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*Cover illustration:*

GI 'Hunahpu

Birth: 1.18.5.3.2 9 Ik 15 Ceh 2697 B.C.

Drawing by Linda Schele

# The Hauberg Stela: Bloodletting and the Mythos of Maya Rulership

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The Hauberg Stela first came to public attention in the *Before Cortes* Exhibition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1970, where it was dated stylistically as "Protoclassic, probably A.D. 100-200," and tied iconographically to both Izapan art and Early Classic monuments at Tikal (Easby and Scott 1970:214). Its second publication was as a rubbing, accompanied by the observation that "this unique miniature stela appears to date from a time before the characteristic Peten formalism had crystallized" (Greene, Rands, and Graham 1972:262). Although its assessment as an early monument has generally been accepted by Mayanists, little attention and no further analysis has been focused on it since these earlier publications. However, new findings in and understanding of the archaeology and iconography of the Late Preclassic period have made it possible and important to place the Hauberg within the larger context of the evolution of Maya civilization as an example of an intermediate stage of development, both in the evolution of the hieroglyphic writing system and in strategies employed by the Lowland Maya to charter kingship and sanctify social reality. This paper examines the date of the Hauberg, the content of its hieroglyphic text, and its iconography within the context of the growing body of information known about the Late Preclassic and Classic periods of Maya civilization.

## *The Inscription*

The inscription opens with a column of large glyphs occupying the left vertical side of the monument (Fig. 1). The first six glyphs record the date, but the components are ordered in an unorthodox fashion, as follows: ISIG, haab, G5, unknown, 17C, tzolkin. Peter Mathews originally questioned the authenticity of the monument because of this odd ordering of the date, but he has informed me (personal communication 1982) that the recently found San Diego cliff carving, a Late Preclassic work of unquestioned authenticity, also has an unorthodox ordering, i.e., tzolkin, ISIG, haab, and lord of the night, confirming the acceptability of the Hauberg ordering as both genuine and very early. Furthermore, David Stuart (personal communication 1983) has pointed

out the existence of several Classic monuments (Quirigua Stela U, El Peru Stela 13, and Copan Stela 16) that have the same haab-tzolkin reversal of CR dates. The use of the ISIG with a CR date but without a LC notation is also known from a number of Classic monuments, including Tikal Stela 4 and the same Copan Stela 16. The unorthodox order and the abbreviated format of the Hauberg date, therefore, has precedents on monuments of known provenience from the Late Preclassic and the Early Classic periods.

The components of the Hauberg date are not only arranged in an unusual fashion, but they are damaged in critical areas and present arithmetical problems that are difficult to resolve. The ISIG has the expected superfix and T548 tun sign. The infixed patron of the month is a long-snouted beastie with in-curling fang and muzzle configuration (Fig. 2), remarkably similar to the upper



Fig. 2 *The Initial Series Introductory Glyph of the Hauberg* (drawing by George Stuart).

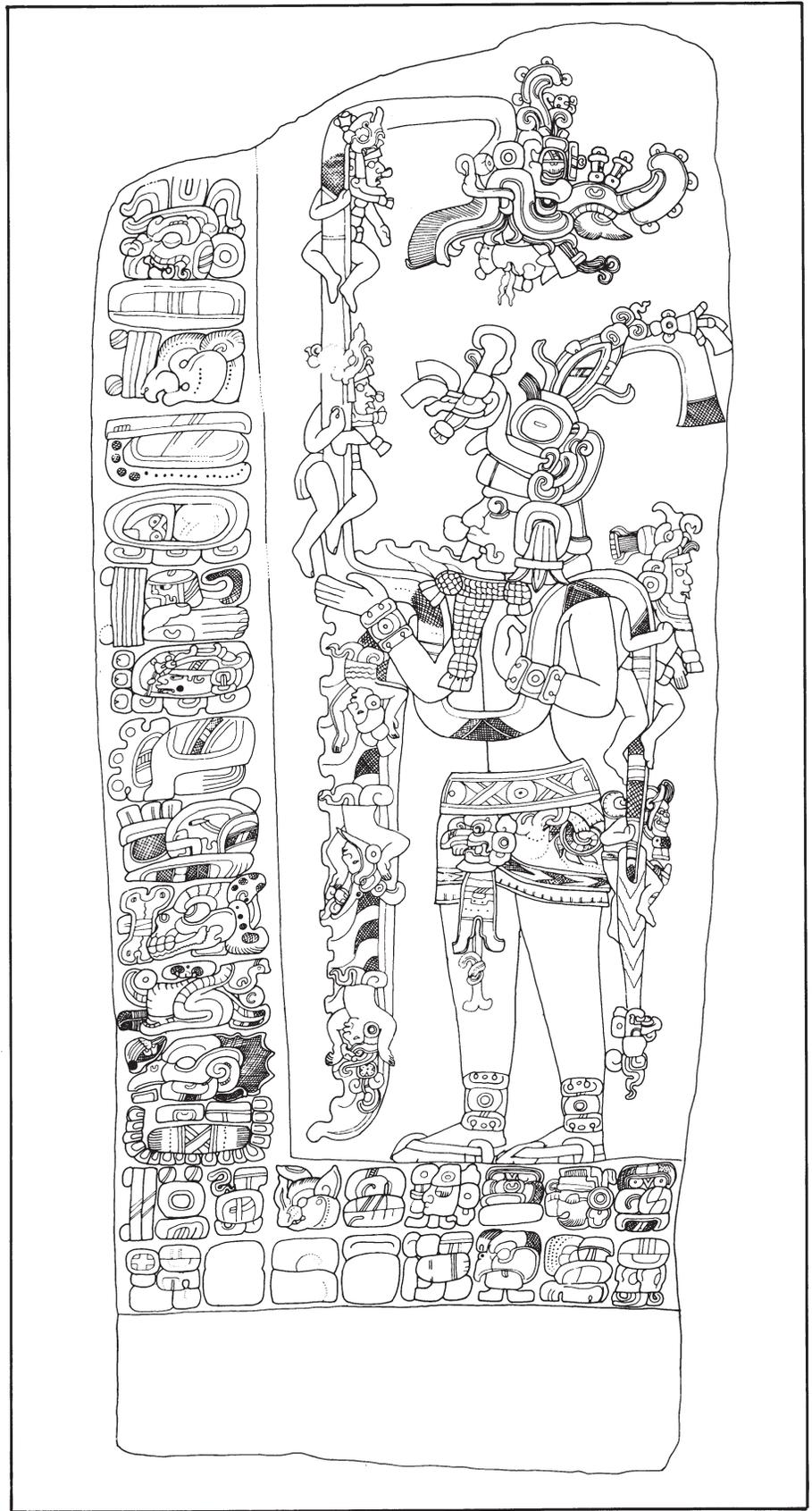


Fig. 1 The Hauberg Stela.

heads on Cerros 5C-2nd (Freidel and Schele 1982). The haab at A2 clearly has 12 as its numerical coefficient (Fig. 3), but the identification of the month sign is somewhat problematic. It is an animal head most closely resembling Xul, but it lacks the T116 affix expected with Xul. Furthermore, the ear and cheek configurations closely resemble those of the Zotz' glyph below at C1.

In most cases the ISIG patron would point towards one or the other of these possibilities, but here it is not conclusive. Thompson (1971: Fig. 22) shows xoc as the patron of the month Zotz', but has only one example for the month Xul. However, a sky sign is clearly shown as the patron of Xul on Lacanja Lintel 1. At first appearances the Hauberg patron seems most likely to be an early xoc, but Freidel and Schele (1982) have shown that the facade of Cerros 5C-2nd is the prototype of the Classic Celestial Monster with the lower heads corresponding to the rear Quadripartite Monster of the Classic beastie, and the upper heads corresponding to the crocodilian front head. The close resemblance of the inward-turning, long muzzle and the in-curling fang of the patron head to the profiles of the upper heads at Cerros can be viewed as evidence for the identification of the Hauberg patron as the front head of the Celestial Monster, and therefore as a zoomorphic version of sky. This latter possibility makes its identification as the patron of Xul as likely an identification as the patron of Zotz'. Since the initial writing of this analysis, John Hauberg has responded to my enquiries concerning the month glyph, and he informs me that the curving line I had previously suspected to be the leaf nose of the zotz' bat is in fact a sphere of harder stone embedded in the softer stone of the stela. This information further supports the identification of the head as the Xul animal.

A3 is clearly G5 of the Lords of the Night, a fact first demonstrated to me by Peter Mathews (personal communication 1982). Glyph F is missing, but G5 also appears without Glyph F on the Leiden Plaque, so Glyph F is not a requirement in early texts. A4 is unknown, but may be related either to the haab notation or to the odd Glyph C that follows at A5. This strange glyph has a day sign cartouche, but it is without a numerical coefficient. The inner space is divided into equal halves, with an unknown sign on the left and an obliterated sign on the right. This glyph does not include known signs nor does it correspond to any structural position reconstructable from Classic texts.

Glyph C appears at A5 with a coefficient of seventeen, a number impossible in the Classic system of lunar reckoning. God C stands above the T713 "to end" glyph, and although it is not normally found with Glyph C, it does appear in Glyph B of the Lunar Series in the door jamb texts of the Group of the Cross at Palenque. The presence of the number seventeen suggests that the Late Preclassic Maya were reckoning lunations using a radically different system than the six lunation semester of the Classic period.<sup>1</sup>

The tzolkin position closes the record of the date, but

again an unambiguous reading eludes me. The day cartouche contains a young male head with T84 atop its head. Of the day signs that can go with the haab coefficient twelve, only Kan fits the drawing, and based on this correspondence, I have previously listed (Schele 1982:86) a series of possible LC positions for 3 Kan 12 Xul and 3 Kan 12 Zotz'. The inclusion of the G5 as a condition of the date delimits those possibilities further to 7.17.10.9.4 3 Kan 12 Xul (November 29, -8)<sup>2</sup> and 8.15.7.5.4 3 Kan 12 Zotz' (A.D. 344, July 24). The latter date is surely too late for the style of the Hauberg.

To further complicate the matter, Lounsbury, Mathews, Justeson, and Stuart (personal communication 1982) have argued that the head is marked as ahau by the presence of a circle on its cheek. I have been able to confirm the presence of this circle and its internal cross-hatching from detail photographs recently provided by the owner of the monument. Furthermore, Lounsbury has tentatively read T84 as *ah* and suggested that here it functions as a phonetic complement for ahau. There seems little doubt that the day sign is the anthropomorphic version of ahau, an identification that poses another problem because of the 12 coefficient of the haab. In order to accept the identification of the day as ahau, we must assume that the coefficient of the haab is in error or that the date is one of the so-called "Yucatecan-style" dates in which the haab is one behind the tzolkin. Mathews (1977) has observed that these kinds of dates are usually accompanied by a half-darkened kin and suggested that they record rituals that took place at an hour of the day at which the tzolkin had advanced, but before the haab had changed. If this date is deliberately in "error," the mysterious glyph at A4 may signal this special category of "Yucatec-style" dates. The date, therefore, may also have been 3 Ahau, which, combined with the haab possibilities, yields two additional possibilities: 8.8.0.7.0 3 Ahau 13 Xul (A.D. 199, October 10)<sup>2</sup> and 8.4.15.7.0 3 Ahau 13 Zotz' (A.D. 135, September 16). Of these four possibilities, the 3 Ahau 13 Xul date seems to be the most likely reading.

While the date of the Hauberg is unclear, the remaining portion of the first clause follows the syntactical order expected from Classic inscriptions and includes a known verbal expression, names, and titles. A7 is the T712 bloodletting glyph with a shell-yax prefix (Fig. 4a); this exact verb, with the addition of the T181 verbal suffix *ah*, occurs on Tikal Stela 10 (Fig. 4b), preceded by the date 7 Cib 14 Yax (9.5.4.5.16) and followed by the ruler's name "Curl-Head." The same T712 glyph appears as the verbal noun following an auxiliary verb + *ti* expression (Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins n.d.) on Yaxchilan Stela 24, where it is the recorded event for a scene that is clearly of tongue mutilation. We can assume, therefore, that the event recorded on the Hauberg is one of bloodletting, and as will be seen, the iconography fully supports this reading.

A8 is a prepositional phrase including T89 *tu*; a very early God C head; and T24, believed by many epigraphers



Fig. 3 The *haab* glyph (photograph courtesy of John Hauberg).

to be a *-vl* suffix. God C with Thompson's "water-group" prefix has been associated with the dotted material scattered on period endings at Yaxchilan (Stuart 1982) and with the material shown emerging from the mouths of women undergoing tongue mutilation at Yaxchilan (Schele 1984). There seems little doubt that this group of suffixes and its God C head variant record blood. These blood affixes are often suffixed to the T714 "fish-in-hand" glyph, another verb that accompanies bloodletting scenes, and blood seems an appropriate substance to record in connection with such acts. The Hauberg verb, then, is the T712 bloodletting glyph followed by a prepositional phrase recording that the substance let is blood.

The final four glyphs of the first clause appear to record the subject and presumably the person shown in the scene. The first of these glyphs (A9) includes a long bone prefixed to a skeletal head, marked with upper and lower front teeth and a long spotted ear. The presence of upper teeth and the ear suggests that the skull is that of a rabbit, and based on this identification, I will tentatively designate this ruler *Bac-T'ul* ('Bone-Rabbit'). A10 seems to be a reptilian head with mouth gaping open; I suspect this glyph is part of the personal name. It is followed at All by a bird head distinguished by a nose attachment appended above a bulging nostril. This nose attachment is marked by a torch, pronounced *tah* in both the Yucatecan and Cholan languages. The torch seems to function here as a phonetic complement specifying a reading of *ta*, making this bird the earliest known example of the head variant of the locative *ti/ta*, usually written as the *tahol* vulture (T747a). The use of the torch, instead of T59, as a phonetic complement for this head variant suggests that the Maya writing system had a significant

phonetic component even at this early stage of its development.

I suspect that the glyph following the locative is an Emblem Glyph, but its form is different from the EG typical of the Classic period. It includes the expected T168 *ahpo* title, but the "blood" prefix is rendered as a contour of beads (blood often appears with a beaded outline) surrounding the main sign. To my knowledge, the main sign (T563b) occurs in no other identified EG, but it may be of interest to note that two of the headdress zoomorphs of the masked façade at Kohunlich<sup>3</sup> are marked by this same T563 glyph. If the Kohunlich use of the glyphically marked headdress motif can be taken as some sort of place designation, then the Hauberg may have come from that region. Certainly the style of the Kohunlich building seems to be from approximately the same period.

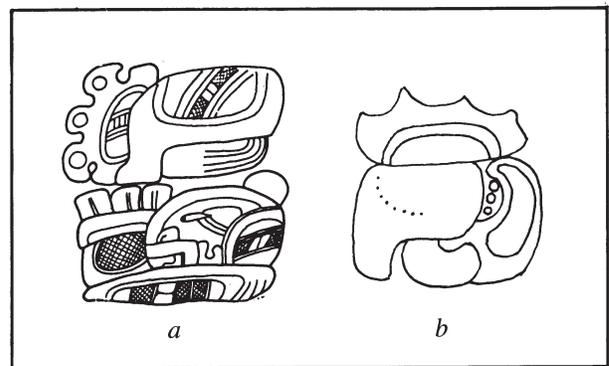


Fig. 4 The T712 "Bloodletting" Verb (a) the Hauberg Stela, A7-A8; (b) Tikal Stela 10, D11.

The first clause of the text, then, records a Calendar Round date with its Lord of the Night, an unknown glyph, and 17C glyph. The date is followed by a bloodletting expression, the name of the subject (presumably the pictured person), a locative preposition, and perhaps an early Emblem Glyph. The remaining part of the text (Fig. 5) is more difficult to read. A13 is clearly a Distance Number, but the main sign does not correspond to any known period glyph. However, because the affixed numbers appear in the configuration expected for the first unit of a Distance Number sequence, I am tentatively assuming that two uinals and twelve days are recorded, and that the chronological order of the events follows the reading order of the text, giving the following dates at the appropriate intervals from the four possible positions of the initial date:

7.17.10.12.18	5 Etz'nab	6 Ch'en	-7, January 20
8.4.15.9.12	3 Eb	5 Yaxkin	135, November 7
8.8.0.9.12	3 Eb	5 Ch'en	199, November 30
8.15.7.7.18	5 Etz'nab	6 Yaxkin	344, September 14

The verb following the Distance Number seems to be an early version of the T168:518 verb (Fig. 6a), which

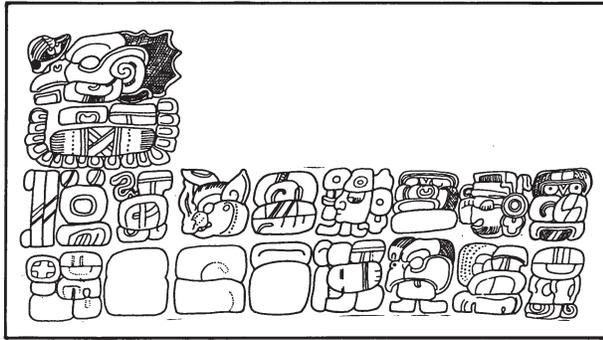


Fig. 5 The lower inscription of the Hauberg

appears on Naranjo Stela 22 (Fig. 6b) as the verb for heir-designation (or accession), and on the west panel of the Temple of Inscriptions (Fig. 6c) as the accession of the ruler. Throughout the Classic inscriptions, it occurs as a title, and although we do not yet understand its specific reference, I think that some sort of office-taking can be assumed for the Hauberg text. The *po* sign in the T168 title appears to be replaced by a sign resembling the undulating body of a snake; this same substitution can be seen with the T518 title in the Late Classic on Tikal Stela 5 (Fig. 6d). It seems likely that the Hauberg text features a bloodletting ritual that took place fifty-two days before an office-taking rite. Unfortunately, the remainder of the text is either eroded or it lacks a clear syntactical framework. E2 seems to repeat the Emblem Glyph at A12, and H1 is the “*hel*-“succession” glyph that occurs throughout the Classic period with numerical prefixes and/or in titular references.

Of the four possible pairs of dates suggested for the Hauberg, the Kan sets seem either too early (7.17.) or too late (8.15.) for the style and glyph content of the Hauberg. For this reason I believe one of the two *ahau* sets to be the most likely decipherment; the 8.8.0.7.0 position is supported by the association of the ISIG with the upper heads at Cerros and by Justeson’s speculations concerning the 17C notation at A5. In both cases of *ahau* dates (8.4.15.7.0 [A.D. 135] and 8.8.0.7.0 [199]), the Hauberg date is a full one hundred years earlier than Tikal Stela 29 and can now be identified as the earliest known lowland Maya monument with a date recorded in a format and with most of the features characteristic of the calendar notation system used during Classic period.

### The Iconography

In the pictorial scene (Fig. 7), a profile figure stands, holding a serpent draped across his chest and arching above his head. This figure is simply dressed, but he wears a mask and an object, overlaid by three inverted, mutilated upper bodies, which hangs downward from behind his right shoulder. The serpent he holds has a supernatural head emerging from its mouth, and four miniature figures are shown clinging to its body. Easby and Scott (1970:214) commented on the resemblance of this serpent motif to Izapan “sky faces” and to the bicephalic serpent bar of Classic period iconography. Rands (Greene et al.:252) also commented on the resemblance of the Hauberg iconography to Early Classic stelae at Tikal, but he also emphasized that the details of the composition violate the canons typical of Classic royal portraiture. Accepting that detectable differences echo the earlier style of the Hauberg, its iconography can be directly associated with the charter of rulership and with the bloodletting ritual so prominent in the iconography of Yaxchilan, but also present at Tikal, Copan, and Seibal.

### The Figure and Costume

The male figure is shown in the rigid, standing posture characteristic of very early Maya style. The legs are depicted in Proskouriakoff’s Pose A (1950:19), with no overlap below the knees. The pelvic area seems impossibly wide because it is warped into three-quarter view in order to facilitate reading the details of the loincloth ornament. The hip cloth is held in place by a thick belt with the expected disk and crossed-bands markings, and a jaguarian zoomorph overlays the frontal loincloth. This jaguar head relates directly to the lower heads on Cerros 5C-2nd, and to the crueler-eyed GIII heads attached to the front of belts on most pre-9.2.0.0.0 monuments at Tikal and elsewhere (Freidel and Schele 1982). The loincloth has a stepped indentation at its end characteristic of royal costume on Tikal Stelae 1 and 9, although the Hauberg lacks the serpent frets typical of later patterns of dress.

The upper torso of the figure is in full profile view and bare of costume, while the shoulders, like the pelvis, are shown from a more frontal view. The left hand is cocked in the position normally found with the serpent bar in Classic iconography, while the right hand is ex-

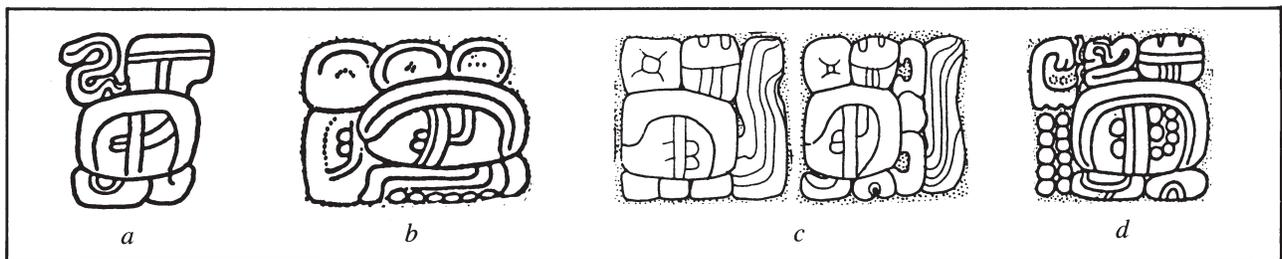


Fig. 6 The T518 verb (a) the Hauberg Stela, B12; (b) Naranjo Stela 22, A10; (c) Palenque Temple of Inscriptions west, F12 and H2; (d) Tikal Stela 5, D9.

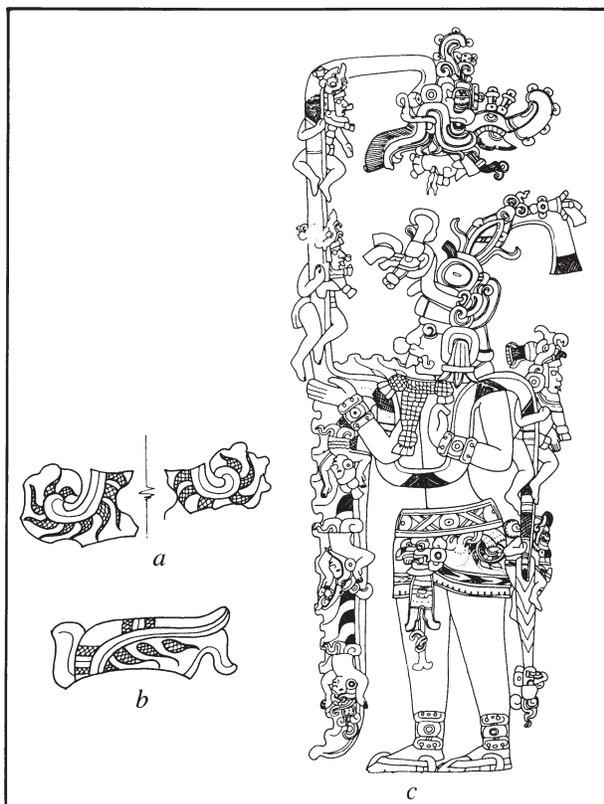


Fig. 7 (a) Detail of the Stormy-Sky name from the front of Tikal Stela 31; (b) "tree" sign from Tikal Stela 26; (c) the figure from the Hauberg Stela.

tended outward from the body in the "scattering" gesture associated with bloodletting rituals. The wrist and ankle cuffs are marked with disks framed by the same "tooth" motifs shown on the Tikal Stela 31 cuffs. The sandals are separate from the cuffs and seem to have a horizontal strap pulled through leather loops at the ankle and ball of the foot. The rear loop is typical of Early Classic sandal forms, but the front loop seems to be unique to the Hauberg.

Costume detail is kept to a minimum except in the elaborately decorated head gear. The face of the figure is covered by an unidentified anthropomorphic mask, marked as supernatural by the presence of a scroll eye motif and perforator tooth. The headdress is composed of a chin strap from which depends a triangular object, perhaps marked as quilted material. The back of the head is covered with two layers of cloth, not unlike the headdress forms on Tikal Stelae 7, 9, and 13. A large ear flare hangs beside the face mask and has a tri-pointed appendage hanging from the central depression. A vertically-oriented personification zoomorph rides above the ear in a form retained on Tikal Stelae 20 and 31; I suspect it may be the forerunner of the personified wing typical of Classic Period head gear.

The upper zone of the headdress can be divided into three sections: (1) a forehead band and cloth cap overlaid by a cantilevered zoomorph I suspect to be the Jester

God; (2) a round frame with an incised glyph; and (3) an arcing top section composed of a number of objects typical of Early Classic headdress assemblages. These latter motifs are: (1) an oblong object with flanking scrolls (it is also seen shown with the cantilevered zoomorph and atop the rearing serpent head); (2) a smoking *ahau*, designating the figure as "lord"; (3) the bell-cylinder-and-ribbons motif; and (4) an arching cloth, later replaced by a stuffed jaguar pelt or boa skin. The figure is a historical person, dressed in costume closely resembling royal dress and identified by elements that in the Classic period mark rulers. He wears the face mask of an anthropomorphic supernatural distinguished by a scroll eye, perforator tooth, mouth emanation, and spherical nose ornaments.

The most unusual piece of costuming is the sprocketed object that drops from behind the figure's right shoulder. The straight edge of this object is marked by a double line from which emerges *caban*-like signs. At first view I identified this object to be related to "earth" iconography, but closer inspection suggests that it is more closely related to "tree" marking, such as seen in Bz2 on Tikal Stela 26. Shapes identical to it are shown emerging from the "sky" glyph of Stormy-Sky's name on the front of Tikal Stela 31. Unfortunately, the Tikal occurrence is unique to that example and offers no clue as to its identification or meaning. On the Hauberg, this unusual hanging object is overlaid by three inverted figures with blood scrolls gushing from their bifurcated bodies. Each descending figure wears a different headdress, with the lower one topped by a *kin*-sun glyph, the central one wearing a long-beaked bird enveloping his head, and the upper wearing an unidentified motif. The bifurcated bodies appear to mark these figures as sacrificial victims, while their size and headdresses suggest identities as supernaturals.

#### *The Serpent and the Bloodletting Ritual*

Bone-Rabbit holds the rearing serpent in his arms, with a hand gesture that is particularly associated with the bicephalic serpent bar in later compositions. Furthermore, the four climbing figures are similar to those shown climbing a double-headed serpent on Tikal Stela 1 (Fig. 8b). However, in the Early Classic period at Tikal and elsewhere, these figures are not shown on the serpent-bar scepter held in the hands of the protagonist, but rather they climb along the verticals of a backrack device that terminates in serpent heads analogous to the bar designs. That these motifs can be identified functionally as backracks can be confirmed on Caracol Stela 16 (dated at 9.5.0.0.0) where the design appears on the same plane as the protagonist and without the complex design and wraparound format that makes the Tikal examples difficult to read. The Caracol example (Fig. 8e) has the feathers typical of backrack devices, and it is shown hanging downward and from behind the upper area of the body. El Peru Stela 22, like Caracol Stela 16, shows this device on the same plane as the protagonist, where it appears without feathers or other obscuring details (Fig.

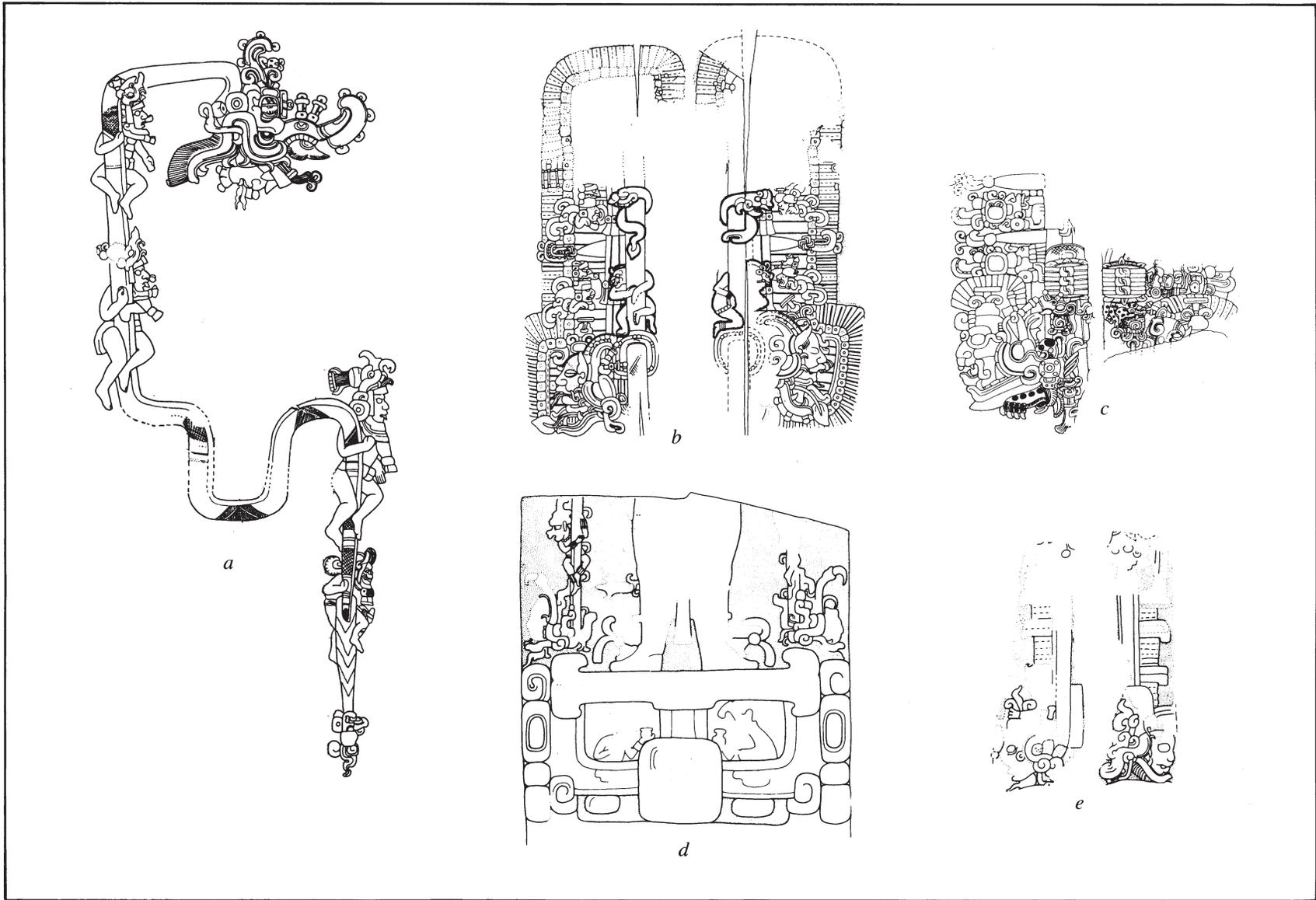


Fig. 8 (a) Vision Serpent from the Hauberg; (b) backrack from Tikal Stela 1; (c) backrack from Tikal Stela 28; (d) El Peru Stela 22; (e) backrack from Caracol Stela 16.

8d). Interestingly, full-figured beasts are shown climbing only the El Peru Stela 22 and Tikal Stela 1 devices (Fig. 8b and d); on all other examples, these figures are either missing, or they emerge as head and forelimbs only from motifs attached to the serpent bodies.

The climbing figures on Tikal Stela 1 consist of two pairs – an upper legless pair and a lower limbed pair (Fig. 8b). The left upper figure is clearly a rattlesnake, while the right upper has an upturned snout and bifurcated tail, perhaps identifying it as a xoc fish. The lower left figure is jaguarian with a vegetal (water lily?) head ornament, and the right is a zoomorph closely resembling the figure emerging from the right head of the serpent bar above. I suspect the right figure is the zoomorphic version of GI while the jaguar refers to GIII. If this association is correct, the upper and lower pairs can be viewed as paired oppositions with the lower pair contrasting GI and GIII and the upper contrasting a rattlesnake and a xoc fish. The analogous figures do not survive on Tikal Stela 2, but on Stela 28 (Fig. 8c), the right backrack head is jaguarian while the left is marked with reptilian features. The small figures emerge from a tri-knot motif attached to the backrack verticals. The left jaguarian head is associated with the reptilian figure, perhaps again meant to be a xoc. The right reptilian head is associated with an emerging jaguar. As on Stela 1, the arrangement invites analysis in terms of horizontal and vertical oppos-

itions, although the pattern of opposition is different.

While the clinging figures are analogous to the compositions discussed above, the Hauberg serpent is neither the backrack nor the royal scepter bar of the Classic period (Fig. 9a). First of all, the body is not bicephalic, but rather has a single head and a tail at the opposite end. Furthermore, the verb of the text describing this scene is bloodletting; the Classic analogue of this serpent should be sought, therefore, in the iconography of bloodletting. In this context, the rearing posture of the Hauberg serpent recalls the vision serpents of Yaxchilan Lintels 13, 14, 15, and 25. On Lintel 25 (Fig. 9c), the serpent is bicephalic with a “tlaloc”-masked human head emerging from the upper head and a fully zoomorphic “tlaloc” emerging from the other. The Lintel 15 vision serpent (Fig. 9b) is single-headed and, like the Hauberg serpent (Fig. 9a), it is marked by T566 *can/chan* serpent markings. In both Yaxchilan examples, the serpents seem to rise vertically from bloodletting bowls and overlay S-scrolls, identified by Stuart (1982) as blood scrolls, signifying perhaps that the visions are of or originate from blood sacrifice. The Hauberg serpent, like all vision serpents of the Classic period, has a head emerging from its mouth.

Perhaps of more direct relevance and certainly of wider distribution, are the vision serpents of Lintels 13 and 14 (Fig. 10a-b). In both these scenes, the vision serpents

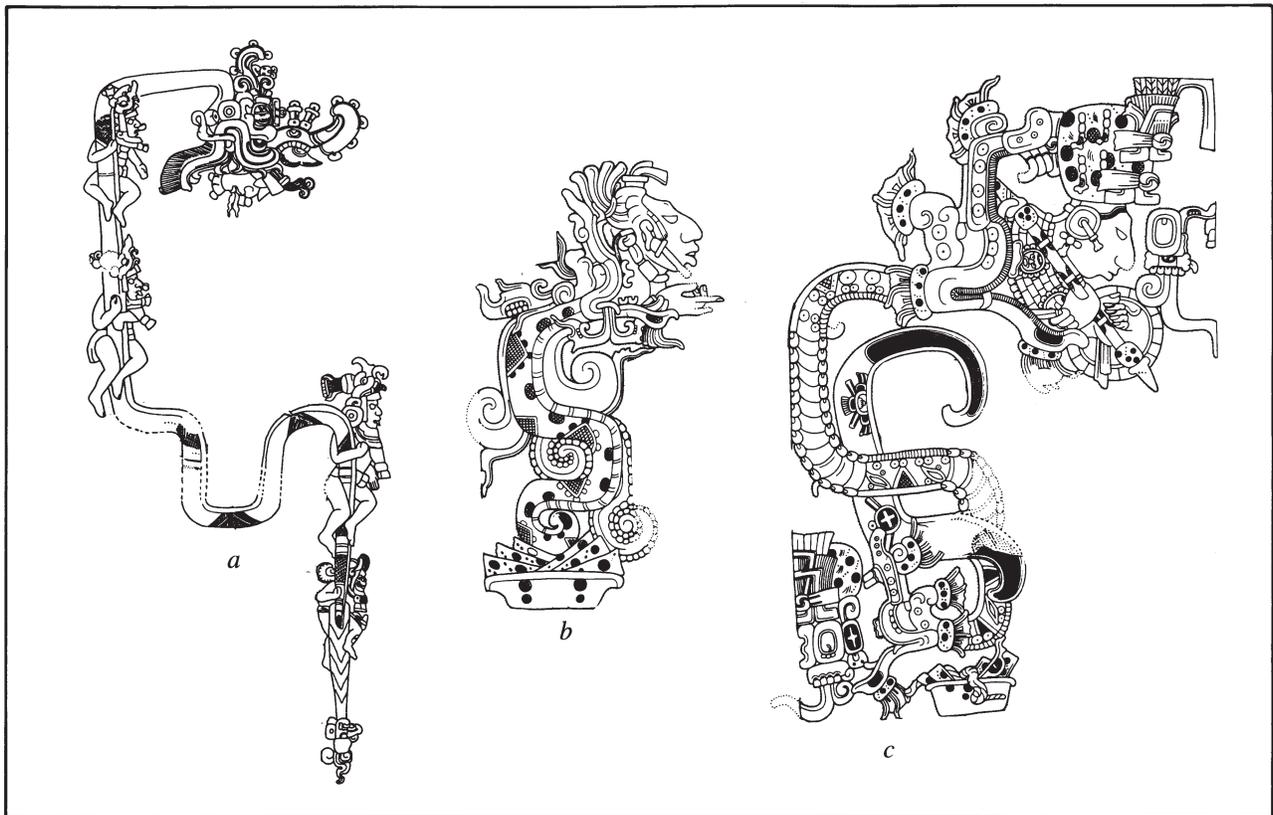


Fig. 9 Vision Serpents: (a) the Hauberg Stela; (b) Yaxchilan Lintel 15; (c) Yaxchilan Lintel 25.

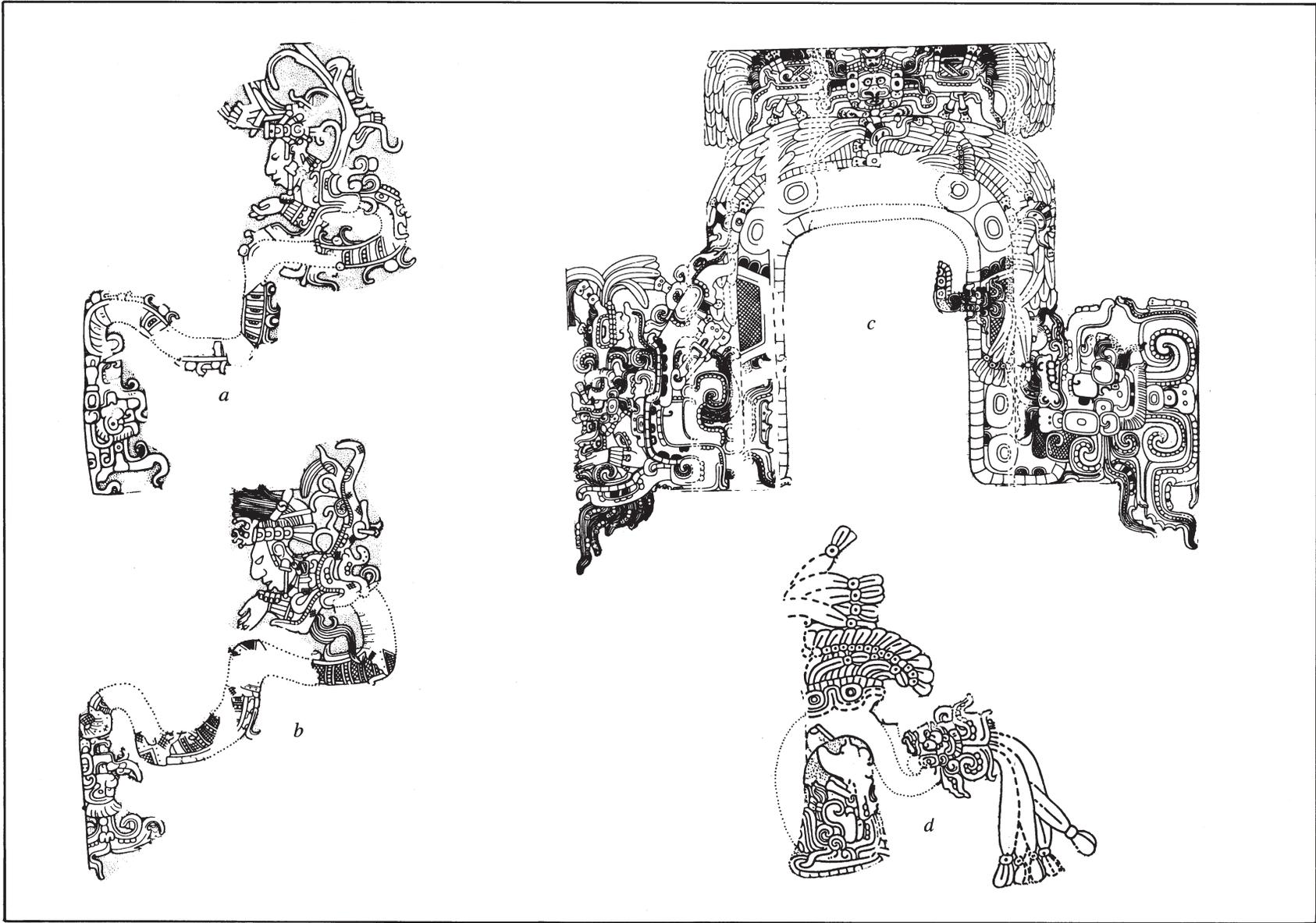


Fig. 10 Vision Serpents: (a) Yaxchilan Lintel 13; (b) Yaxchilan Lintel 14; (c) Tikal Temple IV Lintel 3; (d) Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2.

appear in rearing position, and like the Hauberg, they are held by the persons participating in the vision rite. These serpents, however, are somewhat different than the examples discussed above; their bodies have alternating bands of normal and flayed areas and they have specialized God C heads attached to the ends of the tails. In the two Yaxchilan examples, on Tikal Temple IV Lintel 3 (Fig. 10c), and Copan Stela D, the serpent body terminates in an inward-turning scroll to which is attached a skeletal zoomorphic head. The foreheads of each of the terminal heads are infixed with a God C glyph fringed by short cropped hair. Symmetrical scrolls with a central bone element emerge from the tops of these rear heads, and in many examples these scrolls have a dotted outline. I suspect that the skeletal God C and scroll designs form a unit that functions as a variant of the T41 God C blood glyph and, therefore, specifies blood as the source or media of the vision. They seem to be analogous to the blood scroll surrounding the Lintel 15 and 25 serpents, neither of which have this God C blood-scroll head.

The heads emerging from the mouths of the Yaxchilan serpents appear to represent human personages, perhaps ancestors of particular importance. The vision serpent from Tikal, Temple IV, Lintel 3 (Fig. 10c), however, contrasts to the Yaxchilan examples in several attributes. It arches over the royal portrait and serves as a platform for the zoomorphic bird usually seen atop Celestial Dragons; both the arching position and bird seem to be direct references to the Celestial Dragon and function here as a means of implying either a substitution of the one for the other or an overlapping of function. Furthermore, the emerging figure is not a human, but rather a supernatural. It has a perforator fixed in its mouth, and the top of its head is pierced by a shell perforator, flanked by two of the dotted scrolls I have tentatively associated with blood. Surely this Tikal supernatural is equivalent to the personified lancet identified by Joralemon (1974) at many other sites. The Copan example has God K, a deity repeatedly associated with bloodletting, emerging from the mouth, and the costume of the ruler is dominated by bloodletting icons. Stela D celebrates a period-ending date, and bloodletting is one of the most commonly recorded and widely distributed of period-ending rites.

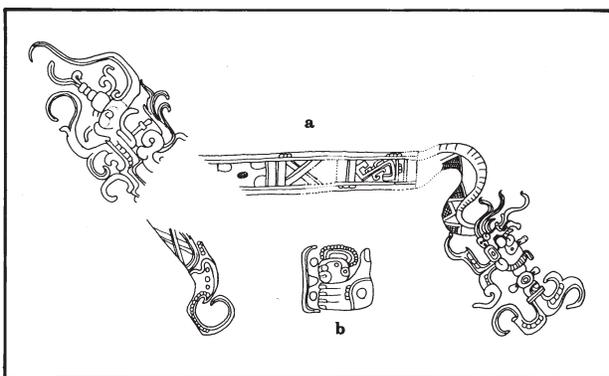


Fig. 11 Seibal Stela 9: (a) the Vision Serpent bar; (b) the "blood-in-hand" verb.

The latest example of the vision serpent occurs on Seibal Stela 9, one of five stelae associated with Temple A-3 and dated at 10.1.0.0. These five stelae seem to be arranged in a program, with each emphasizing a different complex of period-ending iconography. Stela 8 has the T528.116:713 "end of tun" expression, and the ruler Ah-Bolon-Tun/Ah-Hun-Kin is shown wearing GIII regalia and holding a GII head. Stela 11 shows the act of "scattering," and Stela 21, the interior monument, shows the ruler holding the God K scepter and the GIII shield. Stela 10 has "scattering" as the verb and shows this ruler holding the Celestial Dragon in the position of the Bicephalic Serpent Bar. Like Stela 10, Stela 9 has a dragon substituting for the expected Serpent Bar (Fig. 11a); however, in this case, the dragon is the Vision Serpent, rather than the Celestial Monster, and the verb seems to reflect this substitution. It is the T670, now known to record the act of holding or grasping something (Schele 1982:61-63); it is shown here grasping the God C blood glyph (Fig. 11b) so that "holding the vision serpent" is recorded verbally as "to hold blood."

The serpent on the Hauberg Stela does not have the skeletal God C head attached to its tail; instead the tail terminates in a pointed shape, marked by *etz'nab*-flint lines an shaped like a spear blade (Fig. 12). It is a blood-letter. Attached to the tip of the blade is a smoking ahau, a motif shown attached to all sorts of tails in Classic Period iconography. Instead of blood, the Hauberg serpent has the instrument that draws the blood attached to its tail.



Fig. 12 The lower, right climber and the top section of the serpent tail. Note the flint markings (photograph courtesy of John Hauberg).

The mouth of this vision Serpent (Fig. 13) gaps open with an anthropomorphic head emerging from its gullet. This head has a three-part, pointed device overlaying the eye and the looped, bound hair, diagnostic of a class of anthropomorphic supernaturals, including among others GI and GIII of the Palenque Triad. The head has the features of a young male, but the eye motif seems to associate it with the clay effigy figure (12c-508/35) from Tikal Burial 10 (W.R. Coe 1967:60). This full-bodied supernatural has aged facial features and is shown seated on a stool while extending a plate holding a decapitated human head. The head of the Vision Serpent is bearded. A bifurcated tongue emerges from the corner of the mouth, overlapping the counterweight of an earplug assemblage. A scroll motif rides atop the head, emerging from a mirror-image glyph reading “6 (or 11) sky.”

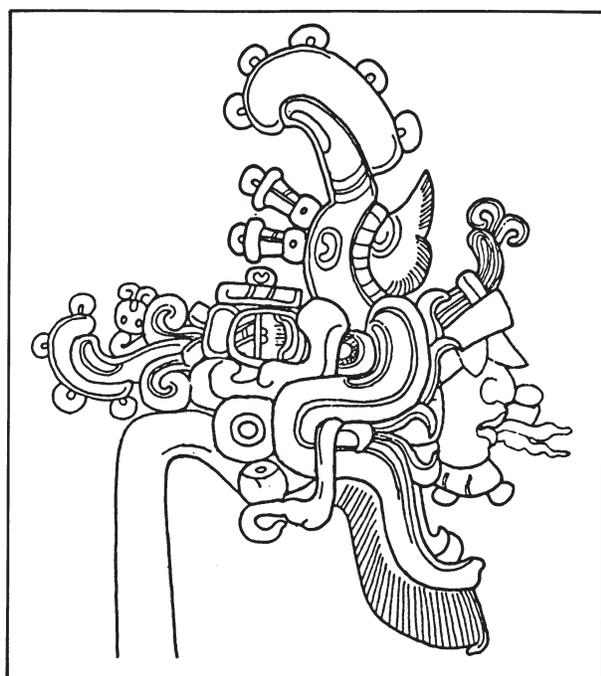


Fig. 13 Detail of the head of the Vision Serpent.

The four figures clinging to the body of the Vision Serpent are the only remaining element to be described. For the sake of clarity, I will designate them a, b, c, and d, moving from top to bottom and left to right. All four figures have anthropomorphic bodies, and figures a-c have anthropomorphic facial features, while figure d has a zoomorphic face. All four are minimally clothed and individual identification seems to be vested in the headdresses. The headdresses of the upper three figures include a horizontal ribbon overlaying the forehead. A second vertical ribbon lies at the rear of each face, and this second ribbon emerges above and below the forehead ribbon folding over it to lay atop the ear region. Exactly this configuration of ribbon marks the headdress of the GIII head held by Stormy-Sky on Tikal St. 31 (Fig. 14e).

The headdress of figure a (Fig. 14a) has a *lamat*-venus sign perched atop a zoomorphic head, marked by reptilian fangs, a large round eye, and an ear. The presence of the *lamat* glyph surely identifies this figure as some early manifestation of Venus. He clings to the serpent body immediately below the topmost curve, facing forward with his head turned into profile view. The right arm and both legs wrap around the serpent body, while the left arm hangs downward at an angle from the shoulder. His head is fully anthropomorphic with a fully human mouth and nose, but with the square-eyes that usually mark supernaturals.

Figure b (Fig. 14b) has his body and head turned profile to the viewer with his loincloth delineated behind the buttocks. The face has the same square eye, human mouth, and bead nose ornament as figure a, but in addition it has a large, pointed front tooth. The headdress is zoomorphic and seems to have the long curving teeth associated with saurian forms. A head stands above the zoomorph and overlaps the serpent body, but I cannot see enough detail in available photographs to posit an identification.

The headdress zoomorph of figure c (Fig. 14c), the upper left effigy, has the upturned snout characteristic of the xoc beastie in Classic Period iconography. The disk and fanlike device is attached to the top of the xoc head and closely resembles the Tikal Emblem Glyph and attached design, marking the GIII head on Tikal Stela 31, already associated with the headbands worn by these miniature figures. Figure c is shown in profile view, but like figure a, the left arm of this figure seems to be extended at an angle away from the body. The belt has a central motif that seems to foreshadow the trilobed knot characteristic of the costume associated with both the Palenque Triad (especially GI and GIII) and the Tikal Paddlers. Figures b and c have the round eye and large front tooth that mark the mask worn by the protagonist, and perhaps more importantly, they wear a bib similar in form to the human's. These shared characteristics suggest that the human wears attributes of one or both of these supernaturals as he undergoes the bloodletting rite.

Figure d (Fig. 14d) is the bottom-most of the figures, and like figures b and c, its body is shown in profile. A section of a belt is visible at the rear of the waist, and an axe is held in his left hand. The face is fully zoomorphic and resembles similar figures clinging to the left hand serpent body on Tikal Stela 1. A half-darkened ahau and a ribbon are suspended below the chin guard. The headdress, unlike those of the other three figures, is not zoomorphic; rather it has an upper, central scroll and it terminates in a sharp point from which emerges a hank of looped hair. A long curving device seems to emerge from the top of the headdress, passing behind the serpent tail. This headdress clearly associates this character with a supernatural identified by Hellmuth (1982) as a featured part of the Early Classic cache vessel and incensario complex. Characteristic of this Early Classic deity is the pointed, scrolled headdress, but it

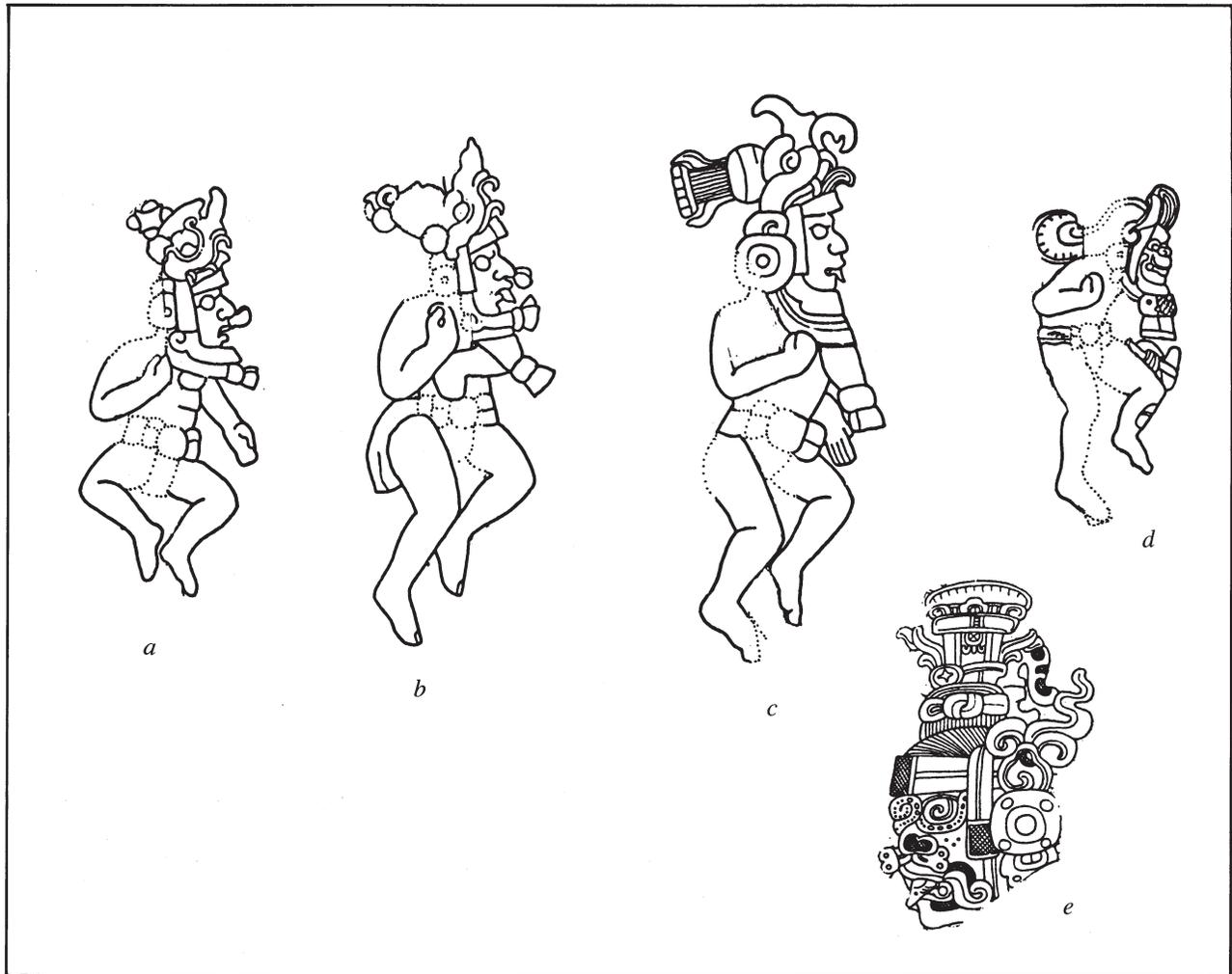


Fig. 14 The Climbers: (a) upper left; (b) lower left; (c) upper right; (d) lower right; (e) Tikal Stela 31, the GIII head.

also appears frequently with a triangular shape, marked by an interior triangle of dots, overlaying the mouth area. This mouth ornament also occurs in a title sequence at Yaxchilan on the Early Classic Lintels 22 (C4-D3) and 34 (A5-B5), where portrait heads of this deity are followed by “sky” and “loincloth” God C phrases. This particular supernatural does not seem to have survived as a part of Late Classic iconographic repertoire, or else its Late Classic alloglyph has not yet been identified. Figure d is the only one of the four miniatures which can be associated directly with a Classic period analogue, but costume elements characterizing these figures are known to appear with the Palenque Triad and Tikal Paddlers.

The miniatures on the Hauberg Stela can be associated with two complexes in Classic iconography: the backrack miniatures of the Early Classic previously discussed and the floating and costume miniatures of the Late Classic. Such figures are frequently shown dispersed among the costume elements of stelae at Quirigua and Copan. Stelae

H and D are particularly marked by these figures at Copan, and both monuments show 18-Rabbit involved in bloodletting rites and covered with bloodletting regalia.<sup>4</sup> The sculpted portal of Temple 22 also has an assortment of miniature figures in a context that links them to the vision quest complex of Yaxchilan and the Hauberg. David Stuart (1982) has shown that the dotted scrolls that depict flowing blood in scenes of scattering and tongue mutilation (Fig. 14a-b) also occur with Vision Serpents (Fig. 15c-d) as the media of the vision. This “blood” motif makes its earliest appearance in Maya iconography on Structure 5C-2d at Cerros (ca. 50 B.C.) where, marked as “red liquid” by painted detail, it emerges from the mouth of the ear-flare grotesque (Fig. 15e). Stuart has further shown that these scrolls with droplet contours, especially in the “lazy-S” configuration, appear in the upper registers of Terminal Classic monuments in the Tikal region as the “media” in which miniatures float. The earliest example of this iconographic complex is found on Tikal Stela 22 (Fig. 15f), while the latest examples occur on tenth cycle monuments Tikal, Ixlu, Jimbal, and Ucanal (Fig. 15 g-j). Glyphically and pictorially, all these monuments record “scattering, ”

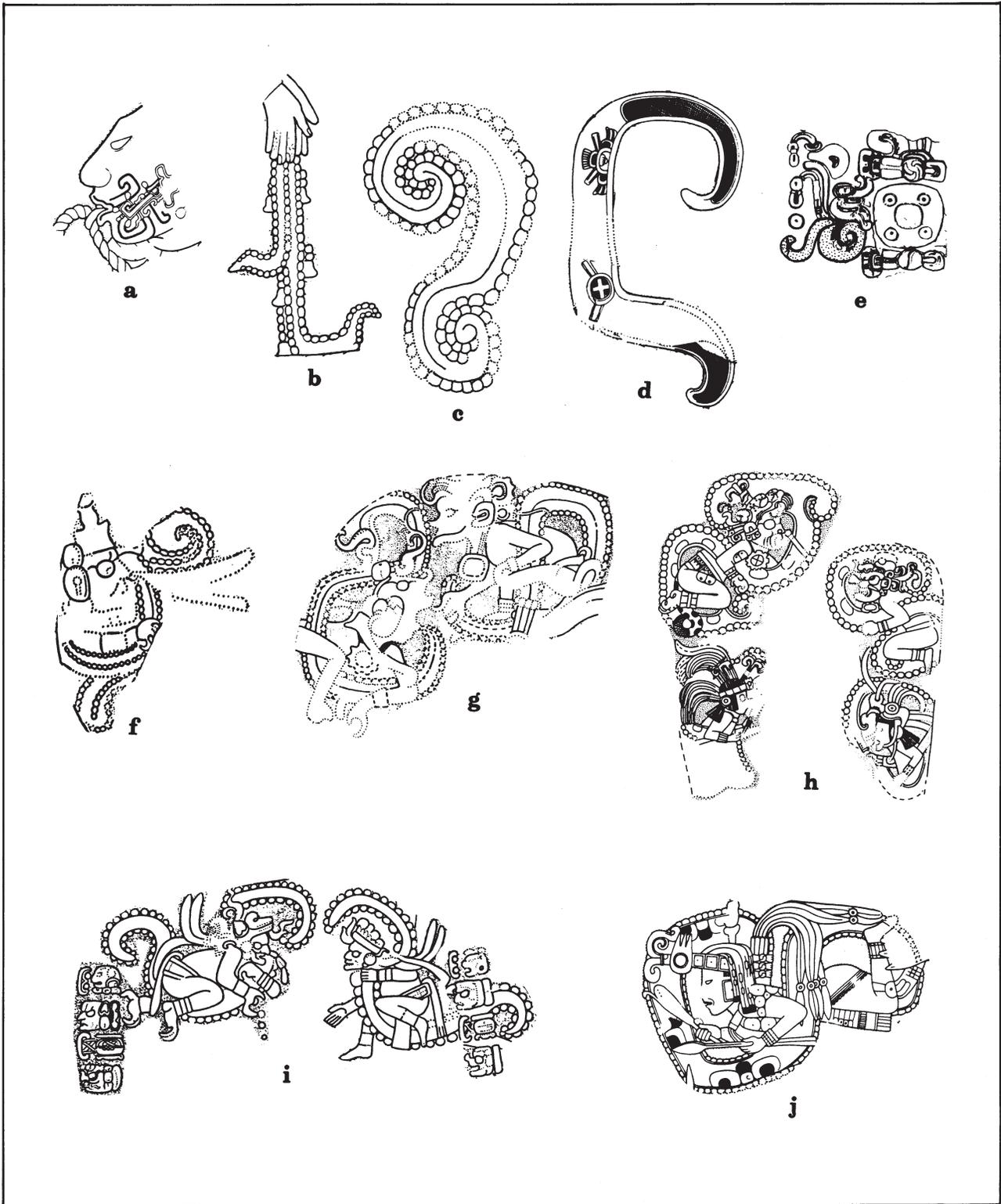


Fig. 15 Blood and the Floaters: (a) Yaxchilan Lintel 24; (b) La Pasadita Lintel 1; (c) Yaxchilan Lintel 15; (d) Yaxchilan Lintel 25; (e) Cerros Structure 5C-2d; (f) Tikal Stela 22; (g) Tikal Stela 11; (h) Ixlu Stela 2; (i) Jimbal Stela 1; (j) Ucanal Stela 4.

now known to be a rite of bloodletting.

Through the careful establishment of structural equivalents, Stuart has extended this complex to include S-scrolls unmarked by the droplet contour (for example, on Lintel 25 at Yaxchilan [Fig. 15d]) and the portal of Copan Temple 22, with its blood scrolls and floating miniatures. It is now clear that the miniatures in the upper register scrolls of the Tikal region and on the Copan portal cavort in the media of blood on the occasion of a ruler's bloodletting activities. While these S-scrolls do not occur on the Hauberg, the miniatures cling to a serpent that is clearly the prototype of the Classic Period Vision Serpent, and the event recorded glyphically as the rite pictured in the scene is bloodletting. The Hauberg miniatures are linked directly to the Classic period iconography of "scattering," as the Hauberg Vision Serpent links directly to the Classic complexes of auto-sacrifice and vision quest.

### Conclusions

The authenticity of the Hauberg Stela cannot be questioned. The unorthodox order of its date, the identification of the month patron, the decipherment of the T712 and T518 verbs, and the structural continuities of the blood complex with the miniatures and the vision serpent, were not known at the time of its first publication in 1970. And much of the archaeological (e.g., Cerros, Lamanai, and El Mirador), epigraphic, and iconographic evidence upon which these identifications are based was not discovered until recently. The importance of the Hauberg does not rest with its authentication nor in the fact that it must now be viewed as the earliest lowland Maya monument with a deciphered date. Rather the importance of the Hauberg is vested in the information it yields about the institution of Maya rulership and the rituals by which it verified social reality at this very early stage of Maya civilization.

In the last decade, intensive excavations at Middle and Late Preclassic sites, such as Komchen, Lamanai, Cerros, Cuello, Colha, and El Mirador, have added enormous data to that previously known from work at Tikal, Uaxactun, and other lowland sites and expanded our understanding of the history of the Maya lowlands before the beginning of the Classic period (A.D. 293, as dated by Tikal Stela 29). Friedel (in Freidel and Schele 1982) sees a millennium of relatively stable development of lowland Maya society, based on an agricultural community with "ritual centers, ritual activities including human sacrifice, trade in exotic materials and differentiated social status as seen in burials." During the period prior to the Late Preclassic explosion of the use of public art (now documented at most of the sites above), the lowland Maya archaeology is characterized by an "aversion to [the] broadly diffused and available symbols used to reinforce elite authority" in adjacent societies that are known archaeologically to have been in profound interaction with the Maya. In other words, the lowland Maya avoided the use of public, monumental art and the reification of social order and reality that such use implies.

Freidel and Schele (1982) have presented an extensive analysis of the content and function of public art when it became a major social tool at the Late Preclassic breakthrough (ca. 150 B.C. to 50 B.C.). We have documented continuities and structural transformations of the Late Preclassic models of reality as reified through public art into the Classic and Postclassic records preserved in art, writing, and myth. We see two major crises and resolutions as documented in the public art. First, at the Late Preclassic threshold, the sanctification of stratified social structure takes place and a hitherto *de facto* elite emerges through the identification of the elite as corporal manifestation of a dyad, based on Venus and the sun as twins, and present in transformed versions in the Classic Period as the Palenque Triad and in the Postclassic as the Hero Twins of the *Popol Vuh*. The appearance of this dyad as the focus of public architecture occurs as a regional phenomenon and in conjunction with a massive expansion of public works that must be characterized archaeologically as abrupt. And characteristic of this period is an anonymous and self-effacing elite; there are no portraits, names, or other historical data recorded in the context of public ritual space.

The second threshold is less well documented archaeologically, but from a comparison of the record before and after the threshold, we have deduced that the crises lay in the transmission of power within divine families of the elite, and that the solution was the singular focus on ruling individuals, their rites of passage (i.e., accession, heir-designation, etc.), and their inheritance of divinity (i.e., their genealogy). In the Classic Period, this concentration resulted in the stela cult, the single-minded focus on history as it reflected structural repetitions from the cosmological environment of historical action and the ancestral past, and on genealogy as documented in both glyphic and pictorial records of descent through lines artificially extended to include both legendary (i.e., the remote, but historical past) and divine (i.e., mythological and supernatural) forebears.

Our records of the period in which this second development occurred are, at present, sketchy. We know that some of the dynamic Late Preclassic centers, such as Mirador and Cerros, collapsed, but where we have continuous occupation through the interface period (50 B.C. to A.D. 293), such as at Tikal, Uaxactun, Lamanai, and Colha, we have no architectural or stela sculpture to document the continuities and transformations in the symbol system. The Hauberg stela becomes particularly important because it dates from exactly this period. What then can we say about the institution of rulership, about the rituals supporting its existence, and about the methods of its members to document it in publicly verifiable contexts?

The ruler is no longer anonymous nor is he self-effacing. He is portrayed, frozen for all to see and verify, in the midst of a ritual action, and in at least so far as the vision he induced through the ritual could not have been physically manifest to those observing the ritual, he is

shown interfacing with the supernatural. The vision is physically and permanently manifested on the stela. The stela format is alien to earlier forms of public art. Architectural sculpture as found in the post-threshold Late Preclassic levels at Tikal, Cerros, El Mirador, Lamanai, etc., provides a framework and stage front for ritual activity; it is a reification of the cosmology and religious reality of ritual, but the ritual is historically ephemeral. The Hauberg makes minimal reference to physical context and cosmology as place; rather it fixes the act and consequences of ritual in time and space. It transforms temporally bound ritual action into permanently verifiable historical record that validates ritual as a continuing reality. It fixes past ritual into a permanent present. The stela of the Classic period combines both goals of Late Preclassic formats. It portrays the ruler frozen in ritual action, but linked to the cosmology of architectural sculpture through costume, and, most importantly, through the manipulation of the context of human activity as cosmological framework. Living rulers are shown flanked by dead ancestors; they stand on earth or underworld registers; they stand under registers marked as the arc of heaven; and they wear in their uniforms or hold in their hands objects of power and status that are symbols derived directly from those cosmological environments. The stela is rare in the Late Preclassic archaeological record from the lowlands, so it may well have been borrowed from neighboring highlands peoples who had long used it as a major art form; by the Classic it had joined architectural sculpture as the major media of Classic Maya public art. Its advantage is that it can record narrative action and cosmological framework as a unified image.

The Hauberg iconography further verifies the focal importance of personal bloodletting and sacrifice as a major responsibility of the Maya elite and as a method of reinforcing social reality for the entire society. Late Classic presentations of this theme suggest that the Maya defined this bloodletting ritual as the critical act that insured the continued existence of the universe in its human and supernatural manifestation. Stuart (1982) has shown that the “scattering” rite was thought literally to give “birth” to the gods; in other words, their physical being was generated through the sacrifice of the blood of the king, and this act was repeated at least every hotun. Two rituals are recorded on the Hauberg – auto-sacrifice and accession, but of the two, the interface with the supernatural as symbolized by the serpent and generated by bloodletting is the rite that required the permanent verification through narrative sculpture. We must assume that the ruler Bac-T’ul lived in a political reality that made his public act of sacrifice more important than the event of his becoming king. We are left with little choice but to recognize auto-sacrifice and vision quest as a central rite of the Maya elite, one that supported the social order in which they lived and indeed that insured the continued existence of existence itself.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Justeson (1982) has worked with the Hauberg date based on discussions between himself, Lounsbury, Mathews, Stuart, and Schele in July, 1982. Using the 8.8.0.7.0 date, he has suggested that the 17C notation possibly “functions as part of some computational system for predicting eclipse-possible dates . . . . The initial date of the Seattle monument was on or within a few days of an eclipse station, depending on just which correlation constant in the 584290 – 584286 range relates this date to the Christian chronology. Another eclipse station had taken place 17 lunar months earlier, with an annular eclipse on May 23, A.D. 198; . . . this eclipse was not visible in Mesoamerica.” Justeson’s suggestion about the 17C may or may not be supported in the future, but his data adds information favoring the 8.8.0.7.0 3 Ahau 13 Xul placement of the Hauberg date.

<sup>2</sup> All Christian dates are given in the Julian Calendar using the 584285 number of the original GMT correlation. I choose to use this correlation constant because of overwhelming historical and ethnological evidence accumulated by Floyd Lounsbury (personal communication 1982) and based on the new astronomical correspondences generated by this correlation. Lounsbury (1982) has demonstrated a widely distributed ritual-war complex stimulated by stations in the Venus and Jupiter year, and the dates associated with these rites are now connected to observed astronomical events, not predictive ones. In other words, this new data has established a network of historical events associated with astronomical alignments, which because they were observed phenomena can be checked against modern astronomical data. I have personally generated test situations in which I have predicted where astronomically related dates ought to occur and with what kind of events and ritual contexts; the results of these tests have been overwhelmingly positive and I accept the 584285 correlation until equally good results are produced for other candidates.

<sup>3</sup> Kohunlich has a temple displaying a Terminal Late Preclassic or very early Early Classic version of the mask complex that is characteristic of Late Preclassic architecture at Cerros, Lamanai, El Mirador, Tikal, and Uaxactun (Freidel and Schele 1982). The style and particularly the rendering of the serpent frames on this Kohunlich building suggests a transitional dating for Kohunlich. Certainly Kohunlich and the Northeastern Peten-Northern Belizean region was extremely active during the Late Preclassic and pre-9.2.0.0.0 Classic periods.

<sup>4</sup> Copan Stela D is usually assumed to portray a woman because of the xoc belt, the long skirt, and the netted overskirt, signals usually associated with female costume. However, in analyzing the inscription on this monument, I noticed that no female name appears in the text. If we assume that female costume alone obligates an identification of the portrayed person as female, then it must be also assumed that the Maya would mark a female monument with an inscription that only names a male while making no reference to the pictured female. I suspect that the Maya would not have allowed such ambiguity to exist on a public monument; I must, therefore, work from the premise that the personal identification recorded in the inscription – 18 Rabbit – takes precedence over costume. The figure is male and is the contemporary ruler dressed in female garb for a bloodletting ritual. This same use of female costume by males can be seen on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross at Palenque and on Stela I at Caracol (Reents, Stone, and Coffman n.d.). (See Schele 1982:320-321 for a discussion of the verbal expressions associated with this monument.)

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