

# Tikal’s “Star War” Against Naranjo

SIMON MARTIN

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

In reconstructing the political history of the Classic Maya, some of the more revealing and unequivocal data comes from records of conflict between major centres. Such antagonisms can be used to define independent political units and to determine some geographic limit to their authority. As contemporary documents they can also be compared with archaeological and other sources, to chart the development and fluctuating fortunes of individual Maya states. Moreover, when seen in a broader perspective, these engagements may yet reveal greater patterns behind the political interactions of the Classic Period.

This paper presents epigraphic evidence for a previously unrecognized military encounter between the Tikal and Naranjo polities that took place in 744 AD.<sup>1</sup> The pivotal event was a “star war” action directed against a central Naranjo location; while one of the major consequences was the capture of the Naranjo king. These events, referred to on two monuments at Tikal, are compared to the inscriptional record at Naranjo and placed within some of the wider context of this period.

Of the many notable sculptures found at Tikal, some of the more remarkable are the intricately carved wooden lintels that once spanned the doorways of several of its most important structures (Coe, Shook & Satterthwaite 1961; Jones & Satterthwaite 1982). It is indeed fortunate that the hard, termite-resistant sapodilla wood survived over a thousand years in the rainforest, since what remains is an invaluable record of Tikal’s militaristic campaigns of the Late Classic.

Four of these monuments form a distinct group, sharing an iconographic theme

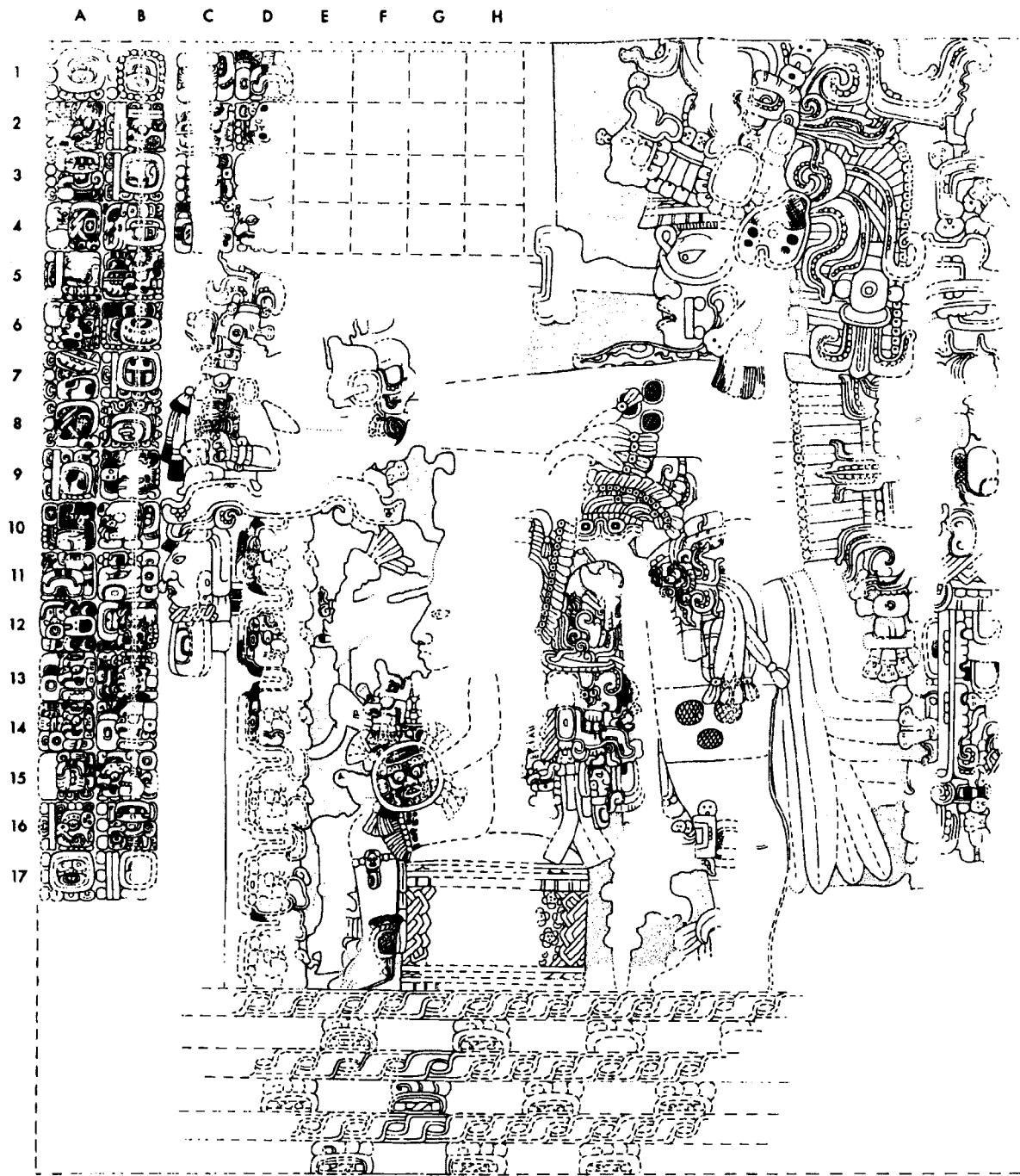
that has been characterized as that of the “giant protector.” Paired lintel scenes were once set within the sanctuary buildings of two of the site’s largest pyramid structures: Temples I and IV. These refer to the reigns of two of Tikal’s most prominent Late Classic kings: Ruler A or *Hasaw Ka’an (or Chan) K’awil* and his son and probable successor Ruler B (whose name has yet to be satisfactorily read). The three most complete examples show strong glyptic as well as iconographic similarities and describe war actions against other major polities.

To date, these adversaries have been identified as “Site Q”<sup>2</sup> (almost certainly Calakmul), on Ruler A’s Temple I Lintel 3; and the site of Yaxha on Ruler B’s Temple IV Lintel 3. No opponent is named in the short inscription of the other example from Temple I, Lintel 2, although the partial preservation of this monument means that a more substantial text may now be missing. The text and image of the remaining, unassigned monument, Temple IV Lintel 2 (fig. 1), is the initial topic I discuss, beginning with the inscription.

## Temple IV Lintel 2

This opens with the Long Count half-period ending 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ahau 3 Mol, before reaching a still uncertain event involving Ruler B at 9.15.12.11.12 6 Eb 0 Pop (B3-B6). Just one day later at 9.15.12.11.13 7 Ben 1 Pop (February 4, 744 AD), we come to an event at B8 (fig. 2a) marked by a superfixed ‘star’ sign, immediately associating it with a group of verbal events that can be termed “star-over-x” (fig. 3a-c).

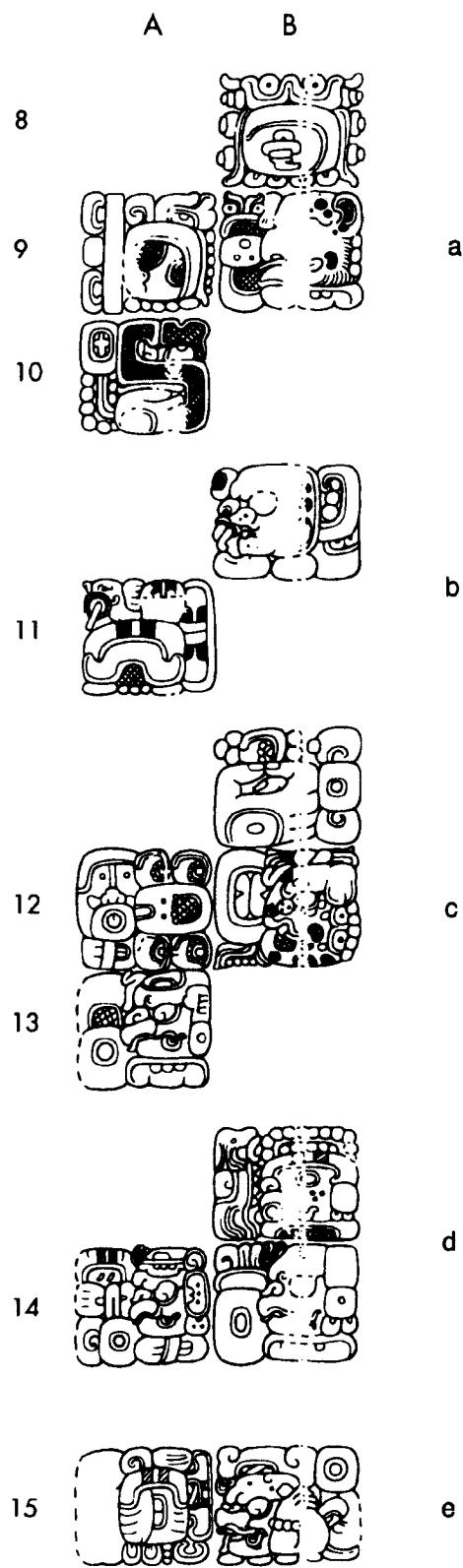
Initial work by Kelley (1977), Closs (1979) and Lounsbury (1982) established



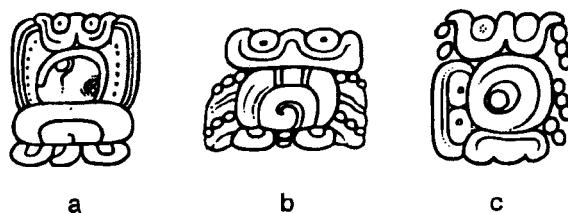
*Fig.1 Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2 (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1982).*

that these compounds frequently correspond to key points in the cycle of Venus, whilst Riese (1984a) first demonstrated that many are also linked to acts of war (over eighty-percent can now be connected to such engagements). It seems clear that the malevolent nature of Venus we see in Post-Classic sources, such as the Dresden Codex, has some application during the Classic, and

that the Maya timed certain military campaigns to coincide with celestial events. Werner Nahm has recently proposed that Lunar Cycles can be linked to those of Venus to produce many more stations at which such war events might occur (this may have implications for our Lintel 2 example, which does not correspond to a key juncture of Venus).



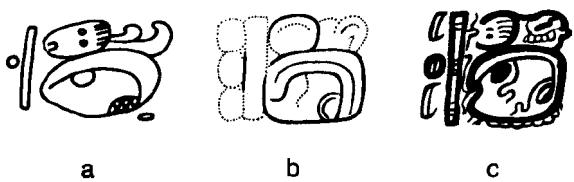
*Fig. 2(a-e) Events on the day 9.15.12.11.13 7 Ben 1 Pop; Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2, B8-B15 (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1982).*



*Fig. 3 Variants of the “star war” event: (a) “Star-earth” (drawing by Ian Graham, in Bricker 1986:66); (b) “Star-shell” (Ian Graham); (c) “Star-u-impinged-bone” (Peter Mathews, in Becquelin and Baudez 1982:1355).*

All are superfixed with the ‘star’ symbol T510b (occasionally in its full form), to which is appended a ‘stream of droplets’ that often appear to emanate from the celestial body and cascade downwards, framing the main sign fixed beneath.<sup>3</sup> Although they resemble T32 k’u(l), the droplets represent a distinct form, T325, that together with T510b constitute a single, as yet undeciphered logogram. Here on Temple IV Lintel 2, and in one other instance, they are replaced by the shell-like ‘stacked’ motif thought to represent water. The variable main sign element (the x in “star-over-x”) produces the distinctive versions of the form; the best known being “star-earth” and “star-shell” (based on T526 and T575 respectively). These and a few much less common collocations are all based on this same verbal root and, where they appear in martial contexts, can be collectively termed “star war” events (a description coined by Schele and Freidel 1990).

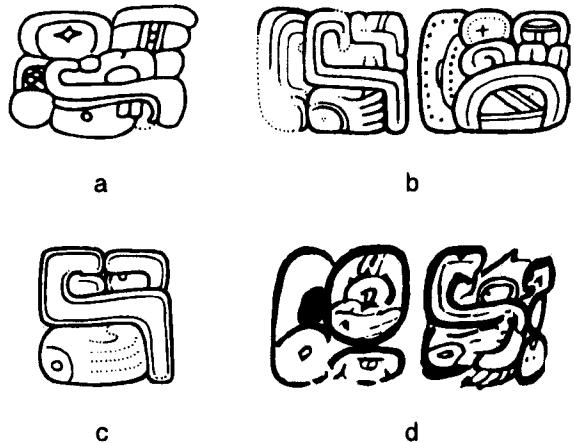
The precise morphology of this verb is an interesting problem that has yet to be fully resolved. What seems clear is that the various main signs can have differing grammatical and structural functions: ranging from components of verbal inflection; to nouns both in simple conflations with the verb; and those suggesting a greater degree of incorporation. The distribution of these forms is not random, but falls into a predominant pattern; with the major variants, in most cases, corresponding to the particular type of subject under discussion.<sup>4</sup>



*Fig. 4* The “6-Earth-Place” location associated with Naranjo; (a) Naranjo Altar 1, H4 (Graham 1978:103); (b) Naranjo Stela 22, G18 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:56); (c) The “Jauney Vase” from Buenavista del Cayo, Position K (drawing by the author after a photograph by Justin Kerr 1992)

The example on Lintel 2 is unique and features an especially rare main sign, one of a set Nikolai Grube and I read as **KAH** (here with a T136 **hi** phonetic complement), a Yucatec word for ‘place’ or ‘town’ (Barrera Vásquez 1980) (Grube and Martin 1992).

The subject of the defeat follows and combines the numeral six; the ‘earth’ sign T526, probably read as **KAB** in most situations; and a superfix of maize foliation, T86, read by D. Stuart (1989) as **NAL**, meaning ‘place of’. This then is a location and can be



*Fig. 5* The supernatural founder of Naranjo: (a) Naranjo Altar 1, F2 (Graham 1978:103); (b) Naranjo Stela 24, B17-C17 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:64); (c) Naranjo Stela 13, G12 (drawing by the author after Graham and Von Euw 1975:38); (d) An unprovenanced vessel in Naranjo style: Kerr No. 2358, Positions M-N (drawing by the author after a photograph by Justin Kerr 1984).

provisionally read as *Wak-kab-nal*, the ‘6-Earth-Place’.

This “6-Earth” pairing is not widely distributed, but frequently occurs in a single context at the site of Naranjo, a little over 40 kilometers distant from Tikal. It appears here on no less than seventeen occasions, in three differing forms, both on monuments and on ceramics directly linked to this centre. It is clearly a very important reference, since one version, *Yax Wak-kab-nal Winik*, ‘First or Beautiful 6-Earth-Place Person’ replaces the local Emblem Glyph and other eminent titles in the accession phrase of the Late Classic ruler “Smoking Batab” (Naranjo Stela 6, A1-B2: Graham and Von Euw 1975:23). Identical compounds to that seen at Tikal are found on two monuments and one vase text, all associated with the names of Naranjo rulers (fig. 4a-c). Whilst none of these mentions reveal its precise nature, it is nevertheless clear that it represented a particularly important locale associated with this kingdom.

Next come two compounds that confirm this information. At B9 there is a damaged bird-head that initially resembles a variant of the ‘sky’ sign, **KA’AN** or **CHAN** (with its T23 **na** complement). But examination of the published photographs (Coe, Shook and Satterthwaite 1961:fig. 24) shows traces of a ‘trident-eye’ motif, that identifies it instead as an allograph of the T571/598/599 “impinged-bone” set, one of the locative references identified by Stuart and Houston (1989). MacLeod (1991) has proposed a reading for it of **KUN**, meaning ‘seat’.<sup>5</sup> With the initial T89 **tu** sign, a conflated pronoun and preposition, this might therefore read *tu kun* or ‘at the seat of’.

The ‘owner’ of this location follows, and is named with a prefixed T36 **k’u(l)** sign, meaning ‘divine’, joined to a zoomorphic head known as the “Square-nosed Beastie” (T794/1021). This last form appears variously as the patron of the month Zip, as one of the stations in the Lunar Cycle and as

a member of the “Sky Band” where, from its appearance in the Dresden Codex, it is traditionally associated with Mars. This particular variant, identified by the hand forming its lower-jaw, a prefixed ‘zero’ or ‘completion’ sign (absent here) and the T95 sign for ‘black’ (here the cross-hatching of this head-form provides an illustrative rendition of this colour), is a supernatural figure active in the distant past, well before the current creation recognised by the Classic Maya. It takes part in such ancient events at both Copan and Palenque, but is most commonly seen at Naranjo, with no less than four separate mentions.

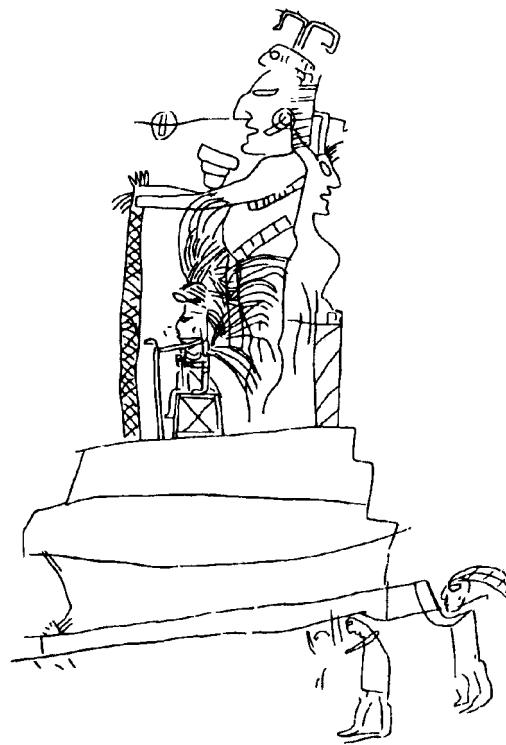
Both Naranjo Altar 1 and Stela 1 record the mythological founding of the Naranjo dynasty that began with the accession of this deity many thousands of years in the past.<sup>6</sup> The Stela 1 text, and that of Stela 24, show it bearing a full Naranjo Emblem Glyph; whilst Altar 1 and Stela 24 describe two of the later, historical rulers of the site as its 35th and 38th successors (fig. 5a-d). These last two references, together with a recently identified third (Martin 1991:28), constitute the ‘high count’ dynastic sequence seen at the site and discussed by Riese (1984b).

Whilst this figure is clearly of pan-Maya importance, it is equally clear that it had a special significance at Naranjo and was at the centre of its claims for an ancient and mystical origin. The Tikal reference indicates that other centres recognised this association and also identified it as the patron deity of the site. The name is used here to emphasize that the *Wak-kab-nal* in question is the Naranjo location of that name, and perhaps to suggest some greater supernatural component to the battle event.

This same formula is also seen at Palenque on the Tablet of the Foliated Cross (Q14-P16). Here the Palenque toponym *Lakam Ha'*, a recent identification of D. Stuart (1993), is given as being at the “impinged-bone” (T89.598var:23) of a

supernatural called *Ox Bolon Chak*. This might provide us with a clue as to the type of location *Wak-kab-nal* represents, since *Lakam Ha'* seems to name the central portion, or perhaps more likely, the whole urban area of Palenque.

The inscription continues with two phrases that have no intervening dates and so both occur on the same day as the battle. The first event (at B10) is spelt **BAK-wa-h(a)** giving *bakwah*, a verbal form apparently derived from the noun *bak*, the word for ‘captive’, as noted by Schele (1991a:2) (fig. 2b). The thing that is captured, at All, is not yet understood but appears to be a version of the same T733-based compound sometimes seen in title phrases. Despite this, it does not seem to represent a person here, but some kind of object, since a second appearance later in the text shows it as the object of a



*Fig. 6 Graffiti from Tikal Str. 5D-65, showing a palanquin similar or identical to that on Temple IV Lintel 2 carried aloft by bearers (drawing by H. Trik and M.E. Kampen, courtesy of University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1983: fig. 72).*

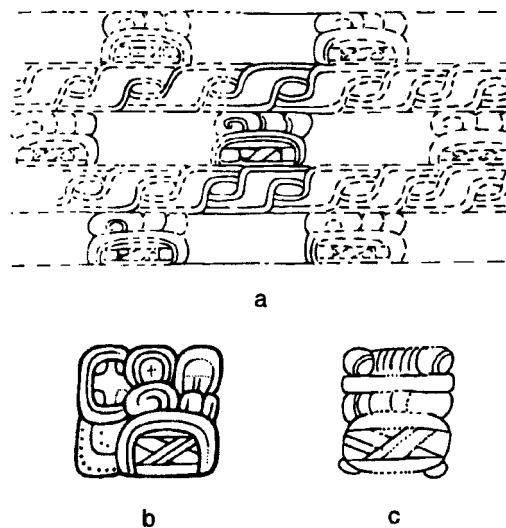
locative preposition (at D1).

This is an appropriate point to turn to the image on Lintel 2, since, as Schele (1990) has demonstrated, the next event (at B11) is closely connected to the scene illustrated both here and on the other Tikal lintels, and refers directly to the “giant protector” figure.

This theme is represented with at least ten other examples at Tikal, etched as graffiti on the interior walls of three other buildings (Trik and Kampen 1983:fig. 71, 72, 73, 81 and 82). Outside Tikal, four instances are known: profile views are to be seen on Piedras Negras Stela 10 and on an unprovenanced altar now thought to come from El Peru (“Site Q” Altar 1); whilst the frontal style is found on Uaxactun Stela 14 and Naranjo Stela 32. On each of the Tikal lintels an enthroned ruler is dwarfed by a monstrous supernatural standing at his back. In every case where the creature has arms to do so, they are outstretched over the lord to hold or touch a large staff (probably one of a pair) the ruler faces. One graffiti example shows the presence of additional struts and beams, suggesting that this arrangement forms a box-like structure enclosing the seated king.

The supernatural ‘protectors’ themselves form a relatively well-defined group, with all four known varieties represented on the Tikal lintels. These include a rearing “Water Lily Jaguar”; a composite creature dubbed the “Mosaic Monster”; and an arching “Celestial Serpent.” On Temple IV Lintel 2 the giant is a humanoid figure who bears features of the “shell-bearded” Jaguar God: a war-like aspect of GIII closely associated with Venus (Grube and Schele 1988). His staff is decorated with the stacked masks of “wits monsters” (zoomorphic mountains) and is crowned with an emergent, jaguar-pawed deity.

None of these scenes rest directly on a ground-line but are raised on a banded base which the Tikal examples show to be a three-



*Fig. 7 The T278:553 main sign of the Naranjo Emblem Glyph: (a) Detail from the palanquin platform of Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2 (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1982); (b) Naranjo Emblem Glyph (Graham 1978:79); (c) A nominal featuring the Naranjo Emblem (Schele and Freidel 1990:175).*

tiered platform complete with a frontal stairway. Jones (1987:108) first noted that the lower left and right sections of Temple IV Lintel 3 show the lashed ends of carrying-poles, whilst one graffiti example shows bearers using them to carry the entire structure shoulder-high (fig. 6). He proposed that the lintel scenes portray realistic, correct representations of ornate ‘palanquins’ used by rulers during triumphal ceremonies. We should therefore see the towering figure not as an apparition or manifested supernatural, but as a giant model or effigy and constituent part of these great litters.

A crucial detail is to be found on this basal platform. Here, repeated in a multiple pattern, is the glyptic combination T278:553, that elsewhere forms the main sign of the Naranjo Emblem Glyph and a device sometimes used as an independent toponym representing the city or its realm (fig. 7a-c).

The work of Stuart and Houston (1989) on toponyms and their associated terms has not only shed light on an important

content of Maya writing, it has added considerably to our understanding of Maya iconography. Whilst we once took all the symbolic ground-lines and zoomorphic heads seen beneath the feet of rulers as supernatural references, we now recognize most of them to be codified representations of places in the real world, specifically the geographic location at which featured events occurred.

Following this precedent we might see the Naranjo emblems as a ‘locative ground’, indicating that the scene portrayed actually took place within Naranjo territory. It is known that an earlier “star war” defeat of this kingdom led to the capture and occupation of the polity centre itself. If this were to have been repeated, triumphal ceremonies might well have taken place in the heart of the fallen capital.

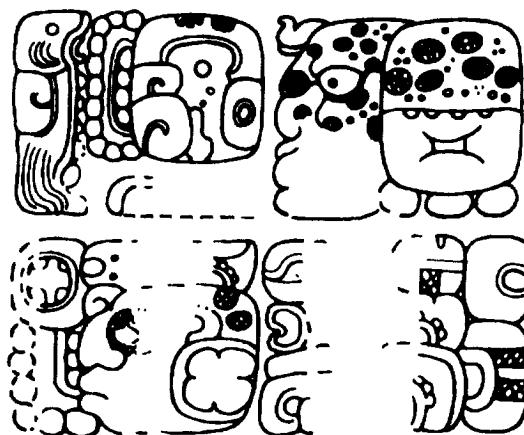
However, it may be significant that these emblems are without any of the ‘locative markers’ discerned by Stuart and Houston, and the multiple arrangement itself has no ready precedents as a toponymic reference. In keeping with the interpretation that the lintel scenes accurately depict the appearance of these palanquins, one should consider instead if the pattern is a genuine decorative feature of the platform. This reading would have the motif as marking the ownership of the structure and functioning as a heraldic device representing the Naranjo state. It may also be important that at least three stelae at Naranjo (8, 11 and 21) show rulers in the guise of the rarely personified “shell-bearded” Jaguar God and in all cases the king is bearing arms, suggesting that the giant figure itself may be an icon with special relevance to Naranjo and its military activities.

If so, this particular palanquin (Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2) would have to be a captured object, displayed as a trophy by the victorious Tikal king, who now sits on the throne of his enemy (this would not necessarily mean that the event didn’t also happen at Naranjo). It is possible, though far from

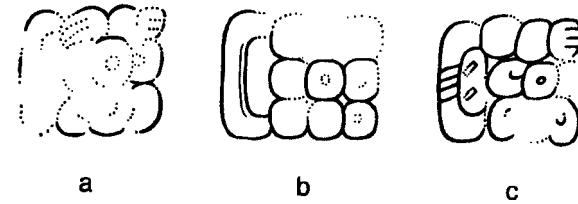
confirmed, that the undeciphered glyph at All, the captured object, is a generic reference to these structures.

The precise function of the palanquins is still hard to discern. Their portable nature is clearly important, suggesting perhaps their use in processions. It is also possible that they were carried outside the home site, to other centres,<sup>7</sup> or perhaps to the scene of a battle, where their great size and fearsome appearance could have served as the central focus or standard for an armed force. Such a use might explain how a rival palanquin comes to be captured in time of war.

Reents-Budet (1991:219) has established that the palanquin on Lintel 2’s partner, Lintel 3, has an iconographic programme strongly related to the “Holmul Dancer” cosmogram (all the seated Tikal



*Fig. 8 The u-k'ul phrase from Tikal Temple IV Lintel 3 naming a ruler of El Peru; A7-D1 (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1982).*



*Fig. 9 The Yax May(uy) nominal at Naranjo: (a) Naranjo Stela 1, C13; (b) Naranjo Stela 28, B2; (c) Naranjo Stela 18, E10 (drawing by the author after photographs in Graham and Von Euw 1975:12, 47 and Graham 1978:75).*

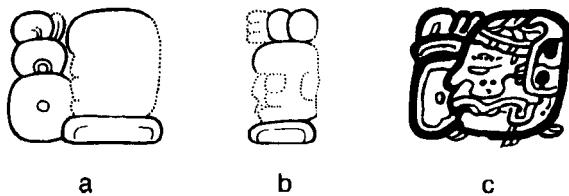


Fig. 10 The head-variant version of the “Naranjo Rulership Title”; (a) Naranjo Stela 10, A4 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:31); (b) Naranjo Stela 7, A3a (Graham and Von Euw 1975:25); (c) The “Jauney Vase” from Buena vista del Cayo, Position I (drawing by the author after a photograph by Justin Kerr 1992)

rulers are dressed in this costume). It is not yet clear in what ways, if any, the other palanquin designs relate to this complex, but the position of the Naranjo emblems on Lintel 2, at the base of the design, might be analogous to the basal ‘mountain’ motif from the Holmul backrack that Houston, Stuart and Taube (1992:502) have shown can refer to specific polities.

The verb that describes the ‘palanquin event’ is found on several other monuments, and while not all of them are directly associated with palanquin scenes, it remains likely that it has a particular role referring to these platforms and their giant effigies. The root, represented by the T174 superfix, is of uncertain reading; though prominent contenders are *kuch* and *buch* (words for ‘seat’ in Yucatec and Cholan respectively). *Kuch* (MacLeod 1993) has a number of attractions in this context, including references for ‘burden’ and ‘to carry or bring a burden’. Even more appropriate are the entries: ‘the seat of kings and lords’ and ‘dais for a throne’;<sup>8</sup> whilst another: *kuchiltah* (perhaps a nominally inflected form comparable to the most common ‘palanquin event’: **KUCH?-ta-h(a)** T174:565.181), means: ‘to take for a seat or abode’ (Barrera Vásquez 1980).

The example seen on Lintel 2 is unique and has an unusual T61 **yu** suffix, in the form **KUCH?(chi)-yu** (T174:671.61) (fig. 2c). It is clear that this cannot be a phonetic complement or constituent of the root,

it must instead form part of its verbal inflection. It may be behaving here in the manner of T126 **ya** and T17/575 **yi**, which D. Stuart (1990:218) has proposed perform a reinforcing role, ensuring the pronunciation of a final -i sound; perhaps to give *kuchi(y)* in this instance.<sup>9</sup>

Given the pattern identified on the other lintel texts, the name of the “giant protector” follows and here fills the next three glyph-blocks: **NIK-(ki)-pi-li-p(i)/K’IN-(ni)-(hi)-HIX/EK’-HUN?-na**. We can be sure that this is a supernatural being since the next term, the **u-k’u(l)-l(i)** (T204.32: 1016:24) combination at B13 (fig. 2d), reads *u-k’ul* ‘the god of’ (note the clusters of three spots that mark the giant’s arms and legs, which are not jaguar-markings but the same *k’u* motif also fixed on the cheek of the T1016 ‘God C’ glyph). If we briefly turn to Temple IV Lintel 3 we find an identical structure at A7; here the *uk’ul* compound is followed by the name of a lord bearing the Emblem Glyph of El Peru (B7-D1) (fig. 8).<sup>10</sup> This should indicate that the Lintel 2 phrase giving the “owner” of the *k’u* figure, also concerns a human character. In fact, this passage names the Naranjo king defeated by Ruler B.

The first part of the phrase is an unusual cluster of three affixes, **YAX-ma-yu** (T16:74:61) at A14a. At Naranjo a semblant of this compound is seen on three occasions, though all are in somewhat eroded contexts (fig. 9a-c). The form differs in having a doubled use of the final **yu** sign. This may represent a space-filling device rather than a genuinely doubled-sound; although, since there seems to be at least one more instance of this second word in an alternative spelling (a combination of T502:61.61 on the ‘Fort Worth Panel’), *Mayuy* rather than *May* could yet prove to be the intended reading at Naranjo. Of the two, only *May* is a word found in Mayan dictionaries where, amongst other things, it is a patronym. All three of the Naranjo examples appear in nominal con-

texts.

The next two compounds can be identified as prestigious names or titles held by Naranjo rulers. The first combines the ‘sky’ sign with the head of God B to form *Ka'an Chak*, a pairing used by most of the site’s Late Classic kings. The next resembles the T58-prefixed *Sak Hun(al)* or “Jester God” compound, but can be recognised instead as the head-variant version of what Closs dubbed the “Naranjo Rulership Title” (1984:80).<sup>11</sup> At Naranjo itself this alternative spelling appears six times, whilst directly related ceramics provide a further three

instances (fig. 10a-c). The portrait substitutes for the more usual day-name glyph T520 (Yucatec Chuen) within a ‘glyptic elbow’. The head-form is a deified monkey similar, and sometimes identical, to the well-known “monkey-scribe” character; surely the precursor of *Hun Chuen* of the Popol Vuh (the apparent ‘god-eye’ seen on Lintel 2 and elsewhere seems to be a result of erosion; well-preserved examples of this portrait show a smaller simian eye within this roundel). Complementation of a final -n consonant, T23 **na** (often T120 **ne**), might further suggest that this title reads *Sak*

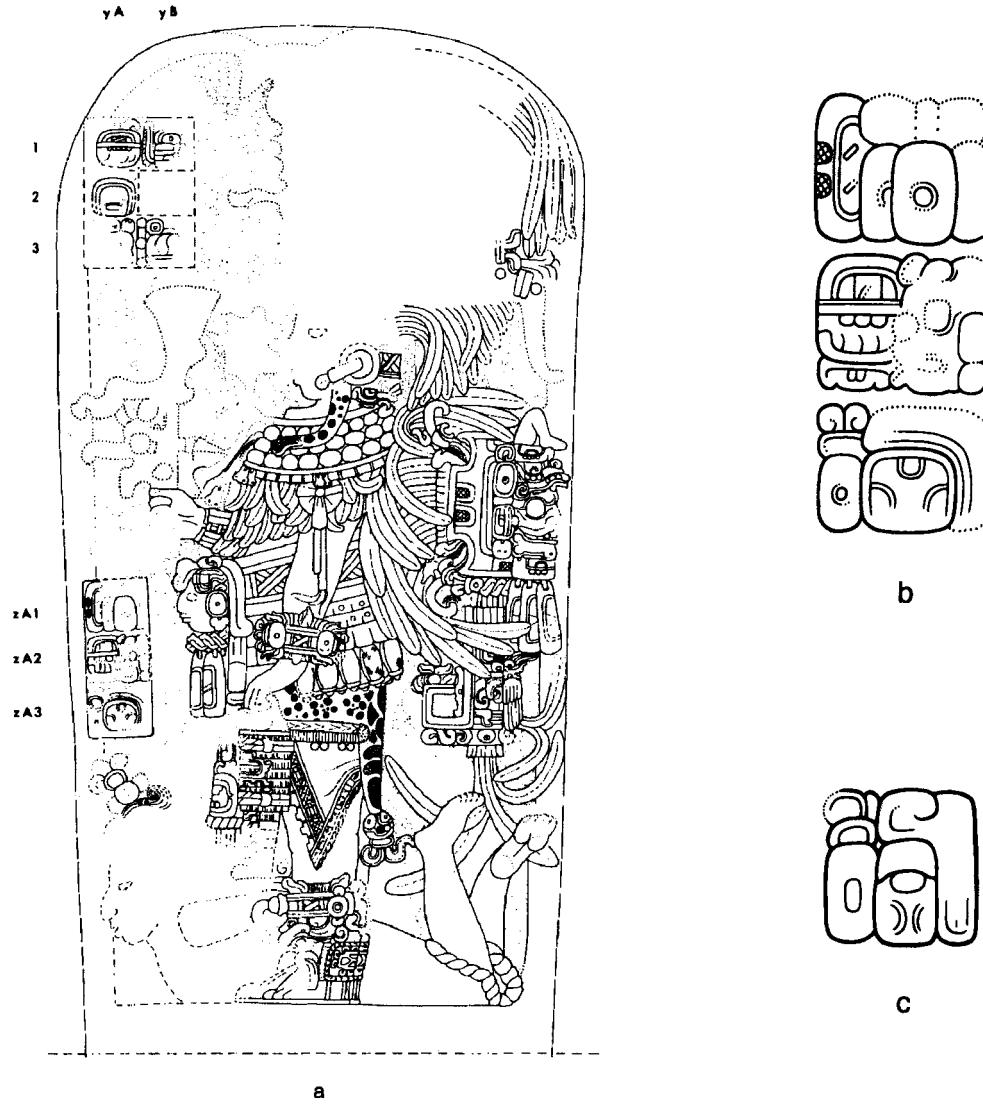


Fig. 11(a) Tikal Stela 5 (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, copyright 1982); (b) Panel zA1-3 from Tikal Stela 5 (drawing after field sketch by the author); (c) The conventional form of the “Naranjo Rulership Title” (Graham and Von Euw 1975:38).

*Chuen*, although some difficulty with this reading remains.<sup>12</sup>

This pair of epithets is only seen in association with the names of Naranjo rulers and, as its nickname suggests, the Naranjo Rulership Title alone can identify a king of the site, even when the local Emblem Glyph is absent. Given this, we can be reasonably confident that we are dealing with a true Naranjo sovereign. Although we might question whether his initial glyph is a personal name, I refer to him in this paper as *Yax May*.

Note that the opposing ruler is not referred to directly here, but only as the “owner” of the *k'u* figure involved in the ‘palanquin event’. We now have some epigraphic reason for believing that the palanquin structure can be linked to Naranjo, since not only is the platform festooned with Naranjo emblems, but it carries a giant figure (of a deity well-represented at the site) described as the “god” of its ruling king.

At first sight, the next compound (at A15) appears to feature (after a destroyed prefix) the T78:514.4 combination often seen in the names of important buildings, most particularly those of mortuary shrines or pyramids (fig. 2e). However, in this instance it has clear T136.126 **hi-(ya)** verbal suffixing, suggesting a quite different function. It would be surprising if a completely new event were to be introduced at this point, when the analogous phrase on Lintel 3 (at C2) has an agency term, T204.758[526]:126 (the *u-kahi(y)* or “*u-kab*” glyph), in this position. This names Ruler B as the protagonist of the “star war” and *bakwah* events there.

The following glyph on Lintel 2 is a lone “*Batab*” title. Work by Fahsen and Schele (1991) suggests that this well-known honorific represented the very highest authority at Tikal, and indeed, Ruler B is described later on the same monument as a “4 K'atun *Batab*. This then would appear to be an abbreviated reference to Ruler B himself, using his most elevated title.

It is clear that the A15 position would be better filled by some kind of agency term. In fact, the 178:514 component frequently occurs in the agentive construction, *yete*, conceivably based on the *e'te(l)* root in Cholan meaning ‘work’ or ‘authority’ (Schele 1991b:21). It is possible that the T4 **na** suffix here is not the word for ‘house or edifice’, as it appears to be in conventional 178:514.4 collocations, but combines with the rest of the inflection to form the verbal ending *-n-ah-i* (Bricker 1986: Table 10). Barbara MacLeod (personal communication 1992) confirms that this is a Yucatec form for derived intransitives, reintransitivised complex stems and other uncategorisables including, appropriately enough, borrowed terms. The extreme rarity, or even uniqueness, of this form in the inscriptions makes the reading necessarily tentative, but a version of this 178:514 word would seem to fit the syntactical context here very well.

The text goes on to record the second, now illegible event involving the captured object (possibly another action involving the palanquin) that takes place some three years later, with a Distance Number of 3.2.7 advancing the narrative to 9.15.15.14.0 3 Ahau 13 Uo (March 7, 747 AD). Ruler B is given his full name and titles once more. A further, also effaced event took place on the same day (at D3) and whilst some details of the following two compounds are visible, their meaning is elusive at present.

### Stela 5

Those parts of the Temple IV Lintel 2 text that survive and can be interpreted do not describe the direct involvement of the Naranjo king, nor detail the final outcome of his defeat. However, another Tikal monument, Stela 5, includes just such a reference and provides graphic evidence for his fate at the hands of his Tikal counterpart.

This, the second stela erected by Ruler B, dates to 9.15.13.0.0, just 128 days after the “star war” battle. The somewhat

damaged front face features a profile portrait of Ruler B and two blocks of text (fig. 11a).

The lower panel (zA1-3) begins with a *yax*-prefixed compound that is only moderately preserved and not instantly recognizable (fig. 11b). The second resembles the *Ka'an K'awil* nominal of Tikal, seen in the names of both Ruler B and his father. However, examination of the monument itself shows that the deity portrait has a ‘curl’ motif in its forehead, rather than the ‘smoking torch and mirror’ device of God K. Such a curl is characteristic of many God B portraits, demonstrating that this is in fact the *Ka'an Chak* pairing of Naranjo. The final glyph clearly has T520 as its main sign, enclosed by a battered but visible ‘glyphic elbow’. This, as I have mentioned, together with the initial T58 **SAK** prefix, is the conventional form of the Naranjo Rulership Title (fig. 11c). It’s therefore clear that the initial compound is *Yax May* (T16.74:61) and that this sequence is directly equivalent to that naming the Naranjo ruler on Temple IV Lintel 2 (A14-B14).

The position of the panel, close to the head of the bound captive at Ruler B’s feet, indicates that it serves as a caption naming this victim. We now know something that does not readily emerge from the Lintel 2 record, that the “star war” led to the capture of the opposing king, and probably resulted in his death through sacrifice.

### Events at Naranjo

Whilst the consequences stemming from a “star war” reverse are known to be varied, on at least three other occasions they include the seizure of defeated kings. In two of these instances we know that this was followed by a cessation of monument erection and gaps in the chronology of the losing centre. We should therefore look to Naranjo itself to see if the decisive victory claimed by Tikal finds some evidence in the inscriptional record there.

Closs, in three separate studies

(1984, 1985, and 1989), has produced by far the most detailed analysis of Naranjo’s inscriptions. Although some parts of his reconstruction can now be revised, he has provided a firm basis for understanding the political history of this polity.

Stela 18 at the site marks the end of Naranjo’s ‘middle period’ and the era of its most famous ruler, “Smoking Squirrel” (Graham and Von Euw 1975:47). Although erected some seventeen years prior to the Tikal war, it features the last date recorded at the site before this encounter, the *holahuntun-ending* of 9.14.15.0.0. The reading of its finely incised and much weathered inscription is problematic, but remaining details suggest that it deals with three characters: “Smoking Squirrel” himself, the matriarchal “Lady of Dos Pilas” and a third person, possibly the young heir to the Naranjo throne. The partial decipherment of the real name of “Smoking Squirrel” has made clear that he survived beyond the date originally proposed by Closs (1985:71-72), and appears on Stela 18 (at H2 and J2) represented with the spelling **BUTS'-ti-li-wi**, a more syllabic rendering of his usual **BUTS'-TIL-wi** name-glyph (Grube, Schele and Fahsen 1991).

The *Yax May(uy)* nominal first appears in close proximity to that of “Smoking Squirrel” (on Stela 1 and again on Stela 28) and, whilst erosion has made the context unclear, it is possible that it represents another of his names or titles. We lack any data regarding the death-date of this ruler, although we know that he lived beyond 9.14.15.13.7 and would have been 56 years of age had he survived up until the time of the Tikal war.<sup>13</sup> This would not have been his first confrontation with this enemy, since early in his reign (whilst presumably in the care of a regent) he records a successful battle against Tikal that led to the capture of one of its lords (Naranjo St. 22 at H1-H4, Graham and Von Euw 1975:56; Houston 1993:108).

However, any idea that “Smoking Squirrel” himself might have been the victim of Ruler B should be tempered by the fact that this same *Yax May(uy)* name is more clearly borne by the third character on Stela 18. This rear text (a possible later addition to the monument) may well seek to legitimize a new king at the site by detailing actions he performed under the auspices of “Smoking Squirrel” (Martin 1991:44). Given the date and general context of his appearance here, this *Yax May(uy)* would appear to be a good candidate for the hapless victim of Ruler B. Unfortunately, it is not yet certain whether this is a record of this previously unknown Naranjo ruler, or an episode from the early life of one of the polity’s later kings.

The next monument at the site, Stela 20 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:51), follows the war date by less than two and a half years, predating the final events described on the Tikal lintel. It marks the inauguration of a new ruler, whose name is spelt **BUTS’-yi-pi-(ya)** (Closs called him “Smoking New Squirrel” in 1985 and “Smoking Baktun” in 1989), at 9.15.15.3.16 (Closs 1989:252). Consistent monumental activity, however, did not resume until the reign of “Smoking Batab” (a son of “Smoking Squirrel”), who produced a flurry of five monuments at 9.17.10.0.0, including a ‘postdated’ record of his accession at 9.16.4.10.18 (Closs 1989:251).

However significant the defeat suffered by Naranjo, Stela 20 would seem to indicate that the polity succeeded in reinstating autonomous rule less than three years after the event. Nevertheless, it is also plain that Naranjo did not return to a stable pattern of monument erection and public history for a further 35 years. The next known ruler failed to produce a contemporaneous record of his own accession, waiting 26 years before commemorating the event in stone.

Whilst the exact circumstances of this difficult time for Naranjo are still unclear, the Tikal war does correspond with

a period of dynastic change and marked disturbance in the chronology of this centre. The active dynasty suggested by the Tikal record is not reflected at Naranjo itself and, if carved monuments once marked the notable dates for the period between Stelae 18 and 20, they have not survived. Whether the very truncated record following this war indicates a period of continued influence or control by Tikal is as yet uncertain. One must hope that a future investigation of this extremely important and all but unexcavated site will provide new information on these issues.

### The Wider Context

Before concluding, it is necessary to touch upon some of the wider context surrounding this confrontation. Although a thorough analysis is beyond the scope of this paper and must await lengthier treatment elsewhere, it is useful both to introduce some further relevant data and to stress a general principle: it is important to maintain a broad regional perspective in which to interpret events at individual centers.

Any single political act takes place within an historical continuum that includes both preceding, causal factors and subsequent ramifications. To examine these is to take a more expansive approach: looking beyond a single temporal plane to chart interaction through time-depth; and beyond an isolated relationship between two antagonists to view a wider geo-political landscape. This requires a regional, or even pan-regional viewpoint; one that perceives the Classic Maya world as a close-knit network of cultural and political exchange, formed from the activities of many contributing polities.

Insights into this area must largely be drawn from the inscriptional record though a conjunctive approach, one that combines epigraphic and archaeological evidence, and represents the most productive method. Notable contributions of late are those of

Culbert (1988, 1991), Schele and Freidel (1990) and, on a regional scale, Houston (1993).

To understand the Tikal-Naranjo conflict is to interpret its place within a whole cycle of wars that gripped the central area at this time, a quite disproportionate number involving Tikal. What we know of Ruler B's reign suggests that he consolidated the Late Classic revival of the site initiated by his father Ruler A, and continued a process in which significant military success overcame both earlier disasters and, as we shall see, a less than advantageous political and strategic position.

The capture of a "Site Q" lord early in his career was followed by the twin triumphs recorded on the lintels of Temple IV.<sup>14</sup> Lintel 3, the companion piece to Lintel 2, details a "star war" that took place just 191 days prior to that fought against Naranjo. Whether this action was against Yaxha, as the traditional interpretation would have it, or, as I believe, against a namesake of this site to be found within the polity of El Peru (Martin n.d.), it is plain that the Naranjo war must be seen as part of a wider military scenario, seemingly one that encompassed much of the region.

At some other sites, such major victories are followed by extensive building programmes, demonstrating that by whatever process, success in war produced some material benefit to the victor (Sharer 1978; Chase and Chase 1989). The archaeology of Tikal provides some tangible support for the epigraphic record, since the reign of Ruler B corresponds to a period of significant construction. Jones (1991:120) regards Ruler B as "the most prolific builder of his era" at the site.

Although Naranjo was clearly a very important polity in its own right, it was nevertheless one with strong ties to foreign powers that played a key role in its fortunes. For much of the Classic Period, Naranjo was linked to "Site Q" or Calakmul, a particular-

ly dominant centre which enjoyed similar relations with many large and otherwise autonomous polities right across the Maya area. There is persuasive, if not yet absolute, epigraphic evidence that Site Q can finally be identified as Calakmul, a very massive site in southern Campeche. There is good evidence that the political sphere centered on Site Q/Calakmul involved relationships of hierarchy and amounted to a form of political organization above the level defined by Emblem Glyphs (Martin 1993).

A Tikal war against Naranjo would only enhance an outline previously detected by Schele and Freidel (1990:211) and complete a near encirclement of the Tikal state with antagonistic neighbors, all of whom had clear affiliations to Site Q/Calakmul. Moreover, whilst numerous diplomatic, ritual and kinship ties link the members of the Site Q sphere, no such relationship is shared between any of these states and Tikal. If, as now seems clear, a schism ran through the political alignments of Late Classic states, then Tikal and Naranjo can be firmly positioned on opposing sides of this strategic divide. Reconstructing this wider context, the power-play between pre-eminent states, together with the composition and workings of state groupings, represents the new frontier in our understanding of the political history of the Classic Maya.

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## NOTES

1 Christian dates given in this study are in the Julian Calendar and follow the widely accepted 584285 correlation.

2 Mathews (1979) devised this interim title.

3 This paper employs the system of glyphic transcription devised by J.E.S. Thompson (1962); while glyphic transliterations follow the conventions of the *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* (G. Stuart 1988).

4 Research both by myself (Martin 1992) and Nikolai Grube and Werner Nahm has produced evidence that the major variants largely correspond to whether the subject of the event is a location (“star-shell”) or an individual (“star-earth”). Since a number of unclear instances remain, it is not yet apparent whether there is a true grammatical distinction at work here, or simply some convention of usage.

5 Whatever the value of this sign set, the ‘trident-eyed’ bird appears to have an infrequent second value, for which MacLeod (1991) has suggested a syllabic **ku**.

6 Mathews (1977) and Stuart identified these founding events. Despite a common Calendar Round position, they are linked to historical events by wildly different Distance Numbers, preventing any single placement of the date.

7 These ‘palanquin event’ phrases often have specific locations attached to them. Where these are identifiable they are foreign locales; suggestive evidence that the great portable thrones were associated with travel to other sites.

8 The Cordemex entry gives a different interpretation; “estrado, estado o puesto en que algo está” Given the surrounding context I take the “dais” meaning for “estrado” to be a probable earlier use of this word (Barrera Vásquez 1980).

9 Absent with this form is the **ti/ta** preposition that normally follows these verbs.

10 This important and largely unpublished Emblem Glyph (a single title spread over two compounds) was first identified for me by Peter Mathews during a conversation we had in 1991. Several variants, including the one seen at Tikal, are represented at El Peru and can be seen in Ian Graham’s invaluable field drawings.

11 This head-variant version was first identified by Reents-Budet (1985:155); Grube supplied the phonetic reading of the Jester God compound.

12 Naranjo Altar 1 (E10) shows this same title with a superfix of T340, identified by Grube as syllabic **ts’á**. Since “monkey-scribe” portraits seen in other contexts show **ts’á** superfixes or **ti/ta** suffixes, one reading for it must surely have been *ts’at* or *its’at*, related words for wisdom and the scribal arts (*Ah Its’at* is one of the references for *Ah Chuen* in Yucatec). It may be that T520 within a ‘glyphic elbow’ is bivalent for *chuen/ts’at*; or, alternatively, the combination may be a compound form for *ts’at chuen*.

13 With a more complete understanding of “Smoking Squirrel’s” name, we can now be sure that he was the father of “Smoking Batab” and is so described on Naranjo Stela 13 (at H7-H13). The “3 K’atun Ahaw” notation he bears there indicates that he must have survived until at least 9.14.15.13.7. The design of ‘space-fillers’ at D6, F5 and G7 on this monument demonstrate that the numeral at H12 is 3 rather than 2.

14 This captive appears on Tikal Altar 9 (personal inspection of the monument).