



The PARI Journal

A quarterly publication of the Ancient Cultures Institute
Volume XV, No.3, Winter 2015

In This Issue:

The Dedication of Tikal Temple VI: A Revised Chronology

by

Simon Martin

PAGES 1-10



A Skyband with Constellations: Revisiting the Monjas East Wing at Chichen Itza

by

Bruce Love

PAGES 11-14



In the Realm of the Witz': Animate Rivers and Rulership among the Classic Maya

by

Jeremy D. Coltman

PAGES 15-30



The Further Adventures of Merle (continued)

by

Merle Greene

Robertson

PAGES 31-32

Joel Skidmore
Editor

Marc Zender
Associate Editor

The PARI Journal
202 Edgewood Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-664-8889
journal@ancientcultures.org

Electronic version
available at:
www.precolumbia.org/
pari/journal/1503

ISSN 1531-5398

The Dedication of Tikal Temple VI: A Revised Chronology

SIMON MARTIN

University of Pennsylvania Museum

The long hieroglyphic text that adorns the back and sides of Tikal Temple VI—a building known more descriptively as the Temple of Inscriptions and more prosaically as Structure 6F-27—has some

distinctive features (Figure 1). It offers an unusually detailed statement of relations between an ancestral ruler-deity and both contemporary and deep-time local monarchs. It also has a distinctive physical



Figure 1. The rear façade of Tikal Temple VI (Structure 6F-27). Photograph by Jorge Pérez de Lara.

character since, with constituent blocks measuring as much as 85 cm across, it boasts the largest hieroglyphs in the Maya world. Due to its current state of timeworn decay it has received only limited attention, although four studies have made significant contributions (Berlin 1951; Satterthwaite and Jones 1965; Jones 1977; Stuart 2007a). To make further progress requires a re-examination of the documentary record, in terms of historical photography and field drawings, together with an effort to integrate epigraphic and archaeological evidence. The Tikal Project Archive held in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is a repository that makes such a reassessment possible.¹

The present article uses this trove of data to address the particular question of the dedication date of Temple VI and the identity of the ruler most responsible for bringing this structure into the form we see today. It proposes an alternative temporal scheme for a key section of the text dealing with the construction and outfitting of the building.

Studying the Temple VI Inscription

Heinrich Berlin published a remarkably comprehensive description of the architecture, façade inscriptions, and associated monuments of Temple VI in the year of their discovery (Berlin 1951). This included an initial sketch of the text by Antonio Tejada and Guillermo Grajeda, which was made partly from ground-level observation and partly from close inspection while suspended from ropes. Berlin proposed that the reading order began with an Initial Series on the rear face and identified the last inscribed date on the north side as 9.16.15.0.0 (766 CE), surmising correctly that this approximates the date of the text's completion (Berlin 1951:47-53, Figs. 17-20, 1953).

A more detailed understanding would emerge only after a more thorough examination by a team from the University of Pennsylvania, who erected an access scaffold in 1965. A sequence of close-up photographs in both natural and artificial light was taken by Gordon Echols. Tracings of these by Christopher Jones were checked in situ by Jones together with Linton Satterthwaite, and the amended versions formed the basis of a line rendering by William Coe (see Jones 1977:Figs. 9, 18; Miller 1986:Fig. 46b) (Figure 2). The six panels were each accorded letter designations, with Panels U and V on the south side, Panels W and X facing east on the rear, and Panels Y and Z on the north.

Satterthwaite and Jones (1965) established the core chronology of the text, which shifts from mythical—or at least legendary—time to a historical narrative spanning the Early to Late Classic. It begins in 5.0.0.0.0 (1143 BCE), advancing to 6.14.16.9.16 (456 BCE), 7.10.0.0.0 (157

BCE), and 9.4.0.0.0 (514 CE), before damage robs us of reliable or legible dates until firm ground returns in the closing passages with 9.16.14.14.17 and 9.16.15.0.0 (766 CE). Jones (1977:53) recognized that Stela 21, which was set up in front of Temple VI on 9.15.5.0.0 (736 CE), was commissioned by a king he designated Ruler B, known today as Yihk'in Chan K'awiil.² As a result this character became the leading contender for the builder of Temple VI. But the issue was complicated by the discovery of "successor titles," which pointed to an unknown monarch who held office between Ruler B/Yihk'in Chan K'awiil who was 27th in line and his son Ruler C/Yax Nuun Ahiin II who was 29th (see Riese 1984:274). Since Ruler C came to power in 768, this 28th Ruler was likely responsible for the last events recorded on Temple VI just two years earlier (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:129). Although his name is damaged and hard to reconstruct in both places it appears, the final passage on Temple VI names Yihk'in Chan K'awiil as his father, confirming that the inscription was completed by this elusive character.³

The earlier of the two 766 dates, 9.16.14.14.17, is associated with an *ochk'ahk'* or "fire-entering" ceremony that dedicated a *wayibil* "sleeping house"—a temple conceived of as the dormitory of a god that must be Temple VI itself (Houston and Stuart 1989:11-13; Stuart 1998:399-401). The god in question was called Sak Hix Muut, one of a select band of supernaturals that were in some sense viewed as ancestral rulers and carried local emblem glyphs (Martin and Grube 2000:50; Stuart 2007a; Baron 2013:173-174). David Stuart (2007a) has explored the longevity and importance of this character at Tikal in detail, describing the recurring structure of the rear text in which events are *yichonal* "overseen" by Sak Hix Muut but *uchabjiiy* "supervised" by a Tikal ruler. In essence, the purpose of the Temple VI inscription was to record important interactions between kings and their divine royal patron.

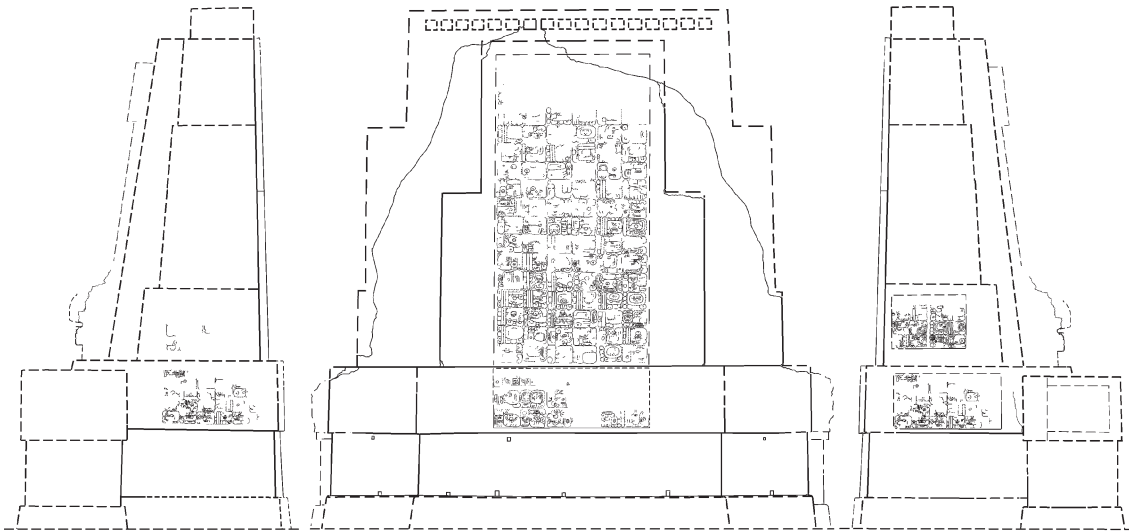
Epigraphy and Chronology of Columns E-F

There are many interesting observations to be made about the Temple VI inscription, but I will concentrate here on the construction history described in Columns

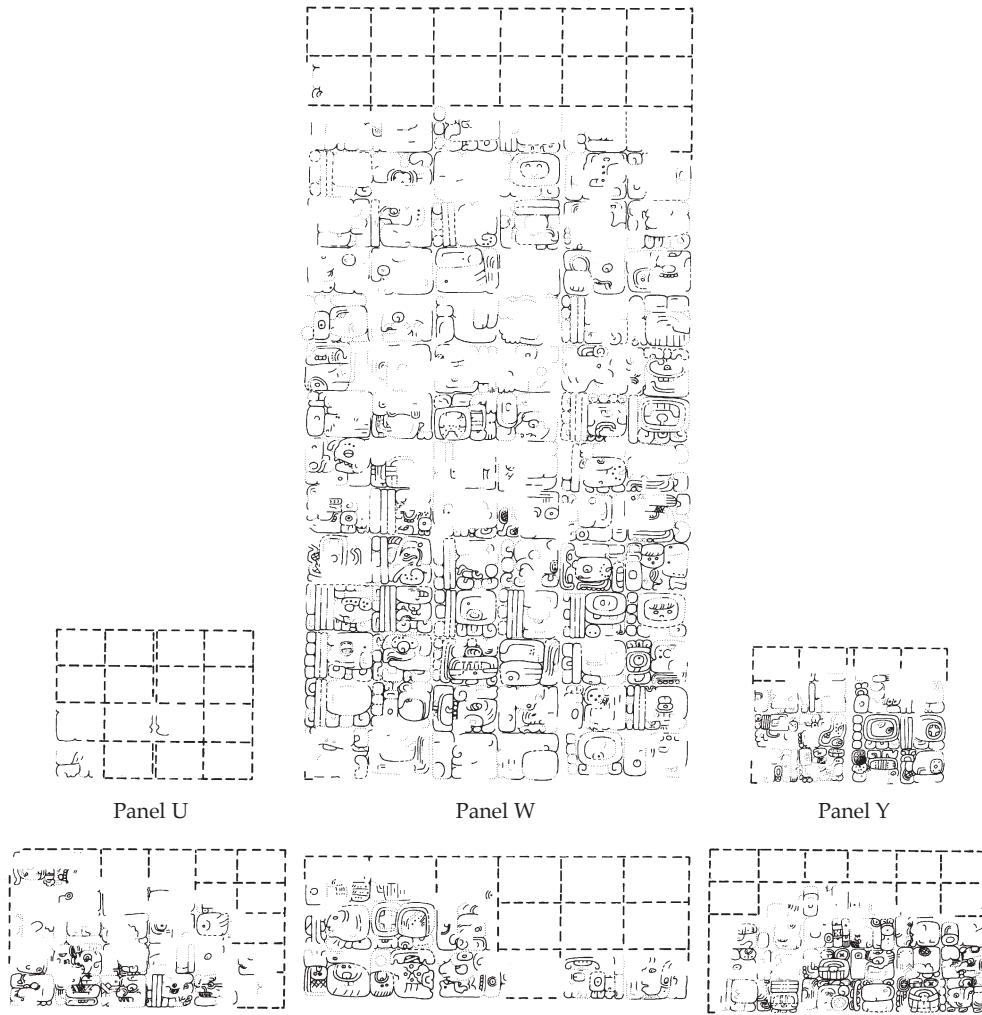
¹ My colleague Dmitri Beliaev has been collaborating with Oswaldo Gómez of IDAEH to conduct a comprehensive re-documentation of the Temple VI inscription as part of the project Atlas Epigráfico de Petén, Fase II. This important new effort has already made valuable contributions, as we will shortly see.

² The name features the word *ihk'in*, meaning "darkness" or "night," formed from the fusion of *ihk'* "black" and *k'in* "sun/day." For "black" as *ihk'* see Zender in Stone and Zender 2011:121.

³ See the summary in Harrison 1999:158-161.

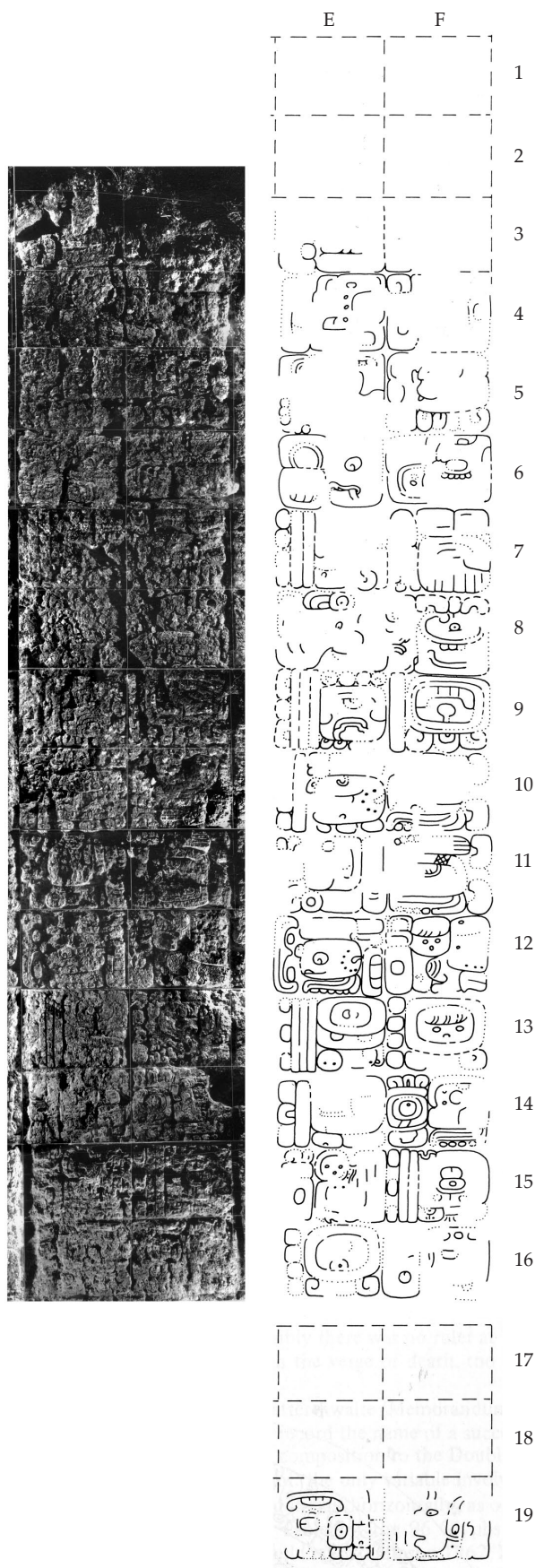


a



b

Figure 2. The Tikal Temple VI inscription: (a) distribution of hieroglyphic panels on the south, east, and north sides of the structure (drawings by Anita Zale after Stanley Loten); (b) text and panel designations (drawings by William R. Coe).



E-F of Panels W and X (Figure 3). The most important insights on this section have come from Stuart (2007a), who pointed to the remnants of **u-WAY[bi]-li** *uwayibil* “the sleeping place of” at E4 and speculated that this formed the subject of an earlier dedication phrase for Temple VI. Additionally, he noted twin examples of the verb **PAT-wa-ni** *patwaan* “is fashioned” at F10 and F11, as references to the making of items, one of them in stone, for Sak Hix Muut’s temple. Stuart also recognized the next event at F14 as **ja-tz’a-[BIH]TUUN-ni** *jatz’ bihtuun* “to strike a stone road” and suggested that it relates to the construction or dedication of the Mendez Causeway leading to Temple VI (see also Grube 2004:209). He subsequently found an entry in the Yukatek Motul Dictionary of *hadz be* “abrir camino por matorrales (to open a road through bushes)” —clear evidence that this term could describe the making of roadways (Stuart 2007b).

An examination of the photographs and field drawings supports these assessments in large measure and allows us to elaborate upon them. The highly eroded E4 is certainly consistent with *uwayibil*, with the implication that the missing F3, alone or more probably together with E3, once supplied an appropriate verb—possibly, but not necessarily, the *ochk’ahk’* term. As expected, F4 names Sak Hix Muut as the owner of the temple. Further on, one of the fashioned objects, at E12, was certainly made of stone, but the one at E11 seems to be composed of **TE’** “wood.” It is possible that they refer to parts of a cult statue. But the most consequential point from the re-analysis concerns exactly when these events took place and who ordered that they be performed.

The existing chronology of columns E and F was derived from Date E at F9-E10, which consists of 5 Cib 9 Ceh, in partnership with a connecting Distance Number of either 2.16 or 4.16 at E9. This *winal-k’in* combination counts back from Date E to an entirely destroyed Date X, which would likely have filled the blocks E2-F2. With 4.16 preferred for the calculation we reach the Calendar Round 13 Ahau 13 Yaxkin, a position appropriate to the Period Ending 9.4.13.0.0. Since the preceding Date D in the C and D columns is firmly fixed to 9.4.0.0.0—just thirteen years earlier—this reconstruction seemed highly probable. As a result, 9.4.13.0.0 became the provisional anchor from which to place all the Long Count dates in the E-F column in the following scheme (Jones 1977:53-55):⁴

⁴ The table in Jones 1977:Fig.18 contains some typographical errors in regard to these dates.

Figure 3. Tikal Temple VI, Panels W-X E1-F19: (a) photographs by Gordon Echols; (b) drawing by William R. Coe based on a field sketch by Christopher Jones.

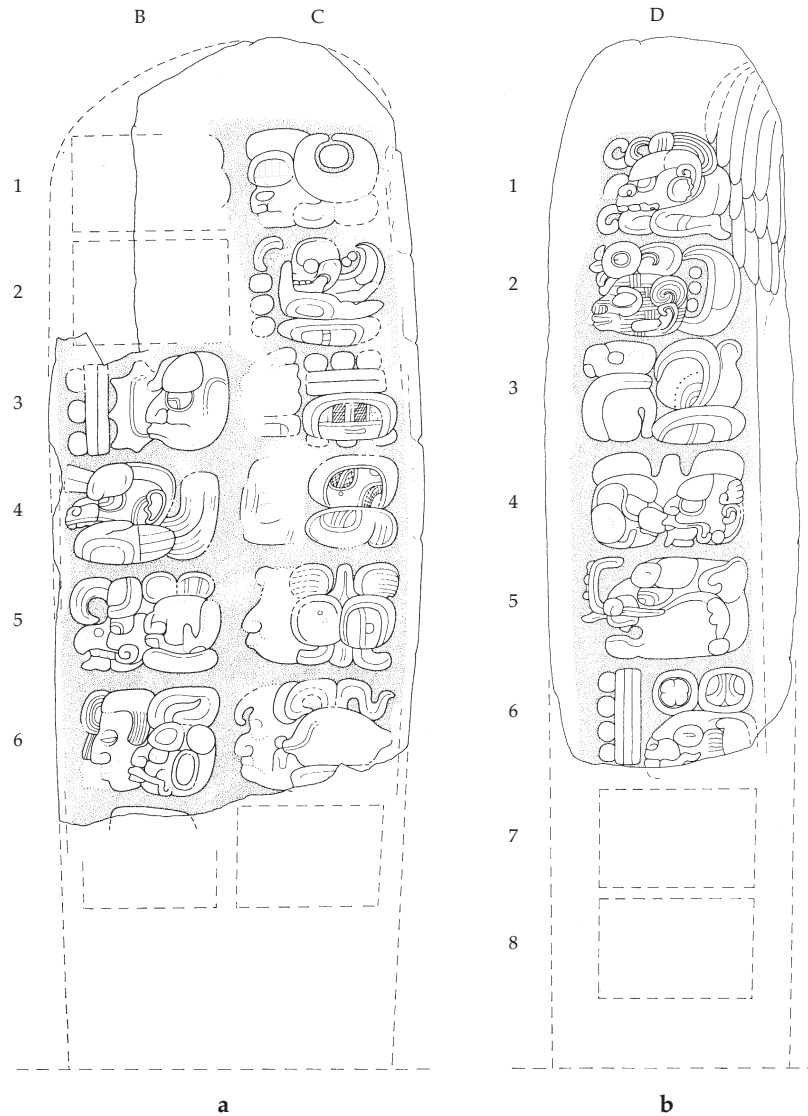


Figure 4. Tikal Stela 12: (a) rear side; (b) left side (drawings by William R. Coe).

Date X (E2?-F2?)	9.04.13.00.00	*13 *Ahau *13 *Yaxkin
	<u> *04.16 +</u>	
Date E (F9-E10)	9.04.13.04.16	5 Cib 9 Ceh
	<u> 01.18 +</u>	
Date F (F13-E14)	9.04.13.06.14	4 Ix 7 Kankin
	<u> 13 +</u>	
Date G (E16-F16)	9.04.13.07.07	4 Manik 0 Muan

The 9.4.13.0.0 date already has one record at Tikal, where it is commemorated by Stela 12 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:31-33, Figs. 17, 18). The celebrant there is the young queen known as the Lady of Tikal, who carries the female version of the high title *kaloomte'* and enacts the appropriate rites of *tzutzuyu uuxlajuunhaab* "thirteen-haab ends" and *k'altuun* "(it is) a stone-raising/presenting" (Martin 1999:5, 2003:18-21) (Figure 4a).⁵ However, the monument itself was owned by a separate male

character, another holder of the *kaloomte'* title, whose appellative is a fusion of the undeciphered name of the Stingray Paddler deity with *bahlam* "jaguar." This 19th king in the Tikal sequence is one I have previously nicknamed *Kaloomte' Bahlam* (Figure 4b). A further monument, Stela 23, tells us that that the Lady of Tikal acceded in 511, while Stela 6 adds that she presided over the 9.4.0.0.0 mark of 514. It comes as little surprise therefore that the matching Date D on Temple VI is followed by an eroded but visible reference to this young woman and, in all probability, that of her consort/co-ruler as well (Martin 2014).

If Date X corresponds to 9.4.13.0.0 then we would

⁵ Marc Zender (personal communication 2014) suggests the nominalization of *k'altuun* employed here.

expect to see the Lady of Tikal as its supervising agent once more. However, the name of the relevant ruler at E6-F6 is spelled very differently as ***yi**[IHK'IN]-**CHAN**? **K'AWIIL** (Figure 5). This is an expanded but nonetheless recognizable name for Yihk'in Chan K'awiil (Figure 6).⁶ His nominal phrase continues at E7 with *chanlajuun te'* “fourteen tree/lineage?”—a poorly understood designation borne by the same king on Stela 5 (B7)—while F7 supplies the expected Tikal emblem glyph of *k'uhul mutul ajaw*. Beyond this, at E8-F8, we find the battered remains of ***u**-**BAAH**-**hi** **u**-**CH'****AHB**-**ya**-[**AK'AB**] *ubaah uch'ahb yak'ab(il)*, a reference to mystical essences that, when possessed, express relations between rulers and gods (Stuart 2005:278; Baron 2013:172, 204). In this stand-alone context the reference likely reiterates the link between Yihk'in Chan K'awiil and the deity Sak Hix Muut he honored in building this temple.

This discrepancy between date and presiding monarch presents a significant problem for the accepted chronology.⁷ If the Calendar Rounds of this section are realigned to Long Counts within the reign of Yihk'in Chan K'awiil the following scheme emerges, all positions falling in 735:

Date X (E2?-F2?)	9.15.04.00.00	*1 *Ahau *13 *Chen
	*02.16 +	
Date E (F9-E10)	9.15.04.02.16	5 Cib 9 Ceh
	01.18 +	
Date F (F13-E14)	9.15.04.04.14	4 Ix 7 Kankin
	13 +	
Date G (E16-F16)	9.15.04.05.07	4 Manik 0 Muan

Notably, a temple dedication in this timeframe would be wholly consistent with the presence of Stela 21, the aforementioned Yihk'in Chan K'awiil monument dated to 9.15.5.0.0 in 736 that stands at the base of the Temple VI stairway (Figure 7a). This stone would appear to signal the termination of his work at this location. Appropriately enough a loose text fragment gives the name of Sak Hix Muut (Figure 7b), clear evidence that this deity was linked to the calendrical rituals recorded here.

The E-F columns move on through the “fashioning” and “road-striking” events to a passage dated 13 days after the latter that begins on Panel W and continues on Panel X. Nothing survives beyond the date until we reach two titles of rulership at E19-F19, which presumably refer to Yihk'in Chan K'awiil once again. The lost event, at E17, could mark the final completion of the complex, a fitting conclusion to the huge rear text and perhaps a more appropriate occasion for the *ochk'ahk'* event that turns buildings into sanctified and ritually active spaces.

What is perhaps most striking about this revised chronology is the speed with which the new king set about his construction project, dedicating the temple

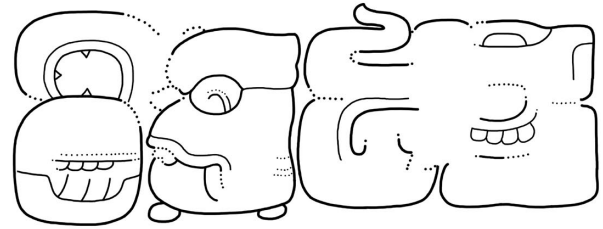
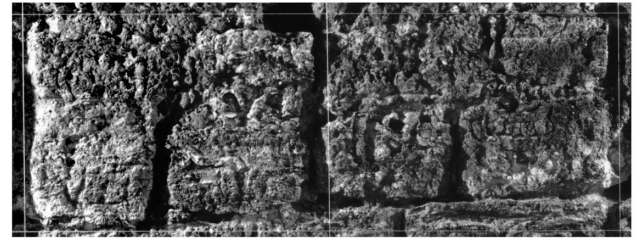


Figure 5. Yihk'in Chan K'awiil on Tikal Temple VI, Panel W E6-F6: (top) daylight photograph by Gordon Echols; (middle) nighttime photograph by Gordon Echols; (bottom) drawing by the author.

just ten or twelve *winal* after his accession on 9.15.3.6.8 (734). We do not know when his father and predecessor Jasaw Chan K'awiil died, but the lack of a carved stela to celebrate the 9.15.0.0.0 mark of 731—despite the construction of Twin-Pyramid Group O which was surely meant to host it—might well imply that the old king did not live to see this juncture and no commemorative text was commissioned as a result (Jones 1977:44-45). If there were a significant interregnum of three or more years it is not inconceivable that Yihk'in Chan K'awiil commenced

⁶ The remaining question concerns the role of the fish-like sign between *chan* and *k'awiil*. Common values for this would be **XOOK**, **CHAY**, or **ka**, although in this position only a phonetic **na** would normally be called for. That this name has greater complexity than most spellings of it is already demonstrated by a version on a polychrome vessel from Burial 196 that shows a **ya** suffix after *yihk'in*, suggesting a verbal role for this unit (Martin 2003:Note 49) (see Figure 6c).

⁷ As Dmitri Beliaev (personal communication 2014) points out, Stuart's recognition that the topic of the Date X passage is a *wayibil* already undermines the idea that it focuses on commemorating a significant Period Ending. Another frailty for the current reconstruction is the reliance on 4.16 for the Distance Number, even though the original field sketch more resembles 2.16. The latter will be preferred here, although this is not to suggest that 4.16 can be excluded as a possibility.

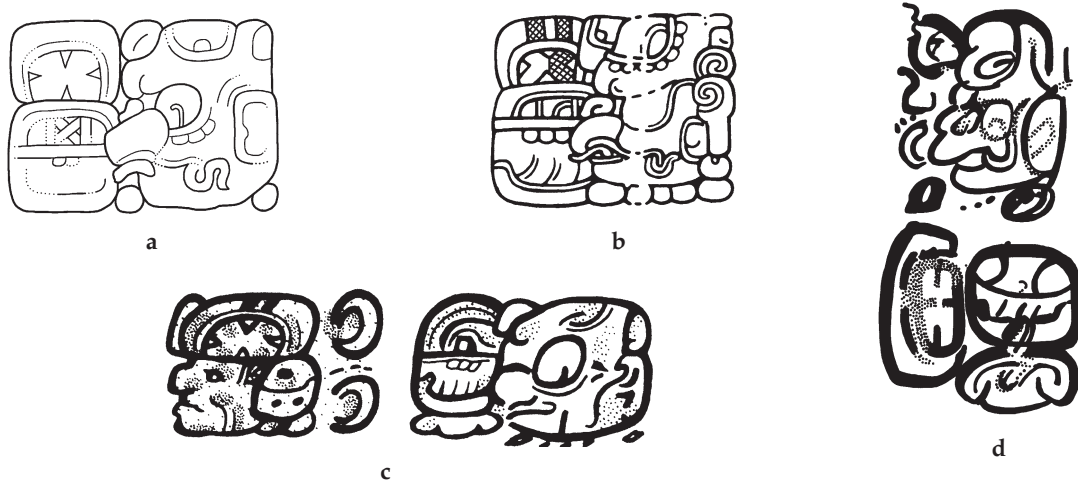


Figure 6. The name of Yihk'in Chan K'awiil: (a) Tikal Temple VI, Panel Z, F4 (drawing by the author); (b) Tikal Temple IV, Lintel 2, B5 (drawing by William R. Coe); (c) Tikal Miscellaneous Text 176 from a vessel in Burial 196 (drawing by Virginia Greene); (d) Tikal Group 5E-11, to be read in reverse order (drawing by the author after a photograph by David Stuart).

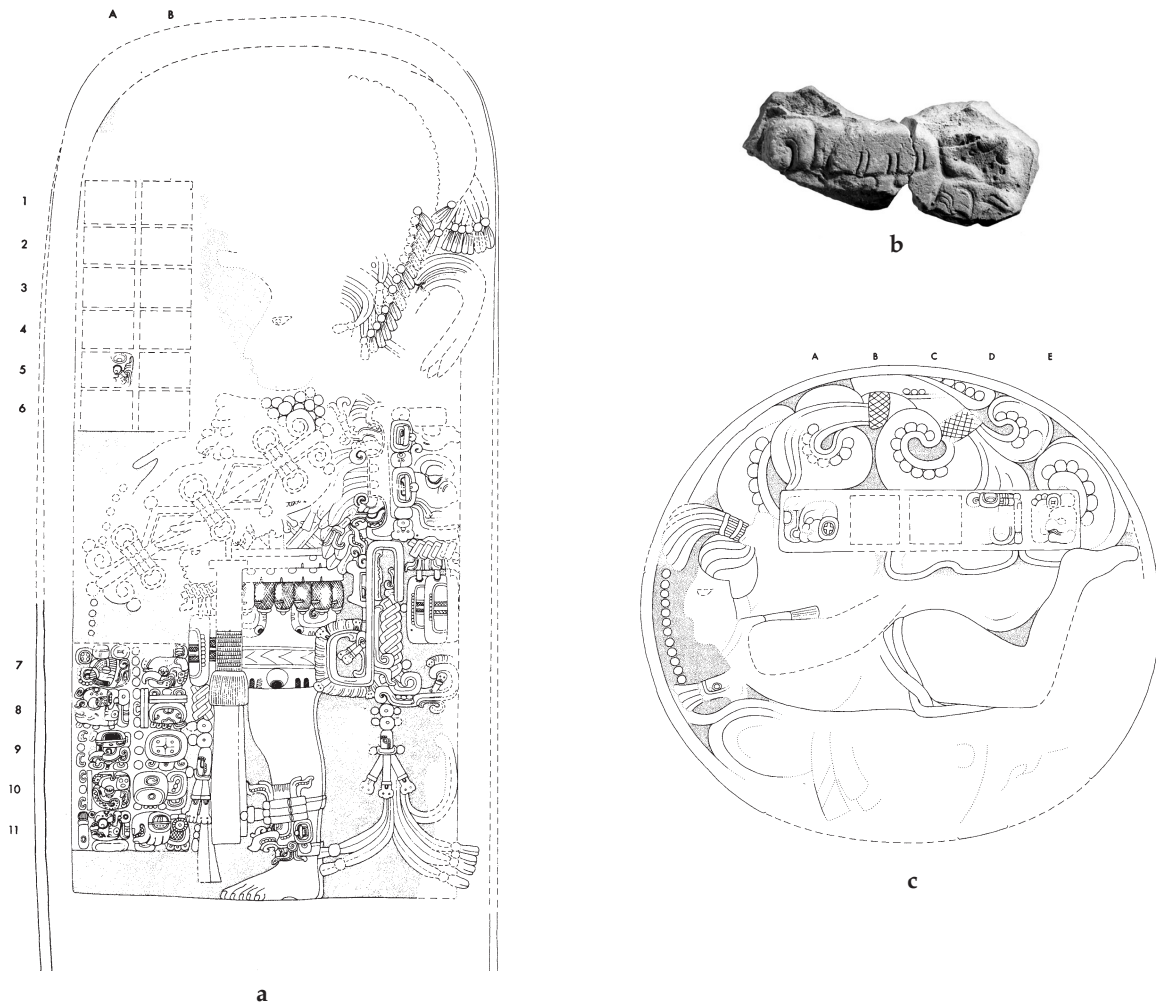


Figure 7. Monuments associated with Tikal Temple VI: (a) Tikal Stela 21; (b) Tikal Stela 21, Fragment 7; (c) Tikal Altar 9 (drawings and photograph by William R. Coe).

work on Temple VI before his official elevation to office. We tend to think of interregna as moribund periods or, if at all enduring, spells in which rival claimants struggled over the succession. However, in most monarchies a pre-designated heir assumes control immediately upon the death of his or her predecessor, thus avoiding a power vacuum, while the formal ceremonies of installation might follow months or even years afterwards.

In addition to quickly stamping his authority on the city by honoring its most important ancestral deity, a contributing motivation for building the temple could have been a military celebration. Altar 9 was set in front of Stela 21 and carries the image of a bound prisoner whose name caption features the snake-head emblem glyph of Calakmul (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:46-48) (Figure 7c). Sadly, damage to the caption's central section prevents us from knowing if this was an actual king or simply one of his nobles (Martin 2005:11-12, Fig. 9b). What little remains of the Calakmul king's name seems to be a conflation of forms used by Yuknoom Took' K'awiil (reigned 698-731+) and the general timeframe would coincide with the last years of his tenure. If we assume, as we must, that this was a victory achieved by Yihk'in Chan K'awiil it should be placed within the relatively narrow window between the death of his father and the completion of the Temple VI complex in 735-736.

Archaeology of Temple VI and the Mendez Causeway

However we ultimately understand the epigraphic evidence it needs to be correlated, as far as is now possible, with the physical remains of the temple. The forthcoming Tikal Report 23B, authored by Stanley Loten (in press), describes crucial architectural and stratigraphic data that we need to take into account. For example, excavations have shown that the basal platform on which Temple VI stands was penetrated by a cache (Problematic Deposit 170) filled with vessels from the Manik ceramic complex dating from 250 to 550 CE. This makes it all but certain that the platform was originally built to support an Early Classic structure, notionally designated 6F-27-2nd, that is encased by the pyramid we see today. Plaster floors found a meter or so beneath those of the upper building of 6F-27-1st presumably belong to this earlier edifice.

As for the main substructure and surmounting vaulted temple of 6F-27-1st, Loten notes the absence of sealing layers in any part of the project bar the division between roof and roof-comb:

Details recorded by three different investigators failed to detect any major pauses from the base level to the roof of the building. Evidence does not clearly indicate that any part below the roof-comb was completely finished and plastered prior to initiation of the next. (Loten, in press)

This would be consistent with a rapid building program since protective plaster seals, designed to prevent rain-water penetrating and destabilizing the rubble fill, normally signal distinct construction phases. The evidence is not incontrovertible; sealing layers may have been missed or removed, but what we currently know of the architectural fabric supports a single building episode.⁸

The plaster finish to the roof of 6F-27-1st necessarily poses the question of whether the roof-comb was raised after only a short pause or whether it was a substantially later addition. Interestingly, at some point the long rear room of the vaulted temple at the summit was largely closed off and packed with rubble to help support the enormous roof-comb. To Jones (in Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:48) this suggests that the great crest was added later, whereas Loten sees no such necessity, arguing that the room filling could amount to a modification made during the construction process or as a subsequent remedial measure.

Data from the stone monuments set atop the basal platform at the foot of the temple stairway help to illuminate the construction sequence. Loten notes that Altar 9 rests on the same plaster floor that abuts the main substructure, indicating that Stela 21 was cut through the same surface. If so, Yihk'in Chan K'awiil must be credited with 6F-27-1st and the question shifts to what degree he was involved with the roof-comb. In one scenario Yihk'in Chan K'awiil was responsible for 6F-27-1st with the exception of the roof-comb and its texts, which were added by his son and successor the 28th Ruler. In a second scenario Yihk'in Chan K'awiil built 6F-27-1st with its roof-comb and its rear text facing east (Panels W and X), while the 28th Ruler conducted limited renovations and added the flanking texts on the north and south sides (Panels U, V, Y, and Z).

Here it is necessary to take account of the physical characteristics of the inscription. Examination shows that both the rear and side texts were originally carved in stone but that this version was later obscured by another modeled in a thick layer of stucco. Earlier scholars believed that the former consisted only of "general outlines" (Berlin 1951:48; Satterthwaite and Jones 1965:2).⁹ But where lumps of plaster have fallen away they reveal fully formed stone glyphs beneath, a particular finding of the Atlas Epigráfico project (Dmitri Beliaev, personal communication 2014). Where both iterations can be

⁸ For a similar single project see Baron 2013:352-353.

⁹ "As noted by Berlin, the glyphs were first blocked out by incising on the stone blocks of masonry, and then in effect re-executed in stucco. Sometimes a line was seen partly in stucco and partly on stone, where stucco had peeled away. No attempt was made to record these distinctions in specific cases, even where the 2 parts of a line did not register precisely. We were on the lookout for incising on the stone through a previously applied coat of plain plaster, with negative results, concluding that the glyph-carving was part of the original plan..." (Satterthwaite and Jones 1965:2).

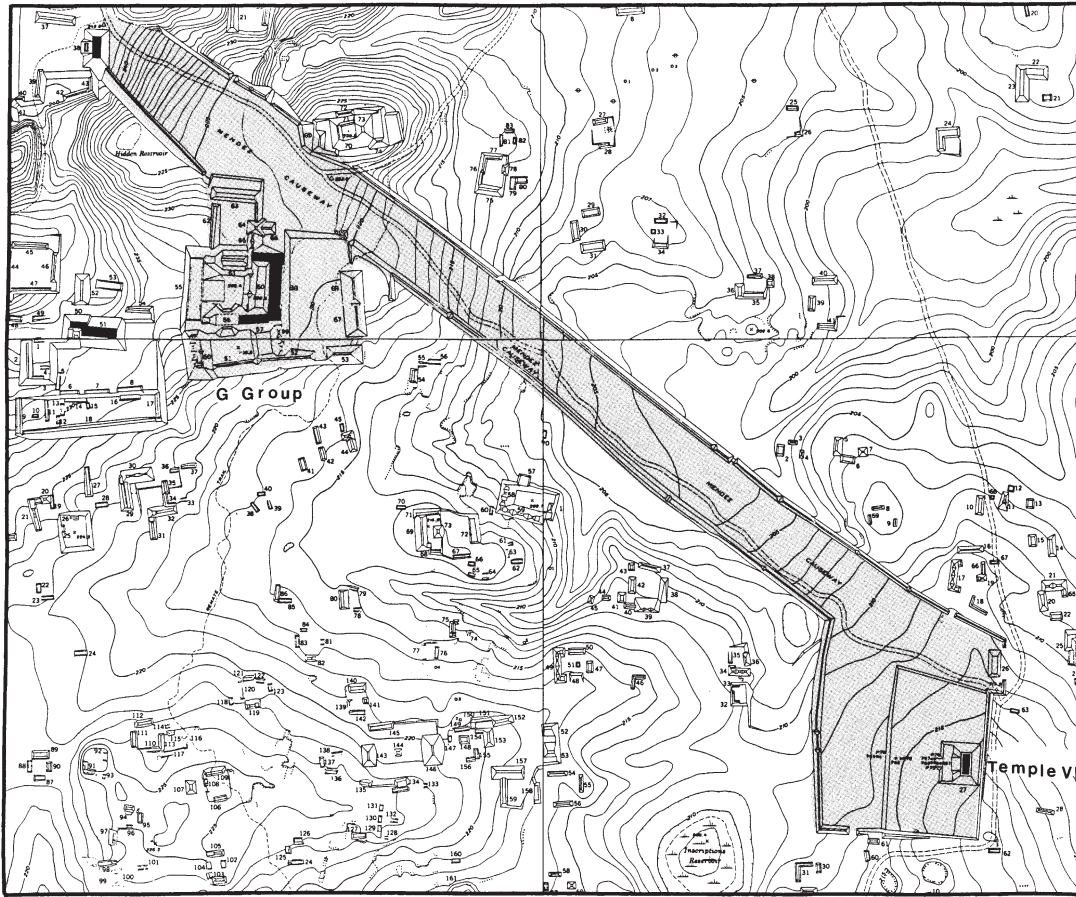


Figure 8. Tikal Temple VI and the Mendez Causeway (from Harrison 1999:Fig. 97).

clearly discerned they are all but identical, as if the purpose of the coating was renovation rather than revision.¹⁰ However, the very small number of such “mixed” cases makes it impossible to be sure if this was true of the whole inscription. Delineating lines in the stucco were drawn while the material was still wet, leaving distinctively raised ridges. This uncommon technique is apparent on both the rear and side texts, and is, if not definitive, then highly suggestive evidence that all the stucco was added in a single effort.

Finally, we must consider the Mendez causeway that extends from the ceremonial core of the site past Group G and out to Temple VI (Figure 8). Investigations here, including one deep section cut close to Group G by Luis Luján in 1960, reveal that the length of causeway that heads from there to the temple complex consists of a single phase above bedrock, while its style of masonry construction provides strong evidence for a Late Classic date (Christopher Jones, personal communication 2014).¹¹ Here we appear to have another synergy between the revised chronology and the material evidence, especially if we link this to Stuart’s interpretation of the *jatz’ bihtuun* “to strike the road” phrase, which would now fall in 735 rather than 527.

Conclusion

This re-analysis of the chronology of the Tikal Temple VI inscription suggests that some of the most important passages, concerning the construction and outfitting of the temple, as well as the building of its associated causeway, should be moved from their current placements in the Early Classic to others in the Late Classic. More precisely, it argues that there is a textual account of Yihk’in Chan K’awiił’s dedication of 6F-27-1st and that it was built rather rapidly at the beginning of his reign. This expedited schedule seems to have been facilitated by building directly over a pre-existing Early Classic 6F-27-2nd. Although there is no reference to the construction of this earlier version in the text, the focus put

¹⁰ One can imagine various motivations for the stucco version, whether it was to restore a quickly eroding original or to harmonize an earlier text with a later one. It is likely that a better-preserved stone text lies beneath the often-ruinous stucco surface at least in some portions.

¹¹ William Coe (1967:87) describes two phases to the causeway close to the East Plaza, one Late Classic in date, the other perhaps built in the Early Classic (Stuart 2012). There appear, therefore, to be two distinct projects, with a shorter initial version later rebuilt and extended to reach Temple VI.

on the co-rulers of the sixth century may indicate that it was one of their projects. We know that 6F-27-1st honored an important ancestral ruler-deity and provided its cult image with a renovated home, but it also served to celebrate a military victory against Calakmul that was recorded on the carved altar at its base. The temple was later re-dedicated in the reign of Yihk'in Chan K'awii'l's son and successor the 28th king of Tikal. He must have added the side panel texts that record that ceremony and advance the timeline to 9.16.15.0.0. However, the extent to which this king remodeled other parts of the building, and the degree to which he was responsible for the initial text in stone as opposed to its remodeling in stucco, remain unclear.

Acknowledgments

My thanks go firstly to Christopher Jones for his encouragement and guidance on Tikal matters over many years and, in regard to Temple VI, his hospitality on my early visits to the Tikal Project Archive in the 1990s. I must further acknowledge the assistance of Dmitri Beliaev and his colleagues from the Atlas Epigráfico de Petén, as well as that of Marc Zender, Stephen Houston, David Stuart, and Stanley Loten for their input on aspects of this article. Also thanks to Jorge Pérez de Lara for his image of the back of Temple VI.

References

- Baron, Joanne Parsley
2013 Patrons of La Corona: Deities and Power in a Classic Maya Community. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania.
- Berlin, Heinrich
1951 El Templo de las inscripciones—VI de Tikal. *Antropología e Historia de Guatemala* 3(1):33-54.
1953 A New Temple at Tikal. *Archaeology* 6(2):82-86.
- Coe, William R.
1967 *Tikal: A Handbook of the Ancient Maya Ruins*. The University Museum, Philadelphia.
- Grube, Nikolai
2004 La historia dinástica de Naranjo, Petén. *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie* 24:197-213.
- Harrison, Peter D.
1999 *The Lords of Tikal: Rulers of an Ancient Maya City*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Houston, Stephen D., and David Stuart
1989 The Way Glyph: Evidence for “Co-essences” among the Classic Maya. *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 30. Center for Maya Research, Washington D.C.
- Jones, Christopher
1977 Inauguration Dates of Three Late Classic Rulers of Tikal, Guatemala. *American Antiquity* 42:28-60.
- Jones, Christopher, and Linton Satterthwaite
1982 *The Monuments and Inscriptions of Tikal: The Carved Monuments*. Tikal Report 33, Part A. Monograph 44. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Loten, Stanley
In press Tikal Report 23, Part B. University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Martin, Simon
1999 The Queen of Middle Classic Tikal. In *Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute Newsletter* 27:4-5. Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, San Francisco.
2003 In Line of the Founder: A View of Dynastic Politics at Tikal. In *Tikal: Dynasties, Foreigners, and Affairs of State*, edited by Jeremy A. Sabloff, pp. 3-45. School of American Research Advanced Seminar Series. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
2005 Of Snakes and Bats: Shifting Identities at Calakmul. *The PARI Journal* 6(2):5-15.
2014 Early Classic Co-Rulers on Tikal Temple VI. *Maya Decipherment*: decipherment.wordpress.com/2014/11/22/early-classic-co-rulers-on-tikal-temple-vi/.
- Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube
2000 *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Miller, Arthur G.
1986 *Maya Rulers of Time: A Study of Architectural Sculpture at Tikal, Guatemala*. The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Riese, Berthold
1984 Hel Hieroglyphs. In *Phoneticism in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, edited by John S. Justeson and Lyle Campbell, pp. 263-286. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University of New York, Albany.
- Satterthwaite, Linton, and Christopher Jones
1965 Memoranda on the Text of Structure 6F-27 at Tikal (“Temple of the Inscriptions,” “Temple VI”). Unpublished manuscript in the Tikal Project Archive, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia.
- Stone, Andrea, and Marc Zender
2011 *Reading Maya Art*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Stuart, David
1998 “Fire Enters His House”: Architecture and Ritual in Classic Maya Texts. In *Function and Meaning in Classic Maya Architecture*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, pp. 373-425. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C.
2005 Ideology and Classic Maya Kingship. In *A Catalyst for Ideas: Anthropological Archaeology and the Legacy of Douglas W. Schwartz*, edited by Vernon L. Scarborough, pp. 257-285. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
2007a “White Owl Jaguar”: A Tikal Royal Ancestor. *Maya Decipherment*: decipherment.wordpress.com/2007/11/04/white-owl-jaguar-a-tikal-royal-ancestor/.
2007b “Hit the Road.” *Maya Decipherment*: decipherment.wordpress.com/2007/12/07/hit-the-road/.
2012 Dating Tikal’s Mendez Causeway. *Maya Decipherment*: decipherment.wordpress.com/2012/02/16/dating-tikals-mendez-causeway/.

A Skyband with Constellations: Revisiting the Monjas East Wing at Chichen Itza

BRUCE LOVE

An 1875 photograph by Augustus Le Plongeon of the East Wing of the Monjas at Chichen Itza has prompted me to write this note about the so-called zodiac appearing there. In 2009, at George and Melinda Stuart's Boundary End Archaeology Research Center, while going through several boxes of Le Plongeon materials collected by Lawrence Desmond,¹ I came across black-and-white prints of scenes from Chichen Itza, one of which shows the eastward-facing façade of the

East Wing of the Monjas building (Figure 1). Desmond informs me (personal communication, 2014) that it was probably taken in 1875. As such it may be the earliest extant photograph showing the details of that famous

¹ The Lawrence G. Desmond Collection of Augustus and Alice Dixon Le Plongeon Photographs is now part of the The George E. Stuart Collection of Archaeological and Other Materials, 1733-2006 (Collection Number 05268), housed in The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

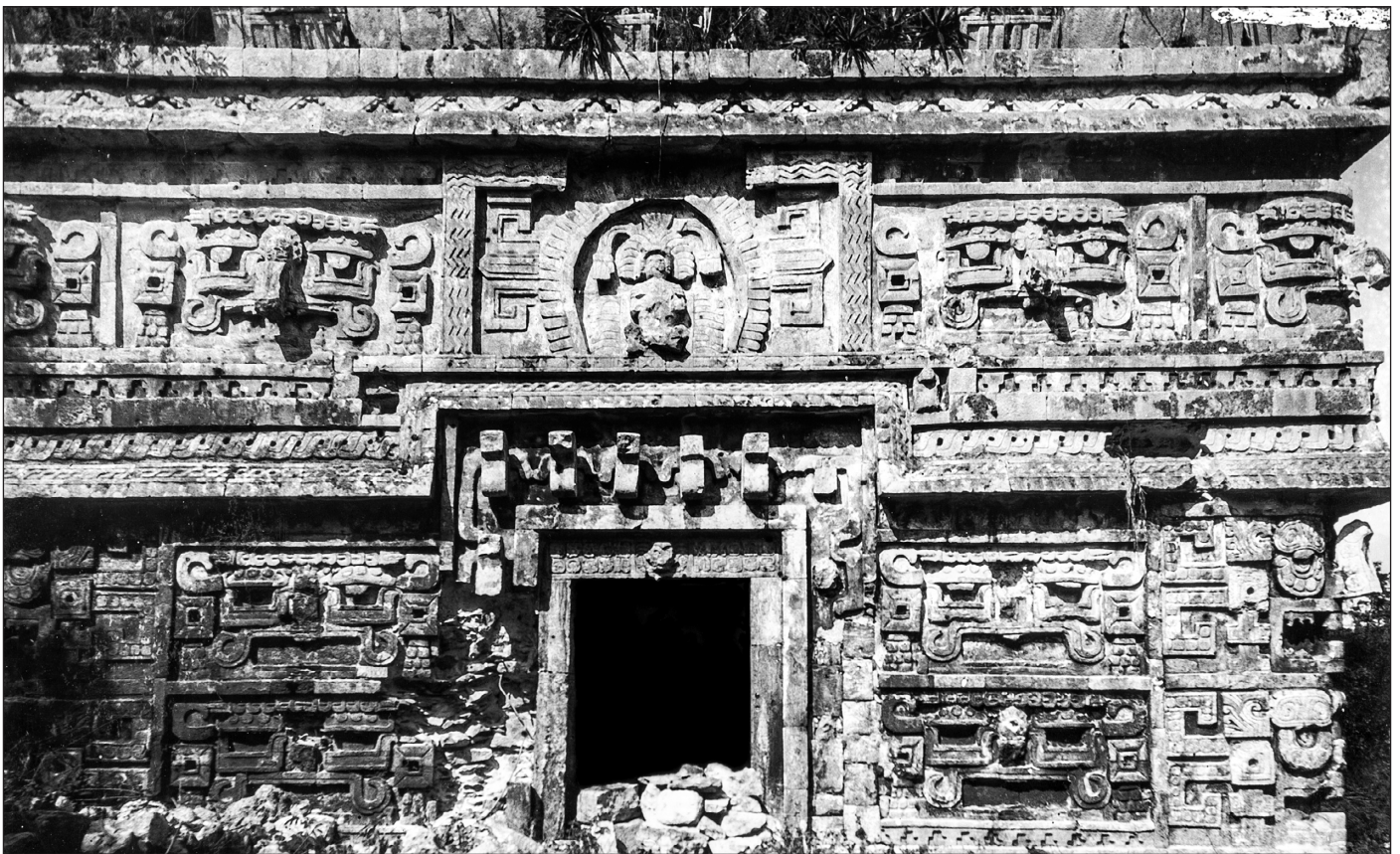


Figure 1. The east face of the East Wing of the Monjas, Chichen Itza. Photograph by Augustus Le Plongeon, probably 1875 (Lawrence Desmond, personal communication 2014), from the Lawrence G. Desmond Collection of Augustus and Alice Dixon Le Plongeon photographs. The George E. Stuart Collection of Archaeological and Other Materials, 1733-2006. Collection Number 05268. The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

façade.

A band of carved stones running across the eastern face of the building has played a significant role in the debate about the Maya zodiac, a debate that includes pages 23-24 of the Paris Codex. The history of zodiac research, including the Monjas stones and the Paris Codex constellation pages, is summarized briefly in Love (1994:93-96) and thoroughly in Bricker and Bricker (2011:708-729).²

Since Förstemann's and Seler's time it has been shown that certain animals carved on the Monjas frieze

² I take this opportunity to restate my position that constellations in the Paris Codex are not a zodiac. The zodiac is a band or belt around the sky that is about 18 degrees wide, within which the sun, the moon, and the visible planets travel. This construct began in Mesopotamia and was later adopted by Greeks, Romans, and Europeans/Westerners. Why would the Maya necessarily develop the same kind of construct as Westerners?

As evidence against a Maya zodiac, the turtle that appears on the Paris Codex pages and in the Bonampak Murals is generally accepted to be Orion (Love 1994:97) but Orion is not in the zodiacal band, lying some distance to the south of it.

If by zodiac, one means generally animals or other beings in the sky, then yes the Maya had a zodiac. But if the word zodiac is used correctly—meaning the 18-degree-wide band around the sky that has the path of the sun (the ecliptic) as its center line—then there is no evidence in my opinion that the Maya had a zodiac. They saw animals and other beings in the sky, but those beings could be well to the north or well to the south of the ecliptic, and were not part of a zodiac.

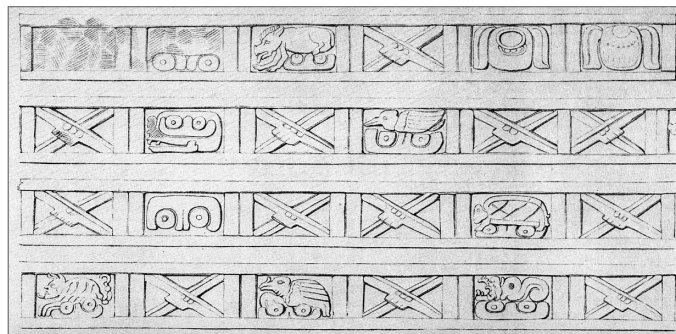


Figure 2. Annie Hunter's drawings of the Monjas skyband based on photos by Maudslay (1889-1902:3:Pl. 13).

are associated with star signs and therefore probably represent constellations (Figure 2). And since at least Spinden's time it has been recognized that the Paris Codex has thirteen beings suspended from the sky that also probably represent constellations (Figure 3). Researchers have long been trying to find a one-to-one correlation between the Monjas stones and the Paris Codex constellations, but such a linkage is elusive at best.

The Brickers have proposed to resolve the issue by suggesting that the stones in the Monjas frieze are a composite of reused stones from one or more other structures, and since they are not in their original order they have little value regarding the sequence or order

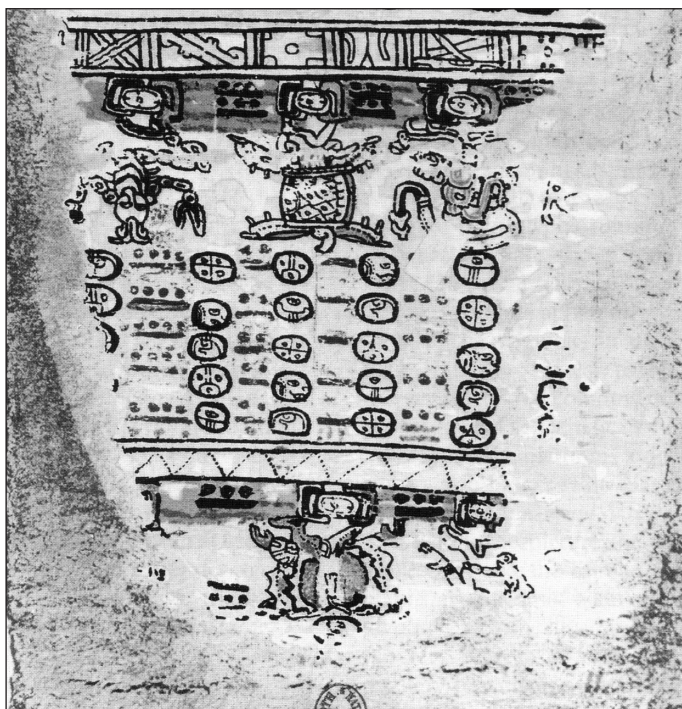
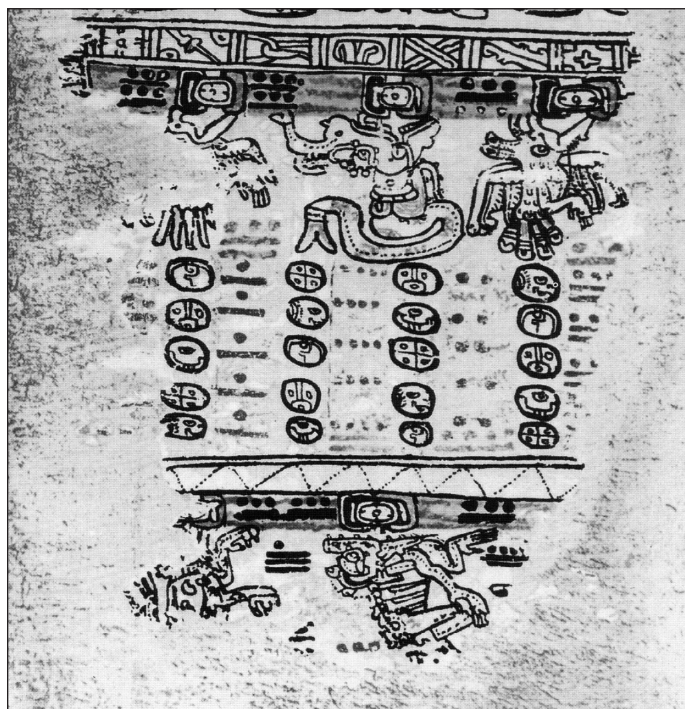


Figure 3. The Paris Codex constellation pages (pp. 23-24) from Love (1994).

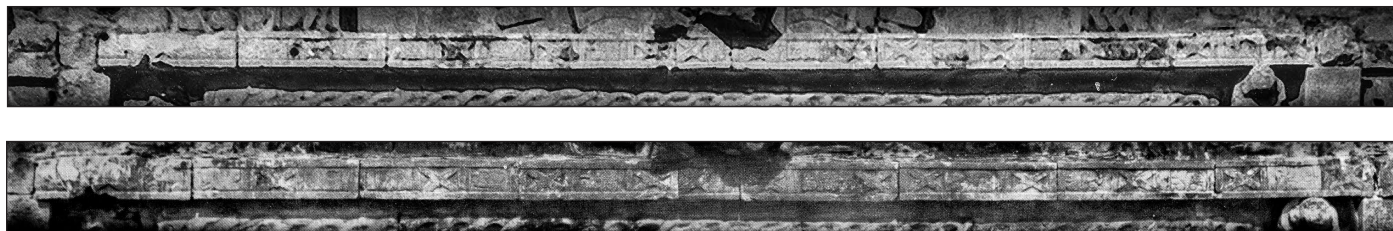


Figure 4. (a) Detail of skyband on the Monjas East Wing showing the stones to be in the same position in 1875 as they are today (photograph by Augustus Le Plongeon, 1875); (b) detail of skyband on the Monjas East Wing as it appeared in 1932-1934, with the stones unmoved since Le Plongeon's photograph in 1875 (Bolles 1977:113).

of constellations, neither confirming nor negating a relationship to the Paris Codex order (Bricker and Bricker 1992:164-166).

If the Monjas stones were borrowed or reused from other structures, when would that have taken place? The 1875 photograph by Le Plongeon shows the band of stones in exactly the same positions where Bolles found them in the early 1930s (Figure 4), during his work with the Carnegie Institution of Washington (Bolles 1977:113); and this is the same position the stones retain today.

If these stones were borrowed from one or more other structures, it would have been when the East Wing façade was first built, during the Epiclassic Period of Chichen Itza's history. It seems unlikely that the stones were rearranged by someone between the time when the East Wing façade was built and when they were photographed by Le Plongeon in 1875.

There is of course the chance that these stones were borrowed from previously existing structures by the builders themselves. This suggestion is made by Bolles (1977:125), as the Brickers point out (1992:164-166), based on irregularities of fit and lack of certain symmetry. Such reuse of stones was quite common throughout Maya history and has been clearly documented, for example, at the nearby Osario (Schmidt and Love 2009). However, the irregularities in the Monjas band of stones could also be explained as a result of less than perfect communication between the designers and the stonecutters in the workshops where the stones were carved. The façade stones were not carved in situ but were manufactured elsewhere and fitted in place by masons where coats of plaster could cover imperfections (Bolles 1977:125).

In my opinion, what we see on the East Wing of the Monjas is exactly what the builders intended the public to see, a skyband platform or throne, not a zodiac. It is a skyband of the type described by Carlson and Landis (1985:119) under the heading "Skyband Bases, Platforms, and Thrones" in their classification scheme. Skyband thrones or platforms are ubiquitous in both monumental art and ceramics (Figure 5). A skyband

platform quite reminiscent of the Monjas has been beautifully reconstructed by Merle Greene Robertson (1991: Fig. 74) from Maudslay's photographs and the scant remains of molded stucco on Palenque's Temple of the Sun (Figure 6).

Extended discussions about the order of the constellation images and whether or not they match the Paris Codex may in fact be moot in light of what we know from Carlson and Landis's thorough investigation of skybands in which they were "unable to find any consistent significance in the sequence . . . of the skyband elements" (Carlson and Landis 1985:129). The designers of the East Wing of the Monjas included constellation symbols in the skyband but we as viewers cannot presume that the sequence itself, the order of the elements vis-à-vis each other, had any particular significance. The Monjas skyband is unique in that it carries constellation symbols, but in the end it remains a skyband. What we have at Chichen Itza is a skyband with constellations, not a zodiac.

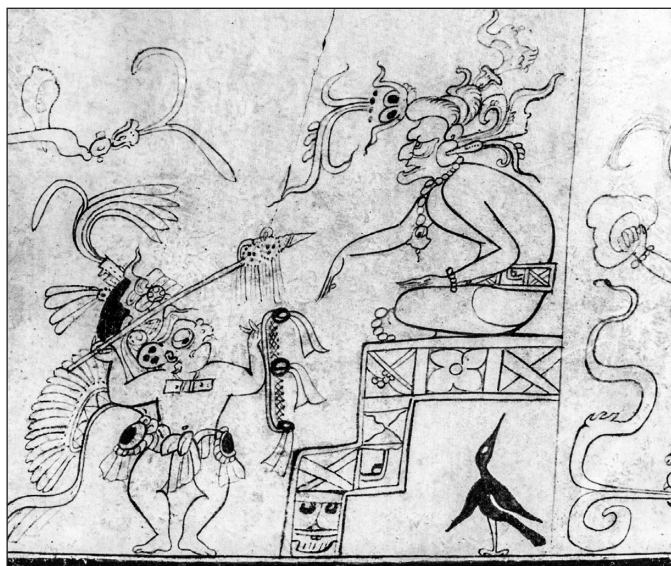


Figure 5. An example of a skyband throne on Classic-period pottery (Carlson 1988:289; Coe and Kerr 1982:107).

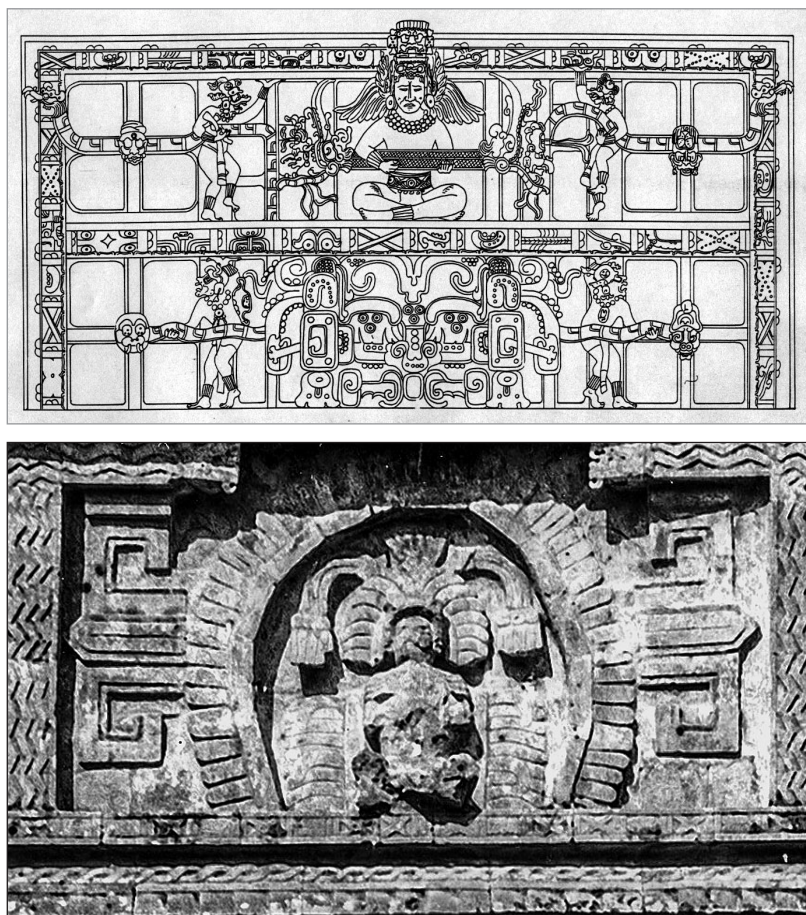


Figure 6. (top) Reconstruction drawing of skyband platform or throne, from roof comb on Temple of the Sun, Palenque, by Merle Greene Robertson (1991:Fig. 74); (bottom) detail of seated figure on Las Monjas skyband (photograph by Augustus Le Plongeon, 1875).

References

- Bolles, John
1977 *Las Monjas*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Bricker, Harvey M., and Victoria R. Bricker
1992 Zodiacal References in the Maya Codices. In *The Sky In Mayan Literature*, edited by Anthony Aveni, pp 148-183. Oxford University Press, New York.
- 2011 *Astronomy in the Maya Codices*. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
- Carlson, John B.
1988 Skyband Representations in Classic Maya Vase Painting. In *Maya Iconography*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson and Gillett G. Griffin. Princeton University Press., Princeton.
- Carlson, John B., and Linda C. Landis
1985 Bands, Bicephalic Dragons, and Other Beasts: The Skyband in Maya Art and Iconography. In *Fourth Palenque Round Table, 1980. Vol. 6*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson, pp. 115-140. Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, San Francisco.
- Coe, Michael D., and Justin Kerr
1982 *Old Gods and Young Heroes: The Pearlman Collection of Maya Ceramics*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.
- Love, Bruce
1994 *The Paris Codex: Handbook for a Maya Priest*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Maudslay, Alfred Percival
1889-1902 *Archaeology*. 5 vols. Appendix to *Biologia Centrali-Americana; or, Contributions to the Knowledge of the Fauna and Flora of Mexico and Central America*. R. H. Porter and Dulau, London.
- Robertson, Merle Greene
1991 *The Sculpture of Palenque, Volume IV: The Cross Group, the North Group, the Olvidado, and Other Pieces*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Schmidt, Peter, and Bruce Love
2009 Hieroglyphic Texts From El Osario, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán. *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 59. Boundary End Archaeology Research Center, Barnardsville, North Carolina.

In The Realm of the Witz': Animate Rivers and Rulership among the Classic Maya

JEREMY D. COLTMAN

California State University, Los Angeles

The Earth constitutes a major point of reverence for Amerindian peoples, many of whom refer to “Mother Earth” as a clear term of respect and endearment (Gill 1987; Guiteras Holmes 1961:288-289). In Mesoamerican studies, however, the general importance and significance of ‘Earth’ is often missed due to the application of western models of religion and western assumptions regarding structures of cosmology (Brady and Prufer 2005:366; Monaghan 2000:26-27). As Brady and Prufer (2005:370) note, “Maya cosmology differs radically from our own, particularly in beliefs related to Earth.” Among contemporary Nuyootecos, corporeal images are used when speaking about the Earth, which is consistent with the idea that the Earth is in fact “alive” (Monaghan 1995:98). The animate Earth—including hills, mountains, caves, springs, and other bodies of water that form features of the sacred landscape—is therefore full of supernaturals who are the controllers and personifications of natural phenomena that can in part be “explained by their resemblance, in varying degree, to the phenomena they represent, as well as by the fact that they are always present in such phenomena” (Wisdom 1952:126). A specific pantheon such as Greco-Roman models from ancient antiquity need not always apply, for ancient Mesoamericans “categorized and worshipped vital, impersonal forces of nature. These forces embodied essences that animated all (or most) things in nature...” (Houston and Stuart 1996:291). Many of these “impersonal forces of nature” are personified within the landscape itself. One such force was a watery riverine serpent whose body mimicked the undulating movement of active water. In his 1950 publication on Maya hieroglyphic writing, J. Eric S. Thompson described this creature as an aspect of the personified tun, or 360-day period:

There is another personified form of the tun, the head of a long-nosed being, of either ophidian or saurian origin, which lacks a lower jaw, indicating a connection with the earth. Often this creature wears the tun headdress, although in early texts the headdress is of the voluted form much favored in the first half of Cycle 9. In two full-figure representations of the tun, this head, with tun headdress, is attached to the body of a snake, and the same is true of the example on the Leiden plaque. This snake is also the deity of number 13... (Thompson 1950:145; original figure references omitted)

Thus began the inquiry into a major yet poorly understood ancient Maya deity. This deity would come to be known by several names, most common among them the ‘Waterlily Monster’ (Schele and Miller 1986:46), ‘Lily Pad Headdress Monster’ (Hellmuth 1987a, 1987b), ‘Celestial God of the Number 13’ (Robertson 1990), ‘Waterlily Serpent’ (Taube 1992:59), and ‘Water Serpent’ (Stuart 2007b). Perhaps the most ambitious study of this creature to date is the dissertation of Nicholas Hellmuth (1987a, 1987b), which provides a particularly detailed treatment of watery creatures in general. One can reasonably state that Hellmuth’s work on the subject has provided the point of departure for most subsequent studies relating to water symbolism among the ancient Maya. Hellmuth also looked at a number of other important creatures including the closely related ‘Tubular Headdress Monster,’ ‘Shell Wing Dragon,’ and several other piscine creatures that have yet to be identified but apparently constitute part of the same ‘underwater-world’ complex.¹

The Water Serpent has also featured in several recent discussions relating to ancient Maya conceptions of water and the sea (Bonnafox 2008; Houston and Finamore 2010; Houston and Taube 2011), although scholars still seem at odds as to how one should refer to this deity. In *The Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea* (Houston and Finamore 2010), for instance, there are entries for both Waterlily Serpent and Water Serpent: two different names for the same being. Whatever one decides to call this important watery creature, the ancient Maya

¹ Several scenes on Late Classic Maya vases depict individuals in the act of spearing supernatural fish (Quenon and Le Fort 1997; Stone and Zender 2011). While it is still difficult to ascertain the meaning of this mythic act, a number of Mixtec codices provide intriguing examples for comparison. Page 4 of the Selden Roll depicts the spearing and decapitation of a ‘rain serpent’ while the Codex Baranda depicts a large water serpent being doused with water as an axe-wielding individual menacingly approaches (Caso 1958; Hermann Lejarazu 2010). These scenes known from Oaxaca may be Mixtec versions of a wider Mesoamerican creation myth where the universe is created by such violent acts set on an aquatic stage. For the Aztec of Late Postclassic Central Mexico, this discord is portrayed in the sacrifice of the earth deity, Tlaltecuhli, while the Classic Maya equivalent involves the decapitation of the ‘Starry Deer Crocodile’ (Stuart 2005; Taube 2010a:204-205).



Figure 1. *Witz'* as the spirit of active water and the personified tun: (a) the animate face of water; detail of K6642 (from Bonnafoux 2008:Fig. 5.14d); (b) Water Serpent within an active water band (from Hellmuth 1987a:2:Fig. 48a); (c) tun period; Leiden plaque (from Hellmuth 1987a:2:Fig. 80f); (d) Caracol Stela 20 (from Ishihara et al. 2006:Fig.5); (e) personified tun sign; Yaxchilan Lintel 48 (from Hellmuth 1987a:2:Fig. 80d); (f) Chochola style vase depicting Water Serpent (from Robertson 1990:Fig. 6)

themselves seem to have known it as *witz'* (see Stuart 2007b), a word that in many Mayan languages emphasizes animate and splashing water, perhaps indicative of the spray or splash of a waterfall and the coursing movement of rivers and streams.²

Like the imagery of other Maya gods, Water Serpent symbolism is complex and encompasses multifarious functions and characteristics, perhaps the most important of which is the embodiment of animate and active terrestrial waters, including springs, pools, cenotes, lakes, and rivers (Figures 1a-b). In Classic Maya epigraphy, it is the personified form of the 360-day tun period and the head variant of the numeral 13 (Ishihara et al. 2006; Robertson 1990; Taube 1992:56-59; Thompson 1950:145) (Figures 1c-e). Early examples of the Water Serpent as the tun period appear on Caracol Stela 20, the Leiden plaque, Yaxchilan Lintel 48, and Copan Stela 63 (Figures 1c-e). In Classic Maya iconography, the Water Serpent can also appear as a plumed being, its sinuous body representing an undulating stream of animate water (Figure 2).³ The face is typically composed of a downward-curving bird beak and a bound headdress that frequently depicts a fish nibbling on a waterlily flower (Hellmuth 1987a:142-143) (Figure 1f). Some depictions of the serpent's body emphasize illustrious green quetzal plumage and sectioned conch or spondylus shells (Figure 2), denoting it as a being of wind and breath, similar to the plumed serpents known from Classic and Postclassic Central Mexico (Taube 2001).

This study builds on recent observations by David Stuart and Karl Taube in assessing the attributes and characteristics of the ancient Maya Water Serpent, but

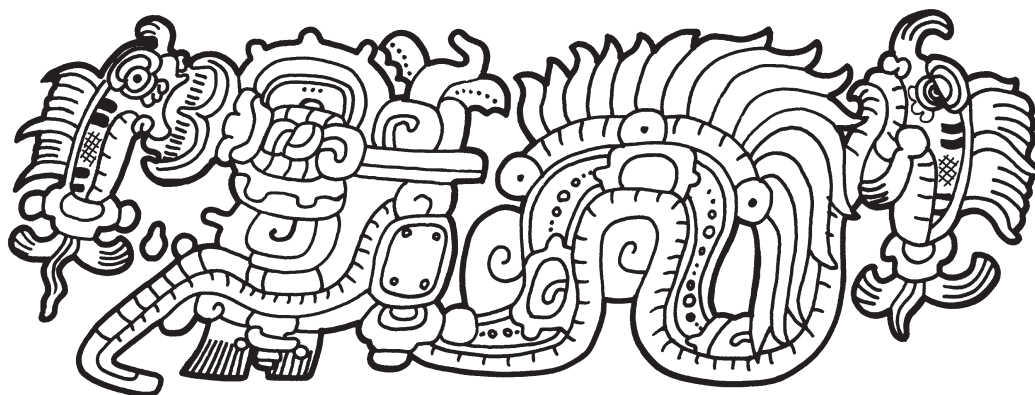
it will also explore the impersonation of this being by rulers, as well as their subordinates who frequently appeared as wind beings, sky bearers, and year bearers, and whose actions provided a political metaphor mirroring cosmic structures of authority. Better insight regarding the function and nature of this watery creature may also be gained from a comparative standpoint. Similar beings from Mesoamerica and the American Southwest are part of rich oral traditions that tell of ambiguous watery serpents that inhabit the terrestrial waters of the earth. However, before examining these political and cosmic structures of authority, a necessary first step is to examine the role of the Water Serpent in

² The full name of the Water Serpent may tentatively be read as **YAX-CHIT-ti/ta HUUN/HU'N-WITZ'?** **NAAH-CHAN**, "new/first lizard(?), one/headband active-water, first snake" (Houston and Taube 2011:31, n. 4). Part of the confusion regarding the various generic names of this being rests on the being's headdress. Hellmuth (1987b:358-359) and Taube (1992:58-59), for instance, see the waterlily pad as a main diagnostic attribute. However, the headdress with waterlily and fish can often be substituted for a large water volute (Ishihara et al. 2006). Such examples can be seen on the West Wall at San Bartolo and the Leiden Plaque (Figures 1c, 3a; see also Hellmuth 1987a:2:Fig. 25c). Furthermore, other Maya supernaturals appear with waterlily iconography designating them as inhabitants of the same aquatic locale of which the Water Serpent was clearly not the only inhabitant, although he may perhaps have been the primary one.

³ As Karl Taube has noted, the depiction of ground-level water on the West Wall at San Bartolo indicates an undulating movement such as that of a large snake (Taube et al. 2010:Figs. 7, 45a, 46). While some of these portions are lost, this may represent the sinuous body of the Water Serpent as a fast moving current.



a



b

Figure 2. The Water Serpent: (a) rollout and detail of vessel K1162 (photograph K1162 © Justin Kerr); (b) Water Serpent from K1162 (drawing by Marc Zender, from Stone and Zender 2011:140).

the natural environment.

A logical place to start is the relationship between the Water Serpent and the Maize God, arguably the most important deity in the Maya pantheon. The earliest example of this interaction comes from the Preclassic West Wall mural of the Pinturas building at San Bartolo,

Guatemala (Figure 3a), where the Water Serpent accompanies both Chahk and the Maize God in a quatrefoil cave set within the turtle earth (Taube et al. 2010:71-80). Similarly, the Late Classic 'Resurrection Plate' from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts depicts the Maize God emerging from the V-cleft cave of the turtle earth,



a



b

Figure 3. The Water Serpent and Maize God theme: (a) Maize God flanked by Chaak and Water Serpent within the turtle earth; detail of San Bartolo Pinturas Mural, West Wall (drawing by Heather Hurst); (b) Late Classic 'Resurrection Plate,' K1892; note Water Serpent emerging from rear of turtle earth; Boston Museum of Fine Arts (photograph K1892 © Justin Kerr).

accompanied by an anthropomorphic form of the Water Serpent emerging from the rear of the turtle (Figures 3b). As has elsewhere been noted, a strikingly similar scene appears on an altar at the base of Copan's Hieroglyphic stairway, again with the Water Serpent emerging from the end of the turtle (Friedel et al. 1993:326, Fig. 8.13). Karl Taube has ventured to explain these scenes as the Water Serpent providing the nourishing waters for the growth of maize (Taube et al. 2010:75-76).

Windy and Watery Subordinates

On Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, Step X, the head sajal Chak Tok Wayib, a subordinate of King Bird Jaguar IV, plays the ballgame in the guise of a duck-billed personage (Figure 4a). David Stuart has read the accompanying deity impersonation phrase as naming Ik' K'uh or "wind god" (Stuart et al. 1999:151; see also Zender 2004), an important discovery which provides evidence that the Classic Maya had a version, and perhaps even a prototype, for the duck-billed wind gods that are so well-known in Late Postclassic Central Mexico, such as the Aztec deity Ehecatl and the Mixtec god 9 Wind. The reading Ik' K'uh "Wind God" also appears on a Late Classic Maya vase (K1485), this time naming one of two duck-billed wind gods whose body is labeled with IK' "wind" signs (Figure 4b).⁴ Elsewhere, the reading appears once more in the lengthy text on the Late Classic 'Vase of the 88 Glyphs' (K1440), this time serving as potential epithets for the depictions of two old men wearing large wind jewels on their chests and the headdresses of the Water Serpent (see Lopes 2004; Taube 1992:59). To return to the vessel with the two duck-billed wind gods (Figure 4b), it has been pointed out that the second being is instead termed Polaw K'uh "Ocean/Sea God," and his body is marked with the sign POLAW "ocean/sea" instead of wind as such (Luis Lopes 2004; Stone and Zender 2011:56, 141) (Figure

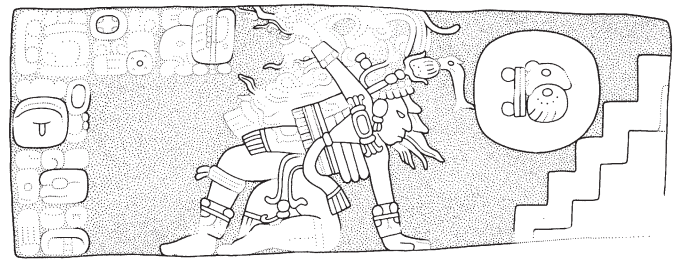
⁴These body markings also appear on a full-figure glyph from Palenque's Palace Tablet which, although not duck-billed, is nonetheless labeled as a wind god through these body markings (Houston et al. 2006:Fig. 4.13c). This particular variant of wind god is closely identified with music, sweet smelling aroma, and the ethereal breath soul (Taube 2004b:73-73). Furthermore, this wind god serves as the head variant of the numeral three and patron of the month Mac and is the Classic-period counterpart to the codical God H (see Taube 1992:56-60). There appears to be a notable distinction between this youthful and delicate embodiment of the breath soul and the duck-billed Ik' K'uh (Henderson 2013:396). Ik' K'uh "Wind Gods" appear to be naturalistic manifestations of wind. This would seem to draw a close parallel with the Central Mexican Ehecatl, who was described as the "road sweeper of the rain gods" (Sahagún 1950-1982:Book 1:3). While the "god of the personified breath soul" and the Ik' K'uh remained distinct during the Classic period, attributes may have begun to overlap during the Postclassic. For instance, in the Dresden Codex, p. 35b, Chahk is shown with the body and headdress of the Water Serpent but appears with the name glyph of God H (Taube 1992:56).

4d). The alternating **IK'** "wind" and **POLAW** "ocean/sea" glyphs are intriguing, suggesting that a wet wind, such as that from the sea or some other body of water, may have been intended in these contexts (Lopes 2004; Stone and Zender 2011:141). On Cancuen Panel 3, the ruler Tajal Chan Ahk is depicted in his quatrefoil cavity of water wearing a waterlily and fish headdress (Carter and Houston 2010:87) (Figure 4e). Two simply dressed subordinates who bear courtly titles wear the simple water lily headdress commonly found with subordinates. Indeed, their arm-gripping posture is a clear sign of their subordination (Carter and Houston 2010:87). Their markings are particularly interesting as they bear the selfsame signs for "wind" and "ocean/sea" carried by the duck-billed wind gods on K1485 (Figures 4f-g).

The duck-billed **IK'** K'uh are frequently found as a pair. Uxmal Stela 14 depicts a remarkable pair of dwarfish duck-billed wind gods who wear waterlily headdresses and are subservient to the glyphically-named Lord Chahk (Figure 5c). In Late Postclassic Central Mexico, the attendants of Tlaloc (known as *tlaloque*) were often conceived of as dwarves and included wind gods among them, known as the *ehecatontin*. Particularly noteworthy is that these two duck-billed wind dwarves on Uxmal Stela 14 stand over a cenote with two dead and bloated captives within its depths. In contemporary Yucatec thought, cenotes were terrestrial sources of the winds, which were thought to come from the sea:

The cenotes are particularly the sources of the winds. As the water makes its cycle, carried by the rain-gods from the cenotes up into the sky to fall as fertilizing rain upon the milpa, so the winds have their sources in the sea and pass up through the cenotes. Therefore, in certain ceremonies offerings are thrown into the cenotes to propitiate the winds. (Redfield 1940:118-119)

In the Bonampak Room 1 murals, a Water Serpent impersonator appears among other individuals costumed as sea creatures (Figure 5b), including two duck-billed wind gods directly behind him, one of which actually has an **IK'** "wind" sign in place of his eye (Taube 2004a:173). While several scholars (Freidel et al. 1993:239; Miller 1986:87) have identified the Water Serpent impersonator as the Maize God, there is little to support this identification, and they have not taken into account the contexts of the Water Serpent headdress



a



b



c



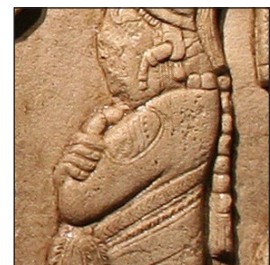
d



e



f



g

Figure 4. Subservient beings of wind and water: (a) duck-billed impersonator and subordinate of King Bird Jaguar IV, named in the text as **IK'** K'uh "wind god"; Yaxchilan, Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, Step X (drawing by Marc Zender, after Zender 2004:Fig. 2); (b) pair of duck-billed wind gods named in the associated text as **IK'** K'uh and **POLAW** K'uh; note Water Serpent headdresses; detail of K1485 (from Stone and Zender 2011:174, Fig. 5); (c) **IK'** "wind" glyph (drawing by Marc Zender, from Stone and Zender 2011:175); (d) **POLAW** "ocean, sea" glyph (from Lopes 2004); (e) Cancuen Panel 3 (photo by Harri Kettunen); (f) detail of **IK'** sign on arm of subordinate; Cancuen Panel 3; (g) detail of **POLAW** sign on arm of subordinate; Cancuen Panel 3.

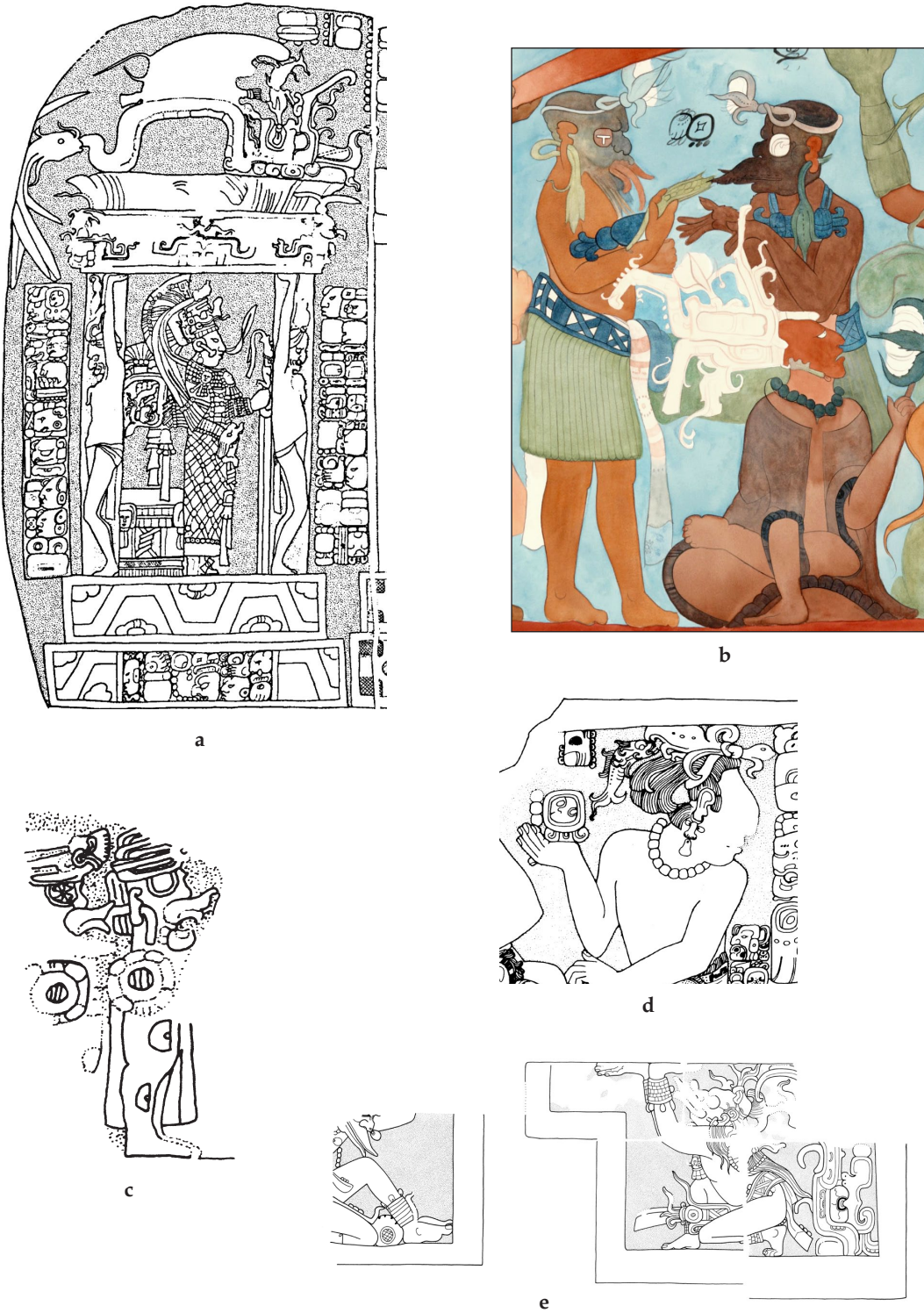


Figure 5. Ik' K'uh and Itzam bearers: (a) two aged Itzam bearers as column supports hold the Water Serpent aloft; detail of La Corona Panel 6 (drawing by Linda Schele); (b) two duck-billed Ik' K'uh flank an impersonator of the Water Serpent; Bonampak, Room 1, detail (reconstruction painting by Heather Hurst and Leonard Ashby, courtesy of Bonampak Documentation Project, Yale University); (c) two duck-billed Ik' K'uh with waterlilies bound in their headdresses; they stand upon a cenote and are subservient to the ruler, Lord Chahk; detail of Uxmal Stela 14 (drawing by the author); (d) one of four Classic-period year bearers holding the dayname Caban; detail of Pomona Panel 1 (after Schele and Miller 1986:Fig. III.12); (e) Ik' K'uh as atlantean throne bearers for K'inich Ajaw; north figure at left, south at right; south figure emerges from a centipede maw and wears a belt that is frequently diagnostic of Water Serpent headdress symbolism (drawing by Oswaldo Chinchilla).

(Looper 2009:67-68). The attire of the two wind gods suggests ballgame paraphernalia (Miller 1986:86-87). A stone vase from Copan depicts the ruler Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat wearing a mosaic collar decorated with wind signs and a headdress identifying him as the Water Serpent (see Looper 2009:70)—an iconographic assemblage that recalls the pair of elderly men on K1440.

As we have seen, the ballgame is apparently linked to Water Serpent imagery on the Yaxchilan hieroglyphic stairway, the Bonampak Room 1 murals, and the Copan vase. According to Karl Taube, ballcourts were widely considered to be fertile entrances to the watery Underworld, "which probably explains why they are frequently sunken, much as if they were cave-like fissures, pools, or cisterns" (Taube 2010:271). The ballcourt itself is composed of two partial quatrefoils which, when put together, form the I-shaped courts (Guernsey 2010:88). Similarly, a half quatrefoil forms the T-shaped **IK'** sign, which can also serve as a cave sign, perhaps in reference to the close relationship between wind and caves (Coltman 2014). Conceivably, the ancient Maya saw no major change in meaning when the wind sign was turned, inverted, or otherwise manipulated (Houston et al. 2006:145-146). Therefore, both ballcourts and quatrefoils are related to watery realms, a fitting place for impersonators of windy and watery entities.⁵

Two similar iconographic programs exist at the sites of Yaxchilan and Pomona. On Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, the duck-billed wind god impersonators on Steps IV, V, X, and XII are all subservient lords of Bird Jaguar IV, who is depicted on Step VII as an impersonator of the Water Serpent and plays the ballgame in full ballplayer apparel. A similar program appears on Pomona Panel 1 where the text says that the local ruler, whose portrait is missing, was himself an impersonator of the Water Serpent (David Stuart, personal communication 2009). On Pomona Panel 1, the subordinates are depicted not as Ik' K'uh but as Classic-period year bearers (Figure 5d), the closest correspondence to the year bearers of the Postclassic (see Stuart 2004). The visual program on the two monuments is therefore strikingly similar: a ruler as the Water Serpent surrounded by four secondary, supporting nobles who are subservient wind gods and year bearers. These two examples indicate a striking representation of the quadripartite system with the ruler representing the axis mundi in a political microcosm.

As Diego de Landa (Tozzer 1941:135-136) has noted, the Bakabs were placed in the four quarters of the world where they supported the sky with a year

bearer associated with each Bakab. These atlantean figures, known as Itzam, can appear with both aged and youthful aspects that often merge with the identities of subordinate lords. On the Late Classic La Corona Panel 6 (Figure 5a), two aged atlantean Itzam bearers serve as support columns sustaining a structure which is topped by the Water Serpent (Stuart 2013; Taube 1994: 215). The Ik' K'uh constitute another set of distinct atlanteans that also sustain the heavenly vault. Fray Diego López Cogolludo writes that the closely related Bakabs not only supported the sky, but were also wind gods (Cogolludo 1954:1:352). Classic evidence to support this comes from a pair of leg supports for a throne at Dos Pilas depicting K'inich Ajaw, the Maya Sun God (Chinchilla 1990; Houston 2010 ; Stuart 2009). Excavated by Oswaldo Chinchilla (1990), these supports depict the duck-billed Ik' K'uh as supporters of the throne (Figure 5e). This is both conceptually identical and strikingly visually parallel to the behavior of the Central Mexican duck-billed wind god, Ehecatl, who also had a role as a sky bearer in the Borgia and Vaticanus B codices, and appears as an atlantean bearer in Aztec stone sculpture. As Houston (2010:99) notes, these blocks from Dos Pilas carry both cosmic and political connotations. The cosmic connotation of this depiction of wind beings supporting the sun recalls an account in the Florentine Codex, where it was the breath of Ehecatl that first put the sun in motion (Sahagún 1950-82:Book 7:7-8).

The atlantean Itzam and Ik' K'uh may therefore be referred to as "world bearers" whose duty of securing the sky could metaphorically extend to include the roof of a house or flat slab of a throne, roles that were mirrored by vassals in terms of political support (Houston 1998:354-355). Presumably of a watery locale, young able-bodied Itzam characters—such as those found on panels from Pomona and Laxtunich—do not appear with typical Old God N characteristics such as turtle shells or nets (Stuart 2007a). However, the watery plants and fish in their hairdos clearly associate them with the duck-billed Ik' K'uh found at both Dos Pilas and Yaxchilan.

Impersonation, Rulership, and Power

The Water Serpent is frequently impersonated by Maya kings and, on occasion, even by female members of the royal court (Houston and Stuart 1996:299). In a sample of impersonation statements, the Water Serpent appears as the second-most impersonated being within the common ritual impersonation expression (Nehammer Knub et al. 2010:190). An example of such a statement comes from a rim text on the Cuychen vase (Helmke et al. 2012:83). According to Houston and Stuart (1996:300), reasons for such impersonation of either the Maize God or Water Serpent may have to do with long-lost narratives where impersonators portrayed deities that participated in repetitious ritual cycles. In a study of

⁵ Both the north and south central panels of the South Ballcourt at El Tajín depict a figure wearing a duck-billed mask (Koontz 2009: Figs. 3.13-3.15). Furthermore, these figures wear a headband with a floral element on the brow that is suggestive of Taube's God H and his Classic-period predecessor.

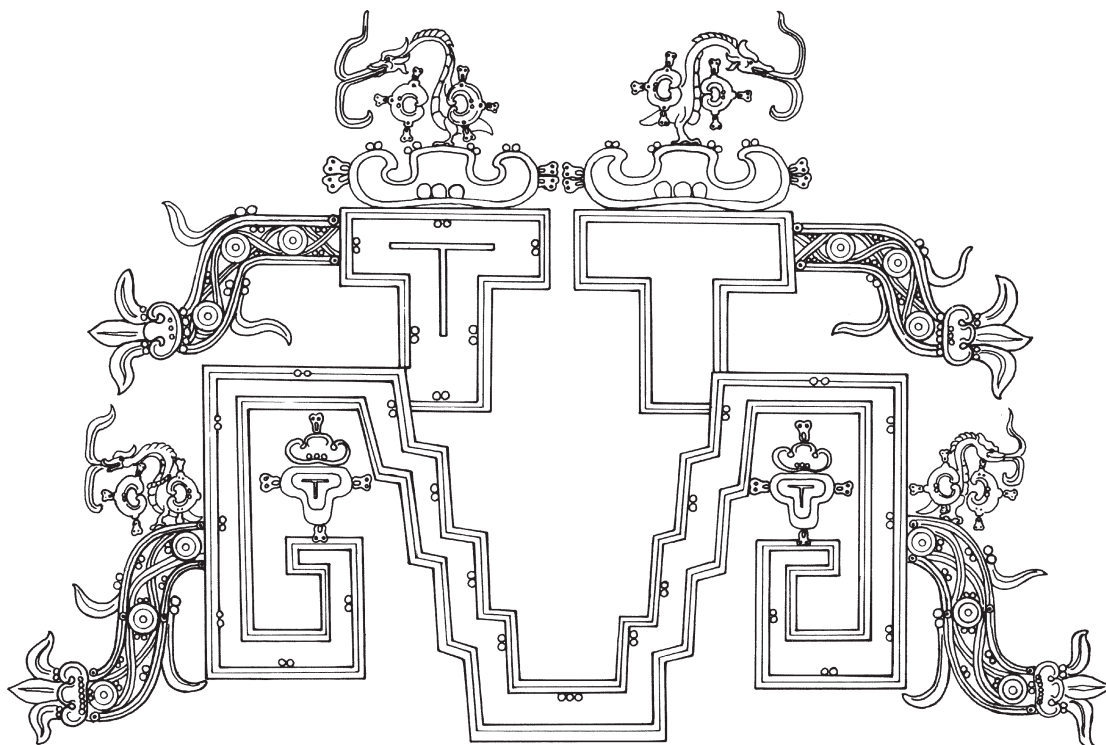


Figure 6. Stucco relief from House B, Palenque, depicting “breathing cave” phenomenon with Water Serpent symbolism (from Robertson 1985:Fig. 177).

deity impersonation, Andrea Stone noted that a

clear signal is sent that the act of impersonating the god was esoterically as meaningful as the god’s holy presence in supernatural affairs. Thus, impersonation provided a powerful interface with the sacred. (Stone 1986:194)

Water Serpent impersonators are frequently depicted within the context of caves and bodies of water. A stucco relief from Palenque House B (Figure 6) provides a striking representation of the phenomena of ‘breathing caves’ infused with symbolism of the Water Serpent (Stone and Zender 2011; Taube 1992:59). Two large wind signs are placed directly above the niche of a step-fretted mountain recalling the cave-like fissure of personified mountain imagery. It serves as an ideal representation of a watery cavernous breathing abode: the symbolic home of the terrestrial Water Serpent. The site of Dos Pilas is one of the best documented cases of site architecture being related to caves and springs (Brady 1997). In the royal palace complex just below the palace platform lies the Cueva de Murciélagos which was the outlet for the entire drainage system. After heavy rainfall, the charging, gushing sound of water from this cave could be heard a half a kilometer away (Brady and Ashmore 1997:129). Dos Pilas Stela 15 depicts the ruler Itzamnaaj K’awiil impersonating the Water Serpent. This impersonation may be related to the appearance of the K’inalha’ toponym on the basal register, which most likely refers to

the subterranean spring beneath the El Duende pyramid (Looper 2009:26). A number of temples at other sites are emblazoned with symbolism of the Water Serpent and aligned to bodies of water, most notably Dzibilchaltun Structure 1-sub in the Northern Lowlands of Yucatan, and contemporaneous façades of the Water Serpent on structure B5-sub and B-16-sub at Caracol, Belize (Ishihara et al. 2006; see also Taube 2010b).

Perhaps the most extravagant display of impersonation of the Water Serpent can be found on several stelae from Late Classic Machaquila. Rulers stand over watery quatrefoil caves while dancing as the impersonator of the Water Serpent. While most of the stelae depict the HA’ “water” glyph within the quatrefoil, Machaquila Stela 10 depicts the upward facing head of Chahk (Figure 7a). Interesting features in the main plaza of the site include a turtle altar and a sunken quatrefoil court, the latter a likely feature indicated by the quatrefoils the rulers dance upon (Stuart and Houston 1994:33). Rulers impersonating the Water Serpent may thus have engaged in dance within this quatrefoil court (Taube et al. 2010:78). La Mar Stela 2 also depicts dancing Water Serpent impersonators recalling those of Machaquila (Ishihara et al. 2006). These dances are interesting to note in the context of nourishing waters from the earth. In Mesoamerica and the American Southwest, masking and dance are frequently related to rain ritual (Schaafsma 1999; Schaafsma and Taube 2006).

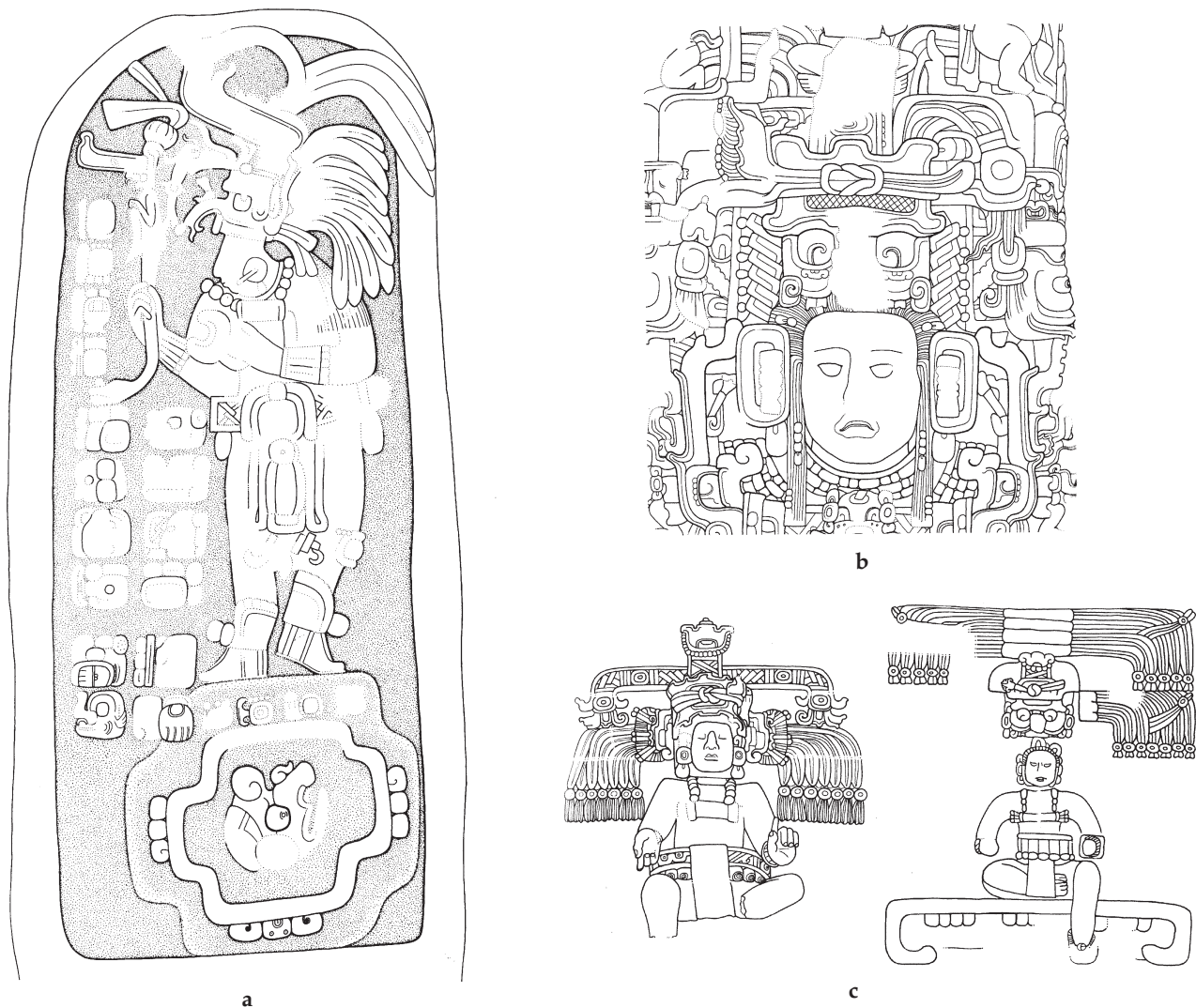


Figure 7. Impersonating the Water Serpent: (a) ruler dances as the Water Serpent over quatrefoil cave that features the upward face of Chaak, Machaquila, Stela 10 (from Graham 1967:Fig. 61); (b) Ruler 15 from Copan as impersonator of the Water Serpent; detail of Stela N (drawing by Barbara Fash); (c) figures wearing the headdress of the Water Serpent, Group 10L-2, Structure 10L-32, and Group 9N-8, Structure 9N-82, Copan (drawings by Barbara Fash).

The site of Copan shows a notable preoccupation with the Water Serpent. On Copan Stela N, Ruler 15 wears an elaborate form of the Water Serpent headdress (Figure 7b). Stuart (2007b) has noted that the word *witz'* appears prominently in the royal name of Ruler 12. At Copan's large residential sectors, impersonators of the Water Serpent appear on sculptured facades from Group 9N-8, Las Sepulturas, and Group 10L-2, El Cementario (Figure 7c). Structure 9N-82 is particularly interesting in that the central figure wears the headdress of the Water Serpent while the two individuals flanking him wear headdresses of maize. This pairing of maize and the Water Serpent has been noted since Preclassic San Bartolo. Structure 10L-32 from Group 10L-2 depicts all the figures wearing the headdress of the Water Serpent.

During the Classic period, kingship may have been linked to the control of water, the most precious of resources. Thus, a recent trend in Mesoamerican studies has focused on water management as a politically and ritually based system (see Lucero and Fash 2006; Scarborough 1998). The elite could have easily manipulated water. As the resource that sustains life, power could become easily controlled and centralized (Scarborough 1998:136). According to Barbara Fash (2005, 2010), the headdress of the Water Serpent worn by rulers and nobles at Copan may have been related to their titles as regional water masters, where they would have overseen engineering at the site's precinct. Fash presents an interesting idea with which I am in agreement. However, I would emphasize that ultimate control and

power over these resources would have been most likely exclusively assumed under the ruler. As the 'houses' of natural phenomena including wind, clouds, rain, and lightning, it is no wonder that rulers frequently situated themselves within the terrestrial sphere. Indeed, there are many representations of rulers situated within the animate earth as early as La Venta Altar 4 (Grove 1973). At Preclassic Izapa and Kaminaljuyu, rulers stand over basal registers depicting the subterranean earth maw, an inward-curving groundline fully equipped with teeth (Taube 2004a:40). As Guernsey (2006:78-79) notes, "the basal motif appears to signify the terrestrial realm, firmly anchoring the performance of the individual standing upon it to the earth." The Late Classic Quirigua Zoomorph P depicts a particularly graphic portrayal of the terrestrial rain-making process with the ruler sitting within the open maw of the saurian earth (Schaafsma and Taube 2006:249).

In Late Postclassic Central Mexico, the rulers of Tenochtitlan, Tlacopan, Xochimilco, and Tetzaco ascended to Mt. Tlaloc by way of an aqueduct (Townsend 1992:173). After the sacrifices and offerings were made, the four rulers descended to the celebration and sanctification of the waters in lakes, streams, and springs (Durán 1971:160). Tetzcotzingo functioned as an administrative center where both water and land rights were confirmed by the *tlatoani*. The sixteenth-century legal document known as the Titles of Tetzcotzingo describes one such ceremony where Netzahualcoyotl allocated water sources and aqueducts to towns, appointees, allies, and their children (McAfee and Barlow 1946). In this respect, Netzahualcoyotl was the quintessential regional master of water. Furthermore, as Schaafsma and Taube (2006:242) note, "[a]s in the case of the four rulers traveling to Mount Tlaloc, while atop Cerro Tetzcotzingo the ruler was the living embodiment of Tlaloc and traveled along his road of water." In the Sierra de Texcoco, Netzahualcoyotl is still invoked as the "rey del mar" and is equated with Tlaloc, a conflation of ruler and regional master of water merging identities with the pre-eminent rain deity (Lorente Fernández 2012).

Agricultural societies like the Maya may have had similar views of rulership, which seem to have been widely shared with agricultural societies of the Old World. The Bashu of Africa, for instance, viewed rulership as an office clearly tied to the natural environment (see Moyes 2006:67-72, 542-585). In Africa, kings are considered to be "the ritual mediators between society and the forces of nature" (Packard 1981:6). In Bashu society, rainmaking was an important component of the development of chiefly authority, the king holding the society together by ensuring rain (Packard 1981:67-71).

Impersonation of the Water Serpent, a being that embodied animate water, would have been a powerful role to assume. This linked the ruler to not only the physical act of control over water sources but also the

supernatural control over these tangible elements. The very act of impersonators dancing as the Water Serpent over water-filled caves sends a powerful terrestrial message: ruler as conjurer, controller, or both. As Brady and Ashmore (1997:129-130) note with regard to Dos Pilas:

Because the king was responsible for crop productivity and quality, identifying his palace with this dramatic water source seems hardly coincidental and in fact, a conscious political strategy, re-expressed every year. The landscape itself thus loudly proclaimed the king's control over water, and presumably over rain-making and fertility.

Water Serpent Lore in Mesoamerica and the American Southwest

The Water Serpent is a likely ancestor of the *chijchan* of contemporary Ch'orti' Maya belief (Stuart 2007b). According to Wisdom (1940:394), the *chijchan* inhabit every body of water as its spirit or essence, their coursing movements causing landslides, floods, and hurricanes. The *chijchan* are subterranean dwellers inhabiting springs, rivers, and lakes, essentially inhabiting every body of water and are also responsible for releasing or withholding rain and wind (Wisdom 1940:395). Indeed, there are some apparent roles of structured authority in contemporary Ch'orti' belief. It is the *chijchan* that churn the water from streams, lakes, and the sea causing it to ascend to the sky in the form of clouds, whereas the working men beat the water out of the clouds so rain can fall. Next, the wind gods swoop in and carry the rain over the world so maize can be planted (Wisdom 1940:396-397). Each direction has a wind god, working man, and *chijchan*, with a single *chijchan* in the north who is superior to all (Wisdom 1940:397). This superior cosmic water serpent, Noj Chijchan, controls the rains and wind and is the chief of all the *chijchans* (Girard 1995:115-116). The contemporary Ch'orti' view of rain-making would seem to confirm Brady and Ashmore's assertion, for the king would be assuming a role in which "the Serpent is master of the water, and is the one who either releases or doesn't release the water" (Girard 1995: 116).⁶

Among the Aztec of Late Postclassic Central Mexico,

⁶ Girard's book *People of the Chan* (1995) was an English translation of the first part of his book *Los mayas eternos* (1962), which focused on the ethnography of the Ch'orti'. In a demonstration of accurate foresight, Girard (1995:117) describes the Noj Chijchan as a dispenser of rain and food that has a human head and reptile body and equates this description with an image in the Codex Dresden, p. 35b, which shows the head of Chahk affixed to the body of a serpent wading in a pool of water. Interestingly, the anthropomorphic serpent on Dresden p. 35b wears the typical headdress of the Water Serpent (Taube 1992:Fig. 26a). Another image of Chahk on Dresden p. 13 appears with an even more elaborate form of the headdress that is even closer to the Classic period version (Hellmuth 1987a:Fig. 193b).

the duck-billed Ehecatl was the “road sweeper of the rain gods” (Sahagún 1950-69:Book 1:3). Thus the attendants to Tlaloc were referred to as the *ahuaque* “masters of water” or *tlaloque* and the *ehecatototin* “little winds” who all inhabited hollow mountains from which the rivers, clouds, and winds emerged (López Austin 1988:1:335). Thus the *ehecatototin* gathered the rain-filled clouds around the mountain homes of the *tlaloque* and rushed them in to water the milpas. In a major study of religion in Prehispanic Central Mexico, Ehecatl is correctly placed in a category based on rain, moisture, and agricultural fertility (Nicholson 1971:414-416). Not always with the best intentions, the *tlaloque* and *ehecatototin* could bring in devastating storms accompanied by lightning bolts, hail, and destructive winds (Lopez Austin 1988:1:340). Indeed, the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950-1982:Book 1:3) describes another aspect of Quetzalcoatl when ushering in the rain:

...when the wind rose, when the dust rumbled and it crackled and there was a great din, and it became dark and the wind blew in many directions, and it thundered; then it was said [“Quetzalcoatl”] is wrathful.

In San Francisco Tecospa, Mexico, rain dwarfs and water spirits are subordinate to a water serpent known as *culebra de agua* (Figure 8). This chief of the rain dwarfs tells them what barrel to open from their mountain cave homes, be it rain, hail, lightning, clouds, drizzle, thunder, or frost (Madsen 1960:131). These rain dwarfs are analogous to the *tlaloque* who were described as

having control of the “clouds, rain, hail, snow, mist, sheet lightning, thunder, and lightning bolts” (Sahagún 1950-1982:Book 7:18). According to contemporary Huastecan Nahua oral traditions, the water serpent is an amalgam of wind and water that collects rainwater from the sea (Hooft 2006:185-186). However, the snake’s fall to land is particularly devastating as the water moves from beneficial to harmful:

Splashing about in the pool, the snake moved the water with its tail, tossing it out of the pool and making it flow over. The water, now threatening, acquires a distinct value and becomes a turbid, invading stream (Hooft 2006:186).

In northeastern Jalisco, the contemporary Tepehua refer to the horned wind serpents as *chenes* or “winds of the waters,” malevolent water-serpents that inhabit springs and streams (Mason 1918:126). The Huichol have an intricate system of belief concerning water serpents, all of which seem to be female. One important water serpent known as Na’aliwaemi rises from her spring as a green cloud and then takes the form of a “large snake of pure water” (Zingg 1938:338-339). Among the contemporary Mixtec, the feathered serpent known as *koo savi* is a rain bringer that typically brings destructive and powerful storms (Monaghan 1989).

Among the western Pueblos of the American Southwest, the water serpent is similar to Quetzalcoatl in his role as a plumed serpent, sharing such characteristics as a rain bringer with clear associations to maize

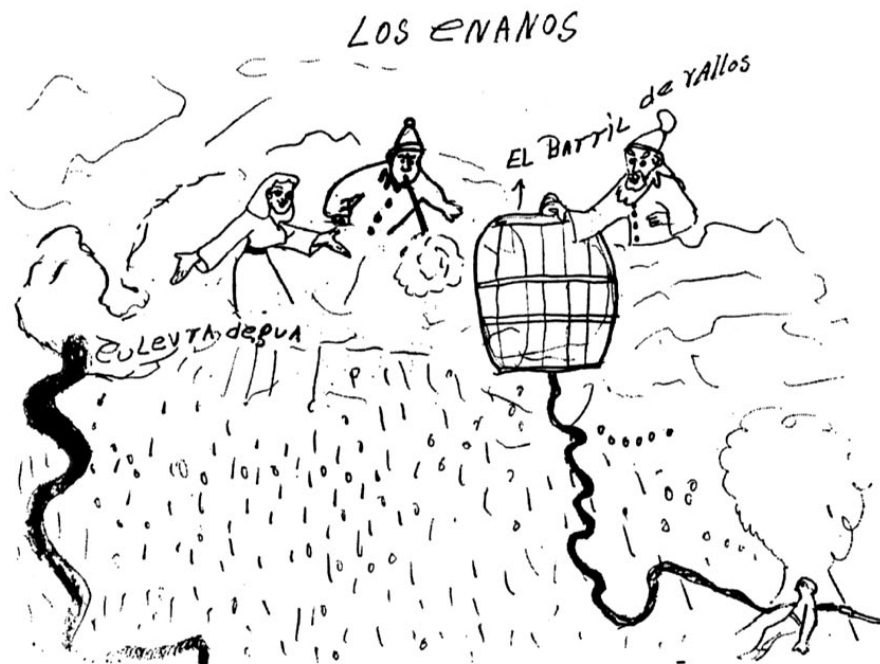
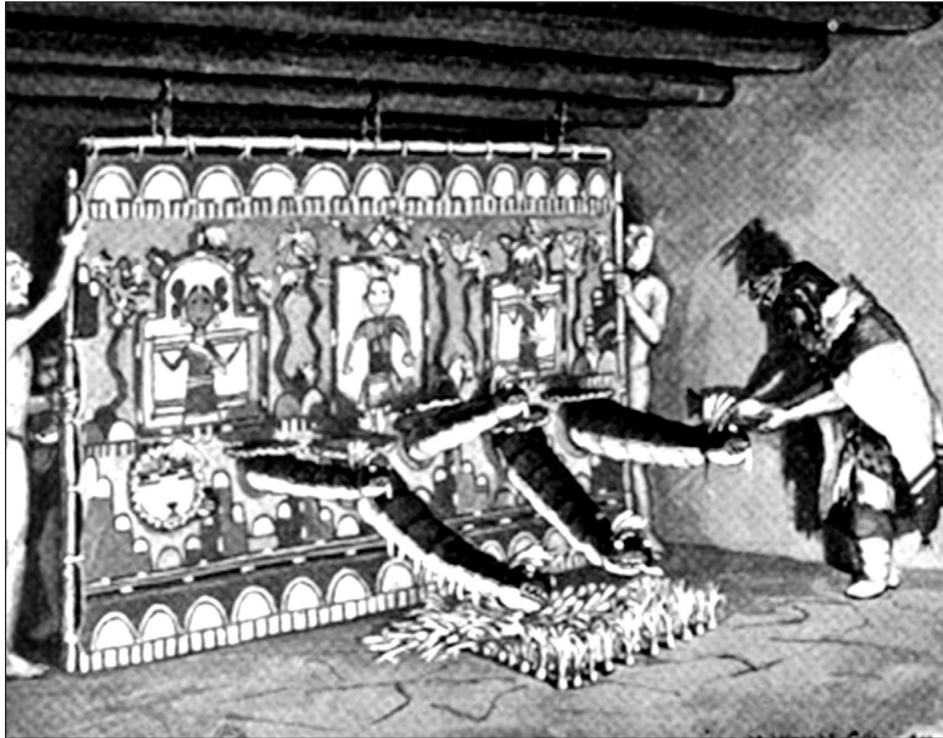
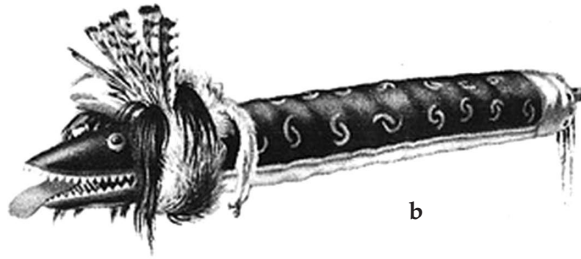


Figure 8. *Culebra de agua*, and attendant rain dwarfs initiating natural phenomena; San Francisco Tecospa, Mexico (adapted from Madsen 1960:129).



a



b

Figure 9. Paalölöqangw and Kolowisi in the American Southwest: (a) a performance featuring the Hopi Paalölöqangw; note symbolic maize field (from Fewkes 1920:Pl. 3); (b) effigy of the Zuni water serpent, Kolowisi (from Stevenson 1904:Pl. 13).

(Schaafsma 2001).⁷ In Zuni tradition, maize is brought up from the underworld every four years by the great plumed water serpent, Kolowisi, a master of oceans with his own rain chieftaincy (Parsons 1939:1:184; Stevenson 1915:99) (Figure 9a). According to Parsons (1939:1:184), the water serpent figures prominently among all Puebloan groups except for the Tiwa and “is a collective being living in springs, sometimes associated with the color directions...” He is also referred to as “a single personage, a god of terrestrial waters.” In the Southwest, the water serpent controls calamitous floods, earthquakes, and landslides (Parsons 1939:1:185), not unlike the *chijchan* of the contemporary Ch’orti’.

Among the Hopi, the water serpent is patron of the Water-Corn clan and known as Paalölöqangw.⁸ During the Hopi *pälülüikoñti* ceremonies performed at Walpi and Oraibi, young maize is grown inside the kiva and

placed before a water serpent screen (Titiev 1944:184) (Figure 9b). For the Hopi, Paalölöqangw inhabit terrestrial bodies of water and can create violent storms,

⁷ In Puebloan rain and water ritual, the duck is featured prominently as a rain god or as a head Katsina. Among the Zuni, the one who sends and controls the Katsina rain spirits is the duck being, Pautiwa, who is notably similar to Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl (Taube 2001:118).

⁸ In Hopi thought, the water serpent resides in springs and is a source of clouds. According to Geertz and Lamatuway’ma (1987:178-179), the water serpent is a guardian of springs and their effigies are frequently carried to nearby springs during rituals. Much like the sacred cave water held in such high regard by the ancient Maya, for the Hopi, water from springs occupies a similar source of pure water to be aspersed in ritual. Many Hopi rites involve carrying effigies of the water serpent to sacred springs with the water being taken back to the mesa (Stephen 1936:1:319-322).

characteristics notably similar to the Central Mexican *culebra de agua*, Mixtec *koo savi*, and Ch'orti' *chijchan*. During the month of February, Paalölöqangw appears in performances held in kivas and is engaged in epic struggles with Kooyemsi and Sa'lakwakatsinam before ultimately destroying symbolic fields of corn, a testament to the raw power and devastating capability of the serpent (Fewkes 1897:308; Geertz and Lomatuway'ma 1987:217-252; see also Mills and Ferguson 2008:341-342). While the Paalölöqangw is capable of causing a multitude of natural disasters including landslides, floods, and earthquakes, it also represents "one of the most powerful embodiments of fertility and fecundity in Hopi religious imagery" (Malotki 1993:3).⁹

Final Thoughts

On the Hieroglyphic Stairway at Yaxchilan, Bird Jaguar IV as well as his father and grandfather dispatch their captives during the ballgame, an act that may speak to vanquishing ancient enemies of civilization while the lower-ranking Ik' K'uh play with "twelve handspan" balls instead of dispatching captives (Zender 2004:8). After all, this act was reserved for the ruler. Uxmal Stela 14 depicts the conquering Lord Chahk standing over a cenote with two bound dispatched captives floating within its depths. His two servile wind god assistants accompany him. The practical import of these events is not just in the role of dispatching captives, but as Zender (2004) points out for Yaxchilan, it serves to useful remind the lesser nobility of their divinely-ordained roles as servants and helpmeets of the king. These secondary nobles carried multiple burdens, be it supporting thrones, skies, or even time itself. Often taking the form of duck-billed Ik' K'uh, aged, toothless, and chapfallen grandfathers, or young and able-bodied men, these individuals provided both a cosmic and political service.

A clear metaphor existed in which ancient Maya political authority replicated the cosmic realms of authority where wind gods, sky-bearing atlanteans, and year bearers were subservient to sustaining the order of the cosmos just as they sustained the ruler. Maya rulers, lords, and even royal women often impersonated the Water Serpent, and just as the Principal Bird Deity was associated with the accession to rulership and the celestial realm of the sky, the Water Serpent was associated with rulership and the cavernous abodes of terrestrial wind and water.

⁹ Malotki (1993:7) notes that the Hopi Paalölöqangw is notoriously associated with human sacrifice, a characteristic that makes him a "plausible candidate for an offspring of a Maya type Water Serpent." Contemporary Nahua also have oral traditions that relate how human sacrifices were made in pools and lagoons in order to appease the water serpent lest the creature emerge from its watery realm and devour the inhabitants of the village (see Hooft 2006:187).

Closely linked to the life-giving qualities of water, wind, and maize, the Water Serpent, as the embodiment of animate and active water, serves as a logical choice for impersonation by rulers. Clearly, a ruler's impersonation of this being would have signified their control of the weather. Rain, wind, and thunderous storms would have been conjured from caves both real and symbolic. Impersonation of the Water Serpent would have invoked a being of both benevolent and malevolent capability. Of course, beneficial waters would have been favored, even required, but flooding, landslides, and earthquakes would have always been a dreaded possibility. Contemporary accounts of water serpents seem almost universal in describing this ambiguous nature, one that fits well with general Mesoamerican cosmology. While one could certainly look for divergent cosmologies regarding water serpents, the core underlying cosmological and weather-related affiliations cannot be ignored (Mathiowetz 2011:222-223). I would strongly suspect that the Water Serpent or *witz'* of Maya antiquity would have held at least some of these characteristics, and perhaps even all of them.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank those that have generously granted permission to use illustrations and photographs, answer inquiries, and listen to me ramble about this fascinating subject for the past several years. In no particular order, these people are James Brady, Marcello Canuto, Oswaldo Chinchilla, Michael Coe, Barbara Fash, Lucia Henderson, Heather Hurst, Harri Kettunen, Simon Martin, Mary Miller, John Pohl, David Stuart, Karl Taube, and Marc Zender. I thank Justin Kerr for his permission to use images from his remarkable archive. Finally, an earlier version of this study was presented at the 7th Annual Maya at the Playa Conference in Palm Coast, Florida, which honored Justin Kerr. I also thank Mat Saunders for the invitation to present these ideas in that forum and for his warm hospitality during my visit. During the conference dinner, I had the good fortune to be seated with George Stuart and Justin Kerr. They regaled everyone with hysterical tales and wise anecdotes. Sadly, George is no longer with us, but in the active spirit of the playa and the Witz': this one's for you, George!

References

- Bonnafoux, Patrice
2008 Etude iconographique des céramiques du Classique ancien dans les basses terres mayas. Ph.D. dissertation, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris.
- Brady, James E.
1997 Settlement Configuration and Cosmology: The Role of Caves at Dos Pilas. *American Anthropologist* 99(3):602-618.

- Brady, James E., and Wendy Ashmore
1999 Mountains, Caves, Water: Ideational Landscapes of the Ancient Maya. In *Archaeologies of Landscape: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Wendy Ashmore and A. Bernard Knapp, pp. 124-145. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Brady, James E., and Keith M. Prufer
2005 Maya Cave Archaeology: A New Look at Religion and Cosmology. In *Stone Houses and Earth Lords: Maya Religion in the Cave Context*, edited by Keith M. Prufer and James E. Brady, pp. 365-379. University Press of Colorado, Boulder.
- Bunzel, Ruth
1932 Zuni Origin Myths. In *47th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Years 1929-1930*, pp. 545-609. Washington, D.C.
- Carter, Nicholas, and Stephen D. Houston
2010 Panel with a Seated Ruler in a Watery Cave [Cancuen Panel 3]. In *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, pp. 86-87. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Caso, Alfonso
1958 Comentario al Códice Baranda. In *Miscellanea Paul Rivet. Octogenario dicata*, v. 1, pp. 373-394. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico.
- Chinchilla Mazariegos, Oswaldo
1990 Operación DP14: Investigaciones en el Grupo N5-6. In Proyecto Arqueológico Regional Petexbatun, informe preliminar no. 2, segunda temporada, 1990, edited by Arthur A. Demarest and Stephen D. Houston. Report presented to the Instituto de Antropología e Historia, Guatemala.
- Cogolludo, Diego López
1954 *Historia de Yucatán*. 4th ed. Talleres Gráficos del Gobierno, Campeche.
- Coltman, Jeremy D.
2014 A Study of Classic Maya Cave Iconography. M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, California State University, Los Angeles.
- Fash, Barbara
2005 Iconographic Evidence for Water Management and Social Organization at Copán. In *Copán: The History of an Ancient Maya Kingdom*, edited by E. Wyllys Andrews and William L. Fash, pp. 103-138. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.
- Fewkes, Jesse Walter
1897 Tusayan Katchinas. In *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1893-1894*, pp. 245-313. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
1920 Sun Worship of the Hopi Indians. In *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1918*, pp. 493-526. Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
- Finamore, Daniel and Stephen D. Houston
2011 *The Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen Houston. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Friedel, David, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker
1993 *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path*. William Morrow, New York.
- Geertz, Armin W., and Michael Lomatuway'ma
1987 *Children of Cottonwood: Piety and Ceremonialism in Hopi Indian Puppetry*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Gill, Sam D.
1987 *Mother Earth: An American Story*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Girard, Rafael
1962 *Los mayas eternos*. Antigua Librería Robredo, Mexico.
1995 *The People of the Chan*. Continuum Foundation, Chino Valley AZ.
- Grove, David
1973 Olmec Altars and Myths. *Archaeology* 26:128-135.
- Guernsey, Julia
2006 *Ritual and Power in Stone: The Performance of Rulership in Mesoamerican Izapan Style Art*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
2011 A Consideration of the Quatrefoil Motif in Preclassic Mesoamerica. *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58:75-96.
- Guiteras-Holmes, Calixta
1961 *Perils of the Soul: The World View of a Tzotzil Indian*. Free Press, New York.
- Hellmuth, Nicholas
1987a *The Surface of the Underwaterworld: Iconography of the Gods of Early Classic Maya Art in Peten, Guatemala*. 2 vols. Foundation for Latin American Anthropological Research, Culver City, CA.
1987b *Monster und Menschen in der Maya-Kunst: Eine Ikonographie der alten Religionen Mexikos und Guatemalas*. Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz.
- Helmke, Christophe, Jaime J. Awe, Shawn G. Morton, and Gyles Iannone
2012 The Archaeological and Epigraphic Significance of Cuychen, Macal Valley, Belize. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology*, Volume 9:75-89. Institute of Archaeology, Belmopan.
- Henderson, Lucia
2013 Bodies Politic, Bodies in Stone: Imagery of the Human and the Divine in the Sculpture of Late Preclassic Kaminaljuyú, Guatemala. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Art History, University of Texas, Austin.
- Hermann Lejarazu, Manuel A.
2010 La serpiente de lluvia en los mitos de origen de Códice Baranda. *Itinerarios* 12:179-196.
- Hooft, Anuschka van 't
2006 *A Reconstruction of Huastecan Nahua Society Through Its Oral Tradition*. Leiden University Press, Leiden.
- Houston, Stephen D.
1998 Classic Maya Depictions of the Built Environment. In *Form and Function in Classic Maya Architecture*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, pp. 333-372. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
2010 Throne Blocks with Atlantean Figures and the Sun God. In *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, pp. 98-99. Yale University Press, New Haven.

- Houston, Stephen D. and David S. Stuart
1996 Of Gods, Glyphs and Kings: Divinity and Rulership among the Classic Maya. *Antiquity* 70:289-312.
- Houston, Stephen D., David S. Stuart, and Karl A. Taube
2006 *The Memory of Bones: Body, Being, and Experience among the Classic Maya*. University Press of Texas, Austin.
- Houston, Stephen D., and Karl A. Taube
2011 The Fiery Pool: Fluid Concepts of Water and Sea among the Classic Maya. In *Ecology, Power and Religion in Maya Landscapes*, edited by C. Isendahl and B. Liljefors Persson, pp. 11-37. Verlag Anton Saurwein, Markt Schwaben.
- Ishihara, Reiko, Jaime Awe, and Karl Taube
2006 The Water Lily Stucco Masks at Caracol, Belize. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology*, Volume 3, edited by John Morris, Sherliyne Jones, Jaime Awe and Christopher Helmke, pp. 213-23. Institute of Archaeology, Belmopan.
- Koontz, Rex
2009 *Lightning Gods and Feathered Serpents: The Public Sculpture of El Tajín*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Looper, Matthew
2009 *To Be Like Gods: Dance in Ancient Maya Civilization*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Lopes, Luis
2004 The Water-Band Glyph. *Mesoweb*: www.mesoweb.com/features/lopes/Waterband.pdf.
- López Austin, Alfredo
1988 *The Human Body and Ideology: Concepts of the Ancient Nahuas, Vol. 1*. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
- Lorente Fernández, David
2012 Nezahualcōyotl es Tláloc en la Sierra de Texcoco: historia nahua, recreación simbólica. *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* 42(1):63-90, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Lucero, Lisa J. and Barbara W. Fash, eds.
2006 *Precolumbian Water Management: Ideology, Ritual, and Power*. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Madsen, William
1960 *The Virgin's Children: Life in an Aztec Village Today*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Malotki, Ekkehart, ed.
1993 *Hopi Ruin Legends: Kiqōtutuwutsi*. Narrated by Michael Lomatuway'ma, Lorena Lomatuway'ma, and Sidney Namingha, Jr. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- Mason, J. Alden
1918 Tepecano Prayers. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 1(2):91-153.
- Mathiowetz, Michael
2011 The Diurnal Path of the Sun: Ideology and Interregional Interaction in Ancient Northwest Mesoamerica and the American Southwest. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Riverside.
- Miller, Mary Ellen
1986 *The Murals of Bonampak*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Mills, Barbara J. and T.J. Ferguson
2008 Animate Objects: Shell Trumpets and Ritual Networks in the Greater Southwest. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 15: 338-361.
- Monaghan, John
1989 The Feathered Serpent in Oaxaca. *Expedition* 31(1):12-18.
1995 *The Covenants with Earth and Rain: Exchange, Sacrifice, and Revelation in Mixtec Society*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
2000 Theology and History in the Study of Mesoamerican Religions. In *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians Volume 6: Ethnology*, edited by John Monaghan, pp. 29-49. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Moyes, Holly
2006 The Sacred Landscape as a Political Resource: A Case Study of Ancient Maya Cave Use at Chechem Ha Cave, Belize, Central America. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo.
- Nehammer Knub, Julie, Simone Thun, and Christophe Helmke
2009 The Divine Rite of Kings: An Analysis of Classic Maya Impersonation Statements. In *The Maya and their Sacred Narratives: Text and Context in Maya Mythologies*, edited by Geneviève Le Fort, Raphaël Gardiol, Sebastian Matteo, and Christophe Helmke, pp. 177-195. Verlag Anton Saurwein, Markt Schwaben.
- Nicholson, Henry B.
1971 Religion in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico. In *Archaeology of Northern Mesoamerica*, edited by Gordon F. Ekholm and Ignacio Bernal, pp. 395-445. Handbook of Middle American Indians, vol. 10, Robert Wauchope, general editor. University Press of Texas, Austin.
- Packard, Randall
1981 *Chieftship and Cosmology: An Historical Study of Political Competition*. University of Indiana Press, Bloomington.
- Parsons, Elsie C.
1939 *Pueblo Indian Religion*. 2 vols. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Quenon, Michel, and Genevieve Le Fort
1997 Rebirth and Resurrection in Maize God Iconography. In *The Maya Vase Book: A Corpus of Rollout Photographs of Maya Vases by Justin Kerr, Volume 5*, edited by Barbara Kerr and Justin Kerr, pp. 884-902. Kerr Associates, New York.
- Robertson, Merle Greene
1985 *The Sculpture of Palenque, Volume II: The Early Buildings of the Palace and the Wall Paintings*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
1990 Celestial God of the Number 13. *Triptych* (Sept/Oct 1990), pp. 26-31. The Museum Society, San Francisco.
- Sahagún, Fray Bernardino
1950-1982 *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain. Translated from the Aztec into English, with Notes and Illustrations by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble*. 12 vols. School of American Research Press; University of Utah, Santa Fe.

- Scarborough, Vernon L.
1998 Ecology and Ritual: Water Management and the Maya. *Latin American Antiquity* 9(2):135-159.
- Schaafsma, Polly
1999 Tlalocs, Kachinas, Sacred Bundles, and Related Symbolism in the Southwest and Mesoamerica. In *The Casas Grandes World*, edited by Curtis F. Schaafsma and Carroll L. Riley, pp. 164-192. The University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.
2001 Quetzalcoatl and the Horned and Feathered Serpent of the Southwest. In *The Road to Aztlan: Art from the Mythic Homeland*, edited by Virginia M. Fields and Victor Zamudio-Taylor, pp. 138-149. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles.
- Schaafsma, Polly and Karl Taube
2006 Bringing the Rain: An Ideology of Rain Making in the Pueblo Southwest and Mesoamerica. In *A Pre-Columbian World*, edited by Jeffrey Quilter and Mary Miller, pp. 231-285. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
- Schele, Linda and Mary Miller
1986 *The Blood of Kings. Dynasty and Ritual in Maya Art*. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.
- Stevenson, Matilda C.
1904 The Zuni Indians: Their Mythology, Esoteric Fraternities, and Ceremonies. *Twenty-Third Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1901-1902*. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
1915 Ethnobotany of the Zuni Indians. *30th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Years 1908-1909*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- Stone, Andrea
1991 Aspects of Impersonation in Classic Maya Art. In *Sixth Palenque Round Table, 1986*, edited by Virginia M. Fields, pp. 194-202. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Stone, Andrea, and Marc Zender
2011 *Reading Maya Art: A Hieroglyphic Guide to Ancient Maya Painting and Sculpture*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- Stuart, David S.
2004 New Year Records in Classic Maya Inscriptions. *The PARI Journal* 5(2):1-6.
2005 *The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque*. Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, San Francisco.
2007a Old Notes on the Possible ITZAM sign. *Maya Decipherment: decipherment.wordpress.com/2007/09/29/old-notes-on-the-possible-itzam-sign/*.
2007b Reading the Water Serpent as WITZ'. *Maya Decipherment: decipherment.wordpress.com/2007/04/13/reading-the-water-serpent/*.
2009 A Sun God Image from Dos Pilas, Guatemala. *Maya Decipherment: decipherment.wordpress.com/2009/04/10/a-sun-god-image-from-dos-pilas-guatemala/*.
2013 New Drawing of a La Corona Panel. *Maya Decipherment: decipherment.wordpress.com/2013/01/23/new-drawing-of-a-la-corona-panel/*.
- Stuart, David, Stephen D. Houston and John Robertson
1999 Recovering the Past: Classic Mayan Language and Classic Maya Gods. In *Notebook for the XXIIIrd Maya Hieroglyphic Forum at Texas, March, 1999*, pt. 2. Department of Art and Art History; College of Fine Arts; Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas, Austin.
- Taube, Karl A.
1992 *The Major Gods of Ancient Yucatan*. Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology 32. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
1994 The Iconography of Toltec Period Chichen Itza. In *Hidden in the Hills: Maya Archaeology of the Northwestern Yucatan Peninsula*, edited by Hanns J. Prem, pp. 212-246. Acta Mesoamericana 7. Verlag von Flemming, Möckmühl.
2004a *Olmec Art at Dumbarton Oaks*. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.
2004b Flower Mountain: Concepts of Life, Beauty and Paradise Among the Classic Maya. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 45:69-98.
2010a Where Earth and Sky Meet: the Sea in Ancient and Contemporary Maya Cosmology. In *Fiery Pool: the Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, pp. 202-219. Yale University Press, New Haven.
2010b Cast of a Temple Façade with the Water Lily Serpent. In *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, pp. 44-45. Yale University Press, New Haven.
2010c Stone Ballgame Belt with the Maize God and Swimmers in the Aquatic Underworld. In *Fiery Pool: The Maya and the Mythic Sea*, edited by Daniel Finamore and Stephen D. Houston, pp. 270-271. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Taube, Karl A., William Saturno, David Stuart, and Heather Hurst
2010 *The Murals of San Bartolo, El Peten, Guatemala, Part 2: The West Wall*. Ancient America 10. Center for Ancient American Studies, Barnardsville.
- Thompson, J. Eric S.
1950 *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction*. Publication 589. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D.C.
- Titiev, Mischa
1944 *Old Oraibi: A Study of the Hopi Indians of Third Mesa*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 22. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Tozzer, Alfred M.
1941 *Landa's Relación de las cosas de Yucatan*. Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 18. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
- Wisdom, Charles
1940 *The Chorti Indians of Guatemala*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
1952 The Supernatural and Curing. In *Heritage of Conquest: The Ethnology of Middle America*, edited by Sol Tax, pp. 119-141. Free Press, Glencoe, IL.
- Zender, Marc
2004 Glyphs for "Handspan" and "Strike" in Classic Maya Ballgame Texts. *The PARI Journal* 4(4):1-9.
- Zingg, Robert M.
1938 *The Huichols: Primitive Artists*. G. E. Stechert, New York.

The Further Adventures of Merle (continued)

MERLE GREENE ROBERTSON

Palenque and the Florida Project

The space underneath the new addition to our Palenque house had a cement floor, lights, and water, and was used mainly when working on the “Florida Project” reproducing replicas of Pier D from House D of the Palace, Pier C from House A of the Palace, the entire south end of the east room of House E, and one of the masks from the wall of House C, for the Florida State Museum in Gainesville. Two of my students, Mark Turner and Pete Mokler, were a great help during the entire Florida Project—Mark rolling out all of the clay ready for making the molds and Pete for helping the Gainesville scientists with the mother molds (Figure 1). This project took nearly a year to complete, Gainesville sending two professionals to help make the mother molds. When finished, it took half of La Cañada building mahogany crates and loading them into a truck to send everything off to Florida after receiving the official stamp of approval by INAH. We had to start work early in the morning when making the mother molds, as we had to be finished by 8:00 am when it then became too hot to set the chemical material. Doing this so early in the morning, we consumed barrels of oranges that whoever had a free moment would squeeze into juice. Sections about one meter by half a meter were first made in clay and stored in our upper rooms at Na Chan-Bahlum under wet towels, until the entire project was ready for the fellows from Gainesville to come and help. One day when I went to check on these clay sections, upon lifting the corner of a wet towel, I saw the most beautiful little gold toad one inch long. Yes, gold color, not yellow or orange, just golden. I took dozens of pictures of this golden gem. I have never seen a gold toad since. Then when finished with all of this, I had to go to Gainesville and paint all of this sculpture in its original colors.

Later this work area was made into a three-room apartment for Chencho and his wife Deleri. Chencho (Ausencio Cruz Guzmán) was my Chol Maya friend who was so smart that he could read, write, and speak the Chol language fluently, the only person in the area who could do this. He worked with me on everything I did at Palenque, rubbings, photographs, and measurements of buildings. His wife Deleri was a perfectionist at keeping Na Chan-Balam clean and neat. In the yard



Figure 1. Working on the molds for the Florida Project.

we had a cacao tree that bore perfect pods. Right next to the cacao tree there was a small pond where I kept a little alligator that Karl-Herbert Mayer, my Austrian archaeological friend from Graz brought to me, much to Bob’s disgust. Of course my alligator mysteriously disappeared one night, and to this day I blame Bob.

La Cañada, the area of Palenque where our house Na Chan-Bahlum was built, was nearly all taken up by the Morales families—Moises with his eleven kids and his brother Carlos with his ten, plus all of the Morales cousins and grandparents. I was sort of squeezed into

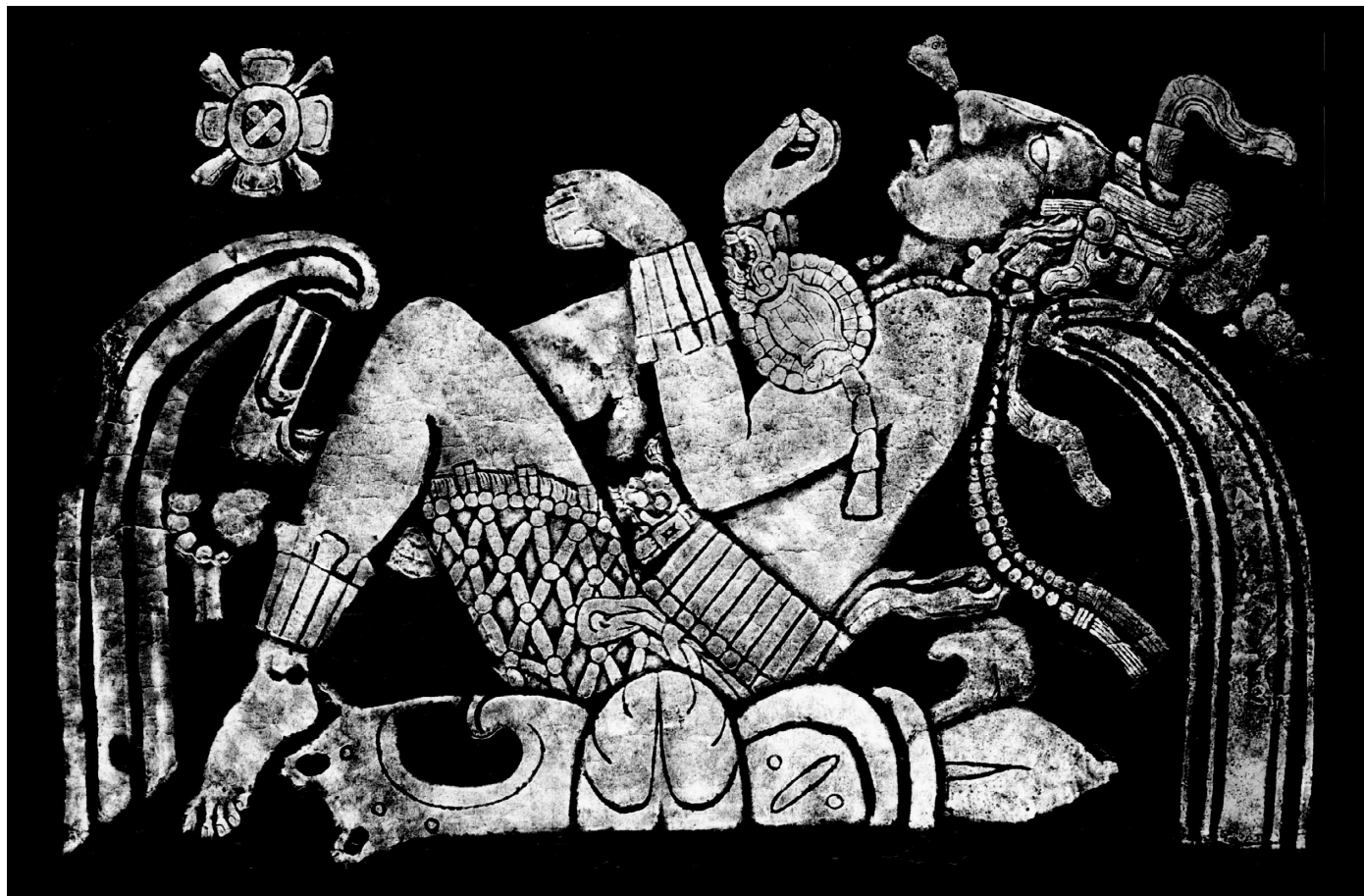


Figure 2. K'inich Janaab Pakal (detail of the Sarcophagus rubbing).

all of this Morales community. Chencho, not a Morales, became my “second in command.” I could not have done many of the things I did without him, like climbing all over the roofs of the Cross Group temples. I probably would have fallen off a roofcomb and killed myself if he had not been bracing me. Not only did he help me with my work, but he could fix anything—just like Alfonso. There wasn’t a thing Alfonso couldn’t fix—open doors or drawers whose keys were lost, drive my jeep with no gas, fix broken projectors, fix a broken water heater, steal water from another tank—anything. On top of that Alfonso spent most of his young years at our house reading, not only “who-done-its,” but archaeology books in English. Good guy to know, and a pleasure to have around.

Other than doing ceramic illustrating for Bob Rands, most of my time was spent doing rubbings of every stone sculpture at Palenque, with the first, and of course the hardest and most time consuming, the Sarcophagus in the Temple of the Inscriptions (Figure 2). Deep within the temple, actually three feet below the level of the Plaza floor, is the crypt, 4 x 9 meters, of the Palenque

King, K'inich Janaab Pakal, who was born in AD 603 and ruled from 615 until his death in 683. To reach this crypt, one must go down a long series of slippery steps in the dark to a platform that has a barred-metal door before the tomb. This is always kept locked so no one can get inside the tomb but can see the Sarcophagus. I had been given permission by the Mexican government to do a rubbing of the Sarcophagus and its cover in June 1964. This had not been an easy task—necessitating letters with gold seals from Dr. Elsasser in Berkeley, from the Mexican Consul, and the Director of INAH. Once inside the tomb, I found I was standing in limestone water over my shoes, and as the cover was at my chin level, I had quite a time boosting myself on top, as the cover was so large (379 x 220 cm). I had to do the rubbing in oil paint, as there was no way I could put a second sheet of this 1 x 2 meter rice paper next to the first sheet if done in sumi ink, as the ink would run at the edges. It took six sheets of paper to do the whole cover and a month’s time. It was a perfect way to do the Sarcophagus Cover, as I could control the shading by pressing thousands of thumb prints of paint against the paper.