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# The Identities of the Mythological Figures in the Cross Group Inscriptions of Palenque

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## Personae

The mythological family that is outlined in the inscriptions of the Temples of the Cross, the Sun, and the Foliated Cross at Palenque begins with a pair that came into being shortly before the start of the current chronological era, the male at minus 8.5.0 and the female at minus 6.14.0, or at 12.19.11.13.0 and 12.19.13.4.0 respectively, in the count of the previous era. The female has the spotlight in the initial passage of the Temple of the Cross, perhaps for a reason suggested in an earlier essay in this series (Lounsbury 1976). Evidence for recognizing the male of the pair, and for distinguishing him from his namesake in the next generation, was presented in another paper of this series (Lounsbury 1980).

After a long intergenerational span (some seven and a half centuries of mythicocosmological time), these two have issue in three closely spaced births. The first of the three offspring becomes the namesake of his sire. The other two bear different names, at least one of which also has a more ancient precedent. These three, whose births are registered at 1.18.5.3.2, 1.18.5.3.6, and 1.18.5.4.0, are the "Palenque Triad" (H. Berlin 1963). Individually, they have been known, following Berlin, as "GI," "GIII," and "GII," respectively, their numerical designations reflecting their order of listing when named together as cult objects, rather than their birth order as here. The letter "G" in these designations has served as an abbreviation and evasive substitute for the term "god", since at the time of Berlin's first study of these it was unclear whether the Triad figures could be equated with Maya deities, such as are known from the codices and from postconquest sources, or whether the evidence of the inscriptions might warrant the application of the term. The convention will be continued here, although in a later work these three were characterized as "dioses" (Berlin 1977), and here too they will be understood as such and on occasion referred to as "gods." Since it is now clear that there were two deities bearing the "GI" name, that is, designated by the "GI" name glyphs, it will be necessary to add distinguishing qualifiers to this designation whenever the context does not make it obvious which one is intended. Accordingly, the ancient progenitor, whose birth is at minus 8.5.0 (1 Ahau 8 Muan),

will be referred to as "the Senior GI"; his namesake in the Triad, whose birth is at 1.18.5.3.2 (9 Ik 15 Ceh), will be "the Junior GI" or "GI of the Triad." The other two members of the Triad will continue to be simply "GIII" and "GII."

After an even longer span of time – some thirteen and a half centuries this time – comes the next recorded birth, that of Kix-Chan (Serpent-Spine).<sup>1</sup> His parentage is not specified, but the context implies descent from the ancient pair. Finally, there is the birth of Kuk (Quetzal). Should my hazard as to the date of this event prove to be viable, it is only about ninety years after the birth of Kix-Chan.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing that can be taken as an index of his parentage, but the same line of descent is apparently to be assumed. In terms of the stratification of mythological time in this record, Kix-Chan and Kuk may perhaps be seen as a third "generation" in the line of gods and demigods from whom the rulers of Palenque claimed descent. They are the last in the mythological sequence. The next such leap through time – another thirteen and a quarter centuries – takes us to the beginning of the historical sequence, with the birth (at 8.19.6.8.8) of the first in a succession of seventeen rulers whose accessions are recorded at Palenque. From this date on, the intergenerational spans, the ages at accession, the life spans, and the durations of reigns and interregna are all within normal limits for human beings and human history. If interpreted according to the Goodman-Martínez-Thompson correlation, the historical sequence extends from A.D. 422 to some time after A.D. 799, with one or two gaps toward the end.

The events in the careers of the mythical forebears are sparingly detailed. (One must imagine an oral tradition accompanying and supplementing these minimal statistics.) For the ancient sire we have, in the Temple of the Cross, the records only of his "birth" (at minus 8.5.0), his "deerhoof" event (on day zero of the era, 4 Ahau 8 Cumhu), and his "sky" event (at 0.0.1.9.2), of which the latter two events are named here only for the distinctive components in their respective glyphs. As to the nature of these events, with human rulers the "deerhoof" event was apparently some kind of rite of legitimation or consecration carried out during childhood, the precise

character and function of which are not known. That it was something of considerable importance, however, may be inferred from the mythical case, for here, with the Senior GI, it was assigned to the date of the completion of the thirteen baktuns of the old chronological era, and it marked the inauguration of the new. The “sky” event, on the other hand, is not of a kind that is recorded for human rulers; or, if it was, it is not obviously so from the glyphs. Beyond these, there is passing reference in the Temple of the Inscriptions to one other event apparently involving the Senior GI (at 0.4.12.3.6), but the glyphs designating the event are not yet understood.

For the ancient mother, in the temples of the Cross Group there are recorded her “birth” (at minus 6.14.0); a presumably ‘sacrificial’ act on the completion of the second baktun of the era (the “fish/hand” event; see Proskouriakoff 1973); and her “accession to rulership,” on one of three alternative dates for which there is competing evidence (2.0.0.10.2, 2.1.0.14.2, or 2.1.0.15.2; cf. Berlin 1965a:330-331; Lounsbury 1976:219, n. 15); as well as the “births” of her offspring, those of the Triad, on the dates already noted. For these latter, perhaps most surprisingly, no mythological events other than their births are recorded. Yet they are named repeatedly, in several inscriptions, as objects of ritual or recipients of offerings during the course of later times, in events of which historical rulers were the protagonists. Though these three seem to have been the principal cult objects, they are not alone in this role, for the ancient pair as well as the two of the third “generation” appear sometimes in a similar capacity, though less frequently.

The question inevitably arises as to whether the characters named in these inscriptions are strictly local mythological figures, peculiar to Palenque, or whether they may have cognate manifestations elsewhere. A review of some of their attributes is necessary before venturing a speculative answer. The suspicion being entertained is that the senior pair together with the Triad – with expectable variations as to detail – may have been more or less pan-Maya deities (though their “birth” dates, surely, were Palenque contrivances), while the later ones may have been more local legendary forebears. In the pages that follow, an attempt will be made to ascertain the identities of some of the suspected pan-Maya deities and to determine also the readings of their name glyphs.

#### The Firstborn of the Triad, The Junior GI

As already noted, the firstborn of the Triad is the namesake of his sire. Were it not for the alfarda inscription from the Temple of the Cross, we would have no direct testimony that this “GI” was not the same as the other, though circumstantial evidence would foster the suspicion. With it, however, doubt is removed. But the two names are completely identical. The portrait glyph of the one born on 1.18.5.3.2, the GI of the Triad, has the same critical diagnostics as does the one born at minus 8.5.0, the prior holder of the name, who was involved in events long before the birth of his namesake. Moreover, the optional preposed gloss or praenomen is also the same for both (Fig. 1).

Some of the physiognomic features of the shared portrait glyph [T1011] are characteristic also of the Maya sun god, as the latter is known from the codices and from numerous carved and modeled representations of that deity (see Berlin 1963:92, 97; also J. E. S. Thompson 1970:236-237). These features include the marked Roman nose, the large eye opening with a somewhat squarish outer contour, and the protruding upper incisors. But other features – notably the cheek barbel (rather like a tuft of whiskers to the rear of the mouth corner), the hook-shaped marking on the eyeball (stemming from the top of the eye opening), and the shell ear ornament, which is nearly always present – are contrastive. These clearly exclude the sun god from candidacy for identification as GI, whether Senior or Junior.

The common portrait glyph that exhibits these features [T1011] is seen in reference to the Senior GI in the accounts of the above-mentioned mythological events of which he is the protagonist (TC: D8, D11, D16; TI-west:

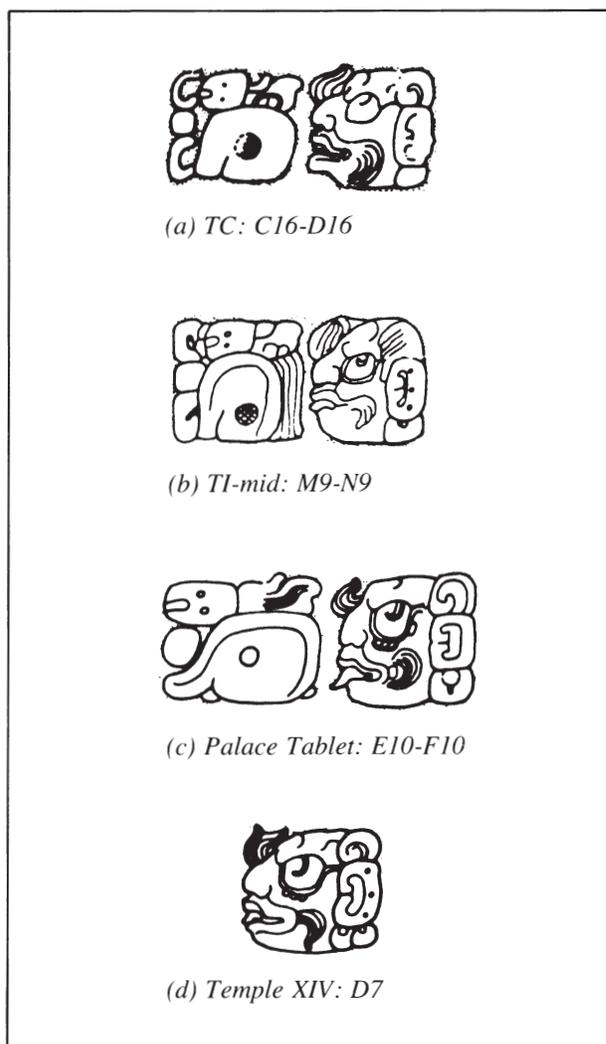


Fig. 1 The “GI” name glyphs.

O12); it apparently refers to this GI also in two of the records of ritual events (TS: Q10; TI-mid: N9). In reference to the Junior, during the mythological period, it is found in a single allusion to his birth (TC alfarda: B2). Its absence in the primary record of that event (TC: C17 seq.) has been discussed elsewhere (Lounsbury 1980). Other occurrences of the glyph in reference to the Junior GI are in connection with ritual events taking place during the historical period (TI-east: B8, D11, F9; TI-mid: D7, E6, J9; TI-west: A5; Hieroglyphic Stairway: C2b1; Palace Tablet: F10, I6). In another instance (TC sanctuary jamb, right), the reference is insufficiently clear.

The auxiliary name glyph [TI.84:785], which may precede the portrait glyph perhaps as a gloss or as a praenomen, is also found in references to both the Senior (TC: C8, C16; TI-mid: M9) and the Junior (Palace Tablet: E10, H15) of this successive-generation namesake pair.

The possibilities for identification of the mythological personages “GI,” and for the reading of their common glyphic appellatives, will be considered at a later point in the ensuing discussion. At this point, however, and contrary to a hypothesis that once invited consideration (Berlin 1963:92, 97), it appears that the field can be narrowed at least to the extent of eliminating the Maya sun god as a possibility.

### The Secondborn of the Triad, GIII

Though the firstborn of the Triad is known as “GI,” the secondborn is known not as “GII” but as “GIII.” The usage derives from the order of listing in the inscriptions whenever they are named together or serially. The naming order is firstborn, lastborn, secondborn.

The usual form of the name glyph of GIII (Fig. 2a-e) can be seen in the record of his birth (TS: D6); in the records of katun-ending rituals carried out by Pacal (TI-east: B9, D12, F10; TI-mid: E7, M5; TI-west: A6); in accounts of an important ritual carried out by Chan-Bahlum (TS: O6; TFC: O10); and in those of a pair of rituals carried out first for, and then by, Kan-Xul (Palace Tablet: E12, I7). The main sign is the “checkerboard” glyph [T594], so called because of the alternating light and dark squares that appear in drawings of the glyph. Had it been labeled for its crisscross of raised and depressed squares that actually appear in the stone, in photographs, and in some of the more accurate drawings, it might more appropriately have been labeled the “plain-weave” glyph. Prefixed or superfixed to it is an oval cartouche containing a youthful-appearing head with a small circular spot on the cheek [T239]. Some occurrences also have a suffix [T130], which is apparently an optional component. A reading of the entire glyph will be proposed after the relevant evidence has been adduced. In addition to this form of the GIII name glyph, there is also a single occurrence of a portrait glyph [T1010] in that function, in TI-mid: E4. That this is an alternate name glyph of GIII is assured by its context, in which it substitutes for the standard GIII glyph of a parallel passage, and in which also a critical detail requires that it refer to that deity.<sup>3</sup> The features of this portrait give a clue to the identity of GIII, and they offer a hypothesis

for the reading of the more usual name glyph. They will be considered shortly, after attending to the glyphic title that accompanies the name of GIII, which is also indicative.

### The GIII Title: Mah-K’ina

The name glyph of GIII, in its normal form, always carries a title whose components are the signs T74 and T184 (in one occurrence reduced to just T184). The title is sometimes superfixed, sometimes prefixed, and sometimes given in its head-form equivalent [T1010.184.74] in a separate and preceding glyph block (see Fig. 2 for the various arrangements). This title is one that is borne also by rulers – by some but not all – at Palenque and at several other sites. The basis for the discrimination, as to which rulers carried the title and which ones did not, is not yet fully understood. Its chronologically earliest applications in the Palenque texts are with the name glyph of GIII, making it appear as though the title was conceived of as deriving ultimately from him. It thus calls for some comment in this connection, for it must reflect

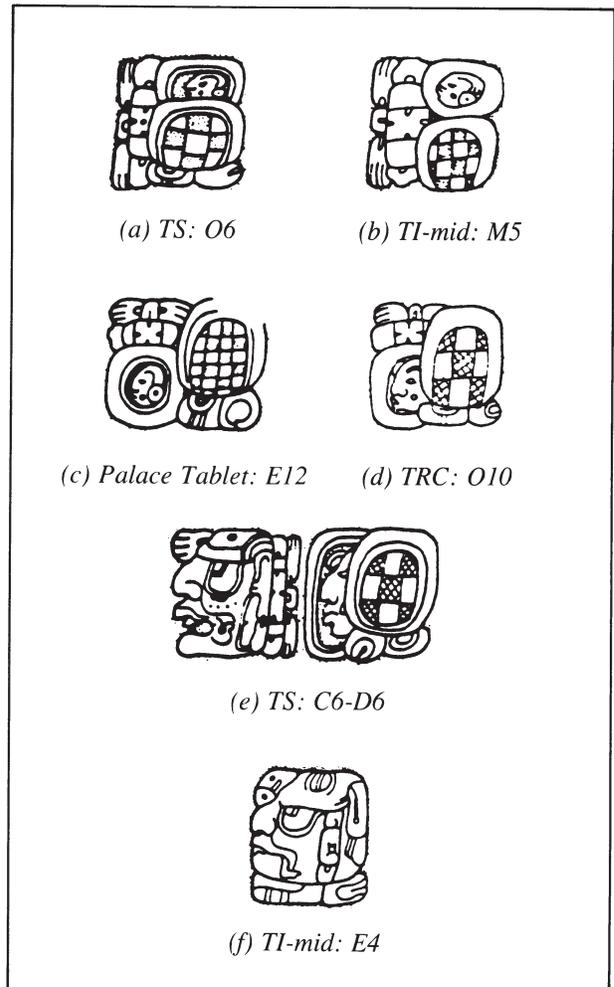


Fig. 2 The “GIII” name glyphs: (a-d) the more usual forms; (e) with head-variant title glyph; (f) portrait variant.

the character of GIII. It does not occur with the names of the other two of the Triad or with those of the senior pair, their progenitors. This restriction also points to GIII as its prototypic exemplar. In a brief note prefaced to the first volume in this series, in explanation of the cover design of that volume and without documentation of the evidence, a reading of *Mah-K'ina* was given for this title (Lounsbury 1974b). This was based on the following considerations.

The affix T184 is a Kin sign ('sun, day') flanked by a symmetrically repeated subordinate affix. The word for 'sun' and 'day' is phonetically *k'in* in Yucatecan and Cholan languages (with glottalized velar stop), *q'in* (with glottalized postvelar stop) in its proto-Mayan form, and surviving as such in Jacaltec though with narrowed meaning, *q'ih* in Cakchiquel, *q'i:h* in Quiché, and *q'e* in compounds in Kekchi. Conventional spellings are various: *kin* in colonial and traditional Yucatec orthography, *q'uin* in current Chol, *k'in* in Jacaltec, *k'e* in Kekchi, *k'ij* in Cakchiquel and Quiché, and *3ih* in a colonial orthography for these latter languages (except that the 3, the 'tresillo', was reversed), but simply *quih* in the manuscript of the Popol Vuh, where the tresillo was used only before *a* and *o* and in syllable-final position, and then only sporadically. The flanking subordinate affix in the earlier occurrences of T184 is not securely identifiable with any other known affix; but in the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, where there are eight occurrences, it is replaced by T23, which I take to be *na*, though Barthel (1954) has considered it as *al* (see Fig. 3). This motivated the reading *k'ina* for T184, but any of several interpretations (with *-a*, with *-al*, with some other suffix, or with no suffix at all) could be admitted within the leeway offered by the available linguistic data.

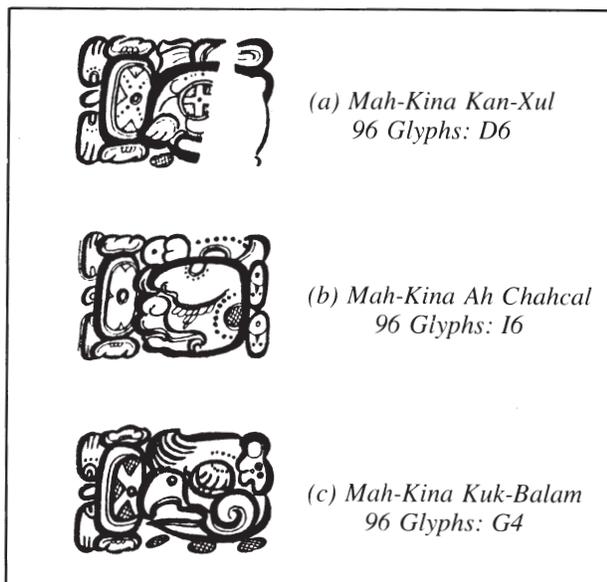


Fig. 3 Variant of the *Mah-Kina* title as in the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, preposed to the name glyphs of three Palenque rulers. T533 (*kin*) with flanking pair of affixes T23 (*na*), replacing T184 after prefix T74 (*ma*).

The other component of the title, T74, is Landa's *ma* sign. Landa illustrated its use for the negative particle *ma?* in the Yucatec phrase *ma? in k'ati*, 'yo no quiero'. In some of its other uses, as in glyphs for the month Mac and in those for the *mam* figures representing the outgoing old years in the Dresden Codex "new year" pages, it is employed phonetically (i.e., for less than a morpheme) in the value *ma*. In still other uses its contribution is semantic, with the sense of 'great' and with readings appropriate to the respective contexts. Thus with the 'great pyramid' glyph (TC: I1; TS: E2). So also in the 'south' glyph, where it confirms the special sense of *yax*, which also can mean 'great' (as well as 'first' and the colors 'green' and 'blue'), and where the combination has the reading *noh*, 'great' and 'right-hand side'. (See Thompson's explanation [1950:249] of the etymology of the word *nohol* for 'south'. The composition of the 'south' glyph is understandable only on the basis of that explanation.)<sup>4</sup> If a primary morphemic value with a reading of *ma* or *mah* and a meaning of 'great' is posited for the sign T74, then its various uses can be seen (1) as representing that morphemic value, both phonetic and semantic, or (2) as phonetic generalization, preserving the primary phonetic value but dropping or changing the semantic, or (3) as semantic generalization, preserving the primary semantic value but dropping or changing the phonetic. In the glyphic title here under consideration, it apparently had its full morphemic value.

There was a title *Mah* or *Ma* (depending on the language and/or the writer) that was in use among both highland and lowland Maya. Edmonson (1965), under the Quiche lexical entry *mam*, 'grandfather, ancestor, elder . . .', notes the following: "*Ma*: (elder) a Cakchiquel title in the early colonial period, particularly extended to heads of lineages." Examples cited are *Mah Q'inal*, *Mah Kinalo*, and *Mah Kinalon* (p. 70a). Another entry cites a title *Ch'uti Ma Pacal* (p. 106b). The forms *Maha* and *Maho* are also exemplified. Carmack (1973: 292) cites a form spelled *Mahquinalo*. In Chol the *Ma* title survives to the present day in a specialized application. Attinasi (1973:291) lists a root morpheme *ma* which he describes as a "prefix for chief mayordomo of a saint, affixed to the name of the saint".

Further, in Quiché, Cakchiquel, and Pokomchi there is a word *q'inom* meaning 'one who is rich, possessed of wealth'. It was used in the Popol Vuh (spelled there simply *quinom*) and is still in use in these languages today. Schultze-Jena (1944:270) glossed it as "der Reiche, Mächtige, Glückliche;" Edmonson (1965:100) gave it as "rich, wealthy, important." The derived word *q'inomal* is given as "Herrlichkeit" and as "wealth, leadership." In Yucatec a cognate word is *k'inil*, a verb form (traditional spelling, *kinil*). The Motul dictionary glosses it as "estar próspero, y reinar, y mandar" (Martínez Hernández 1929:516).

These are the considerations that led to the posited reading of *Mah K'ina* for the glyphic title T74•184. This reading was intended specifically for the graphic form that is exemplified in the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, as previously noted. The earlier graphic form may have

been premised on one of the other linguistic forms cited above, but its import will hardly be different. It may be seen as a title of adulation and magnification, 'Great Powerful One', 'Magnificent', or perhaps even literally 'Great Sun'. There is a question raised by the Quiché and Cakchiquel forms, however, as to whether the word that means 'rich and powerful' is a genuine cognate to the word for 'sun'. There is no problem with the Yucatec form, but in Quiché and Cakchiquel an *h* (or modern orthographic *j*) would be expected in place of *n* if the words are cognate. But if word borrowing was involved (and the title could well have been subject to diffusion), then the form can be accommodated. Or, if there are aspects of the phonological history of those languages that are not yet fully understood, it may also be accommodated. In any case, the glyph suggests a relationship between a conceptualization of the sun, the concepts of wealth and power, and the honorific title. Finally, it may be mentioned that Maquin is in Paul Wirsing's list (1930, V:13) of Kekchí family names and that Pierre Ventur has found it as a family name in documents from several municipios in the southern and central Petén, variously recorded as Maquín, Magquín, and Majquín.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a once hereditary noble title has been passed down as a family name.

As already noted and as illustrated in Figure 2, the glyphic form of this title may be prefixed or superfixed to the name glyph that it modifies; or, as in Figure 2e, it may be postfixed to the head-form glyph T1010, with this combination (occupying a separate glyph block) preposed to the glyphic name to which the title applies. This alternation between a prefix or superfix of the form T74•184 and a full glyph of the form T1010.184.74 is attested not only in combination with the name glyph of GIII of the Triad (TS: C6) but also with the names of some of the historical rulers who bore the title. For example, the full-glyph form of the title occurs four times in the Palace Tablet (in one instance varying to T1010.184: 116) preposed to the name glyphs of Pacal, Chan-Bahlum, and Kan-Xul (Palace Tablet: G6, J12, K9, O9, respectively), replacing the more usual prefixed or superfixed form in these contexts. The alternation is apparently free; that is, there are no discernible conditioning factors in the contexts. Their equivalence can therefore be assumed, and they may be considered as affix and head-form variants of the glyphic expression of the *Mah K'ina* title.<sup>6</sup> Their readings are thus assumed to have been the same, which requires then that the T1010 in the head-form variant be regarded as a determinative, or semantic indicator, making no additional contribution to the reading. Its choice, however, is significant. T1010 is one of the four or more different head-form Kin glyphs, namely, that one which is the portrait of the sun god himself. It usually carries an infixed simple Kin sign, confirming what is already obvious. And it alternates with the simple Kin glyph and/or with other Kin variants, in several contexts: (a) in initial series, for Kin, in the enumeration of 'days'; (b) in glyphs of the month Yaxkin, for the 'kin' component; (c) in representations of the numeral 'four', the number whose deity was the sun; and, expectably

though rarely, (d) as one of the several alternative signs for the day 'Ahau', the day whose deity was the sun (see Thompson 1950:88-89, 133, 137, 142-143, Figs. 17.5, 17.8, 24.20-25, 27.58-62). In the Palenque inscriptions it can be seen in each of these functions as well as in that first noted here, namely, (e) serving as a determinative and carrying glyph in the head-form variant of the Mahkina title. Examples are as follows; Figure 4 illustrates one example from each of these five categories:

(a) as Kin, 'days' – TFC: D4 (with coefficient 'zero', as part of a distance number);

(b) in month sign 'Yaxkin' – TI-mid: H1; Palace Tablet: D1; Temple XVIII: Schele and Mathews 1979:no. 479;

(c) for numeral 'four' – TFC: A6 ('four uinals'); TC: A6 (ibid.); Temple XVIII: Schele and Mathews 1979: no. 493 ('four days and twelve uinals');

(d) for day 'Ahau' – Temple XVIII: Schele and Mathews 1979: no. 489 ('12 Ahau');

(e) in head-variant 'Mahkina' – TS: C6 (with name glyph of GIII); TFC: L7 (with name glyph 'Kuk-Na'); Palace Tablet: G6, J12, K9, O9 (with name glyphs of Pacal [twice], Chan-Bahlum, and Kan-Xul).

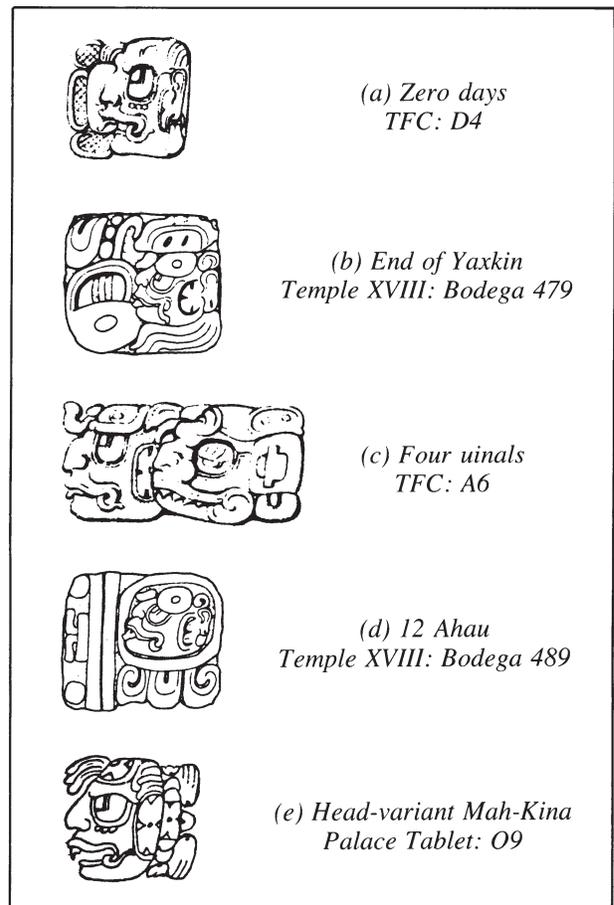


Fig. 4 The visage of the sun god, T1010, in its symbolic values as Kin 'days,' as kin in the month sign Yaxkin, as the numeral 'four', as the day Ahau, and as the main sign of the head-variant Mah-Kina title.

It is thus the portrait of the Maya sun god that is employed as a determinative and carrying glyph supporting the affixed components in the head-form variant of the *Mah K'ina* glyphic title. This is nicely in accord with the apparent etymology of the term (whether it be a historically correct one or only a self-suggesting folk etymology), and it implies at least an awareness of a possible literal rendering of the term, such as was mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Beyond this, if GIII of the Triad was indeed conceived of as the first and prototypic holder of this title, it offers a hypothesis for his identification.

So much for the GIII title. There is more that must be considered now concerning his name glyph.

### The Name of GIII

The name glyph of GIII of the Triad, in all references but one, is a compound based on the so-called checkerboard or plain-weave glyph, as already noted (see Fig. 2a-e). In the one exception (Fig. 2f), which will engage our attention first, GIII is named with a portrait glyph which has a small Ahau sign affixed to the upper left, over the nose and sloping forehead of the face, and a suffix [T130] below the head. This portrait too is quite surely that of the Maya sun god [T1010], although it lacks the infixed Kin sign that is usually present, as in the examples cited in the preceding section. Its other features, however, permit of no other identification. With the attached Ahau sign, all indications are that this glyph was to be read as *Ahaw K'in*. The suffix supports the hypothesis. T130 is commonly employed as a phonetic sign either to add or to confirm a final *w*, as in the *cacaw* glyphs ('cacaw') of the codices and in *Cazew* (the month sign corresponding to Tzec or Ze'ec of Yucatec), *Onew* or *Uniw* (the month sign corresponding to Yucatec Kan-kin), and *Ahaw* ('Ahau' as a personal title and as a katun title), all of which end with the phoneme *w*, a semivowel that patterns as a consonant in Mayan phonology (not as a vowel, as the spellings in the Spanish manner would suggest). In glyphic representations of the Ahau title, of which there are several, T130 commonly accompanies the sign that is employed for that title. This may be an affixed standard Ahau [T533] as in the present case (Fig. 2f), or the profile variant [T239] as in the cases next to be considered, or yet others such as the vulture variant [T747a] and the so-called "Ben-Ich" variant [T168], the latter having *Ahaw* among its possible readings, especially when accompanied by T130.

If now this portrait variant of the name of GIII identifies him as the sun god, and if it is to be read as *Ahaw K'in* (or appropriate cognate, depending on the language), then the more usual variant T239•594(:130), having the same reference, may be suspected also of having either the same meaning or the same reading. A case can be made for the latter. It rests on a determination of the possible values of T239 and T594.

The head that is contained in the cartouche of the affix T239, with the circular spot on the cheek, is equivalent to one or more of the main-sign group T1000c, d, e, f, g, and i with similar spots. With an affixed small Ahau

(of the form of T533) as in d, e, f, and i of this group, it is confirmed in many contexts as a head-form variant of the Ahau title. Contained in the cartouche, and with or without the small affixed T533, it serves as a head-variant sign of the day Ahau (see Thompson 1950:87-88, Fig. 11). Within the cartouche, but serving as an affix [T239] as here, it is surely another representation of the Ahau title or possibly also of the shorter title Ah. The occasional use of the suffix T130, however, confirms the value Ahau (i.e., *Ahaw*) at least in those instances.

In the Palenque inscriptions, there are several instances of the employment of this head-form sign in contexts that definitely require its interpretation as 'Ahau'. Examples may be seen in expressions that designate the tzolkin days 'One Ahau' (see Fig. 5a) and 'Twelve Ahau' (Fig. 5c); also in the title 'One-katun Ahau', applied to a ruler who on the accompanying date had completed one katun as the 'lord' – *Ahaw* – of Palenque (Fig. 5e); and in 'seating expressions, with prefixed locative [T51, 103, 113, 565], designating the kingly office or status into which a ruler is installed on his accession day (Fig. 5d) or has been installed for a stated length of time since his accession day (Fig. 5e, f). In each of these uses the head-form sign alternates with other well-established 'Ahau' variants, such as the standard form T533, the culture variant T747a, and the *Ahpo* or *Pop-Ahaw* variant T168.

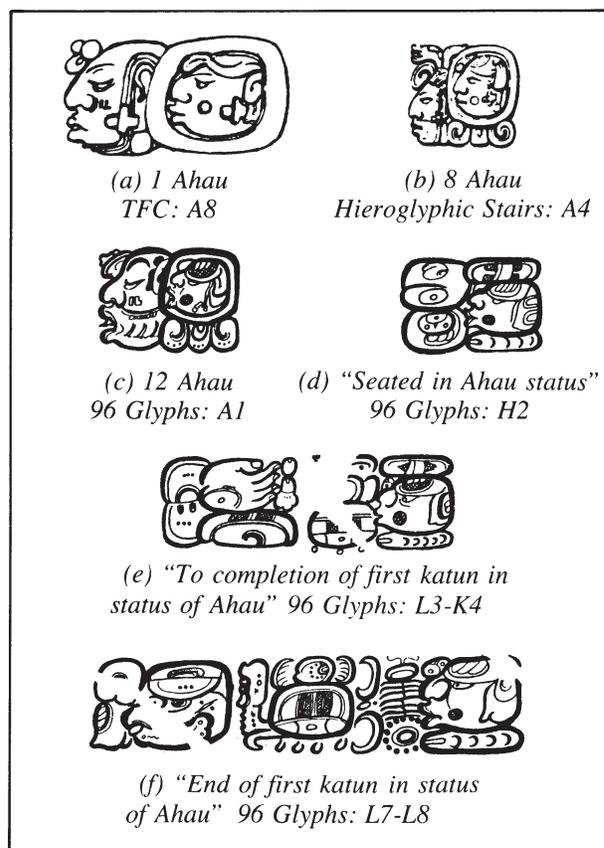


Fig. 5 The profile Ahau: T1000 variants with circular spot on cheek, with affixed T533 and/or contained in cartouche. (For prefixed form [T239] see Fig. 2.)

Though this head with the circular spot on the cheek, when neither contained in a cartouche nor carrying the small Ahau forehead affix (as in T1000c and g), is susceptible to other readings,<sup>7</sup> it is amply clear that when carrying the Ahau forehead affix (as in T1000d, e, f, and i) or when contained in a cartouche (as in T239 and T239MS) or both, its value was that of an Ahau variant and its reading was *Ahaw*. This conclusion is supported not only by the evidence at Palenque but by that contained in inscriptions at other sites as well.

We are left finally with the “checkerboard” glyph [T594], which, as already noted, may better be seen as a depiction of a plain-weave mat pattern. If the principal variant of the GIII name glyph – like the portrait variant that substitutes for it – is also to be read as *Ahaw K'in* (or appropriate cognate), and with the *Ahaw* taken care of in the affixes [T239, T130], then it remains for the checkerboard/plain-weave glyph somehow to be readable as *K'in* (or *Q'in*, *Q'ih*, or *Q'e*, depending on the language). Now it happens that the four principal verb roots for ‘weave’ in the Mayan languages (as far as I know) are *hal*, *hit'*, *kem/chem*, and *q'in*. Sáenz (who uses *k* for *q* and *q* for *k* in just the reverse of the usage of the International Phonetic Alphabet) gives *k'in* (= IPA *q'in*) in Cakchiquel both for laying warp threads and for weaving; and he lists several derivations from that root that apply to a weaver, to weaving implements, and to a ‘weaving’ or back-and-forth movement (Sáenz de Santa María 1940:213). For Quiché, Edmonson lists the root *q'in* with the meanings of “weave, cloth, woof, weaving cotton in the loom”; and he gives derivations from this root, one of which is *q'inom*, “woven”, homonymous with the *q'inom* mentioned earlier, meaning “rich, wealthy, important” (Edmonson 1965:100). The root is present also in Kekchi and in Pokomchi, though documented only in the sense of winding yarn on a bobbin or skein winder or of the hank so wound (Sedat 1955:95; Zuñiga n.d.:170).

At present I have no way of knowing the complete distribution of this root within the Mayan language family, or its probable antiquity, or whether, in those languages that have it or had it, it could be used for the sort of weaving that is depicted in the glyph (as in the simplest forms of mat weaving and basketry) as well as for the weaving of cloth. Pending verification or contradiction of this possibility, it is tempting to suppose that this plain-weave glyphic sign was indeed to be read *q'in* and therefore that both of the GIII name glyphs – this one with the plain-weave sign and profile-Ahau prefix [T239•594:(130)] as well as the hapax consisting of the portrait glyph with a small Ahau forehead appendage [T1000(d, e, f, i):130] – were read as *Ahaw Q'in* if the language at Palenque in the seventh century still maintained the postvelar-versus-velar opposition or as *Ahaw K'in* if that contrast had already been lost. And if this was their common reading, literally “Lord Sun,” then GIII must have been Palenque’s version of the Maya sun god.

In the Maya codices the glyphic name of the sun god is T168:544.130. Of these components, T544 is the ordinary Kin sign, as for ‘sun’ and ‘day’, phonetically *k'in*

in Yucatec. T168 was quite certainly the title *Ah* in Yucatec, and accompanied by T130 (final *-w* or *-aw*) the combination stood for the title *Ahaw* (cf. Thompson 1971, also 1972:151, col. 5; Lounsbury 1973). The sun god of the codices, then, also was known as *Ahaw K'in*, ‘Lord Sun’.

This was not his only Mayan name. Thompson (1970: 235-236) listed others that are documented in historical and in modern sources: Ah Kin, ‘He of the Sun’ or ‘Lord Sun’ (Chorti); Kinich Ahau, ‘Sun-Face or Sun-Eye Lord’ (colonial Yucatec); Kitix, ‘Sun God’ (Ixil); Balanke or Balamque, ‘Jaguar-Sun’ (Kekchi); and Hun Kak, literally ‘One-Fire’ (Lacandón). (The letter *k* in these citations is for *k'* in the lowland languages and for *q'* in those of the highlands.) Thompson also listed titles that are still in use for the sun: ‘Our Father’, ‘Grandfather’, ‘Our Lord’, ‘Holy Father’, and one that is literally ‘Flower-Eye’ or ‘Flower-Face’, metaphorically ‘god-eye’ or ‘god-face’ (or ‘sun-eye’ or ‘sun-face’).

### Mythological Identities

It is time now to pose the central question, because the answer is already obvious. If – as the evidence now suggests – GIII is the sun god, and if there are two GIs of whom the junior is the namesake of the senior, then who are the GIs? They just about have to be the local equivalents of Hun Hunahpu and Hunahpu of the Popol Vuh, unless one is to make up a whole new mythology. And if these are the identities of the GIs, then GIII, *Ahaw K'in* (or *Ahaw Q'in*), must be equated with Xbalanque of the same myth. This follows automatically if one accepts Thompson’s conclusion concerning the proper identities of the leading characters in that story, according to which Hunahpu became Morning Star and Xbalanque became Sun in the hypothetically original version (Thompson 1950:218a, also 1970:233-241, 364, esp. 368-369).

But not everyone agrees with Thompson; nor does the Popol Vuh have it that way. According to the Popol Vuh: “The one the sun, the other the moon his lot.” And since Hunahpu and Xbalanque are always named in that order, the implication is that it was Hunahpu who was to be the sun and Xbalanque who was to be the moon. This makes the sun and the moon brothers. As Thompson noted, this goes against the otherwise universal Maya conception of the moon as female: ‘Our Mother’ (Lacandón, Chol, Chorti, Tojolabal, Mam); ‘Holy Mother’ (Chol, Tzeltal, Tzotzil); ‘Mistress’ or ‘Lady’ (Mam, Jacalteco, Aguacatec, Tojolabal, Chuh); ‘Our Grandmother’ (Quiché, Cakchiquel). And where the moon is related to the sun, it is as an inconstant wife or sweetheart among the Maya. Moreover, where the sun has a brother or brothers, and where identities are specified (as they are in myths collected by Thompson from the Mopán and by Wirsing from the Kekchi), the elder brother is the morning star Venus. Thus, in Thompson’s Mopán version: “This boy, Lord Kin, was the second brother. His eldest brother was Lord Xulab, or Nohoch Ich (Big Eye), who later was to become the planet Venus, and the youngest brother, the T’up [‘lastborn’], was to be-

come one of the other planets, either Mars or Jupiter” (Thompson 1930:120). But there is also an unpublished Cakchiquel version recorded by Redfield in the town of Palopo, in which there were three brothers of whom “the elder ones became the sun and the moon, and the youngest they turned into a monkey” (Thompson 1970:357).

The fact is that, in the folklore of Middle America, there are three competing versions of the “relationship” between the sun and the moon: they are elder brother and younger brother (sometimes twins), or they are brother and sister, or they are husband and wife (or sweethearts). Contradictory versions are sometimes current in the same community, even narrated by one and the same informant.<sup>8</sup> Thompson concluded that the version having priority among the Maya was that in which the two brothers (the elder two) take on the roles of Venus and the sun and in which the moon (who is not their sibling) is female. He considered that the Quiché version of the Popol Vuh, together with Redfield’s Cakchiquel version, was the result of non-Maya influences intrusive into that area.

In the Palenque version we have a set of three, who are pretty clearly brothers, of whom the secondborn is Lord Sun and of whom the firstborn carries the name of his sire. In the first two features (there being a triad and the secondborn being the sun) there is a formal similarity to the Mopán and Kekchi arrangements; in the third feature (the firstborn being the namesake) there is similarity to that of the Popol Vuh; and in the second and third features together there is conformity to Thompson’s hypothetic prior or uncorrupted version of the same. It will be argued now that, at least as far as Palenque is concerned, Thompson’s version is correct. Evidence will be presented first supporting the identification of ‘Xbalanque’ with the sun and, second, supporting the identification of Palenque’s GIII with Xbalanque of the Popol Vuh. Evidence has already been given supporting the identification of GIII with the sun. The evidence for the first proposition is linguistic, for the second iconographic, and for the third (already presented) hieroglyphic.

### Linguistic Evidence

The spelling of the name Xbalanque in the extant Popol Vuh manuscript is doubly ambiguous in regard to the consonant of the final syllable. In syllable-initial position before the front vowels *i* and *e*, the author or the copyist did not distinguish either between the postvelar and the velar positions of articulation or between the glottalized and the unglottalized manners of articulation. Thus, throughout the Popol Vuh as we have it, *qu* before *i* or *e* presents a four-way choice to the readers: it may be *k*, *k'*, *q*, or *q'* (corresponding to *c/qu*, *4*, *k*, and *3*, respectively, of the sixteenth-century Parra alphabet for Quiché). As translators have testified, the choice is not always an easy one (cf. Edmonson 1971:xiii). In the name ‘Xbalanque’, Edmonson took the *qu* to represent a simple *k* and translated the name as ‘Jaguar-Deer’. Other translators have mostly not committed themselves in this case, keeping the name in the spelling of the manuscript and leaving it untranslated. Schultze-Jena (1944) transliterated it with *k* in his analytical vocabulary

but left it uninterpreted as to meaning. Thompson, though not reflecting it in his spellings, took it to be *q'* and interpreted the name as ‘Jaguar-Sun’ in a form stemming from Kekchí. There is probably no way of being sure what sound or what meaning (if any) the Quiché writer of the Popol Vuh may have had in mind when he wrote *que* in the last syllable of this name – if this indeed was his spelling, rather than that of a copyist. There is no evidence that he had either ‘sun’ or ‘deer’ in mind; but as for the sound, it could well have been *q'*. (It should be remembered that the tresillo was not used before front vowels in the extant manuscript.)

The word for ‘sun’ appears many times in the Popol Vuh. Without exception it is spelled *quih*, representing – ambiguously in its initial – the Quiché word *q'i:h*. Also occurring many times is the word for ‘deer’; and without exception it is written either *queh* or *quieh*, representing the Quiché word *keh* or *kyeh* (different dialect forms). The words for both ‘sun’ and ‘deer’ in the Popol Vuh always have final *h*; the name Xbalanque never does. Thus the evidence of the spelling supports neither interpretation of the final syllable of Xbalanque. (Note that the colonial orthographies used *h* for the final fricative or spirant of these words, rather than *j* as is current Guatemalan practice.) The most that can be concluded is that the name is very likely of extraneous origin. Thompson, for good reason, believed that its form was Kekchí and that the name and portions of the myth were diffused from that source to the Quiché.

Wirsing’s Kekchí dictionary (1930, IV:12) has the entry: “Sonnengott, *cavua balamqu'e, cavua sacqu[']e*.” Wirsing usually distinguished between glottalized and unglottalized varieties of the stop consonants, but he consistently failed to distinguish between the velars and the postvelars. Phonetically the above forms are *qa:wa? ba:lamq'e* and *qa:wa? saqq'e* (where prevocalic *w* is, at least in some dialects, a labiovelar fricative or occlusive). The word for ‘sun’ and ‘day’, which is *q'in*, *q'ih*, *q'i:h*, or *k'in* in other Mayan languages, is *q'e* in Kekchí. It remains in that form in the sense of ‘day’, while as ‘sun’ it is compounded with the adjective *saq* ‘white, bright’ (cognate to the familiar Yucatec word commonly spelled *zac*). Thus the second of the Kekchí appellations of their sun god may be understood as ‘Lord Sun’, the first as ‘Lord Jaguar-Sun’ (literally ‘Our Lord’ or ‘Our Father’, ‘Bright-Sun’, and ‘Jaguar-Sun’).

Dieseldorff, who was acquainted with the Kekchí and other Maya in and around Coban, gave the following pertinent item of information: “The name of the sun god ‘Xbalamké’ occurs often in the myths of the Kekchí. But only once did I hear it from the mouth of a laborer from the lowlands. This man was under suspicion of having stolen a tobacco pipe; and when I accused him of the theft, he pointed excitedly with his hand to the sun and cried out: *nax nau li caguá Xbalamké, inccá xin vanu*: ‘Our Lord Sun [Xbalamké] knows that I didn’t do it’” (author’s translation from Dieseldorff 1926:35).

Las Casas gave the name as *Exbalanquen* for some language or dialect of the Alta Verapaz region (Miles 1957:748; Recinos et al. 1951:162, n. 10). The variations

in spelling thus imply a morpheme whose form in some Mayan language ends with *n* but which in some other Mayan language ends in a vowel without the final nasal, as well as without a final spirant. The word for 'sun' qualifies; that for 'deer' does not.

I am uncertain of the origin of the 'Jaguar-Deer' interpretation. Possibly it began with Dieseldorff. His attempt at etymologizing went as follows:

The final syllable *ké* occurs also as the last syllable of the Kekchí word for 'sun', *sakké*, which is 'white *ke*'. *Ké* is the word for 'cold', but this meaning is not appropriate here. More plausible, it seems to me, is that it is a reduction of *kej*, 'deer'; for the white spot on the rump of the deer [der weisse Spiegel des Rehs] may suggest the sun. *Xbalamké* could thus perhaps be a compound of [the words for] 'puma' and 'deer'. (author's translation from Dieseldorff 1926:35-36).

There are several obvious things wrong with this. First of all is the ignoring of three phonological contrasts: postvelar versus velar, glottalized versus unglottalized, and presence versus absence of the velarized laryngeal spirant (the "hache recia") in final position, all of which differences are distinctive in Kekchí. The name of the sun god and the word for 'sun' in Kekchí have the morpheme *q'e*; the word for 'deer' is as Dieseldorff has it, namely, *kej*, writing Spanish *j* for the spirant. ('Cold' is *ke*, without a final spirant.) Second is the supposition that the root morpheme for 'sun' is in need of any further etymology. Would he have required one for *Sonne* or *sol*? Third is the inattention to the free use of the morpheme *q'e* in the sense of 'day' in Kekchí, plus the fact that this *q'e* and that contained in the word for 'sun' are the Kekchí form that is cognate to the words for 'sun' and 'day' in other Mayan languages, such as *q'in*, *q'i:h* and *k'in*. (There is another, more common word for 'day' in Kekchí, *kutan*, common spelling *cutan*, which might account for Dieseldorff's not having considered *q'e* with this meaning.)

Neither is it entirely clear what led Edmonson to translate Xbalanque as 'Jaguar Deer'. This particular problem is not among those dealt with in the otherwise helpful explanatory notes to his translation of the Popol Vuh, but a note in the introduction refers the reader to his Quiché dictionary (1965) for documentation of sources of word meanings. There, under *balam*, 'jaguar', one finds *Ix Balam Keh*, with a final *h*, glossed as 'moon jaguar deer' and followed by a brief synopsis of the career of the young hero of the Popol Vuh, concluding with the statement that "the myth is unrecognizably memorialized in the modern Jaguar-Deer dance (Xahoh Ix-Balam Keh, q.v.)," then with the further entry *Ix Balam Ke*, without final *h*, glossed as 'jaguar cub', with Recinos (1947) cited as authority for this latter meaning. Since the name of the hero is always without an *h* in the Popol Vuh, while the word for 'deer' is always with an *h*, one could argue that this latter entry might better have been the one under which to subsume the hero's name and curriculum vitae, rather than the former. But the ethnographic datum appears to have been decisive. Following up the cross-reference, one finds under *xahoh*, 'dance', the following: "*Ix-Balam Keh*: (jaguar deer) the Jaguar Deer dance of Rabinal and elsewhere, a drama of the death and resurrection of the 13 days, twentieth century." The datum is from manuscript field notes of C. R. Mace (Edmonson 1971:135, n. 4395).

But for this last item, whose source is unpublished and which cannot now be evaluated, it must be said in summary that the available primary linguistic data either support or permit of Thompson's 'Jaguar-Sun' interpretation of the name Xbalanque, while they effectively bar the 'Jaguar-Deer' alternative.

#### Iconographic Evidence

There is a painted Maya vase in the collection of the Museum of Primitive Art (New York) depicting a scene that may be construed as bearing on this subject (Fig. 6). It has been reproduced in print and commented upon

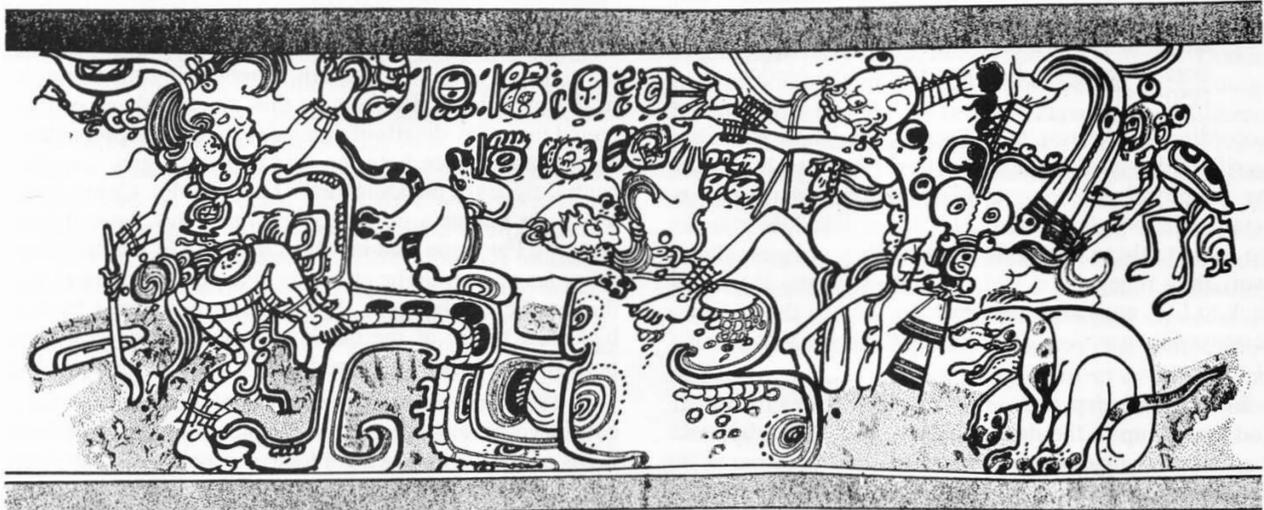


Fig. 6 Roll-out of a scene on a Maya vase reminiscent of an episode in the Popol Vuh. Collection of the Museum

of Primitive Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (After M. D. Coe 1973b: no. 45)

several times prior to this, the first and most detailed studies being those of Foncerrada de Molina (1970, 1972), with more recent illustrations and interpretive notes by M. D. Coe (1973b:98-99, 1978:34-38) and by Robicsek (1978:159-160, pls. 197-182) and yet others, with briefer notes, by Thompson (1970: pl. 302, 304, pl. 14d) and Taylor (1979:83). The vase is judged to date from the Late Classic period and to be from southern Campeche or the northern Petén (Coe 1973b:98). The scene that is depicted appears to be of a climactic episode from the cycle of myths about Hunahpu and Xbalanque (*Xbalamq'ë*) that found its way into the Quiché text of the Popol Vuh. It is the final one of a series that take place in the court of the death god Hun Camé, first lord of the underworld, leading to the humiliation of him and his kind in retaliation for their destruction of the heroes' father and father's brother, Hun Hunahpu and Vucub Hunahpu. The Popol Vuh relates it approximately as follows:

They began their singing and dancing, and all Xibalba gathered to see them. They acted out several of their dances: the 'weasel', the 'owl', the 'armadillo'. Then the lord said to them, "Cut now my dog into pieces, and let him be brought back to life." "Very well," they answered, and they cut the dog into bits; and in an instant he was whole again. And the dog was filled with joy at being brought back to life, wagging his tail when they had revived him. Then the lord said to them, "Now burn down my house." Immediately they put the lord's house to fire, and though the lords were assembled within, they were not burned; and then suddenly the house was whole again. The lords were amazed, and these dances gave them great pleasure. Then the lord said, "Now kill a man; sacrifice him, yet do not let him die." "Very well," they answered, and seizing a man, they sacrificed him, raising his heart on high for all the lords to see; and a moment later the man was alive again, his heart being filled with joy as he returned to life. The lords were simply astounded. "*Sacrifice now yourselves! Let us see that!*" said the lords. "Very well, Sirs," they answered; and they proceeded to *sacrifice each other*. (free paraphrase, more or less after Recinos, Goetz, and Morley 1950:158)

According to the rest of the story, Hunahpu was first sacrificed by Xbalanque and brought back to life, with the reciprocal act being implied though not related in detail, after which the lords of Xibalba asked them to do, the same to them – to which request they obliged. However, they reneged on their promise to bring the lords back to life, until after they had vanquished their realm, destroyed their power, and reduced them to a lower order of existence.

In the scene depicted on the vase, one sees the death god caught up in the dance, his dog seated nearby, and the heroes engaged in their act. If the scenario ran as in the Popol Vuh version, it can be presumed that the dog and Hunahpu have already received the treatment and that at this moment it is the turn of Xbalanque to undergo the same at the hands – or the battle-ax – of Hunahpu.

Xbalanque lies on his back on a "Cauac monster" altar, feet in the air, while Hunahpu prances about, swinging his ax in his right hand and a circular stone knife (with the features of a 'God C' mask) in his left hand, about to administer the coup to his partner. The depiction of the scene and the action unmistakably identify the event and thus also the participants. The details of portraiture of the leading characters, moreover, equally clearly tell us who the pair are and which one is which. The spotted jaguar ear, the paws, and the tail of the one on the chopping block all say *Balam*, 'Jaguar', while the outer contour of the eye, the square pupil in the inner corner of the eye, and the protruding filed incisors, together with the nose, chin, and line of the face, are diagnostic of the sun god – and of Palenque's GIII – and say *Q'in*, *K'in*, *Q'e*, or whatever was 'Sun' in the language of the painter. Together these give his name as 'Jaguar-Sun' and identify him with the sun god, with the Kekchí (*X*)*Balamq'ë*, and with GIII of the Palenque Triad, while the event that is in progress serves to identify him with the Xbalanque of the Popol Vuh, thus implying *Xbalamq'ë* as the proper form of that name. This leaves the dancing figure with the ax as the one who is Hunahpu in the scene; and his curled cheek barbel together with the shell ear ornament mark him moreover as GI of the Triad, thus identifying Palenque's GI with Hunahpu.

This is not the first time that these identifications – or at least some of them – have been made. In 1970 Marta Foncerrada de Molina identified the supine figure as an anthropozoomorphic representation of the Maya sun god, noting that its facial features are those typical for that deity in Classic period iconography and, of particular interest, that its jaguar features – paws, ears, and tail – might have reference to the nocturnal transformation of the sun, the jaguar being one of the Maya symbols of the night sun. She noted also the obvious identity of the death god. As for the dancing figure with cheek barbel and reptilian scutes, swinging the stone ax and the God C mask, she concluded in 1970 that it appeared to represent a deity rather than a human, and she suggested some possible interpretations – that there might be depicted here a scene from a cosmological myth, perhaps involving the day sun and the night sun, symbolizing the triumph of life over death. But beyond this, she noted and enumerated the many details of similarity in features, accoutrements, and stance between this dancing figure and the central figure of the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet. Citing Beatriz de la Fuente's opinion (1968) that this latter figure was of a Palenque lord involved in an act of indisputably religious and symbolic character, Foncerrada pointed out the parallelism between the ritual act performed by the historical figure of the tablet and the mythological one performed by the young god of the vase.

In 1972 Foncerrada carried the analysis a step further, considering the same scene in the light of several pertinent items of data and drawing a logical conclusion. The data included (1) the Popol Vuh account of the victorious emergence of Hunahpu and Xbalanque from Xibalba and their assumption of celestial luminary functions, (2) the assignment of the sun to Hunahpu and the moon to Xbalan-

que, according to the Popol Vuh, (3) the equivalence of the highland day name Hunahpu and the lowland name Ahau, (4) the sun god's status as patron or deity of the day Ahau, (5) the mythological representation of the sun as a youth who courted the moon, and (6) a Lacandon myth of the nightly descent of the sun into the underworld, its journey through the regions of death, and its morning emergence, renewal, and ascent into the sky. Since the young dancing figure in the vase scene may be seen as a victorious one and since he is positioned before the open jaw of the Cauac monster, a possible earth symbol, Foncerrada suggested that he might be seen as Hunahpu, about to begin his celestial ascent and transformation into the day sun (in line with the Popol Vuh version). But the supine figure on the Cauac monster has features that identify him also with the sun. Because of his jaguar form and because his face did not appear to be youthful in the way in which that of the other figure was, she suggested that this one might represent the old sun, falling to the earth and beginning to assume his jaguar transformation. Thus the possibility was raised that these two principals in the scene might symbolize different aspects or states of the sun, the artist having disposed spatially – in relation to the earth monster – the symbols of events that in nature are temporally as well as spatially distributed. Except for a brief mention as the associate of Hunahpu and as the one whose share was to be the moon, Xbalanque did not figure in this interpretation. (No figure in the scene is a likely candidate for the lunar role which the Popol Vuh assigns to that character.) The dancing youth, however, was taken to be Hunahpu.

Coe's interpretation (1973b:98-99) differs in a number of details yet in some respects is similar or ultimately equivalent. Taking note of the cheek barbel and the shell ear ornament of the dancing "young god" at the left, he pointed out that this is "a combination which makes it virtually certain that this is god GI of the Palenque Triad." He noted then also the several striking similarities of detail between this figure and the central one of the Dumbarton Oaks panel. The figure lying on the Cauac monster he described as "a small were-jaguar, with the paws, tail, and ears of a jaguar, but with certain sun-god features," identifying it as "an infantile form of the jaguar god of the underworld, lord of the number Seven." He took the scene to be one in the underworld, in which the jaguar figure was about to be decapitated by the dancer with the ax. This he suspected might have an astronomical meaning, though it still eluded complete interpretation. The interpretation of Robicsek (1978:159-160) followed that of Coe. The notion of the "jaguar god of the underworld," lord of the number Seven (and of the day Akbal), identified with the "night sun", is from Thompson (1950: 74, 135).

The interpretation offered here agrees in part with those that have preceded, disagrees in a few details of secondary importance, and makes two further identifications. The dancing youth who was interpreted as Hunahpu by Foncerrada de Molina, and as GI of the Palenque Triad by Coe, is here taken to be *both* of these, equating the latter with the former. But in partial disagreement with the first

interpretation and with the Popol Vuh on which it was based, Hunahpu is not here understood to be in any way identified with the sun. In this, the present interpretation is in agreement rather with Thompson's hypothesis about the myth, based on comparative evidence. The second principal in the scene, the were-jaguar that was identified as the old sun god (in transformation into the night sun) by Foncerrada de Molina and as an infantile jaguar god of the underworld by Coe, is here taken to be simply the Maya sun god, without age restriction, and is equated with the Mopán and Kekchi sun gods, *Ahaw K'in* and *(X)Balamq'e*, as well as with the Xbalanque of the Popol Vuh (this latter, that is, in all respects *except* that of his postapotheosis role assignment). Further, he is understood here also to be GIII of the Palenque Traid, making the further equation of Palenque's GIII with the Maya sun god.

While it may seem appropriate, considering the scene and the myth, to regard this figure as a "jaguar god of the underworld," it should be noted that none of the evidence reviewed here gives grounds for equating him with any of the other supposed identities and manifestations of the deity known by that term, as it has been understood and applied by Thompson and others. In particular, he is *not* the deity that is depicted with the looped and twisted cord – the so-called cruller – over the nose bridge and between the eyes, whom Thompson (1950) designated as the jaguar god of the underworld (pp. 88, 134), the jaguar god of the dark interior of the earth (p. 74), the lord of the day Akbal (pp. 73-75, 88-89), the patron of the month Uo (pp. 105, 107, 118), and the lord of the number Seven (pp. 88, 107, 134). The diagnostic features of these two figures – in physiognomy, insignia, and ornament – are distinctively different. (Compare the face that has been under consideration here, as in Figs. 2e, f, 4a-e, and on the were-jaguar of the vase of Fig. 6, with that which is on the shield forming the central element in the sculpture of the Temple of the Sun, which latter is a good Palenque example of the one that Thompson called the "jaguar god of the underworld.") Moreover, the one that has concerned us here is lord of the day Ahau, not Akbal; of the month Yaxkin, not Uo; and of the number Four, not Seven. Recent usage has tended to merge these two characters, as different guises of the same solar deity. Such support as there is for this merger derives principally from potential jaguar attributes, which each may exhibit on occasion, and from "Traid" composition at other sites and on equivalences posited thereon. However, the sharing of jaguar attributes may not in itself furnish sufficient grounds for positing identity; more deities than these are found on occasion to exhibit such features. And variation in the composition of pairs and triads of deities might reflect differing local versions of the myth and different interpretations of the identities and roles of the personae. Given the precise differences in the calendrical and numerical values ascribed to these characters (Ahau vs. Akbal, Yaxkin vs. Uo, Four vs. Seven), "splitting" would seem to be more in order than "lumping" at this point.

The similarities noted by Foncerrada de Molina and

by Coe between the central figure of the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet and the dancing youth of the vase are significant. There are yet other instances. Coe and Benson (1966: 16-23) had previously called attention to partially analogous similarities between that figure and the dancing figure of Pier d of Palace House D at Palenque. Yet another example, similar but minus the weaponry and the specifically GI diagnostics, can be seen in the dancing figure of Temple XIV, also at Palenque. The convention clearly had a wider distribution; note the telltale dance step on two painted capstones from Uxmal (Blom 1934). As anticipated by de la Fuente and Foncecrrada de Molina, the central figure of the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet is that of a historical Palenque lord, and the event that is depicted – the dance – is of a religious and symbolic character, related conceptually to the mythological one depicted on the vase. The same is true also of the other two from Palenque. It is known now that the one of Pier d, House D, portrays Pacal; that the one of Temple XIV portrays Chan-Bahlum, son and successor of Pacal; and that the one of the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet is of Kan-Xul, second son of Pacal and successor to his elder brother, Chan-Bahlum. Perhaps not anticipated was that the portrayals in all three cases are posthumous and the “events” postmortem (see Schele 1980b). They give testimony to a Maya belief in the journey of the soul of the deceased through the netherworld realm of the death god, facing the trials and repeating the performance of the mythological heroes, hopefully to emerge victoriously as they did, to assume their destiny in the sky (cf. Coe 1973b:11-14; 1978:11-14).

On the Dumbarton Oaks Tablet, Kan-Xul is depicted with insignia and accoutrements that mark him as being cast in the role of Hunahpu, as the latter appears on the vase. But the context is different. Hunahpu on the vase is still in the court of the death god. Kan-Xul, apparently, has that phase of his journey already behind him and has arrived at the place where his long-deceased parents await him.<sup>9</sup> They flank him, Lady Ahpo-Hel on one side (his right, the viewer’s left) and Lord Pacal on the other, holding the idols symbolic of royal title in readiness for his reinvestiture in the realm beyond. The date of this “event” (9 Manik 5 Muan 9.14.11.2.7) is quite surely after his death, for it is more than two years after the installation of his successor (9 Men 3 Yax 9.14.8.14.15; Palace Tablet: Q9-R16). The date of the analogous event for Chan-Bahlum (9 Ahau 3 Kankin 9.13.13.15.0) is three years and one tzolkin after the date of his death (6 Chicchan 3 Pop 9.13.10.1.5; Palace Tablet: L15-N12).

### Conclusion

The identifications promised in the title to this essay may be summarized now as follows.

“GIII,” the secondborn of the Triad, was Palenque’s version of the Maya sun god. Reasons have been given for believing that his name glyphs – both portrait and plain-weave variants – were read as *Ahaw K’in* (or *Q’in*), signifying “Lord Sun.” This name agrees with those that are ascribed to the cognate deity in other sources both early and modern, including the pre-Columbian Maya

hieroglyphic codices, early postconquest historical sources, and modern ethnography. To a question that may be raised as to why a name glyph for the sun god might employ a ‘weaving’ sign, rather than the ordinary ‘sun’ sign, as in the glyph of this deity in the codices, the following considerations offer a tentative answer: (1) the opportunity was there, with a linguistic basis, too good perhaps to be missed; (2) the exploitation of homonymies – even interlingual ones – to diversify and individualize hieroglyphs has ample precedent; it was, in fact, of the essence in Maya writing; (3) one can suspect that this particular homonymy was more than skin-deep in Maya scribal consciousness and that its employment in forming a nominal hieroglyph at Palenque expressed a sophisticated astronomical metaphor that is known elsewhere among American Indians (cf. Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978:15-19).

The identification is carried a step further. Evidence has been presented which relates this deity both linguistically and conceptually to the Lord Jaguar-Sun, (*X*)*Balamq’*, of the Kekchí, to the Exbalanquén documented by Las Casas, and to the Xbalanque of the Popol Vuh. Thompson’s hypothesis about the priority of a solar role for the last-named character is supported, as is his hypothesis of a Kekchí origin of the name. It is shown that Palenque’s GIII is cognate to these, with a common mythological and iconographic antecedent.

“GI,” the first born of the Triad, is understood to be the manifestation at Palenque of Hunahpu, cognate to the character of the name in the Popol Vuh, as well as to the Pokoman deity of the same name recorded by both Zuñiga and Moran (cf. Miles 1957:748), and analogous to the eldest of the triad in the Mopán myth recorded by Thompson. The glyphic praenomen that sometimes precedes the portrait glyph of GI has some potentialities for a Hunahpu reading, though the value of the main sign is not yet determined with certainty. In the myths, this character is the elder brother and companion-in-exploits of Lord Sun or Xbalanque. In the Mopán myth he was said to have ‘become’ Venus. No evidence for this particular celestial identity has been found in the Palenque inscriptions, however, except that, as Kelley has pointed out (1965:112ff.), his 9 Ik birth date – Nine Wind – is suggestive of such a possibility.

“GII,” the lastborn of the Triad, has not been considered in any detail here. His identification and the reading of his name glyphs are to be the subject of another essay. Though the Popol Vuh presents only a dyad for this set of deities, the triadic arrangement is found again in the Mopán myth.

Of the progenitors, the ancient sire bore the name that was passed on to the firstborn of the Triad, who became his namesake. In this respect Palenque’s arrangement conforms to that of the Popol Vuh, except that there the prior one, Hun Hunahpu, carries an additional numerical coefficient. These calendrical names in the Popol Vuh are ambiguous, depending on the particular Quiché community in which they are interpreted. One or the other of them can mean ‘I Ahau’; but which one it is depends on whether the day locally corresponding to Ahau is

Ahpu or Hunahpu. As for Palenque, the literal interpretation of the name is appropriate for its first bearer, the ancient sire, whose day of birth was indeed 1 Ahau; but neither possible interpretation is calendrically appropriate for its inheritor in the next generation, whose birthday was 9 Ik. The name, however, was clearly not of the language of Palenque but was of some highland Mayan origin,<sup>10</sup> so a literal relevance need not be anticipated.

The name of the other progenitor, the ancient mother, presents a puzzle that so far has eluded solution. This is not from any lack of clues but from their indication of seemingly irreconcilable hypotheses. The role of the mother, of course, has analogs elsewhere in Maya mythology. But her names in those contexts have not helped us read her name glyph at Palenque.

This mythic family can be seen now as not entirely unique to Palenque but as a local manifestation of concepts more or less pan-Maya.

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I have in one way or another made use of information provided me by many colleagues, among whom I should mention at least Michael Coe, James Greenberg, David Joralemon, George Kubler, Peter Mathews, William R. Poulson, Linda Schele, Pierre Ventur, and Margaret Young. I wish to express my thanks to them, but I must also absolve them from any responsibility for the uses to which their information has been put. Thanks are due also to the Grolier Club of New York for permission to reproduce the drawing in Figure 6, which first appeared in their publication (M. D. Coe 1973b).

### Notes

Figs. 1, 2, 3, and 5c-f are by Linda Schele. Figs. 4a, c and 5a, b are from Maudslay (1889-1902). Fig. 4b, d is from Schele and Mathews 1979. Fig. 4e is by the author. Fig. 6 is from Coe 1973b: no. 45.

<sup>1</sup> The pertinent passages determining the date of this birth (TC: E10-F17, P1-Q3) may be paraphrased as follows: "It was 3.6.10.12.2 from 9 Ik [of the preceding passage] to the birth of K'ix-Chan . . . of Palenque; and it was 1.6.7.13 from the birth of K'ix-Chan to the accession of K'ix-Chan on 11 Caban 0 Pop [as] Lord of Palenque." This selects 9 Ik 0 Yax 2.1.0.14.2, out of two contextually indicated alternatives for the 9 Ik date, thus placing the 'birth' of K'ix-Chan at 5.7.11.8.4 (1 Kan 2 Cumhu) and his 'accession' at 5.8.17.15.17 (11 Caban 0 Pop). The redundant repetition of his name in the second clause serves to preserve continuity as the text moves from the left panel (Columns A-E) across to the right panel (P-U, as these columns have been lettered).

The name glyph [T11.212:764b] is at F13, F17, and P2. The superfix is a common iconographic element, notable especially as the central element of the quadripartite badge. Its derivation from the anatomy of the stingray was first noted by David Joralemon, and its occurrence in certain blood-offering contexts, in alternation with other blood symbols, has been noted by Linda Schele. The main sign is the conventional 'serpent' sign, *can/chan*, or head-variant Chicchan day sign. The prefix is one of the pronominal set. The glyph may be understood as 'its spine, serpent' in Mayan syntax or simply as 'serpent-spine' in English. On earlier occasions I had suggested a partial reading (omitting the prefix) as K'ix-can or Ch'ix-chan, depending on the language. Since then, Pierre Ventur has informed me that a name K'ix-chan is found in several communities in the north-

ern and central Petén, spelled variously in local archives as Kixchan, Quixchan, and Quischan. This form shows dialect mixture, but it is of variety that has ample precedent. I have chosen to use the mixed form here, allowing for the possibility of some manner of historical continuity from the glyphic to the modern name.

<sup>2</sup> The date intended here is quite uncertain. The text (P4-Q5) says simply that "on 5 Cimi 14 Kayab was the birth of K'uk'," leaving the day hanging without clear anchor somewhere in the void of three and a half baktuns between the last previous mythological date (5.8.17.15.17 11 Caban 0 Pop) and the first unambiguous historical date (8.19.6.8.8 11 Lamat 6 Xul). The following elliptical passage (P6-Q9) is also unclear. The discussion of plausible alternatives for placing the dates of this cluster is reserved for another occasion.

The name glyph [T744a var.] is at Q5. The forward-sloping crest is the glyphic diagnostic of the quetzal, Mayan *k'uk'*, *q'uq'*, or *mank'uk'*, depending on the language. The glyph here has an infix, and elsewhere it is conflated with jaguar features and combined with an affix, suggesting that the full name was a compound and that the gloss which is used here was only one component of the name.

<sup>3</sup> Note Berlin's alignment of "six related clauses" (1963:94-95, Fig. 7). He remarked: "GIII seems to be absent in the *a* series. The place in E4, where one would expect it, is occupied by a Kin-like face with an Ahau on his forehead and two hooks as subfixes. Could this be a genuine substitute for GIII?"

The crisscrossing parallelisms that Berlin brought to light, and his 'X3' correlate in particular, show that the answer to his question is indeed 'yes', in the sense that the glyph in question is a structural equivalent of the standard GIII glyph and that here it must have the same reference. That it must also have the same reading is our hypothesis here, which is argued in the sections that follow.

<sup>4</sup> Note also the equivalence of *yax*, *noh*, and *nohol* in the Yucatec Mayan expressions for 'firstborn' as attested in several dictionaries and vocabularies, both colonial and modern. Thus, *yax al* or *noh(ol) al*, 'primogénito de madre'; *yax mehen* or *noh(ol) mehen*, 'primogénito de padre'.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Ventur, field notes, 1974-1976. Birthplaces of some of the persons of this surname were in the Alta Verapaz.

William R. Poulson reports a Quiché expression *Ma Kij*, understood as 'Old Sun' or 'Grandfather Sun', employed in Chichicastenango as an age-status term for adult males in their prime who have engendered children. These men are entitled to wear an embroidered 'Ma Kij' sun emblem on the side flaps of their black felt *pantalones*. Poulson has considered the possibility that this may be a modern survival of the Mah-K'ina concept. *Mah* he notes is an apparent variant of *mam*, 'grandfather, old man'. *Kij* [q'ih] is the Quiché cognate to lowland *kin* [k'in], 'sun'.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Mathews, in 1974, assembled the distributional evidence for the equivalence between the simple affix and the head-with-affix variants of this glyphic title and made me aware of their substitutability.

<sup>7</sup> The T1000 head with a circular spot on the cheek appears in contexts that require its interpretation as representing a male. It should thus be distinguished from the other T1000 heads, which are female. When the one with the spot is within a cartouche, or when it carries an 'Ahau' affix, its contexts indicate an *Ahaw* reading. Without either of these a reading of *xib*, or of some phonetic extension therefrom (*xim*, *xam*), is indicated. With the latter value the head with the spot replaces Z130 of the codices as the main sign of the 'north' glyph, *xaman*.

<sup>8</sup> Information from James Greenberg, based on Chatino fieldwork.

<sup>9</sup>Thompson's preferred gloss for T573 is employed here as a convenient label. It is a plausible possibility for a proper reading, but not the only one. The lady in question, whose seating as Pacal's legitimate spouse (9.9.13.0.17) and whose death (9.12.0.6.18) are recorded in TI-west (Q3-T3), was the mother of Chan-Bahlum and Kan-Xul, as well as of a third brother who in his old age succeeded the latter for a brief period (see the Palace Tablet reference in the text).

<sup>10</sup> As for possible highland Mayan origins, although Ahpu or Hunahpu is found as a day name in Quiché (equivalent to lowland Mayan Ahau), the generally-accepted interpretation of that expression as 'Blowgunner' or 'Hunter' appears to be with-

out support in that language. The day name has neither that meaning nor that connotation in any of the Quiché communities from which pertinent data have been reported. The word for 'blowgun', moreover, occurs some ten or more times in the Popol Vuh, and always it is *wub* or *ub* (spelled *uub* and *ub* in the manuscript). Thus, if the accepted interpretation is valid, it is an indication that the name of Hunahpu, at least with this interpretation, is also (like that of Xbalanque) of some non-Quiché origin. 'Blowgun' is found as *pub* in Pokoman, Kekchí, and Cakchiquel, as *wub*, *ub*, or *hub* in Quiché, Uspantec, and Ixil, and as *ubal* in Jacalteco. I have not found references to it in sources for any other language, except in some where the Spanish term has been borrowed. 'Cerbatanero' is given as *aj pub* in Kekchi and Cakchiquel sources (Wirsing 1930; Sáenz de Santa María 1940) and as *aj hub* in Ixil (Stoll 1887).

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# **Fourth Palenque Round Table, 1980**

**General Editor  
Volume Editor**

**Merle Greene Robertson  
Elizabeth P. Benson**

The Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute  
San Francisco

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LADY BEASTIE

Birth: 12.19.13.4.0 8 Ahau 18 Zec

Accession to the throne of Palenque: 2.1.0.14.2 9 Ik 0 Yax

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