

To the memory of Karl Ruppert

Michael D. Coe The Maya Scribe and His World

The Grolier Club New York MCMLXXIII

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Preface

One August day, during the Corn Dance at Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico, I was asked by my friends Alfred Bush and Douglas Ewing to organize an exhibition on ancient Maya writing at the Grolier Club. I agreed reluctantly, since I was then (and am still) engaged in writing up the results of my long-term research on the Olmec culture of Mexico. Our plans, however, lay dormant for some time. The very successful exhibition on the Maya script presented by the Peabody Museum of Harvard at the Center for Inter-American Relations in New York (I. Graham 1971) almost caused me to go back on my agreement. Since this exhibit proved to be exclusively concerned with the history of decipherment, however, a goal we did not have in mind, and very few original objects were displayed, we proceeded with our plans.

The Grolier Club exhibit (April 20 to June 5, 1971) presented a large number of magnificent objects from the Maya civilization, ranging from the Late Formative (around the time of Christ) to the post-Conquest period of Colonial Yucatán. Almost none of these has previously been exhibited or published, so that it is firmly hoped the present catalogue will increase our knowledge and appreciation of the New World's most splendid civilization. All were chosen from private and public collections, the only criteria being the intrinsic beauty and importance of the piece, and that it be painted or inscribed with a hieroglyphic text.

While mounting the exhibit, and especially while studying the texts that occasioned it, it became quite clear that the focal point of the catalogue should be the large number of painted and carved funerary vases which were here brought together for the first time. It presented a unique opportunity to do justice to this great body of Mesoamerican art, iconography, and calligraphy which has heretofore suffered from neglect and even contempt

from specialists. For myself, at least, a whole new world of native American thought was opened up. In addition, certain objects in the exhibit possessed an intrinsic interest by their very uniqueness; in particular, the generosity of an anonymous collector made it possible to put on display for the first time a previously unknown Maya codex (No. 87). It should be understood, however, that this catalogue does not contain all the pieces actually exhibited. Those omitted have either already been published in some detail or do not possess sufficient interest to the connoisseur of Maya art or student of Maya writing. On the other hand, in the long interval that has passed since the exhibit closed, various persons have brought to my attention some superb Maya vessels in their possession which add highly important data substantiating my principal thesis on the nature of pictorial ceramics and their texts. These have therefore been included.

I am deeply indebted to the membership of the Grolier Club, but especially to Alfred Bush, Douglas C. Ewing, Alfred H. Howell, and Robert L. Nirkirk for their aid, organizational ability, and active participation in the exhibit and in the production of this catalogue. Artists' expenses have necessarily been heavy in this book, and they have been borne by Douglas Ewing and The Grolier Club. I am highly grateful to Justin Kerr, himself a knowledgeable collector, who took the majority of the photographs in the catalogue as a service to Maya archaeology. I would also like to pay tribute to the collectors who made the exhibition possible; they have done the entire world an immeasurable service by their devotion to the subject of Mesoamerican art, often by considerable financial sacrifice on their part.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the excellence and devotion of the two artists who have rendered in ink drawings the sophisticated and esoteric texts and scenes on Maya pottery: Diane G. Peck and Diane McC. Holsenbeck.

New Haven, Connecticut, 1972

M.D.C.

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Ancient Maya writing and calligraphy

Of all the native peoples of the New World before the arrival of the Spaniards, the Maya of southern Mexico and Central America were alone in being fully literate. Many of their records have survived more than a thousand years to tell of a way of life that has vanished forever. Archaeologists, who are usually left with little more than the pots, pans, weapons, and other material goods of ancient cultures, assure us that the dead do not speak, and thus assume that the mental life that has gone without trace played little or no part in those cultures. In the case of the Maya, like that of the Egyptians, the dead most certainly *do* speak, but they tell us of a mental world that is often completely alien to our own. It is this unique glimpse into the minds of a gifted people that makes the study of the ancient Maya so fascinating to the scholar.

The Maya civilization flourished in the midst of a tropical forest between the end of the third century after Christ and the Spanish conquest, but its greatest period, the Classic, was over by about 900. At that point in time, some enormous and as yet little understood catastrophe overwhelmed the Maya of the southern lowlands, although during the next six centuries the northern lowlands—that is, Yucatán—remained prosperous even though under sporadic domination from the Mexican highlands.

Let us consider the Classic, since that period saw the greatest flowering of Maya art and architecture, and during the Classic all the great Maya inscriptions were carved. The word city has often been used in discussions of the largest Maya sites—such as Tikal, Palenque, Copán, and Piedras Negras—yet these agglomerations of towering pyramid temples, palaces, and courtyards show little signs of planning, and there are no streets. Instead, houses were scattered helter-skelter across the landscape, although there are more of them the closer one gets to the center of a site. Most archaeologists, then, prefer to think of these as ceremonial centers, inhabited by politicians and priests and their retinues, with the bulk of the Maya peasantry living in rural hamlets

not much different from those one sees today in the Yucatán countryside.

There are probably hundreds of such centers of varying degrees of size and importance across the Maya lowlands, most of them lost from sight under the jungle canopy that covers the area. What really were these centers, so reminiscent of Angkor and the Khmer civilization of Southeast Asia? So poor is our information that we are not even sure that the so-called palaces were actually used as dwellings. On the other hand, the pyramid temples have begun to reveal some of their secrets. They are stucco-covered structures of limestone rubble faced with dressed blocks. The pyramid itself is stepped, with a frontal stairway giving access to a vaulted temple on the summit. In recent years some extraordinary discoveries of richly stocked tombs have been made at the base of the substructure, making it certain that these were funerary temples built by a ruler to house his own remains upon death.

Who, then, might have been worshiped in a Maya temple? A god or the dead ruler for whom it was raised? Here we have an example of the false use of categories derived from our own culture, for in prehispanic Mexico and Central America these might have been one and the same. The rulers were descended from the gods, and a king probably became identified with his lineage god after death. By paying homage to the man, one was also paying homage to the god. Finely made masonry tombs lavishly equipped with grave goods have often been found beneath the floors of the palaces as well. In other words, an ancient Maya center might have been as much a necropolis for rulers and nobles as a seat for the Maya administration. This peculiar ambiguity between life and death can be seen elsewhere in Maya culture.

The writing of the ancient Maya has given us our most valuable clues to their social, political, and religious life. Like their art, this writing is at the same time elegant, baroque, complex, and fundamentally weird. Maya texts

were lavishly applied to stone, pottery, bone, shell, jade, and many other substances, but probably most importantly to folding-screen books manufactured from bark paper and covered with stucco as a writing surface. There must have been thousands of such books in Classic times, but the only ones we have today are a tiny handful of Post-Classic codices.

Maya hieroglyphs are obviously highly pictorial. At any rate, they must have begun their evolution, like our own alphabet, as pictures of real things. Very frequent among them are the heads of humans and animals, shown in profile facing left. These and even more stylized signs are essentially rounded in form, rather like a compromise between an oval and a parallelogram. Because of these factors, the Maya calligrapher was basically a painter, and probably both professions were joined in the same man. This is reminiscent of China, of course. As in China, brush pens of various sizes were used. It is likely that for the relief carving of a text the master calligrapher would first brush on the characters, the rest of the job being finished by the sculptor; in the case of carved pottery, the calligrapher himself may have incised the still-damp clay.

Just as in Oriental or Western manuscripts, there are schools of writing and even individual hands that can be detected. Some Maya calligraphers were amazingly sophisticated, employing at times a running hand which is not easy to read. Others, who generally seem to have been confined to pottery painting, were less adept.

What do these texts say? How are they to be read? In the last century, it was discovered that Maya writing is to be read from left to right, and top to bottom, usually in pairs of glyphs. It was also found that numbers were expressed by bars and dots, a dot having the value of one and a bar the value of five. Thus, seven would be written by a bar and two dots. A third symbol sufficed for zero. With this knowledge, and with information coming to us from the sixteenth-century Franciscan Bishop of Yucatán, Diego de Landa, the intricacies of the Maya

calendar were worked out (Kelley 1962a).

It was learned that many Maya hieroglyphs were, in fact, calendrical. On a typical Maya stela, for instance, or a wall panel, there is usually an initial date. Interspersed in the text are often several other dates, to be calculated forward, or sometimes backward, from the initial date. Among the majority of scholars working on the problem, a very odd notion took hold, one that, if verified, would have made the Maya completely different from every other human civilization of which we have knowledge. According to this idea, the Maya worshiped time itself, each time period being deified. The content of the non-calendrical glyphs would have been little more than a kind of commentary upon this chronological religion, with possible astrological phenomena like eclipses thrown in for good measure.

The inscriptions on stone are usually accompanied by scenes of persons engaged in various activities. Although many of them are clearly in battle dress and are trampling and otherwise mistreating captives, it was said that these were figures of the priests who were supposed to have ruled the Maya. There are also figures wearing skirts or robes, and these also were supposed to have been priests. The usual conclusion was that the Maya were organized as a theocracy dedicated to the worship of chronology.

This hypothetical edifice began crumbling in 1958 when Heinrich Berlin published a study showing that each important Maya center had its own "emblem glyph," a special symbol which was peculiar to it and which he suggested might be its name or the name of the reigning dynasty. He further hazarded that the Maya inscriptions might not be speaking primarily of theological matters but were recording history. This, of course, was a heresy.

The Berlin heresy was compounded two years later, when a now-classic paper by Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960) appeared in the pages of *American Antiquity*.

Proskouriakoff, who many years before had been artist on the University of Pennsylvania expedition to Piedras Negras, on the Usumacinta River in Guatemala, took as her subject matter a large number of stelae from that major center. She was able to show by an analysis of the dates and other glyphs carved on them that these reliefs grouped themselves into twelve series. The interval from the first date in any one series to the last date was no longer than the normal range of a human lifetime. Her conclusion was that each series recorded not chronological hocus-pocus but the reign of a particular ruler, including references to his birth, accession, and death, and containing information on his marriage and the birth of heirs. In other papers Proskouriakoff demonstrated that the robed figures in Classic Maya art were, in fact, women, and worked out the dynastic history of two extremely violent rulers of Yaxchilán.

All subsequent work on the inscriptions has reinforced the Berlin-Proskouriakoff approach; namely, that the principal subject matter of the Maya reliefs and the texts which accompany them are historical records having to do not with occult theocratic matters, but with the everyday, hurly-burly politics of primitive states with warlike rulers hell-bent on including other Maya states within their sphere of influence. This is the secular point of view, and it cannot be denied that most Maya texts treat of such matters, which throw an entirely new light on ancient Maya society and politics. As an excellent example of the insights which have come from this great breakthrough, it can be shown that the giant among Maya centers, Tikal in northern Guatemala, had some degree of control over many other centers, since the Tikal emblem glyph is spread over a wide area. The most probable explanation is that through a combination of military might and judicious marrying-off of younger daughters to lesser leaders, the Tikal kings were able to control most if not all of the southern Maya lowlands.

Now, this secular theory makes the Maya, heretofore buried in a world of mumbo-jumbo, much more believ-

able. They sound very much like other early civilizations in the world, with their stories of conquests, humbling of captives, royal marriages, and royal descent. Certainly, the chronological hypothesis cannot be further entertained.

Yet, puzzles do remain. It is certain that the Classic Maya were lunar astrologers, since several glyphs describing the phase of the moon and other selenine matters follow the initial date on a monument, so that whatever the matter described, the influence of the moon upon it was extremely important. And not all Maya initial dates can be ascribed to temporal rulers. Heinrich Berlin (1965) and David Kelley (1965) have separately demonstrated that at Palenque, the most beautiful of all Maya sites, the texts fall into three groups. The latest group obviously deals with contemporary rulers and their actions. An earlier group refers to ancestral kings who seem to have been historical. But the earliest group of all falls at the end of the last creation when the gods themselves appeared; three of the Palenque temples have been identified by their texts with the birth of highly significant Maya deities.

There was a single, unified body of thought in Mesoamerica—Mexico and Central America—which we would call a Mesoamerican religion. This religion, which almost certainly goes back to the Olmec civilization of 3,000 years ago, has many features which it shares with the early mental systems of eastern Asia. Basic to it is the idea of a universe oriented to seven directions. The surface of our own world has five of these directions, including the cardinal points, at each of which stands a world tree. On top of each tree is a particular species of bird, and there is a definite color associated with the tree and direction; at the center is the green tree of abundance, standing for the fifth direction. Above the world is the "above" itself, a stratified realm of thirteen layers, each with its own god. Below the world are nine layered hells, each with its own god.

This universe had been initiated by an old male-female





14



41



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creator couple, and had been alternately produced and destroyed—four times, according to the Aztec—before our own creation. All the gods were generated by the divine pair during these great epochs. Each god was complex, since not only did he (if male) have a consort, but he was quadruple in that each aspect was assigned to one of the four color directions on the surface. Some gods were at the same time diurnal *and* deities of the night sky. The sun itself died at the close of each day as it dipped below the western horizon, and became an invisible lord of the Underworld in the guise of a fearsome jaguar. It was only the continued offering of the hearts and blood of brave men captured in war that would ensure the rebirth of the sun each dawn.

The existing Maya books treat exclusively of this supernatural world, geared to the strange exigencies of their calendrical system. At the heart of the system is a cycle of 260 days, based upon the permutation of thirteen numerals with twenty named days. Most of the content, textual and representational, of the codices concerns the rituals associated with the gods and this 260-day calendar. It is clear that the main object of these books was to tell the Maya what the auguries—good, bad, or indifferent—were for each day in the cycle. The motions of the heavenly bodies, surely to be identified with certain Maya gods, were supremely important, above all the cosmic dance of the sun and moon which results in solar and lunar eclipses, and the apparent cycle of the planet Venus.

The books have given us the surer clues to the nature of the Maya writing system. While these all date to the Post-Classic period—that is, to the time between the breakup of the Classic Maya civilization around 900 and the Spanish cataclysm—they must preserve features characteristic of the ritual books of the Classic. In three of the four known codices each item of text is associated with a picture, so that we have a unique chance to link writing with events. Unfortunately, decipherment has been very slow. At the beginning, shortly after the Conquest, the controversial Bishop Landa recorded a so-

called alphabet which was rediscovered by Abbé Brasseur de Bourbourg in the nineteenth century. For many years this alleged key led exactly nowhere, convincing most Maya experts that there was, in fact, no real system involved and that the Maya scribes had evolved nothing more than a thing of shreds and patches, a series of sad attempts at trying to record their own thoughts.

It is an irony of intellectual history that the breakthrough on the decipherment of Maya writing has come not in the United States or England or Germany, which have had a near monopoly of Maya studies for the past century, but in Soviet Russia, by a scholar who claims to be inspired by Marxism–Leninism. Yuri V. Knorosov, a student of the evolution of writing systems who had specialized in the Egyptian script, reexamined the problem posed by the noncalendrical aspect of Maya writing, especially the codices. Instead of rejecting the infamous Landa “alphabet,” he accepted it as a much-flawed syllabary, an example of a system much like that of the Japanese, who can write their own syllables by a sign representing a consonant followed by a vowel. When the Maya word was of the consonant-vowel-consonant sort, then, reasoned Knorosov (1967), the Maya would have written it in such a way that the final vowel was understood as silent.

Of course, again like Japanese, there must be many ideographic signs in Maya without any purely phonetic value. It is the understanding of these that takes the longest time and greatest patience, for one reading does not necessarily lead to another. But that the Maya system had a strong phonetic-syllabic component which has been, in the main, correctly interpreted by Knorosov, is not doubted by many students of the subject. If the history of other writing systems is relevant here, then at first one would expect Maya hieroglyphs to have been mainly ideographic, with phoneticism increasing through time, and it is certain that the codices have more syllabic signs than the earlier Classic inscriptions have.

Funerary ceramics of the Classic Maya

Pictorial ceramics, whether painted or carved, are to be ranked among the finest artistic creations of the Classic Maya civilization. However, the subject matter of this pottery, and the hieroglyphic texts painted or inscribed upon it, have been generally ignored by archaeologists and art historians. This neglect of one aspect of Maya culture is unfortunate since it can be demonstrated that these remarkable vessels describe a strange and esoteric world which is barely alluded to in the stone monuments and in the surviving books. This is the realm of the dead, inhabited by a host of macabre gods and monstrous creatures. There is nothing unusual about this conclusion, for after all the overwhelming majority of Maya pictorial pottery was, in fact, found in tombs and graves and must have had a funerary function.

The view the Maya had of death and the destination of the soul in the afterlife must be pieced together from a number of Mesoamerican sources, including ethnohistorical data on the Maya themselves. But first I would like to mention the remarkable cross-cultural study of funerary customs made by the French scholar Robert Hertz (1960), a follower of Emile Durkheim. Basing his argument mainly upon Indonesian material, Hertz makes it very clear that such customs follow not so much from the psychological fact of bereavement as from the necessity for society to reconstitute itself after the loss of one of its members. Three entities are involved in the event: the body of the deceased, his soul, and his survivors. Funerary ceremonies can be shown to be rites of passage, structurally and functionally similar to birth and tribal initiations. In such rites the individual passes from one kind of being or status into another, and his passage is fraught with danger for himself and for the society which has been disrupted by it.

Hertz shows that some funerary customs are peculiar in that there are often not just one but two burials, separated from each other by a lengthy time interval; and he asks why. The answer is that the soul has to cleanse itself of the impurity of death. There is a double process going on after death occurs: first, the corpse decays or otherwise is transmuted into a clean and incorruptible element such as bone; second, as this takes place, the soul itself, as if on a journey, gets closer and closer to its final destination. Among many peoples this journey is fraught with dangers and obstacles that must be surmounted. Bodily corruption thus does not necessarily invoke horror but sometimes may be joyously displayed by the relatives, as in Indonesia, since it is a sign that the terrible voyage is coming to a close. At this point, the second and final burial is celebrated: the individual has truly ceased to exist on this earth.

It is therefore the transmutation of the individual to the forever incorruptible, and the final severance of the deceased from society, that is the ultimate purpose of funerary ceremonies. Egyptian mummification, in which the corpse was treated for seventy days before its soul reached its ultimate destination, was after all the same sort of thing. Cremation, practiced by Aztecs and Romans, was merely a speeding up of the process.

Let us now look at the information which we have on the burial of lords in central Mexico on the eve of the Conquest (Motolinia 1903:243-6; Nuttall 1903:53-7; Torquemada 1943, 2:527-8; Sahagún 1950-69, 3:43; Durán 1971:122). The body was laid out in the palace for four days, as kinsmen and neighboring lords gathered. A piece of jade was placed in the mouth to stand for the deceased's heart, then the body was wrapped in mantles and bark paper under the supervision of old men specializing in these matters. The paper adornments and other riches placed on his funerary bundle are specifically mentioned as ransom to be paid various underworld figures as the soul passes along its somber road. When the corpse had been prepared, a great funerary procession formed to take the body on its palanquin to

the temple courtyard in which the cremation was to take place. Marching along to the doleful sound of dirges were all those persons who were to die with the lord, including not only his slaves and others offered by neighboring rulers but also a large part of his own palace retinue. Mentioned as sacrifices are the lord's private chaplain, his steward, his wives, his female cupbearer, the women who ground his maize, and the dwarfs, hunchbacks, and cripples who had amused him in life. All of these were slain and cremated separately to serve him in the other life. In other words, the Aztecs clearly believed that the royal palace itself was to be projected and replicated in the other world, with all its functions intact.

But the lord was not alone on his pyre. Cremated with him was a little dog which was to carry him across a terrifying river to reach his ultimate destination, the land of Mictlantecuhtli, the Lord of Death; this custom was practiced, it seems, by all Mesoamericans. It took the departed spirit no less than four years to complete the journey. Accordingly, memorial services were performed after 4, 20, 40, 60, and 80 days had passed, and on each anniversary until the four years were up. Then truly it could be said, "Le roi est mort, vive le roi."

Very similar obsequies took place in the Tarascan kingdom to the west of the Aztec, but there the ceremonies were on an even grander scale: no fewer than twenty-two kinds of palace attendants are mentioned as funerary sacrifices (*Chronicles of Michoacán* 1970:44-7). The list of those to be slain is of great interest, for it gives an idea of the complex division of labor in an important Mesoamerican palace. The women mentioned include: (1) one to carry all the king's golden lip plugs and his turquoise, (2) his chambermaid, (3) the keeper of his turquoise necklaces, (4) his cook, (5) the server of his "wine," (6) another "who hands him the finger bowl and holds the cup for him when he drinks," and (7) his urinal bearer. The male attendants are given in two lists, the first of which is presumably more important: (1) one who "carries blankets on his back," (2) one in charge

of weaving flower wreaths for the king, (3) one in charge of braiding, (4) the bearer of his seat, (5) the bearer of light blankets, (6) the bearer of his copper axes, (7) the bearer of his large fan, (8) the bearer of his footwear and war jackets, (9) the bearer of his cane tube of fragrances (tobacco). In the second list are: (1) his oarsman, (2) the sweeper of his palace, (3) the man who burnishes his little rooms, (4) the superintendent of the women, (5) the feather worker, (6) the maker of silver labrets, (7) his arrowmaker, (8) his bow maker, (9) two or three beaters, (10) some of the doctors who failed to cure him (!), (11) his bard, (12) the jester (I suspect this was a dwarf), and (13) his innkeeper. Also mentioned in a way that suggests that they too were destined to be sacrificed were the Tarascan king's dancer, drummer, and maker of drums.

The procession started at midnight, when an "unintelligible" song was sung. Two trumpets were blown, and the marchers intoned, "Lord, thou art to go this way, lose not thy way," evidently giving him directions to carry him on his other-worldly journey. The bundled corpse of the ruler was cremated upon a pyre in the patio of the great temple. Once it was set afire, the attendants were made drunk, then beaten to death with cudgels. While the king's ashes were buried beneath the bottom step of the god Curacaveri's temple, the bodies of the victims were separately interred behind this structure.

Unfortunately, our information on the death practices of the Maya is very scanty and disappointing. For the Yucatec Maya, Landa (Tozzer 1941:129-31) mentions that the cadavers of commoners were shrouded after the mouth had been filled with maize dough and a jade bead placed in it for food and "money," as he puts it, in the other world. Nobles and "persons of high esteem" were cremated (a Mexican practice) and their ashes placed in great urns over which funerary temples were built. The Cocom rulers had the honor of being worshiped posthumously in the form of the front parts of their skulls, which were housed in the palace oratories.

Concepts of the afterlife seem to have been very similar throughout Mesoamerica. Among the Aztec, and probably among the Maya as well, warriors who had died in combat or by the sacrificial knife, and women who had died in childbirth after their first (and only) pregnancy, went to the Paradise of the Sun, conceived of as one of the thirteen layers of heaven. The souls of drowned persons, victims of lightning, or those who had succumbed to diseases connected with water, were transported to the wonderful Paradise of the Rain God. According to Landa, among the Maya of Yucatán there was a heavenly paradise for those who had committed suicide by hanging. But the final destination of the vast majority, whether kings or paupers, was the nine-layered Underworld, the ultimate fate of the souls of those who had "died in bed," so to speak. The Aztec priests described it to the dead man as "the abode of all of us, . . . the place where we come to our fate—there where the earth groweth wide, where forever all things end."

The road the soul was to take led down through each of the nine layers. At every step there were horrible ordeals to be passed through, such as terrifying rivers, hills that clashed together, high plains with cold winds that pierced like obsidian blades. After the four-year trip the soul arrived in the deepest of the hells, presided over by the dread couple, Mictlantecuhtli (Lord of the Land of the Dead) and his consort, both represented by human skeletons in the central Mexican books. From their palace, constructed of human bones, this pair ruled a sinister realm "where the streets are on the left." Other death gods and their consorts served under them (Nicholson 1971, table 2).

We have some extraordinarily detailed information on this underworld in our Maya sources. The Maya words for it are *metnal* or *mitnal* (probably derived from the Nahuatl *mictlan*) and *xibalba*. The term Xibalba, found among both highland and lowland Maya, is derived from the root *xib*, "fear, terror, trembling with fright." Most of the Maya believed that the entrance to the underworld lay in the cave-filled region of the Alta Verapaz, where

the highlands meet the lowlands (Thompson 1970:300). From this entrance or hole, placed at the crossing of four roads, came an unbelievable stench of rotting corpses and clotted blood. The diseases that afflicted men came from this hole in the form of evil beings, whom the Maya curer had to send back to hell by incantation. The putrescence and horror of the underworld is expressed by a name given in several dictionaries for the so-called lord of hell: Cizin, a name derived from *ciz*, "flatulence" or "breaking of wind."

The most famous description of the Underworld is contained in the Popol Vuh, the great national epic of the Quiché Maya and of their ruling house (Recinos 1950; Edmundson 1971; Girard 1972). This great poetic narrative opens with the creation of the world, but soon shifts to several stellar myths otherwise unknown, or only alluded to, in our Mesoamerican sources. The most important of these has to do with a "Harrowing of Hell" by the Hero Twins. The background of this drama can be briefly summarized. A pair of brothers, called 1 Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu, are the sons of the old mother goddess, Xmucané. Hunahpu is the last of the twenty named days in the Quiché calendar, corresponding to the day Ahau in the Yucatec Maya calendar. It is known that 1 Ahau is the calendrical name for the Morning Star, since on that day began the Maya Venus Calendar. 7 Ahau falls exactly 260 days (one *tzolkin*) later, so that it most likely symbolizes the Evening Star. Thus the two brothers represent the two aspects of the planet Venus.

Their noisy ball playing on the surface of the earth angers the Lords of Xibalba, the Underworld, who summon 1 Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu to their dread realm, which I will describe more fully when dealing with the Hero Twins. Suffice it to say that they are bested in a series of magical contests by the Underworld rulers, suffer defeat in a ball game, and are both sacrificed near the ball court. As a token of their victory, the lords cut off the head of 1 Hunahpu and hang it up in a calabash tree (*Crescentia cujete*).

One day a daughter of one of the Lords of Xibalba happens to be passing beneath the tree; the head/calabash spits into her hand and she becomes pregnant with the future Hero Twins. On discovering her condition, she is expelled from Xibalba to the earth's surface, where she finds refuge with the Twins' prospective grandmother, Xmucané. Eventually, the Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, are born and grow up to be handsome youths, expert ball players and hunters with the blowgun. They have various adventures in which they overcome their adversaries, including the sons of 7 Hunahpu whom they turn into monkeys. Like their father and uncle, the Twins are summoned by the infernal gods, their ire again aroused by their ball playing on the surface of the world. Down some very steep stairs they go, on a journey which is obviously cognate to that taken by the soul after death; they pass between steep hills and ravines, and cross rivers of blood and corruption by floating in their blowguns. At last they arrive at the meeting of roads of contrasting colors. Here the Twins begin to best the lords of Xibalba for they send a mosquito along the black road they are to traverse, which, by biting each of the seated rulers in turn, forces them to reveal their names and thus to lose power. There are twelve specifically named Underworld gods in this part of the Popol Vuh; at their head are the supreme leaders, 1 Death and 7 Death. The names of the others suggest that they are personified diseases.

The geography of Xibalba in the Popol Vuh is extremely detailed throughout the Hero Twins' story. For instance, the lords had a garden, even though there was perpetual darkness in Xibalba, guarded and tended by crepuscular birds like nighthawks and whippoorwills. The Twins best the lords in a game played in the infernal ball court, where their elders had suffered defeat. Near the court is Pucbal-Chah, the place of sacrifice where losers in the game are dispatched. Nevertheless, the Twins have to undergo severe trials in each of five underground chambers or "houses": House of Gloom, House of Cold, House of Jaguars, House of Bats (presided over by the Cama Zotz, or Killer Bat), and House of Obsidian Knives.

In each of these houses the Twins survive their ordeals by playing tricks. For instance, the lords give the Twins cigars in the House of Gloom, which they are to keep alight all night; they do so by fixing fireflies to the ends.

The Twins eventually suffer death, but this is only temporary, for they reappear in the court of the Underworld as dancers and magicians. Before the incredulous lords they burn down houses and make them reappear, then each cuts the other to pieces and brings him to life again. 1 Death and 7 Death have the same done to themselves on their own request, but they are not revived. Thus the Twins conquer hell itself and rise up to the sky to become heavenly bodies, the Sun and the Moon, as their father and uncle had become the Morning and Evening Stars.

I think it highly likely that the Hero Twins' story is only part of a much longer and complex myth or myth series having to do with the Underworld and its gods, but that the surviving fragment formed an important part of a funerary text recited over the dead man during the burial ceremonies. I base my evidence upon Maya pictorial ceramics, which, as I have already mentioned, must have had a funerary function.

There has so far been no serious attempt to deal with the scenes painted or carved on Classic Maya pottery, or with the hieroglyphic texts which appear upon them.

It has often been assumed that the subject matter concerns the here-and-now, and that such scenes as lords seated with their retainers in palaces are taken from "real" life. One of the most famous Maya objects is the so-called Merchants Vase, a polychrome vessel from Chamá, Guatemala, which shows seven grotesquely caricatured individuals, four of whom are carrying fans and thus almost certainly do represent traders (Thompson 1970, pl. 3; Gordon and Mason 1925-34, pl. 2). But are these meant to be mortal men? I think not. The two most important individuals portrayed are painted black, a sign both of war and the Underworld, an association reinforced by the jaguar pelt worn over the shoulders

of the right-hand figure. Examining the features of this bearded individual, one can see a strangely deformed face and balding head, the bulbous nose being particularly prominent. It would not be stretching the evidence to identify him as the Black God of Trade, known as Yacatecutli ("Nose Lord") among the Aztec, and Ek Chuah among the Maya. His black counterpart on the left is an old person with a Roman nose, who carries a cigar in one hand. Again, I would see him as a god, almost certainly the cigar-smoking God L who figures so prominently as an Underworld lord in this catalogue. Their five companions would thus also be deities, and all are involved in some incident concerning trade and warfare which takes place in the Underworld.

As a second example, let us turn to another famous Chamá-style vase (Gordon and Mason 1925-34, pl. 52). This one shows a trader, but without the grotesque features evident in the previous case, holding the fan that distinguished the merchant group in Mesoamerican iconography, riding in a palanquin and accompanied by his retinue. This would look like a scene taken from life if it were not for the white dog spotted with black stretching itself beneath the litter, a creature which is a symbol of death in Maya culture. One can therefore interpret the tableau as the final journey to the Underworld of a deceased Maya trader.

Finally, we might consider a palace scene, probably the finest example of which is a richly polychromed vase in the Dumbarton Oaks collection. This shows a lord, painted black (the color of war and death), placed upon a throne, surrounded by his seated underlings with whom he is engaged in conversation. A close examination of the features of this palace will disclose that on the upper part of the three pilasters shown there are faces of a deity whose features combine the traits of the Sun God with those of the jaguar; this deity has long been known as the Jaguar God of the Underworld (Thompson 1950:84), closely associated with death and the night sky. Off to one side of the palace is a grotesque skull in profile. Would this not then indicate that the vase de-

picts a ruler and his court as if projected into the world of the dead? I think the same interpretation can be placed on all palace scenes.

If one accepts as a working hypothesis that pictorial Maya ceramics are concerned exclusively with the Underworld, in conformity with their acknowledged funerary function, then one would expect explicit references to the Hero Twins' Underworld journey as it is set out in the Popol Vuh. That episode must have been known to all Mesoamericans, probably as part of a much longer Underworld epic, most of which is now lost. The famous section of the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel (see No. 88) known as "The Interrogation of the Chiefs" indicates that candidates to high office in Post-Classic Yucatán were tested on their knowledge of the episode, for one of the Sphinx-like riddles they were expected to answer concerns the trick of putting fireflies on the ends of cigars. As far afield as central Mexico, the middle section of the magnificent Borgia Codex is an extremely esoteric and little-understood chapter dealing with the Underworld and the voyage of at least one set of brothers through it. If this section concerns the Venus Cycle, then it would be more closely related to the 1 Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu episode than to the Hero Twins.

One of the most common themes on Classic Maya pottery is what I will call the Young Lords. These are a pair of identical or near-identical young princes, richly garbed, with headdresses to the front of which is usually fixed the jawless head of a reptilian deity. Since they themselves often exhibit the peculiar "god-markings" (similar to glyphs 7 or 504) which indicate supernaturals in both codices and monuments, it may be assumed that the Young Lords are also gods. I think it may also be assumed that they are the Hero Twins, whose journey to the Underworld must be repeated by the dead person in whose grave the vase was placed. Occasionally, another pair of youthful personages is encountered on vessels, but these are marked with black death spots and wear headbands; I have labeled these the Head-

band Gods and suggest that they are Hunahpu and Xbalanque during their Underworld sojourn.

One would also expect to see the dread Killer Bats on Maya vases, and these in fact do occur with some frequency, especially on vases from the Chamá region, not far, incidentally, from the locale in which the lowland Maya conceived the entrance of the Underworld to be. It will be recalled how the Hero Twins trapped the Underworld rulers into revealing their names through the agency of a mosquito. This incident is graphically presented on a carved Chocholá-style vase (No. 64). Cigars and cigar smokers, never a very common theme on the Maya monuments, are known on a number of pottery vessels, including some in this catalogue, and it would appear that the use of tobacco was in some way connected with death among the Maya. Old gods sometimes appear with the Young Lords (see No. 20), and I take it that this represents the presence of the Hero Twins in the court of the Underworld Lords. Upon the return of the Twins to that court after their supposed death, they perform a series of magic dances, one of which is called the Armadillo Dance, probably depicted on a fine Chamá vase.(No. 15). And finally, we have the highly explicit drama shown on No. 16, in which a Young Lord is about to kill one of the Underworld rulers with a flint knife.

The dramatis personae of the realm of the dead must have been amazingly complex, far more so than any of our sources, including the Popol Vuh, would suggest. Only occasionally do these beings “surface” in the monuments or codices, so that many or most of these gods are otherwise unknown to Maya iconography. First of all, it should be stated that some familiar Maya deities are absent, or nearly so, from pictorial ceramics. These include God G (the Sun God), God D (Itzamná, the Supreme Deity), God B (Chac, the Rain God), and God E (the Maize God). I think the reason is not hard to find: all of these are deities of the earth’s surface or of the daytime sky. The enigmatic God K, the serpent-footed deity of the “manikin scepters,” is very rare, but

so little is known about him iconographically and functionally that he cannot yet be explained.

Apparently the paramount Lords of the Underworld are two aged deities, chopfallen and slightly hunched over, known to students of the Maya codices only as God L and God M, in view of the sad fact that we do not know their real names.

God L

This divinity shows up in the monuments only at Palenque, a Classic center with strong mortuary associations (cf. its position in the west, the presence of “Skull” and “Bone” as the main signs of its Emblem Glyphs, the extraordinary tomb in the Temple of the Inscriptions, and the absence of stelae as markers of historical events). One of the most complete depictions of the god is the relief on the east side of the doorway leading into the sanctuary of the Temple of the Cross. He stands with jaguar pelt thrown over his back, and a jaguar ear appears over his own; his headdress is formed of feathers of the Moan bird, a supernatural, owl-like creature which also appears perched on the headdress. God L characteristically smokes a cigar, apparently made of tobacco enclosed by corn husks. On his loincloth are footprints indicating a road, perhaps a reference to the Road of the Dead. On the tablet in the Temple of the Sun, God L is one of two aged divinities supporting a kind of platform.

In this catalogue, God L appears three times on vases. On No. 42 he is shown as a ruler in a sumptuous palace which is unambiguously placed in the Underworld, surrounded by a harem of beautiful women, and presiding over a sacrificial scene in which there are grounds for believing the victim to be the unfortunate 7 Hunahpu. His supreme rulership is again demonstrated on No. 49, in which he is head of a council of Underworld gods which takes place at the beginning of the Maya era. Last, in a carved vase from Yucatán (No. 56), he holds the decapitated head of God K above a basket. This is of interest since on Dresden 46b, a page in the Venus

Tables, God L is shown spearing God K, in the former’s role as one of the five regents of the heliacal rising of Venus.

As a matter of fact, God L is often depicted in the codices, usually as a black divinity with the lower part of his face left white. His war aspect is made clear not only in the Venus Tables but also on the famous world-destruction page in the Dresden (p. 74) in which he carries a shield and hurls darts, a theme again taken up on Madrid 32a. A second aspect is that of hunting god: in Madrid 50b and 51c, God L wears a deer head-dress and is throwing his dart, while in Madrid 45c a deer is trapped in a snare coming from the top of his head. These functions suggest that perhaps God L in this aspect might be the Maya equivalent of the Nahua deity Mixcóatl, who was both warrior and hunter and who was strongly affiliated with the Venus cult among the Aztec (Nicholson 1971:426), although I know of no evidence that Mixcóatl was an important Underworld ruler.

Another black god seemingly associated with God L is God M, Ek Chuuah, the patron divinity of merchants and counterpart of the Aztec Yacatecuhtli. In Madrid 79a, God L wears the head of God M, and appears with him enough times in the same section of the Madrid to have thoroughly confused the Villacortas, who in their commentary on the codex often mixed up their identities (Villacorta and Villacorta 1930). I have already pointed out their relationship on the Merchants Vase from Chamá.

God N

Although I know of no cases where they occur together, God N seems to be of equal rank in the subterranean realm to God L. In monumental inscriptions, where his glyph (1014a, 1014c) is by no means uncommon, and on ceramics, he is distinguished by his aged appearance and by a netted headdress element which may stick straight up or flop forward in front of the face. If we are indeed dealing with the same god, then God N

is the patron deity of the numeral five (Thompson 1950: 133-4), in which guise he wears the *tun* sign in his headdress, a feature often present in representations of God N in the codices. Also characteristic of the god is a snail shell, either worn on his back or out of which he is crawling (see Nos. 16 and 70), although this is not a universal feature in the codices or elsewhere.

Thompson (ibid.) has a very useful discussion of God N, in which he accepts the identification, first made by Schellhas and Förstemann, of God N with Mam, the aged, essentially evil earth god who is still believed by the highland Maya to live in a home beneath the earth’s surface or in the interior of a mountain. Mam was god of the Uayeb days (the last five days of the year) among the late prehispanic Maya of Yucatán. In this same study, Thompson suggests an identification with Tepeyólotl, an Aztec deity whose constant symbol was the snail shell, along with the death eye, an attribute of Underworld gods in central Mexico. Tepeyólotl was ruler of caves and the interior of the earth, and was usually portrayed as a were-jaguar.

Although Thompson in a later work (1970:276-80) has discarded the Mam-Tepeyólotl equivalence for God N in favor of another interpretation, I think he was right in the first place. He now suggests that God N is the same as the four Bacabs, who are said by Landa to have been bearers of the sky after the Flood had dropped the heavens on the earth. It is certainly true that there are figures of God N at Chichén Itzá, with hands upraised as though sustaining something, but I think it likely that they are not holding up the sky but are standing in the Underworld and holding up the flat earth.

In the codices there are several glyphic variations for God N’s name:

IV.63(or 64):548	V.63(or 64):528
IV.63(or 64):528	III.63(or 64):528
V.63(or 64):548	63(or 64):210

Obviously, the constant element is the superfix 63 or 64 (which are surely identical), two netted elements sep-

arated by an eye-like element. In all but one case, the main sign is Tun (548) or Cauac (528); there is abundant evidence that these two glyphs can in all cases, apart from a Long Count date, substitute for each other, and that the correct reading is always *tun*, the 360-day time unit of the Maya. The exceptional name glyph has Snail-shell (210) as the main sign, a logical alternative, given the gastropod attributes of God N. Preceding almost all nominal glyphs for the deity is a numerical coefficient— III, IV, or V.

One might reasonably expect that the nominal glyph for God N would include the netted-element glyph (63 or 64), followed by *tun*. A god mentioned frequently in Landa and in Colonial Yucatec sources is Pauah Tun, like Bacab a quadripartite being with color-direction associations whose function and appearance remain a mystery. There is no entry in the Motul Dictionary (1939) for *pauah*, but there is one for *pauo*, which is glossed as “certain net bags used by the Indians, and feed bag used for giving animals maize, barley, and the like.” Remembering that the netted element is a prominent feature on the headdress of God N in monumental texts, codices, and pottery, and that the *tun* sign is in the headdress of the god as patron of numeral five and in his glyph, I think it may safely be concluded that the real name for God N is Pauah Tun. Kelley (1962b) reads glyph 586, a single-netted element, as *pa*, presumably using the evidence of Landa’s month Pax, before which 586 is placed as a phonetic indicator. It now looks as though both 63 (64) and 586 are derived from the net bag, *pauo*. The Pauah Tun identification, however, does not preclude the possibility that this is also Mam, a name that means maternal grandfather in all Mayan languages but which is not attached to a god among the Yucatec Maya. I would suggest that the Mam of the highlands was called Pauah Tun in the lowlands.

The fact that God A plays a relatively minor role in the Underworld, as compared to Gods L and N or to the various old gods with jaguar traits, suggests that Xibalba or Metnal may have been compartmented into two regions. According to the Lacandon (Thompson 1970:303; Bruce et al. 1971:25-6), one of these chambers is presided over by Sucunyum, “Elder Brother,” who is relatively neutral and decides on the basis of the individual’s past life whether he should be sent to the other chamber, where the dread torturer Cizin inflicts horrible agonies upon his soul, or whether he should be spared eternal punishment. There would appear to be Christian ethics involved here, rather than native ones, but it does suggest that the evil Cizin was responsible only for chastisement and was not really an Underworld ruler. I would guess that Elder Brother is God L.

with God L, or at least one part of it, then they both might correspond to the principal Lords of Xibalba in the Popol Vuh, 1 Death and 7 Death. As we shall see, God N’s name glyph appears early in the Primary Standard text sequence.

Death God

The skeletalized Death God, God A of the codices, is not so common as one might expect on Maya ceramics or elsewhere. The death’s head on the Dumbarton Oaks vase has already been discussed. Perhaps the best-known appearance of this macabre figure is on No. 45, in which he is seen as dancing and “almost jolly,” as Thompson (1970:302) remarks. It will be noted that in this case a noxious gas rises from a bone attached to the buttocks of the god, reminding one of the derivation of one of the Death God’s names, Cizin, from the Maya word *ciz*, “flatulence.” He is seen again in a dance on No. 46, with stylized excrement attached to his back ornament; clearly contamination and sin were a part of his makeup.

The fact that God A plays a relatively minor role in the Underworld, as compared to Gods L and N or to the various old gods with jaguar traits, suggests that Xibalba or Metnal may have been compartmented into two regions. According to the Lacandon (Thompson 1970:303; Bruce et al. 1971:25-6), one of these chambers is presided over by Sucunyum, “Elder Brother,” who is relatively neutral and decides on the basis of the individual’s past life whether he should be sent to the other chamber, where the dread torturer Cizin inflicts horrible agonies upon his soul, or whether he should be spared eternal punishment. There would appear to be Christian ethics involved here, rather than native ones, but it does suggest that the evil Cizin was responsible only for chastisement and was not really an Underworld ruler. I would guess that Elder Brother is God L.

Jaguar Gods of the Underworld

Various Underworld deities are either jaguars or have jaguar traits, that animal being a creature of the night

and therefore a symbol of the nether regions. Among the purely, or near purely, feline beings is the Water-lily Jaguar, usually portrayed with water-lily vegetation, either placed on his head or surrounding him in a cartouche. This deity appears on page 8a of the Dresden Codex, along with his name glyph. However, on No. 38 it can be seen that there are four other felines drawn in the same scene as the Water-lily Jaguar, each with its own peculiarities, so that jaguar iconography is rather complex.

The Jaguar God of the Underworld himself, with face of the Sun God, jaguar ear, and long hank of hair, ranks immediately beneath God L, according to the testimony of No. 49, and is allied with that being by virtue of his role as a war god, a role attested to by the frequent appearance of his awesome face on a war shield, like that of the Temple of the Sun at Palenque. It should be noted that God L also has the jaguar ear. Less easy to identify are two old gods with jaguar spots on the body; these often appear with a pair of young deities, the Headband Gods (No. 22).

Jawless divinities

At least two Underworld rulers are characterized by having no lower jaw; in its place is a cluster of curved elements proceeding downward from the upper jaw (No. 49). One has a quill-like device similar to the perforator used in penis sacrifices and is evidently the same personage as the God of Pax (the month), and G7 in the Nine Lords of the Night sequence. The other, with more curvilinear elements in the mouth, including a spiral at the corner, I have identified as the 1058 God. Both occur at the ends of so-called sky bands in the Bonampak murals, where they exhibit jaguar characteristics.

Other gods

Identified gods are relatively common, but the extraordinary variety of other gods on the corpus of Maya pottery is bewildering. For most of these it is impossible to be sure about identification and function, because

of our general ignorance of the Maya pantheon; it should be remembered that no fewer than 166 deities are named in the Ritual of the Bacabs (Roys 1965), only a handful of which is identifiable.

Some of the gods are definitely connected with water, an Underworld trait. Water birds, some of which are surely herons, are ubiquitous. Three Frog Gods are depicted on No. 37, one of whom is surprisingly shown with a cigar held in his webbed foot. The Fish God does occur on a few plates and bowls not in this catalogue, but it is rare. Animal deities not involved with water are Deer (often with death markings), Spider Monkey (sometimes in erotic association with a naked young woman who may be the Moon Goddess), and Rabbit Gods.

Most astonishing are various Insect Gods which include Mosquito, Firefly, and a pair of wingless creatures with monstrous heads which I have named Insect Gods A and B. The connection between insects and death is noted by Thompson (1950:84-6), based on ethnographic evidence. Among the Quiché Maya, offerings are made to the souls of the ancestors, visualized as an insect smaller than a fly, called *ah mak*. In September, among the Tzutuhil Maya, certain large green flies called *ci uech’ camina’k* (“eyes of the dead”) enter and leave houses and cluster at street corners; these are the spirits of dead family members. In Chan Kom, Yucatán, the souls of the dead return to earth in the form of insects on All Souls’ Day. In the prophecy for the Katun 3 Ahau in the Books of Chilam Balam (Roys 1954:40), appears the passage, “Mourned are the flies (*bulcum*, ‘great hairy fly’) at the four crossroads; they shall be seen, the great hairy flies, they shall be mourned, the great hairy flies, at the four crossroads.” Citing Thompson (ibid.), Roys suggests that this may refer to the souls of dead in insect form, which would be consonant with the meaning of “the four crossroads,” a euphemism for the entrance to the Underworld.

Symbolism and ceremonial

paraphernalia

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

An elaborate and highly patterned symbolism was used by Maya artists working on pictorial pottery. Perhaps the least understood aspect of this symbolism is that of gestures: the position of hands, arms, and torsos. The meaning of only one of these gestures is known, the hand raised to the opposite shoulder as a sign of submission, documented in early Colonial sources. There is definitely room for a great deal more work in this field.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Death symbolism is overtly displayed on many vessels. Besides such obvious signs as death's heads and crossed bones (the latter especially common on the wings of the Bat Gods), there are elements that more subtly indicate the presence of death. Death eyes are disembodied eyes with nerve stalks still attached, and have been long known as an attribute of the Death God (Thompson 1950:45). The death collar is a yoke-like construction worn around the neck of the Death God in the codices and on Maya pottery; hanging from it are death eyes separated by hair-like elements. I suspect that it was symbolic of death by decapitation (cf. the decapitated figure of God CH in Dresden 2a). Black spots prominently displayed on the body also indicate death, as can be seen in Death God representations in the Dresden Codex.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Water and jaguar symbolism stands for the Underworld itself (Thompson 1950:72). The water-lily (Rands 1953) is thus very common on Maya pottery, sometimes arising from a monstrous reptilian head with Imix or Kan-Cross glyph, a creature which Thompson (ibid.) identifies as the Earth Crocodile. On Chochohá-style carved vases, the plant often surrounds the entire scene as a *car-touche*. The personages in palace tableaux, and even the Young Lords, occasionally display water-lily blossoms in their headdresses.

A casual glance through the illustrations to this catalogue will show that one of the most frequent attributes of Maya gods, along with god markings on the bodies, is a pair of curvilinear elements proceeding from the mouth or head; one of the pair is a simple spiral, while the other undulates. Thompson (1970:226) has identified this sign (affix 122) as *bil*, "vegetation or growth," an identification which is inherently improbable since it appears in both monuments and codices above the glyph for fire (563) and surely represents smoke. An identical sign emanates from the mirror carried by the god Tezcatlipoca ("Smoking Mirror") in the Mexican codices. Should not affix 122 then stand for smoke? This would be consonant with my identification of God K as the Maya version of Tezcatlipoca, for both give off smoke from bone tubes sunk into their heads, as well as being snake-footed. As a general attribute of deities, the sign may represent or symbolize the power of the divinity.

In scenes in which figures are enthroned, a jaguar-skin bundle often is placed to one side, or else the personage sits upon it like a cushion. This object, however, is only half covered with jaguar hide, which is crenellated along one edge. It appears with some frequency as glyph 609 in the codices; in the Dresden it is an attribute of Gods L and N, and occurs once with God B. In the monuments, glyph 609 is a rare variant for Glyph F, "probably used because of the close association of the jaguar with darkness and the underworld" (Thompson 1962: 232); on Stela D at Copan, the aged Sun God (G9) bears the jaguar-skin bundle of Glyph F on his back. Similarly, on the previously described Chamá vase showing a procession with a figure in a palanquin, one of his subordinates follows the litter carrying the same object with a tumpline. There can thus be no doubt that the item in question is a bundle and not just a cushion. There is a suggestion that the jaguar-skin bundle was closely associated with the Underworld in that, while four temples are shown in the Dresden New Year ceremonies, only in the temple ruled by the Death God does this object appear. On the Altar Vase (Adams

1971, fig. 92), it is probably significant that glyph 609 follows the nominal glyphs for all six figures, who are all surely dead, while on No. 13, a Chamá vase, the severed head of the Water-lily Jaguar with death collar is fixed to the bundle.

Another kind of bundle can also be seen on pictorial ceramics, but always placed on the ground rather than upon the throne or dais. This seems to be made of cloth and is tied up on top with a large cloth knot (glyph 60). On No. 49, the Vase of the Seven Gods, there are two such bundles, each placed in front of a seated god, and each marked with the glyph compound IX-Star-Earth.

One can only wonder what the meaning of the jaguar-skin and bound bundles might be. Among the Aztec, the *tlaquimilolli* was the bundle in which highly sacred objects such as atlatl darts, ashes, jades, and the skins of snakes and jaguars were wrapped in the mantles of dead gods (Recinos 1950:205); the bundle, which was venerated as the god himself, was often carried during migrations preceding the establishment of politically important centers (Nicholson 1971:409). For the Quiché Maya, there is a mention in the Popol Vuh of the Pizom Q'aq'al (or Gagal), which might be translated either as Bundle of Majesty or Bundle of Fire. This was the sacred bundle of the Kavek lineage, left behind by their founding ancestor, the demigod Balam Quiché, and worshiped in a temple (Edmundson 1965:12). As the Popol Vuh describes it, its "form was invisible because it was wrapped up and could not be unwrapped; the seam did not show because it was not seen when they wrapped it up" (Recinos 1950:205). Probably all Mesoamerican polities—whether lineages, tribes, or states—had such holy objects, a trait which they shared with their relatives, the American Indians of the United States and Canada.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Pottery vessels, both open bowls and cylindrical vases, appear frequently on Maya pictorial ceramics. Although there is a chance that some of the rounded objects

shown in the bowls might be balls of copal incense, I think it far more probable that they are meant to be tamales or some other form of cooked dough. There is strong evidence that tall vases in these scenes hold liquids, most likely the intoxicating beverage known as *balché* used in ceremonies, a strong mead flavored with the bark of a certain kind of tree. A froth is shown on top of the liquid in the tableau of No. 13, surely an indication that the liquid was a fermented drink. Female cupbearers stand to one side on Nos. 27 and 42, and on the latter the young woman is shown in the act of preparing the drink of the ruler (in this case, God L). All kinds of objects, especially Underworld flowers like the water lotus, are placed in low open baskets.

Scenes on Maya Pottery

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

I have already touched upon those themes in Classic Maya ceramics which are more or less explicitly related to the Hero Twins episode of the Popol Vuh. Since, however, a great many scenes on pictorial vessels cannot be so explained, it would seem that there must have been a much larger corpus of Underworld mythology on which the artist could draw than just what we find in that great poem.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

First of all, there are the hierarchic scenes, in which several or as many as thirty-one gods are seated or standing in what was probably a fairly rigid order or rank. In these, activities are generally confined to gestures or to the holding of sacred objects in the hand. The unbelievable complexity of the Underworld pantheon is well illustrated by such scenes.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Some of the most splendid vases are illustrated by palace scenes, frequently taking place beneath a swagged curtain. The ruler is seated upon a throne or dais, often with the jaguar-skin bundle at one side, and subordinates are arranged on the ground below him or stand to

one side. Not infrequently a female cupbearer is included in the scene. Offerings of food and drink, as well as flower-filled baskets, are placed below or to one side of the throne. It might be assumed that such tableaux were meant to show an actual Maya lord and his retinue, but we have already seen the pervasiveness of Underworld symbolism in these palaces. One possible explanation might be that we are looking at a dead lord in the other world, along with his followers who had been slain to accompany him in his replicated palace. I have the feeling, however, that these personages are highly standardized in headdress and other costume details, and that it is equally probable that not real persons at all, but deified or semideified actors in a now-lost Underworld epic, are portrayed. It is certain that the rulers were divine personages in several palace scenes, in which God L is seated upon a throne beneath the curtain.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Most peculiar are the double-palace scenes (Nos. 29, 30). Here there are two rulers; where they are identical, or nearly so, they are surely the enthroned Hero Twins. But this is not always the case. When costume details are strikingly different one must posit some form of dual rulership, documented both for the Maya and central Mexicans (Zantwijk 1963).

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Perhaps one of the most striking themes on Maya ceramics is human sacrifice, an obsession that only rarely shows up on the monuments but is memorably depicted in the Bonampak murals. Curiously enough, it is not heart sacrifice which is shown, but beheading. In the magnificent scene of No. 42, two macabre gods are chopping with an ax at the neck of a seated, bound prisoner who may be the ill-fated 7 Hunahpu of the Popol Vuh, while on No. 44, an insect-headed god has just decapitated a similarly bound victim. Again, Figure 6 on the Altar Vase shows a person with arms tied behind the back, as in Nos. 42 and 44; his face is a ghastly white and is marked with the "division sign" of death. At his neck is an ax. It is not generally recognized that it is decapitation that is being shown in the wall paintings

of Bonampak. In Room 3, befeathered nobles are performing a dance so spectacular that it obscures the real import of the scene, which is actually a beheading ceremony. Two of three figures at the top carry axes in their hands, while the dead captive is being dragged down the step by two underlings. At one side is the usual complement of trumpeters.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Maya pottery also indicates that prisoners were frequently bound to scaffolds and tortured before sacrifice. One of the most sinister compositions in the field of Mesoamerican art is No. 33, on which the victim is raised on a scaffold, while a horribly deformed executioner causes his intestines to spill out with the point of a spear. In an extraordinary polychrome vase in the Art Institute of Chicago (Wardwell 1972, fig. 3), the terrified victim is tied in seated position to the scaffold and is being approached by the masked executioner who has just stepped from a palanquin.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Apparently, orchestral music and singing were a standard accompaniment of such horrifying scenes, with drums, rattles, and wooden trumpets often shown. One is reminded of the funerary dirges with trumpets in the rites and sacrifices which took place on the burial of the Tarascan kings. Even more to the point is a prohibition of 1623 against the dance called *tum teleche*, practiced by the Quiché and other highland Maya (Uchmany de de la Peña 1967). The name of the dance was derived from the Quiché *teleech* ("to capture, lasso, tie up") and *tum* or *tun*, a word used for dances accompanied by a drum. The dance represented the capture and sacrifice of a warrior, and during it the captive was tied to a scaffold. While trumpets blew and "orisons" were chanted, four executioners attired as animals took the victim's life. Presumably in the early seventeenth century the sacrifice itself was feigned, but in prehispanic times the dance was likely to have been the real thing. According to the Holy Office's witness, "When the trumpets are played, the whole town gets into an uproar, even the children coming with anxious desire and haste to be present, something they would not do in other *tum*

dances" (ibid. :296). In the Dresden Codex, a similar sacrificial scene is recorded on page 34a: the severed head of the Maize God lies on a Caban glyph which in turn rests on a pyramid, while an orchestra of old deities, including God N and probably God L, is engaged in music. To one side is a ladder which probably served as scaffold.

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

As Thompson (1970:175-82) points out, there is abundant ethnohistoric evidence for human sacrifice among the lowland Maya, much of it involving decapitation and the use of scaffolds. In the prophecies for Katuns 3 Ahau and 6 Ahau, the beheading of rulers is predicted (Roys 1954), and decapitation is several times mentioned in the Ritual of the Bacabs (Roys 1965:28, 40). In the latter, the appropriate phrase is *xot u cal*, from *xot* ("to cut with a blow") and *cal* ("throat, neck"). In the Sotuta and Homun testimony before the Inquisition, the victim was sometimes killed by beheading before the heart was extracted; another form of sacrifice still being practiced in those days was to cut out the victim's heart while he was tied to a ladder with arms outstretched (Tozzer 1941:116). Christianity had made some impact, however, among the pagan Maya of Yucatán, for some of them had resorted to tying or nailing the victim to a cross!

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Death is unequivocally the ultimate subject of such sacrificial scenes. However, another well-known form of Mesoamerican sacrifice was the shedding of blood from various portions of one's own body, such as the tongue, ears, and penis. Penis bloodletting is found on two outstanding Maya vessels. One is a vase from Huehuetenango (Gordon and Mason 1925-43, pl. 26), showing six Underworld deities engaged in perforating their members, the blood being spattered onto paper contained in baskets (Thompson 1961). In the lower half of the same vase, two "long-lipped" god heads can be seen, but between them are the very same perforators that are being employed in the bloodletting rite. This instrument can also be seen placed against the groin of Figure 1 on the Altar Vase, a dancing god wearing

jaguar-skin pants, jaguar paws, and jaguar headdress (Adams 1971, fig. 92).

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

Warfare is surprisingly scarce in the corpus of Maya vessels, given its importance on monuments and murals. Without question, the finest depiction of a Classic Maya battle, apart from the wall paintings at Bonampak, is on No. 26. Since the ruling divinities of war and the Underworld among the Mesoamericans were closely connected, if not identical, with the gods of trade, it is not surprising to find vases showing armed merchants on journeys. The justly renowned Merchants Vase (Gordon and Mason 1925-43, pl. 2) is such an object; I have already suggested that this represents the meeting of the Maya version of Yacatecutli, God M, with the ubiquitous God L, who surely has a martial aspect. The theme of hunting forms a triumvirate with war and trade in Mesoamerican thought, which may explain in part the deer and deer-hunting rituals on Maya ceramics. Those interested in following up this subject may find it fruitful to examine the scene on the Actun Balam Vase (Pendergast 1969, fig. 12), in which the lord of merchants, God M (caricatured exactly as in the preceding vase), leads a hunting party against magic deer ridden by dwarfs.

Maya Pottery Texts

A vase with a seated god and a bundle of jaguar-skin

The general neglect of Maya pictorial ceramics as clues to Maya thought and civilization can be extended to the glyphic texts which are painted, inscribed, or carved upon them. This casual approach to the subject is sadly apparent in the haphazard, inaccurate, and often illegible manner in which such texts are customarily reproduced in publications (the magnificent Gordon and Mason portfolio of 1925-43 is an outstanding exception). The most influential view of these texts has been that of J. Eric S. Thompson (1950:27), who attested that ceramic artists were generally ignorant of the principles

and meaning of Maya writing, and were reduced to copying forms which they completely misunderstood. This position was followed by Longyear (1952:60-6) in his discussion of Copán pottery, even though this was one of the first monographs to deal with pottery texts in a serious way. By comparing the horizontal glyph band of the famous Quetzal Vase from Copán with that of a Río Hondo vessel excavated by Gann, he was able to show that the texts (identified as Primary Standard in this catalogue) were extremely alike in both style and content, concluding that either one was copied from the other or that both were taken from a third original. However, his opinion of the scriptural abilities of Maya pottery artists closely followed that of Thompson (1950: 65-6), and deserves to be given in full:

The artists who decorated the carved and incised vases just described were technically capable of reproducing any Maya hieroglyph. Their failure to do so, therefore, is worthy of comment. They were not bound by convention, as were the Copador artists, and could use any signs they pleased in their glyph bands, as is evinced by the great variety actually employed. Still, recognizable hieroglyphs are very rare. There may, perhaps, have been a taboo against the use of meaningful glyphs as decoration, but if this were so, one would expect it to be all-inclusive, and not capable of corruption by occasional signs for Ahau, Zotz, etc. A somewhat more reasonable explanation might be that the artists were not familiar enough with the glyphs to reproduce them except from a copy prepared by one of the priests. From both observation and execution, they knew the general characteristics of the signs—the use of head forms and hands, the affixes, the association of bar-and-dot numerals—but they could not accurately inscribe any given glyph without a pattern.

In his catalogue, Thompson (1962:14-8) presents the most complete discussion so far of glyphs on pottery. Although I totally disagree with his conclusions, he deserves full credit for wisely deciding to include ceramic glyphs in it, which has made my own study very much easier. Thompson's opinion (pp. 14-15) is as follows:

Inclusion in the catalog of glyphs painted, carved, or stamped on pottery presented certain difficulties principally because of the doubt as to how many of such texts had any meaning. For instance, several common glyphs appear on pottery with certain affixes with which they are never paired on monuments or in the codices. These compounds found only on pottery might correspond to changes in subject matter, but it is equally possible—and, indeed, more probable—that some of these new pairings of affix with main sign derive not from the need to express some new idea, but merely from the artist's wish to produce a well-balanced and aesthetically pleasing arrangement.

After mentioning the "copying" alleged by Longyear, he points out certain glyphs which were "favored by the decorators of pottery": (1) compound 229. 617, usually with 126 subfixed, a combination which I below identify as the Initial Sign, but which he sees as evidence for the artist's illiteracy; (2) compound 60 or 61.77:585, presented below as Wing-Quincunx; (3) Serpent-segment (565); (4) Hand-Monkey (220.755); along with a "long-beaked bird with a sort of curl emerging from the base of the beak"; and (5) Fish (738). "It is surely significant that among the glyphs particularly favored by potters and apparently copied from one pot to another are those of a monkey, a fish and a bird, glyphs easily recognized by the illiterate" (ibid., p. 16). He concludes that all pottery texts are decorative, with the exception of certain "carved brown ware" vases which might contain functional glyphs.

My own research has led me to exactly opposite results. The idea of "decoration" was, and still is, completely alien to American Indian cultures, including the Maya. As a corollary I will assume, unless it is proved otherwise, that all elements no matter how insignificant they may appear to our own culture-bound eyes, had meaning to the Maya artist and beholder. With such profoundly esoteric subject matter as is manifested on Maya pictorial ceramics, it is inconceivable that the pottery artist was not so fully acquainted with the style

and content of the Maya writing system as those responsible for monumental texts; furthermore, data will be presented in this catalogue that the calligrapher of pottery and of codices must have been one and the same person.

Ceramic texts may be divided into two major groups, *primary* and *secondary*. A primary text appears as a horizontal glyph band below the rim or, if this is not present, in a vertical column. Some 28 percent of all primary texts known to me consist of short sequences of day names (*Primary Tzolkin sequence*), or of glyph repeats (*Primary Repeat*), usually some variant of the Muluc glyph. Primary Repeat texts have been said to contain no meaning, but they could well represent the ritual incantation, over and over like some Tibetan prayer, of a cult word or name. But 72 percent of primary texts contain no repeated signs at all. These nonrepetitive sequences I have separated into *Primary Standard* (by far the most common) and *Primary Alternative*. I will discuss these below, but it should be stressed that in no example known to me is there any firm relation between a primary text and the scene displayed below or to the side. This is why I think that such sequences are rigidly codified chants or recitations.

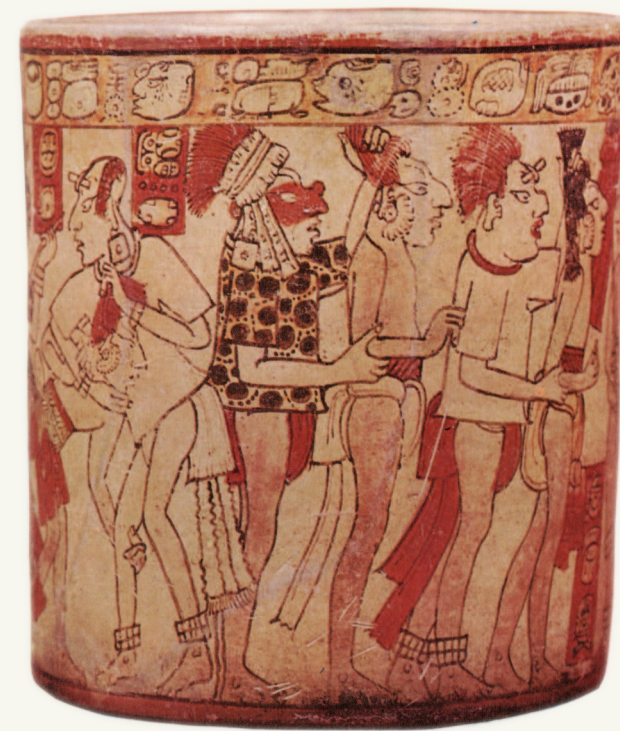
On the other hand, secondary texts, which are shorter glyph sequences found near figures in scenes, have another function; 78 percent of them are nonrepetitive (*Secondary Nonrepeat*) and most likely contain names, titles, and actions which vary according to the figures and events portrayed. Sometimes even Emblem Glyphs are present.

A few vessels have only single glyphs, and a handful has no glyphs whatsoever.

The Primary Standard Sequence

The Primary Standard sequence *never* appears in monumental inscriptions. The only example I have ever seen is on a fake relief in pseudo-USumacinta style in a New York collection. Similarly, it is absent from the extant codices. However, individual glyphs important in the sequence are occasionally found in both inscriptions and books. Two travertine marble vases at Dumbarton Oaks (Lothrop et al. 1957, pls. 86, 87; von Winning 1963) have portions of the sequence. There is a suggestion that the Primary Standard sequence had already been codified by the Late Formative (see No. 2, a stone vessel), but by the Early Classic it is in full use on funerary ceramics. Its final occurrence is on a Tepeu 2 Fine Orange vase from Uuaxactún (Smith 1955, fig. 10, 5). There is no trace of a Primary Standard text on any Post-Classic object.

The Primary Standard sequence presented in Table 1 has been determined by the examination of forty-eight vessels with Primary Standard texts, including twenty-seven in this catalogue. The number of glyphs in each text varies from four to twenty-two, so that it is obvious the artist-calligrapher was selecting from a very long sequence; however, in making his choice, the order in which he arranged them in the glyph band was invariable (i.e. Step always is placed after the Initial Sign, never before; Fish is always later than Wing-Quincunx; etc.). Thus it may be concluded that the artist had memorized the entire sequence, which may well have consisted of up to a hundred glyphs or more. Because of the limited data I was working with, I am sure about the relative position of only thirty-five glyphs out of the sequence. In certain cases I have had to list two to three glyphs together in the same place; however, discovery of further texts should allow these to be separated. Incidentally, the names given to these glyphs by epigraphers are merely mnemonic devices based upon the superficial appearance of the glyphs, and in most cases have little or nothing to do with either their function or



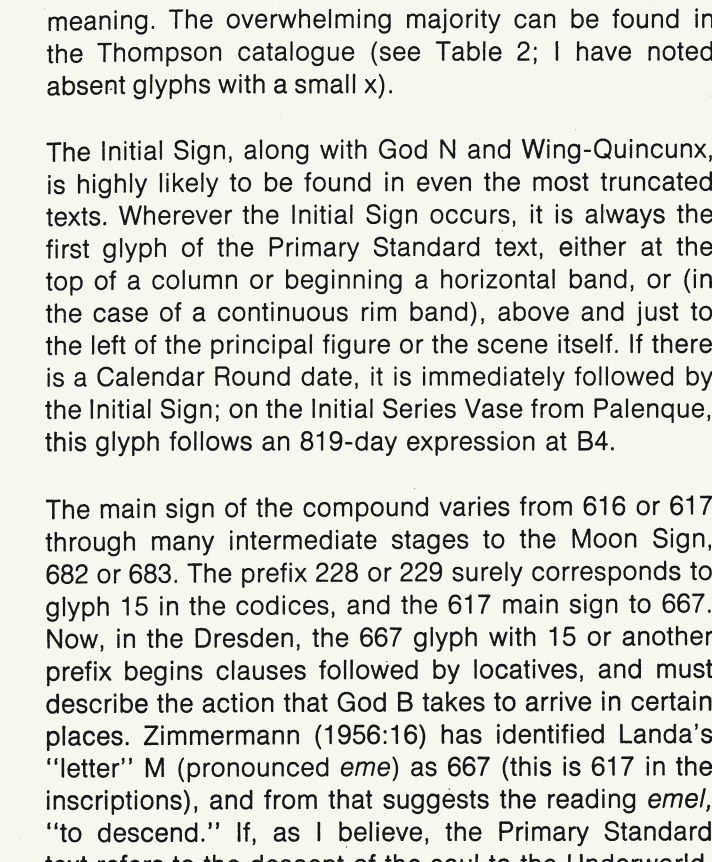
26



21



70



meaning. The overwhelming majority can be found in the Thompson catalogue (see Table 2; I have noted absent glyphs with a small x).

The Initial Sign, along with God N and Wing-Quincunx, is highly likely to be found in even the most truncated texts. Wherever the Initial Sign occurs, it is always the first glyph of the Primary Standard text, either at the top of a column or beginning a horizontal band, or (in the case of a continuous rim band), above and just to the left of the principal figure or the scene itself. If there is a Calendar Round date, it is immediately followed by the Initial Sign; on the Initial Series Vase from Palenque, this glyph follows an 819-day expression at B4.

The main sign of the compound varies from 616 or 617 through many intermediate stages to the Moon Sign, 682 or 683. The prefix 228 or 229 surely corresponds to glyph 15 in the codices, and the 617 main sign to 667. Now, in the Dresden, the 667 glyph with 15 or another prefix begins clauses followed by locatives, and must describe the action that God B takes to arrive in certain places. Zimmermann (1956:16) has identified Landa's "letter" M (pronounced *eme*) as 667 (this is 617 in the inscriptions), and from that suggests the reading *emel*, "to descend." If, as I believe, the Primary Standard text refers to the descent of the soul to the Underworld, then this reading for the Initial Sign is apt. I find, for instance, in the Vienna Dictionary the entry *emiob mitnal*, "they descended to Hell." Of course, this does not answer the question of what the significance of the Moon glyph as the main sign of the compound might be, or why, on carved vases from the Chocholá area, the Moon Sign A compound should stand in the place of the Initial Sign.

Because God N and Step do not co-exist on any vessels known to me, they have been placed together in the next position. It is no surprise to find God N's head early in the Primary Standard sequence, as we have already seen that he is one of the two principal rulers of the Underworld. In glyphic form, the netted bag

placed at the forehead is even better delineated than when he is shown in scenes. Rather than seeming to merge with 515, as claimed by Thompson (1962:393), the main sign of Step would appear to be closely allied with 601. Its meaning is unknown. Flat-hand Verb takes the action sign 181; it bears a strong resemblance to Glyph C of the Lunar Series, also likely to be a verb. Downball-bird is one of two long-beaked bird heads often found in a Primary Standard text; it could well be the creature with down-ball over beak whose head appears as a god in column E of the Venus Tables in the Dresden (p. 47), although this has the Etz'nab sign in the "ear." Manik-hand is known to represent deer in the Maya writing system (for instance, the day Manik corresponds to the Mexican day Mázatl ("deer")) and David H. Kelley informs me that the word for deer in one Zapotec dialect is *manik*. I would think that this glyph, with the Blue-Green or New prefix (16 or 17), might be a substitute for the deer-head which is known on a few vessels, and I would also hazard the guess that we are dealing with a god.

The next three glyphs, Fire-Imix, Wing-Imix, and Fire-Quincunx, seem to behave the same way in the sequence, and their component parts appear to be interchangeable, so that we might be dealing with variations of the same concept. There is little to indicate what the combinations mean, but the Fire-Imix glyph with 12 prefix (read by Knorosov as the honorific *ah*) stands alone on the reverse of No. 67, a Yucatecan vase carved with the figure of the Water-lily Jaguar god. One might entertain the hypothesis that in ceramic texts this compound substitutes for 109.800 as the god's name glyph.

Bat is found on one example before Worm-bird and once immediately after, so that its more usual position in the sequence cannot be determined; in these and in other cases, it is always before Wing-Quincunx. This is surely the head of the fearsome Cama Zotz, the Killer Bat celebrated in the Underworld episode of the Popol Vuh, and the Hero Twins' most formidable enemy. For the curious Worm-bird we have no precedent in monu-

ments or codices, but it must be another deity. As noted by Thompson (1962:183), Cleft-sky almost always appears with 168 prefixed, a compound now known to be the Emblem Glyph for Yaxchilán. The only examples of the glyph without any prefix are also from Yaxchilán, however. Needless to say, nothing else is known about Cleft-sky.

Second in importance to the Initial Sign is Wing-Quincunx. This glyph, which stands in about the middle of the sequence, is extraordinarily uniform. So far, nobody has come up with a convincing reading of the prefix, 61 or 62, but its context in the codices suggests a locative function. The Wing element is also fixed, and demonstrates that 72, 76, 77, and 236 (a bird) are all the same sign. The Quincunx main sign, 585a, also shows remarkable consistency across many centuries and thousands of square kilometers of territory. Assumed that the prefix indicates a place, what place might this be? In most Maya languages, *xik* means wing of a bird. Quincunx is given in Landa's "alphabet" (albeit with only four dots) as the letter B or *be*, which in Maya is the word for road and the root of words indicating walking. Knorosov (1967:89) assigns this element the phonetic value *b(a)*, but gives no compelling reason for this identification. Both readings (as well as a reading *bix* when the Quincunx is used as a kin variant) seem equally plausible. While we cannot now be very definite about the Wing-Quincunx compound, the suggestion might be entertained that it is the glyph for Xibalba, the Underworld. This would be based upon the possible locative, and the use of *xik* acronymically for *xi-*, with a final *-be* or *-ba*. In Quiché, *xibal* means fright or enemy, and *be* means road (as in Yucatec Maya). There is considerable variation in Quiché and Cakchiquel vocabularies for the last syllable: besides *-ba*, we have both *-bai*, and *-be*. Remembering that the four roads of different colors, meeting at a crossroads, are a synonym for the Underworld in Mesoamerican thought and iconography, it would not be farfetched to interpret Xibalba as ultimately meaning Road of Fright, and the Wing-Quincunx combination as "on the Road of Fright."

Serpent-segment is a catch-all term for a series of glyph compounds, all with main sign 565. Since, in spite of their varying affixes, all appear in the same position in the Primary Standard sequence, we must be dealing with a single entity, of unknown meaning or reading. The Young Lord glyph would seem to be the head of one of the Hero Twins, and is especially common on Early Classic vases from the Petén. Spotted-Kan often appears in the codices in short glyph phrases in which it functions as an epithet following the nominal glyph for various deities. For instance, it is associated with the glyphs or pictures of God C (Dresden 5a, 4a, and 11c), Water-lily Jaguar (Dresden 8a), Itzamná (Dresden 9a), God E (Dresden 22b), and God M (Dresden 16b). It seems particularly associated with God L (Dresden 14b, c), and this may well be the god to which the Spotted-Kan compound alludes in Primary Standard texts.

Muluc is an elusive glyph, for compounds containing it as main sign are scattered through the sequence. However, it will be seen in Table 2 that the affixes of the compound vary with the position in the sequence, so that it may be a mistake to group all occurrences of the main sign under one rubric. One might well wonder at the high frequency of Muluc, not only in the Primary Standard sequence but also in Primary Alternative and especially Primary Repeat texts. I doubt that it has much to do with water, the basic meaning given to the glyph as day sign by Thompson (1950:77-8); perhaps a clue may be drawn from the use of the sign to mark the cheeks of some Young Lord heads used as glyphs in Primary Standard texts from the Early Classic. It might just be an epithet for the Hero Twins.

A series of animal-head glyphs now follows, beginning with Fish. Continuing in the same vein, in this sign we may be again dealing with some kind of god based upon an episode in the Popol Vuh: the reappearance of the Hero Twins, after their supposed destruction, as fish. On No. 42, Fish is followed, with an interval of two unknown glyphs, by the directional glyph for south. Rodent Bone is familiar in both monuments and codices, but the un-

raveling of its meaning continues to evade the efforts of epigraphers. As shown in Table 1, a sub-sequence of at least three glyphs branches off from Rodent Bone on carved vases in the Chocholá style from Yucatán. The Hand-Monkey compound appears to be confined to pottery and is one of the prime examples used by Thompson (1962:342) in his thesis that ceramic artists were reduced to copying. In Dresden 20b there is a young god (God U) seated upon a mat, and above him is his nominal glyph, 1028c. I suspect that this glyph, which shows an identical hand, the thumb of which is in the mouth of an old deity, is a variant of Hand-Monkey. If so, then the deity involved would be God U, who as far as I know makes but a single appearance in any of the codices. The well-known Imix-Comb-Imix compound also fits somewhere near this position. There is little indication that it functions in this context either as a title or as a kind of period to a sentence, two roles that have been suggested for the glyph.

Next in sequence may appear Kan-Rodent (Thompson's so-called Jog glyph) and Kan-Cross. Kan-Rodent is a gopher-like head with lolling tongue, and a Kan-Cross infixed at the angle of the jaw. In other situations, Kan-Rodent must be a kind of title (see discussion in Proskouriakoff 1968), but whether it is so here cannot now be determined. Death-head, which follows on the heels of Kan-Cross, may begin a Sky and Earth sub-sequence, or it may be followed by several glyphs ending with an Emblem Glyph and the supposed "Batab" sign. The latter two surely are connected with specific sites and specific persons ruling them. This terminal part of the sequence, if present, therefore is likely to refer to the person with whom the vessel was interred. Fairly convincing confirmation for this hypothesis comes from a vase (No. 26), in which the last ten glyphs (which include Imix-Comb-Imix, Kan-Rodent, Kan-Cross, and Death-head) would seem to refer to the death of a definite individual. Even more explicit is No. 47, which has a long text following the Fish glyph of the Primary Standard sequence; this text definitely refers to the death of a woman from Naranjo.

In both Primary Standard and Primary Alternative texts, a Katun glyph may be present, prefixed by a coefficient which never exceeds 3 in any of the known examples. Since it is almost inescapable that the 3 Katun expression on No. 47 means that the woman in question passed away in the third *katun* of her life (i.e. some time between the age of 40 and 60 years), I think it reasonable to conclude that whenever such isolated *katun* expressions occur in pottery texts, they have the same function.

It is one matter to work out the sequence of a text with a very high degree of redundancy from vessel to vessel; it is another matter to come up with an explanation of what it all means. I cannot prove it, but in my own opinion the Primary Standard sequence is the glyphic form of a long hymn which could have been sung over the dead or dying person, describing the descent of the Hero Twins to the Underworld, the various sinister gods and perils which they (and the deceased's soul) might encounter there, and perhaps ending with a reference to the Twins' apotheosis and the possibility of the same event for the soul of the person for whom the vase was painted. There is considerable evidence that, at the end of such a text, the deceased's name, titles, affiliation, and age at death could be spelled out.

Primary Alternative Texts

Cryptographers are faced with an almost insoluble task with the "one-time pad." This is a device employed in intelligence communications in which the code changes with each message, so that redundancy cannot accumulate to the point that outside observers can crack the message. Although I have not gone into Primary Alternative texts with the same care as Primary Standard, I can see very few common properties held among any of them. Some, at least, are sequences of god names, such as the series of six deities in one of the vertical columns of No. 21, in which the glyphs for the Chicchan and Bat Gods can be identified. A great deal more study is needed in this area.

The Maya Book of the Dead

Enough data have been presented, I hope, to confirm my thesis that the pictorial ceramics of the Classic Maya, and the glyphic texts painted upon them, deal exclusively with death and the Underworld. In this, Maya ceramics strongly contrast with the monuments, which are largely (but by no means entirely) devoted to historical matters, and with the surviving codices, which are mainly ritual-calendrical and only casually concerned with the realm of the dead. There is enough congruence in this material to suggest that the artist who was responsible for painting funerary vases (presumably immediately following the decease of the person for whose grave they were intended) was drawing upon an already existing corpus of written and painted material in codex form. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that there was a real Book of the Dead for the Classic Maya, akin to the Book of the Dead of the ancient Egyptians, which contained ritual texts and pictures describing the long

and terrifying journey of the dead man's soul to its final resting place.

We know that the Maya were extraordinarily concerned with the cult of the dead. For instance, there is ample evidence that the primary function of the great pyramid temple which towers above the tropical forest canopy in sites like Tikal and Palenque was to contain the tomb of the great ruler to whom it was dedicated. The utmost skill was lavished upon funerary offerings, not only for the sepulchers of mighty rulers but also for more ordinary persons. In terms of the concepts presented by Robert Hertz (1960), this lavish attention paid to the defunct was to ensure that the dead one passed from an anxiety-producing object into one which could bring blessings to the social group; the larger the group disrupted by the loss, the more the attention paid to his passing.

I have earlier outlined Mesoamerican beliefs about death and the dangerous trip to the Underworld as presented in our sources. The Popol Vuh, however, implies that perhaps the final destination of noble souls was not necessarily the final extinction suffered by the spirits of commoners. The wonderful story of the descent to the Underworld, temporary death, and apotheosis of the Hero Twins may have been the model for the transformation of dead rulers and nobles into gods. In Mesoamerican thought, the ruling caste was itself of divine origin, separately created from the rest of mankind. This being so, the magnificent ceramics presented in this catalogue may celebrate not just death, but the immortal and godly nature of the lords who ruled over the Maya realm.

Catalog

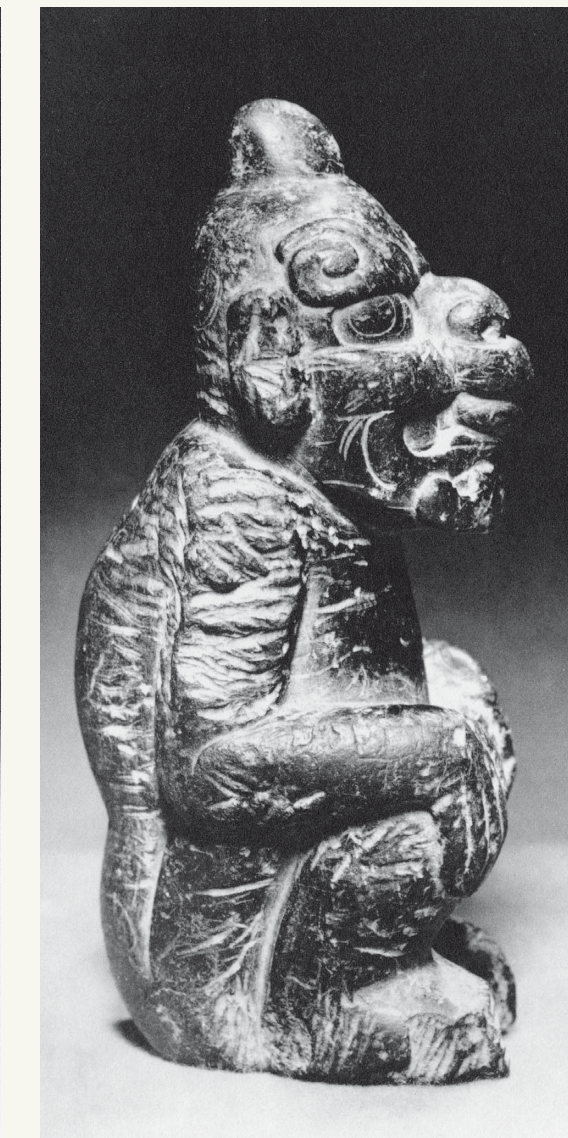
1. Stone jaguar god

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: unknown
 Date: Late Formative Period (ca 300 B.C.–A.D. 1)
 Height: 17.1 cm
 Text: historical?

This little figure is carved from a soft black rock resembling steatite. It depicts an anthropomorphic jaguar squatting with hands on knees. Superficially, the style looks Olmec but in fact it is very close to that of Izapa, Chiapas. The scroll-like brows, the nose with flaring nostrils, and the snarling mouth with projecting upper lip are known on other Izapan representations, but the horn-like feature (or sprouting maize?) on the top of the head is unique. Our faulty knowledge of Izapan iconography makes it impossible to identify the god depicted. It can be placed in the Late Formative Period and was probably carved in or near the Maya area.

Incised on the back are sixteen glyphs arranged in pairs to form two columns. This arrangement makes it certain that we are dealing with an extremely early Maya text, to be read in the sequence A1, B1, A2, B2, A3, etc. Unfortunately, some ancient hand has gouged away the soft stone so as to make some glyphs illegible. The subject matter of the text is unknown, but since there are no bar-and-dot numerals, it cannot be calendrical.

In style and to a certain degree in form, there are close resemblances between this text and the glyphs incised upon the reverse of the Dumbarton Oaks pectoral (M. Coe 1966, fig. 11). The head in A1 is found twice on the pectoral (at B2 and C1), and the fish-like form in A5 might be identified with glyph A2 or C3 on the Dumbarton Oaks object. B5 is surely a moon glyph which also shows up on Stela 10 at Kaminaljuyú, a monument probably contemporary with the jaguar god.





2. Carved stone bowl

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Diker, New York
 Provenance: unknown
 Date: Proto-Classic Period (A.D. 0–300)
 Height: 12.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?

The material from which the vessel is carved is a dense, probably metamorphic rock of grayish-brown color. There are reddish veins as well as lighter veins which may be quartz, since the cutting tool was not hard enough to carve these areas. In execution, the vase is a remarkable feat of technology, perhaps mainly carried out with tubular cane drills in which sand was the main abrasive. Particularly noteworthy is the hollow spout. Pottery vessels of this shape with bridged spouts are characteristic of the Proto-Classic Period in southern Mesoamerica, but I know of none of stone other than this example.

In style of carving, the Diker stone bowl can be compared to stone monuments at Izapa (near the Pacific coast of Chiapas) and at various other sites classed as Izapan, as well as to the monumental stelae and altars of Kaminaljuyú, on the outskirts of Guatemala City. My own feeling is that the vase was actually produced at Kaminaljuyú, from its close similarity, not only in style but also in small iconographic details, to Stela 10 at that site, a fragmentary monument of great size in which exactly the same treatment of volutes and feathers can be seen (Miles 1965, fig. 13).

The carved band encircling the jar neck is vaguely reminiscent of the "sky bands" sometimes found on Izapan monuments, but the usual "U-elements" (of unknown meaning) are absent. In their place are T-shaped elements rather like the Ik or wind sign among the later Maya.

Below this band float two figures of gods, as though flying in the sky or swimming in water. Because of our lack of knowledge of the early iconography of southern Mesoamerica during the Late Formative and Proto-Classic, these deities cannot yet be identified. The iconography, however, is incredibly detailed and meticulously carried out; it is certain that every element placed by the artist on these tremendously baroque figures is to be taken seriously.

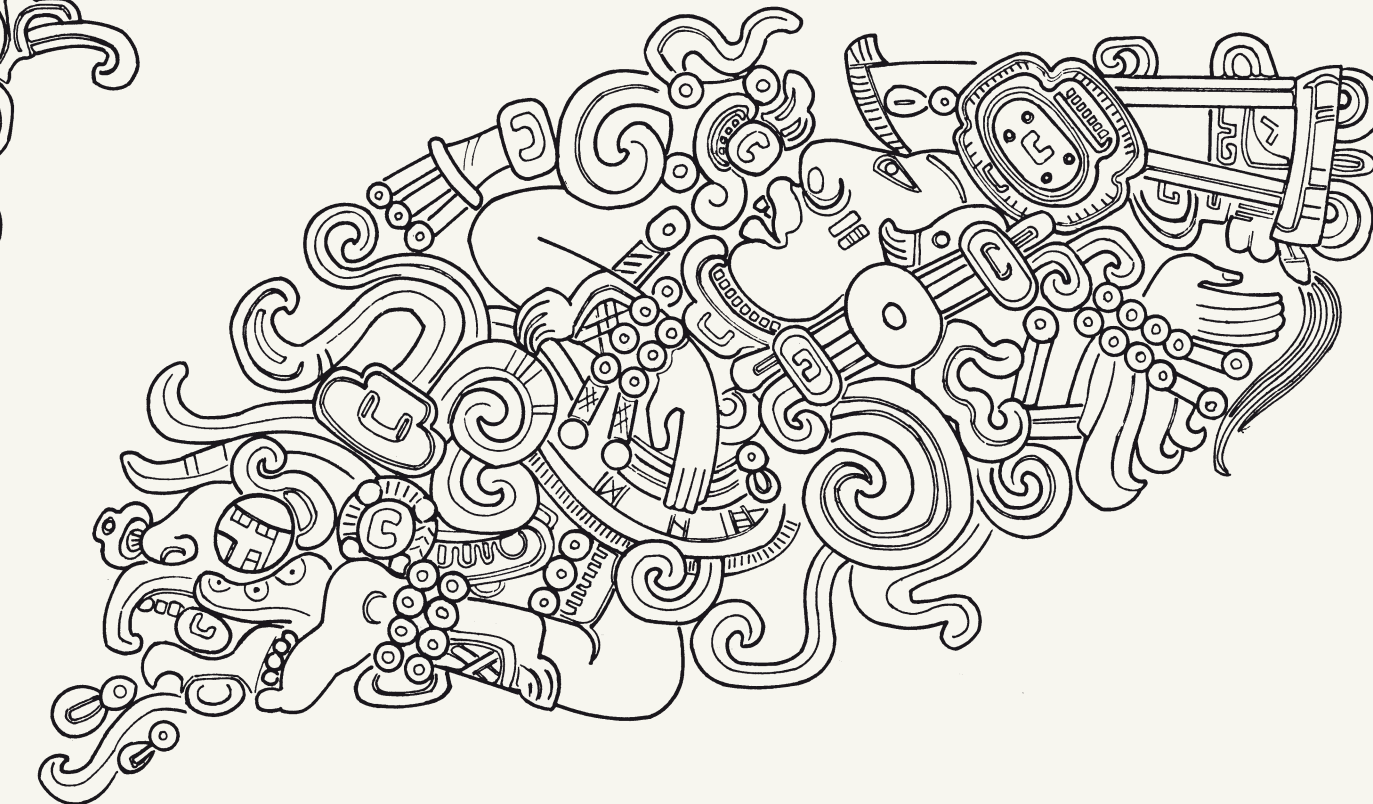
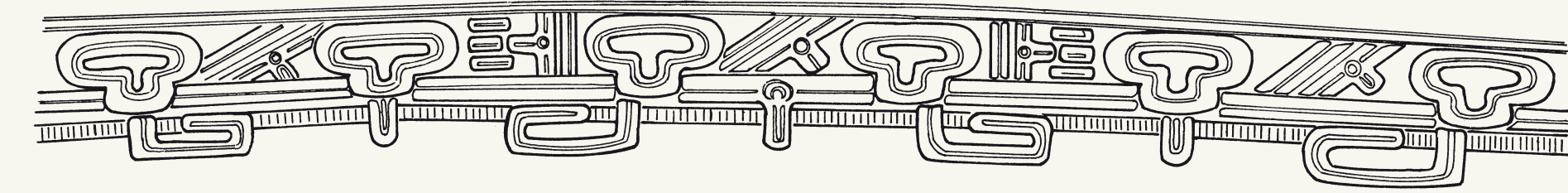
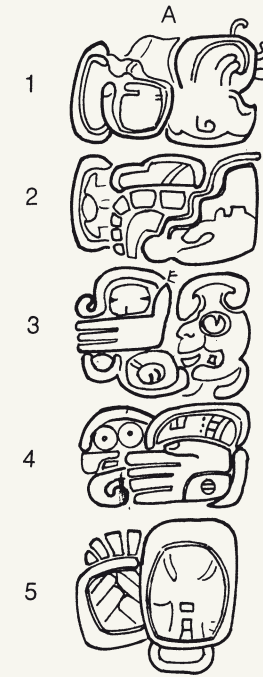
Figure 1 has a wing or hand in place of the eye, a downturned were-jaguar mouth, and feathered arms. The extreme distortion of the legs and arms suggests Xólotl, the deformed twin brother of Quetzalcóatl in some Aztec cosmology. Above the twin volute that emanates from his head is a glyph composed of an outstretched hand with a *kʼin* sign in the palm;

this glyph (544:670) probably functioned as the deity's name and is to be found at A3 on the inscription. On both figures, the head of another deity facing left can be seen as though pendent from the back ornament. In the case of Figure 1, the "long-lipped" god shown has a flower-like glyph over the forehead.

More human than Figure 1 is Figure 2, who has the face of a youth, marked with two vertical stripes on the cheek. As headdress he wears the Quincunx glyph (585a) within a cartouche; interestingly enough, the central element is a U-element, an Izapan feature that persists into the Early Classic in the Maya area. The right leg of Figure 2 is curiously absent, which may or may not be significant. Another long-lipped god appears to the left, but again no identification can be made.

I know of no other representations of the deities of the Diker stone vase. Izapa has the richest collection of very early iconography for southern Mesoamerica, but no figures of these deities are present either there or at Kaminaljuyú. Nor do they show up on probably contemporaneous carved bones from a Chiapa VI tomb at Chiapa de Corzo, a major site in the Central Depression of Chiapas (Agrinier 1960); but when the early art of southern Mesoamerica is better known, this vase should throw important light on the genesis of Maya art and iconography.

The five glyphs carved in a vertical row on the front of the spout comprise one of the very few texts known for this ancient epoch, and identify the vase as a very early Maya artifact. In style, the glyphs are much closer to those of the Early Classic than to the incised text of No. 1, and presumably they are a few centuries later than the latter. Not much can be said about this text since few of them can be surely found in the Thompson catalogue. Nonetheless, it should be noted that A2 contains the combination 331.843 (Step), which belongs to the Primary Standard sequence, so that the text may be related to those on pottery. Furthermore, there appears in A3 the compound 544:670, and I think it likely that this refers to the god shown in Figure 1; it would be nice if we also had a Wing-Quincunx glyph in the text, but this is missing.



3. Limestone glyph panel

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Chiapas, Mexico, probably the Usumacinta drainage between Palenque and Piedras Negras
 Date: Late Classic Period, ca. A.D. 700
 Height: 29.8 cm
 Text: Initial Series, historical

The material from which this beautifully preserved panel is carved is dense yellowish limestone of marble-like quality. Probably the panel was originally set in the interior wall of a temple or palace.

The inscription, which contains sixty-one glyphs, is in the graceful flowing style which was current in the Usumacinta River region during the Late Classic. It can be seen that the sculptor (or calligrapher) first blocked out the glyphs with straight lines; possibly he had already worked out the text on paper. The subject matter is fairly straightforward. Following the Initial Series date given in A1-B5 and C1, the birth of a woman is recorded. In E1-F3, we are told to count forward to another date, when an action undertaken by the same woman took place, possibly her enthronement. At some later time another individual, also a female, was born (glyphs E6-G6). The text ends with a fourth date for which there is no commentary, but this might have been continued on another panel.

The problem is that this panel, while surely authentic, contains some egregious mistakes of which even the most slipshod scribe must have been aware. In the following exegesis, these mistakes are italicized.

A1-B5, C1	I.S. 9.9.2.0.9 3 Lamat 11 Zotz (I.S. variable element is the Fish God, correct for Zotz)
A6	Glyph G8 (correct for .8)
B6	5 D
A7	2 C
B7	X ³
A8	B
B8	9 A
D1	"Upended-frog" glyph (birth of . . .)
C2-C7	female names and titles
D7	2 Katuns
C8	229.747 (meaning?)
D8	58.74:518? (meaning?)
E1-E2	D.N. 1.4.0.2
F2	count forward to . . .

E3-F3	10 Muluc 16 Pax
E4	? :609.181 (action glyph—enthronement?)
F4-F5	female names and titles (same as C3-C4)
E6-F6	D.N. 5.19
E7	count forward to . . .
F7-E8	2 Lamat 16 Cumku
F8	"Upended-frog" glyph (birth of . . .)
G1-G6	female names and titles (second individual)
H6-G7	D.N. 15.3.10
H7	count forward to . . .
G8-H8	9 Etz'nab 11 Cumku

Texts may be discovered some day that will enable us to understand the reasons behind what look like scribal errors in a "maverick" inscription of this sort. Assuming that they are errors, I have tried to resolve them as follows:

Present version	
A1-B5, C1	I.S. 9.9.2.0.9 3 Lamat 11 Zotz
E1-F2	+ 1. 4.0.2
E3-F3	(9.10. 6.0.11) 10 Muluc 16 Pax
E6-F6	+ 5.19
F7-E8	(9.10. 6.6.10) 2 Lamat 16 Cumku
H6-G7	+ 15.3.10
G8-H8	(9.11. 1.10.0) 9 Etz'nab 11 Cumku

Corrected version	
A1-B5, C1	9.9.2.0.8 3 Lamat 1 Zotz
E1-F2	+ 1.18. 4.1
E3-F3	(9.11. 0.4.9) 10 Muluc 17 Pax
E6-F6	+ 1.8.8.19
F7-E8	(9.12. 8.13.8) 12 Lamat 16 Cumku
H6-G7	+ 15.3.10
G8-H8	(9.13. 3.16.18) 9 Etz'nab 11 Cumku

4. Limestone glyph panel

Collection: Miles J. Lourie, New York
 Provenance: Usumacinta River, between Chicozapote and La Mar
 Date: Late Classic Period, probably eighth century A.D.
 Height: 22.9 cm
 Text: Lunar Series
 Publication: Jones 1969, fig. 109

This panel is said to have been found with the large group represented by Nos. 5 and 6, but the style of the glyphs is somewhat different from those in that series. Like the other panels in this catalogue, it was probably set into a wall.

The six glyphs of the inscription are only the last part of what was a longer text, which might have begun with an Initial Series date immediately followed by the day within the *tzolkin* (260-day count) reached by that date. What we have here is the Lunar Series, giving the age of the current moon, the position of the current lunar month in a lunar half-year period, the ruling deity, and the number of days in this particular lunar month. The last glyph is the day reached in the 365-day "Vague Year," in this case 17 Muan.

A1	59.128?:576.120 (meaning?)
B1	15 D (age of moon 15 days)
A2	0 C (position in lunar half-year)
B2	X ² (God C in a monster's jaws)
C1	10 A (lunar month 30 days)
C2	17 Muan

Quite probably the event that took place on this important date (which cannot be fixed in the Long Count calendar) is described on a subsequent panel.

The Lourie Panel is definitely a match to a limestone relief in the Art Institute of Chicago (Wardwell 1972, fig. 9), which has similar dimensions and contains six glyphs in an identical style. These are as follows:

A1	x.168:x (reptile head same as in X ²)
B1	109.607?
A2	122.751b:23:?
B2	12.38.1016:23 (God C)
C1	D.N. 2.17
C2	4 Cauac

Although it would be an exception to the rule, the Lunar Series would then follow a Distance Number rather than an Initial Series date, and be placed between the Calendar Round position 4 Cauac 17 Muan. Of course, there must be at least one panel that preceded the Chicago panel and contained an Initial Series.





5. Limestone relief of ball player

Collection: Perls Galleries, New York
 Provenance: Usumactinta River, between Chicozapote and La Mar
 Date: Late Classic Period, probably eighth century A.D.
 Height: 39.0 cm
 Text: historical?

From an unknown site along the Usumacinta River has come a series of about twenty panels of marble-like limestone, now scattered in museums and private collections. Six or seven of these are said to show ball players, while the remainder consist of glyphic texts only. Nos. 5 and 6 are definitely part of this series; others exist in a private collection in Paris, the Museum of the American Indian (von Winning 1968, fig. 464), and in the Art Institute of Chicago (Wardwell 1967). A single ball player is shown on a panel, faced by another player on an adjacent panel, or both players are together on one panel. The glyphic inscriptions are apparently to be read as a single connected text.

The usual pose is shown on No. 5, the player down on one knee with the body thrust forward. A heavy protective belt of wood and leather is bound to his waist by cords, and the right forearm and left knee are covered by pads. The figure wears an elaborate headdress representing a monstrous head with grotesquely branching nose, topped by quetzal feathers. Near the left edge of the panel are two glyphs which most likely give the name of the player. The opposing panel would have shown the solid rubber ball and an opponent in similar posture.

An effort should some day be made to study all of these panels as a group. My own guess would be that the ball players will turn out not to be historical figures but Underworld-gods engaged in their favorite sport. In their identification, headdresses and name glyphs should be significant clues.

6. Limestone glyph panel

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Usumactinta River, between Chicozapote and La Mar
 Date: Late Classic Period, probably eighth century A.D.
 Height: 44.5 cm
 Text: historical

The dimensions, shape, and glyph style identify this panel as one of the same series as No. 5.

Regrettably, the inscription is only a small part of a much larger text spread across a number of panels, so it cannot be fully interpreted by itself. It is, however, an elegant example of the fully developed Maya glyph style that is found at such western Maya sites as Piedras Negras and Palenque, and shows the Maya predilection for signs based on the heads of animals and humans. The date on the panel (13 Kan 2 Kankin) is reached by counting forward 182 days from an earlier date probably recorded elsewhere. There is at least one title and personal name, and a reference to an unknown ritual performed on that day. The text is as follows:

- A1 84?.x:757.? (probably a title)
- A2 x.x (probably a personal name)
- B1 ? :565:88.XIV:80:565 (meaning?)
- B2 D.N. Introductory Glyph
- C2 D.N. 9.2
- B3 13 Kan
- C3 2 Kankin
- B4 710.181:25.120 ("Hand-sprinkling" ritual)
- C4 VII.229.747:188 (meaning?)





7. Jade head in stone box

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: unknown, but probably Usumacinta region
 Date: some time in the Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Dimensions: box is 24.5 x 17.8 x 6.4 cm; height of head 22.5 cm
 Text: ritual?

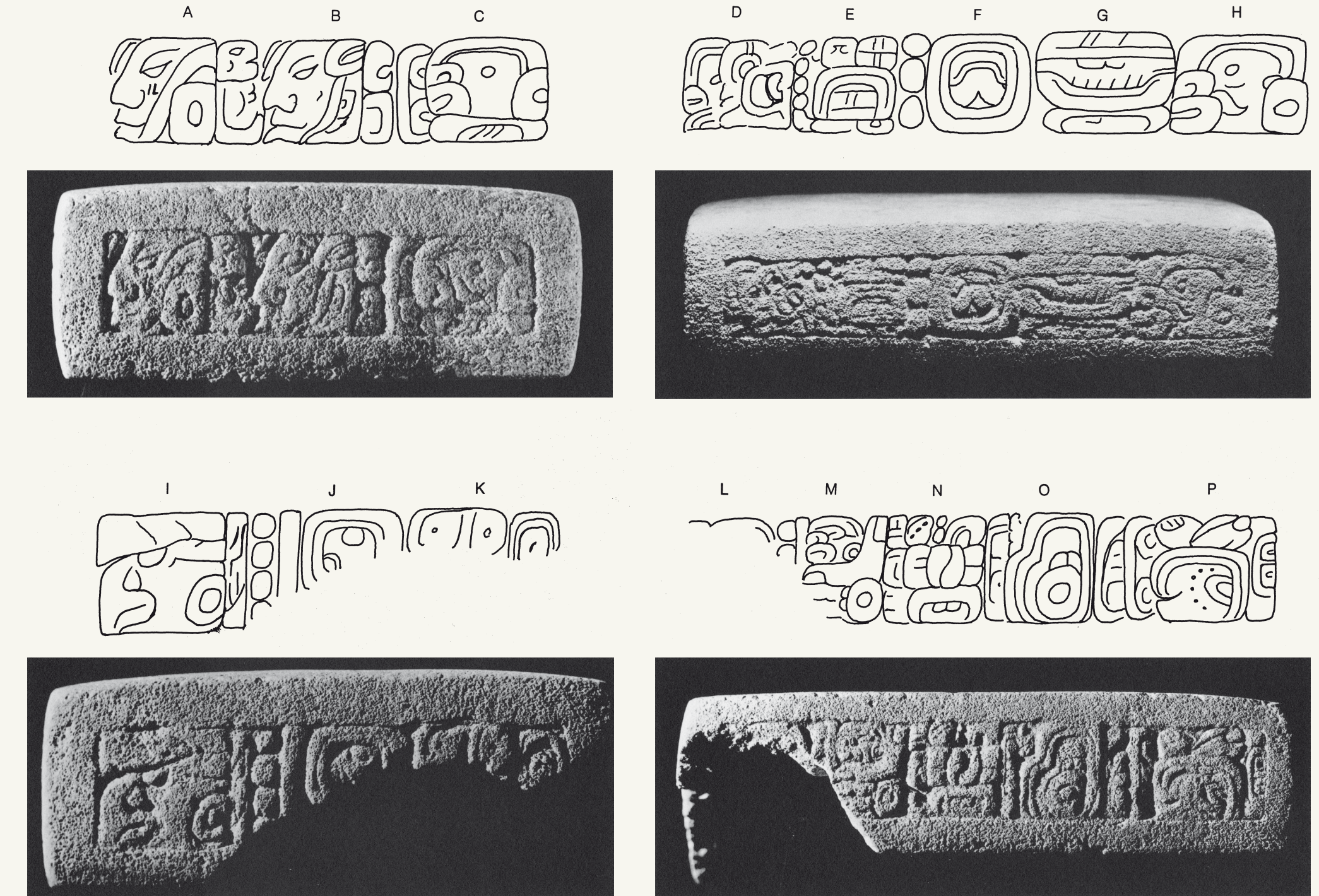
According to Elizabeth Easby (n.d.), who has studied these two objects, the head is one of the largest pieces of worked jade ever found in the Maya area, weighing twelve pounds. For the Maya, who usually fashioned their jades from thin slabs, this object would have been a great treasure. The back of the head is flat, so that it would not have been a mask; the four large perforations probably served, as Mrs. Easby points out, to attach the head to a cult idol. The face closely conforms to the style of male beauty in fashion at Palenque and bears a distinct resemblance to the famous life-size mosaic mask placed over the face of the ruler buried within the Temple of the Inscriptions at that site.

The limestone box, since the inscription is now upside-down, would appear to have been the lid of a two-piece box. It is broken on one corner and badly eroded, so that the glyphs are difficult to make out in most cases. In the following exegesis, I have lettered the glyphs in the order used by Easby.

- A 1000.228
- B 1000.130 (A and B are female names)
- C 1.1016 (God C): 24
- D ??
- E 387.168:?? (Emblem Glyph of unknown site)
- F 3 Cib (day name)
- G 561:23 (Sky)
- H 1016 (God C)
- I x.x (human head with bird beak)
- J 9 Zec (month; but could be day Chuen)
- K ?
- L ?
- M G1 (first of the Nine Lords of the Night)
- N F (associated with the Glyph G series)
- O 1.515.24? (meaning?)
- P 1.?:528.7? (meaning?)

Both Tatiana Proskouriakoff and Eric Thompson prefer to read J as 9 Chuen, but there clearly is space in the broken part to insert the Comb affix which distinguishes the month Zec. Thus, the Calendar Round date would be 3 Cib 9 Zec. They are also reluctant to accept M and N as a Glyph G and H expression since each Lord of the Night always immediately follows the day sign. However, this is a very unusual text in many ways. If G1 is present, then Easby notes that the combination of Calendar Round date and one of a series of nine repeating glyphs can occur only after nine Calendar Rounds, or 468 Vague Years, fixing the only likely date in the Long Count at 9.15.11.15.16. This would correspond to a day in A.D. 743.

The female names given in A and B indicate that the text deals with a woman, but what occurred on the day 3 Cib 9 Zec remains a mystery.



Polychrome Plates

8. Polychrome plate, Headband God

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: north central Petén, just south of the Campeche border
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Diameter: 40.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

An area of the northern Petén and neighboring portions of Campeche and Quintana Roo has produced many of the finest pictorial ceramics. This area is approximately bounded by lines connecting the sites of Calakmul, Placeres, Altamira, Naachtún, and Mirador, and thus lies at the heart of the lowland Maya realm.

This fine plate shows a personage seated tailor fashion upon a small jaguar-skin pillow or bundle. That he is a deity of the Underworld is shown by the cigar he smokes, his black body paint, and the spot (perhaps a death mark) on his cheek. His headband identifies him as one of the deities discussed under No. 22. Like the very similar No. 9, he is displaying hand gestures which almost surely had esoteric meaning. The painting was carried out in black and semitransparent red and gray upon a light orange background.

Eight glyphs are painted around the periphery of the plate, in a highly distinctive style that was probably evolved by ceramic artists used to working with brilliant, glaze-like colors. The text belongs to the Primary Standard group, but because the Initial Sign is missing (as is Wing-Quincunx), the starting point is not known. It probably was the glyph of the ubiquitous old deity, God N.

- A God N
- B VIII (?) Muluc (?)
- C Downball-bird
- D u-bracket Youthful-head with downball
- E ?Manik hand.130
- F IX.Muluc (?)
- G jawless skull with nose ornament
- H ?Youthful-head with downball

Attention should be drawn to the close resemblance of this text to that on No. 9, and to the occurrence of the Muluc-like glyph with a prefix of VIII on No. 47.



9. Polychrome plate, dancer

Collection: Isaac Delgado Museum (Cat. 69.2), New Orleans
 Provenance: said to be from the area of Naachtún, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 42.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

This plate is so similar to No. 8 that both must have been painted by the same school of artists. The figure and glyphs are in black, semitransparent red, and gray on a whitish background, while the dancer's body is colored a light ochre.

On the front of the youthful figure's headdress is the head of the "Zip monster," a feature which suggests that we have a Young Lord figure, one of the Hero Twins; perhaps he is engaged in the Xibalba Okot, the Maya Dance of Death. The pose recalls the dancing figures with one leg slightly raised, on Pier D of House A at Palenque, and on Dumbarton Oaks Relief Panel 2, which also must be ascribed to Palenque (Coe and Benson 1966, fig. 6). The wildly exaggerated dancing figure on the polychrome plate from Structure A-1 at Uaxactún (Morley 1956, fig. 49) should also be mentioned.

The nine glyphs circling the plate form a Primary Standard text which closely conforms to that on No. 8. A is the familiar God N with something like a netted bag pendent in front of his face. B is a skull with a lock of hair on the crown and a death eye on the forehead. C is IX.Muluc (?). D is a youthful head with downball and 130 postfix and G is Downball-bird. This latter pair of glyphs is repeated twice again.





10. Polychrome plate, head of god

Collection: E. Rassiga, Inc., New York
 Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Diameter: 35.6 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat

The color scheme of this plate is black (sometimes used as a wash to fill areas bordered by black lines), red, and white applied over an orange background. The smoke-like element at the top and bottom of the head might identify this old, long-lipped god as the familiar God K of the codices and monuments, the serpent-footed deity who appears as the "manikin scepter" held by male rulers. However, the usual depression which God K carries in his forehead is not present, so that perhaps we are dealing with another iconographic figure, one of the many "old gods" who seem to have been important in the Underworld.

The text merely consists of a repeat of paired Muluc semblants.

11. Polychrome plate, Young Lord head

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Diameter: 35.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

The head and glyphs are painted with great verve in black and translucent red and gray on an orange background; red also covers that part of the interior wall of the vessel not occupied by the text.

The head and neck of a young man are seen in profile, facing left. Although the head ornamentation is extremely simple, and the typical Zip monster is missing from it, this is probably a Young Lord figure, one of the Hero Twins.

The three glyphs on the interior wall are nonrepetitive, but I have been unable to identify them.





12. Chamá vase, Bat Gods

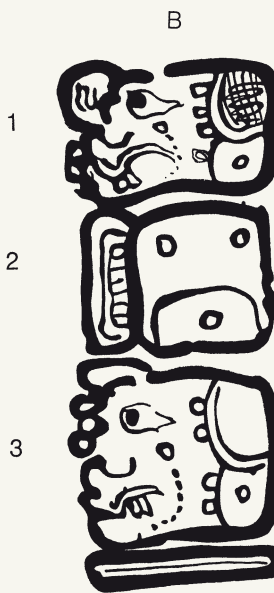
Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 14.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

Chamá vases are readily identified by the black-and-white chevron bands that border the pictorial field above and below; they come from an area lying northwest of the town of Cobán, on the northern edge of the Guatemalan highlands. In this and on other Chamá vessels, the painting is carried out in black and in semitransparent slips of brown and red on a light orange ground. The rim band is red.

Two fearful bats crouch with outstretched wings, a common theme on Chamá vases (see Gordon and Mason 1925-34, pls. 9, 10). The black wings are marked with death eyes, long identified as symbols of the Underworld, and each creature wears around the neck a death collar composed of similar death eyes. These creatures can be identified as the Killer Bats that inhabited the House of Bats mentioned in the Popol Vuh.

The glyphs of column B repeat those of column A. A1 and B1, as well as A3 and B3, are glyphs for the so-called Chicchan God (1003c), while A2 and B2 are the Ahau glyph (533, meaning Lord or Ruler, with 25 prefix). In the Dresden Codex (for instance on pp. 2a, 3a), the Chicchan God is shown with bound arms, wearing the death collar, and in one instance decapitated. Could it be that there are two Chicchan Gods, as shown in this pottery text, one of whom might be 1 Hunahpu and the other 7 Hunahpu, the first set of twins who were defeated and slain by the Lords of the Underworld in the Popol Vuh?

The calligraphy seems to be deliberately carried out in a brusque and forceful fashion, perhaps in keeping with the brutality of the theme.





13. Chamá vase, throne scene

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 21.0 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat, Secondary Nonrepeat

This beautiful vase, besides the usual color treatment, has areas of white ground which were left in reserve by a negative-painting process. In execution, it is considerably more sophisticated and less bold than No. 12.

The theme is a very common one on Maya pictorial pottery. The figure of a Young Lord, with jawless monster head fixed to the front of his headdress, is seated upon a pedestaled throne. The tadpole-like pendant of the headdress shows up elsewhere (cf. No. 47). Facing him are two lesser male figures, one wearing the headdress of a bird that is featured in Primary Standard texts, the other with a "spangled turban"; both give the gestures of submission, with a hand grasping the upper arm. At one side of the throne is a vase, apparently filled with some foaming drink like the well-known Maya mead *balché*, while below or in front is a dish containing some sort of fruit. On the Young Lord's left is a jaguar-skin bundle, to which has been fixed the head of the Water-lily Jaguar (an Underworld god) wearing a death collar. The vertical panel also contains the jaguar-skin bundle theme, this time highly stylized.

Here, then, is one of those vases which, it is usually claimed, are dealing with the real-world affairs of the Maya elite, but which must now be viewed as taking place in the Underworld. The jaguar-skin bundle is no mere pillow or rest but obviously an object important in the cult of the dead.

The text is disappointingly brief. I have considered the primary text to be the two Imix signs (?501) on the throne supports; their meaning here remains unknown. The two glyphs above each of the subsidiary personages must be their personal names, but none of them can be surely identified in the Thompson catalogue.





14. Chamá vase, two Young Lords

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 13.8 cm
 Text: Primary Standard



While the general color scheme and theme of this exceptionally fine Chamá vase are similar to those of No. 13, there is a use of line and slip colors that is superlative. Furthermore, the calligraphy is by a master of the art.

In this case we have both Young Lords, seated tailor fashion and facing left, the hand positions recalling those of lords carved on Maya jade plaques. On the headdresses, which are standard for the Young Lord theme, the jawless monster heads emerge from water-lilies, the flower par excellence of the Underworld. Again, the tadpole-like pendants are prominent. The head coverings are spangled turbans.

The twin texts are Primary Standard, in a very truncated version: the Initial Sign (229.616:142), followed by God N (1014.16), Fire-Imix (1.563a:501), and Worm-bird.

As pointed out in the Introduction, this vase can be interpreted as a depiction of Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the great Hero Twins and probably the patrons of the dead lord in whose honor this masterpiece was made.



15. Chamá vase, armadillo dancers

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 13.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative



Two armadillo-headed figures are dancing, each holding an end flute in one hand and shaking a rattle (which looks disconcertingly like a light bulb) in the other. I believe this is a reference to the incident in the Popol Vuh in which the Hero Twins return after their "death" to the court of the Lords of the Underworld; their various dances, tricks, and acts of legerdemain result in the final defeat of these dread gods:

And instead what they did
 Was just the Screech Owl Dance,
 The Weasel Dance;
 They just danced the Armadillo,
 Just the Centipede,
 And they just danced the Stilt Dance too . . .
 (Edmundson 1971:132)

The Primary Alternative text consists of six glyphs in two columns. The glyphs are painted in a somewhat offhand manner and in the same thick line used in the figures, so that the text is hard to interpret. The prefix in A1 and B1 is Thompson's 2, and the A1 main sign seems to be 506 (Kan); the main sign of A3 may be a variant of 648, while that of B3 could be a skull. My guess is that all six glyphs are the names of deities not shown; certainly action glyphs are absent.





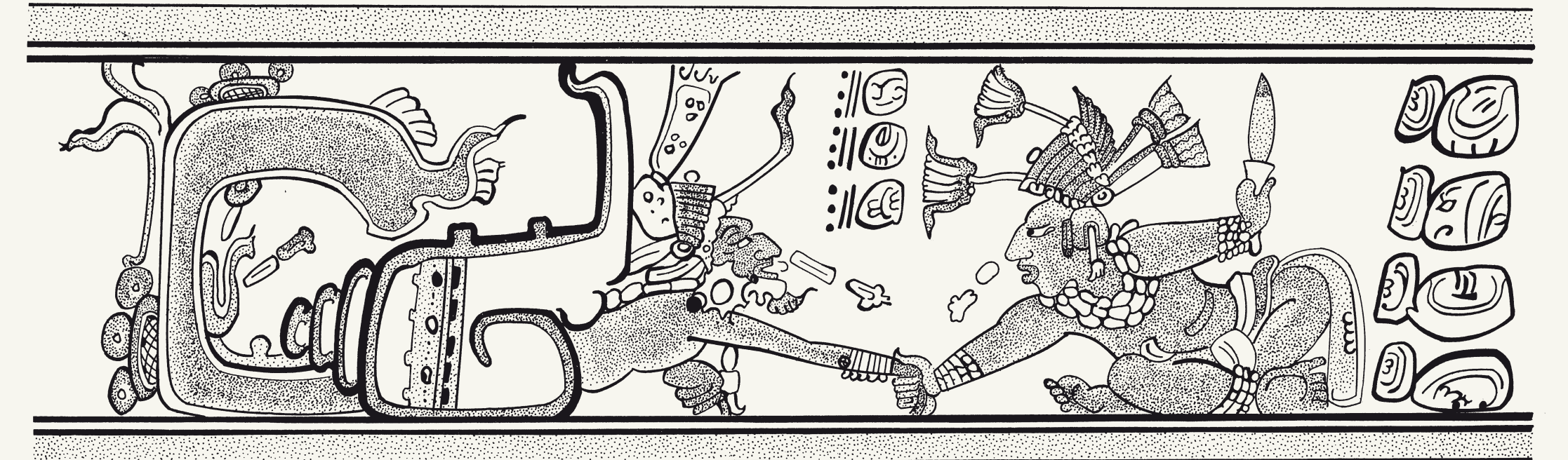
16. Chamá vase, God N and Young Lord

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 15.6 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat and Secondary Repeat

Although the vessel lacks the chevron bands, it is readily identifiable as Chamá from the colors used, from the employment of negative painting for white areas, and from the style of painting.

The theme is of extraordinary interest for its linkages with the Popol Vuh. A Young Lord is in the act of pulling God N from his snail shell, while he conceals behind his back the knife with which he is going to sacrifice him. It will be remembered that at the end of their performance for the Lords of the Underworld, the Hero Twins sacrificed each other in turn, and were brought back to life. The two ruling Underworld gods, 1 Death and 7 Death, were so overcome by the performance that they demanded that they themselves be so cut to pieces. The sacrifice took place, but they were not revived. Since God N, the old shell god, is—along with God L—one of the principal Underworld figures on the pottery, I would surmise that the Griffin vase illustrates this scene: one of the Hero Twins is about to decapitate him.

The Primary Repeat text is contained in a single column, and was executed in a fast, impressionistic calligraphy recalling the running hand of the Chinese and Japanese masters. I assume that the text is repetitive, since the same prefix, probably a variant of 24, stands before all four glyphs. The main signs seem to be shorthand versions of well-known glyphs, but it would be difficult to identify them with certainty. The same is true of the Secondary Repeat text, the three glyphs written between the two figures, in which the main signs are prefixed by XIII; the last main sign would appear to be a variant of 513 (Muluc), but I doubt that any calendrical meaning was intended here.





17. Chamá bowl, three Fox Gods

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 10.0 cm
 Text: Primary Tzolkin sequence

The color scheme is similar to that of No. 12. Only one chevron band is present, encircling the base. In shape, this vessel is quite unusual for the Chamá area.

Three deities, with the heads of the gray fox and human bodies, are seated, facing left. The positions of the hands should be noted, for they are different for all three figures; one makes the gesture of submission by placing the right hand upon the shoulder, but the significance of the other two is unknown.

The headdress is a spangled turban with a water-lily attached to the front. Sweeping back from the turban is a projection covered with crosshatching, perhaps representing a stiff ornament made from henequen fibers.

While it is fairly secure that this is a representation of a fox and not a dog (the latter is always shown in quite a different manner in Maya art), I know of only two other depictions of a Fox God. One is on a remarkable polychrome vase, also from the Guatemalan highlands, in the Dumbarton Oaks collection; on it the Fox God is seated in a submissive posture before an old god with jaguar-spotted face, and he wears a similarly projecting head ornament with crosshatching. In the other, from Chipoc, Guatemala (Smith 1952, fig. 15b), the god sits behind God N.

Although we have no codices surviving from Classic times, the nine day glyphs painted in vertical columns give a good idea of what calendrical signs might have looked like in books from the Chamá area. The sequence begins with Imix (the first day of the *tzolkin*) at A1, and continues in order with Ik, Akbal, Kan, Chicchan, Cimi, Manik, and Lamat, concluding with Muluc at C3. I think it would be dangerous to conclude that this was a merely decorative use of these glyphs by the pottery painter, since the ceremony involving three Fox Gods may have been geared to these nine days.



18. Chamá vase, glyph band

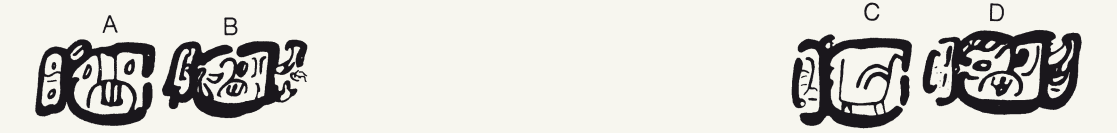
Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 19.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

Red bands encircle the base at rim and base; the glyphs and chevron bands are painted in black on an orange background. The original base color was white, as left in negative areas with the glyphs and chevrons.

The strong calligraphy was carried out by an expert hand; the glyphs are very clear (which is not always the case on Chamá vases) and may refer to a sequence of gods. The occurrence of what seems to be the glyph for the Chicchan God at F and K may relate the text to that of No. 12. Since there is no Initial Sign, I cannot determine where the text should begin, so that the following letter designations do not necessarily indicate the starting point.

- A 16.507:x
- B 24.x
- C x.756 (Bat)
- D 12.x
- E 40.507
- F x.1003c (God CH)
- G XIII.525?
- H 85?.758
- I x.544:142
- J 24?.525?
- K x.1003c (God CH)
- L 1.x
- M XIII.x
- N 331?.758

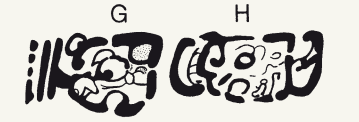
A possible sequence, twice repeated, seems to be Chicchan God (God CH), followed by a glyph with a XIII prefix, which in turn is followed by the Rodent (758) glyph. The head at M is probably Downball-bird, also found on Primary Standard texts.



19. Chamá vase, glyph pairs

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Chamá area, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 13.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

Four pairs of glyphs are placed just below the top chevron band. Unlike the text on No. 18, they are executed in a purposely disjointed and even distorted style, as if to conceal their meaning from the uninitiated. For instance, the glyph at E looks like the day sign Cauac, but it is prefixed with XIV, which is an impossibility in the Maya calendar since the days never have coefficients greater than 13. The odd-looking glyphs at B, D, and H are postfixed with 181, a sign standing for the suffix *-ah* which accompanies action verbs.



20. Polychrome vase, old gods and Young Lords

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Guatemala highlands
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 14.7 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative



The bowl has a fluted or squash-like lower half which, along with the rim band, is painted a bright red. The scene is carried out in black line, red, orange, and gray on a white background.

Here we are given very important data on the differentiation of Underworld gods in a scene that might well have been copied from a ritual codex. There are two tableaux separated from each other by birds perched on vegetation forms. Figure 1 is one of two old gods on this vessel. He wears a flower in his headdress, and so, although toothless, is probably not God N but some other antiquated Lord of the Underworld (perhaps the same as Figure 14 on No. 37, the Vase of the Thirty-one Gods). Facing him is the first of two Young Lords. This one has something like a water-lily in the front of his headdress, and carries in his hands the head of a jawless serpent.

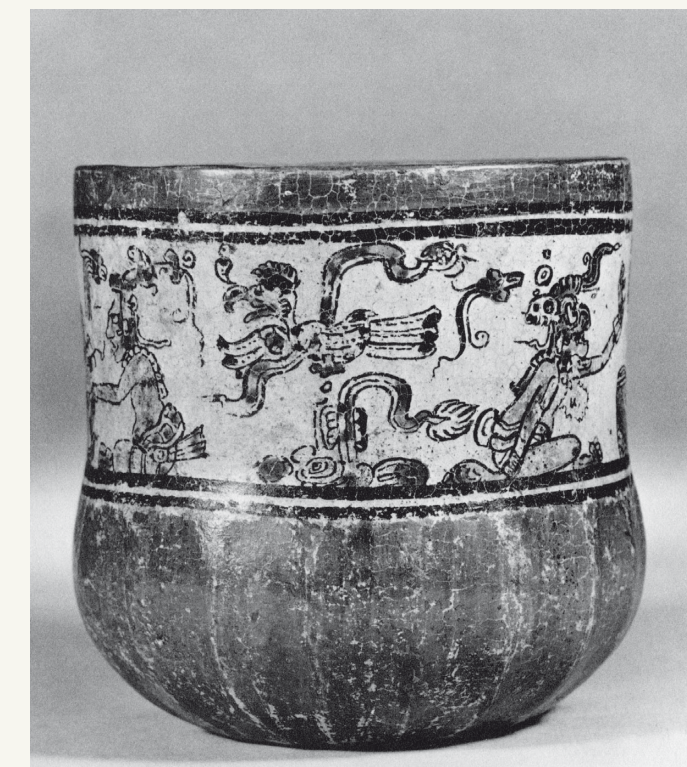
Figure 3 of the second tableau has the Roman nose, large "god eye," and jaguar ear that identify him as the Jaguar Sun, one of the old Jaguar Gods of the Underworld. He is surely the same as Figure 2 on No. 49, a remarkable vase showing seven Lords of the Underworld, since he lacks the headdress and cigar of God L and has something like a hank of hair at the top of his head. Separated from him by a vase is Figure 4, another Young Lord wearing the more typical headdress, the

jawless head of the Zip monster, a deity ruling over the month Zip in the monumental inscriptions. Apparently attached to the headdresses of both actors in this scene are the tadpole-like elements that are a prominent feature of No. 47. They must have some Underworld significance.

The creature just to the right of Figure 2 is the Moan bird, a mythical, screech-owl-like bird that seems to have had very sinister associations for the Maya. It sits on top of a water-lily plant emerging from a moon-like glyph that may stand for a death's head. Separating Figure 4 from Figure 1 is an entirely different plant, in fact a stylized tree of unidentified species, on which perches a quetzal bird; this tree arises from a jawless deity's head. Such representations remind one of the birds on world-direction trees on the tablets of the Temples of the Cross and Foliated Cross at Palenque, and may have similar meaning.

The text consists of three tiny glyphs between Figures 3 and 4, but they are so cursory that they may have no meaning in this case.

According to my interpretation, this vase might represent the meeting of the Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, with two Lords of Xibalba, the Underworld.



21. Polychrome vase, two Young Lords

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Guatemala highlands
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 15.7 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Primary Standard, Primary
 Tzolkin sequence



The two Young Lord figures are painted in black and red on an orange background, with certain details left in negative white; the columns of figures are black and orange on a white background; the remainder is carried out in orange and red; and there are red bands at the rim and base. Both figures and glyphs are executed in an elegant free-flowing style that marks the artist as a master of his profession.

Figure 1, the first Young Lord, stands in left profile. His left arm is folded and bears the weight of a heavy necklace, while attached to the front of his headdress or hairdo is a bell-shaped jade tube from which stylized smoke or steam curls. That both these figures are gods, in fact the Hero Twins themselves, is indicated by the body markings on torso, arms, and limbs. Their youthful beauty and rich trappings show them to have been the very models for young princes of the Maya realm.

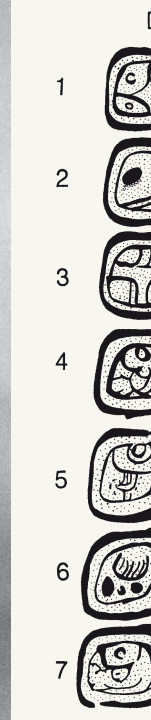
Gesturing elegantly (again, we wish that the meaning of such gestures was known to us), Figure 2 turns right to look back. He is differentiated from his companion in very subtle ways, including the Zip monster attachment to the jade "bell" on his forehead, and by the monster head and other elements fixed to the front of his belt.

The two remaining panels each contain the well-known Crossed-bands motif, a glyphic element which most probably stands for sky or heaven, and which might be considered a reference to the apotheosis of the Hero Twins after their "Harrowing of Hell."

The text is arranged in four columns of six or seven glyphs each. Quite typical of the difficulties encountered in dealing with pottery glyphs is column A, for not one of the main signs can be matched with any glyph in Thompson's catalogue. The reason is clear: these are the heads of gods of the Underworld, and since his catalogue is mainly drawn from texts on monuments and in codices, it cannot be expected that they would be in it. A1 is the head of a young god with black dot on cheek and head markings like those of the Chicchan God. B1, prefixed by the 229 affix, is a Roman-nosed god with god eye and "egg tooth." A4 is a Bat God, but is jawless and so may be different from the sinister bat figures on Chamá vases.

There is no problem with column B, since this is an abbreviated form of the Primary Standard text. The presence at B3 of the 1.77:501 combination (Wing-Imix) should be noted; more commonly seen at this place in the text is 1.563 (Fire):501, so that Wing and Fire seem to be interchangeable elements. This column ends with the Imix-Comb-Imix phrase.

The Primary Tzolkin sequence in columns C and D runs from the first day, Imix, at C1 through the seventh, Lamat, at D1. Then a day is skipped, so that D2 is not Muluc but Oc, the entire sequence ending with Men, the fifteenth day, at D7. There are several peculiarities with individual glyphs in the sequence, such as the forms of Kan and Cimi, but I believe that these are the result of the isolated glyphic traditions of the Guatemalan highlands, where monumental and codical texts are absent.



22. Polychrome vase, Headband Gods and old gods

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: Guatemala, possibly upper Motagua Valley
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 15.0 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat, Secondary Repeat

The basic vessel color is again a brilliant orange placed over a white undercoating which in certain areas was left white by the negative-painting technique. The basic drawing was in black line, with other details added in orange or black. Red bands encircle the base at the rim and base.

The theme shown is relatively common. Two old Lords of the Underworld with Roman noses, god eyes, and toothless jaws are seated, each turning toward a young god who shows some signs of submission. The old gods are covered with jaguar spots, bespeaking their plutonic character. Particularly interesting is the iconography of the young gods. They wear white loincloths, and white headbands which restrain the shock of hair. Their bodies other than the heads are painted black. One has three dots on the cheek; the other has two stripes. These are the deities I shall call the Headband Gods. They show up as a pair on No. 37 (the remarkable Vase of the Thirty-one Gods); and one of the six individuals on the Huehuetenango Bloodletting Vase (Gordon and Mason 1925-43, pl. 26) is surely one of the Headband Gods. I also feel confident that the seated cigar smoker on No. 8, with spot on cheek and black-painted body, is the same deity. Even more suggestive is the head variant of the day sign Ahau which appears on Stela 24 at Copán (Morley 1920, fig. 13a). This is a youthful deity with headband and three dots on the cheek.

If the Headband Gods are to be identified with Ahau (or Hunahpu in the Quiché language), this, together with the spots or circles of death on face and body, suggests that they may be the Twins during their transitory death in Xibalba. Confirmation comes from the Blom Vase (Blom 1950), on which they are characteristically shown shooting with their blowguns.

The Primary Repeat text consists of four pairs of identical glyphs, some kind of Muluc variant with a prefix resembling 86. Two vertical columns of Secondary Repeat text are placed between the youthful gods and the bundle to one side of each old god; repeated four times is a glyph which may be Muluc Burden (515a) with the 24 prefix.





23. Polychrome vase, two seated gods

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: Guatemala highlands
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 19.0 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat

The background is a semitransparent orange slip applied over a white base which has been left unpainted in certain areas. The figures and knots are carried out in black and red, the row of glyphs is red, red bands have been placed at rim and base, and the repeated *kin* glyph is in black and white.

Although the heads of the two seated figures resemble those of the Zip monster (which is known as the patron god of the month Zip), I cannot be sure of the identification, especially since these personages do not appear on any other Maya pottery known to me, with the possible exception of a tripod vase from Burial 48 at Tikal (W. Coe 1967:47). Their bird-like headdresses are strongly suggestive of the hummingbirds which are being ejected from the dark mass at the center of page 36 of the Borgia Codex; there, these creatures are interspersed with representations of the Wind God, Ehécatl, and it could be that the two gods on this vase are versions of Ehécatl.

Two complex plaited knots also appear on the vase, but their meaning is unknown.

The text is something of a disappointment; the main sign of the repeat seems to be a broken-down version of Imix, but the prefix is so sketchily painted that it cannot be identified. The bands above and below contain repeats of the *kin* glyph (544), the Maya sign for the Sun.

24. Polychrome vase, bat heads

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: probably Guatemala highlands
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 17.5 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat

Black and a deep, rather purplish-red are used over a cream-colored base slip. There are thirty-six bat heads in all, arranged in three horizontal rows of twelve heads each. A peculiarity is that the jaws are lacking, so that this may not be the same macabre beast that we have encountered on No. 12. Nevertheless, it is probable that we are dealing with a reference to the House of Bats, a prominent feature of Xibalba, the Underworld.

Arranged around the rim and base are bands of a Primary Repeat text, which seems to consist of a repeated Muluc (513) or Jade-variant (516), followed by an undecipherable affix.



25. Polychrome vase, man with naked women

Collection: Private collector, New York
Provenance: Maxcanú, Yucatán, Mexico
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: 21.0 cm
Text: Primary Repeat



The scene is executed in black, red, and a purplish-brown on an orange background, and there are red bands at rim and base. It takes place on a kind of black platform or structure within which a reptilian god's head can be seen from which proceed water-lily plants; thus, the structure can probably be thought of as a kind of solidified freshwater lake or pond, probably in the Underworld.

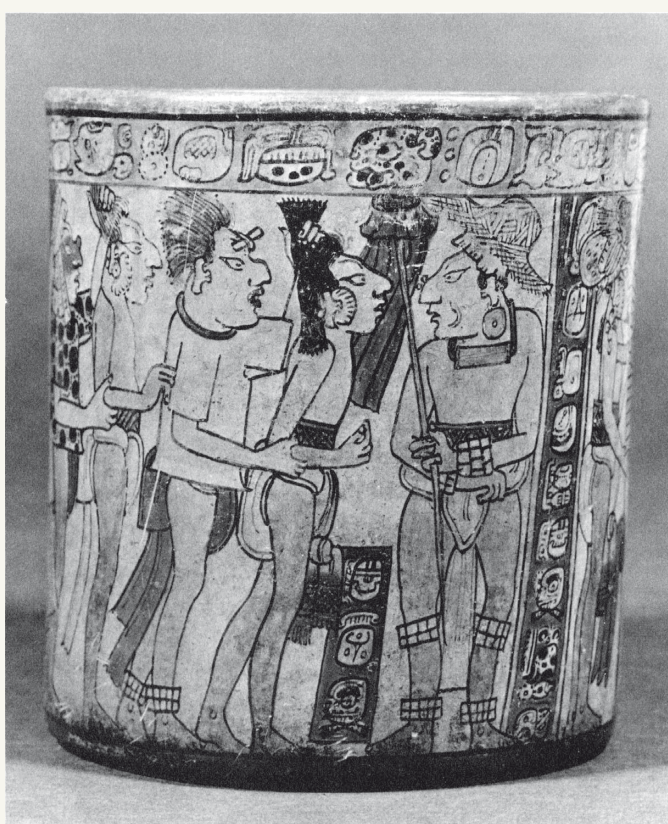
The central figure seated on it is one of the Young Lords, for he is a youthful prince wearing the Zip monster headdress characteristic of that deity. His outstretched hands seem to draw attention to the figures on either side of him. Flanking the scene are two naked ladies (a rare but not unknown theme in Maya art); the markings on their upper arms indicate that they, too, are divine beings. Perhaps a clue to their identity will some day be found in the identical water-lily headdresses they wear. The lady on the left carries the mask of a jawless god.

Between her and the Young Lord are two animal figures, a spider monkey and a bird of a type which Tatiana Proskouria-koff has suggested to me might be a cormorant. Both of these are fairly common themes on Maya pictorial ceramics, and the spider monkey's head (with hand prefix) appears in the Primary Standard glyph sequence. On the very right of the scene is the head of another jawless god from which stylized vegetation sprouts.

A vase with an identical scene is said to be from the island of Jaina, off the Campeche coast (von Winning 1968, fig. 401), and might be by the same hand.

The text is a repeat of a glyph which could be Serpent-segment (565) prefixed by a broken-down version of 229.





26. Polychrome vase with battle scene

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: unknown
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 17 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

For its graphic account of a battle, including the taking of prisoners, this vase almost rivals the Bonampak murals. It was executed in black, red, and orange on a cream background, with body tone given to some of the figures in a kind of purplish-gray wash. In contrast to the verve and flair for line shown by many of the best vase painters, this artist worked in a careful style that evokes modern American comic strips.

There are eleven figures on the vase. Careful examination will show that only one item of costume detail serves to distinguish victors and vanquished: the latter all wear a kind of flower as ear ornament. For this reason I suggest that the battle is taking place among a single group of people, and that the enemy is a faction (perhaps revolutionary) that was put down by Figure 4 and his allies. Perhaps the flower was a badge of recognition among the conspirators. Thus, Figures 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 10 are the enemy.

Some little-known aspects of Maya dress can be seen. Figures 2 and 4 wear jaguar-skin shirts or tunics with false sleeves. The majority of the figures, especially among the enemy, have wide belts apparently made of basketry. Most unusual is the straw hat on Figure 11, to whom the prisoners are being directed. One wonders about the small human heads which appear in the costume of Figures 1, 2, and 4—could these be the shrunken heads of captives? It should also be noted that Figures 5, 8, and 9 have red hair, and Figure 6 has a red braid; in life, this effect was probably achieved by the application of oily paste from the seeds of the *achiote* (*Bixa orellana*).

The glyphic texts are clearly and beautifully drawn. In the band below the rim is a fine Primary Standard text which, as usual, begins just to the left of the principal figure. It can be analyzed as follows:

- A 229.683b (Initial Sign)
- B 1014a.x (God N)
- C 1.x
- D 501 (Imix)
- E 62.77:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- F 51 (inv.)x
- G 126.87:513:142 (Muluc)

- H 738.130 (Fish)
- I 99.669b
- J 325.145:524
- K 751a
- L III.x
- M 115.756?:116
- N 501.25:501 (Imix-Comb-Imix)
- O 1.757 (Kan-Rodent)
- P 281.116 (Kan-Cross)
- Q 1040 (Death-head)
- R 12.168:501

The 145:524 compound appears three times on No. 47, a remarkable vase with a surely mortuary text, but its meaning is unknown.

The Secondary Nonrepeat text, contained in six vertical panels, is of great interest for it contains the names and titles of four of the victors and the name of one of the vanquished. It will be noted that the victors' names are summarized in column S, following a 7 Ahau expression at S1. The name of Figure 6 is of interest, "Captor of 2 Akbal," for it may be 2 Akbal himself whose hair he grasps. The *u-caan* expression at U1 and X1 is presumably a title, and I believe that the whole sequence from U1 through U4 is to be taken as a title.

- S1 7 Ahau
- S2, S3 see W1, W2
- S4 683b (Moon)
- S5 see W1
- S6, S7 see X1, X3
- S8, S9 see U5, U6
- S10 1016:181

T 59:51 (Figure 3)

- U1 1.561 (*u-caan*)
- U2 12.1016:23
- U3 757 (Kan-Rodent)
- U4 586?:1
- U5 12.126:x
- U6 99

} Figure 4

- V1 2 Akbal
- V2 87.601

} Figure 6

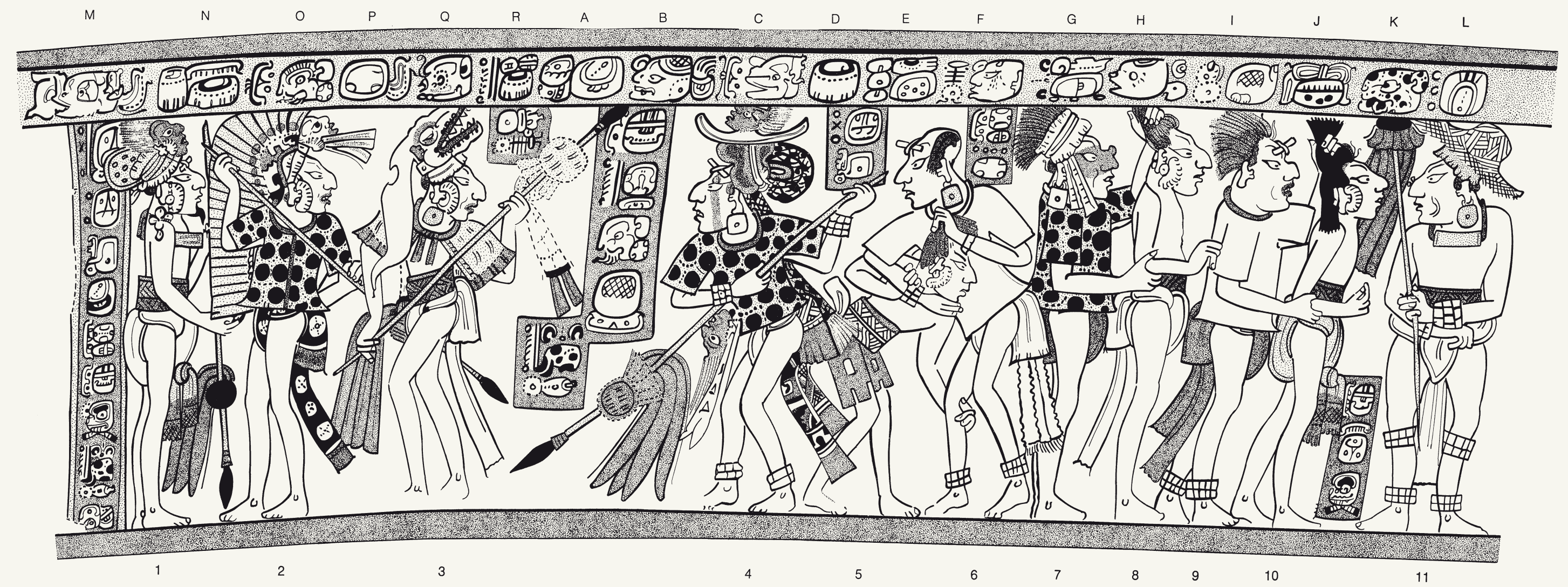
- W1 1.111:102
- W2 IV:281 (Kan)

} Figure 7

- X1 1.561 (*u-caan*)
- X2 25:534
- X3 x:x

} Figure 11

This vase may commemorate a great event in the life of Figure 4, for there are few if any mortuary references in the scene itself. Nevertheless, I believe that Glyphs I and J in the Primary Standard text indicate that Figure 4 is already dead, and that the vessel had a funerary function.





27. Polychrome vase, palace scene

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche, Mexico
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 21.7 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

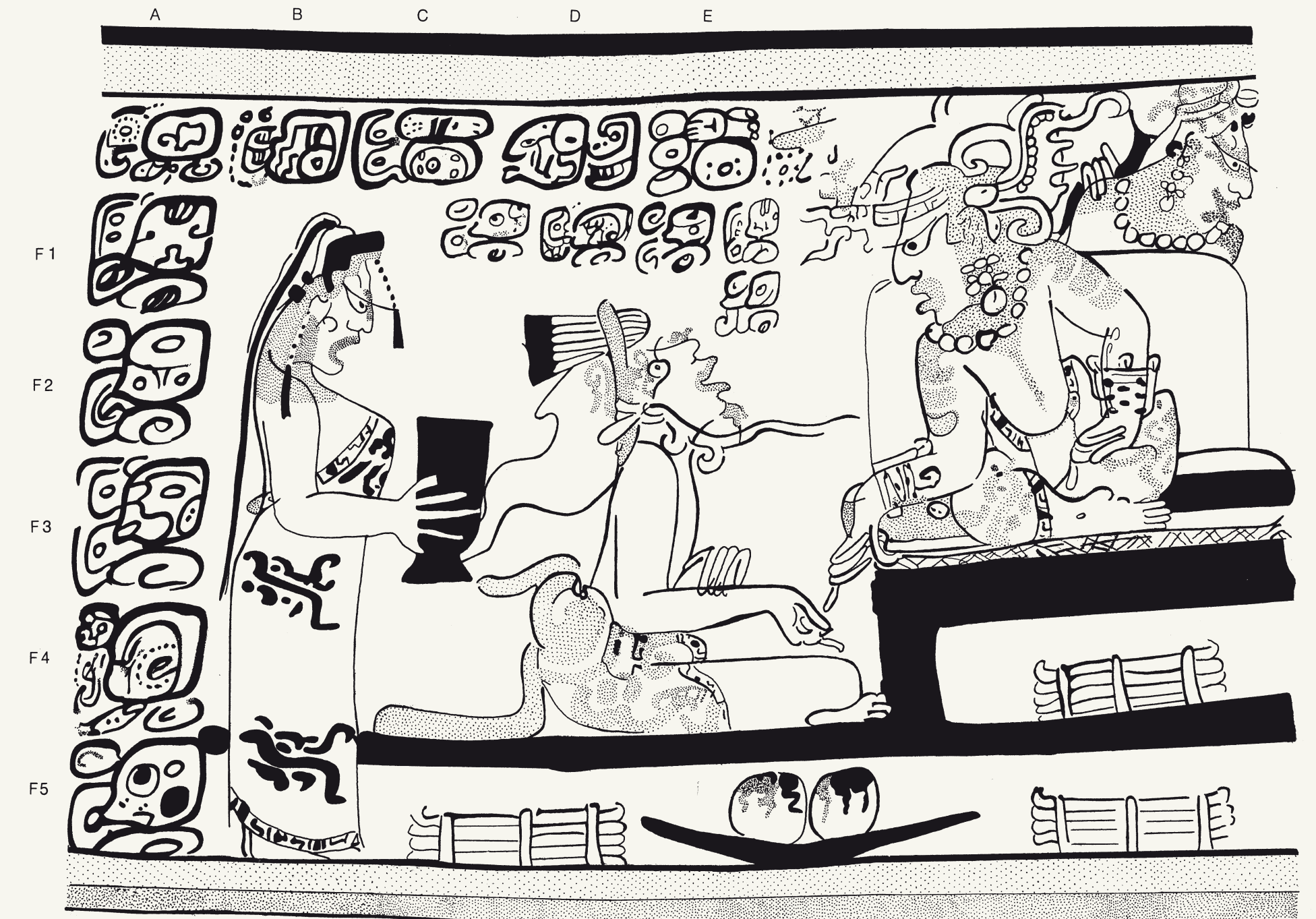
This tall, narrow vase is brilliantly painted in black, purplish-red, light red, and a thin orange on a white background. A Young Lord is seated upon a throne, gesturing with his right hand toward a seated person who seems to be singing. To the left of the scene stands a matronly woman, also in the act of singing, holding a vase. Behind the throne is another man looking to the right as though into another (but missing) tableau.

On the steps leading up to the throne are three bundles which appear to be cloth, and a shallow dish with two dumpling-like objects which may be balls of incense. A similar cloth pile appears behind the scaffolded victim on No. 33.

The glyphs, like the painting, are carried out in a bold but naive style. The much truncated Primary Standard text on the rim begins with a glyph (A) which might be a substitute for the missing Initial Sign; the main sign apparently represents an ear spool. The remaining glyphs are normal. In a vertical column is a Secondary Nonrepeat text which is unfamiliar to me.

- A 238.x:126
- B 331.601 (or 843?) (Step)
- C 1.563a:585a (Fire-Quincunx)
- D 1000?:181 (IL-Face)
- E 61.72?:585a (Wing-Quincunx)
- F1 181?:521:24
- F2 130.534:x
- F3 1.1016:x (God C)
- F4 229.528:x
- F5 130.x:x

Another Secondary Nonrepeat text appears just above the seated figure. It is interesting to note that all three texts consist of just five glyphs each, and that in this text G repeats F5, and J1 is the same as F1.





28. Tall polychrome vase, throne scene

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Maya lowlands, from the Guatemala-Mexico border region
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 25.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Repeat

The background of the vase is orange, over which have been painted black, red, deep purplish-brown, and thin brown slips. The bodies of the two flanking figures are purplish-brown; their faces are black. Purple and red bands appear at rim and base.

The figure seated in tailer fashion on the throne has a spangled turban type headdress to the front of which seems fixed a jawless serpent head; at the rear of the headdress is a horizontal roll of some substance like cloth, decorated with geometric motifs. Around his neck he wears a plaque with attachments, all presumably of jade. His "girdle" seems to be of jaguar skin.

A personage virtually identical in all details appears to the right on No. 29, a double-palacé scene. It should be noted that the throne has the same down-curving element on the left. I think we are dealing with a single individual, whether god or man or Hero Twin.

The attendant figures ranged on either side of the throne have distinctive headdresses which might some day help to identify them. The deer headdress of Figure 4, for instance, shows up in many places. Perhaps the object held by Figure 3 is a bouquet of some sort, but the appealing little bird hovering above it is most unusual.

Unfortunately, the horizontal text below the rim is sloppily executed, but I believe it to be Primary Alternative. However, two glyphs from the Primary Standard sequence may be present: Worm-bird at B and Step at D. The Secondary Repeat texts near the figures are hard to make out.





29. Polychrome vase, double-throne scene

Collection: Isaac Delgado Museum (Cat. 69.33), New Orleans
 Provenance: Colico, northern Petén, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 16.8 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat, Secondary Nonrepeat

This vase should be compared with No. 30, for both deal with a similar subject: two rulers, each seated upon his own throne, with attendants. In No. 29, however, the background is black, probably indicating that this is a night scene; the figures and glyphs have been left in reserve as cream white, with details added in red, brown, tan, and pink. The painter of this vase is certainly not the same as that of No. 30, for his style is much more racy and exaggerated. Note, for instance, the curiously large feet of the seated attendants.

The double-throne scene is known elsewhere on Late Classic Maya pottery (for instance at Tikal; see W. Coe 1967:52). It is of the greatest interest, for regardless of the identification of the two personages on each vase, it suggests dual rulership among the Maya, a phenomenon widespread among the American Indians and documented for the Aztec (Zantwijk 1963). There is a suggestion of pairs of brothers ruling at Copán (Joyce Marcus, personal communication), and I would

think it possible that the shadowy official known as the *nacom* in late pre-Conquest Yucatán was co-ruler with the *halach uinic*.

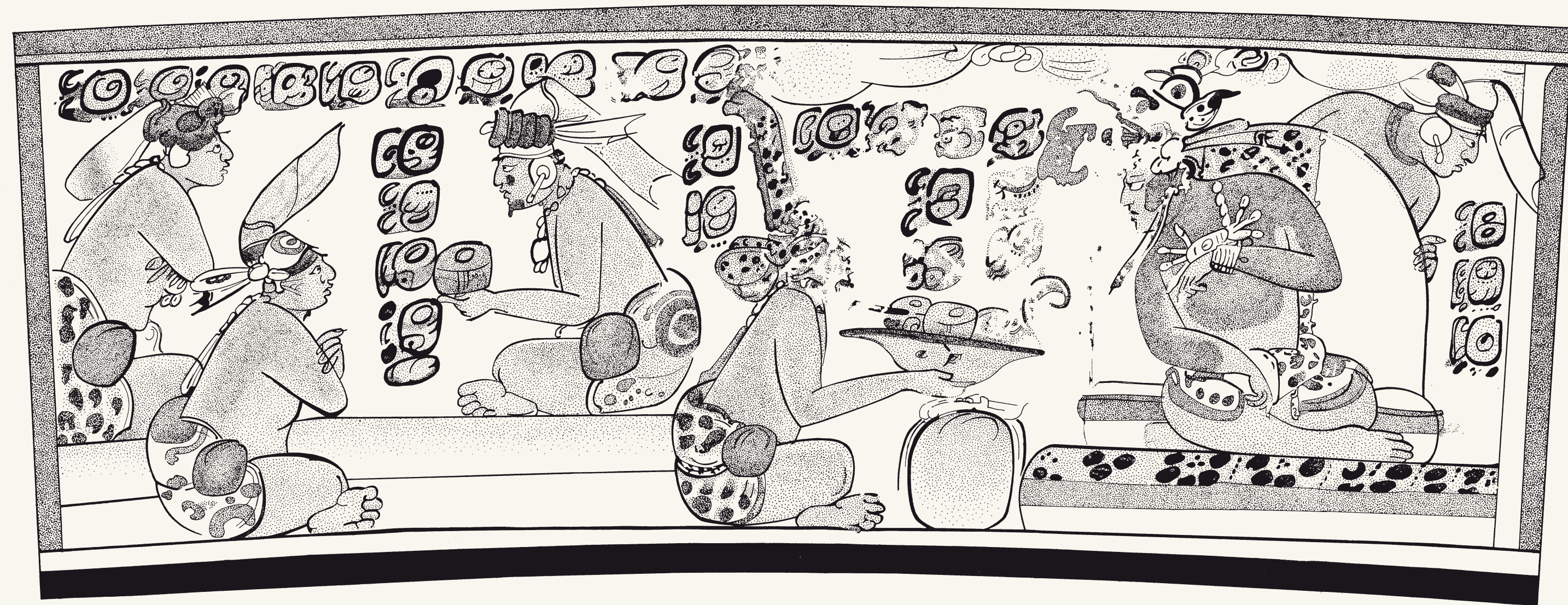
As in other double-throne scenes, the rulers are distinguished from each other by their headdresses and ornaments. It has already been pointed out that Figure 4 on this vase is probably the same individual as the enthroned ruler on No. 28. The attendant figures seated just to the left of each throne are probably women, although I feel more confident about the female gender of Figure 1 than Figure 3. Perhaps eunuchs are intended. They recall the seated "women," equally equivocal, in a throne scene incised on Sculptured Stone 1 at Bonampak (Ruppert et al. 1955, fig. 2).

A depiction of two vases appears on the vessel with the right-hand throne group: Figure 3 holds a cylindrical jar and may have been the cupbearer occurring with some frequency in

palace scenes; another cylindrical jar with a conical cover rests by one side of Figure 4. On the other hand, there is also a chance that the latter vessel is a square pottery box with lid of the same type as No. 73.

The Primary Repeat text consists of two glyphs only: the Initial Sign (229.616?:126) and another sign very much like it, but substituting 713a for 616. This main sign may have a much broken-down Fire glyph (563a) in it. In the vertical columns are Secondary Nonrepeat texts which must contain the names and perhaps the titles of the four personages. Possibly significant is the occurrence of Manik (671) in the names of Figures 1 and 2, and of what seems to be the same sign (an animal head with protruding tongue) with Figures 3 and 4.

As a final suggestion, I would speculate that in the double-throne scenes we have the Hero Twins as the prototypes of the dual rulers of the Maya area.



1

2

3

4

5

6

30. Polychrome vase, double-throne scene

Collection: Jay C. Leff, Uniontown, Pennsylvania
 Provenance: Placeres region, southern Campeche, Mexico
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 16.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Nonrepeat

The painter who executed this vase must have been one of the greatest Maya masters. Working in a line that is at once delicate and strong, he has an unrivaled feeling for the human form and face. In contrast to No. 29, the background is white, over which he has painted in red, purplish-brown, brownish-gray, salmon, and pink. The horizontal bands are purplish-brown and red at top, and black below.

An interesting feature of the Maya artist's attempt to give three-dimensionality to the human form can be seen on this vase. In the post-medieval west, chiaroscuro effects were usually obtained by shading the outer edges of limbs and bodies, leaving the inner portions light. In Maya painting, especially on the finest pictorial vases, the opposite is true: instead of highlighting, inner areas are made darker by what seems to have been almost a dry-brush technique.

Again, we have two rulers seated upon thrones engaged in conversation with subordinates. Figure 3, the goateed ruler on the left, holds a glyph in his hand; the wonderfully painted underlings who face him give the gesture of submission. The other exalted personage, Figure 5, rests on a jaguar-skin throne which has a kind of backrest partly covered with another piece of jaguar pelt. Above can be seen a tied-up curtain. Seated before him is a subordinate figure whose features are unfortunately much eroded; in his hands he offers up a bowl filled with glyphs, similar to that held by Figure 3. This glyph is most likely Kan (506), here to be "read" as a maize offering. An amusing device sometimes used by Maya vase painters can be seen on the far right: another subordinate is placed in back of the throne and looks into the next scene, which in this case is the other ruler and his group.

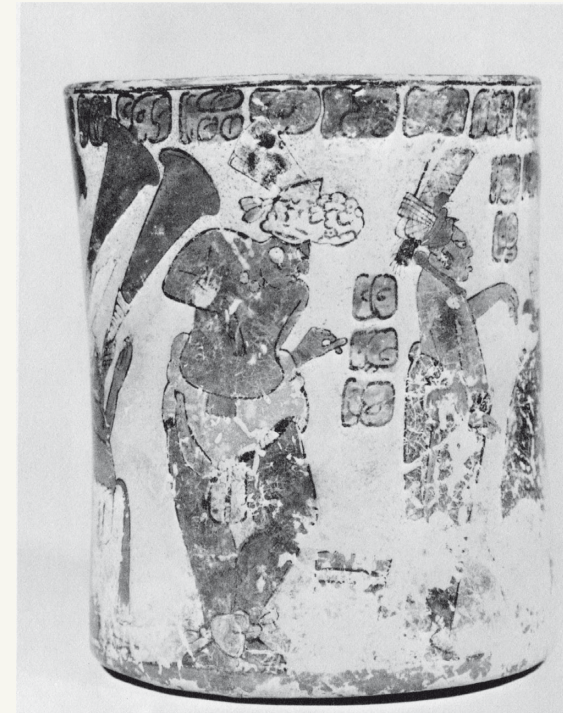
A full study should some day be made of offerings and bundles in pictorial vases, for these are little understood. There is an interesting bundle, tied as usual at the top, to be seen just below the hands of Figure 4; it is painted a delicate rose madder fading into the white background toward the bottom. One would like to know what these bundles contained.

The peculiar headdresses worn by Figures 1, 2, 3, and 6 might some day prove to be significant. They appear to be lengths of stiff cloth apparently folded like fancy starched

napkins at a dinner party. Such headdresses can also be seen on the trumpeters of No. 31 and on Figures 25-27 of No. 37 (the Vase of the Thirty-one Gods), and thus might be associated with specific deities.

The texts were hastily carried out in a Maya version of the oriental running hand and are thus poor subjects for commentary. The vertical texts I would again suggest are personal names and titles, and, in fact, there are strong resemblances between these and Secondary Nonrepeat texts on No. 29. The first two of the group of three glyphs on the farthest right also appear in the Primary Alternative text at top, and may be the name of Figure 5.





31. Polychrome vase with throne scene and trumpeters

Collection: Anonymous collector
Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: 18.0 cm
Text: Primary Alternative?, Secondary Nonrepeat?

The intensely dramatic scene on this vase was painted in black, red, orangey-red, and purplish-brown on a cream-colored background. In the way the figures are depicted, with heavy torsos and lower limbs, and flattened faces, the artist shows a strong affinity with the painter of No. 29, although I believe they were not the same.

Seated upon a platform-like throne, and flanked by the usual woman holding a vase, the stern-faced ruler gestures toward a kneeling figure with bowed head and submissive arms, whom I take to be a captive bound for sacrifice. Behind him, giving what looks like a Maya version of the Roman thumbs-down signal, is a standing, robed figure. I presume that this is also a woman, but the lack of breasts on both purported females suggests the possibility that these are palace eunuchs or transvestites. This institution, however, is not mentioned in our sources on the Maya.

Three kneeling trumpeters provide the music for a dancer who gazes fixedly at the captive. The trumpets were probably of wood, with the ends near the mouth bound with cloth. In Room 3 at Bonampak (Ruppert et al. 1955, fig. 29), virtually identical instruments are being sounded as accompaniment to a dance by the ruler and his entourage. Yet it is quite clear that the dance itself was only part of a larger ritual of human sacrifice being carried out on the steps of a platform.

Two pottery vessels are shown here. One is a simple cylindrical vase in front of the dancer; the other is a necked jar probably containing a liquid.

The glyphic text is so broken down that it is virtually impossible to make anything out of it. Presumably the narrative was so vividly portrayed, and the protagonists so easily identifiable by costume and actions, that no high degree of legibility was required.



32. Polychrome vase, throne scene with dwarf

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: region south of Altamira, Petén-Campeche border
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 15.7 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Nonrepeat



Although somewhat darkened by staining, this is one of the most attractive of the vases with throne scenes. In general coloration and in the style of drawing of both figures and glyphs, it stands somewhat apart from other Maya polychrome vessels from the lowlands.

The background seems to have been a light pinkish-ocher slip, with red rim and base bands. The bodies of the figures are pink, while robes and kilts are gray with white circles and are edged with black-and-white borders. Other details are in the same combination of colors, including red, the glyphs painted over with semitransparent red slip.

A richly attired lord with water-lily emanating from his coiffure is seated upon a gray throne spotted with red; by his side is a woman, probably a principal wife. She turns to look at another woman standing on the right holding the usual vase—the familiar cupbearer. The ruler is facing three bearded figures, one of whom is a dwarf. The subordinate closest to him holds a white or light gray bundle tied at the top with a red knot. On the left of the scene is a person grasping a cloth-covered shaft not unlike those on Lintels 9 and 33 at Yaxchilán.

In spite of the boldness and clarity of the glyphic texts, they are not easy to interpret since so many of the main signs cannot be found in the Thompson catalogue. Noteworthy, however, is the frequency of glyphs which compound well-known main signs, such as the glyph at G which combines 548 and 561. I nevertheless think that these texts are to be taken as meaningful, especially since a well-known Maya deity, Lahun Chan or "Ten Sky" (a god which appears in the Venus Tables of the Dresden Codex) is mentioned in the Primary Alternative text at M. Perhaps this is a sequence of deity names.





33. Polychrome vase, disembowelment scene

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 19.5 cm
 Text: unknown

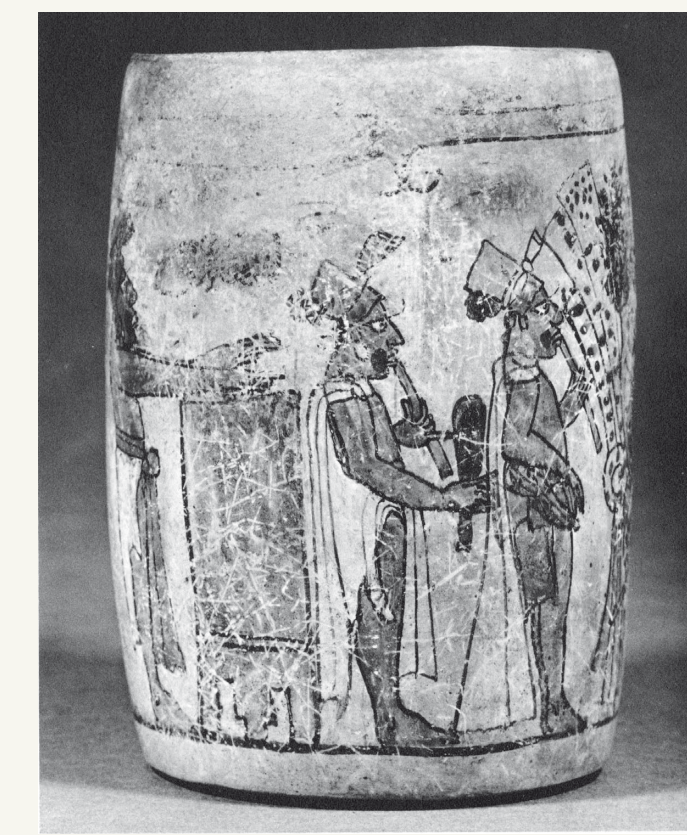
A vase like this should do much to dispel the unfounded notion that the Maya were a peaceful people, the Apollonian "Greeks of the New World," for it tells much of their obsession with torture and sacrifice.

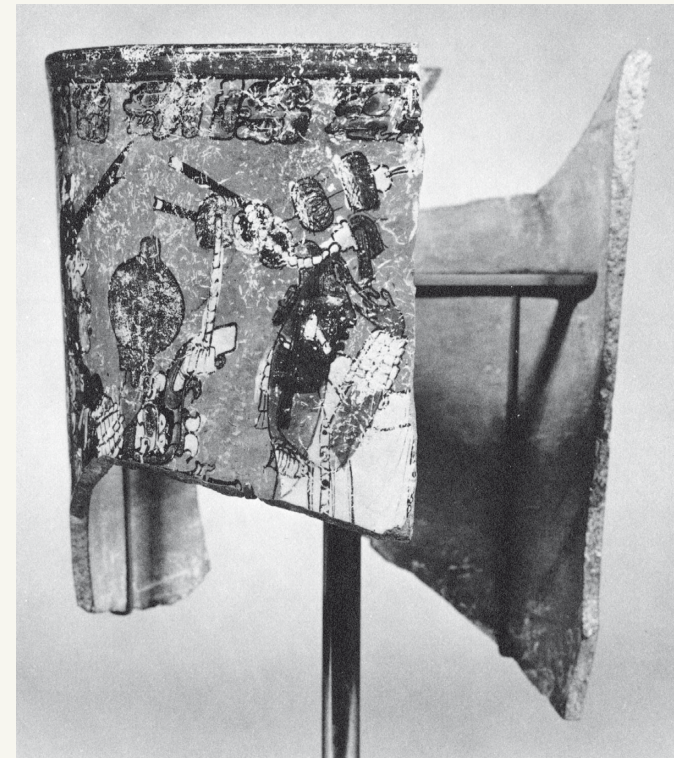
Unhappily, the top third of the vase is badly eroded, but most of the scene remains. The figures are painted in black, ocher (for body color), pink, red, and gray against a light ocher background. The painter must have been of the same school as the artist of No. 36, for many of his conventions are similar, including the delineation of eyelashes. The theatrical nature of the scene is emphasized by the proscenium curtain beneath which it takes place.

In our own culture we do not ordinarily associate music with cruelty and destruction—but the Maya did. On the right, a captive stands on a scaffold, behind which a pile of cloth is placed (perhaps as an offering). Below him a ghastly, misshapen being with huge head, potbelly, and lumpy knees pokes out the victim's intestines (light pink spotted with red) with a spear. The nightmarish executioner has attached to his back an ornamental construction which looks like paper spattered with blood, recalling the paper ornaments of the death gods in the central Mexican codices. I feel reasonably certain that this dread individual is the same as Figure 2 on No. 38.

The quintet at the left plays end flutes, a rattle, an upright drum, and trumpets, a familiar ensemble in Classic Maya art, and the musicians' cheeks are spotted with red.

This has the sorriest text of any vase in the catalogue, and it shows that on rare occasions the vase painter was totally uninterested in recording the Maya language. Originally there were three glyphs in front of the victim, but only the two lowermost are legible and even they make little sense. Of course, we should remember that a Primary text of some sort probably was placed below the rim but is now completely gone through the process of erosion.





34. Polychrome vase, procession

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche, Mexico
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: about 20 cm (tallest part)
Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Nonrepeat

Even fragmentary Maya vases sometimes have a majestic beauty that compels attention. This is such a fragment, part of a cylindrical vase which probably was manufactured in the southern Maya lowlands but which reached its final destination in one of the rich graves for which Jaina Island is famous.

On a yellowish-orange background (the usual brilliantly glossy ground for Maya pictorial vases), the figures are painted in slips of black, orange, red, and grayish-white; the glyphs are carried out in reddish-orange and black. The work

of this painter suggests that he must also have been a muralist similar in ability to the artist who carried out the wall paintings of Bonampak. His style is somber and elegant, and brilliant in color.

The vase originally must have shown a procession of two men (one of whom is missing) and two women, advancing toward a male personage who wears a fantastic headdress (perhaps a bird head) from which hang two long bunches of white shells or spangles. This principal figure holds a small turtle carapace (or glyph 626) in one hand and a bone in the other. He and the one other surviving male figure are covered with death symbols, especially rows of death eyes pendent from ropes which encircle the hips or collar. The second male figure's face is painted black and smeared with white pigment, surely a sign of death, and he shakes a large gourd rattle.

The women are identical; they are painted red, and wear long white robes like the females in the Bonampak murals.

On their strikingly deformed heads they wear elaborate head-dresses with jade beads, rosettes, and water-lily blossoms. They are paragons of the Maya idea of female beauty.

The Primary text below the rim is badly damaged, but because I cannot place most of the animal-head glyphs which have survived I suggest that this is Primary Alternative. The two remaining Secondary Nonrepeat texts surely are to be interpreted as the names of two of the figures, but one cannot be positive about which figure each goes with.

I think it not unlikely that these persons are gods and goddesses, engaged in some funerary or Underworld ceremony the significance of which we do not know. Nor, in our ignorance, can we yet identify these figures with already recognized Maya deities.

35. Polychrome vase, winged gods

Collection: Anonymous collector
Provenance: probably Guatemala highlands
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: 23.3 cm
Text: Primary Alternative

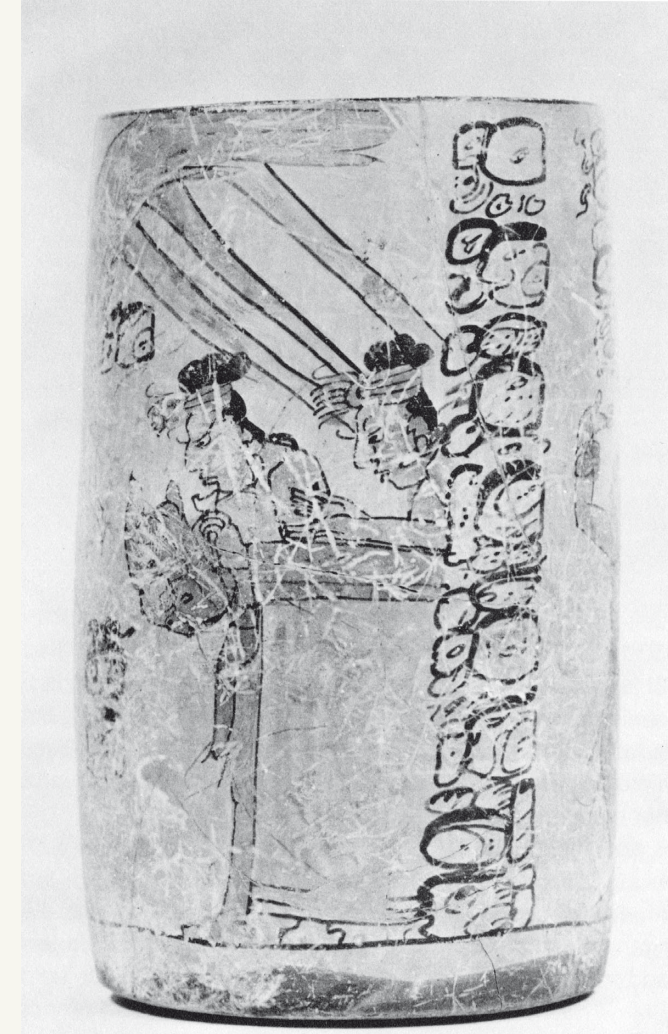
The background of this baroquely painted vessel is a cinnamon buff, the band is red with black glyphs, and the figures are rendered in black, gray, orange, and red slips.

Three grotesque gods, all identical and all painted black, dance while holding the cartouche of the bearded Jaguar Sun, the Jaguar God of the Underworld and symbol par excellence of night and the nether regions (Thompson 1950:134). These gods are not only bearded and outfitted with jaguar ears and jaguar paws, but they are also winged. A similar representation appears as Figure 2 on No. 46, but this latter deity lacks feline characteristics. Covering all remaining space are feather ornaments, jade pendants, and other costume details attached to the three figures.

The significance of the scene is not completely known, but there is a possibility that these gods are associated with the Underworld and also with war. The Jaguar God of the Underworld motif appears with great regularity on war shields held by Maya rulers on the monuments, and in the sanctuary of the Temple of the Sun at Palenque such a shield is backed by crossed spears. Kelley (1965) has a thorough discussion of the close relationship between black gods and war in Maya and Mexican religion.

There are only five glyphs in the Primary Alternative text, about which little can be said. The main sign of B, C, and E is the same; the prefix of A is repeated at C, and the Kin (544) prefix of D (with Ahau main sign) appears again at E. Thus the text has repetitive elements.





36. Polychrome vase, procession with musicians

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Altamira area, southern Campeche, Mexico
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 19.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat
 Publication: Thomson 1971, plate on p. 8

This is one of two vessels by the same hand; the companion piece, a larger vase showing ceremonial activity featuring self-sacrifice, is in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks and includes an identical Primary Standard text.

Against a background of light yellowish-brown (the “vinaceous tawny” of Maya archaeology), the vase is painted in black, dark pink (for flesh tones), gray, white, and light orange. I suspect that this painter, like many of the great Maya artists who worked on mortuary vessels, turned out codices, too, for the freedom and accuracy of the glyphs suggest a strong background in calligraphy.

The procession begins at the left with Figure 1, who is in the typical posture of a dancer with upraised foot. Then follows Figure 2, carrying Figure 3 on his shoulders, as far as I know a unique event in Maya art. Fixed to the back of Figure 3 is an enormous panache of quetzal feathers. Next comes the turn of Figure 4, an old, white-haired man smoking a cigar or smoking tube, a severed head hanging down his back. Figures 5 and 6 repeat the theme of 2 and 3, one person bearing the other on his shoulders.

To the right of the procession is the orchestra: first a musician beating a turtle carapace with a deer antler (a type of instrument still in use in the back reaches of Mesoamerica and seen in the Bonampak murals), then a drummer beating an upright drum made from a hollow log and covered with hide. Three wooden or bark trumpets can be seen in the background, sounded by unseen musicians, a remarkable example of the illusionism favored by Maya artists of the Late Classic Period.

The Primary Standard text provides a vertical divider for the tableau. Perhaps the only glyph that deserves comment is the fourth from the top, which might be transcribed as 172.682:178? The 172.682 combination appears in Dresden 46c (the first page of the Venus Tables) as an evil augury associated with God L as the Morning Star. Clearly to be taken as names are the six Secondary Nonrepeat texts, each associated with one of the participants in the procession, and consisting of one to three glyphs each.

37. Vase of the Thirty-one Gods

Collection: Marianne Faivre, Dixon, Illinois
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 17.8 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat on interior rim

For the iconology of the Classic Maya civilization, the Vase of the Thirty-one Gods is of monumental importance, adding as much new information on the ancient pantheon as would the discovery of an unknown codex.

The vase was carried out in a “four-color negative” technique by an artist who must have been a professional codex painter. First, the figures were brushed on in black outline over a white slip, then the vessel was fired. Next, those areas which were to be left white were covered with a resistant substance like beeswax or clay, and the surface coated with another slip which, on firing, was to be a yellowish-ocher in color (for the heads and bodies of the figures). Finally, after a second firing, all the areas which were to be white or yellow in the finished product were coated with resist, and a red, semitransparent slip applied over the vessel and fired; the resist was then removed (unless it was wax, which would have been fired off). The brilliance and richness of the red is similar to that of an artist’s glaze.

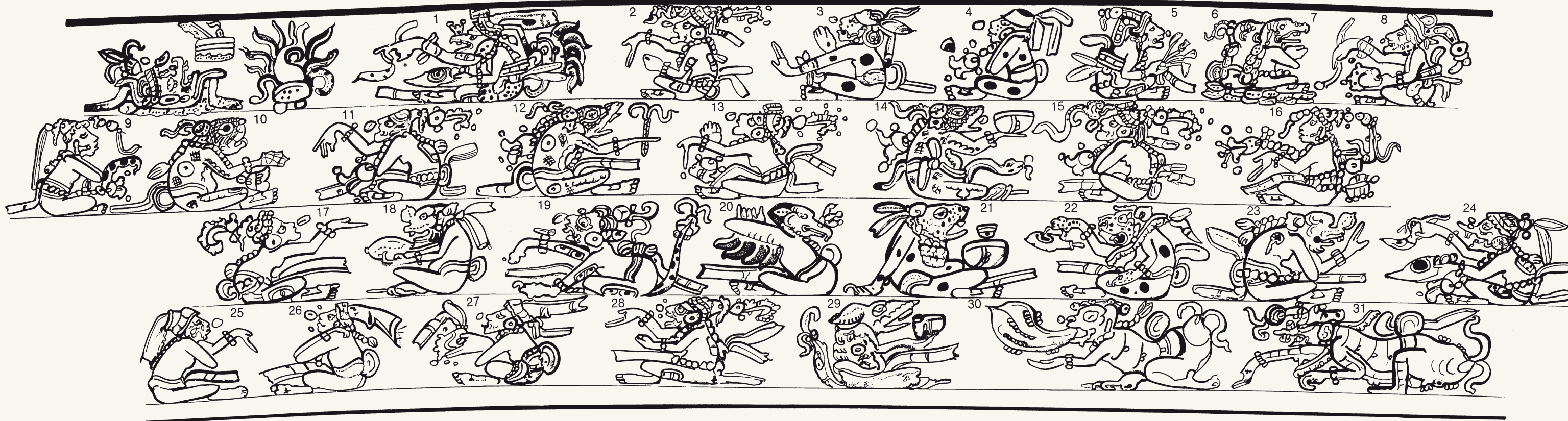
The thirty-one deities are arranged in four horizontal tiers, the tiers separated by black lines. This may have no significance, but I suggest a hierarchical arrangement having to do with four of the supposedly nine layers of the Underworld.

Within each tier there are obviously ten groups of gods in conversation with each other, rather as a stage play is divided into scenes (the groups) which in turn cluster into acts (the tiers). To each deity I have assigned a number and to each conversational group a letter, as follows: A, 1-4; B, 5-8; C, 9-11; D, 12-13; E, 14-16; F, 17-20; G, 21-22; H, 23-24; I, 25-28; J, 29-31. The implication is that the gods within a particular group bear some special relationship to one another.

I have mentioned that these are conversational groups; however, Group A is a ceremonial scene involving gods worshipping ceremonial objects.

For only a minority of these figures have we any idea at all of their identity and even for these there is considerable uncertainty. Our appalling ignorance of the full Maya pantheon is only too obvious in the case of this vessel. Although little





more than a guess, my suggestion would be that there are not only Underworld aspects to be discovered here but also astral associations, for there were definite affinities in Mesoamerican thought between the luminaries of the night sky and the infernal regions. Unhappily, our knowledge of Mesoamerican ethnoastronomy is abysmal. For this, some of the blame must be apportioned to the early Spanish friars who were only slightly concerned about this aspect of Mesoamerican thought, but the major fault lies with ethnologists and social anthropologists more involved with lightweight "problems" such as acculturation, while major segments of Mesoamerican mental life perish under their very noses.

The following represent only preliminary remarks about the thirty-one gods on this great vase:

1. An old god holds a univalve shell in one hand and an unidentified object in the other. He wears a costume appropriate for the ball game, including a yoke and jaguar-skin "kilt"; to the back of the yoke is attached a head of God C. There is an odd ornament attached to his nose. This deity appears to be the same as Figure 3 on No. 42, one of the two sinister sacrificial gods, since both wear identical costume and have jaguar-spotted ornaments or claws protruding from the face. In front of the deity on this vase is a brazier from which curl snake-like flames, and a basket-like object which may contain a codex. The head of a long-nosed god is lying to the left, a device resembling a fleur-de-lis (see Nos. 20, 47) sprouting from his forehead.

2, 11, 13, 15, 17, 28. These gods are all closely related to one another. They are old gods, without jaguar characteristics. Attached to the crown of each headdress is a backward-curving device which is virtually identical with the upturned snout of the Xiuhcōatl, or Fire Serpent, in Aztec iconography (Beyer 1921); the blobs or small balls attached to the device are thus stars and, in all likelihood, representations of the Pleiades, the key asterism for the start of the Aztec year. I will call these figures the Xiuhcōatl Gods, and it will be noted that there are six of them on the vase. Could it be that each deity stands for one of the six usually visible stars in the cluster? Three Xiuhcōatl Gods (11, 13, 15) are in association

with Frog Gods, to whom they are subordinate. One of the Xiuhcōatl Gods is pictured on a Late Classic polychrome vase from Nebaj (Smith and Kidder 1951, fig. 82e). Apparently a standard element in all depictions is a body-marking resembling affix 7 or 24.

3, 4. These are the Headband Gods, a pair of young men with white headbands, three dots below the eye, and large black death spots on the body. On the well-known Blom Vase (Blom 1950), they appear as the young blowgunners about to shoot a fantastic bird out of a tree, and one of them is involved in a penis-bloodletting rite on a vase from Huehuetenango (Thompson 1961). Returning once more to Popol Vuh symbolism, these might be the Hero Twins, Hunahpu and Xbalanque, during their temporary death.

5, 8. A pair of old gods, seemingly attired in ball-game costume (the yokes about the waist are clearly shown), wearing headdresses with long, drooping extensions resembling some affixes. They hold objects of strange appearance, perhaps parts of plants. Figure 8 grasps what looks like a thorny-oyster valve in his left hand. Whoever they are, these gods are associated with Figures 6 and 7.

6, 7. A pair of gods whose heads seem to be bird-like, with rope-like ornaments on the beaks. The mysterious objects on their backs and on which they sit might be the feathers of the sinister Moan bird, and resemble affix 149.

9, 16. Flanking the deities in the second tier is a pair of young gods with headdresses somewhat like those on the Xiuhcōatl Gods, but in place of the Fire Serpent "snout" there are one or two pendent plumes; they also wear necklaces with a flower-like device attached. Figure 9 is distinguished by a great, spotted claw placed before him.

10, 12, 14. There are three Frog or Toad Gods shown, each of which appears with a subordinate Xiuhcōatl God. These creatures are obviously connected with head and full-figure form of the *uinal*, the Maya "month" (Thompson 1950, figs. 27, 29). However, Thompson (p. 144) identifies the uinal creature with the *uo*, an ugly little amphibian associated by

modern Maya with the arrival of the rains. The toad or frog is also patron deity of the month Zac. In our vase, Figure 12 holds a cigar from which the standard form of smoke emanates; and Figure 14 presents a Muluc glyph on outstretched "palm," and has a snake curling up from his loins.

18, 23. A pair of Bat Gods, each associated with an old god. Figure 18 holds what might be a cowrie shell, while Figure 23 is distinguished by the black circle at the corner of the mouth and by a key-shaped marking on the back which might be a death eye. Bat Gods, of course, are common on Chamá pottery, and surely refer to the dread House of Bats in the Popol Vuh.

19. This is an old god with jaguar and solar traits. He has the Roman nose, large eye, curlicue at the corner of the mouth, and egg tooth of the Sun God, but can be assigned to the Underworld on the basis of the jaguar paws and tail. This iconographic mix, plus the chignon-like hairdo and what may be a "decorated Ahau" head ornament, identifies him with Figure 2 on No. 49, the Jaguar God of the Underworld, probably the Sun on its night journey through the Underworld. Parenthetically, the markings on the body look like the Akbal glyph, standing for darkness.

20. An anthropomorphic bird god turns its head back to look at the group to the right.

21, 22. These are Jaguar Gods, engaged in conversation, both with black death spots, and both quite anthropomorphic. The bib-like chest ornament and Muluc glyph (surmounted by a star?) of Figure 21 are distinctive. By comparison with Figure 3 on No. 38, I feel that Figure 22 is the Water-lily Jaguar, patron of the month Pop (see discussion under No. 38). Like the jaguar on that vase, this deity wears a death collar.

24. The head of this old, long-nosed god is identical with the severed head lying to the far left in the first tier. He holds a univalve shell (possibly a conch trumpet) in his left hand and an unidentified object in the right. Despite his long proboscis, I feel that he has nothing to do with God K of the codices.

25, 26. Two young gods are engaged in conversation; they have simple white headdresses, probably of cotton cloth. Similar headdresses appear with subordinates in throne scenes (cf. No. 30).

27. An old god, with a cloth headdress like those of Figures 25 and 26, holds a tasseled object which recalls the Aztec sign *teti* ("stone").

29. This animal god of unknown affiliation holds a glyph and receives the homage of Figures 30 and 31.

30, 31. Two Insect Gods, who are rare in Maya iconography. Their bodies are wingless but segmented like insects, and smoke issues from their anal orifices. Nevertheless, anthropomorphism can be seen in the heads and limbs of these weird creatures. Figure 29, Insect God A, has a skull for a head which spews out a strange cloud-like shape. On the north side of Altar Q at Copán, a personage is seated upon Insect God A's head, suggesting that other glyphs used for seats on this monument are also to be considered deities. On the other hand, the head of Insect God B (Figure 31) is that of an aged god with a long nose, but it is distinguished from that of Figure 24 by the ornament passing through the nose and by a different headdress. Insect God A can also be seen on No. 73, and Insect God B might be present on No. 72.

The only text, curiously enough, is a band of repeated glyphs just inside the rim, consisting of an unidentifiable main sign with a prefix. This is a shame, since it would have been a windfall to have name glyphs attached to our thirty-one gods.



38. Vase of the Eleven Gods

Collection: Marianne Faivre, Dixon, Illinois
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Early Classic, probably Tzakol 3 (sixth century A.D.)
 Height of vase: 18.3 cm
 Diameter of lid: 18.3 cm
 Text: Primary Standard on both vase and lid

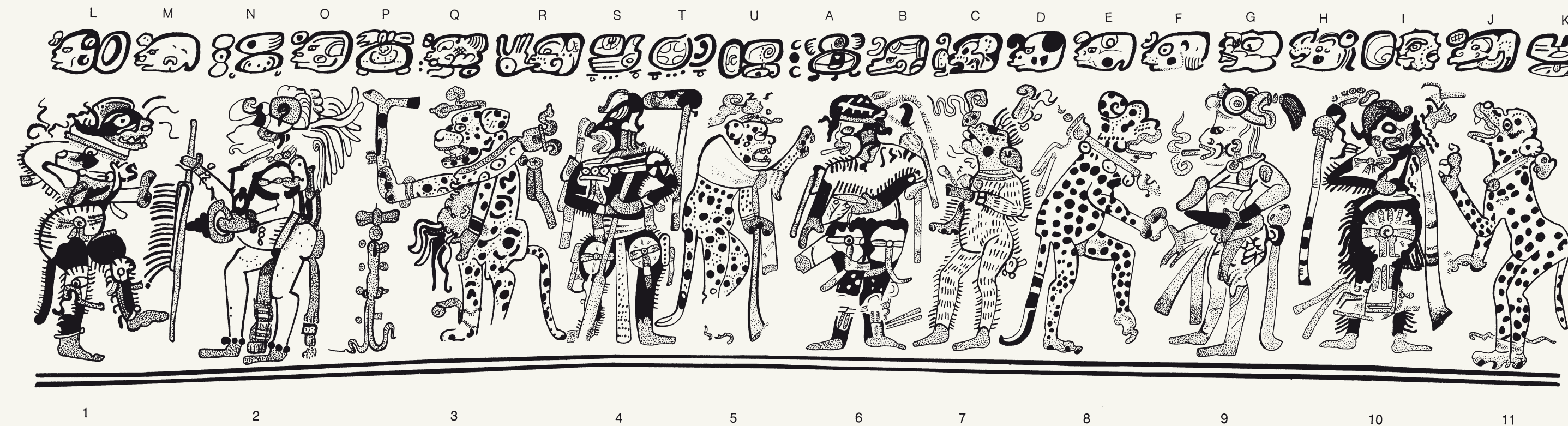
While this vessel illustrates only eleven rather than thirty-one gods, it is of great significance since the majority of them do not occur elsewhere. The background of vase and lid is a cinnamon buff, the handle is red, and the glyphs are black; the figures have been executed in black and red, with some details in a muted gray. The large circles in the lower band are red. Root marks have done some damage, so that some details are hard to make out from a black-and-white photograph only.

Without stretching the evidence, the scene can be interpreted as a sacrificial dance involving feline gods and other deities. Apparently the jaguars and were-jaguars are going to be the victims, for most wear death collars and their partners hold sacrificial weapons. We have no surviving myth from Mesoamerica which would throw further light on this event. The figures can be described as follows.

1. A feline deity with one leg raised in dance; the strange spiky attachments to the body are similar to those on Figures 4, 6, and 10. This being wears a death collar.

2. This is a grossly misshapen deity of basically human form, brandishing a weapon (or eccentric flint?) in one hand and a feathered staff in the other, seemingly intent upon sacrificing his opposite number, Figure 1. His huge head, pot-belly, and blemishes identify him as the monstrous figure disemboweling a victim on No. 33.

3. The Water-lily Jaguar, distinguished from other feline or near-feline deities by his pure jaguar character (excluding,





of course the anomaly of standing upright) and by the vegetation curling over the head. A severed human head hangs down from his death collar, and a banner-like object, perhaps of paper, with a long pendant, is carried in one hand. This god has a relatively wide occurrence, showing up in the Dresden Codex (Dr. 8a), on the monuments (as the patron of the month Pop), and quite frequently on carved pottery from the Chocholá region of Yucatán.

4. A black god holding a paddle-like object; on his shoulders are circular devices with tabs. Spikes or hairs cover the body. This deity is closely similar to Figure 6, but his identity is unknown.

5. Another Jaguar God with an elaborate headdress and a long garment pendent from one shoulder.

6. Another black god, smoking a cigar and grasping a sacrificial knife. He has the same circular devices as Figure 4.

7. This hairy animal seems to be "Shaggy Dog," one of the canoe passengers on an incised bone from Tikal (Triak 1963, figs. 1, 2). While the "hands" are those of a carnivore, the feet are human.

8. The jaguar on this vase wears a death collar and perhaps may be separated from the others by the oddly formed mouth.

9. This deity is human in shape, smokes a cigar, and also holds a knife; around the neck is a curved pendant like those worn on pottery tomb figures from Colima.

10. We have another spiky or hairy black god; this one has circles around the eyes and apparently carries a knife.

11. The fourth jaguar god has the usual death collar and is peculiar in its low forehead with the ears set well back; the shortness of the tail might also be distinctive. It will be appreciated that jaguar symbolism is exceedingly complex!

On the lid, placed between the loop handles and the glyph

band, are four pendent devices which Thompson (1950, fig. 45, 7) identifies as a water symbol.

The text is beautifully brushed on; the same hand carried out the glyphs on both vase and lid. A very similar, but not identical, hand can be seen on No. 39, a vase with glyphs only, and a fruitful comparison could be made of all three sequences, since there is considerable overlap between them. I believe that the vase text opens at A with a 1 Katun time expression; by analogy with No. 47, there are reasons to believe that this means the vase was painted for someone who had died during his or her first *katun* (a period slightly less than twenty years). Somewhat unusual is the Deer glyph (not in the Thompson catalogue) at F; this is also to be found on the lid (at F) and at D on No. 39. The glyphs at E and M are probably a personified form of 843 (Step).

On the lid, it will be noted that most of the glyphs from E to J roughly parallel the vase text from E to J. Instead of the Cleft-sky glyph (562:23) immediately following, however, there are five new glyphs intervening, including God C with 33 prefixed at O.

Vase text

- A 1 Katun
- B x (Worm-bird)
- C x
- D 1002a (IL-Face)
- E x (personified Step?)
- F x (Deer)
- G x
- H 756 (Bat)
- I x.x
- H 756 (Bat)
- J x (Worm-bird?)
- K 562:23 (Cleft-sky)
- L 1000?.x
- M x (personified Step?)
- N 61.77:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- O x
- P 60:507 (Spotted-Kan)

- Q 738:130 (Fish)
- R 220.755 (Hand-Monkey)
- S 507:670:139
- T 281:139.181? (Kan-Cross)
- U x.x:88?

Lid text

- A x (bird-like Caban?)
- B 511?:136
- C 590b (Jawbone)
- D 370.1003c (God CH)
- E x (personified Step?)
- F x (Deer)
- G x:74
- H x (see G of vase)
- I x:x:x
- J x (Worm-bird)
- K 1055 God
- L ?:24
- M 125?:711:125.188
- N x
- O 33.1016 (God C)
- P 562:23 (Cleft-sky)

39. Vase with glyph band

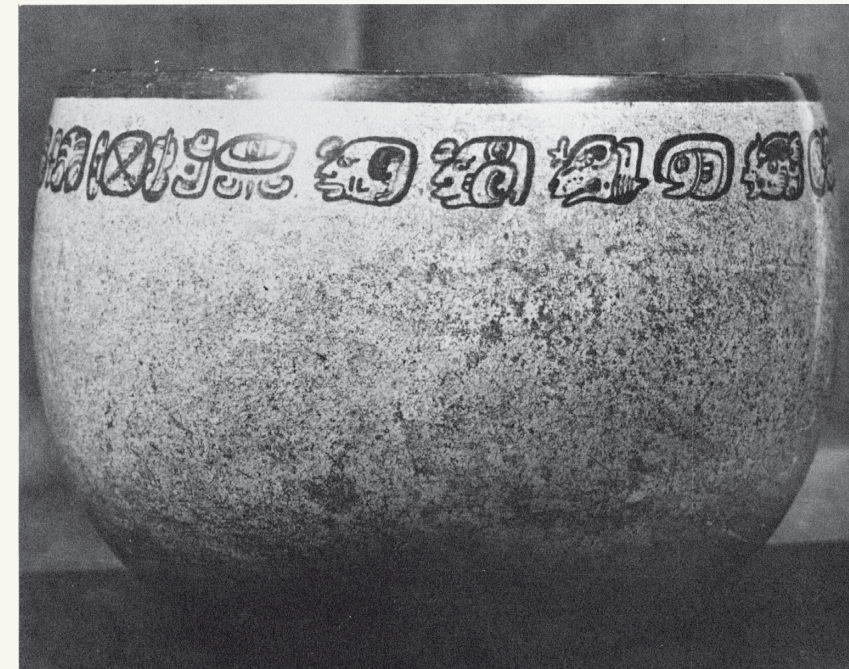
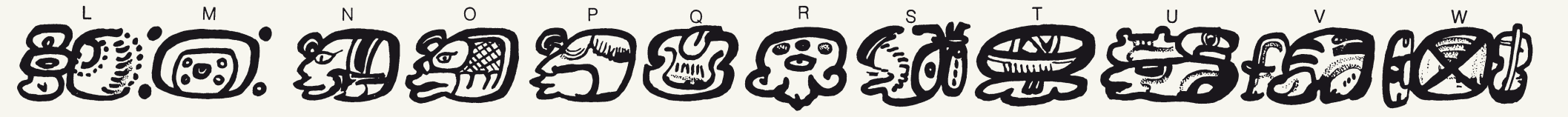
Collection: Marianne Faivre, Dixon, Illinois
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Early Classic, probably Tzakol 3 (sixth century A.D.)
 Height: 10.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

The glyphic text and the rim band are painted in black slip against a yellowish-ocher ground flecked with dark stain. There are reasons to believe that it was found together with No. 38, a conclusion also borne out by the close similarity of their respective texts. Slight differences apparent in individual glyphs however, suggest that another hand was involved in this text, but that this person must have been a product of the same calligraphic school.

From A to M, the text contains few surprises. However, the expression from N to W is unique to this vase and may contain references to specific gods or persons.

- A 229.617:126 (Initial Sign)
- B 1002a (IL-Face)
- C x (personified Step?)
- D x (Deer)
- E 515b? (Muluc)
- F 756 (Bat)
- G x.x (see glyph I, No. 38 vase text)
- H x (Worm-bird)
- I 562:23 (Cleft-sky)
- J 683 (Moon)
- K x (personified Step?)
- L 61.76 } (Wing-Quincunx)
- M 585 }
- N x
- O x (personified 565?)
- P x
- Q 568
- R 628
- S x.57
- T 561c.23 (Sky)
- U 84.526
- V 90?.608
- W 109.592?:370

The occurrence of 568 at Q is of interest, since this sign appears at R6 on No. 49 as the name of a deity, prefixed by four dots. At R, 628 is a glyph previously known only in the Copán inscriptions; 608, the main sign of V, appears only in the codices.





40. Polychrome vase, two seated figures

Collection: Anonymous collector
Provenance: possibly southern Campeche
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: 17.0 cm
Text: Primary Repeat

In spite of the curious stylization of this vase, painted in black and red on a buff background, the theme is surely that of the Young Lords, each seated cross-legged within a rectangular field. Separating them are two rectangular panels, each containing the same glyph repeated six times. Neither the main sign of the glyph nor the prefix can be identified.



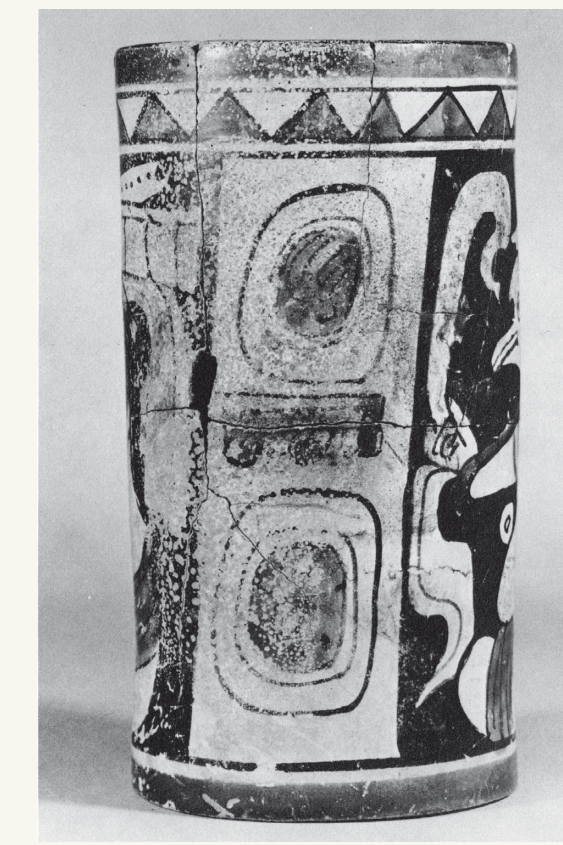
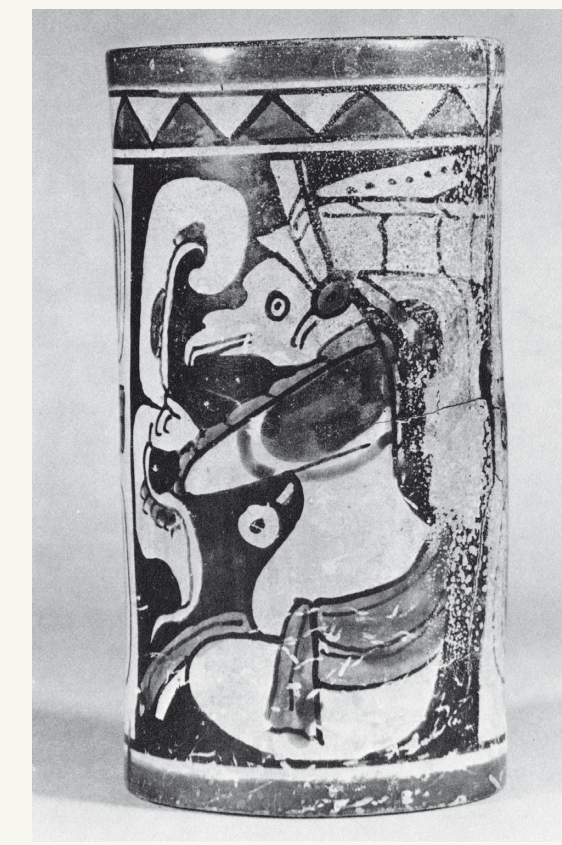
41. Polychrome vase, two bird-headed figures

Collection: Anonymous collector
Provenance: possibly southern Campeche
Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
Height: 20.5 cm
Text: Primary Repeat

The background slip is cream, with the figures and the areas around them indicated by black; the rim bands and triangles, as well as details of the figures and glyph interiors, are covered with a semitransparent, brownish-red slip, made brilliant by the light-colored undercoating.

The creature represented twice has a man's body but the head of a bird. Quite probably this is the familiar Vulture God (Zimmermann's God T5) pictured in the Dresden Codex (p. 8a), but differs from the latter by wearing a headdress; it also lacks the device over the beak which spouts smoke. However, on this vase the smoke motif emanates from the right hand.

Each glyph panel contains a twice-repeated glyph vaguely resembling 513 (Muluc) turned on its side. Below the top-most glyph is what looks like the number VIII, but which is more likely affix 12.





42. Vase in "codex" style, palace scene with beheading

Collection: Mr. and Mrs. William Kaplan, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 24.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

This vase may well be the finest example of Maya pictorial ceramics yet known; it ranks as one of the greatest masterpieces of aboriginal American art. Apparently found together with No. 43, it is one of a handful of cylindrical vessels with scenes of great realism, carried out in very fine lines on cream backgrounds by artists who must have been primarily painters of codices. This ceramic group (see also Nos. 43-46) gives an excellent idea of the high elegance and delicacy which must have characterized ancient Maya books, none of which has survived from the Classic Period.

The only touch of color on the vase is the red slip used to make the usual rim and basal bands; the scene is executed in black or dark-brown lines, with certain areas painted in brown washes of varying strengths. What is so striking is the extraordinary delicacy with which the figures are painted. Like the practitioners of Art Nouveau around 1900, the finest Classic Maya artists were obsessed with the "whiplash line," which can readily be seen in the baroque costuming of Figure 3, or the graceful lines of the women. In its sophistication and subtlety, this magnificent object reminds one of the finest Japanese scroll painting.

The principal personage in the tableau is obviously Figure 6, who is none other than God L of the codices, one of the main Underworld rulers. He wears the characteristic headdress of Moan-bird feathers, surmounted by a water-lily blossom on top of which perches the Moan bird itself, a creature of ill omen similar to the screech owl (if not identical with it). This is of course a palace or throne scene viewed in elevation. From the roof beam of the palace is hung a curtain, raised from below as though this were a scene on a stage. Surmounting it is what may be a version of the well-known Maya roof comb, with three grotesque creatures peering from it. The two on either side are jawless jaguars; the scrolls at the corners of the mouth and the tongue-like protrusions at the front suggest their affinity with a series of jawless gods such as the patron of the month Pax. I cannot identify the face in the middle, but the arrangement recalls the grotesque gods overlooking the scenes in the Bonampak murals.

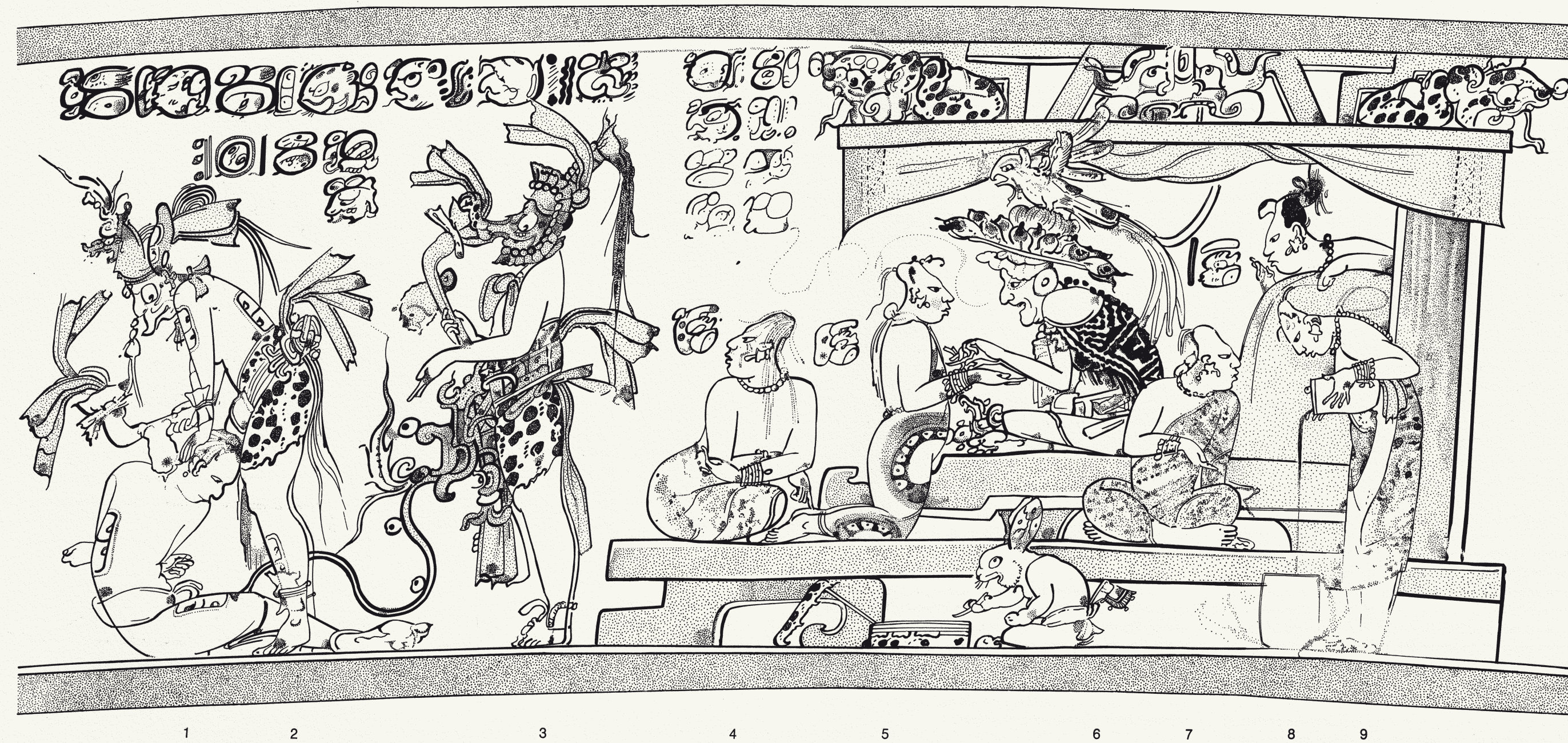
God L is attended by five young women of great beauty, each wearing a patterned robe and showing the pronounced head deformation that was practiced by the Maya upper classes. Their nobility is proclaimed by rich jewelry—jade ear spools, necklaces, and bracelets. Perhaps the principal lady is Figure 5, for God L is talking to her (the wispy lines to his left appear to be speech scrolls) while engaged in tying her bracelet. The lady to the right, Figure 9, pours a liquid—probably the sacred drink *balché*—from one vase to another.

In front of the throne platform is a marvelous little rabbit; in his ear are the markings of the Etz'nab glyph, and in fact his head looks very much like Thompson's glyph 759 (Jog with Etz'nab), implying that the so-called Jog in that case is a rabbit. Confirming this is a very similar rabbit, also shown seated, on a Chamá vase in the University of Pennsylvania Museum collection (Gordon and Mason 1925-43, pl. 53). On our vase, besides the human posture, a slight anthropomorphism can also be seen in the loincloth which it wears, to the back of which is fixed a device like a small flag. What is this Rabbit God doing? Robert Sonin, who was responsible for the restoration of the vase, has convinced me that it is painting a codex, the object immediately to the left: the jaguar-skin cover has been raised, revealing that this is a folding-screen book. The object in its little paw would thus be a brush pen.

In an astonishing tour-de-force of naturalism, the artist moves us from this part of the drama to the other by the device of having Figure 4, a sioe-eyed beauty, look over her shoulder to the left while tapping her neighbor on the foot to draw her attention to the horrific events taking place in that direction. This trick of leading on the eye of the beholder is not unknown elsewhere in the finest Maya ceramics, but never in such a sophisticated manner as in this vase.

Figure 1 is a bound captive—a young man marked as a god by the signs on his body—who is having his head chopped off by Figure 2. The gargoylish executioner also has god marks. He wears a conical hat, perhaps of paper, fronted by



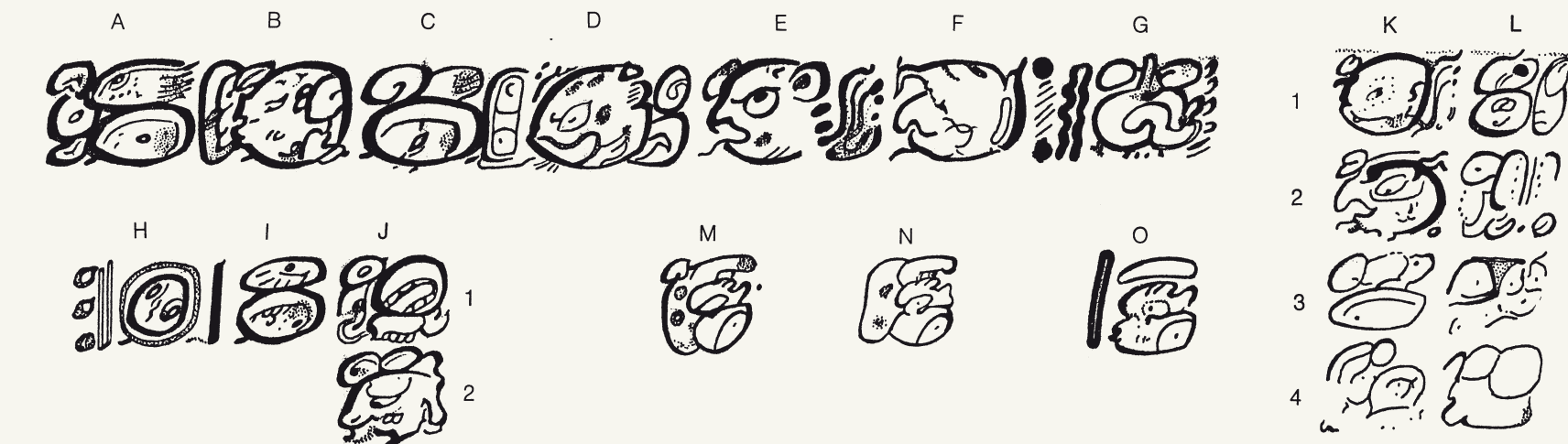


a grotesque face. Paper, probably spattered with red blood spots, is attached to the back of the hat, to his belt, and to the ax in his hand. The only other representation of this god I have been able to find is the left-hand crouching figure on the Tablet of the Slaves at Palenque (Ruz 1952, fig. 12).

Figure 3, a second executioner, is attired with the same jaguar-skin kilt as Figure 2, but his face appears to be a weird mask of which the nose is replaced by a jaguar paw.

Over the execution scene is a segment of the Primary Standard text running from A to G. It will be noted that G is the well-known glyph for south, and it may be that the entire tableau is to be thought of as in that quarter. More important than this is the Secondary Nonrepeat text from H1 to J1, for this may contain the clue to the understanding of the events and personages shown here. It begins with the Calendar Round date 8 Caban 5 Ceh. David H. Kelley has called my attention to the fact that this date is one day before 9 Etz'nab 6 Ceh, a "standard" date in the Dresden Codex for Venus rising as the Evening Star, in the 1 Ahau 9 Kayab section of the Venus Tables (Dresden 49). I will return to this point later.

The glyphs in columns K and L form another Secondary Nonrepeat text, but are somewhat illegible. Glyphs M, N, and O



are all the same and clearly refer to the ladies of Figures 4 and 5 and possibly 8; Glyph O, however, is prefixed by a "five."

What is the meaning of this macabre tableau? God L, who obviously dominates the rest, is a major Underworld lord, perhaps co-regent with God N. He sits in his "jaguar palace" with five women who may be his wives and/or concubines. The fact that there are five of them suggests that they may be cognate with the Aztec Cihuateteo, five goddesses who once were women who had died in childbirth. The Cihuateteo, much dreaded by the Aztec people, were thought to dwell in the Underworld to the west, rising to the zenith at noon of each day to bear the Sun to the horizon and to their fearful abode.

If this identification is correct, then the import of the scene to the left becomes apparent. The young god being dispatched would be 7 Hunahpu, the uncle of the Hero Twins. It will be recalled that he and his brother 1 Hunahpu were both sacrificed by beheading near the Underworld ball court. It has long been known that the Yucatec Maya equivalents of their names, 1 Ahau and 7 Ahau, are the first and last day of the 260-day count if one starts this count with the beginning of the Venus calendar. 1 Ahau is almost surely Venus as the

Morning Star, and 7 Ahau the Evening Star, for this portion of the Popol Vuh is an astral myth describing, first, the death and probable resurrection of the two aspects of Venus, and second, the death and resurrection of the Sun and Moon (the Hero Twins).

Therefore, I would interpret the captive figure as 7 Hunahpu, about to be sacrificed on the day before he appears as the Evening Star in the western sky, where the five Cihuateteo dwell below the horizon. God L also has strong Venus associations, for he appears as the presiding lord of the heliacal rising of that planet on Dresden 46, engaged in firing darts at God K.

The little Rabbit God remains a puzzle, since the rabbit, at least in central Mexican thought, is associated with the Moon and with drunkenness. Perhaps the lady pouring out *balché* suggests a connection with wine, but why the rabbit should be writing a codex is yet to be explained. There is also the possibility that the ladies in the palace are not Cihuateteo, and that one of them is the Moon Goddess herself, for God L is in some sort of sexual relationship with that deity on Dresden 14c.



43. Vase in "codex" style, throne scene

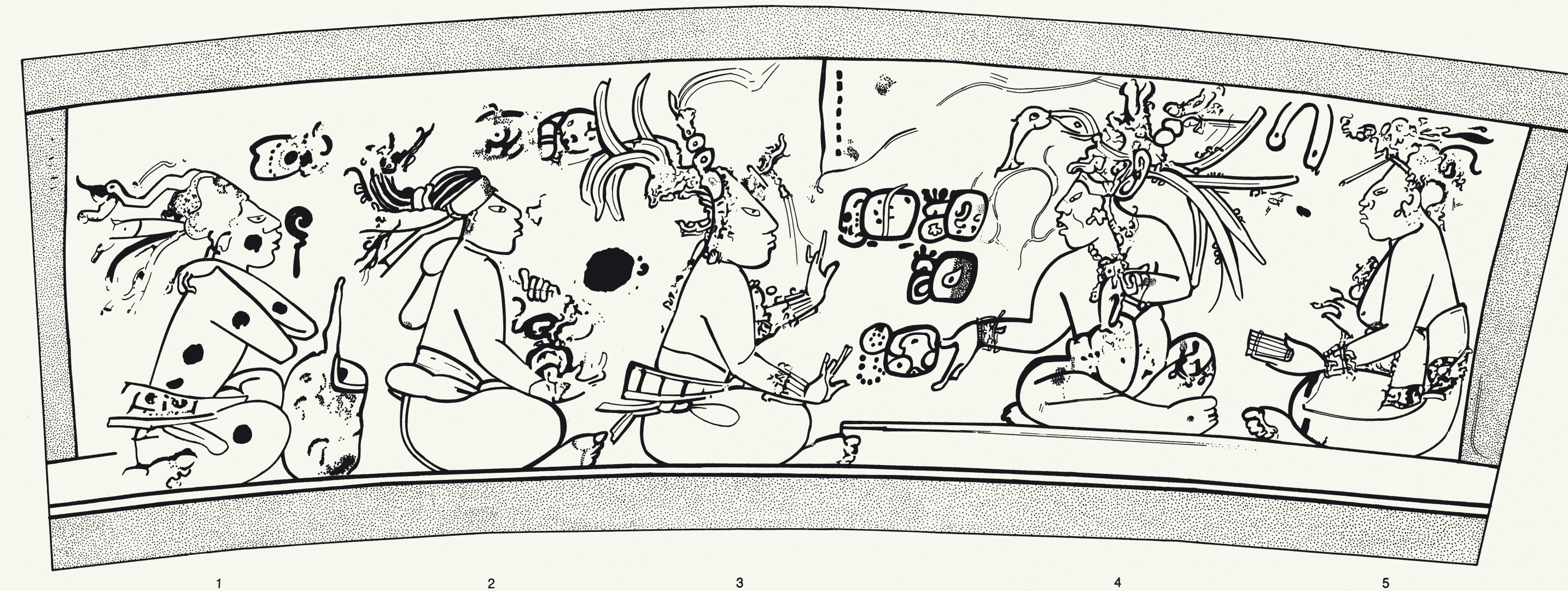
Collection: Mr. and Mrs. William Kaplan, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Secondary Nonrepeat

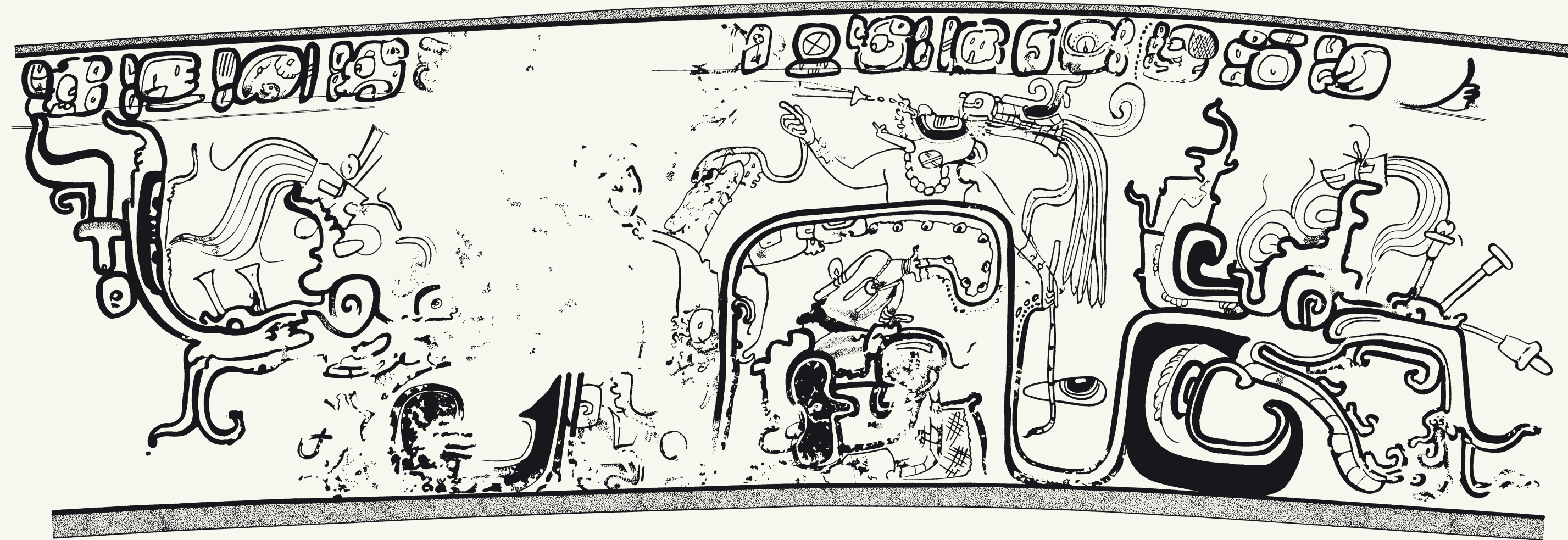
Said to have been found together with No. 42, this vase is probably by the same hand. Like No. 42, it was painted in a black-to-brown paint on a cream-colored background, with red slip used for the rim and basal bands. There are traces of stucco painted with Maya blue on these bands. As with its companion vase, the artist employed very light washes of brown to give form to the figures.

Although somewhat effaced by erosion, the scene is reasonably clear. In an arrangement remarkably similar to that on Sculptured Stone 1 at Bonampak (Ruppert et al. 1955, fig. 16c), a ruler (Figure 4) with lily-and-fish headdress is seated upon a raised platform or dais, underneath the usual swagged curtain, receiving the respects of three seated personages below him. By his side is a woman, presumably his wife, holding an object in her left hand which might be a codex.

Again, while this looks like a scene from real life, I believe this is deceptive. Attention is drawn to Figure 1, covered with black spots on body and cheek, surely a sign that this individual is dead. Since I believe that all the personages are gods or at least legendary figures in a sacred myth, then the clue to his identity might be in the strange "question mark" before his face, and the greatly enlarged glyph, apparently glyph 370, placed before him like a small cello. He might be identified with the young god also covered with death spots, one of the six deities pictured performing the bloodletting sacrifice on the Huehuetenango Vase. Figure 2 also seems to be male and must be one of the Headband Gods on the basis of the long hair bound up in a distinctive chignon; unfortunately, the glyph or god's head which he holds is too worn to be made out. Whether Figure 3 is male or female cannot now be decided. Nevertheless, there is a strong similarity between this deity and the central passenger on two of the inscribed bones from the tomb in Temple I at Tikal (Trik 1963, figs. 3, 4).

There is little to be said of the glyphs, which are in poor condition. Most of them are probably personal names of the deities shown. Of most interest is the head of God C with "water prefix" (40?.1016) between the right hands of Figures 3 and 4. Whatever its meaning in other contexts, in scenes on stelae and panels it has been identified with descent in the female line (Joyce Marcus, personal communication).





44. Vase in "codex" style, beheading scene

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 22.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

Although similar to Nos. 42 and 43 in the way it was painted, this remarkable vase appears to be by another hand. The red bands at top and bottom are proportionately much narrower, and the glyphs are bounded by much heavier outlines. Nevertheless, it falls, along with Nos. 42, 43, 45, and 46, in the most remarkable group of Maya vases yet known, all probably representing a single school of ceramic painters working in a style more typical of the pictorial manuscript.

While the scene has been partly obliterated by erosion, perhaps through water action as it lay on its side in the tomb,

the macabre tableau can be reconstructed with some accuracy. The action takes place within the undulations of a great, two-headed serpent with prominent hanks of hair. Without going into the incredibly complex subject of ophidian iconography among the Classic Maya, it should only be noted here that the serpent heads are clearly distinguished from each other, the left-hand having an upturned snout, while that on the right is down-turned.

Within the central undulation of the monster is a headless figure with hands bound behind its back. From its neck emanates a flexible tube with eyes or stars attached to one side. Below the torso is some kind of a structure, or perhaps a monstrous head, that I cannot make out. Above the serpent's body is an anthropomorphic figure new to Maya iconography; the fleshless jaw indicates him to be a Death God, while his strange, mask-like face is found elsewhere only on the Insect God on No. 45. He wears a headdress rich in quetzal plumes, and a Crossed-bands glyph over the ear. In his left hand is an ax with curiously spindly shaft, the instrument with which he has just decapitated the figure below. In his right hand he

grasps the severed head by a cord. In spite of the crocodilian appearance of this head, there can be no doubt that it was removed from the victim seen here, for the serrations on the severed sections would fit together perfectly.

I can offer no explanation for this grim drama. Decapitation is a far from rare theme in Classic Maya art, and the theme of the sacrifice of 1 Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu in the Popol Vuh will be easily recalled. However, this vase does not seem to depict this famous episode, but rather a portion of the immense and forever lost corpus of Maya Underworld ritual poetry.

The text is also utterly unfamiliar, most of the glyphs being unknown in the Thompson catalogue.

45. Vase in "codex" style, Underworld ritual

Collection: Museum of Primitive Art, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Nonrepeat
 Publication: Thompson 1970, pl. 14d

Another Maya artist of enormous distinction painted this remarkable vase in a variation on the "codex" style which is charged with action. It would not be stretching a point to see here the acme of the Maya use of the whiplash line, but without that feeling of decadence evoked by Art Nouveau artists using a similar device some 1,200 years later. The color scheme is exactly that of the other codex-style vessels, with red bands and a cream background upon which the scene has been carried out with a slip that is black when dense, but which shades off to brown when thin.

The drama is centered around Figure 2, who reclines on a monster's head while two gods dance on either side; watching the action from offstage, so to speak, are two animals.

For at least a partial understanding of this strange scene, probably an Underworld ritual, we must examine in some detail both the figures and the glyphs. Figure 1 is a young god dancing, with an ax in one hand and an object with the face of God C in the other. He has barbel-like whiskers around the mouth and wears a bivalve shell over the ear, a combination which makes it virtually certain that this is God GI of the Palenque Triad of divinities (Berlin 1963). The hair of Figure 1 is done up in a long hank, and the central portion of the Triadic symbol (Kubler 1969:33–46) appears as a kind of headdress. Around his neck is the death collar, from which depends a vessel marked with the Akbal ("Darkness") glyph, with a snake at its opening. An unusual belt with a kind of boss on the hip can be seen at his waist, while a kind of reptilian character is given by the scale-like designs on the backs of his legs.

There are exceedingly few cases of overlap between the iconography of Maya pictorial vases and monuments, but this is one. Dumbarton Oaks Relief Panel 2 (Coe and Benson 1966, fig. 6), which almost certainly comes from the Palenque region, shows a young man dancing, flanked by two seated personages. In one hand is an ax, while in the other he grasps an "Akbal" vessel with a small serpent wrapped around its handle. In the headdress is the central portion of the Triadic symbol, and a shell is worn over the ear. The similarity even extends to the unusual belt with its prominent bosses. Perhaps the only difference to be detected is that the Dumbarton Oaks figure lacks the barbel of God GI of the Palenque Triad.

While Coe and Benson have suggested that the figure on Panel 2 is performing a tree-chopping rite which is also presented in the Madrid Codex (89c), the scene on the vase implies that the "chopping" may have involved a victim's head. The glyph for the rite is surely given at E on the panel, a "III-Axe-Caban" combination.

Figure 2 is a more familiar subject to the world of Maya religious symbolism, with possibly even some Olmec overtones. This creature is a small were-jaguar with the paws, tail, and ears of a jaguar, but with certain Sun God features, such as large eye, Roman nose, and filed upper incisors. He has a long hank of hair, surmounted by the Decorated Ahau motif. I think it virtually certain that we have here an infantile form of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, Lord of Number Seven (see discussion in Thompson 1950:73–5). A mature version of this same deity appears on No. 49 (Figure 2), but lacks the jaguar appendages and tail.

My guess would be that this little fellow is about to be decapitated by Figure 1, since he lies prone as though a victim. Supporting him is the gigantic head of the Cauac Monster, with a huge glyph on the upper part of the head closely resembling T.529, Cauac variant 1. A striking representation of this god is the altar of Stela D at Copán. A possible clue to its appearance in Underworld iconography might be the statement in *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* that Metnal was created on the day 9 Cauac (Roys 1933:117).

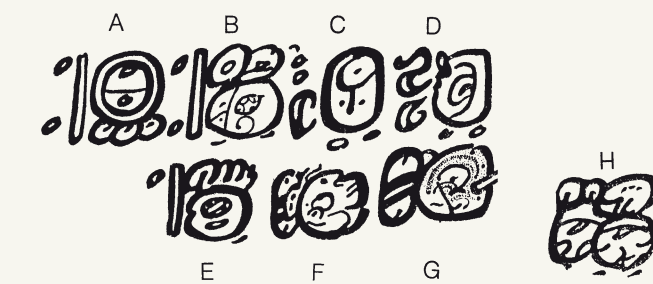
On the right dances Figure 3 as counterpart to Figure 1; his skeletalized form, with skull, prominent backbone, and desiccated limbs, along with death collar and death eyes, proves him to be identical with God A of the Dresden Codex. Fixed to the back of his loincloth is a strange structure combining the head of a long bone with death eyes and the smoke motif; from it rise noxious clouds, suggesting the bad odors associated with one of the Death God's names, Cizin.

Perhaps even more sinister than the previously described creatures is Figure 4, apparently some sort of a dog with jaguar-like front paws raised. Could this be the spotted dog that was supposed to carry the dead soul across the dread river on its way to the Underworld?

Finally, we have Figure 5 to contend with, a little flying insect with Akbal-like wing covers. In one of its two human hands it carries a large cigar from which smoke curls. There is nothing insect-like about its head, which is apparently the same as that of the Death God on No. 44, and which is surmounted by death eyes. Would it be stretching a point to turn once again to the Popol Vuh for the solution of an iconographic mystery? I would hazard the guess that Figure 5 is a firefly, and that the cigar in its hand refers to the incident in which the Hero Twins affix fireflies to the ends of their unlit cheroots in the House of Darkness, to trick the Lords of the Underworld.

It would be impossible to say with any degree of confidence what all this means, but it is likely that at least some of the meaning is to be sought in the text. At A and B is the Calendar Round date 7 Muluc 7 Kayab. I think it highly dubious that this or any other Calendar Round position on Maya pottery is to be considered as contemporary, and I will not attempt to determine a possible Long Count date for it. Following the lead given on No. 42, in which the Calendar Round position was one day *before* a "standard" rising of Venus as the Evening Star in the Dresden Venus Tables, it will be seen in the same tables that 7 Muluc 7 Kayab is one day *after* a heliacal rising of Venus as the Morning Star (in the 13 Mac part of the tables). So one again may postulate an astronomical meaning to a scene which still eludes complete interpretation.

At C is the Inverted-Ahau glyph (534), with an unknown prefix and unknown meaning. A variant of the glyph for God K (1030d) appears at D, but this deity (also known as GII of the Palenque Triad) does not appear on the vase and is quite rare at all times within the corpus of pictorial ceramics. The glyph at E looks deceptively like a calendar sign with its bar-and-dot coefficient, but it is unlike any known day or month sign. At F is a combination in which the prefix is 109, "red," but which has a main sign that might or might not be 738 (Fish). Neither of the elements of G can be found in the Thompson catalogue; H is a compound glyph with what seems to be a Double-Chuen (520.520) as main sign. Other than the Calendar Round date and the glyph of God K, therefore, little can now be determined for this text.



46. Vase in "codex" style, three gods

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: southern Campeche or northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 21.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?



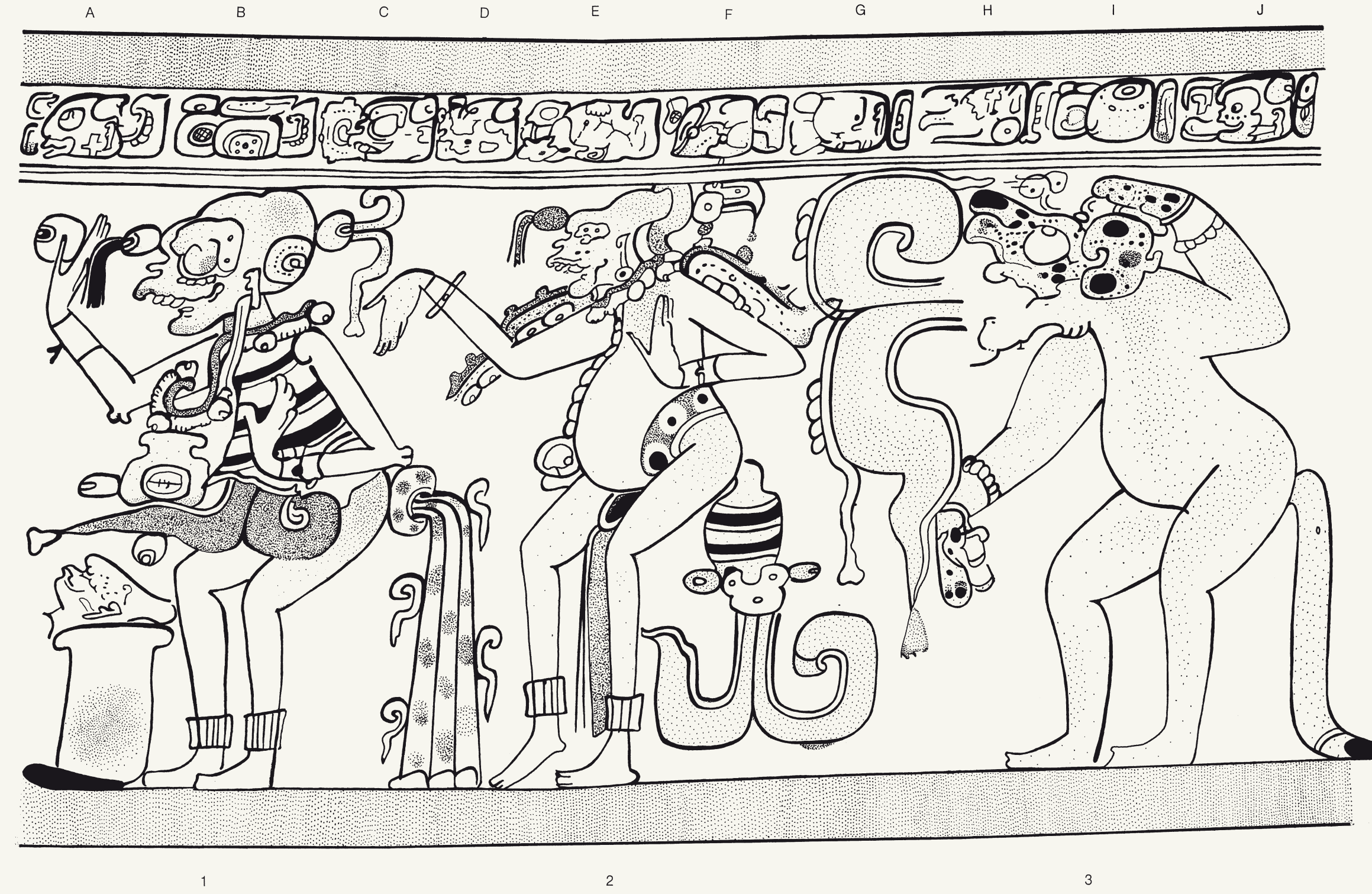
The color scheme on this vase is the same as on Nos. 42-45, although a very different hand is evident. The extremely subtle use of light washes to indicate volumes is typical of painters working in this codex-like style.

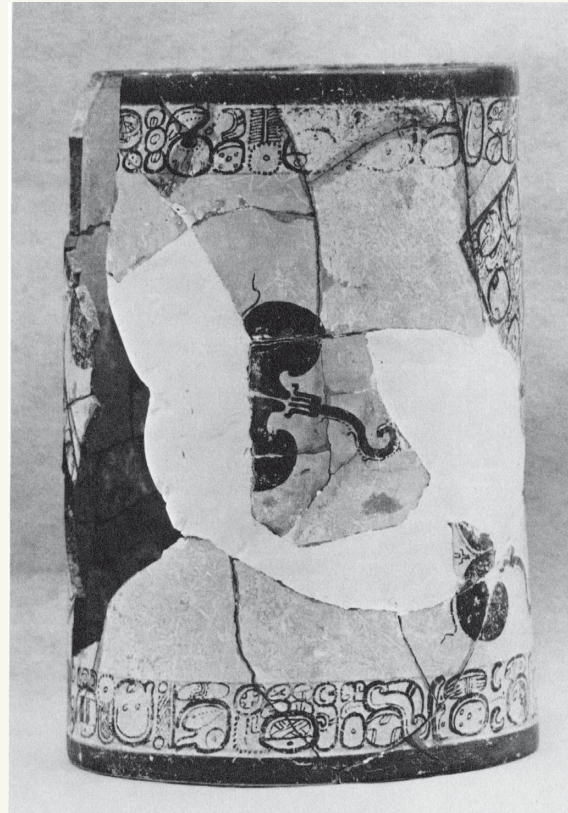
Three gods are dancing with outstretched hands; all three are intimately associated with death and the Underworld. Lying before them is a pedestal bearing the severed head of a young man, toward which they advance. Figure 1 is the familiar Death God (God A) of the Dresden Codex. In this case the skeletonized being has a clearly delineated rib cage from the opening of which curls stylized smoke, colored red. A vessel with some sort of glyph—perhaps Akbal ("Darkness")—hangs pendent from a death collar festooned with death eyes. A death eye with a tassel is fixed to the front and back of the head, and he carries another of these gruesome objects in the right hand. Attached to the buttocks is a rosette with pendent tassel suggesting blood-spattered paper (like the decorations worn by the Aztec Death God, Mictlantecuhtli), bordered by curlicues which resemble excrement as pictured in central Mexican codices.

Figure 2 must be identified with the three winged gods with strangely deformed heads on No. 35. It also has a death collar, and an odd device attached at the buttocks, from which depends the smoke motif.

Winding up the macabre procession is Figure 3, a jaguar deity pensively scratching its pate while the smoke motif curls from its open jaws. The absence of body spots leads me to believe that it cannot be any of the jaguar creatures depicted in the complex tableau of No. 38.

Because the glyphs below the rim band are somewhat hastily executed, there is some uncertainty whether we are dealing with a Primary Standard or Primary Alternative text. Certainly the Initial Sign is absent. Nonetheless, the presence of such familiar glyphs as Wing-Quincunx at B (without the usual prefix), a possible Fish glyph at E, and Monkey at J (minus the Hand prefix) suggests that this might be Primary Standard.





47. Vase in “codex” style, glyphs and “fleurs-de-lis”

Collection: Marianne Favre, Dixon, Illinois
 Provenance: probably Naranjo region, northeastern Petén, Guatemala

Date: first half of ninth century A.D. (Late Classic Period)
 Height: 24.1 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

As is now well known, many or most Maya monuments—particularly stelae—are historical in context. On the other hand, the subject matter of pictorial ceramics seems to be exclusively impersonal and esoteric. No. 47 is an outstanding exception to this rule, for it contains data on a person who once lived at the great Maya center of Naranjo.

Like other vases in the codex style, it is painted in black on a cream-colored background, with red-slipped bands at the rim and base (the latter has fired black in some areas). A horizontal band of glyphs appears below the rim band, and another above the basal band. In addition, two blocks of glyphs, each bordered by a red line, are arranged on the light ground; within a block the glyphs are arranged in two vertical, matching columns. The calligraphic style is remarkably close to that of the Dresden Codex.

In the empty spaces between the glyph blocks are six devices resembling both fleurs-de-lis and tadpoles with wiggly tails (by this time, the ritual importance of the numeral 6 in Underworld iconography should be apparent). These devices, also seemingly in a group of six, appear on the reverse of a vase from the Río Hondo region (Gordon and Mason 1925–43, pl. 47); it will also be recalled that they are attached to the headdresses of the Young Lords of No. 20.

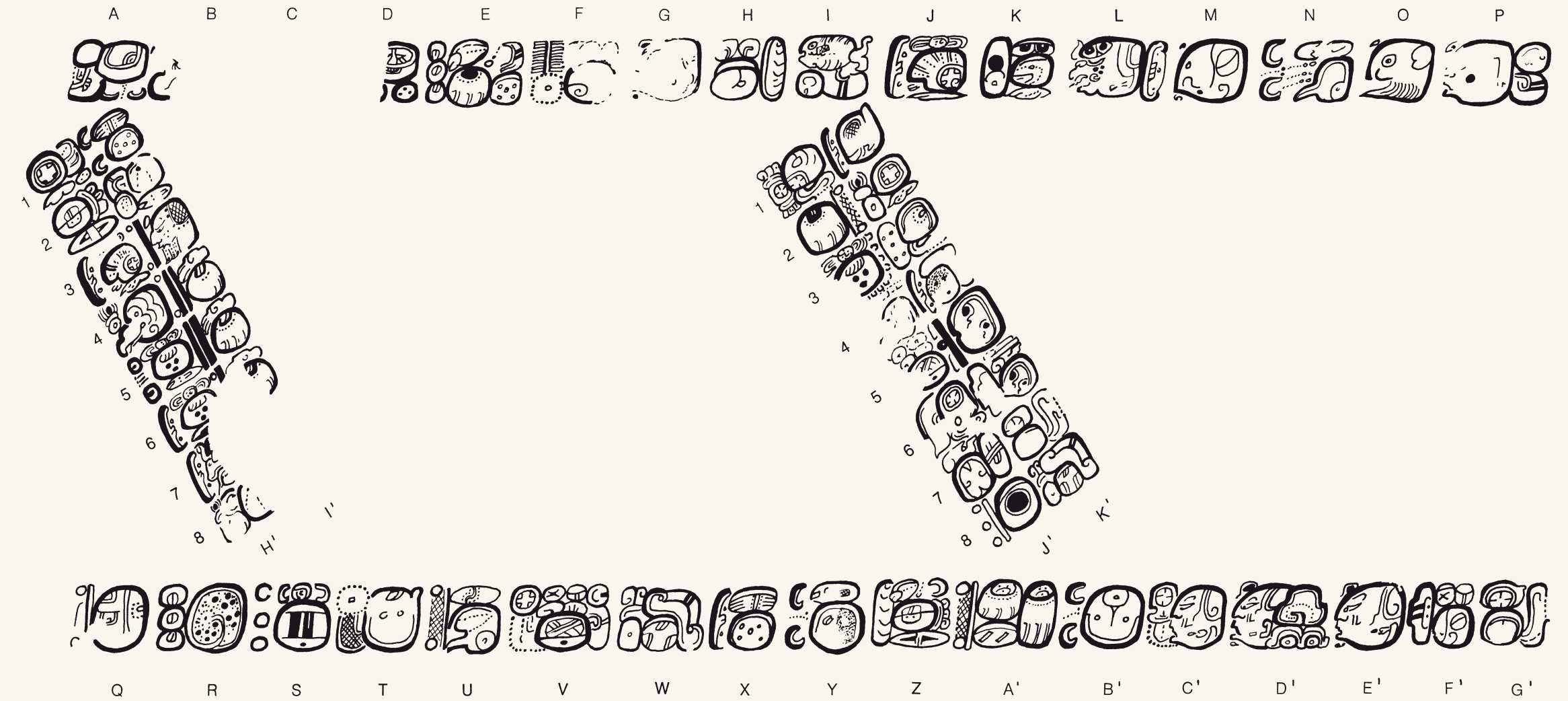
The text on this vase is the longest known for any Maya vessel; before it was broken there would have been sixty-four glyphs altogether. This is a longer text than one finds on many Maya monuments. Before commenting upon it, it will be necessary to transcribe the glyphs into the Thompson system.

Upper band	A	229.617:126 (Initial Sign)
	B	broken (God N?)
	C	broken
	D	683?:178
	E	62.128?:501.585a (Wing-Quincunx?)
	F	51.77:565 (Serpent-segment)
	G	1000 (IL-Face?)
	H	168?:513.188 (Muluc)
	I	738:130 (Fish)
	J	1.145:x:23 (see H'3)
	K	95.504:x:23
	L	x.23 (see H'7)

	M	743
	N	126.x.x
	O	x
	P	1000.130
Lower band	Q	7 Eb
	R	62.578?
	S	3 Katuns
	T	93.672 (Death)
	U	12.x:x (similar to N)
	V	Naranjo Emblem Glyph
	W	59.187?:520 (see K'8)
	X	1.563a:585a (Fire-Quincunx)
	Y	126.82:539?
	Z	188.128?:58?:103 (see H'2)
	A'	12.502:114.502
	B'	126.534
	C'	x.1000b
	D'	1000b.x.510
	F'	16.168:743
	G'	East

First block	H'1	281:23.181:x (see K'2)
	I'1	126.563a:585a (see X)
	H'2	58?:103 (see Z)
	I'2	177.507.82
	H'3	1.145?:x:23 (see J)
	I'3	VII.x (jawless Chicchan)
	H'4	747b (Vulture)
	I'4	XII.78?:501
	H'5	13.145:524.82 (see J'3)
	I'5	X.78?:501
	H'6	1.145:524:?? (see H'5)
	I'6	VII?:78?:501
	H'7	1.x (see L)
	I'7	broken
	H'8	? .507
	I'8	broken

Second block	J'1	184.671[544]:116
	K'1	1.669
	J'2	501.12
	K'2	59.281:23
	J'3	145:524.134 (see H'5, H'6)
	K'3	585a.528:116
	J'4	?
	K'4	1.82?:539?:?
	J'5	Naranjo Emblem Glyph
	K'5	6 Caban
	J'6	115.671[544]:116
	K'6	17?:?:86:526 (Caban)
	J'7	86:521.102
	K'7	East (see G')
	J'8	VIII.511?: (8 Muluc?)
	K'8	59.187:520 (see W)



It is possible to be considerably more certain about the meaning of this particular text than about most of the writing on Maya ceramics. In the upper band, glyphs A through I are part of the usual Primary Standard text. Beginning with J, however, we commence a Secondary Nonrepeat text that probably has specific import for the person for whom this vase was created. It will be readily seen that several glyphs in the two bands are completely or nearly identical with glyphs in the blocks, so that the two groups are related. Thus the glyph at J is repeated at H'3, W is the same as K'8, etc. The combination at K, beginning with the prefix “Black,” is also to be found at Q2 on No. 48.

Of the highest significance to the study of Maya culture is the text in the lower band, which commences with a *tzolkin* day 7 Eb. Joyce Marcus informs me that the only 7 Eb known to her in the monumental inscriptions occurs as the Calendar Round date 7 Eb 10 Zip on a so-called temple stone in the

as-yet-unidentified “Lost City” discovered by the Lambs (Lamb and Lamb 1964, unnumbered plate), presumably somewhere in the Lacandón jungle.

The Naranjo Emblem Glyph occurs at both V and J'5, making it certain that the vase is in some way connected with the history of Naranjo. The personage involved is named at C', D', and possibly also at E'. A search of the Naranjo inscriptions revealed this same lady (for the female determinative, 1000b, is present in both name glyphs) on the reverse of Naranjo Stela 8 (Maler 1908, pl. 23), at E5 and F5. The obverse of that stela shows a male personage holding a spear and trampling a captive, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this lady was his wife or sister.

The Initial Series on the reverse of Stela 8 is the *hotun* ending 9.18.10.0.0 10 Ahau 8 Zac (August 19, A.D. 800), while the Calendar Round on the obverse, 11 Akbal 11 Yaxkin, almost

surely corresponds to an Initial Series date of 9.18.9.14.3, only seventy-seven days before the date on the reverse (Morley 1937-38:138-41). It may be presumed that his wife (or sister) was then a relatively young woman, but probably more than 20 years of age. Turning to our vase, it will be seen that the 3 Katuns expression at S is followed by the 93.672 combination at T, which has been identified by Tatiana Proskouriakoff and Joyce Marcus as a sign connected with a person's death (Joyce Marcus, personal observation).

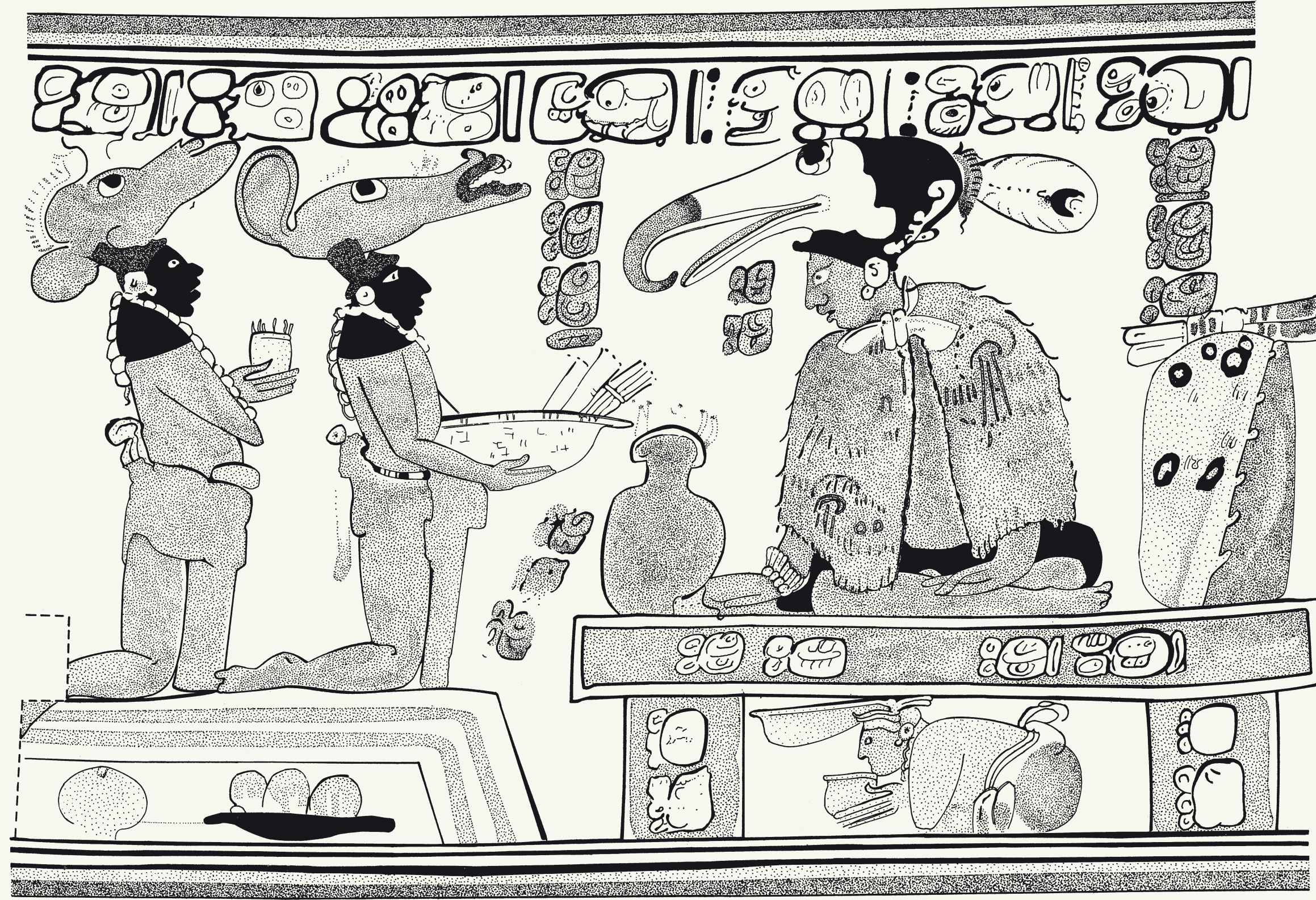
I would thus interpret the lower band as commemorating the death of the Naranjo lady on a day 7 Eb, in the third *katun* of her life (that is, between the ages of 40 and 60 years). So, if she was the young wife of the Stela 8 ruler, or possibly his sister, by the year 800, she would have passed on to her reward in the first half of the ninth century.

It should also be noted that some other glyphs are very fre-

quent at Naranjo, or even unique to that site, for instance, the glyphs at R (Scroll), W and K'8, and F', as well as the “east” expression at G' and K'7.

The columns in the two blocks are hardest of all to interpret. The fragmentary column of pseudodates running from I'3 down through I'6 and possibly even into the glyph below (unfortunately broken) suggests the kind of false Long Count inscriptions that are known on other pots, such as a polychrome vase from highland Guatemala at Dumbarton Oaks, or the famous “Initial Series” Vase from Uuaxactún (Morley 1956, pl. 91).

Finally, it should be stressed that this great vase, like all those in the marvelously refined codex style, affords us a real glimpse into what the myriad and forever lost books of the Classic Maya might have looked like.



48. Polychrome vase, enthroned ruler with two attendants

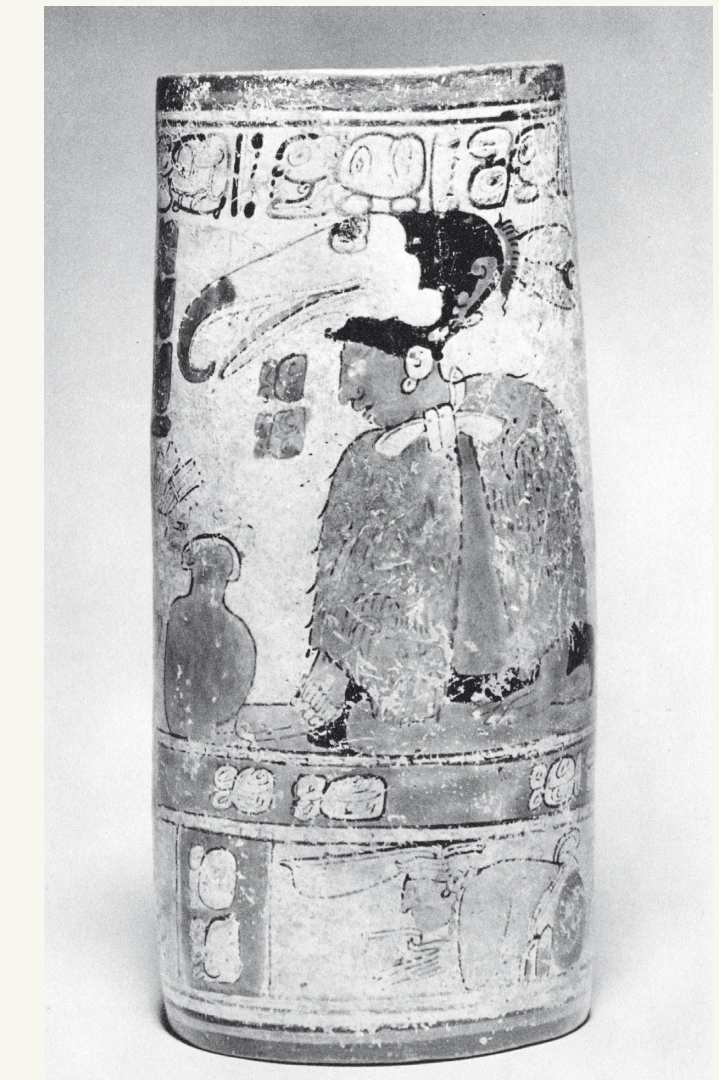
Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 24.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative, Secondary Repeat

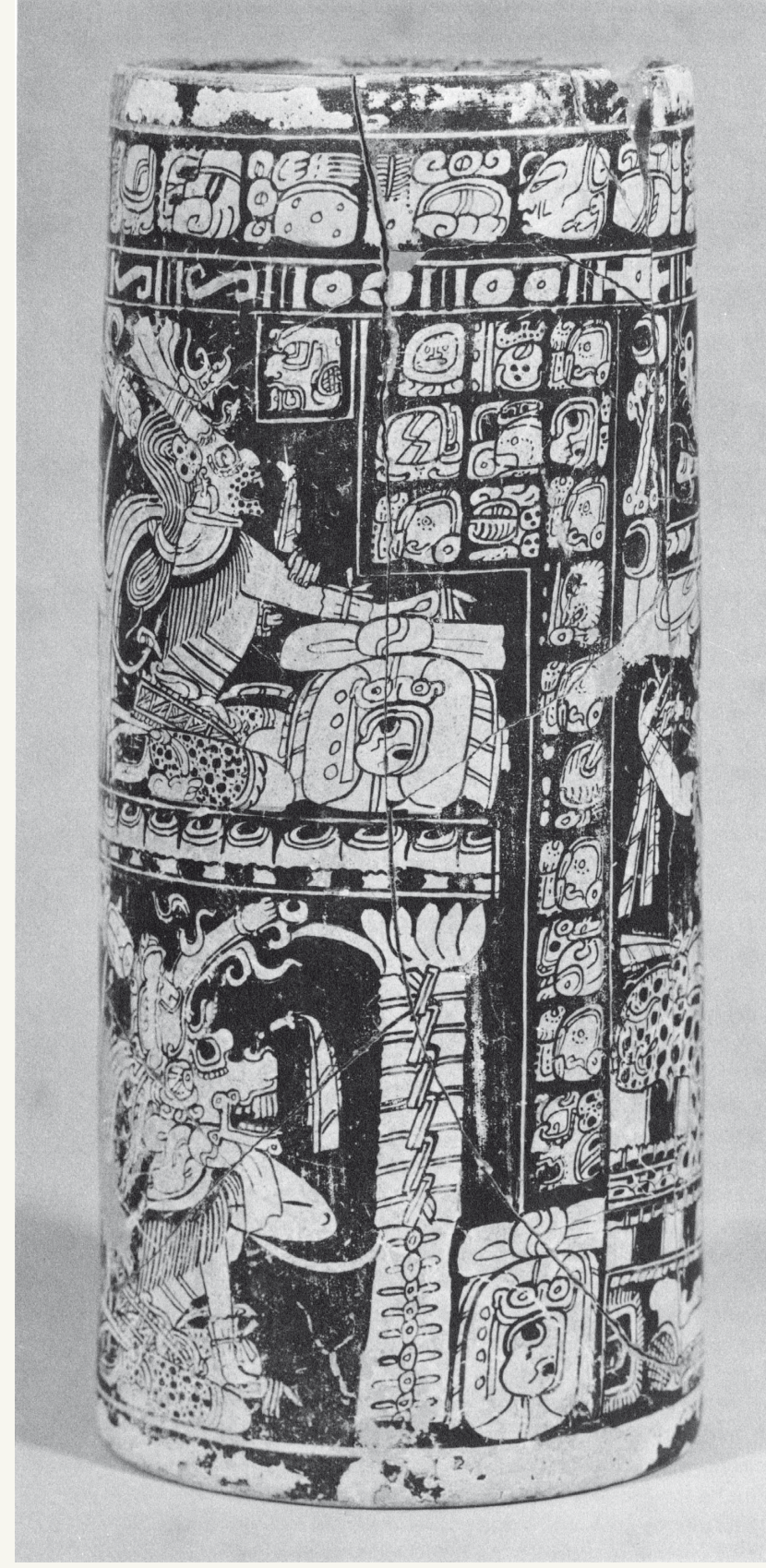
The painting on this tall, narrow vase is carried out in black and various shades of red and orange on a white background. While not in the monochrome codex style, it is so delicately executed as to suggest that the artist was closely allied to that school of painters.

The scene is dominated by Figure 3, an extraordinary personage with feathered cape (painted a purplish-pink, with red and black details) tied at the throat; he sports a gigantic bird-mask headdress which recalls the flamboyant headgear worn by some of the actors in the Bonampak murals. He is seated upon a simple throne, faced with Secondary Repeat glyphs, below which crouches a reduced, subordinate figure holding a bowl. On one end of the throne is a jaguar-skin bundle, and on the other a necked jar with indications of foam or vapor at the mouth.

Figures 1 and 2 are kneeling retainers, one offering a wide basket in which codices may be stacked, and the other holding a small vase containing stick-like objects (brush pens?). Their faces and shoulders are painted black, and they wear animal-mask headdresses again invoking the Bonampak wall paintings, but the "Mickey Mouse" ears seem unique. Beneath and in front of the platform on which they kneel are two offerings, one a shallow bowl with round objects, perhaps tamales, but the other is not clear enough for identification.

The text of the glyph band below the rim is Primary Alternative, and consists of a series of large-eyed death glyphs with prefixes. It is remarkably similar to the text of No. 44 and might be the product of the same scribal school. Secondary Repeat glyphs are found in the scene; the main sign on these and on the throne seems to be 682 (Moon), with a prefix like those on some of the glyphs in the Primary Alternative text.





49. Vase of the Seven Gods

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: possibly Guatemala highlands, but more likely to be from the northern Petén
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 27.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

In spite of its supposed origin in the northern highlands of Guatemala, the style of the glyphs in the Primary Standard text leads me to believe that it was painted in the same region as No. 47 and one other vase (red and orange on white, with richly attired dancers) in the Marianne Favre collection, and that all three may have come from the same grave lot at an unknown site in the northeastern Petén.

This unusually tall and slender cylinder is painted in black on a white-slipped ground in a true negative or reserve technique that did not involve the use of a resist substance. After the entire design had been drawn by a fine brush pen, background areas were filled in with black. A band of blue-painted stucco once encircled the vessel rim, with another at the base. Although somewhat different from the codex style, the skill and fine hand of the painter would suggest that he, also, was principally engaged in the preparation of books.

Because this is one of the most important Maya vases, not just for its artistic excellence but also for its iconography and text, an extended commentary is in order. We have here a hierarchically arranged palace scene in which seven gods are brought into relationship with one another, and, as shall be seen, each god is identified by his own glyph. In some respects, and without exaggerating, this is more information on ancient Maya deities than we get in the Dresden Codex, which is not concerned with hierarchies.

The scene is set off from the Primary Standard text above it by a so-called sky band consisting of repetitions of five signs: Imix (501), Crossed-bands, Kan-Cross, Infinity Sign, and Venus. Probably all these signs are planets, stars, or asterisms and indicate the night sky since the black background shows that the scene takes place in darkness.

Figure 1. On the right is Figure 1, seated upon a jaguar throne under a swagged curtain and definitely the most important deity in the group. The cigar stuck at a jaunty angle in his mouth, his aged appearance, and the Moan-bird headdress show him to be God L. This sinister bird has its own headdress, mainly consisting of the sign IX Sky (IX-561, Bolon Caan). Covering the ear is a device which probably is signifi-

cant in God L's identification, while above is affixed a jaguar ear, shared with Figure 2 and indicating the Underworld affiliation of God L. Certain costume features are held in common with the other six figures: (1) a device like a bird's wing at the brow; (2) a long nose-tassel; (3) a shoulder cape with long fringe; (4) a heavy belt, suspiciously similar to the yokes worn by ball players, decorated with the Crossed-bands motif; (5) a kilt of spotted jaguar skin. It will be noted that the belt and kilt are identical with those worn by the two demonic executioners on No. 42.

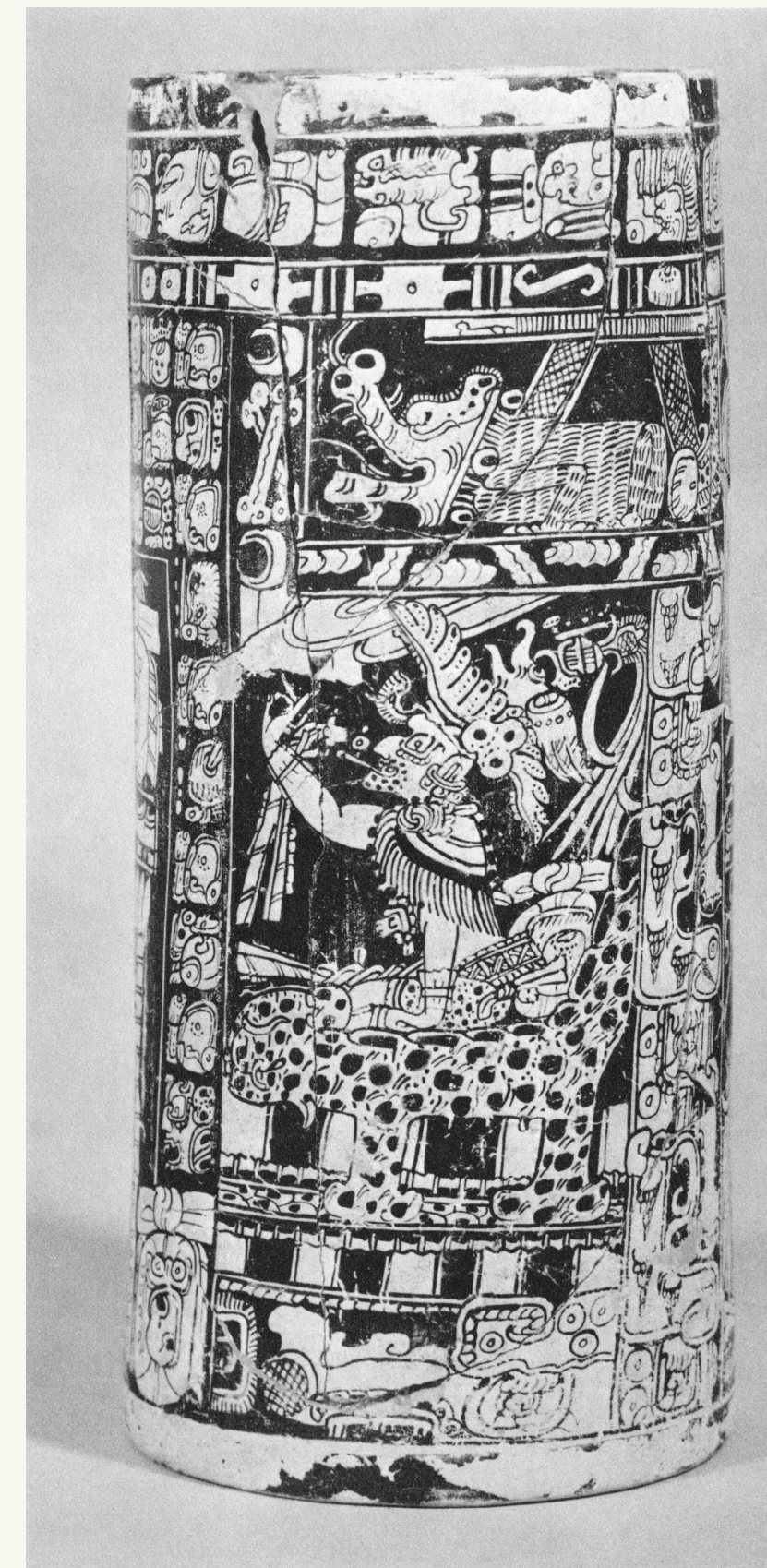
Behind God L is one of three bundles which play a prominent role in the drama. Partly obscured by God L's belt is the well-known Imix-Comb-Imix combination (501.25:501), which Kelley (1962b) believes to be a title and reads as *ba-ca-b(a)*, but which Proskouriakoff (1968) feels is more likely to indicate the end of a statement. In this particular example the Kelley interpretation seems more appropriate.

That God L rules in the Underworld is indicated by the crossed bones and death eyes which appear upper left; by the weird, peccary-like animal with death collar above him—possibly a constellation; and by the vertebrae which support his throne. At the right of him and below are four heads of the jawless reptilian Cauac Monster, a rain deity whose head also appears in No. 45.

Figure 2. Figures 2 through 7 are separated from God L by a vertical glyph column and are arranged in two groups of three each, divided by a horizontal band of death eyes. Presumably they decrease in importance from right to left since they face God L and indicate subservience to him by their gestures. On the other hand, it is not clear whether those on top are more powerful than those below; possibly, the vertical arrangement only signifies different layers of the Underworld.

Before Figure 2 is another bundle, on which he rests one hand; an identical bundle is to be found at the bottom of the glyph column. On both is the compound IX Star-Earth (IX.510:526), a glyph which appears at D2 on Panel 1 of a carved vase from Palenque (Ruz 1952, fig. 14). Figure 2 is the Jaguar God of the Underworld, an aged god with a Roman nose, large eye, and filed upper incisors, traits he shares with all the others except Figures 1 and 5. Around his mouth are jaguar spots, and a jaguar's ear is fixed over his own. Behind his headdress, to which is attached the jawless head of a reptilian creature, Figure 2's hair flows down in a long, bound hank, surmounted by the Decorated Ahau device.

Many representations of the Jaguar God of the Underworld show him with a twisted element over the nose, but this is lacking here and is not universal. Rather, his distinctive feature is the hank of hair, as seen on the shield in the Temple



of the Sun at Palenque, and on the front of the waistband of the deity shown on Stela I at Copán. The Jaguar God of the Underworld appears as the paddler on one of the incised bones from Tikal (Trik 1963, fig. 4), and in the act of spearing a reptilian fish on a remarkable polychrome vase at Dumbar-ton Oaks. In infantile form, he is the central personage in the sacrificial scene of No. 45. An association with the day Akbal ("Darkness" or "Night") and war seems well founded since the Akbal glyph substitutes for the god's face on war shields shown on Classic Maya monuments. He also appears as patron of the month Uo (cf. Uotan, a highland Maya god of the Underworld), and of the numeral 7.

Other representations on the monuments include Stelae 1 and 4 at Yaxchilán (where the god's head peers down on the scene below from a sky band or from a star), and Piedras Negras Stela 5, in which he emerges from the eye of the Cauac monster and is associated with other Underworld figures such as the Death God, Monkey, and a quetzal-like bird with the head of the Jaguar God of the Underworld.

Figure 3 and 4. Several Maya gods are characterized by the absence of a mandible, accompanied by tongue-like extensions curling down from the upper jaw. Two of these appear on this vase as Figures 3 and 4, and so will be treated together. The tongue extension of Figure 3 is almost a quill-like device, and lacks the spiral at the corner of the mouth of Figure 4. The quill looks suspiciously like the perforators used in the penis sacrifice on the Huehuetenango Vase; the same object appears over the loins of Figure 1 on the Altar Vase (Adams 1971, fig. 92). I am fairly confident that this god is the patron deity of the month Pax and the seventh of the Nine Lords of the Night in the Glyph G series (Thompson 1950:115-6, 209-10); in front of the face is usually what Thompson calls the three-circles-and-a-bundle glyph. A particularly fine representation of the god is incised twice on a Tikal bone (Trik 1963, figs. 1, 2). The similarity of the headdress of Figure 3 to that of Figure 4 (both have a single spire of jaguar skin and a feather ruff at the back) again demonstrates their interconnection, but Figure 3 is distinguished by the god's head at front surmounted by a trident-like object.

Figure 4 has a much more curving tongue extension with a spiral at the corner. This being is more likely the "1058 God" (his head appears as glyph 1058 in the Thompson catalogue), one of the patron deities in the Venus Tables of the Dresden Codex. Over his ear he wears a trident device, and he has a spiral object fixed to the front of his headdress, surmounted by glyph 617 adorned by what look like jade beads.

Figure 5. I can think of no other representation of Figure 5, a monstrous deity with an animal's skull for a head. For headdress he wears the jawless head of a reptilian deity, topped by the Decorated Ahau motif.

Figure 6. One can deal on a higher level of confidence with Figure 6, for this god occurs with some frequency on the monumental sculpture of the Classic Maya. The barbel-like whiskers around the mouth, the shell covering the ear, the Triadic motif (or at least two-thirds of it) in the headdress, along with the Sun God features of eye, nose, and mouth, identify this as Gl of the Palenque Triad (cf. No. 45), a group of deities that occur together in some of the Palenque inscriptions (Berlin 1963); in these texts, Gl is shown by his head (Thompson's glyph 1011). He is presented in fullest form as the standing figure of Stela I at Copán, with his belt adorned with the gods of Figures 2 and 4.

Figure 7. Wearing exactly the same headdress as Figure 5 is Figure 7, but he exhibits only the face of a Roman-nosed god with filed incisors, without any other distinguishing traits.

The text. Beginning with A in the glyph band near the rim is a clearly drawn Primary Standard text (obviously by the same hand that painted the text on No. 47), as follows:

- A 229.617:126 (Initial Sign)
- B 45 (or 331).843? (Step)
- C 61.77:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- D 53.77:565 (Serpent-segment)
- E 1000b (L-Face)
- F 168?:513.188(or 56) (Muluc)
- G 738:130 (Fish)
- H 109.758:110 (Rodent Bone)
- I 220.755 (Hand-Monkey)
- J 1.757:116 (Kan-Rodent)
- K 12.x:1041?
- L 1010b?.184
- M x:592?.751a:x
- N 126.168:513:x

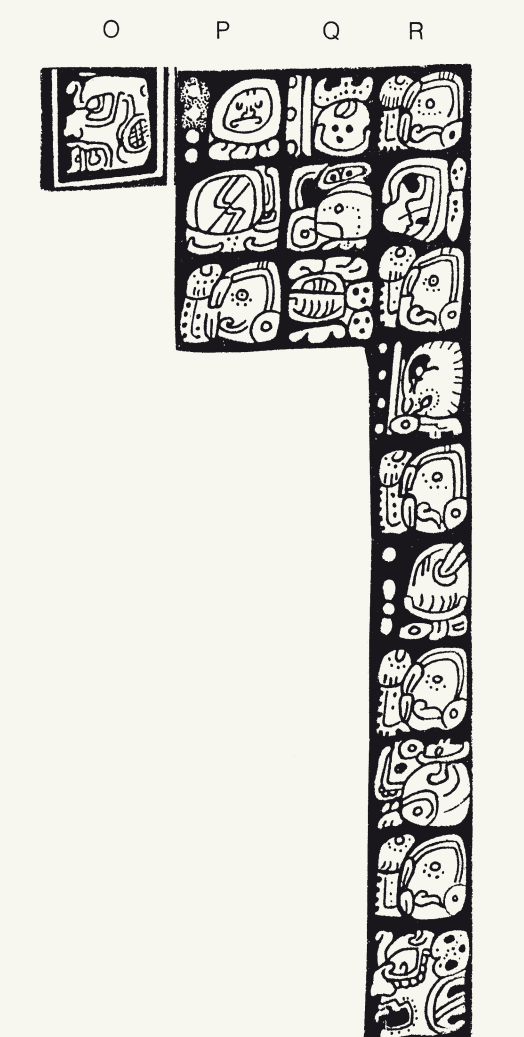
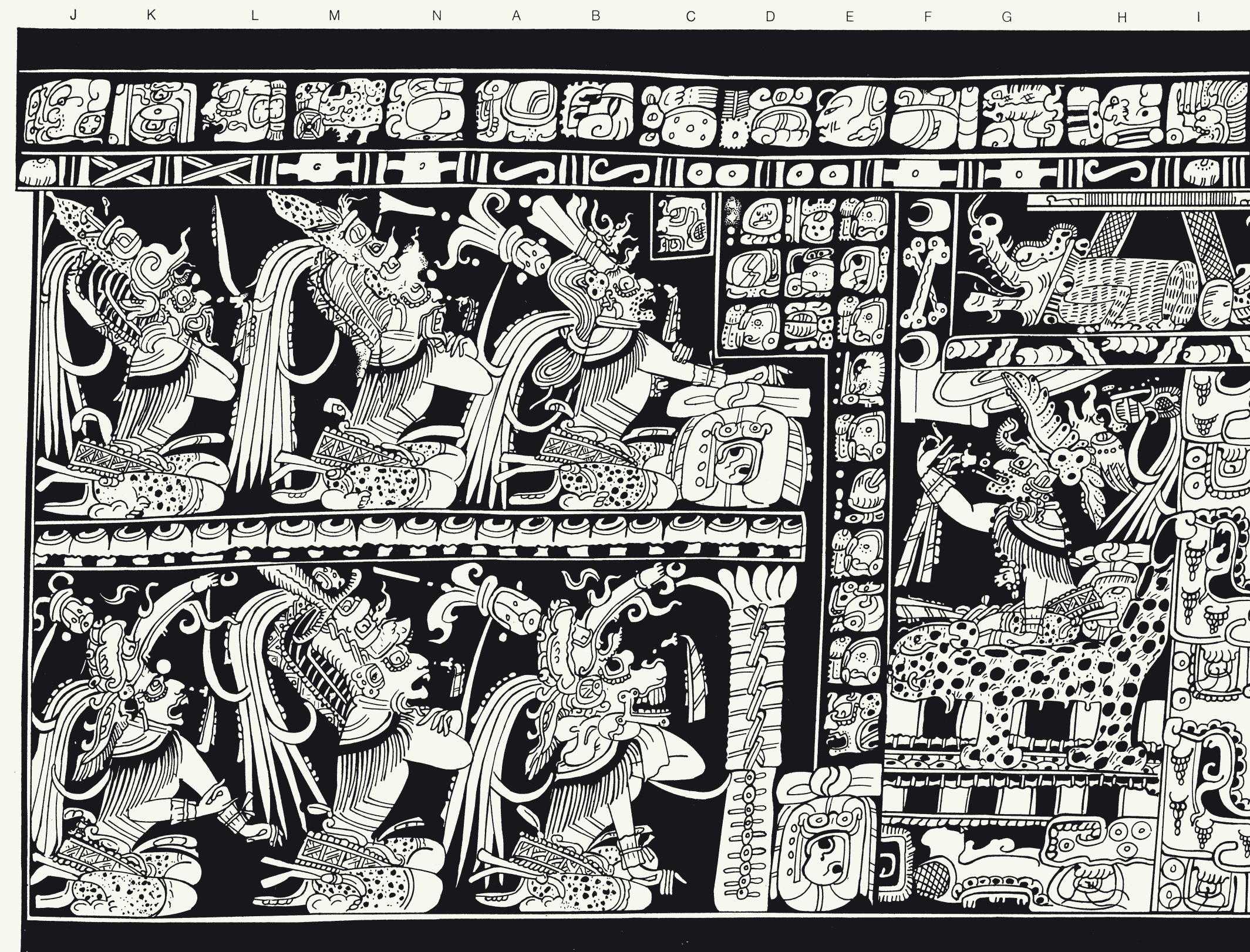
Possibly the last four glyphs contain information unique to this vase or its owner; even so, they cannot be deciphered.

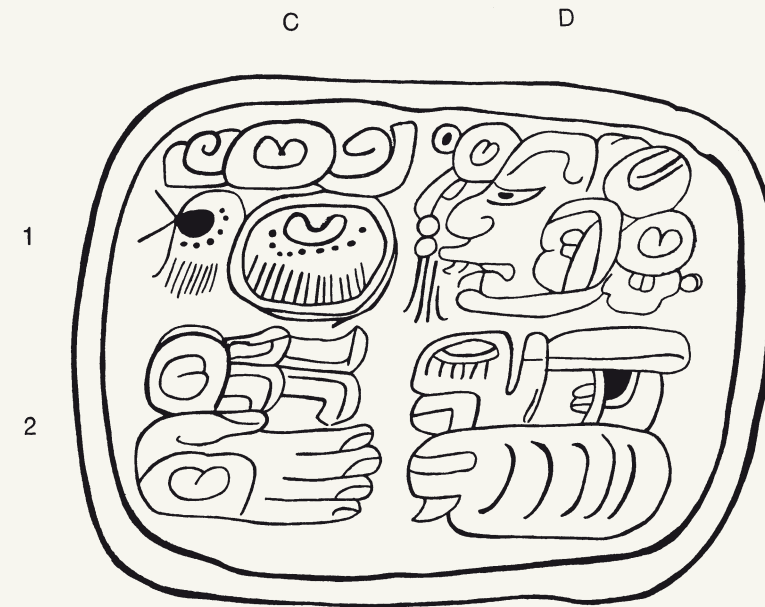
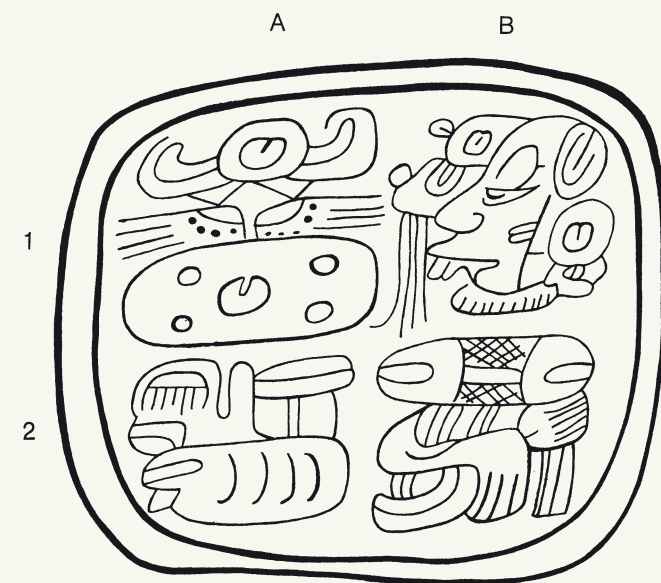
Of the highest significance to the study of Maya writing and iconography is the Secondary Nonrepeat text arranged in columns between God L and his six subordinates. It opens at P1-Q1 with the Calendar Round 4 Ahau 8 Cumku, a date which marks the beginning of time for the ancient Maya; we thus have a scene which takes place at the dawn of creation. This is followed at P2 by the glyph 573:126.181. Thompson (1950:161-2) has suggested the reading *hel*, "change" or "rotation of office," for the main sign of this glyph. At Q2 is the glyph 95.504:x:23, also found at K on No. 47, and which (whatever its meaning might be) opens with the signs for black and darkness.

The glyph for God C (with so-called water prefix) can be found in this text six times: at P3, R1, R3, R5, R7, and R9. Each time the God C head is followed by one other glyph, which is in a sense "introduced" by God C. John Graham (1971) has appropriately suggested that God C head with "water" prefix might be a title like dignitary or lord. A seventh glyph is located at O, but without God C preceding. One such sign, at R4, is the well-known glyph for the god Bolon Yocte (IX.765:87). Without stretching the evidence, it may be presumed that the other six glyphs are also names of gods, and that all seven pertain to the seven deities shown on the vase.

I think it fairly obvious that R10 is the name glyph for Figure 2, the Jaguar God of the Underworld, and that O (1058) pertains to Figure 4, the "1058 God." This leaves five other glyphs to be matched to deities. Unfortunately, the glyph for Bolon Yocte is little help. According to Thompson (1950:56), the name of this "rather obscure deity" means "9 strides"; he is patron of the Katun 11 Ahau in the Chumayel, Perez, and Kaua manuscripts, all from colonial Yucatán, and is mentioned in connection with the second year of Tizimin prophecies. On page 60 of the Dresden Codex, Bolon Yocte's glyph appears with that of God N above a scene showing God N being attacked by two enemies, neither of whom looks in the least like any of the gods on our vase.

The main sign of the glyph at Q3 is 561, "Sky," while that of R2 (the next god sign) is 526, "Earth." I have the feeling that Q3 can be assigned to Figure 1, God L, on the basis of the Sky glyph that appears above the Moan bird in his headdress, but I would hesitate to make any identification for R2. Similarly, little can now be done to tie R6 and R8, glyphs which incidentally are unknown in the monuments or codices, to the residual five deities. Future research and possibly the discovery of additional pictorial ceramics will, it is hoped, throw light on these exciting problems.





50. Incised brown ware tripod

Collection: Brooklyn Museum, New York
 Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
 Date: Early Classic Period, Tzakol 3 Phase (sixth century A.D.)
 Height: 21.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

51. Tripod vase with excised glyphs

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
 Date: Early Classic Period, Tzakol 3 Phase (sixth century A.D.)
 Height: 13.0 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat

Incised and Carved Vases



An excellent example of Early Classic funerary ceramics, the shape of this slab-footed tripod shows the strong influence from the contemporary city of Teotihuacán, in the central Mexican highlands, a site which probably dominated much of the Maya area at this time. Many vessels of this sort come equipped with lids, but none was found with this specimen.

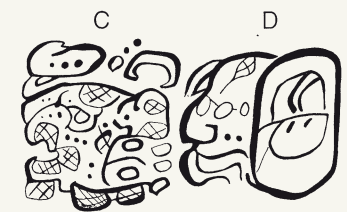
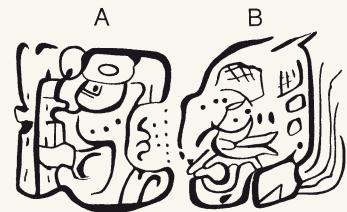
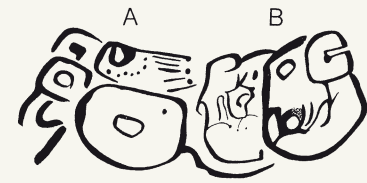
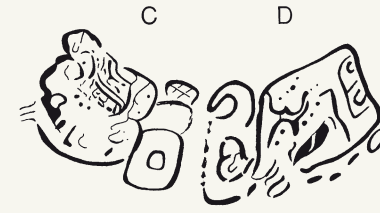
The text was incised within two cartouches before firing, when the vessel was leather-hard; the instrument was probably a pointed obsidian blade lashed to a shaft. From the existence of the Wing-Quincunx combination (61.77:585) at A1 and the Rodent Bone sign (110:x) at B2, it is obvious that the Primary Standard sequence was in use, even a very truncated form as seen in this vase, by the Early Classic Period. In fact, Late Formative reliefs show that it was known as early as the time of Christ.

The heads at B1 and D1 are virtually identical and are marked with the Muluc sign on the cheek. They might well be the Hero Twins, but I would be cautious about such an identification. Another pair of indistinguishable glyphs is at A2 and D2; neither main sign nor affix occurs in the Thompson catalogue. The main sign of C2 is 713a, but I cannot identify its affix.

T-shaped slab feet support this vase. A wide band at the rim and another at the base are covered with a burnished dark-brown slip. Between them, encircling the vessel, is an area that has been left unpolished; it was intentionally roughened while the clay was still damp, with something like a corncob.

Excised into this roughened area are two large, identical glyphs, giving a feeling of great simplicity and power to the vase. Red pigment was later rubbed into the excised areas. Each glyph consists of the bar-and-dot numeral VIII, followed by a circle, which might be the day sign Muluc. This glyph combination appears at J'8 in the second glyph block on No. 47, and similar Muluc-like main signs appear with the numeral IX on No. 8 and 9. Needless to say, their significance remains unknown.





52. Cream ware vase with lid

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: northern Petén or southern Campeche
 Date: Early Classic Period, Tzakol 3 Phase (sixth century A.D.)
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard (?) on lid, Primary Alternative on vase

The cylindrical, or nearly cylindrical, vase with this kind of lid is eloquent testimony to the extent of Teotihuacán influence in the central Maya area during the latter half of the Early Classic. Both vase and lid have been covered with a cream slip through which glyphs were incised before firing.

The text is arranged in pairs of glyphs: two pairs on the lid, and three on the vase. I assume that the lid text is Primary Standard, since A is the Wing-Quincunx glyph (61.77:585), B is 568a, with an unknown prefix. Some kind of animal head is the main sign at C, with 59 postfix, while D is the familiar Rodent (758a) with a possible 229 prefix.

On the other hand, no surely Primary Standard glyphs appear on the vase other than at E. I would transcribe its text (the actual starting point of which is not known) as follows:

A	184?1010?	D	1019.679
B	Moan bird:130	E	?87.515:530?83
C	128:751 (Jaguar)	F	x:534.168:743

Part of the difficulty in identifying these glyphs is that the scribe used his stylus in a forceful but somewhat sketchy manner. My guess is that the vase text contains a name, or possibly three names (we know that individuals in Yucatán had double names derived from both father and mother). The 168:743 combination might be an Emblem Glyph, even though it lacks the "water" prefix.

53. Carved vase in Chocholá style, throne scene

Collection: André Emmerich, Inc., New York
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche, Mexico
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 14.9 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Repeat
 Photograph courtesy André Emmerich



This carved brown vase is one of the most elegant known. A sumptuous throne scene takes place beneath a swagged curtain, as though in a theater proscenium. Seated in a posture unusual for the Maya is a ruler who holds in his left hand a strange fringed object. His headdress is the head of a gigantic vulture, the bare, wrinkled skin clearly delineated; through the bird's nostril is thrust a sting-ray spine, the ancient instrument of ritual bloodletting.

The kneeling figure to the left has a spangled turban very much like that worn by the dancing individual of No. 30, and holds out in one hand a flaring bowl with inset rim. To the right of the scene is a rectilinear frame, perhaps a structure of some kind, within which a disembodied hand holds an object of inexplicable form and function.

On the reverse of the vase is a two-column Primary Standard text of tremendous elegance, incised by a master of calligraphy. It may be transcribed as follows:

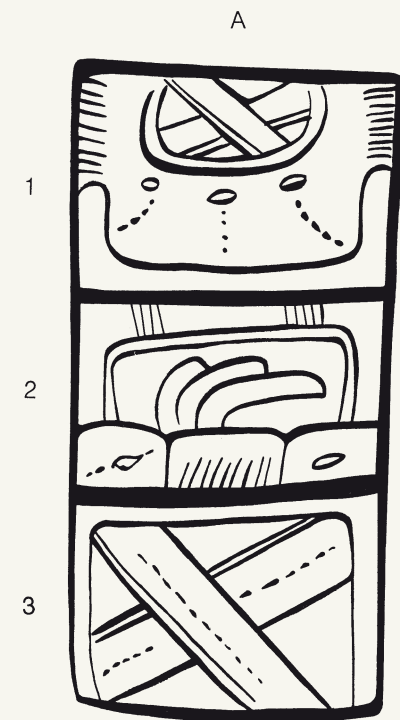
A1	229.617:x (Initial Sign)
B1	1014.88 (God N)
A2	61.76:585a (Wing-Quincunx)
B2	245.1000a.87 (IL-Face)
A3	122.738 (Fish)
B3	19?:632:x
A4	109.1047 (Red [or Great]-death)
B4	x.561 (Sky)

The "Infinity Sign" at B3 is a rare glyph, mainly known in the codices where it may receive a color designation; its significance is unknown.

A minute Secondary Repeat text is found on a small raised panel before the ruler's head. Its prefix seems to be the same as that with B4.

Over the entire panel scene red hematite pigment has been rubbed in or coated on. It has rubbed off the raised areas, however. There are also traces of blue-painted stucco on the reverse.





54. Carved vase in Chocholá style, two Young Lords

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Chocholá or Maxcanú, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 20.6 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative (sky band)

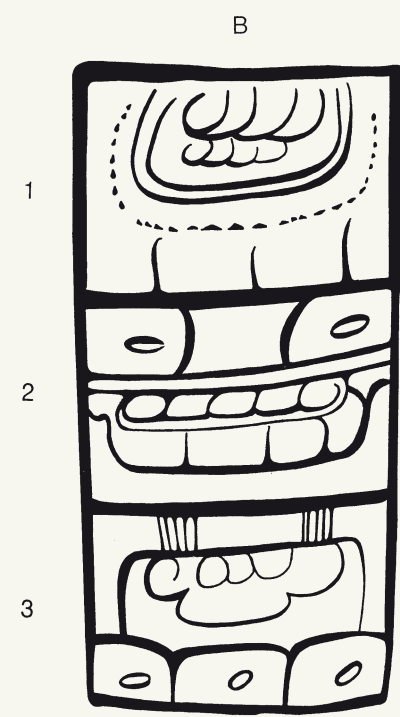
Sites near Chocholá and Maxcanú, respectively 30 and 65 kilometers southwest of Mérida, Yucatán, have produced a group of spectacular vases carved in a uniform style, in a light- to dark-brown ware which occasionally might be gray or blackish. The vast majority are cylindrical in shape, and some have post-fire paint. Vessels in this style are reported from as far afield as Jaina Island (No. 55) and Peto, Yucatán (Gordon and Mason 1925-34, pl. 45), but all must have been manufactured in the Chocholá area.

This particular vase shows the Young Lords theme, two young men seated upon cushions or low thrones. In this instance they are rather plainly attired, with hair bound up simply and no headdress or sandals. Both are placed in a recessed panel in which a swagged curtain can be seen in an upper corner. One holds a flaring bowl with a cut-out depression near the rim, a kind of object seen in other Chocholá vases.

The panels are set off from each other by two vertical columns of boldly incised glyphs which are confined within rectangles. All six glyphs appear to be variants of well-known elements within the sky band, a collection of astral glyphs which often frames a scene on monuments as well as in the codices. A1 would appear to be 561c, a variant of the Sky glyph which is rather common in the codices. More problematical is A2, but it has elements reminding one of the God C glyph (1016) which also crops up in sky bands. A3 is the familiar Crossed-bands glyph; Thompson (1962:168) notes that it is particularly frequent in celestial bands.

In the other column, B1 would appear to unite elements of the Cauac (528) glyph with Imix (501), B2 again suggests the Sky glyph, while B3 looks like another variation on the God C theme.

Red hematite pigment has been applied to both panels and to the glyph columns, setting them off from the light surrounding areas.



55. Carved vase in Chocholá style, ruler and subordinate

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Chocholá, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 17.3 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

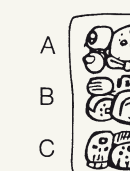
The reverse side of this dark-brown vase had been covered with stucco on which traces of pink overpainting can be seen.

In a single panel with stepped sides, a young ruler is seated cross-legged upon a cushion, backed by a cartouche-like screen. A fish nibbles at a flower of his water-lily headdress, from which stream down feathers from two kinds of birds. Over his chest he wears a jade necklace, apparently tied at the back of the neck with a rope.

His cigar-smoking companion has a spiral headdress of jaguar skin. Strung from a rope or cord around his neck is a curious pectoral recalling the pendant worn by the subordinate figure on a famous relief from Jonuta (Kelemen 1943, pl. 78b).

The main inscription is on the reverse, a single column of five incised glyphs making up a Primary Standard text. At A is the Moon Sign A combination (13.682:18?) which often substitutes for the Initial Sign on Chocholá vases. This is followed at B by Wing-Quincunx (61.77:585a). At C is Spotted-Kan (59.507:60); at D, Worm-bird; and at E, Fish (738:130).

In a raised panel between the ruler and the other figure is a short Secondary Nonrepeat text with three incised glyphs. At A is an Imix combination (13.501:60) known only on Chocholá vases and in inscriptions from Yucatán. At Chichén Itzá it appears as Glyph A1 in a lintel on the Akab Dzib, which also shows a ruler on a throne (Maudslay 1889-1902, 3, pl. 19), and I feel it is some sort of title. The other two glyphs in the vase panel can be interpreted similarly. The combination 74:528.513 which occurs at B is again common on Chocholá vessels; in the monumental inscriptions, Thompson (1950:251) reads this glyph as "the count of the year," but in its present context this makes little sense. On the Initial Series Vase from Uaxactún, it is placed near the ruler's head in such a way as to suggest that it is a name or title, and this seems to be its function here. Finally, at C we have the Imix-Comb-Imix glyph (501.25:501) which again seems to be a title, at least on Maya pottery. Whether this group of epithets was applied to a god, a god-hero, or to a real person depends upon to which of these categories the main figure on the vase can be assigned.





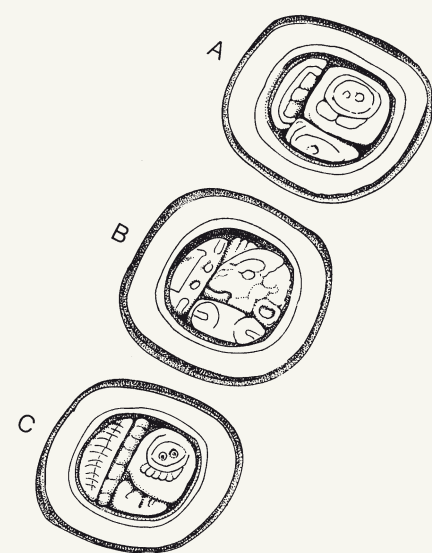
56. Carved vase in Chocholá style, God L seated

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Chocholá, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

There is no trace of red pigment on this carved brown vessel, but very fine purplish rootlet marks (also found on other Chocholá-style vessels) can be seen over much of the surface.

God L is seated cross-legged, apparently resting his back against a jaguar-skin bundle. He wears the usual feather-and-Moan-bird headdress, and the head of the bird itself has an ornament like that surmounting the IX Sky device in No. 49. On his back is a long cape embellished with the turtle-shell design. As in so many depictions of God L, he puffs on a cigar that emits stylized smoke.

In God L's left hand is a knobbed object similar to one displayed by Figure 27 on No. 37 (Vase of the Thirty-one Gods). With his right hand he is in the act of lifting from a basket the head of God K, possibly after this deity has been sacrificed. Typical features of God K that can be seen here are (1) the upturned upper lip or snout, which becomes baroquely branched in the codices; (2) the curlicue at the corner of the mouth; (3) the large god eye; (4) the curious forehead, which looks like glyph 617 turned on its side; (5) the tube poked through the head, from which smoke streams. The identity of this divinity has long puzzled Maya specialists. Seler (1902–23, 1:367–89) concluded, from a study of the New Year ceremonies in the Dresden, that God K was the god Bolon Dzacab mentioned by Landa in the same context, but this solves little since we know nothing of the function of Bolon Dzacab or even what the meaning of his strange name (Nine Matrilineages) might be. In an unpublished study I have hypothesized that God K iconographically and functionally is the same as the great deity Tezcatlipoca ("Smoking Mirror")



of central Mexico, who also was snake-footed. I have reason to believe that the forehead device is actually a mirror seen in three-quarters view, and that the smoking tube (probably of bone, as in representations of Tezcatlipoca) is there to identify this as a mirror that gives off smoke.

Of course, if we could make a similar cross-cultural identification between God L and some central Mexican god, we might know what this scene really meant. Certainly God K is only infrequently met with on pictorial ceramics, and so if he is Tezcatlipoca and thus associated with such concepts as the night sky and war, he is not really an Underworld deity.

The only text occurs on the reverse, in a rectangular frame set at an angle, decorated with scrolls. The glyphs, incised and carved within cartouches, are similar in style to those on the famous Peto Vase. There are only three of them. At the top is 1.682:18?, the Moon Sign A combination which substitutes for the Initial Sign on some Primary Standard texts. Below it is x.758:110 (Rodent Bone). This drastically truncated text ends with Moon Sign B, 12.682:x, a combination that occurs on other Chocholá vases.



57. Vase in Chocholá style, young man with water-lily

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: probably Chocholá area, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 15.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

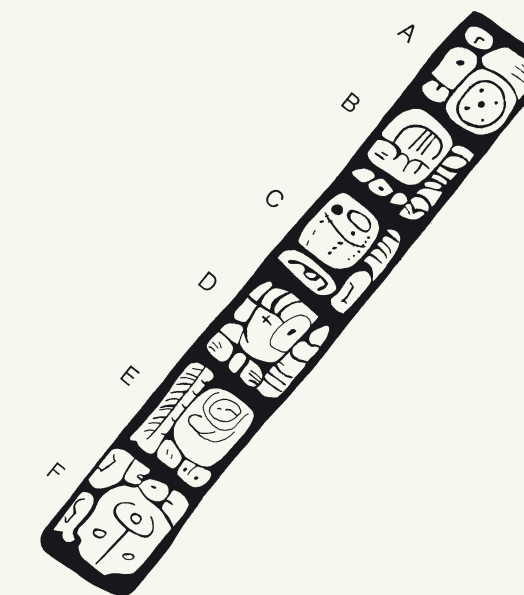
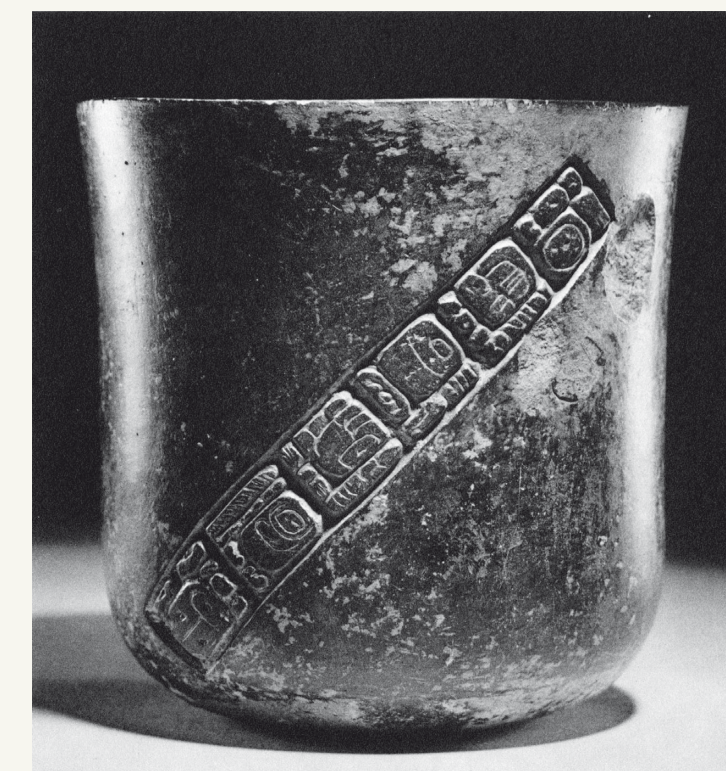
Within a simple square panel on this dark-brown vase, a young ruler flourishes a wand, ending in a broad water-lily blossom, above a tilted object which appears to be a basket. His hair is bound up, and a feather rosette is placed at the back of the head. Like God L on No. 56, he holds a small object in his left hand.

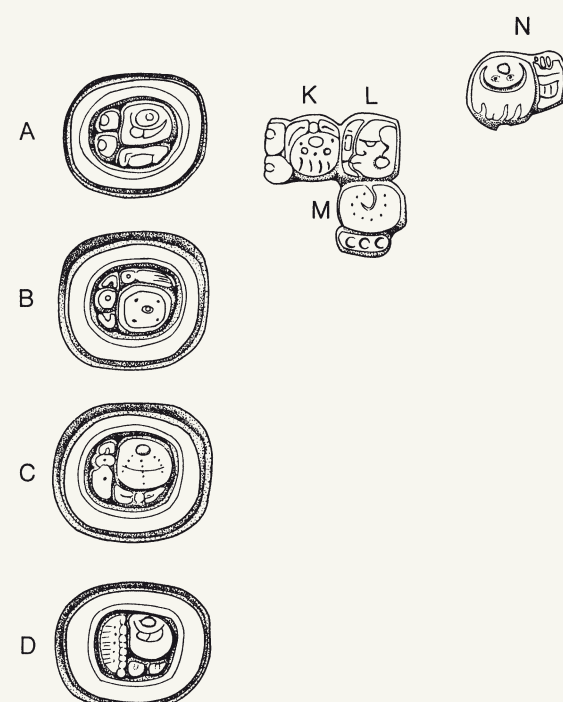
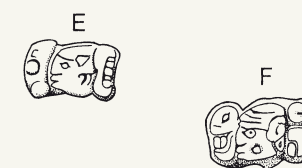
On the reverse side is the usual Primary Standard text, carved and incised within a rectangular band that is inclined at a 45° angle to the vertical. It may be transcribed:

- A 61.76:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- B 565:61.x (Serpent-segment)
- C 507:7.130? (Spotted-Kan)
- D x.x:74.188?
- E 12.683:129? (Moon Sign B)
- F x.62:534 (Inverted-Ahau)

Above and to the right of the seated figure is a Secondary Nonrepeat text which is identical with that on No. 55 except that affix 60 is now above rather than below the main sign on the first glyph.

There is no post-firing pigment discernible on the vase.





58. Vase in Chocholá style, throne scene with dwarf

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Maxcanú, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 17.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Nonrepeat

The vase is matte and light brown in the carved areas, and polished and dark brown in those parts that were left uncarved. Dark, purplish root marks are visible.

The scene in the carved panel is somewhat more complex than in other Chocholá-style vases. The principal figure is seated upon a throne on the right; his crosshatched headgear is similar to that worn by God N, but he is shown as a young person and therefore cannot be that deity. A complicated jade pectoral is suspended by a rope or cord. With either hand he gestures toward two glyphs which are connected by a scroll device, perhaps meant to be quetzal feathers.

At the foot of the throne is an achondroplastic dwarf who is engaged in lifting something from a shallow plate.

The personage to the left of the scene is probably a woman, clothed in a long robe set with spangles and bordered by a fret design. She wears a cap-like headdress topped by quetzal plumes. Her right hand grasps a cylindrical container from which other quetzal plumes emerge, while her left hand is raised to her mouth, perhaps in the act of eating. At her feet is a strange object, perhaps a basket, topped by something resembling a pagoda roof.

There are fourteen glyphs on this vase, an unusually large number for the Chocholá style. Glyphs A through D are placed within cartouches and are vertically arranged on the reverse to make up a Primary Standard text. A is the Moon Sign A combination (13.682:18) which replaces the usual Initial Sign; B is Wing-Quincunx (61.77:585); C is Spotted-Kan (59.507:60); and D is Moon Sign B (12.682:?). The rest of the glyphs on the vase are Secondary Nonrepeat.

E and F are found near the head of the left-hand figure on the vase, and they strike me as female names or titles, even though it is their main signs and not the usual prefixes that look like female heads. The affixes of E are difficult to identify, but F is prefixed by 228 or 229, and postfixed by 130.

To the ruler can be assigned Glyphs G through J. G, H, and I are incised on a small raised rectangle. The usual Imix compound (13.501:60) is at G, followed by Muluc-Cauac (74:528.513) at H. The third glyph, I, is 168 over an unidenti-

fied main sign; even though there is no “water” prefix, I feel that this is an Emblem Glyph, following a two-glyph title. In this context it can apparently substitute for the Imix-Comb-Imix compound. J is a large Imix compound (229.501:x), a glyph (with either 228 or 229) known at Chichén Itzá and Ikil, both Yucatecan sites. This glyph is connected by a plume with N, another Imix combination (501.x) which may be another appellative glyph associated with the ruler.

Glyphs K–M are surely attached to the dwarf. K is identical with G, with the switch of affix 60 from postfix to prefix, and may be assumed to be in the nature of a title. L and M are likely to be name glyphs.

59. Vase in Chocholá style, personage in water-lily cartouche

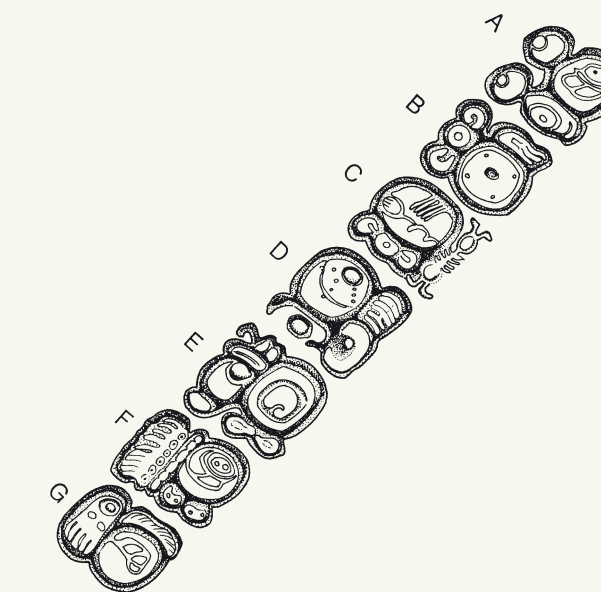
Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Maxcanú, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 11.4 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

On this dark-brown carved vase, a young man's bust is placed within a glyph-like cartouche; as with other presentations of the same theme, the nose and forehead are built out with a fin-like extension. His headdress is the head of the Water-lily Jaguar, and he carries a kind of wand made up of the rhizome, stem, and flower of the water-lily; in fact, the cartouche itself is filled with water-lily symbolism. Two nearly identical vases are No. 60 and a vessel from Calceotok, Yucatán (Spinden 1913, fig. 186). It may be that we have here a god who is the personified form of the Water-lily Jaguar, shown in his purely animal guise on the Peto Vase.

The reverse side bears a Primary Standard text of seven glyphs, deeply incised and arranged vertically in a diagonal band, transcribed:

- A 13.682:18 (Moon Sign A)
- B 61.77:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- C 565:62.53 (Serpent-segment)
- D 507:196?:99? (Spotted-Kan)
- E 58.x:x
- F 25 or 12.682:178? (Moon Sign B)
- G 501.25:565?

The only unusual feature of this text is the glyph at G, in which a possible Serpent-segment substitutes for the second Imix in the familiar Imix-Comb-Imix compound.



60. Vase in Chocholá style, personage in water-lily cartouche

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: probably Chocholá area, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 12.7 cm
 Text: Primary Standard



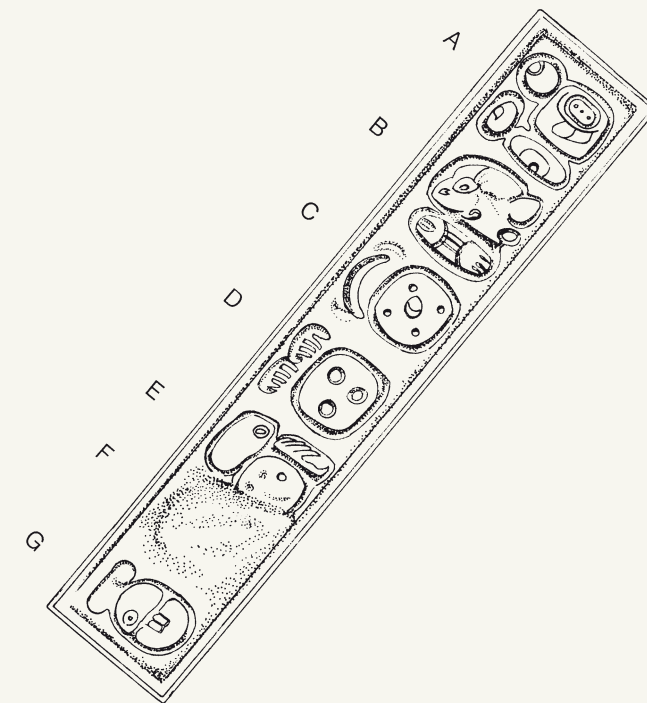
In a dark-brown ware we again have a Chocholá-style representation of the personage with headdress of the Water-lily Jaguar, inside the water-lily cartouche. He wears not only the "nose-fin" but also has a roughened covering over the lower part of the face, features also found on some Jaina figurines and on "smiling faces" from Veracruz.

On the reverse is the usual Primary Standard text, carved and incised within a diagonally placed rectangle:

- A 61.77:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- B x:60
- C Worm-bird?
- D 738:130 (Fish)
- E x.1000a:74 (IL-Face)
- F 12.682:129? Moon Sign B)
- G 13.62:534 (Inverted-Ahau)

61. Vase in Chocholá style, personage in water-lily cartouche

Collection: Art Institute of Chicago
 Provenance: probably Chocholá area, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 15.2 cm
 Text: Primary Standard
 Publication: Wardwell 1970, 1972



The uncarved areas of the vase are polished black; the carved areas were left rough and coated with red hematite pigment. As in the case of Nos. 59 and 60, a man's head and shoulders are seen in a water-lily cartouche. He holds the stalk of a water-lily in his hand, the flower of which can be seen to the front of his pointed headdress. To the back of the headgear, his bound hair can be seen.

The seven-glyph text is Primary Standard and is incised within a vertical frame set at a diagonal. It may be transcribed as follows:

- A 13.682:18 (Moon Sign A)
- B 758:110 (Rodent Bone)
- C 172?:585 (Quincunx)
- D 25.542
- E 501.25:501 (Imix-Comb-Imix)
- F ?
- G x.513 (Muluc)

62. Vase in Chocholá style, lord seated in cartouche

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: probably Chocholá area, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 11.7 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat



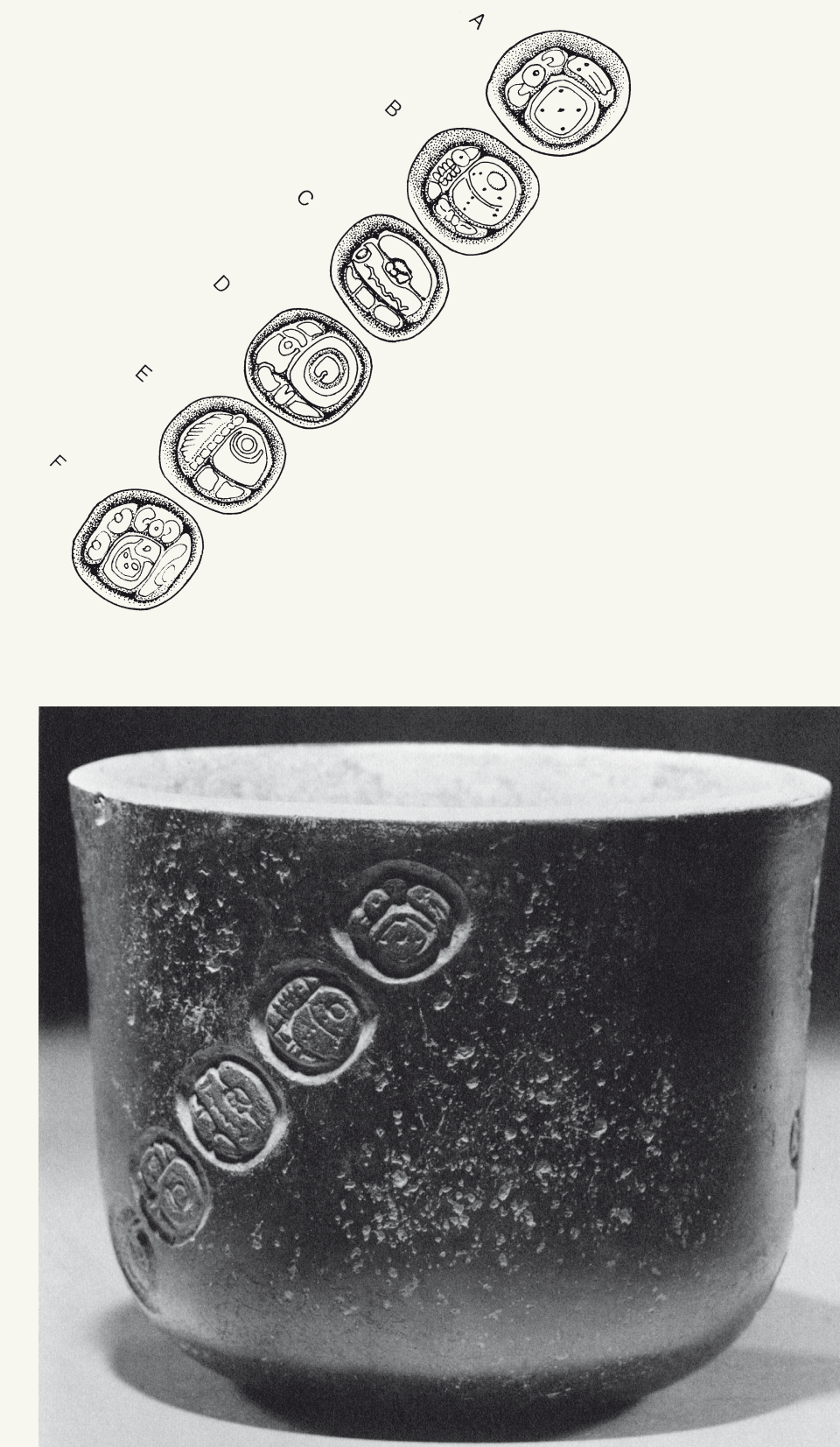
Unlike other Chocholá-style vases, this bowl has its carved or incised areas covered with a polished red hematite slip that has been fired on; the rest of the vase is polished black to brown. Also somewhat aberrant is the artist's individual style, which is more akin to some carved jade plaques than to the bold and assured treatment of figures and details on most Chocholá vases.

As in Maya jades, the ruler is shown frontally, seated cross-legged, with one hand raised in gesture before his chest. His headdress is the head of some jawless animal. On three sides of the cartouche are curvilinear devices from which issue vegetation or smoke.

In a diagonal band on the reverse is a glyph I cannot identify, repeated four times. This band is also covered with bright red slip.

63. Vase in Chocholá style, heron in cartouche

Collection: Justin Kerr, New York
 Provenance: Chocholá, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 12.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard



Somewhat lower in relation to its width than most Chocholá-style vases, this bowl is a dark, polished brown on the uncarved areas.

A bird is placed within a deeply carved background, surrounded by a cartouche flanked by scrolls; the entire cartouche may represent water. The creature's long neck and legs identify it as a wading bird, and the prominent crest indicates that it is a heron, but beyond this one cannot be more specific. It nibbles at a curvilinear object which it holds with one foot. The extreme stylization of the wing suggests that it was meant to represent glyph 77 of the Wing-Quincunx compound. Because water, and animals and plants connected with it, have Underworld connotations, the symbolism of the scene is again that of the world of the dead.

Six glyphs carved in a diagonal column on the reverse make up a Primary Standard text:

- A 61.77:585a (Wing-Quincunx)
- B 51?:507:60? (Spotted-Kan)
- C x:x
- D 59?:511?:60?
- E 12.682:178? (Moon Sign B)
- F 13.61:568.x



64. Vase in Chocholá style, Mosquito God stinging God N

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Maxcanú, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

Said to have been found together with a Chocholá-style vase in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, this dark-brown vessel is a key piece in the understanding of Underworld iconography. On the right stands a winged creature with long proboscis, patently a mosquito with anthropomorphic traits, a combination of insect with human that is also to be seen in the two insect deities (Figures 30 and 31) of No. 37. The resemblance even extends to the element behind the head, a feature also shared with Figure 31. That our Mosquito God is an Underworld denizen is established by the death collar worn around the neck.

The only other appearance of a mosquito in Maya art known to me is on a polychrome vase figured by Gordon and Mason (1925–28, pl. 47), in the act of attacking an anthropomorphic deer. This insect bears the same god marking that can be seen on the Mosquito God's limbs and wing.

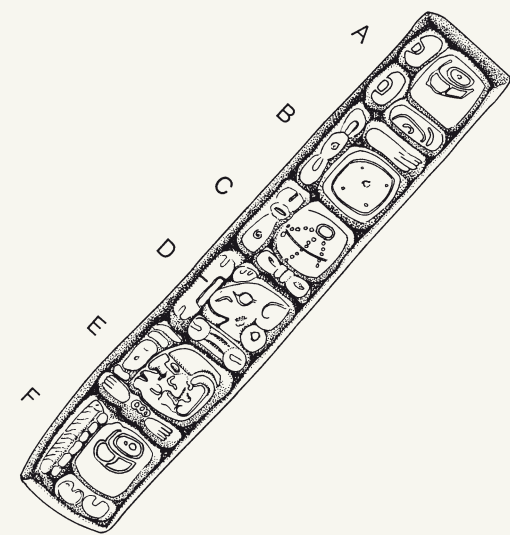
In the present case, however, the victim of the Mosquito God is God N, half emerged from his shell, whose upturned lip the mosquito grasps in its right hand. The hapless God N gestures with his hand toward the tip of the proboscis; a Kan-Cross glyph (281:23) is placed on the surface of the shell, as in Dresden 37a.

The reference to an incident in the Popol Vuh is unmistakable. As the Hero Twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque approach the court of the Lords of the Underworld, each plucks a hair from his leg, which turns into a mosquito. This insect then flies toward the seated rulers, and as each one is stung in turn, he cries out in pain; this causes his neighbor to call out his name, which, of course, reveals their identity to the two boys

and begins the chain of events leading to their downfall. It will be recalled that God N's execution by one of the Hero Twins is celebrated on No. 16, a Chamá polychrome, and there is ample reason to believe that this old god was co-ruler with God L of the realm of the dead.

The Primary Standard text on the reverse consists of six carved and incised glyphs arranged in a diagonal column:

- A 13.682:18 (Moon Sign A)
- B 62.77:585a (Wing-Quincunx)
- C 59.507:60 (Spotted-Kan)
- D 109.758:110 (Rodent Bone)
- E 59.1000:74 (IL-Face)
- F 12.682:129? (Moon Sign B)



65. Vase in Chocholá style, 13 Ahau glyph

Collection: Justin Kerr, New York
 Provenance: probably Chocholá area, Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 13.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

The vase is executed in a clay which is reddish-brown where burnished. The main scene and the text are surrounded by a field which is covered with delicate diagonal fluting, making this one of the most elegant of Chocholá vases.

On the obverse is carved the personified form of the day sign Ahau (last day of the cycle of twenty named days), with the coefficient 13 to the left. Thompson (1950:88-9) identifies this figure as the young Sun God; since the *Ixil* and *Quiché* Maya name for the day is *Hunahpu*, and the *Pokomchi* Maya designation (*Ahpu*) means He of the Blowgun, there can be little doubt that this is a portrait of *Hunahpu*, the Hero Twin who became the Sun. It will be noted that he is shown here in the guise of a Young Lord, with the jawless *Zip* animal on the front of his headdress.

Beginning in the Late Classic Period, and extending through the Post-Classic, the Maya reckoned events according to the *katun* (a period of slightly less than twenty years) in which they happened. Each *katun* was named for the day in the 260-day count on which it ended; the day name was always Ahau. A *katun* with a designation like 13 Ahau would recur only every 256¼ years. If the personified glyph on the vase has such calendrical associations, then the only *Katun* 13 Ahau in the Late Classic Period would have ended on the Long Count date 9.17.0.0.0, corresponding to A.D. 771. Thus the Chocholá style might well be an eighth-century phenomenon.

The ten-glyph Primary Alternative text is arranged diagonally on the reverse in two matching columns. Unfortunately, because of our ignorance of what this inscription means, it is impossible at present to decide whether it is to be read A1,

B1, C1, D1, etc., or whether all of the left-hand column is to be read from top to bottom, then the right-hand one.

- A1 228.1047?:x
- B1 x:561.x:541?
- A2 x
- B2 757 (Kan-Rodent)
- A3 x
- B3 62.756 (Knot-Bat)
- A4 1.x:18
- B4 x.758:110 (Rodent Bone)
- A5 501.x.x:526
- B5 501:87

Kan-Rodent, Knot-Bat, and Rodent Bone occur on the monuments in such a way as to suggest their function as titles. On the other hand, 501:87 is known to stand for the ceiba tree, or *imix-che* in Yucatec Maya.



66. Carved vase, deer ceremony and peccary

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 12.4 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

There are two deeply carved panels on this bowl, with red hematite pigment rubbed into the carved areas.

The subject matter is concerned with the death of game animals important in the life of the Yucatec Maya. On one panel a young man holds a hornless deer by the neck. The animal is dead, for its eyes are closed, its back is covered by a net or blanket, and on it is strapped a container that looks like a water-gourd. On the end of the upraised tail is the smoke or steam device, probably indicating divinity for the creature. Beneath its hoofs is a fish of some sort, perhaps a gar since its scales are prominent and fins inconspicuous.

Such scenes are well known in pictorial Maya ceramics. A famous polychrome vase at Dumbarton Oaks (Gordon and Mason 1925–34, pl. 54) depicts a complex ceremony involving the de-antling of deer covered with death symbols, while a carved vase from the Motagua Valley (Kubler 1969, fig. 48) depicts two young men holding deer in their arms; in both of these, world-direction trees figure prominently. The most enigmatic of such vases is from Actun Balam, British Honduras, on which are shown hunters (almost certainly gods) hurling darts at deer ridden by dwarfish humans (Pendergast 1969). What all this means is far from certain but, according to my colleague Floyd Lounsbury, there are data on the association of the deer with death in more than one New World society. For instance, the seventeenth-century Iroquois word for deer was the same as their word for dead person or the spirit of the dead; this derivation was explained on the grounds that the deer, "because it is a timid animal, is always thought of as being dead" (Lounsbury 1960:23–66). However, this author suggests that the phenomenon may result from the fact that the bone-like antlers protrude from the animal's skin, invoking in the mind of the beholder a dead man's skeleton.

The scene on the other side is equally puzzling. A bearded peccary, eyes closed as in death, stands beneath an undulating snake. The pig's snout emits smoke, which also curls from an Inverted-Ahau glyph at the snake's tail. A large Kin glyph (544), symbol of the Sun, is on the back of the peccary.

A possible clue to these odd depictions might lie in a Cakchiquel Maya story recorded by Otto Stoll (Thompson 1970:370), in which it is said that on a short day the sun is drawn across



the sky by two deer, whereas on long days two peccary pull him. However, the death element is surely present, and it may be that the Sun in this case is the Night or Jaguar Sun in the Underworld.

There are four boldly incised glyphs arranged in two vertical pairs. A1 would appear to be a variant of 802, with 288 postfix; A2 is a variant of 561, with unknown postfix. B1 is 1029, with the same postfix as A1, and B2 is an amalgam of 528 (Cauac) with 565 (Serpent-segment), and has the same postfix as A2.

67. Carved vase, Water-lily Jaguar

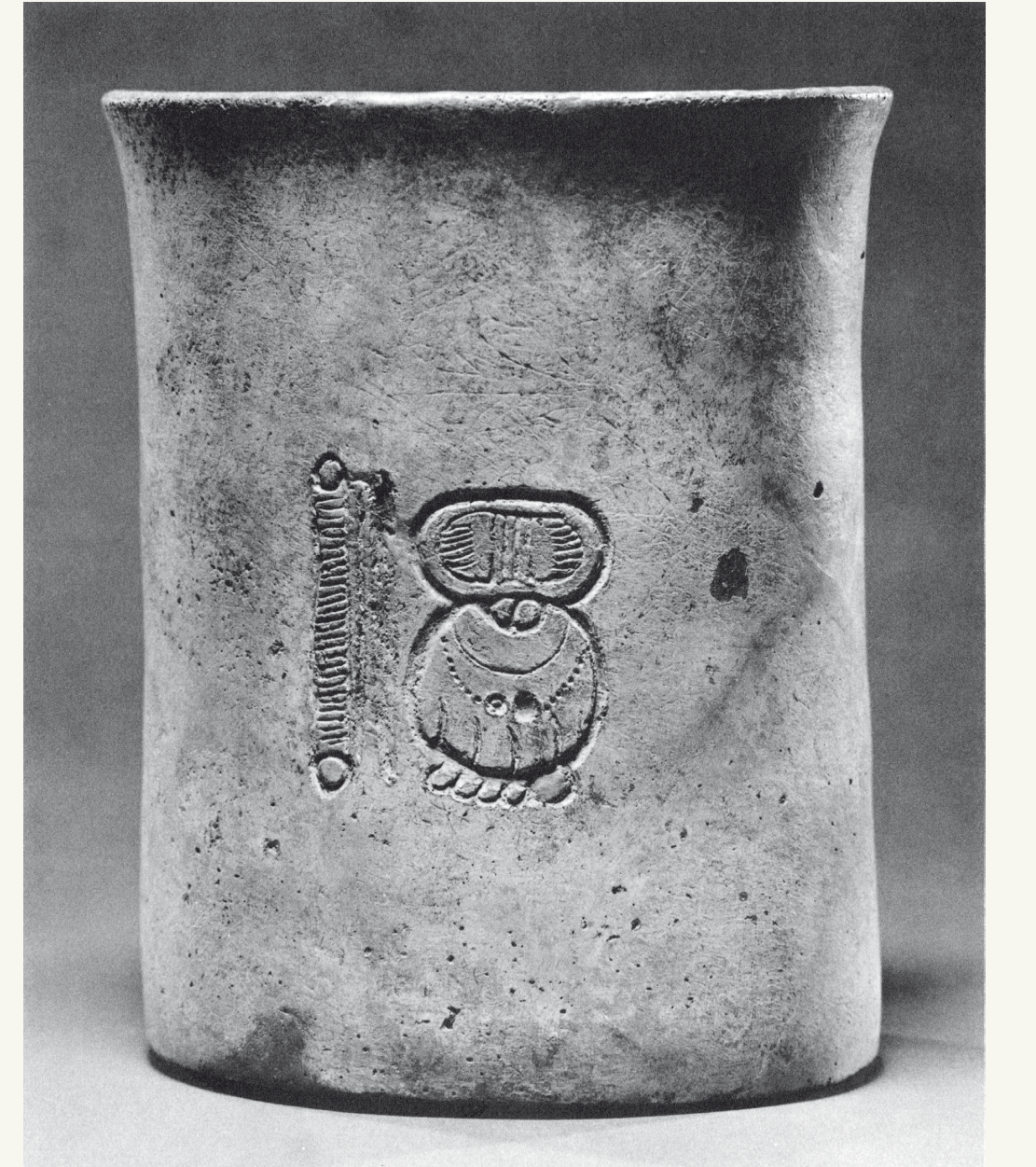
Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: Yucatán, possibly Chocholá area
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 23.5 cm
 Text: single glyph

This fine vase was carved after a cream slip had been applied over the entire surface, but before firing. There are enough resemblances with the Chocholá style to believe that it was produced in western Yucatán by a closely related school of potters.

The only deity shown is the Water-lily Jaguar (see Figure 3, No. 38), his body covered with black spots. On his head he wears a tube, which emits smoke, and the usual floral element which is probably a water-lily bud. A knot is tied around his neck, he has wristlets and anklets, and his tail is tipped with the Decorated Ahau device. From the muzzle of the Water-lily Jaguar streams scroll-like vegetation, and he grasps in both paws a huge water-lily flower, shown in a vertical position.

A solitary glyph, executed in a curiously awkward manner, is incised on the other side. This is an Imix compound, 12.248:501:314, which might be the name of the Water-lily Jaguar since it stands alone. Discounting the final postfix (314), this combination is known in the West Panel of the South Building at Xcalumkín, and in a fragment from Xcochó, two sites not far from Chocholá. However, if one concedes the close resemblance of 248 to 563a (Fire), and concludes that they are in fact the same sign, then quite a few pottery texts contain this compound, sometimes substituting affix 1 for 12 as a prefix, as in, for example, No. 14.

Red hematite pigment has been applied after firing to the carved areas, including the glyphs.





68. Carved vase with glyph band

Collection: Princeton University Library
 Provenance: probably Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 16.5 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?

The vase was slipped black except in a band near the top, then polished. Before firing, however, the unslipped and unpolished band was carved with a boldly executed glyptic text; the calligraphy emphasizes flowing and swirling lines.

The three glyphs may or may not be part of the Primary Standard sequence since the affixes of the two signs which are found in the sequence are aberrant. Glyph A appears to be Moon Sign (683) with an unknown prefix and postfix. The familiar Rodent (758) appears as the main sign at B, with 89 prefix and a possible 181 postfix. None of the elements of C is familiar to me.



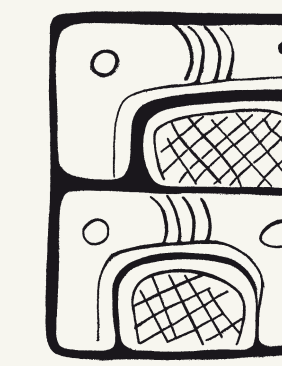
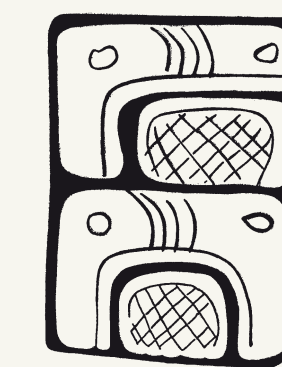
69. Carved vase, two Young Lords seated

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: unknown, possibly Alta Verapaz, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 13.6 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative (twice repeated)

Where it has not been carved, the surface of the vessel is slipped a yellowish-ocher color, with black vertical lines painted over it and around the carved areas.

There are two carved panels, each containing the seated figure of a Young Lord with right hand raised in gesture. The only difference between them is the device in the back of the "turban": one has a simplified Cross-bands glyph (552), while his companion has glyph 586b (Hatched-dot).

The same glyph pair is found twice, in the two glyph panels in between the figure panels. The glyphs are similar to each other, having a hatched area partly or completely covered by an Ahau-like element with two "eyes." These cannot be found in Thompson's catalogue; nevertheless, similar glyphs, also highly rectilinear, occur on other carved vessels (see No. 79), and I would be reluctant to say they had no meaning.





70. Carved vase, God N emerging from shell

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: unknown, possibly Guatemala highlands
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 17.4 cm
 Text: Primary Standard, Secondary Repeat

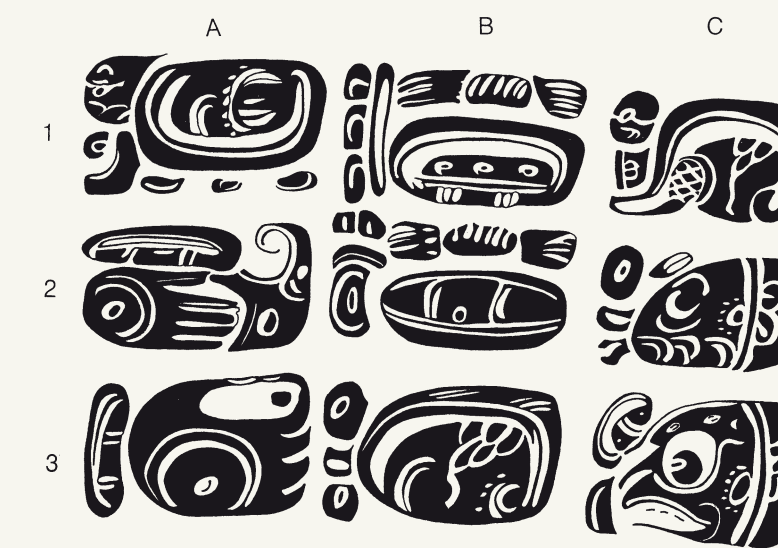
This masterpiece of the pottery carver's—and calligrapher's—art is unusual in that the carved area is burnished a rich mahogany brown; deep red bands encircle the vessel at top and bottom.

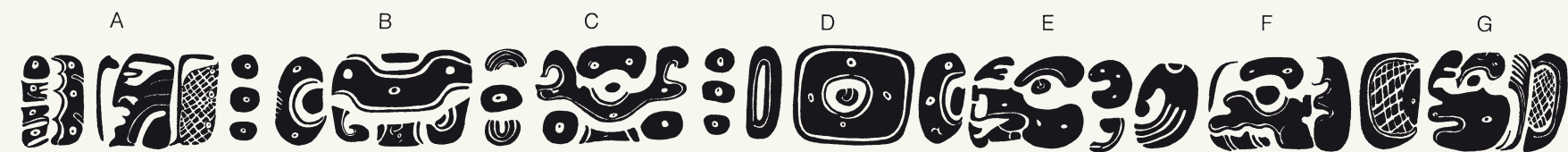
Beneath a swagged curtain, indicating that the scene takes place in a palace, the old God N emerges from his snail shell. He wears a spangled turban headdress at the back of which is his more typical headdress element, with indented upper edge. From his neck hangs an unusual pectoral, apparently flexible. The arms and back have god markings. Fixed to the other end of his swirling shell is a large water-lily flower, symbol of the watery Underworld.

The nine glyphs of the beautifully carved text seem to be part of the Primary Standard sequence. I suggest that they are to read column by column, i.e. A1, A2, A3, B1, etc., on the basis of analogies with other Primary Standard texts:

- A1 229.616 [or 683]:125 (Initial Sign)
- A2 24:713a.181 (Flat-hand Verb)
- A3 24?:671 (Manik-hand)
- B1 12?:58:x
- B2 58.74:x
- B3 147?:528 (Cauac)
- C1 229.532
- C2 147?:x
- C3 x.x

In an L-shaped panel in front of God N are six small incised glyphs, probably meant to be a Secondary Repeat text. The middle two of these are repeats of Manik-hand (671) with 129 (?) prefix, but the remainder cannot be deciphered.





71. Carved vase, God N and two dancing gods

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: unknown, possibly Alta Verapaz, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 20.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?, Secondary Nonrepeat

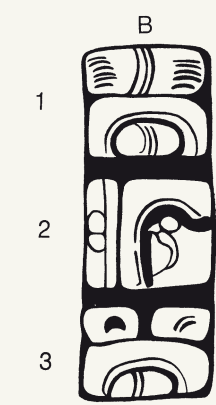
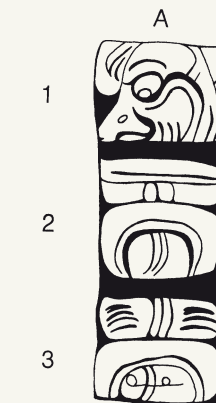
The vase is a grayish-ocher in color, stained brown in places by earth markings, and is only lightly burnished in the uncarved places. It is masterfully carved, but the artist's style in both figures and glyphs is so far unique; typical are sharpness of the cuts, and the small dots or circles.

There are two panels with scenes. In the first panel is seated the ubiquitous God N, with his indented and crosshatched headdress element. What look like flames emerge from his back. One hand is raised and the other carries a carinated object which also appears at the top of a bundle-like form behind him.

In the panel on the other side of the vase are two dancing gods, separated by two snakes which rise vertically from the bottom of the panel. Between the serpents can be seen glyph-like forms. The gods have misshapen heads and tentacle-like curlicues at the corner of the mouth. What might be either long beards or, more likely, feathers of wings, are below the arms. There seems to be little room for doubt that these two creatures are the same as the three dancing gods of No. 35 and Figure 2 of No. 46. On the former vase they have jaguar ears and carry war shields, so that probably they are war deities of the Underworld.

The glyphs in the rim band are very strange, and I have made little progress in identifying them. Nevertheless, the glyph of God N appears at A (with an unidentified prefix), so that the text might be Primary Standard. At D is a glyph we have seen before in Primary Standard sequence, VIII Muluc (?), which sometimes carries the number IX instead of VIII. Equally mystifying are the two vertical panels, each with three glyphs. Either H1 or I1 might be Rodent (758), but H2 is surely Bat (756). It should be noted that I2 is H3 turned on its side; I3 seems to be a skull (1040?) with bound-up hair.

The discovery of other vases in this style should clear up some of the textual difficulties.



72. Carved and dimpled vase, two seated gods

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: unknown, possibly Alta Verapaz, Guatemala
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 14.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?

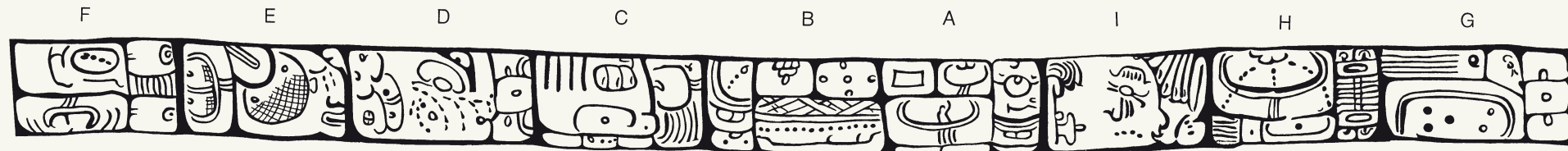
The basic surface of the vase is light brown. A red slip was applied as a rim band, but this and the carved areas were subsequently covered with a light cream slip which has worn away in places on the band. Two rows of small bosses encircle the vessel, enclosing the panels on top and bottom. The areas between the panels are covered with dimples of the same size as the bosses.

The two gods seated in the panels are identical. They have (1) large god eyes, (2) open mouths with prominent teeth, (3) snouts that resemble some insect proboscis, (4) god markings on the arms, (5) circular ear ornaments with long flap-like extensions on the back, and (6) crosshatched head-dresses with long extensions from which quetzal feathers de-

pend, along with a vegetation-like element with glyph 178 as "leaf." Each carries in his hand a glyph, the compound 71:586.

Although their bodies are human in form, there are resemblances between these deities and Insect God B, Figure 31 on No. 37. Perhaps the insect theme in Maya Underworld iconography is far more complex than suspected.

The two glyph columns are executed in a squared-off style usual for this kind of carved vase. There is a possibility that this is part of the Primary Standard sequence, since A1 is Downball-bird. Another glyph which may be significant is B2, with Cauac (528) main sign.



73. Carved vase, 1055 God and Insect God A

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: probably Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 12.8 cm
 Text: Primary Standard

This collared bowl is a dark-brown color, and is well burnished. The figures on the two carved panels are set against a background of crosshatched lines; in between the panels are X-shaped burnished areas in a field of small squares filled with punctuation.

The head and shoulders of a youthful god are seen in one of the panels. Opposed curving lines pass through his eye, a feature which identifies him with the young deity who is the speared victim on Dresden 50 (the last page of the Venus Tables); I do not believe that the lines being horizontal on the vase, instead of vertical as in the codex, makes any difference. The nominal glyph of the god, 1055, appears in the text at D. On the vase panel he wears a very elaborate head-dress with feather rosette and plumes, fronted by a reptile's head with open jaws; a bell-shaped nose ornament with plumes is at his nose.

The creature on the other panel is of even more interest. This has the body and limbs of a wingless insect, but a skull-like head with open jaws from which streams an amorously shaped object with god marking. Curling back from its ear is an extension, also with god marking. Clearly this is Insect God A, the monstrous combination of insect, human, and death which we have seen before as Figure 30 on No. 37 (Vase of the Thirty-one Gods).

As in a few other Yucatecan vases known to me, the Primary Standard text goes from right to left, and each glyph faces to the right rather than the left. Surely this virtuoso defiance of the rules shows that the calligrapher knew what he was writing! In the transcription that follows, I lettered the glyphs in accordance with my belief that the glyph at A is the Initial Sign, in spite of its unusual 168 affix.

- A 229.168:617:x (Initial Sign)
- B x:561.181:178
- C x:671:142? (Manik-hand)
- D 65.756 (Bat)
- E 568 (personified).24?
- F 110.682:18 (Moon Sign)
- G 62.236:585 (Wing-Quincunx)
- H 53.507:59 (Spotted-Kan)
- I 220.1055 (god on vase)

It can be seen here that there is no functional difference between the Bird affix, 236, and 76 or 77 (Wing).

74. Carved vase, heads of reptilian god

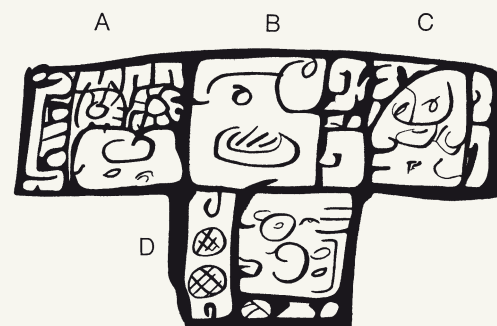
Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: probably Yucatán
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 16.5 cm
 Text: Primary Repeat

This is a brown tripod vase, probably manufactured toward the end of the Late Classic in Yucatán. It is distinguished from the rest of the carved vases presented here by virtue of the burnishing of the carved as well as the uncarved areas, and by the odd style of its glyphs. There is a certain decadence in this piece which suggests that the great Classic Maya tradition of pictorial ceramics had just about run out. The glyphs are so poorly done that at first I suspected the vase to be a fake but am now convinced of its authenticity on the grounds of surface and workmanship.

The two reptilian heads in cartouches are apparently a much broken-down version of the crocodilian deity with water-lily associations pictured in complete form on Stela 7 at Yaxchilán (Thompson 1950, fig. 12, 1); in this, the bifurcated lines running down from the eyes are shown to be the stems of water-lilies, although the blossoms are missing on our vase. This ophidian deity also appears on some polychrome vases (cf. No. 25). Between the cartouches are two plaited knots.

The same glyph pair is repeated four times. I doubt that these glyphs had any meaning. In each pair the first glyph looks like a degenerate Imix with an unknown prefix; this is followed by an animal or bird-like head. At one point in the band, a kind of Crossed-bands glyph appears.





75. Pottery flask, bearded personage

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: Yucatán or northern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 8.0 cm
 Text: Primary Standard?

Small pottery flasks of this sort are often called poison bottles today, after a fancied resemblance to nineteenth-century American glass bottles designed for such use. In the older literature they have been given the name of pilgrim flasks, an equally fanciful attribution. Their use is unknown, beyond the fact that they are found in graves and are thus connected in some way with the cult of the dead. This particular flask is gray slate-ware, with traces of red pigment.

The subject matter carved and incised on one face consists of the head, shoulders, and hands of a stylishly drawn "Fu Manchu" figure with slanted eyes and small goatee. He is placed within a frame topped by the swagged curtain implying a palace. He contemplates a mysterious flame-like object held between thumb and index finger. Presumably, this is a very much abbreviated version of the complex palace scenes seen on other vases.

Four glyphs are incised on the reverse:

- A 1.x:x
- B 568.x
- C 1000.129?
- D x.738:142 (Fish)

The only reason for thinking this might be a Primary Standard text is the presence of Fish, a well-known Primary Standard component.

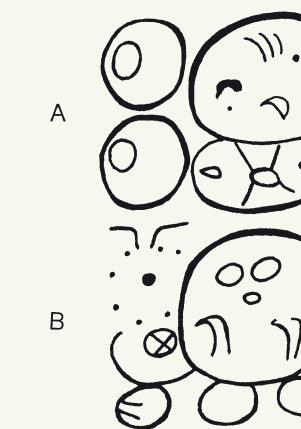


76. Pottery flask, seated old god

Collection: Edward H. Merrin Gallery, New York
 Provenance: Yucatán or northern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 7.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

A wrinkled old god gestures expressively on this tiny carved and incised flask. His hair is bound up by being slipped through a tube, presumably of jade; he wears a flexible ornament through his ear lobe, and a floppy extension hangs down behind the ear, very much like that shown on insect gods. In front of the nose is a bead from which dangle long plumes. I cannot, however, link him with any of the other aged gods who figure so prominently on pictorial Maya pottery.

Only two glyphs are incised on the reverse. Both seem to be concerned with death. A is 13.613?:110, the main sign apparently being the glyph Men as seen in the codices; the death-eyes affix 13 surely expresses some deadly aspect. At B we have 51?.606(672):74?. I believe there is no real difference between 606 and 672, and that since 672 might stand for the death of a person, so does 606.





77. Pottery flask, Young Lord in cartouche

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenience: Yucatán or northern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 10.0 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative

On this thick-walled round flask is carved the head of a Young Lord with bound hair. At the bottom of the cartouche which frames him is a large stylized leaf, and two other similar leaves are attached to stems on either side. They look very much like the rare glyph 824. The text on the reverse is unusually long, consisting of twelve glyphs arranged in paired columns. Because of surface irregularities, there are problems of transcription.

- A1 x.59
- A2 70.501:126
- A2 1000a (IL-Face)
- B2 671:126?:116 (Manik-hand)
- A3 535?:102
- B3 12.1047:23 (Death)
- A4 501:142.23 (Imix)
- B4 60?:506:23
- A5 ?:710?:548
- B5 501 (Imix)
- A6 679.V:544:116
- B6 58.86?:?

One is tempted to think of the combination at A6 as a count forward of five days, even though the 513:59 glyph that should accompany 679 is missing. Little else can be made of the text, which is not Primary Standard in spite of the presence of IL-Face at A2.

78. Pottery box, seated figures and dwarfs

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenience: eastern Tabasco or southern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 23.5 cm (with lid)
 Text: Primary Repeat?

The surface of this lidded box is polished brown. The lid is pyramidal with slab-like vertical handle shaped rather like an inverted foot from an Early Classic tripod. Compared with No. 79, the workmanship as seen in the carving and incising (carried out after burnishing) is fairly cursory, as though done in some haste.

Panel 1, executed on one of the long sides, shows a male seated cross-legged, holding up a shallow dish to a woman with his right hand, and a shell or similar object in his left. At the front of his headdress is a fish, probably nibbling a flower. The woman wears a long robe and jade collar. In her headdress are netted objects similar to main sign 586 (or affix 288). On the far right is what seems to be a vertical bundle, and on the far left a grotesque face on a pedestal.

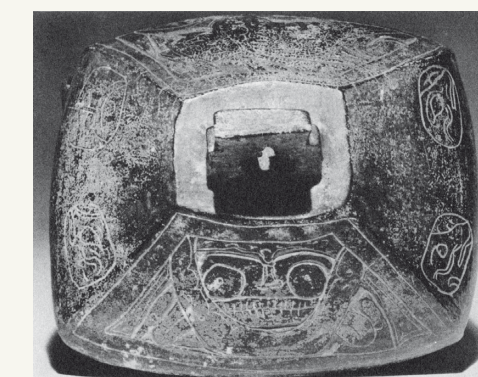
Continuing around the box, Panel 2 is at one end, and like Panel 4 displays a dwarf with a normal adult. The latter, which might be of either sex, caresses the dwarf with one hand. In the adult's headdress is another netted element (glyph 586).

Panel 3 is on a long side. Two seated males face each other and raise their hands; in their headdresses is a doubled netted element, and the glyph 586 itself is to be seen between their elbows.

Finally, in Panel 4, a seated man raises his hand toward the ear of an extremely ugly dwarf whose foot is raised in dance. On a pedestal to the right of the scene is a pedestal with something like a bowl precariously perched upon it.

On one side of the lid is a death's head as crude as those winged skulls to be found on New England tombstones. On the opposite side is a hastily incised anthropomorphic bird like those on No. 79.

The glyphs are so sketchily incised that even the most practiced epigrapher would find it difficult to make much sense of them. On the lid, one pair of glyphs is scratched on each narrow side. Three of the glyphs would appear to be versions of Vulture (747), reinforcing the morbid theme of death presented by the skull. The fourth is 534, Inverted-Ahau. The only glyphs on the box appear in columns between the two figures on Panel 3, and also seem to be repeats of Vulture.





79. Pottery box, enthroned Young Lords

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: probably eastern Tabasco or southern Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 30.0 cm (with lid)
 Text: Primary Alternative

This superb example of Maya art is slipped brown and burnished; subsequent to the slipping, the carving and incising were executed. Fine pottery boxes of this sort are extremely rare. Like No. 78, this one is fitted with a lid shaped like a low pyramid on the top of which is placed a flange-like handle. In the handle a cross has been cut.

Two panels, on opposite sides of the box, are carved in an extremely elegant style which rivals that of the finest Palenque reliefs. The theme is that of the Young Lords, shown in identical posture and costume. The only important difference between them is that one is seated upon a throne with slab legs (between which is a Maltese cross), the other sits upon a jaguar-skin bundle (cf. glyph 609). The latter figure is marked on the cheek with the IL motif, but the lower bar of the L is obscured by the ear ornament. Each Young Lord is richly bejeweled and wears a jade-bead necklace with an animal-head pendant, which he sets swaying with his thumb and one finger. On the front of his headdress is the typical jawless monster head, and at the back a construction of quetzal plumes and beads. Finally, in each panel can be seen two Crossed-bands devices.

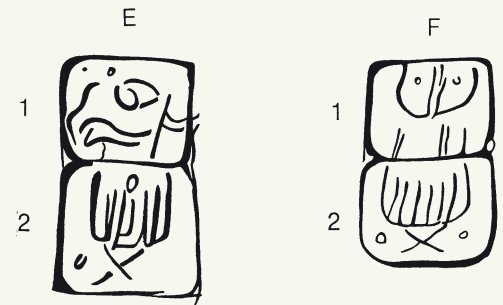
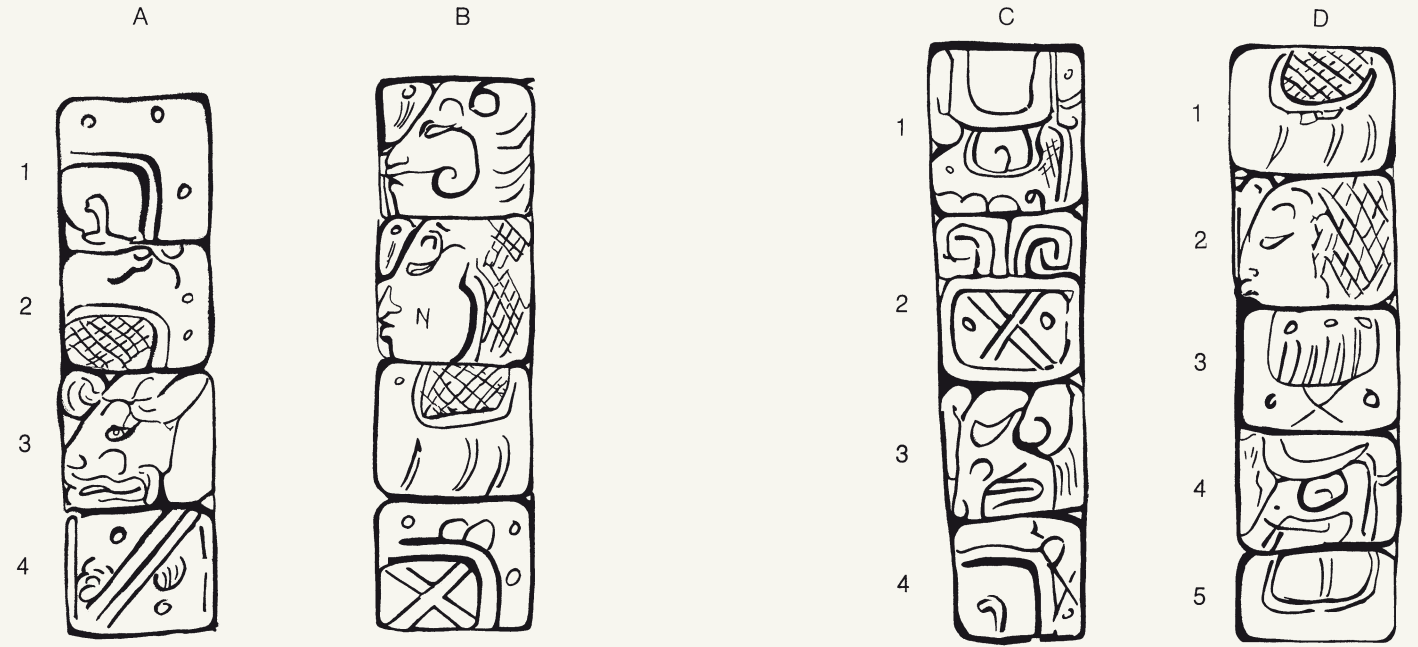
Two fantastic birds are carved on opposite sides of the lid, each with the beak of a raptorial bird, god eye, human ear, and jade-bead necklace. One bird has a tube in the forehead from which plumes stream, and has the Crossed-bands device at the base of the wing. The other has what looks like an ornamented bone coming from the beak, and what may be glyph 575 at the wing base. A very similar, possibly identical, avian monster appears on a pottery fragment from Chipoc

(Dieseldorff 1926–33, 2, fig. 6). One is reminded of the hawk and owls that play prominent roles in the Popol Vuh as messengers of the Underworld rulers.

Seventeen glyphs are incised in columns on the sides of the box and four on the lid. In both form and style the glyphs are very much like those carved on Nos. 54, 69, and 72, being quite squared off and often combining the attributes of what are ordinarily different signs into a single sign. Also shared with No. 69 is a kind of affixing in which an L-shaped affix is placed above and to one side of the main sign, as in Glyph B of the Lunar Series. Surely identifiable glyphs are 758 (Rodent) at C3 and 617 at D5. Examples of combined glyphs are A2, a Manik-hand (671) with 586 infixed; and B2 and D1, which looks like Imix (501), again with 586 infixed.

I believe that glyphs for the Young Lords appear at B2 and D2 (possibly 1002c). Animals in the text besides Rodent are Jaguar (751 or 752) at A3, a possible Fish (738) in personified form at B1, and perhaps Vulture (747) at D4. It is possible that the two glyph pairs on the lid may contain the names of the bird monsters depicted on its surface, for E1 is some kind of bird head, and the second glyph of both is the same (this is also to be found at D3 on the box).

While it is true that a reasonable explanation of the inscription cannot yet be made, I feel confident that it will prove to deal with the Underworld and with the Hero Twins who are here shown in all their glory.





80. Jaina figurine, ruler on throne

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 25.0 cm (with seated figure)
 Text: Primary Standard

I know of only two figurines from Jaina with real glyphs, and both are included in this catalogue; however, miniature ceramic thrones with texts are known from the Alta Verapaz of Guatemala.

A majestic, haughty ruler is seated upon a throne from which the figure can be removed. His crown is a great headdress (also removable) in which a spray of quetzal feathers, painted Maya blue, surrounds a monster's face. Around his neck is a punctate collar from which extend ornaments with feather tips, also covered with blue. His long loincloth has a fretted edge. As in the very finest Jaina figurines, and this is one of them, all features and details are made by hand rather than molded.

Lying on the throne is a jaguar skin, with flattened head and paws, as a symbol of monarchy. The upright back of the throne is of most interest here for it bears a glyphic text at the base, above which are seated two young figures against a cut-out background. These are the Young Lords, the Hero Twins of the Popol Vuh. Between them is the Kin sign (544), glyph of the Sun into which one of the Twins was converted after his apotheosis. At the corners of the rectangle which contains the glyph are stylized animal skulls, a theme also known in a stucco medallion in the Palace at Palenque (Tatiana Proskouriakoff, personal communication).

The Primary Standard text consists of four glyphs, incised in the wet clay of the back before it was molded to the seat; unfortunately, in the process of constructing the throne from its component parts, the lower portions of the last glyph were lost. The text is as follows:

- A 229.683:126 (Initial Sign)
- B x:713a.181 (Flat-hand Verb)
- C ?758.24? (Rodent)
- D 13.512a:? (Muluc-Burden)



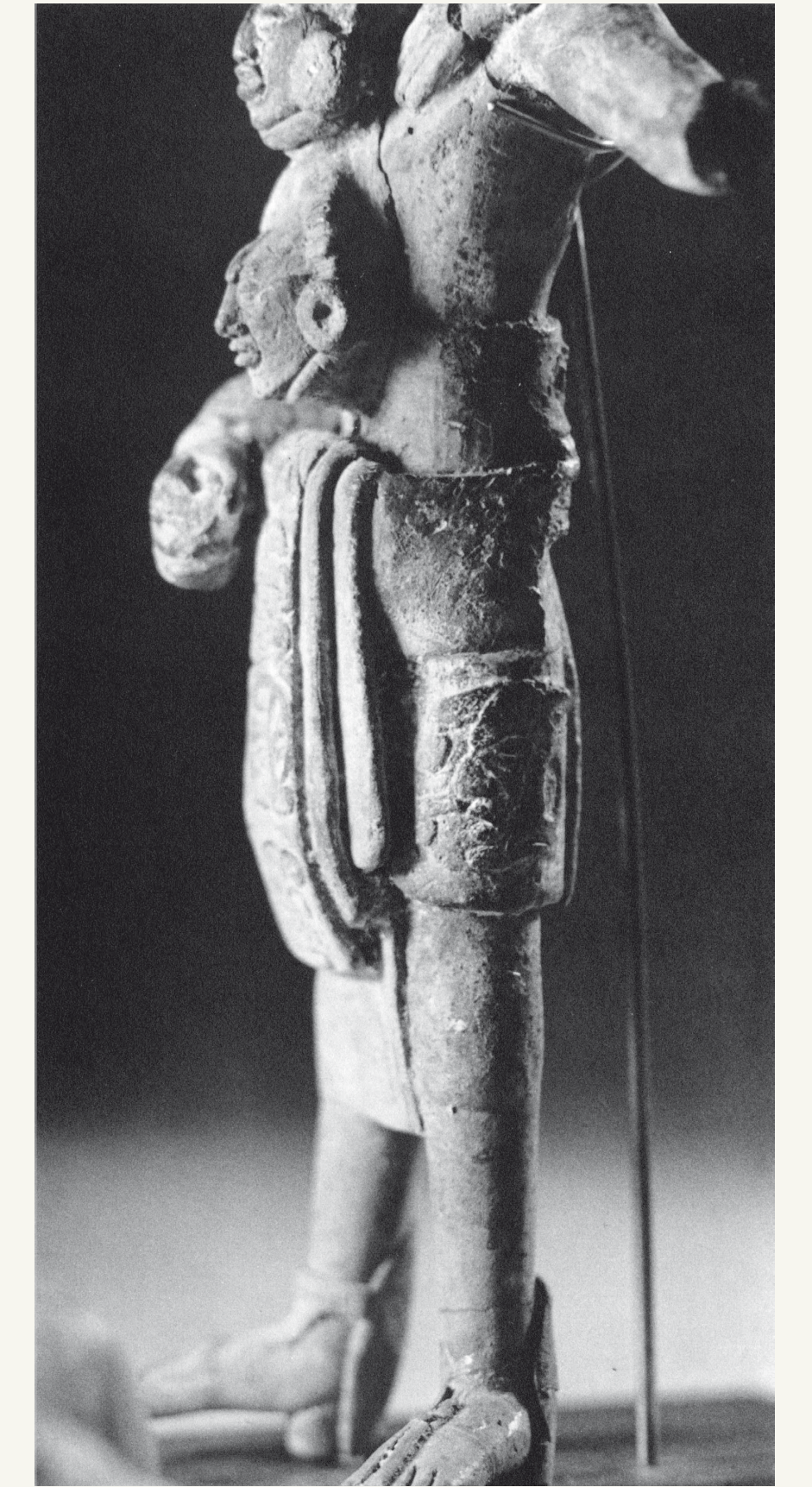


81. Jaina figurine, standing man

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 24.5 cm
 Text: Primary Alternative (pseudocalendrical?)

There must have been a companion piece linked to this figurine, for the hand of another personage can be seen at the shoulder. This figure is male, wearing a large spangled turban. On his chest are suspended two human heads, possibly war trophies. A loincloth with kilt, bracelets, and sandals complete his costume.

On the front of the loincloth is a column of four glyphs and there is a glyph on each hip. In this particular case there seems to have been little effort on the part of the artist to carve real glyphs; rather, the idea seems to have been to suggest the *effect* of a garment on which glyphs had originally been woven, embroidered, or painted. The second and fourth glyphs on the loincloth suggest that the artist copied them from calendrical originals, using head variants for numerals. The former looks like the day 5 Men, and the latter appears to be 1 Kin. This, of course, makes no sense in the Maya system. The remaining four glyphs may be imaginary.





82. Carved human femur, standing warrior

Collection: Private collector, New York
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600-900)
 Height: 30.5 cm
 Text: noncalendrical, historical?

This object was probably a trophy taken from a slain or sacrificed enemy. It would seem that its owner commissioned the carving upon it to celebrate his military prowess, although the text on the reverse can as yet offer us no clues in this direction.

The standing figure on the obverse is a warrior whose grim visage more closely approaches the Toltec ideal of portraiture than that of the Classic Maya, and there are very definite overtones of Toltec-Maya art as seen in the relief columns of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá. This may be a very late product of the Classic Period. The warrior wears a collar of teeth from some carnivore, and the top of the head-dress is bedecked with a tall cluster of quetzal plumes. In his right hand he grasps a spear in which are set five transverse knives.

There are twelve noncalendrical glyphs in the inscription, ten in a vertical column on the reverse, and two below the warrior. This latter pair (K and L) might well be his name.

- A x
- B 1030d (God K, GII)
- C 671:544 (West)
- D 367.168:501 (Emblem Glyph?)
- E 3?.570 (Wavy-bone)
- F 122.?:?
- G 671:544 (West)
- H 126.19:670
- I x
- J 1000
- K 1:747
- L 122.x:x } Name?

The God K glyph with two occurrences of the sign for the direction West suggests the performance of some kind of ritual. The odd glyph at I should be noted, in which vegetation seems to be growing from a Moon Sign.

This text bears little or no relation to any known to me on pottery, and points up the difference between hieroglyphic writing as seen on ceramics (including figurines) and onyx vases, and that on all other materials.

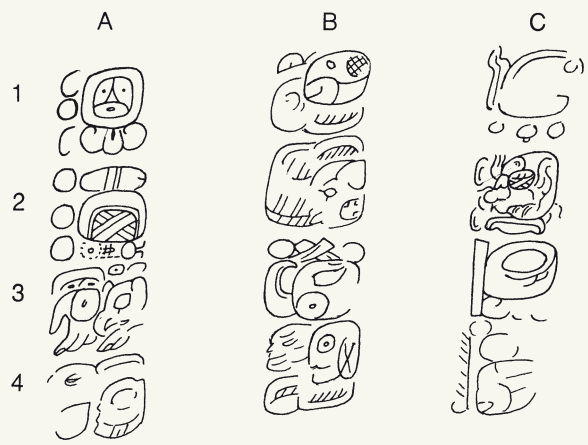
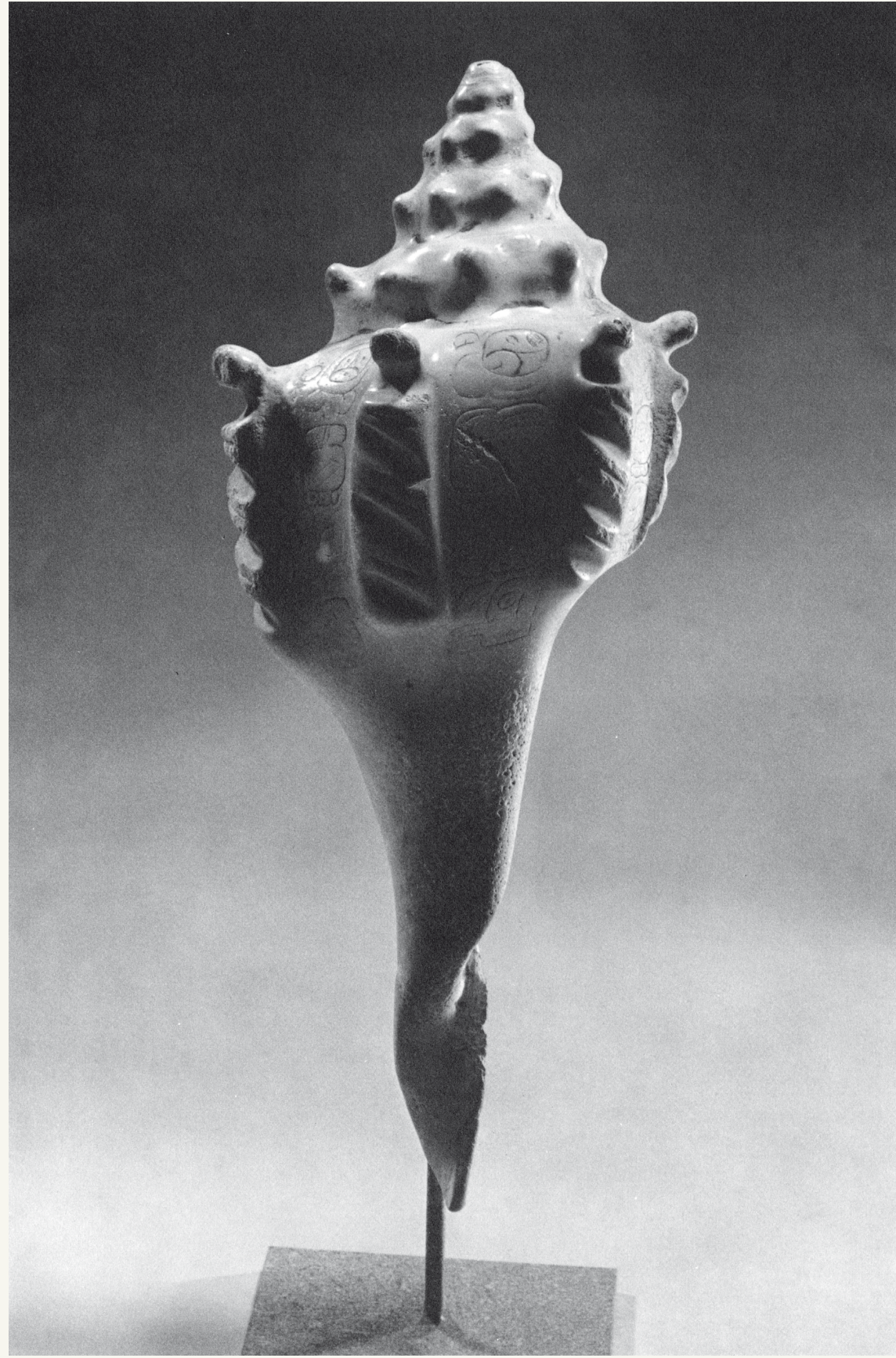
Bone, Stucco, and Shell Objects

83. Stucco glyph

Collection: Brooklyn Museum, New York
 Provenance: central Maya area
 Date: Late Classic Period
 Height: 23.0 cm
 Text: reduplicated gods

Some of the finest Maya calligraphy, if the term can be used in such a context, is carried out in stucco as a feature of architectural enrichment. Stucco texts are best known on both interiors and exteriors of buildings at Palenque, where work in this medium reached perfection. This particular stucco fragment is a glyph, perhaps from the Palenque area, with two identical heads of the Sun God (glyph 1010). The suffix on the right is glyph 8, but its companion to the left is unknown to me.





84. Conch shell container

Collection: Princeton University Library
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: March 17, A.D. 761
 Height: 29.0 cm
 Text: Period Ending, ritual?

The shell has been cut lengthwise to make a container; the interior is heavily coated with red hematite pigment, indicating that its primary function was to hold this substance. The remaining exterior of the conch has been considerably altered by grinding and abrading to leave smooth areas for the four glyph columns incised upon it.

The incised text, filled with hematite red, is in three columns of four glyphs each. Unfortunately, heavy wear has largely obliterated a few of the glyphs, so that interpretation is difficult. The most important fact to note is that the text opens at A1 and A2 with the Calendar Round 1 Ahau 3 Zip, corresponding to the Period Ending date in the Long Count of 9.16.10.0.0. In the Thompson correlation, this would be equivalent to March 17, A.D. 761. This particular Period Ending, marking the completion of half a *katun* (10 *tuns*, or 3,600 days), was widely observed among centers in the Maya lowlands. Where the container was manufactured, in what center it was incised, and how it made its way into a grave on the coast of Campeche remain a mystery.

Presumably the text has something to do with the celebration of this red-letter day in the Maya calendar. If so, then it is mainly concerned with ritual. At A3 is the compound 1:710, the down-turned hand supposedly sprinkling water, which often immediately follows Period Ending dates and which might indicate the rite performed. Another glyph which might be mentioned is C2, the main sign of which might be 844, a glyph so far known only on Tikal Stela 31, a very early monument. At C3 is the compound V.683a (Moon Sign), which is almost certainly *not* part of a lunar inscription.



85. Shell pendant, Ahau glyph

Collection: Gillett G. Griffin, Princeton
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 7.3 cm
 Text: single day glyph

From the Island of the Dead, Jaina, have come many beautiful pendants, cut from shell. This is an excellent example of the genre, the gracefully drawn head and shoulders of a young man within the typical cartouche of a day sign. In fact, the entire pendant represents Ahau, last of the series of twenty named days in the ceremonial calendar of 260 days (13 × 20). The dot on the cheek and the youthful features are typical of the personified form of the glyph. God markings are incised upon the cartouche.

There are at least two variants of the personified form of Ahau (Thompson 1950, fig. 11, 17–36). One has the hair bound up in a headband, has a dotted cheek, and occasionally the eyes are closed as if in death. The other is a Young Lord with jawless Zip monster on the front of the headdress. Both Head-



86. Shell pendant, man emerging from peccary

Collection: Anonymous collector
 Provenance: Jaina Island, Campeche
 Date: Late Classic Period (600–900)
 Height: 6.0 cm
 Text: unknown

The meaning of this strange pendant can only be guessed. The figure of a young man, the top of whose head has been broken off by an ancient accident to the piece, emerges from the split body of a peccary. In each hand he holds an object of which little can be said, except that the one in the left hand appears to be a glyph. The peccary plays a role in Maya iconography and religion—to judge from its appearance in the *codices*, on such objects as the incised peccary skull from Copán, and on pottery (No. 66)—but little can be said about the significance of this role.

Three glyphs are crudely incised to the right, above the head of a god. The third glyph is Ahau (533) with 103 postfix. It is probably safe to say that this short text has little or no significance.





Page 1 (column I)

The enigmatic God K, the so-called Long-nosed God, brandishes a spear with a large point, below which are placed smaller transverse points with red bases. The disk from which plumes depend can also be found on spears in the Dresden Codex. Around his neck on this badly destroyed page, the god wears a death collar. The butt of his spear rests upon the brown hair of a young captive. God K, incidentally, appears in the list of twenty regents in the Venus Tables of the Dresden. Whatever his true nature and function, Thompson's identification of him as an earth and vegetation deity (Thompson 1970:224-7) seems to me to be premature and probably ill-founded.

Page 2 (column J)

The Death God stands with a spear similar to that on page 1. On his cranium is bristling hair like that on the Death Gods of Laud and Fejervary-Mayer. As headdress he wears the head of a jawless jaguar, similar to that worn by the planting gods of Madrid 34a and 36a. On one forearm he wears the Toltec arm protection. Hung across his chest is a pendant suspiciously like the stylized butterfly worn as a pectoral by Toltec warriors at Tula and Chichén Itzá; it also looks like the pectorals worn by the warrior-frieze figures at Malinalco (Villagra 1971, fig. 30). Other Toltec traits are the back shield and knee fringes. Instead of the knife at the front of the face of the Death God on page 6, this deity has what seems to be a spotted speech scroll. Unfortunately, the captive whom he holds by a rope in his left hand is missing. The Death God (God A) is also a Venus regent in the Dresden.

Page 3 (column K)

A young deity, probably male but possibly female, is bedecked with an elaborate reptilian headdress and wears a tubular plug through the ear lobe; at the shoulders are two disks. In his left hand he holds a rope by which a captive's arms are bound. Around the captive's tear-drop eye is a black lining, and there are two black-tipped feathers in his headdress. There is more than a passing resemblance between this captive and a black-eyed figure who appears in Dresden 60 as a warrior with darts and atlatl, and in Dresden 60b as a captive; in the latter case, his arms are bound behind his back, he has the butt of a spear over his head, and his captor appears to be the spearing god in Dresden 49b and Grolier 7, both surely Venus gods. However, other than the feathers, the form of the captive's headdress on this page is specifically Toltec, like those found both at Tula and Chichén Itzá (see Tozzer 1957, figs. 534, 535).

Page 4 (column L)

This again appears to be God K, attired as a Toltec warrior. However, his headdress is very different from that of page 1, with a stepped-down element in which is fitted a downball from which stream quetzal plumes. Most of the figure of the captive whom he holds has been lost.

Page 5 (column M)

I believe this figure to be the old goddess known as Ix Chel among the Maya, the counterpart of Tlazoltéotl and Coatlicue in the Mexican pantheon, on the basis of her aged face and the snakes in her hair. Since she is garbed as a warrior, she is probably in the guise of one of the Cihuateteo, the formidable goddesses of the west who had died in childbirth. In her right hand is a Toltec atlatl, in her left a shield and darts. The shield is of interest for it is decorated with a fringe of death eyes and the Maya numeral seven, a symbol of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, also known on shields in Classic Maya reliefs. In front of her is a temple which she has just speared. The curling element by the spear probably represents flames; both are reminiscent of the conquest scenes in the first third of the Codex Mendoza. At the top of the temple, presumably on its ridgepole, is a device which may be a flower placed upon a star.

Page 6 (column N)

The Death God (God A), with simple headdress and knife in hand, has just decapitated an old Roman-nosed god, from whose neck blood pours. At the Death God's back is a Toltec shield, and at his knees and ankles are what A. M. Tozzer called tape garters. Specifically Maya are the dot-with-line markings on the legs, although in the Dresden these Death God insignia have dotted lines instead of wavy ones. The belt is also typical of deities in the Dresden, but death collars in that codex are always straight instead of pendulous as here. The figure should be compared to the Death God in one of the Toltec–Maya frescoes of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957, fig. 430), which shows a skeleton with a knife in the nasal opening, tape garters at the knees and ankles, and a very similar knife held in one hand.

Page 7 (column O)

As mentioned above, the feathered headdress on this figure identifies him with the spearing gods in the central Mexican Venus Tables, with the spearer on page 49 of the Dresden Venus Tables, and with the standing figure on the bottom of Dresden 60. He is attired as a Toltec warrior, with arm protec-

tion and knee ruffs. On his chest is a circular pendant with the numeral seven. In his left hand he holds something like a piece of cloth, and in the right a long spear with disk and plumes. Before him stands the bearded head of God C, a Maya deity supposedly connected with the North Star; from it sprouts a plant with disk-like blossoms. This representation seems unknown elsewhere, although similar vegetation is known in the Borgia Codex; on Dresden 41b a head of the old god, Itzamná, forms the base of a tree, but it has a swollen trunk with heart-shaped leaves.

Page 8 (column P)

At first glance the deity represented on this page would appear to be unique in Mesoamerican art, but this is not the case. A personage with eagle legs and elaborate avian headdress holds a spear in one hand and Toltec atlatl in the other. His belt with crossed bands is Mayan, but he wears the Toltec back shield; both arms have Toltec protective covering. The headdress—a bird-like mask with fangs, recurved snout, death eyes on stalks over the regular eyes, and attached plumes—appears on the left-hand deity shown in Paris 9; his glyph, VI.168:17. 671, appears in the list of twenty Venus regents in the Dresden Codex, but the god on this Grolier page is young, not old as in the Paris. This same headdress is shown six times on the Death God in the Dresden Codex.

Eagle-legged Toltec warriors appear at Chichén Itzá with some frequency (Tozzer 1957, figs. 434, 436, 584-6). It is known that many of the Toltec men-at-arms depicted at that site wear the accouterments of gods such as Tezcatlipoca and the Death God, and it is not altogether surprising to find an eagle-legged deity at that site.

The object of the deity's ire is another temple similar to that on page 5; in this instance, the roof ridge has spikes or knives fixed on it. What the curling element in the door of the temple represents I cannot imagine.

Page 9 (column Q)

A god with tear-drop eye and "Dick Tracy" nose holds a round object (perhaps a stone he is about to hurl) by one hand and a tied captive by the other. His head is cleft, with two stepped scrolls on either side; in the cleft can be seen something like kernels of maize. I presume this is the Maize God, but he bears little resemblance either to Cintéotl, the Mexican Corn God, or to God E, his Maya counterpart. His ear is unusually large and fleshy, and from his neck hangs an ovate pectoral with two dots, an ornament also known for a Toltec–Maya warrior at Chichén Itzá (Tozzer 1957, fig. 690).

The strange captive whom he holds by a double rope has the same prominent upper teeth that he has; on the captive's head is a bird resembling a cormorant.

Page 10 (column R)

This page is so damaged that little can be made of its subject matter. The principal figure was probably standing. In his headdress was a waterbird of some sort, and he wielded a Toltec-style atlatl.

Page 11 (column ?)

Because the column of day signs is missing, and the page is unattached, it is virtually impossible to place page 11 in the context of the Grolier Codex. Presumably it could be either column H or S. The figure is the Death God, depicted as on page 6. In place of the knife, however, he carries a shield with death's head and a group of three darts, the bases of which are painted red. A dart is aimed from him toward a body of water, shown as a U-shaped, cross-sectioned container filled with blue-green; in it floats a gastropod. Quite probably this scene would be the equivalent of Borgia 54, in which the Venus god spears the Water Goddess, Chalchiuhtlicue, who is placed in a tank-like body of water in which are found a snail and a turtle, both spewing blood from wounds. It is likely that on the day that was associated with this particular part of the Venus cycle, drought was expected (Thompson 1950:217).

88. Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel

Collection: Princeton University Library

Provenance: Chumayel, Yucatán

Date: A.D. 1782

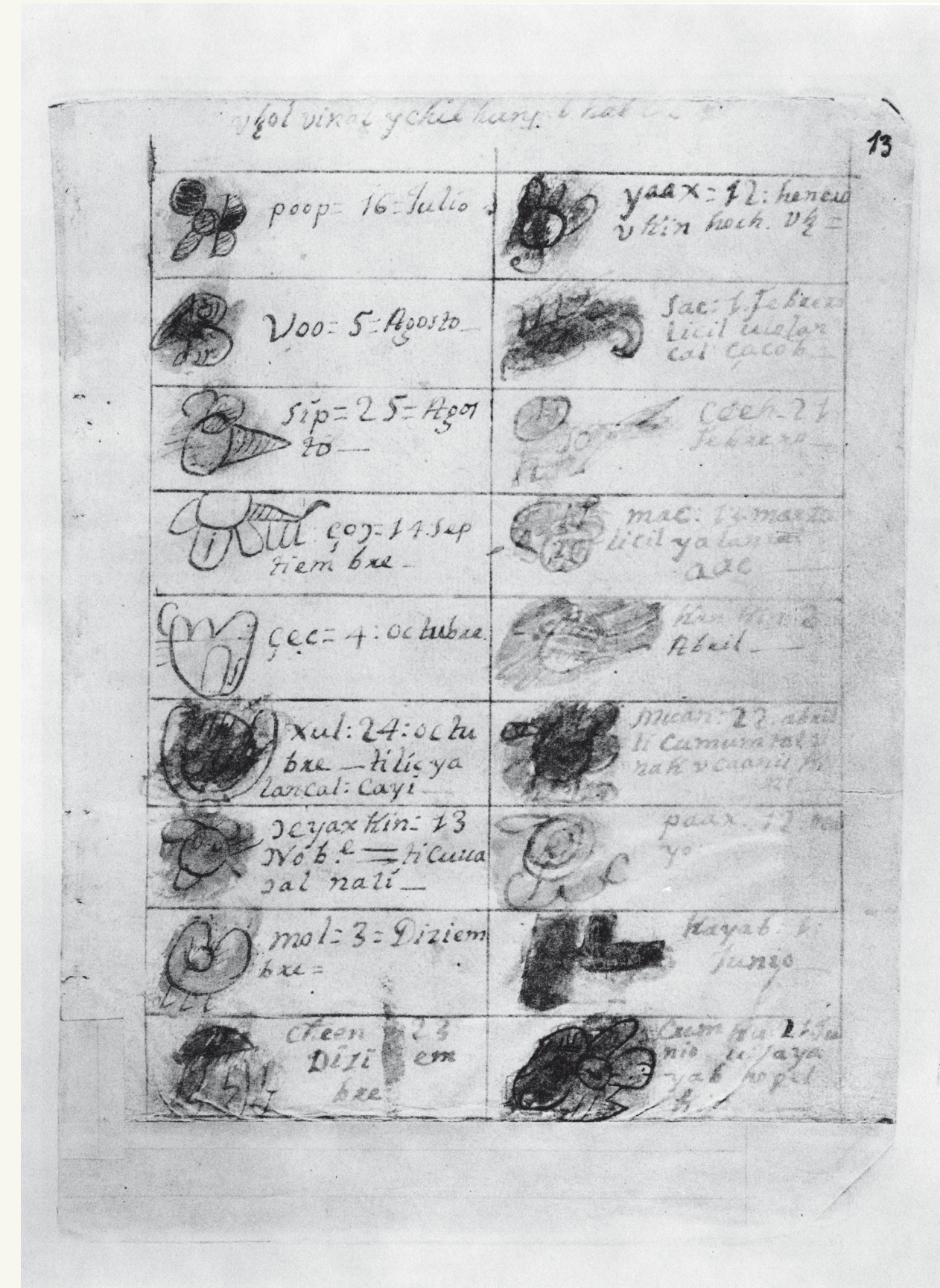
Height: 20.3 cm

Publication: Chumayel 1913; Roys 1933

This small quarto volume originally contained fifty-eight numbered leaves (Roys 1913:6), and is the most famous of the approximately ten Books of Chilam Balam which have come to light. Undoubtedly, many more remain secreted in the hands of Maya scribes in the towns and villages of the Yucatán peninsula. They are named for Chilam Balam, a late pre-Conquest prophet who was believed to have predicted the coming of the Spaniards and the Christian faith to his land.

Actually, the Chumayel, like the other Books of Chilam Balam, has little to do with this alleged prophecy. Rather, it is a late compilation of a wide variety of material, some of which, such as the *katun* prophecies, probably was transcribed in the sixteenth century from prehispanic hieroglyphic codices into the Spanish alphabet. Other sections of the Chumayel deal with the world quarters, the native account of the creation, calendrical material, and a ritual catechism administered to Maya chiefs. Surely post-Conquest are sections dealing with astrology and the coming of the new religion.

Shown here is page 23 of the original, illustrating the eighteen *uinals*, that is, the twenty-day months making up 360 days of the 365-day Vague Year. This seems to be the latest attempt by the Maya to write glyphs, and their sorry appearance is ample evidence for the nearly total breakdown of Maya writing during three and a half centuries of foreign rule. With the abolition and destruction of the Maya priesthood by the friars and the Inquisition, what little native learning survived remained in the hands of local scribes and medicine men who became increasingly untutored in their glorious background with each successive generation. Not one of these month glyphs bears any resemblance to the Maya original, not even to the month signs as written down in the sixteenth century by Bishop Landa. This page thus marks the death of a literary tradition reaching back eighteen centuries into the Maya past.



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Table 3. The Grolier Codex and the Maya Venus Cycle

Page (Grolier)																				
Column	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Position*	SC	ES	IC	MS	SC	ES	IC	MS	SC	ES	IC	MS	SC	ES	IC	MS	SC	ES	IC	MS
Ring number																				
Day sign	Cib	Cimi	Cib	Kan	Ahau	Oc	Ahau	Lamat	Kan	Ix	Kan	Eb	Lamat	Etz'nab	Lamat	Cib	Eb	Ik	Eb	Ahau
	3	2	5	13	2	1	4	12	1	13	3	11	13	12	2	10	12	11	1	9
	11	10	13	8	10	9	12	7	9	8	11	6	8	7	10	5	7	6	9	4
	6	5	8	3	5	4	7	2	4	3	6	1	3	2	5	13	2	1	4	12
	1	13	3	11	13	12	2	10	12	11	1	9	11	10	13	8	10	9	12	7
	9	8	11	6	8	7	10	5	7	6	9	4	6	5	8	3	5	4	7	2
	4	3	6	1	3	2	5	13	2	1	4	12	1	13	3	11	13	12	2	10
	12	11	1	9	11	10	13	8	10	9	12	7	9	8	11	6	8	7	10	5
	7	6	9	4	6	5	8	3	5	4	7	2	4	3	6	1	3	2	5	13
	2	1	4	12	1	13	3	11	13	12	2	10	12	11	1	9	11	10	13	8
	10	9	12	7	9	8	11	6	8	7	10	5	7	6	9	4	6	5	8	3
	5	4	7	2	4	3	6	1	3	2	5	13	2	1	4	12	1	13	3	11
	13	12	2	10	12	11	1	9	11	10	13	8	10	9	12	7	9	8	11	6
	8	7	10	5	7	6	9	4	6	5	8	3	5	4	7	2	4	3	6	1

*SC, Superior Conjunction.
 ES, Evening Star.
 IC, Inferior Conjunction.
 MS, Morning Star.

Table 4. Degrees of Similarity of Grolier Day Glyphs with Other Maya Codices

Grolier day signs	Dresden	Paris	Madrid
Kan	1	0	1
Ix	1	0	0
Eb	1	0	1
Lamat	1	0	0
Etz'nab	1	2	0
Cib	0	0	0
Ik	2 (p.2b)	0	0
Totals	7	2	2