

Repensando las ‘cabezas trofeo’ mayas

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With the little information available about the trophy heads, it is unsurprising that the subject seems to be a taboo in Mesoamerican academic literature. Thus, few have specifically researched this subject in terms of the Maya culture. Nevertheless, in Amerindia, headhunting, head fertility cults, and beheading rituals were common. Based on comparative anthropology, this paper offers an explanation for the Maya trophy head phenomenon as the expression of a head cult, as seen in other Amerindian groups with a shared cosmological background.

Key words: Trophy heads, beheading, ritual, warfare.

Introducción

El tema de las cabezas trofeo ha sido una “piedrita en el zapato” de los estudios mayas, pues es un tema bastante complejo y, por lo mismo, poco estudiado entre los especialistas del área. En la actualidad, podemos decir que contamos con la información necesaria para reabrir la discusión del tema que antes Baudez (2000, 189-204) había tratado y recientemente Helmke (2020). Hasta ahora, la evidencia más temprana que tenemos documentada de este acto en el área maya se encuentra fechada entre el 700 y el 800 a.C. en Ceibal. En los trabajos arqueológicos de las últimas temporadas a cargo de Takeshi Inomata se reportó el hallazgo de una concha *spondylus* trabajada con forma de cabeza humana decapitada – pensada así por su expresión y rasgos afines con las representaciones de estos objetos– con los orificios que la reconocen como un collar en el que la posición del rostro se encontraba invertido. Mientras que la referencia más tardía podría, muy probablemente, corresponder a la representación del acto de cercenamiento de la cabeza enmarcada en el *Rab'inal Achi*, en donde una de las escenas finales emula el acto al tocar el cuello del héroe con un hacha. La única referencia en lengua maya que tenemos sobre esta práctica es del kaqchikel anotado en el voca-

bulario de fray Thomás de Coto, quien registró la entrada: “Cortar la cabeza: Tin 3at, o tin çel ru vi // Cortar por medio: niqah tin 3at [...]”, donde *tin* es ‘estrondo, golpear’, y “Descabezar 3at el ru vi: Degollar” (Coto 1983, 115). Por desgracia, se desconoce con certeza el nombre que este objeto pudo haber tenido en el Clásico, aunque Helmke ha propuesto *Aj-jol*, “el de la calavera” como el título que refirió al propietario de una cabeza trofeo – más probablemente a un cráneo trofeo–, el cual evidenció en varios sitios mayas, como Copán y Bonampak (Miller y Brittenham 2013; en: Helmke 2020, 32).

La decapitación

Las imágenes más recurrentes que nos vienen a la mente al hablar del tema de las cabezas trofeo suelen ser las asociadas iconográficamente a guerreros en la cerámica policromía del Clásico Tardío. Pero, ¿cómo es que estas cabezas llegan a convertirse en cabezas trofeo? y ¿qué es lo que las distingue de otras cabezas referenciadas en la iconografía? Lo primero sería entender el proceso orgánico de obtención del miembro humano. Se han suscitado discusiones acerca de si la adquisición de la testa pudo haberse realizado de forma *peri* o *post mortem*,¹ argumentando la falta de instrumentos adecuados para

1 Como *peri mortem* se entiende las lesiones encontradas en los huesos provocadas alrededor de la muerte, es decir, poco antes del deceso o poco después de que hubiese muerto. Este tipo de lesiones y/o marcas es producido cuando los huesos todavía están “frescos”. La muerte por degollamiento ocurre siempre de manera *peri mortem* y es una lesión cortante (por impacto o deslizamiento) en hueso fresco, sin señales de reacción ósea –en caras laterales o cara ventral de cuerpos vertebrales cervicales– (Tiesler y Cucina 2010, 199). Es el corte de los paquetes vasculares, que tenía el objetivo de conseguir sangre. Para lo que no era necesario separar la cabeza, ya que un corte lateral en el cuello, por debajo del ángulo de la mandíbula, sería suficiente (Chávez 2010, 320).

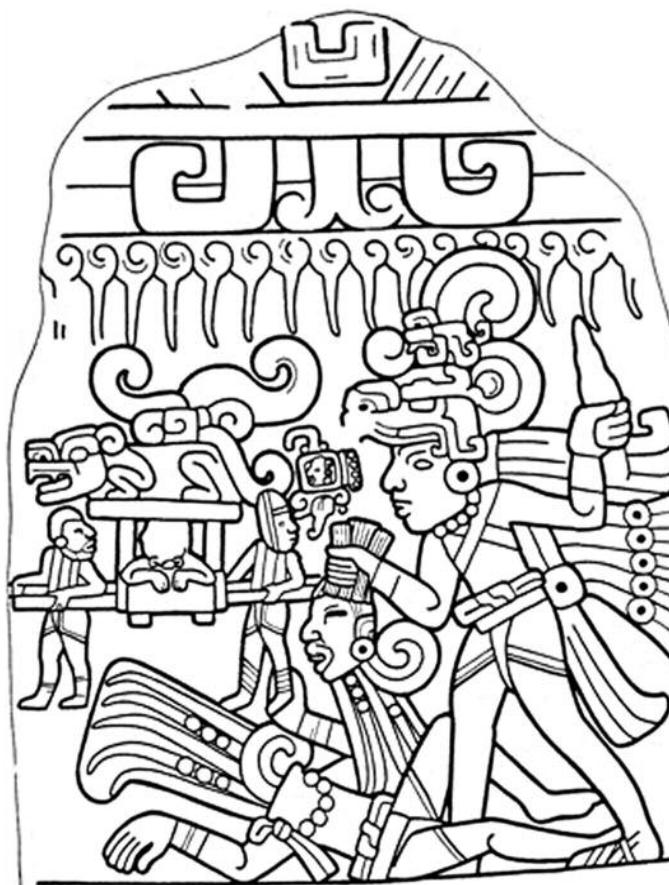


Figura 1. Representación del momento inmediato a la decapitación. Estela 21 Izapa. (Dibujo Ajax Moreno).

causar la muerte por decapitación. También se ha hablado de la posibilidad de que la muerte haya sido por degollamiento para así después proceder a la decapitación (Houston y Scherer 2010, 183).² La propuesta de Baudez (2005, 58-67), basada en la observación de restos óseos con señales de decapitación en Teotihuacan, supone que los huesos muestran rasgos de un golpe violento entre el atlas y el axis que rompió el odontoide, desencadenando con ello la muerte del sujeto. Lo que llevó a Baudez a concluir que la decapitación era producida en dos tiempos; primero, un golpe sobre la nuca que mataba a la víctima, para después decapitarla con un cuchillo afilado (Baudez 2005, 65). Aunque por los resultados de las investigaciones de Ximena Chávez (2010, 317-434) en el proyecto de Templo Mayor, parece más bien haber sido un proceso de muerte por degollamiento que trascendió en la decapitación del individuo. Esto funciona de la siguiente manera: la articulación entre el cráneo y las dos primeras vértebras cervicales es sumamente compleja, al hacer posible el movimiento de la cabeza.



Figura 2. Representación del momento inmediato a la decapitación. Monumento 1 Bilbao. (Dibujo Oswaldo Chinchilla).

2 La diferencia entre decapitar y degollar cierre en que la primera implica la separación de la cabeza por desarticulación, mientras que la segunda hace referencia únicamente al corte de los paquetes vasculares provocando con ello el desangramiento del individuo (Chávez 2010, 318).

El atlas es un anillo con carillas articulares superiores con las que conforma la articulación occipitoatloidea. Por su parte, las carillas inferiores que articulan con el axis son planas y sus superficies están unidas mediante ligamentos, lo cual crea una gran resistencia. La cara posterior del arco anterior tiene una superficie articular para el diente del axis, que forma la articulación atlantooccitaria, permitiendo el movimiento de rotación de la cabeza (Fernández Villacañas y Moreno Casales 2002, 92-95). Como podemos ver, la articulación entre el atlas y el axis es muy compleja, pues presenta varios ligamentos y una membrana, motivo por el cual la decapitación en este punto se vuelve un procedimiento muy laborioso que debe realizarse con movimientos en dirección posterior-anterior. Si el cadáver se encontraba boca arriba, la mandíbula impediría el corte de estas estructuras. Todo esto nos lleva a concluir que la decapitación en el Clásico maya no se hacía entre la tercera y la séptima vértebra, a pesar de que es un método más sencillo que el realizarlo entre el atlas y el axis, ya que la primera modalidad precisa hacerse de costado o de frente, mientras que la segunda se realiza con el sujeto boca abajo (Chávez 2010, 320), justo como se representa en las escenas iconográficas rituales. Este proceso puede asociarse con las piezas cerámicas K1606 y la K694, en donde se muestran actos de cercenamiento de la cabeza a personajes aún vivos con apoyo de otros instrumentos cortantes, mientras que las imágenes de dicho acto con el hacha son más que recurrentes.

Si el acto ritual de obtención de una cabeza trofeo implicaba la decapitación del sacrificado, entonces podemos reconocer la importancia de la obtención del futuro inmolado vivo. Las cabezas trofeo eran objetos rituales con origen bélico, pues sólo una cabeza podía tener dicha calidad si tenía como procedencia un cautivo de guerra. Así, la obtención del cautivo vivo era vital para poder llevar el ritual –de tipo *peri mortem*– a cabo. De esto podemos dar fe gracias a la multiplicidad de representaciones en la que los guerreros hacen uso de estas cabezas aún sangrantes en escenas de batalla o ulteriores. Representaciones del momento inmediatamente posterior a la obtención de la cabeza las encontramos en la Estela 21 de Izapa, así como en el Monumento 1 de Bilbao (Figura 1 y 2). Estas imágenes marcan la distinción entre esta variante de cabezas y las testas de ancestros, pues estas últimas se muestran como objetos de piedra verde con rostros humanos o zoomorfos divinizados, a los que incluso se añade el nombre del ancestro correspondiente. Sobre todo, suelen encontrarse en las partes delanteras y traseras de los cinturones de los gobernantes adornados por tres celtas de piedra preciosa.

El tratamiento y uso de las cabezas decapitadas

Iconográficamente, las cabezas trofeo son objetos fáciles de reconocer, pues son claramente humanas y, en muchos de los casos, aún sangrantes, posiblemente resaltando su reciente obtención, con cabello atado o despeinado, orejas sacrificiales –de papel manchadas de sangre– y rostros de sufrimiento o denotando su defunción con boca abierta y ojos cerrados; cuelgan de los cinturones –ya sea por la parte frontal o en la espalda baja– o del cuello de su dueño Figura 2, haciendo de las cabezas trofeo un objeto destinado para el guerrero capto, desligando el ritual de decapitación para la obtención de la cabeza como trofeo de un acto dedicado a los dioses. Otro punto a favor de esta tesis es que las cabezas trofeo son elementos iconográficos que, al igual que el rostro mismo del cautivo, son los únicos personajes que se representan de frente y no de perfil, marcando así su equivalencia.

Con referencia a lo anterior, podríamos pensar en la posibilidad de decapitar en la batalla misma pero, en realidad, por las implicaciones logísticas y rituales del acto y la cabeza, esto no pudo haber funcionado así, aunque no lo podemos aseverar por la carencia de datos al respecto. A falta del conocimiento de técnicas para embalsamar o reducir cabezas, éstas eran usadas inmediatamente tras el acto de desmembramiento, pues así se evitaba portarlas ya en estado de putrefacción, probablemente es por ello que se representaron aún sangrantes, recordemos de nuevo la escena de la Estela 21 de Izapa, así como la Estela 1 del Jobo. Con respecto a las cabezas trofeo, Descola anotó que los grupos jíbaros,

[...] no bien muerto el enemigo es decapitado y los atacantes se repliegan hacia un lugar convenido, suficientemente alejado del teatro de los combates para que la continuación de las operaciones pueda desarrollarse sin mucho peligro para ellos. Allí practican una incisión en la cabeza desde la nuca hasta la coronilla y le extraen el cráneo, los maxilares, el cartílago de la nariz y la mayoría de los músculos antes de hacerla hervir en una marmita para quitarle la grasa (Descola 2005, 268);

si bien el proceso para la reducción no existió en nuestra área de interés y, por lo tanto, el proceso de obtención es dispar, el fenómeno a simple vista muestra cierta afinidad.

Sobre lo que pudo haber sucedido con las cabezas tras su inevitable putrefacción, una posibilidad es que la prolongación de su vida de uso se lograra a través del culto a sus cráneos. No es que este sea un fenómeno homogéneo, pues en la mayoría de los casos el culto parece apuntar más a una relación directa con la veneración



Figura 3. Cabezas trofeo, detalle de vasija K6414. (Foto de Justin Kerr).

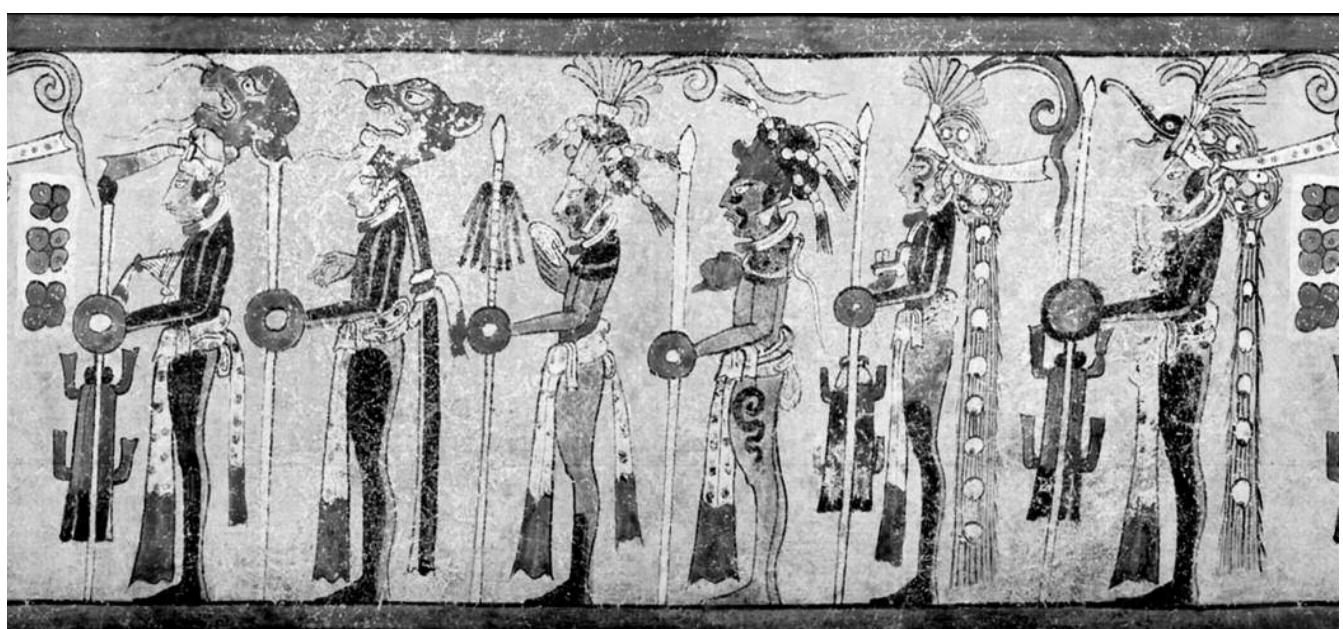


Figura 4. Guerrero usando una mandíbula descarnada en su pecho. Detalle vaso K5124. (Foto de Justin Kerr).

de las osamentas de ancestros que a las de los guerreros enemigos, a pesar del proceso de familiarización que se crea con estos últimos. En el caso que ahora nos compete, el posible cráneo de antiguas cabezas trofeo, contamos con una referencia muy interesante del Centro de México en *La hystory du Mechique* cuando habla de la crianza de Quetzalcóatl, en el pasaje en que él y sus vasallos vengan la muerte de su padre por sus hermanos, “[...] flechó sus hermanos. Los vasallos de Quetzalcóatl decapitaron a los hermanos y se embriagaron usando los cráneos como copas” (ver Olivier 2015, 42). Cito esta referencia, pues recuerda el pasaje del *Rab'inal Achí* en el que el señor de los k'iche' enuncia: “Es esa Tu mesa de manjares, es esa Tu copa de beber? [...] ¡Pero ese es el cráneo de mi abuelo, esa es la cabeza de mi padre, la que veo, la que miro! ¿No se podría formar lo mismo con los huesos de mi cabeza, con los huesos de mi cráneo, cincelar mi boca, cincelar mi faz?” (Rabinal – Achí 1989, 73-74). Si bien el pasaje refiere a un cráneo de ancestro, se piensa que el uso de las osamentas como copas quizás no fue tan diferenciado; pensando en la referencia de Landa al uso de las mandíbulas descarnadas de cautivos por sus captores:

Después de la victoria quitaban a los muertos la quijada y limpia la carne, poníánsela en el brazo. Para su guerra hacían grandes ofrendas de los despojos y si cautivaban algún hombre señalado, le sacrificaban luego porque no querían dejar quien les dañase después. La demás gente era cautiva en poder de quien la aprendía (Landa 1959, 52) (Figura 4).

En este sentido, hay evidencia arqueológica relacionada a dicha práctica en el periodo Clásico, en el sitio de Xunenkal, en cuya área residencial se exhumó un entierro múltiple dentro de una cista. El primero de los individuos llevaba sobre su tórax un cráneo-máscara, cuya parte posterior se había cortado de forma vertical. Tenía perforaciones en los parietales, en la mandíbula y en ambas porciones auriculares, quizás para colgarla del cinturón del individuo. Varios dientes se habían perdido durante el uso de la máscara, siendo reemplazados con las piezas de otros individuos (Tiesler y Cucina 2010, 207). Esta evidencia podría apuntar que, debido a la corta vida de uso de una cabeza trofeo, ésta pudo haber tenido como destino un ‘cráneo trofeo’, pues es similar a las representaciones de dichos cráneos a manera de cabezas trofeo en monumentos como la Estela de Dos Caobas, el Mural de la Batalla de Bonampak y algunas piezas de cerámica polícroma (Figura 5), en todas ellas se muestran usos diversos de los cráneos trofeo.

Es natural pensar que para poder hacer uso del cráneo trofeo previamente debió de desollarse la cabeza, por la naturaleza de las sociedades mesoamericanas esto seguramente conllevó un acto ritual. De nuevo, es gracias a fray Thomás de Coto que tenemos la entrada para el acto de “*deshollejar: tin qhol, o ti u'eleçah ruq, umal*” (Coto 1983, 149) como único testimonio lingüístico de dicho acto, además de la referencia en el *Título de Yax* que dice: *Ta xquijol ujolom caminak xquic'akbej quib*, “Cuando desollaron las calaveras, y las tiraron unos a otros” (Carmack y Monloch 1989, 105). Para épocas más tempranas, tenemos la formidable figurilla de El Baúl hallada en el marco del proyecto dirigido por Osvaldo Chinchilla, la cual representa una figura de un hombre usando una máscara de rostro humano (Chinchilla 2014, 2). El personaje porta parafernalia sacrificial (collar, brazaletes y tobilleras de papel plisado), resaltando la máscara de un rostro desollado que muestra arrugas causadas por la contracción y descontracción de la piel despellajada, estas arrugas son comunes en la iconografía mesoamericana del desollamiento.³ Indicadores de evidencia iconográfica y osteológica de esta práctica existen en las Tierras Bajas mayas del Clásico (Taube 1992, 105-110). Massey y Steele reportaron marcas de removimiento de tejido blando y piel en un depósito de treinta cráneos hallados en Colhá (Massey y Steele 1997, 62-77). Efigies cerámicas del Posclásico provenientes de El Salvador retratan a individuos viendo piel humana (Chinchilla 2014, 4).

Entre sus escritos sobre Guatemala, el fraile de las Casas notó que antes de ser enterradas, las cabezas de las víctimas sacrificiales estaban fijadas en a unos postes arriba de las estructuras por un tiempo. Esto hace sugerir a Miller que, por el número de mandíbulas halladas a lo largo del *sacbe* de Chichen Itzá, la exposición de cráneos en postes a lo largo de éste podría explicar tales hallazgos (Miller 2007, 171). Aunque quizás podría referir más a la costumbre del uso de mandíbulas de guerreros como lo refirió Landa (1959, 52). Para redondear y dejar abierta la discusión sobre el tema, Fray Torivio de Benavente hizo referencia a:

Las cabezas de los que sacrificaban, en especial de los tomados en guerras, desollaban, y si eran señores o principales los ansí tomados, desollábanlas con sus cabellos, y secábanlas para guardar. De éstas había muchas al principio, y si no fuera porque tenían algunas barbas, nadie creyera sino que eran rostros de niños, y causábalo esto por estar como estaban secas (Benavente 1971, 74);

³ Son comunes los fragmentos cerámicos que indican este tipo de acto ritual, aunque no así figurillas completas (Chinchilla 2014, 3).



Figura 5. Guerrero en combate usando cráneo trofeo como collar. Detalle Mural de la Batalla, Bonampak. (Dibujo de Heather Hurst y Leonard Ashby).

haciendo una interesante alusión a lo que pudieron haber sido cabezas reducidas en el Centro de México.

La cabeza trofeo en la cosmología maya del Clásico

Con respecto a la cabeza y su valor en el pensamiento maya, es común su asociación al mundo vegetal y como origen de la germinación en algunos casos. Así se relata en el *Popol Vuh*:

Fue cortada la cabeza de Jun Junajpu solamente su tronco fue enterrado con su hermano menor. 'llevad su cabeza entre las ramas del árbol el que está pintado en el camino' dijeron, pues, Jun Kame Wuqub' Kame. Entonces llevaron su cabeza entre las ramas del árbol entonces dio fruto, pues, el árbol no tenía fruto cuando no estaba puesta la cabeza de Jun Junajpu entre las ramas del árbol. Así, pues, jícara llamamos hoy a la cabeza de Jun Junajpu, así es llamada (Popol Vuh 2013, 66),

similar a lo referenciado en los Monuments 2 y 4 de Bilbao (Figura 6), colocando a la cabeza en el contexto del ritual de decapitación en el juego de pelota como una especie de calabaza que genera vida vegetal.

La *tsantsa*, nombre jíbaro para las cabezas trofeo, no es un 'trofeo' ordinario. En este caso, a diferencia de otros grupos de la región amazónica quienes también llevan a cabo esta práctica, no es un botín que testimonie una hazaña bélica y del que se deshacen sin miramientos al final del ritual; no es un amuleto, fuente de energía y poder que permitiría controlar espíritus, atraer animales de caza o multiplicar la fertilidad de los huertos. Descola refiere que lejos del vitalismo de los fetiches, este objeto sin sustancia y sin contenido funcionaba más bien como un operador lógico, una marca abstracta de identidad susceptible,

por su abstracción misma, de ser empleada para la fabricación de identidades nuevas entre los mismos grupos jíbaros (pues sólo se obtienen de otros jíbaros con los que no tengan relación alguna). Justo este factor es lo que da razón de ser a la reducción, puesto que las cabezas trofeo 'ordinarias', capturadas por otros pueblos amazónicos, por efecto del clima se pudren y pierden su fisonomía original. Como la *tsantsa* perduraba, en consecuencia, la miniaturización de la cabeza era el efecto secundario de la técnica de conservación que buscaba preservar los rasgos del decapitado, pues era un factor vital para el establecimiento de afinidad con el enemigo decapitado (Descola 2005, 270). Mas, si esto sucede con las cabezas trofeo 'imperecederas' en otra región de la misma Amerindia, ¿cómo es que podemos explicar el fenómeno y función de dichos objetos en los casos en que no existe un proceso de preservación?

Para explicar esta práctica, en muchas ocasiones se ha atribuido la caza de cabezas trofeo como fin último de la guerra, como es el caso de la cultura nazca. La iconografía de estos objetos se encuentra claramente aso-

ciada a la fertilidad, hasta el punto de brotar de ellas plantas comestibles; así que más que “semillas metafóricas” (López 2012, 52), a los ojos de Bischof, estos objetos debieron de haberse considerado como portadores de potencias reproductivas vitales para la agricultura. Sin embargo, en tiempos tardíos en la cultura nazca (s. V-VII d.C.), la cabeza trofeo se convirtió en un logro personal como requisito para el ascenso socio-político del guerrero, llegando al punto de volverse cada vez más común el pintarlas y/o modelarlas en barro (Bischof 2005, 81-82). En la zona andina, por lo general, en tiempos precolombinos en el contexto de la captura de cabezas, este objeto era pensado para engendrar los ciclos agrícolas, pastoriles, la producción familiar (incluida la fertilidad humana) y el dominio del poder político, pensado en la habilidad del hombre para hablar (López 2012, 52). Mientras que en el caso jíbaro, el ritual asociado a esta actividad es descrito como “[...] una especie de epifanía barroca, cargada de alusiones esotéricas a la muerte y el renacimiento, a la fecundidad y al alumbramiento, al salvajismo caníbal y a las reglas inmemoriales de la armonía social” (Descola 2005, 269); haciendo de la práctica de reducción de cabezas una vía de acceso a los poderes de la fertilidad, para mujeres y cautivos, tomados de los afines potenciales. Todo ello da fe de la familiaridad del pensamiento amerindio en torno al entendimiento de la cabeza trofeo como un elemento en el que se hace patente



Figura 6. Monumento 2 Bilbao (izquierda) y Monumento 4 Bilbao (derecha).

la fertilidad a partir de su cercenamiento y depredación como acto de consumo.⁴

Las cabezas trofeo maya parecen enmarcarse en la misma línea que el resto de Amerindia. Pues si no podemos hablar de un fenómeno de cacería de cabezas

⁴ En otro caso de cacería de cabezas, la vinculación de las cabezas con el nombre y el territorio asociado a él entre los asmat de Papúa sólo refleja que no podemos hablar de universalidad en el fenómeno de obtención de cabezas, pues fuera de Amerindia parece que el acto no tiene una relación directa con la fertilidad humana y vegetal que parece ser patente en la macro área americana.

como tal, ni mucho menos colocar a esta actividad como motivación primordial de la guerra en la región, sí podemos proferir que el fenómeno se inscribe en el mismo marco de la asimilación del enemigo como elemento creador de relaciones sociales y agrícolas a través de la obtención de su cabeza, claro, con sus propias particularidades como el resto de los casos. Ya hemos revisado el tema de la cabeza como origen de vida, un buen pasaje que así lo refiere aparece de nuevo en el *Popol Vuh*, donde la cabeza de Jun Junajpu embaraza a la joven del inframundo al escupir en su mano:

Solamente descendencia te he dado con mi saliva mi baba. Así mi cabeza ya no sirve solamente es un hueso ya no tiene carne solamente así, pues, es la cabeza de un gran señor solamente su carne hace bonita su apariencia así, pues, cuando se muere, asusta en su exterioridad a la gente por sus huesos. Así pues, solamente es su hijo, así, su saliva su baba es la esencia del hijo del señor del guerrero del pensador del orador solamente queda su hija su hijo (Popol Vuh 2013, 69)

revelando a la cabeza como contenedor de elementos fecundadores.

Existe una corriente que explica que el acto ritual de la decapitación y la obtención de la cabeza humana, ya en un contexto de cabeza trofeo o no, cierre en la idea de la testa como centro anímico. Esto es: sabemos que el nombre de la entidad anímica que residía en la cabeza era *b'aahis* (Velásquez 2009). De esta forma, se explica que la práctica de decapitación pudo haber estado asociada también –implícita o explícitamente– con la apropiación de esta entidad anímica, “[...] ya que constituía el centro de la individualidad y de los actos reflexivos; en ella se concentraba el coraje, el valor y la autoridad; era un importante centro de conciencia que regulaba la identidad cultural y social, y matizaba los pensamientos impulsivos del corazón (‘*o'hlis*’) (López 2012, 53). Apoyado en los datos recopilados por las etnografías contemporáneas, López Oliva sostiene la hipótesis de que la motivación del ritual de decapitación fue la obtención del *b'aahis*, apreciada por sus propiedades, pues la cabeza resultaría así la depositaria de una energía divina (López 2012, 54). El hecho de la existencia del *b'aahis* y su residencia en la cabeza a los ojos de esta investigación no es una explicación que de sentido a la complejidad del fenómeno y su familiaridad con el resto de los casos presentes en sociedades amerindias. De una forma u otra, su importancia parece estar más ligada a un proceso de asimilación del enemigo como un medio de creación de familiaridad con otro que en diversas modalidades siempre se presenta como un afín, y que en el actuar ritual se relaciona con la fertilidad y no con actos que de-

noten la importancia de la apropiación de ‘atributos’ anímicos.

La obtención de cabezas trofeo no fue una práctica encaminada a la satisfacción de las deidades o seres sobrenaturales en particular; sino que fue realizada en beneficio de la comunidad y/o del guerrero – y posiblemente de su casa/familia– que se hacía del trofeo, de forma que el ritual que se celebraba debió de concretarse entre el captor, la comunidad, y el guerrero enemigo (antiguo poseedor de la cabeza). El acto ritual pudo tener la intención de establecer lazos de familiaridad entre el nuevo y el antiguo propietario de la cabeza, convirtiendo al enemigo en un familiar aliado, un benefactor que propiciaba la fertilidad y la vida a través de la muerte. Al respecto, Olivier habla que, entre los mexicas, los ritos llevados a cabo con cráneos y huesos “tenían claramente como propósito propiciar el renacimiento de las víctimas tanto humanas como animales. Olivier considera que los huesos eran asimilados simbólicamente con semillas susceptibles de reavivarse, siguiendo un simbolismo ampliamente difundido entre los pueblos cazadores” (Olivier 2010, 31). Aunque para el particular caso maya, parece referir más a una vida vegetal/frutal en el entendido que el hombre es un ser de maíz, retomando así el vínculo entre el guerrero, la caza y la muerte como origen de vida.

En el Marcador B de las estructura 14 –Juego de Pelota– de Yaxchilán, dedicado tras su muerte a Itzamnaah B'ahlam II por su hijo Yaxuun B'ahlam IV, regente en ese momento, se rememora el juego de pelota realizado en 744 d.C. (Schele y Freidel 1999). En la escena se representa el sacrificio de un cautivo en el marco del juego de pelota donde el gobernante juega como Yax Chiit Jun Winik Naah Kan, ser conocido como ‘Serpiente Nenúfar’ (Barrois y Tokovinine 2005, 31), frente a una estructura por la que cae el prisionero Ik’ Chih, ‘Venado Negro’, señor de una jurisdicción llamada Lakamtún (Schele y Freidel 1999). Además de las claras asociaciones comentadas en el apartado anterior acerca de la semejanza del juego de pelota y la cacería del inmolado como pelota y nombrado como venado, de acuerdo con Stuart, con dicho acto sacrificial Yaxuun B'ahlam IV se hace partícipe de un evento de ‘creación’ (Stuart 2003, 24-29); ya que en este acto sacrificial, realizado en un momento histórico, el *k'uhul ajaw* recreó la decapitación de los tres seres sobrenaturales, que ocurrió en tiempos de las distintas creaciones respectivamente (Martin y Grube 2000, 130). La importancia de esta inscripción recae en mostrar el claro vínculo entre el sacrificio por decapitación y la noción de ‘creación’. De las cuatro referencias epigráficas a los sucesos creacionistas, sólo el texto ahora mencionado señala la causa que es en sí la decapitación de los tres seres sobrenaturales, resaltando que el objetivo de estas menciones es hablar del tema de las creaciones y no del

juego de pelota. Desgraciadamente, por la naturaleza de los textos, no es posible vislumbrar sobre el evento que antecedió a las decapitaciones. Lo único que es factible aseverar es que fue llevado a cabo un acto de cercenamiento de cabezas infligido a tres seres sobrenaturales preexistentes a la era actual, en el que cada sacrificio implicó el origen, como creación, de una nueva era. De esta forma, el acto de decapitación, llevado a cabo o no en el juego de pelota, es el ritual que recrea este momento en el que la muerte es producción con el sacrificio del llamado Serpiente Venado Estelar, fenómeno aparentemente emparentado con la llamada ‘Guerra Estrella’, lo que se conecta directamente con el acto de decapitación de cautivos en el marco de un acto ritual creador.

Conclusiones

Cabe aclarar que el fenómeno de apropiación de cabezas, en el que tienen cabida las cabezas trofeo, es sumamente complejo y con muchas y muy dispares particularidades. El que, para el caso del tipo de cabezas que se estudia ahora, refiera a la fecundidad, el renacimiento y la vida/muerte vegetal no implica que el resto de los casos y medios de obtención de cabeza entre los mayas del Clásico funcionara así, pues retomando la idea del culto a cráneos y las cabezas de ancestros, a la par del caso de las cabezas tomadas por las entidades *wahyis*, parecen no poder aplicarse los mismos parámetros para su entendimiento.

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Textual reconstruction of Classic Maya inscriptions: what adaptions and copies tell us about scribes and the practice of writing

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While the task of reconstructing calendrical data is common in Maya epigraphy, the possibilities to fill other types of *lacunae* have only been treated in a superficial manner. However, the systematic reconstruction of missing parts of text, based on the comparison with direct or structural parallels, is essential to any contextual treatment of an inscription. This article presents two cases of Classic Maya texts from Copan, where textual reconstruction is not only possible, but also necessary in order to obtain certain information about authorship and the practice of writing.

Key words: Maya Epigraphy, hieroglyphic writing, copy, adaption, textual reconstruction

Introduction

When we talk about the epigraphy of Maya hieroglyphs, we usually refer to a broad range of research problems and methods. So broad, actually, that one may speak of a trans-discipline that is concerned not only with the description, analysis, and decipherment of the writing system (grammatology), the evolution of writing and calligraphy (paleography), the documentation and analysis of the carriers of writing (archaeology), and the computation of calendrical dates and the correlation with other calendars (chronology), but also—and this is currently the principal focus of Maya epigraphy—the analysis and translation of texts (philology), source critique (history), and the reconstruction of the represented languages (historical linguistics), etc. In a certain manner, this vision contrasts with the traditional conception of epigraphy that was originally thought of as an auxiliary science concerned with the analysis of inscriptions on durable media (mainly stone, but also wood, metal, ceramics, bone, etc.), and with the specific problems raised by these materials. Epigraphic media provide direct data about the context and the time of use, information we usually lack when it comes to literary sources which only survived as copies from later periods. But at the same time, the physical preservation

of inscriptions is an extra challenge because they are frequently found in a destroyed, fragmented, or altered state. From a classical point of view, the epigrapher “prepares” the text for the historians and the philologists by describing its context, reconstructing destroyed and lost parts, solving abbreviations, and providing a date for the inscription (Sandys 1919, 1–2, 197–206; Klaffenbach 1957, 7–10), even though it is not necessarily her or his responsibility to translate it or to include it in a broader historiographic discussion. Today, this strict and static vision of classical epigraphy is not maintained, since its professionals are well aware that their field of work is shaped by practice rather than by a systematic delimitation, and that it converges with archaeology, history, paleography, numismatics, etc. (Bodel 2001, 1–5; Bruun and Edmondson 2015; Cooley 2012, 126–127; Gordon 1983, 3–4).

The first epigraphers in Maya studies were concerned with problems very like those of early classical epigraphers, which is actually why the label became popular in this field. The work of Sylvanus Morley (1920, 1938), for example, is focused on the archaeological (contextual) description of sculpted monuments, their detailed documentation by the means of drawings and photography, as well as the reconstruction and compu-

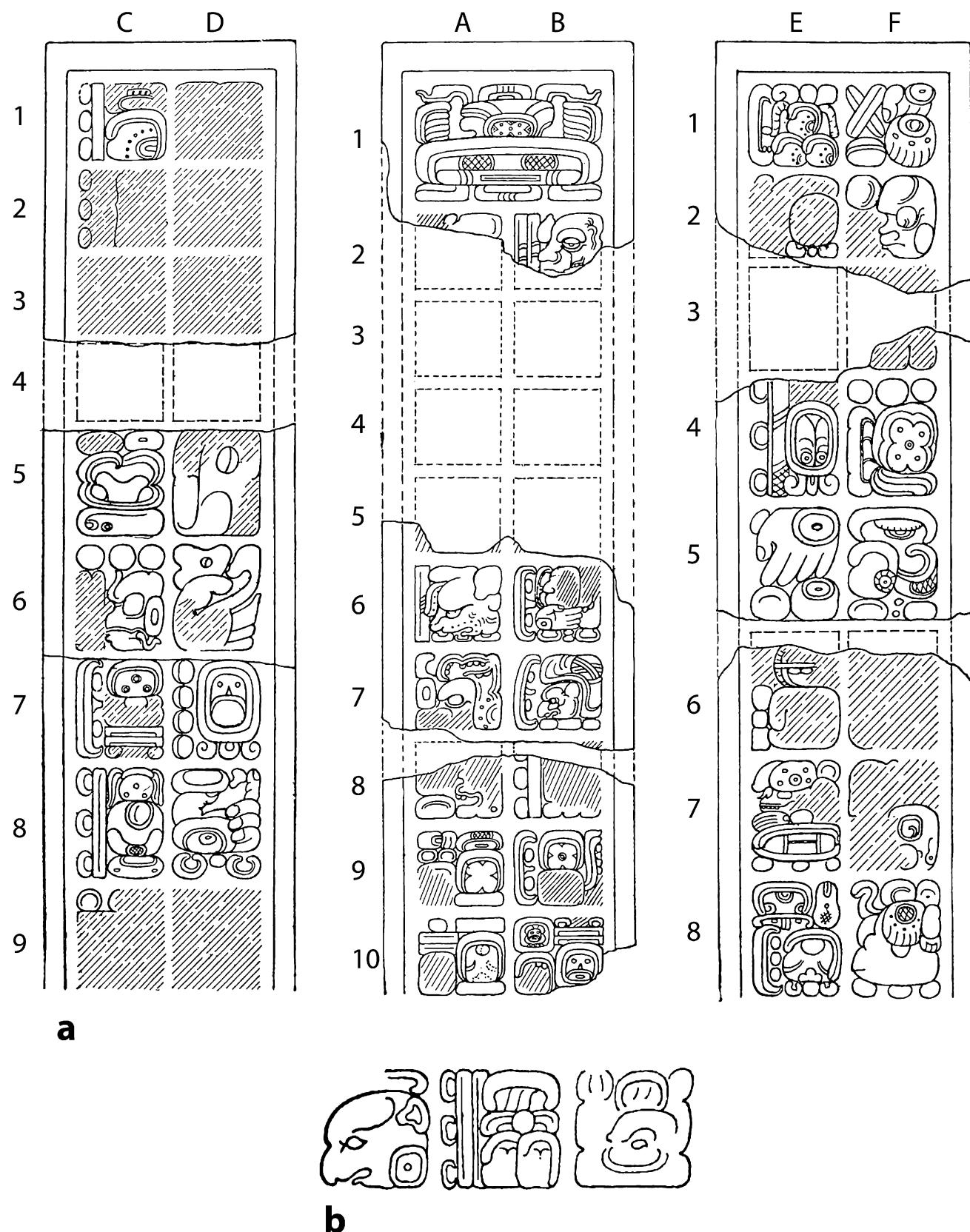


Figure 1. Stela 23 at Copan (Santa Rita). a) Inscription on the sides and back of the stela (Drawing by Sylvanus Morley 1920, 148, fig. 26). b) Partial drawing of the inscription on the front of the stela (Drawing by Sylvanus Morley 1920, 150).

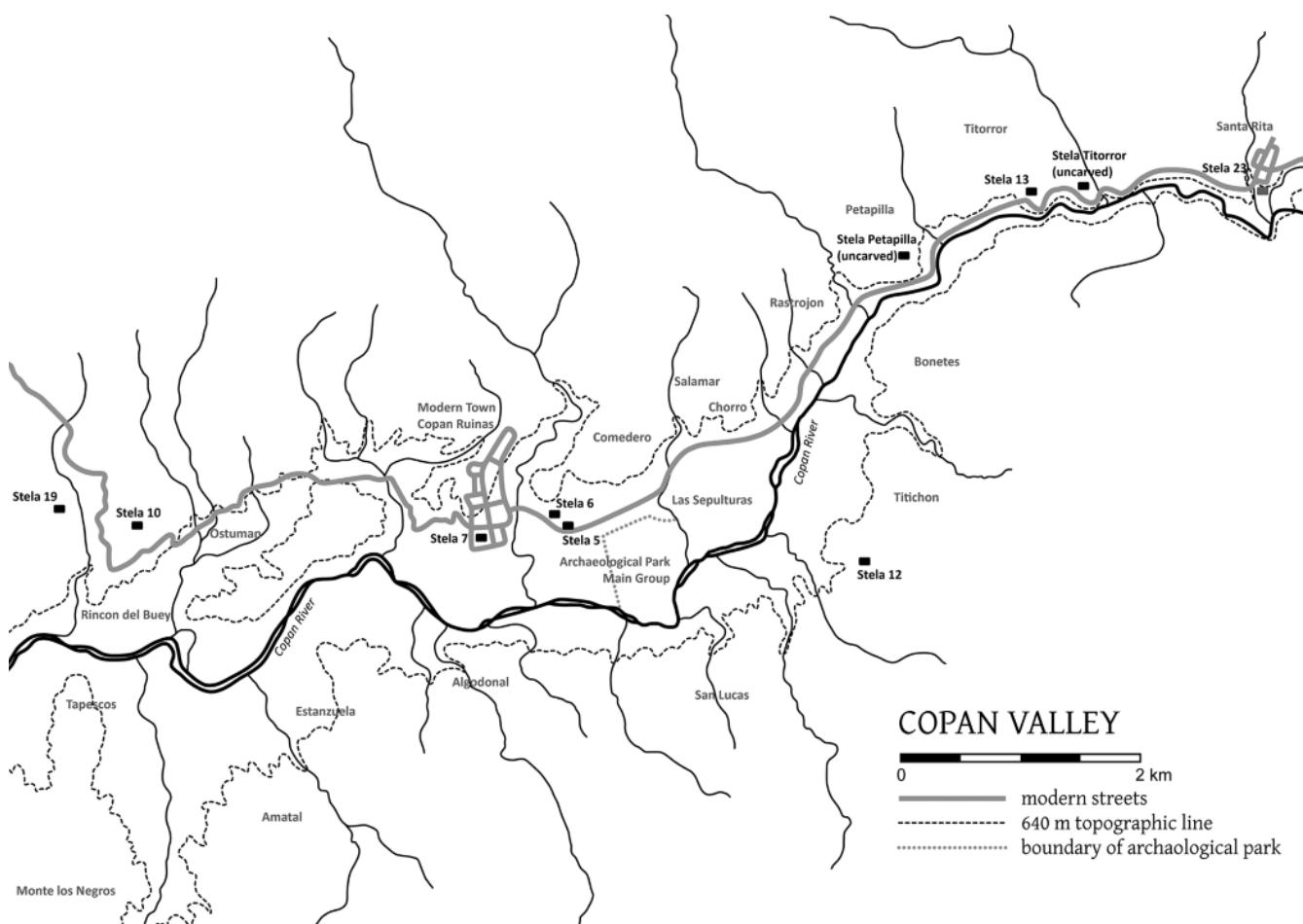


Figure 2. Map of the Copan Valley, pointing out the locations of the outlying stelae (Drawing by the author after Willey et al. 1994, 6, fig. 2).

tation of dates and stylistic dating. In light of the decipherment of the Maya's hieroglyphic script—i.e. the correlation of signs with phonetic values in specific languages—from the 1950s onwards, recent research has concentrated on the contents of inscriptions, discussing their historical, social, cultural, and linguistic implications. The computation of dates is still an obligatory task in the study of any text with calendrical references, since it is frequently the key to a historically conclusive interpretation. Historical, textual, and comparative data are often used to determine even the dates of heavily damaged inscriptions. However, although the reconstruction of calendrical information is a common practice, little attention has been paid to the methodological possibilities of reconstructing other portions of text.

In the following sections I will discuss some examples of textual reconstruction in Classic Maya inscriptions that are not restricted to the calendrical domain. As will be shown, the reconstruction of certain glyphs always requires an analytic comparison. *Lacunae* can only be closed if there are parallel texts which provide examples of the parts missing in the original. The first

case presented here is the inscription of the now missing Stela 23 at Copan (Santa Rita), which is only known from a drawing by Sylvanus Morley (Figure 1). A comparison with texts from Copan and other Maya sites permits not only a full and secure reconstruction of the initial series, but also of a considerable portion of the rest of the text. The second example is the parallel sections of contemporary stelae 2 and 12 at Copan.

Since the filling of *lacunae* is based on the comparison with parallel texts, the result will not augment the text's value as a primary source, i.e. it will not tell us anything new about dynastic biographies or events of sociopolitical significance. However, both of the cases discussed here provide important information on other social issues, such as authorship and the production of hieroglyphic inscriptions, which have received little attention so far.

Local parallels and pan-Maya canons: Stela 23 at Copan

Stela 23 is one of at least seven sculpted stelae which were erected in the Copan valley (Figure 2), outside the

civic-ceremonial centers¹, in the second half of the 7th century AD, during the reign of the twelfth Classic dynast, K'ahk' Utí' Juun Witz' K'awiil². Since the discovery of these monuments, their spatial distribution has received considerable attention and different arguments have been presented in search for an explanation (Fash 1991, 101–104). While some scholars have tried to make sense of the isolated stelae through an interpretation as fix points for astronomical observations (Morley 1920, 132–134; Carter 2014, 35–36), others have speculated about their religious functions (Proskouriakoff 1973, 171), their use as political/territorial markers (Schele and Grube 1988), or even as defensive devices (Fash 1991, 104).

Stela 23 was found by Sylvanus Morley in three fragments at a distance of almost six kilometers from the 7th-century center of Copán (Main Group). The author informs that the monument was “[f]ound built into the walls of the cabildo at Santa Rita [...]” (Morley 1920, 146). Previously, Alfred Maudslay (1889–1902, vol. 1, 16) had reported several fragments of one or more sculpted monuments on the plaza of Santa Rita—probably the same fragments that Morley documented some decades later. Since he made drawings of three sides of the fragments and provided a description of the fourth, it is obvious that he removed the blocks from the modern walls. However, there is no notice of the monument in posterior literature. Moreover, Morley (1920, 13) writes that he saw more sculpted fragments in several modern houses and their courtyards, as well as a cylindrical monolith on the main plaza which may have served as a foundation stone or as an altar for the Stela. Hence, Stela 23 was probably a public monument, integrated into the center of a Pre-Hispanic settlement at Santa Rita.

The lack of further documentation complicates the analysis of the inscription. On one hand, the drawing (Figure 1a) indicates that many glyph blocks were erod-

ed or otherwise damaged, while one fragment of the stela, which contained at least ten more glyph blocks, was completely absent. On the other hand, Morley's drawing—although legible in many parts—lacks certain details and one must suspect some inaccuracies and treat this source with caution. Nevertheless, in what follows it will be shown that it is possible to reconstruct a considerable portion of the inscription, since many of the signs identified in the drawing confirm that the text closely follows the canon of contemporary inscriptions at Copán and other Maya sites.

There is no complete visual documentation of the stela's front, but Morley (1920, 151–152) offers a brief description, stating that it bore the image of a standing individual in profile, accompanied by an L-shaped text of six glyph blocks. As already noted by the same author (Morley 1920, 147–148, 151–152), the style of the portrait is absolutely atypical for contemporary stelae at Copán: all stelae from the 6th to the 8th century show rulers in a frontal perspective (although the depth of the relief increases notably over time). The only example of a stela-portrait in profile is found on Stela 35, which is one of the earliest known sculpted monuments at the site (Riese and Baudez 1983, 186–190, fig. R-114–R115; Schele 1990, 23, fig. 14; Baudez 1994, 155, fig. 174). Anthropomorphic representations in profile are found on other contemporary sculpted media, such as ball-court markers and altars, as well as architecturally integrated sculptures from the 8th century, such as benches or door jambs, but never on stelae. Therefore, the imagery of Stela 23 has to be regarded exceptional. Actually, as already noted by Morley (1920, 151), the ruler's portrait in profile with its text in an inverted L-shape is more characteristic of the central lowlands (e.g., stelae 23 and 29 at Naranjo) and may indicate that a foreign artist was at work here.

In his description, Morley provides a sketch of three of the six glyph blocks (Figure 1b), which can probably

¹ Besides the Main Group, the center of the modern town of Copán Ruinas was a major civic-ceremonial center, at least until the beginning of the 7th century AD. Morley (1920), who named the Pre-Hispanic settlement “Group 9”, identified at least 18 sculpted monuments in this area.

² In the inscriptions of Copán, the name of Ruler 12 is frequently spelled with the logogram HUN (T60 or T609b), usually representing the noun *hu'n* 'book' (e.g. K'AK'-u-TI' HUN-WITZ'-K'AWIL on Altar K; also see stelae 6, 12, E, and I, and the Hieroglyphic Stair of Structure 10L-2; Fash 2003, CPN 22; Riese and Baudez 1983, 149, fig. R-1b; Schele and Schele, no. 1007, 1012; Fash and Fash 2006, 121, fig. 4). However, it is quite probable that this sign should actually be read as *juun* in the name phrase of Ruler 12. The difference between /h/ and /j/ appears to have vanished at Copán by the beginning of the 7th century AD (see Carter 2014, 46–47), so that HUN could easily have served as a *rebus*-spelling for *juun*, and maybe it was a visual way to mark that Ruler 12 was a man of letters. *Juun* 'one' is a classifier that marks primordial beings, such as the maize god, Juun Ixiim, and the cultural hero Juun Ajaw who can be interpreted as mythological derivations of maize and lordship, respectively. Juun Witz' is a deity, probably the mythological originator of *witz'* 'splashing water' (Stuart 2007a). Considering onomastic patterns in regal names (see Colas 2004), the presence of a composite theonym (i.e. Juun Witz' K'awiil, a fusion of Juun Witz' and K'awiil) is far more plausible in this context than a reference to mundane water (i.e. *witz'*). Therefore, the transcription *k'ahk' utí' juun witz' k'awiil* is preferred here.

be read u-BAH 13-u?-PIK [.....]³ *ubaah uxlaajun upik*⁴ ‘[it is] his image, his “baktuns”⁵ are thirteen [...]’⁶, and it is possible that it was followed by the personal name of the portrayed individual (most likely a ruler). The reference to ‘thirteen “baktuns”’ is explained in the main text, as discussed below.

In Morley’s drawing, it is clear that the text starts with the Initial Series Introductory Glyph (ISIG; A1-B1). The following Long-Count and complementary series are very fragmented, which has led to different proposals for the represented date. The relevant elements documented by Morley are:

- the coefficient 10 in the position of the *katun*⁷
- the coefficient 8 in the position of the month (*haab*)
- the patron of the month *yaxkin* in the ISIG.

After the Initial Series, several glyph blocks contain extra-calendrical information (A9-B9) and are followed by a Distance Number that has been interpreted as 5.12 (Morley 1920, 151; see also Callaway 2011, 90). This Distance Number connects the Long Count date to the Calendar Round 12 *ahau* 8 *ceh*, which is best interpreted as the period-ending 9.11.0.0.0 (October 14th, AD 652; B10b-C1). However, a more detailed reconstruction of the passage in A9-A10a shows that the Distance Number is actually a different one, permitting a precise reconstruction of the Initial Series.

After the Initial Series, the inscriptions of Copan usually feature a dedicatory statement that specifies the creation or the inauguration of the respective monument. The verbal and positional roots that express the dedication are *tz’ap* ‘to plant’, *wa* ‘standing’, *k’al* ‘to present/bind’, and—in some occasions—*tzutz* ‘to complete’ (e.g. Stela 2), which does not refer to the monument as an object, but to a related calendar cycle. The form represented on Stela 23 seems to be *wa-la?-ja wa’laj* ‘it

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- 3 Transliterations are marked by bold text. Upper case is used to represent logograms, lower case for phonograms, and Arabic numbers for dot-and-bar numerals. Hyphens connect the graphemes within a glyph block; a space indicates the separation of glyph blocks; and vertical lines mark a line break. Infixed signs are written in curly brackets, while question marks are used for unsure readings. Square brackets are used for *lacunae*: each period indicates the presence of one unknown sign; two dashes represent an unknown number of unknown signs. Text in square brackets is reconstructed. Undeciphered signs are identified by the corresponding T-Numbers (Thompson 1962) or, if not assigned, by the corresponding code in Martha Macri and Matthew Looper’s catalogue (2003).
- 4 Transcriptions are marked by italic text. Square brackets include phonetic values which are not marked in the hieroglyphic original text, as well as *lacunae* and reconstructed text. Question marks are used for unsure readings and parentheses indicate optional or possible readings.
- 5 Period of approximately 394 solar years. The term “baktun” is—just like other long time periods, such as “pictun” and “calabtun”—a modern nickname derived from Yucatec Maya numerals (see Thompson 1950, 147). The Classic Maya term was *pik*, *pihk*, or *pih*.
- 6 Translations are written between single quotation marks.
- 7 Period of approximately 20 years. The commonly used designation *katun* is taken from Colonial Yucatec Maya; another possible translation of the Classic Maya term *winikhaab* is the literal one as “score-year”. Note that terms of Colonial Yucatec origin or derived from expressions in this language are represented in a Colonial orthographic style.

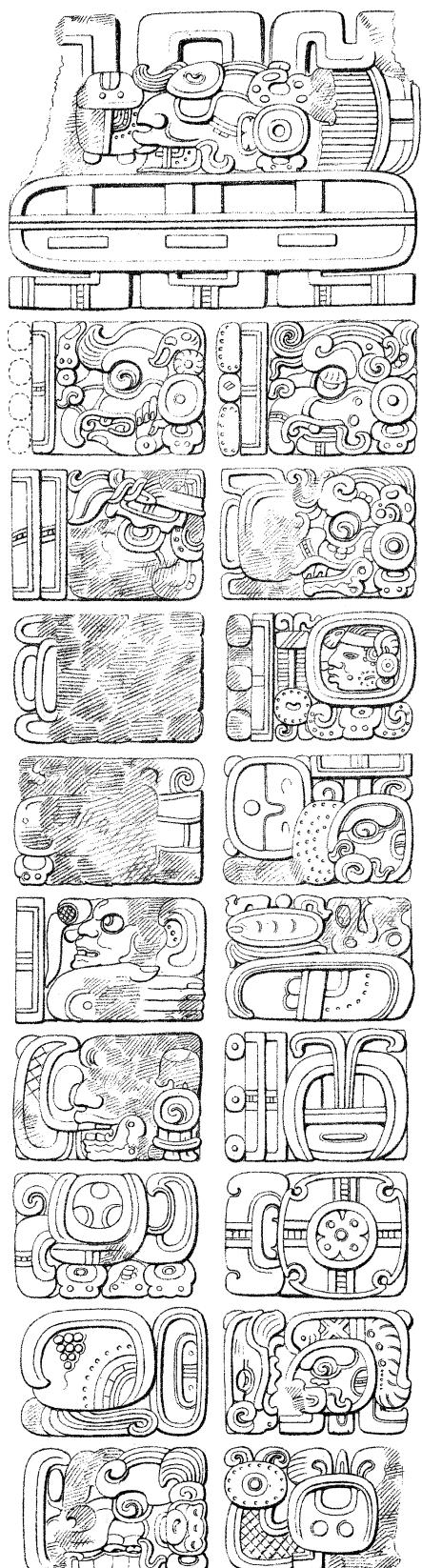


Figure 3. Initial part of the inscription of the now destroyed Stela 9 at Copan, back side Drawing by Annie Hunter (after Maudslay 1889-1902, vol. 1, plate 110).

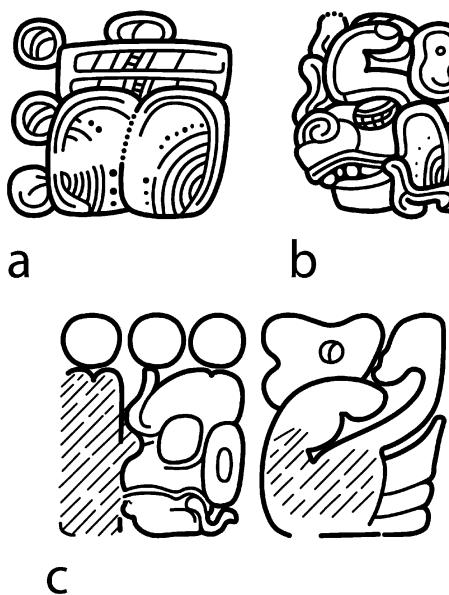


Figure 4. a) The 3-11-PIK-title on the Papagayo Step (E1); b) the conflated name-glyph of Tuun K'ab Hix on the Papagayo Step (M4). c) Detail of C6-D6 on Stela 23. Drawings by the author; a and b after Linda Schele (2000, no. 1045), c after Sylvanus Morley (1920, 148, fig. 26).

stands up' (A9a). After this predicate, the subject is required: YAX?-K'IN-[ni?] *yax?* *k'in* (A9b) is the proper name of the stela, as is clear from other texts with a similar structure that feature the optional expression *u(k'uh)* *k'aba'* '[is] the (divine) name of' (e.g., Copan, stelae 9, D, E, I, M; see Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1006, 1007, 1012). A similar name, *yax k'in tuunil*, was given to Stela 9 (Figure 3). Interestingly, Stela 23 is not classified as a *lakamtuun*, which is the most common term for stela, but as a *k'i[h]n [tuun]* 'heat-stone' (B9). The substitution of the standard expression *lakamtuun* is rare, but not exclusive to Stela 23, as proven, for instance, by the inscription of Stela 9 where the stela is classified as a *chaahk* (Stuart 2010, 296). On Stela 23, the object-classifier *k'i[h]n [tuun]* is possessed, so it is evident that the following glyphs in A10a (11-[]) do not belong to a distance number, but rather to the name of the "owner" of the monolith. In contemporary inscriptions at Copan, this kind of owner is usually a specific supernatural entity that possessed or even inhabited the respective monument. Stela I (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1012), for instance, was inherently possessed⁸ by a well-known deity (XAK?-YUK?-"G1"-mi) who was not only mentioned in the text, but also impersonated by the ruler who was portrayed in the god's guise on the stela's front. In the case of Stela 23, the "owner's" name includes the numeral 11, which is

likely to be a reference to the 11th *katun* as an abstract entity to be associated with the monolith. The next glyph in A10b, then, is a minimalized distance number to be read as 5-WINAL-[ya] *ho' winal[jiiy]* 'it had been five scores [of days]', so the long count can be securely reconstructed as [9.]10.[19.13.0 3 *ahau*] 8 [*yaxkin*] (July 6th, AD 652), a hundred days before the period ending 9.11.0.0.0. This solution—in perfect concordance with all the details documented in Morley's drawing—had already been suspected some decades ago by Linda Schele (1991, 3), due to the appearance of the same date on Stela 10, but no conclusive argument was presented. The reconstruction of the dedicatory phrase eliminates all doubts about the correctness of this solution.

Following the dedicatory statement, the stela inscriptions at Copan usually narrate certain ritual activities, which can include the scattering of incense, the evocation and impersonation of patron gods and other numina, etc. In the case of Stela 23, the Calendar Round implies that the event expected in D1 might have been the completion (*tzuhtzaj*), followed by the *katun*-count of 11 in C2. A comparison with other completion texts, such as those on stelae 7 (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1031) and P (Schele 1990, fig. 10), suggests that certain supernatural and/or ancestral companions were mentioned on Stela 23 as witnesses or the ones responsible of this event. C5 of Morley's drawings possibly reflects the theonym *witzil ajaw*, which resembles the expression *balunte' witz* (Stela I; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1012), as well as the later canonized *tukun witz ajaw* and *mo' witz ajaw* (Baron 2013, 219). Therefore, it is probable that a list of supernatural beings was introduced with *ukabjiyy* 'they had ordered it' or *yitaaj* 'in the presence of', somewhere between C2 and D4. The glyph in D5 is similar to the phonogram a, but it is actually more plausible to assume a logogram, such as MO' or some other bird-head sign. At first glimpse, the next two glyph blocks, C6 and D6, seem to contain another distance number and some verbal form that includes a root written with a hand-shaped glyph (TZUTZ, HUL, or K'AL). However, none of these readings make sense in the broader context, so another hypothetical reconstruction should be considered. C6 is composed of the numeral 3 and, possibly, another numeral, as well as the head of a supernatural being. This pattern is not only characteristic of distance numbers, but also of the title 3-11-PIK, the meaning of which is still unclear (see Looper 2002). This title was used in different Early Classic inscriptions at Copan, most prominently on the so-called Papagayo-Step (Figure 4). On this sculpted monolith, the 3-11-PIK title is associated with the

8 Intimate possession is marked by the suffix *-il* in the expression *ulakamtuunil* 'the stela of'.

Table 1. Transliteration of the main text on Copan Stela 23, indicating local and pan-Maya textual parallels.

Copan, Stela 23	Parallels	
ISIG (patron of <i>yaxkin</i>) [9-PIK] 10-WINIKHAB [19-HAB 13-WINAL MIH-K'IN 3-AJAW G8 u-TI'-HUN] 5°-HUL-ya NAH?-IXIM?-K'AL-[la]-UH X u-{CH'OK}K'ABA'-[a] [WINIK?-ki?-LAJUN] 8-[YAX-K'IN-ni] wa-[la-ja]-YAX?-K'IN-[ni] u-K'IN-[TUN]-ni 11-[PIK?]-5-WINAL-[ya] [?-TUN?]-12-AJAW 8-CHAK-SIHOM [TZUTZ?—] [1]1?-WINIKHAB] [—] [—] [—] [—] [—] WITZ?-li-AJAW a? 3-11?-PIK? {TUN?}K'AB?{HIX?} u-[TZ'AK]-AJ 4-AJAW 8?-OL-la TZUTZ{yi?}-ya [13-PIK TI'-CHAN-na] YAX-ZC6-NAL JEL-[ja] k'o-ba [...]-ya? [...] [12-MIH-WINAL-ji-ya 1-WINIKHAB-ya]? 8-[ti]-LAMAT? 1-YAX-K'IN-ni CHOK-[.-ja?] IL?-TUN?-ja?-ya? [...] [—] bi?-WINIKHAB? [—] se?-li?-li?-u-WINIK?-ya? K'AK'-TI'-WITZ'{K'AWIL}-la	Initial series same as Copan Stela 10	local
	Copan Stela 9 (similar dedicatory statement and stela name)	local
	e.g. Copan, stelae 7, P (completion rites and god-list)	local
	Papagayo Step?	local
	Era Day-inscriptions (e.g. Palenque Temple of the Cross; Quirigua Stela C; Copan Altar CPN 19469, etc.)	pan-Maya

fourth local dynast, Tuun K'ab Hix, whose name is written with a conflated combination of the logograms TUN, K'AB, and HIX, closely resembling Morley's rendering of D6 on Stela 23. Were these two glyph blocks a reference to this Early Classic ruler? If so, this would be a direct link to contemporary Stela 2 with its portrait of K'ahk' Utí Juun Witz' K'awiil wearing Tuun K'ab Hix's headdress (Stuart 2008, 14). While there is—at least for now—no way to prove this hypothesis, the inclusion of ancestral Tuun K'ab Hix's name in the list of summoned beings on Stela 23 is far more plausible than the presence of a distance number and a verbal phrase.

The following section narrates a mythic event, strictly associated with the last creation of the world in 3114 BC. In the corpus of Classic inscriptions, there are plenty of parallels of this passage (Freidel et al. 1993,

59–116; Callaway 2011), allowing a detailed reconstruction of the parts missing on Stela 23 (D7-F1):

*u[tz'ak]aj chan ajaw waxak [...]johl tzutz[uu]yi
[uxlajuun pik ti'chan] yax [...]nal je[h]laj
k'o[jii]b/k'o[j] ba[ah]/k'o[jo]b*

'It was the ordering of 4 ahau 8 cumku, thirteen "baktuns" were completed. At the edge of the sky, at the place of the first hearth-stones, the appearance/the hearth was changed.'

It is interesting that the parallel texts—Stela C at Quirigua (Looper 2003, 12, fig. I.11) and the main panel of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque (Robertson 1991, fig. 9)—put the adverbial clause *ti' chan yax [...]nal* after the verb, while the version of Stela 23 clearly suffered

⁹ Morley's drawing suggests the presence of the glyph 5D, but the expected value is 1ED (21D). At Copán, the computation of the lunar series is generally problematic (Iwaniszewski 2007), but a difference of 13/16 days seems too big, so that the original text probably featured some other numeral, such as 3ED which is found on Stela 10. However, note that there may be variations in the lunar series of stelae 10 and 23, since glyph C seems to have the coefficient 6 on the former and NAH (1) on the latter.

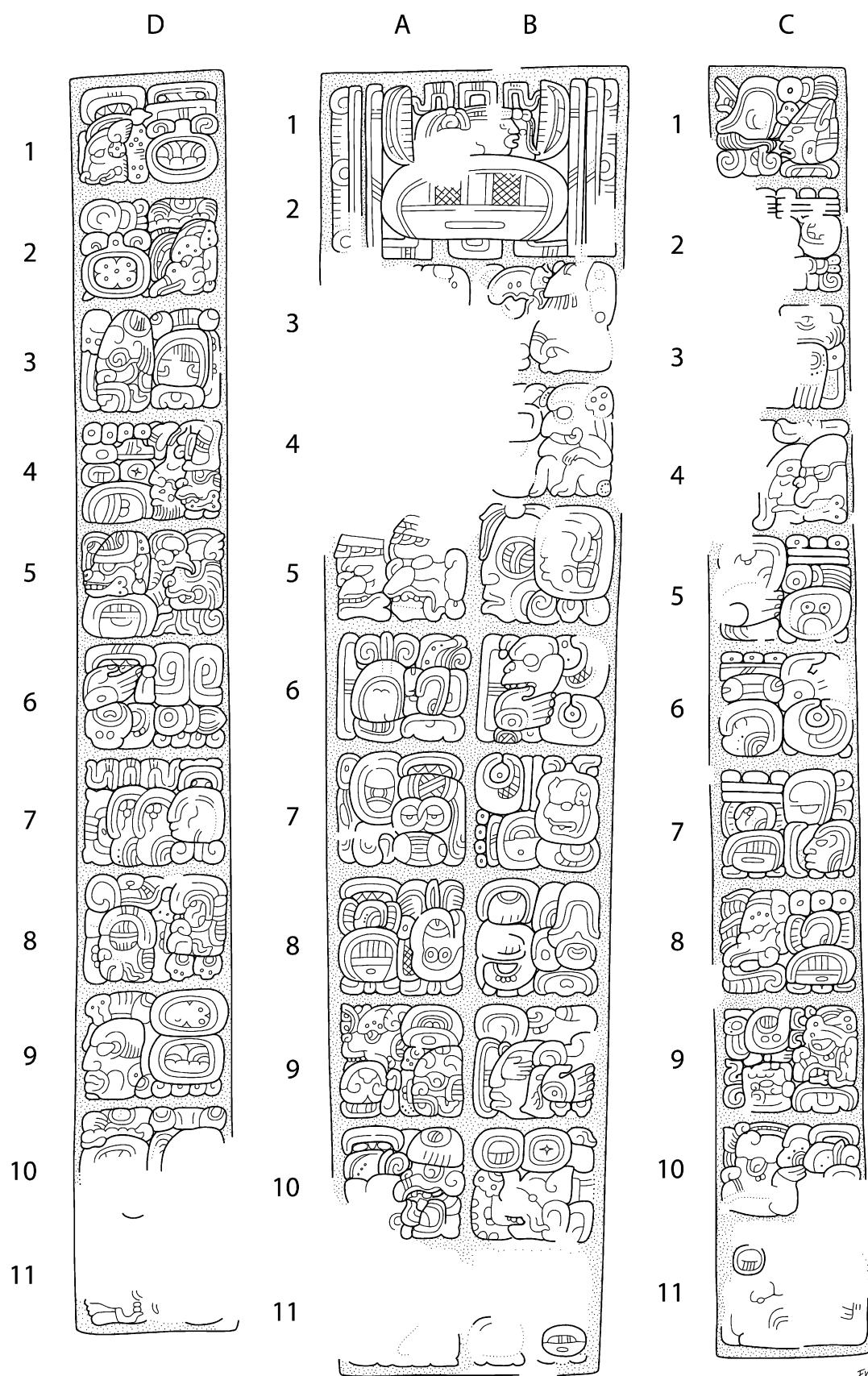


Figure 5 Stela 2 at Copan, inscription on the east, north, and west side. Drawing by the author, based on the drawing by Barbara Fash (Schele and Looper 2005, 366, fig. 9.18) and the original.

a syntactic alteration or, maybe more accurately, had not yet suffered this standardization. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of the segment *ti' chan* (D9) is valid, for this toponym appears constantly paired with *yax [...]nal* in the Classic corpus.

The next glyph blocks (E2-F3) cannot be reconstructed, since Morley's drawing does not show enough detail in this damaged portion of the inscription. Considering that E4-F4 contain the Calendar Round 8 *lamat 1 yaxkin*—probably 9.10.18.12.8 (June 30th, AD 651)—, it is possible that E3-F3 originally showed a distance number (1.0.12), but not necessarily so. The event of this date, the scattering of incense, was written in E5, but the following glyphs are, again, impossible to reconstruct. Apparently, F5 expressed another predicate, but the subject cannot be identified with certainty. It may have been Ruler 12, whose name was written at the end of the text (E8) as *k'ahk' [u]ti' witz' k'awiil* (see Riese 1979). However, judging from Morley's drawing, the preceding glyph block (F8) seems to have included the expression *uwinik* 'the man of', implying that the protagonist was not the ruler of Copan himself, but a subordinate individual, maybe a local leader of Santa Rita. Unfortunately, it is impossible to prove this, since the available data is quite limited.

The text of Stela 23 (Table 1) is but one of many examples that show the adaption of distinct local and pan-Maya canons in a rather complex discursive composition. We may talk of proto-texts which were constantly reproduced and—to various degrees—modified in monumental literature. The first part of the text on Stela 23 follows a pattern present on other Late Classic stelae at Copan, so the structure of the proto-text may loosely be reconstructed as follows:

Initial Series + (sometimes explicit reference to a period ending) + dedicatory statement + associated ritual activities + supernatural actors or witnesses + presence/actions of current ruler.

This formula seems to have been (re)used at Copan from the earliest inscriptions onwards (see, e.g., Stela 63; Fash 1991, 82, fig. 37), but has its origins in the central lowlands (e.g. Stela 26 at Tikal, Stela 1 at Caracol; Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981, fig. 1; Jones and Satterthwaite 1982, fig. 44). However, at Copan, this sequence became a long-lasting standard which was applied (with variations) until the 8th century AD.

The Era Day-passage is a different case. A comparison with the parallel texts which are found throughout the entire Maya area, makes clear that the sequence on Stela 23 was copied with a high degree of fidelity from an exist-

ing proto-text. The crucial elements of Era Day-inscriptions (see Callaway 2011) show minimal variation in composition and in the choice of specific signs. Certain elements could be omitted and others could be added, but the essential predicates are quite homogeneous. Therefore, we must assume that the proto-text was not only copied again and again over long periods of time, but also exchanged (probably by means of paper books) among the scribes in virtually all Classic Maya cities.

Copies in Classic Maya monumental texts: Stelae 2 and 12 from Copan

While direct copies of larger portions of hieroglyphic text are rather common on ceramics (especially in the so-called Primary Standard Sequence; Coe 1973, 18–22), they are extremely rare in monumental inscriptions in stone or stucco. One of the few examples is found in the openings of the texts of Stela 2 from Aguateca (A1-E2) and Stela 2 from Dos Pilas (A4-C3), respectively, where the same event is repeated word-by-word (Houston 1993, 92, fig. 3–28, 115–116, fig. 4–20). However, the second parts of both inscriptions differ from each other, so we may assume that the shared opening was copied from an original text.

A more complex case of copies in monumental inscriptions is known from stelae 2 (Figure 5) and 12 (Figure 6) at Copan. Both monuments were erected in AD 652, during the reign of K'ahk' Utí' Juun Witz' K'awiil. It has long been known that large sections of the texts on both monuments are identical (David Stuart and Barbara Fash, personal communication with Schele 1991, 2), but, regarding the date, no extensive study of the similarities and differences has been published.

Stelae 2 and 12 are formally different, for the former features the ruler's portrait on the front and an inscription on the remaining three sides, while the latter is completely hieroglyphic. These variations correspond, in all likelihood, to the original locations of the stelae. Stela 2—today exposed in the Copan Sculpture Museum—was found broken into two pieces in the alley of Ball Court A, while a cruciform offering chamber in the platform of Structure 10L-10, which limits the ball-court to the north, indicates that this was the Stela's location before the abandonment of the site (Fash 2011, 58; Strömsvik 1941, 75, fig. 5c–d). However, stratigraphic data indicates that the cruciform chamber and the associated platform were built about a century after the stela was produced, so it was clearly re-erected in the 8th century AD (Cheek 1983, 336–337), while its original location might have been a different one. Rulers' portraits are typical for the stelae of the Main Group and its surroundings¹⁰, so Stela 2 stood most likely in

¹⁰ Stelae 1, 3, I, and probably E (Baudez 1994, 113–114, fig. 150–153; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1007, 1012, 1027), all bear ruler portraits and were erected in the Main Group during the 7th century.

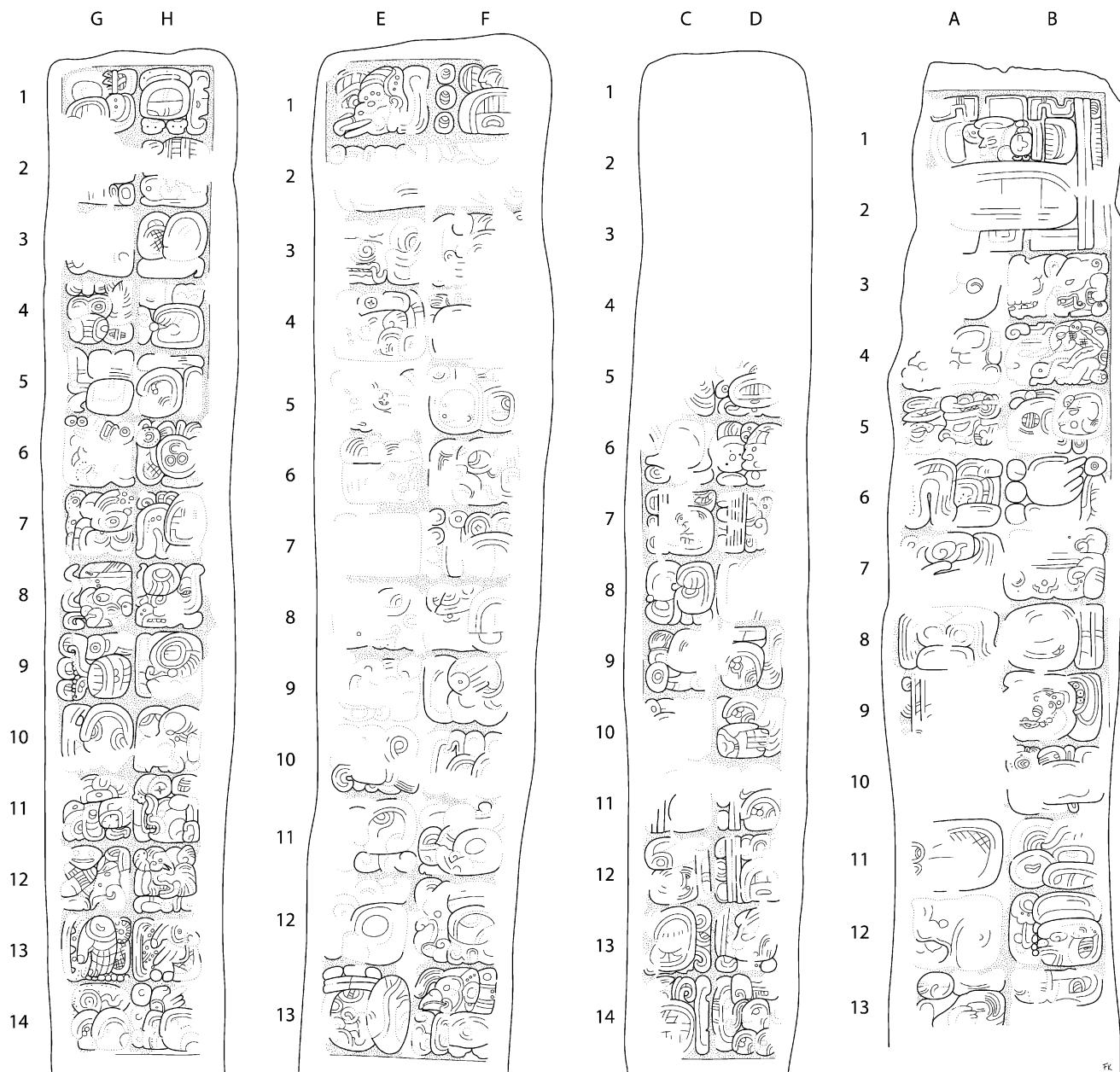


Figure 6. Stela 12 at Copan, south, east, north, and west side (Drawing by the author).

this area during the 7th century. On the contrary, Stela 12 is one of the isolated outlying stelae, for which K'ahk' Utí' Juun Witz' K'awiil apparently preferred the full hieroglyphic format¹¹. Usually, the inscriptions on this type of stelae are read surrounding the monument counter-clockwise (front-right-back-left), following the

standard reading direction from left to right, but Stela 12 features a reversed layout in the order front-left-back-right.

Table 2 exposes the extent of the copied text on both monuments. Due to the different format, the text on Stela 12 is longer, so the last section does not have a cor-

¹¹ This format was also used for stelae 10, 13, and 19 (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1033, 1034, 1040). Stela 23 is a special case due to the unconventional carving on the front side and its location in a secondary settlement center. Stelae 5 (Baudez 1994, 128–129, fig. 161–162; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1029) and 6 (McCready et al. 1988, 4, fig. 1; Fash and Fash 2006, 121, fig. 4) were both erected outside the Main Group and feature the ruler portraits, but they are slightly later and were not located in isolated spaces, but in what appears to have been a major road that connected Copán's two Classic civic-ceremonial centers (see Kupprat 2015, 174–207).

respondence in the inscription of Stela 2. The first part, however, is almost identical on both monuments, not only with respect to the content, but also visually. Although Classic Maya scribes disposed of a vast repertoire of graphemic variants, which were frequently used to make repetitive text portions visually more heterogeneous, the texts on stelae 2 and 12 are glyph-by-glyph copies. This is astonishing, since the calligraphy and “orthography” are very unusual. The use of logograms to represent the numerals in the Initial Series and non-traditional phonetic complementation (e.g. CH’EN-ne instead of CH’EN-na¹²) indicate that the scribe intended to compose a “sophisticated” text, which was and is difficult to read. Moreover, in some of the graphemic variants, one can observe archaisms, i.e. old forms that had become uncommon by the time the text was created. The Initial Series Introductory Glyph is one of those archaic signs, since it is very similar to the counterparts on earlier monuments, such as Stela P (AD 623). Another example is the phonogram **Ia** (T178), which is represented in a T-shaped form typical of early Classic calligraphy. In E6 on Stela 2 it even presents the semi-circle inclusion, which by the 7th century had already evolved into a circle (see Lacadena García-Gallo 1995:297, fig. 296.299). At Copan, the T-shaped variant of T178 was still used on stelae 7 (AD 613; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1031) and P (AD 623; Schele 1990, fig. 10), but contemporary monuments (stelae 10, 13, 19, and E; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1007, 1033, 1034, 1040) do not feature this allograph anymore.

The text on Stela 2¹³ starts with the statement that K’ahk’ Utí’ Juun Witz’ K’awiil completed his first twenty-year-cycle as a ruler¹⁴ on 9.10.15.13.0 6 *ahau* <8> *mol* (July 28th, AD 648) (Schele 1992). By including a facultative theonym in his name phrase (Colas 2004, 263–277), the ruler assumed the identity of a personal ‘companion-god’ (*chit k’uh*; Prager 2013, 518–525) during this “anniversary”. The text goes on with an incense-scattering and stone-binding ritual, probably on the *ho’tuun*¹⁵-station 9.10.15.0.0 (November 10th, AD 647),

and then it skips forward to the ending of the eleventh *katun* in AD 652. A couple of ritual activities described in the following section are connected to this important date: the visit of a sanctuary of the previous ruler, K’ahk’ Utí’ Chan Yopaat, an impersonation event that involved a series of deities, as well as another completion and bathing event which was ordered by the heavenly and the earthly gods. Up to this point, the text on Stela 12 is basically the same, but the last six glyph blocks on Stela 2, where the putting in order of something or somebody is mentioned, do not have a counterpart on the parallel monument.

The final section of the text on Stela 12 is harder to read because the inscription is not as well preserved as the one on Stela 2. After what appears to be a list of further deities, we learn that K’ahk’ Utí’ Juun Witz’ K’awiil did something under the auspices of the (then long deceased) dynastic founder K’ihnich Yax K’uk’ Mo’. At the end of the text there is a reference to two instances of incense-scattering that are, in a somewhat unspecific manner, related to the calendrical super-cycles of one(?) “Pictun” and three “Calabtuns” (a total of 480,996 solar years).

A comparison of the two parts of the inscriptions on Stela 12—Part 1 includes A1–E11 and Part 2 F11–H14—reveals that they are not the work of the same author. A first indicator is the reading order inside the glyph-block, which is consistently top-down/left-right in Part 1, but less strict in Part 2, where we find forms like **K’AK’-HUN-TI’ WITZ’{K’AWIL}-wi** for *k’ahk’ [u]ti’ [j]uun witz’ k’awiil* (G9–H9) or **YAX-K’UK’{MO’}-{K’IN}chi-ni** for *k’i[h]nich yax k’uk’ mo’* (G11). Inconsistencies and even errors in the spelling of canonic expressions confirm the hypothesis of a second author. In H1, for instance, the theonym *chanal k’uh* (‘heavenly gods’) is rendered **CHAN-na-la-K’UH**, although the canonic and infrequently modified spelling includes the logogram **NAL**, as seen in F11 or in D8a on Stela 2 (but also in other contexts throughout the Maya lowlands). Far more critical is the spelling of another theonym,

12 Nicholas Carter (2014, 46–47) interprets this variation of the complementation pattern as a reflex of linguistic change, specifically the loss of vocal complexity (*ch’èn* > *ch’en*). However, the example in the copies on Stela 2 and 12 is the only one, while on contemporary and later monuments (e.g. stelae 10 and J, or the Altar of Stela 13; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1014 1033, 1040) we find the canonic spelling CH’EN-na. This does not contradict Carter’s interpretation, but it is necessary to emphasize that the expression CH’EN-ne on stelae 2 and 12 was a scribal experiment that did not become a local convention.

13 Besides the discussion about the calendrical information, a partial analysis of the text has been published by Linda Schele and Mathew Looper (2005, 365–368) and a detailed transliteration, transcription, and translation was proposed by Péter Bíró and Dorie Reents-Budet (2010, 321–333).

14 As stated also on stelae J and 5, as well as Altar H’ and the Hieroglyphic Stairway at Copán, K’ahk’ Utí’ Juun Witz’ K’awiil became ruler on 9.9.14.17.5 6 Chikchan 18 K’ayab (February 8th, AD 628) (Stuart and Schele 1986, 7; Stuart 2005b, 383), which is actually one *katun* (twenty-year-cycle) and 275 days before the date on Stela 2. Maybe the “anniversary” expressed on this monument refers to a post-accession event.

15 Period of approximately 5 years. The ‘last *ho’tuun*’ is the third five-year-ending within a 20-year cycle (Lacadena García-Gallo 1994, 2002, 45–46), in this case probably 9.10.15.0.0 6 *ahau* 13 *mac* (November 10th, AD 647).

kabal k'uh ('earthly gods') as [KAB]-NAL-K'UH in E12. A literal reading leads to the form **kabnal k'uh*, which is not the desired one. The common rendering of this theonym is KAB-la-K'UH, as for instance on stelae 2, 7, and 10 (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1031, 1033), as well as—again—in other lowland texts. Apparently, the author of Part 2 of Stela 12 mixed up the signs for NAL and la, a type of mistake which does not occur in the first part of the text.

However, there are also some differences between the text of Stela 2 and Part 1 of Stela 12, mostly in the initial series. The coefficient of the month *mol* is, erroneously, 9 on Stela 2, but plausibly 8 on Stela 12. Glyph F of the supplementary series was apparently not included on Stela 2 but is present on Stela 12. Also, glyphs G, C, and X are different, which has led Linda Schele (1992, 2) to believe that the initial dates are not the same, but that the date of Stela 12 is 260 days earlier than that of Stela 2 (Morley 1920, 132–136). The problem with this interpretation is that the referred event is, beyond doubt, the same and it is probable that the variation on Stela 12 indicates an attempt of correcting the calendrical contents.

Besides these calendrical changes, the most notable difference in Part 1 of the inscription of Stela 12 is the addition of the name of the sanctuary of K'ahk' Utí' Chan Yopaat in C14-D14. TI'-CHAN-na YAX-ZC6-NAL is, as mentioned before, a toponym of mythic origin which apparently was used in 7th century Copan as a name for a shrine (and maybe the last resting place) of the 11th dynast. However, the incorporation of this name is syntactically problematic. D13-E1 is transcribed as *ukab[al] ti' chan yax [...]nal che'[']n*, where the proper name *ti' chan yax [...]nal* is inserted in the descriptive expression *ukab[al] che'[']n* 'his earthly cave'. Since the latter is a possessed combination of an adjective and a noun, *ukab[al] che'[']n* should not be separated and the expected form would be **ti' chan yax [...]nal ukab[al] che'[']n* 'Ti' Chan Yax [...]nal', the

earthly cave of.' This strange syntactic rupture suggests that the scribe responsible for the insertion was not very concerned about the integrity of the original text.¹⁶ A second example of textual expansion on Stela 12 is less obvious, since the actual inscription is lost in this section. However, what was expressed in one glyph block (A11) on Stela 2 seems to have occupied four or more glyph blocks on Stela 12, somewhere between C1 and C5, which suggests that the corresponding text in this section was actually longer than its counterpart on Stela 2. Unfortunately, it is impossible to reconstruct the contents of this passage, since the monument has suffered severe damage in this part.

Finally, some minor variations are observed in other portions of the text. One of them is the substitution of T86 on Stela 2 (B9) with T84 on Stela 12 (A13-B13). Although it is commonly assumed that both signs are allographs of NAL, it has recently been suggested that the signs had different values (Stuart 2005a, 161, note 49). The substitution on stelae 2 and 12 could mean that there is no difference at all, but it is also possible that it is another "correction", since at least the name LEM?-PH9-NAL? (Stela 2, B9 and Stela 12, A13) usually features T84 (see, e.g., Dos Pilas, Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step IV, J2, Houston 1993, 109, fig. 4-11; Copan, Stela 10, Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1033).

A last difference is found comparing the names of the Paddler gods¹⁷ in D1b-D2a on Stela 2 and in F5 on Stela 12. As on Stela 2, the name of the Jaguar-paddler is usually named first, while the Stingray Spine-paddler is named second—a pattern not only seen at Copan but in the whole Maya area. Although the glyphs of the corresponding section on Stela 12 are hard to distinguish, it seems that the names were switched, starting with the name of the Stingray Spine-paddler. The reason for this variation is unclear, but—again—it goes against the literary canons at Copan and of the major Maya area.

16 Note that the same toponym is found in a syntactically uncommon position on the contemporary Stela 23 (see above). However, at this point I cannot offer an explanation for this (maybe coincidental) parallel.

17 The Paddler gods are first mentioned in texts from central Peten, but at some point in the Early Classic period they became principal patron deities at Copán (Sánchez 2012). They are a couple of supernatural actors who have been nicknamed Jaguar-paddler and Stingray Spine-paddler because of their distinctive iconographic attributes. They are associated with liminal moments (Velásquez 2010, 116), most importantly with the death of the Maize God and his journey through the otherworld (Trik 1963, 12; Schele and Miller 1986, 52), as well as the events of the Era Day at the primordial location Naah Ho' Chan (Freidel et al. 1993, 67; Velásquez 2010). At Copán, one of the first references to the Paddler gods is found on Stela 16 where they are associated with the mythological three-stone place. On the monuments from the 7th century, these numina are frequently mentioned in the god lists of ritual companions or witnesses of ritual activities (stelae 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, P, and the Altar of Stela I). In some occasions, they even 'bind stones' (stelae 1, 7, and 13), they 'bathe' other deities (Altar of Stela 1 and Altar I'), and they are being impersonated (stelae 2, 7, 12, and P).

Table 2. Comparison between the transliterations of the inscriptions on stelae 2 and 12 at Copan. Text highlighted in grey marks graphemically identical parts of text. White text marks a reconstruction based on a direct parallel.

	Stela 2	Stela 12	
A1-B2	ISIG ¹⁸	ISIG	A1-B2
A3-B3	[BALUN-PIK] LAJUN-WINIKHAB	[BALUN-PIK] LAJUN-WINIKHAB	A3-B3
A4-B4	[HO'LAJUN-HAB UXLAJUN]-WINAL	[HO'LAJUN-HAB UXLAJUN]-WINAL	A4-B4
A5-B5	MIH-K'IN WAK-AJAW	MIH-K'IN WAK-AJAW	A5-B5
A6	G7?-TI'-HUN-na	G8-TI'-HUN?-na 3-HUL? ²² -[ya?]	A6-B6
B6	NAH-K'AL?-?-UH?-?	[.]K'AL-IK'IJ?-UH	A7
A7	X3?-u-CH'OK-ko-K'ABA	X? u-CH'OK-ko-K'ABA	B7-A8
B7	WINIK?-LAJUN-9-mo{lo}-tzu{TZUTZ} ¹⁹ -ja	WINIK?-LAJUN 8-[mo{lo}] tzu{TZUTZ}-ja	B8-B9
A8	u-WINIKHAB-ch'a-ho?-ma	[u-WINIKHAB] ch'a-ho?-ma	A10-B10
B8	HA?-IL-IK?-MIJIN?-na ²⁰	[HA?-]IL-IK?-MIJIN?-na?	A11-B11
A9	APP-ka?-{ku?}yu?-CHIT-K'UH	APP-[ka?-{ku?}yu?] CHIT-K'UH	A12-B12
B9	LEM?-PH9-NAL?-K'AL-la-NAL?	[LEM?]-PH9-NAL? [K'AL]-NAL?-la	A13-B13
A10	[K'AK'?]-u-TI'-[HUN?]-WITZ'-K'AWIL-la?	[K'AK'-u-TI'-HUN WITZ'-K'AWIL-la?]	C1
B10	K'UH-T756d-pi-AJAW-wa?	K'UH-T756d-pi AJAW-wa?]	—
A11	[—]	[—] [—] [—] [—]	D4
B11	[—]-CHAN-na-[—]-1?-WINIKHAB	[—-CHAN-na—-] 1?-WINIKHAB	C5?-D5
C1	chu-[mu?]-ni-ya ti-AJAW-li	chu-[mu?]-ni-ya ti-AJAW-li?	C6-D6
C2	[6-ti-CHAN?] 18-{K'AN}a-si-ya	6-ti-CHAN? 18-{K'AN}a-[si]-ya	C7-D7
C3	[IL?-ji?] u-CHOK-ch'a	IL? ²³ -ji? u-[CHOK-ch'a]	C8-D8
C4	[ti-WI'-5-TUN ti]-HO'?-LAJUN?	ti-WI' 5-TUN-ni ti-[HO'?-LAJUN?]	C9-C10
C5	K'AL-TUN-ni ti-12-AJAW	K'AL-TUN-ni? [ti-12-AJAW]	D10-C11
C6	8-CHAK-SIHOM TZUTZ-ja	[8]-CHAK-[SIHOM] TZUTZ-ja	D11-C12
C7	11-WINIKHAB IL-ya-u-KAB-la?	11-WINIKHAB IL-ya u-KAB-la	D12-D13
C8	CH'EN-ne 3-WINIKHAB	TI'-CHAN-na YAX-ZC6-NAL	C14-D14
C9	ch'a-ho?-ma-K'AK'-u?-TI'-CHAN?-na	CH'EN-ne 3-WINIKHAB	E1-F1
C10	YOPAT u-TI'?-[—]	[ch'a-ho?-ma K'AK'-u-TI'-CHAN-na]	E2-F2
C11	K'UH-T756d-[pi]-AJAW [—]	YOPAT [u-TI'?—]	E3-F3
D1-D2	u-BAH-AN u?-na-ZZ7 ti-ZZ6 u-MAM	K'UH-T756d-pi-AJAW [—]	E4-F4
D3	K'UH u-SAKUN?-na-K'UH	[u-BAH-AN] ti-ZZ6?-—[—ZZ7?] [u-MAM]	E5-E6
D4	4-TE'-AJAW ²¹ BALUN-K'AWIL-la	K'UH [u-SAKUN?-na-K'UH]	F6-E7
D5	ha-i i-ya	4-TE'-AJAW [BALUN]-K'AWIL	F7-E8
D6	u-TZUTZ-la-ja AT-ti-ji	ha-i [-ya]	F8-E9
D7	YAX-tzi-pi u-KAB-ya	u-TZUTZ-[la]-ja ya-[AT-ti-j]	F9-E10
D8	{CHAN}K'UH-NAL {KAB}K'UH-la	[YAX]-tzi-pi [-]KAB-ya	F10-E11
D9	u TZ'AK-ji	[.]CHAN-na-NAL-K'UH [KAB]-NAL-K'UH	F11-E12
D10	u-[.] u-MAM?	u-u?-KAB?-ya	F12
D11	[—] [—]	13?-K'UH-TAK MAM-a-wa-xa-[.]la	E13-F13
		yi-ta-ja-WAY? K'UH-CHAN-na-la	G1-H1
		[K'UH-KAB-la—] [—]	G2-H2
		[—] IK'-[.]ji?	G3-H3
		4-CH'OK-ko-TAK-ki [.]IL	G4-H4
		[ti]-wi 5?-TUN-li?	G5-H5
		[.]TE' ch'a-ho?-ma	G6-H6
		K'UH-WAY-ya ?-CHAN-[na]	G7-H7
		K'AK'-HUN-TI' WITZ'{K'AWIL}-wi	G8-H8
		3-wi-ti-ki u?-	G9-H9
		u-KAB-[ya] ?-?	G10-H10
		YAX-K'UK'{MO'}-{K'IN}chi-ni	G11
		K'UH-T756d-pi-AJAW	H11
		WIN?-na-AJAW i-li?-ya	G12-H12
		u-CHOK-ch'a u-2-CHOK-ch'a	G13-H13
		T42-pi 3-TZUTZ?-pi	G14-H14

18 The ISIGs of both texts feature the head of a wind god as “patron” of the month *mol*. This sign was previously identified as Patron of Mac (Thompson 1950, fig. 23).

19 The gourd sign T370 probably is to be read *tzu* in this context. The head of a bat or feline (see Stela 12) is infixated in T370, and it is possible that it has an independent phonetic value. It may be related to the inverted bat-head-sign TZUTZ (APN), although in case of the latter, the 180°-turn is a distinguishing feature. Nevertheless, there is a parallel for the upright bat-head with the value TZUTZ in a fragmentary stucco text from Tonina (Stuart 2007b; I thank Marc Zender for pointing out this example).

Discussion

The reconstruction of damaged and missing parts of an inscription is to be understood as an approximation of the original text, but never as exact science. The degree of fidelity of a reconstruction can be estimated based on the type of parallel texts. Whenever we have a direct copy of the text that must be completed, the reconstruction will be quite accurate, but not necessarily without errors. However, when the available parallels differ from each other and from the known portions of the text to be analyzed, a reconstruction may become an educated guess. Therefore, a reconstruction without the precise citation and a critical analysis of the relevant parallel texts is inadmissible.

But what do these examples tell us about the ancient Maya? Why is the reconstruction of parallel texts relevant, if it only repeats what is already stated in other texts? The reconstruction of missing text means an analytical shift of focus from content to composition. The inscription on Stela 23 does not provide any new data about Era Day-events or political history. It does, however, contain valuable information about the narrative structure and scribal conventions at 7th century Copan. Although the monument was erected a hundred days before the completion of the eleventh *katun*, this important period ending was, without a doubt, the central event in the narrative. Actually, the stela seems to have been inherently possessed by this calendrical cycle, a role played by gods and ancestors in contemporary texts. Hence, the reference to the period ending on Era Day was integrated into the narrative as a semantic parallel to the current period ending, marking the latter as part of mythic tradition and primordial continuity. A similar strategy—i.e. the integration of deep-time period-endings in the principal narrative to (re)create the millennial tradition of *katun*-celebrations—was applied in other inscriptions at Copan, as, for instance, on Stela C (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1004) where a connection is made between the end of the 11th pre-era “baktun” (February 5th, 3902 BC) and the *katun*-ending of 9.14.0.0.0 (December 5th, AD 711), since both dates share the same *tzolkin*-day and *haab*-coefficient. On other monuments, this connection is less obvious, as,

for example, on Stela I (Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1012) where the mythological period-ending 8.6.0.0.0 does not have a Late Classic counterpart, since the stela was erected sometime after the actual *katun*-ending.

The Era Day-passage on Stela 23 is one of the earliest known fragments of this narrative and it may have directly influenced later renderings, such as the text of Stela C at the neighboring site of Quirigua (Looper 2003, 12, fig. I.11). This inscription features one of the most extensive accounts of creation and includes all the elements present on Stela 23. Not only is the textual coincidence important, but also the discursive function, since Stela C at Quirigua presents the same argumentative pattern; the Era Day is followed by another important period ending (9.1.0.0.0; August 28th, AD 455), and finally it reaches the author’s present with the *ho’tuun*-ending 9.17.5.0.0 (December 29th, AD 775).

As indicated by the textual structure, by the contents, and possibly by the reception of the inscription, Stela 23 was a typical text of 7th century Copan. The master-scribe who designed it—not necessarily the same one who carved it into stone—was familiar with the local conventions of monumental inscriptions, as well as with pan-Maya mythological knowledge. Nevertheless, the imagery on the (mainly undocumented) front side was not typical of Copan’s stelae at all. Hence, it is likely that text and imagery were designed by two different persons. Given the original location of the stela, far off the center of Copan at a secondary settlement, it is possible that it was not directly commissioned by Copan’s ruler K’ahk’ Utí’ Juun Witz’ K’awiil, but rather by a vassal of his who resided at Santa Rita. The sculptor who elaborated the front side might have been a recently immigrated artisan from the central lowlands, while at least the primary author of the text was most likely a member of the royal court at Copan, trained in the conservative style of local literacy.

In a similar manner, the texts on stelae 2 and 12 provide information about the process of textual composition and authorship. As shown, the first and second parts of the inscription on Stela 12 were written by two different master-scribes, to be nicknamed Scribe A and Scribe B. Since the first part on Stela 12 is not only tex-

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- 20 The same sequence—probably a (part of a) theonym that sometimes was incorporated into personal names—also appears on Stela E (A12; Schele and Schele 2000, no. 1007), as well as on a couple of painted plates that belonged to K’ihnich Waw, ruler of Tikal (I thank Dmitri Beliaev for pointing out this parallel).
 - 21 At first sight, the correct transcription appears to be 4-TE’-AJAW{TE’}, but it is quite probable that in this case the TE’-element infix in the logogram AJAW is simply a calligraphic variation.
 - 22 The floral element attached to the hand-sign suggests the value TZUTZ rather than HUL. However, in the context of the complementary series, HUL is the expected expression, so this variation has to be interpreted as a scribal confusion of these distinct logograms.
 - 23 The sign IL seems to be repeated in this occasion, but it was probably meant to be read as a single instance. Graphically, the sign depicts a seeing eyeball; maybe the scribe duplicated the sign in order to represent both eyeballs.

tually but also graphemically identical to the text on Stela 2, Scribe A was the primary author of both. In other words, Scribe B copied Scribe A's text and adapted it to fit on the raw monolith that became Stela 12. He changed not only the last bit of the original text and added a rather large section at the end, but he also realized calendrical corrections and included some minor changes and additions. By doing so, he maintained the archaic calligraphy of the original, but he was clearly less experienced than Scribe A, for the incongruent spellings occur in the second part of the inscription, and his addition of the toponym *ti' chan yax[...]*¹¹ does not respect the syntax of the original text. Hence, it is probable that Scribe B was an apprentice of Scribe A, taking his master's work as a draft for his own text. We do not know if Scribe A was directly responsible for the text on Stela 2, or if he made the original text design on some other (perishable?) material. Since there are no documented signatures of sculptors at Copan, it is unknown if the master-scribes who composed the inscriptions actually engaged in carving.

Why, then, would a rather unexperienced scribe oversee the elaboration of an inscription as complex as the one on Stela 12? The probable answer lies in the unprecedented extension of K'ahk' Ut' Juun Witz' K'awiil's stelae program. For the 11th *katun* alone he commissioned at least seven stelae with complex hieroglyphic inscriptions (2, 3, 10, 12, 13, 19, and 23) and their respective altars. The cutting of the stone, its transportation, and its carving required an immense amount of manpower. Is it possible that there were simply not enough skilled scribes to supervise the elaboration of all these monuments? The case of stelae 2 and 12 seems to confirm this hypothesis. While Stela 2 is the more important and prestigious object, because of the presence of elaborate imagery on its front and its location at or near the site-center, Stela 12 is a remote hilltop-stela with no architectural structures nearby (implying a lack of day-by-day reception), which could be entrusted to a less-skilled scribe. The scenario of a scribe shortage would also explain the presence of stelae Petapilla and Titorror, two hilltop-stelae that do not present any carving. This lack of inscriptions has led to the belief that these two monuments are Preclassic, non-Maya monuments (Díaz 1974, 20–22). However, the Titorror Stela has not only a carved cribbing-frame (Strömsvik 1941, 79), but also a "bound" altar, which is stylistically similar to the Altar of Stela I (Spinden 1913, 161, fig. 214–215). Both of these elements are typical of the sculpture of the 7th and 8th centuries AD, so the uncarved stelae may well have formed part of the 11th-*katun*-program. Perhaps these monoliths were not sculpted (but simply painted in red), because there were insufficient artisans to get the work done in time.

Final remarks

The presented cases have shown how textual reconstruction in hieroglyphic texts provides a ground for a broad contextualization of specific inscriptions and their carriers. However, it should always be noted that the possibilities for reconstruction vary significantly and that the results are never precise. Interpretations based on reconstructed texts should, whenever possible, be cross-checked with independent data to assess their reliability. In the case of Stela 23, for example, the degree of accuracy varies among different sections of text: D2–D5 can only be reconstructed very loosely as a "list of gods", and the reading of C6–D6 as the name and title of a ruler is purely hypothetical. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of C9–D9 ([13-PIK TI'-CHAN-na]) is quite secure (even the phonetic complement!), thanks to the great consistency of composition and spelling in parallel texts.

Any reconstruction is, of course, only as good as the parallel text(s) on which it is based. While textual parallels with graphemic variation, commonly referred to as substitution patterns, have always played an important role in the decipherment of the hieroglyphic script, the case of stelae 2 and 12 makes it clear that the comparison of graphemically identical texts can also produce important data concerning contextual information, such as literary practices and authorship.

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Appendix: Transcription and translation of the text of Stela 12 at Copan

[balun pik] lajuun winikhaab [ho'lajuuun haab uxlajuun] winal mih? k'in wak ajaw [...] ti' hu'n ux[ij?] hul[iiy ...] k'aal chuwaaj? uh [...] uchi'ok k'aba' winik?lajuun waxak [mol] tzu[h]tzaj [uwinikhaab] ch'aho'm? ha'? il[an] ihk? mijiin? chit k'uh [lem?] [...]nal? [k'aal]nal? [kahk' uti' [juun] witz' k'awiil k'uhul ...p ajaw ...chan...] juun winikhaab chu[mwa]niiy ti ajawil ti wak [chan?] waxaklajuun k'anasiy il[aa]j u[chok ch'aaj] ti wi'(il) ho'tuun ti [ho'lajuuun] k'al tuun [ti lajcha' ajaw] [waxak chak]siho'm tzu[h]tzaj buluch winikhaab il[aa]y ukabal ti' chan yax [...]nal che'n ux winikhaab [ch'ah'o'm? k'ahk' uti' chan] yopaat [uti' ...] k'uh[ul ...]p ajaw [...] u[baahila'n] [...] umam] k'uh [usaku'n? k'uh] chante' ajaw [balun] k'awiil ha'i'iiy utzutz[laj] ya[tij] [yax] tzip [u]kab[jii]y chanal k'uh [kab]al k'uh ukab?[jii]y uxlajuun? k'uhtaak mama' waxa[...].l yita[a]j wahy[is]? chanal k'uh [kabal k'uh... chan] ch'oktaak [...]ila[... ti wi'] ho'tuunil? [...]te' ch'ah'o'm? k'uh way [...] chan k'ahk' [u]ti' [j]uun witz' k'awiil uxwi[n]tik [...] ukab[jii]y [...] k'i[h]nich yax k'uk' mo' k'uh[ul ...]p ajaw wiin[te']na[ah] ajaw iliay? uchok ch'a[aj] ucha' chok ch'a[aj] [...] pi[k]? uxtzutz? pi[k]

[It were nine “baktuns”], ten katun, [fifteen years, thirteen] scores, [and no] day. On the day 6 *ahau*, [when] “G8” was the *ti' hu'n* and three days had [passed] since the “JGU”-moon had arrived at the [...]th enclosure, [and when] its youthful name was [..., of] thirty [days], on 8 [mol]²⁴; the *katun* of the young man, [K'ahk' Uti' Juun Witz' K'awiil, the devine lord of ...p, as] Ha'(? Ilaan Ik'(? Mijiin(?) [...], the companion god, [Lem] [...]nal(?), [K'aal]nal(?), was completed.

[... and] one *katun* [had passed] since he had sat down in rulership, on the day 6 [*chicchan*], 18 *kayab*.²⁵ His incense-scattering was seen on the last *ho'tuun*, on(?) [fifteen] stone-bindings. [On the] day [12 *ahau*, 8 *ceh*], eleven *katun* were completed. Ti' Chan Yax [...]nal, the earthly cave²⁶ of [K'ahk' Uti' Chan Yopaat, the young man of one] *katun*, [the *ti' ... of ...*], the divine lord of [...]p, [...], was seen.

The image of the “Paddler gods”, the maternal and paternal²⁷ grandfathers of the gods, Chante' Ajaw, and [Balun] K'awiil [came to] exist²⁸. It had been them who completed it²⁹, [and who] bathed Yax Tzip(?), [as] the heavenly gods and the [earthly] gods had ordered it, [as] the thirteen gods [at] the ancestor-place(?), [at] Waxa[...].l(?), had ordered it. [He is/They are] in company of the *wahy*(?), the heavenly gods [and the earthly gods, ..., and] the Four Youthful Ones. K'ahk' Uti' Juun Witz' K'awiil, the young man [of the final *ho'tuun*(?)], the godly *wahy* [...] snake(?), the [...] of Ux Wintik, was(?) seen, [as] K'ihnich Yax K'uk' Mo', the divine lord of [...]p, the lord of the Wiin [Te'] House, had ordered it. His incense-scattering was seen(?), [as well as] his second incense-scattering, [on?] the “pictun” [and on] three “calabtuns”.

24 The date of the Initial Series correlates to July 28th, AD 648.

25 Date of the accession of K'ahk' Uti' Juun Witz' K'awiil on February 8th, AD 628, about 20 years before the production of Stela 12.

26 In this case probably to be read as ‘sanctuary’.

27 This meaning of *saku'n* has been pointed out by Albert Davletshin (personal communication, 2018) and will be discussed in an upcoming paper.

28 Usually, this expression refers to impersonation rituals.

29 Read: ‘the *katun*’.

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The Baah Kab “First of the World” of Comalcalco: On Two Incised, Stuccoed Vessels and a Name at Comalcalco, Tabasco, Mexico

† ERIK BOOT

The article deals with iconography and text of two incised vessels, which are marked by Kerr number as K7669 and K2799. One of them is situated at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, while latter is at the Dallas Museum of Art. They are probably made in the same workshop, based on the iconographic style. The present paper tries to connect the origin of the vessels to Comalcalco, which is supported by analysis of iconographic style, and also by mention of Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab on vessels and also on clay brick from Comalcalco.

Key words: Comalcalco, incised vessel, Maya Epigraphy, hieroglyphic writing, iconography

In 1992, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York purchased a tall, cylindrical, stuccoed, incised Maya vessel portraying a seated lord. Before the Met Museum purchase, in the 1960s, the vessel was part of a private collection in Switzerland (Doyle, 2014). Justin Kerr published a rollout photograph of the vessel as K7669 in *The Maya Vase Book*, Vol. VI (Kerr and Kerr 2000, 1001) and posted it on his website.¹ Nearly two decades earlier, the Dallas Museum of Art obtained a tall, cylindrical, stuccoed, incised Maya vessel portraying a seated lord as a gift from several private individuals and foundations. Justin Kerr has also made a rollout photograph of this vessel, available on his website.² In 2006 I saw the vessel at the Dallas Museum of Art and in 2008 I saw the vessel at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 1).

After seeing the vessel at the museum in New York, it dawned on me that both vessels were of the same style. The vessels were so close in appearance, style, type, and size³ that they must have been created by the same artist or, at the very least, in the same workshop. For several years, I did not study these vessels until I came to work on updating and extending my 2009 classic Maya vocabulary (Boot 2009) sometime in 2012. This note presents my data and preliminary suggestions, both about the text on the Met Museum vessel and the visual narratives⁴ on both vessels (Figure 2).

From these rollout photographs, it becomes even more obvious that both these vessels are not only executed in a similar style, but that both vessels also indeed could have been produced by the same artist or at least two closely related artists working in the same workshop.

1 Available at http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=7669.

2 Available at http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=2799.

3 Both examples are large, near-straight walled cylindrical vessels, slightly incurving at the top. Met Museum vessel: h=24,13cm, d=18,73cm. Dallas Museum vessel: h=22,86cm, d=18,09cm. Note that the diameter divided by height for the Met Museum vessel gives 0,78 and for the Dallas Museum 0,82, a good indication that perhaps the vessels were produced with some set of fixed proportion in mind (of the pottery maker, who is not necessarily the artist who embellished the vessel). I am aware of the fact that the vessel measurements are approximations, as such so are the proportions obtained through diameter divided by height.

4 In the analysis of art works, such as classic Maya pictorially embellished painted, modeled, or incised ceramics, one can describe a work of art as providing a “narrative illustration” or “visual narrative” if the work of art is a pictorial representation of one or

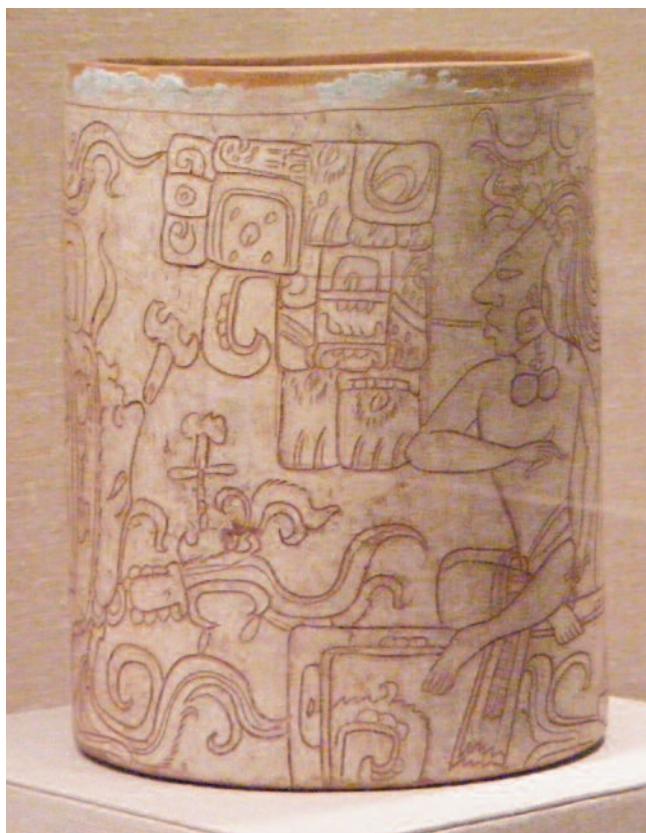


Figure 1. a) Vessel at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1992.4; photographed by the author on June 6, 2008); b) Vessel at the Dallas Museum of Art (1973.34; photographed by the author on March 22, 2006).

Both ceramic vessels are covered with a thin layer of stucco and subsequently incised. Figure 3 presents a comparison of two particular details to show the stylistic closeness in the execution of the incision on both vessels.

The details in Figure 3a show the head of the Maize God emerging from (or, more neutrally, set within or upon) bifurcating elements (of vegetal origin or perhaps of smoke). The details in Figure 3b show the upper torso and the hands of a seated anthropomorphic figure. In both cases, the upper torso is rendered similarly, broader on top (at the level of the upper chest) and narrower at the bottom (at the level of the belly and hips). Most peculiar are the curvy or bent fingers on both portraits. On K2799, the index finger of the right

hand is fully bent backwards, while on K7669, the pinky finger of the left hand is bent in a curvy but (nearly) impossible manner.

There is a site in the Maya region containing a substantial corpus of incised objects which provide a clue to the origin of the bent fingers. This site is Comalcalco, Tabasco, where several clay bricks illustrate human portraits and show curvy or bent fingers (Figure 4).

The clay bricks in Figure 4 clearly show these curvy and bent fingers. In one example, the fingers of the right hand are playfully interwoven while the left hand is fully flexed backwards (Figure 4a).⁵ In the other example, the portrayed human figure seems to look at his right hand, the fingers of which are bent backward (Figure 4b).

more (sequential) events, illustrates a probable relationship, or implies an interaction or association that may bring about a change in condition (compare Murray 1995, 17). As such, one could perhaps distinguish between *interactive* visual narratives (those pictorial representations that portray interactions of any kind) and *non-active* or *static* visual narratives (those pictorial representations that do not portray an interaction). (Also see Cohn 2013, who presents a theory of "Narrative Grammar" of the graphic form, more precisely of those graphic expressions that provide sequential images.)

⁵ While the fingers are playfully interwoven and the left hand is bent backwards, this particular posture actually may illustrate contractures of the arms and hands and identify a person affected by spasticity (cerebral palsy). If correctly identified, this physical condition (of an unnamed individual) can be added to the physical deformities and congenital conditions of polydactyly of various royal individuals at Palenque (e.g., six fingers, House A, Pier D; six toes, Temple of the Inscriptions, Piers B-C) and the cleft lip (a craniofacial anomaly) of *k'uhul ajaw* Ukit Kan Le'k at Ek' Balam (e.g., Str. 1, Capstone 15) represented in classic Maya art.



Figure 2. Rollout photographs by Justin Kerr of a) K7669 (Metropolitan Museum of Art) and b) K2799 (Dallas Museum of Art).

Other clay bricks provide facial renditions which are very close to the facial rendition of the human figures on the Dallas and New York museum vessels. While one clay brick shows a human face (Figure 5a), the other clay brick portrays a more complete portrait of a human being, and also shows the upper torso rendered in the same manner as on K2799 and K7669 (Figure 5b). Also note the necklace with two large discs (compare to Met Museum vessel).

Also of particular interest is a cylindrical ceramic vessel with an outward curving upper rim. This vessel (I do not have the measurements) shows that the ceramic vessel was covered with a thin layer of white stucco, but it remained without incision (Figure 5c). The cover

or thin wash or slip with stucco is parallel to the other two vessels.

The similarities presented above can be coincidences based on location.

However, the similarities go much further. In an online essay on the Met Museum vessel (K7669), James Doyle (2014) notes that the iconography is executed in a style close to a ceramic vessel illustrated by Heinrich Berlin found at the site of Jonuta and which has a “white slip through which geometric and/or human figures are incised.”⁶ This establishes a connection to the western Maya region. This connection becomes stronger through the very short analysis Doyle (2014) presents of the hieroglyphic text on the Met Museum vessel. He reads

⁶ The Jonuta site museum shows a selection of sherds of ceramics made in this tradition (e.g., Ochoa and Espinosa 1987, 58). Note that Brainerd (1941) suggested that the Veracruz littoral functioned as a place of origin of the specimens of Fine Orange ceramics found in Yucatan (see note 10).



Figure 3. Details for comparison, a) emerging Maize God on K2799 compared to emerging Maize God on K7669 (horizontally inverted), b) curvy or bent fingers on K2799 compared to curvy or bent fingers on K7669 (images by Justin Kerr; digitally edited by the author).

the text as “*yuk’ib baje wa-KAAN TOOK’bakab*,” or “the drinking cup of B’aje(?) Kaan (or Chan) Took’, the ruler”, and notes that Stephen Houston “spotted a similar name on one of the inscribed mud bricks from the acropolis of the site of Comalcalco, Tabasco, Mexico.”

What Doyle and Houston failed to recognize is that the epigraphic connection is much stronger than this reference on a clay brick at Comalcalco (which Doyle incidentally does not illustrate, but which appears below on both the drawing and the photograph.)

How can this connection to Comalcalco be established? In preparation for an update of my 2009 classic Maya vocabulary I checked all the texts I have available, including the inscriptional record of Comalcalco. For some time, I have had knowledge of a brick from this site which provided a short hieroglyphic name caption, but that only provided a partial connection to the Met Museum vessel (Figure 6a). A drawing of that brick was published in 1990 (Álvarez Aguilar, Landa and Rivera 1990, Fig. 192), and in 2006 as a photograph (Armijo

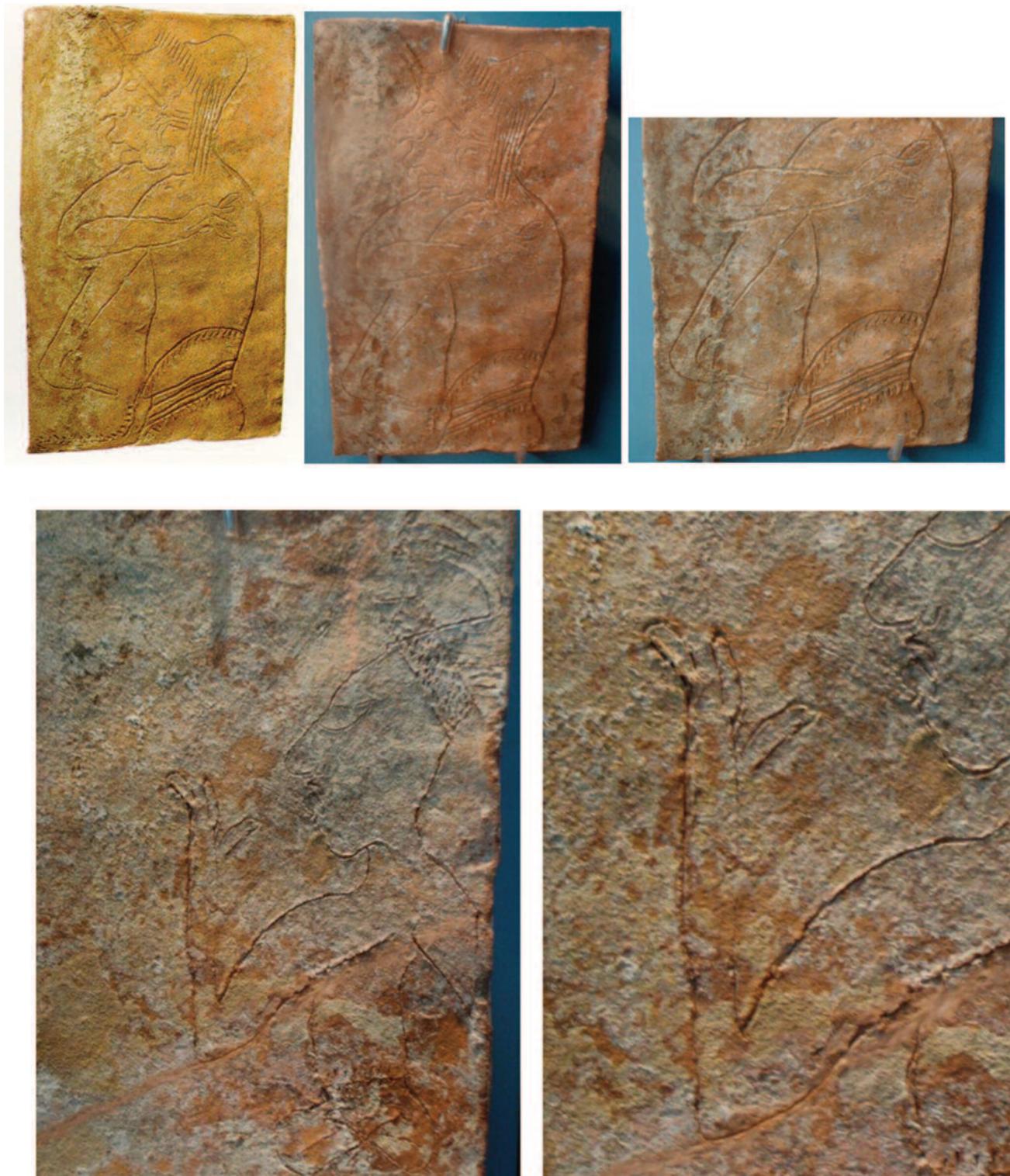


Figure 4. Examples of human portraits with curvy or bent fingers at Comalcalco, a) clay brick at the Comalcalco site museum (left image from Armijo Torres and Gallegos Gómora 2006, 27; right images by Hutch Kinsman, photographed August 15, 2011), b) clay brick at the Comalcalco site museum (images by Hutch Kinsman, photographed August 15, 2011).

Torres and Gallegos Gómora, 2006, 30) (Figure 6b). There is another short text parallel to the Met Museum vessel (Figure 6c).

The text on the Met Museum vessel is a name tag identifying the object and its owner (Figure 6a). The text, spoken by the seated human figure, can be tran-



Figure 5. Clay bricks and a stuccoed vessel at the Comalcalco site museum, a-b) clay bricks showing the human face and upper torso, c) stuccoed, cylindrical ceramic vessel (photographs by Hutch Kinsman, August 15, 2011).

scribed⁷ as **yu-k'i-bi ba-je wa-SKY-na-TOK' ba-ka-ba** for *y-uk'ib baje[']w ka[']n to[']k' ba[ah] kab* “(it is) the drink-instrument of Baje'w Ka'n To'k' (who is entitled) Baah Kab, First of the World.” The name of the owner of the vessel is Baje'w Ka'n To'k', where I identify *baje'w* as a verbal conjugation (-e'w) of the root *baj-* “to hammer” (Zender 2010). His name can be paraphrased as “Hammers Sky Flint” or, more fluently, “Flint that Hammers the Sky.” My transliteration of T561 SKY as *ka'n* is built upon a text to be analyzed shortly. As it is spoken by the human figure portrayed, it identifies him as Baje'w Ka'n To'k'.

The text that Houston referred to (as cited by Doyle 2014), can be found on a clay brick (Figure 6b), retrieved from the rubbish heaps on the west side of the Acropolis (Álvarez, Landa and Rivera 1990, 179). The text can be transcribed as SKY-na- TOK' ka-[JOY[SKY]-na]AJAW or *ka[']n to[']k' joy ka[']n ajaw* “Ka'n To'k' (who is) Joy Ka'n Ajaw or King.” On this brick, the part Ka'n To'k' can be found, a prominent part of the full nominal Baje'w Ka'n To'k' on the Met Museum vessel.

However, while this partial name can be directly compared to the name on the vessel, it may refer to a (partial) namesake. Furthermore, it terminates with a paramount title, Joy Ka'n Ajaw (the “Emblem Title” sported by the ruling elite of Comalcalco), where *ajaw* means “king” and where Joy Ka'n refers to the polity of Comalcalco. The same collocation provides the pertinent clue to the transcription of the main sign T561 SKY

⁷ In this essay, bold type letters are used in the transcription (transference of individual components from one system to another) of Maya hieroglyphic signs; upper case for logograms (i.e., logographs), lower case for syllabograms (i.e., syllabic signs). Hyphens separate individual signs in a glyph block (i.e., compound, collocation, composite sign group), square brackets indicate infixes or super-imposed signs (e.g., **ba-je**, **ka-[JOY[SKY]-na]AJAW**). In transcription, English words in upper case indicate a known logograph, but leave the reading to the transliteration (e.g., **wa-SKY-na-TOK'**). Order of the values in transcription is based on the common classic Maya compounding principles (top-to-bottom, left-to-right; to which there are exceptions due to scribal preference, errors/mistakes, as well as aesthetics). Transliterations (complete phrasings based on transcriptions) are placed in italics; reconstructed phonemes are placed between square brackets (e.g., *ka[']n*). An added query between



Figure 6. a) The hieroglyphic text on the Met Museum vessel (left, photograph by Justin Kerr; right, drawing by James Doyle with amendments by the author), b) clay brick from Comalcalco (left, drawing after Álvarez Aguilar et al. 1990, Fig. 192; right, photograph after Armijo Torres and Gallegos Gómora, 2006, 30), Spine 9 from Urn 26, Comalcalco (drawing by Marc Zender).

normal brackets indicates a certain level of doubt on some aspect of the transliteration. In transliteration, phonemic reconstructions are presented. These follow historical reconstructions for Mayan languages based on cognate sets, not some set of spelling principles (linguistic data based on Dienhart (1998), Kaufman (2003), and additional dictionaries and vocabularies not contained in these works). All reconstructions are tentative, under review, and subject to change as cognate sets on which they are based are extended and reanalyzed. Occasional T-numbers (e.g., T561) refer to the Maya hieroglyphic signs as cataloged by Thompson (1962).



Figure 7. The inverted head of the Maize God on the Met Museum vessel (left, photograph by Justin Kerr; right, drawing with colored detail by James Doyle).



Figure 8. The left side of the visual narrative on the Met Museum vessel (photograph by Justin Kerr, digitally edited by the author), with the number 9 set apart and colored in.

as KAN for *ka'n*. It opens with the syllabic sign **ka** which cues the *ka'n* “sky” transliteration.

The third text provides the most important clue that links the Met Museum vessel to Comalcalco. Urn 26 was excavated in 1998 and was located on the first platform between Temple II and II-a (Zender 2004, 250-251). The urn contained a large assemblage of objects, among them a series of inscribed pendants and spines. On Spine 9, a text can be found. The text runs perfectly parallel to the text on the Met Museum vessel, and, while

the surface of the spine is damaged and part of the text has not survived, it can be confidently transcribed as **ba-je-wa SKY-TOK' ba-ka-ba** or *baje[‘]w ka[‘]n to[‘]k’ ba[ah] kab* “Baje’w Ka’n To’k’ (who is) Baah Kab, First of the World.” This text may support the hypothesis that the Baje’w Ka’n To’k’ Baah Kab on the Met Museum vessel is indeed an individual from Comalcalco or its direct environs, as the name Baje’w Ka’n To’k’ Baah Kab occurs within a sealed context at Comalcalco. The stylistic comparisons between the Met Museum vessel, and

various ceramic media excavated at Comalcalco, as presented above, may further substantiate this fact. But, there is still a possibility that two individuals carry the same name and title (note the historic Itza kings named Kan Ek' at Tayasal or the various classic Maya kings named Yaxuun Bahlam at Yaxchilan).

However, is Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab, as mentioned on the Met Museum vessel and Spine 9 from Comalcalco Urn 26, the same individual as named Ka'n To'k' and entitled Joy Ka'n on the clay brick? As the complete nominal seems to be Baje'w Ka'n To'k', the part Ka'n To'k', especially as it is followed by Joy Ka'n Ajaw and not Baah Kab, may signal this particular name (abbreviated and with Baah Kab not included) or any other name that terminated in Ka'n To'k'. Note as such in the northern and central Maya areas, the part Cha'n Chahk, which terminates nominal phrases as Uk'uw Cha'n (**cha-SKY-na**) Chahk at Dzibilchaltun (e.g., Structure 42, Tomb, Incised Bone), K'ahk' [...] Cha'n (**cha/cha-na**) Chahk at Uxmal (e.g., Ballcourt Sculpture 1 & 2), and K'ahk' Tiliwi Cha'n (**SKY-na/SERPENT-na**) Chahk at Naranjo (e.g., Naranjo Stela 21, K0927, K1398, K2085), or the part Cha'n K'awiil, which terminates nominal phrases as Yuklaj Cha'n (**SKY-na**) K'awiil of Hixwitz (K3636), Bajlaj Cha'n (**SKY/SKY-na**) K'awiil at Dos Pilas (e.g., Dos Pilas HS 4, Dos Pilas Stela 7), Jasaw Cha'n (**SKY-na**) K'awiil at Tikal (e.g., Tikal Temple IV Lintel 3), and Sihyaj Cha'n (**SKY-na**) K'awiil at Tikal (e.g., Tikal Stela 31).

The visual narrative on the Met Museum vessel deserves further attention, as it includes the most important entity. Only a small part that belonged to this entity was analyzed by Doyle (2014): the inverted head of the Maize God (Figure 7). The actual entity is much larger (Figure 8).

The first observation that I make is the presence of the integrated number 9 or *balun* (perhaps *bolon* in this case) into the design. This particular identification opens a new avenue of research, namely into the "9 place" in Maya iconography (Figure 9).

The design on the Met Museum vessel could be a variation of the "9 Place" as known, for example, at Copan, Tikal, and Palenque.⁸ Most important are the examples at Copan and Tikal, which not only feature the number 9 and the head of the supernatural entity with a skeletal lower jaw, but also feature vegetal elements which can be identified as maize plant leafs. The Met Museum ves-

sel clearly features the same entity, note as such the skeletal lower jaw and the u-shaped element with center dot (with an even smaller inner dot) in the crown of its head. On top of its head and on its right side, large vegetal elements appear, the leaves of the maize plant. From one of these bifurcating maize plant leaves, the Maize God head emerges. This particular arrangement suggests that the leaves and Maize God head stand for *nal*, not just the name of the Maize God and thus identifying the Maize God as Nal (Boot 2013; 2014), but through its homonym *nal*, "place," and thus identifying the "9 Place" as a true mythological *location*. Except for the fact that this important mythological location opens with *balun* (or *bolon*) "nine" and terminates with *nal* "place," I do not venture a further decipherment.

In sum, the Met Museum vessel portrays a human figure who speaks a short text. This text is a name tag, identifying the cylindrical vessel itself as an *uk'ib*, "drink-instrument," owned by Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab. This nominal and titular phrase identifies the human figure as a high-ranking individual. He is seated on a monolithic elevation adorned with vegetal elements. On his backside, there is a large cushion, and his posture is common to many high ranking individuals seated on elevations (Boot 2000; 2005). Not only does he speak (as indicated through the speech scroll), his vision is also directed to the design on his right (our left), a huge supernatural entity marked with the number nine and bifurcating maize leaves, from one pair of which emerges a Maize God head. This design defines a location named the "9 Place," or, Balun or Bolon [...] Nal, the actual location where Baje'w Ka'n To'k' "Flint that Hammers the Sky," entitled Baah Kab "First (*baah*) of the World (*kab*)," is seated. As Baje'w Ka'n To'k' is turned towards the huge "9 Place" toponymic sign, he directly interacts with the sacred geography in which he is seated.

How does this relate to the Dallas Museum vessel? The vessel was described and published in a book by Robicsek (1978, 190-192). There is no hieroglyphic text on this vessel. The human figure is also seated on an elevation, marked by large crossed bars (do they indicate wooden bars and thus a wooden elevation?), to the sides of which two smaller elements are placed with crossed bars. He is seated with crossed legs on this elevation.

He fronts a supernatural entity which holds bifurcating vegetal elements in his hands. I identify these vege-

⁸ The "9 Place" is often paired with another mythological location, which opens with the numeral seven and which, based on its constituent parts, can be deciphered with some confidence as 7- [**IK'-K'AN]NAL** or Huk Ik' K'a[h]n Nal "Seven Black Bench/Seat(?) Place." Examples of monuments that present this pairing include Copan Stela D, Palenque Temple of the Sun Tablet (center panel), and Tikal Stela 2 (the monuments that provided "9 Place" examples in the main text). This location is of great mythological and ceremonial importance as well, note as such that at Huk Ik' K'a[h]n Nal (now paired with K'ahk' Witz "Fire Mountain") the completion of the 8.18.0.0.0 *k'atun* is celebrated at Tikal (Stela 31: F15-F18).

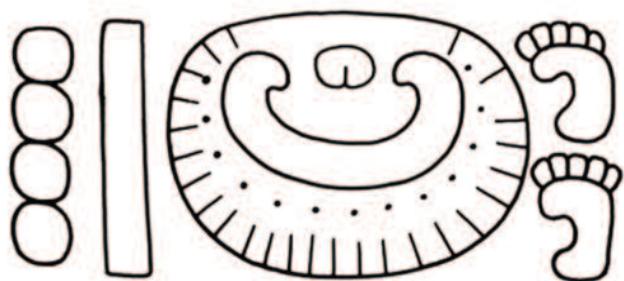


Figure 9. The "9-Place" in Maya iconography, a) Copan, bottom of the Margarita Panel (left, photograph by Kenneth Garrett; right, drawing by Linda Schele), b) Copan Stela D (drawing by Barbara Fash), c) Tikal, Stela 2 (drawing by William R. Coe); d) Palenque, Temple of the Cross (drawing by Linda Schele), e) Palenque, Temple of the Sun (drawing by Merle Green Robertson).



Figure 10. A comparison between the supernatural entities on a) K2799, the Dallas Museum vessel, and b) K0631 (photographs by Justin Kerr).

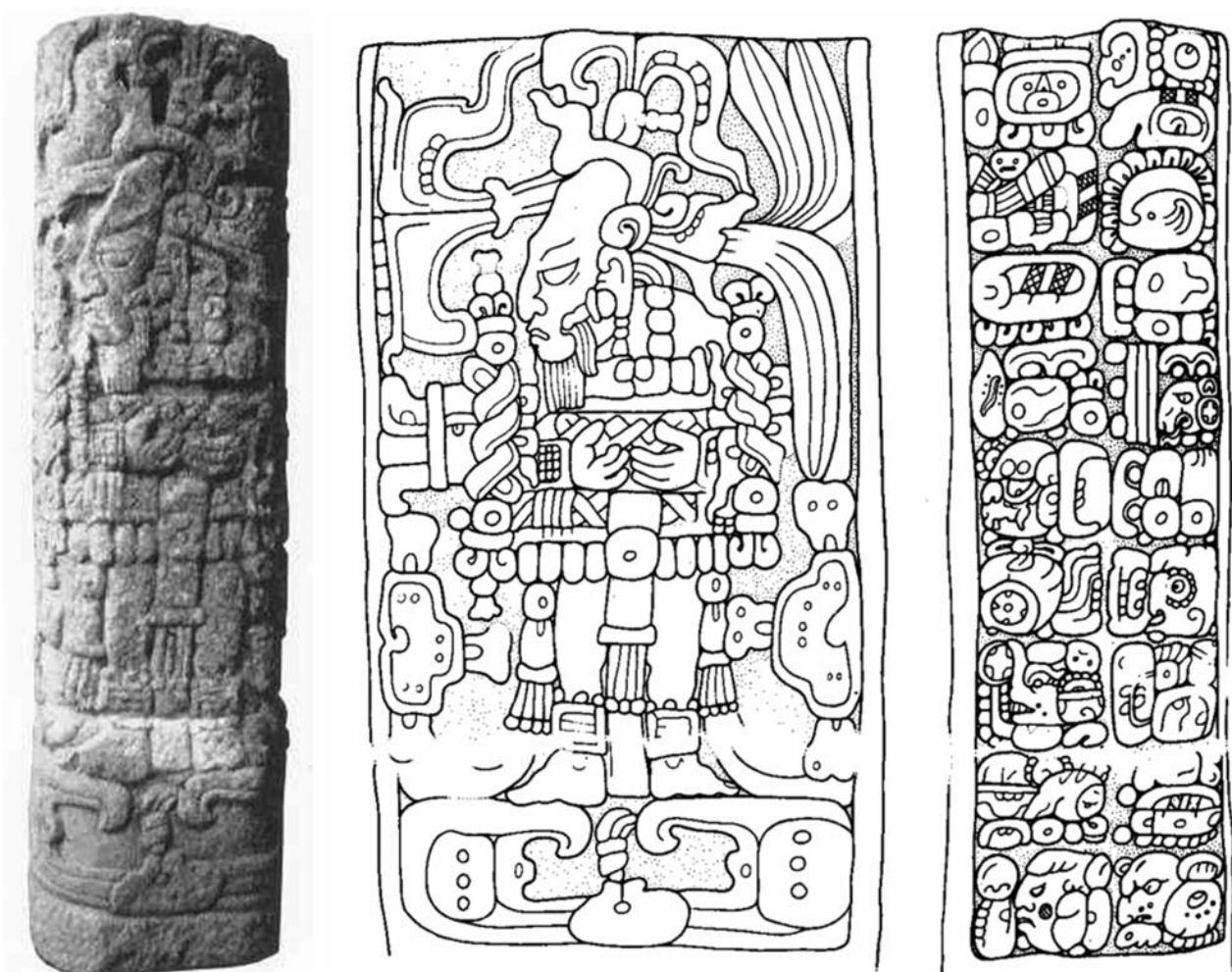


Figure 11. Copan Stela 11, photograph (by unknown photographer), front (visual narrative) and back (text) (drawing by Linda Schele).

tal elements as large maize leaves and, as on the Met Museum vessel, the head of the Maize God is present. Again, this might indicate *nal*, the integration of the Maize God as Nal to signal *nal* “place.” Although there is no number 9, it is tempting to suggest that the Dallas Museum vessel also shows the “9 Place” or Balun or Bolon [...] Nal in its full somatomorphic manifestation. However, the anthropomorphic entity may be a manifestation of K’awiil. It lacks the common diagnostic serpent leg or foot and a clearly defined mirror and torch on its forehead, but this rendition of a potential K’awiil on the Dallas Museum vessel is very close to a portrait of K’awiil on a polychrome tripod vessel of unknown provenance cataloged as K0631 (Figure 10).

The complex visual narrative on K0631, which may have been produced in the central to eastern Maya highlands, includes the pairing God L-K’awiil (a common pairing on small round ceramic flasks which probably contained *may*, “tobacco”). The K’awiil on K0631 (Figure 10b) does not have a serpent leg (both his feet are visible as he sits in a cross-legged position on an ele-

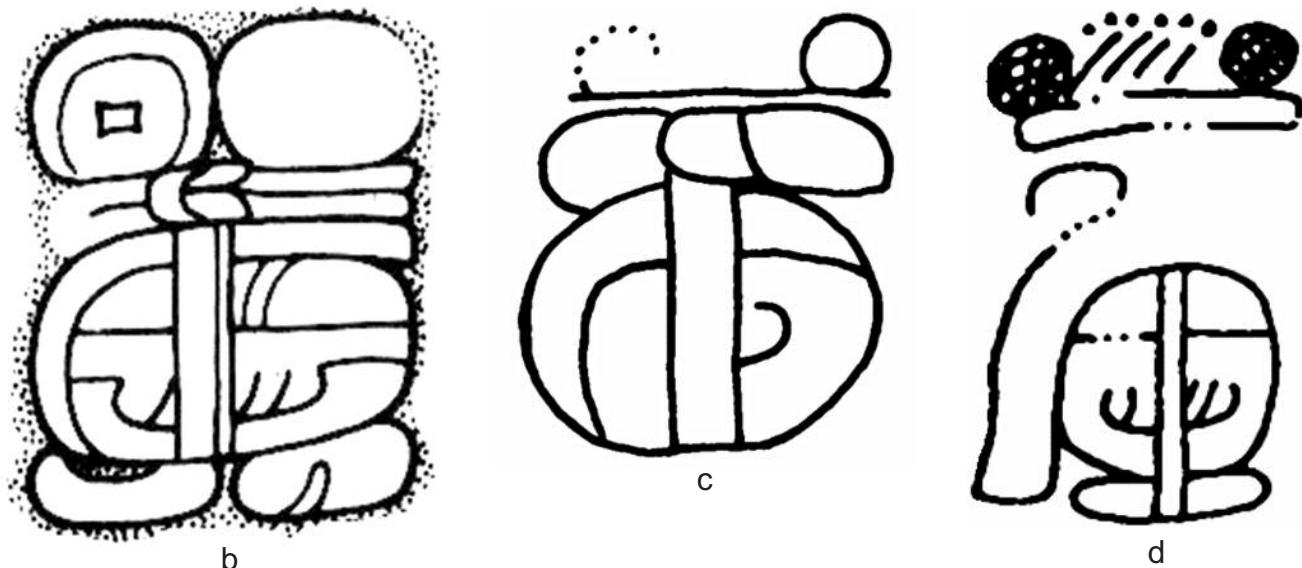
vation). Specifically note the rendition of his facial and cephalic features which includes the typical smoking element “penetrating” the top of his head. His facial expression is close to the supernatural entity’s face on the Dallas Museum vessel.

Furthermore, the visual narrative on the Dallas Museum vessel is framed by a vertical band of discs indicating a water surface, which is supported by the attached triple water stacks and a large water lily flower (on the left side of the vertical water band).

If the supernatural entity on the Dallas Museum vessel is indeed K’awiil, combined with the emerging Maize God, this could produce an interesting alternative identification. In this particular case I interpret the Maize God as targeting the name Ajan, a nominal of the Maize God based on the Maya word *ajan* “roasting ear (of maize).” The combination of K’awiil and the Maize God as Ajan may hint at a supernatural entity named Ajan K’awiil or K’awiil Ajan, named in various classic (e.g., Lacanha, Panel 1: N2-M3; Tikal, Temple 1, Lintel: F5-G6; Quirigua, Altar P: U1), and postclassic Maya



Figure 12. Examples of the Comalcalco "Emblem Glyph": a) Comalcalco, Acropolis, West Side, rubbish dump, brick (photograph after Armijo Torres and Gallegos Gómora 2006, 30), b) Tortuguero, Monument 6: H5 (drawing by Ian Graham), c) Tortuguero, Jade Ring: B4 (drawing by Sven Gronemeyer), d) Tortuguero, Monument 8: 59b (drawing by Sven Gronemeyer).



contexts (e.g., Codex Dresden 26C, coll. 5) (Boot 2009, 13, 111). The watery surroundings integrated on the vessel and the occurrence of the potential Aján K'awiil (or K'awiil Aján) may hint at a postmortem, commemorative visual narrative. Deceased Maya kings can be found in the guise of the god Aján K'awiil and in watery contexts (on the inclusion of the imagery of the watery location in funeral temples or tombs, see for example Hellmuth (1987a, b); Fitzsimmons (2009, 23, 35–36, 50, 53, 61, 68–72, 91–92, 158). I also note that at least one death expression is related to water, namely the expression *och-ha'*, “enter water” (e.g., K1004; Tikal, Stela 31: D23) (Boot 2009, 139). A monumental example of a commemorative visual narrative set in a watery surrounding featuring a dead king in the guise of Aján K'awiil can be found on Copan Stela 11 (Figure 11).

This monument (a small sculpted column, an extremely rare monument type at Copan) portrays a deceased Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat Ux Winaak Haab Ajaw

(“Three Twenty Year King”) Baah Kab (“First of the World”) in the guise of Aján K'awiil and placed within (upon) a cenote, defined by the stylized, opened jaws of a centipede. Note inclusion of the characteristic torch element of K'awiil on the forehead and a diagnostic maize plant leaf element that signals Aján, and to which a bundle of feathers is attached on the back of the head. The cenote sign targets the watery location, as do the two dotted scroll elements placed on either side just above the cenote sign. The fact that the cenote sign indeed directs to a watery location is perhaps more obvious in the Codex Dresden, as in several examples, the cenote sign is filled with water (e.g., pages 36C2, 38C1, 39C3). The cenote sign depicts the stylized opened jaws of the centipede, the classic Maya way to envision the cave entrance to the Underworld, into which kings enter and from which kings will be reborn as the Maize God (as found on the Palenque sarcophagus lid in reference to king or *k'uhul ajaw* K'ihnich Janaab Pakal).

Within contemporary Maya communities, caves and cenotes are said to be watery places (e.g., Brady and Pfuerer 2005, 305, 356, 363). In the community of Homun in Yucatan, Mexico, caves and cenotes are not just watery places; they are places where the *u kilich kimilob*, “the revered dead,” can be found (personal fieldwork, March 1986).

Close to cenotes, where virgin water is found, it is thought that the burial of a Maya priest can be found (Boot 1988, 29). In the Tzotzil community of Chamula, Chiapas, Mexico, the watery underworld, accessible through caves, is where the dead go (and/or their souls, more correctly, tongue-souls or *ch'ulel*) (Gossen 1974, 21-22; 2001, 1028, 1035, 1045, 1051-1052). The same is true for the K'iche' community of Santiago Momostenango, where the underworld is entered through a cave in the east, the domain of Corpus (the lord of the dead), where the human dead and liminal beings reside (Cook 2000, 164, 231). In the K'iche' community of Zunil in the northwestern highlands of Guatemala, caves are considered places “to contact the ancestors” (Molesky-Poz 2006, 110).

The Dallas Museum vessel may thus portray its human figure (most probably Baje'w Ka'n To'k') as deceased and paired with Ajan K'awiil (K'awiil Ajan), the supernatural entity associated par excellence with death and rebirth. Note the small oval element on his cheek. Is this perhaps a “death spot,” indicating he has passed to the realm of the dead? This spot may have its origin, in the black spots on the body of the skeletal Death God (God A) (e.g., Codex Dresden 10A2, 10C1, 11A3, 12B1, 13A2). Also note the wonderful frontal extended headband ornament worn by the human figure; this ornament he has adopted from the Maize God (specifically note the large headband ornament of the Maize God on the Met Museum vessel, K7669). On the Dallas Museum vessel, the Maize God does not have a headband or a headband jewel. Does this headband jewel perhaps indicate his participation in the process of rebirth after he has passed to the realm of the dead?⁹

The vessels show a human figure at the “9 Place” on the Met Museum vessel and associated with Ajan K'awiil (K'awiil Ajan) on the Dallas Museum vessel. These vessels may even portray the same individual, Baje'w Ka'n To'k'; his name is included in the name tag on the Met Museum vessel. As they are executed in a style so similar to each other, it is even possible that they were produced by the same artist or at least artists from the same workshop. The style of both vessels, as exam-

ples presented above indicate, is intrinsically related to the site of Comalcalco (and its direct environs).

The same name and title, Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab, was identified on Spine 9 in Urn 26 from Comalcalco. This text formed part of a larger assemblage of texts providing an entrydating the two vessels more precisely. Both vessels can be ascribed to the late Classic period, circa AD 650-900. The urn at Comalcalco provided 23 hieroglyphic texts (out of a larger number) containing 18 dates and which date between AD 763-777 (Zender 2004, Table 6). This date range may also bear on Spine 9, which carries the Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab nominal and titular phrase, but which does not carry a date. Generally speaking, that spine may thus date from the same period as the other dated texts in the Urn 26. This may also bear on the two ceramics at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art. As the spine and the Met Museum vessel contain the same nominal and titular phrase, Baje'w Ka'n To'k' Baah Kab, it may identify the very same individual or, at the least, a close contemporary. This would mean that the two vessels can be dated to a period between AD 763 and AD 777. A general assignment to AD 650-900 thus does fit both vessels well, but may be narrowed down further to AD 750-800.

I want to return now to the spelling **ka-[JOY[SKY]-na]’AJAW** (Figure 6b, 13a) which led to the transliteration *joy ka[]n ajaw* or Joy Ka'n Ajaw, the paramount title of the Comalcalco ruling elite. This spelling with prefixed **ka** to T561 SKY indicates that *ka'n*, “sky” is the correct reading for the SKY sign. As such, other examples of this title need to be transcribed accordingly, for example at Tortuguero, Monument 6 (at H5), which provides **[JOY[KAN]]’AJAW-wa** for Joy Ka'n Ajaw (Figure 12b). Besides these two “Emblem Glyphs,” there are two examples of a “title of origin” (Stuart and Houston 1994) at Tortuguero which feature the main sign combination.

On Jade Ring 1 and Monument 8 appear the collocations ‘**AJ-JOY[SKY]**’ (Figure 12c) and ‘**AJ-JOY[SKY-na?]**’ for Aj Joy Ka'n (Figure 12d). These “titles of origin” indicate that Joy Ka'n functions as a toponym identifying the seat of the Comalcalco polity and may name the central Acropolis and its direct surroundings (just as the toponym Lakamha' at Palenque refers to the Palace and its direct surroundings). Ultimately, the spelling **ka-[JOY[SKY]-na]** as recorded on the Comalcalco brick shows that the T561 SKY leads to *ka'n* and thus not to *chan*, as has been suggested in previous research.¹⁰ Joy Ka'n Ajaw is thus the correct reading of

⁹ This adoption of the Maize God headband jewel, in my estimation, would be parallel to the adoption of the Maize God costume as practiced by K'ihnich Janaab Pakal on the Palenque sarcophagus lid in his presumed rebirth from the realm of the dead.

¹⁰ Joy Chan Ajaw and Aj Joy Chan, e.g., Gallegos Gómora et al. 2003, 5; Gronemeyer 2004, I, 156, 2004, II, 34, 76; Martin et al. 2002, II-21.

the Comalcalco polity paramount title, and Aj Joy Ka'n is the correct reading of the title of origin.¹¹

In the future, I hope to dedicate additional research to further support the idea that the Met Museum and Dallas Museum vessels portray the same individual and location and were produced by the same artist (or same workshop).¹² This artist (or workshop) and the high ranking individual portrayed on these vessels can be directly linked to the archaeological site of Comalcalco. Not only through stylistic comparisons of the vessels with various material remains excavated at this site (i.e., clay bricks, ceramics), but also through the fact that the full name Baje'w Ka'n To'k' with the associated title Baah Kab is identified on the Met Museum vessel and Spine 9 from Urn 26 at Comalcalco. The Met Museum and Dallas Museum vessel indicate, through the link with Comalcalco, that the archaeological site of Comalcalco and its direct environs constituted one of the production areas of a particular kind of style of (partially) stuccoed and incised fine paste ceramics (of various shapes and fine pastes, i.e., orange, grey, café, red) thatulti-

mately saw a wide distribution during the Late Classic to Terminal Classic period from Tabasco, Usumacinta drainage, Campeche, to Yucatan (e.g., Armijo Torres 2006; Jiménez Alvarez 2015).

One of their high ranking elite members was titled Baah Kab "First of the World" and was named Baje'w Ka'n To'k'. His nominal to be paraphrased as "Flint that Hammers the Sky" will find a way into the upcoming update of the classic Maya vocabulary (Boot 2016a).

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¹¹ While I prefer *ka'n* "sky" to be the correct reading resulting from the *ka-[JOY]SKY-na* spelling and historical linguistic research, other epigraphers may prefer *ka'an* or *kaan*. Any reconstruction of a classic Maya word, especially in the realm of vowel reconstruction, is but an approximation of the original intended linguistic item (Boot 2009, 7). As previously stated (see note 4), "[a]ll reconstructions are tentative, under review, and subject to change as cognate sets on which they are based are extended and reanalyzed."

¹² As noted by Doyle (2014), the Kerr archive includes some rollout photographs of this kind of ceramic, but he gives no examples. Here, I mention those vessels: K1391, K4972, K6024, K6495 (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, inv. nr. 67.11), K7015 (Hudson Museum, Orono, HM1204). Most interesting is K1391 (h=19,3cm, d=14,7cm, d:h=0,75). K1391 is proportional to the two vessels discussed in this essay (see note 3), has stuccoed upper and lower rims, and provides a complex visual narrative featuring the Rain God Chahk with heron headdress and the Maize God, both in canoes, on opposite side of a speared "serpent" (actually a huge eel) (see Boot 2016b). It has a short linear hieroglyphic text featuring calendrical signs and combinations, the placement of the numerals and the arrangement of the main calendrical signs of which show direct parallels with texts at Comalcalco (e.g., Álvarez Aguilar, Landa and Rivera. 1990, Figs. 160, 176, 185-187, 194, 197-199). Perhaps also this vessel can be assigned to a production center at or in the environs of Comalcalco. For further examples, see Brainerd 1958, Figs. 36g,i, 59a-b, 72a-b, 76k-t, 77a-dd, 80a-e,q-gg, 81j-s, 103m (complete vessel, Dzibilchaltun; comparable to K6495; note both have "curvy" fingers, perhaps also directing to a Comalcalco [and/or environs] origin).

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Poza Maya (Petén, Guatemala) in the light of old and new investigations

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Introduction

Poza Maya is an important pre-Columbian centre of Maya civilization located in north-eastern Guatemala. The site is situated in the heart of the Triangle Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park that covers 371.6 km² and encompasses three major cities (Naranjo, Yaxha and Nakum) and several medium or intermediate centres such as Poza Maya, La Pochitoca, and Naranjito (Figure 1). There are also many smaller sites (that in the settlement hierarchy model proposed by Vilma Fialko [2013] can be classified as minor centres), as well as plenty of small residential complexes dispersed in rural areas stretching between the above-mentioned sites (Fialko 2013).

Recent investigations in Poza Maya were carried out within the frame of the Nakum Archaeological Project (NAP) run by the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland and realized thanks to permission from the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH). So far, these investigations have included mapping, excavations, and archaeological surveys within and outside of the city epicentre, as well as geophysical research. Here, we present a brief description of the most important results of the NAP investigations carried out at Poza Maya. We also outline previous research conducted by Guatemalan authorities in this pre-Columbian centre.

Previous research at the site

The first reconnaissance of Poza Maya was carried out in the 1970s by the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (IDAEH) under the direction of Miguel Orrego, who created the first preliminary plan of the site. Orrego gave numbers to all structures documented at the site (from 1 to 50). Later, Poza Maya was the subject of investigations carried out under the framework of the Triangle Project of the IDAEH. During these investigations in 1992, Claudia Molina surveyed

the site and prepared a new plan of the site wherein she distinguished three major (A-C) and three minor architectural groups (D-F). She also proposed an alternate nomenclature for the documented structures which included their location within their respective architectural groups, e.g. Str. A-1, Str. C-2 – in Group C, etc. The results of this work were presented in 1994 in her Licenciatura thesis, defended at the Faculty of Architecture, Rafael Landivar University. Molina's thesis included a very detailed description of all documented buildings and looters' trenches (35 illicit excavations were documented) that devastated many structures at Poza Maya (Molina 1994; Quintana 2013, 214). Triangle Project research also included archaeological and consolidation works conducted at the site in the 1990s. Limited archaeological investigations were carried out in 1992 when the site was surveyed; several test-pits were excavated and ceramics were collected from the surface. This work continued in 1995 with excavations, documentation, and consolidation of several structures heavily destroyed by looters' trenches (among them was a monumental pyramid of Structure 1 and a ballcourt [Structures 13 and 14]), as well as excavations of test-pits in all major plazas of Poza Maya. Archaeological work during 1995 was supervised by Juan Luis Velásquez and Zoila Calderón (Velásquez, Calderón and Hermes 1995). Rescue work and excavations were subsequently continued at the site in 1998 by Bernard Hermes and Vinicio García, who investigated Structures 1 and 21 (Hermes and Contreras 2002). In 1999, Poza Maya and its surroundings were also investigated by Vilma Fialko under the Regional Archaeology Programme of the Triangle Project. During this research, several new residential complexes were documented on the periphery of the site (Groups G-J); thirteen test-pits were also excavated at Poza Maya and looters' trenches and tunnels were documented (Fialko 1999a). Moreover, between 1995 and 1996, several new residential groups were discovered around Poza Maya during investigations by the Bajo Communities Project, which conducted investigations in the wetlands of Bajo La Justa and its vicinities (Kunen et al. 2000).

IDAEH excavations showed that the site of Poza Maya was inhabited from the Late Preclassic till the Terminal Classic. However, it experienced a large growth during the Early Classic – material from this epoch is prevalent in almost all excavations (Fialko 1999a; Hermes and Contreras 2002). Early Classic growth was mostly seen in the middle and final part of this period (Tzakol 2 and 3 phases), and scholars were able to distinguish at least four major architectural stages dating to this period of growth. Previous research has also demonstrated that the Late Classic period saw the rebuilding of most Early Classic structures while the



Figure 1. Map of the Triangle Park with location of various archaeological sites, including Poza Maya (map by Piotr Kołodziejczyk).



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the aguada located close to Poza Maya (photo by Jarosław Źrałka).

Terminal Classic was characterized by drastic depopulation and a halt in architectural activity (Hermes and Contreras 2002; Fialko 1999a).

NAP investigations

Recent investigations of the Nakum Archaeological Project (NAP), though not large in scientific scope, nevertheless consisted of several important research phases. First of all, an exact topographic map of the site has been prepared with the use of two Total Stations. This new map shows that previous plans were very schematic and far from being topographically precise; they did not reflect the exact shape, volume, and orientation of many Poza Maya structures. The data are currently being processed, and the first topographic map with contour lines will be submitted to IDAEH soon. The mapping process showed that Poza Maya does not have a coherent N-S orientation, as was presented in previous plans by Orrego and Molina. We now know that the northern sector of Poza Maya has a more or less N-S orientation, but the southern and central parts of the site show a several degrees deviation to the west from the north. However, it has not been established so far whether this difference is the result of an attempt to adjust the layout of the city to differentiate landforms, or if these parts were built in distinct periods and therefore represent changes in the concept of city planning.

The overall location and shape of Poza Maya creates the impression that the site has the character of a defensive location. It is situated on a karstic elevation or hill surrounded by the seasonal wetlands of Bajo La Justa. This location made access to the city very difficult, especially from the north, east, and west. Currently the difference between the level of plazas and the surrounding Bajo La Justa exceeds 15 m in the northern and eastern limits of the site. This is of course the result of several hundred years of rebuilding the city, which increased its volume (especially vertically), creating a highly inaccessible place. Though nowadays Poza Maya is best reached from the south, we should remember that in pre-Columbian times, especially during the rainy season, it was not so easy to get to the site from the south, since that is also where the wetlands of Bajo La Justa lie. Some 350 m to the southwest of the southern part of Poza Maya there is a square *aguada* measuring ca. 235 x 205 m (Figure 2) that was constructed during the Early Classic (Fialko 1999a, 1999b). The *aguada* must have formed an important source of water during pre-Columbian times, and it is still filled with water to this day. Investigations of the *aguada* and its surroundings, conducted in 1999 by Vilma Fialko and her team revealed the existence of two canals that are connected with this reservoir. The first canal provided water to the *aguada* (scholars were able to document 270 m of this

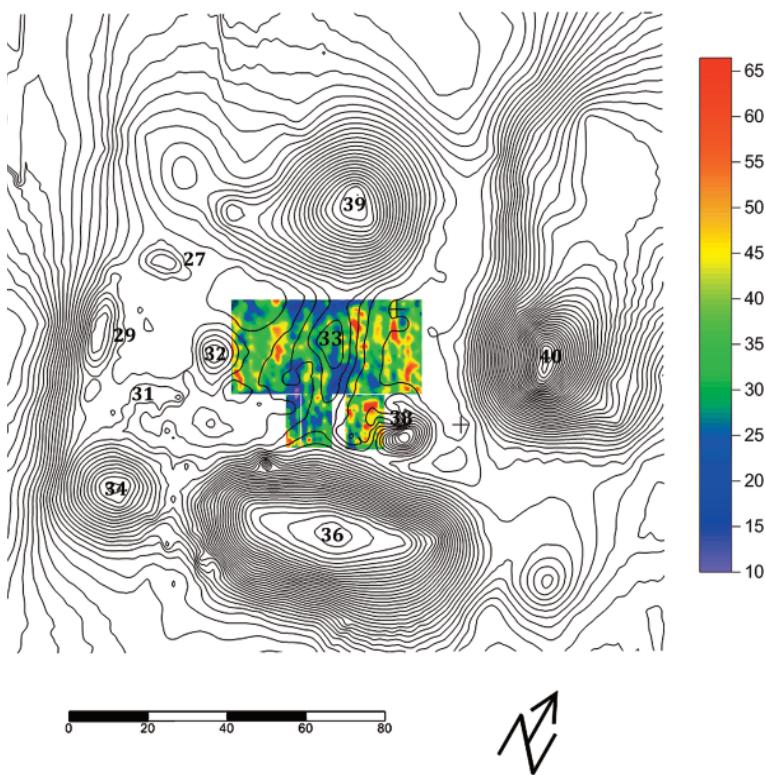


Figure 3. Map of the southern part of Poza Maya featuring the results of geophysical research with the use of resistivity-meter (map by Piotr Szczepanik, NAP).

canal), while the second one carried water outside the reservoir into the surrounding Bajo La Justa, possibly for agricultural purposes (Fialko 1999b, 15-17).

Investigations at Poza Maya have also included using geophysical techniques (resistivity-meter) in the northern part of the site (on the plaza stretching in front of Structure 1), and in the southern sector (the area between Structures 36 and 39 and to the north of the latter construction) (Figure 3). They showed a series of anomalies, some of which have been tested archaeologically.

Between 2015 and 2016, limited archaeological excavations were carried out in the southern part of the site (in Structures 33 and 39), as well as in a small patio group encompassing Structures 27-32 and located in the southwestern corner of the site (Figure 3). This patio group consists of a small plaza, that is delimited from all sites by low mounds, that are vestiges of structures. The patio in question forms a typical Maya habitational complex with most structures, having a residential function and an elongated rectangular plan. Nevertheless, Structure 32, which is located on the eastern side of the plaza, is higher, and its shape suggests that it was rather square at its base. Similar constructions were documented on the eastern side of many Maya complexes across the lowlands, and they are part of what archaeologists have named as the eastern-shrine complex or the Plaza Plan 2 group (where eastern structures usually

have a square plan and are higher than neighbouring structures). Such eastern shrines usually contain burials and offerings and must have been associated with the cult of ancestors living in their respective habitational groups (see Becker 2003, 2014; Chase and Chase 1994). However, the latter construction was heavily looted in modern times; an illicit 10 m long trench converting into a 1.75 m high tunnel has been documented here (see Fialko 1999a). It exposed various architectural features representing different stages in the rebuilding of the latter construction. Though the looters' trenches were sealed by the authorities of Triangle Park, we decided to conduct only superficial excavations on the major western façade of this structure, in order not to affect its stability. Our research in the southwestern patio was focused on superficial, extensive excavations supplemented by several test-pits, all of which were aimed at establishing the shape and dating of all the structures that form this complex (Figure 5). Excavations indicate that the complex was constructed and occupied during the Late and Terminal Classic, as may be surmised from all the recovered archaeological material.

A pyramidal construction (Structure 39) and an elongated platform that joins it from the south (Structure 33), were also subjected to excavations. Investigations of Structure 33 were planned to check for anomalies that were documented while using geophysical techniques (Figure 3). At least some anomalies can be ascribed to retaining walls detected in the construction fill and with walls of the façades of Structure 33. In general, excavations of Structure 33 showed that it was a low platform, approximately 20 m long and 12 m wide, and might have been used for ritual purposes such as dances and other similar activities (Figure 4). It divided a plaza or patio group that was enclosed (and formed by) Structures 40 (from the east), 36 (from the south) and 39 (from the north). All archaeological data indicate that the platform was constructed during the Early Classic period and it was at least 1.20 m high, with its stairway located on its western façade (Velasquez et al. 2015). Since the platform in question joined Structure 39 from the south, it might have been associated with the latter construction, which was a pyramid platform. Excavations revealed that Structure 33 covers an earlier construction (33 Sub-1) which was also a low platform that was constructed during the Late Preclassic period. The latter construction can be associated with the lowest strata (construction fill) discovered in a test-pit, excavated to the east of Structure 33 (Figure 4).

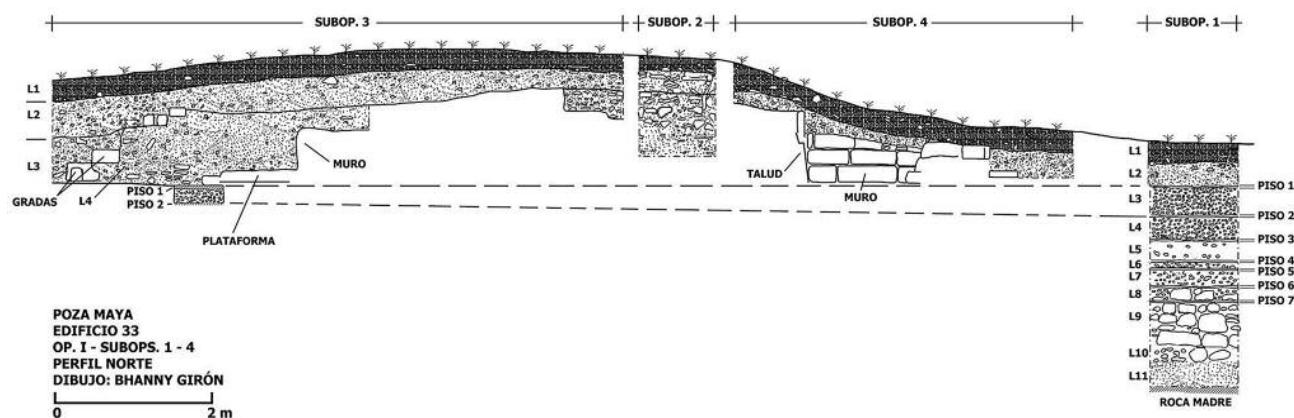


Figure 4. Cross-section featuring several excavation units opened in Structure 33 and to the east of this construction (a test-pit marked as Subop. 1). Drawing by Bhanny Girón.

A pyramidal structure (no. 39) was only partly investigated by the NAP: a trench was excavated on its northern façade (but we failed to discover any major architectural features here); another excavation on its top showed that in its last architectural stage Structure 39 was a several-terraced platform surmounted by two superstructures which encircled a small patio that opened to the south and west. These constructions can most probably be dated to the Early Classic period. The major façade of Structure 39 may have been located on its northern side, but future excavations may change this opinion.

Conclusions and future perspectives

Recent excavations at Poza Maya confirm previous findings, according to which the site was first settled during the Late Preclassic (Chicanel phase), and it reached its cultural and architectural peak during the Early Classic. However, Poza Maya was also the subject of important architectural changes during the Late Classic (Fialko 1999a), which saw the rebuilding of a large pyramid of Structure 1, a ballcourt, and other structures (Velasquez et al. 1995). The site was also partly inhabited during the Terminal Classic period as recent investigations in the southwestern patio of Poza Maya indicate. We plan more intensive excavations in the future that will hopefully shed more light on the problem of



Figure 5. Poza Maya, a) excavations of Structure 31 in progress (note walls of the building); b) Structure 27 during excavations (note exterior walls of the building exposed during excavations). Photographs by Robert Słabowski.

its development across time, and especially its political role in the region. The role of Poza Maya in local geopolitics constitutes an as yet unresolved problem. The site is located only 4.5 km north of Yaxha (Maler Group) and 6.3 km south of Nakum (in a straight line). The lack of carved monuments and other texts at Poza Maya obscures our knowledge about the political relations this site had with other neighbouring centres. However, this absence may indicate that Poza Maya was part of other mighty polities such as Yaxha. Ironically, the period of the greatest architectural and cultural development of Poza Maya – the middle and late part of the Early Classic (Hermes and Contreras 2002) – is poorly represented at Yaxha, despite many years of excavations at the latter site (Hermes 2000). However, Yaxha has a group of Early Classic monuments featuring local lords that show the political importance of this site during the period in question. However, stylistically they can be ascribed to the first part of the Early Classic (Grube 2000, 255). The supremacy of Tikal over both Poza Maya and Yaxha during the Early Classic should also be considered. Although Poza Maya was first settled during the Late Preclassic period, evidence of architectural remains from the Late Preclassic is meagre, and it is only during the Early Classic when we observe great growth of this centre. This cultural peak may have been the result of direct influence from Yaxha; its elites might have established an important administrative centre at Poza Maya during the Early Classic, and it might have been ruled by a lesser segment of a Yaxha dynasty (Fialko 2013, 277) or other inferior nobles. Although this view may change in the future, Poza Maya represents one of the most important Early Classic Maya settlements in the region, that might have played a significant role in the history of this part of the Maya Lowlands.

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de excavación. Informe de la unidad de arqueología local o de sitios mayores del Proyecto Triángulo (Unpublished report submitted to the Institute of Anthropology and History of Guatemala).

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ered very important in the ongoing attempts to reaffirm local autonomy, revitalize local culture, and promote social justice for community members based on human, indigenous, and territorial rights.

This report presents part of the data that has been collected within my doctoral research project, that aims to document the dynamics in the relationships between people and sacred places and the perception of sacred landscape among the indigenous people of the Ixil region in Guatemala. Moreover, it explores the different ongoing changes and challenges that I will mention further on. Initially the research included collecting and recovering information about the natural and transformed elements of sacred landscape in the region, that are considered as sacred places, based primarily on local oral traditions and histories, as well as participant observation of rituals and religious celebrations. In addition, GIS technology was used to document some of the locations of specific sacred places where people continue to pray and practice ritual, as well as spaces that now only exist in the community's memory. I have also considered some of the archival resources and existing archaeological data, as contemporary sacred places are often located in the former settlements. As the research progressed, I included another analytical focus that examines women's roles and approaches to religiosity both within *costumbre* and Maya spirituality. The research findings have been immensely informative in terms of the contemporary perspectives, not only on the sacred landscapes, but also environment and its conceptualizations within Ixil Maya communities. Of course, it would be difficult to expand on all of these points of interest in this report, so I will concentrate only on selected aspects of my research materials.¹ Partial results of the project had been already submitted to local Ixil Maya authorities and community leaders in order to help strengthen their efforts in promoting environmental social justice in the Ixil Region and the recovery of information about cultural patrimonial heritage. Sharing the research results, including community members in the ethnographic fieldwork, as well as in the production, presentation, and dissemination of the results is part of the method that I put effort in implementing and developing throughout my academic work.

The Ixil Region is located in the El Quiché department in the western highlands of Guatemala where almost 90% of the population are Indigenous Peoples (INE 2018). It consists of three municipalities: Santa María Nebaj, San Gaspar Chajul, and San Juan Cotzal, where the majority of inhabitants are Maya Ixil. There

Sacred Landscape and Oral Traditions in the Ixil region, Guatemala

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Within an Ixil Maya worldview, natural and transformed elements of the landscape play a vital role in the perception of the environment as part of sacred geography. In many aspects, ritual life concentrated around those spaces provides evidence for the continuity of ancestral traditions. At the same time, these sacred geographies are subject to ongoing dynamic processes and transformations. Not only are natural and transformed landscapes in the Ixil region considered places of prayer and sacrifice, but they are also many times considered as living beings. The *K'uykumam*, or the ancestors' live inside the caves, pre-Columbian building remains are explicitly manifested in the mountains. These elements of sacred geography are organized in spiritual spaces through the Ixil Maya calendar and many times associated to the particular days of the ritual cycle. All kinds of ritual specialists, such as Day-keepers (*Aj'qij, B'aal, Vatz, Tiixh* in Nebaj, or *Mama'* in Chajul), as well as midwives (*K'uyintxa'*), ancestral authorities, and *cofradía* members (religious brotherhoods within the Catholic Church), look after these places and are the important keepers and transmitters of local oral histories and traditions. These stories are also consid-

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Figure 01. View from Xe'Mam Tze' archaeological site on the mountain Vi' Kooma, one of the four cardinal points of Ilom (Chajul) (Photography by Monika Banach).

are also three variants of the Ixil language, which is one of the 30 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, and Honduras (England 1992, 20). Part of the research results, that this report focuses on, concerns the community of Ilom (4,182 inhabitants), located in the municipality of Chajul. Ilom is a unique place for plenty of reasons. According to local oral tradition, it is the first settlement from which the Ixil people emerged and then founded the three towns of Tx'aul (Chajul), Naab A' (Nebaj), and K'usal (Cotzal). Numerous archaeological sites exist in the valley where Ilom is located, one of them called in the Ixil language B'ayal I' or Xe' Kuxhab' (also known as La Panchita), which is considered by *ilomeros* the first settlement where the Ixil ancestors dwelled. The remains of pre-Columbian buildings can be found there, and religious specialists hold *costumbres* (ceremonies) among them. Archeologists have conducted research there since 2009, after the hydroelectric project HidroXacbal affected part of the site. Excavations had shown that this site denominated by the archae-

ologists as 'Xacbal' was inhabited uninterruptedly between 500 BC (Preclassic period) and 1530 AD (Late Postclassic period) (Hermes and Velásquez 2014; Velásquez 2012; PRAX 2010). There are many more archaeological sites located around Ilom, covered by contemporary houses or *milpas*. Some of them, like Bayal I', are also considered sacred places.

During the fieldwork conducted in collaboration with the ancestral authorities and elders, 38 sacred places were re-identified around Ilom and measured 25 exact and three approximate locations of *altares* (altars, places of prayer) using a GPS device.² Because of the diversity of the elements of sacred landscape and many possible ways of understanding them, in this work, I consider any categorization or typology only as a guide. Most of the sacred places around Ilom are mountaintops, hills, water springs, rocks, pre-Columbian buildings remnants, cemeteries, or caves. There are four mountains surrounding Ilom where altars are located, defining the community's four cardinal points. They correspond to

² Vi' On (South), Vi' Kanoja (North), Vi' Kooma (East), Vi' Sajsivan (West), Xe'Naloj, Tzi Jul A', Jul A', Txinaki, Vi' Paalma, Xe' Paalma, Kutchmaltostiiux, Sajmb'al Tza'jatoja, Xixil I', Xe' Kaq Tze', Nikapamaki, Vi' Chib', Xatch Kooma, Nikapamaki, Vi' Vitz, Xe' Poj, Txixhil A', Pombal Tze', Vi'k Vialtz'ukuna', Xe' Mam Tze', Xe' Kuxhab', Jasali', Vi' Musan, Baxamuunte, Timuunte, Q'aqleb'altiuxh, Tzi Tze A', Vi' Jojb'al, Aj Tzib' Tib'altenam, Aj Tzib' Nikatenam, Katchb'al Sivan, Cha'bala', Nimla Kuruz, Vi' Muxsivan, Vi' Sivan Tzi Xakb'al.



Figure 02. Ancestral authorities carrying their varas, consulting community matters over ceremonial fire in Nebaj (Photography by Monika Banach).

the particular days of the Ixil calendar known as the Four Yearbearers: on the East Vi' Kooma (day No'j); on the West Vi' Sajsivan (day Chee); on the North Vi' Ka-noja (day Iq'); and on the South Vi' On (day Ee). Some of these places are shared or considered as boundaries between nearby communities, such as respectively Sotz'il, Sajsivan, and Santa Eulalia "La Pimienta". In the center of this system, there is a particularly important cave called Xe' Nalox³, where maize is thought to have originated. In today's town center, there is another group of sacred places (mostly rocks, from one to ten meters high), which seem to constitute a separate system due to their special role in local celebrations. In the past, those places were organized in groups, and there were ritual specialists assigned to each of them. Many of the sacred places in Ilom are strongly linked to local oral traditions and bound to the ritual and agricultural cycle of the pre-Columbian calendar. The ritual language associated to these and other locations (also outside Ilom) shows the local cosmovision in the context of

local and regional notions of the sacred landscape and its roles in community life.

There are various factors that affected local Ixil religious life in the past and others currently shaping the relationships with the environment and its sacred characteristics. First, imposed Spanish Christianization, forced resettlement of the population, and expropriation of indigenous lands displaced whole communities from the sacred context of the surrounding environment. This process continued through the following centuries with the capitalist politics of the Liberal dictatorships in the 1870s (Lovell 2015, 573). Relationships with the sacred landscape had been further damaged during the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996). According to residents, some of the sacred places in Ilom stopped being visited on a regular basis in the 1980s due to the violence, massacres, and persecution of many ritual specialists, who were accused of participating in the guerilla. Evangelical churches significantly grew after the war, and have discouraged publicly practicing

³ As I have described elsewhere, the term *naloj* refers to a number of caves in the Ixil region, especially those where speleothems can be observed and those associated to the oral tradition concerning the origins of maize (i.e. Xe' Nalox in Ilom, Xe' Nalox in Oncab' and Xe' Nalox or Paxil in Xolcuay, Chajul). Traditionally, the word *naloj* means two tied maize cobs of good quality separated from the crop for the next sowing season and normally hung on the beam (see Banach 2016, 2017).



Figure 03. Spiritual guides and Cofradía members during ceremony carried out at the cemetery altar in Chajul (Photography by Monika Banach).

Ixil rituals in sacred places, which they have demobilized.⁴ Recently, the current political and economic context has changed due to the decline of coffee production that has led the plantations such as La Perla (established on Ilom's ancestral lands in the early 20th century) to sell some of its properties to companies building megaprojects.⁵ The arrival of international investments, such as HidroXacbal hydroelectric project has led to an escalation in land conflicts at all levels, but has also impacted the relationship between the Ixil and sacred places. The case of the aforementioned Bayal I' is a good example of a sacred place that has been directly affected by such changes. It has been considered 'abandoned' by different sides of recent conflict, but it has also always been deeply rooted in the oral tradition of the entire Ixil region and never forgotten by the people of Ilom, including the original toponymy.

Responses to these changes in power dynamics has proven that sacred places continue to play an important role in the Ixil worldview, in Ilom and in the Ixil region

in general. Implementation of the development projects based on Western ideas, in addition to existing historical complexity, has impacted the landscape. Not only has this occurred in a physical way, but also in a political and a religious sense, changing local discourses and approaches regarding the environment, its significance, and preservation for the communities and their resistance. These changes are visible also in gender dynamics, as more Ixil women reclaim leadership positions, including religious functions, as well as engaging in activism. Many times, these decisions are grounded within ancestral indigenous knowledge regarding the environment, and thus, the significance and present situation of the Ixil sacred places, an interest and pre-occupation that many times crosses the boundaries of present religious affiliations. These ideas are intrinsically connected with the perspectives on community and collective wellbeing, including gender equality and equity informed by ancestral principles and values.

⁴ Presently there are 17 Evangelical churches in Ilom. For more on the protestantism in Guatemala see for example the works of Virginia Garrard-Burnett (1998).

⁵ For more on the megaproject activity in the Ixil region see Giovanni Batz's work on the "Four Invasions" (Batz 2020).

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Implicaciones de la recalibración cronológica en las Tierras Altas del Área Maya: un ejemplo en el área del Montículo C-IV-4 de Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala y su importancia arqueológica y cultural

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Resumen

Ante las nuevas propuestas e investigaciones arqueológicas, no solo en Kaminaljuyu, sino también en toda el Área Maya, es necesario replantear el rumbo de las interpretaciones y estudios en los diferentes sectores investigados en los sitios arqueológicos durante la última década. Con el fin de aportar nuevos datos a la cronología y desarrollo de los antiguos habitantes de Kaminaljuyu, se contrasta la información obtenida por el Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica Montículo C-IV-4 de Kaminaljuyu y se presenta una nueva secuencia de ocupación del mismo.

Palabras clave: cronología, cerámica, Preclásico, canales hidráulicos, depósitos, áreas de actividad

Introducción

La ciudad de Kaminaljuyu es el sitio prehispánico más importante del Valle de Guatemala para el período Preclásico (Popenoe de Hatch 1997; Barrientos 1997; Ponciano 2000; Corado 2008). Durante las fases del Preclásico Providencia, Verbena y Arenal, se caracterizó por su amplio desarrollo, aumento poblacional y relaciones con otras áreas culturales, reflejado en la abundancia de hallazgos y materiales arqueológicos que son testigos de la fuerte actividad económica y cultural que tuvo lugar en el sitio.

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La ciudad de Kaminaljuyu es el sitio prehispánico más importante del Valle de Guatemala para el período Preclásico (Popenoe de Hatch 1997; Barrientos 1997; Ponciano 2000; Corado 2008). Durante las fases del Preclásico Providencia, Verbena y Arenal, se caracterizó por su amplio desarrollo, aumento poblacional y relaciones con otras áreas culturales, reflejado en la abundancia de hallazgos y materiales arqueológicos que son testigos de la fuerte actividad económica y cultural que tuvo lugar en el sitio.



Figura 1. Excavación de los canales (Fotografía García Patzán, 2012).

Desde las primeras investigaciones publicadas sobre el sitio (Kidder, Jennings y Shook 1946; Shook y Kidder 1952), uno de los objetivos primordiales fue el fechamiento y establecimiento de una secuencia cronológica de ocupación. Ronald Wetherington (1978) realizó el primer análisis detallado de la cerámica del sitio a partir del método Tipo-Variedad, proponiendo así una tipología. Posteriormente, a partir del trabajo realizado por Edwin Shook y Marion Popenoe de Hatch (Popenoe de Hatch 1997), se estableció una nueva cronología cerámica para el sitio y con ella, la aplicación del método Vajilla para el análisis cerámico.

Ambos métodos son aceptados y aplicados por la mayor parte de proyectos de rescate e investigación arqueológica en Kaminaljuyu. Sin embargo, actualmente esta secuencia cronológica, ampliamente conocida y aplicada, ha sido replanteada, cambiando el rango de fechas de las fases ya establecidas a partir de nuevos análisis que contemplan un ajuste en el desarrollo modal de la cerámica temprana del Área Maya y que la correlaciona con fechas absolutas obtenidas a través de radiocarbono (Inomata et al. 2014; Ortiz 2014). Estos cambios replantean las fechas utilizadas en varios sitios arqueológicos, entre los que se encuentra Kaminaljuyu, para aproximadamente 250 a 300 años más tarde.

En el año 2013 se dio por finalizado el Proyecto de Investigación Arqueológica Montículo C-IV-4 de Kaminaljuyu (Urbina 2014). A partir de los resultados de este proyecto, inicialmente la ocupación de esta área se fechó para las fases Providencia, Verbena y Arenal que, según las fechas anteriormente propuestas, correspondería del 600 a.C. al 100 d.C. Es decir, el área estuvo

habitada durante un rango de 700 años, aproximadamente.

La evidencia recuperada durante las excavaciones dirigidas por Urbina y su equipo (Urbina 2014) definió dos espacios importantes de análisis: el montículo y su plaza hundida al sur (Alvarado y Urbina 2013). La plaza hundida al sur, con el hallazgo de un canal abierto y uno secundario de drenaje, fue objeto de estudio reciente (Díaz García 2016), donde se aborda el análisis de este desde su dimensión ritual y su función cotidiana para el abastecimiento de agua en el sector (Figura 1).

Durante la misma fase y poco antes del cierre del canal mayor, la evidencia material muestra que la actividad doméstica y ritual

en el área no cesó. El segundo canal descubierto por el proyecto y que se identificó como un canal de drenaje (Díaz García 2016) parece continuar en uso hasta que se llevó a cabo el relleno total de la plaza. Varios fogones y gran cantidad de material cerámico se encontraron en el lado noroeste y suroeste del montículo (Urbina 2014). Esta era parte del área de actividad doméstica del sector, incluyendo un basurero cercano que seguramente sirvió para los desechos de las tareas realizadas (García Patzán 2017).

La cerámica asociada a los cimientos de viviendas perecederas cerca del canal de drenaje también se fecha para Verbena. Sin embargo, el material indica que el uso de estas áreas domésticas, el basurero y viviendas, sí continúo hasta la fase Arenal (200 a.C.-100 d.C.), época en la cual se llenó la plaza hundida y se cubrieron completamente ambos canales.

En la parte superior del montículo, seguido del material de relleno de la fase Arenal, se encontró cerámica asociada a un cráneo y restos de carbón, que forman parte del mismo tipo de actividades posiblemente rituales que indican el fin de una etapa. La ocupación del montículo parece haber continuado incluso hasta la fase Santa Clara y durante el Periodo Clásico (250-900 d.C.), aunque sin ser tan relevante como su ocupación Preclásica.

Otros hallazgos importantes incluyen un depósito de navajas de obsidiana con una posible ofrenda de una vasija con tapadera y 11 núcleos (Carpio 2013) (Figura 2) fechados para la fase Arenal. Un botellón, concentraciones de cerámica y evidencia de cimientos de viviendas en torno al canal conforman los rasgos más importantes de la ocupación de la plaza.

Por otra parte, el montículo presentó otras evidencias: la principal, el entierro de un individuo acompañado de dos vasijas y 4 navajas de obsidiana. La parte suroeste y noroeste del montículo presentó otro tipo de rasgos una serie de fogones, evidencia de materiales orgánicos (olotes de maíz y otras semillas) y tendidos de: cerámica, incluyendo vasijas completas, fragmentos de figurillas, artefactos de cerámica y obsidiana (Urbina 2014) (Figura 3).

La nueva propuesta cronológica

La aplicación de la nueva propuesta cronológica para Kaminaljuyu incluye la revisión de los modos cerámicos para cada fase (Inomata, et. al. 2014; Ortiz, 2014) y una serie de fechas de radiocarbono, especialmente de una muestra tomada del interior del canal más grande asociado con el Montículo C-IV-4. Esta muestra coloca el cierre de este entre el año 90 a.C. al 55 d.C. (Arroyo, 2014); es decir la nueva fase Verbena (Inomata et. al. 2014). A la luz de esta nueva cronología, la secuencia de actividad en este montículo se mueve para 250 años más tarde (Figura 4).

Las investigaciones en el Montículo C-IV-4 permiten analizar espacios de interacción y actividad que fueron intensos durante el Preclásico Tardío y que en la cronología revisada, se sitúan en las redefinidas fases Providencia y Verbena, alargando su ocupación hasta la fase Arenal, ahora en el Preclásico Terminal.

Así, la construcción del canal de mayor tamaño y que posiblemente se alimentara del agua del Lago Miraflores (Díaz García 2016) se sitúa hacia el inicio del Preclásico Tardío (Providencia 350-100 d.C.), donde el montículo pudo ser en su fase inicial una plataforma menor que tenía bajo su control el manejo de la actividad doméstica y artesanal en el área. Esto se sugiere con base en el hallazgo del depósito de obsidiana que indica que se realizó algún tipo de labor especializada en el sector.

Dicha actividad cesó en la fase Verbena (100 a.C.-50 d.C.), momento de reorganización en el sector, que incluyó una serie de actividades rituales. El entierro de un individuo en el montículo y el depósito de cráneos humanos y vasijas, entre otras evidencias ya mencionadas, son prueba del carácter ritual que tuvo el fin de una etapa de actividades y el inicio de otra, en esta área de la ciudad.

El sector pasó de ser un área de actividad especializada a una de carácter meramente habitacional y domés-



Figura 2. Vaso Café Negro (Fotografía Alvarado, 2013).

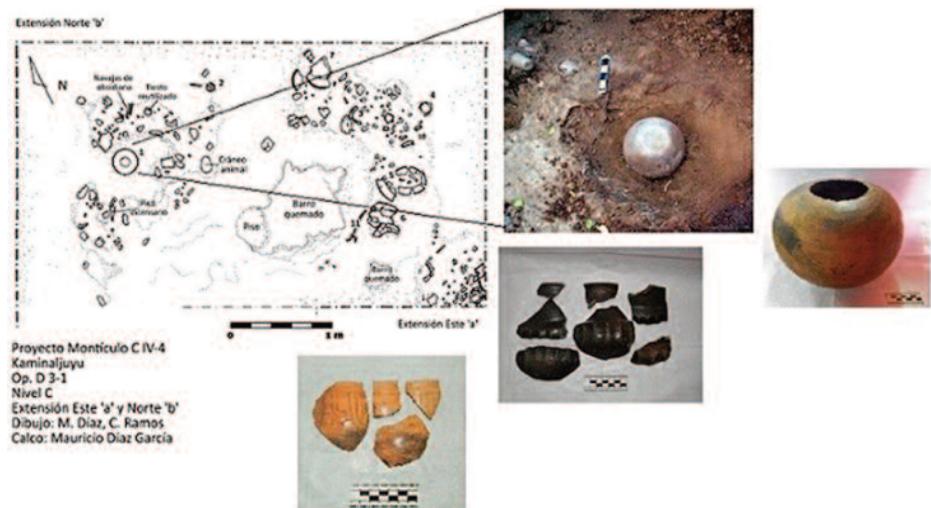


Figura 3. Depósito de materiales (Fotografías: Ramos 2014; García Patzán 2016).

Período	Fecha	Shook-Popenoe	Takeshi y otros
Clásico Temprano	300 -	Aurora	Aurora
	200 -	Santa Clara	Santa Clara
	100 -		Arenal
	1 DC -		
Terminal	100 AC -	Arenal	Verbena
	200 -		Providencia
	300 -	Verbena	Las Charcas
	400 -		Tardío
Tardío	500 -	Providencia	Las Charcas
	600 -		Temprano
	700 -	Majadas	
	800 -	Las Charcas	
	900 -		
	1000 -	Arévalo	?
	1100 -		

Figura 4. Nueva propuesta cronológica y comparación (Arroyo 2014).

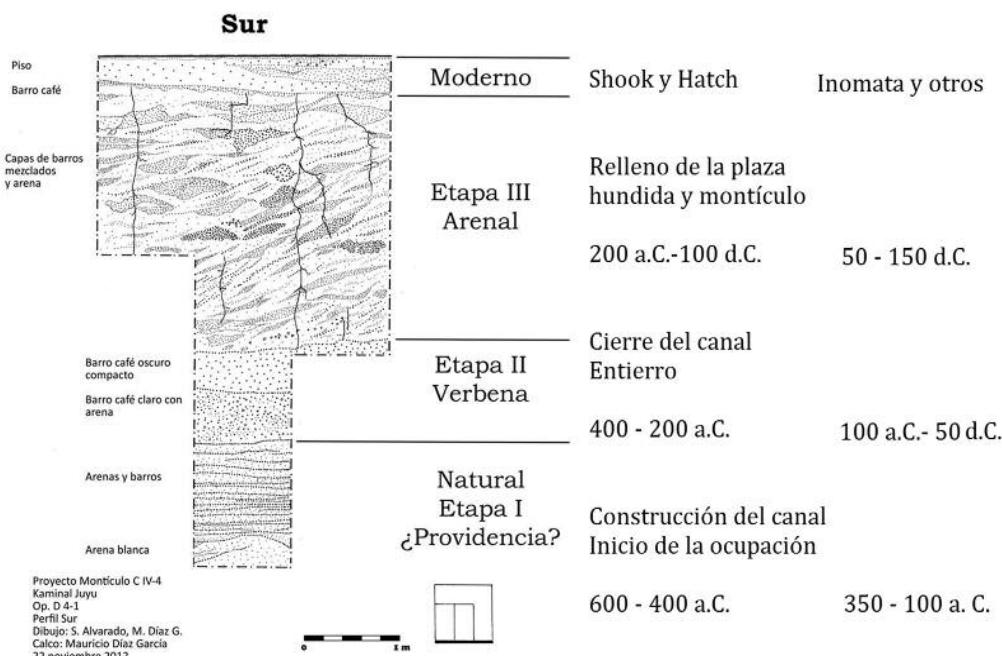


Figura 5. Cronología de ocupación del montículo C-IV-4 (Díaz García 2012).

tico. Las fases Arenal y Santa Clara (50-200 d.C.), en el Preclásico Terminal, estuvieron evidenciadas por el relleno intencional de la plaza y la elevación de la altura del montículo, una etapa de transición que termina en su abandono (Figura 5).

Comentarios finales

A pesar de la identificación de materiales cerámicos que corresponden al Período Clásico, el daño y modificación que ha sufrido el montículo debido a la ocupación humana moderna en el área, especialmente durante la segunda mitad del Siglo XX (el montículo fue modificado para la construcción de una casa), no permitió la identificación de contextos sellados del Período Clásico, por lo cual es difícil determinar qué sucedió en el montículo durante este lapso, por lo tanto no se puede realizar una revisión certera de las remodelaciones o nueva ocupación del montículo C-IV-4 en este momento.

Los hallazgos encontrados en un área tan pequeña de esta ciudad nos muestran la grandeza del sitio especialmente durante el Preclásico Tardío. A partir del análisis del espacio y el contexto de los materiales encontrados, se pudo definir una unidad residencial de actividad especializada, donde un número considerable de personas estuvo a cargo del aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales y de las diferentes tareas a realizar (García Patzán 2017). Este conjunto formó parte de la organización política y económica del sitio, donde también resalta la dimensión sagrada de ciertos elementos como el agua.

Si bien el descenso del nivel freático del lago conllevó el desuso del canal mayor y su cierre, también la muerte del individuo enterrado en el montículo pudo ocasionar los cambios en las actividades llevadas a cabo en el área, ya planteados. ¿Sería este individuo un personaje importante, líder de la organización del sector y de la familia o grupo que habitó el área? Es seguro que el tiempo de investigación no fue el suficiente para terminar de responder las preguntas que se plantean en esta parte del sitio, sin embargo es probable que otros individuos fueran enterrados en el lugar.

Hemos intentado aplicar la nueva propuesta cronológica a los hallazgos ya analizados anteriormente (García Patzán 2017; Díaz García 2016). De cualquier forma la problemática indica que al final del Preclásico y el inicio del Clásico Temprano sucedieron eventos trascendentales que marcaron un cambio político y configuración social a gran escala, evidencias de ello se han encontrado también en otras áreas excavadas de Kaminaljuyu (Estrada y Álvarez 2015; Rodríguez 2017). La problemática es intentar unir todos los pedazos como un gran rompecabezas, de un sitio que ha sido excavado ya por más de 50 años, en diferentes momentos y especialmente por proyectos de rescate o salvamento que no permiten realizar una investigación exhaustiva en las áreas.

Kaminaljuyu es y ha sido constantemente amenazada por el crecimiento urbano de la Ciudad de Guatemala y por la construcción de nuevos complejos comerciales. Por otra parte, el tiempo de estudio dedicado para la investigación en los proyectos de rescate no es suficiente. El motivo principal de esto es la falta de políticas encaminadas a la protección y resguardo de este sitio en constante peligro. El Montículo C-IV-4 no es la excepción.

En este sentido, el objetivo de la publicación de la revisión cronológica y nuevas interpretaciones y aportes para la investigación de este sitio aporta a la sensibilización sobre la importancia de proteger el patrimonio arqueológico de Kaminaljuyu, como un legado de la historia de las civilizaciones prehispánicas.

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ERIK VELÁSQUEZ GARCÍA:

Códice de Dresden. Parte 1. y Códice de Dresden. Parte 2.

Arqueología Mexicana, Edición Especial 67 y 72. 2016-2017.

Las Ediciones Especiales de la revista Arqueología Mexicana “Códice de Dresden. Parte 1. Edición facsimilar” y “Códice de Dresden. Parte 2. Edición facsimilar”, números 67 y 72, respectivamente, presentan el análisis pormenorizado que Erik Velásquez García, experto en arte y escritura jeroglífica maya, realiza al Códice de Dresden, uno de los cuatro manuscritos mayas de época precolombina conservados en la actualidad, junto a los códices de Madrid, de París y el Códice Maya de México.¹ Esta edición facsimilar reproduce fotografías de alta calidad de las cromolitografías realizadas por Ernst Förstemann a finales del siglo XIX, por lo que incluye detalles del códice que se perdieron tras el bombardeo de la ciudad alemana de Dresden durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

Ambas publicaciones están disponibles en su versión impresa y digital, y presentan un detallado análisis de las secciones que componen cada una de las páginas del Códice de Dresden, siguiendo el orden de paginación original, pues el manuscrito se encontraba dividido en dos pedazos de 24 y 15 hojas, respectivamente, lo que derivó en la confusa paginación actual. De tal modo, el estudio comienza con el comentario desde la página 1 a la 24, prosigue de la página 46 a la 74, finalizando con las páginas 25 hasta la 45. A lo largo de las mismas, se abordan los aspectos calendáricos, iconográficos, epigráficos y rituales del manuscrito, al tiempo que se explica la temática principal de cada página y se indica el escriba que la realizó, siguiendo la propuesta del epigrafista alemán Nikolai Grube. Además de las cromolitografías de Förstemann, se incluyen pequeños esquemas de cada una de las páginas donde se señalan las distintas secciones, las fechas, así como los principales elementos iconográficos y epigráficos, facilitando la comprensión del estudio.

El comentario ofrece importantes detalles que permiten conocer el contenido del manuscrito en profundidad. Respecto a la lectura de los textos jeroglíficos, se presenta su transcripción, es decir, cómo se debería leer el texto en maya, y su traducción en español. Ciertamente se echa en falta la transliteración, primer paso del análisis epigráfico consistente en la reproducción

signo a signo del texto jeroglífico en el sistema alfabetico; sin embargo, el trabajo de Velásquez García proporciona otros datos de gran interés, como las diferentes propuestas de lectura de aquellos signos que todavía no han sido descifrados. Por otra parte, el autor identifica las flexiones verbales, tanto en cholano como en lenguas vernáculas de la rama yucateca. De igual modo, reconoce los diversos recursos retóricos empleados por los escribas, como los difrasismos, la metáfora, el hipérbaton, la políptoton o el paralelismo, entre otros, revelando las capacidades literarias de los amanuenses del códice. Al mismo tiempo, relaciona ciertos augurios, así como algunos dioses mencionados en las cláusulas jeroglíficas, con el contenido de los libros de *Chilam Balam*, manuscritos de época colonial.

En cuanto a la iconografía, se describen e interpretan las escenas atendiendo a los principales elementos que permiten identificar a los personajes como deidades determinadas, así como otras figuras y objetos representados, y se relacionan dichas imágenes con los textos que las acompañan. Asimismo, se detectan los rasgos del estilo internacional del Posclásico conocido como “Mixteca-Puebla” presentes en las imágenes.

Por otra parte, cabe destacar que el investigador mexicano aclara la aritmética de las diferentes tablas registradas y de los períodos temporales presentes en el códice, además de los ciclos astronómicos, como el ciclo sinódico de los planetas Venus y Marte o las lunaciones, aspectos fundamentales para la comprensión de las diversas secciones del manuscrito.

“El Códice de Dresden. Parte 1”, contiene el estudio de las primeras 38 páginas del manuscrito. El comentario inicia con una introducción sobre la historia conocida del códice, desde que fuera adquirido en 1739 por Johann Christian Götze, director de la antigua Biblioteca Real Pública de Dresden, así como las principales ediciones e investigaciones referentes al mismo, desde el siglo XIX hasta nuestros días. Asimismo, contiene una fugaz descripción sobre el contenido y el uso que tuvo en época prehispánica este códice, cuyo propósito fue la predicción del futuro.

El estudio comienza con las primeras dos páginas elaboradas por el Escriba 1 y que por su temática se nombran como “Almanaques misceláneos, serie I”. En ellas se identifican los rasgos principales que se repiten en los demás almanaques del códice: las páginas están enmarcadas por líneas rojas y presentan secciones diferenciadas mediante líneas horizontales rojas; asimismo, los números rojos aluden a fechas, en tanto que los negros corresponden a intervalos entre las fechas.

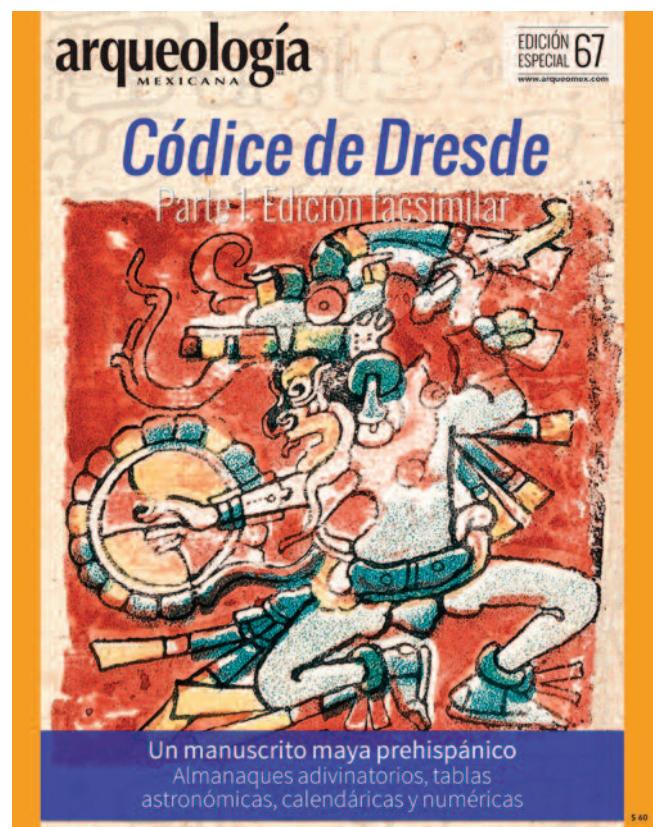
A continuación, se presenta el comentario de las pá-

1 El antes conocido como Códice Grolier fue renombrado como Códice Maya de México tras los estudios que corroboraron su autenticidad (véase Martínez Campos 2018).

ginas elaboradas por el Escriba 2, que incluye otra serie de almanaques misceláneos, donde el autor identifica a diversos dioses del panteón maya posclásico, tales como Jun Ajaw, señor del inframundo y de la estrella matutina, Kiimil, divinidad de la muerte, e Itzamna', señor supremo del panteón, entre otros; así como los augurios asociados, como por ejemplo *chamal*, 'mortandad', *ox wi'il*, 'mucho comida', o *k'ahk' te' tuun*, 'castigo por fuego'. Le sigue el análisis de los almanaques de la diosa lunar, denominación que responde al gran protagonismo de la joven divinidad, referida en los textos como U' Ixik. A lo largo de esta sección se observa a la Diosa de la Luna junto a otros númenes, a los cuales carga con un mecapal o bien a su espalda como símbolo del augurio de cada día; en otras ocasiones parece mantener relaciones sexuales con ellos. Prosigue con las páginas realizadas por el mismo amanuense, que constituyen una tercera serie de almanaques misceláneos.

Posteriormente, se presenta la explicación de las páginas elaboradas por el Escriba 3, amanuense principal del Códice de Dresde. Dicha sección comienza con las tablas de Venus; además de explicar el ciclo sinódico del astro, denominado *Chak Ek'* en los textos, Velásquez García analiza los terribles augurios, como *yaj ch'e'nal*, 'sepulcros dolorosos', o *yaj winik*, 'hombres heridos', entre otros, que, junto a las imágenes de dioses venusinos caracterizados como guerreros en actitud de ataque, revelan la naturaleza nefasta del astro, así como la ideología castrense y sacrificial asociada al mismo. Al análisis de la tabla de Venus, le sigue el comentario de la "tabla lunar y de eclipses", donde se registran las lunaciones y las posibles fechas en las que podía ocurrir un eclipse solar, y en menor medida lunar, aunque no fuesen visibles desde el área maya. Estos fenómenos astronómicos causaban pavor entre los mayas, por lo que las tablas fungían como instrumentos de pronosticación de gran relevancia, además de ofrecer los augurios asociados. Tras este capítulo, se incluye el estudio de las páginas correspondientes a la enigmática "tabla de múltiplos de 78", que en ocasiones ha sido relacionada con el ciclo de Marte. Finalmente, la primera parte del estudio concluye con las profecías del *k'atuun 11 ajaw*, registradas en la página 60, última del anverso del manuscrito, donde predomina una temática bélica.

El segundo volumen, "El Códice de Dresde. Parte 2", comienza con el análisis de una extensa sección también atribuida al Escriba 3 y denominada "Números de serpiente y almanaques de 7 x 260". Velásquez García señala que se trata de uno de los capítulos más complejos del manuscrito, cuyos textos enigmáticos refieren a la creación de los grandes ciclos temporales, *piktuum*, *bak'tuum*, *k'atuun* y *ha'ab*, los cuales eran concebidos como dioses que se sumergían y emergían del agua del inframundo, del sueño o del tiempo mítico profundo, suceso que esta-



ría simbolizado por las serpientes de cuerpo ondulante representadas en esta sección. Dentro de este capítulo, el autor también analiza "la tabla de las estaciones", que incluye la "tabla de múltiplos de 91" y las representaciones del dios de la lluvia, Chaak, realizando actividades de diversa índole, las cuales provocan los augurios registrados en los textos jeroglíficos que acompañan a las imágenes. Finalmente, se presenta el comentario de la denominada "tabla del agua", que, de acuerdo al autor, estaba destinada a la adivinación de fenómenos meteorológicos, especialmente las lluvias abundantes.

A la explicación de las complejas tablas vinculadas con el ciclo de las lluvias, le sigue el comentario de las páginas de las "Ceremonias de año nuevo", atribuidas al Escriba 4. Este apartado del códice contiene información sobre los rituales llevados a cabo durante los días *wayeb* para despedir el año viejo, así como los rituales celebrados para lograr el favor de las deidades para el año entrante. En él, Velásquez García aborda los mitos cosmogónicos sobre el diluvio y la erección de los árboles que subyacen tras las ceremonias de año nuevo. Además, identifica los sacerdotes representados que intervienen en los ritos, así como los elementos empleados en los mismos, como es el caso de las ofrendas entregadas a los *Amayte'*, árboles o postes que evocarían a los cuatro árboles míticos erigidos en las esquinas del mundo tras la gran inundación para levantar la bóveda celeste.

El último capítulo está constituido por un extenso apartado referido como “Almanaques de los campesinos”, debido a la preeminencia del dios Chaak en estos vaticinios vinculados con el calendario ritual de 260 días. En este apartado, el autor también identifica referencias a otros seres, como los *winkil*, equivalentes a dueños, protectores o guardianes. Asimismo, analiza otras secciones breves que se encuentran en las últimas páginas del códice, como la “tabla de múltiplos de 78 y 780”, posible tabla de Marte donde aparece la conocida como “Bestia de Marte”, cuyo nombre, según Velásquez García, se lee como Aak(?). Algunos de dichos pasajes han sido atribuidos a otros amanuenses; tal es el caso de la “tabla de los *ajtook*”, elaborada por el Escriba 6, que constituye una sección especial dedicada a las ceremonias agrícolas de los *ajtook* o “quemadores”, celebradas para asegurar las lluvias, por lo que en estos fragmentos el autor identifica tanto los pronósticos como las posibles cantidades de maíz o copal empleadas en los rituales.

En suma, el comentario del Códice de Dresde de Erik Velásquez García constituye un estudio de gran relevancia, puesto que se trata del análisis epigráfico más actualizado² y la primera traducción en español de los textos jeroglíficos del manuscrito. Asimismo, la cuidadosa descripción de las imágenes y del contenido de los textos permite al lector ahondar en la ritualidad y la mitología, así como en el calendario y los conocimientos astronómicos de los antiguos mayas.

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MARIO HUMBERTO RUZ:

Kakaw, oro aromado

México D.F: Gobierno del Estado de Tabasco, Universidad Autónoma de México, 2016. 167 p.

Este libro examina las múltiples facetas de la historia y las concepciones culturales del cacao en Mesoamérica; enfoque que transmite Mario Humberto Ruz en el preámbulo al exponer la importancia actual del cacao a nivel mundial y los cambios que se han producido tanto en sus áreas de producción como en el predominio de las especies cultivadas del género *Theobroma*.

Las fuentes históricas, epigráficas e iconográficas, así como las evidencias arqueológicas, parecen presentar al cacao (*Theobroma cacao L.*) como un fruto altamente valorado en las antiguas culturas mesoamericanas. La palabra castellana “cacao” es una adaptación de la palabra nahua *cacahuatl*, que es referida en lenguas mayas como *kakaw*. Sin embargo, las evidencias lingüísticas parecen indicar que los orígenes de esta palabra se encuentran en las lenguas de la familia mixe-zoque, asentada en el Istmo de Tehuantepec.

A nivel biológico, los orígenes del cacao posiblemente se sitúen en la cuenca de los ríos Amazonas y Orinoco desde donde se dispersaría a diferentes regiones de América. Además, evidencias recientes parecen indicar que su área de domesticación también se encontraría en Sudamérica, pese a la gran importancia de Mesoamérica como centro de producción y distribución.

En el primer capítulo “Del cacao y su arqueología en el sur de Mesoamérica”, Lynneth S. Lowe explica por medio de diferentes ejemplos la asociación del cacao a rituales agrícolas y prácticas culinarias. Unas ideas que quedan reforzadas en el apartado de este capítulo dedicado a la identificación química de residuos y las formas de utilización del cacao, donde se exponen parte de los resultados obtenidos tras los análisis de algunas vasijas, como las tres piezas halladas en Colhá, en el norte Belice.

La autora también destaca su utilización como símbolo de alianzas políticas y familiares, así como su posible uso como indicador de diferencias sociales. Esto se deduce de la iconografía que parece resaltar su importancia en la interacción y negociación social entre las élites. La entrega de bultos de cacao en escenas palaciegas y su mención en la *Matrícula de Tributos*, entre otras fuentes, remarcán la repercusión de este fruto en

2 Poco después de la publicación de las Ediciones Especiales de Arqueología Mexicana, Velásquez García publicó nuevamente su estudio con las correcciones de algunas de sus lecturas epigráficas en la edición del Códice de Dresde dirigida por el INAH. Dicho comentario está disponibles en <http://www.codicededresde.inah.gob.mx/>

la economía regional, por ejemplo, en las redes de intercambio a larga distancia, el tributo o el intercambio de regalos que acompañaba a las celebraciones.

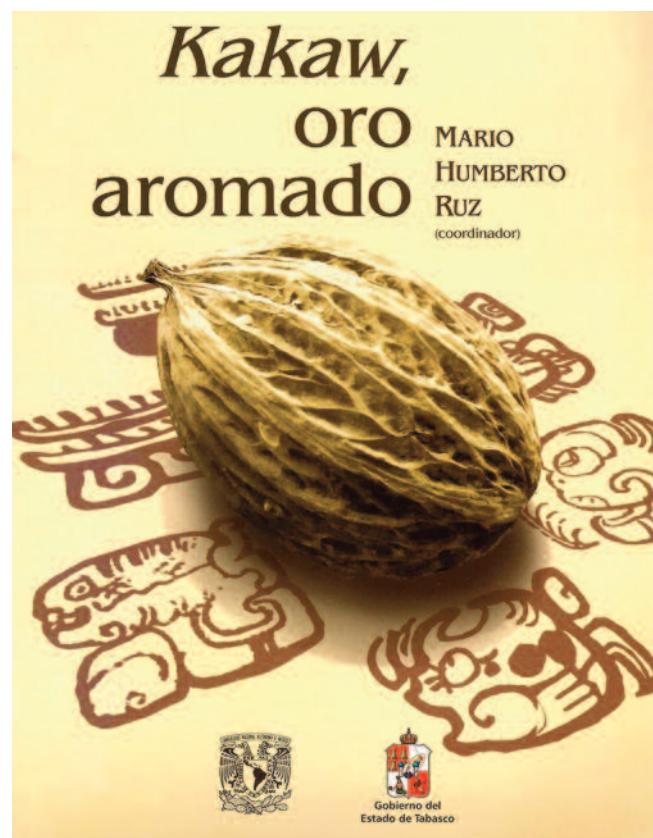
Tomás Pérez Suárez y María del Carmen Valverde Valdés, en el segundo capítulo, “Oro aromado. Imágenes y símbolos del cacao en Mesoamérica y el área maya”, retoman algunas de las ideas expuestas anteriormente, pero con mayor énfasis en las evidencias epigráficas encontradas y los estudios lingüísticos. La concepción de la naturaleza en el pensamiento mesoamericano se desarrolla al final del capítulo, donde el cacao es vinculado al mundo de abajo, el inframundo, que se opone al mundo de arriba correspondiente al maíz.

En el tercer capítulo, “El mono y el cacao: la búsqueda de un mito” de Martha Ilia Nájera Coronado, se explican las propuestas en torno a la existencia de conexiones simbólicas entre el cacao y el maíz, reflejadas en la iconografía. A partir de un análisis comparativo con otras creencias e ideas mesoamericanas, propone rastrear elementos simbólicos asociados al cacao para esbozar un antiguo mito de origen de esta planta y su vinculación con el mono y el ciclo narrativo del maíz. Las ideas extraídas se trasladan a Chichén Itzá donde realiza un interesante análisis de la distribución espacial y la iconografía de los edificios del Grupo de la Serie Inicial.

El periodo colonial es desarrollado en el capítulo cuatro, “De la xícara a la porcelana: el peregrinar del cacao tabasqueño”, por Mario Humberto Ruiz. En él se exponen algunos de los cambios sufridos a nivel económico en Mesoamérica con las crecientes exigencias tributarias de este fruto por parte de los conquistadores o la expansión de sus zonas de producción y comercio. Las consecuencias de esta nueva política se reflejaron en la demografía y las tradiciones sociales europeas e indígenas. Por parte de los primeros, comenzaron a surgir nuevas recetas y utensilios culinarios asociados al cacao. Para los segundos, cambiaron las deidades y los usos procedentes de época prehispánica. A partir de los testimonios de varios personajes de diferentes nacionalidades, épocas y oficios, el autor nos aproxima a la evolución de la percepción del cacao tanto en el continente americano como el europeo.

En suma, este libro se presenta como una buena introducción a la historia del cacao en Mesoamérica. Las ideas planteadas por los autores permiten obtener una visión global de la evolución de la percepción cultural del cacao hasta el siglo XVIII, la cual puede ser ampliada a partir de la bibliografía especializada utilizada para construir cada uno de los capítulos.

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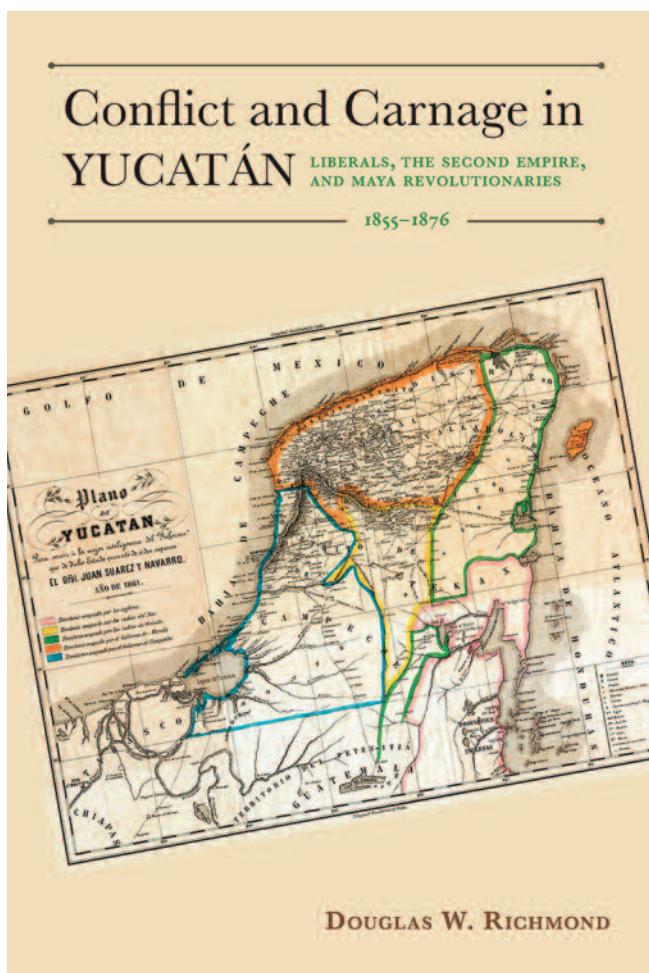


Douglas W. Richmond: Conflict and Carnage in Yucatan: Liberals, the Second Empire, and Maya Revolutionaries, 1855-1876

Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press,
2015. 177 p.

Douglas Richmond's concise, approachable monograph reconsiders an often overlooked era in Yucatecan history—the French Intervention and the Second Empire (1861–67) and the Restored Republic Era (1867–76). After surveying the political stability, the economic wellbeing, the extent of violence, and the condition of the Maya majority in Yucatan under the two regimes, Richmond takes on a once sacred figure in Mexican history, President Benito Juárez. He concludes that Yucatan fared much better under Maximilian's agents and policies than under the juarista liberal program for the peninsula.

Richmond mined an often overlooked repository for the source material for *Conflict and Carnage*, the micro-



filmed collection of archival materials from Yucatan at the University of Texas-Arlington. His ability to write a well-researched monograph based mostly on archival materials from a single library's special collections should alert researchers of its value. While the materials microfilmed in UT-Arlington's Yucatan Collection are copies of original documents found in the state, episcopal, and notarial archives in Mérida, Yucatan, it is the most extensive collection of historical material on Yucatan in the United States. Richmond aptly demonstrates its potential for scholarly use in this book.

Richmond's emphasis on the *Documentos del Congreso* enhanced his treatment of local and national politics. Nineteenth-century separatist revolts and political conflicts between liberals and conservatives in Yucatan are contextualized in the global events and currents of the era without any serious omissions. International relations with Great Britain, trade ties with the United States (US) and meddling by US interlopers, and the European background of Napoleon III and Maximilian, Mexico's ill-fated Austrian monarch (r. 1864–67), all receive adequate coverage. In *Conflict and Carnage* he also concisely narrates Yucatan's fraught relationship with Mexico, the troubled nation from which the pe-

ninsula repeatedly attempted to separate. Finally, the regional rift between Mérida and Campeche receives its due coverage as an underlying source of much of the violence that plagued the peninsula. However, if one group occasionally slips out of focus, it is Yucatan's Maya majority. Often, they are depicted as supporting actors to elite conflicts with minimal discussion of their perspective on the troubled nineteenth century.

The first chapter, surveying Yucatan's history from "antiquity to 1821" gives readers unfamiliar with the colonial province's history a necessary background, making it accessible for readers unfamiliar with the peninsula's pre-Columbian and colonial past. However, a few cases of chronological confusion and occasional factual errors need to be addressed. First, Richmond asserts that Montejo burned his ships in imitation of Cortés (7). Though the conquistador of central Mexico was reputed to have done so, as Matthew Restall pointed out in *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*, "actually, he did not." (*Seven Myths*, 19) Richmond also states that the province of colonial Yucatan included the Mexican states of Yucatan, Campeche, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, the Petén area of Guatemala, and what is now Belize. Guatemala's *audiencia* had civil jurisdiction over Petén.

Nevertheless, the strengths of the book emerge in the following chapters. As Richmond moves to the nineteenth century, he uses sufficient supporting evidence as he sets the stage for his well-argued contrast between Maximilian I's well-intentioned policies and the harsh regime of the liberals loosely affiliated with Benito Juárez. Richmond's central argument that Yucatan fared well and had better administrators under Maximilian than under the liberals who had tenuous allegiance to Juárez is convincing. He notes that "once considered the savior of republican ideals and a hero of a Mexican nationalism, historians of Mexico are now interpreting Juárez more critically." (122). Indeed, the traditional Mexican historiographical perspective of the second half of the nineteenth century, in which Juárez is enshrined as a national hero and Porfirio Díaz is roundly vilified, has been critically reexamined in recent years. Richmond's regional study of Yucatan marks a substantial contribution to this new trend, especially in his balanced but overall positive reflection on Maximilian's rule and its impact on Yucatan. Previously, Díaz's long shadow over the twentieth century has been given a more nuanced treatment, while scholars such as Richmond have moved beyond the national myth of Juárez to depict a less heroic figure. By taking a regional focus on Yucatan and highlighting the difficult conditions of Mayas under liberal rule, Richmond does indeed bring a much-needed reevaluation to this era, even if one of the supposed central protagonists of the book, the rebel Mayas, are often out of the spotlight.

In conclusion, this work is a concise and direct monograph, adequately grounded in the historical context without getting bogged down in the details, making it suitable reading for undergraduate courses. Likewise, advanced researchers and graduate students will do well to take note of Richmond's impressive use of UT-Ar-

lington's often-untapped resources, the Yucatan Collection's microfilmed documents.

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