

ALTERNATIVE EPIGRAPHIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MAYA SNAKE EMBLEM  
GLYPH

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies  
in the Office of the Vice Provost  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term  
2007

## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the Maya snake emblem glyph is associated with religious specialists, instead of geographic locations, as emblem glyphs are typically understood to be. The inscriptions and the media on which the snake emblem glyph occurs will be analyzed to determine the role or function of the “Lord of the Snake.” Temporal and spatial data has also been collected to aid in understanding the enigmatic glyph. The snake emblem glyph has recently been identified as originating from a broad area containing the sites of El Perú and La Corona in Guatemala, and Dzibanche, Mexico, a departure from the longstanding choice of Calakmul, Mexico. Unprovenanced snake emblem glyph texts have been cataloged under a “Site Q” designation (‘Q’ for the Spanish word *Que*, meaning “which”) by Peter Mathews. Site Q is thus not securely identified geographically, which confounds efforts to designate a particular site as the snake emblem glyph site.

Other problems with the snake emblem glyph, such as its geographically wide dispersal, hint that it is not a title of a particular city or region. Yet another problem is “a proper fit” between the individuals listed on unprovenanced material and individuals named at sites associated with the snake emblem glyph. It is argued that the interpretation of the snake emblem glyph differs from how emblem glyphs are presently understood. Rather than representing a physical location, the snake emblem glyph represents a mythological place or “state,” containing members who legitimize their lineage (association) through ritual events such as communication with supernaturals via the vision serpent. The specialists perform rituals, scatterings, are ballplayers, and witness events. They are rarely associated with accession, which by current interpretation is implicitly tied to emblem glyphs.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	anno Domini
ADI	Anterior Date Indicator
BOD	<i>Maya Book of the Dead: The Ceramic codex: The corpus of Codex Style Ceramics of the Late Classic Period</i> (Robicsek 1981)
FAMSI	Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Incorporated.
GMT	Goodman, Martinez, Thompson
PDI	Posterior Date Indicator
PSS	Primary Standard Sequence
T###	Thompson Number
VOS	Verb, Object, Subject

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

It is the premise of this thesis that the individuals associated with the snake emblem glyph represent a group of ritual performers, who dedicate buildings, enter named *wayeb* (animal co-essences) trances, play the ballgame, and perform scatterings, visions, and *K'awiil* events. These interpretations run counter to popular views on the snake emblem glyph. The most common and hotly contested reading of the glyph, among Maya scholars, is as the title "Sacred Lord of Calakmul." This idea of an emblem as the supreme title of a Maya ruler/priest (e.g. Stuart 1993) is the commonly accepted paradigm and is prevalent in iconography and epigraphic treaties (e.g. Martin and Grube 2000), but has not been explored in-depth by epigraphers. Instead, epigraphers, especially after the findings of Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960), have focused on literal meanings taken as historical fact.

A brief history of Maya hieroglyphic decipherment and a review of basics concerning glyphic readings relevant to the snake emblem glyph will serve as a starting point in the discussion. This will be followed by an analysis of the texts containing the snake emblem glyph. Then, the inscriptions will be examined for overarching motifs and focal points relating to the snake emblem glyph.

The idea that the snake emblem glyph could represent a supernatural title was based on the following observations. Maya iconography, particularly on lintels, commonly shows a vision serpent as a vehicle of communication with ancestral spirits. The idea is perhaps taken from observations that snakes shed their old skin, making them appear as "new," and that they swallow their prey whole, both actions being symbolic of a passage through realms in which the

Maya could commune with supernaturals or ancestors. On the body of the generalized vision serpent appear serpent marks, sometimes referred to as flayed areas (Schele and Freidel 1990:69), like that of a molting snake. These serpent marks resemble a crosshatched triangle with circles on its border. These serpent marks in turn bear a strong resemblance to the glyph *xaman* (Figure 1). The *xaman* glyph signifies an apex, like the North Star, within the Milky Way. Accordingly, one's ancestors travel the Milky Way after death. It is the road to Xibalba (Miller and Taube 1993). The road to Xibalba is also the realm of Mixcoatl (a star faced cloud serpent), and Quetzalcoatl (a feathered serpent), both Central American serpents (Miller and Taube 1993). Although these serpents are not wholly Maya, the ideological overtones of these ideas became apparent. These serpents are associated with the heavens. Adding to this curious revelation, the *xaman* glyph has a basal element of a segmented underbelly of a serpent. The *xaman* glyph sometimes appears infixed within the rear portion of the snake main sign glyph (Figure 2) as at Tikal on Lintel 3 from Temple 1. Other examples of conflation or infixation worth mentioning are given below.

The *mo* glyph (Figure 3) is sometimes infixed on the forehead of the snake main sign. A secondary interpretation of this sign is as the *muyal* glyph (Figure 4). If the glyphic element is *mo* it may refer to the scarlet macaw, a creature who aided the Hero Twins in the *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1985); if the glyph refers to *muyal*, then the meaning of "cloud" can be associated with the snake main sign making this a "cloud serpent." Either way both signs could be phonetic and iconographic motifs signifying to the reader an aerial or sky aspect to the snake. Finally, the dots may be *k'uhul*, or "sacred" drops of blood or copal (used as a blood substitute in the *Popol Vuh* (Tedlock 1985)). Earlier hieroglyphic studies focusing on phoneticism have similarly atomized

glyphs into their simplest elements, particularly the snake main sign in the 1940's (Gruyter 1946). Atomization of glyphs, when given consideration of the symbolic nature of Maya iconography, is not without merit.

These observations of certain infixed glyphic elements in the snake main sign may signal to the reader a relationship with the supernatural. Peter Harrison (2007) recently observed that the snake emblem main sign might be a conflation of several animals, even asking if the snake emblem main sign is a snake and not a composite creature. This line of reasoning is especially applicable since epigraphers such as Simon Martin (2005) have started to reevaluate the snake emblem glyph on some monuments at Calakmul as a bat emblem glyph.

Public texts containing the snake emblem glyphs exhibit, with a great deal of regularity, iconography showing ritual displays of legitimacy through iconographic means, particularly through the display of the Bicephalic Ceremonial Bar, dwarves, and *K'awiil* motifs. The snake emblem glyph also appears regularly on portable art, including ceramic vases that depict *wayeb* and *K'awiil* events as well as vision serpents.

Another observation I made is that the snake emblem glyph, when analyzed phonetically, spells out *k'uhul-ka-kan ajaw*. *K'uhul-ka-kan* is close enough in spelling to the mythological Maya deity Kukulcan to merit investigation, although this is not within the scope of this paper. It would be a difficult question to answer based on linguistic study alone. Unfortunately, though, Maya/Spanish dictionaries do not appear prior to the sixteenth century, leaving another four hundred years of linguistic evolution to obfuscate interpretation.

The snake emblem glyph's designation is brought into question by epigraphers. Did the snake emblem glyph occur with common secular leadership events, or, was the emblem glyph,

and perhaps other emblem glyphs, more sacred than other titles? To examine this problem, the glyph's relation to iconography and surrounding glyphic context will be examined.

A brief understanding of the history of decipherment is needed to show how interpretation has evolved to its present state. Interest in the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphs has led to many important discoveries, as well as many dead ends. After more than one hundred years of scholastic attempts, our grasp of the ancient Maya writing system is still not complete. What are hieroglyphs and how do we interpret them? The etiology of the word "hieroglyph" is Greek, meaning "holy writing" because of what appeared to be a correlation of Egyptian symbols and the temple walls they were found on. The term "glyph" holds the same meaning as "hieroglyph" and can refer to elements within a glyph (affixes and main signs) or to the whole glyph. Emblem glyphs are typically constructed of two affixes and a main sign.

Maya hieroglyphs, as they are understood today, are a combination of logograms (picture words) and phonetic elements (symbols representing parts of words). Logograms represent morphemes and words. Logographic writing can also be considered rebus writing in its simplest form, as it occurred among the Aztec in tribute lists, or ideographic writing, with its use in more complex structural composition i.e. sentence structures in Maya texts.

The phonetic approach in Maya epigraphy is based on the belief that the glyphs represent a syllabary, or collection of common phonemes in lieu of an alphabet. Phonetic elements can be combined to form words in a manner similar to the more complex alphabet. Grammatical structural analysis has allowed epigraphers to verify phonetic substitution of logograms and vice versa. Linda Schele provides a classic example of logographic versus phonetic glyphs using the Maya word *balam* "jaguar." Each example shown by Schele of various combinations of

logographic and phonetic glyphic elements represents *balam* in writing (e.g. Coe 1993:264). She gives a logographic example followed by a mixed logographic/phonetic rendering and finally a purely phonetic spelling of *balam* (Coe 1993:264).

The earliest Maya hieroglyphic writing is usually dated to before the beginning of the Early Classic Period or to just prior to AD 250 (Coe and Van Stone 2001). However, the Maya and other cultures, such as the Olmec, had even earlier writing systems. Recently, Maya hieroglyphs dating to the Late Preclassic have been recorded at San Bartolo, Guatemala (Saturno 2006). The hieroglyphic writings in the Maya area pertinent to this study were inscribed by people who probably spoke the Maya language families of Yucatec and Proto-Cholan (Coe and Van Stone 2001; Houston and Coe 2003). Chol or Cholan was spoken in the Southern Lowland Maya area and is the best candidate for linguistic comparison between 16<sup>th</sup> century dictionaries and Classic period glyphs, rather than Yucatec, the language spoken to the north. The Yucatán peninsula is not a source of large quantities of Classic period inscriptions. Most of the Classic Period material in this paper is presumably related to a Cholan-speaking people of the Southern lowlands, although some of the inscriptions are located in areas where a mixture of languages probably was spoken.

One of the first decipherment breakthroughs with regard to Maya hieroglyphs came almost 2,000 years after their initial use. Friar Diego de Landa (Tozzer 1941) wrote what is considered the "Rosetta Stone" for the decipherment of Maya text in AD 1566. A flawed translation of Maya syllables correlated with the Spanish alphabet appears in his *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*, a book that he wrote as penance for his harsh treatment of the Maya of the Yucatán peninsula. Several important pieces of information are included in this work. His Maya

syllable to Spanish letter figure has proven crucial for work on the phonetic decipherment of Maya hieroglyphs. Landa also recorded the day and month glyphs, and a reference date that has been used to correlate the Maya calendar to the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Landa's work was lost to those interested in hieroglyphic decipherment for almost three hundred years. An abridgement of Landa's treatise resurfaced in 1862 when the Abbé Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg discovered a copy of the manuscript in Paris (Coe 1993). Landa's original manuscript has never been found.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century produced many adventurous characters, including some of dubious personality. Early Central-Americanists, such as Count Waldek in the 1700's, were arguably more of a hindrance to scholastic advancement of Maya studies, given with his fanciful and inaccurate depictions of monuments. Despite his reputation, Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Smaltz deciphered the values of the bar and dot system of numeration in the 1830's. Other researchers, such as Maudslay and Maler, generated interest in glyphs through high caliber photographic records.

Epigraphy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became entrenched in a dispute that was to forestall the decipherment of ancient Maya texts for years. The phonetic camp arose from the 19<sup>th</sup> century French school of thought on hieroglyphic texts. Leon Louis Lucien Prunol de Rosny, a distinguished Orientalist, thought that the glyphs were more than rebus symbols, and that they had phonetic components. De Rosny was the first to notice the existence of phonetic elements in the day and month glyphs in Landa's *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*. De Rosny is responsible for identifying the glyphs for the cardinal directions as well (Coe 1993:115).

Yuri Knorosov, a Russian soldier with scholarly interests, saved a codex in a Berlin

library from destruction during World War II. He presented a well-honed paper in 1952 that explained how glyphs could be deciphered. Knorosov's concept was based on the principle that affixes and main signs represent combinations of logographs and syllables. The syllabic glyphs commonly took the form of a lone vowel, or consonant followed by a vowel. In this, Knorosov departed from the common view of the time, which was to use Landa's Spanish/Maya alphabet as a letter for letter translation of Maya glyphs. Instead, Knorosov understood that the drawings in Landa's book were syllables. These syllables, when strung together, formed words and by extension, sentences.

An opposing camp based their decipherments on the premise that Maya writing is ideographic i.e. picture symbolism. The ideographic camp came to be associated with and dominated by Eric Thompson. The Thompsonian School saw the ancient Maya writing system as ideographic, like that of the Aztec. The glyphs were viewed as being pictorial tools used as memory aids by the priest who read them. Thompson's inflammatory persona and vicious, but successful, attacks on opponents stonewalled advancement in Maya decipherment for decades. But as the old cliché goes, "paradigms change one funeral at a time."

The method employed by the ideographic camp was to focus on analysis of the structural arrangement of glyphs for clues to their meaning, a method important to both camps. The Thompsonian School, like the phonetic school, also had its successes. Indeed, much progress in the study of Maya hieroglyphs was made by comparing glyphs in known clauses and structural position with unknown glyphs. Many new readings came from examining glyphic substitution.

The premier example of the structural analysis of glyphic material is the work of Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960) at Piedras Negras. Proskouriakoff was not a Thompson protégé, but her



methodology is an excellent example of structural analysis. With data from Piedras Negras, she determined that the texts of groups of Piedras Negras' stelae spanned time frames from 55 to 64 years, or the typical duration of a human lifetime. The stelae were arranged in parallel constructions, and the glyphs associated with "birth" and "accession" were derived from the structure of glyphic clauses. Non-calendrical glyphs were shown to contain information relating to historical peoples and events; they were not just numbers and calendrics as presumed by Thompson. Through the work of Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960) and Heinrich Berlin (1958), the Maya were finally seen as having a language that recorded historic events, people, and possibly places. However, it appears both groups were correct to a degree. Hieroglyphic texts are a blend of logographic and phonetic elements.

More specific to this study, in 1958 Heinrich Berlin published a paper proposing a special group of glyphs called emblem glyphs. Emblem glyphs were considered to be titles of ancient Maya places or, alternately, tutelary deities. As to what emblem glyphs actually represented, Berlin was wisely vague. Berlin noted that this class of glyphs seemed to follow supplementary series calendrics and what is known as the anterior date indicator (ADI), or in Maya *u-ti-ya* "it happened" (Stuart and Houston 2001). This is not the case for the snake emblem glyph, although Houston notes that the ADI usually precedes toponyms (Stuart and Houston 1994).

Berlin noted that emblem glyphs consisted of three parts: the 'Ben Ich' superfix (T168), Thompson's "water group" (T32-41) as a prefix, and a main sign. Essential to an emblem glyph is the Thompson "water group." This "water group" may represent the scattering of blood, corn, or precious jade. Floyd Lounsbury speculated that it was copal. Alternately, the Thompson "water group" may simply indicate a bloodline. The "water group" prefix (T32-41) is now

identified as *k'uhul* or *ch'ul*, meaning “sacred” or “holy” (Coe 1993: 263). The 'Ben Ich' superfix was deciphered by Floyd Lounsbury as the title *ajaw* or *ahpo*, meaning “he of the mat” (Lounsbury 1973). An English equivalent of the phrase would be “Lord.” The *po* glyph in the 'Ben Ich' superfix is also thought to represent copal incense called *pom* by Lounsbury (Lounsbury 1973). The main sign has been interpreted as a toponym if it lacks the affixes it needs to be an emblem glyph (Stuart and Houston 1994). Therefore emblem glyphs are typically read “Sacred Lord of \_\_\_\_\_”.

Besides these standard affixes others are commonly attached to emblem glyphs. The snake emblem glyph sometimes has variants of the *ka* glyph attached as a prefix and determinant. Interestingly, and confusingly, Piedras Negras' emblem glyph has what appears to be the lateral body of a fish attached as a prefix to the main sign, which is the syllable *b'i*. What makes this interpretation noteworthy is the fact that the syllabic reading of the snake is *b'i*. This creates the problem of the Piedras Negras glyph having the same meaning as the snake emblem glyph site when read phonetically.

The affixes such as the *ka* glyph are read in a similar way as semantic determinatives, which appear as a non-spoken aspect of a logogram that classes the subject. An aid used in the snake emblem glyph is the *ka* comb, or lateral fish body or full fish body prefix, presumably to differentiate *kan* from *chan*. The comb shaped *ka* prefix is the most common of the three, although none are truly necessary. However, the only Maya determinative known to date is the cartouche around day names (Schele and Freidel 1990:53).

Glyphs are not standardized and can be manipulated significantly by the scribe. John Montgomery (2002), and Michael D. Coe and Mark Van Stone (2001) discuss the common

practice of Maya scribes was to conflate, infix and suppress glyphs. Conflation occurs when a glyph is combined with another glyph in a singular form to represent singular or multiple meanings. Conflation makes a glyph's meaning more specific. A more common method of glyph modification employed by the Maya is infixing glyphs or glyphic elements within other glyphs. This happens with regularity in the snake main sign. Perhaps as Peter Harrison (2007) suggests, the snake main sign of the snake emblem glyph is more properly a composite creature. As noted earlier, the *xaman* and *mo* phonetic elements are infixed in the snake emblem glyph in Tikal and Dos Pilas inscriptions with some regularity, but are absent in other examples. One of the most common cases of infixation is the Kan cross, infixed in the Thompson “water group” (Coe and Van Stone 2001).

Glyphs also can be suppressed. In suppression, glyphs are left out and the reader is expected to fill in the missing information from the context of the glyphs. A very common use of suppression is in Distance Count Dates, for example, when two numerical values are attached to a single glyph. The affixual positioning and prominence of the numbers around the glyph determines its reading. Conflation, infixing, and suppression occur in Maya script apparently at the whim of the scribe, for aesthetic purposes, or for brevity. Some glyphs, like the ADI, are sometimes left out all together.

The snake emblem glyph is commonly found in readings with the *K'awiil* glyph and with iconic representations of the vision serpent, Manikin Scepter, or Bicephalic Bars, all of which are important mediums between mortals and the supernatural. This thesis seeks to demonstrate that the snake emblem glyph is a title belonging to a class of individuals who have access to the supernatural through rituals. The association of these people named with the snake emblem

glyph and their actions will be observed.

Several problems exist with the identification of the snake emblem glyph. One is how much variance is acceptable for the glyph to still be called an emblem glyph. For example, can a full-figured fish affix or God C head replace the comb-like *ka* glyph, or can the glyph be broken up into several glyphs, which combined have the same meaning? Indeed, the snake emblem glyph can be broken into several discrete glyphs, as it is in several of the examples analyzed here in this corpus.

The snake glyph is homophonic, capable of meaning “snake,” “sky,” and “captive” (Houston 1984). The question is, which interpretation do we use? To further confuse the issue the logographic snake main sign can be read phonetically as *b'i*. But it cannot be substituted for the quincunx glyph that is representative of the Piedras Negras emblem glyph (Coe and Van Stone 2001), or can it? When do we read the text logographically and when do we read it phonetically?

How important is glyphic order to meaning? Were the Maya consistent? The answers appear to be very and no, in that order. Consider the word *Caan*. *Caan* is understood to mean “sky place,” reversing the order, however, yields the reading *Nachan*, “First Serpent.” The question of which reading is most appropriate is complex and relies on the reader's ability to contextualize the text and properly organize the glyphic elements i.e. subfixes, postfixes, and the like.

The snake emblem glyph is represented in inscriptions over a large area in the Southern Maya Lowlands; arguably, it has the widest dispersal of all emblem glyphs (Figure 5). If it does indeed represent a single polity, as is generally assumed, how would it have held sway over the

other sites where the glyph is recorded? The answer does not seem to lie in military strength and domination. The effective range a polity can control by military force is limited by the length of its supply line or chain of command (Chase and Chase 1998). This rules out military conquest for some of the sites at which the snake emblem glyph appears. Diplomacy and trade would seem more appropriate conduits for lasting political influence. We must remember that trade is not always an exchange of tangible goods. People also trade in ideas. The Maya have a long history of integrating external influences into their own culture. This line of reasoning would mean that military and political domination would be less likely to be the cause of the snake emblem glyph having a wide geographic proliferation. More likely the answer is the snake emblem glyph represents a non-volatile, readily accepted idea that is incorporated into, or replaces conventional ideology.

Lastly, emblem glyphs are a title of a person given the *ajaw* superfix, so regardless of the interpretation of the rest of the glyphic parts, the title belongs to a person not a place. A sound alternative to the assumption that the snake emblem glyph represents a political location would be that the snake emblem glyph (and perhaps some other emblem glyphs) represents a title for a priestly class of ritual specialists in contact with supernaturals and ancestors. This reading is based upon contextual situations to be analyzed in this thesis.

Questions that arise from the enigmatic snake emblem glyph are: 1. What are the times and places where the snake emblem glyph exerts influence? The temporal and spatial parameters of the snake emblem glyph may provide clues as to its proliferation through time and space. 2. What glyphs (events and actors) are regularly associated with the snake emblem glyph? The snake emblem glyph will be analyzed with this in mind to determine the actions and who

performs them, in relation to the snake emblem glyph. 3. Is there a name generally associated with the snake emblem glyph? The texts will be studied to determine if there is a name which regularly is associated with the snake emblem glyph, and 4. Does the snake emblem glyph represent a religious title, a specialist, or an ideology instead of a geographical polity? All these are questions which have not been adequately addressed by epigraphers regarding emblem glyphs, particularly the snake emblem glyph. Instead the assumption which has been consumed whole-heartedly is that emblem glyphs equal exact locales in the Maya world.

## CHAPTER TWO: CORPUS ANALYSIS

In order to study and challenge some of the previous interpretations of the snake emblem glyph, it is necessary to document the corpus of inscriptions containing this glyph. At first inscriptions were only going to be analyzed from less mobile monuments such as stelae, altars, and other permanent public monuments. However, it soon became evident that the corpus needed to be expanded to include portable, personal art, such as ceramics, and looted stelae and panels. Indeed, some of the more interesting and problematic pieces come from the ceramic collections and depict more private scenes. This different medium may lead to a better understanding of the correlation between the iconography and the texts than the public monuments.

Some conventions are adhered to in this paper, but deserve mention nonetheless. One convention used in the discussion is that sacred day and month names given in Calendar Round statements are provided here in Yucatec names, as this practice is widely accepted among Maya epigraphers. Other traditions, such as the use of the word *tun* to mean year instead of *haab* and the use of the 19<sup>th</sup> century invention, the *bak'tun* (Coe and Van Stone 2001:47), will be adhered to so as not to confuse the reader.

The snake emblem glyph appears most often publicly on stelae, although it is also found painted on cave walls at the site of Naj Tunich (Stone 1995) and inscribed on vases (Kerr 1989, 1992, 1994, 1997), bone (Schele and Freidel 1990), and mirror backings (FAMSI Schele Drawing Collection). Texts on public stone monuments have a different purpose from less public texts, such as those on pottery vases or written in places such as caves. Large stone monuments, such as altars and stelae, are meant for public consumption and are more limited as

to their subject matter. Typical stelae passages concern a ruler's right to rule by birthright, his feats of war, the captives taken, and other important personal events such as accession to power. Personal artifacts deal with more private information, such as patron deities and companion spirits.

Several issues need to be discussed prior to looking at the glyphic texts. First, dates, when available, are given in the Julian calendar with a Goodman Martinez Thompson (GMT) correlation of 584283. Where dates are incomplete or not readily available, efforts have been made to derive a time period by using supplemental material appearing on dated material. It must be noted that there are common names in texts, which muddy simple correlations of dates and proper names; these include "Jaguar-Paw" and Yaxchilan's "Bird Jaguar." Rough dates are refined by Calendar Round dates that are available on the monuments being studied. This is not always possible, and some of the monuments discussed below have been dated by stylistic similarity to other monuments from the same site. For example, Nikolai Grube notes that Altar 3 from Altar de los Reyes is stylistically similar to Stela 1 from the same site; the two monuments are therefore believed to be contemporaneous (Grube 2002).

Although Maya hieroglyphs are assumed to have been deciphered, having met all the landmarks of decipherment (Houston and Coe 2003), it is not so. Rather, not all the glyphs presently known have meanings or decipherments that are universally agreed upon by epigraphers. Some glyphs are unique and are likely to remain undecipherable. Therefore, some of the individuals named in this thesis will follow the general practice of naming persons logographically, if their names cannot be given otherwise. The reader must note that epigraphers do not always stick to the names or the spellings of persons identified in hieroglyphic texts, as



will be seen later in this paper.

Another problem with this research involves differences in the drawings of monuments. In several cases, variation or omissions of detail occur in drawings made of the same monuments. For example, the reader is directed to Figure 5 from *The Blood of Kings* (Schele and Miller 1986). This figure compares two drawings of Yaxchilan Lintel 17: the 19<sup>th</sup> century drawing by Annie Hunter for Alfred P. Maudslay omits a rope being drawn through a woman's tongue but it is present in the more modern drawing (Schele 1986:22). Drawings of monuments usually do not show all faces or sides of the monument being drawn, which also leads to an incomplete understanding of the monument. The problem with omissions is that the person may be presenting only the data that supports her interpretation, which makes it difficult for others to check the work. The Cleveland Stela is a good example of an incompletely drawn stela in this corpus. It is not known if the other sides of the stela have been documented (Miller 2003). Relevant to this paper are the omissions in Houston's drawing of the K5453 vase, as examples of error, whether planned or not.

Another consideration when examining the texts of the ancient Maya is who carved or painted the monuments and vases? Who among the ancient Maya were literate? Did literacy extend to the masses? Or were they scribes, royalty, or a special class of artisans, who had access to painted pottery? Who planned the texts and drawings, or were "blueprints" handed down from those commissioning the work? Errors in the drawn and painted texts have been noted in this corpus, as well as in other texts coming from places like Palenque and Dos Pilas. Schele and Miller (1986:39) suggest that the blatant errors, particularly in mathematics, were either not caught or considered divine providence and left by the scribes as is. They also do not

rule out the possibility that scribes may have been fasting, been bloodletting, or been inebriated while pursuing their art. Pseudoglyphs and repetition in some texts may question the literacy of the artists painting personalized objects, such as drinking vases, perhaps suggesting a wider level of wealth among the general population (Reents-Budet 1994).

Numerous fake artifacts exist in the market, and there are vases, that have been heavily repainted during refurbishment, leading some to omit them from their collections (Kerr 1989). The argument against including fake material is apparent, but one needs to consider carefully the justification that heavily refurbished pieces are unable to convey their original meaning. Just as many refurbished pieces are considered authentic in these same publications (A. Chase personal communication 2007). In other words, personal selection or omission by authors skews the data when they choose which pieces represent the ancient Maya and which do not.

Finally, people study other cultures, regardless of space and time, through their own eyes and their own society's value systems. "Westerners" must not lay our blueprint of patterns of thought, which are accepted within our society, today, on to the world. We must not look at other cultures in a manner where we make them fit into our preconceived categories. A great deal of information has been glossed over that demonstrates that, although the glyphs may speak of historic persons, epigraphers have been ignoring the sacred portion of Maya life (e.g. A. Chase et al. 2007), which we, as "Westerners" generally separate from our secular lives.

The corpus of inscriptions that follows contains texts with the snake emblem glyph (Appendix B). In the following pages, these texts are discussed individually or in groups, as is the case of the Kan Dynastic Vases and Dzibanche's stairs. Attention has been given specifically to the textual and iconographic context in which the snake emblem glyph appears.

### Figure 6 analysis

Figure 6 is a rollout photograph of an out-of-context vessel, labeled “Kerr File K7794.” Iconographically, it shows a vision serpent, complete with deer ears, regurgitating an old god (God N) or an ancestor who blows on a conch shell, signaling the onset of a vision. There is a decapitated bird with a snake curling between the bird’s head and body. Scrolled and straight blood drops flow from the bird's mouth. The snake, while in this act, is regurgitating or vomiting forth the vision serpent.

This scene's linking of a sacrificial component to the summoning of visions is of paramount importance. An interesting point discovered, while gathering the corpus, was that the snake emblem glyph is most frequently found in texts with the Tikal/Dos Pilas emblem glyph *Mutal* “Place of Birds.” The text states that the vessel is a drinking vase of *Chak Chak Zotz* “Great Red Bat.”

The most significant part of the accompanying hieroglyphic text is the “enters the snake *wayeb* statement” of the Divine Lord of the Snake. This same statement is repeated in the vase text for Figure 7 as well. In both of these cases, the text is associated with the iconography of the vision serpent, with God N emerging from the serpent’s mouth and blowing of a conch shell, signaling a vision.

### Figure 7 analysis

Figure 7 is Justin Kerr's FAMSI database (K531) rollout scene from an out-of-context cylindrical codex-style vase owned by the Los Angeles County Museum. The vase depicts a

host of supernatural creatures. Interestingly, this text has two references to *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* and three references to *wayeb*. The text is read left to right with a Primary Standard Sequence (PSS), common to ceramics (Coe 1978), at the far right. A toad with a *te* “tree” glyphic infixation presents a bowl with offerings. These offerings or sacrifices are a hand, an eye, and a jawbone or perforator. The text to the left of the toad deciphers as a sacred human will enter the *wayeb* of *tzuk amal* “the toad,” which is the *wayeb* of an unknown emblem glyph (Grube and Nahm 1994:701). The text to the left of the jaguar reads *K'intanal*, *wayeb* of the Sacred Lord of the Snake. *K'intanal* is the name given to the jaguar walking upright with the *K'in* sign on his belly (Grube and Nahm 1994:687).

Directly above the jaguar's head, the text also names *Chihil Chan* “Deer Snake” as the *wayeb* of the Sacred Lord of the Snake. *Chihil Chan* is also named as the *wayeb* of the snake emblem glyph on Kerr Number 927 (also in this corpus). From its mouth emerges the bust of a man named *Uc Zip* or *Wuk Sip*, also with deer ears, blowing a shell (Grube and Nahm 1994:693). The blowing of the shell is a well-known announcement for the onset of a vision (Brennan 1998:212). The shell is also an instrument associated with the ancient creator and inventor of writing, God N (Coe and Van Stone 2001). God N, not a historical ancestor is, in fact, emerging from the serpent's mouth in these *wayeb* vases.

Linda Schele (1989:147) found this antlered vision serpent to be *Chihil Chan*, “Horned Serpent of the Chorti,” who also appears as the *wayeb* of *K'awiil* on K2572. Schele, in Grube and Nahm (1994:694) mentions that this creature occurs on K1256 as a *wayeb* of Site Q, even though no supporting text was found on that vase. Perhaps the most interesting associations are the duality of meaning portrayed; a Sun Jaguar, showing properties of darkness and light (much

like G9 or God N) is paired with the vision serpent, which is associated with *K'awiil* events and the snake emblem glyph.

Martin Brennan (1998:207) has called this vase painting "The Ajaw of Calakmul Enters the Spirit World." Brennan interprets this vase as showing the vase owner the path through the darkness of Xibalba to the place of his ancestors by the invocation of his *wayeb* (Brennan 1998). I disagree with this interpretation. First, one cannot assume that the vase owner is listed on the vase, since it very well could have been gifted to the person. Second, Brennan's reading likely stems from a misreading of the PSS "Wing-quincunx" glyph for the *xi-b* "fright place" glyph. The vase suggests the onset of a vision with the aid of supernatural "Deer Snake" the *wayeb* of the snake emblem glyph individual.

#### Figure 8 analysis

Figure 8 is an out-of-context vase photographed as K927. The vase shows four columns containing death gods and *wayeb* animal companions that are stacked three high. Secondary text passages concerning the *wayeb*s fill in the blank space on the vase. The PSS identifies this vase as a drinking cup for cacao. "*Chihil Chan*" is shown with a snake wrapped around its ear and a jaguar pelt bundle (Schele 1994).

Two of the *wayeb* are attached to emblem glyphs. Tikal and the snake emblem glyph are represented. However, the Tikal emblem glyph Schele discusses is only a *mutal* glyph and does not bear the standard affixes of an emblem glyph. The snake emblem glyph is associated with *Chihil Chan*, the "Deer Snake" (Schele 1994).

It is not known if the iconography on this vase follows Maya artistic convention, but two death gods, Enema God A<sup>1</sup>, and "Stinking Death," occupy the lowest register, perhaps hinting of their association with the Underworld. All of the middle *wayeb* animals wear scarves or death eye necklaces.

Neither of the animals below *Chihil Chan* have *wayeb*s associated with them but fire is a repeated theme in their names. *K'ak' Chitam* "Fire Peccary" occupies the lowest register in the illustration, and *K'ak' ne Tz'utz* "Fire Tail Coati" occupies the middle. *Chihil Chan* also has a netted or jaguar pelt bag, suggesting a relationship to the jaguar or perhaps God N.

#### Figure 9 analysis

Figure 9 is the contextually-recovered "The Altar Vase" from Altar de Sacrificios, Guatemala (Adams 1971). It shows six individuals, some part animal, or dressing the part of animals, engaging in *wayeb* rituals. It is dated to the Late Classic, and was featured in *Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path* by Freidel, Schele and Parker (1993). The individual on the right hand side of the vase dances with a snake, and is the only wholly human individual on the vase. Also of note is the text passage to the right of the person. Unlike the texts around the other individuals, there is no *wayeb* glyph; instead, there is the *Nachan* glyph, which appears in the names of other vision serpents (Schele 1994:147). Further indication of the vision serpent is the deer antler and hoof (as seen in *Chihil Chan* in Figure 8) that precede the *Nachan* glyph.

### Figure 10 analysis

Figure 10 is an out-of-context vessel cataloged in the FAMSI Justin Kerr database as K791. The vase is very similar to “The Altar Vase” discussed above. Like “The Altar Vase,” this vase contains several *wayeb*s associated with emblem glyphs and toponyms. Toponyms are described as essentially being emblem glyphs lacking a Thompson “water group” (Stuart and Houston 1995). Instead of indicating geopolitical units, toponyms represent physical locations, perhaps both geographical and supernatural. Linda Schele (1994) assembled a collection of the named *wayeb* that occur on all of the vases in Kerr’s corpus up to 1994. *Mab*, *Chaak Balam* and *K’util Hix*, three of the *wayeb* Schele identified, occur on both this vase and the Altar Vase.

The snake emblem glyph occurs twice on this vase, both times in a nonstandard emblem glyph format form. In both secondary texts, the emblem glyph is stretched into two glyphs after the *wayeb* glyph in both secondary texts. It occurs as the gopher-headed *K’uhul* followed by the snake main sign with the 'Ben Ich' superfix.

The two *wayeb* on the vase directly connected to the snake emblem glyph are the “grasping of the stone in his dark place” performed by a dancing God A<sup>1</sup>, who is surrounded by three Chaak heads (one of which God A<sup>1</sup> holds). Schele (1994) mentions that God A<sup>1</sup> also appears on Kerr 5070, but there is no accompanying emblem glyph on Kerr 5070. God A<sup>1</sup> appears on three of the four *wayeb* vases containing the snake emblem glyph in this corpus.

The second figure associated with the *wayeb* of the expanded snake emblem glyph is *Chaak Balam*, who wears a jaguar head adornment, and has a personalized perforator. The text above this figure mentions a *k’ak’* “fire” *wayeb* of the snake emblem glyph.

Lastly, another “Jaguar priest,” named *K’util Hix*, dances with what appears to be a rattle

and baton. Although not specifically associated with the snake emblem glyph, he is associated with the Naj Tunich “yoke” emblem glyph, which follows the snake emblem glyph on Naj Tunich Drawing 52 (Schele 1994). Supernaturals such as “Water Lilly Jaguar,” “Death on the Path,” and an anthropomorphized jaguar are also located on this vase.

#### Figure 11 analysis

Figure 11 is an out-of-context vase, labeled “K5453.” Stephen D. Houston (Houston and Mathews 1985) drew this vase for PARI Monograph I, but the drawing is incomplete and omits the PSS sequence, several hieroglyphic texts, and a good deal of the iconography. We will therefore use the K5453 figure. The vase is thought to come from Dos Pilas. The iconography on this looted and unprovenanced vase shows five individuals. One figure is sitting on a stone pedestal or throne while two others kneel before him. One of the kneeling figures wears a peccary headdress and carries a jaguar pelt bundle on his back. The other kneeling figure wears a spotted, knotted headdress. The person on the pedestal holds the dominant position. He wears two orbs around his neck. Similar orbs are depicted on prisoners on Altar 23 at Caracol, Belize (Chase, Grube, and Chase 1991). A scribe is located behind the person seated on the pedestal. The scribe holds a torch next to some Quetzal feathers and a bundle, likely a codex. Finally a man with his arms crossed stand nearby. Next to the subordinate, who has his arms across his chest in a sign of submission, rises a glyphic column that opens with a date of 4 Ajaw 13 Keh. The column reads, on this day the prince of Tikal/Dos Pilas emblem glyph is named at the site of *Chaak Yax-te'* “Great Precious Tree.”



The scene has been interpreted as a pre-accession ritual of a young prince from Calakmul and securing support from the kneeling figure, known as *Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ak'* “Jaguar-Paw” (Schele and Freidel 1990). This event presumably was witnessed by “Flint-Sky-God K” of Dos Pilas (Schele and Freidel 1990). “Flint-Sky-God K” is also known as *Balaj Chan K'awiil* (ca. AD 648-692). It must be noted that the hieroglyphic inscription does not confirm this latter interpretation.

There are some interesting points to be made about the iconography, which are atypical of accession scenes. First, one would expect an accession scene to contain the grand backracks and regalia that rulers are commonly adorned with during such events. Instead, all individuals are scantily clad, again emphasizing the non-public nature of this ritual. Second, another peculiarity about the scene are the atypical headdresses worn.

The text on the vase tells the story of *Ch'ok K'ak' Balam, K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* (a sprinkling of prince Jaguar-Paw, Sacred Lord of the Snake). The sprinkling was likely an incensing ritual performed by a *bacab* whose task it is to hold up the four corners of the heavens.

The text to the left of the kneeling figure closest to the pedestaled man names a *matan* “gift” of *pom* “incense” to the prince of a K'uhul Mutal Ajaw. The figure with the spotted white headdress is identified by the glyphs to his left, which reads Kan Balam Ajaw.

I believe that the scattering event performed by Jaguar-Paw happens after the events that are pictured on this vase. My understanding of the text and iconography is that a Lord sits on a pedestal awaiting the scattering event performed by Jaguar-Paw, Sacred Lord of the Snake, as a dedication to the new title he is about to attain. A bundle which glyphically reads *Ox Kaloomte'* sits below the lord. *Kaloomte'* is the supreme title afforded to an autocrat (Rice 2004), perhaps

with some military implications (Coe and Van Stone 2001). The PSS on this vase, like most PSS texts, does not have anything to do with the secondary text included in the body of the vase (Coe and Van Stone 2001).

#### Figures 12-23 analysis

Figures 12-23 are termed "Dynastic Vases" (Hansen 1991). All are out-of-context codex-style vases. Codex-style vases have been recovered from the Mirador Basin area, but none of these dynastic vases have been recovered from that area (Martin 1997). The vases share several features in common. None of the vases exhibit any iconography; instead, they only contain text. All of the texts progress through a sequence of nominals attached to the snake emblem glyph. The texts generally follow a date - verb - nominal - emblem glyph formula (Martin 1997). K6751 is the longest of the texts. The vases name between five and nineteen persons.

Simon Martin (1997) associates the last seven named individuals on the K6751 vase with people who lived in the Classic Period. The sequence starts with Jaguar-Paw, who appears in several other texts within this corpus. There is a danger associating people named here with the snake emblem glyph, to other texts because they carried the same proper name, sometimes without the snake emblem glyph. Some names occur quite commonly in glyphic texts from multiple sites i.e. Jaguar Paw. There does not have to be a one-to-one correlation between names in different texts, especially if some of the glyphic affixes naming the actors are varied. Furthermore, there are individuals who are presumed to be rulers of the snake emblem glyph site who do not occur on the dynastic vases; there are problems with the ordering of the named

characters; and, there are problems with accession dates and chronology (Martin 1997). Martin suggests that the "careless" keeping of dates on these vases may signal that the events and characters on the dynastic vases took place in mythological time (Martin 1997). Rulers in the dynastic series all bear names relating to Chaak (the rain/thunder god), sky places, serpents, jaguars, death symbols (such as skulls), and a bird (perhaps representing a macaw or owl). All of these animals and deities are used in the ruler's personal names, and also are duplicates of items named or displayed iconographically on the vases in this corpus in relation to *wayebs*.

Errors exist in the Calendar Rounds of the dynastic sequence. An excellent example is the Calendar Round date of Ruler 2, who appears on all the Dynastic Vases. Only four of the twelve vases have Calendar Round dates that could realistically be associated in real time with this "ruler." Three different coefficients are found with the day sign associated with Ruler 2, and the day and month signs associated with him vary between the twelve vases. Unfortunately, the vessel labeled "BOD 121" is too eroded to get a date associated with Ruler 2; however, the calendrics that are visible on this vessel correlate well with the other vases.

A more specific calendrical error occurs on K955. Of the six Calendar Round dates on the vase, only the opening and closing dates are mathematically possible. This would mean that the scribe incorrectly recorded 66% of the dates. One Calendar Round date lacks the day sign and coefficient. These lapses could mean that the scribe had little knowledge of the workings of his own calendar, or they could have occurred during the refurbishment of the vase by modern forgers. It is also possible that the erroneous dates between the two real dates take place in mythological time.

### Figure 24 analysis

Figure 24 shows the top and sides of Altar 3 from Altar de los Reyes. In its present eroded form, the altar does not exhibit a date, but Nikolai Grube (2002) noted that stylistically it could be the accompanying piece to Altar de los Reyes, Stela 1. Stela 1 is dated to 9.18.10.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Sak, August 30th AD 800 (Grube 2002). The top of Altar 3 has two glyphs reading thirteen *k'uhul-ka-ba's* "sacred lands." These locations are listed around the side of this altar (Grube 2002). Unfortunately, only two glyphs from the top of the altar are legible.

The monument side is incomplete and eroded. Grube (2002) believes that the glyphs at P1 and P2 are a passage reading *?-tan?-winik*, which references the thrones of the thirteen places. Grube also states that the Calakmul emblem glyph, a.k.a. the snake emblem glyph, is clearly listed (P6), along with other well-known emblem glyphs (Palenque and Tikal). It is debatable if P6 is even the snake emblem glyph, since the main sign at P6 is neither legible nor typical of the snake main sign. Glyph P9 may represent Altun Ha or Tamarindito. On glyph P13, only a portion of a *k'uhul* glyph and the bottom of a head with an earspool remain. Glyph P14 may be Naranjo, based on the *jal* element on the ear of the individual. P15 is Motul de San José.

If there are indeed thirteen emblem glyphs around the side, then what does it mean? Are there political alliances at work that are detailed on this altar? Is this a cosmological belief of sacred places or sacred actors? Grube (2002) believes thirteen is an important number to the Maya, perhaps representative of a sacred cosmological number. Interestingly, with the exception of Palenque, all the identifiable locations on the altar-if emblem glyphs are places- could be considered to be close to Altar de los Reyes spatially.

### Figure 25 analysis

Figure 25 is from the Linda Schele drawing collection on the FAMSI website. It is a looted Site Q altar that was cut into two pieces. The iconography on this monument is complex. The left side of the monument shows a lady Ajaw standing between at least two, but most likely four, Pawahtuuns. The Pawahtuuns hold up a canopy with three Maize Gods emerging from the heads of Wits monsters. Atop of this canopy is a serpent with a *K'awiil* head and a fish nibbling its tail, reminiscent of the vision serpent. The lady Ajaw wears a beaded quechquemilt and skirt, and a Chaak headdress, and holds the Manikin Scepter. Manikin Scepters were brandished during end of period rituals, although the recorded date does not bear out a period ending (Coe and Van Stone 2001).

A Long Count date is recorded in the upper center of the altar. Unfortunately, the date is written in a non-standard way. It is not read in columns of two, as is typical of Maya writing. If we take what we know for certain, one date starts out 9 Bak'tun 4 K'atun and ends in 8 ?-day name 17 Zots'(?). The derived date is 9.4.4.14.4 8 Kan 17 Sek, or July 4<sup>th</sup> AD 519 in the Julian Calendar. The month displayed on the altar is clearly not Sek but Zots', which does not shed light on the problem of dating the altar.

On the left outside center of the monument is a single column of glyphs, which tells of a tenth scattering at Five Sky place on 4 Muluk 7 Yax. Given the iconography on the left side of the monument, Five Sky place could be considered the axis mundi, the World Tree central to the Pawahtuuns, who hold up the roof with emergent heads above the woman on the left. Or, possibly, it could be the *Na Ho Chan* mentioned on K791 (Schele 1994:694).

The central text of the monument is located in relation to two women who face each

other. The text is read left to right in pairs, as is typical of most hieroglyphic writing. It reads *Ka Kan Ajaw*, followed by several place names as indicated by the na subfix in G2-G4 of the text. The place is also associated with fire. A *wayeb* event is done by a "child of mother" associated with ?-ox *k'ak'* "Three Fire." This text ends with a three day sign, followed by the Distance Numbers 18 K'in 2 Winal.

The right central text of the altar starts with a Distance Number count. An ADI places the date at 12? 9? in the Calendar Round. Afterwards, a house is named with an Ajaw prefix. The glyphs that follow fill in more of the proper name of this house as *Ek'-Naah Wuk-?- Naah* "Star House, Seven House." The last glyph in the text appears to be a Uo frog.

The base of the left side of the altar records an act performed by a *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* with the secondary title of *Bacab*. Here the "Sacred Snake Lord" is one who "holds up the Sky"; he is a Pawahtuun.

On the right figure base an ADI counts forward 17 K'in 10 Winal 2 Tuns and 4? K'atun count to 13 ? (Kaban, Ik', Manik' or Eb) 10 Zots'. An *Ajaw Kante'* "Snake Tree Lord" *hul* "arrives" at a place.

The text along the bottom of the monument is fragmentary. Again there is a problem with the dates on this portion of the monument. We can garner that there is a person who is named as a *yatan* "spouse." The text may be making a claim to legitimacy, since the glyph for "child of mother" appears and is followed by a name. The portions of the hieroglyphs that can be made out after the "child of mother" statement reads: *k'uhul winic ajaw* or "holy person lord."

A *wayeb* is manifested, as seen by the half jaguar pelt covered *ajaw* glyph. The *wayeb* is conjured by a *ch'ab* event. *Ch'ab* events are thought to be bloodletting (Montgomery 2002:186).

The person performing the *ch'ab* ends the statement. Unfortunately, not much information can be gathered from the glyphs, either due to their erosion or the artist's inability to record them. Typical of Maya hieroglyphs, the next statement starts with a Distance Number count. The count is 7 K'in 8 Winal 5 Tun. Again, the condition of the next glyph drawing is such that it cannot be read, so it is unknown whether it is a Calendar Round date. More glyphs follow, which appear to read 4 Ajaw, 28 lunations.

An *aj ch'ok* "prince" is given the titles 13 *ka Kan*, *Kan Ajaw K'inich Jol*, *K'uhul*, *aj* 16 *K'atun*. The 16 *K'atun* statement that ends the bottommost text is curious, since that would be a period of 320 years, far too many years for a prince.

#### Figure 26 analysis

Figure 26 is Tikal Altar 9 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982). The iconography of this altar shows a captive lying prone. Plumes of *k'uhul* drops fall upon his back from an unknown source. There are five glyph blocks on the top of this altar. Only the first and last two glyphs are legible. The first glyph reads *aj-ch'ok*. The last two glyphs are a person with the snake emblem glyph title following his name. Martin (2005) says that this person is *Yuknoom Took' K'awiil*. The presence of sacred *k'uhul* drops may suggest that the captive is being ritually sacrificed.

#### Figure 27 analysis

Figure 27 is Yaxchilan Lintel 35. No iconography accompanies the text. The lintel is displayed by the British Museum as a gift from A.P. Maudslay in AD 1882. The text opens with

a tenth change of the seating of the lords. A lord named *Mak'ina Skull Ajaw* (*Mak'ina* Skull II) is named and is associated with a *Sajal Balam*. *Sajal Balam* is a title given to warriors or governors. Another reading of glyph A4 could be *Jasaw* (?) *Balam*, followed by a vulture diving through a cloud (Cloud Lord?). Multiple individuals witness what may be a birth at B6. An individual known as “Knot-Jaguar of Bonampak” is recorded performing a scattering event in witness of the birth. A lady and ballplayer who is a “Lord of the Snake” also witnesses the birth. Deity names comprise the final glyphs of this text.

The British Museum write-up on Lintel 35 records the capture of various people, concluding with a triumph over Calakmul in AD 537 ([http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aoa/y/yaxchil%c3%a1n\\_lintel\\_35.aspx](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aoa/y/yaxchil%c3%a1n_lintel_35.aspx), accessed October 2007). This interpretation is questionable, since no glyph for capture is located on the lintel. The closest glyph, in form, to a capture glyph is the Bonampak emblem glyph located at D3. An incorrect reading, on the British Museum webpage, of the Bonampak emblem glyph as *chu-ku*, or “he was captured” seems to have occurred. The last three glyphs have been previously deciphered as recording that the people are *u-we'-ya* “food for the gods” listed in D7 ([http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aoa/y/yaxchil%c3%a1n\\_lintel\\_35.aspx](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aoa/y/yaxchil%c3%a1n_lintel_35.aspx), accessed October 2007). It is a matter of speculation as to what this passage truly means. Was the *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* the food? Was there a ballgame with a sacrifice for the gods? Or was there a ritual event symbolic of the reciprocal relationship of gods and humans? The supernaturals depicted in the text resemble the Palenque Triad gods God I and God III, or Venus and the Sun, respectively.



### Figure 28 analysis

Figure 28 is a wooden lintel from Temple 1, Tikal, Guatemala. The lintel records a Calendar Round date of 9 Ajaw 13 Pop, which correlates to February 26, AD 695. The date is perhaps correlated with two individuals named on the lintel. Several months after this date, in August of AD 695, the text records *jub'uy u tok' pakal*, the "bringing down of his flint and shield" of *Yich'Aak K'ak'* "Jaguar-Paw," Sacred Lord of the Snake. This marks the defeat of Jaguar-Paw. A6-B6 records a place known as *Baakna* "Bone Place or Captive Place."

The next event on the lintel happens on 12 Ets'nab 11 Sak. A person with a *bakab* title performs a *ts'a-p(a) nal balam* "to plant the jaguar corn," perhaps copal on a copal palette. C3-D5 reads to conjure *ts'apa ch'ab* "to plant a penance," followed by the phrase *sak ya-ak'bal* "white, its darkness" by a *sajal* named *Jasaw Chaan K'awiil I K'uhul Mutal Ajaw* (ca. AD 682-734).

The next series of glyphs record a summoning of K'awil at a cave known as "Four Sky Place." Although the glyph at C6 is unclear, it appears to read *chum wani-li at tan ch'en Mutal* "he sits in the center of the Tikal/Dos Pilas Cave" known as "Four Sky Place." E2-E3 names the child of Lady Jaguar Pelt Ajaw, "Four Jewel." Glyph F4 calls forth a "Lord of Penance" who carries the sacred *ch'ajom* "dripper" title at F5. The *K'uhul Mutal Ajaw* summons *K'awiil* at E6.

A Distance Number count is given at F7-E8, bringing us to a date of 5 Kib' 14 Sots' at F8-E9, the date of accession of *Jasaw Chaan K'awiil I*. The Long Count is 9.15.2.12.16, or 734 AD, and the glyphs mention a *ts'ap*, or planting event at glyph E10. It is likely that this planting event has to do with the burial of *Jasaw Chaan K'awiil I*, since 734 was the year of his death. Glyphs F10-E11 name *Jasaw Chaan K'awiil I, K'uhul Mutal Ajaw*, who ushered in a period of

growth at Tikal, according to John Montgomery (Montgomery 2002:213). A hand glyph statement ends the text.

#### Figures 29 and 30 analysis

Figures 29 and 30 are sections of hieroglyphic stairs from the Maya site of Dos Pilas. Many passages contain the Sacred Lord of Tikal statement; however, both Dos Pilas and Tikal share the same emblem glyph. Although our study is interested in the relationship of the snake emblem glyph to text passages, additional stairs were deciphered to lend context to the relevant passages. Six of the twelve stair segments emphasize warfare.

Figure 29 are steps six through one of the Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stair 2, West section. These glyphs are read in two columns of two glyphs per row.

#### Figure 29 analysis

Step 6 is essentially a "star-war" event against the authority of "Jewel Lineage Skull." The third column of glyphs is partial, but it may signal a *lok* "driving out" of someone with the title *K'uhul Kan Ajaw*. Note the conflation of the snake main sign and the binding of the main sign for Tikal/Dos Pilas. Step six ends with the dedication of a house.

Step five records a "star-war" event, and then moves forward 8 winal 11 k'in to a date of 7 Ix 17 ka? to an incomplete passage bearing a head infixed with a *k'in* "sun" and *ha* "water" glyph. Moving forward 7 k'in 1 winal to 9 Ak'bal, then to 6 Yaxk'in, a "star-war" event against an unknown opponent by a Tikal/Dos Pilas individual drives out the flint of *t'ab hix wits* "Jaguar Mountain."

Step four begins with a Distance Number counted forward from 11 k'in 1 winal 1 tun, at which time a “star-war” occurs at a water place. Then on 3 Ix 16 Muwan a “star-war” occurs at a place which is unable to be made out glyphically. The “star-war” which expels a person named with an animal head glyph to a place possibly named *Wak-Ak-La* “Seven Turtle.” The text continues with the date 9 Imix 4 Pax, when an event that happened in the water place relative to *Balaj Chan K'awiil, K'uhul Mutal Ajaw*, captor of *Taj Mol Chaak* “Red Torch Macaw.”

Step three's text begins with a moon age of twenty-three days and a Calendar Round of 8 Ajaw 13 Sek. A seven-year Ajaw title is given. The next passage counts forward to 11 unknown month name 10 unknown day name, when the flint and shield of Twisted Skull was destroyed. The meaning of the next passage is not clear. Step three's glyphic passage ends naming *Balaj Chan K'awiil, K'uhul Mutal Ajaw Bacab*.

Step two records a 9 Ajaw half-period completion. A Site Q *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* is named as the sibling of *Balaj Chan K'awiil, K'uhul Mutal Ajaw*. A date counts forward to 2 Ik 10 unknown day name, when the “third change of lords” occurs. It is the beginning *K'atun* of *Balaj Chaan K'awiil*.

Step one names *Itzamnaaj Balam* (AD 697) perhaps a *k'ak'* “fire” glyph and a parentage statement, probably of his mother and his father, *Balaj Chaan K'awiil* (AD 648-692), Sacred Lord of Tikal/Dos Pilas.

#### Figure 30 analysis

Figure 30 is Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stair 2 East, Steps six through one. These glyphs are

read in two columns of two glyphs per row. Step six continues with an event associated with 6 Ajaw 13 Mak, and then counts forward 2-4? Muluk 2 Mak with an event by *K'awiil Mutal Ajaw*. It happened at the water, in the water, was captured, 12 ? *u-kab* “under the authority” of *Balaj Chan K'awiil K'uhul Mutal Ajaw*.

Step five's hieroglyphic text starts with a Distance Number count leading to 12 Ajaw 8 Keh on 9.11.0.0.0. This is followed by an event associated with an incomplete proper name of 17 Ajaw, Smoking Jaguar. A "star-war" event will happen at the water under the authority of “Sun Place” of Site Q. An expulsion is associated with one who bears the Mutal Ajaw title and may be associated with a place called *Ma-K'in pa aj Wits* “his Great Sun Mountain.”

Step four begins with a Distance Number count but it is not known if it is an ADI or PDI of 14 k'in 5 winal. The text continues, “and then it happens 11 K'atun, and then it happens on 6 Ix 2 Muwan” a "star-war" over Tikal *u-kab K'inna* “under the authority of Sun Place” the *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*. Step four ends with the “driving out and capture” of a *Mutal K'in Ajaw*.

The first half of Step three is illegible; only a "and then it happens" glyph is legible. Then, "White Knot Jaguar-*kal*, Jaguar-Paw" *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* is named in a relationship to the Dos Pilas lord.

Step two opens with a Distance Number count of 1 k'in 2 winal. The count brings us to 11 Ajaw 18 Sak or Yax (the glyph lacks the identifying prefix), a half period. Then the date 9 Kawak 17 Yaxk'in is recorded relative to a captive of the Dos Pilas lord named “Zero Skull.” It ends with a sibling relationship to the Dos Pilas lord and a jaguar lord, *ya -jol aj la Balam Ajaw*.

Step one, interestingly, records the same date as step two, a half period completion on the date 12 Ajaw 18 Yax, Sak or Keh (again the glyph lacks the identifying prefix). The text moves

forward to 9 Kaban 5 Pop, where the capture of Torch Macaw of Machaquila occurred. Torch Macaw is the captive of *Balaj Chan K'awiil, K'uhul Mutal Ajaw Bacab*.

#### Figures 31-37 analysis

Figures 31-37 come from the site of Dzibanche, and all of the stair panels detail captive events. T514 is prominent in most of the captive statements connecting the name of the captive to the captor (Velasquez 2005), in this case usually related to the snake emblem glyph. Monuments 10a, 13, and 16 are the exceptions. Figure 31 and Figure 36 both have what are being called “warfare statements” in the A2 position (Velasquez 2005), although they are not the same glyph. Simon Martin has noted that the statement *och chen* “enters the cave” metaphorically means to enter enemy territory (Velasquez 2005). I disagree with this statement; rather, the prisoners that are shown in the iconography associated with the texts are more likely to be sacrificed and entombed, as is a common practice, thus the “enters the cave” statement, would seem to be more appropriate. Additionally this same statement can also be read as *U Ba'ak na* “his bone place.”

Figure 31, Dzibanche Stair Panel 5, shows a captive in a prone position. The text opens with an incomplete Calendar Round of 11 Ok and states that a captive (given as *Xook Ucha*, although it appears to be a bat not a shark) is taken by the snake emblem glyph (Velasquez 2004). The captor is named as *Yuhkno'm Ch'e'n*.

Figure 32 is Dzibanche Monument 8b and shows a bound prisoner. It states that he is the seventh “companion” of the snake emblem glyph.

Figure 33 is Dzibanche Monument 10a. All that is decipherable from this badly damaged or incomplete stone monument is the snake emblem glyph.

Figure 34 is a photograph of Dzibanche Monument 12, which portrays a captive taken by a lord of the snake emblem glyph. Scrolled ropes with tassels bind the captive.

Figure 35 is Dzibanche Monument 13. It states on 5 Chikchan 3 Yaxk'in (9.2.15.8.5; [Velasquez 2004] or August 6, AD 490) a person with *Balam* in his nominals was taken prisoner of the holy serpent lord. The iconography on the panel shows a sitting person with his hands bound with flowing scrolls, most likely of blood. The scrolls have small *yax* signs or tassels attached to them.

Figure 36 is Dzibanche Monument 15. A date of 10 Men 8 Xul is recorded, followed by the name of a prisoner who is a captive of the snake emblem glyph. The Calendar Round is tied into a long count date of either 9.1.16.2.15 or 9.2.9.6.0 (Velasquez 2005), which would be July 27 471 or August 2 AD 484.

Figure 37 is Dzibanche Monument 16. The stone panel consists of three registers. The far right panel shows three individuals facing away from the hieroglyphic text. The text appears to read "spouse of First Axewielder Divine Snake Lord." The text ends with an *ajaw* head attached to another eroded head glyph.

#### Figure 38 analysis

Figure 38 is recorded by Grube (2004) for the site of El Resbalón. The glyphic text is present on several stair panels, but little can be gleaned except for the name of the Divine Lord

of the Snake, an incomplete Long Count (7.0.16.14.?), and a Distance Number of 2.4.?.?

#### Figure 39 analysis

Figure 39 is the hieroglyphic stair from Palenque, House C. A Long Count of 9.8.9.13.0 8 Ajaw 13 Pop (March 23, AD 603) is first recorded. After this calendrical statement, the glyphs are read in columns, with each glyphic block made of four complete glyphs. The "birth" glyph follows the initial date. The birth recorded is that of *K'inich Janaab Pakal*, the well-known ruler who is buried in the Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque. Glyph A5d is a variation on the familiar Palenque emblem glyph. Instead of Thompson's "water group," the glyph *took'* "flint" is prefixed to the main glyph.

The next event is the *k'al jun* "accession" of *Pakal* in A6a, which occurs on 9.9.2.4.8 5 Lamat 1 Mol. *K'inich K'uk Balam* is named. This date is derived from the Distance Numbers given in B5. The Julian date is July 24<sup>th</sup>, AD 615. Unfortunately, the next part of the text is tricky, with uncommon, incomplete, or undecipherable glyphs. Glyph C1b, according to Schele (1989), is a decapitation of a young lord of some sort. D1a opens with a hand glyph, reading "entered." D1 would read "enters the Lord, Sky Witness, Lord of the Snake." It appears that Sky Witness is in the company of the Palenque Triad (GI, GII and GIII) at C2b-C2d, perhaps imitated by *Itzamna Balam* II. Whether or not this implies a vision through bloodletting, trance, or drugs is unknown. Schele also writes that he "came in the company" of an eclipse in D2a (Schele 1989). I do not see any glyphic evidence of this in the text; instead Schele's reading relies on a close date on which an eclipse occurred (Schele 1989).

Interestingly, D2b and D2d are glyphs, which are supposed to have two parts. The first is *u-bahil*, “he is the,” with the second half representing the fact that he is imitating deities. If this follows the standard VOS of Maya syntax, then the imitator is *Itzamna Balam II* and the subject being imitated is *Lakam K'awiil* “Big God K.” The next glyph block at C3 opens with a sibling statement relative to *Itzamna Balam II*, the Lord of Yaxchilan and possibly the captor of the individual named at D3c.

Glyph C4b-c gives the date of 7 Chuwen 4 Ch'en. On this date, a sibling at “his Sky place, at his stone,” an unusual event occurred. Some of the glyphic text in this section of the monument is illegible. Glyph C5 continues the story of what happened at the sky place. It is not clear if the first two parts of this glyph are a continuation of the proper place name for the Sky place, but a planting of 20 god-head (?), *tsa'pa ka ?*, is given in C5c at the house at D5. Its partial name is *Naah Bolon Kan Te* “house of nine captives.” Finally, the monument names *K'inich K'uk' Bahlam* “Great Sun Quetzal-Jaguar” (ca. AD 764-783) as Palenque Lord in C6 and as the first companion. Then, the text gives a partial proper name for the house at D6. It reads *Lakamha* “Big Water,” the name of the place sacked in the East Panel from the Temple of Inscriptions (see Figure 41).

#### Figure 40 analysis

Figure 40 is Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stair 6 from Ian Graham's corpus of inscriptions. The glyph in question on this monument is N2. The glyph is a snake with a headband signifying a *kan ajaw*. The prefix to the emblem glyph is not the normally placed Thompson “water group.”



Instead, it is a head with a *tun* headdress similar to that seen in Site Q glyphic panel 7, also in this corpus. The action credited to this individual is the verb L2b, having to do with the monkey glyph that follows at M2a. The Naranjo star-war is credited to L2a (Caracol variant) (D. Chase and A. Chase 2007). The panel ends with the date of 1 Ajaw 8 K'ayab. At L3, the names *Ox Te'tun* "Three Stone Tree" and *A-Nab-Tun-Chi* "Stony Aguada?" are given without the preceding ADI that would be expected. Both are place names associated by Stuart and Houston (1994) with the site of Calakmul. The rest of the text consists of a distance count and an incomplete calendar round.

#### Figure 41 analysis

Figure 41 is the East Panel from Palenque. It begins in 9.4.0.0.0 with *Akul-Anab's* accession and concludes in 9.10.0.0.0 with *Pakal's* accession to rule (Schele and Mathews 1998). The panel is one of three on the Temple of Inscriptions that tells the dynastic history and events of Palenque's rulers, leading into the rule of *Pakal* and into the future (Schele and Mathews 1998:106-109). The text of the Central and West Panels are concerned with *Pakal*, his rule, and his legacy. The snake emblem glyph appears prior to Lady *Sak K'uk's* rule in a statement that Linda Schele calls "the sacking of *Lakam-Ha* by Calakmul" (Schele and Mathews 1998:102).

Apparently, the victory of the snake emblem glyph over the polity of Palenque was enough to effect a change in the religious views of Lady *Sak K'uk*, *Pakal's* mother. Ritual bundles that were previously mentioned in the text were not opened. Schele and Mathews (1998) interpret one of the passages as reading "died the gods, died the lords, they did not

decorate the Bearded Jaguar-God” (Schele and Mathews 1998). This passage suggests a cultural change, whether by war or cultural influx, with the result being the abandonment of the previous patron gods and practices (Schele and Mathews 1998).

#### Figure 42 analysis

There is no accompanying iconography for Figure 42. Instead, only text appears on Site Q Glyphic Panel 4. The date of the panel is AD 690, if it is indeed a sister piece to Ballplayer Panel 1, as suggested by Peter Mathews (<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/siteq/index.html>). The panel’s last known location in 1998 was the Andre Emmerich Gallery of Zurich, Switzerland. The text concerns Jaguar-Paw, an *aj pits* “ballplayer,” who bears the title *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*. A distance date ending on the day 11 Imix is recorded in the reverse fashion typical of Distance Numbers followed by an ADI. Confusion arises as to the month. Xul is a likely choice based on the hieroglyphic text; however, the combination is impossible in the Calendar Round based on the numeric coefficients that are permissible with the day sign Imix (Coe and Van Stone 2001).

A *b'a k'uhul ch'ok* “second sacred youth” bears the title of a *Kan Ajaw* “Precious Lord” during the sixth binding of the moon known to Maya scholars as Glyph C (Coe and Van Stone 2001). This text is fragmentary because Glyph X, which is not present, is supposed to accompany Glyph C. Glyph C would give the name of the lunar period that Glyph X refers to. Glyph A would be expected to follow Glyph X; however, the next glyph (C2) records the title of *Aj Kan Ajaw*. If more of the glyphic panel were available for study, perhaps more would be understood.

#### Figure 43 analysis

Figure 43 is Glyphic Panel 7 from a riser off of a hieroglyphic stairway from Site Q (<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/siteq/index.html>). Its last known location in 1998 was in Galerie Jeanne Boucher in Paris, France. There is a partial date consisting of a secondary series 10.19 and a Calendar Round of 5 unknown month name 8 unknown day name which is thought to accompany Ballplayer Panel 1 from the Peter Mathews Site Q collection. This being said the date of the panel is AD 690, if it is a sister piece to Ballplayer Panel 1. The text on the panel is clear that the "house of a lord was dedicated with fire," or the burning, most likely of copal (B3-C3), by *K'ak' Balam Ajaw*. A stone or year lord with the "Sacred Lord of the Snake" title witnessed the event.

#### Figure 44 analysis

Figure 44 is Site Q Glyphic Panel 6 from Peter Mathews' online Site Q corpus (<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/siteq/index.html>). After a Distance Number count (1.0.19) and Posterior Date Indicator (PDI), this panel records the birth of Jaguar-Paw, *Ka Ka Kan Ajaw* on 3 Kawak 2 Keh. A second PDI of 7.14.15 moves us into the past, to the improbable date of 12 Ix 18 Xul. 12 Ix 18 Xul is not a permutation that can occur in the Calendar Round (Coe and Van Stone 2001). An ADI also would not produce the correct date combination. A month count of 17 will work but the drawing clearly shows 18 as the coefficient.

#### Figure 45 analysis

Figure 45 is a disk or mirror backing currently assigned to Site Q. Eight glyphs appear on the disk. It concerns a youth with the title of *Kan Ajaw* after his personal name, which logographically is a turtle, and a bird with a shell over its eye. The latter also functions as the Caracol glyph substitution (see Grube 1994). This child is the "child of father" of First Axewielder, *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* (AD 572-579). This mirror backing is important because it shows the hierarchical relationship between the *Kan Ajaw* title and *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* title. Also the *Kan Ajaw* title may be one that is inherited or passed down through the bloodline, legitimizing rule.

#### Figure 46 analysis

Figure 46 is an incised bone from Tikal Burial 116. The bone is currently located at the Museo Morley in the Parque Nacional Tikal, Guatemala. The iconography on the bone clearly shows a captive awaiting sacrifice. He frowns as he looks at his bound arms. His legs are bound at the knees. He is unclothed except for a loincloth and his hair is tied into long braids. The drawing is from the FAMSI Linda Schele drawings, Schele number 2040.

The primary text reads "on 11 Men 8 Muwan (9.13.3.13.15), four are thrown down." *Chaak? Balam* (A4-A5) or "Great Jaguar" is captured under the auspices of Split Earth (AD 695).

Two secondary texts are positioned to the left of the person. The upper text reads 23 *Balam Ajaw*, using the *Imix* glyph as a main sign. Linda Schele gives this upper left text the

reading of *Ox-Ha-Te Ixil Ajaw* “Lady Lord Three Water Tree” (Schele and Freidel 1990). The lower text reads “*u-ajaw* birdhead Split Earth, *K’uhul Ajaw*” of an individual we will refer to as “Dotted Eye.” Schele and Freidel (1990) instead read this passage as “in the land of Split Earth Sacred Lord of Calakmul.”

#### Figure 47 analysis

Stela 3 comes from the site of Caracol. The Julian date for this monument is arrived at, following Lounsbury, using a 584285 correlation (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981). As with most stelae, the iconography generally occurs on what is presented as the front of the stela, with the main hieroglyphic text on the rear. In this summary of the stela, the character names used are those found in Caracol Monograph 3 (Chase and Chase 1987). A date of 9.6.12.4.16 5 Kib 14 Uo or April AD 566 is given. A secondary series follows, giving more information on the time.

The birth of *Batz’ Ek* is recorded in AD 572. The child's parents are then named. They are given with a “child of mother” statement in B9.

A Distance Number count forward brings us to the date 9.6.18.12.0 or AD 572. The text that follows is eroded. The next portion of legible text comes back in at A13 recording the name Sky Witness *K’uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*. The date moves forward to AD 584 with the arrival of a deity witnessed by *Batz’ Ek*, a *Yax Ajaw* “Precious Lord” (Chase and Chase 2007).

At B17, the birth of *K’an* II with an expanded Caracol emblem glyph is recorded in AD 588. In AD 593, presumably Ruler II, by the indication of *kan k’atun ch’a-jo-ma* “four *k’atun* dripper” performs a *yax ch’ab* “precious bloodletting” action for the young *K’an* II, perhaps in

recognition of a period of five years passing. The second half of the back of Caracol Stela 3 is an attempt to legitimize his right to rule. This portion of the stela reads through several dates over a nine-year period. *K'an* II states that he is "Lord of Caracol" and has some unknown dealings with *Yuknoom Chan*, "Lord of the Snake." This action is perhaps an attempt to solidify his legitimacy in the royal line. In AD 622, he again pairs himself with his mother through titles, rather than with the typical child of mother glyph one would expect. The next year, Lord *K'an* II of Caracol performs a dripping ceremony or act of penance in D15.

Counting forward 4 k'in 4 winal 3 tun to 9.9.13.4.4 9 Kan 2 Sek or AD 626, the destruction of "he from Naranjo" "under the auspices of Lord *K'an* II" is recorded. Martin and Grube (2002:92) note that this event is associated with a sacrifice of a person from an unidentified location within Naranjo territory, dubbed "*Ko-Bent Cauac*." On 9.9.14.3.5 12 Chikchan 18 Zip, or AD 627, another destruction event occurs (D19). The text then names Lord Kan II as a sibling of a reported snake lord.

The front of the stela includes a text running down the side of the richly adorned individual. The individual is standing with a Bicephalic Bar folded across a jaded mat motif on his chest. The stela is also rich with "double headed" associations. Above the figure, two intertwining Vision Serpents come down from a Bicephalic Celestial band.

The Bicephalic Bar held by the person reflects the homophonic association of sky and snake, suggesting that the vision serpent is a conduit through which the gods can be communicated with or conjured. The *K'awiil* comes out of the end of the bar, suggesting supernatural communication with one's ancestors. Finally, at the bottom of the monument is the defleshed Quadripartite Monster with two heads, one fair, representing the Maize God, and the

other that of Cauac, the Wits Monster or Living Mountain.

The text that accompanies tells of a "star-war" over the nearby city of Naranjo on 7 Ak'bal 16 Mak, or AD 631 (Chase and Chase 1987). A series of Distance Number counts take us through the year AD 637. Poorly distinguished glyphs follow ending with a reference to *Batz' Ek*, the mother of *K'an* II. The fact that *Batz' Ek*'s name is paired with female heads and Ruler II parentage statements leads to the deduction that *Batz' Ek* was the mother of *K'an* II (Houston 1987:91).

#### Figure 48 analysis

The Cleveland Stela is also known as El Perú Stela 34 and Stela 1. Currently, this stela resides in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, Ohio (Miller 2004). The iconography on the stela is a royal portrait of *Na Kan Ajaw* "Vision Serpent Lord." The iconography of the stela displays a woman dressed in a crosshatched, beaded quechquemilt and skirt, which is common dress for women depicted on monuments in the Petén and at Palenque (Taylor 1989 after Proskouriakoff 1961). The beaded quechquemilt is worn by women associated with the moon goddess *Ix Chel* (Taylor 1989). It is unknown if there was text or iconography on the sides or back of this stela (Miller 1974).

The stela records the date 8 Ajaw 8 Uo. The Long Count date is 9.13.0.0.0 or March 13, AD 692 by the Julian Calendar. The date signifies a period ending and the celebration of a *K'atun* ending, an event important in the lives of rulers (Schele and Freidel 1990). Although the Manikin Scepter is not pictured in the iconography, both it and *K'awiil*, who is listed in the text,

are often associated with period ending rites (Coe and Van Stone 2001:63). For those interested in assigning the snake emblem glyph to Calakmul, this stela would have filled in a time gap that is missing at the site (Miller 1974). However, Ian Graham (Schele and Freidel 1990:458) has found fragments of this stela in El Perú. As a period ending date, it is ruled over by G9. G9 is the aged Night Sun God (Coe and Van Stone 2001). It is my belief that G9 is God N, the writer of history (Schele and Freidel 1990), quadripartite god and consort to *Ix Chel*.

The coupling of a G9 period ending is interesting, especially when considered along with the other iconographic elements on the stela. To the left of the woman stands a dwarf, perhaps a messenger to the divine since they are associated with both humans and supernaturals (Houston 1992). Dwarves have earned a reputation for carnality, making them a fertility motif (Houston 1992:527). The association between the woman dressed in a fashion similar to the Maize God and a dwarf strengthens the role of the woman as progenitor, since dwarves have been associated with the Maize God (Houston 1992:526).

The stela's texts are located in opposite corners of the monument. The text in the upper register records a *K'awiil* event in B3 by Jaguar-Paw, who lived ca. AD 649-695, and holds the title "Sacred Lord of the Snake." The stela records a person but the glyph is damaged and unreadable.

In the lower right corner of the monument, a sacred younger brother's name and the *Kaloomte'* title is given with a short count of 8 Ajaw. Other small text blocks are located on the monument. Most of these texts are incomplete, but the titles of eight artists are given.

The text between the dwarf and the main figure gives the partial reading of *kab kab* "earth," followed by the glyph for south, *nohol*. If we read the glyph in its entirety, however, it



could be read as *k'uhul k'aba* or “holy name.” This may be a statement of the relationship that dwarves are believed to have with the underworld and places of the dead (Houston 1992; A. Chase and D. Chase 1994). The text to the left of the main figure's face names one of the carver's of the *Lakam Tun*, literally big stone or stela.

The small text directly over the dwarf's head is partially readable, and the last two glyphs of the four mentions a possible *ix-ba-ka-ba*, perhaps a female sky-bearer title followed by a reading *ch'ol ajaw* “unripe lord.”

#### Figure 49 analysis

Figure 49 is Stela 13 from Dos Pilas, Guatemala. The stela bears no imagery. The monument's hieroglyphs are paired into two double glyph columns instead of the more common four single glyph columns, as would be expected. The text tells the story of *joy-aj* “accession” of *K'ak' Ch'ab Balam* of the snake emblem. A subsequent event is witnessed by the *K'uhul Mutal Ajaw Balaj Chan K'awiil*, a Dos Pilas ruler from AD 648-692 who is named with the secondary title of *Chaan-te-mol* “Sky Tree Macaw.” This happened at *Nab-tun-chi* “Watery Stone.”

#### Figure 50 analysis

Figure 50 is Piedras Negras, Stela 36 from Piedras Negras, Guatemala. Stela 36 has a Long Count date of 9.10.6.5.9 (April 10, AD 639). A Secondary Series calendrical statement reads that G1 was the Lord of the Night who ruled the day. An accession (B8) event is followed by three heads, presumably a name, associated with the Site Q emblem. The text continues to

count back to the birth of the three heads, or, possibly, Macaw Monkey. The text ends with the Calendar Round date 4 Ajaw 13 Mol.

#### Figure 51 analysis

Figure 51 shows Piedras Negras Stela 35 and opens with a Long Count of 9.11.9.8.6 12 Kimi 9 Kumku (February 5, AD 662). The next statement names a person, but the text is fragmentary; it reads *Aj-?-ka kan u'ka-? ...Ch'il Chaak* "heir of the great" ?-9-?. Glyph B7-B8 records an "entering of the fire" by a *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*. A date of 4 Chuwen 14 Yax ends the inscription.

#### Figure 52 analysis

The hieroglyphic text is of unknown origin. It opens with a date of 2 Ak'bal 6 Mol. A "Moon Place" is mentioned as being "under the authority of *Chaak Ak'bal Itzamna Kin Ajaw*," who may be God A. This "Moon Place" is mentioned again with an *u-kab* "under the authority" of an individual named "Two-Numerator Penis" and his titles, *k'ak'-kab* "fire, earth" and *ya-ha-ta* "water." The text then states "he enters into the earth *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*." It is evident from the titles that the pairing of sun and night, and fire and water, or opposite pairings is important.

#### Figure 53 analysis

Figure 53 is Stela 3 from El Chorro, Guatemala (Stuart and Houston 1994) or Site Q

(<http://www.archaeology.org/9709/etc/siteq.html>). Stela 3 is located in the collection of S. Josefowitz, Lausanne. Stela 3 displays a woman in full regalia holding a Ceremonial Bar guised as a Celestial Serpent. She wears a headdress that has a *Chaak* head, the symbol of rain and the deity responsible for bringing maize to the Maya (Miller and Taube 1993). The iconography suggests the figure's position as conduit between the realm of the gods and humans. The Ceremonial Bar is adorned with crossed matting similar to the matting hanging from the fish and Spondulus shell design at her waist. A fish nibbles at the tail of the Celestial Serpent, giving an affixual feel of *ka* to supplement the image of the Celestial Serpent.

The hieroglyphic text in the top left corner of the stela read *u-kab* “under the authority of” the individual named at A2-A3, who is depicted glyphically by a head and macaw, then a jaguar head followed by a Roman-nosed god head. The hieroglyphic panel in the lower left side of the stela reads *k'uhul u-kayi'* or “holy earth” or “holy authority” of an individual or deity named in A6. The small text on this monument cannot be read, except for the “five” superfix on the top glyph.

The text in the lower right hand corner of this stela is a title statement that Houston and Stuart (1994) describe as meaning “He of Chorro” which is followed by the snake emblem glyph. The Sacred Lord of the Snake is doing penance (in glyph C1) at “his jewel house” (in C3.)

#### Figure 54 analysis

Figure 54 is Stela 10 from Yaxchilan, Mexico. The monument has iconography on both

faces of the stela and a text on the side that records a date. The riverside face of the stela shows a man holding a spear. A woman stands on either side of him. A subjugate kneels before him with one arm across his chest as a sign of submission. An incomplete text is located in the upper left portion of the stela, all that remains is a place name and two emblem glyphs. One of the emblem glyphs is readily identifiable as Yaxchilan's.

The text on side A of Stela 10 opens with *u-baah yatan* (or *u-huun-tah?-na* [sacred one off]) *Ix Kan Ix Kan Mo K'uhul, K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw, Och-K'in-ni Kaloom-te'* "Sacred Lady Macaw, Sacred Lord of the Snake, West *Kaloom-te'*." The Lady is also known as Lady Eveningstar, wife of Shield Jaguar a.k.a *Itzamnaaj Balam II* (Schele and Freidel 1990). *Itzamnaaj Balam II* (AD 681-742) records a penance in D2. Interestingly, Lady Eveningstar is not mentioned in monuments commissioned by Shield Jaguar (Schele and Freidel 1990), despite the apparent might of Calakmul. This perhaps suggests a retrospective alignment by Shield Jaguar's son with the "Sacred Lord of the Snake," thus connecting himself to a mytho-historic background. Glyph E2 names *Itzamnaaj Balam II* and his captive *Ah ?*; Shield Jaguar is "Sacred Lord of Split Sky and a Sacred Lord of *Mol*," both emblem glyphs of Yaxchilan.

The other sides of the stela appear to deal mostly with calendrics. The nine glyphs on side B of Stela 10 are fairly easy to read as a Long Count, but is not complete enough to obtain a date. An illustration is also present on this side of the monument, of a person holding quetzal feathers. The eighth glyph records part of a lunar series. Side C of Yaxchilan Stela 10 reads two *K'uhul*. It is the only text on this side clear enough to be deciphered. Side D records 30 lunations and the month of 18 Pop.

### Figure 55 analysis

Figure 55 is Seibal Stela 10. The iconography represents a person dressed in royal regalia holding a Celestial Bar. The Celestial Bar represents a conduit between the natural and supernatural world via visions (Schele and Freidel 1990). A vision serpent emerges from one end of the Stela while a *Chaak* head with a dangling shell and a manifestation verb, *jal*, emerge from the opposite end. The figure wears a belt expressing the idea of duality through the contrasting *k'in* “day” and *ak'bal* “darkness” symbols. His headdress also combines the *Chaak* god and *jal* glyph, further indicating a conjuring of deities through a scattering event. The upper left text celebrates a period ending of 10.1.0.0.0 5 Ajaw 3 K'ayab (AD 849). The man depicted on the stela is identified at B5 as conjuring *Aj Bolon Tun*, perhaps a reference to *K'awiil* who is known as *Bolon Ts'akab* (Coe and Van Stone 2001:112). This person is shown to have manifested a deity known as *Aj-Hun-Kin-li* “his one sun” through a scattering event at B3 on the change of the first *k'atun*.

The lower left text is more difficult to interpret. The Seibal sacred lord and his action are named in A6-B6. The event is witnessed by *Kan* deities from the *K'uhul Mutal Ajaw*, *K'uhul Ka Kan Ajaw*, and the Sacred Lord of Motul de San José (*Ik*). The last two glyphs of the text appear to state that the vision serpent was raised at Seibal.

### Figure 56 analysis

Figure 56 is the south side of Copan Stela A. This stela has been the focus of much study. The stela has a date of 9.14.19.3.0 or October 20, AD 730. The drawing comes from the

Linda Schele drawings on FAMSI. Unfortunately, the Long Count of 9.15.0.3.0 given in the FAMSI database is incorrect. The correct date is given on the north side of Stela A. The text begins with *xaman*, “north” (or the place of the ancestors), followed by three glyphs, which read “Red Water Lord.” Four glyphs follow, which refer to four sky places. After the four sky locations are named, four emblem glyphs are listed. They are *K’uhul Zotz’ Ajaw* (Copan), *K’uhul Mutal Ajaw* (Tikal/ Dos Pilas), *K’uhul Ka Kan Ajaw* (Snake Emblem), and *K’uhul Lakam-ha’ Ajaw’* (Palenque). Glyphs B6-B7 repeats the sky place’s celestial importance. The four cardinal directions follow in A8-B9, *Lak’in* (east), *Ochk’in* (west), *Nohol* (south or down) and *Xaman* (north or up).

Glyph A10 repeats the same verb found in B2, but this time in relation to probably underworld locations. Glyph B12 notes the completion of a *la-hun-tun*. Copan Stela A's south side text finishes with a location where the *la-huntun* was presumably “seated.”

#### Figure 57 analysis

Figure 57 is Calakmul Stela 89, which was located on top of Structure 1 at Calakmul. Unfortunately, looters and their chainsaws have removed this stela in sections, and little remains on site. The location of the looted pieces is not known. The stela is dated to 9.15.0.0.14 or August 13, AD 731. The stela displays a royal figure, standing with his body forward and his head in profile, facing a dwarf who stands in attendance. The main figure grasps a Mannikin Scepter and carries a small buckler in the other hand. The stela's condition is poor, although not as poor as most of the limestone material that comes from Calakmul. The original Karl Ruppert

photograph shows the left and front sides of this monument (Ruppert and Denison 1943). The right side of the monument is concerned with dating and gives several Distance Counts, lunar information, secondary series, and Calendar Rounds. It appears to also have a period ending date at D6 (Ruppert and Denison 1943). The right side, however, is not available for study pictorially. The monument's left side is also mostly concerned with calendrical statements. The exceptions are the last three glyphs (B7-B8), which are noted by Ruppert as two "grotesque" heads and "an unusual glyph with a coefficient of twelve" (Ruppert and Denison 1943:121).

Calakmul Stela 89 has five glyphic passages on the front of the monument. One passage repeats the calendrical error present on the right side of the monument. The glyphic passage to the right of the Mannikin Scepter is almost unseen in the Ruppert photograph, but according to Morley (Ruppert and Denison 1943), contains two *Zotz* heads with knot prefixes. This passage most likely represents the name of the scribe(s) commissioned to carve this stela, since the bat head glyph commonly means "it is the carving of" (Coe and Van Stone 2001:95). Ruppert's *Archaeological Reconnaissance in Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Peten* (1943) describes the other glyphic passage on this monument's face side consists of three glyphs, none of which seem calendrical. These three glyphs are erroneously reported as appearing in the upper right hand side of the monument; however, the three glyph panel occurs in the lower right hand side of the monument. The upper right hand side glyphic passage is not mentioned by Ruppert and Denison (1943); these glyphs were in poor condition. However, the stela is believed by some to have the snake emblem glyph located on it. Indeed the glyph may appear in the upper right hand passage but not in the place or passage that Simon Martin (2005) gives in his PARI paper. Martin's Calakmul Stela 89 passage provides the name of the lord followed by: "Divine Lord of the

Snake, *Kaloomte*, the third change of *K'awiil*." However, the glyphic order of Stela 89's upper right register does not appear to correlate with Martin's passage.

If this monument contains the snake emblem glyph, then it is very similar to the Cleveland Stela iconographically, bearing both the dwarf and Mannikin Scepter. Both the dwarf and Mannikin Scepter have been correlated with *K'awiil* and legitimacy of rule through association with supernaturals, as seen in other examples in this corpus. The stela also repeats a calendrical "error," which is not unusual among inscriptions dealing with the snake emblem glyph. Such calendrical "errors" may signal entries or exits from mythological time.

#### Figure 58 analysis

Figure 58 is Stela 25 from the site of Naranjo Guatemala. It is drawn and photographed in the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphs. Ian Graham drew the sides and Von Euw drew the front portion of the stela. The stela is no longer in situ. The front of the stela shows a person holding a bicephalic bar. The bottom portion of the bar is not drawn but the portion facing the sky has a serpentine figure issuing out of the bar with flints coming out of its mouth. This is symbolically similar to *K'awill* motifs, particularly the idea that the object that protrudes from *K'awill*'s head is sometimes axe blades. The figure has several strings of beads, most likely made out of jade on various parts of his body as well as running down the top side of the bicephalic bar. These beads may also be symbolic of *k'ul* drops, which tend to designate sacrifice, penance and divinity.

The sides of the monument are incised into two columns of glyphs and reads downwards to the bottom of the stela in a series of ten glyph pairs on the right side of the stela and eleven



glyph pairs on the left side. Both of the sides of this stela are mainly concerned with time, although the exact date is not calculatable in the long count. Several calendar rounds are present as well as distance counts although all of the distance counts lack an ADI or PDI.

The right side of the monument has the snake emblem glyph located at A10. It is a modified form from the standard emblem glyph. It lacks the prefixed *K'uhul* drops, instead it doubles the *k'an* prefix. It also has a headband, the sign of rulership, instead of the more common "Ben Ich" superfix. This same headband is depicted at N2b Hieroglyphic Stairs 1, Step VI from Naranjo (Graham and Von Euw 1975:109). The snake emblem glyph at A10 is preceded by the verb *k'al tuun* "the *tun* is bound" which means that a period of 360 days has passed. This is the reading in standard VOS syntax. Unlike all of the other *k'al tuun* glyphs that are found on the left and right sides of this stela, the *k'al tuun* glyph is in expanded form occupying both A9 and B9. The monument in its entirety has several of these year ending markers on it.

Stela 25's purpose is clearly to mark the passage of years, although the significance of the dates are not made known on the stela. However, it can be stated that the passing of these periods is ritually observed and recorded. Typically the iconography is related to the text on stelae. Therefore, this observation would mean that the individual, who is not named on the monument is most likely associated with the observances of these passages of time.

#### Figure 59 analysis

Figure 59 is painted on the wall of the cave site Naj Tunich, Guatemala. The opening Calendar Round date is 10 Ix 4 Sak, which, like Glyphic Panel 4 from Site Q, is an impossible combination in the Calendar Round. Glyph A2 is a "*tun* bearer" marking the completion of an important period of time. The painting names a potential individual from western Caracol. The phrase is as follows "under his authority, the Red Jaguar Flint, *K'inich Ajaw*, Sacred Lord of the Pierced Green Earth, 7 White Earth, Western Sky Jaguar (*Ix*), Flint of the Earth, *Chaak*; prisoner of Precious Macaw Bat, Sacred Lord of the Snake, Lord of Naj Tunich." The purpose of the inscription is to establish the credibility of the person as a fertility specialist or progenitor of deified status. The importance of caves to Maya worship, both today and in the past, is seen by the artifacts and writings that have been found deep within. Modern Maya hold reverence towards caves as being the birthplace of waters, or houses of *Chaaks* (Stone 1995:39).

#### Figure 60 analysis

Figure 60 is Drawing 52 from Naj Tunich Cave, Guatemala, photographed by Andrea Stone (1995). The drawing opens with a date of 1 Men 13 Pax. The text then counts forward 5 k'in 10 winal 2 tun to 3 Ajaw 3 Mol. A person is then named as a companion of *K'uhul Kan Ajaw* "Sacred Snake Lord." The text ends with a "his writing" statement followed by the proper name of the artist.

### CHAPTER THREE: DISCUSSION

Maya scholars have engaged in much discussion over the snake emblem glyph and the location of the Maya site (Site Q) that it may represent. Current research is pointing towards a change in epigraphy, with a shift to an approach in which epigraphy and archaeology are working together more harmoniously in the synthesis of Maya history (Chase, Chase, and Cobos 2007). The case for religious symbolism in Maya art and inscriptions is beginning to be conjoined with our understanding of Maya writing, where once all we sought was historic fact. The pendulum has swung from the early ideas of hieroglyphs representing mathematics and religion to post-Thompsonian historic epigraphy. The field of epigraphy is now acknowledging that religious belief is not separated from daily, secular activity in Maya texts (as it is in modern Western culture). Therefore, one shouldn't expect Maya texts to deal with only historic "fact".

Decipherment and review of the inscriptions gathered in this corpus, have elicited several facts about the snake emblem glyph. Examining the temporal and spatial aspects of the snake emblem glyph will allow us to begin to understand the impact that the emblem glyph held within the Maya sphere.

Temporally, the glyph was in use from AD 518 at Dzibanche, although the dating is problematic (Velasquez 2005), until AD 849, where it occurs at Seibal on Stela 10. This occurrence in the Pasión region is 107 years after the snake emblem glyph is recorded on Stela 10 at Yaxchilan in AD 742. This assessment leads one to wonder about the 107-year absence of the glyph in writing, and why it resurfaced near the end of Maya civilization's peak. The writing and iconography at Seibal at AD 849 date lacks substance, and texts deviate greatly from the earlier, more traditional records, perhaps signaling the end of the greatness of Maya civilization

(Schele and Freidel 1990). The 107 year absence may be broken far north of the Pasión by Altar 3 at Altar de los Reyes with its presumed calendar date of AD 800, but this is only speculation based on stylistic similarity to Stela 1 from the same site (Grube 2002).

Spatially, the snake emblem glyph is limited mainly to the west part of the Southern Maya Lowlands. Specifically, the inscriptions originate at sites on or near the Usumacinta River. The sites of Seibal, Altar de los Sacrificios, El Chorro, Yaxchilan, Dos Pilas, and Piedras Negras all have texts with the snake emblem glyphs, and are located on or near the Usumacinta River. Another area with a large amount of snake emblem glyph inscriptions, which has received a lot of attention, is the area encompassing El Perú, Altar de los Reyes, Dzibanche, El Resbalón, and Calakmul. The sites of Caracol, Naranjo, Copan, Tikal, Palenque and Naj Tunich are the exceptions to these two areas. The furthest site from the core areas that contain inscriptions with the snake emblem glyph is Copan to the south. Site Q's location of course is undetermined, but believed to be in the area of La Corona or Dzibanche (Guenter 2005).

Current evidence suggests that the region around La Corona is the origin place of the snake emblem glyph (Guenter 2005). Unfortunately, while photographed (Guenter 2005), a legible text is not available at the time of this thesis's preparation. This identification is based on the assumption that an emblem glyph represents a "real" place and not an otherworldly place, or both, as Guenter (2005) argues. Heinrich Berlin (1958) was hesitant to give any emblem glyphs a specific meaning; instead, he lists several alternatives to places or polities, such as tutelary deities or dynasties. Indeed, the idea of the snake emblem glyph as a geopolitical entity has proved problematic and shifting. La Corona also pushes back the dates associated with the snake head emblem glyph to a time predating Calakmul, challenging previous ideas about the political

power of major cities.

However, the location of the snake emblem glyph polity is still debated. Ian Graham stylistically notes that sculptures from the site of La Corona did not match the Site Q panels (Graham 1997). Later, David Stuart's (2001) petrographic analysis of plain stone blocks at La Corona compared to a Site Q monument residing in the Hudson Museum at the University of Maine demonstrates a match in the stone that was used to create both monuments. Stuart's find suggests that the Site Q stone was quarried from somewhere in the region around La Corona. It appears obvious that the criteria being used to date and place the monuments and personal articles bearing the snake emblem glyph are problematic and vary in type and quality. The input of non-epigraphic data e.g., archaeological data would help solidify arguments.

Another problem with identifying a physical, geopolitical location for the snake emblem glyph is that if it represents a site, it changes through time. During the time the glyph appears at La Corona, Simon Martin (2005) has found evidence that a bat head emblem glyph occurs at Calakmul and that the bat is used at Calakmul after the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Calakmul uses the snake emblem glyph during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (Martin 2005). To put it another way, the snake emblem glyph is not a fixed "site" emblem glyph. At Calakmul the snake emblem glyph was in vogue for a period of time and was preceded and eclipsed by the bat head emblem glyph (Martin 2005). The cause of the emblem glyph's mobility is debatable, but may indicate abstract processes rather than a geopolitical unit controlled by martial or political forces.

As for the corpus, first we will discuss the collection of vases with the snake emblem glyphs. The pottery vases bearing *wayeb's* and the snake emblem glyph comes from a well-defined area based on chemical analysis of the clay used in their creation and on the artistic style

displayed on these vessels (Reents-Budet 1994). The vases were probably created close to the site of Motul de San José, where workshops likely existed for the creation of the stylized vases known as the *Ik'* style (Reents-Budet 1994). Unfortunately, only the Altar Vase is provenanced, which perpetuates the enigma of the snake emblem glyph. However, this origin point suggests an even wider geographical context for the snake emblem glyph than simply around La Corona in the Petén. All of the ceramics in this corpus date to the Late Classic Period, ca. AD 750-850.

The ceramics arguably contain the most interesting iconography in the corpus. They contain vivid paintings of gods and anthropomorphized *wayeb* companion animals. Four out of the six ceramic texts with iconography have *wayeb*s directly linked to the snake emblem glyph. A vision serpent with deer attributes is found on two-thirds of the *wayeb* vases. The other one-third of the time the *wayeb* is *Mab*, who wears a deer skull headdress (The Altar Vase and Kerr 791). Schele suggests that *Mab* may be taken from the Maya word *manab* "*visión o fantasma, duende, trasgo, espectro, fantasma,*" or, in English, a phantasm or spectre (Schele 1994:694). Stephen Houston suggests that the phonetic name of dwarves may be *ma-s(u)*, *mas* or *duende* means "goblin, fright" in Yukatec Maya (Houston in Kerr 1992:529). *Mab* also appears on vessel K791, although the snake emblem glyph is not associated with it on this vase. The K791 *Mab* is the *wayeb* of *Na Ho Chan*, "House of 5 Snake, the dark place of creation" where the two Paddler Gods are located (Schele 1994:694). The subject of the iconography of the ceramic vases is self-sacrifice as seen through the use of God A and God A<sup>1</sup>, the self-decapitating god. A similar motif may be found in the Thompson "water group," symbolically flowing down from the Ajaw superfix on emblem glyphs. *K'awiil* is associated with the vision serpent and God N, which is made clear in the *Maya Book of the Dead* on The Bearded Dragon Vases 3 through 13

(Coe 1973).

The remaining ceramics differ in subject material from the vessels with *wayeb* co-essences. Instead, they are Dynastic Vases, with the exception of K5453. The subject of the Dynastic Vases is textual *K'awiil* events related to individuals bearing the snake emblem glyph title. Simon Martin states that the grasping of the *K'awiil* event means “ties into rulership” when it refers to historical people, as he believes the Dynastic Vases do (Martin 1998:855). However, *K'awiil* events can also be performed in mythological time (Martin 1998:855).

A brief explication of the nature of *K'awiil* needs to be made. *K'awiil* is commonly seen graphically on other ceramics with a snake leg replacing or coming from the middle of its groin (Coe 1978: Robicsek 1981). The *K'awiil* figure also grasps an axe, suggesting sacrifice similar to the self-decapitating God A. God A is associated with the snake emblem glyph on some of the *wayeb* vases in this corpus. *K'awiil* sometimes holds an eccentric flint in the shape of *Chaak's* head, as does God A on the K791 vase. *Chaak*, like *K'awiil*, is also a deity with close ties to fertility, further linking *K'awiil* to ancestors. On other vases not in this corpus *K'awiil* is shown carrying an eccentric flint in his hand, again reminiscent of blood sacrifice (e.g. “The Three Gods” vase [Coe 1978]). The *wayeb* vase known as K791 associates the hand grasping a flint with a *wayeb* of the snake emblem glyph. A smoking pipe, mirror, or axe commonly extrudes from *K'awiil's* forehead, suggesting a sacrifice of blood, which is then incensed to gain access to supernaturals or ancestors.

Symbolically, the complete series of the Dynastic Vases, especially as seen on K6751, consists of 19 individuals. Martin (1998) has noted that the average length of rule around the world equals approximately 22 years. There is also a death statement (Martin 1998) on K6751

which may signal completion, especially when one considers the Maya's vigesimal system of counting where zero follows 19 and means "nothing" or "completion."

There are "problems" with the Calendar Rounds recorded on the Dynastic Vases. The individuals, however, are unerringly placed in the same order on all of the vases. The Dynastic Vases also predate a majority of the individuals associated with the snake emblem glyph, such as Jaguar-Paw, which does not help epigraphers locate the snake emblem site (Martin 2005). However, the fact that the characters predate the known Classic Period individuals depicted on other monuments and vases, while not appearing on any monuments, may point to a mytho-historic or pseudo-historic past. Both the *Kan* Dynastic Vases and the East Panel of the Temple of Inscriptions are at this time, viewed as *k'atun* endings prior to known Classic Period individuals (Martin 1998; Schele and Mathews 1998). The activities performed on the *k'atun* endings are probably moved to these dates, as in the case of the Temple of Inscriptions East Panel. The "white lie" is that the accessions did not actually occur on the *k'atuns*; rather, they were moved there to coincide with the *k'atun* count. An individual with the snake emblem glyph appears on the East Panel from the Temple of Inscriptions with a phrase that has been deciphered to mean that the "Big Water was destroyed by Scroll Serpent Sacred Lord of the Snake" (Schele and Mathews 1998). Problematically, Scroll Serpent appears after Jaguar-Paw on the Dynastic Vases, but before his rule on the East Panel. The result of Scroll Serpent's victory, in Linda Schele's decipherment of this phrase, is that the lords and gods died and the bearded jaguar was not decorated with its bundle. The scribes go as far as to say that *Pakal's* mother did not perform rituals that she normally would have (Schele and Mathews 1998), suggesting a change in religious views conceivably brought on by the snake emblem's "victory."



A second “problem” with the Dynastic Vases is that individuals prior to Jaguar-Paw (Ruler 13) are not yet found on any monuments, suggesting that they were created simply as background figures or “back-history.” Jaguar-Paw’s position in the dynasty is problematic, since Jaguar-Paw died around AD 695; however, the rulers named after him are found on monuments predating him. Examples of “reversed” rulers are Ruler 17 and Ruler 19 (Martin 1998). Jaguar-Paw is also coexistent with Ruler 15 and Ruler 18 (Martin 1998). If rulers did share power, the validation of authority was problematic; this would be one answer to why so many Dynastic Vases would be created. Another explanation is that there may have been other “Jaguar-Paws” who are merged with the snake “Jaguar-Paw.” Following these arguments, epigraphers should also discard the idea that the *Kan* Dynastic Vases similarly follow a historical chronology.

The last vase we look will examine K5453. K5453 has no *wayeb*, *K'awiil* or vision serpent depicted graphically or in the text. The text mentions a scattering event by a person bearing the snake emblem glyph and lists *pom* “incense” as a gift from a Tikal/Dos Pilas vassal. This is a ritual engagement depicted on the vase.

Most importantly, all of the snake emblem glyph texts on the ceramics represent supernatural activity and rituals. All of the events are closely associated with sacrifice and offerings that may be meant to induce visions for the purpose of communicating with the gods or ancestors.

Dwarves were mentioned above as being a possible *wayeb* (*Mab*) associated with the snake emblem glyph. No dwarves appear on the ceramics with the snake emblem glyph, but two stelae and one lintel contain dwarves in their iconography. In all three instances the dwarves are in an attendance to the main figure. The texts, however, diverge from one another. The

Cleveland Stela details a *K'awiil* grasping event by the snake emblem glyph, while the text on Lintel 3 at Tikal describes a warfare event "bringing down of flint and shield" of a person with the snake emblem glyph title. The last stela, Calakmul Stela 89, is similar to the Cleveland Stela, but it is unknown if Calakmul Stela 89 even has the snake emblem glyph in its text, although some (Martin 2005) have argued that it is there.

Three altars are included in the corpus. Two of the three altars have early dates associated with them. The altar from Altar de los Reyes is believed to list thirteen sacred lands (Grube 2002). Emblem glyphs circle the side of the altar. Unfortunately, the altar is in too poor a condition to say much more; Grube (2002) suggests that one of the thirteen emblems may be the snake emblem glyph.

The second altar is the Site Q altar, which definitely depicts with supernatural events. Two women face each other. One woman grasps a Manikin Scepter and wears a beaded *quechquemiltl* associated with the Maize God; she stands under a roof consisting of a vision serpent and Celestial Band held up by Pawahtuuns at the corners. Three Maize Gods emerge from split-headed Wits Monsters on the roof siding. The second female faces the first wearing a plain robe, under the protection of a Jaguar-like supernatural. The text on this altar lists a scattering event and *wayeb*. The title of *Kan Ajaw* is given in the central portion of the monument prior to the *wayeb* event that happens at *Ox K'ak'* "Three Fire." The snake emblem glyph is located in the altar's base text. The person with the snake emblem glyph additionally is titled as a *bacab* "stood up one," understood to mean Pawahtuun. The right side base of the altar's text again gives the *Kan Ajaw* title to a *ch'ok*. This time the title is embellished and reads "13 *Kan*, *Kan Ajaw K'inich Jol*, *K'uhul*, *aj* 15 *K'atun*."

Tikal Altar 9 is the last altar in this corpus. It shows a captive, presumably *Yukoom Took'* *K'awiil* (Martin 2005), bound and lying on his stomach with blood scrolls emanating from an unknown source above him. A line of Thompson "water group" beads cascades down in front of the captive's face. Unfortunately, too little of the text on the monument survives to say more than this.

Two lintels, one from Tikal and the other from Yaxchilan, both name people with the snake emblem title. The Yaxchilan lintel records a possible visit by a ballplayer representing a lord with the snake emblem glyph title. The person is further referenced as "food for the gods" with two god-heads after the phrase "to eat." Tikal Lintel 3 shows a dwarf standing in attendance with a jaguar protector. They both attend the corpulent person seated on a palanquin holding a Manikin Scepter. The main text records several conjuring and penance events, while the text surrounding the snake emblem glyph is concerned with the "bringing down of the flint and shield" of Jaguar-Paw, who is a prisoner of another *ajaw*. Unfortunately, all of the events that may have a supernatural element on this lintel are related to the figure bearing the *K'uhul Mutal Ajaw* title. The text also names a cave at Tikal that is entered for rituals.

The corpus has 16 stone panels containing the snake emblem glyph. Only the Dzibanche stair panels contain iconography. Two of the panels are part of a hieroglyphic stair from Dos Pilas, two from Palenque, one is from El Resbalón, three are from Site Q, one from Naranjo, and seven panels from Dzibanche.

Twelve stair segments make up the Dos Pilas hieroglyphic stairs containing the snake emblem glyph. The snake emblem glyph occurs four times on these twelve stair segments. It is paired with the Tikal/Dos Pilas emblem glyph in three of the four instances. The most

spectacular pairing is an expanded snake emblem glyph with a God C head representing the *k'uhul* portion of the glyphic passage while the snake main sign is conflated with the bundle of Tikal/Dos Pilas. The Dos Pilas stair segments subject is mainly "star-war" and capture events. Two of the snake emblem glyphs are the object of warfare events, while the events associated with the other two are unknown.

Several panels contain the snake emblem glyph. The panel from Palenque names Sky Witness, Sacred Lord of the Snake, who is also named on Stela 3 from Caracol (Robertson and Fields 1989:2). Sky Witness is in charge of the activity that takes place at D1a. The glyphs that follow make it apparent that Sky Witness, Lord of the Snake, is a companion of the Palenque Triad, perhaps imitated by the person named in D2. The Palenque Triad god GII is shown glyphically as *K'awiil*.

The three Site Q panels are associated with a ballplayer, named in one of the three panels. One ballplayer panel shows a person referred to as *Chak' Kutz*, who witnessed a calendar ritual at *Oxte'tun Chik Nab* (Mathews 1998). The individual, Smoke or Fire Jaguar, is named on all of the Site Q panels. This individual is probably the ubiquitous Jaguar-Paw. The text on Panel 6 concerns the birth of *Yoknoom Yich'aak K'ak'*, Lord of the Snake. The birth date of *Yoknoom Yich'aak K'ak'* may be set in mythical time, since the Calendar Round date is not a permutation that can occur. A house of a lord is dedicated by *K'ak' Balam Ajaw* on Panel 7. The event is witnessed by a *Kan Ajaw* "Lord of the Snake," identified simply as a Stone Lord. The Stone Lord glyphs appear again affixed to the name of Jaguar-Paw on Site Q Panel 6. Panel 4 identifies Jaguar-Paw as a Sacred Lord of the Snake and as a ballplayer; of the three Site Q panels, it is the only panel with an emblem glyph in its complete form. A second sacred youth, a

*b'a k'uhul ch'ok*, is given the title of *Kan Ajaw* "Precious Lord." This panel, like Panel 6, contains erroneous calendrical statements. First, the panel gives an improbable date in the Maya Calendar Round. The naming of the second sacred youth as a *Kan Ajaw* occurs with an incomplete secondary series, but this may be the result of how the panels were removed from their original context.

Dzibanche's seven stair panels display snake emblem glyph captives, with the exception of Monument 10a, which contains one glyph, the snake emblem glyph, and no iconography. The stairs simply depict captives and captive statements. Like the Site Q panels, the stair panels are associated with the Maya ballgame. For example, Dzibanche Monument 19 does not depict the snake emblem glyph, but rather shows a ball-court and people in profile. When considered along with the other panels, this could be suggestive of ritual sacrifice associated with the ballgame. The *Kan Ajaw* title occurs again, although using different glyphs, on the mirror backing referring to Site Q (one of two personal items in the corpus.) On this mirror, the title of *Kan Ajaw* is given to a person who is the "child of father" of a person identified glyphically as First Axewielder, Sacred Lord of the Snake. First Axewielder is also named on one of the Dzibanche monuments. A thought that crossed my mind is, perhaps the titles are indicative of an age-graded society or hierarchy. This age-graded society may be a group responsible for rituals and ceremonies, which have a supernatural component. First Axewielder does not appear in the Kan Dynastic Vases, which seems to support the non-dynastic interpretation of the snake emblem glyph.

The mirror backing is one of two personal items that are not ceramic. The other personal item is a bone pin from Tikal Burial 116. It has an incised picture of a person awaiting sacrifice. This person is apparently named Twenty-three Jaguar and is a "lord of" or "under" Split Sky,

Lord of the Snake. It remains unknown whether the person sacrificed held an office related to the snake emblem glyph or if he was a vassal of the snake emblem glyph.

Twelve of the 55 inscriptions with the snake emblem glyph occur on stelae, a small number considering stelae are a common, public source for texts about rulers. The stelae are the most geographically dispersed of all the media for inscription, although the unprovenanced pottery could actually have had a wider distribution. Stelae with the snake emblem glyph span a time frame from the Early Classic to the end of the Late Classic. With the exceptions of Caracol, Naj Tunich, Naranjo, and Copan, all of the stelae come from the northwestern Northern Lowland area (Usumacinta River Basin and the *bajos* around the modern, northern border of Guatemala).

The iconographic elements of all the stelae, except for the Cleveland Stela and Calakmul Stela 89, also share common themes. Four out of the eight stelae with iconography contain Ceremonial Serpent Bars or *K'awiil* elements. The Cleveland Stela does not contain these thematic elements; however, a dwarf faces a woman dressed in a cross-hatched quechquemilt, which has been associated with the Maize God (D. Chase and A. Chase 2007, Joyce 2000 andLooper 2002). The figure on Caracol Stela 3 is also an individual dressed in the garb of the Maize God.

The glyphic content of the stelae, like lintels and panels, are broad in their topics and not as overtly supernatural as is the pottery. Accessions to power by individuals identified with the snake emblem glyph are the topic on 16.6% of the stelae. Close to half of the stelae's subject material is possible ritual events or posts fulfilled during rituals: witnessing events, enters the fire, enters the earth, enters penance, *K'awiil* events, maw of the Underworld. Four of the occurrences of the snake emblem glyph on stelae are simply cases where the individual is named

as a "Sacred Lord of the Snake." Unfortunately, some stelae, like Calakmul Stela 89, have been destroyed by looters and are thus incompletely documented.

The Manikin Scepter is present only in the iconography of Calakmul Stela 89, the Site Q altar, and Tikal Lintel 3. It is a full body *K'awiil* idol with one leg ending in a snake-head. The Manikin Scepter accompanies individuals as a symbol of hereditary right, lineage, and period-ending rituals (Miller and Taube 1993). It is typical of many stelae but only occurs on Calakmul Stela 89 in this corpus, which argueably, does not contain the snake emblem glyph at all. *K'awiil* events, however, are common in its place.

The most intriguing stela in the corpus is Copan Stela A. The south-side text has received much attention concerning the four emblem glyphs and directions that are recorded on the monument, particularly in attempts to portray the snake emblem glyph as a directional Maya capitol (Marcus 1976). The layout of the text may be symbolically structured. The text on the south-side begins with the word *xaman* at the apex of the monument. It ends at the base with the bottom-most glyphs indicating an opening of a portal to the Underworld, to a throne of water, and a throne of the Underworld. In between these two supernatural realms lie four emblem glyphs and the four cardinal directions representing the *bacabs*, or Pawahtuuns, who are responsible for tending to the world of mortals by holding up the heavens. This symbolic interpretation would support the reason emblem glyphs appear outside of their area, and why they are used in regions far from their suspected source, such as the bat emblem associated with Copan occurring at Calakmul (Martin 2005). The matter of which emblem glyph to use would be one of choice for the inhabitants or would be guided by ritual calendars, much like the adoption of Catholic Saints as patrons to towns and villages in contemporary Central America, or

the cycling of rulership among the Nahuas of Mexico (Lockhart 1992). Sites with two emblem glyphs may represent a diarchy, another common occurrence among indigenous peoples of the Americas (Rice 2004).

Two cave inscriptions come from Naj Tunich, in Guatemala close to the Guatemala/Belize border. One of the cave paintings legitimizes an individual with the Sacred Lord of the Snake title by tagging many other titles to his or her name, which apparently deify the individual. The date given in the painting, again, is one that cannot occur in the Maya Calendar Round, suggesting an earlier, mythological time or an error on the part of the painter. The other Naj Tunich cave painting simply lists a person as a companion of the Sacred Lord of the Snake; this is possibly a reference to the vision serpent *Chicchan*. The *ho* “five” on K791 is a number repetitively associated with the vision serpent *Chicchan*, and is found as a prefix to a Sacred Lord of the Snake title at Naj Tunich on Drawing 52.

Errors in calendrical data, such as on the *Kan* Dynastic Vases and on Drawing 52 from Naj Tunich, are present on two of the Site Q panels, on a step from Dos Pilas, and on Calakmul Stela 89. Again, while we could ascribe the “error” to scribes, it is likely that the “error” is purposeful, taking us into a mythical or non-worldly time and space. The “error” is repeated twice on the same monument, as is the case with Calakmul Stela 89 and with Step 4 of Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairs East.

Sacred time (i.e. out of body experiences, possessions, trances, and periods of supernatural involvement) occurs as a special phenomenon in many religions. For example, the ancient Greeks entered into a transient state of divinity by rites celebrating Dionysus and the Eleusinian Mysteries (Hamilton 1969). In the case of the Site Q panels, the “sacred time” marks



the birth and ballplayer status of Jaguar-Paw. The other calendrical “errors” occur in a “driving out,” perhaps of *Balaj Chan K'awiil* through a “star-war” event recorded on the Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairs East, Step 4. The date on Step 4 is repeated twice, reinforcing the notion that the “error” was purposeful. The dynasty vase K0955 has four incorrect Calendar Rounds on it, bracketed between two mathematically possible Calendar Rounds, perhaps signaling an entrance and egress from “sacred” time. All of these “grasping” events deal with supernatural forces and mythological time.

Twenty of the 55 examples of the snake emblem glyph are closely associated with jaguars. Sixteen of the inscriptions deal with the proper names of individuals such as Jaguar-Paw and *K'ak' Chab Bahlam*. The other cases have supernatural jaguar protectors, jaguar pelt bundles (presumably carrying ritual items such as copal), and supernaturals such as “Waterlilly Jaguar.” The list of inscriptions correlating “Jaguar” names with the snake emblem glyph would be even greater if all of the *Kan* Dynastic Vases progressed through Ruler 9. The individuals in the texts with “jaguar” names perform *K'awiil* events, scattering events, imitate gods, are born, and become ballplayers in “sacred time.” Some of the individuals bearing the “jaguar” name are driven out or captured. Although warfare and capture may not seem to fit into the mold of priestly duties, one needs to remember that the Maya likely went on ritualized raids, especially while following the cycles of Venus and Jupiter in the manner (Tlaloc-Venus warfare) adopted from the Teotihuacáanos (Schele and Freidel 1990:296). The individuals captured were probably important since prestige was the goal of such events. It is also worth noting that the captives are mostly named on stair risers associated with temples and with the iconography of ball courts, locations that are of ritual sacrifice.

## CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

The subject of the inscriptions and iconography of the snake emblem glyph corpus is mainly ritualized, supernatural events, and *wayeb*s, rather than actions linked solely to rulers, such as accession (Table 1, Note that some objects (N=55) have more than one subject (N=61).

Table 1. Snake Emblem Glyph Data.

Column: Object Row: Subject	Vases N=18	Stelae N=12	Lintels N=2	Altars N=3	Personal Items N=2	Cave Paintings N=2	Hiero- glyphic Stairs N=16	Percentage of Subject Material #/61
Accession	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3.3%
<i>Wayeb</i> events	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	9.8%
Scattering and Sacrifice	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	6.6%
Vision Serpents	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.3%
<i>K'awiil</i> events	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	21.3%
Witness Events	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	6.6%
Ballgame reference	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3.3%
Warfare	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	14.7%
No reference	0	4	0	0	0	0	2	9.8%
Other (i.e. enters the fire, com- panion statement)	0	4	0	1	1	2	5	21.3%

Indeed, only two out of twelve public monuments (stelae, altars, lintels, and stair panels) had accession as a subject, while none of the other mediums had text detailing accessions. How the

Dynastic Vases fit into the picture is somewhat problematic, since they state *K'awiil* events, which Martin relates to accession, i.e. "ties into rulership" (Martin 1998). However, all are out of context and have problems with temporal consistency, and most of the dynasty vase individuals are never mentioned at all on any of the other media. It appears more likely that they do not represent people who acceded to power, but rather mark *K'awiil* rituals performed by ritual specialists. All other activities, besides notoriety as a ballgame player, by people bearing the snake emblem glyph are more common than leadership statements. People with the snake emblem title witness births, perform and witness scattering events, are listed as companions to others, "enter the fire" and "earth," and undertake dedications of houses and people. Only 3% of the activities engaged in by people named with the snake emblem glyph title are accessions to the throne, whereas 87% are engaged in activities which are predominately associated with ritualistic spiritual activities. The remainder of the texts do not state what the individuals with the snake emblem glyph are doing.

These tasks are performed by people bearing names associated with fire and jaguars, suggesting that a specific title of "Fire Jaguar" priest may be appropriate as a proper name, or in place of a proper name, in 30% of the inscriptions. There are jaguar motifs in an additional 7% of the inscriptions and iconography where individuals are not named outright. It is also worth noting that events rulers would have been involved in, such as accessions to the throne, are less common than would be expected for individuals named as sacred lords, presumably of major Maya polities, since the act of accession only occurs in 3% of the inscriptions.

In cases where there are no actors associated with emblem glyphs, such as the south-side of Copan Stela A, the text is visually symbolic in its layout, displaying the ordering of Maya

“sacred” space. All of the text runs down the side of the person represented on Stela A, visually indicating that the Maya ruler or priest is the liaison between the underworld and the heavens. From this position the person is in contact with Xibalba, the Lords of the Underworld, the ancestors, and the levels of the Sky (Heavens).

Finally, it must be pointed out that examining the iconography and inscriptions alone is not enough to get a clear or accurate view of the Classic Maya. The field of epigraphy provides an incomplete, lopsided view of the Maya (as does any non-collusive singular data type) and needs external data to support epigraphic readings. Problems exist with the documentation of inscription sources and with the partial texts taken out of the context, often frustrating people interested in the field and discouraging independent evaluation of the monuments.

Individuals named on the monuments are constantly being renamed by epigraphers. The main individual named associated with the snake emblem glyph in this corpus has been called six different names by modern epigraphers, which adds greatly to the confusion about identification, as well as doing little to make the field more accessible to outsiders. The individual in question is Jaguar-Paw-Smoke, who is also known as Jaguar-Paw (Carrasco 1999), *Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ak'*, *Yich'aak K'ahk'*, "Fiery Claw" (Martin and Grube 2000), and "Claw of Fire" (Martin 2005). Similarly, the Cleveland Stela has also been called Calakmul Stela 1 and El Peru Stela 34.

Epigraphic articles also are rife with citations of unpublished documents, drawings, and personal communications; this makes it near impossible to check on the accuracy of the data being presented (i.e., Proyecto Arqueológico de la Biosfera de Calakmul Temprada 1993-1994 by Ramon Carrasco V. et al.). Along with these preventable issues are errors in citations, such as

in Stuart and Houston's *Classic Maya Place Names* (1994) regarding Calakmul. The statement that “texts from Calakmul show that *Oxte'tun* and *Nabtunich* appear in association with local events and with rulers who clearly use the snake emblem” is inaccurate. Checking the citation revealed that there is no figure 50c and that figure 51b is “Hormiguero, Structure VI, west buttress plan (Ruppert and Denison 1943: figs. 50c. 51b).” In *The Forest of Kings* (Schele and Freidel 1990), Seibal Stela 10 is misnamed Stela 11. One of Simon Martin's drawings (Martin 2005) is attributed to Calakmul Stela 89, but does not appear on the photographed sides nor in the text description provided by Sylvanus Morley (Ruppert and Dennison 1943).

Public monuments and elite goods present an extremely skewed picture of the Maya, with a bias away from the common people and towards those that had the power to commission public monuments and elaborate paintings. This information must be integrated with other forms of archaeological data by focusing on settlement patterns, household goods, and dietary differences among the Maya to present a clearer understanding of the ancient Maya. It is not enough just to study inscriptions and then start fleshing out the bones of ancient Maya life. Epigraphy and archaeology must work together to collaborate on data and understand the disparities between the two different, but overlapping, data sources if a more precise knowledge of the ancient Maya is sought (Chase, Chase and Cobos 2007). It is perhaps even more important when epigraphic information can be placed in archaeological context. For example, we speak of “king” lists and royal dynasties; however, current archaeological finds (i.e., La Corona and Dzibanche) are challenging the accuracy of epigraphic readings, especially with regards to the transient and widely dispersed snake emblem glyph.

The iconographic and textual evidence displayed in this corpus supports an association

between the snake emblem glyph and the supernatural. When we consider the majority of the events described on the various media related to the snake emblem glyph, and include the taking of captives for ritual sacrifice and the significance of the ballgame to Maya belief, then roughly 87% of the inscriptions describe ritual events. The reintroduction of the ruler-priest of old or a combination of ruler and priests representing a symbolic world tree or conduit between the realm of the supernatural and the mortal is an idea that explains some of the problems in the conjunction of epigraphic and archaeological evidence regarding emblem glyphs. These ruler/priests would have communicated with deities through vision serpents such as *Chicchan*, *wayebs* mentioned on the ceramics, and ritual scattering events. I emphasize the word “priest” instead of “shaman.” The images of *wayeb* and visions, a la Schele and Freidel are generally described in terms that bring to mind the realm of the “shaman,” which is accurate. However, publicly built funerary temples, monoliths such as stelae, and painted ceramics focusing on rituals displaying scenes and motifs over and over are indicative of organized religion, typical of those aligned with massive, sacred, public works, and ritual specialists, i.e. priests.

After consideration of all the media on which the snake emblem glyph is inscribed, the dynastic sequence of “rulers” of the snake emblem glyph cannot be viewed as a historic document; The Dynastic Vases are mired in chronological problems. The fact that none of the pre-Jaguar-Paw rulers have been located on monuments or on any medium except ceramics brings into question the purpose of the vases. Further, archaeological evidence from Dzibanche (Velasquez 2004) shows that the *Kan* dynastic vases do not correlate temporally with individuals of the snake emblem glyph on the stair segments found at Dzibanche. The individuals listed there should predate Jaguar-Paw in the dynastic sequence, but they are not the individuals listed

on the vases. Similarly, the “ruler” list derived from the stelae of Calakmul (Marcus 1973) does not correlate with the *Kan* dynasty vase list either. The chronological problems and overlap of the Dynastic Vases suggests that the “Sacred Lord of \_\_\_\_\_” title is not a title for a singular ruler from sites as epigraphers have suggested in the past (Martin and Grube 2001).

Therefore, as an alternative, it seems reasonable that there may have been several leaders, in hierarchic positions, of sacred diarchies, triarchies or even a caste of priests practicing sacred rituals that included sacrifice and/or divination. These individuals may have been under the divine rule of a higher authority, but were able to be vested with a name and title related to his or her rank. These priests would have been named with the holy titles of “Sacred Lord of the Snake,” or “Sacred Lord of Mutal” or “Sacred Lord of *Oxte’ Tun*” (three emblem glyphs that share a bulk of the *wayebs*). These would have been the individuals interpreted by epigraphers as the “rulers” of emblem glyph polities. It is also reasonable that such priests had “jaguar” titles (Rice 2004:270) since there is a strong affinity for names relating to “fire” and “jaguars” within this corpus.

Jaguar priests have been found to be associated with human sacrifice and *K’awiil* in both Aztec and Maya art (Baudez 2004). Too often we think of proper names as the names given in texts, but we must not dismiss the likelihood that the Maya used names in another way or ways. This may have been similar to how pontiffs in Catholicism choose their pontifical names, or perhaps how era names were chosen among Dynasties in China, or how praenomen (throne names) were used in ancient Egypt. Epigraphic researchers of the ancient Maya have not adequately considered these possibilities, we must therefore be vigilant and not dismiss alternative hypotheses when creating historic models of ancient civilization.

## APPENDIX A: GLYPHIC ELEMENTS AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS





Figure 1. *Xaman* Glyph

Montgomery, John. Dictionary of Maya Glyphs. 2007. 9-11-2007. <

[http://research.famsi.org/montgomery\\_dictionary/mt\\_entry.php?id=1058&lsearch=x&search=xaman](http://research.famsi.org/montgomery_dictionary/mt_entry.php?id=1058&lsearch=x&search=xaman)

>. Drawing by John Montgomery, © Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., [www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org).

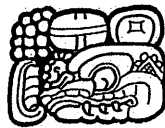


Figure 2. Snake main sign (after Jones and Satterthwaite 1982).



Figure 3. *Mo* glyph.

Drawing by John Montgomery, © Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., [www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org). Montgomery, John. Dictionary of Maya Glyphs. 2007. 9-11-2007.

<[http://research.famsi.org/montgomery\\_dictionary/mt\\_entry.php?id=541&lsearch=m&search=m](http://research.famsi.org/montgomery_dictionary/mt_entry.php?id=541&lsearch=m&search=m)  
o>.



Figure 4. *Muyal* glyph.

Montgomery, John. Dictionary of Maya Glyphs. 2007. 9-11-2007.

<[http://research.famsi.org/montgomery\\_dictionary/mt\\_entry.php?id=547&lsearch=m&search=muyal](http://research.famsi.org/montgomery_dictionary/mt_entry.php?id=547&lsearch=m&search=muyal)

>. Drawing by John Montgomery, © Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc., [www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org).

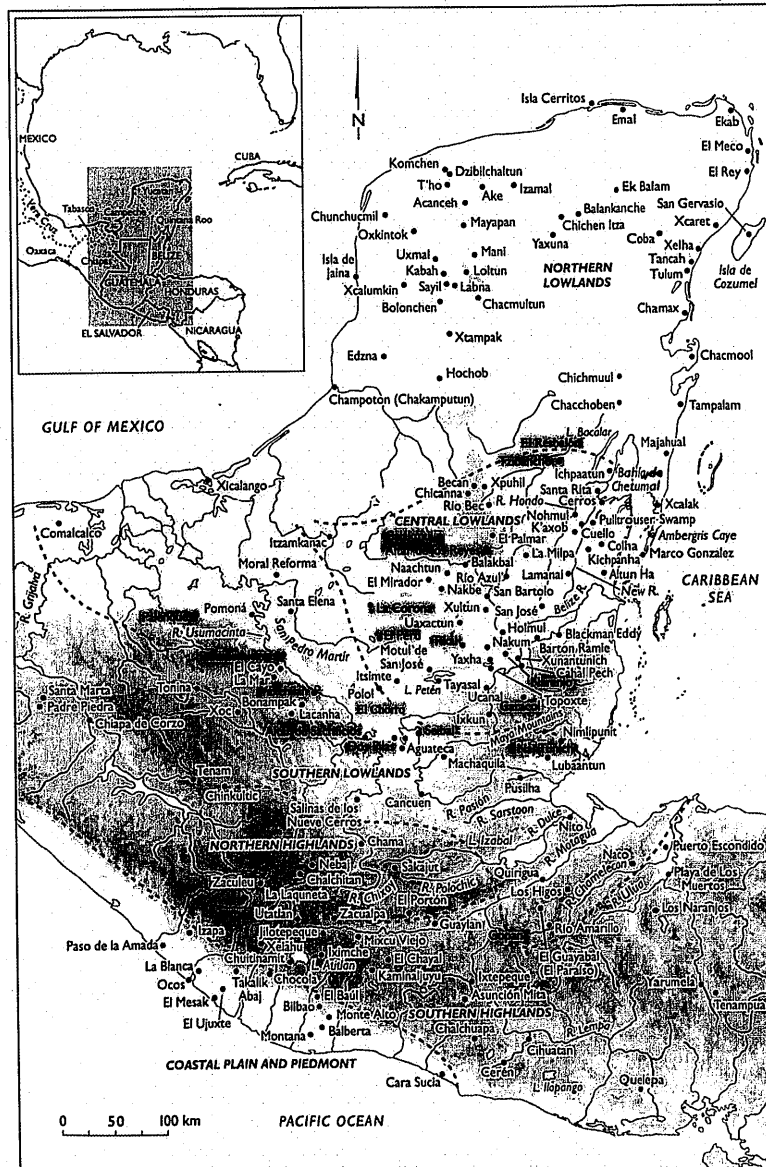


Figure 5. Map of the Maya area (after Sharer and Traxler 2006) with sites relating to the snake emblem glyph indicated.

Image from *The Ancient Maya*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition by Robert Sharer and Loa Traxler ©2006 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University.

## APPENDIX B: CORPUS OF INSCRIPTIONS



Figure 6. Photograph © Justin Kerr K7794.



Figure 7. Photograph © Justin Kerr K531.

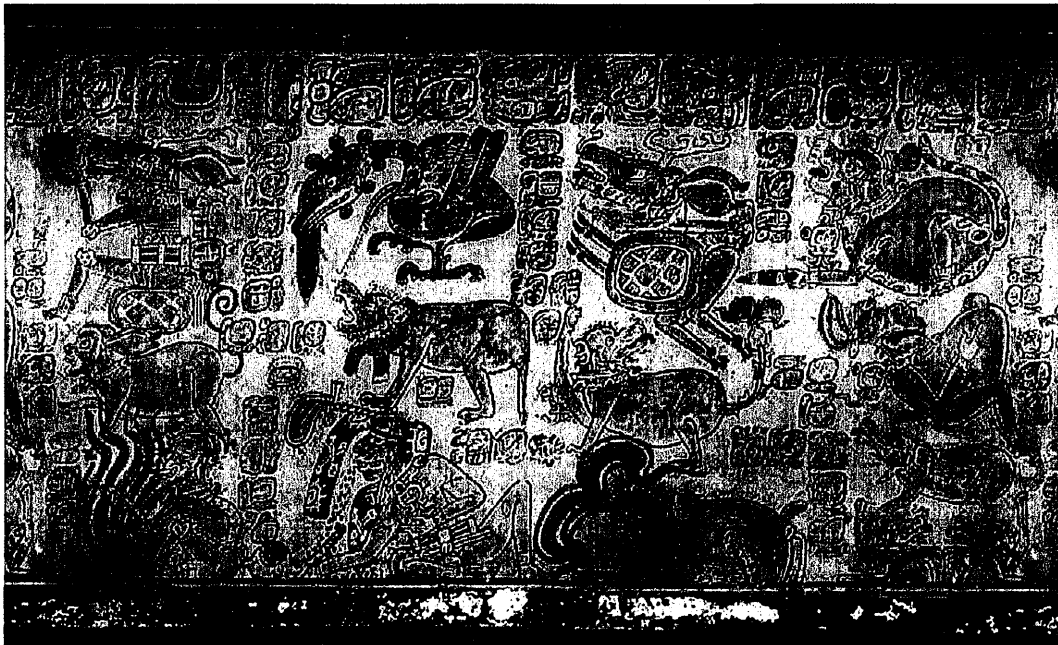


Figure 8. Photograph © Justin Kerr K927.

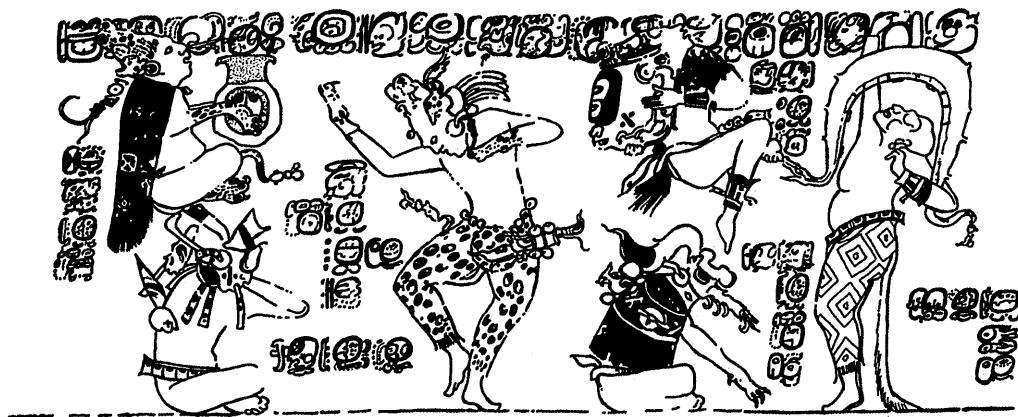


Figure 9. The Altar Vase.

Schele, Linda. The Linda Schele Drawing Collection. 2000. 9-11-07.

<<http://research.famsi.org/uploads/schele/hires/08/IMG0050.jpg>>. Drawing by Linda Schele, ©

David Schele, courtesy Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc.,

[www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org).

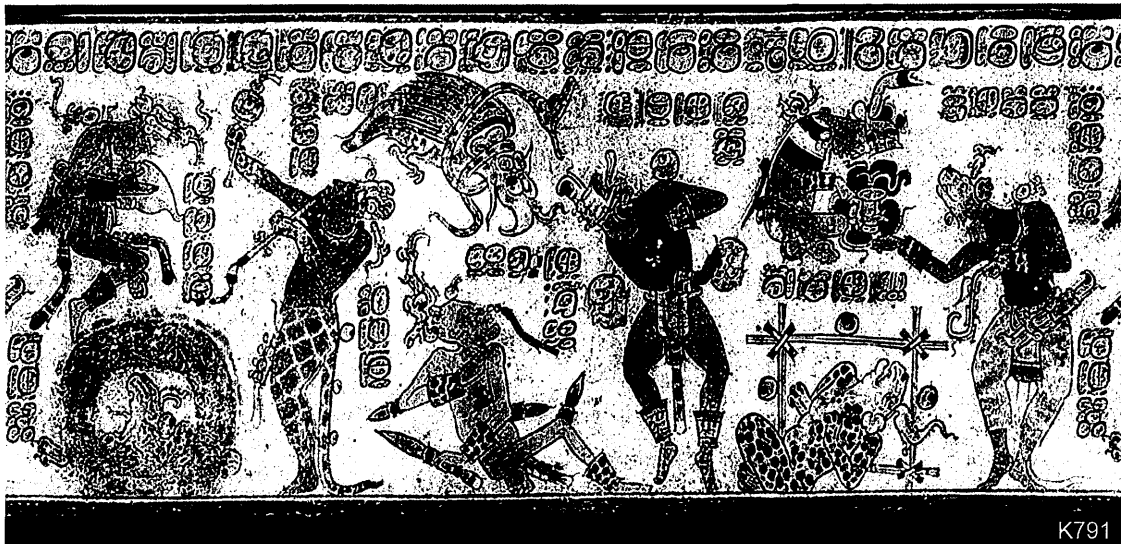


Figure 10. Photograph © Justin Kerr K791.

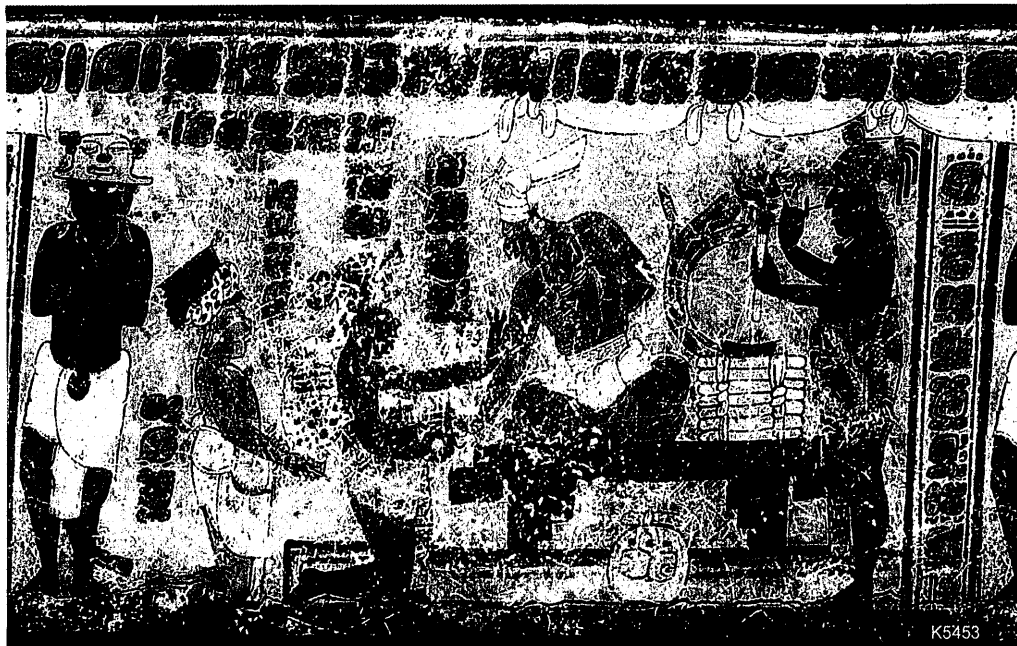


Figure 11. Photograph © Justin Kerr K5453.

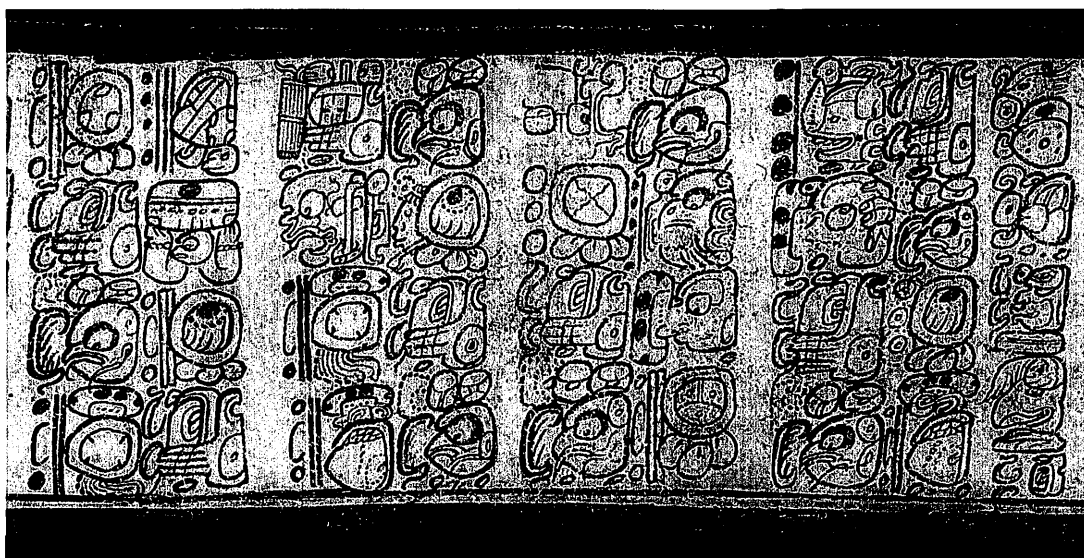


Figure 12. Vessel 126, Photograph © Justin Kerr K0955.

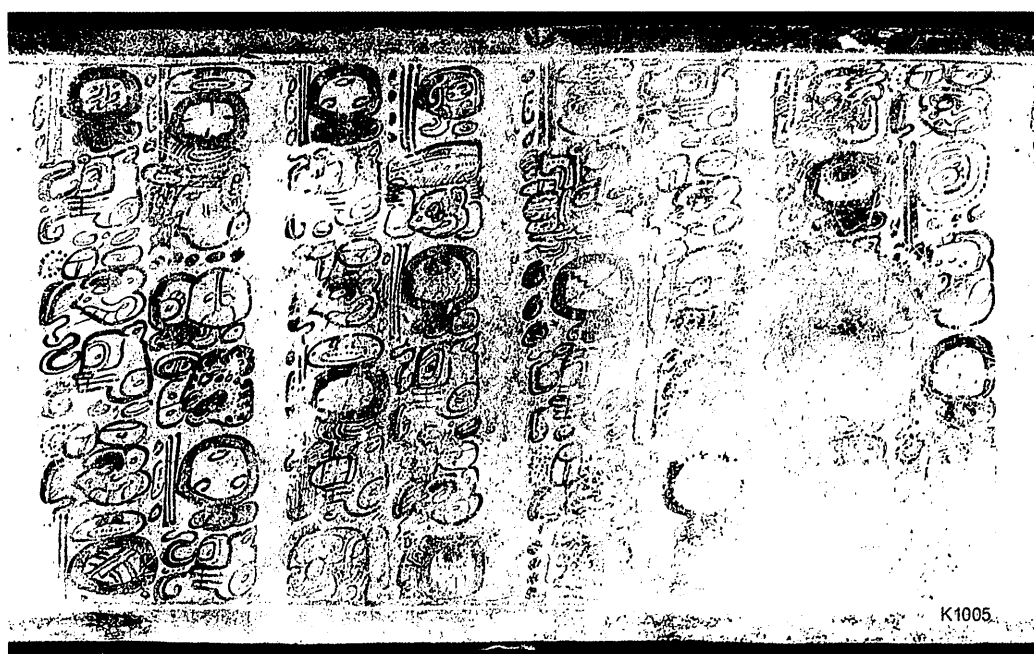


Figure 13. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1005.

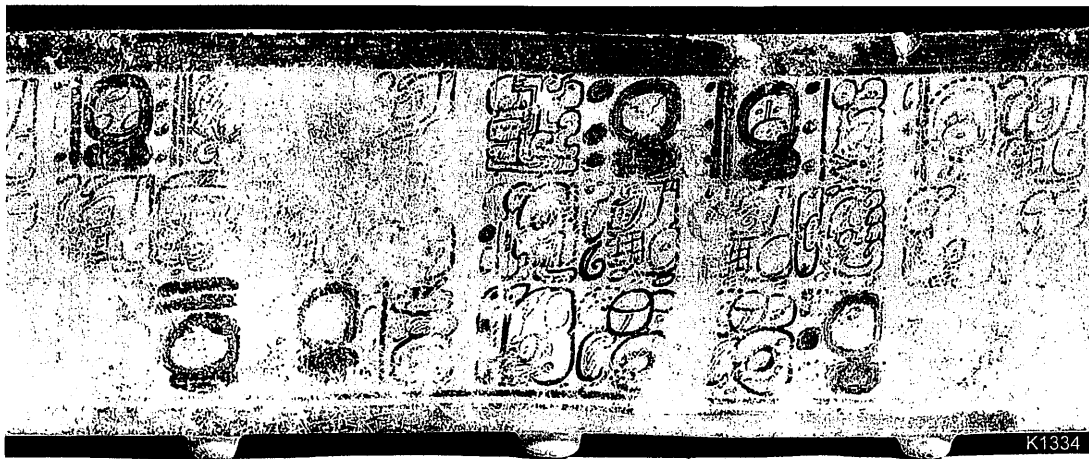


Figure 14. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1334.

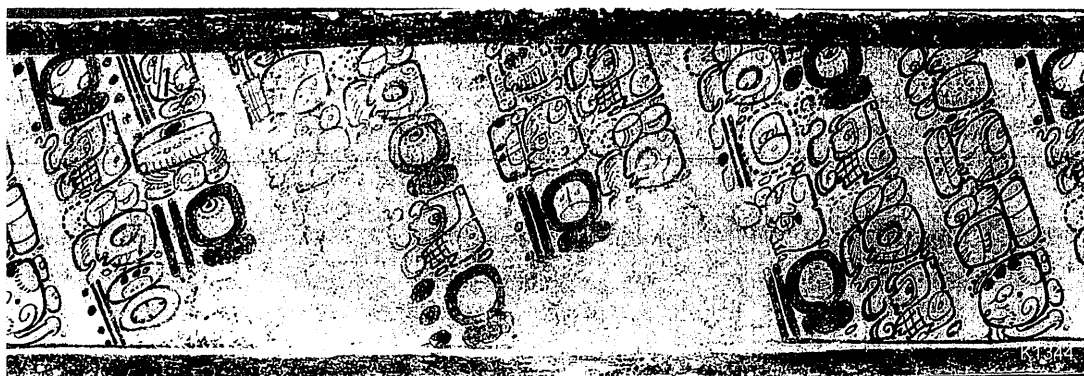


Figure 15. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1344.



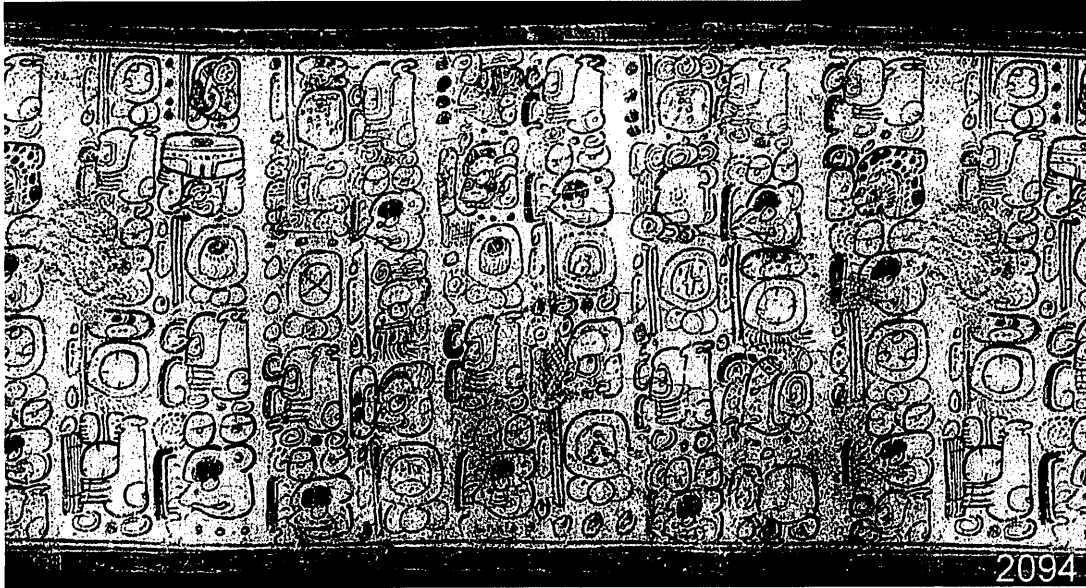


Figure 16. Photograph © Justin Kerr K2094.

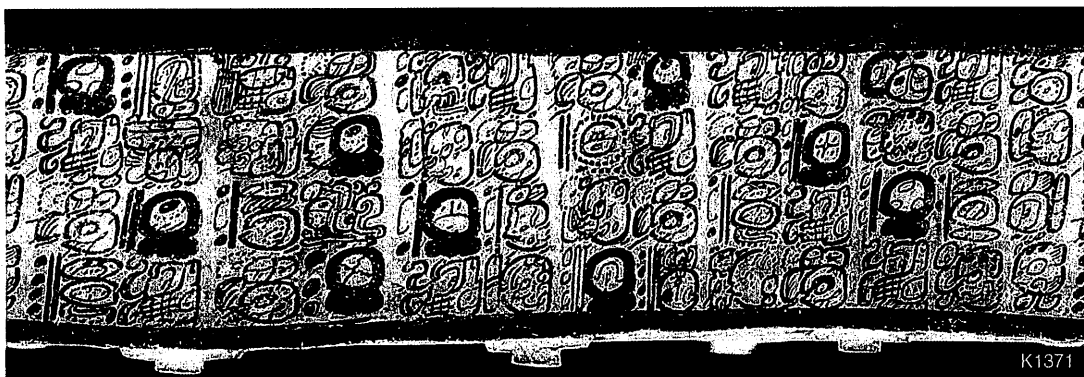


Figure 17. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1371.

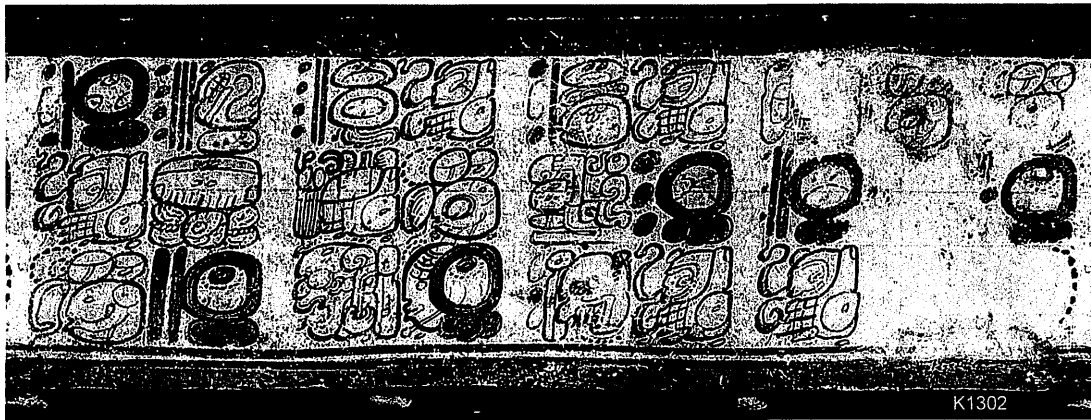


Figure 18. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1302.

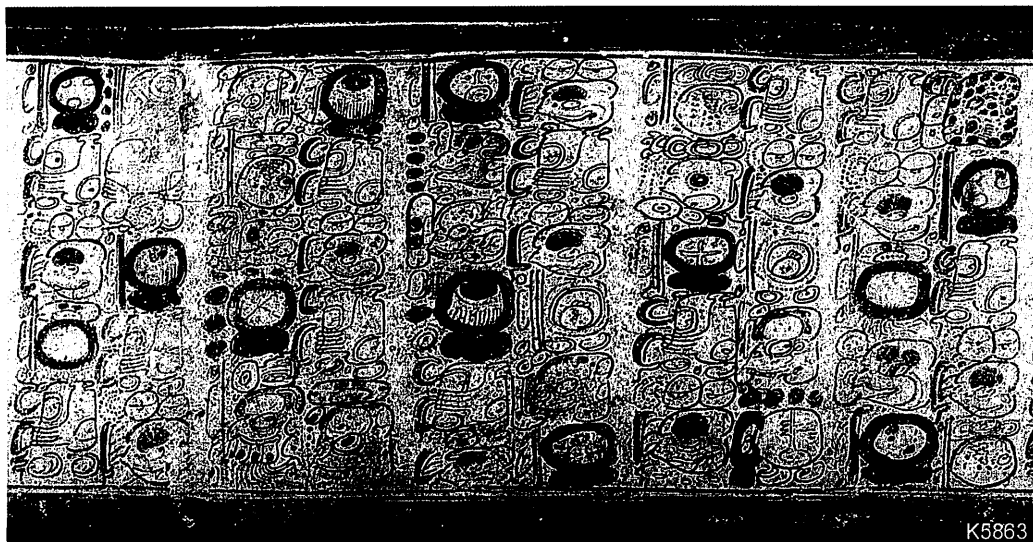


Figure 19. Photograph © Justin Kerr K5863.

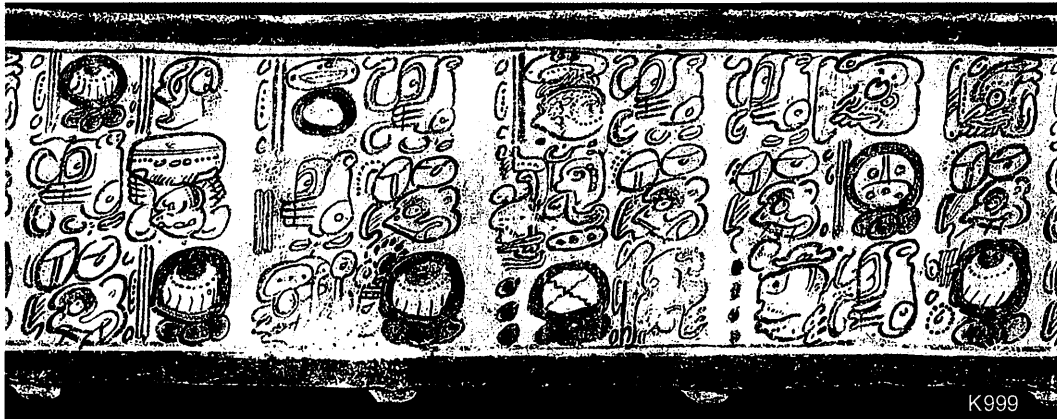


Figure 20. Photograph © Justin Kerr K999.

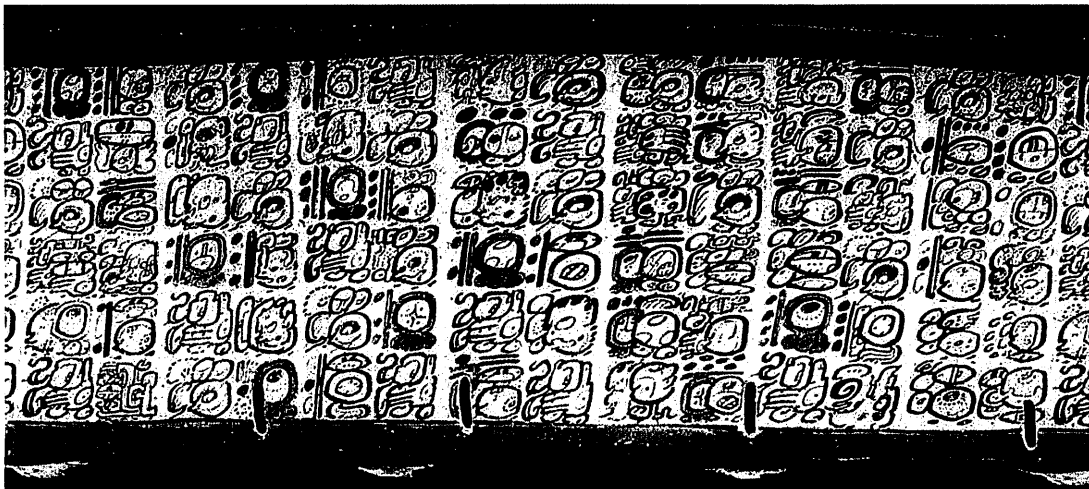
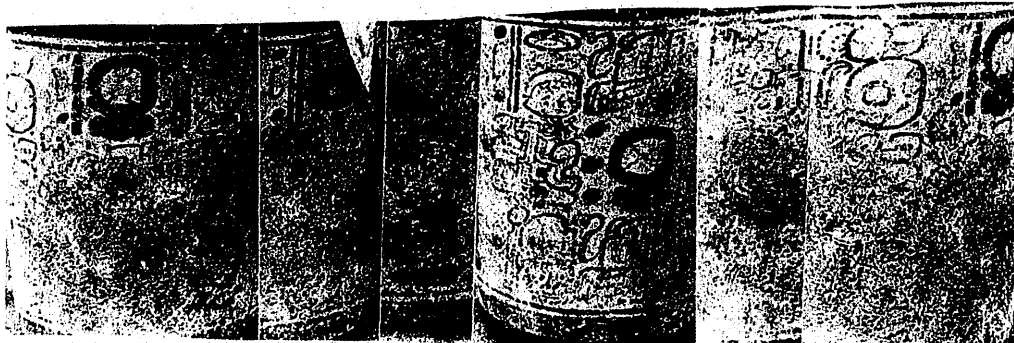


Figure 21. Photograph © Justin Kerr K6751.



Vessel 121

Figure 22. *Maya Book of the Dead*, Vessel BOD 121 (Robicsek 1981:97).

Photograph courtesy of Dr. Francis Robicsek.



Figure 23. Photograph © Justin Kerr K1372.



Figure 1. Altar de los Reyes, Altar 3, upper face (drawing by Nikolai Grube).

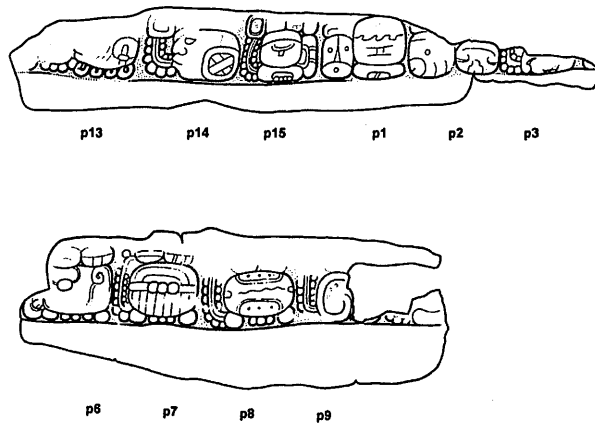


Figure 2. Altar de los Reyes, Altar 3, inscription on the lateral surface (drawing by Nikolai Grube).

Figure 24. Top and side of Altar de los Reyes Altar 3.

After Grube drawing in Appendix 2 in *Archaeological Reconnaissance in Southern Campeche, Mexico: 2002 Field Season Report*. 2002.9-11-07.

<<http://www.famsi.org/reports/01014/section14.htm>>.

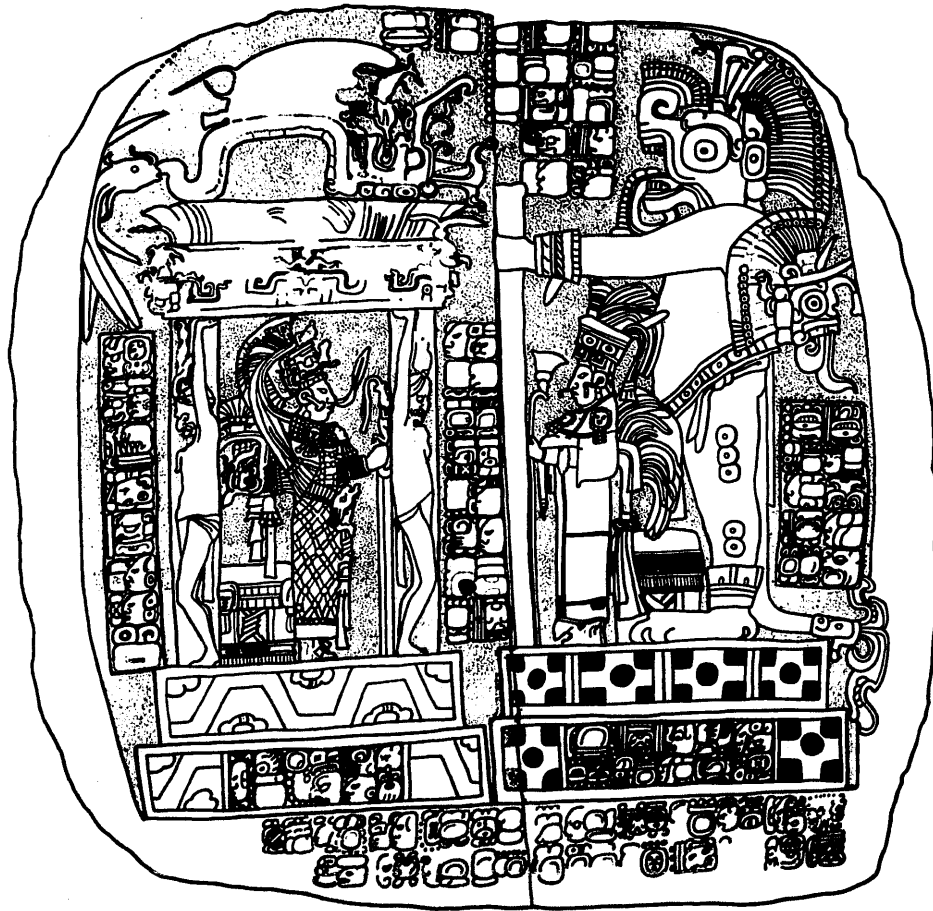


Figure 25. Site Q Altar.

Schele, Linda. The Linda Schele Drawing Collection 2000. 9-11-07.

<<http://research.famsi.org/uploads/schele/hires/10/IMG0044.jpg>>. Drawing by Linda Schele, ©

David Schele, courtesy Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc.,

[www.famsi.org](http://www.famsi.org).

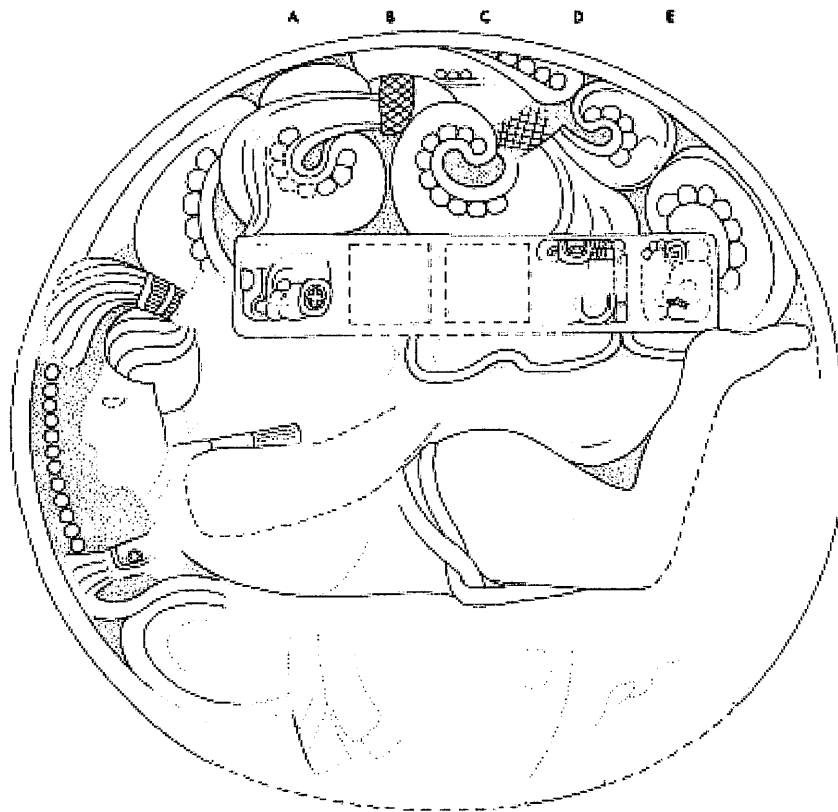
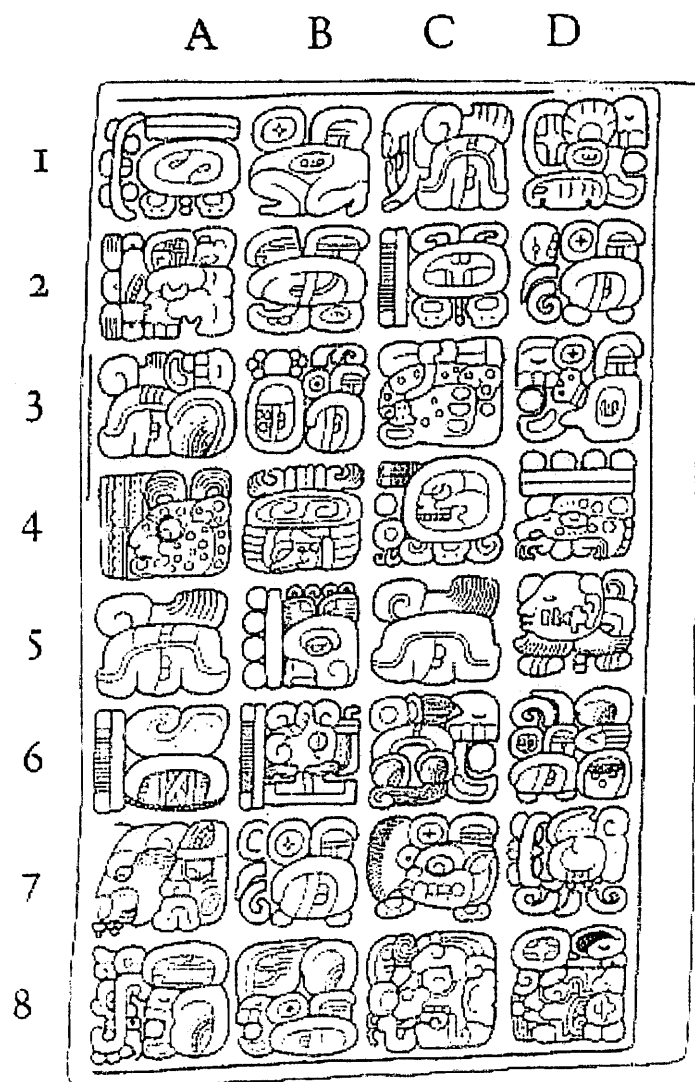


Figure 26. Tikal Altar 9.

Tikal Altar 9 originally from Jones and Satterthwaite's *Monuments and Inscriptions of Tikal:*

*The Carved Monuments*, Tikal Report 33a, University Museum Press, copyright © 1982. Image after Martin (2005:11).

<[http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/journal/602/SnakesBats\\_e.pdf](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/journal/602/SnakesBats_e.pdf)>.



Lintel 35

Figure 27. Yaxchilan Lintel 35 (after Culbert 1991:237).



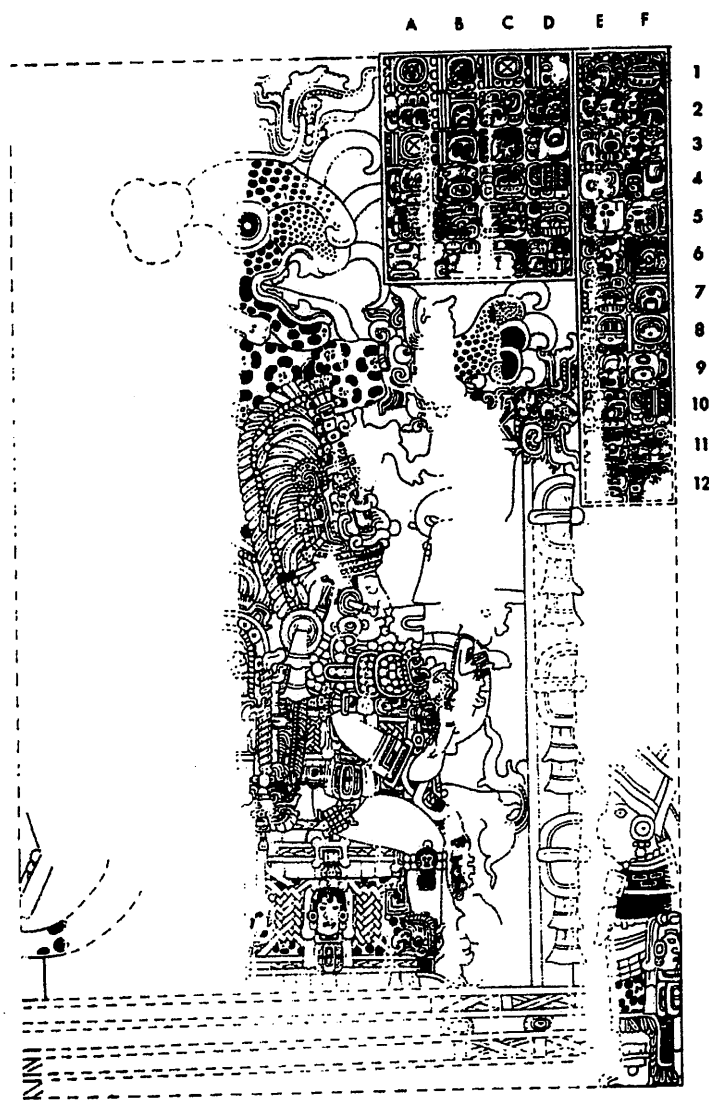


Figure 28. Tikal, Temple 1 Lintel 3.

Tikal, Temple 1 Lintel 3 after Jones and Satterthwaite's *Monuments and Inscriptions of Tikal:*

*The Carved Monuments*, Tikal Report 33a, University Museum Press, copyright © 1982.

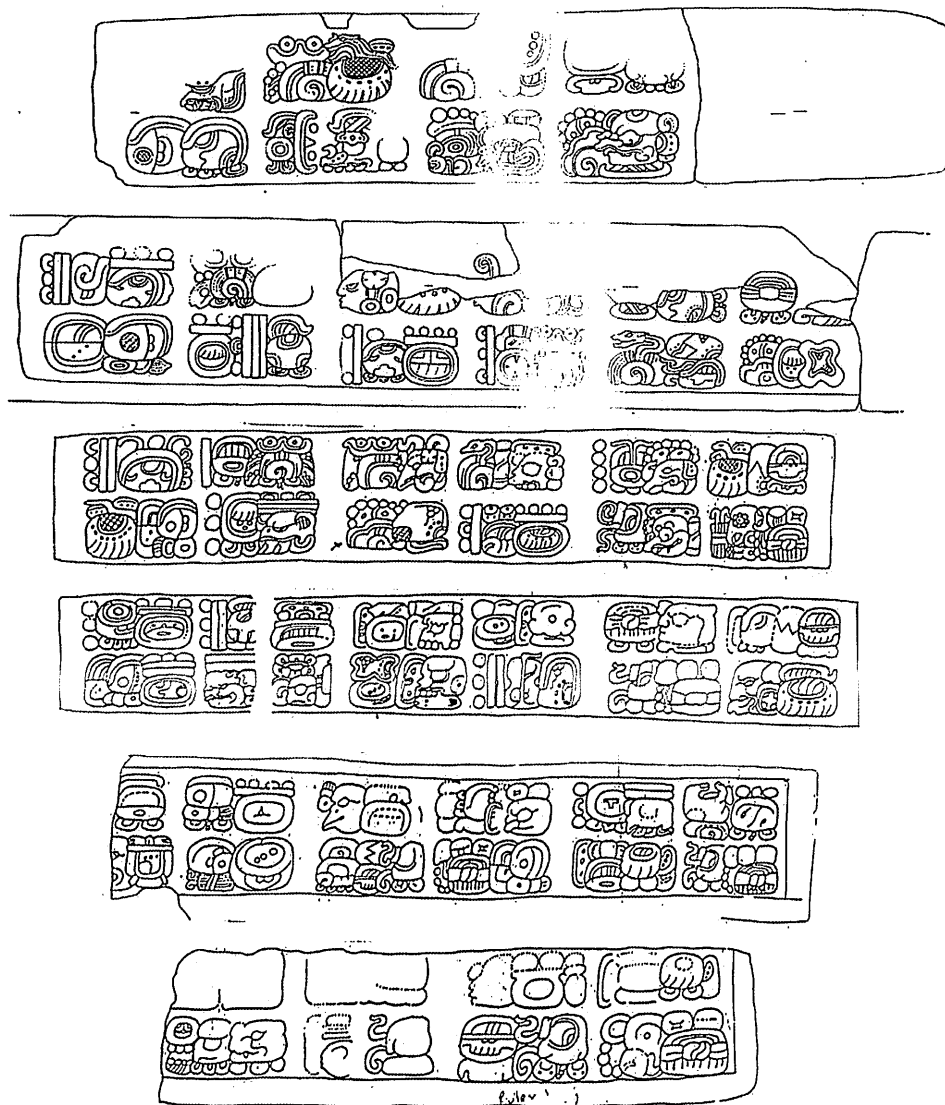


FIGURE 8  
STAIRWAY 2, WEST SECTION

Figure 29. Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stair 2 West, steps 6-1.

Fahsen, Federico. *Rescuing the Origins of Dos Pilas Dynasty: A Salvage of Hieroglyphic Stairway #2, Structure L5-49*. 2002. 9-11-07.

<<http://www.famsi.org/reports/01098/images/fig08.jpg>>.

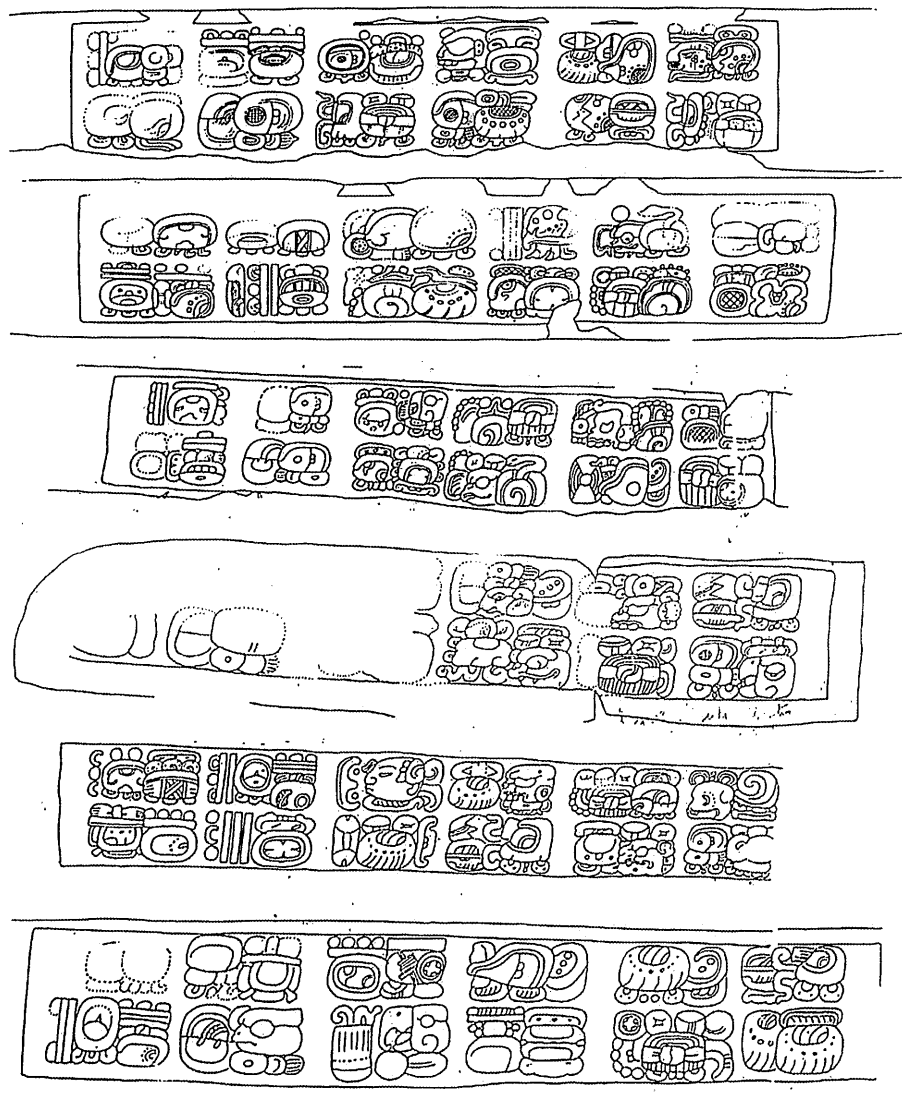


FIGURE 7  
STAIRWAY 2, EAST SECTION

Figure 30. Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stair 2 East, steps 6-1.

Fahsen, Federico. *Rescuing the Origins of Dos Pilas Dynasty: A Salvage of Hieroglyphic Stairway #2, Structure L5-49*. 2002. 9-11-07.

<<http://www.famsi.org/reports/01098/images/fig07.jpg>>.

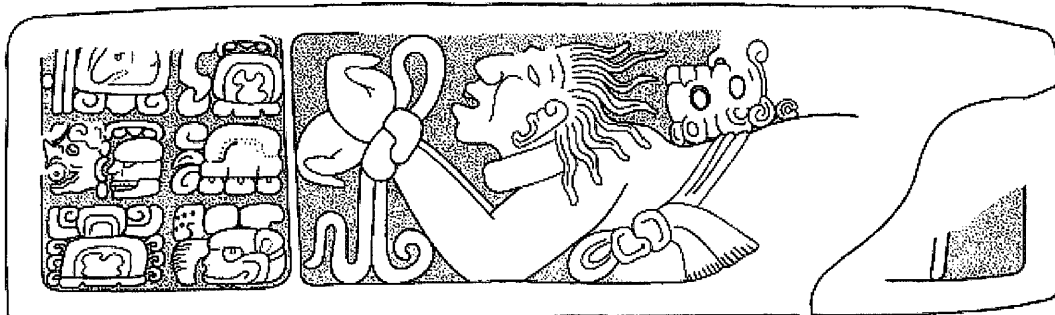


Figure 31. Monument 5 (after Nalda 2004:87).

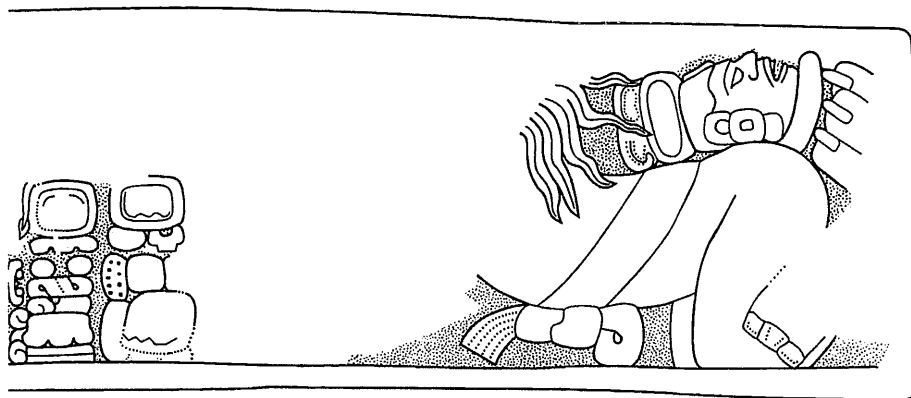


Figure 32. Monument 8b (after Nalda 2004:90).

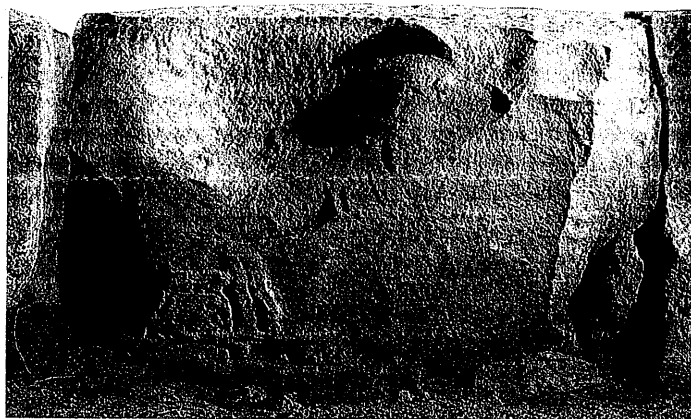


Figure 33. Hieroglyphic Monument 10b (after Nalda 2004:91).



Figure 34. Dzibanche Monument 12 (after Nalda 2004:45).

Photo by Jorge Perez de Lara.

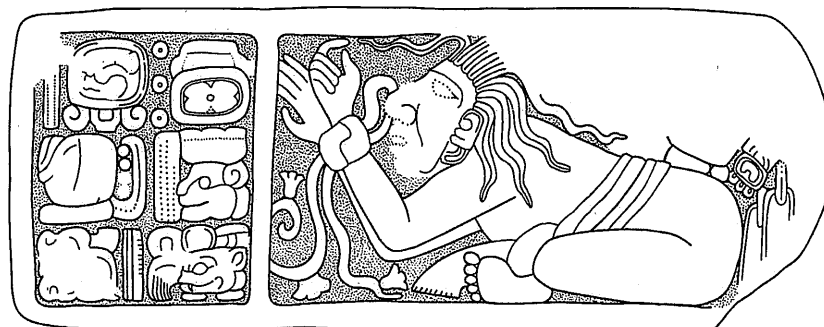


Figure 35. Dzibanche Monument 13 (after Nalda 2004:92).

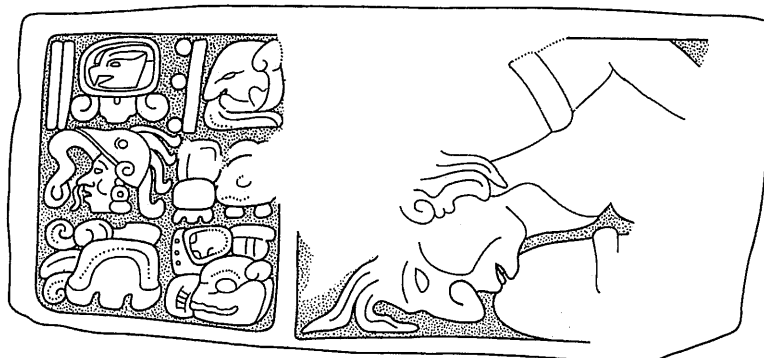


Figure 36. Dzibanche Monument 15 (after Nalda 2004:93).

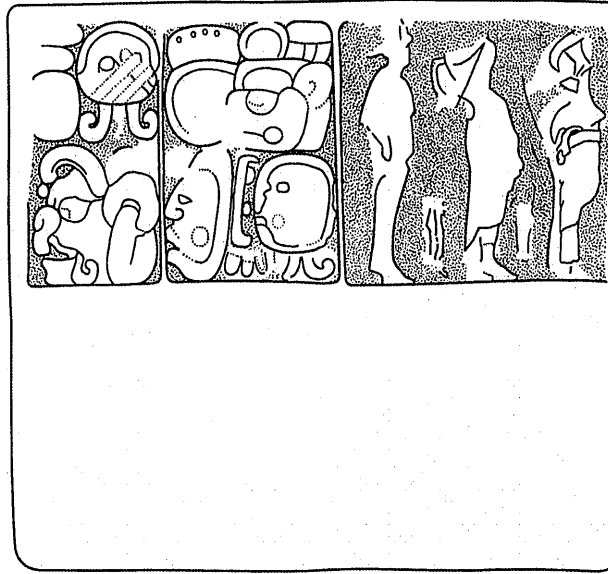


Figure 37. Dzibanche Monument 16 (after Nalda 2004:100).

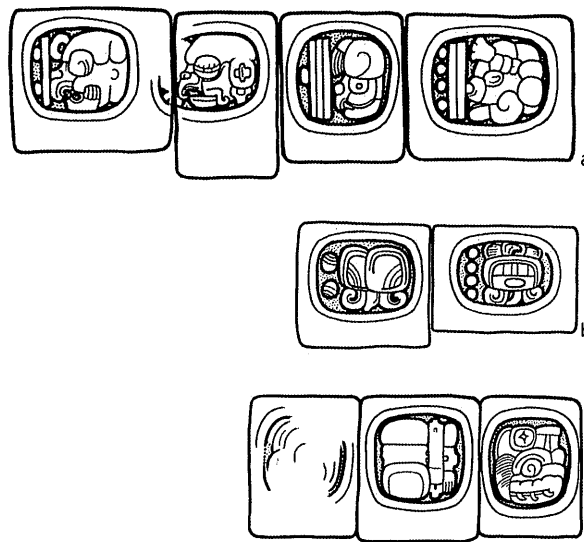


Figure 38. Stair panels from El Resbalón (Grube 2004).

Image courtesy of Nikolai Grube.

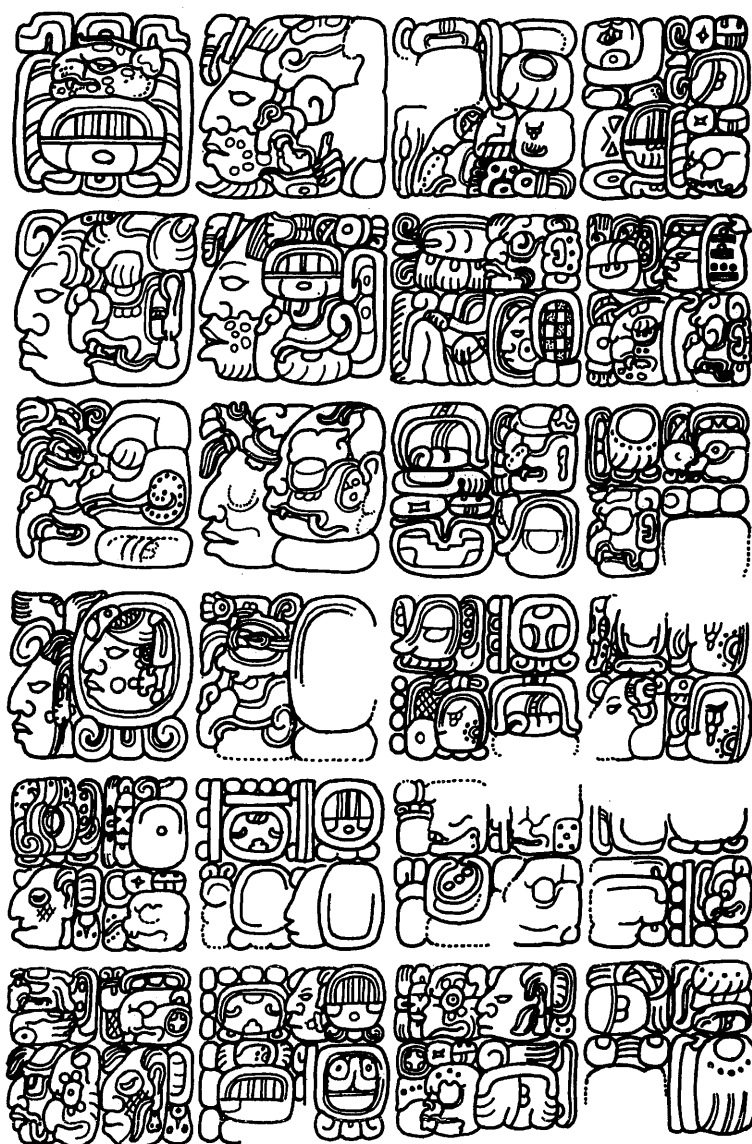


Figure 39. Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairs, House C.

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<<http://research.famsi.org/uploads/schele/hires/01/IMG0042.jpg>>. Drawing by Linda Schele, ©

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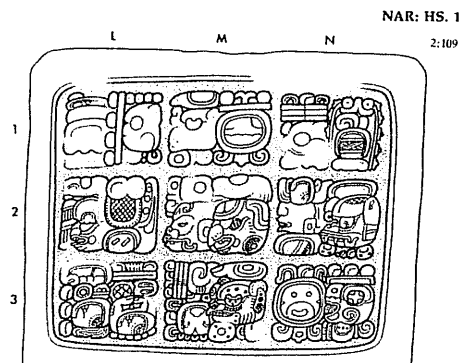


Figure 40. Drawing, NAR: HS1, Step VI.

Drawing, NAR: HS 1, Step VI from *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions*, Vol. 2 Part 2, page 109 *Naranjo*, reproduced courtesy of the President and Fellows of Harvard College (1975).

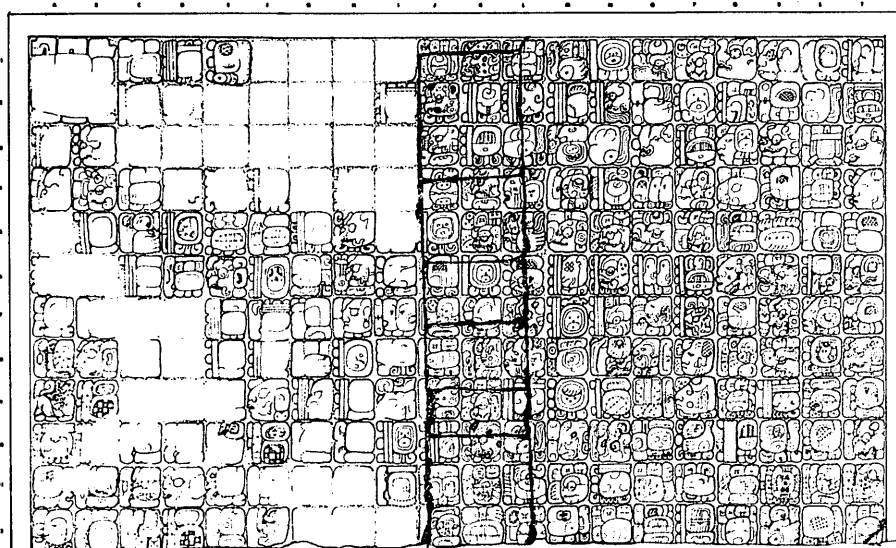


Figure 41. East Panel from the Temple of Inscriptions, Palenque

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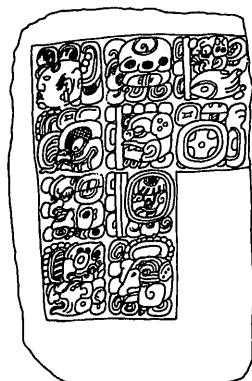


Figure 42. Glyphic Panel 4, Site Q.

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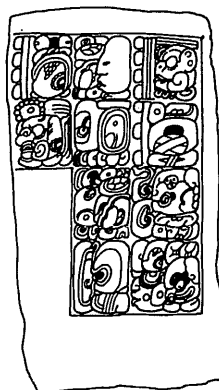


Figure 43. Glyphic Panel 7, Site Q.

Schele, Linda. The Linda Schele Drawing Collection. 2000. 9-11-07.

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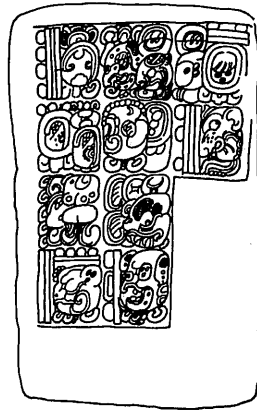


Figure 44. Glyphic Panel 6, Site Q.

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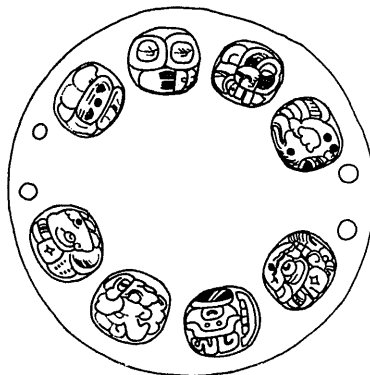


Figure 45. Disk or Mirror Backing believed to be from Site Q.

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Figure 46. Incised bone from Tikal Burial 116.

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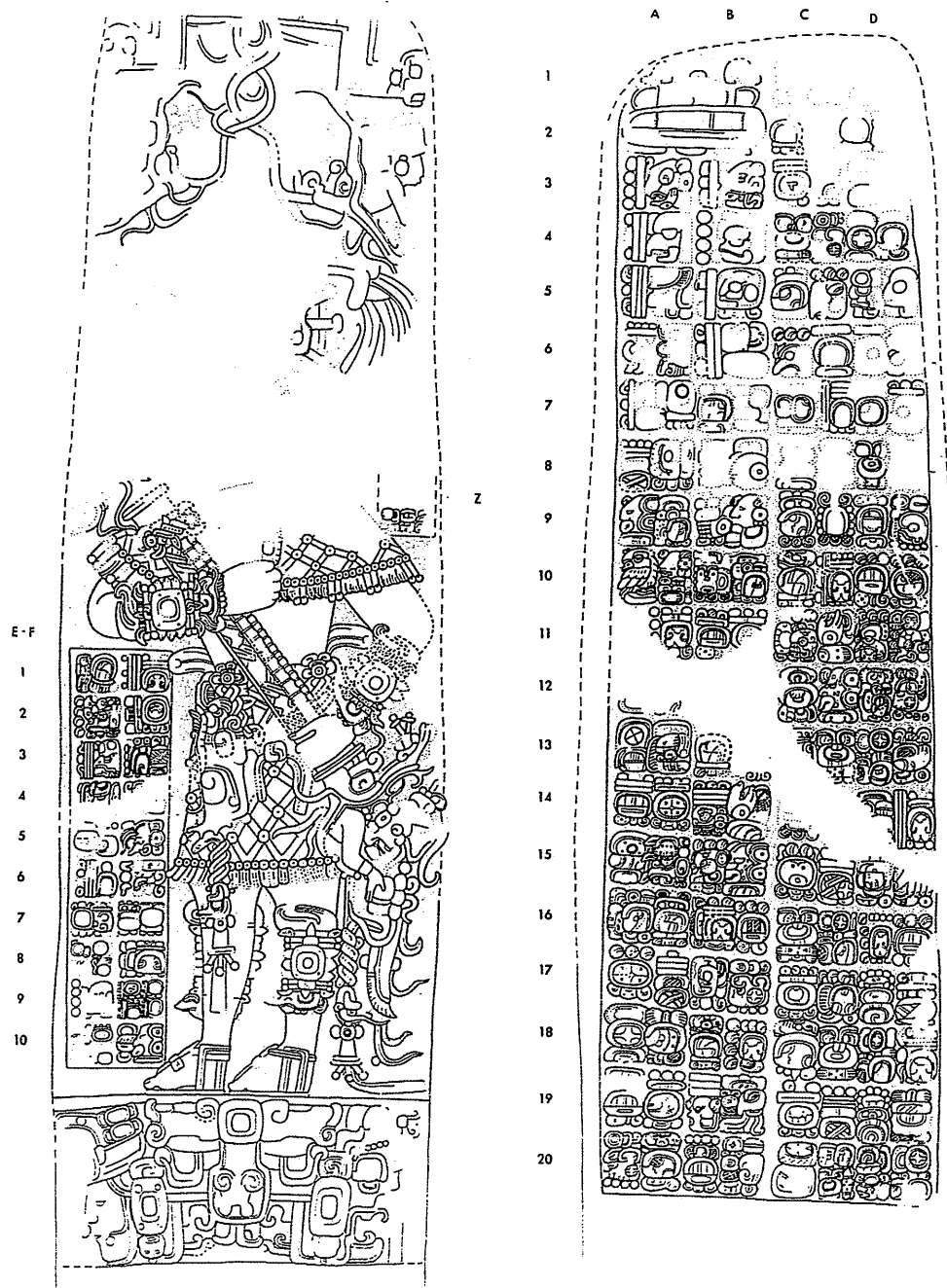


Figure 47. Caracol Stela 3 (after Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:137&139).

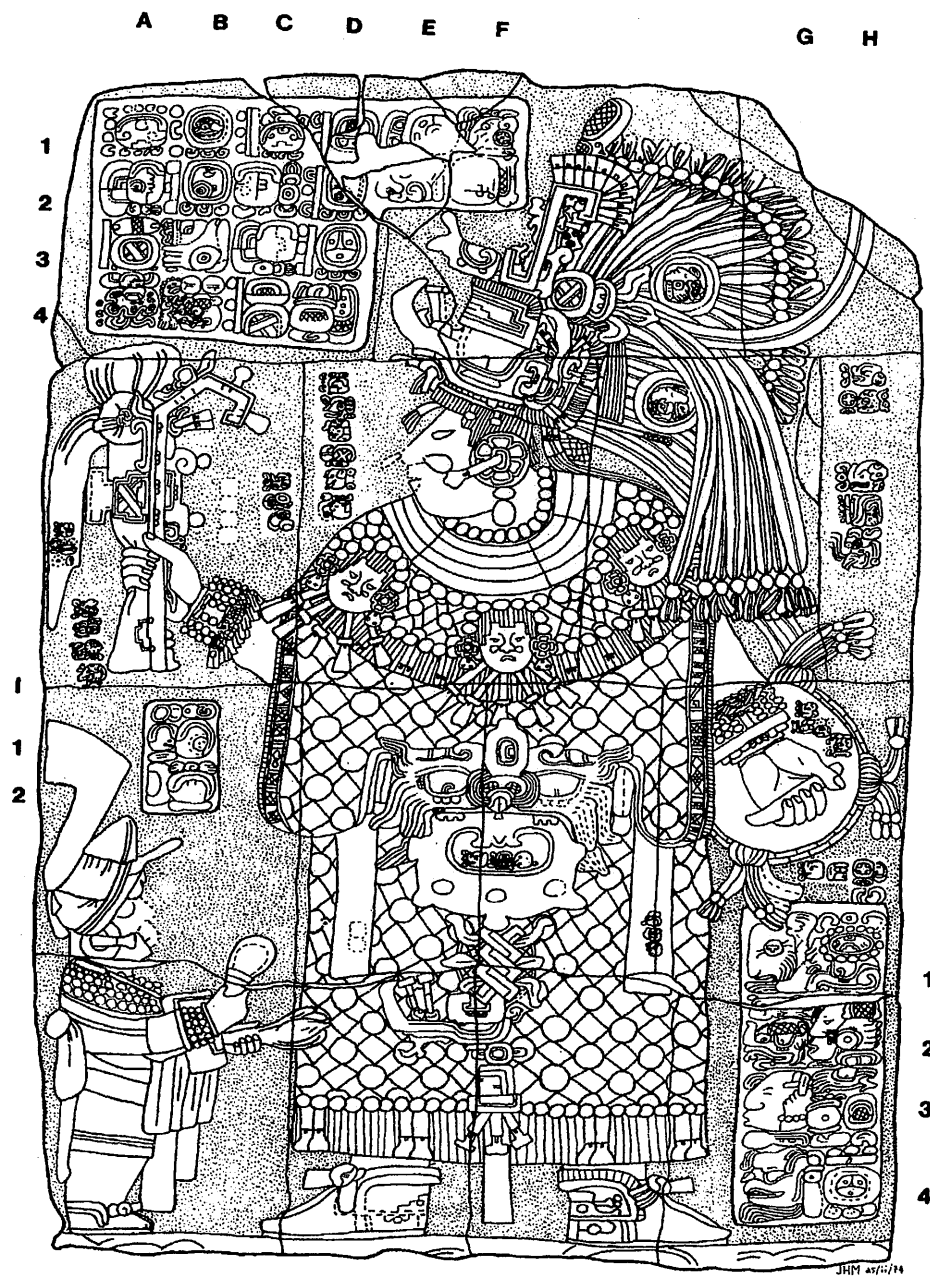


Figure 48. Cleveland Stela ca AD 692.

It is also known as El Perú Stela I (after Miller 2003:3).



Figure 49. Dos Pilas Stela 13 (after Schele and Freidel 1990).

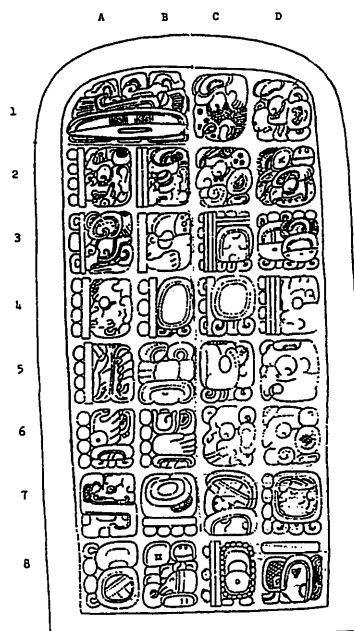


Figure 50. Piedras Negras Stela 36.

Drawn after John Montgomery (2001).

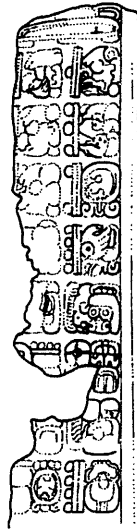


Figure 51. Piedras Negras Stela 35.

< [http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/RT10/001grube/palenque\\_fig08.html](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/RT10/001grube/palenque_fig08.html) > accessed

October 2007. Image courtesy Nikolai Grube.

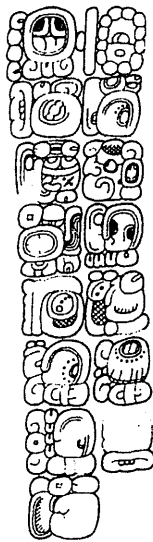


Figure 52. Inscription from a private collection.

< [http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/RT10/001grube/palenque\\_fig08.html](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/RT10/001grube/palenque_fig08.html) > accessed

October 2007. Image courtesy Nikolai Grube.

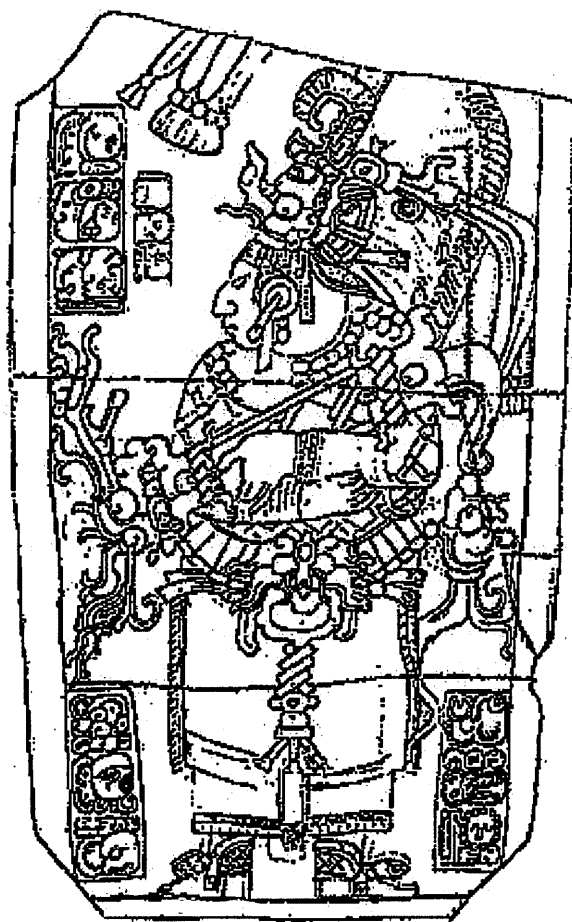
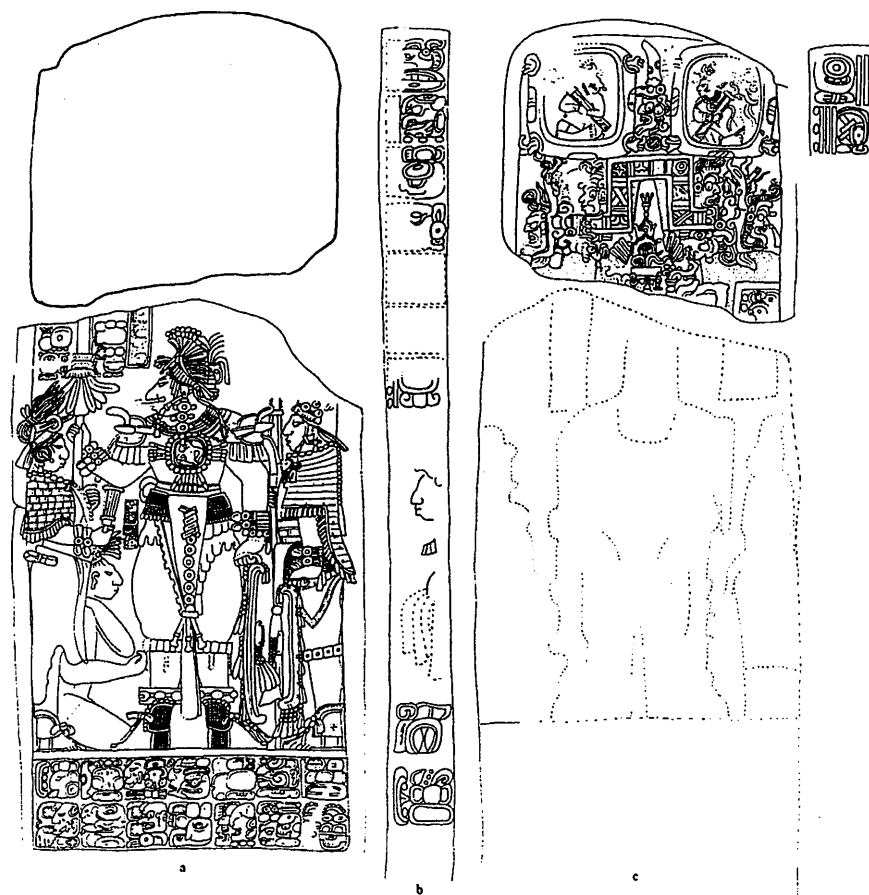


Figure 53. Stela 3, Site Q.

Image after Peter Mathews' Site Q corpus at

<<http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/siteq/index.html>> accessed October 2007.





Structure 39. Stela  
10. a. river side;  
b. d. texts; c. temple  
side. Author  
drawings.

Figure 54. Yaxchilan Stela 10.

Yaxchilan Stela 10 from YAXCHILAN: THE DESIGN OF A MAYA CEREMONIAL CITY by  
Carolyn E. Tate, University of Texas Press, Copyright © 1992.

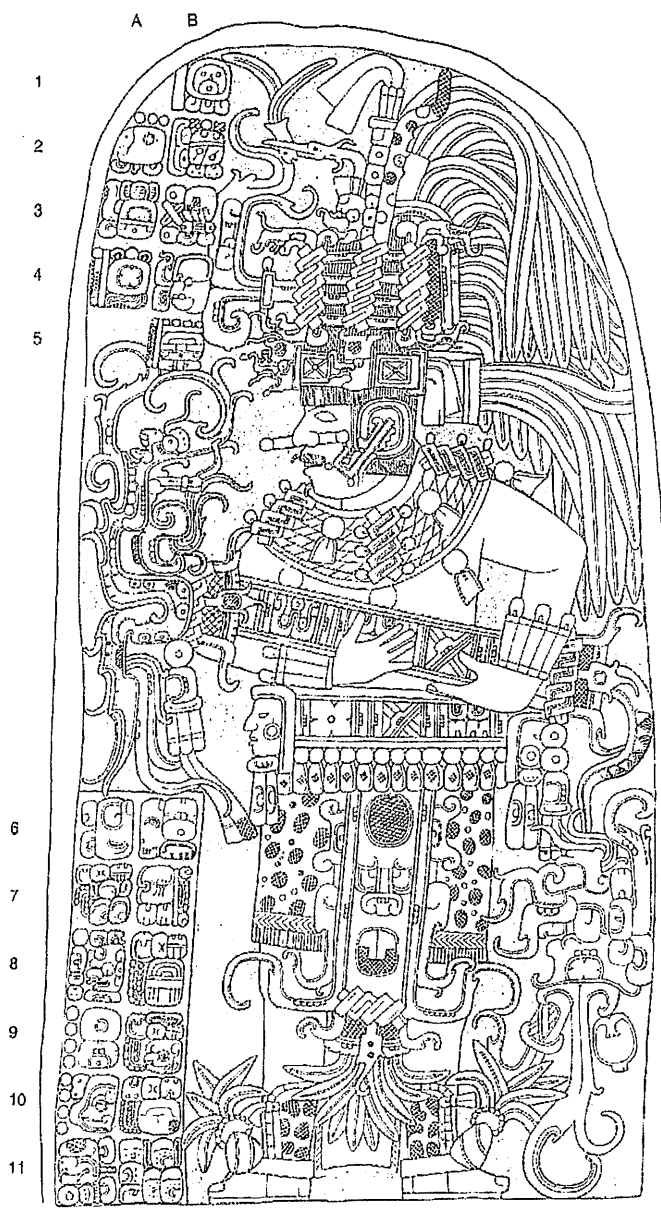


Figure 55. Seibal Stela 10.

Seibal Stela 10 from *Reading the Maya Glyphs* by Michael D. Coe and Mark Van Stone, Thames and Hudson Ltd, Copyright © 2001. Drawing by Ian Graham.

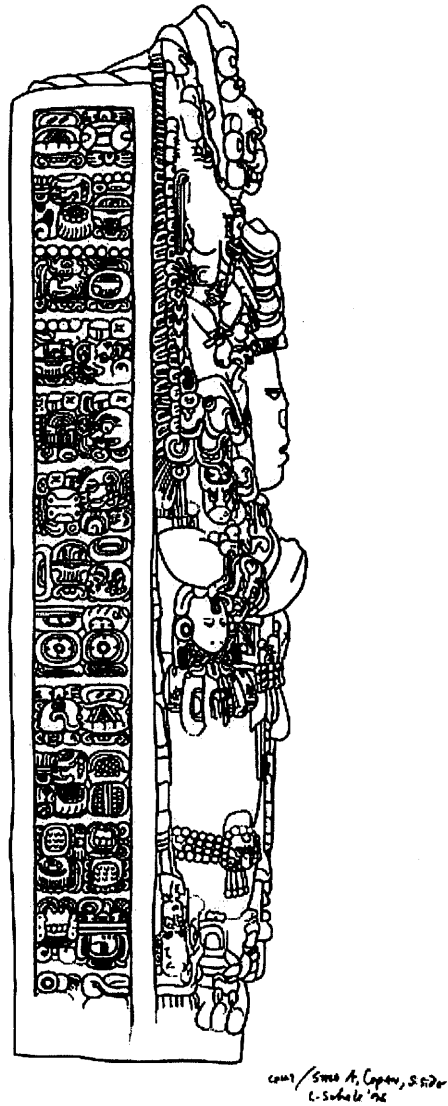


Figure 56. Copan Stela A, south side.

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Figure 57. Calakmul Stela 89 photograph after Ruppert and Denison 1943: plate 53 b and c.

Calakmul Stela 89 image from <[http://mayaruins.com/calakmul/ruppert-denison-stela51-](http://mayaruins.com/calakmul/ruppert-denison-stela51-89.html)

[89.html](http://mayaruins.com/calakmul/ruppert-denison-stela51-89.html)>. Line drawing courtesy Simon Martin, 2005.

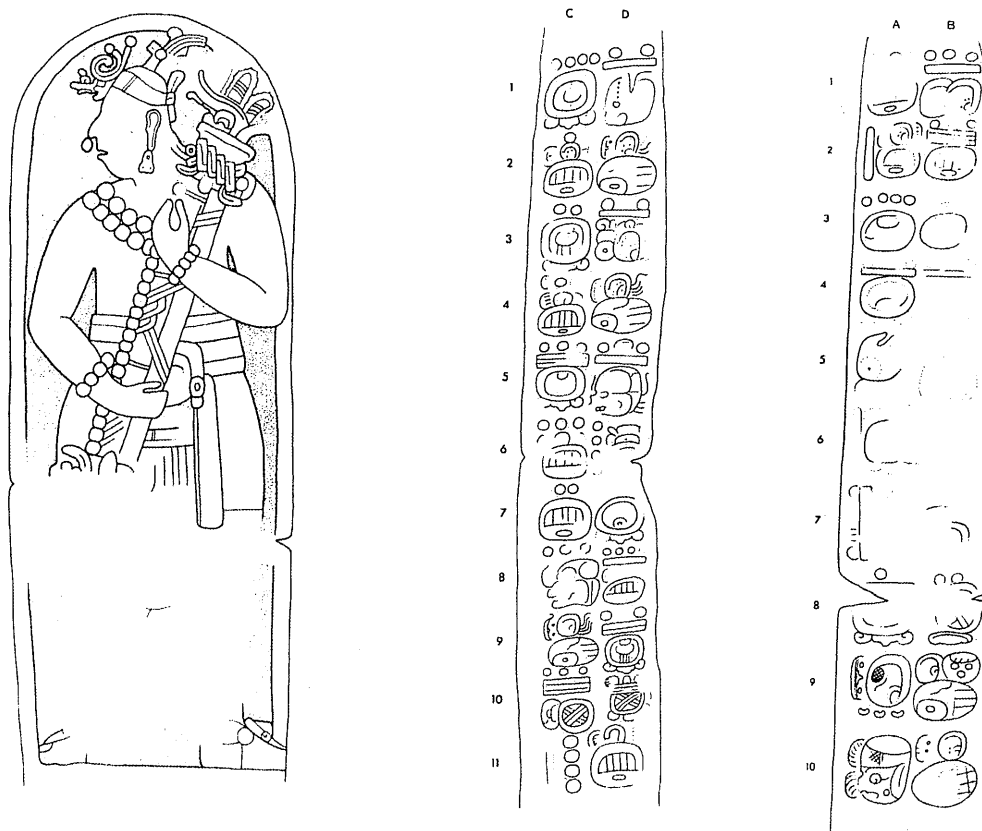


Figure 58. Naranjo Stela 25 front, left, and right sides, respectively.

Drawing after Graham and Von Euw (1975:69-70).

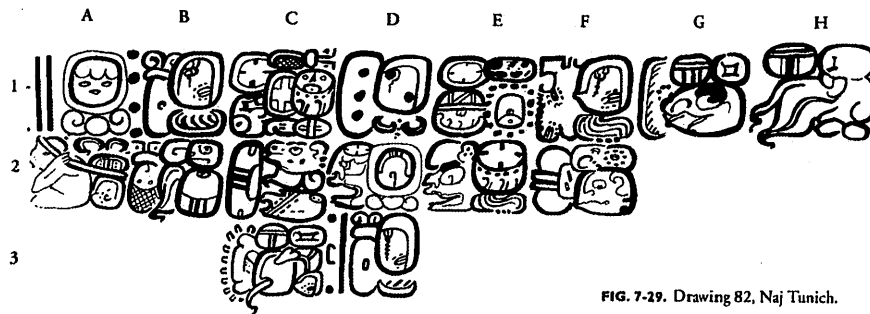


FIG. 7-29. Drawing 82, Naj Tunich.

Figure 59. Drawing 82, Naj Tunich.

Drawing 82, Naj Tunich from *IMAGES FROM THE UNDERWORLD: NAJ TUNICH AND THE TRADITION OF MAYA CAVE PAINTING* BY Andrea J. Stone, University of Texas Press, Copyright © 1995.

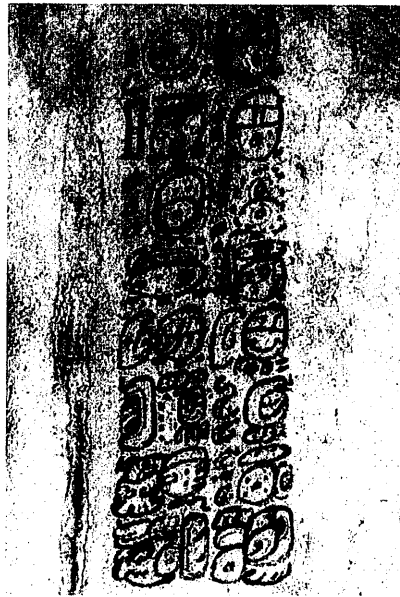


Figure 60. Drawing 52, Naj Tunich.

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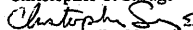
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3. SD7207 Panel showing rulers atop palanquins or litters.
4. SD7250 L-shaped glyph panel.
5. SD7259 L-shaped panel with text recording birth of Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ak...of Calakmul.
6. SD138 Text of Hieroglyphic Stairs, House C, Palace, Palenque.
7. SD2040 Carved Bone from Burial 116 showing captive from site of Hail, Tikal.
8. SD152 East panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque.
9. SD1001 Stela A, South side, Copán.

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