

Troubled Times: The Archaeology and Iconography of the Terminal Classic Southern Lowland Maya

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Archaeological data from the site of Seibal have been interpreted to indicate two sequent incursions into the Southern Lowland Maya area at the end of the Late Classic era (Graham 1973; Sabloff and Willey 1967; Sabloff 1973; Adams 1971, 1973). Both of these incursions have been viewed as emanating, either directly or indirectly, from the western Gulf Coast. Recent evidence from the eastern Lowlands has suggested that there was also at least one incursion into the southern heartland from the eastern littoral (Chase and Chase 1982; D. Chase 1982). This eastern incursion has been linked to events in the northern Yucatan and may have ultimately penetrated as far inland as the Peten lakes district (A. Chase 1985). The exact relationship, however, between the western and eastern incursions has not been defined.

Simulation studies of the Classic Maya collapse using mathematical models and trend surface analysis (Hamblin and Pitcher 1980; Lowe 1982; Bove 1981) have suggested that the Terminal Classic Period in the Southern Lowlands is much more complex than has been previously thought. The single vector, west to east, movement postulated by Sabloff and Willey (1967), Thompson (1970a), and Adams (1971) is no longer tenable. While this original invasion argument -- the Usumacinta penetration -- was largely based on archaeological data gathered from Altar de Sacrificios and Seibal, it was supported by what appeared to have been the cessation of the stela cult in the western part of the Maya realm, in contrast to its persistence in the eastern part of the Southern Lowlands. Hamblin and Pitcher used this suggested pattern of stela cessation and single direction, foreign invasion theory in their modeled study; they (1980:261) concluded that "the temporal-geographical pattern in the cessation data do not support the invasion hypothesis, at least as it has been proposed." An alternative interpretation is proposed here to explain this west-east stela cessation phenomenon; in turn, this interpretation is linked to what has been termed the "pincer movement" involved in the Classic Maya collapse (Chase and Chase 1982:610).

While stela erection is clearly one of the prime indicators of Classic Maya civilization, patterns that may be

seen among the monuments and their placement may be better explained with a review of the extant iconography and archaeology than with less detailed applications of cultural geography. While it is true that the stela cult disappears from the western Maya area first, it should also be noted that the stela cult was inoperative in the eastern Maya coastline of Belize before the advent of the Terminal Classic Period. What is in fact striking is that the Maya stela cult persisted the longest in the hinterland at sites which were not on or immediately north of the major riverine systems. When the late stelae in the eastern heartland of the Maya area are then conjoined with what is known about the archaeology, interpretations of the decline of the western stela cult may be refined.

The archaeological and iconographic data indicate that the Southern Maya Lowlands were faced with two diverse, yet overlapping, incursions; these appear to have affected the different parts of Classic Maya civilization in varied ways. One of these incursions, the earliest, emanated from the western part of the Maya realm while the second, and later, one originated in the eastern littoral (Figure 1).

The Western Intrusion

As early as 9.16.0.0 the Usumacinta Valley was the recipient of foreign influences that probably emanated from the western or Puuc part of the Yucatan Peninsula; this is specifically evident at the sites of Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan (Thompson 1970a:40). It was the introduction of new ideas with these foreign influences that most likely led to a de-emphasis of the stela cult. The intrusive elements that were introduced into the Usumacinta area coagulated at Seibal by around 9.19.0.0; at this time, architecture mimicked that of the Puuc (see Smith 1982) and the ceramic assemblage at the site was largely replaced with fine paste pottery (Sabloff 1975; Sabloff et al. 1982). The foreign elements at this upper Usumacinta site were so noticeable, in fact, that Sabloff and Willey (1967; see also Binford 1968) argued for a direct foreign takeover of this site. Unlike other sites in this southern drainage area, however, the stela cult appeared to con-

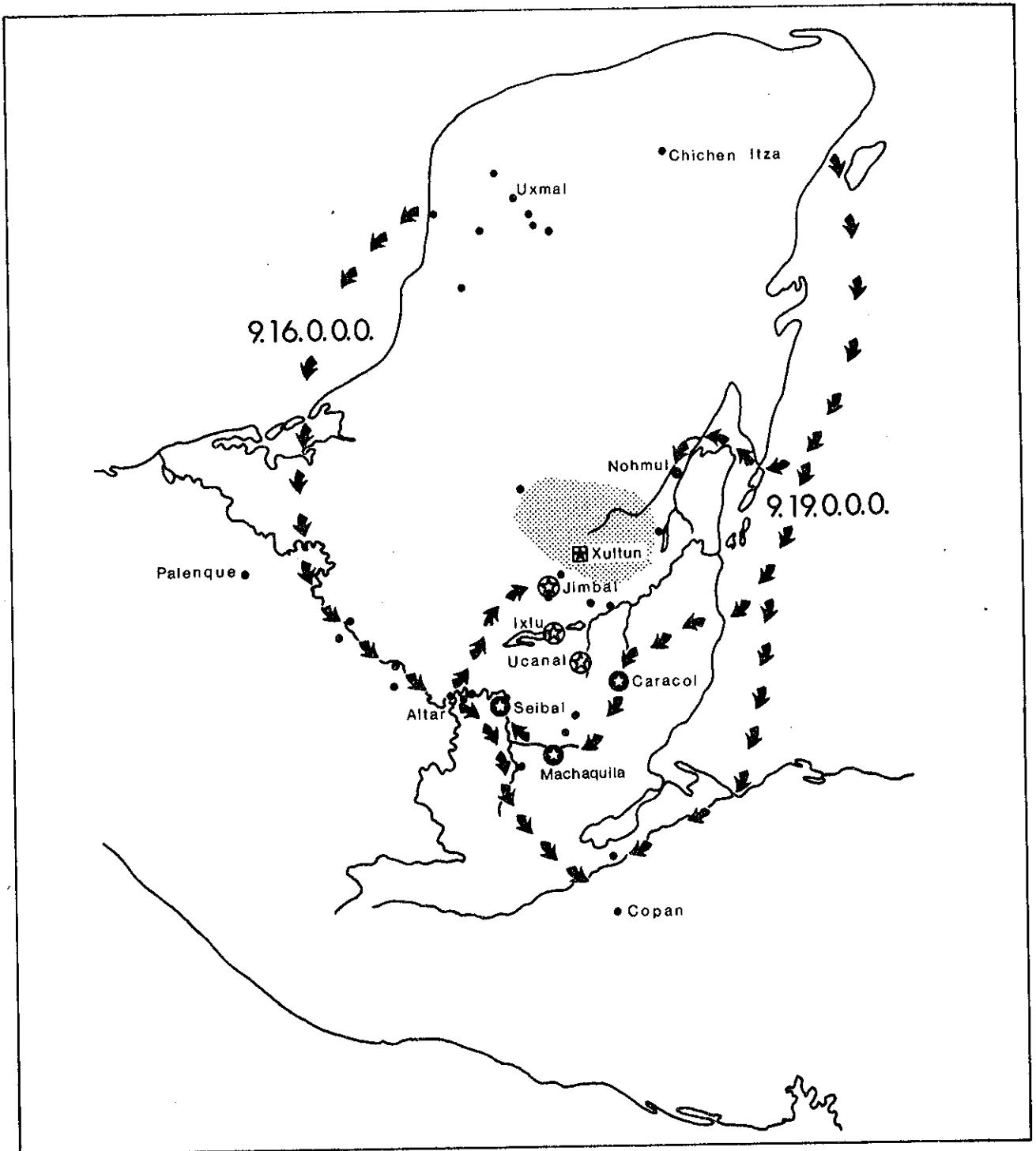


Fig. 1 Map of the Maya Lowlands illustrating sites discussed in the text and the postulated East and West Routes of Yucatec influence. The stippled area around Xultun represents the area of the Southern Lowlands believed to be the least influenced by the Northern Lowlands. The Southern Lowland sites with the three Terminal Classic iconographic themes discussed in this paper are represented as follows:

- ☐★ - Jaguar Cub
- ★ - Sky Figure
- ★ - Alliance, Friendship, or Submission

tinue, perhaps indicative of the juncture of a foreign and local elite.

Other Peten sites also exhibited foreign elements following 9.17.0.0.0. Of the two extensively excavated sites in the Peten, Tikal and Uaxactun particularly reflect the disruption of previous patterns, but in distinct ways. Fine Paste ceramics (Pabellon Modeled) appear in a non-intrusive crypt burial at Uaxactun (A41) that may be dated prior to 10.0.0.0.0. Burial patterns also shift at Uaxactun at this time and the site appears to enter on a time of apparent prosperity, characterized by a construction spree (Smith 1950). At Tikal the 9.19.0.0.0 monument, Stela 24 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982), is the last to be erected for three katuns, marking the disruption of a period of copious stela erection. At approximately the same time, construction in Group G at Tikal resulted in the building of a group which was architecturally more typical of its northern neighbors. The outer facades of the structures in this group were decorated with pseudo-columns and the entire compound was entered through a serpent door, the only example known from the Southern Lowlands. This latter fact is significant as Proskouriakoff (1950:144) has correlated the presence of the serpent facade in the Rio Bec region of Yucatan and at Copan, far to the south, with the cessation of stela erection:

. . . it is striking that in both cases where it is known, stelae did not seem to play a major part in the ceremonial complex, a fact which suggests that it was connected with a different set of religious practices.

At Tikal, the serpent facade and columned outer walls were likely built at or shortly after 9.19.0.0.0. It would therefore appear that Proskouriakoff's correlation between the presence of this motif and stela cessation is also valid for Tikal. Carrying this linkage one step further, it may be suggested that a new religious system was introduced to the Southern Lowlands around 9.17.0.0.0, perhaps via the Usumacinta penetration, and adopted by the elite of several sites; this new system included the de-emphasis of the more traditional stela cult.

The Eastern Intrusion

While the western part of the Maya realm was engaged in changes in the elite system that may be attributed to the introduction of foreign ideas from western Yucatan, the eastern part of the Southern Lowlands was similarly affected by the eastern Yucatan. This is particularly evident in northern Belize at the site of Nohmul where several buildings, previously only noted from Chichen Itza, have been located (Chase and Chase 1982). The associated archaeology clearly demonstrates that these are Terminal Classic in date (D. Chase 1982). Ultimately, this eastern intrusion reached the central Peten (A. Chase 1985). The exact linkage between the eastern and western intrusions is not clear; they may have been completely contemporaneous with or slightly later in the eastern littoral. An important difference, however, may be seen between the two intrusions. Whereas the western intrusion appears to have been largely incongruous with the

pre-existing stela cult, the eastern intrusion was not, although such monuments were not in evidence at Nohmul. In fact, the eastern intrusion and its spread may be expressed in the extant iconography and may illuminate the cultural factors involved in the Classic Maya Collapse.

Iconographic Themes of the Collapse

Specific themes are introduced into the portrayals on stelae of the Terminal Classic Period in the eastern part of the Maya Lowlands; these themes are thought to be related to political events occurring during this time. While earlier foreign themes such as paneled stela (e.g., La Mar Stela 2 at 9.18.15.0.0) and possibly dancing (e.g., La Amelia Stela 1 at 9.19.0.0.0) appear during the Late Classic Period, three themes datable to the Terminal Classic can be specifically isolated. One of these is the theme of friendship, submission, or possibly alliance. While a theme of confrontation may be found on a slightly earlier time horizon in both the pottery (Pabellon Modeled Carved) and on stelae (Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, Ixkun, Motul de San Jose), the theme of submission, or alliance of a ruler to another individual, may be directly depicted on the stone monuments of three Terminal Classic sites – Caracol, Machaquila, Seibal – and secondarily at another – Ixlu. The dates which may be ascribed to the stelae illustrating this theme clearly demonstrate an east to west movement over time. A second theme is visible at only one site – Xultun. This theme consists of the uplifting of a small jaguar cub in the right hand of the ruler while the left arm cradles the manikin scepter. As Xultun appears to have weathered the collapse, this jaguar cub may have been the new symbol of power that helped it to do so. The third iconographic theme that is evident in the eastern part of the Peten consists of small figures in the sky above the portrayed individual. These "sky figures" may be reminiscent of those that occur in the earlier sacrifice scenes at Yaxchilan or, alternatively, a northern origin may be ascribed to them (Thompson 1970a:42).

Submission, Friendship, Alliance

Bonampak Sulptured Stone 1 (Greene 1967:52), dating to approximately 9.11.0.0.0, portrays the earliest recognized pose of submission or friendship, as represented by the placement of the right arm in a near horizontal position across an individual's chest. On the Bonampak carving, a figure manifesting the crossed arm is seated on a throne viewing three seated figures to his left. The nearest one offers him a manikin head. Based on the iconography of this scene, the crossed arm, as pictured here, is not a symbol of submission but one of friendship or politeness, for it is clear that the three lower figures are of a lesser status than the one on the throne.

Following the early Bonampak example, the crossed arm does not occur on any known Late Classic monument. When the arm across the chest theme does re-occur almost 150 years later at Caracol, however, it would appear that its meaning has shifted somewhat and may more closely approach alliance and/or submission.

Caracol

At Caracol, the theme is first explicitly portrayed on Altar 12 (Figure 2a) which may be dated to 9.19.10.0.0. At or after this time, it is depicted again on two portrait altars and one stela. Beetz and Satterthwaite (1981) have in fact noted that two individuals were represented on these monuments. While noting that the Caracol ruler is the one in the honored right position, they did not refer to or interpret the gesture of the ruler to the individual portrayed to the left, usually iconographically portrayed as though of equal status. This gesture of friendship, alliance, or submission by the Caracol ruler is pictured on all of the known final monuments from the site. It may also be linked with the appearance at the site of the unusual Stela 18 (Figure 7), which represents a large serpent with open mouth.

With the exception of Stela 10, the latest Caracol monuments occurred in Group B, some 350 m southeast of this Group. Stela 10 was located in Group A and is an all glyphic monument. It is dated to approximately 10.3.0.0.0 largely on comparative data; Beetz and Satterthwaite (1981:43) have correlated it with Uaxactun glyphic Stelae 10 (10.0.0.0.0) and 12 (10.3.0.0.0) and Jimbal glyphic Stela 2 (10.3.0.0.0). Stelae 8, 9, and 11 in Group A are stylistically dated to between 9.18.0.0.0 and 10.0.0.0.0. The dating of this entire group of monuments is open to revision given the poor preservation of the glyphic material. The presence of a purely glyphic Stela 4 at Ixtutz, probably dating to 9.17.10.0.0, would suggest that Caracol Stela 10 could be earlier than the 10.3.0.0.0 date assigned to it. Importantly, all of the figures presented on the Group A monuments are iconographically pure Maya in their poses; this is not true of the Group B monuments.

The monuments of Group B and the Stela 17/ Altar 10 (Figure 2c) combination from southeast of this group evince a sharp break from the preceding Classic Maya patterns. This is particularly evident in Stela 18, a portrait of a serpent head, and on Altar 13 and Altar 12, which contain scenes of friendship, alliance, or submission. The scene that was presented on Stela 19 is unknown. Similar scenes of friendship, alliance, or submission are again presented on both Stela 17 and Altar 10.

Group B consists of a large northern acropolis, eastern and southern structures with accompanying flanks; a ballcourt delimits the western side of the group. Stela 18 is set on axis to the eastern Structure B28 while Stela 19 is on axis to the southern Str. B5; Altars 12 and 13 are also associated with this southern building. While no date can be assigned to Stela 18, Stela 19 dates to 9.19.10.0.0 as does its associated Altar 12. Altar 13 either dates to 9.19.10.0.0 or to 10.0.0.0.0 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:113). Altar 12 (Figure 2a) presents a composition consisting of two individuals seated on god-head thrones facing each other. The right figure leans forward toward the left and has his right arm placed across his chest; the left figure holds something in his hands which are placed in front of him. It would appear that the right figure is

Caracol's ruler Lord Quincunx while the left figure (PCY) is one of two provisional characters identified by Beetz and Satterthwaite (1981:124-130). Altar 13 (Figure 2b) presents a similar scene, except in this case the protagonists are standing. Lord Quincunx, portrayed on the right, holds his left arm across his chest while the left figure (probably PCY), this time clearly wearing a Yucatec style headdress, presents an elaborate fan and prisoner to the Caracol ruler.

The final portrait stela and altar pair at Caracol, Stela 17 and Altar 10 (Figure 2c), may be securely dated to 10.1.0.0.0. The exact placement of these monuments relative to structures is not known. These two monuments repeat the iconography first seen on Altars 12 and 13 in Group B; the individuals involved, however, are different. Both Altar 10 and Stela 17 portray a new Caracol ruler, Lord Storm-water Maize, who may have acceded to the throne at 10.0.19.6.14 (ibid.:128). On both monuments, Lord Storm-water Maize carries his right arm across his chest and faces an unidentified individual to the left.

Based on the iconography of the late monuments at Caracol, it may be hypothesized that the last two Caracol rulers entered into some sort of alliance with individuals foreign to the site. The style of headdress on the left figure suggests that he may have come from somewhere to the north.

Machaquila

The site of Machaquila was first mapped and described in detail by Ian Graham (1967), who also graphically illustrated the corpus of monuments from the site. The Machaquila stelae and altars are located in the easternmost plaza of the site core. The monuments are physically grouped in four clusters in front of four structures in the northeast portion of the site. Each cluster appears to represent the monuments of a single ruler, and presumably each of the associated structures houses the tomb of that ruler. The earliest cluster of monuments (Stelae 14, 15, and 16) is located in front of the eastern Str. 16; it is suspected that the monuments all date prior to 9.14.0.0.0 with the earliest one being Stela 16. The next cluster of monuments (Stelae 10, 11, 12, and 13) date from 9.14.0.0.0 to 9.16.10.0.0 and are located in front of the eastern Str. 17 which is immediately north of Str. 16. The third cluster of monuments (Stelae 1, 2, 3, and 4) are set in front of the northern Str. 20 and date from ca. 9.18.0.0.0 to 9.19.10.0.0; these stelae commemorate the reign of "Ah-ho Kin-God Faggots-Kan" (Graham 1967:98). The final grouping of stelae commemorate the reign of "One Fish-in-the-hand, Captor of Double Chuens." The five stelae in this group are set south of Str. 19 which is immediately east of Str. 20; they range in date from 9.19.15.0.0 to 10.0.10.0.0, at which time the record for Machaquila ceases.

The stela series associated with One Fish-in-the-Hand is extremely interesting. The suspected earliest monument (Stela 9) is not carved. The two monuments erected at 9.19.15.0.0 (Stela 8; Figure 3d) and 10.0.0.0.0 (Stela

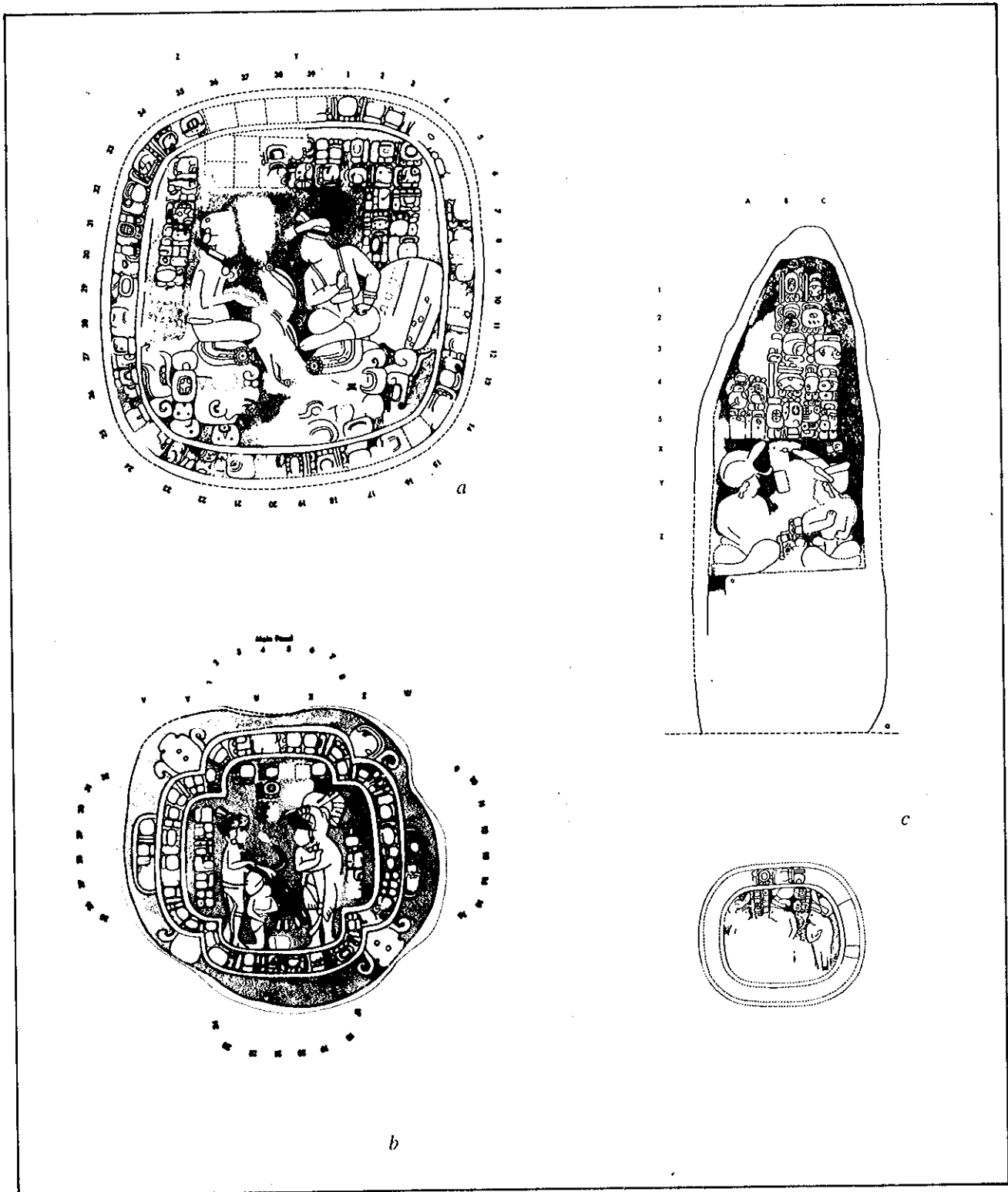


Fig. 2 Monuments of Caracol illustrating the theme of Alliance, Friendship, or Submission (from Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981): (a) Altar 12 – 9.19.10.0.0; (b) Altar 13 – 9.19.10.0.0 or 10.0.0.0.0; (c) Stela 17 / Altar 10 – 10.1.0.0.0.

7; Figure 3c) present a Maya figure with a typical headdress holding a manikin scepter in his right hand. Sometime following 10.0.0.0, however, the guise in which the same individual is presented on his stelae changes. Stela 6 (Figure 3b), commemorating the date 10.0.5.16.0, presents One Fish-in-the-Hand wearing a jaguar headdress, with his right hand across his chest in the gesture of friendship, alliance, or submission. He holds no manikin scepter as a symbol of authority, and for the first time a nose bar is prominently displayed. The foreign elements are similarly seen on Stela 5 (Figure 3a), dated to 10.0.10.17.5. On this monument, One Fish-in-the-Hand's headdress resembles a bird's head and he holds a fan in his right hand, rather than the earlier manikin scepter; the nose bar is also present.

The drastic changes that are evident between the paired sets of carved monuments attributable to One Fish-in-the-Hand are suggestive of the kind of changes found at Caracol. It would appear that the latest ruler of Machaquila underwent a cultural transformation and that this is illustrated on his last two stelae. The gesture on Stela 6, in combination with other aspects of the iconography, indicates the likelihood that there was a strong relationship, perhaps an alliance with, or possibly submission to, foreign individuals who greatly influenced the dress and symbols of authority used by One Fish-in-the-Hand. An intriguing link may be made between events at Machaquila and Motul de San Jose, north of Lake Peten. In a stela erected there, portraying two dancing individuals, One Fish-in-the-Hand's name figures prominently in the text describing the associated event. As the date 10.0.0.0.0, ascribed to this stela by Morley, is contemporaneous with the dates of the Machaquila ruler, it is quite possible that One Fish-in-the-Hand's transformation may have been related to an event recorded at Motul de San Jose.

Seibal

The final, and perhaps most dramatic, example of the probable alliance and/or submission of a Maya ruler occurs at Seibal itself on Stela 17 (Figure 4). Graham (1973) dates this monument to after 10.3.0.0.0, and argues that it presents the meeting of two Maya groups.

The late monuments of Seibal have long been noted as being replete with foreign elements (Proskouriakoff 1950). Graham (1973) postulated that two different groups of people are represented on the stelae at this site. The majority of the Seibal stelae are set up either in the Central or South Plaza of Group A (see Smith 1982:4, 8). The central plaza has an associated ballcourt on its western side, much like Caracol Plaza B. Two post-10.3.0.0.0 monuments (Stela 18 and 22) are associated with Str. A-20, located immediately south of the ballcourt; Stela 18 portrays a seated figure with two atlats. The only pre-10.0.0.0.0 monuments in Group A are located in front of Str. A-10, directly across the plaza from Str. A-20. These monuments consist of three, possibly reset, panels associated with the stairway of Str. A-10 and dating from between 9.17.0.0.0 to 9.18.10.0.0; the

two panels flanking the stairway illustrate ballplayers.

Following these Late Classic ballplayer panels, a hiatus in monument erection occurred at Seibal, for the next datable monuments are the five (Stelae 8, 9, 10, 11, and 21) associated with Str. A-3, all of which date to 10.1.0.0.0. These five monuments illustrate the same ruler in typical Maya poses; Stela 21 is the only monument showing him holding a manikin scepter; Stela 10 portrays him with a nose bar. Only two other stelae in the South Plaza of Group A present the more typical Maya single figure portraits: Stela 1, dating to 10.2.0.0.0 and located in the northern part of the South Plaza; and Stela 20, dating to 10.3.0.0.0, and located directly in front of the Str. A-24 substructure. If the same individual is involved in all of these portraits, it is obvious that he is continuing the Maya practice of marking katuns.

All of the other extant carved stelae in the South Plaza of Group A contain foreign elements. Stelae 2 and 3 were set directly in front of the eastern Str. A6. Stela 2 presents a full face view of a masked figure and is dated to approximately 10.2.0.0.0 (Greene et al. 1972:218); Stela 3 is a paneled portrayal of three scenes and is similarly dated to approximately 10.2.0.0.0. This latter stela is especially reminiscent of Yucatec stela patterns in its three vertical scenes; the imagery presented in the central panel was also visible on the stucco panel of Str. A-3, dated to 10.0.0.0.0 (see Smith 1982:16, 55). Stela 19, portraying a figure wearing an Ehecattl mask and dated to ca. 10.2.0.0.0, was set up in front of the platform bearing the eastern Str. A5. Stela 13, also dated to approximately 10.2.0.0.0, was located in front of Str. A-24; the snake belt this figure wears also has Yucatec counterparts (see especially Stelae 1 and 7 at Itzimte; Ew 1977:9, 19).

Stela 17 (Figure 4), located directly in front of Str. A24 on the summit of its substructured platform, is possibly the latest monument in the South Plaza of Group A. It is dated to approximately 10.3.0.0.0, and portrays a Maya-like figure and a foreign figure. The Maya-like figure is located on the right side of the stela and faces the foreign figure. His left hand holds a manikin scepter "while his right hand and arm are raised in the traditional gesture of friendship or submission" (Greene et al. 1972:240). This monument presents the latest use of this theme in the Southern Lowlands.

The Jaguar Cub

Not all parts of the Southern Lowlands were subjected to foreign takeover or direct influence. Archaeologically, this can be seen at Lamanai (Pendegast 1981) for the site actually flourishes and survives the Maya collapse which is occurring further to its southwest.

Iconographically, it would appear that Xultun remained independent of foreign influences through its later history. In fact, it appears that another symbol of authority may have been developed in order to combat such forces. On the Late and Terminal Classic Xultun stelae, the manikin scepter, so important in all Late Classic Period power iconography, and usually held in front of the indi-

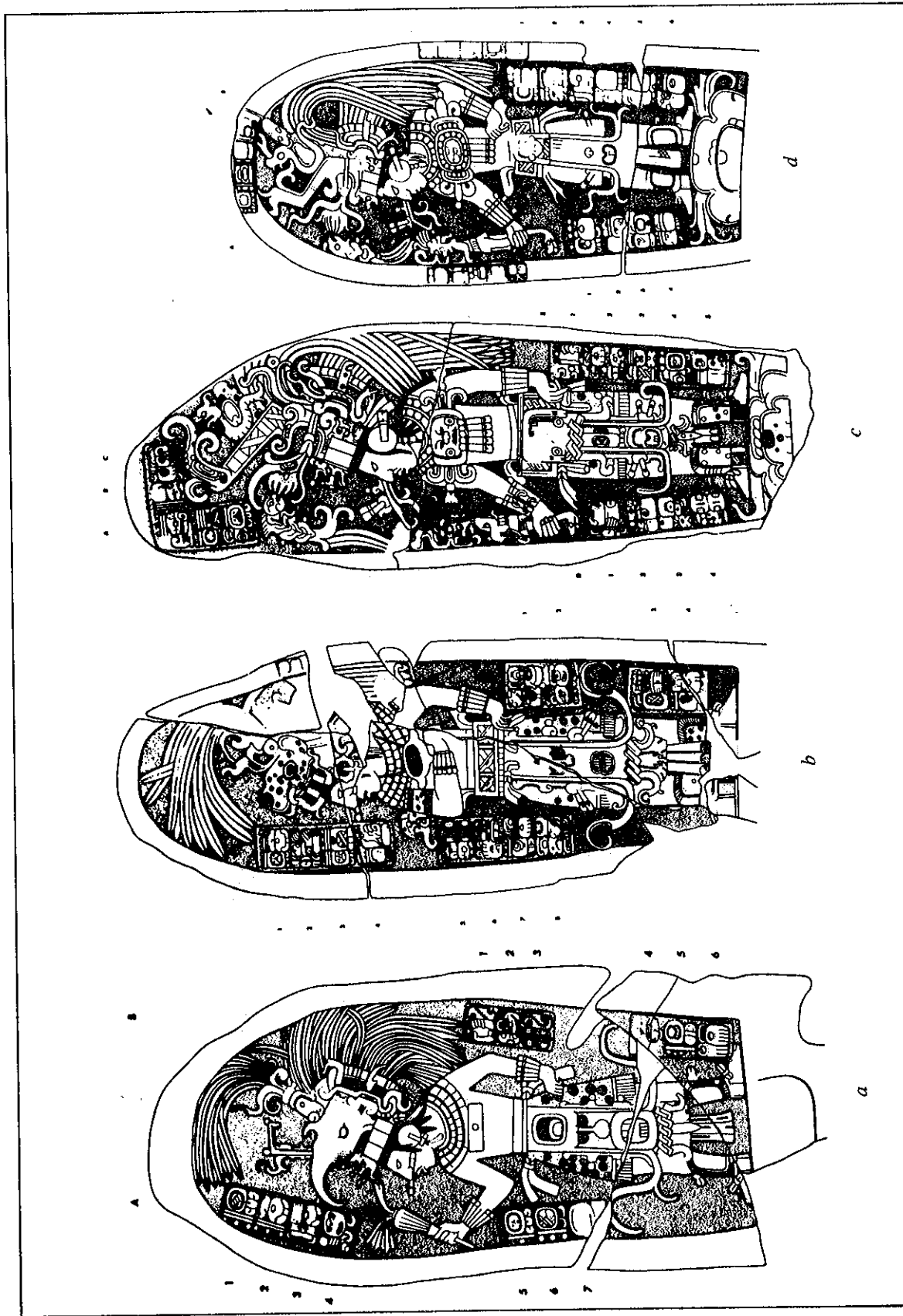


Fig. 3 Monuments of Machaquila Ruler One Fish-in-the-hand (from Graham 1967):
 (a) Stela 5 - 10.0.10.17.5; (b) Stela 6 - 10.0.5.16.0;
 (c) Stela 7 - 10.0.0.0.0; (d) Stela 8 - 9.19.15.0.0.



Fig. 4 Seibal Stela 17 (after 10.3.0.0.0) illustrating the theme of submission, friendship, or alliance between a Maya and a non-Maya individual (from Greene et al. 1972).

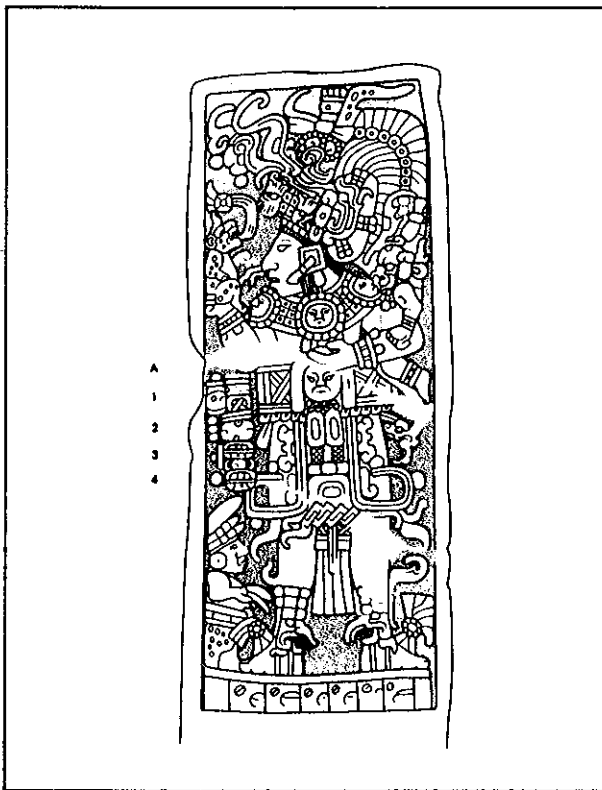


Fig. 5 Xultun Stela 10 (10.3.0.0.0) showing the Maya lord holding a jaguar cub in his right hand (from Euw 1978).

vidual, is held in the crook of the left arm. The right arm of the ruler is upraised and usually holds a baby jaguar (Figure 5). This symbolism does not appear at any other Southern Lowland site of this time. As the typical Maya costume elements continue, it may be proffered that this was Xultun's way of remaining exterior and independent of the foreign forces so important in the land to the south. Freidel (1985) would interpret these monuments at Xultun as a rare "manikin portrayal of the ancestral hero twins."

Xultun

The site of Xultun is located in the northeast Peten. It was first visited by Morley (1937-38, I:383-422) as part of the Carnegie Institution's stela recording project and was subsequently visited and mapped by Euw (1978). At least nine (Stelae 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 16, 19) and possibly twelve (Stelae 8, 15, 17) stelae at Xultun present the upheld jaguar in the right hand. This theme ranges in date from 9.19.10.0.0 (Stela 9) until the cessation of stela erection at the site (Stela 10). Interestingly, the latest stela at Xultun (Stela 10; Figure 5) also evinces a decorative glyph band, as found on Fine Orange pottery (Proskouriakoff 1950:151).

Xultun appears to have been extensively occupied during the Terminal Classic Period, for both of the main sectors of the site, Group A and Group B, have stelae which present the jaguar theme. This dispersed distribution of Terminal Classic monuments contrasts with sites further south.

The jaguar cub theme of Xultun is not duplicated at any other site, even though sites such as Xunantunich continue to erect iconographically pure Maya monuments through 10.1.0.0.0. The existence of this theme on the Xultun monuments from the end of Cycle 9 through 10.3.0.0.0 is also unusual, for it suggests that Xultun did not experience the stela hiatus found at most other sites that persisted until the onset of the Postclassic Period. A jaguar motif, however, was not limited to Xultun. It is found at La Amelia Stela 1 (9.19.0.0.0) in the position usually occupied by a bound prisoner, and it is interesting to note the use of a jaguar altar at Seibal in front of the 10.3.0.0.0 stela portraying alliance or submission of the Maya-style ruler. The earlier Machaquila stela, portraying alliance or submission, also depicts the site's ruler garbed in a jaguar headdress. Xultun's use of the symbol was not fortuitous for, based on other occurrences of jaguar symbolism, the theme obviously implied great meaning to the independent Maya groups of the Terminal Classic Period. Following 10.3.0.0.0, however, no other monuments are erected in the northern Peten. Perhaps the jaguar has either finally been subdued or has outlasted the serpent.

Sky Figures

One final theme appears to have been introduced into the iconography of the Southern Lowlands during the Terminal Classic Period. This theme consists of figures in the sky, here referred to as "sky figures." In overall

layout, the figures are placed similarly to those evident on Stela 2 at Uxmal (Proskouriakoff 1950:150) and to "countless sculptures . . . at Chichen Itza, in which a . . . deity peers down from a sun disk" (Thompson 1970a:42; see also Freidel 1985). Stelae at the sites of Ucanal, Ixlu, and Jimbal present this theme in its fullest (Figure 6). A modified version of the theme may be present at Naranjo, Flores, and Seibal. All of the stelae which have sky figures in their upper registers date to Cycle 10. The significance of the sky figures is not known, but it is possible that they are indicative of a syncretic Maya cult revival of the old sky gods. They may further presage the diving gods so common in the later Postclassic Period.

Ixlu

Two monuments at Ixlu present sky figures. Both were located in front of a large eastern structure. The earliest one, Stela 1 (Figure 6a), dates to 10.0.0.0.0 and presents four figures bounded by a dotted scroll in the sky above the protagonist. The Maya lord is portrayed in the scattering pose. Behind him is a smaller, seated, bearded figure with his right hand across his chest. From the capped headdress and beard that he wears, it appears that this minor figure is foreign and is expressing the submission or alliance theme. Stela 2 (Figure 6c) at Ixlu, dated to 10.2.10.0.0, portrays four separate sky figures above a characteristic Maya lord who holds a manikin scepter.

Jimbal

Stela 1 (Figure 6d) at Jimbal, dating to 10.2.10.0.0, portrays a single Maya individual with a nose bar who holds a manikin scepter. Two glyphically named figures occur in the sky above this individual. The only other stela at Jimbal, Stela 2, presents an entirely glyphic text and dates to 10.3.0.0.0. Squared "Mexican" glyphs are clearly evident in both texts.

Ucanal

A single monument north of Str. A-26 at Ucanal manifests a sky figure (Graham 1980:152-153, 159). Ucanal Stela 4 (Figure 6b) may be dated to 10.1.0.0.0. It presents two Maya figures facing each other; each holds a manikin scepter although the lord on the left is clearly the more important of the two. Square cartouches are used in the accompanying glyphic texts, and the main protagonist clearly has a Mexican name. A single large sky figure, entwined in a dotted scroll and carrying an atlatl, is located above the two lords. Proskouriakoff (1950:150) has noted potential Yucatec affinities for the sky figure; Thompson (1970a:42) has associated it with Chichen-Itza. Thompson (1970a:4, 42) has further argued, largely on the basis of this single monument, that Ucanal was one of two early Putun outposts (the other being Seibal) associated with the Maya collapse. The iconography of Ucanal Stela 4, however, suggests that the site is more likely responding to a different set of events and does not encounter the same influences found at Seibal.

Naranjo, Flores, and Seibal

Paneled monuments which occur at Naranjo, Flores,

and Seibal may be indirectly related to the sky figures. Naranjo Stela 9, possibly the latest monument at that site, presents a paneled scene (Proskouriakoff 1950:151). Flores Stela 1, dating to 10.2.0.0.0, (Greene et al. 1972:360) is also paneled in design and presents a seated figure in the jaws of an upturned serpent (Proskouriakoff 1950:152) and a lower figure. It is perhaps significant that the upper figure may have its right hand across its chest. A full figure diving god is also portrayed on a stela from Flores (I. Graham drawing; A. Chase 1985). At Seibal, the late Stela 18 may be most similar to Flores Stela 1. Seibal Stela 3, with its three registers, may present the Mexican equivalent of the Maya sky figures in its upper register, although Graham (1973:215) would disagree.

Terminal Classic Archaeology and Iconography:

Implications

The iconography and archaeology of the Terminal Classic Period Southern Lowlands suggests that there were two major, and possibly other secondary, incursions into the Peten (see Figure 1). The first of these incursions occurred in the west and becomes evident in the iconography at about 9.17.0.0.0. This original incursion likely emanated from western Yucatan and brought with it Fine Orange ceramics, possibly serpent door architecture, an associated stress on architectural elaboration, and a strong de-emphasis of the stela cult. Shortly after 9.19.0.0.0, a second intrusion associated with Chichen-Itza was made along the eastern littoral. As this second intrusion did not appear to have made an impact on the independent Maya of the Rio Hondo drainage (as represented by Lamanai), it is likely that it entered the Peten through a more southern route, possibly the Belize River drainage. This second intrusion was likely responsible for a revival of the stela cult in the Peten at the sites of Uaxactun, Tikal, and Seibal as well as for the sky figures in evidence at Ixlu, Jimbal, and Ucanal. Sometime after 10.3.0.0.0, other groups of people ushered the Peten into its Postclassic Period.

This reconstruction of the Maya collapse differs from the previously proposed double intrusion from the west (see Adams 1971, 1973; Sabloff 1973). Proskouriakoff (1950:164) noted the first hint of exotic influence in the Peten as being as early as 9.17.10.0.0, and also correlated the appearance of serpent-mouth doors and architectural elaboration at Copan (specifically Strs. 11 and 22) with the cessation of stela erection at that site at approximately 9.16.10.0.0. Her (1950:171) "inescapable conclusion that some contact, however tenuous, must have existed between the Toltec and the Classic people in the last phases of the latter's history" also anticipated the Nohmul data from northern Belize which "indicates that Chichen-Itza was contemporaneous with and directly involved in the Southern Lowland collapse" (Chase and Chase 1982:609).

At the time that Proskouriakoff (1950) wrote her tome on Maya monuments, however, neither Seibal (Willey et al. 1975) nor Tikal (W. Coe 1967) had been excavated.

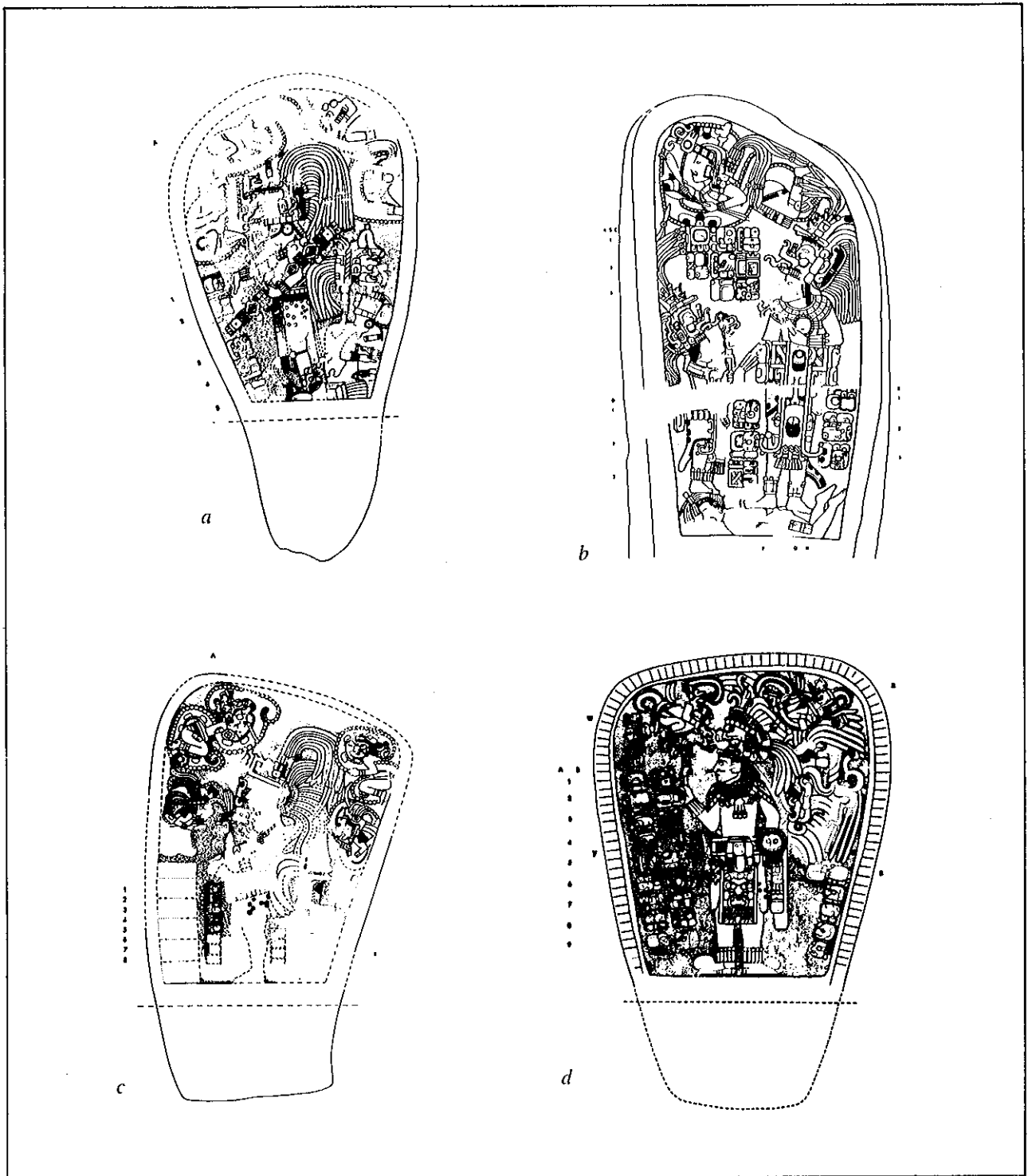


Fig. 6 Stelae from the Southern Lowlands with Sky Figures in their upper registers:
 (a) Ixlu Stela 1 – 10.0.0.0.0 (from Jones and Satterthwaite 1982); (b) Ucanal Stela 4 – 10.1.0.0.0 (from Graham 1980); (c) Ixlu Stela 2 – 10.2.10.0.0 (from Jones and Satterthwaite 1982); (d) Jimbal Stela 1 – 10.2.10.0.0 (from Jones and Satterthwaite 1982).

Thus, she was able to masterfully point out the iconographic significances within the sculptures, but lacked the archaeological information to fully interpret their meaning. Thompson (1970a) attempted a synthesis of both the iconography and archaeology and suggested a single Putun invasion from the west, but as Adams (1973:156) has pointed out, "Thompson ignored archaeological data from Altar de Sacrificios and Seibal that directly contradict a crucial element of his theory." While I do not wish to discuss the differences between the Altar de Sacrificios and Seibal sequences here, it should be noted that Adams (1973) has demonstrated that there is comparatively much less Fine Orange material at Seibal than at Altar. When this fact is combined with the knowledge that Seibal itself has a stela hiatus from 9.18.10.0.0 until 10.1.0.0.0, and that the later stelae present figures which are reminiscent of Chichen-Itza (Proskouriakoff 1950:171; Thompson 1970a:41), it may be proposed that Seibal, rather than being a late anomaly in the Southern Lowlands, is consistent with other late trends which may have had their origin in the second eastern intrusion.

The first intrusion, which entered the Maya Lowlands via the Usumacinta drainage, began some time after 9.16.0.0.0 and affected much of the Southern Lowlands between 9.17.0.0.0 and 10.0.0.0.0. Proskouriakoff (1964:196-199) has argued that Yaxchilan was in fact under the control of non-Maya groups by 9.19.0.0.0. A possible avenue for the reception of these influences was available in this area by 9.11.0.0.0, for Proskouriakoff (1950:156) has pointed to a tie between Piedras Negras and Jaina at this date. The Yucatec style of dating also first occurs in the Usumacinta area, suggesting that this west coast tie was maintained throughout the Late Classic Period. Thus, it is not surprising that there was a readiness for western Yucatec ideas in the Southern Lowlands.

Whether or not the first intrusion, which may be placed iconographically as occurring about 9.17.0.0.0, was warlike or peaceful cannot be ascertained. Its direct effect, however, was to cause the cessation of stela erection in the southwestern Lowlands and at many sites in the southern Peten. Based on Seibal (Str. A3; Smith 1982) and Tikal (Group G), it was also associated with architectural elaboration. Similar influences were also at work at Copan and Quirigua (Proskouriakoff 1950:143-145). Elaborate architecture was constructed at both southern boundary sites following the cessation of the stela cult and, at least for the latest Quirigua stelae, "... some contact with another highly developed contemporary style is strongly indicated . . .," probably Yucatec (Proskouriakoff 1950:140, 144). Thus, it may be postulated that similar western Yucatec influences were reaching both the Motagua drainage and the Usumacinta drainage at the same time.

In the Peten, these influences traveled rapidly, for they are evident on Naranjo Stela 19 by 9.17.0.0.0: "Its style suggests influences from the Usumacinta area or possibly even from Yucatan" (Proskouriakoff 1950:140). Follow-

ing Proskouriakoff (1950), the final Late Classic monuments at most sites in the southern Peten – Itzimte Stela 3 (9.16.0.0.0), El Caribe Stelae 1 and 2 (9.17. 10.0.0), Ixkun Stela 5 (9.18.10.0.0), Cancuen Stela 2 (9.18.10.0.0), Seibal Stela 5 (9.18.10.0.0), La Mar Stela 2 (9.18.15.0.0), and La Amelia Stela 1 (9.19.0.0.0) – manifest western Yucatec influences. It is significant to note, however, that nowhere are these Yucatec influences related to Chichen-Itza; all of them are related to the western part of Yucatan.

This initial western intrusion resulted either in the cessation of stela erection or in a stela hiatus at the sites that it influenced. In the Usumacinta, no Cycle 10 monuments were raised. In the Pasion, Altar erects one small monument in 10.1.0.0.0 after halting stela erection in 9.17.0.0.0 (Graham 1973:209). At Seibal, following the 9.18.10.0.0 ball player monument, no stelae are erected until 10.1.0.0.0 although the elaborate frieze of Str. A-3 records a 10.0.0.0.0 date (Smith 1982). It is significant that these new stelae at Seibal are seen not as reflective of a western Yucatec style, but rather of an eastern Chichen-Itza style (Proskouriakoff 1950:171, cites Stelae 8 and 9; Thompson 1970:41, cites Stelae 1, 6, 10, 11, and 14). Thus, Seibal's dramatic re-entry into monument erection at 10.1.0.0.0 and Graham's (1973) Facies A style are likely due, either directly or indirectly, to the second eastern intrusion.

The stela hiatus evident in the southern part of the Peten is also manifest at Tikal, where no monuments are erected between 9.19.0.0.0 (Stela 24) and 10.2.0.0.0 (Stela 11), and at Uaxactun where no monuments were erected between 10.0.0.0.0 (Stela 10) and 10.3.0.0.0 (Stela 12). Interestingly, the final Tikal monument evinces "the twisted-rope border, which is frequently used in the Puuc" (Proskouriakoff 1950:161). The monuments of Jimbal also evince the twisted rope border. Northeast of these sites, Xultun with its continuous, largely unaffected, stela sequence and jaguar cub theme probably represents the limit of the northern expansion of the first intrusion; the site was also seemingly unaffected by the second.

The second intrusion came from the east and is reflective of Chichen-Itza inspired events based both on iconography and architecture. The site of Nohmul has produced a Chichen-Itza inspired architectural complex which may be cross-dated to the Terminal Classic Period (D. Chase 1982, Chase and Chase 1982). Based on the iconography which appears in the eastern part of the Southern Lowlands following 9.19.10.0.0, the recovered archaeology from Nohmul may be viewed as contemporaneous with Seibal, the Puuc centers, and Toltec Chichen-Itza. Whereas Thompson (1970:44) argued that the first western invaders "brought with them no cult of Kukulcan in the form of ubiquitous feathered serpents," Caracol Stela 18 (Figure 7) clearly presents just such a serpent. Whereas Thompson further linked Ucanal Stela 4 with the first intrusion, its Chichen-Itza related iconography (specifically its sky figure) clearly relates it to the second, east-

ern, intrusion. This second intrusion not only replaced the western elements introduced earlier in the southern Peten, but was also felt as far south as Quirigua where a Chichen-related chacmool was found (Sharer 1985).

Summary

The transition from the Classic to Postclassic Periods in the Southern Lowlands was truly a troubled time. From the Late Classic Period until the Postclassic Period, the Southern Lowlands were affected by political events occurring far to their north. An examination of the archaeology and iconography of this period has allowed for the identification of two different, but overlapping, intrusions. The first occurred along the southwestern fringe of the Peten after 9.16.0.0.0 and resulted in the introduction of traits evident in western Yucatan; these included an emphasis on architectural sculptural elaboration, a cessation of the stela cult, and, perhaps incidentally, fine paste pottery. The second occurred along the eastern littoral of the Maya area after 9.19.0.0.0, and resulted in the re-establishment of the stela cult at several sites and the introduction of new themes, representing a synthesis of the styles of the Classic Maya and Chichen-Itza.

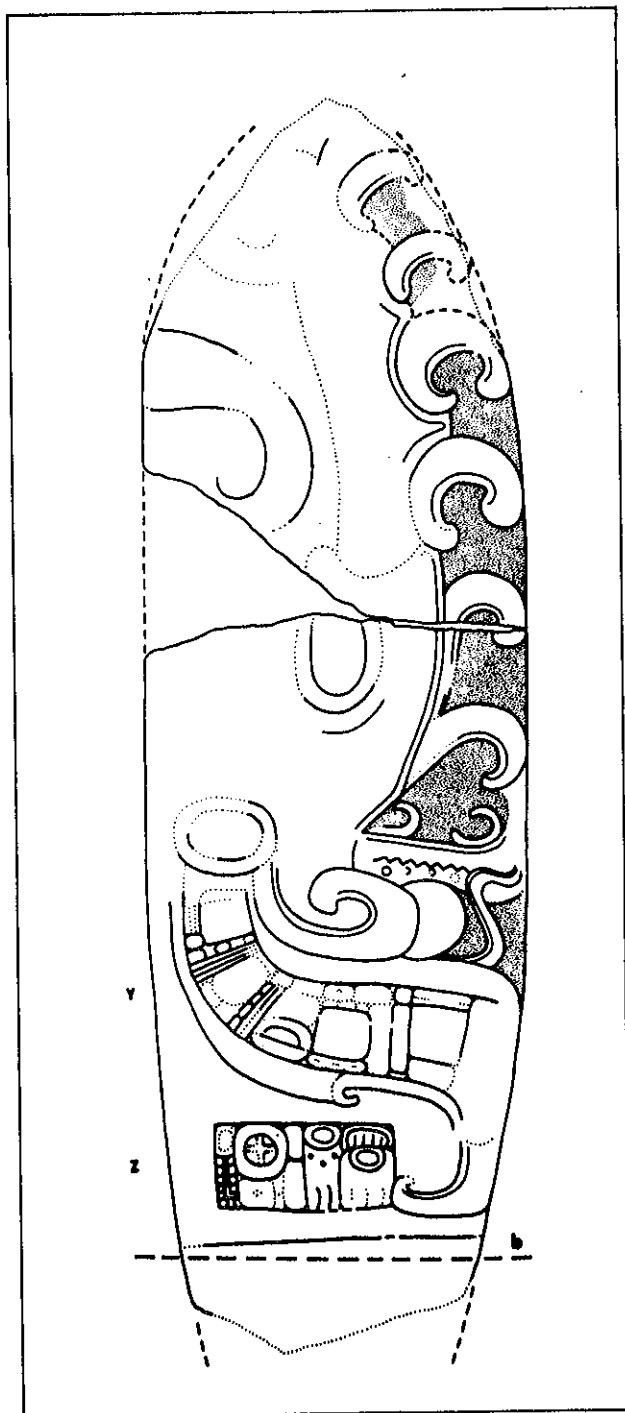


Fig. 7 Caracol Stela 18, probably dating between 9.19.0.0.0 and 10.1.0.0.0 illustrating a large, and possibly feathered, serpent (from Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981).

FIFTH PALENQUE ROUND TABLE, 1983

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