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**Understanding a Classic Maya Myth on Codex-style Pottery** 

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## Sacrificing the Jaguar Baby:

## **Understanding a Classic Maya Myth on Codex-style Pottery**

by

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#### Dissertation

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## **Dedication**

To Mary Heckler, John Lunsford, and Aaron Sherman with love and gratitude

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#### Abstract

#### **Sacrificing the Jaguar Baby:**

#### **Understanding a Classic Maya Myth on Codex-style Pottery**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

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The Jaguar Baby vessels belong to a large corpus of Late Classic Maya pictorial ceramics dubbed Codex-style pottery and originating from archaeological sites, such as El Mirador and Nakbe, in the north-central area of Peten, Guatemala, where they were made for a brief period shortly before and/or after the turn of the eighth century AD. Through strategic juxtapositions of images and words, the vessels convey the story of a rain god and a death spirit who, in the darkness between the sun's setting and dawn, sacrifice an infant, a jaguar, or an infant with jaguar traits on a mountain in the midst of water, as an offering during the conjuring of an elderly deity. New evidence from a fragmentary Codex-style vessel recovered from the site of Calakmul in the southern half of Campeche, Mexico, suggests that the sacrifice is part of a pre-accession ritual serving to endow royal heirs with the ability to conjure, which, in turn, was integral to assuming the throne.

vii

## **Table of Contents**

List of Figures	X
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Codex-style pottery	3
Jaguar Baby Vessels	
Modern Repainting	11
Iconology and Iconography	12
The Iconology of Classic Maya Iconography	
Figures	
Chapter 2: The Settings	56
Descriptive Details	57
Mirrors	57
Chapaat Maws	61
Lunar Crescents	64
Quatrefoils	
Maize Leaves	
Jewels	67
Environmental Motifs	72
The Mountain (Witz Head)	72
The Water	77
The Tree	
The Curtains and the Throne.	81
Figures	83
Chapter 3: The Participants	
The Sacrifice	
Yax Ha'al Chaak (The Rain God)	
Sak-aj? (The Death Spirit)	
Huk? Yax? Chak? (The Old God in the Bearded Serpent)	
The Infant, the Jaguar, and the Feline Infant (The Offerings)	
Jun ? K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay] (The Firefly)	
The Wayob and the Fan-holding Attendant	
The Presentation	
Bih-al Akan (Holder of the Feline Infant)	180
The Enthroned Ajaw and His Attendants	183
The Elderly Attendant and the Young Child	
K'awiil	
Figures	190
Chapter 4: The Inscriptions	
Individual Summaries of the Glyphs on Jaguar Baby Vessels	
The Day Signs	
The "Months" (and the Numeral Classifier Te')	
The Temporal Adverb	
The Verhs	327

The Toponyms	335
The Nominal Phrases	337
Individual Analyses of Each Inscription on Each Jaguar Baby Vessel	350
Individual Analyses of Each Inscription on Each Snake Lady Vessel	367
Figures	382
Chapter 5: Insights and Conclusions	
Prior Understandings	504
Interpretations Made in Reference to the Popol Vuh and	
the Objections to Them	504
Explanations Seeking Correlations with Ancient Mexican Myths or	
Modern Maya Folklore	506
Important Insights Gained while Studying	
a Different or More Broad Topic	509
Current Understanding	511
The Length of the Nominal Phrase and	
to Whom and/or What It Refers	513
The K'awiil Logogram and How It Relates to the	
Huk ? Yax ? Chak ? Nominal Phrase	520
Calakmul Vessel 0	524
Daubing, Aspersing, and the Letting of Blood:	
A Ceremony Possibly Called Yax Ch'ahb	525
The Implications of Calakmul Vessel 0 Possibly Depicting a	
Yax Ch'ahb	534
The Jaguar Baby Vessels, Codex-style Pottery, and Calakmul	538
Conclusions	542
Figures	546
Bibliography	579

# **List of Figures**

Figure 1.1	Still photo of the Metropolitan Vase, K0521	18
Figure 1.2	Rollout photo of the Metropolitan Vase, K0521	19
Figure 1.3	Map of the Maya Area showing select archaeological sites	20
Figure 1.4	Standard vessel forms of the Canonical variant	21
Figure 1.5	Distinctive vessel forms of the Canonical variant	22
Figure 1.6	Still photo of K5424	23
Figure 1.7	Rollout photo of K5424	24
Figure 1.8	Standard vessel forms of the Calligraphic variant	25
Figure 1.9	Distinctive vessel forms of the Calligraphic variant	26
Figure 1.10	Still photo of K5391	27
Figure 1.11	Rollout photo of K5391	28
Figure 1.12	Standard vessel forms of the Composite variant	29
Figure 1.13	Distinctive vessel forms of the Composite variant	30
Figure 1.14	Canonical, Composite, and Calligraphic potsherds	
	from Nakbe	31
Figure 1.15	Canonical, Composite, and Calligraphic potsherds	
	from El Mirador	32
Figure 1.16	Incomplete Canonical bowls recovered at Calakmul	33
Figure 1.17	Calligraphic Vessel found in Tomb 1 of Structure II,	
	Building 2H at Calakmul	34

Figure 1.18	Rollout photo of K1152	35
Figure 1.19	Rollout photo of K5855	36
Figure 1.20	Rollout photo of K2208	37
Figure 1.21	Rollout photo of K2213	38
Figure 1.22	Rollout photo of K6754	39
Figure 1.23	Rollout photo of K5164	40
Figure 1.24	Rollout photo of K1645	41
Figure 1.25	Rollout photo of K1200	42
Figure 1.26	Rollout photo of K1003	43
Figure 1.27	Rollout photo of K0531	44
Figure 1.28	Rollout photo of K4013	45
Figure 1.29	Rollout photo of K1768	46
Figure 1.30	Rollout photo of K8655	47
Figure 1.31	Rollout photo of K1370	48
Figure 1.32	Rollout photo of K1644	49
Figure 1.33	MBD Vessel 28	50
Figure 1.34	World Tree rising up from Quadripartite Badge	51
Figure 1.35	Square-nosed serpents and carved spondylus valves	52
Figure 1.36	Rollout photo of K1787	53
Figure 1.37	Blue frames enclosing areas of notable restoration on K1787	54
Figure 1.38	Blue frames enclosing areas of false reconstruction on K1197	55
Figure 2.1	K'awiil	83

Figure 2.2	Regular and animate variants of the <i>lem</i> logograph	84
Figure 2.3	Rollout photo of K0530	85
Figure 2.4	Mirrors on K0530	86
Figure 2.5	Narrow band bordering mirror	87
Figure 2.6	Turtle shells	88
Figure 2.7	The T617 and T1017 mirror motifs on celts	89
Figure 2.8	Animate variants of the <i>lem</i> and <i>k'uh</i> logographs	90
Figure 2.9	The Chapaat, a bony monstrous centipede with two heads	91
Figure 2.10	Water and/or earth motifs in the mouth of the Chapaat	92
Figure 2.11	The Black Water Motif	93
Figure 2.12	Death-eyes	94
Figure 2.13	The Chapaat Maw	95
Figure 2.14	Bicephalic Chapaat Maws	96
Figure 2.15	Cephalomorphic Chapaat Maw on K4013	97
Figure 2.16	The Chapaat Cartouche as a frame for mirrors, ancestors, and	
	solar motifs	98
Figure 2.17	The <i>k'in</i> (T544) logograph and the <i>bih/bi</i> hieroglyph	99
Figure 2.18	The Lunar Crescent	100
Figure 2.19	The Lunar Crescent, the Moon Goddess, and the Rabbit	101
Figure 2.20	Animate mirror motif with quatrefoil-shaped mouth on the	
	back of a frog/toad	102
Figure 2.21	Rollout photo of K1182	103

Figure 2.22	Throne	104
Figure 2.23	Old god sitting inside the quatrefoil-shaped mouth of a cephalomorphic mountain	105
Figure 2.24	Maize and the <i>nal</i> motif	106
Figure 2.25	The <i>nal</i> motif as an ear-like embellishment on Chapaat Skull	107
Figure 2.26	The nostrils of each Witz Head on the Jaguar Baby vessels	108
Figure 2.27	Cephalomorphic nostrils on Copan Stela C	109
Figure 2.28	The three separate variants of the Jester God	110
Figure 2.29	The Ajaw Vulture wearing each variant of the Jester God	
	jewel on its headband	111
Figure 2.30	The Crocodile Tree and the Piscine Jester God	112
Figure 2.31	Similarities between the contours of the Piscine Jester God's	
	tail-head and a fleshy nostril	113
Figure 2.32	Rollout photo of K0760	114
Figure 2.33	Rollout photo of K1225	115
Figure 2.34	Trio of huun logographs, each with a hu prefix and a na suffix	116
Figure 2.35	Hieroglyphs relevant to the Witz Head	117
Figure 2.36	The Witz Head on K1003	118
Figure 2.37	The Witz Heads on K4013	119
Figure 2.38	The Witz Head on K1644	120
Figure 2.39	Components of a Witz Head's eye resembling a waterlily bud	
	and a crescent	121
Figure 2.40	Foliated Maize God inside the eye of a Witz Head	122

Figure 2.41	Calakmul Vessel 19A	123
Figure 2.42	The Witz Head on K0521	124
Figure 2.43	The Witz Head on K1370	125
Figure 2.44	Animate mirror on the Witz Head's snout	126
Figure 2.45	The Witz Head and the death spirit on K1815	127
Figure 2.46	The Witz Head and Chahk on K3201	128
Figure 2.47	Waterband with bubbles, shell scrolls, and water stacks	129
Figure 2.48	Still photo of K1609	130
Figure 2.49	Rollout photo of K6979	131
Figure 2.50	Rollout photo of K8201	132
Figure 2.51	Rollout photo of K1248	133
Figure 2.52	Rollout photo of K0521	134
Figure 2.53	Rollout photo of K1152	135
Figure 2.54	Rollout photo of K1644	136
Figure 2.55	Calakmul Vessel 19A	137
Figure 2.56	Calakmul Vessel 19	138
Figure 2.57	Rollout photo of K2207	139
Figure 2.58	Rollout photo of K2208	140
Figure 2.59	Rollout photo of K1003	141
Figure 2.60	Rollout photo of K1815	142
Figure 2.61	The tree on K1815	143

Figure 2.62	The tree on K1815 with reconstructed quatrefoil marking	
	the hole in its trunk	144
Figure 2.63	The tree on K4013	145
Figure 2.64	The waterlily tree on K0555	146
Figure 2.65	The yax-te' ("first tree") on K1226	147
Figure 2.66	The Tree God and Patron of Paax on K3007	148
Figure 2.67	Rollout photo of K5855	149
Figure 2.68	Curtains and throne cushion on K5855	150
Figure 3.1	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1152	190
Figure 3.2	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1370	191
Figure 3.3	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1644	192
Figure 3.4	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1815	193
Figure 3.5	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K2208	194
Figure 3.6	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4056	195
Figure 3.7	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1003	196
Figure 3.8	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4013	197
Figure 3.9	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K0521	198
Figure 3.10	Yax Ha'al Chahk on Calakmul Vessel 19A	199
Figure 3.11	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4011	200
Figure 3.12	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4056	201
Figure 3.13	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1199	202
Figure 3 14	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K2207	203

Figure 3.15	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K3201	204
Figure 3.16	Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4384	205
Figure 3.17	Rollout photo of K2723	206
Figure 3.18	Vessel from Calakmul Tomb 1, Structure II	207
Figure 3.19	Rollout photo of K1250	208
Figure 3.20	Tikal Altar 5	209
Figure 3.21	Figures wearing clothing and holding objects denoting acts	
	of penance and sacrifice	210
Figure 3.22	Two Chahks using lightning weapons to split open the	
	turtle shell	211
Figure 3.23	The handle of Chahk's lightning axe	212
Figure 3.24	Chahk merged with K'awiil	213
Figure 3.25	Sak-aj on K1152	214
Figure 3.26	Sak-aj on K1370	215
Figure 3.27	Sak-aj on K2213	216
Figure 3.28	Sak-aj on K4013	217
Figure 3.29	Sak-aj on K1815	218
Figure 3.30	Sak-aj on K1644	219
Figure 3.31	Sak-aj on K0521	220
Figure 3.32	Sak-ja on K2207	221
Figure 3.33	Sak-aj on K1199	222
Figure 3.34	Sak-ai on K4011	223

Figure 3.35	Sak-aj on K3201	224
Figure 3.36	Sak-aj on K4056	225
Figure 3.37	Sak-aj on K2208	226
Figure 3.38	Sak-aj on K1003	227
Figure 3.39	Sak-aj on MBD Vessel 28	228
Figure 3.40	The Sak-aj nominal phrase	229
Figure 3.41	A sak logograph, a full ja syllabograph, and a	
	cham/kam logograph	230
Figure 3.42	Batuun as a toponym and as a title	231
Figure 3.43	Chthonic eye on mirror edged with death-eye fringe	232
Figure 3.44	The Starry Deer Crocodile, K1609	233
Figure 3.45	Copan Altar G1	234
Figure 3.46	Huk ? Yax ? on K2213	235
Figure 3.47	Huk ? Yax ? on K4013	236
Figure 3.48	Huk-? Yax-? on K6754	237
Figure 3.49	Huk-? Yax-? on K5164	238
Figure 3.50	Huk-? Yax-? on K1382	239
Figure 3.51	Huk-? Yax-? on K1813	240
Figure 3.52	Huk-? Yax-? on K4485	241
Figure 3.53	Huk-? Yax-? on K1081	242
Figure 3.54	God N	243
Figure 3 55	Rollout photo of K1198	244

Figure 3.56	Conjuring portrayed on Lintel 14 at Yaxchilan	245
Figure 3.57	Rollout photo of K2715	246
Figure 3.58	The huk-? yax-? chak-? nominal phrase on K0521	247
Figure 3.59	The Tree God (Paax patron)	248
Figure 3.60	Rollout photo of K4114	249
Figure 3.61	The Maize God emerging from a turtle shell with	
	God N (left) and K'awiil (right) inside it	250
Figure 3.62	The Bearded Serpent's head on K4013	251
Figure 3.63	Parts of the Bearded Serpent's snout on K4013	252
Figure 3.64	Parts of a Bearded Serpent's ear on K4013	253
Figure 3.65	Jaguar on K1152	254
Figure 3.66	Infant on K4056	255
Figure 3.67	Infant on K2213	256
Figure 3.68	Infant on K4056	257
Figure 3.69	Infant with jaguar traits on K0521	258
Figure 3.70	Infant with jaguar traits on K2208	259
Figure 3.71	Infant with jaguar traits on K4011	260
Figure 3.72	Infant with jaguar traits on K3201	261
Figure 3.73	Infant with jaguar traits on K4013	262
Figure 3.74	Infant with jaguar traits on K1003	263
Figure 3.75	Infant with jaguar traits on K1370	264
Figure 3.76	Infant with jaguar traits on K5855	265

Figure 3.77	Infant with jaguar traits on K1815	266
Figure 3.78	Infant with jaguar traits on K1644	267
Figure 3.79	Infant with jaguar traits on K4385	268
Figure 3.80	Infant with jaguar traits on Calakmul Vessel 19	269
Figure 3.81	Infant with jaguar traits on K4384	270
Figure 3.82	Infant with jaguar traits on K1200	271
Figure 3.83	Infant with jaguar traits on K119	272
Figure 3.84	Depictions of sacrificial children wearing or lying	
	on a jaguar skin	273
Figure 3.85	Chan-Te' Ajaw burning the Jaguar God of the	
	Underworld	274
Figure 3.86	Firefly on K0521	275
Figure 3.87	Firefly on K1003	276
Figure 3.88	The Firefly and his nominal phrase on K1815	277
Figure 3.89	Rollout photo of K8608	278
Figure 3.90	Still photo of K2226	279
Figure 3.91	Rollout photo of K8007	280
Figure 3.92	Jaguar Dog on K0521	281
Figure 3.93	Enema Jaguar on K1003	282
Figure 3.94	Enema Jaguar on K2208	283
Figure 3.95	Owl on K2208	284
Figure 3.96	Owl on K3201	285

Figure 3.97	Fan-holding Attendant on K4056	286
Figure 3.98	Fan-holding Attendant on MBD Vessel 28	287
Figure 3.99	Rollout photo of K4622	288
Figure 3.100	Rollout photo of K4824	289
Figure 3.101	Bih-al Akan on K5855	290
Figure 3.102	Bih-al Akan? on K1200	291
Figure 3.103	Bih-al Akan? on K4384	292
Figure 3.104	Self-decapitating Akan on K1230	293
Figure 3.105	"Enema" Akan on K092	294
Figure 3.106	Enthroned Lord on K5855	295
Figure 3.107	Seated Attendant on K4384	296
Figure 3.108	Kneeling Attendants on K5855	297
Figure 3.109	Kneeling Attendant on Calakmul Vessel 0	298
Figure 3.110	Calakmul Vessel 0	299
Figure 3.111	Kneeling Attendant on K1200	300
Figure 3.112	Enthroned Lord on K120	301
Figure 3.113	Enthroned Lord on K4384	302
Figure 3.114	Elderly Attendant and Young Child on Calakmul Vessel 0	303
Figure 3.115	Elderly Attendant on Calakmul Vessel 0.	304
Figure 3.116	Young Child on Calakmul Vessel 0	305
Figure 3.117	Dos Pilas Panel 19	306
Figure 3 118	Priestly Attendant on K8665	307

Figure 3.119	Priestly Attendant on K8526	308
Figure 3.120	Priestly Attendants on the Vase of the Eighty-eight Glyphs	
	(K1440)	309
Figure 3.121	Young Wind God wearing the headdress of the God of the	
	Number Thirteen on K0114	310
Figure 3.122	Old Wind God on K3007	311
Figure 3.123	Priestly Attendants, Temple 19 Platform (south face)	312
Figure 3.124	The "banded bird" title and its variants	313
Figure 3.125	The Waterlily Serpent, the <i>haab</i> logograph, and the God	
	of the Number Thirteen	314
Figure 3.126	Shell Wing Dragons, Tablet of the Slaves, Palenque	315
Figure 3.127	K'awiil on Calakmul Vessel 0	316
Figure 3.128	K'awiil	317
Figure 3.129	Calakmul Vessel 0	318
Figure 4.1	The day sign known as Kib	382
Figure 4.2	The day sign known as Muluk	383
Figure 4.3	The day sign known as Ajaw	384
Figure 4.4	The "month" sign read as K'anasiiy	385
Figure 4.5	The "month" sign read as Saksihoom	386
Figure 4.6	The T87 te' logograph	387
Figure 4.7	The temporal adverb provisionally read as <i>nukak'ab-il</i>	388
Figure 4.8	The pas logograph and the name of Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat	389

Figure 4.9	Different forms of yal on the Jaguar Baby vessels	390
Figure 4.10	Logographs read as yal ("to throw") or al ("child"),	
	depending on the context	391
Figure 4.11	A Composite Codex-style vessel (twice) depicting	
	Chan-te' Ajaw throwing a large stone onto Ux Ha'	392
Figure 4.12	The bent-arm throw posture	393
Figure 4.13	Full and partial examples of the T126 ya sign in the	
	same name or the same verbal compound	394
Figure 4.14	The verbal compound on K1644 and K1815	395
Figure 4.15	The verbal compound read as tza[h]k-aj	396
Figure 4.16	Comparison of hands in the <i>tzak</i> and <i>jatz</i> ' logographs	397
Figure 4.17	The verbal compound read as si[h]yaj	398
Figure 4.18	The verbal compound read as <i>u-ch'am-aw</i>	399
Figure 4.19	The "Chatan" toponym	400
Figure 4.20	The toponym read as <i>batuun</i> and its individual components	401
Figure 4.21	The toponym read as baha' and its individual components	402
Figure 4.22	Logographs read as k'awiil	403
Figure 4.23	K'awiil, the god, with his serpentine leg and a celt piercing	
	his forehead	404
Figure 4.24	The <i>huk-</i> ? collocation	405
Figure 4.25	The yax? collocation	406
Figure 4.26	Variants of the T16 <i>yax</i> logograph	407

Figure 4.27	The <i>chak-?</i> collocation	408
Figure 4.28	The nominal phrase the Old God in the Bearded Serpent	
	shares with the feline infant (and his equivalents)	409
Figure 4.29	Three examples of the "double stripe" chak logograph	410
Figure 4.30	The T139 <i>la</i> syllabograph and "bracers," a calligraphic	
	flourish without phonetic meaning	411
Figure 4.31	The individual components of the K'uh[ul] "Chatan"	
	Winik toponymic title	412
Figure 4.32	The Yax Ha'al Chahk nominal phrase on Codex-style vessels	413
Figure 4.33	The Yax Ha'al Chahk nominal phrase	414
Figure 4.34	The Sak-aj nominal phrase	415
Figure 4.35	A sak logograph, a full ja syllabograph, and a cham/kam	
	Logograph	416
Figure 4.36	Batuun as a toponym and as a title	417
Figure 4.37	The Firefly and his nominal phrase, Jun? K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay]	418
Figure 4.38	Bih-al Akan with his nominal phrase just above the feline	
	infant's foot	419
Figure 4.39	The akan collocation	420
Figure 4.40	The inscription on K2208	421
Figure 4.41	Rollout photo of K2208	422
Figure 4.42	Uncut rollout photo of K2208	423
Figure 4.43	The inscription on K1370	424

Figure 4.44	Rollout photo of K1370	425
Figure 4.45	Uncut rollout photo of K1370	426
Figure 4.46	The inscription on MBD Vessel 28	427
Figure 4.47	MBD Vessel 28	428
Figure 4.48	The primary inscription on K1815	429
Figure 4.49	The secondary inscriptions on K1815	430
Figure 4.50	Rollout photo of K1815	431
Figure 4.51	Uncut rollout photo of K1815	432
Figure 4.52	The primary inscription on K1644	433
Figure 4.53	The secondary (a) and tertiary (b) inscriptions on K1644	434
Figure 4.54	Rollout photo of K1644	435
Figure 4.55	Uncut rollout photo of K1644	436
Figure 4.56	The inscription on K0521	437
Figure 4.57	Rollout photo of K0521	438
Figure 4.58	Uncut rollout photo of K0521	439
Figure 4.59	The inscription on K4013	440
Figure 4.60	Rollout of K4013	441
Figure 4.61	Uncut rollout of K4013	442
Figure 4.62	The primary inscription on Calakmul Vessel 19	443
Figure 4.63	Calakmul Vessel 19, exterior (a) and underside (b)	444
Figure 4.64	The primary inscription on K1003	445
Figure 4.65	The secondary inscription on K1003	446

Figure 4.66	Rollout photo of K1003	447
Figure 4.67	Uncut rollout photo of K1003	448
Figure 4.68	The primary inscription on K2213	449
Figure 4.69	The secondary inscription on K2213	450
Figure 4.70	Rollout photo of K2213	451
Figure 4.71	Uncut rollout photo of K2213	452
Figure 4.72	The primary inscription on K4011	453
Figure 4.73	The secondary inscription on K4011	454
Figure 4.74	Rollout photo of K4011	455
Figure 4.75	Uncut rollout photo of K4011	456
Figure 4.76	The primary inscription on K1152	457
Figure 4.77	The secondary inscriptions on K1152	458
Figure 4.78	Rollout photo of K1152	459
Figure 4.79	Uncut rollout photo of K1152	460
Figure 4.80	The inscription on K2207	461
Figure 4.81	Rollout photo of K2207	462
Figure 4.82	Uncut rollout photo of K2207	463
Figure 4.83	The inscription on K3201	464
Figure 4.84	Rollout photo of K3201	465
Figure 4.85	Uncut rollout photo of K3201	466
Figure 4.86	The primary inscription on K4056	467
Figure 4.87	The secondary inscriptions on K4056	468

Figure 4.88	Rollout photo of K405	469
Figure 4.89	Uncut rollout photo of K4056	470
Figure 4.90	The primary inscription on K5855	471
Figure 4.91	The secondary inscriptions on K5855	472
Figure 4.92	Rollout photo of K5855	473
Figure 4.93	Uncut rollout photo of K5855	474
Figure 4.94	The primary inscription on K1813	475
Figure 4.95	The secondary inscription and dedication on K1813	476
Figure 4.96	Rollout photo of K1813	477
Figure 4.97	Uncut rollout photo of K1813	478
Figure 4.98	The primary inscription on K6754	479
Figure 4.99	The secondary inscription on K6754	480
Figure 4.100	Rollout photo of K6754	481
Figure 4.101	Uncut rollout photo of K6754	482
Figure 4.102	The inscription on K1081	483
Figure 4.103	Rollout photo of K1081	484
Figure 4.104	Uncut rollout photo of K1081	485
Figure 4.105	The inscription on K5164	486
Figure 4.106	Rollout photo of K5164	487
Figure 4.107	Uncut rollout photo of K5164	488
Figure 4.108	The inscription on K1198	489
Figure 4.109	Rollout photo of K119	490

Figure 4.110	The inscription on K4485	491
Figure 4.111	Rollout photo of K4485	492
Figure 4.112	Uncut rollout photo of K4485	493
Figure 4.113	The primary inscription on K1382	494
Figure 4.114	The secondary inscription on K1382	495
Figure 4.115	Rollout photo of K1382	496
Figure 4.116	Uncut rollout photo of K1382	497
Figure 4.117	Comparison of glyphs from K1382 and K5164 to	
	variants of the <i>chan/kan</i> ("snake") logograph	498
Figure 4.118	The primary inscription on K1645	499
Figure 4.119	The secondary inscriptions on K1645	500
Figure 4.120	Rollout photo of K1645	501
Figure 4.121	Uncut rollout photo of K1645	502
Figure 5.1	Re-creation of illustration showing feline infant's positional	
	change (invented paw omitted)	546
Figure 5.2	Rollout photo of K3844	547
Figure 5.3	The Old God and the Jaguar Baby sharing the huk-? yax-?	
	chak-? nominal phrase on K4013	548
Figure 5.4	Alternative cropping of K4013	549
Figure 5.5	Rollout photo of K2772	550
Figure 5.6	Rollout photo of K1257	551
Figure 5.7	Rollout photo of K5057	552

Figure 5.8	Still photo of K5072	553
Figure 5.9	Ceremony portrayed on Temple 21 Platform at Palenque	554
Figure 5.10	Ceremony portrayed on Panel 19 at Dos Pilas	555
Figure 5.11	Figural Group 1 on Grolier 37 (K1386)	556
Figure 5.12	Figural Group 2 on Grolier 37 (K1386)	557
Figure 5.13	K'in logograph on Stela D at Quirigua	558
Figure 5.14	Gods of wind and water on K1485	559
Figure 5.15	Body painting on Grolier 37 (K1386)	560
Figure 5.16	Daubing and aspersing on the Vessel of the Eighty-eight	
	Glyphs (K1440)	561
Figure 5.17	Enthroned lord on the Vessel of the Eighty-eight Glyphs	
	(K1440)	562
Figure 5.18	Ceremonial drinking on K0114	563
Figure 5.19	Old Wind God singing on K3007	564
Figure 5.20	Attendant with aspergillum portrayed on Temple 21	
	Platform at Palenque	565
Figure 5.21	Transformed Classic Headband Twins with drums and	
	rattles on K3007	566
Figure 5.22	Rollout photo of K8665	567
Figure 5.23	Heads of simian scribes	568
Figure 5.24	Attendant wearing the headdress of the God of the	
	Number Thirteen on K8526	569

Figure 5.25	Boys wearing feathery capes on K8526	570
Figure 5.26	Calakmul Vessel 0	571
Figure 5.27	Detail of inscription on Calakmul Vessel 0	572
Figure 5.28	Rollout photo of K4013	573
Figure 5.29	Rollout photo of K2068	574
Figure 5.30	Rollout photo of 5164	575
Figure 5.31	"Bird-man" logograph on Monument 141 at Tonina	576
Figure 5.32	Rollout photo of K4117	577
Figure 5.33	Rollout photo of K1489	578

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Since the initial publication of the Metropolitan Vase in 1970 (Foncerrada de Molina 1970;Thompson 1990 [1970]:Fig.14d), the scene of a feline infant being sacrificed, which appears on numerous polychrome ceramic vessels, has been fascinating students of Classic Maya art (Figures 1.1-1.2). Numerous scholars have sought to explain its narrative. Some approach it through the tropes of ancient Mesoamerican myths (Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán 2013), while others seek analogies with the Popol Vuh, a Colonial-era creation epic (Foncerrada de Molina 1972; Lounsbury 1985:53-56; Robicsek and Hales 1981:113-119,1988; Spero 1991:190-193) or use modern ethnography as their guide (García Barrios and Valencia 2011). There are those, as well, who have made salient observations while studying a broader subject (Martin 2002:51-53, 57) or a separate topic (Taube 1994:671-674). No work, however, has examined the Codex-style vessels—a subset of Classic Maya polychrome ceramics that I define in detail below—depicting the sacrifice of the Jaguar Baby with greater specificity than the current study.

To do so is a challenge since the vessels differ notably from object to object in what they depict and describe, but it is also the key to a different perspective. Anyone analyzing one of the mythic narratives appearing repeatedly on Codex-style pottery will encounter similar variations from vessel to vessel. Such differences, however, are especially plentiful in the depiction and description of the events involving the sacrifice of a feline infant, the conjuring of an elderly deity, and—as recent evidence suggests—

the childhood ritual of a royal heir. Their story, evidently, entails a varying crew of participants, indoor and outdoor settings, three toponyms, at least three verbs, and a temporal adverb as well as a nominal phrase that is both of variable length and optional. In contrast, the story of the elderly deity's birth appears with comparable frequency but shows a narrower range of participants, a setting that is indoors or nondescript, and involves only one verb in its standard form. Accordingly, as someone working with this material learns quickly, it is far too easy to craft an explanation that works well with many, if not most, of the vessels only to realize that one (or more) has a glyphic or figural detail that makes an ostensibly strong interpretation untenable.

Furthermore, even if one formulates an interpretation that adheres closely to the evidence and persuasively accounts for the majority of its puzzling aspects, there are some things that currently are and, perhaps, will always remain, problematic. Foremost is the occurrence of Calendar Round Dates that are invalid because the coefficient of the "month" is incompatible with the day. Some insist that such dates must only result from modern forgery and are sufficient reason to dismiss the majority of Codex-style pottery as suspect (Kelker and Bruhns 2010:139-145). Others, however, allow for the possible authenticity of the dates and suggest that they could be a means of indicating that the relevant events occur during a mythic era (Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán 2013:41) or have some other unknown explanation aside from modern repainting alone (an issue to which I will return) (Martin 1997:853). Another issue is the absence of ordinary verbal forms aside from the passive (e.g., ya[h]l-aj, tza[h]k-aj, si[h]y-aj), and the presence of several logograms—including many in the elderly deity's name—that

remain resistant to conclusive decipherment because they lack sufficient phonetic complementation to confirm their spelling and do not substitute with a sign of known meaning.

There are also graphic variations in the form of individual signs that are likely to be familiar only to an expert epigrapher. The *ya* syllabogram in the spelling of *yal* on the Metropolitan Vase, for example, is very rare and quite unlike the standard *ya* signs appearing in charts of Classic Maya syllables (e.g., Coe and Van Stone 2001:160; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:77; Montgomery 2002:Fig.7-15; Stuart 2005b:32). That is why, in my analysis of the inscriptions on the vessels, I include (when possible) examples of the same signs from monuments for comparison and, if there is something unusual about the execution of a hieroglyph, I explain my reasons for reading it as I do. Indeed, as will become apparent, one's understanding of the hieroglyphs will more or less determine one's interpretation of the pictorial narratives and the story they portray.

#### **CODEX-STYLE POTTERY**

Codex-style pottery is a kind of Late Classic Maya earthenware that was made without a potter's wheel and produced for a brief period sometime between AD 672 and 731. It originates primarily from archeological sites located within a geographical depression in north-central Guatemala known as the Mirador Basin (Figure 1.3). Michael Coe (1973:91) named the pottery for the formal affinities its vessels share with the pages of Postclassic Maya codices. It belongs to the Tepeu II ceramic complex, and is assigned to the Zacatal ceramic group in the Type-Variety system. Initially, the corpus of Codex-

style pottery consisted of the objects that Justin Kerr photographed for his database (<a href="www.mayavase.com">www.mayavase.com</a>) or that Francis Robicsek and Donald Hales (1981) illustrated in their catalog, *The Maya Book of the Dead, the Ceramic Codex: The Corpus of Codex Style Ceramics of the Late Classic Period.* More recently, it has expanded to include the whole or partial vessels that archaeologists have found at Nakbe, El Mirador, La Muerta, El Peru-Waka, and Calakmul. The exact size of the Codex-style corpus is unknown, but probably includes at least 350-400 complete vessels and, thus far—with the exception of a "Codex-style" vase that was locally made—all of the Codex-style pottery excavated from Calakmul has a chemical profile in keeping with pottery originating from sites in the Mirador Basin, rather than the local pottery of Calakmul.

In 1997, Coe refined his description of Codex-style pottery in order to distinguish it from a group of objects within the traditional Codex-style corpus which he favors classifying separately as "Nakbé-style ceramics" since archaeologists working there have recovered examples of it at the site. While there are, indeed, stylistic variants within the traditional corpus that warrant a more formal recognition than they have received, I am opposed to splitting the corpus and giving the variants a name that does not acknowledge their stylistic kinship or that ties them to a single site. Instead, I prefer to regard the corpus as containing three stylistic variants of Codex-style pottery: Canonical, Calligraphic, and Composite (Steinbach 2012). The first and second are highly distinct

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In a stylistic analysis of 287 pieces of Codex-style pottery, Marvin Cohodas (1989:204-205) uses the Metropolitan Vase as his touchstone and credits its painter with "nearly half" of the vessels, and describes the artist's work as having three styles: ornate, dynamic, and transitional. Although I think he ascribes far to many vessels to one artist, I am grateful for his systematic approach. To the degree they are comparable, the styles he

and easy to distinguish, while the third is less so because it shares traits with the other two, including the same basic palette and a standard set of vessel forms.

More specifically, the Canonical variant conforms most closely to Coe's descriptions of Codex-style pottery. It prioritizes storytelling with the depiction of opposing figures interacting in a specific location, and frequently includes a descriptive text beginning with a date (e.g., Figures 1.1-1.2). In addition to the standard vessel forms—vases, bowls, and plates (Figure 1.4)—it favors the same forms as tripods with nubbin or tau-shaped feet (Figure 1.5), and shuns any embellishment of the vessel wall (e.g., gadrooning or fluting), which would complicate the painting of complex figural compositions.<sup>2</sup> The Calligraphic variant, in contrast, corresponds to Coe's Nakbe-style ceramics. It emphasizes the presentation of the Dedicatory Formula, which extends around the entire vessel, just below its rim, and with an upper and/or lower guideline (however faint) to ensure its evenness (Figures 1.6-1.7). The selection of its signs is notably consistent, and it normally appears above a pair of matching iconic images. There is also a more expansive use of color, including the tinting of select details on each figure and glyph and, in addition to the common vessel forms (Figure 1.8), an avoidance of tripods and a strong interest in pots with rounded bottoms and/or gadrooned sides (Figure 1.9). The Composite variant shares traits with the other two, and embodies what seems to have been a gradual and imprecise process of dissipation, experimentation, and coalescence that led from one variant to another (Figures 1.10-1.11). Thus, it has the

describes as ornate, dynamic, and transitional are roughly equivalent to the stylistic variants I refer to as Calligraphic, Canonical, and Composite.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all drawings are by author.

widest variety of vessel forms (Figure 1.13) beyond the traditional set (Figure 1.12), and the most varied use of color, as well as fewer specific settings with environmental motifs, and more images that are repetitive and/or iconic. There are also fewer descriptive texts, and an elevation of the Dedicatory Formula from an abridged afterthought crowded amidst the figures, to something that is unabridged and has its own dedicated space that is separate from the images below.

Since majority of Codex-style pottery is looted, there is no archaeological basis for determining if the variants are more sequential or coeval. Nearly every example with provenience comes from an especially ambiguous context, such as construction fill (Forsyth 1989:3, 2007; López and Fahsen 1994:70), the remains of a looter's trench (Forsyth 1993:50), or a "trash deposit" (Delvendahl 2008:125) (Figures 1.14-1.16), rather than a tomb (Folan and López 1996:18-21) (Figure 1.17). Given that the differences between the Canonical and Calligraphic variants involve more than minor changes and are quite comprehensive, I strongly believe, as does Marvin Cohodas (1989:204), that the variants are more sequential than coeval. It is possible, however, that data from the ongoing excavations will ultimately prove that they are mostly coeval, and that their stylistic distinctions are more geographical than temporal, which is likely true if, for example, each variant primarily originates from a different site.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The ceramic sequence of El Mirador does not identify the contexts in which the artifacts were found because its author did not have access to the field notes of the excavating archaeologists. However, most of the material was collected from looter's trenches and construction fill (Forsyth 1989:3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> We disagree, however, about the sequence. Cohodas regards the ornate (i.e., Calligraphic) as the first of the three, whereas I see it as the last.

#### THE JAGUAR BABY VESSELS

The Jaguar Baby vessels are a group of Canonical (e.g., Figure 1.18) and Composite (e.g., Figure 1.19) Codex-style pots depicting an infant with feline traits (Figure 1.20)—or one of his equivalents (Figure 1.18 or Figure 121)—being sacrificed outdoors or, far more rarely, presented to a lord indoors (Figure 1.19). Francis Robicsek and Donald Hales were the first to group the vessels into a set and to give the narrative a specific name. They called it the "Sacrifice of the Jaguar God" and saw it as one of seven sets of events that collectively serve as the "pages" in the first part of a "ceramic codex" which the entire corpus of Codex-style pottery supposedly forms when the objects within it are properly grouped and sequenced (Robicsek and Hales 1981:21, 39-43). Although their notion of the corpus as a ceramic book has not held sway, their groupings of the vessels within it have. Indeed, Robicsek and Hales were the first to group the Jaguar Baby vessels together and to link the events they portray to a second set of mostly Canonical (e.g., Figure 1.22) but also Composite (e.g., Figure 1.23) objects showing a bare-breasted young woman in the coils of a bearded serpent with an elderly deity emerging from its mouth. The so-called Snake Lady vessels depict the birth of the ancient deity, but Robicsek and Hales (1981:113-117) speculated that the elderly deity and the woman were the parents of the feline infant, and that the child's presentation to a ruler on a throne preceded his sacrificial death in the Underworld.

Robicsek and Hales (1981:21-26, 39-43) did not specify their criteria for classifying a vessel as depicting the sacrifice, but it is apparent from their selections that they were relying on similarities between figures, hieroglyphs, and/or settings. Of the

seventeen vessels they grouped together, the first (Figure 1.24) bears a mix of image and text that undeniably links the narrative involving the "Snake Lady" to the narrative of the sacrifice. The second (Figure 1.25), in turn, depicts the presentation, while ten of the remaining vessels portray the sacrifice (e.g., K1.26) and five depict groups of two or more co-essences (e.g., Figure 1.27). Since the publication of the book in 1981, several pieces of Codex-style pottery portraying the sacrifice (e.g., Figure 1.28) or the presentation (e.g., Figure 1.19) have come to light, including two partial vessels (Figures 1.16a-b) from a "trash deposit" on the south side of Structure XX at Calakmul containing approximately fifteen thousand potsherds and little else (Delvendahl 2008:125-128). It is impractical, however, to subject every vessel or potsherd to an equal degree of scrutiny since some add little, if anything new (e.g., MBD Vessel 26) while others are too clumsy to be of much interest (e.g., Figures 1.29-1.30).

Like Robicsek and Hales, I rely upon similarities between figures, hieroglyphs and/or settings to formulate the guidelines I use for defining a piece of Codex-style pottery as depicting part of the tale involving the sacrificial offering of an infant, a jaguar, or an infant with feline traits. However, whereas they sought—in keeping with their belief that the vessels in the Codex-style corpus can be sequentially arranged to tell an epic story from beginning to end, from the first vessel to the last—to classify the most objects possible as being related to the sacrifice, it is my intent to focus narrowly on the vases and bowls portraying events in the life of the feline infant (and his wholly humanoid or fully feline equivalents), namely his sacrificial death outdoors or his courtly presentation indoors.

The grounds I have chosen for classification accord well with the unstated criteria others have relied upon to identify examples of Codex-style pottery as Jaguar Baby vessels, since the group of objects I have assembled is essentially the same as that of others (e.g., García Barrios and Valencia 2011:77-79; Kerr 1992:2; Looper 2009:242, fn.4; MacLeod 2015; Spero 1991:190-192; Taube 1994:672; Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán 2013:44-45), but includes more material from Calakmul. Although there are several "black background" cylinders portraying similar sacrificial acts which are often analyzed in conjunction with the vessels under examination here, I am excluding them from further consideration because they belong to at least two other styles of pottery. Unless the subject is, more broadly, one of birth imagery and k'ex offerings (Taube 1994:659, 673-674) or the feline infant motif in general (Martin 2002:54-55), including vessels from other pottery styles simply adds more material, and I find it inappropriate to treat—as some do (e.g., Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán 2013:44)—the toponyms and nominal phrases such objects provide as integral to the Codex-style Jaguar Baby vessels, as if they did not provide such information of their own.

Accordingly, for this study, to qualify as a Jaguar Baby vessel, a piece of Codex-style pottery must meet very specific criteria, each element of which—be it a figure (e.g., death spirit), an environmental motif (e.g., animate mountain), or a part of speech (e.g., temporal adverb)—is individually and thoroughly addressed in the chapters that follow. In the meanwhile, however, I will refer to those elements only in passing in order to identify the characteristics I use to classify a piece of Codex-style pottery as a vessel portraying an event (or two) from the story of the sacrifice involving the feline infant.

Thus, to qualify as a Jaguar Baby vessel depicting the sacrifice, a piece of Codex-style pottery must portray a setting that includes water and/or an animate mountain. It should also, at minimum, depict either a rain god or a death spirit and a feline infant or one of his equivalents, that is, an entirely zoomorphic jaguar (Figure 1.18) or a fully anthropomorphic baby (Figure 1.21). If a vessel meeting these requirements bears a legible descriptive text beginning with a Calendar Round date, the following must apply as well: the day is either Kib or Muluk, the "month" is K'anasiiy or Saksihoom, and the verb is a form of yal ("to throw down"), tzak ("to conjure"), siy ("to be born"), or ch'am ("to take"). It is permissible for the inscription to end with a verb, as it does on K1370 (Figure 1.31) and K1644 (Figure 1.32). However, if a noun follows the verb, unless it is a toponym (i.e., batuun, baha', or "chatan") naming where the sacrifice occurs, it should either be k'awiil or the first glyph in the nominal phrase (i.e., huk? yax? chak?) the elderly deity shares with the beings whose lives are exchanged for his, with the feline infant being the foremost among them. In some of the primary inscriptions, there is an adverb between the "month" and the verb to specify the time of day when the sacrifice occurs. The adverb is purely optional, but it is also extremely rare in any context. Indeed, its rarity is part of the reason that MBD Vessel 28 (Figure 1.33) remains in the corpus even though the one upon the Witz Head has been lost to erosion.

To qualify as a vessel depicting the presentation, the setting a vessel portrays ought to include a throne and/or curtains, and among the figures there should be—in addition to the feline infant or, in theory, one of his equivalents—the sinister being who presents him, an enthroned lord, and a royal attendant or two. Thus far, only one presentation

vessel bears a legible text that appears to be more than the falsified remnants of a dedication statement or suspect glyphs added as filler. Although many of its collocations are readable, its overall meaning remains opaque.

## MODERN REPAINTING

Anyone working with Classic Maya painted pictorial pottery lacking archeological provenience can safely conclude that he or she is working with objects that have undergone modern repainting to some extent. When it is least harmful, repainting does nothing but darken or solidify what remains of the original design. K1787, for example, is a Composite Codex-style cylinder depicting a pair of anthropomorphic scribes wearing "Spangled Turban" headdresses (Coe and Kerr 1997:105). The black and white rollout photograph (Figure 1.36) illustrates the vessel as it appear in *The Maya Book of the Dead* (Robicsek and Hales 1981:55). In contrast, the color rollout photograph (Figure 1.37) currently available through Justin Kerr's online photographic archive (www.mayavase.com) shows the vessel following a mostly subtle restoration consisting mainly of removing mineral encrustations and then darkening or solidifying existing lines, including the red border bands. There are, however, forays into reconstruction to repair the missing hand and foot of the scribe who leans forward the most. (To make the changes easier to discern, blue frames enclose the notable areas of restoration.) The repaired scribe is on the right in the black and white original, and on the left in the color image because the newer photograph was cropped differently. Overall, K1787 underwent a restoration that is mostly harmless.

K1197 (Robicsek and Hales 1981:25), on the other hand, depicts a trio of supernatural entities, and has suffered from an a false reconstruction in which new images or details were added to its empty spaces and potsherds from other Codex-style vessels were used to fill in its missing pieces. Although I do not have permission to reproduce the photos showing the vase prior to its present state, blue frames enclose the approximate areas of falsification in the rollout illustrating K1197 as it appeared in *The Maya Book of the Dead* (Figure 1.38). Whatever degree of repainting or other beautification a vessel undergoes prior to entering the art market or appearing in print, it is extremely rare to see evidence of it in a less attractive state. As result, the veracity of a vessel's painting is most often in the eye of the beholder and is purely a matter of opinion barring some physical proof of its inauthenticity. Accordingly, I will note areas of concern on the objects under analysis as they are encountered.

## ICONOLOGY AND ICONOGRAPHY

Iconology is the study of iconography, although it can also be construed broadly as the study of images in general.<sup>5</sup> Iconography, in turn, is a system of symbols used to convey assigned meanings. For the purposes of this study, I am defining iconography as a code that uses visual cues to identify and characterize the beings, places, objects, and deeds depicted in a figural work of art.<sup>6</sup> The cues of an iconographic code are drawn

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For a book-length meditation on iconology as the study of images, see W.J.T. Mitchell (1987).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Erwin Panofsky (1982:26) defines iconography as "that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form." However—because I regard iconography as a *subject* of study, rather than a

from a body of knowledge the iconographer shares with whomever is intended to experience the artwork and its symbolism.<sup>7</sup>

In a work of art, iconographic cues are usually arranged in ensembles, and this aggregation, in turn, helps to affirm and amplify the information that the cues are intended to convey. It also helps to avoid the semantic ambiguity likely to arise from the use of only one cue. Each iconographic ensemble, in turn, tends to be a mix of specific and generic traits that points collectively towards a particular identity. (Within this mix, the specific traits are relatively rare but seldom unique, and the generic traits mark the identified as belonging to a boarder category of beings, places, objects, or deeds.) The nature of what is identified largely determines the nature of the iconographic cues used to identify it. Thus, for example, as this study will demonstrate, beings are characterized with cues referring to their bodily details, attire, behavior, and/or location, whereas places are characterized with cues referring to their physical traits, their occupants, and the events that occur within them. Similarly, an object's identity is cued through its physical traits, use, and user, while a deed's identity is cued through implied movement and/or an apparent consequence as well as where it is done and who and/or what it involves.

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field of study—I have provided my own definition and note that it is fundamentally similar to Webster's definition of iconography as "the imagery selected to convey the meaning of a work of art or the identity of its figures and setting and comprising figures or objects or features often fixed (as in medieval religious art) by convention" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged, 2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> As Panofsky (1982 [1939]:27) recognized, individuals, in order to successfully interpret iconography, must be "familiar with the practical world of objects and events, but also with the more-than-practical world of customs and cultural traditions peculiar to a certain civilization." This poses particular challenges for scholars of the ancient Maya past, as I address below.

## THE ICONOLOGY OF CLASSIC MAYA ICONOGRAPHY

Classic Maya iconography and Classic Maya writing are inseparable (Stuart 1988:188; Stone and Zender 2011:10-12), in that, they belong to the same communication system and, consequently, the study of one requires knowledge of, and attention to, the other. It is unsurprising, then, that the decryption of Maya iconographic motifs is fundamentally similar to the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphs or that the formal conventions of Maya storytelling (Josserand 1991) are relevant to both glyphic and pictorial narratives. The decipherment of a hieroglyph is an intricate process that varies from decipherment to decipherment according to the nature and amount of evidence available. Nonetheless, most productive decipherments—in addition to requiring a familiarity with Mayan languages—rely, to some degree, on patterns of phonetic complementation and/or glyphic substitution as well as consideration of any relevant iconography and ethnography (Houston, Chinchilla, and Stuart 2001:9-10). More specifically, if an undeciphered logogram consistently takes a deciphered syllabogram as a prefix or a suffix, then the syllabogram is a phonetic complement indicating that the logogram signifies a word that begins or ends with the syllable the syllabic sign represents. Likewise, if an undeciphered glyph substitutes for a deciphered glyph and does so consistently and in the same context(s), then the substitution between the glyphs indicates that they are semantically equivalent. In their decipherment of the T539 way ("co-essence") logogram, for example, Stephen Houston and David Stuart (1989) cite evidence that T539 consistently takes a wa prefix and/or a ya suffix, and identify T509 as another hieroglyph that is likely to signify way as well since it is

interchangeable with T539 in at least one context. They also note the imagery cooccurring with the sign, use its iconographic cues to determine which Colonial or modern
definitions of *way* seem most relevant to its ancient usage, and contemplate what, if any,
agreement there is between the Prehispanic evidence and more recent ethnographic
information regarding similar concepts.

Decrypting an iconographic motif is a similarly intricate process that also varies, from decryption to decryption according the nature and amount of evidence available. In my experience, the most productive decryptions depend, to some extent, on patterns of iconographic substitution and/or hybridization as well as consideration of any accompanying texts or ethnographic information that is likely to be relevant. More specifically, if one motif substitutes for another in the same context and/or combines formally with another, then the substitutability and/or hybridization of the motifs indicates that they share a fundamental semantic equivalency. That is, just as more than verb can record the same event, more than one iconographic motif can symbolize the same thing.

The ceiba, for example, is the plant the Maya traditionally identify with the World Tree (Girard 1995:33-34; Thompson 1990:195) and, in Classic Maya art, the World Tree rising up from the Quadripartite Badge is often a highly stylized ceiba (Robertson 1983:59) with Square-nosed Serpents on the ends of its branches (Figure 1.34). In Temple 14 at Palenque, a Square-nosed Serpent stands in for the World Tree as the central element amid the components of the Quadripartite Badge (Figure 1.35a) and, on Yaxchilan Lintel 14, a Carved Spondylus Valve serves the same purpose (Figure 1.35b).

At Yaxchilan, the serpent and the valve are also depicted as the central element in ear flares (Figures 1.35c-d)and are even blended into a composite form in which the serpentine snout assumes the curvilinear shape of the shell carving (1.35e). The interchangeability and combinability of these motifs demonstrates that they are iconographically equivalent as pars-pro-toto symbols of the ceiba variant of the World Tree (Steinbach 1998:32-34). Their equivalency, however, is not complete. Unlike the serpent, the shell carving can also serve as a glyphic element signifying yax ("blue/green," "first") since the yax logogram depicts the same kind of shell—a spondylus valve—from which the carving is made. Moreover, the two motifs highlight different aspects of the tree. The squareness of the serpent's snout recalls the bent shape of a ceiba bloom's pistil and its ophidian nature invites a comparison between the slithering movement of a snake and the upward and outward expansion of the tree's branches as it grows. In contrast, the shell carving—in addition to recalling the bent shape of the pistil—is a glyphic reference to yax as the name of the tree's green color (Boot 2009:207; Kaufman 2003:225; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:126) and as part of yaxte', a common Mayan word for "ceiba" (Boot 2009:209; Kaufman 2003:1114; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:126).

Ordinarily, when two motifs are blended into a composite form, each will relinquish some of its original contours. In the merging of the quatrefoil and the skeletal maw on Naranjo Altar 1 (Figure 2.13e), for example, the quatrefoil loses its upper quadrant to the opening between the maw's tips, and the maw loses its crescent shape to the three remaining quadrants of the quatrefoil. In contrast, when a motif is applied

adjectivally to an object or a figure, it will not change the silhouette of whatever it modifies. Thus, for example, a mirror applied adjectivally to K'awiil to indicate the brilliance of his resplendent skin or the shininess of his polished celt (Houston, Stuart Taube 2006:16), will lie flush against the contours of each and will not alter the shape of either. An adjectival motif is often repeated across someone or something to indicate that the quality it marks is not limited to a single area, but applies to the entire being or object; thus, for example, it is not just the skin on K'awiil's forehead or arm or leg that is resplendent, but all of his skin. Such repetition, however, can also function formally as a design element.

To summarize, since the iconography and hieroglyphic writing of the Classic Maya form a single communication system, I will use the methods of iconographic decryption and hieroglyphic decipherment to trace and analyze the details of the so-called Jaguar Baby myth appearing on a subset of vessels in the corpus of Codex-style pottery, and thereby try to understand what links the sacrifice of a feline infant to the conjuring of an elderly deity and the childhood ritual of a royal heir. Having established the purpose of my project, I will turn in Chapter 2 to an examination of the descriptive details and environmental motifs that characterize and define the settings in which the events of the narrative occur.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Stone and Zender (2011:13-15) refer to such adjectival motifs as "property qualifiers."

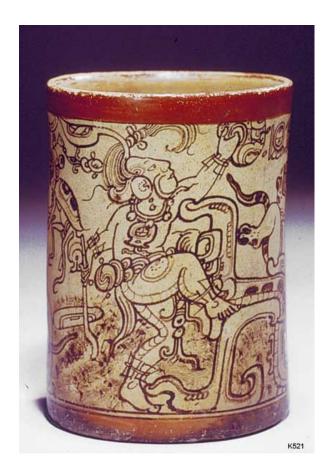


Figure 1.1 Still photo of the Metropolitan Vase, K0521  $\ \odot$  Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.2 Rollout photo of the Metropolitan Vase, K0521  $\ \odot$  Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.3 Map of the Maya Area showing select archaeological sites. Adapted from Maya civilization location map-blank.svg (© Sémhur / Wikimedia Commons / CC-BY-SA-3.0 [or Free Art License]).

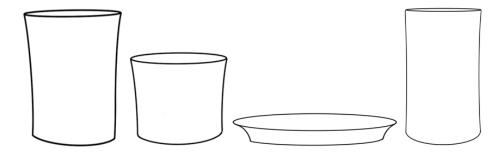


Figure 1.4 Standard vessel forms of the Canonical variant (drawing: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 1.5 Distinctive vessel forms of the Canonical variant (drawing :Penny Steinbach).

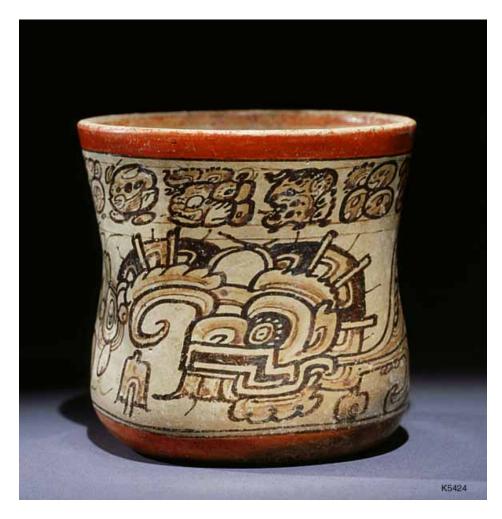


Figure 1.6 Still photo of K5424 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.7 Rollout photo of K5424 © Justin Kerr.

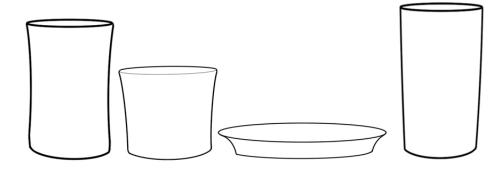


Figure 1.8 Standard vessel forms of the Calligraphic variant (drawing: Penny Steinbach).

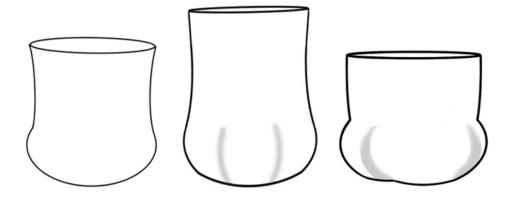


Figure 1.9 Distinctive vessel forms of the Calligraphic variant (drawing: Penny Steinbach)

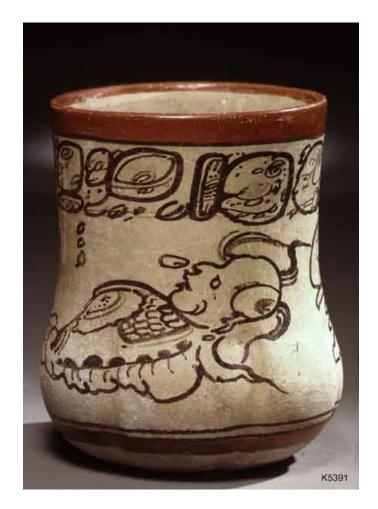


Figure 1.10 Still photo of K5391 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.11 Rollout photo of K5391 © Justin Kerr.

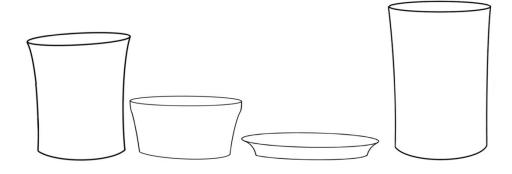


Figure 1.12 Standard vessel forms of the Composite variant (drawing: Penny Steinbach).

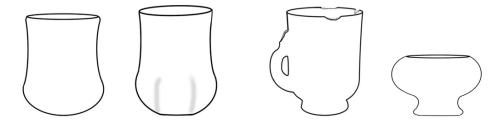


Figure 1.13 Distinctive vessel forms of the Composite variant (drawing: Penny Steinbach).

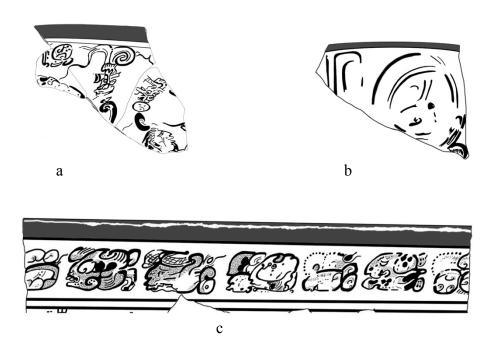


Figure 1.14 Canonical, Composite, and Calligraphic potsherds from Nakbe:

- Canonical (drawing after photo); Composite (drawing drawing after photo); Calligraphic (redrawn after Roberto Lopez).

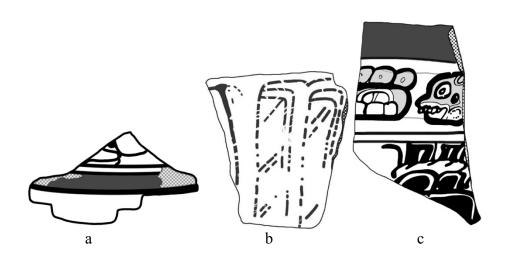


Figure 1.15 Canonical, Composite, and Calligraphic potsherds from El Mirador:

- Canonical (redrawn after Donald Forsyth); a
- Composite (drawing after photo); Calligraphic (drawing after photo). b

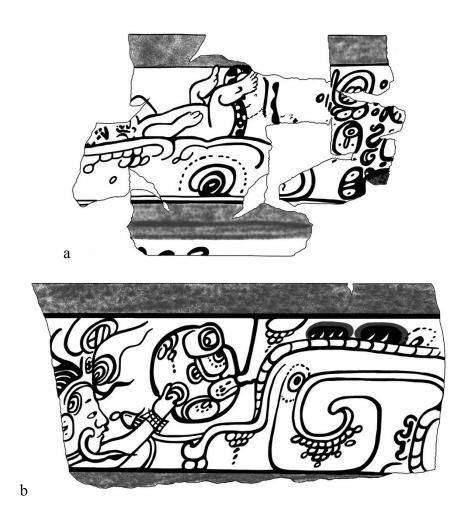


Figure 1.16 Incomplete Canonical bowls recovered at Calakmul:

- a Calakmul Vessel 19 (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- b Calakmul Vessel 19A (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).



Figure 1.17 Calligraphic Vessel found in Tomb 1 of Structure II, Building 2H at Calakmul (drawing after photo).



1.18 Rollout photo of K1152 © Justin Kerr.

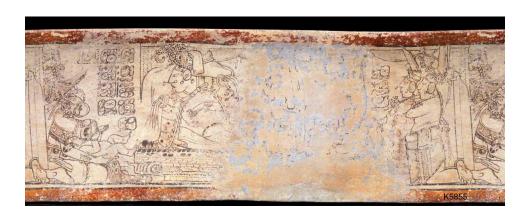


Figure 1.19 Rollout photo of K5855 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.20 Rollout photo of K2208 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.21 Rollout photo of K2213 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.22 Rollout photo of K6754 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.23 Rollout photo of K5164 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.24 Rollout photo of K1645 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.25 Rollout photo of K1200 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.26 Rollout photo of K1003 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.27 Rollout photo of K0531 © Justin Kerr.

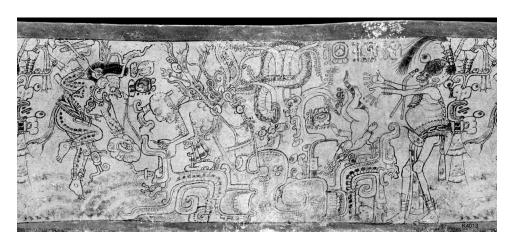


Figure 1.28 Rollout photo of K4013 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.29 Rollout photo of K1768 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 1.30 Rollout photo of K8655 © Justin Kerr.



1.31 Rollout photo of K1370 © Justin Kerr.



1.32 Rollout photo of K1644 © Justin Kerr.

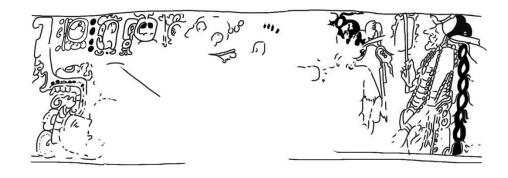


Figure 1.33 MBD Vessel 28 (rollout drawing after photo).

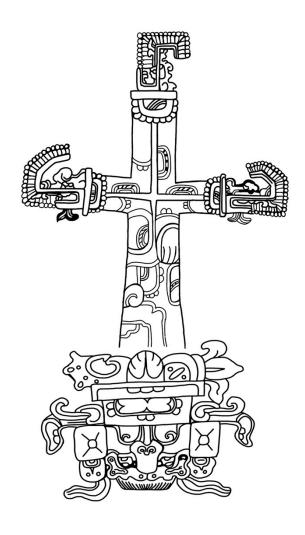


Figure 1.34 World Tree rising up from Quadripartite Badge, Sarcophagus (cover), Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque (redrawn after Linda Schele).

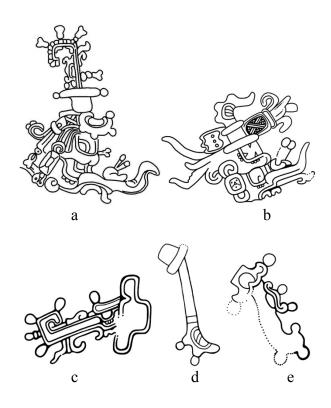
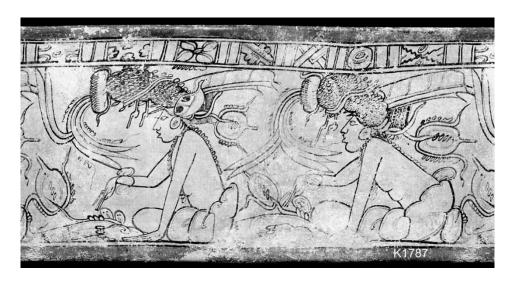


Figure 1.35 Square-nosed serpents and carved spondylus valves:

- a Square-nosed serpent, Temple 14, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b Knobby shell, Lintel 14, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c Square-nosed serpent, Lintel 24, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- d Knobby shell, Lintel 42, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after: Ian Graham);
- e Serpent-shell composite form, Lintel 24, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham).



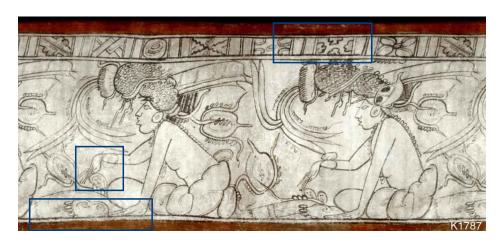


Figure 1.37 Blue frames enclosing areas of notable restoration on K1787 (© Justin Kerr).

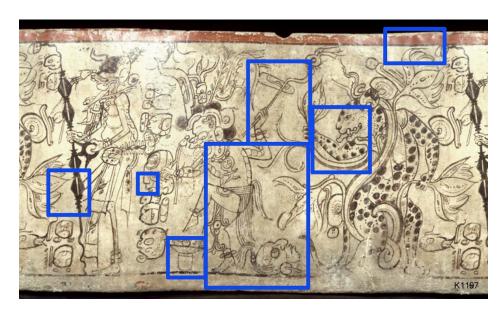


Figure 1.38 Blue frames enclosing areas of false reconstruction on K1197 ( $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr).

# **Chapter 2: The Settings**

The environmental motifs on the Jaguar Baby vessels include a mountain, a tree, and water, as well as curtains and a throne, and correspond to two settings: outdoors, where the sacrifice occurs, and indoors, where the presentation happens. They also include motifs that are not strictly environmental, but convey information about the things within the environment, such as a mirror denoting the sheen of a moist and supple maize leaf, or a jewel denoting the vitality and preciousness of breath. In other words, the iconographic elements comprising the environment are similar to the hieroglyphs in an inscription, in that, it is helpful to examine each one individually before considering them collectively. Nicholas M. Hellmuth came to a similar conclusion in his groundbreaking study of the iconography of the aquatic realm and its inhabitants.

Although he focused on Early Classic art, his observations about Maya iconography (Hellmuth 1987b:103-104) are applicable to the entire Classic era, and are worth quoting at length:

A fundamental principle of Early Classic Maya art must be described before individual Maya creatures are discussed. This is the practice of assembling composite creatures from discrete, standardized elements. The same basic parts can be used to form birds, fish, snakes, and so on. The parts most interchangeable are facial: teeth, snouts, beaks, and eyes. Often the same decorative element can simultaneously serve as two different body parts....All of the parts and their potential double imagery must be understood before the complete creation will recognized. One source of these multiple-service designs is the Maya tradition of utilizing hieroglyphic features as parts of costume. For example, the costume and accessories on the front of Tikal Stela 31contain almost as many hieroglyphs as does the long formal text on the back.

Accordingly, to avoid making long asides about the identifying characteristics of an important and multivalent descriptive detail, such as a mirror or a jewel, while discussing an environmental motif, such as an animate mountain, I am devoting separate subsections to each, so that the iconographic implications of their co-occurrence are more accessible and easier to follow. Moreover, I will discuss the descriptive details first since they can—and do—apply to more than one motif and, as the next chapter will show, to more than one figure. The ability to recognize such details, and to distinguish their different forms—mirrors, for example, can be animate or inanimate—makes the images easier to comprehend visually which, in turn, is essential to following the pictorial narrative and to understanding its iconography.

#### **DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS**

### **Mirrors**

In a personal communication to Linda Schele in 1973 (cited in Schele and Miller 1983:9), Michael Coe identified God K's forehead as a mirror with a smoking cigar piercing it based on his belief that the deity with one leg (Figure 2.1) is the Maya prototype of an Aztec god named Tezcatlipoca ("Smoking Mirror"). Relying on visual evidence, Jeffrey Miller identified the iconic component of a particular logogram (i.e., word sign) as a mirror in 1974, and explored its hieroglyphic implications with Schele at the second meeting of the Palenque Round Table (Figure 2.2a) (cited in Schele 1976:26,

fn.4; see also Schele and Miller 1983:1), but died the next year. In the monograph she published to commemorate their collaboration, Schele outlined the visual evidence that aided Miller in his identification. The evidence she cited is very suggestive, but I think it is insufficient to sustain the identification. Fortunately since then, the efforts of archaeologists and iconologists have revealed how the Pre-Hispanic Maya created, used, and depicted mirrors, which, in turn, makes it possible to confirm that Miller's identification of the word sign's iconic component as a mirror was more correct than not. Furthermore, even though their provisional reading of "mirror" (Schele and Miller 1983:12-14) has not withstood the test of time, David Stuart (2010:291) has argued persuasively that the logogram most likely signifies *lem* a term denoting shininess, such as the resplendence of a polished stone or the radiance of lightning.

Instead of a mirror, I think that the *lem* sign probably depicts a polished stone with a mirror motif *on it* to indicate the glossiness of its surface. Proof that the scribes added the mirror motif to other things, including the bodies of supernatural beings with divinely radiant skin (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:17), is evident in images on Late Classic polychrome pottery in which the color of the mirror differs from the color of the object on which it appears. K0530, for example, is a barrel-shaped vase representing Chahk, a god of rain and lightning (Taube 1992b:22), presiding over several groups of individuals doing various things (Figure 2.3). Behind him is a greenstone carving of a head with a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The logogram is number 617 in Thompson's catalog of Maya hieroglyphs. Despite decades of study, the language used to discuss essential things, such as the distinct components of a hieroglyph, has not been codified. "Iconic component" is the term I use to refer to what a glyph depicts, as opposed to its verbal component, which is the word or syllable it signifies.

trio of celts hanging from it. Embellishing each of the celts is a yellow mirror with a redbrown border and a black reflection line (or two) near its center (Figure 2.4b). At the opposite end of the pictorial field, there is another Chahk shaking a pair of rattles and having the same type of yellow mirror appearing on his back and forearm to characterize his skin as luminous (Figure 2.4c).

In addition to the descriptive mirrors, the barrel-shaped vase depicts a practical mirror that has not surrendered its independent shape to conform to the counters of a body part or another object (Figure 2.4a). There are also no reflection marks on its solid black surface. Instead, its reflectivity is clearly implied by the old god who is gazing into it before applying more pigment to his face (Coe 1978:78). The mirror is fairly ornate. A pair of green earflares adorn its rim (Taube 1992a:175-176), and it is set in a bowl-like container that is brownish red and has a *te* ' ("wood") marking (Schele and Miller 1986:284) on it. Given the color similarity between the bowl-like container and the narrow band bordering each of the yellow mirrors, the band is probably a frame made of wood.

Schele and Miller (1983:16) identified the marks extending across the *lem* logogram's central motif as representing reflection lines on the face of a mirror (Figure 2.5a). They did not, however, comment on the narrow band bordering it. On polychrome pottery, there is often a narrow band intervening between the mirror's rim and frame that is either the same color or paler than the mirror (Figures 2.5b, e-f). Although the band around the mirror serving as the iconic component of the *lem* hieroglyph might depict a simple frame, such as those enclosing the yellow mirrors on the celts and the Chahk

(Figures 2.4b-c), it is just as likely, if not more so, to represent the beveled edge so many Maya mirrors had, especially the tessellated ones made of golden pyrite or silvery hematite.

In addition to serving as a descriptive motif indicating the quality of shininess, mirrors also can also denote a point of passage, such as the entrance to a cave (Taube 1992a:194-197). This is evident from images in which the Classic Maya used the motif representing a mirror interchangeably with another depicting an opening. The mirror motif, for example, can substitute for a cleft or crack in the back of a turtle's shell (Figure 2.6). Like many hieroglyphs, the *lem* logogram has an alternate, animate form known as a head variant because it depicts the head of a being who embodies the sign (Figure 2.2b). The being who embodies the *lem* logogram is simian creature reminiscent of the conventionalized spider monkey who embodies the k'uh ("god") logogram (Figure 2.8) (Ringle 1988). In addition to the mirror motif on his forehead—which visually links him to the *lem* sign's regular form—the shiny simian has a short forelock, crossed eyes, and a bulbous nose as well as a fleshy mouth with a central, tau-shaped tooth (Figures 2.8a). Given that the so-called inanimate form of the *lem* logogram depicts a stone object with a mirror on it, it is debatable if its simian embodiment corresponds to the stone or the mirror; In my opinion, it corresponds to the mirror. Many of the stelae at Copan portray rulers wearing elaborate belt ornaments in the form of an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic head with three celts of polished stone hanging from it. On the east side of Stela B, the reflection mark on each celt is a pair of evenly-spaced lines forming a loop against one side of the mirror motif (Figure 2.7a). In contrast, on the west side of Stela

C, the extra-wide middle celt overlaps most of the other two and, while the narrow band bordering the mirror on either of the flanking celts is visible, the refection marks are not. Moreover, the central celt has an animate mirror motif on it, and the face of the simian creature who embodies the motif appears entirely *within* the confines of a narrow band (Figure 2.7b). In my view—whether it depicts a frame or a beveled edge—this narrow bands serves, both visually and conceptually, as the boundary between the descriptive mirror motif and the object it modifies.

# **Chapaat Maws**

In Classic Maya iconography, the Chapaat is a monstrous centipede with two bony heads and a skeletal midsection (Figure 2.9) (Grube and Nahm 1994:702; Taube 2003:408-410). It embodies a subterranean passageway that is watery, and nearly always has something in it mouth. Near the top of Copan Stela A, for example, a Chapaat Skull clutches a motif between its teeth that is a cross between a waterlily bud and a *kab* curl (Figure 2.10c) (Baudez 1994:259). Similarly, near the middle of Yaxchilan Lintel 25, there is a Chapaat Skull with a piece of vegetation in its mouth from which a big, dark drop of water hangs, and another whose mouth overlaps a feather with dark spots on it (Figures 2.10a-b). The vertical arrangement of the spots on the feather, their darkness of color, and the gradual variation in their size is reminiscent of a design Taube (1992a:84) identified as representing falling rain or water. The black water motif, as I call it, typically consists of three or more dark dots of varying size arranged in a vertical row from largest to smallest (Figure 2.11a-c). In the Classic period, the black water motif is

often integral to a death-eye. Death-eyes are eyeballs embellishing the bodies of chthonic creatures (Coe 1973:16; Thompson 1985:45), most notably bats, fireflies, and centipedes (Figure 2.12). They occur both separately and as part of a decorative fringe. K1398, for example, is a polychrome vase bearing an image of K'inich Ajaw, the Sun God (Figure 2.11a). He is wearing a headdress in the form of a Chapaat Skull with a large death-eye on the tip of its snout, and hanging from the eye, like a stream of tears, is the black water motif. There is also a fringe of death-eyes extending across the top of the headdress, but the fringe part of it is atypical. Instead of being black and solid, as it is on the vase, the fringe is usually light in color and striated, as it is on Yaxchilan Lintel 25 (Figure 2.10a).

The Chapaat Maw is the iconic component of an undeciphered logogram that probably signifies "hole' or a similar word (Schele 1990; Stuart and Houston 1994:71-72) (Figure 2.13a-c). As an iconographic motif, it symbolizes the opening of a subterranean cavity, such as pit in the ground or the threshold of a cave. It derives its shape from the fang-like venomous claws of a centipede (Figure 2.14c) (Taube 2003b:413-416) and, in its simplest and least cephalomorphic form, is a striated, sometimes toothy, crescent with two or more bony plates (Figure 2.13a-d). Naranjo Altar 1 bears a conflation of the maw with the quatrefoil that helps to confirm that the two are iconographically equivalent as motifs representing a point of passage (Figure 2.13e). There are also numerous images of the maw in which the bicephalic nature of the centipede remains apparent with the addition of the Chapaat Skull's bony facial features to each half of its crescentic shape. At Palenque, for example, the monstrous mouthparts on the cover of Pakal's sarcophagus consist of such a maw further embellished with a set of frontal teeth and a beard (Figure

2.14a). Similarly, on the exterior of Structure 9N-82 at Copan, an entire centipede serves as a *totum pro parte* manifestation of the maw (Figure 2.14b). There are also, however, instances of *pars pro toto* in which part of the motif appears in lieu of the whole. On one Jaguar Baby vessel, for example, there is only one cephalomorphic venom claw to mark the feline infant's point of entry into the mountain (Figure 2.15).

Like the Chapaat Maw, the Chapaat Cartouche represents a point of passage between realms. In Classic Maya art, it serves as a frame for mirrors, solar motifs, and ancestors, especially ancestors who appear in the guise of the Sun God (Figure 2.16). Thus, depending upon what it contains, it is also known as an "ancestor cartouche" (e.g., Grube and Nahm 1994:702; Tate 1992:59) a "solar cartouche" (Taube 2003:435), or a "solar mirror cartouche" (Taube 1992a:193). However, instead of designating the motif in reference to what it encloses, which is variable, I prefer to name it for its constituent elements, that is, its shape and the bony centipede heads embellishing it.

In its typical form, the cartouche has four full (Figures 2.16a-b, d) or partial (Figure 2.16c) Chapaat Skulls marking each of its four corners. The arrangement of the heads on the cartouche is similar to the arrangement of the points in a quincunx-like earspool (Figure 2.17b). According to Alfonso Villa Rojas, each of the five points in the correlates with a position of the sun. More specifically, he suggested that the central point corresponds to the sun at zenith, whereas the remaining points correspond to its location at sunrise and sunset on the days of the summer and winter solstices. Thus, the four points are roughly equivalent to the intercardinal points which, in turn, implies that the cardinal points are equivalent to the points midway between the solstitial points

(Clemency Coggins 1980:731; Villa Rojas 1988[1968]:127-134). Given that the cartouche frequently contains solar motifs, including the iconic component of the T544 *k'in* logogram (Figure 2.17a), I have no doubt that the four heads that usually adorn it refer to the solstitial points, or that the additional heads adorning it on Stela 5 at Caracol refer to the cardinal points (Figure 2.16b).

#### **Lunar Crescents**

According to traditional Maya cosmology, the sun travels through the earth every night and, as its companion, the moon makes the same journey at conjunction (Thompson 1985:111, 238; Stone and Zender 2011:59). To pass through the earth, the celestial pair cross the same terrestrial threshold but, the Classic Maya used the Chapaat Cartouche to symbolize it for the sun (Figure 2.16c-d), and the Lunar Crescent to symbolize it for the moon (Figure 2.18). The lunar motif is a crescentic shape that is sometimes partly dark (Figures 2.18d,f, 2.19b) and usually has a short row of dots on it (Figures 2.18c, e, 2.19a-c) and/or in it (Figure 2.18b-d, f). In rare instances, the cartouche and the crescent were combined, which helps to confirm their iconographic equivalency as motifs symbolizing a point of passage. On Stela 1 at Yaxchilan for example, an ancestor sits inside a cartouche that, like its lunar counterpart, has a crescentic shape and a row of dots on it even though it also has a Chapaat Skull marking each of its four corners (Figure 2.18a). A similar image appears on an incised pottery vessel (K6547) now in Berlin at the Museum für Volkerkunde (Figure 2.19d.). However, the cartouche contains the head of

the Sun God rather than the body of an ancestor and, instead of merging with it, the lunar crescent lies within the cartouche and partly overlaps its rim.

It is also debatable whether the lunar motif depicts a crescent moon (Stone and Zender 2011:59) or a crescentic opening (Bassie-Sweet 1991:95) through which the ghostly satellite passes at conjunction. In my opinion, if it were an image of a lunate moon, its shape would be more crescent-like and would never merge with a Chapaat Cartouche (Figure 2.18a) or a quatrefoil (Figure 2.18f). That is not to contend, however, that the distinction between the celestial body and the crescent is unambiguous. On the contrary, the Classic Maya created images in which the crescent appears physically indistinct from the Moon Goddess (Figure 2.19a) or the Lunar Rabbit (Figure 2.18e), both of whom do, indeed, embody the moon. However, instead of confirming that the crescent and the moon are one in the same materially, I think the lack of clear distinction is a means to indicate that the crescent is integral to the moon as the opening that allows it to pass from one realm to another.

# Quatrefoils

In Mesoamerican art in general—and in Classic Maya iconography specifically—the quatrefoil symbolizes an opening (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:352; Guernsey 2012; Stross 1996). The point of passage it marks can be part of the physical boundary between the inside and outside of a body or a structure. On a Composite Codex-style bowl (Figure 2.20), for example, the face embellishing the frog/toad's back has a mouth in the form of a quatrefoil that is three-fourths visible and, on a Canonical Codex-style

vase (Figure 2.21), a half-visible quatrefoil marks a passageway between the building's interior, where there are furnishings, and its exterior, where there are deer.<sup>2</sup> However, the boundary to which the quatrefoil allows passage is often more than physical. Being inside a mountain, for example, is not merely occupying space within a big mound of dirt; it is being in the otherworldly realm of the subterranean, where the spirits of the ancestors live and many of the gods reside (Guernsey 2010:87-88; Taube 2004:81-82). A stone throne from Piedras Negras, for example, portrays a pair of royal ancestors in the ocular cavities of a cephalomorphic mountain (Figure 2.22), and the periphery of Tikal Altar 4 depicts an elderly deity sitting in the quatrefoil-shaped mouth of the same kind of creature (Figure 2.23).

#### **Maize Leaves**

Maize leaves are ubiquitous in Classic Maya art, both as part of the plant itself (Figure 2.24a) and as a descriptive motif implying vitality. Their formal simplicity makes them fundamentally similar to scrolls symbolizing volutes of smoke or flames of fire.

Aside from the context in which it occurs, a scroll representing maize foliage is often identifiable as such from the addition of moisture beads (Figure 2.24c-d) and/or a mirror motif (Figure 2.24d). Collectively, the curvature of the scroll as well as the beads and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The association between mouths and quatrefoils is of great antiquity in Mesoamerica (Guernsey 2012:77-79). Chalcatzingo Monument 9, for example, is a stone sculpture from the Middle Pre-Classic era (900-300 BC) depicting the face of a creature with quatrefoil-shaped mouth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>On maize foliation, moisture beads are a series of three or more small loops appearing side-by-side along the central or lateral line of an individual leaf.

the mirror characterize the maize leaf as supple, lush, and lustrous, rather than brittle, dry, and dull; that is, as something vital.

In its complete form, the *nal* ("place," "ear of maize") logogram (Figure 2.24b) depicts a fresh corncob (Stuart and Houston 1994:21) with a germinated kernel on top of it sprouting one or two leaves (Figures 2.24b). Ordinarily, only the top portion of the logogram is visible and, when it occurs in a pictorial context, I call the seed and its leaves either a nal motif or a spray of maize leaves. The cephalomorphic mountains adorning the corners of Temple 22 at Copan (Figure 2.24c), for example, wear a *nal* motif above their earflares, as does their mountainous counterpart along the base of Bonampak Stela 1 (Figure 2.24d). The *nal* motifs above the earflares on the Stela 1 mountain, however, are unusually elaborate. In addition to having a leaf with an animate mirror on it, each one also includes the head of the Tonsured Maize God as a mature ear of corn (Taube 1992a:46). Sprays of maize leaves also commonly occur as ear-like embellishments on the serpentine heads of fanciful snakes and monstrous centipedes. At Copan, for example, the western end of Altar G1 (Monument 13) depicts the skull of a centipede with an ear-like *nal motif* on either side of it. However, one "ear" bears a regular mirror motif (Figure 2.25a), whereas the other bears its animate counterpart (Figure 2.25b).

## **Jewels**

On many of the Jaguar Baby vessels portraying the sacrifice, the animate mountain has a nostril in the form of a Jester God jewel (Robicsek and Hales 1988:270). In each instance, the thick end of the nostril forms the upper part of the zoomorphic head, and

specifically serves as the supraorbital area above its eye (Figures 2.26e-k). In most of the examples, a pair of cylindrical beads projects from the thin tip of the nostril to mark the breath of the mountain itself. On one vessel (K4385), however, the beads project from the nose of the little zoomorphic jewel to mark its breath, rather than the breath of the mountain (Figure 2.26k). The gem-like nostril on K4385 is the largest and most prominent of the group. Its supraorbital area is also the least nostril-like. Indeed, its curved brow and the prong-like projection above it are what led me to accept it as an example of the Jester God. Although it is a highly unusual use of the motif, it is not unique. On both sides of Copan Stela C, the ruler it depicts holds a ceremonial bar with matching zoomorphic heads on either end of it. On the western side, the heads are Chapaat Skulls (Figure 2.27b) and have fleshy nostrils like the cephalomorphic mountain ordinarily does (e.g., Figure 2.26a-b) but, on the eastern side, the heads are serpentine and each of their nostrils is a little Jester God (Figure 2.27a).

The Jester God is a cephalomorphic jewel that Classic Maya lords and ladies wore as an emblem of sovereignty, either on a headband, a headdress, or directly on top of the head. There are three separate variants of the jewel—piscine (Hellmuth 1987a:127-129; Steinbach 2009, 2011, 2014:2-4; Stuart 2012:129; Taube 1995:99-100; Taube and Ishihara-Brito 2012:148-149), anthropomorphic (Fields 1991; Schele 1979:51; Steinbach 2009, 2011, 2014:2; Stuart 2012:129; Taube and Ishihara-Brito 2012:149), and avian (Hansen 1992:146-148; Steinbach 2009, 2011, 2014:4-7; Stuart 2012:128-129; Taube 1998:454-459; Taube and Ishihara-Brito 2012:149-150) and each variant serves as the jewel on the headband of the vulture that is the iconic component of a logogram

signifying *ajaw* ("lord") (Figures 2.28-2.29). However, since they are equivalent as emblems of sovereignty, the Classic Maya frequently blended them into composite forms (Steinbach 2009, 2011, 2014:7-10). The short, blunt snouts of the head-shaped nostrils on the Jaguar Baby vessels tend to turn downward and, thus, recall the avian Jester God's beak-snout, but the curvilinear shape that is typical of their foreheads is specifically piscine. In its purest (least composite) form, the piscine Jester God is a shark in the same tail-over-head position as the crocodile of the Crocodile Tree (Figure 2.30). Ordinarily, however, the scribes omitted the midsection of the shark's body so that its tail occupies the area immediately above its eyes. They also had a tendency, especially when painting pottery, to blend its tail and supraorbital area into a single, volute-like form that is similar in shape to the upper half of a question mark (Figure 2.31) (Steinbach 2009, 2011, 2014:3-4). The scribes who painted the cephalomorphic nostrils on the Jaguar Baby vessels favored the volute-like form of the piscine Jester God's tail-head (for want of a better term) since its contours are very similar to a fleshy nostril's. Indeed, they are almost identical when one end of the volute is flattened against the other (Figures 2.31cd) or blended with it (Figures 2.31e).

In Classic Maya inscriptions, the general term for a Jester God is *huun*, but when one of the jewels is named individually, its nominal phrase usually includes the word for "shark" (*xook*) (Miller and Martin 2004:69). *Huun* is also the name for a type of paper that was made primarily from the inner bark of a ficus tree (Coe and Kerr 1997:143-145; von Hagen 1999:31-41). It had a cloth-like quality and was well-suited for making headbands and the pages of books. Consequently, the scribes who painted Codex-style

pottery used Jester Gods descriptively to embellish objects made of paper (Steinbach 2009, 2011); Stone and Zender 2011:113; Stuart 2012:131). K760 (Figure 2.32), for example, is a Codex-style vase portraying a pair of simian scribes who hold codices bound with jaguar skin (Coe 1977:331-345). Each scribe wears a piscine Jester God on the front of his headdress to indicate that he is a lord and, yet, the same type of Jester God also adorns each half of both books. But, instead of serving as an emblem of sovereignty as it does on the monkeys, it is a descriptive motif indicating that the pages are made of *huun* and, perhaps, also alluding to paper as an elite item symbolizing authority and economic status (Julia Guernsey, personal communication, 2015).

K1225 (Figure 2.33), like K760, is a Codex-style vessel depicting a pair of simian scribes who hold codices and wear matching Jester Gods. The Jester God they wear, however, is a composite form combining the beak-snout of the avian jewel with the spiral pupils and volute-shaped tail-head of its piscine equivalent. Moreover, one scribe wears it on the front of his headdress as an emblem of sovereignty, while his companion wears it on the back of his hip cloth to indicate it is made of *huun*. Support for this inference comes from another peculiar detail. Each scribe has the end of a belt-like garment extending past his foot. The end of the garment and the end of the codex have the same type of ragged edge. In my opinion, their formal resemblance is iconographically significant and is meant to indicate that they can both be described as *huun* since one is a paper garment and the other is a book with paper pages. Furthermore, there are iconographic details on K760 indicating that the simian scribes on it are wearing paper garments as well. More specifically, each of the scribes on K760 (Figure 2.32) wears a

headband under his headdress that is tied at the back of his neck so that its ends are visible just above his nape. The scribe on the right has a small leaf sprouting from one end of his headband, and a larger and more elaborate version of the same leaf sprouting both from the edge of his garment under his codex and from two places on the back of his hip cloth. Elsewhere, I have argued that the Classic Maya routinely added a leaf to the end of a headband made of bark cloth to differentiate it from one made of animal skin (Steinbach 2014:5, fn.8), and I strongly suspect that the artist who painted K760 added leaves to the garments for the same reason.

Given that the avian Jester God is the iconic component of a logogram signifying huun (Figure 2.34a) (Schele 1991:32-35), using a variant of the jewel iconographically to denote objects made of huun seems very apropos. Yet, to my knowledge, no other scribes did it as frequently or intensively as those who painted Codex-style pottery. It is unsurprising to me then, that they would be among the minority of artists who depicted cephalomorphic nostrils in the form of the Jester God. Most of the actual Jester God jewels still in existence, including the one that was in Pakal's sarcophagus (Figure 2.28a), are carved from green stones such as jade. In his analysis of jade symbolism in Classic Maya religion, Taube (2005:47) noted that jade was "a rarefied embodiment of life essence, not only as maize and life-giving water, but also as a physical manifestation of the breath spirit." Thus, I am inclined to interpret a nostril in the form of a Jester God—the ultimate jewel—as means to emphasis the preciousness of breath as the animating force of life.

#### THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOTIFS

## The Mountain (Witz Head)

The Witz Head symbolizes an animate land mass of substantial elevation, such as a mountain or hill. Formerly known as the "Kawak Monster" (Taylor 1979; Schele and Miller 1986:45), it is the iconic component of a head-variant logogram signifying witz (Stuart 1987:18-23), a common Mayan word for "mountain" or "hill" (Figure 2.35a-b) (Boot 2009:202; Kaufman 2003:432-433; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:125). It is a hodgepodge of terrestrial and zoomorphic traits that ordinarily sits upright with its eyes forward. On all but one of the Jaguar Baby vessels, however, it lies supine with its eyes skyward. The difference in its position is iconographically significant since portraying it vertically highlights it as a place of life from which things grow and emerge, whereas depicting it horizontally underscores it as a place of death into which things enter and die. The vertical witz on K1003, for example, has a snake coming out of it and a small plant growing on top of it (Figure 2.36). In contrast, the feline infant who is falling to his death on K4013 is about to enter the horizontal witz below him (Figure 2.37). Yet, in either position, the witz remains a place of both the living and the dead. On K4013, for example, there is not only a tree growing on the witz next to where the feline infant will slip into it, there is also a snake emerging from a hole in the tree's trunk bearing forth an elderly deity in its mouth. Likewise, on K1003, even though the Witz Head is vertical, the feline infant still falls upon its face after the death spirit throws him because that is where he will pass into the mountain (Figure 2.36). That is, just as the snake can come out of the eye of the witz, the feline infant can enter it. Similarly, even though the top of

the Witz Head is usually a place of emergence, the opening within it can also serve as a point of entrance, as it will for the little jaguar-like fellow lying within it on K1644 (Figure 2.38).

The elements commonly forming the eyes of the Witz Head underscore the cavelike qualities of its ocular cavities. Indeed, they often imply that its eyes are watery holes. More specifically, its eyes (Figure 2.39a) usually consist of the lower part of a motif depicting a waterlily bud (Figure 2.39d) and another depicting the Lunar Crescent (Figure 2.39c, e). The flower is the iconic component of a logogram read as ha' ("water") (Fox and Justeson 1984:55; Stuart and Houston 1994:19) and, although its resemblance to an actual waterlily bud is not especially strong, its appearance is in keeping with how Classic Maya scribes rendered the aquatic plant (Figure 2.39b) (Thompson 1985:72). As noted, in my opinion, the Lunar Crescent does not depict a crescent moon but, instead, symbolizes the terrestrial threshold through which the celestial body passes in and out of the earth. The cavernous nature of the Witz Head's eyes is readily apparent from other examples of the motif. A stone throne from Piedras Negras (Figure 2.22), for example, depicts a royal ancestor within each of its ocular cavities (Martin and Grube 2008:152) and, on a wooden lintel from Tikal, the Foliated Maize God appears inside the eyes of another mountain (Figure 2.40).

The Witz Head seldom has a lower jaw as it does on K1003 (Figure 2.36). When it is lying supine and seen in profile, the long length of its pliant snout is especially obvious. On the Jaguar Baby vessels, the inside of its mouth usually contains a molar and a tooth-like scroll. When the head is vertical (upright), the molar resembles a

lowercase letter m (Figures 2.36, 2.39f, 2.40), and when it is horizontal (supine), it looks like the number 3 (Figure 2.41). The scroll begins in front of the molar and runs along the underside of the scaly snout before curling sharply towards the ground (e.g., Figures 2.36, 2.38f). Viewed in tandem with the molar, the shape of the scroll is visually similar to the rather serpentine teeth the Witz Head sometimes has (e.g., Bonampak Stela 1, Figure 2.39f). If the end of the scroll is bifurcated, as it is on several vessels (e.g., Figures 2.37-2.39), then only its lower half resembles a fang. Depending on the example, the markings on the scroll characterize it as stony or foliate. The stony scrolls, such as those on K1003 (Figure 2.36) and K1644 (Figure 2.38), have *kawak* markings (Schele and Miller 1986:45; Schele and Matthews 412) on them and are, thus, covered with the same assortment of dotted lines, semi-circles and "grape bunches" as the rest of the *witz*. In contrast, most of the foliate scrolls have the striations and moisture beads characteristic of a maize leaf (e.g. Figures 2.42-2.43), and one even has an animate mirror on it (Figure 2.43).

The long snout of the Witz Head turns up and away from the scroll. Instead of being marked with *kawak* motifs, it has the spotted skin and ventral scales of a snake (Figure 2.44). It also has a cephalomorphic mirror motif along its inner edge that typically faces forward if the mountain is horizontal, and downward if it is vertical. From an aesthetic point of view, the animate mirror imparts a fierce intensity to an otherwise somnolently impassive creature. Indeed, with its big eyes, bulbous nose, and gaping, fleshy mouth, the simian face embodying the mirror on the end of the Witz Head's snout often appears confrontational. On one vessel, for example, the hyperextension of its

lower jaw and the menacing glare of its eyes creates the impression that it is straining forward in a futile attempt to lunge at the death spirit (Figure 2.44). Likewise, on another, it locks eyes with the ax-wielding rain god in a grimacing stare (Figure 2.45). In Classic Maya iconography, serpents are strongly identified with lightning, and according to traditional Maya beliefs, mountains are a source of lightning because the gods who control or manifest it dwell inside the earth (Spero 1991:187). Moreover, *kawak* (or its cognate) is a term for "lightning" in various Mayan languages, and *lem*—Stuart's proposed reading for the regular and head-variant (i.e., animate) mirror signs—is the root of various terms for lightning as well (Schele and Miller 1983:13). With that in mind, it is conceivable that the Witz Head's highly prominent and weirdly animate snout is meant to allude to lighting striking from within the mountain, which would make the Witz Head, like the Chapaat, a terrestrial symbol with a dangerous mouth.

A glyphic motif once read as *sak nik* ("white flower") (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:183; Houston and Taube 2000:283) embellishes the brow of the Witz Head on K1003 (Figures 2.35f-2.36).<sup>4</sup> Although its possible hieroglyphic significance remains a point of debate, its location and floral nature suggests that the *witz* where the sacrifice occurs is a manifestation of Flower Mountain. Widely portrayed throughout ancient Maya art, Flower Mountain arises from primordial waters to serve as the point of contact between the sky above and the watery underworld below (Taube 2004:81; Guernsey 2012:87). As Taube (2004:81) notes, it is also where the ancestors dwell, and where they

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Linda Schele discussed the *sak nik* reading during her workshop at the 1992 Maya Meetings in Austin, and the transcript of it includes a letter in which Nikolai Grube proposed his reading of T533 as *nik* ("flower") and another in which David Stuart expressed his reservations about it.

and celestial deities ascend into the sky. As will be argued, the elderly deity in the snake is born in a subterranean shrine, and the feline infant goes underground as an offering so that the ancient one in the serpent can go aboveground without disrupting the spiritual balance between the realms (Figure 2.37). Although he is not overtly supernal like a sun god, God N—according to Simon Martin (2007:9-11)—does have a celestial aspect (evident from his role as a sky-bearer), and the elderly deity in the snake—who, it will be argued (in the next chapter), is a specific incarnation of God N—presumably does as well. At the very least, when he and his serpent emerge from within the tree to enter the aboveground realm of the sky, they do so only after passing through the witz under the tree, and thereby follow a pathway that accords with a belief in a mountain that is a threshold between realms. The idea of such a place among the Maya extends far back into the Pre-Classic era, when the creation of pyramidal structures with quatrefoil shapes expressed a comparable notion by combining the foundation of a mountainous edifice with a symbolic form used throughout ancient Mesoamerica to denote a passageway between realms (Guernsey 2012:87-88), and carries forward into the present among members of a Tz'utujil Maya community in Santiago Atitlan, where the concept of "Flowering Earth Mountain" serving as the axis mundi and supporting the ancestral tree that is "the source and endpoint of life,") still exists (Carlsen and Pretchel 1991:27; Taube 2004:81).

### The Water

To imply the presence of water, Classic Maya artists depicted waterlilies, shells, and fish. They also used iconographic symbols such as waterbands, water stacks, and shell scrolls to indicate it directly (Hellmuth 1987b:101; Houston 2010:70-75; Robicsek and Hales 1981:115-117, 137; Schele and Miller 1986:47; Spinden 1975[1913]:18-20) (Figure 2.47). The scribes who painted Codex-style pottery did all of the above as well. To represent the black water in the black hole where the Maize God emerges, for example, the scribe who painted the Codex-style vessel known as the Cosmic Plate created an elaborate black waterband that incorporates water stacks, rows of bubbles, and the hieroglyphic toponym naming the black water place (Stuart and Houston 1994:72) (Figure 2.48, interior). He painted a similarly elaborate waterband on the exterior of the vessel (Figure 2.48, exterior). It, too, has black water stacks extending across its top, and contains rows of bubbles but, instead of alternating with a hieroglyphic toponym, the bubbles alternate with two iconographic motifs. One of the motifs is a waterlily pad bearing a simplified "diamond-and-dot" pattern inside it, while the other is a spondylus valve—note its crenellated margin—embellished with a trio of beads and a scroll.

However, the scribes who painted Codex-style pottery also displayed a keen interest in portraying water in a manner more suggestive of its amorphous fluidity. To do so, they used the brown-black slip to make a wash of varying darkness that they applied in various ways to hint at the volatility of water as it ripples, engulfs, or splashes.<sup>5</sup> K6979 (Figure 2.49), for example is a Codex-style bowl depicting the dressing of the Maize God

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Robicsek and Hales (1988:271) credit Lin Crocker as the first to suggest that the brown wash denotes water.

and bearing a text referring to his death metaphorically as a "water-entering" (*och-ha'*) (Stuart 1998:388). The event occurs as the Maize God, his four female attendants, and his two sons stand waist-deep in water. To represent the rippling water engulfing their bodies, the scribe painted a pair of zigzagging lines in two bands that indent or darken slightly around each individual or pair. Similarly, K8201 is one of a group of Codex-style vessels portraying another event—Robicsek and Hales (1981:71, 80-82) called it The Confrontation—in which the participants are standing in deep water (Figure 2.50). To imply the sloshing of the water around the two central figures approaching each other, the painter used a stippling of wash across the pictorial field that obscures the lower halves of their bodies. K1248 belongs to the same group of vessels, but the scribe who painted it opted to represent the water with a wash of varying darkness containing a Waterlily Skull with a fish nibbling at its flower (Figure 2.51).

The sacrifice of the feline infant (or his equivalents) occurs in a watery location (Robicsek and Hales 1988:271), and the scribes who painted the vessels represented its wateriness in various ways.<sup>6</sup> On the Metropolitan Vase, for example, the level of the water rises and falls, and the dappled wash that gives it color surrounds, but does not obscure the bodies within it (Figure 2.52). K1152, in contrast, has a narrow band of stippled darkness that leaves the *witz* entirely visible, but engulfs the bodies of the death spirit and the rain god (Figure 2.53). The scribe who painted K1644 favored a similar

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> To maximize the visibility of the individual figures, I often omit the water wash along with the background of the vessel when making a cutout version of each rollout photograph. Thus, when considering the details of a vessel, it is best to consult an illustration of the uncut rollout as well to retain a sense of the object's unaltered appearance.

band, but now all that remains of it is a tiny bit between the baby's tail and the death spirit's necklace (Figure 2.54). He also painted water motifs on the inside of the vessel, and as Robicsek and Hales (1981:41) describe them, they are likely very similar to the aquatic symbols embellishing the interior (Figure 2.55) and/or underside (Figure 2.56) of the Jaguar Baby vessels recently recovered from Calakmul. The scribe who painted K2207 (Figure 2.57) preferred dappled swirls, and the one who embellished K2008 (Figure 2.58) favored a pale wash with a smattering of spots, some of which overlap the figures. In my opinion, much of the water wash on K1003 (Figure 2.59) is a modern addition serving to disguise significant areas of erosion around the lower half of the jaguar, much of the firefly, and the lower part of the death spirit, including his backrack.

### The Tree

The trees on the Jaguar Baby vessels are fairly naturalistic. At the very least, they are more obviously trees than the Witz Head is a mountain. Yet, like the mountain, each tree contains a hollow space through which things can pass. The tree on K1815 grows on top of the Witz head (Figure 2.60). It has a hole in its trunk directly behind the head of the feline infant who will slide down through the tree on his way into the mountain. Most of the details of the motif representing the opening in the tree are now missing (Figure 2.61). However, from what remains, I suspect the motif was three-fourths of a quatrefoil with a dark inner edge, as my reconstruction illustrates (Figure 2.62). Quatrefoils also appear on the trunks of trees in the art of Izapa (Guernsey 2012:84), an exceptionally large center of commerce that prospered in the Late Pre-Classic era. Located above the

Pacific coastal plain in what is now the modern Mexican state of Chiapas, Izapa was also the source of a highly distinct sculptural style (Guernsey 2006:70) that heavily influenced the art of its trading partners, including the Maya.

The tree on K4013 bears the face of the supernatural who embodies the *te'* ("tree") logogram on its trunk, and surmounts the conjuncture between the conjoined Witz Heads (Figure 2.37). More specifically, it grows on top of the common brow they share and over the crevice within it. It also overlaps the Chapaat Maw marking the opening through which the cat-like baby will enter the mountain on the right. Like its counterpart on K1815 (Figure 2.60), the tree on K4013 has a hole in it, but instead of being the point of entry for the feline infant, it is the point of emergence for the snake bearing the elderly deity in its mouth (Figure 2.37). Furthermore, the motif representing the hole is not a quatrefoil, but a dark striated crescent (Figure 2.63) reminiscent of the simplified Chapaat Maw that is the iconic component of an undeciphered logogram (Figure 2.13c). It is also taking the place of the mirror that ordinarily adorns the forehead of the being whose face appears on the trunks of trees an embodiment of the *te'* logograph (Figures 2.64-2.65).

In Classic Maya art, the Tree God—who is the patron of the "month" Paax (Thompson 1985:115-116), and thus sometimes called the Paax God (e.g., Taube 1988:337)—seldom occurs as a complete being with a whole body (Figure 2.66). Instead, he is usually just a face that is combined with a floral motif to indicate that it represents a tree, rather than a flower or non-arboreal plant. One vessel, for example, portrays a pair of waterlily flowers (one open, one closed) sprouting from the Tree God's head, and thereby indicates that the flowers are part of a waterlily tree. The arboreal

being's face also adorns the trunk of a primordial tree on a Canonical Codex-style vessel called the Blowgunner Vase (Figure 2.65). However, in addition to confirming that the floral motif depicts a tree, the tree spirit's head also serves—in conjunction with the shell ornament protruding from its side—as a glyphic reference to yax-te', which literally means "first tree" or "green tree," and is a common Mayan word for "ceiba" (Stuart 2007a). However, since the tree does not have a spikey trunk or resemble the highly stylized ceibas familiar from the art of Palenque, such as the one gracing the lid of Pakal's sarcophagus (Figure 1.34), I strongly suspect that the purpose of designating as a yax-te' was not to identify its species or color, but to denote its primordial nature. More specifically, I think it is highly likely that yax-te' was a designation for the World Tree serving as the axis mundi before it was a name for a specific plant, and that the ceiba acquired the name through its association with the sacred tree. Be that as it may, the Tree God does not have a lower jaw, and typically has a jaguar paw above either ear (Figures 2.63-266). The position of the jaguar paw, however, varies; sometimes it is against the tree (e.g., Figure 2.64), and sometimes it protrudes from it (Figure 2.65) and, thus, on one Jaguar Baby vessel, claw marks run down the tree's trunk because, as it grew, the nails of the paw scratched it (Figure 2.63).

## The Curtains and the Throne

To indicate the luxurious and courtly setting in which the presentation occurs, the scribes depict a throne cushion on a platform within a curtained space large enough to accommodate an enthroned lord and some of his retinue (Figure 2.67). Made of a lightly-

colored material that is gathered into swags, the short curtains hang well above the individuals below. On two of the vessels, the throne cushions are spotted with black and their appearance is likely meant to imply that they are adorned with jaguar skin.

Having thoroughly examined the descriptive details and environmental motifs where the events of the narrative occur, I will turn in Chapter 3 to a discussion of its protagonists. As explained in my Introduction, all of these distinct elements—the descriptive details, the environmental motifs, the figures, and the hieroglyphs—work collectively, and if the goal is to understand the narrative that the Jaguar Baby vessels convey, it is important to consider the separate components individually, and how they relate to one another, before attempting to understand how they function as a whole.

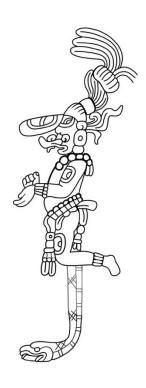


Figure 2.1 K'awiil, Lintel 3, Yaxchilan (redrawn, with modification, after Ian Graham).

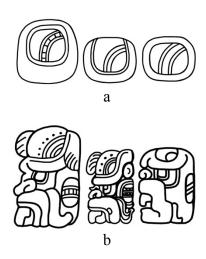


Figure 2.2 Regular and animate variants of the *lem* logograph:

- a Three examples of the regular variant (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- b Three examples of the animate variant (redrawn after Matthew Looper).

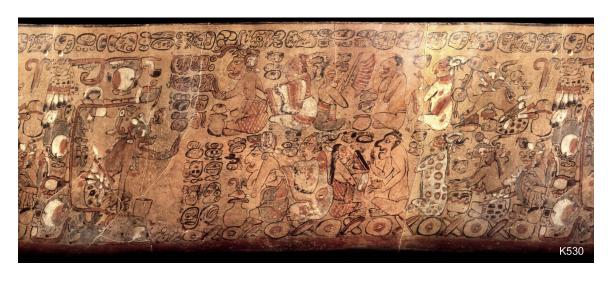


Figure 2.3 Rollout photo of K0530 © Justin Kerr.

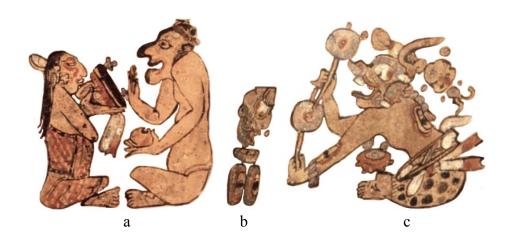


Figure 2.4 Mirrors on K0530, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a Elderly deity using black mirror to apply pigment to his face;
- b Yellow mirror motifs adorning trio of celts;
- c Chaak with yellow mirrors motifs adorning arm and back.

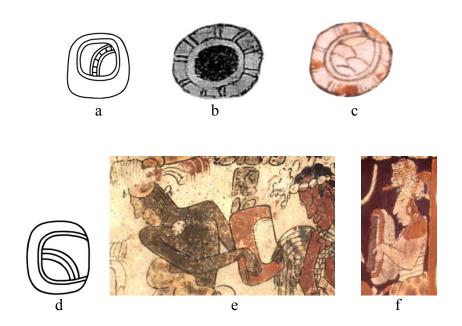


Figure 2.5 Narrow band bordering mirror:

- a Lem logograph with full mirror motif (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- b Framed black mirror, K6610, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c Tessellated mirror, K1440, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d Lem logograph with profile mirror motif (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- e Framed yellow mirror seen in profile, K1454, detail © Justin Kerr;
- f Framed black mirror seen in profile, K2695, detail © Justin Kerr.

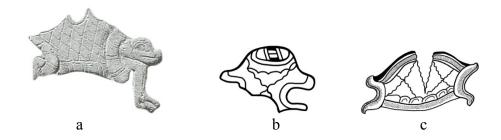


Figure 2.6 Turtle shells:

- a Turtle with cleft in back of shell, K4705, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b Turtle shell with mirror, Detaille Vase, detail (redrawn after Nicholas Hellmuth);
- c Turtle shell with crack, polychrome vase, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).

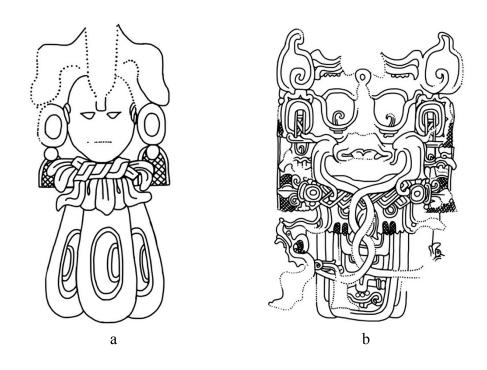


Figure 2.7 The T617 and T1017 mirror motifs on celts:

- a Regular *lem* mirror motif on three celts, Stela B (east side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Anne Dowd);
- b Animate *lem* mirror motif on central celt, Stela C (west side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Barbara Fash).

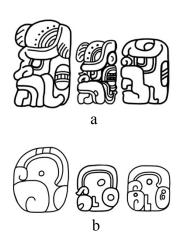


Figure 2.8 Animate variants of the *lem* and *k'uh* logographs:

- a Three examples of the *lem* logograph (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- b Three examples of the *k'uh* logograph (redrawn after Matthew Looper).

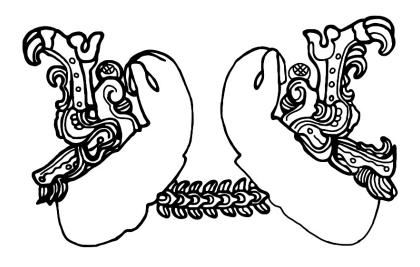


Figure 2.9 The Chapaat, a bony monstrous centipede with two heads, Stela I (west side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).

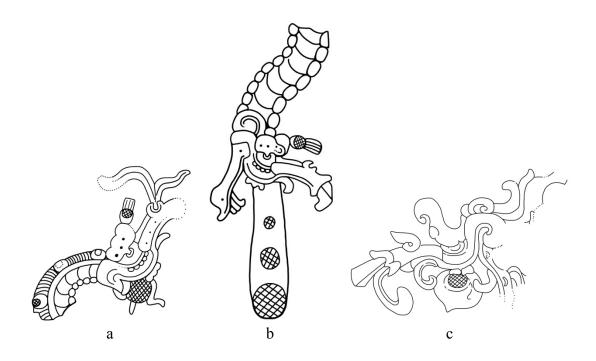


Figure 2.10 Water and/or earth motifs in the mouth of the Chapaat:

- a Black water drop with embellished with waterlily sepals, Lintel 25, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b Spots on feather resembling drops of black water, Lintel 25, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c Conflation of waterlily and *kab* curl, Stela A (east side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Anne Dowd).

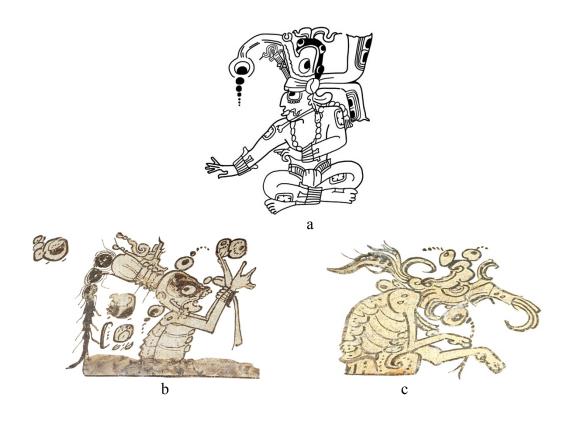


Figure 2.11 The Black Water Motif:

- a Dripping from death-eye on the Sun God's Chapaat headdress, K1398, detail (drawing after photo);
- b Dripping from death-eyes on death spirit's head (note hair styled to mimic motif), K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c Dripping from death-eye in mouth of bisected cosmic creature, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

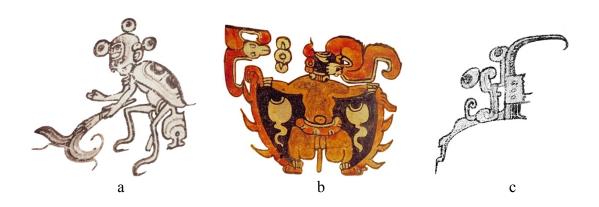


Figure 2.12 Death-eyes:

- a On the head of a firefly, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b On the wings of a bat (with optic nerve still attached), K1286, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c On the cephalomorphic venom claw of a centipede, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

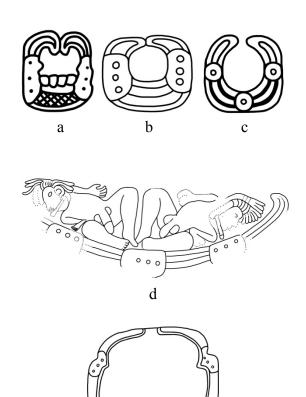


Figure 2.13 The Chapaat Maw:

- a T769, Stela A (south side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b T769, Stela J (east side), Quirigua, detail (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- c T591, Page 39c, Dresden Codex, detail (redrawn after Eric Thompson);
- d Bodies in Chapaat Maw, Stela 14, Uxmal, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- e Conflation of Chapaat Maw and quatrefoil, Altar 1, Naranjo, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham).

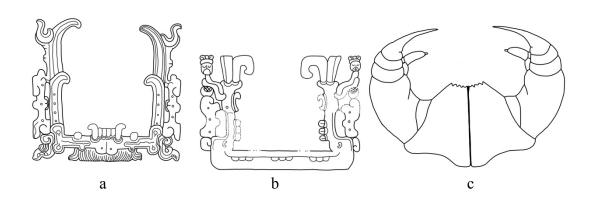
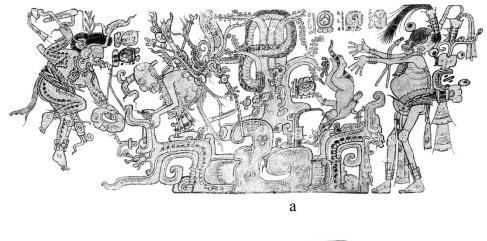


Figure 2.14 Bicephalic Chapaat Maws:

- a Sarcophagus (cover), Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b Structure 9N-82, Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c Venom claws of a centipede (redrawn after Karl Taube).





- $2.15\,$  Cephalomorphic Chapaat Maw on K4013, details  ${\mathbb O}$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):
- In context; Isolated.

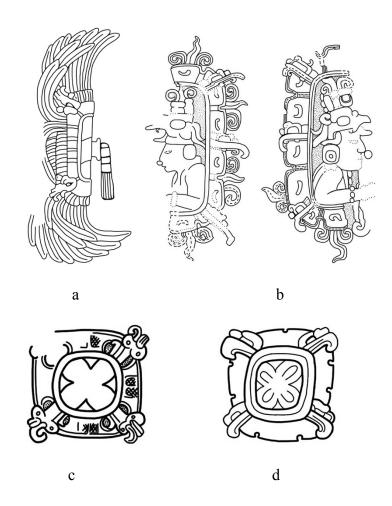


Figure 2.16 The Chapaat Cartouche as a frame for mirrors, ancestors, and solar motifs:

- a Framing a mirror embellished with a tasseled earflare-like ornament, Stela 11, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- b Framing ancestors, Stela 5 (front), Caracol, detail (redrawn after Carl Beetz);
- c Framing a k'in motif, Stela 1 (front), Tikal, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- d Framing a *k'in* motif, Stela 10 (front), Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).

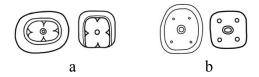


Figure 2.17 The *k'in* (T544) logograph and the *bih/bi* hieroglyph:

- Two examples of the *k'in* logograph (redrawn after Matthew Looper); Two examples of the *bih/bi* hieroglyph (redrawn after Matthew Looper).



Figure 2.18 The Lunar Crescent:

- a Conflation of the Lunar Crescent and Chapaat Cartouche, Stela 1, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- b Variable element for the month of Ch'en, Lintel 3, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after Huberta Robison);
- c T683 (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- d T683 (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- e Variable element for the month of Ch'en, Stela 2, Sacchana, detail (redrawn after Huberta Robison);
- f Variable element for the month of Ch'en, Stela 17, Copan, detail (redrawn after Huberta Robison).

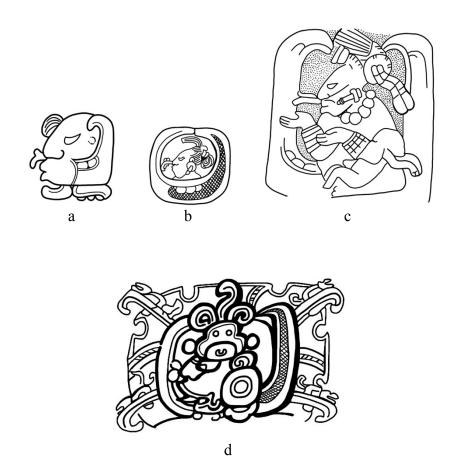


Figure 2.19 The Lunar Crescent, the Moon Goddess, and the Rabbit:

- a Moon Goddess portrait glyph with infixed Lunar Crescent, Lintel 23, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- b Moon Goddess inside Lunar Crescent, Stela 19, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- c Moon Goddess and Lunar Rabbit in Lunar Crescent, Lintel 2, Chicazapote, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- d Lunar Crescent conflated with Chapaat Maw, K6547, detail (drawing after photo).

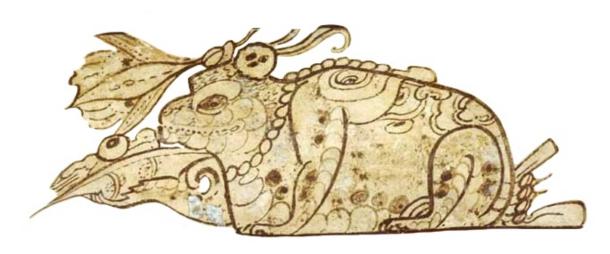


Figure 2.20 Animate mirror motif with quatrefoil-shaped mouth on the back of a frog/toad on K4116, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.21 Rollout photo of K1182 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.22 Throne, Piedras Negras, K4899 © Justin Kerr.

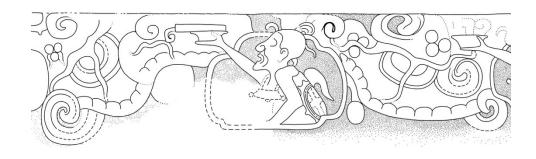


Figure 2.23 Old god sitting inside the quatrefoil-shaped mouth of a cephalomorphic mountain, Altar 4 (periphery), Tikal, detail (redrawn after William Coe).

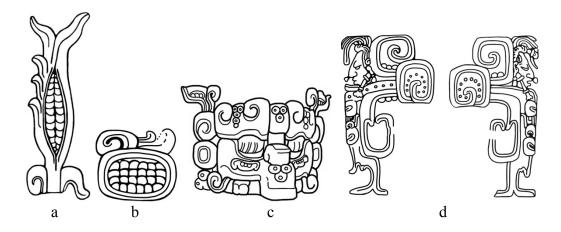


Figure 2.24 Maize and the *nal* motif:

- a Maize ear inside leaves, Temple of the Sun (south jamb), Palenque, detail (redrawn after Merle Greene Robertson);
- b Nal logograph, Stela 31 (back), Tikal, detail (redrawn after William Coe);
- c Cephalomorphic mountain with *nal* motif above earflare, Temple 22, Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d Elaborate *nal* motif with Maize God as ear of corn and animate mirror motif on leaves, Stela 1, Bonampak, detail, (redrawn after Linda Schele).

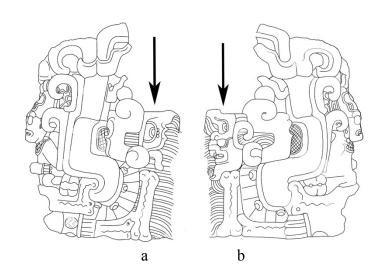


Figure 2.25 The *nal* motif as an ear-like embellishment on Chapaat Skull:

- a *Nal* motif with mirror motif on leaf, Altar G1 (south side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Anke Blanck);
- b *Nal* motif with animate mirror motif on leaf, Altar G1 (north side), Copan detail (redrawn after Anke Blanck).

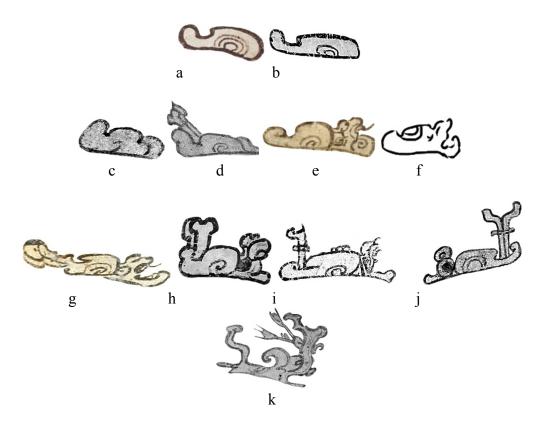


Figure 2.26 The nostrils of each Witz Head on the Jaguar Baby vessels:

- a K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b K1003 (rotated), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo);
- g K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- k K4385, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

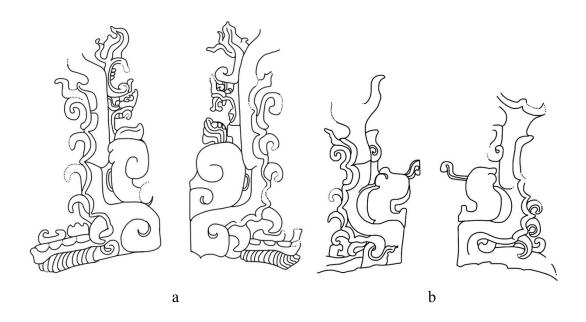


Figure 2.27 Cephalomorphic nostrils on Copan Stela C:

- a Serpentine heads with head-shaped nostrils in the form of the Jester God (east side), detail (redrawn after Barbara Fash);
- b Chapaat Skulls with fleshy nostrils (west side), detail (redrawn after Barbara Fash).

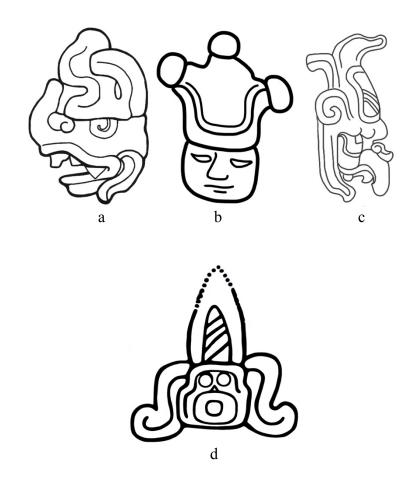


Figure 2.28 The three separate variants of the Jester God:

- a Piscine, Sarcophagus, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn, with modification, after Linda Schele);
- b Anthropomorphic (naturalistic face), Oval Palace Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c Avian, Sarcophagus (cover), Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d Anthropomorphic (stylized face), Monument 26 (front), Quirigua, detail (redrawn after Matthew Looper).

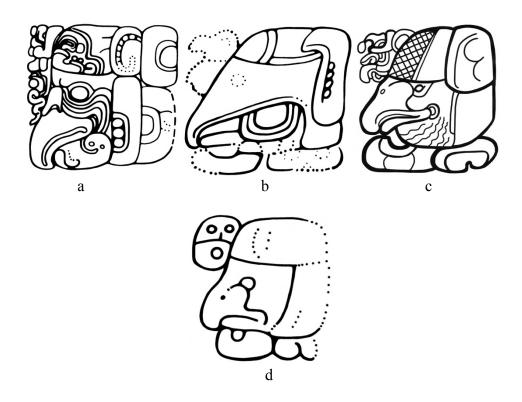


Figure 2.29 The Ajaw Vulture wearing each variant of the Jester God jewel on its headband:

- a Piscine jewel, Stela 5 (left side), Tikal, detail (redrawn after William Coe);
- b Anthropomorphic jewel (naturalistic face), Stela 23, Naranjo, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham );
- c Avian jewel, Palace Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d Anthropomorphic jewel (stylized face), Monument 9, Tonina, detail (redrawn after Peter Mathews).

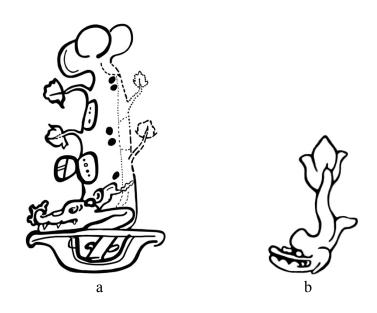


Figure 2.30 The Crocodile Tree and the Piscine Jester God:

- a Crocodile Tree in bowl, K1607, detail (drawing after photo);
- b Piscine Jester God, Oval Palace Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).

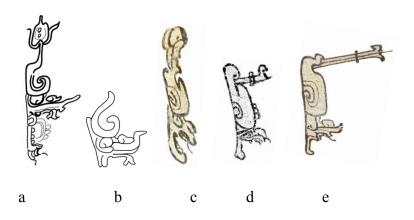


Figure 2.31 Similarities between the contours of the Piscine Jester God's tail-head and a fleshy nostril (nostrils rotated for comparison):

- a Piscine Jester God with volute-shaped tail head, K0760, detail (drawing after photo);
- b Piscine Jester God with volute-shaped tail head, K2796, detail (drawing after photo);
- c Cephalomorphic nostril, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d Cephalomorphic nostril, K4013 (left), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e Cephalomorphic nostril, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

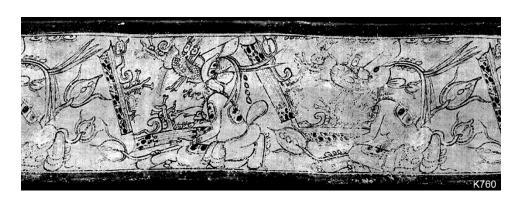


Figure 2.32 Rollout photo of K0760 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.33 Rollout photo of K1225 © Justin Kerr.

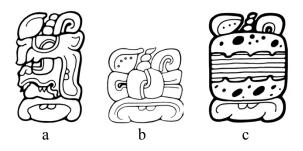


Figure 2.34 Trio of huun logographs, each with a hu prefix and a na suffix:

- a Huun logograph depicting an avian Jester God (redrawn after Mark Van Stone);
- b Huun logograph depicting a headband (redrawn after Mark Van Stone);
- c Huun logograph depicting a codex (redrawn after Mark Van Stone).

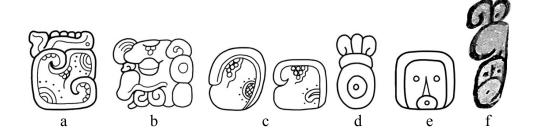


Figure 2.35 Hieroglyphs relevant to the Witz Head:

- a Witz logograph with wi superfix (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b Witz head-variant hieroglyph (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c *Kawak* hieroglyphs (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- d Sak logograph (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- e T533 logograph (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- f Sak-? appellation of Witz Head on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

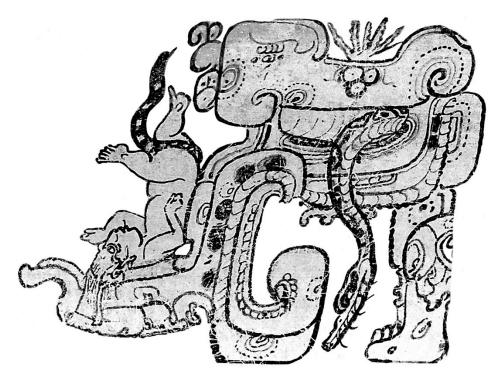


Figure 2.36 The Witz Head on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

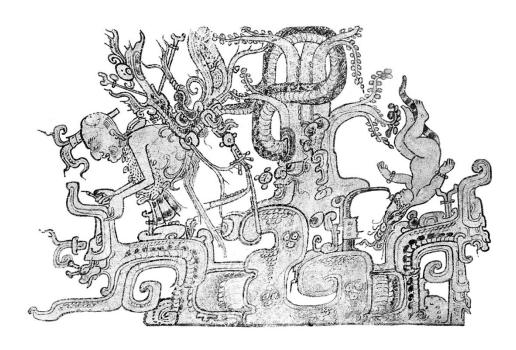


Figure 2.37 The Witz Heads on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.38 The Witz Head on K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

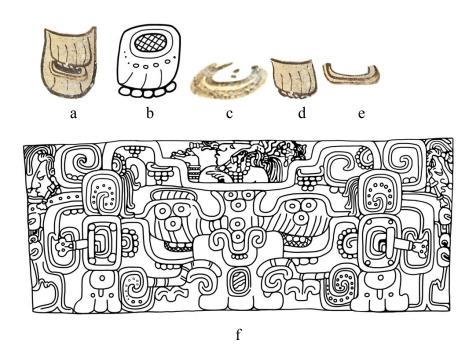


Figure 2.39 Components of a Witz Head's eye resembling a waterlily bud and a crescent:

- a Witz Head's eye, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b *Ha'* logograph depicting a waterlily bud, Piedras Negras Lintel 3, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- c Lunar Crescent from the center of death spirit's backrack, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d Witz Head's upper eyelid, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e Witz Head's under eye area, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr; cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f Witz Head, Bonampak Stela 1, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).



Figure 2.40 Foliated Maize God inside the eye of a Witz Head, Lintel 3, Temple VI, Tikal, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).



Figure 2.41 Calakmul Vessel 19A (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

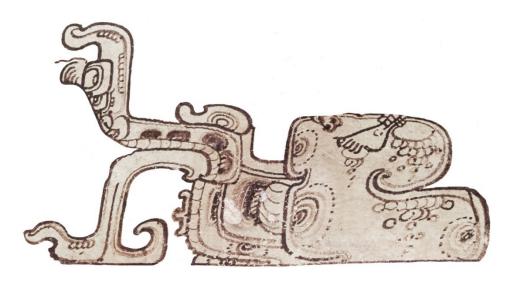


Figure 2.42 The Witz Head on K0521, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

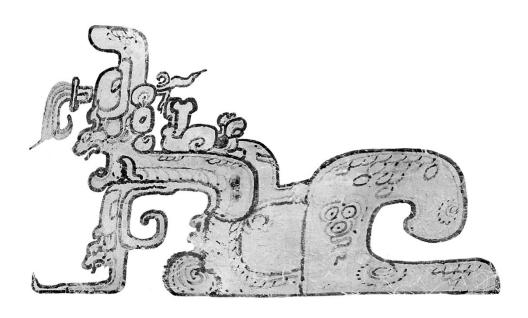


Figure 2.43 The Witz Head on K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

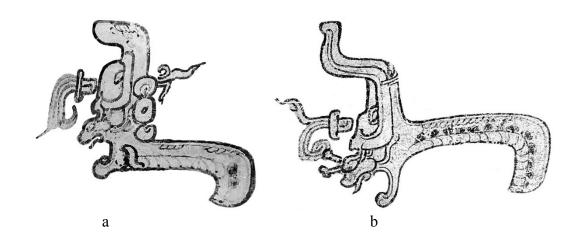


Figure 2.44 Animate mirror on the Witz Head's snout:

- K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach); K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

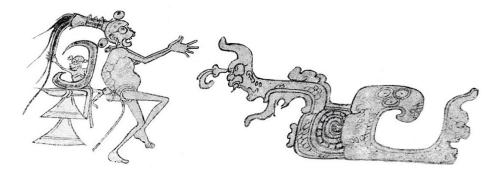


Figure 2.45 The Witz Head and the death spirit on K1815, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.46 The Witz Head and Chahk on K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.47 Waterband with bubbles, shell scrolls, and water stacks (redrawn after Linda Schele).

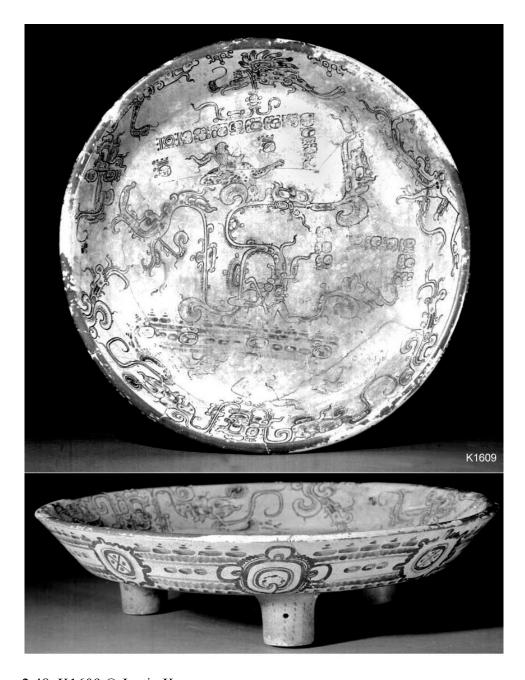


Figure 2.48 K1609 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.49 Rollout photo of K6979 © Justin Kerr.

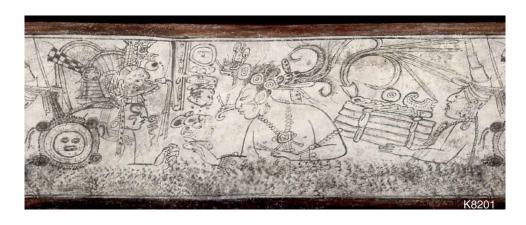


Figure 2.50 Rollout photo of K8201 © Justin Kerr.

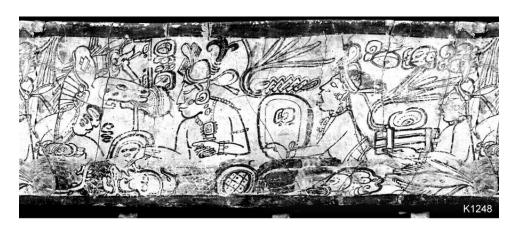


Figure 2.51 Rollout photo of K1248  $\ \odot$  Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.52 Rollout photo of K0521 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.53 Rollout photo of K1152 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.54 Rollout photo of K1644 © Justin Kerr.

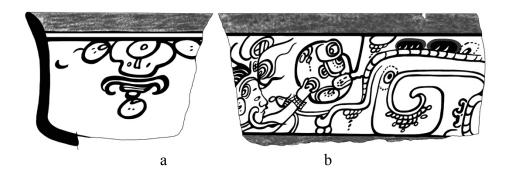


Figure 2.55 Calakmul Vessel 19A:

- a Aquatic motif on bowl's interior (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- b Witz Head and rain god on bowl's exterior (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

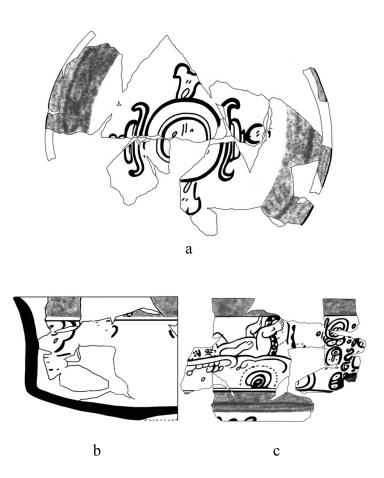


Figure 2.56 Calakmul Vessel 19:

- a Aquatic motif on bowl's underside (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- b Aquatic motif on bowl's interior (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- c Witz Head and feline infant on bowl's exterior (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

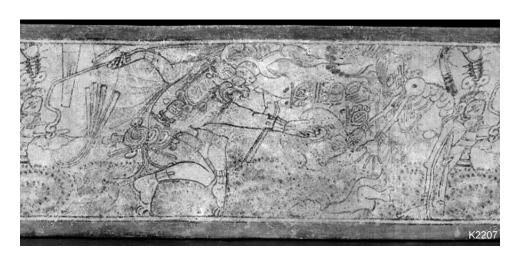


Figure 2.57 Rollout photo of K2207 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.58 Rollout photo of K2208 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.59 Rollout photo of K1003 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 2.60 Rollout photo of K1815 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

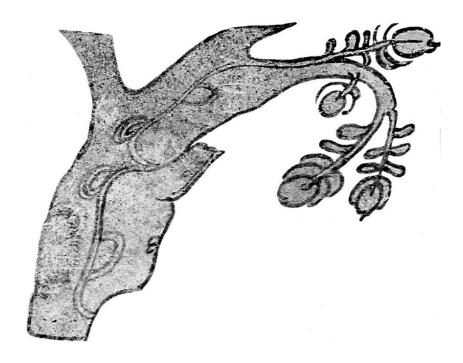


Figure 2.61 The tree on K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

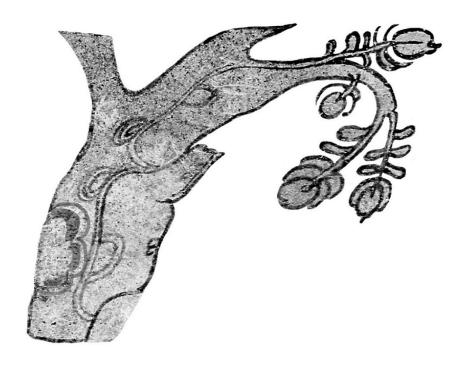


Figure 2.62 The tree on K1815 with reconstructed quatrefoil marking the hole in its trunk, detail  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

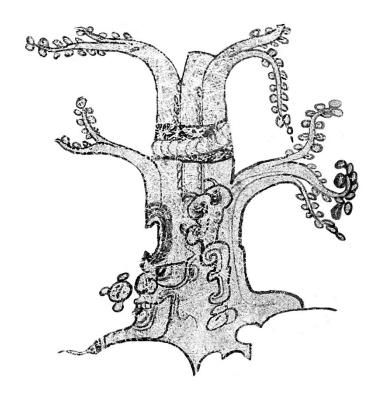


Figure 2.63 The tree on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

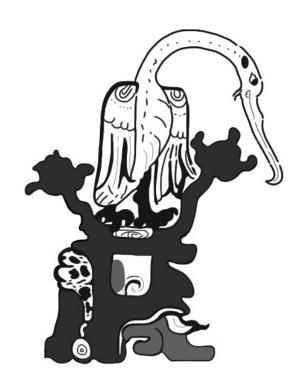


Figure 3.64 The waterlily tree on K0555, detail (drawing after photo).

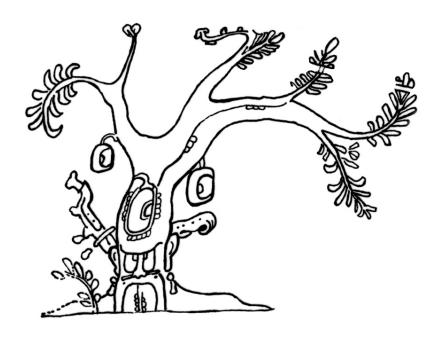


Figure 2.65 The *yax-te*' ("first tree") on K1226, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).



Figure 2.66 The Tree God and Patron of Paax on K3007, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.67. Rollout photo of K5855 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 2.68 Curtains and throne cushion on K5855, detail  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

## **Chapter 3: The Participants**

The narrative of the Jaguar Baby vessels relates several events, and the participants in each vary from vessel to vessel. As tempting as it is to ignore figures who appear infrequently or are obviously secondary to the primary participants, they typically imply things that are not readily evident, such as the firefly's presence alluding to a likely time of day if a vessel's inscription does not include a temporal adverb, or the probable duration of events when it does. They can also reiterate things that are fairly implicit, at least for modern viewer-readers who do not have the same cultural literacy, or the same knowledge of iconography and hieroglyphic writing that the intended recipients of the vessels possessed (or, at least, were expected to have). The infrequent inclusion of a "jaguar dog" or an "enema jaguar," for instance, seems far less incidental with the recognition that they are among the companion spirits belonging to the place where the sacrifice occurs, that they are the co-essences of "Chatan," where the mountain and the water are. (As the next chapter will address, "Chatan" is a widely-accepted provisional reading for a place name appearing on the Jaguar Baby vessels, both in reference to where the sacrifice occurs, and as part of a toponymic title.)

Likewise, it is easy to overlook the specific traits of a familiar being, such as the death spirit, whose boniness and human form could make his identity seem so very obvious, and whose highly variable and ornate regalia could be dismissively attributed to

<sup>1</sup> As prestige items, examples of writing—such as vessels bearing inscriptions—were suitable offerings, but do not necessarily indicate the literacy of their recipients (Houston 1994:38).

an artistic fondness for visual variety and elaborate attire. Nonetheless, attentively inspecting the varying elements comprising the bony being's backrack, for example, reveals complex cosmological iconography amid a wealth of scribal creativity. Accordingly, it is best to consider the figures individually so that their identifications and the scholarship that has contributed to them can be properly elucidated. Since they are the most numerous, I will identify the participants in the outdoor sacrifice first, starting with those who appear most frequently, and concluding with those who are rarely present, before following the same protocol while identifying the participants in the indoor presentation. One of the Codex-style vessels recently recovered from Calakmul that does not qualify (for this study) as a Jaguar Baby vessel because it does not unequivocally portray the feline infant or one of his equivalents (i.e., the adult jaguar who appears fully feline or the nude infant who appears fully human). Nonetheless, it bears a nominal phrase and depicts a setting strongly indicating that it is relevant to the Jaguar Baby vessels. In fact, it seems to be a different version of the presentation indoors, one that gives us new information. Alternatively, however, what it portrays could be temporally and locally distinct from the presentation, so I will identify its figures last.

#### THE SACRIFICE

## Yax Ha'al Chahk (The Rain God)

Yax Ha'al Chahk (Figures 3.1-3.16) is a specific manifestation of Chahk the Rain God (Spero 1991:191-192; Taube 1992b:19). His name means "Chahk is the First Rain" (Lacadena 2004:93) or "First Rain Chahk" (Martin 2002:57) and its primacy accords

well with the toponyms that alternately describe the rocky and aquatic setting of the sacrifice as the "First Stone" (Batuun) and the "First Water" (Baha'). Yax Ha'al Chahk's identifying attributes are the same as those of Chahk in general. He wears a tiara made from carved shells. Its central component—its diadem—is taller than it is wide, and is typically embellished with a pair of crossed bands, while its lateral component—its headband—is longer than it is wide and curls up at the ends. The margins of the diadem and/or the curled ends of the headband may be smooth (e.g., Figure 3.1), jagged (e.g., Figure 3.4) or knobby (e.g. Figure 3.2), all of which are characteristic traits of shells in general, and spondylus valves in particular. Each one of these traits, for example, is frequently apparent in the depiction of the ear-like spondylus valves Chahk normally has on the sides of his head.<sup>2</sup> The rendering of the valve often includes two or three circles/dots along the margin across from its hinge, and their inclusion in a relatively naturalistic portrayal of the shell in which many of its identifying traits have not been carved away (as is often the case), helps to confirm that the two or three circles/dots often depicted above Chahk's eyes should be seen as part of the shell eyebrows he sometimes clearly has.

Chahk's hair is is often gathered in a hank that falls in front of (e.g., Figure 3.9) or behind his diadem (e.g., Figure 3.15). It is also fairly common, especially on pottery, for his hair to be portrayed as globular and black (e.g., Figures 3.6-3.8) rather than stringy and dark (e.g., Figures 3.2-3.4). In the context of the Jaguar Baby vessels, I suspect that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> It is generally unclear whether Chahk has anthropomorphic ears *under* the shells or if the shells *are* his ears. On the Jaguar Baby vessels, however, the consistent depiction of two circles below each valve implies that the shells are ornaments with a pair of pendant beads.

the scribes intended the dark and billowing masses of his hair to allude to the dark waters of the black, broken place were the Maize God emerges (as on the Cosmic Plate, for example [Figure 2.48; see also Schele and Miller 1986:310-11, 315]), especially since Chahk often wears a maize motif in conjunction with his diadem (e.g., Figures 3.1, 3.4, 3.9) and, at times, the diadem itself is flanked by long tendrils resembling maize leaves (e.g., Figure 3.2, 3.5-3.6).

Several of the Jaguar Baby vessels depict a long stem with short leaves replacing the maize motif on Chahk's head (e.g., Figures 3.7-3.8, 3.11). On Codex-style pottery, such foliage is indicative of the kind of tree which, as noted, bears the designation of yax-te' ("first tree") on K1226 (Figure 2.65). Whenever the stem of this primordial tree replaces the maize element on Chahk's head, a scroll-like motif bearing a series of kab ("earth") curls usually accompanies it. The same motif occurs on two Codex-style vessels depicting multiple images of an infantile Maize God being born from a split kernel of corn floating in a dark body of water. On one vessel (Figure 3.17), the scrolls are entirely floral but, on a vessel excavated from Tomb 1 in Structure II at Calakmul (Figure 3.18), each scroll has a serpentine head near its end, pointing away from the seed which—in my opinion—implies that, as the plant grows, the scroll will extend along and through the earth in a root-like fashion.

In the Classic period, there are a few instances in which Chahk's face is almost entirely anthropomorphic (e.g., Figures 3.9-3.10, 3.19), but otherwise it is thoroughly bestial. Chahk's spiral pupils, for example, are indicative of chthonic supernaturals (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:170), especially those who are reptilian and/or fish-

like, such as the bearded serpent or the piscine creature that the *xook* ("shark") logograph depicts (Jones 1991:252). His thick, blunt lip and the squashed nose above it are telltale signs of his descent from an Olmec rain deity with jaguar traits (Taube 1995:95), while his central, triangular tooth and long, whiskery barbels are distinctly piscine. From the neck down, Chahk's body has an anthropomorphic shape, but his skin is decidedly non-human. As a deity, he typically has so-called god-markings (Coe 1973:13; Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:16; Schele and Miller 1986:43) on his limbs and back to indicate that his skin is radiant like a mirror (e.g., Figures 3.2, 3.4-3.5) or glistens like water in a shell (e.g., Figures 3.7, 3.9). He also tends to have scales and/or dark spots along the sides of his torso and on the back of each arm and leg (e.g., Figures 3.7-3.8, 3.12). Such skin is categorically characteristic of chthonic entities and commonly occurs on anything that is close to the ground or dwells near the surface of the earth, including fish, frog/toads (e.g., Figure 2.20), turtles (e.g., Figures 2.6a, c), and snakes (e.g. Figure 3.46).

On the Jaguar Baby Vessels, the "breath-marker" (Steinbach 1998:29-31) that appears near Chahk's nose (e.g., Figures 3.4-3.5, 3.10) is usually a knotted piece of bark paper with two long streamers and is indicative of beings engaged in sacrificial acts (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:142). The loincloth Chahk wears ranges from a simple cloth (e.g., Figures 3.4, 3.12) to an elaborate braid ending in a *sak* ("white") motif (e.g., Figure 3.2, 3.5 3.15). It usually pairs with a cord belt that has a central knot resembling a ball of yarn embellished with beads and/or a bell-shaped floral form (e.g., Figures 3.5, 3.9, 3.15). On one vessel, he wears a knotless cord belt with a string skirt (Figure 3.7), while on another the fringed belt he pairs with his braided loincloth is marked with a

chevron pattern (Figure 3.8), both of which are quite unusual. In addition to bracelets and anklets made from strips of bark cloth (e.g., Figures 3.1-3.2, 3.9) or pieces of jade (e.g., Figures 3.3, 3.6, 3.14), Chahk consistently wears a large pectoral or an elaborate necklace. The pectoral is a large knot made of cord (e.g., Figures 3.1, 3.3, 3.16) and closely resembles the central knot on the back of the cord belt and, like its counterpart, it is flanked by a pair of (partial) *sak* motifs to identify it color as white.

When Chahk wears a necklace instead of his pectoral, it is almost always a short band of death-eye fringe with a single pendant. On one vessel, the pendent is a *sak* motif with a design on it that appears identical to a modern percentage sign (Figure 3.2). The calendrical glyph representing the name of the day called Kimi ("Death") in Colonial Yucatec (Thompson 1985:75) depicts the same motif, but it is also the iconic component of a logograph signifying *way* (Houston and Stuart 1989:13). Given that Chahk wears the necklace while participating in a sacrifice, a reference to death is certainly appropriate, but there is a strong likelihood that his pendent is a glyphic reference to *sak way-is*.

Sak way-is, like k'uhul "chatan" winik, is a title that is common in the historical inscriptions of sites (e.g., La Corona, Uxul, and El Perú-Waka') that were in the political sphere of the Kaan dynasts who ruled Calakmul during the late seventh and early eighth centuries (Grube, Delvendahl, Seefeld, and Volta 2012:21-23; Martin 2008:4; Martin, Houston, and Zender 2015). Both titles also frequently occur on Codex-style vessels bearing a dedication statement (e.g., Figure 3.17 [last glyph block]), but little is known about the people to whom they refer, especially those who were called sak way-is. Tikal

Altar 5 (Figure 3.20) is unusually informative, however. According to it, individuals bearing the *sak way-is* title exhumed and burned the bones of a royal woman and, as the altar portrays them, did so while wearing clothing and holding instruments that denote penitential behavior and/or acts of human sacrifice (Grube 2004a:72-73).

More specifically, one of the weapons is an obsidian knife with three blades, and the sacrificial clothing includes a belt with a circular ornament which, in turn, is adorned with a central knot and long strips of cloth that are sometimes spotted with blood (e.g., Figure 3.21). On one vessel, the death spirit who performs the sacrifice with Chahk has both a circular belt ornament and a black trident knife (Figure 3.12). He also normally wears the *sak way* pendant (e.g., Figures 3.2-3.3, 3.8-3.9). In fact, he wears it more frequently than Chahk, and its inclusion in their regalia while they perform a sacrifice further implies that the *sak way-is* title is especially appropriate for those engaged in such acts. Be that as it may, the pendant hanging from Chahk's necklace is usually an inverted vase with an *ak'ab* ("darkness") sign on it and a small snake coming out of it (e.g., Figures 3.5, 3.7-3.9). In an upright position, the same vase symbolizes "dark, rain-laden clouds" (Taube 2004:77), whereas its inversion implies a downpour of rain falling from the sky.

As a god of rain, Chahk is also a being of lightning and thunder (Taube 1992b:22) and routinely wields an ax and a pounder, together or individually, to manifest his phenomenal powers.<sup>3</sup> Thus, his ax strikes like lightning, his pounder has a thunderous

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The object I am calling a pounder is a kind of stone weapon that Classic Maya boxers used as an alternative to knuckledusters made of cut shell. Such weapons have also been

impact, and each one has a mirror—one inanimate (the ax), one animate (the pounder)—on it to characterize it as something illustrious that can flash when in motion. There are also depictions of either weapon emitting volutes of smoke or flame as an allusion to fire arising from lightning (e.g., Figure 3.22), and the handle of Chahk's ax sometimes take the form of a snake (Figures 3.8, 3.22c, 3.23a) or of K'awiil (Figure 3.23b), the serpent-footed god of lightning with whom Chahk is sometimes conflated (Taube 1992b:73-78) (Figure 3.24). The ornamental knot typically adorning the tip of Chahk's ax handle is similar in form to his breath-marker, although its streamers are sometimes longer and more numerous (e.g., Figures 3.2, 3.4-3.6).

# Sak-aj? (The Death Spirit)

Sak-aj (Figures 3.25-3.39) is a skeletal manifestation of death and one of the primary participants in the sacrifice; indeed, he is the being who holds or throws the one who is sacrificed. He is a specific variant of the being Paul Schellhas (1904:10) designated as Death God A in his list of deities appearing in the Post-Classic Maya codices. The first part of his name (Figures 3.41a-b) is likely to be an inchoative verb (Kettunen and Helmke 2011:72) deriving from an adjective. That is, Sak-aj derives from sak ("white") (Kaufman 2003:220) and probably means "becoming white." The second part of his name is a glyph depicting a skull with a smattering of darkness on it (Figure 3.40c). Without the darkening, this sign is a logograph (Figure 3.41c) signifying a term for "death" deriving from *cham* (or *kam*), a verb meaning "to die" (Boot 2009:44;

described as "cudgels" (Zender 2004a:6) or "manoplas" (Taube 2004b:84-85). See also Taube and Zender 2009.

Kettunen and Helmke 2011:82; Stuart 2005b:83). However, with it, the skull sign becomes something more specific. It becomes Sak-aj's portrait glyph since he is "becoming white" and, thus, has only a small amount of darkness remaining on his face. Without phonetic complementation or some other confirmation of its specific value, it is best to leave a portrait glyph unread. Alternatively, it may be that the skull following sak-aj is nothing more than a word for "death" and that the addition of color to it is just a fitting embellishment of its iconic component that does not change its verbal significance.

The darkness on Sak-aj's face varies from more or less obvious (e.g., Figures 3.25, 3.28, 3.38) to barely there (e.g., Figures 3.30, 3.32, 3.35), and is sometimes entirely absent (e.g., Figures 3.29, 3.31, 3.37). Its faintness on some of the vessels seems mostly a matter of artistic subtlety (e.g., Figure 3.30) or the result of erosion or some other damage to the vessel's surface (e.g., Figures 3.32, 3.35), while on others it might be the result of overaggressive cleaning in which the deliberate darkening was mistaken for discoloration (e.g., Figure 3.34) (Robicsek and Hales 1981:137). On a few, however, there is nothing to indicate it was ever present, and that raises the possibility that the death spirit they depict is not Sak-aj. Indeed, according to Robicsek and Hales (1988:1981:40, 41, 114), there are two skeletal beings who alternately participate in the sacrifice, whom they dubbed "1 Death" and "7 Death" after a pair of death gods mentioned in the Popol Vuh, a Quiche Maya manuscript written in the sixteenth century. While there may very well be two different death spirits partaking in the sacrifice, I think it is much more likely that depicting Sak-aj's face in a manner indicative of his name was not of equal importance to every scribe. Furthermore, if there are two such beings,

naming them after a pair of death gods mentioned in a document written at least eight centuries later is, at the very least, anachronistic. It also ignores the provision of the *sakaj* appellation for the being they called "1 Death" or "Black-faced Skull" (Robicsek and Hales 1988:260). Thus, for the present study, my working assumption is that there is only one death spirit, and since the exact reading of his full name is uncertain, I will use his descriptive appellation—Sak-aj—to refer to him.

On one bowl (Figure 3.25), Sak-aj's nominal phrase expands to include a clause identifying him as a "co-essence" (*way*) (Stuart and Houston 1989) of Batuun or, perhaps, of *a* Batuun. Either interpretation is plausible given that a *way* can belong to a place *or* to a being, and **ba-TUUN** can be a toponym (Figures 3.42a-b) *or* a title (Figures 3.42c-d).<sup>4</sup> In the context of the Jaguar Baby vessels, I am much more inclined to interpret it as a toponym since it names the place of the sacrifice on one of the vessels (Figures 4.68, 4.70). Moreover, Sak-aj frequently wears a Jester God on the front of his headdress as an emblem of lordship and, given that Yax Ha'al Chahk is a lord of Batuun, it is quite likely that Sak-aj is as well.

Squiggly lines form the sutures on Sak-aj's skull, and a curving bracket suggests a cranial indentation above his ear. The pupils of his eyes, if present, tend to be small, colorless, and off center, with the result being a stare that is eerily vacant. Large deatheyes adorn the front and back of his cranium, and the majority appear to shed tears in the form of the Black Water Motif. Although a few of the eyes are rendered unambiguously

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> On K771, for example, one co-essence belongs to a holy place of dance, while another belongs to a lord of Seibal (Grube and Nahm 1994:690, 705). For an extensive discussion of titles beginning with *ba/baa[h]*, including **ba-TUUN**, see Boot 2008 and Houston 2008.

as ornaments "crying" strands of hair (e.g., Figure 3.34), most are portrayed as if they are real eyes with real tears (e.g., Figure 3.31). Despite his largely skeletal state, parts of Sak-aj remain fleshy. Thus, he has a skull with ears, and limbs that are bony and thin but not fleshless. He also tends to have a distended belly that contrasts sharply with his bare ribcage and exposed spinal column.

Directly on top of his head, Sak-aj wears a toque-like headdress of white bark paper. It is bound with a series of knots, and sometimes bears a Jester God as an emblem of his lordship. His hair is gathered into a long black swath that passes through the headdress to dangle in front or behind it. On some of the vessels, the swath of hair hangs loosely in strands (e.g., Figures 3.28-3.29). But, on others, it is bound, as if tied with multiple bands, to mimic the Black Water Motif that often drips from the eyeballs on his skull (e.g., Figures 3.31-3.32). The breath-marker that is typically near Sak-aj's face is almost identical to Chahk's, but occasionally has more streamers (e.g., 3.31) or additional knots (Figure 3.34). Although often difficult to discern, Sak-aj usually has a thin strip of cloth-like paper pulled through a hole in his earlobe. On one vessel (Figure 3.28), the dark spots marking it probably depict drops of blood from an act of auto-sacrifice. Sak-aj also typically wears a death-eye collar with a sak way pendent, and his wrists and ankles are usually encircled with paper ornaments. He twice forgoes both bracelets and anklets, however, in favor of an eccentric flint with a trio of blades and a circular handle that he wears around his arm (Figure 3.36) or leg (Figure 3.27).

Sak-aj's loincloth is more variable in construction than Chahk's. On one vase (Figure 3.28), it has dark spots running its entire length that most likely represent drops

of blood from a self-sacrificial penile incision (Schele and Miller 1986:180) since one occurs on the covering over his pubic area as well. In contrast, the smaller and more numerous spots darkening his garments on another (Figure 3.37) depict drops of moisture splashing up from the watery location in which the sacrifice occurs, and this is readily apparent when the figure is seen in context. (The lack of spotting on Sak-aj's body—and on the bodies of Chahk and the the feline infant—is, in my view, a deliberate omission to preserve the visibility of the figures.)

When Sak-aj wears a backrack (Coe 1978:94; Schele and Miller 1986:72), it is the dominant element of his attire. A backrack is an exceptionally large piece of regalia that is fastened to the back of a belt and normally extends above the head and below the waist of whomever wears it. Most backracks have a central component symbolizing a particular location (Coe 1978:96; Houston, Stuart, and Taube 1992:501). Many also include celestial and terrestrial motifs as a framing device around the centerpiece to indicate that the place it embodies is somewhere between heaven and earth, that is, the human realm (Reents-Budet 1991:218).

The composition of Sak-aj's backrack varies significantly from vessel to vessel, but certain components are common, including triangular pendants that hang from its underside and are edged with black bands (e.g., Figure 3.31) or bear a decorative motif resembling a pyramidal water stack (e.g., Figure 3.37). Most commonly, part of a limb bone with a suture near its midsection to denote "boniness" (Karl Taube, personal communication 2015), and a circle on each epicondyle, serves as the upper part of the backrack (e.g., Figures 3.28, 3.31-3.32). It is very similar the cracked and bisected bone

that is the iconic component of the T571 logograph (Macri and Looper 2003:108) signifying *ch'en* ("cave," "well") (Boot 2009:59; Kaufman 2003:432; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:108; Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:33). More often than not, the bone sports a toque-like headdress comparable to Sak-aj's that either sits directly on top of it (e.g., Figure 3.32) or rests on a pair of tendrils that emerge from it (e.g., Figure 3.28).

On many of the vessels, the bone surmounts a black striated crescent or circle studded with death-eyes (e.g., Figures 3.31-3.32) that is similar in form to the motif representing the hole in the tree on K4013 (Figures 4.59-4.60). Without embellishment, the striated motif is a generic representation of an opening. It is not overtly terrestrial or otherworldly, but adding death-eyes to it transforms it into a variant of the Chapaat Maw in which the eyeballs replace the bony plates. Moreover, with the disembodied eyes, it is almost certainly the form of the Chapaat Maw from which the iconic component of T591(Figure 2.13c)—the Post Classic variant of T769 (Figures 2.13a-b)—derives, since the round elements studding it are more eye-like than plate-like. On one vessel (Figure 3.32), the maw encloses a *kimi/way* motif, and on another (Figure 3.28), the Lunar Crescent encloses the same design. The substitution between the maw and the crescent is in keeping with the latter's conflation with the Chapaat Cartouche at Yaxchilan (Figure 2.18a) and the quatrefoil at Copan (Figure 2.18f). It also helps to confirm that the backrack is a symbol of the point of passage through which the sun and moon travel when they journey through the earth.

The central element of the backrack Sak-aj wears on K1815 (Figure 3.29) is a formal variant of its counterpart on K4013 (Figure 3.28) in which a small death figure replaces the *kimi/way* motif inside the Lunar Crescent. Rather than sit passively, the little fellow leans back, turns slightly, and reaches up to put his hand in the strands of Sak-aj's hair. Including this little act of impishness draws the viewer's attention to the backrack and to Sak-aj's tiny doppelganger. Given that a partial Lunar Crescent is the iconic component of the *ja* sign in *sak-aj* and that the little death spirit is tantamount to a full-figure portrait glyph, it is highly likely that the centerpiece of the backrack is not only symbolizing a location, but alluding to Sak-aj's name. Without an area of facial darkness on either figure, the *sak-aj* appellation is not necessarily relevant; however, on K4013 (Figure 3.28), his faced is darkened and the central element in his backrack is a lunar crescent enclosing a *kimi* ("death") motif, so I think it certainly could be.

On three of the vessels, the bone surmounts a circular object edged with death-eye fringe and embellished with a short scroll (Figures 3.34-3.36). An item of comparable design adorns the Muwan Bird's headband at Palenque (Figure 3.43d), and the headband of the god of the number zero at Copan (Figure 3.43b). It is also appears on a polychrome bowl (possibly from Altar de Sacrificios), as part of a headdress in the form of a firefly's head (Figure 3.43a). At Palenque and Copan, the lack of crosshatching around the scroll indicates that the object bearing it is light in color and, indeed, on the bowl, it is yellow, as if it were made of pyrite. On a Chama-style pot, it is part of another headdress, but the area around the scroll is red and white (Figure 3.43c). Schele and

Miller described the example from Copan as a "scroll shield," but I think it is something else.

As noted, the Classic Maya depicted mirrors both as practical objects and as descriptive motifs. The practical objects tend to look like mirrors, but the descriptive motifs do not because they typically conform to the shape and color of whatever they modify. It is also commonplace, as Taube has argued, for mirrors to be portrayed conceptually rather than naturalistically, which often led to a change in form arising from the addition or substitution of other elements. Given their visual variability, it is helpful to have a context, such as costume, in which mirrors that do not look like mirrors are interchangeable with those that do (Taube 1992a:181). Thus, for example, a comparison of mirrors worn on the back makes it possible to confirm that the color black, crosshatching, and an *ak'ab* ("night," "dark") motif are all equivalent means of indicating a mirror that is dark in color.

Throughout Mesoamerica, eyes were strongly identified with mirrors. At Teotihuacan, for example, a human eye was sometimes added to the face of a mirror or depicted in lieu of it (Taube 1992a:181-182). A similar belief is evident in Classic Maya iconography, although the eyes equated with mirrors are seldom human. Instead, they are most often a kind of supernatural eye that has a spiral pupil and that is entirely white, unless it has some red along its outer edge. Such eyes are characteristic of otherworldly beings who are chthonic, such as Chahk, K'awiil, and the Witz Head.

In my view, the "scroll shield" is a mirror with death-eye fringe around its rim and a chthonic eye on its surface. On the Altar de Sacrificios bowl, only a pupil was added to

the mirror (Figure 3.43a) but, on the Chama-style bowl, the entire eye covers the face of the mirror (Figure 3.43c). Also, the flower embellishing the mirror on the latter is analogous to the type of floral ornament that adorns the face of Bird Jaguar's mirror on Yaxchilan Stela 11 (Figure 2.16a) and the face of a pyrite mirror at Kaminaljuyu (Taube 1992b:Fig.6c). The alignment of the four death-eyes around the rim of the mirror is comparable to the four centipede heads (or snouts) marking the corners of the Chapaat Cartouche (Figures 2.16a,c-d). As noted, the cartouche symbolizes a point of passage that is strongly terrestrial and, as Taube (1992a:195) contends, using it to enclose a mirror implies that the Classic Maya identified mirrors with caves. The conflation of a mirror and a quatrefoil on a Codex-style vase (K4546) depicting Jun Ajaw hunting the Principal Bird Deity supports his contention, as does the addition of a lunate maw to a back mirror on an an Early Classic (K3105) vessel that happens to depict the same event.

The backrack Sak-aj wears on K1644 (Figure 3.30) is the most elaborate and strangest of all. On top of a "bone throne," there is a Lunar Crescent visible beneath the folded flaps of a bundle. Emerging from the top of the bundle is a long stem with round leaves that curves to the right. Running along its underside is a scroll marked with two T617 mirror motifs flanking a *kab* ("earth") curl, a combination of symbols that is common in earthbands. Near the tip of the stem, the scroll curves away from it and extends downward before transforming into a skeletonized being with the bony forelegs of a deer and a pair of scrolls emitting from the bottom of its ribcage to indicate its lack of a lower body. Its head is a Chapaat Skull with a weeping eyeball in its mouth and a

collar of death-eye fringe around its neck. Given its blend of traits and obvious dissection, this creature is surely the back half of the Starry Deer Crocodile.

The Starry Deer Crocodile (Figure 3.44) is a bicephalic quadruped that seems to denote the nocturnal sky of the Underworld and is an enigmatic aspect of the equally arcane Celestial Monster (Stuart 2005a:72-73). In most of the depictions, the rear head has a Quadripartite Badge surmounting it and a zoomorphic face that is skeletal but not necessarily Chapaat-like (Figure 3.44a). It is also seldom a true second head and usually just sits on top of the creature's hindquarters without being part of its body. Copan Altar G1 (Figure 3.45), however, is an alternative version of the quadruped that omits the Quadripartite Badge and depicts the rear head as a Chapaat Skull with a death-eye collar (Figure 3.45b). It also presents the creature as having two sets of deer forelegs—one with flesh (Figure 3.45a), one without (Figure 3.45b) (Baudez 1994:55-58)—and minimizes its specifically crocodilian traits in favor of those that are equally serpentine (e.g., its spotted skin and the shape of its supraorbital area). A passage in the inscriptions on the platform in Temple 19 at Palenque refers to the decapitation of the Starry Deer Crocodile and describes it as having a hole in its back (Stuart 2005a:68-70, 73). The mythic significance of this act remains unclear, but its occurrence and the existence of the hole provide a probable explanation for the severance of its back half from the rest of its body.

# Huk? Yax? Chak? (The Old God in the Bearded Serpent)

To my knowledge, the Old God who emerges from the mouth of a bearded serpent and is the son of Ix Tzak Kotz'-om Chan (Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:173-174), occurs exclusively on Codex-style pottery (Figures 3.46-3.53). He is also among the small group of subjects that is common to all three of its variants (Figures 5.28-5.30). Thus, I am inclined to regard him as a very specific and highly local manifestation of God N who was primarily, if not exclusively, of interest to the people who made and received Codex-style ceramics. God N is a god of thunder and lightning who dwells within the earth and supports the sky above it as a sustainer of the world (Bassie 2002: Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:152; Martin 2007:3-5; Taube 1989:345-358, 1992b:92-99). He is also, almost certainly, the male half of the elderly couple who created the universe (Foster and Wren 1996:259; Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:53; Martin 2007:26-27). Despite being an elderly deity who primarily appears inside a conch shell (Figure 3.54b) or turtle carapace (Figure 3.54c), he is inherently anthropomorphic, and the visible parts of his body appear human. God N's agedness is apparent in his aquiline nose, wrinkled cheeks and sunken, often toothless mouth. It is also evident in his thin arms, saggy chest, and plump belly. He usually has one of the following on his bald or balding head: a "spangled turban" (Coe 1978:52), a net headscarf (Figures 3.51, 3.54b), or a waterlily flower tied with its stem (Figure 3.54a). Unless he is in an atlantean pose (Figure 3.54a) or partially ensconced in a shell (Figure 3.54b) or in the mouth of a serpent

<sup>5</sup> Martin completed his "Old Man" essay in 2007, but the book for which it was written is still in press, and its likely date of publication cannot be determined.

(Figures 3.46-3.53), his net headscarf is his most distinctive attribute. As a general rule, he wears it tied above his brow (Figures 3.46, 3.51) or draped across the back of his head.

The Old God in the Bearded Serpent on the Jaguar Baby vessels is the same being as the elderly deity in the snake on the Snake Lady vessels, but the details of his appearance vary somewhat from object to object. One vase (Figure 3.52), for example, portrays him with a bare head, but another (Figure 3.46) depicts him with a net headscarf, and yet another shows (Figure 3.53) him with a small bundle of writing implements strapped to his brow (Coe and Kerr 1997:92). He also frequently wears a distinctive bib (e.g., Figures 3.49, 3.51) associated with the use of intoxicants (de Smet 1985:60), and sometimes has a flaming torch piercing his head from front to back (e.g., Figures 3.47-3.48, 3.55). Irregular patches of darkness frequently appear on his face, especially around his eyes and mouth (e.g., Figures 3.48, 3.50-3.51), and on one vase, he has a *k'in* motif near the crown of his head (Figure 3.47).

The snake-like creature from which the elderly deity emerges is a kind of supernatural reptile that is also known as a bearded dragon (Coe 1975:15; Robicsek and Hales 1981:107; Taube 1994:663) or a vision serpent (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:195; Schele and Miller 1986:46-47). It is a conduit between realms, especially during an act of conjuring (Schele and Freidel 1990:417; Schele and Mathews 1998:417; Stone and Zender 2011:201; Taube 2004a:90; 2005:39), which was tantamount to giving birth for the conjurer and to being born for the conjured (Houston and Stuart 1989:7;

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Houston, Stuart, and Taube (2006:17) see the *k'in* motif—in conjunction with the fiery torch—as a visual reference to the iconic components of a Classic verb read as *puluyi* ("to burn").

Taube 1994:663). Hence the numerous depictions of a giant snake wrapping around or passing across a conjurer's body to bring forth whomever or whatever is being summoned (e.g., Figure 3.56). More often than not, if the conjurer is male, the serpent will pass through a so-called ceremonial bar (Schele and Freidel 1990:415-416) that is cradled against his body, as it is on Yaxchilan Lintel 14 (Figure 3.56) and K2715 (Figure 3.57). But, if the conjurer is female, the serpent is more likely to encircle her body directly, as it does on K5164 (Figure 3.49), where the snake from which the Old God emerges wraps around the body of his mother (Lady Tzak Kotz'om Chan) as she gives birth to him through an act of conjuring.

The Old God's nominal phrase, in its fullest form—but excluding toponymic titles (e.g., "'Chatan' Winik") or relational descriptors (e.g., "child of mother")—contains a trio of collocations: huk-? yax-? chak-?(Figure 3.58). With all three, the reading of the prefix is secure, but the reading of the main sign is not. Also, since the third collocation (chak-?) is relatively rare and, thus far, exclusive to the Jaguar Baby vessels, I am inclined to regard the first two (huk-? yax-?) as his core designation, that is, the part of his nominal phrase that is least subject to omission. It is also the name with which he most frequently co-occurs (Stuart 2000:7). The huk-? yax-? nominal phrase is usually among the names following the birth verb on the Snake Lady vessels. Another names Chahk, who is one of the so-called Bundle Gods (infantile beings in swaddling clothes) (Stone 1988:84) who often sit near the old god and his mother. On K1813, the other swaddled god—who is a manifestation of the Tree God and patron of Paax previously noted—has a collocation on his headdress that closely resembles the first part of the huk-

? yax-? nominal phrase (Figure 3.59a). In light of this resemblance, some inferred (Robicsek and Hales 1981:39 Stone 1988:83-84) that the swaddled tree god was named huk-? yax-?, even though the collocation in the center of his headdress on K1645 is entirely different (Figure 3.59b). With the subsequent publication of additional vessels, it became apparent that the old god's claim to the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase is much stronger than the swaddled Tree God's.

One vase with fluted walls, for example, depicts the Old God in the Bearded Serpent emerging from a ceremonial bar in the arms of a kneeling figure (Figure 3.60). Above the head of his conjurer, and parallel to the bar, is an inscription stating that, "[It is the] image of [the] *k'awiil* [who is] Huk-? Yax-?" (*u-bah k'awiil huk-? yax-?*). Similarly, the inscription on one vessel (Figure 3.49) not only states that *huk-? yax-?* is the child of Ix Tzak Kotz'om Chan ("She Who Conjures the Rolled-up Snake"), it describes him as the "*mam* of the turtle" (*u-mam akul*). *Mam* is an honorific akin to "ancestor" but, in a parentage statement (as on K5164, Figure 3.49) it identifies one being as the "grandfather" or "grandson" of another. Without more of his genealogy, it is unclear whether the old god is the grandfather or grandson of the turtle. Their kinship seems fitting however, since *huk-? yax-?* is a manifestation of God N, and God N often appears inside a turtle shell, with (Figure 3.61) or without (Figure 3.54c) K'awiil who, in turn, is frequently part of *huk-? yax-?*'s snake, most commonly, on the Snake Lady vessels (Figures 3.48-3.49, 3.51).

There is a strong probability that the second collocation (*yax-?*) in the elderly deity's nominal phrase is read as Yax Kan ("First Snake") and refers directly to the

serpent. As with the Old God, the appearance of the Bearded Serpent varies somewhat from depiction to depiction. It is a male creature, with its masculinity apparent from the hairs on its chin and the forelock that typically lies along its curvy brow (e.g., Figures 3.46-3.47, 3.49). As with the Old God, its appearance varies somewhat from object to object. On either side of its head, there is usually an earlike spray of maize leaves adorned with a shining mirror (Figure 3.64a) above an earflare with a long and elaborate pendent (Figure 3.64b). It also has an upturned snout (Figure 3.63), and most of its teeth are fanglike. On Codex-style pottery, the tail end of the bearded serpent is usually part of K'awiil's leg. There is also a tendency to embellish its anatomical details in order to emphasis its glowing vitality and precious, wind-like breath. Thus, for example, to denote the greenness and sheen of a living plant, the earlike maize leaves on the sides of its head are typically adorned with jewels and beads of jade (Figure 3.64a), and/or a shining, animate mirror (Figure 3.51)—some with kernel-like tesserae (Figure 3.53)—or a gleaming star (Figure 3.52). Similarly, a tooth in the shape of an *ik*' logograph implies that its breath is wind-like (Figure 3.49), while another in the form of a Jester God alludes to its jewel-like preciousness (Figure 3.63b). It is also likely that when the breathmarkers projecting from the serpent's nostrils are widely splayed that their position alludes to it breathing heavily as it bears the Old God forth (Figure 3.63a). The mirror that normally adorns the serpent's glossy snout may be light (Figure 3.49) or dark (Figure 3.63d), and animate (Figures 3.51-3.52) or inanimate (Figure 3.49). Along with it, there is usually a sprouting maize seed that is suggestive of the serpent's fecundity and,

depending on the example, it takes the form of a foliated ajaw (Figures 3.46, 3.49, 3.63c), a germinating kernel (Figure 3.51), or its ornamental equivalent (Figure 3.50).

## The Infant, the Jaguar, and the Feline Infant (The Offerings)

Evidence from Piedras Negras and Copan suggests that, in the Classic era, infants and jaguars were the utmost in human and animal sacrifice. At Piedras Negras, the base of Stela 11 (Figure 3.84) depicts the body of a small child lying supine in an offering bowl (Martin 2002:53), and Altar Q at Copan was built over a masonry pit containing the bodies of fifteen jaguars (Fash 1991:169-170). According to Taube, the stela portrays a child whose life was given for the new monarch's, and a jaguar was killed for each of the previous rulers of Copan. More specifically, both the child and the jaguars were k'ex offerings (Taube 1994:671-673). K'ex is a well-attested word for "exchange" or "barter" in Mayan languages (Kaufman 2003:781-782), and in the contemporary curing rites of the Tzotzil Maya living in Chiapas, Mexico, a k'ex sacrifice is the substitution of one life for another to restore the spiritual equilibrium between those above ground and those below (Taube 1994:670). Among the Classic Maya, royal accession was a transitional process akin to being reborn (Taube 1994:672) during which the individual becoming a *k'uhul ajaw* ("god-like lord") (Boot 2009:13, 118; Houston and Stuart 1996:295) acquired a new name (Martin and Grube 2008:14) and a new (sacred) identity. Moving from one state of being to another through birth, rebirth, or accession, created a void in one realm that had to be filled with a suitable replacement from the other in order to

protect the balance between the living and the dead (Martin 2002:53; Taube 1994:671), if not also between the human and the divine.

It is my contention that the feline infant is not transforming from a human into a jaguar or vice versa, but is instead one of three kinds of being who are suitable to serve as a *k'ex* offering during the conjuring of the Old God in the Bearded Serpent so that he may leave his place in the underworld to go aboveground: an anthropomorphic infant (Figures 3.66-68), an adult jaguar (Figure 3.65), and an anthropomorphic infant with jaguar traits (Figures 3.69-3.75, 3.77-3.80, 3.83). At the time of sacrifice, each offering shares (at least) the core name of the Old God (*huk-? yax-?*) because each one is his *k'awiil*. That is, each offering is an embodiment of his spiritual force—of his "visible, material godhood" (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:67)—and, as such, is suitable to serve as his placeholder in the underground so that he may go aboveground without disrupting the equipoise between the netherworld and the world above it. Of the three, the *unen balam*—literally, the "baby jaguar" (Martin 2002:61-64)—is the most common and, evidently, the most preferred.

The feline infant also typically has a trait that is indicative of the Jaguar God of the Underworld (Figure 3.85), namely, a cord that forms a loop above his nose and passes underneath his eyes (e.g. Figures 3.70, 3.73-3.74). The Jaguar God of the Underworld is an elderly and nocturnal aspect of the Sun God, and the supernatural patron of fire (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:85,170; Stuart 1998:408; Taube 1992:54; Thompson 1985:107). He also symbolizes the number seven in the writing system (Thompson 1985:134). Portraying the Jaguar Baby with an identifying characteristic of the Jaguar

God of the Underworld underscores his specialness and further sets him apart from the infant and the jaguar. Nonetheless, his interchangeability with the other two undermines the notion that any of the three is unique, and suggests instead that each is an ideal sacrificial offering, with one—the feline infant—being first among equals since he is also supernatural and akin to a fiery sun god. Also, according to Houston, Stuart, and Taube (2006:17), the image of the Old God with a *k'in* ("sun") motif on top of his head, in conjunction with the flaming torch piercing his brow, "duplicates" (the iconic components) of a verb (*puluyi*) meaning "to burn." If it is a *deliberate* "duplication" of the verb—which, incidentally, does occur on a Codex-style vessel depicting the burning of the Jaguar Old of the Underworld (Figure 3.85)—then a being akin to a fiery sun god would be an especially apt placeholder belowground for the Old God while he is aboveground.

The infancy of both the feline child and his fully anthropomorphic counterpart is apparent from the often flexed position of their arms and/or legs (Martin 2002:53-55), as well as the stubby chubbiness of their limbs, the smooth plumpness of their bodies, and their sometimes hairless or nearly hairless heads. In his most jaguar-like form, the feline infant has four paws, a tail, and a pair of cat ears above his own (e.g., Figures 3.69-3.70). The looped cord on the bridge of his nose is often easy to overlook, and an *ak'ab* ("night") god-marking sometimes appears on his back in reference to the jaguar's nocturnal nature (Houston, Stuart and Taube 2006:17). On K0521 (Figure 3.69), he has neither the loop nor an *ak'ab* sign, but he does have the Jaguar God of the Underworld's aged visage and *tau*-shaped tooth. In a few instances, he wears a motif known as a

smoking ajaw (e.g., Coe 1982:42; Taube 1992:54) on the top of his head or the tip of his tail (Figures 3.69, 3.70-3.71, 3.73, 3.77). The object tipping his tail on K3201 (Figure 3.72) appears to be a smoking celt and, as such, is likely intended to mark the feline infant as a manifestation of *k'awiil* the spiritual energy, since a smoky celt is an identifying attribute of the K'awiil the god. Whether as an infant with feline traits or a baby without them, the little fellow often holds the back of his paw or hand to his forehead in a "Classic Maya gesture for death and lamentation" that the Maize God makes as well during the journey to his death (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:194) (Figures 3.70, 3.72).

# Jun? K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay] (The Firefly)

Several Jaguar Baby vessels depict a firefly (also known as a lightning bug) hovering nearby, probably to indicate that the event occurs in the darkness of twilight. Indeed, not only do the fireflies on two vessels hold torches (Figures 3.86-3.87), but the inscription on a third specifies that it is at dawn—literally, the "big night" (as in the fullness of the night)—when the *k'awiil* is thrown (Figures 4.48, 4.50). Alternatively, since fireflies tend to be more active in the twilight of sunset, than the twilight of dawn, the juxtaposition of the firefly with a glyphic reference to "dawn" could be a means to imply that the events of the narrative—the throwing, the conjuring, and (if my ultimate interpretation proves correct) the childhood ritual of a royal heir—occur between sunset and sunrise.

On the same vase, the firefly (Figure 3.88a) appears above a nominal phrase consisting of three collocations (Figure 3.88b). In the first, the number one (*jun*) prefixes an undeciphered sign with a *hi* suffix, while the second contains either two logographs forming the phrase *k'ak' ti'* ("fire mouth") (Boot 2009:103) or one (very rare) logograph signifying a term for smoking (David Stuart, personal communication 2009).<sup>7</sup> Whichever it is, is an obvious allusion to the idea that fireflies smoke, as the fireflies on two other vessels clearly do (Figures 3.89-3.90). Erik Boot sees the last part of the bug's name as consisting of three syllables—**ku-ku-la**—that spell "*kukul*," a word for "beetle" or "bug" (2009:99) but I think that the element he interprets as a *la* suffix is just a calligraphic flourish and, therefore, agree with David Stuart's suggestion (personal communication, 2009) that **ku-ku** is an under-spelling of *kuk[ay]*, a common Mayan word for "lightning bug" (Kaufman 2003:672).

An *ak'ab* ("night/darkness") motif covers most of the firefly's face and marks each of its wings and/or the back of its body. There is usually a small *kimi* motif on its cheek and death-eyes studding its head and adorning its necklace. Most notably, it typically has a segmented pouch near its hindquarters that corresponds to the bioluminescent abdominal lantern that many species of fireflies have (Lopes 2004; Stone and Zender 2011:189. One vessel (Figure 3.91), in fact, depicts a swarm of smoking fireflies trailing flames from both ends as they fly.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The logograph signifying a term for "smoking" or "to smoke" is in a hieroglyphic inscription in Building 1 of Group XVI at Palenque (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009).

### The Wayob' and the Fan-holding Attendant

In addition to the primary participants and the firefly, several of the Jaguar Baby vessels depict other beings present when the sacrifice occurs, and most of them are coessences. A co-essence or a way (to use the Classic Maya term, the plural of which is wayob') is a supernatural entity that belongs to a given individual, polity, or place (Calvin 1997:868; Fitzsimmons 2009:46). They are spirits of a rather sinister nature, and often embody a specific illness or disease. Many of the zoomorphic wayob' are impossible mixes of animals that cannot interbreed, such as a jaguar and a dog, and there are others that are physically normally but strangely behaved, such as an owl that flies with a snake around its neck or a jaguar that wears a vomit bib denoting the use of intoxicating enemas. Given that the jaguar dog (Figure 3.92) and the so-called enema jaguar (figures 3.93-94) are co-essences of Chatan (Grube and Nahm 1994:689, 698), the owl with the snake (Figures 3.95-3.96) likely is as well. For the intended recipients of these vessels, the presence of these wayob' would have likely located the place portrayed as within Chatan, which is in keeping with the toponymic information the other vessels provide regarding where the events of the narrative occur, namely, on a mountain surrounded by water in a primordial setting that is alternately described as Batuun ("First Stone"), Baha' ("First Water"), and Chatan.

On two of the vessels portraying the sacrifice, there is an elderly attendant with a pointed chin, sunken cheeks, and an exaggerated nose that is either very long (Figure 3.98) or extremely bulbous (Figure 3.97). He also has exceptionally long and abundant black hair that hangs behind him in a thick braid with an open weave. On both vessels,

he wears the headband that marks him as a lord, but only once it is bejeweled with the Jester God (Figure 3.97). The remainder of his attire differs greatly. On one vessel, he is dressed in a shoulder cape and loincloth (Figure 3.97), while on the other, he is wearing a segmented upper garment edged with knots and a hipcloth decorated with crossed bones and death-eyes (Figure 3.98). The type of hand fan he holds is also different. Although each has a long handle, one is very oar-like while (Figure 3.97) the other has the crenellated contours of a conventionalized waterlily pad (Figure 3.98). It is likely that the glyphs beside him on one represented his name, but they are no longer legible (Figure 4.88).

The fan-holding attendant has one arm lowered, one arm raised, and both knees bent. In Classic Maya iconography, the act of dance is often indicated with just a raised heel or a lifted arm, and fans are a common accouterment of dancers (Looper 2009:47, 52-53, 216; Taube and Taube 2009:237). There are also clownish-yet-lordly beings who have similarly exaggerated noses (Taube 1989c:367, Figs. 24.7I, 24.13a), and dancers who have decorative queues comparable to the open-weave braid the attendant wears (Figures 3.99-3.100). It is very likely, then, that the fan-holding attendant is a dancer in mid dance. The presence of such an individual accords well with evidence linking acts of sacrifice—be it an offering of one's own blood or the execution of another—to dancing (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1994:265; Looper 2009: 73, 226; Miller and Brittenham 2013:136, 144). Moreover, since *wayob* also engage in sacrifice and dance (Fitzsimmons 2009:46; e.g., K0791, K3844), it is quite possible that the fan-holding attendant is a co-

essence as well, albeit one whose identity as a *way* awaits the confirmation of a caption identifying him as such.

#### THE PRESENTATION

## Bih-al Akan (Holder of the Feline Infant)

Akan is the elaborately attired being who holds the feline infant while indoors and sitting or kneeling in the presence of an enthroned ruler (Figures 3.101-3.103). Günter Zimmermann (cited in Taube 1992b:14, 160) designated him Death God A' to distinguish him from Death God A, the skeletal manifestation of death Paul Schellhas (1904:10) included in his list of gods appearing in the Post-Classic Maya codices. In addition to death, Akan is also a god of sacrifice, disease, and drunkenness who, in the Late Classic, was often impersonated during ritual performances (Taube 1992b14; Grube 2004). On the Jaguar Baby vessels, he wears a sombrero-like hat with a broad brim and a narrow crown. The crown is tied with a vertical row of knots and has a Jester God jewel on it to identify him as a lord. It also has an open top to permit his long black hair to pass through it and to hang in a queue behind him. Short, light-colored tendrils (possibly of paper) emerge from under his hat and are visible just above his eyes. On two vessels, he wears a facial ornament in the form of a figure eight, with one loop around his eyes and the other around his mouth (Figures 3.101-3.102). His earflare is a large disc with a bent central element terminating in a set of scrolls resembling part of a sak sign or the "cap" on a smoking ajaw motif. He wears a fringed cloak that varies in length but is black and white and embellished with death-eyes (Figures 3.101, 3.103) or with markings

reminiscent of those on an armadillo's shell (Figure 3.102). On one vessel, the clasp of his cloak strongly resembles a lunar crescent and the foot of the jaguar baby touches it, perhaps as an allusion to his impending death and entrance into the underworld (Figure 3.102).

There are numerous manifestations of Akan, and at least two are *wayob* linked to Chatan (Grube and Nahm 1994:708). Ch'ak-baah Akan ("Self-decapitating Akan") is the co-essence of someone bearing the K'uhul Chatan Winik title (Figure 3.104), and "Enema" Akan is the co-essence of Chatan Bih, that is, the Chatan Road (Figure 3.105). Nikolai Grube (2004:60-62) deciphered Akan's portrait glyph after noting that it takes *a* and *na* signs as phonetic complements and merges with a deer glyph signifying the word *ceh* in the Emblem Glyph from the site of Acanceh in the Yucatan. The defining elements of Akan's portrait glyph are a black mark around or across his eye and a death mark on his cheek that resembles a percentage sign. In one example of it from a vessel on which he holds the jaguar baby, a black band runs across his eye and he has a death mark on his cheek, but instead of cohering into a motif resembling a percentage sign, it devolves into a (loosely) diagonal trio of dash marks (Figure 3.101). On the same vessel, a pair of signs preceding his portrait glyph can be analyzed as spelling *bih-al* (BIH-la), which seems to be a noun of qualitative abstraction (Houston, Robertson, and Stuart

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "Enema" Akan's nominal phrase cannot be read in its entirety and he is nicknamed for the enema clyster he holds. Grube and Nahm (1994:708) saw the final collocation in his name as ?-bi and speculated that it was a substitute for winik, whereas I see it as a bih/bi sign superimposed on a hi syllabograph and read it as spelling bih ("road").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Grube and Nahm (1994:709) suggested Akan as a possible name for God A' but Grube did not publish a formal decipherment until 2004. Acanceh is the Colonial Yucatec spelling of Akankej, the site's Pre-Hispanic name.

2001:7-8) serving as an adjective to describe Akan. 10 If it is, then surely the bih in bih-al is as metaphoric as the bih in och-bih, since Akan is a death god and och-bih (Stuart 1998:388; 2006a:2) is a verb meaning "to die," but which translates literally as "to roadenter." In their analysis of quality and quantity in glyphic nouns and adjectives, Houston, Robertson, and Stuart (2001:11) argue that the -VI suffix (e.g., -aI) is sometimes used "when dealing with metaphysical, otherworldly things." I suspect, therefore, that the -alsuffix in bih-al conveys a quality of otherworldliness and that Bih-al Akan essentially means "otherworldly-road Akan." Be that as it may, in the context of the Jaguar Baby vessels, I think Akan is likely to have a descriptive appellation preceding his name since that would make his nominal phrase compositionally comparable to the nominal phrases of the rain god and the skeletal co-essence, each of whom has a descriptive appellation (i.e., yax ha'al and sak-aj, respectively) preceding his name. Adding bih-al to his name would also further differentiate him from other manifestations of God A' who occur more frequently on pictorial pottery, including Jatz'-tuun Akan ("Stone-striking Akan") (Lopes 2003:4) and the previously mentioned Ch'ak-baah Akan. 11

With only one example of the *bih-al akan* collocation, there is room for debate not only about its reading, but whether or not it names to the individual who holds the feline infant. In my opinion, if he is not Akan or someone impersonating him, then he is a lord

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>In Mayan grammar, the distinctions between nouns and adjectives are sometimes imperceptible (Helmke and Kettunen 2009:17; Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001:2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>Lopes mistyped "striking-stone" as "strinking stone" in his translation of Jatz'-tuun Akan's name, but I have corrected it since it is clearly unintentional and contrary to how he translates *jaatz*' elsewhere on the page.

acting as the same type of attendant as one of the men who appear on Tikal Altar 5 and carry the *sak way-is* title (Figure 3.20).

## The Enthroned Ajaw and His Attendants

Each vessel on which the enthroned ajaw and his attendants appear has multiple cracks and/or large areas of erosion. On one vessel, the crown jewel on the lord's forehead is misshapen and the upper part of his headdress looks as if it is bristling and ready to pounce (Figure 3.112). In my opinion, most (if not all) of the ruler is the work of a modern painter. On another vessel, the surface of the vase where the ruler appears is pitted and abraded (Figure 3.113). There is also a crack in the rim that extends down through the figure's head, and while I find it less suspect than the figure with the hostile headgear, I am still wary of giving it credence. The lordly attendant sitting next to him must have undergone some repainting since he has a crack running the full length of his body which, in turn, makes me leery of relying on the figure's details (Figure 3.107). However, his general appearance seems plausible since one of the newly reconstructed partial vessels from Calakmul depicts the upper part of a headdress that is substantially similar to his because it also includes a serpent-wing and a stuffed jaguar's tail next to a floral ornament (Figure 3.110).

A third example of the enthroned ajaw seems to be in relatively good condition despite partial erosion (Figure 3.106). At the very least, the shape of his headdress is not outlandish and its front bears part of a credible Jester God gem. The shoulder tassels on his cloak are uncommon, as it the garment's sawtooth edging. An attendant kneeling

behind the ruler wears a long cape with the same type of serrated hemming. Next to him, his bare-chested cohort him is clad in a hipcloth that is tied on the side and embellished with a mix of ornate borders, including one with tabs resembling ik' signs (Figure 3.108). Both attendants wear the forward-swept headscarf that is among the attributes of courtiers who bear the so-called Banded Bird title (Bassie-Sweet, Hopkins, and Josserand 2012:206-207; Jackson 2013:15, 58-59; Stuart 2005a:133-136), but the one in the hipcloth wears it in conjunction with a sovereign jewel to indicate that he is the senior of the two. The south face of the platform from Temple XIX at Palenque confirms that the same distinction existed among historical individuals. It portrays the coronation of K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb as Palenque's K'uhul Ajaw. He is sitting with six royal attendants, three of whom carry the priestly title. However, it is the most senior attendant—the one with the rank of Banded Bird Ajaw—who bestows the crown (Stuart 2005a:119).

On Calakmul Vessel 0, there is an incomplete image of a kneeling attendant behind the elderly attendant who holds the child (Figure 3.109). Like the senior of the two attendants who kneel behind the enthroned lord on K5855 (Figure 3.108), his hipcloth is tied on the side and has a distinctive selvage. He also wears the forward-swept headscarf that is an attribute of someone who bears the "Banded Bird" title, but with an element resembling a tiny torch or lit cigar tucked under its brim. What remains of a probable mantle with a distinctive trim is visible in front of his hipcloth (Figure 3.109b), and it is likely that he was once kneeling with another attendant behind an enthroned lord, as his counterpart on K5855 does (Figure 3.108) or, perhaps, since his

head is tilted back, he is doing whatever the kneeling attendant on K1200 is doing (Figure 3.111).

# The Elderly Attendant and the Young Child

The attendant who has a young child in his lap on one of the recently reconstructed vessels from Calakmul is an elderly man whose advanced age is evident from his aquiline nose and sunken mouth (Figures 3.114-3.115). Although he has been identified as Itzamnaaj (Boucher Le Landais 2014:61-62), his distinctive attire indicates that he is serving as a priestly official whose office is designated with an undeciphered hieroglyph known as the "Banded Bird" title (Bassie-Sweet, Hopkins, and Josserand 2012:206-207; Jackson 2013:15, 58-59; Stuart 2005a:133-136) (Figure 3.124). Individuals such as he also delivered gifts to foreign courts (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:244-248) and witnessed events on behalf of their lords (Miller and Brittenham 2013:78, 124). When serving as emissaries, they characteristically wore a necklace with three pendant spondylus shells and a white mantle with distinctive selvage (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:244). However, when doing something more priestly, such as daubing and aspersing (Steinbach 1998:55-56; 2007, 2008), or assisting with bloodletting (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:132; Looper 2009:42; Martin and Grube 2008:60-61), they sometimes wore a shoulder cape and a jaguar-skin hipcloth (Figures 3.117, 3.120). Furthermore, since the performance of such rites often involves deity "impersonation" (for want of a better word), it is not uncommon for a "Banded Bird" attendant to appear

in a headdress that is indicative of a given god and portrays the face of that god's zoomorphic aspect.

At Palenque, for example, during K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb's coronation (as portrayed on the previously mentioned platform from Temple XIX), his most senior attendant (i.e., his "banded bird" ajaw), Janab Ajaw impersonated Itzamnaaj and wore a variant of the old god's headdress that portrays the face of his alter ego, the Principal Bird Deity (Figure 3.123). Although he is not wearing a mask, the caption accompanying Janab Ajaw's portrait explicitly states that he is in the guise of Yax Naah Itzamnaaj (Stuart 2005a:117-119) (Figure 3.124a). Sakjal Hix (Figure 3.117), the "Banded Bird" attendant who oversees the bloodletting of a young prince on Dos Pilas Panel 19 (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:132), is wearing a headdress that is indicative of a supernatural being with a beak-like snout who—in addition to having strong affinities with wind and water—embodies the *haab* logograph denoting a period of 360 days and is the god of the number thirteen (Taube 1992b:56-59; Thompson 1985:135-136) (Figure 3.125c). 12 The caption accompanying Sakjal Hix's image provides only his name and title but it is, nonetheless, reasonable to infer that, like Janab Ajaw, he is "impersonating" the deity whose headdress he wears. Moreover, a Late Classic Maya polychrome bowl known as the Vase of the Eighty-eight Glyphs (Robicsek and Hales 1982:38-39) depicts a pair of elderly attendants in comparable regalia, and while there are no captions identifying them, they wear large ik' ("wind") motifs on their chests (Figure 3.120).

1′

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The logograph now read as *haab* (e.g., Kettunen and Helmke 2011:55), was formerly read as *tuun* (e.g., Schele and Miller 1986:318).

The headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen is often discussed in reference to the Waterlily Serpent (e.g., Hellmuth 1987b:140-142; Steinbach 1998:52; Taube 1992b:56-59) because it appears far more frequently and wears the same headdress (Figure 3.125a). Indeed, since it also embodies the *haab* logograph (Figure 3.125b) and serves as an animate version of the number thirteen (Schele and Miller 1986:46) (Figure 3.125), it is—perhaps—a less anthropomorphic version of the same being who emerges from the rear end of the turtle shell on K1892 (Figure 3.125c). In its most elaborate form, the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen consists of a waterlily pad that is tied horizontally with the stem of its flower. The pad, in turn, is surmounted by a decorative braid ending in a *sak* motif and another, more angular element frequently serving as the perch for a tiny Shell Wing Dragon (Figures 3.125a-3.126). When a depiction of the god's face is part of the headdress, it sometimes has a forehead shaped like a *haab* motif, as it does on Calakmul Vessel 0 (Figure 3.115).

Like his counterparts from Dos Pilas (Figure 3.117) and the Vase of the 88 Glyphs (Figure 3.120), the priestly attendant on the Calakmul vessel wears the "animate" form of the headdress which incorporates the god's face (Figure 3.115). The details of his regalia and clothing, however, are more in keeping with those of the priestly attendants appearing on two other Late Classic Maya vessels without provenience (Figures 3.118-3.119). His headdress, for example, in addition to having a forehead in the form of the *haab* motif, also includes a Shell Wing Dragon with a long and sinuous neck. Although the painting style of the object makes the details of the figure less easy to discern, the

<sup>13</sup> See Hellmuth (1987b:147-148) for more about the Shell Wing Dragon.

headdress of the elderly attendant on K8665 has a little Shell Wing Dragon standing upon his headdress, as well as a *haab* motif upon its brow (Figure 3.118). On all three vessels, the priestly attendant wears a mostly white mantle with a distinctive trim and a long train that extends behind them. Each one also a mat symbol around his neck, and two of the three wear in conjunction with a spondylus shell (Figures 3.115, 3.118).

The young child who sits upright in the elderly attendant's lap is entirely anthropomorphic—he does not have *any* feline traits—and, given his comparatively long limbs and slender body, he is not an infant (Figure 3.116). Instead, he is probably three-to-five years old, and thus a bit younger than the little prince who Sakjal Hix assists on Dos Pilas Panel 19 (Figure 3.117). His maleness is evident from his loincloth, and even though his clothing is plain and his head is bare—as I will argue—he, too, is surely a prince undergoing a childhood ritual. On the floor, and in front of the child, there is an object but it is incomplete because part of the vessel is missing (Figure 3.114). From what remains, it appears to be a possible container sitting on a bisected black quatrefoil amid groups of radiating lines that might represent strips of paper and/or kindling.

## K'awiil

K'awiil is a complex deity who is coincidentally designated as God K in Schellhas' list of gods (1904:32). In Classic images, he appears as a reptilian being with anthropomorphic traits who has a smoking celt (e.g., Figures 3.49, 3.128) or a flaming torch (e.g., Figures 3.48, 3.127) passing through a mirror on his forehead and, most strikingly of all, a serpentine leg terminating in the head of a snake. As a god of

lightning, God K sometimes serves as the burning axe of Chahk (figure 3.23b) and, at other times, merges with him (Figure 3.24). Despite his relative smallness, K'awiil is essential to Classic Maya concepts of power, and is closely identified with royal lineage and bloodletting (Schele and Miller 1986:49; Taube 1992b:69-79). As noted, on the Snake Lady vessels, he is often part of the Bearded Serpent from which *huk-? yax-? chak-?* emerges (e.g., Figures 3.48-3.49, 3.51)

On Calakmul Vessel 0, K'awiil appears above the elderly attendant and young child (Figures 3.127, 3.129). He is visible from the shoulders up and is inside a smoky volute formed from the flame of his own cranial torch. Placing him in the uppermost part of the pictorial field, and enclosing him inside a fiery wreath, collectively indicates that he is present but has the relative weightlessness of fire which, in turn, implies he is more spirit than flesh.

Having individually introduced the figures who appear in the pictorial renderings of this narrative, I will turn now in Chapter 4 to the individual hieroglyphic passages describing it in the accompanying texts. Given the formal variability of some signs and the extreme rarity of others, it is necessary to establish the identity of each hieroglyph before attempting to understand it as part of an inscription.



Figure 3.1 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

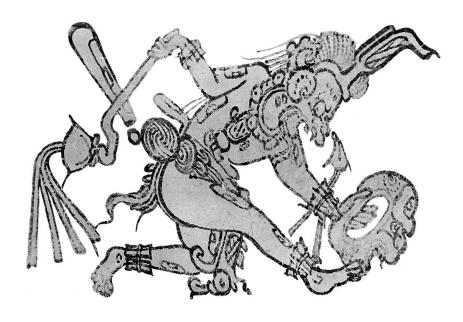


Figure 3.2 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.3 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.4 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.5 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.6 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.7 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.8 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.9 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.10 Yax Ha'al Chahk on Calakmul Vessel 19A, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).



Figure 3.11 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

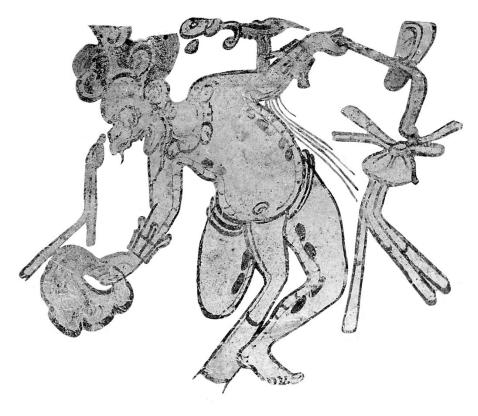


Figure 3.12 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.13 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K1199, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.14 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.15 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.16 Yax Ha'al Chahk on K4384, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.17 Rollout photo of K2723 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.18 Vessel from Calakmul Tomb 1, Structure II (drawing after photo).



Figure 3.19 Rollout photo of K1250 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.20 Tikal Altar 5 (drawing by Linda Schele © David Schele).



Figure 3.21 Figures wearing clothing and holding objects denoting acts of penance and sacrifice, K5043, detail  $\odot$  Justin Kerr.

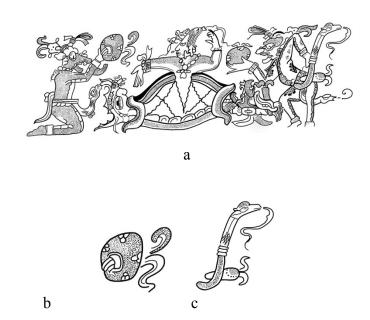


Figure 3.22 Two Chahks using lightning weapons to split open the turtle shell:

- a Late Classic polychrome vessel (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- b Detail of pounder with smoke and flame volutes (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- c Detail of serpentine lightning axe with flaming tongue (redrawn after Karl Taube).

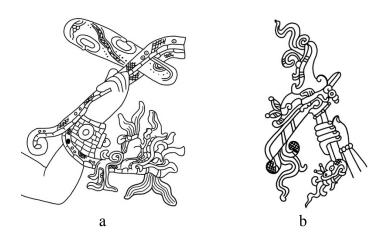


Figure 3.23 The handle of Chahk's lightning axe:

- a In the form of a snake, Panel, Dumbarton Oaks, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b As K'awiil's serpentine leg, Early Classic vessel (K1285), detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).

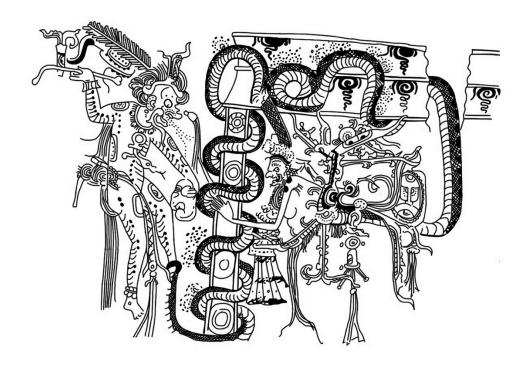


Figure 3.24 Chahk merged with K'awiil, K2772, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).



Figure 3.25 Sak-aj on K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

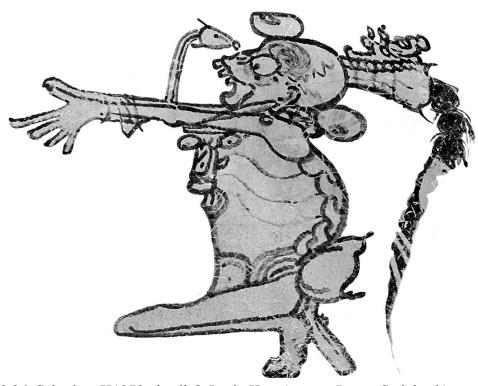


Figure 3.26 Sak-aj on K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.27 Sak-aj on K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.28 Sak-aj on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.29 Sak-aj on K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.30 Sak-aj on K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

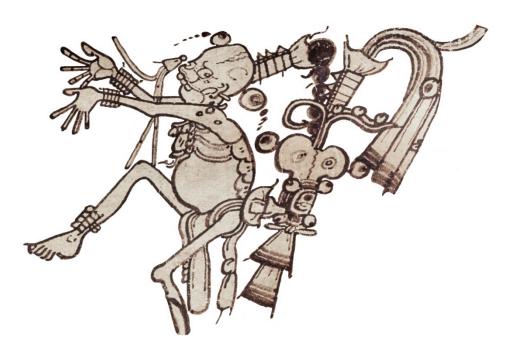


Figure 3.31 Sak-aj on K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

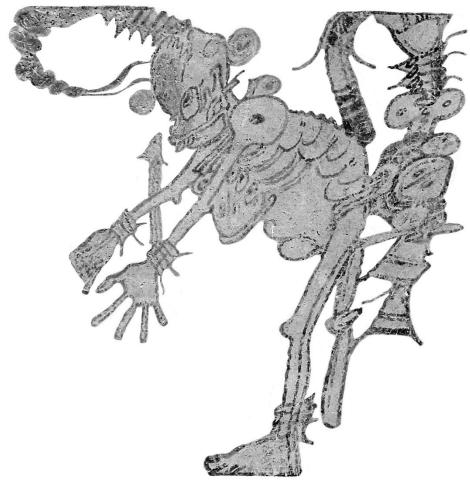


Figure 3.32 Sak-ja on K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.33 Sak-aj on K1199, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.34 Sak-aj on K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.35 Sak-aj on K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.36 Sak-aj on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.37 Sak-aj on K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

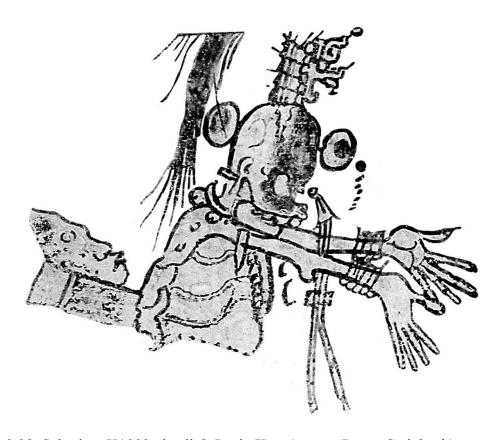


Figure 3.38 Sak-aj on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.39 Sak-aj on MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo).

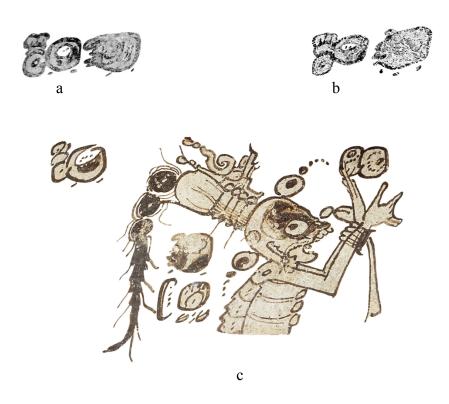


Figure 3.40 The Sak-aj nominal phrase:

- a SAK-ja?, sak-aj?, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b SAK-ja?-?, sak-aj?, K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c SAK-ja? u-WAY-ya ba-TUUN sak-aj? u-way batuun, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

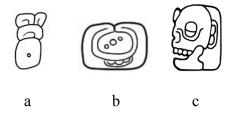


Figure 3.41 A sak logograph, a full ja syllabograph, and a cham/kam logograph:

- a *sak* logograph, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b *ja* syllabograph, Stela 3, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- c *cham/kam* logograph, Dumbarton Oaks Panel, detail (redrawn after Nikolai Grube).

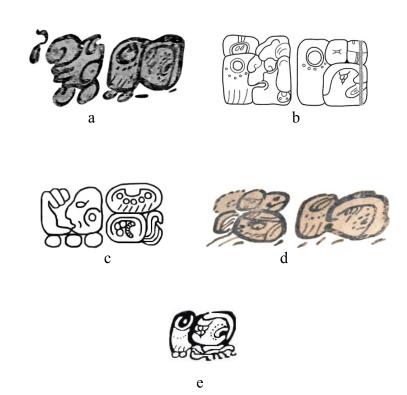


Figure 3.42 Batuun as a toponym and as a title:

- a ya-YAL-wa ba-TUUN, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b YAX-HA'-CHAHK ba-TUUN-AJAW, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c **KELEEM-ma ba-TUUN-ni**, Panel 7, Xcalumkin, detail (redrawn after Eric von Euw);
- d **K'UH-ka-KAN-AJAW ba-TUUN**, K0531, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **ba-TUUN-ni**, RPN186, Nakbe, detail (redrawn after Roberto López).



Figure 3.43 Chthonic eye on mirror edged with death-eye fringe:

- a As part of a headdress in the form of a firefly's head, K0793, detail © Justin Kerr.
- b Adorning the head of the God of the Number Zero, Copan, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- c On a headdress, K6999, detail © Justin Kerr;
- d Adorning the head of the Muwan Bird, Tablet of the Cross, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).



Figure 3.44 The Starry Deer Crocodile, K1609, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach):

- a Rear head with Quadripartite Badge;b Front head with star motif in eye.

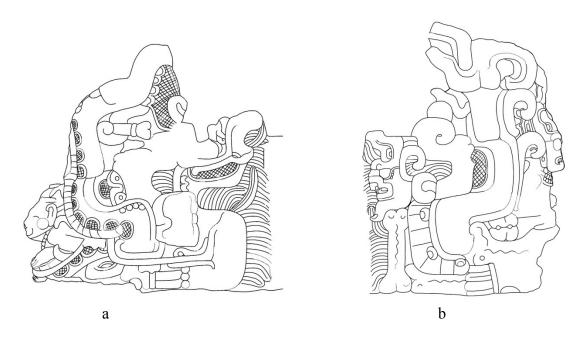


Figure 3.45 Copan Altar G1:

- a Front head (north side), detail (redrawn after Anke Blanck);
- b Rear head (north side), detail (redrawn after Anke Blanck).



Figure 3.46 Huk ? Yax ? on K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

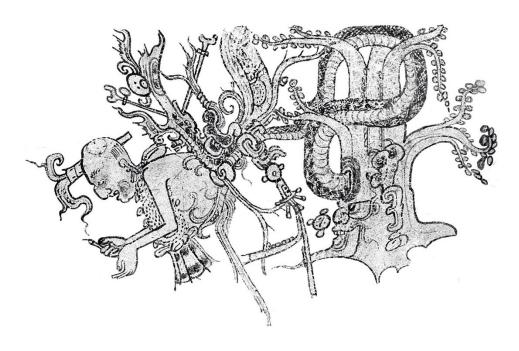


Figure 3.47 Huk? Yax? on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.48 Huk-? Yax-? on K6754, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.49 Huk-? Yax-? on K5164, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.50 Huk-? Yax-? on K1382, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

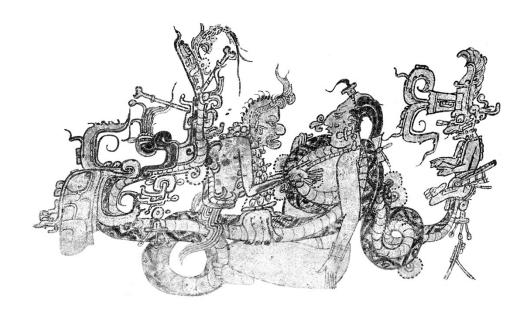


Figure 3.51 Huk-? Yax-? on K1813, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.52 Huk-? Yax-? on K4485, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.53 Huk-? Yax-? on K1081, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

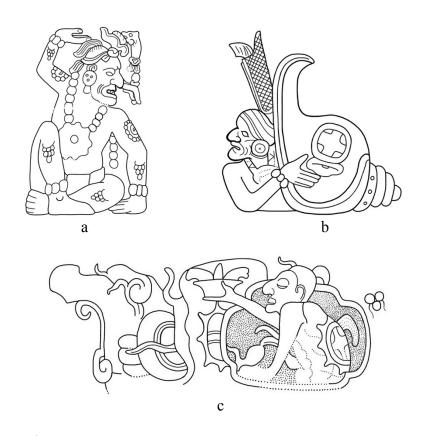


Figure 3.54 God N:

- a As an sky-bearer, Sepulturas Bench, Copan, detail (redrawn after Barbara Fash);
- b In a conch shell, unprovenienced vessel, detail (redrawn after Simon Martin);
- c In a turtle shell, Tikal Altar 4, detail (redrawn after Simon Martin).



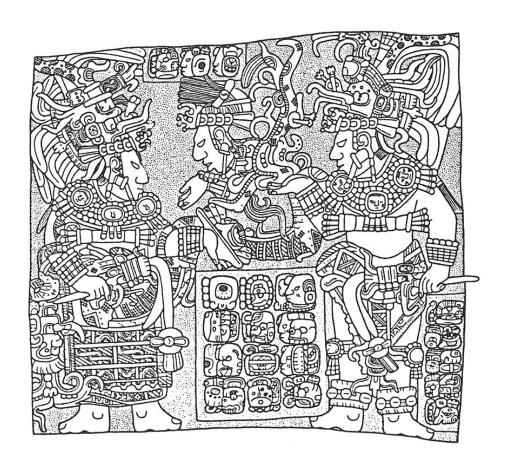


Figure 3.56 Conjuring portrayed on Lintel 14 at Yaxchilan (drawing by Linda Schele  $\mathbb C$  David Schele).



Figure 3.57 Rollout photo of K2715 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.58 The *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal phrase on K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

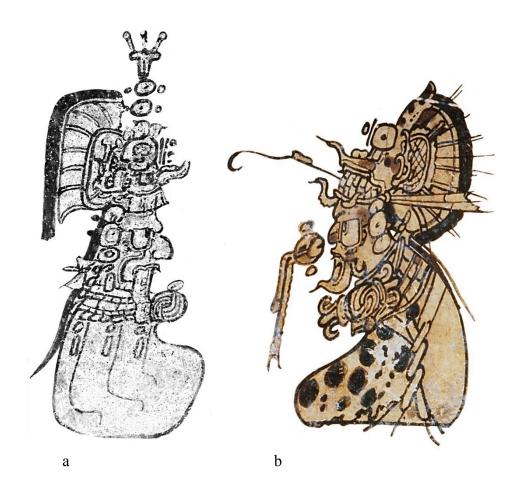


Figure 3.59 The Tree God (Paax patron):

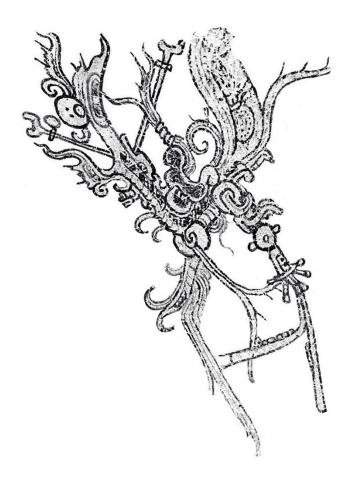
- a K1813, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.60 Rollout photo of K4114 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.61 The Maize God emerging from a turtle shell with God N (left) and K'awiil (right) inside it, unprovenienced polychrome plate (redrawn after Simon Martin).



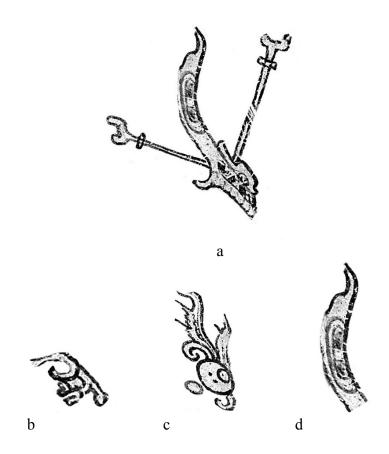


Figure 3.63. Parts of a Bearded Serpent's snout on K4013, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- Widely splayed breath-markers with fleshy nostril;
- b Tooth;
- c Sprouting seed; d Mirrored snout.

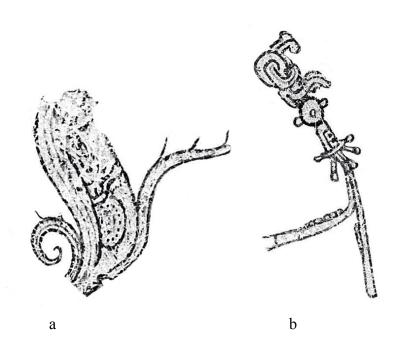


Figure 3.64 Parts of a Bearded Serpent's ear on K4013, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- Ear-like maize spray of maize leaves; Earflare with long floral pendant.



Figure 3.65 Jaguar on K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

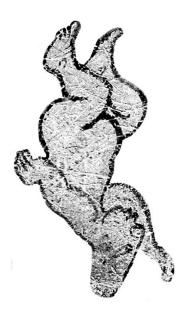


Figure 3.66 Infant on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

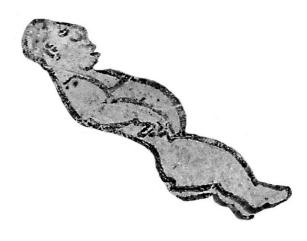


Figure 3.67 Infant on K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

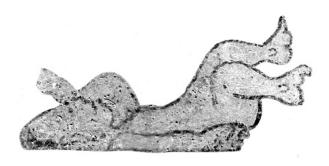


Figure 3.68 Infant on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.69 Infant with jaguar traits on K0521, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.70 Infant with jaguar traits on K2208, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.71 Infant with jaguar traits on K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

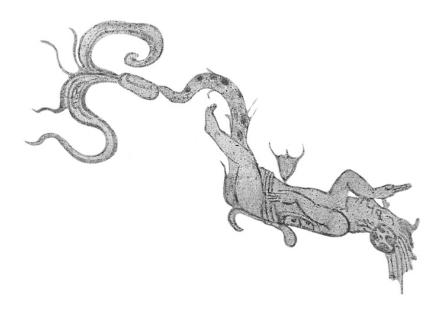


Figure 3.72 Infant with jaguar traits on K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

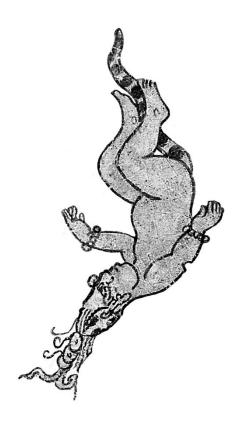


Figure 3.73 Infant with jaguar traits on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

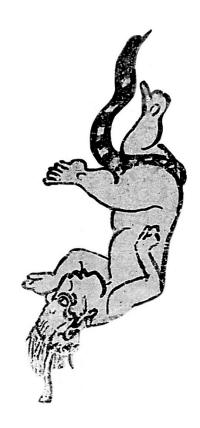


Figure 3.74 Infant with jaguar traits on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

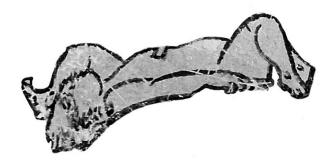


Figure 3.75 Infant with jaguar traits on K1370, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.76 Infant with jaguar traits on K5855, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

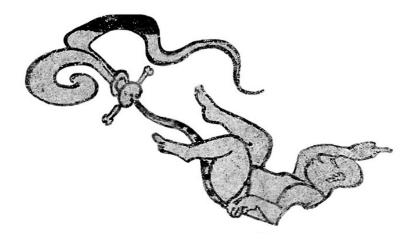


Figure 3.77 Infant with jaguar traits on K1815, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

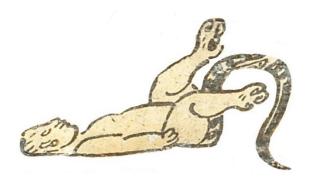


Figure 3.78 Infant with jaguar traits on K1644, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.79 Infant with jaguar traits on K4385, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.80 Infant with jaguar traits on Calakmul Vessel 19, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

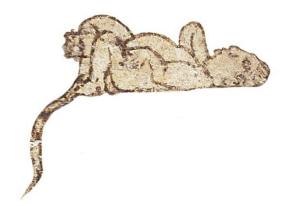


Figure 3.81 Infant with jaguar traits on K4384, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.82 Infant with jaguar traits on K1200, detail  $\ \ \,$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

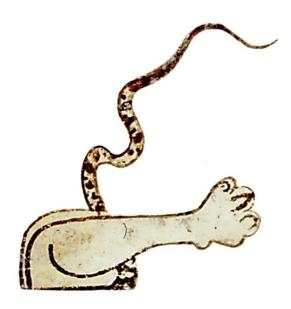


Figure 3.83 Infant with jaguar traits on K1199, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

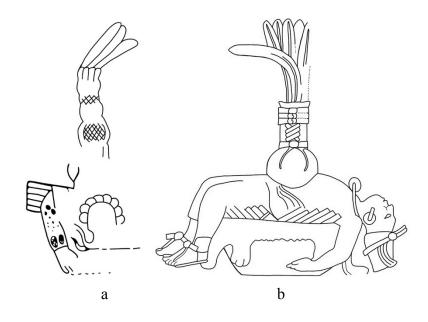


Figure 3.84 Depictions of sacrificial children wearing or lying on a jaguar skin:

- a Stela 14 (note sleeve), Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube);
- b Stela 11 (note paw), Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart).



Figure 3.85 Chan-Te' Ajaw burning the Jaguar God of the Underworld, K1299, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).



Figure 3.86 Firefly on K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

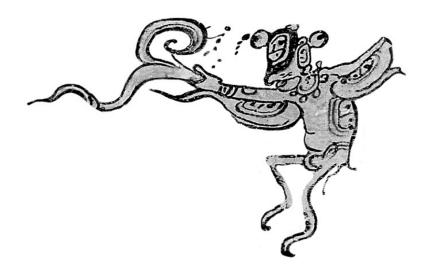


Figure 3.87 Firefly on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

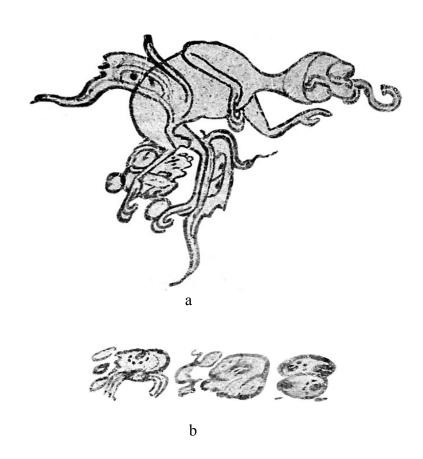


Figure 3.88 The Firefly and his nominal phrase on K1815, details  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a Firefly;
- b **1-?-hi K'AK'-TI' ku-ku**, jun ? k'ak' ti' kuk[ay].



Figure 3.89 Rollout photo of K8608 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.90 Sill photo of K2226 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.91 Rollout photo of K8007 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.92 Jaguar Dog on K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.93 Enema Jaguar on K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.94 Enema Jaguar on K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.95 Owl on K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

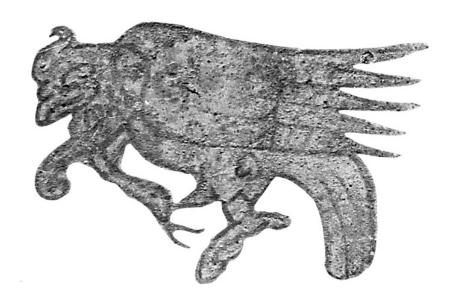


Figure 3.96 Owl on K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.97 Fan-holding Attendant on K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.98 Fan-holding Attendant on MBD Vessel 28 (drawing after photo).



Figure 3.99 Rollout photo of K4622 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.100 Rollout photo of K4824 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.101 Bih-al Akan on K5855, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.102 Bih-al Akan? on K1200, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.103 Bih-al Akan? on K4384, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.104 Self-decapitating Akan on K1230, detail © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.105 "Enema" Akan on K0927, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.106 Enthroned Lord on K5855, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.107 Seated Attendant on K4384, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.108 Kneeling Attendants on K5855, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.109 Kneeling Attendant on Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke):

- a Alone;
- b With part of the clothing on the figure once in front of him.



Figure 3.110 Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (drawing after photo).



Figure 3.111 Kneeling Attendant on K1200, detail © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.112 Enthroned Lord on K1200, detail © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.113 Enthroned Lord on K4384, detail © Justin Kerr.



Figure 3.114 Elderly Attendant and Young Child on Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).



Figure 3.115 Elderly Attendant on Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).



Figure 3.116 Young Child on Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).

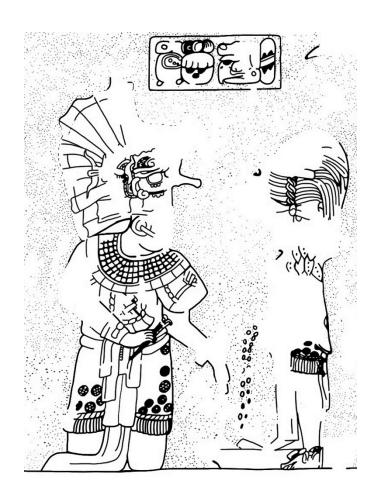


Figure 3.117 Dos Pilas Panel 19, detail (redrawn after David Stuart).



Figure 3.118 Priestly Attendant on K8665, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.119 Priestly Attendant on K8526, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.120 Priestly Attendants on the Vase of the Eighty-eight Glyphs (K1440), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.121 Young Wind God wearing the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen on K0114, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 3.122 Old Wind God on K3007, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

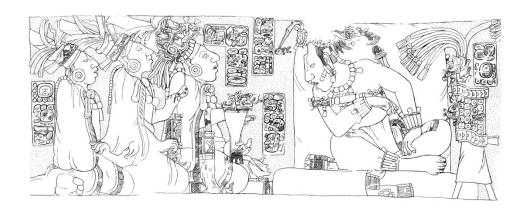


Figure 3.123 Priestly Attendants, Temple 19 Platform (south face), Palenque, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart)





Figure 3.124 The "banded bird" title and its variants:

- a Janab Ajaw's nominal phrase ending in "banded bird ajaw" title, Platform, Temple 19, Palenque, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart);
- b Monument 8, Tortuguero, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart);
- c Wooden Box, Tortuguero region, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart);
- d Temple 19 Platform, Palenque, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart);
- e Tablet of the Foliated Cross, Palenque, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart).

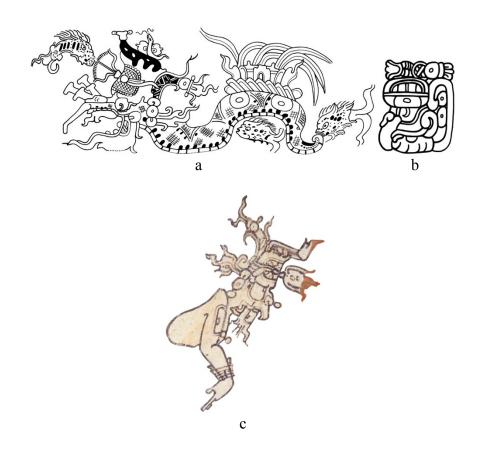


Figure 3.125 The Waterlily Serpent, the *haab* logograph, and the God of the Number Thirteen:

- a Waterlily Serpent, Late Classic polychrome vessel, detail (redrawn after Nicholas Hellmuth);
- b A variant of the *haab* logograph depicting the Waterlily Serpent's head (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- c God of the Number Thirteen, K1892, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

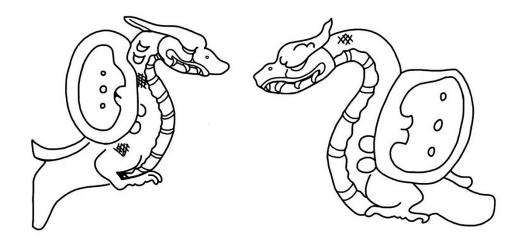


Figure 3.126 Shell Wing Dragons, Tablet of the Slaves, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Nicholas Hellmuth).

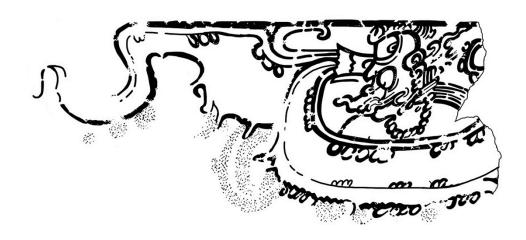


Figure 3.127 K'awiil on Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).

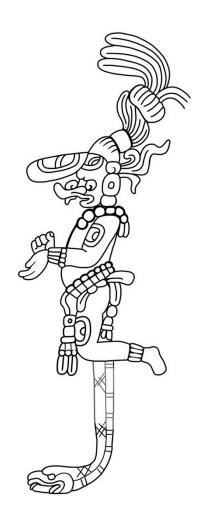


Figure 3.128 K'awiil, Lintel 3, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn, with modification, after Ian Graham).



Figure 3.129 Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).

## **Chapter 4: The Inscriptions**

In this chapter, I examine the both the individual hieroglyphs and the hieroglyphic inscriptions accompanying the figures on the Jaguar Baby vessels. These syllabic and logographic signs are integrated into the pictorial field, and typically appear near the focal point of the pictorial narrative. Thus, on the vessels depicting the sacrifice occurring outdoors, the text is usually between two opposing figures and/or above the being who is the offering or, in one instance, the being for whom the offering is made. Similarly, on the vessels portraying the presentation happening indoors, if there is a lengthy inscription, it will appear between the individual holding the feline infant and the enthroned ruler with whom he converses. Also, while depicting one event but describing another (or others) is a common practice—the inscriptions on Classic Maya monuments routinely record far more events than the accompanying images portray—it is instructive to encounter that convention on a smaller scale in which the discrepancy between what is shown and what is said is far easier to navigate.

On many of the vessels, points of contact between the figures and the hieroglyphs serve to clarify and confirm elements of the narrative—such as who does what to whom—which are not clearly apparent from the just the images or words alone, and cannot be readily grasped without scrutiny of the interface between figure and hieroglyph. Indeed, the visual and verbal presentation of the story the vessels convey assumes that the viewer-reader is well-acquainted with iconographic conventions and hieroglyphic writing, and will not only know the rules of thumb for each, but will have

both the desire and ability to follow the scribe's departure from—or variation upon—standard practices, such as using a verb without marking its voice or creating a point of contact between a figure and a hieroglyph—that instead of merely implying that one names the other (Wald 1997)—seeks to elucidate the link(s) between what the verb signifies and what the figures do (Bassie-Sweet 1991:41).

Of the whole and partial vessels meeting the criteria to qualify as Jaguar Baby vessels, more than a dozen bear legible glyphs. The degree of legibility varies from vessel to vessel, and no two inscriptions are truly identical; there is always some difference. To avoid needless repetition, and to make it easier to review the reading of a given sign, each glyph is the subject of a summary addressing its formal properties and the history of decipherment. The ordering of the glyphic summaries follows the likely sequence of the glyphs in a Jaguar Baby inscription (i.e., calendrical, adverbial, verbal, toponymic, nominal, and titular), and within a given set of glyphs, the sequence reflects either the frequency of their occurrence (e.g., from most to the least common verb), or their sequence in a nominal phrase (e.g., yax ha'al chaak). Following the summary of glyphs is an analysis of the glyphs in situ that includes a transliteration, transcription, and translation of each inscription on each vessel, as well as notes on anything previously unspecified that bears upon the legibility of the glyphs or is relevant to their interpretation, such as an area of contact or overlap between a figure and a glyph.

In addition to my examination of the inscriptions of the Jaguar Baby vessels, I am also including an analysis of the inscriptions on a second group of Codex-style objects that are not Jaguar Baby vessels, but are relevant since they depict the birth of the elderly

deity for whom the feline infant (or his equivalent) is sacrificed, and with whom the feline infant (or his equivalent) shares a name. Many of the glyphs in the second group of objects—the so-called Snake Lady vessels, to use the nickname Justin Kerr gave them—occur on the Jaguar Baby vessels as well, so instead of providing separate summaries for each of the 'new' glyphs, I will address their formal properties and histories of decipherment *en route*.<sup>1</sup>

### INDIVIDUAL SUMMARIES OF THE GLYPHS ON JAGUAR BABY VESSELS

### The Day Signs

### Kib

Kib (Figure 4.1) is the Colonial Yucatec name for the sixteenth day in the cycle of twenty days known as the Tzolk'in.<sup>2</sup> To form a valid Calendar Round date in conjunction with one of the eighteen "months" of the Mesoamerican solar year, Kib must have a coefficient of four, nine, fourteen, or nineteen (Thompson 1985:123). The common variant of the Classic Kib day sign depicts a motif that defies easy identification. Thompson (1985:86) identified it as part of a univalve shell but, given its

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Robicsek and Hales (1981:16, 17-22) referred to such objects as "Bearded Dragon" vessels, but I think Kerr's nickname for them is much more evocative, since serpents are common, but women in snake coils are not.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Classic Maya names for the days are mostly unknown since the use of a cartouche to mark each sign as a day name largely precludes phonetic complementation. Consequently, scholars generally use the Colonial Yucatec day names instead.

resemblance to an inverted T506 *k'an* motif—which depicts a tamale in its leaf wrapper (Taube 1989:32)—it might depict an upside down leaf-wrapped tamale instead.

#### Muluk

Muluk (Figure 4.2) is the ninth day in the twenty-day cycle. In a valid Calendar Round date, it must have a coefficient of two, seven, twelve, or seventeen (Thompson 1985:123). The motif the common variant of the Muluk sign depicts is exceptionally puzzling. Hermann Beyer (cited in Thompson [1985:78, 329]) identified it as a sign for jade, but I am uncertain of its identity.

### Ajaw

Ajaw (Figure 4.3) is the last day in the twenty-day cycle and requires a coefficient of three, eight, thirteen, or eighteen (Thompson 1985:123) to form a valid Calendar Round date. The common variant of the Ajaw day sign depicts a stylized face (T533) signifying the word *ajaw*.

## The "Month" Signs (and the Numeral Classifier, Te')

# K'anasiiy

K'anasiiy (Figure 4.4) is the Classic Maya name for the twenty-day period called K'ayab in Colonial Yucatec. It is the seventeenth 'month' in the Haab cycle of 365 days

divided into eighteen counts of twenty days and one count of five days (Thompson 1985:104). The primary components of the hieroglyphic compound depict the head of a turtle with a k'an cross in its eye (Thompson 1985:116). As individual glyphs, the head is a syllabograph a and the cross is a logograph read as k'an (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009; Boot 2009:106-107). More often than not, the k'anasity compound has at least one phonetic complement (i.e., si and/or ya).

#### Saksihoom

Saksihoom (Figure 4.5) is the Classic Maya name for the 'month' called Sak in Colonial Yucatec. It is the eleventh 'month' in the Haab cycle (Thompson 1985:111). The hieroglyphic compound consists of a *sak* logograph surmounting a *sihoom* logograph that usually has a *ma* suffix. According to Marcri and Looper (2003:303), the *sak* logograph depicts an ear flare with scrolls. The iconic component of the *sihoom* logograph is the same as that of the day sign, Kawak, and depicts something stony with a cracked and pitted surface, such as a stone (Schele and Miller 1986:325) or a cave (Bassie-Sweet 1996:68).

### Te'

Te' (Figure 4.6) is an optional numeral classifier that occurs most commonly in calendrical notations (Kelley 1977:123-126; Macri 2000:15-17; Thompson 1985:54, 55-56). In Calendar Round dates, it modifies the coefficient of the 'month' rather than the coefficient of the day. In my opinion, the T87 te' logograph depicts a simplified version

of the carved spondylus valve that certain beings, such as the Principal Bird Deity, wear (Steinbach 1998:33-35) and that occasionally serves as a *pars pro toto* symbol of the World Tree in the Quadripartite Badge (e.g., Figures 1.35b, d).

## The Temporal Adverb

#### "Nukak'ab-il"

The temporal adverb that follows the date on four Jaguar Baby vessels is likely to be a Classic Maya cognate for for *nimaq'ab* read provisionally as *nukak'ab-il* (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009) (Figure 4.7). *Nimaq'ab* is a K'iche' Mayan word for "dawn" that literally means "big [nim] night [aq'ab]" and reflects the notion that the dawn marks the fullness—the completeness—of the night (Kaufman 2003:452). Its primary component depicts an *ak'bal* motif with a central cleft and, to my knowledge, it always occurs with a subfix signifying *li* and an initial sign signifying *nu* or *nuk* (Macri and Looper 2003:307). That is, while the reading of this compound is probably *nukak'ab-il*, there is uncertainty about whether the initial sign is syllabographic (*nu*) or

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The *ak'bal* motif is the motif of the day sign signifying the name of the day called Ak'bal in Colonial Yucatec (Thompson 1985:73). Macri and Looper (2003:307) credit Michel Davoust with reading T282 and T151 as *nuh* ("grand"), but do not credit anyone with the reading of T282 and T151 as *nuk* ("big").

logographic (*nuk*) and, accordingly, whether the central element with the *ak'bal* motif is purely iconic or signifies a word (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009).<sup>4</sup>

At present, I am inclined to regard (and transliterate) the *nukak'ab-il* collocation as consisting of two syllabic signs (*nu*, *li*) and a logograph (*nukak'ab*), but whatever the morphology of the compound proves to be, the iconic component its main sign depicts is an apt choice for a collocation signifying "dawn." Iconographically, the split *ak'bal* literally illustrates a breaking of darkness since the split represents a break or cleft (as it does in images of the Maize God's emergence, e.g., K1892), and the *ak'bal* motif denotes darkness (as it does on the face of Jun Ajaw's mirror on K0519, the Pearlman Shell Trumpet). Moreover, the split is the iconic component of a logograph signifying *pa'* ("broken," "split") (Boot 2004c; Martin 2004:4), whereas the *ak'bal* motif is the iconic component of a logograph signifying *ak'ab* ("night," "darkness") (Boot 2009:21; Kaufman 2003:448; Stuart 2005:81), and together they suggest *pa' ak'ab* a Yucatec term for "dawn" (Barrera Vásquez 1991:614; Bolles 2001).<sup>5</sup>

The the visually evocative nature of the *nukak'ab-il* collocation brings to mind a logograph signifying *pas* (Figure 4.8a), the root of *pasaj*, another word for "dawn" (Boot 2009:219; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:89, 119; MacLeod 1990:75-77). At Copan, the *pas* logograph serves as the root of *pasaj* in the name of the ruler, Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat (Martin and Grube 2008:208), where it also alternates with a fully syllabic spelling of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The *nu* or *nuk* quandary extends to other contexts in which T282, T151 and their allographs (T592, T106) occur, most notably in the varied spellings of a royal name ("Shield Skull") on the steps of Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4 (Step III:C2-D2, Step III:I2, and Step V:F2-H1) (Houston 1993:Fig.4-11; Martin and Grube 2008:42).

<sup>5</sup> The *ak'ab* reading arises from a consensus of epigraphers rather than a formal

decipherment (Justeson 1984:338).

pasaj, pa-sa-ja (Figures 4.8b-c). It also combines the iconic components of other hieroglyphs into a symbolic representation of of the sun rising into the sky from the surface of the earth. That is, the pas logograph depicts the iconic component of a "sun" (k'in) glyph as it pushes upward into the iconic component of a "sky" (chan) glyph from the top of the iconic component of an "earth" (kab) glyph and, yet—phonetically—it signifies pas instead of k'in, chan, or kab or any combination thereof. In my opinion, the nukak'ab-il collocation makes similar use of the iconic components of the pa' and ak'ab glyphs to symbolize dawn as the breaking of night.

Albert Davletshin and Péter Bíró (2014:7-9) have recently identified the "Split Akbal"—as the main sign of the adverb is informally known—as a possible *t'i* syllable, and suggested that the adverbial collocation consists of three syllabic signs (**nu-t'i-li**) spelling *nut'il* as a word for "dusk, sunset" which literally means "joining, closing" and indicates that the end of the day is when the "sun is 'closing the horizon' or 'joining to it' and beginning its journey to the underworld." As they note, the use of *nut'il* as "sunset" pairs nicely with the use of *pasaj* as "sunrise," given that one has a root meaning of "to close" (*nut-*) and the other, "to open" (*pas-*). Their suggestion that the throwing of the feline infant occurs at sunset also accords well with the presence of the firefly who appears on several of the Jaguar Baby vessels. Unfortunately, as with any reading of the adverbial collocation, its extreme rarity remains a barrier to secure decipherment.

Moreover, without at least one example of the "Split Akbal" acting as a syllabic sign in the spelling of a different word, I find it highly doubtful that it represents a syllable.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> For a guide to the sources establishing the reading of the *k'in*, *chan*, and *kab* glyphs, see Macri and Looper (2003:191, 197, 209).

# The Verbs

Yal

Yal (Figure 4.9) is both a root transitive meaning "to throw down" and a root intransitive meaning "to fall" or "to descend" (Kaufman 2003:162; Kaufman and Norman 1984:137; Laughlin 1988:382; my translations). It is the most common verb on the Jaguar Baby vessels, but is otherwise very rare in the corpus of Classic Maya inscriptions. The two logographs signifying yal as a verbal root depict either the T670 hand with a scroll motif (Figures 4.9a-b, g, 4.10a) or the T670 hand with an inverted ajaw motif (Figures 4.9e-f, 4.10b). Consequently, they are visually identical to two logographs (Figures 4.10d-e) traditionally read as al ("child") in parentage statements referring to an individual's mother. Given that al is a habitually possessed noun, and that its possessed form is y-al ("her child"), then perhaps—as Erik Boot argues (2009:23, 207)—the logographs always indicate YAL, even in references to y-al. If he is correct, despite evidence to the contrary—namely, the baah al ("first child") phrase Stuart (1997:2-3) notes on Tonina Monument 69—then the ya glyph that typically prefixes a yal logograph must be serving as a phonetic compliment to YAL rather than as a prevocalic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In its canonical form, the T670 hand has an upright thumb and four stiff fingers held closely together. Despite this rigidity, I think the motifs added to the hand are meant to be perceived as being held in the hand rather than resting upon it given the placement of the fingernails (when present) and the use of the hand as part of a logograph signifying *ch'am* ("to take," "to receive").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> David Stuart (1985:7-8) and Victoria Bricker (1986:68) independently deciphered the reading of these logographs as *y-al* in parentage statements, and Simon Martin (1997:855) credits Nikolai Grube as the first to realize that they can signify *yal* ("to throw down") instead.

possessive pronoun accompanying AL. Alternatively, I think it could just be that the scribes repurposed the *al* logographs into *yal* logographs and did so with the expectation the signs would be understood as *yal* because the *al* logographs nearly always occur in a homophonic collocation (i.e., **ya-AL**, transcribed as y-al) and because the intended meaning of the logograph—y-al (possessed noun) or yal (verbal root)—is readily apparent from context. Moreover, the iconic components of the two *al* logographs are exceptionally well-suited to serve as the iconic components of logographs signifying yal as a verbal root meaning "to throw" since each one depicts a hand with a motif that has a rounded, ball-like shape. Be that as it may—a satisfying explanation of the **YAL** versus **AL** conundrum remains elusive—there is evidence at Palenque and on K4118 that both the "scroll-in-hand" and the "inverted-ajaw-in-hand" logographs can, indeed, signify yal as a verbal root.

At Palenque, on the west tablet of the Temple of the Inscriptions, there is a passage referring to someone or something thrown down from the hand of a deity (GI) into the sea. In the passage—"ya-YAL-ji-ya tu-U-k'a-ba 'GI' TA-?-K'AHK'-NAHB, yahl-(a)j-iiy t-u-k'ab 'GI' ta-?-k'ahk'nahb, 'he/it was thrown from the hand of GI into the center(?) of the sea" (Stuart 2005a:168-169)—the "scroll-in-hand" logograph signifies yal as verbal root (Figure 4.10a). On K4118 (Figure 4.11), the glyphs and images tell the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> When using the logographs as verbs, there is a tendency to slant the hand slightly downward slant and to differentiate the length of its fingers, both of which add to the impression that the motif with the hand is being held within it and not merely resting upon it. The *y-al* collocation on K5164, however, proves that this visual distinction—while worth noting—is not entirely reliable because it is not always made.

story of Chant-te' Ajaw throwing a stone at Ux Ha' on Seven Ix, the Third of Hulohl. 10 The inflection of the "inverted-ajaw-in-hand" yal logograph (Figure 4.10b) is ambiguous—it lacks derivational suffixing—but its verbal nature is not since it clearly refers to the action the pictorial narrative implies. In the pictorial narrative, an old supernatural being with feline traits (Ux Ha') lies supine with a large anthropomorphic stone obscuring his midsection. Next to him is a young anthropomorphic male with pairs of short black bars marking his skin (Chan-te' Ajaw). The short height of the vessel's pictorial field prevents the depiction of Chan-te' Ajaw's entire body, but it is apparent from his posture that he has just thrown the stone onto Ux Ha'. The position of his upper body—face forward, arms flexed, wrists bent forward, and fingers splayed with palms facing—is nearly identical to Sak-aj's position on K1644 which, in turn, helps to confirm that Sak-aj has just thrown the Jaguar Baby down onto the witz (Figure 4.12).

The *ya* prefix on the *yal* logograph on K1003 (Figure 4.9e) is a typical example of the T126 syllable, but its counterparts on K4011 (Figure 4.9f) and K2213 (Figure 4.9g) are not because each has a switchback on its upper bracket. Without this additional element, they would closely resemble the *ya* prefix on K4118 (Figure 4.10b), but with it they are confusingly similar to a smoke scroll on a *k'awiil* logograph (Figures 4.22 a-f). Although I was once inclined to dismiss the *ya* signs with switchbacks as the work of a modern re-painter, the presence of a *ya* syllable—in a spelling of an enigmatic title, *y-an(i)b-il*—with a similarly odd appearance on part of a Codex-style vessel recently recovered at Calakmul gives credence to their authenticity (Figure 5.27). On K1003 and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Hulohl (Boot 2009:245; Stuart 2005b: 93) is a tentative reading of the Classic name of the 'month' known as Kumk'u in Colonial Yucatec (Thompson 1985:117).

K2213, the verb is *yal-aw*, which could exemplify ergative extraction, a "transitive focusing strategy in some Mayan languages wherein the ergative or subject pronoun is deleted" (MacLeod 2015) or it could be an agent-focusing anti-passive, but such verbs typically follow the demonstrative *hai[n]* (Lacadena 2000:173-175). Moreover, in either instance, the English translation sounds very much like a transitive. Indeed, Barbara MacLeod translates *yal-aw k'awiil* as "he throws K'awiil," and—using Alfonso Lacadena's other examples as a guide—if *yal-aw* is an agent-focusing anti-passive, I would translate *yal-aw k'awiil* as "it is he who throws the *k'awiil*." Accordingly, I will transliterate and transcribe the verb as is, but translate it as a transitive.

On K0521 (Figure 4.9c) and K4013 (Figure 4.9d), the spelling of *yal* is entirely syllabic, and in the absence of a familiar logograph, the unusual form of the *ya* syllable requires explanation. In its typical form (Figures 4.9e, 4.13a, c-d), the *ya* syllable consists of a pair of crescents flanking a short row of circles or dots that sometimes vary in size (Figure 4.13c-d). On K0521 and K4013, however, it consists of a vertical row of circles surmounting a single crescent. To anyone unfamiliar with the impressive malleability of the *ya* syllabograph, the alterations of its form can be confounding and their interchangeability suspect. Nonetheless, a comparison of the formal variations the syllable sometimes exhibits within a *single* glyph block (Figures 4.13c-e) or among *contemporaneous* spellings of the same name at a given site (Figures 4.13a-b) reveals the flexibility of its form and provides assurance that its shape on K0521 and K4013 is not without precedent. Similarly, K4118—the vessel that tells the story of Chan-te' Ajaw throwing a stone onto Ux Ha'—provides a precedent for being able to follow the action

of the narrative the figures and glyphs on the vessel present, even though the inflection of the verb denoting the action is ambiguous. The verb on K0521, K4013, K1152, and K2207 is *yal*, but in each instance—whether it is written syllabically or logographically—its inflection is unclear because it lacks verbal suffixing. Nonetheless, it is safe to conclude from both the pictorial narratives it accompanies and the knowledge gained from the other depictions of the sacrifice, that it is the feline infant (or his equivalent) that is thrown and the thrower is Sak-aj. Given its lack of verbal suffixing, I will transliterate and transcribe the verb as is but, in the translation, I will treat it as if it were passive (i.e., *yahl-aj*, "is thrown") for reasons of semantic clarity and aesthetics since translating it into English as "throw" without any indication of voice or tense would be incomprehensible and unappealing.<sup>11</sup>

The verb on K1644 (Figure 4.14a) and K1815 (Figure 4.14b) is difficult to interpret. If its root is not *yal* (arranged atypically for aesthetic reasons), then it is probably *laj* or *alaj*. To my knowledge, neither *laj* nor *alaj* is attested in the hieroglyphic corpus, although *laj* ("to finish") occurs in many Mayan languages (Kaufman 2003:1271) and *alaj* means "to give birth to a child" in K'iche' (Christenson 2003b:11) and is the cognate of *ara* ("to give birth," "to lay eggs") in Chortí (Hull

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Alternatively, *yal* could be interpreted as a nominalized verb. However, such verbs are typically combined with their objects (e.g., *och-iiy k'ak'* "the fire entered" becomes *och-k'ak'* "the fire-entering" (Stuart 2005b:77), but that is not the case here.

Atypical arrangement of the glyphs within a collocation do occur. On K2213, for example, the 'month' K'anasiiy is spelled **si-[K'AN]a** (Figure 4.4d) rather than **[K'AN]a-si** (Figures 4.4c,e) or **[K'AN]a-ya** (Figures 4.4g-j). Likewise, Schele and Grube (2002:27) included an example of the verbal compound *u-ch'am-aw* (Figure 4.18a) in which the width of the *ma* subfix relative to the main sign (*ch'am*) and the postfix (*wa*) would typically indicate that the *ma* sign is in the final position (Schele and Grube 2002:4; Stuart 2005:22) but, grammatically, the *wa* syllable must be read last.

2005:5). Robicsek and Hales (1981:40, 41) interpreted the root as *laj*, whereas David Stuart (personal communication, 2009) thinks that *alaj* is the more likely of the two. Neither possibility conflicts with my interpretation of the narrative the Jaguar Baby vessels convey, especially since the intransitive on K3201 (Figure 4.83) and K1645 (Figure 4.118)—*siy*—is ubiquitous and unequivocally means "to be born" (Boot 2009:160; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:90; Stuart 2005:88). For the time being, however, since all three readings are problematic, I prefer to read the verbs on K1815 and K1644 as *ya[h]l-aj* since it provides a degree of consistency and, unlike *laj* or *alaj*, *yal* occurs elsewhere in the hieroglyphic corpus.

#### **Tzak**

Tzak (Figure 4.15) is a root transitive that generally means "to grasp" or "to catch" (Kaufman 2003:903; my translations). In Colonial Yucatec, however, it means "to conjure storm clouds or storms" (Barrera Vásquez 1991:850; Swadesh 1970:85; my English translations) and, in the Classic inscriptions, it means "to conjure a spirit" or "to grasp an elusive thing" (Stuart 2005b:89). The tzak logograph (T714) is very common and depicts a hand gripping a fish with its head pointing upward. On Yaxchilan Lintel 25, the glyph alternates with a fully syllabic spelling (tza-ku) (Figure 4.15b) that confirms its reading as tzak. The position of the hand in tzak sign on K1370 (Figure 4.15c) is closer to the position of the hand in canonical examples of the logograph (Figure 4.15a) than the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Schele (1991:51-52) identifies Grube as the first to recognize this pattern of substation and as the first to interpret *tzak* as a reference to conjuring but notes that he did so only after reading Stuart's decipherment of the T699 *tza* syllable. See also Boot 2003a:14.

example on K2208 since the index finger is parallel with the fish's eye and the thumb across from it is more or less straight. On K2208 (Figure 4.15d), in contrast, the index finger is below the fish's eye and the thumb is invisible behind the fish's head. That is, the *tzak* logograph typically displays a cylindrical grasp suitable for holding something long and slender (such as a hammer's handle), whereas the tzak logograph displays a spherical grip suitable for holding something shorter and wider (such as a ball) and, thus, more closely resembles the stone-holding hand of the *jatz'* logograph ("to strike") (Lopes 2003; Zender 2004) (Figures 4.16f-h) than the fish-holding hand of the *tzak* logograph (Figures 4.16a-b). Indeed, in my opinion, the K2208 scribe inadvertently portrayed the tzak hand with a spherical grip and then tried to make the grip look more cylindrical by adding a curved line above the base of the palm to suggest an extended thumb. It is also worth noting that, while the grip of the *jatz*' is usually spherical (Figures 4.16f-h) especially on pottery, including several Codex-style vessels (e.g., K1230, K1652, K2068, K2284)—there are examples in which its grip is more cylindrical (Figures 4.16d-e). In other words, being somewhat atypical does not necessarily invalidate a glyph if there is precedence for its anomaly.

Iconographic evidence indicates that the Classic Maya regarded conjuring as a form of birth (Houston and Stuart 1989:7; Stuart 1984:14-19; Taube 1994:663). In depictions of conjuring, whoever is being born emerges from a serpentine creature that typically passes across or around (if not through) the conjurer's body (e.g., Yaxchilan Lintels 13-14, 38-40).

Siv

The "birth glyph" signifies an intransitive meaning "to be born" (Figure 4.17). It is extremely common in the hieroglyphic corpus and depicts the upturned head of a frog. Tatiana Proskouriakoff (1960:460) was the first to recognize it as a reference to birth, and John Justeson (1978:299) initially read it as the verb *sih*. More recently, however, David Stuart, Stephen Houston, and John Robertson (1999:160) noted a fully syllabic spelling of *siy* (i.e., **si-ya**) on K2723 next to an image of an infant Maize God, and since then, epigraphers have tended to favor *siy* instead (e.g., Boot 2009:160; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:100; Martin 2002:55).

#### Ch'am

Ch'am (Figure 4.18) is a root transitive meaning "to take" or "to receive" (Kaufman and Norman 1984:119; my translations). The logograph signifying *ch'am* depicts the T670 hand with an upright *ajaw* motif. On Piedras Negras Lintel 2, the logograph has phonetic complements confirming a *ch'am* reading but, as Stuart (2000a:3) notes, there is evidence at Palenque indicating that it can also signify *k'am*, a cognate of *ch'am* in Yucatec. Visually, the only difference between the *ajaw*-in-hand *ch'am* logograph and the *ajaw*-in-hand variant of the *al/yal* logograph is that the *ajaw* motif of the *ch'am* logograph is right side up whereas the *ajaw* motif of the *al/yal* logograph is upside down.

# The Toponyms

## "Chatan"

"Chatan" (Figure 4.19) is a well-known provisional reading of an apparent toponym (T520-TAN-na) that occurs primarily—but not exclusively—on portable objects, especially ceramics. It is usually a part of a toponymic title (e.g., K1523, K2777) or in the nominal phrase of a co-essence (e.g., K0927, K0791). On K1815, however, it is just a toponym naming the location of the event since it occurs after the verb and is not part of a toponymic title in an individual's nominal phrase (Stuart and Houston 1994:44, 81). The spelling of the place name is very consistent and, to my knowledge, the initial glyph is always T520. Around 1990, Nikolai Grube (Stone 1996:5) deciphered T520 as *cha* which, in turn, lead to the *chatan/chahtan* reading of the place name (Boot 2005; Grube and Nahm 1994:689; MacLeod and Kerr 1994:133-134; MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994:134). In the toponym, however, T520 is unlikely to be a syllabic sign and is, instead, almost certainly logograph of unknown meaning (David Stuart, personal communication 2009). Nonetheless, for convenience, I will continue to refer to the T520-TAN-na toponym as "Chatan."

#### Batuun

The **ba-TUUN** (Figure 4.20c) collocation on K2213 is a toponym that probably means "first stone" (Kaufman 2003: 276, 436) and most likely refers a specific place

within "Chatan." There is also a toponymic title at Palenque (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009) that identifies Yax Ha'al Chahk as a lord of Batuun (4.32c). The T501*ba* syllabograph (Figure 4.19a) depicts a closed water lily bud with its petals pointing downward and a small bright mirror (with a single reflection mark) near its corolla, whereas the *tuun* logograph (Figure 4.19b) depicts a small stone (or, at least, a stony motif) with a pitted surface.

## Baha'

The **ba-HA'** (Figure 4.21c) collocation on K4056 is a toponym that probably means "first water" (Kaufman 2003:276, 552) and, like the Batuun toponym on K2213, it most likely names a specific location within "Chatan," just like K'inalha' refers to a particular part of Dos Pilas (Stuart and Houston 1994:84-85). Although the T501 *ba* syllabic sign and the *ha'* logograph depict the same petals-down water lily bud, they are usually easy to differentiate since one has a small bright mirror (with a single reflection mark) near its receptacle (Figure 4.21a), while the other has a small, dark solid spot near its corolla (Figure 4.21b) that probably depicts a drop of dark water given the occasional addition of moisture beads (and the meaning of *ha'*), although it could depict a small dark mirror instead. On K4056, the dark spot on the *ha'* logograph has a scratch near its

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> In the Classic inscriptions, the incomplete spelling of *baah* ("first," "primary" "head") (Stuart 2005:81) as *ba* (**ba**) is as common, if not more common, than the complete spelling of *baah* (i.e., **BAAH** or **ba-hi**). This is especially apparent in titles such as *ba-sajal* and *ba-ch'ok* (Houston and Stuart 1998:79) as well as *ba-kab*, *ba-bak*, *ba-wayib* and others (Boot 2008; Boot 2009:30), all of which serve to designate the bearer as the "first," "principal," "head," or "top" of his kind.

center that looks like a reflection which, in turn, makes it easy to misread the *ha*' in *baha*' as a second *ba* sign. 15

#### The Nominal Phrases

## K'awiil

In the Classic era, *k'awiil* is both the name of a deity, and a term for the visible and material spiritual force the deity embodies, including godhood (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:67). There are two common forms of the logograph signifying **K'AWIIL**. One depicts K'awiil's entire head (Figures 4.22a-c) and the other depicts only his mirrored forehead with large smoke scrolls and a tiny celt (Figures 4.22e-f) or, simply, a pair of smoke scrolls (Figure 4.22d). In his decipherment of the glyph, David Stuart (1987:15-16) cited ample evidence that the *k'awiil* logograph is interchangeable with a fully syllabic spelling of the name (i.e., **k'a-wi-la**) (Figure 4.22g). On the Jaguar Baby vessels, instead of naming K'awiil the god, the logograph seems to be a "front-loaded term" (David Stuart, personal communication, 2006) serving to indicate that the focal point of whatever is happening is not simply a given being but, rather, that being as a *manifested spiritual force*, that is, as *k'awiil* the power, not K'awiil the god. The being who is the manifested spiritual force, is the being whose name the *k'awiil* logograph prefaces, that is, Huk? Yax? Chak?. At Yaxchilan, on Lintel 25, there is a description

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See Macri and Looper (2003:181, 182, 216) for a guide to the sources establishing the readings of the *ba*, *tuun*, and *ha* 'glyphs.

of an act of conjuring that conveys a comparable notion with language that is enviably clear. According to the relevant passage, *ho' imix chan mak u-tzak-aw u-k'awiil-il u took' pakal u aj k'ak' o' chaak*, that is, "On Five Imix, the Fourth of Mak, he conjured the *k'awiil* of the flint and shield of Aj K'ak' O' Chahk. In other words, he did not conjure the flint and shield *or* Aj K'ak' O' Chahk, who was Yaxchilan's patron deity; he conjured the *k'awiil* of—the power of—the god's weapons.

Although I do not regard k'awiil as part of Huk? Yax?'s personal name, I am grouping it with the nominal phrases because, like a toponymic title, it is a designation. If it were part of Huk? Yax?'s core name, then surely a k'awiil logograph would be in his nominal phrase on the Snake Lady vessels since they seem to depict and describe his actual birth (his birth "of origin," so to speak) in conjunction with the birth of two other gods. They also typically portray K'awiil himself because he is part of the Bearded Serpent from which Huk? Yax? emerges. Yet, even on a Snake Lady vessel (Figure 4.100) where Huk? Yax? has a flaming torch piercing his forehead just like K'awiil's, K'awiil is not part of his nominal phrase. Luís Lopes (2005:2), in his analysis of the Snake Lady's nominal phrase, tentatively interprets part of the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase on K5164 as "chak k'awiil?" However, a comparison between it and other examples (Figures 4.40, 4.59, 5.26) of the name confirms that what he sees as "chak k'awiil?" is in keeping with other renderings of the collocation I read as yax-? and, while the logograph does depict a creature with a spiral pupil and a rather large mirror on its forehead, it—unlike a k'awiil logograph—has neither smoke scrolls nor a celt.

## Huk? Yax? Chak?

On most of the Jaguar Baby vessels, there is a nominal phrase that, in its fullest form, contains a trio of collocations signifying a personal name and concludes with a toponymic title. However, before examining its components individually, I must explain my reasons for regarding them as forming a single nominal phrase. Each of the collocations in the personal name—Huk? Yax? Chak?—has an undeciphered main sign represented by a question mark. On most of the vessels having more than one inscription, the collocations of the personal name belong to the primary inscription, that is, the inscription containing the date and the verb. Thus, one or more of the collocations co-occurs with each of the verbs at least once, which inclines me to regard them as signifying the name of whomever the actions of the narrative are primarily about. That is, I think they represent the name of the one who is thrown, the one who is conjured, the one who is born, and the one who is (perhaps) taken.

The three collocations do not always co-occur, but when they do, they follow the same sequence. On one vessel, only the first collocation (*huk-?*) is present, but more often than not, the second collocation (*yax-?*) is provided as well, and in a few instances, all three are given. Moreover, there are just two instances in which any part of this name appears on a vessel and does not belong to the primary inscription. On K1815, the first and second collocations (i.e., *huk-? yax-?*) are above the feline infant whereas, on K4013, the first collocation (*huk-?*) is above the cat-like child and the last two (*yax-? chak-?*) are above the Old God in the Bearded Serpent. In my opinion, the willingness of the scribes to pair the *yax-?* collocation with either the first collocation (*huk-?*) or the third (*chak-?*)

confirms that they are all part of the same nominal phrase. Furthermore, as I will argue, I see the splitting of the collocations between the feline infant and the elderly deity as confirmation that they share the same name, and that to whom it refers depends upon the context.

The main sign of the first collocation (Figure 4.24) depicts an inverted vase embellished with a crossed-bands motif inside a rounded square that often appears above a bar or a bar and a dot. There is also an undulating scroll surmounting the inverted vase that is identical to a T124 *tzi* syllable but, instead of being part of a separate glyph, it is probably just an optional visual detail of the main sign itself (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009). On K1152, K1645 and, perhaps, K4013 (Figures 4.24e-g), the inverted vase takes an in-line variant of the T140 *la* sign that often occurs in painted texts, especially on Codex-style ceramics. On the Jaguar Baby vessels, the inverted vase sign always has the number seven as its prefix, and since *huk* is a likely Classic term for "seven" (Boot 2009:70; Kaufman 2003:1478; Kettunen and Helmke 2009:38), I have opted to refer to the 7-inverted-vase collocation as the *huk-?* collocation.

Nikolai Grube (2012) recently suggested that the scroll is a logograph signifying Sip ("Lord of the Deer"). Key to his argument is the scroll depicts "stylized deer antlers" but, because of scribal inattentiveness, are frequently unrecognizable a such. However, I find his decipherment unpersuasive since I do not think that the element surmounting the inverted vase on the Jaguar Baby vessels depicts a deer antler of any kind. Furthermore,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Nikolai Grube argues that the scroll is a logograph signifying Sip ("Lord of the Deer"). Key to his argument is that the sign depicts "stylized deer antlers" and since I do not think it does, his decipherment is unpersuasive.

there is an old god with deer-like traits who blows a shell trumpet and appears on Codex-style pottery. Furthermore, Grube contends that the *huk-?* collocation is the name of an old god with deer-like traits who blows a shell trumpet and is the guardian of game animals. There are three Codex-style vessels portraying such a being, but his supposed name—the *huk-?* collocation—does not accompany him (e.g., K1384, K1882, and K2572) and, instead, consistently co-occurs with beings who do not have deer-like traits, be it the Old God in the Bearded Serpent (e.g., K5164, K2715, K4114), the feline infant (e.g., K4013), or his equivalents (e.g., K2207, K2213). Although it is still provisional, the reading of the *huk-?* collocation as Huk Pul Tziin ("Seven Provider of Sustenance") that Barbara MacLeod (2012, 2015) has proposed is far more promising, in part, because it is a fitting designation of the Old God in the Bearded Serpent who, as a manifestation of God N, was likely perceived as being in charge of the earth's bounty and, thus, as a provider of sustenance.

The first glyph in the glyphic compound (Figure 4.25) that usually follows *huk-?* is a *yax* logograph ("first," "blue-green") (Kettunen and Helmke 2011:93) depicting a shell valve (Steinbach 1998:29; Stuart 1988:201). *Yax* and *chak* logographs are sometimes confusingly similar on Codex-style pottery (Martin 1997:853, 857) since the *yax* signs (Figure 4.26) often have the lateral marks (Figures 4.26c-d) that are indicative of a *chak* sign (Figure 4.29). Consequently, on some of the vessels (Figures 4.25b,f) the first glyph in the *yax-?* collocation is easy to mistake for *chak* but, on others (Figures 4.25a,d), it is more clearly *yax* because it has a scalloped or irregular edge that is inherent to *yax* signs but is never indicative of *chak* signs.

The second glyph in the *yax-?* collocation (Figure 4.25) depicts a zoomorphic head with a combination of traits that collectively characterize it as piscine, and the resemblance between the glyph and a Classic Maya image of a fish is fairly evident. That is, it has a round eye, a thin mouth line, and a small, sometimes non-existent nostril. More tellingly, it also has a tendril-like form rising up from its brow and a curving line that extends down its cheek and ends below its jawline.<sup>17</sup> It might be a syllabic sign signifying *ka* or, alternatively a word sign signifying *kay* ("fish").<sup>18</sup> Yet, if it signifies *ka* or *kay*, the head should not have a spiral pupil or a mirror on its forehead, as it does on K4013 and K2208 (Figures 4.25e-f). Since the bearded serpent is integral to the old god, there is a strong probability that the second collocation refers directly to it and is read as Yax Kan ("First Snake"). However, given that the reading of its main sign as *kan* is more provisional than not, I will refer to the second collocation as *yax-?*.

The third collocation (Figure 4.27) of the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal phrase is a *chak* logograph preceding an undeciphered glyph that, to my knowledge, occurs only on the Jaguar Baby vessels. Moreover, the "double stripe" variant of the *chak* glyph itself is uncommon. It does, however, substitute for a typical *chak* sign the name of the military victor Chak Suutz' on the Tablet of the Slaves at Palenque, and in the name of the 'month' Chaksihoom in the inscription on K6751 (Figures 4.28a-b). The other glyph in the *chak-?* collocation depicts a peculiar zoomorphic head with a small nostril, a thin lip

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The anatomical inspiration for these details—if there is any—is unclear, although the curving shape of the cheek lines is somewhat reminiscent of an operculum, the flap of skin that covers the gills of a fish.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> For a guide to the sources establishing the reading of the *ka* syllable, see Macri and Looper (2003:52).

line, and a more or less round eye with a small pupil. A light wash of dark color tints most of the glyph on K0521 (Figure 4.27a) and K4013 (Figure 4.28d), whereas a similar wash on K2208 (Figure 4.28c) is spotty and less abundant. On K2208, the creature the glyph depicts also has a supraorbital plate above its eye and a curling form rising up from its jawline. These additional details add to the likelihood that it is some kind of dark-skinned fish or reptile, but since there are so few examples of the sign, I think it is best to refrain from identifying the creature with certainty.

On K0521 (Figure 4.30e), the undeciphered glyph has a pair of short, thin slanting lines below it. In my opinion, these lines exemplify a calligraphic flourish the scribes often add to glyphs to either ground (or brace) the glyphs visually—if the glyphs are freestanding—or to add symmetry to a block glyph so that both sides consume a similar amount of space. On K6751 (Figure 4.30b), for example, the two short lines under the red cartouche of the Imix day sign in the 10 Imix 10 Yaxk'in Calendar Round date serve as a visual counterweight to the *ni* suffix on the *k'in* in the Yaxk'in 'month' sign whereas, on K0531 (Figure 4.30c), the two short lines under the *winik* logograph in the k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik toponymic title provide visual grounding for an otherwise round glyph. Epigraphers (e.g., Boot 2009:103, ku-ku-la, kukul [Figure 4.30g]; Looper 2009:86, SAK-ja-la, sak jal [Figure 4.30f]) sometimes interpret these lines as a syllabograph signifying la, and they are, indeed, reminiscent of a T139 la sign (Figure 4.30a). In the examples noted, however, these bars cannot signify *la* since the cartouches of day signs are not receptive to phonetic complements or derivational suffixing, and a la suffix on the winik logograph in the k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik title on K0531 is as out of

place as a *la* suffix on Chahk's portrait glyph (Figure 4.30d). Thus, on Codex-style pottery, extra caution is in order when interpreting such marks, especially with regard to glyphs or glyphic compounds of unknown meaning or only tentative decipherment.

On K2208 (Figure 4.27c), the undeciphered glyph, at first glance, seems to have a T140 la postfix but, at second glance, the la-like circular elements appear to be part of the death-eye fringe embellishing the upper part of Sak-aj's backrack (Figure 4.27e), even though the fringe usually occurs only on the tendril sprouting from the cracked bone and not on the knotted paper crown surmounting the bone. This visual ambiguity would be little more than a side note were it not for its likely relevance to its counterpart on K4013. On K4013 (Figure 4.27d), the undeciphered glyph, when first seen, seems to have a T139 la suffix as well as a T140 la postfix. While it is possible that both affixes are more authentic than not, I think it is just as likely, if not more so, that they are primarily the work of a re-painter who saw the "bracers" (i.e., calligraphic flourishes) on K0521 as a suffix and the ambiguous circular elements on K2208 as a postfix and decided to add both to the zoomorphic main sign on K4013 in order to make it more closely resemble the other examples of the chak-? collocation. Calakmul Vessel 19 bears remnants of a chak-? collocation that is strongly reminiscent of its counterpart on the Metropolitan Vase (Figures 4.27a-b).

# K'uh[ul] "Chatan" Winik

K'uh[ul] "Chatan" Winik (Figure 4.31) is a title that commonly occurs on Codexstyle ceramics, especially in the section of the Dedicatory Formula referring to the vessel's patron (e.g., K0531, Figure 4.30c). It also occurs in the monumental inscriptions of sites in and around the Mirador Basin, including Calakmul (Boot 2005:509). As noted, "Chatan" is a provisional reading for an apparent toponym. *K'uh[ul]* is an adjective deriving from *k'uh* ("god") (Ringle 1988) and means "godlike," "divine," or "holy" (Boot 2009:118; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:88; Stuart 2005b:83), and *winik* is a noun meaning "person" (Boot 2009:201; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:92; Stuart 2005b:90). Thus, the K'uh[ul] "Chatan" Winik title identifies its bearer as a "holy" person of 'Chatan." The *k'uh* logograph, in its head-variant form, depicts the simian head of God C with a stream of dots or circles in front of his face but, in the K'uh[ul] "Chatan" Winik title the *k'uh[ul]* sign is usually just a stream of dots and lacks the necessary *-lv* suffix to complete its adjectival form. If the "*chatan*" and *winik* glyphs depict specific objects rather than abstract motifs, I do not recognize what they are.

## Yax Ha'-al Chahk

Yax Ha'-al Chahk is a specific manifestation of the rain god, Chahk, and one of the primary participants in the sacrifice. His name occurs in the monumental inscriptions of Copan, Piedras Negras, Palenque, and Chichen Itza (Figure 4.32). He is a Chahk of a particular type of rain which, depending upon the meaning of *yax*, is the "first" rain, the "blue/green" rain, or the "clear" rain (Lacadena 2004:93). As noted with regard to the Baha' toponym, the *ba'* and *ha'* syllabographs appear nearly identical but it is usually still possible to discern from context which is which whenever erosion or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Joan Spero (1991:192-193) was the first to consider *yax ha'al* as possibly relevant to the reading of Chahk's appellation on the Jaguar Baby vessels.

repainting blurs the distinction between them. On K4011, for example, the spot near the top of the glyph is not solid black, but it must be a *ha'* logograph rather than a *ba* syllable since it is part of Yax Ha'al Chahk's nominal phrase and there are unequivocal examples of *yax ha'al* among the other Jaguar Baby vessels (e.g., Figures 4.32a-b,e). Likewise, at Palenque, despite heavy erosion, the toponymic title that Yax Ha'al Chahk carries is more credibly read as Batuun Ajaw rather than Ha'tuun Ajaw, given that the former is still in common use as a toponym in Guatemala (Figure 4.33c).

The Chahk logograph is a portrait glyph depicting the head of Chahk with his distinctive ear-like shell valve. In various contexts, a syllabic spelling coexists with the portrait glyph and the logograph itself often takes a *ki* suffix (e.g., Figures 4.33b-c, 4.33a) as a phonetic complement. Moreover, on a column in Structure 6E1 at Chichen Itza (Figure 4.33d), the spelling of the name, Yax Ha'al Chahk, is mostly syllabic (Taube 1992b:18-19).

# Sak-aj?

As noted, Sak-aj is a skeletal manifestation of death and one of the primary participants in the sacrifice. His core nominal phrase consists of a *sak* sign with a *ja* suffix modifying a skull (Figures 4.34-35). On K1152, Sak-aj's nominal phrase expands to include a clause identifying him as a "co-essence" (*way*) (Stuart and Houston 1989) of Batuun or, perhaps, of *a* Batuun (Figure 4.34c). Either reading is plausible given that a

way can belong to a place or to a being, and **ba-TUUN** can spell a toponym (Figures 4.36a-b) or a title (Figures 4.36c-d).<sup>20</sup>

# Jun? K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay]

Three of the Jaguar Baby vessels—K0521 (Figures 4.57-58), K1003 (Figures 4.66-67)), and K1815 (Figures 4.50-51)—depict a firefly hovering nearby as the sacrifice occurs. On K1815, he appears above a nominal phrase consisting of three collocations (Figure 4.37). In the first, the number one (*jun*) prefixes an undeciphered sign with a *hi* suffix, while the second contains either two logographs forming the phrase *k'ak' ti'* ("fire mouth") (Boot 2009:103) or one (very rare) logograph signifying a term for smoking (David Stuart, personal communication 2009). Whichever it is, is an obvious allusion to the idea that fireflies smoke, as the fireflies on K8608 and K2226 clearly do (Figures 3.89-90). Erik Boot sees the last part of the insect's name as consisting of three syllables—**ku-ku-la**—that spell "*kukul*," a word for "beetle" or "bug" (2009:99) but I think that the element he interprets as a *la* suffix is just a calligraphic flourish (bracer) and, therefore, agree with David Stuart's suggestion (personal communication, 2009) that

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> On K0771, for example, one co-essence belongs to a holy place of dance, while another belongs to a lord of Seibal (Grube and Nahm 1994:690, 705). For an extensive discussion of titles beginning with *ba/baa[h]*, including **ba-TUUN**, see Boot 2008 and Houston 2008.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> The logograph signifying a term for "smoking" or "to smoke" is in a hieroglyphic inscription in Building 1 of Group XVI at Palenque (David Stuart, personal communication, 2009).

**ku-ku** is an under-spelling of *kuk[ay]*, a common Mayan word for "lightning bug" (Kaufman 2003:672).<sup>22</sup>

#### Bih-al Akan

Bih-al Akan (Figure 4.38) is the young death god who presents the feline infant in the Presentation scenes on K5855 and K1200. Günter Zimmermann (cited in Taube 1992b:14, 160) designated him Death God A' to distinguish him from Death God A, the skeletal manifestation of death Paul Schellhas (1904:10) included in his list of gods appearing in the Postclassic Maya codices. Nikolai Grube (2004:60-62) deciphered Akan's portrait glyph after noting that it takes *a* and *na* signs as phonetic complements and merges with a deer glyph signifying the word *ceh* in the Emblem Glyph from the site of Acanceh in the Yucatan (Figure 4.39).<sup>23</sup> The defining elements of Akan's portrait glyph are a black mark around or across his eye and a death mark on his cheek that resembles a percentage sign. On K5855, a black band runs across his eye and he has a death mark on his cheek, but instead of cohering into a motif resembling a percentage sign, it devolves into a (loosely) diagonal trio of dash marks (Figures 4.38, 4.39c).

The pair of glyphs preceding Akan's portrait glyph on K5855 can be analyzed as spelling *bih-al* (**BIH-la**), which seems to be a noun of qualitative abstraction (Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001:7-8) serving adjectivally to describe Akan (Figure 4.38)

<sup>22</sup> "Lightning bug" is another name for a firefly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Grube and Nahm (1994:709) suggested Akan as a possible name for God A' but Grube did not publish a formal decipherment until 2004. Acanceh is the Colonial Yucatec spelling of Akankej, the site's Prehispanic name.

.<sup>24</sup> If it is, then surely the *bih* in *bih-al* is as metaphoric as the *bih* in *och-bih*, since Akan is a death god (Taube 1992b:14-16) and *och-bih* is a death verb that translates literally as "to road-enter" (Stuart 1998:388; 2006a:2). In their analysis of quality and quantity in glyphic nouns and adjectives, Houston, Robertson, and Stuart (2001:11) argue that the – VI suffix (e.g., -al, -il, etc.) is sometimes used "when dealing with metaphysical, otherworldly things." I suspect, then, that the -al suffix in bih-al conveys a quality of otherworldliness and that Bih-al Akan essentially means "otherworldly-road Akan." Be that as it may, in the context of the Jaguar Baby vessels, I think Akan is likely to have a descriptive appellation preceding his name, since that would make his nominal phrase compositionally comparable to the nominal phrases of the rain god and the skeletal coessence, each of whom has a descriptive appellation (i.e., yax ha'al and sak-aj, respectively) preceding his name. Adding bih-al to Akan's name would also further differentiate him from other manifestations of God A' who occur more frequently on pictorial pottery, such as *ch'ak-baah* Akan (e.g., K1230, the Popol Vuh Vase) (Grube 2004a:63) and *jatz'-tuun* Akan (Lopes 2003:4).

<sup>24</sup> 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> In Mayan grammar, the distinctions between nouns and adjectives are sometimes imperceptible (Helmke and Kettunen 2012:26; Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001:2).

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES OF EACH INSCRIPTION ON EACH JAGUAR BABY VESSEL

**K2208 (Figures 4.40-42)** 

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 4-[K'AN]a-si nu-NUKAK'AB?-li? TZAK-ja

K'AWIIL 7-? YAX-? CHAK-?-la?

huk kib chan k'anasii[y] "nukak'ab-il" tza[h]k-aj

k'awiil huk-? yax-? chak?

"On Seven Kib, the Fourth of K'anasiiy, at dawn, it is conjured,

the *k'awiil* (who is) Huk? Yax? Chak?."

Notes

A cascading hank of Sak-aj' dark hair partially obscures the suffix on the verb as he struggles with the squirming child. Half of the foliation on the feline infant's tail capper overlaps the center of the verb, while the other grazes part of his name and is partly overlapped by the pounder Chahk uses to strike the paw he holds in front of his face. Given that the depiction of conjuring—the action the verb *tzak* typically denotes—is not in keeping with the action the vessel portrays, I think the overlap between the figures and the verb is a narrative device prompting the viewer to consider how the words relate to the figures. Yet, at the same time, the action the vessel does portray—Sak-aj grasping a squirming child—is a very literal illustration of *tzak*'s less esoteric meaning of "to grasp an elusive thing" that is also wittily apropos.

350

K1370 (Figures 4.43-45)

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 4-[K'AN]a-si nu-NUKAK'AB?-li? TZAK-ja

huk kib chan k'anasii[y] "nukak'ab-il" tza[h]k-aj

"On Seven Kib, the Fourth of K'anasiiy, at dawn, it is conjured."

Notes

On K1370, the vessel does not depict the action the verb denotes. Nonetheless,

strategic points of contact between figures and glyphs imply a link between word and

image which, in turn, alludes to the throwing and the conjuring happening concurrently

and in the same location. More specifically, having just been thrown down, the feline

infant is beginning to slide into the witz and, in that moment, the splayed fingers of Sak-

aj's hands are touching both the bottom of the adverb and the chest of the child. At the

same time, and directly across from Sak-aj, the curling maize foliation tucked behind the

ear of the uppermost animate mirror on the Witz Head's muzzle is touching the

coefficient and the cartouche of the day sign, as well as the breath-marker projecting

from the Witz Head's nostril. Collectively, these points of contact serve to imply that the

event portrayed and the event described occur at the same time and in the same place.

**MBD Vessel 28 (Figures 4.46-47)** 

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 4-TE' [K'AN]a-ya nu-NUKAK'AB-li? [ERODED]

7-?

351

huk kib chan-te' k'ana[sii]y "nukak'ab-il"...huk-?"On 7 Kib, the Fourth of K'anasiiy, at dawn...Huk ?...."

# Notes

MBD Vessel 28's inscription is notable for providing another example of the adverb, and was surely extraordinary in its original state.

# K1815 (Figures 4.48-51)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 8 [K'AN]a-si-ya nu-NUKAK'AB?-li la-ya-ja

K'AWIIL-la? cha?-TAN-na

huk kib waxak k'anasiiy "nukak'ab-il" ya[h]l-aj

k'awiil "chatan"

"On 7 Kib, the Eighth of K'anasiiy, at dawn, it is thrown,

the k'awiil (in) 'Chatan.'"

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

YAX-HA-la CHAAK-ki

1-?-hi K'AK'-TI' ku-ku

yax ha'al chaak

jun? k'ak' ti' kuk[ay]

"(He is) Yax Ha'al Chahk."

"(He is) Jun...K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay]."

**Notes** 

K1815's primary inscription is notable for including "Chatan" not as part of a toponymic title, but simply as a toponym, and one of its secondary inscriptions names the firefly. Above the feline infant, there is a pair of eroded hieroglyphic compounds that mostly represented the first (*huk-?*) and second (*yax-?*) collocations of his name. The curvy line near the center of the day sign is extraneous and likely modern, and the outline

**K1644 (Figures 4.52-55)** 

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 3-TE'-[K'AN]a la-ya-ja

of the "month" glyph has been heavily strengthened.

huk muluk ux-te' k'ana[siiy] ya[h]l-aj

"On Seven Muluk, the Third of K'anasiiy, it is thrown."

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

YAX-HA' CHAAK

yax ha'(al) chaak

"(He is) Yax Ha'al Chahk."

Tertiary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-AJAW

huk ajaw

"(It is) Seven Ajaw."

#### Notes

The disposition of the feline infant and Sak-aj on K1644 provides another example of using points of contact between figures and glyphs to underscore the connection between inscription and depiction, which is helpful since no one is named in the primary text. In contrast, the placement of Chahk's *yax ha'al* appellation disregards the convention that nominal glyphs only touch or overlap the figures they name, since the bony maw of the creature behind him is in direct contact with both glyphs, a state of affairs that is only apparent on the vessel itself and in the original ("uncut") rollout photograph since I had to re-crop the photograph to show Sak-aj's backrack in its entirety when I made the cutout rollout of K1644. Given a need or impulse to paint very quickly, and a desire to create pictorial narratives with (relatively) ample detail, it is unsurprising the scribes often neglect the convention, but it is also quite impressive that any of them opt to make the daisy chains of visual connections they sometimes create in order to clarify or highlight the interdependence of the glyphic and pictorial narratives.

7 Ajaw, the date inscribed on the underside of the bowl, is a tertiary inscription since there is no evidence it pertains directly to the narrative the vessel portrays or describes. Instead, in all likelihood, it is the date of a historical event somehow relevant to the reason(s) for the vessel's creation.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Robert Wald (1997) used this convention to confirm the identities of the figures portrayed on the Tablet of the Slaves at Palenque. Karen Bassie-Sweet (1991:41) noted a similar convention in which the hieroglyphs forming a monument's inscription were strategically placed around the images to lead the viewer's eye across the figure of the person engaged in the action described.

**K0521** (Figures 4.56-58)

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 7-TE'-[K'AN]a ya-la-?

K'AWIIL-la? 7-? YAX-? CHAK-? cha?-TAN-WINIK

huk kib huk-te k'ana[siiy] yal

k'awiil huk-? yax-? chak? "chatan" winik

"On Seven Kib, the Seventh of K'anasiiy, he throws

the *k'awiil* (who is) Huk? Yax? Chak? 'Chatan' Winik."

Notes

On K0521, points of contact between figures and glyphs as well as iconographic hand postures help to clarify who does what to whom. The position of Sak-aj's hands—splayed fingers with palms facing—is reminiscent of the position of Chan-te Ajaw's hands just after he threw the large stone onto Ux Ha' (Figure 4.11) and indicates that it is he who throws the feline infant. Moreover, Sak-aj's widely spread fingers simultaneously touch the *k'awiil* glyph, the *chak-?* collocation, and the "*chatan*" winik compound and, thus, link the third collocation in the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* name (as well as the toponymic title that follows it) to the glyph designating the feline infant as a *k'awiil*, and thereby underscores the unity of the nominal phrase (including the title), while also highlighting the connection between it and the *k'awiil* glyph. Likewise, the feline infant's points of contact with the *huk-? yax-? chak-? "chatan" winik* nominal phrase allude to him and the Old God sharing the same name because he is the *k'awiil* given in exchange for the Old God's *k'awiil*. More specifically, his foot partially covers

the coefficient in the *huk-?* compound, his hair overlaps the unknown main sign of the *chak-?* collocation, and part of the flaming *ajaw* motif on his head touches the bottom of the "*cha*" in "*chatan*."

# **K4013 (Figures 4.59-61)**

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 8-[K'AN]a-ya ya-la

7-?-la YAX-? CHAK-?-la-la?

huk kib waxak k'ana[sii]y yal

huk-? yax-? chak-?

"On Seven Kib, the Eighth of K'anasiiy, he throws

Huk? Yax? Chak?"

# Notes

On K4013, the feline infant falls headfirst towards the *witz*, beginning to slide even as he is still falling, and as he fall-slides, a Bearded Serpent, having slithered up through the *witz*, slips out a hole in the tree's hollow to convey the Old God into the realm aboveground. The feline infant and the elderly deity split the glyphs of the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal between them, with the first collocation beside the child and the rest next to the ancient spirit. As he stands behind the feline infant, with his palms facing and his fingers still splayed, strands of Sak-aj's hair overlap the verb, linking the action it denotes to him.

Calakmul Vessel 19 (Figures 4.62-63)

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7?-MULUK 7?-[K'AN]-a? ya?-la

**K'AWIIL-la...CHAK-?** 

"huk" "muluk" "k'anasiiy" yal

*k'awiil...chak-?* 

"On Seven Muluk, the Seventh of K'anasiiy, he throws

the *k'awiil* (who is)...Chak?.

Notes

scribes told it.

Calakmul Vessel 19 is among the Codex-style vessels reconstructed from potsherds found in a so-called trash deposit consisting almost entirely of fifteen thousand or so pieces of pottery, which was found on the south side of Structure XX during the field seasons at Calakmul in 2001 and 2003 (Delvendahl 2008:125-128; 2009). Despite its incomplete nature, its text is highly important because the similarities it shares with the inscriptions on other Jaguar Baby vessels helps to verify their veracity. That is, even if the vessels without provenience are not entirely free of lines that are darkened, solidified, or reconstructed, the figures and glyphs they bear are also—evidently—not entirely inauthentic. The spelling of its verb is especially striking, since what remains is almost an exact replica of the verb on the Metropolitan Vase and K4103. It also confirms that the *k'awiil* logograph and the *chak-?* collocation are, indeed, part of the story as the

# K1003 (Figures 4.64-67)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 7-TE'-[K'AN]a ya-YAL-wa

#### **K'AWIIL**

huk muluk huk-te k'ana[siiy] [u]-yal-aw

k'awiil

"On Seven Muluk, the Seventh of K'anasiiy, he throws

the *k'awiil*."

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

SAK-? TI'

sak-? ti'

(It is) Sak? Ti'.

# **Notes**

The feline infant's tail sinuous tail slides against the *k'awiil* logograph as he falls onto the *witz* and looks up at the death spirit standing over him with splayed fingers as a stream of black tears drips from one of his death-eyes on to the prefix of the verb and, thus, reiterating that the child with jaguar traits is the *k'awiil* and it is Sak-aj who throws him. Given its proximity to the insect, Sak? Ti' ("White...Mouth") is probably an alternate designation for the firefly who, on K1815, is called Jun? K'ak' Ti' Kukay ("One? Fire Mouth Firefly")

## **K2213 (Figures 4.68-71)**

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 3-si-[K'AN]a-TE' ya?-YAL-wa ba-TUUN

7-?

huk kib ux-te k'anasii[y] yal-aw batuun

huk-?

"On Seven Kib, the Third of K'anasiiy, in Batuun, he throws

Huk ?."

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

SAK-ja?

sak-aj

Sak-aj.

# **Notes**

The ends of the old god's headdress obscures the lower half of the verb's prefix, but this overlap is incidental than suggestive since it is Sak-aj, not the old god, who throws down the baby and it is Sak-aj who holds him now. Following the verb is a compound I perceive as **ba-TUUN** (*batuun*) rather than **ba-ku** (*baak*). Granted, in the absence of a *ni* suffix as in the *batuun* collocation on RPN186 (an incomplete vessel excavated at Nakbe) (Figure 4.36e), the second sign could certainly signify the sign's syllabic reading (*ku*) instead, but I doubt it since an inscription at Palenque describes Yax Ha'al Chahk as a Batuun Ajaw and Batuun as a title is fairly common in the nominal phrases of the numerous *wayob'* occurring on Codex-style pottery, especially that of the

Canonical variation, where it sometime co-occurs with other titles beginning with *ba*, such as *bate'* (e.g., K0531, K1181). One of the streamers on Chahk's axe touches the probable portrait or death glyph the *sak-aj*? nominal phrase (Figure 4.71), but it is clear from examples on other Jaguar Baby vessels that the *sak-aj* appellation refers to the death spirit, while *yax ha'al* refers to the rain god. The rather mangled-looking group of glyphs below Sak-aj's name might be another appellative of Chahk's—it includes a spotted element reminiscent of his ear shell—but nothing else in it looks familiar.

# K4011 (Figures 4.72-75)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7?-MULUK 4-TE'?-[K'AN]-a ya?-YAL-wa

7-? YAX-?

huk muluk chan-te' k'ana[siiy] [u]-yal-aw

*huk-? yax-?* 

"On Seven Muluk, the Fourth of K'anasiiy, he throws

Huk? Yax?."

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

## CHAAK-ki YAX-HA'

chaak yax ha'(al)

"(It is) Yax Ha'al Chahk."

# Notes

K4011 has numerous, obvious cracks, including one that extends from a deep chip in the rim to pass between the verb and its prefix before ending near the bottom of the *huk-?* compound. Both of the calendrical glyphs have been restored, with the far greater damage to the 'month' sign still evident. The transposing of the *chaak* sign with its appellative evinces haste rather than illiteracy.

# **K1152** (Figures 4.76-79)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 10-SAKSIHOOM YAL

HUK-?-la YAX-? K'UH-cha?-TAN-WINIK

huk muluk lajun saksihoom yal

huk-? yax-? k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik

"On 7 Muluk, the Tenth of Saksihoom, he throws

Huk? Yax? K'uhul 'Chatan' Winik."

Secondary inscriptions: transliteration, transcription, and translation

YAX-HA'-la

SAK-ja? U-WAY-ya ba-TUUN

yax ha'al [chaak]

sak-aj? u-way batuun

"(He is) Yax Ha'al Chahk."

"(He is) Sak-aj?, the Co-essence of Batuun."

# Notes

K1152 is the only Jaguar Baby vessel to depict the sacrifice of a fully zoomorphic jaguar rather than an infant with feline traits or a fully anthropomorphic infant. It is also the only one to record a date in a 'month' other than K'anasiiy. It is also notable for identifying Sak-aj as a co-essence of Batuun, or of a Batuun, since a *way* can belong to a person or a place, and the *batuun* collocation signifies both a toponym and a title.

# **K2207 (Figures 4.80-82)**

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 10-[K'AN]-a-ya YAL

7-?

huk muluk lajun k'ana[sii]y [u]-yal-[aw]

huk-?

"On Seven Muluk, the Tenth of K'anasiiy, he throws

Huk ?."

# Notes

K2207 has many areas of faintness and a lot of shallow pitting across it surface.

Nonetheless, most of its original lines remain legible.

# **K3201 (Figures 4.83-85)**

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

8-KIB 4-TE'?-[K'AN]a? SI-ya-ja

7-?-? YAX-?

waxak chan-"te'" "k'anas[iiy]" si[h]y-aj

*huk-? yax-?* 

"On Eight Kib, the Fourth of K'anasiiy, he is born,

Huk? Yax?."

# Notes

K3201 is an oddly pallid vase that does not photograph well and is notably more distinct in person. The fine internal details of the glyphs are too faint to see and the outline of each glyph has been darkened.

# K4056 (Figures 4.86-89)

7-MULUK 6-TE'-[K'AN]a-?-ya U-CH'AM-wa ba-HA'

7-? YAX-?

huk muluk wak-te' k'ana[sii]y u-ch'am-aw baha'

*huk-? yax-?* 

"On Seven Muluk, the Sixth of K'anasiiy, in Baha', he takes

Huk? Yax?."

Secondary inscriptions: transliteration, transcription, and translation

YAX-HA'-la CHAAK

SAK-ja?-ma?

yax ha'al chaak

sak-aj?

"(He is) Yax Ha'al Chahk."

"(He is) Sak-aj?."

## Notes

K4056's surface has extensive root damage and there is ample line darkening. Its inscription is the only one to use *ch'am* as its verb and to use a verb form that is unequivocally transitive since it pairs a –*aw* suffix with an appropriate prenominal prefix. Given that one variant of the *yal* logograph is nearly identical to the *ch'am* logograph and that *u-ch'am-aw* is a very common verbal compound in the Classic inscriptions, it would be easy for a 'restorer' to misinterpret a spelling of **ya-YAL-aw** as a spelling of **u-CH'AM-aw** instead, and I think that is likely to be have happened with K4056's verb. Alternatively, since *ch'am* constantly pairs with *k'awiil* in the ubiquitous accession phrase, *u-ch'am-aw k'awiil* (literally, "he takes/grasps *k'awiil*), perhaps the scribe was playing with the idea that to sacrifice the feline infant or to conjure the elderly deity in the snake was to "take *k'awiil*" in a different manner, but I doubt it. K4056 also has several secondary inscriptions that are too eroded to read, including one under Chahk's portrait glyph and another or two in the area between the streamers on Chahk's axe and the pair of fans in the dancing attendant's hands.

## **K5855 (Figures 4.90-93)**

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

```
ha-[i]-ni?-yu-bi-la? 3-TZ'AK-bu?-ka-?-na 3-ba-na-ka?-ka-?-na
5-ya-ti-ki i-bi-li-? TE'?-lo-ma-?

ha'in? ux-tz'ak-bu-[j]? ux banak?

ho'y-atik? "kaloom-te"

"(It is) he...the third counted...the third banak...

the five y-atik ...'Kaloom-te."
```

Secondary inscriptions: transliteration, transcription, and translation

**BIH-la-AKAN** 

?-?-BIH-la ?-na T670[?]-wa?

bih-al akan

???

"(He is) Bih-al Akan."

[None.]

# **Notes**

K5855's primary inscription begins with *ha'in*, which is analyzable as either an independent pronoun meaning "he/she/it" (Boot 2009:66; David Stuart, personal communication, 2009) or a first person singular pronoun meaning "(it is) I" (Hull, Carrasco, and Wald 2009), but much of the inscription remains unknown. The couplet referring to the "third counted...the third *banak*..." is intriguing. *Banak* is a Mayan name for a type of tree (Virola *merendonis/koschnyi*) belonging to the Nutmeg family that is

known in Spanish as a *palo de sangre* ("blood tree") because it exudes red sap when cut (Allen 1977:354; Pineda 1976:25; Smith and Wodehouse 1937:484).<sup>26</sup> It is also part of a name, Waxak Banak Jun Banak, referring to a supernatural being (or two) named in conjunction with Yax Ha'al Chahk on Piedras Negras Panel 2 (Fitzsimmons 1998:273).

Following the couplet is a glyphic compound consisting of the number five (ho') and a trio of syllables (ya-ti-ki) yielding a reading of ho' yatik or ho' y-atik. Christian Prager (cited in Boot 2003b:5 and 2004b:6) reads it as ho' yatik and regards it as possibly equivalent to a logograph (T831) that often pairs with the number five and that has a ya prefix and a ki infix as phonetic complements in an example from Topoxte' (Miller and Martin 2004:Plate 16). Simon Martin (2008:6-7), however, reads it as ho y-atik—that is, he interprets the ya sign as a prevocalic pronominal affix indicating possession—and is less inclined to regard it as a fully phonetic equivalent of T831 since T831 typically precedes a name that is known to be the name of a god, whereas the 5-ya-ti-ki compound does not.<sup>27</sup> It is unclear if the glyphs in the glyph block following ho' y-atik are providing it with derivational suffixes or spelling a separate word. The prefix and suffix of the next collocation have been lost to repainting. However, if the main sign is, indeed, a lo syllable with a ma pseudo-superfix, then the glyph block—in its original form—was probably kaloom-te' (Stuart, Grube, and Schele 1989), a title of unknown meaning that is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Various groups of indigenous South Americans derive hallucinogenic snuffs from different species of *Virola* (Flores 2003:772).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Helmke and Kettunen (2012:126) as well as Boot (2009:207) identify *yatik* as the name of an unknown flower. Martin (2008:7), however, describes it as "not readily identifiable in existing Mayan lexicons."

prestigiously rare among Early Classic rulers but unimpressively common among their Late Classic peers (Grube and Martin 2004:78).<sup>28</sup>

Bih-al Akan's nominal phrase immediately follows the primary inscription and appears just above the feline infant's foot. Across the vessel, past a large area of erosion is a short inscription next to a pair of kneeling young men. Although some of the individual syllabic signs are legible, I do not recognize the words they form.

# INDIVIDUAL ANALYSES OF EACH INSCRIPTION ON EACH SNAKE LADY VESSEL

To qualify as a Snake Lady vessel, a vessel must, at minimum, depict a frail old god emerging from the mouth of a giant serpent to caress or reach toward a bare-breasted young woman or goddess around whom the serpent coils. In addition to the Old God and his mother—yes, he is her child as the inscription on K5164 states—the Snake Lady vessels often depict one or two infant deities wrapped in swaddling clothes (Stone 1988:84) and resting upright on a platform (e.g., K6754, K1813) as well as a drowsy (e.g., K1382) or astonished (e.g., K4485) attendant and a sacrificial offering. If it has an inscription, it ought to record the birth of at least one of three beings born on the day of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>The title itself refers to some type of tree (*te'*). Also, in the *kaloom-te'* title, the *ma* sign is a pseudo-superfix because it appears to be a discrete glyph *above* the *lo* sign but is actually part of a full-form *ma* glyph that cannot be seen because—conceptually—it is *behind* the *lo* glyph. In this respect, the T74 *ma* syllabograph is comparable to the T86 *nal* and T168 *ajaw* glyphs that are consistently read in final position even though they, too, appear to be superfixes (Stuart and Houston 1994:21).

Muluk and in the 'month' of Paax. Any additional inscriptions, if present, will either provide a name the primary inscription does not include (e.g., K1382), or be an abridged dedication beginning with *y-uk'-ib* (e.g., K6754).

## K1813 (Figures 4.94-97)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 15-pa-xi-la? SIY-ya-ja

HA'-yu?-KAB?-la? CHAAK-la? 7-?-la? YAX-?-la? ?-?-la?

huk muluk ho'lajun paxiil si[h]y-aj

yu[k]? ha' kabal? chaak huk-? yax-???

On Seven Muluk, the Fifteenth of Paxiil, they are born

? Chahk (and) Huk? Yax???

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

?-?-la? ch'a-CH'AJOOM-ma

? ch'ajoom

...Ch'ajoom

Dedicatory inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

yu?-k'i?-bi? ta?-ixiim?

y-uk'-ib ta ixiim

"(It is) his drinking vessel for maize (tree cacao)."

### Notes

K1813 has areas of erosion along its bottom half and a large chip in its surface that extends from below the last pair of glyphs in its primary inscription, to just below the end of its dedication (*ta ixiim*). The glyphs nearest the chip are likely to have suffered damage as well and, in my view, the dedication has been inaccurately repainted—for example, the last syllable in "*y-uk'-ib*" is oddly similar to part of a T514 *te'* sign and I suspect the last two pairs of glyphs in the primary inscription have been altered to varying degrees, especially the final two, which—given the Old God's extended nominal phrase on another vessel (K5164)—might have once been *u mam akul*, "*mam* of the turtle." Aside from the day sign, nearly every glyph in the primary inscription has a suffix resembling *la* and that, too, is problematic, especially on Chahk's portrait glyph and the main sign of the *yax-?* portion of the *huk-? yax-?* nominal phrase.<sup>29</sup>
Consequently, I think most, if not all, of the *la*-like suffixes are probably the work of a 'restorer' who mistook a scribal fondness for certain calligraphic flourishes (i.e., bracers) for a mandate that every sign have a rounded, bipartite suffix.

As Robicsek and Hales (1981:39) recognized, the other swaddled deity on K1813 is a manifestation of the being who embodies the variable element in the Initial Sign of the Long Count whenever the 'month' is Paax (Thompson 1985:115). He also serves as the iconic component of a logograph signifying *te'* ("tree") and, in this study, is called the Tree God since he is an animate tree and, in at least one instance has god-markings on his

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Macri and Looper illustrate this example of the main sign paired with *yax* and assert, with elaborating, that it is "in the name of baby jaguar/Pax god" and tentatively identify the head as that of a snake.

limbs (Figure 2.66). Robicsek and Hales (1981:39) were the first as well to conclude that the huk-? collocation is part of the infantile Tree God's name, an understandable inference since it appears that the same collocation—albeit backwards (i.e., ?-huk) surmounts the long-nosed zoomorphic head in the center of the arboreal deity's headdress. On another vessel (K1645), however, he has a different glyphic compound in his headdress—6-MULUK?/PET?, wak "muluk"/"pet", which implies either that he has two nominal phrases that are completely different, or the names belong to his ancestors rather than to him. In my view, the latter implication is the most likely. Sihyaj Chan K'awiil, for example, is the main figure on Tikal Stela 31 and he carries the crest of his dynasty's founder on his headdress even though the founder, Yax Ehb Xook, was born centuries before Sihyaj Chan K'awiil assumed the throne (Martin and Grube 2008:34). Thus, even though a name appearing on an individual's headdress is usually his or her own, there is clear precedence for such a name to belong to an ancestor instead. Also, as noted, I think the Old God's claim to the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase is much stronger than the Tree God's since it involves more than a single appearance on a headdress.

Paax (**pa-xi**) or Paxiil (**pa-xi-la**) is the Classic Maya name for the sixteenth period of twenty days in the Haab cycle and, depending on the variant, the iconic component of its glyph is either a drum (Justeson 1984:342) with a central split or a reptilian amphibian with a cleft near its crown.<sup>30</sup> Reading the appellation preceding Chahk's portrait glyph is

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> This creature is a frog according to Thompson (1985:115) and a toad according to Miller and Taube (1993:168). Although I share the latter's suspicion that its spotted earlike element refers visually to the pitted parotid gland of a cane toad, I tend to prefer designations like "reptilian amphibian" to something less ambiguous since depictions of this creature sometimes include small serrated teeth (e.g., Paax logograph from of the 96

no easy task given that neither the identity, nor the sequence of its signs is entirely clear. As noted, the iconic components of the ha' and ba glyphs are almost identical, and on Codex-style pottery, the minimal visual difference between them is often missing as a result of erosion, repainting, or scribal inattention. On K1813 and K6754 (Figures 4.94c, 4.98c), the sign that seems to be in the initial position is probably ha', whereas the second and third signs are, respectively, a superfix reminiscent of T61 yu and a possible kab ("earth") sign. However, on K1081 and K4485 (Figures 4.102c, 4.110c), the yu-like superfix appears to be in the initial position since its lateral elements extend across the other two glyphs. On K4485, the left sign under the superfix is probably ha' while the one on the right is possibly kab whereas, on K1081, both of the signs under the superfix look like ba syllables. Barbara MacLeod (2015) recently suggested yuk ha' kabal ("shakes water-and-earth") as the reading of the appellation proceeding Chahk's name, and I am tentatively following her suggestion here. Alternatively, instead of referring to Chahk (Figure 4.115), it could be the Tree God's name (Figures 3.59, 4.100). If so, then he is probably the firstborn. The birth order of the triad is unclear, however, since several vessels portray both the Tree God and Chahk infants present at the Old God's birth, which implies he is the youngest. However, there are also vessels depicting only one swaddled infant present when the Old God is born which, in turn, implies that whoever is absent—be it Chahk (K6754) or the Tree God (K1382)—is the youngest of the three.

Glyphs; K531). For the decipherment of the *paax* logograph, see Stuart 1987:33, and for an illustration of an Aztec drum similar to the drum the non-zoomorphic *paax* glyph depicts, see Miller 1988:323.

The first compound in the secondary inscription consists of a main sign depicting a youthful anthropomorphic head, a postfix in the form of a deer antler, and another possibly suspect *la*-like suffix, while the second is a title that typically refers to young men who cast incense (Boot 2009:58; Stuart 2005:84). Epigraphers disagree about whether the spelling of this title is partly (**ch'a-CH'AJOOM**) or fully syllabic (**ch'a-jo-ma**) and if it includes a velar sound or not (i.e., *ch'ajoom* or *chahoom*).<sup>31</sup>

**K6754 (Figures 4.98-101)** 

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 15-pa-xi SIY-ya-ja

yu?-KAB-la?-HA' 7-?

huk muluk ho'lajun paax si[h]y-aj

yu[k]? ha' kabal? chaak huk-?

On 7 Muluk, the Fifteenth of Paax, they are born

Yu[k] Ha' Kabal? Chahk and Huk? (Yax?).

Dedicatory inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

yu-k'i-bi? hu-ku-na ti-ki-ba

*y-uk'-ib* ? ?

"(It is) the drinking vessel of [name of vessel's original recipient]."

<sup>31</sup> For more about *ch'ajoom* vs. *ch'ahoom*, see Boot 2009:58.

372

### Notes

The scribe who painted K6754 is highly skilled, but tends to underestimate the amount of space necessary for a given inscription. Hence his need to start condensing and omitting details halfway through the list of royal accessions he painted on K6751 (Martin 1997:858-859) and his inability to write the second part of Huk Yax's name on K6754 or to include the names of the possessors of two of the three *wayob* on K1652. The abridged dedication begins with *y-uk'-ib* on both vessels and concludes with the same nominal phrase which, on K6751 is slightly longer and much easier to read, although I am uncertain how to transcribe it.

# **K1081 (Figures 4.102-104)**

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

13-MULUK 12-pa-xi-la? SIY-ya-ja

yu-[ku]-ba-ba CHAAK? YAX?-?

uxlajun muluk lajcha' paax si[h]y-aj

yuk bab "chaak" "yax"?

On 13 Muluk, the Twelfth of Paax, they are born

Yuk Bab "Chahk" and "Yax"?.

### Notes

In Chahk's appellation on K1081, the superfix clearly occupies initial position and is a *yu* glyph with an infixed *ku* syllable to spell *yuk*, a verb meaning "to shake, tremble" (Boot 2009:212; Stuart 2005:90) as well as "to join, unite" (Kettunen and Helmke

2011:102), while the two *ba* syllables below spell *bab*, which means "to pour" or "to pour from one vessel to another" in Yucatec (Barrera Vásquez 1991:22, my English translation). Barbara MacLeod (2012) interprets Yukbab as an appellation identifying its bearer as one who stirs and pours liquids, which is rather fitting for a rain god such as Chahk. However, the glyph following Yukbab bears a stronger resemblance to the *chi* syllabograph depicting a bird's head than Chahk's portrait glyph, and the mangled collocation after it—in its original state—might have been the *yax-?* of the *huk-? yax-?* nominal phrase, but now it resembles that collocation in outline only.

# **K5164 (Figures 4.105-107)**

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation<sup>32</sup>

13-MULUK 17-PAAX SIY-ya-ja

7-? YAX-? u-MAM a-ku ?-IK' a-mu-chi TUUN-ni-AJAW

ya-AL IX-TZAK ko-tz'o-ma CHAN IX-WAY-[bi]

uxlajun muluk huklajun paax si[h]y-aj

huk-? yax-? u-mam aku[l] ?-Ik' a[j]much tuun ajaw

y-al ix tzak kotz'-om chan ix way-ib

On 13 Muluk, the Seventeenth of Pax, he is born

Huk? Yax?, the mam of Turtle...Wind, the Toad Stone Ajaw,

the child of Ix Tzak Kotz'-om Chan, Ix Way-ib

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup>K5164's inscription contains multiple clauses, but I regard it as single text since Huk? Yax? is its point of reference from beginning to end.

#### Notes

Robicsek and Hales (1981:110) interpreted the Snake Lady vessels as depicting a rivalry between K'awiil and the Old God for Ix Tzak's attention, which culminated in Ix Tzak and the elderly being having "sexual relations" and K'awiil complaining about it to two bundled ancestral deities (the Chahk and Paax infants) who declined to intervene on his behalf. In contrast, Stone (1988:83-84) recognized the bundled gods as swaddled infants and argued that they are the result of a sexual union between Ix Tzak and the Old God. Stone's interpretation held sway until Taube (1994:664) suggested, instead, that the Old God was a *mam* being ritually conjured, that is, ritually born, in conjunction with the actual births of the bundled gods. K5164's inscription confirms that the Old God is a *mam* and, given his mother's nominal phrase, there is no doubt that his manner of birth involves a coiling snake and is a form of conjuring. Evidently, then, Huk? Yax? is part of a divine triad born on a day of Muluk in the 'month' of Paax.

Mam is both a kinship term meaning "grandson" or "grandfather" and an honorific meaning "ancestor" or "elder" (Stuart 2000:9-13). It is unequivocally a kinship term—not a honorific or a nominal glyph—on K5164 since it precedes a female parentage statement, but it is unclear if its designates him as a grandson or a grandfather. The first half of his mother's name essentially means, "She Who Conjures the Rolled-up Snake" (Stuart, Houston, Robertson 1999:173-174), while the second half is a title identifying her as a female way-ib. A way-ib is a resting place—literally, a "sleep-thing" (Kettunen and Helmke 2011:125)—and, at Copan, there are models of temples that pair an image of God C inside the structure with an inscription identifying it as "the sleeping place of the

god" (Grube and Schele 1990:3-5; Taube 1998:428-429), that is, as an *u-way-ib-il k'uh*. Moreover, as Karl Taube reminds me (personal communication, 2015), *way* means "to dream" as well. It is conceivable, then, that to be a *way-ib* was to be a resting place for a god or someone through whom a god was accessible through the act of dreaming. At the very least, it is apparent that a *way-ib* was ordinarily male since it requires a female classifier to indicate otherwise, and that the individuals who bore it existed in more than one rank given that *ba-way-ib* ("first" or "head" *way-ib*) exists as a title.

# K1198 (Figures 4.108-109)

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 14-PAAX-la? SIY-ya-ja

7? YAX?-?

huk muluk chanlajun paax si[h]y-aj

huk-? yax?-?.

On Seven Muluk, the Fourteenth of Paax, he is born,

Huk? Yax??.

## Notes

K1198's inscription is notable for the use of the head variant of the Muluk day sign and as well as for the use of the zoomorphic variant of the *paax* logograph as opposed to the drum variant or the usual syllabic signs. Its verbal compound remains viable, but the collocation following it has been lost to a combination of erosion and repainting.

K4485 (Figures 4.110-112)

Inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-MULUK 10-pa-xi-la? SIY-ya-ja

yu?-[ku]?-HA'-KAB?-la?

huk muluk lajun paax si[h]y-aj

yu[k]?ha' kabal?

On 7 Muluk, the Tenth of Paax, they are born

Yuk? Ha' Kabal? (Chahk)....

Notes

Like K6754, K4485 is the work of an impressive—but hasty—scribe who stopped painting an inscription in the middle of a nominal phrase. However, it seems he just forgot to paint the rest of the name, since there is more than enough space left to complete it with a *chaak* glyph and to begin another name, especially since all three

members of the triad are present.

K1382 (Figures 4.113-116)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

13-MULUK 18-PAAX-[xi] SIY-ya-ja

uxlajun muluk waxaklajun paax si[h]y-aj

On Thirteen Muluk, the Eighteenth of Paax, they are born.

Secondary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

IX TZAK-aj ko-tz'o SAK-CHAN? IX-[WAY]-ba

ix tzak-aj kotz'-o[m] sak chan? ix way-ab

Ix Tzak-aj Kotz'om Sak Chan?, Ix Way-ab.

#### Notes

In K1382's primary inscription, the T140 la suffix on the Muluk glyph is an erroneous modern addition to the day sign's cartouche, and repainting has muddled the appearance of the verbal compound as well. The zoomorphic head following kotz'-o[m] in the vessel's secondary inscription has a sak prefix and has probably lost its original identity to repainting, given the odd line extending from just above its lip line to curl around its eye as well as the jaggedness of the lip line itself, which once might have been dentition similar to the *chan* glyph's on K5164. While I agree with Luís Lopes that the zoomorphic head—in its current state—bears little resemblance to a snake, I find his identification of K5164's *chan* glyph (Figure 4.117b) as a variant of T790 (Figure 117c) rather than T764 (Figure 117d) puzzling, even with the caveats he gives (Lopes 2005:2). T764 is a Classic glyph depicting the head of a snake that is demonstrably similar to the heads of snakes as the Classic Maya depict them, including the scribe who painted K1003 (Figures 4.66-67), whereas T790 is a Post Classic glyph from the codices that does not closely resemble the glyphs he cites—without caveats—as variants of T790 in the Classic era, much less the glyph on K5164. It is also unlikely, I think, that the kotz'-om in Ix Tzak's name refers to her son as the "wound up thing" (i.e., in her arms or in swaddling clothes) (Lopes 2005:5,7), rather than to the coiling serpent through which she brings forth her son.

The spelling of the title in the second half of Ix Tzak's nominal phrase differs as

well. Instead of a separate T539 way glyph (as on K5164), there is a small T509 way

glyph infixed on the cheek of the feminine classifier (ix) and the instrumental suffix in

her title is -ab (Kettunen and Helmke (2011:128) rather than -ib. Although K1382's

epigraphy is of minimal interest, its iconography provides crucial information the other

Snake Lady vessels omit, namely that the location of the way-ib where the Old God's

birth occurs is underground. Next to the *ix* in Ix Tzak, a pair of *kaban* curls hangs from

the ceiling (Figures 4.115-116). The *kaban* curl is a motif that appears on the Kaban day

sign and on the *kab* ("earth") logograph. In Classic Maya iconography, a row of *kaban* 

curls denotes the surface of the earth (Schele and Miller 1986:47) and, thus, to be below a

row of *kaban* curls is to be somewhere underground.

K1645 (Figures 4.118-121)

Primary inscription: transliteration, transcription, and translation

7-KIB 8 [K'AN]a-ya SIH-ya-ja

7-?-la YAX-?

huk kib waxak k'ana[sii]y si[h]y-aj

huk-? yax-?

On 7 Kib, the Eighth of K'anasiiy, is born,

Huk? Yax?.

379

Secondary inscriptions: transliteration, transcription, and translation

ch'a-CH'AJOOM-ma-TAK

yo-o-ki

ch'ajoom-tak

v-ook

"(They are) Ch'ajooms."

"(It is) its foot."

## **Notes**

K1645 is not a Snake Lady vessel or a Jaguar Baby vessel, but it does evince a link between the two narratives (Robicsek and Hales 1981:39, 113) since it depicts the setting of one, but bears a text appropriate to the other. Indeed, K1645's inscription is almost identical to K4013 (Figure 4.59); the only difference is the verb. K1645 refers to the birth of Huk? Yax?, whereas K4013 refers to his manner of death, and it is my contention that the two vessels offer different perspectives on the same narrative, one from above the earth's surface and one from below. More specifically, the day of birth K1645 refers to is not the day of birth Huk? Yax? shares with his two brothers, but a subsequent day of birth he shares with the being whose *k'awiil* is substituted for his. It is the day on which the feline infant—or his equivalent—as he is dying, is being born into the sub-terrestrial realm so that Huk? Yax? can ascend to the terrestrial realm without disrupting the balance between the two. K4013's depiction of the feline infant sliding headfirst into a Chapaat Maw explicitly confirms that he is not just falling on the *witz*, he is entering into it. Likewise, the positioning of the tree so that it is partly on the maw

confirms that the entrance to the tree's hollow overlaps with the entrance to the *witz*, which implies there is a pathway through the mountain allowing the elderly deity to rise above the earth's surface and the feline infant to go below it.

On K1645, there are two inscriptions in addition to the primary one. The *ch'ajoom* title next to the pair of young men takes the plural suffix *–taak* (Kettunen and Helmke 2011:129) because it applies to both, whereas the glyphs by the offering bowl, instead of naming the offering as one might expect, describes the tripod stand supporting the vessel above the flames as *y-ook*, "its foot" (Houston 2009:174, fn.11).

In addition to identifying each hieroglyph and parsing the inscriptions they form, I sought to show how the interplay between image and word serves to clarify who does what to whom, and how the complementary relationship between the two enriches the narrative. Also, by including the inscriptions from the Snake Lady vessel, I have laid the groundwork for Chapter 5, in which I will review the interpretations of others, and offer my own.

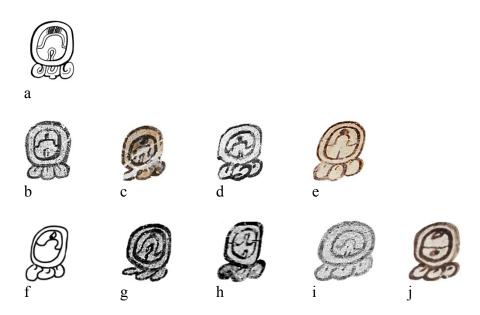


Figure 4.1 The day sign known as Kib:

- a **KIB**, *kib*, Temple XIX Platform, Palenque, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- b **KIB**, *kib*, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c **KIB**, *kib*, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d **KIB**, *kib*, K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **KIB**, *kib*, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f **KIB**, *kib*, MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo);
- g **KIB**, *kib*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h **KIB**, *kib*, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i **KIB**, *kib*, K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i KIB, kib, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



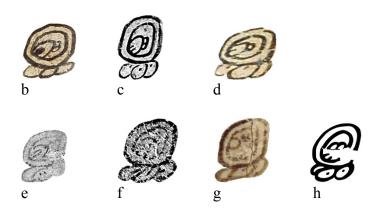


Figure 4.2 The day sign known as Muluk:

- a MULUK, muluk, Temple XVI Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b **MULUK**, *muluk*, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c MULUK, muluk, K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d MULUK, muluk, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e MULUK, muluk, K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f MULUK, muluk (rotated), K4056 detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g MULUK, muluk, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h **MULUK**, *muluk*, Calakmul Vessel 19, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).





Figure 4.3 The day sign known as Ajaw:

- a AJAW, *ajaw*, carved jade bead, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
  b AJAW, *ajaw*, K1644 (underside), detail (drawing after photo).

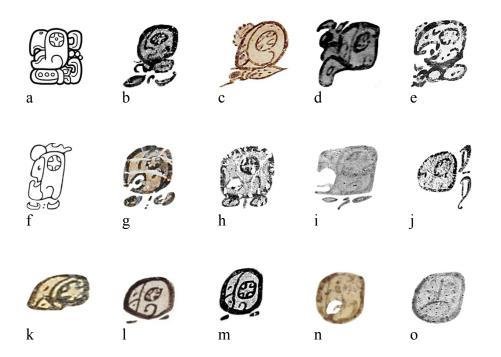


Figure 4.4 The "month" sign read as K'anasiiy:

- a **{K'AN}a-si-ya**, *k'anasiiy*, Temple XVI Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after M. Van Stone);
- b {**K'AN**}a-si-ya, *k'anasiiy*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c {**K'AN**}a-si, *k'anasiiy*, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d si-{K'AN}a, k'anasiiy, K2213 detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e {K'AN}a-si, k'anasiiy, K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f si-{K'AN}a-va, k'anasiiy, MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo);
- g {K'AN}a-ya, k'anasiiy, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h {**K'AN**}a-ya, *k'anasiiy*, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i {K'AN}a-ya, k'anasiiy, K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- j **{K'AN}a-ya**, *k'anasiiy*, K4056 (rotated), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- k {**K'AN**}a, *k'anasiiy*, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- 1 {**K'AN**}**a**, *k'anasiiy*, K0521 detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- m {**K'AN**}a, *k'anasiiy*, K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- n {K'AN}a?, k'anasiiy?, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- o {**K'AN**)a?, "k'anasiiy," K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

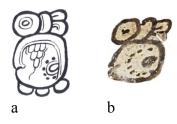


Figure 4.5 The "month" sign read as Saksihoom:

- a **SAKSIHOOM-ma**, *sak sihoom*, Temple XIX Platform, Palenque, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- b SAKSIHOOM, sak sihoom, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

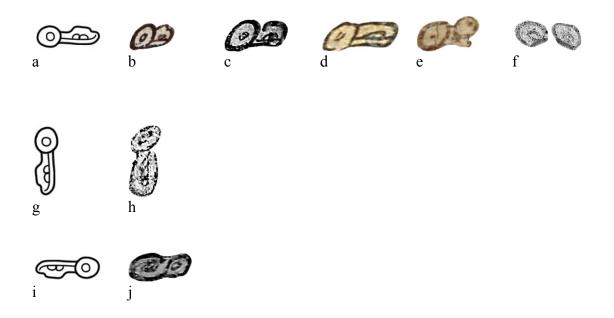


Figure 4.6 The T87 te' logograph:

- a TE', te', Stela A (west side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b TE', te', K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c TE', te', K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d TE', te', K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **TE'?**, te'?, K4011, detail (poorly restored) © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f **TE'?**, "te," K3201, detail (outlines repainted) © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g **TE'**, *te'*, Stela A (west side), Copan, detail (rotated and reversed) (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- h TE', te', K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i TE', te', Stela A (west side), Copan, detail (rotated) (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- j TE', te', K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

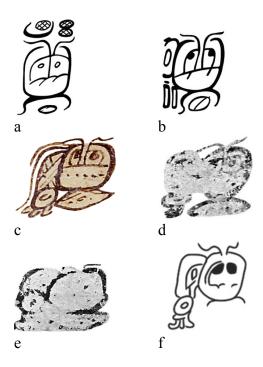


Figure 4.7 The temporal adverb provisionally read as *nukak'ab-il*:

- a **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, Shell Pendent 8a, Comalcalco, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- b **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, Shell Pendent 8b, Comalcalco, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- c **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f **nu-NUKAK'AB-li**, *nukak'ab-il*, MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo).

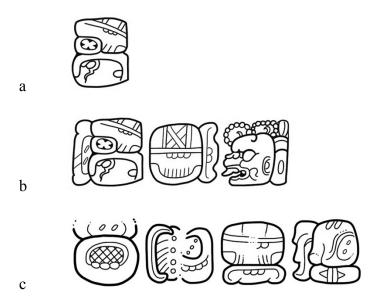


Figure 4.8 The *pas* logograph and the name of Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat:

- a **PAS**, pas, Altar Q (top), Copan, detail (redrawn after Mark Van Stone);
- b YAX-PAS CHAN-na YOPAAT-ti, yax pas[aj] chan yopaat, Altar Q (top), Copan, detail (redrawn after Mark Van Stone);
- c YAX-pa sa-ja CHAN-na YOP-AT-ta, yax pasaj chan yopat, South Jamb, Temple 18, Copan, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender).

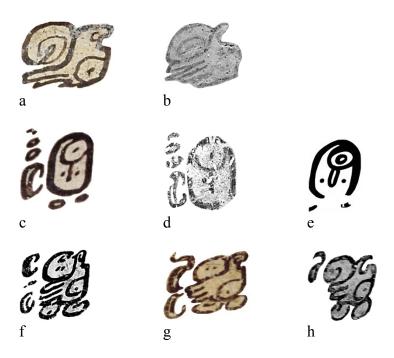


Figure 4.9 Different forms of *yal* on the Jaguar Baby vessels:

- a YAL, yal, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b YAL, yal, K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c ya-la, yal, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d ya-la, yal, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e ?-la, yal?, Calakmul Vessel 0, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- f ya-YAL-wa, [u]-yal-aw, K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g ya-YAL-wa, [u]-yal-aw, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h ya-YAL-wa, [u]-yal-aw, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

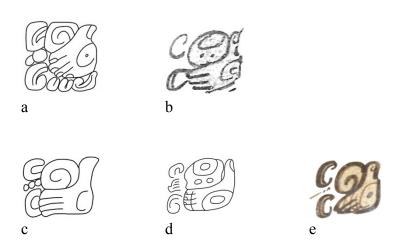


Figure 4.10 Logographs read as *yal* ("to throw") or *al* ("child"), depending on the context:

- a **ya-YAL-ji-ya**, ya[h]l-(a)-iiy, "he/it was thrown," West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b ya-YAL, yal, "to throw," K4118, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c ya-AL, y-al, "her child," Dallas Altar, detail (redrawn after Simon Martin);
- d ya-AL, y-al, "her child," Caracol Stela 16, detail (redrawn after LaBerta Ehman);
- e ya-AL, y-al, "her child," K5164, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

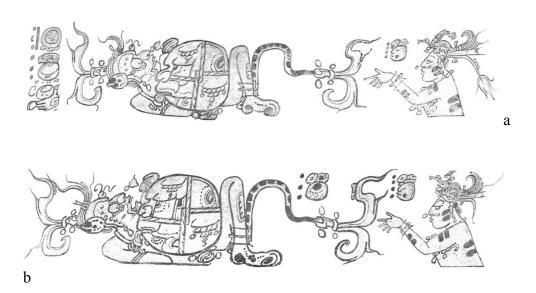


Figure 4.11 A Composite Codex-style vessel (twice) depicting Chan-te' Ajaw throwing a large stone onto Ux Ha':

- a K4118, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);b K4118, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

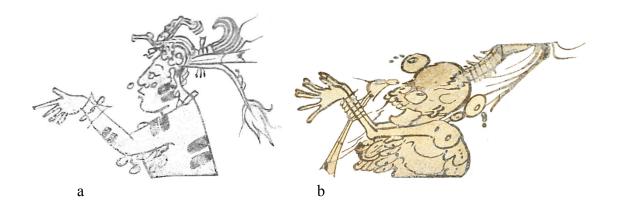


Figure 4.12 The bent-arm throw posture:

- a Chan-te Ajaw, K4118, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b Sak-aj, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

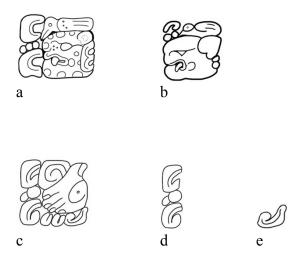


Figure 4.13 Full and partial examples of the T126 *ya* sign in the same name or the same verbal compound:

- a a full T126 *ya* sign in Bird Jaguar's name, Lintel 42, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b a partial T126 *ya* sign in Bird Jaguar's name, Step 7, Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c a verbal compound signifying ya[h]l-(a)-iiy, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d a full T126 *ya* sign in the verbal compound, *ya[h]l-(a)-iiy*, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- e a partial T126 *ya* sign in the verbal compound, *ya[h]-(a)-iiy*, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele).



Figure 4.14 The verbal compound on K1644 and K1815:

- a la-ja-ya, ya[h]l-aj, K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b la-ja-ya, ya[h]l-aj, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

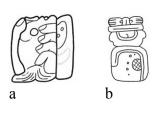






Figure 4.15 The verbal compound read as tza[h]k-aj:

- a **TZAK-ja**, *tza[h]k-aj*, Lintel 15, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b tza-ku, tzak, Lintel 25, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c **TZAK-ja**, *tza[h]k-aj*, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d TZAK-ja, tza[h]k-aj, K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

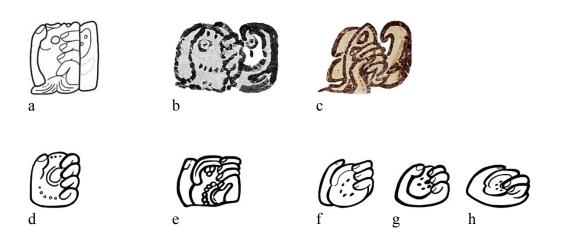


Figure 4.16 Comparison of hands in the *tzak* and *jatz*' logographs:

- a **TZAK-ja**, tza[h]k-aj, Lintel 15, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b **TZAK-ja**, *tza[h]k-aj*, K1370, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c TZAK-ja, tza[h]k-aj, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d JATZ', jatz', Stela 21, Caracol, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- e JATZ', jatz', Hieroglyphic Stairway, El Peru, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- f JATZ', jatz', K5070, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- g JATZ', jatz', K1652, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender);
- h JATZ', jatz', K2068, detail (redrawn after Marc Zender).



Figure 4.17 The verbal compound read as *si[h]yaj*:

- a **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]yaj*, Stela 3, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]yaj*, K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c SIY-ya-ja, si[h]yaj, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

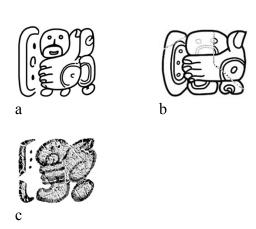


Figure 4.18 The verbal compound read as *u-ch'am-aw*:

- a **u-CH'AM-ma-wa**, *u-ch'am-aw* (redrawn Linda Schele);
- b **u-CH'AM-wa**, *u-ch'am-aw* (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c **u-CH'AM-wa**, *u-ch'am-aw*, K4056, detail (rotated) © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);

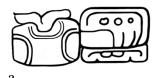
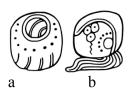




Figure 4.19 The "Chatan" toponym:

- a **cha?-TAN-na**, "*chatan*", Panel, Structure 5D-141, Tikal, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b cha?-TAN-na, "chatan", K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

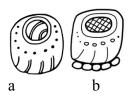




c

Figure 4.20 The toponym read as *batuun* and its individual components:

- a **ba**, Lintel 46, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b TUUN-ni, Lintel 46, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c ba-TUUN, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



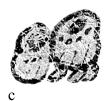


Figure 4.21 The toponym read as *baha*' and its individual components:

- a **ba**, Lintel 46, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b **HA'**, Panel 2, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- c ba-HA' (rotated), K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

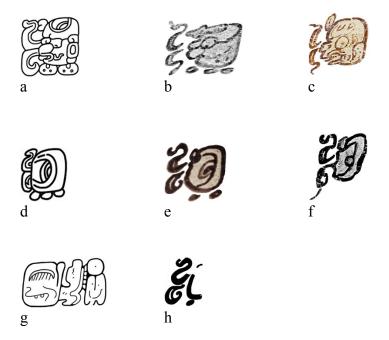


Figure 4.22 Logographs read as *k'awiil*:

- a **K'AWIIL-la**, *k'awiil*, Stela N (north side), Copan, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- b **K'AWIL-la**, *k'awiil*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c **K'AWIIL**, *k'awiil*, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d **K'AWIIL-la**, *k'awiil*, Temple XIV Tablet, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele)
- e **K'AWIIL-la**, *k'awiil*, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f **K'AWIIL**, *k'awiil*, K1003, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g k'a-wi-la, k'awiil, Lintel 2, Chichen Itza, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- h **K'AWIIL-la**, *k'awiil*, Calakmul Vessel 19, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

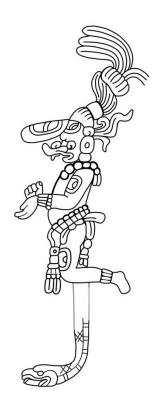


Figure 4.23 K'awiil, the god, with his serpentine leg and a celt piercing his forehead. Lintel 3, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn, with modification, after Ian Graham).



Figure 4.24 The *huk-?* collocation:

- a undeciphered 'vase' logograph, Palace Tablet, Palenque, detail (drawing after photo);
- b 7-?, huk-?, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c 7-?, huk-?, MBD Vessel 28, detail (drawing after photo);
- d 7-?, huk-?, K2207, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e 7-?-la, huk-?, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f 7-?-la, huk-?, K1152 detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g 7-?-la, huk-?, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h 7-?-la?, huk-?, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- i 7-?, huk-?, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- j 7-?, huk-?, K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- k 7-?, huk-?, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- 1 7-?-la?, huk-?, K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

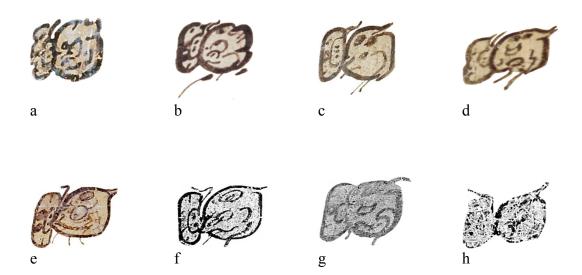


Figure 4.25 The *yax*? collocation:

- a YAX-?, yax-?, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b YAX-?, yax-?, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c YAX-?, yax-?, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d YAX-?, yax-?, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach); e YAX-?, yax-?, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f YAX-?, yax-?, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g YAX-?, yax-?, K3201, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- h YAX-?, yax-?, K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

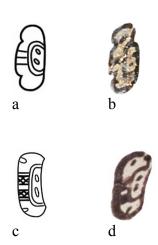


Figure 4.26 Variants of the T16 yax logograph:

- a YAX, yax, Stela A (south side), Copan, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b YAX, yax, K1645, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c YAX, yax, Lintel 3, Temple 4, Tikal, detail (redrawn after William Coe);
- d YAX, yax, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

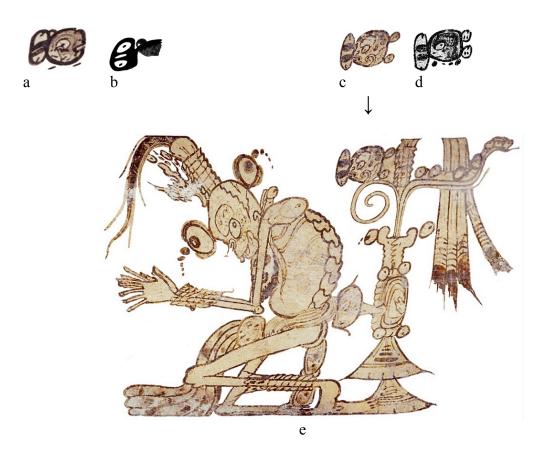


Figure 4.27 The *chak-?* collocation:

- a CHAK-?, chak-?, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b **CHAK-?**, *chak-*?, Calakmul Vessel 19, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- c CHAK-?-la?, chak-?, K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d CHAK-?-la-?, chak-?, K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e *chak-?* in context and touching Sak-aj's backrack K2208, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);

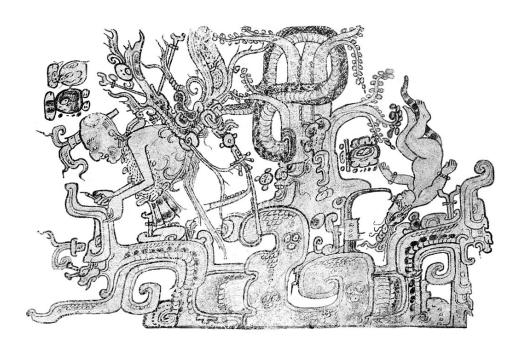


Figure 4.28 The nominal phrase the Old God in the Bearded Serpent shares with the feline infant (and his equivalents), K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).







Figure 4.29 Three examples of the "double stripe" *chak* logograph:

- a **CHAK-SUTZ**, *chak suutz*', Tablet of the Slaves, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b **CHAK-hi-SIHOOM**, *chaksihoom*, K6751, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c CHAK-?, chak-?, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

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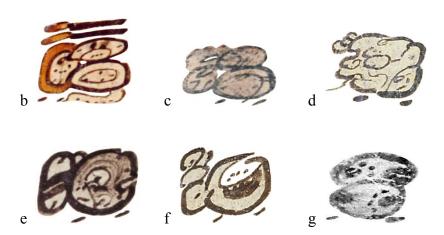


Figure 4.30 The T139 *la* syllabograph and "bracers," a calligraphic flourish without phonetic meaning:

- a T139 *la* syllabograph, Stela 3, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- b **10-IMIX 10 YAXK'IN-ni**, *lajun imix lajun yaxk'in*, K6751, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c **K'UH-cha?-TAN-WINIK**, *k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik*, K0531, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d CHAHK, chahk, K6754, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e chak-?, chak?, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- f SAK-ja, sak-aj, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- g **ku-ku**, *kuk[ay]*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



a

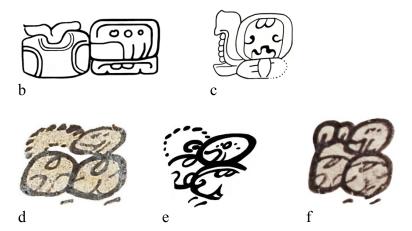


Figure 4.31 The individual components of the K'uh[ul] "Chatan" Winik toponymic title:

- a **K'UH**, k'uh[ul], Lintel 25, Yaxchilan, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- b **cha?-TAN-na**, "*chatan*", Panel, Structure 5D-141, Tikal, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c wi-WINIK-ki, winik, Stucco Glyph, Temple XVIII, Palenque (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d **K'UH-cha?-TAN-WINIK**, *k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik*, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **KUH-cha?-TAN-WINIK**, *k'uh[ul]* "*chatan*" *winik*, Calakmul Vessel 19A, detail (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera);
- f **cha?-TAN-WINIK**, "chatan" winik, K0521, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

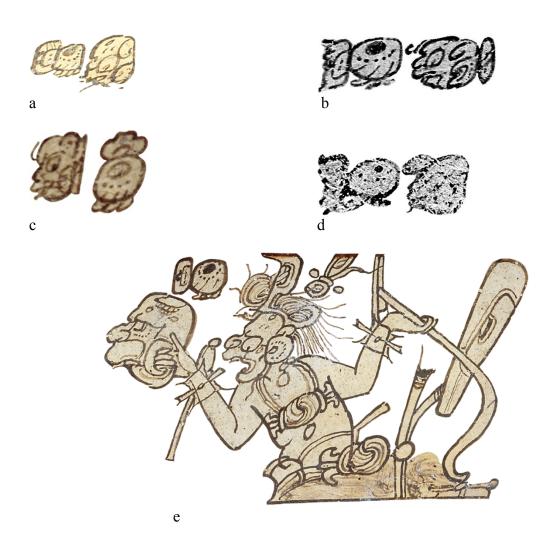


Figure 4.32 The Yax Ha'al Chahk nominal phrase on Codex-style vessels:

- a YAX-HA' CHAHK, yax ha'[al], K1644, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b **YAX-HA'-la CHAHK-ki**, *yax ha'al chahk*, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c **CHAHK-ki YAX-HA'**, *yax ha'[al] chahk*, K4011, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d YAX-HA'-la? CHAHK, yax ha'al chahk, K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e YAX-HA'-la, yax ha'al, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

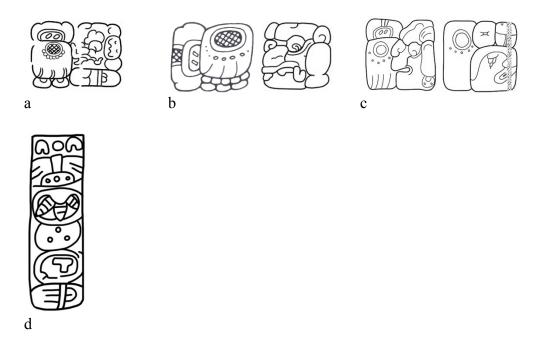


Figure 4.33 The Yax Ha'al Chahk nominal phrase:

- a **YAX-HA'-la CHAHK-ki**, *yax ha'al chahk*, Hieroglyphic Stairway, Copan, detail (redrawn after Matthew Looper);
- b **YAX-HA'-la CHAHK**, *yax ha'al chahk*, Panel 2, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- c YAX-HA'-CHAHK ba-TUUN, yax ha'[al] chahk, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- d **ya-YAX HA'-la CHAHK-ki**, *yax ha'al chahk*, Column, Structure 6E1, Chichen Itza, detail (redrawn after Karl Taube).

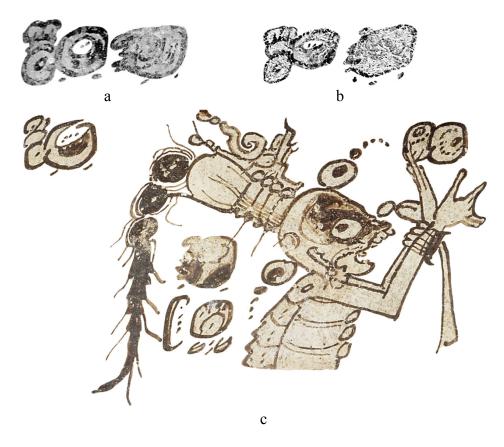


Figure 4.34 The Sak-aj nominal phrase:

- a SAK-ja?, sak-aj?, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b SAK-ja?-?, sak-aj?, K4056, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c SAK-ja? u-WAY-ya ba-TUUN sak-aj? u-way batuun, K1152, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

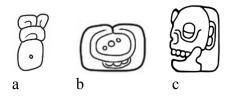


Figure 4.35 A sak logograph, a full ja syllabograph, and a cham/kam logograph:

- a sak logograph, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque, detail (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- b *ja* syllabograph, Stela 3, Piedras Negras, detail (redrawn after David Stuart);
- c cham/kam logograph, Dumbarton Oaks Panel, detail (redrawn after Nikolai Grube).

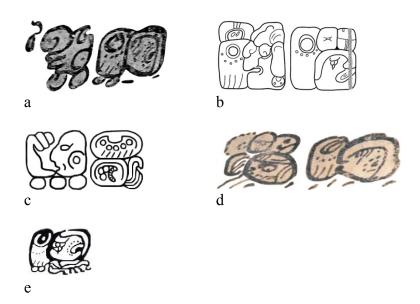


Figure 36. Batuun as a toponym and as a title:

- a **ya-YAL-wa ba-TUUN**, *yal-aw batuun*, K2213, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b YAX-HA'-CHAHK ba-TUUN-AJAW, yax ha'al chahk batuun ajaw, West Panel, Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque (redrawn after Linda Schele);
- c **KELEEM-ma ba-TUUN-ni**, *keleem batuun*, Panel 7, Xcalumkin, detail (redrawn after Eric von Euw);
- d **K'UH-ka-KAN-AJAW ba-TUUN**, *k'uhul kan ajaw batuun*, K0531, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- e **ba-TUUN-ni**, *batuun*, RPN186, Nakbe, detail (redrawn after Roberto López).

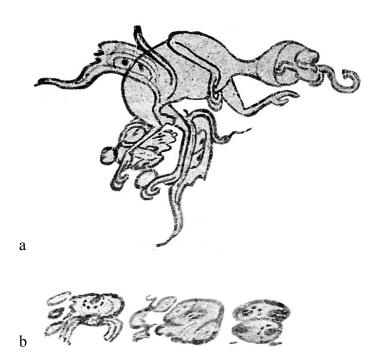


Figure 4.37 The Firefly and his nominal phrase, Jun? K'ak' Ti' Kuk[ay]:

- a Firefly, K1815, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b 1-?-hi K'AK'-TI' ku-ku, jun ? k'ak' ti' kuk[ay], detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.38 Bih-al Akan with his nominal phrase just above the feline infant's foot, K5855, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

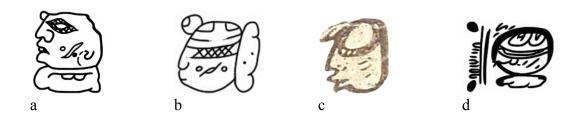


Figure 4.39 The *akan* collocation:

- a **AKAN-na**, *akan*, Altar U, Copan, detail (redrawn from Linda Schele);
- b **AKAN-na**, akan, Altar 1, Naranjo, detail (redrawn after Ian Graham);
- c AKAN, akan, K5855, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- d **a-AKAN-an**, *akan*, K0791, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.40 The inscription on K2208, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 4-[K'AN]a-si nu-NUKAK'AB?-li?, huk kib chan k'anasii[y]"nukak'ab-il";
- b **TZAK-ja**, *tza[h]k-aj*;
- c K'AWIIL 7-? YAX-? CHAK-?-la?, k'awiil huk-? yax-? chak -?.



Figure 4.41 Rollout photo of K2208 © Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.42 Uncut rollout photo of K2208 © Justin Kerr.





Figure 4.43 The inscription on K1370 details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 4-[K'AN]a-si nu-NUKAK'AB?-li?, huk kib chan k'anasii[y] "nukak'ab-il"; h T7AK-ia
- b **TZAK-ja**, *tza[h]k-aj*.

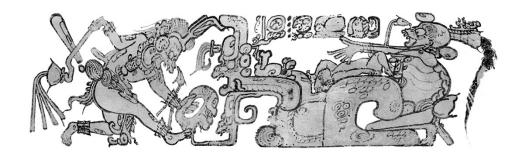


Figure 4.44 Rollout photo of K1370  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).





b [eroded]

a

 $\mathbf{c}$ 



Figure 4.46 The inscription on MBD Vessel 28 (drawing after photo):

- a 7-KIB 4-TE'-[K'AN]a-ya nu-NUKAK'AB?-li?, huk kib chan-te k'ana[sii]y "nukak'ab-il";
- b [eroded];
- c 7-?, huk-?.

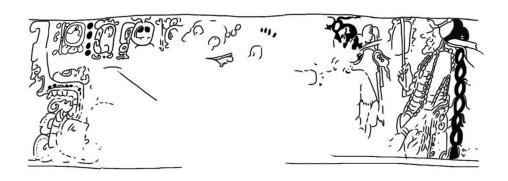


Figure 4.47 MBD Vessel 28 (rollout drawing after photo).

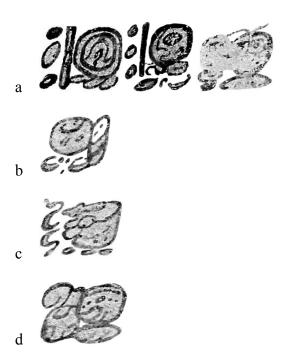


Figure 4.48 The primary inscription on K1815, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 8-[K'AN]a-si-ya nu-NUKAK'AB?-li, huk kib waxak k'anasiiy "nukak'ab-il";
- b **la-ya-ja**, *ya[h]l-aj*;
- c **K'AWIIL-la?**, k'awiil;
- d cha?-TAN-na, "chatan".

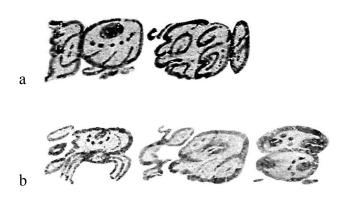


Figure 4.49 The secondary inscriptions on K1815, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a YAX-HA'-la CHAHK-ki, yax ha'al chahk;
- b 1-?-hi K'AK'-TI' ku-ku, jun k'ak' ti' kuk[ay].



Figure 4.50 Rollout photo of K1815  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.51 Uncut rollout photo of K1815 © Justin Kerr.





Figure 4.52 The primary inscription on K1644, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 3-TE'[K'AN]a, huk muluk ux-te' k'ana[siiy];
- b **la-ya-ja**, *ya[h]l-aj*.

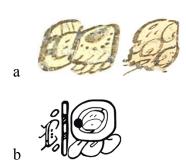


Figure 4.53 The secondary (a) and tertiary (b) inscriptions on K1644:

- a YAX-HA' CHAHK, yax ha'[al] chahk, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach);
- b **7-AJAW**, huk ajaw (drawing after photo).



Figure 4.54 Rollout photo of K1644  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.55 Uncut rollout photo of K1644  $\ \ \, \mathbb C$  Justin Kerr.

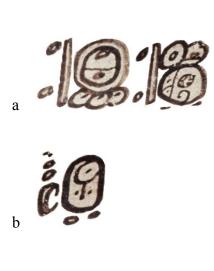




Figure 4.56 The inscription on K0521, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 7-TE'-[K'AN]a, huk kib huk-te' k'ana[siiy];
- b **ya-la**, *yal*;
- c K'AWIIL-la 7-? YAX-? CHAK-? cha?-TAN-WINIK, k'awiil huk-? yax-? chak-? [k'uhul] "chatan" winik.

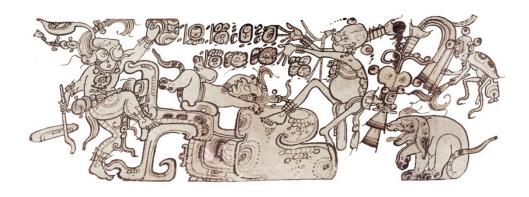


Figure 4.57 Rollout photo of K0521  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.58 Uncut rollout photo of K0521 © Justin Kerr.







Figure 4.59 The inscription on K4013, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a **7-KIB 8-K'AN]a-ya**, huk kib waxak k'ana[sii]y;
- b **ya-la**, *yal*;
- c 7-?-la YAX-? CHAK-?-la-la?, huk-? yax-? chak-?.

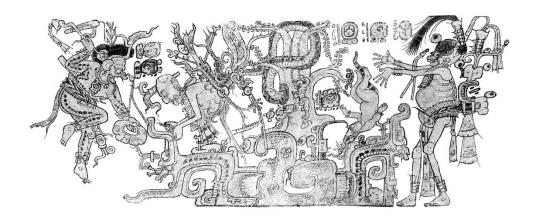


Figure 4.60 Rollout photo of K4013 © Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.61 Uncut rollout photo of K4013 © Justin Kerr.

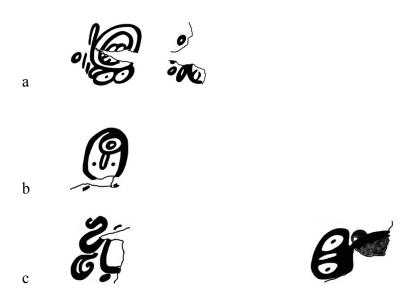
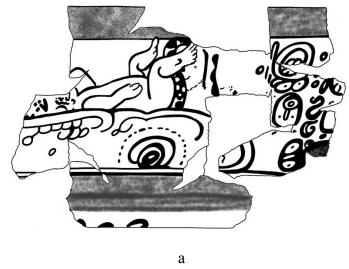


Figure 4.62 The primary inscription on Calakmul Vessel 19, details (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).

- a 7?-MULUK 7?-[K'AN]a, "huk" muluk "huk" "k'anasiiy;"
- b **ya?-la**, *yal*;
- c **K'AWIIL-la**...**CHAK-?** *k'awiil...chak-?*.



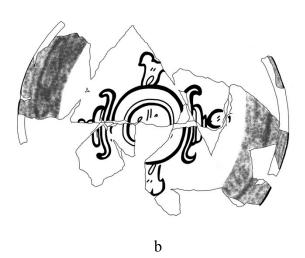


Figure 4.63 Calakmul Vessel 19, exterior (a) and underside (b) (redrawn after Guillermo Kantun Rivera).







Figure 4.64 The primary inscription on K1003, details  $\ \ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 7-TE'-[K'AN]a, huk muluk huk k'ana[siiy];
- b **ya-YAL-wa**, yal-aw;
- c **K'AWIIL**, k'awiil.



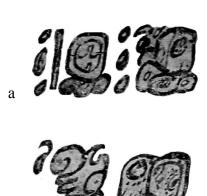
Figure 4.65 The secondary inscription on K1003. **Sak-?-TI'**, *sak? ti'*, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.66 Rollout photo of K1003  $\$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.67 Uncut rollout photo of K1003 © Justin Kerr.





b

Figure 4.68 The primary inscription on K2213, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 3-si-[K'AN]a-TE', huk kib ux-te' k'anasii[y];
- b **ya-YAL-wa**, **ba-TUUN**, yal-aw batuun;
- c 7-?, huk-?.



Figure 4.69 The secondary inscription on K2213. **Sak-ja?**, *sak-aj?*, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).

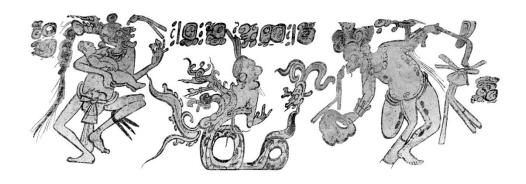


Figure 4.70 Rollout photo of K2213 © Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.71 Uncut rollout photo of K2213 © Justin Kerr.

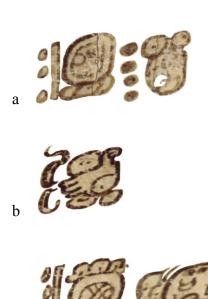


Figure 4.72 The primary inscription on K4011, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7? MULUK? 4-TE'?-[K'AN]a, "huk" "muluk" chan-"te'" k'ana[siiy];
- b **ya-YAL-wa**, yal-aw;
- c 7-?-la? YAX-?, huk-? yax-?.



Figure 4.73 The secondary inscription on K4011. **CHAHK-ki? YAX-HA'**, *yax ha'[al] chahk*, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.74 Rollout photo of K4011  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.75 Uncut rollout photo of K4011 © Justin Kerr.

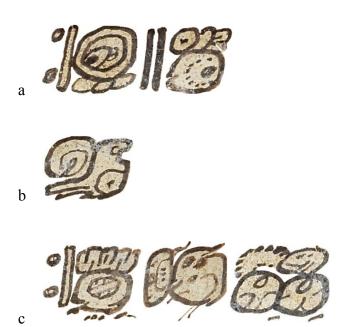


Figure 4.76 The primary inscription on K1152, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 10-SAKSIHOOM, huk muluk lajun saksihoom;
- b **YAL**, yal
- c 7-?-la YAX-? K'UH-cha?-TAN-WINIK, huk-? yax-? k'uh[ul] "chatan" winik.





Figure 4.77 The secondary inscriptions on K1152, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a **YAX-HA-la**, yax ha'al;
- b SAK-ja? U-WAY-ya ba-TUUN, sak-aj? u-way batuun.



Figure 4.78 Rollout photo of K1152 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.79 Uncut rollout photo of K1152 © Justin Kerr.

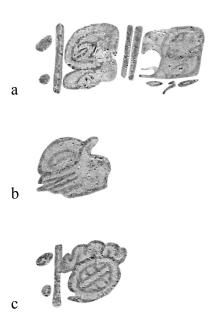


Figure 4.80 The inscription on K2207, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a **7-MULUK 10 [K'AN]a-ya**, huk muluk lajun k'ana[sii]y;
- b **YAL**, yal;
- c 7-?, huk-?.

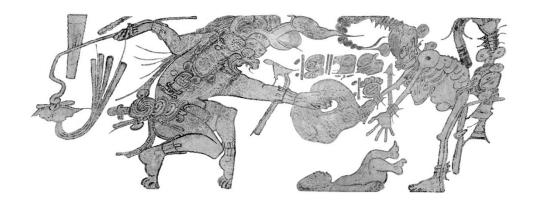




Figure 4.82 Uncut rollout photo of K2207 © Justin Kerr.

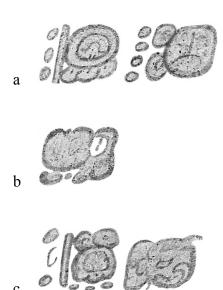


Figure 4.83 The inscription on K3201, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 8-KIB 4-TE'?-[K'AN]a?, waxak kib chan "k'anasiiy";
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c 7-? YAX?, huk-? yax-?.

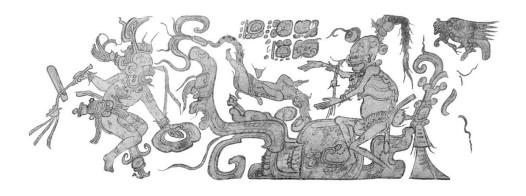


Figure 4.84 Rollout photo of K3201  $\odot$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.85 Uncut rollout photo of K3201 © Justin Kerr.

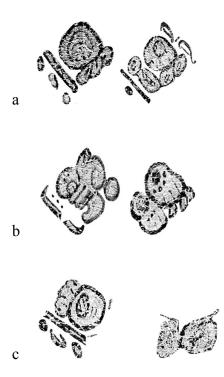


Figure 4.86 The primary inscription on K4056, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 6-TE'-[K'AN]a-?-ya, huk muluk wak-te' k'ana[sii]y;
- b **u-CH'AM-aw ba-HA'**, *u-ch'am-aw baha'*;
- c 7-? YAX-?, huk-? yax-?.





Figure 4.87 The secondary inscriptions on K4056, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a YAX-HA'-la CHAHK, yax ha'al chahk;
- b **SAK-ja?**, sak-aj?;



Figure 4.88 Rollout photo of K4056  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout [water omitted]: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.89 Uncut rollout photo of K4056 © Justin Kerr.

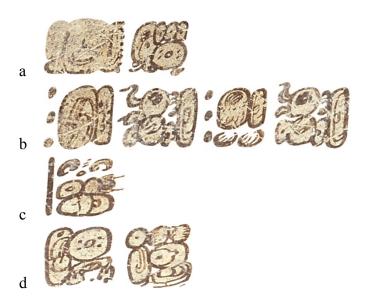


Figure 4.90 The primary inscription on K5855, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a ha-{i}-ni ?-yu-bi-la?, ha'in ?;
- b **3-TZ'AK-bu ?-ka-yu?-na 3-ba-na-ka ?-ka-yu?-na**, ux tz'ak-bu-[j] ? ux banak ?;
- c **5-ya-ti-ki**, *ho'y-atik*;
- d i-bi-li-? TE'?-lo-ma-?, "ibil kalom-te'".





Figure 4.91 The secondary inscriptions on K5855, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a BIH-la-AKAN, bih-al akan; b ?-?-BIH/bi-la ?-na T670-{?}-wa?,
  - ?bih-al ?



Figure 4.92 Rollout photo of K5855 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.93 Uncut rollout photo of K5855 © Justin Kerr.

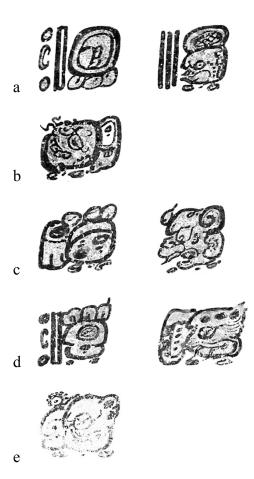


Figure 4.94 The primary inscription on K1813, details  $\ \ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 15-pa-xi-?, huk muluk ho'lajun paax;
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c **ba/HA'?-?-? CHAHK-?**, ? ? chahk;
- d **7-?-? YAX-?-?**, huk-? yax-?;
- e **?-PAAX?-?**, *? paax?*

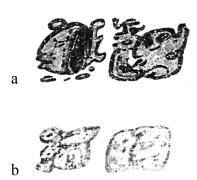


Figure 4.95 The secondary inscription and dedication on K1813, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a ?-?-ya ch'a-CH'AJOOM ? ch'ajoom;
- b **yu-k'i-bi ta?-IXIIM**, y-uk'ib "ta" ixiim.

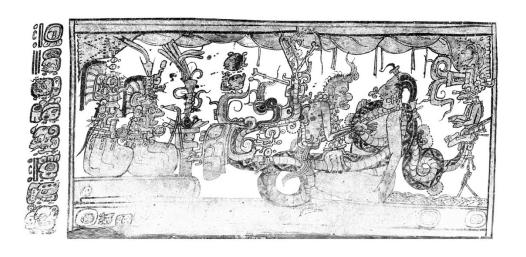


Figure 4.96 Rollout photo of K1813 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

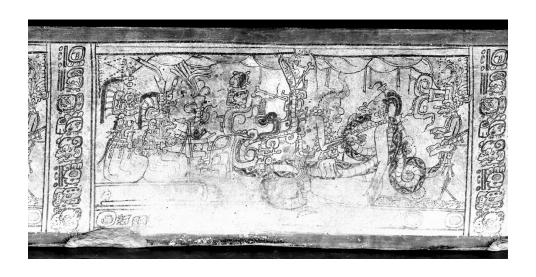


Figure 4.97 Uncut rollout photo of K1813 © Justin Kerr.

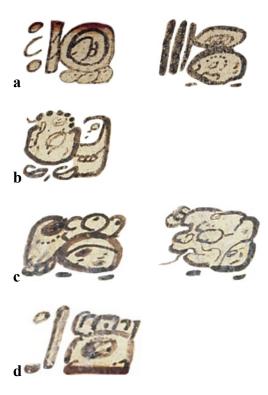


Figure 4.98 The primary inscription on K6754, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 15-pa-xi, huk muluk ho'lajun paax;
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c HA-?-? CHAHK, ha? chahk;
- d **7-?**, *huk-?*.





Figure 4.99 The secondary inscription on K6754, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a yu-k'i-bi?,
- *y-uk'ib?*; b **hu-ku?-na? si-ki-ba?**, hukuun? sikiib?.



Figure 4.100 Rollout photo of K6754 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.101 Uncut rollout photo of K6754 © Justin Kerr.

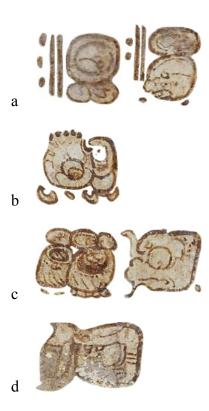


Figure 4.102 The inscription on K1081, details  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 13-MULUK 12-pa-xi, uxlajun muluk lajcha' paax;
- b **SIY-ya-ja-ya?**, *si[h]y-aj?*
- c yu?-[ku]?-ba-?-ba CHAHK?, yuk? bab? chahk?;
- d **YAX?-?**, yax?-?.



Figure 4.103 Rollout photo of K1081 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.104 Uncut rollout photo of K1081 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 4.105 The inscription on K5164, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 13-MULUK 17-PAAX, uxlajun muluk huklajun paax;
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c 7-? YAX-? u-MAM a-ku i?-IK' a-mu-chi TUUN-ni AJAW, huk-? yax-? u-mam aaku[l] a[j]much tuun ajaw
- d ya-AL IX-TZAK ko-ts'o-ma CHAN IX-WAY-{bi}, y-al ix tzak k'ots'-om chan ix way-ib.



Figure 4.106 Rollout photo of K5164 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.107 Uncut rollout photo of K5164  $\ \ \ \$  Justin Kerr.

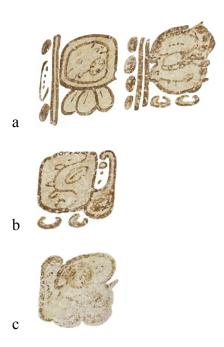


Figure 4.108 The inscription on K1198, details  ${\mathbb C}$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-MULUK 14 PAAX-la? huk muluk chanlajun paxiil?;
- b **SIY-ya?-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c YAX?-?, yax?-?.



Figure 4.109 Uncut rollout photo of K1198 © Justin Kerr.

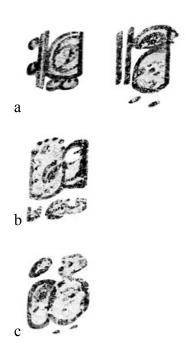


Figure 4.110 The inscription on K4485, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- 7-MULUK 10 pa-xi, huk muluk lajun paax; SIY-ya-ja, si[h]y-aj;
- HA'-?-?, ?.

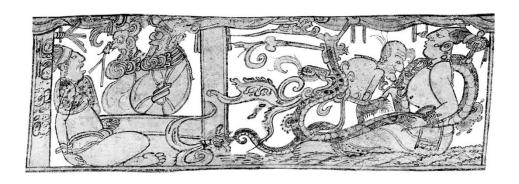


Figure 4.111 Rollout photo of K4485 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

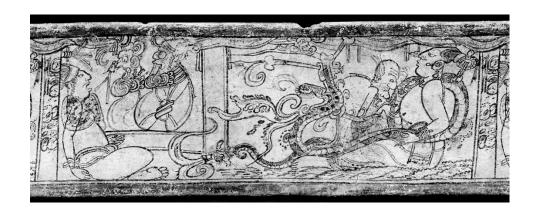


Figure 4.112 Uncut rollout photo of K4485 © Justin Kerr.



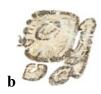


Figure 4.113 The primary inscription on K1382, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 13-MULUK-la? 18-PAAX-[xi], uxlajun muluk waxaklajun paax;
- b **SIY-ya?-ja?**, *si[h]y-aj?*.



Figure 4.114. The secondary inscription on K1382, details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach): **IX TZAK-ja ko-tz'o SAK-CHAN? IX-[WAY]-ba?**, *ix tzak-aj kots'o[m] sak-? ix way-ab?*.



Figure 4.115 Rollout photo of K1382 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.116 Uncut rollout photo of K1382 © Justin Kerr.

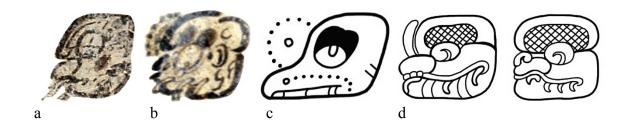


Figure 4.117 Comparison of glyphs from K1382 and K5164 to variants of the *chan/kan* ("snake") logograph:

- a Possible chan logograph, K1382, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- b Chan logograph, K5164, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach);
- c Postclassic T790 *chan* logograph (redrawn after Avis Tulloch);
- d Classic T764 *chan* logographs (redrawn after Avis Tulloch).







Figure 4.118 The primary inscription on K1645, details  $\ \ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a 7-KIB 8?-[K'AN]a-ya, huk kib waxak? k'ana[sii]y;
- b **SIY-ya-ja**, *si[h]y-aj*;
- c 7-?-la YAX-?, huk-? yax-?.





Figure 4.119 The secondary inscriptions on K1645, details  $\mathbb O$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach):

- a ch'a-CH'AJOOM-ma-TAK, ch'ajoom-tak;b vo-o-ki
- b **yo-o-ki**, *y-ook*.



Figure 4.120 Rollout photo of K1645 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 4.121 Uncut rollout photo of K1645 © Justin Kerr.

## **Chapter 5: Insights and Conclusions**

Having laid out the individual components of the pictorial renderings and the hieroglyphic descriptions of this narrative, I will now address the interpretations and meanings that can be derived once these elements have been considered separately and then assembled into a coherent whole. That is, following a thematic approach, I will discuss the scholarship that has preceded mine. However, I will focus upon substantive observations rather than the countless comments made in passing, such as the inference that Yax Ha'al Chahk is using the feline infant "to crack open the mountain where the first maize seeds were hoarded" (Davletshin and Bíró 2014:9), or speculation that the date on the Metropolitan Vase may coincide with a new moon (Milbrath 1999:126).

More specifically, I will begin with prior understandings formulated in reference to the Popol Vuh (Foncerrada de Molina 1972; Lounsbury 1985; Robicsek and Hales 1981, 1988; Schele and Miller 1986) and the objections to them (Coe 1989; Kerr 1992; Taube 1994); continue with explanations seeking correlations with ancient Mexican myths (Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán 2013) or the still-vibrant folklore of a Maya community in Rabinal, Guatemala (García Barrios and Valencia 2011), and complete the review with important insights gained from the study of a topic that is different (Taube 1994) or more broad (Martin 2002). Then, I will offer my current understanding of the narrative the Jaguar Baby vessels convey. To facilitate its presentation, I will divide it into several subsections. The first and second will resolve important issues regarding the *huk-? yax-?* nominal phrase and the *k'awiil* logograph, while the third and fourth will,

respectively, consider the activity Calakmul Vessel 0 portrays, and present evidence of a childhood ritual to which it seems to relate. In turn, the fifth will address what their apparent link implies about the Jaguar Baby vessels, and the sixth will consider the connection between Codex-style pottery and Calakmul. Thereafter, I will state my conclusions.

#### PRIOR UNDERSTANDINGS

### Interpretations Made in Reference to the Popol Vuh and Objections to Them

Aside from key differences with Michael Coe (1989:165-166) and Joanne M. Spero (1991:190-193), Floyd Lounsbury's (1985:53-56) analysis of the Metropolitan Vase (Figures 4.57-4.58) is generally representative of those who interpret the events of the sacrifice in light of the Popol Vuh (e.g., Foncerrada de Molina 1972; Robicsek and Hales 1981:114-117, 1988; Schele and Miller 1986:271, 274, 287). As he notes, others make similar observations, such as identifying the ax-wielding "dancing youth" with Hunahpu the Hero Twin (e.g., Foncerrada de Molina 1972) or GI of the Palenque Triad (e.g., Coe 1973:98, 1978:34). Lounsbury extends their inferences further by equating GI with Hunahpu and making a comparable equation between GIII of the Palenque Triad and Xbalanque, Hunahpu's little brother. He then identifies the Metropolitan Vase as representing a moment in the Colonial epic when the Hero Twins sacrifice and revive first a dog, and then one brother sacrifices the other, in order to trick the death lords of the underworld (Xibalba) into offering themselves to die as well.

Although Spero (1991:190) agrees that the sacrifice occurs in the underworld, she relates it to a different passage in the Popol Vuh, one in which "Q'uq' Kumatz, the *nawal ahaw*, transformed himself into a jaguar (among other forms) and, in doing so, stayed for a week in Xibalba." She then draws upon ethnohistoric data and contemporary ethnography to prose a more original interpretation. Namely, that the feline infant, who is in a state of transformation between a human and a jaguar, represents the soul of a deceased ruler over which the rain god and death spirit battle for possession, and that the outcome of their struggle will determine the soul's fate.

Following Lounsbury's lead more closely, Francis Robicsek and Donald Hales (1988:274-275) contend that the positional differences among the feline infants on the vessels correlate with the movement of the planet Jupiter across the night sky, as opposed to the "Night Sun" as they had speculated previously (1981:115). To illustrate their argument, they include a drawing in which differing jaguar babies are arrayed across a mountain (deriving from several Witz Head), beginning with one in a bowl and ending with another, of whom only a tail, lower leg, and (invented) paw remain visible (Figure 5.1). Although the illustration of their idea is visually seductive, I know of no evidence linking the feline infant to any astronomical body or its movement, and they provide none beyond citing Lounsbury's suggestion that, on the Tablet of the Sun at Palenque, the Jaguar God of the Underworld symbolizes Jupiter.

Despite being initially influential (e.g., Robicsek and Hales 1988; Schele and Miller 1986:49, 51), the "Lounsbury hypothesis" has fallen from favor. As Coe (1989:165-166) argues using only one iconographic source (the Metropolitan Vase)

weakens the argument, as does the identification of Xbalanque as not only the sun, but as the Hero Twin who returns from death since, according to the Popol Vuh, Xbalanque sacrifices his brother, and it is Hunahpu—not he—who turns into the sun. Also, as Karl Taube (1994:672) points out, nothing on the vessels indicates that the feline infant will, indeed, live again. For different reasons, Justin Kerr objects to Lounsbury's interpretation as well. He maintains that what takes place is *not* a sacrifice, and observes that none of the vessels represent "the little fellow being killed or dismembered" but, instead, portray his rebirth into the "otherworld" where Chahk and Death God A are waiting to receive him (Kerr 1992:6). Even though he sees the event as a sacrifice, Taube (1994:672, fn.no.11) also regards the death god as receiving the jaguar baby into the afterlife. More recently, however, the meaning of the texts accompanying the images has become much clearer, and it seems unlikely that throwing someone down upon a mountain would serve as means of greeting or welcome. Also, given the use of a temporal adverb to denote the time in reference to the sun, and the inclusion of a symbol representing the entrance to the underworld, I think it can be reasonably argued that a sacrifice does occur, that it happens aboveground, and that to enter the mountain or water is to go belowground and die.

# **Explanations Seeking Correlations with Ancient Mexican Myths or with Modern Maya Folklore**

Instead of drawing analogies with the Popol Vuh, Rogelio Valencia Rivera and Hugo García Capistrán (2013:36) examine the Jaguar Baby vessels to find details

correlating with Mexican creation myths and thereby show that the story they portray is "a myth shared with other Mesoamerican religious traditions." Using Central Mexican myths of Tamoanchan, the abduction of Xochiquetzal, and the birth of Centéotl as their guide, they reconstruct a creation narrative in which an abandoned child born of an illicit affair is sacrificed upon a hollow mountain, in the place of the mist and the flowery tree, and who, after death, returns as maize. They also suggest that the place the vessels portray as the setting of the sacrifice is the Mayan precursor to Tamoanchan. More specifically, they maintain that the couple appearing on another Codex-style vessel is conjuring the Old God in order to have a firstborn son. However, instead of granting their wish, the Old God—or rather, K'awiil in the form of the elderly deity because K'awiil "[n]ever" appears as himself and "is behind every single one of the acts in this play"—seduces the woman and sires a rain god, a tree god, and an infant with feline traits who is not fully formed. When the infant is presented to his mother's husband, he rejects the babe because of his cattiness and sends the little one to die on the mountain, where his now-grown brothers—the rain god and the tree—are waiting with a death god to bury him in the earth because he is, in truth, a maize seed and will be reborn as the Maize God.

While is instructive and worthwhile to seek essential equivalencies between Central Mexican and Maya myths, since such parallels do exist and even extend beyond Mesoamerica to the American Southwest (e.g., Taube 2001), it also provides ample opportunity for misinterpreting things. That is especially true for something presented in a manner as variable and complex as the Jaguar Baby vessels present the narrative they convey. For instance, Valencia Rivera and García Capistrán (2013:41) read the text

following the date on K2715 as "ch'am K'awiil Wuk?" and translate it as "K'awiil Wuk ? was taken." However, that is incorrect. The verb is just a root and does not have a passivizing suffix, and the k'awiil logograph cannot be incorporated with the verb—as it is—and still form a nominal phrase with huk-? (wuk is "seven" in a different orthography). Under the circumstances, ch'am-k'awiil huk-?, "the k'awiil-taking of Huk-?" (meaning the accession of Huk-?) is a more plausible analysis of the text, and the difference is relevant since they regard huk-? not as the name of the taker, but as part of the name what is taken. Their insistence that inscriptions referring to the birth of an individual means that he "is being conceived" (2013:42-43) is puzzling as well. Moreover, I disagree with the assumption that the woman on K2715 (Figure 3.57) is Ix Tzak Kotz'om Chan (the mother of the Old God) or that the infant on K1645 (Figures 4.120-4.121) is in bowl over a fire to "keep him warm" (2013:44), especially in light of a similar scene in which smoke and flames engulf the child (Figure 5.2). It also baffles me that the death spirit, on a given vessel is described as being *inside* the mountain (2013:45) when he is clearly not (Figures 4.60-4.61). Although their parsing of the details, in my opinion, is mostly unconvincing, the location of sacrifice is watery, the mountain is hollow, and the tree—although not especially flowery—is the same kind as the "first tree" (yax-te') on K1226, and probably represents the axis mundi. There is also something undeniably seed-like about the feline infant (and his equivalents) since putting him underground leads to an emergence aboveground.

Many of the iconographic and epigraphic arguments Ana García Barrios and Rogelio Valencia advance are similar to those he makes with García Capistrán.

However, instead of searching for similarities among ancient myths, they are looking for insights in modern ethnography, specifically from stories of an old god and his daughter from a Maya community in Rabinal, Guatemala. One of their assertions (2011:76) is that the Snake Lady (Ix Tzak Kotz'om Chan) is the Old God's daughter and that they are the incestuous parents of the infantile rain and tree gods usually appearing with them (e.g., Figure 4.96-4.97). Another is that the *huk-?* collocation is both a toponym designating where the sacrifice occurs and the name of the arboreal deity (2011:77). They also note the possibility of other interpretations, given the complexity of the material and the likelihood of future decipherments.

## Important Insights Gained while Studying a Different or Broader Topic

Karl Taube (1994:669-674), in his iconographic analysis of a square polychrome vessel known as the Birth Vase, discusses k'ex offerings, both as a current practice in some Maya communities and as it likely relates to sacrificial acts among the Classic Maya. K'ex is a common word in Mayan languages meaning "exchange" or "substitute" and, in contemporary healing rites, it is used to denote substituting a sacrificial offering for the patient. In curing ceremonies among the Tzotzil Maya of highland Chiapas, Mexico, chicken sacrifice is essential to ritual healing and the restoration of an individual whose illness arises from the loss of his or her animal spirit co-essence. Ideally, the chicken should be the same sex and approximate age as the patient since its spirit will be offered to the gods in exchange for the return of the lost co-essence (Taube 1994:669-670). Taube, like Stone (1988:83-84), regards the inscriptions on the Snake Lady vessels

as referring to the birth of the two bundled gods. Since being newly born is amongst the most vulnerable times in an individual's life, he posits that a *k'ex* offering made shortly after a child's birth could have been a means of appeasing underworld entities whose interest in the newborn's spirit threatens his or her life. For most of the newly born, an offering of food, incense, or an animal would have likely been sufficient. It seems, however, that something more was required when the newborn was a god, or a *k'uhul ajaw* who—at the time of his accession—began life anew as a god-like lord. As previously noted, for such an individual, only an offering of the highest caliber was suitable and, thus, the life force given in exchange was that of a jaguar, a human (the younger the better), or—most ideal of all—an infant with jaguar traits. In Taube's opinion, the vessels depicting the jaguar baby sacrifice depict a *k'ex* offering to the underworld (Taube 1994:671-672).

Simon Martin (2002:51-57), in his study of the *unen balam* ("baby jaguar") motif in Classic Maya art and writing, identifies the death spirit as the one who holds and then throws the feline infant. In his opinion, the setting of the sacrifice is suggestive of "a rocky island in a primordial sea." More notably, he believes that the sacrifice of the jaguar baby "served as a mythic paradigm for actual infanticide," and cites images showing children as burnt offerings roasting in dishes or over direct flames, while other lie across altars with their abdomens or chests cut open. He agrees with Taube that the feline infant is a *k'ex* offering, and then discusses the implications of the concept and the ideas underlying it. Namely, it "presumes an equilibrium between the realms of life and death in which the Underworld must be compensated for giving up its due."

Conceptually, a *k'ex* offering serves as bridge linking birth, death, and resurrection, with birth being a transformative moment analogous to death, the key difference being the direction of travel, that is, into or out of, the underworld. As to the greater significance of the sacrifice, he suggests a link between the infanticide of the jaguar and the birth of maize. More specifically, he speculates that, perhaps, the "death of the infant Jaguar God of the Underworld forms part of a *k'ex* sacrifice that gives rise to the newborn Maize God." In keeping with this idea, he finds it notable that, "the axe-wielding executioner on the codex-style vessels is called Yax Ha'al Chahk 'First Rain Chahk,'" and then asks if there could a better "precursor to the birth of maize than the banishment of the dry season and its burning sun by the coming of the first rains" (Martin 2002:51-57).

### **CURRENT UNDERSTANDING**

From the beginning—that, from initial publication of the Metropolitan Vase, when the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing was still nascent—the most difficult part of analyzing the texts on the Jaguar Baby vessels was identifying the reading and/or purpose of every collocation following the date. Eventually, however, advances in hieroglyphic decipherment led to the recognition of the temporal adverb and the reading of the most recurrent verb root as *yal* ("to throw"). Since then, the most contentious issues have been the length of the nominal phrase and to whom it refers, as well as the optional *k'awiil* logograph and how it relates to the nominal phrase. The answers to these questions— how many collocations does the nominal phrase contain, to whom and/or what does it refer, and is the optional *k'awiil* logograph integral to it—are pivotal points

in the analysis of the Jaguar Baby vessels because the being and/or entity to which the nominal phrase and/or the *k'awiil* logograph refer, is central of the narrative the Jaguar Baby vessels convey.

The resolution of these issues is complex, and to state it without explanation would be unpersuasive and imprudent. Moreover, my interpretation of the Jaguar Baby vessels and the story they present is significantly different from its antecedents. It differs substantially because Calakmul Vessel 0 is essential to it, and my understanding of Vessel 0 largely depends upon my prior original research regarding a polychrome barrelshaped vessel known as the Vase of the Thirty-one Gods, which belongs to an unnamed and entirely different style of Classic Maya pictorial pottery. More specifically, it relies upon my finding that the first two figural groups on the vase depict supernatural beings who prepare for, and then conduct, a ritual that is the mythic template for a ceremony royal heirs underwent in preparation for assuming the throne. Shortly after the end of my research, the discovery of the Temple 21 Platform at Palenque provided evidence directly linking the ceremony I identified, and which involves daubing and aspersing, to a ceremony—or, more likely, a different moment in the same ceremony—which includes bloodletting and is regarded by many as likely being what is referred to—in monumental inscriptions recounting the lives of historical rulers—as a yax ch'ahb, a "first penance" or "first creation" (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:93; Looper 2009:42; Martin and Grube 2008:91; Stuart 2005a:154).

As noted, to present my interpretation as clearly and concisely as possible, I will devote individual subsections to my resolutions of the issues regarding the length of the

nominal phrase, to whom and/or what it refers, and if the *k'awiil* logograph is integral to it. I will also devote subsections to Calakmul Vessel 0, the evidence regarding the probable *yax ch'ahb* ceremony, and to what their apparent link further implies about the sacrificing of the feline infant and the conjuring of the elderly deity, because Calakmul Vessel 0 depicts a young child and bears the nominal phrase belonging to whomever or whatever is pivotal to the story the Jaguar Baby Vessels present.

# The Length of the Nominal Phrase and to Whom and/or What it Refers

The inscriptions on the Codex-style vessels depicting or alluding to the sacrifice of a feline infant—or his non-infantile or non-feline equivalents—defy easy comprehension. Some describe the event portrayed, while others refer to an event unseen. They also vary greatly in the amount of information they provide. Some include not only the date of the event, but also the time of day when it occurs or where it happens, while others do not even name the being towards whom the action is directed. Two of the inscriptions, for example, refer to an act of conjuring. One provides the date, the time of day, and the name of the individual being conjured (Figure 4.40). The other one, however, simply states that, on a given date, at dawn, he is conjured, and the only way to know that the conjured is a he rather than a she or it, is not from what it is written (the implicit third-person absolutive pronoun, sometimes represented as  $\varnothing$ , is non-specific), but from prior familiarity with the story (Figure 4.43). If a pictorial narrative

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> That is, the third person singular absolutive pronoun is a zero morpheme, meaning that it is present at an abstract level, but is neither pronounced nor written (Helmke and Kettunen 2011:144).

portraying an act of conjuring accompanied the more laconic statement, then some of the information its text does not provide would likely be apparent, but it is not. Instead, the brief notation appears with an image of the feline infant lying supine on the mountain after being thrown. The other, longer inscription accompanies a pictorial narrative that does not answer this question, either. Instead of showing an act of conjuring, it portrays the death spirit grasping the child's legs as he hurdles him to the ground.

It is possible that the purpose of the text and the imagery together is to tell us that the feline infant was conjured and then thrown, especially since—on some of the other vessels—the name of the being who is thrown is the same as the one who is conjured, but I doubt this very much. Conjuring was an arduous undertaking that required an offering of the conjurer's blood, sometimes drawn from a cut in his penis or her tongue (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:215; Schele and Miller 1986:175-181; Stuart 1988:177-178). To me, it is highly unlikely that someone would make such effort to summon a being from one realm into another to just sacrifice him. Rather than referring to the conjuring of the feline infant, I think it refers to the conjuring of the Old God in the Bearded Serpent. Also, while I agree with Taube (1994:672) that the sacrifice of the feline infant is a k'ex offering, I do not believe that his life was exchanged for the lives of the swaddled Chahk and Tree God on the occasion of their birth, or that their names appear in the inscriptions on the Jaguar Baby vessels. Instead, I think that the feline infant dies during a conjuring of the Old God that is subsequent to the elderly deity's birth as a member of a triad. It is also my contention—and David Stuart's (2007b)—for reasons I will return to later, that the name that has been attributed to the swaddled Tree God, actually belongs to the Old

God in the Bearded Serpent. The elderly deity, moreover, shares his name with the sacrificial being—be it a jaguar, an infant, or an infant with jaguar traits—because in order for him to be born aboveground (via conjuring), a being as precious as he (or, at least, as precious as the temporary presence of his power) must take his place underground to maintain the balance of life and death between the realms.

More specifically, Yax Ha'al Chahk is the rain god who participants in the sacrifice of the feline infant and his fully humanoid or zoomorphic equivalents. His nominal phrase occurs on some of the vessels, but it is not part of the primary inscription that begins with the date. Instead, it stands alone as a secondary inscription captioning his figure (e.g., Figures 4.50-4.51). In contrast, the name of the infantile Chahk in swaddling clothes is part of the *primary inscription* on the Snake Lady vessels and, rather than Yax Ha'al Chahk ("First Rain Chahk"), his name seems to be, as Barbara MacLeod (2015) suggests, Yuk Ha' Kabal Chahk ("Shakes-Water-and-Earth Chahk). Similarly, in my opinion, the inscription on K5164 (Figure 4.105) confirms unequivocally that the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase belongs to the Old God in the Bearded Serpent rather than to the swaddled Tree God. K5164's inscription is exceptionally long, and goes well beyond stating the date of his birth to specify that he is the mam (Stuart 2007a) of the turtle and the child of "She Who Conjures the Rolled-up Snake" (Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:174). Likewise, I think that the inscription and the pictorial narrative on K4013 make it clear that the elderly deity in the snake and the feline infant share the same name, and that one enters the subterranean realm as the other leaves it (Figure 5.3).

The initial three glyphs of K4013's inscription—the day sign, the month sign, and the verb—are in a row in the space that is between Sak-aj (the death spirit) and the tree, but above the feline infant. *Huk-?*, the first part of the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal phrase, fills the space between the tree trunk and the cat-like child, while the rest of it, *yax-?* and *chak-?*, forms a column in the space between Yax Ha'al Chahk and the Bearded Serpent, but above the Old God (Figures 4.60-4.61). If physical proximity to other each other (not the figures) were the only criteria, then the three sets of glyphs could be plausibly classified as a primary inscription describing the event, and two secondary inscriptions naming individual figures. But, given what I consider to be ample evidence that the *huk-?*, *yax-?*, and *chak-?* collocations collectively form a single nominal phrase, I think that the glyphs on the vessel should be seen as forming a single inscription or, at most, a primary inscription (the date and verb) and one caption (*huk-? yax-? chak-?*).

Moreover, except on K1815 (Figures 4.50-4.51), when any part of this nominal phrase occurs elsewhere, it is part of the primary inscription, and if more than one part of it is present, their order does not change and they are not indiscriminately split among different figures. The *chak-?* collocation does not appear in the inscriptions on the Snake Lady vessels, and its absence from them might indicate that it is an additional element acquired in relation to the sacrifice and the conjuring. Nonetheless, the *huk-?* and the *yax-?* collocations do appear on the Snake Lady vessels, and when they do, they occur in the same sequence, unless there is a lack of space (e.g., Figures 4.100-4.101) or some other mishap (e.g., Figures 4.103-4.104). Also, on K1815, the first and second

collocations (i.e., *huk-? yax-?*) are together and above the feline infant, while on K4013 the second and the third collocations (i.e., *yax-?chak-?*) are together and above the Old God. In my opinion, the willingness of the scribes to pair the second collocation with either the first, or the third, is another indication that all three are part of the same nominal phrase.

The inscription on K2208 states that a being bearing the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* name was conjured (Figure 4.40), whereas the inscription on the Metropolitan Vase indicates that an individual bearing the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* name was thrown (Figure 4.56). Given the images of the feline infant hurtling down onto the face of the mountain or into the water, it is clearly he (or his equivalent [Figures 4.78-4.79, 4.81-4.82, 4.88-4.89]) who is thrown. There are not, however, any images of the Bearded Serpent bearing him in its mouth or other visual allusions to him being conjured. Likewise, the Old God's mother is "She Who Conjures the Rolled-up Snake" and the Bearded Serpent she conjures bears him in its mouth, but there are no depictions indicating that the elderly deity, himself, is ever thrown. Furthermore, the placement of the collocations in the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal phrase on K4013 not only implies that the feline infant and the Old God share the same name, it directs the movement of the reader's eye through the pictorial field, but in a way that is counterintuitive in one respect or another.

Ordinarily, Maya hieroglyphic writing is read from left to right, and top to bottom. The first three glyph blocks in the inscription on K4013 (Figure 5.28), for example, are arranged in a horizontal row and read from left to right. The location of the *huk-?* collocation is entirely orthodox as well, since its lower position on the vessel indicates

that it should be read after the calendrical and verbal glyphs, which is in keeping with both the conventions of the writing system, and the examples in which the primary inscription includes the nominal phrase beginning with *huk-?*. However, to read the nominal phrase in its entirety, the viewer's eye must move across the pictorial field, from right to left, and from down to up. That is, it must move in reverse of the standard left-to-right, top-to-bottom reading order to arrive at the last two collocations, at which point, a normal top-to-bottom reading order resumes.

Alternatively, since it is a cylindrical object, the vase could be held so that the feline infant and Sak-aj, as well as the date, verb, and first collocation of the nominal phrase (huk-?) are visible, and then rotated clockwise to reveal Yax Ha'al Chahk and the Old God along with the rest of the name (yax-? chak-?) (Figure 5.4). That way, as the nominal phrase is read, the viewer's eye moves from the left to the right and, as the vessel rotates, the huk-? collocation becomes invisible, and the top-to-bottom reading order of the last two collocation is readily apparent and any ambiguity that might arise from the first collocation being lower than the other two ceases to be an issue (to the extent it ever was). Approaching the inscription in this manner, however, is counterintuitive because it requires reading against the pictorial grain, so to speak. That is, on Codex-style pottery, when opposing figures appear in a pictorial narrative, the action of the narrative typically appears between and they serve to direct the viewer's attention toward it. Consequently, the viewer's eye generally moves from one profile face to another, rather than from the face of one figure into the back of another's head. Additionally, if there is a row of glyphs present, the movement will likely be from the

profile figure on the left to the profile figure on the right. Nevertheless, whether the eye of the viewer-reader moves with the flow of the pictorial field (right-to-left)—or against it (left to right)—to follow the collocations of the nominal phrase, the outcome is the same, and—to paraphrase Karen Bassie-Sweet's (1991:38) comments about the similarly complementary relationship that often exists between image and word on monumental sculptures such as stelae, lintels, and wall panels—the act of moving the eye from collocation to collocation to read the inscription, guides the viewer's attention through the figural composition and, thus, through the action portrayed.

Before moving from this vase on to other topics, it is important to note how indispensible K4013 is understanding the narrative of the Jaguar Baby vessels. Taube (1994:672, 680, Fig. 10c), for example, illustrates one of its most distinctive details—the Chapaat Maw over the eye of the Witz Head—to demonstrate a crucial point: that the feline infant *enters* the mountain. In my opinion, the fact that he enters the mountain indicates that the sacrifice *does not* occur in the underworld as most infer (e.g., Coe 1973:99, 1978:34; Kerr 1992:6; Lounsbury 1985:54; Robicsek and Hales 1981:114; Spero 1991:190; Taube: 1994:672, fn.no.11). If it did, then the feline infant would just be going further underground than moving from one realm to another, or from life to death. Moreover, while there is evidence that the sun was perceived to enter the underworld at sunset and to leave it at dawn, I am skeptical that a temporal adverb would be used to refer to the sun's nocturnal transit.

K4013 is also the vase that García Barrios and Valencia see as proving that the *huk-?* collocation, in addition to being the name of the swaddled Tree God on the Snake

Lady vessels, also is a toponym designating where the sacrifice occurs because, on K4013, there is a point of contact between the tree and the huk-? collocation. As is evident from both the original rollout and the cutout I made from it (Figures 4.60-4.61), there is a point of contact between the huk-? collocation and a leaf of the tree. But, it is also equally evident that there is a point of contact between the huk-? collocation and the feline infant's finger. As a rule of thumb, if there is contact between a nominal phrase and an image, then the nominal phrase probably names the images it touches (Wald 1997). However, when a nominal phrase is in contact with more than one image, there is a need for additional information to determine to which of the two it—if either—it names. In the case of the Jaguar Baby vessels, there is plenty of comparative evidence, and since there are at least four more examples of contact between the feline infant and the *huk-?* collocation, and no additional examples of contact between the *huk-?* collocation and the Tree God, I think that the child with the jaguar traits has a much, much stronger claim to the huk-? name than the arboreal deity. Furthermore, if the appearance of a probable huk-? collocation on top of the Tree God's headdress is reason enough to regard it as naming him, then the fact that he has an entirely different collocation on his headdress on another Snake Lady vessel ought to be an equally sufficient reason to doubt that it does.

# The k'awiil Logograph and How Its Relates to the Huk? Yax? Nominal Phrase

An issue central to the interpretation of the Jaguar Baby vessels is whether the *k'awiil* logograph signifies the word as the god's name, and is integral to the nominal

phrase, as some believe (e.g., Valencia and García Capistrán 2013:46). Or, if as I contend, it signifies the word as the name of the spiritual force the god quintessentially embodies, and is a descriptor indicating that the bearer of the nominal phrase following it embodies the same kind of spiritual force as the god, but retains a distinct identity and name, which is why it is permissible to refer—in the context of the narrative Jaguar Baby vessels present—to throwing (K1003) the k'awiil, throwing (K4011) Huk? Yax?, or throwing (K0521) and conjuring (K2208) the *k'awiil* who is Huk? Yax? Chak?. K'awiil, unlike deities such as Chahk or the Maize God, is seldom involved in independent actions (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:67). Instead, he seems to be a generic deity, like God C (Taube 1992b:30-13), who embodies divinity and is the iconic component of a logograph read as k'uh, "god" (Boot 2009:117, 118; Houston and Stuart 1996:292-295; Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:67; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:88; Ringle 1988). According to Stephen Houston, David Stuart, and Karl Taube (2006:67-68), K'awiil and God C represent "a pivotal distinction in Maya thought, one between visible, material godhood [k'awiil] and a more elusive, immanent version of the same spiritual force [k'uh]. Moreover, k'awiil is "closely linked to lineage and royal accession," whereas *k'uh* "can be sensed, but not grasped."

For Valencia and García Capistrán (2013:46), K'awiil the god is behind everything. Indeed, the *huk-?* collocation refers to him since the feline infant, the tree deity, and the elderly god in the snake "are all advocations of *K'awiil*," and he is always acting, "but never as himself, but through the form of the other characters, his advocations, even as two, or three of them at the same time." Although I agree that the

sacrifice of the feline infant involves different embodiments of *k'awiil*, I think they are embodying *k'awiil* the power, not K'awiil the god. That is, I do not regard K'awiil as a form-changing trickster who pulls strings from behind the scenes. Instead, the use of the *k'awiil* logograph on the Jaguar Baby vessels suggests to me that the purpose of conjuring an entity is less about summoning its presence than specifically invoking its spiritual power, that is, its *k'awiil*.

Accordingly, I believe there is a fundamental difference between the Old God's original birth on a day of Muluk in the "month" of Paax, which happened through his mother's conjuring of the "rolled up snake" in subterranean chamber, and his subsequent (or, at least, temporally distinct) conjuring on a day of Kib in the "month" of K'anasiiy, which was done in conjunction with the sacrifice of the feline infant.<sup>2</sup> With regard to this contrast, it is instructive to compare K1645 (Figures 4.120-4.121) and K4013 (Figures 4.60-4.61, 5.28) since they present different—but, as the evidence strongly indicates, related—events occurring the same day (7 Kib 8 K'anasiiy).<sup>3</sup> One pairs the verb *si[h]y-aj* ("is born") with the *huk-? yax-?* name and shows a baby set over a burning fire and in the presence of two members of the triad, neither of whom is the Old God, whereas, the other—as noted—refers to throwing and splits the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal between the Old God and the feline infant and portrays the emergence of the former and the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the span of a 360-day *haab* period, Paax (the sixteenth "month") precedes K'anasii (the seventeenth "month"). Without additional information, however, it is impossible to know if they are, indeed, part of the same "year." The point is, nonetheless, that the two events do not occur on the same day.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> To be clear, I do *not* regard the vessels as forming a literal set—if they did, I would expect the infant offering to be feline on both pots—but I do see them as providing differing perspectives of the same narrative by highlighting different aspects of it.

falling entrance of the latter. In my opinion, one vessel portrays the offering and its payoff aboveground, while the other depicts the offering and its consequences belowground. Also, just as K4013 portrays both events—the Old God's conjuring, the feline infant dying—I suspect that K1645's inscription is alluding metaphorically to both events as a kind of birth. In other words, when the Old God—through conjuring—is "born" aboveground, and the infant—through dying—is "born" underground. If my inference is correct, it accords well with Martin's (2002:53) aforementioned observations regarding k'ex offerings and birth, in which he noted that, in conceptual terms, a k'ex sacrifice is a "bridge linking birth, death, and resurrection," and birth is a transformative event analogous to death, with "the essential difference being only the direction of travel—into, or out of, the Underworld."

As for the infant being fully anthropomorphic on one vessel (K1645) and partially feline on the other (K4013), I do not see him as transforming from one kind of being into another; instead I think individual vessels portray the offering differently, just as individual painters sometimes give the same co-essences a very different appearance (e.g., Three White Dog [Grube and Nahm 1994:697]). That is, even though there are several scribes who (more or less) follow the same conventions for depicting this myth, there are clearly others for whom it was far less codified or whose patrons wanted something else. Moreover, I am not convinced that the newly born Old God's obvious longing for his mother's breast must mean that they have an incestuous relationship or are necessarily the parents of the infantile gods in swaddling clothes. At the very least, we should consider the possibility that each member of the triad had a different mother since

his mother is one of three female figures appearing together on a Codex-style vessel depicting yet another complex scene involving the Old God and a palatial setting that is underwater and underground (Figure 5.5).

### Calakmul Vessel 0

Calakmul Vessel 0 (Figure 5.26) is a partial vase reconstructed from some of the more than fifteen thousand potsherds recovered from a so-called "trash deposit" in a relatively small courtyard immediately behind Structure XX at Calakmul (Delvendahl 2009; Boucher de Landais 2014:60-61). Sylviane Boucher de Landais describes it as a brownish black-on-cream bichrome variant of Codex-style pottery, and though quite rare, there are other such vessels lacking the red rim and basal bands that are among the hallmarks of the "parent" style, including one vase depicting a pair of scribes (Figure 5.6) that is quite similar to a partial Composite vase recovered at Nakbe (Hansen, Bishop, and Fahsen 1991:227-232, Figs.5-6; Hansen 2000:Fig.88), and a plate that forms a set with a Calligraphic vase (Reents-Budet 1994:73; Fields 1994:324) (Figures 5.7-5.8).4 The appearance of the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase in the space midway between K'awiil and the attendant with the child leaves no doubt that it is relevant to the events involving the Old God in the Bearded Serpent and the sacrifice of the feline infant and his fellow offerings. However, where others note similarities to scenes of the presentation (Boucher de Landais 2014:61), and equate the elderly attendant and his little companion with the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In the black and white rollout of the vase published in Robicsek and Hales (1981:55) and available from Kerr's online database, the bichrome vessel depicting the pair of scribes is not obviously bichromatic. However, a color photo of it viewable online through the Arizona Museum of Natural History's website confirms that it is.

feline infant and his sinister custodian (Valencia and García Capistrán 2013:44), I note a child who is fully anthropomorphic and young, but not a baby, and an old man in the regalia of a type of "important priest" (Stuart 2005a:133), the kind who bear the "Banded Bird" title and are instrumental to the crowning of kings and the bloodletting of princes.<sup>5</sup> That is, rather than seeing a different rendering of more of the same, I see novel information giving new lines of evidence along which to seek the reasons for performing the sacrifice beyond conjuring the Old God. Indeed, I regard the presence of the child and his priestly attendant as linking the narrative of the sacrifice (including the presentation) to a long and complex ritual that is one of multiple rites of passage a royal heir underwent, preferably during childhood or early adolescence, to prepare him for the possibility he would one day be a k'uhul ajaw, a god-like lord. Previously, while identifying the mythic precedent of this rite and what it entails, I saw it as a likely means of designating an heir. Now, however, I believe it and similar ceremonies, such as the "deer hoof" event (Stuart 2005a:153-154), to be part of the preparation potential rulers received to enable them to fulfill their royal obligations, among the most important being the conjuring and taking of *k'awiil*.

# Daubing, Aspersing, and the Letting of Blood: A Ceremony Possibly Called Yax Ch'ahb

In 2002, Arnoldo Gonzaléz Cruz and his team of INAH archaeologists excavated a platform or "throne" in Temple 21 at Palenque (González Cruz and Bernal Romero

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> To be fair, Boucher de Landais (2014:61) does note that the child is tailless.

2004:264-66; Stuart 2007d:226-228). It depicts five figures interacting ceremonially, and bears a long inscription (Figure 5.9). However, only the captions refer unequivocally to the image, and they identify the individual figures, but not the ceremony or its date. The figure in the middle who holds a bloodletter and sits on a jaguar skin throne, is K'inich Janab Pakal. Sitting on either side of him are his two grandsons, K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb and Upakal K'inch, each of whom wears a feathery cape and a simple headband bearing a trio of sprout motifs befitting their princely status of *ch'ok*, which means "child" or "sprout" as a noun and "young," "unripe," or "emergent" as an adjective (Boot 2009:61; Kaufman 2003:79; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:109; Stuart 2005b:84), and as a title, can be aptly glossed as "emergent one" (Stuart 2005a:26). Each of the younger men interact with a zoomorphic attendant whose nominal phrase ends with the "banded bird" title. The platform's primary inscription refers to events that happened at least twentyfive years after Janab Pakal's death, as well as an *och-otot*, "house-entering," dedication event that happened in 252 BC. Given that Janab Pakal, according to the text by his image, is appearing in the guise of the ruler who oversaw the dedication event in 252 BC, the monument's makers must have perceived a connection between the dedication and the activity portrayed, but its nature is unclear.

The bloodletter in K'inich Janab Pakal's hand, his grandsons feathery capes, and the presence of priestly attendants bearing the "banded bird" title is collectively reminiscent of the aforementioned Panel 19 from Dos Pilas (Figure 5.10). Panel 19 depicts Ruler 3, his wife, and a pair of dignitaries as they watch a young prince—a *ch'ok*—of Dos Pilas make an offering of blood from his penis with the help of Sakjal

Hix, who holds a bloodletter and kneels before the child. Like the primary inscription on the platform, the text on the panel identifies the participants but not the activity portrayed. If it is the boy's first bloodletting, as his age suggests, then perhaps the event is his yax ch'ahb, "first penance" or "first creation" (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:93; Looper 2009:42; Stuart 2005a:154). Caracol Stela 3 states that the ruler Yajaw Te' K'inich oversaw his son's yax ch'ahb when the boy was barely five years (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:131; Martin and Grube 2008:91), and even though there is not a corresponding image to provide unequivocal proof that bloodletting was involved, it is a reasonable inference given the prominence of blood sacrifice in royal rituals, and the rarity of terms denoting an event featuring such a young child. Moreover, comparing Panel 19 and the Temple 21 Platform to other depictions of comparable events, suggests that—in addition to bloodletting—the ceremony involves daubing, aspersing (or sweeping), drinking, singing, music, and the offering of a bundle as well as the impersonation of supernatural beings. It also derives from a mythic event in which the Headband Twins transform into birds.

The Headband Twins (i.e., Jun Ajaw and Yax "Balam") are the ancient Maya antecedents to the Hero Twins described in the Popol Vuh.<sup>6</sup> Their transformation into birds, however, has no counterpart in the Colonial K'iche' Maya epic. Instead, it is an event I retraced from a pictorial narrative on an object Michael Coe (1973:81-83)

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> It is unclear if the feline two has a two-part name, and if he does, whether the second half is *balam* ("jaguar") or *bolon* ("nine") (because he embodies the number). David Stuart (personal communication, 2005) favors calling him just Yax since it is the only part of his name that can be read unequivocally. However, since his brother has a two-part name, I think he does as well, and prefer *balam* to *bolon*.

nicknamed the Vase of the Thirty-one Gods after the number of figures it portrays, and which I refer to more briefly as Grolier 37 after its catalog number in *The Maya Scribe* and *His World*. It is an unprovenienced Late Classic Maya vase that was probably painted during the first half of the seventh century AD. The relevant pictorial narrative on Grolier 37 consists of two figural groups.<sup>7</sup>

In the first figural group (Figure 5.11), a freshly severed head lies next to an open codex and a burning censer. The proximity of the codex and the head's iconographic similarity to a *k'in* glyph on Quirigua Stela D (Figure 5.13) (note the braided headband and the ornament above the ear) indicate that it belongs to one of the simian scribes known to embody one variant of the *k'in* ("sun," "day") logograph (Boot 2009:112; Coe 1977:341; Kaufman 2003:461; Kettunen and Helmke 2011:114). Iconographically, it implies that the activities occur shortly after sunset since, despite being severed, the head still has white breath beads above its nostrils. Attending the censer, is an avian scribe who holds a conch-shell container and a paintbrush. Behind him is the old god, Itzamnaaj, who wears the *ak'bal*-marked headband and cut-shell ornament that are among his diagnostic attributes. He, in turn, sits in front of an iconographic variant of the Headband Twins in which Yax "Balam" lacks his jaguar pelage and, instead, has plain black spots like his brother (Coe 1989:170; Taube 2003a:472).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> To avoid adding more material to an already massive project, I will not replicate my previous work, but much of my masters thesis was devoted to establishing the identities of each figure on Grolier 37 because it is the work of an eccentric draughtsman whose figures can be challenging to identify, at least initially.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Even it is an effigy, the inclusion of breath beads suggests a recent death.

In the second figural group (Figure 5.12), two old gods attend the twins after they have assumed avian form. The priestly attendants are identified as old because they have jutting chins and wrinkled cheeks, and as divine because the figure on the left has a socalled "god-marking" on his thigh. Each also wears a simplified form of the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen which omits the waterlily pad and flower and, as is generally true of gods (as opposed to their impersonators)—including their fellow deities of wind (and water) on another wonderfully complex vase (Figure 5.14)—their headdresses do not depict the god's face. In addition to holding his mouth in a position indicative of singing (Taube 2004a:74), the old god on the right holds a spondylus valve and an object with a rounded, white tip (Figure 5.12). The valve is a container and the object is an applicator he will use to apply the white substance in the shell to the twins. This behavior recalls the body painting depicted on other vases and, elsewhere, on Grolier 37 (Figure 5.15). Nonetheless, it is different. The scribe with the anthropomorphic bat holds a conch-shell container filled with black pigment and a utensil that is well suited for painting because it has a seemingly pliable tip that comes to a fine point. In contrast, the applicator has a blunt tip that is more suitable for the relative imprecision of daubing. The two objects are also held differently, which further implies they are used differently. On the left, the other old god holds an aspergillum appearing to consist of four pieces of white and yellow vegetation bound together with white bark cloth.

On an unprovenienced Late Classic bowl known as the Vessel (or Vase) of the Eighty-eight Glyphs (Hull, Carrasco, and Wald 2009:36; Robicsek and Hales 1981:132),

a young man sits with two old men. One old man holds an aspergillum over the young man's head, while his companion holds a shell container and an applicator with a blunt tip (Figure 5.16). Like its counterpart on Grolier 37 (Figure 5.12), the aspergillum consists of four linear elements that have flexible tips and are bound together with white cloth. However, its individual parts have a regularity of form, similar to the aspergillum on the platform, that contrasts with the organic irregularities of vegetation evident on Grolier 37. Furthermore, the overall details of the bowl suggest humans engaged in a reenactment. The young man wears a feathery cape but is otherwise fully anthropomorphic, and his cape may be made of leaves intended to mimic feathers, just as the aspergillum is probably made of cloth or paper, rather than vegetation. He also wears the same type of headband as the brothers on the platform, consisting of a thin band adorned with sprout-like forms. Similarly, the old men wear the variant of the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen which includes a depiction of the god's face, and have ik' ("wind") motifs on their chests to emphasize they are acting as wind deities. Also, the inscription on the colorful bowl refers the accession of a human as well as to the birth of gods of wind and water (Carrasco 2004). That is, like the ceremony depicted—and like the inscription on the platform from Temple 19 (Figure 5.9)—it is a blend of history and myth.

The Vessel of the Eighty-eight Glyphs also depicts a figure on a throne (Figure 5.17). He appears to be the same young man who wears the cape, but he may not be. Thus, in my original study of Grolier 37, I suggested that this ceremony was done, either as a rite of accession or, as part of an heir designation ritual, and that the daubing and

aspersing old gods were two manifestations of Itzamnaaj because he appears in the first figural group (Figure 5.11). He is also, in the Postclassic Maya codices, associated with the Wind God and appears as a priest who uses an aspergillum to asperse water. If these bouquet-like objects are aspergilla, then the substance they asperse is, presumably, in the shells since no other containers are visible. Alternatively, if they are dry, they could be used for sweeping rather than aspersing. Whatever their exact use, I believe their underlying purpose is to cleanse or purify.

The pair of figures sitting between the two old gods are avian because they have bald and wrinkled bird heads on anthropomorphic bodies and are partially covered with spotted feathers (Figure 5.12). They also sit in a nest-like pile of their own plumage and have segmented, fleshy growths on their beaks resembling the double snood of a turkey. Their incomplete feathering suggests that they are physically immature, and the obviously young age of the Dos Pilas prince supports the inference that both the mythic event, and the ceremony deriving from it are conceptually linked to childhood. An unprovenienced polychrome cylinder presents a variation of the myth that adds drinking, and favors Jun Ajaw—here with one very large black spot on his cheek—with the omission of his twin and shows him with the traits of a water fowl. There is also only one priestly attendant, and it is none other than the young Wind God himself (Figure 5.18).

A second unprovenienced polychrome cylinder depicts an old wind god sitting before an enthroned Tree God (Figure 2.66). The old god has a trio of *ik*' glyphs on his short cape and, like his counterparts on Grolier 37, wears the heavy belt of a ballplayer

and has his mouth open to sing (Figure 5.19). He is also sporting the same type of headdress that the priestly attendants on the Temple 21 Platform wear. It combines one of the projecting elements of the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen with a beaded crown studded with a trio of large ornaments that, in the Palenque example, are clearly anthropomorphic Jester Gods (Figure 5.20). To my knowledge, the Tree God appears only in this example of the mythic event. He is comparable to Janab Pakal and Ruler 3 because he is a high-ranking male who oversees the activities taking place. Sitting behind the old wind god are a pair of young figures who sing as they pound drums and shake rattles (Figure 5.21). They are identifiable as Jun Ajaw and Yax Balam because the figure on the left has a large black spot on his cheek, whereas the figure on the right has patches of jaguar skin around his mouth and on his arm. Otherwise, they are nearly identical. Each wears a conical headdress with two strands of twisted cloth that run down the sides of the headdress and terminate in serpentine heads that project outward. This "double-mat" headdress (as I call it) also adores the little prince at Dos Pilas (Figure 5.10.). Returning to the cylinder, Jun Ajaw and Yax "Balam" (the Headband Twins) have spotted feathers on their backs and legs and, although they appear fully anthropomorphic, I think this image, like its counterparts on Grolier 37 and and the other polychrome cylinder (Figure 5.18) should be read as Jun Ajaw and Yax Balam transformed into birds.9

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Houston, Stuart, and Taube (2006:17) regard the spotted oval replicated on their backs as a symbol indicating "rough texture" or "wrinkle." Since birds have bumpy skin, that is appropriate. But, in this instance, I contend they should be read as feathers because some of the ovals on Yax "Balam" have black, pointed tips just like some of the feathers on the bird above Jun Ajaw. Also, the cylinder has undergone restoration (Taylor 1982:114-

On one of the colorful pots briefly noted in the section devoted to the elderly man holding a young child on Calakmul Vessel 0, two young boys wear feathery capes and sit facing an old priestly attendant whose headdress is the same type as the elderly man's (Figure 5.22). Between the boys and their elder, is a large basket containing a simian head (or mask) without its scribal headband, but otherwise closely comparable to the severed head on Grolier 37 (Figure 5.23). Its inclusion in the ceremony on this vessel confirms that it happens after sundown, and that the first group on Grolier 37 is, indeed, part of the same mythic event as the aspersing and daubing. Similarly, the man who holds a bloodletter and sits on a throne, like K'inich Janab Pakal (Figure 5.9), helps to verify that K8665 and the platform are different examples of the same ceremony. K8526, which was briefly noted earlier in conjunction with K8665, presents a large group in a courtly setting. Among the figures are a priestly attendant wearing the "animate" form of the God of the Number Thirteen's headdress (Figure 5.24), and two boys who wear feathery capes and are noticeably smaller than the adult males (Figure 5.25). One boy most likely the eldest—sits on a platform facing an enthroned lord, while the other sits on the ground with a large bundle in his lap and the priestly attendant behind him. The two boys wear differing headdresses as well, and it is likely that their physical separation and the difference in their apparel convey a hierarchal distinction that is usually more subtle. On Grolier 37, for example, only one spotted twin gestures boldly (Figure 5.11), just as only one avian twin appears to sing (Figure 5.12). Similarly, the boy closest to the attendant on K8665 (Figure 5.22) has a bigger necklace, and on K3007 (Figure 5.21),

<sup>119),</sup> but comparative photos show that the iconographic details I have cited were present in its unrestored state.

only Jun Ajaw wears a pectoral and, on one vessel (Figure Figure 5.18), he appears but his brother does not. On the platform, the distinction between the brothers arises primarily from K'inich Janab Pakal, who leans toward the older of the two, K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb (Figure 5.9).

# The Implications of Calakmul Vessel 0 Possibly Depicting a Yax Ch'ahb

The elderly attendant holding the child on Calakmul Vessel 0 is, in my opinion, a "Banded-Bird" priest, and while the little boy is of an appropriate age to undergo the ritual deriving from the avian transformation of the Headband Twins—which is probably what the Classic Maya called a Yax Ch'ahb—he does not have a feathery cape and he does not wear an appropriate headband or headdress (Figure 5.26). Nonetheless, my inference is that he is making his first offering of blood and, with that in mind, I will speculate about its relevance to the invoking of the Old God in the Bearded Serpent and the offering of a being to be his placeholder underground while the conjuring happens. Ch'am k'awiil literally means "to take" or "to receive" k'awiil, and refers to assuming the throne and its powers. Indeed, at the time of accession, a Maya ruler evidently acquired some aspect of the k'awiil that was perceived as fundamentally and permanently altering the type of being he was (Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:175). To ch'am k'awiil, a ruler had to conjure it, but was the ability to do so innate or acquired? While a proper lineage surely helped, my suspicion is that one or more of the "pre-accession" rites (Stuart 2005a:44, 153) a royal heir underwent, preferably as a child or adolescence,

served to endow him with the ability to summon the spiritual force that, upon receipt, would change him forever.

As noted, conjuring is akin to giving birth for the conjurer, and implies a profound link between the summoner and the summoned. For the Prehispanic Maya, blood was a spiritual conduit, and it seems to me that there would be few better means of establishing a link tantamount to parent-and-offspring between a future conjurer and the patron god he will conjure than to commingle his blood with a *k'ex* offering given in exchange for that deity, or more specifically, for a manifestation of his divine spiritual force. Doing so could—in theory—make their blood inseparable and, thus, create a spiritual equivalency between the royal heir and the *k'ex* offering which, in turn, would make him spiritually equivalent to the deity's *k'awiil*, for which the substitutional offering is exchanged. Establishing such a link would then enable the heir, on the day of his accession, to conjure the *k'awiil* of his patron deity and thereby take or receive the divine energy that would make him a *k'uhul ajaw*, a holy or god-like lord.

The object in front of the child and his priestly attendant on Calakmul Vessel 0 is only partially visible because the vase itself is incomplete (Figure 5.26). From what remains, it appears to be a container of some kind sitting on a bisected black quatrefoil amid groups of radiating lines that might represent strips of paper and/or kindling. In my opinion it is probably a burning censer containing a mix of the little heir's blood and all or part of the *k'ex* offering. Above the censer, is the *huk-? yax-?* nominal phrase, and above it—in a smoky volute of flame—is K'awiil the god and the quintessential embodiment of *k'awiil* the power. The nominal phrase seems to appear in isolation and is

not part of an inscription, at least not one that survives. When all of the pieces of Calakmul Vessel 0 are put together, including the large fragment depicting the circular banner (Figure 3.110), there is a short vertical inscription above the man kneeling behind the elderly attendant holding the child. However, instead of providing a date or a verb, it consists of three titles—y-an(i)b-il, k'uhul "chatan" winik" and sak way-is (Figure 5.27)—and is almost certainly the final clause in an abridged dedication statement, which would have begun with y-ukib and ended with the names and/or titles of the individual for whom the vessel was made. 10 It is likely then, that the huk-? yax-? nominal phrase does, in fact, stand alone. As a name, it should caption someone, but it is not especially close to any one figure. The placement of the nominal phrase may seem careless or noncommittal (a scribal case of "put the glyphs wherever"), but I think its placement is every bit as intentional as the placement of the glyphs of the nominal phrase on K4013 (Figure 5.3), where the first collocation accompanies the feline infant and the rest are with the Old God. However, instead of being split between two figures, it is well above the censer and midway between the child below and K'awiil above. To me, its placement alludes to the idea that the child's pathway to the *k'awiil* he will one day take or receive as a *k'uhul* ajaw is through the god—through Huk? Yax?—who he must first be able to conjure.

Before concluding this subsection, I want to comment about *okib*. In his analysis of the inscriptions from Temple 19 at Palenque, David Stuart (2005a:130-131) discusses the use of *okib* as a "pre-accession" title for future rulers, including K'inich Ahkal Mo'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Y-an(i)b-il (Boot 2009:24; David Stuart, personal communication, 2014) is a title of unknown meaning. In one example from Naj Tunich, it precedes the "Banded Bird" title (Stone 1994:Fig.8-52).

Nahb and Upakal K'inich. The word's significance is difficult to discern, but it appears to be analyzable as an instrumental noun in which the -ib suffix derives a noun of instrument from ok ("to enter") and means "entrance" or, more literally, "thing used for entering" (Stuart 2005a:92-93). On the Temple 21 Platform, okib is part of K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb's nominal phrase in the caption to his image. As noted, the platform also represents part of the ritual I am suggesting endowed royal heirs with the ability to conjure gods, and if my suggestion is correct, then okib ("thing used for entering") would be a fitting designation for someone now having that skill, since a god cannot be conjured without entering into the conjurer who brings him forth. Moreover, given that the platform portrays a ceremony deriving from a mythic event in which the Headband Twins transform into birds, it is notable that an inscription in Temple 19 repeats the ceremony's probable date and accompanies an image of a young man in a costume bird's head. The date is designated with a "an unusual verb or predicate" that is partially lost but, fortunately, enough of the glyph remains to show that it is an example of a "birdman" sign appearing in other inscriptions from Palenque and Tonina (Stuart 2005a:35, 131, Fig. 24a). <sup>11</sup> A comparison of the partial logograph to a better preserved example from Tonina Monument 141 (Figure 5.31) reveals that it portrays the head of a young man with a spotted cheek on the body of a bird.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Stuart (2005a:38, 131) twice writes the "month" of the Calendar Round notation accompanying the 9.13.17.9 Long Count date as "3 Ajaw 3 Yax" rather than "3 Ajaw 3 Yaxk'in" but, given the topic, it is clearly accidental.

## The Jaguar Baby Vessels, Codex-style Pottery, and Calakmul

The story the Jaguar Baby vessels depict and describe is simple, but the way they present it is complex, at least for those who lack the highly esoteric knowledge that their creators—as members of the cultural elite—were among the few to have in a world of limited literacy (Houston 1994:40). Some of the scribes favor a relatively simple narrative with little emphasis on the grander themes of cosmic creation, whereas others revel in alluding to the bisection of the Starry Deer-Crocodile, or the centrality of the yaxte' ("ceiba," more literally "first tree") to the place of the first water, the first stone. They are also but one group of vessels celebrating the life and preciousness of the Old God in the Bearded Serpent. His value to the makers and, presumably, recipients of Codex-style pottery was such that he one of the few specific entities who appears on narrative vessels exemplifying each of the three stylistic variants readily apparent in the traditional corpus. More specifically, the vase on which the feline infant shares part of the Old God's name, for instance, is an example of the Canonical variant because it depicts opposing figures interacting in a specific environment, and its inscription is a descriptive text beginning with a calendrical notation (Figure 5.28). A new acquisition of the Metropolitan Museum, in contrast, is a Calligraphic vase showing the Old God emerging from an underwater stone structure after Chahk split its roof. It exemplifies the Calligraphic variant because, just below its red rim band, it bears an unabridged dedication statement (i.e., beginning with the Initial Sign) that extends fully around the vessel, and a light wash of color selectively highlights details of its figures and glyphs (Figure 5.29). There is also a Composite vase depicting the Old God's birth and, unlike one of its many

Canonical counterparts, it portrays the event as occurring in a nondescript location. It differs from a Calligraphic narrative as well, because it does not have an unabridged dedication statement just below its rim, and its figures and glyphs show a minimal use of color (Figure 5.30).

The Old God in the Bearded Serpent (Huk? Yax? Chak?) is a manifestation of the God N, whom Simon Martin calls the Old Man of the Universe. He bears the earth, supports the sky, and floats in water (Martin 2007:3-5). As part of the creator couple, the Mother-Father of ancient times, he helped to make the world and retains control of its riches (Martin 2007:26-28). Having a manifestation of such a comprehensively powerful deity as a patron god would surely be a boon. We do not know what kind of snake the to which the name of the Kan polity refers, but a snake bearing one of the many specific manifestations of God N is a strong candidate.

During the Late Classic period, including the brief time when Codex-style pottery was made, Calakmul was the seat of the Kan ("Snake") polity. However, at present, there is no evidence of the Snake dynasty at the site prior to AD 630. Accordingly, the Kan kings of Calakmul—unlike their rivals at Tikal—did not use titles enumerating their place in the line of succession (e.g., the sixteenth in line) or boast of a long dynastic count. Or, at least, not in any of the monumental inscriptions found so far. There is however, a group of Codex-style vessels—the so-called Dynastic Vases (Robicsek and Hales 1981:97, 157-159)—listing the names and accession dates of no fewer than twelve, and as many as nineteen, Snake lords. Little is known of the first dozen, aside from their names, but five of the remaining seven have nominal phrases known from comparable

examples on stone monuments where they are unambiguously identified as rulers of the Kan polity (Martin 1997:857).

The creation of such king lists, and the depiction of co-essences belonging to holy Snake lords, indicates that the painters of Codex-style pottery were particularly attentive to subjects relevant to the rulers of Kan, and the recovery of a large quantity of Codexstyle potsherds implies their attentiveness was well received. It is evident as well, from the objects bearing dedication statements, that k'uhul "chatan" winik and sak way-is are frequently among the titles of the individuals who received and/or commissioned Codexstyle pottery. Neither title is well understand, and both were once regarded as indicating that the bearers were dead (MacLeod and Reents-Budet 1994:120-121). More recently, each has been described as a possible family name (Grube, Delvendahl, and Seefeld 2012:22; Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:144). The possibility they are surnames is intriguing because the Kan dynasty had a "far-flung political network" (Martin and Grube 2008:104) extending throughout the central Peten, and it is not uncommon to find references to individuals bearing the k'uhul "chatan" winik and/or sak way-is titles in the inscriptions of their political affiliates as well as Calakmul itself (Grube, Delvendahl, and Seefeld 2012:21-22; Martin 2008:4; Martin, Houston, and Zender 2015). If the titles are, in fact, surnames, then perhaps it was mostly the members of these clans—rather the Snake lords themselves—who encouraged the creation of Codex-style pottery highlighting the Kan dynasty or featuring its companion spirits as a means of currying favor with the rulers of Calakmul. That might explain, for example, why the Dynastic Vases celebrate a royal line extending much further back than the historical rulers

themselves are known to have claimed, since it is more politic to let others boast of one's past, especially if the claims are more fantasy than fact.

At present, there is no way to know who the young child on Calakmul Vessel 0 is supposed to be. My suspicion is that he depicts someone from the distant past, perhaps one of the early Kan lords from the fabled king list. The possibility occurs to me because, as Martin (1997:857) notes—Sky Raiser, the first name on the list and, presumably, the founder of the dynasty—also appears on a Codex-style bowl depicting the so-called Confrontation, which was noted in the discussion of water motifs because the participants are standing in water. According to the inscription—bolon ajaw huk k'anasiiy ch'ak baah "sky raiser"—"On 9 Ajaw, the 7<sup>th</sup> of K'anasiiy, head chop Sky Raiser," which likely means that "Sky Raiser" was decapitated. 12 Be that as it may, the vessel depicts two groups of opposing figures, one with weapons and one without. The unarmed individual in front, wears a headdress in the form of Chahk's diadem. He also has a "barbel" on his face, a shell on his ear, and wears the rain god's knotty pectoral. In contrast, the individual confronting him has a kab ("earth") motif around his eye and wears a headdress in the form of Sak-aj the death spirit's head with a sak motif surmounting it. Although only the lower half of the sak motif is visible on the first bowl, another bowl from the same group of vessels depicts the full sak motif surmounting the headdress. Taube (2004:75, 77) identifies the confrontation as the capture of the Wind God, with the bowl bearing Sky Raiser's name depicting a variation in which the capture is a blend of Chahk and the Wind God. While the vessels likely do depict the capture of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> As is the case with several Jaguar Baby vessels, the verb is only a root. In translating *ch'ak-baah* as "head chop" I am following Stuart (2005a:177).

the Wind, their headdresses suggest to me that they are humans impersonating supernatural beings, rather than the supernaturals themselves. It intrigues me that Sak-aj is impersonated, because Chahk (and the Wind God) are pan-Maya but Sak-aj, to my knowledge, occurs only on Codex-style pottery, and this localizing of the capture strengthens my impression that the mythic events appearing on vessels belonging to this ceramic tradition are highly localized.

### **Conclusions**

Given the highly detailed nature of this treatise, I will list some of the more notable observations, contentions, and findings it contains. In this study, my original contributions or arguments include:

- Organizing the traditional corpus of Codex-style pottery into three stylistic
  variants—Canonical, Calligraphic, and Composite—which originate from sites
  such as Nakbe and El Mirador and have been recovered at Calakmul;
- Recognizing the bisected creature that is part of the death spirit's backrack on K1644 is part of the Starry Deer-Crocodile;
- Identifying three toponyms designating the outdoor place of sacrifice (Baha', Batuun, and "Chatan");
- Contending that the *k'awiil* logograph is not integral to the nominal phrase it precedes and is, instead, a descriptor designating the bearer of the name following it as an embodiment of the power the god quintessentially embodies, rather than of the god himself;

- Using the placement of the collocations in the nominal phrase on K4013 to argue
  that that the Old God in the Bearded Serpent shares with his name with the feline
  infant, and that following the glyphs leads the viewer's eye through pictorial field
  and the actions it portrays;
- Reading the nominal phrase of the individual holding the feline infant on K5855 as
   Bih-al Akan;
- Identifying the elderly attendant and the young child on Calakmul Vessel 0 as a "banded bird" priest and a royal heir;
- Drawing upon a prior original contribution to argue that Calakmul Vessel 0 portrays an activity that is part of a ceremony that involves daubing, aspersing, and bloodletting, and likely known as a Yax Ch'ahb ("first penance/creation");
- Suggesting that the ceremony's purpose is to endow a royal heir with the ability to summon the spiritual force (the *k'awiil*) he will have to conjure and then grasp in order to assume the throne;
- Posing the possibility that the pre-accession title, *okib*, refers to this newly acquired ability.

While some of my contributions and arguments are mostly pertinent to the Jaguar Baby vessels or Codex-style pottery, others have a relevance to the study of Classic Maya culture that extends well beyond the study of pictorial ceramics. The contrast I make between *k'awiil* the power and K'awiil the god, for instance, helps to substantiate the proposed distinction between a "visible, material godhood and a more elusive, immanent version of the same" (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:67) because it counters the

assumption that references to *k'awiil* necessarily refer to the god rather than, possibly, the power he embodies. Also, knowing that a ceremony primarily occurs in the darkness of the night, between the sun's setting and dawn, and that it involves more than bloodletting, greatly improves our odds of accurately discerning its import and purpose. Indeed, if I am correct, and the ceremony is a pre-accession rite of passage that endows a royal heir with the ability to conjure by commingling his blood with the *k'ex* offering then, in addition to new insights into an obscure ritual and a cryptic expression linking creation and darkness (*u-ch'ahb-ak'ab*, "creation darkness"), but we have a further understanding of how Maya lords used bloodletting to forge a connection with their gods.

The insights and artifacts from ongoing excavations at sites in the so-called Mirador Basin, and at Calakmul, will continue to change and expand our knowledge of Codex-style pottery, and of the sites where it was made and received. It will also necessarily bear upon the interpretation of the Jaguar Baby vessels and the narrative they convey, about which there is still more to learn, especially since some of its collocations still cannot be read. Without a doubt, elements of my work will need revision in light of new evidence. Alternative interpretations are also possible, as others have amply demonstrated. Considering the material from different points of view, has enriched my understanding of it, and it is my hope that considering mine, will do the same for others. Moreover, if my extensive documentation and examination of the figures and hieroglyphs on the vessels makes them easier to understand, and demonstrates the value of closely observing the interplay between image and word, then something worthy has been done.

Lastly, I hope it underscores the benefits of basing explanations on multiple lines of evidence, and of regarding a painted image as no less deliberate than a written word.



Figure 5.1 Re-creation of illustration showing feline infant's positional change (invented paw omitted), details © Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.2 Rollout photo of K3844 © Justin Kerr.

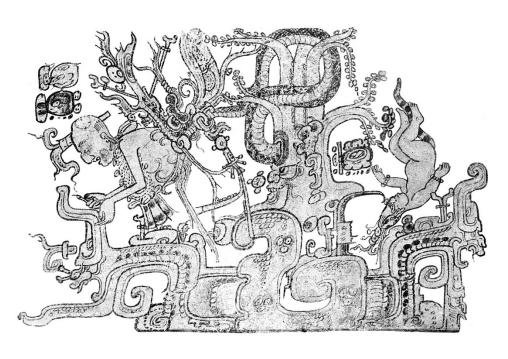


Figure 5.3 The Old God and the Jaguar Baby sharing the *huk-? yax-? chak-?* nominal phrase on K4013, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

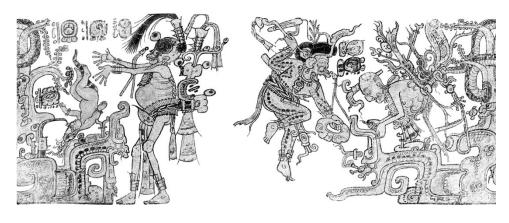


Figure 5.4 Alternative cropping of K4013, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.5 Rollout photo of K2772 © Justin Kerr.

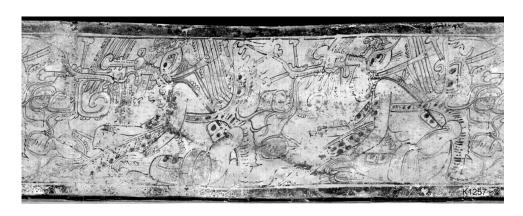


Figure 5.6 Rollout photo of K1257 © Justin Kerr.



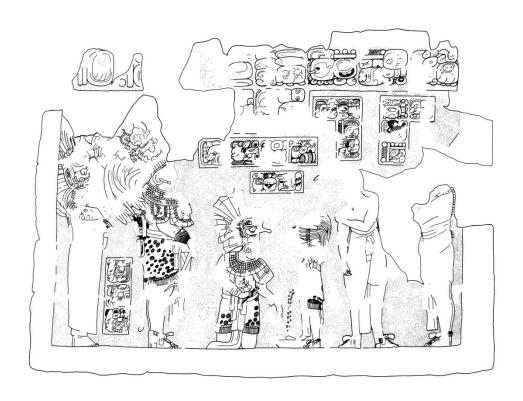
Figure 5.7 Rollout photo of K5057 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 5.8 Still photo of  $K5072 \ \mathbb{O}$  Justin Kerr.



Figure 5.9 Ceremony portrayed on Temple 21 Platform at Palenque (drawing courtesy of David Stuart).



5.10 Ceremony portrayed on Panel 19 at Dos Pilas (redrawn after David Stuart).



Figure 5.11 Figural Group 1on Grolier 37 (K1386), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.12 Figural Group 2 on Grolier 37 (K1386), detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).

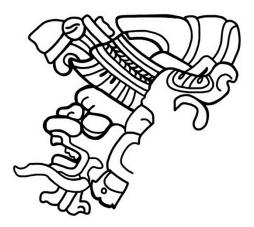


Figure 5.13 K'in logograph on Stela D at Quirigua (redrawn after Matthew Looper).



Figure 5.14 Gods of wind and water on K1485, details  $\ \ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.15 Body painting on Grolier 37 (K1386), detail © Justin Kerr.



Figure 5.16 Daubing and aspersing on the Vessel of the Eighty-eight Glyphs (K1440), detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.17 Enthroned lord on the Vessel of the Eighty-eight Glyphs (K1440), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.18 Ceremonial drinking on K0114, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.19 Old Wind God singing on K3007, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.20 Attendant with aspergillum portrayed on Temple 21 Platform at Palenque, detail (drawing courtesy of David Stuart).



Figure 5.21 Transformed Classic Headband Twins with drums and rattles on K3007, detail  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.22 Rollout photo of K8665 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.23 Heads of simian scribes:

- Grolier 37 (K1386), detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach); K8665, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.24 Attendant wearing the headdress of the God of the Number Thirteen on K8526, detail © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.25 Boys wearing feathery capes on K8526, details  $\ \$  Justin Kerr (cutouts: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.26 Calakmul Vessel 0 (redrawn after Christophe Helmke).



Figure 5.27 Detail of inscription on Calakmul Vessel 0 (drawing after photo).

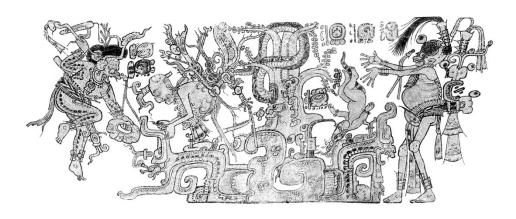


Figure 5.28 Rollout photo of K4013 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.29 Rollout photo of K2068 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.30 Rollout photo of 5164 © Justin Kerr (cutout: Penny Steinbach).



Figure 5.31 "Bird-man" logograph on Monument 141 at Tonina (redrawn after Ian Graham).

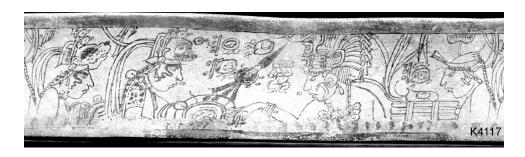


Figure 5.32 Rollout photo of K4117 © Justin Kerr.



Figure 5.33 Rollout photo of K1489 © Justin Kerr.

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