
The Narrative Structure of Hieroglyphic Texts at Palenque

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Each hieroglyphic inscription (or group of inscriptions) has a story to tell, and the texts of the inscriptions can be understood better if we look at them in terms of their structure as stories or narrative texts. Sometimes these stories are short and sweet and limited to a few basic facts—a pithy statement of an important event on a particular date by a titled lord or lady. Few texts at Palenque are so simple, though they are common elsewhere. An early example is found on the Leiden Plate, whose text gives an “unadorned” accession statement for an Early Classic ruler of Tikal (fig. 1). The order of elements is Date-Event-Actor, or, restated in linguistic analysis, Temporal + Verb + Subject.¹

At other times, and particularly at Palenque, the hieroglyphic texts are quite long; besides the main event, they contain many background details and references to happenings that are outside the main storyline, but are related in specific ways to the main event. These may include the actor’s parentage, even though his parents are not otherwise mentioned in the text. Very often the monuments at Palenque and elsewhere commemorate katun endings and associate the Period-Ending event with a “scattering” or bloodletting event carried out by the protagonist of the text (usually the ruler). Really long texts can give practically a full life-history of an important ruler, relating his birth or other events in his life to his accession or to some other important event (Period-Ending ceremonies, dedicatory events for monuments or buildings; ball-game and sacrificial events; war events and capture of prisoners), or connecting some of his dates to numerological and/or astronomical cycles or to anniversaries of events in the lives of important ancestors or even gods. Examples of most of these can be found in the discussion of the figures presented below.

Sometimes long hieroglyphic texts are found spread across several monuments, in a single iconographic program (for example, the Group of the Cross at Palenque), where the different sections of text might be thought of as “acts” in a play or drama, or chapters in a book. Just as in a play or book, there is a plot, sometimes even subplots, and there is some central event, or climax, which is what the play or book is about. The principal charac-

ters or actors are introduced, usually at the beginning of the story, and a time frame and setting are established. As the scene changes, to another time frame, the different episodes begin, develop, and close with an important event, then they pass away, to be replaced by the next scene. Some episodes contain flashbacks to earlier scenes and time frames, but on the whole the story progresses sequentially. Most long hieroglyphic texts relate to the legitimization of political succession by the Maya kings, and many of them are expressly dynastic in nature, emphasizing the current ruler’s descent from previous rulers and the illustriousness of his parents, and sometimes even connecting the dynasty to specific deities. Again, the texts from the Group of the Cross at Palenque display this relation of mythological actors and events, and ancestral histories, to the life of the ruler, Chan Bahlum II.

In this paper, Classic Mayan hieroglyphic inscriptions are examined for their structure as literary narratives. Palenque’s long texts have a discourse structure that is amazingly similar to that of modern Mayan and Mesoamerican narrative texts in general, and to Chol Mayan texts in particular (Hopkins and Josserand 1986; Cruz, Josserand, and Hopkins 1986; see also Fought 1976 and 1985 on Chortí). An ancestral form of Chol was one of the two principal languages of the Classic Maya, the other being an ancestor of Yucatec, which was spoken in the northern part of the Maya realm, while Chol once was spoken across the base of the Petén. Almost certainly the Maya who inhabited Palenque spoke an earlier form of Chol, for we have been able to identify unique features in the spoken language that match unusual features in the hieroglyphic texts of this region (Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins 1985). In both ethnohistoric and modern times, Chol has been spoken in the Indian communities surrounding Palenque.

The Structure of Narrative Texts

In order to consider Palenque’s hieroglyphic texts as narrative stories not unlike modern Chol oral narrative texts, I would like to describe briefly some of the charac-

teristics of both of these kinds of texts. A modern text and, I believe, a hieroglyphic text can be discussed in terms of three major elements: time frame, actors, and plot.

Setting the Scene

Chol narrative texts begin by setting a time frame and introducing the main actor(s). This introductory material may also include more description of the physical setting, or introduce other actors, and it often includes a little preview of what the story is about. This preview is sometimes called a *capsule* statement (Attinasi 1979:3).

In hieroglyphic texts, the first date, whether Initial Series with a Long Count or just Calendar Round (or even a Distance Number from a Period Ending or katun seating), sets the time frame and begins the time-line of the story. The equivalent of a capsule statement can often be found in the short texts that accompany the figure(s) in the principal iconographic display, or image.

Most carved stone monuments have two basic parts: an *image*, portraying a ruler or other notable, and the principal *text*, which accompanies and often surrounds the image. The space mainly occupied by the image itself may contain short stretches of hieroglyphic text; these have been called the *secondary texts*, but I prefer *caption texts* (Kubler 1973:146). These caption texts usually relate directly to the actions and/or name the actors portrayed in the image (this relation is discussed at length below, in the discussion of the caption texts from the Temple of the Cross, fig. 8). The relation of the image to the principal text is a topic for discussion in itself (see Bassie 1986), but it seems clear that in most cases the image is portraying one of the main events of the long text associated with it, that is, the iconography itself illustrates the principal actor and the central event of the entire text.

Events and the Event-line

In Mayan and Mesoamerican narrative texts in general, a plot can be considered to be composed of a series of *events* that are related to each other temporally even though they may not be presented in sequential order. These events are said to be *on the event-line*; they are crucial to the development of the story, and all lead up to the central event of the text, which is referred to as the *peak* of the entire text. This is the bare-bones structure of the simplest texts, the plot and its climax.²

An event, very simply, is an incident in the story: an action, a situation, the presentation and description of a character. Usually these are expressed grammatically by verbs or other predicated expressions. In the hieroglyphs these verbs include glyphic expressions for birth, capture, accession to power, acts of holding various objects (such as god manikins, staffs, bundles, and bloodletters), and the dedication of monuments and buildings. Even a date can be an event, especially if the date represented the completion of a major time cycle. A Calendar Round (CR) can function as the subject of a certain verbs, like

uht, “come to pass” (*uht* is the main sign of the Anterior and Posterior Date Indicator compounds; see Stuart 1984b). The combination of a numbered (ordinal) Period Ending and a Calendar Round also forms a predicated expression; for example, the text on Tikal Stela 22 begins with the verbal expression of a date: “The 17th katun was 13 Ahau 18 Cumku” (table 3). It is likely that the Initial Series is itself an event, separate from the actions of the ruler on that date.

Episodes and Peak Events

Usually at least some of the events in a story are elaborated into larger (i.e., longer) structures, called *episodes*. An episode is composed of more than one event, and the constituent events are tied together by a common time frame within which all the events develop sequentially. The central event of the episode, also called the *peak event* of the episode, is part of the backbone of the overall story; that is, it is *on the event-line*, and is prominently connected to the peak event of the entire text sooner or later. The subsidiary events serve as *background* to the peak event of the episode, which is stressed, or *foregrounded* in some clear way. The clear analogy here is to the use of these terms in art and theater; elements in the foreground are visually more prominent, and are set against a background, which is visually more distant. The particular techniques used in Mayan languages for emphasis or highlighting (that is, foregrounding) are discussed in more detail below; basically, they involve emphasizing the action of the event itself by placing it in a prominent position in the sentence or by repetition of the event in a second or third restatement.

It is not difficult to identify the foregrounded elements in a text, because these parts were intended by the storyteller to be more prominent, and they are very likely repeated more than once. If the same event appears in more than one episode, it can usually be shown to be important to the dramatic development of the text and to be the peak of one of the episodes, usually the first in which it appears. But when it appears in a subsequent episode, it serves as background to the peak event of that particular episode, clearly connecting the first event with the subsequent one, and tying both of them to the main event-line of the story. In glyphic texts, the ties may be between the king and his predecessors, all of whom perform the same rites, or to the gods on special anniversaries celebrated by the king during his lifetime. The exploits of the king recounted in one event may be recalled in another event by their incorporation into his prestigious titles, as in the Yaxchilán lintels of capture, and the subsequent “captor” titles carried by the ruler (Stuart 1985).

In a sense, all the nonpeak events are background to the main event, and they are directly related to that main event through a variety of techniques. In hieroglyphic texts, these techniques include temporal connections using Distance Numbers, Calendar Rounds, and anniversary expressions and personal connections

via expressions of parentage and ancestry, or succession in political rule, as well as other devices.

In Chol texts, each episode is introduced by a special phrase, which indicates whether the change is temporal (“and then,” “three days later,” etc.) or circumstantial (“meanwhile,” and other scene changers). In hieroglyphic texts the episodes are best defined as separate time frames, and temporal introducers are the most common transition markers between episodes. But it is important to distinguish between at least three or four kinds of temporal phrases: Long Counts (LC), Calendar Rounds (CR), and Distance Numbers (DN), and perhaps also phrases involving the *hel* glyph (Thompson’s Glyph T573), which have been interpreted and glossed as special Distance Numbers. A Calendar Round date, stated or implied, naturally accompanies every action or event; in normal grammatical order, the CR is the first element in a hieroglyphic sentence. Distance Numbers connect one event to another event, usually within the same episode. Even though they “change the date,” they normally proceed along a continuous, sequentially ordered time-line. But when the time-line itself is interrupted, by backing up in time and starting over from an earlier date, or by going forward in time with no stated connection to the last events, we can consider that the time frame has been changed, and a new episode begun. Besides the DN technique, this is often accomplished by the insertion of a new Long Count (a “backward” DN) or even a complete new Initial Series in the middle of the text.

In a multi-episode narrative, the temporal sequence of the peak events in each episode should normally proceed forward chronologically—that is, they are sequentially ordered with respect to time. The individual episodes may be quite different from each other, both in content and in structure, but there is usually considerable unity within an episode, in terms of both the events included and the grammar with which they are presented. There are also usually ties between episodes, especially adjacent ones; often this is achieved by casting back to earlier events from previous episodes (via Distance Numbers, or merely repetition of earlier events). The overall grammatical structure of the episodes can be compared to poetic stanzas, each composed of parallel sentence formations, and usually including one or more couplets. The frequent use of couplets is especially characteristic of ritual speech in Mayan languages.

In a very long story, some of the episodes are more important, and thus more emphasized, than others. The most prominent episode very likely contains the most important event of the entire story, and its grammatical markings attest to its special status. The peak episode of a long text is very often the final episode of the narrative.

Foregrounding and Focus

Peak events are usually very prominently marked, although a variety of techniques may be used to give a peak event prominence. In general, these techniques

are referred to as *foregrounding*; they include repetition, elaboration, couplets and other parallel structures, and special grammatical constructions, particularly when the emphasized element is placed at the beginning of the phrase (*fronting*). Any change in the normal, or expected, word order is an indication of focus, or increased importance of the information being transmitted. Joining two sentences, especially when they are partially similar, is very common. Parts of one of the constituent sentences may then be omitted (deleted), and one or both of the parts may be further marked with a special word or affix. These techniques are discussed in some detail below (see also Lounsbury 1980; Schele 1982, 1986a:7–14, 39–41, 52–56).

In modern Chol narrative texts, the chronological sequence of events that are on the event-line is signaled by the use of the “completed action” modal, *tza’*, before the main verb. This word is the marker for preterit or, less technically, past tense, and its presence indicates that the event of the main verb is “on the event-line.” The peak event of an episode is further emphasized by a variety of linguistic strategies. When it occurs within an episode, preceded by other, background events, a peak event may be marked as the featured event by a special introducing word, whose sense is not unlike a very dramatic “and then . . .” This word both marks the punctuality of the event (making it a specific point on the event-line, whether a specific date is given or not) and emphasizes its chronological position with respect to the backgrounded events. It is a focus marker for the verbal action, the event itself (as opposed to the actor/subject or any other noun phrase).

In hieroglyphic texts, the Posterior Event Indicator (PEI; Thompson’s Glyph T679) often marks the peak event of an episode, or sometimes only the peak of the entire text. It immediately precedes the main verb of the peak event, thus fulfilling the role of verbal focus marker. Of the various readings that have been suggested for the PEI, I favor its interpretation as a conjunction with the value *i* (see Thompson 1962:281) for two reasons. First, it resembles the sign recorded in Landa’s alphabet with that value, and, second, there is a conjunction in modern Chol (and in other Maya languages) with a similar function and the same form. Modern texts have *i* as a conjunction that sometimes precedes episode introducers and sometimes precedes the peak event verb phrase, but it has always been assumed to be from Spanish *y*. However, in contrast to Spanish *y*, Chol *i* is never used for concatenation of noun phrases, where only Chol *yik’ot* appears. Given both the function of the PEI and its suggested reading as *i*, perhaps we should reconsider the supposedly Spanish origin of the Chol focus marker *i*.

Whatever its reading,³ when the PEI occurs as part of a posterior date indicator, it precedes the verb *uht*, which is then followed by a Calendar Round. This converts the temporal phrase into a separate sentence and has the effect of “fronting” the main verb of the peak event to initial position in the next sentence, which is

the most prominent position in a sentence. This is exemplified in figure 6 (see the discussion of fronting and promotion, below).

Background

Just as each episode has a key or peak event, which is on the event-line, the episode may also include references to other events, either as a back-reference to an earlier event that was also on the event-line, to emphasize its importance and to relate it more directly to the peak event of the current episode, or as a reference to an event completely outside the storyline, but somehow related to the main actor. These events may not ever appear as peak events of individual episodes, and may not even be on the event-line of the main story, but they are tied to the main story, through some concrete temporal link to the event-line, and usually to some action of the main actor, the protagonist of the text.

An example of the first kind of back-reference can be seen in a section of text from the Cross Tablet (the main panel from the Temple of the Cross), where the accession of Lady Beastie is given as the peak of the episode (fig. 4), but it is set against the background of her birth, an event that was itself the peak of the episode associated with the Initial Series date of the Cross Tablet. The 819 day count is a good example of the second kind of background information; it is almost always earlier than the Initial Series and is always linked to the IS (and seldom linked to anything else); it is not a peak event itself, and often “interrupts” the first sentence of the text, separating the Initial Series and Calendar Round date from the event that takes place on that date.

Both of the above cases are examples of backgrounded or “old” information, and they should be clearly (and usually repeatedly) marked as such in the text. In modern Chol narrative texts, the characteristic “background” marker is the syllable *-ix*, which is attached at the ends of verbs and temporal adverbs or longer temporal phrases. This corresponds structurally to the Anterior Event Indicator (AEI; Thompson’s Glyph T126) in the hieroglyphs, and I have previously suggested (Josserand 1984; Josserand and Schele 1984) that the *-ix* value is, in fact, appropriate for the AEI reading as well.⁴

When an episode has several events, those that are subsidiary to the peak event of the episode are likely to be marked with the backgrounding particle *-ix* (both in modern Chol texts and in hieroglyphic texts). The subsidiary events are also likely to *precede* the main event of the episode in two ways: they are temporally earlier, and they occur first in the phrase. That is, the last thing in the episode is usually the peak event, just as the last episode in a text usually contains the peak of the entire text.

Discourse Features of Hieroglyphic Inscriptions

The application of discourse analysis models to the Mayan hieroglyphic inscriptions contributes both to the overall understanding of the content of particular in-

scriptions and to the decipherment of specific elements and constructions in the inscriptions. It also supports the assertions that these inscriptions are written in real language, not simple schematic representations of important dates and events.⁵ The discourse model gives us greater insight into the strategies behind the selection and presentation of information in a hieroglyphic text. The order of elements in a hieroglyphic text is directly comparable to the order of words in a sentence, and changes in word order are among the most common indicators of informational importance. Normal, expected word order (*unmarked* order) does not stress any part of the sentence over any other. Unexpected, or *marked* word order focuses attention on a particular element within the sentence and thus indicates its increased importance in the development of the narrative. New information is often presented in marked constructions; old information is downplayed and may even be omitted from a sentence in order to highlight what remains. Important new information may be repeated several times, or elaborated by adding extra bits of new information in each restatement.

Hieroglyphic texts are very poetic in their structure, as are traditional Mayan texts, whether they be prayers and rituals or tales of gods and heroes. The grammatical structures that characterize these language styles are formal and constrained. Where our poetry is governed by patterns of meter and rhyme, theirs is revealed in patterns of repetition and coupleting (Bricker 1974; Lounsbury 1980:107–108; Norman 1980; Townsend 1980); in stanza structures and parallel constructions (Townsend, Cham, and Ich’ 1980; Cruz, Josserand, and Hopkins 1986; Hopkins and Josserand 1986); and in word plays of many kinds. The rules of poetic structure are revealed in the discourse strategies used in the texts. The particular grammatical elements or processes used to signal discourse functions (such as highlighting or backgrounding) may vary regionally and through time, but the basic strategies are always there and can be seen to persist in traditional narrative genres throughout the modern Mayan languages.

It is difficult to illustrate a single discourse feature, because the whole point of discourse analysis is to see things in context; to do that, the reader/hearer must keep in mind what has already been said or understood (the “old” information) when each new phrase begins. But as soon as more text is included in an example, to show the context, the presence of other discourse features invariably makes the picture more complex. In the following examples, individual discourse strategies are discussed, and references are made to pieces of hieroglyphic text that illustrate each point. But the glyphic text segments cannot be adequately described in terms of single discourse features; so, after the brief overview of glyphic discourse features, each hieroglyphic text is separately discussed, to show all the different discourse strategies it employs, and to place it in the context of the larger text in which it occurs. The last three figures

and accompanying tables treat discourse features that relate to overall text structure, so they are illustrated by complete hieroglyphic texts.

In the hieroglyphic inscriptions, normal (expected, unmarked) word order is the same as in modern Chol (and most other Mayan languages); this is usually stated as being “verb initial,” meaning that in a simple sentence with only three elements—actor (= Subject), action (= Verb), and recipient of the action (= Object)—the order of these elements is Verb followed by Object followed by Subject, or VOS. Any other order is non-normal, or marked. Sometimes the Subject is repeated as a pronoun preceding the verb; this is not a change in order, but a special situation governed by Maya grammar. The third-person pronoun *u*, “he/she” (T1) was one of the earliest grammatical elements to be deciphered in Mayan hieroglyphs. Sentences with intransitive verbs have only two elements, the Verb and its Subject. Other kinds of sentences can be formed with two elements, neither of which is a Verb, properly speaking, but in these cases one of them acts as a Predicate, an equivalent to a Verb, and the other as its Subject. All of these sentence types are Verb-initial in Chol and most other Mayan languages, and normal order in the hieroglyphic inscriptions seems to be Verb-initial as well.

If another element is added to the basic three (Verb, Object, and Subject), it very likely contains special information; because of that, the element may well occur at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, when a sentence contains a specific time reference, the temporal word or phrase generally *precedes* even the verb. So “normal” word order for temporally marked phrases becomes Temporal + Verb + Object + Subject. If other elements are added, the order is likely to change (the new element occurs first), or some of the previous elements are dropped; this seems to be related to a restriction on the number and length of noun phrases following the verb. Thus, if both Object and Indirect Object (the recipient of an action) are specified (or Object and Instrument, or Object and Location), the Subject may be omitted (presumably the Subject is already known, that is, it is “old information”). So any change in word order can be taken as an indication of special importance, or foregrounding. In hieroglyphic texts, the grammatical techniques for foregrounding can be grouped under three broad headings: elaboration; fronting or promotion; and “marked” syntax or unusual grammar.

Elaboration and Coupletting

Elaboration is an especially common technique for highlighting the Subject/actor. It usually involves long name or title phrases (figs. 1, 2), and often includes parentage clauses (figs. 3, 6, 9). Special poetic or metaphoric phrasing may be employed (the parentage statement for GI in fig. 5; the special Distance Number introductory verbs in the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, figs. 6 and 9; or Chaacal’s accession restatement in the 96 Glyphs text, fig. 9). Elaborated verbs and verb phrases are also found; these

may include complex expressions for the verb itself (the verb at F5 in the Tablet of the Slaves, fig. 10), or lengthy complements to the verbal action (the accession phrases found in figs. 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10).

Another form of elaboration is repetition or restatement, usually by means of the ubiquitous couplet. Couplet expressions occur at all levels of linguistic structure, from paired words to paired sentences. A very subtle couplet can be seen on the Leiden Plate (fig. 1, table 1) in the use of parallel “seating” expressions for both the date (the seating of Yaxkin) and the event (the seating of the Tikal ruler).

Given that an event consists of a statement about an action (Verb) done by a specific actor (Subject) on a specific date (Temporal), a couplet to that statement can consist of a simple restatement of the same event (by the same actor, on the same date, just said differently), or one or more of the three basic elements can be changed, while holding the rest the same. Thus, the same event can be done on the same day by another actor, as on Lintel 2 from La Pasadita (fig. 2, table 2), or the actor and date can be unchanged, but another event is performed, as a couplet to the first event, as on Stela 22 from Tikal (fig. 3, table 3), or the date can stay constant but both event and actor change, and so forth.

If the intent is to emphasize the equivalence of two events, rather than focus on one and background the other, the events can be given the same prominence in the discourse structure. La Pasadita Lintel 2 illustrates this kind of text (fig. 2, table 2). On the same date (and portrayed together in the central image), Bird Jaguar of Yaxchilán and a subordinate perform equivalent acts. BJ is shown “scattering” (part of the bloodletting rite; see Stuart 1984a), while his *cahal* holds an object that is probably a bloodletter. This is a “single episode” text with two “events,” supposedly the same or equivalent, though performed by two different actors. This pairing of dominant and subordinate actors in a single image raises interesting questions about who erected the monument. The subordinate is given somewhat less prominence on the La Pasadita lintel: there is no Calendar Round asso-

Table 1. Text Structure from the Leiden Plate:
Accession of an Early Classic Ruler of Tikal

Location	Structure	Content
A1–A9	Temporal Introducer	= ISIG + LC + 1 Eb + G5 (Lord of Night), + seating of Yaxkin
B9–A10	Verb + Complement	= seating verb + office (“seated as <i>ahau</i> ”)
B10–B11	Subject Phrase	= personal name of Early Classic Ruler, + Early Classic Tikal Emblem Glyph (EG)
“On 1 Eb . . . Balam Ahau Chan of Tikal was enthroned as lord.”		

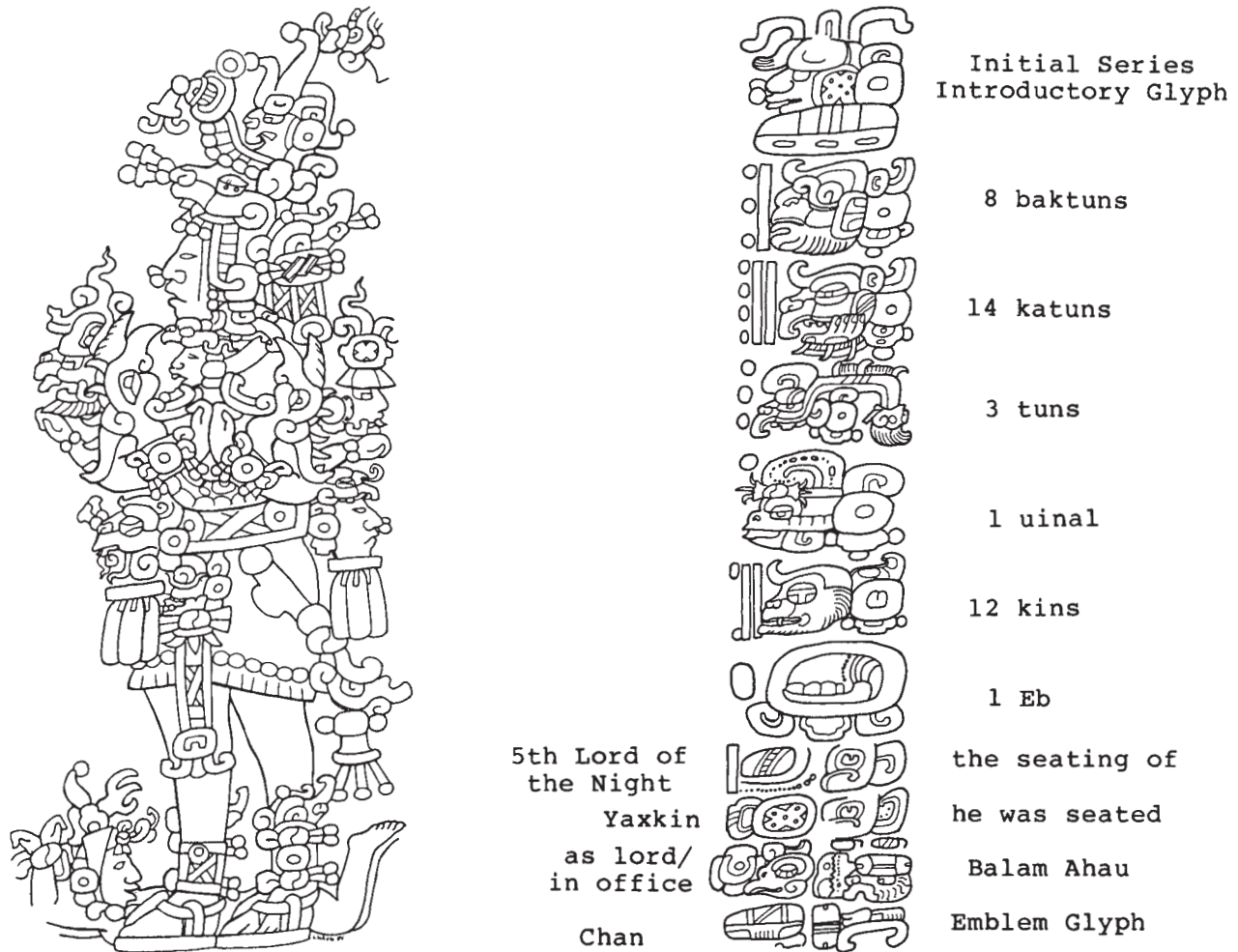


Fig. 1 Leiden Plate (Tikal). Accession to office or to rule (drawing by Linda Schele).

ciated with his text, and his name-and-title phrase is quite short, compared to Bird Jaguar's Subject phrase. Costume and ritual dominance are also given to Bird Jaguar. But visual backgrounding is minimal; in fact, the subordinate's right thumb very subtly overlaps Bird Jaguar's name phrase. This problem is addressed again in the discussion of the Tablet of the Slaves (fig. 10).

Focus, Foregrounding, and Backgrounding

Even simple hieroglyphic texts can have peak event, focus, and background. The text on Tikal Stela 22 (fig. 3, table 3) commemorates a katun ending and focuses on the bloodletting rite performed by the ruler on that occasion. The associated image is the scattering event, which is emphasized in the text by its text-final position, and by its couplanting with the main verb of the first sentence, which was the erection of the tun monument. This is a three-sentence monument:

1. The Temporal clause is an independent sentence.
2. The main clause is Verb-initial and has a very elaborated Subject phrase (perhaps involving subordinated clauses).

3. The third sentence recapitulates the event through conjoined clauses, with the event-line focus marker (PEI) on the final clause.

Note that there is a focus marker on the last Verb (at B12), which is a temporal "couplet" of the first Verb (at B2), that is, it is another action of Ruler C on the Period-Ending date. The Subject is deleted from this final sentence as well as from the background clause, but it is readily identified as the only actor in the text. The background event is the ruler's seating in an office that has been read as Batab (chief, from Yucatec Maya *baat*, "axe").

The text fragment from the main tablet of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque (fig. 4) also illustrates simple backgrounding and focus. The backgrounded event, marked by the *-ix* (T126) suffixes on both the distance numbers and on the birth verb (table 4), is Lady Beastie's birth, the event of the Initial Series date on the Cross Tablet. The Distance Number restarts us in time, in a new episode, which sets the pattern for all the remaining episodes in the text. These episodes give (or imply via Distance Numbers) the birthdates and accession dates of

Table 2. La Pasadita, Lintel 2: Scattering Rite by Bird Jaguar of Yaxchilán, and Paired (Completed) Event by His Subordinate

Location	Structure	Content
B1-9, A1-6	Temp + Pron-Vb-Obj + S	"On 7 Ahau 18 Pop BJ let blood."
C1-5	Pron-Vb Prep-Comp + S	"X, <i>cahal</i> , follows in the rite."

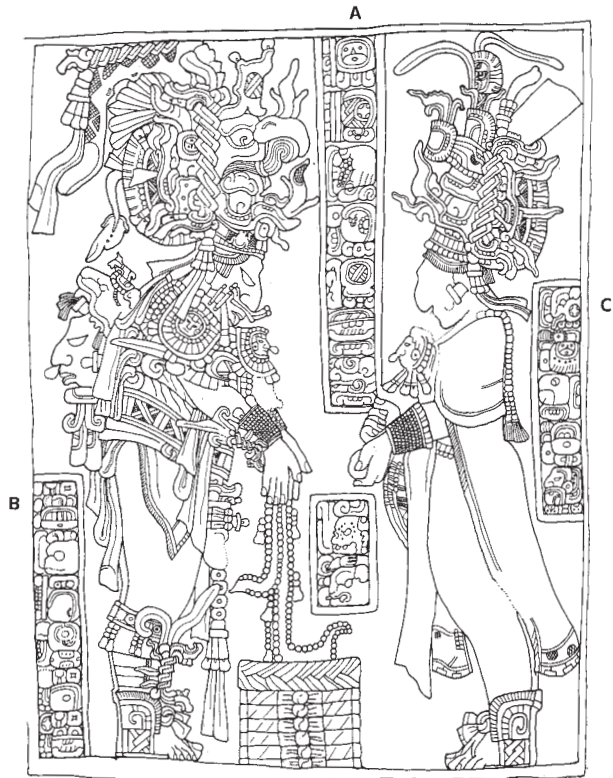


Fig. 2 La Pasadita, Lintel 2. Completed event by two actors (drawing by Linda Schele).

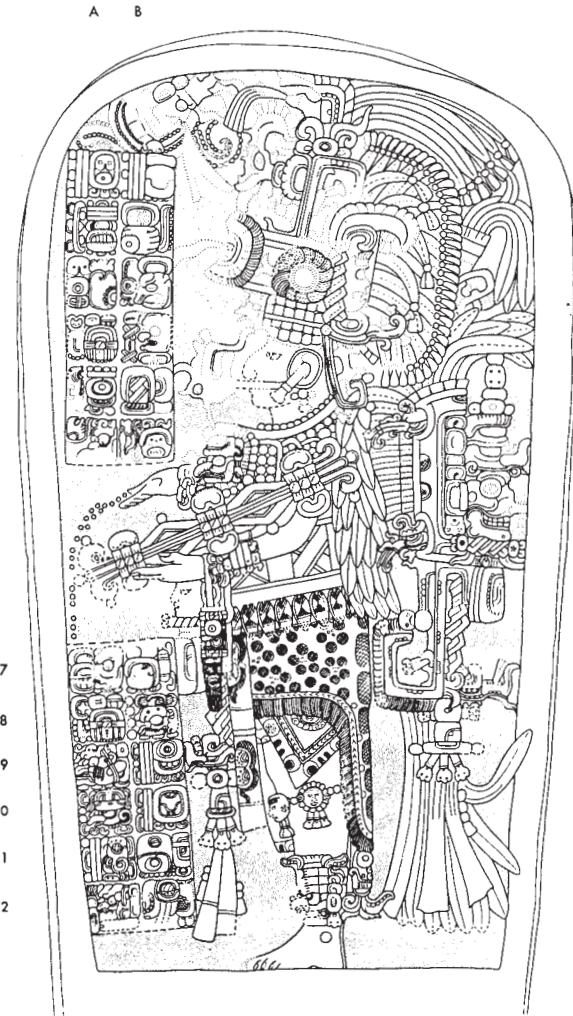


Fig. 3 Tikal, Stela 22. Period Ending and scattering rite (drawing by William R. Coe, courtesy of The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania).

Table 3. Tikal, Stela 22: Period Ending (17 katuns) and Scattering Rite

Location	Structure	Content
A1-2	Predicate + Subject (= V + S)	CR = 17th katun (equative sentence) "The 17th katun was 13 Ahau 18 Cumku." (9.17.0.0.0)
B2-A9	V-O S	V-O = "he ended the tun"/ "placed the stone" S = Ruler C + Tikal EG + Title + 28th successor + title + Child of Father, Ruler B-long title "Ruler C . . . , child of Ruler B . . . , placed the katun monument."
B9-A12	DN-ix Temp V-ix Comp	"16 kins, 1 uinal, 2 tuns ago, on 11 Kan 12 Kayab," "he was seated as <i>batab le</i> ," "and so he scattered blood."
B12	PEI + V-O	(on the Calendar Round of the Period Ending)

Table 4. Palenque, Cross Tablet, Left Side Text, E5–F9:
Simple Focus and Background, from Birth to Seating of Lady Beastie, on Calendar Round

Location	Structure	Content
E5–7	DN-ix V-ix	“It was 2 days, 11 uinals, 7 tuns, 1 katun, and 2 baktuns since (her) birth,”
F7–9	PEI-Vb-Obj Prep-Comp S Temp	“until Lady Beastie held the white bundle (became <i>zac uinic</i>) of the succession on 9 Ik seating of Zac.”

the earliest recorded rulers of Palenque. The foregrounded or focused event in all cases is the “holding of the white bundle in the succession.” This event has been glossed as “to become *zac uinic* (‘great man’) of the succession” (Schele 1983:29) and is understood as accession to rule.⁶

Tripletting

Another piece of text from the main tablet of the Temple of the Cross, Palenque, shows the use of repetition for highlighting important new information (fig. 5). The birth of GI’ (or GI the son, the firstborn of the Palenque Triad) is given great emphasis by its triple presentation, in a three-sentence episode (table 5). The birth is first shown against a background of sky acts performed by the first GI (his father?), then it is restated in a short, verb-initial sentence of Verb + Object + Subject, giving no new information. (To “touch the earth” is similar to other Chol metaphors for birth: *k’el panumil*, “to see or experience the earth/world,” and dialect variant *il panumil*, “to see the world.”) The last sentence relates his birth to his supposed mother, Lady Beastie. Note that the subject of the last sentence is deleted; it is not Lady Beastie but GI’ who is the subject, but he is related to Lady Beastie through this “parentage” phrase, as well as being related to GI the father through the backgrounded clause at the beginning of this episode.

The importance of the birth of GI the son is emphasized by the combination of several different focus techniques: (1) the use of the PEI (T679) before the birth verb (the first time it occurs); (2) the “initial” position of that verb in its clause, with the CR demoted to clause-final position, as is the pattern with such conjoined clauses, and (3) the triple expression of the event, where the first restatement again names the actor, GI, and the couplet to that restatement gives his parentage, in an elaborate and somewhat unusual phrasing. This episode is, however, the only time that GI the son is mentioned in this entire text (Tablet of the Cross), even though the Temple of the Cross has been considered to be “dedicated” to GI the son, in a manner analogous to the association of the Temple of the Sun with GIII, the second-born of the Triad, and of the Temple of the Foliated Cross with GII, the last-born of the Triad.⁷ Here GI the son has been displaced from the IS date of the Cross panel by his even more important mother, Lady Beastie. Still, his birth is the first event by an actor given syntactic prominence (via the PEI focus marker) in the entire

Cross Group text. The only earlier PEI precedes the completion of the *mai* event on 4 Ahau 8 Cumku, when the cycle of time began anew. The events of GI the father following that date were given prominence through multiple restatements, but even though they were introduced via a Distance Number, they were not preceded by a PEI focus marker.

Fronting and Promotion

Fronting and promotion are linguistic terms for changes in word order that move an element to the beginning of the sentence (fronting), or change it to a “higher” syn-

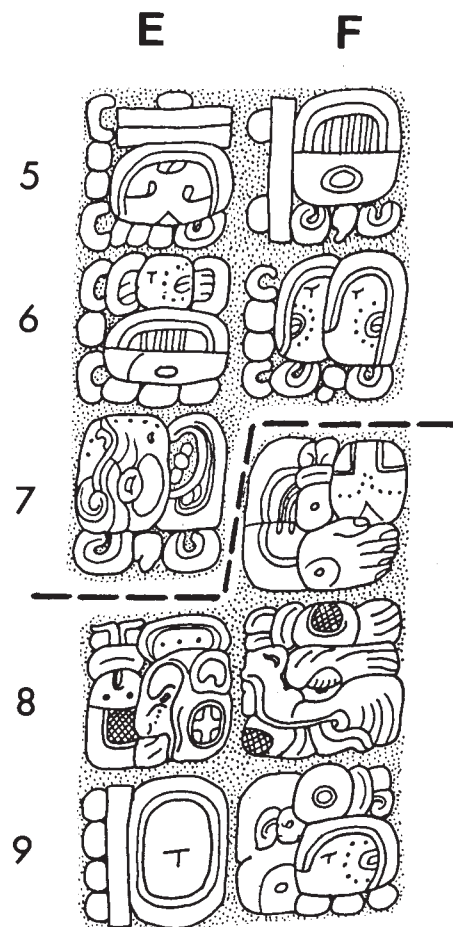


Fig. 4 Palenque, Tablet of the Cross, E5–F9. Background and focus (drawing by Linda Schele).

tactic category (from Temporal phrase in one sentence to Subject phrase of an independent sentence is the most common promotion in the hieroglyphs). The use of the Posterior Event Indicator results in the *fronting* of the verb, because it requires that the verb immediately follow it, and the Calendar Round date (the Temporal phrase) is displaced, and either occurs at the end of the sentence or is removed completely from the sentence. In the first case, the order of elements is PEI + Verb + Object + Subject + Temporal (see fig. 4 and table 4). In the second case, the Calendar Round can either be omitted from the text (especially if it is old information, as in fig. 3 and table 3) or be *promoted* to an independent sentence, where the CR serves as the Subject of one of a limited number of verbal expressions having to do with time.

Another sequence of accession episodes, more elaborately stated, is found in the text of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, from Palenque. A typical episode from this text is presented in detail in figure 6 and table 6. This is another three-sentence episode, which illustrates highlighting both by promotion of the Distance Number and Calendar Round to a separate sentence and by repetition or completing of the featured event. In a construction typical of Palenque texts, the Calendar Round date is removed completely from the highlighted event, by making it the grammatical subject of a separate verb. The Distance Number leads from the previous event, a Palace dedication by Pacal the Great, to the Calendar Round date of the seating of Kan-Xul (II). But neither event is given in the same sentence as the Calendar

Round. The earlier event was in a previous sentence, and the featured seating verb (for Kan-Xul) is the first element in the next sentence, thus giving it more grammatical prominence. (Note that the Distance Number leads from an event in the life of Kan-Xul's father, Pacal the Great, not from the seating of the previous ruler, Kan-Xul's older brother Chan Bahlum II.)

The noun phrases following the verb are both very elaborate. The first is the verbal complement, *ta ah po le*, "as lord of the succession" (dynasty or lineage?). Then the long subject phrase, which begins with a conflated title, continues with Kan-Xul's kingly title and name, *ma kin ah Kan Xul*, "Great Sun Lord Kan-Xul," and concludes with the Palenque "bone" emblem glyph. The normal placement of the corresponding CR would be following the subject, but this would lead to too many elaborate independent phrases following the verb. Thus, there is ample justification for the stylistic extraction of the CR phrase to a separate sentence. The final couplet phrase restates the event, giving more information, this time in two Locative phrases, naming specific places: the "White Stone House" (their name for House E of the Palace, which was once painted white), and the "Jaguar Throne" (found inside House E).

Deletion and Unusual Syntax

When two sentences are joined, the purpose is usually to show a special relation between the event of the first sentence and that of the second. The similarity between the two sentences can result from the identity of any of the basic elements, but especially of the subjects of the

Table 5. Palenque, Cross Tablet, Left Side Text, D13–F4: Elaboration and Focus via the Tripleted Expression of the Birth of GI' of the Triad

Location	Structure	Content
D13–16	DN-ix V-ix Loc S	"It was 0 days, 12 uinals, 3 tuns, 13 katuns, and 1 baktun ago that Hun Ah Po GI ordered the sky,"
C17–F1	PEI + Vb + S + Temp	"and then the Triad God (GI' the son) was born on 4 Ik 15 Ceh."
E2–F2	Pron-Vb-Obj + S	"GI' touched the earth";
E3–F4	Pron-Vb Poss-Obj-Possr	"he continues the line of Lady Beastie, X-Kan-le-ox (title), Lady Ahau."

Table 6. Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, C2–8: Promotion of the Temporal Phrase to an Independent Sentence, and Focus on the Event, by Fronting the Main Verb and Completing the Event

Location	Structure	Content
C2–D3	Pron-Vb DN-ix	"Night and Day cycled for 17 days, 4 uinals, 8 tuns, and 2 katuns,"
C4–5	PEI-Vb S	"until 5 Lamat 6 Xul came to pass."
D5–C7	Vb Prep-Comp S	"The many-titled, Great Sun Lord Kan-Xul, Blood Lord of Palenque, was seated as Lord of the succession."
D7–C8	Pron-Vb Loc Prep Loc	"He sat on the Jaguar Throne, in the White Palace."

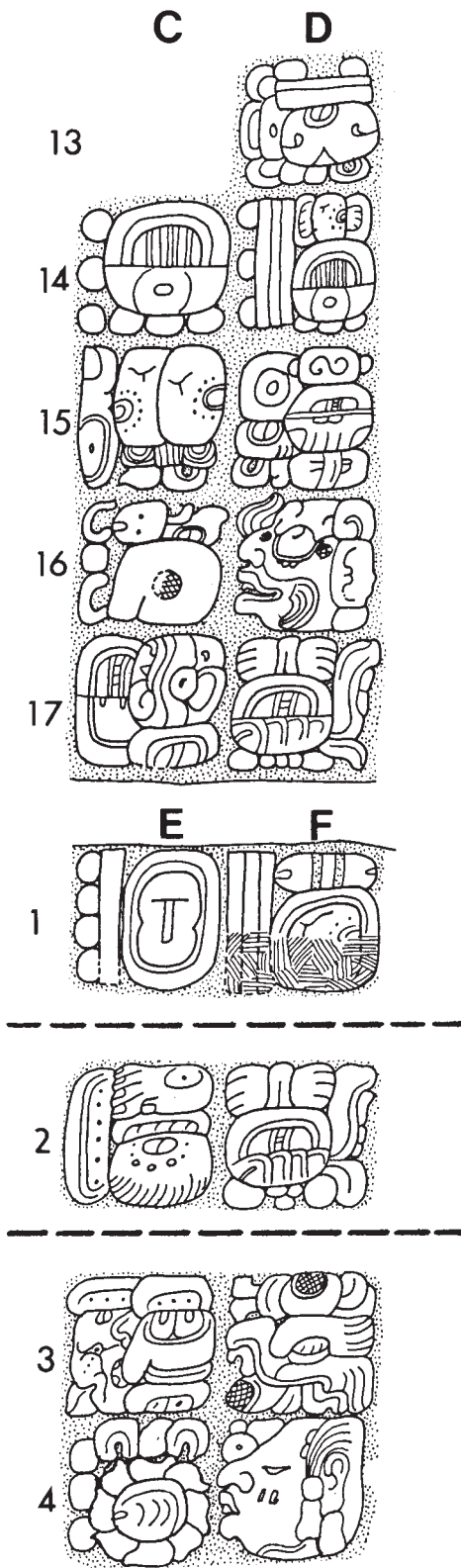


Fig. 5 Palenque, Tablet of the Cross, D13–F4. Focus and tripling (drawing by Linda Schele).

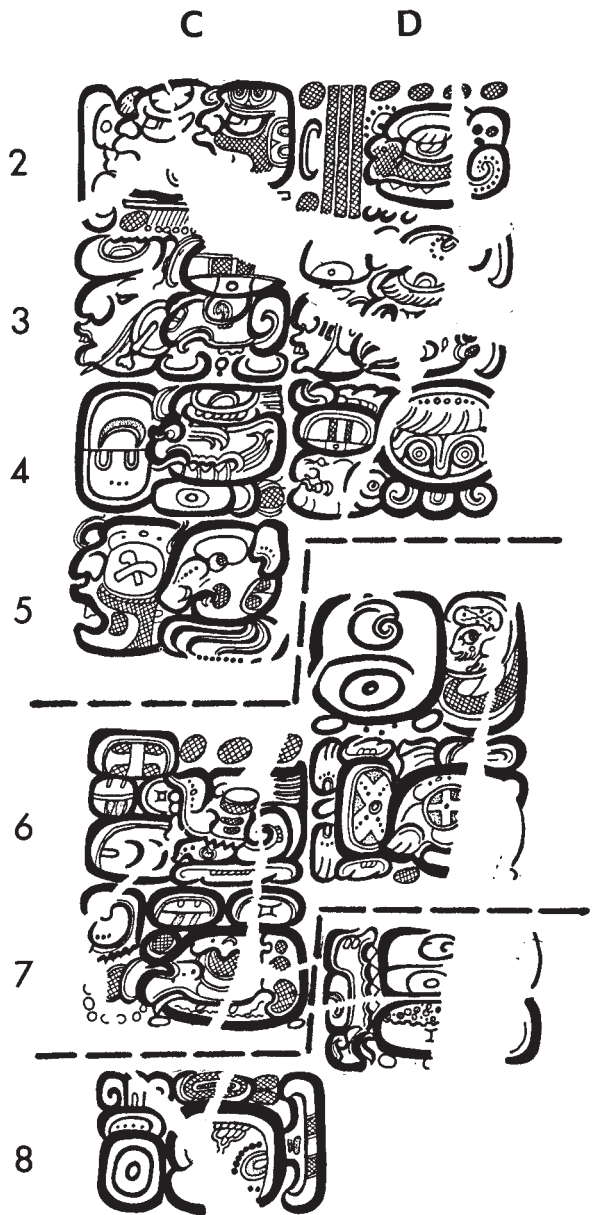


Fig. 6 Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, C2–C8. Fronting and promotion (drawing by Linda Schele).

two sentences, or of the verbs, that is, the action of the two sentences. In these cases, rather than repeating the common elements, one of the duplicated subjects or verbs can be omitted, or *deleted*. The text fragment from the Cross shown in table 4 illustrates the deletion of the common subject, Lady Beastie, from the first of the conjoined sentences. Note that the Calendar Round of the first sentence has also been deleted, not because it is the same as that of the second sentence, but because it is retrievable through the Distance Number (and also because it is old information, and was previously given at the beginning of the text). Subject deletion is very common in hieroglyphic texts; it can be seen in the text ex-

amples in figures (and tables) 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. There are several examples of verb deletion on the Tablet of the Cross, although these are not illustrated here (see also Schele 1982:36–42). A handy rule of thumb about deletion is: the more that is deleted, the more important what remains is likely to be. This is a generalization about the use of deletion to focus attention on the remaining elements. Just as prominence is given to a verb by fronting it to clause-initial position, so also stripping it of its argument (its Subject) leaves it in an even more highlighted form.

Another technique for highlighting verbal action is to isolate the verb word from any distracting elements, such as subject pronouns or tense-aspect suffixes. This is achieved by a special construction that uses an auxiliary verb, which carries the pronoun and other verbal markings, followed by the particle *ti* and the unadorned verb stem, sometimes referred to as the noun form of the verb (Josserand, Schele, and Hopkins 1985). This construction is not unlike English verb phrases with infinitives, and it is particularly suited to hieroglyphic texts, because it allows the verb to occupy an entire glyph block, without extraneous affixes to detract from its importance. Such constructions are typical of the Palenque texts, but are also found elsewhere, especially in the Southern Maya Lowlands; they are also typical of modern Chol, as opposed to other Mayan languages, although they appear sporadically in Yucatecan languages and other Mayan neighbors of Chol.

Disturbed Syntax Around the Peak

It has long been noted by epigraphers that, just when it appears that the most important events are being presented, the text suddenly gets harder to read. This is a reflection of the phenomenon of *disturbed syntax* around the peak event of the text. An example of this phenomenon is found in the last clause of the main tablet from the Temple of the Cross, Palenque (fig. 7, table 7).

The episode begins by focusing on the birth of Chan Bahlum I (an ancestor of the protagonist of these texts, Chan Bahlum II), set against a background of the birth of his older brother, Chaacal II. It then continues with

two backgrounded phrases introduced by Distance Numbers, only one of which leads to the focal event of the episode, which is also the peak event of the entire text on the Cross Tablet. The episode as a whole is the peak episode, and even the first sentence has distorted or disturbed syntax. The Calendar Round that is proper to the backgrounded clause, the birth of Chaacal II, is not found within that clause, but rather at the end of the following, foregrounded clause, the birth of CB I (table 7). But the real problems begin with the following two constructions. First a Distance Number of more than forty-five years begins counting from the birth of CB I, given with its correct CR following CB I's name; this DN leads correctly to the final, focused event of the text, the accession as *zac uinic* of CB I (stated only as PEI + Verb + Complement, with both the subject and the CR deleted). But before this focused clause begins, still another DN clause is inserted, in a parenthetical construction. This second DN also leads from CB I's birth as the background event, but no corresponding foregrounded event follows; since the DN itself is somewhat eroded in the tun coefficient, we can only guess that it leads to some unspecified event, presumably in the life of CB I, between fifteen and nineteen tuns after his birth. The peak event of the Cross Tablet, then, is the accession of Chan Bahlum I; though its importance in the narrative flow is signaled through the use of the PEI, only the context provides the information necessary to identify the actor and the date of this important event. The very lack of the other grammatical elements adds to the highlighted importance of the peak event.

Discourse Analysis of Long Narrative Texts

In long narrative texts, episodes are linked together to form a discourse unit that should be studied as a whole, not as isolated parts. This discourse unit may span several inscriptions, just as iconographic programs may occur across a series of monuments or even structures, forming an integrated statement. Though the Cross Group at Palenque is the first of the long connected texts to be studied as a single narrative via the discourse model

Table 7. Palenque, Cross Tablet, Right Side Text, U6–U17: Disturbed Syntax around the Peak Event of an Inscription

Location	Structure	Content
U6–T9	DN-ix V-ix S	"It was 1 day, 1 uinal, and 1 tun, from when Chaacal (II) was born"
U9–T11	PEI-V S	"until Chan Bahlum (I) was born; (since) 7 Kan 17 Mol."
U11–14	DN-ix Vb-ix S Temp ₁	"It was 7 days, 4 uinals, 8 tuns, 2 katuns, since Chan Bahlum (I) was born on 11 Chicchan 13 Ch'en" . . .
T15–U16	DN-ix VB-ix S	["It was 2 days, 8 uinals, 15+ tuns since Chan Bahlum (I) was born" . . .]
T17–U17	PEI-Vb-Obj Prep-Comp	"until he held the sacred bundle of the succession."

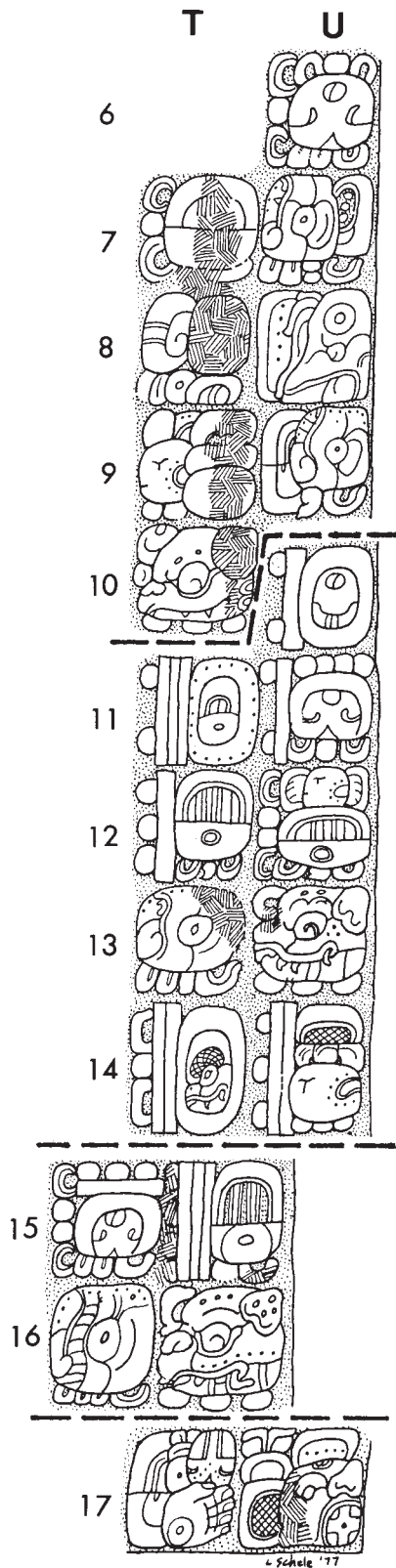


Fig. 7 Palenque, Tablet of the Cross, U6–U17. Disturbed syntax around the peak event (drawing by Linda Schele).

(Josserand and Schele 1984, in press) it is clear that other texts at Palenque and elsewhere work similarly (Bassie 1986). Here I use the Cross Group to illustrate the relation of captions to the whole text, the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs to illustrate the event-line, and the Tablet of the Slaves to illustrate the structural division of a long text into episodes.

Setting the Scene: The Caption Texts

In the Cross Group, the caption texts (or secondary texts) are found around figures in central iconographic displays.⁸ Karen Bassie is carrying out a detailed study (1986 and in preparation) of the relationship of these short texts to both the images that are their matrices, and the long hieroglyphic texts that surround them, in effect testing hypotheses generated by the discourse analysis of the Cross Group texts (Josserand and Schele 1984, in press). The caption texts on the three main panels of the Cross Group introduce the contemporary ruler of Palenque, Chan Bahlum II, who erected these temples and almost certainly commissioned their inscriptions, which deal with the major events of his life and relate him to history, both mythological and recent.

In terms of the overall content of the long hieroglyphic texts from the Cross Group, the three tablets themselves can be characterized as follows: the Cross Tablet sets the stage for the events in the life of Chan Bahlum II by giving both mythological and dynastic history as “background” for the next two tablets (the Sun and the Foliated Cross). The mythological events constitute a second storyline concerning the births of the Triad gods, and these events are previewed in the images and caption texts from the *alfardas* that flank the stairs on each of the three temples. But this mythological tale is itself a kind of backdrop for the life of Chan Bahlum II. The mythological event-line continues as the first half of both of the next two tablets, but it is clear from the associated images that the more important storyline is that concerning Chan Bahlum II. The second tablet in the series is from the Temple of the Sun, whose texts (both caption and long texts) emphasize events in the early life of Chan Bahlum II, especially what Bassie calls his “first lineage event.” The third and last tablet is that of the Foliated Cross, and its texts highlight the events in the life of the mature Chan Bahlum II, particularly those on and following 2 Cib 14 Mol (an astronomical event;⁹ and perhaps also the dedication of one or more of the Cross Group temples themselves).

The caption texts on all three tablets can be considered to be in pairs: each tablet has two sets of short texts, one set associated with the smaller figure and the other with the larger figure shown on each tablet. In fact, the content of the texts is much the same on all three tablets, and the relationship between the large or small figure and the content of the set of caption texts surrounding them also remains constant. The caption texts surrounding the larger figure in all three panels contain references to

Chan Bahlum II's accession (as *zac uinic* of the succession), while the caption texts surrounding the smaller figure in the three panels all contain references to a ceremony in which Chan Bahlum II participated when he was about six years old (on Gregorian date 17 June 641 A.D.). This is Chan Bahlum's "heir apparency" event (Schele 1984a:77, 95, 114–115, 1984b) or "first lineage event" (Bassie 1986), effectively the beginning of his public life. These two events, Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event and his accession as lord of the succession, are the events being depicted in the images of the three tablets (Bassie 1986; Schele 1976:12–14 treats the smaller figure as the deceased Pacal, not Chan Bahlum).

A comparison of the caption texts from the three tablets reveals that only the Cross Tablet caption texts carry PEI, or event-line focus markers; that is, they are the only caption texts that prominently display temporal movement, from one event to another, in sequential/chronological order. This reflects the function of the caption texts as well as the main text of this temple, which is to "set the stage" for the main events in the life of CB II. In this respect, the Cross caption texts (fig. 8 and table 8) give an overview or preview of what is to come in the other two tablets.

The caption texts associated with the smaller figure (on the left in the Cross Tablet, fig. 8) begin with the Calendar Round of Chan Bahlum II's first lineage event (G–K3), identifying him as the son of Pacal and Lady

Ah Po Hel (K4–K6), and then move, via a DN, to the CR of the 9.10.10.0.0 lahuntun Period Ending, which CB II must have celebrated in his new capacity (K7–K10). Note the unusual syntax: the CR that follows the DN corresponds to the date of the Period Ending; it should normally *follow* the Verb in clauses introduced by the PEI, but here it precedes the PEI. This order would usually indicate that the CR corresponds to the earlier event, from which the DN counts. But since the CR for that event was given in the first sentence, there is no real confusion generated by this order; instead, it functions to highlight the later event, which now is the only element following the PEI.

The caption texts associated with the larger figure (on the right in the Cross Tablet) begin a new episode, with the CR of Chan Bahlum II's accession as *zac uinic* of the succession (L1–O1). The text then moves via a Distance Number of slightly over six years to the 2 Cib event by the Palenque Triad (O2–O6), and from there to the rites three days later,¹⁰ which are associated with the 2 Cib ceremonies (O7–O15). These last rites, performed by Chan Bahlum II, are given further prominence by their double presentation, in couplet form: Chan Bahlum "lets blood" and "holds the bundle (of the bloodletter)." The first statement of this bloodletting seems to have a long noun phrase as its final element (at O10–O11), but it is unclear whether it is functioning as a subject (= CB), or as an indirect object (the recipi-

Table 8. Palenque, Cross Tablet, Central Panel: Image and Caption Texts

Location	Structure	Content
Left Text	Temp + Vb + S-Parentage G, H I J, K1–K6	"On 9 Akbal 6 Xul, the many titled Lord (but as yet unnamed as Chan Bahlum), the Jaguar Lord of Palenque, the child of Great Pacal, and child of Lady Ah Po Hel, was displayed on the pyramid."
	DN + Temp K7–8 K9 PEI-Vb K10	"17 kins, 8 uinals, and 1 tun later was 13 Ahau 18 Kankin, when the (10th katun) cycle was completed." (i.e., the 9.10.10.0.0 Period Ending)
Right Text	Temp + Vb-Obj + Comp + S L1–2 L3 M N–O1	"On 8 Oc 3 Kayab (9.12.11.12.10) the Great Sun Lord Chan Bahlum (II) held the sacred bundle of the succession."
	DN + Vb-Obj O2–3 O4 PEI-Vb ₁ O5 Vb ₂ + Comp + S O6 O7	"6 kins, 11 uinals, and 6 tuns passed from when he held the bundle" "until the sky event (on 2 Cib)."
	DN + Pron-Vb ₁ -Obj + Comp + S? O8 O9 O10 O11	"The Triad (just GI?) did an event?" "On the third day he let blood . . ."
	Pron-Vb ₂ -Obj + S O12 O13–15	"The Great Sun Lord Chan Bahlum (II), Palenque Jaguar Lord, Ah Po of Palenque, held the bundle (of the bloodletter)."

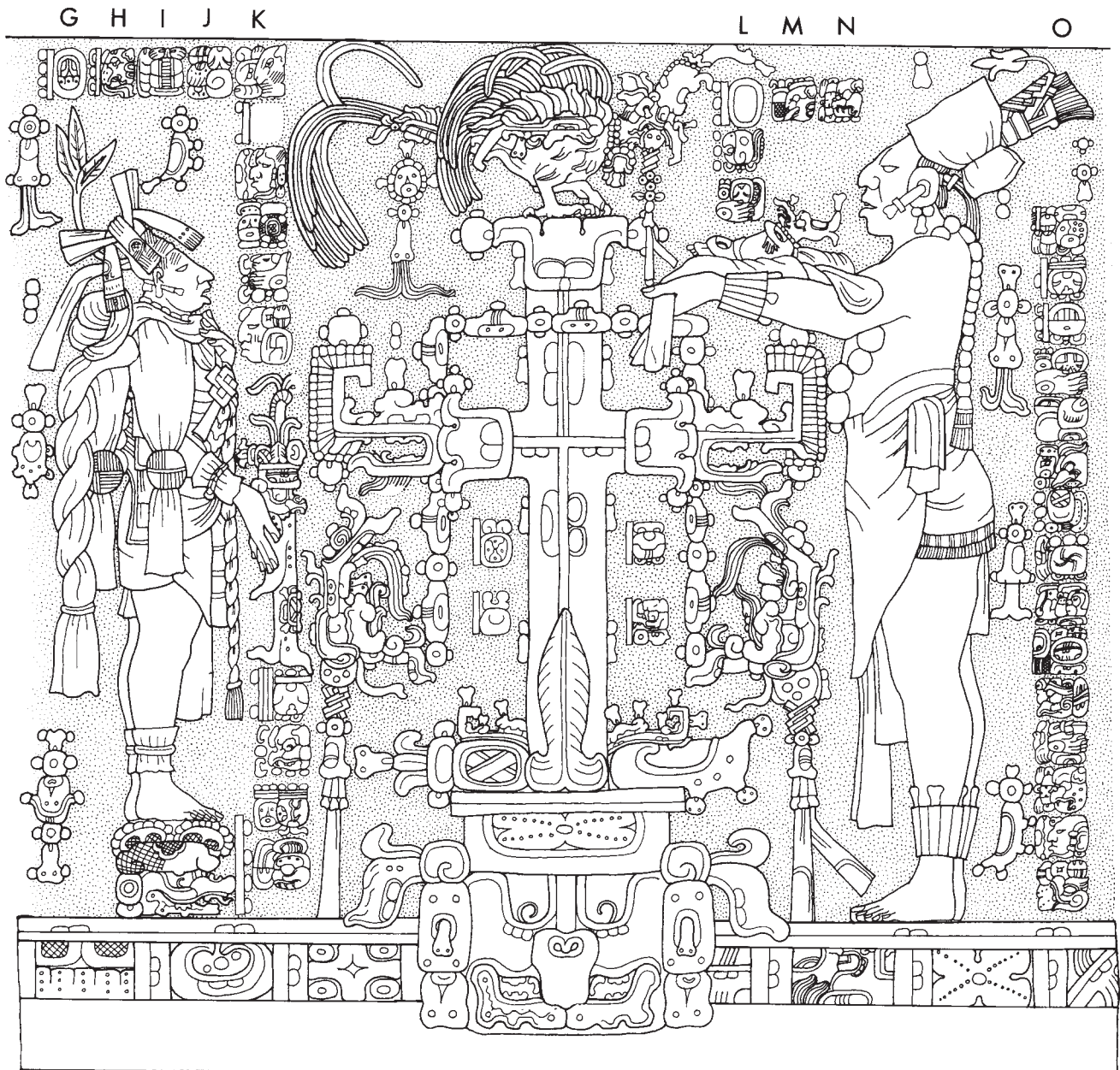


Fig. 8 Palenque, Tablet of the Cross, Central Panel. Image and caption texts (drawing by Linda Schele).

ent/beneficiary of the actions?), or as some other kind of verbal complement.

The Event-Line: Development of the Story

The event-line can be simple, as on Tikal Stela 22 (table 3), or very complex, as in the Group of the Cross inscriptions. A good example, easy to follow, is the event-line of the inscription on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs from Palenque (fig. 9). This text is a two-episode narrative; that is, it has two sections that correspond to distinct time frames (table 9). The first episode opens

with the Calendar Round at the beginning of the text, which is not an Initial Series date, but is like IS Period Ending expressions: "On 12 Ahau 8 Ceh the 11th katun rested, under the auspices of the great Pacal of the Five Pyramids, Blood Lord of Palenque" (A1–B4). This statement sets the time frame and begins the event-line. The second sentence (A5–D1) sets the grammatical pattern for the presentation of all the events that follow, most of which involve a ruler of Palenque being seated as lord and/or doing a special rite in the White Stone House (i.e., House E of the Palace, which was once painted white, and which also housed the throne referred to in

later sentences). These subsequent events are all presented using the following set phrasing as the constant pattern of development for the event-line:

1. Verb + DN=*ix* + PEI + Verb + CR
2. Verb + Complement + Subject
3. Couplet expression.

Each new event on the event-line is introduced by a unique substitute for the verb normally used to indicate the passing of time (the Distance Number introductory verb), here replaced by poetic renderings utilizing typically Mayan couplets of paired oppositions (Day and Night cycled; Life and Death; Venus and the Moon;

Wind and Water). Then a Distance Number leads from the event in the preceding sentence to the Calendar Round date of the new event on the event-line. The CR is actually functioning grammatically as the subject of a special past-tense verb, *uhti*, "it came to pass" or "it occurred" (Stuart 1984b).

The event that took place on this date is actually the focused event, not the date itself, even though the verb preceding the CR carries the Posterior Event Indicator focus marker. In this text, the PEI serves chiefly as an indicator of temporal movement through the text, placing events on a sequential event-line. The verb of the new event is given special prominence by appearing first in its own sentence (the expected initial element, the



12 Ahau	8 Ceh	S Pacal	S EG	DN	DN	PEI Vb uhti	9 Manik	Obj	Comp	Mother (Title)	DN
Vb	S 11 Katuns	DNIG Vb	DN	PEI Vb uhti	9 Ik	15 Uo	Vb+Comp	S (Title)	S (Title)	13 Ahau	13 Muan
Vb	S Pacal	DN	DN	5 Kayab	Vb+Comp	S (Title)	S (Title)	S (Title)	S Kuk	Vb	PEI Vb
S (Title)	S EG	PEI Vb uhti	5 Lamat	S (Title)	S Chaacal	S Kuk	S EG	S (Title)	S (Title)	Obj Comp	Vb Obj
DN	DN	6 Xul	Vb	S (Title)	S EG	Pron+Vb Loc	Loc	Pron+Vb	Child of Father	Vb?	Obj?
PEI Vb uhti	9 Chuen	Comp S (Title)	S Kan Xul	Pron+Vb+obj	Loc	DNIG Vb	DN	Father (Chaacal)	Father (Title)	? Comp Vb	S (Title)
9 Mac	Vb	S EG	Pron+Vb Loc	DNIG Vb	DN	PEI Vb uhti	7 Manik	Fa EG	Pron+Vb	S Pacal	title PEI S Vb
Obj or Loc	Comp	Loc	DNIG Vb	DN	DN	0 Pax	Vb	Child of Mother	Mother Lady X-Ahau	Obj	Comp

Fig. 9 Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs. Event-line development (drawing by Linda Schele; schematic by K. Josserand; shaded affixes are Anterior Event Indicators).

Table 9. Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs: Event-line Development in a Long Hieroglyphic Text

Episode I		
(1)	9.11.0.0.0	On 12 Ahau 8 Ceh the 11th katun rested, under the auspices of Pacal.
(2)	9.11.2.1.11	2+ years later, it was 9 Chuen 9 Mac. Pacal dedicated his great Palace.
(3)	9.13.10.6.8	2+ years later, it was 5 Lamat 6 Xul. Kan-Xul was seated as Ah Po; he sat on the jaguar throne in the Palace.
(4)	9.14.10.4.2	19+ years later, it was 9 Ik 5 Kayab. Chaacal III was seated as <i>ahau</i> ; he sacrificed with the bloodletter in the Palace.
(5)	9.16.13.0.7	2+ katuns later, it was 9 Manik 15 Uo. Kuk II was seated as <i>ahau</i> ; he sat on the jaguar throne in the Palace.
(6)	9.17.13.0.7	1 katun later, it was 7 Manik, the seating of Pax. The great and many titled Kuk completed his first katun as <i>ahau</i> , he who is of royal descent, of the blood of the Great Chaacal, Lord of Palenque; and who is the child of the royal lady, the Lady Cahal.
Episode II		
(1)	9.17.13.0.0	7 days earlier, 13 Ahau 13 Muan was the 13th tun,
(2)	9.17.13.0.7	and then he completed his first katun as <i>ahau</i> ; he erected a monument (this stone?); he sacrificed(?), under the auspices of Pacal and then he finished his first katun as <i>ahau</i> .

CR date, having been removed to a separate sentence, as explained above). The event is usually given further emphasis by a second, parallel sentence that serves as a “couplet” to the first statement of the event (the order of the events is shown in table 9).

Notice that the second episode begins a new time frame (L1–K4); that is, it restarts the event-line by going back in time to an earlier date, the oxlahuntun Period Ending (9.17.13.0.0). The short Distance Number (of 7 days) connects this Period Ending with Kuk’s anniversary event, which was the peak of the first episode. This second episode recaps the action of the first episode in a poetic manner, by beginning with a Period Ending (like the first episode) and closing with the 1 katun anniversary event, which is here given even more prominence by the addition of other events presumably carried out on the same date. The formal structure of this last sentence is chiasmic, producing a “mirror image” of parallel constructions, of the A-B-B’-A’ pattern (De Long 1986).

The visual layout of the event-line is very striking on this monument; the Posterior Event Indicators or event-line markers are displayed across the text in an ascending pattern, which leads from the date of Pacal’s “fire” event (the House E dedication rite?) on the lower left at A6, diagonally up, via the intermediate seating events of Kuk’s direct lineal ancestors marked by the PEIs at C4 and E2, to the date of Kuk’s accession, at the top middle of the panel at G1. Most of the rest of this double column is given over to Kuk’s titles, a dead giveaway of who

this monument is about. The event-line continues with another date associated with Kuk, 7 Manik 0 Pax (G7–G8), when Kuk celebrated his 1 katun anniversary as Lord of Palenque; this may also be the dedicatory date for this tablet. Kuk is again given great prominence by the very elaborate name phrase for the anniversary verb; Kuk’s name and many titles, plus his parentage statements, take up an entire double column on the right of the tablet. The final double column (beginning at L1) contains the second episode, or closing statement, which opens with the 9.17.13 Period Ending (not as good as a full katun ending, but 13 tuns is still a good number to celebrate, especially given the 13 Ahau 13 Muan Calendar Round). Then the 1 katun anniversary event is emphasized again by stating it twice, both times with the PEI focus marker (at L3 and L7). These are the only two times in this text that the PEI appears directly on the *event* verb rather than on the *uhti* verb that precedes the other Calendar Rounds. In addition, there are two more statements, about other events associated with Kuk’s 1 katun anniversary.

The Episodes of a Narrative Text: The Tablet of the Slaves

The discourse analysis approach can lead to new insights in a difficult text by “chunking” the text into significant sections, based on the formal characteristics of event-line, peak, and temporal introducers. Schele (this volume) gives a different kind of reinterpretation of the Tablet of the Slaves, recognizing that Chac-Zutz’ was

not a king of Palenque, but a subordinate lord carrying a title that has been read as *cahal*, a regional governor.¹¹

In the Tablet of the Slaves text, each episode is formally marked as a new time frame, and there is both unity within the episodes and contrast between them, in terms of their grammatical structure as well as their content (fig. 10 and table 10). Each new episode backs up in time slightly, to restart the time-line, except for the last episode, which starts ahead but then backs up via an unusual grammatical construction. The first episode is characterized in content by the seating events of earlier rulers, in grammatical structure by the use of the same “seating” verb in all three sentences, and by “katun endings” as approximate Distance Numbers. The second episode, which introduces the main actor, Chac-Zutz’, begins with a completely different grammatical pattern as well as a different verbal expression for accession to power. The third episode concerns war, capture, and perhaps sacrifice events performed by Chac-Zutz’, and the fourth and last episode connects him to a major Period Ending and celebrates his “60th” birthday (three katuns).

Episode I: This text gives a series of consecutive dates and background events, and sets the time frame with the seating of Palenque’s most illustrious ruler, rather than with a more standard seating event, the seating of a katun (Period-Ending expression). Note the use of “ap-

proximate” Distance Numbers in this episode, that is, katun seatings between rulers. Actual Long Counts are implied, by consecutive Calendar Round dates, and are confirmed by readers on the grounds of “shared knowledge” about who was ruler of Palenque during katun endings named by the Calendar Rounds. The dated events run consecutively from Pacal’s accession through Chan Bahlum II’s accession and on to that of Kan-Xul II.

Episode II: This section of text establishes a new time frame; it backs up in time. This episode contains the only Posterior Event Indicator of the whole text (and the only real Distance Number in the first three episodes). It is not the only peak event in the text, but the highlighting or focus on the other peak events is differently expressed. Note that it is *Chaacal’s* accession that is emphasized, but it should be understood that this episode is only giving additional background to the main events of this text, which deal with the life of *Chac-Zutz’* (CZ), the protagonist of the text, who is also portrayed as the central figure in the image of the tablet. Note also that the text opened (in the first episode) with the seating of Pacal the Great, during whose reign Chac-Zutz’ was born.

A very unusual aspect of this text is the presentation of the main character, Chac-Zutz’, in a phrase that is marked as background, or previously given information,

Table 10. Palenque, Tablet of the Slaves: Episodic Analysis

Episode I: Opening/Background (No Initial Series)	
(1) On 5 Lamat 1 Mol Pacal was seated as Ah Po.	9.9.2.4.8
(2) 3 katun endings later, Chan Bahlum was seated.	9.12.11.12.10
(3) 1 katun ending later, Kan-Xul was seated.	9.13.10.6.8
Episode II: The setting for Chac-Zutz’ life	
(1) 11 tuns and 2 katuns had passed, since Ma-Zutz’ birth on 7 Caban 15 Kayab, and then Chaacal held the shining bundle of the succession on 9 Ik 5 Kayab.	9.11.18.9.17 9.14.10.4.2
(2) On 8 Imix 7 Yaxkin, Chac-Zutz’, lineage lord, held the smoking bundle of the succession.	9.14.11.12.14
(3) On 7 Ik 5 Zec, there was a war event.	9.14.13.11.2
(4) It was in the territory of Lord Chac-Zutz’.	
Episode III: Great moments in the life of Chac-Zutz’	
(1) On 9 Cimi 19 Zac, he captured Ah Manik, Ah Ahual, and Ah Chan(?).	9.14.11.17.6
(2) On 2 Cauac 2 Xul, there was a war event.	9.14.17.12.19
(3) It was in the territory of Chac-Zutz’.	
(4) On 7 Imix 4 Ceh, many titled Chac-Zutz’, <i>cahal</i> , performs an event (sacrifice?).	9.14.18.1.1
Episode IV: Dedication of the commemorative stone	
(1) It is 8 uinals and 1 tun before the period ending on 4 Ahau 13 Yax, which is the seating of the (15th) katun.	9.15.0.0.0
(2) On 5 Lamat 6 Uo was the lineage event.	9.14.18.9.8
(3) He held the <i>ahau</i> bundle.	
(4) Nine days later he completed 3 katuns, on 1 Caban 15 Uo, since his birth.	9.14.18.9.17

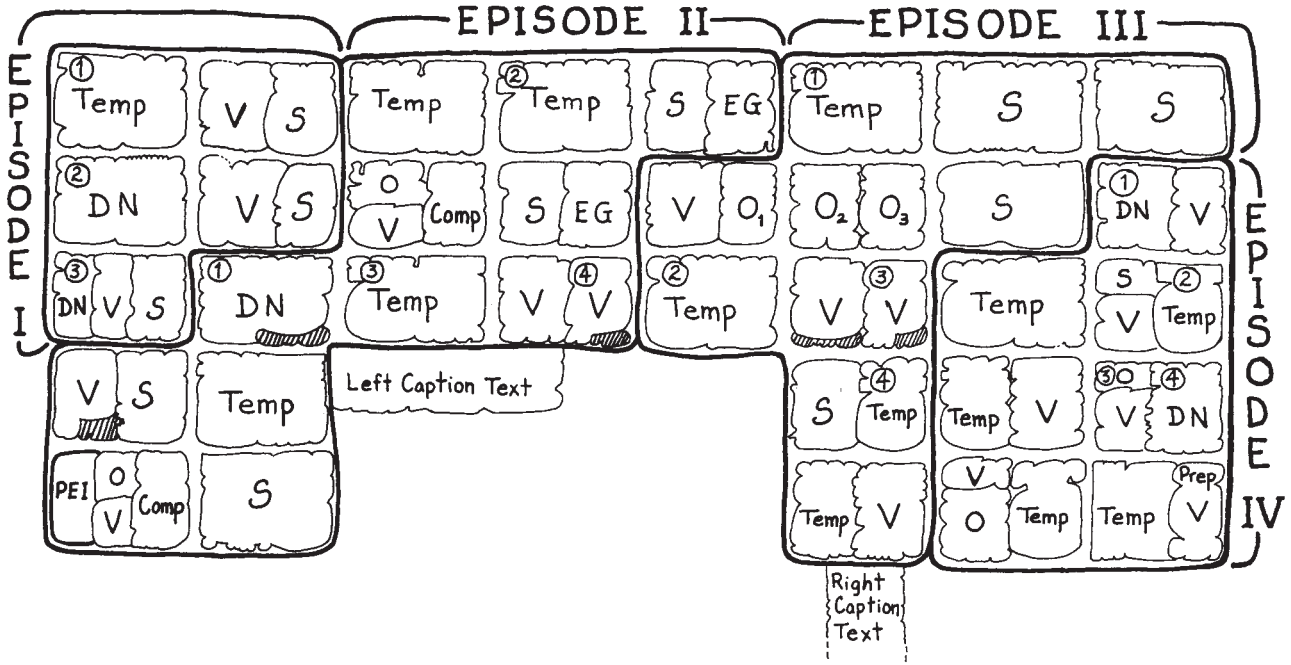
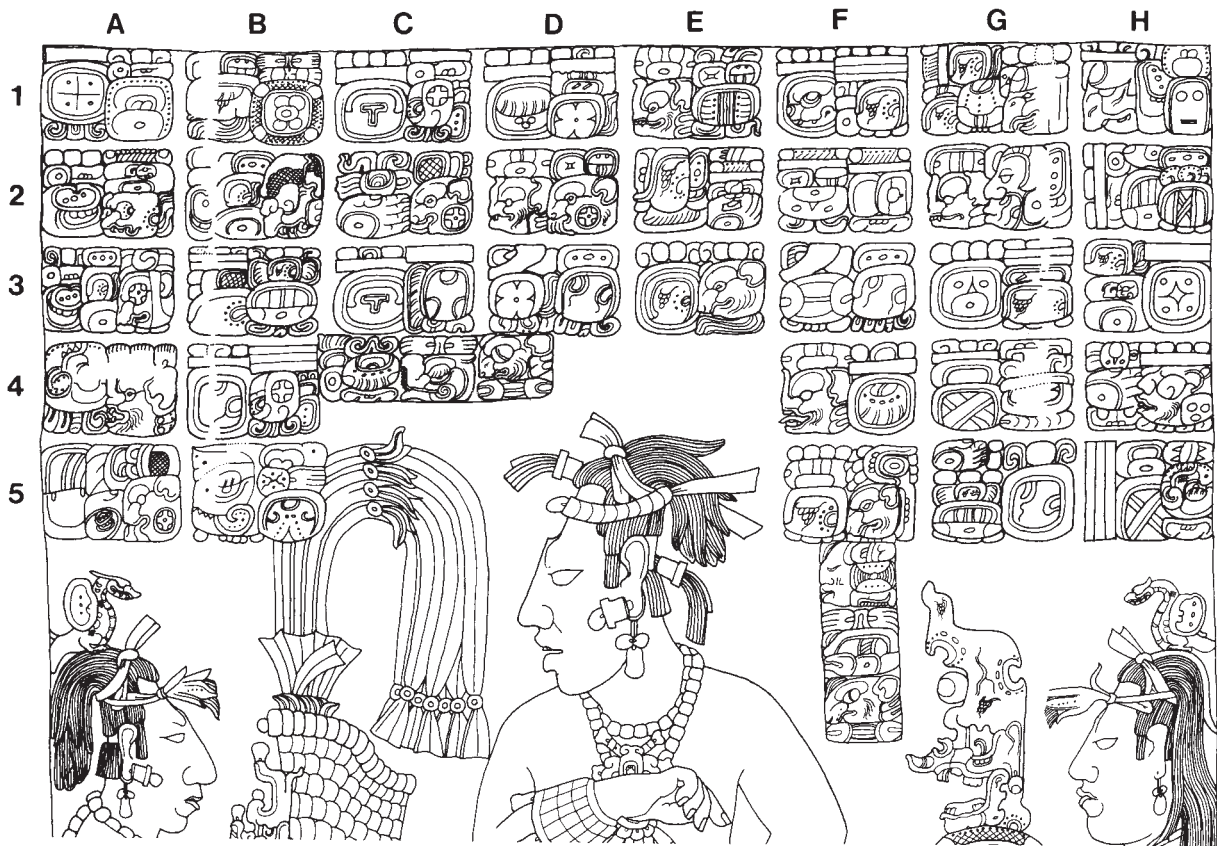


Fig. 10 Palenque, Tablet of the Slaves. Episodic analysis (drawing by Linda Schele; schematic by K. Josseland; shaded affixes are Anterior Event Indicators).

even though this is the very first time CZ is mentioned on this stone. Why is the relation between CZ and Chaacal presented in this seemingly aberrant manner? Compare this text to our own monuments erected by lower officials, which nonetheless prominently name presiding higher officials (mayor, state governor, or U.S. president). Chaacal, the presiding lord, must be mentioned, and even given the most prominence of all the actors in the text, but we should not forget who the text is about, so we must understand the subtle techniques being employed to balance conflicting pressures for prominence. Yes, Chaacal's accession is the "most important event" in some senses, since he is the ruler of Palenque in power during the period of these events. But in the text, Chaacal's accession is framed by two events in the life of Chac-Zutz': his birth, which is the first background statement of this episode, and his "lineage event," which is like in kind to Chaacal's accession in some way that is still unclear to the modern reader. This second episode ends with a "war event," which seems to carry background marking. The "land of" phrase carries the *-ix* suffix (T126) which marks backgrounded material, and it is possible that the verb for the war event also has the *-ix* suffix.

Episode III: The great moments in the life of Chac-Zutz' all seem to be concerned with war, capture, and perhaps sacrifice (CZ's greatest hits?). Once again, the time frame backs up, to restart the action with CZ's capture of Ah Manik, Ah Ahual, and another named lord. This event followed CZ's lineage event by some five uinals (a third of a year), and preceded the war event in the previous episode by some two years. The next event in Episode III is another war event in the land of CZ. The dates indicate that the "war event" in this episode is not the same one referred to at the end of the last episode (in fact, it was some four years later than the first war event).

Notice also in this episode the use of implied Distance Numbers; none are given overtly until the last episode. Again, the sequential Calendar Rounds indicate chronological development. All three events seem to be on the event-line, without any particular emphasis on one of them (no apparent foregrounding). It is possible that the war event again carries some kind of background marking (the *-ix* suffix on the "land of" phrase). On positional and elaborative grounds it would appear that the last event is the peak of this episode, but its exact nature is unclear: perhaps it is sacrifice. Whatever it is, the event glyph is covered with blood signs. Note also the very long title phrase before Chac-Zutz's name. The date itself has no special significance; it follows the preceding event, the second war event, by about six uinals.

Episode IV: This is the most unusual episode in terms of time frames, for it does not back up in time and restart the time-line like the other three episodes do. Rather it starts from the other end, from the latest date on the entire tablet, and backs up from there, so a new start is

implied. Even though the event-line might be considered to be continuous, there are other fairly clear indications that these last events form a separate episode—in particular, the use of genuine Distance Numbers to connect the events within the episode. Note especially the Distance Number at the beginning of the episode, which connects Chac-Zutz' to a major Period Ending at 9.15.0.0.0. The grammar of this construction is unusual, for the backgrounded event, the PE, is actually later in time than the focused events, CZ's second lineage event and his 60th birthday nine days later.

Perhaps the lineage event is the peak event of this episode, since it is expressed in a couplet ("On 5 Lamat 6 Uo he did the lineage event; he held the *ahau* bundle"; note that the lineage event in this episode is not the same as the earlier lineage event). But the completion (on 1 Caban 15 Uo) of 3 katuns since birth seems to be more prominent, if only because of its text-final position on the tablet. Another marker of prominence for both of these events is the striking absence of the grammatical subject for both main verbs. Chac-Zutz', the agent or actor, is not mentioned, though he is clearly the person being referred to (the date is 3 katuns since his birth-date, which was given in Episode II). Note also how this last sentence restates the theme of the text, the life of Chac-Zutz', by framing the actions of the text as occurring between his birth (during Pacal's reign) and his sixtieth birthday (presumably during Chaacal's reign). This recap of the action at the end of the tale is another characteristic of both modern Chol texts and Mayan hieroglyphic texts.

Notes

1. The spelling conventions followed here use established linguistic orthographies for citations of Mayan words, except that the proper names of rulers of Palenque follow the model set forth in the *Proceedings of the First Palenque Round Table*. Abbreviations are of two kinds, those dealing with hieroglyphic terms, and those dealing with linguistic terms. Hieroglyphic abbreviations include: AEI (Anterior Date Indicator), BJ (Bird Jaguar of Yaxchilán), CB (Chan Bahlum), CR (Calendar Round), CZ (Chac-Zutz'), DN (Distance Number), DNIG (Distance Number Introductory Glyph), EG (Emblem Glyph), IS (Initial Series), ISIG (Initial Series Introductory Glyph), LC (Long Count), PE (Period Ending), and PEI (Posterior Event Indicator). Linguistic abbreviations include Comp (Completion of a Verb), Loc (Locative Phrase), O or Obj (Object of a Verb), Poss (Possessive Pronoun), Possr (Possessor of a Noun), Prep (Preposition), Pron (Pronoun Subject of a Verb), S (Subject), Temp (Temporal Phrase), and V or Vb (Verb).

2. Some basic discourse analysis references that treat the concepts presented here at greater length, with respect to Mesoamerican languages, are Jones (1979), Longacre (1979), and Jones and Jones (1984).

3. A reading of *i wal* has also been suggested for the PEI (Justeson 1984a:350), which indicates its interpretation as a modal verb (Pronoun *i* plus modal verb *wal*, cf. Chol *woli*, the progressive tense/aspect marker). Evidence cited for this reading is the use of such a construction in colonial Chontal documents (Smailus 1975). I believe that this interpretation of the PEI as a modal verb is one possibility: it reflects the relation of the PEI to punctual time. Even interpretations of the

PEI as a third-person pronoun (Lounsbury 1974:17; Bricker 1985:68) also seem to have temporal correlates, since use of the alternate pronouns is governed by verbal tense/aspect and voice; the “split ergativity” characteristic of Cholan and Yucatec reflect the overriding influence of tense/aspect on pronominal use. But functionally the PEI acts more like a subordinating conjunction, and its interpretation as a preverbal third-person pronoun does not seem well founded (MacLeod 1984:258–260).

4. This reading for the Anterior Event Indicator was independently suggested by Will Norman (cited in Fox and Justeson 1984b:60); Fox and Justeson also reviewed other proposals for reading T126 (1984b:54–62).

5. This is in contrast to views held by Thompson (1960:50–51) and Kubler (1973:146).

6. Note that on the Temple of the Inscriptions, Chan Bahlum I's accession is given (implied) as 9.6.18.5.12 (8 kins, 12 uinals, 1 tun since he was seated as *ahau* of Palenque until the Period Ending 9.7.0.0.0), and this is the same Long Count date as is given on the Temple of the Cross for his becoming *zac uinic*.

7. In the accompanying iconographic program, GI' the son does appear on the Temple of the Cross doorjamb and on the exterior *alfardas*.

8. In the following discussion I am deeply indebted to Karen Bassie for her perceptive insights on the content of the iconography and the relationship between the images and the caption texts of the Cross Group panels.

9. Lounsbury has proposed that the 2 Cib date records a Jupiter hierophany (cited in Schele 1984b:100).

10. David Stuart (personal communication) argues that the last DN construction is not “the third day,” but just an ordinal, “the third (time?).” See also Riese (1984a) on *hel* hieroglyphs.

11. David Stuart (personal communication and 1986a) considers that the title is not read as *cahal*, although the sense of “regional governor” is still valid.

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The idea of dividing long hieroglyphic texts into “chunks” and interpreting them in terms of discourse structures was anticipated by Lounsbury (1980:115) and by Kubler (1973, 1974). Clause structure has been presented at length by Schele (1982 and elsewhere), and temporal structuring of long narratives has been independently suggested by Fought (1985).