



# The PARI Journal

A quarterly publication of the Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute

Volume IV, No 2, Fall 2003

## In This Issue:

**Photographing the  
Cacaxtla Murals**  
by Merle Greene  
Robertson

PAGES 1-3

•  
**Frans Blom and the  
Decipherment of  
Maya Writing**  
by Jesper Nielsen

PAGES 4-9

•  
**Morley's Diary:**  
**April 10-13, 1932**

PAGES 10-16

## Submissions:

parijournal@mesoweb.com

The printed version of this issue is distributed to subscribing libraries and is available via PARI Online Ordering or:  
D. Greene & Co.  
970 Dewing Avenue,  
Suite 300  
Lafayette, CA 94549  
925-824-8630

The electronic version will remain available at:  
www.mesoweb.com/  
pari/journal/0402

ISSN 1531-5398

## Photographing the Cacaxtla Murals

---

MERLE GREENE ROBERTSON

---

In 1976 my good friends Augusto Molina Montes and his wife Marta Foncerrada de Molina called me and told me that Marta had been asked by UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico) to record the newly discovered murals at Caxcatla, an archaeological site near Puebla, Mexico, and she wanted me to do the photography. I came to Mexico City, and the three of us went to Puebla where we stayed in a hotel there for the weekend.

These murals were first discovered by two young looters who were digging into a mound, probably hoping to find some pottery. When they unexpectedly came upon an area that showed perfectly preserved murals, they realized they had stumbled upon something very important that should be reported to the authorities. So these honest looters turned conservators. INAH, Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, was called, and there begins the recording of this fantastic site. There are so many things about these murals that are Maya, in a non-Maya area, that had they not been turned over to the authorities when they were, but dug up, to surface who knows where, no one would have believed that they had come from this area.

Another couple, also by the name of Molina, were in charge of the site and had done a considerable amount of work uncovering many of the murals when we came to photograph them. No overhead covers or

roofs had been put up, so photographing was easy — no shadows from an overhang, and best of all, no tourists, as the site had not been made known yet. I took dozens of color pictures with both my Hasselblad camera and my 35mm Nikon.

As I was living at Palenque, I sent the film back to San Francisco with a friend to be processed. The photographic establish-



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson

ment was instructed to send one set of 8" x 10" photos to each of the following: Marta Foncerrada de Molina in Mexico City, Professor George Kubler at Yale, and to me, with instructions to send mine to the home of Professor Donald Robertson of Tulane University, with whom I would be staying.

Now we jump from Cacaxtla to New Orleans. Don Robertson was having a party, which probably fifty or more people attended: students, professors at Tulane, and

visiting people from Mexico. At the height of the party the doorbell rang and it was FedEx bringing a three-foot-long package addressed to me. I had no idea what this was all about as I had ordered nothing. I had forgotten all about the photographs that were to come to me in New Orleans, and anyway they would have been in a very small package holding twenty 8" x 10" photos.

Everyone was as excited as I was about what this package contained, so I opened it. It contained all of my



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson

photographs, but all were 20" x 20", not at all what I had ordered, and terribly expensive. No one knew about Cacaxtla, so had never seen photos of the murals. They were so excited, as we hung them all over the walls in the Robertsons' house and spent the rest of the night looking at and remarking about them.

Now comes stage three. A letter arrives at Tulane University accusing me of selling photos to Donald Robertson of a site that had not even been published yet. This, of course, was ridiculous, as, in the first place, I would never do such a thing, and in the second place, Donald Robertson, who was one of the most honest persons in every way I had ever known, would not even have thought of doing that. We went over all the people who had been at the party, trying to figure out who could possibly have been trying to get one or both of us in trouble. We never could figure that one out.

Marta did get her set of 8" x 10" photos, but George Kubler did not receive his. As Marta was taking a class from him at Yale, she took her set with her to New Haven so that they could work on them. Two years later Kubler's FedEx package of photos was found on a top shelf in his office. A secretary had not given them to him, just tossed them up on a high shelf.

When it came time for the 1978 Third Mesa Redonda de Palenque, in which Kubler, Foncerrada



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson

de Molina, and Alfredo Barrera Rubio had papers on Cacaxtla (Kubler 1980, Barrera Rubio 1980, Foncerrada de Molina 1980), and at the 1980 Palenque Conference when Donald Robertson also had a paper on Cacaxtla



Photo: Merle Greene Robertson

(Robertson 1985), my photographs were used, but my name was not put in the publications, because after all the erroneous accusations, we thought that we would just keep still until they were admitted to be false, which they later were. Apparently the credibility of the person who accused us in the first place was not as good as either Don's or mine.

### Bibliography

BARRERA RUBIO, ALFREDO

1980 "Mural Painting in the Puuc Region in Yucatán". In *Third Palenque Round Table, 1978*, pp. 173-182. Edited by Merle Greene Robertson. Austin: University of Texas Press.

FONCERRADA DE MOLINA, MARTA

1980 "Mural Painting in Cacaxtla and Teotihuacán Cosmopolitanism". In *Third Palenque Round Table, 1978*, pp. 183-198. Edited by Merle Greene Robertson. Austin: University of Texas Press.

KUBLER, GEORGE

1980 "Eclecticism at Cacaxtla". In *Third Palenque Round Table, 1978*, pp. 163-172. Edited by Merle Greene Robertson. Austin: University of Texas Press.

ROBERTSON, DONALD

1985 "The Cacaxtla Murals". In *Fourth Palenque Round Table, 1980*, pp. 291-302. Edited by Elizabeth P. Benson. San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute.



# Frans Blom and the Decipherment of Maya Writing

---

JESPER NIELSEN, University of Copenhagen

---

The purpose of the present article is to shed new light on phonetic and linguistic approaches to the decipherment of ancient Maya writing in the late 1920s and early 1930s. During research for a new biography on Frans Blom, published in Danish (Leifer et al. 2002), it became clear that Blom's perception of the writing system of the Maya was in opposition to dominant views of the time. Although Blom never became a pivotal figure in the decipherment, his own ideas and his reluctance to accept the general views of Maya writing of the time offer an interesting perspective on different academic "camps" in Maya hieroglyphic studies. Blom's ideas also appear to have influenced Benjamin Lee Whorf's unsuccessful attempt at a phonetic decipherment in 1933. Most importantly, however, Blom's brilliant intuition and approach foreshadowed later and more successful approaches to the decipherment of ancient Maya writing.

## A Brief Biographical Sketch of Frans Blom<sup>1</sup>

Frans Ferdinand Blom was born in Copenhagen in 1893 into a bourgeois family of wealthy merchants. The young Blom did not, however, wish to follow in the footsteps of his father. He attended the University of Copenhagen with the intent of studying art history but had very little success in this and soon dropped out after receiving low grades. After years of spending too much of the family's money in elegant cafés he was sent to distant Mexico in February 1919 on a one-way ticket to learn how to make a living on his own. After some time in Mexico, Frans got a job in the oil industry in Minatitlán in Veracruz. This, however, proved an unrewarding job, as Blom had always been more attracted by art, culture and languages. In 1922, after having worked for various oil companies in southern Mexico, Blom, at the age of 29, finally found his way into Maya archaeology. During the previous two years Blom had spent con-

siderable time taking notes on the Pre-Columbian temple mounds and stelae he encountered on his expeditions in the more-or-less uninhabited areas of lowland Veracruz, Tabasco and Chiapas. Blom's growing interest in archaeology is well-documented in an edited collection of his letters and diaries published in Danish (Blom 1923).<sup>2</sup> In the summer of 1922, Blom managed to get a job as an assistant for the eminent Mexican archaeologist Manuel Gamio in the Dirección de Antropología in Mexico City, and shortly after he sent his drawings of Tortuguero Stela 1 to Sylvanus G. Morley. From December 1922 to March 1923 Blom worked (on his own) in Palenque surveying the site and writing a report on what could be done to protect the already famous ruins (see Blom 1982). Morley became so impressed by the drawings and Blom's notes on the ruins – as was Alfred M. Tozzer of the Harvard University – that they both assisted Blom in receiving a scholarship to study archaeology at Harvard over two semesters (1923-1924). At Harvard, Blom studied under Tozzer and got together with Oliver G. Ricketson to work on a joint master's thesis which eventually became *Index of Ruins in the Maya Area* (Blom & Ricketson 1925). In the winter of 1924, Blom, Ricketson and Monroe Amsden went to Uaxactun in the Petén rainforest of Guatemala to prepare the excavations of the Carnegie Institution that were scheduled to begin the following year (see Black 1990). Blom ended up doing much of the job at Waxactun on his own, and it was during his two-month stay here that he made his discovery of the function of the E-Group as an astronomical observatory (Blom 1924).<sup>3</sup> Later the same year Blom joined the excavations of Pueblo Bonito in New Mexico as part of his training as an archaeologist. Soon after finishing his MA in the fall of 1924, Blom got a position at the newly established Department of Middle American Research at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he worked

under William Gates (see Brunhouse 1975:129-167; Leifer et al. 2002:163-166). Early in 1925 Frans Blom, accompanied by Oliver La Farge, set out on a long expedition that took him through southern Mexico and highland Guatemala. The discoveries and experiences of the journey were later published in *Tribes and Temples*, probably Blom's most famous publication (Blom & La Farge 1926-27). In 1926 the troublesome Gates was ousted from Tulane and Blom became director of the department – a position he was to hold until 1940.

What is worth noting in Frans Blom's career as a Mayanist and in his publications is his broad approach to Maya culture – both ancient and modern. He had strong interests and conducted research both in archaeology and ethnohistory as well as in ethnography. In this he was undoubtedly inspired by his good friend and mentor Alfred V. Kidder, who was celebrated for developing and encouraging interdisciplinary projects. Furthermore, Blom's friendly relation with the ethnohistorian Ralph L. Roys (who was affiliated with Blom's department for a period) made him deeply interested in and acquainted with the rich ethnohistoric sources that would offer several leads to an understanding of the ancient writing system.

### **Blom's Attempt at Hieroglyphic Decipherment**

In the 1920s when Blom got seriously interested in the Maya hieroglyphic writing system, the established view on the subject was that the writing system did not include signs that expressed sound or phonemes, but rather consisted of ideograms or logograms. Also, the inscriptions were believed to contain, not historical information, but references to calendrical and astronomical observations. The main figure behind this ruling consensus was the great and highly respected Maya scholar Sylvanus G. Morley (Coe 1992; Houston et al. 2001). Alternative approaches to the understanding of the writing system had failed, and it appears that by 1927 few American and English scholars were looking for phonetic signs and historical substance in Maya script.

From his first encounters with Maya inscriptions, Frans Blom developed a special interest in the enigmatic signs, and his 1922 drawing of the stela from Tortuguero was a turning point in his life. In an early letter to Morley, Blom says: "Have you ever had the feeling that the whole thing is so very near our reach, just like a dog that looks at you and wants to tell you something, but can only speak with its eyes? That's how I have often felt

these days, when staring, my eyes tired, on Maudslay's drawings and photographs" (cited in Brunhouse 1976: 32). Although initially trained and inspired by Morley, Blom quickly came to regard his methodology and entire conception of the writing system and its function as a dead end, and thus looked for other avenues of research. In 1929 he wrote: "It is all very well to know that the Maya carved calendrical hieroglyphs in stone and wood, but that does not give us a picture of the Maya culture as a whole, nor does it tell us how they lived" (Blom 1929: 3). To Thomas Thomsen, curator of the Ethnographic Collection at the National Museum in Denmark, Blom wrote about Morley: "This is the weakest side of Morley. He is only interested in the hieroglyphic inscriptions, in fact only in the first part of them. He has travelled around the Petén over the last 8 years collecting inscriptions (he's a genius at reading them), but hasn't measured as much as a single structure or picked up a sherd."<sup>4</sup> Apparently, this somewhat narrow-minded approach did not appeal to the overtly anti-authoritarian Blom and his interest in a more holistic understanding of the ancient Maya. Only by being familiar with many different aspects of Maya culture would it be possible to "crack the code". Undoubtedly, Blom also had other ancient writing systems in mind when he approached Maya glyphic texts. With his wide knowledge of other ancient civilizations and their means of written communication, to Blom there was something deeply strange about a writing system that only conveyed dates.

Furthermore, Blom's language skills (he read and spoke English, German, French and Spanish) allowed him to read earlier hieroglyphic studies in tongues other than English. Thus, he could read ideas about phoneticism and historical content in Maya writing put forth by French scholars León de Rosny and Jean Genet (Houston et al. 2001:77-88; 282-298). Genet's ideas were well-known to Blom, and they seem to have known each other through sustained correspondence (see Blom 1934; 1935). Another powerful sign of Blom's opposing view on the nature of Maya writing appears to have been the decision in 1927 to employ the German-born scholar Hermann Beyer as the hieroglyphic expert at Tulane (Thompson 1959; Stuart 1992:32-33; Houston et al. 2001:156; Leifer et al. 2002:207-208). Beyer believed Maya glyphs to be ideographic (a view Blom did not share), but, more importantly, he searched for historical content in the inscriptions and focused on non-calendrical decipherment. As a result, he represented an alterna-

tive approach to Morley's dominant, almost orthodox, view on Maya writing.

In 1928, Blom's interest in Maya writing had intensified, and a letter to Kidder from December that year shows that he was now working seriously on understanding Maya writing. After discussing Hermann Beyer's opinion on the glyphs being ideographs, Blom writes:

Personally I lean towards the idea that the glyphs express sound. The Maya language contains comparatively few basic sounds which express different things according to slight variations in accent. Roys has remarked on this fact in a footnote to one of his papers, and I have a hunch that the many pre-, sub, post and other fixes which we so frequently see in the glyphs have something to do with this. I have a collection of material toward the solution of this problem, but as yet I am not satisfied with the results. I firmly believe that we have reached the point in our studies of Maya hieroglyphs where we must have a proper knowledge of Maya linguistics before we can carry on. [...] Another question worries [sic] me. Did the ancient Maya priesthood have a hieratic language, just as now-a-days the Catholic Church uses latin freely. Many things like that are troubling me, and I am ploughing my way through Chilam Balam's [sic] and other documents in hopes to see the light some day. I do not occupy myself much with the calendrical glyphs but leave that to those who are already well tangled up in that matter.<sup>5</sup>

In these few lines Blom presents several important suggestions. To begin with, he seems convinced that the glyphs represent sound (as others before him). He firmly believed that the writing system was at least partly phonetic, and, as we shall see, he had no doubts that Landa's "alphabet" would provide a crucial key to decipherment, views he shared with earlier scholars like Léon de Rosny and Cyrus Thomas (Houston et al. 2001: 77-88, 113-117). Secondly, he points out the necessity of a linguistic approach to the problem – something that few, if any, seriously considered at this time. Blom had earlier planned to stay in Yucatán to learn Yucatec Maya, but had failed to find time for this project. The linguistic approach was a matter that he seems to have shared with Alfred Tozzer. Thus, Houston et al. describe Tozzer as: "one of the few scholars to champion other, more linguistically oriented points of view, perhaps because of his intimate familiarity with Yucatec Maya" (2001:154). Furthermore, Blom raises the question of the presence of a hieratic language in the ancient script. This is an issue which has only recently been raised again by Houston,

Stuart and Robertson (1998:294; Coe and Van Stone 2001:15). Finally, it is clear from the quote above that, to Blom, ethnohistoric sources were most likely to provide the decisive lead towards a successful decipherment.

Three months later Blom writes to Roys: "[I] am doing some research in an attempt to prove that at least the five or six glyphs which I am working on are phonetic."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, we have no evidence of exactly which glyphs Blom was working on. His working notes do not appear to have survived and are not to be found in the archives of the Middle American Research Institute (M.A.R.I.), the Latin American Library at Tulane University or in the large collection of Blom-related documents in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley University.<sup>7</sup> In the letter to Roys he also mentions that he was planning a symposium on phoneticism in Maya writing; apparently La Farge had already written a short paper entitled "Consideration on the role of general Mayan linguistics and the studying of Maya hieroglyphs". There is no evidence, however, that this symposium ever became a reality.

In April 1933, Blom gave a talk at a meeting of the New Orleans Library Club that was later published as an article entitled *Maya Books and Sciences* (Blom 1933). Blom began by stating that: "Those glyphs which deal with other matters [than calendrics], such as history and medicine, are still unintelligible to us" (1933:410). Yet, his intimate knowledge of the ethnohistoric sources, which in several cases revealed that the Postclassic Maya had made use of glyphs to record chronicles about wars, pestilences, famines and other events, had convinced him that the Classic inscriptions recorded the same kind of information by way of a syllabic writing system:

As yet no such records have been read by our scientists, but I feel confident that we are standing on the threshold of the door which soon will open to our full knowledge of Maya writing [...] A study of the Maya glyphs shows us that this system of writing must be among one of the very few original systems developed in our world, and scientists are still discussing whether Maya characters are phonetic or ideographic [...] I think that it ultimately will be shown that Maya glyphs represent sounds, and a single statement in "Relacion de la ciudad de Merida" gives an indication in this direction: "They had characters of which each letter was a syllable and they expressed themselves with these" (1933:413).

The same year another article dealing with phoneticism in Maya writing was published by the linguist

Benjamin Lee Whorf, and it may well be that Whorf's ideas were directly influenced by Blom's. According to Michael D. Coe, Whorf initially became interested in the Nahuatl (Aztec) language in 1928, and only later extended his research to Mayan languages and hieroglyphic writing (Coe 1992:127). From letters in the archive of M.A.R.I. at Tulane University we know that Blom and Whorf corresponded in the first years of the 1930s, and that a linguistic approach to Maya hieroglyphic decipherment was among the topics in those communications.<sup>8</sup> To Blom, Whorf's knowledge of languages was crucial, and the two shared the view: "that Maya writing must phonetically record one or another Maya language" (Coe 1992:131). There can be little doubt that Blom, as the more experienced Maya scholar, encouraged Whorf to pursue his research on glyphs. The result of Whorf's work was presented in 1933 (Whorf 1933; see Coe 1992: 128-131; Stuart 1992:35). Even though Whorf would turn out to be correct in some of his more general ideas about Maya writing and in attributing phonetic values to "certain characters", the article was full of errors and weak arguments (Houston et al. 2001:153).

Soon after, Richard C.E. Long, a partisan of views by Morley and J. Eric S. Thompson, published a series of counterarguments in *Maya Research* (a short-lived journal that Blom edited from 1934-36), and Whorf's ideas and the entire linguistic approach were quickly dismissed and largely forgotten (Long 1934; Coe 1992:129-131). As Houston and his co-authors note: "Benjamin Lee Whorf's unsuccessful efforts seem to have discredited such interest in the language behind the glyphs" (2001:96). After the time of Whorf's ill-fated attempt Blom never really returned to glyphic studies, but he maintained his ideas about the potential gold-mine of information in Maya writing. In his book *The Conquest of Yucatan* (1936), he states that we must "wait until the hieroglyphs have been fully deciphered before we can attempt to write a real history of the Maya" (Blom 1936:v). Later in the same volume, he comments on Bishop Landa's famous "alphabet":

He did not realize that the Maya language is monosyllabic, and that the Maya by their signs expressed sounds rather than letters. They not only expressed sounds, but certain ideas were expressed by certain sounds, and before modern scholars can even attempt to unravel the secret of those most fascinating Maya hieroglyphs, they must not only learn the Maya language, but also must become thoroughly familiar with the Maya process of thought.

The scientist trained with a foundation of European knowledge has absorbed the arrogant idea that his learning is a world pattern, and that it is impossible for other peoples to develop individual lines of thought that amount to anything. Not until he shapes himself to the psychology of the people will he succeed in understanding *them* and their characters. (1936:112).

Blom goes on to predict that Landa's "alphabet", when carefully studied and compared with information from ethnohistoric records and old Maya dictionaries, will be pivotal in deciphering Maya writing. He gives three concrete examples of this:

He said the Spanish *A* (pronounced *ah*) and he repeated it until his informants painted the head of a turtle, which is called *AC* in Maya. He got three signs for *A*, and then turned to *B* (pronounced *bay* in Spanish). Now the sign for a road is the imprint of a human foot, and the word for a road in Maya is *BE* (pronounced *bey*). What could be more natural than that the Maya, slightly wearied by the incessant questioning of the Bishop, would paint the sign for *B* as the sign for a road?

The Bishop was persistent; he worked his way through the whole alphabet, and the Indian informants became more and more impatient. Came the sound for *SH*, like *shee*. To the Maya it sounded like *shay*, and to satisfy the fierce old man, they painted the face of a man, and before his mouth they made little dots. They meant to indicate that the man was vomiting, and when one consults a dictionary of the Maya language one finds that the word for vomiting is *shay*. (1936:112-113).

What is worth noting in this quote is Blom's perceptive way of using and applying Landa to his own broad knowledge of Maya culture and language. The three signs described here by Blom may well have been among those he had earlier (1928-29) attempted to decipher, and although he does not explicitly propose that Landa's "footprint"-sign (T301) is a syllable reading *be*, he may indeed have been the first scholar to suggest that this sign carried the value *be*.<sup>9</sup> However, apart from these sporadic and somewhat detached observations, Blom's lack of discipline eventually did not allow him to delve more deeply into the decipherment of Maya writing.

Frans Blom's interest in Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions continued after his many personal calamities in the late 1930s (divorce, drunkenness etc.) and his subsequent return to southern Mexico in 1943 (Leifer et al. 2002:231-252). By this time, however, his focus seems to have shifted to the discovery and recording of new inscriptions (Blom & DUBY 1957), rather than making a renewed assault on decipherment. This may have

resulted from several things. First, by this time the field was completely dominated by the "anti-historical" view put forth by the Thompson "school" and Blom did not have the energy (or the arguments) to open up the issue of history and phoneticism again. In fact, the descriptions of the hieroglyphic texts presented in *La Selva Lacandona* (1957), which deal exclusively with calendrical glyphs, strongly suggest that at this point Blom had given up his earlier ideas. Second, years of alcoholism had had their impact on Blom: he was no longer at the height of his intellectual abilities and he was never again seriously involved in working with the question of decipherment. Unfortunately we do not know how he reacted when the first groundbreaking publications by Knorozov, Berlin, and Proskouriakoff appeared in the second half of the 1950s. It must, however, have delighted him to see that so many of his old, general ideas about the nature and content of Maya writing were now being revived and backed up by a new host of insights and scientific arguments that he himself had never been able to put forth. Frans Blom died in his home in San Cristóbal de las Casas on June 23, 1963.

### Acknowledgements

This paper benefited greatly from the valuable comments and corrections of Una Canger, Stephen D. Houston, Tore Leifer and Søren Wichmann. I also thank E. Wyllys Andrews V and Kathe Lawton of M.A.R.I., Tulane University for their kind and enthusiastic help.

### Endnotes

1. See Leifer et al. 2002, chapters 1-3 for a full description of Blom's early years in Denmark and Mexico.

2. Translated into Spanish and published by the Instituto Chiapaneco de Cultura as *En el lugar de los grandes bosques* in 1990.

3. See Aveni & Hartung (1989) and Aveni et al. (2003) for recent reevaluations of Blom's original hypothesis.

4. Frans Blom to Thomas Thomsen, 24 March, 1924, Waxaktun (The Archives of the Ethnographic Collection, the National Museum, Copenhagen).

5. Frans Blom to Alfred E. Kidder, 1 December, 1928 (M.A.R.I., Tulane University, New Orleans).

6. Frans Blom to Ralph L. Roys, 2 February, 1929 (M.A.R.I., Tulane University, New Orleans).

7. The discovery of a major collection of documents in the Bancroft Library, including photo albums, diaries and letters not known to previous biographers of Blom has contributed significantly to the new biography published in Denmark.

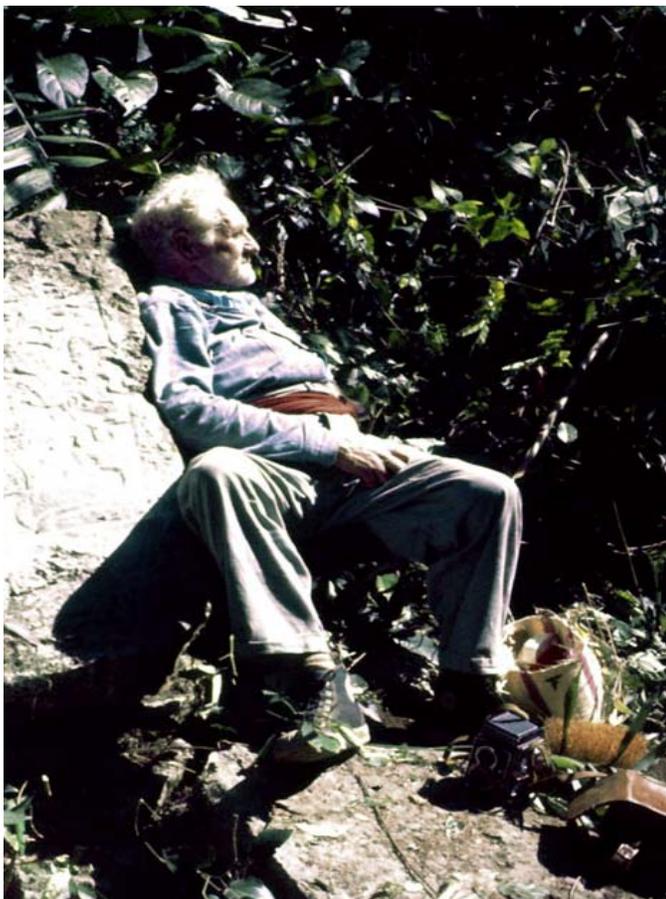
8. Benjamin Lee Whorf to Frans Blom, 23 March, 1930; see also Whorf to Blom, 24 February, 1931 and 27 November, 1933 (all in M.A.R.I., Tulane University, New Orleans).

9. It is far from easy to determine with certainty whether other scholars had already suggested this identification before Frans Blom (see Houston 1989:15). I have not, however, been able to find any earlier than Knorozov's from 1955 (1956 [1955]).

### Bibliography

- AVENI, ANTHONY F. & HORST HARTUNG  
1989 Uaxactun, Guatemala, Group E and Similar Assemblages: An Archaeoastronomical Reconsideration. In *World Archaeoastronomy*, edited by A. F. Aveni, pp. 441-461. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- AVENI, ANTHONY F., ANNE S. DOWD & BENJAMIN VINING  
2003 Maya Calendar Reform? Evidence from Orientations of Specialized Architectural Assemblages. In *Latin American Antiquity*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 159-178.
- BLACK, STEPHEN  
1990 The Carnegie Uaxactun Project and the Development of Maya Archaeology. In *Ancient Mesoamerica*, Vol. 1, pp. 257-276.
- BLOM, FRANS  
1923 *Idé store Skove – Breve fra Meksiko*. Andr. Fred. Høst & Søns Forlag, København.  
1924 Report on the Preliminary Work at Uaxactun, Guatemala. In *Carnegie Institution of Washington Year Book*, No. 23, pp. 217-219. Washington, D.C.  
1929 *Preliminary Report of the John Geddings Gray Memorial Expedition*. Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University, New Orleans.  
1933 Maya Books and Sciences. In *The Library Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 408-420.  
1934 Note. In: *Maya Research*, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 136.  
1935 Jean Genet. In *Maya Research*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 295-296.  
1936 *The Conquest of Yucatan*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston & New York.  
1982 [1923] *Las Ruinas de Palenque, Xupá y Finca Encanto*. INAH, México, D.F.

- BLOM, FRANS & OLIVER G. RICKETSON  
1925 *Index of Ruins in the Maya Area*. Unpublished M.A. thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- BLOM, FRANS & OLIVER LA FARGE  
1926-27 *Tribes and Temples. A Record of the Expedition to Middle America Conducted by the Tulane University of Louisiana in 1925. Vols. I-II*. The Tulane University of Louisiana, New Orleans.
- BLOM, FRANS & GERTRUDE DUBY  
1957 *La Selva Lacandona – Andanzas Arqueológicas (segunda parte)*. Editorial Cultura, T.G., S.A., México, D.F.
- BRUNHOUSE, ROBERT L.  
1975 *Pursuit of the Ancient Maya: Some Archaeologists of Yesterday*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.  
1976 *Frans Blom, Maya Explorer*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.
- COE, MICHAEL D.  
1992 *Breaking the Maya Code*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- COE, MICHAEL D. & MARK VAN STONE  
2001 *Reading the Maya Glyphs*. Thames and Hudson, London.
- HOUSTON, STEPHEN D.  
1989 *Maya Glyphs*. British Museum Publications, London.
- HOUSTON, STEPHEN D., DAVID STUART & OSWALDO CHINCHILLA MAZARIEGOS  
2001 *The Decipherment of Ancient Maya Writing*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- HOUSTON, STEPHEN D., DAVID STUART & JOHN ROBERTSON  
1998 Disharmony in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Linguistic Change and Continuity in Classic Society. In *Anatomía de una Civilización. Aproximaciones Interdisciplinarias a la Cultura Maya*, edited by Andrés Ciudad Ruiz et al., pp. 275-296. Sociedad Española de Estudios Mayas, Madrid.
- KNOROZOV, YURI V.  
1956 *La Escritura de los antiguos mayas*. Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano Ruso, México, D.F.
- LEIFER, TORE, JESPER NIELSEN & TOKE SELLNER REUNERT  
2002 *Det Urolige Blod: Biografi om Frans Blom*. Høst & Søn, København.
- LONG, RICHARD C. E.  
1935 Maya and Mexican Writing. In *Maya Research*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 24-32.
- STUART, GEORGE E.  
1992 Quest for Decipherment: A Historical and Bibliographical Survey of Maya Hieroglyphic Investigation. In *New Theories on the Ancient Maya*, edited by Elin C. Danién & Robert J. Sharer, pp. 1-63. The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- THOMPSON, J. ERIC. S.  
1959 Some Memories of Hermann Beyer. In *El México Antiguo – Homenaje al Dr. Hermann Beyer*, pp. 17-22.
- WHORF, BENJAMIN LEE  
1933 The Phonetic Value of Certain Characters in Maya Writing. *Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Harvard University.  
1935 Maya Writing and its Decipherment. In *Maya Research*, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 367-382.



Blom at Yaxchilan, 1960. Photo: Jim Merrett.

# Morley's Diary, 1932

## Editor's note

A leading archaeologist of his time, Sylvanus Griswold Morley was an Associate of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the foremost organization excavating archaeological sites in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras in the early part of the twentieth century. This diary continues his account of the Carnegie Institution's expedition to Calakmul begun on April 3, 1932. Morley's professional companions were his wife Frances, Karl Rupert, John Bolles and Gustav Stromsvic. The continuation of the diary entry for April 10 begins with a reference to biologist Cyrus L. Lundell, who conducted the first scientific investigations at Calakmul and brought the site to the attention of the Carnegie Institution



Neg. No. 10313, Courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico.

## April 10 – Sunday (cont'd from *PARI Journal* 3:2/3)

And what a man, all day long tramping through this bush with his map in hand to make it easy for us, we have checked him almost pace by pace and everytime time found him right. We have every convenience for camp comfort, a half a dozen men besides ourselves to cut the bush, and I suspect he had very little comfort. He did a splendid thing and I deeply appreciate his fine spirit of generosity and love of scientific truth which prompted him to call this matter to the Institution's attention. For I know we can do this great site justice and we will see that he gets credit for its discovery. I personally shall see to that.

In the mean time all of our hats – so to speak – are off to him for having made such an accurate map with such slender resources and in such a brief time!

But it was getting late, about 4, and we still had one more of his monuments to see, one standing by itself some 200 yards northeast of Structure D. With Jesus as our guide we came back through camp and then struck northeast from Structure D. We walked for quite a distance passing mounds, etc., and finally came to a mound with two fallen stelae on its south side. This couldn't be Lundell's last monument because that is still standing on the west side of a mound, whereas the two just found are both fallen on the south side of a mound.

These are Stelae 83 and 84. Both are new, bringing our total of new monuments for the day up to 22. Eliminating Lundell's Stela 10 which was not a stela, leaves his total 63 and with our new 22, makes a total of 85 stelae.

Of the two just found, Stela 83 was in too poor condition to tell whether it had been sculptured or not but Stela 84 has an I. S. in Katun 12, the 32nd for the day.

No there is some mistakes here for in writing up the entry for today I have managed to pick up an extra I. S. for in reality our total is only 31. So somewhere along the line I have picked up an extra number but the total is really only 31 I. S. for the day.

It was now getting on for five and we were all ready to call it a day, but what a day: 22 new stelae, 31 new I. S., and a grand total — thus far — of 84 stelae for the site, which makes it have more stelae than any other Maya site yet reported, probably more than any other Maya site in existence.

And there are probably more stelae to be picked up when we have covered this whole central area. We are already speculating on the possibility of finding around 100.

We came back to camp and took much needed sponge baths and then had supper at six. We were all ready for it at 5:30 or thereabouts so tomorrow night we are going to bring forward the supper hour to 5:30.

No one thought of writing, or playing the phonograph or even of just sitting around and talking. It was taps for everybody just as soon as supper was over, and no fooling.

The new moon is already giving some light and before we leave here the bush should be flooded with moonlight. One thing I forgot to record. While scouting around today John roused a jaguar, which darted off into the bush with a low growl, probably even more frightened than John at this strange encounter.

## April 11 – Monday

Today was the first day of detailed work at Calakmul. As indicated in the foregoing pages, yesterday we gave the site a bird's eye view, but today we settled down to business.

Including Jesus Garcia, who is foreman, we had 8 men. Four I gave outright to John: Victor Audinette, the Belizano; Laborio, whose wife does the cooking down at the other camp; Juan Andres, the Veracruzano from whom we bought the jaguar skin last Saturday at Central Buenfils; and an Emilio. They are all good men and with them John set off cutting his lines through the bush.

Karl and I had nobody as yet, but when the Rio Desempeño bunch get in we ought to draw one. I stayed pretty close with Gustav however, who had Alberto, a very good man, Jesus Garcia, and the boy Demetrio. Jose Carmen our youngest boy, stayed around camp and fetched water, a hard job, which no one really likes.

I started with Stela 1. This surely has an I. S., I was a little doubtful yesterday, but this morning there could be no doubt.

I could not read it however. It looks like 9.10.0.?.5, but the original is too far gone to permit anything like exact decipherment.

Gustav in the meantime had turned the fallen Stela 6, which proved to be plain. It is probable that all of the five stelae, 2-6 in front of Structure G are plain; four of them, 2-5 are still standing.

Stela 7 on the east side of the Main Plaza also proved to be plain. It is also fallen.

Stela 8 yielded very clearly the I. S. 9.14.10.0.0 5 Ahau 3 Mac. Gustav's men got the trees down around this and let a hole of light through the tree tops.

I went over to Stela 9, the monument made of slate, and started working on its two I. S. The one on the left side is 9.10.16.16.19 3 Cauac 2 Ceh, and the other half way down the right side 9.?.?.4.0 11 Ahau??

By this time it was lunch hour. Jesus Garcia in exploring the northeast section of the city looking for the last of Lundell's monuments had found 5, or 6, or 7 stelae he didn't know which. So after luncheon, Karl, Gustav, and I with Jesus and Alberto went looking for these stelae.

First we followed along the trail clear back to the boy's camp at the aguada where Laborio's Señora, a dog and two horses were holding down that place. Here we turned off into the bush to the right and continued for quite a time passing another aguada on our right. Finally climbing a slight rise and passing several mounds we came on to a plaza with nine more stelae! These were arranged on the two sides of a plaza, 5 fallen on the east side and 4 still standing on the north side. At first it seemed that all nine were plain, but on digging under Stela 87 it alone seems to be sculptured on its under face. The others however seem to be plain.

On returning to camp, Gustav began to turn the enormous Stela 15, and while he was doing this John found two more very

small stelae out in the Main Plaza about midway between the kitchen and their own tent-cover.

These were given the numbers 85 and 86. The former was not examined but it looks plain. The latter is sculptured with a very interesting figure on the front and curious square glyphs on its two sides; the back is plain. The glyphs each seem to be separated by 3 dots each, almost like the glyphs on pottery. This is Stela 86.

Karl came in about this time and reported three new stelae, Nos. 96-98 which he thinks are new. They stand on the north side of a mound, which must lie somewhere between Structures B and O but on the west side of the trail. The middle one is standing, Stela 97, and has an I. S., our 32nd and this time with no mistake in the count. Both Stelae 96 and 98 appear to have been sculptured but are in very bad condition. Coming back to camp I began to write the descriptions of Stelae 15 and 16. Gustav was turning the heavy Stela 15, with the two jacks. He estimates that this must weigh some 8 tons.

While he was doing this I worked on Stela 16. This has an Initial Series on its left side which reads 9.19.0.0.0.

At first Gustav thought the front of Stela 15 had no glyphs on it but when it was nearly raised, Frances distinguished three glyphs in the upper left corner, the first of which has a coefficient of 9. This is preceded by the familiar torch-like prefix, that sometimes accompanies the days of Period Ending dates.

This is followed by an 18 Mol very clearly. The whole date therefore reads 9.19.0.0.0 9 Ahau 18 Mol, i.e. a repetition as a Period Ending of the Initial Series recorded on the nearby Stela 16. This gives us another date. By the time we leave here we'll have a pretty good chronological picture of this place.

Just before knocking off work we tried to push this monument up but no use so it was decided to wait until tomorrow morning for the final push.

We were needing a number of things in camp. Gustav wanted more axes, shovels, and picks, and also 25 meters of half inch rope. Frances wanted tortillas, eggs, a chicken, and some sugar for cooking.

I wrote a note to Don Ambrosio asking him to send these things out tomorrow by young Jose Carmen, who I had told to come back after supper and get this note. He showed up in due time and I gave it to him. He will ride over on Victor Audinette's white horse bringing the things back on it.

I had written part of the morning in this diary and for a short while after supper, but at 7:30 we were both tired so I called it a day and we went over to our tent.

#### April 12 - Tuesday

We were one man short today in consequence of Jose Carmen's going to Central Buenfils. The first thing after break-

fast Gustav's cuadrilla with the help of John's tried to give Stela 16 the final shove that would have put it back straight but push as they would, the dead weight of its 8 tons proved too much for them and Gustav had to finish the job with his two jacks, just as he had begun it.

When this was finished we moved down to the south side of the Main Plaza where Stelae 28 and 29 are standing almost buried in the fall of debris from the top of the building behind them. The first, Stela 28, I had read yesterday as 9.9.10.0.0 2 Ahau 13 Pop recorded by an I. S. on its left side.

The second proved more recalcitrant, indeed I did not really get it until after lunch. What was holding me up was a misreading of the katun coefficient as 10 whereas it was really 9.

The work on Stelae 28 and 29 was going to take some time so I intended to push on ahead. The next group of stelae I was going to examine and prepare for photography, were those associated with the structure of the west side of the Main Plaza, Stelae 22, 23, and 24 in front and Stelae 25, 26, and 27 behind.

I picked up Frances in camp and we climbed this mound. The first of these monuments, Stela 22, is very much weathered. In fact little more now than a crumbling pile of stone. This stands below on the Plaza floor.

Stelae 23 and 24 were on the summit, the former standing, the latter fallen. The former I had read yesterday very doubtfully as 9.13.0.0.0; the latter however I had read practically surely as 9.13.10.0.0 7 Ahau 5 Cumhu.

From here we crossed over and down the back of this same mound and picked up Stelae 25, 26, and 27.

The first has an Initial Series which I read yesterday as 9.15.10.0.0 and the middle one, Stela 26, has an Initial Series which I read yesterday as 9.15.5.0.0, i.e. a hotun earlier.

Yesterday or rather Sunday I had failed to identify an Initial Series on the third of these three monuments, Stela 27, but this morning I picked one up here making our 33rd. This reads 9.15.10.0.0, the same date as on Stela 25 on the other side of Stela 26.

We heard John shouting something about this time somewhere to the northwest. Finally he called that he had a new stela and something even more important. We made our way through the forest toward his voice, until presently it developed he was over by the mound he calls the Castillo, I think it is M on the map. This has 3 stelae in front of it, i.e. the east side. John's new stela was on the south side of this. It is fallen and sculptured with glyphs on the sides. I could find neither an I. S. nor even a date. This is Stela 99 and if we could locate Lundell's standing monument in the northeast section we could round out an even hundred. We will surely find a Stela 100 before we are finished.

John next directed us to the end of the line he was then bushing. We were to follow it west and when it stopped to look around on the ground.

We walked out this and finally came to the end and looked around on the ground. To the left of the line a piece of the native limestone was outcropping and on this was carved a human head in very deep relief. This was carved on native rock and in a very fine state of preservation in spite of the fact that it had been exposed at the ground level where it was most subject to the attacks of humic acid. John left us the discovery of this interesting carving, the Veracruzano, Juan Andrea, to help clear it off. And here Frances and I worked with him the rest of the morning.

We had exposed by that time a section of the outcrop 9½ feet high and 7½ feet wide. On this was an enormous kneeling captive with arms bound behind his back. The figure is nude and shows his genitalia very prominently. Behind and above is another smaller captive figure, the face of which has flaked away. There is a third figure much smaller sitting behind the larger figure. On another piece of the limestone there is a further carving, but this continues under a tree and it will want considerable work to brace it in this direction.

We worked here, sweating and brushing until we had uncovered the above mentioned section from roots and encumbered earth. If we can only get a good photograph of this carving it will create a great sensation at home. We knocked off at eleven and came down John's line till we found his transit and then with Juan Andrea as a guide struck eastward until we hit the trail and thence south to our camp.

Gustav reported that Stela 29 was entirely cleared of encumbering earth and not much more work remained on Stela 28.

After luncheon I went down to see his work. I had not been able to get the date of Stela 29 up to this point, but the light was better on its west side, and I saw that the katun coefficient which I had been misreading as 10 is 9. This gave me 9.9.?0.0. I looked at the tun and it seemed to be more like 10 than anything else. This agreed with the month's coefficient of 13, i.e. 9.9.10.0.0 2 Ahau 13 Pop. I next examined the month itself and was able to pick out the kin element and the knot element; indeed there can be no doubt that the month is 13 Pop.

Final confirmation came from the variable central element of the I. S. introducing glyph, which is a jaguar head fairly clearly. This is the form corresponding to the month Pop under the Beyer Formula and the reading of this I. S. may be accepted as 9.9.10.0.0 2 Ahau 13 Pop just the same as on the companion monument, Stela 28, both having been dedicated on the same day.

From here we went over to Structure F on the west side of the Main Plaza. There was no work to be done on Stela 22 which as I have said is little more than a pile of fallen stone,

crumbling into dust. Of the two stelae above Nos. 23 and 24 both present the same I. S., 9.13.10.0.0 7 Ahau 3 Cumhu. The former is standing the latter fallen. Stela 23 is made of a very poor quality of stone and even though standing the relief is practically gone. On the left side at the bottom is a nodule of flint, which the stone tools of the ancient masons or sculptors could not remove or even reduce in size.

On the front at the top there is a large hole which must have been filled with limestone and mortar in ancient times. Gustav worked on Stela 24 turning its two principal fragments over. There was little left of the relief on the under side however. This stone also seemed to be poor in quality. We just about finished her, when the tom-tom at camp went off.

I was writing my diary when Jose Carmen got back from Central Buenfils. He brought all the things I asked for, 2 axes, 2 picks, 2 shovels, 1 kilo of brown sugar, 25 meters of ½ inch rope, all the eggs he could get and a chicken. Literally all of these things he brought back with him.

He tied the chicken to a tree but it escaped and he had quite a chase around the Main Plaza, the hen clucking madly until finally Frances joined the chase, between the two of them they cornered her finally and Jose Carmen brought her back into captivity.

After dinner it began to grow quite cold. Tarsisio played the phonograph at first, though John soon relieved him and he carried on nobly. I wrote my diary and the other four sat around, talked. Frances brought out the candy and we munched on that.

Gustav mended the tripod leg with copper wire. It is a mystery how this could have broken. I somehow feel that it was on the mule transport from Central Buenfils here. It is a shame as it is a splendid tripod and most useful.

I wrote in this diary until eight and then it was so cold we could stay up no longer. Really it was perishing. It must have been below 65 even then and it got colder during the night. We are congratulating ourselves that Frances brought two blankets apiece.

### April 13 - Wednesday

Another day and Gustav and I are getting on with our end of this job. We first went to Stela 24 which Gustav finished turning and then continued on over behind this same mound, Structure F, to Stelae 25, 26, and 27.

Karl and I paced off the top of Structure F which must be at least 35 feet high and 100 feet square on top. The only construction is the low mound or platform which was just behind (west) of Stelae 23 and 24.

From here we moved to the three stelae behind as just noted.

None of these were turned in fact Stela 27 is still standing. Both Stelae 25 and 26 have fallen on their faces, in the case of



the former the enormous roots of a great ramon tree are binding this to the ground. It would have taken much more time than we have at our disposal for any one monument to have turned this and in the case of Stela 26 the relief on the under side had all but rotted away. I contented myself here with having the left sides of both Stelae 25 and 26 thoroughly excavated and cleared and a considerable section of tree felled so as to let in sufficient light for photography.

While Gustav and his three boys were attending to this I went over to Stelae 59 and 60 in front (east) of Structure I. The former is fallen, the latter standing, both are in such bad condition that I am afraid neither will yield a date. I think I will not have Gustav waste his valuable time on attempting to turn the former.

Before leaving Stelae 25, 26, and 27 let me record that the middle one of the row was put up in 9.15.5.0.0 10 Ahau 8 Chen, and that the two flanking monuments were both erected on the next hotun-ending, i.e. the lahuntun ending 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ahau 3 Mol. All three present Initial Series.

After finishing with this trio it was lunch time and we returned to camp.

I wrote diary from about 11:15 until luncheon.

Just as we were finishing luncheon a regular caravan descended upon us 23 mules, 2 arrieros, 9 jornaleros and a cook lady! These were the Tuxpeña crowd who were to have met us at El Rio last Friday, i.e. 5 days late. Here was a pretty kettle of fish. We had no need at all for the mules and arrieros and at the most needed only 6 of the 9 laborers.

I talked with the head arriero, Francisco Aguilar, and also the capitas of the laborers. They had brought neither food nor cooking utensils with them!

My first thought was to see if I could get Laborio's wife, the cook for our Central Buenfils crowd, to cook for them using the woman they brought with them as assistant cook.

I sent for Laborio and proposed this to him but when he came from his camp at the aguada he said they hadn't enough utensils. It was also clear that he didn't like the idea.

It was necessary to think of a new plan and quickly. Finally I doped out the following.

The mules we will not need at all. Calakmul is going to keep us all so busy to finish it in the two weeks we are allowing that we will not have time to go anywhere else.

I am sending back the 7 riding animals and 1 aria of 7 pack animals to Tuxpeña at once in charge of 1 arriero. The other aria I am sending in to Central Buenfils to bring back food supplies and certain cooking utensils for the Tuxpeña cuadrilla tomorrow after which this arriero with their remaining aria will return to Tuxpeña tomorrow.

As for the labor. I decided I would keep 6 including their capita, Francisco Aguilar, and the cook lady.

Since there were 9 laborers and three of them had to go back I decided that barring the capitas, Francisco, who had to remain here in charge of them, the other eight would have to draw lots to see who would go.

Karl cut up 8 pieces of paper and on three wrote the letter X, these were to be the lots indicating retirement to Tuxpeña. I borrowed Francisco Aguilar's Stetson, put the eight lots in it and passed it around.

Of the three boys who have to go, only one looked really promising the other two were Fifis, if not weak sisters.

These I paid off by checks allowing them 6 days for their pains and trouble, 3 days coming and 3 days returning to Tuxpeña. I also paid off the other arriero, Clemente Salas, who also returned to Tuxpeña this afternoon.

I had the Tuxpeña capitas, Francisco, in the meantime prepare a list of food and cooking utensils he would need and I next wrote to Don Ambrosio Aguilar asking him to send these out by Francisco Aguilar tomorrow. When all those details were attended to, I ate my dessert which Frances had saved for me. The three Tuxpeños and the extra arriero left, also the 6 Tuxpeño boys I was keeping returned to the aguada.

I told their capitas that they could have this afternoon to fix their camp but that I would expect them to report for work at 6:30 tomorrow morning.

But meanwhile 12:30 had come and gone and our old men had all gone out to work, so bidding my Frances goodbye until 5:00 I followed Gustav and his three hearties to Structure I where we were to work in the afternoon.

I found Jesus and Gustav lost near Stelae 59 and 60 but putting them to rights, we pushed around this mound and came to Stelae 61 and 62. Jesus shouted for Alberto and Demetrio

and presently they too came up bringing all our tools which had been left at 11:00 at Stelae 25, 26, and 27.

Stela 61 is carved but all that can be made out is a single line of glyphs on the right side. The whole upper part of the monument has broken away apparently in very small pieces.

Stela 62 was turned chiefly to get the monument on its side so we could photograph the very fine figure on its front.

I believe the contemporaneous [sic] of this stela was declared by a Period Ending date of which the day and most of the month sign had disappeared. What was left was the lower part of the coefficient of the month sign, clearly a 12 or 13 and if this is a P. E. as I believe it must have been, it was 13. The Glyph below the month coef. of 13 is "the end of a tun" and the last glyph very clearly "Katun 16". I believe the whole thing records the I. S. 9.16.0.0.0 2 Ahau 13 Tzec. I have underlined the two parts of this date which now appear on the original.

Having finished with these we moved our men over to Stelae 63, 64 and 65. The first of these proved a dud of first water. It was a small slab of stone but very hard and we had high hopes that the figure on the under side would be beautifully preserved but to our disgust there was nothing on the under side. Stela 64 I had originally read as 9.14.0.0.0 declared by an I. S. on its left side, but a closer examination this afternoon showed that the katun coefficient had been 19 instead of 14, i.e. 4 dots and 3 bars instead of 4 dots and 2 bars.

This corrected reading was further confirmed by finding probably the day of the terminal date of the corrected reading, i.e. 9 Ahau viz. 9.19.0.0.0 9 Ahau 18 Mol. This is the latest date yet found here but is also recorded on Stelae 15 and 16 in the Main Plaza.

I expected Stela 65 to be plain like Stela 63. It was small — about the same size as Stela 63 and appeared to be a sister monument, i.e. two plain ones, Stelae 63 and 65, flanking a sculptured one, Stela 64. To our delight, however, after Gustav had turned it there was a beautifully carved figure holding a Manikin Scepter in her right hand and a most beautiful little shield in its left hand. But not a glyph on it. The sides were plain as also the back and not a single glyph on the front.

Secondary lime deposits, including many snail shells, limestone in the making covered the front, but with care these may be removed and we ought to get an excellent picture of this little gem.

After setting Stela 65 on its edge we left this court with Structure I on its east, Structure J on its south side, Structure

L on its north side and the Ball Court K on its west side, and moved our men to the row of 3 stelae, Nos. 67, 68, and 69 just north of Structure P.

The last of these is new, i.e. does not appear on Lundell's map. It is almost completely buried and Gustav put Jesus to digging out its left side. To my great delight an I. S. developed here presently making the 34th here so far. I was able to decipher this without much difficulty as 9.18.10.0.0 10 Ahau 8 Zac. So the day was fairly successful for me after all.

I had previously read the I. S. on Stela 67 as recording this same date on our first inspection of all the monuments last Sunday.

The middle stela, No. 68 shows nothing on its sides, and unlike most of the others has fallen over backward with its front face up. I decided we would turn all these three monuments to see if the sides down had preserved sculptures but it was getting late and what time was left the boys devoted to digging along the sides of these three stelae.

Going home we went first due north to hit John's north line and not more than 100 feet due north of Stelae 67, 68, and 69 we came to the sculptured slab of limestone with the bound captives carved on it.

We came in his north line and cut through the bush west of Structure G striking the Main Plaza at Karl, John, and Gustav's camp, where the first was taking his shower as we came by.

I have quite a touch of rheumatism in my right shoulder so instead of taking a cold bath I took a sponge in very hot water and Frances rubbed my shoulder with Absorbine Jr. The boys went off to bed immediately after supper and we turned in at 7:15.

#### April 14 - Thursday

The greater part of the morning was devoted to turning Stelae 67, 68, and 69, all of which successively proved to be duds. Stela 67 was turned and while there had been carving on the front the relief was too far gone to permit me to distinguish details. Stela 68 had fallen over backward with its sculptured face up. Frances found some traces of red paint even on this exposed surface but none of the design survived the passage of time. This was an exceedingly heavy stone and we were all disgusted when it proved to be plain. The third stela in this row No. 69, was also turned but the design was too far gone to permit the identification of any details. I had both Stelae 67 and 69 left as they were so I could photograph their respective left sides (the I. S. sides) more readily.

Frances in the meantime had Jose Carmen and another boy and was working on the piece of laja with its carved figures. The end of this has not been reached by a long shot and several new figures have been uncovered. While we were at this Don Manuel Osorno came. He is Don Francisco Buenfils' manager,

out here in the bush and had just returned from taking his family to La Gloria from which they were continuing to Champoton.

I took him over to see the sculptured laja and he became so interested that he had to take a hand too. He ordered Frances' two boys around in good style much to her disgust but he got up a particularly bothersome stump which uncovered another figure.

After this Frances took her boy over to the Ball Court and put him to work on uncovering the carving at the north end of its west wall inside.

I had given this the No. 66 though there was some evidence that it might be only a carved stone in association with the Ball Court as at Cobá for example. Frances found however, that it was a reused stela, the shaft having been broken off at the knees of the figure and then the fractured edge dressed smooth. This reused stela base seems to have belonged to a monument very similar to Stela 61. The principal figure stands on an ornamented bar, which runs clear across the shaft of the monument. The single column of glyphs on the left side has its glyph-blocks very clearly separated by strongly marked inter-glyph channels, which are very well defined both on Stela 66 and on Stela 61, and the glyph-blocks on each do not seem to have been carved with interior details as though they were never finished perhaps.

We finished with Stelae 67, 68, and 69 before luncheon and moved over to Stelae 57 and 58. Stela 56 is a stump of a stela, the base still in situ but in such bad condition that it is impossible to tell whether it had ever been carved or not.

While the boys were getting ready to turn the fallen monument, Stela 57, Gustav built me a platform of poles and I went up on this with some trepidation – my right ankle is still weak, and my rheumatism in the right shoulder still painful. With the assistance of Gustav and another boy I managed to climb up it and verified the reading of the Initial Series as I had deciphered it on our preliminary tour of inspection last Sunday: 9.17.0.0.0 15 Ahau 18 Cumhu. I had just descended and was sitting down to write the notes on this monument when we heard the banging of the eleven o'clock tin pan through the forest faintly. This was the signal that the morning session of work had finished, and everybody hallooing we all returned to camp.

I had asked Mr. Osorno to lunch with us and he came in about 11:15 and I sent him over to the boy's camp to wash up.

Our own little camp stool made the sixth chair and we sat very comfortably around our little single table.

Francisco Aguilar, the Tuxpeña arriero had returned from Central Buenfils with the food I had sent for for the second Cuadrilla yesterday and after luncheon I had to pay him off by check (\$21.00 pesos) and at the same time write a note to Señor William Rosene, the Administrator of Tuxpeña, thanking him for all his kindnesses and asking him not to send any more men or mules.

There was also a little mail to go out which I asked Mr. Osorno to send to Bryden at Campeche to mail for us.

Bidding Mr. Osorno goodbye he set off with Francisco Aguilar for Central Buenfils. I told him I thought we would come in a week from next Sunday, i.e. April 24.

Gustav had gone on with his cuadrilla to Structure M, and Frances and I followed later along the north line.

Frances went on to the sculptured laja and I save her the two axmen, Isidro and Rafael to fell that enormous tree growing right on top of the western end of the laja.

I went back to Stela 58 and finished writing the notes on it and then over to 57 which Gustav was turning. I read this last Sunday as 9.17.0.0.0 13 Ahau 18 Cumhu declared as an I. S. the same date as Stela 58.

When Gustav had this turned over, the figure on the under side – the original front of the monument – was in very poor condition. After finishing with the notes on Stela 57 we moved around to Stela 88 on the south side of this same mound.

Meanwhile Frances had sighted a saraguato, a Guatemala Howler monkey and by dint of grunting in which she was aided ably by Jose Carmen, she succeeded in making the old male howler exceedingly angry and presently he too was roaring back at them making as much noise as a coyote.

He had his wife with him and she had their baby on her back, which probably accounts in part for his rage.

Gustav came up from Stela 88 to see what all the noise was about.

Jose Carmen proved to be quite a marksman with stones and registered two direct hits and one near hit. The old Howler was furious, roaring and prancing about and swinging by his tale [sic]. Long after we had ceased to notice him he yowled and gibbered, finally he made off with his mate. She had not opened her mouth during the entire performance.

In the meantime Gustav had turned up the upper half of Stela 88. There was a fairly well preserved figure on the front. The profile was a typical Maya one and in fair condition, heroic in size.

Unfortunately I could not do a single thing with this date. I am fairly confident that an Initial Series had never been recorded here but I could find no Period Ending date. There is a day 2 Ahau on the right side near the top. It looks like 4 Ahau, but is 2, i.e. But this decipherment got me nowhere.

We were on the lower half of this monument when the five o'clock bell rang. Again we could hear it through the bush.

Frances and I came in along the north line but this is so much out of the way that it is the last time.

Everybody was tired and went to bed immediately after supper. I wrote in this diary until 7:15, when Frances and I also went to bed.



Morley with Quirigua Stela F. Photo after Jesse L. Nusbaum, Courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico. From the archives of the PARI Journal.