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A New La Corona Panel

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The subject of this short note is a small panel (measurements: 39 x 44 x 7.6 cms, or 15½ x 17½ x 3 inches), which until recently was part of a private collection in San Francisco, California (Figure 1). The panel has been returned to the Guatemala authorities. On May 30, 2011, the Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes, Dirección General del Patrimonio Cultural y Natural, Registro de Bienes Culturales issued the Dictamen No. 06-2011/PH registering

the panel. The panel was delivered to the Gautemalan Consulate in San Francisco on July 28, 2011.

The panel is made of a light brown limestone, reminiscent of the many panels now known to come from the archaeological site of La Corona, Guatemala (Schuster 1997). A large number of panels, generally designated to belong to Site Q (Canuto and Barrientos, eds. 2009:21-45; Mathews 1997; Martin and Stuart 2009:8-31), in both



Figure 1. The new La Corona panel (all photographs by Michel Quenon unless otherwise noted).

private and public collections, have their origin at La Corona (Anonymous 2005, 2006; Canuto and Barrientos 2009, 2011a; Canuto and Barrientos, eds. 2009, 2010; Graham 1997; Guenter 2005; Martin 2008; SMU 2005; Witze 2005). The panel probably was part of a series of panels (perhaps part of a fourth or even fifth hieroglyphic stairway; see below) providing a continuous text. In this preliminary note the hieroglyphic text on this panel will be discussed in some detail.



Figure 2. Block A1 of the inscription: 8 Ajaw 18 Yax.

Epigraphic Analysis

The panel contains six glyph blocks, arranged into two columns. Probably this panel was part of a multi-panel text; as such the designation of the glyph blocks is preliminary and each letter-number combination is preceded by “p(reliminary)”:¹

pA1a 8?-DAY.SIGN.AJAW	<i>waxak ajaaw</i>
pA1b 18-MONTH.YAX	<i>waxaklajuun yaxsijo'm</i>
pB1a u-PAT-bu-ji	<i>upatbuji</i>
pB1b u-xu?[lu]/u-[lu]xu?	<i>uxul(?)</i>
pA2a [K'AN]TUN-ni	<i>k'ahntuun</i>
pA2b SAK-NIK-*TE'	<i>saknikte'</i>
pB2a u-*KAB-[ji]ya	<i>ukabjiiy</i>
pB2b ?-yo-OK	<i>... yook</i>
pA3a 8-HAB-ya	<i>waxak haab[i]y</i>
pA3b ?-?-ya?--ma?	<i>...</i>
pB3a i-GOD.N-yi	<i>i-t'ab[a]y(?)</i>
pB3b 5-EB?-?	<i>ho' ehb(?)</i>

The new La Corona panel opens with a Calendar Round date, which probably was 8 Ajaw 18 Yax (Figure 2). Although part of the opening numeral for the day coefficient is broken off, this most probably contained an additional dot, making a coefficient of 8. There is no indication that any of the dots served as a filler. The position of this date in the Long Count will be discussed below.

¹ Complex vowels employed in this note are derived from historical linguistic processes, not from spelling principles. These reconstructions are tentative and subject to revision.



Figure 3. Block B1: u-PAT-bu-ji u-xu?[lu]/u-[lu]xu?.

The Calendar Round is followed by *upatbuji*, which at present I interpret as a transitive verbal expression *u-pat-bu-ji* with the meaning “he forms/fashions it” (compare Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999:II-32) (Figure 3). Alternatively, but less likely, it is a nominalized antipassive, based on the root *pat-* “to form, fashion,” *-bu* “antipassive suffix,” *-[e]j* “nominalizing suffix,” *-i[l]* “possessive suffix,” and *u-* “third person possessive pronoun” (see Boot 2009). Thus *upatbuji[l]* would mean something like “his formed/fashioned thing (is).”



Figure 4. Block A2: [K'AN]TUN-ni SAK-NIK-*TE'.

The *upatbuji* expression is followed by the name of the object that was fashioned: *uxul k'ahntuun* (Figure 4). On rare occasions Maya hieroglyphic texts refer to the *uxul k'ahntuun* (e.g., Tonina M. 95), in which *uxul* (from **ul-xul*, Barbara MacLeod, personal communication, October 23, 2010) refers to the “carving,” while *k'ahntuun* refers to either “precious (*k'an*) stone (*tuun*)” or, more probably, “extended surface or bench (*k'ahn*) stone (*tuun*)” (Boot 2009:109). Hieroglyphic texts at Palenque and Pomona refer to a *k'ahntuun* that may have been part of a bench or throne assemblage (e.g., Palenque Tablet of the 96 Glyphs; Pomona Tablet of the 96 Glyphs). The *k'ahntuun*

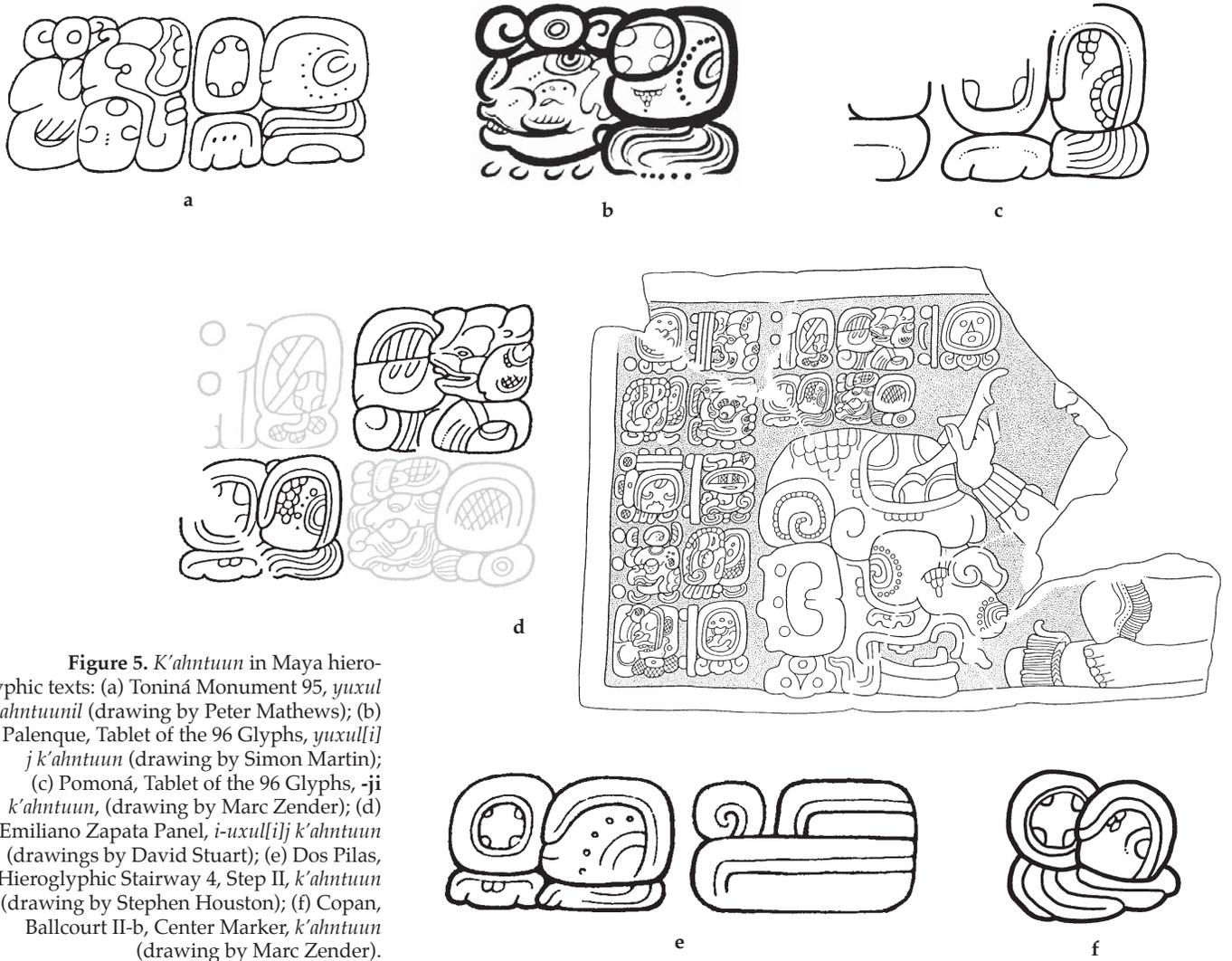


Figure 5. *K'ahntuun* in Maya hieroglyphic texts: (a) Toniná Monument 95, *yuxul k'ahntuunil* (drawing by Peter Mathews); (b) Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, *yuxullil j k'ahntuun* (drawing by Simon Martin); (c) Pomoná, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, *-ji k'ahntuun*, (drawing by Marc Zender); (d) Emiliano Zapata Panel, *i-uxullilj k'ahntuun* (drawings by David Stuart); (e) Dos Pilas, Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step II, *k'ahntuun ehb* (drawing by Stephen Houston); (f) Copan, Ballcourt II-b, Center Marker, *k'ahntuun* (drawing by Marc Zender).

depicted on the Emiliano Zapata panel (see Stuart 1990) is in the process of being carved, and perhaps served as a seat, or a support for one. Other *k'ahntuun* are found on Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4 and Copan Ballcourt II-b Center Marker (Figure 5). Directly following this statement one can find the collocation **SAK-NIK-TE'**. The collocation surely refers to Saknikte', the proper toponym of La Corona (Canuto and Barrientos 2011a; Stuart and Houston 1994:39). The "fashioning" of the *uxul k'ahntuun* thus took place at Saknikte'; the whole phrase may actually state that it is the *uxul k'ahntuun* of Saknikte' itself that was fashioned. The **TE'** sign is almost completely eroded, but note the oval part with inner circle on the left side of the eroded sign, and the composition of the collocation clearly hints at the former presence of this sign. Apart from its erosion, the collocation provides suggestive evidence that the panel came from La Corona, and that its hieroglyphic text refers to local affairs.

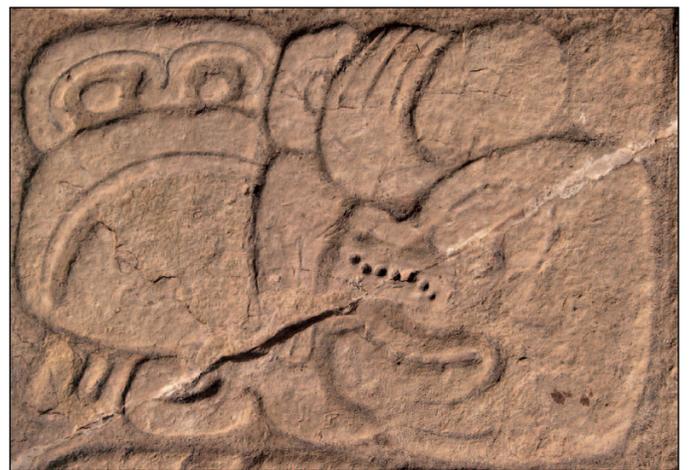


Figure 6. Block B2: *u-*KAB-[ji]ya ?-yo-OK*.

The text continues with the statement *ukabjiiy* (or possibly *uchabjiiy*, as there is no preposed syllabic

complement to indicate *kab-*), “he supervised it,” followed by the nominal phrase [?] *yook* (Figure 6). This is the name of a local person at La Corona, and several other texts from La Corona refer to a local ruler who carries the same name (Figure 9). The sign here transcribed as [?] looks like the sign for *je*, but is probably a different sign, or part of a complex sign partially hidden by the *yo-OK* spelling.²



Figure 7. Block A3: 8-HAB-ya ?-?-ya?-?-ma?.

The next collocation opens with 8 *haab*, probably a Distance Number indicating a new date, as also suggested by the postfixed *-ya* (cf. La Corona Panel 3:F1) (Figure 7). The hieroglyphic signs after the 8 *haab* are too eroded to venture any reading, but it does not seem to have included a new Calendar Round.



Figure 8. Block B3: i-GOD.N-yi 5-EB?-?.

The last collocation opens with a verbal expression, in which the GOD.N main sign is employed (Figure 8). This sign targets a dedicatory verb, which may have been *t'abay* (Stuart 1998:417), though the reading remains uncertain. The whole verbal expression tentatively reads *i-t'abay*, “so dedicated (was).” The progressive particle

i- supports the presence of a Distance Number at pA3a. The very last part of this short text opens with the number five (*ho'*), placed above a possible sign **EB** (Figure 10). This sign is largely eroded, and still more eroded is a potential third sign below it, perhaps a full form of the syllable **bu**, serving as a phonetic complement to **EB**. Alternatively, I should point out that the main sign may not be **EB** at all, but rather the T685 “pyramid” sign (see Stone and Zender 2011:105). This sign typically shows two or three platforms bisected by a central staircase. Further, it is known to be combined with the number five in a number of other inscriptions (e.g., Palenque’s Tablet of the 96 Glyphs: A3). Unfortunately, the “pyramid” sign remains undeciphered. I will return to a discussion of the final collocation in my closing remarks below.

The Opening Date

The carving style of the monument hints at a period circa AD 550-700. Small drilling holes for serial dots appear at pA1a, pB1a, pA2a, pB2b; these also are used on Panel 1 and H.S. 3, Block III. The drilled dots are most reminiscent of the style of two unprovenanced lintels. These lintels are dated to 9.3.3.16.4, *2 K’an 2 Mak (December 3, AD 498) (Mayer 1984: Plates 26-27) and 9.3.19.3.8, 7 Lamat 11 K’ank’in (December 28, AD 513) (Mayer 1980: Plates 39-40). These lintels in style and sculptural execution are clearly earlier than the new La Corona panel, and as such I tentatively assign the new La Corona panel to the period circa AD 550-700. The opening Calendar Round may thus be contemporary with this time period. A Calendar Round of 8 Ajaw 18 Yax can be found at these Long Count positions:

9.7.0.15.0	8 Ajaw 18 Yax	October 1, AD 574
9.9.13.10.0	8 Ajaw 18 Yax	September 18, AD 626
9.12.6.5.0	8 Ajaw 18 Yax	September 5, AD 678

Considering the Distance Number recorded as 8 *haab*, the later dates would be:

9.7.8.15.0	2 Ajaw 18 Mol	August 20, AD 582
9.10.1.10.0	2 Ajaw 18 Mol	August 7, AD 634
9.12.14.5.0	2 Ajaw 18 Mol	July 25, AD 686

However, with no definitive temporal anchor present in this new La Corona hieroglyphic text, it is difficult to set

²There are other names in hieroglyphic texts containing the *je*-like sign. A similar composition is present in the birth name of the Palenque *sajal* Chak Suutz’ (or Sootz’). His birth name is recorded on the Tablet of the Slaves at position A4b with the *je*-like sign above a bat head. As such, the configuration of the name glyph is the same as the La Corona example (*je*-like sign above a dog head). Like the La Corona name, this Palenque nominal phrase still resists analysis.

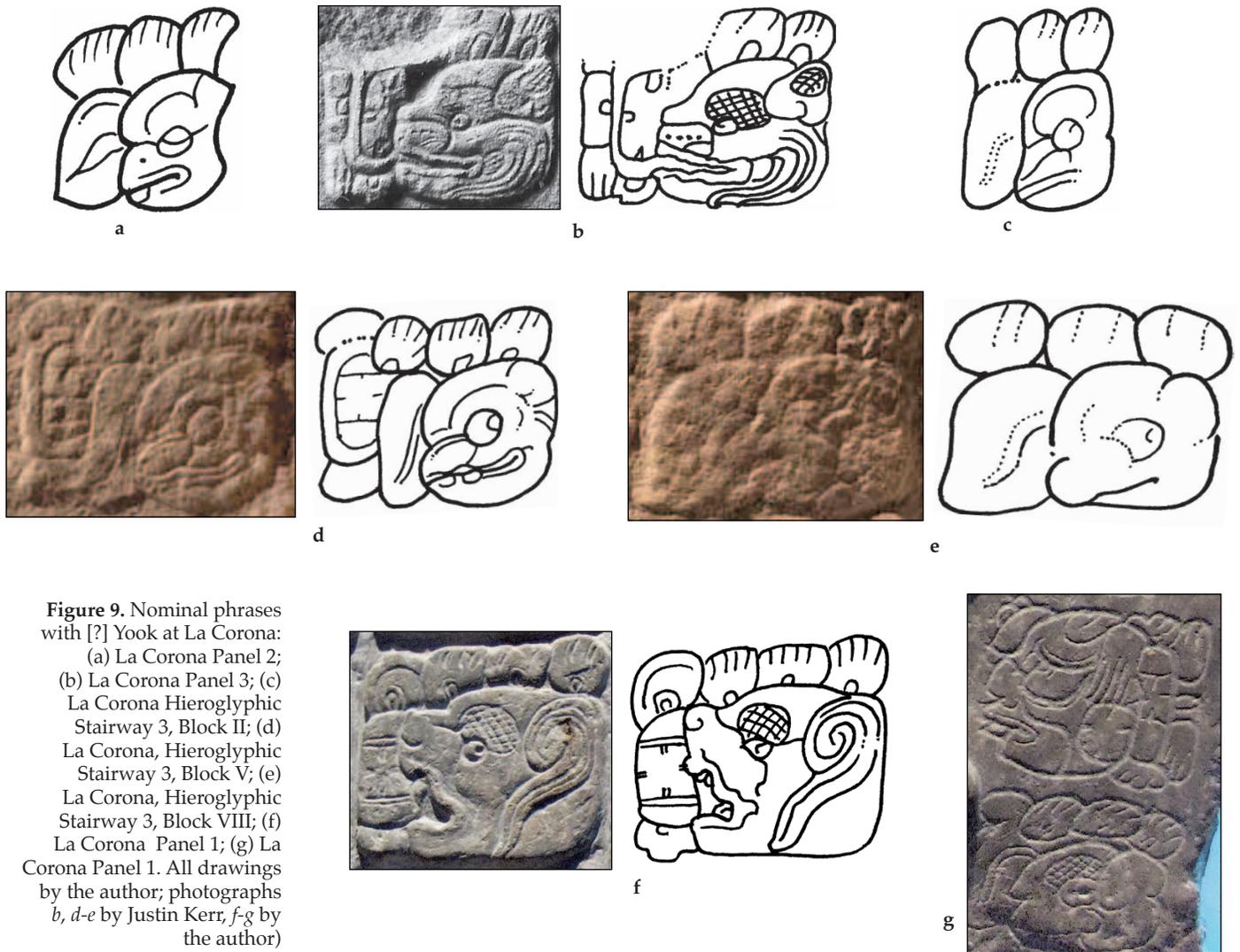


Figure 9. Nominal phrases with [?] Yook at La Corona: (a) La Corona Panel 2; (b) La Corona Panel 3; (c) La Corona Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Block II; (d) La Corona, Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Block V; (e) La Corona, Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Block VIII; (f) La Corona Panel 1; (g) La Corona Panel 1. All drawings by the author; photographs *b, d-e* by Justin Kerr, *f-g* by the author

a Long Count date.

A comparison to a list of recorded dates within the presently known La Corona corpus shows that the two dates on the new La Corona panel were not registered previously. At present I favor a placement of AD 678-686.

The Nominal Phrase [?] Yook

The nominal phrase [?] Yook (hereafter just Yook) occurs various times in the corpus of La Corona, as illustrated by select examples in Figure 9. The name appears in two forms, one prefixed by K'inich and the other without, yet both nominals probably refer to one and the same individual.

The Yook nominal on the new La Corona panel is written with the DOG sign for OK much like the example on La Corona Panel 1 (Figure 9f,g) and Panel 3 (Figure 9b). La Corona Panel 3 has a calendrical construction in which Long Count and Calendar Round

do not match, while consecutive Calendar Rounds (arrived at through Distance Numbers) record impossible combinations. If the opening Long Count on this panel is correct, the 9.9.2.0.9, 3 Lamat *1 Sotz' (11 Sotz' is written) date targets a date in AD 615. Some 25 years later K'inich Yook is born. This individual acceded in AD 675, as recorded on La Corona Panel 1. The currently last known date associated with K'inich Yook falls in AD 691 and is recorded on La Corona Stela 1 (Canuto et al. 2009:26). This "life time" range of dates provides further suggestive evidence for placing the new panel at AD 678-686. Other ranges would be 52 years earlier or later and would thus be far removed from the presently attested dates of K'inich Yook.

It is known that the nominal phrases of kings can be abbreviated—e.g., K'ahk' Upakal as an abbreviation of K'ahk' Upakal K'inich K'awiil at Chichen Itza; K'ahk' [Y]ohl as an abbreviation of K'ahk' [Y]ohl K'inich, king of Yootz (see also Grube 2004:208 for the typically abbreviated name of "Aj Wosal Chan K'inich")—which may



Figure 10. Three images of the final collocation taken with different lighting.

explain why both Yook and K'inich Yook are employed to refer to one and the same individual.³ Different sculptural and scribal schools executed the inscriptions in which (K'inich) Yook is mentioned.

The Yook mentioned on the new panel may be the same (K'inich) Yook mentioned on a great number of monuments previously known from La Corona. If so, the only dates that would fit with his attested dates are:

9.12.6.5.0	8 Ajaw 18 Yax	September 5, AD 678
9.12.14.5.0	2 Ajaw 18 Mol	July 25, AD 686

Alternatively, the Yook mentioned on the new panel refers to a yet unknown and earlier ruler of the same name who ruled circa AD 570-600. I consider this alternative less likely, but if so, the following dates would be correct:

9.7.0.15.0	8 Ajaw 18 Yax	October 1, AD 574
9.7.8.15.0	2 Ajaw 18 Mol	August 20, AD 582

Five Hieroglyphic Stairs at La Corona?

If my tentative identification of an **EB-bu** spelling in the final glyph block on the new La Corona panel is correct,

³ Colas (2003:281) argues that “[t]he prefixed name of the sun god K'inich reflects an association of divine kingship and the sun” while “[t]he postfixed K'inich refers rigidly to the king's self.” I am still hesitant in applying Colas's hypothesis in this and other cases, my reason being that abbreviations abound when it comes to the registration of the name of kings. For instance, the king commonly registered as K'inich Janaab Pakal is recorded in one example as Yajawte' K'inich Janaab Pakal (Palenque, Temple XXI Bench). The initial K'inich of many kingly names may thus be an abbreviation of a particular manifestation of the solar deity, Yajawte' K'inich (see Boot 2009:206, note 288 and Boot 2011).

it may provide a reference to the dedication of *ho' ehb*, or “five steps, stairs, or stairways.” This would in turn suggest that five hieroglyphic stairs or stairways were once present at the archaeological site of La Corona. Three hieroglyphic stairways have thus far been identified at La Corona (see Barrientos et al. 2011; Canuto and Barrientos 2011a; Canuto and Barrientos, eds. 2009, 2010) at Structures 13Q-3 (H.S. 1, presence confirmed), 13R-10 (H.S. 2, presence confirmed), and 13Q-4 (H.S. 3, presence hypothetical). Recently, new blocks of Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 were found in situ during the 2011 season (Canuto and Barrientos 2011b). The new panel, as it is executed in a different style and with a different textual organization when compared to these stairway texts, may have belonged to still one more stairway (one of two stairways remaining to be found, if this hypothesis bears out). Alternatively, the final passage may refer to a “five pyramid(?)” structure (or structures), of a kind known from a few other sites.

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The Murals of San Bartolo: A Window into the Art and Cosmivision of Precolumbian Man

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Artistic expressions are a reflection of a culture's social, political, and ideological milieu. In the past, a mural's subject matter was suited to the purpose of the building in which it was painted. Thus its character could be conceptual, narrative, historical, ritual, religious, bellicose, cosmogonic—or, most frequently, quotidian (de la Fuente 1995:7). A common feature of all the murals of Mesoamerica is their use of flat fields of color; however, concentrations of color can produce illusions of volume, and outlines can cause the figures to stand out. Another characteristic is the absence of vanishing-point perspective (de la Fuente 1995:9).

For the Maya, mural painting expressed aspects of society both sacred and profane, principally related to rulers and gods. Diana Magaloni (1995:22) suggests that the figures in mural painting are distinguished by characteristics that convey their individuality, such as the printing of the fabrics they used in their clothing, the particular color of their skin, the size and position of their bodies, and their gestures.

Examples of mural painting have been found in different areas of Mexico and Guatemala, with dates that range from the Late Preclassic to the Postclassic. Most significant are those from Uaxactun (250 BC–AD 550), Tikal (250 BC–AD 900), Holmul (250 BC–AD 600), Yaxchilan (AD 300–900), Bonampak (AD 300–900), Dzibilchaltun (300 BC–AD 900), Coba (AD 300–900), and Chichen Itza (AD 900–1000).

The preservation of murals in a tropical climate is extremely tenuous; the instability of stucco in an environment of changing heat and humidity has left only a small fraction of what could have been an extensive Maya tradition. Added to this factor was the destruction of buildings and their images due to remodelings on the part of successive rulers, in keeping with their respective architectural programs. Such was the case with the murals of San Bartolo, which were partly destroyed by the new building now known as the Pyramid of the Paintings (la Pirámide de Las Pinturas).

Here we present a brief synopsis of the stylistic relationships to other figural scenes of the Late Preclassic, as well as the implications for the development of artistic traditions observed in early sites like Uaxactun and the splendor reflected in the paintings of Late Classic Bonampak.

Location and antecedents

San Bartolo is situated in the Ixkan river basin 8 km north of the archaeological site of Xultun, in the northeastern quarter of the department of Peten. Nearby are Uaxactun, Tikal, and Holmul, archaeological sites sharing similar characteristics of pictorial art. San Bartolo was known at first only by *chicleros* and a few residents of neighboring communities. Later, in the 1980s, personnel of the Guatemalan Institute of Anthropology and History (among them Anatolio López), undertook the work of clearing *brechas* at nearby Xultun, as a result of which the existence of San Bartolo became known.

In 1998, Oscar Quintana carried out reconnaissance and diagnostic work in the zone, without direct archaeological intervention (Quintana and Wurster 2001:76). It was in 2001 that William Saturno and a team of investigators undertook the first archaeological reporting of the site and its murals, continuing in 2002 with intensive investigation.

The San Bartolo murals

The mural paintings of San Bartolo are located within Structure 1, also known as the Pyramid of the Paintings (Figure 1). The building is 25–30 m tall and is penetrated by four looters' tunnels, two in the front and two in the rear. The branching of these tunnels has resulted in extensive damage to the interior of the structure. The illicit tunnels in the rear penetrated deepest into the pyramid, and it was one of these that led to the discovery of the substructure containing the murals, as well as a series of previous construction phases. Furthermore, this tunnel destroyed the northern section of the substructure's wall, leaving only the upper part in a precarious condition of instability.

This section of the mural painting was found partially covered by the construction fill of the final building

¹ This article is a translation of Mónica Urquizú and Heather Hurst, 2003, *Las pinturas murales de San Bartolo: Una ventana al arte y cosmovisión del hombre prehispánico*. In *XVI Simposio de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Guatemala, 2002*, edited by Juan Pedro Laporte, Bárbara Arroyo, Héctor L. Escobedo, Héctor E. Mejía, v. 1, pp. 325–334. Guatemala: Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes; Instituto de Antropología e Historia; Asociación Tikal.

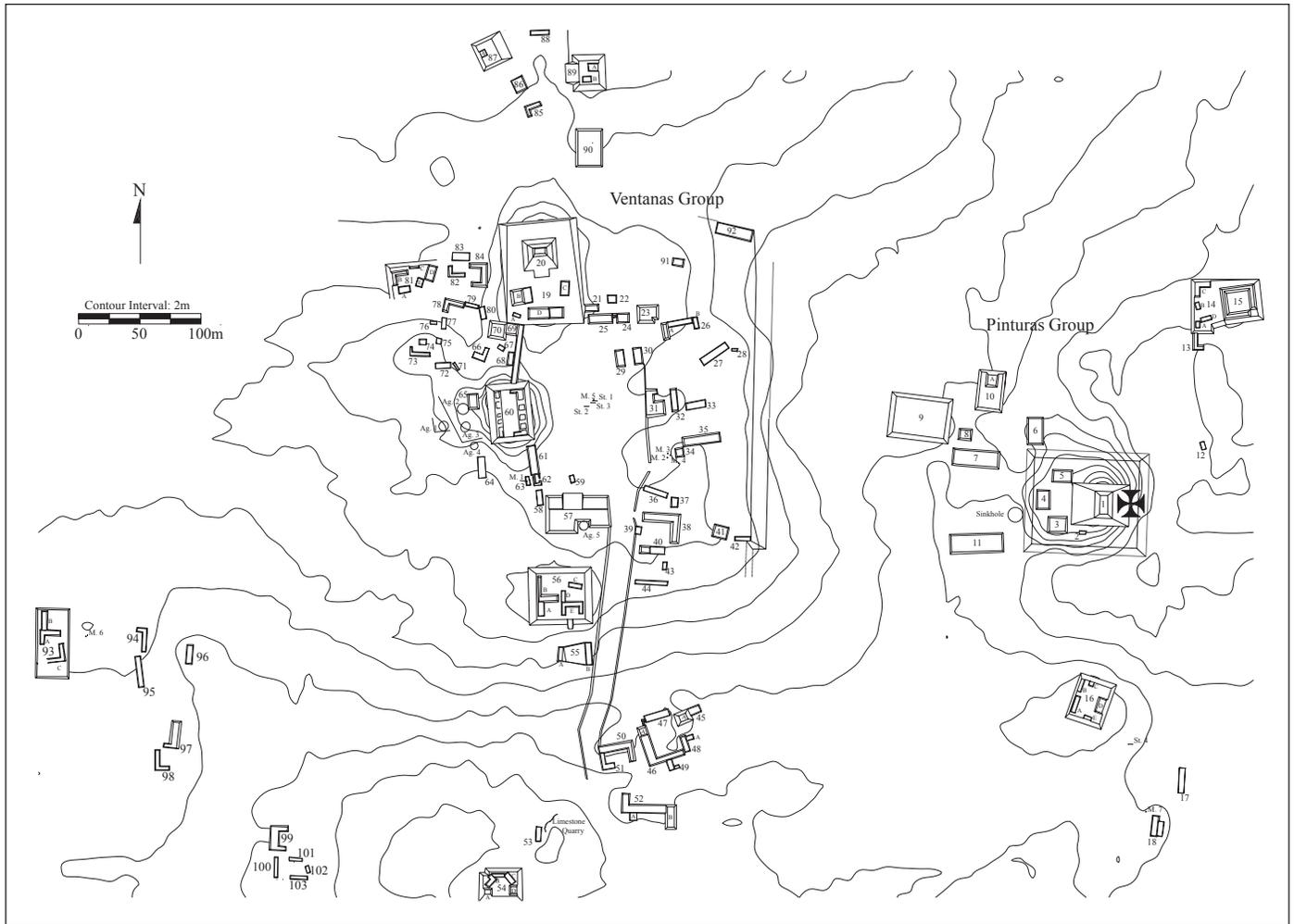


Figure 1. Map of the San Bartolo archaeological site showing the location of the Pinturas Group, the building complex in which the murals were found.

phase. The only visible section of the painting was 1 x .6 meters in extent. The dating of this architectural feature was based on the associated material and a stylistic analysis of the painted figures, leading to a placement between 100–200 BC, in the Late Preclassic period.

In 2001 a short visit to the site resulted in the recording of the paintings then visible and an assessment of the stability of the building housing them. In the current 2002 field season a program of investigation, salvage, and conservation has encompassed multispectral photography, analysis of stucco, and monitoring of heat and humidity within the pyramid. The murals owe their preservation to the covering of stone, lime, and mud that constituted the fill of the pyramid containing them. They still present vivid colors in tonalities of white, red, black, and yellow-ochre, preserving delicate details as if they were executed yesterday.

Description of the murals

The visible part of the north-wall mural of Structure 1

displays a scene which includes at least nine figures. All are standing or kneeling on a plain border or band which contains in its lower part many designs and geometric elements painted in black, red, and yellow-ochre (Figure 2). The scene is dominated by a standing male figure who walks toward the left of the viewer, looking over his shoulder at two kneeling female figures behind him. Beyond these two, there is evidence of at least two more standing figures. To the left of the central figure we see a kneeling male figure with a blackened face, who seems to be holding an object above his head, which in turn is grasped by the hands of the central figure. From this object emerge volutes and a type of plant. To the left one can distinguish another kneeling figure, who is still mostly covered by fill (Saturno et al. 2001).

Interpretation and comparisons

The Late Preclassic period (250 BC–AD 250) represents a very important moment in Maya culture, an era of transformation and internal change which brought

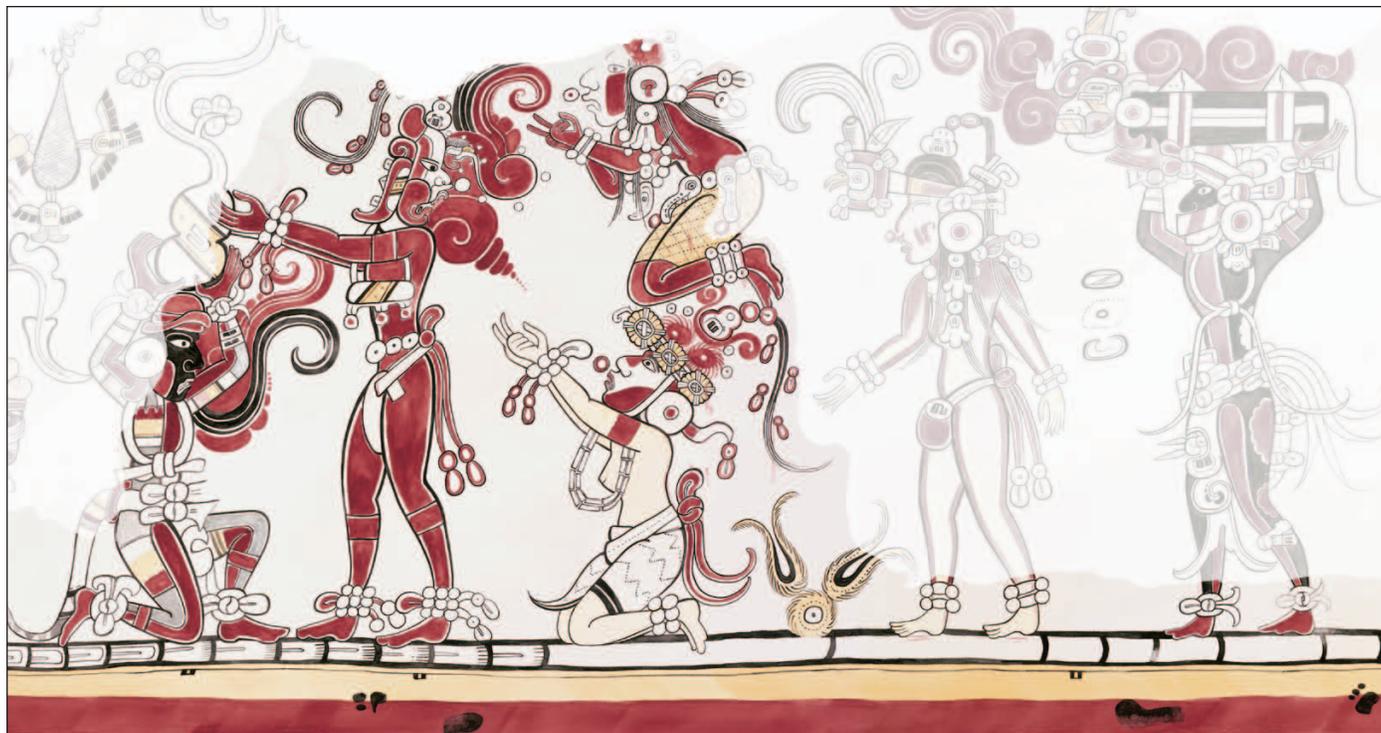


Figure 2. Detail of Heather Hurst's rendering of the San Bartolo North Wall mural. The highlighted area corresponds to the figure that accompanied the original publication of the present article (Urquizú and Hurst 2003), showing how much of the mural had been revealed at that time and documented by the project artist.

about the flowering of civilization (Valdés 1990:23). Among the different artistic forms employed in the Maya Lowlands for symbolic representation are full-figure depictions of figures in standing, reclining, or seated pose. These were realized in different materials such as modeled stucco, mural painting, and portable objects of carved jade and limestone (Valdés 1990:24).

Freidel (1985) and Schele (1985) have contributed studies on the use of color and its significance during the Preclassic and the Classic periods. Red was the first to be employed, immediately followed by black. With the addition of cream color, these were the most common on facades of the Late Preclassic. In addition to these colors, rose, grey, yellow-ochre, green, and orange have been reported to a lesser degree (Valdés 1992:28).

The San Bartolo paintings follow an established canon for Preclassic figures depicted in stone monuments, carved objects, and other mural paintings found at Tikal and Uaxactun. Valdés (1990:25) mentions that at both sites the paintings are located in palaces of the era's governing class, such as Structure 5D-Sub10-1 of Tikal. In Tikal's North Acropolis, figures are depicted in profile and ornamented with earflares, bracelets, and belts tied on the upper arms; one arm is raised and all figures are surrounded by volutes (Figure 3a). Seated figures sharing the same stylistic features are also depicted on the internal walls of Burial 166 of the North Acropolis. The paintings of Uaxactun are located on the

facade of palace structure H-Sub 5, painted in red on a white background.

The style of the ornamentation and wardrobe, as well as the positions of the figures in the San Bartolo scene are also similar to carved objects such as the Dumbarton Oaks pectoral and the Leiden Plaque (Figure 4). The figures wear headdresses and bracelets on their wrists and ankles, as well as jewelry with large beads including necklaces and ear flares. Another interesting aspect is the rounded lines of the thighs and hips, as well as the strokes that show creases in the flesh. The positions of hands and feet are stylistic indicators; the treatment of the hands is a Late Preclassic tradition. This style is reflected in a jade plaque from an unknown site in northern Peten (Coe and Kerr 1998:Plate 25), as well as sculpted figures in stucco discovered in Structure H-Sub 10 at Uaxactun (Figure 3b). The hands have thumbs stylized with a distinctive curvature evoking the figures of Kaminaljuyu Monument 65. All of the figures of the mural display this characteristic. Valdés (personal communication 2002) indicates that the kneeling female figure in the lower part of the scene is marked by a possible error on the part of the artist, who seems to have painted two right hands.

There are two styles in the position of the feet on the San Bartolo mural. The central figures and the women present a fluid line with a notch which defines the toes and a pronounced curve for the arch. On the other hand,



Figure 3. Figures surrounded by volutes: (a) detail of mural from Structure 5D-Sub-10-1st, North Acropolis, Tikal (drawing by Karl Taube after W. Coe 1990:Fig. 32a); (b) detail of stucco facade from Building H-sub 10, Uaxactun (drawing by Karl Taube after Valdés 1987:Fig. 6).

the standing figure behind the kneeling woman has four distinct toes and a gentle curve of the arch. This style is reflected in Tintal Stela 1 (Justeson and Mathews 1983, cited by Valdés 1990:41), in the modeled stuccoes of Uaxactun, and in Stela 1 of Nakbe. On this stela can be seen knots, bracelets, anklets, and masks which, together with the position of the figure, all relate to the murals in this artistic tradition.

A possible mask in the mural of San Bartolo can be compared to the Dumbarton Oaks pectoral, which probably dates to AD 120 (Figure 4a). Here we see a ruler with a possible mask, with one arm extending down and the other gesturing upwards. Both figures have bare shoulders, while the standing figure at San Bartolo is more slender than the one from Dumbarton Oaks. The figures have jewelry in common, including fine adornments with beads and bindings on the upper arm.

Similar knots can be seen at San Bartolo and in the examples previously mentioned, appearing on the knees and ankles of the figures as well as in the back part of the belts of the San Bartolo figures. The figures in the scenes wear jewelry with large beads seen from a frontal perspective, while the figures themselves are seen in profile. The Dumbarton Oaks figure wears the typical skirt-like loincloth of the nobility, whereas the San Bartolo male does not. The women in turn wear the familiar skirt that comes to the knees, with a wide waist and ornamental belt.

In describing the mural from a technical point of view, the first observation to be made is that the scene is carefully painted. The black outline is strong and picks out the figures delicately. There are fine lines that define in detail the ornamentation of the jewelry and the composition of the textiles of the women's skirts. All of the areas have been carefully filled with red, leaving a white border to give emphasis to the depth of the elements. The composition, line, and application of color are all very controlled.

Heather Hurst considers that the artists who painted this mural could have also been sculptors or carvers. The use of a continuous

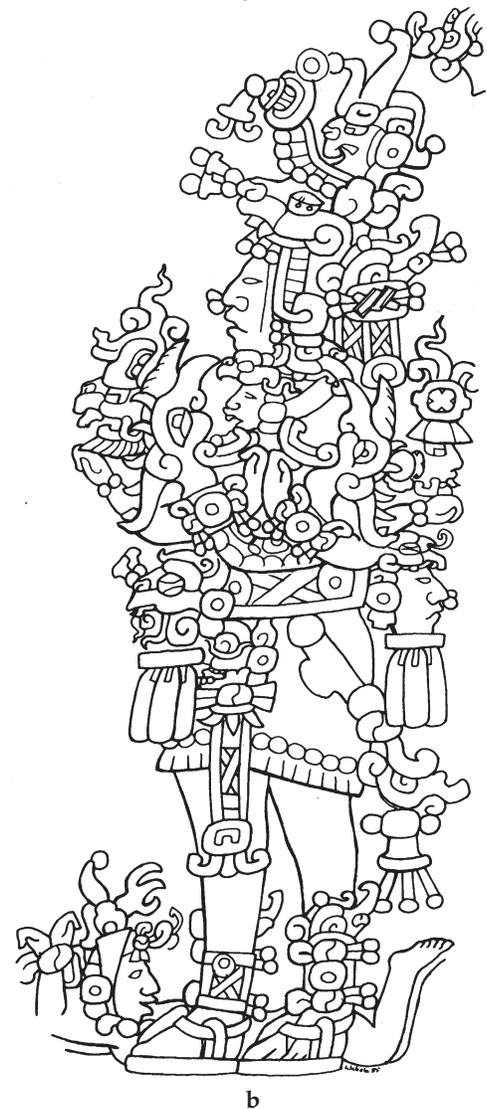


Figure 4. Details of the Dumbarton Oaks pectoral (a) and the Leiden Plaque (b). Drawings by Linda Schele.

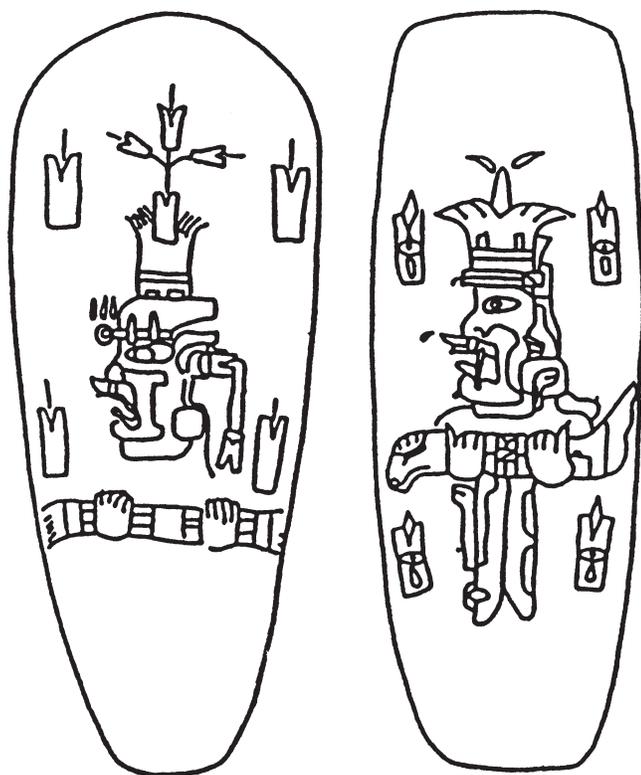


Figure 5. Río Pesquero celts. Drawings by Linda Schele, courtesy of David Schele.

and firm line seems more from the hand of a carver than the loose lines that can be observed in Classic-period painted ceramics. Hurst, citing Mary Miller, thinks that the Bonampak murals were painted by artisans who were also sculptors. This proposal is based on a comparison of the style and composition of the hands and feet of the Bonampak scenes with Yaxchilan Stela 1.

It is believed that the Early Preclassic was a time of transition to a social system with a stratified hierarchy emphasizing the ruler or king (Freidel 1995; Schele and Miller 1986). Changes occur in monumental architectural programs, with works of public art such as the stucco facades of Cerros, Uaxactun, and Nakbe. This reflects the growing complexity of life in Maya society and the elite class (Schele and Miller 1986:104). Public art promoted a social reality in which the king was at the center, aligned with powerful gods in a symbolic composition that generated social cohesion.

In some cases these rulers adopted already established symbols in order to legitimize their royal authority. In the mural of San Bartolo, the whole scene is centered on the Maize God, with his Olmec features, the maize leaves which sprout from his head, and the distinctive pectoral that he wears. Maize cultivation attained its importance as a basis of society during the Preclassic period (Miller and Taube 1993:58). Instruments used in the cultivation of maize took on

a ritual importance, as seen in the caches in which Olmec celts have been found. Rain and maize were the elemental forces of the Olmec world, central to ritual contexts in the Early and Middle Preclassic periods.

For the Late Preclassic a complex ideology of maize and rain culminated in a series of symbols that were inherited by the Classic-period Maya (Joralemon 1971; Taube 1995). Karl Taube (personal communication 2002) describes the San Bartolo mural as the Preparation of the Maize God. The male in the center could be wearing a mask of the Maize God or he could be the god himself. In this activity he is assisted by three or four women, two on either side. Elements of this scene are similar to an incised jade celt found in Río Pesquero on the Gulf Coast of Mexico (Figure 5, left). The celt shows the head and the hands of the Maize God holding a scepter. Taube has identified this scepter as quetzal plumes, symbolizing the new growth of the plant. In the mural, the white floor represents a dias where the figures interact, providing an emphasis to the two central figures. Valdés (personal communication 2002) thinks that this could be a ruler of San Bartolo participating in a ritual personification of the Maize God.

On the Río Pesquero celt, this deity shows four symbolic leaves of the maize plant growing from his head. The artist of the San Bartolo mural depicts the Maize God at the center of the scene marked by the four kneeling women. Heather Hurst thought at first that the mural artist was making an effort at perspective. He seems to have been unable to show the women as if they were kneeling around the central figure, so therefore he stacked them vertically. However, Hurst thinks that the mural represents the same ritual symbolism that Kent Reilly describes—in reference to another celt from Río Pesquero (Figure 5, right)—as the Olmec image of Creation: a quadripartite arrangement that defines the four points of the earth with the center symbolized by the growing maize plant (Reilly 1986, 1995; Schele 1995).

There are many other examples of the quadripartite arrangement associated with the Maize God and Creation. Taube has also found a strongly quadripartite nature for the Olmec rain god. For example the black color and the red elements behind the central figure of the San Bartolo mural are symbolic of rain clouds. Taube suggests that these features are an early rain-associated symbolism which developed into the Jester God of the Classic period (Taube 1995:99). The pectoral worn by the central figure terminates on the underside in beads representing raindrops. Taube has observed this feature in Tres Zapotes Stela C and in a rock carving from Chalcatzingo dating to the Middle Preclassic. As rain and maize are indissolubly joined, the associations of rain, maize, clouds, and fertility were invoked by the ruler through personification in order to take on a crucial role in the continuing

agricultural cycle.

The role of the women in this mural is uncertain; the gesture of the figures seems to be one of offering to or honoring the central figure. Kneeling is a birthing position on Olmec painted vessels. The bare breasts and rounded hips evoke fertility. A fertile woman and a growing maize plant substitute iconographically in the symbolism of the quadripartite creation.

The San Bartolo mural is one of the earliest in the Maya pictorial tradition, with unique characteristics but also a symbolism employed throughout Mesoamerica. The Maize God can be observed as a continuing thematic topic in artistic representations down through the time of the conquest.

In conclusion, it is hoped that in future field seasons we can count on more evidence that will permit us to extend, test, or refute these findings and with this expand our understanding of the cosmology of the Late Preclassic Maya as reflected in their artistic expressions.

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

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 Ruppert, John Bolles, and Gustav Strömsvik.

April 28 – Thursday (cont)

The two boys who sent these messages were as much interested in their contents as we were and asked a lot of questions. It took considerable time also for them to figure what these telegrams would cost, especially the one to Andover. Finally it was decided that the one to Mexico City would cost about 12 pesos – a little more – and one to Andover about 33 to 34 pesos.

After paying for these messages it was about 6:30 and we went next to pay a short call on Fernando Gutierrez Mc Gregor. The family was all in and we had the usual formal visit. He has found some things he wants to show us and we made an appointment to see him in the morning.

We got back to the Brydon's at seven and dinner was served shortly after our return. She had most thoughtfully asked Gustav and John, who were already there when we arrived.

Dinner was a pleasant reunion and we all looked somewhat different "shaven and shorn" and clean, both as to clothes and person.

Immediately after dinner Frances and I excused ourselves to go to bed. This is literally the first full night's rest we have had since last Saturday, i.e. five nights ago and we are nearly all in in consequence.

Mrs. B. had alloted us her husband's bedroom, fronting the sea. A delightful breeze was sweeping in the window and we were soon asleep without pabellon.

April 29 – Friday

It was after eight when Fanny and I came down stairs to breakfast. Felipon was already at the door with his car.

Mrs. Brydon had had a telegram from her husband saying he would be back this noon. Karl decided wisely to sit around and rest, while Frances and I went into the town.

Our first call was at the office of Don Francisco Buenfils. I had seen his administrador, Castilla, yesterday and told him I would be around the first thing this morning to settle our bill.

I stopped at the Telegraficos first however, to send a message to Fernando Barbachano reserving rooms for all of us at the Gran Hotel tonight.

Mr. Castilla had our account all made out when we got there, and the total was \$1001. pesos plata at 3 for 1, \$333. more or less American money. This included all of our transportation from La Gloria to the ruins and all the freight both by mules and by trucks. The price I thought exceedingly reasonable.

After liquidating here we went over to the Mexican Exploitation Company where I next paid up.

Yesterday I had taken 250 pesos in cash and counting this our bill was only \$277.

We next went over to Fernando Gutierrez McGregor's but he was not in. Mrs. G. asked us in however, and showed us some lovely old things.

She was married at 15, now 31, has 7 children, the oldest, a daughter of 15: Quite a record I should say, even for this fecund vicinity.

Presently Fernando came in. He showed us the same china that we had looked at last year but Frances is now quite sure she does not want it.

He also had two lovely ivory hand painted fans for which their owner – not Fernando – was asking 125 pesos. But Frances did not fancy these either.

What we both liked, however, to distraction was some old family silver: a lovely fat old coffee pot; a large round plate; a medium sized round plate; three small round plates; and two long plates which might be fish plates. There together weighed 321 ounces. We had quite a time weighing them on the Gutierrez family scales. Fernando himself, who has a sixth interest in this silver is in favor of selling it, but final word cannot be given in the matter until his brother Eduardo returns from Mexico, from whence he is expected early in May. If all six of the brothers and sisters agree to sell, Fernando thinks he will bring the silver out here himself.

It was after twelve when we left the Gutierrez' house and returned to the Brydon's. Mr. B. was back from Merida and we enjoyed seeing him. I suggested that when he visits Santa Maria about the middle of May he leave his family with us. The nearest way for him to go is by way of Dzitas and Tizimin and then a 3 day's ride to Santa Maria. He wants me to get the dope about this trip and send it back to him. He is seriously considering leaving Mrs. B. and the children with us

while he is away.

We had a venison luncheon. The Brydens have been most kind which we deeply appreciate and I hope we can repay it in kind by taking care of them out here.

Felipon was at the door at one and we left for the station at 1:10.

At the station there was relatively little confusion. John, Gustav, Tarsisio, and Arturo were already on hand, and as almost all of our baggage had gone on by express, we had little trouble.

Nazario Quintana Bello, Inspector of Monuments for the State of Campeche, an old friend was down to see us off and I gave him a copy of the telegram I had sent to Ignacio Marquina at Mexico City last night.

The Governor of the State of Campeche was also going up on the same train, Senor Esquivel, and when he came on board, Nazario introduced me to him. I thanked him for having released us from the necessity of having to pay import duties (state) on all our outfit when we brought it into Campeche on April 5th.

The ride up was hot and monotonous. We saw no flamboyant trees in flower, though the bush in general looked much greener than when we came down. A number of milpas were being burned and the air was quite smoky. The range of low hills which parallels the track to the southeast seems to be a favorite place for milpas. We passed patch after patch of cleared areas on the steep northwestern side of the range.

About the middle of the afternoon we played auction – Gustav and John against Frances and myself – all the rest of the way in, which was a most helpful antiboredom diversion.

At Uman, the Governor of Campeche and his wife with another matrimonio evidently of their party, left the train catching an automobile from here into Merida.

Here also – Uman – Frances induced me to abandon my sun helmet. This was indeed finished. It had been sat upon, torn and so battered about that the pith of which it was made had broken into pieces, only held together by the white cotton cover. I threw it out of the window just as we were leaving the station. We saw a fat man step off the platform, retrieve it, try it on and cast it away again. Too far gone even for him.

We got ready to leave the train behind the penitentiary where the Campeche train used to stop. The brakeman told me the train would stop here today, but both John and Arturo thought differently; indeed had been told differently. We got our baggage ready to get off if it should stop but the train hurried by without stopping.

We reached Campeche [sic] at 6:35 where Fernando Barbachano and John Germon met us, also the faithful Pablo. Frances, Tarsisio and I came up in Pablo's car the rest in Fernando's car. We went first to Martinez and Solit to leave our films but their shop was closed.

Numero 31 was reserved for us at the Gran Hotel but before we assembled for dinner all had hot baths. A

shower of hot water is about the most agreeable thing after such a trip as we had had, as may be imagined.

Fernando Barbachano and John Germon took dinner with us and we were a happy party albeit greatly exhausted. It had been decided that Karl, Gustav, and John will continue on to Chichen Itzá tomorrow, Frances and I and the two boys, following the next day, as I have a lot of business to attend to in Merida tomorrow.

There was a letter in the office for me from Esther asking me to bring out a thousand pesos.

I asked Fernando if he could get these tonight. The hotel office did not have them; Luis Garcia of the Restaurant was not to be found; he could not get hold of Rafael Torres, the Bank manager, by telephone. Finally young Cue Noriega whom we had last seen at San Dimas on the morning of Wednesday, April 6, turned up for dinner. He said he would be glad to get this money from his safe after dinner. Fernando said he would accompany him, and bring it back turning the money over to Karl tonight. After satisfying myself that this arrangement would surely go through Frances and I went up to our room about 9:15.

April 30 – Saturday

Frances ordered breakfast this morning: orange juice, pompano grilled with butter, toast and chocolate. I do not know when a breakfast tasted better, nor indeed when Frances enjoyed one more.

While we were at breakfast Tarsisio appeared with the news that Pablo was waiting outside and as soon as we were finished we set about the business of the day – and there was a lot of it.

Our first concern was for our films and we went up to Martinez and Solis and I talked personally with Martinez and asked him to use new chemicals and employ every precaution possible to see that we got a good set of negatives. We made arrangements to return later in the day and see how they were coming out.

Our next port of call was at the Lizarraga's where Frances went to tell Miss Lizarraga we would be leaving in another 3½ weeks and she hoped her needle-point might be finished by that time. The poor half paralyzed mother was sitting up and Frances went in the bed-room to talk to her but she looks very ill and will surely pass away before another year rolls around.

From the Lizarraga's we went to Maestro Menas to see about an ebony frame we want made for a piece of embroidery we have. The frame is to be square but the opening to be round. Frances has an excellent design for this and by the aid of a pencil and my acting as interpreter put it over to the Maestro. He has converted the front of his shop into a grocery store where his son is in business, thus are they all scratching for livings. We cautioned him that this frame must be finished in 3 weeks time and he promised it.

Pablo lives right nearby, almost across the street

in fact and we next visited his home. His little girl, 9 months old tomorrow – Alicia Maria – is as pretty as a picture.

His house is clean and well kept and his wife a thoroughly capable nice girl. The younger sister from Ticul was visiting them. When Frances and I saw her there 2 years ago she was very pretty, but now she is too fat and gone pimply as well.

Pablo's mother broke her arm and is very depressed in consequence. P. says she talks of nothing but dying. They die so easily these Maya, I fancy one day soon the old lady – she is 72 – will lie down in her hammock and never arise.

But we had to push on. I next went to the station to arrange for the free shipment of our express from Campeche to Dzitas. Don Rafael Ramirez himself was not in, but his young secretary, Gutierrez, arranged the matter for me.

This was a break as I did not lose much time here.

We next went to a sombreria to see if I could get a sun helmet like the old one I threw away yesterday at Uman. I was shown cork helmets, but none like the one I had worn out and I am afraid they are not importing them anymore because of their cost. The shop-keeper said an English salesman was in town and he could get one but *quien sabe*; he is to send one around, however, if he finds one.

From here we went to Arthur Rice's. His wife, son, and sister-in-law have gone back to the States on the Ward Line.

He had sold only two of our five thousand dollar drafts: one for 3.01 and the other for 3.05. The exchange by great good fortune is up today to 3.13, i.e. 3.11 to the buyers of silver, so taking the remaining three one thousand dollar drafts, I went over to the Banco de Mexico.

I had a nice chat with Rafael Torres. He and his wife, Nacho and Izela Molina and his brother and sister-in-law are probably coming out to Chichen Itzá over the next week-end. I sold my three remaining drafts to the bank for 3.12 making a total credit of \$15460. pesos plata for the five thousand dollars. These are the sinews of war which are to carry us to the end of the year at Chichen Itzá.

On our way back to the hotel we stopped at the Cafe Colon, I took a guanaba ice and Pablo a coconut ice. I tried to persuade Frances to take the latter of which she is very fond but she would not, and very fortunately too, as after lunch Pablo told us he had vomited his very heels as result of his. Said it was "muy pasado" that he had even noticed it when he ate it.

I also stopped at the Museum to see if Don Luis Rosado Vega was in but found from young Guemes who was in charge that Don Luis had left for Mexico shortly after we passed through Merida on our way to Campeche.

Just as we got back to the hotel, Nacho and Izela Molina were leaving. They had come to ask us out to lunch and said they would call for us at 12:30.

We saw some of the pictures at Martinez and Solis. They are coming out fairly well, though look over-exposed

in general. That light at Calakmul was deceiving.

I also stopped into Don Francisco Buenfils but he was out; told his niece I would call later in the day.

We had almost an hour's rest before Nacho Molina came for us at 12:30.

When we got out to the Quinta Jacinta old Don Augusto was on the corridor. He has faded greatly, gone off in weight, looks weaker, and Izela says is losing his memory. Well he may for he is 87 years old!

We sat down to luncheon shortly after, the usual six of us: Nacho, Izela, Doña Jacinta, young Augustito, Frances, and I.

I had told Pablo to come for us at 2 and he was there promptly at that hour.

On our way back to the hotel I stopped a second time at Don Francisco Buenfils' home, but again had the misfortune to find him out. This time I made a definite appointment with his niece. I told her I would be back between 6:30 and 7:00.

I also tried to get into the Ford Garage to see about the battery for the Ford Harry and Henry purchased two months ago, but it was closed.

We came back to the hotel and took a much needed nap. It was a furiously hot day. Everybody said the hottest they have had yet and a storm will surely close this heat spell.

About 4 we went up to Martinez and Solis again to see our films. Over-exposure seems to be their chief defect, though the man at Martinez and Solis says they will give good prints on proper paper. I myself believe they will come out if properly printed.

Fernando Barbachano had asked us to come to the birthday party of his son, aged 6, about 4:30.

Frances wanted to pick up some gift for the boy so we walked out to a new candy shop. The candy was fresh and lost nothing by sweetness and she selected a couple of pounds. Then back to a box-makers for a box which was not too attractive and then on to a third place, Burrell's, to have it wrapped. We were just returning to the Hotel with the resulting trophy when Fernando met us at the door to take us out to the party.

A number of children, cute as could be, had already gathered, and were playing various games. Some mothers were present and the affair was well under way.

The children blind-folded were led to a cord from which various gifts were taken. Dolls, a chila poblano, a negress, and a clown, with bags of candy were hung up and the children struck at these with sticks until the bag was broken and the candy scattered in every direction. The negress doll had a pottery jar instead of a bag under her skirt and when this broke there was a grand scramble. Sex was forgotten, chivalry non-existent, each child pushed and scrambled for the dulces. One little girl of four to whom I had taken quite a fancy was pushed off a cement walk under a flower bush. Each one was intent on getting back more than his share and the stronger ones got precisely that.