



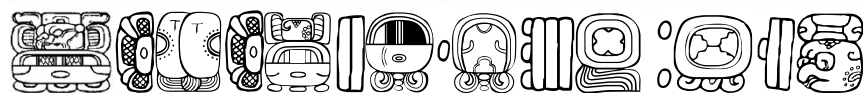
A monthly newsletter published by the
Institute of Maya Studies

Maya enthusiasts providing public education for half a century.

No IMS zoom livestreaming presentation this month.



Volume 50, Issue 12
December 2022
ISSN: 1524-9387



December 7, 2022 • Modern K'iche' Maya Long Count: 0.0.10.1.18 • 2 Etznab 11 Mac • G2

Of Sticks and Stones: Identifying Marks on the Palenque Cross (Part I)

by **Carl D. Callaway**, Austin Community College

The difficult task of making sense of Maya iconography is compounded further when energetic lines suddenly burst into a myriad of complex forms; a flint axe contorts into a pair of laughing eyes and mouth; wisps of smoke scrolls coil into fiery serpents; a speech scroll blooms into flowers; a dancer's feet morph into a pair of jaguar paws. Hieroglyphs especially can animate from simple forms into full-figured variants of gods, plants or animals that then mix with a scene's painterly lines to twist and run like vines and branches lacing through the forest canopy – it is an art form imitating nature's flow through the green fuse, camouflaging itself in a game of hide-n-seek with elaborations, conflations, simplifications, eliminations and substitutions that conceal identity in subtle and ingenious ways.

The central cross motif at Palenque prominently displayed on K'inich Janaab' Pakal I's sarcophagus lid and K'inich Kan B'alam II's Temple of the Cross Sanctuary Panel presents just such a tangle of layered visuals that seamlessly merge hieroglyphic labels with portraiture (**Figs. 1** and **2**). Two of the labels present mark the surface of the cross as wood but also as having a resplendent, jade-like surface. Is the cross wood or stone, or is it a montage of both? The labels themselves are not so clear-cut and easy to define, rather each glyph carries a domain of related meanings connected to both the natural and the supernatural world. If the properties of the

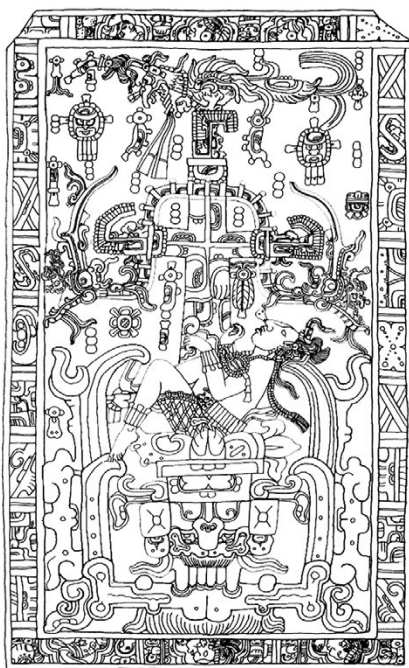


Fig. 1: The Sarcophagus Lid from the Temple of the Inscriptions. Drawing by Linda Schele.

Maya cross are to be understood, the glyphic signs that mark its body must be thoroughly examined.

The TE' Sign

In general, the TE' sign is a label for "tree" and "wood." It possesses both normal, head variant, and full-bodied forms. The normal form of the TE'

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IMS Streaming:

**December 7,
8 pm ET**

**The Annual
IMS Membership
Meeting
hosted by
Rick Slazyk**

**and
Keith Merwin**

Please plan to be there with us! See the program announcement on page 14.



**Jim Reed,
Editor**

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Ichkabal Archaeological Site Near Bacalar Will Soon Open to the Public

Submitted by **Marta Barber**

The site is home to a pyramid twice the size of the large K'uk'ulkan temple in Chichen Itza

On route to the Bacalar lagoon in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, the site of the ancient Maya city of Ichkabal (City of Snakes) will soon open to visitors, according to Diego Prieto Hernández, Director of the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH).

Although there is no confirmed date for its opening, researchers and authorities hope that the first tangible results of work on the project will be seen by tourists by mid-2023.

"Ichkabal is not open to the public because it is not easy to access the area," Prieto noted.

Although a large portion of the city still lies beneath the jungle, the site is currently being excavated by the INAH. It's part of the Program for the Improvement of Archaeological Sites (Promeza), an initiative to improve and/or develop archaeological sites along the route of the under-construction Maya Train, a commuter and tourist railroad route that will have stops near many tourist cities and attractions in southern Mexico. Excavations are directed by Sandra Balanzario of INAH – Quintana Roo.

Located 30 kilometers away from what could be the Bacalar station of the railway project, Ichkabal was only discovered 28 years ago by archaeologists Enrique Nalda Hernández and Javier López Camacho, although there had been talk of an archaeological site in the region since the 1930s.

So far, excavation at Ichkabal has revealed a central set of five buildings that are at least 2,400 years old. Standing out among them is a 40-meter-high pyramid twice the size of the large K'uk'ulkan temple in Chichen Itza. The Ichkabal pyramid has a base area similar to that of the Pyramid



Ichkabal was rediscovered by researchers in 1994.
Photo credit: INAH.

of the Sun in Teotihuacan.

The building's size supports the findings of previous investigations of the site, which have suggested the importance of Ichkabal for the Maya. Some researchers believe the city is the origin of the Kaanu'l (serpent) dynasty, one of the most powerful ruler groups of the Maya civilization.

Archaeological findings at the site ranging from between the Preclassic period and the Maya civilization's collapse (400 BCE–900 CE) demonstrate the city's permanence through time, also an indicator of the site's importance.

The artificial lagoons used as water reservoirs for the ancient city have also surprised archaeologists.

In an interview with the newspaper *La Jornada*, INAH archaeologist Sandra Balanzario said that the lagoons used an advanced hydraulic technique to avoid erosion and water seepage, allowing the lagoons to support the daily life of a city of 100,000 inhabitants spread over an area of 60 square kilometers.

To date, 26 archaeological zones along the Mayan Train are currently undergoing renovation work, with Quintana Roo being home to the largest number of zones in the program.

Source: **Mexiconewsdaily** has their online article here: [*Ichkabal Archaeological Site Near Bacalar Will Soon Open to the Public*](#)

Editor's note: Sandra Balanzario gave me her email address in a direct message during Francisco Estrada-Belli's IMS livestreaming event in November. I hope to visit Ichkabal during next year's field season. (Get ready Zac!)

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Ichkabal is located near Bacalar, Quintana Roo, a quiet municipality that federal and state officials believe is ripe for more tourism – in fact, the Maya Train will have a stop at Bacalar. Photo credit: Curtoscuro.

Of Sticks and Stones: Identifying Marks on the Palenque Cross

by Carl D. Callaway, continued from page 1

glyph is composed of two basic parts consisting of a joined circle and oval with a circular bead with one or two circles inscribed within (**Fig. 3**). Attached to the circle is an oval-shaped ornament from whose edge juts one or two jagged teeth like a broken stick. Inscribed in the oval is a line or a bar on which hangs two or three dots. This line-and-dot infix serves as the essential feature of the TE' glyph and acts as a sign that often labels wood items (**Fig. 4**).

For instance, Maya artists placed the line-and-dot infix of the TE' glyph on depictions of trees, plates, bowls, canoes and paddles to mark these items as actually made of wood (Stone and Zender 2011:71). The glyphic infix is also found on the frames of star bands, indicating that images of celestial bodies are enclosed by a timber scaffold, perhaps like-in kind to the roof poles of a traditional Maya house.

The normal form of the TE' sign is incorporated into names of objects built with lumber to denote their materiality. CH'AK-TE'-le for "cut/split wood" describes the trapped lily jaguar on Kerr Vase 791, who is confined by a cage, built similarly to modern Yucatec bird coops using split sticks (Juergen Kremer per. comm. 1993). *Lab'te' hix* spelled la-b'a-TE' HIX-xi, refers to a sorcerer's jaguar stick on a codex-style vase depicting a stuffed jaguar tied to a wooden pole (Stuart 2005:116).

The head variant of the TE' sign is an animated face of a tree spirit with ghoulish features (**Fig. 5A**). The TE' head displays a pair of large crossed eyes, a large nose, a cruller motif running under the eye socket, and a disembodied jaguar paw above the ear. From its jawless mouth dangle root-like protrusions. The mouth of the TE' head contains either the T712 sign or root-like tendrils. In every instance as a full tree, the missing lower jaw of the TE' mouth is below ground level, a fact that argues that the substance trailing from its mouth represents tree roots.

The manner in which Maya artists painted knots and tree hollows into human-like masks, is a case for

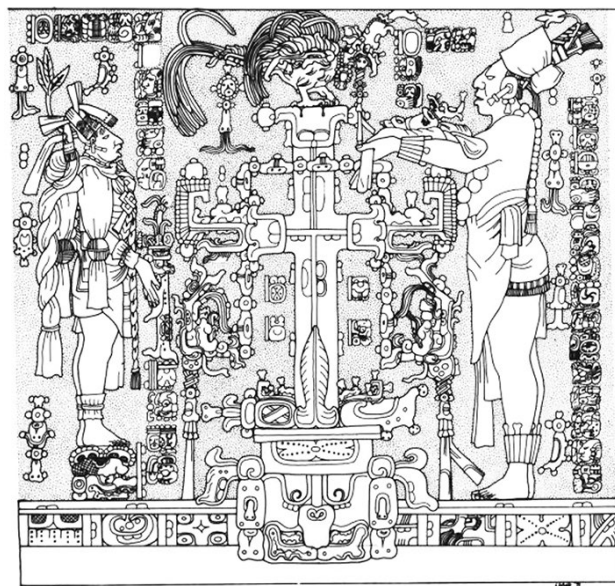


Fig. 2: The Temple of the Cross Main Sanctuary Panel. Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson.

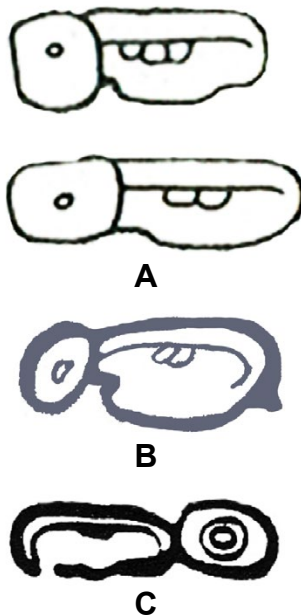


Fig. 3: The normal form of the TE' Glyph as found on (A) Temple of the Inscriptions, Palenque; (B) Kerr Vessel K4669; (C) Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, Palenque.

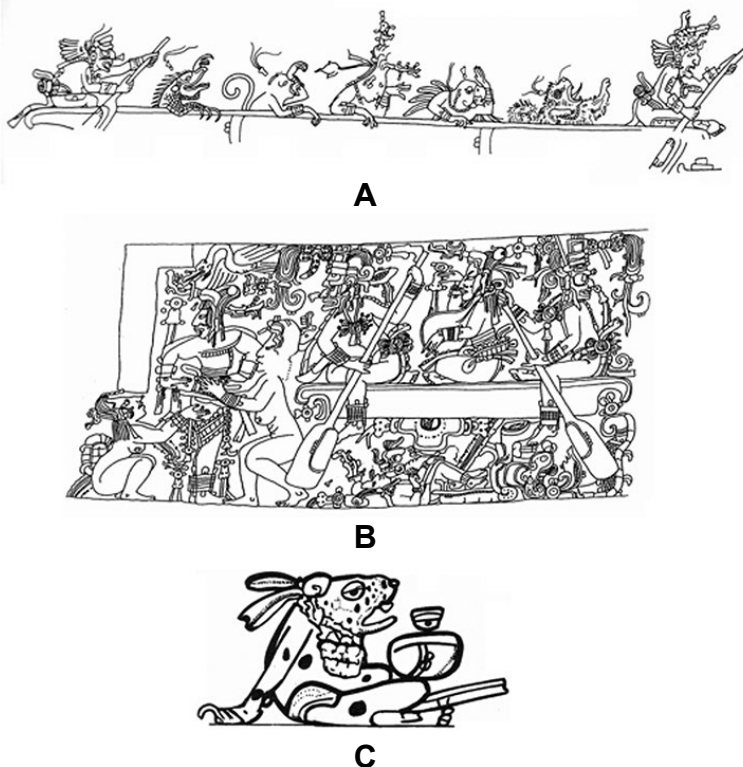


Fig. 4: Examples of the TE' Sign on Wooden Objects (A) A Canoe (after Schele and Miller 1986:270, Fig. VII.1); (B) Canoe Paddles (drawing by Linda Schele after Quenon and Le Fort 1997:886, Fig. 4); (C) God with Bowl in Lap (after Coe 1973:82, Fig 37).

face pareidolia, the phenomenon of seeing faces in everyday objects. There are instances when the tree trunk carries a circular knothole, often in the form of a quatrefoil (**Fig. 5C**). Kerr Vessel 4013 displays a deer-eared serpent emerging out of the knothole. Here, the TE' portrait is especially telling in that the jaguar paw above the ear has sharp feline

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by **Carl D. Callaway**, *continued from previous page*

claws digging lines into the bark of the tree, as if it were marking territory. The vertical scratched lines bleed droplets of sap not unlike those found on the infix of the TE' glyph and may point to the origins of the sign as cut lines of tree sap (Stone and Zender 2011:71) – a most intriguing thought, but without further examples the identification remains tentative.

Even when the TE' sign was written as a numerical classifier to express the calendar month it retains its ghoulish portrait. The morpheme *te'* is one of many classificatory suffixes that qualify a word and relate what class a counted object falls into (Thompson 1960:54). A most elaborate example of the classifier is found within a Long Count inscription on Copan Stela D (**Fig. 6**). Copan scribes wrote the entire Long Count text with full-figured variants of numbers and periods. The Calendar Round recorded is 10 AJAW 8 CH'EN. The numbered haab month reads WAXAK-TE'-IK' SIHOM with the numeral eight displayed as the full-figured portrait of the Maize God, who cradles in his left hand the head variant of the TE' sign with root-like protrusions still dangling from the mouth.

It seems fitting that a portrait of a deified tree aids to render the month name in the Maya latitudes where even today, farmers discern the month of the year via the trees that bloom – a veritable seasonal clock of tree flowers and changing leaves.

A full-figured variant of the TE' god appears as the “Patron of the Month” for the month of PAX, who performs custodial duties to help with calendar machinations (**Fig. 7**). The god's portrait



A



B



C

Fig. 5: Examples of the Head Variant of the TE' Sign on (A) Kerr Vessel 4669; (B) K1226; (C) K4013 (see Kerr Database: K4669, K1226 and K4013).

is inserted as the central element of the Long Count Introductory Glyph, clueing the reader as to the month being celebrated (Thompson 1971:105). As a patron, the face of the TE' head

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An Artistic Eye for the Maya with artist Steve Radzi

Hochob: “Corn Cob Storage Area” in Yucatek Maya. Late Classic Period (600-900 CE):

Hochob, a Chenes-style site, can be found in northern Campeche on Highway 269 close to the town of Dzibalchen. It is set upon a hilltop with most of the architecture situated around a central plaza. The first excavations and restorations were undertaken by Ramón Carrasco of INAH beginning in 1982. The residential sections were terraced along the hillside. This illustration of Structure V, which lies in the southeast corner of the plaza and is the best restored of the two towers at the site, was originally sketched in 1995.

Steve Radzi has been illustrating Maya sites for many years. The original black and white illustrations were created in 1995 for an exhibition at the Miami Museum of Science. In recent times, Steve has colored them, bringing them to life. These illustrations have not been published before. We shall feature his work in this and upcoming issues throughout 2023. Enjoy. You may visit Steve's site for more of his work. www.mayavision.com 🏡



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carries an added nose ornament associated with ink/soot translated as SIBIK giving a possible name for the TE' patron as SIBIK TE' (Zender 2005:8).

A full-figured form of the TE' god occurs on Quirigua's Zoomorph B (Taube 2005:30) where vegetal leaves sprout from the reclining figure's mouth (**Fig. 7**). As Miller and Martin (2004:28-29) point out, the personified form of SIBIK TE' occurs as part of a sculpture on the Amparo Throne Back where he takes on the duties as messenger (**Fig. 8**). The throne shows the TE' god as possessing a bizarre set of serpent headed wings underneath his arms. He sits cross-legged between two royal figures, one of which is acting as the God Itzamnaaj. The accompanying glyphic text states that the TE' god is the avian "messenger of Itzamnaaj" (Miller and Martin 2004:28-29). Perhaps the ability to touch the sky with branches, gives the god the capability to telegraph messages to celestial powers. The largest known portrait of SIBIK TE' is displayed on the back of Quirigua Stela C where he ecstatically dances while clinging to heavenly cords dropping from celestial architecture surmounted by the Principle Bird Deity.

The TE' god also can transmute from wood into stone. TE' gods were carved from blocks of jade as animated bejeweled trees (Wagner 2001:67; Taube 2005:29). For instance, at Copan the Early Classic grave of K'ak' Yipyaj Chan K'awiil produced a rectangular shaped pectoral carved as a standing figure of the TE' god, complete with the definitive jaguar ears and stylized roots protruding from its mouth and oval T24



Fig. 9: A Jade Pectoral from Structure 10L-26, Copan (A) Front View Showing Pax God (after Taube 2005: Fig. 5); (B) Back View Showing a Square-Nosed Blossom with Oval T24 Sign (after a jade replica carved by Elisabeth Wagner).

"mirror" signs on its legs (**Fig. 9A**) (Wagner 2001:67). Even more remarkable, the back of this pectoral is carved with a "Square-Nosed Flower" and a prominent oval T24 "mirror" sign, indicating (as we will discuss shortly) the resplendence of the jade surface (**Fig. 9B**). At Palenque, Pakal's tomb also produced another jade figurine of a seated TE' God. In both cases, the separate domains of plant and stone are being fused into a single bejeweled tree god, relaying to the viewer that in the Maya world trees fashioned from jade are a distinct reality.

The T24 "Mirror" Sign

A second glyphic label found on the cross at Palenque is the so-called "celt/mirror" sign. The glyph is catalogued by Thompson as T24 (Thompson 1962:445). In general, the normal form of the T24 sign is quite simple, consisting of two oval-shaped rings with a smaller oval ring infixed into the side of the larger (**Fig. 10A**). Two parallel bands form a partial loop or arch within the infixed

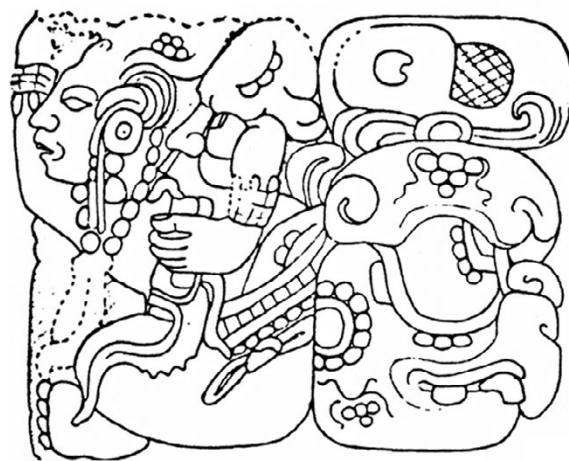


Fig. 6: The TE' Sign as a Numeral Classifier on Copan Stela D, North (glyph block A9). Drawing by Linda Schele.



Fig. 7: The TE' Sign as the Patron of the Month Pax appearing in the Introductory Glyph on Zoomorph B (after Taube 2005:30, Fig. 5b).

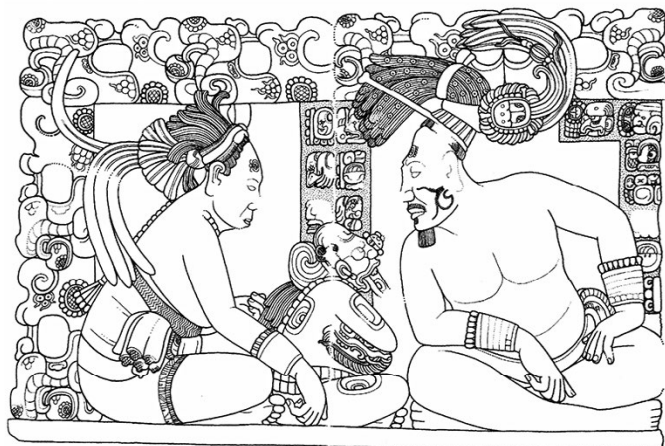


Fig. 8: The Amparo Throne Back (after Zender 2005:12, Fig. 9).

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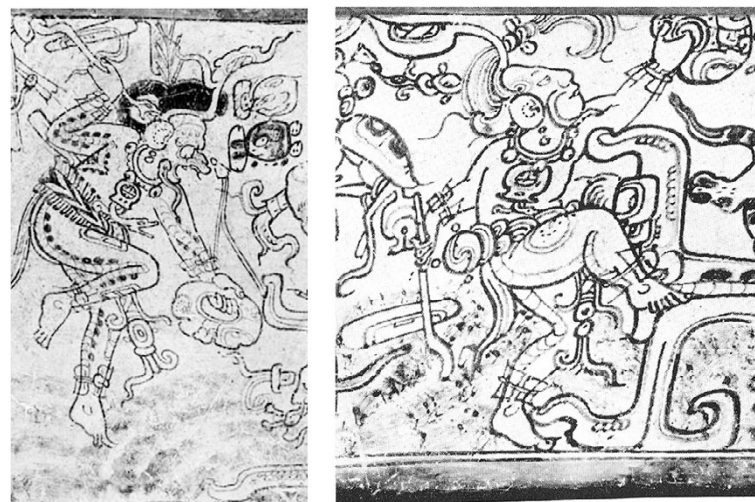
oval. Linda Schele and Jeffery Miller (1983) first coined the term “mirror” for this sign suggesting that it had a value of NEN or ‘mirror’ and conveyed the idea of “brightness.”

Iconographers early on noticed that the sign commonly labeled and took the shape of jade celts hanging off ceremonial belts such as those depicted on Dos Pilas Stela I and 17

(**Fig. 10B**). These oval belt ornaments occur abundantly in the archaeological record as thinly carved jade pendants resembling axe heads with a single hole drilled at the top in order to be hung from belts and back racks (Stone and Zender 2011:21). One of the most famous of these jade celts is the Leiden Plaque from the Early Classic Period. It bears an inscription on one side and a kingly portrait on the opposite with celts dangling from ancestor heads.

The T24 “mirror” sign also has an animated head variant (Stuart et. al: 2006). The variant is catalogued by Thompson as T1017 (Thompson 1962:457) and is the same profile of a cross-eyed supernatural that inhabits the base of the cross on Pakal’s sarcophagus lid. (**Fig. 11A/B**). The face has very distinct features, including a quatrefoil-shaped mouth with a shaved, buck-tooth incisor, a curled nostril, and square-shaped eye sockets with crossed eyes. In addition, infixed into its forehead or at the back of its head is another oval T24 “mirror” sign.

The T1017 and the T24 signs directly substitute for each other in the script. One needs to look at the inscriptions of Naranjo and Stelae 24 and 29 to see their equivalency (Grube and Schele 1991:5).



A

B

Fig. 13: Examples of Chaak Wielding Axes (A) K4013; (B) K521 (see Kerr Database 2005: K4013 and 521).

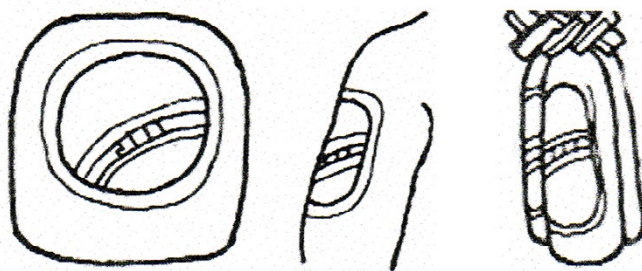


Fig. 10: The “Mirror/Celt” Sign (A) Circular and Oval Forms (after Schele and Miller 1986:43, Fig. 20); (B) Celts Hanging from a Royal Belt on Dos Pilas Stela I (after Schele and Miller 1986:77, Fig. 1.4e).

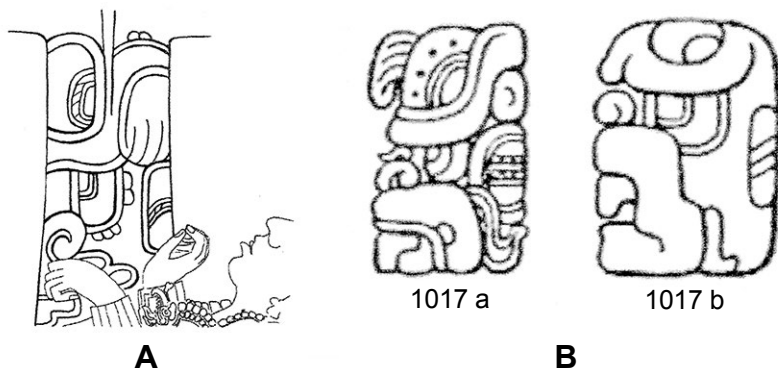


Fig. 11: Examples of the T1017 Supernatural Head (A) from Pakal’s Sarcophagus Lid (after Greene 1974:81, Fig. 8); (B) from Thompson’s Catalogue of Maya Hieroglyphs (after Thompson 1962:457).

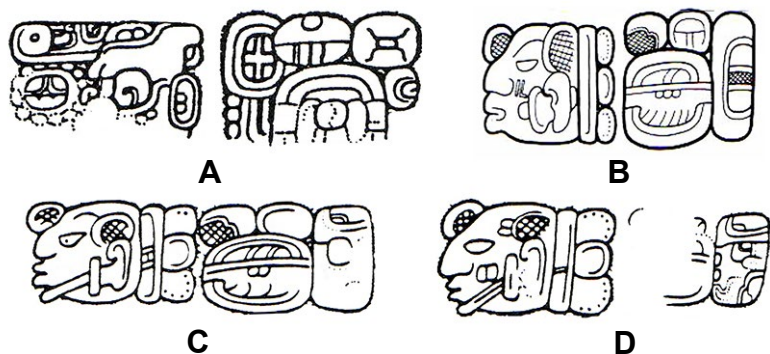


Fig. 12: Examples of T24 and T1017 Substitutions (A) Itzamnaaj K’awil Name Phrase on Dos Pilas, Stela 8 (H11-I11) (after Houston 1993:111, Fig. 4-14); (B) Lady Six Sky Name Phrase from Naranjo (after Martin and Grube 2000:74); (C) and (D) Lady Six Sky Name phrase from Naranjo Stela 29 (glyph blocks H13-I13 and I17-H18) (after Graham et. al. 1978:72, Vol. 2).

On Stela 24, a portion of Lady Six Sky’s title consists of a CHAN glyph (with an unknown superfix) followed by the T24 sign (**Fig. 12B**). On Stela 29, the same title is spelled slightly different with the supernatural head that directly substitutes for the “mirror” sign (**Fig. 12C/D**).

The T1017 head variant also has a close affinity to jade axes. Just as the T24 “mirror” sign marks axe heads hanging from belts, so too the T1017 head marks stone axes carried by various gods

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(Stuart 2010:292). CHAAK often swings a circular jade axe emblazoned with the T1017 face (**Fig. 13A-B**) (as seen on K4013 and K521). The smoking axe in K'awiil's forehead will carry the T1017 face (**Fig. 12A**). Itzamnaaj K'awiil (Ruler 2) from Dos Pilas uses a K'awiil portrait in his name phrase on Stela 8 (Stuart 2010:292).

Here, K'awiil's smoking axe displays the T1071 portrait with a slight difference. The head has a circular bead on its forehead rather than the more common oval T24 sign.

The T1017 head is specifically named on a blue-green carved jadeite block from Palenque's Temple 12 (Miller and Martin 2004:234). The block has an inscription on the reverse naming itself as tribute from a Pomoná king (**Fig. 14**):

Transliteration (Blocks A1-D3)

I-AJAW 3-POP NAH-HO'-TUUN-ni ["dedicated"]
YAX-[T1017] u-K'AB'A yi-ka-tzi ["Sun-Raiser Jaguar"]
[Pomoná]-AJAW

Translation

"I AJAW 3 POP the first 5 tuun was dedicated
blue-green-[T1017] is its name, the tribute
of Sun Raiser Jaguar, Pomoná Lord."

The deity depicted on the carved jade is the T1017 head variant and the inscription on the back specifically names the stone by using the T1017



Fig. 14: Inscribed Jade Block from Palenque, Temple 12 (after Miller and Martin 2004:234, plate 130).

glyphic label. In this instance, the scribe makes a one-to-one equivalency between the carving and the deity title, linking its polished blue-green surface to its proper name. The connection between god and blue-green stone seems undisputable. Yet a direct association with jade remains enigmatic.

The fact that Maya artists use the sign in different ways outside the context of jade, argues against such a clear-cut link. For instance, the backs of toads, the skin of gods, and plant leaves also carry the T1017 label. The shared trait connecting all these entities into the same semantic domain is the connection to a bright blue-green surface (skin, sky, leaves) leading back to the Schele and Miller (1983) hypothesis that the T24 label serves as a term for "brightness," or as David Stuart notes, a more general term like "resplendence" (Stuart 2006:116).

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Carl D. Callaway, PhD, is Adjunct Professor, Austin Community College, Department of Art History. He is an archaeologist, art historian and folklorist. He earned his PhD in 2012 from La Trobe University, Melbourne, in the Archaeology Program under the direction of Dr. Peter Mathews. The topic of his dissertation at La Trobe was "A Catalogue of Maya Era Day Inscriptions" that describe the mythic events surrounding the "zero date" of the ancient Maya calendar that occurred on 13.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 8 Kum'ku (August 13, 3114 BCE). He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology with a minor degree in Native American studies in 1994 from the University of California Davis. In 2006, he obtained a Master's Degree in Art History at the University of Texas at Austin under the direction of Dr. David Stuart. His MA thesis was a reevaluation of the Maya "cross" from Palenque, Mexico. Recently, he published "*Rubbings of Ancient Maya Sculpture by Joan W. Patten*" (Mayaweb Art Press).



Carl D. Callaway

From 1991-2016, Callaway organized and taught over 50 workshops on Maya art and writing in California, Texas, and Mexico. These 1-5 day workshops include courses on Maya Classic art, the inter-workings of Maya sacred and solar calendars, Maya grammar, and structural analysis of historic texts. From 2006-2007, he was Assistant Instructor for the annual Maya Meetings and Hieroglyphic Workshop at the University of Texas at Austin. His works in folklore include "*The Life and Times of Jake C. See*" (editor) and "*Backporch Rambles*" (both by AtEase Press). These stories harken back to California during 1900-1930. Carl's family were some of the first Irish settlers in 1848 to farm the land known as the Irish Hills of San Luis Obispo, and he has held a life-long fascination for the people, history, and folklore of his beloved home town.

Editor's note: **Carl D. Callaway** will present the topic of this article in a livestreaming event on Monday, December 12 at 8 pm ET. Access this hyperlink to join in the event: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83435940889>

Note: This is not an IMS-sponsored event, but everyone is welcome!





A Visual Guide to the Aztec Pantheon

Story and Illustrations: Gwendal Uguen Code: Luc Guillemot

My name is Gwendal Uguen, I'm a French journalist and graphic designer. For a while now, I've been working on a special project and have now released my work on a new website. I share my passion for the Aztec gods. I tried to collect and classify the different gods (around 130 at the moment), with restorations of codices in vector graphics, in order to give a general audience a better understanding of the richness of Aztec civilization. As I'm not an expert in Mesoamerican history, I know it still needs improvement, but I hope this resource can also be an interesting tool for specialists.

The starting point was when I discovered Aztec codices more than ten years ago. I fell in love with Aztec art and I started to restore some of them in vector graphics, just to see what they would have looked like with bright plain colors and black lines. As I'm a bit obsessive, I've redrawn dozens of pictures and discovered the complexity of the Aztec Pantheon.

I felt a bit frustrated because I didn't find many comprehensible resources on the Internet, just partial lists, mainly without illustrations. So, last year, thanks to the Pudding website crew who specialize in data journalism, I've started to collect as much information as I could (reading websites, books, and contacting historians), in order to give to the general public a place where the Aztec pantheon could be understandable for a broad audience.

So far, I've collected 130 gods, with illustrations and descriptions, and, thanks to Luc Guillemot, we have classified them by thematics and created a cartography that people can navigate. I would love to expand this database and enhance it. I've still have several dozens of gods which lack information or proper illustrations that could be added and it could also be interesting to add a relationship map, with kinship and aspects (for example, the different shapes that a god can take). So, if any historians or specialists are interested by this project, don't hesitate to contact me.

*Thank you, Gwendal Uguen
uguengwendal@gmail.com*



South American and Mesoamerican civilizations have fascinated me since childhood, when I would watch *The Mysterious Cities of Gold*. This early 1980s Japanese-French anime series featured a solar-powered galleon ship, a golden, mechanical condor, three kids exploring the *New World* at the beginning of the Spanish Conquest, and a mini documentary at the end of each episode. Who could ask for more? (There was even a sequel in 2012!)

But, despite this enchantment, Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc were the only gods I could identify, while I could name dozens of Greek, Egyptian or Norse Gods. Only ten years ago, I learned about Aztec codices and a whole world of deities, each taking care of some aspects of human life. Using these codices, I tried to identify them all, like a Pokemon chaser, despite scattered, partial and sometimes contradictory sources. I finally collected and restored illustrations of more than a hundred gods.

Through these illustrations, I hope to commemorate the complexity of the Aztec Pantheon, make the academic research more accessible, and show how this civilization is still alive in our global culture. With luck, they will also help you see this society with the wonderment of your inner child's eyes, just like I did all those years ago.

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A Visual Guide to the Aztec Pantheon by Gwendal Uguen *cont. from previous page*

Aztec Iconography

Aztec gods, in iconographic sources, are like paper dolls. Each has a base form that is “dressed” with important symbolic accessories. Even specialists have difficulty identifying gods as these symbols can be emphasized for a particular worship, or switched between deities if they share similar fields of competence. Thus, gods can have multiple disguises, also known as aspects or nahual, and will freely share them with others.

The gods illustrated below are imaginary. These made-up illustrations show how symbols and attributes in real Aztec iconography were composed to depict a god’s domain, abilities and needs.

Imaginary God of **Death**



Snake helmet, a symbol of fertility and the underworld

Skull face with blood drops, and **wide opened** stellar eye, to see through the dark



Paper flags used in ceremonies

Obsidian knife used for sacrifice



Necklace with prickly pears, symbol of the human heart



Half dark circles, symbol of the night sky, and **eye-shaped stars**

Belt like a molting snake, symbol of renewal.



Claws emphasize ferocity and blood thirst



Seat with a **jaguar pelt**, symbol of authority and magic



Imaginary God of **Fertility**



An **eagle helmet** is a symbol of power and war, and fertility when pictured with flowers

Quetzal feathers are a symbol of fertility and beauty, and also power since they are used by high ranking people

Black painting around the eye, symbol of mourning, or to show power if the painting is made with the ashes of an enemy



Moon-shaped noseplug, symbol of fertility and femininity



An **earring** made of **jade**, symbol of high ranking people



Incense burner is associated with religious ceremonies

Corn necklace, symbol of fertility

Poncho and skirt are female clothes



Agave leaf and bone spur, used for autosacrifice



Flowers are associated with pleasure, sex, and fertility



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The Aztec Pantheon

These symbols can be found in real Aztec iconography, like in the 137 restored illustrations below. But Aztec Gods are rarely associated with a single domain. On the contrary, seemingly contradictory domains, like life and death, are often embodied by the same deity.



(Colorized detail from a stone sculpture exhibited at the Templo Mayor museum)

Tezcatlipoca

Tezcatlipoca rules night, death, discord, conflict, temptation, change and destruction.

Colors

He is usually represented with black and red as predominant colors.

Face

Yellow and black stripes are used for the face.

Spear

He carries a spear to judge humans.

Mirror

His obsidian mirror is used for divination.

Headdress

The elaborate headdress represents swirling smoke that emanates from his mirror.

Foot

Tezcatlipoca's foot was bitten off by Tlaltecuhltli in a battle. It is sometimes replaced by smoke, a scroll or a snake.



(Codex Borgia)

continued on page 12



The Aztec Pantheon

These symbols can be found in real Aztec iconography, like in the 137 restored illustrations below. But Aztec Gods are rarely associated with a single domain. On the contrary, seemingly contradictory domains, like life and death, are often embodied by the same deity.



The Gods of this pantheon are organized according to whether they are associated with death or life, and whether their domain is more spiritual or material.

Death groups all the gods related to destructive forces, whether they come from nature or humankind, like the underworld, war or natural disasters.

Life, like death, combines both renewal of nature and the continuation of the human species and, thus, includes fertility, birth, food or even cosmic creation.

Spiritual can be gods related to human intellectual interests, like art, lust and excess, or gods related to metaphysical interests, like the mysteries of nature, its creation and its purpose.

Material deities offer protection to the activities that ensure the survival of Aztec civilization, from trading and craft to war or food.

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A Visual Guide to the Aztec Pantheon by Gwendal Uguen *cont. from previous page*

The website is interactive and the gods come alive!

But, as we've seen with Tlaltecuhтли and Tezcatlipoca, Aztec gods rarely fit into a single category, and most are both creative and destructive, spiritual and material, especially the 13 major gods.

You can explore each illustration to see if you can spot the attributes that align with the gods' domains. Be sure to seek out the 13 major gods (high-lighted in red on the previous page) where you can also learn about Aztec society's lasting legacy, from modern election practices in the south of Mexico to the foods eaten around the world.

You can start exploring with Omēteotl (featured below), a major figure often deemed as the primordial god, as he is the cosmic energy that gives life to everything.



Omēteotl

Androgynous entity, responsible for the creation of the world, on the back of Cipactli, and the gods. Not the creator of mankind.

Symbolism

The only symbol of truth and permanence for Aztecs is Omēteotl, the cosmic energy which gives life to everything, and structures it, like a fabric upon which gods and humans weave their history. Omēteotl doesn't seem to be worshiped, besides mentions by some poets. However, they're the core of the Aztec worldview. Like the cell's mitosis, Omēteotl divides itself into Omētecuhтли (male) and Omēcihuatl (female), then into the four creation gods. So every Aztec god is a specific disguise or embodiment of Omēteotl.

Legacy

This deity is still celebrated annually in Morelos at the Omēteotl festival, which showcases the diversity of Mexican culture. But Omēteotl's legacy can also be seen in the rise of the philosophical notion of complexity and complex systems. The Aztec's pantheon is indeed a perfect example of it, where all the parts interact with each other in various ways, culminating in a higher order.

The website, with its code designed by Luc Guillemot, has numerous hyperlinks that lead you to additional resources

Until its rise as an academic field that strives for accuracy, history has been, by definition, written from a single point of view. Concerning our subject, we stumble upon a major difficulty: the Aztecs destroyed materials created by their rivals in order to justify the dominance of their empire.

Furthermore, Spanish conquerors and Christian missionaries brought about an even bigger annihilation, toppling Aztec society and rewriting their works.

Fortunately, some of these missionaries tried to collect as much information as they could, especially pioneer of anthropology [Bernardino de Sahagún](#), while others, like [Bartolomé de Las Casas](#), fought for indigenous rights. Their work is still precious to historians.

Work in progress:

We have, so far, in our database around 137 gods. And another batch is in the "work in progress" phase, as we still lack information, iconographic resources or simply the time to render them in graphic vector. We hope to improve and expand it in the future so, if you're interested in this project, you can [contact me](#) for corrections in written or iconographic resources. Thank you in advance for your help!

Editor's note: I definitely recommend that you check this website out! [The Aztec Pantheon](#)



Wednesday, December 7 • 8 pm EST

IMS Annual Membership Meeting

hosted by Rick Slazyk and Keith Merwin

Be there with us as we share what brought us together and continues to keep us together for 51 years! Many are unaware of just how important a venue The Institute of Maya Studies has been for scholars and researchers to share their research and discoveries with IMS members and Maya enthusiasts for 5+ decades!

Happy Birthday IMS!

If you're a member of the IMS, please join us.

This is the active IMS Streaming party link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83188874690>



Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for December by Zach Lindsey

2 December 680 CE: On 7 Etz'nab 6 Muwan G9, Tiwohl Chan Mat, son of Pakal the Great, died. He died while his father was still alive, but even still, he played an important role in continuing the dynasty. After Pakal died, two of Pakal's sons served as rulers – but neither seems to have produced an heir. It was Tiwohl Chan Mat's son K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naahb who kept the lordship in the Pakal family. Though Ahkal Mo' Naahb was just two when his father died, he later memorialized Tiwohl in the inscriptions of Temple XIX at Palenque.



*K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naahb III
name glyph.*

7 December 1935 CE: On 12.16.1.15.1 10 Imix 9 Ceh G4, Armando Manzanero Canche was born in Ticul, Yucatan. His parents were both musicians, and he wrote his first known song at fifteen; it went on to be translated into twenty-one languages! Actually, his songs were so often translated into other languages that tracking them gets confusing. (Like that time he wrote Spanish lyrics to a French song which was then translated into English by Elvis's songwriter but performed by Perry Como.) Besides writing so many songs, they pretty much had to give him a Grammy, Manzanero was also involved in the promotion of Mexican music and the protection of its musicians as president of the Asociación Nacional de Autores y Compositores (Mexican National Association of Authors and Composers). If you recognize his name, you might have missed the news of his December 2020 death of COVID-19 in Mexico City. If you haven't heard him, I recommend "Adoro," which you can listen to here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xjDwp-wqE4>



*K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naahb III (678–736 CE),
on tablet from Temple XIX with two
kneeling nobles. He was grandson of
Pakal the Great. He took the throne in
721, reigning until c.736 CE.*



Pioneer in the Institute of Maya Studies: In Memoriam, by his niece Jennifer Poole, Marta Barber, and Jim Reed

Initial notice to the IMS Board of Directors:

Scott Allen, a longtime member of IMS, has passed. I haven't confirmed this, but it seems he was among of the victims of Hurricane Ian.

Scott was a frequent traveler to the Maya world. And his interest in this culture was limitless. He had many friends among the caretakers and site-workers made through the decades he traveled. — Marta Barber

Personal email from Scott's niece in Nashville:

Hello Jim,

Thank you for replying to my email. I'm sorry it's taken me a couple days to reply to you as I've had a busy week. Sadly, Scott was apparently suffering from Alzheimer's, according to his friends, and I noticed he would occasionally repeat himself when we spoke on the phone. His mother and sister died of Alzheimer's, so I wasn't surprised to hear he'd been having cognitive issues also.

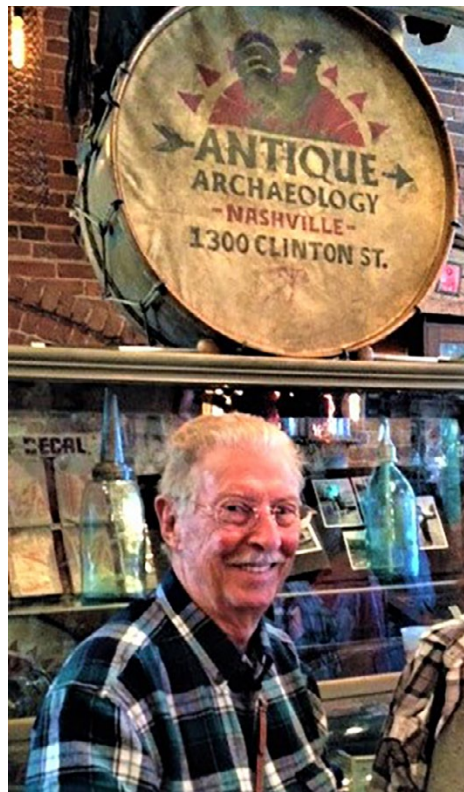
When he passed, he was trying to put a tarp on his screen porch roof before Hurricane Ian hit. He'd been standing on a ladder and lost his balance falling backwards and he must of tried to stand up, but fell over hitting his head on the ladder causing him to break his neck.



Scott's best buddie — Scotty Boy.



Scott with orchids in his back yard for Easter — 2018.



Scott in Nashville — 2016.



"This photo of Scott on the sofa was taken at his sister's house in the Nashville area (Hendersonville) when he came up here for her funeral in 2017. That's also the last time anyone in our family had seen him in person."

His beautiful cherry-headed Conure parrot that he called "Scotty Boy" or "the Bird" died about a year or two ago. I was sad for Scott as he'd had the bird for over 30 years and I worried he'd be lonely without him. Then in June of this year, a lady had a young parrot just like his old one and she gave it to him for free. When the police called me to confirm Scott's death, I told them he had a parrot and for them to give it to his friend Dave because he volunteered to babysit it or adopt it if no one in the family could take it. So it's with Dave now.

Scott had two friends that he would meet every morning for breakfast at McDonalds and when he didn't show up on the 29th of September, his friend Craig got worried and went to his house to check on him and found him lying in the backyard.

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Pioneer in the Institute of Maya Studies: In Memoriam: Scott Allen, by his niece Jennifer Poole, Marta Barber, and Jim Reed

Craig called the police and they determined from the scene his must have died from the fall and that's what his autopsy revealed. I'm thankful that he didn't lie there suffering for hours but that his death was instant. Although I hate it when someone passes alone. He turned 85 in April.

His younger brother whom he was estranged from lives in Miami and is trying to settle his estate, but it's been an uphill battle as Scott had no will or plans in place, so his brother has applied to become his executor, but in order to do that, he had to get into to his house to find his documents and his house was crammed with stuff.

I didn't know he was Treasurer of the Mayan club. I got your email from some old emails he sent to me and others and I just thought if some of his friends were still alive they might want to know of his passing.

What does IMS stand for? International Mayan Studies? Thank you for mentioning it because I didn't know the names of the clubs Scott was affiliated with. I told his brother that Scott's Mayan stuff might be wanted by some of his club friends, so if he finds the photos or slides, or artifacts, I'll let you know.

Thank you again for your kindness in replying and the info about Scott. He will be missed by his family and friends and remembered for his friendly demeanor, sense of humor, and love of nature, travel, and history. — *Sincerely, Jennifer Poole*

Scott was a very good friend of mine...

Scott and I got along great. I loved his smile and sense of humor. I do think that Jennifer is mixing things up between Michael West and I, as it was Michael that she first reached out to after finding his email address in Scott's belongings. Michael contacted Marta Barber; I found out from Marta's notice to the IMS board; and I reached out to Michael for Jennifer's email address; she replied with her email letter above.

I first met Scott in the late 90s, after I returned from living in Guatemala and found out about the IMS presentations at the Miami Museum of Science.

We would sit together and he was the first to suggest that because of my enthusiasm for the Maya that I should try and get on



Scott with a County Fair photo award – 2015.



Scott loved to fly in his friend Russel's ERCO Ercoupe.



Scott, in his younger days, at an airport.

the IMS board of directors. He was the IMS Travel Director at the time. I got on the board, and it took me three years to be voted in as president (2000).

Scott was there for me through all of it. After a year, I moved to Atlanta (for 19 years) and became the IMS's long-distance newsletter editor. Scott left living in Miami and moved to Interlochen, in Central Florida. I would stop by and stay overnight at Scott's place because it was about halfway between Atlanta and visiting my family in South Florida for the holidays. I also would stay at his place when going together to a few of the early Maya at the Playas.

I loved interacting with Scott's parrot Pretty Boy, but it meant that I had to keep my cat out in the very screened-in porch that Scott tried to climb up to. I would also eat at the same McDonalds and go with him to eat dinner at the local VFW. I miss you, Scott. Those were the good ol' days. — *Su amigo, Jim*

Index for Volume 50, 2022

The names of our 2022 livestreaming presenters are highlighted for each month.

Vol 50, Issue 1: January

Biography of Sylvanus Morley by Chris Ward; IMS 2022! Get on the Bandwagon! Message from Eric Slazyk, the IMS President; Digital Preservation of Ancient Maya Cave Architecture: Recent Field Efforts in Quintana Roo, Mexico, with **Dominique Rissolo**; Pioneer in Maya Studies: V. Garth Norman, *In Memoriam* compiled by Jim Reed; Enlightening the Shadowy Underworld of the Ancient Maya: Archaeology of the Río Frio Caves, Belize, by **Jon Spenard**; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with artist Steve Radzi: Xlabpak; Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for January, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 2: February

A Day on the Trail: Excerpt from the Diaries of Sylvanus Griswold Morley, by Chris Ward; Maya Archaeology: *Tales from the Field*, Edited by **Mat Saunders** and Pamela Voelkel; Get to Know AFAR: American Foreign Academic Research; British Museum Exhibition: Peru: A Journey in Time; The Palenque Mapping Project: Settlement and Urbanism at an Ancient Maya City, by **Edwin Barnhart**; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Uaxactun; Unbundling the Past for February, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 3: March

Rehabilitating Becan, by Joseph W. Ball and David Webster; A personal communication from Joe Ball; Ancient Maya Settlement with Marcello Canuto; The New MARI-GISLAB Portal Goes Live, with Francisco Estrada-Belli; "Where Have All the Ceramicists Gone?" Challenges in Teaching Maya Ceramics, by **Dr. Michael Callaghan**; Buried Power, Dzibilchaturun Seven Dolls, by **Georges Fery**; "La Guerra de Que?" by Zac Lindsey; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Dzibanche; Unbundling the Past for March, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 4: April

Confronting Maya Figurine Technology, by **Mark Van Stone**, Ph.D., G.F.; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Oxkintok; Communities, Caves, and Ritual Specialists: A Study of Sacred Space in the Maya Mountains of Southern Belize, by **Keith Prufer**; Becan During the Snake Dynasty/Tikal Conflicts, by Joseph W. Ball and David Webster; Unbundling the Past for April, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 5: May

Becan: Our "First Love" Site, by Joseph W. Ball and David Webster; *Hix*: Male Jaguars in Maya Art and Hieroglyphic Writing, by Karen Bassie-Sweet; K'awiil Chan K'inich, Lord of K'an Hix: Royal Titles and Symbols of Rulership at

Cahal Pech, Belize, by Jaime Awe and **Dr. Marc Zender**; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Cahal Pech and Becan; The Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology at Harvard University, by **Keith Merwin**; Unbundling the Past for May, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 6: June

Group E of Uaxactun: Astronomical Hypotheses and Archaeological Reality, by Ivan Šprajc; A Maya Sculpture from Santa Rosa Xtampak Repatriated, by Karl Herbert Mayer; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Palenque; El Mirador, Dzibanche, and the Origins of the Snake Kingdom: A Review of the Evidence and the Arguments, with **Stanley Paul Guenter**; Dating Stela 26 of Tikal, by Stanley Paul Guenter; Postclassic Yearbearer Rituals and Cyclical Renewal: Evidence from Maya Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and Codices, by **Dr. Susan Milbrath**; Unbundling the Past for June, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 7: July

The "Awe" Factor in Veracruz, by Zac Lindsey; Pioneer in Maya Studies: Sid Hollander, *In Memoriam* by Anne Stewart; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Oxkintok; Yucatan's Loss; Heaven's Gain: Sid Hollander, *In Memoriam* by Evan "Josh" Albright; Sid Hollander, An Expedition with Sidney, *In Memoriam* by Arthur Dunkelman and Sushila Oliphant and Others "Quetzalcoatl and the Dresden Codex Venus Table" and "Maya Calendar and Mesoamerican Astronomy" by **Gerardo Aldana**, "Gazing at the Death Face": The Story Behind the Story of the Discovery of the Tomb of K'inich Janaab' Pakal with **Elaine Schele**; You've Seen Cute Figurines, How About Humorous?, by Janice Van Cleve; Unbundling the Past for July, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 8: August

A Shrine to the God of Hellish Drunkenness, by Barbara MacLeod; "Lives of the Gods: Divinity in Maya Art" at the Met Museum; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Tikal; Defensive Hilltop Structures Among the Ancient Maya: An Example from Witzna, with **Kaitlin R. Ahern**; Pathways Into Darkness Revisited: The Archaeology and Mystery of Petroglyph Cave, by **Dr. Barbara MacLeod**; "The Encounter of the Long Count Keeper" Poem and Song by Barbara MacLeod; Unbundling the Past for August, by Zac Lindsey.

Editor's note: I've enjoyed bringing you this 50th Anniversary Volume of *IMS Explorers*. We've sponsored two livestreaming events a month and brought you so much this year, that this is the first year ever that the Index spans more than one page! Cheers!

Index for Volume 50, 2022

The names of our 2022 livestreaming presenters are highlighted for each month.

Vol 50, Issue 9: September

Back to the Field: Reconnoitering Two Small Sites in the Eastern Puuc, by Dr. Ken Seligson; “The Great Jaguar Rises” a new Maya Exhibition Now Open in Union Station – Kansas City; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Sayil; The Second-Most Popular Maya Art in Ancient Times (Right After Cooking!) with **Mark Van Stone**; Maya Stelae at the IMS, by IMS Webmaster Keith Merwin; A Tribute to John Montgomery (1951–2005) from *FAMSI.org*; Creation Narratives on Ancient Maya Codex-Style Ceramics in the Metropolitan Museum by **James Doyle**; The Big Reveal: Lidar-Aided Survey in the Northern Maya Lowlands, with **Dr. Ken Seligson**; Unbundling the Past for September, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 10: October

Preserving Underwater Maya Finds Using 3D Technology, with **Heather McKillop**; The Long Count of Bars and Dots, by Edwin Barnhart; Great Courses, Podcast, and So Much More!, featuring Edwin Barnhart; Living Under the Canopy: Lowland Maya Urban Studies in the Age of Lidar, with **Dr. Damien B. Marken**; Filled to the Brim: Improving Classic Maya Reservoir Capacity Estimates, by Damien B. Marken, Matthew C. Ricker, and Robert Austin; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Uaxactun; Among the

Ancient Maya, Cacao Was Not Exclusive to the Elite, but Was Important – and Common – to All, by Shelly Leachman, featuring Dr. Anabel Ford; Unbundling the Past for October, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 11: November

“On the Path of the Kaanu'l Dynasty in Northeastern Peten: Recent Investigations at Chochkitam”, with **Francisco Estrada-Belli**; Intact Maya Chocolate Vessel Uncovered in a Playa del Carmen Cave; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Tikal; Chochkitam: A New Classic Maya Dynasty and the Rise of the Kaanu'l (Snake) Kingdom, by Francisco Estrada-Belli and Alexandre Tokovinine; Bringing the Ancient Maya Back to Life in Classrooms Around the World by **Jon Voelkel** (and Pamela Voelkel); Unbundling the Past for November, by Zac Lindsey.

Vol 50, Issue 12: December

Of Sticks and Stones: Identifying Marks on the Palenque Cross (Part I), by Carl D. Callaway; An Artistic Eye for the Maya with Steve Radzi: Hochob; A Visual Guide to the Aztec Pantheon, Story and Illustrations by Gwendal Uguen; *The Founder* by Janice Van Cleve: Review by author Edward Bolles; Index for Volume 50, 2022; *In Memoriam*: Scott Allen, Compiled by Jim Reed; Unbundling the Past for December, by Zac Lindsey. ▲

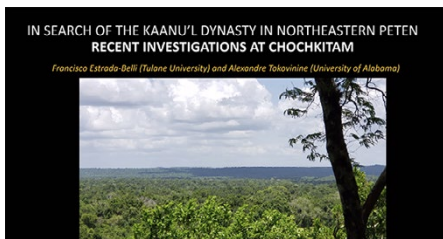
IMS November Third Wednesday Zoom:

“On the Path of the Kanuu'l Dynasty in Northeastern Peten: Recent Investigations at Chochkitam”

with **Francisco Estrada-Belli**,

Tulane University, along with

Alexandre Tokovinine, University of Alabama



Recent work at Chochkitam, in northeastern Peten, uncovered royal texts and tombs with titles identifying a previously unknown dynasty and Early Classic references to the Kaanu'l supporting the initial hypothesis regarding the possible Kaanu'l progression along the eastern Peten front during the early part of the sixth century, as well as the true identity of the architect of the victory over Tikal.

Recording now on the IMS website:

[On the Path of the Kanuul Dynasty](#)

IMS January 18, 2023 Zoom:

“The Art and Science of Classic Maya Pottery”

with **Dorie Reents-Budet**,

National Museum of Natural History,
Smithsonian Institution.

Recent results from the **Maya Ceramics Project** will be presented.

Ronald L. Bishop, Curator Emeritus, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, is co-author of the book of the same name.

The zoom hyperlink will appear in the January *IMS Explorer*.

It's official... save the date!

18th Annual Tulane Maya Symposium and Workshop “Inequality Among the Maya”

March 16-19, 2023

Stay tuned for more info soon!

tms.tulane.edu tms@tulane.edu



The Founder by Janice Van Cleve

Review by author Edward Bolles

(from a personal communication to Janice)

"Hi Janice, I just finished reading your novel, *The Founder* and found it to be an amazing work of literature. I can see your passion for the subject pouring out of each page in an engaging story that forces the reader to turn the page, no matter how late the hour is. I hope your novel has been given the recognition that it deserves.

"I highly recommend you submit your work to the historical novel society for recognition from the novelist community. <https://historicalnovelsociety.org>

"I am even confident you might be highlighted with an award for such an important text.

"I also submitted a review in Amazon where I bought your book:

5.0 out of 5 stars

"Fantastic dramatization of one of the most influential figures in Classic Mayan history.

The Founder is a historical novel written by renown Mayanist Janice Van Cleve about the founding of the Teotihuacano dynasty at the Maya city of Copan. The novel begins with the back story of several generations before the main plot, with the challenges of Queen Unen Balam, an exiled queen of Tikal. The king of Teotihuacan, Spearthrower Owl, plans a reconquest of the Maya world, and sends the great general, Siyaj Kak, east across the Usamacinta river, where he conquers Waka (El Peru), Tikal, and Uaxactun in rapid succession. Yax Kuk Mo, the protagonist of the novel, continues the invasion and conquers Copan, on the eastern border of the Maya world, and installs a new dynasty for his Teotihuacano overlord.

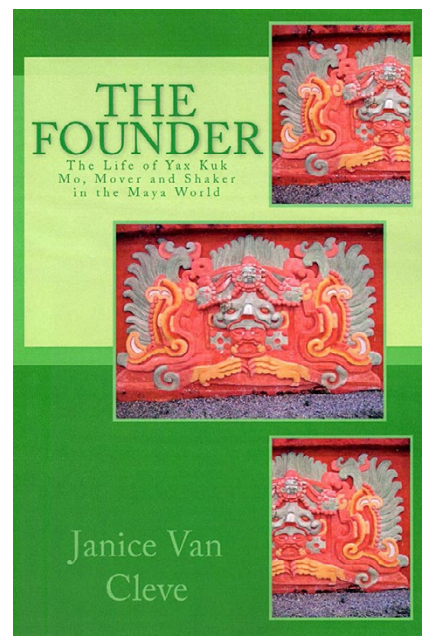
"Van Cleve takes scant historical records of the event and artfully weaves them together with fiction that is both educational and engaging. She successfully brings to life the universe of the ancient Maya, and the reader is taken along to witness great historical figures and common characters as they engage in epic events of the time.

"In every aspect, this is a classic historical novel, and one that should be widely read and recognized as a window to the history of the Maya.

"Thank you Janice for giving me the opportunity to read this wonderful novel. I congratulate you for the excellent and important achievement."

Regards, Edward Bolles *Thanks for giving me the opportunity to read this incredible story!*

Editors' note: You can check out all of Janice's books on her website at: <http://mayas.doodlekit.com>



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