

IN MY GROWNUP HEADDRESS: THE WAR OF POSITION AND YOUTH AT
THREE CLASSIC MAYA SITES

by

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DEDICATION

To Eva Ixchel

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Proportional manipulation and the Maya

The ways in which artists and leaders use art to encode political and social values provide glimpses at a culture's priorities (Layton 1991). In this thesis, I examine symbols and language in three artistic creations originating in the Maya lowlands (Figure 1) during the Classic era (approximately 200-900 AD) to examine priorities and values related to elite childhood.

The hypothesis of this thesis is that portrayals of proportionally-smaller children occurred in the art of unstable dynasties because rulers used allusions to childhood to imply stability throughout time. To demonstrate this, I will perform structural analyses on and discuss the historical context of three public or semi-public works of stone sculpture. All include images of proportionally-distinct children. These artistic creations are the Temple of the Sun tablet at Palenque, Lintel 2 at Yaxchilan, and Stela 3 at Piedras Negras.

The same symbol or motif may carry different meanings and priorities in different cultures; for example, in Moche fine line pottery from present-day Peru, some figures are portrayed as larger than other figures (Donnan and McClellan 1999). This is typically for one of three reasons: to portray status, to portray perspective, and, rarely, to portray children.

For the Pre-Hispanic Maya, proportional variation played a role in art as well. Bound captives are smaller than the leaders who stand on their backs. People with achondroplasia, or dwarfism, are also portrayed as smaller than the people around them

(Miller 1985). Dwarves rarely appear with names on the monumental stone artwork I have observed, and they typically appear at the feet of rulers (such as in Figure 2).

The final reason artists varied figures' proportions in Maya art was to portray childhood or young adulthood. However, this motif was rare, only appearing in any significant way during the Classic era and rarely making it into monumental art (Houston 2018:43). In the art I have observed, unnamed children, especially infants, sometimes appear on murals or figurines to suggest the quotidian nature of activities. But their use in stone is limited to the portrayal of specific individuals, usually potential heirs or rulers as they appeared in their childhood.

The Classic Maya kingship system, known as the *ajaw* system or the *ajawlel*, was based on patrilineal descent from a mytho-historic ancestor (Martin and Grube 2008, Miller and Taube 2007). In public art, the *ajawtaak* described themselves as essential conduits between our world and the world of the gods (Wright 2011). But a lineage head's right to rule was more tenuous than his scribes implied: "culturally-established meanings ... are always at risk" (Sahlins 2013:10). Wars, illnesses, and the simple fact of a 50 percent chance of a pregnancy not producing a son created exceptions to the idea of an unbroken chain to a mythic ancestor.

These events could create unstable dynasties. In this thesis, I define unstable dynasties as ones in which: A) an heir designate's father dies before the heir is old enough to perform leadership functions (and the heir is typically guided by a regent) B) a king fails to produce a male heir or C) a figure ends up in power who was not the originally-designated heir.

Any of these situations creates the potential for disruption, and the second two belie the notion that power came from patrilineal connections to semi-mythic lineage heads. In this thesis, I will demonstrate that, for this reason, Classic Maya rulers took pains to recognize heirs before their accession to the throne through public presentations and investiture rituals. These rituals and other coming-of-age events were sometimes mentioned in glyphic inscriptions (such as the inscriptions on the Regal Rabbit Vase [Carrasco and Wald 2012:184-185]), but rarely portrayed on monuments. Still, the limited portrayals of children show them involved in important rituals such as dances, k'atun endings, and bloodletting rites.

1.2.0 Elites and the war of position

'Elite' is a word that often goes uninvestigated in archaeology (Chase and Chase 1992). I use it here to refer to political and cultural leaders, much the way Antonio Gramsci used the word 'government' to describe not just the political structure of a society but also the movers and shakers who govern behavior (Gramsci 1988, Crehan 2002). Material wealth is not necessarily a sign of elite status. At Tikal, for example, polychrome pottery appears in trash dumps on the outskirts of town, far from the major influencers (Chase and Chase 1992:5).

Identifying the elite, then, is more difficult than correlating them with fancy pottery, especially in places with a lot of material wealth. Though the glyphs identify specific people, they may only describe a small number of the actual power-players of ancient Maya society, especially thanks to the jungle's habit of destroying paper.

As royalty, the individuals described in this thesis were certainly elite. But they were by no means the only people with political or social power. Along with the *ajaw* of a city were the lesser lords such as the *sajaltaak* (Martin and Grube 2008:150).

Navigating the power of other influencers while maintaining their own power is one of the essential struggles of elites. For example, toward the end of the Wars of the Roses in England, Richard III clashed with Elizabeth Wydville and her family. Alison Weir (1992) claims this conflict came about from equal levels of fear—Richard III was as afraid of Wydville’s family as they were of him.

Antonio Gramsci (1988) likened intra-class efforts to overthrow or maintain hegemonies to wars. I believe Gramsci’s war concept can be translated to the way elites manipulate political messaging, i.e. using art and propaganda to implement the strategies Gramsci describes. The two types of wars Gramsci describes are the war of maneuver and the war of position (Gramsci 1988:228-230). The war of maneuver is a short-term blitz. To return to Richard III, just a few months passed from the time he began a serious pursuit of the throne to the time he became king--a war of maneuver. But the Tudor campaign to portray him as their evil opposite continued over decades, well after the deaths of both Richard III and Henry VI (Weir 1992). This was a different war than the rapid effort to replace Edward V. Rather, it required concentrated and specific propaganda that would pay off over time—a war of position in Gramsci’s terms.

1.3.0 To be young and noble

The Maya knew something about long-term strategies: Rulers used the dawn of time to prove their legitimacy. At Piedras Negras, Altar 1 describes a Piedras Negras lord witnessing the establishment of the three-stone hearth that signals the beginning of the

current world (Pitts 2011:10-14). In other cases, rulers may describe historic events from before their lifetime, such as the list of kings commissioned by Yaxuun B'ahlam IV at Yaxchilan.

References to youth are also fairly common; the most common term for young people and pre-accession leaders (young or old) in Maya inscriptions is *ch'ok*, literally “sprout” (Houston 2018). Contemporary daykeepers liken a child to a branch of their parents' tree (Tew 2019 personal communication), and the Classic Maya may have had similar ideas.

However, actual portrayals of heirs before their accession are rare in the surviving corpus of Maya art, and our understanding of childhood among elites is limited. For example, while Mark Child (2013) believes glyphs at the Cross Group describe sequestration and a sweat bath ritual as important to K'inich Kan B'ahlam's investiture into the heirship, Alexandre Tokovinine (personal communication) believes the glyphs may describe a stilt dance or voladores performance, and Dennis Tedlock (2011) believed it described ascent up a pyramid to live in isolation for more than a year.

Titles besides heirship and entrance into cults and other private societies also included investiture-like rituals, and there were also general coming-of-age rites that were only peripherally related to leadership. Sorting out the disagreements in meaning is important, but unfortunately hampered by a lack of available evidence.

A better understanding of how people used aspects of the *ajawlel* such as heirship and childhood for political purposes may in turn lead to a better understanding of the *ajaw* system in general, its strengths and its weaknesses. This may help shed light on why the system crumbled so spectacularly in the Terminal Classic era (800-900 AD). It may

also allow for a more nuanced interpretation of artwork and glyphs portraying investiture and youth.

1.4.0 Coming-of-Age Ceremonies

The images of children in Maya stone art I reviewed are not typically portraits; most children are taking part in an event or ritual, be it investiture, dance, or simply a period ending. (In one portrayal of a probable youth at Xcalumkin, Panel 7, the young man sits on a throne staring forward.) Understanding these rituals and why a child could or should be in attendance at them is important to understanding the use of childhood in Maya art.

By the time Diego de Landa Calderón wrote his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* in the 1500s, children of the Yucatan Peninsula participated in a number of public rituals and rites in some capacity, but the most important were the *jetsmek*, a ritual in which infants were shown the tools they would work with later in life, and the *ka'a púut sijil*, a ceremony Landa describes as “baptism” (Landa 2008:48-51). Dancing was also important in ritual life for the entire community in the Post-Contact era (Landa 2008), as it was in the Classic (Grube 1992, Regueiro Suárez 2017).

While it is difficult to say when these specific rites came into Maya culture, the foundational beliefs being transmitted through them date to at least the Preclassic period (1000 BC to 250 AD, Izquierdo 1983). Outside the Maya area, coming-of-age ceremonies were also important; Fray Bernardino de Sahagún described how six-year-old nobles in the Mexica region would enter the care of pages, then, at twelve, they entered the care of a priest (Carrasco 2012).

Though Landa does not mention them, the other major events in the lives of elites were investitures. Investitures are ceremonial or ritual events when a person is invested with certain privileges, power, or status. Even today, Maya people who practice traditional culture are ceremonially invested with positions of leadership within the community (Christenson 2016).

Investitures, coming-of-age rituals, and other events that link young people to their community are often incredibly important in the lives of their participants. For the 16th-century Maya, the *ka'a piut sijil* had “more gravity than a pope crowning an emperor” (Landa 2008:50).

But not all titles carried with them a formal investiture. Some titles may have come with birth or were granted early on in life, such as the title of K'in Ajaw at Piedras Negras, which appears on Piedras Negras Stela 3 associated with a three-year-old.

1.5.0 The iconography of heirship

With this thesis, I explore the question of why some Classic Maya artists portrayed heirs to the throne while they were children and what iconography and linguistic choices typically accompany these portrayals. To do this, I analyze costume elements, choice and positioning of glyphs, and poses of young heirs in Maya art, especially focusing on Lintel 2 at Yaxchilan (Figure 3), Stela 3 at Piedras Negras (Figure 4), and the Temple of the Sun Tablet at Palenque (Figure 5), with additional examples when possible and relevant for comparative purposes. I will use a Panofskian approach to structural analysis influenced by scholars who focus on Mesoamerican art such as Amador Bech (2006), Houston and Stuart (1998), and Hamann (2017).

All three of these images come from dynasties which fit my earlier definition of unstable. At Yaxchilan, Kokaaj B'ahlam IV (also known as Shield Jaguar IV or Itzamnaaj B'ahlam IV) was the son of a king who rose to power after a ten-year interregnum, and Kokaaj B'ahlam's father may have left him in the care of a regent before his death (Martin and Grube 2008:132). This fulfills both conditions A and C from my definition above. The king and queen of Piedras Negras, Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw and K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II (also known as Ruler III) at Piedras Negras do not seem to have produced a male heir (Martin and Grube 2008:147, Pitts 2011:110). This meets condition B of my above definition. Finally, K'inich Kan B'ahlam (also known as Chan Bahlum) of Palenque was the son of a man whose connection to the Palenque lineage is muddled (Martin and Grube 2008:161); this fulfills condition C.

As the power of lesser lords like the *sajaltaak* increased around them (Martin and Grube 2008), the leaders in these cases used a variety of tactics in order to maintain power. One of those tactics was a form of Gramsci's war of position: I will argue here that they used images of their children or themselves as children to remind viewers of the depth of time inherent in multiple generations and to imply the dynasty's long-term viability, thus attempting to keep power for the long-term. In a culture where leaders were also shamanic religious figures (Reilly 1996), this war includes the use of certain key religious phrases, rituals, and costume elements to prove leaders were in contact with the spirit world.

Politicians across the world use art to encode and maintain power (Layton 1991). In a way, this could be said to be an extension of self; Marshall McLuhan (2003) considers media to be a tool to expand an individual's power and intent. This idea would

not be unfamiliar to the Maya. In their world view, people are capable of extending the spiritual aspect of themselves--their soul or essence--into objects and even other beings (Tew 2019).

The ancient Maya believed portrayals in stone literally contained the essence of leaders, and the placement of stelae and other monuments extended that essence over the landscape (Houston and Stuart 1998:90). Thus, choice of actors and motifs in a given scene is extremely important. The three artistic creations described below can reveal lost details about not just the regalia and rituals of childhood, but the methods Maya elites used to wage the war of position.

1.6.0 Order of Information

In Chapter II, I discuss previous studies of childhood as well as Maya concepts of self and childhood. I discuss previous research on youth in the Maya region, especially the work of Houston (2018). After discussing 16th-Century ethnohistorical evidence of coming-of-age ceremonies, I discuss relevant research on Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras, and Palenque.

In Chapter III, I describe an approach to studying Maya art that synthesizes epigraphy, iconography, and graphic design. I discuss concepts related to the study of historical documents that are also archaeological in nature. Finally, I describe the general theory of the work, that proportionally-distinct children in art represent political propaganda designed to emphasize the stability of the lineage system.

In Chapter IV, I perform a structural analysis of the three select pieces of Maya art, discussing clothing, gestures, and other culture traits that can be identified on the art

pieces as well as common trends in glyphic descriptions of heirs. When possible, I will provide readings of relevant passages and commentary on the placement of glyphs.

In Chapter V, I summarize the results of the research by discussing the instability faced by the dynasty, the nature of the propaganda suite used as a response to that instability, and the effect of the propaganda. Also, I provide suggestions for future research, such as studies of the pieces at Xcalumkin and at Dos Pilas.

2. HISTORY OF STUDIES OF MAYA CHILDHOOD AND ART

2.1.0 *Selfhood and childhood*

Childhood is small. In art, children are often smaller than adults, though dwarves may appear child-like, and how small children appear sometimes depends on artistic intention (Noguera Auza 1968).

Childhood is restricted. Children have less agency than adults. There are limits to the status they can achieve. This makes them prone to becoming victims of sacrifice, slave trafficking, and abuse (Baxter 2008). Children encountered compulsory segregation by gender in Classic Maya culture; adult mentors instructed them but also used them for martial ends and to harness youthful energy (Houston 2009). And yet, to say children were powerless denies them the importance they had as representations of a society's future (Ardren 2011).

Childhood is underrepresented. Young people under the age of eighteen made up one-fourth of the population of most ancient societies, yet they are rare even in artwork depicting community events where they were likely present (Baxter 2008). This bias affected archaeologists, too, who tended to label strange finds as the work of children but ignored them as a serious subject until the 1980s (Baxter 2008).

Childhood is culturally-specific. Western culture focuses on years, with the 'terrible twos,' *quinceaneras*, and learners permits, as well as eighteen being the official cutoff of childhood in many peoples' minds. The Incas had roads of life, describing people by phase rather than age (Guamán Poma 2001:195-236). This meant a child's numerical age was less important than the developmental stage he or she had achieved.

For the early contact-era Maya, life phases such as puberty, marriage, and childbirth were also important, though certain ceremonies tended to be attached to specific years (Izquierdo 1983). The Classic Maya, too, associated certain phases of life with new responsibilities. But titles sometimes superseded actual age, and leadership represented a kind of social adulthood. Children as young as two could serve as *ajawtaak* with the help of regents according to glyphic inscriptions (such as a king at Tonina [Houston 2018:49]). In art, though, even 12-year-old bodies are portrayed as fully-grown if they are representations of leaders, as on Piedras Negras Stela 33 or Palenque's Oval Palace Tablet (Figure 6).

With that taken into account, it is no surprise childhood is a rare motif in Maya art. Yet children do appear in Classic-era art, and leaders did sometimes allow themselves to be portrayed as children. To understand why, it is worth reviewing Maya concepts of self.

2.2.0 *Uxlab' and ub'aah*

According to contemporary K'iche' Maya daykeeper Apab'yan Tew (2019), the *uxlab'* is what we might call consciousness. However, unlike traditional Western models of consciousness, the *uxlab'* is energy which can be extended to influence the world (Tew 2019).

A similar idea was at play in ancient times, according to Houston and Stuart (1998). Johnson (2013:263) recommends translating *b'aah* as “himself” or “his image,” but Houston and Stuart (1998:92) suggest it is more complicated than this; a more accurate translation might be “his essence” or “his soul.” The difference says something about Maya artwork: The image contains the literal essence (something like a soul) of the

person (Houston and Stuart 1998). This is why people defaced artwork of unpopular leaders in antiquity (Houston and Stuart 1998:95).

Houston and Stuart give this a spatial dimension, showing how rulers may have spread their essence over their territories through images and iconography, but they also briefly discuss the other implication. Since Maya artwork portrays specific events in time, the portrayal of one's essence is not just an act of spatial but temporal extension. The power of the image to serve as proof of attendance at important rituals such as k'atun endings is thus obvious: If European leaders recorded their deeds with signatures and seals, Maya leaders used their life essence.

2.3.0 Pottery and power

Currently, the most important work on youth in Classic Maya culture is probably the recent work by Steven Houston, *The Gifted Passage* (2018). In many ways, this thesis is an expansion upon themes of his work and proof of one of Houston's ideas. While he focuses on pottery, the themes he describes are apparent in other Maya art as well, especially the monumental works described in this thesis.

The glyph-bearing pottery found in Maya tombs often includes names other than the tombs' owners. This suggests pottery was exchanged during life, and that rulers may have put their names on it as a sort of branding effort (Houston 2018). Receiving a piece probably meant you were friends or allies with the named individual on the vessel.

One leader at Uaxactun used descriptions of his youth to highlight his legitimacy (Houston 2018:91). The young ruler, guided by regents, distributed pottery to friends and allies; especially prominent on these pieces was a description of his *yax ch'ahb'* or "first bloodletting" event (Houston 2018:91). As an important "first," this event was associated

with youth and young people. This ceremony is also the subject of Dos Pilas Panel 19, where a proportionally-distinct child performs the ritual. A king may remind his people and his allies of his participation in this event as proof of his right to rule (Houston 2018:91).

As lower-status elites pressured the supreme leaders for power and environmental collapse threatened, proving legitimacy with images and descriptions of an idealized childhood may have been a “dynastic response to the perception and reality of encroaching disorder” (Houston 2018:155).

2.4.0 The child in Maya art

In the Early Classic era, rulers were almost always portrayed alone and standing with their legs in profile (Mathews 1985). No stone monuments from the Early Classic I observed in my research included children portrayed as proportionally varied from adults, though Houston (2018) suggests the Hauberg Stela may be smaller than others because it was made for a child, an interesting idea but difficult to test.

By the Late Classic, the number of figures that could appear in monumental art increased, with women and *sajaltaak* becoming more common. Children who are proportionally varied from the adults around them appear in the art of a few sites, but almost never alone. Only one extant stone carving, Panel 7 at Xcalumkin (Figure 8), may portray a child alone. Even this was meant as part of a set that probably included his mother and father (Houston 2018:43).

In the case of the pieces below, different phases of childhood are shown. The Aztecs had stages that followed a general progression from infant to toddler to older child

to youth to mature person (Houston 2018:22). Maya artists may have shown similar phases (Figure 9).

But the details of these phases and subphases such as first insertion of lip piercings or earspools, are not necessarily applicable to the Maya; for example, the Aztecs apparently did not dress toddlers in different clothing by gender (Houston 2018:22), but in the Maya portrayal of a three-year-old on Piedras Negras Stela 3, she is gendered female through name and clothing though she does not appear to have an adult name yet.

2.5.0 Heirs of the 16th Century

Gaps in understanding of the Classic Maya can sometimes be filled in with ethnohistorical information from the contact era. However, this must be done carefully, as documents may contain errors, omissions, and lies, and the meaning of concepts can change drastically over centuries (Moreland 2007).

For example, one of the most authoritative works from the contact era was written by Diego de Landa Calderón. But Landa's book was a defense of his actions, meaning he had every reason to exaggerate the extent of Maya idolatry and the brutality of the existing system.

Like any writer, Landa also views things through his own cultural lens, such as when he notes children interact with a *hisopo*, an aspergillum for scattering holy water (Landa 2008:50-51). But what Landa describes is closer to the *k'awiil* scepter of the Classic Maya than the aspergillum of Catholic priests: a short, well-carved staff with a rattlesnake tail attached by cotton fibers (Landa 2008:50).

Still, Landa's discussions of naming, inheritance, and coming-of-age rituals are useful for thinking about the practices and rituals related to youth from before the arrival of the Spanish.

By the 16th century, the *ajaw* system was long gone, but Landa notes a similar lineage-based system of towns led by the Cocom family. The leaders appointed local governors; governors who performed well could count on their sons or daughters taking over, like the *sajal* at Bonampak who had his heir approved by Yaxchilan (Miller and Brittenham 2013, Houston 2018). But for a leader's son to take over, the leader had to impress the Cocombs (Landa 2008:21).

Impressive leaders were well-versed in the calendar (Landa 2008:22), and noble children also learned their own lineages extensively. Men from the royal lineage at Mayapan "boasted a lot" (*jáctanse mucho*) about their heritage (Landa 2008:46).

Inheritance typically passed from father to eldest son, then younger sons, skipping daughters; if a family had no sons, inheritance passed to the father's brothers (Landa 2008:46). If the son was too young to take over the father's duties, he would be trained, usually by the father's brother, until he was old enough (Landa 2008:46). This seems to have been true in the Classic as well, but a mother's brother could also serve as guardian of a young heir, as in the case of Kokaaj B'ahlam at Yaxchilan, whose uncle appears on Lintel 58.

2.6.0 *The Maya 'baptism'*

One youth-related ceremony Landa described as *bautismo* (baptism) in Yucatan in the 16th century was called *ka'a púut sijil* (*caputzihil* in colonial spelling) and happened between three and twelve years of age, always before marriage (Landa 2008:48). But this

ritual was probably for noble children only, and it may have been optional (Izquierdo 1983:53). The priests of the town chose a day for the baptism based on their auguries, and for three days before the event, the parents and officials abstained from sex (Landa 2008:49). Children received godparents and were divided into groups by gender; boys at least entered a corded area with Chaak statues at the four cardinal directions (the priests themselves were also called *chaces* [Landa 2008:49]). After the children scattered corn and incense on a fire, a priest dressed them in ceremonial regalia that included a feathered bag and headdress, and strips of cotton fabric that came to the ground “like tails” (*como colas*, Landa 2008:49-50).

At this point, the children interact with the aforementioned *hisopo*. Then, priests place a white cloth made by the child’s mother on the child’s head (Landa 2008:50). Unfortunately, Landa did not record styles of decorations on the fabric or whether the fabric was tied on or simply placed on.

Before the ritual could go on, children were asked if they had committed any sins; those who said yes were taken aside (Landa 2008:50). The rest participated in a number of prayers that included the rattlesnake staff and were anointed with water prepared with chocolate and flowers (Landa 2008:50). The male children were given a back rack adorned with feathers before they let blood (Landa 2008:50), something perhaps analogous to the bloodletting ritual on Dos Pilas Panel 19 (Figure 10) Finally, children were given presents made by their mothers and given a small amount of what Landa refers to as ‘wine’ (*vino*, Landa 2008:51).

This was not the only childhood ritual, and Landa (2008:83) notes that, during the month of Yaxk’in, children of both genders receive ceremonial blows on the hands,

though he recorded too few details of the ceremony to match it to anything happening in extant Classic iconography.

2.7.0 Relevant research on the three sites

2.7.1 Yaxchilan: Kokaaj B'ahlam IV

The lintel art of Yaxchilan is the only Maya art well-known enough to be featured on the tutoring website Khan Academy (Khan Academy n.d.). While Yaxuun B'ahlam IV and his son Kokaaj B'ahlam IV did not pioneer the style, they both used it heavily in their iconographic programs, and Lintel 2 is an important example.

Yaxchilan under the leadership of Yaxuun B'ahlam and his father and son has been well-studied in a general context. This allows for a more specific study of the themes of youth.

For this work, the most important studies of Yaxchilan are the exploration of Yaxuun B'ahlam's political propaganda in Bardsley (2004) and the study of Yaxuun B'ahlam's dances in Regueiro Suárez (2017). Extant documents cannot resolve the mystery of what caused the interregnum between his father's death and his accession, but studies such as these have exposed both his apprehensions about the power of his *sajaltaak* and some of the methods by which he dealt with those apprehensions.

2.7.2 Piedras Negras: Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk

Despite its apparent influence in the Classic era and its influence on contemporary understandings of Maya history (Proskouriakoff 1960), Piedras Negras was not a large center compared to its rivals (Nelson 2016). Still, its rulers commissioned some of the richest and most compelling artwork in the Maya area. Thanks to the history of

archaeology and epigraphy in the region, inscriptions are fairly well understood, and thus the polity makes a good source for more complex studies of motivation and leadership.

But as is the case with all Maya sites, gaps in the extant record leave us with questions about important social dynamics. For example, the now-destroyed Piedras Negras Stela 3 provides important information about the life of a queen and her daughter, but a paucity of records relating to the daughter lead to scholars such as Kathryn Josserand (2002) and Mark Pitts (2011) to radically different conclusions about the girl's fate.

2.7.3 Palenque: K'inich Kan B'ahlam

K'inich Kan B'ahlam dedicated the Cross Group, of which the Temple of the Sun tablet is a part, in 692, after eight years in office (Martin and Grube 2008:169). Linda Schele and others devoted considerable attention to it in the 1970s and 1980s (for example, Schele 2005[1974], Schele 1976, and Clancy 1986), and the drawings of the work here come from Schele. It continues to receive attention (for example, Child 2013, Tedlock 2011, Carrasco 2012a, 2012b).

This means there are many different opinions about the Cross Group and yet, still much we do not know. The textual passage that is an important focus of this study, the first secondary text on the Temple of the Sun tablet (Figure 11), is an example. Child (2013), Tedlock (2011), Carrasco (2012), and Tokovinine (personal correspondence) all disagree on the details of the ritual it describes.

Even calling it an investiture with the heirship is possibly incorrect, since Pakal's formal announcement of Kan B'ahlam's heirship may not have been until 9.12.6.12.0 5 Ajaw 4 K'ayab (24 January 679 AD) (Wright 2011). Understanding the complexity of the

text may be impossible without more evidence, but it is at least possible to make some comments about the way K'inich Kan B'ahlam used his own youth as a political tool.

3. THEORY AND METHODS

3.1.0 Theory: *To be young and holy*

Antonio Gramsci never meant to be an anthropologist, but his ideas provide a useful model for the way individual agents affect the complex structures that make up the human sociopolitical network (for example, see Crehan 2002). As a victim of fascist Italy, Gramsci was more interested in providing allies with a method for dismantling systems, but to do so, he spent a considerable amount of effort investigating their forms and functions. Thus, his work provides an especially strong model for looking at systemic instability and power dynamics.

Especially useful here is Gramsci's war of position concept. Gramsci's wars come from terminology used in World War I: the war of maneuver, which involves frontal assaults and trench warfare, and the war of position, which even during the literal warfare of the First World War required socio-political manipulation (Gramsci 1988).

The highest-ranking members of a class fight the war of position, sacrificing their own freedom in the process in order to form class alliances and nurture illusions of consent in the population (Gramsci 1988). The war of position is also not just a counter-revolutionary strategy but a revolutionary strategy (Gramsci 1988). I believe the concept of this clash between revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries can be applied to many stratified societies throughout time, including the Classic Maya *sajaltaak* negotiating slow increases in power as well as the *ajawtaak* resisting them. An *ajaw*'s position was important but also tenuous. To keep power, the *ajaw* needed to manufacture consent.

In the pages that follow, I will argue that childhood is one aspect of the war of position these nobles fought. Yaxuun B'ahlam IV, for example, chose to portray his

sajaltaak though previous leaders typically did not (Bardsley 2004). This may have been an effort to form alliances with power players of lesser but still substantial import within his own social group. However, these other strategies are outside the context of this thesis.

3.2.0 Methods for studying Maya art

A number of sources are useful for studying Maya art. More broadly, the work of Erwin Panofsky (1972) and John Moreland (2007) are helpful for contextualizing art and text.

Panofsky's method is a three-layer investigative technique. At the start, it examines the most superficial to determine what the shapes and forms of the artwork mean at a base level, then asks more detailed cultural questions.

In a Maya example, Piedras Negras Stela 3 (Figure 4) contains two figures. They are seated. There is text around them. The second level puts these elements into context. One figure is a queen. The other is a child. They are seated on a throne with iconography representing creation (Clancy 2009:89). At Panofsky's third level, a researcher would investigate meanings and intentions: why the artist might have chosen creation symbolism compared to other iconographic suites.

But Piedras Negras Stela 3 provides us with more than iconography; it also provides us with language. It is a historical document. For this, Moreland's (2007) ideas about text and archaeology are relevant. Moreland (2007) is generally optimistic about the ability of historic documents to assist archaeologists in profiling ancient societies—but only if they are viewed not as a list of facts but as culturally-mediated perspectives on

facts. Writers of the past may misremember, misinterpret, twist, or omit facts, but they do so for a reason (Moreland 2007:26-30).

But if text is lies and incomplete truths, how do we know what we are reading is accurate? Alison Weir (1992:xiii-xiv) would say we do not, not with the same level of certainty as a courtroom requires to convict. Historians work with probabilities.

Like in Europe, the Classic Maya distorted their records for political gain. Images complement text, but images, too, can provide varying degrees of truth. Kan B'ahlam II appears facing a young version of himself on the Temple of the Sun tablet; this is obviously metaphorical and not based on a real event. Rather, it is based on at least two events--three if the references to creation are included (Tedlock 2011).

Considering the rich symbolism of Maya regalia, artists probably embellished elements of costuming. Yet as with text, this embellishment is not random, and it serves a purpose. I may wonder at the exact appearance of the flower in Kan B'ahlam's investiture outfit, as it differs slightly on each tablet (Figure 29). But in this thesis, I assume the use of such iconography implies its importance in some way. He probably wore a similar outfit, but even if he did not, his outfit represents socially-appropriate dress for pre-accession elite boys.

While neither Moreland nor Panofsky contradicts the other, neither spend a lot of time in each others' worlds. Panofsky (1972) devoted little attention to text, except as a source of documentary information about a piece, and Moreland devotes little time to art. The ancient Maya combined text and art in a fusion that created multiple layers of meaning; the face meaning, syntax, and choice of glyphs in Maya art all contribute meaning (Hamann 2017).

3.2.1 Multimodality

The Maya habit of augmenting imagery with text is somewhat different than in other parts of Mesoamerica (Hamann 2017). In many pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican societies, writing was confined to tagging--naming key individuals or providing anchoring dates for a scene (López Austin and López Luján 2014). The scene, thus, carried most of the narrative weight, and art followed events, more like a motion picture than a still photograph (Reilly personal communication).

The Maya, too, used tags, and as late as the pre-Classic, tags appear to be the main purpose of extant Maya writing (Figure 12). But by the Classic era, Mayan writing was complex enough to provide rich details of lives and events. This means the visual art of the Maya increasingly focused on specific moments. A stela may describe a ruler's entire life, but only show one moment of that life frozen in the record. However, 'photograph' is not an effective comparison because, like text, the images make use of metaphors and narrative manipulation in order to prove points, follow or break artistic conventions, and embed propaganda in the work (Hamann 2017).

3.2.2 Panofsky in the jungle

In "Notas acerca de una hermenéutica de la imagen" (2006), the art historian Julio Amador Bech expanded the well-known theoretical framework of Erwin Panofsky to include art made in cultures distant from Renaissance Europe. Be it Amador Bech's exposure to Mesoamerican art or the flexibility of Panofsky's ideas, many of the methods for exploring art described by Amador Bech apply to Maya artwork well.

Where Amador Bech's ideas differ from Panofsky, the influence of his studies of ancient art is apparent. For example, Amador Bech (2006:10) says not to separate

iconography and form but to see an “inseparable unity” between form, content, and place and placement. That the ancient Maya likely saw images as a literal extension of self and spiritual energy (Houston and Stuart 1998) means the material of Maya artwork is important. For example, pottery includes a much wider variety of subject matter than stone artwork, and it seems as though the types of images allowed on pottery was wider. In a more literal sense, the form of stones used to carve stelae often influence the placement of glyphs, as with the slight slant of glyphs on Stela 3 because of the slant of the stone.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.0.0 Introduction

In the following section, I perform structural analyses of the images and relevant text from Yaxchilan Lintel 2, Piedras Negras Stela 3, and Palenque Temple of the Sun panel. For practical purposes, I employ the three-level Panofskian method in my structural analysis of the three pieces whenever possible. But, because Maya scribes use both text and image holistically, I have grouped elements by theme. This means a single subsection may discuss text and iconography.

In all three cases, more than one Classic-era source describes individuals represented in the artwork. When relevant, I reference other sources, especially text, as the purpose of the iconography is often different.

4.1.0 Structural analysis of Yaxchilan Lintel 2

4.1.1 War by way of dancing

Lintel 2 from Yaxchilan (Figure 3) is one of a number of images of Yaxuun B'ahlam IV involved in ceremonial dances. The lintel spans the central doorway of Structure 33 with its top facing northwest (Graham and Von Euw 1996). It is the earlier of two known images of Yaxuun B'ahlam dancing with his son Chelew Chan K'inich, who would go on to be the *ajaw* of Yaxchilan; in both, the son is the subject of proportional manipulation to show his age (Regueiro Suárez 2017). His birthday appears on Lintel 13, suggesting he was five on Lintel 2 and 14 on Lintel 52. On both images, his outfits parallel his father's, and on Lintel 2 their regalia is almost identical.

In this sub-section I discuss the iconography and language of dancing as represented in the piece; below, I will discuss the clothing choices of the performers and text related to royalty such as emblem glyphs.

The dance happened on 9.16.6.0.0 4 Ajaw 3 Sotz' (5 April 757 AD) and was a celebration of Yaxuun B'ahlam's fifth year in the *ajawlel*.

There are two dancers; we know this is dance because the text tells us but also because their foot positioning is similar to other images of dancing (Regueiro Suárez 2017). The smaller dancer is in profile; he faces the adult dancer. The adult looks at the child, but his chest faces forward. Both carry crossed staves. The younger carries one, while his father carries two. These staves interact with the textual content of the image, and the feathers appear to bend back rather than penetrate a text block. A more complex version of the staff appears on Lintel 5 (Figure 13), but on Lintel 2 the staves are single-barred crosses about the length of one's arm. The bars are tipped with what look like flowers with a single circle in the center and circles to form the petals. These may also be stars, especially considering a star motif on their ankles.

The *ajaw* and his son hold the crosses by strips of cloth around the bar. On Lintel 5, these strips appear to be mobile and capable of fanning out slightly. They also fall lower than the cross bar and are more extensively decorated on Lintel 5 than on Lintel 2. This cloth's motion was probably important to the dance. The staves are topped with descending birds.

The text is probably most appropriately broken into three clauses. The second and third clauses refer to the dance, naming it *xukpi*, which is likely a reference to the type of bird on the staves (Grube 1992, Figure 14). In Ch'ol, there is a bird called the *xwucpic*;

Aulie, Aulie, and Scharfe de Stairs (2009) translate this as ‘guardabarranco,’ or a bird of the Momotidae family (Figure 15). Based on the long tail feathers on the staves and the signature long tail feathers of Momotidae, I think it may be the same bird.

Considering the dancers are not wearing things like celts or the sky band belt that often signify rulership (Schele and Freidel 1990), they may be wearing stripped-down outfits for a dance that required more movement than normal.

Though they do not wear a sky band around their waist, they both have circles on their anklets (Figure 16), and Yaxuun B’ahlam has a sky band in his headdress. This could imply the dance happens in the sky, as circles with dots in the middle typically represent stars (Miller and Taube 2007). The staves with birds could be a way to represent the movement of birds in the sky.

Chronologically, this is the second record of Yaxuun B’ahlam performing a *xukpi* dance. The first is Lintel 5, where he performs the dance with a wife. She carries a sacred bundle, but it is unclear if there was a bundle involved in the later dance (Regueiro Suárez 2017).

4.1.2 Regalia of ritual and rulership

Yaxchilan Lintel 13 shows a vision serpent that may represent Kokaaj B’ahlam’s birth (Graham 2004). But Lintel 2 is the earliest extant portrayal of Kokaaj B’ahlam in human form, meaning it may have been a way of presenting him to the community (Gómez Palacios 2018), or perhaps even proof of his heirship (Regueiro Suárez 2017). If it is proof of heirship, it shows how varied leadership ceremonies were by region, a point stressed by Wright (2011).

Kokaaj B'ahlam is about a head shorter than his father. The two wear similar headdresses, with a few exceptions discussed below. The headdresses are of the “drum major” style, which may be a fancy version of the *ko'haw*, or war helmet, associated with Teotihuacan (Stuart 2019). At Palenque, some scholars have suggested the headdress may have been passed down through the generations (Martin and Grube 2008), but at least at Yaxchilan, the fact that there are two in the same image indicates the headdress was not passed from father to son.

Both have snakes carrying stars on their backs on top of their headdresses. Kokaaj B'ahlam's star has quetzal feathers emerging from it; his father's might as well, but they fall outside the border of the image. These snakes emerge from the Sun God or an anthropomorphized *k'in* sign, who in turn emerges from a spondylus shell.

The face of the principal bird deity, who may be Itzamnaaj or Yax Tuun (Stuart 2019), rests below a smaller image of Ox Yop Hu'n on both headdresses; both these traits are so strongly associated with leadership that scholars wonder if Kokaaj B'ahlam was not a co-regent for wearing the same symbols as his father (Gómez Palacios 2018). Both father and son also have another common diagnostic trait of the principal bird deity, ‘serpent wings,’ or serpent mouths from which emerge quetzal feathers (Stuart 2019).

Yaxuun B'ahlam's headdress has two elements his son's does not. The first is two serpent bars with mirrors and feathers emerging from them. The second is a flower from which emerge breath or speech scrolls (Figure 17). The word *ajaw*, which I translate “lord,” may actually come from the phrase *ah aw*, “he who speaks” (Boot 2010:150). Kokaaj B'ahlam has a similar flower, but it does not have the breath scrolls, perhaps one indication his father is still firmly in charge.

They both wear earspools, though once again the father's are more elaborate. (They have an extra beaded cross dangling from them.) This means for rulers, at least, a five-year-old with earspools was not unheard-of. Both wear beaded collars with faces on them; Yaxuun B'ahlam's includes a plate-like pectoral that either cannot be seen or is not a part of Kokaaj B'ahlam's outfit. This pectoral is somewhat similar to a jade collar on the Cacaxtla murals (Figure 18). Like its Maya counterpart, the Cacaxtla collar has a face which may represent the *ajaw* symbol of leadership and circular beads which may represent stars; together, this symbolism is suggestive of the Maize God (Uriarte 2019).

Both figures have back racks (called a *paak pihk* in Classic Mayan [Stuart 2019]), but Yaxuun B'ahlam's *paak pihk* is behind him and can barely be seen, but for a mass of feathers. Kokaaj B'ahlam does not appear to be wearing his, perhaps because the weight was a bit much for a five-year-old, but it stands on the side of the image. It is missing some signatures of back racks like the mask of an ancestor's face (though there does appear to be a slightly eroded face). The presence of two of these in the image may suggest Kokaaj B'ahlam had a simpler one than his father before his accession, or, like the *ko'haw*, this object was not inherited.

The first clause of text, running across the top left of the lintel, provides the date and reason for the dance: It was the close of Yaxuun B'ahlam's fifth year in the *ajawlel*. The second phrase begins with *u b'aah*, establishing that this is the essence of the dancing individual. The second phrase also names the young noble by his pre-accession name, Chelew Chan K'inich, one of a few times this name appears in text (see Figure 19 for another example). All glyphs related to Chelew Chan K'inich are smaller than the

ones referring to the event in general or his father (Bricker 2007). But he is still given an emblem glyph, K'uhul Kaaj Ajaw.

The third clause describes the father with his typical bombastic titles. He uses two emblem glyphs, K'uhul Kaaj Ajaw and K'uhul Pa'chan Ajaw (Figure 20). Much has been made of the fact that this is switched on Lintel 52 nine years later, with the son receiving two emblem glyphs and the father receiving one (Regueiro Suárez 2017). It may be the use of both titles later is an indicator of his increase in power over time. However, it should not be assumed that one title was already transferred, as Yaxuun B'ahlam IV uses both on later images such as Lintel 9.

4.2.0 Structural analysis of Piedras Negras Stela 3

4.2.1 The Precious Turtle of Piedras Negras

Stela 3 from Piedras Negras (Figure 4) was important in Proskouriakoff's (1960) initial realization that the Piedras Negras stelae told a royal history, though it has since been destroyed by looters and exists only in fragments (Clancy 2009). It once had iconography on four sides and possibly the top (Proskouriakoff 1960). At its excavation, it retained traces of red, green, and blue paint (Clancy 2009).

The side facing the plaza likely had an image of the ruler K'inich Yo'nal Ahk and possibly his wife, but this had eroded by the time Maler unearthed it (Clancy 2009). The sides contained text, much of which had eroded when John Montgomery drew them in 2000.

However, the back, which showed little erosion thanks to having toppled in antiquity, once contained one of the most unique images in Maya art--a tender scene between mother and daughter that still evokes the traditional iconography of leadership

(Figure 21). Before it fell, the stela back looked up at “elevated, restricted” portions of the royal palace, and these may have been areas specifically for women during religious rites (Houston 2018:100).

4.2.2 *The people*

There are two people sitting on a throne in the image. The two people are named in the glyphs above. Ix Winikhaab’ Ajaw is the older person, and she occupies the majority of the frame created by the text and the natural borders of the rock. She wears a headdress with the quadripartite badge, a symbol associated with women at other sites; the use of this badge may be connected to GI or otherwise stressing ancestral connections to leadership (Tuszyńska 2011).

On top of the headdress is an anthropomorphized bloodletter, given away by the stingray spine below its jaw. Its mouth is a *k’in* sign. From the neck of the bloodletter emerges a bundle of quetzal feathers; these are weighted toward the middle and at the tips to make them dip. She wears at least one ear spool and presumably two, but details of her face are obliterated by a crack in the monument. Her huipil comes down to her calves. It has rows of quadripartite shapes possibly representing the four corners of the world, and she wears bracelets.

Around her neck, she has what Clancy (2009:89) calls a “twisted rope.” This may be a reference to bloodletting, since ropes could be drawn through the tongue in bloodletting rituals (Clancy 2009). The rope may additionally serve as metaphorical connection to the ancestors. Rope for attaching a backstrap loom to a tree is today known as *yujkut* by the Tzotzil Maya, a word synonymous with umbilical cord (Prechtel and Carlsen 1988:126). Leaders of the ancient Maya used umbilical cords to connect them to

the spirit world; leaders accessed this umbilicus through sacrifice (Schele and Mathews 1998:47). But an umbilicus may also represent a more mundane connection: the connection between parent and child or between an individual and his or her ancestors (Boyd personal correspondence).

Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw is barefoot. Her hands are forming gestures. While there have been valuable studies of Maya hand gestures (such as Houston 2001), I could not find an explanation for her gestures. However, the position of her left hand seems to match with the left hand of the Moon Goddess on the skyband on Structure 8N-66 at Copan (Figure 22).

The smaller figure is more eroded, but presumably represents the three-year-old mentioned in the text, Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk. She wears a round headdress with feathers emerging from the top; other details, as well as her face, are eroded or perhaps intentionally defaced. She wears a beaded necklace and a bracelet on her right arm; the rest of her outfit is too eroded to make many comments. Like her mother, she is probably barefoot. By the Contact era, children of her age typically did not wear clothing (Izquierdo 1983:26), but she does appear to wear a garment at her waist. The child on the Bonampak murals and the infant Maize God on K7912 also wear clothing, suggesting that noble children were treated differently.

On the Bonampak murals, young people have ear spools already (Houston 2018:113), and, as we saw at Yaxchilan, five-year-old male elites could have them. But unfortunately Stela 3 at Piedras Negras is too eroded to observe the presence or absence of ear spools or ritual scarification on Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk.

4.2.3 *The scene*

The pair sit on a throne that may be an artistic representation of a throne found in Structure J-6 at Piedras Negras (Clancy 2009). The throne on the stela has a mural on its base. This image includes a figure holding a serpent. There is also a glyph on the mural; this glyph is repeated on the legs of the throne (Figure 23). This glyph probably reads **NIKTE'-EK'-KAB'-NAL** or “Flower of the Black Earth Place,” a possible reference to the “Five-Flower Place” of creation (Clancy 2009:89).

The text itself refers to a throne: E2-F4 reads, “On 11 Imix 14 Yax (26 August 711 AD), Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw took the throne” (author’s translation). Nicholas Carter (personal correspondence) believes the throne she took was the one in the image.

The glyphs on the throne may position mother and daughter in the place of creation (Clancy 2009), which would be one way to suggest that the daughter’s right to rule came from the ancients.

A small lidded vase or flask rests on the right of the throne. On the front of the vase is another quadripartite image. The shape is similar to Olmec iconography which Reilly (1990:21) described as being a reference to portals or gateways to other levels of reality. It appears to be smoking, and may be an incensario, though much of the detail (as well as the face of the entity looking through the portal) is lost to erosion and damage.

Still, the bloodletter in Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw’s headdress, the rope around her neck, and the portal all imply bloodletting was an important part of the k’atun-ending ritual. At Bonampak, Room 3 contains an image of a young girl who is proportionally similar to Ix Ju’ntahn Ahk engaged in ceremonies associated with bloodletting (Miller

and Brittenham 2013), so the Precious Turtle was probably not spared the ceremony due to her age.

4.2.4 The glyphs

The stela is a fabulous example of the use of textual layout to express messages, and the placement of the glyphs may be as important as their content. There are 48 glyph blocks divided into six rows. Two rows, the first and last, are longer than the others. This creates parallelism, a common Maya literary technique meant to associate two subjects which is also seen on the Cross Group tablets (Carrasco 2012). In this case, the parallelism positions the birth of the panel's main subject, Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw, with the end of the 14th k'atun.

But possibly the most important glyph blocks are D5-D7; these are at the center of the text (Figure 24) and punctuated with Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw's headdress (Figure 25). These glyphs describe her birthday, and C7-D7 read *ix ju'ntahn ahk, ix k'in ajaw*; their placement quite literally centers the action on the girl, not her mother. There are five dates in the text (Table 2), two before and two after Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk's birth, so, like with the layout of the text, from a literary standpoint, her birth lands in the center.

4.3.0 Structural analysis of the Temple of the Sun tablet

4.3.1 War iconography and the war of position

The Temple of the Sun tablet (Figure 5) is one of three tablets portraying K'inich Kan B'ahlam II as a boy and a man in the Cross Group of temples, which include the Temple of the Foliated Cross, the Temple of the Cross, and the Temple of the Sun. The temples were dedicated on an astronomical alignment of Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter in 690 AD (Tedlock 2011).

The Temple of the Sun is the westernmost temple (Tedlock 2011:76), though what this means for reading order of all three panels together is debatable (for example, see Clancy 1986). It has three doors which lead to a sanctuary designed to model a Maya home; the carved stone tablet under discussion is mounted on the back wall (Tedlock 2011:76).

Each image is carved into stone and flanked by eight rows of hieroglyphs. There are two human figures on each. These figures are both Kan B'ahlam, one at six and one at forty-nine. They face each other, a technique also used on La Corona Panel 1 (Stuart 2019). *K'ulel* floats around the figures, implying the otherworld or a sacred space (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993). Each of the panels invokes a different god of Palenque; the Temple of the Sun tablet primarily discusses GIII (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:305). I herein divide the iconographic suite into three groups of elements: military, youth, and accession iconography.

4.3.2 Military iconography

Compared to the two other tablets in the Cross Group, the dominant theme of the Temple of the Sun tablet is warfare. Gone is the world tree, replaced with obvious spears and shields and less-obvious references to the underworld. This may link this tablet to the physical world (Clancy 1986), though there are some (but fewer than on the other temples) objects like floating *k'ulel* which typically implies an otherworldly nature.

The major element of military iconography is in the center of the image, replacing the foliage of the other two temples. It is a large shield with two spears behind it atop a litter made of bone and carried by two gods, or possibly four, with two out of view (Figure 26). This image, a representation of the *tok' pakal*, or flint-and-shield, is

Teotihuacan iconography adapted by the Maya, but the face on the shield is an image of Palenque god GIII, K'inich Ajaw Pakal (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:470). Besides representing the sun, he is strongly associated with Jupiter (Tedlock 2011:76). Flint spear tips emerge from the mouths of white bone snakes (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:305). These types of spears are rare; of twenty-eight spears on eight vases from the Kerr Collection (Kerr n.d.) and the two spears on Lintel 8 from Yaxchilan, none have similar white bone snakes. Even another war stack on K1116 does not have white bone snake spears, but an unprovenanced stela from the Ucumacinta region includes a *sajal* with a similar spear who is involved in a ritual celebrating the god B'olon Yokte' K'uh (Carrasco and Wald 2012:199, see Figure 27 for comparison).

The four-corner litter has a bloody, severed head of a jaguar mounted to it and snake mouths on either side (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:305). The Old God and God L (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:305) or underworld spirits (Tedlock 2011) are holding up the litter.

Unlike the Temple of the Foliated Cross tablet, where the two Kan B'ahlams stand on islands in the primordial sea, on the Temple of the Sun tablet, they stand on the backs of supernatural beings on a border representing the underworld. (Tedlock [2011] calls them captives, which they may be, but they are probably not humans: Their eyes suggest they are gods or spirits [Macri andLooper 2013]). This in itself is war iconography; the power to wage war came from the underworld (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:307).

There is also a vessel in which an anthropomorphic *sak hu'nal* (the white paper headdress of leadership) and anthropomorphic flint rest. This is probably a *sak lak*, a plate for sacrifice (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:306).

4.3.3 Iconography of youth

On 9 Ak'bal 6 Xul (June 15, 641 AD), the six-year-old Kan B'ahlam took part in an important ritual, probably investiture with the title of *okte'*, but the ceremony may also have had similarities with the coming-of-age ritual described by Landa (2008).

This is described in the glyphs that float over the head of the young Kan B'ahlam. He is probably dressed for this event. While elements of his dress are not unexpected for Maya clothing, elements such as the decorated cloth or paper strips hanging from his hat are uncommon and thus possibly associated with this specific ceremony. The cloth outfit may also have some association with the ballgame (Clancy 1986) though it was certainly not an easy outfit to move quickly in. He is barefoot. Like at Yaxchilan, he has earspools.

He wears at least three and, assuming the outfit is symmetrical, five strips of knotted fabric of different styles. One is a rope (Carrasco and Wald 2012:200) and the others may be similar to the “tails” in the coming-of-age rituals described by Landa (2008:49-50). Carrasco and Wald (2012:199) specifically link the ropes with *okte'* rites as there is a similar rope around the neck of the *sajal* who impersonates the god B'olon Okte' K'uh on the previously-mentioned unprovenanced stela from the Usumacinta region.

The flower emerging from the back of his headdress to raise toward the sky appears similar to the fig tree bud of *ox yop hu'n*, the so-called Jester god associated with the *sak hu'nal* of leadership. This symbol represents a strong and direct connection to

ancestors, and represents the rebirth of dead ancestors in the present king (Wagner 2017). It is also a symbol heavily associated with Palenque royalty: It appears on an image of Kan B'ahlam's father's accession on the Oval Palace Tablet (Wagner 2017, Figure 28).

Recent studies of Maya art suggest asymmetrical motion may be a deliberate narrative technique, especially the hand movements of individuals on turntable objects like pottery (John and John 2018). On the Foliated Cross panel, Kan B'ahlam's hands are down, on the Cross panel, they are midway up his body, and by the Temple of the Sun, Kan B'ahlam's hands are level with his neck (Figure 29). This may be a deliberate technique to show the passage of time in the ceremony. But the objects he holds in each are different, implying the diverse responsibilities of leadership. On the Temple of the Sun tablet, the young Kan B'ahlam holds an image of an anthropomorphic *sak hu'nal* of leadership and a personified flint, a symbol of war.

Disputes over the meaning of the secondary text associated with the young Kan B'ahlam make assumptions about this event difficult. This is my transcription of the first phrase of the secondary text:

b'olon akb'al wak chikin le'm? nah? ta okte' ah ? tzitz b'aak wayal

For many years, the phrase *ta okte'el* was considered a prepositional phrase meaning “at the enter-treeship” or the heirship (see Montgomery 2002:228, Tedlock 2011). But Tokovinine, Carrasco, and others disagree. Carrasco (2012:142) simply calls the event an “*okte'* rite of passage.” Kan B'ahlam's father made a later announcement of heirship order for Kan B'ahlam and his younger brothers (Wright 2011), so it is presumably not an announcement of heirship, though this later announcement may have come about if it became apparent Kan B'ahlam would not have a child.

This means the earlier verb (at A'2) is essential for understanding the event. Unfortunately, the meaning and even transliteration of this expression are disputed. Tedlock (2011) translates *le'm? nah?* as “he ascended the temple,” but does not explain how he came to that conclusion. Carrasco and Wald (2012:204) consider “he was pyramid-installed,” which I believe to be somewhat more accurate. In Yukatek, *lem* is a flexible word, but when used as a verb, early dictionary writers glossed it as *resplandecer* (“to shine”), *relampaguear* (“to flash [lightning]”), *calmar* (“to calm, to become calm”), *encajar* (“to fit, to burden with”), *fornicar* (“to fornicate”), and *meter* (“to measure”) (Bolles 2001).

We might assume it does not reference fornication, but I believe *le'm nah* might be best translated as “burdened in the temple” with the *okte'el*. The use of the term ‘burden’ as a metaphor for leadership is a concept across the Maya world (Tedlock 2003:140). In his accession outfit, Kan B'ahlam is dressed simply, probably invoking the idea of a slave to the state (Clancy 1986). Even today, the Maya who hold important ritual positions in communities in Guatemala view their positions as a sacred burden (Christenson 2017). On the other hand, perhaps *le'm* relates to shining or burning at the temple; in Central Mexico, noble children were required to set fir branches on city altars and mountaintops to illuminate the night (Carrasco 2012).

Okte' is also a debated term. Carrasco (2012) believes it to mean “wood-pillarship,” possibly similar to the *temillotl*, or “pillar of stone hairstyle” of Central Mexico, a hairstyle that is, not unexpectedly given the military component of the tablet, used by warriors (Flood n.d.). But Tokovinine (personal correspondence) suggests it may mean “wooden leg,” or a reference to stilt dances (for an example of a stilt dance, see

figure 30), because *ok* typically means “foot.” *Ok* can also mean “pole” or “handle,” including the handle of a weapon, and *uyok te’* is an expression in Ch’orti for an upright pole along which maguey leaves are rasped (Gronemeyer 2020:8).

The ceremony to receive the position of *okte’* may have taken at least five days; a distance number in the main text traces back to a day five days after 9 Akb’al 6 Xul (Table 3). After that, the text mentions a different but presumably related event a year later. This is my transcription of the second clause:

*oxlaju’n ajaw waxaklaju’n uniiw jub’uy chan?tikil ch’oktaak {PH2} b’aak
wayal umook? k’uhul b’aakal ajaw*

Most important here is the phrase *jub’uy chan?tikil ch’oktaak*, “they descended, the four? youths.” Tedlock (2011) took this to mean that the ceremony which began in June 641 ended in December 642. The “temple,” in this case, may have been school, then; Aztec elites at twelve or thirteen often spent time with priests away from their parents (Carrasco 2012). But Tokovinine (personal correspondence) believes it is a reference to the *voladores* ritual, where a group of four people climb a pole and return to the earth via ropes. If so, it is the only known reference in Maya inscriptions, though there is graffiti at Tikal which appears to show the ritual (Hutson 2011). Another possibility is that the ritual is similar to the sweeping descent down a pyramid performed by Aztec *tlatoani* Motecuhzoma Xocoyotzin (Reilly personal communication).

4.3.4 Accession iconography

Given the extravagance of royal regalia, accession outfits were fairly simple; this was probably to imply a leader’s humbleness and slavery to the state (Clancy 1986). On the Temple of the Sun tablet, the adult Kan B’ahlam wears a tall, plain headdress. At the

top, the headdress appears to have a flower and possibly feathers, but other details disappear out of the frame. His hair is long; it reaches his shoulders even if some of it appears to be up under the headdress.

He wears an ear spool and a necklace, the beads of which are larger at his chest and smaller at his neck. The necklace cord is long enough to fall to the small of his back. He wears bracelets and raises the k'awiil figurine and a bandanna which is probably a *sak hu'nal*. This cloth is long; a strip of it falls from his hands and dangles in front of his belly button. The *sak hu'nal* has a few beads or tassels, but is relatively undecorated.

His chest is bare, but he is wearing a pseudo-apron which covers his stomach and a breechcloth which goes past his knees. The pseudo-apron is decorated with fringe and a simple pattern at the waist. Unlike his younger self, he wears shoes. He is also lower than his younger self; the captive he stands on is his elbows, unlike his companion on hand and knee. This may be an artistic effect to balance the image. Doing so offsets the height difference between the child and the adult. Without the height adjustment, the younger would only come to the small of the elder's back. With it, he comes to the shoulders.

4.3.5 *Additional glyphs*

Besides the previously-discussed secondary texts, there are eight columns of main glyphs on the flanking the image. A full discussion of them is outside the scope of this thesis, and the text is only tangentially related to Kan B'ahlam's childhood, but certain portions of it are worth noting. That the columns are symmetrical is no accident, and the narrative itself often repeats or emphasizes important information through couplets, "one of the most common and important Mayan literary conventions" (Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993:70). The story is not complete without the two other panels, which, together,

describe the creation of the earth in relation to events in Palenque's history (Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993, Clancy 1986, Tedlock 2011).

On one side, the texts discuss events in the early days of our age or the time before this world; on the other side, they discuss events in Palenque's recent past. This trend is true of all three panels, though the Temple of the Sun panel only discusses events after the rising of this sun, even if these events are mythical and magical.

Most important for this discussion are the final columns of the text. Here, the main text calls K'inich Kan B'ahlam the fifth to take the *okte'*. But on Pakal's sarcophagus, which was likely commissioned by Pakal or Kan B'ahlam, there are ten acknowledged leaders (counting Pakal's mother Sak K'uk') of Palenque listed as coming before Kan B'ahlam. This implies the *okte'* is distinct from the heirship.

5. CONCLUSION

5.0.0

Childhood was hardly the only time Maya rulers were connected to sacred ancestors. But the examples above show it was an important time to present new rulers in a variety of contexts. These presentations often involved the taking of new responsibilities or burdens. On the other hand, much of the sacredness of the child had already manifest. By simply being part of the lineage, young people had access to sacred titles, participated in rituals tying them to creation, and were allowed to wear the clothing and accoutrements of the elite. This was presumably true among stable and unstable dynasties, but only unstable dynasties seem to have felt the need to portray these events. For these dynasties, the social pressure from lesser elites was greater, and they needed to prove their ability to lead not only over space but over time.

They do this by emphasizing military prowess and sacred heritage. These are common themes in Maya artwork, but worth noting because of the ages of the participants. Presumably Kan B'ahlam was not leading forces into battle at six, but the beginning of his military apprenticeship and public association with war began in earnest at that age.

In the following sections, I summarize the political instability, the method of propaganda, and the effects on the dynasty (when known) surrounding the three art pieces described in this paper. Finally, I discuss difficulties surrounding the study of childhood in the Classic era and provide a few suggestions for further research in this field.

5.1.0 *Yaxchilan Lintel 2*

5.1.1 *The instability*

Kokaaj B'ahlam IV was the son of Yaxuun B'ahlam IV, the Yaxchilan king who took over after a 10-year interregnum or rule by an unpopular *ajaw* (Martin and Grube 2008). While Yaxuun B'ahlam IV appears to have been the son of the previous king, his mother was not the famed Ix K'ab'al Xook but a secondary queen named Ix Ik' Jolo'm Chan. Thus his road to ascendancy was not direct. This fulfills part C of my definition of unstable dynasties: Someone ended up in power who was not the intended king. Yaxuun B'ahlam also may have left his son in the care of a regent after his death, thus fulfilling part A of my definition.

Yaxuun B'ahlam IV spent much of his career engaged in a propaganda campaign to fend off the encroaching power of lesser elites, and he is one of the first *ajawtaak* to widely portray his *sajaltaak* (Bardsley 2004). He was such a brilliant propagandist he tricked early Mayanists, who for many years believed he was a military tactician of great power; later scholars realized many of his conquests were minor centers (Martin and Grube 2008).

If Yaxuun B'ahlam had approached the throne from an indirect means, his son probably faced the same social pressure he did. Because of this, Yaxuun B'ahlam invested what appears to be an unusual amount of effort promoting his son's right to rule. But Yaxuun B'ahlam died before he saw his son in power, leaving him in the hands of a regent. This may have placed even more pressure on the son.

5.1.2 *The propaganda*

The war of position as Gramsci (1988) describes it is typically fought against other members of the same social class or strata as the warrior. Unlike stelae but like all lintels, Lintel 2 was only semi-public. This means it was not meant to be viewed by

commoners necessarily. The rulers of Yaxchilan knew who would see it most frequently: other elites.

The propaganda that began with Yaxuun B'ahlam's birth on Lintel 13 continued on Lintel 2 and Lintel 52. There is some debate over whether these lintels were commissioned by father or son (Mesoweb n.d.); if it was by the father, the son also portrayed his own youth on lintels 57 and 58 after his father's death. Lintel 13, seemingly portraying Kokaaj B'ahlam's birth, describes Yaxuun B'ahlam with the expression *ox winikhaab' ajaw*, or "three-k'atun lord." Three k'atuns is sixty years, but at the time of Kokaaj B'ahlam's birth, Yaxuun B'ahlam was forty-three (Martin and Grube 2008:128). Either his son's heirship became more of a preoccupation toward the end of his life, which is certainly possible, or it was his son commissioning the monuments. I think this is more likely, since there is an image of Kokaaj B'ahlam as a young person with his mother, Lintel 52. Lintel 2 was mounted on the central doorway of Temple 33 (Martin and Grube 2008:133). This makes it semi-public, and thus meant to be seen by other nobility. As lesser elites entered the temple, they would have seen the reminder of Kokaaj B'ahlam's childhood, his connection to his father, and his participation in the dance.

No matter who commissioned them, Kokaaj B'ahlam IV's birth and youth became tools for political purposes. Kokaaj B'ahlam appears on at least three lintels as a proportionally-distinct youth. He was a participant in important rituals with his father. We know because they made sure to tell us.

5.1.3 The results

Kokaaj B'ahlam's reign saw the decline of stonework and art at the site, and his son K'inich Tatbu Jolo'm only commissioned one monument (Martin and Grube 2008).

His father's war of position came at the beginning of the end for the *ajawlel*. The combination of negotiating increased power for the lesser lords while still attempting to emphasize the sacred kingship did not hold off the collapse of the system, and Yaxuun B'ahlam IV, the famed 'He of 20 Captives,' probably would not have been impressed with the status of the kingdom of his grandson K'inich Tatbu Jolo'm.

5.2.0 *Piedras Negras Stela 3*

5.2.1 *The instability*

Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk was the only known heir of Piedras Negras ruler K'inich Yo'nal Ahk II and his wife. She was born twenty-two years after Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw's marriage to K'inich Yo'nal Ahk. In the interim years, the couple may have been under intense social pressure to produce an heir.

Even after her birth, the royal family had to defend itself. As succession was typically to a male child, a female heir was not the ideal situation. By Landa's time, succession passed from father to son, and to brothers if a ruler had no sons; women were skipped entirely (Landa 2008:49-50). But K'inich Yo'nal Ahk does not record brothers, meaning he either had none or hoped his daughter would be queen in spite of them. This matches part B of my definition of unstable dynasties: The king failed to produce a male heir.

Despite his long reign, Yo'nal Ahk seems to have faced a rough time. He lost control of cities conquered by his father, and Palenque conquered nearby Annay Te' and La Mar (Martin and Grube 2008). He may have even bowed to foreign leadership, possibly from Palenque or Calakmul (Martin and Grube 2008). Publically, his lack of an heir may have been viewed as bad tidings for the marriage and for the *ajaw* himself; by

the Contact era, nuptials without a child “were corrupted by sin” (Izquierdo 1983:32).

The threat to the future of the dynasty established by his grandfather was multi-faceted, and his political response was as well.

One aspect of that response was the centering of his wife and daughter as a way to imply the ability of the dynasty to last after his death. Perhaps because his heir was late in coming, it appears she was thrust into the political limelight as soon as K'inich Yo'nal Ahk could find a ritual important enough to display her, the celebration of the date 9.14.0.0.0.

Even her name, Lady Precious Turtle, suggests youth. When referring to people, *ju'ntahn* is a phrase used in mother to child relationship titles (Montgomery 2002:127), or, on the lip of Pakal's sarcophagus, to describe affection between a husband and a wife. As far as I understand, it is not used in the names of any other individuals.

The second part of her name is the common dynastic name, and is a part of her father's name as well (Pitts 2011). Her age on Stela 3 was about three and a half. The ancient Maya could change or receive new names at important life events, and usually had a different childhood and adult name (Martin 2005, Izquierdo 1983). Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk was probably not the name she used as an adult. It may not have even been a name, but a diminutive nickname.

5.2.2 The propaganda

Still, this name is one of the most important things on the stela. As mentioned, the birth and name play a prominent role in the art (Figures 23 and 24). While this was made in Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk's youth, the message is the same: She is important, she was at important period-ending celebrations, and you need to obey her the same as her father.

She receives the title *ix k'in ajaw* (“Lady Sun Lord”), a title associated with the lords of Piedras Negras. However, this title was not exclusive to kings; an artist named Sihyaj Chan uses the title *k'in ajaw* on the El Cayo altar. He is referred to as a *ch'ok k'in ajaw*, “young/princely Sun Lord.” He may have been a relative of the royal family (Martin and Grube 2008).

If it is correct that Ju'ntahn Ahk was not her adult name, the *k'in ajaw* title probably came with birth into the royal family. She was able to use it before possessing an adult name and thus before having gone through important coming-of-age rituals. (K'inich was also apparently a name or title children could have, at least at Caracol [Martin 2005]).

But those ceremonies were probably not far away. In the Contact era, children began to participate in public rituals around the age of three (Izquierdo 1983:42). The k'atun-ending may have been her first public ritual, but it was undoubtedly not her last. If the k'atun ending did not involve bloodletting, that event was probably coming.

A princess of Tikal was involved in a *mak* ceremony at 3 years and 2 months of age, which may have been similar to the genital-covering ceremony Landa describes while discussing the *ka'a p'úut sijil* (Houston 2018:100). I suspect that, though it would have been age-appropriate to do so, Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk had not yet had her *mak* event, or she would have been referred to by a more formal name. But given the bloodletting paraphernalia and the fact that a child of her age lets blood on the Bonampak murals, she may have already performed autosacrifice.

5.2.3 *The results*

The fate of the little sun lord Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk is unclear from the surviving

record; she is never mentioned again by that name. But since the name was a childhood name, we may not expect her to use that name later in life.

There is a mysterious woman mentioned on a set of incised shells that were found in the possible tomb of Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw (Pitts 2011). But a fast scribe painted signs that are open to interpretation. Both Mark Pitts (2011) and Josserand (2002) believe the action was related to marriage. But they disagree on whose marriage. Pitts (2011) believes it was the remarriage of K'inich Yo'nal Ahk at the end of his life in a desperate attempt to produce a male heir. Josserand (2002) says it was the marriage Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk, grown up, and she married the up-and-coming Ruler 4 of Piedras Negras.

The disagreement hinges on an event on the date 9.14.17.14.17 1 Kaban 0 Mol (28 June 729 AD). A woman named Ix Matawil Sotz' was involved in an event, possibly adornment for marriage. The following passage describes either the witnesses or a witness and the bridegroom. I transcribe and translate K2-K5 as: *ju'n chab' ti haab' yaxk'in nahwaj? ? ix matawi sotz' ajaw? u kab'ij ix namaan ajaw yichnal kooj yo'nal ahk yokib' ajaw* "1 Kaban 0 Mol, she was adorned for marriage?, Ix Matawil Sotz' Ajaw?, she witnessed it, the Lady Ruler of La Florida, in the company of Kooj Yo'nal Ahk, Lord of Piedras Negras."

As there are not many extant discussions of women's relationships with their daughters or with other wives, it is hard to know whether this discusses a daughter or a co-wife. But on other textual examples, individuals after the phrase *u kaab'ij* are witnesses, not participants. On Piedras Negras Stela 8, for example, Yo'nal Ahk's father is said to witness Yo'nal Ahk's wedding in a similar fashion. This suggests Yo'nal Ahk did the same thing his father did: Witness a wedding to give it authenticity shortly before

his death.

As for the identity of Ix Matawil Sotz', it was perhaps premature of Josserand to consider her as Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk. It may have been another, later-born daughter, or a more complicated political dynamic unfolded. However, though Josserand (2002) only provides circumstantial evidence that this wedding involved the young girl on Stela 3, the fact that her name likely changed means she cannot be yet ruled out as a participant in the event on 1 Kaban 0 Mol.

Unless a source providing the name of the wife of Ruler 4 appears, it is impossible to be sure what Ix Matawil Sotz's relationship to Piedras Negras was. But based on the structure of the sentence, it is more plausible that Yo'nal Ahk was a witness than a participant in the marriage of Ix Matawil Sotz'. Yo'nal Ahk's father also used a wedding to legitimize Yo'nal Ahk's rule. The wedding memorialized on the shells probably represents Yo'nal Ahk's attempt to legitimize his successor's rule.

Ruler 4 came into power a few months after the wedding of Ix Matawil Sotz'. Had Yo'nal Ahk been making a last-minute attempt to produce an heir at an advanced age, only to fail shortly afterward, we would expect some turbulence between the death of Yo'nal Ahk and the accession of Ruler 4. But if there was a power struggle, it was far less disruptive than the struggle which led to Yaxuun B'aalam taking power at Yaxchilan (Martin and Grube 2008:127).

Though Yo'nal Aak and Ix K'atun Ajaw did not produce a male heir, they used a war of position to secure their daughter's hegemony. If Josserand's (2002) hypothesis is correct, they were successful as well, and their daughter was able to transform her

unstable role as a female in a patrilineal system into a stable role without a resulting change in the status quo.

5.3.0 Palenque Temple of the Sun

5.3.1 The instability

Though clearly a competent ruler who built important structures, renewed faith in the Palenque gods, and inspired later rulers to take his name, K'inich Janaab' Pakal was not a direct patrilineal descendant of the previous Palenque dynasty (Martin and Grube 2008:161). Rather, he came into power after the city had been discredited by a major loss to Calakmul; they may have even lived under a puppet government ruled by the Snake dynasty (Martin and Grube 2008:161). The dynasty Pakal created fits part C of my definition of unstable dynasties: Pakal ended up in power despite not being the originally-designated heir.

Pakal's mother, Lady Sak K'uk', put her 12-year-old son onto the throne of Palenque in 615 AD. Pakal's father is not on the Oval Palace Tablet, and it is his mother who gives him the *ko'haw* or "drum major" helmet, unlike on the Palace Tablet when Pakal gives the *ko'haw* to K'an Joy Chitam II and his mother Tz'akb'u Ajaw offers a flint and shield. This may mean his mother had a stronger link to the founding dynasty than his father. On the Oval Palace tablet, Sak K'uk' uses an undeciphered title representing a hand, the *nah* ("house") sign and the god GI. As "house" can also mean "social group" and GI is associated with divine kingship, this may have been her way of reminding residents that she was linked to the royal family (Tuszyńska 2011), one piece of propaganda in the war of position her son and grandsons continued to wage.

Lady Sak K'uk' defied the traditional patrilineal descent system to install her son in office. His rule was long, but it may not have been as impressive as his posthumous fame would suggest, as he lost many military conquests a few years after gaining them (Martin and Grube 2008:165). But the large amount of surviving artwork from Pakal's and his sons' reigns and its iconographic richness suggest both father and sons understood the value of political propaganda.

By the time his eldest son K'inich Kan B'ahlam came into power, the son was already forty-eight. Kan B'ahlam's youth was so long before his accession that many of his subjects would have had hazy memories at best of important youthful ceremonies. Other elites, especially up-and-coming elites, may have been especially prone to "forget" his participation in these ceremonies. If K'inich Kan B'ahlam used the Cross Group temples for steambath rituals (Child 2013), he likely met these lesser elites surrounded by artwork reminding them of his power.

He knew the importance of framing himself as a descendant of a 'pure' Palenque dynasty, calling himself 10th in line for the dynasty on the facade of his father's mortuary temple (Martin and Grube 2008:168), but he was still a child of a man whose claim to the throne is murky. If he had children, they did not seem to survive long enough to be marked as heirs (Martin and Grube 2008:168); at 48, he seems to have accepted not having a son. His younger brother, K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II, became the *b'aaah ch'ok* or "first heir" on Kan B'ahlam's accession, and it would be his younger brother who replaced him on the throne (Martin and Grube 2008:171).

5.3.2 *The propaganda*

The Cross Group addresses these issues. Though here, I discuss the Temple of the

Sun tablet, parallel iconography means that many of these statements apply to the Cross Group as a whole. For example, text ties Kan B'ahlam to mythic ancestors on all three panels of the Cross Group, using the same narrative technique each time. The left side of the panel describes mythohistoric events, and the right side is occupied by events in Kan B'ahlam's lifetime or the recent past of Palenque. While some events are repeated, others are only mentioned on one or two panels, suggesting the emphasized events are related to the iconography of the panel.

The *okte'* ceremony is mentioned more times and with more detail on the militant Temple of the Sun panel than on the other two panels (three times directly and once indirectly on the Temple of the Sun panel, compared to once each on the Temple of the Cross and the Temple of the Foliated Cross panels). This may connect the event to warfare.

Another line of evidence may connect the *okte'* to warfare. On the Temple XIV tablet, which references Kan B'ahlam's taking of the K'awiil on 9.10.15.7.10 13 Ok 18 Wo (April 6, 648 AD), there is a mention of a deity named B'olon Okte' K'uh (Carrasco and Wald 2012:201). This deity *u k'aab'iiy*, or "witnessed," the events portrayed on the Temple XIV tablet. If B'olon Okte' K'uh was around to witness those events, it may mean K'an B'ahlam's relationship with this deity began earlier, possibly during the events described on the Temple of the Sun tablet.

B'olon Okte' K'uh is associated with war in the Postclassic era, and at Classic-era Naranjo (Carrasco and Wald 2012:197, but see Grofe 2009 for a contrary opinion). This may explain the prevalence of war iconography on the Temple of the Sun tablet. That

Kan B'ahlam was a part of the *okte'el* and later was observed by B'olon Okte' K'uh himself imply the two were related.

While this does not explain the meaning of *okte'*, *te'* has another potential military connection. In the expression *yej te'*, it probably means 'spear,' and that expression may be translated as "under the spear of" (Bernal Romero 2014). This expression appears at C7 on the Temple XIV tablet, though in an unrelated context; still, it is worth considering that both concepts were in play in Palenque culture at the same time.

On the unprovenanced panel from the Usumacinta region mentioned by Carrasco and Wald (2012:199), the name B'olon Okte' appears not in front of the leader but beside his spear. The spear is a complicated affair, with points on either side emerging from the mouths of the same style of serpents which appear on the Temple of the Sun war stack. Before the name is the word *u b'aah*, which Carrasco and Wald (2012:200) interpret as meaning that the *sajal* is impersonating B'olon Okte', but the other possibility is that the artist was naming the spear.

Though Tokovinine (personal communication) disagrees, I think *okte'* might have to do with a spear rather than a stilt dance. As a possible reference to stilts, *ok* might mean "foot," and *te'*, "wooden." But *ok* or *yok* can also mean "handle" or "base" (Gronemeyer 2020:8). *Okte'* might refer to a specific style of spear with a unique handle—that of the white bone snake (Figure 27). But spear or stilt, it is clear that the position is related to war. In that case, what he was inducted into on 8 Ok 3 K'ayab (January 8, 684 AD) was not the heirship but a military cult.

Whatever *okte'* meant to the people of Palenque, the strong military association of the tablet is a reminder that the war of position took many forms, and in one form, it took

the form of the direct threat of force.

5.3.3 *The results*

Of the three case studies, the most successful was that of Kan B'ahlam. Despite not having a child, Kan B'ahlam ensured an orderly succession for his younger brother K'inich Joy Chitam. While on the Palenque Palace Tablet, K'inich Joy Chitam is portrayed receiving his "drum major" helmet from his father, his succession could not have occurred without the support of his older brother, who mentioned his name on the Temple of the Sun tablet. He leaves no question about his brother's status, and also provides the date of his brother's own *okte'* ceremony, which occurred on 9.11.0.0.0 12 Ajaw 8 Keh (12 October 652 AD).

This extends the war of position into the future; not only does he express his own sacred connection to the past, he plants a seed for the next leader to wage his own propaganda war. Pakal may not have been the direct descendant of the previous rulers of Palenque, but he and his children were still linked to the mythic and the supernatural. While things did not turn out so well for K'inich Joy Chitam himself, it appears that his successor was still a direct descendant (grandson) of Pakal (Martin and Grube 2008).

5.4.0 *U b'aah over time*

For researchers, the main issue with comments about youth in the Classic Maya era is a lack of corresponding evidence. Each major Maya polity handled accession and heirship differently (Wright 2011). While titles like *okte'* were clearly in place in different polities (Carrasco and Wald 2012), the lack of recognition of these titles at sites like Yaxchilan and Piedras Negras suggest *okte'* may have been more important in Palenque than in other places. Determining exact meanings may never be possible,

though with more evidence from the three sites, we may learn more about the specifics of ceremonies.

However, I think the context of the three pieces above suggests one important general theme: The use of childhood in Classic Maya art is long-term political propaganda. Dynasties that chose to portray heirship on artwork were often unstable and may have been trying to prove their lasting power and dismiss rival claims to the throne. By stressing the right of heirs to rule, leaders manufactured consent among the populace.

Other childhood portrayals may help fill in details. For example, Piedras Negras has images of three different children, and possibly more. Piedras Negras is the site with the most extant images of distinct, named children that I could identify. Proskouriakoff (1960) identifies possible children on stelae 2 (top), 11, and 16, but they are too heavily eroded to be sure. Ruler 4 of Piedras Negras may show his own childhood on Panel 3 (Pitts 2011). If so, this fits with my hypothesis. As mentioned, Ruler 4 was not the child of Yo'nal Ahk. He may have shown his youth to prove he was around the court. Panel 2 also shows a child, possibly an heir who died young and never sat on the throne (Pitts 2011). If this is the case, this is somewhat different than other uses of childhood but still fits the idea of childhood iconography to combat instability.

Children at Dos Pilas and Bonampak perform bloodletting rituals at a young age. But erosion at Dos Pilas makes statements about costuming impossible. Based on the other examples, I suspect the ritual at Dos Pilas may have had similarities to other rituals in the Maya world. Yet in specific detail, it was probably its own beast compared to the rituals described in this thesis.

Panel 7 at Xcalumkin (Figure 8) may be one exception to this rule, possibly

because it is from the culturally-distinct Puuc region (Closs 1983). But in my research, I found little information about the relative stability of the dynasty.

Certainly it is thematically distinct; the child is seated, alone, and engaged in hand gestures, but there is no obvious action or ritual activity. The child is apparently male, so this does not meet definition B of my definition of unstable dynasties. That the panel is meant to engage with other panels showing his mother and father (Houston 2018) suggests he grew up with a father, and thus does not meet definition A of my requirements. However, I am unaware of whether the father was the original heir to the Xcalumkin throne. An investigation into the relative stability of the Xcalumkin dynasty could produce fruitful results.

Though not always effective, political manipulation of youth was a tool of Classic leaders. Like the belief that images of rulers spread their essence over space, rulers could also use imagery to project in time . . . or at least remind their subjects that they were witness to essential events when they were children. Unfortunately, the encroaching instability of the Terminal Classic proved too much for even master propagandists.

APPENDIX SECTION

FIGURES

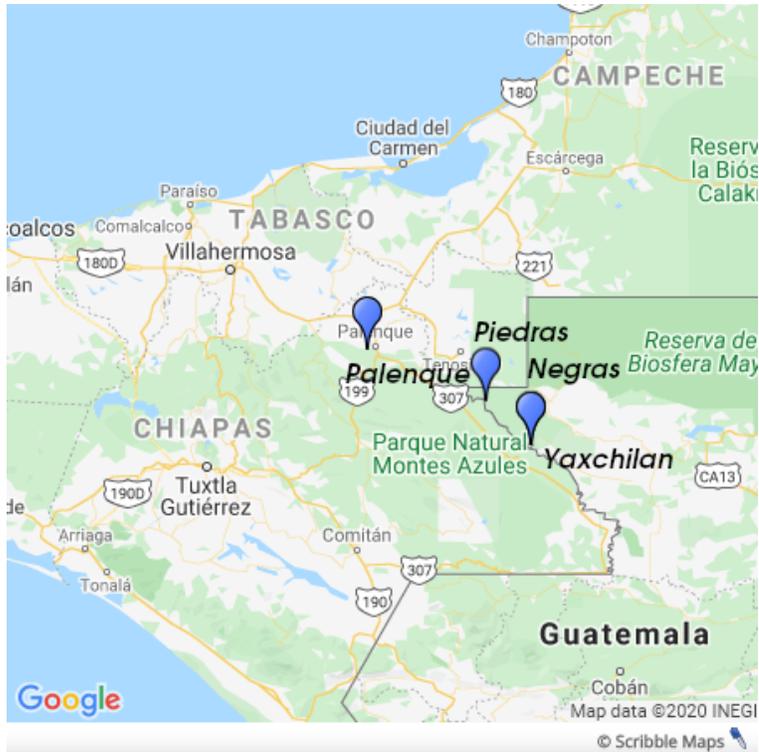


Figure 1: A map of southern Mexico and northern Guatemala highlighting the three sites mentioned in this thesis.



Figure 2: A dwarf in front of a ruler. Detail of Kerr 532.

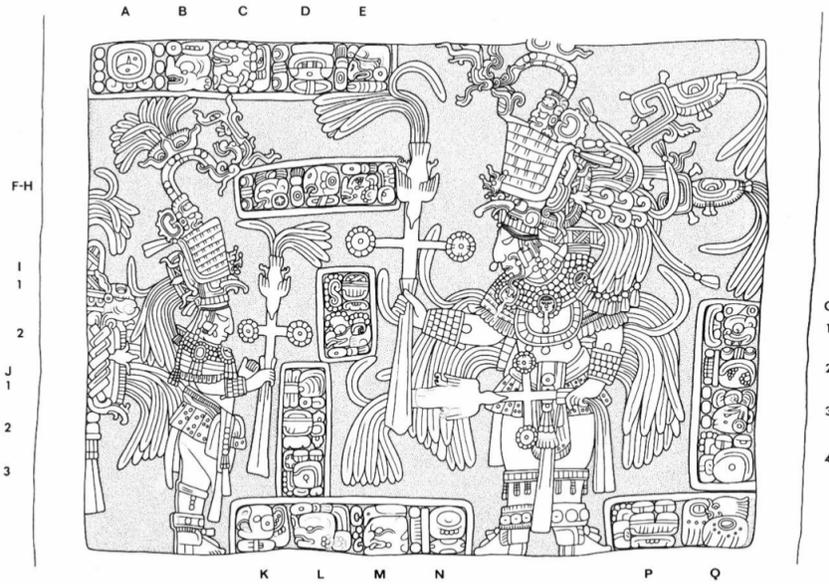


Figure 3: Yaxchilan Lintel 2. Drawing by Ian Graham.

Piedras Negras, Stela 3, Back
 Copyright 2000 John Montgomery

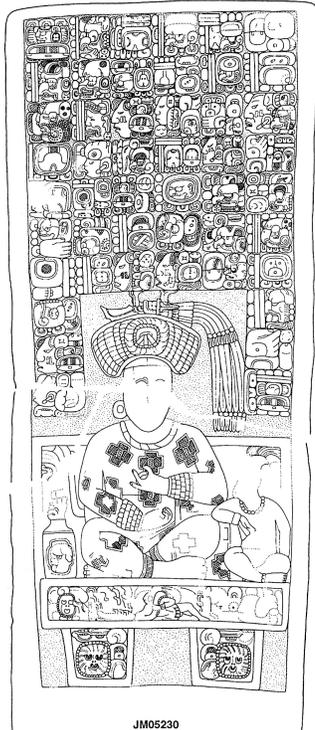


Figure 4: Piedras Negras Stela 3 Back. Drawing by John Montgomery.

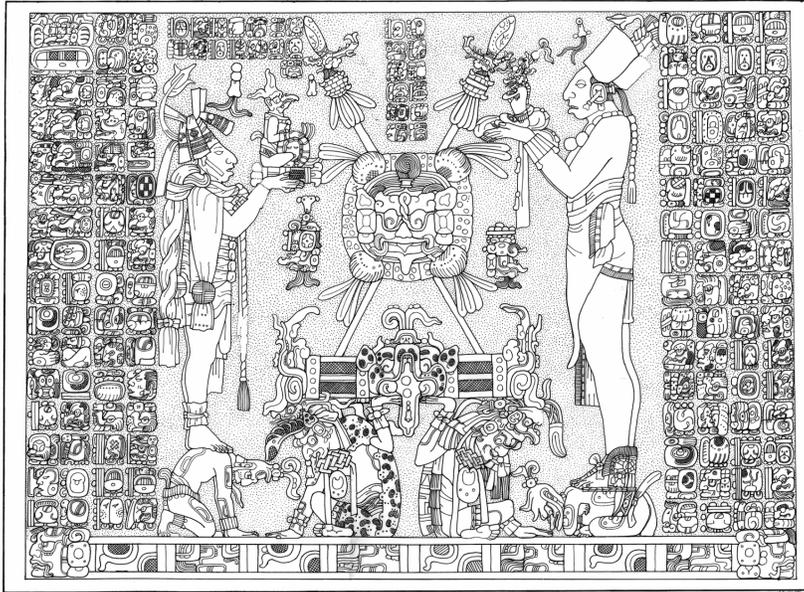


Figure 5: Temple of the Sun tablet. Drawing by Linda Schele.

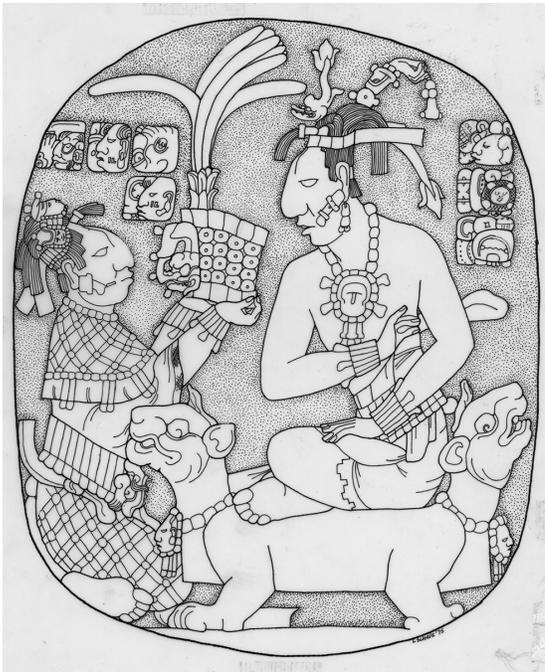


Figure 6: Oval Palace Tablet. Drawing by Linda Schele.



Figure 7: Detail of *ub'aah* phrase from Lintel 2. Drawing by Ian Graham.

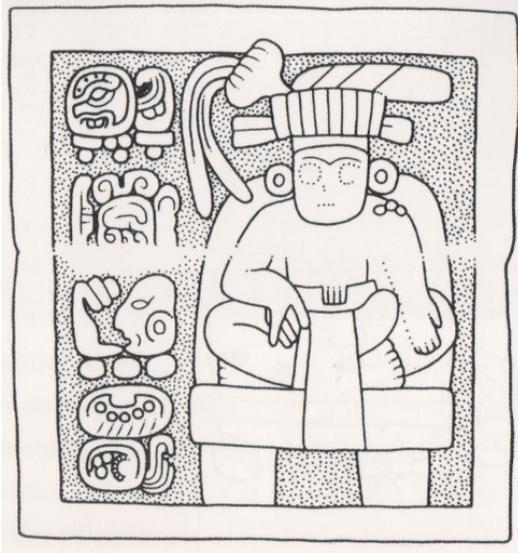


Figure 8: Panel 7 from Xcalumkin. From Houston (2018).



Figure 9: Comparison of Ages in Maya art: Infant (Maize God, K7912), Toddler (Ix Ju'ntan Ahk, by John Montgomery), Child (left) and Teenager or Young Adult (right, Lintel 3, drawing by Linda Schele)

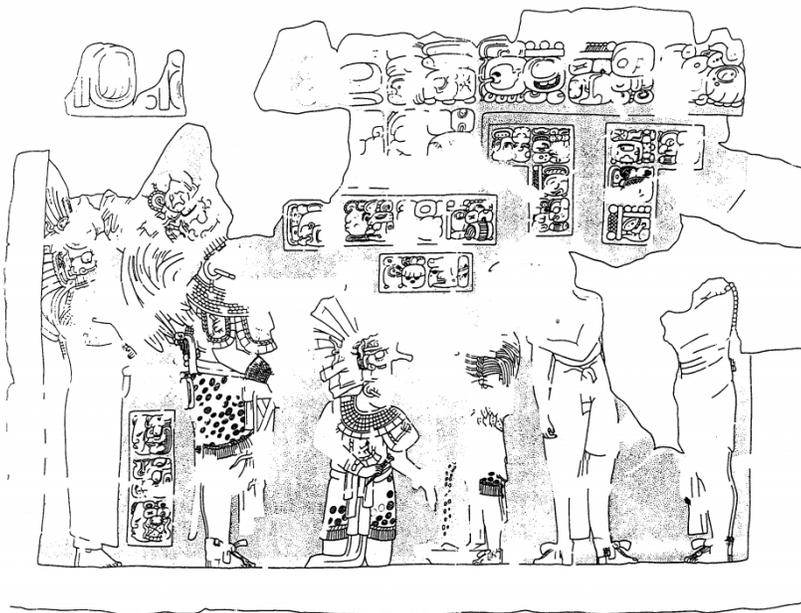


Figure 10: Dos Pilas Panel 19. Drawing by David Stuart and Steven Houston.

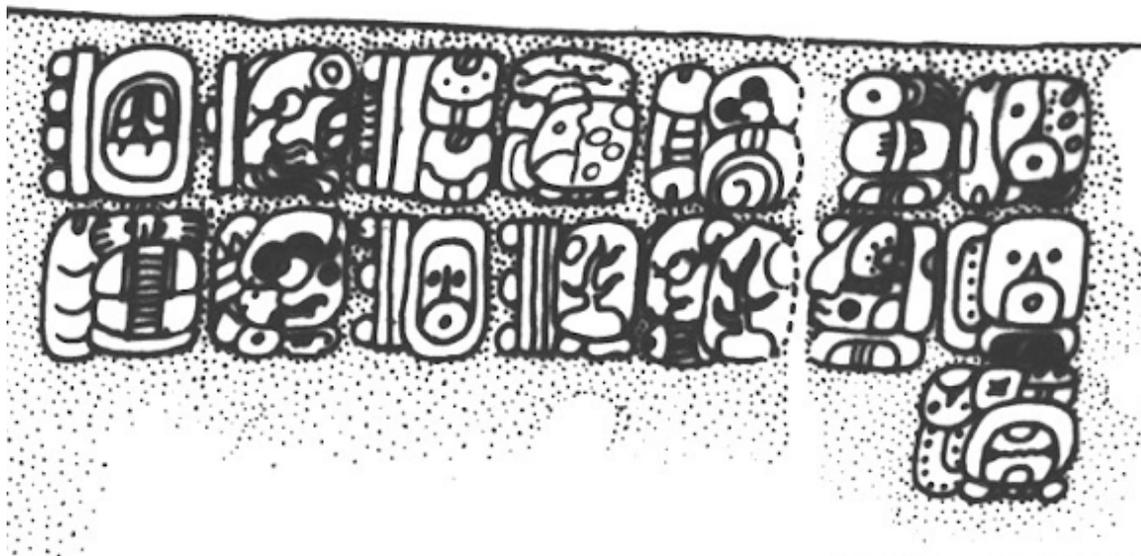


Figure 11: Secondary inscription from the Temple of the Sun tablet. Drawing by Linda Schele.

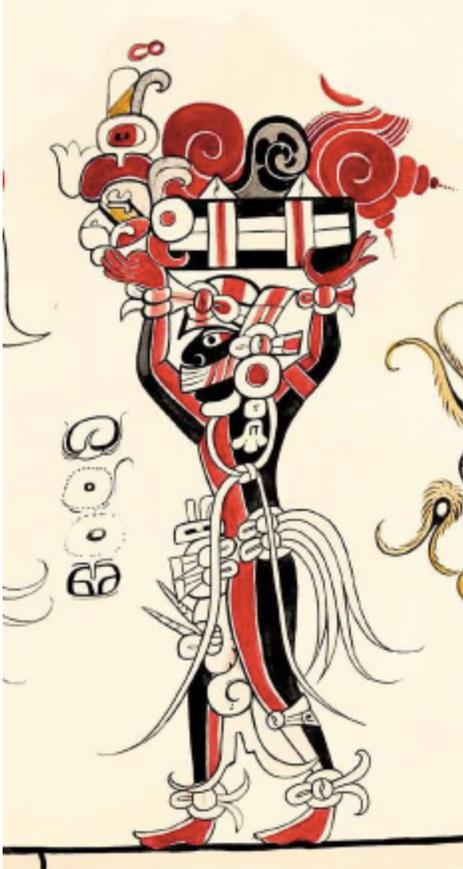


Figure 12: Detail of San Bartolo mural. Probable name glyph of a lord carrying an offering. Drawing by Heather Hurst.

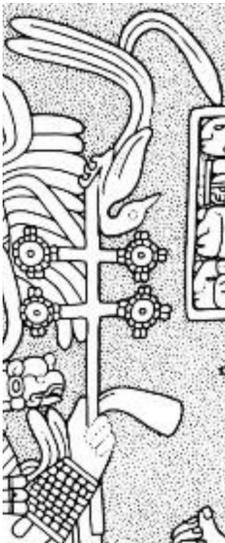


Figure 13: Detail of staff on Lintel 5. Drawing by Ian Graham.



Figure 14: Detail of preposition and dance name on Lintel 2 (**ti-xu[ku]-pi**). Drawing by Ian Graham.



Figure 15: *Momotetes momota*, a bird of the Momotidae family, known in Mexico and Central America as guardabarranco or barranquero. Image from YouTube, user Robinson Semilla Estelar.

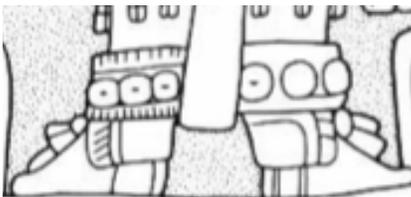


Figure 16: Close-up of possible star symbols on Yaxuun B'ahlam's anklets. Drawing by Ian Graham.



Figure 17: Detail of flower with breath or speech scrolls on Yaxuun B'ahlam's headdress.

Drawing by Ian Graham.



Figure 18: Collar from Cacaxtla murals. Photo by Ricardo Alvarado 2010.

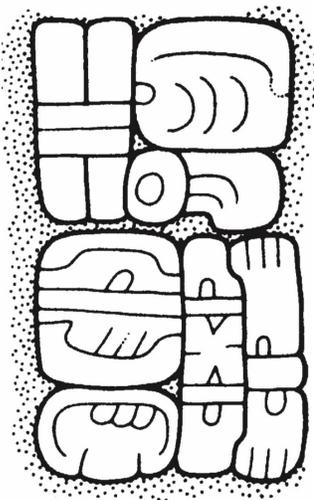


Figure 19: Detail of Lintel 52, Kokaaj B'ahlam's pre-accession name. Current reading *Chelew Chan K'inich* (Zender, Beliaev, and Davletshin 2016). Drawing by Ian Graham.

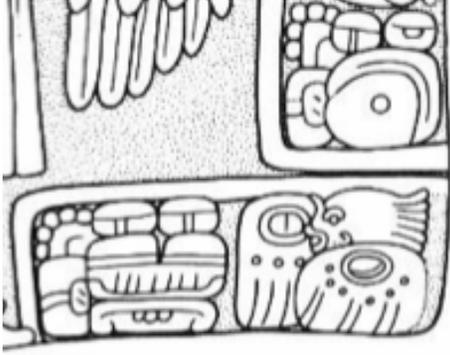


Figure 20: Detail of titles of Yaxuun B'ahlam on Lintel 2. Drawing by Ian Graham.

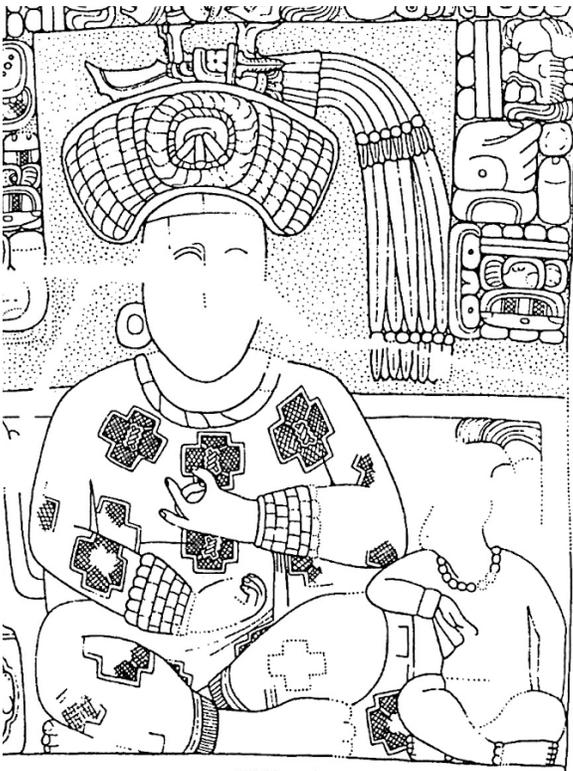


Figure 21: Detail of mother and daughter on Stela 3. Drawing by John Montgomery.

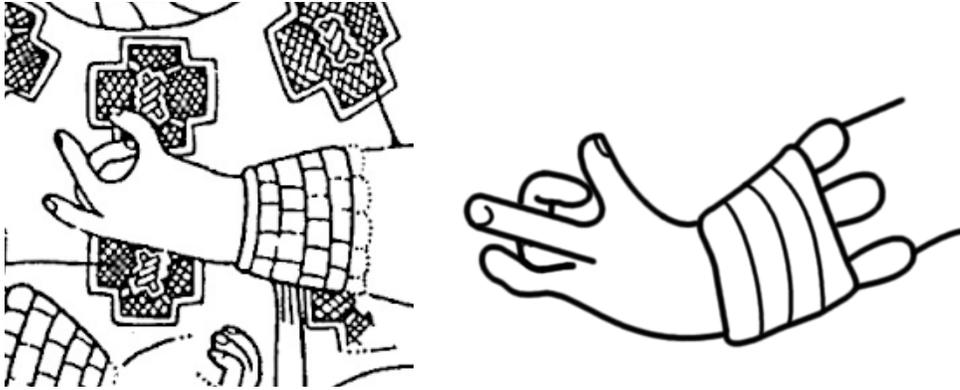


Figure 22: Hand gesture on Stela 3 (left) compared with the hand gesture of the Moon Goddess on Copan skyband (right). Stela 3 drawing by John Montgomery; skyband drawing by author from a photo by Güenther Eichhorn.

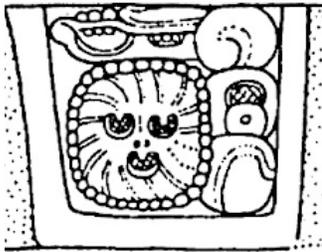


Figure 23: Detail of glyph on leg of throne of Stela 3. Drawing by John Montgomery.

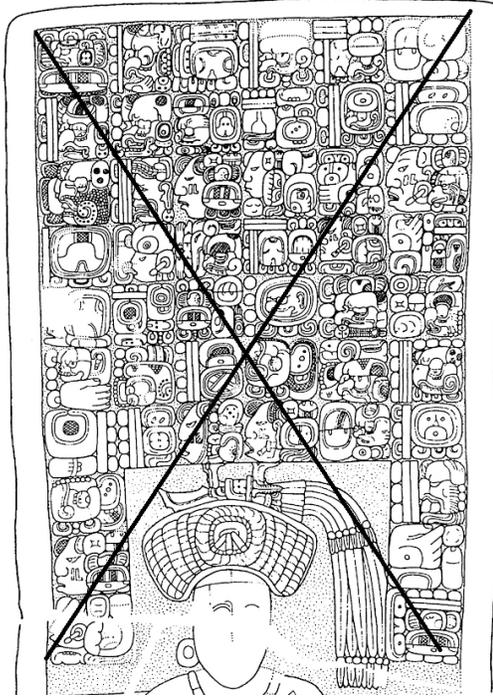


Figure 24: Lines marking the center point of the glyphs on Stela 3. Drawing by John Montgomery; lines addition of the author.



Figure 25: Detail of Ix Jun'tan Ahk's name and title glyphs and the portion of Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw's headdress which points to them. Drawing by John Montgomery.

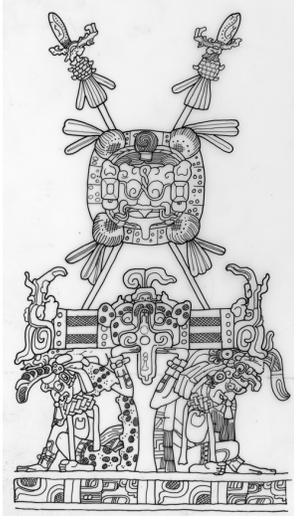


Figure 26: The war stack on the Temple of the Sun tablet. Drawing by Linda Schele.

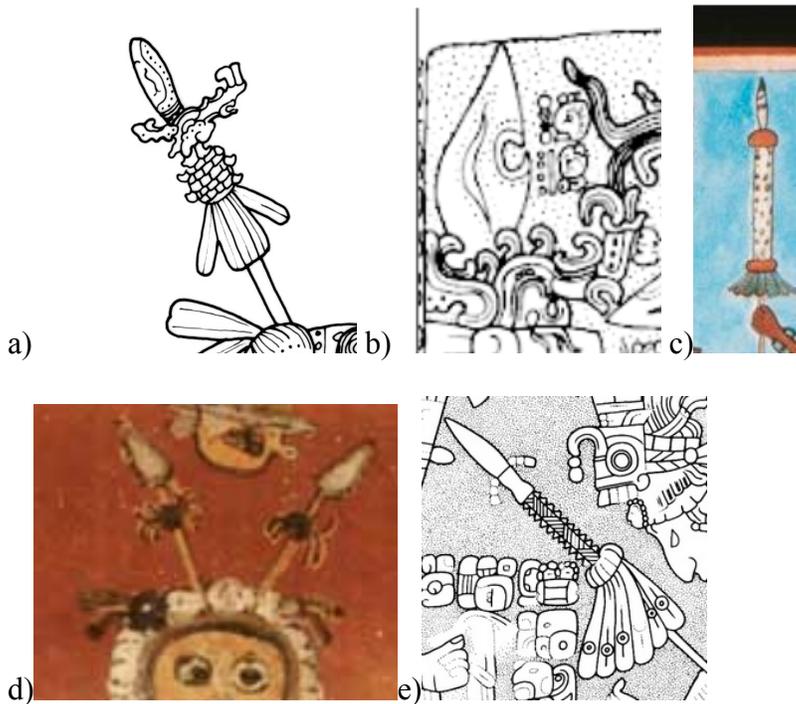


Figure 27: A comparison of spear heads. a) Temple of the Sun Tablet (Linda Schele), b) unprovenanced stela from Usumacinta region (Christian Praeger), c) spear of Bonampak leader (Mary Miller), d) spears from a war stack (K1116), e) Lintel 2 (Ian Graham)



Figure 28: The flowering stalk from Pakal's headdress on the Oval Palace Tablet. Taken from Wagner 2017.

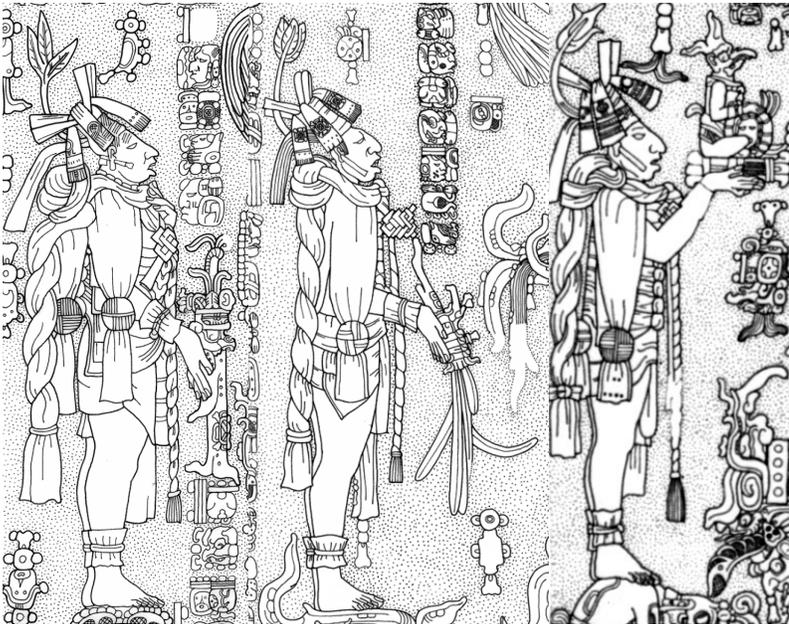


Figure 29: Three positions of Kan B'ahlam's hands: Temple of the Cross, Temple of the Foliated Cross (image reversed for comparison), Temple of the Sun. By Linda Schele.



Figure 30: A stilt dancer leads a group of musicians from a cave to a royal throne. K8947.

TABLES

Table 1: Important events in Kokaaj B'ahlam's childhood.

| Long Count | Day Sign | Month Sign | Gregorian (GMT) | Location | Event |
|-------------|------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 9.16.0.14.5 | 1 Chikchan | 13 Pop | February 16, 752 AD | YAX Lintel 13 | Birth |
| 9.16.6.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 3 Sotz' | April 5 757 AD | YAX Lintel 2 | Xukpi dance |
| 9.16.15.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 18 Pop | February 17, 766 AD | YAX Lintel 52 | K'awiil rite |

Table 2: Dates on rear of Piedras Negras Stela 3.

| Long Count | Day Sign | Month Sign | Lord of the Night | Gregorian (GMT) | Event |
|---------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|
| 9.12.2.0.16 | 5 Kib' | 14 Yaxk'in | G7 | 5 July 674 AD | Birth of Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw |
| 9.12.14.10.16 | 1 Kib' | 14 K'ank'in | G9 | 19 November 686 AD | Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw's presentation for marriage |
| 9.13.16.4.6 | 4 Kimi | 14 Wo | G5 | 19 March 708 AD | Birth of Ix Ju'ntahn Ahk |
| 9.13.19.13.1 | 11 Imix | 14 Yax | G9 | 26 August 711 AD | Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw took the throne |
| 9.14.0.0.0 | 6 Ajaw | 13 Muwan | G9 | 3 December 711 AD | K'atun celebration |

Table 3: Dates associated with K'inich Kan B'ahlam's coming-of-age from the Temple of the Sun tablet.

| Long Count | Day Sign | Month Sign | Lord of the Night | Gregorian (GMT) | Event |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 9.10.8.9.3 | 9 Ak'bal | 6 Xul | G3 | 15 June 641 AD | Le'm? nah? ti ok' te (stilt dance?) |
| 9.10.8.9.8 | 1 Lamat | 11 Xul | G8 | 20 June 641 AD | Event referenced by distance number in main text |
| 9.10.10.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 18 K'ank'in | G9 | 1 December 642 AD | Descent of the youths |

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