VOICES OF THE PAST: EPIGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF THE DOLORES-

POPTUN CORRIDOR

by

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DEDICATION

TO MY FAMILY AND MY MOTHER

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I. INTRODUCTION

Being one of the four sub-fields in anthropological studies, archaeology attempts to explore humanity by utilizing comparative research to recognize similarities among societies throughout time and place. Yet to identify these similarities, one must attain an intimate knowledge of those societies. While archaeology produces a large amount of information from cultural material, many explanations are often muddled by multiple interpretations. However, if written texts are present, such as is the case with the ancient Maya, material culture need no longer be interpreted without context but based on the emic perspectives of those who produced them.

For the Maya world, epigraphic studies do more than examine hieroglyphic structure and production. Maya inscriptions tell us about aspects of ancient Maya culture, illustrating a complex and dynamic world by describing social, political, and cultural relationships that otherwise would be missing from traditional archaeological interpretations. Hieroglyphic inscriptions reveal information about political events such as war, the foundation of new kingdoms, the relocation of capitals, and of royal marriages and accensions. These written texts contain the emic perspectives of Maya life, written by scribes and in close association with the ruling class. However, when epigraphy is coupled with art historical studies, the recognition of distinctive regional artistic and scribal traditions becomes possible, mirroring methods of the identification for pottery styles and monumental artistic traditions. Regionally distinctive styles or themes may have developed locally or be introduced by surrounding territories but have always done so in the context of interactions among scribes and courts. Thus, the identification of

Maya regions that possess shared artistic and textual styles is of critical value when attempting to understand the Classic Maya political spheres.

One such region holding these shared elements, identified by Phil Wanyerka, is in the Southern Maya Mountains of Southern Belize. Wanyerka investigated Maya political spheres of the area by utilizing hieroglyphic inscriptions to provide a "bottom-up perspective", resting on the accounts of minor polities rather than from a "superordinate perspective" (Wanyerka 2009:21). In doing so, Wanyerka revealed that the southern Maya Mountain region is "laced with numerous instances of unusual syntax, unique spelling and unique grammatical conventions" (Wanyerka 2009:21). These elements seem to combine Classic Yucatecan and Ch'olan languages. Wanyerka's examination indicates that the peoples of the Southern Maya Mountains practiced lexical borrowing, which appears in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the region. Wanyerka states that "it is vital to examine the lexicon and verbal morphology of these Maya texts since they contain diagnostic features of language differences" (Wanyerka 2009:21). Matsumoto's analysis of epigraphic texts and identification of sculptural style offered insight to the history of the Sak Tz'i' kingdom, fleshing out political interaction spheres and regional chronology.

The process of analyzing artistic composition and textual styles to add clarity to political histories appears in work by Mallory Matsumoto and colleagues (Matsumoto et al. 2021). Matsumoto and fellow collaborators examine stylistic and epigraphic features of 58 stone monuments from the site of Lacanja Tzeltal, Chiapas Mexico, capital of the Maya kingdom of Sak Tz'i' (Golden et al. 2021). In doing so, Matsumoto and her associates attempt to identify elements of cultural autonomy and clarify spheres of

political interaction for the kingdom of Sak Tz'i. From this, Matsumoto et al. (2021) reveal a distinctive sculptural tradition for the Sak Tz'i' kingdom, manifesting in three forms of stone monuments: column stelae, "squat" columns and a central ballcourt marker. Additionally, they explore the glyphic texts of Lacanja Tzeltal and neighboring polities to pinpoint local and external glyphic traditions. Matsumoto et al.'s research reveals that while the kingdom of Sak Tz'i' experienced influence by the greater polities such as Piedras Negras or Palenque, it still managed to retain its unique sculptural and scribal traditions (Matsumoto et al. 2021)

Moreover, the works of Matsumoto and Wanyerka provided a framework that this thesis wishes to follow, in hopes of revealing the cultural and political nuances of the Dolores region through epigraphic, iconographic, and archaeological elements.

Within the southeastern area of Petén (Guatemala), remnants of ancient Maya political centers lay scattered across the low range of the western Maya Mountains, settled among the waterways of the Mopan, Xa'an, and Sacul rivers. The ancient sites of Ixtonton, Ixtutz, Ixkun, Sacul and Naj Tunich share the region with the modern towns of Poptun and Dolores (Carter 2016). Like more renowned polities, locations in the Dolores region hold intricate archaeological and epigraphic histories told on the monumental sculptures that exhibit both distinctive local material and ritual culture as well as indications of outside influence during temporal periods. These descriptions of the social and political atmosphere need acknowledgment and exploration.

In this study, I will focus my attention on the Dolores region of southeast Petén, which is rich in archaeological material and monumental styles, yet contains no local tradition of painted polychrome ceramics (Tokovinine 2013). While the Dolores region

holds distinctive archaeological characteristics in terms of its ceramics and ritual architecture, recent epigraphic work describes a complex network of political, cultural, and social interactions. Were the scribal traditions of the Dolores region influenced by interactions with distant polities? Did the Dolores region possess a distinctive scribal community? Or was the scribal community in Dolores simply mirroring scribal practices and traditions from other regions of the Maya world? These are the very questions that I wish to address in this thesis.

II. LANDSCAPES

The physical world in which we live in shapes and frames our social world by influencing the way we see reality. It is for this reason, that one must become familiar with the landscape of the Dolores region physically and linguistically. By acknowledging these landscapes, we can orient ourselves spatially and begin our examination of the scribal traditions of the region with a solid foundation.

Physical Landscape

The northern most department of Guatemala, Petén contains 6,000 square kilometers of land, consisting of "limestone folds that run east to west" that reach elevations of three hundred meters above sea level (Schwartz 1990). Near the center of the region lies Lake Petén Itzá which measures 34 kilometers long and five kilometers wide. In addition, the modern city of Flores, the region's capitol, is located on an island on the lake. Heading south, the landscape transforms from ridges to savannah grasslands, consisting of scrubby trees and low hills beginning around 12 kilometers from Lake Petén Itzá. Within this region also lie the modern townships of San Francisco, La Libertad, and Santa Ana. The region to the north of Lake Petén consists of steep ridges which then lead into the bush plains of the Yucatan. Towards the southeast corner of Petén, the landscape shifts as the Maya Mountains begin to form, creating valleys and plateaus that hold the towns of Dolores and Poptún. When looking to the composition of the Maya Mountains, they consist of "metamorphosed late Carboniferous to middle Permian period volcanic-sedimentary rocks over layering Silurian period granite" (Andireani and Gloaguen 2016; Bateson and Hall 1977; Kesler et al., 1974; Steiner and Walker 1996). To the west, the Usumacinta River flows through the Petén into the country of Mexico, acting as drainage

for the western territories, whereas the Mopan River marks the drainage boundary to the east crossing the borders of Guatemala and Belize. Originating in the Maya Mountains, the Mopan River drains water from the central regions, flowing into the eastern swamplands. In the northeastern expanses, the rivers of the Ixcan and the Azul channel water into the greater Hondo River where it terminates at Chetumal Bay. The climate of the area consists of dry and wet seasons possessing a semi-tropical climate in the north while the southern region holds a tropical environment. However, the yearly average temperature ranges from 25-30 degrees Celsius (Schwartz 1990). Precipitation within Petén is variable, with rain fall fluctuating throughout the territory as northern zones hold drier climate. Yet, areas of southern Petén may see rainfall ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 mm per year (Schwartz 1990). The ecology of Petén consists of a large spectrum of flora, with semideciduous trees to the north, tropical evergreens to the south and pine towards the southeast (Schwartz 1990; Lamb 1966). The forests of Petén create a more than suitable environment for an array of wildlife, including deer, peccary, and rabbit. However, the area is not without its dangers in that several varieties of poisonous snakes inhabit different environmental territories (Schwartz 1990).

Linguistic Landscape

The Mayan language family consists of multiple language communities, spoken by around six million people living in the countries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico (Bennett et al 2016). However, the journey into the formation of the Maya linguistic landscape begins with the reconstruction of a theoretical "mother language" or protolanguage. By examining the linguistic elements of two language groups, such as structure of lexemes and morphemes or its function and modality, the creation of a

protolanguage is possible. This allows for the recognition of language communities and their characterization into related sub-groups (Zywilzynski 2017). When looking to the Maya, scholars such as Bruce Dahlin suggest that a Proto-Mayan language existed around 2500 B.C., spoken in the areas of Santa Eulalia and San Juan Chixoy, located in the Sonoma highlands of Guatemala. However, Proto-Mayan was not the only linguistic community present in the area at the time, as the Mixe-Zoquean language group occupied the areas of Veracruz and Chiapas, Mexico (Dahlin 1987; Kaufman 1976). By the year 2100 B.C., the first divergence from Proto-Mayan occurred, forming the Huastecan linguistic group which settled in northern Veracruz. From this, Proto-Mayan split into four subgroups. he Mamean and K'ichee'an linguistic communities, located in the Guatemalan highlands. In the west the languages of Ch'olan, Tzeltalan, and Q'anjob'alan occur in the areas of the Usumacinta River, the Chiapas highlands, and the Grijalva River (Figures 1, 2). The creation of the Yucatecan language group appears to have formed around 2000 B.C., primarily in the Yucatan peninsula. The Yucatecan language family consists of languages such as Lacandon, Itzaaj, and Mopan. However, when looking to the Petén region, two of these languages are used. The first, located around Lake Petén, is Iztaaj Mayan whereas the second occupies the regions of Dolores and southern Belize, known as Mopan Mayan (Dahlin 1987).

Political Landscape

Political relationships among the Maya resemble a web of interactions, containing major events of alliances, war, and ascensions to the throne. These relationships are critical for understanding the influence of political power as it manifests in scribal traditions, monumental art, and iconographic style. In examining Dolores' political

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landscape and spheres of interactions, any influences on its scribal and iconographic traditions may easily appear.

Late Preclassic 300 B.C.-250 A.D.

During the late Preclassic era of Maya history, the area of Dolores shows indications of a small if not sparse population at sites including Ixtonton, Ixtutz, and Sacul (Chocon 2009; Laporte et al. 1992; 1994). Further indications of the region's occupation appear in Ixkun, where archaeology reveals ritualistic activity performed in a cave located near at the site (Laporte et al 1994). Additional evidence to the occupation of the Dolores region appears as hieroglyphic text during the Late Preclassic. Written on Stela P from Pusilha, the text describes the accession the first lord of the Ho'kab' kingdom, based in Classic times at Ixtonton and Ixtutz, in the year A.D. 81 (Prager 2013).

Early Classic 250-600 A.D.

Evidence for the occupation of the Dolores region continues through the Early Classic period, appearing in the form of ceramic vessels revealed at Sacul, dating back to the sixth century. However, the presence of Late Preclassic-style ceramics during this period complicates models of occupation, alluding that the area of Dolores experienced a period of depopulation. Yet, Laporte suggests that the region was not depopulated, but that potters continued to produce Late Pre-classic styles (Carter 2016; Laporte 1995; Laporte and Mejia 2006). Even though signs of occupation existed, the scarcity of monumental structures alludes to the population size of Dolores, suggesting a lack of growth for most of the region. Nevertheless, Ixkun continued to hold its ritualistic importance as a site of pilgrimage (Carter 2016).

Late Classic 600-900 A.D.

The transition from the Early to Late Classic represents a period of growth as well as intensified interaction with not only neighboring polities, but also within the greater Maya political complex. Settlements such as Ixkun, Ixtonon, Ixtutz, and Sacul experienced a period of growth, manifesting as an increase in monumental construction. Additionally, interactions with other major polities such as Naranjo are present, appearing in the ceramic styles of vessels recovered from Ixkun as well as Sacul (Laporte et al. 1994). However, Naranjo's influence in Dolores exceeds the presence of ceramic tradition. Epigraphic records describe the complex relations that develop during the Late Classic era throughout the Maya world which incorporated the Dolores Region. During the middle of the Late Classic, the powerful kingdom of Kaanul, located in the modern Mexican state of Campeche, held enormous influence over several kingdoms, including Naranjo and Caracol, both of which maintained a political relationship with Dolores. Yet, in the year 680 A.D., war erupted among the two sister sites resulting in the fall of Naranjo. Following Naranjo's defeat, the site of Dos Pilas, an ally of Calakmul, supplied a new Queen to oversee the polity by the name of Ix Wax Chan Lem Ajaw in the year 682 A. D. (Martin and Grube 2008). Queen Ix Wak Chan Lem Ajaw led a series of battles known as the "land-ordering" through the hand of her son, resulting in the capture and removal of the king of Ucanal in 702 A.D. and the placement of a new vassal king, Itzamnaaj Bahlam II (Carter 2016).

In the year 744 A.D., Naranjo fell to Tikal, creating a rift in the influence Naranjo held over Ucanal and the Dolores region. Shortly after, the ruler of Ucanal, Itzamnaaj Bahlam II, found himself no longer a vassal lord and claimed independence from

Naranjo. As a result, he became Itzamnaaj Bahlam II overlord of the Dolores region, controlling major trade routes and enforcing his influence by placing a vassal ruler by the name of K'iyel Janab at Sacul by the year 760 A.D. (Carter 2016; Morales and Laporte 1995). The relationship between Ucanal and Sacul soon took a turn, as the alliance among the two polities collapsed. In the year 779 A.D., K'iyel Janab claimed Sacul as independent and attempted to control the trade routes possessed by Ucanal. Furthermore, in an effort to solidify political power and influence of the area, K'iyel Janab placed a vassal lord in Ixkun. By doing so, K'iyel Janab created Ixkun as a subordinate kingdom which corresponds to the creation of major architecture within the site (Carter 2016).

Hieroglyphic texts written on Stelae 2 and 12 of Ixkun illustrate the results that followed, as struggle for control over the region appears as four sequential events. The first event describes the accension of a ruler named Yukuul Chan Ahk' and his "settling in Ixkun" in the year 779 A.D. Following Yukuul Chan Ahk's coronation, a series of attacks between three polities occurred. The first attack was by Ucanal against Sacul. The Sacul retaliated the next day with a raid on an unknown site and followed up with attacks on Ucanal and Ho'kab' (Carter 2016; Carter and Santini 2019).

While the history of the Dolores region presents a narrative that highlights rights of kingship and precarious political relationships, the site of Naj Tunich provides an interesting facet of Maya political interaction and alliances. Glyphic texts painted on the cave walls of Naj Tunich describe the location as a site of pilgrimage for local polities near the site and for places located beyond the expanses of Dolores. Evidence of pilgrimages from the cities of Sacul, Ixtutz, Ixtonton to Naj Tunich appear on cave walls, starting in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. (Figure 1). Other kingdoms that visited the caves

include Caracol, Ucanal, and the powerful kingdom of Calakmul (Carter 2016; Carter and MacLeod 2021; Tokovinine 2013; Tsukamoto and Esparza Olguin 2016). These events at Naj Tunich emphasize its importance as a ritual site as well as providing evidence for amicable relationships between the kingdoms of the Maya world (Figure 3). The cave of Naj Tunich was not without governance, as glyphic texts from the area describe a kingdom named Baax Tuun whose capital may have been located next to the cave. Drawing 29 from Naj Tunich mentions individuals from Baax Tuun hosting two elite youths from the kingdom of Sak Muk, which is located near Chetumal Bay and share alliances with the Caracol and Kanuul kingdoms (Carter and Macleod 2021).

III. PAST EXPLORATIONS

Initial archaeological work within the Dolores region of Petén began with the documentation of Ixkun, performed by Colonel Modesto Mendez, who exposed the site during the mid-1800s. Following Mendoza's discovery of Ixkun in 1887, Alfred Percival Maudslay, in his seminal work *Biologia Centrali-Americana,* provided a detailed account of the monumental structures of Ixkun. Furthermore, Maudslay's efforts created a site map of the polity's primary center, as well as documenting Stela 1 by utilizing photography and molding (Matsumoto and Carter 2020; Maudslay 1889–1902).

During the 1950's, continued endeavors conducted by Tatiana Proskouriakoff examined Classic Maya stelae in the effort to create an improved and more precise definition of Classic Maya stylistic traditions. Proskouriakoff's comparative work, *A study of Classic Maya Sculpture,* examines themes, motifs, and subjects in the attempt to detect variations of Classic Maya style. Proskouriakoff's endeavors added clarity to Maya chronology and revealed changes in the progression of style in Classic Maya stelae (Proskouriakoff 1950).

In the mid twentieth century, Edwin Shook and Robert Elliot Smith attempted to document the sites of Poptún, Los Cimientos, Hortaliza, Sabanita, and Petensuc, located in the Poptún Valley, before Poptún, a logging community and military outpost overran them (Anderson 2020). Smith and Shook (1950), with support of the Carnegie Institution and Instituto de Antropología e Historia, directed by Adolfo Molina, explored the sites surrounding Poptún, mapping architectural structures and documenting ceramic styles and traditions. As a result, Shook and Smith identified the sites as places of civic and religious importance to the area (Shook and Smith 1950).

Also in the mid twentieth century, Merle Greene Robertson, provided documentation and examinations of Ixtutz, producing site maps, detailed descriptions of 6 stelae, and their initial iconographic analysis (Robertson 1972). Additionally, her work "Monument Thievery in Mesoamerica" speaks to the still relevant issue of looting and defacing of monumental structures, as well as drawing attention to the possible complications that arise from tourism (Robertson 1972b).

In 1975, work by archaeologist Ian Graham provided the opportunity to explore the glyphic texts of the region by creating the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions. With funding from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and support from the Peabody Museum, Graham wished to gather a collection of glyphic texts from throughout the Maya world. Additionally, Graham sought to create uniformity in monumental to aid in further epigraphic studies. Guided by the principles of accuracy, clarity and comprehensiveness, Graham characterized the corpora of the Maya world into five regions: the Yucatan, Central Lowlands, Chiapas and Usumacinta River, Highland and Pacific, and the Lower Motagua Drainage. However, Graham's work did not include all texts in the formation of the corpus as codices and pottery vessels were not used. Graham attempted to present his information without interpretations when capturing not only glyphic expressions but the representational art that accompanies it, only speaking to its physical attributes and characteristics (Graham 1975).

One of the largest contributions to the exploration of the Petén region comes from the efforts of the Atlas Arqueológico de Guatemala. Originating as a novel concept in the 1986 First Meeting of the Permeant Seminar on Bilateral Studies between Mexico and Guatemala, Atlas Arqueológico de Guatemala expressed concerns over national borders,

looting of archaeological sites and the preservation of cultural heritage. Under the direction of Juan Pedro Laporte Molina and Juan Antonio Valdez Gomez, the Atlas Arqueológico sought to provide adequate protection of pre-Hispanic remains as well as the creation of maps illustrating political borders of archaeological sites throughout Petén. Guided by a three-step process of documentation research, field reconnaissance and laboratory, and office and dissemination, the Atlas Arqueológico began its exploration with reconnaissance in the areas of the Dolores, Xa'an, Sacul, Ixkun, and Mopan Valleys, identifying thirty archaeological sites by 1992. Additionally, a parallel study of the area centering on the polity of Ixtonton sought to examine the social-political and architectural progression of the Dolores region. The unwavering efforts of the Atlas Arqueológico ultimately documented up to 400 pre-Hispanic sites throughout the country of Guatemala by utilizing a myriad of methods including ceramic and lithic analysis. Moreover, the projects performed by Atlas Arqueológico contributed to the preservation and the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage by promoting awareness through workshops, publications, and presentations (Corozo 2012).

Continued studies in the area performed by Juan Pedro Laporte, Héctor Mejía, and Phil Wanyerka yielded epigraphic data uncovered from monuments at Ixkun, Ixtutz, and Sacul (Laporte et al. 2006; Laporte et al. 2009). Additionally, Laporte revealed Ixkun's ceremonial importance as the site contains a hill, Cerro Sur, with a two-chamber, limestone cave. This cave contained large ceremonial deposits consisting of thirty fragmented vases, pieces of copal and burnt wood. The evidence of ceremonial deposits in Cerro Sur and the production of monumental architecture such as an E-group and plaza emphasize Ixkun's role as a center for ritual during the Late Preclassic (Laporte et al.

1994). Other contributions from Laporte and Alvarado attempt to identify and examine the presence of Late Preclassic populations within the southeastern region of Petén, by creating comprehensive ceramic chronologies and structural formations to explain possible fluctuations of Late Preclassic communities (Laporte 1998).

More recent work performed by Nicholas Carter added clarity to the complex political spheres shared between Sacul, Ixkun, and Ucanal. The monumental inscriptions at Ixkun and Sacul recount the primary "settling" of Ixkun in the late eighth century A.D. by Yukuul Chan Ahk,' under the supervision of a ruler of Sacul. Shortly after a conflict between the collaborative effort of Sacul and Ixkun against the political capital of Ucanal (Carter 2016). Carter's observations conducted on Stela 9 of Sacul indicated that Sacul took a captive from an undiscovered polity named K'ante' and fought a war with Ixtonton/Ixtutz (Carter and Santini 2019). Looking to the iconography of Stela 9, Carter identifies a close correlation to regional styles and motifs at Naranjo, which alludes to the possibility of interregional interactions, demonstrating the continued complexities of the political landscape (Carter 2019).

Looking to the polity of Ucanal, examinations performed by Christina T. Halperin (2020) identify the cosmopolitan traits of Ucanal's public art. Iconographic elements of clothing, weapons, and other motifs resembling central Mexican influences incorporated Maya styles, alluding to Ucanal adopting political, social, and cultural ideology from foreign powers such as Teotihuacan. Furthermore, Halperin states that during the Terminal Classic period, a foreign ruler present at Ucanal called Papmalil may have been from the Chontal area of the Gulf Coast. In addition, Halperin states that while Papmalil

hosted lords from Naranjo and Caracol at Ucanal, he does not claim the Ucanal emblem

glyph as his own (Halperin and Martin 2020; Thompson 1975).

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

<u>Linguistic framework</u>

The scribes of the Dolores region created works of art in the media of stone and ink, capturing the histories of royal lineages and the political triumphs of the ruling elite. However, their choices in scribal practices offer an additional level of insight, explaining social hierarchy and political representation. By utilizing sociolinguistic and epigraphic theories, we will be able to identify the Dolores region's unique linguistic and iconographic characteristics. Furthermore, we will be able to connect these characteristics to the formation of social stratification. Nevertheless, before we examine elements of status and taste, we must understand the concepts of status and taste.

To aid the effort in the contextualization of these elements, we find guidance through the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's observations highlight the connection between taste and social hierarchy through the medium of cultural capital. Cultural capital is a concept that defines and allows movement through the social hierarchy, or holds of an individual to their birthplace, operating on a set of social elements that accumulate over time, establishing and maintaining social equity. Bourdieu categorizes these elements within three states: embodied, objective, and institutionalized. The embodied state describes the social capital gained from the personification of personal skills (Throsby 1999). The objective state refers to objects and items characterized as valuable or as objects that define a higher social class. The institutionalized state describes cultural capital that centers on habitus, or one's role in a particular social setting (Richardson 1986). The roles that individuals adapt from their habitus may manifest in body or verbal behaviors, such as the way one would talk or act

in a particular situation. For example, one who assumes the role of a student develops

behavioral routines from this habitus, yet when the student assumes the habitus of a

parent, one's behavior may shift to fulfill the needs of that role. It is these actions that

create a person's mannerisms and activities. In addition to institutionalized, embodied,

and objective capital, the concept of social capital can manifest linguistically.

Linguistic capital holds parallels to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital,

however the acquisition of capital centers on the use of language and speech. Verbal

communication provides multiple veins of information, indicating social status, origin,

and education. This distinction of specific levels of social capital is a manifestation of

distinction resulting from linguistic interaction. Bourdieu explains, "language is worth

what those who speak it are worth, so too, at the level of interactions between individuals,

speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it."

(Bourdieu 1977 p.652). For example, one's vocabulary, tone of voice, or the use of

vernacular expressions such as slang may result in a lowering of social capital. However,

if an individual chooses to use academic or a more "tasteful" vocabulary, the greater the

social capital gained. It is these differences between using slang versus prestigious

language that can control the rise and fall of social capital. Yet, what is the concept of

taste and who determines what is tasteful?

Bourdieu's research expands further into taste and its influence in social

stratification and identity by conducting a study centering on musical particularities

between social classes. The results of Bourdieu's observations suggested that taste exists

in three categories or "zones." Legitimate taste represents individuals that possess a

higher level of social and educational capital, corresponding to low, middle, and higher

levels of social status. In this classification the highbrow represents the preference of the higher class where the middle brow taste represents the likings of the middle class. However, the popular taste is indicative of those that hold a low social or educational capital. From this, Bourdieu concludes that taste "functions as a sort of social orientation, a sense of one's place" guiding the occupants of a given place in social space towards their social positions adjusted to their properties (Bourdieu 1986:468-469). However, taste is not static as movement between levels of taste are possible. An individual may reflect the taste of a different level to obtain social capital through emulation of the legitimate taste.

From the studies conducted by Bourdieu, social stratification holds the ability to manifest through verbal exchange, allowing for the expression of tastes which are indicative of an individual's position in a given social framework. Further evidence for linguistic interactions as catalysts of social stratification, manifests in William Labov's (1965) work on linguistic markers of social status in New York City and their change over time. To do so, Labov documented the linguistic tendencies of salesclerks in three department stores from various economic areas ranging from high, middle, and low incomes. The study indicated that the pronunciation of "r" corresponds to the gain or loss of linguistic capital, resulting in an ascribed social status-based on linguistic exchange. Labov's findings suggests that the letter "r" within the New York speech community is a marker of social class, in that upper-class residents of New York City held a higher frequency in "r" pronunciation. On the other hand, the omission or shortening of the pronunciation of "r" is indicative of individuals from the middle or lower classes. In addition, Labov's observations revealed the fluidity of linguistic capital within social

interactions, in that salesclerks of the various department stores changed their initial pronunciation of "r" to accommodate the customer's responses (Labov 1965). This demonstrates that one may borrow linguistic prestige to resemble a higher social class and in doing so, one is able to gain social capital. Linguistic capital ebbs and flows in the context of interactions, allowing for minute movement through social frameworks. Bourdieu and Labov acknowledge the complexities that lie in the way we communicate and how social hierarchy manifests through linguistic choices and traditions.

To further understand the nuances of communication and social interaction, author John Gumperz attempted to deconstruct the dynamics of communication between groups and individuals. In doing so, Gumperz revealed that communication among groups generally consists of a method of exchange and a responsive reaction. The first is the ability to express a broad spectrum of abstract ideas and concepts though a communicational medium such as a verbal system or written communication. The second manifests as the social component of linguistic communication which creates behavioral norms and customs. An American social norm, such as shaking one's hand after a personal introduction, contain these two components, where the greeting represents the verbal component, and a handshake contains the social and behavioral expectations of a specific cultural group. John Gumperz labels this social component of linguistic exchange as a speech community, where a speech community consists of verbal signs operating under grammatical or social expectations. When we communicate verbally the response given contains a predetermined action dictated by social or cultural expectations. Gumperz continued by explaining that speech communities do not reside in a vacuum, allowing communities to combine social and verbal engagements creating "a diffusion of linguistic

behavior" known as a *sprachbund* (Gumperz 1968). In addition to linguistic diffusion between speech communities, social rules created by speech communities aid in identifying social status.

Iconographic Framework

While linguistic theory provides insight to the importance of scribal choices and the social implication that accompany it, additional layers of insight rest in the interpretation of iconographic elements on monumental and scribal works of art. However, to fully utilize iconographic sources, we must look to the theoretical framework of Edwin Panofsky.

The field of iconography looks to reveal the greater meaning of a work of art by distinguishing it from its structural elements to understand a deeper cultural meaning. Panofsky states the most basic understanding of form is simply the change in the subject's physical or visual composition, which manifest as patterns, shapes, and details he identifies as factual meaning. In addition to factual meaning, the subject possesses expressional meaning, or the underlying connotations of the work, reflecting concepts which describe the emotions and perceptions of an individual (Panofsky 1979). Panofsky clarifies that the amalgamation of factual and expressional meaning forms the initial step in the analyzation of iconography, which he refers to as the primary or natural meaning. However, Panofsky points out that the interpretation of imagery, acted out or illustrated, is subjective to the individual observing it, therefore requiring a secondary or conventional understanding of the form centered on the cultural and social contexts from which created it. The handshake, within a primary context, is a series of gestures that begin with the extension of an arm, grasping another individual's hand and shaking.

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Further aspects such as body proxemics and the duration of the action are methods to identify the primary context. The understanding that these gestures are equivocal to a greeting relies on the acquisition of knowledge based on the cultural circumstances of the gesture. Panofsky explains those additional pressures, such as social influences, education, and past or present traditions, condition individuals, shaping individuals' views of concepts and ideologies, thus creating a deeper intrinsic meaning. The elements used to create interpretations, such as motifs, stories, and images, are symbolic values in that these interpretations are "iconography in a deeper sense" (Panofsky 1975).

Panofsky explains that in iconographic interpretation, to reach and understand the intrinsic meaning of the subject, requires the acknowledgement of pre iconographic distinctions of motifs, lines, colors, and patterns. However, Panofsky cautions that the process of pre iconographic distinction carries a caveat, in that recognition of elements rests in the perception of the researchers as their practical experiences may affect descriptive interpretations. The expression of an individual's experience affects the history of style or their interpretation of an explanatory narrative. Panofsky states that from pre iconographic descriptions, the creation of iconographic analysis may occur. However, this process demands a deeper knowledge in cultural themes, which resides in stories recorded in literary or oral traditions (Panofsky 1979). For clarity, an individual looking at a Nativity scene would be able to identify primary elements and patterns such as a star, a man, a woman, and a newborn. However, this individual would not be able to understand the secondary context of what the narrative tableau is trying to illustrate without having a deeper sense of Christian traditions. Without the literary and oral traditions of the nativity, the interpretations of its form are reliant on the view of the

examiner and their interpretations. Missing the knowledge that the newborn is Jesus, the imagery can only represent a basic interpretation as a baby. However, the hurdle of biased interpretations is rectifiable with a firm foundation in subject knowledge, in that it steadies the course of analysis to center on reliable sources rather than arbitrary understandings. By referencing biblical sources, the imagery illustrated by a Nativity holds a greater context than looking only at primary meanings.

As a form of solidification and clarification, Panofsky describes the transitions of artistic paradigms from classic motifs to Christian ideals, highlighting its progression through the Renaissance era and the presence of intrinsic meaning. Panofsky states that classic motifs, which hold relations to old world "pagan" beliefs, soon experience a shift in their intrinsic meaning during the Christian era (Panofsky 1979). As Christian influence grew, it borrowed Classical motifs yet replaced its intrinsic meaning to reflect religious concepts, ideologies, and principles. Classical images representing motifs of such individuals as Atlas, Heracles, and various Greco-Roman deities, represented a deeper sense of the Hellenistic world. However, as political, and cultural environments change, motifs that once represented Classical cultural meaning transformed to represent Christian narrations. While the primary contexts of elements may be similar in form, the meaning of that work represents the perceptions of the current environment. Panofsky continues with an observation describing the unification of Classical motifs to classic themes during the renaissance era by utilizing a painting of Dürer representing the kidnapping of Europa by Zeus. Yet, Panofsky mentions that while there is a unification of themes and motifs the intrinsic meaning transformed, as the individuals creating the work are not familiar with the cultural understandings of the classic period, thus placing the

individual's perceptions and biases as the deeper meaning (Panofsky 1975). Panofsky's framework looks beyond the lines and the motifs to uncover and explore the deeper cultural significance that imagery possess by creating a guide to distill the intrinsic meanings. Additionally, Panofsky implies that primary contexts may change from one perception to another, disregarding any context from that of the previous culture. On the other hand, secondary contexts encompass perceptions of the individual and their cultural influences and social environment. The meaning of the work created by individuals contains a deeper significance, embodying the perceptions and close relationships unique to one's experience.

By drawing on Bourdieu's concept of linguistic capital, we can identify how the scribes of the Maya world used hieroglyphic and iconographic expression to gather social capital from peers and elite and move within the social strata. The practice of glyphic writing communicates cultural expectations and traditions regarding the style of how writing manifests; while somewhat standard, hieroglyphic orthography possess a spectrum of regional variance in its appearance and usage. While most hieroglyphic texts produced are in a Ch'olan language, specifically Classic Ch'olti'an, Classic Maya inscriptions may contain elements of other local languages. For example, the Chontal positional suffix -*wani* appeared first in otherwise Classic Ch'oltian inscriptions around Palenque, where an ancient form of Chontal was the vernacular language; later, the use of the -*wani* suffix appears to spread, manifesting in inscriptions from non Chontal speaking regions (Hruby and Child 2004). From this example, the dissemination of scribal traditions alludes to communications and relationships between elites of different polities.

Additionally, the writing customs of Maya scribes may reflect the struggle for

social status. Scribal communities compete with their peers to gather linguistic capital, producing inscriptions that represent the prestigious taste of the ruling class. Bourdieu's model of distinction suggests that the manipulation of style to mirror the legitimate taste would most certainly cater to the preferences and the desires of the elite. While prestigious taste varied from polity to polity, scribal choices would represent these local preferences of taste (Carter 2009). By reflecting the tastes of the elite through hieroglyphic expressions, Maya scribes acquired social capital. In addition, the act of emulating the prestigious taste supplements the influence of the elite. From this perspective, scribal traditions within the Dolores region would reflect the high taste of the elite in the areas of Sacul, Ixtonton, Ixtutz, Ikkun, and Naj Tunich. Therefore, any variation of glyphic expression that deviates from the classical Ch'orti' or Ch'olti'an grammatical structure may reflect the elite class of the Dolores region or allude to the outside influence of greater political power. On the other hand, orthographic composition that specifically used Classic Ch'olti'an could stress a local identity in contrast to foreign identities. Furthermore, the use of unusual signs or spellings within scribal choices would suggest the presence of a specific speech community for Dolores, operating under regional scribal traditions. When juxtaposed to Maya scribal practices, the modern-day scholar engages in similar relationships by way of taste. As academics, we use cultural capital achieved by institutionalized sources to gain social capital and the attention of our "aristocratic elite" and peers, using academic vernacular not typically used in the average population. In addition, by choosing to engage this prestigious language, the scholar reinforces and emulates taste defined by the elite.

When we look at the Maya through the lens of Gumperz, Maya scribal

communities appear analogous to speech communities, containing the two major components of communication and social reaction. The Maya scribal community expressed ideas and concepts using written language. When attention redirects to the social components of the Maya scribal communities, stylistic choices by the scribe reflects the social influences forcing that action. These glyphic choices would not only be for the royalty and the ruling class but others within the scribal community and scribal social hierarchy. However, not all glyphic choices result from social obligation. Variations within the glyphic corpus can manifest from personal stylistic choices within scribal communities.

Guided by Panofsky's principles, elements of hieroglyphic corpora such as lines and shape identify the factual meaning. Yet this is only the first point of analysis suggested by Panofsky. However, when factual elements accompany written narratives, recognition of motifs and style create an intrinsic meaning, allowing for us to investigate local or foreign influences in Maya political spheres. From this a deeper meaning or understanding of Maya society emerges, adding detail to historical narratives.

V. METHODOLOGY

The methods used in this thesis utilize previous explorations and works as a foundation in the comparative analysis of the inscriptions. This allows for clear recognition of epigraphical similarities and distinctions, identifying elements of orthography, style, and glyphic expression. In addition, previous iconographic studies serve as a foundation to distinguish similar artistic composition and influences. The process of comparative analysis first consisted of the accumulation of texts from in the region of Dolores and the surrounding area. From this, the meticulous examination of epigraphic and iconographical stylistic elements is possible. Additionally, the use of epigraphic records anchors artistic motifs in time and space, allowing for recognition of political influence and interaction spheres between polities.

Within this study, there are three possible findings. First, suppose no variations in the linguistic culture appear. In that case, the scribes of the Dolores region would have adhered to the standard Classic Maya scribal culture observed by large neighboring sites such as Caracol and Naranjo. Secondly, if there is variation in scribal choices, but no difference in linguistic practices from standard Classic Ch'olti'an, then that may indicate the emergence of a distinct local culture. Lastly, suppose that there is evidence of Yucatecan words and grammatical structures in the Dolores-area corpus. In that case, it could indicate that the relationship between the northern Yucatecan and Dolores included the migration of Yucatecan speakers, at least at the level of the literate elite, and their possible involvement within the region. On the other hand, the presence of Yucatecan orthography in Dolores may suggest a form of interaction or emulation.

VII. COLLECTIONS

Cartouches: Encapsulating the glyphs

On several monuments in the Dolores region, glyph blocks are grouped together within rounded cartouches. One example is Ixkun Stela 12. Laporte describes the dimensions of the stela as 2.60m high,0.85m wide and 0.20 m thick. While the stela was subject to breakage and erosion, Juan Laporte identified twelve glyphs and a dedicatory date of 9.17.10.0.0 (780 A.D.) (Laporte et al. 2005; Figure 4). The glyph blocks appear in three groups of four with rounded corners so that each group appear almost as if enclosed in cartouche. However, when directed to the composition of the glyphic block these cartouche-like characteristics become recognizable. The most notable design on the glyph blocks manifests as rounded edges that seem to encapsulate the glyph phrases within a cartouche, forming three panels each consisting of four rounded glyph blocks.

The same format appears on Ixkun Altar 2, located in front of Structure 6 and south of Stela 3. Laporte describes the limestone engraving spanning 1 m vertically and 1.32 m horizontally. In addition to the documentation of physical characteristics, Laporte identifies the presence of 4 glyphic blocks surrounded by a cartouche, like those found on Stela 12 (Laporte et al. 2005; Figure 5).

In examining these monuments, the practice of placing glyphic phrases in cartouches seems to represent a particular taste in scribal choices. However, the use of the cartouches in hieroglyphic writing is not unique to the polity of Ixkun but extends to various kingdoms throughout the region. At the site of Sacul, the practice of encapsulating glyphs in cartouches appear on Stela 3, contemporaneous with stela 2 at Ixkun, which stands at 4 m tall, 0.85 m wide and 1.33 m thick and etched in limestone.

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Unfortunately, Stela 3 underwent massive erosion as well as fragmentation. However, Laporte documented a total of 41 glyphic blocks distributed among three panels, each distinguished by a cartouche (Laporte et al. 2006; Figure 6).

A similar taste for glyphs enclosed in cartouches appears on the monumental steps of Caracol. The history of the Caracol hieroglyphic staircase is complicated, as sections of it became spoils of war after Caracol experienced defeat at the hands of Naranjo (Helmke and Awe 2016). Naranjo then gave these sections to the polities of Ucanal and Xunantunich as a reward for their allegiance. Recent work performed in the site of Xunantunich by Jaime Awe revealed another portion of the Caracol staircase. Measuring at 87 cm wide, 141 cm high and 22 cm thick, the section found at Xunantunich maintained a "pristine state of preservation" depicting two glyphic panels with inscriptions in cartouche like elements. Further analysis places the text into three clauses, separated by distance numbers. The initial clause, while eroded, dates to 11 K'an 2 Sak or 638 A.D. and the second occurs 1 year later on 1 Kaban 5 Yaxk'in. However, the third date, 13 Ajaw and 18 Kankin, indicates a period ending 9.10.10.0.0 (642 A.D.) (Helmke and Awe 2016). The fragments of the stairway unearthed at Naranjo continue to demonstrate that the use of cartouches in scribal practices of Caracol held importance as a scribal tradition. Other depictions of cartouches or rounded glyph blocks appear in substantial amounts at Caracol. Altar 17 depicts a central glyph surrounded by 12 glyphic blocks encapsulated in cartouches, providing the date of 12 Ahaw 8 Keh 9.11.0.0.0.(652 A.D.) The inscription tells of a name K'an II and a rare form of the Caracol emblem glyph (Grube 1994; Figure 7).

Further representation of the cartouche element manifests on Stela 19 of Caracol.

While fragmented and eroded, Stela 19 held a height of 3.5 meters. The stela explains the history of "Ruler XI", providing the date of 8 Ajaw 8 Xul 9.19.10.0.0 (820 A.D) which is located within a cartouche in the upper right side of the stela. Three other glyph blocks surround the center the stela, all of which appearing in cartouches (Grube 1994). Located at the front base of Structure A13, Stela 6 contains the same cartouche elements surrounding eight panels of glyphic blocks carved out of limestone. In addition, the inscriptions hold a possible dedicatory date of 9.8.10.0.0 (603 A.D) (Beetz and Satterthwaite:31-35; Figures 8, 9). Other hieroglyphics within the corpus of Caracol hold a circular or oval form, such as Altar 23 and Altar 12 (Figures 10, 11) The use of cartouches further extends south to the site of Copan, showing up on Stela 63 and the back of Stela F (Schele and Looper 1996) (Figure 12). The use of the cartouche seems to extend north from Copan into the area of Quirigua, appearing in inscriptions on Zoomorph P. (Figures 13).

Hieroglyphic Benches

The cartouche style extends beyond the texts of stelae, appearing on a hieroglyphic bench from Machaquila to the west of the Dolores region. Found broken and out of its original context, the limestone bench was comprised of three vertical supports and a seat made from multiple blocks. The base of each support bears four glyph blocks grouped together in a cartouche. While the creation of hieroglyphic benches is a widespread practice in the Maya world, the one from Machaquila is especially similar to the hieroglyphic bench found at Ixtutz, which dates to 804 A.D. (Carter et al. 2021). The bench was dismantled in antiquity and pieces looted in the 20th century, leaving parts unaccounted for, yet similarities to the Machaquila bench are still visible in its apparent

design and the style of its glyphic engravings. Hieroglyphic benches uncovered at Copan in the House of the Bacabs also share similar design qualities to the benches of Machaquila and Ixtutz such as hieroglyphic text lining the front of the seat. Further similarities appear in the benches' construction, utilizing false legs and solid stone blocks as support (Carter at al. 2021; Webster 1989).

Iconography of Stela 9

Stela 9 of Sacul holds iconographic similarities to Naranjo's Stela 33, illustrating the ruler of each polity standing over and, on a captive, dressed in ritual regalia with a jaguar headdress and holding a staff (Figure 14,15). Further examples of shared motifs appear on Stela 6 of Sacul and Stelae 21 and 11 at Naranjo, which all three illustrate a local ruler dressed in a feathered robe and a plumed headdress with trilobate ornaments, wearing the facial cord of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, along with a tasseled nose bead, and carrying a shield depicting the face of the same god with the same kind of nose ornament (Figure 16,17).

While similar, the difference lies in the content of the text. The text describes the erection of Stela 9 of Sacul and Stela 33 commemorating the ending of the Long Count calendar, whereas Stela 6 of Sacul and Stela 21 of Naranjo describe the military conquest of the polities (Carter and Santini 2019). These similarities in iconographic elements demonstrate a political and cultural connection to the site of Naranjo as its motifs and style seemingly mix with the identity of Sacul.

Epigraphic distinction of Dolores

When looking to the epigraphic data gathered from the Dolores region, certain distinctions such as particular verbs and glyphic expressions appear. One such distinction

is the use of the verb *k'ub'* inscribed on Stela 12 of Ixkun, representing the action of consecration. The monument describes the consecration of Yukuul Chan Ahk written as **k'u-ba-AJ yu-ku-la-CHAN-na-a-ku** on the date 9.17.8.5.14 4 Ix 7 Zotz' (779 A.D.) (Carter 2016). It uses the passive voice form of the verb, *k'ubaj*, but the precise meaning remains unclear (Figure 18).

Nicholas Carter suggests its translation as "giving" or "offering," which draws from the iconographic context of Altar 12 from Caracol illustrating the ruler Papmalil presenting quetzal feathers as an offering to a king from Caracol (Carter 2016; personal communication, March 2022). However, alternate meanings of *k'ubaj* are present when looking at Altar 12 of Caracol. Grube suggest the verb possesses a different purpose, favoring the translation "to give" or "to deliver". Grube attempts to extend the meaning to sacrifice, in that it refers to the giving of royal blood (Grube 1994). The earliest use of the verb *k'ubaj* is on Tikal Altar 5. Altar 5 describes the death of a woman named Ix Tuun Kaywak and bears the date 9.12.19.12.9 1 Muluk 2 Muwan (691 A.D.). Here, Grube and Linda Schele (1994) interpret the verb as "was inserted or deposited," referring to received funerary offerings or the body of the deceased woman (Grube and Schele 1994).

Further examinations of the Dolores inscriptions show the presence of a unique glyphic expression, depicting an anthropomorphic figure carrying the glyph for fire on a tumpline. This fire carrying glyph manifests on Stela 2 of Ixkun and in the caves of Naj Tunich in Drawing 82. In examining Stela 2, studies conducted by Pierre Colas suggests that the glyph may be indicative of war, favor a translation of "invasion" and the pronunciation of *tok*. While Stela 2 does deal with battles (Brady and Colas 2005), this

verb may not itself refer to war, as in context, it seems to describe travel through the night with torches prior to an attack at dawn (Nicholas Carter, personal communication, March 2022; Figure 19). Colas continues to suggest that the glyph is representing an invasion against Caracol in AD 744 (Colas 1998). On the other hand, Carter points out that none of the inscriptions of Naj Tunich describe military actions or war, supporting the idea that the glyph describes the carrying of fire or torches into Naj Tunich (Nicholas Carter, personal communication, March 2022).

In addition to the use of the "fire carrying" glyph, epigraphic particularities continue in Drawing 82. Located at the end of the text is the date of 7 Sak, which would have been pronounced *Sakshihoom* in Classic Ch'olti'an. However, the spelling of the month name does not follow the traditional Classic Ch'olti'an formation but instead utilizes a phonetic complement of **-ka** emphasizing a reading of **SAK-ka,** the Yucatecan name of the same month (Carter and Macleod 2021). The different spellings of the Haab month continues in the region with Ixkun Stela 5. In contrast the name of the same month on Ixkun stela 5 takes the form of **SAK-SIHOOM-mo** which is indicative of the Classic Ch'olt'ian pronunciation (Figure 20).

Southeastern Petén's distinctiveness continued to solidify by the use of a title glyph known as the twenty-eight lords, and which commonly appears written as T856-**la** lords. Examinations performed by Tokovinine suggests that the term twenty-eight lords refer to a collection of united rulers, who stretches from Southern Petén to Belize. The title also appears in inscriptions from polities beyond the region such as Dos Pilas, which describes the burial of Itzamnaaj K'awiil, witnessed by the twenty-eight lords (Tokovinine 2013:113).

In other instances, where the title of the twenty-eight marks self-identification, it is used by the rulers of the polities of Machaquila, Ixtutz, Baax Tuun and Nim li Punit who call themselves the *waxakwinik* or the twenty-eight people. Further exploration by Tokovinine uncovers a possible connection between this title and Stela 31 at Tikal. Here the ritual act of accession for Yax Nuun Ahiin included the "taking of twenty-eight *pet*," where *pet* may mean "provinces" or "areas," possibly referring to the political organization (or reorganization) of territories in eastern Petén (Tokovinine 2013).

VII. DISCUSSION

The scribes of the Dolores region utilized cartouche elements in numerous examples. However, this stylistic choice does not only manifest in Dolores as examples of its use appear at polities spanning from Caracol in the east to Machaquila in the west and south to Quirigua. While the initial application of this specific style has not been determined, its appearance suggests a shared preference towards its implementation. The appearance of rounded texts and glyph blocks may have happened independently in each polity. However, provided those scribal communities and traditions emulated the taste of the ruling class audience, it is highly likely that the use of cartouches spread through political network circular elements may be indicative of the greater political influences on the areas of Dolores.

The iconography found on stelae in the Dolores region, mirroring those at Naranjo are further examples of external influence. Two distinct sets of similar styles and themes appear on stelae at Sacul and Naranjo. The depiction of jaguar regalia seems to take on multiple meanings in Naranjo's iconography, which in turn integrated into the iconographic traditions of Sacul. The application of these themes and styles allude to the political influences present in the Dolores, depicting the taste as well as the accomplishment of the dominant political power.

When we turn attention to the cave of Naj Tunich and drawing Number 82, external influence is present in the orthography as it manifests in the spelling of *Sakshioom.* The use of the phonetic glyph **-ka** suggests a Yucatecan orthography rather than the Classic Ch'olti'an spelling. Yet, on Stela 5 of Ixkun, the spelling of *Sakshioom* seems to cue the Classic Ch'olt'ian word, utilizing the phonetic complement -**mo** (Carter

and MacCleod 2021). We thus see an amalgamation of languages and perhaps their speakers in the Late Classic Dolores region, drawn by the importance of Naj Tunich as a pilgrimage site (Stone 1995). That importance may have lasted longer than the practice of inscribing texts on the cave walls, since a term *mon pan* attested at Naj Tunich may also appear on Panel 2 at Xunantunich (Helmke et al. 2010).

However, the region held a degree of scribal autonomy. The area of Dolores had distinctive iconographic and epigraphic tradition expressed in the monumental art of its polities. This took the form of a taste for unusual glyphic expressions, such as *k'ub* and the fire carrying logogram, and the use of the "28 lords" title as a self-identifier.

Other indications of possible external influences on the style and tastes of Dolores may exist; however, their recognition will depend on additional studies of the region. Yet present evidence shows interesting parallels between Ixtutz Panel 1 and the façade on structure 8N-66 south in Copan, illustrating engraved iconographic elements which describe the function or name of the building. This form of labeling or identification is common in elite buildings at Copan (Webster 1989; Wagner 2006). While this study holds focus on the region of Dolores, its clearly visible that its role in the greater Maya political sphere held importance. When looking to the area there is a considerable influence from the Kaanul kingdom as its early eighth century rulers were a part of the Kaanul alliance centered on in Calakmul. This alliance included Naranjo, Caracol, and Dos Pilas. In addition, the writings at Naj Tunich highlight the long reach of political power held by the Kaanul dynasty.

The use of Yucatecan writing in the region may be representative of the writing tradition that the scribe choses as well as representing its royal Yucatecan-speaking

audience. However, what does this information provide in the historical context of the area? It is very apparent that the scribal traditions of Dolores experienced external influence. However, the information gathered also tells of a complex scribal community that is intersectional, expressing stylistic choices from multiple Maya territories.

VIII. CONCLUSION

I set out to ask, were the scribal traditions of the Dolores region influenced by interactions with distant polities? Did the Dolores region possess a distinctive scribal community? Or was the scribal community in Dolores simply mirroring scribal practices and traditions from other regions of the Maya world? The response to these questions requires deeper complexity than a simple binary answer.

However, the Dolores area certainly had its local distinctive scribal traditions, integrating styles from surrounding political territories. The number of examples of cartouches and rounded glyphs shown throughout Dolores allude to a distinctive stylistic tradition which may have expanded from Caracol to Copan and Quirigua. In addition, the iconographic data from the region demonstrates a strong stylistic similarity to those from Naranjo, perhaps highlighting shared tastes of the ruling class. Furthermore, the use of Yucatecan orthography within the cave of Naj Tunich reveals that scribes wrote according to the tastes of an international ruling class, choosing to address the Yucatecan pilgrims. Perhaps some of the cave texts were written by Yucatecan speakers. Nevertheless, Dolores maintained its own distinctions, which manifest as the fire bearing glyph as well as the rare use of the verb *k'uhbaj*. Yet the most profound piece of evidence showing local distinction is the use of the "lord of the 28" as a self-identifier.

Mirroring the findings of Wanyerka (2009) and Matsumoto et al. (2021), the result of this exploration indicates the region of Dolores resembles a hybridization of scribal traditions, infusing local and regional practices. This combination of traditions is what defines Dolores, presenting the area as a space of political, ritual, and cultural commerce. However, these observations only highlight a small portion of the history of

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Dolores. By committing to further explorations in the Dolores region, a new understanding of its local culture and political positionality will arise.

As to the reason this blending occurs for the Dolores region, multiple factors are at play, manifesting as occurrences of migration into the area from external populations, pressure from greater political forces and the adoption of style into local traditions. However, evidence of cultural integration and exchange are not limited to the Dolores region as archaeological evidence indicates increasing interactions between the south-central lowlands and the Yucatan and Gulf coastal regions during the Late to Terminal Classic Period. (Jaime J Awe, Personal communication 2022)

Once such example comes from the sites of Naranjo and Xunantunich, where ballcourt rings resemble those created in the Yucatan, exhibiting stylistic characteristic from the Puuc region. Further evidence of Yucatecan influence continues to manifest at Xunantunich, where the use of columns, a Yucatecan style, appears on Structure A-20 as well as the palaces of Grooves at Tikal. Masks appearing on Structure B5 at Caracol and on a slate slab at Actun Tunichil Muknal represent the rain god Tlaloc. This integration of local and external styles does not go unnoticed as Laporte claims that cities of Terminal Classic Mopan integrated stylistic traditions from the people of Northern Yucatán (Laporte 2004).

With such a large amount of archaeological and epigraphic evidence, the Dolores area was certainly an area of cultural intersectionality and a network of political relationships. Additional information telling of regional interactions appears outside of stone and written texts but comes from bioarchaeological explorations of the region. Work conducted by Christina Halperin et al. attempted to understand residential

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settlement histories through the strontium analysis of human teeth. Halperin and colleagues reveal that while strontium testing indicated the setting of non-local individuals, the results do not fully describe political dynamics and migrations (Halperin et al. 2012). Meanwhile, dental morphological analyses indicate that the population of the Dolores region was not genetically isolated from the rest of the Maya world (Aubry 2019).

While the work and efforts of numerous individuals assisted in writing the historical narratives of Dolores, the nuances of its relationships and practices can only be reveal though addition work in the region. I believe in doing so will not only uncover details of regions complexity, but also add insight to the narrative of the greater maya world during the Late Classic.

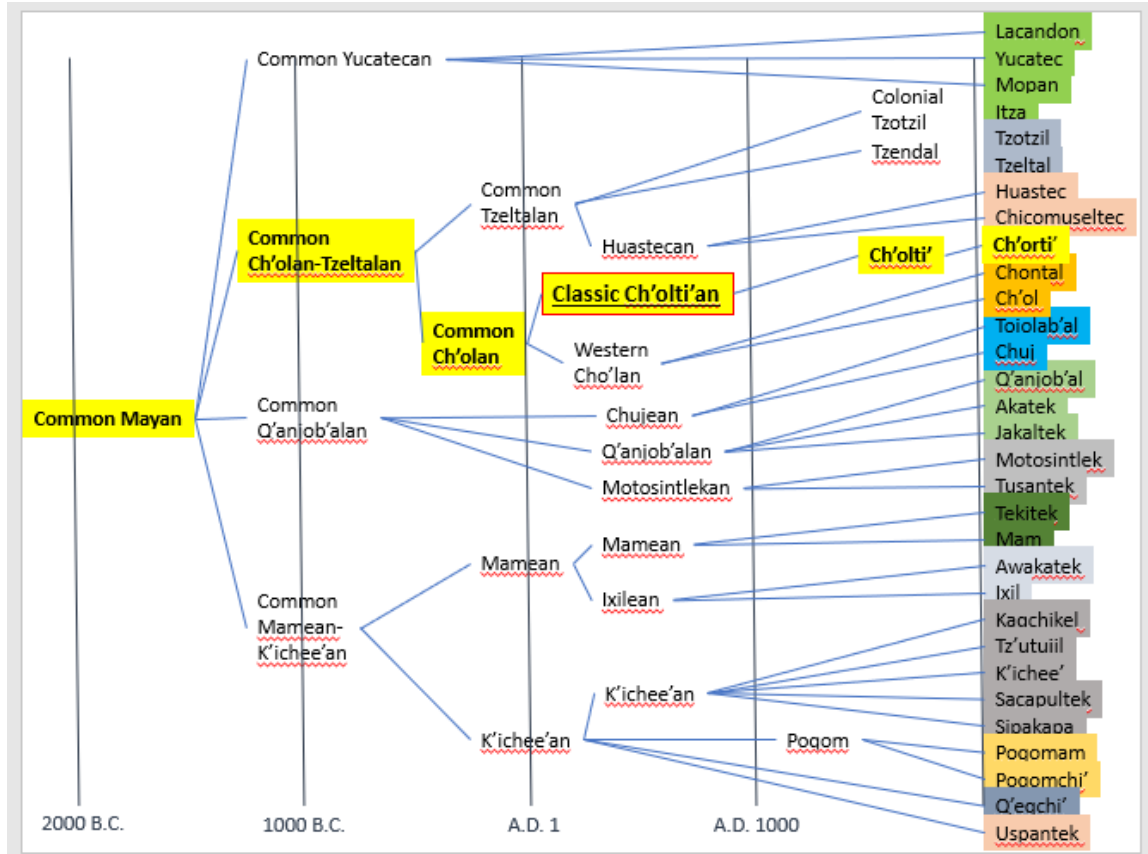Figure 1. Mayan Linguistic Tree. From Nicholas Carter.

Distribution of Mayan Languages

1. Yucatec (Maya)
2. Itzaj (Itza')
3. Lacandon (Lakantun)
4. Mopan
5. Huastec (Teenek)
6. Chicomuceltec (Kabil)
7. Ch'ol
8. Chontal (Yokot'an)
9. Ch'orti'
10. Tseltal
11. Tsotsil
12. Tojolab'al
13. Chuj
14. Q'anjob'al
15. Akatek
16. Popti' (Jakaltek)
17. Mocho' (Motosintlek)
18. Mam
19. Tektitek (Teko)
20. Awakatek
21. Chalchitek
22. Ixil
23. Kaqchikel
24. Tz'utujil
25. K'iche'
26. Achi
27. Sakapultek
28. Sipakapense
29. Poqomam
30. Poqomchi'
31. Q'eqchi'
32. Uspantek

Figure 2 Mayan Language Distribution. From The Electronic Atlas of Ancient Maya Sites, © 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2010, Walter R. T. Witschey and Clifford T. Brown
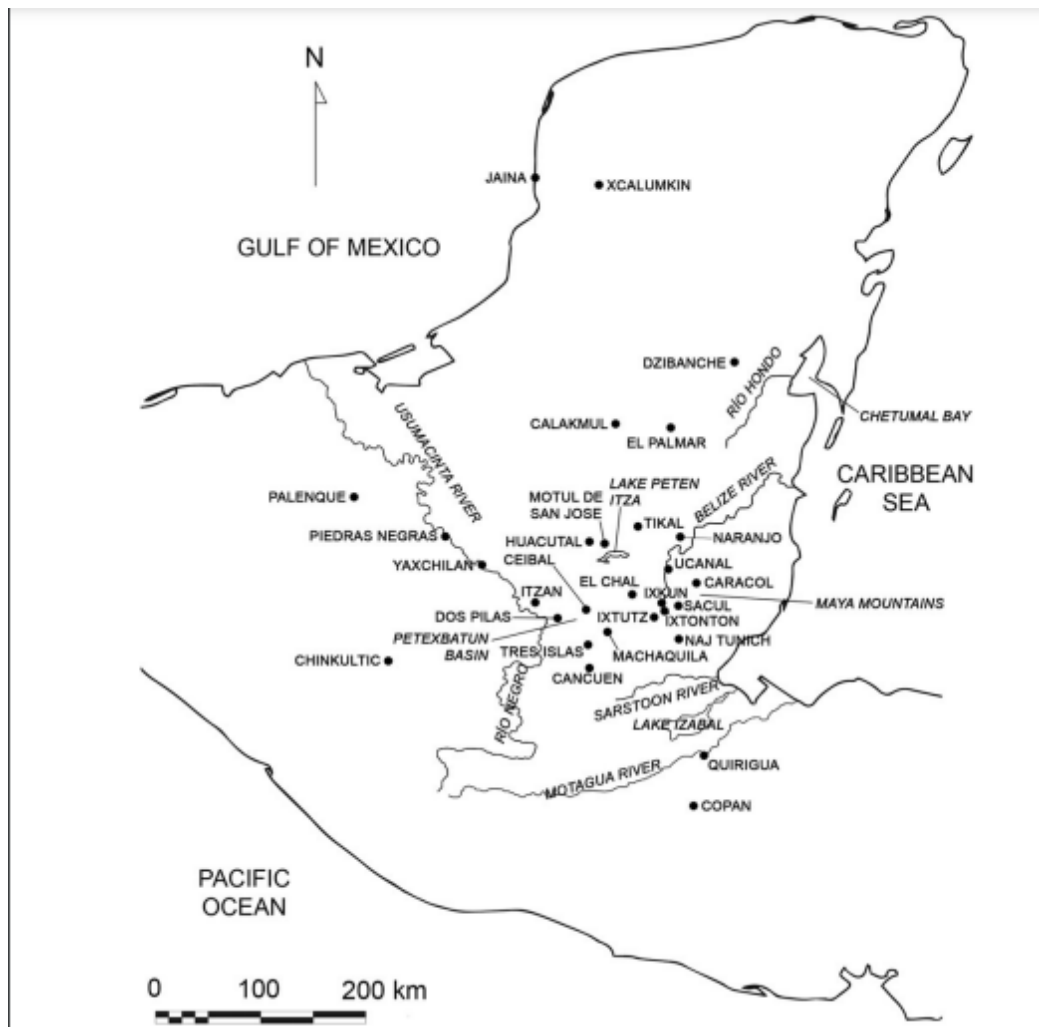
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GULF OF MEXICO

JAINA ● ● XCALUMKIN

DZIBANCHE ●
RÍO HONDO
CHETUMAL BAY
CALAKMUL ●
EL PALMAR ●
CARIBBEAN
SEA
LAKE PETEN ITZA
BELIZE RIVER
PALENQUE ●
MOTUL DE SAN JOSE
TIKAL ●
PIEDRAS NEGRAS ●
HUACUTAL ●
NARANJO
USUMACINTA RIVER
CEIBAL
YAXCHILAN ●
UCANAL
EL CHAL ● CARACOL
ITZAN IXKUN ●
SACUL
DOS PILAS ● IXTUTZ ● IXTONTON
PETEXBATUN BASIN
NAJ TUNICH
MAYA MOUNTAINS
CHINKULTIC ●
TRES ISLAS
MACHAQUILA
CANCUEN
SARSTOON RIVER
RÍO NEGRO
LAKE IZABAL
MOTAGUA RIVER
QUIRIGUA ●
PACIFIC OCEAN
● COPAN

0   100   200 km

Figure 3. Maya Political Landscape. From Law (2011).

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A B

4-[IX] 7-SUUTZ'
kan ?hiix wuk-[te'] suutz'
On 4 Ix 7 Zotz'

k'u-ba-AJ yu-ku-la-CHAN-na-'a-ku
k'uhbaj yukuul chan 'ahk
is consecrated Yukuul Chan 'Ahk.

'U-TZ'AK-AJ-3-2-WINIK-ji-ya
13-[CABAN]-10-TZIKIN-ni
'u tz'akaj ux [heew] ka' winikjiiy
uxlajuun [?kab] lajuun-[te'] tzikin
Its count is three and two score days;
on 13 Caban 10 Xul [8 Caban 10 Xul]

?KAJ-yi-?-?-la 7-?-{?}-?li-'AJAW
?kajayi [...]i wuk [...] 'ajaw
settles at [Ixkun] the Wuk [...] lord.

'U-TZ'AK-AJ-13-5-WINIK-ji-ya
'u-ti-ya-['i-'u-ti]
'u tz'akaj uxlajuun [heew] jo' winikjiiy
'uhtiiy 'i 'uhti
Its count is 13 and five score days
since it happened, and then happens

12-['AJAW]-8-PAX ['U-K'AL-AW-TUUN]
[...]-[...]-[...]
ka'lajuun 'ajaw waxak-[te'] ?pa'ax
'u k'alaw tuun [...]
12 Ahau 8 Pax; he binds the stone...

Figure 4. Ixkun Stela 12. Drawing by Nicholas Carter. Adapted from Juan Laporte.

Figure 5. Ixkun Altar 2 of Stela 3. Gift of Ian Graham, 2004. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 2004.15.1.3311.4
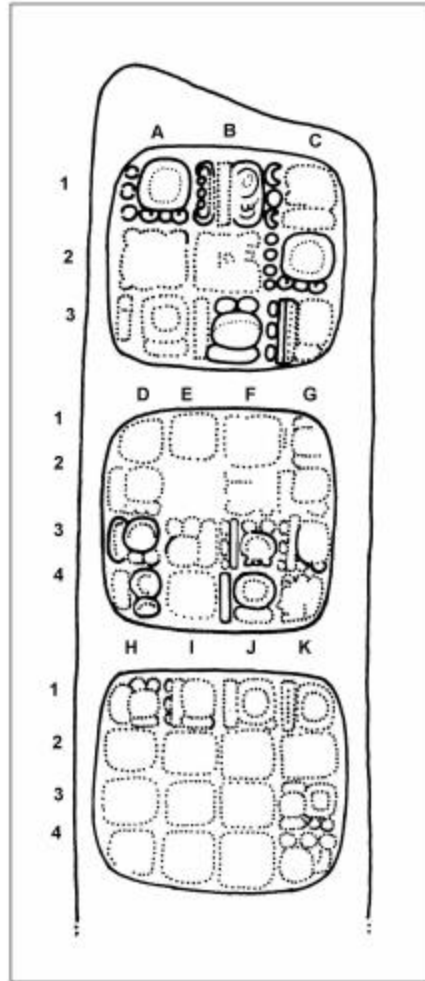
Figure 6. Sacul Stela 3. Drawing by Paulino Morales. Adapted from Ian Graham
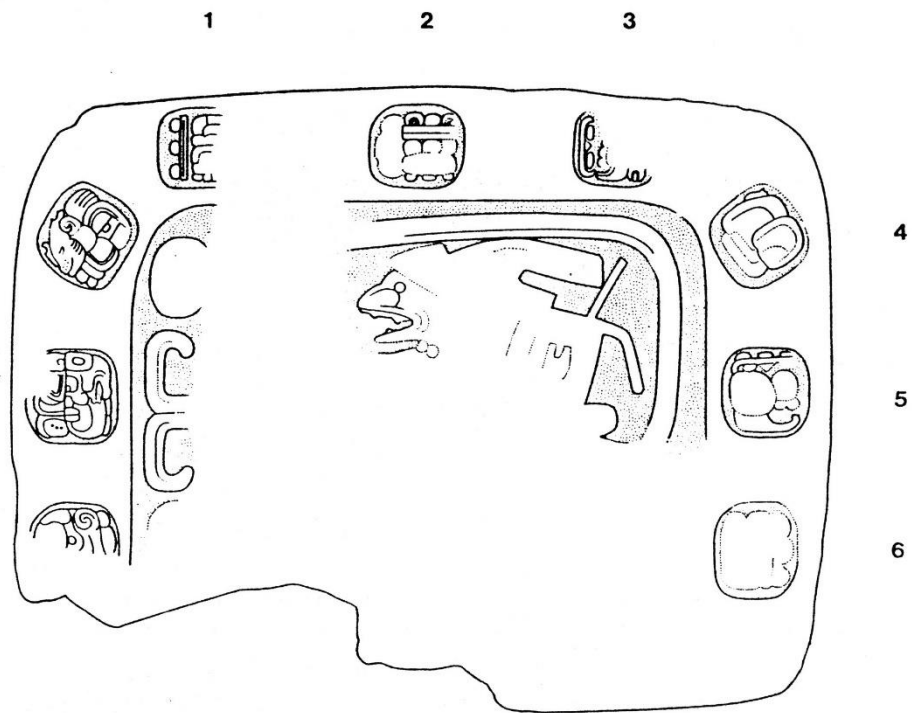
Figure 7. Caracol Altar 17. Drawing from Beetz and Satterthwaite. Courtesy of Penn University.
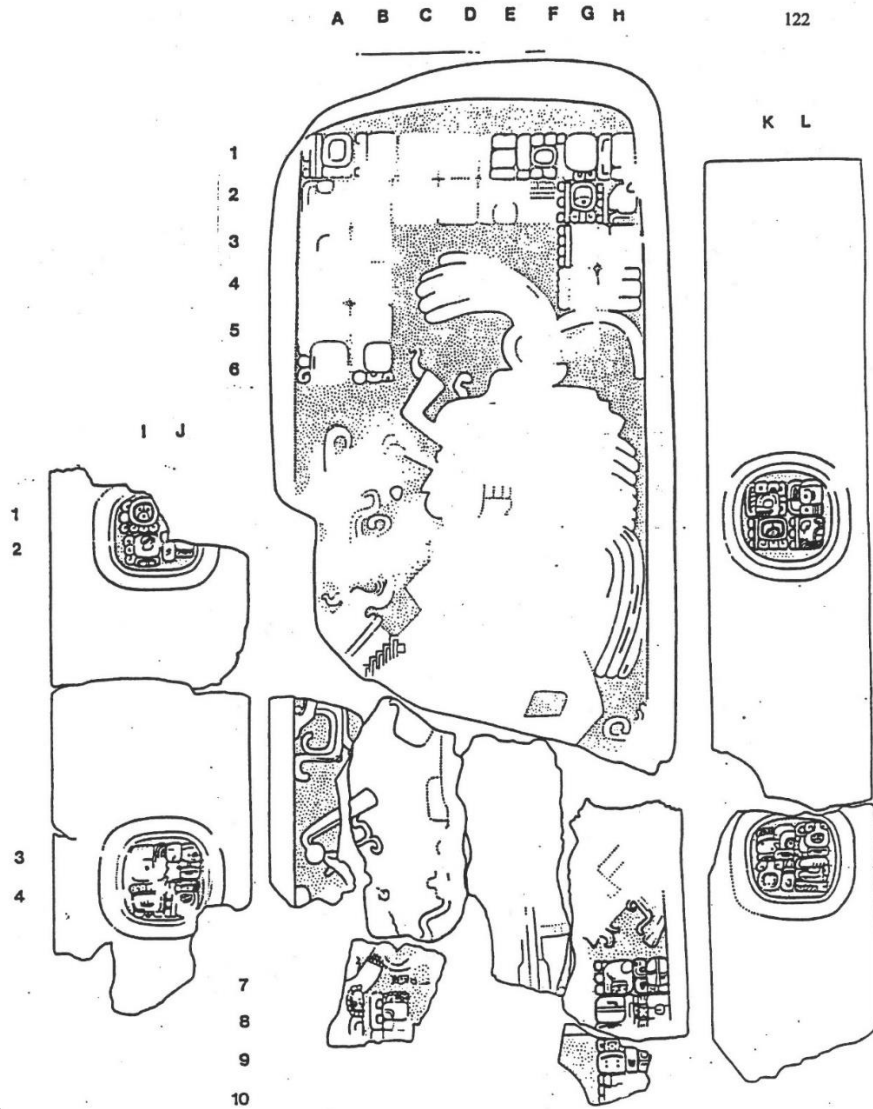
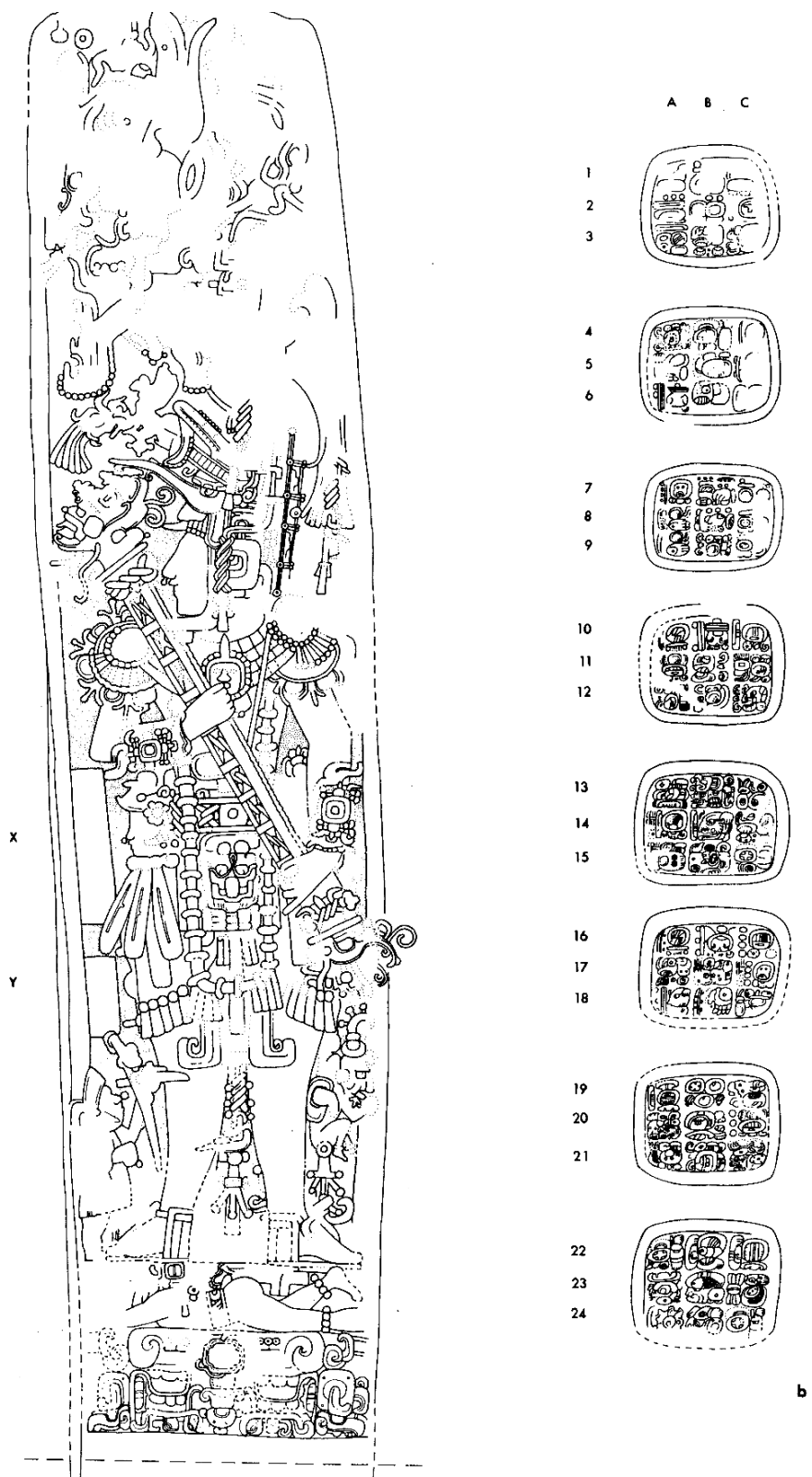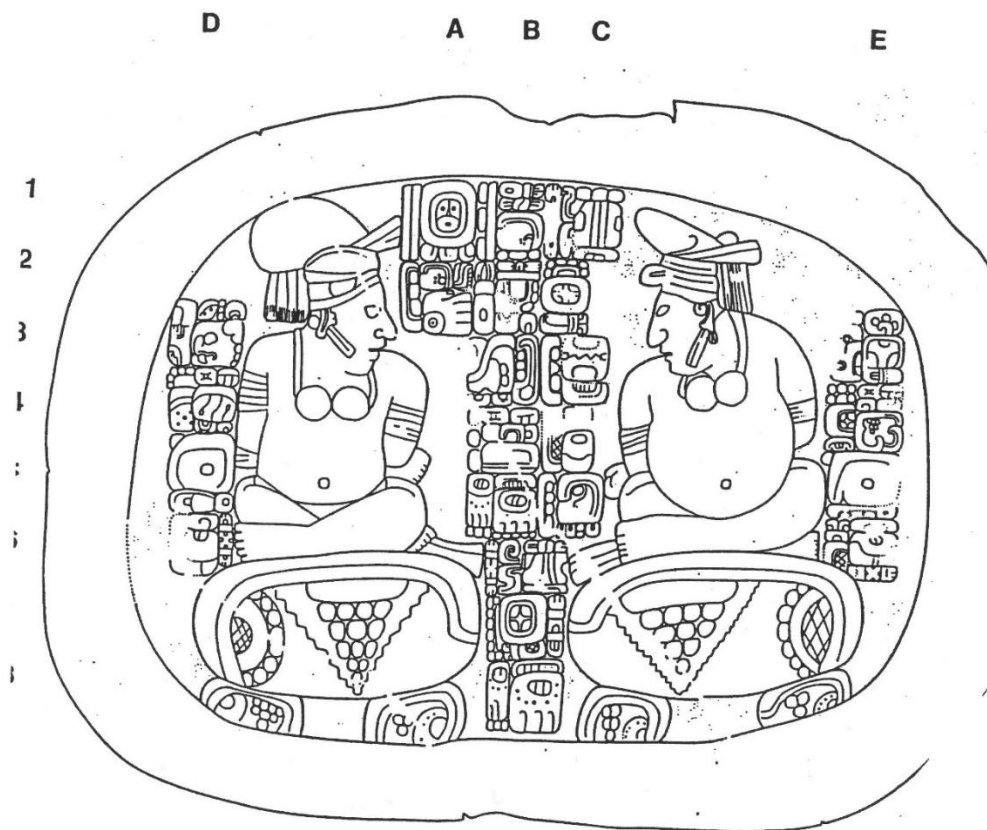Figure 8. Caracol Stela 19. Drawing from Beetz and Satterthwaite. Courtesy of Penn University.

Figure 9. Caracol Stela 6. Drawing from Beetz and Satterthwaite. Courtesy of Penn University.

Figure 10. Caracol Altar 23. Drawing from Beetz and Satterthwaite. Courtesy of Penn University.

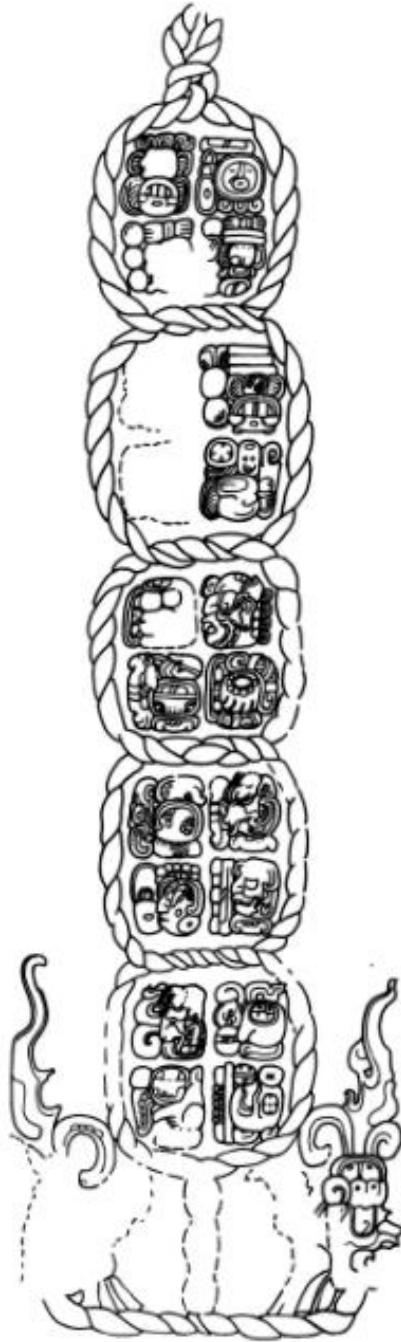Figure 11. Caracol Altar 12. Drawing from Nicholas Carter.

Figure 12. Copan Stela F. SD-1008. Drawing by Mark Van Stone © David Schele. Photo courtesy Ancient Americas at LACMA (ancientamericas.org)
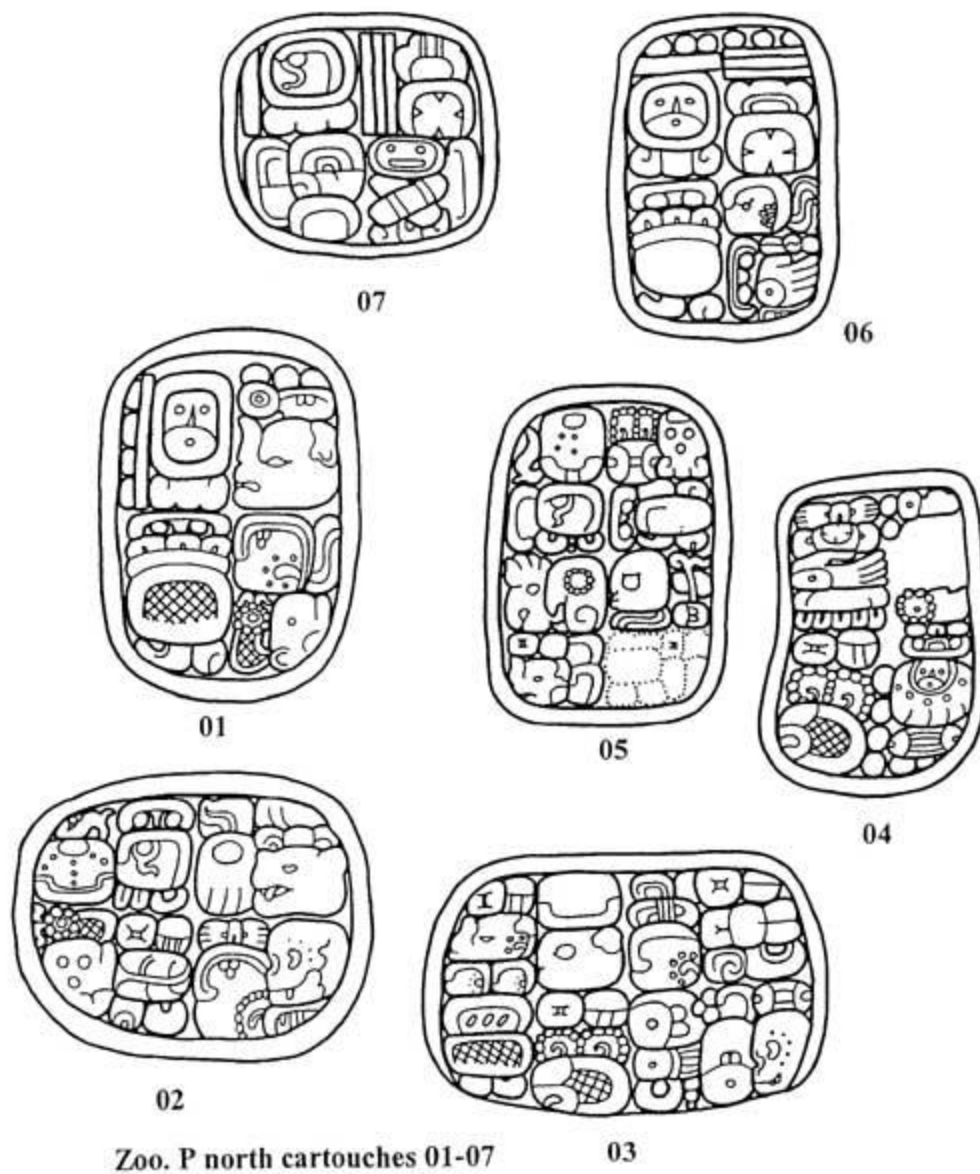
Figure 13. Quirigua Zoomorph P. Drawings by Matthew Looper.
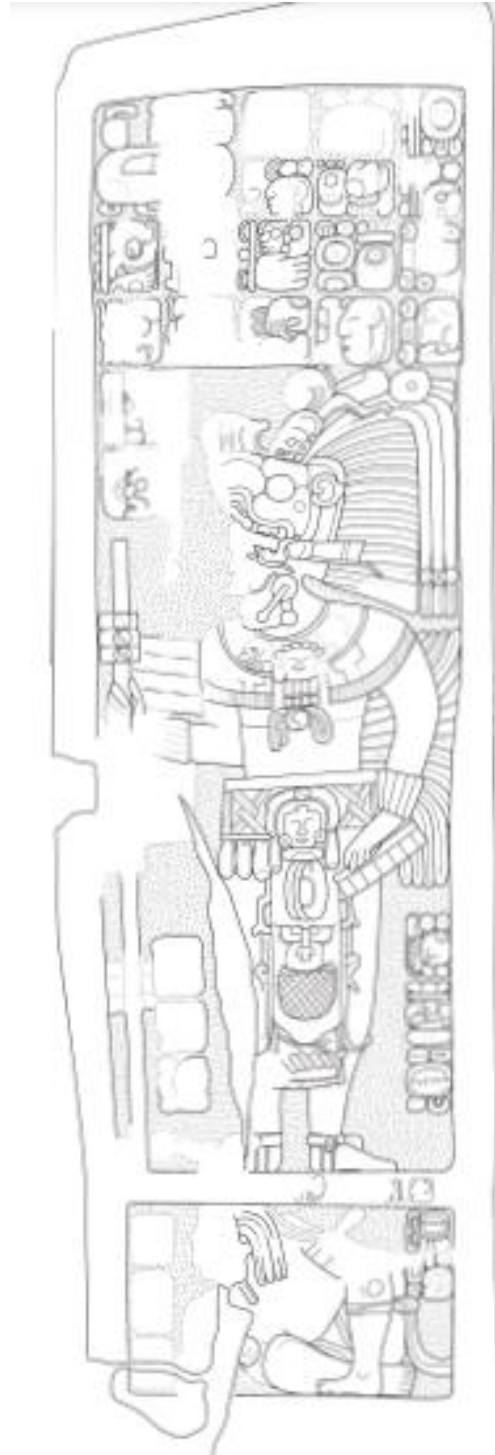
Figure 14. Sacul Stela 9. Drawing from Nicholas Carter after a field sketch by from Ian Graham.
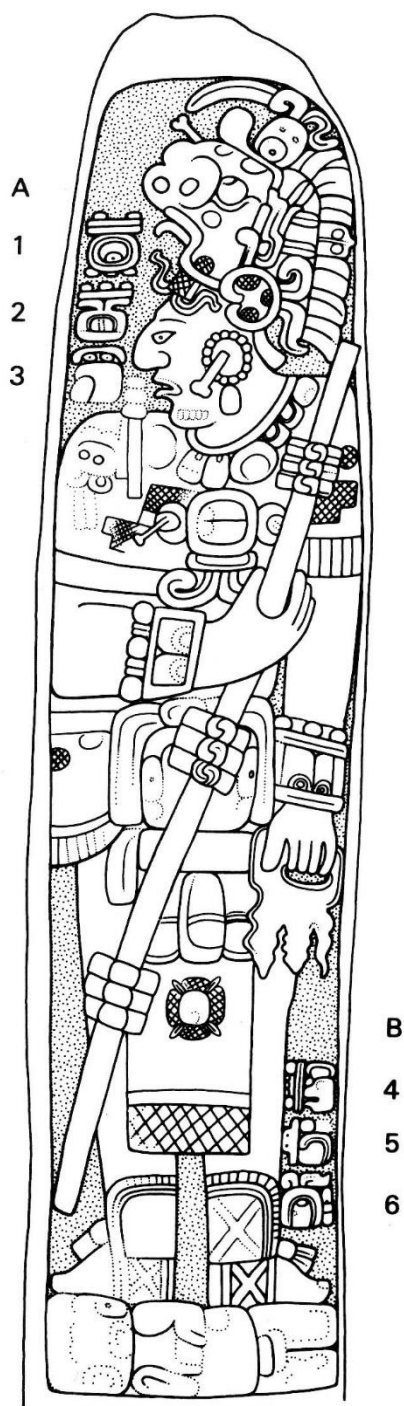
Figure 15. Naranjo Stela 33. Drawing by Ian Graham. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 2004.15.6.3.15.

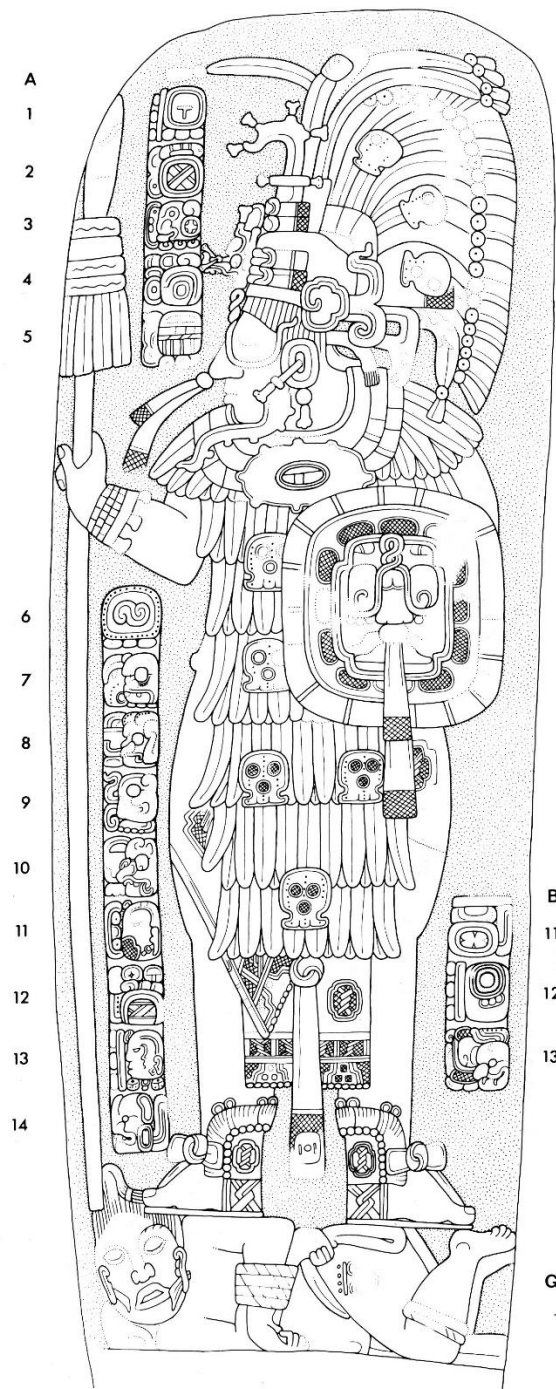Figure 16. Sacul Stela 6. Drawing by Nicholas Carter. Adapted from Ian Graham.

Figure 17. Naranjo Stela 21. front, drawing by Ian Graham. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 2004.15.6.2.37.

1

4-[IX] 7-SUUTZ'
kan ?hiix wuk-[te'] suutz'
On 4 Ix 7 Zotz'

2

k'u-ba-AJ yu-ku-la-CHAN-na-'a-ku
k'uhbaj yukuul chan 'ahk
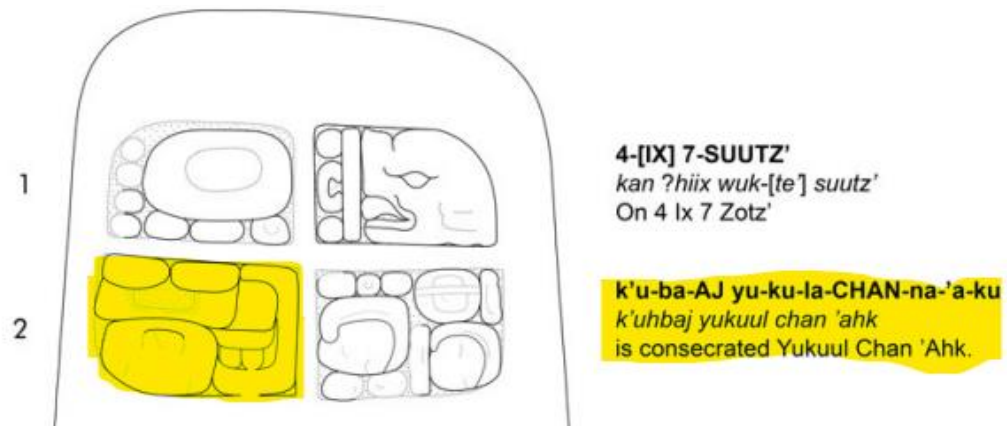is consecrated Yukuul Chan 'Ahk.

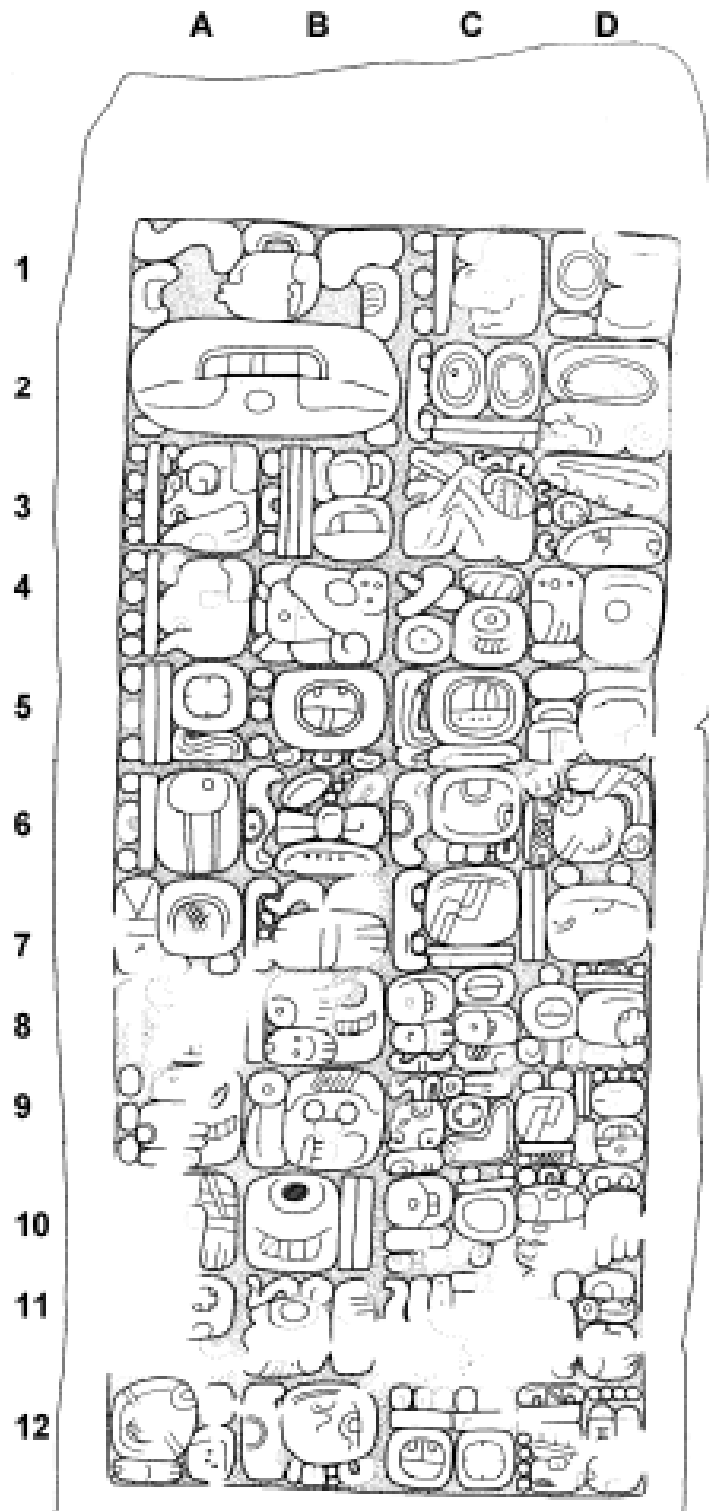Figure 18. Ixkun Stela 12 with *k'ubaj* highlighted. Drawing from Nicholas Carter.

Figure 19. Ixkun Stela 2. front, drawing by Ian Graham. © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, 2004.15.6.4.2.
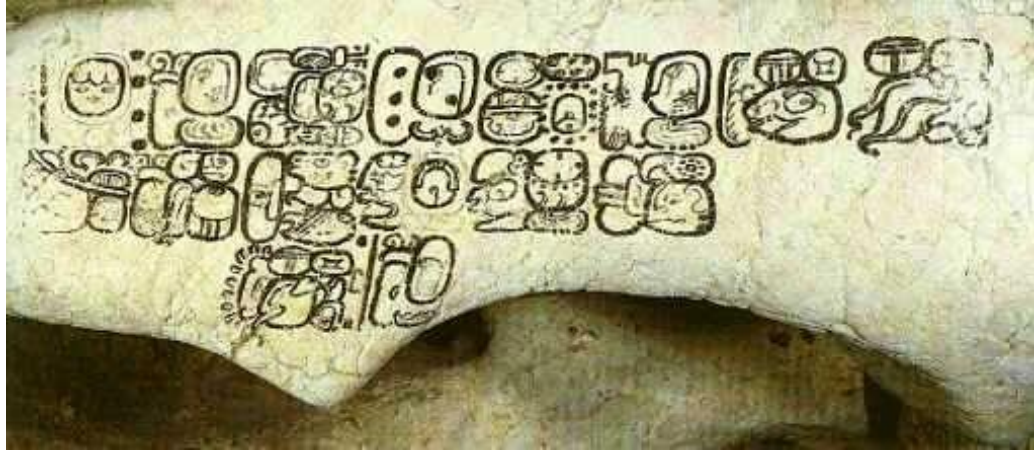
Figure 20. Drawing 82 of Naj Tunich, from Stone (1995:8.82). Photograph by Chip and Jennifer Clark.

Table 1. Pilgrimages to Naj Tunich. Adapted from Carter and Macleod (2021:Table 1)

Long count	Calendar Round	Gregorian	Event	Source
9.12.19.14.7	13 Manik 0 Kayab	1-3-692	Nich K'ahk', anab of Yuklaj Ch'akat of Jut', and Tz'ahyaj K'ahk' of Caracol visit Naj Tunich with two other people; earliest NTN dated text	Naj Tunich Drawing 88
9.14.7.11.3	6 Akbal 16 Xul	6-7-719	Chak Balaw Mayik K'an Biyaan and Tz'itz'il Mayik K'an Biyaan visit Naj Tunich; first mention of Baax Tuun	Naj Tunich Drawing 29
9.15.8.9.4	13 Kan 17 Kayab	1-9-740	People including elites from Ucanal and Sak Muk visit Naj Tunich	Naj Tunich Drawing 65
9.17.1.10.16	4 Cib 4 Zac	8-20-772	28-haab anniversary event at Baax Tuun with Kaanul and Huacutal lords; last mention of Baax Tuun and latest NTN dated text	Naj Tunich Drawing 82

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