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A Parallel Long-Reckoning Between the Chilam Balam of Chumayel and a Hieroglyphic Inscription From Yaxchilán

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a re-translation of an obscure passage from an account of the creation of the world in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel. In the light of two previously proposed interpretations, the meanings of the constituent words and phrases of the passage are analyzed in order to substantiate a slightly different translation. A possible paraphrase of the new translation is then shown to parallel a long reckoning in the text recorded on Step VII of the Hieroglyphic Stairs of Structure 33 at Yaxchilan. The parallelism renders the new translation more accurate since it documents the survival of Classic Maya beliefs in Colonial texts.

A HISTORY OF THE CREATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD

The Chilam Balam of Chumayel is one of several Native American books (e.g. the Chilam Balam of Tizimin, the Chilam Balam of Mani, and the Popol Vuh) dealing with the creation of the world. Martínez Hernández (1910, 1913) has partially translated the Chumayel, while Roys (1967) and Edmonson (1986) have translated the book in its entirety. The latter two are notable for substantially differing from each other, both in the ordering of the subject matter and in the translation/interpretation of individual phrases. For instance, what Roys (1967, Ch. X) calls “The Creation of the World,” Edmonson (1986, Sec. 29) calls “The Ceremonial of the Baktun.” More recently, Knowlton (2010) has dealt with the Chilam Balam of Chumayel to a great extent. This section briefly summarizes the portion of the Chumayel, as translated by Roys, that leads to an interesting obscure passage in the history of the creation of the world, a passage that has been interpreted somewhat differently by all of its translators.

The account of the creation/destruction of the world opens with a motivational paragraph, indicating that it is of the utmost importance to believe in it, for it deals with the replacement of the gods of the old religion by the true Lord of Heaven. The second paragraph explicitly states the subject matter (as being the history of the world in the old times) and the purpose of the writing, namely a narrative that will enable the Maya people to know about their origins.

From the third paragraph on, the history of the creation/destruction of the world unfolds from Katun 11 Ahau. The evil forces of the Underworld (represented by Bolon-ti-ku, the “Nine Gods”) seize their benevolent counterparts of the Upperworld (represented by Oxlahun-ti-ku, the “Thirteen Gods”). Treating these forces as single entities, the Chumayel states that the former despoils the latter of his insignia. Thereafter, Oxlahun-ti-ku assembled his first Bolon Tzacab (nine generations, or eternity) and went to the 13th layer of the sky. As a consequence of the theft of Oxlahun-ti-ku’s insignia by Bolon-ti-ku, the sky (in the form of water) fell upon the earth, and the four Bacabs, along with the four trees of abundance, were set up at the four corners of the world to symbolize the destruction of the world.

Then another Katun was begun, as its plate or coefficient “was set up and fixed in its place by the messengers of their lord” (Roys 1967:101, n. 1). Three of these messengers are named Piltec, with an adjectival color distinguishing them, and they were set up at three of the cardinal directions. The color/direction correspondences adhere to the Maya norm, namely red/east, white/north, and yellow/south. Roys did not provide a translation for piltec, but Barrera Vázquez (1982,
p. 691) indicates that since the (ah) p’iltek were deities that conducted people to their god, it follows that they were inferior deities. The setting of Lahun Chaan (the fourth messenger) at the west can be equated with the first appearance of Venus as Evening Star (Roys 1967, p. 101, n. 2). The supporting evidence is that on page 47b of the Dresden Codex (Figure 1), and in association with the table for the synodic period of Venus, a hieroglyphic text names the planet as 10 Sky (the literal meaning of Lahun Chaan in Chol, possibly borrowed by Yucatec), being the subject of a “spearing” verb (Kelley 1976, p. 73), as shown in Figure 1. Consequently, the astronomical association of the fourth messenger suggests that the other three might have been secondarily connected with Venus (Kelley 1976, p. 75). After the setting of the messengers, Ah Uuk Cheknal, “he who fertilizes maize seven times” (Roys 1967:101, n. 3), was set up over the world in order to fecundate Itzam-kab-ain, “the whale with the feet of a crocodile,” identified with the earth monster (Roys 1967:101, n. 4).

Thereafter, the state of affairs that obtained prior to the creation of the world, and the creation itself, are translated by Roys as follows:

They [the ancient people] moved among the four lights [the four messengers], among the four layers of the stars. The world was not lighted; there was neither day nor night nor night.

FIGURE 1. PAGE 47B OF THE DRESDEN CODEX.

A: After Najarro (2017: 6, pl. 47), reproduced by permission from the author.

B: After Villacorta and Villacorta (1976: 104), reproduced by permission from Tipografía Nacional de Guatemala.
moon. Then they perceived that the world was being created. Then creation dawned upon the world. During the creation thirteen infinite series <added> to seven was the count of the creation of the world. Then a new world dawned for them. (Roys 1967:101-102; see also p. 102, n. 1).

The second-to-last sentence constitutes the focal point of this paper. As will be shown, it is a sentence obscure enough to have prompted Roys (1967:102, n. 1) to provide the alternative meanings of tz’ak, and to insert the word “added” in order to make some sense out of the original Maya text.

AN EXERCISE IN TRANSLATION

This section presents the translations by Roys (1967) and Edmonson (1986) of the sentence pertaining to the count of the creation of the world. Then, after a discussion of the meanings of the constituents of the sentence, yet another alternative translation is proposed as being more accurate on the basis that one of its paraphrases is shown to parallel a long reckoning in a Classic Maya hieroglyphic inscription.

In his translation of the Chumayel, Roys did not give any clues as to the way he assembled the constituents of sentences in the original Maya text. From the translation, however, the sentence “Ualacito yahal cab, oxlahun pic tz’ac tu uuc u xocan yahal cab” (Roys 1967:32) can be decomposed as indicated below. The English reading of each constituent appears to its right (cf. Roys 1967:101-102):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ualacito yahal cab</td>
<td>During the creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxlahun pic tz’ac</td>
<td>thirteen infinite series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu uuc</td>
<td>&lt;added&gt; to seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u xocan</td>
<td>was the count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yahal cab</td>
<td>of the creation of the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roys’ footnote (1967:101, n. 1) indicates that the reading of tz’ac as “series” accepts as alternatives “degrees, steps, stairs and other things which go above one another,” as given in the Motul dictionary.

Edmonson (1986:158-159) did in fact present his translation by decomposing the sentence into its constituents (as he did in the whole translation of the Chumayel). At first glance, it is immediately apparent that the breakdown of the Maya sentence (and therefore its translation) is quite different from the one done by Roys:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ua la ci to</td>
<td>If that is indeed he,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y ahal cab</td>
<td>The dawn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxlahun pic tz’ac</td>
<td>Thirteen thousand steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu uuc</td>
<td>And seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U xocan</td>
<td>Is the count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y ahal cab.</td>
<td>Of the dawn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Edmonson’s footnote, on line 3172 of the Maya text, makes reference to the interpretation that Martínez (1912:15) gives to the clause oxlahun pic tz’ac as referring to 13 baktuns, or 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku, the zero date of the current Maya era. While agreeing with Martínez’ speculation, he then remarks that “when you add the other seven you reach the mythological date of 20.0.0.0.0” (Edmonson 1986:159).
The two translations discussed above are so different from each other that the proposed alternative interpretation must be derived from an analysis of all the words comprising the sentence in question.

**RATIONALE FOR THE TRANSLATIONS**

This section lists the meanings of the constituents of the sentence dealing with the count of the creation of the world. The listing is a verbatim extract from a dictionary of Yucatec Maya (Barrera Vázquez 1980). For ease of presentation, a number of notational conventions were employed. The character “$” marks a constituent (either a word or a phrase) of the sentence. The characters “<<” denote derivation, so that “A << B” means that A follows (or derives from) B, where A is a constituent of the original Maya sentence (as given by Roys [1967]) and B is the corresponding entry in the dictionary. The Spanish meaning provided by the dictionary is followed by my English gloss, separated from the former by a slash (“/”). Indentation is used in order to show more clearly the meanings and terms related to entries from the dictionary.

$ Ualacito
   << ULAH:  durante / during
   (ulah ak’ab: durante la noche / during the night;
   ulah ha’ab: durante el año / during the year;
   ulah k’in: durante el día / during the day)

$ Yahal cab
   << AHAL KAB:  amanecer / dawn (in possessed form)
   AHAL  1:  despertar / to awaken
   AHAL KAB 1:  ser el mundo creado / creation of the world;
   2:  madrugada / dawn
   (cf. K’ALAK K’IN: creación del mundo / creation of the world)

$ oxlahun
   << OXLAHUN:  trece / thirteen

$ pic
   << 2 PIK  4:  el número de ocho mil / the number eight thousand
   5,7:  mil en número [es un error, debe ser ocho mil] / one thousand in number [it is in error, must be eight thousand]
   8:  el número antiguo de ocho mil y hoy de mil / the ancient number of eight thousand, one thousand nowadays
   10:  ocho mil / eight thousand
   (cf. pictun = 20 baktuns = 400 katuns = 8000 tuns)
   3 PIK  6:  sobrecarga / overload
   PIKIL  7:  multitud / plethora
   2. PIKTAN  1:  mucho o muchos / plenty or many
   3. PIKTANIL  1,7,8:  muchedumbre / crowd
   8:  multitud, infinidad / plethora, infinity

$ tz’ac
   << 1 TS’AK  4:  para siempre [cosa sin fin] / forever [eternal or endless thing]
   2 TS’AK  3:  estado, medida general para las milpas / stadium, general
measure for cornfields
3 TS'AK 1-3, 6-9: grados de parentesco / degrees of parentage
4 TS'AK 2,5: nudo, juntura o añadidura / knot, joint or addition
3: grado, escalón para subir / step (as in a stairway)

$ tu = TU

7: [pronombre de tercera persona] su / third person possessive pronoun
8: pronombre de tercera persona, su o en su; cuando se une a un numeral tiene el romance de por / third person possessive pronoun; when joined with a numeral has the gloss “for” (tu ka’aten, tu ka’ a muk: por segunda vez / for the second time)

$ uuc << UUK

siete / seven

$ u xocan << 1 XOK

8,9: cuenta / count
8: numeración / numeration
2. XOKA’N 2,5,6: cuenta / count
3. U XOKA’N 1: cuenta para veces, el número / count for times, the number
3: u xok’a n kuxtal: cuenta de la vida, pensamientos y palabras / account of life, thoughts and words

The meanings listed above point to several flaws in the translations by both Roys and Edmonson. The major misinterpretation involves the phrase tu uuc (or T u uuc). Roys interprets it as the second term of an addition, namely “thirteen infinite series <added> to seven,” while Edmonson treats it in the same fashion but with a different first term, namely “thirteen thousand steps and seven.” Apparently, they missed the fact that tu, normally a third person possessive pronoun, preceding a numeral produces an ordinal construction. Therefore, the phrase tu uuc has the literal meaning of “for the seventh time.” On the other hand, while Roys’ interpretation of oxlahun pic tz’ac as “thirteen infinite series” is justified, Edmonson’s translation as “thirteen thousand steps” is faulty because of the incorrect meaning of pic as “one thousand.” The meaning of pic as “eight thousand” is confirmed by the artificial term pictun used by epigraphers to designate the time period equivalent to twenty baktuns (= 400 katuns = 8000 tuns).²

ALTERNATIVE TRANSLATION AND PARAPHRASE

The above considerations suggest a new translation of the sentence in question, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ualacito</th>
<th>During</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yahal cab,</td>
<td>its dawn,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oxlahun pic</td>
<td>thirteen times eight thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tz’ac</td>
<td>step(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu uuc</td>
<td>for the seventh time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u xocan</td>
<td>its count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yahal cab.</td>
<td>its dawn.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which can be paraphrased either as:

Thirteen times 8000 steps for the seventh time during its dawn is the count of its dawn.

or as

Seven steps above 13 times 8000 (= 13 pictuns?) after its dawn is the count of its dawn.  

The second paraphrase is strikingly reminiscent of a device apparently used by the Maya to link historical events with the mythological origin of the world, namely by means of extremely Long Counts involving coefficients of “13” at and beyond the baktuns position. An example is provided by the inscription on Step VII of the Hieroglyphic Stairs in Structure 33 at Yaxchilan, which contains a huge long count number (Figure 2) linking historical events in the life of “Bird Jaguar” with the creation of the world in the mythological past (Figure 3). A clausal-form complete reading of the inscription is provided in the next section.

The parallelism between my second paraphrase of the sentence in the Chumayel and the hieroglyphic inscription from Yaxchilan is supported by at least two facts. First, the Long Count number has seven coefficients of “13” beyond the pictuns position, which has the same coefficient. Second, it is noteworthy that of all the known variants of the Distance-Number Introductory Glyph (Figures 4 and 5), the head-variant form of the glyph preceding the Long Count (numbers 16 to 19 in Thompson 1971, Fig. 30) has been given the gloss “as day changes to night” (Schele 1988:100). However, on the basis of Schele’s glosses of the other variants of the Distance-Number Introductory Glyph (DNIG), it is apparent that the meaning of a glyph that is used allegorically does not follow from a directionality implied by the collocation of its constituents. Therefore, the variant of the DNIG under consideration can equally be given the gloss “as day replaces night” or, equivalently, “dawn.” By semantic extension, “dawn” can then be equated with the creation of the world.

Since the text on Step VII has previously been commented upon in a scanty fashion (Schele and Miller 1986:249; Miller and Houston 1987:54-56), its overall interpretation is briefly summarized. The text establishes a relationship between war and the ballgame and, by implication, between war and sacrifice. The left side of the inscription deals with events in the mythological past, involving three decapitations (indirect references to war events) and subsequent defeats (of captives) in the ballgame. These events occurred in the Maw of the Underworld, at the beginning of time. The right side involves historical events in the life of Bird Jaguar, ruler of Yaxchilan, who re-enacted the third mythological defeat by playing the ballgame on his stairway. The effect of such a re-enactment was the invocation of the vision serpent. Both sides are “linked” by a huge Long Count number, which is “neither a distance number, nor a projection deep into the past or future ... [but a device used by Bird Jaguar to set his action of ballplaying in] the realm of sacred behavior within a time frame that approached infinity” (Schele and Miller, 1986:249). The coefficients of “13” above the baktuns position would, if taken as significant, amount to 350,315,789,460 baktuns prior to the normal Long Count 9.15.13.6.9 that marks the historical time of Bird Jaguar’s action.

Dealing with “how the Maya thought in vast expanses of time,” Thompson stated:

“One of the most interesting of the calculations into the past occurs on the Tablet of the Inscriptions, Palenque. It was Richard C.E. Long (1923) who first solved this equation by reading the tun coefficient as 2 instead of 1. With that change he was able to connect the dates satisfactorily:
The coefficients of the two highest periods of the first date have been supplied from a possible arrangement of the inscription on Tikal [Stela] 10. The calculation here covers 1,264,982 tuns, a little short of 1,250,000 years” (1971:314, Appendix IV).

It is interesting to note that the left side of the inscription on Step VII offers some insight into the world view of the Maya. The three decapitations (war events) and defeats in the ball-game represent corresponding destructions of the world, and the record of those events was deemed most important by the Maya. Apparently, the re-creations of the world, represented by the manifestation (i.e., invocation) of ancestors through sacrifice, were assumed to be inevitable consequences of the destructions.
FIGURE 3. RIGHT SIDE OF STEP VII OF THE HIEROGLYPHIC STAIRS IN STRUCTURE 33 AT YAXCHILÁN.

(AFTER GRAHAM, I., 1982, VOL. 3, PT. 3.)
(REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM THE PEBODY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY.)

FIGURE 4. DISTANCE-NUMBER INTRODUCTORY GLYPH.

(AFTER THOMPSON 1971, FIGS. 30.9–16)
(REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS.)
The reading of the text is based on the assumption that a Cholan language was spoken by the Maya at Yaxchilan (Kelley 1976:9, map). The only exceptions are the glyphs for days, months, and period names which, according to normal usage, are given in Yucatec. The phonetic values of individual glyphs are based on the syllabary compiled by D. Stuart (1987:46-47), and refined by Schele (1989:5a, 5b). The readings of cartouches follow the conventions proposed by G. Stuart (1988), with the exception that the ambiguities inherent to Thompson’s (1962) notation are resolved by means of parentheses. Thus the notation “X.(Y:Z)” indicates that “X” is to the left of a compound formed by “Y” above “Z”. Of course, this refinement has no effect on the meaning of a cartouche as derived from the values of its constituents. The readings of specific glyphs and glyphic compounds are due to the work of a number of scholars. Except in cases where a reading is generally understood (or long known), readings are credited in appropriate footnotes when written for the first time. (Notation: In the readings of glyphs “-Vm” stands for “verbal modifier” and “DN” stands for “distance number.” Missing constituents of Maya words are enclosed by square brackets; constituents and words are given in italics.)

AUTHOR’S NOTE

This paper was written in 1991 but was never published. In the words of David Stuart (personal communication 2017), “[many] of the epigraphic readings use very old and out-dated sign values. Epigraphic readings in the RRAMW need to reflect the more-or-less agreed-upon analyses and conventions used by most epigraphers.” The old sign values were state-of-the-art in 1991. Instead of just replacing the old sign values with the new ones, I will keep the old ones separated from the new ones by a red horizontal line. This will illustrate how much the epigraphic readings have evolved from 1991 to at least 2013, the publication date of Version 2 of David Stuart’s Maya Hieroglyph Syllabary. If there is no horizontal line, the old reading stands as it was.
CONCLUSION

This paper has dealt with the translation of an obscure sentence related to the history of the creation of the world in the Chilam Balam of Chumayel. On the basis of an analysis of the sentence constituents, its previous translations have been shown to be inaccurate. From the fact that a possible paraphrase of the revised translation parallels a passage recorded in a hieroglyphic inscription, it can be posited that the new translation is a better alternative in that it documents once more the survival of ancient Maya beliefs in Colonial texts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Brian Stross for his valuable comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper, and to the late Linda Schele, my Ph.D. dissertation advisor, for her personal communications on the readings of particular glyphs. Last, but not least, my wife Diane Law must be acknowledged for proofreading this paper twice.

ENDNOTES

1 Linda Schele brought to my attention the translation of ahal kab as “creation of the world,” communicated to her by Nikolai Grube (1991).

2 In fact, the actual names given by the ancient Maya to the periods starting at the 5th position of a Long Count and beyond remain unknown (Kelley 1976:33).

3 The long count number 13.0.0.0.0 in hieroglyphic inscriptions is interpreted as designating the beginning of the current Maya era (4 Ahau 8 Cumku) because it is implied by the inscription on the tablet from the Temple of the Cross at Palenque. Lounsbury (1976) solved the puzzle of the initial series of the tablet, namely 12.19.13.4.0 (8 Ahau 18 Tzec), by observing that it is the birthdate of an ancestral mother, “Lady Beast-with-the-Upturned-Snout,” 6.14.0 before the Classic era. The addition of the distance number to the initial series leads to 13.0.0.0.0, and the text of the tablet explicitly states (Schele, 1987:66):

- D3: [on] 4 Ahau
- C4: 8 Cumku (13.0.0.0.0)
- D4: were completed
- C5: 13 baktuns

The distance number 8.5.0 (at D1-C2) implies the birth of GI’ (Schele, 1987:59) on 12.19.11.3.0, 1 Ahau 8 Muan, before the Classic era (Figure 6a). Going forward from the beginning of the era, the distance number 1.9.2 (at D5-C6) leads to 13.0.1.9.2, 13 Ik 20 Mol, the date on which GI’ entered the sky (Schele 1987:58) (Figure 6b). The next distance number illustrates the functionality of “13” as zero. Recorded at A13-B15, the number 1.18.3.12.0 added to 13.0.1.9.2 gives the date 1.18.5.3.2, 9 Ik 15 Ceh, which is the birthdate of the first god of the Palenque Triad (Lounsbury 1976:212; Schele 1987:58) (Figure 6c). Therefore, a coefficient of “13” in the baktuns position is functionally equivalent to zero just because the Maya, without an apparent reason, decided to start the current era on the completion of 13 baktuns since the beginning of the previous one. By extension, all the coefficients of “13” at the pictuns position and beyond also function as zeros. When used in Long Counts involving infinities, the coefficients of “13” can be interpreted as a “literary” way of referring to the completion of many higher-order cycles since the beginning of time, as is the case of the Long Count 13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.9.15.13.6.9 recorded on Step VII of the Hieroglyphic Stairs in Structure 33 at Yaxchilán (see Figures 3 and 7). Thompson (1971:148) drew attention to Stela 1 from Cobá, containing a series of glyphs, each with a “13” coefficient, preceding the record of 13 kinchiltuns, and speculated that some of these glyphs might have represented higher periods of time in the vigesimal system. However, Schele (personal communication) pointed out that the date 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku, preceded by extremely long series of coefficients of “13”, is explicitly written several times in other inscriptions from Cobá.

4 The ch’ak ‘decapitation’ reading was independently derived by Orejel (1990) and by Nikolai Grube (Schele, personal communication).
FIGURE 6. DISTANCE NUMBERS IN THE TABLET OF THE CROSS DISCUSSED IN FOOTNOTE 3.

A. After Schele, L., 1987, p. 58
B. After Schele, L., 1987, p. 58
C. After Schele, L., 1987, p. 58

(Drawn by J.C. Splitstoser After Schele 1987:58)
A1: 13 Manik

B1: 5 Pax

A2: $(ch'acka),(ba:?) = ch'ak decapitation$

B2: SUBJECT OR OBJECT

A3: $ul.(mahul-vm)$ HIS FIRST

B3: $ah.(ha:li) = ahali defeat$

A4: 17 K'ins [0 Winals]

B4: 19 Tuns

A5: 5 K'atuns

(DN = 5.19.0.17)

B5: $iwal.(ui:ti) = iwal ut$

A6: 9 K'an

B6: 12 Xul

C1: $(ch'acka),(ba:?) = ch'ak decapitation [ob]$

C2: SUBJECT OR OBJECT

D2: $ul.(ka'.he:l-vm)$ HIS SECOND

C3: $ah.(ha:li) = ahali defeat$

D3: 11 K'ins, 14 [Winals]

C4: 10 Tuns

D4: 8 K'atuns

C5: 3 Bak'tuns (DN = 3.8.10.14.11)

(After Graham, I., 1982, Vol. 3, Pt. 3.)
FIGURE 7. CLAUSE-FORM READING OF THE TEXT ON STEP VII OF THE HIEROGLYPHIC STAIRS IN STRUCTURE 33 AT YAXCHILN (CONTINUED).

GLYPHS D5–H6

D5: iwal.(uit) = iwal ut and

1 ultii
  THEN IT CAME TO PASS

E3: [ch’ak](ra?)
  = ch’ak decapitation [of]

E4: subject or object

E5: ox.(ahalli)
  = ox ahal third defeat

F5: “ballcourt”.ah
  ballplaying verb

E6: (mu?) .(chan-right)
  ooh+eex+oor?
  death

F6: (uit),ix
  = utix it had come to pass

G5: pa.(nal?)

ik-way-ya-nal
“[At] the maw of the underworld” location

G6: wak.(nal?[chan])
  = wak chanal
  “The beginning of time, 4 ahau 8 cumku, when the sky was lifted up”

H6: ut .((k’nakbal)ah)
  ut= tz’ak=aj
  “as day changes to night”

(After Graham, I., 1982, Vol. 3, Pt. 3.)
(As Thompson noted [1971, Appendix IV, p. 314], there is no direct evidence for the use of the period names beyond tuns. I used them following the “standard” practice.)
The reading of this cartouche as ahal is due to Nikolai Grube (Schele, personal communication), who has used the Yucatec meaning of “creation/manifestation” (cf. Barrera Vázquez 1982). However, under the assumption that a Cholan language was spoken at Yaxchilán, and without stretching the principle of synharmony (Kelley 1976:180) to drop the last vowel, the Cholti word ahali “vencer/to defeat” (Morán 1935:66, vocabulary) is clearly more fitting to the context established by a decapitation. The reading is reinforced by the derived word ahaliya “vencedor/victor” (Morán 1935). Grube’s interpretation follows from mine by describing the teleology of a defeat, namely the creation or manifestation of a supernatural being (Schele and Miller 1986:243) through the sacrifice of a captive defeated both in battle and in the ballgame (cf., Orejel 1990). Consequently, both Yucatec ahal “creation/manifestation” and Chol ahali “evil spirit” follow from Cholti ahali “to defeat”, which is an indirect reference to destruction.

The reading of the Posterior Event Indicator as iwal ut “and then it came to pass” is due to Schele (1987, 1988), who based it on the Cholti word yual “actualidad/present time” (Morán 1935:1, vocabulary).

The “ballplaying” verb reading is due to Houston (1983).

The reading of this “death” expression is due to Schele (personal communication).

The reading of the Anterior Event Indicator as utix “it had come to pass” is due to Schele (1987, 1988).

Based on a closer inspection of this cartouche in Graham’s photograph (1982-3:161), Schele (personal communication) has interpreted the Maw of the Underworld as the location where the decapitation/death events occurred in the mythological past.

Reading due to Schele (1987).

Identification due to Orejel (1990), based on Schele’s (1987) interpretation of wak chan as “the lifted up sky.”

The gloss of the DNIG follows Schele (1988). As discussed in the paper, the DNIG also admits the interpretation “as night is replaced by day,” (i.e., dawn) which semantically can be extended to denote the creation of the world.

Reading due to Schele (personal communication, 1991).

Reading due to Josserand, Schele and Hopkins (1980).

Reading due to Schele (personal communication, 1991).

The reading of the “ben-ich” prefix as ahpo/ahau “lord” is due to Lounsbury (1973).

Reading due to D. Stuart (1983).

The reading of the “water prefix” as ch’ul “divine/precious” is due to Schele (1987).

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