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Contributions in New World Archaeology 4, 13-40

2012

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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STATEMENTS OF IDENTITY – EMBLEM GLYPHS IN THE NEXUS OF POLITICAL RELATIONS

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Abstract

The meaning of emblem glyphs is now widely accepted as an indicator or presentation of a specific site or polity over which a site had dominion. It is well known that specific emblems show unusual patterns of both individual and spatial distribution. Thus, a mere territorial reference might not be appropriate to describe the complex socio-political dimension of emblem glyphs.

This paper will argue by using some crucial texts that emblem glyphs served as an emic identifier for the elite groups governing polities. A number of cases from the epigraphic record reveal political statements concerning the application of emblem glyphs. The examples include the sharing of the same emblem across sites, the combination of two distinct emblems in one or more sites, and the migration of emblems between sites.

If we subsume this information under the variations in emblem glyphs according to a person's current socio-political role, we get important insight into how the elite self-conception in Classic times shaped political identification, relations and boundaries. The processes behind the genesis, distribution and extinction of emblems inform us not only of the self-identity of the people referred to in this emblem, but also about the rise and fall of the cities they ruled.

Resumen

En la actualidad hay un amplio acuerdo en aceptar el significado de los glifos emblema como un indicador o representación de un sitio o la ciudad estado sobre la cual el sitio tuvo dominio.

Se sabe bien que emblemas específicos muestran patrones inusuales en su distribución. Por lo tanto, una referencia territorial no es siempre apropiada para describir la compleja dimensión socio-política de los emblemas.

El estudio presente argumenta, que los glifos emblema funcionaron como identificador émico por los grupos nobles que gobernaban un territorio. Algunos ejemplos de la epigrafía revelan declaraciones políticas con respecto a la aplicación de los glifos emblema. Estos ejemplos incluyen la división del mismo glifo emblema a través de varios sitios, la combinación de dos emblemas en uno o más sitios y la migración de emblemas entre sitios.

Combinando esta información con la variación de los glifos emblema, según el papel socio-político de una persona, se obtiene una comprensión importante de la concepción misma de la nobleza clásica y su contribución a formar entidades políticas, relaciones y demarcaciones. El proceso que motiva la génesis, distribución y extinción de emblemas también nos permite concluir el ascenso y caída de las ciudades mayas.

INTRODUCTION

This paper¹ is about “statements of identity” in a range of applications. As a marker of these identities, I will make use of the emblem glyphs attributed to the highest representatives of a Maya polity – the divine lord or *k’uhul ajaw* – and the closest members of his lineage. In an attempt to also draw implications for the political landscape of Classic Maya times, there needs to be an intertwined approach to applying these identities. In order to get such an overall socio-political picture, it is necessary to consider individual and group identities as well as governmental entities. As we shall see, these are not necessarily separate in the case of Classic Maya polities.

I will argue that emblem glyphs served as a primarily emic social identifier for the nobility governing polities. Before elaborating on this and other cases I utilise, it is appropriate to first define some of the operating premises with respect to terminology.

Emblem glyphs were first discussed as a distinct sign collocation by Heinrich Berlin (1958) and recognised as titles (Mathews & Justeson 1984: 216-217) because of their syntactic position within nominal phrases. I will apply the term emblem glyph when it appears as a personal title in the original sense (Berlin 1958) and speak of an emblem when referring to the variable main sign (Berlin 1958: 111) that may also appear in a couple of different environments (cf. Stuart & Houston 1994: 7-18, 93).

Speaking of nobility is difficult and involves simplification. In a recent synopsis, Houston and Inomata (2009: 44-45) try to cope with the assignment of nobles vs. non-elites and what they call “group strife” (2009: 48), a factor that certainly plays a role in this investigation. Simple as it may sound, it is sufficient for this study to restrict myself to all those personages who can be identified by the attribution of an emblem in their nominal phrase (also see footnote 5), thus having a (group) identity (Houston & Inomata 2009: 163). I do, however, acknowledge that certain persons or social strata will therefore be omitted in this paper. As we shall see, the titular embedding of an emblem is not unambiguous enough to eventually further stratify the nobility or to identify social roles, and the term “elite” does not necessarily correspond with a formal rank (Marcus 1992: 295).

The third premise needs to encompass the definition of a polity. Yet, the question of the nature of a Maya “state” alone could literally fill volumes with different analytical models and approaches (cf. Grube 2000: 549-550). In this paper, I will restrict myself to Grube’s (2000: 553) roundup where the concept of a “city-state” is the most appropriate. In his summary, the royal court and its seat equates to a city, the capital of the entire state, thus we often have the toponym of this site used as its emblem (cf. Stuart & Houston 1994: 93). In that respect, it is also more apt to apply the term “polity” in its double sense for either a neutral reference to a political body or the ideal model of a city state per se.

The following discussion will scrutinise a few cases some of which have long been known from the epigraphic record and some recent discoveries. In the new light of some anthropological studies dealing with self-conception (Sökefeld 1999) and cultural memory (Assmann 2002), these examples reveal interesting power-political statements. These cases (Fig. 1) are:

- The sharing of an emblem across several distinct polities, as in Tikal, Dos Pilas, and other sites in the Petexbatun area, as well as in Palenque, Tortuguero, and Comalcalco;
- The combination of emblems from two sites such as Yaxchilan and Laxtunich, Machaquila and Cancuen, or Bonampak and Lacanha;
- The migration or relocation of one or more emblems between sites, as in Calakmul, Dzibanche, Uxul, and Oxpemul.

Such examples were once termed “uncomfortable details” by Norman Hammond (1991: 276). But it is my opinion that we need to tackle them, “not because they are easy, but because they are hard” (Kennedy

¹ This paper is an enlargement of the theoretic framework first applied to my study on the inscriptions of Tortuguero (Gronemeyer 2006: 50-53), which discussed the appearance of the *baakil* emblem in that site.

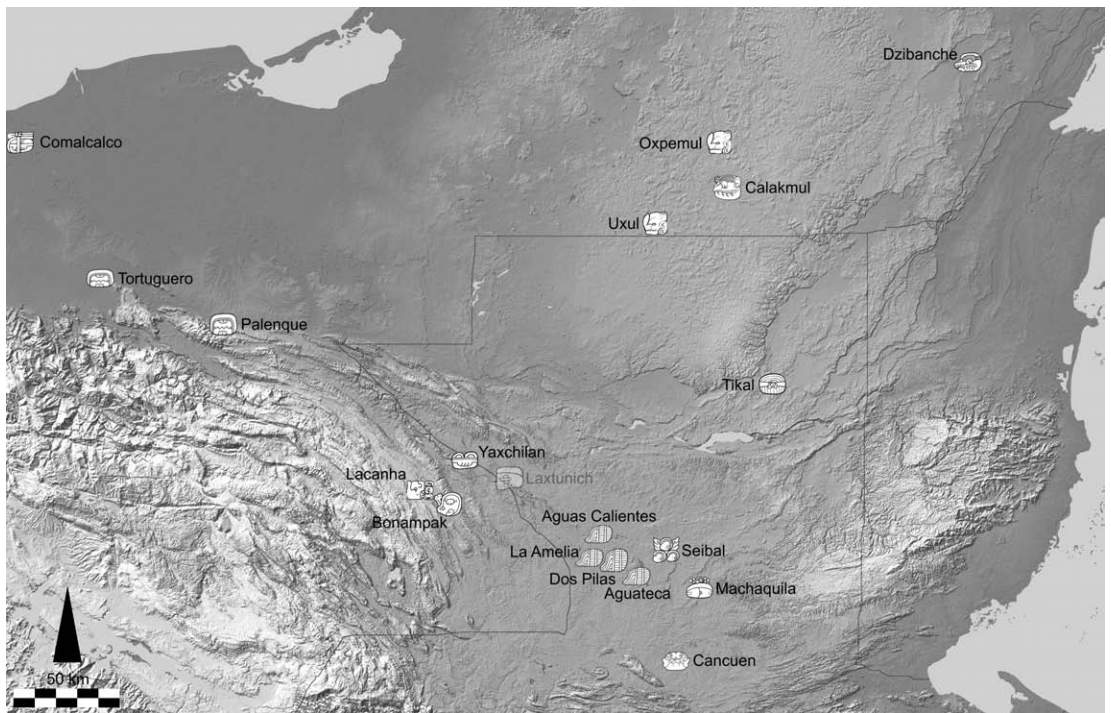


Figure 1. Map of the sites mentioned in the case studies with their principal / original emblem. A possible localisation for Laxtunich is given, but as the site is still unprovenanced, it is greyed out. Map by Sven Gronemeyer. Height relief by Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM), PIA03364. Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech.

1962), since under the broader anthropological perspective, understanding them will provide us with an important insight into how elite self-conception shaped political identification, relations, and boundaries. Opening this “black box” (Hammond 1991) will allow us to understand the processes behind the genesis, distribution, and extinction of emblems. This will not only enable us to further define the social groups behind these emblems, but also help us to understand the rise and fall of the cities they were ruling.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND SCOPE

Much of our current understanding of the nature of Classic Maya emblem glyphs derives from subsequent studies by Peter Mathews (1985, 1988, 1991). Emblems are now mostly (Mathews 1991: 24) considered to be place names, or, on the larger scale, with the major site being equivalent to the polity (Grube 2000: 553), as an appellation for localities or territories (cf. Marcus 1976: 11). As Mathews and Justeson (1984: 216) stated, they are a reference for “the political unit over which one site had dominion.” The ancient name of the site to which they are most obviously bound was also among the interpretations by early scholars (cf. Berlin 1958: 111; Barthel 1968: 120; Kelley 1976: 215). While toponyms clearly refer to local features in the sense of region names or proper names of natural and artificial landmarks (Stuart & Houston 1994: 7-12), emblems are more abstract and rather reflect the idea of a wider area (Colas 2004: 232). The occasional suffixion of emblems with *-l* suffixes (Colas 2004: 231) for abstraction or locatives (cf. Lacadena 2001: 4; Houston *et al.* 2001: 25-26; Lacadena & Wichmann 2005: 19-28) seems to support this idea.

In contrast, other interpretations have emerged through time and have been the subject of controversies. Still, not all nuances have been solved. Ethnic affiliations have also been used as one model to explain emblem glyphs (Barthel 1968: 120). But it is problematic to employ the conceptual domain “ethnic group” in the case of Maya society interacting within its city states (Graham 2006: 109-110, 113). Other connotations brought forward by different authors are either too restricted and focus on a certain concept, or they tend towards a terminological preoccupation when dealing with the conceptual idea of emblems. Proskouriakoff (1960: 471) narrowed emblem glyphs down to the insignia of a “dynasty” or a “lineage”, as did others (Berlin 1958: 111; Colas 2004: 249; Martin 2005: 12). The name of tutelary gods (Berlin 1958: 111) or an honorific title (Barthel 1968: 120) was also among the interpretations.

A much more neutral notion of emblems would therefore be a “group” or a thereby expressed “group identity” (cf. Sökefeld 1999: 417) with likely “political overtones” (Graham 2006: 117). In this sense, a multitude of individual sentiments for sameness is combined in a common consciousness to be part of a social environment “in which and through which personal identity was formed” (Sökefeld 1999: 417). Epigraphically palpable, this holds true for the elite and its individual members as the originators of inscriptional information. With the commissioning of a hieroglyphic text, we may get a complex fabric of several individuals and collective information (Emberling 1997: 299), an “intersectionality of identities” (Sökefeld 1999: 423). A ruler for example, an individual, will record both his individual and personal identity (Assmann 2002: 131-132), i.e. his “self” (Sökefeld 1999: 418) and his individual social role² (Kray 1997: 29). The ruler will also, even if only implicitly, make statements about his collective identity (Assmann 2002: 132), i.e. the group he belongs to, either as a simple member or when interacting in his social role with others from the same group or different groups³. From the *k’uhul ajaw*, as the paramount character in Maya society, we could break down the same information for inferior social strata, for nobles identified as an *ajaw*, those that are a *sajal*, for scribes, military commanders, etc. (Houston & Inomata 2009: 63). With enough information provided, each individual known from the inscriptions could, simply stated, be positioned in a grid of identities, for which an intersection big enough would constitute a “group.” All members of this group would express their emic view of the group’s identity similarly in the epigraphic record. But the recipient has to consider these statements as etic, provided he is not a member of the respective group and does not share its identity (Emberling 1997: 304). Under this premise, emblems also function as a device to convey the emic identity to the outside⁴ (cf. Assmann 2002: 39-40).

² The dichotomy of different conceptions of self and identity has also been discussed by Sökefeld (1999: 418-419, 424). As Cohen (1994: 22) rightly argues, we have to examine the relations between the self and groups, individuals and the collective “to illuminate society.” As a result of this desideratum, we have to pursue the question of the ancient Maya self (Houston & Inomata 2009: 56), in an epigraphically aimed study specifically in regard to the elites. We may easily get trapped in the methodological tension between a paradigmatic application of self and identity that biases our perception of the epigraphic record as our main, if not even our sole, source of information of the Classic society. Although this paper is about statements of identity, it must be clear that the analyses and postulates herein can only be a rough approximation based on the available epigraphic sources plus cross-cultural observations and “common sense” (Houston & Inomata 2009: 44). To reconstruct a generic (elite) perception of the Classic self and identity (cf. Houston & Inomata 2009: 42-64) is not the aim of this paper, nor is it to correlate it to its physical presence (Houston et al. 2006: 57).

³ A second layer of information is what Assmann (2002: 48-56) calls the communicative and the cultural memory, although it is not always clearly separated. The first focuses on recent history and individual, prosopographical accounts. The latter is the socially accepted, even canonised knowledge of far (and mythic) history and its impact on contemporary people.

⁴ Halbwachs (1925: 303-304) mentions mediaeval heraldry in a comparable context. Although the use of heraldic figures shows some intriguing parallels to the epigraphic examples detailed here, there is yet a significant difference (Christian Prager, pers. comm. January 2010): the blazon of a coat of arms will never result in a phonemic

The division of society into nobility vs. commoners raises further questions. First of all, the question is whether emblems were only used among the elites themselves as a medium or instrument to create, display, or maintain their respective group identity. Secondly, we must ask whether the lower reaches of Classic society also had a mental relation to the emblem of a specific polity, site, or ruling house. It is hard to tell how social strata were divided and how “otherness” was perceived between them (Houston & Inomata 2009: 45), but above all: To what extent did the Classic Maya consider themselves “citizens” of a specific polity? Was there a broad, social consensus – with emblems thus not being exclusively elite from a cognitive point of view – or can we consider something like a *cuius territorium, eius signum* rule? Without the non-elites having a voice in the inscriptions, this can hardly⁵ be answered.

It may, under certain circumstances, also be difficult to extract the correct meaning of an identity from a historical account. Identity can be quite complex and differentiated (cf. Sökefeld 1999: 422-423), as a popular example demonstrates for the attribution to a group of people. John F. Kennedy’s epochal “Ich bin ein Berliner” (1963) was not a self-description of his real social affiliation, but an emotional integration into the citizenship of West Berlin, as “[a]ll free men, wherever they live, are citizens of Berlin.” In that Cold War situation, Kennedy also politically embodied “as a free man” the American alliance for and with the Berliners.

With the above premises and questions, I will now look into the cases from epigraphic sources. They are mainly built on previous research and serve the main purpose of sketching the different environments in which we find emblems applied.

When investigating these cases, as well as the following case studies, we must deduce the motivations from the historical accounts, survey the causalities, and apply them in a diachronical and spatial distribution (cf. Goetz 1993: 302). In the second step, the results need consolidation to elaborate the macro-structural use of emblem glyphs that may answer the question of statements of identity which will be part of the synoptic discussion.

SHARED EMBLEMS

One piece of the puzzle in understanding emblem glyphs comprises the case, where several distinct polities, and therefore, elite factions, identified themselves by the same emblem. I would like to discuss the cases of two emblems where each one was shared between a number of distinctive sites and polities. The first is the emblem *mutu’ul* in Tikal and Dos Pilas (cf. Johnston 1985; Martin & Grube 2000: 55) and later in the Petexbatun “petty kingdoms” of Aguas Calientes, Aguateca, La Amelia,

correlation with the pictured, whereas emblems are written words, e.g. the Palenque emblem can be read as *baakiil* and understood as “Place of the Bone” (Colas 2004: 231-232) or “Place where the Heron abounds” according to a different etymologic approach by Lacadena and Wichmann (2005: 28).

⁵ The use of emblems in the “title of origin” (Stuart & Houston 1994: 7-18) together with the agentive *aj-* prefix (cf. Jackson & Stuart 2001: 222) or *winik*, “person” (Houston *et al.* 2006: 11-12) may suggest a wider accepted use by or for other parts of the society. But in fact, the applicability question for non-elites has far more impact on the model of a Classic Maya polity than visible on the surface, which can only be briefly sketched here. If public ceremonies (cf. Demarest 1992: 150) were an important tool for “theatre states” to represent their ideology, there was an audience to eventually absorb this view or identity. However, there is a high chance that there was a high mobility (Houston & Inomata 2009: 244) of non-elites, especially peasants, between polities. High population fluctuation in a polity may prevent long-lasting identification bonds for a specific polity. But elites eventually forced such bonds, as the creation of new plazas to serve as the “theatrical stages” in Aguateca (Houston & Inomata 2009: 247-248) and Dos Ceibas (Eberl 2007: 512) after the integration into a different polity may suggest. In this respect, archaeology may contribute more to this question than epigraphy can.

and Seibal (Martin & Grube 2000: 64-65). The other is *baakiil*, appearing in Palenque, Tortuguero, and later Comalcalco (cf. Berlin 1958: fig. 28; Hoppan 1996: 156; Gronemeyer 2006: 37, 61-63)⁶. However, there is one more still poorly investigated case of a shared emblem known from Arroyo de Piedra and Tamarindito (Mathews & Willey 1991: 43-44, Houston 1993: 116, 125, Escobedo 1997: 308, Eberl 2007: 60-64). Both sites used to be under Dos Pilas' control in the Late Classic (cf. Eberl 2007: 65), as e.g. detailed by Arroyo de Piedra Stela 2, D3-F3.

The Emblem *mutu'ul*

The first ruler of Dos Pilas was *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* who reigned from AD 648. In the light of recent evidence, he was probably a brother or half-brother of the Tikal king *Nuun Ujol Chaak* (cf. Fahsen 2002; Boot 2002a; Guenter 2003; Eberl 2007: 64), as suggested by Dos Pilas Panel 6 (blocks: A7-B8). Obviously, a dynastic crisis was instigated when *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* killed a *mutu'ul ajaw* (Guenter 2003: 3, 14) as recorded on Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, East Stair, Step 6, D1-C2 (Fig. 2a). He was another noble of the same elite group, probably another Tikal prince. These events presumably led to some kind of "civil war", when the faction around *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* broke away from Tikal and founded an independent counter-kingdom in Dos Pilas. Interestingly, *Nuun Ujol Chaak* is always attributed with a full emblem glyph (*k'uhul mutu'ul ajaw*) in Tikal, while he constantly appears without any royal title at Dos Pilas (Guenter 2003: 14), with the one exception on Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step III, C2-E1 (see below).

The reason for the identical use of the *mutu'ul* emblem in both sites is evident, both *Nuun Ujol Chaak* and *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* considered themselves to be legitimate successors of a dynastic line, the first as the incumbent king in Tikal, the latter as what he himself would potentially have described as in exile in Dos Pilas. The idea of a counter-kingdom in Dos Pilas seeking to legitimise itself is strengthened by the mutual attacks and expulsions between Tikal and Dos Pilas (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 56-58; Guenter 2003). It is tempting to consider Dos Pilas as a basis for campaigns to get power back in Tikal, before it developed into a royal court in the later tenure of *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil*.

There are further intriguing details we can observe on Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step III (Fig. 2b), from which the accounts below are cited. The events are complemented on Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, East Stair, Step 5 (Fig. 2c, Guenter 2003: 16-17), although the exact events are difficult to reconstruct. A "Star War" event conducted by Calakmul ruler *Yuhknoom Ch'een*⁷ forced *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* to seek refuge in the fortified site of Aguateca (Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, East Stair, Step 5, E1-F2) a few kilometres southeast. Having already been expelled, the Dos Pilas king appears without his emblem glyph (blocks B2-C1), whereas the Tikal king, initiating another "Star War" against the land of Dos Pilas (block A2), is specified as a "*mutu'ul* person" (blocks C2-E1) in an almost pejorative manner. It is debatable if this is just a toponymic use of the *mutu'ul* sign to identify the Tikal ruler's origin. But if we interpret it as an emblem, the absence of the royal *k'uhul ajaw* title can only signify that *Nuun Ujol Chaak* was considered to be an invading usurper whom the local Dos Pilas tradition denied his prerogatives.

⁶ To what extent the "petty kingdoms" and also Comalcalco really belong to the case of shared emblems is somehow fuzzy. The late Petexbatun sites only feature that emblem after the demise of Dos Pilas (Martin & Grube 2000: 64-65), as does Comalcalco after the assumed abandonment of Tortuguero (Gronemeyer 2006: 61). Relocation may be even more appropriate in these cases. However, as Tikal and Palenque respectively still coexisted with these sites, I will discuss them together as a case of shared emblems.

⁷ Guenter (2003: 16-17) considers this to be an attempt by Calakmul to first extinguish the faction in Dos Pilas before concentrating its forces on the remaining heartland of Tikal. As Calakmul later became a Dos Pilas ally (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 108-109), there was obviously a strategic reorientation in supporting the counter-kingdom to beset Tikal with combined forces.

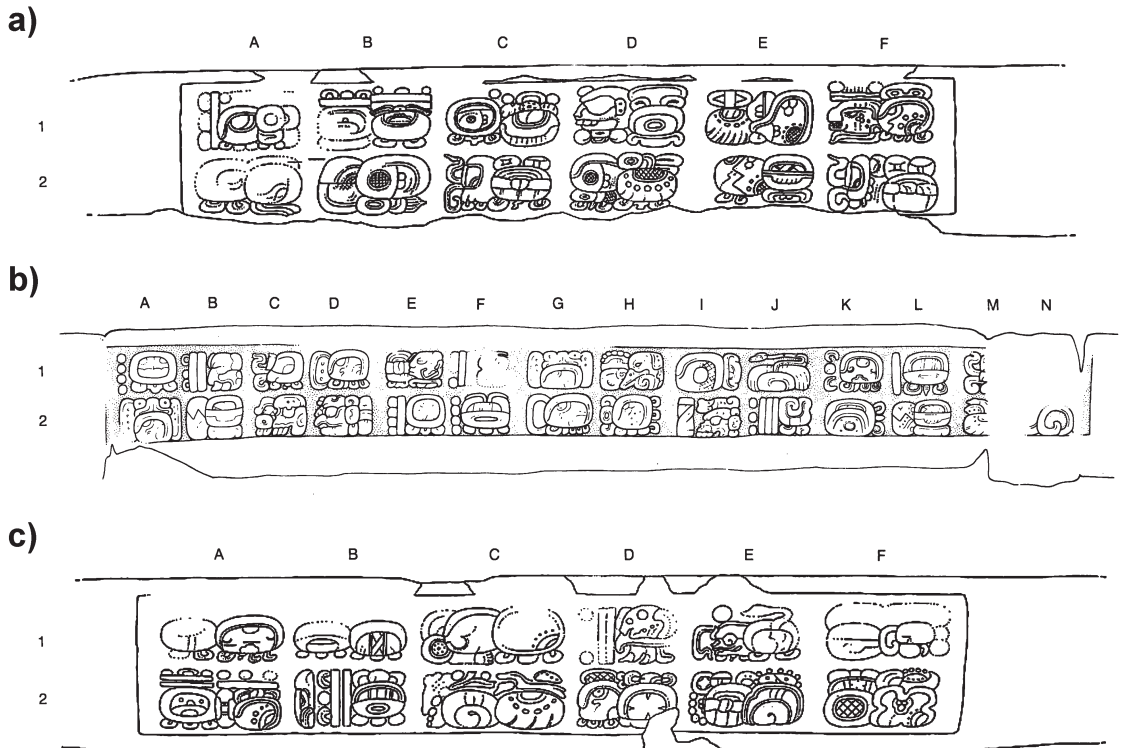


Figure 2. a) Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, East Stair, Step 6 with the killing of a *mutu'ul ajaw* (blocks D1-C2) under supervision (F1a) of *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* (blocks E2-F2). Drawing by Luis Fernando Luin (Fahsen 2002: fig. 3); b) Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step III. The name of the expelled *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* (blocks B2-C1) appears without an emblem glyph, while Tikal ruler *Nuun Ujol Chaak* (blocks C2-D2) is referred to as a “*mutu'ul* person” (block E1) while conducting a “Star War” event against Dos Pilas (block A2), but is denied a royal title in block I2. Drawing by Stephen Houston (1993: fig. 4-11); c) Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, East Stair, Step 5 which informs about *Yuhknoom Ch'een* II's raid on Dos Pilas (blocks C2-E1a) and the escape (block E1b) of *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* to *k'inich pa'witz*, the toponym for Aguateca (blocks F1-F2). Drawing by Luis Fernando Luin (Fahsen 2002: fig. 3).

To make a long story (cf. Houston & Inomata 2009: 137) short, the tide finally turned when Calakmul entered the stage by attacking the site of *Puliil* and *Nuun Ujol Chaak* most likely got set upon there or in the vicinity of that site and had to flee (blocks G1-I2, Boot 2002b: 5). On Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, West Stair, Step 3, blocks B2-E1 (Boot 2002a: 15) *Nuun Ujol Chaak* faces the final curtain of this fratricidal war: the defeat of his army and a “bloodbath” among the *mutu'ul* (Tikal) lords of the thirteen provinces (cf. Beliaev 2000: 65-67). Finally, the Tikal king met his own demise there. In both of the aforementioned events, he is again denied any emblem glyph, defeated, humiliated, torn out of the social context in the history written by his conqueror.

Another detail concerns the graphemic use of the different variants of the sign HB1 (sign classifications in this article follow Macri & Loooper 2003) for the *mutu'ul* emblem (also see James A. Doyle, this volume): Tikal and the early Dos Pilas predominantly use variant HB1(1) while other variants are seldom used in Tikal, but come to dominate with Dos Pilas Ruler 3. Martin and Grube (2000: 61) consider this shift as the perceptible symptom of a mature self-identity at Dos Pilas. It could even be suggested that

this is also the graphical indication for a stabilised political power, and a ruling house seeking separation – or even independence – from the line in Tikal. Yet, like their Tikal rivals, the Dos Pilas kings continued to make prominent use of the theonym *K'awiil* in their personal names (Houston & Inomata 2009: 57).

It is somewhat unclear why the *mutu'ul* variants Dos Pilas was using later were exploited by the “petty kings” after the political breakdown in Dos Pilas (Martin & Grube 2000: 63-64). As the authors speculated, some of these sites served as hideaways for members of the Dos Pilas dynasty (cf. Demarest 2006: 117). Local rulers of the Petexbatun area could also have tried to gain prestige from the old splendour of this emblem or to compete for the regional authority (Demarest 2006: 118) and the political heritage of Dos Pilas⁸.

The Emblem *baakiil*

The emblem of Palenque was one of the first to be recognised in the inscriptions (Berlin 1958). But it is as early as 353 AD that *baakiil* is also attributed to a place name in Tortuguero (Tortuguero Monument 6, block J2), although this is a retrospective mention from the late 7th century. It is therefore open to question, whether this refers to a locality in Palenque or Tortuguero. And in the latter case, the question is whether the emblem was already in use in the 4th century, or if this is rather a retrospective projection from the contemporary date (Gronemeyer 2006: 53).

The first Tortuguero ruler to carry the *baakiil* emblem is *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan* I (Gronemeyer 2006: 28, 49), the father of the famed *Bahlam Ajaw*. He is only named in a retrospective mention on Tortuguero Monument 6 (blocks L2-K3) in a passage providing family relations of *Bahlam Ajaw* (Fig. 3). Interestingly, it was not his mother *Ix Nay Ak Noh*, whom we know from Tortuguero Monument 8 (blocks A 21-A23),⁹ but *Ix Wan K'oj* (Tortuguero Monument 6, J17-K1), who was designated as a royal lady from Palenque (Gronemeyer 2006: 53; Gronemeyer & MacLeod 2010: fn. 56). The relationship statement *u-baah u-chit-ch'ab* (Jones 1977: 41-42) that connects *Ix Wan K'oj* with *Bahlam Ajaw* can be interpreted in two ways. As Erik Boot (cf. Prager 2002: I 96) has previously discussed, it could be connected to the Yucatec term *ix cit* (Ciudad Real 1995: f. 227v), which is the paternal aunt. In that case (Gronemeyer 2006: 35, 43-44), it brings forth a couple of interesting implications (cf. Gronemeyer 2006: 53-54).

Ihk' Muuy Muwaan could therefore have been the brother or half-brother of *Ix Wan K'oj*, and thus, also a likely member of the Palenque nobility. Whatever the reason was for establishing a separate line in Tortuguero, the obvious preference of *Ix Wan K'oj* as opposed to the mother of *Bahlam Ajaw* must have a reason. She was retrospectively believed to have brought the emblem into Tortuguero and *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan* I claimed the right to designate himself a *k'uhul baakiil ajaw* when he came to power in Tortuguero, indicating that he was not carrying the royal title before.

I tend to consider another type of relationship that involves the etymology *ket* for ‘join together’ in Itzá and “companion, co-...” in Yucatec (Barbara MacLeod, pers. comm. May 2010), with the relationship statement as ‘co-creator.’ As Barbara MacLeod (Gronemeyer & MacLeod 2010: fns. 56, 57) was able to point out, her role could have been to augment the newborn with “lineage power”,

⁸ These questions are of special interest in the case of Seibal, which used to have its own dynasty and emblem glyph under the rule of Dos Pilas (Martin & Grube 2000: 64). Furthermore, in a similar way, Terminal Classic Ixlu and Jimbal took over the Tikal emblem glyph between 859 and 889 AD (Houston & Inomata 2009: 306).

⁹ The relationship term *u-baah u-juntan* (Stuart 1997: 12) is regarded as one of maternal care and devotion. We have, however, instances wherein deities and rulers are connected via this expression. Therefore, persons other than the biological mother (e.g. a foster mother [Gronemeyer & MacLeod 2010: fn. 56]) might have this relationship with the child.

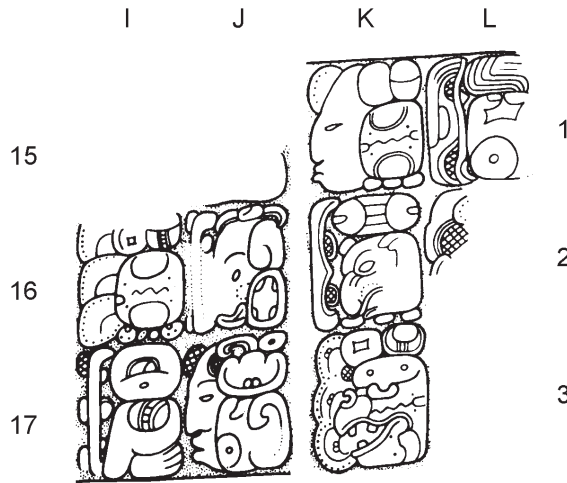


Figure 3. Tortuguero Monument 6, J15-K3 showing the relationship statements for *Bahlam Ajaw*. He himself is named J15-116. The terms *u-baah u-chit-ch'ab* (blocks J16-117) relate *Ix Wan K'oj* from Palenque (blocks J17-K1) and his father *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* (blocks L2-K3) via *u-nich u-kotz'oom* (L1-K2) to him. From a drawing by Ian Graham (Bricker 1986: fig. 37).

as similar expressions and scenes suggest in Yaxchilan. In that case, it seems plausible that *Bahlam Ajaw* mentioned her to highlight her Palenque origin and, even more, his lineage bonds. In this case, *Ix Wan K'oj* could have been invited by *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan* to play the role of a Palenquean “co-creator”. Alternatively, she could also have brought the *baakiil* emblem into Tortuguero as a spouse of *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan*.¹⁰ A final possibility weakens the relationships if we assume a posthumous mention of *Bahlam Ajaw*'s father with the intention to legitimise himself as a *baakiil* lord in Tortuguero.

The motivations for the sharing with – or, eventually, the shift to – Comalcalco are similarly vague. After Tortuguero waged war against Comalcalco in AD 649 (Gronemeyer 2006: 57), the latter's emblem *joy chan* (Martin & Grube 2000: 19; Armijo Torres *et al.* 2000: 58) vanished from the epigraphic record. About 60 years later, we observe the last erection of a monument with Tortuguero Monument 2 (Fig. 4a), commemorating the 14th *K'atun* ending during the reign of Ruler D (Gronemeyer 2006: 46-47, 60-61). We can also observe some kind of “hiatus” in Comalcalco since the war: the first epigraphic trace to be found on the site is that of Comalcalco Stela 1, seven years prior to the *K'atun* ending that mentions an accession (Grube *et al.* 2002: II 36). There is no indication how this ruler was titled, as most of the nominal phrase is broken away, but a local elite must have survived to erect this stela.

Roughly 14 years after the last monument was erected in Tortuguero, we can observe the first appearance of the *baakiil* emblem in Comalcalco (Grube *et al.* 2002: II 41), where the ruler *K'inich Ohl* dedicates a brick inscription associated with Temple 1 (Fig. 4b). As the aforementioned Stela 1 provides no answers in terms of an emblem glyph, there is room for speculation that after the death of

¹⁰ In that case, she should have been an earlier or later wife, if *Bahlam Ajaw* was a sibling from a matrimony with *Ix Nay Ak Noh*. Polygamy was certainly not practised among the Classic Maya (Tuszyńska 2009). Nuptial aspects may cause another interesting implication, regardless of the interpretation of *u-baah u-chit-ch'ab*, and the fact that *Ix Nay Ak Noh* was the wife in a morganatic marriage that would have made *Bahlam Ajaw* a less preferred successor. He in turn would have declared his *baakiil* descent to legitimise his tenure.

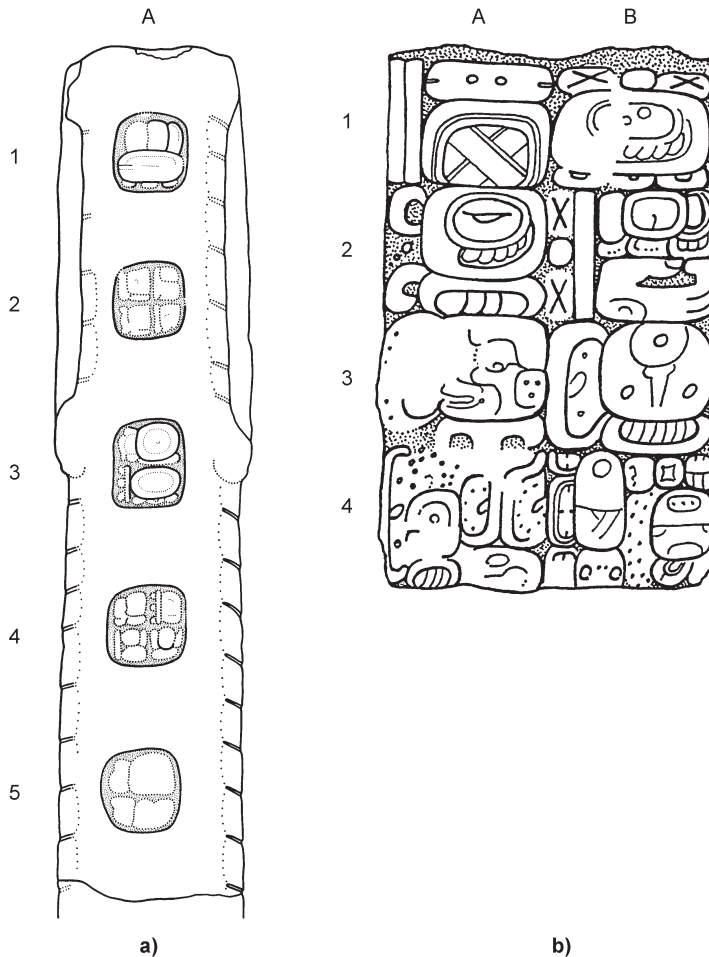


Figure 4. a) Tortuguero Monument 2 mentioning the 9.14.0.0.0 period ending with a *k'al tuun* (block A4a) ritual performed by Ruler D (block A5). Drawing by Sven Gronemeyer (2006: pl. 6); b) Comalcalco Modelled Brick 2 attributing the *baakiil* emblem to *K'inich Ohl* (block B4) on 9.14.14.9.12. Drawing by Jean-Michel Hoppan (Grube *et al.* 2002: II 41).

Ruler D the royal family of Tortuguero moved to Comalcalco (Gronemeyer 2006: 61-63). By that time, the early 8th century, Comalcalco experienced a considerable upswing, recognisable in the construction of the palace acropolis and other buildings.

This is, of course, one possible scenario that rather points to migration of the emblem and the people referring to it. However, a split, sharing, or takeover is not totally unlikely when based on the sparse epigraphic record, and inscriptions yet to be discovered may shed more light on this in the future. But in contrast to the *mutu'ul* case, we cannot determine any preference for a special graphemic variant. If Dos Pilas really wanted to separate itself from Tikal, which seems probable, considering their rivalry, no such motivation is traceable for Palenque, Tortuguero, or Comalcalco. In fact, at least the first two sites seem to have peacefully coexisted (Gronemeyer 2006: 60).

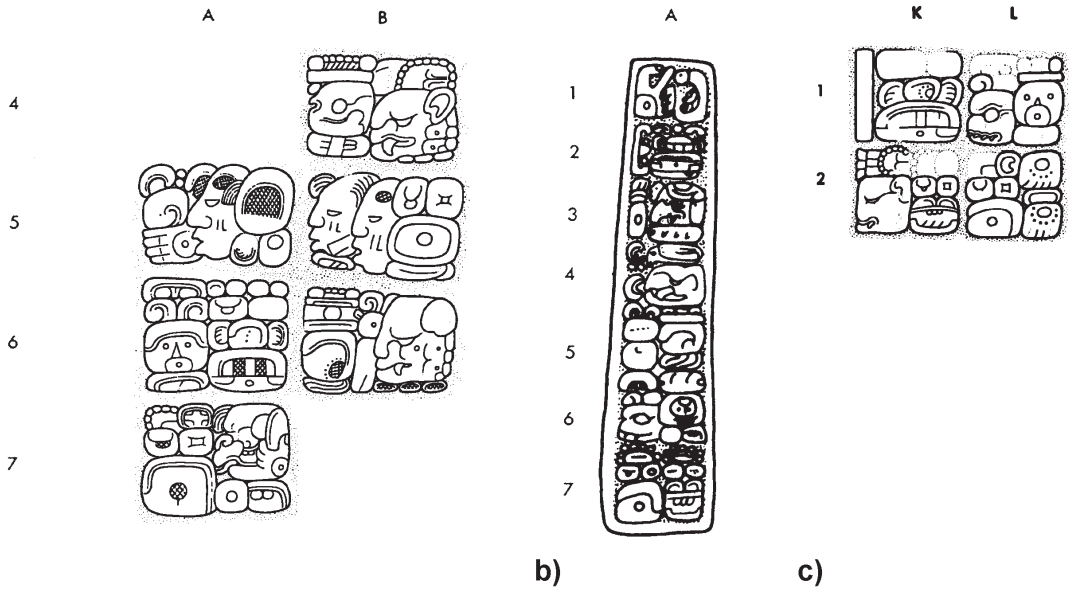


Figure 5. A sample of emblem glyphs for *Aj Wak Tuun Yaxuun Bahlam* and *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II*. a) Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Step IV, B4-A7 that gives the relationship statements for *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II*, attributing the *kaaj* emblem both to his mother (block B5) and his father (block A7). Drawing by Ian Graham (1982: 167); b) Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, A1-A7 endowing *Aj Wak Tuun Yaxuun Bahlam* (blocks A4-A5) with the combined emblem glyph (block A7). Drawing by Carolyn Tate (1992: fig. 85); c) Yaxchilan Lintel 56, K1-L2 that names *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II* with the combined emblem (blocks K2-L2a). Drawing by Ian Graham (1979: 121).

COMBINED EMBLEMS

The next case is the combination of emblems of two different sites. The discussion will mainly be restricted to the “split sky” emblem *pa’chan* (Boot 2004: 5; Martin 2004) of Yaxchilan and the “spot” emblem *kaaj* of a still un-located site¹¹ as the best documented example, although we have at least two additional examples namely, Bonampak / Lacanha / *Sak Tz’i’* (see Beliaev & Safronov 2009) and Machaquila / Cancuen. There are also highly specific instances in which we have a combination of the Copan and Quirigua emblem glyphs. This example will be omitted here, but will be discussed again in the summary when dealing with the social role.

The Emblems *pa’chan* and *kaaj*

There are also interesting insights into the use and function of emblems in the case of Yaxchilan and its double emblem glyph. As Ute Schüren (1992) was first able to demonstrate in a combined diachronic, referential, and genealogical analysis, the combined emblem first occurs in coeval inscriptions of *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II* (Fig. 5c, cf. Schüren [1992: 34]). Monuments erected before this

¹¹ There are indications (Schüren 1992: 37) to consider the site of Laxtunich as the origin of the *kaaj* emblem. I take the reading of the emblem based on Martin (1996: 225), who, together with Nikolai Grube, first proposed the logographic value /KAJ/ for this sign.

time and retrospective mentions of earlier Yaxchilan kings only feature the original *pa'chan* emblem. The second emblem does not occur in Yaxchilan at all before the time of *Itzamnaaj Bahlam's* father, *Aj Wak Tuun Yaxuun Bahlam* (Fig. 5b). The latter's spouse, *Ix Pakal* is identified with the *kaaj* emblem (Fig. 5a, cf. Schüren [1992: fig. 4] for epigraphic references). Based on these observations, Schüren (1992: 36) concluded that the marriage between *Aj Wak Tuun Yaxuun Bahlam* and *Ix Pakal* led to a strategic alliance between Yaxchilan and Laxtunich.

The question still remains as to what the nature of this political amalgamation was. Perhaps Yaxchilan was the *primus inter pares* in some sort of alliance. Alternatively, the Yaxchilan king might have ruled over both sites in personal union, just like the members of the House of Hanover did as regents of the United Kingdom of Great Britain (and Ireland) and the Electorate of Brunswick-Lüneburg and later Kingdom of Hanover between 1714 and 1837. A hint of a personal union could be that the double emblem is the attribute of the Yaxchilan rulers in inscriptions from both sites and also subordinate sites governed by *sajal* ranking nobles such as La Pasadita, but never in any other external reference from outside this union. Other sites (Martin 2004: 1), like Piedras Negras, always refer to the Yaxchilan nobility by the original and principal *pa'chan* emblem (e.g. Piedras Negras Panel 2, A'3-B'3, Piedras Negras Panel 3, K1). The emblem is also used to either refer to the city itself, or a place within (Martin 2004: 2), as demonstrated by three events that took place at *tahn ha'pa'chan* – “amidst the plaza of Yaxchilan” (Yaxchilan Lintel 25, M1-M2, U1-U2, I3).

Another clue may be provided by Laxtunich Panel 1 (Fig. 6) that shows Yaxchilan king *Chel Te' Chan K'inich*. As the text informs us, he receives captives by the provincial lieutenant *Aj Chak Maax* (blocks A3-A5). The text emphasises that the prisoners are *ti y-ajaw* – “for his lord” (block B5), indicating that Yaxchilan had the supremacy in Laxtunich. But the increasing influence of the lesser nobility in Yaxchilan's later history (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 130-131, 135; Tokovinine 2005) may indicate that *Chel Te' Chan K'inich* also felt more than the king of both sites than his predecessors as purely Yaxchilan kings. On Laxtunich Panel 3 (block I1) and Yaxchilan Lintel 58 (block E4) he is even provided with only the *kaaj* emblem. To draw again the parallel to the House of Hanover: Their first two regents on the British throne were born in Germany and spent most of the time in their homeland (zu Stolberg-Wernigerode *et al.* 1964: 211-212) and allowed a “Prime Minister” to govern Great Britain. Their successor, George III, was born in London and was the first “British” king. From that time on (zu Stolberg-Wernigerode *et al.* 1964: 213), the Hanover monarchs considered themselves more and more to be British kings, and were also perceived as such.¹² The emphasis given to Laxtunich in later times may indicate an attempt to maintain the power in this personal union.

As a third alternative, we could also consider Yaxchilan and Laxtunich as some form of real union, such as Austro-Hungarian Empire in Western history. Although we certainly cannot speak of a “Dual Monarchy”, the growing influence of the lesser nobility from smaller centres in the Yaxchilan polity, like that of La Pasadita or Site R, may be comparable to the increasing secession trends of territories in the Habsburg multi-ethnic state (Ingrao 2000: 244-246).

One final observation regarding the distribution pattern of the Yaxchilan emblem glyph is also noteworthy. While contemporary monuments show the combined emblem from *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II* onwards (Schüren 1992: 34), the overwhelming majority of posthumous references from later rulers are only accompanied by the original split sky emblem *pa'chan* (e.g. Yaxchilan Lintel 13, block F4). Only the union's founder himself, who is only known from retrospective monuments anyway (e.g. Yaxchilan

¹² Interestingly, the later Hanoverian monarchs were also perceived as “British” in their German homeland. William IV's statue in front of the Göttingen University auditorium is regarded as the only monument ever erected for a British king on German ground. This is especially still true when asking local people (whereas Göttingen was part of the Hanover kingdom), although the pedestal bears the inscription “PATER PATRIAE”.

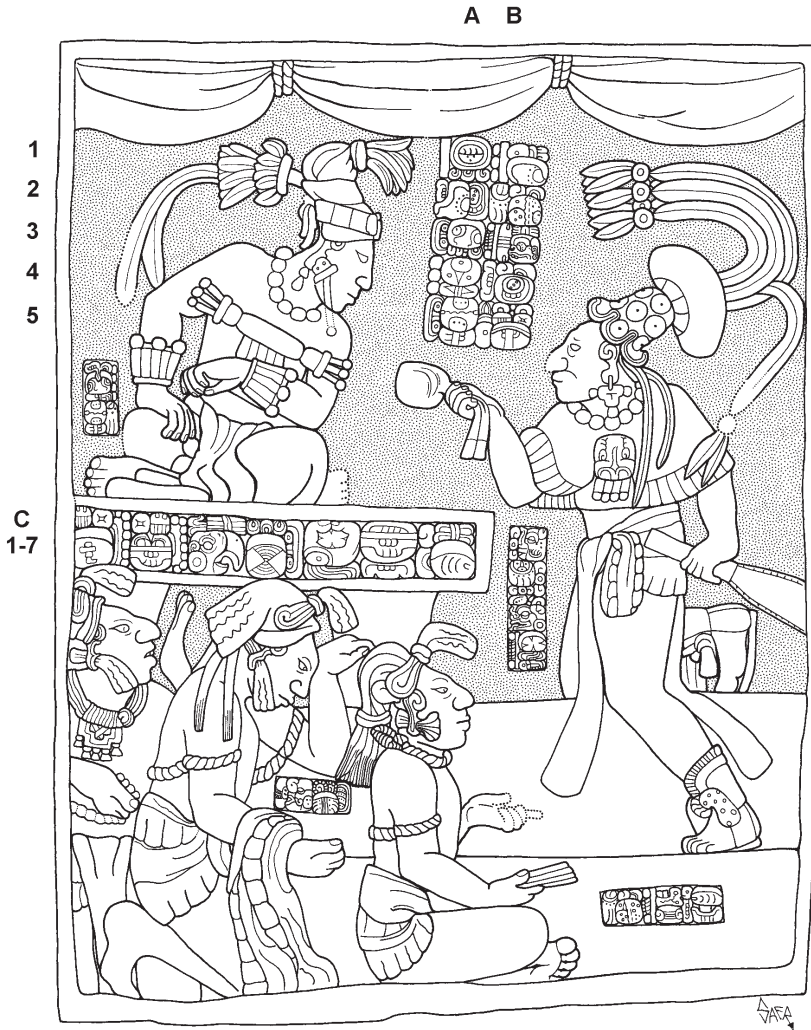


Figure 6. Laxtunich Panel 1 on which captives are being presented (*nahwaj u-baak ti y-ajaw*, blocks B4-B5) to Yaxchilan king *Chel Te' Chan K'inich* (blocks C1-C3), who carries the combined *pa'chan* and *kaaj* emblem (blocks C6-C7). Drawing by Alexandre Safronov. Courtesy Wayeb Drawing Archive.

Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Step IV, A7; Yaxchilan Stela 3, A7), and his son *Itzamnaaj Bahlam II* are exceptions (e.g. Yaxchilan Stela 10, G2; Yaxchilan Stela 11, I3) to this pattern.

The Emblems of Bonampak/Lacanha/*Sak Tz'i'* and Machaquila/Cancuen

While palpable relations can be established in the case of Yaxchilan, despite a sufficient background for the reason and nature of the assumed alliance, the phenomenon of paired emblems otherwise remains more or less opaque. Different authors (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 119; Schüren 1992: 37; Palka 1996: 217) have noted that the emblem glyphs of Bonampak and Lacanha (e.g. Bonampak Stela 3, A6-B6; Bonampak Lintel 3, B3-B4, Lacanha Panel 1, D4-C5) are also paired. Schele and Mathews

(1991: 251) implied that Bonampak had absorbed the Lacanha polity by the mid-eighth century by military aid from Yaxchilan. In Bonampak (cf. Beliaev & Safronov 2009) for example, we have one singular mention of its own *ak'e'* emblem,¹³ four of the *xukalnaah* emblem / toponym of Lacanha and also four paired occurrences. Safronov and Beliaev argue that Bonampak and Lacanha were, from a certain time on, consecutive capitals of the *xukalnaah* polity, thus pairing would possibly result from relocation. We can even observe the pairing of the Bonampak and *Sak Tz'i* emblem (e.g. on the Caracas and Stendahl panels), as these also formed a union (Beliaev & Safronov 2009) after Bonampak was defeated by *Sak Tz'i* in AD 693.

Cancuen and Machaquila likewise featured a double emblem (e.g. Cancuen Panel 1, O10-P10; Cancuen Panel 3, C5-D5) at certain times. In the aftermath of the Dos Pilas fall, Cancuen seems to have conquered Machaquila under the rule of *Tajal Chan Ahk* around AD 796 (Fahsen & Jackson 2003; Just 2007: fn. 11), ending Machaquila's autonomous reign. This is suggested by the sole occurrence of the combined emblem in Cancuen itself, whereas the hitherto known monuments from Machaquila (Graham 1967) only feature the original local emblem (Guenther 2002: 18-19). However, this military annexation ended only shortly after in AD 801, when *Ochk'in Kaloomte' Aj Jo' Baak* erected Machaquila Stela 2, projecting the autonomy (Just 2007) of his polity. The Bonampak/*Sak Tz'i*' and Cancuen/Machaquila cases thus represent pairing probably by belligerent actions to establish a personal union over the subjugated polity. It is, however, not just a mere victory title that had not appeared previously.

RELOCATED EMBLEMS

The final case examined to illustrate political relations by means of emblem glyphs is the migration or relocation of emblems. I will elaborate on this by applying Simon Martin's work on what he has already termed so tellingly as "Shifting Identities at Calakmul" (2005).

The Emblems *kaanu'ul* and BAT HEAD

It was Joyce Marcus (1973, 1976: 12, 51-52) who first correlated the snake head emblem *kaanu'ul* with the site of Calakmul, before it also became archaeologically tied to this site on a stairway fragment found in 1994 (Martin 2005: fn. 3). We can trace the attribution of the *kaanu'ul* emblem in Calakmul from *Yuhknoom Ch'een* II on (Martin 2005: fn. 9) who governed from AD 636. Although he is considered as the "zero point" in Calakmul's *kaanu'ul* count of rulers (Martin 2005: 8), we know as many as 19 earlier *kaanu'ul* kings from the dynastic lists painted on a couple of ceramic vessels (Martin 1997; Martin & Grube 2000: 102-103).

Although Calakmul has become so intimately tied to the *kaanu'ul* emblem since Marcus' (1973) attribution, to all intents and purposes we only have five Calakmul kings that can be identified by the snake head emblem. In contrast to Martin's first investigation (2005: 11), the last ruler was not *Yuhknoom Took'K'awiil* (Fig. 7a) who governed until AD 736 (Martin & Grube 2000: 113; Martin 2005: 12). His successor *Wamaaw K'awiil* bears the *kaanu'ul* emblem on a ballplayer panel of unknown provenance (Tunesi 2007: 15-16, Fig. 7b). The rule of the "Three Kings" (*Yuhknoom Ch'een* II to *Yuhknoom Took'K'awiil*) marked the "golden age" (Martin & Grube 2000: 108) of the *kaanu'ul* kings, but this emblem

¹³ Early inscriptions that refer to the *ak'e'* emblem only show it unpaired, but are of unknown provenance, as the Houston Panel, F8 and the *Po-Throne* Panel, block D6. There have been suggestions to consider *ak'e'* originally as the emblem of Plan de Ayutla (Beliaev & Safronov 2004, see Martos López [2009: 73-74] for a discussion) during the Early Classic before it got relocated to Bonampak. In that respect it would mirror for example the Dzibanche / Calakmul case, but more epigraphic data are needed to clarify the origin of the *ak'e'* emblem.

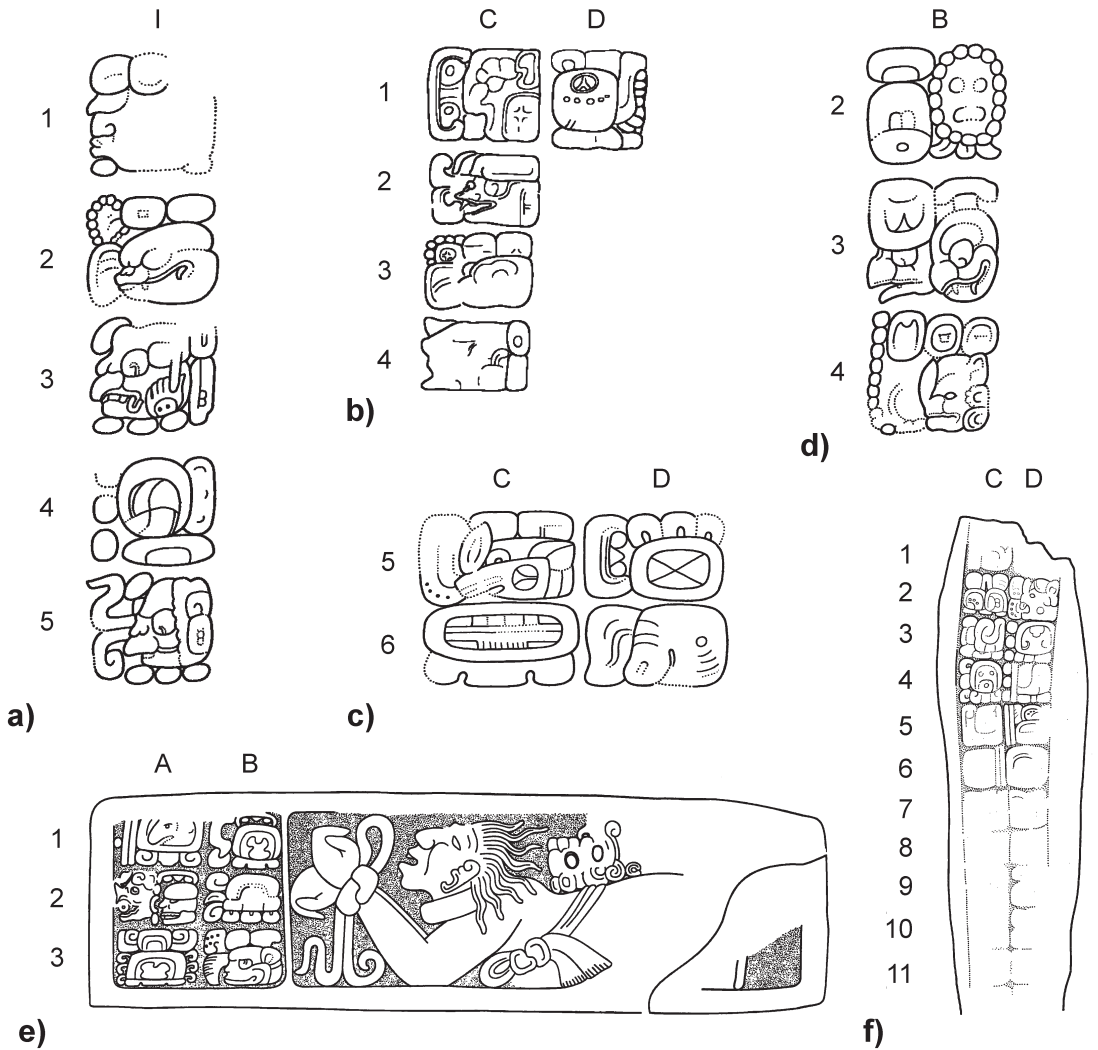


Figure 7. The *kaanu'ul* and BAT HEAD emblems in Calakmul, Dzibanche, and Uxul. a) Calakmul stela 89, 11-15 that is the last monument of Martin's (2005) original proposal to feature the *kaanu'ul* emblem (block I2) in connection with *Yuhknoom Took' K'awiil*. Drawing by Simon Martin (2005: fig. 4c); b) Ballplayer Panel of unknown provenance, C1-C4 mentioning *Wamaaw K'awiil* (blocks D1-C2) as a *kaanu'ul* lord (block C3). Drawing by Raphael Tunesi (2007: fig. 4); c) Calakmul Stela 114, C5-D6 with *U-? Chan Yopaat* as the earliest bearer of the bat head emblem. Drawing by Simon Martin (2005: fig. 5); d) Calakmul Stela 62, B2-B4 attributing the bat head emblem to Ruler Z, after it had been revived by Ruler Y. Drawing by Simon Martin (2005: fig. 7); e) Dzibanche Monument 5 mentioning an Early Classic *Yuhknoom Ch'een* as a *kaanu'ul* king (blocks A3-B3); his namesake later established the snake emblem in Calakmul. Drawing by Nikolai Grube (Nalda 2004: 34). f) Uxul Stela 3 that mentions a bat head emblem for AD 632 (block D2). Drawing by Nikolai Grube (2008: fig. 8-49).

is parenthesised in the Early and Late Classic by the use of another emblem, namely a leaf-nosed bat head (Martin 2005: 9).¹⁴ Based on the calendrical reconstruction provided by Martin (2005: 9), it could be from as early as AD 411 that the bat head emblem is traceable in Calakmul (Fig. 7c), until the accession of *Yuhknoom Ch'een* II at the latest.¹⁵ With an epigraphic *terminus post quem* of 741 AD (Martin 2005: 9) we see the revival of the bat head emblem on Calakmul Stela 59 by Ruler Y, and ten years later it appears again on Calakmul Stela 62 in connection with Ruler Z (Fig. 7d). Surprisingly, the latter is also designated a *kaanu'ul ajaw* on a recently discovered ball court panel fragment (Calakmul Fragment 40), making him the fifth king to (still) carry the snake head emblem.

Such intriguing questions as from where the *kaanu'ul* emblem arrived in Calakmul, how it replaced the bat head and what happened to the snake kings to enable the bat head's return are slowly but surely being answered by combining various pieces of the epigraphic record.

The epigraphic analysis of the Dzibanche Hieroglyphic Stairway (Nalda 2004) was the first brick to rebuild the migration history of the two emblems. As several authors have noted (Grube & Martin 2000: 103, Grube 2004, Velásquez García 2005), a number of snake head emblems can be identified on individual steps of the stairway, and in particular two of them (Dzibanche Monument 5, A3; Dzibanche Monument 11, B3, Fig. 7e) are assigned to a ruler called *Yuhknoom Ch'een*. As stated above, his namesake was considered the pivotal point in the Calakmul line of the *kaanu'ul* kings. As Grube (2004: 117-118) first pinpointed in detail, it is plausible that we can regard Dzibanche as at least an earlier seat of *kaanu'ul* kings. It is tempting to assume that *Yuhknoom Ch'een* II relocated the seat of the *kaanu'ul* rulers to Calakmul, probably by military force (Martin 2005: 11), which deeply affected and changed the political landscape. Because that is what Calakmul did as one of the superpowers (Martin & Grube 1994, 1995, 2000: 108-109) in the Maya area.

At the apogee of Calakmul's power, the *kaanu'ul* emblem started to vanish from the epigraphic record (Martin 2005: 10, 11-12). The apparent trigger can be reconstructed from Tikal Altar 9 that shows a bound, prostrate captive who is apparently *Yuhknoom Took' K'awiil*. After this first Tikal victory over the old adversary in AD 695 (Tikal Temple 1 Lintel 3, A4-B6) by *Jasaw Chan K'awiil*, the capture was nothing but the death blow for Calakmul's hegemony and its *kaanu'ul* kings (Martin & Grube 2000: 112-113). Little is known of the next *kaanu'ul* king *Wamaaw K'awiil*, who is only posthumously attested on Quirigua Stela I (blocks: C5-D5) (Martin & Grube 2000: 114). This however demonstrates distant influence of Calakmul at Quirigua.

With the rise and fall of the *kaanu'ul* kings and the return of the bat head bearers to Calakmul, we must now trace their fate at the time they were ousted. Grube (2005: 97, fig. 9) was able to identify the bat head emblem in the site of Oxpemul, about 22 kilometres northeast of Calakmul. But interestingly, the dated monuments mostly postdate the *kaanu'ul* appearance in Calakmul (Grube 2005: 95, Grube 2008: tab. 8-1), although one might expect that Oxpemul served as a refuge for the former Calakmul rulers during the *kaanu'ul* reign. Martin (2005: 11) thinks some sort of over-lordship was executed from Oxpemul, but more epigraphic data are needed, especially for the Early Classic, to further cement this hypothesis and better explain the spatial and diachronic patterns of both emblems. There is also recent evidence contributing to the political landscape from the south-westerly located

¹⁴ Although resembling the sign APM, Martin (2005: fn. 11) doubts that this is a leaf-nosed bat /SUTZ/, but rather a compound of a different phonemic value, also with respect to the sometimes visible stone marking (e.g. Calakmul Stela 62, B4; Calakmul Stela 59, C1). If it is identical to the sign in the Copan emblem glyph, it may probably read /KIP/ (suggested by Péter Biró, Nikolai Grube, Guido Krempel, Christian Prager and Elisabeth Wagner in 2010), where a /pi/ sign often serves as a phonemic complement.

¹⁵ See Martin (2005: 7) for the possibility of earlier *kaanu'ul* kings in Calakmul. Especially the event mentioned on Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway 1, N1-L3 dating to AD 631 brings together the Calakmul toponym *ux te' tuun* with the ruler *Yuhknoom HEAD*, designated as a *kaanu'ul* king.

site of Uxul (Grube 2009). We have an occurrence of the bat head emblem on Uxul Stela 3 (block D2, Fig. 7f) that dates to AD 632, but unfortunately the context is unclear (Grube & Paap 2008: 270). This stela is just one year before *Yuhknoom Ch'een* II accedes to the throne and it allowed Grube to propose Uxul as another candidate for the seat of the bat head emblem. It appears that Uxul and Calakmul overlapped temporally in the display¹⁶ of the bat head emblem before and some time during the *kaanu'ul* “interlude”, whereas Oxpemul and Calakmul overlap later (cf. Grube 2008: tab. 8-1). It is not clear, however, why we see the *kaanu'ul* emblem in Calakmul again with Ruler Z after the bat head emblem was restored and continued to be used since the times of his predecessor Ruler Y. Possibly, this is a historicizing reference, or larger-scale dynamics were involved in the political history of Southern Campeche that is currently available in the epigraphic record.

OTHER POTENTIAL EXAMPLES

In the discussion of the *mutu'ul* emblem, I have already touched on the possibility of a geographical migration. Although the emblems of Tikal and Dos Pilas are phonemically, and frequently also graphemically the same, we may want to conceptually separate them. With the proposed growing independence of the Dos Pilas polity (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 61) and the end of the fratricidal war, the Dos Pilas variant may have become an independent emblem in terms of the self-perception of the local nobility (see below). After the demise of Dos Pilas and the taking over of the emblem by the petty kingdoms (Demarest 2006: 117-118), we have multiple relocations and therefore sharing again, which certainly needs further research. Aguateca, as the “twin capital” of Dos Pilas (Martin & Grube 2000: 64; Houston & Inomata 2009: 295), was the first stopover (and for some time the only obvious one), before the emblem spread further. Of particular interest is Seibal, which had been under the over-lordship of Dos Pilas. A local ruler, *Ajaw Bot*, later replaced the old dynasty identified by the “three-stones” emblem (Martin & Grube 2000: 65; Houston & Inomata 2009: 295) with Dos Pilas’ *mutu'ul* (cf. Seibal Stela 7). *Ajaw Bot* also erected the last stela (Seibal Stela 7) before a 29-year hiatus, until *Aj Bolon Ha'bie Wat'ul K'atel* restored the original Seibal emblem (Seibal Stela 11, Houston & Inomata 2009: 306-307).

Comalcalco could also be another example, as the gap of 14 years after the last inscription in Tortuguero suggests. But the heavy destruction and looting of Tortuguero (Gronemeyer 2006: 3-6) makes it unlikely to expect more from there, so the burden of clarification of a temporal overlapping relies on texts from Comalcalco.

One final comment concerns the inscriptions of Altar de Sacrificios (Graham 1972, Mathews & Willey 1991: 41-42), where we have an inscriptional hiatus (Graham 1972: 116) and the replacement of an earlier emblem with a later one (Houston & Inomata 2009: 136), suggesting a rupture in the previous dynasty. Whether a migration of the new emblem was involved, or whether it got replaced locally by another noble faction cannot be answered, but it is interesting to note that this hiatus coincides with the time of *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil's* accession (Eberl 2007: 65).

SYNOPSIS

As the itemised case studies demonstrate, the proclaimed territorial correlation of an emblem glyph (Mathews & Justeson 1984: 216) with socio-political implications is certainly demonstrated. But it is likewise simplified and not exclusive.

¹⁶ Without additional inscriptions contributing further, I will not ultimately estimate the bat head migration pattern, although the current evidence makes Calakmul the most likely original seat as it is the pivotal point between Uxul and Oxpemul both temporally and geographically.

In summary, the following conclusions, which should still be considered as preliminary, can be drawn from an analysis of the epigraphic data. At the present time, some of the examples yield no decisive evidence (such as the distribution pattern of the bat head emblem) that would be necessary for a more detailed synoptic review. As we can see, emblems may split and therefore be shared among polities; they can be merged from two polities at the same time, and also show varying degrees of geographic mobility. Socio-political reasons are obviously always given, but, as a rule, they depend on personal actions and motivations. This is at least the impression from these cases where an ample attestable causality arises from the epigraphic and historiographical analysis. There is no automatic process that facilitates one of the case studies, nor is a certain action within the local elite of a polity or between the nobilities of different sites a determinant. Marriage will not always result in the combination of two emblems as in the case of Yaxchilan, otherwise, the Maya area would be swamped with double or triple emblem glyphs. Inter-site marriage was far too common for this purpose, and there may have been power-political reasons not to extol such ties (Houston & Inomata 2009: 150). The cycle of an emblem's (epigraphic) existence, its genesis (by combination), extension, distribution, and extinction is always determined by individual decisions and case-by-case strategies. Queen Elizabeth II would likely still be named Elizabeth Alexandra Mary von Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha, if her grandfather George V hadn't proclaimed the House of Windsor during the First World War because of internal political pressure and reasons of state. I also regard the disappearance of an emblem as an active process. One may think of the German Democratic Republic with its proper name and all its symbols when it re-joined the Federal Republic of Germany during the process of German reunification. The epigraphic data are not clear on such processes, as for example with Comalcalco's *joy chan*, or in Seibal, or Altar de Sacrificios. War might be one reason, resulting in the forced abandonment of a group identity by eliminating the bearers of an emblem. The voluntary takeover of any nature from a different group identity can not be excluded and may have resulted in the replacement of an emblem.

EMBLEMS IN THE NEXUS OF POLITICAL RELATIONS

Emblems are complex entities that involve a multi-faceted purpose. They certainly contain the assumed (Hammond 1991: 276) and testified territorial unity and even autonomy, even when accepting the over-lordship (Martin & Grube 1994, 1995, Grube & Martin 1998) of more powerful, hegemonial centres that are somewhat comparable to the political situation in the Warsaw Pact. Emblems do not necessarily need to be regarded as dynastic or lineage insignia (Johnston 1985: 56) alone, but superimpose all of that together on an identificational and power-political level (Graham 2006: 117), with the ruler being the origin of noble titles (Prem 1998: 31).

Emblems are legitimating, as only their bearers can claim to be the ruler or those who are part of his kin when carrying the emblem as a proper personal title. Also, they are eventually an opportune instrument for an intra-group self-projection. Thus, the proclaimed lineage aspect of emblem glyphs is given (Proskouriakoff 1960: 471). From this point of view, the emblem contained in this title is primarily the expression of an individual identity, the "self" (Assmann 2002: 131-132, Sökefeld 1999: 424). It is only in the second step that an emblem becomes part of a collective identity (Assmann 2002: 132), an institutionalised and established group identity; when the emblem is accepted, continued, and shared by other members of the nobility. As we can observe from the Dos Pilas and Yaxchilan examples, this is so in the last of the cases, when the successor of the initiator or sponsor of the emblem perpetuates it, if it had not been shared among the ruling nobility before. We may consider this to be a necessary step in between, but it is not documented by the epigraphic record.

In fact, emblem glyphs epigraphically appear only with a specific ruler, as in the case of long established dynasties, often posthumously. As we have seen with the Petexbatun petty kingdoms, rulers

proclaim a dynasty connected to a specific, already existing emblem. The genesis of emblems is, in any case, not *sui generis*. For example, the idea of a greater “German-hood” (cf. Kohn 1950: 459) existed before the German Empire was declared in 1871 by the unification of all German territories, together with the creation of the new title of the German “Kaiser” that surpassed all other regents (e.g. King of Prussia, King of Bavaria, Landgrave of Hesse-Nassau, etc.)

It could be suspected that in the Terminal Preclassic, when kingship and the concept of a *k'uhul ajaw* emerged, one local (and already prestigious?) nobility faction proclaimed a ruling house in a similar way. This group elevated the identity, previously restricted to their kin, to a state level (see also on the social role below), where it became perpetuated and institutionalised. We see the use of the word *ajaw*, “lord”, as early as on the San Bartolo Las Pinturas glyph block, pA7 (Saturno *et al.* 2006: 1283, fig. 4), the Las Pinturas west wall, A8, and other Late Preclassic and Protoclassic objects of unknown provenance (cf. Grube & Martin 2001: II 29, 30, 32, 40), in inscriptions referring to the social rank of a specific person. We can finally see the first emergence of kingship here, before it was elaborated by the use of emblem glyphs with all their implications described in this paper. Contemporary iconography is especially revealing, such as in the assumed coronation scene from the San Bartolo Las Pinturas west wall (Houston & Inomata 2009: 91, fig. 3.14), resembling the much later “ascension motif” from Piedras Negras. Late Preclassic depictions from Cival, El Mirador, or Loltun (cf. Houston & Inomata 2009: 90-92) also feature icons of royal power known from later times.

Summarising Peter Mathews’ (1991) work on emblem glyphs, Patrick Culbert (1991: 328) once stated that “[t]here are so many cases of individuals who were not rulers using Emblem Glyphs that it is obvious that this identifier was available to a group of upper-level elite [...]” Although Culbert anticipated the observations from the present study, he concluded with caution that “the rules and restrictions governing its usage cannot yet be derived.” Today, with a *K'atun* of Maya epigraphy having passed, we are in a much more comfortable situation. The advances we have made, as detailed in the case studies above, enable us to finally open Hammond’s (1991) “black box”.

As we can see from the cases and the group-identifying aspect of emblems, they stand apart from the role that an individual carries out in society. And when going from the collective cultural memory aspect of emblems to the more granular, individual level, emblems become an inherent part of a person’s identity. If ethnicity is rather used for differentiation (Emberling 1997: 306), emblems predominantly focus on the internal social cohesion but it is not without a social role – when used as a personal title or an emblem glyph – that emblems unfold their full power.

A clear example of the internalised and perpetuated individual identity carried by an emblem is *Ix Wak Chanil*, who continued to use her original Dos Pilas emblem while already governing over Naranjo. She did not take the royal title of a *k'uhul sa'al ajaw*, never formally acceding to the throne (Martin & Grube 2000: 74), but referred to herself as a *k'uhul mutu'ul ajaw* (e.g. Naranjo Stela 24, A6-A8), just as her father and contemporary counterpart *Bahlaj Chan K'awiil* in Dos Pilas had done. Also, the female marker *ix* was often omitted from her titles (Doyle 2005: 3, e.g. Naranjo Stela 3, E9, Stela 23, E14 and Stela 24, D18) in order to feature more prominently her *k'uhul* nature. This also proves that *Ix Wak Chanil* was always considered more than just a steward on the throne for her underage son. He again, as the offspring of the marriage with a local noble, reclaimed the original Naranjo emblem as one being locally born into the existing group identity that was also consanguineously inherited (cf. Houston & Inomata 2009: 50) via the paternal line. The individual tie of an emblem is also evident from the case study of the *kaanu'ul* and bat head emblem that moved with its bearers.

As it has been pointed out by Pierre Robert Colas (2004: 249), there is an intimate connection between identity and origin. The homeland of a group is the place of their social identity (McAnany 1995: 110), the stage of interaction and anchor of memories (Assmann 2002: 38-39). These beliefs still seem to be preserved in modern Maya societies as e.g. the concept of the *naab'l*, a person’s “social role” or

“way of being”, among the Mam of Chimalteco in Chiapas suggests (Calvin 1997: 869). In my opinion this is the primordial origin for the territorial aspect to which we now most often refer to when applying emblem glyphs in epigraphic research as a tool for reconstructing political relations. As stated above, the nature of a Maya city-state makes this assumption possible. This is certainly true when a local ruler, governing his polity descended from the local group. It is also true when identities change by taking over an emblem, or integration into a new group takes place, and a person not only emotionally becomes a “Berliner”.

There is a final aspect to be considered that bridges the aspect of the social role. There are certain sites that have more than one emblem that is used in the ruler’s title on different occasions. The most prominent examples would be the signs BM7 *matwil* in Palenque and PE4 in Tikal, the *way* (cf. Houston & Stuart 1989) form of its emblem glyph (Schele 1985: 62, fig. 5, Grube & Martin 2000: II 75), although we cannot establish connections between the *way* figures connected to the Tikal emblem glyph (Calvin 1997: 874, also K3413). In certain circumstances, we can see the ruler taking a role that is based on a different identity most obviously stemming from local mythology, as it is most evident with *matwil* as the place name where the Palenque Triad was born (Kelly 1965: 97; Lounsbury 1980: 112; Houston & Stuart 1994: 77; Stuart 2005: 22). It is also used as an emblem glyph for deities, such as the Palenque Triad Progenitor (“Lady Beastie”) specified as a *k’uhul matwil ajaw* on Palenque Temple of the Foliated Cross, C11-D11 (cf. Houston & Stuart 1994: 75). Thus, the Palenque ruler using this emblem makes, as so often in Palenque’s history (cf. Schele 1976: 28-31, Schele 1978: 41; Stuart 2005: 159-161, 174, 183-185), an explicit connection to the claimed godly descent of the ruling house. Defining the use of these emblem glyphs by using contextual analysis that also involves iconography, would certainly clarify much further the social role of emblems and their function as a marker for identity¹⁷. This however must be a subject of another study.

EMBLEMS AND THE SOCIAL ROLE

The social role of emblems is most obvious in their use within the personal title of a Maya ruler – the *k’uhul ajaw* as the paramount figure of Classic society. In his self-conception as a god-like avatar (Houston & Inomata 2009: 22), the ruler serves as the *axis mundi* of his particular polity – at least in the view of the elites – in the fragmented political landscape of city states. By this, an emblem also serves as a differentiating utensil (cf. Sökefeld 1999: 422-424) not only to other, foreign elite groups. It also delineates polities in an extroverted “state self-representation” (Graña-Behrens 2006: 107), although its distribution seems to vary geographically (Graña-Behrens 2006: 120) and is less developed in Northwestern Yucatan. Even more, Classic Maya kings literally “stand” on their emblem as an abstract concept of their homeland, their territory. Part of that conception is as Guido Krempel (pers. comm. December 2008) pointed out with the *baah kab* title, the “face of the earth.” Maya kings are considered the countenance (cf. Houston *et al.* 2006: 7, 61, 62-63) of their land and are therefore

¹⁷ The use in Tikal is quite restricted and best known from the wooden lintels celebrating Tikal’s victory over Naranjo (Martin 1996: 225-226, Zender 2005: 14). On Tikal Temple 4 Lintel 2 (block A6), *Yik’in Chan K’awiil* carries the title conducting a nightly action (Zender 2005: 14) before the “Star War” event actually took place. In a subsequent passage on Tikal Temple 4 Lintel 3 (blocks E5-H9), *Yik’in Chan K’awiil* impersonates several supernatural beings while also giving a parentage statement. Here, his father *Jasaw Chan K’awiil* is being retrospectively (?) bestowed with the emblem. Tentatively, I would propose that *Yik’in Chan K’awiil* underwent a transformation of some sort to prepare himself to fight this battle for breaking the encirclement by his political opponents (Martin 1996: 233, Martin & Grube 2000: 49-50).

not just mere sovereigns over their territory, but they virtually embody it.¹⁸ Rulers clearly differ from one another in terms of this perception and self-identity, creating a *différance* (Sökefeld 1999: 423) from one another and their states. *L'État, c'est moi* is also very true in the case of Classic Maya polities. Moreover, with this view, the ruler also permeates his territory and everything under his rule with his *k'uh* essence (Houston & Inomata 2009: 198).

All the above also helps to explain the socio-political quality of a ruler in different contexts or from diverse source perspectives. I have already covered this problem with *Nuun Ujol Chaak* being mentioned as a “*mutu'ul*-instilling” in Dos Pilas. The political identification of a *k'uhul ajaw* is primarily an emic concept with a one-to-one relationship between the individual and the polity, and in most cases etically accepted by other rulers. This is also an explanation of why rulers are only considered as *k'uhul* in internal inscriptions and “descriptive” external references. But a ruler will never be granted the godly and *k'uh*-instilling property by his foes (Houston & Inomata 2009: 140), especially when displayed or mentioned as a captive on monuments as the place and medium of public humiliation.

The differing usage of the Copan emblem glyph in Quirigua as a personal title of both the victorious Quirigua king *K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Yopaat* and the defeated Copan king and previous Quirigua overlord *Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil* (cf. Martin & Grube 2000: 205, 218) is an interesting example in this respect.

In Quirigua inscriptions erected after the beheading (Looper 2003: 77) of *Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil*, *K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Yopaat*, too – besides just using his own *uniw* emblem glyph – combines the Copan and Quirigua emblems (e.g. Quirigua Stela D, A19, D19, Stela F, B9-A10 and Stela I, C1) on various occasions, for example *ihk' COPAN ajaw*, *k'uhul uniw ajaw*, *baah kab* or just uses the *ihk' COPAN ajaw* without his own emblem glyph as an epithet, eventually with *u cha'n* – “the guardian of” (e.g. Quirigua Stela E, A19-B19). Here, the divine quality of the Copan lord is removed and replaced by the colour attribute “black” (Schele 1989: 4). The colour association could very well be a death reference (see the Machaquila example below) or “represent a legacy from Copan’s old regional order” (Martin & Grube 2000: 219; cf. Looper 2003: 59-60). Otherwise, the combination is similar to the case of Cancuen and Machaquila, although *K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Yopaat* doesn’t seem to have gained full or permanent control over Copan (Martin & Grube 2000: 219; Looper 2003: 114), otherwise I would expect the normal use of *k'uhul* in front.

Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil is mostly referred to as simply a *COPAN ajaw* in Quirigua inscriptions (e.g. Quirigua Stela E, A9-B9, A20, Zoomorph G, T6, Zoomorph P, D9), especially when referring to earlier events when he still acted as the overlord. Alternatively, he is not given any emblem glyph when the account of his beheading is mentioned (e.g. Quirigua Stela E, B15). Both cases also perfectly match the observations made above. Only on a very few occasions, as on Quirigua Stela J, G5, is *Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil* given his full royal title. Copan itself only referred to *Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil*’s death with common ciphers, *i k'ay u sak-baak ik'il tu took' tu pakal* – “then it diminished his force and breath with his flint and with his shield” (Copan Temple 26 Hieroglyphic Stairway, Step 58, cf. Gronemeyer & MacLeod [2010: fn. 49]). Unfortunately, we have no evidence of an emblem glyph which follows.

The socio-political dimension of emblems also becomes clear if we compare the reduction of the paired emblem glyph in Yaxchilan, to the original *pa'chan* emblem in posthumous references. The socio-political statement that was fulfilled by the combination during the life and tenure of a ruler perished with his death. But the individual itself remains a commemorated part of the local nobility and its identity.

¹⁸ As Carl Callaway (pers. comm. May 2010) pointed out, this also interestingly relates to the breaking of the face, the nose, or the mouth of a ruler on a stela (Houston *et al.* 2006: 76, Houston & Inomata 2009: 196). It is equal to attacking a polity.

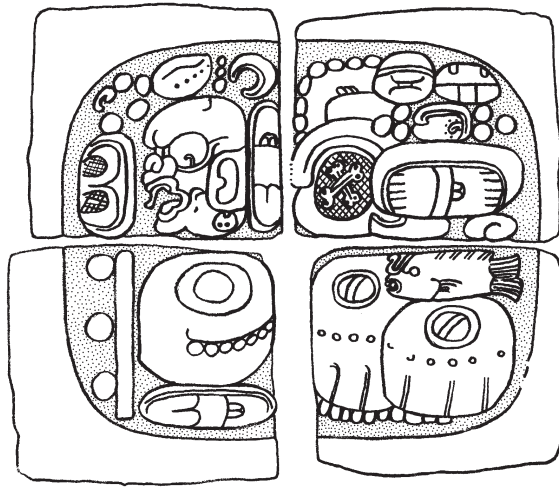


Figure 8. Machaquila Structure 4 Throne Support III (blocks E-89, E-86, E-87, E-90) that almost uniquely applies crossed bones to the *k'uhul* prefix of an emblem glyph (block E-86) for a posthumous reference to *Sina'an? Ti' Chaak* (block E-89). Preliminary drawing by Guido Krempel. Courtesy Guido Krempel.

Perhaps the most beautiful example of how an emblem is coated with the social role comes from a recently discovered throne from Machaquila Structure 4, Throne Support III (Fig. 8, Guido Krempel, pers. comm. December 2008). The Machaquila ruler *Sina'an? Ti' Chaak* was already dead by the time the inscription was commissioned. The usual *yax*, *k'an* or shell element of the *k'uhul* prefix and sign AMC(3) is replaced by a darkened element with crossed bones. This special and almost unique graphemic rendering (there is a second example from Machaquila also) not only elegantly conveys historical information, but at the same time it also elevates the deceased in an apotheosis, making him a divine ruler and steward of his polity forever.

FINAL REMARKS

Culbert's view (1991: 328) that a (noble) individual without an emblem glyph, without any identificational marks, gets lost in the "sea of inscriptions" is a fitting statement regarding the socio-political role of emblems. An emblem glyph socially and geographically anchors an individual. With its help, we can not only identify a person's self but follow him across time, reconstruct his communicative memory and also that of a group. The case of *Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil* and the Copan emblem glyph is a good example in this respect.

I hope I have presented some evidence and a basis for discussion to further elaborate on the Classic Maya self (Houston & Inomata 2009: 56), at least for the higher levels of society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank the Wayeb Conference Board and most notably Frauke Sachse, as well the organisers of the Jagiellonian University, especially Jarosław Żrałka and Wiesław Koszkuł, for providing me with the opportunity to present an earlier version of this paper at the 14th European Maya Conference in the royal city of Kraków. I also extend my gratitude to all who have further contributed

with their thoughts and materials on the subsequent reincarnations of this paper, especially Erik Boot, Carl Callaway, Markus Eberl, Guido Krempel, Barbara MacLeod, Christian Prager, Raphael Tunesi, and Elisabeth Wagner. Lester Goddin kindly consented to turn the manuscript into what I believed to be English; Claudia Vela González took care of the Spanish abstract. Unless stated otherwise, all assumptions and errors in this paper are mine.

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