

Why we use the Aztec Myth (*Leyenda de los Soles*) to Explain Maya Creations

The surviving accounts of the Maya Creation Myth are fragments, tatters. Much more is *missing* than is *there*. The earliest surviving fragments appear on the monuments of Izapa (and neighbors) and the newly-discovered *Murals* of San Bartolo (ca. 100 BCE).

As if through a keyhole, we glimpse a rich, intricate cosmology connecting time, space and personalities. It relates the cardinal directions to colors, species of trees and game, the calendar, myths, and who knows what else.

Eight centuries later, Classic Maya vase painters illustrate a few other Mythic scenes, some involving the *Hero Twins*. A few Classic stone inscriptions connect Creation with house-building.

Six centuries later, one of the curiosities Cortez presented to the Emperor, a book we call the *Dresden Codex*, recounts several arcane events which occurred on 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u.

Later still, a Quiché Maya scribe in the impoverished and conquered Guatemalan highlands copied out the *Popol Vuh*, connecting his cacique's ancestors back to the Creations of the World (ca. 1700). It dwells on the Hero Twins, who prepared the world for its final Creation - our Creation.

Though it is clear that the Maya conceived a dizzying, intricately interconnected cosmology, we have difficulty working out its details. This is partly due to the fragmentary nature of our evidence, but it is also increasingly clear that the stories varied substantially from city-state to city-state. (Not unlike the conflicting versions of Abraham's Sacrifice: In the Biblical version, the son is Isaac, who goes on to father the Israelites. In the Islamic version, the son is Ishmael, father of the Arabs. These divergent stories represent the infinite variety found in all mythic traditions.)

The Aztec adapted their **Five Creations** stories (called the “**Five Suns**”) from Maya and other accounts. Our knowledge of the Aztec myths is much more complete than that of their antecedents. If we proceed with caution, keeping in mind that they changed things at will, it will be instructive to examine the Aztec Creation cycle as a reflection of the **older Maya tradition**.

Though various versions of the Aztec Creation myth existed¹, the canonical story is laid out in the central section of the famous Aztec “*Calendar Stone*,” also known as the *Sun Stone* and *Altar of Axayacatl*. The symbolism seen there corresponds to the most coherent Aztec account of the five Creations, called “the Five Suns” in the *Leyenda de los Soles*².

¹ even after they were homogenized under Tlacaélel

² “Legend of the Suns” — the Aztecs called each Creation a “Sun.”



The Aztec Calendar Stone

or
*Stone of
Axayacatl*

Note the
eight
triangular
signs
representing
rays of the
Sun.



Original colors.

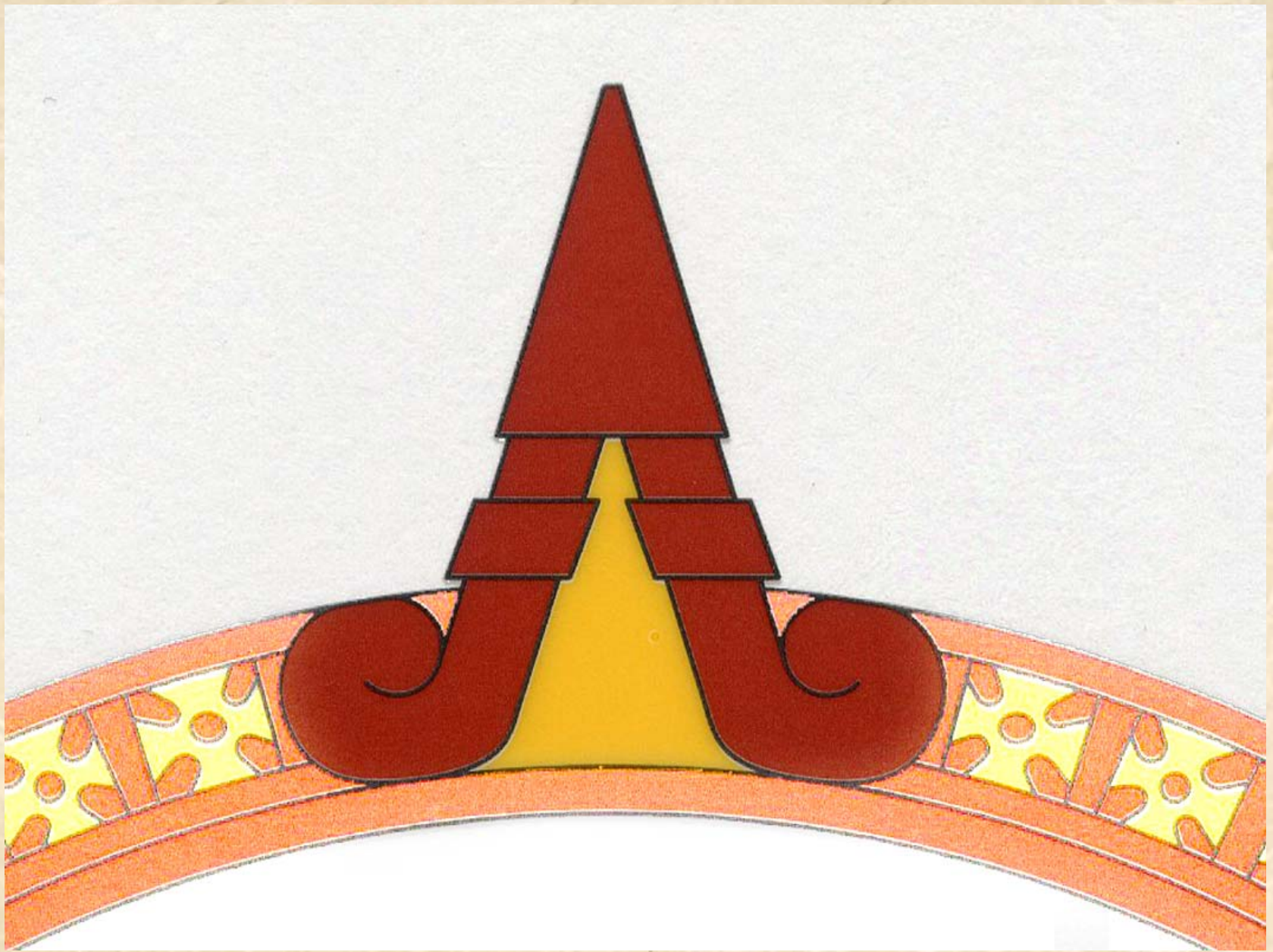
Dated (at top)

13-Reed

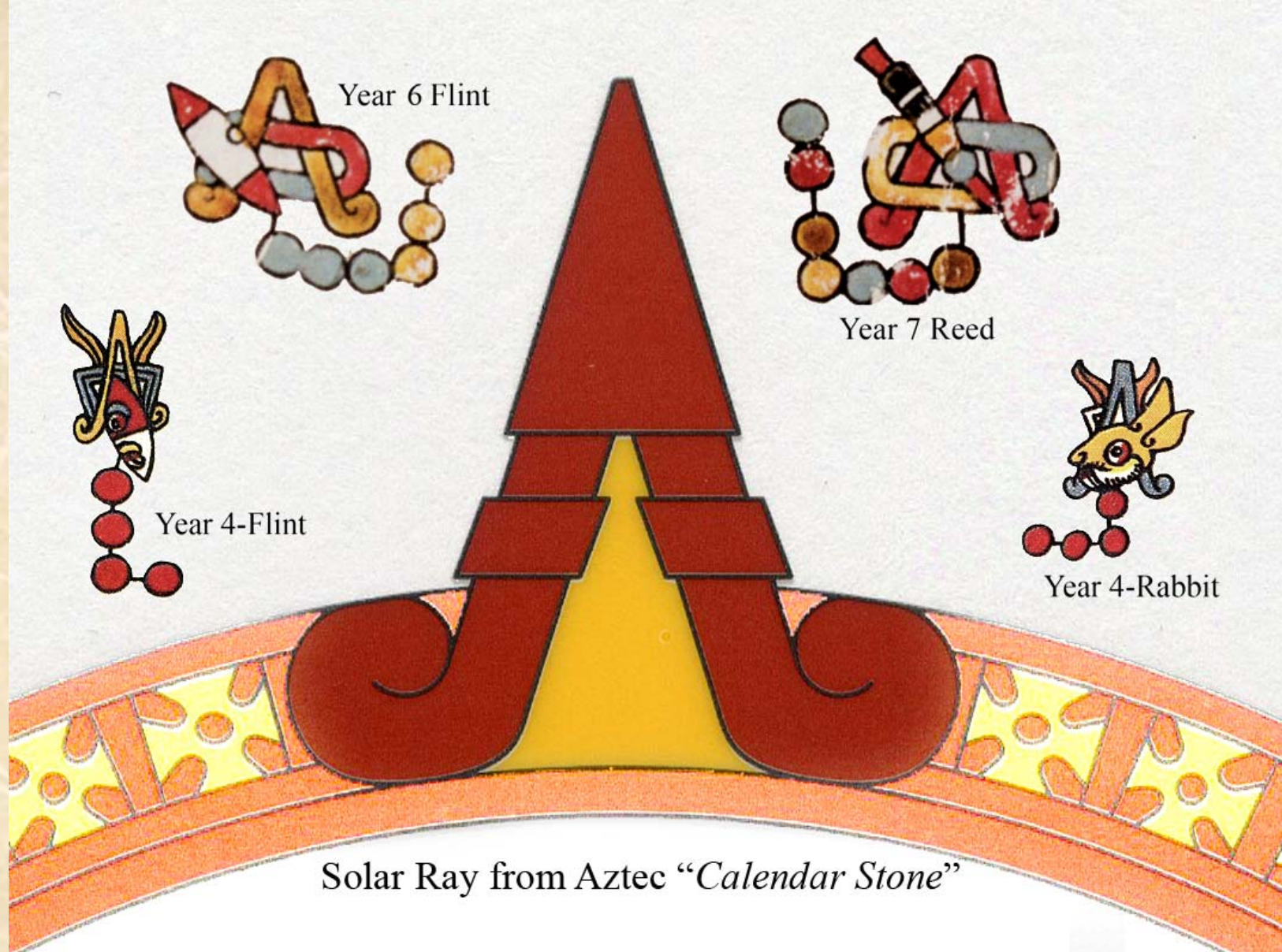
("13 Acatl")

=

1479 AD.



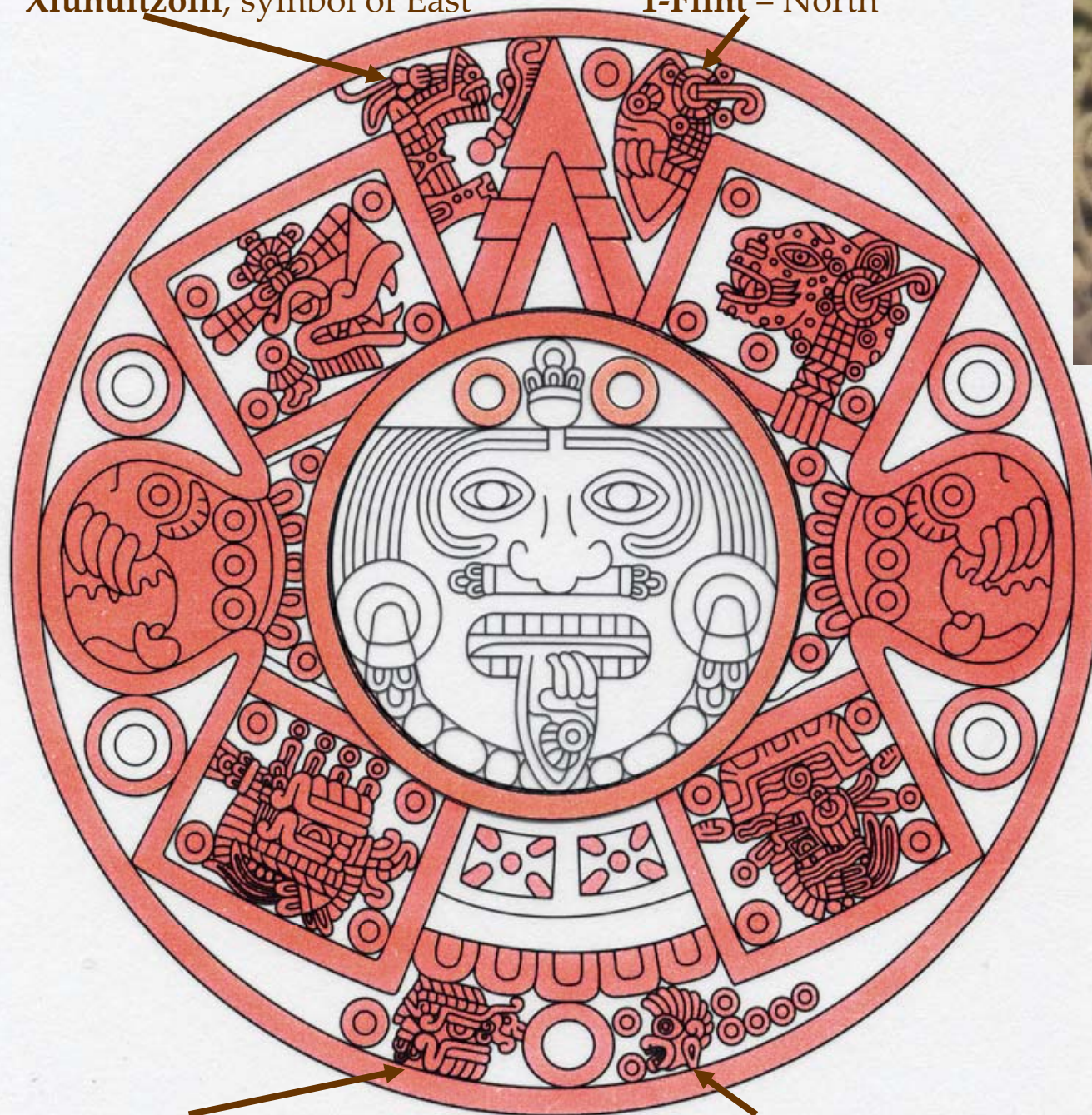
A Sun-ray from the *Stone of Axayacatl*.



This "ray" sign is the same sign incorporated into the "A-O" or "trapeze-and-ray", also known as the "Mexican Year Sign", which we saw in Part 4.

Xiuhuitzolli, symbol of East

1-Flint = North



1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West



This “*Calendar Stone*” (shown in its original colors) is so called because of its central section. Here Aztec priests, like the Maya, combined time and space in a symmetrical, complex iconography.

Xiuhuitzolli, symbol of East

1-Flint = North



1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West

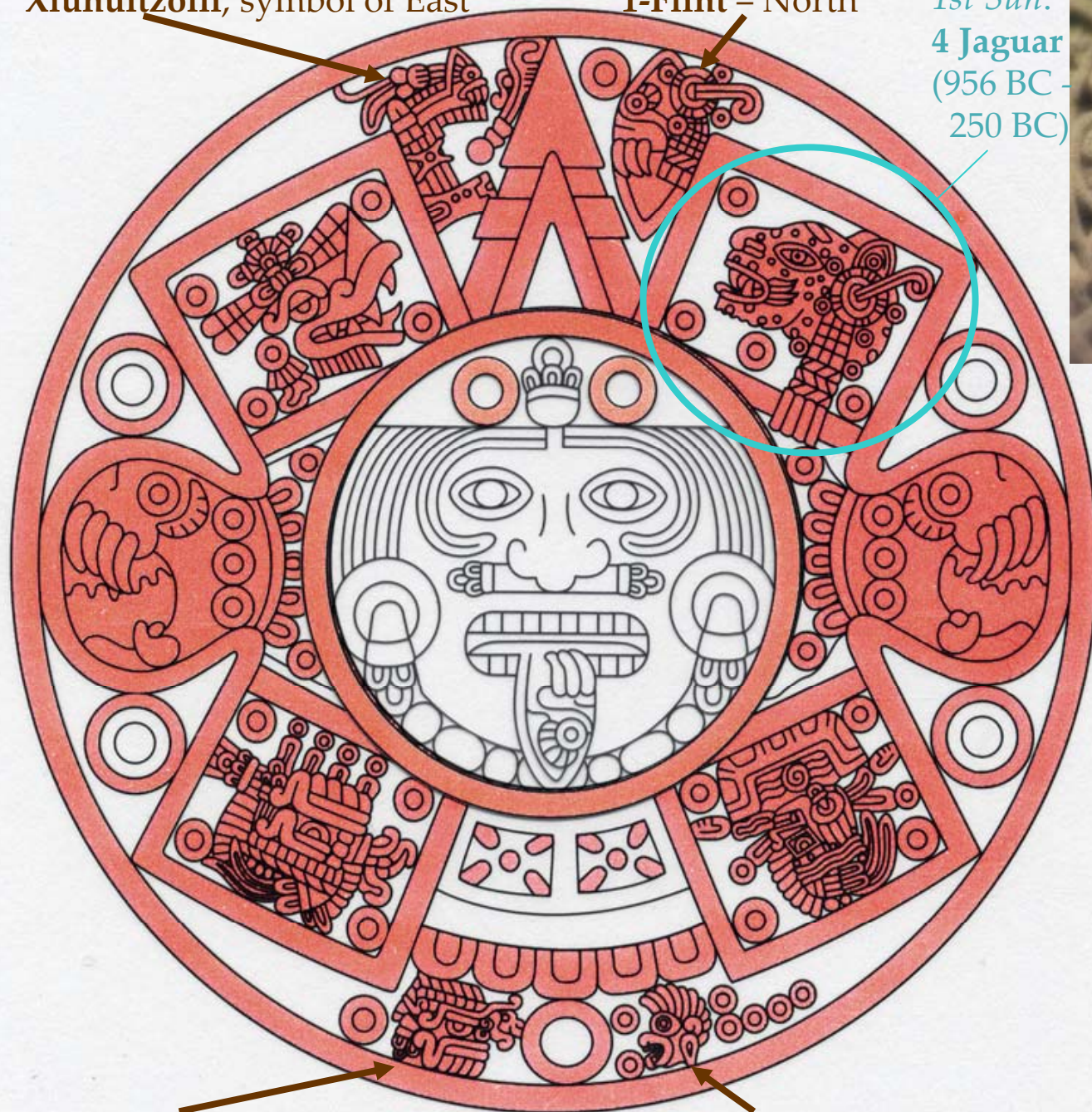


The four emblems tucked into the top and bottom represent the four cardinal directions. East (upper left) is *Xiuhuitzolli*, the imperial headdress issuing a speech-scroll (the Aztec emperor's official title was *Tlatoani*, "Speaker"). The other three directional emblems are also *dates* – holy days sacred to the gods who ruled the directions. This connects sacred Space to sacred cycles of Time.

Xiuhuitzolli, symbol of East

1-Flint = North

1st Sun:
4 Jaguar
(956 BC -
250 BC)



1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West

The upper right arm of the central sign contains the date **4-Jaguar**, the beginning and the end date of the First Creation, which the *Aztec Leyenda de los Soles* tells us began on that day in 956 BC. It lasted precisely 13 cycles of 52 years (676 years), ending on another 4-Jaguar day in the year 280 BC. The primitive inhabitants of this Creation were, in the end, eaten by jaguars.

Xiuhuitzolli, symbol of East

1-Flint = North

1st Sun:
4 Jaguar
(956 BC -
250 BC)
/

2nd Sun:
4 Wind;
Lasted
364 yrs



1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West

An unspecified interval elapsed before the next Creation began and ended on **4-Wind** (upper left arm). This one lasted seven 52-year cycles (364 years), before ending — you guessed it — in a hurricane. The slightly improved inhabitants of this world turned into turkeys.

Xiuhuitzollī, symbol of East

1-Flint = North

1st Sun:

4 Jaguar

(956 BC -
250 BC)

2nd Sun:

4 Wind;

Lasted

364 yrs

3rd Sun:

4 Rain;

Lasted

312 years

1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West



Likewise, after a period in limbo, the “Third Sun” started (and ended) on **4-Rain**, lasting six 52-year cycles, or 312 years (lower left). It ended in a “rain of fire” sometime in the late fourth century AD.

Xiuhuitzollī, symbol of East

1-Flint = North

1st Sun:

4 Jaguar

(956 BC -
250 BC)

2nd Sun:

4 Wind;

Lasted

364 yrs

3rd Sun:

4 Rain;

Lasted

312 years

1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West

4th Sun:

4 Water;

52 years of

Flood, then

676 years.



(Lower right): The "Fourth Sun," **4-Water**, began with a 52-year Flood, then lasted 13 more 52-year cycles (676 years). The entire world, though much improved over previous ones, was washed away in another catastrophic flood, and its people turned into fish. This brings us up to at least the end of the eleventh century AD (likely to some time after 1125 AD.)



Each of these Creations was described as inherently unstable, ruled by gods in constant conflict. Each associated with a cardinal direction – North, South, East or West – but ours, the **Fifth Sun**, the Creation of the Center, is **fundamentally different**.

The Creation in which we live began on **4-Movement** (or 4-Earthquake) in a 2-Reed year (probably in 1143 or 1195 AD). The gods made a blood sacrifice to set the Sun in motion. Thus was the insatiable need for blood established; the Sun needs continued nourishment to keep moving. However, unlike previous Suns, this Creation is in balance; it *could* last forever.

Xiuhuitzollī, symbol of East

1-Flint = North

1st Sun:

4 Jaguar
(954 BC -
258 BC)

2nd Sun:
4 Wind;
Lasted
364 yrs



5th Sun: 4 Movement.
(simple form above)
Began (at earliest)
1125 AD.

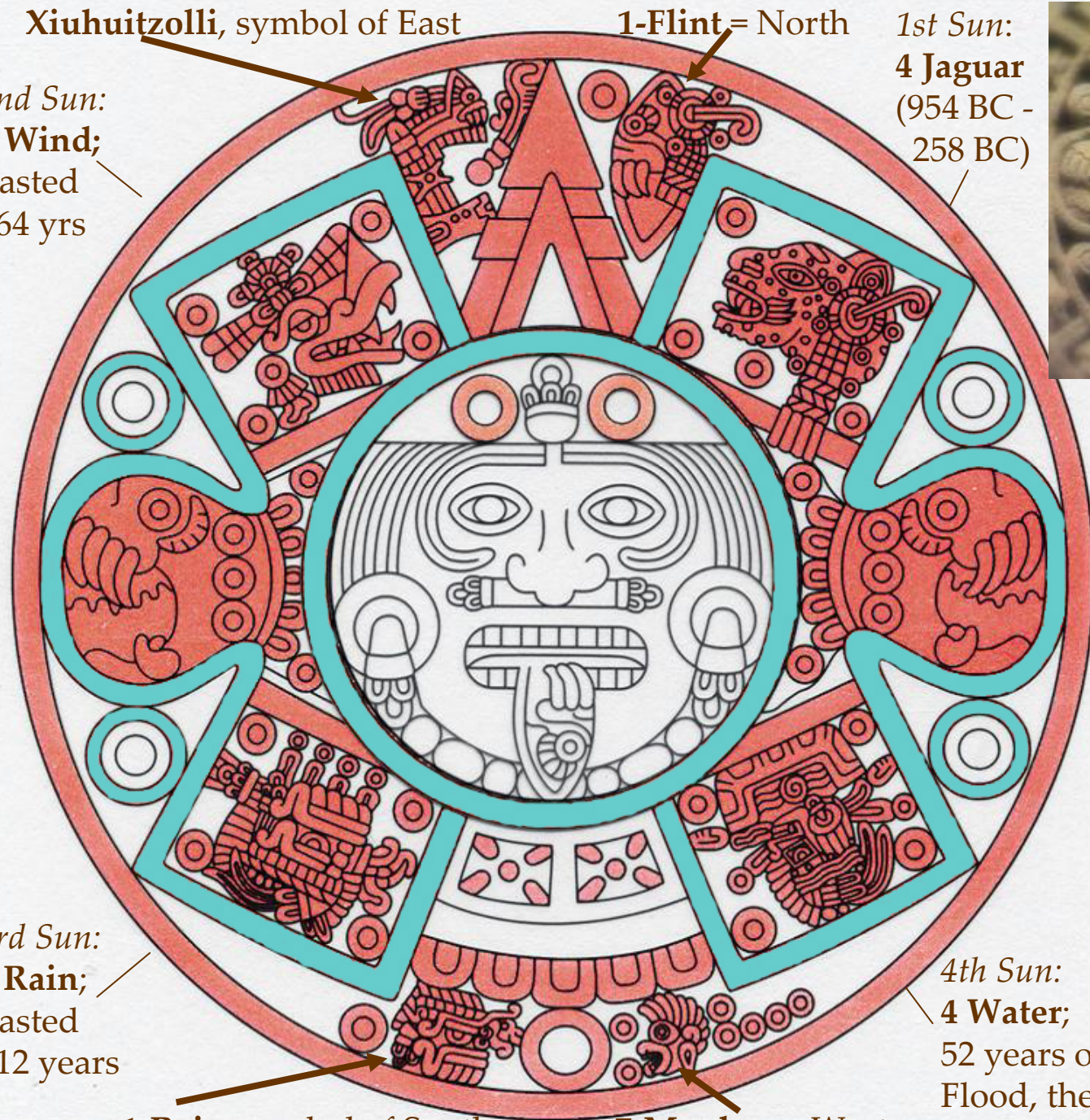
3rd Sun:
4 Rain;
Lasted
312 years

4th Sun:
4 Water;
52 years of
Flood, then
676 years.

1-Rain, symbol of South

7-Monkey = West

The large central sign is itself a giant date. This era will end with cataclysmic earthquakes, and it is the last Creation. There will be no other.
(Center: *Tonatiuh*, the Sun God)



Points on the Aztec Calendar

--Aztec derived from the same source as the Maya.

- Similarity of **dates** (4 Movement, 4 Jaguar, etc., & 4 Ajaw)
- Similarity of **rhetorical structure** to the Maya *Popol Vuh*
- Both describe each Creation as **improving** on the previous
- Both accounts clearly say this latest creation is the **ultimate**
- Motivation for the Maya *Popol Vuh* destructions: gods displeased with their Creation, as with Noah's Flood.
- However, none of the Aztec Creation dates are 4-Flower, which would correspond exactly to 4 Ajaw, so the Aztecs either received a corrupted account of the Maya Creation, or deliberately changed it. Noted above, they also changed Quetzalcoatl's birthday from 9-Wind to 1-Reed.

Points on the Aztec Calendar

--Aztec account much more **complete and clear** — and **contrived**— than Maya.

- The five Creations are ruled by five different gods in turn.
- Each Creation lasts a **precise multiple of 52 years** — 13×52 , 7×52 , 6×52 — therefore each *begins and ends on the same day*. Note that two of these earlier Creations last 13×52 years, and the other two add up to 13×52 years.
- Each Creation has a specific **color** and **direction**, ruled by a different **god**.
- The **augury** of each Creation's calendar date predicts its end: for example,
 - “4-Jaguar” people were eaten by Jaguars,
 - “4-Wind” Creation was blown away by Wind, etc.;
 - *This* one (“4 Motion”) will end in a massive earthquake.
- There are only five Directions: N, S, E, W, and Center, each associated with a Creation. The last was unique: it possessed a stability the first four lacked. But most importantly, the *Annals of Cuauhtitlan* explicitly tell us that **ours is the final Creation**. There will be no others. As León-Portilla puts it, “There would be one final earthquake—one so powerful that “with this we shall perish.”” (León-Portilla, p. 56, note 39, citing Lehman 1938, p. 62)

Ironically, according to this reckoning, if Earthlings were somehow to achieve genuine world peace, our universe would come crashing down around us in a final earthquake, on a 4-Movement day in a 2-Reed year.

The next opportunity for the Aztec End – i.e., the next 4-Movement-in-a-2-Reed-year, arrives in 2027 (as I noted above; the next after that in 2079...).

The *Leyenda de los Soles* explicitly tells us that **this Creation will be the last**; there is no provision for a “Sixth Sun.” But I guess, the way things are going, it looks like we will be satisfying the gods’ blood-lust for a long time to come.

The Aztec “*Calendar Stone*,” despite its visual appeal, is not really an appropriate symbol of the Maya Calendars. It would be comparable to portraying the Colosseum when talking about Classical Athens.

**So what *do* Ancient Maya
records say about 2012?**

1740

Primero

53

14



Can ahau katun
u buluc dit katun Cu
xocol. chichcen y
ka: uhes katun
ulom u cahal. ah
yhaobi. kulom
Kulit u lom ya
xum: ulom ah
Kantenal. ulom
Xo ki ki: kulom

Kukulcan = tupachob tu cate u than Di
lae - Ulom ah yha-

1760

Segundo

12



Ca bil ahau katun
ulahica dit katun ma
ya Vas Cu Camil -
uhes katun: tan coch
hom u uah: tan coch
hom yaal: uthan

Dios lae tan coch hom u templo. tiya
hau llob. u xul uthan Dios lae

What do Ancient Maya records say about 2012?

1.

"The quetzal shall come, the green bird shall come.

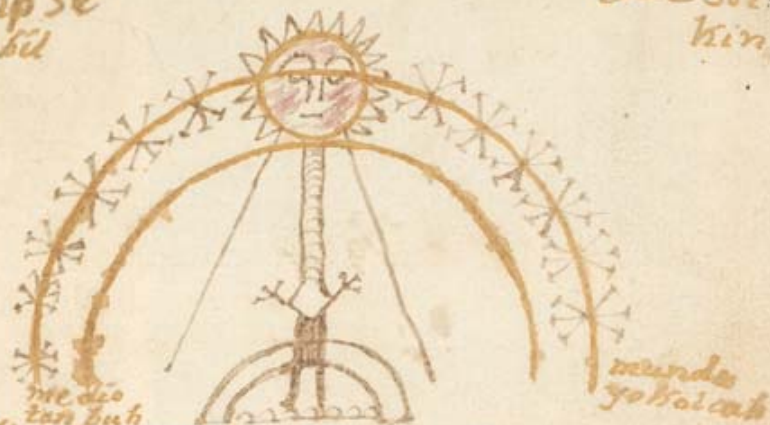
Ah Kantenal ("He of the yellow tree place") shall come. Blood-vomit shall come (As it did in the last Katun 4 Ahau, the katun just before the Conquest).

Kukulcan ("Feathered Serpent") shall come with them for a second time. The word of God. The Itza (a Maya people) shall come."

Above: Translation from p. 53 the *Chilam Balam* of Chumayel, a written between 1775 and 1800 AD/CE in the Maya village of Chumayel, Guatemala. It is one of several *Chilam Balam* manuscripts originally preserved in various villages. Each purportedly contains the pronouncements of a renowned Maya prophet, though each book also emphasizes local history and issues. (The *Chilam Balam* of Naa, for example, has some interesting native medicinal recipes.)

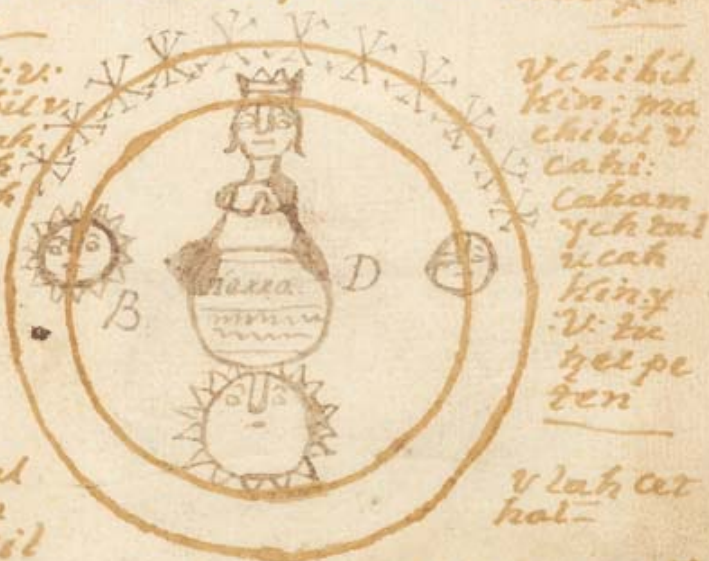
Eclipse
Vchibil

Dre Sol 16
kin



ixiblabob: tuxaxob yanlay lun tuxa: ucun bail
machibil: ucach ki ni: hedun yanchumuc: lay
Cuchi bil: neup tan ba ucach y. V. tuchibil xim
bal ucach payan be. zimaili chi bee
ucach ucim bal tixaman: nohochi
pelili lun: vchibilob kin y. V. zimaili kin
chuc chum kin: vna cul tixial yafutic
maya uini cob bal cuyachul ti kin y. V.
v: lae

Vchibil: v.
machibil v.
Cahi: cah
ham ych
tal ucach
v: y kin
tu hel
peten



Chicul
bumer
D'licil

v lah ar
hal-

heuc machibil v. lah

Chilam Balam of Chumayel, 1775-1800

f.16r.

Here the manuscript describes eclipses. The first and third lines on this page are in Spanish; the rest of the page and the main text of the book is in Yucatec Mayan.

This section of the *Chilam Balam* manuscript incorporates astronomical information learned from the Conquistadors. It is apparent to any viewer that the quality of Maya drawing declined in the centuries since the Collapse, and especially since the Conquest.

Previous Slide: *Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, Folio 53r, containing Katun Prophecy for Can Ahau Katun (K'atun 4 Ajaw), translated above, the 20-year eras ending ca. 1500, 1756, and 2012. (The lower half of the page has the following Cabil Ahau Katun [K'atun 2 Ajaw] prophecy.)

(Photo downloaded from the website of Princeton University's Library, where the original manuscript is housed in the Garrett Collection.)

What do Ancient Maya records say about 2012?

2.

*“Tzuhtz-(a)j-oom u(y)-uxlajuun pik
(ta) Chan Ajaw ux(-te’) Uniiw.
Uht-oom Ek’-? Y-em(al)??
Bolon Yookte’ (K’uh) ta ?.”*

“The Thirteenth '*Bak’tun*' will end (on) 4 Ajaw,
the 3rd of *Uniiw* (a.k.a 3 *K’ank’in*).

?? will occur. (It will be) the descent(?)
of the Nine Support? (God(s)) to the ?.”

This (*Tortuguero Monument 6*, shown in next slide) is the *one and only* Classic Maya document that refers explicitly to the date 13.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in, equaling 21 (or 23) December 2012.

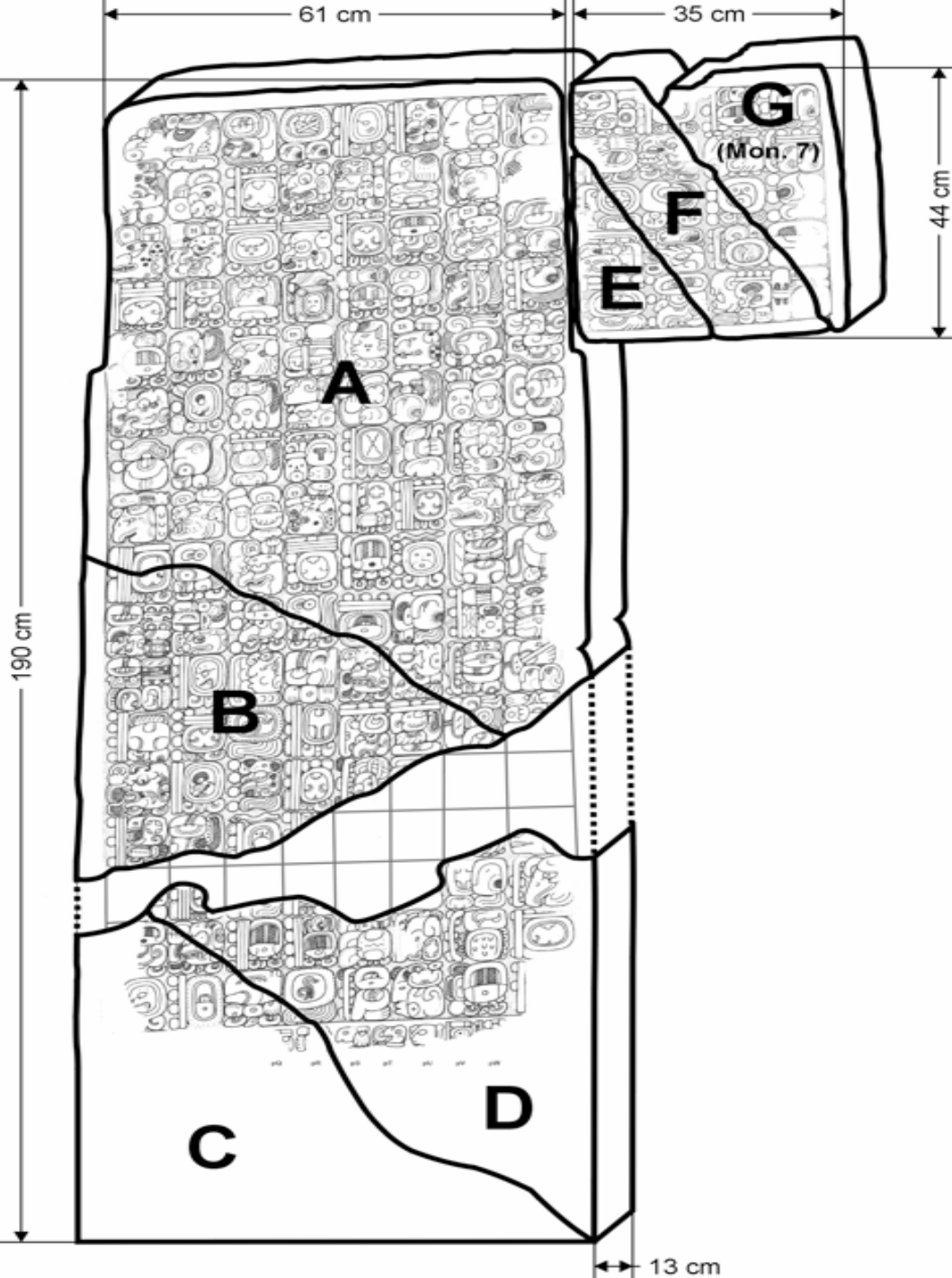
It says the 13th *Pik/Bak'tun* will end, that a god or gods called *Bolon Yokte'* will descend, but to where, and what *Bolon Yokte'* will do once he gets there, ironically those two glyphs are broken.

This we call “Murphy’s Law of Epigraphy.”

By the way, the eminent epigrapher Steve Houston does not accept this interpretation, saying, “I suspect the structure simply relates the Bolon (many?) Yokte' to the final historical date on the monument.” [private communication, March 2008]

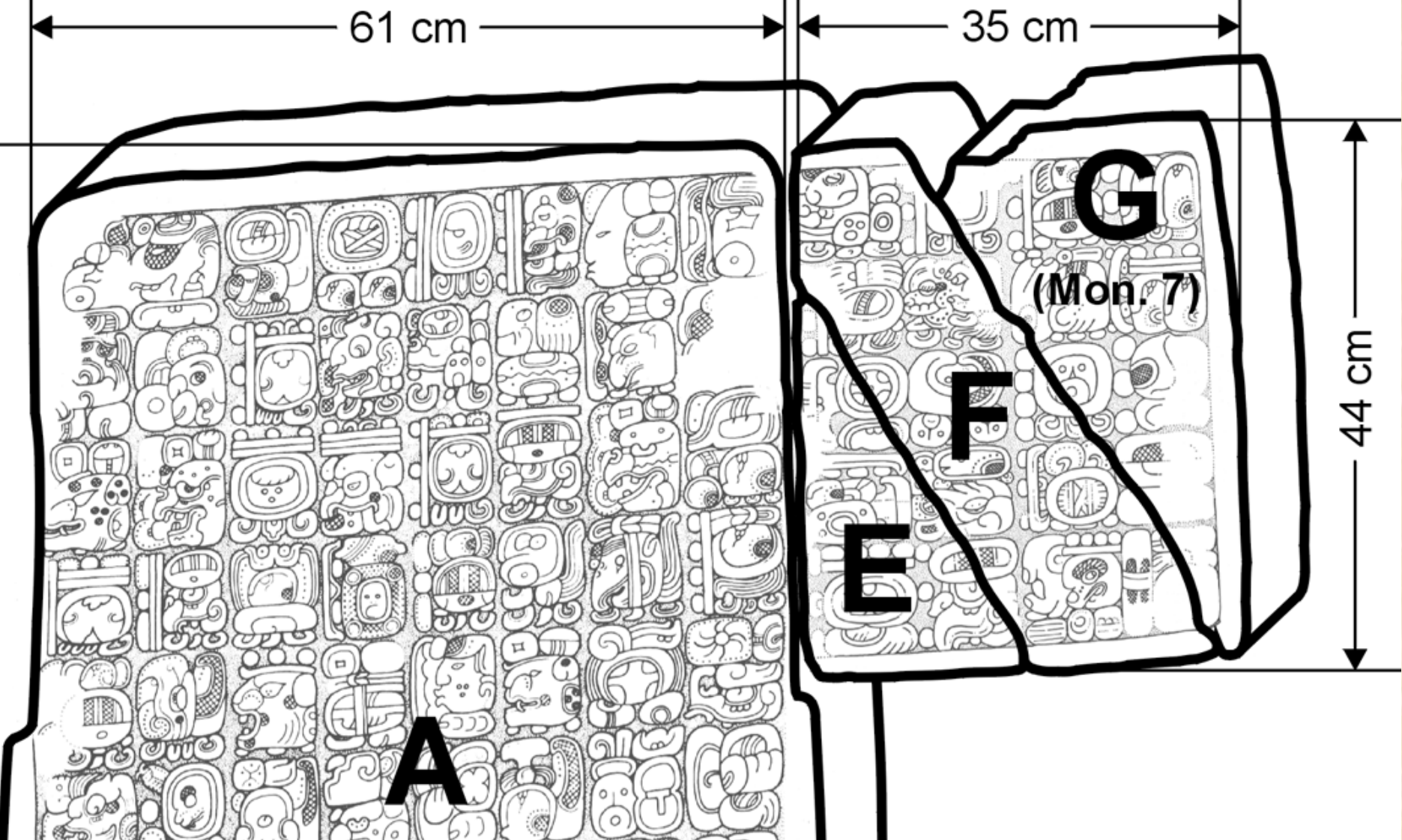
Bolon Yokte' (other interpretations: “Nine Support [Gods]”, “Many-Strides God”, “Nine-Dog Tree”, or “Many-Root Tree”) is a god of change, of destruction, and of Period-endings (modern epigraphy’s term for Maya Long Count dates which end in lots of zeroes, such as 9.16.13.0.0 or 9.0.0.0.0. These “round number” dates were very important to the ancient Maya.) Unfortunately, he is rarely mentioned, and we know relatively little about him, or them. Although mentioned once or twice in the *Dresden Codex*, he was not sufficiently important for them to *illustrate* him, though they did draw dozens of other gods.

Thanks to Christian Prager and Markus Eberl for delineating this obscure deity.



Drawing of this monument, the oddly T-shaped Tortuguero *Mon. 6*, which mostly records the recent history of the king who erected it around the year 700 AD/CE. The symmetrical upper left 'wing' of the monument, containing the Long Count, is missing.

Drawing by Sven Gronemeyer. Present locations: Portions A, C, D, and G in Civic Museum, Villahermosa. Portion B is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Portions E and F are in a private collection.



A close-up of the segment at the end, which contains, in its last twelve glyphs, the “2012 text.” We shall return to this frustrating inscription after comparing some related texts dealing with the Creation in which we live, that of 3114 BC/BCE.

13.0.0.0 Creation stories on Monuments - Quirigua



Photos by Linda Schele



Quirigua *Stelae E and D*, the largest Maya monoliths ever erected. These and other Quirigua stelae form a forest of monumental inscriptions whose texts are subtly interconnected.

Most important for our purposes here is the east text on Stela C (775 CE), which provides the most complete description of the 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u Creation (3114 BC) on any monument.

The next slide displays a drawing of the whole text, with an enlargement of the Long Count and first sentence...



What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation gives us a clue as to what was expected at the next one.

“The Count of the Years (is) 13 *Pik*, 0 *Winikhaab*, 0 *Haab*, 0 *Winik*, 0 *K'in*. (On) 4 Ajaw, on the 8th day of Kumk'u, (the hearth) was manifested, ...”

—Quirigua Stela C east, dedicated 29 December 775 CE

Drawings of Quirigua Monuments by Prof. Matt Looper, enlargement of the Long Count and first sentence at right.

I'm going to show you a little how decipherment works, so you know where we epigraphers are coming from.

By rearranging the text into our reading format: horizontal rows, we can use a process called *distributed analysis*, a technique of comparing parallel texts which has been very productive in understanding Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions.

We'll use the Quirigua *Stela C* Creation story as an example, because it mirrors the 2012 event: they (apparently) share the same Long Count date **13.0.0.0.0**.

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 1

“...(The hearth) was manifested,
three stones were bound.

(1) The Jaguar Paddler and the
Stingray Paddler plant a stone
at *Nah-Ho-Chan*; the Jaguar Stone.
(2) *Ek-Nah-Chak-??* plants a stone
at the Big?/Banner?-??-*ma*;
the Serpent-Stone. ...”

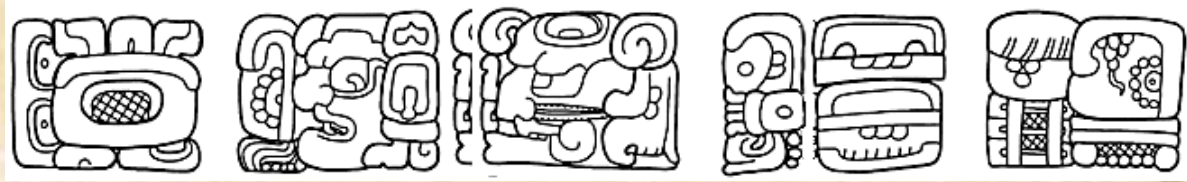
One of the most common Maya
hieroglyphs is highlighted, the
word for “stone,” to show how it
can vary from one position to
another.





The text continues, and here is a photograph of part of it. The original carving is hardly eroded and quite clear. The toothless guy with the spine through his nose is known as the "Stingray-Spine Paddler." He and his twin, the "Jaguar Paddler," pilot souls in the canoe to the Underworld. Here they play a role in Creation...

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation...



(1) “They plant a stone, the Jaguar Paddler and the Stingray Paddler, at *Nah-Ho-Chan* (“Great-5-Sky”); (it is) the Jaguar-Throne-Stone.

In this glimpse of the story, Creation is likened to building a house. A builder’s first priority is to make a place to cook: a firepit surrounded by three stones, on which one rests a griddle to cook tortillas and tamales. Everyone must be fed, even before the house is completed.

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0 Creation...



(2) “He plants a stone, *Ek-Nah-Chak-??*, at the Big?/Banner?-??-*ma*; (it is) the Serpent-Throne-Stone.

This god, whose name means something like “Black-House-Great-Somebody,” is barely known elsewhere. The place he plants his stone starts with the glyph *Lakam*, which means either “Big” or “Banner;” (Inscriptions refer to a stela as a *lakam tuun*, “Banner Stone” or “Big Stone.”)

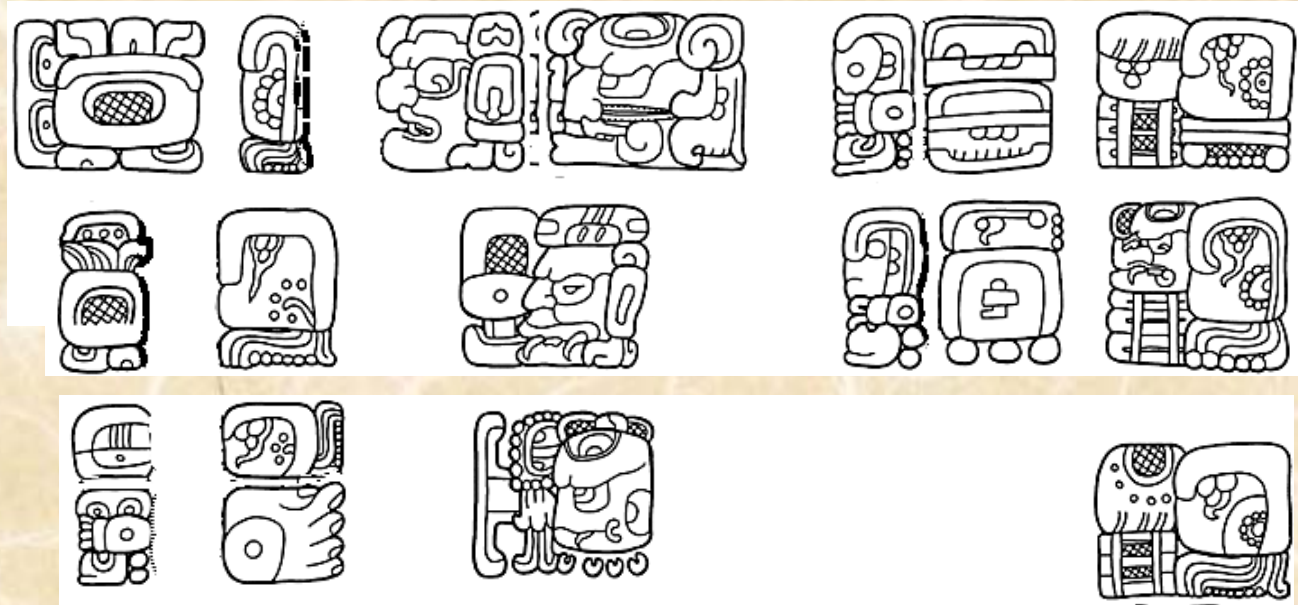
What happened at the last 13.0.0.0 Creation...



- (1) “They plant a stone, the Jaguar Paddler and the Stingray Paddler, at *Nah-Ho-Chan* (“Great-5-Sky”); (it is) the Jaguar-Throne-Stone.
- (2) “He plants a stone, *Ek-Nah-Chak-??*, at the Big?/Banner?-??-*ma*; (it is) the Serpent-Throne-Stone.”

Splitting and spreading the glyphs so they line up in parallel, one can see that the first and second sentences are identical except for the names of the actors and the designations of the particular stones. Each stone, the *Jaguar Stone* and the *Serpent Throne-Stone*, is planted in a specific celestial location, by different gods.

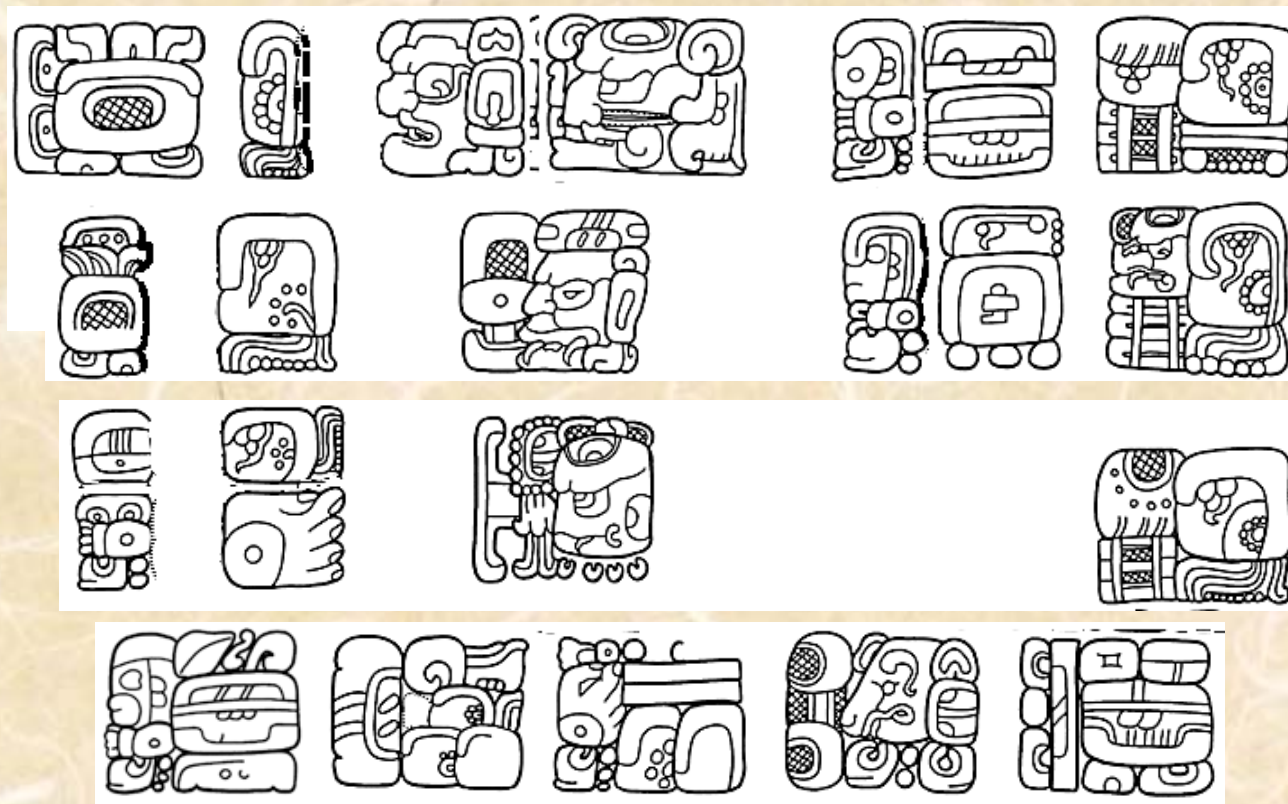
What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation...



(3) “And then he tied a stone, Itzamnaaj (God D), (it is) the Water-Throne-Stone.”

The third sentence is almost the same structure, but the location is not named (until the next line), and the verb is “tied” or “wrapped” rather than “planted.” Apparently the Creation-reenactment ceremony of the Three Stones involved “planting” and then “wrapping.” Itzamnaaj a.k.a. ‘God D,’ is a high-ranking, wrinkled Old God, ubiquitous in Maya art, usually ruling over other gods. Occasionally, as here, God D appears as a serpent-head.

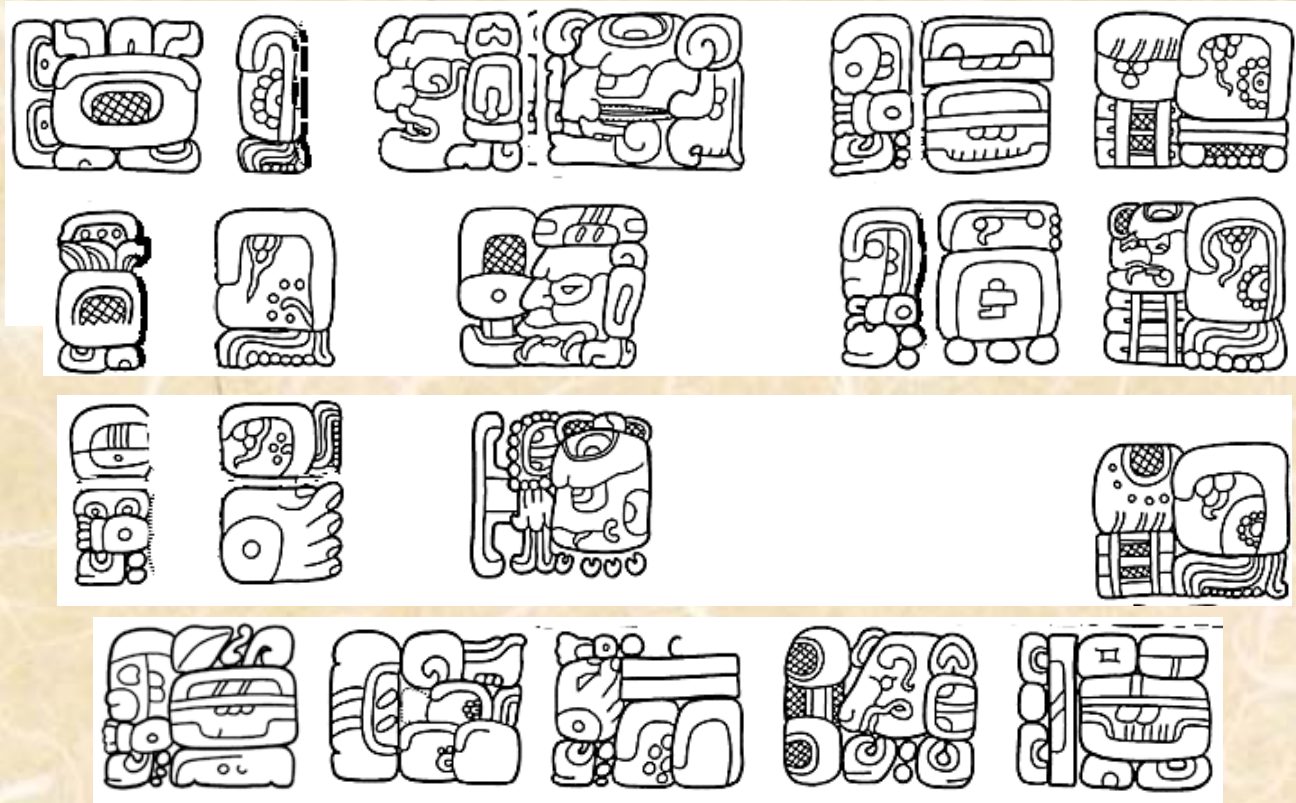
What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation...



(4) “It happened at the Edge-of-the-Sky First-3-Stones-Place; Six-Sky-Lord oversaw the ending of the 13 *Pik* (“bundles” of years).”

The next phrase in the main text notes the location of the Third Stone, which we missed in the previous sentence. Then the last three glyphs state that 13 *Pik* (“bundles” of years, i.e., 13 x 400 ‘years’) ended, and the whole affair was overseen by one “Six-Sky Ajaw.” This mysterious supervisor appears rarely, but does occasionally act in some other contexts. Perhaps this is a pseudonym for ‘God L,’ or some other deity whose name we cannot otherwise read.

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0 Creation...



- (1) "They plant a stone, the Jaguar Paddler and the Stingray Paddler, at *Nah-Ho-Chan* ("Great-5-Sky"); (it is) the Jaguar-Throne-Stone.
- (2) "He plants a stone, *Ek-Nah-Chak-??*, at the Big?/Banner?-??-*ma*; (it is) the Serpent-Throne-Stone.
- (3) "And then he tied a stone, *Itzamnaaj* (God D), (it is) the Water-Throne-Stone.
- (4) "It happened at the Edge-of-the-Sky First-3-Stones-Place; Six-Sky-Lord oversaw the ending of the 13 *Pik* ("bundles" of years)."

Most stone monuments refer to Creation *only* in terms of the 3-Stones story; they use the same verb (*tz'ap*) to describe the “Creation of the Hearth” as they use to describe the erection of the monuments themselves.

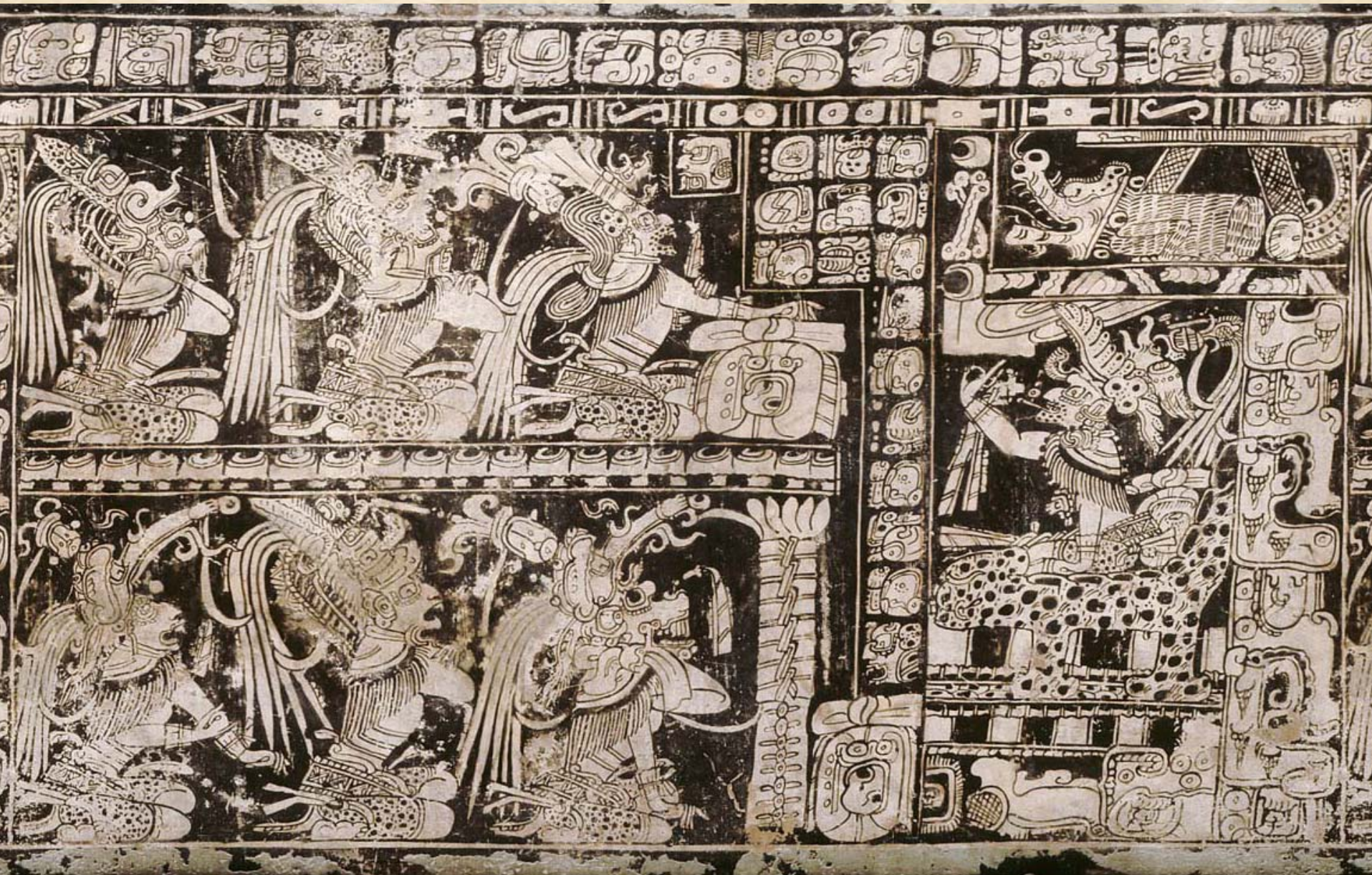
That is, when the Maya put up a stone monument, they were re-enacting a part of the Creation story.

Whenever the Maya build a new house, they start with the hearth, thus also re-enacting this part of the story.

Two painted vases illustrate a different event of the Creation story.

The glyph in the background is *u-tz'apaw*, “...was planted.”

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 2



K2796: *The Vase of the Seven Gods:* Gods in the dark, with “lots of star-earth,” presided over by God Lon a Jaguar Throne inside a mountain. Photo: Justin Kerr



Photograph © Justin Kerr 1998. File No. 7750d

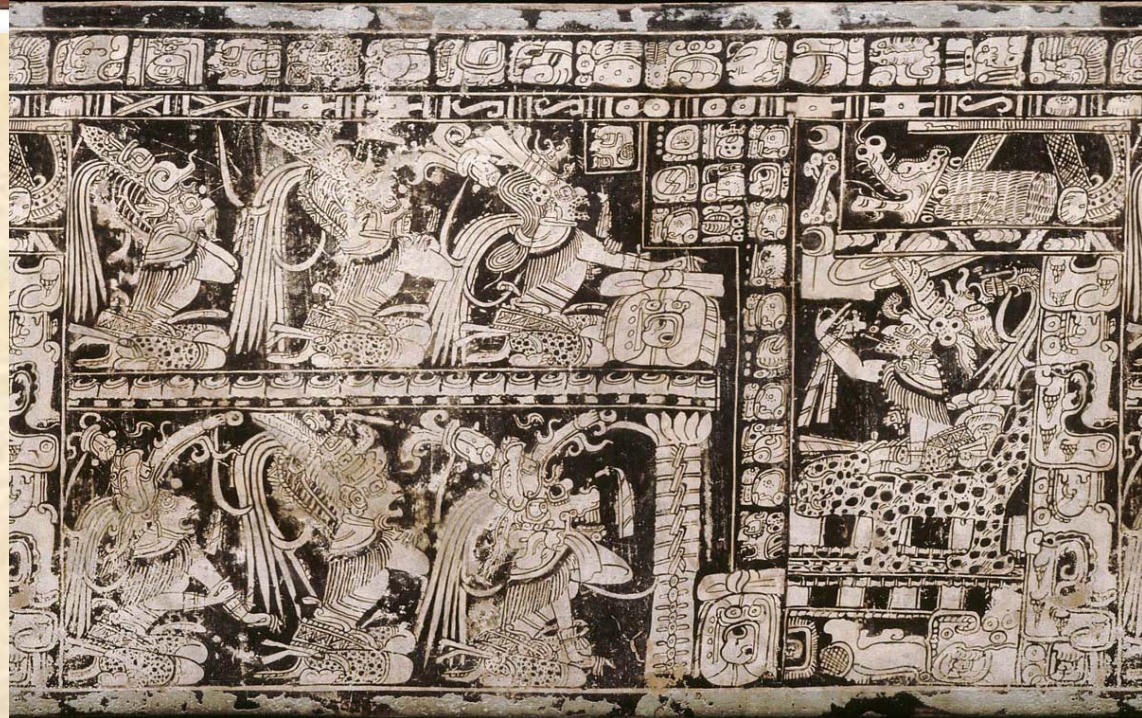
Photograph © Justin Kerr 1998. File N. K7750c

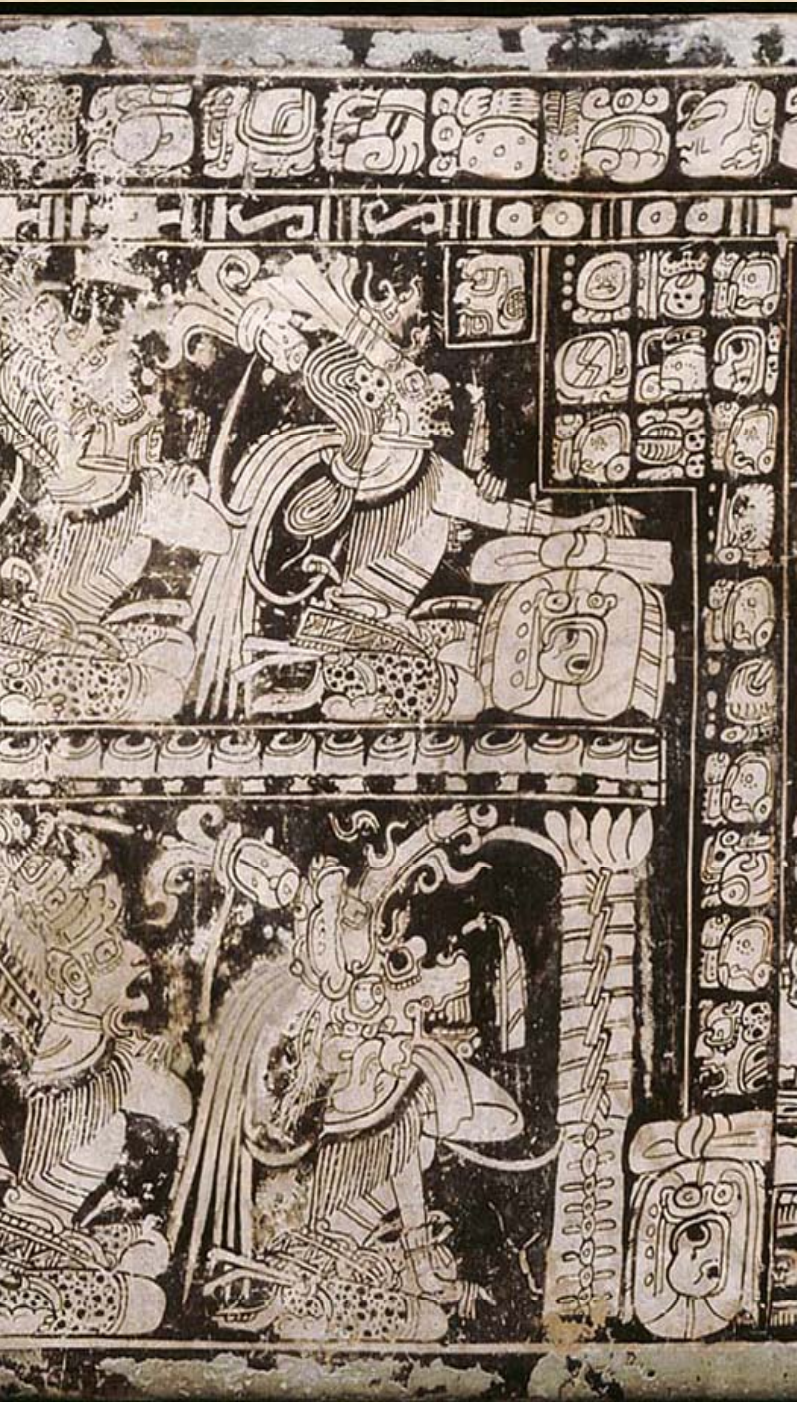
What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation Part 2:

K7750: *The Vase of the Eleven Gods*: is a second copy of precisely the same scene as K2796: gods in the dark, with “lots of star-earth,” presided over by God L on a Jaguar Throne inside a mountain. (here by a different artist, polychrome versus black-and-white, on a square vessel instead of a cylindrical one, and with the gods rearranged somewhat.

(Right: K2796: *Vase of 7 Gods*.)

Photos: <http://research.famsi.org/kerrmaya.html>





The two gods in the front ranks, one with jaguar features and the other looking like a skeletal horse, each confront a wrapped bundle labeled "9-Ek'-Kab," "Lots of Star-Earth (stuff)," the raw material of Creation.





What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 2:

K2796: Vase of 7 Gods (black):

On 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u, they were put in order: The Black-its-Center God, the Sky Place God, the Earth God, Many-Strides God *Bolon-(y)okte'-K'uh*, The Three-Born-Together Gods (*Ox-lu-ti-K'uh*), 20-??-Tree-Deer?-God" (*K'al-na?/ya?-Te'-chi K'uh*); The Jaguar (Paddler?) ... the Tree (God?) (These two glyphs appear only on this vase, and probably name the first two characters in the top row. But they are anomalous, not fitting the rhetorical pattern of the previous list.)

K7750: Vase of 11 Gods (red):

Starts the same as above and continues on with:

...20-??-Tree-Deer?-God" (*K'al-na?/ya?-Te'-chi K'uh*); it happened in the East? (*K'in-chi-yi? K'in-ni-chi-li*)

(next column): ?? is the "cherished one" (child) of Lady ??, Lady Jaguar-Tail, Lady ??-ba-?? Ajaw, West-??.

He is the son of the 4-winikhaab (= "60-80-year-old") incenser, *K'ak'-Tiliw* ("Fire-Tapir"), 9th in succession, White-Monkey?-Lord?

The 3 glyphs above the bundle are a scribal signature: "It is his painting, Loose-Flint-Death-Shark."

It is difficult to assign which name goes with which god. The problem is complicated by the fact that in the *text*, the list of gods keeps the same order in both vases, while the *illustrations* appear to mix them up. There *may* be a correlation between the names of the gods and their pictures, but this puzzle is not yet resolved, and is another example to warn us not to flatter ourselves that we have anything near complete understanding of the ancient Maya mind. More importantly, none of the names in the list match the known names of the few recognizable gods.

(The last two gods on the bottom row of the [black and white] *Vase of 7 Gods*, God GI and a Death God, are promoted to the end of the top row on the [polychrome] *Vase of 11 Gods*, even keeping precisely the same poses. I respectfully disagree with Christian Prager and Markus Eberl's connection of God GI to the mysterious *Bolon Yokte' Kuh* who is the actor on the "2012 Stela" from Tortuguero [Mon. 6], on which more later.)

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 3

The next example,
Coba Stela 1, though
badly eroded,
provides yet a
different glimpse of
the 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u
Creation (13.0.0.0.0).

Photo by Ian Graham (CMHI Vol.7)



Photograph by Ian Graham, *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*, vol. 7

Coba Stela 1

(V)

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

C D

1

2

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

13. 0.

0. 0.

0, 4

Ajaw

G9, F

3E, 5C

B, X

30A,
8 Kum-
k'u

Mani-
fested,
the ??

Ended
13 pik?

8-??,
???...

Though badly worn, we can read that the date 13.0.0.0.0, instead of just five vigesimal digits, is an abbreviation; the “full” version they rendered with an extra 19 digits.

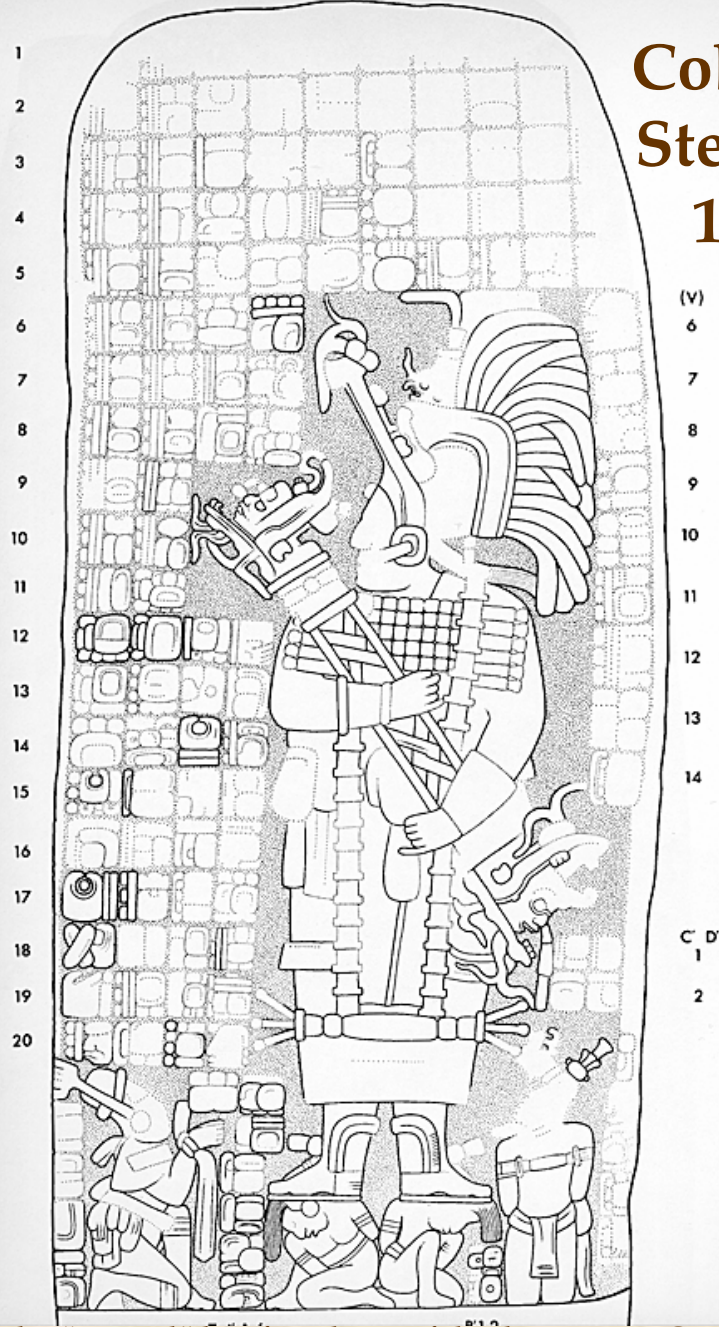
Creation’s date is here rendered
13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.13.0.0.
.0.0. The units of time are each twenty times larger than the following period: the 13 *Pik* (Baktuns) are equivalent to 5125.366 years, the next digit up is 13 *Piktuns*, or 102,507.3 years. Above that, 13 *Kalabtuns*, is 2,050,146.45 years. And so on.

A few Maya texts employ calculations involving huge bundles of years like this, and these vast numbers count not only time much earlier than the 4-Ajaw Creation, but far exceeding the age of our known universe.

Such a date is comparable to indicating our location like this:

You are here



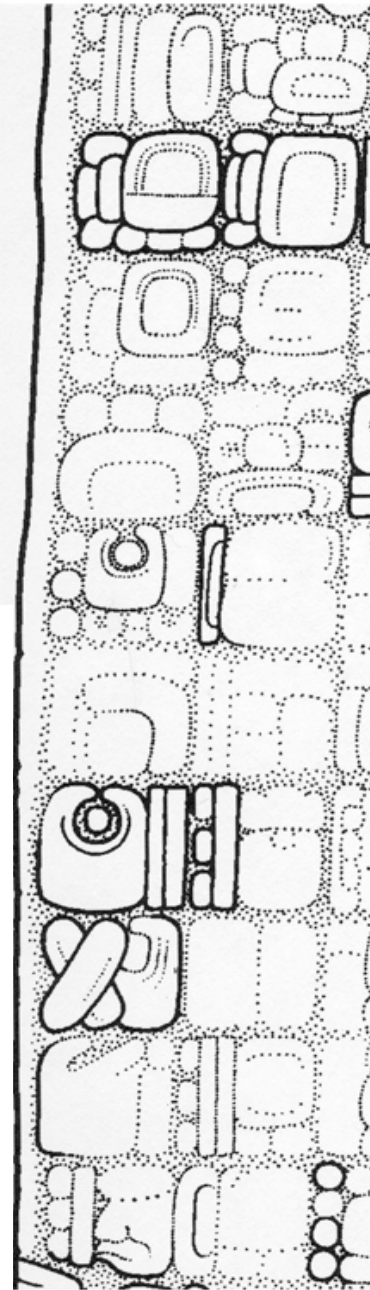
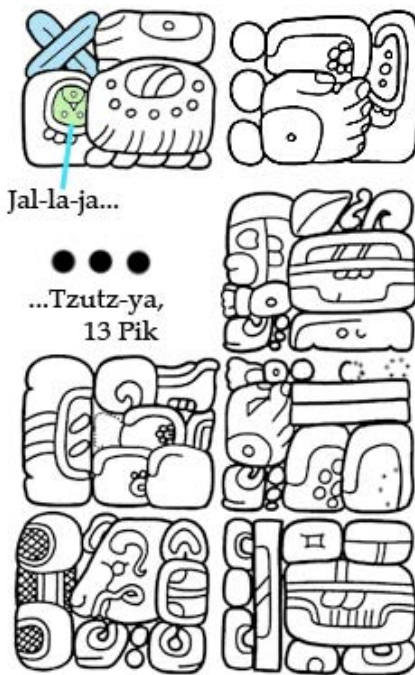


Coba Stela 1

(V)
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
C' D'
1
2

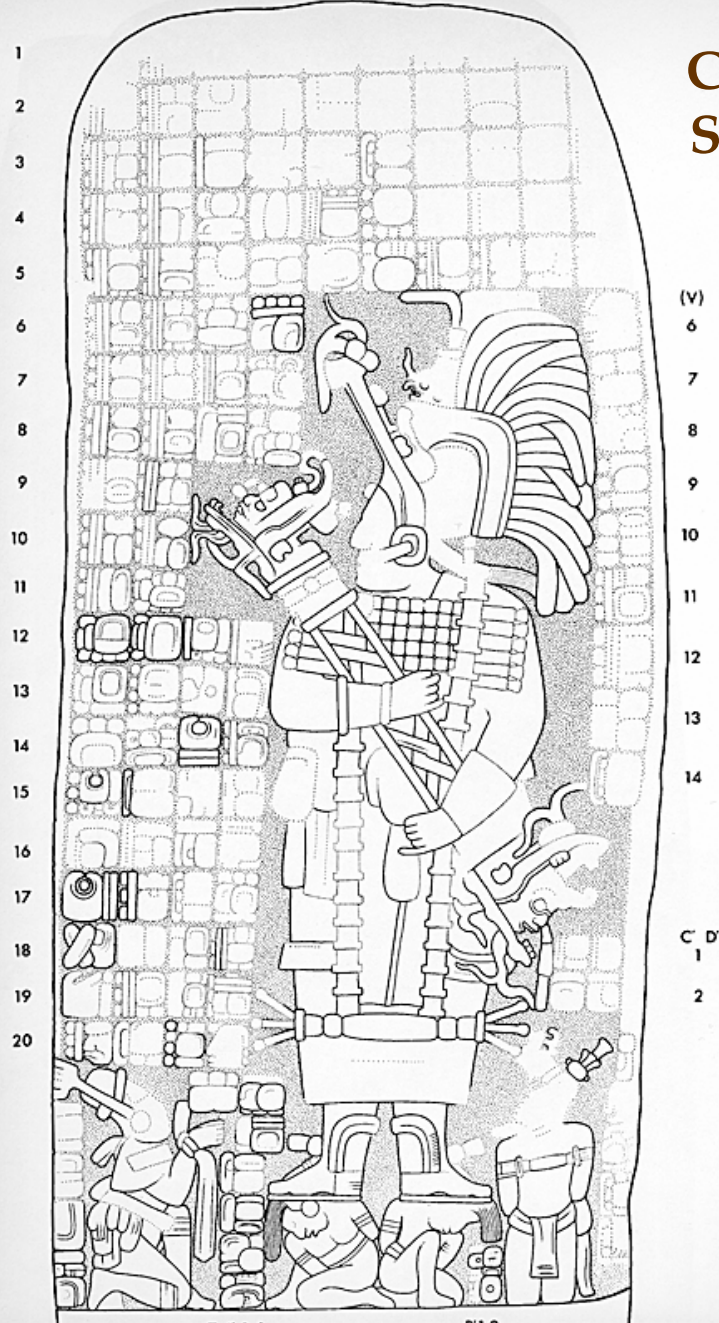


11
12
13
14
15



13. 0.
0. 0.
0, 4 Ajaw
G9, F
3E, 5C
B, X
30A,
8 Kumk'u
Manifested
the ??
Ended 13
pik?
8-??, ???...

The "normal" last five digits of this huge Long Count appear enlarged at right, with the rest of the Initial Series date, followed by the Creation event itself. In the middle is the equivalent text we just saw, from Quirigua St. C: the 'crossed planks' verb *Jalaj*, "It was manifested, the ?? ..."



Coba
Stela
1

(V)
6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

C' D'
1

2



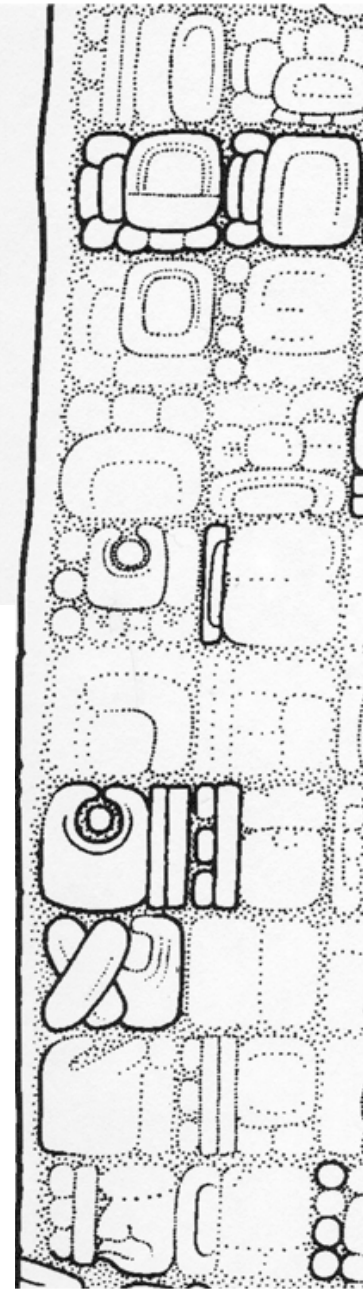
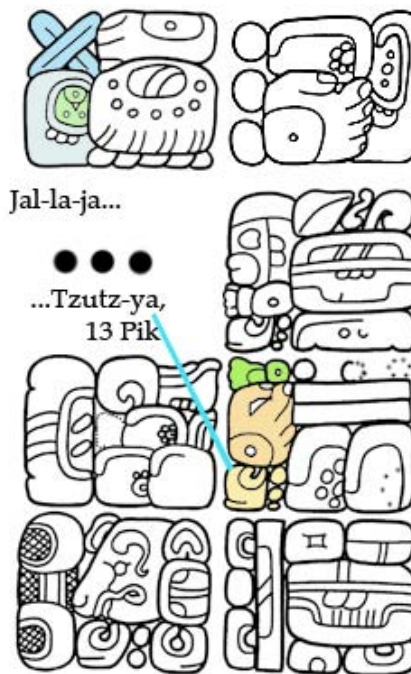
11

12

13

14

15



13. 0.

0. 0.

0, 4 Ajaw

G9, F

3E, 5C

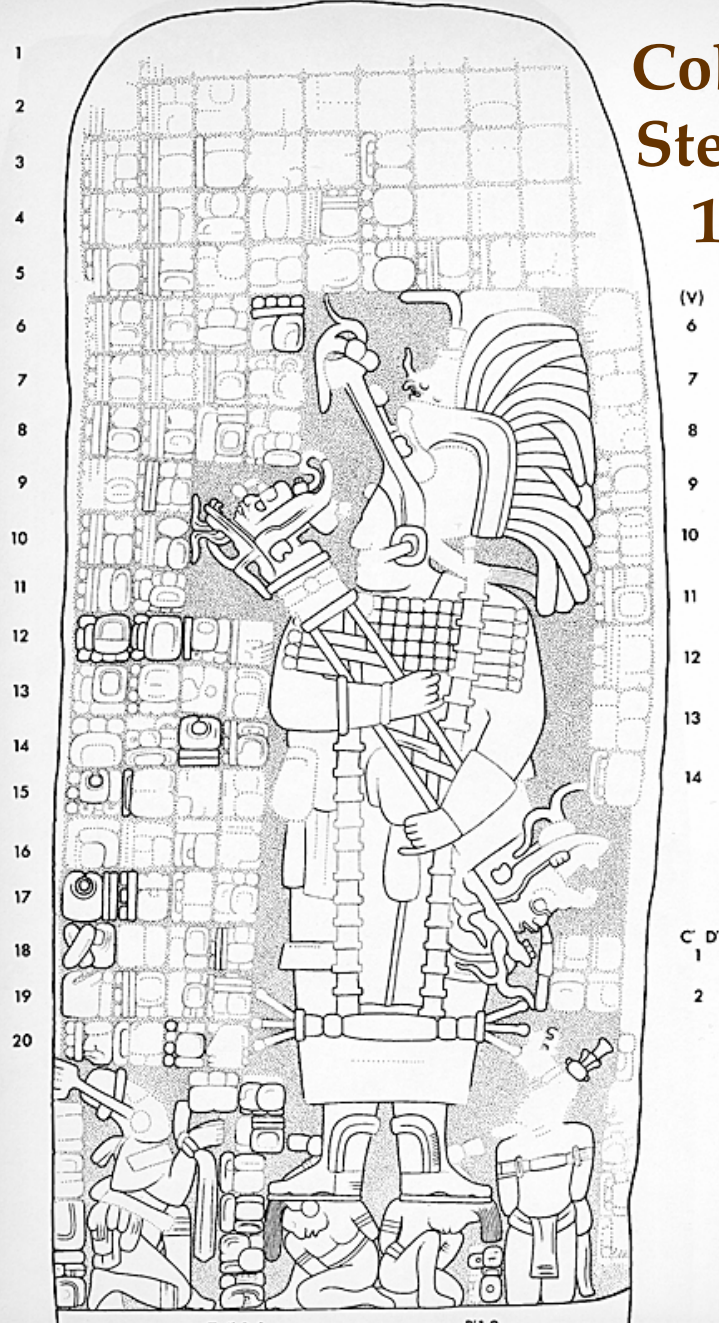
B, X

30A,
8 Kumk'u
Manifested
the ??

Ended 13
pik?

8-??, ???...

"...and Tzutz-ya/It ended..."

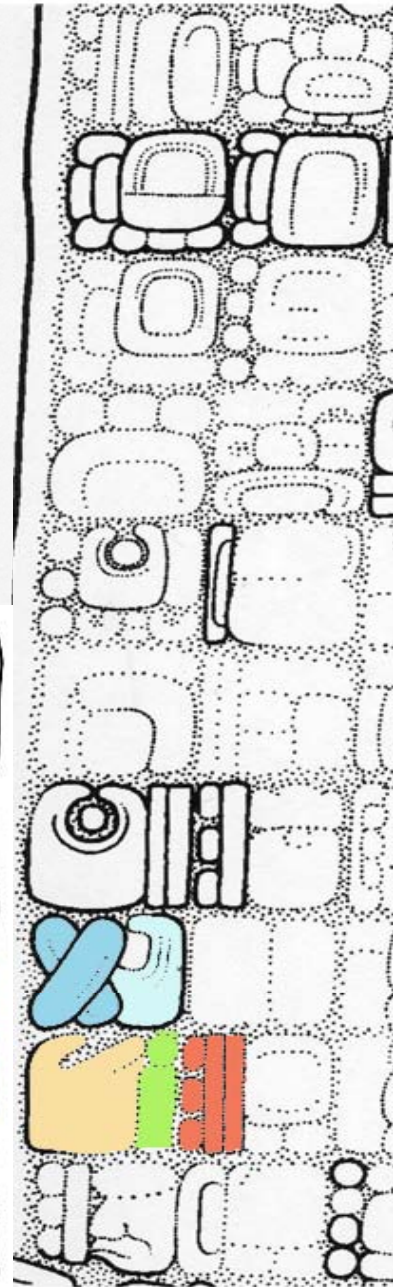


Coba Stela 1

(V)
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
C' D'
1
2



11
12
13
14
15



13. 0.
0. 0.
0, 4 Ajaw
G9, F
3E, 5C
B, X
30A,
8 Kum' u
Manifested
the ??
Ended 13
pik?
8-??, ???...


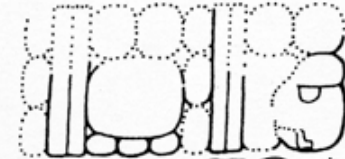
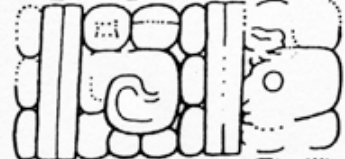



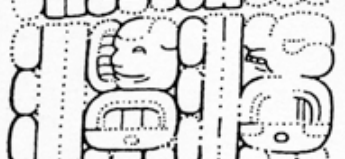
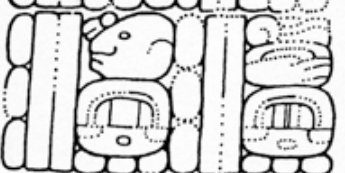
"...the 13th *Pik* (Bak'tun)..." The next phrase could tell us more about the events on this fateful day, but they are too eroded to read.

Likewise, the ten glyphs that begin the next double-column are tantalizingly illegible. Again!

After them, the text jumps ahead to the (then) present, signaling Reality with another Long Count.










This, too, is very rare; the number of inscriptions containing two Long Counts can be reckoned on the fingers of one hand. Color-coding indicates the parallel sentences in the two monuments.

Unnamed higher
orders each
multiplied by 13

		13 x (20 ²¹ tuns)
13 x (20 ²⁰ tuns)		13 x (20 ¹⁹ tuns)
13 x (20 ¹⁸ tuns)		13 x (20 ¹⁷ tuns)
13 x (20 ¹⁶ tuns)		13 x (20 ¹⁵ tuns)
13 x (20 ¹⁴ tuns)		13 x (20 ¹³ tuns)
13 x (20 ¹² tuns)		13 x (20 ¹¹ tuns)
13 x (20 ¹⁰ tuns)		13 x (20 ⁹ tuns)
13 x (20 ⁸ tuns)		13 x (20 ⁷ tuns)

Coba Macanxoc Stela 1, First half of
Extended Initial Series.

Drawing by Linda Schele, Fig. 16-3 from *Forest of Kings*

13 Alawtun (20 ⁶ tuns)		13 K'in - chiltuns (20 ⁵ tuns)
13 kalab'tun (20 ⁴ tuns)		13 piktun
13 pij		0 k'atun
0 tun		0 winal
0 k'in		4 Ajaw
G9		Glyph F
3E		Glyph C
Glyph B		Glyph B
Glyph A		8 Kumk'u
JAL-ja jalaj "to appear"		k'o-{j}-b'a k'ojb'a "the image"

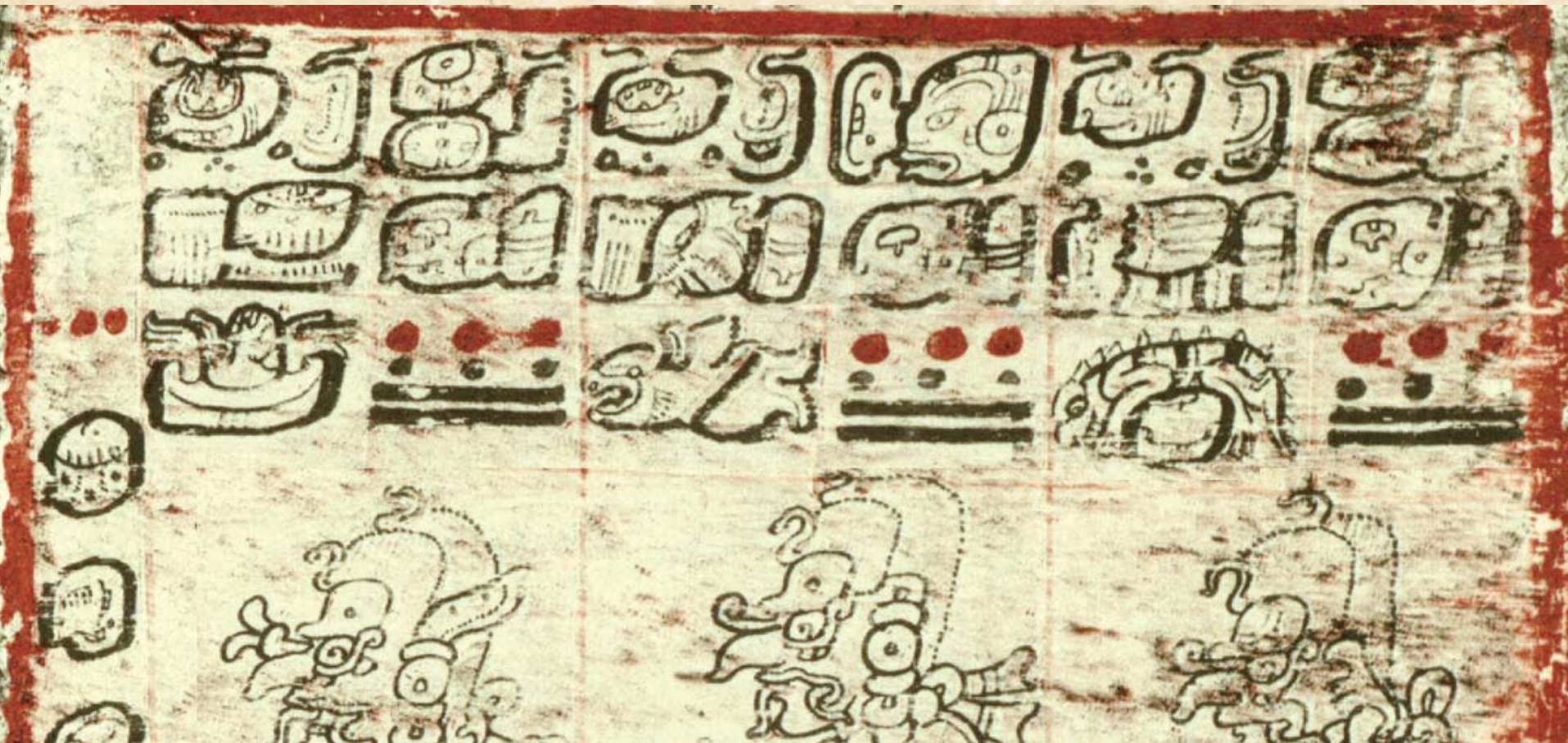
Macanxoc Stela 1, extended Initial Series, part two.

Here is a
drawing
of the
entire
Initial
Series of
Coba
Stela 1.

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 4

The *Dresden Codex* (ca. 1500 AD/CE) gives us a little more information about the last Creation, in this case the invention of Time itself.

It also mentions an important event 34,000 years *before* Creation. (Perhaps involving Neanderthals?)





Dresden Codex,
p. 69, p. 61.

Parallel texts from
"Serpent-Number"
Tables.

Chaak and other gods
sit atop a snake,
within its coils sit
parallel six-digit
Distance Numbers,
which count forward
from an ancient date:



9 K'an 12 K'ayab,
over 34,000 years
to the Creation



4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u,
(13.0.0.0.0 = 3114 BC),
as well as other
nearby dates.

Here are the two introductory passages from the Dresden Codex, the upper parts compared on the left and the lower halves on the right.



One can see that the two upper passages (pre-Creation) are identical, but for a few spelling differences. The lower sections (after Creation and counting back to 9 K'an 12 K'ayab) are similar but exhibit minor differences. The two were written by different scribes, which accounts for some of the spelling and other differences. I have also copied a "13 Piktun" glyph from the Coba Stela, so you can see the *Piktun* is mentioned at least twice in each passage.



Pahtaj
"was formed"

Bolon Lahun
"nineteen (days)"

4 Ajaw



Aj Winik
"He 20"

Aj Mi K'in / K'in
"He Zero Day / Day"

8 Kumk'u



"Was formed, He of the Twenty (the *Winal/Winik*),
Nineteen, (and) he of the Zero-day / a day,
(prior to the [Creation] Era Day on)
4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u (13.0.0.0.0 = 3114 BCE)

19 Days + the Zero Day = 20 day units = 1 *Winal/Winik*

Fig. 9: Translation of the pre-Creation passage from pages 61 & 69 of the *Dresden Codex*.
Adapted from Callaway, Carl, "The Birth of the Number Twenty in the *Dresden Codex*, 2008"

The last four glyphs before the Era Date 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u say "He the *Winal* (the period of 20 days) was "formed" (*pataj*)." In the previous slide, the same *pataj* verb refers to the *Piktun* glyphs a bit earlier in the inscription, so we can conclude that that time period (20 *Pik*/20 *Bak'tuns*) was also created in this pre-Creation limbo. In other words, Time itself was invented just before this Creation was set in motion.
(Deciphered by Carl Callaway)

[4 Ajaw]

8 Kumk'u

Wa'laj "Stopping"

K'uhul Ok
"Holy Foot"

Chak God?
"Red/East? God"



[4 Ajaw]

8 Kumk'u

Wa'laj "Stopping"

K'uhul Ok
"Holy Foot"

Ek' Chaak
"Black/ West Chaak"

Figure 3: Dresden Codex Page 70 Columns C and D, after Dresden 1998:70.

Adapted from Callaway, Carl, "The Birth of the Number Twenty in the *Dresden Codex*, 2008

Another Creation event on p. 70, a bit more puzzling, says that gods of the East and West "paused (in their travels)" on 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u. There are several other mentions of this date in the *Dresden*, but most are damaged or even more obscure than this.

Panel Fragment 7th century AD/CE

...8 Wo,
(*Haab Date*)

i-uut

“And then it was”

8 Kumk'u
(*Haab Date*)

Yax K'oj

Chak-K'uh Ajaw,
“Holy Ajaw of
Chak”



Photo by Justin Kerr

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0.0 Creation, Part 5

0 Days, 16* Winik (Distance Number)

*(written “0 Days, 18 Winik, which is surely an error)

4 Ajaw (*Tzolk'in Date*)

ilahiiy / “His first appearance”

Ahk, (royal name)

9 Pik/Bak'tuns (a DN)

(9.0.0.0.0)
i-uut “and then...”

Panel Fragment 7th century AD/CE

...8 Wo,
0 Days, 16* Winik
passed,

and then it was
4 Ajaw

8 Kumk'u
He first appeared,

Yax K'oj Ahk,

Chak-K'uh Ajaw
9 Pik/Bak'tuns
(passed?) and then...





Photo by Justin Kerr

*This Distance Number is highly anomalous. It seems to be read "18 Days, zero Winik," but a normal DN would just say, "18 days."

(One never says, "I'll be there in zero hours and 13 minutes.")

However, "Zero Days, 18 Winik" violates another rule: the coefficient of Winik never exceeds 17; an interval of 18 Winiks would be written "1 Haab."

The distance from 8 Wo to 8 Kumk'u is sixteen, not 18 Winik. Here the carver erred, misreading the (painted) hollow 'space fillers' on a 16 () for solid dots, and carved an 18 ().

...8 Wo,
0 Days, 16* Winik
passed,

and then it was
4 Ajaw

8 Kumk'u
He first appeared,

Yax K'oj Ahk,

Chak-K'uh Ajaw
9 Pik/Bak'tuns
(passed?) and then...



Photo by Justin Kerr

Translation by Marc Zender, who believes that this text does NOT refer to a Creation event, but to the historical date 9.9.16.0.0 (629 AD), which also fell on a 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u.

I believe he is probably right, though any ceremony on a 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u is certain to *recall* and perhaps *re-enact* part of the Creation story, just as a Christian sermon on Christmas Eve will always take some aspect of Christ's birth as its theme.

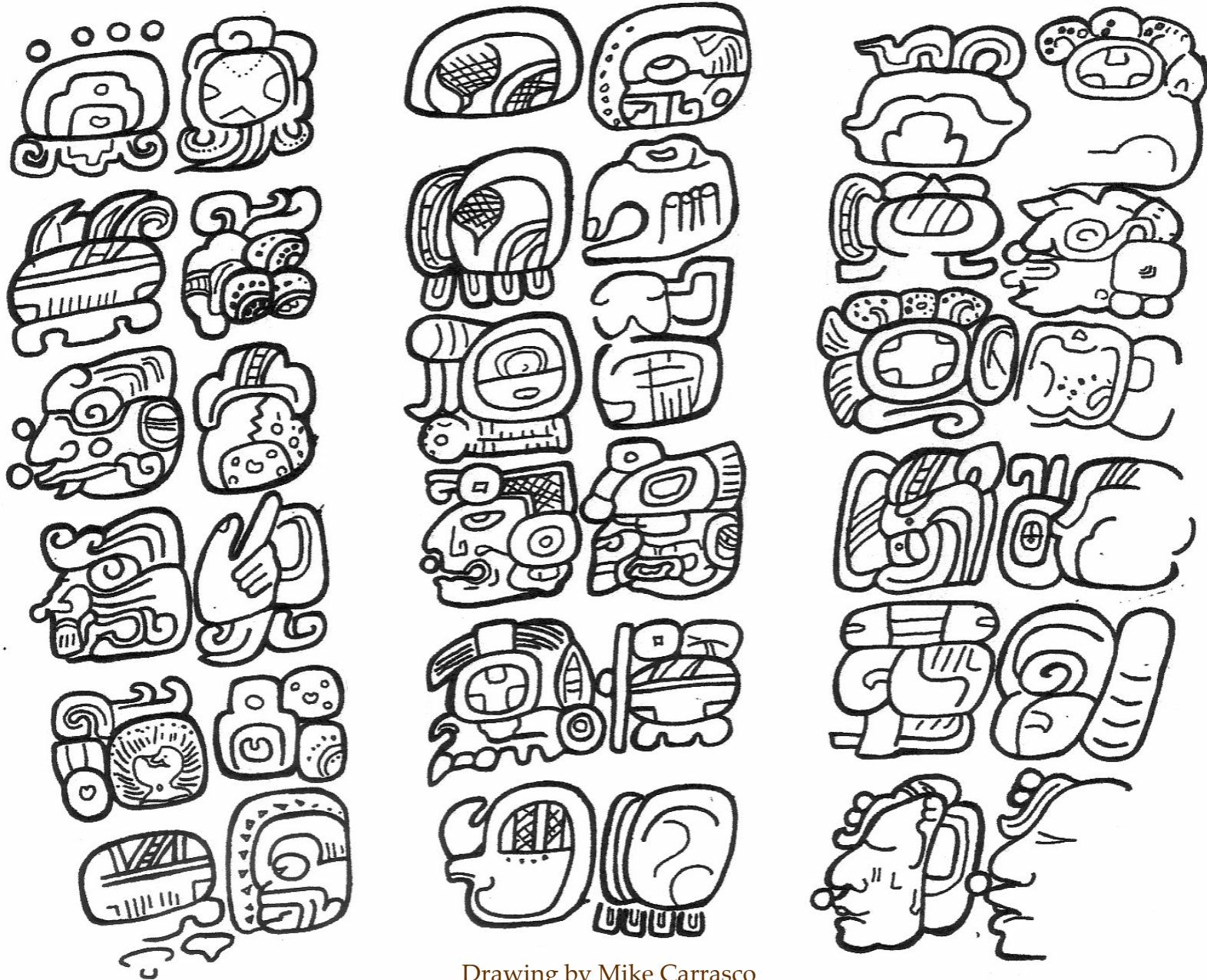
The event here, in any case, is not the usual "Planting Three Stones" that we find on other monuments. it records the "appearance" of a *Chak K'uh Ajaw* name *Yax K'oh Ahk*; e.g., of a "Great Holy Lord" named "Green Mask Turtle."

What happened at the last 13.0.0.0 Creation, Part 6



The earliest explicit mention we have of the 4 Ajaw Era date is carved on the back of an unprovenienced greenstone mask (probably from Rio Azul). It dates from the 4th or more likely the early 5th century AD/CE.

Distributive Analysis of 4-Ajaw Texts: Comparing 4-Ajaw Dates



Drawing by Mike Carrasco

I've divided the six-column text into double-column reading order...

4 Ajaw

Hul?-ya, "arrived? (at),"

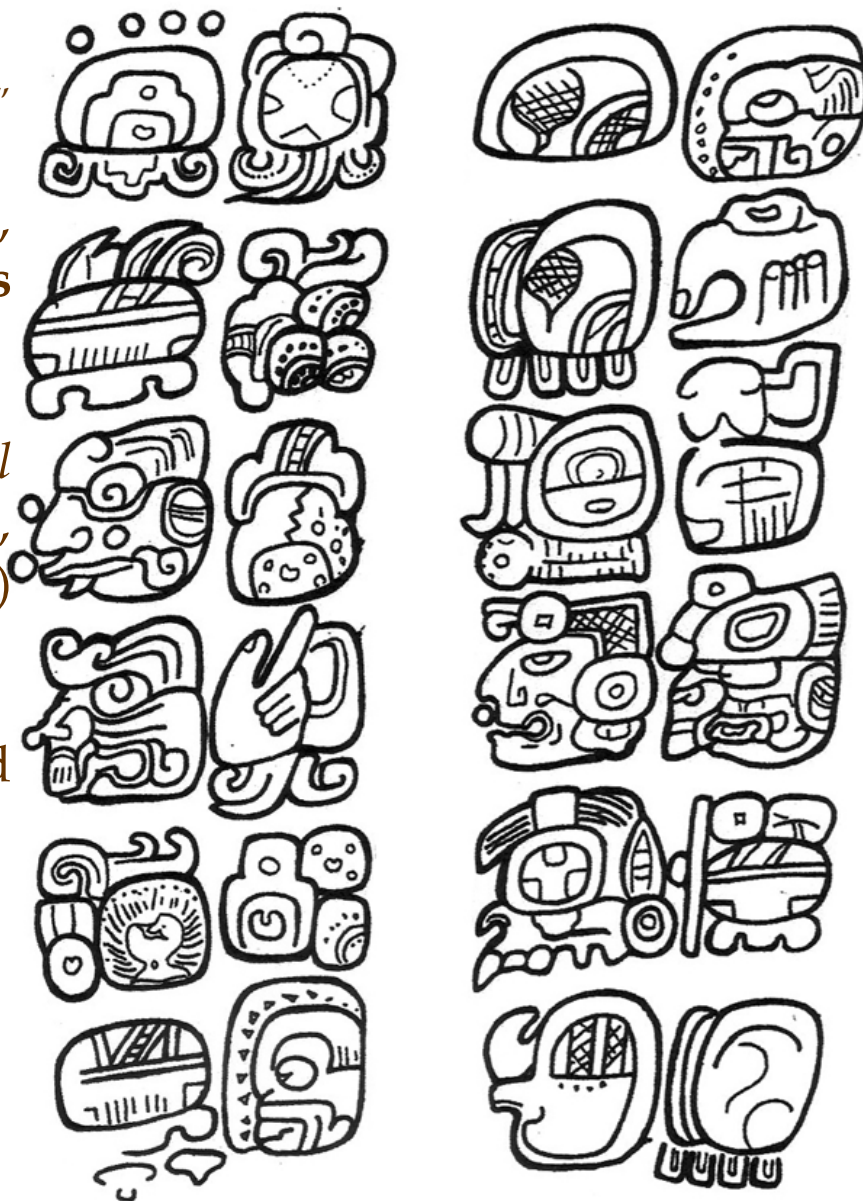
Edge of the sky,
New 3-Stones
Place

GI Yax Waybil
(version of Chaak,
the mask itself)

??? arrived

At a Cave?/
Spring? - place

Sky-God



Earth-God

U-Kab-ji
(directed by...)

??? ???

(Personages?)
&...

...
Six-Sky Lord

?? - U-Kab-ji
(directed by...
royal person.)

...And translated the relevant Creation passage in the first two double-columns. Some familiar faces appear: Sky-God and Earth-God, 6-Sky Lord. As usual, 6-Sky Guy is supervising the activities, but he is in turn supervised by a "child of (father)," who is apparently a real person, possibly the denizen of the tomb from which the mask was taken.

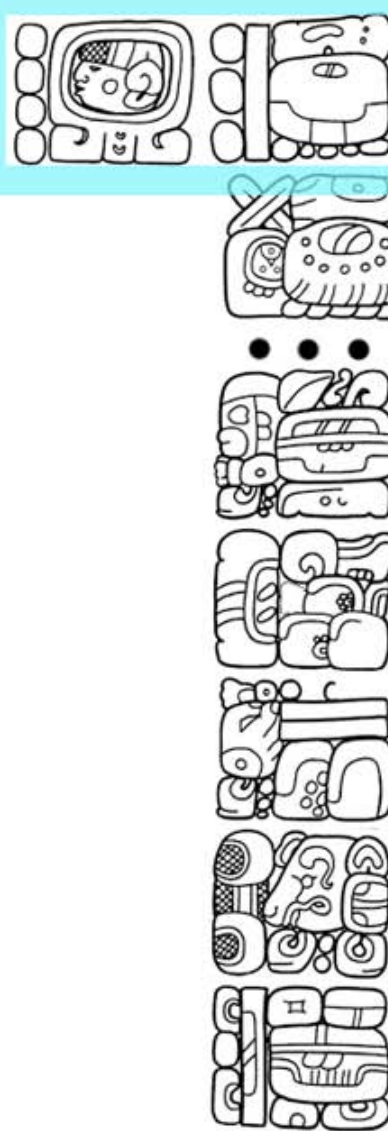


7 Gods Vase

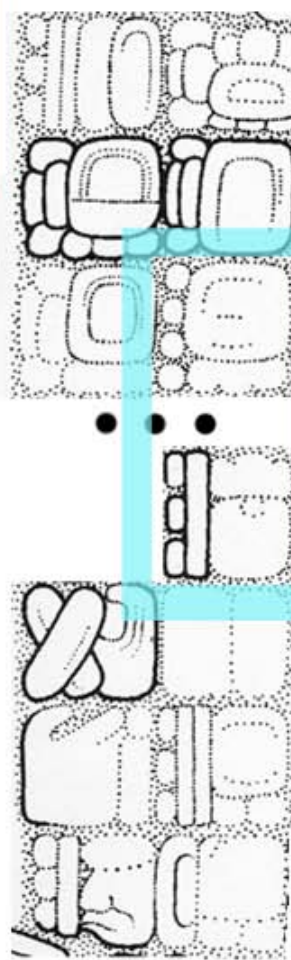
11 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. 4-Ajaw dates

Comparing side-by-side the six texts we have just seen, you can find the **4 Ajaw 8 K'umk'u** dates, usually the opening phrase (**4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in** on the Tortuguero monument....), common to all six.



11 Gods Vase



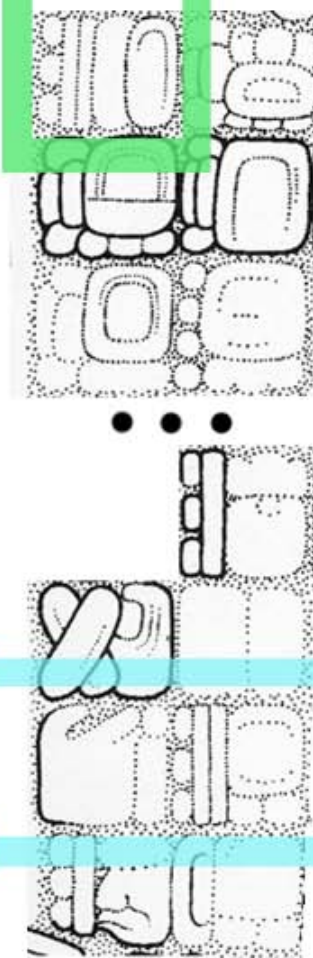
7 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. 13-Pik Period-Endings

References to the “**end of 13 Pik**” appear in three of the texts.

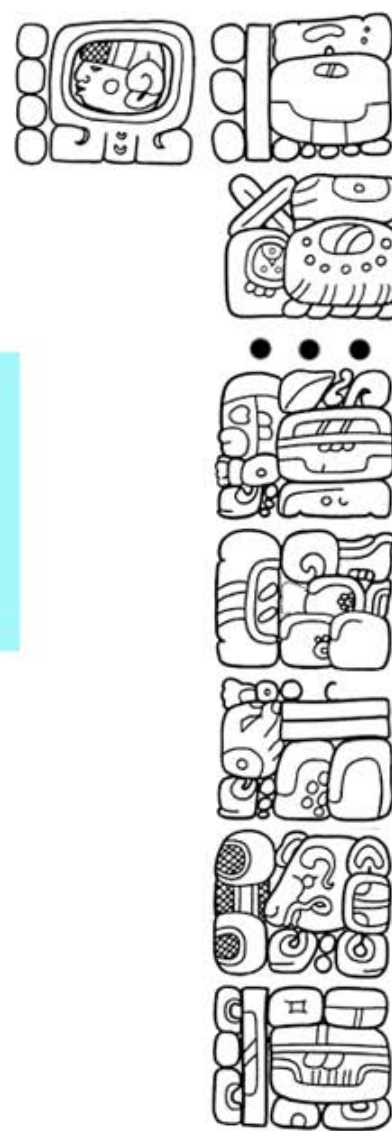


7 Gods Vase

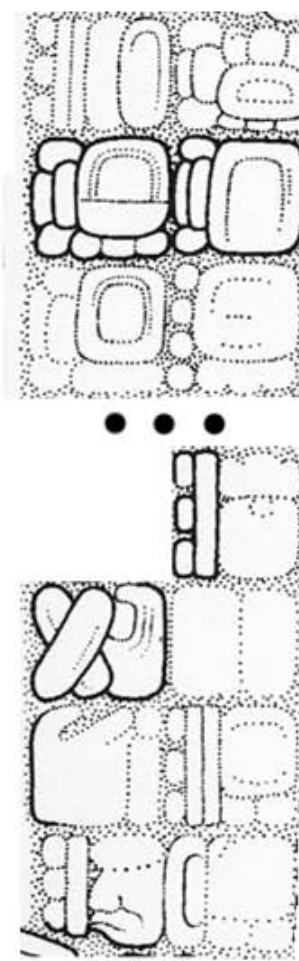
11 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. Sky God, Earth God



11 Gods Vase



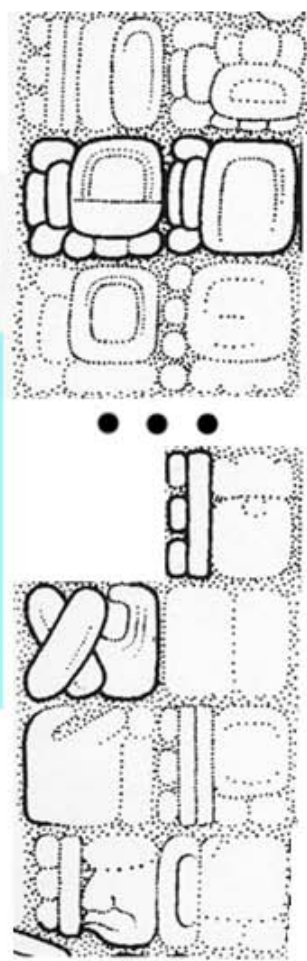
7 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. “Edge-of-Sky, New 3-Stones Place”

The “Edge of Sky, New 3-Stones Place” is mentioned in two venues.

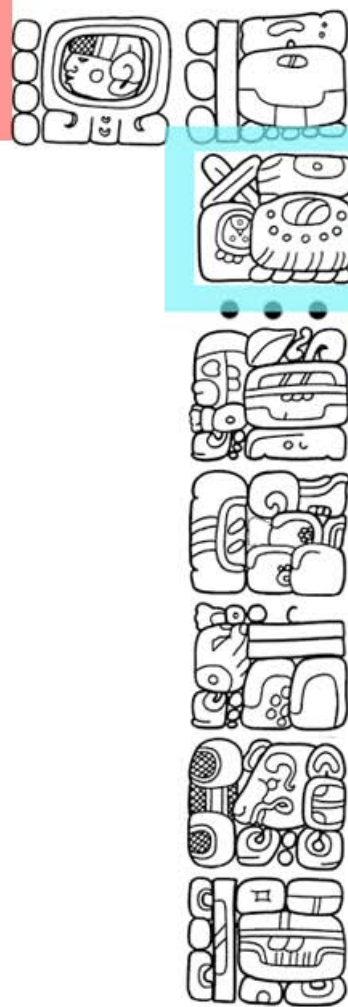


11 Gods Vase

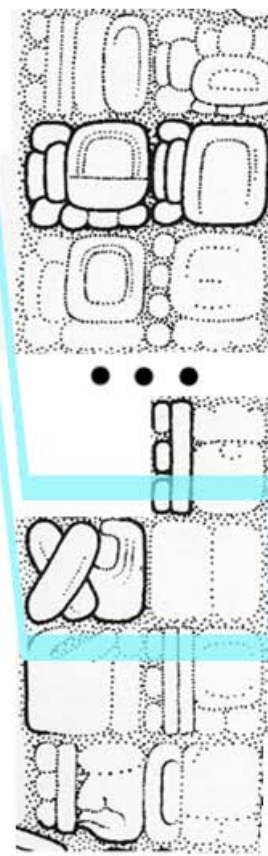
7 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



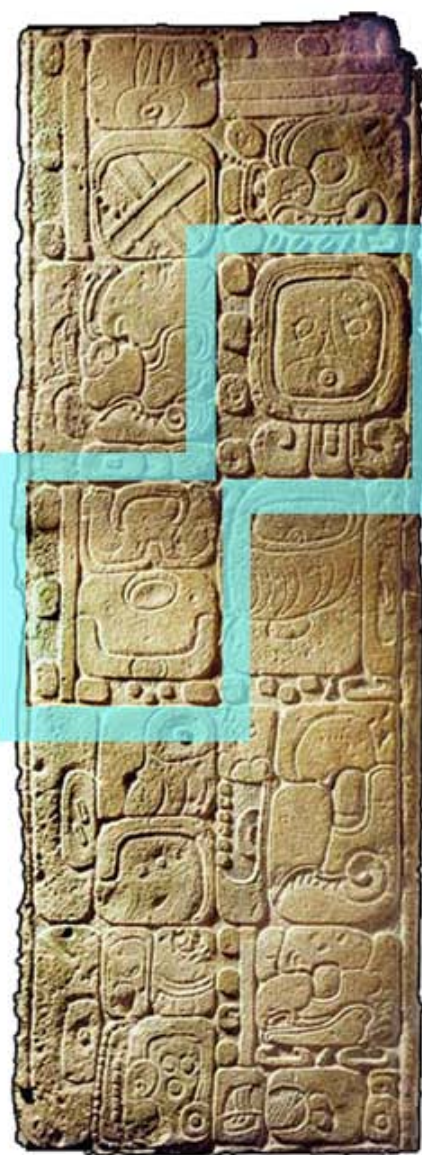
Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. Verbs (also *Tzapaj-Tuun*, “plant stones”)

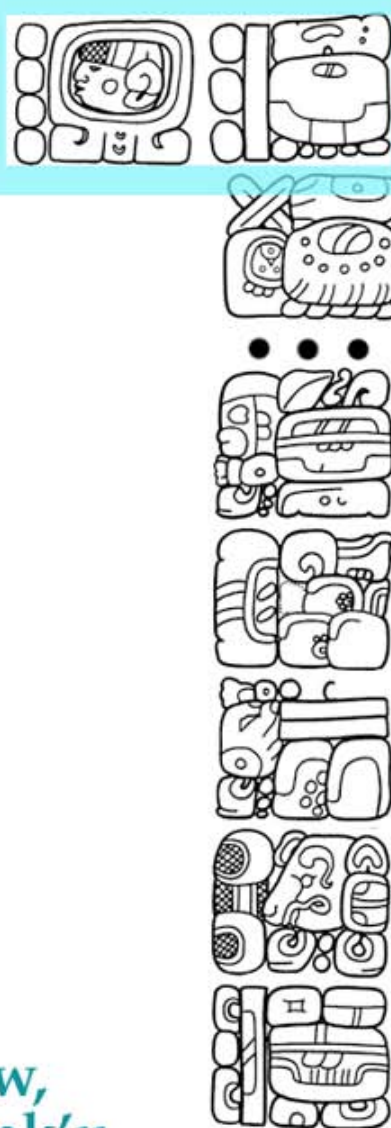
The **verbs** in these contexts are all different, and some are not yet precisely deciphered. They say: “(They) were put in order” (yellow), “(They) arrived(?)” (red), “(Three Stones) were planted and tied,” “(The Hearth) was manifested,” “13 *Pik* ended,” “The *K’oj* (image?) changed over, (turquoise),” and the future, “He will come down and ... (green).” (More next page)



Jerusalem Panel fragment
 "...On 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u
 appeared Yax K'oh Ahk,
 Great Holy Ajaw,
 9 Pik/Bak'tun (passed),
 and then..."



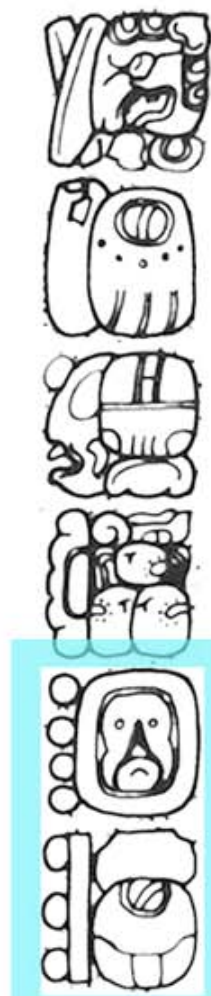
Rio Azul Mask 2
 "On 4 Ajaw, arrived(?)
 at Edge-of-Sky, First
 3-Stones Place,
 GI Yax Waybil...
 Sky-God, Earth-God..."



Quirigua Stela C
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 changed over, image?...
 It happened at Edge-of-Sky,
 First 3-Stones Place. End of
 13 Pik; 6-Sky-Lord oversaw it."



Palenque Cross Tablet
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 End of 13 Pik ...
 changed over, image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,...
 descends, GI."



Palenque Sun Tablet
 changed over,
 image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,
 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u

**4 Ajaw,
 8 Kumk'u**



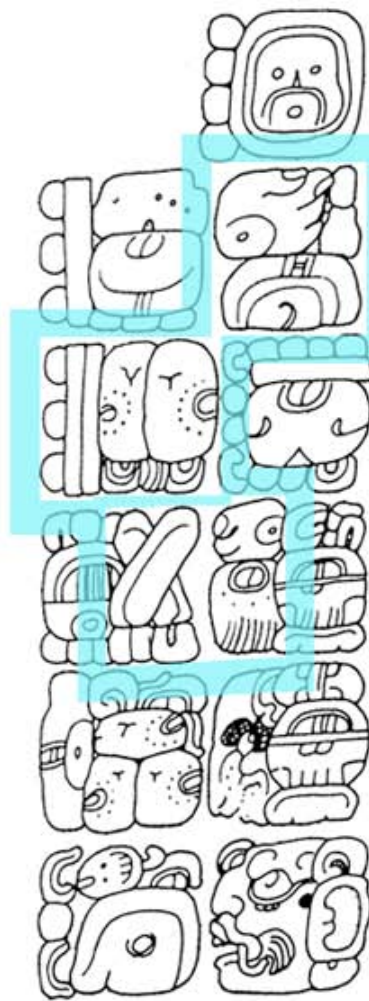
Jerusalem Panel fragment
 "...On 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u
 appeared Yax K'oh Ahk,
 Great Holy Ajaw,
 9 Pik/Bak'tun (passed),
 and then..."



Rio Azul Mask 2
 "On 4 Ajaw, arrived(?)
 at Edge-of-Sky, First
 3-Stones Place,
 GI Yax Waybil...
 Sky-God, Earth-God..."



Quirigua Stela C
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 changed over, image?...
 It happened at Edge-of-Sky,
 First 3-Stones Place. End of
 13 Pik; 6-Sky-Lord oversaw it."



Palenque Cross Tablet
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 End of 13 Pik ...
 changed over, image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,...
 descends, GI."



Palenque Sun Tablet
 changed over,
 image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,
 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u

**"End of 13 Pik,
 Changed-over"**

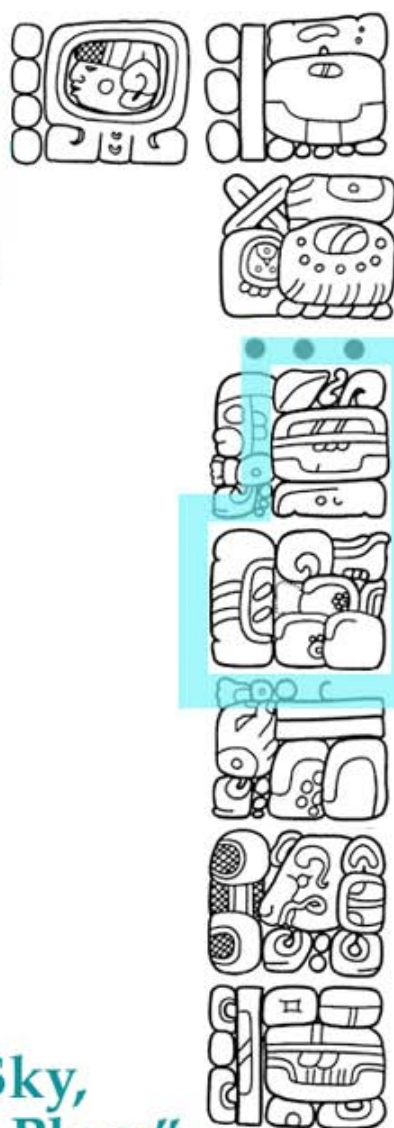


Jerusalem Panel fragment
 "...On 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u
 appeared Yax K'oh Ahk,
 Great Holy Ajaw,
 9 Pik/Bak'tun (passed),
 and then..."



**"Edge-of-Sky,
 1st 3-Stones-Place"**

Rio Azul Mask 2
 "On 4 Ajaw, arrived(?)
 at Edge-of-Sky, First
 3-Stones Place,
 GI Yax Waybil...
 Sky-God, Earth-God..."



Quirigua Stela C
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 changed over, image?...
 It happened at Edge-of-Sky,
 First 3-Stones Place. End of
 13 Pik; 6-Sky-Lord oversaw it."



Palenque Cross Tablet
 "On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
 End of 13 Pik ...
 changed over, image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,...
 descends, GI."



**Palenque Sun
 Tablet**
 changed over,
 image?
 at Edge-of-Sky,
 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u



Jerusalem Panel fragment

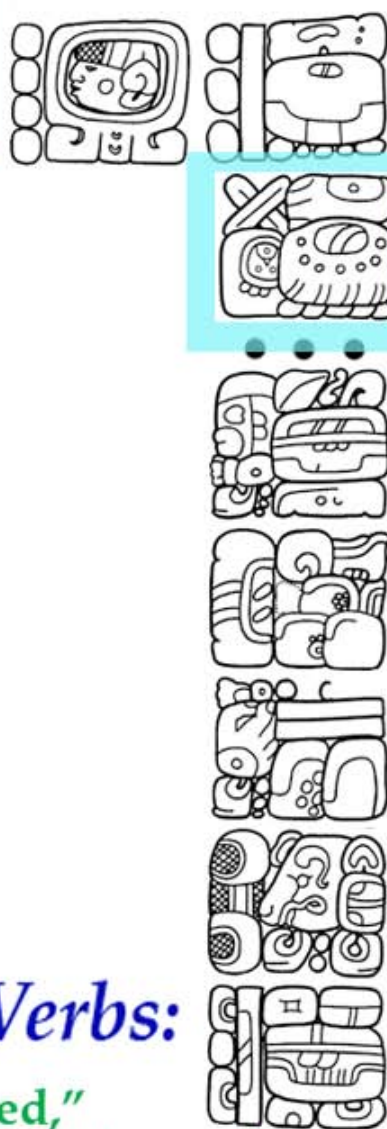
"...On 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u
appeared Yax K'oh Ahk,
Great Holy Ajaw,
9 Pik/Bak'tun (passed),
and then..."



"appeared,"

"arrived,"

Rio Azul Mask 2
"On 4 Ajaw, arrived(?)
at Edge-of-Sky, First
3-Stones Place,
GI Yax Waybil...
Sky-God, Earth-God..."



Verbs:

"changed over..."

Quirigua Stela C
"On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
changed over, image?...
It happened at Edge-of-Sky,
First 3-Stones Place. End of
13 Pik; 6-Sky-Lord oversaw it."



Palenque Cross Tablet
"On 4 Ajaw, 8 Kumk'u
End of 13 Pik ...
changed over, image?
at Edge-of-Sky,...
descends, GI."



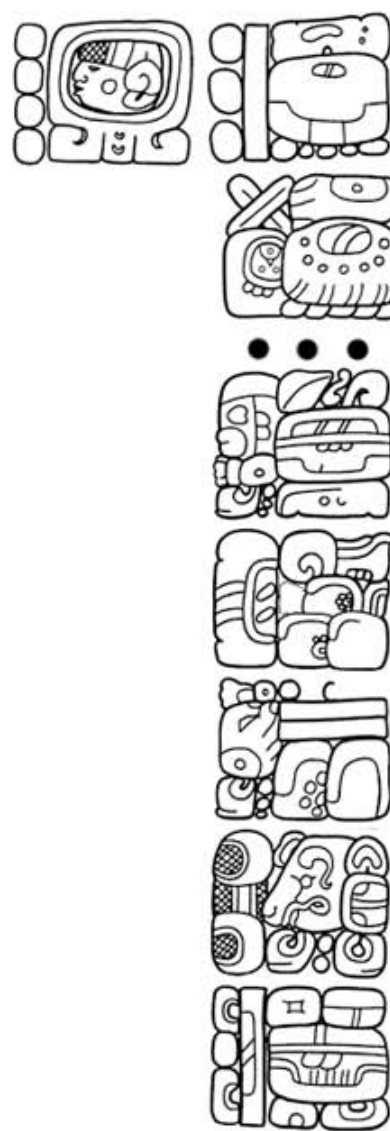
Palenque Sun
Tablet
changed over,
image?
at Edge-of-Sky,
4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u



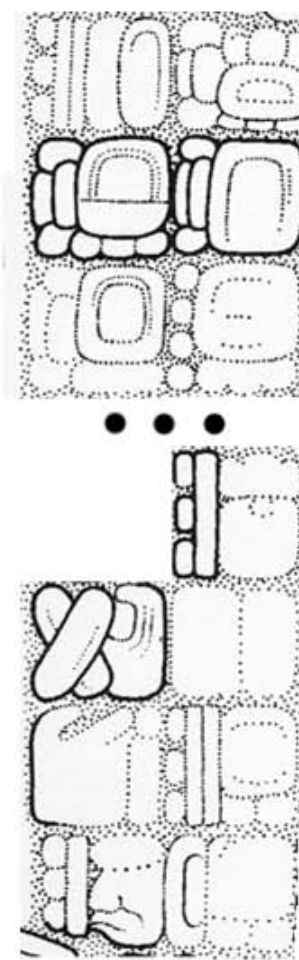
7 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. 9-Ok-Te' God

11 Gods Vase

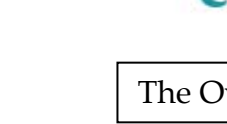
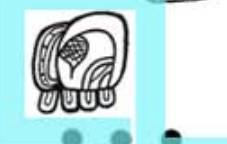
The mysterious god or gods 9-(Y)Ok-Te' appear at the "earth-and-sky-stuff" manufacturing party on the Vases, and in the single "prophetic" text from Tortuguero.



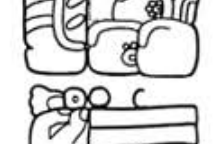
11 Gods Vase



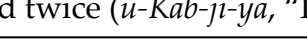
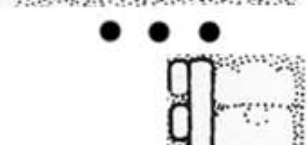
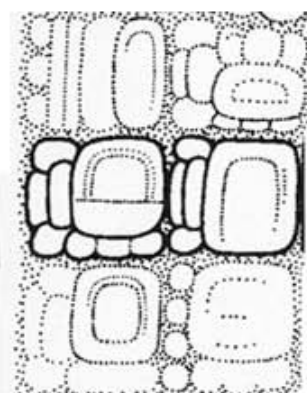
7 Gods Vase



Rio Azul Mask 2



Quirigua Stela C



Coba Stela 1



Tortuguero 6

cf. *u-Kab-ji-ya* 6-Sky Lord

The Overseer **6-Sky Lord** is mentioned twice (*u-Kab-ji-ya*, "He oversaw it,...").

The Quiché Maya Popol Vuh (copied about 1700 AD/CE) describes the four Creations. Note similarity here between names of gods **Creator of the Green Earth** and **Creator of the Blue Sky** with the Classic-era pair **Sky-God** and **Earth-God**; And (perhaps) **Heart of Sky** with **Lord 6-Sky**.

Here we shall gather the manifestation, the declaration, the account of the sowing and the dawning by the **Framer** and the **Shaper**, **She Who Has Borne Children** and **He Who Has Begotten Sons**... along with **Hunahpu Possum** and **Hunahpu Coyote**, **Great White Peccary** and **Coati**, **Sovereign** and **Quetzal Serpent**, **Heart of Lake** and **Heart of Sea**, **Creator of the Green Earth** and **Creator of the Blue Sky**, as they are called.

THIS IS THE ACCOUNT of when all is still silent and placid. All is silent and calm. Hushed and empty is the womb of the sky.

THESE, then, are the first words, the first speech. There is not yet one person, one animal, bird, fish, crab, tree, rock, hollow, canyon, meadow, or forest. All alone the sky exists. The face of the earth has not yet appeared. Alone lies the expanse of the sea, along with the womb of all the sky. There is not yet anything gathered together. All is at rest. Nothing stirs. All is languid, at rest in the sky. There is not yet anything standing erect. Only the expanse of the water, only the tranquil sea lies alone.

All alone are they ...,
Luminous they are in the water, wrapped in quetzal feathers and cotinga feathers.
Thus they are called **Quetzal Serpent**.
In their essence, they are great sages, great possessors of knowledge.

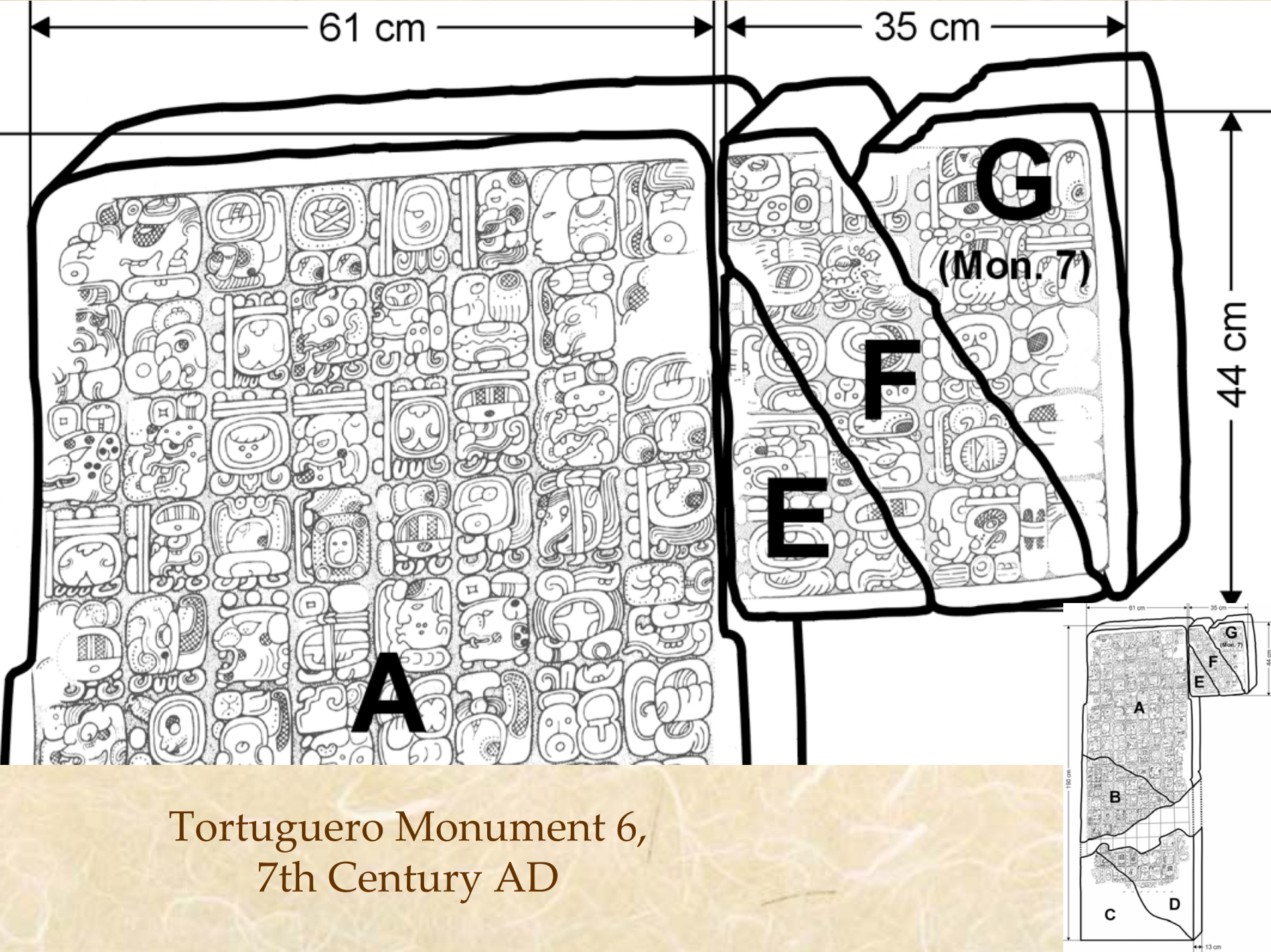
... There is also **Heart of Sky**, which is said to be the name of the (chief) god.

—Creation texts, Part 7: the *Popol Vuh*, translated by Allen Christenson

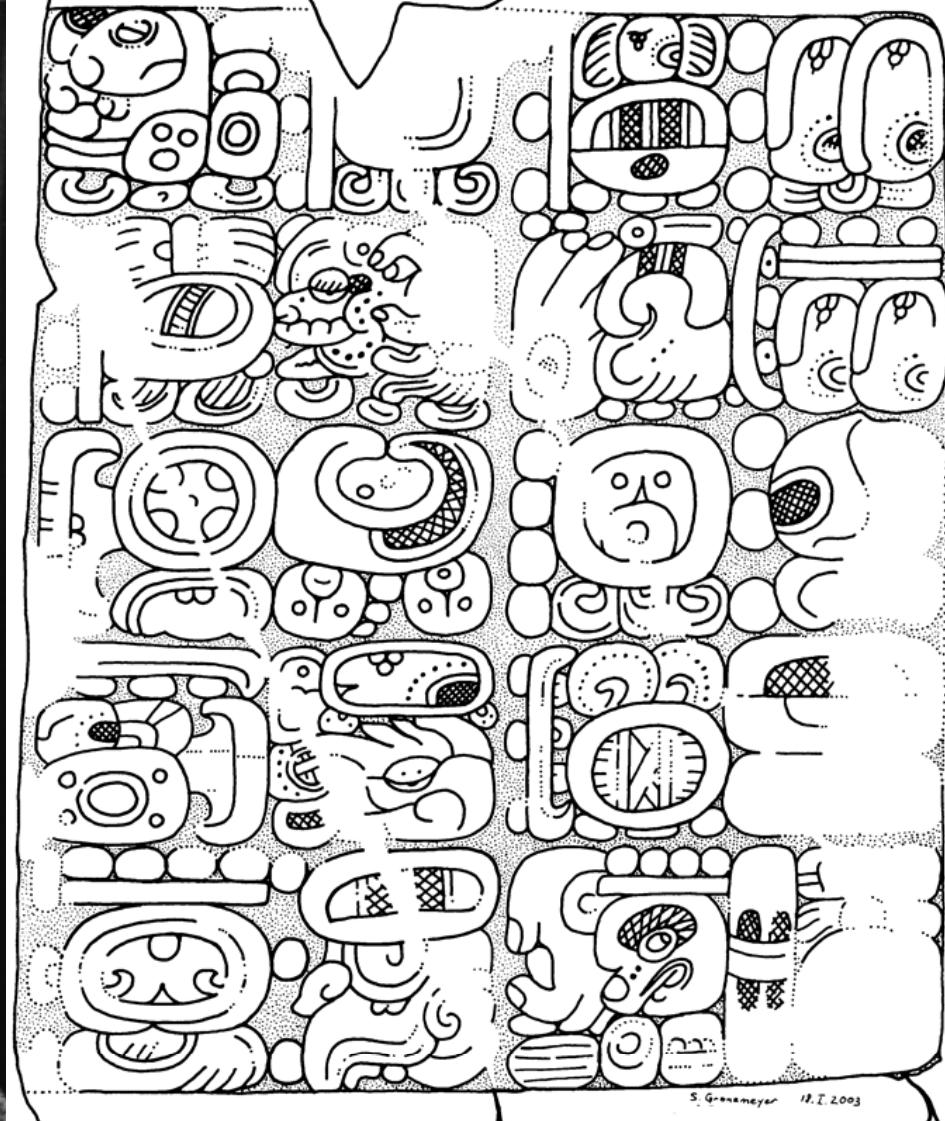
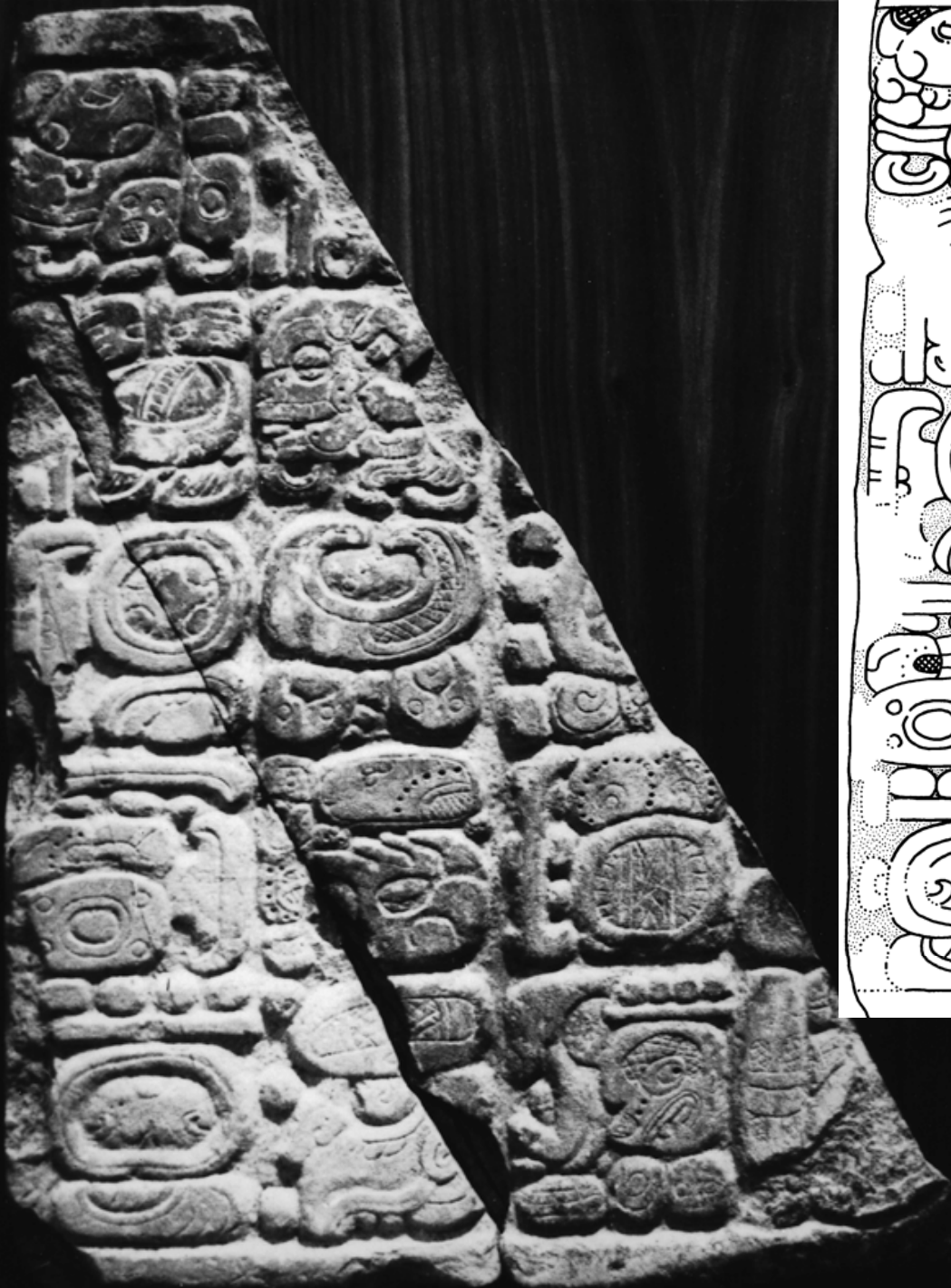
Note that although the *Popol Vuh* parallels the 5 Aztec Creations, it provides *no dates*.

It also expounds quite a bit on events *between* Creations, particularly the Hero Twins' preparing the way for the latest Creation. This involves a lot of action with blowguns and the Ballgame, and a tricky magic act in *Xibalba*, the Underworld.

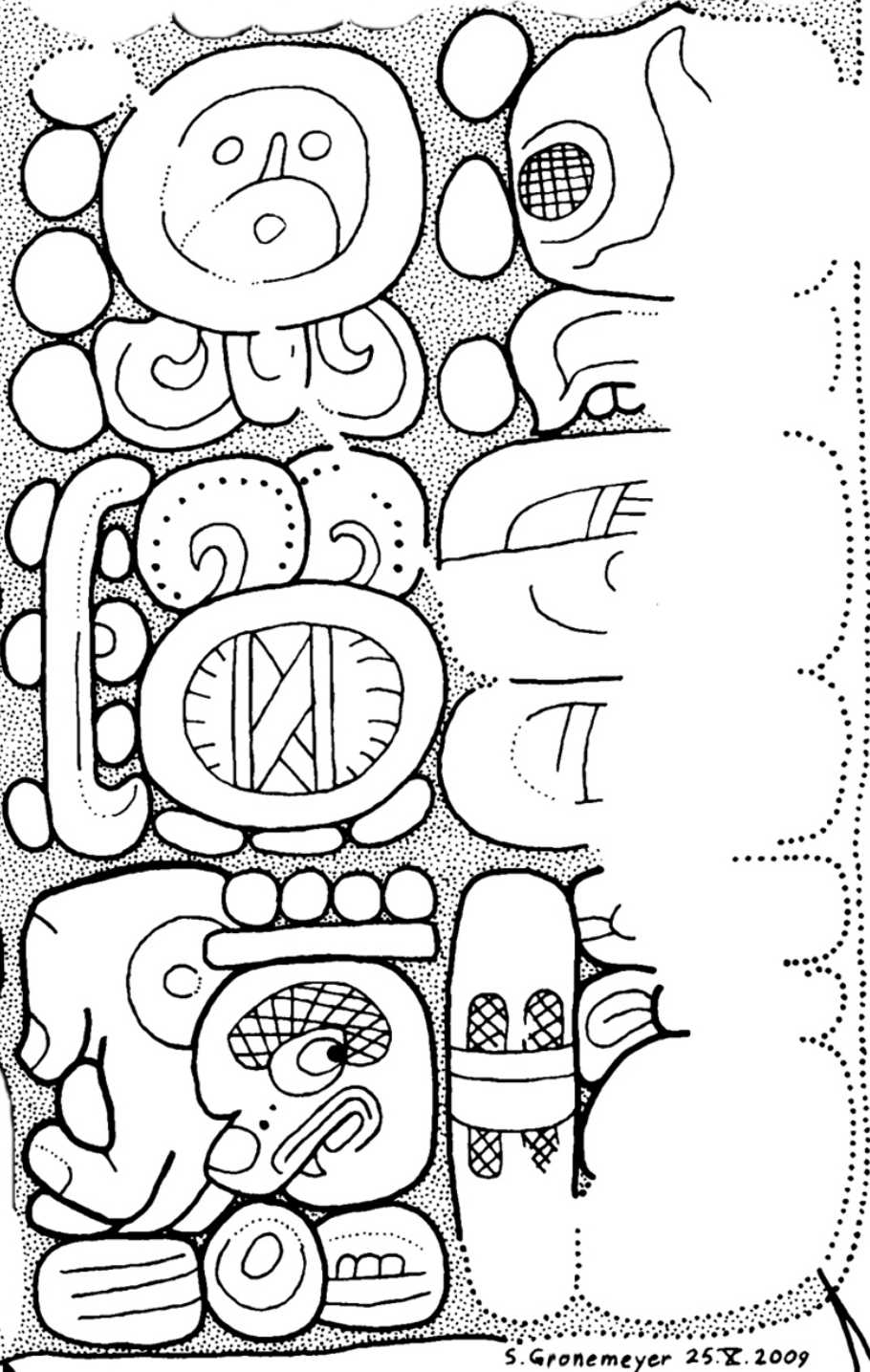
To return to 2012, here again is *Tortuguero Monument 6*.



Tortuguero Monument 6,
7th Century AD



Tortuguero Monument 6, upper right wing. With the relevant text in a drawing and (partly) in photograph, you can assess the extent of the damage to the missing two glyphs. Above drawing by Sven Gronemeyer, photo by Donald Hales



Tzuhtz-(a)j-oom u(y)-uxlajuun pik (ta) Chan Ajaw ux(-te') Uniiw.

*Uht-oom Ek'-?? Y-em(al) **Bolon (Yo)okte' (K'uh)** ta-chak-ma?-??.*

“It will have been completed, the Thirteenth *B'ak'tun* (on) 4 Ajaw, the 3rd of *Uniiw* (a.k.a. 3 *K'ank'in*).

It will occur, the witnessing/attending of the display of *Bolon-Yokte'* (the **Many-Strides?***) in the **great?** (*or red?*)-impersonation(?).”

— Translation of the final phrase of *Tortuguero Monument 6* by David Stuart, **Additions/emendations** by Mark Van Stone.

— Because Mayan is rife with homonyms, the translation of this descending god could be “**9-dog-tree**,” “**many roots**,” “**many supports**,” Usually his name includes the epithet *K'uh*, “god(s),” as we saw on the *Vases of the 7 and 11 Gods*.

Stephen Houston has recently updated his interpretation of this “prophetic” text (“**What Will Not Happen in 2012**” at <http://decipherment.wordpress.com/>). He compares it to similarly-phrased future-statements from Naranjo and La Corona. Of one he says, ‘The text ... situates itself in present time, leaps to a future presented in highly schematic terms, and then reverts to the present.’ Then,

‘The final passages of the La Corona panel do much the same ...’ From a “base date” of ‘9.12.5.7.4 4 *K’an* 7 *Mak*, (Julian Oct. 24, AD 677)., the inscription lurches forward ... almost in yo-yo effect ... to 9.13.0.0.0 (Julian March 15, AD 692), one of the most vivid times for the Classic Maya because of its evocation of a 13th cycle. The relevant part of the text terminates the inscription: *i-u-ti/tu?* 4 *K’an* 7 *Mak*. The parallel with Tortuguero *Monument* 6 is clear, in that a future date jolts back to the present as marked by a phrase beginning with *i-*.’ (This date also has a 13.)

He concludes,

‘Whatever *Monument* 6 has to tell us pertains to the dedication of the building associated with the sculpture. It has nothing to do with prophecy or the supposed, dread events that await us in AD 2012. About that the Maya are notably silent...or, truth be told, a bit boring.’

In other words, the part about Bolon Yokte' coming down refers to the dedication of a building back in the seventh century. In this interpretation the monument tells us even *less* about 2012 than we thought. Houston finally adds:

'Note - 9 *Yookte*' (*Bolon Yookte*') is an enigmatic expression. When postfixed by *K'UH*, it appears to identify some collective totality of gods.' In other words, the "god" mentioned here as "coming down" is actually nine gods.

There is a bit of evidence that shows that although the Maya reset the Long Count at the last 13.0.0.0.0, they don't plan to do it again. They seem to have thought that there would be no more re-creations after this one. After 13.0.0.0.0 would come 14.0.0.0.0, and 15.0.0.0.0, and on up.

The first is carved on a step in Yaxchilan. The second is from Palenque, where events in Pakal's life are connected to events in the distant past and the far future. The third comes from Tikal, and has a higher-order Long Count with a coefficient of 19.

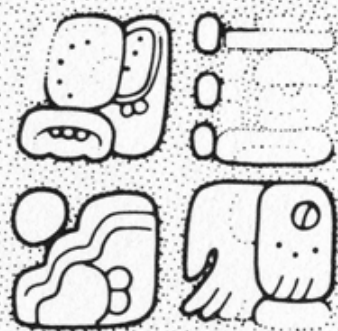
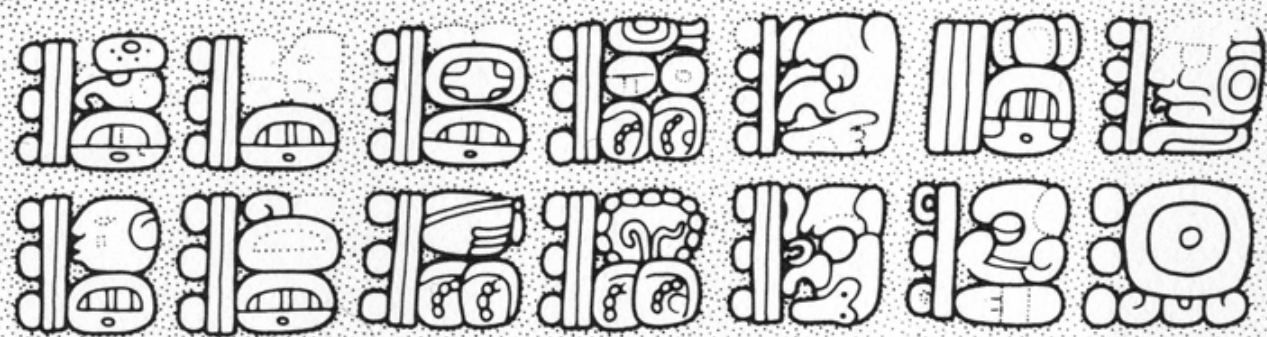
Picture: aerial view of Palenque's Palace [foreground] and Temple of Inscriptions [behind].



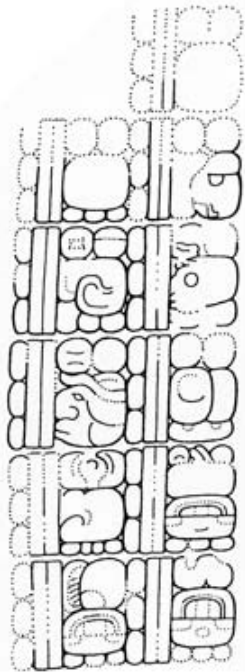
FOTO: MICHAEL CALDERWOOD / RAÍCES



This step from a Hieroglyphic Stairway at Yaxchilan shows two dwarves playing ball. The Long Count above them is historical, that is, it dates an event in the then-present (9.15.13.6.9), but, like the Long Counts at Coba, it includes larger time-periods, eight orders of them. On the Creation date 13.0.0.0.0, all the higher orders were also set at 13. One would expect that when the *Pik/Bak'tun* clicked over from 13 to 1, the next-higher order (*Piktun*) would have risen to 14, like an odometer. But it didn't. Apparently, though the lower five orders of the Long Count run smoothly and reasonably, the higher orders were considered, at least at Yaxchilan, entirely symbolic.



Unnamed higher orders each multiplied by 13



Coba Macanxoc Stela 1, First half of Extended Initial Series.

Drawing by Linda Schele, Fig. 16-3 from *Forest of Kings*

(13 x 20 ¹⁰ tuns)		(13 x 20 ⁹ tuns)	
(13 x 20 ⁸ tuns)		(13 x 20 ⁷ tuns)	
13 Alaw-tuns (20 ⁶ tuns)		13 K'in-chiltuns (20 ⁵ tuns)	
13 kalab'tun (20 ⁴ tuns)		13 piktun (20 ³ tuns)	

13 pij		0 k'atun	
0 tun		0 winal	
0 k'in		4 Ajaw	
G9		Glyph F	
3E		Glyph C	
Glyph B		Glyph B	
Glyph A		8 Kumk'u	
JAL-ja jalaj "to appear"		k'o-(j)-b'a k'ojb'a "the image"	

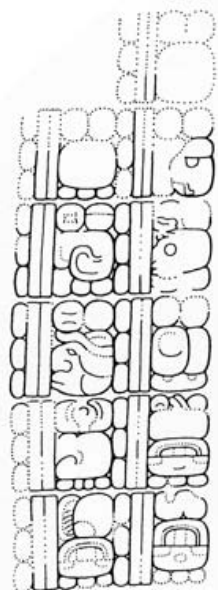
Macanxoc Stela 1, extended Initial Series, part two.

9 Pik		15 Winikhaab	
13 Haab		6 Winik	
9 K'in		(G3 ?)	
3 Muluk		17 Mak	
conju- ring		3rd de- feated one?	
(in the) Ball- court		(scattering?)...	

Translation of
Yaxchilan
Stairway by
Linda Schele &
Carolyn Tate,
1991

Comparing the higher orders of this Long Count with that of *Coba Stela 1*, we see that, although we have lost the names of the orders above 20⁶ tuns, that the Maya mathematicians were pretty consistent (though the 20⁹ and 20¹⁰ orders appear reversed in the two dates).

Unnamed higher
orders each
multiplied by 13



Coba Macanxoc Stela 1, First half of
Extended Initial Series.
Drawing by Linda Schele, Fig. 16-3 from *Forest of Kings*

(13 x 20 ¹⁰ tuns)		(13 x 20 ⁹ tuns)	
(13 x 20 ⁸ tuns)		(13 x 20 ⁷ tuns)	
13 Alaw-tuns (20 ⁶ tuns)		13 K'in-chiltuns (20 ⁵ tuns)	
13 kalab'tun (20 ⁴ tuns)		13 piktun (20 ³ tuns)	
13 pij		0 k'atun	
0 tun		0 winal	
0 k'in		4 Ajaw	
G9		Glyph F	
3E		Glyph C	
Glyph B		Glyph B	
Glyph A		8 Kumk'u	
JAL-ja jalaj "to appear"		k'o-(j)-b'a k'ojb'a "the image"	

Macanxoc Stela 1, extended Initial Series, part two.

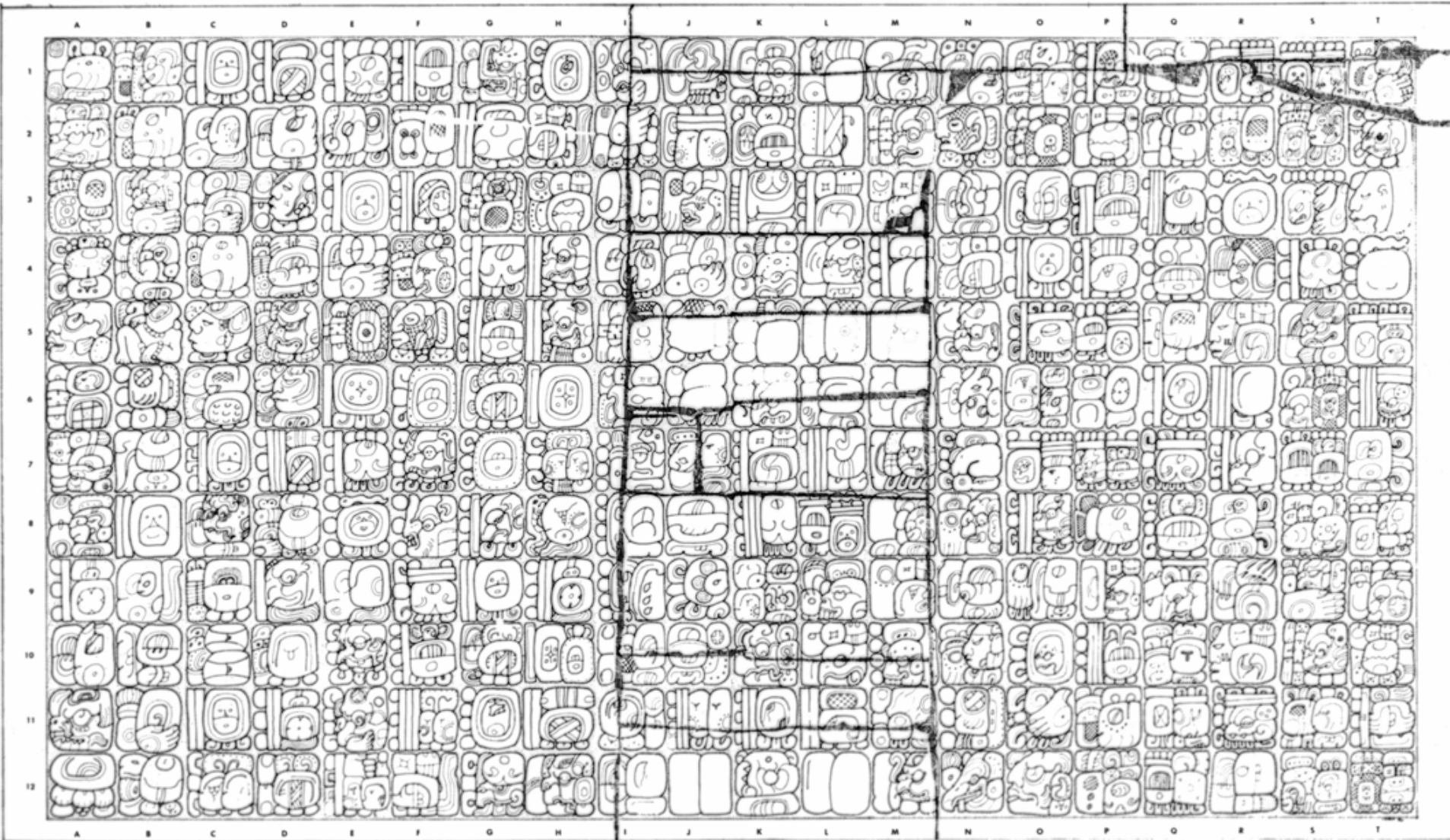
	(13 x 20 ⁹ tuns)
	(13 x 20 ⁸ tuns)
	13 K'in-chiltuns (20 ⁵ tuns)
	13 piktun (20 ³ tuns)
9 Pik	15 Winikhaab
13 Haab	6 Winik
9 K'in	(G3 ?)
3 Muluk	17 Mak
conju- ring	3rd de- feated one?
(in the) Ball- court	(scattering?)...

Translation 1991 by Linda Schele & Carolyn Tate

"head variants"

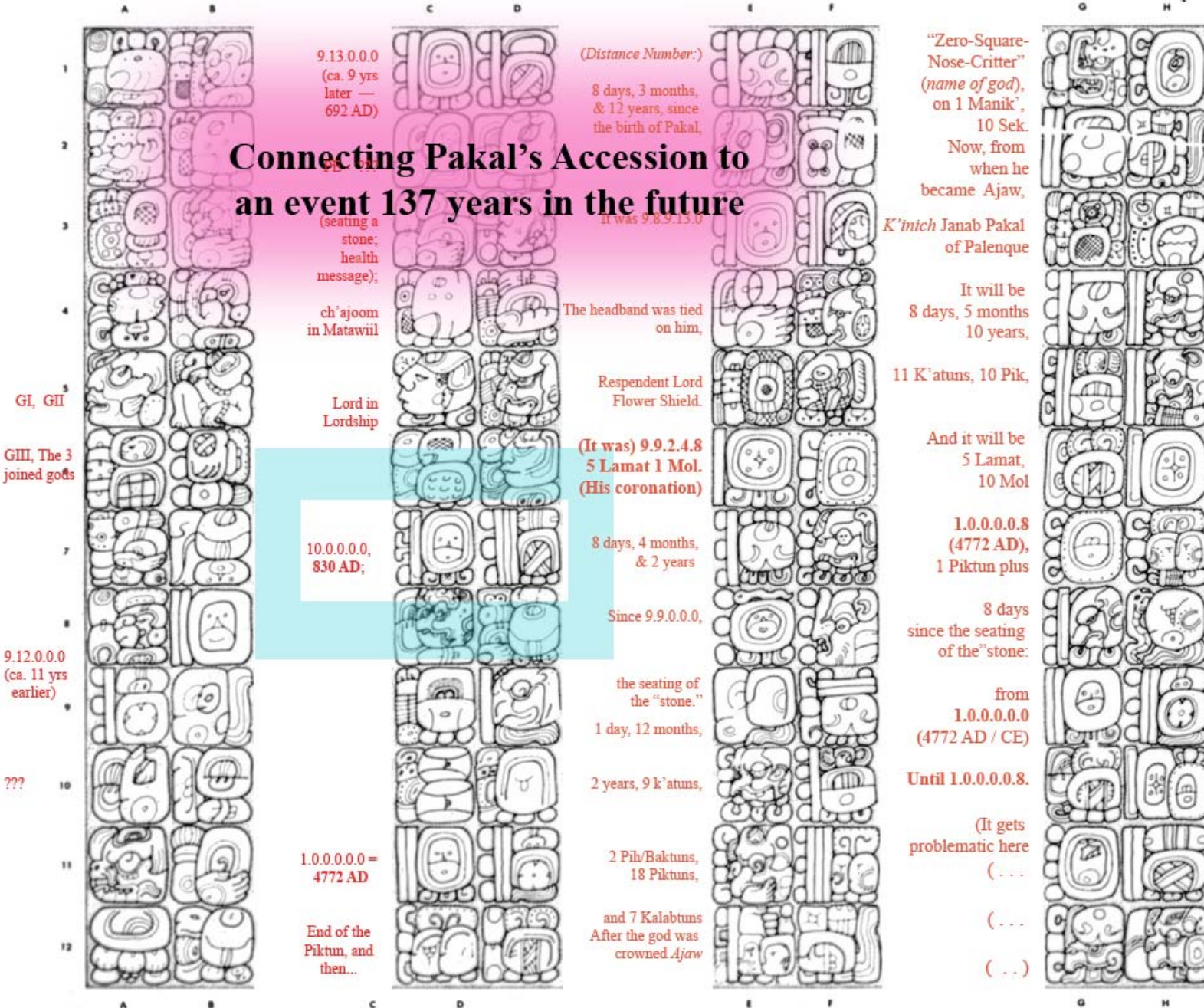
Once we enter "real" time, however, the two texts differ considerably. The Yaxchilan date uses "head variants" of the time-period glyphs, while Coba's artists chose the easiest, most abstract versions of the same glyphs. Finally, I wish to draw your attention to the pictorial glyph for "ballcourt" — a ball bouncing down steps.

Palenque Temple of Inscriptions: West Panel (final third of text)

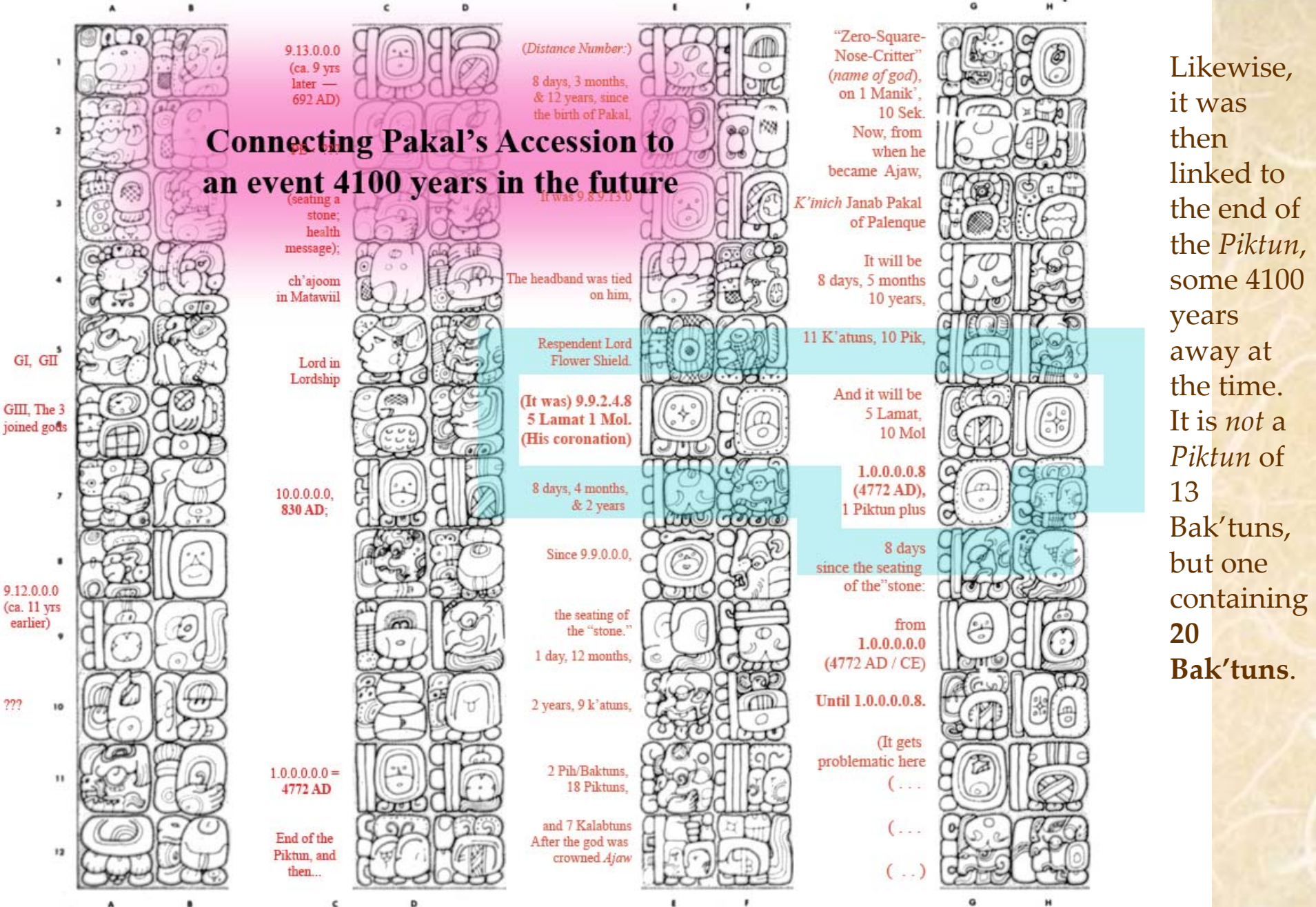


The longest intact Maya inscription goes into some detail about Palenque's history, especially that which occurred under the purview of Pakal the Great, who is buried under the *Temple of the Inscriptions*, the pyramid that carries this long text. The full name of Lord Pakal, the most famous Palenque ruler, was *K'inich Janahb Pakal*, "Resplendent Flower Shield."

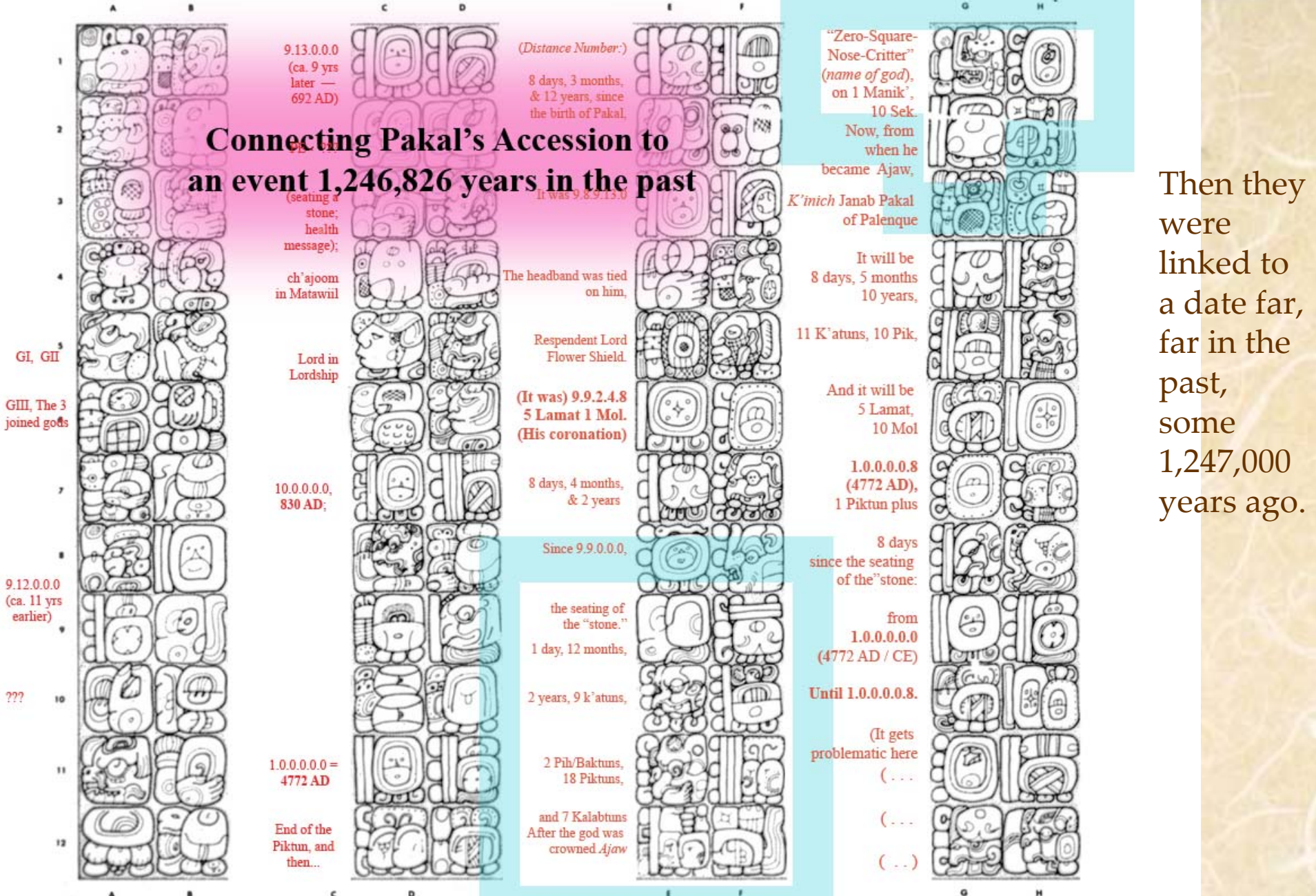
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1								
	9.13.0.0.0 (ca. 9 yrs later — 692 AD)		(Distance Number:) 8 days, 3 months, & 12 years, since the birth of Pakal,				“Zero-Square-Nose-Critter” (name of god), on 1 Manik', 10 Sek.	
2								
	PE - ???						Now, from when he became Ajaw,	
3								
	(seating a stone; health message);		It was 9.8.9.13.0		K'inich Janab Pakal of Palenque			
4								
	ch'ajoom in Matawuil		The headband was tied on him,				It will be 8 days, 5 months 10 years,	
5								
GI, GII	Lord in Lordship		Respendent Lord Flower Shield.				11 K'atuns, 10 Pik,	
6								
GIII, The 3 joined gods			It was 9.9.2.4.8 5 Lamat 1 Mol. (His coronation)				And it will be 5 Lamat, 10 Mol	
7								
	10.0.0.0.0, 830 AD;		8 days, 4 months, & 2 years				1.0.0.0.0.8 (4772 AD), 1 Piktun plus	
8								
			Since 9.9.0.0.0,				8 days since the seating of the "stone."	
9								
9.12.0.0.0 (ca. 11 yrs earlier)			the seating of the "stone."				from 1.0.0.0.0.0 (4772 AD / CE)	
10								
???			1 day, 12 months,				Until 1.0.0.0.0.8.	
11								
	1.0.0.0.0.0 = 4772 AD		2 years, 9 k'atuns,				(It gets problematic here (...))	
12								
	End of the Piktun, and then...		2 Pih/Baktuns, 18 Piktuns,				(...)	
			and 7 Kalabtuns After the god was crowned Ajaw				(...)	



Pakal's coronation date was linked to the 10.0.0.0.0 *Period-ending*, which at that time was 137 years in the future.



At Palenque, at least, the astrologer-priests did not believe that the next 13.0.0.0.0 would be followed again by a 1.0.0.0.0, but by 14.0.0.0.0, and then 15.0.0.0.0, and on up till, at 20, it clicked over to zero and presumably raised the *Piktun* coefficient to 14. Or maybe from Zero to 1.



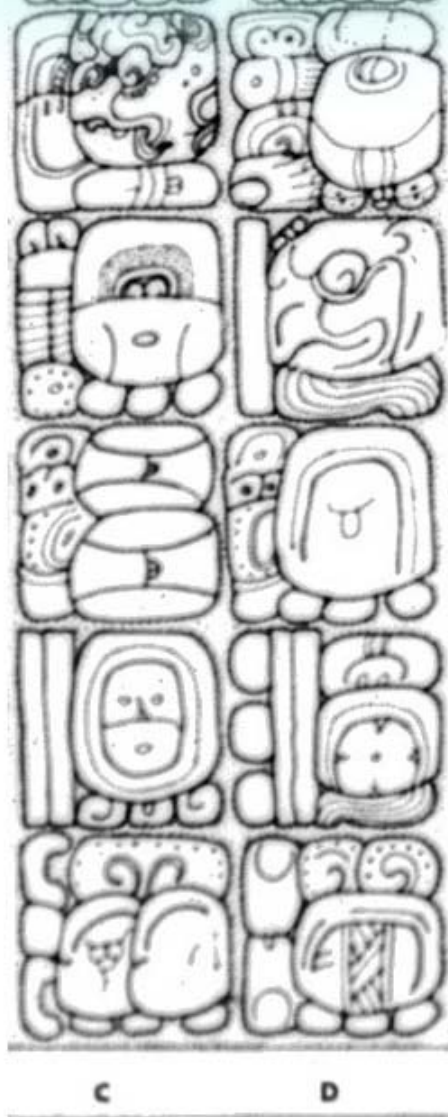
Then they were linked to a date far, far in the past, some 1,247,000 years ago.

Interestingly, these are not "prophecies" in the strictest sense; the event they foretell (or "recall") on these dates are almost always trivial: As if to say, On the 21st of June, 2051, it will be a Friday, and the Lord's 100th birthday will be celebrated.

At the very least, this implies that the ancient Maya expected the *status quo* to continue at least 4000 years into the future. That's 2760 years after 2012.

They expected no interruption.

**Connecting Pakal's accession to a similar
accession 1,246,826 years and 290 days earlier**



A closeup of the drawing of the large Distance Number, leading back to this date over a million years ago. I overlaid it with its photograph, showing how shallowly the sculptors worked on this inscription.



At Tikal there is a date (from another era, perhaps far in the future or using a different Long Count Calendar than we have seen so far) which has a Piktun coefficient of 19. Apparently, the higher orders of Tikal's Long Count Calendar were not, as at Yaxchilán, stuck at 13. It seems that different schools of time-reckoning existed in different city-states. These were proud, squabbling polities, constantly jockeying for power like Athens and Sparta. When one thinks about it, it seems much more likely that they would have competing mythologies and scientific systems, than that they would have been of one accord.

19 Piktun

Tikal Stela 10 has a very large long count date, with a 19-coefficient Piktun

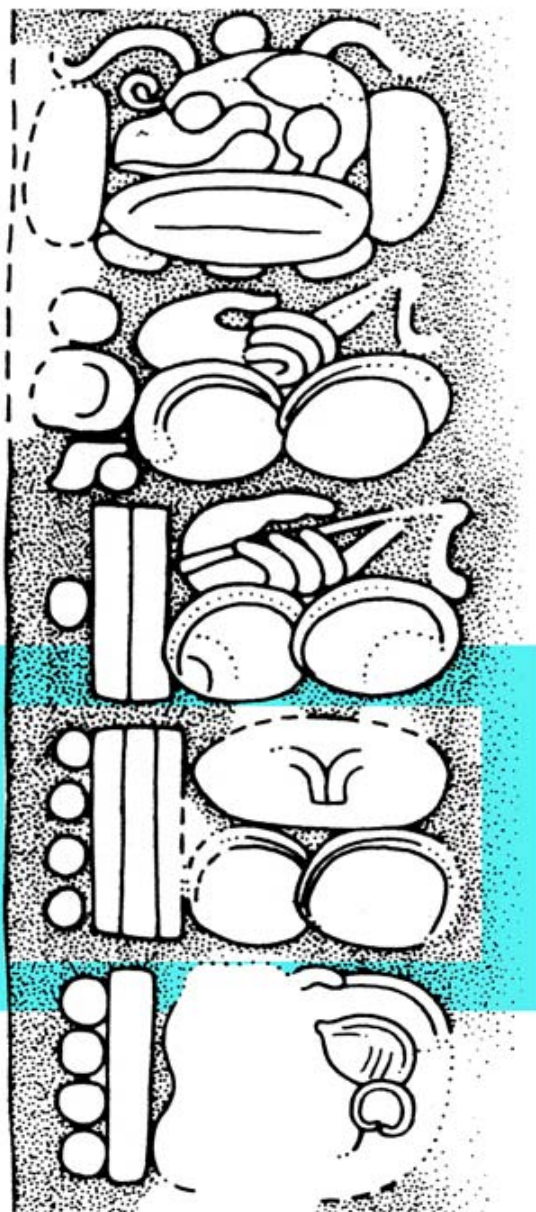
Initial Series
Intro Glyph

1 K'inchiltun

11 Kalabtuns

19 Piktuns

9 Pik (Bak'tun)



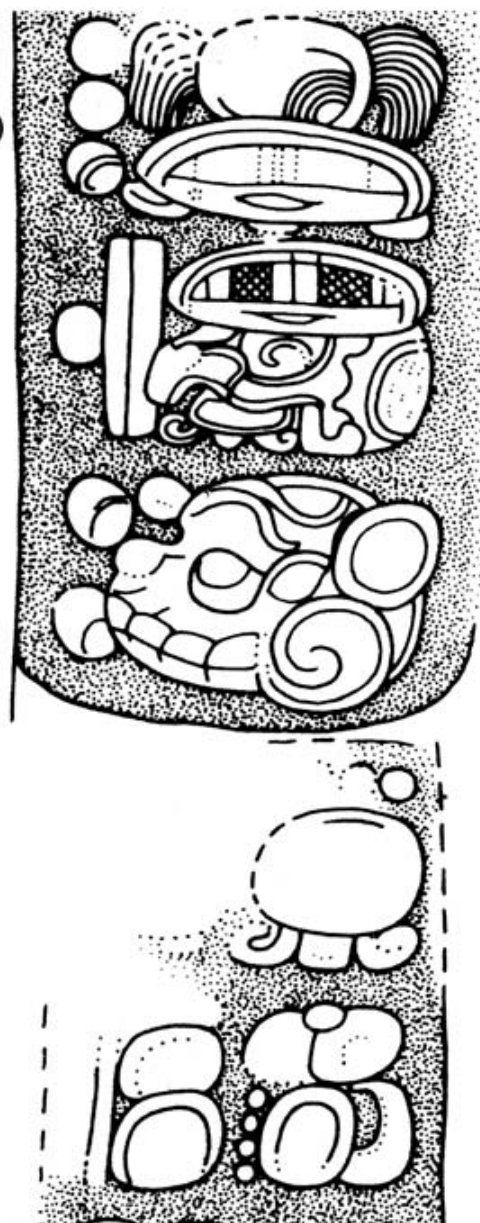
3 Winikhaab (K'atun)

11 Haab (Tun)

2 Winik (Winal)

?? K'in (days)
4 ?? (Tzolk'in)

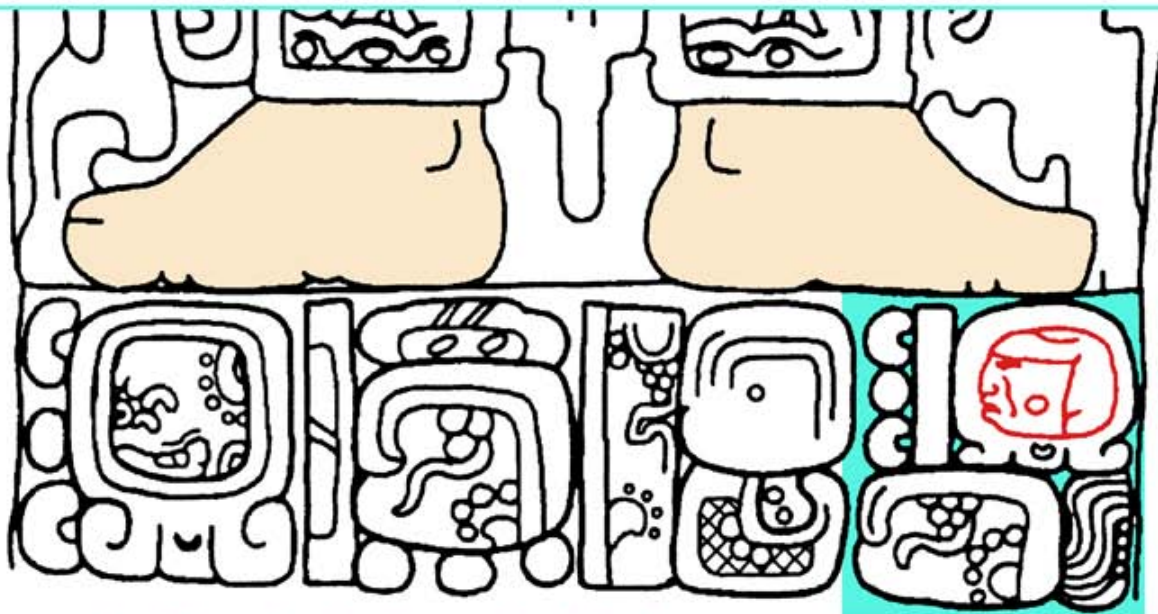
5+ ?? (Haab)
(verb ?)...



Much evidence suggests that Maya city-states had more differences between their mythologies than similarities, much as the various Mixtec polities practiced a few centuries later (see *John Pohl's Mesoamerica: <http://www.famsi.org/research/pohl/>*).

This is a good reason not to interpret “Maya prophecies” as if they were Biblical or scientific, or in any way like predictions of our day. Maya prophetic literature, as far as we can discern from badly-shredded evidence, was as diverse as the cities’ architecture or art styles. For example, Tikal alone has K’atun-Double-Pyramid groups, clustered in the inner city, and (like Copán and Calakmul) bristles with stelae. Palenque ignored stelae, adorning buildings with voluptuous stucco reliefs and low-relief panels. The city of Toniná is virtually a single building covering a mountainside, and its sculptors, uniquely, carved sculptures in-the-round. Yaxchilán’s artists left us 50 carved stone lintels, while nearly everyone else made them of wood. Pottery styles were even more locally diverse.

An indication of local cities' peculiar mythologies is their “patron gods.” The Hero Twins, so common on Classic Maya painted vases, are almost completely absent from Classic carved monuments. (Oddly, the ubiquitous head-variant glyphs for “Ajaw” and “Nine” are portraits of these two, but that is almost their entire role in carved inscriptions — so far as we know. See next slide.)

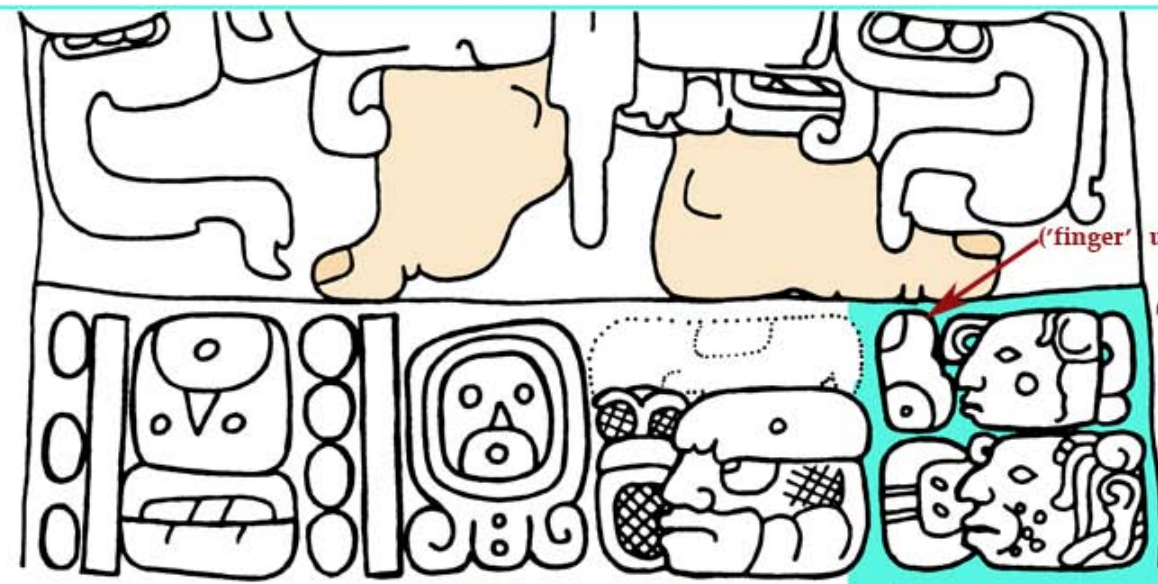


Quirigua Stela C, south side, base text: "...6-Ajaw Stone"
(proper name of the stela) (Ajaw daysign marked in red)

Hero Twins' heads used as
'head variant' glyphs for "9 Ajaw"



Drawing by Mark Van Stone



Drawing by Matt Looper

Quirigua Stela C, north side, base text:
"...u?-tu-ta? Jun Ajaw & Yax Balam"

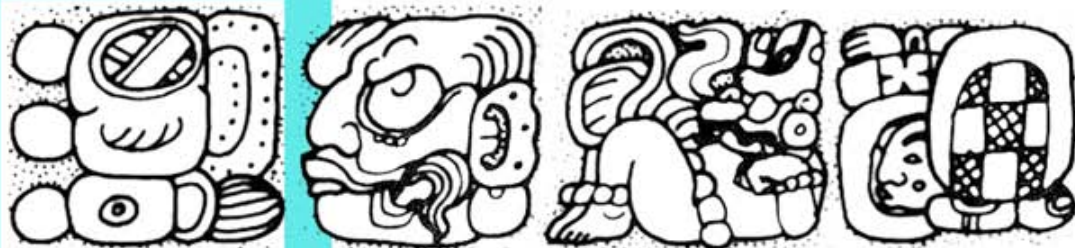
Name glyphs and portraits
of the Hero Twins,
Classic Period Codex-style plate
K1892, ca. 700 AD/CE
Boston Museum of Fine Arts



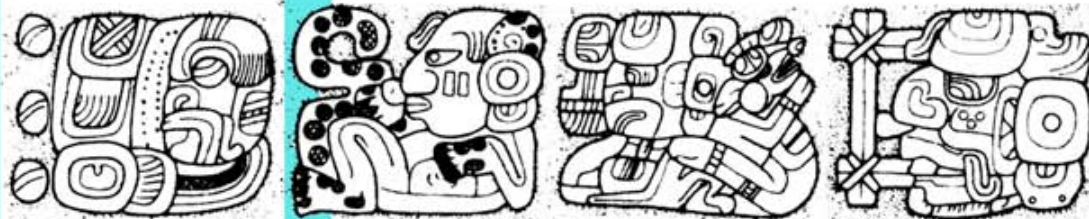
Drawing by Linda Schele

The well-known “Palenque Triad” Patron Gods (GI, GII, and GIII) appear uniquely at that city. Other cities have Triad Gods, but they are a different trio in each place (see next slide). These gangs seem to have nothing in common from city to city, save the epithet *Ox-lu-ti-K’uh*, the “Three-Born-Together Gods.” This title also appears among the cast of Creation Characters on the *Vases of the 7 and 11 Gods*, though the three individuals are not specified.

Triad Gods from Palenque, Tikal, Naranjo, and Caracol



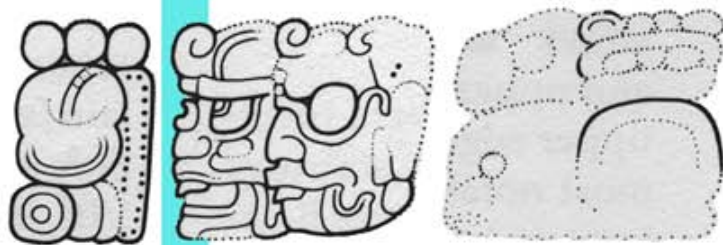
Palenque Temple of the Foliated Cross, N8 - O10 - N11



Tikal Stela 26, zB7 - zB9



Caracol Stela 16, A13 - B15



Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway, Steps II - III

Ox-lu-ti-K'uh,
"3-Born-
Together Gods"



Vase of 7 Gods and Vase of 11 Gods
K2796 and K7750

Note that each city's patron Gods are unique

Examples collected by David Stuart

Triad Gods Title

In summary,

The 13.13.13....13.13.0.0.0.0 Long Count dates imply that the Maya considered this Creation to be unique. Its enormous time spans (billions of billions of times longer ago than the Big Bang), will “never” again all line up to be all 13’s.

(Maya period-ending monuments favored 13’s in the lower-orders as well: we find disproportionate mentions of 9.13.0.0.0, or 9.17.13.0.0, for example, but oddly, discover no monuments extolling a date like 9.13.13.13.13, or the five-of-a-kind 13.13.13.13.13. Why not? Apparently Maya numerologists did not consider 13’s and zeroes as equivalent.)

The Palenque Maya did not expect 2012 to be the end of days. They calculate a *piktun*-ending with a *piktun* of 20 *bak’tuns*. This could not happen if the *bak’tun* reset again after it reached 13.

It was important to them to connect events in Pakal’s life with like events in previous Creations and future eras (even though time itself seems not to exist in any coherent way between Creations).

The most important connection between events seems to have been that they occur on the same Calendar Round.