

The Text from the Osario in Chich'en Itza
by Linda Schele and Peter Mathews

During the summer of 1994, we were in Chich'en Itza. During our visit, Peter Schmidt showed up through the new excavations of the Osarios and invited us to take a look at the new texts he had found during his project. Fortunately for us, Merle Robertson had been there before us and had made rubbings of all the texts. We examined both the original stones and her rubbings, which we found to be an immense help. We have not yet been able to identify dates or names in the newly discovered texts, but we were able to read the text on the pier 4 of the upper temple. This date has played an important role in the dating of Chich'en, as summarized by Charles Lincoln (1986). Lincoln cited Thompson's original placement of the date at 10.8.10.11.0 2 Ahaw 18 Mol, based on the assumption that the date fell within a k'atun named 2 Ahaw. David Kelley accepted this dating according to Lincoln's summary.

In the process of studying the Osario for her MA thesis, Annabeth Headrick (1991) and Linda Schele re-examined the date and came to the conclusion that a far better placement for the date was 10.0.12.8.0 (June 20, 842). Their reasoning was based partially on Headrick's new interpretation of the group as one of an origin and on the fact that Schele did not think that a 2 Ahaw K'atun was mentioned in the text. Schele and Freidel (1990:500) published this earlier placement of the date and one a calendar round later.

This summer, we had the opportunity to examine the original monument and a photograph of the rubbing Merle made of it. Mathews's earlier drawing based on a photograph is fairly accurate, but our new study has allowed some refinement on the reading of the text. The opening two glyphs are clearly 2 Ahaw 18 Mol. C1 is very badly eroded, but it is clearly part of the expression that records the name of the k'atun. We were able to discern a tu sign, but the k'atun expression does not match any of the other formulas known at Chichen.

Typically, a Chichen date reads "9 Lamat k'in tu 11 Yax til 13 tun ti 3 Ahaw" or "9 Lamat, day on the 11th of Yax in 13 tun in 3 Ahaw." Here we have no additional glyphs between the components of the calendar round so that this date is far closer to the traditional Classic period dates of the southern lowlands. The glyph following the cr is too eroded for us to identify a number although there is room for one above the tu sign. Since the following glyph is clearly Ahaw, we are confident that these two glyphs recorded the name of the k'atun in which the date fell.

The following two glyphs record tz'apah tun, "it was erected the stone." Elizabeth Wagner (in a 1994 submission to the Texas Notes received this summer) also identified the verb as tz'apah. This reading identifies the action as the setting up of a stone object, which we think is the pier itself. The name of the actor should follow in the next one or two glyphs. Finally the passage closes with what appears to be a distance number of 2.11 and 2 Ahaw, the date recorded at the beginning of the text.

The format of the date and the use of the tz'apah tun expression makes this text one of

the closest at Chichen to the style and presentation of Classic-period texts. Unfortunately, we cannot identify the number that went with the k'atun-ending anchor. As a result, we can offer two placements of the date.

The Text from the Osario in Chich'en ~tza
by Linda Schele and Peter Mathews

During the summer of 1994, we were in Chich'en Itz. During our visit, Peter Schmidt showed up through the new excavations of the Osarios and invited us to take a look at the new texts he had found during his project. Fortunately for us, Merle Robertson had been there before us and had made rubbings of all the texts. We examined both the original stones and her rubbings, which we found to be an immense help. We have not yet been able to identify dates or names in the newly discovered texts, but we were able to read the text on the pier 4 of the upper temple. This date has played an important role in the dating of Chich'en, as summarized by Charles Lincoln (1986). Lincoln cited Thompson's original placed of the date at 10.8.10.11.0 2 Ahaw 18 Mol, based on the assumption that the date fell within a k'atun named 2 Ahaw. David Kelley accepted this dating according to Lincoln's summary.

In the process of studying the Osario for her MA thesis, Annabeth Headrick (1991) and Linda Schele re-examined the date and came to the conclusion that a far better placement for the date was 10.0.12.8.0 (June 20, 842). Their reasoning was based partially on Headrick's new interpretation of the group as one of an origin and on the fact that Schele did not think that a 2 Ahaw K'atun was mentioned in the text. Schele and Freidel (1990:500) published this earlier placement of the date and one a calendar round later.

This summer, we had the opportunity to examine the original monument and a photograph of the rubbing Merle made of it. Mathews's earlier drawing based on a photograph is fairly accurate, but our new study has allowed some refinement on the reading of the text. The opening two glyphs are clearly 2 Ahaw 18 Mol. C1 is very badly eroded, but it is clearly part of the expression that records the name of the k'atun. We were able discern a tu sign, but the k'atun expression does not match any of the other formulas known at Chichen.

Typically, a Chichen date reads "9 Lamat k'in tu 11 Yax til 13 tun ti 3 Ahaw" or "9 Lamat, day on the 11th of Yax in 13 tun in 3 Ahaw." Here we have no additional glyphs between the components of the calendar round so that this date is far~closer to the traditional Classic period dates of the southern lowlands. The glyph following the cr is too eroded for us to identify a number although there is room from one above the tu sign. Since the following glyph is clearly Ahaw, we are confident that these two glyphs recorded the name of the k'atun in

which
the date fell.

The following two glyphs record tz'apah tun, "it was erected the stone." Elizabeth Wagner (in a 1994 submission to the Texas Notes received this summer) also identified the verb as tzapah. This reading identifies the action as the setting up of a stone object, which we think is the pier itself. The name of the actor should follow in the next one or two glyphs. Finally the passage closes with what appears to be a distance number of 2.11 and 2 Ahaw, the date recorded at the beginning of the text.

The format of the date and the use of the tz'apah tun expression makes this text one of the closest at Chichen to the style and presentation of Classic-period texts. Unfortunately, we cannot identify the number that went with the k'atun-ending anchor. As a result, we can offer two placements of the date.

10. 0. 12. 5. 9 3 Muluk 7 Xul

10. 3. 5. 3. 0 2 Ahaw 18 Mol in 10. 4. 0. 0. 0 12 Ahaw 3 Wo
2.1 1
10. 3. 5. 0. 9 3 Muluk 7 Xul

These dates fall on June 16, 842 and June 3, 894. The information contained in the Osario text does not allow us to choose between these two placements. Perhaps the date in the nearby Casa Colorado will eventually help in choosing between them, if the archaeology of the Osario Group can be linked with that of the Casa Colorado. The text inside the Casa Colorado records the date 10.2.0.15.3 6 Muluk 12 Mak (September 11, 869, Julian).

References:

Headrick, Annabeth

1991 The Chicomoztoc of Chichen Itza. An MA Thesis, University of Texas at Austin.
Lincoln, Charles

1986 The Chronology of Chichen Itza: A Review of the Literature. In Late Lowland Maya Civilization: Classic to Postclassic, edited by Jeremy A. Sabloff and E. Wyllys Andrews V, 141 — 196. A School of American Research Book. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
Schele, Linda, and David Freidel

1990 A Forest of Kings: Untold Stories of the Ancient Maya. New York: William Morrow and Co.