

# **K'ak'-u-pakal, Hun-pik-tok' and the Kokom:**

## *The Political Organization of Chichén Itzá*

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### **0. Introduction**

The following article is concerned with well known hieroglyphic inscriptions from Chichén Itzá. It is our task to offer new insights into the socio-political organization of this urban-like settlement which figures so prominently in the history of northern Yucatán during the end of the late classic period. Our analysis will focus on the political organization that has prevailed in urban-like Chichén Itzá during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. We will show that Chichén Itzá was controlled by a triumvirate of men who held specific offices within the political hierarchy. The results are based on the analyses of all inscriptions from Chichén Itzá, Yula and Halakal but emphasis is laid on the texts from the Casa Colorada, the Caracol, and the Akab Dzib (**Figure 1**). This information is contrasted with pertinent data from the ethnohistorical sources which refer to the history of Chichén Itzá.

### **1. The epigraphic material**

The hieroglyphic texts from Chichén Itzá reveal a particular emphasis on the buildings of the city. Some of the more conspicuous structural elements, like facades, doorways, lintels, and jambs are mentioned as being carved and finished at specific dates. Following the terms of these architectural features, one encounters the names of individuals who owned or sponsored entire buildings as well as single rooms in them. These names are constituent parts of rather elaborate phrases which feature titles, special occupations and offices, as well as genealogical and ethnical terms (Davoust 1980; Kelley 1982; Krochock 1988; Ringle 1990; Grube 1994; García Campillo 1995; Wagner 1995).

Among the names of the 57 male and 7 female individuals identified so far in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá, there are two which are also mentioned in historical sources from colonial times: *K'ak'-u-pakal* and *Hun-pik-tok'* (Kelley 1968b; Schele and Freidel 1990: 498, Note 16; Wagner 1995: 45-92, 129-133). Also, the glyphic expression for the *Kokom* dynasty who figure so prominently in the late history of Yucatán, when the location of the peninsular political center had been shifted to Mayapán, has been identified in two inscriptions at Chichén Itzá (Grube and Stuart 1987; Grube 1994: 327).

Among the dates which introduce the hieroglyphic texts at Chichén Itzá there is but one Initial Series date: 10.2.9.1.9 9 Muluk 7 Sak (July 30, 878 A.D.)<sup>1</sup>. This date is recorded on the lintel which was found in structure 5C4 and which gave this building its present-day-name: The Temple of the Initial Series. All other dates at Chichén Itzá are recorded in the Short Count fashion (Thompson 1937, 1950: 197-204). As a result emerges a definite period of only 65 years, from 10.0.2.7.13 (832 A.D.) till 10.3.8.14.4 (897 A.D.), with the Initial-Series-date being positioned roughly in the middle between these two extremes (Grube 1994: 325, 344; Krochock 1995: 1-2).

The uniform style of hieroglyphic carvings<sup>2</sup> and the coherent architectural layout of the buildings into which the hieroglyphic texts are embedded suggest that these buildings and their hieroglyphic texts are contemporaneous (cf. Lincoln 1990). The content of these texts, when viewed in connection with the short period of dates which accompany them, suggest that they describe the first phase of building activities at Chichén Itzá, i.e. the period when the city was founded (cf. Landa 1959: 13). This suggestion is supported by the fact that in some of the buildings bearing inscriptions, e.g. Caracol, Las Monjas, Temple of the Initial Series, the inscribed stones were obscured, covered by or reused in later constructions (Ruppert 1935: 135-143; Bolles 1977:145; Morley 1927: 135).

### 1.1. The Texts on Individuals - The *k'ul* titles: Patronyms or referential terms?

The personal, individual-oriented information which the inscriptions provide on the people who built, sponsored, dedicated, owned, and inhabited the first buildings of Chichén Itzá, have tempted scholars to reconstruct the social setting and the political system of the city from these data. Kinship relations among the men and women who founded Chichén Itzá are indeed extant in the inscriptions and can be visualized in the well known graphical symbolism of genealogical trees (cf. Schele and Freidel 1990: 362; Boot 1994b; Wagner 1995: 117). However, the interpretation of certain hieroglyphic collocations as denoting lineages, families or patronyms (Schele and Freidel 1990: 362-363; Grube 1994: 325-331), has not been proven satisfactorily and must, therefore, be examined critically.

It is the existence of the name *kokom* in the inscriptions of the Casa Colorada and the Akab Dzib which led to claim the presence of patronymics in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá (**Figure 2a**). According to Nikolai Grube the patronymics consist of two parts of which the first spells *k'ul* while the second is variable. He argues that any individual has only one of the *k'ul* titles but a certain *k'ul* title can appear with several individuals (Grube 1994: 327-328).

#### 1.1.1. The *k'ul kokom*

The term written **/ko-ko-ma/** (*kokom*) in the 9<sup>th</sup>-century-inscriptions of Chichén Itzá certainly was the name of a lineage of worldly rulers some 600 years later at Mayapán in the 15<sup>th</sup> century according to colonial sources (cf. Landa 1959: 14-16). However, the term *kokom* designated the office of a judge (oidor) in Yucatán according to Fray Juan de Torquemada's "Monarquía Indiana" first issued in 1615 (1986: Volume 2, Book 6, Chapter XXIV, 52; cf. Tozzer 1941: 23, Note 126). His comment substantiates the entry in the earliest known colonial dictionary, the Calepino de Motul where *kokom* is translated as "escucha o

<sup>1</sup> The conversion of the Mayan dates into the Julian calendar is based on the GMT-L correlation with the numerical constant 584285 (Lounsbury 1992).

<sup>2</sup> There are at least two inscriptions at Chichén Itzá which differ from the majority, one is inscribed on the lintel over the doorway in the east annex of structure 4C1 (Monjas), and the other one on the doorjambs of the entrance to structure 6E3 (Temple of the Hieroglyphic Jambs).

escuchador con atención (listen or someone who listens with attention)" (Ciudad Real 1984: 77v). Additionally, the adjectival attributive *k'ul* which is put in front of the name might simply function as a honorific term with the meaning "venerable, honorable" (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 420) as in the case of the titles *ahaw*, *ah k'ak'*, *yahaw k'ak'* and *ah kan*. Therefore, the whole expression *k'ul kokom* can be translated as "the venerable judge" that might address a high ranking official whose social position was held in high esteem.

Another aspect of the title vs. patronymic discussion which has not been solved in a satisfactory manner is the question about the syntactic position of the *k'ul* titles in relation to the personal names. Although Nikolai Grube wondered about the unusual presence of the *k'ul kokom* title in front and behind of the personal name he did not comment on it further but continued to elaborate his arguments in favor of the interpretation as patronymic (Grube 1994: 328). An examination of all presumed patronymics reveals that the preferred syntactical position is behind the personal name but in five cases they do appear in the front position (**Figure 2**). This syntactical shift is rather unusual as a patronymic is regarded as an essential part of the nominal phrase indicating a social affiliation and should be expected to follow the personal name like the so called emblem glyphs. This is the case for the Cholan as well as for the Yucatec languages documented in the inscriptions of Northern Yucatán. Suffice it to say that we hold it justified to classify the *k'ul* titles in general and the *k'ul kokom* in particular as a personal, individual oriented title and not as a patronymic.

From the viewpoint of sincere historical research, it would have appeared appropriate to at least test this meaning of *kokom* in the context of the inscriptions which contain the term. But this has not been done, so far. Our alternative interpretation as a title does not mean, that the concept of patronymics has to be discarded, but it becomes evident that the prevailing notion concerning the emergence and formation of the family names documented for Postclassic and early colonial times is far from being understood. It is most likely, that the *Kokom* lineage derived its name from the bearer of this title as the office was handed down from generation to generation until it became hereditary in Postclassic times (see 3.1.3. below).

#### 1.1.2. *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob*

Postulating a so called "Penis-lineage" (**Figure 4a**) at Chichén Itzá also needs to be critically reviewed (Schele and Freidel 1990: 363, Grube 1991: 244). As Alexander Voss has confirmed by a thorough inspection of the original text in the Casa Colorada (Kremer and Voss 1998a), the decisive grapheme which occurs nine more times in almost identical nominal clauses in other inscriptions at Chichén Itzá, is not T 761 for which the phonetic value /OAT/ (\*penis) has been generally accepted, but rather glyph T 608. Thompson identified and listed all occurrences of this sign at Chichén Itzá as such in his catalog of 1962. It was Knorozov who suggested reading the sign as /ts'u/ (tz'u). His reading was first accepted by Berthold Riese and has since proven to be a valid decipherment (Knorozov 1967: 103; Riese in Justeson 1984: 347; cf. Schele and Grube 1997: 22).

The basic problem is to distinguish T761 and T608 because of their graphic similarity. To make a proper distinction we sampled as many known occurrences as possible of both signs and compared their graphic appearance, their syntactic position within phrases and their affix cluster.

As can be seen from the characteristic examples shown in (**Figures 3 and 4**) both signs look very similar in several cases. They consist of a longish element hanging sideways from an oval to round object. In the case of T761 the longish element represents the penis and the oval

object the testicles (**Figure 3a-b**). Instead, T608 represents indefinite bent objects (**Figure 4a**). In the case of the Casa Colarada inscription the most elaborate full graphic version is most likely a sucker fish with the longish element representing the tail and the round object the mouth formed as a sucker disk (**Figure 4a1**). In its reduced form T608 is only represented by a fish tail (**Figure 4b**). An allograph to this sign is T203a which shows a small fish hanging from a cord-like element (**Figure 4c**).

Nevertheless T 761 and T 608 do appear in different syntactic positions and have different affix clusters. The penis glyph T761 can be classified as logographic sign. In general it shows up as a constituent part of a title phrase consisting of the sky glyph T561 followed by T761. In most cases T761 is preceded by T115 /yo/. Sometimes T59 /ti/ or allographs appear as a suffix. The prefix marks the possessive pronoun of the prevocalic set and the initial vowel of T761 whereas the suffix is a phonemic complement indicating the final consonant. Thus, T761 can be read as *y-oat* which is translated as "\*penis of".

The two penis glyphs from the Akab Dzib lintel and lintel 3A from the Casa de las Monjas are quite different from all the other examples under discussion (**Figure 3b**). They appear as part of the name phrases of two women at Chichén Itzá. On lintel 3A from Monjas the penis glyph has a suffix T23 /na/ which obviously is employed as a phonemic complement to T761. It indicates that the intended reading is *ton*, another term for penis in Yucatec Maya (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 806). In the case on the Akab Dzib lintel no affixing occurs leaving us with several possibilities to read this element.

In contrast, the glyphs we identify as T608 /ts'u/ present a completely different set of affixes and occur in quite different contexts (**Figure 4**). Its presence in different positions points toward a syllabic character of the sign. It is best documented in the Codices Dresden and Madrid in the collocations T608.149a /ts'u-nu/ denoting *ts'un[un]*, the term for hummingbird (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 124; Barrera Vásquez 1980: 874, 893; Ulrich and Ulrich 1976: 227). On a drinking cup from burial 196 in Tikal, Petén, *ts'un[un]* is represented by T203a /ts'u/ and T592 /nu/ (Culbert 1993: fig. 84). In another occasion on drinking cup Kerr #1398 (Kerr 1989: 81), the element T203a appears as suffix in a collocation spelled *uts'* which we read as "wretched" or "wrinkled" in this context (**Figure 4c**)<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, it is worth to mention that in the various consulted dictionaries of Lowland Maya Languages the words for bent and hanging objects, as well as the action of kissing and sucking begin with the syllable *ts'u*.

In the nominal phrase under discussion T608 has always T228 /a/ in front and T 188 /le/ is always present as a suffix (**Figure 4a**). The prefix T228 can be classified as the agentive *ah* which means "he who has / is / uses ..." (Smailus 1989a: 119). With T188 being suffixed in all nine cases to T608 the reading obtained is /ts'u-le/. This is employed to spell the word *ts'ul* which means "foreigner" or "owner" (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 892). It is in accordance with the example in the lower register of page 50 of the Dresden Codex where the term *ts'ul* is written T608.568 /ts'u-lu/ (**Figure 4b-3**)<sup>4</sup>.

The agentive *ah* and the nominal term *ts'ul* follow elements read as *k'ul* and precede signs which render the word *wah*. It is worth to note that the term *wah* is written either by the syllables /wa/ and /hi/ or in the logo-syllabic fashion employing the main sign T 506 and a phonemic complement read /wa/. This indicates that the logograph T 506 read /OL/ in the

<sup>3</sup> See the entries for *uts'* in Yucatec (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 902) and Tzotzil (Laughlin 1988: 195).

<sup>4</sup> For arguments on alternative interpretations of this collocation as Penis-lineage title see Linda Schele and David Freidel (Schele and Freidel 1990: 362-363), Nikolai Grube (Grube 1991: 264; 1994: 325-331), Erik Boot (Boot 1995b) and Elisabeth Wagner (Wagner 1995: 98-99).

inscriptions from the Southern Maya Lowlands is taking the additional phonemic value /**WAH**/. This extension of meaning for T 506 appears for the first time in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá and is still present in the Postclassic Dresden Codex. The reasons for this development can be manifold. The most interesting assumption, however, is to take this innovation as a reflex to the introduction of a new feature into the world as it was perceived by the late classic inhabitants of the Northern Maya Lowlands.

The complete nominal phrase under discussion can be read as *k'ul ah ts'ul wah*. The syntactic structure of this nominal phrase allows two different readings. In the first case the term *ts'ul* is used as adjectival attributive to modify the noun *wah*. In accordance with colonial grammars the agentive *ah* is related to the expression *ts'ul wah* (Smailus 1989a: 120). The preceding *k'ul* is an attributive to the phrase *ah ts'ul wah*. The complete nominal phrase *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* can, therefore, be translated either as "the venerable one with a foreign lifestyle" or "the venerable one of the foreign food or tortilla" depending on the different meanings given for the noun *wah* (Ciudad Real 1984: 438v, 439r). Secondly, the phrase can be translated as "the venerable owner of the tortilla" reading the terms *ts'ul* and *wah* as nouns with the latter one describing the owned object.

The first translation reveals that this epithet addresses the outstanding feature of "foreign lifestyle" or "foreign food or tortilla". It reveals that the bearer of the title was perceived as different and prepared or consumed its food in a way that was regarded as uncommon and unfamiliar by the majority of the inhabitants of the Northern Mayan lowlands during the 9<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Taube 1989). In this case the term reveals the concept of defining group identity by the type of food being consumed<sup>5</sup>.

In the case of the second translation as "the owner of the tortilla" the meaning of the title is less evident. Only if we assume that the tortilla was a food regarded as uncommon in the Northern Maya Lowlands during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century which might be reflected by the adoption of a new reading for the sign T 506, than this title may describe the outstanding feature of its bearer consuming unfamiliar food, as well. Either way, the title would still remain a descriptive term and not a patronym as suggested by Nikolai Grube.

The nominal phrase we read as *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* is found nine times in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá and is associated with four individuals: *K'ak'-u-pakal*, *K'inil Kopo?l*, *Wah-u-Haw* and *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit Kamax* (**Figure 2b-e**)<sup>6</sup>. They represent the only group of individuals addressed with this honorific term. From the genealogical information preserved in the inscription of Chichén Itzá it becomes evident that at least *K'ak'-u-pakal* and *K'inil Kopo?ol* were half-brothers and their maternal grandfather (*mam*) was *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit*

<sup>5</sup> A similar concept of defining group identity by the type of food being consumed, may be reflected by a passage related in Landa's Relación. Indeed, it was only when the lords of Mayapán noted with satisfaction that the *Xiw* cultivated the land in the same way as they themselves did, that they decided to make friends with the immigrants and invite their leader to build his palace in their city (Landa 1959: 16). The same concept applies to the Caribs as well who were called foreigners who eat men in the third Chumayel chronicle (Roys 1967: 78C-81C). The first Spaniards were called *anona* or *guayaba* eaters by the Maya (Edmonson 1982: 55, note 1180; Tozzer 1941: 49).

<sup>6</sup> It has been argued that *Choch Yok Puy* is also addressed with the so called "Penis" title (Wagner 1995: 60). This assumption is problematic as parts of the text between the name and the title on Lintel 3 from the Temple of the Four Lintels have broken away. It is possible that a relational term is inserted between the name of *Choch Yok Puy* and the following title sequence. Therefore, he is excluded from the discussion. The names given in the list are proposed by different persons: *K'inil Kopo?l* by William Ringle (1990: 236), *Wah-u-Haw* by Elisabeth Wagner (1995: 58), *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit Kamax* in parts by Elisabeth Wagner (1995: 70-71) and ourselves.

*Kamax* (Schele and Freidel 1990: 359-360; Wagner 1995: 115-116). The genealogical relation of *Wah-u-Haw* remains obscure. Again, this leaves us with the question, whether *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit Kamax* handed down this title to his offspring and by extension it became a patronym or the *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* title designated a specific office within the society of Chichén Itzá which was held by several individuals at the same time<sup>7</sup>. Evidence for the assumed political role and the implications related to this title will be presented further on.

## 1.2. The Texts on Public Events - *K'ak'-u-pakal, Hun-pik-tok'* and the *Kokom*

Besides the personal data recorded in the inscriptions of residential buildings (*y-otot*), there are hieroglyphic texts at Chichén Itzá which deal with public events. One of these texts is the hieroglyphic frieze inscribed on the eastern vault spring in the outer room of the Casa Colorada (**Figure 5**). This fact was established quite early in the process of deciphering. It was Thomas Barthel who first recognized the parallels between this text and the captions describing the activities of the gods drilling fire in the central registers of pages 5 and 6 of the Dresden Codex and the gods on page 38 of the Codex Madrid. David Kelley substantiated Barthel's suggestion by his decipherment of the glyphic expression for fire (*k'ak'*) which follows the drilling-glyph (*hoch'oh* or *hoch'ob*) in three of its five occurrences in the Casa Colorada inscription (Barthel 1955: 13; Kelley 1968a, 1976: 278, 288, 284-285, 1982: 4).

The text records four fire rituals between 6 Muluk 12 Mak before K'atun 1 Ahaw which can be placed in the Long Count 10.2.0.1.9 corresponding to September 11, 869 A.D and 10.2.2.6.11 9 Chuwen 4 Kumk'u which is equivalent to December 12, 871 A.D. (Eberl and Voss 1998) The first fire drilling was performed by two individuals named *Yax-uk'-u-sa* (Wagner 1995: 54-55) and *?-u-chok Hun Yahawal Winik* (Erik Boot 1994a). The third activity which is recorded for the same date is a vision quest by *K'ak'-u-pakal (u tsak tu k'in tu ba' tu nabil K'ak'-u-pakal)*. In this clause *K'ak'-u-pakal* bears the title *k'ul ah ts'ul wah*, the reading of which was presented above.

At the very end of the inscription *K'ak'-u-pakal* is named in the company of two other dignitaries, in a composite phrase consisting of three titles and the names of the dignitaries who hold them (**Figure 5**, Blocks 55 to 57). The individuals mentioned are well known from other inscriptions at Chichén Itzá. They are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>k'ul ah ts'ul wah</i>                    | [ <i>K'ak'-u-pakal</i> ]               |
| 2. <i>k'ul ? "headless man"? ahaw? k'inich</i> | <i>Hun-pik-tok'</i>                    |
| 3. <i>k'ul kokom</i>                           | <i>Yahawal Cho' K'ak'</i> <sup>8</sup> |

For reasons of economy of space or redundancy the sculptor omitted one of the three names, just listing the title of the person concerned. But since the title is *k'ul ah ts'ul wah*, it is quite clear from the point of (con)textual coherence that the individual mentioned here must be *K'ak'-u-pakal* who is the only individual to bear this title in the inscription of the Casa Colorada (**Figure 5**, Blocks 22b to 24).

<sup>7</sup> In the case of *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit Kamax* the nominal phrase *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* is preceded by an /u/ which may indicate possession or "the first" as has been suggested by Elisabeth Wagner (1995: 99). The genealogical information preserved in the inscription on Lintel 7 from Monjas may indeed confirm Wagner's suggestion. On the other hand, it might be a case of graphemic inversion as can be observed frequently with other glyphs in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá.

<sup>8</sup> A reading of this name is based on proposals made by Nikolai Grube (1994: 342, Endnote 8) and the interpretation of T 627 as the syllable /k'a/ (Boot,Looper, and Wagner 1996: 2).

This final clause is introduced by the expression *u-kaban* (**Figure 5**, Frieze-block W). As the drilling of fire is spatially related to the Casa Colorada it is probable that the *u-kaban* expression alludes to the region in which this building is located. For this reason *u-kaban* may be translated as "it is the territory of" (cf. Schele and Freidel 1990: 360, Fig. 9:12). The expression *kaban* might alternatively be a derivation of the *kah* verb reading "to do" which is used to denote the agent of an action. From this it appears that notwithstanding the functional role of the other individuals mentioned in the Casa Colorada text, the ultimate responsibility for this type of public affair at Chichén Itzá rested with three persons who occupied three distinct offices which possibly represented the top of the government.

The offices assigned to the three men have to be deduced from their titles as the information provided on personal oriented activities in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá is rather scanty. As the focus of the inscriptions is centered on the inauguration of buildings or parts of them only four events could be certainly identified for *K'ak'-u-pakal*. For *Hun-pik-tok'* only one event is recorded. Concerning titles, conditions improve considerably for *K'ak'-u-pakal* but remain unsatisfactory for *Hun-pik-tok'* who is only mentioned twice in the entire corpus of inscriptions. This is lamentable because his *k'ul* title is not understood yet. For the *kokom* only titles are recorded. In the following their roles will be discussed in the reversed order of their appearance in the Casa Colorada inscription.

#### 1.2.1. The third official: the *k'ul kokom*

The third office mentioned in the Casa Colorada text was that of the *kokom*. As stated above, the term means "judge" and was the name of the "Kings of Yucatán". From this we may deduce that the office of the *kokom* was that of the head of the administration at Chichén Itzá. At the time when Chichén Itzá was founded, the office of *k'ul kokom* was held by *Yahawal Cho' K'ak'* (**Figure 2.a**).

His personal abode was the *Wa(k)wak Puh Ak Na*, "the flat house with the excessive number of chambers" which is nicknamed Akab Dzib today (**Figure 6**)<sup>9</sup>. The name tells us that the Akab Dzib with its 18 rooms was considered a sumptuous mansion according to contemporary standards of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Of the three individuals mentioned in the joint ceremony of the Casa Colorada text, only the *kokom Yahawal Cho' K'ak'* is the possessor of such a house. *K'ak'-u-pakal* as well as *Hun-pik-tok'* have not assigned any house or room under their names in or around Chichén Itzá. Considering all this and the central location at the East side of the Central Plaza of Chichén Itzá, the multiroomed abode, the venerable palace (*u-k'ul otot*) of *Yahawal Cho' K'ak'* may in fact express the importance of his office.

#### 1.2.2. The second official: *Hun-pik-tok'*

The second office in the order of the Casa Colorada text was held by *Hun-pik-tok'*. His *k'ul* title is of little help to elucidate his role in the triumvirate of Chichén Itzá since it remains unread (**Figure 2.f**). But it is clear, that it is not the *k'ul* "Penis" title as was first suggested by Nikolai Grube (1994: 328). The only event related to him is recorded in the inscription on the lintel from structure 1 of Halakal (**Figure 7**), about three kilometers to the northeast of Chichén Itzá, dated 10 Lamat \*6 Tsek in a Tun before K'atun 1 Ahaw which is equivalent to

<sup>9</sup> The term *ak na* (**Figure 6, D1b**) refers to a house with one story only. At present it designates a seasonal shelter erected within the milpa during the planting season consisting of a gabled roof only. Its squat appearance resembles that of a turtle (*ak*). The word *pu'* (D1a) literally means "folds" and is employed to characterize the way in which the rooms or chambers of the Akab Dzib are arranged. The term *wa(k)wak* (C1b) refers to the excessive number - eighteen in total - of these.

March 29, 870 A.D. (10.2.0.11.8). As the event is another fire ritual it is useless for our purposes.

Although his role cannot be determined from the *k'ul* title and the event, his Emblem Glyph is of great importance. Up to now he is the only one in the inscriptions pertaining to Chichén Itzá to whom an Emblem Glyph can be assigned (**Figure 2f-2 and 7**). This Emblem Glyph is clearly related to Ek Balam, located some 50 kms. to the northeast of Chichén Itzá (Vargas de la Peña and Castillo 1999: 30, figures 5 and 6). The distinctive elements are T 676 /*TAL*/ and T 580 /*lo*/. Apart from *Hun-pik-tok'* the same Emblem Glyph can be identified with the lord *Ukit Kan Lek* on the hieroglyphic serpents of the central stairway of structure 1 of Ek Balam (Vargas de la Peña and Castillo 1999: *ibid*). The *k'ul* title and the Emblem Glyph assigned to *Hun-pik-tok'* are also present on the fragmented Stela 1 of Ek Balam (**Figure 8**). The use of the Emblem Glyph evidences that Ek Balam adhered to the concept of divine rulership and confirms a polity which retained the tradition of the Late Classic Southern Lowlands. This system of rulership is clearly based on hereditary descent lines.

All the monuments from Ek Balam predate the appearance of *Hun-pik-tok'* at Chichén Itzá and Halakal. The Long Count on stela 1 of Ek Balam is given as January 22, 840 A.D. which can be reconstructed as 10.0.10.0.0 (Vargas de la Peña and Castillo 1999: 31). The hieroglyphic serpents must precede this date as *Ukit Kan Lek* is already shown as divine ancestor on Stela 1 (Vargas de la Peña y Castillo 1999: 31). *Hun-pik-tok'* is among the successors to *Ukit Kan Lek*. Obviously, the apogee of Ek Balam concurred with the rise of Chichén Itzá. After the death of *Ukit Kan Lek* Ek Balam's decline set in after 840 A.D. Yet, it was not eclipsed by Chichén Itzá which took the predominant position after 850 A.D. Ek Balam's ruling elite was added to the government of Chichén Itzá. This would speak for the relative importance Ek Balam was still playing in the Northeastern Yucatec Plains. It would also speak for a collective government in which the mechanical solidarity of councils prevailed over the organic solidarity of hereditary descent lines (cf. Voss and Eberl 1999).

### 1.2.3. The *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob* - The ceremonial aspect

The first office mentioned in the Casa Colorada text is that of the *k'ul ah ts'ul wah*, "the venerable one with a foreign lifestyle", whose most prominent representative was *K'ak'-u-pakal*. From his known titles we can deduce that he was involved in ceremonial matters. The most striking titles are *ah k'ak'* (he who makes fire) or *k'ul ah k'ak'* (the venerable one who makes fire) and *u-nun k'ak'nal* (**Figure 9**).

The latter one has already become of special interest for the study of Chichén Itzá's history. The term *nun* was translated as "the one who does not speak the language of the country properly" and was interpreted as an expression denominating the foreign origin of *K'ak'-u-pakal* (Grube 1994: 334-335; Kremer 1994: 303). On the other hand, the various related entries in most of the lowland Maya dictionaries reveal that the term *nun* does also mean "to inform, to pass to another place, to dream and to announce something before it happens" (Ciudad Real 1984: 336r; Ulrich and Ulrich 1976: 144; Wisdom 1950: 545, 546) which forwarded the idea, that *nun* might be related to a kind of ritual speech (cf. Foster 1995; Boot 1997a). Additionally, it has to be stated that the former interpretation as "foreigner" is not in accordance with the syntactic structure of the text. The word *nun* is preceded by a possessive pronoun relating it to the following term *k'ak'nal* and not immediately to the individual who holds the title<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the whole nominal phrase might be transliterated as "the spokesman of

<sup>10</sup> According to the various occurrences in the Chilam Balam books *num* is an equivalent to *nun* (Miram and Miram 1988, 3). A comparison of the syntactic position of the word *nun* or *num* in the



the fire place" and relates *K'ak'-u-pakal* to the fire ceremonies. Therefore, his status as foreigner in Northern Yucatán should be based on his *k'ul* title until further evidence is at hand.

As stated above, from the recorded activities ascribed to *K'ak'-u-pakal* we clearly see that he was taking an active part in ceremonial events. On the text from the hemispherical sculpture from the Great Ballcourt he is taking part in the inauguration ceremony for the ballcourt, dated 10.1.15.3.7 which corresponds to November 14, 864 A.D. (**Figure 10**)<sup>11</sup>. The vision quest described in the Casa Colorada text takes place on September 11, 869 A.D. (see 1.2.1. above). On Yula Lintel 1 he is obviously related to a ballcourt event taking place on the day 8 K'an 2 Pop (10.2.4.8.4) which is equivalent to January 3, 874 A.D. (**Figure 11**). It is interesting to note that these events rank among the earliest in the chronological sequence from Chichén Itzá known so far and are all related to public buildings. On these occasions *K'ak'-u-pakal* shows up as the promoter of the ritual events.

#### 1.2.4. The *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob* - The military aspect

*K'ak'-u-pakal's* role as military commander can be deduced from the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá as well. The decisive textual information derives from the inscriptions of lintels 1 and 4 of the Temple of the Four Lintels and block no.12 of the Hieroglyphic Serpents from the Caracol. During the inauguration ceremonies on 9 Lamat and 10 Muluk in the month Yax belonging to the thirteenth Tun before K'atun 1 Ahaw (10.2.12.1.8 and 10.2.12.1.9) which correspond to July 9 and 10, 881 A.D. described on lintel 4 of the Temple of the Four Lintels at E2b to H8 the *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob K'ak'-u-pakal*, *K'inil Kopo?l* and *Wah-u-haw* are involved in an event concerning a *tok'-pakal* (**Figure 12**). There is sufficient evidence and argument which confirms the role of the *tok'-pakal* (flint-shield) as an object related to accession rites and warfare (Riese 1982: 278-279; Houston 1983; Schele and Freidel 1990: 409; Freidel, Schele, and Parker 1993: 293-336; Kremer and Voss 1993: 20). Although this episode is ritual in nature, it gives an insight into the organization of the military elite of Chichén Itzá.

The passage in question names no less than four individuals which are related to the *tok'-pakal*<sup>12</sup>. First, *K'ak'-u-pakal* is addressed as *u-kanan may* of the flint-shield. *K'inil Kopo?l* is

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Chilam Balam texts with those from the Monjas lintels reveals that *nun* is used as an adjectival attributive which is always set in front of the noun it modifies. In the hieroglyphic inscriptions it follows the personal name of *K'ak'-u-pakal* and can, therefore, not qualify this individual.

<sup>11</sup> Our reading order which takes the CR date as the starting point of the text deviates from the enumeration proposed by Linnea Wren (Wren, Schmidt and Krochock 1989: Fig. 2). This reinterpretation is based on our inspection of the sculpture in the bodega of the Museo Regional de Antropología, Mérida, Yucatán, México in September 1997 (Kremer and Voss 1998b). The event in question occurred on the second day mentioned. The date is simply expressed by the so called "sun at horizon" glyph (*pas*, block M) which is equivalent to the distance number of one day count forward from the CR 11 Kimi 14 Pax *tan hun ahaw* (blocks A-B and Kb-L). The first event obviously dealt with the inauguration and naming (*u-k'aba*, block E) of the ballcourt (block G) performed by (*u-kahi*, block H) a yet unidentified individual (blocks I-Ka) while the second event (eroded, block N) is performed by *K'ak'-u-pakal* (blocks P-Q). The text closes on the third day (*pas*, block U) with another event (unknown, block V) related to the ballcourt (block X).

<sup>12</sup> A point should be made on the reading order presented here. The relationships expressed in this text do all refer independently to the main topic of the event which is the *tok'-pakal* and are not chained to another. In this respect they work much like parentage statements that are not chained either but independently related to the protagonist of a text. This pattern seems to have been generally adopted in the hieroglyphic inscriptions.

called an *u-mayan* followed by *Ak'e Tok'* (Boot 1995a) who is termed a *y-itah*, and finally, *Wah-u-haw* who is denominated an *u-tahal* of the object in question. The latter two relational glyphs are rather unproblematic. The term *y-itah* is safely translated as "companion of" and describes friendly relations between two individuals or a human with a divine being (Schele 1989: 4, 24; Schele and Freidel 1990: 449; MacLeod 1992: 257; Voss 1995: 48-49). The term *u-tahal* is interpreted as "owner of" or "possessor of" (Wagner 1995: 110)<sup>13</sup>. More intriguing, however, are the expressions related to *K'ak'-u-pakal* and *K'inil Kopo?l*. The morphosyntactic analysis shows that the term *u-kanan may* is a possessive inflected nominal compound made up of *kanan* and *may*. According to the Motul dictionary <ah canan> means "someone who protects [or guards] something, with a name or object following it means to protect the mentioned object" (Ciudad Real 1984: 7v). In our case *may* is the protected object and, therefore, is most likely a specific modality of the *tok'-pakal* itself. In this respect we should turn to the relational term *u-mayan*. The linguistic analysis reveals that the root of this possessive inflected noun is *may* as well, with the derivational suffix *-an* indicating the agentive with a shift of final *-m* to *-n* which is well attested throughout the lowland Mayan languages. Thus, the individual addressed as *mayan* is obviously doing something with the *may*.

Unfortunately, no convincing reading has been proposed for the word *may* so far. Up to now this word has been related either to the Yucatec glosses for "deer" and "tobacco" (Wagner 1995: 112-113) or the Quiche gloss for "20 year cycle" (Lincoln 1994: 184). Yet, one entry from colonial Cholti might help to elucidate the intended meaning. In this language we find the entry

<maii> "dar de gracia (give for free), dádiva, don (gift, talent)" (Morán 1695)

which points to someone offering something. This meaning seems to be supported by several entries from the Chol, Cakchiquel and Quiche Maya languages. In present day Chol similar entries are documented:

<majñan> "borrow" and  
 <majtan> "gift" (Whittaker and Warknetin 1965: 163);  
 <majñ-an/ö> "prestar (borrow)" and  
 <majtan> "regalo (gift)" (Schumann 1973: 87);  
 <majan> "prestado (borrowed)" and  
 <majtañ^l> "regalo (gift)" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 77, 78).

In the consulted Cakchiquel dictionary of the second half of the 16th century ascribed to Fray Juan de Alonso we have the entries

<maih> "donación; maravilla (donation; miracle)",  
 <maiham> "donada cosa; famoso (donated thing; marvelous)", and  
 <maihaxel> "adorable dios, o digno de ser adorado; amable cosa (adorable god or worthy of being adored; kind thing)" (Smailus 1989b, 3: 526).

In Quiche the entries are related to the same concept as well:

<mayih> "gift",  
 <ah mayih> "doer of good", and  
 <mayibal> "miracle" (Edmonson 1965: 71).

The gloss "doer of good" (*ah mayih*) seems to be the closest one to the intended meaning of the word *mayam*. It should be recalled that in the Lowland Maya languages the agentive

<sup>13</sup> David Freidel and Ruth Krochock erroneously read the collocation T103:683:178 /**ta-ha-la**/ as *tahlah* which they translated as "ballplayer". From this they deduced a whole sequence of ballgame related activities throughout the entire corpus of inscriptions at Chichén Itzá (Freidel and Krochock 1994). This alternative is inappropriate since it is not in accordance with the generally accepted syllabic spelling rules proposed by Yuri Knorozov (1958: 290; 1967: 45).

suffix *-Vm / -Vn* is functionally equivalent to the agentive prefix *ah*. In this respect it is worth to note that among the prehispanic Pokom-Maya existed a priest called

<ah mai> "ofrendor (who presents gifts to god)" (Fray Pedro Morán quoted from Miles 1957: 750)

which is in complete accordance with the title of the high priest of Mayapán, who was called *ah k'in may* or *ahaw kan may* (Landa 1959: 14). In our specific case *K'inil Kopo?l*, the half-brother of *K'ak'-u-pakal*, held this specific office of *mayam* or *ah may* and was responsible for the appropriate offers to the *may* during specific public ceremonies.

### 1.2.5. *K'ak'-u-pakal* and *Yax Loch Kan*

This leads us to the question who or what was the essence that was housed in the flint-shield and required a set of three dignitaries, the *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob*. The fact that *Ak'e Tok'* is addressed as companion of the flint-shield and by extension of its essence indicates that we are dealing with a supernatural being. In this respect it is interesting to note that the *y-itah*, the *u-tahal*, and the *u-kanan may* expressions reappear in connection with a nominal phrase read as *Yax Loch Kan* (Wagner 1995: 50). The inscription from lintel 4 of the Temple of the Four Lintels (**Figure 12**), the inscription of lintel 1 of the same building (**Figure 13**), and block 12 of the Hieroglyphic Serpents from the Caracol (**Figure 14**) present a set of six relational expressions between *Yax Loch Kan* and the well known individuals *K'ak'-u-pakal*, *K'inil Kopo?l*, *Wah-u-haw* and *Ak'e Tok'*. In these cases *K'ak'-u-pakal* is twice addressed as possessor or owner (*u-tahal*) and once as protector (*u-kanan may*) of *Yax Loch Kan*. It becomes clear from the context that *Yax Loch Kan* is the proper name of the essence (*may*) of the *tok'-pakal* which is owned and protected by *K'ak'-u-pakal*. Relating thereto, the yet unread possessed nouns between *Yax Loch Kan* and *K'inil Kopo?l* as well as between *Yax Loch Kan* and *Wah-u-haw* have to be interpreted in a similar way. Our findings are confirmed by the presence of *Ak'e Tok'* who is named a companion of *Yax Loch Kan* as has been the case for the flint-shield as well. Additionally, the fact that the *tok'-pakal* sequence is a constituent part of a text relating to the inauguration of a residence (*y-otot*) of the supernatural *Yax Loch Kan* might also support our proposed equation for *Yax Loch Kan* being the essence of the *tok'-pakal* proper. Thus, the Temple of the Four Lintels might be regarded as the shrine which housed the *tok'-pakal* with its spirit companion *Yax Loch Kan*.

In summary, we see a set of three individuals holding the title of *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* which are responsible for the *tok'-pakal* and its supernatural essence *Yax Loch Kan*. In this triumvirate *K'ak'-u-pakal* was regarded as its protector, *Wah-u-haw* as its owner or keeper and *K'inil Kopo?l* as its sacrificial priest. Noteworthy in this respect is the first relation mentioned on lintel 4 from the Temple of the Four Lintels at A6 to C6 (**Figure 12**). In this occasion *Yax Loch Kan* is addressed as *u-k'ul ah wakabal ox pakab matam* which is translated as "the venerated one of those standing upright before him, the three who repay the given charities"<sup>14</sup>. This title clearly and unmistakably refers to the three keepers who ministered the *tok'-pakal* in Chichén Itzá, the *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob*. It indicates that the addressed persons were fulfilling

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<sup>14</sup> The title *ah wakabal ox pakab matam* is divided into two sections. The term *wakabal* derives from <uacab> which is glossed as "cosa que esta en pie o enhiesta delante de otro (something standing or placed upright before someone)" (Ciudad Real 1984: 437r). The expression *ox pakab matam* is composed of the instrumental form of the verbal root *pak* with the coefficient *ox* (3) in front and the noun *matam* following. In the dictionaries of colonial Yucatec as well as Tzotzil we find the verbal phrase <paaceex a. matan> (Ciudad Real 1984: 354v) and <pak moton> (Laughlin 1988, I: 278) which are glossed as "retribuyd la limosna que os dan, pues os dan, dad vosotros (redistribute the charities given to you, as you are given, you should give)" and "enviar algo de retorno (send present in return)" respectively.

their ritual duty in the appropriate way which was obviously regarded a reciprocal event in return for the powers provided by the flint-shield in battle (cf. Freidel, Schele and Parker 1993: 324-327).

The pictorial representation for the *Yax Loch Kan* figures prominently in the iconographic programs of nearly every building erected on the North Terrace (Gran Nivelación), especially the Great Ballcourt with its four temples (Str. 2D1) and the Temple of the Warriors (Str. 2D8). His name can be transliterated as "Green/First Bent Serpent". As such he represents a twisted serpent adorned with long (quetzal) feathers always accompanying a warrior armed with spearthrower and darts. This image was termed Captain Serpent by Arthur Miller (1977). From the epigraphic data it becomes obvious that the visualized serpents are the animal companions or *wayob* of the warriors proper which inspire the human beings (cf. Houston and Stuart 1989)<sup>15</sup>. Obviously, the capacity of owning this particular alter-ego was restricted to a few warriors only. Therefore, only few individuals protected by the *Yax Loch Kan* can be identified in the battlefield scenes shown in the frescos from the Upper Temple of the Jaguars. A similar distribution pattern applies to all the other large groups of individuals represented in processions throughout Chichén Itzá except for those on the dais and benches of the Northern Collonade and the southern Temple of the Warriors where serpent warriors are lined up one after another. It is tempting to assume that these do in fact represent the back bone or command of Chichén Itzá's military forces<sup>16</sup>.

Returning to our point of departure the title *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* classifies its bearer as member of the military command by being the minister of the flint shield called *Yax Loch Kan*. Unfortunately, this title does not specify a martial quality but a way to sustain oneself which is regarded as uncommon by the native people of the country. It is intriguing to assume that the peculiar diet based on tortilla or *wah* is intimately related to the military profession under discussion. Additional argument will be presented further on.

### 1.3. Summary of epigraphic analysis

Our epigraphic research of the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá reveals several new insights into the socio-political organization of the site's elite during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It becomes evident that the identification of *k'ul* titles as patronymics (Grube 1994: 327-328) is nothing but a scientific postulate which cannot be substantiated by the epigraphic material at hand. Yet, it is more likely that these *k'ul* titles are designations for specific offices which in Postclassic time eventually became patronymics as is the case for the *kokom*. Others like the *ah ts'ul wah* vanished.

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<sup>15</sup> Animal spirits and supernatural appearances (*wayob*) play an important part in Mayan warfare. Compare similar phenomena in the Quiche report on the battle fought against the Spaniards on February 22, 1524 near Xelahu', today Quetzaltenango (Recinos 1957: 71-94; Carmack 1973: 265-345; Bricker 1981: 31-41; Schele, Freidel and Parker 1993: 327-330) and in the reports on the battle of Huistán fought on August 25, 1712 during the Tzeltal revolt of 1712-1713 (Duerr 1991: 170-172, 187-189; Moscoso 1984: 69-70).

<sup>16</sup> The Quiche report on the battle at Xelahu' is very explicit in determining that the warriors which had themselves transformed into their *wayob* (eagle, lightning) were the chiefs and captains of their units. The same is reported for the Tzeltal revolt. A decisive criterion for the selection of captains was not only their combat experience but their supernatural abilities as sorcerers (Duerr 1991: 170-171). It is tempting to consider the possibility that those warriors who are represented with the *Yax Loch Kan* as their spirit companion in the iconographic programs of Chichén Itzá should be the leaders of the Chichén Itzá war parties.

The offices or functions which were addressed by distinct *k'ul* titles present evidence for a certain specialization at the top of the social hierarchy at Chichén Itzá. The *k'ul kokom* can most likely be equated with the office of a judge and was obviously the highest representative in administration. The *k'ul ah ts'ul wahob* were certainly related to the military. Both, the *kokom* and the *ah ts'ul wahob* took an active part in public ceremonial affairs. This is especially the case for *K'ak'-u-pakal* who is the most widely mentioned individual throughout the inscriptional corpus of Chichén Itzá. The role of *Hun-pik-tok'*, the divine lord of Ek Balam, remains ambivalent. His appearance at the top of Chichén Itzá's political hierarchy seems to be socio-politically motivated rather than based on a specific function within the triumvirate. Interestingly, these three men are not related to each other by kinship or any other system of social affiliation. This indicates that the political system established at the top of the political system is largely motivated by cooperation and mutual control.

## **2. The ethnohistorical material**

Since David Humiston Kelley first presented convincing evidence for the presence of *K'ak'-u-pakal's* name in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá and thus for the first time in the history of Maya studies offered the possibility to parallel epigraphic data with ethnohistorical accounts (Kelley 1962, 1968b), comparison of epigraphic with ethnohistorical source material has become the most common procedure in the field of pre-Columbian studies on the Maya in general and pre-Columbian history of Northern Yucatán in particular.

Yet, the alleged historical data from the chronicles of the Chilam Balam books are unsuitable to reconstruct the absolute chronology of the early history of Northern Yucatán since the foundation of Chichén Itzá. Recent research on the Chilam Balam books has shown that the chronicles in the Mani, Tizimin and Chumayel books are mainly based on oral traditions and are characterized by neglecting linear chronology and spatial accuracy. The arrangements are thematic rather than historical (Gunsenheimer 2002). The remaining ethnohistorical sources such as Landa's "Relación" and the "Relaciones Geográficas" can only be used to reconstruct a relative sequence of the alleged historical events. According to our reconstruction based on the Spanish accounts it can be said that no event relevant to the history of Northern Yucatán predates the arrival of the Itsa at Chichén Itzá. In Landa's "Relación" it is said that three venerable brethren came into Yucatán from the West and brought together a great number of people at this settlement which they ruled for several years. Although it is never explicitly stated it is most likely that they seem to have congregated with the Itsa and that both groups became known as "the Itsa" in later times. Based on the "Relaciones Geográficas" and the "Historical Recollections" of Gaspar Antonio Chi the military commanders of the Itsa were *K'ak'-u-pakal* and *Tek Uilu* in the time before Mayapan was founded. Both seized Izamal, Motul and Chak'anputun. These are the data which can be salvaged from the ethnohistorical material relevant to the history of early Chichén Itzá.

## **3. A comparison between selected epigraphic and ethnohistorical data**

The task of the comparison between the epigraphic and the critically reviewed ethnohistorical material is to detect parallels and similarities within both kinds of sources which may yield a reconstruction of the events concerning the foundation of Chichén Itzá and its socio-political organization.

### 3.1. The triumvirate of Chichén Itzá

From the epigraphic analysis of the Casa Colorada text it appears that the ultimate responsibility for the public affairs at Chichén Itzá rested with three persons who occupied three distinct offices which possibly represented the top of the government.

The concept of divided rulership, extracted from the Casa Colorada inscription, as well as its appearance in the founding phase, at the very beginning of the recorded history of Chichén Itzá, and in an obviously ceremonial setting, coincides in all of its aspects with the information from Landa's *Relación* (Landa 1959: 12, 112-113) where it is stated that three venerable brethren [*tres señores hermanos*] came to the place of Chichén Itzá from the West and brought together a great number of common people [*pueblos*] and nobility / gentry [*gentes*] which they reigned for several years. Suffice it to say for the moment that in light of the epigraphic data the story of the three lords of Chichén Itzá loses the fairy tale flair it has in Landa's report and reveals a core of solid historical information.

#### 3.1.1. *K'ak'-u-pakal*

The fact, that the *K'ak'-u-pakal* of the ethnohistorical sources is indeed the same person mentioned in the hieroglyphic inscriptions from Chichén Itzá can be confirmed by parallels within both types of source. The information that *K'ak'-u-pakal* is intimately related to the Itsa is corroborated by the presence of his name on Stela 1 from the Caracol at C6 to D6 and the presence of the name of an Itsa on the same monument at N1 to M5 (**Figure 15**). This corresponds to the data from the *Relación* of Santa María y Izamal provided by Gaspar Antonio Chi (Garza 1983: I, 305; Jakeman 1952: 17). The supposed and often stated presence of at least two military leaders with the name *K'ak'-u-pakal* in Northern Yucatán's history (cf. Kelley 1968b; Schele, Grube and Boot 1998: 401) no longer holds true due to the critical historic-philological revision of the respective material (cf. Gunsenheimer 2002).

From the recorded activities and the titles ascribed to *K'ak'-u-pakal* in the inscriptions of Chichén Itzá we clearly see that he was involved in ceremonial matters and was obviously assigned a sacerdotal function. This is consistent with the passages of the three lords from Landa's *Relación* where it said that the three brethren from the West were devoted worshippers of their god and thus they built many and magnificent buildings (Landa 1959: 12, 112-113). Apart, we were able to demonstrate that he held a military office, as well. This military role is confirmed by the analyzed passages from the "Relaciones Geográficas" and the "Historical Recollections" of Gaspar Antonio Chi.

Unfortunately, the ethnohistorical data do not shed light upon the *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* title at first glance. As the epigraphic analysis shows, this title can be translated as "the venerable one with the foreign lifestyle or food" or "the venerable owner of the tortilla". In any case it seems to point toward a concept of defining group identity by the food being consumed. Obviously, the tortilla or *wah* as foodstuff of the military forces of Chichén Itzá was regarded as an innovation.

The question is, where this innovation came from that is correlated with the military. An answer might be found in several Spanish accounts concerned with the founding phase of Chichén Itzá. According to the *Relación* de Muxuppipp dating to 1581 (Garza *et al.* 1983: I, 377) and Sánchez de Aguilar's "Informe contra idolorum cultores" from 1639 (1987: 94-95) the Maya from Northern Yucatán were subjugated by the Mexicans. With the help of the chronological information given in these sources the Mexican conquest can be dated to

around 800 A.D. and lasted at least some 150 years<sup>17</sup>. These data present sufficient substantial evidence to assume that these Mexicans can be equated with the three venerable brethren that came to the place of Chichén Itzá from the West in Landa's *Relación*. If this correlation holds to be valid than the new food called tortilla or *wah* was introduced by these Mexican conquerors coming from the West. The tortilla was obviously the provision of the Mexican soldiers and mercenaries during a military campaign. This way of solving the problem of logistics for an army on the move or in the field is best documented for the Aztecs in the Mexican Highlands some 550 years later (cf. Hassig 1988: 61; see also 1992: 28, 55, 130). These suppositions still await definite archaeological confirmation<sup>18</sup>.

From these considerations it is possible to argue that *K'ak'-u-pakal* was one of the commanders of the foreign military element whose presence is so evident in the sculpture of Chichén Itzá. This military element of foreigners is present at Chichén Itzá from the very beginning, when the city was founded. When the Itsa come to establish themselves at the place which was to bear their name, the foreign element is right with them, much like the Quiché Maya of the *Popol Vuh* migrate to their new homes in highland Guatemala, accompanied by the Yaqui, a Nahuatl term for traveler, runner, foreigner (Schultze Jena 1972: 305-306) and - by extension - soldier. And much like the Yaqui shared the identity of their host nation, the Quiché, according to the *Popol Vuh* (Schultze Jena 1972: 123), the foreign element at Chichén Itzá appears to be thoroughly blended with the Itsa as is evident from the "joint ceremony" documented in the *Casa Colorada* text and the inscriptions of the *Caracol*.

In the memory of later generations of the Yucatec Maya, the military arm of foreigners so fully integrated into the society of Chichén Itzá, was obviously taken for the Itsa proper. As Sánchez de Aguilar explains it in 1639: Six hundred years before the advent of the Spaniards, the Maya were vassals of the Mexicans who left the memory of their presence in the large and marvelous buildings of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá (1987: 94–95). This confusion appears quite understandable from the point of view presented here. It was their army of foreign professionals from México by which the Itsa had gained and kept exercising control over their new domain in Northern Yucatán. Following the parallels provided by the "community of fate" between the Quiché tribes and the Yaqui in the *Popol Vuh* (Schultze Jena 1972: 108, 122, 173), one might equate the term *Yaqui Tepeu* (Yaqui sovereign) of the Quiché with the *k'ul ah ts'ul wah* of the Itsa. Information on the ethnic origin of the foreigners in both cases points towards an area of Nahuatl speech in central México. So it is no surprise that the name

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<sup>17</sup> In the *Relación de Muxuppip* it is stated that the people of the country did not commit idolatry until the Mexicans entered and conquered it approximately 800 years ago according to the elders of the Indians. As the report was written in 1581 we have to count back this distance of years to reach a date between 781 to 800 A.D. In the report of Sánchez de Aguilar it is stated that 600 years before the arrival of the Spaniards the Maya were vassals of the Mexicans who left the memory of their presence in the large and marvelous buildings of Uxmal and Chichén Itzá. Its anchor date, the "first arrival of the Spaniards" is the year in which the survivors of Valdivia's expedition suffered shipwreck and reached the East coast of Yucatán. For this event which was firmly implanted in the minds of both the Spanish (Landa, Gomara, Cervantes de Salazar) and the Maya (Na K'uk' Pech) the colonial documents list the year 1511 (cf. Brinton 1882: 193, 216; Tozzer 1941: 7, 236, 237).

<sup>18</sup> According to George Brainard only three handle fragments of *comales* were found at Chichén Itzá (1958: 54-55, 81, 244, and 312, figures 66-g-2, 97-k-1, and 97-k-2). Chronologically "the only two (!) fragments found were probably of Early Mexican substage [= Sotuta ceramic complex] production" (Brainard 1958: 81). Unfortunately, most Chichén Itzá ceramics do not come from controlled stratigraphic subfloor excavations (Brainard 1958: 35). Household excavations are completely lacking. As *comales* are regarded the indicators for the production of tortillas or *wahob* their presence at Chichén Itzá would help to support the epigraphic analysis concerning the introduction of the tortilla preparation to Northern Yucatán and by extension the adoption of the new meaning by the sign T 506.

of the most prominent holder of this title, *K'ak'-u-pakal*, may be an approximation to the Nahuatl *Chimalpopoca*, the name born by the third ruler of México-Tenochtitlan some 550 years later.

Apart from his military office it has to be recalled that *K'ak'-u-pakal* also was the promoter of several important ceremonial events at Chichén Itzá. Thus, he obviously combined the offices of military leader and priest. But what appears to be a contradiction in modern terms of social functions, emerges as the normal procedure in late Postclassic times, where military and priestly offices are merged, especially the role of professional soldier and human sacrificer. From the parallel established above between the Itsa and *ah ts'ul waho'ob* and the Quiché and Yaqui it is probable to assume the role of priest (or sacrificer) for *K'ak'-u-pakal* in addition to that of a military commander of the Itsa army of foreigners from México. As Recinos points out, according to the Popol Vuh, the Yaqui guards, that are the Mexicans, also were the priests of the Quiché, those who performed the sacrifices after the Mexican fashion (Recinos and Goertz 1953: 40; Tedlock 1985: 170, 183). From this it would appear quite reasonable to argue that *K'ak'-u-pakal* and other leading members of the Mexican community would have been particularly active as priests and sacrificers during the founding phase of Chichén Itzá when new buildings were erected and the appropriate sacrifices had to be performed and supervised.

### 3.1.2. *Hun-pik-tok'*

*Hun-pik-tok'* is known as the divine lord of Ek Balam, i.e. *k'ul tal(o) ahaw*. The use of the Emblem Glyph evidences that Ek Balam adhered to the concept of divine rulership and confirms a polity which retained the tradition of the Late Classic Southern Lowlands. The presence and participation of *Hun-pik-tok'* in the "joint ceremonies" at Chichén Itzá and Halakal obviously indicate Ek Balam's political decline after 850 A.D. Ek Balam's ruling elite was added to the government of Chichén Itzá and became a vassal which played an active part in Chichén Itzá's hegemony over northern Yucatán.

Unfortunately, the information about Ek Balam from the Relaciones Geográficas (Garza et alii 1983: II, 138-139) as well as on an individual called *Hun-pik-tok'* which can be retrieved from Lizana's work (Lizana 1995: 63-64, 81, 82) are useless for our comparative purposes. The crucial point is the fact that *Hun-pik-tok'* is addressed as military commander of Izamal in Lizana's work which cannot be corroborated by the epigraphic data at hand (Voss and Eberl 1999). The only plausible explanation is that the information provided by Lizana about *Hun-pik-tok'* does not refer to the individual known from the hieroglyphic inscriptions but to an official from late Postclassic Izamal addressed by the same name. It is very likely to assume that this personal name converted into an office and was adopted by the respective individual in charge. A similar phenomenon is well documented for the *teopixque* of Tenochtitlan who adopted the name of the god they worshipped and their individual character became unimportant in comparison with the god they impersonated (cf. Lanczkowski 1978: 102-104). In Izamal the importance of the *Hun-pik-tok'* office is stressed by the fact that apart from the temples of the gods or idols called *Itzam Na Thul*, *Kabul* and *K'inich K'ak' Mo'* and the priesthood he is the only one which is entitled with a residential complex atop a pyramidal platform (Lizana 1995: 62-64). Likewise, the Relación Geográfica of Ek Balam does not contain any information about the individuals recorded in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the archaeological site. It is most likely that the information provided on the Ekbalamistas pertain to a later period of the settlement prior to the occupation by the *Kupul* or are nothing but a posterior construct to explain the origin of the archaeological site.



### 3.1.3. The *kokom*

As result of the epigraphic analysis it could be shown that the term *kokom* designated the office of a judge (*oidor*) and was most likely used to address the head of the administration at Chichén Itzá. At the time when Chichén Itzá was founded this office of *k'ul kokom* was held by *Yahawal Choh K'ak'*. This supposition is supported by ethnohistorical information in Landa's *Relación* that it was for reasons of maintaining a stable government that the House of *Kokom* later was given the highest authority at the new capital of Mayapán when its founder, *K'uk'ul Kan*, had returned to México (Landa 1959: 14). Since it is the House of *Kokom* which is addressed here, and not a single individual by that name, it is quite clear that the office was already hereditary. The historical development at Mayapán bears witness to this arrangement (Landa 1959: 16-19). It was for this type of "family-owned office" that the term *kokom*, in a secondary sense, later also came to designate the lineage whose members held the title.

In Landa's *Relación* the house of the *Kokom* is given the chief power in Mayapán in order to maintain the type and quality of government which *K'uk'ul Kan* had established. The reason for this choice of the Yucatecan lords is threefold: "the house of *Kokom* was the most ancient and richest and he who was in command of it at the time, was a man of the greatest power." Later it is stated that "all the lords (of Yucatán) took care to respect and visit the *Kokom* and make him happy in that they bore him company and entertained him, and they applied to him in difficult matters" (Landa 1959: 14). The final part in this statement obviously alludes to the *Kokom*'s office as supreme judge.

If this outstanding position which the house of *Kokom* later held at Mayapán is in any way a reflex of the situation more than 400 years earlier, which is implied in Landa's statement, then the *k'ul kokom Yahawal Choh K'ak'* of Chichén Itzá must have occupied the highest administrative office at the city, closely assisted by the highest sacrificers and supreme commanders of the Mexican forces who were *Hun-pik-tok'* and *K'ak'-u-pakal* when the Itza controlled the city.

Landa's description of the many high ranking visitors, the associated social events and the judiciary proceedings which were characteristic of the position of the *Kokom* at Mayapán, also would explain why his predecessor at Chichén Itzá would have needed such a large, multiple roomed and centrally located residence like the Akab Dzib or *Wa(k)wak Pu Ak Na'*. The building was inaugurated with the positioning of the lintel in the 11<sup>th</sup> tun before K'atun 1 Ahaw (10.2.10.0.0 2 Ahaw 13 Ch'en) which corresponds to June 26, 879 A.D., nine years after the joint ceremony was held at the Casa Colorada.

### 3.2. Conclusion

The task of this article was to present new decipherments on the well known hieroglyphic inscriptions of Chichén Itzá and offer new insights into the socio-political organization of this urban-like settlement by comparison of epigraphic data with pertinent information from ethnohistorical material. Therefore, the sights for the study of Chichén Itzá's early history were set rather high. The complexity of the theme made it appropriate to choose a critical approach to the source material and to review actual notions prevailing in scientific literature. For this purpose material from both sources was independently submitted to a detailed analysis. Then, the obtained results were compared with each other. The reinterpretation of the epigraphic and ethnohistorical material pertinent to Chichén Itzá yielded many new insights into its socio-political organization during the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century (**Figure 16**). It became evident that several passages from the ethnohistorical sources contain a core of

solid historical information which helps to reconstruct the political organization of Chichén Itzá.

First, the notion of the *k'ul* titles representing patronymics or lineage names had to be rejected. Instead, they had to be reclassified as personal, individual oriented titles. This critical approach focused on the titles *kokom* and *ah ts'ul wah*, formerly the "Penis"-title. The analysis of these titles helped to detect different offices within the alleged socio-political hierarchy of Chichén Itzá's elite. The term *kokom* addresses the office of a supreme judge (*oidor*) obviously representing the highest administrative rank. The *ah ts'ul wah* is a military office. At the time when the Itza controlled the city the office of *k'ul kokom* was occupied by *Yahawal Choh K'ak'* closely assisted by the "supreme commander" of the military forces who was *K'ak'-u-pakal*. This man performed and controlled both secular and religious matters. This points toward a specialization within the elite at the top of the social hierarchy. The third man was *Hun-pik-tok'*, the *k'ul tal(o) ahaw*, i.e. the divine lord of Ek Balam. The use of an Emblem Glyph confirms a polity which retained the tradition of the Late Classic Southern Lowlands and adhered to the concept of divine rulership. The incorporation of Ek Balam's ruler into the government of Chichén Itzá was probably socio-politically motivated rather than a functional necessity. The absence of kinship or other social relations between these three men gave way to the hypothesis that the controlling body of the political system at Chichén Itzá was solely based on mutual control and cooperation. The analysis gave way to the hypothesis that these men are related to the three lords who came to Yucatán from the West and established their rule at Chichén Itzá according to Landa's report.

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## Figures

Figure 01: Map of Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, México  
(adapted from Tozzer 1957 and Schmidt 1994)

Figure 02: *k'ul* titles and associated names:

- a.1) *Yahawal Cho' K'ak' K'inich Ba Pakal? K'ul Kokom*  
(CHN ADz Lnt.1A, D2-E2)
- a.2) *K'ul Kokom Yahawal Cho' K'ak'*  
(CHN CC Frieze, 57)
- b) *Ah Yal? Ka?b U-kit Kamax u-k'aba U-K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah ...*  
(CHN CM Lnt.7, A2-D1)
- c.1) *K'ak'-u-pakal K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah*  
(CHN CC Frieze, 22b-25a)
- c.2) *K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah [K'ak'-u-pakal]*  
(CHN CC Frieze, 55)
- c.3) *K'ak'-u-pakal K'awil K'ul Ahaw K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah*  
(CHN CM Lnt.5A, B-D)
- c.4) *K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah K'ak'-u-pakal K'inich K'awil*  
(CHN T4L Lnt.4, D3-C6)
- c.5) *K'ak'-u-pakal K'inich K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah*  
(YUL Lnt.1, C4-C6)
- d) *K'inil Kopo?! Y-ahaw K'ak' K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah*  
(CHN T3L Lnt.1, D2-G2)
- e) *K'ul Ah Ts'ul Wah Wah-u-haw*  
(CHN T4L Lnt.1, D2-C4)
- f.1) *K'ul ? ["Headless Man" ?] Ahaw? K'inich Hun-pik-tok'*  
(CHN CC Frieze, 56)
- f.2) *? K'inich Hun-pik-tok' K'ul "Headless Man" ? ? Tal(o) Ahaw*  
(HLK Lnt.1, G4-G6)
- g) *U-chok Wah-u-'Ab K'ul ? Toch*  
(CHN CM Lnt.4, E2b-E4)
- h.1) *Tok' Yah Si' Ahaw K'ul Um(a)*  
(YUL Lnt.1, B8-D2)
- h.2) *Tok' Yah Si' Ahaw K'ul Um(a)*  
(YUL Lnt.2, F2-F4)
- h.3) *K'ul Um(a) Tok' Yah Si' Ahaw*  
(YUL Lnt.2, G7-H8)
- i) *K'ul Ah ??? Ak'e Tok' Ahaw Y-ahaw K'ak'*  
(CHN T4L Lnt.1, H4-H6)
- j.1) *Ah ?? ?-a K'ul Kalah-u-Kaw Ch'ak Ol Bate Y-ahaw K'ak'*  
(CHN T4L Lnt.2, H4-H8)
- j.2) *?? K'ul Ah ?h-u-Kaw*  
(CHN T4L Lnt.3, D8-F2)

(Drawings by Ian Graham (b, c.3, g) from Boles 1977, by Ruth Krochock (c.4, d, e, h.2, h.3, i, j) from Krochock 1989 and Boot 1997b, and by Alexander Voss (a, c.1, c.2, c.5, f, h.1))

Figure 03: The glyph T 761 in hieroglyphic inscriptions

- a) Penis - glyphs in the sky - penis title phrase:
  - 1) Figure 57, K-L (Robiscek and Hales 1981: 155)
  - 2) Kerr #4572, O-P (Kerr 1994: 555)
  - 3) Bowl 39, V (Coe 1973: 39-40)
  - 4) CPN Temple 11, North Doorway (Lounsbury 1989)

- 5) CPN Temple 18, North Doorway, East Panel (Lounsbury 1989)
- 6) COL Jade Plaque (Duetting 1990)  
(Drawings from Coe 1973 (3), from Lounsbury 1989 (4,5), by John Montgomery (6), and by Alexander Voss (1, 2))
- b) Penis glyphs in nominal phrases of women from Chichén Itzá:
  - 1) CHN CM Lnt.3A, C2
  - 2) CHN ADz Lnt.1, G2-H2  
(Drawings by Ian Graham (1) from Bolles 1977, by Alexander Voss (2))

- Figure 04: The glyph T608 in hieroglyphic inscriptions
- a) Full graphic forms of T 608 glyphs in Chichén Itza: *ah ts'ul wah*
    - 1) CHN CC Frieze, 24-25a,
    - 2) CHN CC Frieze, 55
    - 3) CHN CM Lnt. 5A, D
    - 4) CHN CM Lnt.7, B3-A4
    - 5) CHN T4L Lnt. 4, D3-C4
    - 6) CHN T3L Lnt. 1, G1-G2
    - 7) YUL Lnt.1, D5-C6  
(Drawings by Patricia Anderson (7) from Anderson 1993, by Ian Graham (3,4) from Boles 1977, by Ruth Krochock (5,6) from Krochock 1989, and by Alexander Voss (1,2))
  - b) Reduced graphic forms of T 608 glyphs in the Codices:
    - 1) COD Dresden, 7b:II, *ts'unu(n)*
    - 2) COD Dresden, 50c:II, *ts'u-?*
    - 3) COD Dresden, 50b:II, *ts'ul*  
(Drawings from Villacorta and Villacorta 1930)
  - c) T 203 as allograph to T 608 in hieroglyphic inscriptions:
    - 1) TIK Str. 5D-73, Tomb 196, *ts'unun* (Culbert 1993: fig. 84)
    - 2) Kerr #1398, *uts'* (Kerr 1989: 81)  
(Drawings from Culbert 1993 (1), by Alexander Voss (2))

Figure 05: The Casa Colorada text  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on original, drawing by A. Hunter in Maudslay 1889-1902 and unpublished drawing by Hermann Beyer)

Figure 06: The Akab Dzib Lintel 1:  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on original and drawing by A. Hunter in Maudslay 1889-1902)

Figure 07: The front text of Halakal Lintel 1:  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on original, photographs from the Peabody Museum formerly CIW and in Beyer 1937 and unpublished field drawings by Ian Graham / Eric van Euw, David Stuart and Elisabeth Wagner, and Daniel Graña-Behrens)

Figure 08: The headless man title and the emblem glyph on EKB St. 1  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on unpublished field drawing by Eric van Euw)

Figure 09: The expression *u-nun k'ak'nal*

- 1) CHN CM Lnt. 2A, B-C, *K'ak'-u-pakal K'awil U-nun K'ak'nal?*
- 2) CHN CM Lnt. 4, Y3-Z3, *K'ak'-u-pakal K'awil Ch'ahom ? U-nun K'ak'nal?*  
(Drawings by Ian Graham in Boles 1977)

- Figure 10: The text from the Ballcourt sculpture at Chichén Itzá  
(Redrawn by Alexander Voss from drawing by Wren in Wren, Schmidt and Krochock 1989 with additional coorections based on original)
- Figure 11: Yula Lintel 1, C3-C6, Ay "*Ballcourt*" *K'ak'-u-pakal K'inich*  
(Redrawn by Alexander Voss from Anderson 1993)
- Figure 12: The text of Lintel 1 from the Temple of the 4 Lintels  
(Drawing by Ruth Krochock from Krochock 1989)
- Figure 13: The text of Lintel 4 from the Temple of the 4 Lintels  
(Drawing by Ruth Krochock from Krochock 1989)
- Figure 14: Block 12 of the Hieroglyphic Serpents from the Caracol  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on photographs in Ruppert 1935: fig.337)
- Figure 15: The front text from St. 1, Caracol  
(Drawing by Alexander Voss based on original and photographs by Morley in Ruppert 1935: fig. 166)
- Figure 16: The socio-political organization of Chichén Itzá (Concept and drawing by Alexander Voß based on present material and article by Voß and Eberl 1998)



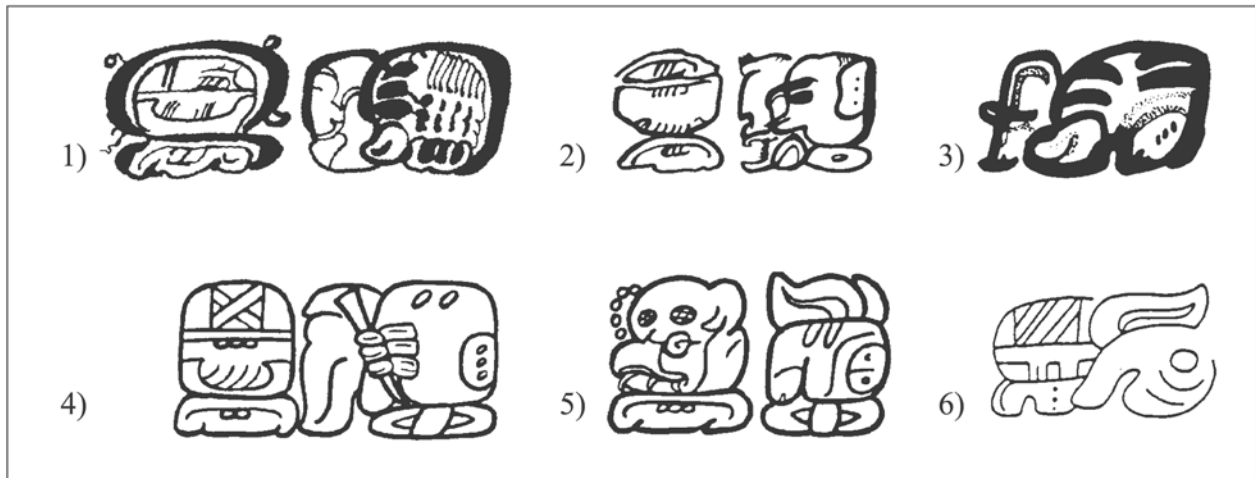






Figure 3: The Glyph T 761

a) Penis Glyphs in the Sky-Penis Title



b) Penis Glyphs in the Names of Women from Chichén Itzá

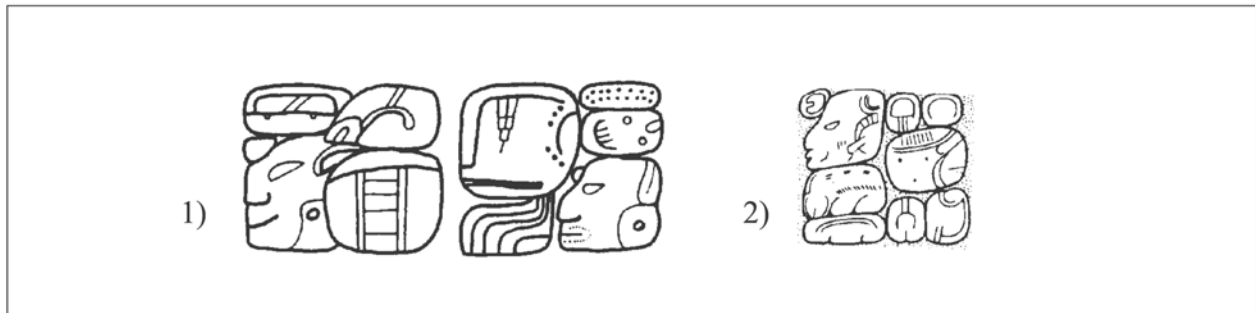
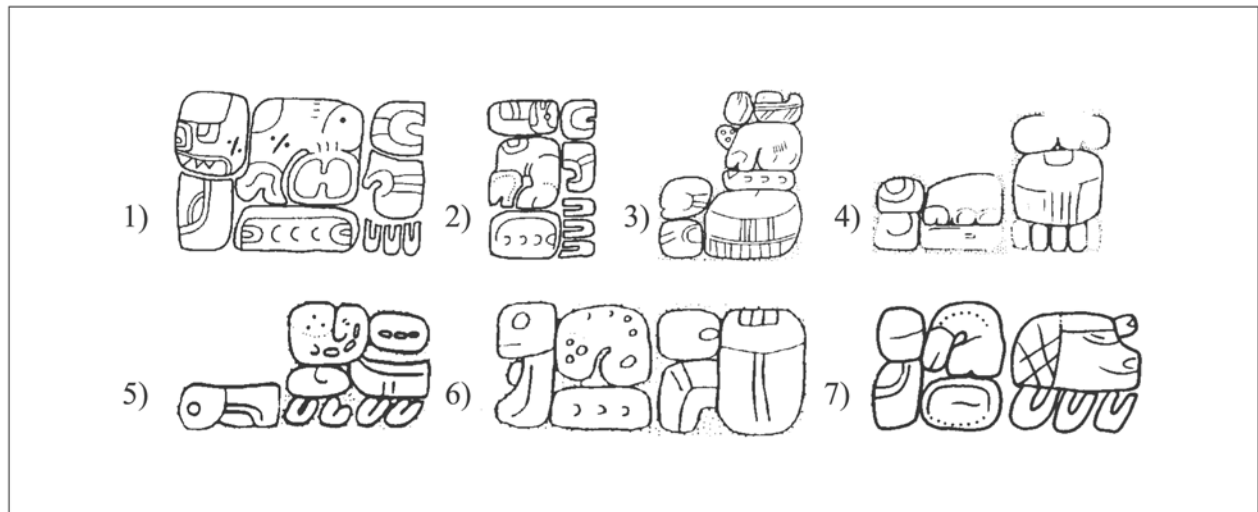
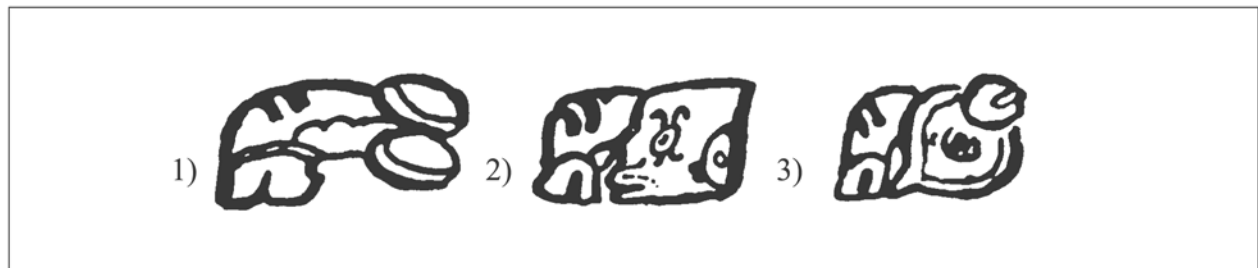


Figure 4: The Glyph T 608 in the Hieroglyphic Inscriptions

a) Full Graphic Forms of T 608 in Chichén Itzá



b) Reduced Graphic Forms of T 608 in the Codices



c) T 203 as Allograph to T 608

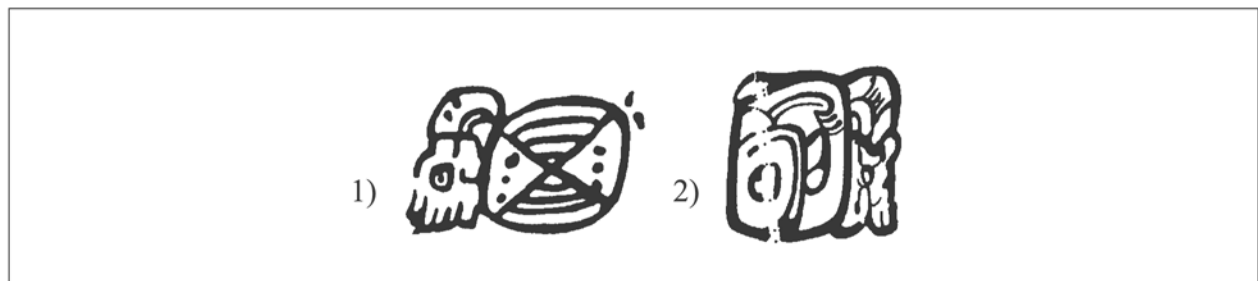


Figure 5: The Casa Colorada Text

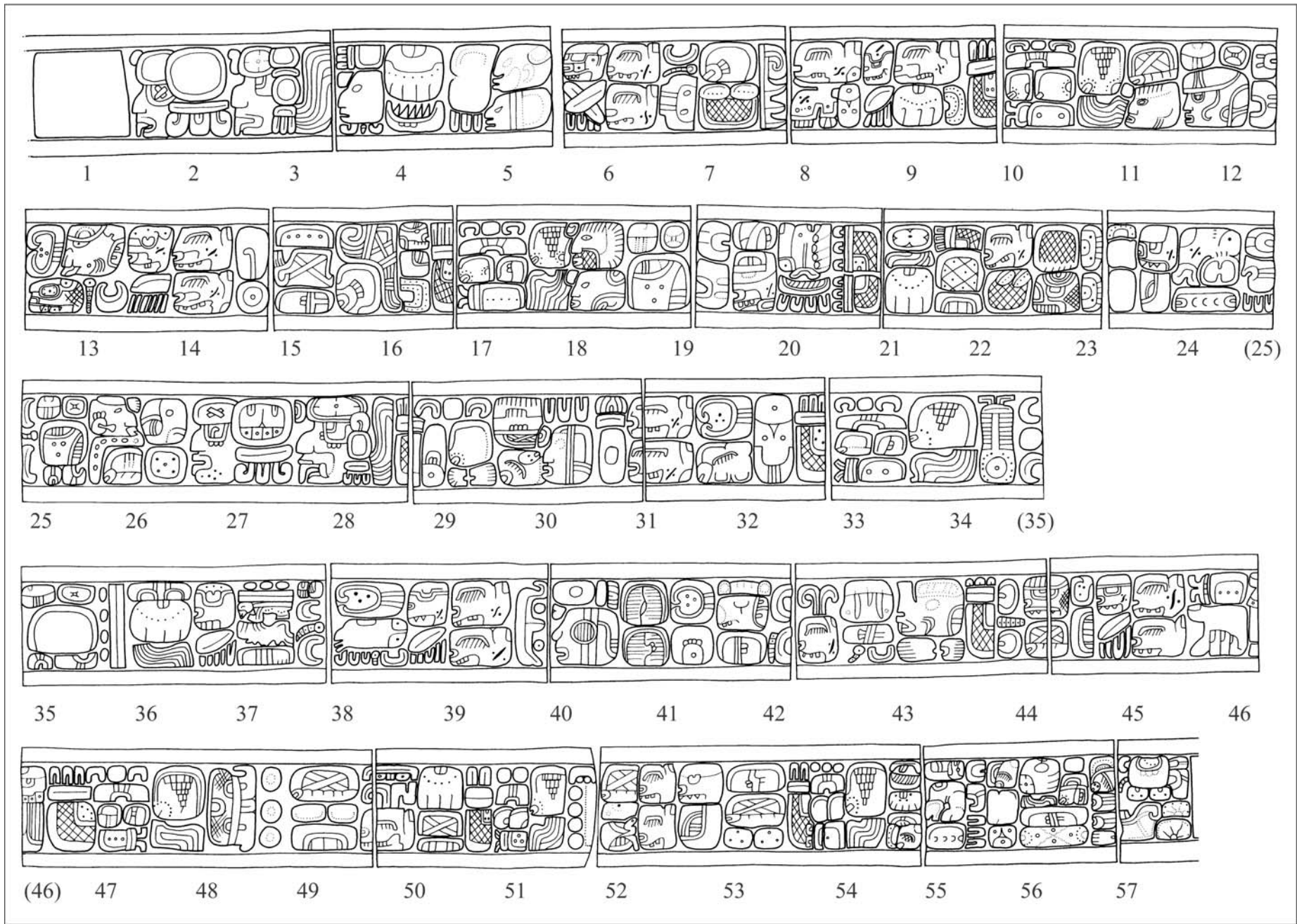
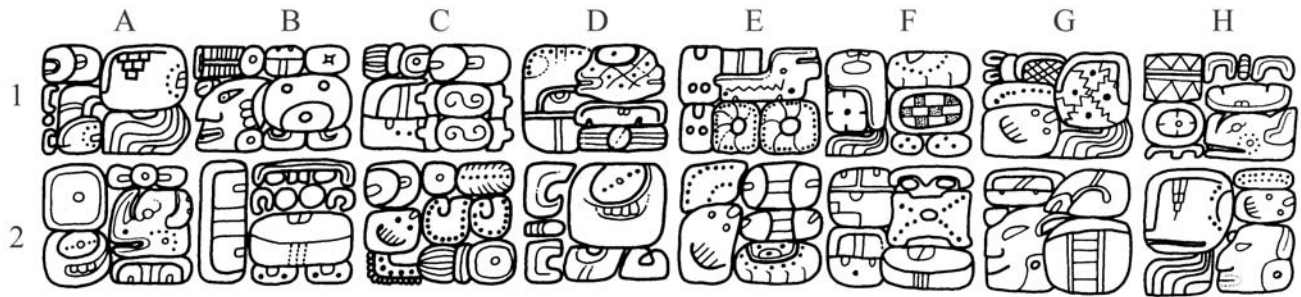


Figure 6: The Akab Dzib Lintel

Lintel 1A:



Lintel 1:

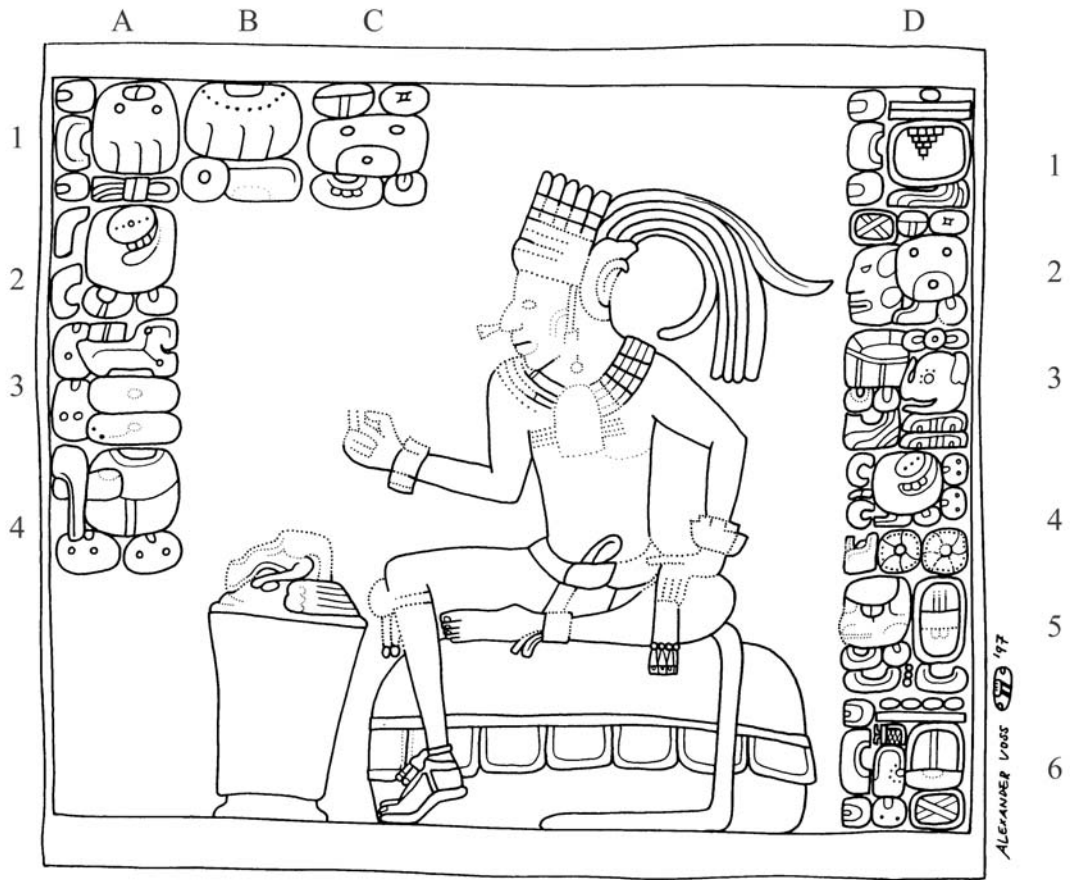


Figure 7: The main text of Halakal Lintel 1

Lintel 1:

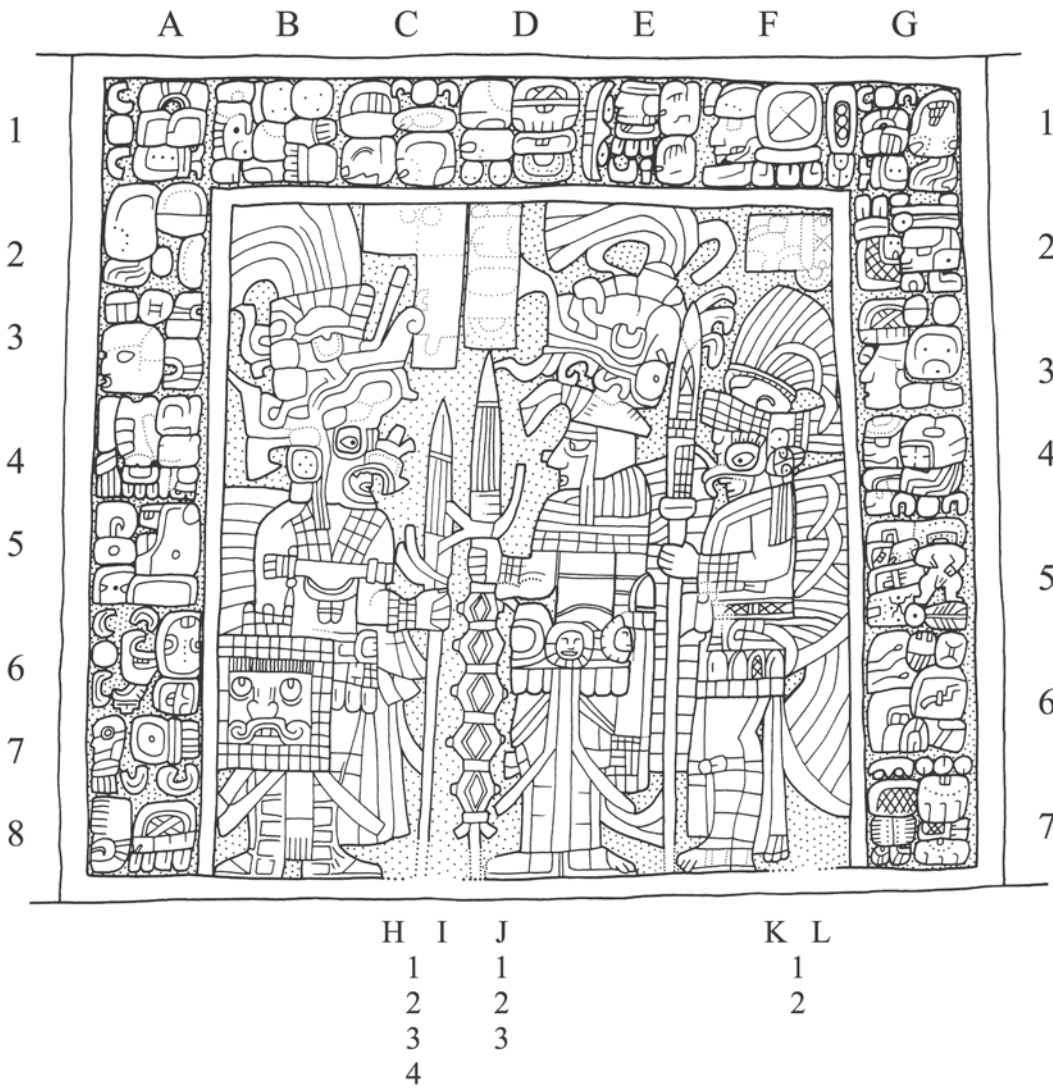


Figure 8: The headless man title and the emblem glyph on EKB St.1

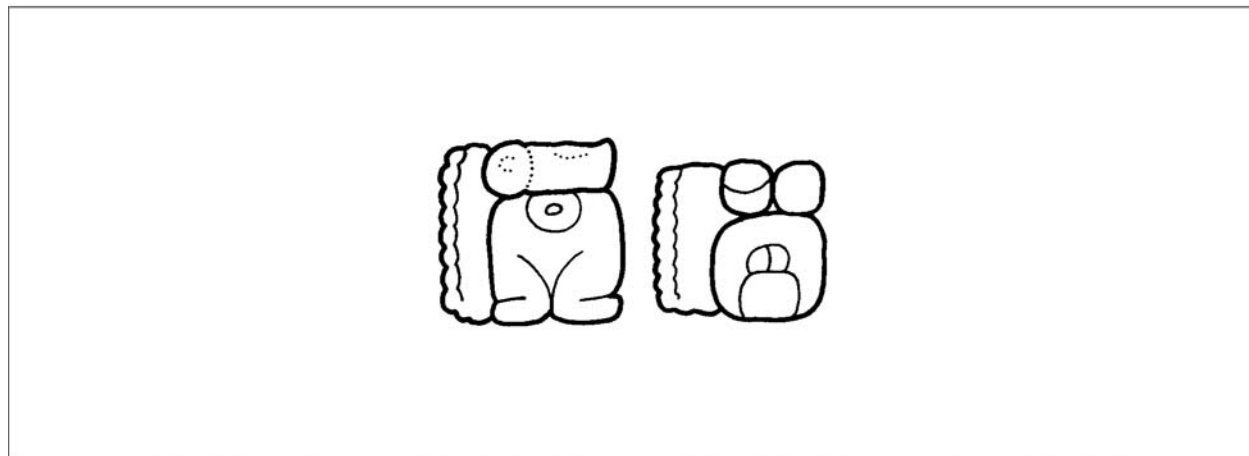


Figure 9: The Expression *u-nun k'ak'nal*

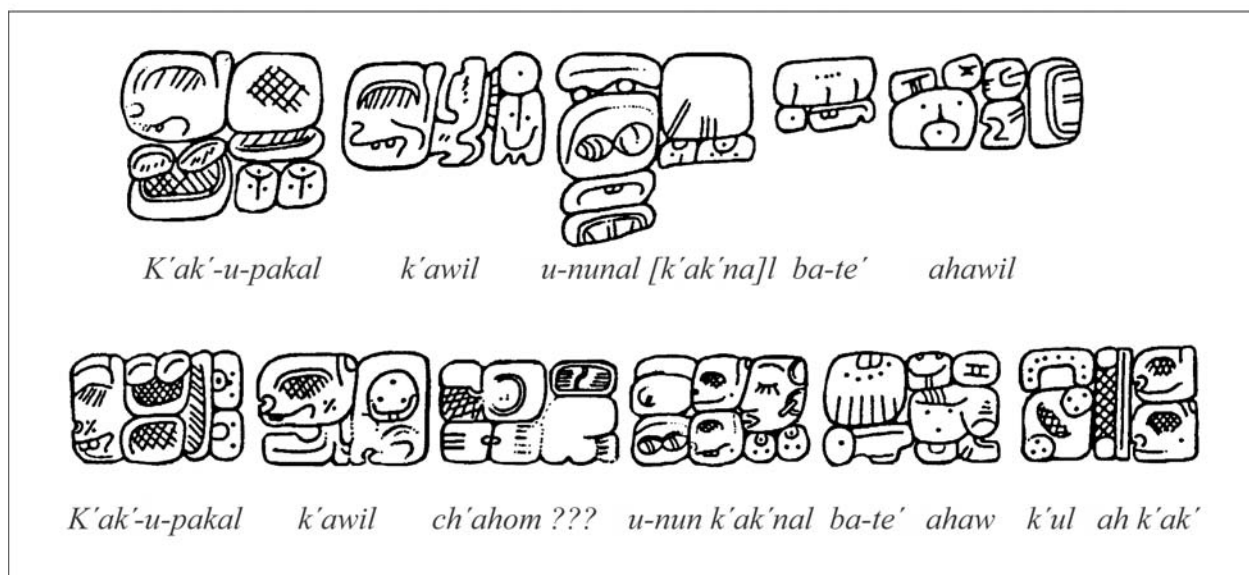




Figure 12: The Inscription of Lintel 4 of the Temple of the 4 Lintels, Chichen Itza

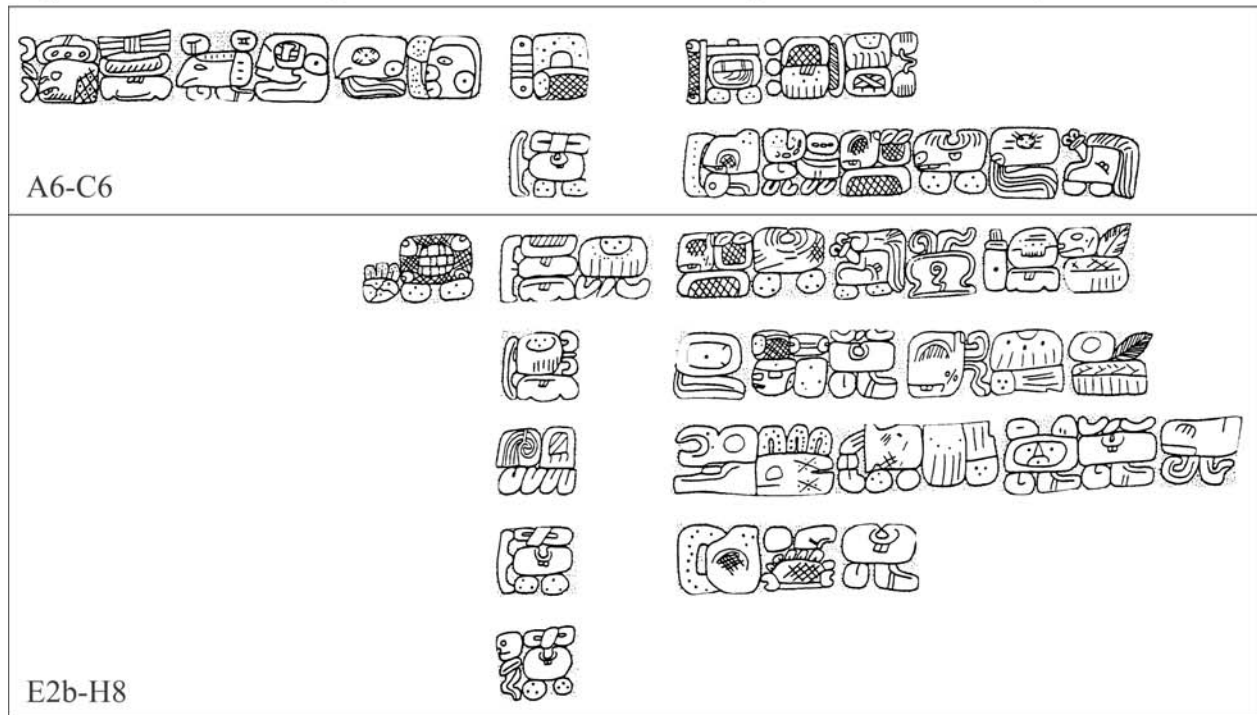


Figure 13: The Inscription of Lintel 1 of the Temple of the 4 Lintels, Chichen Itza

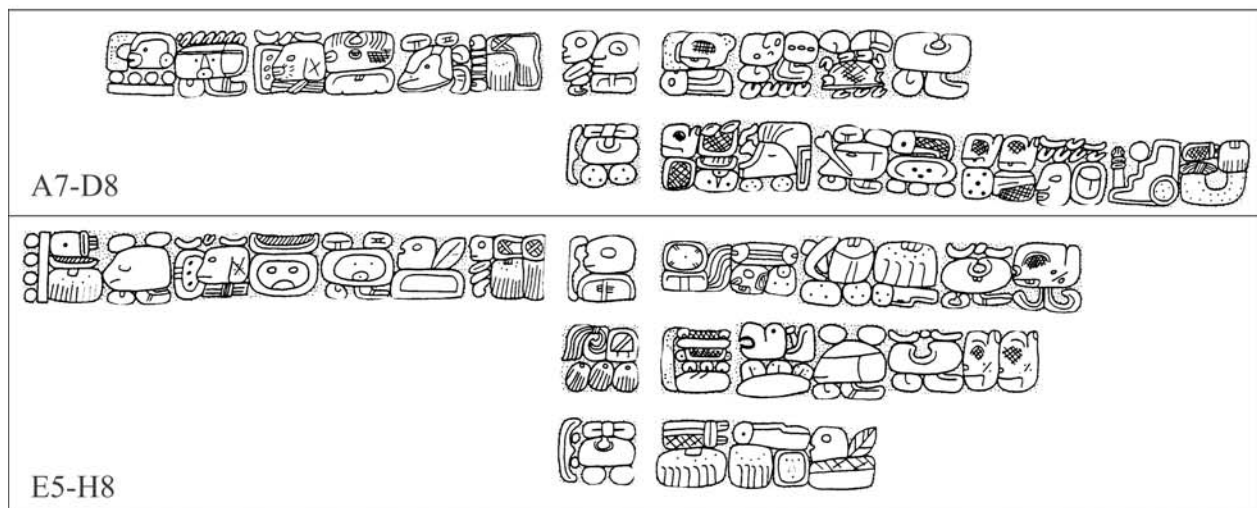


Figure 14: Block 12 of the Hieroglyphic Serpents from the Caracol, Chichen Itza

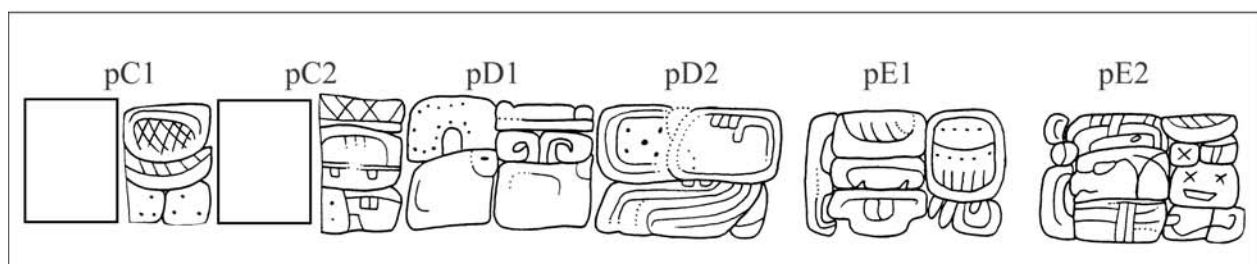




Figure 15: The Frontal Inscription of Caracol Stela 1, Chichen Itza

