

# At the Court of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut

## Preliminary Iconographic and Epigraphic Analysis of a Late Classic Vessel

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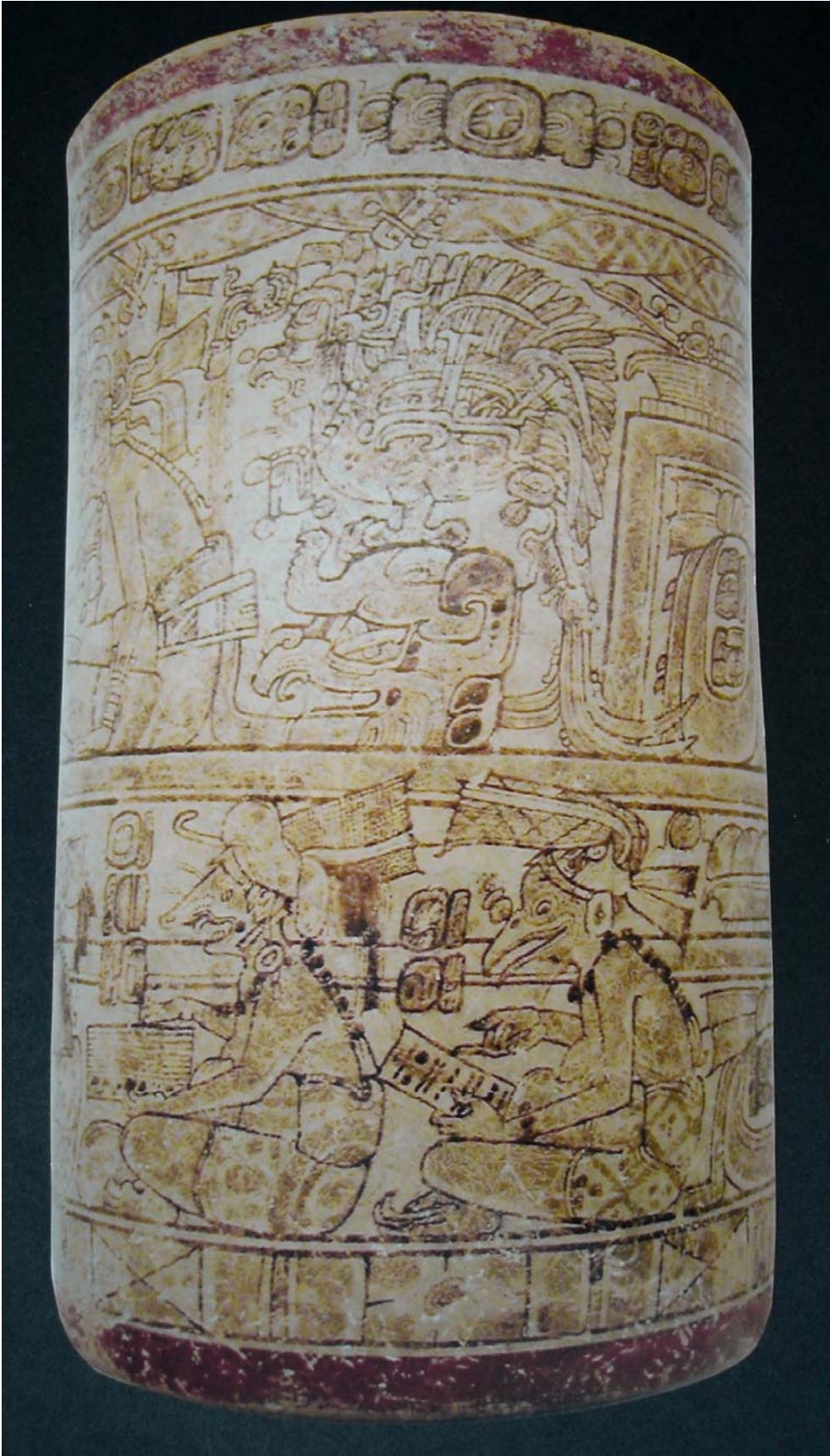
“God D is one of the most important and perhaps *the* major god of the Classic and Post-Classic Maya pantheon,” thus wrote Karl Taube in 1992 (page 31, italics in original). Already in early research the codical God D, as described and cataloged by Schellhas (1887, 1904), was identified as Itzamna (e.g. Fewkes 1895; Seler 1887). Since Taube’s discussion of God D several important examples of God D as painted in the Classic period have come to light as well as an important reference to him in a Late Classic inscription (Palenque, Temple XIX Bench Text).

The subject of this essay is a tall cylindrical vessel at present part of a private collection, painted in a style closely related to the Codex Style of the area just north of the central Petén, Guatemala, an area around and including the archaeological site of Nakbé (e.g. Hansen, Bishop, and Fahsen 1991). Albeit tentative, the vessel may originated from the central Maya area. The vessel has a height of about 25 cm. and a diameter of circa 13 cm. The vessel illustrates a complex visual narrative that takes place at the court of God D (Figure 1). The rim text, the visual narrative, the principal protagonists, and the hieroglyphic texts that accompany the narrative are discussed in detail. In this essay the full name of God D will be presented as Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut.

### The Rim Text

The rim text on this vessel is a typical Dedicatory Formula,<sup>1</sup> which I transcribe as **'a-LAY-ya K'AL-ja tz'i-bi-na-ja yu-k'i-bi ta-tzi ch'o-ko 'a-la-tzi TAN-na-HA'-'a 'i-'AK? 'u-tz'i-ba RABBIT-bu** and transliterate as *alay k'a[h]laj tz'ibnaj yuk'ib'i[l] ta tzi[h][il?] [kakaw] ch'ok aj] latzi[l] tan ha' [?] utz'iba[l] [?]*.<sup>2</sup> This transliteration can be paraphrased as “here it is enclosed, written; it is the drink-instrument for fresh(?) cacao of the young (*ch'ok*) person of stacks (*aj latzi[l]*) Tan Ha' [?]; it is the writing of [?]” At three places the Dedicatory Formula is sectioned by an iconographic element, which contains a **K'AN** “yellow; ripe; precious(ness); bench, seat” sign flanked on each side by a flower element.<sup>3</sup> A comparable sectioning in the Dedicatory Formula can be found on Kerr No. 3699 (the center element on this vessel is T502 **'IK'** “wind; breath”).

**Figure 1** (on the following four pages): *Four views of the God D Court Vessel* (digital images provided by Michel Quenon, digitally edited by the author)



a



b



c



d

### The Visual Narrative and the Short Hieroglyphic Texts

The vessel illustrates a court scene in which several protagonists interact. The most important position is taken by God D who is seated on a stepped elevation (Figure 1a-b, top). This stepped elevation is placed on a Sky Band.<sup>4</sup> Behind God D his avian manifestation can be found,<sup>5</sup> perching on the head of the Sky Bird.<sup>6</sup> Both God D and his avian manifestation are present within a structure, the back wall of which is marked by three large *ik'* or “wind” signs. Above the head of God D and his avian manifestation curtains can be found. These curtains indicate that this elevation is inside some kind of structure within the Sky Realm, the domain of God D.<sup>7</sup> Behind the avian manifestation of God D one can find a bundle marked with a short hieroglyphic text [CHAN-na]NAL 'i-ka-tzi or *chanal ikatz*, “heavenly/of the sky bundle or cargo.”<sup>8</sup> Above the bundle one can find a woven basket containing some, as yet unidentified, implements.

Below God D there are three anthropomorphic animals, from left to right one can identify a dog, an opossum, and a vulture. Each of the animals is identified with a short hieroglyphic text (Figure 1a-b, bottom). The text associated with the dog can be transcribed **K'IN-ni-ya-sa 'OK-ki** or *k'in yas ok*, in which *k'in* means “sun” and *ok* “dog.” The text associated with the opossum can be transcribed **K'IN-ni ya-sa 'u-chu** or *k'in yas uch*, in which *k'in* means “sun” and *uch* means “opossum.”<sup>9</sup> The opossum holds a Maya screenfold book (or a series of stacked book pages or leaflets) in his hands. The third animal, the vulture, is associated with a shorter text spelling **TAN?-na 'u-su** or *tan us*, in which *tan* may mean “front; belly” and *us* means “vulture.”<sup>10</sup> In his left hand the vulture holds a single sheet of paper with writing, a series of numbers in bar-and-dot notation (6-12-4-10-10?, or perhaps 6-2-10-4-10-10?). Behind the three animals one can find a bundle marked with a hieroglyphic compound spelling **11-K'AN-na-se?-ma?/3?**. This compound probably names the bundle itself, and it opens with *buluch k'an* “11 yellow; ripe; precious ...,” the final element of this compound remains without decipherment as the signs in question may have different values.

Seated on a Sky Band in front of God D are three anthropomorphic divine entities, each associated with a short hieroglyphic text (Figure 1b-d, top). The text associated with the first god (and closest to God D) (Figure 1b) remains largely undeciphered, a tentative transcription is **?-?-ya ti?-?-ma? ?-?**. This entity seems to be a manifestation of GI of the Palenque Triad (GI, GII, & GIII; Berlin 1963), note as such his facial features (mouth, barble, tooth, large eye with curl, Roman nose) and the shell ear flare. He wears a *hunal* “jester god” headband.

The second god (Figure 1c) has a clearly recognizable hieroglyphic text, which can be transcribed [**u**]7-**CHAPAT**[**TZ'IKIN**] [**K'IN**]'**AJAW-wa 9-**[**'OK-TE**]'**K'UH** or *uhuk chapat tz'ikin k'in[ich] ajaw balun [y]okte' k'uh*. This text seems to combine two well-known god names, Uhuk Chapat Tz'ikin K'inich Ajaw and Balun Yokte' K'uh. In previous research I suggested that the Uhuk Chapat Tz'ikin K'inich Ajaw was a manifestation of the Sun God (following an earlier suggestion by Stuart and Houston, 1996: 299) and that this manifestation was associated with warfare (Boot 2005a: 250-256 & note 29). The god named Balun Yokte' K'uh is a god associated with transition (of time and place) as well as with warfare (transition of power) (Eberl and Prager 2004). Albeit tentative, this particular combination of deity names (and the deities themselves) may be an additional piece of evidence that the god Uhuk Chapat Tz'ikin K'inich Ajaw was associated with warfare.<sup>11</sup> The portrait of this anthropomorphic god contains a large *k'in* “sun” sign in his forehead, he has a large eye with a square infix, a Roman Nose, and

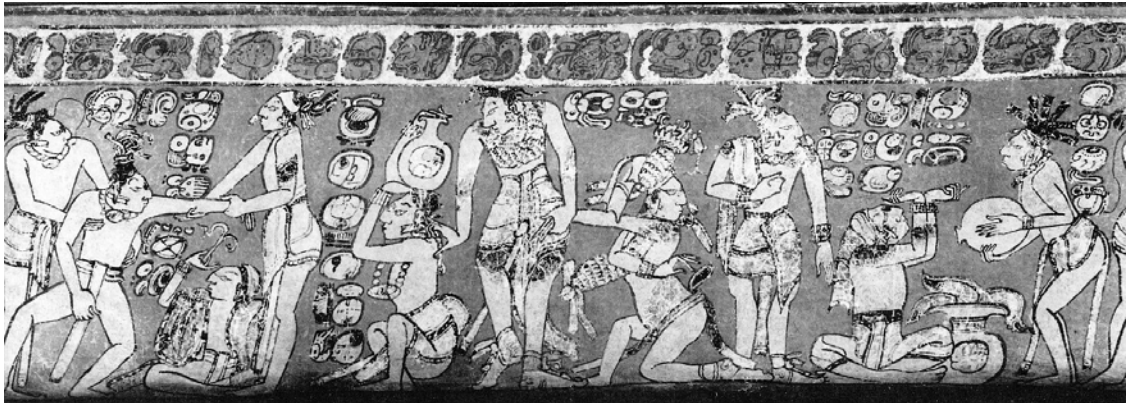
a single tooth. On top of his long and bundled hair a headband with the stylized representation of a centipede can be found. The same god is depicted on at least three other vessels. On two of these vessels he makes his appearance at the court of another god, God L (Figure 2b-c). On the third vessel he is portrayed twice, seated on a bench (Figure 2d).



**Figure 2:** A comparison of *Uhuk Chapat Tz'ikin K'inich Ajaw Balun Yokte' K'uh* and a god appearing at the court of God L: a) The God D Court Vessel (digital image provided by Michel Quenon), b) Kerr No. 2796 (before restoration, note *k'in* “sun” sign in forehead; photograph by Justin Kerr, after Coe 1973: 106), c) Kerr No. 7750 (photograph by Justin Kerr), d) detail of Kerr No. 6960 (photograph by Justin Kerr)

The third god (Figure 1d, top) has a single hieroglyphic compound for identification, which opens with the number **4** (*chan* “four; sky; serpent”) prefixed to a unique sign of

unknown meaning, which itself is superfixed to a composite sign that includes the number six infixed to a sign resembling the sign employed for the so-called ring numbers in the Codex Dresden (e.g. Dresden 24, 31A, 45A, 59, 62-63). The reading or meaning of this composite sign is unknown. The god has a large eye with curl, small nose, a single tooth, and he wears a shell beard. In his headdress the sign for *kab* “earth” has been included.



**Figure 3:** *Kerr No. 1092* (rollout photograph by Justin Kerr; scanned by the author after Kerr 1989: 58)

Below the three gods and the Sky Band one can find a row of four supernatural beings, all with anthropomorphic bodies (Figure 1b-d, bottom). Their facial features, sometimes with clear simian characteristics, their headdresses, and associated implements identify these four beings as supernatural scribes and artisans.<sup>12</sup> They are seated looking to their right and only the last one (from right to left) has an individual hieroglyphic caption. It is a single glyph sign, a variant of the “Patron of the Month Pax” glyph for **TE**.<sup>13</sup>

The four supernatural beings seem to be involved in a drinking ceremony, as the third being has a large flared vessel to his side,<sup>14</sup> while the first being seems to throw up a stream of red liquid that passes over a large flared vessel in front of him. Next to this large vessel yet another flared vessel can be found. The stream of red liquid includes a hieroglyphic text that spells **'u-ti-ya YAX-?-xa? WINIK-ki** or *utiy yax [?] winik* “it happened at Yax [?] Winik ... .” The stream of red liquid continues and the end part touches another hieroglyphic text, probably the continuation of the toponym. The first collocation may spell **SHELL.DRAGON?[HA']**. The second collocation seems to be a variant spelling for **wa-wa-li** or *wawal*, of still undetermined meaning, and this particular expression can be found three times on Kerr No. 1092 (Figure 3), depicting a drinking fest or ceremony. The last collocation spells **5-[JAN?]NAL** or *ho' jan(?) nal* “Five Flower Place” (Boot 2006: 11-14, Figures 7-8). Albeit tentative, at present I interpret the sequence **YAX-?-xa? WINIK-ki SHELL.DRAGON?[HA'] wa-wa-li 5-[JAN?]NAL** as the composite name of a (or a series of) supernatural location(s) as this would explain the statement *utiy* “it happened at.”



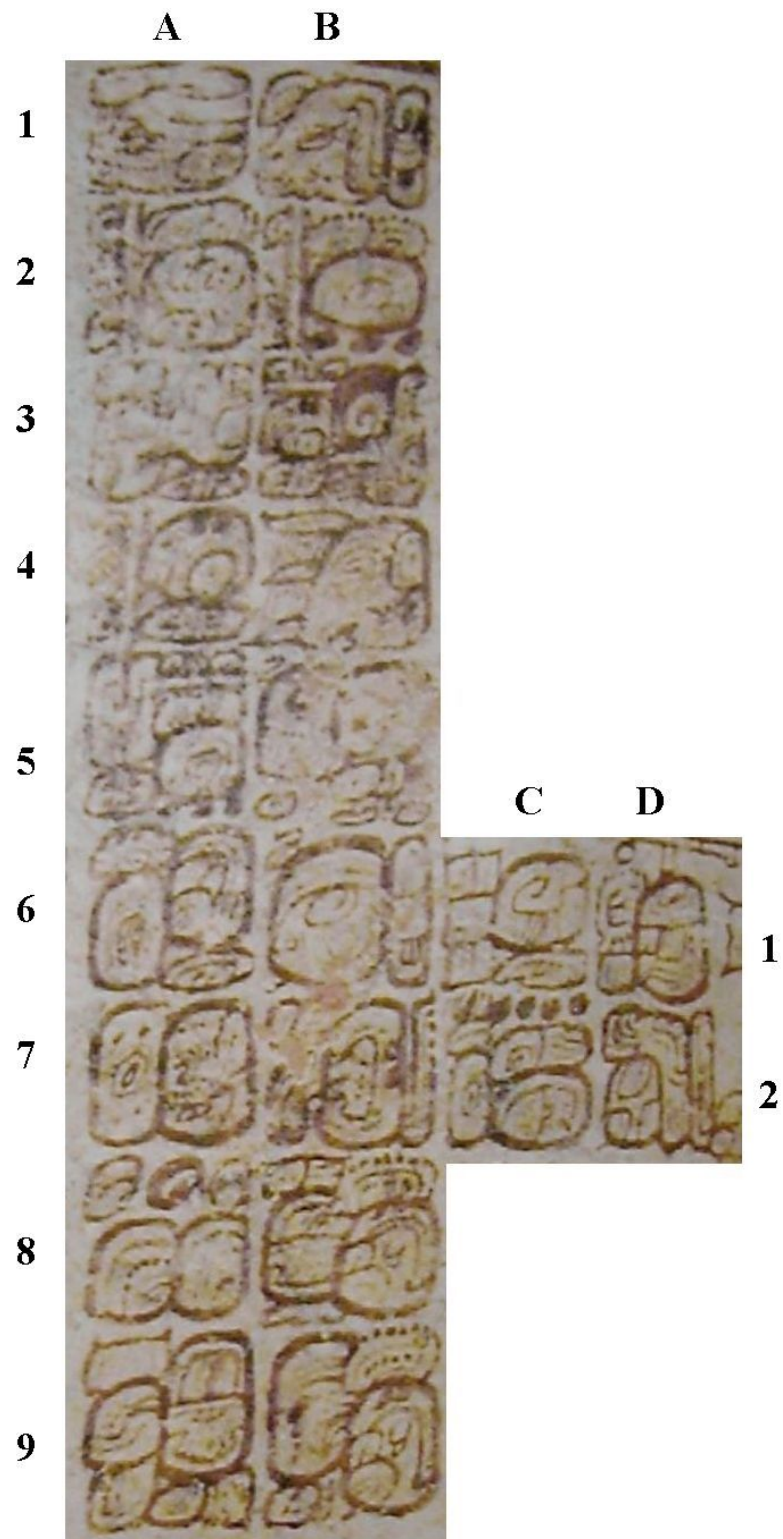
The visual narrative thus includes four intimately related groups of protagonists. The most important and paramount ranking protagonists are God D and his avian manifestation. Below God D three animals are seated, a dog, an opossum, and a vulture. In front of them are three gods, all named, seated in line and fronting each other's back. Below these three gods one can find a series of four supernatural beings, probably seated in a single row, whose facial characteristics and head-dresses identify them as scribes and artisans.

A long double column text is centrally placed between God D, his avian manifestation, the three animals, the three story elevated seat, and the three gods and four supernatural beings.

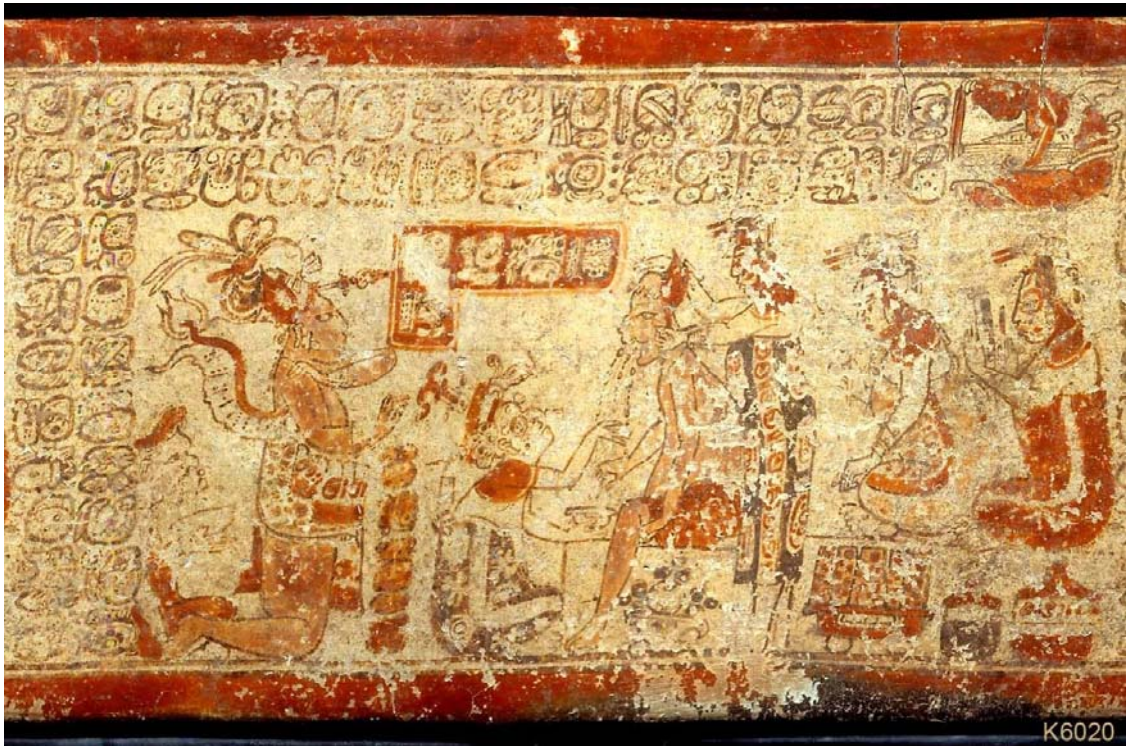
### The Double Column Text

The long text (Figure 4) contains hieroglyphic signs and compounds unique to this particular vessel. The calligraphic style of this text, as well as the other texts on this vessel, is reminiscent of two other vessels, namely Kerr Nos. 1440 (possibly by the same painter-scribe) and 6020 (Figure 5).<sup>15</sup> Also these vessels present long and still largely opaque passages and complex visual narratives, probably from Classic Maya mythology. Below follows my tentative transcription and partial transliteration of the double column text in front of God D, from left to right and top to bottom:

A1	HEADBAND.MONKEY?	
B1	DEER?/he?-ta	
A2	'AJ?-?-?	
B2	'AJ?-?-?-ma?/3?	
A3	?-ke?-ta	
B3	'AJ?-ICH'AK?-ki-YAL?	
A4	'AJ?-ICH'AK?-ki	
B4	MAM?	
A5	he-ta-'AJ?-?-ma?/3?	
B5	ba?-ya-'u-ti-ya	<i>bay utiy</i>
A6	YAX-?-ta?-xa	
B6	WINIK-ki	<i>yax [?] winik</i>
A7	bi-xi	
B7	wa?-jo?-ni	<i>bixi waj on</i>
A8	1-PIK	<i>jun pik</i>
B8	[CHAN-na]NAL-K'UH	<i>chanal k'uh</i>
A9	HUN?-CHAN-?	<i>hun chan(?)</i>
B9	KAB-la-K'UH	<i>kabal k'uh</i>
C1	che-he-na	<i>chehen</i>
D1	GOD.D	God.D
C2	ti-4-TE'	
D2	CHUWEN?-na	<i>ti chan te' chuwen</i>



**Figure 4:** *The main text on the God D Court Vessel* (digital image provided by Michel Quenon, digitally edited by the author)



**Figure 5:** Kerr Nos. 1440 (“Vase of the 88 Glyphs,” top) and 6020 (bottom) (rollout photographs by Justin Kerr; digitally edited by the author)

The double column seems to open with a series of titles (if the identification of the variant signs for 'AJ is correct). Independent of the correctness of the present transcription, the text presents several visually recognizable couplets and repeated compounds.<sup>16</sup>

The still opaque opening passage is followed by a part of which I am more confident and which I transliterate as *bay utiy yax* [?] *winik*, *bix(i) waj on jun pik chanal k'uh hun chan(?) kabal k'uh*. Tentatively, I paraphrase this passage as “thus/so it happened at Yax [?] Winik, we went, the numerous(?) Celestial/Of the Sky Gods, the numerous(?) Earthy/Of the Earth Gods.” While I have confidence in most of the transliteration, the paraphrase does contain several elements that can be contended. First, there is the verbal phrase *bix(i) waj on*, the spelling **bi-xi wa?-jo?-ni** on which it is based is unique in the corpus of Maya hieroglyphic texts. The root of the phrase is *bix-* “to go,” which may obtain a completive suffix *-i* and, very tentatively, the first person plural absolute suffix *waj on*.<sup>17</sup> Second, the expressions *jun pik* and *hun chan(?)*. I take these as prefixed adjectives as they are followed by *chanal k'uh* and *kabal k'uh*. Both *pik* and *chan* are known to refer to the *bak'tun* period in Long Counts, while *pik* is employed to refer to units of 8,000 (e.g. Museo Amparo Capstone, *balun pik* “9 x 8,000”). At the end of the Classic period (circa A.D. 350-900) the sounds /j/ and /h/ merged, and possibly here *jun* and *hun* refer to the number one.<sup>18</sup> If correct, *jun pik* and *hun chan(?)* simply may mean “one (*jun/hun*) count of a unit (*pik/chan*),” which here I paraphrase as the superlative “numerous.”

The text ends with the expression *chehen* God D *ti chan te' chuwen* or “say I, God D, to (the) Chan Te' Chuwen.” This last passage opens with the probable first person conjugation (*-en* “I”) of the verb *che* “to say.”<sup>19</sup> This indicates that the passages before this expression are spoken by God D. He thus says these passages to (*ti*) the Chan Te' Chuwen, which is a group title referring to the four (*chan*) *te'* (their proper name), who collectively are named artisans (*chuwen*), seated on his left, on the floor below the Sky Band.

The name glyph for God D remained without decipherment. I interpret his name glyph as follows: his name is written through a complex composite sign group which unifies both the name of the god and his avian manifestation. Full versions of the God D name glyph can be found at Palenque, in the inscription on the south side of the bench discovered in 1999 inside Temple XIX (Figure 6). The first example provides the spelling **YAX-NAH[hi]** [**ITZAM**]**KOKAJ.MUT-ji**, which I transliterate as Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut (Figure 6a). This re-ordering I base on how the name of the paramount and creator god was recorded in Yucatán during the Colonial period, namely as Hun Itzam Na Yax Kokaj Mut “One/Unique? Itzam Na(h) First Harpy Eagle” (“Bocabulario de Mayathan” 1972 [ca. 1670]: MS 129r, line 5).<sup>20</sup> At another occasion I suggested that the God D avian manifestation named Yax Kokaj Mut was a harpy eagle (Boot 2004: 2).<sup>21</sup>

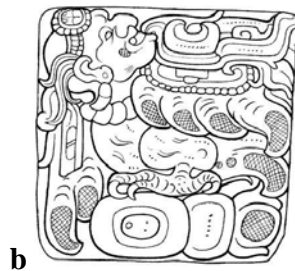
This first spelling example at Palenque also shows that the commonly found **ji** sign in the God D name glyph (see below) is not a phonetic complement to the part *nah* (as has been suggested in previous research, including my own), but most probably it is a phonetic complement to **KOKAJ** in the composite sign **KOKAJ.MUT**. In this first spelling the sign for **NAH** is clearly postfixed with the full sign for **hi**.



**Figure 6:** *The name glyph of God D at Palenque, a) Temple XIX, Bench, South Side: C7-D7, b) Temple XIX, Bench, South Side: V1 (drawings by David Stuart)*



**a**



**b**



**c**

**Figure 7:** *Examples of the simultaneous illustration, merging, and substitution of God D and his avian manifestation, a) Kerr No. 3863 (rollout photograph by Justin Kerr), b) fallen sandstone block at Toniná (Monument p48, drawing by Simon Martin), c) Kerr No. 7821 (note the screenfold book below the throne; detail of rollout photograph by Justin Kerr)*

The re-ordering does find corroboration in the second example from Palenque, from the same text (Figure 6b), of the God D name glyph,<sup>22</sup> which is spelled in a slightly more complex way, employing different layers of signs, as YAX-[[’ITZAM]KOKAJ. MUT]NAH for Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut.<sup>23</sup>

The God D Court Vessel clearly illustrates both God D and his avian manifestation (also found on Kerr No. 7226). The simultaneous illustration, merging, and substitution of God D and his avian manifestation can be found in several media (Figure 7).<sup>24</sup> The example of God D and the avian manifestation on Kerr No. 3863 (Figure 7a) recalls the emblematic hieroglyphic names of the early Classic founder K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ (Structure 10L-16: Margarita building façade, Rosalila building façade) and the twelfth ruler Balam Nen (Structure 10L-25 façade), both at Copán. The full merging of God D and his avian manifestation can be found at Toniná, on a fallen sandstone block (Figure 7b). Another Late Classic vessel, Kerr No. 7821, illustrates a narrative with two panels, one in which God D appears, the other in which he seemingly is substituted by his avian manifestation (Figure 7c).<sup>25</sup>

It is based on these and other examples that I interpret the name glyph for God D as a composite of both, the name Itzam Nah and Yax Kokaj Mut. Below I return to this particular decipherment.

#### Further Discussion of Image and Texts

Within the limits of this essay it is impossible to provide a full comparative study of the elaborate detail present in both the visual narrative and the hieroglyphic texts. However, some pertinent details I discuss in this section.

- The *chanal ikatz* or “Celestial/Of the Sky Bundle or Cargo”: At present I have not yet identified another Classic Maya visual narrative which features such a bundle. The presence of the bundle at the court of God D, the Sky Domain, does remind me of the bundles at the court of God L as illustrated on Kerr Nos. 2796 and 7750 (Figure 8).<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 8:** *The bundle at the court of God L*, a) Kerr No. 2796, b) Kerr No. 7750 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

The bundle at the court of God L, in his headdress his possible avian manifestation Uxlajun Chanal Kuy, in both examples is marked simply as *ikatx*. It is spelled 'i-ka-tzi on Kerr No. 7750, while on Kerr No. 2796 the part **ka-tzi** remains recognizable, the 'i sign most probably obstructed by God L's waist band. As at the court of God D the bundle is placed behind him. The court of God L is set below a Sky Band (as illustrated on Kerr No. 2796) and this court is located within a cave, indicated by the stacked zoomorphic heads of the mountain or *witz*.

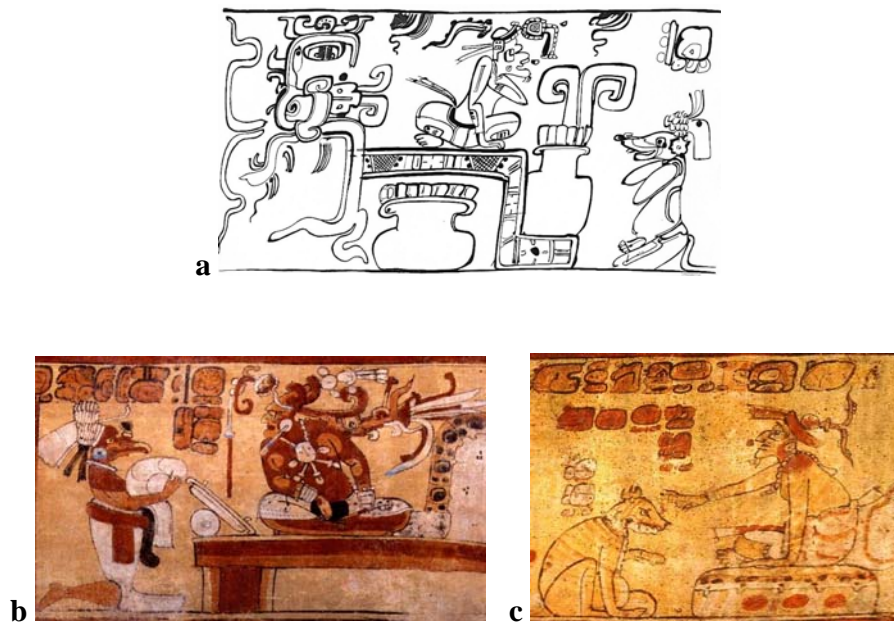
- The *chan te' chuwen* or "Four Te' Artisans": The representation of the four artisans and their involvement in a drinking ceremony is uncommon in Classic Maya visual narratives. The artisans do make their appearance as a single entity (e.g. K0505, involving the *batun* drink) or as a pair (e.g. Kerr No. 0501), usually involved in practicing their arts (either sculpting or writing).

Additionally, the (series of) location(s) where the drinking ceremony apparently takes place is important to note. Although some of the signs employed in the name of the location remain without proper decipherment, the complete version in the text associated with the four artisans is referred to as Yax [?] Winik "Shell-Dragon Water" Wawal "Five Flower Place." However, in the long double column text the location is abbreviated to Yax [?] Winik. The parts Yax [?] Winik and "Five Flower Place" can be compared to a series of vessels I discussed at another occasion (Boot 2006). The "Five Flower Place" is an important location where pivotal mythological events take place (e.g. Kerr No. 1609), but it is also the place where shaping and sculpting takes place (e.g. Kerr Nos. 0717, 7447, 8457, with the location as "Five Flower Place") (Figure 9a) or it is identified as the place of origin of a scribe (Kerr No. 6020, with location as "Five Flower Place" *chan ch'en* or "sky cave," possibly meaning community) (Figure 9b). The "Shell-Dragon Water" location is known to function as the main toponym at Dos Pilas (e.g. Dos Pilas Stela 8: B21-B22; Stela 14: G2; Stela 15: F6). If correctly identified, it is possible that the Dos Pilas toponym is derived from this mythological place name, as it is contained in this series of toponyms on the God D Court Vessel. The part Wawal remains without a secure identification.



**Figure 9:** References to "Five Flower Place", a) Kerr No. 8457, b) Kerr No. 6020 (photographs by Justin Kerr; digitally edited by the author)

- The three animals associated with God D: Directly below God D three animals are seated, a dog (named K'in Yas Ok), an opossum (K'in Yas Uch), and a vulture (Tan Us). These animals are associated with writing within other narratives as well. The vulture can be seen holding a writing implement and ink bowl on a plate cataloged as Kerr No. 8479, seated in front of an enthroned God D. Two other plates, Kerr No. 0344 (Coe 1977: Fig. 7) and Kerr No. 1491, illustrate a variety of animals involved in the act of writing and/or sculpting, among these animals are dogs. These particular animals can be found associated with God D within other visual narratives, although in those instances they are not specifically named (Figure 10).



**Figure 10:** *Animals at the court of God D*, a) the opossum on Kerr No. 3056 (drawing by FLAAR), b) vulture on Kerr No. 5764 (photograph by Justin Kerr), c) dog on Kerr No. 4548 (photograph by Justin Kerr)

The opossum at the court of God D crosses one of its arms over its chest (as a sign of respect), while at the court also two large flared vessels can be found (Figure 10a). The vulture at the court of God D brings a bundle of some sort (Figure 10b, also see Kerr No. 8479), while the dog at the court is petted by God D (Figure 10c, also see Kerr No. 7265).<sup>27</sup> Possibly these visual narratives are related to the narrative on the God D Court Vessel illustrating the three animals together. Interestingly, all three animals not only are (predominantly) carnivores, they are scavengers as well. Another court scene associates deer with God D (Kerr No. 3049). Outside of the court, God D can be found associated with a variety of animals, including the peccary (e.g. Kerr Nos. 1991 and 8622) and deer (e.g. Kerr Nos. 3049 and 8622).

The three (anthropomorphic) animals at the court of God are associated with writing. The K'in Yas Ok dog may have a stack of book pages or leaves in front of him (although, alternatively, this may simply be an extension of his loin cloth), the K'in Yas



Uch opossum holds a screenfold book or stack of book pages or leaves, while the Tan Us vulture holds a single page or leaf containing writing, a series of bar-and-dot numerals. This association of animals with God D, which themselves are associated with writing, may not be coincidental. According to the “Bocabulario de Mayathan” the god Itzam Nah, in his manifestation as Itzam Nah K’inich Ajaw, was the inventor of writing, as a colonial Spanish vocabulary source provides the line “adoraron que fue un hombre por aber allado el arte delas letras desta tierra ytzam na, kinchahau” (“Bocabulario de Mayathan” 1972 [1670?]: MS 129r, line 3-7, original spelling).<sup>28</sup> A screenfold book also can be found at the court of God D on Kerr No. 7821 (see Figure 7c). On a vessel from the Maya Highlands God D “reads” an opened screenfold book (Dieseldorff 1926: Tafel 32).<sup>29</sup> This association with writing may thus additionally explain the presence of the Chan Te’ Chuwen, the four supernatural scribes and artisans.

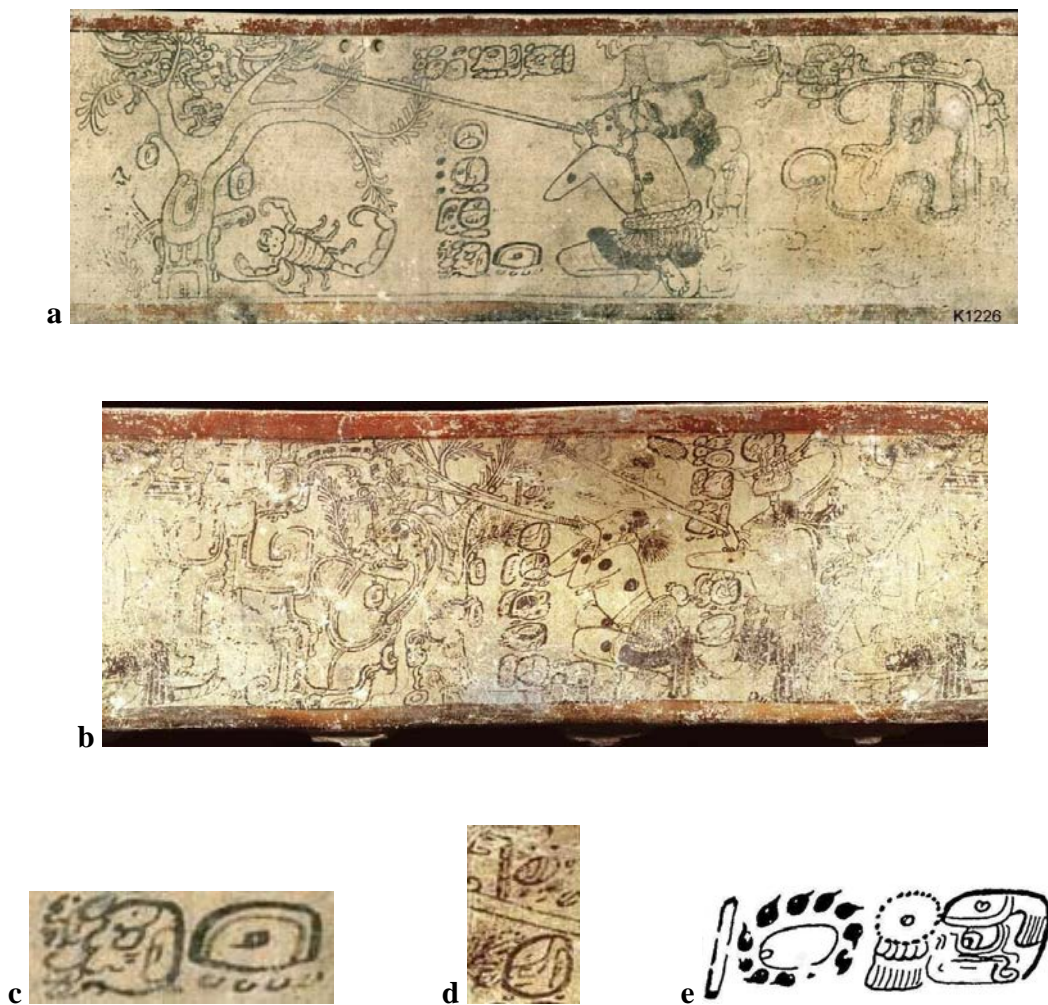
- Deciphering the God D name glyph: Based on the two elaborate and complex God D name glyphs recorded at Palenque, I proposed to decipher his name as Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut. There are other examples of the God D name glyph that provide tantalizing clues to the possible pronunciation of his name (Figure 11).

The possible example of the God D name glyph on the Hauberg Stela (Figure 11a) seems to provide the spelling [**ITZAM-ma**]KOKAJ.MUT.<sup>30</sup> The God D name glyph on Tikal Stela 26 (Figure 11b) portrays God D holding the syllabic sign **ji**, thus the spelling is [**ITZAM**]KOKAJ.MUT-**ji**. At Xcalumkin (Figure 11c) the God D name glyph occupies two glyph blocks and seems to spell **ITZAM-na KOKAJ.MUT-ji**; a second example of the God D name at Xcalumkin (Figure 11d) perhaps spells **MUT-ti** [**ITZAM**]KOKAJ.MUT-**ji**.<sup>31</sup> At Palenque (Figure 11e-f), as cited earlier in this essay, the God D name phrase is spelled **YAX-NAH[hi]** [**ITZAM**]KOKAJ.MUT-**ji** as well as **YAX-[[ITZAM] KOKAJ.MUT]NAH**. At Quiriguá (Figure 11g), the God D name glyph provides the comparable spelling **NAH-[ITZAM]KOKAJ.MUT-ji**. In this spelling T63~64 represents the value **ITZAM**, as has been suggested by David Stuart in previous research (largely remaining unpublished; compare to Stuart 1994). At present the part **YAX** can only be found in the God D name phrase as recorded at Palenque. On the God D Court Vessel the name is spelled [**ITZAM**] **KOKAJ.MUT** (Figure 11h). The spelling on Kerr No. 7727 (Figure 11i) is **ITZAM KOKAJ.MUT**; in this spelling it is clear that the “(netted) old man’s head” is **ITZAM** (note **i-** prefix in Figure 11l and **-ma** postfix in Figure 11a) (compare Martin 2006) and that the headband extension belongs to the **KOKAJ.MUT** sign (compare to Figure 11c). On an unprovenanced vessel the God D name employs the sign T63~64 for **ITZAM**, a variant sign for the “(netted) old man’s head,” superfixed to the **KOKAJ.MUT** composite sign (Figure 11j). On Kerr No. 4548 the spelling is slightly different, namely [**ITZAM**]KOKAY?.MUT-**ya** (Figure 11k). The Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín provides an alternative spelling *kokay mut* in the name Yax Ah Kokay Mut (see note 20). On Kerr No. 7226 the preferred spelling seems to be [**MUT**]’**ITZAM-ma**?-**NAH** (Figure 11l). The spelling in the Codex Paris may be transcribed [**ITZAM-na**]KOKAJ.MUT (Figure 11m), the same applies to the example from the Codex Dresden, [**ITZAM-na**]KOKAJ.MUT (Figure 11n). A Tases plate (Smith 1971: 67) from Mayapán, dating to circa A.D. 1150-1500, illustrates the very same spelling, [**ITZAM-na**]KOKAJ.MUT (Figure 11o).



**Figure 11:** A Selection of God D name glyphs, a) Hauberg Stela (drawing by Karl Taube), b) Tikal Stela 26 (drawing by Karl Taube), c) Xcalumkin, Column 5: A2 (drawing Eric von Euw), d) Xcalumkin, Column 3: A5 (drawing by Eric von Euw), e) Palenque, Temple XIX Bench, South Side (drawing by David Stuart), f) Palenque, Temple XIX Bench, South Side (drawing by David Stuart), g) Quiriguá, Stela C, West (drawing by MatthewLooper), h) the God D Court Vessel (photograph supplied by Michel Quenon), i) Kerr No. 7727 (photograph by Justin Kerr), j) unprovenanced vessel (image supplied by Raphael Tunesi), k) Kerr No. 4548 (photograph by Justin Kerr), l) Kerr No. 7226 (photograph by Justin Kerr), m) Codex Paris, Page 11, n) Codex Dresden, Page 28C, o) Spelling on ceramic dish at Mayapán (drawing by the author, after Smith 1971: 67), p) Codex Madrid, Page 80B, q) Codex Madrid, Page 110B (codex images scanned by the author)

The two examples from the Codex Madrid are most intriguing. On Page 80 the name glyph of God D is spelled 'i-'ITZAM (Figure 11p), while on Page 110 the name glyph is spelled ['ITZAM-na][tzi]KOKAJ.MUT (Figure 11q). This last spelling may hint at yet another alternative of the God D name, Itzimnah Yax Kokaj Mut. At the time of the conquest a town in the Kej Pech province was named Itzimna, after the creator god (Roys 1957: 43). In the present-day it has been integrated as a neighborhood with the same name in the capital city of Yucatán, Mérida.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 12:** Naming the avian manifestation of God D, a) Kerr No. 1226 (rollout photograph by Justin Kerr), b) Kerr No. 4546 (rollout photograph by Justin Kerr), c) name glyph from Kerr No. 1226, d) name glyph from Kerr No. 4546, e) name glyph from an Early Classic ceramic vessel (drawing by the author)

If these tentative transcriptions are correct, the Classic name of God D, through the elaborate, common, and more abbreviated spellings, seems to be Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut (or in the one case that ends in -ya, probably Itzam Nah Yax Kokay Mut).

Elaboration and abbreviation are common phenomena in Classic Maya writing, specifically in the case of nominal phrases of human beings as well as gods and supernatural beings. The common abbreviation in colonial Yucatán of Itzam Nah to Itzam Na can be observed first at Xcalumkin (Figure 11c) and, after that in time, in the examples from the Late Postclassic screenfold books (Figure 11i-o).

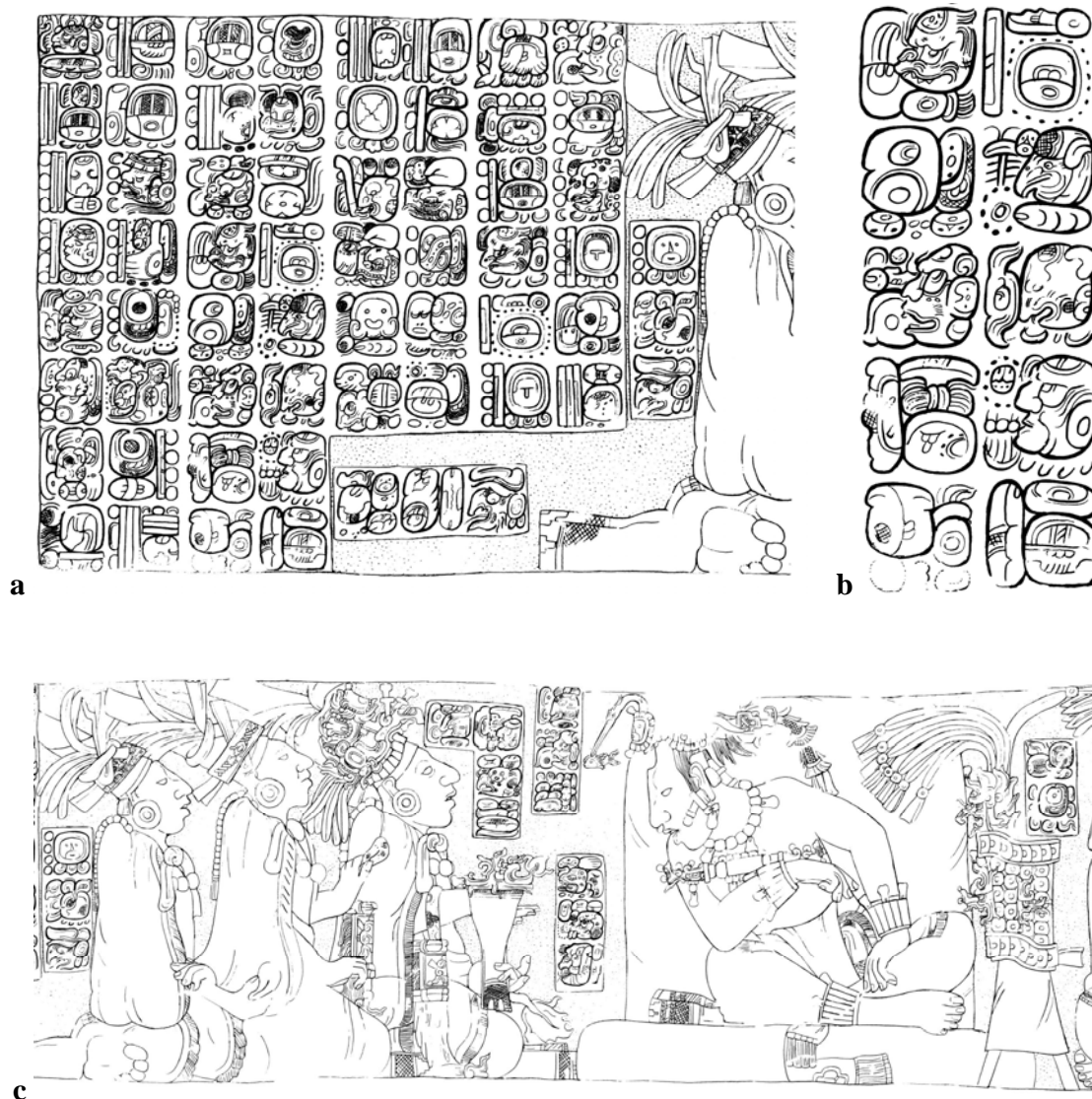
There are several examples in which the avian manifestation of God D is named. In one example the name of the avian manifestation of God D is elaborate, while in two other cases the name opens with a different appellative (Figure 12).

On Kerr Nos. 1226 and 4546 the visual narratives illustrate the avian manifestation of God D in the top of a tree, most probably a Ceiba tree. In both narratives the avian manifestation is in the process of being shot with a blow gun (see Boot 2004). On Kerr No. 1226 he looks down as if physically descending (Figure 12a). A short explanatory text accompanies this scene, which opens with a Calendar Round date of 1 Ajaw 3 Uniw (K'ank'in). The date is followed by the verb spelled **'EM-CHAN-na** or *em chan* “descends/descended (from the) sky.” The name of the entity descending from the sky on this date is referred to as **['ITZAM] KOKAJ.MUT KAJ?-ji**.<sup>33</sup> While it is the avian manifestation of God D who descends from the sky, the spelling provides the full name, Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut. Kerr No. 4546 depicts the same avian manifestation within a very similar hunting scene (but note the split blow gun) (Figure 12b). The vessel does not contain an explanatory text, instead it has a version of the Dedicatory Formula and a phrase identifying the *way(aw)* “(co-)essence; familiar; spirit counterpart” of some person (or perhaps a location).<sup>34</sup> The two compounds before the **'u-WAY-ya** expression are of importance here (Figure 12d). These compounds spell **5-YATIK?[ki] KOKAJ.MUT** or Ho' Yatik(?) [Yax] Kokaj Mut.<sup>35</sup> The same phrase occurs on an Early Classic vessel, probably as part of a nominal phrase (Figure 12e). The spelling on Kerr No. 4546 indicates that this name phrase refers to the avian manifestation of God D. Probably there were several different manners to refer to the avian manifestation of God D, one which included the part Itzam Nah and another one which included the appellative Ho' Yatik(?) “Five Flower.”

- The gathering at the court of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut: The above analysis and description of the epigraphic and iconographic details contained within the complex narrative provide the background for an important question I would like to address in this essay. What is the purpose of the gathering of all these gods and supernatural entities at the court of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut?

I propose that this gathering is the visualization of a passage in Maya mythology which previously was recorded only in a short hieroglyphic passage. This passage was discovered in 1999 in Palenque and can be found in the opening part of the text recorded on the south side of the Temple XIX Bench (Figure 13).

The text opens with a full Initial Series (including Supplementary Series, Lunar Series, and 819 Day Count) of 12.10.1.13.2, 9 Ik' 5 Mol, or April 6, 3309 B.C., a date before the 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Hulol (Kumk'uh) era event (Figure 13a).<sup>36</sup> The event that takes place on this date follows at C5-D8 (Figure 13b):



**Figure 13:** *The Accession of GI at Palenque*, a) Temple XIX, Bench, South Side, Opening Section, b) Temple XIX, Bench, South Side, Detail: C4-D8, c) Temple XIX, Bench, South Side, Central Visual Narrative Re-enacting the Accession (all drawings by David Stuart)

C5	<b>CHUM[mu]-la-ja</b>	<i>chumlaj</i>
D5	<b>ta-'AJAW-le</b>	<i>ta ajaw[l]el</i>
C6	"GI"	GI
D6	<b>'u-KAB[ji]-ya</b>	<i>ukabjiy</i>
C7	<b>YAX-NAH[hi]</b>	
D7	<b>['ITZAM]KOKAJ.MUT-ji</b>	<i>itzam nah yax kokaj mut</i>
C8	<b>'u-ti-ya</b>	<i>utiy</i>
D8	<b>ta-?-CHAN</b>	<i>ta [?] chan</i>

This short text reads *chumlaj ta ajaw[l]el GI ukabjiy itzam nah yax kokaj mut utiy ta [?] chan* “GI sat in kingship, Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut supervised it, it happened at Ta [?] Chan.” The reference Ta [?] Chan provides the name of the domain of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut, the sky.<sup>37</sup> The central visual narrative on the same side of the Temple XIX bench portrays a re-enactment of this particular event by human actors, the Palenque king Yajawte’ K’inich Akul Mo’ Nab III (A.D. 721-736?) and six of his court officials, one who impersonates Itzam Nah (compare Stuart 2005b: 117-123, 172, 196-197).<sup>38</sup>

The visual narrative on the God D Court Vessel may portray the same event, but with the actual gods enacting (i.e. the original “cast”). As this narrative takes place in the Sky Domain (indicated by the Sky Bands), this domain may thus be named Ta [?] Chan, as indicated by the Palenque Temple XIX text. In front of Itzam Nah and Yax Kokaj Mut one can find a god, seated. This god I identified earlier in this essay as GI, based on his facial features and characteristics. Most importantly, he wears a headband the front of which is set with a large *hunal* or “jester god” emblem, the symbol par excellence of paramount lordship among the Maya. The re-enactment by king Yajawte’ K’inich Akul Mo’ Nab III shows how the Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut impersonator hands the *hunal* headband to GI, embodied by the Palenque king himself. It is this headband that GI wears on the God D Court Vessel (Figure 13c).

The God D Court Vessel provides us with a full visual narrative of the mythological event that took place on 12.10.1.13.2, 9 Ik’ 5 Mol, as recorded at Palenque. The purpose of the gathering as depicted on the God D court vessel is thus the actual accession of GI under the supervision of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut, which happened in the Sky Domain.

References on Maya mythology at Palenque have sometimes been qualified as specifically being versions of Mayan mythology from the western Maya perspective. However, if my comparison is correct, the God D Court Vessel does not provide the view on this important mythological event from Palenque or western Maya area, but it provides the view from the central Maya area. Thus, ultimately, not only king Yajawte’ K’inich Akul Mo’ Nab III of Palenque derived legitimacy from this mythological event, but all kings and queens in the Maya area who bore the *hunal* emblem and headband on their head.

### **Final Remarks**

The God D Court Vessel provides a wealth of iconographic and epigraphic information which previously was unavailable from other sources. Research continues on the proposed decipherment of the God D name glyph as Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut. Additional examples may provide valuable clues on the correctness of the decipherment of the God D name glyph proposed here. Research continues on the comparison of mythological events described in hieroglyphic texts and in monumental art at Palenque and other sites as well as portrayed within complex visual narratives on different media.<sup>39</sup> Further research on the protagonists portrayed on this vessel, as well as their appearance on a large selection of other ceramics and other media, may substantiate the suggestions made in this essay and may further our understanding of Classic Maya mythology and cosmology.

### **Acknowledgments**

In the first place I would like to thank the gallery owner who once possessed the God D Court Vessel for his permission to publish this late Classic vessel. I thank Michel Quenon for providing

the set of photographs on which the present study is based. I thank Raphael Tunesi for providing the image of the God D name phrase on another late Classic unprovenanced vessel, part of a private collection in Italy. I also thank Edwin Braakhuis, Carl Callaway, Christophe Helmke, Barbara MacLeod, Simon Martin, Jenn Newman, Christian Prager, Dietmar Reda, Michel Quenon, and Mark Van Stone for their comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay. The present essay has benefited from their comments and suggestions, but as always, unless stated otherwise, the opinions expressed in this essay are mine and I solely bear the responsibility for any remaining errors or fallacies.

### Endnotes

1) In this and previous published work I refer to the primary hieroglyphic rim texts as the Dedicatory Formula (DF, as also favored in Stuart 2005a) or Standard Dedicatory Formula (SDF; Boot 2005b) instead of the common Primary Standard Sequence (PSS), introduced in 1973 by Michael D. Coe. These rim texts, as well as the dedicatory texts at other places on ceramics and a variety of monumental and portable objects (of stone, bone, wood, shell), are dedicatory in nature by employing dedicatory verbs. These texts are formulaic through a clearly sectioned and standardized variation in contents, depending which medium is dedicated (Boot 2005b).

2) In transcription logograms are placed in bold capital letters (e.g. **LAY**), while syllabic signs are placed in bold small letters (e.g. **'a**). Queries indicate a certain degree of doubt on the identification of the sign (e.g. **'AJ?**) or refer to a sign of unknown meaning. Signs between square brackets in a transcription indicate an infixed or layered sign (e.g. [**'ITZAM**]KOKAJ.MUT-**ji**), reading order is established through comparative research. In transliteration words are placed in italics (e.g. *alay*), while reconstructed sounds are placed between square brackets (e.g. *a[j] latzi[l]*). On occasion reference is made to so-called T-numbers (e.g. T24); these refer to the Maya hieroglyphic signs as cataloged by Thompson (1962). I employ descriptive terms for hieroglyphic signs for which no T-numbers are available, written in capital letters (e.g. HEADBAND.DOG, DEER). In this essay there is no reconstruction of vowel complexity (see Boot 2002, 2005a; Houston, Stuart, and Robertson 1998; Kaufman 2003; Lacadena and Wichmann 2004, n.d.). Transliterations are generally followed by English paraphrases, less common Maya entries may be explained in end notes.

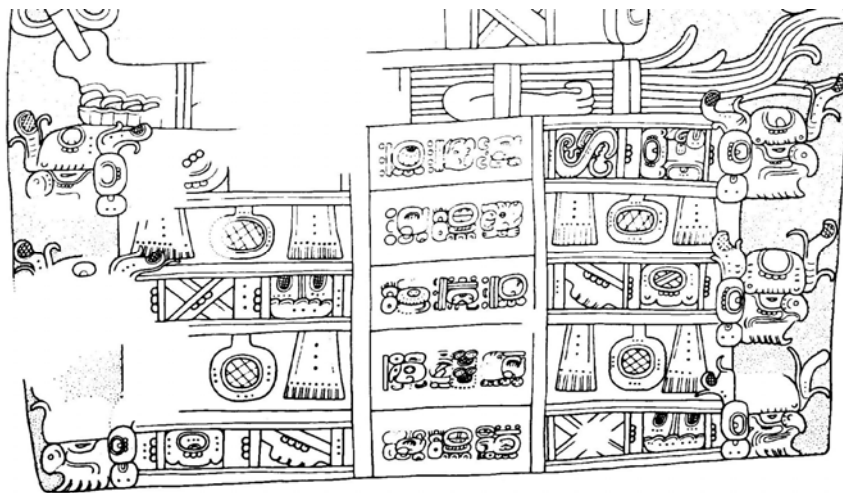
3) These flower side elements can be found regularly in Classic Maya iconography, for example in the front element of the headdress of God D on Kerr No. 0504.

4) For a study on Sky Bands on ceramics, see Carlson 1988.

5) The avian manifestation of God D has been referred to in previous research as the Principal Bird Deity or PBD (e.g. Bardawil 1976; Cortez 1990; see Guernsey 2006: 95-115 for a detailed overview of research on the Principal Bird Deity). Gods among the Maya had many manifestations, the PBD is the avian manifestation of God D. This bird, an eagle (see main text) has strong solar aspects through its association with K'inich Ajaw, the Sun God (see for instance note 29).

6) This bird head is the enlarged variant of the bird head that substitutes for T561 **CHAN** "sky" in hieroglyphic texts. This bird head became cataloged as T746 by Thompson

(1962: 329). Note for instance the substitutions at Copán (the toponym **4-?-T561-na** on Stela B, West Side and **4-?-T746-na** on Copán Stela A: D3a) and Yaxchilán (the nominal **'IX-'UH-T561-na-T24** on Stela 33: C2-C3 and **'IX-'UH-T746-T24** on Stela 10, Base Panel: H2). In the eye of the bird a small ax can be found; the small ax is the diagnostic element in the head variant of number six (Thompson 1950: Fig. 24: 32-37). Together I identify the bird head with ax infix to be the enlarged glyphic representation for **6-SKY** or **6-CHAN**, *wak chan*. Importantly, Naranjo Stela 32 illustrates on its front the currently last known Naranjo ruler Waxaklajun Ubah K'awil, who acceded into kingship in A.D. 814, seated on a triple Sky Band bench, platform, or throne (after Graham 1978: 2:86):



Each end of the three Sky Bands terminates with a bird head, the same bird head as illustrated at the court of God D. In total there are thus six bird heads, again a reference to Wak Chan. Also note that the Wak Chan bird sign on the vessel is placed on top of a three-tiered elevation, much like the three stacked Sky Bands on Naranjo Stela 32.

Further confirmation of this possible Wak Chan toponymic reference can be found in the inscription of the Museo Amparo Throne Back, which provides the phrase *emey wak chan nal* “descends (from) Wak Chan Nal” and which connects the toponym Wak Chan Nal with God D (this text is discussed in more detail in note 13). A full analysis of other Wak Chan references lies outside the scope of the present paper, suffice to note here are the toponym Wak Chan Ki’ (e.g. Palenque, Temple of the Cross Tablet: D15) and the title Wak Chan Ajaw (e.g. Quiriguá Stela C, West: B15). Both are directly associated with the 13.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk’uh event. Tentatively, the possible toponym Wak Chan at the court of God D may name part of his Sky Domain. As noted by Christian Prager (personal communication, May 1, 2008) the T561-**ki** collocations at Palenque may hint at a transliteration *pik* for the sky sign in this specific context. There is however not sufficient space in this essay to explore all the different possibilities (of transcription, transliteration, translation, and interpretation), as it would require the inclusion of a full discussion of all events, toponyms, and protagonists in relation to the 13.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Hulol (Kumk’uh) era event. Suffice it to state here that there is a reference to “six” and to “sky.”

The bird head itself may portray a Muwan bird, note the feather on the forehead, the crest, beak, and color patterning in comparison to *muwan* or sparrow hawk-like birds in the Maya codices, e.g. Codex Dresden 16C-1, 18B-3 (Förstemann 1880). Also note the



bird seated on the cave on Kerr No. 0530 (which in actual posture is very close to the sparrow hawk as depicted in Aulie and Aulie 1977: back of page between pages 106-107). A perhaps related manifestation of this bird species is associated with God L, where it is named Ux Lajun Chan(n)al Kuy “13 Sky Place/Like the Sky Owl.”

7) The sky is the domain of God D. In many of the narratives in which God D appears he is seated on a bench, throne, or elevation marked by the Sky Band or the whole narrative is placed on a Sky Band (see Kerr Nos. 0504, 0518, 1183, 2249, 3049, 3056, 3091 [Sky Band abbreviated as a serpent head, compare to 3056], and 3462). In other narratives God D is seated on elaborate benches (see Kerr Nos. 2249, 5764, 7265, 8004) or is seated on or against (jaguar-skin covered) pillows or cushions (see Kerr Nos. 0732, 3094, 4339, 4548, 4999, 7226, 7727) or on both a bench and pillow or cushion (see Kerr Nos. 7821, 8479). There are at least two short hieroglyphic passages from the Late Classic period that relate God D directly with the Sky Domain. One passage is recorded at Palenque (Temple XIX, Bench, South Side). Here God D supervises (*ukabjij*) the sitting in kingship (*chumljij ti ajaw[l]el*) of GI, and it happens in the Sky Domain (*utiy ta [?] chan*) (see main text). The other passage is recorded on Kerr No. 1226. Here the avian manifestation of God D is found sitting in the crown of a fruit-bearing tree (probably a Ceiba tree), the hieroglyphic text refers to a descend of the avian manifestation from the Sky Domain through an elaborate phrase (*em chan Itzam Nah yax kokaj mut* “Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut descends [from the] sky”) (see main text).

On three occasions, also ethnohistoric sources from the early Colonial period relate Itzam Nah with the Sky Domain. Two sources are from Yucatán. The “Relación de Kanpocolche y Chochola,” without date but probably written in 1579, provides two references to the same god, the first one of which reads “ytzamna [...] que era el que estaba en el cielo” (Boot 1998; De la Garza et al. 1983, vol. 2: 323). Another source provides a full description of the principal god, “Que habia hallado un señor principal, que preguntándole de su religion antigua que observaban, le dijo: Que ellos conocian y creian en Dios, que estaba en el cielo, y que aqueste Dios era padre, hijo y Espíritu Santo, y que el padre se llamaba Yzóna” (López de Cogolludo 1971 [1688], vol. 1: 247 [Lib. 4, Cap. V]). The third source is fray Bartolomé de las Casas’ “Apologética Historia Sumaria” on which Cogolludo based his citation (De las Casas 1967 [ca. 1555-57], vol. 1: 648 [Lib. III, Cap. CXXIII]).

8) *Chanal*, derived from *chan* “sky” (Kaufman 2003: 486) and a -*VI* qualitative suffix (Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001), thus *chanal* “celestial/of the sky.” *Ikatz* means “bundle, cargo.”

9) The part *yas* (spelled **ya-sa**) remains without a paraphrase. The element *yas* appears within other examples, note for instance *tok’ yas k’inich* (spelled **ya-si**) on Kerr No. 1726 and *tok’ yas ajaw* (spelled **ya-si**) at Chichén Itzá (Yulá Lintel 2). Michel Quenon compared the phrase *k’in yas* to the early Colonial title (*ah*) *k’in yah* “priest” (personal communication, April 4, 2008). Intriguingly, colonial Yucatec Maya also provides the title (*ah*) *tok’ yah* “sangrador” (Barrera Vásquez 1980: 805). In these entries, (*y*)*ah* is employed as a nominalizing suffix (MacLeod, personal communication, April 4, 2008). Although I have no good linguistic evidence yet, tentatively I suggest that Classic Maya *yas* was employed in a similar function, as a nominalizing suffix. If correct, *k’in yas* would mean “priest,” while *tok’ yas* would mean “sangrador.” Both *tok’ yas k’inich* and

*tok' yas ajaw* may thus be paramount titles referring to blood sacrifice. Alternatively, *yas* may be a qualitative suffix (MacLeod, personal communication, April 10, 2008); *k'in yas* would thus mean “sun-like,” *tok' yas* would mean “flint-like.”

10) **'OK-ki** > *ok* “dog” (loanword from Mixe [proto-Mixe \*'uka], most common Mayan word was *tz'i'* ), **'u-chu** > *uch* “opossum” (Dienhart 1989: 475-476; Kaufman 2003: 577-578), **'u-su** > *us* “vulture” (Kaufman 2003: 621). These short texts confirm that *ok* refers to dog, that *uch* refers to opossum, and that *us* refers to vulture (note **'u-si-ja** > *usij* “vulture” in other contexts, e.g. Yaxchilán Lintel 40: F4 & Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, Step 1: C2b), as the texts are accompanied by clearly recognizable images of these animals. The “image and animal identification” has been instrumental in other examples, for instance **t'u-lu** > *t'ul* “rabbit” next to a rabbit or **chi-ji** > *chij* “deer” next to a deer.

11) The merging of gods and god names is a phenomenon recently proposed by Simon Martin. He refers to this phenomenon as theosynthesis (e.g. Martin 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008). The gods (*theo-*) who merge (*synthesis*) can be complementary or closely related (God K and the Maize God, as K'awil Ajan/Ajan K'awil), while in other cases different manifestations of the same god merge. As Martin proposes, this is the case with God D. While his proposal has certain potential, I see these “mergings” as part of a different phenomenon to which I refer as theopolymorphosis, the manifold shapes and forms through which a god can manifest him- or herself and in which different but complimentary manifestations can merge and become confluent. See note 24.

12) Two of the four have clear simian characteristics (number 2 and 4, viewed from the right). For a comparison of individual and paired artisans, their portraiture and investments, see the illustrations in Coe and Kerr 1997: 80-85 and the description of the various beings related to the arts on pages 105-106 in the same publication (also see Coe 1977). As noted by Raphael Tunesi and Edwin Braakhuis (personal communication via email, May 9 & June 8, 2008), the first figure viewed from the right seems to be “Gluttony Death.” Independent of his identification on other vessels, on this vessel apparently he is included in the group of four *chuw'en*.

13) If it is the Patron of the Month Pax, in Maya writing the sign is employed as **TE'**, for which specifically the Dedicatory Formula on ceramics provides excellent examples for substitution. Compare as such Kerr Nos. 0518 and 4464 (**PAX.GOD-le** > **TE'-le** > *te'[e]l*) to for instance Kerr No. 4689 (**TE'-le** > *te'[e]l*) and Kerr No. 3744 (**TE'-e-le** > *te'el*). Most probably the **TE'** designation identifies each of the four supernatural beings individually, as this would explain the fact that all four are referred to as *chan te' chuw'en* “four *te'* artisans.” One of the Copán (e.g. Stela 6: B8a) and perhaps Chichén Itzá (Initial Series Lintel: D6) local gods is named Chan Te' Ajaw and possibly this deity, albeit tentative, is related to the Chan Te' Chuw'en.

Carl Callaway (personal communication, April 16, 2008) directed my attention to a sculptured throne back in the collection of the Museo Amparo in Puebla, Mexico (Mayer 1995: Plate 120). The text on this throne back states that on 9 Kawak 0 Sutz'il (Sotz') *emey wak chan nal te'* “*te'* descended (from) *wak chan nal*.” The name or title *te'* is written with the Pax God head glyph, and between the two human impersonators (one impersonates God D) one can find a small statuette of the Pax God, with a small wing (marked by a serpent head) on his elbow. The *te'* is said to be *yebet itzam nah yax kokaj*

*mut* “the messenger of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut.” Does the statuette refer to one of the Te’ as illustrated on the God D Court Vessel? Intriguingly, at Palenque the three court attendants associated with (and one actually performing the) God D impersonation are marked with the “headband-title.” Does this “headband-title” identify a messenger or priest of some sort (postfixed with either **-ta** or **-ti**, perhaps *bobat* “prophet”)? As the Museo Amparo throne back indicates, the *ebet* “messenger” was associated with God D.

Another question may arise: Why are these four supernatural beings referred to as Te’? At least three of these four supernatural beings have clear simian facial features (see note 12). The people of wood, as referred to in the K’iche’ epic Popol Vuh, are destroyed and it is said that the spider monkeys are a manifestation of these people once carved of wood (Christenson 2003: 85-90). The Classic Maya word for wood is *te’*, in K’iche’ it is *che’* (Kaufman 2003: 1081-1082). After their defeat (initiated by a song called “Hunahpu Spider Monkey”), the older brothers Hun Batz’ and Hun Chowen are ultimately sent into the trees where they changed into spider monkeys, the monkey species into which the people carved of wood had changed as well (Christenson 2003: 141-145). Hun Batz’ and Hun Chowen ultimately became the patrons of the arts. *Batz’* means “howler monkey” (Kaufman 2003: 558), *chowen* (and *chuwen*) means “artisan” and in the Maya calendar it is the eleventh day name. In most Mesoamerican calendars the eleventh day name was “Monkey.” In Maya languages *chuwen* was probably derived from a Mixe Zoquean loan word *\*tzawi* “monkey” (Justeson, Norman, Campbell, and Kaufman 1985: 24). I propose that the name *te’* for each of the supernatural beings is not coincidental and that it refers to these particular passages from the sixteenth century epic Popol Vuh, mythic passages which during the Classic period may have been slightly different (there is a time difference of at least some 700 to 800 years, while additionally the Popol Vuh was recorded in the Maya Highlands instead of in the central or western Maya area). These supernaturals on the God D Court Vessel may thus be beings formerly made of wood, *te’*, and after their transformation they obtained simian features.

14) The body of the vessel seems to be marked by a large version of the T501 glyph, which can be transcribed **HA’** “water.” Did these vessels contain water? Water is known, when taken in large quantities, to be an excellent purging agent.

15) The fact that both the God D Court Vessel and Kerr No. 1440 probably were painted by the same painter-scribe can be found in the calligraphic rendering of for instance the signs for **K’AN**, **na**, and **ja**, while the application of thick outer lines and fine inner lines provides a very close similarity between the two vessels.

16) Compare as such B1 with A5a, B2 with A5b, and B3a with B4. A3 parallels A4-B4, in which only **YAL** (A3b) substitutes for the tentative **MAM** (B4).

17) The suffix *waj on* contains two parts, *waj* and *on*. It is *on* that may refer to the first person plural absolute suffix (inclusive?) (Kaufman 2003: 1508). The part *waj* remains without explanation. However, as pointed out by Dietmar Reda (personal communication via email, April 1, 2008), Piedras Negras Panel 3 has a secondary text which opens with the spelling **wa-ja-ta**, which may be transliterated as *waj at*. If correct, that spelling seems to contain the second person singular pronoun *at*, and it opens with the comparable and still unexplainable *waj*. The same text also contains the independent pronoun *ha’ob* “they” (spelled **ha’o-bi**).

Alternatively, the spelling **bi-xi wa-jo?-ni** may lead to *bix(i) waj on(i)* “arrived earlier,” in which the possible completive (-i) of the verb *bix-* “to go” is followed by a postfixed temporal adverb *waj on(i)*. This, very tentative, alternative I base on the presence of *on(i)*. Note as such proto-Ch’olan \**7on.i* “earlier,” Ch’orti’ *ani(j)*, and Ch’olti’ *#oni* (Kaufman 2003: 1450).

18) The common spelling for *jun tan* “cherished one” was **1-TAN-na** (in one example **1-ta-na**, on a panel in a private collection in Australia, Houston 1983: 107). In the Late Classic also the spelling **HUN-TAN-na** (Randel Stela: F3b) was recorded, as the sounds /j/ and /h/ had merged (Grube 2004). Possibly the recording of **1** and **HUN** in the present context may thus target *jun/hun* “one,” as this is a Late Classic vessel text produced at a time when /h/ and /j/ may have merged (in transcription and transliteration I provide the original distinction). The **CHAN-?** compound can be found in the context of the *bak’tun* period in the Long Count or Initial Series (e.g. Palenque, Temple XIX Bench, South Side: B1, Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step I: B1). A full epigraphic analysis of the sign that remains without decipherment here lies outside the scope of the present essay.

The sequence *jun pik chanal k’uh hun chan(?) kabal k’uh* seems to be the full version of a similar sequence recorded at Tikal in the inscription on the back of Stela 31:

B13-B14	<b>1-PIK [CHAN]K’UH [KAB]K’UH</b>
E25-E26	<b>1-PIK [CHAN]K’UH [KAB]K’UH</b>
G8	<b>[1-PIK]K’UH</b>

These three abbreviated spellings provisionally can be transliterated *jun pik chan[al] k’uh [hun chan(?)] kab[al] k’uh*, *jun pik chan[al] k’uh [hun chan(?)] kab[al] k’uh*, and *jun pik [chanal] k’uh [hun chan(?)] [kabal] k’uh*, if the sequence as recorded on the God D court vessel is considered to be the full or complete sequence. In all three cases the sequence as recorded at Tikal is associated with the completion of half-periods (in order of the Stela 31 text at 9.0.10.0.0, 8.18.10.0.0, and 8.19.10.0.0) (a collocation written **1-PIK K’UH**, and thus a similar abbreviation as at Tikal Stela 31: G8, can be found on a Chocholá vessel, offered for sale at a 1998 Sotheby’s auction, Sale 7138-1, No. 150). Interestingly, the third example is directly followed by the verbal statement **K’AL[HUN]-ja** or *k’a[h]laj hun* “wrapped/presented is (the) headband,” one of the Classic Maya expressions that refers to accession.

19) In previous research the spellings **che-he-na** and **che-’e-na**, leading to *chehen* and *che’en*, were identified as quotative particles *chehen/che’en* “said, so was said” (Grube 1998). However, as research by various epigraphers (including the present author) shows, the root of the expressions *chehen* and *che’en* is based on the intransitive root *che’-* “to say” and the first person absolute pronoun *-en*. Thus *che’en* > *che’-en* “I say.” The variant *chehen* may be derived through a phonological process in which the intermediate /’/ became slightly aspirated as /h/.

20) The “Bocabulario de Mayathan” (1972 [ca. 1670]: MS 129r, line 5) provides the following line, in the original spelling (and interpunction): “hunytzamna . yaxcocahmut.” In Landa (1986 [1566]: 66 [MS fol. 30v, e.g. line 26]) one can find the avian manifestation of God D referred to as «Yaxcocahmut», as also in Cogolludo (1688: 192 [Libro Quarto, Capítulo VI]). Later ethnohistoric sources employ Ahkok Ahmut

(Avedaño y Loyola 1996 [1696]: 35 [fol. 29v]) and Yax Ah Kokay Mut (Chilam Balam of Tizimín, Mayer 1980: MS 20v [15v]: lines 32-33, «yax ah co cai mute»). The part *mut* in these two references means “bird” (Kaufman 2003: 619). More importantly, in the present-day Tzeltalan language the item *kokmut* is conserved and it identifies the Harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) (Hunn 1977). A text on the back of an Early Classic mask, probably looted from Río Azul, has a long text pertaining to events that took place on (13.0.0.0.0) 4 Ajaw (8 Hulol [Kumk’uh]). In a long list of participants and supervising agents one can find the spelling <sup>2</sup>**ko-mu-tu** for *kokmut* (drawing by Michael Carrasco, doubler added on base of photographs):



As such the item *kokmut* can already be identified in an Early Classic text. Mayan languages do not provide alternative solutions, other than to relate this spelling to the name of a bird species (as it ends in *mut* “bird”), more specifically the harpy eagle (as in Tzeltal, cited above).

21) On Kerr No. 4546 the avian manifestation of God D is referred to as **5-YATIK?**[ki] **KOKAJ.MUT** (on the decipherment of the probable **YATIK** logogram, after a suggestion by Christian Prager, see Boot 2003 & 2006). Note that the (Yax) Kokaj Mut name glyph does not contain any of the Itzam Nah name elements and thus only refers to the avian manifestation. The same sequence, spelled **5-YATIK?** **KOKAJ.MUT** (is perhaps the **5** a reference to the “Five” in “Five Flower Place” and is *yatik* perhaps synonymous to the still undeciphered flower sign?), occurs as part of the name of the probable owner of an Early Classic vessel (Boot 2003). See main text of this essay.

22) This example of the God D name glyph occurs in an impersonation formula, in which a God D impersonator is in the process of placing the royal headdress on the GI impersonator, the king of Palenque. It is a re-enactment of a part of a series of mythical events (taking place prior to 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Hulol [Kumk’uh]), recorded in the first four columns of the text on the south side of the bench at Temple XIX (see main text).

23) In this essay I prefer to separate Itzam from Nah. This I base on the fact that Nah (or its Late/Postclassic/Colonial part Na) on occasion was abbreviated and on the variety of God names that contain Itzam, but which all are followed by a different noun (as found in Classic Maya inscriptions and a large variety of Postclassic and Colonial sources): Itzam Nah, Itzam At, Itzam Kan, Itzam Tun, Itzam Tzab, Itzam T’ulil, Itzam Kab Ayin.

24) As space is limited in the main text of this essay, here I would like to extend my thoughts on the different manifestations of God D from a comparative point of view, albeit brief. In note 11, I introduced the concept theopolymorphosis, the manifold shapes and forms through which a god can manifest him- or herself and in which different but complimentary manifestations can merge and become confluent.

The manifestations of God D, many of which are introduced in this essay, show these complimentary manifestations (note mention of Itzam Nah Itzam Tzab and Itzam Nah K’awil in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, Gordon 1913: 73, line 23 & 106, line 7). Depending on the context, a certain quality or character of God D is invoked

which provides the base for the different but confluent manifestations. These differently named confluent manifestations remind me, for instance, of the 50 names of Marduk, each depending on a different context and aspect of Marduk, as recorded in the 12th century BC Babylonian epic Enuma Elish (King 1902), or the six manifestations of the Divine in Smartism which Smarta Hindus consider to be equivalent to each other (a Hindu religion based in Vedic tradition in India, its origin dates from circa the ninth century A.D.), or the different shapes, forms, and aspects through which Quetzalcoatl manifests himself in central Mexico, among for instance the Mexica-Azteca in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D. As such as I do not see these manifestations as mergings of distinct aspects of one or more gods (as in theosynthesis), but as confluences of the manifold shapes and forms a god can take depending on the context in which the god actually manifests him- or herself.

25) Carl Callaway (personal communication, April 16, 2008) directed my attention to a vessel which portrays God D with wings (Hellmuth 1987: Figures 578 & 579; Callaway 2006: Figure 2.29c). Here God D may be seen transforming into his avian manifestation, as Callaway suggests, or, as I prefer at present, here we see the full or complete confluent embodiment of God D as Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut.

26) At Palenque there is a unique passage that involves both the *chanal ikatz* “Celestial/Of the Sky Bundle or Cargo” and the *kabal ikatz* “Terrestrial/Of the Earth Bundle or Cargo.” The passage is related to the eleventh *k’atun* that ends on 12 Ajaw and states that a young Sky (maize?) god became king (*ajawniy*), that the “Jewel” Tree (*te’*) sprouts, the “Five (*ho’*) Flower(?)” Tree (*te’*) sprouts, *chanal ikatz*, *kabal ikatz*, jewels/beads/collars, ear flares (were present) (Palenque, Temple of the Inscriptions, Center Tablet: A3-A9).

27) Note that on Kerr No. 4548 God D has no elaborate “ak’bal” marked extension on his headband, nor does he have the *yax* sign on the top of his head. This is God D without the blending or merging with Yax Kokaj Mut (the Yax Kokaj Mut bird is present in the narrative, as a serpentine wing appears behind the back of God D). This portrait provides iconographic clues to identify God D on other ceramics. His portrait, without the headband extension or the *yax* sign, thus can be found on for instance Kerr Nos. 3049, 5034, 8450, and 8940 (holding a mask).

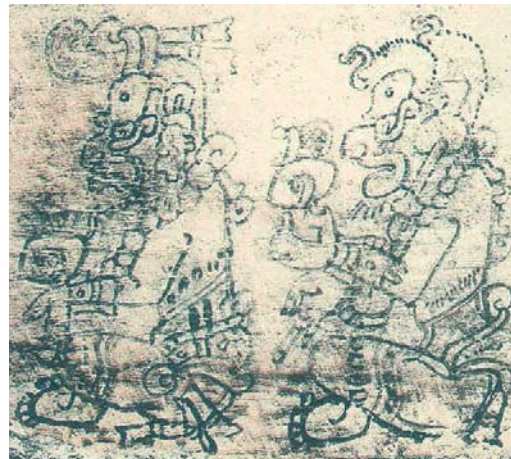
28) This manifestation of Itzam Nah as Itzam Nah K’inich Ajaw is most interesting, as it contains the appellative K’inich Ajaw. The entry in the “Bocabulario de Mayathan” seems to be corroborated by another ethnohistoric source: “pero el primero que hallò las letras de la lengua Maya, è hiso el computo de los años, meses, y edades, y lo enseño todo à los Indios de esta Provincia, fue un Indio llamado Kinchahau, y por otro nombre Tzamna” (Beltrán 1746: 13 [Artículo III-50]). Possibly the appellative K’inich Ajaw provides Itzam Nah with solar aspects, as *k’inich* contains the item *k’in* “sun.” On several ceramics God D can be identified riding or being associated with deer and peccary (e.g. Kerr No. 8622). Among the Kaqchikel of the early twentieth century it was told that “on a short day the sun is drawn across the sky by two deer, whereas on long days two *jabali* pull him” (Stoll cited in Thompson 1970: 370, italics in original). Perhaps this summary story is a remnant of a larger myth which associated Itzam Nah in his manifestation as Itzam Nah K’inich Ajaw to the sun and to writing. At Xcalumkin his association with

writing is provided in a straightforward manner; one of the titles that follows the God D name Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut is Aj Tz'ib "Scribe" (see note 30).

29) Kerr No. 1377 (now at the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, MA, inv. No. 1988.1179) contains a complex visual narrative, central to which is a (human?) sacrifice:



On both sides a house or temple structure can be found. The structure on the right contains the depiction of the opened jaws of the "Bearded Dragon" (compare to the hand holding a brush within the jaws of the "Bearded Dragon," actually a centipede, as depicted on an incised bone found at Tikal, Temple I). Inside the opened jaws one can find a jaguar skin covered stack of pages or book leaves. The stack of pages is attended by an anthropomorphic being wearing a centipede headdress. Now, the front of the roof is of importance. Here one can find the portrait head of God D fully merged with his avian manifestation. However, God D has an artificial beard, a diagnostic marker for the Sun God, as can be seen in the portraits of both the Sun God (with artificial beard) and God D (note probable beard hairs) in the Codex Dresden (Codex Dresden, Page 4C, scanned after Förstemann 1880):



Based on the abbreviation of the signs within the spellings of *k'inich* in Classic Maya hieroglyphic texts (even fully reduced to simply **K'IN**, cf. Boot 2008: 110, entry *k'inich*),

I interpret the spelling [**K'IN**]'**AJAW-wa** to spell K'inich Ajaw. Thus the front of the roof combines God D and his avian manifestation with the Sun God and as cited before Itzam Na K'inich Ajaw was the inventor of writing. The house or temple structure (*nah*) on Kerr No. 1377 contains writing and the front of the roof contains the portrait of the inventor of writing. The house of Itzam Nah K'inich Ajaw is thus the house of writing. On Kerr No. 0504 one can find the court of God D, he is seated on a Sky Band throne or bench, together with the Moon goddess. In front of him, on a normal throne or bench, a writer is seated. A vertical text spells '**u-BAH tz'i-ba 'a?-'AT** for *ubah tz'ibat* "(it is) the image of Tz'ibat," in which *tz'ib* refers to writing, painting, and *-at* most probably is a nominalizing suffix. This short sentence probably describes one particular manifestation of the court of God D and connects it clearly with writing, painting.

30) The sign I transcribe as **KOKAJ.MUT** contains two parts, a "shield-like" extension (probably long feathers set with beads, see headdress of God D impersonator on the Museo Amparo throne back) marked with an T504 '**AK'AB** sign (see note 33) and a bird head. This bird head sign is very close to the bird head which is employed for the fifteenth day name Men (Yucatecan calendar), which probably in Classic times was pronounced *tz'ikin* "bird" and represents the head of an eagle (Boot 2005a: 250-253). Note that in Mexica calendar the fifteenth day name was Cuauhtli "eagle." Also the bird head in the **KOKAJ.MUT** sign refers to an eagle, but through the composite noun *kok(aj) mut* "eagle" (also see note 34).

31) In various forms the God D nominal phrase appears four times in the inscriptions at Xcalumkin, two of which are mentioned in the main text (examples on Columns 3 and 5). The third example can be found in the very eroded text on the front of Lintel 3 and parallels the spelling on Column 5 (Stuart 1994). However, on Lintel 3 the spelling ends in **mu-ti** for *mut*, just as the full name Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut would end. The underside of the lintel provides a portrait of the bird manifestation of God D. A third example appears in a text that frames an inner doorway and is known as Miscellaneous Text 5, a text that has come to us in an incomplete form (Graham and Von Euw 1992: 4:197). This text even has been reset in part in Precolumbian times. The text ends with a reference to God D as '**ITZAM-na KOKAJ.MUT-ji**, an abbreviated spelling for Itzam Na(h) Yax Kokaj Mut. It is followed by three titles spelled '**AJ-K'IN-ni 'AJ-tz'i-ba 'AJ-ji-pu**, which since some time (Boot 1996) I transliterate as Aj K'in "Priest," Aj Tz'ib "Scribe," and Aj Pu[h] "Person from Place of Reed." Ethnohistoric sources provide an explanation for the first two titles. In one source a certain Zamná, a probable abbreviation of Itzam Na(h), was identified as "sacerdote suyo" and he came from the west (López de Cogolludo 1971 [1688], vol. 1: 232 [Lib. 4, Cap. III]). The same source identifies the "que entre ellos primero inventó los caracteres, que servian de letras á los indios" as Itzam Na(h) (López de Cogolludo 1971 [1688], vol. 1: 254 [Lib. 4, Cap. VIII]). This equation between Itzam Na(h) and writing is confirmed in another source, as an entry in this vocabulary read "Ydolo otro q~ adoraron que fue un hombre por aber allado el arte delas letras desta tierra ytzam na, kinchahau" ("Bocabulario de Mayathan" 1972 [1670?]: MS 129r, line 3-7), also cited in the main text. In the Landa manuscript one can find the intriguing line "Cinchau Yzamna, el qual dizen fue el primer sacerdote" (Landa 1566: Fol. 40r, lines 36-37).

Intriguingly, only Palenque and Xcalumkin (as far as my research of Maya inscriptions currently available to me shows) provide references to the name of God D in



so-called impersonation statements (Houston and Stuart 1996), here transliterated *ubahil anu[l]* and paraphrased as “(it is) the image incarnate.” Once at Palenque (Temple XIX, Bench, South Side), twice at Xcalumkin (Column 3, Column 5) (compare Thun, Nehammer Knub, and Helmke 2007). At Palenque it is a court official of the rank “headband-title” *ajaw* “king, lord,” who performs the impersonation. At Xcalumkin a court official of the rank of *ch’ok sajal* “young provincial lord” (Column 3) and of the rank *matz* “wise man, sage” (Column 5) perform the impersonation. Within the whole Maya area, at present Xcalumkin provides the highest number of recorded God D references and impersonations. From the perspective of the Yucatecan peninsula it is located in the west; according to one ethnohistoric reference from Yucatán, cited above, a certain Zamná came from the west.

32) The change from Itzam Nah to Itzim Na(h) may be based on a process of progressive vowel harmonization. The unique spelling in the Codex Madrid that includes the infixed syllabic sign **tzi** may be a hint at this particular phonological process. Alternatively, the **tzi** syllabic sign may be understood to reinforce the opening part *itz-* of the name Itzam Nah (compare Stuart 1987: 16, Figure 24).

33) The identification of the unknown sign as **KAJ** is tentative. A second example of this sign occurs on a sherd from Special Deposit No. 2 at Buenavista in a spelling **’i ka-?-ji** (Houston, Stuart, and Taube 1992: Figure 12), in which the unknown sign may be **KAJ** (although a recent observation by Nikolai Grube that only vowel and semi-vowel signs can be employed as preposed/prefixed phonetic complements militates against this suggestion). The sherd actually illustrates God D seated on a large jaguar skin covered pillow or cushion. As no other part of the vessel has survived, it is not known if the pillow or cushion was placed upon a bench or platform marked with a Sky Band. The spelling is at the end of a text which may describe the event:



34) I base the *wayaw* reading on a spelling on the so-called Castillo Bowl (Kerr No. 3395), now in the Museo Popol Vuh in Guatemala City. The text contains the spelling **’u-WAY-wa-la**, which may mean that *uway(a)wal* was the full version of this possessive construction and that *wayaw* was the root. On the original decipherment of T539 as **WAY**, see Grube 1989 and Houston & Stuart 1989.

At Palenque the important dynastic title Bakel Waywal provides an additional hint that *wayaw* indeed is the root of the expression. For instance, at I2 in the text of the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs one can find the spelling **BAK-le wa-WAY-wa[la]**. At H3 (formerly O3) in the text of the Tablet of the Foliated Cross one can find the spelling **BAK-WAY-wa[la]**. Both spellings **BAK-le-wa-WAY-wa[la]** and **BAK-WAY-wa[la]**

direct at a transliteration *bakel waywal*, in which the item *wayaw* has obtained a possible -*VI* (qualitative or existential?) suffix. The word *wayawal* would be contracted to *waywal*.

35) What about the part *kokaj* in Kokaj Mut for “harpy eagle”? The following argument is only very tentative. *Mut* refers to “bird” (*mut* “bird; omen, message”). If indeed Kokaj and Kokay are employed, the name part Kokaj/Kokay Mut may combine two nouns or an adjective plus noun to name the harpy eagle. In Mayan languages *kokay* (\**kuhkay*) refers to fire flies, while in Ch’orti’ *kuhkay* refers to “star” (probably based on the nightly activity of fire flies as moving point of lights in the sky). As the Classic name glyph specifically has a -**ji** postfix, *kokaj* is probably the Classic variant of Colonial and still unique *kokay* (also see Luis Lopes 2003 on fire flies). Fire flies (e.g. K0521, 1003, 2226) have a very clear “ak’bal” sign in their forehead and the Yax Kokaj Mut headband extension has this same clear sign as well. Could the Kokaj/Kokay Mut name part include the *kokaj/kokay* “fire fly/star” part and *mut* “bird”? Could this even be present in the iconographic rendition of the Yax Kokaj Mut, as its headband extension? With the two nouns combined, Kokaj/Kokay Mut came to refer to the Harpy Eagle and this combination also may have occurred in the iconographic rendition of the avian manifestation of God D. As Christian Prager recently noted (personal communication, May 5, 2008), a connection to “fire flies” through the entry *kokay* was suggested already by Thurber and Thurber (1959).

36) Correlation constant employed to calculate the Christian date from the Maya Long Count is 584,285 (Julian). The Classic name for the eighteenth month was probably Hulol (as suggested by David Stuart, for which epigraphic evidence can be found at Copán), which is equated in the Yucatecan calendar with the month name Kumk’uh.

37) The T24 sign that is prefixed to the **CHAN** sign is generally interpreted as meaning something like “resplendent; shiny; brilliant” and may represent a celt or other oval shaped object. It is currently one of the signs that still has not been satisfactorily deciphered. At Palenque there is an intriguing substitution of the T24 sign, albeit in a different context. At Temple XVIII there was once a stucco inscription, one of the surviving glyph blocks of which spells **’u-wi-ni-BAH** for *uwinbah* “(it is) the image.” This may be a syllabically transparent spelling of a more common **’u-T24-BAH** spelling (e.g. Copán Stela 1: C1a & Stela 4: B8). If a value **WIN** is applied in the context of **ta-T24-CHAN** at Palenque, this would generate a transcription **ta-WIN-CHAN** or *ta win chan*. In colonial Tzotzil the word for “sky, heaven” was *vinahel*, based on the root *vin* “to manifest, to appear” (Laughlin 1975: 370). The sequence Ta Win Chan, and for that matter the more neutral Ta [?] Chan (as the present context does not contain any phonetic complements to the T24 sign), additionally reminds me of the realm of abundance where according to several central Mexican sources the gods resided, a realm named Ta Moan Chan. As has been suggested in earlier research, Ta Moan Chan, was most probably a loan word from the Maya region (Miller and Taube 1997: 160). Now note the 6-BIRD sign at the God D court, the bird head of which may represent the bird species known as *muwan* (see note 6). Did the sixteenth century part *moan* derive from this association?

38) The earliest re-enactment of this mythological passage may be identified at San Bartolo’s Pinturas Sub-1 Mural Room, West Wall. Here a human figure, ornately

dressed, presents a crown to a human figure seated on a (wooden) scaffold structure serving as an elevation or throne. The human figure presenting the crown wears a bird headdress. I identify this bird as a Late Preclassic (ca. 100 B.C.-A.D. 100) representation of the avian manifestation of God D. If so, the seated king (he who receives the crown), may represent the GI figure. At Piedras Negras Stelae 6, 11, 14, 25, and 33 (the so-called niche-stelae) depict the result of the same re-enactment. Each new Piedras Negras king acceded to power through a re-enactment of the mythological event as described and portrayed at Palenque's Temple XIX bench. Thus not only the preceding cosmic caiman decapitation (as described in the Temple XIX bench text) explains part of the iconography on these stelae (see Velásquez García 2006), but also the accession to kingship by GI under the supervision of Itzam Nah Yax Kokaj Mut which took place in the sky. That is why the Piedras Negras kings are seated on the scaffold framed by the Sky Band, on top of which the avian manifestation of God D perches.

Also note that the crown that is presented in the San Bartolo mural in its appearance is very close to the crown worn by the seated ruler on a re-used Olmec quartzite flanged pectoral from ca. 100 B.C.-100 A.D. (date of re-use), currently in the collection of Dumbarton Oaks (see Schele and Miller 1985: Plate 32, 32a-c):



The similarity between the crowns not only is suggestive of contemporaneity of the two, but possibly it is also indicative of a close relation between their places of origin (was this re-used Olmec pectoral looted from the San Bartolo-Xultún-Río Azul area?).

39) In this further research also a recently published paper by Mercedes de la Garza (2007) will be considered, who discusses the presence of Itzam Nah at Palenque in both hieroglyphic texts and iconographic programs. Discussion of her argument merits more space than is currently available.

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### **File History**

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