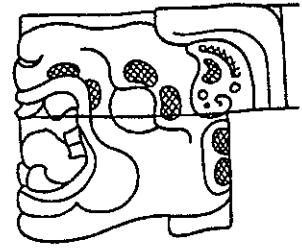


Copán Mosaics Project Copán Note* 102

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Speculations on Who Built the Temple under 11

by Linda Schele and Nikolai Grube
edited by Khristaan Villela

In 1987, while drawing the bench found by Aubrey Trik in March 1936 under the final phase of Temple 11, David Stuart realized that it was a dedication monument for a temple called "Holy Copán structure, the house of Yax-K'uk'-Mo'." Since the protagonist of this text has a jaguar head in his name, and since only the seventh or the tenth successors have full jaguar heads in their names, we knew the text had to refer to one of them, but we could not posit which. With new evidence from a few fragmentary stones, we believe we can now suggest, at least hypothetically, that the king on this step was the tenth successor, who has been nicknamed Moon-Jaguar (Schele 1986).

During summer 1991, while examining the new restoration of Temple 21A, Schele noticed a carved block mounted on the east end of the

bench (Fig. 1). The stone clearly did not belong there. It was half the height of the inscribed stones on the rest of the bench and upon inspection, she noticed it was mounted upside down. Closer inspection revealed the carving to be the lower section of a glyph reading "9 bak'tuns."

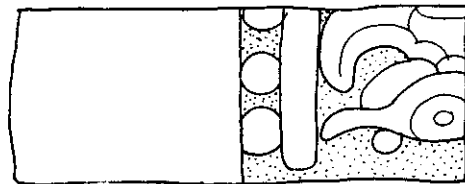


Fig. 1 Stone from Temple 21a

*The Copán Notes are a running series of commentaries and small reports deriving from the multidisciplinary research project designed to conserve, document, and analyze the architectural and sculpture monuments of the Classic Maya ruins of Copán. Originally undertaken by William L. Fash and known as the Copán Mosaics Project, this endeavor has since June 1988 formed part of the larger Copán Acropolis Project, funded and carried out by the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia through financing from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Funding for the Copán Mosaics Project, the Copán Hieroglyphic Stairway Project, and supplementary funding for the Copán Acropolis Project has been provided by the National Science Foundation (1986-1988), the National Geographic Society (1986-1989), the National Endowment for the Humanities (1986-1987), the Center for Field Research (EARTHWATCH; 1985-1988), the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (1987; 1989), the H.J. Heinz Charitable Fund (1986), Council for International Exchange of Scholars (1987), and Northern Illinois University (1985-1989). The Copán Acropolis Project, as a dependency of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia, is subject to the rules of that body. Regarding any re-use or subsequent distribution of these materials presented in the Copán Notes or an project publications, those rules stipulate that any publication using materials (either written or in the form of line drawings or photographs) derived from the Copán Acropolis Project must receive prior written consent from the Project Director (William Fash) and the Director of the Instituto (José María Casco). These notes are published by the Copán Acropolis Archaeological Project and the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia.

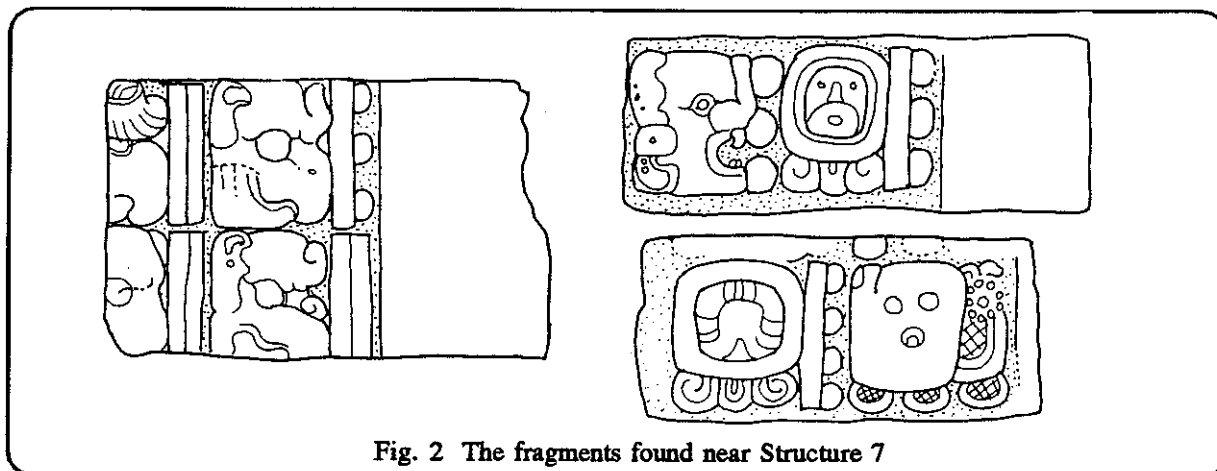


Fig. 2 The fragments found near Structure 7

The fact that the number was clearly on the left edge of the text and that the stone has a wide flat area outside the text immediately called to mind the wall panels of Temple 11, which are cut in exactly the same way. A quick inspection of the restored panels of Temple 11 (Stuart, Schele, and Grube 1989), however, revealed that no 9 bak'tun glyph was missing and there was no possible place where one could have been.

Schele was later looking through notes taken last year on the contact prints of the earliest forty rolls of film in the archives of the Copán Project. Among the stones from the old museum and storehouse were a set of four fragments (Roll 45; CPN 486.1-3), three with the same wide border (Fig. 2). The glyphs on these stones, unlike the one reset in the Temple 21A bench, were written in mirror-image. The only monument at Copán which is known to have both glyphic wall panels and mirror-image writing is Temple 11. Unfortunately, the catalogue data recorded on these stones is scant. It simply states their provenience as Structure 7, a small mound just north and west of Temple 11 on the west boundary of the plaza. Schele searched Gustav Strömsvik's field notes and found only a reference to the finding of the inscribed step under Temple 11 in March 1936. However, since Structure 7 has not been excavated, and since fragments from several buildings were stored on its steps or in front of it, we feel these mirror-written texts were likely left there after they were found elsewhere.

The dimensions recorded on the catalog sheets list them as 13.1 and 13.2 cm. high x 32.8, 28.5, and 37.8 wide. Although the reused fragment from Temple 21A falls in the same size range—13.2 cm. high x 33.3 wide—its glyph would have been over twice the size of the mirror-image glyphs. This apparent discrepancy may be because this fragment was from an initial series, which are often twice the size of other glyphs in texts. Although this format is not used in the glyphic panels of the last phase of Temple 11, there is no reason to suppose it could not have been in an earlier version of the same temple. Since Temple 11¹ is the only building to have both large glyphic wall panels and mirror-image writing, we feel these fragments likely came from an earlier phase of this structure. We suspect they came from the tunnels or the debris associated with Temple 11 and were simply moved to Temple 7.

The fragments yield some information of interest to the history of Copán. One pair are carved with the remains of a long count date or a distance number which included 8 bak'tuns, 10 k'atuns, 10 tuns, and 10 winals. In addition, there is a calendar round date of 8 Ahaw 3 Sotz' and another stone with 9 Kib followed by *ch'ahom*. First we tested to see if the long count fit the calendar round dates we had. The Ahaw combination cannot work for 8.10.10.10.0, which calls for 6 Ahaw 8 Muwan, rather than the 8 Ahaw 3 Sotz' that is written. However, 8.10.10.10.16 fell on 9 Kib 4 Pax (April 6, 249), and since the other stone has 9 Kib, we tentatively identify this new

1. Temple 18 also has glyphic inscriptions on its walls, but they were composed in angular strips rather than glyphic panels with paired columns.

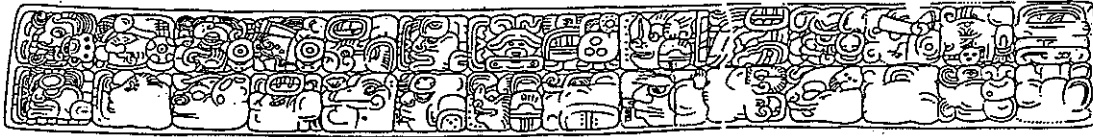


Fig. 3 The step from Temple 11-sub (drawing by David Stuart)

long count date in early Copán history as 8.10.10.10.16 9 Kib 4 Pax.

Returning to the 8 Ahaw 3 Zotz', we found all the eligible long count positions for this date. One, 9.5.19.3.0, is the accession date recorded for the tenth successor on Step 9 of the Hieroglyphic Stair (Schele 1986). Although not indisputable, this is reasonably strong evidence that the protagonist or at least a major person discussed in the mirror-image text was the tenth successor. Since this text likely comes from Temple 11, we feel this is evidence for tentatively identifying the protagonist of the step inside Temple 11 also as the tenth successor.

Stuart (personal communication, 1987) already identified a passage on this step (Fig. 3) as the dedication of a house, presumably the one in which it was mounted. There are, in fact, two dedication phrases: one using the God N verb frequent in the Primary Standard Sequence, and one reading *och butz'*, which Stuart first deciphered and circulated in a letter to other epigraphers in December, 1989. He proposed it as a house ceremony in which "incense smoke enters" the house. In both passages, the protagonist is named Ahaw² Balam.

While we cannot produce an indisputable argument that this Ahaw Balam is Moon-Jaguar, there is tantalizing evidence on Stela 9 that he was. The only still-legible version of the tenth successor's name is in Maudslay's drawing of Stela 9 (Fig. 4). It consists of Mah K'ina, the glyph that gave

the nickname "moon" to this king, and Balam written as a jaguar head. This moon sign has two tall scrolls emerging from its center. These distinguish it from other moon signs that read *ha* and "twenty." David Stuart and Barbara MacLeod³ identified this sign as one of a set recording the syllable *tzo*, so the king's name included the term Tzo-Balam.

A second example of his name may have appeared on the other side of the monument at C9-C10. The first glyph in this passage includes what appears to be the *tzo* sign with a *ta* added to the bottom. The next glyph is shown badly damaged in Maudslay's drawing, but we suspect it may

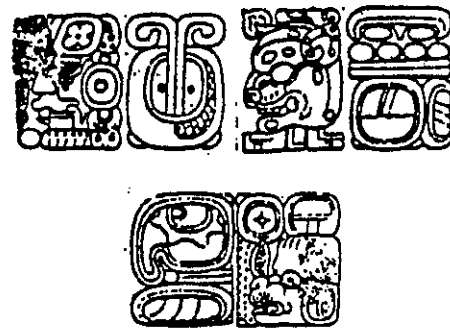


Fig. 4
Stela 9
passage

2. The second one at L1 may read *yahaw* or *k'ak' ahaw*.

3. David Stuart (personal communication, 1988) identified the substitution and proposed a *tzo* or *tzi* reading for the signs. Barbara MacLeod tested these values over the following years and added many other examples to confirm the *tzo* reading.

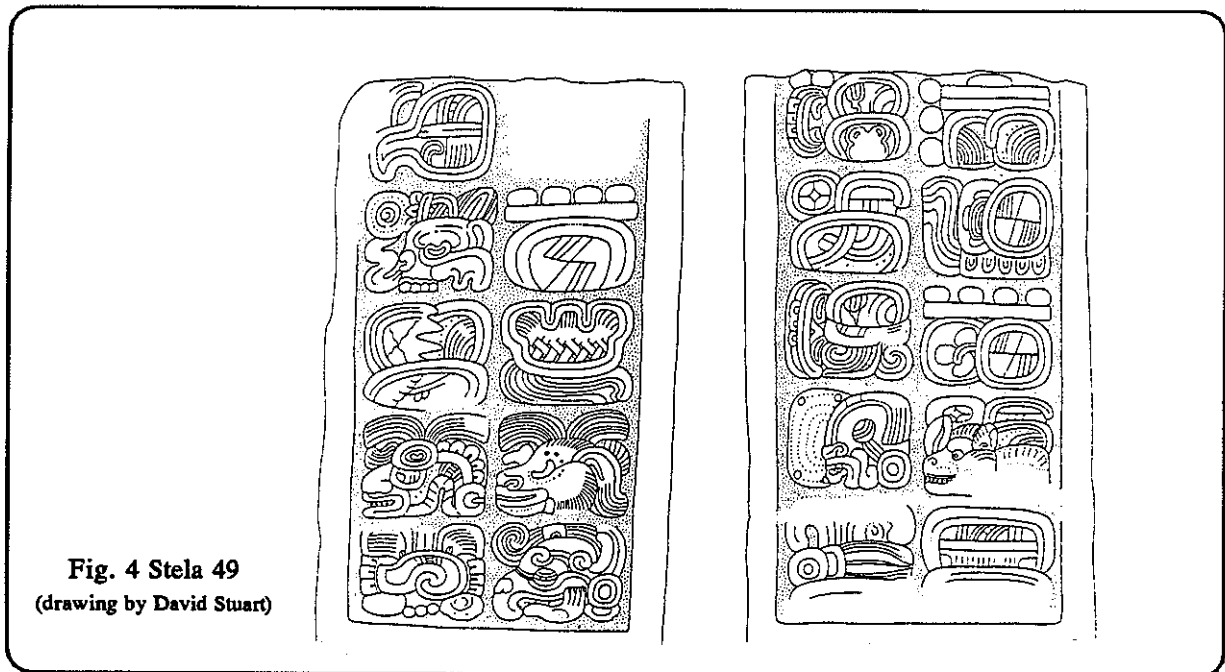


Fig. 4 Stela 49
(drawing by David Stuart)

have been the jaguar. The following glyph is an animal of some sort with a disk and triangle of dots for its ear. A similar phrase occurs at M1 in the name of the protagonist on the step from Temple 11. We suggest these might be the same. Stela 9 also mentions the father of the tenth successor, who was Waterlily-Jaguar. It specifically describes him as a *k'atun ch'ahom*, a title that is used to name the father of Ahaw Balam on the Temple 11 step.

Furthermore, Waterlily-Jaguar is the only other king of Copán who had a jaguar head in his name. However, in his name a sequence of phonetic signs possibly reading *nan* always follows the jaguar head. This glyphic compound does not appear on the step. Taken together, we feel these similarities in the texts, as tentative as they are, make a case for identifying the protagonist of the step as Moon-Jaguar or Tzo-Balam, especially since his accession may have been recorded in the mirror-image text.

If our identification is correct, then it also allows for the identification of a monument of the ninth in the succession of Yax-K'uk'-Mo'. Stela 49 (Fig. 5) was found inside Structure 10L-4 during the Copán Project excavations. We noticed that this fragmentary stela twice records a "nine successor" title. One follows a skull glyph that is

likely a personal name. The other follows *u kahi* and precedes the Copán emblem glyph. Since "nine-successor" glyphs often appear as references to the god named Bolon-Tz'akab and in the title Bolon-Tz'akab-Ahaw, we had, until now, been reluctant to identify these Stela 49 passages as references to the count of royal successors.

The first four glyphs of the Temple 11-sub step include the Primary Standard Sequence introductory glyph, the God N dedication verb, and a two-glyph passage that occurs only on this step, on Stela 49, and on a looted lintel from an unknown site. The latter example has a numerical prefix of thirteen and is used iconographically as an object carried in the hands of a person. We can therefore eliminate it from this discussion. This phrase includes square-face character with fat lips and a "snake" tail emerging from the rear of its head. The second half of the expression shows a horned deer with a footprint in place of its eye. The Stela 49 and Temple 11-sub step examples both have third-person pronominal signs as prefixes. The extreme rarity of this glyphic phrase and the fact that it is present in both texts lends support that the "nine successor" is a regular succession reference and that both texts were very close in time. We suspect they may have been composed by the same scribe. The accession of the ninth successor

was on either 9.5.17.13.7 2 Manik seating of Muwan, or 9.5.16.13.7 6 Manik 5 Muwan (Schele and Stuart 1986), only 1.7.13 or 2.7.13 before the tenth successor's accession. That his monument, if it was Stela 49, would be composed by the same scribe, is not an unreasonable possibility. We must note, however, that we are unable at present to associate the name of the ninth successor with his representation on Altar Q, where he sits on glyphs reading Sak-Lu.

Although the evidence we have presented for the identification of the Temple 11-sub step as belonging to the tenth successor and Stela 49 to the ninth is tentative at best, we feel there is enough to propose a hypothesis testable by future excavation and research.

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