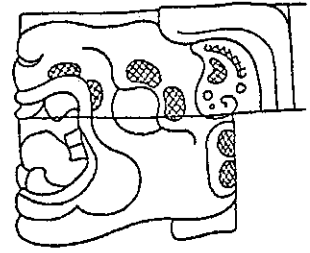


Copán Mosaics Project Copan Note* 20

July, 1987
Copán, Honduras



The Brother of Yax-Pac

by Linda Schele and Nikolai Grube

David Stuart (*Copán Note 10*) first identified the name phase of an individual who is named on a series of Late Classic Copán monuments from the reign of Yax-Pac (Fig. 1). This name phrase consists of a element representing the crossed-bands device of the Quadripartite Badge prefixed to *ahau*, written either phonetically or logographically, a sky glyph, and T12 *ah* prefixed to a skull. This personage, Yahau Chaan Ah Bac, is the protagonist of Altars U, T, and GIII (*Copán Note 5*).

The parentage of Yahau Chaan Ah Bac is recorded on the rear of Altar U with the mother's name recorded at K4-N1, after a "child of" expression using the T712 "bloodletting" expression (Fig. 2a). The status of this individual as "the first Copán *ahau*" (*Copán Note 5*, see I1) may be explained by the identity of his mother,

who includes among her titles "mother of the *bacab*, Copán *ahau*" (L5-N1).

The same woman's name also appears on Stela 8 in a passage noting a woman from Palenque (Marcus 1976), who is recorded as the mother of the current king, Yax-Pac. Stela 8, unfortunately now destroyed, recorded the first katun anniversary of Yax-Pac's accession, linking it to 9.17.0.0.0 and the Baktun ending 10.0.0.0.0 on one side (Morley 1920:340-343) and on the other linking Yax-Pac's accession date, 9.16.12.5.17 6 Caban 10 Mol, to a day five days after its exact katun anniversary (9.17.12.6.2 9 Ik 15 Zip). The "fish-in-hand" bloodletting recorded for this day can be taken for the rite that ended the anniversary celebration which must have begun five days earlier. This one-katun anniversary is also recorded

* Copán Notes are a running series of commentaries and small reports deriving from the multidisciplinary research project designed to record and analyze the monolithic and architectural sculpture of Copán. The Copán Mosaics Project has received support from the Center for Field Research (Earthwatch; 1985, 1986, and 1987), Northern Illinois University (1985, 1986, and 1987), The National Science Foundation (1986 and 1987), The National Endowment for the Humanities (1986 and 1987), the National Geographic Society (1986 and 1987), The H. John Heinz III Charitable Foundation (1986), and the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* (I.H.A.H.; 1985 and 1986), Council for International Exchange of Scholars (1987) and is conducted under the authority and jurisdiction of the I.H.A.H. through a five-year agreement between the I.H.A.H. and Northern Illinois University. According to the terms of that agreement, any publication using materials (either written or in the form of line drawings or photos) derived from the Copán Mosaics Project must receive prior written consent from the Project director (William Fash) and the Director of the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* (Victor Cruz Reyes).

on Altar T, another monument of Yahau Chaan Ah Bac.

Yax-Pac's name is recorded with on Stela 8 (Fig. 2b) with its "New Sky-at-Horizon" variant and with the 'sky-penis' title, '2 katun 'shell-fist', a badly eroded glyph, and the Copán Emblem Glyph. The mother's name begins with the T670 "child of mother" expression followed by T1000 *na*, the usual introductory glyph for female names. The individual name consists of *yax*, 'ahau,' *ci* (T102), T7851, and *uc* (T738c:102). The name closes with the Palenque Emblem Glyph.

The same personal names appear on Altar U (K4-N1) with the color term *chac* replacing *yax*. Here the name is missing the Palenque Emblem Glyph, but it includes the honorific notation of the woman as the mother of the king, record as "*bacab Copán ahau*."

The father of Yahau Chaan Ah Bac is also named on Altar U at L1-L2 following a unique parentage phrase including a baktun bird following the T757 verb (Fig. 2a). His name phrase shares the glyph for God A' with the name of Smoke-Monkey, the fourteenth successor of Yax-Kuk-Mo', but the remaining two glyphs of his name are not in common with that king's name. The first of these name glyphs includes the head variant of the 'winged-quincunx' from the Primary Standard Sequence. The second is a knot-skull. We must conclude at this time that this person was not a king of Copán since his name does not occur on Altar Q or on any other monument.

This identification leaves a question as to the identity of the king's father. Yax-Pac records himself on Stela 8 as a "two-katun shell-fist lord" at the time of his first katun anniversary requiring that he was less than twenty years of age at his accession. His youth allows sufficient time for his mother to have married a second man after the

death of his father and to have born a half-brother to the king.

Yax-Pac's father is not named anywhere in the surviving inscriptions. In fact, parentage statements of any type are rare at Copán. Other than the Stela 8 record, only the parentage of Smoke-Imix-God K is recorded on Stela 10 and the Hieroglyphic Stairs and his parentage seems to have been unusual. He is not recorded as the child of the previous king, Butz'-Chaan. The fact that other parentage relationships are not recorded at Copán implies that they were normal and followed expected father to son descent. Yax-Pac does not name his father, perhaps because the descent was obvious and from the expected source, the previous king Smoke-Shell. He records his mother because she was from Palenque and thus unusual in Copán genealogy and brought prestige with her foreign identity.

Summary

With present evidence the identity of the father of Yahau Chaan Ah Bac and Yax Pac cannot be resolved; however, it is clear that their mothers were the same person, the woman from a noble family of Palenque. The fact that Yahau Chaan Ah Bac's mother was from Palenque, as well as the mother of Copán's king, may be the reason why Yahau Chaan Ah Bac was allowed to commission such sizeable and important monuments. His status appears to have been the *yax ahau* of the Copán king, his 'First Lord.' We should note also that there is a parallel case at Palenque. Chac-Zutz' was the half-brother of the king Chacal and served as his principle lord and probably as war chief of the city. The location of Altars U and T in the village area may also suggest that Yahau Chaan Ah Bac was administrator of that sub-region of the Copán valley.

1 Lounsbury (personal communication, 1976) has tentatively suggested a value of *pu* for this sign, based on its appearance at Palenque in the name phrase of GI of the Palenque Triad. He has proposed this title TL84:785 reads *hun.ah:pu*.

It is of interest also that the Yax-Pac appears with the Copán Emblem Glyph rather than that of Palenque. This pattern suggests that Emblem Glyphs were transferred by patrilineal descent.

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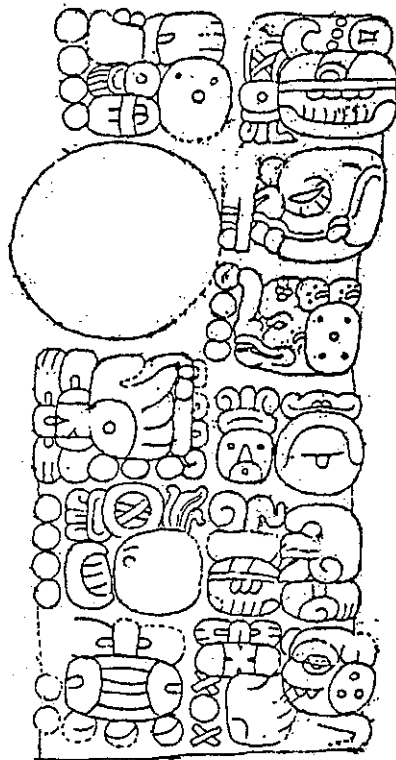
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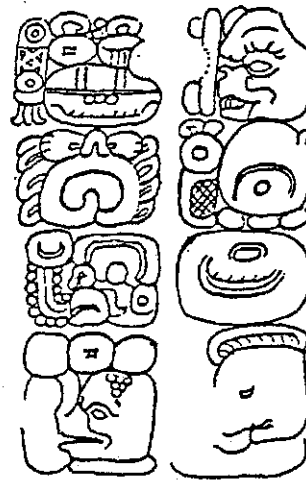
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Altar G



Altar T

Figure 1 The Name Phrase of Yahu Chan Ah Bac

a. Altar U



Yahau Chaan Ah Bac



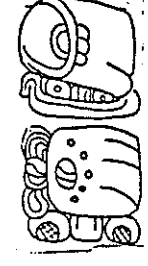
"child of"



father



"blood of"



mother's name



"child of"

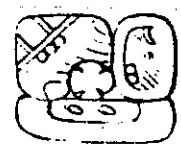


mother's name

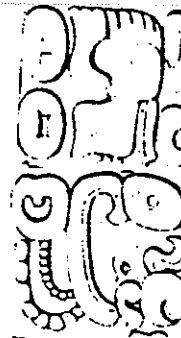
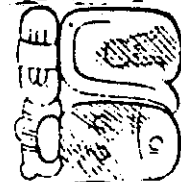
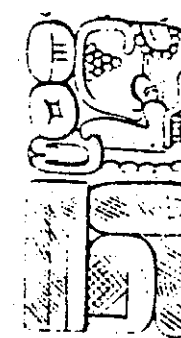


"blood of"

b. Stela 8



Yax Pac



Blood
Palenque
Ahau

Figure 2 The parentage of Yahau Chaan Ah Bac and Yax Pac