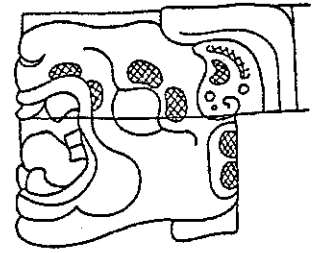


## Copán Mosaics Project

### Copan Note\* 26

October, 1987  
Copán, Honduras



## A Possible Death Date for Smoke-Imix-God K

by Linda Schele

Located in the Sepulturas Group, Structure 9N-82 is a late building containing a the full-figure inscription displayed on the edge of the bench in the central room. The bench inscriptions records the date of the building dedication at 9.19.3.2.0 11 Ahau 3 Yax (Grube and Schele 1987). However, extensive excavations (Webster, Fash, and Abrams 1986) of the plaza fronting 9N-82 have produced evidence of long term occupation of the group and early phases of the same building from the Late Classic period. Some of the most important pieces of sculpture from the immediately previous stage include the Pauhtun sculpture (Fig. 1) cached under the final phase of the building (Schele and Miller 1986: Pl. 46; Webster *et al.*: Lam. 38-42) and three stone fragments with texts reused in the stairs immediately below the entry door to the building.

One of the dates on these reused stones (Fig. 2) has been identified by David Stuart (personal communication, 1987) as 9.14.3.6.8 5 Lamat 1 Zip (March 27, A.D. 715), the first katun anniversary of the accession of 18 Rabbit. This identification suggests that the other date from these fragments, 12 Manik 0 Yaxkin, could also be associated with the reign of the same ruler (Fig. 3).

The glyphs that follow the CR on this second fragment include the wing sign that occurs as the verbal root in the 'wing-shell' expression for death. The 'wing' is followed by T513  $\mu$  and the zac-ahau expression that occur in the possessed noun that normally follows the verb in the same 'wing-shell' death expression. Furthermore, this same zac-ahau glyph occurs on the final phase of Structure 9N-82, once emanating from the nostril of the Underworld Maw on the outer wall of the

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building (Fig. 4) and one suspended from a rope that drops from the inscription on the bench into the hands of the young Pauhtun sustaining the bench (Fig. 5).

Peter Mathews (personal communication to William Fash, 1978) has suggested this zac-ahau glyph is held by the Pauhtun (Fig. 5) as a symbol of communication with the soul of the dead predecessor of the bench's protagonist. Mathews' suggestion seems on target because this very ancestor is in fact represented on the left interior leg of the bench (Schele 1987). And in the exterior usage the zac-ahau represents some quality that emerges from the nostril of the Underworld Maw as if it were breath. In both contexts a reference to something like "deceased," "soul," or "spirit" would be appropriate.

In the text fragment, zac-ahau (Fig. 3) is preceded by a possessive pronoun and the verb normally used in the 'wing-shell' death expression. If this combination is fact an abbreviated version of the 'wing-shell' death expression, then whose death is recorded?

The remaining text does not help answer this question. The glyphs occurring in the second half of the block is not recognizable as one of the currently known kings of Copan. However, the Calendar Round date may provide the clue. 12 Manik 0 Yaxkin occurred on 9.13.3.5.7, just 1.1 or twenty-one days before 9.13.3.6.8 7 Lamat 1 Mol (July 9, 695), the date of 18 Rabbit's accession. This interval is in keeping with other interregnums documented at Copán as the following lists shows (Stuart and Schele 1986):

10th Moon-Jaguar to 11th Butz'-Chaan	24 days
11th Butz'-Chaan to 12th Smoke-Imix	16 days
13th 18 Rabbit to 14th Smoke-Monkey	39 days
14th Smoke-Monkey to 15th Smoke-Shell	14 days

I suggest therefore that the death recorded is of Smoke-Imix-God K, 18 Rabbit's predecessor, who died according to this reconstruction just twenty-one days before 18 Rabbit's accession. The im-

plication is also that the two fragments, one recording the first katun anniversary of this accession and the other recording the death as the event preceding accession, are fragments from the same sculpture that one adorned the earlier phase of N9-82. As David Stuart has suggested, this dating places the volumetric sculpture of Pauhtun (Fig. 1) in 18 Rabbit's reign, a dating stylistically in keeping with the exuberant volumetric carvings of that period.

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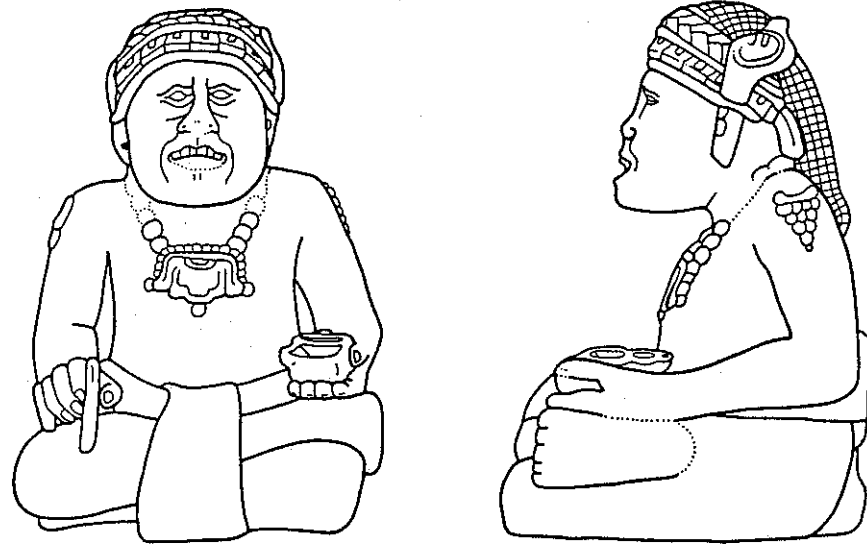


Fig. 1 Pauahtun from earlier stage (dwg by B.W. Fash)

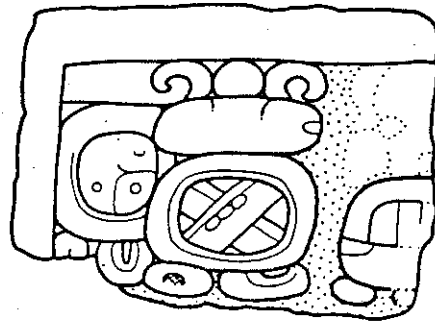


Fig. 2 Fragment with 9.14.3.6.8 5 Lamat 1 Zip

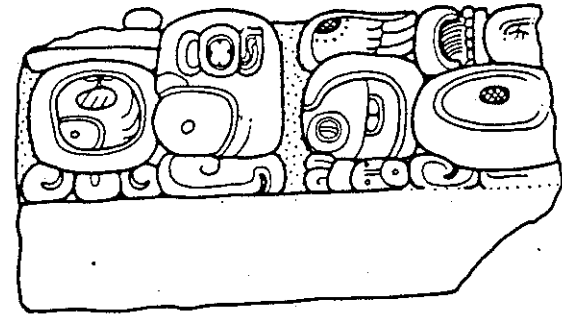


Fig. 3 Fragment with 12 Mani seating of Yaxkin

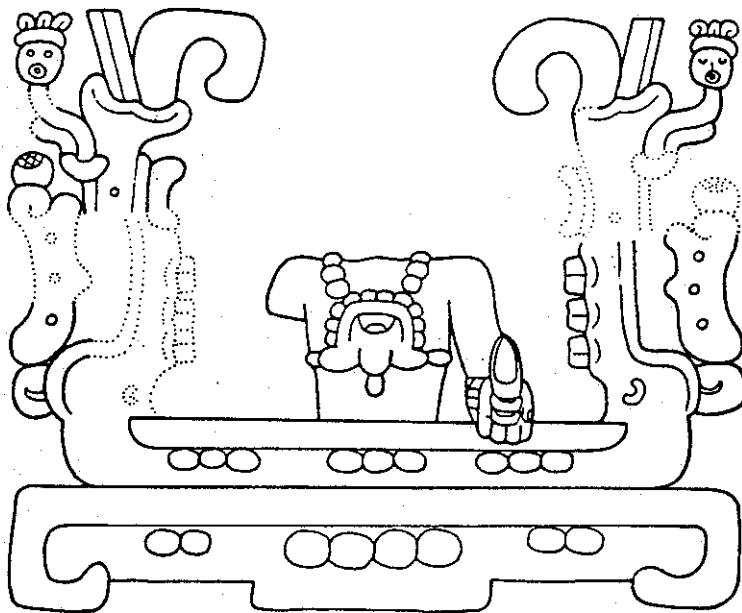


Fig. 4 Zac-ahau with the Underworld Maw



Fig. 5 Zac-ahau and the Pauahtun