

Copán Note 3

The Chronology of Altar U

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The text of Altar U includes five Calendar Round dates of which two can be placed in the Long Count with security. C1-D1 records 9.16.12.5.12 6 Caban 10 Mol, widely recognized as the accession of Yax Pac; here the date is followed by *chumwanix ti ahau le* (he was seated as lord") and a recognized form of Yax Pac's name phrase. The second CR 4 Ahau 13 Ceh (F4 and G1-H1) is the hotun ending 9.18.5.0.0. The remaining three CR dates should occur within a reasonable distance of these Long Count positions, giving the following readings as the most likely positions:

1. The 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 and 1986), Northern Illinois University (1985 and 1986), The National Science Foundation (1986 and 1987), The National Endowment for the Humanities (1986 and 1987), the National Geographic Society (1986), The H. John Heinz III Charitable Foundation (1986), and the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* (I.H.A.H.; 1985 and 1986), 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* (Ricardo Agurcia).

G3-H3: 9.17. 9. 2.12 3 Eb 0 Pop
 D5-E1: 9.18. 1.13. 2 9 Ik 10 Mol
 O1-P1: 9.18. 2. 5.17 3 Caban 0 Pop

Both calendric and noncalendric evidence supports these three LC positions. A1 records a Distance Number of ____10.0.0 followed by the ADI *utix* suggesting that one pair of these five dates should be related by this span of time. The 3 Caban 0 Pop date which begin the text on the top side of the altar is 1.10.0.0 after the accession date of Yax-Pac, the first date on the rear.

9.16.12. 5.17 6 Caban 10 Mol
 1.10. 0. 0 add
 9.18. 2. 5.17 3 Caban 0 Pop

Since the DN and ADI immediately precedes this accession date, the reading seems an appropriate one. However, the syntactical arrangement of the ADI in this analysis would not conform to its behavior at Copán and other sites. The ADI is composed of the verb *ut* 'to come to pass' or 'to happen' marked by T126 as a perfective or pluperfect 'it had come to past.' In the discourse pattern of hieroglyphic texts using the *ut* verb, the dates to which the refer are the subjects of the verb. A second sentence then follows in which one or the other verbs is marked with T679 *iwal*, the conjunctive "and then." In some cases, the verb associated with the early date can also be marked by T126. This last pattern is evident on Altar U. T644 *chum* is marked at C2 with both perfective suffixing T130:116 -*wan* and the pluperfect T126 (*ix* or *ih*). *Ut*. "to come to pass," reappears at C5 with the *iwal* prefix, foregrounding the date following it as the subject. The following paraphrase shows the expected relationship between the Distance Number, the ADI/PDI marking, and discourse structure:

10 tuns and 1 katun after it had come to pass 6 Caban 10 Mol; he was seated as lord, Yax Pac; and then it came to pass 9 Ik 10 Mol . . .

While the DN is the exact one required between 6 Caban 10 Mol and 3 Caban 0 Pop, it also approximates the span of time between 6 Caban 10 Mol and 9 Ik 10 Mol--1.9.7.5. The use of approximate Distance Numbers rounded up to the next highest whole unit is documented at Palenque and Copan. Furthermore, relating the DN to the latter set of dates has other advantages in that the 9 Ik 10 Mol date is the twenty-ninth haab (365-day year) anniversary of Yax-Pac's accession. Thus, two dates celebrated an anniversary of Yax-Pac's accession: 9 Ik 10 Mol, the 29th 365-day year, and 3 Caban 0 Pop, the 30th 360-day year. As we will see, this altar features another haab (365-day year) anniversary

At G2, another DN (13 tuns) precedes another *utix* ADI and the date 3 Eb 0 Pop, and the verb following the date is again seating and marked with T126. The presence of the DN of 13 tuns and the T126 pluperfect suffix on both verbs suggests that this 3 Eb 0 Pop date should be related to another date on the altar. The date beginning the upper inscription is followed by the same DN, now written, however, as an ordinal construction 'the thirteen tun.' Furthermore the statement of the event following this notation is remarkably similar to the expression following the 3 Eb date.

The separation between the 3 Eb 0 Pop and 3 Caban 0 Pop dates is 13.3.5 or 13 x 365 days. The Distance Number must, therefore, refer to 13 haabs, not thirteen tuns. Based on other evidence, Mathews and Justeson (1983) have suggested that T548 was read at several sites as *haab* in both Distance Numbers and Long Counts. Its use for the 365-day year is indisputable on Altar U, although it clearly normally stands for the 360-day year in Distance Numbers and Long Counts at Copán and other sites.

One final Distance Number on Altar U is noteworthy, although we do not fully understand its usage. At E4, a notation of 5?? *tu-tun* (TV.89:528) precedes "fourth tun." This combination is similar to others used at Copán and elsewhere to record a specific tun within a katun, such the "5th tun of the 4 katun." However, this type of interpretation does not make sense here. The 9 Ik date (9.18.1.13.17) is in the second tun of the hotun and the DN required to reach the hotun ending is 3.4.18. We suspect that the notation is another DN rounded up to the nearest whole tun, but we do not understand how the "4th tun" notation relates to the *hotun* written before it.

The chronology of Altar U also gives the reading order of the text, which begins on the left side with the 1.10.0.0 DN, continues onto the rear surface to the right side and finally to the top surface in the following pattern:

C1-D1:	9.16.12. 5.17	6 Caban 10 Mol	
A1:	1.10. 0. 0		
D5-E1:	9.18. 1.13. 2	9 Ik 10 Mol	
E4:	4. 0. 0		
F4,G1-H1:	9.18. 5. 0. 0	4 Ahau 13 Ceh	
G3-H3:	9.17. 9. 2.12	3 Eb 0 Pop	
G2,O2:	13. 3. 5		written as "13 haabs"
O1-P1:	9.18. 2. 5.17	3 Caban 0 Pop	

References

Justeson, John and Peter Mathews

1983 The Seating of the *tun*: Further evidence concerning a Late Preclassic Lowland Maya Stela Cult. *American Antiquity* 48, pp. 586-593)



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J

I

H

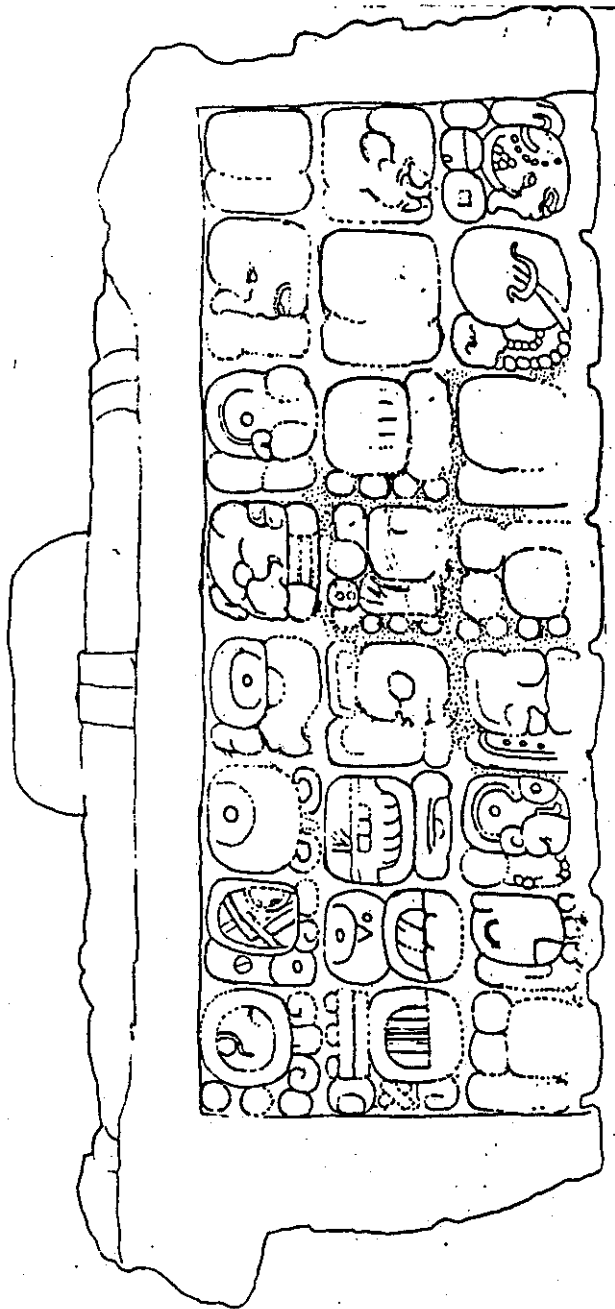
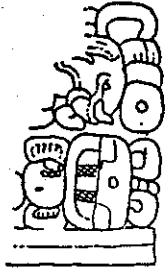
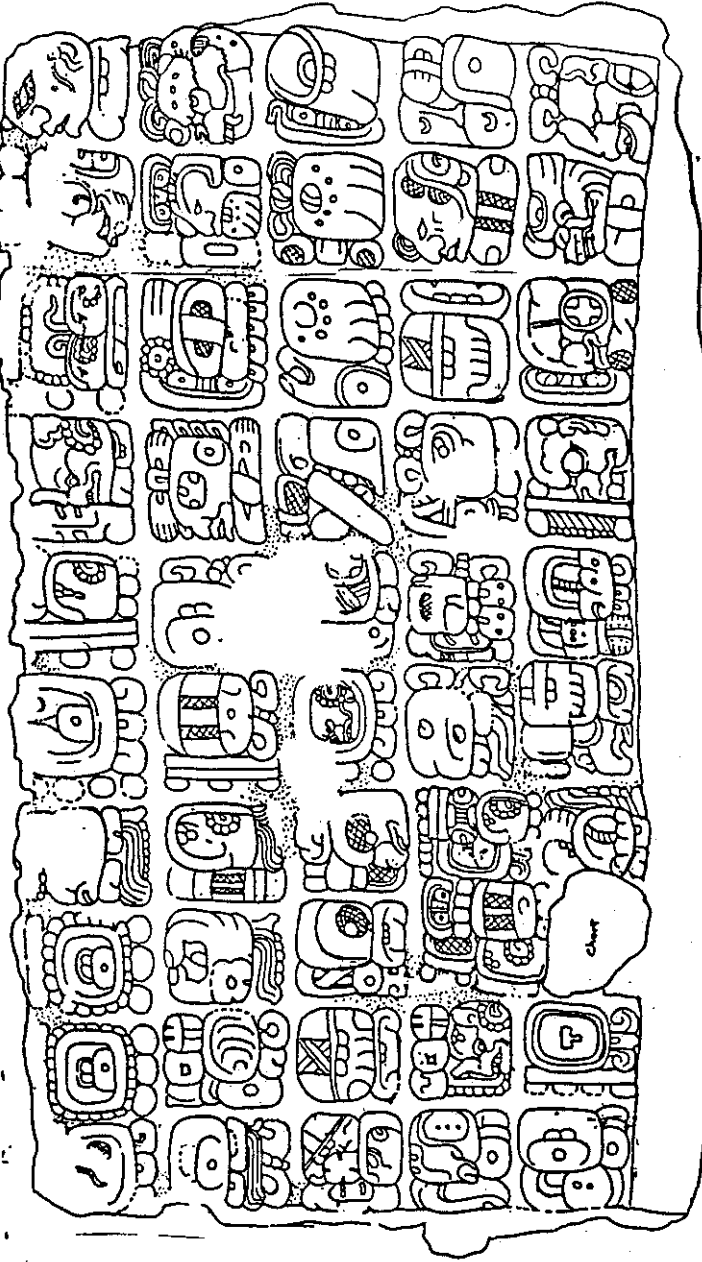
G

F

E

D

C



17

16

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