PATRONS OF LA CORONA:
DEITIES AND POWER IN A CLASSIC MAYA COMMUNITY

Joanne Parsley Baron

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Dr. Richard M. Leventhal
Professor of Anthropology
Supervisor of Dissertation

Dr. Clark Erickson
Professor of Anthropology
Graduate Group Chair

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Asif Agha
Professor of Anthropology

Dr. Marcello Canuto
Associate Professor of Anthropology,
Tulane University
PATRONS OF LA CORONA:

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Joanne Parsley Baron
For Robert J. Sharer,

Carlos Enrique Fernández

and José Belarmino Quixchan
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“Over these years of working with Dr. Sharer, I have observed some of his characteristics: he is omniscient, in that he seems to know everything there is to know about Maya archaeology, and wrote the book about it (several times!). He is omnipotent, in that his support can magically seem to get you onto the coolest projects. He is magnanimous, in that I have never known him to be angry or in any way unpleasant. And he is attentive, in that he will check in with you exactly when you were thinking about scheduling a meeting with him. Do these character traits remind you of anyone? Yes, Dr. Sharer is in many ways similar to Santa Clause.”

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ABSTRACT

PATRONS OF LA CORONA:
DEITIES AND POWER IN A CLASSIC MAYA COMMUNITY

Joanne P. Baron
Richard M. Leventhal

While political power in ancient societies has often been described by archaeologists applying cross-cultural or universal models of political institutions, unequal social relationships are better described by examining the meaning of individual actions and discourses in past societies. In this dissertation, the insights of semiotic anthropology are applied to a set of religious practices of the Classic period Maya (AD 250–900) in order to understand their relationship to political power. Members of this society venerated patron gods, deities believed to provide abundance and protection to specific communities. Patron deity veneration is explored through three lines of evidence: archaeological remains of patron deity temples and veneration rituals; epigraphic texts that discuss patron deities; and ethnographic and historical data relating to religious practices from later periods. It is argued that patron deities can be distinguished from other categories of supernatural being, such as ancestors or general gods, by the specific rituals used to venerate them, their status as symbols of community identity, and their perceived ability to influence the world of humans. Patron deity veneration was used by rulers of the Classic period and later periods to justify and legitimize their authority. They claimed close, personal connections to patron gods and publicly proclaimed the arduous burden of religious ritual. The use of patron deity veneration in local politics is explored
at the site of La Corona, Guatemala. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence are used together to demonstrate that new patron deities were introduced into the community after a period of civil conflict. Two elite families vied for political control of La Corona, using ancestor veneration and patron deity veneration as symbolic media to justify their competing claims. The replacement of old ancestor shrines with new patron deity temples signified the shifting politics of the community. Using La Corona as a case study, it is argued that Classic Maya politics are best described by attending to the significance of specific social actions, such as patron deity veneration rituals, and the discourses that accompanied those acts.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This dissertation is about Classic period (AD 250-900) Maya patron deities and about Classic period Maya politics. The title of the dissertation, “Patrons of La Corona,” in fact refers to both supernatural and political patronage. For the Classic Maya, the relationship between humans and patron gods was quite similar to the relationship between communities and their rulers. Patron deities were gods believed to have special, interpersonal relationships with human beings, and to actively participate in human affairs. The nature of their participation included overseeing human ritual actions (such as accession ceremonies) in order to sanction them, as well as bringing about positive phenomena like agricultural abundance and success in war. In exchange, these deities were sustained by human beings: they were fed, bathed, clothed, and sheltered. This reciprocal arrangement is similar to relationships of patronage among human beings in Classic Maya society. Maya rulers, like gods, were responsible for bringing about positive events in the community, such as material wealth and political success. In return for overseeing the well-being of the community, they were sustained by its members in the form of tribute and labor.

Political relationships among the Classic Maya, or any society, cannot be understood without attention to the particular meaning of the social acts through which they are framed. Cross-cultural models of politics do not have sufficient explanatory power to fully illuminate the workings of Classic Maya society. Only theoretical perspectives that forefront the interpretation of social action within its broader
meaningful context have the ability to explain certain enduring cultural phenomena such as hereditary rulership or patron deity veneration.

For this reason, this dissertation explores the ritual veneration of patron deities from a perspective which seeks to understand its meaning and the ways in which that meaning was negotiated and manipulated by particular social actors in order to achieve particular outcomes. This perspective relies on all available data, including archaeology, epigraphy, more recent historical documents, and ethnographic observations. Specifically, I look at the site of La Corona as a case study for which a particular context and meaning of patron deity veneration can be examined in detail. La Corona is a small site in the Northwestern part of Petén, Guatemala. One of its groups of monumental architecture, nicknamed “Coronitas,” contains a series of small pyramidal platforms, which functioned as patron deity shrines. These features and the monumental history of La Corona will be explored in this dissertation.

In this chapter, I will discuss the goals I seek to accomplish in writing this dissertation: to apply a semiotic model to understand political power in the past; to provide an example of the productive combination of epigraphic and archaeological datasets; to provide a detailed study of a religious phenomenon of the Classic Maya that has been largely overlooked; and to use this new model and information to provide insight into the politics of the Classic period Maya. After explaining these goals more fully, I will give the reader background information about the Classic Maya themselves. Finally, I will give an outline of the rest of the dissertation and the main arguments that I make in it.
Goals of the Dissertation

The first goal of my dissertation project is to apply the insights of semiotic anthropology to the study of social institutions in past societies. This goal arises from my assertion that it is insufficient to model political power by reference to cross-cultural or universal theories of its workings (see Sharer and Golden 2004). More precisely, I see power as arising from sequences of meaningful action, which transform social relationships through their very significance. Thus, in general terms, it is possible to model the relationship between transformative capacity and meaningful action, but it is impossible to fully understand these processes in a given society without attention to the meanings of particular actions themselves.

Semiotic anthropologists have noted the complex nature of signs, both of the linguistic and non-linguistic varieties. One contribution of semiotic anthropology is the recognition of the importance of language in human affairs. While some social theorists tend to ignore the role of linguistic acts, semiotic anthropologists have emphasized their unique features, as well as those properties they shares with non-linguistic signs. Specifically, linguistic and non-linguistic signs share the world of pragmatic meaning, or meaning that is based heavily on the context in which signs are used.

Linguistic and non-linguistic signs are both used in the broad category of “social action.” This term was introduced by Max Weber, who defined action as “attach[ing] a subjective meaning to behavior—being overt or covert, omission or acquiescence” and social as “this subjective meaning tak[ing] into account of the behavior of others and thereby oriented in its course” (Weber 1978:4). Over time, these individual social actions accrue to create large-scale reflexive models of the way society functions or should
function. Some of these large-scale reflexive models are referred to as “institutions.”

While institutions, such as the Classic Maya royal court, often appear to be stable, enduring, and self-evident, they are in fact composed of individual actors whose roles have been defined by individual social actions accumulated over time. Thus, these institutions are actually inherently fragile, and are incapable of enduring past the point when the reflexive models that shape them cease to exist. Thus, individual persons invested in social institutions constantly try to reaffirm and justify them through new social actions, such as discourses and rituals.

Social institutions such as the Maya royal court shape political relationships within societies by defining the normative entitlements of some individuals over others. For example, institutions model who has the right to demand tribute or deference from whom. Thus, in order to understand political relationships in the past, it is essential to understand the individual social actions that both create and uphold large-scale reflexive models and institutions. This is an inherently interpretive process: understanding political power in ancient societies involves interpreting actions and discourses that took place in the past. Interpretive archaeology is challenging because individuals of the past society are no longer alive. However, it can be accomplished through the use of a robust ethnographic analogy. In addition, the archaeologist should make use of as many different types of data as possible to assist her interpretation of past social actions.

This brings me to a second goal of this dissertation: to provide a case study of what is possible if the disciplinary boundaries between epigraphy and archaeology in Maya studies are breached. Although relations between these two disciplines were once openly hostile, recent decades have seen a more interdisciplinary understanding of
Classic Maya society. Nevertheless, both archaeology and epigraphy of the Classic Maya require extensive study and there are few academic programs in the United States that offer instruction in both. Thus, archaeologists continue to rely on specialist epigraphers to translate inscriptions, while epigraphers continue to rely on archaeologists for their interpretation of other material remains.

Both epigraphy and archaeology carry advantages and disadvantages, but can be remarkably complementary when used together. Epigraphy, for example, is often criticized because it relies on data which may not be fully representative of Classic Maya society. Hieroglyphic texts were commissioned by elite members of society. They were also created by elites, since the scribal class seems to have been drawn from ruling and elite families. Texts deal almost exclusively with the concerns of the elites, almost never even acknowledging the existence of the rest of society. Thus, inscriptions were of, by, and for elites, and therefore only represent one particular discursive perspective. Furthermore, they were only used in certain contexts, such as building dedications. Hieroglyphic texts that may have dealt with other aspects of life, such as accounting, administration, or even poetry, were probably recorded on paper, and thus have not survived the millennia. In spite of these drawbacks, epigraphic data are useful because they have the potential to reveal the cultural meaning of certain material phenomena. For example, we can see that a large temple platform exists, and that certain objects were left in it as offerings. But only by reading the accompanying text can we learn that the temple was dedicated to a particular god or ancestor. Thus, epigraphic data have limited contexts, but they are rich in meaning.
Archaeological data, on the other hand, come from many contexts. Many actions leave material remains, and these remains can be analyzed to tell which actions were performed, where, when and by whom. However, the meanings of those actions are not always apparent. Interpretation of archaeological data relies on ethnographic analogy as well as on epigraphic readings (see Chapter 2). Only by using these data sources together can the maximum amount of information be obtained and the best interpretations proposed. Several archaeological projects have made it an explicit goal to use archaeology and epigraphy together. Investigators at Copan, for example, called this the “conjunctive approach” and successfully used archaeology to give detail and context to epigraphic narratives (Fash and Sharer 1991:166, 170). Specifically, epigraphic interpretations provided by David Stuart, Linda Schele, and others (see Stuart 2003), argued that the royal dynasty at Copan had been founded in the 5th century by a lord named K’ínich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ who had connections to Tikal and the Central Mexican city of Teotihuacan. Excavators located a tomb from this time period and, using artifact analysis as well as strontium isotope analysis from the bones, determined that the evidence was consistent with this as K’ínich Yax K’uk’ Mo’s tomb (Bell et al. 2004; Bell et al. 1999; Buikstra et al. 2004; Sharer, Fash, et al. 1999; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999). Thus, archaeological investigation was used to give context to a more limited discourse appearing in hieroglyphic texts. Following this example, the integration of archaeological and epigraphic data has become more and more common on archaeological projects studying the Classic period Maya in recent years.

One of the challenges of combining archaeology and epigraphy is finding a reasonable interpretation when the epigraphic and archaeological records do not entirely
agree, or do not meet the investigator’s initial expectations. For example, investigators at Caracol noted that, as expected, successful warfare events, recorded in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the site, corresponded to periods of increased prosperity and integration as revealed by the archaeological record. However, they noted that Late Classic Caracol also demonstrates prosperity, integration, and high populations during a time when the hieroglyphic record is unexpectedly silent, supposedly indicating a weakened polity (Chase et al. 2008). In order to resolve apparent contradictions such as these, the investigator must seek the best possible interpretation of the data available, both archaeological and epigraphic, rather than privileging one of these data sets over the other. In fact, this approach is useful even when the archaeological record and epigraphic record seem to align. Such challenges exist at La Corona as well. For example, given the emphasis on La Corona’s relationships with Calakmul in the looted “Site Q” inscriptions, it had long been expected that La Corona would prove to be a special-purpose site, such as a garrison (Barrientos and Canuto 2009). Archaeological investigation is showing the opposite: that La Corona’s ceremonial core and settlement pattern resemble other Classic period communities in the region, and show no evidence of having been built for some other specific purpose. Reconciling these two narratives is a challenge, but is possible if we remember that hieroglyphic inscriptions were created with particular discursive goals in mind. Thus, they do not give a complete picture of the history of the site.

The historic division of labor between epigraphy and archaeology has allowed some cultural phenomena of the Classic period Maya to fall through the cracks and remain under-explored. Patron deity veneration is one such phenomenon. Some patron deities have been recognized due to epigraphic efforts. The most well-known group of
patron deities is that of Palenque (Berlin 1963; Lounsbury 1973; 1980). Palenque has a large corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions, making it an especially important and well-studied site by epigraphers. Also, for reasons not entirely clear, it has a particularly rich set of inscriptions relating to patron deity veneration. These inscriptions have been subject to much scrutiny by many scholars, allowing for a detailed understanding of patron deity veneration at Palenque.

Unfortunately, because the inscriptions of Palenque are so abundant and were so important during the period of hieroglyphic decipherment, there has historically been a tendency within epigraphy to interpret other sites using Palenque as a model. For example, inscriptions about patron deities at Palenque make use of a special “patron deity introductory glyph.” Thus, patron deities at other sites have been defined by the presence of this glyph (Stuart et al. 1999:II–57; Stuart 2006a:160), while other patron deities in inscriptions often go unmentioned. However, this particular glyph only appears in the inscriptions from Palenque, Caracol, and Tikal. Thus, scholarship about patron deities has been primarily restricted to a handful of sites due to the unrealistic belief that all inscriptions having to do with patron deities should be similar to the inscriptions of Palenque.

Archaeologists, on the other hand, are severely limited in their ability to contribute to the exploration of patron deities. This is because it is often difficult to distinguish different types of ritual activity based on material remains alone. Although there are some attributes which seem to be common in patron deity temples, these are not easily distinguished from other temples, such as ancestor shrines. In fact, patron deity temples across the Maya area show remarkable variation in size and shape. Thus, a
temple with no accompanying inscription can only tentatively be associated with patron
deity veneration, while one with an accompanying hieroglyphic inscription can be more
ciently interpreted as having this function. Because of difficulties such as this,
archaeologists are often forced to simply state that certain structures were religious in
nature, but that the exact use and meaning of structures, and the artifact assemblages
found there, remain opaque.

Thus, neither archaeologists nor epigraphers have adequately explored patron
deity veneration among the Classic Maya, nor its important role in Classic Maya politics.
A third goal of this dissertation is to fill this void. For this reason, my dissertation
includes several sources of data, brought together within one explanatory framework. I
have collected all examples of hieroglyphic inscriptions related to patron deities that I
could find, in order to define patron deities and distinguish them from other supernatural
entities. This collection of hieroglyphic information is made available here, so that future
scholars may build on my work.

In addition to the epigraphic component of the study, I have undertaken five field
seasons of excavations at La Corona, in order to understand the importance of patron
deity veneration within this particular community. Finally, I have drawn on the efforts of
historians and ethnographers of the Maya and other Mesoamerican groups to examine the
historical relationships between Classic Maya patron deity veneration and more recent
religious practices, including patron saint veneration. This comparison demonstrates that
more recent religious traditions are remarkably similar to that which is attested in the
Classic period and that these practices have retained their pivotal importance in
community relationships. It is my hope that future scholars, even if they should disagree
with my theoretical or interpretive framework, may draw upon the information I have collected for this dissertation, in order to advance Maya scholarship.

This brings me to my final goal: to explore the relationship between patron deity veneration and political power among the Classic Maya. Classic Maya society was highly stratified, with a small number of individuals making up the elite class. An even smaller subset of elite individuals comprised the actual rulers of Maya communities. These were often drawn from a single family or small group of interrelated families. These rulers were pivotal to many aspects of society. It is known, for example, that they collected tribute in the form of exotic goods (Houston 2000; Stuart 1995), but it is also likely that they received tribute in the form of subsistence goods from the greater population. They may have also been responsible for administering the trade networks and market systems upon which their communities relied for commodities (e.g. Freidel et al. 2002; Foias 2002; Dahlin and Ardren 2002; Rathje 1971). Rulers were responsible for relationships with other political communities, often decided through warfare. Rulers actively led armies to war and participated in battles themselves. In addition to these responsibilities, rulers had the obligation to perform certain religious rituals on behalf of the community. This included marking the passage of time by commissioning monuments every twenty years (Stuart 1996).

The ruler also had the responsibility to interact with patron deities on behalf of the community. However, while often presented discursively as an obligation that the ruler undertook with great personal sacrifice, some aspects of patron deity veneration should also be regarded as privileges that were closely guarded by rulers. In fact, Postclassic narratives discussed in Chapter 3 indicate that this privilege/obligation was a defining
characteristic of rulership itself. Only rulers were worthy of performing the arduous rituals required to supplicate patron gods, and in exchange they were owed the loyalty of the population.

This attitude of exclusivity can be contrasted to the principle of ancestor veneration among the Classic Maya. Although all community members may have recognized a single set of patron deities, each family, whether elite or common, had its own set of ancestors to venerate. Ancestor veneration was practiced at the household level. It has been aptly described by Patricia McAnany (1995) as “living with the ancestors,” in that it involved burying lineage members beneath household floors, and continuing to interact with them in certain ways after their death. By venerating these ancestors, each lineage in the community, no matter what its social status, maintained links to the past, which conferred privileges, such as access to ancestral lands (McAnany 1995). Rulers also venerated ancestors, usually on a magnificent scale and in public places. This allowed rulers to demonstrate their relationships to a special set of royal privileges, established by previous members of the ruling family. It did not, however, imply that the ruler’s ancestors were also the commoners’ ancestors. Commoners venerated their own ancestors, a practice which is readily identifiable in the archaeological record. Thus, patron deity veneration, explicitly undertaken on behalf of the community, differed substantially from ancestor veneration.

By meeting the goals laid out here, I hope that this dissertation can be of use not only to scholars of the Maya, but to other anthropological archaeologists as well. I advocate the use of the insights of semiotic anthropology, and the incorporation of
multiple datasets, to understand the relationship between social action and cultural context in the negotiation of power relationships among peoples of past societies.

*The Classic Period Maya*

In the following sections, I will provide background information for readers unfamiliar with the Classic period Maya. The Maya are a group of closely-related ethnicities speaking languages of the Mayan family, and living on the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico and the surrounding areas of Chiapas, Tabasco, Guatemala, Belize, and Western Honduras and El Salvador. This area (figure 1.1) can be broken up roughly into four sections. The Northern Lowlands corresponds to the northern part of the Yucatan Peninsula. This area receives little rainfall, but has a high water table allowing for the use of ground water for habitation. The Southern Lowlands corresponds to a region of tropical jungle covering the southern part of the peninsula, as well as parts of Tabasco and Chiapas, Belize and Petén, Guatemala. The Highlands corresponds to the mountainous region in the south, which covers parts of Chiapas and the southern Guatemalan departments, as well as Western Honduras and El Salvador. This region is ecologically diverse, due to the mountainous terrain. It is ethnically and linguistically diverse as well. Finally, the Pacific Slope is the narrow strip between the mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

The Maya are part of a larger cultural phenomenon referred to as “Mesoamerica,” whose development spans several millennia. The term “Mesoamerica” was first introduced by Paul Kirchoff (1943). He noted that certain cultural traits as observed by the Spaniards at the time of the conquest were widely distributed across Mexico and
Figure 1.1. Map of the Maya Area, including places mentioned in the dissertation
Central America. Other traits were noticeably absent in this area. Thus, this first application of the term Mesoamerica was ethnographic, rather than archaeological, although it was quickly adopted by archaeologists.

The concept has proved useful to researchers since the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century, and continues to be in use today although undergoing some critique. Some of the cultural traits listed by Kirchoff are still considered diagnostic of Mesoamerican societies, such as religious beliefs and iconographic symbols. Others, such as the use of rabbit fur textiles, are not considered germane to its definition today. The region is typically divided into zones, such as 1) Maya region, 2) Oaxaca region, 3) Gulf Coast, 4) Central Altiplano, 5) West Mexico, and 6) Northern Mexico (Piña Chan 1960).

Mesoamerica’s cultural development is broken into several periods (figure 1.2). Although the precise dates in which each period begins and ends are still being debated, I will define them for the purposes of this dissertation. The Paleoindian period, lasting from ca. 15,000 to 8,000 BC refers to the period of initial settlement of the Americas by hunter-gatherers. The Archaic period, from 8,000 to 2,000 BC is the period in which groups became sedentary and started practicing agriculture.

The Preclassic (or Formative) is broken up into three sub-periods. The Early Preclassic, from 2,000 to 1,000 BC marks the beginning of social complexity within settled communities. The Middle Preclassic, from 1,000 to 400 BC is the period in which Mesoamerica saw its first state societies in the Gulf Coast, Oaxaca, and Central Mexico. State societies may have existed in the Maya area as well. The Late Preclassic, from 400 BC to AD 250 saw the flourishing of large cities in the Maya area, followed by their sudden collapse.
Figure 1.2. Timeline of Mesoamerican Chronology
The Classic period is also divided into three sub-periods. The Early Classic, from AD 250 to 600, shows the founding of new Classic-period communities and the proliferation of hieroglyphic texts. The Late Classic, from AD 600 to 800, shows increased political relationships between these communities, especially the dominance of many sites by Tikal and Calakmul. The terminal Classic, from AD 800 to 900, is a period of social collapse and de-population.

The Postclassic period is divided into two sub-periods. The Early Postclassic, from AD 900 to AD 1300 corresponds to a transition in the Northern Maya Lowlands to new architectural styles and eventual abandonment of Chichen Itza, a major regional capital. In Central Mexico, it corresponds to the rise of the Toltecs. The Late Postclassic, from AD 1300 to AD 1521, corresponds to the rise and fall of Mayapan in Yucatan, and to the period of Nahua migrations into Central Mexico, the fall of the Toltecs, and the rise of the Aztecs.

In 1521, the Aztec capital at Tenochtitlan was conquered by Cortes, ushering in the colonial period, which lasted until independence in 1821. The Modern period is defined as 1821 to the present day.

The Maya themselves, both ancient and modern, have never been politically unified. Nor have they ever seen themselves as members of a single ethnic group. Rather, the term “Maya,” originally designating only the indigenous inhabitants of Yucatan, was used by modern scholars as a convenient way of referring to a series of related ethnicities. First and foremost, “Maya” now refers to an ethnic identity associated with a language that is a member of the Mayan language family. Because this family of languages now
occupies a contiguous area of land stretching from the Yucatan Peninsula in the north to the Pacific coast of Guatemala in the south, “Maya” is often thought of in terms of a geographical region (Thompson 1954; Sharer and Traxler 2006).

However, when linguistic and geographical understandings of the Maya are grafted onto the past, they begin to lose some of their efficacy. Hammond (1992) for example, makes the claim, with little evidence, that “people were occupying all parts of the Maya area for perhaps 10,000 years before the emergence of Classic Maya civilization, and it must be a strong possibility that these early inhabitants were the direct ancestors of the Classic and present Maya population” (p. 138). There can be no doubt that certain cultural traits seen archaeologically among the Maya persist today among their modern descendents, and that Mayan languages were spoken for thousands of years. But to be precise about what we mean by “Maya” means tracing particular traits back as far as possible, and leaving earlier populations unidentified.

One effective way to do this is linguistically. If “Maya” refers to a linguistic group in the present, than “Maya” should also refer to Mayan-speakers in the past. Kaufman’s (1976) glotto-chronological reconstruction of the spread of Mayan languages is widely cited. He tentatively identifies a western Guatemalan highland homeland for Proto-Mayan, somewhere in the Cuchumatan Mountains. This proto-language, he argues, did not begin to break up until the late Archaic or Early Preclassic period, casting serious doubts on any claims that Paleoindian populations of the Maya area were Mayan speaking or direct ancestors of modern Maya. Furthermore, the “Maya area” was not occupied contiguously by Mayan speakers until even later than this initial dispersal. Glotto-chronology has its shortcomings, however. It usually assumes that languages
mutate at a constant rate, and thus linguistic distance is used to approximate the time of language differentiation. Solid archaeological evidence for Mayan speakers in the lowlands does not appear until 200-300 B.C. While earlier hieroglyphic inscriptions are known from the highlands and the Pacific coast, an inscription at San Bartolo, Guatemala, provides the earliest legible hieroglyph in a Mayan language (Saturno et al. 2006).

Other scholars have focused on material culture rather than linguistics to trace the Maya back to their beginnings. The earliest pottery found in the southern Maya lowlands dates to the Early and Middle Preclassic period, but is scattered sparsely across a very few sites (Kosakowsky 1987; Andrews 1990). These early pottery phases, named “Swasey,” “Xe” and “Real” do not apparently share any features with the later, more widespread Mamon complex. This led Andrews (1990) to conclude that they were, in fact, products of non-Mayan speakers, who were later displaced or absorbed when Mayan speakers moved into the area. This theory corresponds nicely to Kaufman’s (1976) hypothesis that the spread of Greater Tzeltalan around 1000 B.C. corresponds to the archaeological spread of Mamon pottery. The Mamon complex is far more widespread than Real/Xe and in many places in the lowland Maya area corresponds to the very first settled villages. However, Andrews (1990:2) cautions, “we are never justified in assuming a one-to-one correlation between language and culture, but the even more questionable argument is that one aspect of material culture—pottery—accurately reflects language and ethnicity. What follows, then, must obviously be viewed with a robust skepticism.”
By the time of the Classic period, however, archaeologists studying the Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, Guatemala, and parts of Chiapas, Tabasco, El Salvador and Honduras can be confident that they are dealing with an ethnically Maya people speaking a series of Mayan languages. The traditional definition of the Classic period is nicely summarized by McKillop (2004:91–92):

“The Classic period is defined as the time in which carved monuments called stelae were erected at lowland Maya cities with hieroglyphic inscriptions and dates carved in the Maya long count, roughly between A.D. 300 and 900. The earliest dated monument is Stela 29, dated to A.D. 292 from Tikal. The last dated monument is from A.D. 909 from Tonina….Although this definition of the Classic period might appear arbitrary, in fact it refers to the time period of dynastic rule of lowland city-states as recorded on stelae.”

It does indeed seem arbitrary, especially since earlier long count dates have been found at sites in the highlands and Pacific slope, such as Tak’alik Ab’aj, Chalchuapa, and El Baul (see Sharer and Traxler 2006:231–50). While it was once assumed that long-count dates were an indicator of a tangible change in Maya political institutions, and that the Preclassic period was a mere precursor to Classic glory, it is now becoming apparent that many aspects of Classic Maya culture were developed earlier (Freidel and Schele 1988). In fact, the end of the Preclassic is best seen as a collapse of some of the largest cities the Maya ever built, such as El Mirador. In comparison, the Classic period polities appear somewhat diminished. However, there is evidence that the Classic period Maya saw their epoch as different from what had come before. Martin (2003a:5) notes stylistic changes in architecture and carved monuments. Furthermore, Classic period dynasties, according to the inscriptions, were not founded during this earlier time period, but during the very end of the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods.

“Evidence for an emic distinction, that the Maya themselves saw these changes as meaningful, emerges from their royal ‘successor titles’. The numbering of rulers in sequence serves notice not only of a dynastic consciousness but a finite
origin…. The subsequent identification of the ‘founders’ who initiated these lines has unmasked the very individuals to whom the Maya ascribed the ‘Classic’ movement.”

The end of the Classic period has received more press than any other event in Mesoamerican archaeology. At this time the Maya abandoned most of the cities of the southern lowlands, which had seen their peak populations shortly earlier. Communities further north in Yucatan saw a sudden florescence, before they too were abandoned a few hundred years later. Some see this process as a swift collapse that caught the Maya elite off-guard (Martin 2003a). Others see it as a slow, gradual decline which probably varied from site to site (Sharer and Traxler 2006).

Scholars have proposed a plethora of explanations for the Terminal Classic collapse. For example, those scholars working in the Petexbatun region, which saw political fragmentation in the eighth century, often see the collapse as a result of warfare and disrupted trade routes (Demarest 2004a), whereas those working at the late-blooming Xunantunich usually attribute the collapse to the increased population and demand for subsistence resources (Ashmore et al. 2004). In the past, scholars have seen the iconographic changes at sites like Seibal as evidence of foreign invasion (Sabloff and Willey 1967). The tendency among scholars today, however, is to see the collapse as a result of various processes that came together. These include climatic variability (Haug et al. 2003; Lucero 2002), warfare (Demarest 2004a), economic changes (Ashmore et al. 2004; Sharer 1982), overexploitation of the environment (Sharer 1982), and even Maya fatalistic beliefs (Puleston 1979:19; Sharer 1982).

In the roughly 600 years between the beginning and end of the Classic period, Southern Lowland Maya society was not uniform but varied from generation to generation and site to site. Most importantly, this area was never politically unified but
composed of a series of polities with varying degrees of political influence. In this
dissertation, I will examine inscriptions from a number of these sites. However, my
archaeological case study will focus on just one: the community of La Corona. It is
important to remember, nevertheless, that this site existed within a greater cultural
context of the Maya and more broadly within Mesoamerica.

Classic Maya Gods

The belief system of the Classic period Maya was extremely complex and varied
from site to site. For this reason, a complete description of Classic Maya religious beliefs
is well beyond the scope of a single dissertation. However, because this dissertation
concerns gods, I would like to briefly define this term. I would also like to discuss some
of the critiques that have been leveled at scholarship about Maya gods. Like other
Mesoamerican religious belief systems, the Classic Maya personified many natural forces
and phenomena that modern readers might consider inanimate. For example, rain, wind,
and agricultural fertility are all represented as animate beings. Mythologies surrounding
these characters included stories of their birth, other characters considered to be their
relatives, and episodes from their lives that represented them as similar to human beings.

It is a matter of debate as to whether these characters can be called “gods” or
whether some other word is appropriate (see Houston and Stuart 1996). In theory, the
word “god” conjures up either a Greco-Roman model, or a Judeo-Christian model. The
Judeo-Christian model of a single god who controls all things is not an adequate
comparison for understanding Mesoamerican religion. Neither is the belief in a cosmic
battle between the forces of good and evil. In fact, the concept of good vs. evil seems to
be absent from Mesoamerican religious belief. Rather, natural forces could be alternately beneficial or destructive, depending on conditions.

Greco-Roman gods show some similarities to Mesoamerican beliefs. First, in the Greco-Roman world there were many gods, each representing different natural or social phenomena such as storms, rivers, war, etc. It was believed that each god was responsible for his/her particular domain and could control it. However, Greco-Roman gods were considered separate from their domains, residing together in a palace and meddling in human affairs, often by falling in love with human beings. Mesoamerican gods, on the other hand, seem to have been considered one and the same with their particular domains, rather than simply ruling over them. Thus, the wind god was not a separate entity that ruled the wind, but was rather an anthropomorphic representation of the wind itself. Mythological episodes thus show these gods interacting with one another in allegorical stories that represent natural phenomena, rather than having affairs with human beings. Thus, scenes that show K’awiil, the lightning god, and God L, the underworld god, discussing the price of seeds allegorically represent the first lightning of the spring striking the earth in order that new seeds can germinate and spring forth (Martin 2006).

On the other hand, Mesoamerican gods did interact with humans, although never in the same romantic or mischievous ways Greco-Roman gods did. Mesoamerican gods became patron deities of different human communities. This entailed an interpersonal relationship with human beings resembling a political patron-client relationship. In return for patronage, these gods received special forms of religious devotion. They existed in the form of physical effigies, and these effigies were sustained by human communities who fed, bathed, housed, and clothed them. These supernatural patrons were not
considered categorically different from the impersonal gods of natural phenomena, but were thought of as descending into the human plane in order to form covenants with human communities.

The idea that certain supernatural beings could be the patrons of particular human communities is not unique to Mesoamerica. This was a common practice in the Greco-Roman world as well, where different cities took on different gods as their patrons (Athena as patron of Athens, for example.) Ancient Mesopotamian cities maintained patron gods as well whose temples were the largest in any given city (Pollock 1999). The construction of this temple was the responsibility of the city’s ruler, who could use this responsibility to manipulate the loyalty of conquered cities (Porter 2004). Like Maya deities, Mesopotamian deities lived in great comfort:

“The gods…were also dressed, and caskets of jewelry were assembled for them, inventories of which we still have. The gods were groomed, they were bathed and perfumed. They were paraded through the city and the countryside, transported from one residence to another either in a chariot or in a boat, because they went on visits now and then” (Bottero 1992:226).

Members of the community were responsible for supplying foodstuffs for the god’s “meals.” In fact, community membership was partly defined by this ritual responsibility (Postgate 1992). Catholic communities in Europe have traditionally maintained similar relationships with patron saints, who are seen as advocating on the behalf of the community before God (Christian 1981). Patron saints among modern Maya communities also exist, but are different in many ways from their European counterparts, as discussed in Chapter 3. In his tome *Economy and Society*, Weber claims at first that the patron deity phenomenon is universal (1978:413). However, all his examples come from circum-Mediterranean societies. He then admits that
“The rise of genuinely local gods is associated not only with permanent settlement, but also with certain other conditions that mark the local association as an agency of political significance…. Consequently, such a full development of the local god is not found in India, the Far East, or Iran, and occurred only in limited measure in northern Europe, in the form of the tribal god” (1978:414–15)

As I will discuss in the following chapter, there are drawbacks to using cross-cultural examples as a basis for the interpretation of Maya religion. However, such cross-cultural frameworks do allow us to define terms whose referent is more or less similar cross-culturally, and therefore allows the reader to understand the concepts under discussion. Therefore, because of similarities to the Old World, I consider the word “god” to be an appropriate word to refer to Mesoamerican supernatural characters. In this dissertation, I use “god” and “deity” interchangeably to refer to Mesoamerican religious entities, while recognizing that there are significant differences between Mesoamerican and Mediterranean religious models.

Another potential drawback to the discussion of Maya gods is the potential for it to be understood as pejorative. Such an interpretation is evident in Montejo’s (1993) critique of Western scholarship, aptly titled “In the Name of the Pot, the Sun, the Broken Spear, the Rock, the Stick, the Idol, Ad Infinitum & Ad Nauseum: An Expose of Anglo Anthropologists Obsession with and Invention of Mayan Gods.” In this article, Montejo, an ethnic Maya scholar from Guatemala, levels a number of critiques at the Western scholarly community. First, he correctly argues that it is a mistake to uncritically accept the claims of Spanish chroniclers, especially Diego de Landa, when it comes to Maya religion. Diego de Landa was a friar sent to Yucatan to convert the Maya immediately after the peninsula was conquered. However, when he uncovered evidence that certain pre-Columbian religious practices were still in use, he conducted a massive campaign of torture and interrogation, forcing many Maya to admit, probably falsely, (Tedlock 1993)
to owning and worshipping idols. Since such methods were illegal, Landa was recalled to Spain to answer for his inquisition. While in Spain, he wrote an ethnography of the Yucatec Maya, demonstrating to the Spanish crown that their traditional religious beliefs were evil and needed to be stamped out (Clendinnen 2003). While this ethnography has provided much invaluable information to later scholars, especially concerning the hieroglyphic writing system, its descriptions of religious practice cannot be read uncritically, given the purpose for which they were written.

Montejo argues that Landa has served as the basis for the identification by later scholars of numerous Maya gods. He claims that archaeologists and anthropologists, following the fashionable scholarly practice of identifying new gods, inappropriately label any “strange figure” they come across as a god. Although recent scholarship on Maya gods is based on iconography and epigraphy much less than on references in Landa, Montejo’s point is well taken. Identifying every unknown character as a god is probably not an adequate scholarly method. While I disagree that this is the basis for a modern scholarly understanding of Classic Maya religion, this critique must be kept in mind when scholarship is undertaken. For this reason, in my epigraphic analysis of Classic Maya patron deities, I have taken care to note the ways in which the inscriptions themselves refer to different characters (see Chapter 4). My identification of Classic Maya gods comes entirely from what the Classic Maya themselves said about them, rather than from Landa or other chroniclers. My chapter on the Postclassic and more recent periods (Chapter 3) does rely on Spanish chroniclers to a certain extent. However, all of this information is found alongside indigenous documents which paint a similar picture.
Montejo’s biggest critique, however, is that the representation of Maya religion painted by Western scholars is pejorative. This is seen especially in the focus on human sacrifice, which Montejo believes represents the Maya as bloodthirsty. Montejo is correct in his assertion that human sacrifice is an aspect of Maya religious practice that has particularly fascinated scholars and is probably over-represented in the literature. However, there is evidence to suggest that it did take place, and this evidence must be considered carefully and critically. Human sacrifice among the Maya can be divided into two broad categories. The first is the death by sacrifice of a human victim. There are various examples of this type of sacrifice, having been found archaeologically and in several depictions. It is also discussed in Native-authored ethnohistorical documents such as the Popol Vuh. But while some clear archaeological examples from the Classic period have been found (e.g. Houston et al. 2011), many other cases are more ambiguous. The second type of human sacrifice is autosacrifice, in which a religious practitioner draws blood from part of his or her body and then burns it as an offering. This was probably a more common practice, and is depicted and mentioned frequently on Classic Maya monuments as well as in ethnohistorical accounts. However, as I discuss in Chapter 4, many depictions originally thought to represent rulers scattering droplets of blood on altars in fact probably represent the scattering of incense. In this dissertation, I discuss evidence for both types of human sacrifice. This evidence is mentioned in chapters 3 and 4. However, it is clear that human sacrifice was not the only aspect of religious ritual used to venerate patron deities, nor was it the most common or important.
Most modern scholars of the Classic Maya agree that religious belief played at least some role in the exercise and legitimization of power within Classic Maya communities. Some scholars have elevated ideology and ritual to the primary means by which power relations were mediated. For example, Demarest (1992) has drawn on African and Southeast Asian parallels to argue that Maya polities were “theater states” in which the ruler’s display of his supernatural connections was the main force behind his political authority. Inomata (2006a) similarly notes that theatricality of ritual acts was responsible for drawing large masses of people to participate in community formation centered on the royal court. Even scholars who take a primarily materialist perspective acknowledge the importance of ritual in the legitimacy of power and the mobilization of goods (e.g. Lucero 2003). These scholars agree that religious belief, and its behavioral expression, religious ritual, were used to legitimize social inequality and the authority of the ruler and his court. Clearly, there were also other strategies used in the exercise and legitimization of authority, but scholars disagree on which of these was the most important.

The religious authority of the ruler was based not on his own charisma as an individual, but rather his privileged position as head of the royal court. The court was an enduring social institution that regulated interaction between elites, and it may also have been essential in the maintenance of inter-class relationships as well, by serving as a locus of administrative obligations, as a distributor of social status, or as a point of face-to-face interaction between ruler and ruled (Inomata and Houston 2001).
The royal court, and its head, the polity’s ruler, or *ajaw*, served as a focal point of religious belief. *Ajaw* is a term found frequently in Maya hieroglyphic texts, used to refer to the highest-ranking members of the elite class and the paramount lord of the Classic Maya community. Many scholars (e.g. Demarest 1992; Fields and Reents-Budet 2005; Freidel and Schele 1988; Freidel et al. 1993; Houston and Stuart 1996; Schele and Miller 1986) have examined the relationship between the Maya ruler and religious practices. These scholarly investigations have worked from a model of divine kingship, or a special relationship between the ruler and the divine. This dissertation also examines a special relationship between the ruler and patron deities as a means of legitimizing royal authority. However, the nature of that relationship as described in this dissertation differs substantially from the work of many other scholars who see Maya rulers as similar to shamans. I disagree with the shaman model and its view of Maya religious organization. But since this model has been influential in Maya studies, I think it is important to examine it and describe how it differs from the model presented here.

The Maya shaman-king concept was introduced to Maya studies by Schele and Freidel, (e.g. Freidel and Schele 1988; Freidel et al. 1993; Schele and Freidel 1990; Schele and Miller 1986) in order to explain the ruler’s relationship to religious belief and practice. According to these scholars, village-level ritual specialists (shamans) during the Preclassic period developed into a form of institutionalized shamanism during the Classic period. According to Eliade (1964 in Klein et al. 2002:387), shamanism is defined as the ability of the ritual specialist to undergo a trancelike change of mental state, in which the soul journeyed to other places and communicated with powerful spirits. Thus, they argued, Maya kings had these powers of spiritual transformation, and were able to
intercede with these spirits on behalf of the community, thus gaining power and legitimacy.

In forming the theory of the shaman-king, scholars have drawn the works of those who had studied shamanism, particularly Furst. Furst (1976 in Klein et al. 2002:388) attempted to develop a model of shamanism that was particularly adapted toward the Americas. He recognized that a definition relying solely on altered states of consciousness was not always appropriate for Native American societies, and instead focused on elements of ideological systems in those societies. Thus, he defined shamanism based on a three-tiered universe, an axis mundi connecting these levels, often surmounted by a supernatural bird. Furthermore, he included beliefs in an animistic universe, in which supernatural forces were personified, and an emphasis on human-animal transformation. These features are common in many Native American belief systems. Thus, Furst developed a circular argument, in which common belief systems, not originally seen as specifically related to shamanism, came to define shamanism in the Americas (see critique in Klein et al. 2002:388–89). If one follows this view, Native American religious systems must be shamanistic by definition.

However, these features were taken up by scholars such as Schele and Freidel to argue for shamanism as central in Classic Maya religious ideology. For example, they argued that elements in rulers’ costumes resembled the World Tree (Freidel and Schele 1988; Freidel et al. 1993; Schele and Freidel 1990) thus linking the ruler to a shamanistic role. In Maya cosmology, as well as in many other Native American cosmological systems, the World Tree was believed to be the axis mundi which connected the planes of the universe (sky, earth, and underworld) together vertically. The shaman could thus
travel to these different planes via the World Tree. While there is evidence that the Maya believed that deceased souls did use the tree as a pathway to different worlds, Zender (2004:68–72) argues that there is no evidence that the costume of Maya rulers actually made reference to the tree or to shamanic journeys. Instead, he argues that Schele and Freidel misinterpreted certain iconographic elements as relating to trees, when in fact they related to jade and preciousness more generally. Schele and Freidel also made reference (Schele and Freidel 1990; Freidel et al. 1993) to a glyph reading *wahy* in the Classic period inscriptions, which refers to a class of fantastical beasts associated Maya rulers (Houston and Stuart 1989; Grube and Nahm 1994). It is likely that these beasts represent some sort of spirit companion, a concept that is widespread in Mesoamerica. The glyph was interpreted to mean “shaman” by Schele and Freidel (1990:45), largely because modern shamanic specialists in Mesoamerica are often believed to have the ability to transform into similar animal familiars. It has been pointed out, however, by those who originally deciphered this glyph and by others (see Zender 2004:75–77), this glyph may have a different meaning—rather than an spirit companion into which the ruler could transform and contact the spirit world, the *wahy* may instead have represented animated diseases or other supernatural phenomena the ruler was believed to control in some way.

To clear up some of the confusion surrounding the term “shaman,” Zender (2004) surveys several cross-cultural examples of shamans and contrasts them with priests. In doing so, he develops a series of criteria that can be usefully used to distinguish between these two overall models of religious organization. According to Zender, shamans typically are believed to have direct contact with the divine, via altered states of
consciousness. Thus, in their relations with powerful spirits, they are able to command
and threaten, as well as plead. Priests, on the other hand, have only an indirect
relationship with the divine, and their role is usually restricted to pleading. The shaman
typically operates individually, on a case-by-case basis as the need arises. On the other
hand, priests serve the community as a whole, and conduct rituals in a pre-determined
fashion, such as on certain dates in the ritual calendar. The shaman typically operates
either in his/her own home, or in the home of the client, whereas the priest operates in a
temple, shrine, or some other official religious building. Shamans tend to be recruited
through charisma, in the Weberian sense of the word: that is, they are believed to be
individuals with a calling, marked by a gift of grace. Priests, on the other hand, are
usually hereditary or at least recruited from within specific families or social classes.
Finally, shamans typically operate as normal community members, whereas priests are
marked as a “class apart,” with special comportment, morals, vestments, and status.
Although in some societies, ritual practitioners have characteristics of both of these
categories, leading scholars to label them as shaman-priests or priest-shamans, in general
these categories are useful for creating a working definition of “shaman” vs. “priest.”

Zender (2004) also notes that in many societies, priests are drawn from the ruling
class, and rulers themselves are thus trained as priests. Thus, they can take on the role as
well as the trappings of priesthood in appropriate ritual situations. Therefore, rulers who
have religious functions on behalf of their communities need not necessarily be
considered shaman-kings, and rulership is not necessarily the institutionalization of
earlier shamanic practices.
According to these overall guidelines, Classic Maya religious organization fits much better into a system categorized as a priestly hierarchy than a system that can be called shamanic. Whether the Classic Maya system originated with shamanic practices is still up for debate. However, as Zender demonstrates, Classic Maya society did include a class of nobility which seems to have been largely responsible for religious activities on behalf of the community. These specialists wore special vestments and operated in official religious buildings. They were drawn from the hereditary noble class. Maya rulers could take on the vestments and roles of these individuals in appropriate situations. They do not appear to have threatened or commanded gods and ancestors, but to have pleaded with them and given them offerings in exchange for their intercession. For all of these reasons, I agree with Zender, that Classic Maya religious organization is best characterized as a hereditary priestly hierarchy, of which the ruler was a member. It is likely, in fact, that the ruler served as the apex of this hierarchy and was believed to be primarily responsible for carrying out the proper veneration of patron deities and other supernatural beings. Shamans may also have existed during the Classic period and may have been patronized by commoners for medicine, divination or prayer. However, this does not mean that elite religious authority functioned in the same way.

In recent years, scholars have attempted to study Classic Maya ritual practices from the perspective of non-elites and to include theories of commoner ritual in overall theories of Maya society and politics (see Gonlin and Lohse 2007). However, archaeological approaches to commoner ritual focus heavily on domestic contexts. It is argued that only within the household could non-elites be active participants in religious rituals, because elites dominated the public rituals held in other locations (e.g. Gonlin
2007; Joyce and Weller 2007). These studies attempt to provide a contrast to elite-sponsored ideology and thus offer a theory of commoner resistance that took place away from the watchful eyes of rulers.

However, such theories ignore the possibility that non-elites were also active participants in public ritual. I will argue that such active participation, especially in the context of patron deity veneration, was a vital force in the creation of a community identity, upon which elites could draw for their own legitimization. Thus, at La Corona, rulers appear to have encouraged the active participation of non-elites in public rituals, for example, by encouraging or requiring them to attend feasting events in honor of patron deities.

**Classic Maya Political Organization**

The political organization of the Classic period Maya has been addressed through both epigraphic and archaeological methods. Over time, these methods have become more sophisticated and have developed into several overarching models of Maya political organization.

Bullard (1960) observed that the archaeologist could classify sites according to certain criteria, such the number and size of buildings, plazas, and the presence or absence of inscriptions and ballcourts. He proposed that these differences between sites might correspond to differences in a political hierarchy, with larger and more ornate sites representing the highest levels of control. This type of methodology was taken up by other scholars interested in defining political hierarchies. For example, Adams (1980;
Adams and Jones (1981) proposed that a count of the number of courtyards could also serve the purpose of defining a site hierarchy.

Hammond (1974) proposed that, beyond simply recognizing differences in site size, one could even estimate the surrounding hinterland controlled by a particular site (its “realm”) by the use of Thiessen Polygons. As he points out, this is an easy geometric exercise, involving the assumption that the boundary between two hierarchically-equivalent centers should be equidistant between them. Researchers quickly pointed out the problem with this system: without a consistent means of judging hierarchical equivalency, all sites end up being judged as equal (Adams 1980). This is especially problematic in higher-density areas, where a higher number of sites yields smaller hinterlands and does not address potential political hierarchies between them.

In the mid-20th century, researchers began to draw on epigraphic evidence to examine political organization. This was first done with the use of “emblem glyphs.” First recognized by Berlin (1958), an emblem glyph is a glyph that is associated with a particular site. It consists of two glyphic elements (discussed further below) that are consistent, and one element that varies depending on the geographic location in which it is found. Berlin identified the emblem glyphs of important sites such as Tikal, Naranjo, Yaxchilan, and Copan, and suggested that these glyphs might correspond to the place name, patron deity, or dynastic name of each city.

Barthel (1968), while unable to actually read the glyphs, noted that on two inscriptions (Copan Stela A and Seibal Stela 10) there appeared to be four important emblem glyphs. On the Copan stela, each emblem glyph was associated with one cardinal direction. In both inscriptions, Tikal and Calakmul were mentioned, while the other two
emblem glyphs varied between the two monuments. Barthel suggested that these four emblem glyphs corresponded to powerful regional centers and that it might be possible to identify a center’s area of influence by the presence of its emblem in the inscriptions of smaller nearby sites.

Marcus (1973; 1976) built upon Barthel’s observations. She argued that the Copan and Seibal inscriptions showed the way the Maya viewed their political world: with four major “capitals” in each cardinal direction. These capitals could change, as shown by the different sites listed on the Copan and Seibal monuments. This suggested a fluctuation of power over time. Furthermore, she echoed Barthel in arguing that the scholar could discern which capital controlled which sites, based on patterns of glyphic mentions. For example, a secondary site might mention the capital, but never the other way around. Marcus then made the first systematic attempt to use epigraphic evidence to map political influence by applying this theory. Unfortunately, it was made at a time when very few glyphs could even be read. Marcus therefore missed key pieces of information and her model was eventually replaced.

The next major breakthrough in the examination of emblem glyphs was made by Mathews and Justeson (1984). They recognized several important points. First, one of the invariable elements on the emblem glyph substituted elsewhere with the title *ajaw* “lord/king.” They therefore showed that the emblem glyph was actually a political title “lord of….” They proposed that the variable element thus represents a place name or polity name. Furthermore, they noticed that other titles, besides “lord” could be

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1 Lounsbury (1973) had previously argued that this sign was of highland origin and read *ahpop* or “lord” and that it was adopted by lowland Maya and read as *ahau*. While his conclusion (that the sign reads *ajaw*) was ultimately correct, his explanation was not.
associated with variable elements. This suggested that a hierarchy of titles was present in the epigraphic record, each associated with its own particular kingdom.

Stuart (1984a) read one of these titles as *cahal* (later found to actually read *sajal*). He showed that individuals with these titles were of high rank, and could control minor sites, but were never rulers of sites with emblem glyphs (p. 7). Grammatically, the word could be possessed by a person of higher rank, showing a political relationship. Furthermore, he noted that *sajals* remained in office after the death of their overlord, suggesting a degree of political autonomy from *ajaws*. Stuart argued, “because these ‘cahals’ are apparently subsidiary to certain specific centers (Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan, Lacanha, etc.), either through family relationships of otherwise, it follows that these known relationships would define actual regions of power and influence or actual ‘states’” (p. 31). Here was the first real glyphic evidence of supra-site political organization.

The implications of these glyphic breakthroughs, as interpreted by Mathews (1985; 1991) was that all sites with emblem glyphs (*ajaws*) were hierarchically equal to one another, and these may or may not have controlled subsidiary centers with lesser-ranked nobility. The presence of numerous sites with the *ajaw* title showed that Maya states were relatively small and weak. Rather than four major capitals as Marcus had argued, Mathews saw 23 small capitals spread out over the Maya world by 790 AD (1985:33).

This interpretation of glyphic evidence is characteristic of a weak state model, the idea that Maya polities were not stable or particularly powerful beyond their immediate capitals. Sanders and Webster (1988), adherents of the weak state model, claimed that
Maya cities had low populations and controlled small territories. Rulership was based on family ties. Indeed, the entire court could be seen as an extended household and the dynasty as simply one powerful lineage. The activities of lesser nobility mirrored that of the ruler in a disguised form of mechanical solidarity (Sanders and Webster 1988:534). This arrangement they called a “segmentary state,” a term borrowed from African anthropology (Southall 1956). Other weak state proponent, such as Hammond (1991), Demarest (1992) and Ball and Taschek (1991) drew upon models developed in other societies, especially Africa and Southeast Asia. Demarest (1992) especially argued that Maya political power was largely based upon ritual and ideology rather than economy or warfare. This made states inherently weak, he argued, especially when the same functions as the king were mimicked at lower hierarchical levels. He called this system a “galactic polity,” borrowed from Tambiah (1976), or a “theater state,” borrowed from Geertz (1973a). Houston (1993) agreed with this assessment, arguing that epigraphic evidence for unstable alliances and administrative duplication at lower hierarchical levels supported the galactic polity or segmentary state model.

Other researchers disagreed with the weak state model and saw evidence for strong centralization. Chase et al., (1990) pointed to evidence at Tikal and Caracol of high population densities, public works such as roads, raised fields and earthworks, and epigraphic evidence suggesting control of surrounding settlements. These data, they argued, showed that “Maya centers were seats of powerful ruling dynasties controlling polities that encompassed other smaller centers….Substantial populations were incorporated into both center and polity, far more than could be administered effectively under the conditions presented by Sanders and Webster” (Chase et al. 1990:499). Culbert
(1988:73) argued that, “agricultural intensification, specialization, and trade seem too evident not to have involved some administrative control.” He also argued (1991) that epigraphic evidence did not necessarily preclude the existence of higher orders of political organization. He pointed out that many locales keep their names, even after conquest by a higher political power. Thus, if emblem glyphs represent site names, there is no reason that they would reflect supra-site politics. Furthermore, he noted that sites with emblem glyphs do express fealty to other sites with emblem glyphs, belying the argument that the sites are thus politically equal.

These observations anticipated the “superstate” or “hegemonic” model, which was shortly developed by Martin and Grube (1994; 1995; 2000). This model emerged in 1994 in an unpublished manuscript that was widely circulated among Mayanists. In 2000, however, it appeared as the book Chronicle of Maya Kings and Queens, where it has gained status as a widely utilized reference among the scholarly community and public alike. Martin and Grube’s fundamental point was that although Maya sites were nominally equal to one another (many had emblem glyphs) their relationships were actually structured by supra-site political units. Specifically, the sites of Tikal and Calakmul were able to control vast alliances of sites and thus create power blocs which acted on concert. While Marcus had first attempted to define such blocs by using emblem glyph mentions, Martin and Grube were actually now able to read the glyphic references and understand which mentions were hostile and which were friendly. Furthermore, they recognized that, unlike the model developed by Marcus, these blocs did not form contiguous areas but rather spread out amorphously across the Southern Lowlands.
The Hegemonic Model proposes a supra-site mechanism of politics, previously unseen by scholars. While it could be argued that the emblem glyph represented a somewhat independent polity, the hierarchical level above this polity actually held the important decision-making powers. While making a general comparison to Cold War power blocs of the USA and USSR, Martin and Grube argued that this model forms a close parallel to political processes seen in Mesoamerica itself, especially by the Triple Alliance of the Aztec empire.

Applying the superstate model to epigraphic and archaeological evidence from the Classic period, it is clear that the Maya had a clearly defined system of political patronage. Patron lords, such as the ruler of Calakmul, sanctioned the rule of client lords. This was achieved by participating in the accession ceremonies of client lords, and offering military support. Relations were also reinforced through marriage alliances, frequent visits, and gift exchange. In return for this patronage, client lords rendered tribute to their patrons, usually in the form of luxury items such as cloth, feathers, and cacao beans. If political pressure was insufficient, powerful rulers could force others to become their clients through military campaigns. This patron-client relationship seems to have been similar to the relationship the Maya had with their patron deities. Deities needed to be sustained by frequent offerings of food and luxury items. In exchange, they witnessed royal accessions and were believed to bring military victory to their home communities.

Although the superstate model has been influential in the study of Classic Maya political organization, aspects of the strong state and weak state model remain and continue to be debated. For example, some scholars contend that the power of Maya
kings over their hinterland populations was weak and needed to be bolstered both materially and ritually, such as through the control of water resources or the sponsorship of large public events (e.g. Lucero 2002; 2003; Inomata 2006a). In contrast, other scholars argue that Maya royal courts had strong and direct influence over the affairs in their hinterland territories and villages (e.g. Canuto 2004; Golden 2003; Sharer and Golden 2004).

Epigraphic investigation into Maya political organization has not ceased either. Velasquez (2004) and Martin (2005a), for example, observed that the powerful “Snake Head” emblem glyph, first noticed by Barthel, was originally located at Dzibanche and suddenly moved to a new capital at Calakmul, replacing the previously existing emblem glyph already there. This suggested that emblem glyphs “label royal houses whose connections to specific territories are less intrinsic than habitual” (Martin 2005a:8). Tokovinine’s (2008) dissertation on Maya place names further illuminates the issue: an emblem glyph, while sometimes the same as a site’s toponym, is more often associated with mythological places, places of origin, or specific locations within the polity that have more cultural salience. Thus, if a dynasty moves its primary location or splinters apart, it is possible to see its emblem glyph in unexpected locations, or for multiple lords to carry the same emblem glyph at the same time without any competition or contradiction. Both of these studies show that “Maya ideas of statehood and territoriality could be more fluid than often supposed” (Martin 2005a:8).
The Classic Maya Community

The concept of the “community” as a unit of analysis has been subjected to new theories and critiques in recent years (Canuto and Yaeger 2000; Canuto 2002; Yaeger 2000a). Recent scholarship has focused on two interconnected aspects of the community: scale and formation processes.

Some scholars have focused on the community because they see it as the ideal mid-level scale between polities and households. As noted by Canuto (2002), Maya polities, as discussed above, tend to be studied using top-down approaches which focus on political elites and which use epigraphy and iconography in their analysis. On the other hand, households tend to be studied using bottom-up approaches which focus on farmers, and use techniques such as settlement survey and house mound excavation for their analysis. But Canuto points out that different scales of social organization, like fractals, are equally complex (Canuto 2002:21). Thus, neither a top-down nor a bottom-up approach is superior, but simply fails to fill the mid-level scalar range. Canuto proposes focusing on the “community” level, often called “settlement clusters” by bottom-up scholars and “local civic center” by top-down scholars, as a way of bridging this gap (Canuto 2002:33). His work is based in the Copan Valley of Western Honduras. The community-level analysis he proposes is in fact ideally suited to this particular environment. The Copan Valley is a bounded geographical area that showed particularly dense settlement during the Classic Period. It was politically dominated by the Copan royal court, but individual settlement clusters in the greater valley show variation in settlement history and material culture. Thus, buy comparing two of these smaller
communities, Canuto is able to bridge the gap between individual households and the
greater polity which was dominated by the hegemonic power of the court.

A similar approach is taken by Yaeger (2000a), who works in similar conditions. His study focuses on San Lorenzo, a settlement cluster within the Belize River Valley, in an area that was dominated by the Xunantunich royal court. Like the Copan River Valley, this area was clearly politically dominated by a central royal authority, but can also be divided into discreet communities that show variation. In such situations, the “community” can readily be defined as a matter of scale.

It should not surprise the reader, however, that Classic Maya communities can exist at different scalar levels. The same is true today, in which rural towns and large cities can be referred to as “communities.” Even non-contiguous social groups can be referred to as “diasporic communities,” thereby reducing the precision with which the term is applied. In this sense, it would not be inaccurate to refer to the entire Copan or Xunantunich areas of hegemony as “political communities.” Thus, more than simply a question of scale, the efficacy of the term also depends on the particular social processes at work in the formation of a given community. In particularly small communities, such as those studied by Canuto and Yaeger, face-to-face interaction is an essential factor in community formation. Community members regularly engage in social interaction with one another, through the simple fact of their close proximity and reliance on common resources such as water sources and agricultural fields (Yaeger 2000a; 2000b).

The fact of shared geography is not in itself sufficient for a sense of community identity, as demonstrated numerous times throughout history such as when Catholics expelled Jews from Spain or when Hutus slaughtered Tutsis in Rwanda. Nevertheless,
factors related to geography and local space can account for community formation. Drawing on Giddens (1979), Canuto (2002) refers to socially important locations as “locales” around which identity can form. These include geographical features considered sacred within the community, or public buildings such as ballcourts around which social activity congeals. The common use of such socially-charged locales can bring about the sense of common identity among community members.

Many scholars of the Classic Maya have proposed that communities were also based on kinship ties. Such theories vary considerably, from those that see communities as single co-residing lineages (Tourtellot 1988), to those who see communities as “house” societies, based upon kinship ties as well as non-kin ties expressed through kinship tropes (Gillespie 2000). Although such models may be appropriate for small-scale Classic Maya communities, I do not find them particularly convincing for more urban settings. Firstly, lineages are, as a general rule, exogamous. Therefore, if communities were formed by single lineages, this would necessitate the exit of many individuals (probably women in the case of the Maya) upon reaching marriageable age. It is more likely that communities were formed by a series of exogamous lineages that both intermarried and engaged in competition over status and resources. Such a picture is painted by McAnany’s (1995) study of ancestor veneration among the Maya and especially at K’axob, Belize. Hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Classic period also make reference to exogamous local lineages within the elite class.

Another important factor in community formation is political power. Chapter 2 will discuss a definition of power more thoroughly. However, for the discussion here, it is enough to note that inhabitants of a single polity are all beholden in similar ways to its
rulers, such as by the requirement of tribute and service. Such factors also contribute to a sense of community identity.

Finally, as I will argue in this dissertation, Classic Maya communities were defined partly through religious identity. It is perhaps useful to associate different Classic Maya religious beliefs with different levels of social interaction, as does Farriss (1984) for Postclassic and Colonial Yucatan. For example, ancestor veneration can be clearly associated with the household or lineage. On the other hand, gods of natural phenomena such as the wind god or sun god, as they were shared by many people across the Maya world, can be associated with a larger sense of ethnic identity or in some cases, “superstate” identity. Patron deity veneration, as I will show, can be associated with the local polity, although relations with other polities (such as conquest) can bring about changes to the local deity pantheon. Houston et al. (2003) argue that, as custodians of such local gods, rulers embodied the ethnicity of the entire polity and thus served as the symbolic hub of the “moral community” that comprised the Classic Maya polity.

The many factors just discussed—symbolically-charged locales, kinship relations, political identity and religious identity are all facets of what has been called the “imagined” community (Isbell 2000). This term was first used by Anderson (2006[1983]) to apply to modern nation. However, he argues, “in fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined” (Anderson 2006:6). Canuto (2002), preferring a practice-oriented approach over a mentalist approach prefers the term “emergent,” to indicate that such communities are in the constant social process of active formation. I prefer an emphasis on discourse and other meaningful acts (see Chapter 2): communities are not “imagined” in the individual
brains of members, but are rather socially enacted through interpersonal and public interaction. Thus, although some individuals may have varying ideas about what makes up a community, publicly enacted patterns of social behavior can reveal the efficacy of the community concept.

In examining the Classic Maya community of La Corona, we can begin by looking at the scale of analysis. Both Yaeger (2000a) and Canuto (2002) studied small communities that were of an intermediate scale between individual households and the greater royal courts of Xunantunich and Copan. La Corona, on the other hand, has its own royal palace and accompanying courtly structures, such as temples, aguadas, and a ballcourt. However, this royal court is not as large as Xunantunich or Copan, and individual discrete settlement clusters have not been identified within the site itself. Rather, La Corona has a fairly robust settlement in the areas around the monumental groups, and settlement drop-off has not yet been identified during mapping. Several other, smaller sites also exist in the immediate area, possibly representing discrete communities themselves.

In this dissertation I refer to the La Corona monumental core and the settlement around it as a “community,” while recognizing that this is a larger entity than the settlement clusters defined by Canuto and Yaeger. However, in a sense La Corona as a community is also intermediate in scale between the households that make it up and the “superstate” of Calakmul, of which La Corona was a client.

The formation of community identity at La Corona probably was the result of multiple processes, but this dissertation focuses on religious and political ones. Different community members at La Corona were united in their veneration of common
community deities. Although La Corona was a client of Calakmul, it did not share Calakmul’s patron gods but formed a separate local religious identity. The patron deity temples and surrounding architectural complex at La Corona can thus be considered an important “locale” around which inhabitants of La Corona enacted this identity.

Main Arguments of the Dissertation

In this dissertation, I argue that Classic Maya political power cannot be understood without attention to the meanings of actions and discourses of individuals who were involved in political relationships. Although institutions like the Classic Maya royal court appear to be stable and enduring phenomena, they are in fact accretions of individual semiotic acts and must be constantly strengthened and reaffirmed in order to endure. I explain this theoretical position more thoroughly in Chapter 2. Interpreting the meaning of individual semiotic acts that took place 1,500 years ago can be quite a challenge. Many archaeologists have tackled this challenge using different sets of interpretive theories. I argue that ethnographic analogy is an essential aspect of this process, since it allows the analyst to observe meaningful acts within the context of their use.

The first step in understanding Classic Maya patron deities, therefore, is to understand more recent versions of this religious phenomenon. In Chapter 3, I build an analogy using ethnographic data from modern Maya communities as well as historical data from the Colonial and Postclassic periods. In this chapter, I argue that supernatural beings recognized by the Maya can be broken down into three major categories. The first category is deceased ancestors. Ancestors are remembered in Maya communities for their
establishment of civic order and social norms. Although ancestors are not believed to
directly intervene in human affairs, their veneration is used by descendants to uphold
rights and privileges. Each lineage venerated its own ancestors although very ancient
ancestors may be regarded as the ancestors of all community members. The second
category is “Earth Lords,” or deities living within mountains and believed to control
wealth. These deities are asocial and intractable. They are aloof and, while prayed to by
individuals, are not believed to protect the community at large. Finally, there are patron
saints. These saints are believed to be responsible for the well-being of the community.
They reside in the town church in the form of effigies which are carefully maintained.
They are believed to be community members themselves and represent the identity of the
community in its relationships with other towns.

In Chapter 3, I also demonstrate that patron saints are the modern equivalent of
pre-Columbian patron gods. When Spanish friars introduced patron saints after the
Conquest, they recognized the similarities between Spanish patron saints and
Mesoamerican patron gods. The resulting syncretic religion still carries many pre-
Columbian attributes that are recognizable in Colonial documents such as the Popol Vuh
or Titulo de Totonicapan.

In Chapter 4, I trace beliefs and practices about patron deities back to the Classic
period using epigraphic data. The three categories of supernatural being are recognizable
in the Classic period. I call these categories ancestors, general deities, and patron deities.
Patron deities were not categorically different from other gods recognized by the Maya.
Instead, patron gods were like other gods, in that they represented natural phenomena
such as rain, sun, and wind. However, patron gods also formed relationships with
particular human communities. These relationships were believed to be similar to the relationship between political patrons and clients: a reciprocal arrangement in which the patron is sustained by the client and in return provides ritual sanction and protection.

Patron deities, however, were categorically different ancestors. Ancestors were important deceased family members. Among commoner families, they were frequently buried under house floors. Royal ancestors were given more elaborate temples, but these temples were also physically near the royal household, and thus operated along a similar principle. Ancestors received offerings such as incense, and thus were sustained partially in the same way that patron gods were. However, unlike patron gods, ancestors did not reside in cult effigies. Rather, they resided in their own material remains, which were usually buried out of sight. Occasionally, these human remains were exhumed, or tombs were opened in order that additional rituals could take place.

Many previous scholars have argued that patron deities are in fact simply deified ancestors (e.g. Proskouriakoff 1978:116–17; Marcus 1983; 1992; McAnany 1995:27; Wright 2011:232–33). However, as I show in Chapter 4, the Maya drew a clear distinction between these two categories. They had separate words referring to these categories (k’uh for “god” and mam for “ancestor”). Patron gods were a sub-category of gods in general, while ancestors were deceased human beings. Patron gods actively participated in human affairs, whereas ancestors remained aloof to the activities of their descendents, merely watching from afar. Thus, these two categories should be seen as entirely distinct. Deceased ancestors do not become patron deities over time.

This distinction is also evident in the different meanings that these two forms of religious belief had for the political community. Ancestors were venerated by their own
descendants and lineages. Thus, in a given community, a number of different ancestors were worshipped by different social segments. Although royal ancestor veneration was more prominent, this does not mean that non-royal lineages participated in royal ancestor veneration or saw royal ancestors as their own. Thus, ancestor veneration reinforces lineage-based social differences. It also reinforces hereditary claims to status, wealth and land (McAnany 1995). Patron deity veneration, on the other hand, was controlled primarily by the ruling class. However, this veneration was undertaken on behalf of the entire community. At times, ritual practices were only undertaken by ritual specialists. At other times, community members participated as well, particularly through public feasts. Thus, patron deity veneration also emphasized social distinctions, but in a different way. Rather than emphasizing lineage-based distinctions, patron deity veneration emphasized class and status-based distinctions, and served to reinforce them. By claiming that ritual practices were an arduous obligation, rulers reinforced their authority over the general populace.

Apart from the political implications of patron deity veneration within communities, patron deities also represented polities vis-à-vis other polities. This was true both in times of conflict, when patron deities were believed to provide military support to their home towns and were carried into battle, but also in times of peace, when deity effigies were invited to feasts in other communities. In this role as the public face of a community, the patron god could be drawn upon as a symbol of community solidarity and identity. This in turn must have reinforced their importance within the religious beliefs of community members.
Because of this political function, patron deities were important symbols that were manipulated during times of political instability. We see this primarily through the process of deity introduction. In general, patron deities, once adopted, were not abandoned. Rather, they continued to be venerated by later generations. However, during periods of war, conquest, and dynastic change, new patron deities were introduced into Classic Maya communities. The purpose of such introductions may have been the attempt, on the part of rulers, to renew the support of the population by renewing the sense of community as well as the sense of gratitude and obligation owed to the ruler. After all, more deities meant more arduous rituals that the ruler undertook on the community’s behalf, and may have bolstered the authority of the ruler during times of political upheaval.

In Chapter 5, I discuss archaeological correlates for patron deity veneration. The clearest example is the patron deity temple. Patron deity temples can be identified at Palenque, Tikal, Chichen Itza, Yaxchilan and La Corona by means of accompanying hieroglyphic texts. Unfortunately, these temples show wide variation in their architectural features. Thus, given the small sample size, it is still impossible to identify patron deity temples based on architectural features alone, and epigraphic references remain the best way to do this.

Another correlate for patron deity veneration is feasting. Large-scale feasting events leave obvious archaeological traces in the form of animal bones, plant remains, and ceramic vessels. And, as I discuss in Chapter 3, ethnographic and historical evidence suggests that patron deities were often venerated using large public feasts. Thus, the
archaeologist can look for the remains of these feasts to identify patron deity veneration at Classic Maya sites.

In Chapter 6, I begin my discussion of the case study of La Corona. I discuss my excavations in the Coronitas group and the evidence that this group served as a precinct for patron deity veneration: the presence of patron deity temples, as indicated by a hieroglyphic inscription, along with large midden deposits indicating large-scale feasting events. I argue, however, that simply identifying patron deity veneration at La Corona is not enough to understand the meaning of these ritual practices and the relationship between them and political power in the community. Instead, epigraphic data must also be incorporated.

In Chapter 7, I compare the archaeological evidence from the Coronitas group to the monumental history at La Corona. I argue that throughout its history, La Corona had two elite lineages that competed for political authority at the site. During the Early Classic period, one of these two lineages used the Coronitas group as a necropolis, burying deceased ancestors there over multiple generations. However, after a period of civil conflict in the mid-7th century, a different lineage gained royal authority at La Corona. The new king replaced these ancestor shrines with temples for newly introduced patron deities. This act was meant to negate the claims of his rivals while at the same time legitimizing his claims to authority and tribute. In subsequent generations, patron deity veneration was routinized at La Corona and no longer associated with one lineage or the other. Instead, it bolstered royal authority more generally.

In Chapter 8, I discuss the ways in which this dissertation addresses each of the goals outlined in this introductory chapter: to provide an account of patron deity
veneration among the Classic Maya; to offer an example of the effective combination of archaeological and epigraphic data; to outline a theoretical framework for understanding institutions and power; and to use this framework to understand the relationship between patron deity veneration and Classic Maya hereditary rulership.
CHAPTER 2

A Model for an Interpretive Archaeology

Introduction

This chapter will introduce the theoretical position I take for the remainder of the study. I assert that individuals, in our own society as well as the Maya Classic period, engage in meaningful actions and that through these actions, they create reflexive models of society. These reflexive models shape social asymmetries and power relations, which are the target of the rest of this dissertation. Therefore, I argue, only by understanding the meaning of these actions, and the reflexive models that they create, can power relations be fully understood for a given society. This position is fundamentally interpretive: I assert that the archaeologist must be prepared to interpret the material remains of past social actions in order to understand the significance of those actions for power relations.

An interpretive approach to society is by no means a new concept within anthropology. One of its most influential early proponents was Max Weber, who defined sociology as “a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences” (Weber 1978:4). As for the object of study, “social action,” he defined action as “attach[ing] a subjective meaning to behavior—being overt or covert, omission or acquiescence” and social as “this subjective meaning tak[ing] into account of the behavior of others and thereby oriented in its course” (Weber 1978:4). This basic definition of terms remains useful today.
In our own era, Clifford Geertz is one of the best exemplars of the interpretive approach, perhaps because of his captivating style of writing. “Believing,” he says, “with Max Weber that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental one in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (Geertz 1973b:5). For this reason, Geertz calls for anthropologists, when they carry out ethnographies, to undertake “thick description,” or to sort out the meanings of social action. This means understanding these social actions in the context of their use in specific societies, rather than relying on universal interpretations of cross-cultural human behavior:

“If anthropological interpretation is constructing a reading of what happens, then to divorce it from what happens—from what, in this time or that place, specific people say, what they do, what is done to them, from the whole vast business of the world—is to divorce it from its applications and to render it vacant” (Geertz 1973b:18).

Many archaeological theorists, especially of the post-processualist tradition, also seek to interpret meaning in the past. Of course, archaeological interpretation is quite a different problem to ethnographic interpretation, for the sole fact that the social actors in question are all dead, and therefore actions must be reconstructed from material remains rather than observed directly. However, as I will discuss below, a “thick description” in archaeology is possible.

Preucel (2010) recently called for a greater engagement with the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce in archaeology. Peirce’s work has been taken up within anthropology, especially linguistic anthropology, and has great potential to offer archaeologists a fresh way of approaching the task of archaeological interpretation. Following Preucel’s lead, I present a strategy for archaeological interpretation based on
pragmatic (or semiotic) anthropology. I start by discussing the term “pragmatic” and its implications for the interpretation of language and other non-linguistic communicative media. Following this, I focus on the transformative properties of discourse and its interrelations with other cultural forms. I examine the concepts of ideology, agency, power, and ritual from this perspective. Finally, I discuss the ways in which this framework can be applied to the task of archaeological interpretation and “thick description.”

Pragmatics and Performativity

As Preucel discusses extensively (2010), social theorists have long debated the relationship between discourse and other semiotic media. Can language serve as an analogy for other cultural forms such as art or clothing? Is it analyzable in the same way? Does it share the same structural properties? It is very difficult to analytically separate language from other communicative media because these media often interact with each other in meaningful ways.

The relationship between language and other semiotic media is discussed by Silverstein in his chapter “Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description” (1976). He claims that language can be distinguished from other cultural media by its use of “pure reference.” He states,

“The referential function of speech can be characterized as communication by propositions—predicates descriptive of states of affairs—subject to verification in some cases of objects and events, taken as representations of truth in others….It is this referential function of speech, and its characteristic sign mode, the semantic-referential sign, that has formed the basis for linguistic theory and linguistic analysis in the Western tradition” (p. 14)
He calls this function of language “semantic.” However, semantic meaning is not the only meaning conveyed by language. In fact, it is simply a subset of a much broader world of pragmatic meaning (Silverstein 1976:20). Semantic functions co-occur with other pragmatic functions. (Some simple examples include the use of deferential pronouns to signify social rank, the use of a tone of voice to signify contempt, or the use of an accent to signify geographic origin.) Pragmatic anthropology traces its origins to the American philosopher Peirce through the linguist Roman Jakobson. Preucel defines Peirce’s philosophy of pragmatism as “the theory that the meaning of an idea or action can be determined by considering what idea or action it routinely generates, that is to say, its practical consequences” (2010:44). Thus, the study of pragmatics in anthropology involves the study of all acts that have communicative results. Silverstein argues that pragmatic functions of language are in fact much greater than the small subset of semantic functions, and it is this pragmatic function that they share with other communicative cultural media.

One interesting difference between semantic meaning and other pragmatic meanings is that semantic meaning is essentially “context free” (Silverstein 1976:47). In other words, the purely semantic meaning of an utterance will not change if it is quoted directly, while the pragmatic meaning may change substantially (as politicians are constantly re-discovering). Thus, pragmatic meaning is highly context-dependent. Another way to look at this phenomenon is to compare the different sign modes employed by semantic meaning (exclusive to language) and pragmatic meaning (also found in other communicative media). Peirce defined three different ways in which signs can be related to their referents: the iconic mode, the indexical mode, and the symbolic
mode. Icons are signs that physically resemble their referents in some way. Indexes are signs that co-occur either spatially or temporally with their referents. Finally, symbols are all other signs, “where neither physical similarity nor contextual contiguity hold between sign vehicle and entity signaled. They form the class of “arbitrary” signs traditionally spoken of as the fundamental kind of linguistic entity” (Silverstein 1976:27). Because pragmatic meaning is context-dependent, it makes exclusive use of iconic and indexical signs (signs that are related to their referents in a physical or spatio-temporal way). Semantics, on the other hand, and thereby language, is unique from other communicative media in that it has a true symbolic mode (Silverstein 1976:53).

In their shared pragmatic function and their shared iconic and indexical sign modes, language and other cultural media can and should be analyzed as a single set of co-occurring communicative acts that constantly shape one another. Ironically, however, “that aspect of language which has traditionally been analyzed by linguistics [semantics], and has served as a model [for other social behavior], is just the part that is functionally unique among the phenomena of culture” (Silverstein 1976:12). Thus, an analysis of pragmatics of other cultural forms cannot take traditional linguistics as a model, but must broaden its scope to pragmatics more generally.

An attempt at understanding the pragmatic function of language was made by the philosopher J. L. Austin (1965) in his lecture series *How to Do Things with Words*. Austin examines a type of sentence in which the utterance itself explicitly performs an action, such as “I now pronounce you man and wife” or “I dub thee Sir Lancelot.” He recognized that such sentences cannot be adequately analyzed on the basis of truth or falsity, but rather must be evaluated with respect to their “happiness.” Thus, if it is
discovered that the person performing a wedding ceremony was, in fact, never ordained, the legitimacy of the statement “I pronounce you man and wife” is called into question and the validity of the wedding is undermined. Austin called these performative utterances the “leading incident” in the situations in which they occur, but noticed that their “happiness” depended on a series of conditions. These are a) there must exist a convention of the performative sentence (thus, “I apologize” is a conventional performative, whereas “I insult you” is not); b) the people and circumstances must be appropriate; c) the proper procedure must be carried out by all participants correctly and completely; d) participants must be sincere in their intention to orient future actions toward the performative sentence (for example, saying “I promise to…” should be accompanied by an intention to carry out the promise; and finally e) participants must actually conduct themselves in this way (1965:14–15). Only under these circumstances does the performative utterance indeed carry out the act which it describes.

Austin was unable to determine a fixed set of rules to define performative utterances largely because all speech acts are, to some degree, performative. (That is to say, they have pragmatic functions.) Thus, while the statement “passengers are hereby warned to stay off the tracks” is explicitly performative, “passengers, please stay off the tracks” or “it is dangerous to step on the tracks” both accomplish the same action: warning the passengers, though this action remains implicit. Other examples of performativity are even more implicit, creating social effects such as insulting someone through seemingly innocent comments. Thus, it is a mistake to believe that pragmatic functions are entirely dependent upon their semantic meanings (Silverstein 1976:18).

What is unique about the types of utterances discussed by Austin is that “certain features
of their internal organization formulate a sketch of the social occasion of the utterance that is highly transparent in the utterance itself” (Agha 2007a:56). The explicit performative utterances described by Austin, like utterances with more implicit pragmatic meaning, create a reflexive model of future conduct, by, for example, setting criteria for truth or falsity (are they truly married?), establishing entitlements (is he a knight?) and motivating future hostilities (did he really insult me?) (Agha 2007b). Thus, by attending to pragmatic meaning, we can understand the ways in which actions of individuals shape reflexive models, thus creating social effects.

Properties of Discourse

From the discussion of pragmatics above, it is clear that both linguistic and non-linguistic signs have pragmatic communicative functions. Language, however, is the only medium that also has the semantic function or the function of pure reference in the symbolic mode. For this reason, language has exceptional communicative capacity and is often used alongside other communicative media. Therefore, in this section, I focus on discourse and the ways in which it articulates with other communicative media to convey social meaning. Although scholars define “discourse” differently, I use it to refer to linguistic activities, whether spoken or written, as they are used in social life.

Unfortunately, many social theorists do not adequately incorporate discourse into models of social life. This is probably due to a curious property of language: it is so important and used so often, that its self-evident nature leads it to be overlooked when theories of social life are formulated. Language is such an excellent instrument for acting

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The model I employ here is largely based on Agha’s (2007a) *Language and Social Relations* and related material. Agha provides a framework for understanding how symbolic systems (both linguistic and non-linguistic) model and shape human actions without reducing these actions to human universals.
and interacting with other human beings, for creating reflexive representations of the social world, and for imbuing material objects with symbolic value, that these effects of its use are often far more noticeable than the act of language use itself. For this reason, language is often considered separately from the material world (especially in archaeology) and even as a separate phenomenon, not entirely central to other cultural processes. However, this is simply not the case.

Another common misconception about language and about culture in general, is that it is structured by a series of rules, often called “structure.” These rules are thought to constrain what a person can say or do into a set of only one or a few alternatives. However, such views misunderstand the reflexive properties of language and other non-linguistic signs. Signs are not simply a medium through which social relations flow, but are also the means by which human beings define norms of appropriate behavior. These norms then serve as points of reference for human actions, even when the norms are not followed. The process by which language is used to define social norms is complex because of the ability social actors have of acquiring a reflexive grasp of these norms. They are able to consider questions such as, “what is the norm?”; “for whom is it a norm?”; “when does it apply?” etc. Such a reflexive grasp then becomes the basis for communicating with others, even if those messages are in fact contrary to the norm. The contrast with the norm becomes a message in itself, used to communicate something about the individual.

Thus, when we misunderstand norms of social conduct for “rules” of social conduct, we lose sight of some of the social import of the norms themselves. Reflexive models of appropriate behavior are, in fact, just as interesting and relevant to human
being’s interpretation of other humans’ communicative acts as the content of the acts themselves (Giddens 1984). For instance, a “structural rule” that one person should show deference to another person of higher status (through the use of honorific speech, averted gaze, etc.) is in fact simply a standard of behavior against which actual behavior can be measured. By adhering to the standard, a person appropriately shows deference. By failing to show deference, the person has communicated something else (such as contempt, humor, etc.). Thus, “rules” are in fact simply norms against which actual behavior can be judged as appropriate or otherwise (see Agha 2007a:282–83).

For this reason, we should not see actors within a social relationship as being necessarily constrained. In fact, there is potentially limitless variation on the ways in which they will actually behave. However, their actual conduct, because of these reflexive models of appropriate behavior, will be judged accordingly and social consequences may ensue. Thus, when we study the workings of language and other communicative acts, we need to go beyond simply listing a set of norms. Rather, we must also understand other factors such as the degree to which the norm is recognized across society, the groups within society for whom it is considered a norm, and the mechanisms by which the norm is reflexively modeled and spread among social actors.

In order to properly understand the process by which norms form reflexive models for interpreting human behaviors, we thus need to understand two separate processes (see Agha 2007a:12; 15–16). First, we must understand the process by which norms become norms. How do these reflexive models come about and how are they spread throughout segments of society or society as a whole? Second, we need to understand how specific individuals who use these models become socialized to their use.
How do social actors develop the ability to inhabit these reflexive models and manipulate them effectively for their own communicative purposes?

The answers to these two questions vary broadly depending on the society and the norm in question. Here, however, I would like to consider certain aspects to these processes that apply to the case study described in this dissertation. In order to examine the first question, I will look at social institutions and the ways in which these institutions create and disseminate norms among the social community. Next, I will examine the second question in terms of social asymmetries among social actors: not all actors are able to evaluate norms and respond appropriately in certain social situations. This asymmetry of interpretive capacity is implicated in asymmetries of power within society.

**Institutions**

As mentioned above, human beings readily make reflexive representations of the social world through linguistic and other material signs. As individuals, we do this countless times a day without even thinking about it. These patterns of individual activity gradually accumulate to form what we call institutions. Institutions, which are large-scale social models, have the ability, by their very scale and complexity, to create further reflexive representations of the social world. In our own society, an example of an institution is the court system. While it appears as a powerful, self-evident entity, the court system can be analytically broken down into 1) a series of individuals (judges, attorneys, prison wardens, etc) whose authority to act is linked to their educational backgrounds 2) a series of places (courtrooms) whose meaning has been established through specific semiotic acts and 3) a historical context (case law) which establishes the
appropriateness or inappropriateness of the behavior of the participants. This institution appears powerful and its participants have great influence because of a series of semiotic processes that will be described further in this chapter.

Social theorists in the functionalist tradition tend to see institutions as reflective of society-wide models of conduct that are generated almost automatically through collective will. For example, Durkheim saw political systems as functioning for the greater good of society. He refers to the government as the “social brain” (1933:84) and elaborates by explaining that “the state…does not think for the sake of thought or to build up doctrinal systems, but to guide collective conduct” (1986:41). The law, then, is the “role of sanctioned conduct” as expressed in the “public conscience” and punishment is therefore meted out by society itself (1933:68–69). What this model fails to recognize is that institutions, which are large-scale reflexive models of human conduct, may not necessarily reflect the will of the entire social body, and are actually produced one semiotic act at a time, not in large chunks. In the modern world, where mass communication is possible, single semiotic events can have wide-spread influence simply by virtue of their ability to reach vast amounts of people at a time. However, in pre-modern society, and in modern society as well, cultural formations are also spread without the help of mass media. In order to understand this process, we must consider the ways in which particular semiotic events are linked to one another.

Agha (2007a:66–69) for example, considers the process by which a name becomes attached to an individual. That is, how does it come about that a particular name can be readily associated with a particular person among that person’s acquaintances or, in the case of some individuals, among the population at large? First, he points out, the
act of attaching a name to an individual begins with some sort of “baptismal event.” This event can literally be a baptism, in which a ritual is performed for close family and friends in which a religious authority officially names the individual. In other cases, it may be the simple act of new parents deciding on a name for their child among themselves or the act of filling out a birth certificate. The association of the name with the individual thus can always be dated back to this particular event. From this time forward, a potentially infinite number of individual communicative events serve to make this association widely known. New parents introduce their child to relatives using the name. Relatives show photos to their co-workers using the baby’s name, etc. If the individual grows up to be famous actor, his name is printed and repeated in mass media. Thus, communicative acts associating the individual with his name form chains of discourse radiating out from the original baptismal event. Each instance in which the name is associated with the individual is a new link on one of these chains. All of the individuals who can associate this individual with his name therefore form a network. Membership in this network is defined by having once been part of a communicative act which formed one of those links. A person who is not a member of this network will not be able to name the individual or will not understand who he is if the name is mentioned in conversation. Members of the network need not know each other and they need not have been present at the baptismal event itself, or even know that it took place. But they do have to have been privy to at least one of the communicative events of the discursive chains radiating from it.

Institutions come about in the same way, through long historical processes of communicative acts linked together into discourses. The Classic Maya royal court, for
instance, can be traced back to a founding ancestor, who established hereditary authority at a particular site. This establishment itself resulted from individual acts, such as the arrival or first settlement at a new community, the adoption of particular titles, and the acquisition of symbols of authority from other royal courts. As subsequent semiotic events unfold, the royal court acquires status through its relationships of patronage and obligation with other community members, and among other royal courts by military or marriage alliances. The court can also be reconfigured by competing discourse about membership within particular lineages, or obligations to other communities. The court can undergo violent change if internal conflict develops or if conquered by outside forces.

The royal court was of utmost importance in Classic Maya society. It regulated economic relationships as well as social entitlements. As discussed in this dissertation, it also regulated religious life within the community. Because of the importance of institutions such as these, they often appear inviolable and timeless. Discourses around the royal court, such as those of rulers and affiliated elites, uphold these characteristics partly because of their self-interest in doing so. However, institutions, because they are based on specific historical processes, cannot endure beyond the historical moment in which reflexive models of their importance are interpretable and upheld. Thus, because they are created and constantly shaped through communicative acts, institutions are inherently fragile and subject to change, even while promoting discourses of their own timelessness.
Ideology

Let us examine more closely the discourses through which institutions are given their timeless or inviolable aura. These discourses, like all semiotic acts, create reflexive models of institutions and their place within society. Such discourses, often referred to as “ideology,” are authoritative, that is, they justify and reproduce models of social hegemony, because of a variety of strategies that they employ (see Agha 2007a:73–77). One of these is a naturalizing strategy. They present reflexive models of society as natural models of society. For example, such discourses present social institutions or specific features of those institutions as part of a wider system of signs such as the physical world, the cosmos, or the nature of society in general. For example, such a discourse might present the Maya ruler as the only individual capable of adequately supplicating the patron gods, and thereby presenting rulership and all of the social institutions which regulate it as part of the natural order of the universe. The success of such strategies is based upon the difficulty in recognizing the fact that this model of the university is historically contingent. It is not a timeless truth that is universally recognized.

In addition to naturalizing discourses, another strategy is to present institutions as linked to wider social projects that are deemed good. For example, patron deities were linked to the notion of community autonomy, understood to be positive. Like naturalizing discourses, this strategy relies upon the likelihood that “community” and “autonomy” will seem to the receiver as universally good because of prior discursive acts. It would be difficult to discern that other models of what “community” looks like are also possible.
Another strategy of speakers who produce authoritative discourses is by appeal to tradition and timelessness. In order to do this, these linguistic events must link past events, which are given an ahistoric, transcendental quality, to events in the here and now. Religious rituals are particularly effective in this regard, presenting reflexive models of the current social world as reproductions of timeless models. All of these strategies are effective because of their use of widespread discourses already in circulation in society. As Mann puts it, “powerful ideologies are at least highly plausible in the conditions of the time, and they are genuinely adhered to” (1986:23).

In spite of the efficacy of these discursive strategies, it is important to remember that they do not always yield success. As in the example of royal courts noted above, if competing reflexive models arise within a society, even totalizing and naturalizing discourses can be overturned. It is for this reason that all institutions are fragile while appearing to be strong.

*Ritual*

Ideology is related to another strategy employed during the formation of institutions: ritual. The task of defining what “ritual” means is especially difficult. Various scholars have struggled with this concept, some preferring to define ritual as specific to religious practices, others seeing ritual as an element in all social phenomena. Ethnographers working on rituals tend to focus on those which are deemed especially significant by informants, and thus focus on named rituals such as large-scale religious rites, wedding ceremonies, and the like. However, others have pointed out that basic repetitive behavior such as stopping at red lights can be seen as ritualistic. How then
should we define ritual and more importantly, how can we understand the way ritual action works?

Scholars tend to agree on some common features of ritual action. For example, Tambiah (1985:128) lists the features of “formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion) and redundancy (repetition).” Bell (1992) criticizes this mode of analysis, arguing that it inevitably leads to an incomplete picture:

“most attempts to define ritual proceed by formulating the universal qualities of an autonomous phenomenon. They maintain, however provisionally, that there is something we can generally call ritual and whenever or wherever it occurs it has certain distinctive features. Such definitions inevitably come to function as a set of criteria for judging whether some specific activities can be deemed ritual. As a result, these definitions of ritual are not complete when they set up a single universal construct; additional categories are needed to account for all the data that do not fit neatly into the domain of the original term” (Bell 1992:69).

She proposes that instead of defining ritual according to a set of criteria into which certain actions either fall or do not, that we instead look at the degree of ritualization of events. By ritualization, she means aspects of certain activities that set them apart as particularly important or special. Thus, ritualization is a strategy meant to “establish a privileged contrast” (Bell 1992:90). As an example, she draws a distinction between a normal meal and a Christian Eucharistic meal. The distinction is drawn by the elements of the meal such as a larger family gathering, a certain periodicity, and insufficiency of the food for actual nourishment. She notes,

“the features of formality, fixity, and repetitions are not intrinsic to this ritualization or to ritual in general. Theoretically, ritualization of the meal could employ a different set of strategies to differentiate it from conventional eating, such as holding the meal only once in a person’s lifetime or with too much food for normal nourishment. The choice of strategies would depend in part on which ones could most effectively render the meal symbolically dominant to its conventional counterparts” (Bell 1992:90).

Agha (2007c) offers a similar definition of ritualization. He notes that any given meaningful act has elements of entextualization and contextualization. Entextualization is
the differentiability of an act from its surround, where contextualization is the manner in which signs point to their surround. A high degree of ritualization, therefore, is when a particular series of meaningful actions (linguistic or otherwise) have a high ratio of entextualization to contextualization. Thus, a typical meal is not highly ritualized because it is not easily distinguishable as separate from the ordinary flow of meaningful activity (and thus is highly contextualized). A religious meal, on the other hand, is set apart from its surround as different in all the ways listed by Bell and thus has a high ratio of entextualization. Thus, the elements of the ritual meal point to one another as interrelated and internally structured within the wider context of their surroundings. Thus, activities with high degrees of ritualization call attention to themselves by their very nature, leading informants to give them as obvious examples of important ritual events.

Bringing about this high ratio of entextualization can be accomplished in a number of ways, as Bell has pointed out. Often, these involve the commonly cited features of ritual such as repetition, both within the ritual itself and across different instances of ritual acts. A high degree of formality and theatricality also accomplish this entextualization. In fact, the theatricality of ritual events has been particularly emphasized in some literature (Inomata and Coben 2006; Kertzer 1988), including studies of Classic Maya religious ritual (e.g. Houston 2006; Inomata 2006b; 2006a). It is argued that the high degree of theatricality (bright colors, loud noises, many spectators) is the primary source from which these rituals derive their efficacy. Following Tambiah (1985), most of these authors use the term “performance” to refer to theatricality in this sense, as well as in the sense used by Austin described above. However, it is a mistake to confuse these very different notions of “performativity.” The pragmatic effectiveness of a
ritual is not dependent upon its theatricality. Rituals can take place behind closed doors with only a few witnesses and still model future conduct. This is due to the effects of later semiotic acts such as speech chains, as discussed above. Participants in the ceremony, although small in number, initiate speech-chain networks which discursively establish that the ritual has taken place. Thus, we cannot conflate theatricality with pragmatic effectiveness.

Rituals are carried out for particular purposes or, as is often the case, with multiple purposes. Take the political ritual of a coronation ceremony. The purpose of this ceremony is to officially turn an individual into a king. That is to say, this ceremony models future conduct toward the individual by establishing that he is the monarch. It also models future conduct toward all other individuals who stand in relation to the monarch—as subjects, relatives, enemies, allies, etc. Religious ritual also has pragmatic meaning in this sense. Supplications or sacrifices to gods are made for the purposes of insuring future blessings. But such rituals also define relationships between practitioners themselves. In the case of patron deity veneration at La Corona, rituals were performed to supplicate the gods for the benefit of the community. However, the privileges associated with particular ritual roles were also defined through ritual acts, such as royal or priestly investiture.

These pragmatic meanings are achieved through ritual because the process of ritualization, or setting apart certain activities as unique from their surroundings, is an especially powerful type of social action. For this reason, ritual is often employed in the process of legitimizing or strengthening social institutions. For example, some rituals formulate models of social conduct as being timeless, making it difficult for the
participant to separate them from the specific historical context in which they are
performed (Agha 2007a:73). This serves to “naturalize” these models in the ways
described earlier. Another common feature of ritualization is to formulate models of the
world which are highly implicit. Because the use of linguistic and other signs in ritual
does not formulate explicit models of the social world, but rather highly implicit ones, it
is difficult for these models to be challenged. Rituals also often consist of many
constituent parts, none of which, on its own, is sufficient to formulate a reflexive model
of the social world. Thus, challenging the model requires effort on the part of the receiver
to formulate the message from the many constituent parts, a message which is itself never
explicitly stated. Even if individuals are capable of explicitly formulating the model that
is only implied in the ritual, the explicit model has a more limited circulation than the
ritual itself, and thus creates further difficulties challenging it (Agha 2007a:74).

But while ritualization can be a force for conservatism and naturalization of
existing institutions, it can also be a potent force in changing social models as well. As
Kertzer (1988:42) notes, “oddly enough, ritual can be important to the forces of political
change just because of its conservative properties. New political systems borrow
legitimacy from the old by nurturing the old ritual forms, redirected to new purposes.” As
I will discuss, patron deity veneration ritual at La Corona is implicated in both processes:
creating new social models by redirecting rituals for new purposes and naturalizing this
new institution once it was in place.
The adoption of reflexive models

At this point, we can turn to the second part of our analysis of reflexive models of human behavior: the question of how specific individuals who use these models become socialized to their use. How do social actors develop the ability to inhabit these reflexive models and manipulate them effectively for their own communicative purposes?

Some theorists have taken a top-down approach to this process. Marx, for example, sees all social relations as springing directly from the organization of production within society; he attributes social beliefs and values to the same materialist source. Marx argues that these particular ideas do not come about by accident, or by some progressive evolution of thought, but from the mode of production by which a particular society is organized. Ideology, therefore, is the set of ideas used by the ruling class to maintain its dominance (Marx 1998). The implication of Marx’s concept of ideology is that this class, the only class with the power to produce ideas, intentionally distorts its representations of the world so as to serve its own interests. This means not only that the dominated classes, by virtue of their lack of power, are incapable of challenging these ideas, but that the ruling class is somehow able to see a more objective truth than those it dominates.

Bourdieu (1972; 1991) has similar ideas to Marx. He too sees society as composed of competing class interests. He, like Marx, wants to understand how class domination is possible, by examining human practices. He argues that certain behavioral and communicative standards are imposed by institutions of the state upon the set of dispositions of the individual (what he calls the “habitus”). He argues that this process of sedimentation occurs without passing through consciousness or language (Bourdieu
Once it is formed, the *habitus* constrains the individual to only act in certain ways because of his inability to imagine others. Because large-scale institutions are the agents of the process of inscription upon the individual, they have “structural power” over him, and the individual appears to lack agency. Thus, Bourdieu is led to a similar conclusion to Marx: that people are generally ignorant about the reality of oppression or class dominance within society. Agents are shaped by their *habitus* to respond appropriately in certain situations, but they are unaware of what makes something appropriate or not.

In case this account sounds similar to the account I am providing here, let me highlight the differences between the position taken here and that taken by Bourdieu. First and foremost, the model I am adopting relies on language and other intentional semiotic activity to produce and reproduce reflexive models of the world. To quote Agha (2007a:229–30),

“far from being ‘transmitted without passing through language,’ the social life of the habitus is mediated by discursive interactions…. [Bourdieu’s notion] is a systematic distortion, not an accidental omission: it reflects and inadequate grasp of the reflexive properties of language itself.”

One of the reasons for this distortion is that metasemiotic processes, i.e., semiotic processes which are used by actors to characterize other linguistic and non-linguistic signs, are highly implicit. For example, they may include small acts of ridicule for an inappropriate choice of clothing. Such behaviors are not explicit formulations of norms, but rather implicit models of social behavior that are “highly concrete and palpable in the event at hand, but difficult to report out of context” (Agha 2007a:229). This makes it difficult for the anthropologist or social theorist to recognize them. Nevertheless, such an
implicit act may have a profound effect on the personal clothing choices (habits) of the individual.

Thus, in this model, the sedimentation of habits upon individuals is not imposed all at once by social institutions, but occurs one semiotic event at a time. This is why it is so important to study individual semiotic acts in order to understand reflexive social models that give institutions their apparent strength. At any point in this series of semiotic acts the reflexive models presented to the recipient can be affirmed or rejected. In some cases, reflexive models of the social world are presented with authoritative discourses linked to institutions of widespread social influences. At other times they are presented through other types of discourses. However, all acts of semiotic activity require interpretation and are then followed by additional semiotic activity on the part of communicating individuals. This semiotic response is therefore always unknown. It may, on the one hand, simply repeat and transmit prior reflexive models without comment, yielding the special case of social continuity (in which Bourdieu is particularly interested). At other times, reflexive models may be transformed, creating new possibilities for future semiotic behavior and interpretation.

**Agency**

Top-down models such as those of Bourdieu and others create problems of agency. They typically see individuals as constrained by powerful institutions, and thus appear to lack the ability to act in the world. However, by examining these theories more carefully, it can be seen that this problem is a mere artifact the top-down approach. Individuals, in fact, do have the ability to act in the world, by creating reflexive models,
as well as accepting or rejecting others in circulation. But, as Agha (2007a:230–32) argues, although these abilities are usually referred to with the single term “agency,” they are not actually a unitary phenomenon. Instead, the reflexive abilities of individuals vary in particular ways.

First, individuals have interpretive ability. They have the capacity to interpret other’s communicative acts and to respond appropriately (or inappropriately, as the case may be). This is the phenomenon Giddens calls “reflexivity.”

“‘Reflexivity’ hence should be understood not merely as ‘self-consciousness’ but as the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life. To be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons…” (1984:3).

This ability to interpret and initiate communicative acts is so basic and universal that it is easily overlooked in theoretical discussions of agency. However, it should be noted that not all individuals have this ability equally at all times. In certain situations, individuals may find themselves completely out of their element, unable to interpret semiotic activity and respond to it in a meaningful way. For example, a Classic Maya commoner in the presence of the ruler may have found himself completely confused, unable to interpret high-status language, unable to respond intelligibly questions, and unable to interpret the consequences of his answers. Such a lack of interpretive ability in this situation renders him, in one sense, without agency. Differential interpretive ability is the result of different processes of socialization. Classic Maya elites were raised within the context of the royal court, which disseminated norms of appropriate language, dress, and comportment. The commoner, on the other hand, did not have access to these metasemiotic processes, and was thus unable to fully participate in these discourses. On
the other hand, the same commoner has privileged access to semiotic modes unavailable to the elite, such as knowledge of vernacular.

A second aspect of agency is relative freedom to act vis-à-vis others. This is to say, individuals differ in their entitlements to act in the world, or their entitlement to propose that others act in a certain way. For example, a ruler is entitled to demand deference and tribute payments from subjects, or to attend the accession ceremony of his client and to participate in the ritual in significant ways. Other individuals do not have the same sets of entitlements. However, it is important to remember that entitlements themselves are norms, rather than rules for social behavior. Thus, they do not form a set of rigid constraints limiting other actors except in very particular cases (such as constraints on a bound prisoner). In other cases, however, there are ways of getting around constraints through semiotic manipulation or outright refusal (Silverstein 1976:215–216). Paulston (1976 in Agha 2007) provides the example of entitlement to differential use of honorific pronouns. While social position may entitle some individuals to receive honorific pronouns, thus indexing their social superiority, interlocutors may employ strategies, such as “accidentally” using familiar pronouns, then apologizing, in an attempt to force the higher-status individual to propose mutual use of familiar pronouns.

Finally, a third aspect of agency is the reflexive grasp individuals have of their own freedom in the sense just described. Individuals may see themselves as powerful, yet find themselves constrained in certain situations. As Weber notes, “status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life is expected…. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on social intercourse” (Weber 1978:932). On the other hand, individuals who intuitively feel constrained may find that in some
situations they have a greater amount of freedom than they had supposed. Of course, their entitlements and freedoms, as well as their reflexive grasp of them, vary depending on the specific social situations in which they find themselves.

To reiterate, “agency” is often discussed as if it were a universal aspect of human nature, the fundamental ability of all humans to act purposefully at all times. However, the position taken here is that agency is not a single universal aspect of human conduct but a set of interrelated phenomena that vary depending on the individual and the context of social action. Human beings do not all “have agency” to the same degree at the same time. In fact, variation in the ability of individuals to reflexively interpret social actions, and the freedom they have and attribute to themselves and others, help to explain social asymmetries and power differentials.

Power

The notion of agency is closely linked to the concept of power. The word “power” is difficult to define, precisely because it has been defined in many different ways by many different scholars. In general, the term “power” is linked to social entitlements often of two categories (see Agha 2007a:36–37). Some scholars define power as the entitlement to shape the conduct of other individuals. Other scholars define power as the entitlement to choose one’s own course of action. Scholars of the Marxist tradition tend to follow the first definition, seeing power as the domination of one class over another. Wolf (2001) recognizes several definitions of power, but chooses to focus on what he calls “structural power.” This he defines as “abilities that flow from positions in a set of relations, positions that are strategically endowed with the power to control behavior by
governing access to natural and social resources” (2001:375). He compares his theory of structural power to Marx’s theory of “the power of capital to harness and allocate labor power” and Foucault’s claim that power “structures the possible field of actions of others” (Wolf 1990:586). Weber follows the second definition, seeing power as the “ability to carry out one’s own will despite resistance”. He contrasts this to “domination,” or “the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons.” Thus, domination, akin to the first definition of power reviewed, is linked to explicit acts indexing entitlement differentials. Power, on the other hand, has the broader definition of carrying out will, and is not necessarily confined to the will of individuals with entitlements (Weber 1978:53). Giddens sees power as the ability to “make a difference” or “transformative capacity” and is thus logically part of action in general (1984:14–15). This ability to make a difference is drawn from “resources” which are allocative (involving the material world) and authoritative (coordination of human activity). Thus, “power is not a resource,” in other words, it is not something pre-social that can be drawn upon, but is rather purposive action focused through resources (Giddens 1984:16). In other words, it can be linked to widespread social phenomena such as institutions, as discussed above. He argues that “power is not necessarily linked with conflict in the sense of either division of interest or active struggle, and power is not inherently oppressive…. Power is the ability to achieve outcomes; whether or not these are connected to purely sectional interests is not germane to its definition” (1984:257).

A similar view of power is often attributed to Foucault. However, while Foucault does see power as multi-directional in human relationships (rather than top-down), his view of power is curiously devoid of agency in any of the three senses discussed above
(reflexive ability, degree of freedom, recognition of freedom in self and others). Foucault often represents individuals as powerless, rendered so by the insurmountable forces of power which constantly surround them. He writes as if power had a will of its own:

“Power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the ‘privilege,’ acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions—an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. Furthermore, this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who “do not have it”; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure on them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. This means that these relations go right down in to the depths of society….” (1984:174).

While Foucault here mentions that individuals transmit power, it is still unidirectional and repressive. Actors may struggle against it, but this struggle is not itself described in terms of the power of the actor, rather it is quite the opposite: a negative force against power’s positive. Foucault goes so far as to assert that power actually renders human actors powerless, or “docile.” As Giddens puts it, “Foucault’s ‘bodies’ are not agents” (1984:154). This curious theoretical position does not locate entitlements anywhere (whether to shape the conduct of others or to choose one’s own action) and Foucault is thus forced to discuss power in the passive voice or by otherwise avoiding direct reference to social agents: “power is neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and… it only exists in action” (1994:208). It seems that Foucault’s use of the term power is functionally equivalent of the term structure as used by Bourdieu. That is, it is a set of society-internal principles, linked to institutions, which shape human action without necessarily passing through communication:

“No doubt communication is always a certain way of acting upon another person or persons. But the production and circulation of elements of meaning can have as their objective or as their consequence certain results in the realm of power; the latter are not simply an aspect of the former. Whether or not they pass through systems of communication, power relations have a specific nature” (1982:786) [emphasis added].
This view of the way structure/power shapes docile bodies/habitus has drawbacks that have already been discussed, namely that it misunderstands the ways in which reflexive models are formed and shape human action. Although Foucault uses the term “discourse,” he does not mean “linguistic activity”, as I do here, but rather habitual human behaviors and artifacts, including, for example, the layout of a school (1978:27–28).

To account for the many conceptions of power that have been proposed by theorists, it is necessary to remember that the term itself does not refer to a single unitary phenomenon but a series of interrelated phenomena that are linked to the different factors of agency discussed above. Social entitlements, both to shape the behavior of others and to choose one’s own conduct, are not, strictly speaking, rules of behavior but merely models, shaped metasemiotically, of how behavior should proceed. The degree to which these models are actually followed varies considerably depending on the interaction. This variation, in turn, is the process by which models themselves are subject to change. Leach makes this point in his discussion of political manipulation in Highland Burma. He notes that

“individuals can and do hold contradictory and inconsistent ideas about this system [of reflexive models]. They are able to do this without embarrassment because of the form in which their ideas are expressed. The form is cultural form; the expression is ritual\(^3\) expression” (1970:4).

“to the individual himself such systems [reflexive models] present themselves as alternatives or inconsistencies in the scheme of values by which he orders his life. The overall process of structural change comes about through the manipulation of these alternatives as a means of social advancement” (1970:8).

\(^3\) Note that Leach’s definition of “ritual” is slightly different from the one that will be developed here. He defines ritual as “an aspect of all behavior, namely the communicative aspect” (1970:xiv). In communication, Leach includes both semantics and pragmatics, and thus his “ritual” roughly corresponds to Weber’s “social action.”
It is this ability to evaluate reflexive models of social behavior that gives individuals agency in social interaction, even when they interact with those who supposedly have entitlements that they lack (i.e. “have power over them”). By manipulating the ongoing flow of communicative behavior in highly implicit ways, individuals are able to choose their own course of action. Such implicit communicative strategies

“neither describe nor violate norms but are nonetheless effective as means of circumventing them…. Strategies of implicit representations themselves yield power over others. They readily shape the behavior of those favored by explicit metapragmatic models. And their effectiveness depends on their non-transparency” (Agha 2007a:37).

Thus, “speaking truth to power” in highly explicit ways is not the typical strategy, or even the most effective means by which individuals “push back” against others.

Nevertheless, it should be recalled that individuals have the ability to do this (have agency in the first sense) only in varying degrees. This is because not all social actors have the same interpretive and communicative ability in all situations. Both linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic acts can analytically be thought of as a series of registers. A register is a “repertoire of performable signs linked to stereotypic pragmatic effect by a sociohistorical process” (Agha 2007a:80). Although most individuals can recognize a number of communicative registers (such as legalese, slang, etc), no individual can command more than a few of them. This is true both for “powerful” and “non-powerful” individuals. Thus, even an individual with certain entitlements loses agency in some social situations (such as a prosecutor who relies on a criminal informant to understand other communicative registers). However, it is easy to lose sight of this fact because some social registers are highly valued in society, while others are not.

The ability of certain individuals to command highly valued registers, and thus have access to certain entitlements (and be perceived as “powerful”) is dependent on a
host of other factors relating to their social history. It is linked to institutions described above, such as royal courts are disseminated, and it is also linked to less obvious institutions, such as families and inheritance practices. By virtue of their connections to these phenomena, both large-scale and small-scale, individuals acquire knowledge of necessary registers and communicative skills. By virtue of links to these institutions, as well as other symbols manipulated in the here-and-now, individuals are also *perceived* as having acquired this knowledge by other individuals\(^4\). Thus, a member of the Maya royal court was probably perceived as knowledgeable of court language and etiquette, and as having accompanying entitlements, by virtue of his dress and comportment, even if his interlocutor had never met him previously. In this way, individuals inhabit social personae which serve to link them, through a series of symbols and histories, to social entitlements and social knowledge.

Keeping all this in mind, I propose that for the purposes of this dissertation, power be defined as the *efficacy of an individual’s actions in his or her ongoing interaction with the social world*. In other words, power is the *pragmatic effects* of social action. This definition of power is thus closely linked with normative entitlements, which model the behavior of other individuals. But it is also closely linked with agency in the three senses described above, through which individuals are able to reflexively monitor social actions in the first place, and respond to them in various ways. Thus, power-as-related-to-*norms* is the way in which power is defined by scholars such as Marx and Bourdieu. And power-as-related-to-*actual-conduct* (agency) is the way in which power is defined by scholars such as Giddens. Neither of these ways of viewing power is sufficient on its

\(^4\) The process by which certain registers of communication become valued and linked to particular social personae is called *enregisterment* (Agha 2007a:55). An account of this process and its effects is a central theme in Agha’s work.
own; they must be viewed together as part of a relationship between norms and behaviors.

*Interpretive Archaeology: Applying the Framework*

The pragmatic approach advocated here is clearly an interpretive approach to the study of human society. I argue that it is through the meaning of human behavior that norms of conduct are created and that actual human conduct is evaluated. Thus, an understanding of the operation of power in any given society, such as the Classic Maya in this case, cannot be gained without an account of the semiotic systems that gave social behaviors their meaning and efficacy. Thus, meaning, far from being outside of or apart from some greater cross-cultural phenomenon of power, is in fact central to its operation. Archaeologists cannot ignore this fact in their studies of past societies. In order to understand how these societies function, archaeologists must evaluate the meaning of past behaviors. What is called for, essentially, is a “thick description” of archaeological societies.

How is this accomplished? The archaeological record consists of durable artifacts that once held pragmatic meaning for those who created them and used them in social interaction. The interpretation of these artifacts is the way that archaeologists accomplish an understanding of past societies. In this dissertation, two principal classes of durable artifact are evaluated: artifacts with writing and artifacts without writing. The first comprises hieroglyphic inscriptions, examined by epigraphy, and the other comprises all other material artifacts, examined by archaeology.
Because hieroglyphic texts contain both semantic and pragmatic meaning, they are an especially rich source of information about the semiotic system of the Classic period Maya. However, they have caused suspicion among archaeologists in the past because of their “propagandistic” properties and potential to mislead researchers (e.g. Chase et al. 2008; Marcus 1992; Ruz Lhuiller 1977). In this view, the archaeological record can be compared favorably to the hieroglyphic record because it cannot lie, and must therefore represent a pre-discursive truth. This notion can be linked to the processualist belief that meaning is epiphenomenal to the material world. However, as I have argued here, pragmatic meaning in fact mediates the human relationship with the material world and thus meaning is not epiphenomenal to, but in fact implicated in, the creation of the archaeological record. Thus, we can say that artifacts carry pragmatic meaning, while hieroglyphic texts carry both pragmatic and semantic meaning. Non-textual artifacts cannot “lie” but neither can they “tell the truth” because they lack semantic properties! The question of whether or not hieroglyphic texts “lie” is a semantic question. It asks whether the decontextualized referential meaning of a hieroglyphic text is consistent with an actual state of affairs. But in this dissertation I am not only concerned with the semantic meaning of texts, but their pragmatic meanings. Thus, rather than asking whether hieroglyphic narratives are true, I ask, “what do hieroglyphic narratives accomplish?” Pragmatic meaning cannot be divorced from context, so the use of hieroglyphic texts must be examined contextually along with the rest of the archaeological record.

5 “It has been said that the spade cannot lie, but it owes this merit in part to the fact that it cannot speak” (Grierson 1959:129).

6 Although Maya texts do discuss mythological events that did not, strictly speaking, ever occur, hieroglyphic narratives about contemporary events do not seem to ever actually lie. (Or at least none have been demonstrated to.) Strategic omissions, however, are frequent.
The Archaeological Record as a Text

In contrast to the processual opinion that meaning is epiphenomenal, many post-processualist approaches explicitly attempt an interpretive ("hermeneutic") approach to archaeology (see Preucel 2010). Such approaches posit that it is useful to view the archaeological record as a text (e.g. Hodder 1989; 1992; Tilley 1991). Like a text, the archaeological record is composed of material signs—artifacts that communicate information—and can thus be interpreted the way that a reader interprets a text. However, in the post-modernist tradition, some of these theorists also argue that the meanings of texts are so inherently complicated as to be interpretable in a number of different ways. The intentions of the author therefore recede before the experience of the reader and his/her own interpretation. The archaeological record is similar, in that it is so complex that a single interpretation is not possible. Multiple researchers can produce different interpretations that are equally valid (Tilley 1991; Shanks and Tilley 1992).

Unfortunately, the archaeological record-as-text approach has a number of problems.

Firstly, although some scholars are content with the idea that multiple interpretations of the past are equally valid, this view is not satisfactory to me. Unfortunately, given nature of the past itself (beyond living memory) and the limits of the discipline, it is impossible for the past to ever be fully reconstructed. However, this does not make all reconstructions equally appropriate: some interpretations more closely approximate the past than others (Renfrew 1994:10). Thus, the notion that the intent of the author is of less importance than the experience of the interpreter (e.g. Tilley 1991) should not be applied to the archaeological record, where it is precisely the intention of
the author which is sought in analysis (Hodder 1992:16–17). This is especially important because archaeology is not a discipline that exists within a vacuum. Learning about the past is important to the publics that archaeology serves: it is important to descendant communities as well as the general public for a myriad of reasons. Therefore I believe it is the obligation of the archaeologist to take the excitement of these groups seriously and provide the best reconstructions possible. Thus, doing archaeology is not the same as reading a literary work. It is a public activity with political, emotional, and educational implications. This view is shared by some post-processualists, notably Hodder (e.g. 1982; 1989; 1992), who agree that 1) it is essential to try to understand the meanings and motivations of past social actors, 2) that different interpretations can be evaluated for plausibility, and 3) that doing so is a political act.

But the text analogy breaks down in methodological terms as well. Let us examine the analogy more closely. It holds that the archaeological record is composed of durable material symbols whose distribution will vary not in accordance with universal laws of human ecology, but by the vagaries of symbolic usage (Hodder 1982). Thus, “we cannot predict what material culture patterning will result in any human and physical environment, but we can interpret the past by using our contemporary knowledge of symbolism and ideologies (Hodder 1982:217).”

Unfortunately, while this sentence seems to suggest the advocacy of historical analogies, discussed below, Hodder instead turns to the structuralist notion of binary oppositions. This approach, borrowed from the ideas of Levi-Strauss, proposes the use of supposedly universal systems of binary oppositions that are present in all symbolic systems such as clean(dirty, male/female, and life/death. Although societies may differ in
which oppositions they recognize, the idea is that the sets of oppositions themselves are
universal, operating like color choices in a catalog from which each society can choose in
order to create its own symbolic system. Thus, the archaeologist need merely observe
which sets of oppositions appear to be emphasized in the archaeological record in order
to interpret it “as a text.” Hodder (1982:217) calls this approach “contextual
archaeology,” because “an emphasis is placed on the particular way that general symbolic
and structural principles are assembled into coherent sets and integrated into social and
ecological strategies.” This is ironic since the structuralist approach essentially de-
contextualizes durable symbols and applies universal interpretations.

The main methodological problem with this view is that it confuses semantic and
pragmatic meaning. As I have discussed, only language has semantic meaning, while all
communicative media share pragmatic meaning. Semantic meaning can be
decontextualized, while pragmatic meaning cannot. Reading a text is largely a semantic
exercise: the words are removed from the context of their author, and it is generally the
semantic-referential meaning that is most salient to their interpretation. The
archaeological record, on the other hand, is not comprised of semantic meaning but rather
pragmatic meaning. It cannot be interpreted out of the context of its formation. It should
be stressed that archaeological context, or the spatial relationships between artifacts in the
ground, is not the same as the original context of use. The original context includes
human beings and their social actions, while the archaeological record does not. Ignoring
this fact eliminates the possibility of comprehending the original meaning of these signs.
Silverstein and Urban (1996:1) level a similar critique at those who would read culture as
a text:
“…to turn something into a text is to seem to give it a decontextualized structure and meaning, that is, a form and meaning that are imaginable apart from the spatiotemporal and other frames in which they can be said to occur.”

To avoid the pitfalls of the archaeological-record-as-text model, we must ask how signs were used in context by the people of ancient societies. Unfortunately, the context in which these signs were used no longer exists. This means that the archaeologist must rely on an intermediate step: ethnographic analogy. Only by reference to this analogy is thick description in archaeology really possible.

_Analogy in Archaeology_

Ethnographic analogy is essential to interpretive archaeology. As put by Preucel,

“The relationship [between archaeology and] anthropology, broadly conceived, cannot and should not be discarded, for the simple reason that ethnographic analogy, in its various forms, remains the basis for all interpretation. All interpretation involves establishing and evaluating analogical cables or threads linking known and unknown cultural contexts” (Preucel 2010:261).

This view is shared by Flannery and Marcus (1996), who argue that the interpretation of cosmolgy, religion, ideology and iconography are only possible “under the appropriate circumstances and with appropriate rigor,” by which they mean the use of ethnographic and historical evidence from related societies. Although this fact has led to discomfort and protest on the part of some theorists (see Wylie 1985 for further discussion of this discomfort), any view to the contrary fails to understand that pragmatic meaning cannot be separated from the context of its use. Thus, the meaning of human actions in the past cannot be interpreted from the archaeological record alone because archaeological context is not the same as semiotic context. The meaning of actions and their effect on physical objects must be observed in the present as an intermediate step.
Interestingly, the reliance on analogy has not caused the same amount of concern within the field of epigraphy. Like archaeology, epigraphy is a field that depends on analogy to access the meanings of symbolic systems that were in use in the past. The decipherment of various writing systems will illustrate this point well. All ancient scripts that have been deciphered are now intelligible because of an analogy to a surviving language that is similar to that recorded in the ancient script (Coe 1999:44). In the case of Egyptian hieroglyphics it is Coptic. In the case of Linear B it is Greek, and in the case of Mayan hieroglyphics it is the modern family of Mayan Languages. With the lack of an analogous language, ancient scripts remain unintelligible. For example, Etruscan inscriptions are recorded in Greek script, making their pronunciation transparent. However, the Etruscan language is no longer spoken and appears to be an isolate, with no known related languages in the past or present. For this reason, although Etruscan words can be read, the meaning of Etruscan inscriptions remains unknown (Coe 1999:44).

Once a living analogous language is recognized, decipherments are possible. After initial decipherments are made and the principles of the system are understood, future readings can then be judged on their intelligibility within the deciphered system. This is an ongoing process. For example, there are many Mayan hieroglyphic signs that remain undeciphered, simply because not enough examples have been found whose different contexts would allow researchers to propose an intelligible reading. However, new readings are always made with reference to the analogous language. Thus, scholars make frequent use of modern dictionaries and language skills in order to decipher new signs. An example of this process can be found in Chapter 4, where I propose a reading
for a hieroglyphic sign based on several dictionary entries as well as the proposed reading’s intelligibility within a system of already deciphered signs.

The reliance in epigraphy on analogy is not a cause of distress within the discipline. The idea that it is possible to understand an undeciphered ancient text without this intermediate step is usually met with skepticism if not ridicule. Yet archaeologists attempting to read the archaeological record based on universal principles such as binary oppositions, rather than modern analogous systems are doing the exact same thing. Thus, the explicit use of analogy should not be cause for distress among archaeologists. Instead, attention should turn to which analogies are the most appropriate for interpreting ancient symbolic systems.

There is a longstanding discourse in archaeological theory about the virtue of analogies and which types of analogies work best for which types of archaeological inferences (see Orme 1981; Wylie 1985). Analogies can be roughly divided into two types. The first are those that have a historical relationship with the archaeological society in question (such as modern descendant communities). This type of analogy has been called “historical,” “specific,” and “genetic.” Championed by the “folk-culture approach,” or the “direct historical approach,” such analogies are widely agreed to be more likely to yield useful interpretations of the archaeological record. The second type of analogy consists of broader cross-cultural comparisons that posit similarities of human behavior across different cultural contexts. These have been called “unconnected,” “general,” and “formal” and are usually employed when the first type of analogy is not possible, or when certain types of archaeological questions are asked, such as those
related to economy and subsistence strategies (see Asher 1961:318–319; Binford 1961; Clark 1951; 1953; Willey 1977; Wylie 1985).

However, while these cross-cultural analogies are often used for economic questions, they are inappropriate when attempting to understand *semiotic* systems of particular societies for the reasons outlined above. The argument made for cross-cultural analogy in subsistence systems is that human beings tend to come up with similar solutions to similar economic problems. Thus, a solution observed in one part of the world is equally applicable to a problem in another part of the world (Orme 1981). The interpretation of symbolic systems in the past is an entirely different problem altogether. This is because symbolic systems, by their very nature, are contextual, varying radically from one society to another. For this reason, archaeologists should choose analogous societies as close as possible to the ancient societies they attempt to study. Ideally, the analogous society should be a descendent community, for whom many of the meanings of particular symbols are still in use but the closeness of the analogy will ultimately depend on the limitations of the researcher and the area where he or she works. When direct descendents are lacking, other closely related communities may also provide useful

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7 Unfortunately, the use of cross-cultural analogies in this manner can potentially lead to large circular arguments, in which cross-cultural analogies are used to demonstrate what was assumed from the outset: different societies had similar economic processes. But further discussion of the potential drawbacks of this methodology is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

8 Orme (1981) recommends the study of a variety of cross-cultural ethnographic examples in order for the archaeologist to get an idea of the range of variation in human ritual and religious beliefs. For example, she discusses situations in which human burials differ in the skeletal assessment of sex and the gendered ritual treatment of the remains (e.g. apparent male buried in a typically female fashion). She suggests that by studying a range of societies in which culturally defined gender roles differ from biological sex, the archaeologist can become aware of different possible interpretations of the remains, essentially breaking free of his/her own notions of sex and gender. This methodology is reasonable and represents a more refined application of cross-cultural analogy. Indeed, archaeologists trained under the disciplinary umbrella of anthropology are already aware that notions of sex and gender in other societies do not correspond neatly to our own and thus Orme’s logic is built into the discipline. However, any specific interpretation of the meaning of sex and gender in a particular archaeological society must rely on the analogy of a descendent or closely-related community for the reasons outlined here.
analogies, with varying degrees of potential success as one moves away from the society in question (Hawkes 1954:161). For the purposes of this dissertation therefore, an analogy is developed based on modern communities in the Maya area that speak Mayan languages. I also examine ethnographically and historically attested societies of Central Mexico, because of the rich data available. However, I acknowledge that moving further in time and space from the Classic Maya introduces additional uncertainty to the analogy.

Naturally, no modern society is an exact replica of an archaeological society and no symbolic system remains unchanged over time. However, as I have argued, proceeding without analogy leaves the archaeologist no better off, and completely unable to gain access into the past symbolic system. Where does this leave archaeologists? We must be prepared to accept the fact that the models we develop, because they are based on analogy, and because they are interpretations of incomplete systems of material symbols, will not ever replicate the ancient societies that we study. This is simply the nature of the discipline. However, specific analogies can be used to develop interpretive hypotheses, which can then be tested and evaluated for consistency with the archaeological record (Binford 1961; Wylie 1985). Thus, we can use the tools available to us to develop as best a model as possible. Through the use of analogy, symbols can be observed in the context of their use (in creating reflexive social models) and the system of symbols can be rendered intelligible and translatable. This translation of material symbols can then be applied to the archaeological record and used to interpret it. It is not possible to conduct such an analysis of the archaeological record without analogy, because the archaeological context is not the same as the context in use. Through analogy, the archaeologist can relate this modern, ethnographically observed symbolic
system to the system from the past, filling in the gaps and continually testing the interpretive theories that are generated.

Application of the Interpretive Framework

In the rest of this dissertation, I will apply the framework I have developed here to the interpretation of Classic Maya patron deity veneration, in an attempt to meet the goals set out in Chapter 1. I want to understand what patron deities were and how they were venerated and to understand how this veneration is implicated in the power of social institutions, specifically the royal court and the authority of the ruler. As I have argued here, institutions come about, are sustained, and promote their own efficacy through individual semiotic acts which can be characterized as discourses, ideologies, and ritual. In order to understand the promotion, maintenance, and ultimately the power of Maya rulers, we must therefore be prepared to interpret these individual semiotic acts through their material remains. This “thick description” in archaeology is a daunting task but I will attempt it here and the reader may judge its effectiveness.

Thick description in archaeology begins with ethnographic analogy through which the meaning of social acts can be interpreted. In Chapter 3, I lay out a historical/ethnographic analogy for the Maya. I use ethnographic material from a number of ethnographies of modern Maya communities to develop an analogy between pre-Columbian patron gods and more recent patron saints. I then examine the Colonial period and the transition from pre-Columbian beliefs to Christianity. Finally, I examine colonial era documents referring to the pre-Columbian period for the information they give us about patron deity veneration. By examining these analogous periods, I outline the
meanings associated with certain patron deity/saint veneration practices. For example, the pre-Columbian monopoly on patron deity rituals by the Maya ruling class was part of an ideological discourse naturalizing differences in entitlements. Rulers were entitled to demand certain tribute obligations on the part of non-rulers, and they justified this social asymmetry by describing it as a reciprocal arrangement: by undertaking arduous rituals, they served the good of the entire community, and thus deserved support in the form of tribute and labor. This arrangement was also naturalized through discourses linking elite superiority to the creation of the cosmos, in effect making it difficult for society members to recognize particular social asymmetries as historically contingent.

In Chapter 4 I trace this set of meanings back to the Classic period through the use of epigraphy. This chapter gathers up all Maya inscriptions that I could identify that relate to patron deity veneration. I demonstrate that many of the same meaningful practices and discourses identifiable in the Postclassic/Colonial/Modern eras are also present in Classic period Maya texts. They also contain discourses justifying and naturalizing social asymmetries. For example, by attributing certain actions to patron gods, the creators of these texts gave the social order a supernatural sanction that would be difficult to challenge, given that patron deities were believed to serve the whole community.

In Chapters 6 and 7, I present archaeological and epigraphic evidence from the site of La Corona, which I use as a case study for the role of patron deity veneration in power relations in a Classic Maya community. I argue that patron deity ritual was used in two distinct ways at La Corona: to create new social models and to naturalize these institutions over time. A set of new patron deity temples was constructed in the year 658
and can be linked with the rise to power of a new king after the violent death of his rival. Thus, in this time period we can link two phenomena: a period of social upheaval after which a new ruler gained power and the veneration of new patron deities at La Corona. In this historical moment, I argue that these new rituals created new social models of royal authority at La Corona. While these particular patron gods were probably new to the community, the rituals initiating this veneration would have been familiar at La Corona already: they made use of temples already in place, and they drew on a tradition of patron deity veneration that was already in use at La Corona and across the Maya area more broadly.

After the introduction of these new gods, subsequent rituals routinized the social asymmetries naturalized and justified by these particular religious beliefs and practices. At least one additional patron deity shrine was constructed, and a set of monuments from this shrine provides us with an excellent example of a discourse of naturalization and justification. Their text sets out the history of La Corona itself, relating the present ruler to an early settler of the site. Next, the text justifies the veneration of the deity by claiming that this god had had a relationship with La Corona all along, in fact thousands of years before the community was even settled. Thus, the veneration of this god was the natural thing to do. Finally, the text gives detail about the life history of the king, essentially explaining why he was especially well-equipped to carry out the duties of patron deity veneration.

Thus, through the case study of La Corona, I offer an example of how patron deity veneration was linked to institutions of authority, and the process by which social asymmetries of entitlements came to be justified, naturalized, and made to seem timeless.
I assert that, without a “thick description” approach to this problem, in which the pragmatic meaning of specific social actions is interpreted, the link between patron deities and royal authority would remain completely opaque. Merely stating that Maya rulers performed rituals and thereby gained power, without understanding the meaning behind these rituals, is completely insufficient to understand the way this process actually worked. Instead, a careful analogy must be developed, as well as an understanding of past (hieroglyphic) discourses, followed by a willingness to use these tools to interpret the archaeological record as more than a self-evident “text.”

Doubtless, patron deity veneration is just one of the numerous activities through which power relations among the Classic period Maya were negotiated. But to understand these processes, a robust interpretive framework must be adopted.
CHAPTER 3

Patron Gods and Patron Saints: Developing an Analogy

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss evidence for the veneration of supernatural patrons in three different time periods (all of them after the end of the Classic period and the abandonment of La Corona). The first period I will discuss is the Modern period, lasting from 1821 (the date of independence from Spain) to the present day. Next, I will discuss the Colonial period, defined as the period of Colonial Spanish rule, ca. 1500 to 1821. Finally, I will discuss the pre-Columbian Postclassic period, defined as roughly AD 900 to 1500. This period begins with the collapse of Classic-period polities and ends with the Spanish Conquest. Throughout these three periods, certain continuities can be observed between the veneration of patron deities and the veneration of Catholic patron saints.

The evidence examined in this chapter is historical and ethnographic. Documentation of practices of the Modern period is mostly available in ethnographies that have been compiled by anthropologists over the past century. In this chapter, I rely on many sources from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. While readers seeking accounts of more recent social and religious practices among the Maya are advised to read more recent ethnographies, these sources provide valuable information about Maya communities that have recently undergone rapid change. While it is important to remember that Maya towns of the mid-20th century are not pristine survivals of a pre-Columbian past, this era retains many traditions that have changed since the introduction
of Evangelical Christianity, the rise of the tourist industry, and the introduction of modern systems of communication.

Colonial histories have been widely studied, and are available in the form of mundane documents, such as wills, that survive from this period. In this chapter, I summarize the work of a number of scholars who have studied this period. Historical accounts of the Postclassic period can be found in native histories that were compiled after the conquest, or in the occasional pre-Columbian document that survived this period. This chapter will form an ethnographic analogy which will be employed in subsequent chapters in order to interpret remains from the Classic period.

As I mentioned in my introductory chapter, this dissertation is concerned primarily with patron deities of the Classic period Maya. I define patron deities as deities who form special relationships with particular human communities and actively participate in human affairs in return for particular veneration practices. Evidence for supernatural characters that fit this description is abundant in the eras following the Classic period and will be discussed in this chapter in order to create an analogy with which Classic period data can be analyzed.

*Patron Saints among the Modern Maya*

When we look at the modern Maya religious practices, it is important to note that patron saints are not the only supernatural entities that are venerated in these communities. Watanabe (1990), in fact, carefully distinguishes between three types of local supernatural beings in the highland Maya town of Santiago Chimaltenango, Guatemala. First, the patron saints are associated with community identity and sociality.
Watanabe describes them as “accessible” and “worldly.” They are not town founders or ancestors but rather were introduced to the community in the ancient mythic past. These can be distinguished from a second category, ancestors, who were once real living people, and who founded the town and its traditions. Ancestors are believed to be the original owners of family lands, and offerings are made to them in order to establish continued claim to these plots. Ancestors and saints are linked, in that the obligation to venerate the saints is seen as a necessity established by the ancestors themselves. Thus, saint veneration invokes ancestors who established this tradition. However, patron saints are not themselves considered ancestors, nor vice-versa.

“Despite the costumbre that binds them, Maya saints and ancestors persist as distinct images of community….Neither figure, however, can now do without the other: alone, each contradicts itself—the stranger-saint who precipitates community, the life-giving ancestor whose now lifeless bones lie in the cemetery on the edge of town. Mythically, ancestors appear to antedate the coming of the saints, yet only when the saints arrive are towns founded, churches built, and orderly social life established” (Watanabe 1990:140–41).

A third type of supernatural being defined by Watanabe (1990) are Earth Lords. These supernatural entities are believed to own the mountains that surround the community. These mountains are seen as a source of great wealth, and thus Earth Lords control access to worldly success. Because of their associations with wealth, they are imagined as Ladinos rather than indigenous Maya. They are like “imperious Ladinos closely resembling Ladino plantation owners in status, speech, wealth, and their peremptory—or at least paternalistic—attitudes toward Chimaltecos” (Watanabe 1990:141). They are associated with amoral intractability, sometimes stealing away souls, sometimes granting riches.

The Earth Lords described by Watanabe for Santiago Chimaltenango closely resemble similar supernatural beings in other Highland Maya communities. These
characters are represented as Ladinos, often wearing Ladino clothes and smoking cigars; believed to control wealth; associated with the earth or mountains; and are feared for their amoral nature. They are referred to as “mountain owners” (Watanabe 1990; 1992; Siegel 1941), Satan (Warren 1978), Judas (Bunzel 1959; Warren 1978; Watanabe 1992) and Maximon (Christenson 2001; Mendelson 1965 in Watanabe 1992:122; Reina 1966). In the role of Judas or Maximon, these characters play a central role in Easter celebrations, where they come into conflict with Christ, eventually are defeated, and are ritually stripped or burned\textsuperscript{9}.

Modern Maya patron saints function as symbols of the communities they inhabit. One clear example of this phenomenon is the practice of naming towns after patron saints in Guatemala and Chiapas. In many of these towns, the saint name comes first, while the indigenous name follows, as in the case of Santiago [Saint James] Chimaltenango. Although these towns were originally given saints names by 16\textsuperscript{th} century Spanish missionaries, the equivalence of the saint’s name with the town’s name in the modern era reinforces the saint as a symbol of community identity. Further reinforcing this identity is the fact that in Guatemala, saint images are often dressed in each town’s traditional clothing and are only prayed to in the indigenous language of the community, rather than in Spanish (Watanabe 1990; 1992). In the Maya highland region, where both language and dress differ substantially from town to town, both of these features serve as markers of ethnic/community identity to a strong degree. Thus, forms of dressing and speaking to the saint further reinforce the notion that the saint is a member of the community although he/she may have a Spanish name.

\textsuperscript{9} In some towns, particularly Santiago Atitlan, Maximon is highly commoditized. Tourists are invited to visit Maximon and mini Maximon effigies are sold for them to take home. It is important to note that such commoditization can have profound effects on traditional religious practices.
Additionally, saints serve as symbols of their home communities vis-à-vis other communities (e.g. Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:107–8). In many communities, saints often visit one another to celebrate fiestas. For example, if one town holds a fiesta for its patron saint, images of saints from other communities may come to the fiesta to pay their respects (figure 3.1 and 3.2). In return, the visited saint will travel to the other community for its own fiesta (Cancian 1965:39; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:153; Siegel 1941:72; Vogt 1973:101; Watanabe 1992:114).

Often, Maya saints are seen as inhabiting the physical effigies that depict them. Maya towns commonly have more than one effigy of the same Catholic saint (especially the Virgin Mary). However, these are not viewed as multiple representations of the same person, but completely different individuals (Christenson 2001; Watanabe 1992; Wisdom 1940). For example, Santiago Chimaltenango has two images of Santiago (Saint James). Santiago *Patrón* is the true patron of the town, while Santiago *Chiquito* is a smaller image and is prayed to separately (Watanabe 1992). In his study of the Chorti Maya, Wisdom (1940:413) notes that all saints with the same names from different towns are considered “brothers” but not the same individuals. An older example of saints inhabiting their effigies is an anecdote mentioned by Thompson (1960:25). In 1883 some residents from San Luis, Petén, crossed into British Honduras and founded the town of San Antonio. But after a year of bad luck they determined to kidnap Saint Luis, who they had left behind in the original town. They successfully carried out the raid, capturing all the saints from their former hometown, thus conferring their divine powers on the new town of San Antonio.
Figure 3.1. San Pedro Necta, Guatemala, receives a visit from Santiago, patron saint of Santiago Chimaltenango. Photograph by Robert Sharer, 1963.

Figure 3.2 Santiago Retires to the Church in San Pedro Necta. Photography by Robert Sharer, 1963.
Because the saint is thought to inhabit the image itself, rather than a distant heavenly location, patron saint veneration is closely tied to maintaining the images themselves. Under normal circumstances, this means simple ritual acts such as providing the saint’s altar with flowers (Bunzel 1959:166; Cancian 1965:34; Reina 1966:102; Siebers 1999:53; Wisdom 1940:376), incense and candles (Bunzel 1959:166; Cancian 1965:34; Oakes 1951:60; Valladares 1957:148; Vogt 1993:18; Watanabe 1992:124; Wisdom 1940:381), sweeping and maintaining the church building where the saints reside (Cancian 1965:34–35; Oakes 1951:60; Reina 1966:102; Siebers 1999:53; Watanabe 1992:109), making sure the clothes of the saint are washed and in good repair (Cancian 1965:34; Christenson 2001:92; Reina 1966:105, 145; Vogt 1993:118; Wisdom 1940:417), and making sure the saints are generally comfortable (Reina 1966:121).

Throughout the year, special saints days, marked by the Catholic calendar, are set aside to celebrate the fiestas of the saints. In addition to fiestas specifically celebrated for the saint, other holidays such as Easter often incorporate the saint, and many of the rituals are the same for these additional holidays. There are two hallmarks of fiestas then set them apart from other religious events. The first is the precession of the saint. Saint images are carried out of the church on large platforms and paraded around the town, often more than once over the course of the holiday (e.g. Bunzel 1959; Cancian 1965; Christenson 2001; Vogt 1993; Wisdom 1940). Another important aspect of these fiestas is dancing (e.g. Brintnall 1979; Bunzel 1959; Cancian 1965; La Farge 1994; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962; Siegel 1941; Vogt 1993; Wisdom 1940). Redfield and Villa Rojas (1962:155–56) argue that in Yucatan, social dancing (*jarana*) is the defining feature which separates a fiesta from everyday religious activity. Although this is a social dance
used by young people as an opportunity to see and be seen, it is also for the saint: “the jarana must take place where the santo can watch it; it is therefore held at the door of the oratorio, or else the image is moved to a place where the dance may be more conveniently held” (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:155). In some Highland communities, dancing is more formalized but also demonstrably performed for the saint (e.g. Bunzel 1959:205; Vogt 1993:121).

Another important aspect of patron saint veneration is food sharing (feasting). Ritual feasting can be broken down into two different categories. The first is the feast in which all members of the community are invited to participate. Most commonly, fiestas involve the consumption of huge amounts of alcohol, but they also involve the sharing of food as well (Bunzel 1959:254; Cancian 1965:38; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:150–56; Siebers 1999:64, 66; Siegel 1941:72; Watanabe 1992:124; Wisdom 1940:385, 387, 449–50). The second type is the ritual feast in which only ritual specialists and their guests participate (Bunzel 1959:166–68, 194–95; Brintnall 1979:98; Christenson 2009; Cancian 1965:38, 41; La Farge 1994:116; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:154–55; Reina 1966:138; Siebers 1999:54; Watanabe 1992:124; Wisdom 1940:375). These specialists are members of the community who are in charge of organizing the fiesta, and are generally organized either with the cofradía or cargo system (discussed further below). In fact, most of the rituals surrounding these systems involve some sort of food sharing. Both public and private feasts are carried out, usually multiple times, during any given fiesta.

Modern Maya fiestas emphasize the participation of the saint himself/herself. Often, the ritual feeding of saints is made explicit by anthropologists’ informants.
Usually, saints are described as “eating” candles and incense, as if this was food (e.g. Bunzel 1959:166; Vogt 1993:1). As one informant stated, “The saints and God want candles and incense and flowers, but we, the persons who take care of them, want food and drink, to enjoy our bodies” (Reina 1966:120). Another informant claimed that without candles, rum, and incense, God and the Saints “would have no tortillas” (Wagley 1949 in Watanabe 1992:76). In other instances, however, saints are believed to actually partake of food and drink (e.g. Reina 1966:115; Wisdom 1940:376). In Yucatan, the act of food sharing with saints is referred to as *matan*, or “offering.” In *matan* rituals, special ritual foods are prepared and arranged on an altar. Supernatural beings such as saints are then invited to partake of the spiritual essence of this food before it is eventually distributed to human participants (Sullivan 1989:96).

In addition to ritual feasting, ritual fasting is also observed by some ritual specialists during their time in office. This can involve brief periods in which only corn is eaten (Wisdom 1940:435) or the practitioner abstains from meat, salt and spices (La Farge 1994:114). It can also include longer periods of sexual abstinence up to a year (Oakes 1951:60; Wisdom 1940:376, 435).

In exchange for ritual practices of saint devotion, modern Maya community members say that their patron saints provide them with general protection and well-being (e.g. Reina 1966:122). More precisely, the saint has the ability to bring either good or evil to the community, depending on whether the community properly carries out the prescribed rituals. In Santiago Chimaltenango, for example, it is said that the saint protected the community from the worst atrocities of the Guatemalan Civil War, while their immediate neighbors suffered far worse under the army occupation (Watanabe
Additionally, individuals can seek the aid of the patron saint for help against specific misfortunes (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:108). However, if the rituals are not properly carried out, the saint has the ability to punish the whole town (Reina 1966:18) or the individual ritual specialists (Cancian 1965:28).

Because Maya patron saints are believed to have protective powers over the whole community, specialists who perform the necessary rituals for the saints are also in the position of protecting the community from harm. In modern Maya communities, and in indigenous communities throughout Mesoamerica, the responsibility of carrying out rituals and fiestas for the saints is assigned by means of a cargo system, a cofradía system, or some combination of the two. The word cargo means “charge” or “burden,” and is usually referred to in Maya communities using indigenous terms with the equivalent meaning (e.g. Bunzel 1959:165; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:156–57). In a cargo system, the responsibility of performing ritual obligations is shared among the boys and married men of the community. The wives of these men typically also share the responsibility, especially in food preparation for the frequent ritual meals, as well as some ritual responsibilities (Bunzel 1959:167; La Farge 1994:165–66; Reina 1966:132; Siebers 1999:53; Wisdom 1940:375). Each year, different individuals will be responsible for certain tasks throughout the year. If these cargo holders live in outlying hamlets, they will move to the town center during their period of service (Vogt 1973). Ritual responsibilities are broken into a series of different levels (Cancian 1965; Oakes 1951; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:157; Siebers 1999; Warren 1978; Watanabe 1992). Lower level cargos involve daily maintenance of the church and saint effigies, while higher cargos typically involve planning the fiesta, and presiding over important annual rituals.
There are greater numbers of lower-level cargos, while the highest levels usually have one or two positions. Men move up this cargo system gradually throughout their adult lives. Because there are more openings available at the lower levels of the cargo, more men participate in these levels (Cancian 1965). Only men who have passed through the sequential levels of the cargo reach the top. Unsurprisingly, reaching the highest level confers significant prestige. Holding a cargo involves more than ritual responsibility, however. It also involves the expenditure of a good deal of money, and the higher the cargo, the more money that is spent (Brintnall 1979:97–98; Hill 1986:69; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:157; Siebers 1999). This is because cargo holders are responsible for funding the community fiesta, along with all the associated rituals it entails. Thus, cargo holders typically go into debt during their year of service and must spend several years paying off their debts before advancing to the next level in the system.

The *cofradía* system operates in much the same way as a cargo system. Cofradías are religious brotherhoods founded for the care of particular saints (Hill 1986; Reina 1966; Siebers 1999:55). Most communities have several cofradías, each responsible for a different saint image and different fiesta. The cofradía usually owns a house where the saint image or ritual paraphernalia are kept (e.g. Christenson 2001). Like the cargo system, each cofradía has different levels of participation through which individuals pass. Higher levels also involve the expenditure of money and carry greater prestige. In most communities, a single individual may take on responsibilities at all of the different cofradías of his community, rather than a single cofradía (Brintnall 1979:98; Hill 1986:69). Thus, the cofradía system is basically identical in structure to the cargo system, although it is organized around the shared property of the cofradía house.
In return for the service provided by cargo holders, they have traditionally been given respect and deference by other community members, and have had a greater say in the decisions of the community, especially those that achieve the top level of the cargo system. However, just as the cargo system itself is the result of centuries of changing social and economic conditions in the Maya area (see below), the relationship between ritual responsibilities and social roles is continually in flux. The rise in Evangelical Christianity has complicated the situation, since Evangelicals are less likely to recognize authority based on Catholic rituals. In Yucatan, the Ejido system (introduced after the Mexican Revolution) has also introduced new systems of authority for regulating land use and rights.

Some communities in the Highlands have traditionally used a hereditary system for certain ritual specialists (Oakes 1951; Reina 1966; Vogt 1973). In these cases, cargo holders are assisted by a lifelong religious specialist, whose role is usually inherited from a parent. These specialists have traditionally been given extraordinary respect by the community at large, and have carried great authority. I suspect that this hereditary system is a direct survival of the Colonial (and ultimately pre-Columbian) system, whereby noble families monopolized positions of ritual importance (see below).

Over the past few centuries, the institution of rotating prestige and authority has been enacted through individual semiotic acts related to the veneration of patron saints. By carrying out their religious responsibilities in accordance with social norms, cargo-holders have the authority to influence events in the community entirely unrelated to religion. Thus, precessions, banquets, effigy maintenance, and other semiotic acts of
patron deity veneration are highly implicated in the workings of power in communities adhering to the cargo system.

*The Colonial Encounter: from Patron Deities to Patron Saints*

Many of the features of patron saint veneration seen in modern Maya communities can be traced to the colonial period and the joining together of Spanish religious practices with indigenous religious practices. When the Spanish conquerors arrived in Mesoamerica, they immediately recognized the phenomenon of indigenous patron deities as being similar to their concept of patron saints. Spanish Catholicism had a tradition of local covenants with specific local saints, and this system was introduced in the early colonial period by Spanish friars in their attempts to convert the indigenous inhabitants of New Spain. The functional equivalence of patron saints and pre-Columbian patron deities is noted by the chronicler Duran (1971:128):

> “Though the people solemnize the feast of all the saints, the feast of the town and its patron is carried out with the utmost solemnity. So in ancient times on the feasts of the idols each village had its own idol as patron. On his day extremely elaborate festivities and expenditures were common.”

Religious practices that eventually became prevalent in Colonial and Modern Mesoamerica did not include an exact copy of Spanish patron saint veneration. Rather, aspects of patron deity veneration and other religious practices of the pre-Columbian period survived to produce a unique syncretic religion that combined Christian and indigenous elements.

Before examining this syncretic system, it is important to examine its constituent parts and the process that produced it. Patron saint veneration in conquest-era Spain is treated by William Christian (1981) in his frequently cited book, *Local Religion in*
In this book, he examines the responses to a questionnaire that was sent to the villages of New Castile, Spain in the years 1575-1580. This questionnaire was drawn up by the royal chroniclers of Philip II and sought information about each town’s geographical location, history, natural resources, demography, and religious practices. The idea was to create a history of the entire kingdom using the responses to these questions, although the final study was never produced. However, Christian uses the responses to questions about 16th century religious matters to reconstruct local religion in these towns. Although conquistadors and Spanish friars originated from many parts of Spain, not just New Castile, the study is valuable for what it tells us about patron saint veneration in Spain and thus the local Spanish practices that confronted local indigenous practices during the Colonial encounter.

Christian notes that there were two levels of Catholicism practiced in 16th century Castile. The first was the universal church based upon the sacraments, the liturgy, and the official holiday calendar. The other was local and based on sacred places, images, relics, patron saints, and a calendar that was sometimes at odds with the official one. Within the local religion, there were additional layers of devotion. The first was a set of old local saints along with their bodies and relics, some of which may have been original inhabitants of the town. These saints were believed to have led saintly lives, and underwent a popular canonization after death. The second was a set of Marian cults, often based outside of the town itself in the local landscape at sites where miracles were supposed to have occurred. These cults centered on the Virgin Mary, but each Mary had a unique identity. “Our Lady of this-place, located by this particular spring, tree, or castle, with that particular view, was different from any other Mary” (Christian 1981:125).
Finally, an additional layer of patron saints was introduced to deal with specific problems in the community, such as natural disasters or illness.

Saints from these different layers of devotion became associated with specific towns through different processes. Saints of the first layer were attached to towns where their relics resided. As mentioned, some of these saints may have originally been from these towns. In the second layer, sites on the landscape became associated with Mary through specific miraculous events. Often, stories of these miracles centered on marginalized members of the community, such as poor children, who are thus not believed when they tell of the miracle. Eventually, however, the witness is vindicated and glorified, and the story serves as morality tale about belief in God’s miracles. Finally, specialist saints were chosen in response to natural disasters such as hail or locusts. Often, the coincidence of the disaster with a specific saint’s day was taken as a clear sign that that particular saint should be chosen as patron. At other times, a lottery was used or other events were interpreted as signs that a particular saint should be chosen. These new patrons were layered on top of the Marian devotions, since Mary was seen as insufficient to protect the town when disaster struck.

Once a saint was chosen as a patron of a town, the town took on the responsibility of devotion toward that saint. This devotion took the form of a vow, which was made by the community as a whole. These vows included the obligation to build a chapel and carve the saint’s image, as well as to observe the saint’s day as a holiday. This included not working on the saint’s day, fasting the day before, holding a precession to the saint’s chapel, and finally holding a feast in which poor members of the district were fed in the saint’s honor.
Although declaring a holiday and a feast in the saint’s honor may not seem like a particularly arduous burden to modern readers, it should be noted that small agricultural towns in 16th century Spain could only lose a certain number of days for holidays, especially during harvest season, before they risked losing their agricultural livelihood. They were already obliged by the universal church to observe certain holidays. In certain districts, these amounted to around 85 days out of the year. Thus, towns came in conflict with the universal church over which holidays were the most important to observe. The church considered local vows unimportant compared to the universal holidays, whereas towns preferred to keep their vows to their patrons and ignore other obligatory holidays instead.

Practitioners saw patron saints within a religious hierarchy that was based on their experiences with the royal bureaucracy.

“The village or town was subject to a number of hierarchies in addition to the saintly pantheon. Castilian application of the term advocate [lawyer, abogado] to helper saints fit their earthly circumstances. Communities were constantly litigating: over who was their lord, exemptions from taxes, and common lands. Many lawsuits had to be argued by lawyers paid by the community as a whole in the distant courts of Granada and Valladolid. Just as they paid their lawyers, sometimes going into debt to do so, so villages and towns entailed their resources in the form of future masses, penance, and work time to pay saints to be their lawyers before God…. The saints did not merely seek to placate an angry God upset by sin. At times there appeared to be other unnamed antagonists trying to get the judge’s ear. Here the analogy of a monarch who rewards and punishes after multiple intrigues and influences of favorites would serve just as well as that of a judge” (Christian 1981:56).

When the Spanish conquerors and friars arrived in New Spain, this is the notion of patron saints that they brought with them. Although the friars were sent by the universal church, which was often in conflict with the local devotions of Spanish towns, the friars were not immune to the local influences from their childhoods. Christian notes that within 16th century Castile, priests were often from different villages than those that
they served. Thus, they would speak about “local devotions with a bemused tolerance, occasionally wondering out loud about ‘pagan superstition.’ But when asked about the shrines of their home villages, the same priests speak with tenderness, excitement, and pride” (Christian 1981:20). The same attitude was brought to New Spain, where friars attempted to rid the indigenous inhabitants of pagan superstitions, while at the same time introducing them to their own local religion from Spain.

The process of converting the indigenous population of Mesoamerica to Christianity took place on a number of different levels. Just as the universal church existed alongside the local devotions in Spain, Mesoamerican religion was also practiced at the personal, community, and universal levels. Personal religions practice included ancestor veneration and perhaps family deities. The community level, which Farriss (1984:296) refers to as the middle-level, included the patron deities representing the autonomy of communities and polities. Finally, many communities shared beliefs in general gods or world creators, of which their local gods were sometimes aspects. Farriss (1984) points out that indigenous religion confronted Catholic religion on all different levels, and thus the conversion process was not a change from local to universal, or even universal grafted onto local, but a complex mix that existed on all levels. While personal devotions to ancestors and gods were quickly driven underground or exterminated, and universal religion was quickly monopolized by the Catholic clergy, the veneration of patron deities of communities existed somewhere in between, and thus directly competed with the local saints of the new Catholic rulers (Farriss 1984:300). Thus, it is in this middle level that we can most clearly observe the syncretic process by which Catholic saints took over the roles and identities once held by patron gods.
It is a matter of some debate whether the Spanish friars sent to convert New Spain to Christianity intentionally allowed the identification of saints with pre-Columbian deities or whether they discouraged this process. One of the most frequently-cited examples of this identification is the Virgin of Guadalupe with the pre-Columbian goddess Tonantzin. The Virgin of Guadalupe now serves as the patron saint of the Mexican nation, and is also venerated in other Latin American countries. She appeared to an indigenous man in 1531, and her image was imprinted on his cloak. The friar Sahagun claimed that Tepeyacac, the site of the apparition outside of Mexico City, corresponded to the site of an indigenous shrine to Tonantzin, and that her cult was thus suspect, because pilgrims might actually be worshipping the pagan goddess (in Poole 1994). Poole (1994), doubting Sahagun, notes that Francisco de Bustamente, a contemporary, never mentioned the Guadalupe cult in his 1556 condemnation of neo-idolatry and that Sahagun’s native informants never mention Tepeyacac as sacred to Tonantzin. However, López Luján and Noguez (2011) convincingly argue that on an adjacent hill, Zacahuitzco, two pre-Columbian rock-carved images marked the spot as sacred to Tonantzin and that this hill was a pilgrimage destination for nations going to war. This, along with other evidence they cite, demonstrates that Guadalupe probably was a manifestation of a pre-Columbian deity. On the other hand, as Lockhart (1992:246) notes, the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe itself has many formal resemblances to the Marian cults of Spain. The shrine is located outside of Mexico City, just as Spanish Marian shrines are also located in the landscape. The name Guadalupe itself is taken from one such Marian saint of Spain. The Virgin appeared to a marginalized indigenous man, who had to convince the doubtful clergy of the authenticity of the apparition, along the lines of Catholic
narratives. Thus, the Virgin of Guadalupe is an excellent example of a syncretic deity, melding pre-Columbian and Catholic beliefs and narratives.

There are other clear examples of pre-Columbian and post-Conquest equivalencies as well as the friars’ complicity in that identification. Nutini (1976) provides four excellent examples from Tlaxcala. These include San Juan as a replacement for Tezcatlipoca in the town of Tianguismanalco, which can be observed in the iconography of the altar of the church today; Santa Ana to replace Toci in the town of Chiautempan on the basis that they were both grandmothers of deities; San Bernardino as a replacement for Comaxtli, the patron god of the Tlaxcalan polity; and finally the Virgin of Ocotlán as a replacement for Xochiquetzalli, the wife of Comaxtli in pre-Columbian mythology. This last example is the clearest of the four. She was a goddess associated with arts and flowers, and appeared to supplicants in a burning pine tree. She was also depicted with a blue huipil and white skirt. The origin of the cult of the Virgin of Ocotlán can be traced to an event in 1541 in which the Virgin appeared to the indigenous Juan Diego Bernardino within a burning pine, dressed in a blue blouse and white skirt, and told him to build her sanctuary atop the ruins of a shrine to Xochiquetzalli nearby. The new cult spread so rapidly that the friars were obliged to confirm the miracle. In the account of the miracle given by Fray Martín Sarmiento de Hojacastro, the friar concludes that the event was providential because the Virgin chose to appear to Juan Diego in a form he and the indigenous population could understand. Furthermore, he expresses some doubts that the deity that appeared was actually the Virgin herself rather than the pre-Columbian goddess, but says that it doesn’t matter, since everything would eventually become clear to the pilgrims who came to visit the new chapel.
Nutini (1976) takes this as an example of a process he calls “guided syncretism,” in which Spanish friars consciously allowed the indigenous population to identify Catholic saints with pre-Columbian gods in order to facilitate their conversion. Nevertheless, he argues, it would be a mistake to say that the Virgin of Ocotlán is really Xochiquetzalli in disguise. Rather, she is a new supernatural entity that resulted from the interactions between these two deities. Nutini sees syncretism as a multi-step process leading to this type of deity fusion. First, a new deity (the Virgin Mary) was introduced to the indigenous inhabitants but they did not yet understand her or know how to interpret her. Thus, they saw her as a new manifestation of a familiar deity, Xochiquetzalli. Second, as the friars took steps to stamp out native religious practices by destroying temples and effigies and imposing harsh punishments for idolatry, the knowledge of pre-Columbian religious practices and associated social practices began to fade. Meanwhile, active instruction in catechism and social rewards for Catholic devotion made the population more familiar with Catholic ritual and social practices. Gradually, after a period of struggle between these two systems, syncretized structural elements were interpreted within the new religious context as Catholicism was internalized. Thus, the Virgin of Ocotlán was considered part of the Catholic pantheon. This is an excellent example of the formation of a new institution through a series of individual semiotic acts.

This complex process produces an outcome in which elements of the old religion are still present in the new religion, but they are not recognized as such by practitioners. Thus, it is usually not possible to identify specific patron saints with specific pre-Columbian deities because they are viewed within a Catholic framework. Nevertheless, ritual practices surrounding these new saints can be observed to follow patterns of pre-
Columbian patron deity veneration. In the following sections, I will examine the origins of different patron saint veneration practices in order to see which attributes are of probably recent origin and which may have pre-Columbian roots.

Patron Saints of the Colonial Era

Patron saints were introduced by the Spanish friars based upon their own experiences that each town should have a patron saint or abogado. Thus, upon undertaking the conversion of the indigenous communities of Mesoamerica, friars assigned patron saints along the same lines. Although, as discussed above, some friars may consciously have allowed the communities to venerate saints similar to their pre-Columbian patron deities (Lockhart 1992:244), it appears that in many cases, saints were simply assigned, often by the personal whims of the friar in question (Farriss 1984:310). Once these friars began to found churches, they insisted that each church have a patron saint (Lockhart 1992:244), a practice which caught the attention of their new converts. Although the Nahuatl documents from Central Mexico examined by Lockhart do not make unambiguous references to saint cults before the 1580s, the process of adoption of patron saints must have begun during the first few generations after the Conquest, as friars began assigning patrons to churches, and their converts recognized the similarity to pre-Columbian patron deities.

Once these saints had been assigned, and their cults got off the ground, mythologies often developed among the indigenous inhabitants of the town explaining how the saint was chosen or placing the saint in the pre-Columbian past, as if to naturalize it. For example, Lockhart (1992:236) cites an example from Santiago Sula in
Central Mexico. According to local legend, the friars informed the town that it would need a patron saint and told the people to choose one. The task was assigned to two respected elders and each dreamed of Santiago, who appeared before him to announce that he would be the town’s patron. Upon comparing dreams the next morning, the elders announced that Santiago would be the patron. Lockhart equates the village elders to the town’s mythological heroes “Quail Lord” and “Quail Serpent,” which represented pre-Conquest community identity. Thus, he argues, ethnic identity is maintained by associating Santiago with the old ideology. Another example is cited by Gibson (1964:498, note 142) in which the construction of the saint’s church is pushed back in time to the improbable date of 1521 (the year of the Conquest).

Another example is given by Watanabe (1990:135) in his treatment of the patron saint in the modern Maya community of Santiago Chimaltenango, Guatemala:

“Chimaltecos further naturalize Santiago through accounts of how he came to live in [Chimaltenango]. They tell of when the first Chimaltecos found Santiago in the mountains, in a place where even today no one lives because it has no water. After building the church that still stands at the center of town, these ancestral Chimaltecos fetched Santiago to his new home. The next morning he was gone. Searchers eventually found him back where they had first encountered him and one more returned him to the church. Again he fled to his old place but this time when they tried to carry him back to town, Santiago made himself so heavy that no one could lift him. Exasperated, the ancestors beat him with whips to get him into the church, leaving gouges on his back that can still be seen today. Santiago had dutifully abided in the church ever since. Although he is neither the mythic founder of the town nor even originally Chimalteco, Santiago attests to those ancestral Chimaltecos who first discovered him, built his fine house for him, and finally domesticated him.”

I find Watanabe’s concept of domestication especially useful for understanding both patron saints and pre-Columbian patron deities. Post-Conquest patron saints were all introduced by Spanish friars and were thus foreign. Through a series of individual semiotic acts, they were made domestic and thus came to represent the communities in which they resided. These acts include not only discourses projecting them into the past,
but ritual activities, especially the building of the church and the carving of the saint’s image.

Once this domestication process had occurred, patron saints came to represent their home communities just as patron deities had previously. Lockhart notes this phenomenon in his studies of documents from Colonial Central Mexico. Here, the churches of saints, just as there pre-Columbian antecedents, represented the autonomy of the town. Sub-units also had patron saints, just as pre-Columbian *calpolli* districts, and could sometimes use these saints as the basis for a claim to autonomy. Lockhart (1992:210) cites an example in which the village of Santa Cruz Contzinco wanted to hold a procession but the town of San Pablo Tlachcuititlan, of which Santa Cruz was a part, protested to the authorities. In response, Santa Cruz held its procession at night and thereby avoided penalty. The following year, with precedent on their side, they were granted official permission, thus asserting their independence from San Pablo. (This is an excellent example of an implicit strategy challenging differences in social entitlements, as discussed in the previous chapter).

Saints were also seen as the true owners of community land. Lockhart (1992:168–69; 455–59) cites another example in which a woman and her husband who have no land request land on which to build a house from the town elders. They refer to the unoccupied village land as “the land of San Miguel,” the patron saint of the town. In return, the couple promises to burn candles and incense at San Miguel’s altar in gratitude.

The same identification of the saint with community identity is evident among the Maya in Colonial Yucatan. Here also, the church took over the role of the pre-Columbian temple as a reflection of the prestige and autonomy of the town. Restall (1997:151) notes
that several Colonial-era churches in Yucatan carry dedicatory plaques proclaiming the names of the indigenous governors at the time when the churches were completed (much like pre-Columbian inscriptions proclaiming the construction of patron deity temples by Classic Maya rulers—see Chapter 4). Restall claims that “saints, like churches… were representations and expressions of their [communities]; the more extravagant the image and its celebration (and the larger and more elaborate the church), the better the projection of [community] pride and importance” (Restall 1997:153).

Farriss (1984) argues that patron saint cults served to organize the community around shared ritual practices. Unlike other organizational principles, such as lineage or occupation, patron saint veneration was organized around territory and physical boundaries. Thus, the presence or absence of the church marked whether the community was autonomous or part of another town with its own church. For this reason, when Spanish authorities attempted to shift administrative boundaries for their convenience, they were met with resistance by villagers who wished to remain part of the original town: “Maya calculations of who belonged where were not based on physical distance and certainly not on the bishops’ criterion of equalizing parish incomes. People belonged to the pueblo where their local saints were honored” (Farriss 1984:330).

Spanish patron saints in the 16th century were originally supplicated for assistance against specific troubles in the town, usually locusts, hail, or other agricultural problems. And, just as Maya saints, they were believed to be able to punish the town by withdrawing their protection if vows were not kept (Christian 1981:53). The exception was the Virgin Mary, who was always seen as forgiving (Christian 1981:98). When individuals suffered specific problems such as health ailments, however, they often made
pilgrimages to other communities with saints renowned for dealing with those particular problems. Thus, Spanish saints were believed to divide their labor according to specific human problems (Christian 1981). Maya saints, in contrast, are believed to protect humans based upon the communities in which they live. This aspect of patron saint veneration therefore probably has its origins in pre-Columbian Mesoamerican rather than in 16th century Spain.

Community members honored patron saints through a number of ritual practices, most of which continue to this day in modern communities. In everyday terms, these practices consisted of providing for the saint image’s maintenance and comfort. The saint had to be supplied with candles, incense and flowers (Lockhart 1992; Wood 1991). Furthermore, their clothing had to be washed (Farriss 1984:321) and the images themselves kept clean. One of the most commonly mentioned services provided for saints was the sweeping of the church or chapel where there image was kept. Lockhart notes (1992:238) that “sweeping for saints” serves as a generic term in Nahuatl wills for any service for the saints. Although sweeping for gods is mentioned by Duran as a pre-Columbian practice, it was also a Spanish practice, so it may have become more prevalent or important after the Conquest.

By far the most important way in which patron saints were honored during the Colonial period was through community feasting events (fiestas). These were held on the saint’s day and involved the entire community. The fiesta involved the precession of the saint and the offering of food and drink, followed by its consumption by the community. Saint precessions were an aspect of Spanish religious practice but can also be traced to
pre-Columbian antecedents (see Chapter 4), thus the two traditions converged in this respect.

Large sums of money were spent on patron saint fiestas, often the majority of the town’s income (Restall 1997:153). The Nahuatl documents examined by Lockhart indicate that special land was set aside to provide for the saint. From cultivating this land the town gained both foodstuffs and extra income for the celebrations. Community members were expected to help tend this land for the benefit of the saint. Colonial indigenous feasting practices differed from their 16th century Spanish counterparts in beliefs about who was actually being served. Whereas Spanish communities vowed to hold fiestas in order to feed the poor on behalf of their saints, indigenous communities held fiestas in order to feed the saints themselves. This is because Colonial Maya, in contrast to 16th century Spaniards, believed that saints inhabited their very effigies, rather than residing in Heaven. Food offerings are made to these effigies in order to sustain them. This type of ritual is referred to as *matan*, “offering” (Sullivan 1989:96) and consists of offering food to supernatural beings before humans themselves partake of the food (Farriss 1984:322).

While fiestas brought the community together in a shared experience, they also served to highlight hierarchical differences in the group: who paid for the fiesta, who ate where and in which order, etc. This is because in the Colonial period, patron saint veneration was closely tied to political hierarchies and prestige. During pre-Columbian times, patron deity veneration was controlled jealously by the ruling elite (see below). These individuals had the sole responsibility for supplicating the gods on behalf of the community, often after strenuous fasts and auto-sacrifice. They also sponsored public
feasting events. In return, they were claimed the legitimacy of their lordship and the support of the community, in the form of tribute, service, and obedience.

After the Conquest, the role of ritual specialist was taken over by the Spanish catholic hierarchy. Only Spanish priests could hold mass and perform the sacraments, thus displacing the indigenous nobility. The indigenous nobility still existed, however, and during the Colonial period enjoyed a gradually-eroding set of special privileges under Spanish rule (Farriss 1984:334–35). However, although the nobility, due to their indigenous blood, could not enter the Catholic priesthood, they did manage to monopolize other positions of religious authority during the Colonial period. These included the maestro cantor of the local church, who was responsible for educating youths in the new doctrine, assisting the priest, serving as parish secretary (thus literacy was a requirement), appointing other church functionaries, advising community members on matters concerning marriage and the family, organizing music and liturgy, caring for priestly vestments, and burying the dead. In other words, except for providing the actual sacraments, they did everything to keep the religious life of the community functioning and were therefore the face of the church in the community (Farriss 1984:335–36). The maestro cantor also had a staff of assistants, often consisting of members of the same families that had ruled before the Conquest (Restall 1997:150). In some cases, this staff was organized into formal religious brotherhoods known as cofradías. The members of these groups had the day-to-day responsibility to care for the saint’s images and keep them dressed and clean. The organization as a whole was responsible for holding the fiesta, either through its own resources or with funds derived from the working of cofradía land. The same elite that had once commanded tribute from commoners now
mobilized surplus wealth in order to hold the fiestas and honor the saints (Farriss 1984:339). Thus, patron saint cults became a means through which the traditional nobility could maintain their high status even after the profound changes of the Conquest.

As we have seen, the cofradía system exists to this day, but has undergone significant changes since the Colonial era. Today, it consists of a rotating system of religious offices. Partly because this system is so widespread in the indigenous communities of Mesoamerica, and partly because it filled some of the expectations of a previous generation of scholars about the ancient Maya, it was asserted in the 1960s and 1970s by anthropologists and archaeologists of the Maya that this system was a survival of a pre-Columbian equivalent (Carrasco 1961; Coe 1965; Price 1974; Rathje 1970). Because it was thought by scholars of this era that the ancient Maya lived in dispersed settlements in order to practice slash-and-burn agriculture, it was argued that the cargo system, by encouraging power-sharing among different lineages, would have encouraged at least some integration to counter the centripetal forces of dispersal (Coe 1965).

The problem with this theory is that cargo systems, by their very nature, tend to impoverish their participants while simultaneously building prestige. As Nancy Farriss (1984) argues, it is unlikely that ancient Maya ritual specialists of the elite class would have participated in a system which caused their own impoverishment. “No hereditary ruling group devises a system the purpose of which is to destroy its economic base; or if it does, it does not last very long as an hereditary elite” (Farriss 1984:349). Instead, the system should have simultaneously promoted the authority of political institutions while still maintaining their wealth. How could such a system morph into the cargo system
whereby personal wealth is spent to carry out religious obligations on behalf of the community, rather than community wealth?

The theorists who proposed that the cargo system operated in the pre-Columbian period made the fundamental mistake of seeing modern Maya communities as isolated from the outside world, and therefore fossilized micro-survivals of ancient Maya communities. However, over the past 500 years, Maya communities, like the rest of the world, have been in a constant state of change due to the influences of the Conquest, independence from Spain, the rise of new governments, civil wars, and exploitive practices by non-indigenous neighbors (Reina 1966). All of these factors have affected the organization of religious obligations within these communities. It is important to examine these changes along with religious continuities.

Chance and Taylor (1985) examined historical records from Jaslico, Oaxaca, and Central Mexico to offer a detailed account of the changes that took place in indigenous communities during the Colonial and Modern periods. As I discussed above, the Conquest put indigenous nobility in a difficult position. While they had once monopolized positions of religious responsibility, this role was taken over entirely by the Spanish clergy. In order to maintain some position of authority within their communities, the native nobility filled the next-best level in the hierarchy: that of assistants to the Spanish clergy (such as the maestro cantor). They also formed the first cofradías of Mesoamerica, monopolizing positions within the religious brotherhoods to the exclusion of less noble-blooded indigenous persons. At this time, cofradías owned land that was devoted to the saints in their care. By farming and raising animals on this land, agricultural and financial surplus was obtained to fund the fiestas (Chance and Taylor
Although cofradía members farmed this land, it was also up to the community to support them with free labor in order to fund the fiestas. Thus, during the Colonial period, the indigenous nobility monopolized positions of authority within the religious hierarchy, and used public land and labor to finance rituals for the saints, while simultaneously enhancing their own prestige.

In the latter part of the 18th century, cofradías faced greater demands on their wealth. This was due to population increases (increasing fiesta expenses), disputes over land, taxes and famine (Chance and Taylor 1985:14). Compounding the problem was the slow decline in of the social distinctions between the indigenous nobility and indigenous commoners. Spanish Colonial law allowed some commoners to advance to higher status through a hierarchy of civil-administrative positions. There were also economic benefits to Spanish officials if they could be persuaded to recognize the dubious noble status of petitioners (Chance and Taylor 1985:17). Thus, the status of the traditional nobility was so devalued that it eventually disappeared. Because public land could no longer pay for the necessary rituals and fiestas, and because the traditional nobility could no longer be distinguished from other community members, it fell to the now relatively egalitarian community to fund fiestas by some other means. During the 19th century, therefore, individuals began to take on the responsibility of paying for fiestas themselves (Chance and Taylor 1985:17). The final stage of the transformation process was the fusion of these new religious responsibilities with the civil hierarchy.

“The formation of a civil-religious cargo system seems to have occurred with the shift from collective to individual sponsorship of religious fiestas…. Together these changes give us the 19th- and 20th-century version of the cargo system so often labeled "traditional" by ethnographers” (Chance and Taylor 1985:19).
A good case study for this slow process in the Maya area is given by Rus and Wasserstrom (1980), who describe the shift of responsibility for funding fiestas from the cofradía organizations to individual cargo holders in Zinacantan, Chiapas throughout the 19th century. This shift was a result of the economic burdens placed on the community. Ladinos had slowly appropriated the best lands, and Zinacantan men were thus forced to make a living as traveling merchants, mule drivers, and porters. These economic changes drew men out of the community, making it impossible for those cofradía members who remained to keep the system functional. The result was the collapse of the cofradía as a funding institution, which was replaced by a rotating cargo system. When new opportunities for employment improved this situation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these cargos became ranked and competitive.

In spite of these profound changes, there are still some features of the modern system that are probably of pre-Columbian, rather than Spanish origin. Firstly, the modern Maya community relies on the cargo holder to act on the community’s behalf and carry out the appropriate rituals. Individual piety is under-emphasized. Essentially, it does not matter that an individual neglects to attend mass or pray to the saint, because cargo holders do this for him (Bunzel 1959; Cancian 1965; Reina 1966:140). If a cargo holder neglects his community ritual responsibilities to the saint, however, this causes a great scandal (Cancian 1965:61). The cargo holder at best loses face in the community, and can lose his opportunity to serve higher cargos. At worst, he can be fined or jailed. It is believed that the saint may punish him with death or bad fortune (Cancian 1965; La Farge 1994:167; Redfield and Villa Rojas 1962:157). This attitude is quite different from the beliefs of 16th century Spaniards. In Spain, it was the responsibility of each
community member to keep the vows made to saints (Christian 1981:41–42). If a community member failed to do so, or was insincere in fulfilling his obligations, it was believed that he would be punished by the saint.

In summary, the Spanish Conquest was a time of profound changes to the religious systems of Mesoamerica. While this dissertation is not primarily concerned with the process of conversion and the adoption of Christianity, it is important to note that it did not turn indigenous Mesoamericans into perfectly Spanish-style Catholics. Rather, the result was a syncretic system at a number of different levels: private devotions, community devotions, and beliefs about the universal church.

In the Colonial period, patron saints, as in later times, were venerated in specific ways. These generally included providing for their comfort and well-being: dressing, cleaning, and providing candles, flowers and incense. Ritual feasting was a key aspect of patron saint veneration, and involved ritually sharing food with the saint before community participants ate the food themselves. Saints represented the community vis-à-vis other communities and thus patron saint cults reinforced community identity. Within the community, patron saint cults were used to promote the legitimacy of the traditional nobility, who monopolized the care of the saint, the sponsorship of the fiesta, and the public funds necessary to carry out these tasks.

Patron saints in Mesoamerica differed from saints in Spain in several key regards. First, ritual practices surrounding the saints were similar but ultimately distinct. Both involved sweeping the saint’s area and holding feasting events. However, feasting in Spain was seen as a service to the poor in the saint’s name, whereas feasting in Mesoamerica was a means of feeding the saint himself. Saints in Spain, especially the
Marian saints, were tied to landscape features, rather than town centers. Shrines developed in the hinterlands as sacred sites. In Mesoamerica, however, saints resided with the community itself because they represented the social ties of that community. In Spain, saints were chosen at specific times to counteract natural disasters. In Mesoamerica, saints were introduced by the Spanish priesthood and then went through a naturalization process (the invention of mythologies to explain them) and a domestication process (rituals designed to turn them into community members). Finally, Spanish communities understood saints within a metaphor of the royal court or the judicial court. God was the judge or monarch who could be influenced by the intrigues that surrounded him, and the saint served as the lawyer or ambassador that swayed God to spare the community from harm. Although the Spanish friars referred to Mesoamerican patron saints as “abogados,” employing the same metaphor, indigenous communities did not see their saints within this framework. Rather, saints themselves protected the community from harm or provided it with sustenance.

Postclassic Patron Deities: the Maya Area

Many of the attributes of patron saint veneration that we saw in the Colonial and Modern eras can be seen in the Postclassic era as well, demonstrating their indigenous origin. In this section, I will examine evidence for patron deities during this period and the various beliefs and practices that surrounded them.

The Popol Vuh, or “Council Book,” is a colonial-era manuscript that recounts the history of the K’iche people of highland Guatemala (translated by Christenson 2003). In the early eighteenth century, a catholic priest named Francisco Ximenez obtained the
manuscript, which he transcribed and translated into Spanish. The original manuscript is now lost, and all that survives is the Ximenez transcription.

The Popol Vuh can be roughly divided into two sections. The first deals with the creation of the world and the deeds of heroic gods to make the world safe for human habitation. The second part deals with the creation of human beings, and the history of the K’iche nation. The importance of the Popol Vuh in the study of the Classic period Maya cannot be exaggerated. The first part of the text shows remarkable similarities to the myths of the Classic and Preclassic periods as reflected in art and hieroglyphic texts.

While the first part of the text of the Popol Vuh has been drawn on extensively by scholars of the Classic Maya, it is the second part of the text which deals with patron deities and is of greater interest to this study. In this part, the first men are created by the gods using maize dough. Of these four men, three go on to found the ruling lineages of the K’iche nation. After the first people have been created, they journey to the primordial city of Tulan, where they receive patron gods. Other nations are also present at Tulan, and they receive gods as well. The nations then leave Tulan in great sadness, and await the first dawn. Before the dawn the world is cold, but the patron gods of the K’iche supply them with fire. The other human nations come to beg for fire and are thus forced to pledge themselves as sacrificial victims to the patron gods of the K’iche. Finally, the dawn appears and the patron gods of the K’iche inform them that the world is now theirs to conquer. After conflicts with other highland nations, the K’iche emerge victorious and their sons journey to Tulan to receive emblems of rulership. The K’iche nation then founds various capitals, and the text gives a history of the ruling lineages up to the mid-sixteenth century. Much of the same information is covered, in a truncated form, in the
Titulo de Totonicapan (translated by Carmack and Mondloch 1983). This manuscript was written in the sixteenth century by a group of K’iche leaders and was first translated to Spanish in 1834 by the priest Dioniso José Chonay.

From these documents, we can learn about the way the K’iches represented and discussed their patron gods: who they were, where they came from, and which ritual practices were required to venerate them. From the Popol Vuh, we are told that the first people were created by the gods who created the universe. The term “god” is *k’ab’awil* and the same term is used to describe the patron gods. However, we learn that before the first dawn, gods did not exist in physical effigy form: “they [the first people] did not yet call upon wood or stone. They remembered the word of the Framer and the Shaper, of Heart of Sky and Heart of Earth [the creator gods], it was said. They would merely plead for their heartening, their sowing and their dawning” (Christenson 2003:206).

The human nations then journey to Tulan in order to obtain their patron gods. The first and most important of these is Tohil, who was given to Balam Quitze, one of the four original men. According to Christenson (2003:211), the word *Tohil* refers to obligation, debt, or tribute, suggesting the god’s demands for tribute and sacrifice. Tohil is also listed as the patron of the non-ruling K’iche groups, the Tamub and the Ilocab. In fact, the Popol Vuh claims that it was the patron god that defined these other groups as K’iche.

“Thus was the naming of the three Quichés. But in this they freed themselves because it was the same god’s name, Tohil Quiché, for all of them. It was Tohil for the Tamub as well as for the Ilocab. There was only one name for the god among them. Therefore the three groups of Quichés were not divided” (Christenson 2003:213).
Thus, according the discourse presented in the Popol Vuh, it is this similarity of religious ritual that unites the K’iches more than common language, since the language of the other nations only changed after the K’iche gods were assigned.

The second god given to the K’iche rulers was Auilix, meaning “you are cared for” and suggesting the care provided by the K’iches for their gods (Christenson 2003:211). Auilix was given to the progenitor Balam Acab. Next, Hacavitz, possibly a fire god, was given to Mahucutah (Christenson 2003:211). Finally, the god Nicacah Tacah was given to Iqui Balam. This god, whose name means “Middle Valley”, is not seen again in the Popol Vuh, since Iqui Balam failed to produce sons, and his lineage therefore died out. The three remaining gods, Tohil, Auilix and Hacavitz, are listed as a deity triad (Christenson 2003:212).

The Kaqchikels were a neighboring nation in highland Guatemala, closely related to the K’iche and their greatest rivals. In the Popol Vuh, their patron god is listed as Chimalcan, meaning a serpent that moves quietly (Christenson 2003:231). However, the Annals of the Kaqchikels (also known as the Memorial de Sololá) (translated by Otzoy 1999), which tells the history of the Kaqchikel nation, does not mention this deity, but others. The first of these was Chay Ab’áj, meaning “Obsidian Stone.” When the Kaqchikels left Tulan, they were given two other gods to carry and sustain. These were named B’eleje’ Toj (Nine Storm) and Jun Tijax (One Flint) (Otzoy 1999:157; Orellana 1981:159). Finally, the Annals of the Kaqchikels mentions one more god named K’auxtok’. This god only began to be venerated after the first dawn.

The accounts of the first interactions of these nations with their new gods define the nature of these patron deities. The first thing that Tohil does is provide the cold
K’iches with fire. The K’iches exclaim “are you not truly god? You are our provider and
strengthener. You are our god”. Tohil replies in the affirmative: “Very well, I am truly
your god. Then be it so. I am your lord. Then be it so” (Christenson 2003:213). For
“god,” the text uses the word *k’ab’awil*, which had previously referred to the gods who
created the universe and humans. It also uses the term *ajaw* for “lord,” thus comparing
the authority of Tohil to the authority of a ruler. Finally, the K’iches are instructed by the
creator gods as to their relationship with the patron deities: “[the] messenger from
Xibalba said to them: ‘truly Tohil is your god. He is your provider. His is also a substitute
and remembrance of your Framer and your Shaper [creator gods]” (Christenson

In the Popol Vuh, the patron gods appear in different forms. When the gods are
first given to the K’iches, it is not clear which form they take. They are able to speak and
are also carried on the backs of the K’iches. The Titulo de Totonicapan tells us that
Hakavitz was made of precious stones (Carmack and Mondloch 1983:177). Elsewhere,
they appear as young men, and the rival nations attempt to seduce them. Finally, they also
exist in pure effigy form, as carved stone images (Christenson 2003:286). In the Annals
of the Kaqchikels, the god Chay Ab’äj is referred to as “the wood and the stone,”
probably a reference to carved deity effigies (Otzoy 1999:156). However, the god
K’axtok’ appears in human form during the Spanish Conquest, when he possesses a man
and in this form tells the Kaqchikels to disperse and not to pay the tribute of gold
demanded by Alvarado (Otzoy 1999:187).

The housing of deity images changes throughout the Popol Vuh. After leaving
Tulan, the patron gods instruct the K’iches to hide them in the wilderness. Auilix was left
in a canyon, Hacavitz on a mountain. Tohil was hidden in a forested canyon. However, when the citadel of Cumarcah is built, houses are also built for the gods there, so that they could be worshipped in the capital. It appears that although the Tamub and Ilocab K’iches also worshipped Tohil, they had their own separate effigies of him. The Titulo de Totonicapan recounts an event in which all these idols were brought together at Cumarcah along with the lords and effigies of various other highland peoples (Carmack and Mondloch 1983:195–96).

Twice the Popol Vuh discusses the K’iche’s anxiety that the patron gods would fall into the hands of enemy nations. This is the motivation for hiding them in the wilderness after leaving Tulan. Later, the other nations attempt to capture Tohil and make him their own. “This Tohil, he is a god. We also shall worship him. But we shall capture him” (Christenson 2003:248). According to the Annals of the Kaqchikels (see below), the Kaqchikels do succeed in capturing the patron gods of the K’iches after defeating them in a battle in which the K’iches carried their effigies (Otzoy 1999:178).

The requirements for the veneration of these gods are also defined. First, certain materials must be offered to sustain the gods. These include the extracted hearts of humans from foreign nations, which are gained after tricking these nations into promising their hearts to “embrace” Tohil. Of the K’iches, Tohil also demands blood auto-sacrifice, “you shall carry out your responsibilities first by piercing your ears. You shall prick your elbows. This shall be your petition, your way of giving thanks before the face of god” (Christenson 2003:219). Other offerings besides human blood were also given to the patron gods. These include pine resin, flowers, corn, and animal blood. Similar items are described in the Titulo de Totonicapan: human victims, copal incense, and birds
(Carmack and Mondloch 1983:191). The Annals of the Kaqchikels tells us that humans were created for the purpose of sustaining Chay Ab’äj through their suffering (Otzoy 1999:155). Like the K’iches, they offered their gods tree resin, wild cats, and auto-sacrificial blood (Otzoy 1999:168). The Kaqchikels are also told to “eat with the god,” implying food-sharing rituals such as feasting (Otzoy 1999:156).

Finally, rulers were required to fast and abstain from sex if they wanted to pray to their deities. It is this obligation to perform fasts and sacrifices that define the K’iche lords as rulers.

“Thus each of the lords carried out his obligations. This was their way of showing veneration for their lordship….They did not merely exercise their lordship. They did not merely receive food and drink. All this was not without purpose. They did not achieve their lordship, their glory, or their sovereignty by deception or theft. They did not merely crush the canyons and the citadels of the small nations and the great nations” (Christenson 2003:290–91).

Rather, their right to rule is based upon their continued veneration of the patron deities and creator deities on behalf of the rest of the community. Favors asked of these gods include agricultural abundance, human fertility, security, and protection from shame, misfortune, injury, illness, etc. (Christenson 2003:289–90). This quote is an important example of an ideological discourse that naturalizes the authority of the royal court. It claims that this authority was owed to the K’iche rulers because of their sacrifices on behalf of the community. By monopolizing patron deity veneration ritual, K’iche rulers thus promoted the importance of political institutions.

Unlike the documents of highland Guatemala already discussed, the indigenous manuscripts of the lowland Maya of the Yucatan peninsula do not generally discuss patron deities. However, mention of them can be found in a few places. The Paxbolon-Maldonado Papers, were written in the early 17th century and record the merits of Don
Pablo Paxbolon, governor of Tixchel (translated by Scholes and Roys 1968). Part of the text tells the story of the conversion of the Acalan Chontal by Fray Diego de Béjar:

“He wanted everyone to come and display his idols. Having heard what the father told them, they began to bring out their idols, first the idol of the ruler which bears the name of Cukulchan, and also the devil of Tadzunum, and those of Tachabte, Atapan, and Taçacto, and the other idols…. The idols hidden in their secret places by the Indians, such as Ykchua, for so this idol was called, another called Tabay, another called Ixchel, another called Cabtanilcabtan, and many other places of idols were sought out in all the pueblos” (Scholes and Roys 1968:395).

The first effigy to be given up is named Cukulchan, and is thus a version of Quetzalcoatl/Kukulcan. This effigy is said to belong to the ruler of Acalan. Following Cukulchan are listed the four effigies of the four quarters of the city of Itzamkanac. These quarters are called Tadzunun, Tachabte, Atapan, and Taçacto and their deities are listed respectively as Ykchua, Tabay, Ixchel, and Cabtanilcabtan (Scholes and Roys 1968:395). The implication is that each district of the city had its own patron deity, the same system that was in use among the Nahuas of Central Mexico at the time (Scholes and Roys 1968:56) (see below). Like the highland documents, this text associates the main deity of the city with the ruler himself. Unfortunately, no details are given about the veneration of these patron deities before the conversion to Christianity.

References to patron deities can also be found in Spanish chronicles of the Itza Maya of Lake Petén Itza in northern Guatemala. Various Spaniards visited the island capital and described a large number of temples. The Franciscan missionary Avendaño visited the island in 1696 and reported “nine very large buildings, made in the form of churches of this Province [Yucatan]” (Means 1917:18). Villagutierre, compiling a history of the conquest of the Itzas in 1701 from various firsthand accounts, reports that General Ursua and his men found 21 temples when they invaded the island the following year.
(Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:313). Of these, one was the principal temple while the others “were common to all the people….In none of these sanctuaries did they perform the cruel sacrifice of taking out live hearts, nor anything of this kind, except in the main sanctuary or temple…” (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:316). Jones (1998:73) reports that the nine tallest of these sanctuaries were described as “adoratorios” by the conquering Spaniards, perhaps corresponding to the nine described by Avendaño. He argues that these nine temples corresponded to the eight districts of the Itza kingdom, with the extra, main temple corresponding to capital itself (Jones 1998:73). Such a pattern would be similar to Tenochtitlan, discussed below. If Jones’ theory is correct, each of these temples would have housed the patron deities of the nine districts, with the main temple housing the patrons of the whole kingdom. Thus, as in Colonial and Modern times, patron deities represent political territorial groups.

Specific deities were described by Spanish visitors. The most famous of these was the effigy of a horse called Tziminchak (thunder tapir), which was destroyed by Franciscan missionary Fuensalida during his 1618 visit to the Itza capital. This was apparently an effigy of a horse left behind by Cortes when he passed through the Petén in 1525 (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:72–73). The later missionary Avendaño claims to have seen “a box suspended, in which we saw indistinctly (although hastily) a bone of the leg or thigh, very large in size, which appeared to be that of a horse” (Means 1917:136). When Ursua conquered the Itza, he found, in the main temple

“a half-decayed shin bone; below it was a small bag, three hand-breathths long, and in it were small pieces of bone, also decayed….Among other things, when they asked a very old Indian woman who had been captured the day the Petén was taken what that shin bone and the other fragments were, she replied it was the Tezmin of the great captain…they were the bones of a horse that had been entrusted by a king who passed by there a long time ago” (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:314).
Clearly, this horse was venerated by the Itza in some way. However, it is difficult to know whether it can truly be classified as a patron deity. The same can be said for several other deities with familiar Yucatec names, mentioned by Avendaño (Avendaño y Loyola 1996:35–36; Thompson 1951:392).

On the other hand, three other deities are mentioned by Villagutierre which can be classified as patron gods and appear to be unique to the Itzas. First, he describes a deity called Hobo and claims that its effigy was a hollow metal statue in which sacrificial victims were slowly roasted (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:302). This description, however, is quite unusual and strains my credulity.

Two other deities are listed:

“...they had two other idols which they adored as gods of battle: one they called Pakoc, and the other, Hexchunchan. They carried them when they went to fight the Chinamitas, their mortal frontier enemies, and when they were going into battle they burned copal and when they performed some valiant action their idols, whom they consulted, gave them answers, and in the mitotes or dances they spoke to them and danced with them” (Villagutierre Soto-Mayor 1983:302–303).

This description matches quite nicely what is known about patron deities of the Maya highlands, which were carried into battle. Thus, while there are fewer accounts of Lowland Postclassic Maya patron deities, beliefs and practices seem to have been similar between the Lowlands and the Highlands.¹⁰

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¹⁰ Although the Lacandon Maya of the Usumacinta river region are often imagined as direct descendants of the Classic period Maya, Palka (2005) argues that their origins can in fact be traced to the early 19th century. During this time, the jungles of the Usumacinta were remote and largely inaccessible to Colonial powers. The modern Lacandon (not to be confused with the Ch’olti speaking Lacondons documented by Spaniards of the 16th to 18th centuries) speak a dialect of Yucatec and probably emerged as a discrete group from the intermixing of various Colonial period indigenous groups of southern Yucatan, northern Guatemala, and eastern Chiapas (Palka 2005:69–82). Many scholars have documented Lacandon religious practices, and some of these practices resemble patron deity veneration discussed in this dissertation. The Lacandon venerate a set of creator gods, which are believed to require feeding by means of ritual offerings. These gods are believed to temporarily descend into effigy pots and incense burners that are decorated with their likenesses and animated by the addition of a stone representing a heart or other body part. While the
Postclassic Patron Deities: Central Mexico and Oaxaca

The practice of patron deity veneration was widespread in Mesoamerican during the Postclassic and is not confined solely to the Maya area. An abundance of information is available about patron deity veneration in Central Mexico among the Nahuatl-speaking groups and their neighbors. By using comparative data from Central Mexico, I am admittedly straying from the ethnically and linguistically defined Maya, who are the focus of this study. However, the data from Central Mexico are particularly rich and also strikingly similar in many respects to the data from the Maya area. Thus, their inclusion can sharpen the ethnographic analogy being constructed here, with the caveat that the resulting analogy carries some uncertainties.

Duran tells us that,

“in pagan times each of the cities, towns, and villages of New Spain had its own god [worshipped by] the natives. And though [the gods] were revered by all adored, and their feasts celebrated [each town] had a special one who served as patron of the place, honored with greater ceremonies and sacrifices” (Duran 1994:128).

The most well-known of these patron deities is Huitzilopochtli (“Southern Hummingbird”), patron of the Mexica of Tenochtitlan. Details of the beliefs and practices surrounding Huitzilopochtli can be found in various chronicles of the Colonial period of both indigenous and Spanish authorship. In content, the story of the early history of the Mexicas found in these chronicles is quite similar to the account in the Popol Vuh and belief that deities can occupy physical objects is similar to beliefs in patron deities, Lacondon practices differ in other ways. For example, the manifestation of the gods in physical form is believed to be temporary. Rather than human-like effigies that can be clothed, Lacondon deities are believed to descend into ceramic vessels that only rather superficially resemble the deities in question. Finally, the gods venerated in this way do not appear to be patrons of particular political groupings, but rather creator gods that are venerated in many different communities (Palka 2005:247–267). For these reasons, it is a mistake to take modern Lacondon religious practices as an analog for Classic Maya patron deity veneration.
related documents of the Maya highlands. In these chronicles, the Mexica, and other related groups, migrate from their homeland Aztlan in the north. They then leave a place called “Seven Caves” carrying Huitzilopochtli with them. When they arrive in Central Mexico, they come into conflict with other groups already there, and Huitzilopochtli commands them to continue their migrations until they arrive at the site where they found Tenochtitlan.

The similarities between Postclassic patron deity veneration in the Maya area and Central Mexico are striking. Like Tohil, Huitzilopochtli was said to have similar physical forms and role within the community. Huitzilopochtli was a deity effigy, and existed in this form. He is also described as inhabiting a coffer (Chimalpahin 1997a:71) and a wrapped bundle (Chimalpahin 1997b:22). In this form, he was carried by four god-carriers during the wanderings of the Aztecs, just as the K’iche described the wanderings of the founders of the four noble lineages carrying their gods with them. Like Tohil, Huitzilopochtli also openly conversed with these god-carriers, as if the effigy could become animated. The four god-carriers are depicted in the Codex Boturini (Pérez Bolde 1980:6). Like the description given by Chimalpahin (1997a:71), the group consists of three men and a woman. The first man in line carries a bundle from which emerges the head of a Huitzilopochtli with his hummingbird headdress. The other three also carry bundles, but their contents are kept hidden.

Just as the Popol Vuh describes the patron god of the K’iche as a “lord,” having similar authority to a ruler, Huitzilopochtli was compared to the Aztec emperor because both god and emperor sustained and protected the people:

“You [Ahuitzotl] will carry the same burden as does the god Huitzilopochtli, which is to provide and maintain this world order, that is, to provide the sustenance, the food and drink for your people. Eyes from the four directions are
fixed upon you. You have now been given a sword and a shield so you may risk your life for your country. You have been charged with the responsibility for the mountains, the hills, the plains, caves, cliffs, rivers and seas, pools and springs, rocks and trees. Everything has been commended to you and you must take care and see that these do not fall apart” (Duran 1994:313).

The veneration of Huitzilopochtli apparently took a similar form to that of the highland Maya patron gods. Human blood was just one offering that could be made, either in the form of sacrificed captives of enemy communities, or as the auto-sacrificial blood of Aztecs. Other offerings included items of wealth taken from conquered enemies. Duran (1994:357) also mentions the ritual dressing of the effigy by the emperor Ahuitzotl. Probably the most significant act of devotion toward the deity was the building of his temple. This was usually the first act performed by the Aztecs at any of the new sites they stopped along their migration. When they finally reached Tenochtitlán, directed by the god, they built his temple first, even when materials were scarce.

“Although the wood and stone were not sufficient, nonetheless the Aztecs, working hard, began to build their temple with that material…. The little shrine for their god was made only of mud, but they covered the outside of this with a coating of small cut stones, then plastered it with a lime finish. So, although it was small and humble, the home of Huitzilopochtli acquired a pleasing appearance” (Duran 1994:46).

Later, once the Tenochtitlán was well-settled and had acquired wealth and power within the valley, a larger and more suitable temple was built (Duran 1994:130).

As Nicholson notes, the temple of the patron god within Central Mexican communities “was the symbol of the town’s independence and integrity, and in one sense, its luck and fate. The military conquest of the community was signalized by the burning of the patron deity’s shrine…” (1971:409–10). There are other ways in which we can see that Huitzilopochtli was discursively linked to the identity of the Mexica as a nation, just as Tohil was linked to K’iche identity. Huitzilopochtli is said to have given
the Aztecs their new name Mexica: “[Huitzilopochtli] said to them: Now no longer is your name Azteca: you are now Mexitin. There they also applied feathers to their ears when they took their name as Mexitin. Hence they are now called Mexica” (Chimalpahin 1997a:73). In another incident, part of the original Aztec group breaks off when the sister of Huitzilopochtli, a goddess named Malinalxochitl, was abandoned during the course of the migration. Those who stayed with her founded the town of Malinalco in her name, and she became their patron (Duran 1994:25). Thus, membership within the Mexica group (a subset of the Aztecs) is defined by veneration of Huitzilopochtli, just as membership within the K’iche ethnic group was defined by veneration of Tohil in the Popol Vuh.

Thus, just as with modern patron saints, patron deities represented their communities or nations vis-à-vis other nations. This is made clear in the behavior toward patron gods by warring nations as well as nations at peace. Duran (1994) describes an incident in which Chalco went to war with the Mexica. Although these communities were already in conflict with one another, Chalco bought time from the Mexica by telling them they had an announcement to make.

“The Chalcas, seeing they were about to be defeated, asked for a truce since they wished to communicate something to the Aztecs. The Aztecs then ceased fighting to hear what this message was. And the Chalcas said, ‘O brothers, know that five days from now we shall celebrate the festival of our god Camaxtli and we wish to celebrate it with the blood of Aztecs so that our god will be more honored and glorified. Therefore, we ask that on that our god’s day you come into the field, in this very place, to join us in battle, because we wish to solemnize our feast with your flesh’ (Duran 1994:138).

Unfortunately for the Chalcans, they lost the ensuing battle as well, leading to the Aztecs to call to them ‘O little girls, do not ask for another truce because we shall not grant it to you….On this spot you will find out who the Aztecs are, and we shall see who celebrates
the feast of their god, the Chalca or the Aztecs! Let us see how you fulfill the oath you have sworn to your god!” (Duran 1994:140). From this exchange, we can see that patron gods serve as symbols of the community and its victory.\footnote{This conflict is not a “flowery war,” as it was not fought for the sole purpose of gaining victims for sacrifice. Rather, the conflict already existed, and was discursively re-framed by the participants as a battle between Camaxtli and Huitzilopochtli, symbols of the Chalca and Aztecs.}

Relationships with friendly or pacified nations were also defined through veneration rituals for Huitzilopochtli. Allied or conquered nobles were expected to pay their respects to the deity, to offer him tribute, or to render service. This included caring for the effigy itself (Duran 1994:127) or making offerings of blood or valuables:

“…All the dignitaries from Tepeaca came to acknowledge and do honor to Huitzilopochtli. [They] went directly to the temple and made offerings to the god of splendid large white fans, rich feathers worked in different forms, bows and arrows, finely painted bracelets made of bone, the tanned skins of diverse animals, and nose plugs of the type worn by the lords. Then they all took out some small blades and drew blood from their tongues and ears with these” (Duran 1994:158).

To ensure good behavior, it seems that the Aztecs went so far as to keep captured deities of enemy towns in a symbolic prison-temple, where they were maintained in ritual exile (Sahagún 1969:234).

It is interesting to note that although Huitzilopochtli and similar patron gods of other groups represented the entire political community, subsets within that community were also represented by minor patron deities, just as we saw in the Paxbolon-Maldonado Papers of the Acalan Chontal. The districts of Tenochtitlan were represented by district gods. These gods are described as having accompanied the Aztecs on their migrations along with Huitzilopochtli (Chimalpahin 1997a), although the districts themselves were not established until Tenochtitlan was built.

“After the Aztecs had separated themselves into these districts, Huitzilopochtli commanded them to distribute the gods among them and that each barrio choose
a special place where the deities might be revered. Thus each neighborhood was divided into many small sections according to the number of idols it possessed. These gods were called calpulteteo or district gods” (Duran 1994:46).

It appears that patron deities were also venerated by the Zapotecs of Oaxaca during the Postclassic period: “each pueblo…had a deity as its patrón which it revered above all the rest” (quoted in Spores 1983:344). Most of these deities appear to be akin to Central Mexican patron deities, such as Coquihauñi, the god of light or Quabelagayo, “Five Flower,” the equivalent of the Nahua god Macuil Xochitl (Whitecotton 1977:157). However, it seems that in at least some instances, the Spanish chroniclers confused Zapotec royal ancestors for patron gods, since they were also subject to veneration (Whitecotton 1977:157–59, note 115). However, Marcus (1983:348) argues that all or at least the vast majority of patron deities among the Zapotecs were in fact deified ancestors. The basis of this argument is that many of the names of patron gods incorporate the term coqui or xonaxi (male and female ruler). However, as we have seen in the Postclassic Maya documents, deities were frequently represented as lords in discourse. As I will argue in this and subsequent chapters, this does not mean that they are simply deified ancestors. Just as in modern Maya religious belief, clear distinctions can be drawn between deified ancestors and patron deities. Although these two categories have often been mistaken for one another, there is no need to categorize all Postclassic supernatural beings as ancestors.

Another argument made by Marcus (1983:348) for the identity of Zapotec patron deities and royal ancestors is the fact that patron deities often simply use calendrical names, a common practice in naming human beings. However, Central Mexican deities are also called by day names (such as Macuil Xochitl) and deities from all over Mesoamerica are frequently associated with particular dates in the ritual calendar.
Although these calendrical associations do not appear in the Maya documents, they are apparent for Central Mexico and Oaxaca. Whitecotton (1977:159) notes that the Zapotec town of Teocuicuilco held a feast for its patron every 260 days, or once every cycle of the ritual calendar (rather than the solar calendar). This feast involved all inhabitants bringing quails, feathers, and precious stones for the priests. The priests themselves performed auto-sacrificial rites for the deity and supplicated the gods on behalf of the community for health and agricultural fertility.

Continuities: Building an Analogy

In this chapter, I have traced ritual practices relating to patron deity/saint veneration in three different periods (Modern, Colonial, and Postclassic), in order to form a rich analogy for the chapters to come. The veneration of patron gods by pre-Columbian Mesoamericans survives in the form of patron saint devotion today. The Catholic conversion that accompanied the Conquest of the 16th Century brought about changes in belief, ritual and social organization but did not entirely change the way supernatural patrons were venerated. Thus, information about these more recent religious practices can be used as an analogy for interpreting patron deity veneration during the Classic period.

In Maya beliefs, supernatural beings can be broken down into three separate categories recognized by Watanabe: Ancestors, Saints, and Earth Lords. Patron saints represent community sociality and are believed to look after the well-being of their home towns. Earth Lords are aloof, and do not represent specific communities or actively participate in human affairs. Finally, ancestors are distinct from both of these categories. Although their deeds established patterns of community tradition, they themselves did not
actively protect the community, but rather watched their descendants from afar. In Postclassic accounts, patron deities such as Tohil are considered separate from the Creator gods, although both are referred to using the term *k’ab’awil*. The patron gods are said to be “substitutes/remembrances” of the Creator gods themselves. Finally, while ancestors are sometimes attributed super-human traits, they are not the same thing as patron deities. Ancestors do not become patron deities: these categories remain distinct.

Modern ritual practices of saint devotion closely resemble those of patron god devotion of the pre-Columbian period. Churches are built as physical homes for patron saints. The care and maintenance of the church structure is an important aspect of patron saint veneration. This mirrors accounts of the Postclassic period. During this era, the most fundamental act of deity veneration was the construction of a temple for the deity’s home. This was always the first founding act of a new community, and the destruction of this temple represented the conquest of the community and the loss of its independence. By analogy, the Classic period patron deity temple should be a focal point for community identity and its dedication a fundamental act in patron deity veneration.

Other important patron saint veneration practices in modern communities include the care and comfort of saint effigies themselves. It is believed that saints reside within their effigies, and thus the care of these effigies is of utmost importance. This includes dressing, washing and feeding the effigies. They are fed with flowers and incense, as well as Spanish-introduced candles, vegetables, tortillas, etc. In the Postclassic period, patron deity effigies were also fed with human or animal blood, flowers, and incense. Human food sharing is also an important aspect of modern patron saint veneration. After being consumed by the saints, food offerings are consumed by human beings. Modern patron
saint fiestas are characterized by both inclusionary and exclusionary feasting. By analogy, we should see ritual acts focused on the care and feeding of the patron gods during the Classic period. Just as in the modern era, this care would have been considered necessary to ensure the protection of the community by the patron gods. We should also see evidence for feasting events, both large-scale, in which the whole community participated, and smaller-scale, in which only ritual specialists and elites engaged.

The feeding and care of modern patron saint effigies is not believed to be the responsibility of the whole community. Rather, this ritual responsibility belongs to a particular sub-set of individuals, who undertake it on the community’s behalf. This responsibility confers a great deal of prestige and community members undertake the responsibility in a rotating fashion. Individuals who take on ritual responsibilities multiple times are given greater respect and authority by community members. In the Postclassic period, the role of ritual practitioner was monopolized by the ruling lineages, and was used to discursively justify their authority. In the Popol Vuh, ritual responsibilities to patron gods are represented as the basis for the legitimacy of the K‘iche rulers, who were deity suppliants rather than tyrants. A naturalizing discourse linked the burden of office (deity veneration) to the right of rulers to their special privileges and power. Thus, in both the Postclassic and Modern eras, the responsibility to carry out particular religious acts on behalf of the patron saints/gods carries political authority with it. By successfully completing individual meaningful acts of patron deity/saint veneration, ritual practitioners strengthen and reaffirm political institutions and power relationships within the community. Thus, in the Classic period, we should
expect to see patron deity veneration rituals linked to royal authority through discourses highlighting the rituals carried out by the king for the patron deities.

Modern patron saints serve as symbols of community identity. This is partially because the names of modern towns correspond to saints’ names but there are other factors as well. In many places, modern saints are still dressed in the traditional garb of their home communities. They are spoken to in indigenous tongues rather than in Spanish. Patron saints of friendly communities visit one another as an expression of community pride. The “domestication” of deities into indigenous communities took place through discourses of naturalization as well as specific ritual acts such as the building of a church. During the Postclassic period, ethnicity was defined by which deity was venerated. For example, K’iche ethnic identity in the Popol Vuh is defined by veneration of Tohil more than the speaking of the K’iche language. Disputes between conflicting communities were represented as disputes between deities: which deity desired sacrificial victims, which deity insulted another deity, or which deity tricked another nation, etc. Armies attempted to capture their rival’s patron deity effigy, which served as a mark of political victory and the loss of autonomy for the defeated community. Subservient polities were obliged to pay tribute and homage to the patron of their overlords, in the form of service and luxury goods. Between friendly communities, patron deities participated in large feasting events, having been invited by their allies. During the Classic period, we should expect to see patron deities serving as symbols of their communities vis-à-vis other communities as well. We should expect to see friendly deities visiting each other as well as deities carried into battle to represent hostile relationships.
In Chapter 4, I will look at the epigraphic evidence for patron deity veneration during the Classic period. It will be seen that many of the modern practices discussed in this chapter have Classic period parallels, and can be readily interpreted by use of the analogy developed here. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the utility of this analogy when examining the archaeological record.
CHAPTER 4

Classic Maya Patron Deities: Hieroglyphic Discourses

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the ethnographic and ethnohistoric data about patron saint veneration during Modern and Colonial times and with patron deity veneration during the Postclassic period. This chapter will begin to draw on these analogies and examine the evidence for patron deity veneration among the Classic period Maya.

This chapter examines discourses preserved on Classic period hieroglyphic monuments. These monuments discuss a variety of different supernatural beings, such as deceased ancestors, general Maya deities, and patron deities themselves who are usually only venerated at one or a few sites. These categories match the three categories defined by Watanabe and discussed in the previous chapter. Classic Maya hieroglyphic discourses draw clear distinctions between these different types of characters. Just as the modern Maya recognize deceased ancestors, earth lords, and patron saints to be different categories, the Classic Maya had different ways of talking about ancestors, general gods, and patron gods. Patron deities can be distinguished from the other two categories by the things that they were believed to do, and the ways in which they were venerated. Patron gods were believed to directly influence human affairs, while ancestors and general deities were more aloof. Furthermore, patron deities existed in physical effigy form, and veneration involved the care and maintenance of these effigies. Neither ancestors nor general deities existed as effigies. For this reason, I define Classic period patron deities as
gods that 1) formed special relations with certain human communities (as opposed to
general deities, which were recognized more broadly), 2) actively participated in human
events and 3) were venerated in particular ways. These veneration practices are
analogous to those we see for patron saints in modern Maya communities.

In this chapter, I will begin by examining Maya religion and Maya gods in
general. Next, I will differentiate between the different supernatural categories. I will
continue with a discussion of the specific ritual practices used to venerate patron deities
by the Classic Maya. I will follow with a discussion of the specific actions attributed to
patron deities—what they were believed to do for human beings. Finally, I will discuss
the role of patron deity veneration in the politics of the ancient Maya, both between
communities and within them.

*Epigraphic data*

The principal source of data related to specific Classic Maya deities has always
been epigraphic. Numerous hieroglyphic inscriptions make reference to deities and the
practices which the Classic Maya used to venerate them. Before discussing these data,
however, it should be noted that there are some limitations to the study of ancient
inscriptions in general and Classic Maya inscriptions in particular, as has been briefly
mentioned in previous chapters. Inscriptions represent a specific viewpoint and often a
specific rhetorical purpose. In the case of the Classic Maya, inscriptions were almost
always commissioned by rulers and occasionally by lesser elites. There are no known
inscriptions commissioned by non-elite people. Therefore, unlike the epigraphic records
of, for example, Southern Mesopotamia, where everyday economic and personal
correspondence of the non-ruling class has been preserved, the Maya epigraphic record represents the discursive viewpoint of only the highest-status members of society. On the one hand, this fact is useful to a study that seeks to examine the intersection of political power and religious practice because Maya texts demonstrate which religious practices were most emphasized by rulers as they sought to legitimize their position. On the other hand, these texts do not allow us to see whether these rhetorical strategies were successful among other segments of the population, or whether competing discourses about religious practices were also in circulation.

Another challenge of interpreting epigraphic data, especially in the Maya area, is the differential preservation of different written media. For instance, hieroglyphic inscriptions remain relatively well-preserved on stone monuments, but poorly preserved on wood, and are not preserved at all, at least for the Classic period, on bark paper, the medium used for the Postclassic codices (screenfold books). This means that Classic period codices, which may have recorded relevant data about deity veneration, are not available for this study.

Finally, there are limitations to the study of Maya inscriptions that relate to religious ritual simply because many of the relevant glyphic signs remain undeciphered or poorly understood. For example, deity names are often composed of signs which are only used in limited contexts within the corpus, making it difficult or impossible to fully translate them. In these cases, the scholar is forced to simply describe the glyph so that it may adequately be distinguished from other deity names. In other cases, esoteric religious rituals can be translated but not fully understood.
In spite of these challenges, epigraphic data remain the richest source of information about the veneration of patron deities among the Classic Maya. For this reason, I have undertaken an epigraphic study of patron deity veneration for this dissertation. The goal of the study was to collect as many references to patron deities from the Classic period inscriptions as possible and to use this information to distinguish deity categories and identify ritual practices associated with the different categories. This dissertation is aimed at understanding the intersection between political power and the practice of patron deity veneration among the Classic Maya. As such, the references to patron deities were examined with an eye toward detecting the role of political power in ritual practice.

The collection of inscriptions analyzed are presented as series of excel spreadsheets and a written summary (Appendix A). The spreadsheets include all securely provenienced references to patron deities that I could find, as well as some unprovenienced examples. (All unprovenienced examples have already appeared in publication.) Appendix A also contains some examples of characters that are not patron deities for the purposes of illustrating the differences between these categories. Inscriptional sources for each of these characters are also included, so that the reader may check my work or use the data for his or her own research. This chapter will discuss the nature of Maya deities as revealed by these texts, and summarize what can be gleaned about veneration practices.
The Nature of Maya Deities

The exact nature of Maya gods has been a source of study for decades. One line of study has been the identification of individual deities and the classification of these deities into different groupings. The pioneer of this effort was Schellhas (1904), who assigned letters to the principal recognizable deities of the Postclassic codices, many of which are still used today. This list has been widely used since then, undergoing some changes by Thompson (1950) and later by Hellmuth (1987) and Taube (1992) who drew links between the iconography of the Classic and Postclassic periods in the Maya area, as well as links to deities of Central Mexico. More recently, Simon Martin (2007) has demonstrated that these individual deity personalities were often fused in Classic period iconography, and that they Maya could therefore combine deities to represent a greater variety of concepts. A key example of this type of fusion is the combination of Schellhas’ God N with the “Principal Bird Deity” to create a deity identified by Schellhas as God D. God N, a creator deity, could also fuse with other supernatural creatures, such as a crocodile, to represent the sacred celestial crocodile that makes up the sky in Classic Maya belief.

In reaction to this classificatory line of study, other scholars have argued that a pantheon of deities in the Greco-Roman sense misunderstands Mesoamerican religion in general (Baudez 2002; Marcus 1978; 1983; Stuart 2005a). These scholars argue that ancient Mesoamericans viewed deities as a manifestation of “the vital force or power that inhabits the blood and energizes people and a variety of objects of ritual and everyday life” (Houston and Stuart 1996:292) or “a numinous, impersonal force, diffused throughout the universe…preeminently manifested in the natural forces—earth, air, fire,
and water—but also found in persons of great distinction or things and places of unusual or mysterious configuration” (Townsend 1979:28). In this theory, particular gods were simply “physical manifestations of the sacred essence,” (Stuart 2005a:275) rather than distinct personalities.

Another widely-held view is that individual deities in Mesoamerica are simply ancestors who have been re-imagined by their descendants. This theory is used to explain the presence of deities who appear to have special relationships with particular communities (Proskouriakoff 1978:116–17; Marcus 1983; 1992; McAnany 1995:27; Wright 2011:232–33). This view has led to the confusion of certain deities and ancestors in Maya studies, some of which I will discuss below.

While the concept of an energizing force diffused throughout the universe may be useful for examining some Mesoamerican religious practices, it does not seem to apply to the veneration of patron deities. The epigraphic data demonstrate that the Classic Maya viewed patron gods as unique personalities, distinct from royal ancestors, who had special relationships with human beings and antagonistic relationships with enemy communities. As the data will show, patron deities and ancestors were venerated using different religious practices and their relationship to living humans was distinct. Furthermore, the verbs attributed to each category—that is, their capacity for influencing the human world—demonstrate that they were thought of as separate entities.

**Gods in Maya texts**

One of the key sources of information used to support the interpretation of Classic Maya religion as the veneration of vital forces is the word *k’uh*. This is the term that was
in use during the Classic period, and I will translate it as “god” or “deity.” However, it has been noted that in modern Mayan languages, $k'uh$ seems to take on a set of broader meanings when certain suffixes are attached (Vogt 1969; Houston and Stuart 1996; Kaufman and Justeson 2003). These concepts include “soul,” and “spirit,” or “a vital force of power that inhabits the blood” (Houston and Stuart 1996:292). This interpretation is based largely on Vogt’s ethnographic work in Zinacantan, Chiapas and his analysis of the concept ch’ulel (Vogt 1965; 1969). As Houston and Stuart (1996) point out, this more abstract concept is derived from the root $ch'u$ (a cognate of $k'uh$) through the addition of the ending –lel. Ethnographic literature indicates that the term ch’ulel can be translated as “inner soul,” (Vogt 1969) and from there it has been interpreted as an impersonal sacred force. However, equation of Classic period $k'uh$ with ethnographic ch’ulel ignores the abstractive ending –lel (Houston et al. 2001). This ending is in fact a contraction of two morphemes. The first is the ending –ul$^{13}$, which turns the noun into an adjective “ch’u-like” or “of or pertaining to ch’u.” The second abstractive ending –el is added to this, rendering ch’ulel “the quality of being ch’u-like” or “the thing that makes a person similar to ch’u.” The same sets of abstractive endings are also attested in the Classic period inscriptions, where we see $k'uhul$ “god-like” but never $k'uhlel$ “godliness”$^{14}$.

$^{12}$ This follows colonial dictionaries. For example, both the the Motul dictionary (Martinez Hernandez 1929) of Yucatek and de Ara’s (De Ara 1986) dictionary of Tzeldal translate cognates $ku$ and $chu$, respectively, as “dios.”

$^{13}$ These types of endings are formed by mimicking the internal value of the noun (in the case of $k'uh$ the internal vowel is –u-) and adding –l. This turns the noun into an adjective. Another good example is the use of the ending –al to turn $ahk$ (turtle) into $ahkal$ (“turtle-y”) as in the case of a “pool that abounds with turtles” (Houston et al. 2001:32–35).

$^{14}$ We do see the –lel ending on the word ajawlel “lordship,” for example, so we know that this set of endings was used during the Classic period. However, it was never applied to the term $k'uh$. 

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Thus, while the term *ch’ulel* may indeed refer to an animating force or “soul” that inhabits humans and other objects, it is an abstraction from the term *ch’u* [*k’uh*] itself. When the suffixes are missing, it is a mistake to interpret *k’uh* in this abstract way. A close examination of the use of *k’uh* in the inscriptions indicates that it can simply be translated as “deity” in the sense of an individual supernatural being. This has been noted by various scholars (e.g. Zender and Guenter 2003; Houston 2004; Houston and Inomata 2009), who argue that a close reading of epigraphic evidence reveals that “as a basic noun in the inscriptions, *k’uh* refers to specific beings only. In this it appears to depart from the more abstract concept of a divine principle in all things….Texts restrict *k’uh* in particular to the kinds of personalities we might call ‘gods’ (Houston and Inomata 2009:198).”

The glyph for *k’uh* was originally deciphered in the 1980s (Ringle 1988) and usually consists of two elements (figure 4.1a). The first is the head of a creature resembling a monkey. This creature occasionally appears in full form, such as in full-figure hieroglyphs or in Postclassic codices. In these cases, this creature has been referred to as “God C” (Schellhas 1904). As noted by Taube (1992), God C functions as a generic deity. That is, this image appears when the identity of the deity being described is not stated. We see this context in a set of miniature temple effigies excavated at Copan (figure 4.1b). Each is a small model of a temple, onto which is inscribed the glyphs *uwayibil k’uh* “the temple of the deity.” In each case, the front of the model is carved with a depiction of “God C” a generic deity seated within its house¹⁵ (Grube and Schele 1990).

The other part of the *k’uh* glyph is the so-called “water group” which consists of a series of small circles representing droplets, sometimes appearing above the head of the

¹⁵ These god houses are discussed further in Appendix A.
generic deity, at other times in front of his face (figure 4.1c). Often, these droplets seem to fall from signs for \textit{yax} “new/green”, \textit{k’an} “precious/yellow” or a spondylus shell. The “water group” makes its most frequent appearance in the form of emblem glyphs, or titles for Maya kings. Here it is adjectival, read as \textit{k’uhul Ajaw} or “god-like lord.” I will discuss this adjectival form of the glyph further below.

As discussed, the “God C” part of the sign can appear on its own as a generic representation of a deity. There are also some iconographic settings in which the “water group” appears independently, as droplets decorated with \textit{yax} or \textit{k’an} signs. These contexts all come from the stelae of Yaxchilan and neighboring sites (figure 4.1d). These stelae depict the ruler with arms spread, droplets falling from his hands onto kneeling nobles or ritual objects (Stuart 1984b). Stuart (1988; 2005a) has interpreted these images to mean that the ruler, through ritual acts, was able to transfer his “sacred essence” (\textit{k’uh}) to subordinates or to activate ritual objects. However, I have a different interpretation of these Yaxchilan images.

On Yaxchilan stelae 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7, we see the ruler releasing droplets marked with \textit{yax} and \textit{k’an} signs. Stuart (2005a) interprets these in the sense of paired opposites ripe/unripe, thus representing a totality and linked to agricultural fertility. Other symbols are also present, however, such as jewels (Stela 1) and spondylus shells (Stela 4). All are symbols of preciousness and mark this substance as a precious fluid (Stone and Zender 2011:69). These symbols undoubtedly serve the same function within the glyphic “water group” where droplets fall from shells, or \textit{yax} and \textit{k’an} signs. Houston and Inomata (2009:197) note the similarity between the Yaxchilan images and the murals of Portico 11 of the Tetitla compound at Teotihuacan. In these images, an individual with arms
spread scatters a stream of liquid marked with jade and spondylus shells (Miller 1973:fig. 301–314).

From this iconography, we know that the substance flowing from rulers’ hands at Yaxchilan and Teotihuacan was considered precious. However, it is doubtful that it was actually a vital essence (k’uh). The depiction of rulers scattering droplets appears quite frequently in Maya art, although most sites chose to omit the symbols of preciousness associated. Labels accompanying the scenes include the glyph for “scatter” chok (Stuart 1995). The substance being scattered is not k’uh, however, but ch’aaj. Ch’aaj was first read as “incense” by Love (1987) but can also be translated as “droplets” (Love 1987:11; Stuart 1995:228). While Stuart (1995) argues that in some cases these droplets represent streams of sacrificial blood, we can safely assume that in most instances, these are droplets of resin incense, given the presence of incense bags in scattering scenes (Hammond 1981:78) and ethnohistoric accounts of ritual incense scattering (Love 1987) (see Chapter 3). Teotihuacan mural scenes also support this interpretation. In these, individuals holding incense bags scatter streams of liquid marked with flowers. From the liquid waft scrolls marked with flowers and jades, indicating the precious, perfumed scent of the incense (Miller 1973:fig. 168–177, 183).

In the Classic period, these scattering scenes usually depict droplets falling atop stone altars, usually during period ending ceremonies. The Yaxchilan examples are no different in this regard. The bundled objects at the ruler’s feet probably represent small wrapped monuments. Stuart (1996) has demonstrated that the act of monument wrapping was also a common feature in dedicatory events. On Yaxchilan Stela 1, the typical chok ch’aaj label even accompanies the scene, demonstrating this scene’s equivalence to other
scattering scenes across the Maya area. Thus, it is safe to assume that the droplets falling from the ruler’s hands on these stelae are also “droplets” of incense or other ritual fluid, rather than *k’uh* itself.

As noted above, the complete *k’uh* sign shows a generic deity with the same droplets either above his head or in front of it (figure 4.1a). I suspect that the intended meaning refers to a supernatural being that either ate or smelled incense (or possibly auto-sacrificial blood). Among the Classic Maya, supernatural beings, both gods and deceased ancestors, were sustained by means of fragrance, either in the form of burnt incense or other burnt offerings (Taube 1998; Taube 2004:73; Houston and Taube 2000:271; Houston et al. 2006:149). The Popol Vuh attributes such a quality to the first men, who sustain themselves simply by sniffing the ends of their walking sticks for sustenance (Christenson 2003:221). Various historical and ethnographic examples discussed in Chapter 3 also indicate that deities were “fed” with fragrant substances such as incense. Such a concept would then be an appropriate way to depict a deity, since living human beings cannot be sustained in this way.

There are some additional contexts that support this interpretation of the *k’uh* sign. Dos Caobas Stela 1 has an unusual form of the *k’uh* sign within the emblem glyph of the Yaxchilan king (figure 4.1e). Here, rather than seeing the incense droplets above the head of “God C” we see them above the sign for *we’ “eat.”* Here, the scribe has chosen to play on the concept of deities as incense eaters, expressing the term *k’uh* by explicitly showing the eating of incense. In some Terminal Classic stelae from eastern Petén, such as Jimbal Stela 1 and Ixlu Stelae 1 and 2, we see rulers in the act of scattering “droplets.” Above their heads float deities, wreathed in clouds of smoke, probably the
smoke of the offering itself (see drawings by William Coe in Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: figures 78, 80, and 81a). Here then is the full form of the *k’uh* glyph, with specific, rather than generic deities, partaking of burnt offerings.

**K’uhul as an Adjective**

As noted above, the *k’uh* sign appears most frequently as the adjective *k’uhul* attached to people and objects. The most common context in which this is seen is the emblem glyph formula, where certain kings, usually of large sites, claimed to be “god-like lords” of their particular sites. This adjective began to be regularly added to royal titles at the end of the Early Classic period (Houston and Inomata 2009:123); earlier Maya kings were usually simply identified as *ajaw* “lord.”

The distribution of the adjective may help to point towards its intended meaning. As mentioned, it was attached most frequently to kings, especially at large sites. Rulers of smaller sites, while referred to as *ajaw*, did not use the *k’uhul* adjective. Sometimes, the adjective was omitted even for kings known to be of *k’uhul* status, possibly to save space or for aesthetic reasons. Antagonists did not generally refer to their enemies using the *k’uhul* adjective, as if to deny them the honor (Houston and Inomata 2009:140). There are a few sites which used unusual emblem glyphs, such as Caracol (*K’uhul K’antumaak*) and the still unidentified Chatahn kingdom (*K’uhul Chatahn Winik*). In both cases, generic terms for “person” were used, rather than “lord” in association with the *k’uhul* adjective. Even *Sak Wahyis*, a noble or royal title associated with kingdoms of western Petén and Campeche, including La Corona, occasionally appears with the *k’uhul* adjective. In addition to these individuals, all probably rulers, *k’uhul* appears frequently
with noble ladies (wives and mothers of kings) and occasionally with lesser nobility as well. One excellent case comes from Tonina, where a monument posthumously ascribes the *k’uhul* adjective to an important *Ti’ Sakhuun*, probably a caretaker for the underage king.

*K’uhul* is often translated as “holy” thus lending itself to incorporation into studies of divine kingship. Literally, *k’uhul* can be translated in several ways. The first is “of or pertaining to deities.” This translation is problematic, however, because interaction with deities was a feature of people of many different social positions, not just those labeled as *k’uhul*. Alternatively, *k’uhul* could be translated as “god-like,” that is, having attributes otherwise associated with deities. I suspect that this is the best available translation. Something about these individuals made them particularly similar to deities in some way, while not actually deities themselves.

From the examples discussed above, we can see that the *k’uhul* adjective is ascribed to people who ruled especially powerful dynasties, were especially influential nobles, or were especially important historical figures. From this distribution, we can glean that the status of “god-like” had less to do with supernatural powers and more to do with earthly ones. Rulers carrying this adjective had exceptional influence over the affairs of other communities. Historical figures carrying this adjective had made exceptionally important contributions to their communities. Thus, like patron deities, these rulers had special *influence* over affairs within their polities or client polities. This discourse is similar to that seen among the Aztecs, where the emperor Ahuitzotl is compared to the patron deity Huitzilopochtli because both sustain and protect the community (see Chapter 3). In return for overseeing the well-being of their communities and client communities
(patronage), Maya rulers were sustained by their members in the form of tribute and labor. Thus, the human quality of being “god-like” had to do with the ruler’s ability to influence human events—a remarkably insightful understanding of power by the Classic period Maya.

Distinguishing Patron Deities from Ancestors

Because of the difficulties associated with some of the undeciphered glyphs used in deity names, it is sometimes hard to securely identify deities, and especially patron deities, as opposed to other supernatural entities. As discussed in Chapter 3, three distinct types of supernatural entity, as recognized by Watanabe (1990), can be observed in many modern Maya communities. Maya inscriptions also show clear distinctions between ancestors and patron deities. To find and define this distinction in the epigraphic record, I examined as many Classic Maya texts as possible that dealt with deities or ancestors to determine the attributes of each character. It was also important to examine these texts on a site-by-site basis. In this way, I could also observe whether, for example, kings of individual sites took names related to their own patron deities, and how patron deities from different sites interacted with one another.

I compiled the database to look at the following attributes of each supernatural character: the character’s primary name; the monuments on which it appears; the dates for which the veneration of that character can be attested at any given site; additional names or epithets used to describe the character; the way in which it is depicted, if at all; references to that character as a physical effigy; the verbs which are attributed to the character (that is, its capacity for influence in human affairs); actions carried out by
people for that character, such as bathing or dressing; the term used to refer to that character’s temple, if any; references to that character as a lord or ruler; whether it starts a dynastic count or is specifically called the first ruler of a site; and any additional comments. These data are presented in Appendix A.

After gathering this data, I was able to make a preliminary differentiation between general gods, patron gods, and ancestors. I started by observing those characters which were specifically named as gods (k’uh) and comparing them to characters known to be deceased kings. At this stage, it was possible to distinguish between the attributes of deities and ancestors. For example, references to physical effigies can only be found among patron deities (k’uh), and are not found in reference to ancestors. More importantly, verbs are only attributed to patron deities, not to deceased ancestors. This may seem surprising, given the emphasis that has been placed on the religious importance of ancestors in Maya scholarship. However, I was only able to find four cases where ancestors seemed to participate in events after their own deaths, and three of these examples turned out to be refutable. 1) The Tablet of the 96 Glyphs at Palenque appears to attribute an ukabjiiy verb to the long-deceased K’inich Janahb Pakal. However, the syntax of the sentence as well as the currently untranslated verb ukobow closely resemble

16 David Stuart (2012a) has recently interpreted a glyph that appears in the texts of Copan, Quirigua, and Palenque as referring to ceramic effigy incense burners of gods and ancestors. Ceramic effigy incense burners depicting Copan kings have been recovered from the fill around the tomb of Ruler 12, and Stuart equates these to a mention of the same glyph in the text from that temple’s exterior. However, there may be some problems with this interpretation. This sign has usually been interpreted as a glyph for a stone altar (e.g. Schele 1989a:41), and there are reasons why this reading is appropriate. The sign has stone markings, indicating that it refers to an object made of stone, not ceramic. It also closely resembles an altar, with two feet. A stone altar is thus a good candidate. Furthermore, the inscription of Altar Q refers to the dedication of one of these objects in what is probably a self-referential context. Altar Q is a stone altar with feet, so it makes sense that this glyph refers to objects like Altar Q itself. Glyphic references and depictions of patron deity effigies in the texts indicate that they were not themselves incense burners, but rather statues of the gods that were treated as gods themselves. Thus, I interpret the effigy incense burners of Copan ancestors not as effigies in this same sense, but as elaborated incense burners used in funerary ritual.
other glyphic passages that link past events to similar present events (see Helms et al. 2006:15–18 for further discussion of these glyphic constructions). Thus, it is probable that the passage simply describes events during Pakal’s own lifetime. 2) Fitzsimmons (1998) argues that Piedras Negras Stela 8 refers to a dance performed by Ruler 2, the deceased father of the K’inich Yo’nal Ahk II. However, a drawing by Stuart and Graham (2003:48) makes it clear that the dancer is in fact K’inich Yo’nal Ahk II himself and that his father remains in the grave. 3) On Caracol Stela 6 the former king Yajawte’ K’inich “sees” a period ending ritual after his son is already in power. However, other glyphic passages suggest that Yajawte’ K’inich abdicated the throne and was therefore still alive during his son’s early reign (Martin and Grube 2000:90). 4) Quirigua Zoomorph G records the death of king K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat in July of 785 but then connects him to a period ending in October of the same year. Of the four examples, this is the only one that truly seems to attribute powers to a king after his death. The dedication verb (k’altuun) is not in a transitive form, however, and the implication may be that the king, although not directly participating posthumously in the ritual, was still somehow responsible for it (Stuart 2011). It may be significant, therefore, that his death was only a few months before, rather than in the distant past.

We can contrast this situation to the overwhelming evidence for patron deity participation in human affairs, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Thus, we can regard patron deities as active supernatural beings and social participants, while ancestors remained passive observers of human life. Hieroglyphic discourses readily distinguish between the categories of ancestors and patron gods. Thus, it is a mistake to see patron gods as merely deified ancestors or to suppose that ancestors all gradually morphed into
deities. Patron deities and ancestors were linked to two different ideological discourses and, as we will see at La Corona, sometimes came into direct conflict.

After observing all of these basic differences, it became possible to identify those characters that were not specifically labeled as *k’uh* or were not known ancestors based on their attributes. In the database, however, these characters are labeled as either “probable god” or “probable ancestor” so that future scholars may make a determination based on more secure data. In some cases it is possible to identify a deity because its name appears in a long list of known deities. In these cases, the database also clarifies that identification is made for this reason.

There are some similarities between deities (both general and patron) and ancestors that probably have fueled the confusion between these two categories. First of all, both deities and ancestors can be “impersonated.” Impersonation involves a ritual practitioner, usually the king, wearing costume elements associated with that deity or ancestor (Houston and Stuart 1996). The verb used to describe these events is *ubaah a’n* possibly or “his image in the guise of…” (Zender 2006) “his image existing as…” (Nehammer Knub et al. 2009). These events are used to re-enact events from the mythological past or from historical periods within a site’s history. Thus they are somewhat theatrical in nature, but usually are meant to draw a parallel between current events and events from mythology or history.

Another source of confusion is the constant reference to deities as *ajaws* (rulers/lords). As discussed in Chapter 3, the same phenomenon also appears in ethnohistoric sources of the Postclassic period. Here, it is used to compare the authority of the patron deity to the authority of the ruler. In Classic period texts, the term *ajaw* is
often an integral part of the deity’s name, such as in the case of Yajaw Maan, a patron
god of Calakmul. In other cases, the patron deity is simply ascribed *ajaw* status, or given
the full emblem glyph of the site where he appears. In some cases, inscriptions even
make reference to accession events for their patron gods. A good example of this is the
god “Gi” of Palenque, who is said to have acceded as lord in the deep mythological past.
Other monuments depict patron deities as seated lords in the pose of ancient kings. An
excellent example of this is bench of Temple 21 at Copan, which depicts a row of
Copan’s ancestral kings, seated as lords upon their own name glyphs (Schele and Miller
1986:plate 36). Opposite them are depicted the site’s patron gods, seated in the exact
same way and wearing the exact same dress. In spite of these similarities of
representation, however, the patron gods of Copan are attributed verbs and take an active
role in human affairs at Copan, whereas deceased ancestors do not. It appears that the
representation of patron gods as rulers, as in the Popol Vuh, is a trope used in Classic
period texts for political purposes. By comparing the authority of the patron deities to the
authority of the ruler, the institution of rulership was presented as timeless and necessary
for the well-being of the community. Thus, referring to patron gods as lords (and
referring to human rulers as god-like) was an ideological discourse meant to naturalize
the institution of rulership.

Further confusion stems from a second trope in Maya texts: the representation of
ancestors as deities. In many cases, we see deceased ancestral rulers depicted with
general deity attributes. By far the most common deity attributes taken by rulers are those
of the Maize god, or Sun god for male ancestors, and Moon goddess for female ancestors.
In these cases, deceased ancestors are depicted in the sky, either as disembodied heads
(e.g. Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:figure 51) or as full figures that gaze down from above (e.g. Tate 1992:figures 86, 124b, 130c) (see Houston 2006:142). However, in spite of these frequent depictions of ancestors as deities, ancestors do not take on the attributes of their site’s own patron deities\(^{17}\). Thus, patron deities remain carefully differentiated from the ruling lineage. There is no evidence that deceased ancestors gradually morphed into patron deities over time. On the contrary, the evidence demonstrates that ancestors were entirely distinct from patron deities. As I will discuss below, these two ritual practices were linked to entirely separate discourses about hereditary power. The representation of ancestors as general deities (not patron deities) was probably meant to claim the superiority of the ruling lineage over all other lineages rather than to promote discourses about the nature of political power itself.

There are several characters that have been frequently confused in epigraphic literature, and I would like to clarify their identities based on this classificatory scheme. The first of these is Naranjo’s “Square Nosed Beastie” (SNB) (see Martin 1996) which has sometimes been called a patron deity of the site (e.g. Schele 1987a; Tokovinine and Fialko 2007; Martin and Grube 2008). However, I believe that this character is better described as an ancestor, almost certainly the founding ancestor of the site. The name of the SNB is incorporated into the name phrases of later kings. It is extremely rare for patron deities to give their names to kings of their own communities, although there are a few examples from Calakmul, where the Water lily Serpent was both a patron deity and a

\(^{17}\) The only exception to this rule can be found on the sarcophagus lid of Palenque’s Temple of the Inscriptions. It shows king K’inich Janahb Pakal at the moment of his death, wearing attributes of the maize god and K’awiil, and in the pose of an infant. This equates him with “Baby K’awiil,” one of Palenque’s main patron gods (GII) (Stone and Zender 2011:31). The uniqueness of this example requires an explanation. Perhaps it is best to group this monument with depictions of deity impersonation rather than ancestor deification tropes, since it depicts the moment of the king’s death/resurrection, and equates it to a primordial birth, rather than the fusion of a long-dead king with a tutelary deity. To be sure, there are no other examples from Palenque where any of the patron gods are equated with deceased ancestors.
king’s name, and possibly at Tikal, where Baby Jaguar may be the name of a patron god as well as an ancestor (Martin 2002). However, it is reason to suspect that we are dealing with a deceased ancestor rather than a patron deity. Another reason to suspect as much is that the SNB is depicted in typical ancestor fashion on Stela 45 as a floating disembodied head, conflated with a later known ancestor (Tokovinine and Fialko 2007). Patron deities do not ever appear depicted in this manner. Furthermore, the SNB originates a dynastic count. That is to say, the kings of Naranjo counted their reigns from his in the following manner: “he was 39th in line from the SNB.” Such counts of kings never originate from patron deities, even if deities are said to accede in the mythological past. On Naranjo’s Altar 1, the king is said to be “in the line of the Jaguar God of the Underworld,” one of the site’s actual patron deities. However, an actual numerical count does not start with this god.

One reason for confusion is the fact that SNB’s name is preceded on Tikal Temple IV Lintel 2 with the k’uh glyph. In this case, however, it is most likely serving as a k’uhul adjective, often used to describe historical figures of special prominence (see above). If the text intended to describe SNB as a god, we should grammatically expect to see a k’uh glyph after his name. Another source of confusion for the SNB has been the fact that the date of his accession to kingship is given as impossibly ancient (see Mathews and Stuart in Martin 1996). In fact, Naranjo Altar 1 has his accession about 20,000 years ago, while Stela 1 has his accession nearly a million years ago. This has been taken to mean that the SNB could not possibly be a normal human being, and must therefore be some sort of deified ancestor or patron deity. However, the pushing of a historical

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18 See for example god name Bolon Yookte’ K’uh.
accession into the ancient past is not an unusual feature of Maya rhetorical usage. A similar device can be observed in Christenson’s (2001) ethnographic study among the modern Tzutujil community of Santiago Atitlan. Here, an informant discusses a known community ancestor, Francisco Sojuel, who is pushed into different time frames within the same interview:

“He told me that the entire altarpiece was two thousand years old. He then went on to tell me that his grandfather had known the nuwal Francisco Sojuel, who was a great sculptor and helped to carve the altarpiece…. I asked him when Francisco Sojuel had died and he replied 1907. Was the altarpiece, then, carved about that time? ‘Just so, in 1907, two thousand years ago, when the Spaniards first came to Santiago Atitlan’” (p. 68).

In this case, the actual historical accuracy of the chronology of this ancestor is less important than the framing of his life within significant events of community history. For this reason, he can be pushed back in time so that his lifetime seems to parallel these important events.

Thus, the rhetoric used to describe the SNB on the monuments of Naranjo is completely consistent with descriptions of founding ancestors and is inconsistent with descriptions of patron deities. The patron deities of Naranjo actually consist of several versions of the Jaguar God of the Underworld.

A similar character also exists in the inscriptions of Palenque. This ancestor’s name was [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat (“[?] Maize Hawk Cormorant”) and has been referred to as “Lady Methuselah” (Lounsbury 1976) and the “Triad Progenitor” in more recent literature (Stuart 2006a), but was almost certainly a male. He appears on the Cross Group Temples and on the inscriptions of Temple XIX. The reason he has often been thought to be a deity is the fact that his relationship to the three main patron deities of Palenque is expressed similarly to the relationship between a father and son. This has been interpreted
to mean that [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat was another deity who was parent to the three principal gods (Lounsbury 1980). However, the phrase used to describe the relationship, *ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil* (his image/his penance/his darkness) (figure 4.2a) in fact has broader applications than simply expressing genetic relationships. We see a similar term used to describe the relationship between a king of Caracol and one of his well-known patron deities on Stela 3 (figure 4.2b) and at La Corona to describe the relationship between K’inich ? Yook and the patron deity Ikiiy (see figure 6.5). In other contexts, especially at Palenque, we see another phrase, *ubaah uhuuntahn* (his image/his precious thing) to describe the relationship between king and patron gods (Houston and Stuart 1996:294). Usually, this phrase describes the relationship between mother and child, but in these inscriptions, it indicates that patron deities were seen as precious and in need of care just as a mother’s baby. Therefore, the use of a term often applying to family relationships can be used to refer to king/god relationships without necessarily implying that both characters must be deities.

[?] Ixim Muwaan Mat is almost certainly an ancestral figure because his lordship is referred to as “the first,” even after the same text describes the earlier accession of the site’s patron deity. Here we are seeing the same pattern as Naranjo: although the site’s patron deity (in this case GI) is said to accede in the mythological past (the trope of lordship discussed above), the deity does not start a dynastic count. This is left to the founding ancestor, who in this case is [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat. This situation is similar to the rhetoric of the Popol Vuh, discussed in Chapter 3, in which patron gods are linked to the founding ancestors of the K’iches. Further evidence that this character is an ancestor
and not a deity is the fact that patron deities at Palenque do not take emblem glyphs, while this character does. The fact that his accession is said to have taken place in the ancient past (2325 BC) indicates that the inscriptions merely use the same rhetorical device seen in the Naranjo texts of pushing the date into earlier timeframes that were significant in the mythology of the community.

The final character to mention comes from Tikal and has been called “White Owl Jaguar” (Stuart 2007a). His name probably reads Sak Hiix Muut “White Feline Bird” (Martin and Grube 2000:50) and he is mentioned in several inscriptions from Tikal. The
most important of these is the roof comb of the Temple of the Inscriptions (Jones 1977), which was probably his temple. Sak Hiix Muut has been called an ancestor by David Stuart (2007a) but I believe the evidence points to this character as a patron god. In fact, there are two inscriptions (El Encanto Stela 1 and Ixlu Altar 1) which may place him within a long list of patron gods and even name him as a k’uh. In both cases, however, the glyph is badly eroded. Beyond these examples, we can see from the Temple of the Inscriptions that he “oversaw” (vichonal\textsuperscript{19}) period endings, both in the ancient past and in contemporary times. This verb is only ever attributed to patron gods, never to ancestors. In fact, overseeing period endings is one of the most frequent things patron gods do in the hieroglyphic record. The only source of confusion for this god is the fact that he carries a full Tikal emblem glyph, suggesting that he is an ancestor. While some sites such as Palenque choose not to attribute emblem glyphs to their patron deities, they do appear at other sites. Furthermore, other uses of the term ajaw are quite common with patron deities during the Classic period.

\textit{Defining Patron Deities through Epigraphy}

Now that I have explained the process of differentiating patron deities from ancestors at particular sites, I will explain the process of differentiating patron deities

\textsuperscript{19} I favor the interpretation of this glyph proposed by Zender (2007; Stone and Zender 2011:15, 233). He argues that the glyph, usually spelled yi-chi-NAL, refers to the physical presence of a higher ranking individual, based on the Tzotzil root ichon “front/presence.” He also argues that it freely substitutes with a logographic version, usually spelled yi-ICHON?-NAL, whose main sign is a glyph depicting a torso with a hand held elegantly in front in the typical pose of a seated ruler. Stuart (1997:10) disagrees with this interpretation, proposing that yi-chi-NAL be read yichnal “together with” or “in the company of” based on analogy to the Yucatek root ikanl. Both roots are related to presence and visual field, so these views are not incompatible. However, Stuart (2006a:40–42) also argues that the logographic torso with hand is an entirely different and unrelated term having to do with children. He admits that this glyph appears between the names of lower- and higher-ranking individuals (often a gods), and that it refers to the person “who sanctioned, oversaw, or attended to the ritual concerned” (p. 42). In this way, it functions just as yi-chi-NAL does. Because of these similarities, I follow Zender as seeing the two glyphic compounds as equivalent, whether pronounced yichonal or yichnal.
from general deities. In other words, how does one define the term “patron deity?” Was this truly a salient category of gods for the Classic period Maya or is this a scholarly invention?

The study of patron deities has been based largely upon data from the inscriptions of Palenque. This is because there are several temples at Palenque, most of them probably patron deity temples themselves, that record extensive mythological information and ritual practices involving these deities. Although other deities appear at Palenque, these texts deal primarily with three main gods, nicknamed GI, GII, and GIII (Berlin 1963). Information about this deity triad was so rich, in fact, that some scholars (Lounsbury 1985; Schele 1979) attempted to draw parallels between them and characters from the Colonial period Popol Vuh, the history of the K’iche people of highland Guatemala. It was later pointed out, however (Coe 1989) that the Classic equivalent of the Hero Twins could be identified in iconography, and that they looked nothing like the Palenque triad. Others (Stuart et al. 1999:II–57; Stuart 2006a:160) pointed out that other sites such as Caracol, have their own patron deity groupings and that GI, GII, and GIII are best thought of as primarily local deities of Palenque, not pan-Maya deities of agricultural fertility as had been claimed.

The recognition of patron deity groupings at sites besides Palenque has sometimes focused on a glyph I call the “Patron Deity Introductory Glyph” (PDIG) (see figure 4.3a). This glyph is used at Palenque as a descriptive term introducing the triad. It consists of the number 3, an undeciphered sign with phonetic complement –ti, and the term k’uh (god or gods). I will discuss possible meanings of this glyph further below. This sign also appears in the inscriptions of Caracol and Tikal, as well as on the “Vase of Seven Gods,”
where it also seems to label a god or god category. It has been assumed (Stuart et al. 1999:II–57; Stuart 2006a:160) that this glyph is meant specifically to introduce patron deities and that the inclusion of the number 3 corresponds the deity triads themselves (reading “3 (?) gods”). For this reason, it has also been assumed that patron deities usually appear in sets of three.

There are some problems with this conclusion. First, the PDIG does not always introduce triads. As I will discuss below, there are examples where the term introduces sets of two, four or six patron deities. Furthermore, there are many cases in which the glyph does not appear, and yet deities behave the same way as those that carry the glyph. For this reason, it is best to conclude the following: a) patron deities do not always occur in sets of three and b) the PDIG is not required in order to introduce lists of patron deities. Thus, the definition of what constitutes a patron deity must expand.

When collecting epigraphic data, I tried to examine every monument at a particular site that had anything to do with deities in general. This included costume elements and mythological data. As a result I found that deities tended to fall into two categories, which I will call general deities and patron deities. These correspond to Watanabe’s (1990) categories of Earth Lords and Saints (see Chapter 3). Patron deities, corresponding to modern patron saints, were representatives of community sociality, and were believed to look after the well-being of their home towns. General deities, on the other hand, include creator gods and underworld gods. Christenson (2001) argues that Maximon/Earth Lords closely correspond to the ancient Maya underworld deities, especially the one nicknamed “God L” by scholars.

“Like [Maximon], God L was an aged deity famous for his lascivious nature…. Both deities are closely associated with the sacrifice of gods and cosmic devastation…and cigars are part of their standard iconography. Also, both God L
and [Maximon] are patrons of the underworld jaguars and long-distance travel” (Christenson 2001:186–87).

These gods are aloof, and do not represent specific communities or actively participate in human affairs. The same Classic Maya categories of patron gods and general gods have also been recognized as “a) major gods that are the personifications of universal phenomena as well as natural and cosmological forces…whose stories are often narrated on ceramic vessels and b) local gods like tutelary deities…” (Sachse 2004:9).

General deities are frequently depicted and impersonated by kings. However, general deities do not appear to have had physical effigies. General deities remained passive and aloof and did not directly interact with humans. Patron deities on the other hand, often had similar or identical names to general deities, sometimes with minor variations to distinguish them. While rarely depicted or impersonated, patron deities existed in physical form and had temples to house their effigies. Unlike general deities, patron deities were attributed verbs of action in the human world and received human ritual veneration in return.

Basically, then, general deities are those gods which we see frequently on painted ceramics and referenced in mythological texts. They have a whole set of stories attached to them that provide models for human behavior. We might think of the Maize god as a good example of a general deity. He appears at many sites across the Maya world. He is frequently impersonated by kings through the use of the net skirt costume. He appears on painted ceramics as a dancer, as a dead king, and as a resurrected maize plant. Thus, stories about him both provide a model for kingly behavior, and also explain the fertility cycle of corn. General deities do seem to demonstrate the concept discussed above, that Maya deities were in fact manifestations of sacred but aloof forces diffused throughout
the universe. Thus, general deities such as the Maize or Sun god in fact represent these natural phenomena and the vital force that animated them.

There are numerous general deities, and these are the gods that have been categorized and assigned letters by Schellhas (1904) and the scholars that followed him. But if we look at the inscriptions on a site-by-site basis rather than a god-by-god basis, we see that these general deities form special relationships with certain sites. That is, they can become patron deities. As patron deities, their behavior differs from the impersonal general deities, and more closely resembles the western conception of gods, like those of ancient Greece. Let us examine the example of the hero twins, the maize god’s twin sons. They also appear frequently on polychrome ceramics, to the extent that we can match their Classic period story to the Colonial period story that appears in the Popol Vuh (Coe 1989). They also provide a mythological precedent for human behavior. However, they do not usually interact in an interpersonal way with human beings. The exception is the site of Moral Reforma. Here, together with a version of Chaak, they form a patron deity triad and “oversee” (yichonal) a stela dedication performed by the ruler (Simon Martin, personal communication 2011).

Thus, it is usually possible to identify patron gods with an original general deity. Indeed, both general deities and patron deities are referred to using the term k’uh (as in the Popol Vuh, which referred to both creator gods and patron gods as k’ab’awil). However, it is the special relationship that these deities form with particular sites that allows them to be re-defined as patrons. For this reason, my definition of patron deities is as follows: those deities which form special relationships with human beings at particular sites and actively participate in contemporary human affairs while in return
receiving active ritual veneration. To reiterate, there are a number of general gods who exist in mythology across the Maya world and are frequently depicted and impersonated. A few of these gods function as patron gods for specific communities where a new relationship is forged with them. Thus, a particular god may behave differently at a site for which he is a patron than at a site where he is not. However, patron gods across the Maya world largely behave the same way at each community. I will discuss this behavior further below.

At Palenque, the forging of this local relationship of supernatural patronage is made explicit and is referred to as the “arrival,” the “earth-touching,” and the “birth” of the site’s three main patron gods during the reign of the site’s founding ruler, [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat, discussed above (Lounsbury 1980:112–13). In fact, Palenque texts also include mythological activities of GI before this “birth” in the mythological past. For years scholars were confused as to how GI could perform mythological actions before his own birth and concluded that there must be two different GIs (Lounsbury 1980:112). However, (Stuart 2006a:173–74) has asserted more recently that there is simply one GI who takes two forms: pre-birth and post-birth. This “birth”/”arrival”/”earth-touching” event corresponds to the descent of the general deity into his patron deity form, forging a new relationship with Palenque’s dynastic founder. This is in many ways similar to the role of the K’iches’ patron deities, which are supposed to be “substitutes” and “remembrances” for the creator gods, given to the founders of the lineages (see Chapter 3). The creation of a new relationship of patronage with a deity happened numerous times throughout the Classic period. As I will discuss below, new patron deities were introduced into communities during times of political crisis. Thus, patron deities cannot
be characterized as a gradual outcome of beliefs about general deities but must be seen as the result of specific semiotic events at particular times. But as these semiotic events accrued, many sites accumulated long lists of patron deities.

_Patron Deity Sets and Categories_

As I have mentioned briefly above, patron deities often appear in sets. The Palenque triad is the patron deity set par excellence, but it is hardly the only patron deity set in the Classic period inscriptions. There are 26 examples of patron deity triads in the inscriptions that I analyzed (that is, hieroglyphic passages that only list three deities at a time). However, in spite of the popularity of listing GI, GII, and GIII at Palenque, most lists of three gods are not so formulaic (see table 4.1). For example, there are three monuments that mention lists of Calakmul patron gods. The Cancuen Panel and Calakmul Stela 58 both list three patron gods, but one of the gods is different and the other two are in a different order. On Stela 54 there is a list of five patron deities, three of which are the same as Stela 58 and two of which are not seen elsewhere (Martin 2009). Much more diverse combinations appear at Copan, where inscriptions include pairs, triads, and sets of five, six, and eight patron gods. Many of these patron gods overlap but occasionally new ones are added or old ones subtracted. Even at Palenque, known for its formulaic recitation of gods GI, GII, and GIII, has a bit of variation. The formulaic triad appears eight times. Twice, however, an additional three gods are added to the list, making it six patron gods long. Once, GII is paired with the Baby Jaguar God of the Underworld and on the Temple XIV tablet, an entirely different set of patron gods.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>deity set</th>
<th># of deities in set</th>
<th>inscription</th>
<th>date (AD)</th>
<th>occasion</th>
<th>use of PDIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balakbal</td>
<td></td>
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**Palenque**

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**Piedras Negras**

<p>| K'inich Ajaw/6-?/8 Ha' Naak | 3 | Panel 12 | 518 | temple dedication |</p>
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**Tila**

|                | Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler | 2 | Stela A | 830 | period ending |

**Tonina**

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<th></th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Monument 56</th>
<th>628</th>
<th>period ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 8</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 134</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 139</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 136</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 165</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 110</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>period ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 138</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>probable period ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 42</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monument 166</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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**Tortuguero**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ek' Hiix/Yax Suutz'</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Monument 6</th>
<th>669</th>
<th>temple dedication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?-ji/Chan Ho Kix K'uh/K'awiil</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monument 8</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>7 year anniversary of accession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ucanal**

| Ek' ?/Ich'aak ? Jol | 2 | Stela 4     | 849 | period ending |

**Xultun**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Singing Jaguar&quot;/K'awiil</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Stela 5</th>
<th>672</th>
<th>period ending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Singing Jaguar&quot;/K'awiil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stela 3</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Singing Jaguar&quot;/K'awiil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stela 10</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yaxchilan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aj K'ahk' O Chaak/K'an Wi' JGU</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Lintel 35</th>
<th>537</th>
<th>capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aj K'ahk' O Chaak/Pa' Chan Balam/K'an Wi' JGU/Sak Baak Na ?/Tajal Way/6 Kaban/Yax Ajaw/Yajawte' Took' Ajaw</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>temple dedication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Yaxha**

| Jaguar Paddler/Stingray Paddler | 2 | Stela 13   | 793 | period ending |

Table 4.1. deity sets in the inscriptions.
appears, including GI and four other deities. I could detect no pattern governing the number or identity of the patron gods appearing on particular ritual occasions. It may be that a variety of religious criteria went into selecting patron deities or it may simply be that scribes could pick and choose which gods to name on monuments.

While patron deity triads do appear in the inscriptions of various sites, deity pairs are actually more common. Most of the examples of patron deity pairs refer to the Paddler Gods. These gods appear as patron deities at twelve different sites: Balakbal, Caracol, Copan, Dos Pilas, Ixlu, Jimbal, Naranjo, Piedras Negras, Sacul/Ixkun, Tikal, Tonina, and Yaxha. As such, they are quite widespread compared to other patron deities. As general deities, these two gods appear on the Tikal bones paddling a canoe that carries the dead maize god and a set of animals to the underworld. One of the paddlers wears a stingray spine through his septum, while the other appears to be a version of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. For this reason they are nicknamed the Jaguar Paddler and the Stingray Paddler. Their name glyphs were identified by David Stuart (1984b) and include signs for day and night, suggesting that the pair is meant to represent paired oppositions or some sort of totality of the sun’s cycle. The reasons for the Paddlers’ popularity as patron deities across the Maya area remain unknown.

Another popular patron deity pairing is a second set of paired opposites: Chanal K’uh/Kabal K’uh “Sky god(s)/Earth god(s)” (Stuart et al. 1999:II–43). This pair occurs as patron deities in the inscriptions of Copan, Palenque, and Tikal. However, it is quite possible that these are not god names themselves but represent a category of patron gods. We can see this clearly in the inscriptions of Chichen Itza, where named deities are classified as “sky gods.” However, the classification “earth god” does not appear at
Chichen Itza. On Tikal Stela 31, sky gods and earth gods are mentioned on three separate occasions. On this stela, however, they are prefixed by the term *pik*, referring to a “bundle” or to the number 8,000 (Houston et al. 2006:188). On the first reference to these gods on Stela 31, they are followed by a list of six other gods. The second occasion omits these other gods, simply listing *pik Chanal K’uh/Kabal K’uh*. The third occasion simply mentions *pik k’uh* (8,000 gods). These gods are also prefixed by *pik* on Copan Stela 10. It seems likely the *chanal k’uh* and *kabal k’uh* are not separate deities themselves, but rather are a category of deity that others can fit into. Tikal Stela 31 and Copan Stela 10 seem to indicate that the Maya recognized many deities of these categories, and that other god lists may be truncated. We see a similar truncation on El Peru Stela 14, which refers to 29 gods, but only names three (Guenter n.d.:4).

In addition to the possible use of Sky Gods or Earth Gods, the Classic Maya had a variety of other terms used to describe patron deities. The term *Ohlis K’uh* “Heart God(s)” (Stuart et al. 1999:II–44) appears in the inscriptions of Chichen Itza, Chinikiha, Comalcalco, and Palenque. The term may refer to gods that require hearts for sustenance in the form of human or animal sacrifice, or it may have a more esoteric meaning. Another term used to describe patron deities is *Naah Ho Chan Ajaw* “First Five Sky Lord,” sometimes shortened to “First Five Sky.” This term appears most frequently with the Paddler gods. This apparent association with the paddler gods, however, may simply be attributable to the popularity of the paddlers as patron gods and their subsequent high frequency in the texts as compared to other characters. *Naah Ho Chan* also appears with other patron gods in the inscriptions of Caracol, Palenque, and Tikal. For this reason, I believe it is a category referring to a certain type of god, rather than specifically the
paddler gods. *Naah Ho Chan* refers to a mythological location in the sky, having to do with the creation of the world (Freidel et al. 1993). We can see this on Quirigua Stela C, which discusses events surrounding the 3114 BC creation date of Maya mythology. In this text, the Paddler gods plant a stone at “First Five Sky.”

Finally, we should turn to the Patron Deity Introductory Glyph mentioned earlier (figure 4.3a). To reiterate, this glyph consists of the following elements: a) number 3, b) an undeciphered sign resembling the *lu* syllable, but with the addition of an infixed crossed-band element c) phonetic complements –*ti* on this unknown sign, and d) the *k’uh* sign. It therefore reads “Three [?] god(s).” Before attempting to explain this glyph’s meaning, I would like to look briefly at its distribution. The PDIG is most common in the inscriptions of Palenque and Caracol. At Palenque, the glyph usually describes the patron god list consisting of GI, GII, and GIII. However, at other times it also lists a single god, a pair of gods, or a set of six gods. At Caracol (I include the Naranjo Hierolglyphic Stairway in this set, as it was originally a Caracol monument (Martin 2000a)) the PDIG is used four times, introducing lists of four gods, three gods, and possibly six gods. From these examples we can already see that it does not necessarily only apply to patron deity triads, but can apply to any number of deities. This leads me to question the hypothesis that the use of the number three in the glyph refers to the number of gods in the set.

There are three other examples of the sign. The first comes from Tikal stela 26 (figure 4.3b). This stela lists a series of ritual objects owned by the king’s royal ancestors. The last of these ritual objects is some sort of altar. After naming this altar, the text lists the PDIG followed by four glyphs. The first glyph reads Unen Bahlam “Baby Jaguar,” which is the name of a general deity but also an ancestor’s name at Tikal (Martin 2002).
The second is the Principal Bird Deity. The third glyph reads *Ehb K’ini*ich, and may be a reference to the Tikal dynastic founder, Yax Ehb Xook. The fourth glyph includes a female head and the main sign of the Tikal Emblem glyph (Mut or the name of the Tikal kingdom). Because of the presence of the PDIG, it has long been assumed (Stuart et al. 1999:II–57; Stuart 2006a:160) that the first three of these glyphs name patron deities, followed by a title for them. This may indeed be the case. The Principal Bird Deity appears as a patron god on Tikal Stela 31 also and the Baby Jaguar is also a god name (Martin 2002). However, the syntax is not clear and given that the rest of the monument
text already has a pattern of naming ancestors as object owners, it is possible that one or more of the glyphs refers to ancestors. In fact, the text may have the approximate meaning: “it is the patron deity altar belonging to ancestor(s) X and Y.”

The other examples of the PDIG appear on the Vase of the Seven Gods (Coe 1973:#49) and Vase of Eleven gods (K7750). These two unprovenienced vessels are obviously a set. They show similar scenes and the relevant texts are identical. Both vases picture mythological scenes in which six gods or ten gods are seated cross-legged in front of an additional god. The additional god is God L, the lord of the Underworld. The gods seated in front of him are more variable, especially since one vase pictures more than the other. A short inscription describes the scene: it tells us that “gods are put in order.” The text then lists the following gods/god categories: *Ik’ Tahn K’uh* “Black Dark Hearted God”; *Chanal K’uh* “Sky God”; *Kabal K’uh* “Earth God”; *Bolon Ookte’ K’uh* “Many Steps God”; *3 lu-ti K’UH* (PDIG); *Jawante’ Chij K’uh* “Deer Mouth Agape God”; the Jaguar God of the Underworld; and *Te’* “Tree” (Zender and Guenter 2003:107–109).

Although the sign is usually fairly standardized, there is some variation. On the polychrome vases just mentioned, the crossed-band element does not appear at all, leaving a normal *lu* syllable, followed by the usual *ti* syllable (figure 4.4c). On Caracol Stela 16 and 14, and the Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway (also originally from Caracol (Martin 2000a:57–58), the crossed bands are replaced by parallel lines, usually indicating polished surfaces (figure 4.4d). Finally, Caracol Stela 3 may have an example of the sign without its –*ti* phonetic complement (figure 4.4e). This example may exclude the *K’UH* sign altogether or it may be present in the eroded left side of the glyph block.
There are two possibilities for the reading of the central part of the sign. The first possibility is that both –lu and –ti serve as phonetic signs and that the crossed-band sign is an additional infixed undeciphered element. This would render 3 [?]–lu–ti K’UH or 3 lu–[?]–ti K’UH. This approach has been taken by Guillermo Bernal Romero, discussed below. The second possibility is that the crossed band sign within the apparent lu syllable is itself an undeciphered compound logogram, rendering 3 [?]–ti K’UH. I will take this approach below.

Guillermo Bernal Romero is the only scholar to publish a proposed reading for the PDIG, and he has proposed Ux P’uluut K’uh, which he translates as “three incensario gods” (Cuevas García and Bernal Romero 1999) (figure 4.4a). This reading is based on the hypothesis that the crossed-band sign is phonetic p’u, and that a set of elaborate incense burners discovered throughout the Cross Group Temples of Palenque represent the three main patron deities of the site. Unfortunately, both of these lines of evidence are flawed.

The reading of the crossed-band sign as p’u is based on two pieces of evidence. The first is the Cordemex dictionary of Yucatec, which includes an entry for p’ul as incensario. The second is a series of examples from the Codex Madrid. Some show a sign with similar crossed bands followed by a –lu syllable in contexts which could potentially refer to incense burning (p’ul) Another shows these crossed-bands followed by –na in a context potentially referring to trapping animals (p’un means “trap” in Yucatac). Bernal Romero also argues that on carved monuments the crossed bands seem to serve as phonetic complement to a sign that he reads p’ul “incensario.”
However, this argument is based entirely on the Yucatec language, which creates a problem for the interpretation of PDIG. The Classic period inscriptions of the Southern Lowlands do not record Yucatec but rather a language of the Ch’olan language group (Houston et al. 2000). Clearly, Yucatec p ’ul is a cognate of the word “to burn,” which is unglottalized pul in the Ch’olan group (Aulie and Aulie 1978:96; Hull 2005:97–98; Keller and Luciano 1997:197–98; Moran 2004:38). Both a logogram for PUL and a phonetic pu already exist in the Classic period hieroglyphic system, so no new signs are needed to spell them. The reading of the crossed-band element of the PDIG as phonetic p ’u is unconvincing for other reasons as well. In some of the Caracol examples the crossed bands freely substitute with parallel bands (figure 4.4d). If crossed bands are the main distinguishing feature of the purported p ’u sign, it would be unlikely for them to disappear and for the sign to still be legible. Finally, both crossed bands and parallel bands disappear altogether in the painted ceramic examples, demonstrating that this element is not necessary for the compound’s legibility, as it would be if spelled entirely phonetically (figure 4.4c).

The known PUL logogram also contains a crossed-banded element. Therefore it is possible that the puluut reading is correct but spelled PUL-lu-ti, with the PUL logogram infixed into the lu sign, rather than fully phonetic p ’u-lu-ti. Once again, however, the free substitutions with parallel bands at Caracol are left unexplained. There are other problems with this interpretation as well. Ch’orti’ and Ch’olti’ render “incensario” not as p’uluut or puluut but as purnib and pulnib respectively (Abrams 1998:98; Moran 2004:39). This is much in keeping with the instrumental suffix –ib.

\[\text{\footnote{Moran (2004) gives punlib for quemadero “[incense] burner.” Given the similarity to the ch’ort’i example, as well as the attested root pul on the same page, I suspect that he accidentally inverted two letters, and that the intended term is pulnib.}}\]
already attested in the inscriptions, with a literal translation of “the thing used for burning.” Furthermore, although Bernal’s colleagues have identified Palenque incensarios with the three principal patron deities of its inscriptions (Cuevas García 2000; de la Garza Camino and Cuevas Garcia 2005), these identifications are incorrect. They mistakenly identify depictions of the Jaguar God of the Underworld with both GI and GIII, probably because all three share solar associations. They also claim that depictions of the Paddler gods are also part of a GIII complex. Finally, they mistake a depiction of Chaak for GII, an infantile aspect of K’awiil who is recognizable from depictions on the carved monuments of Palenque. In short, therefore, the argument linking the PDIG to incensarios and the term *p’uluut* or *puluut* remains unconvincing.

I would like to propose an alternative reading that fits better with the contextual clues we have seen so far. A number of dictionary entries indicate that the term *lot* or *lut* (perhaps originally *loot*) (Kaufman and Norman 1984) has the general sense of “together” or “set.” Here are a few:

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21 It appears that a similar reading was reached independently by Mark Van Stone (in Wright 2011:230) but has not been published as far as I know.
Kaufman and Norman (1984:87 and 125) reconstruct the Proto-Cholan form of this word as *lut, arguing that Common Mayan *oo shifted to *u in various contexts. Houston et al. (2000:328) however, argue that the hieroglyphic script retained long vowels and that the shift in fact changed *oo to *uu. A good example of this is the shift from proto-Mayan *sootz’ (bat) to suutz’, spelled with the disharmonic su-tzi’ in Classic Maya writing, indicating a long or complex vowel. Hence, the Common Mayan root loot might read as luut in the hieroglyphic script. Unfortunately, neither Ch’olti’ nor Ch’orti’ preserve this term, making it difficult to know for sure whether it existed in the language of the script.

I suggest that LUUT is a possible reading for the undeciphered crossed-band-in-lu sign (see figure 4.4b). The syllable –ti would thus serve as a phonetic complement. The two examples from the polychrome vases would render a fully phonetic version of lu-ti without the use of the crossed-band logogram. The LUUT reading may also be supported by the example on Caracol Stela 3 (figure 4.4e), which omits the –ti syllable. This omission demonstrates that the ti sign is not necessary, as it would be if the compound were spelled PUL-lu-ti or p’u-lu-ti. As a simple complement to LUUT, however, the ti sign is not necessary.

As I have noted, the use of the number three in the PDIG does not seem to correspond literally to the number of gods listed, since some cases list more than three
and some cases less. It is likely that in this context the use of “three” is intended to mean “many,” seen in some other hieroglyphic contexts (Grube 1997:88). If we then insert the term luut with the approximate meaning “together” or “set,” we read ux luut k’uh “the many-together god(s),” or “god(s) from a large set.” This would be a remarkably appropriate way to introduce the god sets that we see in the inscriptions. However, this reading is tentative at the moment. New examples of the PDIG are necessary in order to determine whether this reading is viable.

Patron Deity Veneration Practices

This section will explore the common activities that were carried out by human beings for their deities. Of course, because the data being considered here are epigraphic, the human beings under review are all elite members of Maya society, usually community rulers. In Chapters 6 and 7, where I consider patron deity veneration at La Corona, I will consider archaeological evidence for other activities and other community participants.

Just as in the Postclassic, Colonial, and Modern periods, the care and maintenance of patron deity effigies was a central aspect of patron deity veneration. (see Chapter 3). Most of the actions being taken by kings seem to necessitate the physical presence of the patron deities, and we can thus infer that their effigies existed even when not explicitly stated. One of the basic practices, therefore, was the creation of these effigies. An excellent example of this practice comes from the inscription of the Cross Group at Palenque. Texts from these temples tell us that on the day 2 Kib 14 Mol in AD 690 a series of ritual events take place. First, the “oven” and “temple” of the main patron deity
triad were burned. Next, the “dear things” (patron deities) of the king were shaped. Stuart (2006b) sees the passage as a reference to the firing of clay effigies in ovens. I prefer to see this as a termination event of an earlier temple, followed by the creation of new deity effigies. On the following day, we read that the patron gods were “conjured,” that is, a ritual was performed so that the deities inhabited the new effigies created for them (Stuart 2006b). We know from earlier texts at Palenque that the three main patron deities already existed at the site. Therefore, the creation of their effigies cannot have been something new. Rather, we are seeing that patron deity effigies had to periodically be reshaped and renewed.

We see the same practice at Caracol. Both Caracol Stela 3 and the Naranjo Hieroglyphic stairway record that in 622, a patron god I have nicknamed “Man Eater” arrived in Caracol, as a gift from the Calakmul king. Since this same god “Man Eater” already existed at Caracol by 534 (Stela 16), if not earlier, we must conclude that this gift is a new effigy meant to renew the patron deity.

Another patron deity renewal probably appears on Calakmul Stela 89. The text refers to an event in 731 involving the carrying of a palanquin platform for the site’s principal patron deity Yajaw Maan. On the same day, something is built called k’ìn ajaw (sun lord). This probably refers to the patron deity effigy itself. On Naranjo Stela 32, a different patron god is also called k’ìn ajaw, lending support to this hypothesis. Stela 89 will be discussed further below.

Steps were also taken to care for the patron deities’ physical bodies. For example, there are numerous inscriptions that make reference to “bathing” patron deities (yatij) (Stuart et al. 1999:II–50). This ritual is especially common at Tonina, but also appears at
Copan, Naranjo, Piedras Negras and Tikal. Although it is most common with the paddler
gods, other patron deities get bathed as well. In addition to bathing patron deities, kings
also dressed them. Unfortunately, the only example of this practice that exists in the
current epigraphic record is from the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque (Macri
1988:116–17). This exceptionally long text tells us that on multiple occasions throughout
Palenque’s history, in fact on most major period endings, the sitting ruler gave gifts to the
three principal patron deities, including clothing and jewelry. We read about helmets or
headdresses, necklaces, ear flares and “dressings.” Stuart (2006a:166–67) points out that
the special names given to the different clothing items match the iconographic
accoutrements seen on these deities. For example, the name of the headdress of GI
incorporates the “quadripartite badge” motif often seen on the head of GI in iconographic
representations. Although this is the only inscription that specifically mentions the
dressing of patron deities, we can infer that this was actually a common practice by
analogy to modern patron saint veneration, where the upkeep of the saint’s clothing is an
important ritual responsibility (see Chapter 3).

Another analogous practice is the feeding of patron deities, just as in later periods
when patron gods and patron saints were fed with food, flowers, blood, candles, and
incense. The most well-known example of this practice during the Classic period comes
from Yaxchilan. Here, on Lintel 35 we read that in 537, a noble from Calakmul was
captured, and that following this event, the two patron gods of the site “eat him.” This has
been interpreted to mean that the prisoner was sacrificed and fed to the patron gods
(Houston et al. 2006:123). Another possible reference to patron deities eating can be
found on Naranjo Stela 2, where the paddlers may be said to eat on the 9.13.0.0.0 period
ending of 692. There are also references to patron deities drinking in the corpus. One of these can be found on the third tablet of the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque. Here, the text probably records the assembly of various foreign lords at Palenque in 659, as well as possibly some foreign patron gods. At the end of the passage, we learn that “the gods drink.” One final example may be present on Monument 6 of Tortuguero.

Unfortunately, this text is in poor condition, having undergone looting and erosion, so it is difficult to link different events within the text to each other. The stela seems to have been carved to commemorate the dedication of a temple for two patron gods at the site. Earlier in the text, we read about some event that involved pulque (an alcoholic beverage) and possibly cacao (chocolate drink). Therefore, it is possible that these beverages were consumed, possibly by the patron gods themselves, to celebrate the new temples. The practice of sharing food and drink with patron deities, as we have seen, is a common ritual practice in modern Maya communities and it is also mentioned in the Annals of the Kaqchikels. We will also see archaeological evidence at La Corona for this important practice.

The building of temples for the patron gods was a major ritual responsibility taken on by kings, just as it was during the Postclassic period and during the Modern period as well (see Chapter 3). Unfortunately, not many actual architectural examples of patron deity temples can now be identified. These are discussed in the following chapter, and include temples at Tikal, Yaxchilan, Chichen Itza, and Palenque. The usual term to describe patron deity temples is wayib, meaning “place for sleeping” (Houston and Stuart 1989). This is presumably because the patron deity was thought to sleep inside in ritual seclusion. While this term is commonly used to describe patron deity temples, I only
know of one example where it refers to an ancestor shrine. This is the “Pop Panel,” an unprovenienced carved lintel possibly from Bonampak (Mathews 1975 in Schele 1991a:79) dating to AD 521. Other terms used to describe patron deity temples include “house” (otoot) (Stuart 1987:33–38), which also applied to residential structures and other temples, and “sweat bath” (pibnaah) (Stuart 1987:38–39; Houston 1996) which we find at Palenque and Tortuguero and is possibly connected to the idea of patron deities bathing. Finally, at Palenque, we also see the “Red [?] House,” which may be some other type of temple as opposed to the sweat bath or sleeping place (Stuart 2006a:101–02).

When patron deities are said to possess these structures, we see the suffix -il on the structure type, indicating an intimate form of possession (Houston et al. 2001). A possessed structure without this suffix (as on Tortuguero Monument 6 upibnaah), implies that the owner is the king who built the structure, rather than the patron deity owner.

When they were not asleep in their wayibs, patron gods were physically handled. It is not clear at this point whether handling was a ritual requirement for patron deity well-being or whether it was intended to demonstrate the king’s relationship to the patron deity to observers. The phrase “he grasped K’awiil” is a common way of referring to kingly accession in the hieroglyphic inscriptions. Sometimes, the deity K’awiil is replaced in these statements by the king’s patron deities. A good example of this is El Peru Stela 14 (Guenter n.d.:4). Here, the king is said to grasp “his 29 gods,” of which three are then listed. In other cases, patron deity effigy handling is not related to accession. Several monuments at Palenque show rulers cradling the infant K’awiil (GII) in their arms, seemingly as a replacement for the typical K’awiil which served as the scepter of Maya rulers. Xultun also frequently depicts the king holding aloft a jaguar.
effigy, which may be a patron god of the site. Patron deities also occasionally emerge from the ubiquitous double-headed serpent bars which were emblems of rulership. A good example is Naranjo Stela 6, where the Naranjo Jaguar God of the Underworld emerges from the bar (Martin 2005b). This usage is not consistent, however, and many serpent bars depict ancestors and general deities as well. A final form of patron deity handling was on palanquins—large float-like platforms that carried enormous deity effigies and thrones for kings (Martin 1996; 2000b). These resemble the floats on which modern patron saints are carried during festivals (see Chapter 3). The best examples of these palanquins can be seen in the wooden lintels of Tikal. In general, it appears that these were used during warfare, as I will discuss shortly.

Apart from these physical actions undertaken by rulers, there are several glyphic passages that seem to refer to an affective quality in the relationship between patron deities and human beings. At the most basic level, patron deities are often possessed by rulers with the term *uk’uhil* “his god.” We can see that this term also carries the intimate possession –*il* suffix, showing that gods and kings were intimately connected (Houston et al. 2001). On the other hand, the same patron god was possessed by multiple kings in succession, demonstrating that patron gods were not considered property of a particular king, but only of whichever king happened to be on the throne at the time. The relationship between patron gods and people was sometimes reversed: on Tonina Monument 165, an important nobleman is said to be *uk’uhul ti’sakhuun naah ho chan ajaw* “the god-like nobleman of the First Five Sky Lords [Paddler gods].”

In addition to this possessive relationship, other phrases describe the king-god relationship as like the one between parent and child. We see the phrase *ubaah*
“uhuuntahn” “his precious thing” describing patron gods a Palenque. The same phrase may also appear on El Encanto Stela 1 of Tikal (Martin 2000a:53). This phrase is usually used in parentage statements to describe a mother’s love for her child. As Houston and Stuart argue (1996:294), the idea is probably to express the loving care offered by the king for the patron god effigies. At Caracol, Palenque and La Corona, we also see the phrase 

*_ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil_, usually expressing relationship between father and son, used to express the relationship between king and patron god (see figure 4.2a). At Palenque, as mentioned above, this has been mistakenly interpreted to imply a genetic relationship between [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat and the three principal deities. However, I argue that [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat is in fact the dynasty founder and is not the literal father of the gods. This interpretation is supported by the passage on Caracol Stela 3, linking the current king to his patron god “Man Eater” with the phrase *baahajiyy u[ch’ab] [y]ahk’abil* (see figure 4.2b) and at La Corona, where a block refers to the patron god Ikiiy as *ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil* (see figure 6.5).

That the patron gods found their relationships with humans to be pleasing is demonstrated by a phrase on the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque. Here, on the 9.12.0.0.0 period ending of 672, the three principal patron gods of Palenque were given gifts of clothing and jewels. A new temple was also dedicated for GI and we are told that the king “satisfies the hearts of his gods” (*utimiw yohl uk’uhil*) (Houston et al. 2006:189).

**Actions Attributed to Deities**

The most inactive of verbs attributed to patron deities is *yitaaj* “accompany.” In these cases, patron deities accompany rulers, usually for period ending ceremonies. The
general sense here may be that the king and the patron god are “companions.” By far the most common action attributed to patron gods is “oversight” (Houston and Stuart 1996:301). This is expressed with the term *yichonal*. The *ichon* can be described as the physical space immediately in front of a person, thus something that happens within this space is within the presence of that person (Zender 2007; Stone and Zender 2011:59). Similar phrasing is used in the Popol Vuh, where things happen “before the faces of their gods” (see Chapter 3). However, the term also implies a hierarchical relationship (Houston and Stuart 1996:301). When used to express relations between two humans, the person in whose *ichon* an event happens is always the dominant individual. Thus, when events happen in the *ichon* of patron deities, a good translation is “overseen by” because it implies sight as well as dominance. It also implies physical presence and we can presume that these events happened with physical patron deity effigies. Many different events were overseen by patron deities. The most common are period ending rituals, such as monument dedications, incense scatterings, etc. Other common events include accessions of kings and pre-accession events of princes, which may be interpreted as heir-designation ceremonies in one form or another. An unusual set of *yichonal* events can be found in the inscriptions of Burial 26 of Comalcalco (Zender 2004). These texts record the bloodletting rituals performed by a priest of this site every year on or around the spring equinox. Unusually, the patron god “overseeing” these events changed from year to year. It is unclear whether this oversight implied that the patron gods were recipients of sacrificial blood, or whether they merely observed the ritual.

Another common action attributed to patron deities is *ukabjiyi*. This term defies easy translation. It expresses the sense of ultimate responsibility and is used as an
auxiliary verb to inform the reader about the person in authority who either carried out or sanctioned an event. In the case of human relationships, we often see this term used to express an overlord’s authority over the actions of his subordinate. This is especially true for accessions, where the accession of a minor lord is sanctioned by the authority of his patron. We also see it used in warfare expressions, where the conquering king claims credit for the actions of his subordinate generals and soldiers. Thus, when we see this term applied to patron deities, the claim is that the deities have actually made the event happen through their supernatural powers. There are several examples of accession events ukabjiyi patron deities. There are also examples of period endings ukabjiyi gods, as if these patron deities actually cause time itself to pass. Other examples do not specifically use ukabjiyi, but nevertheless indicate that patron gods are responsible for the passage of time. The uses of ukabjiyi are interesting, because they demonstrate that the belief that the patron gods themselves were causing human events to come to pass. A similar attitude is apparent in later periods, where the well-being of the community was entrusted to the god/saint, who was responsible for agricultural fertility, luck, etc. (see Chapter 3).

Deities in Inter-community Politics

One particularly interesting example of ukabjiyi can be found on Stela 31 of Yaxha. The text records the capture of a foreign prisoner during war. This event is ukabjiyi a patron deity of the site named Baby [Jaguar God of the Underworld] (Baby JGU). Thus, we see that the patron god is given direct credit for success in war (Martin and Grube 2000:82). This leads us to a whole new realm of patron deity activities: inter-
site politics. Recall from chapter 3 that patron gods were important during inter-community conflicts during the Postclassic period in both the Maya area and central Mexico, where they were carried to war and could be captured, as described in the Popol Vuh and the Annals of the Kaqchikels (Christenson 2003:248; Otzoy 1999:178).

The example of the Yaxha Baby JGU is particularly interesting. In addition to getting credit for his community’s success in war, he is also mentioned in relation to his community’s defeat. On Naranjo Stela 35 a mythological episode is recounted in which the Baby JGU is burned by four youths. The same mythic event is depicted on codex style ceramics, showing a youth bearing a torch before a tied-up jaguar. The front of Stela 35 depicts the same scene, here with the Naranjo king playing the part of the torch-bearing youth, and his prisoner from Yaxha impersonating his own patron god, the soon-to-be-burned Baby JGU (Martin and Grube 2000:82). The back of the monument describes the defeated ruler’s fate: ch’ahkaj ubaah ti yootoot [JGU] uk’uhil (his head is chopped at the temple of his god, the JGU), once again linking the defeated king explicitly to his defeated god (Marc Zender, personal communication 2012).

This episode demonstrates that the Classic Maya not only saw mythic episodes as precedents for human behavior in general, but also saw them as models for inter-community relationships. What makes these events even more interesting is that the most important patrons of Naranjo were also versions of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. Although modern observers might think that the patron gods of Yaxha and Naranjo were quite similar, the Classic Period Maya did not consider these similarities to be salient in

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22 Marc Zender examined photographs of this monument in the late 1990s and was able to read this passage, though his sketch remains unpublished. The published drawing (Graham 1978:92) is far less clear.
their treatment of foreign communities. As far as they were concerned, the two different Jaguar Gods were completely distinct, representing two autonomous communities.

There are other examples where we can see that patron deities served as symbols of autonomy between hostile Maya polities. In some cases, patron deity effigies of rival communities were destroyed after their defeat. We can see this practice on Stela 2 of Aguateca and Stela 2 of Dos Pilas, a set of stelae that recount the same events. In both texts, we read about an attack on the nearby city of Seibal in 735. After this event, Seibal became a subordinate to the Mutal Dynasty of Dos Pilas. The day after the attack, the text tell us that “the painted back of K’awiil was chopped” (ch’ak utz’ibil paat k’awiil). This may refer to some sort of patron deity effigy from Seibal. This deity does not appear again in any inscriptions.

There are several examples that are more ambiguous. Tamarandito Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 (step 3) discusses some sort of war that occurred in 761. At this time, the site was already a vassal of the Dos Pilas dynasty. The deity GI-K’awiil served as a patron for a variety of sites in the Petexbatun. The stairway records a defeat (an axing) of Tamarandito and the flight of the Dos Pilas king. The aggressor of the attack is unclear. The “flints and shields” of an unknown individual were also “made low,” a common warfare expression. The glyph that follows reads either ulakam (“his banner”) (Houston and Stuart 1996:302) or ukabjiiy (“under his authority”) (LeFort 1998:15) followed by the name of GI-K’awiil. This indicates that either the patron god’s banner was “made low” along with his weapons, or that the patron god was responsible for defeating a foreign army. Because of the ambiguities in the text, it is hard to determine whether GI-
K’awiil was the patron deity of the aggressor or the deity of Tamarandito. However, his involvement in the exchange is clear.

Another ambiguous reference can be found on Quirigua Stela I. This retrospective account records the victory of Quirigua’s king K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat over his former overlord, Copan king Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil, in 738. Six days before this event, the text mentions certain objects belonging to Chante’ Ajaw and K’uy Nik Ajaw, two patron gods of Copan (Looper 1999:268; Grube et al. 1991). Unfortunately, the verb is not at all clear. The objects belonging to the patron gods include wood, fire, and a mirror. It seems that the event involving these patron gods is in some way linked to the defeat of Copan but too much ambiguity remains to be sure.

There are a few notable examples of enemy patron deities being captured during warfare events and being introduced in conquering cities. As discussed in Chapter 3, I call this process of adoption of enemy gods “deity domestication.” I borrow this term from Watanabe (1990), who describes the ritual practices involved in the “domestication” of Santiago (Saint James) in the modern Maya community of Santiago Chimaltenango (see Chapter 3). The best examples of this type of event during the Classic period come from three wooden lintels from Tikal (Martin 1996; 2000b). Lintel 3 of Temple 1 is the first of these important inscriptions. It records a date in 695 when Tikal defeated its enemy Calakmul in a major battle. During the battle, the Tikal army captured Yajaw Maan, a Calakmul patron deity. He is depicted on the lintel as a giant effigy of a jaguar, claws outstretched over a throne, on which sits the victorious Tikal king Jasaw Chan K’awiil. The name of the palanquin is given as tu- [?] Bahlam Nal (“[?] Jaguar Place”). On a date 40 days after the battle, this palanquin was carried, a god was conjured, and
something was built in the city of Tikal. The text therefore tells us that the defeated patron deity, rather than being destroyed as we saw in other examples, was carried back into the city of Tikal. It was probably this deity who was conjured and something was built, possibly a new temple for him, within the city. The ritual acts recorded at Tikal are designed to turn a foreign and hostile patron deity into a home patron deity and to finalize the defeat of a foreign community.

Famously, the Mexica of Postclassic Central Mexico had a similar practice of kidnapping conquered patron deities (Sahagún 1969:234). However, treatment of these captured gods was different in Tenochtitlan, and involved keeping the patron deities in a prison-temple like human captives (see Chapter 3).

The capture of a patron deity did not necessarily mean the end of that deity’s veneration in its original home city. Stela 89 of Calakmul records events surrounding the *tu-[*?]* Bahlam Nal* palanquin in 731, several decades after the god’s capture.

Two other deity domestication episodes occurred in Tikal’s history, both during the reign of Yik’in Chan K’awiil. On Lintel 3 of Temple IV is recorded an attack on El Peru in 743 (Martin 2000b). During the battle, a patron of El Peru was captured. This deity is an aspect of the god Akan, an underworld deity. The next day, this patron god is said to “complete his journey” and “arrive in the city of Tikal.” Three years later, domestication rituals take place. The deity is impersonated, the king dances at Akan House and an object or temple is built called Akan Year Place, both obviously associated with the name of the captured god. The patron god is also now referred to as “the god of the [Tikal] Kaloomte’” rather than the defeated El Peru king.
Lintel 2 records similar events in the year 744 (Martin 1996). After attacking Naranjo, the king of Tikal captured a Naranjo patron god, a version of the Jaguar God of the Underworld combined with a hummingbird. The victorious king is carried upon this god’s palanquin, which is depicted on the lintel as a throne in front of a giant effigy figure. The text counts forward three years to further events involving this palanquin. Unfortunately, the text is too poorly preserved to read what these events are.

What is clear is that in all three cases, effigies of enemy patron deities were captured in battle and then brought home triumphantly to Tikal, where they were “domesticated” through a series of ritual acts. These acts include conjuring, dancing, and building temples for the captured deities.

A similar pattern might be observed in the Temple of the Four Lintels at Chichen Itza (Boot 2005). The texts of this small building record a dedication date in 881 and two patron deity owners of the temple. The first owner is the god Yax Chich(?) Kan, the Chichen Itza version of the Water Lily Serpent (Boot 2005:352). This patron deity appears in several inscriptions of Chichen Itza. The other patron deity named is Uchoch Yokpuy, who is not known from any other inscriptions of the site (Boot 2005:337). He is called “great head god” and “sky god” but is also described as nachil, which Boot interprets to mean “foreigner” (p. 338). Another lintel gives a date 16 days after the dedication and discusses ritual events carried out by a Chichen Itza nobleman, the owner of the deities. According to Boot (2005:341–42), these events include the announcement of a festival, the interment of a cache offering, the “sprinkling” (of incense?), and the presentation of an unnamed patron god. If we assume that this unnamed god is the same Uchoch Yokpuy mentioned on the other lintel, these texts seem to record another patron
deity domestication episode. The patron god is described as a “foreigner” and a series of ritual events are undertaken on his behalf. It is possible therefore that he was captured from a foreign community and domesticated at Chichen Itza.

Patron gods are not only implicated in hostile relations between communities, but also in friendly or hierarchical relations. Just as in the Titulo de Totonicapan, where deities visit one another during a feast and in modern Maya communities, where patron saints visit each other on important ritual occasions, Classic Maya patron deities also represented their communities in friendly political interactions. An excellent example of this can be seen on the Cancuen “looted panel” (Guenter 2002). This panel records the accession of the Cancuen king in 656, when the site was subordinate to Calakmul. The accession of this king was “overseen by” (yichonal) three patron deities from Calakmul. It is quite possible that the event took place at Calakmul itself. The act of overseeing a foreign accession ceremony demonstrates that the Calakmul patron gods were intended to sanction the event.

A recently discovered hieroglyphic stairway at El Palmar, Campeche, records the visit of a dignitary of that site to Copan during the reign of Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil. In a reference that it not entirely clear, this stairway names three patron gods of Copan as somehow participating in this visitation event (Tsukamoto and Esparza O. 2013). This is another good example of patron gods representing the friendly relationship between two communities.

There are also instances of visits between deities of two different communities. One of these comes from a Late Classic stairway block from Calakmul (Martin 2008a).
Although no date is recorded, it recounts an event involving Yajaw Maan, a patron of Calakmul, and Akan, a patron of El Peru, one of Calakmul’s subordinates. The verb in question is *bukuy*, a mediopassive construction based on the verb root *buk*. As a noun, this root means “clothes” and can therefore mean “to dress” under certain circumstances. However, given that this is a mediopassive construction, it should be something that happens all by itself. If the patron gods dress themselves the glyph should require a reflexive pronoun, which is not present. I prefer to interpret this glyph with the verb root “to gather together.” In several languages the root *buk* refers to a gathering or piling up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tzeldal</td>
<td>bucuyon</td>
<td>juntarse</td>
<td>(De Ara 1986:252)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatac</td>
<td>brukul</td>
<td>juntarse mucha gente en algun lugar</td>
<td>(Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980:68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’ortí’</td>
<td>b’ukb’a</td>
<td>amontonar</td>
<td>(Hull 2005:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b’ukwan</td>
<td>estar amontonado</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This root suggests that these patron deities from different sites got together in some sort of ritual. As we saw in the last chapter, similar rituals are common in modern Maya communities, in which patron saints visit one another during saint’s days.

Another example comes from the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque. The text refers to the arrival of a lord from Santa Elena in 659. A series of other arrivals also take place, probably of nobles of other sites or of Palenque itself. Two patron gods are also said to arrive at Palenque, including Yax Ha’al Chaak and Chan Ujol K’uh. Shortly after, we are told that the Palenque triad of principal patron deities drinks along with the king of Palenque himself. While the text is hard to interpret, it does seem to refer to the gathering of subordinate lords and subordinate patron deities for an event involving ritual feasting.
A final example of patron deities in hierarchical foreign relationships comes from Caracol. In 619, the king of Caracol underwent an accession ceremony under the auspices of his new overlord, the king of Calakmul (Martin 2009). In 622, the Calakmul king gave him an effigy of the patron god nicknamed “Man Eater.” As I have said above, this deity was already venerated as a patron at Caracol. Therefore Calakmul did not impose a new patron god on its subordinate. Rather, it gave Caracol a new patron deity effigy, apparently as a sign of goodwill and possibly also as a subtle way of becoming a sponsor of Caracol state religion.

All of these examples make it clear that patron deities were regarded as symbols of their home communities during encounters with other polities. During hostile encounters, this could mean that they were ritually destroyed or ritually kidnapped to deprive their home communities of their protection. In peaceful encounters, they were manipulated to represent the domination of one community by another.

Deities in Domestic Politics

In considering the role of patron deities in domestic politics, it is important to remember that carving monuments is itself a political act. The constant discourse claiming personal relationships between rulers and patron deities was used to naturalize the ruler’s authority. Similar rhetoric can be seen in the Popol Vuh (see Chapter 3). Here, gods are represented as personal companions of the ruling lineage members. Another important discourse is the comparison between rulers and patron gods. Rulers are described as “god-like,” while patron gods often are described as lords. Just as with the comparison between the Aztec emperor and the patron god Huitzilopochtli (see Chapter
3), this discourse presents lordship itself as natural and also justifies the demands made by the ruler (obedience, tribute, labor, etc.) as being necessary for the maintenance of the community or universe. Finally, Classic Maya texts describe the many acts carried out by rulers in order to care for their deities such as dressing, bathing, feeding, and temple building. As in the Popol Vuh, and in modern communities, this discourse was probably meant to argue that political office was a burden (“cargo”) that the ruler carried for his people and thus deserved his royal authority.

By highlighting the pragmatic effects of these discourses, I do not mean to imply that Classic Maya rulers disbelieved their own rhetoric. It is likely that the efficacy of patron gods was a strongly held belief among the Maya elite and probably among their subjects as well. It is probably also true that they took their ritual responsibilities toward these patron gods extremely seriously. However, one must always be aware of the political component to patron deity veneration, especially when it is made public to a wide audience.

The verbs attributed to patron gods are a good starting point to examine their role in domestic relationships. As I have mentioned above, patron gods were commonly said to “accompany” rulers, to “oversee” ritual events and to “make happen” accessions. For a ruler to claim a patron god as his personal companion was a political act and implied that harm to the ruler would be harm to the patron deity or at least displease the deity. Similarly, the act of overseeing important events by patron gods surely was meant to increase legitimacy of the ceremony. This is probably especially true of accession events where an overseeing patron deity may have been believed to provide official sanction to
the new king’s authority. It also meant that any act against the sovereignty of the king was an act of blasphemy against the patron god who had officiated at the ceremony.

This official sanction is made even stronger with the *ukabjiyi* verb. It is likely that the succession of rulers in Classic Maya society was not always a peaceful affair, especially considering that rulers often took multiple wives and produced many potential heirs. By claiming that the accession of a particular heir was “brought about by” the will of the patron gods is to sanction this outcome over other potential outcomes and to bolster the authority of the king over potential rivals.

The link between patron deities and official royal authority is made explicit on Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 3. Here, a ruler comes to power in 681, receiving the royal headband in his accession ceremony. The name of the headband is *Bolon Tzak K’an K’ahk’ Chaak* “Many Conjurings of [Aj] K’ahk [O] Chaak,” who was an important Yaxchilan patron deity. This suggests that the office of kingship was intimately tied to the ritual responsibility of conjuring the site’s main patron deity.

But while these inscriptions actively strive to rhetorically link patron gods to royal authority or particular royal individuals, patron deities are also closely linked to *place*. We can see this in the historical record of the Petexbatun. The god GI K’awiil was important at a variety of sites, including Aguateca, Cancuen, La Amelia, Seibal, and Tamarandito (Houston and Stuart 1996:302). Dos Pilas was an intrusive site founded in the 7th Century by an offshoot of the Tikal dynasty (Houston, Symonds, et al. 1992). The inscriptions of Dos Pilas recognize GI K’awiil at other sites in the region but he was not actually venerated at Dos Pilas itself, which seems to have had its own patron gods imported from Tikal. Over time, the Dos Pilas (Mutal) dynasty conquered a series of
these sites, and eventually split up into a group of petty kings with multiple capitals. In spite of this political upheaval, GI K’awiil remained an important patron god. This is best demonstrated at Seibal. Unfortunately, the extant hieroglyphic record of Seibal begins only after it was conquered by the Mutal dynasty in 735. Before this date, we read about GI K’awiil at Seibal on Stela 15 of Dos Pilas. In 746, after the defeat by the Mutal kings, a new Seibal king acceded to the throne. This event was “overseen” by GI K’awiil. By 771, a splinter of the Mutal dynasty had taken over as king of Seibal, fundamentally changing the identity of its rulers. Nevertheless, Stela 6 mentions his impersonation of GI K’awiil. By the end of the 8th century, the Petexbatun region had collapsed entirely. About 30 years later, a Terminal Classic dynasty re-established itself at Seibal, showing a mixture of traditional Maya symbolism and Central Mexican influence (Schele in (Martin and Grube 2008:227)). This dynasty was apparently a vassal of Ucanal and did not use the Mutal emblem glyph (Schele and Mathews 1998). However, Stela 10, Stela 3 and Stela 14, all dating to this period, make reference to GI-K’awiil.

In summary, GI K’awiil remained the most important patron deity at Seibal even after it was made subordinate to a foreign king, and after two sets of foreign lords made it their capital. This demonstrates that the patron god was linked to the place itself and to other nearby sites, rather than to the ruling dynasty. Such local persistence is probably due to the patron god’s importance among the general population of Seibal. With the non-elite population supporting the patron deity cult, it would have been difficult to remove the god, and it was a better strategy for incoming dynasties to adopt him as their own.
The Seibal example demonstrates that once a god was considered a patron of a particular place, that god stayed a patron even in the face of dynastic upheaval. However, there are also plenty of instances of new patron gods appearing in the inscriptions of a site suddenly and becoming a local deity thereafter. Perhaps the most interesting example of this phenomenon appears on the Tikal Marcador text, which tells of events surrounding the *entrada* of 378. Although there is debate in the scholarly community about what exactly happened at this time (Braswell 2003), we know that the site went through some important dynastic events. The king of Tikal died on the same day that a foreign warlord arrived. The new king that this warlord installed was the son of a ruler bearing the name Spearthrower Owl. It has been suggested that these events represent a takeover of Tikal and much of the Petén by warriors from Teotihuacan and that the new king was the son of the Teotihuacan ruler (Stuart 2000). The Marcador text tells us that on the same day these events took place, a god arrived at Tikal named Waxaklajun Ubaah Kaan (Eighteen Images of the Snake) (Stuart 2000:493–94; Taube 2000). Although this god would eventually appear in iconography and inscriptions at a variety of Maya sites, this is the earliest known reference to him in the Maya area. It seems that the entrada event introduced this new patron god and that he subsequently became important at Tikal and at other sites. The introduction event may be depicted on Lintel 2 of Tikal Temple 1, which shows a lord, dressed as a Teotihuacan warrior, seated on a palanquin with a giant effigy of this deity (Stuart 2000:490). The introduction of this patron god did not mean

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23 What is interesting about this text, carved to commemorate the 13 K’atun anniversary of the arrival of Sihjay K’ahk’ at Tikal, is that it equates the introduction of the Teotihuacan deity to the introduction and domestication of the captured Calakmul effigy Yajaw Maan. The introduction of foreign deities by capture or by conquest is the theme of the Temple 1 lintels.
a replacement of local Tikal deities. Patron deities such as Sak Hiix Muut persist in the inscriptions of the site.

A similar pattern can be observed in the inscriptions of Copan although without explicit explanation. At certain points throughout the site’s history, new patron deities appear in the record, while old deities continue to be venerated. Chante’ Ch’oktaak (Four Youths) and Bolon K’awiil (Many K’awiils) are first mentioned in 542 during the reign of the 8th ruler Wi’ Yohl K’inich. We first hear about Chante’ Ajaw (Four Lords) in 613 during the reign of the 11th ruler Butz’ Chan. In 715, during the reign of Ruler 13, Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil, we first learn about K’uy Nik(?) Ajaw (Ceiba(?)) Flower(?) Lord) and Mo’ Witz Ajaw (Macaw Hill Lord). Finally, Tukun Witz Ajaw (Dove Hill Lord) and Chan Bate’ (Four Warriors) are both introduced during the reign of Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat, the 16th king of the site. All of the patron gods mentioned persist up until the end of the hieroglyphic record. During the reign of the final king, we learn that patron gods from all these different periods are referred to as koknoom Ux Witik, “the guardians of Copan” (Houston and Inomata 2009:204). Thus, although all introduced at different periods, they all come to be regarded as protectors of the place itself, rather than any particular ruler.

This process was probably the norm at Classic Maya sites, resulting in the long deity lists we see in many inscriptions. We have already looked at examples of patron deity domestication, where foreign deities were adopted after conquests of enemies. There may have been other processes also involved in their accumulation. While the

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24 For the names of some of these deities, see Schele and Grube (1990), Schele and Newsome (1991), and Villela (1993). It has been argued by Stuart (in Stuart et al. 1999:II–59) that additional deities were introduced during the reign of Ruler 16. The texts that mention these characters and ambiguous, however, and it is not certain that they are actually deities. If they are, their introduction by Ruler 16 matches the pattern of deity introduction and accumulation described here. See Appendix A for further discussion.
inscriptions of Copan offer no explanation for the introduction of new deities, we can see that individual kings presided over the introduction of new patron gods which were then venerated by their successors. We can probably attribute new deities to important events within the life of the community which necessitated new religious practices. Within the specific political and temporal context of these Maya communities, semiotic acts associated with deity introduction such as the dedication of a new temple and “domestication” rituals such as dancing and impersonating would have important pragmatic effects. Most often, these acts were probably linked to ideological discourses such as those seen in the Postclassic Popol Vuh: the burden of patron deity veneration of rulers was taken up on behalf of the community and thus the ruler was owed loyalty and support. The pragmatic effects of this process of patron deity introduction and accumulation and its connection to local politics will be explored in depth in Chapter 7 on La Corona.

**Summary and Implications**

In this chapter I have reviewed the epigraphic data available about Classic period patron deities and compared it to what is known from later periods. This data allows us to gain insight into the nature of these deities and how they differed from other supernatural entities. The term *k’uh* was used by the ancient Maya to refer to gods. The glyph for *k’uh* depicts a creature resembling a monkey, which serves as a generic representation of gods, combined with droplets of incense. The general concept, I argue, is to represent a creature that is primarily sustained through incense. *K’uh* can be found in two basic forms: as aloof deities who inhabit mythological narratives and natural phenomena such as sun,
rain, and rivers (I call these general deities) or as patron deities. I define patron deities as deities who form special relationships with particular human communities and actively participate in human affairs. Different communities form these relationships with different deities from the general pantheon.

It is a widely held misconception that patron deities are in fact simply deified or mythologized ancestors. Such views hold that patron deity veneration can therefore be reduced to a form of ancestor veneration, and specifically to the ancestors of the ruling family. This study has found, however, that hieroglyphic texts draw a clear distinction between royal ancestors and patron deities. The source of the confusion is that patron deities often are described as if they were rulers, in what I call a trope of rulership. In addition, ancestors are often described as if they had attributes of certain general gods, usually the sun god, moon god, and maize god. However, if one closely examines the texts referring to supernatural beings, one can see that ancestors are passive, whereas patron deities are active in human affairs. Ancestors gaze down upon their descendents, often as disembodied heads, but are not the subjects of verbs (and thus do not actively participate in human affairs) beyond their own lifetimes. Nor are they ever described as physical entities with effigy figures. In contrast, patron deities are physical objects that require bathing, dressing, housing, feeding, handling, etc. They are the subjects of verbs and thus are considered active participants, often in the same rhetoric used to describe human overlords. They are also deeply entwined in political life, both vis-à-vis foreign polities and also within the political milieu of their home communities.

This is not to say that ancestor veneration was insignificant in the politics of Classic Maya communities. The most comprehensive work on practice of ancestor
veneration among the Classic Maya is McAnany’s *Living with the Ancestors* (1995). In this book, McAnany reviews archaeological, ethnographic and epigraphic data on the ritual treatment of ancestors by modern, colonial, and ancient Maya groups. McAnany makes several key arguments about the relationship between ancestor veneration and social inequality among the Classic Maya. First, she observes that among Maya commoners, lineages were embodied by key ancestral figures, whose veneration was used to differentiate these genealogy-based factional groups. She concludes that connections to ancestors gave their descendents differential rights to resources such as land. While Maya rulers also venerated ancestors, McAnany argues that kingship was more than simply kinship writ large. Instead, kingship was essentially an extractive institution which appropriated, politicized, and ultimately superseded kin-based social organization. Rather than a series of autonomous lineages, each with their own rights to land and resources, the institution of hereditary rulership promoted the claims of the ruler to these resources as superior to all lineage-based claims.

One of the ways in which this change occurred was the claim by rulers that their ancestors were divine, and therefore superior to other ancestors, rendering the royal lineage worthy of economic support. While non-rulers continued to venerate their own ancestors on a small scale, more and more lineage-based rights were swallowed by the royal court, which justified this monopoly by presenting the royal lineage as distinct from, rather than equal to, all other lineages. The depiction or description of royal ancestors as fused with the sun god or maize god probably served this exact purpose. It was a way of claiming exceptional status for the ruling lineage, thus bolstering its claims to prerogatives political status within the community.
Another effective means of displacing lineage-based claims of community members may have been through the introduction of alternative religious practices, specifically the veneration of new deities. Since ancestor veneration remained an important religious practice throughout the Classic period (and continues today), rulers had to continually contend with competing elite lineages which promoted their own ancestors and thereby claimed certain rights for lineage members. In order to suppress these competing claims, rival ancestor cults could be replaced with patron deity cults. Since patron deity veneration was discursively linked to the well-being of the entire community, the introduction of new patron deities at the expense of one particular lineage could be justified. Thus, the ruler could remove a potential rival while at the same time originating and encouraging new discourses of community identity linked to his religious authority. According to the inscriptions, patron deity cults were controlled by rulers: patron gods were the personal companions of the ruler and were given credit for his rise to power. He was responsible for caring for their physical bodies and in return, they were referred to as his precious belongings. But while the ruler was said to control the cult, patron deities were also claimed to serve the entire community.

Throughout this chapter, I have mostly examined patron deity veneration as a synchronic phenomenon, as if all hieroglyphic discourses on patron deities were produced at the same time. However, it is important to remember that religious institutions such as patron deity veneration unfold one discursive event at a time, slowly accumulating to the point where they can be used strategically to create social models by which individuals shape their relationships. The accumulation of patron deities throughout the history of sites reflects this phenomenon. The introduction of new patron
deities probably accompanies important political events in the history of sites. If we think of patron deities as a means of replacing non-royal lineages, we can examine the rise of institutionalized royal authority within particular communities. McAnany (1995:154–56) argues that, although this institutionalization apparently took place long before the Classic period at some sites, others remained outside the kingship system for the duration of the Classic period. Thus, the time-frame for this process varied radically between different communities. In order to connect the practices associated with patron deity veneration to the strategies of kingship, we can therefore ask, at what point in the life of a community do patron deities appear? What are the political circumstances surrounding their introduction and continued veneration? The answers to these questions are not always apparent through epigraphic data alone, since hieroglyphic texts do not elaborate on the political machinations that must have characterized Classic Maya royal courts and communities more broadly. However, by combining epigraphic data with archaeological data, a diachronic perspective can be applied to patron deity veneration, and its connections to community politics more closely examined. In Chapters 6 and 7 I will examine this diachronic process at the site of La Corona, by exploring the epigraphic information about the site, and the archaeological evidence for patron deity veneration.
CHAPTER 5

The Archaeology of Patron Deities: Methodological Challenges

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I argued for an analogical model of Classic Maya patron deity veneration based on those practices and discourses observed in the Modern, Colonial, and Postclassic periods. In Chapter 4, I reviewed epigraphic evidence from the Classic period which suggests that many of these practices and discourses can be traced back to earlier times. I have argued that these discourses and ritual actions have pragmatic meanings similar to those in later periods and were used to justify, strengthen, and naturalize institutions of political authority during the Classic period.

While epigraphy remains a particularly rich source of information about rituals and discourses of the Classic period, many of these semiotic acts leave other types of material remains as well and can be studied through archaeological investigation. For example, as I have discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, patron deities existed in the form of physical effigies that were handled and cared for. They resided in temples which exist in the built environment. One of the key components of patron deity veneration was the feeding of the patron gods and subsequent feasting by community members. Large-scale food consumption events are also readily identifiable in the archaeological record. Thus, it is theoretically possible to identify patron deity veneration in Classic period sites.

Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted about patron deities and consequently there are severe limitations in our current ability to recognize them archaeologically. In this chapter, I will discuss the challenges and limitations of the
archaeological record and argue for the best way to identify Classic Maya patron deities archaeologically.

*Maya Temples*

While many scholars of the Classic Maya recognize the implications of temple building for political legitimation, Lucero (2007) is the only one to examine temple construction as an aspect of factional competition. She notes that the political histories of Classic Maya communities were anything but calm and peaceful, and rather represent complicated histories of different factions and lineages. She suggests, therefore, that different factions may have constructed different temples and that commoners could then “choose to whom to contribute” (by choosing which temple to attend).

Based on a preliminary study of temples at Yalbac, Belize, Lucero tentatively concludes that different temple sponsors varied by plaza, with rulers responsible for all the temples in Plaza 2, while non-rulers were responsible for the temples of Plaza 3. She bases this argument on factors such as construction technique and quality of materials, arguing that royals had greater access to wealth and could thus afford to build the best temples. However, there may be problems with the middle-range theory that she proposes. For example, differences in construction technique, rather than representing the sponsorship of non-rulers, may in fact reflect the relative wealth of the community at the particular point in time (historical differences), the relative importance of a particular temple (religious distinctions), the intended attendees of the temple (status distinctions) or simply the priorities of the king (rulership style). As I will discuss in the case of La Corona, there are major differences in temple construction at the site, with large, well-
built temples occupying the main plaza and small, lower-quality temples in the “Coronitas” plaza (the patron deity temples themselves). While this might seem to indicate that the Coronitas temples were built by non-rulers, inscriptions tell us the opposite: the royal family was actually quite focused on this area. However, the main plaza temples were probably meant to impress foreign dignitaries, such as those from La Corona’s patron, Calakmul, while the Coronitas temples were probably meant for use by the local community.

Furthermore, it may be a mistake to attribute absolute freedom of choice to commoners. Lucero is correct that factional competition did exist in Classic Maya communities, and that this competition is reflected in temple histories. This is evident at La Corona. However, commoner participation in rituals probably resembled less a free market and more a delicate game in which commoners lacked absolute freedom of choice and yet rulers were also unable to entirely change religious obligations without risking revolt. As we saw in the previous chapter, the introduction and accumulation of patron deities was part of a historical process of dynastic changes, each of which ultimately had to be supported by the general population or risk failure. Patron gods were associated with locations and communities and thus could not be replaced without the danger of revolt. On the other hand, new patron deities could be introduced that replaced rival ancestor veneration or otherwise highlighted the ritual power of the new ruler. Although I have a different interpretation of temple sponsorship and use, Lucero’s article is important in that it asks us to question the use of temples in the power struggles that characterized Classic Maya communities. Such power struggles, and their resulting effect on temple building at La Corona will be discussed in Chapter 7.
Known Patron Deity Temples

Patron deity temples are not the only temples that exist in Classic Maya sites. Temples were also constructed for ancestor veneration and probably other purposes as well. Therefore, it is important to ask whether the function of patron deity temples is readily apparent based on architectural features. Recall from Chapter 4 that the Maya had different terms to refer to different types of temples. Patron deity temples are usually referred to in the inscriptions as wayibs, or “sleeping places,” although other terms like ootoo “house,” and pibnah “sweatbath” (or possibly “underground structure”) are used as well as more generic terms such as naah “structure” and kun “platform.” Thus, the Maya themselves seem to have had a classificatory scheme that differentiated temples based on function, possibly with patron deities owning more than one type of structure at the same site (as at Palenque, where the gods had “sleeping places,” “sweatbaths,” and “red [?] structures”).

Given the current state of knowledge about patron deities (which this dissertation is meant to improve), the only way to positively identify a patron deity temple is with hieroglyphic inscriptions. Unfortunately, in spite of the large number of hieroglyphic texts that discuss patron deities, a frustratingly small number of temples are accompanied by inscriptions that identify them as patron deity temples. This is because some inscriptions are looted from their original context while others were never directly associated with temples to begin with. Apart from La Corona, patron deity temples are securely identifiable by inscriptions at only four sites. These are Chichen Itza, Palenque, Tikal, and Yaxchilan. Of the four, the Cross Group temples of Palenque have undergone
the most investigation, although a comprehensive excavation plan aiming to understand
the ritual practices associated with patron deity veneration by means of associated
artifacts or middens has not been attempted at any site. I will briefly review what is
known about these structures at these four sites.

**Chichen Itza**

Four structures at or around Chichen Itza can be firmly identified as patron deity shrines
based on their inscriptions. These include the second story of the Monjas Complex
rooms 17 and 19), the Temple of the Hieroglyphic Jambs, the Temple of the Four
Lintels, and Structure 1 from the nearby site of Yula.

Of these four structures, the Monjas Complex has been most extensively
excavated, although with an eye toward restoring architecture rather than investigating
religious practices (Bolles 1977). The second story of the main Monjas structure consists
of eight rooms (Bolles 1977:135–145). Along the front (north) of the structure is a long
room (room 18) with three doorways carrying inscribed lintels (lintels 3, 4, and 5). On
either side of this long room are two smaller rooms (rooms 17 and 19) carrying
hieroglyphic lintels 2 and 6. This arrangement is mirrored on the back of the structure,
which also has a long central room (room 22) and a room on either side of it (rooms 23
and 21). Finally, along the east and west sides of the structure are two additional rooms
(rooms 16 and 20), with doors opening east and west, each carrying its own inscribed
lintel (lintels 1 and 7). As discussed in my summary of Chichen Itza inscriptions (see
Appendix 1), the lintels each name owners of the individual “houses” (ootot) or rooms to
which they correspond. Room 18 belongs to three human beings, two males and a female.
Side rooms 16 and 20 also belong to human beings. However lintels 2 and 6 name the
owners of rooms 17 and 19 as deities. Thus, these small flanking rooms must have served as deity shrines, along with the similar rooms on the back of the structure (rooms 21 and 23). Thus, it appears that the elite inhabitants of this palatial structure lived in close quarters with their gods. The use of the term “house” to describe the shrines is the same term used to describe the living spaces of the humans as well. Under such circumstances we might expect the gods inhabiting the shrines to be unique to the lineage or residential group. However, both gods are well-known from other inscriptions at Chichen Itza. So although the deities venerated in these small shrines were not exclusive to the building’s inhabitants, these human inhabitants probably had exclusive use of these ritual areas.

The outside of the building was decorated with geometric and floral patterns and did not depict either deities or ancestors. Eventually, a third story was added to the structure. This necessitated the addition of a stairway on the front, which filled in a blocked Room 18. However, deity shrines in rooms 17 and 19 remained intact.

The Temple of the Hieroglyphic Jambs is a small structure (6E3) which was excavated by the Carnegie Institution of Washington (Ruppert 1943:233). It belongs to a section of the site called “the market.” This structure is one of the “Gallery-Patio” type structures, which consists of a partially-roofed patio supported by columns. However, it is the only one of these structures to bear a hieroglyphic inscription. Structure 6E3 includes an approximated 18m x 18m patio. The entrance is on the southern side and it is this entrance that is adorned with the hieroglyphic text. On the eastern side, a door opens into a small vaulted room, approximately 2.5m by 5m (Ruppert 1943:figure 3). The text names the structure as the “house” (*otoot*) of a deity who is not named elsewhere. It is
likely that the effigy of this deity was stored in the small eastern room. It is also possible that other gallery-patio structures with similar rooms (Structure 5B17 and the Chultun Group Structure) may have served a similar function as god houses.

The Temple of the Four Lintels (Structure 7B4) is another “house” (ootot) belonging to patron deities. It has two rooms. Access to the larger of the structure’s two rooms is by two exterior doors that open to the front of the temple (north side). These northern doors carry carved lintels 2 and 3. An additional exterior doorway opens on the west side, carrying lintel 4. An interior doorway opens into the smaller room on the structure’s east side, carrying lintel 1. Lintels 1 and 4 both mention a well-known Chichen Itza god who was a version of the Classic Period Waterlily Serpent (Boot 2005). Lintel 3, which covers one of the two front doorways, mentions a god named Uchoch Yokpuy (Boot 2005). This name is unique at Chichen Itza. Its pair, lintel 2, refers to a god, but does not name him. I suspect that this is another reference to Uchuch Yokpuy (see Appendix 1).

Lintels 1 and 4 were discovered in 1911 by E. H. Thompson (Morley 1925). In 1925, excavations were undertaken by the Ricketson of the Carnegie project in an attempt to find more lintels. In that year Lintels 2 and 3 were discovered. Ricketson reports (1925:267–68) that the whole structure is 41 feet 9 inches long (east to west) and 16 feet 10 inches wide (north to south). It sits on a low platform 81 feet long and 66 feet wide. The smaller east room measures 12 feet (north to south) by 8 feet 9 inches (east to west). The larger western room is about double the size, although Ricketson does not report its exact dimensions (see Ruppert 1952). Ricketson notes that a full excavation of the temple
was not attempted, but does report a few artifacts recovered: directly in front of the temple, presumably on its platform, eleven carved stone heads were recovered. Ricketson does not report the size of these heads, but notes that “by far the greater proportion of them had the ‘twisted doughnut’ ornament, which is usually associated with Tlaloc, the Rain God” (1925:268). He probably refers to the “cruller” now associated with the Jaguar God of the Underworld. He also notes that all the heads were found right side up. He also reports the recovery of a course red bowl in the doorway between the rooms.

The temple lintels name two deities and two rooms are present. I suspect that the small eastern room can be associated with the Waterlily Serpent deity, given that Lintel 1, spanning this doorway, names him as the house owner. The larger room must have been devoted to the other deity, Uchoch Yukpuy. As I have discussed, I believe this deity was of foreign origin and was paired with a local god in a process of “domestication.” The course red bowl recovered in the temple may once have contained an offering for one of these gods. The eleven carved heads are more of a mystery. Ricketson argues that they must be in their original position, given that they were all right side up. It is also possible that they originally served as some sort of decoration, or that they somehow depict the god Uchoch Yukpuy.

Yula is a small secondary site outside of Chichen Itza. Structure 1 carried two hieroglyphic lintels, the only known inscriptions from the site. The lintels tell us that the structure belonged to a god who is unfortunately not named. The type of structure is not given either. The structure is located on Platform B, and now only rises to a height of approximately four meters (Anderson 1998:130–31). The dimensions of the platform are
approximately 4x7 meters. The front of the platform had nine steps leading up from the platform. In front of these steps is an uncarved altar. Excavations in front of the structure revealed a single floor above bedrock. The superstructure consisted of a single room with two front doorways, and was one of only two vaulted structures at the site (Anderson 1998:291, fig. 16).

Palenque

The temples of the Cross, Foliated Cross, and Sun were dedicated to the patron deities GI, GII, and GIII respectively. Each temple has a small interior vaulted sanctuary measuring approximately 3 meters wide and 2 meters deep. This sanctuary is in turn set within a larger room. This room is flanked by two smaller rooms on either side and all three open into a front room, which in turn give access to the exterior through three doorways. While the size of these temple rooms varies, the size of the sanctuary is consistent across all three temples (Houston 1996:134). The texts of these temples describe them as “sweatbaths” (*pibnaah*) and it has been argued by Houston (1996) that their architecture resembles that of functioning Maya sweatbaths from the Classic period. He thus proposes that these temples were thought of as symbolic sweatbaths. Stuart, (2006b) on the other hand, argues that *pibnaah* can also mean “underground house” and believes that the term refers to the sanctuaries as symbolic caves. The temples were dedicated on a single date in 692 by Palenque ruler K’ínich Kan Balam (684-702). Each temple was given a proper name (Stuart 2006b). The Temple of the Cross was called “Six [?] Sky”; The Temple of the Foliated Cross was called “[?] Ripe [?] Structure”; and the Temple of the Sun was called “Nine [?] Fire Radiant Earth Opening.”
Various offerings have been found cached within these three structures. They appear to have been cached after the initial dedication of the building and are characterized as “humble” by the excavator (Fernández 1985:225). Buried around these three temples, numerous effigy incensarios have also been discovered (Cuevas García 2000; Sáenz 1956). Although these have been interpreted as effigies of the three main patron deities themselves, I disagree with this conclusion (see Chapter 4).

Temples XIX and XXI were both built during the reign of K’ínic Ahkal Mo’ Nahb (721-736) and both face the Temple of the Cross (Stuart 2007b). The texts in these inscriptions deal with royal authority at Palenque, but also indicate that the structures themselves belonged to the three main patron gods of Palenque (Stuart 2006a). Both temples are called “red [?] houses,” apparently a name for this type of structure. Temple XIX was dedicated in 734 and belonged to the deity GI. Temple XXI was dedicated in 736 and belonged to the deities GII and GIII (Stuart 2006b; 2007b). These two temples are similar in form, with a single north-facing doorway and a single long room running east-west. The roof is supported by a line of piers along the central axis of the room (Straight 2007). Temple XIX is approximately 33 meters by 7 meters, with seven piers, while Temple XXI measures approximately 19 meters by 6 meters with four piers (Barnhart 2001:fig. 2.3). They both contain inscribed pedestals that were dedicated on the same date in 736. It is difficult to know exactly what took place in these structures that had to do with patron deities. There are no niches or rooms that appear suitable for housing deity effigies, so it may be that these are special purpose or storage facilities having to do with the cults of these gods. No analyses of artifacts from these structures that might indicate such activities have yet been published.
It is interesting to note that several inscriptions at Palenque refer back to earlier patron deity temples that are still unidentified. For example, the text of the Temple of the Inscriptions refers to the dedication of a temple in 672 for GI. The name of the temple is “Six [? Sky”, the same as the name for the Temple of the Cross, later dedicated to GI in 692. Since it appears that the Temple of the Cross was built in a single construction phase (Damien Marken, personal communication 2011) this earlier temple must be located elsewhere on site. This earlier structure may also be referred to in the inscriptions from the temples of the Cross, Foliated Cross, and Sun. All three temples mention a date in 690, when the “oven” (chitin) of the patron deities was burned (Stuart 2006b). The Temple of the Sun text, however, uses the term wayib instead of chitin, telling us that a temple of the patron gods was burned on this day. While Stuart (2006b) believes that this event refers to the firing of ceramic effigies, I wonder if it refers to the ritual termination of a previous patron deity temple. The fact that this temple was referred to as an “oven” may indicate a special use or it may simply refer to the fact that it was destroyed by fire.

Another example can be found in the text from Temple XXI. This text refers to a temple for GI and GII that was built in 252 BC. It is called “[?] Ripe [?] Structure,” the same name as the Temple of the Foliated Cross, which was dedicated to GII. However, this earlier temple is said to be a “red [?] house” rather than a “sweatbath” so it too must be different from the Temple of the Foliated Cross. Thus, in both cases, temple names were re-used, although the exact type of temple referred to seems to vary.
The Temple of the Inscriptions, or Temple VI, carries a large text allowing it to be identified as a “sleeping place” (wayib) for the god “White Owl Jaguar.” The temple was constructed by the 28th Tikal ruler in 766. Unlike other large temples at Tikal, Temple VI has three doorways leading into its front room rather than one (Berlin 1951:35–37). This front room measures 14.97m by 1.82 meters. From there, a single doorway provides access to the small back room, probably the shrine itself, measuring 4.03m by 1.25m. On either side of this back room was a small bench. The interior of the temple contains graffiti, but only in the front room.

**Yaxchilan**

Yaxchilan’s Lintel 10 is the site’s last carved monument, and the only one to describe the dedication of a “sleeping place” (wayib) to the site’s patron gods. It comes from the small Temple 3 at the site. Maler (1903:119–120) had the following to say about Temple 3:

“…I noticed certain ruins which were, however, so interwoven with a powerful network of roots that I was forced to give up all idea of making an excavation among them. Near the west side of the temple there must formerly have stood a little edifice, which may have been of masonry, but cannot have been roofed over with stone; the roof must have been made of some perishable material (beams and palm leaves). Only thus can the fact be explained that there was scarcely any other debris to be found on the spot, where I excavated the two half-buried lintels, for a broken-down stone roof always leaves a large heap of ruins.”

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25 It has been suggested (Stephen Houston, personal communication 2008) that the temples in the Seven Temples Group at Tikal, with their similar size and layout to the patron deity temples of La Corona, may also represent patron deity temples. These temples are relatively small (the largest measures 19 meters in height while the smaller six temples are 12.5 meters tall) and face west (Gómez 2008). However, conclusive evidence that they were used for patron deities is lacking.
Summary of Known Patron Deity Temples

Having reviewed the archaeological evidence from known patron deity temples in the Maya area, it is obvious that there is a high degree of variability among the temples reviewed. Temple VI at Tikal, for example, is a large structure, while Temple 3 of Yaxchilan is tiny in comparison. However, the inscriptions from these temples indicate that both were commissioned by rulers. In fact, both temples housed important patron deities that had been venerated for generations at their respective sites, and thus it is unlikely that the temple sizes reflect the relative importance of a particular deity. Instead, it is more likely that they reflect the intended use and number of users or attendees of the temple: rulers and elites or common people.

The frustratingly small sample size allows few conclusions to be drawn. Different structure classifications do seem to correlate to different architectural features. “Houses” (otoot) belonging to patron deities consist of two-room structures or small apartments resembling human residences. All of these examples come from Chichen Itza. “Sweatbaths” or “underground houses” (pibnaah) consist of small vaulted shrines within larger temple structures. All of these examples come from Palenque. “Red [?] Structures” are long rooms with single doorways broken up by piers and are also only found at Palenque. Finally, sleeping places” (wayibs) seem to be variable, and include both Temple VI of Tikal and Temple 3 of Yaxchilan. Frustratingly, the variation in these structures may be attributable to regional differences in architecture rather than function. Therefore, it is essentially impossible to define a set of architectural features of patron deity temples that can be applied to other structures.
Patron Deity Effigies

Unfortunately, none of the excavations at any of the temples mentioned here focused on associated artifact assemblages, so there is no artifactual data to identify or distinguish the functions of these buildings.

When one thinks of artifacts potentially associated with patron deity temples, the most obvious examples are deity effigies themselves. Both Lucero (2007:414) and an anonymous reviewer of an unsuccessful NSF proposal brought up this point as a means of detecting patron deity temples. Unfortunately, patron deity effigies are extremely rare archaeologically, in spite of their frequent mention in texts. However, this is actually not all that surprising if we consider the abandonment process at Maya sites. Recall from Chapter 3 that patron deity effigies, being of central importance to community and ethnic identity, were never abandoned during the wanderings of the Aztecs or the K’iches but were rather carried on the backs of community leaders or carefully hidden in the wilderness. Both Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 also reviewed strong evidence that patron deity effigies were also subject to attacks by foreign armies, either to be destroyed or kidnapped. Thus, at a site rapidly abandoned by warfare, as in the case of Aguateca (Inomata 1997), we should not expect to see untouched patron deities either, as they would have been the target of particularly fierce attacks as well as protection by defenders.

There are very few examples of patron deity effigies from secure archaeological contexts. One of these comes from the site of El Portón, located in the Salama Valley of Baja Verapaz. It was excavated by Sharer and Sedat (1987:49–70) in Structure J7-4B. This structure seems to have been ritual in nature, given the high number of caches and
monuments found within. The rear of the structure contained a U-shaped bench within which was a low plinth, only about 5cm high and heavily burned. Sitting on this plinth was a ceramic effigy 45.2cm tall and 20.8cm in diameter. It depicted a seated anthropomorphic individual wearing a necklace and flanked by wings depicting growing maize plants (Sharer and Sedat 1987:plates 3.25, 3.26). Its head had been removed and was not recovered. Associated with the figure were fragments of pyrite mirrors. In a later phase of construction, two larger than life earflares were recovered on the platform, and the authors suggest that these originally belonged to a later effigy figure.

Other examples of patron deity effigies may come from the site of Mayapan (Pollock et al. 1962). Excavators found a number of stone sculptures in structures that they called “shrines.” For example, Structure Q-69 contained several stone statues:

“Fragments of one figure were found on the summit between the door jambs. This figure lacks a head, which was a separate piece fitting into a deep round depression between the shoulders. The back of the torso is smooth and almost flat, but the legs, found as a separate piece, have a tenon projecting both downward and back, suggesting that the figure was set in front of a bench or altar. There were traces on this piece of a thin coat of plaster painted red. Sherds of incense burners and redware vessels were scattered in the debris around it. Three sculptured heads were found in the vicinity of the shrine; five other torsos (one with a deep tenon projecting from the back); a clasped hand with a pit 3 cm deep between the thumb and the forefinger; and a carved stone skull” (Pollock et al. 1962:102).

It is possible that these shrines represent patron deity temples and that the sculptures described are patron deity effigies, although this cannot be confirmed26.

It is known from epigraphic evidence (discussed in Chapter 4) that patron deity effigies periodically had to be renewed. Old effigies were therefore probably terminated

26 Another possible patron deity effigy was reported by Stuart and Stuart (1977:53), and was found in an unnamed cave in the Petén. It “came to light” in 1967 but within ten years had been destroyed. It is a life-sized image, possibly of a rain deity, and is said to be from the Preclassic period (Houston and Stuart 1996:303). This may be an example of a patron deity effigy left in the wilderness, as described in the Popol Vuh. However, it may also simply mark the cave as important for water-gathering.
and cached, just as we see with these effigies at El Portón and Maypan. If we hope to find more archaeological examples of patron deity effigies, I suspect that they will come from these contexts: terminated effigies cached in or nearby patron deity temples.

Feasting

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, food consumption was an important aspect of patron deity veneration both in the Classic period and later. One of the obligations of the ruler was to be sure that the god was “fed” and a few texts mention feasting events in association with patron deities. The information is even clearer in later periods, in which feasts brought different community members to share a meal with the gods/saints. As I discussed in Chapter 3, these ritual meals can be roughly divided into categories based on participants. Some ritual meals only include ritual specialists, and these meals are highly formalized. At these events, cargo holders carry out rituals believed to be essential to the well-being of the entire community. Other events, often taking place at the same time, include the whole community, including non-ritual specialists. These events promote community identity though commensality with the saint. Both of these types of meals are important parts of patron deity veneration activities.

In her important article on ancient Maya feasting, LeCount (2001) defines similar categories of feasting events. Exclusionary feasts, called “diacritical feasts” by Dietler (1996), are hosted by powerful members of society and generally involve specialty foods and serving vessels. Inclusionary feasting gathers many members of society and redistributes large quantities of food, although the food may not be highly specialized. LeCount notes that such inclusionary, public feasts “realized the delicate task of
simultaneously demonstrating group inclusion of the commoner masses while celebrating elite prerogatives” (2001:937). In the context of patron deity veneration, this is certainly the case, since patron deities were seen as connected to the community as a whole, while the obligation to worship them was seen as a hallmark of the ruler.

Because feasting is such an important aspect of modern patron saint veneration, it is reasonable to expect that Classic period patron deity veneration would also incorporate feasting events, both inclusionary and exclusionary. Thus, evidence for such events is a good way to identify patron deity veneration in the archeological record. While LeCount’s (2001) analysis of ceramic forms has been widely cited, there are also additional ways of detecting feasting in the archaeological record, specifically the remains of foodstuffs. This can include animal bones and plant remains. As will be discussed in the following chapter, there is clear evidence for ritual feasting at the Coronitas group, associated with patron deity veneration, at La Corona. This evidence includes large midden deposits with a wide variety of animal bones and plant remains; individual serving vessels with fancy decoration; and very large serving basins and storage jars. All of these features are associated with the patron deity temples themselves, but even greater quantities of feasting remains can be found associated with the nearby Structure 13R-10. In the interior of the structure evidence for food preparation activities has been recovered (in the form of multiple manos and metates) and the front of the structure once carried a hieroglyphic stairway which mentions a feasting event in which the king “drinks” and “gives pulque” (a fermented beverage made from maguey) (Martin 2008b; Stuart 2008a).
Summary and Conclusions

Various archaeological correlates exist for the patron deity veneration activities discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. The most obvious correlate is the patron deity temple itself. Given the current state of knowledge about patron deities, these temples can only be identified by associated inscriptions that refer to a patron deity. A review of known patron deity temples reveals that there is no fixed set of architectural attributes for a patron deity temple, and that patron deities could actually possess a variety of different types of temples within the same site. The only feature in common in these temples is that the place where the effigy itself would have been placed is generally small, even if the temple itself contained additional rooms that were larger. Thus, temples of unknown function can be evaluated for consistency with this feature, but given the small sample size of identified patron deity temples it is possible that even this conclusion may be modified by future research. In short, the best way to determine whether a temple was used for patron deity veneration or some other purpose is to find an inscription associated with it. Unfortunately, none of the temples described here has undergone a study that focused specifically on artifact assemblages in associated contexts (such as middens). Therefore, it is impossible to know whether characteristics of these assemblages pointed to a patron deity veneration function. And since this dissertation is the first study to be conducted along these lines, no other comparative data is available. In the future, I hope that further studies will increase the sample size of known patron deity temples, and perhaps patterns can be observed.

Finding patron deity effigies also seems like a logical way of identifying whether temples were dedicated to patron gods or not. Unfortunately, given the ancient
importance of these effigies, it is unlikely that they would have ever been left abandoned. Thus, the presence or absence of these effigies is not a reliable way of determining temple function. However, since patron deity effigies were apparently replaced periodically (see Chapter 4) it is possible that terminated effigies may be located nearby. This was not the case at La Corona but it is conceivable that such artifacts will be found at La Corona or other sites in the future.

A third archaeological indicator for patron deity veneration is feasting events. As discussed in Chapter 3, ritual meals are an important aspect of modern patron saint veneration, and there is evidence for these events in the epigraphic record of the Classic period as well (see Chapter 4). Feasting remains were recovered at La Corona, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

To conclude, it is clear that the presence of an associated text is the most reliable, if rare, means to identify patron deity temples. Even the most obvious archaeological features that would be expected to readily identify patron deity veneration (temple types and effigies) are in fact unreliable. There is a clear need for more archaeological investigation of Classic period patron deity veneration.

In spite of the paucity of comparative data, it is possible to use the analogies established in Chapter 3 and the epigraphic information discussed in Chapter 4 to develop a predictive model for the presence of patron deity veneration in the archaeological record. Patron deity veneration should include a temple or a series of temples although the exact architectural features of these structures are unpredictable. Furthermore, evidence of food consumption should accompany these temples: deities themselves were fed and the remains of these offerings may be present in middens on or near the temples.
Large-scale community feasting events should also leave remains such as animal bones, and ceramic vessels for cooking and serving. The lack of an actual patron deity effigy associated with these remains does not necessarily mean that these remains were not associated with patron deity veneration because site abandonment processes make it unlikely that such effigies would be left in place at all. Finally, the most secure way to identify patron deity veneration is through hieroglyphic texts discussing patron deities that occur within the archaeological context.
CHAPTER 6
La Corona, Guatemala: Archaeological Evidence

The archaeological site of La Corona, located in the Northwestern part of the department of Petén, Guatemala, serves as an excellent case study for the processes of Patron Deity introduction, accumulation, and veneration. The pragmatic effects of semiotic acts related to patron deities can be gleaned by carefully comparing the archaeological record to the site’s hieroglyphic monuments and applying the conclusions of the analogical model established in Chapter 3. As discussed in Chapter 5, certain material correlates to patron deity veneration can be sought in the archaeological record. However, they remain difficult to interpret without accompanying hieroglyphic texts. La Corona was occupied from the Early Classic to Terminal Classic periods (probably around AD 300-850). During this time frame, the inhabitants of the community produced a rich hieroglyphic corpus and abundant archaeological material. When studied together, these data sets provide much information about the meaning of patron deity veneration. In this chapter, I will examine archaeological evidence for patron deity veneration at La Corona. In Chapter 7, I will compare it to epigraphic data from the site.

History of Investigation of La Corona

During the 1960s, a number of unprovenienced Maya sculptures appeared on the art market in the United States and Europe. They shared a number of common attributes such as their small size, excellent preservation, exquisite artistry, and thematic content.
Peter Mathews (1979) noticed these similarities and proposed that they were looted from a single source site, which he called “Site Q” for the Spanish “¿sitio qué?” meaning “which site?” Mathews created a catalog of monuments he believed to come from this mystery site, and although the catalog has undergone additions and subtractions since then, his key observations were correct (Mathews 1998; Schuster 1997).

The search for Site Q became important in the 1980s and 1990s because of an initial misunderstanding of the Site Q monuments. At this time, epigraphers, along with their archaeologist counterparts, were in the midst of debating the nature of Maya political organization (see Chapter 1). It was noted that a number of emblem glyphs of important polities appeared in the inscriptions of subordinate sites. One such emblem glyph was the Snake Head emblem, referring to the Kaan dynasty. This glyph appeared in the inscriptions of a large number of sites, and it was therefore clear that the Snake Head site would prove to be a powerful capital. But this site had not yet been identified. Many of the Site Q monuments mentioned the Snake Head emblem glyph in such a prominent fashion that it was believed for several years that Site Q and the Snake Head capital must be one and the same. Thus, the search for Site Q was conflated with the search for the Snake Head capital (Martin 1993; see Chase and Chase 1998:21; Schuster 1997).

Eventually, epigraphy advanced to the stage where it was obvious that Site Q was not in fact the Snake Head capital but another of its subordinates (Schele and Grube 1994:109; Martin and Grube 2000:110). The Snake Head capital itself was identified as Calakmul, a site with disappointingly poor preservation of monuments (Marcus 1973; Martin 1993; Stuart and Houston 1994; Martin and Grube 1994).
In the late 1980s, chicleros working in the northwestern Petén discovered a site which they named “Lo Veremos” after a camp they had established nearby. The site was visited by German archaeologists in 1989 (Grube et al. 1990), who noted large structures, monuments, and heavy looting. In 1996 the site was visited again by Tom Sever and Dan Lee of NASA and Jim Nations of Conservation International (Barrientos and Canuto 2009). Remote sensing to the north of El Peru had revealed linear features possibly representing a *sacbe* (causeway) leading north in the direction of Calakmul, and they wished to see if other sites lay along this possible “royal road.” Upon visiting “Lo Veremos,” they too noted the presence of monuments and asked for the help of epigraphers.

In 1997 Ian Graham and David Stuart visited the site (Graham 1997). They made the first map of the site and renamed it “La Corona” after the series of 5 small temples now called “Coronitas” which resembled the peaks on a tiara. Stuart made drawings of the unlooted monuments and noticed the name of a Site Q ruler on Stela 1, and the ancient name of Site Q (Sak Nikte’) on Altar 1. He also noticed several references to political events involving the Snake Head polity (in Schuster 1997:44). For these reasons he suspected that La Corona was Site Q. However, Graham pointed out that the unlooted monuments at the site were large and did not match the style of the small carved panels associated with Site Q.

Because other archaeologists also doubted the identification of La Corona with Site Q (such as Hansen in Schuster 1997:43), Stuart asked Chris Hayward of the University of Manchester to analyze the limestone of one of the Site Q monuments to see if it was similar to a sample of La Corona limestone. The analysis indicated a match
(Stuart 2001), but the possibility remained that Site Q was another site in the area or even a series of sites (e.g. Martin 2001:183).

In 2005, the El Peru-Waka’ project, directed by David Freidel and Héctor Escobedo sent a team to La Corona on a short expedition with the goal of investigating the link between La Corona and Site Q (Canuto et al. 2006). During this trip, Marcello Canuto discovered an in situ a set of carved panels (Monuments 7 and 8) in the looter’s trench of Structure 13R-5. (These monuments will be discussed in the next chapter.) These monuments were in a near-perfect state of preservation and were entirely consistent with the known Site Q corpus. Not only were they the same size and style as other Site Q panels, but it named a known ruler and discussed relations with Calakmul (Guenter 2005). This discovery confirmed Stuart’s proposal that La Corona was Site Q.

The El Peru project sent a second expedition to La Corona in 2006 (Canuto 2006). Some of the excavations carried out during that year in the Coronitas group will be referred to periodically throughout the rest of this chapter. A new map of the site was also produced, which continues to be improved with new data every year.

In 2008, the La Corona Regional Archaeology Project began work at the site under the direction of Marcello Canuto and Tomás Barrientos. I began to work at La Corona during that year. I have conducted excavations in the Coronitas group during the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 seasons. Other excavations mentioned in this chapter were carried out by Mary Jane Acuña in 2006 and 2008 (Acuña 2006; 2009); Carlos Enrique Fernández in 2010 (Fernández 2011); Jocelyne Ponce in 2011 and 2012 (Ponce Stokvis and Nájera 2012); María Antonieta Cajas in 2011 and 2012 (Cajas 2012); and Divinia Perla in 2012.
Excavations in the Coronitas Group

The site of La Corona is composed of a number of architectural groups built around the edges of seasonal lakes known locally as civales (figure 6.1). The most monumental of these groups is the Main Group (or 13Q group), located on the western side of the site center. The Main group consists of a palace acropolis to the west, two large pyramidal platforms to the east, and two long range structures on the north and south side of the plaza. Four altars, a stela, and a hieroglyphic stairway remain in situ in this group. It probably served as the administrative center of the community and as the residence of the polity’s ruling family.

The eastern side of the site core is composed of the Coronitas group (or 13R group). Like the Main Group, Coronitas is composed of a set of structures arranged around a plaza (figure 6.2). On the east of this plaza is a row of five pyramidal platforms. The resemblance of these five structures to points on a tiara caused Ian Graham and David Stuart to name the site La Corona (Graham 1997), and it also gives the Coronitas Group its name. On the northern side of the plaza is an elite residential structure (13R-10) set on an elevated patio platform. This structure is flanked by a pyramidal structure to the west and by a series of low structures to the east, which may have served as auxiliary buildings or additional residences. On the west and south sides of the group, low range structures separate the plaza from a cival.

Archaeological investigation of the Coronitas group began in 2005 when Marcello Canuto discovered Monuments 7 and 8 in a looter’s trench of 13R-5, the southernmost of
Figure 6.1. Map of La Corona by Rodrigo Guzmán.

Figure 6.2. Map of Coronitas Group by Damien Marken.
the “crown” of five structures on the group’s east side (Canuto et al. 2006). In 2006, Canuto conducted excavations in 13R-5 to understand better the context of the monuments (Canuto 2006). The primary motivation for my excavations in Coronitas from 2008 to 2012 was based on the interpretation of Monuments 7 and 8.

These monuments refer to two separate temple dedication events for patron deities at La Corona. The first took place in 658 when the ruler Chakaw Nahb Chan dedicated wayib temples for three patron deities just 35 days after his accession to the throne. The second took place in 677, when K’inich ? Yook dedicated a fourth wayib temple for a fourth deity. This second event should correspond to the dedication of Structure 13R-5, given the self-referential nature of the text. It was also hypothesized that Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4, the temples immediately to the north of 13R-5, correspond to the three wayib temples dedicated in 658. The goal of my excavations was to find evidence to support (or deny) this hypothesis, and if supported, to learn about the role of patron deity veneration in the community life of La Corona.

My excavations were carried out on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4, and 13R-5. Although 13R-1 belongs to this complex and may have been a wayib for a fifth deity, I did not conduct excavations there because of time constraints.

All four excavated temples had been heavily looted. Structure 13R-2 had a collapsed tunnel on the back (east) side, as well as a superficial trench on the front. Structure 13R-3 had a deep looter’s trench or tunnel on the back. Structure 13R-4 had a looter’s trench on the front as well as a deep looter’s pit in the center. The southeast corner of the platform had also been destroyed with a superficial trench, and a very narrow trench was dug between Structures 13R-4 and 13R-5. Finally, a deep looter’s
trench and pit were dug into the front of Structure 13R-5. It is believed that these trenches were probably made in the 1960s during the period when “Site Q” monuments were removed from La Corona, with the exception of some of the looting on Structure 13R-5, which occurred in 2005 after the monuments were discovered.

Working around this looting proved to be quite challenging for several reasons. Looter’s trenches, especially when left unfilled for decades, can collapse and de-stabilize the structures. In some cases, such as Structure 13R-3, those that were originally dug as tunnels probably collapsed leaving a cavity resembling a trench on top of the building. On 13R-3, the collapse also destroyed around two thirds of the superstructure. In other cases, decades of erosion had caused collapsed architecture to fill up looter’s trenches to the point that it was impossible to recognize the difference between intact structure fill and collapse. This was the case on Structure 13R-4, where the looting of a tomb was not evident until organic remains recovered from the tomb proved to be of recent origin. In Structure 13R-2, looters had opened up a tunnel into the back of the platform, arriving just above a tomb that I later reached by a testpit. Although looting did not destroy the tomb context, it exposed the tomb to water and animals, and created a dangerous situation in which any misplaced stone would have led to collapse and injury. Looting also created permanent gaps in data. Irreplaceable primary context deposits (such as activity residues and burials) were destroyed, as were vital architectural connections. When a looter’s trench cuts across a wall or a floor, for example, it is impossible to definitively prove that features on either side of the trench were originally continuous. Finally, looting left giant piles of backdirt in inconvenient locations all over these structures.
This looting situation was not unique to the structures I excavated, but is in fact common at La Corona, and is the reason that the “Site Q” monuments ended up in private collections around the world. Although these monuments are useful for our understanding of dates and events in La Corona’s history, considerably more information has been permanently lost. Furthermore, if these monuments had not been looted they would have been recovered eventually with proper excavation methods now employed by the La Corona Regional Archaeology Project, which would also have recovered far more information without the incredible damage inflicted upon the site.

In spite of this challenge, I was successful in employing an excavation strategy that allowed me to gain information about the chronology of these structures and about patron deity veneration at La Corona. This was accomplished through both extensive excavations and deep pitting/trenching excavations. In all, excavations on these structures were carried out in four operations, one for each structure (figure 6.3).

Structure 13R-2 was excavated in Operation 15. Suboperation 15A corresponded to excavations on the front of the structure: cleaning of the front looter’s trench; the exposure of architectural features left intact in the profile of the trench such as superstructure floor and front stairway; exposure excavations at the base of the structure along a platform shared by all three structures; and a testpit excavated from the top of the structure to bedrock exposing a tomb (Burial 6). Suboperation 15B corresponded to minor excavations on the back of 13R-2, exposing the back terraces where they articulated with the back terraces of 13R-3.

Operation 12 corresponded to excavations on Structure 13R-3. Suboperation 12A consisted of excavations along the shared platform: the exposure of the base of 13R-3’s
Figure 6.3. Map of excavations on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4 and 13R-5.
stairway; the exposure of the floor of the shared platform; and the exposure of the front
stairs of the shared platform down to the level of the plaza floor below. Suboperation 12B
corresponded to excavations on the back of 13R-3, namely the cleaning and profiling of a
looter’s trench on the back. 12C consisted in excavations on 13R-3’s superstructure and
front stairway.

Operation 14 corresponded to excavations on Structure 13R-4. Suboperation 14A
consisted of the cleaning and profiling of the large looter’s trench on the front and in a
testpit excavated to the tomb below this structure. (It was later determined that this testpit
had not been dug into original fill, but rather primarily into a collapsed looter’s pit.)
Suboperation 14B consisted in excavations on the back of 13R-4. These exposed the back
terraces all the way from the northernmost point, where they articulated with the back of
13R-3, to the southeastern corner (destroyed by a looter’s trench).

Operation 17 corresponded to excavations in 13R-5. Although my excavations
were only carried out on the back, I named the only suboperation 17B, to be consistent
with nomenclature for the other three operations. These excavations exposed the back
terraces of the structure and excavated a trench westward from the back terraces into the
construction fill of the structure all the way down to bedrock.

**Phases of Construction in 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4, and 13R-5: an Overview**

I identified six major episodes of construction and use in the four structures (see
table 6.1). Two of these episodes belonged to Structure 13R-5, while three were found in
Structure 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. A final episode consisted of a series of late additions
on all four structures.
Table 6.1. Construction phases and architectural features of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4 and 13R-5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Structure 13R-2</th>
<th>Structure 13R-3</th>
<th>Structure 13R-4</th>
<th>Structure 13R-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unen (8th and 9th centuries)</td>
<td>stepped terrace</td>
<td>stepped terrace, stucco decoration</td>
<td>alley blocked by new terrace wall</td>
<td>low wall behind structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ub (677)</td>
<td>New façade on front, un floor</td>
<td>New façade on front, un floor</td>
<td>New façade on front, un floor</td>
<td>New platform and superstructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’uh (mid-to-late 7th century)</td>
<td>Burial 2, funerary platform, back terraces, ich floor</td>
<td>funerary (?) platform, back terraces, ich floor</td>
<td>Burial 6, funerary platform, back terraces, ich floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muk (late 6th Century)</td>
<td>back platform terrace</td>
<td>pix floor and associated features</td>
<td>back platform terrace, pix floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mam (mid 6th Century)</td>
<td>Burial 1, Funerary Shrine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first construction episode, named K’inch\textsuperscript{27} was found in Structure 13R-5. It consisted of a low platform constructed over a tomb chamber that had been cut into bedrock. This tomb (Burial 1) was looted, but the chamber was cleaned out in 2006 by Marcello Canuto and human bone was recovered (Canuto 2006). Ceramics from the fill of this phase correspond to the Late Preclassic Chicanel ceramic phase of Uaxactun, putting the date of construction of the K’inch architecture probably sometime before AD 400.

The next construction episode, named Mam\textsuperscript{28}, was found in Structures 13R-2 and 13R-4. Remains from below the platform shared by Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 may also correspond to this period. In the testpits of Structures 13R-2 and 13R-4, the

\textsuperscript{27} The K’inch phase is named for the Early Classic individual named on Panel 1.

\textsuperscript{28} The Mam phase is named for the Mayan word for “ancestor.”
back terraces of two Mam phase platforms were discovered. In Structure 13R-2, this Mam platform rises to approximately 4 meters above bedrock, while in 13R-4 it rises to approximately 3 meters. Behind the platform in Structure 13R-2, a midden deposit had accumulated against the Mam platform. Diagnostic pottery from this midden is equivalent to Tzakol 2/3 ceramics from Uaxactun, allowing me to date the use of this phase to the latter half of the 6th century. On the shared platform, the first of three floors may correspond to the Mam construction episode. A set of wall features built on top of this floor and buried by later construction may also correspond to Mam.

In Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4, the most substantial construction phase is known as Muk. The earliest Muk construction is on Structure 13R-4, where a new construction phase buried the Mam platform. A rock-cut tomb chamber (Burial 2) was found below the central axis of the Muk platform, having been cut into the earlier Mam architecture. This tomb was looted, but ceramics and human bones were left behind. A small buildup of midden materials was recovered behind this structure. The next Muk construction was on Structure 13R-3. Exposed back terraces from this phase demonstrate that the Muk phase of Structure 13R-3 was later than the Muk phase of Structure 13R-4. The Muk phase of Structure 13R-2 was completed last. Like in Structure 13R-4, a rock-cut tomb (Burial 6) was excavated into the midden behind the Mam platform and then the larger Muk construction phase covered it. The sequential nature of the Muk episode is probably due to the fact that the Muk platforms were funerary temples. As each tomb occupant died, a new temple was constructed. Dates for the Muk construction probably range from the mid- to late-sixth century, as indicated by Tzakol 3/Tepeu 1 ceramics.

29 The Muk phase is named for the Mayan word for “burial.”
The *K’uh*\(^{30}\) episode, which followed, was distinctive from its predecessors because it appears to have been completed as a single construction program. This program covered over the front facades of Muk architecture of 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 with a thin veneer of fill and masonry, adding new stairways, a new platform floor, and a new superstructure. This construction phase does not appear to have been extended to the back terraces of the structures, leaving the Muk terraces exposed.

In 677, a second phase was added to Structure 13R-5, called *Ub*\(^{31}\), as recorded on Monuments 7 and 8. Structure 13R-5 underwent a change in function (Canuto 2006). The earlier K’inich architecture of this structure held a burial, while the text from the Ub phase clearly identifies Structure 13R-5 as a patron deity shrine.

The *Unen*\(^{32}\) phase corresponds to a series of architectural features that was added to all four structures, probably late in the site’s history. On the front, a stepped platform was added between Structures 13R-2 and 13R-3, blocking most of the stairway of 13R-2. Stucco decoration was added to the front of this platform on the north side of the 13R-3 stairway. Corresponding stucco decoration was added on the south side as well, here supported by thin walls added to the front of the structure’s lowest terrace. Large vessels were left in place on these features as well as the exposed K’uh phase features. On the back of Structure 13R-5, a terrace wall was added connecting it to 13R-4, replacing a narrow alley. In addition, a low wall was added running behind Structure 13R-5, as if to create an interior room. On the floor of this room, a number of ceramics were recovered, including Fine Gray sherds, indicating a date at least as late as 760.

\(^{30}\) The K’uh phase is named for the Mayan word for “god.”

\(^{31}\) The Ub phase is named for the patron deity named on Panel 1.

\(^{32}\) The Unen phase is named for the Mayan word for “baby.”
I will now discuss each of these phases in more detail, describing architectural features, fills, middens, burials, and contemporary construction in other areas of La Corona.

*The K’inich Phase (4th Century)*

**Architectural Features**

K’inich is the name given to the early phase of Structure 13R-5. It was explored in 2006 by Marcello Canuto (Canuto 2006) and I conducted excavations in 2012 (figure 6.4). It consists of a low platform constructed approximately 30cm over bedrock. Into this bedrock, the Maya excavated an L-shaped tomb chamber, into which a burial was placed. This burial was then covered with a plaster floor. A poorly-preserved interior wall of this phase was discovered in 2006 (Canuto 2006), running East-West to the north of the burial chamber. At the eastern termination of this wall, the plaster floor was cut, but no offerings were found within (Canuto 2006).

**Burial 1**

The tomb of the K’inich phase (La Corona Burial 1) was unfortunately destroyed when looters entered from above and cut through the floor. However, excavations in 2006 recovered human bone, jade, and shell (Canuto 2006). The human remains were analyzed by Erin Patterson (personal communication 2012), who provided the following information: the individual appears to have been a young to middle aged adult, as indicated by a small number of cranial fragments showing open sutures. The lack of obvious markers of old age, such as arthritis, was consistent with this determination. The determination of sex was more difficult, given the lack of diagnostic remains. However,

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33 See Appendix C for radiocarbon analysis results.
Figure 6.4. North profiles of Structure 13R-5 showing construction phases.
one possible supraorbital margin was recovered that may indicate that the individual was female. However, this is a very tentative determination. At death, the individual seems to have been in a reasonable state of health. However, one tooth demonstrated linear enamel hypoplasia, possibly indicating nutritional deficiency at weaning or during childhood when the tooth was formed. Two of the individual’s teeth showed modification. One of the top front incisors had a circular cut for an inlay, although the inlay was not recovered. One lower incisor possibly had a notch intentionally removed, although this may have occurred post-mortem.

The status of the individual can be inferred from several lines of evidence. First, some fragments of jade and shell were recovered from the burial, in spite of the looting (Canuto 2006). The dental modification, especially for an inlay, may also indicate an elevated status. Funerary rites themselves may also indicate status: the bones were treated with red pigment, indicating that the body was probably allowed to decompose before burial. This may have given mourners time to cut the tomb chamber into bedrock. This, along with the construction of a platform for a funerary temple over the tomb, indicates the venerated status of this individual after death. It is interesting that this high status did not protect this individual from nutritional deficiency during childhood.

Fill

My excavations in 2012 allowed me to collect fill from an unlooted context from under the floor of the K’inich phase (see Appendix B Table B.1, Figure B.1). Diagnostic sherds corresponded to the Chicanel phase of Uaxactun (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). It is unlikely that the fills are actually contemporaneous with the burial, but rather likely date to before this time. In order to construct the K’inich phase,
the Maya would have gathered unused dirt, along with discarded sherds, to create the structure. Thus, the structure should post-date the sherds contained in the fill. For this reason, and given the epigraphic evidence of Monuments 7 and 8 (see Chapter 7), I place the K’înich phase sometime in the early 4th century AD (roughly 100 years after the end of the Chicanel phase).

The Mam Phase (mid to late 6th Century)

Architectural Features

The Mam phase is the name given to a series of early architectural features discovered in Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. In Structure 13R-2, a deep testpit revealed the back terrace of an early platform (figure 6.5). This terrace was constructed directly on top of bedrock, and was approximately 3 meters high. It displayed a decorative apron molding. Although it was not revealed by excavation, I suspect that a second terrace rose above the first, given that fill of the next architectural phase was laid down in layers probably corresponding to these architectural features. If this is a correct reconstruction, this Mam phase platform would have risen to approximately 4 meters above the bedrock.

In Structure 13R-4, a similar pit excavation revealed a similar feature (figure 6.6). Here, an early terrace approximately 75 centimeters high was discovered. This was probably the second terrace, rather than the lowest. The terrace wall drops down to a sloping floor surface, which may have fallen away to a lower terrace to the east of the excavation. The sloping floor was probably cut by the Maya during the construction of the subsequent phase (see below). Unfortunately, this terrace wall was in a poor state of
preservation. It was only present in the northwestern corner of the excavation unit. To the south, it appears to have been destroyed by the looting episode that damaged much of the structure. To the north, it appears to have been cut by the Maya themselves for unknown reasons.

On the front (west) of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4, the three structures appear to share a single platform, which then dropped down to the plaza floor below. Excavations on this shared platform revealed three plaster floors, probably corresponding to the three principal phases of construction in 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. The earliest of

Figure 6.5. South profile of Structure 13R-2 showing construction phases.
Figure 6.6. North profile of Structure 13R-4 showing construction phases.
these floors, corresponding to the Mam phase, is called *pix* (figure 6.7). This platform floor is approximately 2.5 meters above the plaza floor. In front of Structure 13R-3, some features were discovered built atop this *pix* floor, and therefore probably corresponding the Mam phase. These consisted of a plastered wall running north-south, which then has an unusual rounded shape, and turns a corner to the west (figure 6.8). These features are only preserved to approximately 75 centimeters high, having been later destroyed for additional floors. It was impossible to explore these features beyond the excavation unit.

Because the features of the Mam phase have only been explored superficially, it is impossible to know for sure what their function was. However, given the function of the earlier K’inich and subsequent Muk phases as funerary temples, it is reasonable to conclude that the Mam phase served the same function.

**Midden**

No fills were excavated from the Mam phase features. However, a midden dating to the use of this phase was discovered. It had accumulated behind the terrace wall discovered in Structure 13R-2, piling up on top of the bedrock and against this wall. It was less than a meter thick. Diagnostic sherds from this midden correspond to the Tzakol 2/3 phases of Uaxactun (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.2, Figure B.2). This is the only ceramic context that can be used to date the Mam phase. Unlike fill, this midden should post-date the construction of the Mam platform in Structure 13R-2, and be roughly contemporaneous with its years of use. For this reason, I place the use of the Mam phase within the latter part of the 6th century AD.

The vessels recovered from the Mam phase midden may also be informative about activities taking place on this structure. The identifiable assemblage consisted of
Figure 6.7. North profile of the front of Structure 13R-3 showing sequential platform floors.
13.79% jars, 31.03% bowls, and 55.17% plates (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012)\(^3\). (see Appendix B, Table B.3, Figure B.3). This assemblage contrasts sharply with later middens (see fig. 6.34).

A soil sample from this midden was analyzed by Clarissa Cagnato (personal communication 2012). She found several fragments of maize; one seed of the genus *Crotalaria* (common name: chipilin), which is an edible green; and one seed of the genus...

\(^3\) Because traditional distinctions between vases, bowls, dishes and plates can create confusion, vessel categories were defined in the following way: plates are vessels with a height between zero and 1/3 of the total diameter, while bowls have a height greater than 1/3 the diameter and less than equal to the diameter. Vases have a height greater than the diameter. Dishes were eliminated as a category. When there was a doubt as to vessel height, classification was based on rim angle or the presence of decoration on the inside, outside, or both (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012).
*Plantago*, which is edible and sometimes medicinal. Other seeds such as one grass seed and 12 seeds of the flower family *asteraceae* were probably intrusive.

*The Muk Phase (late 6th Century to early 7th Century)*

**Architectural Features**

The name Muk is applied to a series of three pyramidal platforms that were constructed over the earlier Mam phase remains. These platforms are sequential: 13R-4 was constructed first, followed by 13R-3 and 13R-2. As in the Mam phase, they appeared to share a frontal platform, which was given a new floor, called *ich*.

In Structure 13R-4, the Maya cut into the Mam phase surface below the terrace wall and added a rock-cut burial chamber below (La Corona Burial 2) (see figure 6.6). Then, they raised a new platform along the axis of the tomb, displacing the center of the building eastward (backwards). This may have been intended to keep the shared platform in front of the three structures free for use.

The floor of the Muk phase platform was 3 meters above the Mam phase terrace wall, bringing the total elevation of the platform to 106.5 meters asd\(^{35}\). None of the superstructure is preserved above this floor, nor is the front staircase, having been destroyed by looters. However, the top front terrace wall of the Muk phase platform can be seen in the north and south profiles of the looter’s trench.

Behind Structure 13R-4, the bedrock sloped downward from the center of the platform toward the east, forming a natural rise on top of which the platform was constructed. However, the Muk phase architecture was not built directly on top of

\(^{35}\) Above site datum; elevations at La Corona are not measured in meters above sea level but rather with an arbitrary elevation system. I will use this system to compare elevations across different structures.
bedrock, but rather on a layer of compact leveling fill approximately a meter thick. This was not plastered, but rather compacted to form a construction surface. On top of this, the construction fill of the platform was laid down, apparently as a single layer, because no changes could be detected in the fill during excavation of the looter’s trench in the center of the structure. To contain this fill, a construction wall was built. A facing wall was added about a meter and a half beyond this construction wall. The first terrace wall was approximately 3 meters high, with an apron molding at the base. Three courses of the second terrace were preserved above. Excavations revealed that the eastern (back) wall of the platform measured approximately 12 or 13 meters in length, although the southeast corner had been destroyed by looters. In addition, most of the facing wall had been robbed by the Maya themselves for the cut stones it contained.

The Muk phase platform of 13R-4 was in use for some period of time before the construction of the Muk phase of 13R-3. This is apparent because there was a buildup of midden material approximately 30cm thick discovered near the northeast corner of 13R-4 (see below). Structure 13R-3 was built on top of this compact midden layer (figure 6.9). The 13R-3 platform was constructed in a similar fashion to 13R-4, with a construction wall containing interior fill, and then covered over by a facing wall. The central axis of 13R-3 was set back by several meters from 13R-4. Thus, a construction wall of 13R-3 runs eastward from the northeast corner of 13R-4, partially obscuring it. The facing wall was only preserved in its first few courses, having been robbed in antiquity. This forms the southernmost wall of Structure 13R-3. After approximately 3 meters, it turns a corner and runs to the north, forming the east (back) wall of 13R-3 (see figure 6.9). The first few courses of the east construction wall of 13R-3 were observed in north and south
profiles of the looter’s trench behind the structure (figure 6.10). A possible higher terrace was also observed in the south profile. The floor of the Muk phase platform of Structure 13R-3 had an elevation of 108.5 asd, or two meters higher than the floor of 13R-4 during this phase.
The east (back) wall of 13R-3 is approximately 10 meters in length, where it then turns a corner to the west. The first terrace of this wall is approximately 2.5 meters high. The juncture between 13R-3 and 13R-2 is similar to that between 13R-4 and 13R-3 (see figure 6.9). 13R-2 was constructed after 13R-3. However, no midden buildup was observed. Instead, the bottom terrace of 13R-2 was constructed on top of a plastered surface approximately 50 centimeters higher than the base of 13R-4. Right where the base of 13R-3 turns its corner to the west, this 50 centimeter high platform ends in a low wall. On top of this plastered platform, the terraces of 13R-4 were constructed. The lowest terrace runs north in the same line as the eastern terrace of 13R-3, as if to visually link the two structures. However, after approximately 1 meter, it turns a corner to the east, forming a southern side of 13R-2, much like the southern side of 13R-3. Thus, each new building of the Muk phase is set back (east) from its predecessor by several meters. This southern wall of 13R-2 was followed for approximately 3 meters, after which it had collapsed completely. This bottom terrace of 13R-2 was only 1.4 meters high, above which a plastered terrace surface was found. Higher terraces were not explored.

A deep testpit operation revealed that 13R-2 was also constructed on top of a rock-cut tomb. This tomb was cut into exposed bedrock behind the Mam phase platform, rather than excavated into it as in 13R-4 (see figure 6.5). (In order to dig the chamber, the Maya also had to dig into the Mam phase midden described above.) The Muk phase structure was then constructed over the central axis of the tomb, displacing the axis of the building backwards by several meters, as in 13R-4. Construction appears to have occurred in several episodes, as different fill types were discovered within. These were retained by construction walls running both north-south and east-west. In addition, two
Figure 6.10. South and west profiles of the back of Structure 13R-5 showing construction phases.
layers of fill were covered over with a thin layer of lime mixture. The lower of these was at the same level as the top of the terrace of the Mam phase structure, suggesting that each new layer of fill corresponded to earlier features that needed to be covered over.

The Muk phase platform of Structure 13R-2 rose to an elevation of 110 meters asd, higher than either of its counterparts. At the top of the platform, excavations revealed the upper few steps of the structure’s front stairway. Interestingly, each stair was constructed by first laying down a level surface of lime mixture that ran under all higher stairs. Next, only the portion of this surface to be used as a tread was plastered, and a new level was added for the next step up. The resulting stairs were each approximately 30 centimeters high and 50 to 60 centimeters wide. They were painted red.

Burial 2

Burial 2 was discovered below the Muk phase of Structure 13R-4, the earliest of the Muk phase platforms. It was cut into the surface of the earlier Mam phase and into the bedrock below. The chamber of the burial measured approximately 2.8 meters (east-west) by 1 meter (north-south). The long walls of the chamber were lined with masonry walls approximately 1 meter high. The top of this wall may have supported a wooden roof.

Burial 2 was unfortunately looted, and this looting destroyed much of the architectural context. In the subsequent decades, collapse from the sides of the looter’s trench completely refilled the tomb (in fact, because of this refilling, there was no clear indication that the tomb had been looted until a radiocarbon date of a wood fragment demonstrated that it was modern). Artifacts recovered from the tomb included a single obsidian prismatic blade and several ceramics. The ceramics included a nearly complete hemispherical bowl with a ring base and a rim diameter of 30 centimeters, quite similar to

\[^{36}\] See Appendix C for radiocarbon analysis results.
vessels found in Burial 6 (see below). A sherd from a similar vessel was also recovered, and the two may have formed a lip-to-lip cache. Other sherds included small black thin-walled bowls, also similar to ceramics from Burial 6 (see Appendix B, Table B.4, Figure B.4). These ceramics indicate a date corresponding to Tzakol 3 (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) and I estimate that the tomb was constructed in the mid-to-late 6th century.

Although looting probably robbed the tomb of most of its contents, a few human bones were left behind. These were also analyzed by Erin Patterson (personal communication 2012). The presence of fused epiphyseal and partially-fused cranial sutures indicates that the occupant was an adult, possibly of middle age. Slight arthritis was observed on the proximal epiphysis of the right ulna and on two vertebrae. It was impossible to determine sex from the remains available. As with Burial 1, red pigment was observed on the cranium and on some other bones as well. Status of the individual appears to have been high, given the large funerary monument constructed over the tomb. Burial 637

Burial 6 was discovered below the Muk phase of Structure 13R-2, and thus is the latest burial from this phase. In order to create the tomb, a boot-shaped chamber was cut into bedrock behind the Mam phase of 13R-2, with the toe of the boot pointing west. The resulting chamber measured approximately 2.75 by 1.5 meters, with the long axis running east-west. Approximately 1.3 meters above the bottom of the chamber, the cut was wider, creating a 25 centimeter wide shelf on the north, east, and south sides. The walls of the tomb and shelf were all lined with rocks and plaster to even out their appearance. On top of the shelf rested the wooden roof of the tomb, of which only a fine black powder exists.

37 See Appendix C for radiocarbon analysis results.
today. The collapse of the roof of the tomb destabilized the overlying substructural fill considerably. Many large fill stones fell into the tomb below, crushing its contents. A looter’s trench on the back of the structure allowed water to seep in from above, creating a large collapsed cavity and further destabilizing the substructure. Excavation of the tomb thus took place through a narrow opening, and the entirety of the surrounding context could not be investigated safely.

On top of the wooden roof of the tomb, a woven mat had been placed, probably with offerings on top, followed by fill that sealed the tomb. This fill was bright yellow in color, and was mixed with large boulder-sized stones. The woven mat, although long decayed, left an impression in the bottom of this fill layer (figure 6.11), so the fill was probably wet when originally placed.

After some of this fill was laid down, a large layer of lithics was placed on top (figure 6.12). These consisted of a large quantity of chert flakes and obsidian fragments. The chert came in a variety of colors (figure 6.13). It seems to have been flaked off unused nodules, since many pieces still retained areas of cortex. The obsidian, however, mostly consisted of broken prismatic blade cores (figure 6.14), and therefore represents the ritual re-use of objects that were presumably originally utilitarian. In all, approximately 7,000 chert flakes were recovered, along with about 450 pieces of obsidian. Lithics alternated with fill in layers that covered over the tomb. It is estimated that only a quarter to a third of the lithic deposit was recovered, and that in total, 20,000 to 30,000 chert fragments covered the tomb, along with 1,500 to 2,000 pieces of obsidian.
Figure 6.11. Photograph of mat impression on the ceiling of Burial 6.

Figure 6.12. Photograph of lithic flakes above Burial 6.
Figure 6.13. Chert recovered from above Burial 6.

Figure 6.14. Obsidian recovered from above Burial 6.
The collapse of the roof and fill above created a jumbled context within the tomb itself. However, some ceramics were recovered from near the top of the rubble that filled the tomb, and others were recovered from under it. This leads me to conclude that some ceramic vessels were originally placed above the tomb on the woven mat, while others were placed in the tomb itself. The vessels from above include the following: Five hemispherical bowls with ring bases, and a rim diameter between 25 and 28 centimeters, one flared bowl with a flat bottom and a rim diameter of 23 centimeters, and one small cylinder vase with a rim diameter of 8 centimeters (see Appendix B, Table B.5) (figure 6.15). The six bowls were all of the Aguila Orange type, and probably were used for three lip-to-lip caches, perhaps set in a line on the woven mat along the mid-line of the tomb (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). The small cylinder vase was orange with red vertical stripes and was placed above the south side of the tomb. Sherds from this last vessel were found on the shelf that supported the roof beams, indicating the original placement, while the six bowls were all recovered from inside the tomb itself, having fallen in. Only half of one of the hemispherical bowls was recovered, indicating that the rest is probably still somewhere in the fill above the tomb. Given the presence of the vase on the south side of the tomb, I suspect that additional over-tomb offerings were placed at the cardinal directions. Unfortunately, the instability of the structure prevented me from investigating this hypothesis.

To excavate the tomb itself, I divided the area in half lengthwise, and into sections of 40 centimeters, labeled A-G west to east and 1 and 2 north to south (figure 6.16).
Figure 6.15. Ceramic vessels placed above Burial 6.
Figure 6.16. Plan of artifacts recovered from Burial 6.
Throughout much of the tomb area, freshwater shells, of both bivalves and gastropods, were scattered. Many of these were whole, although most had been damaged by the collapse of the tomb roof. The only area where they were not recovered was the very west side of the tomb. This distribution indicates that they were intentionally placed all around the body.

Other faunal remains include the skeletons of a small crocodile and at least one turtle. A complete faunal analysis has not yet been conducted, but Diana Fridberg (personal communication 2011) was able to identify these two species. The crocodile bones were collected from grid squares A1 and A2, on the westernmost end of the tomb. I postulate that the presence of shells and two aquatic species was intended to mimic the conditions of the watery underworld of Maya mythology, much like the well-attested practice of depositing of spondylus shells in burials and offerings (Baron et al. 2011).

Sixteen small fragments of marine shell were recovered (figure 6.17). Nearly all of them were collected from grid squares E1 and D1, near the cranium of the tomb occupant (see below). Also in this area were 7 small ceramic beads. I conclude that these artifacts are objects of personal adornment. One of the pieces of marine shell is white in color and carved to resemble a set of teeth. It was suggested to me by Simon Martin (personal communication 2011) that this may have been part of a headdress or mask. Other items of adornment included two tiny fragments of what may be calcified textile (figure 6.18). Unfortunately, other ancient organic materials had decayed.

Eight ceramic vessels were placed in the tomb itself (figure 6.19). These consisted of a set of three nearly identical small black bowls with a high polish, another black polished bowl slightly taller than these three, a set of two nearly identical small black
Figure 6.17. Marine shell recovered from Burial 6.

Figure 6.18. Possible textile fragments recovered from Burial 6.

Figure 6.19. Ceramic vessels recovered from inside Burial 6.
bowls without polish, and a set of two nearly identical bowls with red slip and an orange underslip on the base (see Appendix B, Table B.5). These vessels, although they lacked polychrome designs, were well executed and had thin walls. It was possible to tentatively reconstruct the placement of these vessels within the tomb, by comparing the grid squares from which their sherds were recovered. Most of the vessels were placed near the legs of the occupant, with three placed to the east of the head.

Two soil samples from the tomb were analyzed by Clarissa Cagnato (personal communication 2012). She found remains of maize, both a kernel and cob material. She also found four fragments of the bean family *Fabaceae* and a possible fruit rind.

Human remains were scattered throughout the tomb. This is due in part to animal activity. When the tomb was entered, a family of rats was living inside and moving freely throughout the voids in the fill. They, as well as their predecessors, likely disturbed the bones considerably. A human fibula covered in rodent gnaw marks, probably from this burial, was even recovered from the Mam phase midden above, probably having been deposited by these animals. Water seepage probably did damage to the bones as well.

Nevertheless, a high concentration of cranial bones and teeth was recovered from grid square E1 and foot bones were recovered from squares A1 and A2. This indicates that the deceased was placed with head to the east and feet to the west.

Osteological analysis conducted by Erin Patterson (personal communication 2012) indicates that the tomb occupant was an adult of middle to old age, based on fused epiphyses and the left pubic symphysis. Sex is undetermined, but the large size of the teeth may indicate a male. A vertebral entheophyte was observed, possibly indicating old age or, more likely, trauma. Healed porotic hyperostosis was also observed on the
occipital bone and other fragments of the cranial vault. This is indicative of chronic poor nutrition during childhood, probably related to iron deficiency anemia. Both upper central incisors were modified with a notch on the distal enamel. As in Burials 1 and 2, red pigment was present on the cranium and on a rib.

The tomb occupant appears to have been a high status individual. This is indicated most obviously by the 9 meter platform that was raised above the tomb as a funerary shrine. It is also indicated by the large quantity of lithics deposited over the tomb. Such deposits are associated with high-status burials elsewhere in the Maya area (Demarest et al. 2003; Moholy-Nagy 1997). The woven mat may also mark the occupant’s high status, as it is associated with rulership in Maya iconography. On the other hand, the burial lacked jade and only had a small amount of marine shell, indicating that the occupant lacked access to these markers of high status. For this reason, it is difficult to be sure that the occupant was of royal status. I will discuss the identity of this individual, along with the occupant of Burial 2, in Chapter 7. It is interesting to note, as in Burial 1, that the high status of the individual did not protect him from poor nutrition during childhood.

The ceramics from the burial date to late Tzakol (or possibly early Tepeu in some cases), indicating a date around AD 600 or slightly after (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012).

Fills

Ceramics from fills in Structures 13R-2 and 13R-4 were analyzed for stylistic dating (see Appendix B, Tables B.6 and B.7, Figures B.6 and B.7). Structure 13R-4, the earliest of the three Muk phase platforms, appears to have been constructed using a single fill episode. Unfortunately, due to looting, very little intact fill was excavated. Of the lots
of intact fill, only 86 sherds were recovered, and only five of these were diagnostic, dating to Tzakol and Tepeu (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). This does not seem adequate for a proper assessment of date, and I therefore rely on the dates provided by the ceramics from the tomb (Tzakol 3) and the midden (Tzakol-Tepeu transition) to understand the chronology of the structure. I place the construction of the tomb in the mid-to-late 6th century, and the subsequent use of the funerary shrine the decades leading up to AD 600.

Structure 13R-3 was constructed next, but no intact fills were available for ceramic analysis, since this phase was investigated by cleaning the looter’s trench on the back of the structure. Structure 13R-2 was constructed last, with the tomb apparently dating to around AD 600. Fills from the platform above were clearly laid down in separate episodes, with changing fill color throughout. Some fill lots therefore appeared to be earlier than others, probably because fills were drawn from deposits of different dates. On the whole, however, the fill could primarily be dated to Tzakol with less than 1% of the assemblage dating to Tepeu. This is consistent with a date around AD 600 or slightly after, at the Tzakol-Tepeu transition.

Midden

The only midden context that can be securely associated with the Muk phase is that which piled up on the back of 13R-4 before the construction of 13R-3. Unfortunately, this is a rather small sample (10 diagnostic sherds) but appears to date to the Tzakol-Tepeu transition near the end of the 6th century (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.8, Figure B.8). Only 11 sherds could be categorized by form: 2 jars, 8 bowls and 1 plate (see Appendix B, Table B.9, Figure B.9).
In contrast, the Mam phase midden had 116 identifiable forms. Therefore, I do not think the sample size is large enough to adequately compare the assemblages.

**Summary**

In summary, the three platforms of the Muk phase were constructed sequentially from south to north. Structures 13R-2 and 13R-4 were both observed to have been constructed as funerary shrines over rock-cut tombs. It is highly probable that Structure 13R-3 served the same purpose in this phase and that there is a third tomb buried underneath it. These tombs belonged to individuals of high status, probably rulers of La Corona. It does seem likely that the Muk phase complex of three funerary temples belonged to a single elite or royal family of La Corona, with each new platform constructed as each important family member died in sequence. Burial 2, the earliest of these tombs, dates to the mid-to-late 6th century, with Burial 6, the latest, probably dating to the beginning of the 7th.

*K’uh Phase (early to mid-7th century)*

**Architectural Features**

The K’uh phase was found on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. Unlike the Muk phase, the K’uh phase was a single episode of construction that covered all three structures in a single architectural program. On the platforms itself it appears as a thin veneer of architecture on the front of the buildings. This can be observed in profiles of all three structures (see figures 6.5, 6.6, and 6.10). In Structure 12R-2, the K’uh phase floor was observed at an elevation of approximately 110 meters asl. It covered over the Muk phase stairs, raising the total height of the platform probably not more than 50cm above
the Muk phase elevation. A low bench feature was constructed on top of this floor, 80 centimeters to the east. This low bench probably abutted the back wall of the now vanished superstructure. A similar feature was found on the front of the superstructure, possibly forming the base of the front wall. Between the front wall and the start of the bench, the room is 1.90 meters wide. The upper walls and roof of the superstructure were perishable, as indicated by the discovery of daub in the collapse on top of the structure (figure 6.20). The floor of the superstructure ends with the front stairway of the platform. It consists of 16 steps and drops approximately 4.5 meters to the new un floor of the shared platform below.

Figure 6.20. Daub recovered from the K’uh phase of Structure 13R-2.
The bottom stair of Structure 13R-3 is in a line approximately 2 meters farther west than the bottom step of 13R-2. (This is consistent with the earlier Muk phase of construction, in which Structure 13R-2 was set back from 13R-3 by several meters). The bottom step of 13R-3 could be traced completely, demonstrating the width of the stairway at 5.60 meters (figure 6.21). The first five stairs were relatively intact, but above these, the staircase was mostly collapsed. The southern side of the staircase was still largely preserved with much of its original stucco intact. However, the northern side of the staircase was completely collapsed.

The stairway of 13R-3 was also constructed on top of the *un* floor of the shared platform. Above the stairs, the superstructure of the building was partially preserved (figure 6.22). The base of the walls forming the northwest corner of the superstructure was observed as was the stucco floor. However, the collapsed looter’s trench on the back of 13R-3 destroyed the rest of this room. From the profile of this trench, it was possible to observe that the floor of the K’uh phase superstructure was less than 50 centimeters above the Muk phase floor, and had an elevation of 109 meters asd, about a meter below 13R-2. It was also observed that the central axis of the K’uh phase of 13R-3 was slightly north of the Muk phase of that structure.

Two front terraces of the K’uh phase of 13R-3 were observed to the south of the staircase. The bottom of these rested on the *un* floor of the shared platform. It rose at a slope for about 2 meters, above which was a 60 centimeter wide horizontal surface. Above this rose a vertical terrace wall for approximately 1.2 meters. The lower, sloping terrace ran south and incorporated into the K’uh phase of 13R-4, while the upper, vertical
terrace turned a corner to the east, forming the southern side of the 13R-3 platform (figure 6.21). Similar features probably existed on the north side of the staircase as well. This area was excavated in 2012. Stone alignments, possibly corresponding to terrace faces on the front of 13R-3 and 13R-2 were discovered, but the area was so badly disturbed by tree roots that a secure reconstruction was impossible.
The K’uh phase architecture of 13R-4 is much harder to understand because of the massive looting on the front of the structure. A front stairway was never positively identified. A wall, possibly forming the northern side of the staircase, runs westward from the front terrace shared with 13R-3. This wall is integrated with the terrace, demonstrating that the two were constructed at the same time.

In the profile of the looter’s trench in 13R-4, it was possible to observe a layer of fill, approximately 1.5 meters thick, above the Muk phase floor. Furthermore, a terrace wall from the K’uh phase can be observed in front of (to the west of) the front terrace of the Muk phase. These features demonstrate that the K’uh phase existed, although it is now mostly destroyed. The elevation of the K’uh phase platform must have been somewhat higher than 108 meters asd. The superstructure of 13R-4 was also perishable, as indicated by daub recovered in the collapsed fill behind the structure (figure 6.22).

Figure 6.22. Daub recovered from K’uh phase of Structure 13R-4.
The three structures share a frontal platform that was replastered with the *un* floor. In front of the stairs of 13R-3, this platform is approximately 2 meters wide, before it drops away in a series of five stairs. Below these stairs is another horizontal surface approximately 3.5 meters wide. This drops away with another two wide steps to the plaza floor below (see figure 6.7).

The fact that the stairways of 13R-2 and 13R-3 are built atop the *un* floor, and that the wall of 13R-4 is integrated with the terrace of 13R-3, indicates that the K’uh phase construction of these structures is a single episode, rather than a sequence of constructions as in the previous phase. However, the platforms do not share the same north-south axis, an artifact of their construction atop the sequential Muk phase platforms. Back terraces of the K’uh phase were not observed. Instead, it appears that the K’uh phase only covered the front of the platforms, leaving the Muk phase terraces exposed on the back.

**Fills**

Because the K’uh construction fill was so much thinner than the Muk phase, there is comparatively less ceramic material with which to date it (see Appendix B, Tables B.10, B.11, and B.12, Figures B.10, B.11, B.12). In total, only 12 diagnostic sherds were recovered from three contexts: from fill near the top of Structure 13R-2 (4 sherds), from the profiles of the looter’s trench in 13R-4 (3 sherds), and from under the *un* floor in front of 13R-2 (5 sherds). Although the sample size is small, it indicates an early Tepeu date, with some late Tzakol sherds as well (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). This is consistent with a date in the early to mid 7th century.
Midden

A midden from the K’uh phase was discovered in the corner formed by the south wall of 13R-3 and the east wall of 13R-4, behind the two structures. Recall that these terraces were built during the Muk phase, but continued to be exposed during the K’uh phase and subsequent years. Since the midden did not display obvious internal stratigraphy, it was impossible when excavating to determine whether it dated to the Muk phase, the K’uh phase, or thereafter, or whether it was a mix. However, an analysis of the ceramics indicates that the majority of the sherds recovered probably date from the K’uh phase, with some Muk phase perhaps mixed in. All diagnostic sherds (except one) can be identified as belonging to the Tepeu phase (21.45%) or to forms in use during both Tzacol and Tepeu phases (17.09%) (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.13, Figure B.13). One of the sherds had incised glyphs with the syllables –na and yo- (figure 6.23), which would be consistent with the name of ruler K’inich ? Yook, although it is impossible to know for sure whether the vessel mentioned this king.

The midden assemblage differs considerably from the assemblage of the earlier Mam phase (see Appendix B, Table B.14, Figure B.14). In this midden we see vases for the first time, which make up 19.70% of the identifiable forms. Jars make up 16.67% of the identifiable forms, bowls 48.48% and plates only 15.15% (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). This is a considerable increase in bowls and a considerable decrease in plates over previous middens from these structures (see fig. 6.35).
Contemporary Events

Other changes to the Coronitas group occurred around the same time as the K’uh phase of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. It is likely that the construction of the large platform atop which are built Structures 13R-9 and 13R-10 was initiated in the mid-7th century. It is also possible that the first phase of Structure 13R-10 was constructed at this time, although it has not yet been explored thoroughly (Ponce and Cajas 2012).
Ub Phase (AD 677)

Architectural Features

The Ub phase belongs to Structure 13R-5, and was constructed over the earlier K’inch phase. The platform of the structure was raised approximately 1.5 meters, bringing the new platform floor up to an elevation of approximately 103 meters asl (see figure 6.4). Part of the superstructure was preserved above this floor as well. It consisted of a single room, measuring 7.5 meters (north-south) by 3 meters (east-west) (see Canuto 2006:fig. 1). The first four to six courses of the back (east) wall were intact. The wall was nearly two meters thick, but was pierced by an opening looking eastward out the back of the structure (Canuto 2006). Along the base of this doorway (or window), was a bench approximately 50 centimeters high. Into the front of this bench, at the base of the doorway, were set Monuments 7 and 8. These monuments give a date of 677 for the dedication of this phase, during the reign of ruler K’inch’ Yook, and ceramics from the fill (see below) are consistent with this chronology. The doorway and monuments were not placed along the central axis of the structure, but rather about 50 centimeters to the south. This is on the same axis as Burial 1, corresponding to the earlier K’inch phase (Canuto 2006). A shorter bench, approximately 20 cm high and 1.20 meters wide was constructed in front of these monuments over the floor of the room.

The north and south walls of the superstructure were also partially explored by Canuto in 2006, enough to define the dimensions of the room. On the west (front) of the superstructure, the floor drops away as a step three courses high. This is probably the top of a short stairway leading down to the plaza floor below.
Although Structure 13R-5 is lower than Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4, the features of the Ub phase demonstrate that more time and care were taken during construction than in the K’uh phase. The walls were thicker and better preserved, perhaps in order to support a vaulted ceiling (although no vault stones were found).

Fills

The architectural features of the 13R-5 superstructure (first step in front of the room, floor of the room, low bench, and high bench in the back doorway) are all reflected as floors in my 2012 trench on the back of the structure (see figure 6.4). The different fills of this trench clearly demonstrate the construction technique that was used: first the platform was built up, and contained with a construction wall. Next, the features of the superstructure were added. Finally, a facing wall was added to the back of the platform to finish off construction. Although these three episodes all correspond to the same construction phase, the fills differ in both color and content.

The fill from behind the retaining wall, which was the first step in the construction process, contained some sherds from the Chicanel phase as well as from Tzakol/Tepeu. The second step, the construction of the superstructure features, was made up of fills dating to the Tepeu phase. Finally, the facing wall on the back was added, using fills dating to the Tepeu phase as well (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.15, Figure B.15). It is likely that the difference in these fill dates indicates that the Maya were drawing from different fill sources during construction. However, the latest sherds from this construction clearly date the Ub phase to the 7th century.
Contemporary Events

There is evidence at other structures in the Coronitas group for ritual activities dating to the reign of K’inich ? Yook (Ponce and Cajas 2012). A second phase of Structure 13R-10 was added, in which it appears to have served as an elite residence in addition to its role as a venue for ritual events. Structure 13R-9 was constructed next to it, probably as a funerary temple. The structures were connected by a 2 meter wide corridor which gave access to the funerary temple via Structure 13R-10 (Ponce and Cajas 2012). The open area of the platform behind both structures served as a back patio.

Excavations on the back patio area by Mary Jane Acuña in 2006 and 2008 (Acuña 2006; Acuña 2009) and Erin Patterson and Elisandro Garza in 2011 (Patterson et al. 2012) recovered massive amounts of ceramics, including many polychrome ceramic fragments. These date to the Tepeu 1/2 phase of the Late Classic period (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). In 2012, Antonietta Cajas excavated a deep testpit in Structure 13R-9. In one of the fill layers of this structure, she recovered many polychrome ceramics, including drums, and animal bones (Ponce and Cajas 2012). This fill was probably gathered from the area immediately around the structure, as the sherds are consistent with those from the back patio area.

These excavations suggest that the platform of Structures 13R-9 and 13R-10 was used heavily for feasting events. Ceramic analysis has not yet been conducted on these contexts. However, the presence of polychrome serving vessels may be related to diacritical feasting (Dietler 1996), in which the wealth and connections of the host was on display. Many of the polychromes have inscriptions, some of which carry royal titles from La Corona and Calakmul (figure 6.24). Some sherds are also executed in a style
Figure 6.24. Ceramics with royal titles recovered from the Coronitas group.

Figure 6.25. Imitation polychrome sherds recovered from the Coronitas group.
very similar to codex-style vessels (figure 6.25). Codex-style vessels seem to be uniquely distributed within the northwestern Petén/southern Campeche region. They have been found archaeologically at Calakmul, Uxul, Naachtun, El Zotz, El Peru, and the Mirador basin (Velásquez 2009, Stanley Guenter, personal communication 2009) and looted pieces refer to the kingdom of Hix Witz—the sites of Zapote Bobal and La Joyanca (David Stuart in Gámez et al. 2007)—and to the unidentified Chatahn kingdom or region. The majority of these sites were vassals to the Calakmul dynasty, suggesting that their distribution was a product of Calakmul-controlled gift exchange. Production sites of codex-style vessels have not been found archaeologically, but chemical analysis suggests that these ceramics were produced at multiple centers in the Mirador region and at Calakmul (Reents-Budet et al. 2010). The codex-style sherds from La Corona were all produced locally, and are characterized by Reents-Budet as imitations, since their color differs slightly from the sherds recovered from other areas (personal communication 2009)\footnote{A true codex-style with the chemical signature characteristic of La Corona was recovered from a Calakmul tomb, however, suggesting that at least some vessels from La Corona were used in gift exchange (Reents-Budet et al. 2010).}. In addition to these polychrome vessels, the assemblage also included several fragments of polychrome ceramic drums, probably used during these elaborate feasting events.

Unen Phase (early 8\textsuperscript{th} Century to early 9\textsuperscript{th} Century)

Architectural Features

The Unen phase consists of a series of late additions to the Coronitas temples. On the front platform shared by Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4, various features were added (figure 6.26). On the north side of the stairway of Structure 13R-3, two thin walls
were added that ran from the sloping terrace face westward, parallel with side wall of the staircase. These walls were each stuccoed on the south side, and were apparently meant to create some sort of support for stucco decoration that was added to the south of the staircase, facing west (figure 6.27). This stucco decoration cannot have been very high, but most of the design was eroded away. Pieces that were left intact resembled foliage motifs.

Figure 6.26. Plan showing Unen phase features on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4.
Figure 6.27. Photograph of Unen phase features on the front of Structure 13R-3.

Figure 6.28. Schematic drawing of Unen phase stepped platform in front of Structure 13R-5.
Modeled stucco was also added to the northern side of the staircase. It was recovered collapsed on the *un* floor. This stucco was not supported by east-west walls as on the south side, but rather by a platform feature. This platform was first observed on the front stairs of Structure 13R-2. These stairs were first covered with a compact layer lime fill which formed a slope up from the *un* floor to the third step in the stairway (see figure 6.5). On top of this were constructed two phases of a masonry platform. The first was built against the third and fourth stair, and only extended westward approximately 60 centimeters, with its north face at about the center line of the stairs. In front of (to the west of) this platform feature was added a second phase of the platform. It extended from the west wall of the first phase, westward along the *un* floor, about 2.30 meters. Here, it turned a corner to the south, running along the *un* floor until meeting with the northwestern corner of the stairway of 13R-3, where it apparently supported stucco decoration. In front of (on the west side of) this platform feature was a low step.

At the northwest corner of this stepped platform, approximately in front of the center of the stairs of 13R-2, a 60 centimeter wide wall was constructed that ran westward from the corner of the stepped platform and then immediately turned a corner to the north (figure 6.28). This wall was followed until it entered a looter’s trench, where it was destroyed. This wall would have effectively blocked access to the stairway of 13R-2 from the front of the structure. At some later date, the area between the blocked stairway and this wall seems to have been filled in and covered in gravel which ran up against the fifth step of the staircase. It may be that the stepped platform was intended to create a new staircase, shared by Structures 13R-2 and 13R-3, which gave access to the
temples via the higher steps on each staircase. No such feature was found linking the stairways of 13R-3 and 13R-4, however.

The final set of Unen phase architectural features was discovered on the back terraces of 13R-4 and 13R-5. Originally, a narrow alley about a meter wide existed between the south side of 13R-4 and the north side of 13R-5. However, during the Unen phase, a plastered wall was added that ran northward from the northeast corner of 13R-5 (figure 6.29). This turned a corner to the east, running roughly parallel to the south wall of 13R-4. A low wall, approximately 50 centimeters high, protruded from the southern wall of 13R-4. Together these features essentially created a small room in the area behind Structure 13R-5. The low wall was only followed for 1.5 meters, due to time constraints.

Figure 6.29. Plan of Unen phase features behind Structures 13R-4 and 13R-5.
Fill

Fill from only one of these architectural features contained datable ceramics: the hard lime mixture laid down over the stairway of 13R-2 under the later platform feature (see Appendix B, Table B.16, Figure B.16). Only 7 diagnostic sherds were recovered. Two of them dated to the Tzakol phase, while 6 were indicative of either Tzakol or Tepeu (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). This is a slightly earlier assemblage than expected, but is probably due to the re-use of fills during construction.

Midden

A midden was identified from the Unen phase. It was found in the small “room” behind Structure 13R-5. The date of this midden was considerably later, as indicated by the presence of Chablekal Fine Gray (after AD 760) (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.17, Figure B.17). The assemblage of this midden differed from that of the K’uh phase, in that it lacked vases (see Appendix B, Table B.18, Figure B.18). However, this may be a superficial difference. The percentage of jars was similar (14.71%) and the percentage of plates remained low (8.82%). The only major difference was the percentage of bowls, which was higher (76.47%) (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). It seems that vases simply gave way to bowls, with the other two categories remaining largely unchanged. This is probably because Fine Gray bowls (14.71% of the identifiable forms) took over the function once filled by vases as high-status serving vessels for liquid. If we analyze this midden with fine gray bowls filling the role of vases in the earlier K’uh midden, the two assemblages are not significantly different from one another (see Appendix B, fig. 6.35).
Also in this midden, four fragments of turtle shell were recovered, as was a jade bead (figures 6.30 and 6.31). Since turtle shells have been recovered in other relevant contexts from this time frame (see below), it is possible that these bones are the remains of food consumption. The reason for discarding a jade bead, however, is more difficult to assess.

Floors

On the front terraces of Structure 13R-2 and 13R-3, a number of items were found left in place on terrace surfaces, before the slow collapse of the structures (see Appendix B, Table B.19, Figure B.19). These items included a number of largely-intact ceramic vessels (figure 6.32). Of the identifiable forms, 72.09% of these vessels were jars, 22.09% were bowls, and 5.81% were plates (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) (see Appendix B, Table B.20, Figure B.20). This once again suggests an emphasis on liquids. However, none of these vessels were Fine Gray, and no vases were recovered. This demonstrates that the assemblage is different from the middens (found on the back of the structures, rather than the front) in that fancy individual vessels for liquid were lacking. This assemblage suggests that large vessels for liquid (rather than individual vessels) were placed on these terraces and left exposed for a period of time, while individual vessels used in patron deity veneration rituals were discarded after use.

Other remains were also left on these floors. These included two snail shells (figure 6.33a), a fragment of the pelvis of a large mammal such as a deer (figure 6.33b), and several fragments of turtle bones (figure 6.33c) (identified by Diana Fridberg, personal communication 2011). These may be the remains of food consumption in this
Figure 6.30. Turtle shell fragments recovered from Unen phase midden.

Figure 6.31. Jade bead recovered from Unen phase midden.
Figure 6.32. Ceramic jar left in place on the terrace in front of Structure 13R-3.

Figure 6.33. Items left on the un floor during the Unen phase. a) snail shells, b) pelvis of large mammal such as a deer, c) fragments of turtle shell, d) chert flakes, e) obsidian blade.
area. Finally, three chert flakes (figure 6.33d) and a small obsidian blade (figure 6.33e) were recovered, but this small amount of lithic material is hard to interpret.

**Contemporary Events**

The Unen phase potentially corresponds to a relatively long time span. Since the features of this phase are dispersed from one another, stratigraphy is not useful in placing them in sequential order. Furthermore, the paucity of datable fills makes absolute dating difficult as well. It is only possible to say that the features added on the front terraces were built after the K’uh phase, and that the features added to the back of 13R-5 were built after the Ub phase. The presence of Chablekal Fine Grays in the Unen midden places this ritual activity after AD 760 (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). I suspect that the whole Unen phase lasted from the reign of Yajawte’ K’ínich (K’ínich ? Yook’s son) until the abandonment of the site during the Terminal Classic.

During this time frame, a number of developments took place elsewhere in the Coronitas group. Changes were made to Structures 13R-9 and 13R-10. Walls were added to the front façades of these structures, and access to 13R-9 via 13R-10 was blocked. In addition, changes to the interior rooms of Structure 13R-10 may have been intended to add privacy. In the 8th century, two deposits point to large-scale ritual feasting events. The first of these is a chultun that was dug into bedrock immediately behind the back of Structure 13R-10. It was excavated in 2010 by Carlos Enrique Fernández (Fernández 2011). It contained over 6,000 sherds, including utilitarian vessels, fancy serving vessels and ceramic drums (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). It also contained over 1,100 animal remains, including deer, turtle, bird, domestic dog, opossum, large
rodent, fish, and mollusks. The good preservation of these animal remains, and the lack of taphonomic activity such as rodent gnawing, indicates that these remains were probably deposited all at once, in a single event (Fridberg and Cagnato 2012). Other food remains included maize; seeds from the tomato family, including possibly chile seeds; amaranth seeds; seeds of the genus Chenopodium which are leafy greens; and two seeds of the family Fabaceae including chipilin and an unidentified legume (Fridberg and Cagnato 2012). Also recovered were figurines and large amounts of lithic material.

The second midden deposit was discovered by Divina Perla in 2012 and is located beside Structure 13R-7, another of the structures in the Coronitas plaza (personal communication 2012). Structure 13R-7 was a vaulted structure this is only beginning to be explored and analyzed. The midden deposit next to 13R-7 was similar to the chultun midden in that it contained numerous vessels, many of them fancy serving vessels, including Chablekal Fine Grays. It also contained ceramic drums, like the chultun deposit and the earlier fill of Structure 13R-9 (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012) and a small number of animal bones that have yet to be analyzed.

These two middens are roughly contemporaneous with the Unen phase midden behind Structure 13R-5, as indicated by the presence of Chablekal Fine Gray sherds. All three contexts must date to sometime after 760.

An even later midden deposit, excavated by Fernández (2011), was found next to the opening of the chultun on the surface of the patio behind 13R-10. This deposit included over 400 sherds, many of which were large water jars and food processing basins (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012). Over 700 animal remains were recovered, including deer, peccary, opossum, birds, turtles, and mollusks, as well as two
teeth of a large feline (Fridberg and Cagnato 2012). This deposit included Fine Orange sherds, indicating a date after AD 830 (Caroline Parris, personal communication 2012).

Excavations by Jocelyne Ponce in 2011 and 2012 recovered many remains in the rooms of Structure 13R-10, left in situ when the site was abandoned (Ponce Stokvis and Nájera 2012). These included four manos and five metates (Jocelyne Ponce, personal communication 2012). One of these metates was analyzed by Clarissa Cagnato for plant remains. She found plant starch, including maize and possibly the family Euforbiacea, to which yuca belongs. In addition, carbonized maize grains, as well as the remains of palm and fruits were recovered (Fridberg and Cagnato 2012). These remains suggest that the structure continued to be used for food preparation, perhaps for ritual feasting events, up until its abandonment in the 9th century.

At some point in the late history of Structure 13R-10, the front stairway was modified. As discovered by Jocelyne Ponce in 2012, numerous blocks with carved hieroglyphic writing were assembled and re-set in this stairway, although not in a coherent order. Two blocks were even placed upside-down, one on each end of the bottom step (Ponce and Cajas 2012). Unfortunately, much of this stairway was looted, so it is now impossible to know the original configuration of the blocks. However, the entire bottom step was untouched by looting, demonstrating the jumbled nature of the final context of these blocks. This re-assembly of hieroglyphic blocks probably took place during the Terminal Classic period.

Other Terminal Classic architectural remains have been discovered on the platform in front of 13R-10. At this point, these features are in a poor state of preservation (near the surface) and it is difficult to work out their function.
Post-abandonment Activities

After the site was abandoned, and the Coronitas temples had partially collapsed, it appears that Postclassic pilgrims visited the site for ritual purposes. A Postclassic incense burner was recovered from the front of Structure 13R-3 (figure 6.34). It was very close to the surface, and was thus placed on top of nearly a meter of overburden that covered the stairway of the shared platform Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4. It was associated with a chert point.

Four other similar incense burners have been recovered from La Corona. One of them was recovered from Structure 13R-8 in the Coronitas group (Jocelyne Ponce, personal communication 2012). The other three were recovered from Structure 13Q-2 in the main plaza group (Gunter 2010; Guirola and Martínez 2012; Cristina Guirola, personal communication 2012).

Figure 6.34. Postclassic ceramic incense burner recovered from the surface in front of Structure 13R-3.
Archaeological Correlates of Patron Deity Veneration

The archaeological record of the Coronitas group consists of features discussed in Chapter 5 that correspond to patron deity veneration. A series of temples, whose architecture displays the small chambers consistent with patron deity shrines, makes up the eastern side of the Coronitas plaza. Structure 13R-5 even contains a hieroglyphic text that explicitly identifies the structure as a patron deity shrine and gives a date of its dedication in 677. The same text also mentions three other patron deity shrines that were constructed in 658. These very likely correspond to Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 which, in the K’uh phase, consists of a single architectural program corresponding to the early-to-mid 7th century.

Beyond temple dedication, the primary ritual activity for patron deity veneration visible in the archaeological record is feasting. Numerous middens have been found throughout the Coronitas group. This includes middens behind Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4 and 13R-5, as well as additional midden deposits behind Structures 13R-10 and 13R-7. Finally, the fill of Structure 13R-9 appears to be constituted largely from re-used midden fill. In short, every structure excavated in the whole Coronitas group so far has evidence of ritual feasting activity. The middens from Structures 13R-10 and 13R-7 have not yet been fully analyzed but contain enormous quantities of ceramics (fancy serving vessels, storage vessels, processing vessels, and drums), animal bones, shells, plant material, and lithics. Structure 13R-10 itself contained numerous manos and metates as well as additional plant material.

The middens from the temples themselves contain mostly ceramic material. An analysis of rim diameter revealed no significant changes through time. However, an
analysis of vessel forms turned up interesting results (fig. 6.35). The first midden recovered is from the Mam phase of Structure 13R-2. The ceramics date to Tzakol 2/3, during the mid 6th century. Of the identifiable forms present in this midden, 13.79% were jars, 31.03% were bowls and 55.17% were plates. No vases were identified. This midden can be compared with a midden from the K’uh phase, recovered behind Structures 13R-3 and 13R-4. In this phase, the percentages are quite different. The identifiable forms were composed of 19.70% vases, 16.67% jars, 48.48% bowls, and 15.15% plates. A Fisher’s exact test confirmed that these two assemblages were significantly different from one another (see Appendix B). A third midden from the Unen phase behind Structure 13R-5 turned up similar results. 14.71% of the identifiable sherds were Chablekal Fine Grays (functionally equivalent to vases), 14.71% were jars, 61.76% were bowls, and 8.82% were plates. Fisher’s exact tests demonstrated that this midden was also significantly different from the Mam phase, but that the K’uh and Unen phase middens were not significantly different from one another (see Appendix B). These results reflect the fact that activities on these temples during the K’uh and Unen middens were different from activities during the Mam phase. We can see a clear shift from a high percentage of plates and no vases during the Mam phase to the presence of individual vessels for liquid, a decrease in plates, and a higher percentage of bowls during the K’uh and Unen phases.

In addition to these middens, we can also examine the vessels left on the front of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4 in the Unen phase. Here, many vessels, especially jars, were recovered mostly intact upon the front terraces. This suggests that vessels were left in place (rather than smashed) after feasting events were complete. The identifiable assemblage consists of 72.09% jars, 22.09% bowls, and 5.81% plates. Interestingly,
Figure 6.35. Assemblages of Mam, K’uh and Unen phase middens. For more information about middens, see Appendix B.
individual vessels for drinking (vases/fine gray bowls) were absent from the assemblage. In addition, regular bowls and plates were also much better represented in the patron deity associated middens than on the front terraces.

The presence of this ceramic material points to the consumption of food and drink on the temples themselves. It appears that beverages were served on the front terraces by means of jars, many of which were left in place after the feasting event was over. Celebrants consumed these beverages in individual vessels, which were then discarded off the back of the structure when the feast was over. Vases and Fine Gray bowls were probably used by high-status celebrants, while other bowls were probably used by lower-status individuals. The paucity of plates in the K’uh and Unen phase assemblages seems to point toward a lack of solid foods. However, all ethnographic information about patron deity/saint veneration during the Postclassic, Colonial, and Modern periods indicates that solid foods were also consumed. This is supported by the large amounts of animal bones, plant material, and artifacts related to food preparation recovered from Structure 13R-10 and associated middens. I suspect, therefore, that only high-status celebrants used plates on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4, whereas lower-status celebrants used perishable items such as leaves (as from unwrapped tamales), or tortillas.

The fact that jars were left in place after the celebration was over is a curious and somewhat unexpected practice. Caroline Parris (personal communication 2012) suggests that such vessels may have been left in place regularly on the front terraces of these structures as a means of commemorating the abundance of recent feasting events. They may have only been cleared away in preparation for the next event. When the site was
abandoned, the next event never occurred, leaving the remains of the final patron deity
feast in place for millennia.

When we examine the archaeological evidence for feasting in the entire Coronitas
group, two distinct practices emerge: inclusionary feasting and exclusionary feasting
(LeCount 2001). Both types of feasts co-occur in modern patron saint veneration, and this
is probably the case for the Classic period as well.

Exclusionary feasting only included high-status celebrants. In modern patron saint
veneration, as discussed in Chapter 3, cargo holders celebrate a set of exclusive rituals
involving food and drink. The evidence from Coronitas suggests that analogous practices
occurred there in the context of patron deity veneration. Evidence for exclusionary feasts
comes in the form of large quantities of polychrome ceramics, many of them with royal
titles. These exclusionary feasts would have been venues in which status hierarchies were
enacted, and in which formal rituals of patron deity veneration, believed necessary for the
well-being of the community, were performed.

Inclusionary feasting, on the other hand, refers to feasting events in which many
different sectors of the La Corona community were involved. Evidence for this practice
can be found not only in the temple contexts described above, but in the sheer abundance
and variety of food remains and ceramics recovered from Structure 13R-10 and
associated middens. By analogy to modern patron saint veneration, such events would
have enacted community identity through the discourse of commensality with the deities
themselves. Inclusionary feasting also provided a venue in which low-status community
members directly participated in the ritual life of the community and could potentially
influence political ideology. Although rulers at La Corona introduced new patron deities
throughout the history of the community, whether or not the veneration of the deities was routinized may have depended largely on whether their feasts were celebrated by the community at large. On the one hand, inclusionary feasting tempted low-status community members with an abundance of food, drink and celebration. On the other hand, attendance at these feasts implied the tacit acceptance of royal ideology by attendees. Whether such feasts were entirely optional is open to question. However, it would have been difficult for any ruler to force the entire community to attend, even if he wanted to.

The presence of these archaeological materials all point to the use of the Coronitas group as a precinct for patron deity ritual. The mention of rulers of La Corona on Monuments 7 and 8 indicates that the royal family of La Corona saw patron deity ritual as an important aspect of their legitimacy. And it may be tempting to leave the analysis at that and to conclude that the institution of rulership was linked to the institution of patron deity veneration without further explanation. However, such a superficial conclusion lacks an in-depth understanding of the individual semiotic acts of patron deity introduction, accumulation, and veneration and their pragmatic effects of power relations in the community.

Luckily, at La Corona the analysis can be taken quite a bit further given the abundance of hieroglyphic monuments from the site. And the incorporation of this epigraphic evidence can potentially answer questions that remain about the Coronitas group. For example, why do Monuments 7 and 8 discuss patron deity veneration only going back to 658 when it is clear that the Coronitas temples have construction phases that are quite a bit earlier? Furthermore, why are there burials in these temples at all? As I
have established in earlier chapters, the Maya clearly differentiated between deceased ancestors and patron gods, yet here they built patron deity temples on top of old funerary shrines. By combining archaeological and epigraphic evidence, a much more nuanced understanding of the meaning of patron deity veneration at La Corona can be achieved.
A History of La Corona as Given on its Monuments

The ever-expanding epigraphic record from La Corona includes many monuments that are unprovenienced as well as others that have been found in situ by the La Corona Regional Archaeology Project (Table 7.1) (Mathews 1979; Graham 1997; Canuto et al. 2009). Thanks to archaeological investigation, the original provenience of many looted monuments can be pinpointed. In 2012, a large looter’s trench on the front of Structure 13R-10 was cleaned and excavations were carried out by Jocelyne Ponce. She discovered that the looters had encountered a hieroglyphic staircase, but had missed the bottom step. Other carved blocks had been disturbed by the looters, but apparently were rejected as too eroded to be of value. Additionally, a monument carcass matching the shape and dimensions of Looted Monument 6 was discovered. This excavation allows the Project to pinpoint the exact location from which numerous “Site Q” monuments were looted.

However, it is important to note that this partially-looted hieroglyphic stairway consisted of blocks of a number of different original monuments. In other words, the Maya of La Corona had, in the later history of the site’s occupation, removed different monuments from their original locations and re-set them on Structure 13R-10. Two of the in situ blocks were even reset upside-down. Thus, while we now know the provenience of the monuments looted in 1960, the Project is still in the process of discovering the original location of many of these blocks before they were moved by the Maya themselves.
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<p>| Monument 70 | H.S. 2 Block 1 from 1st row | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Monument 71 | H.S. 2 Block 12 from 1st row | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na'? |
| Monument 72 | H.S. 2 Block 2 from 1st row | Belongs with M. 73 | unknown |
| Monument 73 | H.S. 2 Block 3 from 1st row | Belongs with M. 72 | unknown |
| Monument 74 | H.S. 2 Block 5 from 1st row | | Chak Ak’aach Yuk |
| Monument 75 | H.S. 2 Block 6 from 1st row | Style similar to Looted M. 27 | Yajawte' K'inich |
| Monument 76 | H.S. 2 Block 7 from 1st row | Belongs with M. 77 | Sak Maas |
| Monument 77 | H.S. 2 Block 8 from 1st row | Belongs with M. 76 | Sak Maas |
| Monument 78a | | | ? |
| Looted Monument 1 | Site Q Panel 2, Panel 2 | | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 2 | Site Q Panel 2a, Panel 2a | | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 3 | Panel 3, Site Q Panel 1 | | K'inich ? Yook (?) |
| Looted Monument 4 | Site Q Panel 4, Panel 4 | | Chak Ak’aach Yuk (?) |
| Looted Monument 5 | Site Q Panel A, Panel 5 | | ? |
| Looted Monument 6a | Panel 6, Altar 5, Dallas Tablet/Altar | | Yajawte' K'inich |
| Looted Monument 6b | Panel 6, Altar 5, Dallas Tablet/Altar | | Yajawte' K'inich |
| Looted Monument 6c | Panel 6, Altar 5, Dallas Tablet/Altar | | Yajawte' K'inich |
| Looted Monument 7 | Site Q Glyphic Panel A, H.S. 3 Block I | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 8 | Site Q Glyphic Panel B, H.S. 3 Block II | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 9 | Site Q Glyphic Panel D, H.S. 3 Block III | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 10 | Site Q Glyphic Panel C, H.S. 3 Block IV | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook |
| Looted Monument 11 | Site Q Glyphic Panel 6, H.S. 2 Block VI | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 12 | Site Q Glyphic Panel 7, H.S. 2 Block VII | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 13 | Site Q Glyphic Panel 1, H.S. 2 Block VIII | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 14 | Site Q Glyphic Panel 9, H.S. 2 Block IX | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 15a | Site Q Glyphic Panel 4, H.S.2 Block X | | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 15b | Site Q Glyphic Panel 4, H.S.2 Block X | | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |
| Looted Monument 16 | Site Q Glyphic Panel 8, H.S. 2 Block XI | Hieroglyphic Stairway B | K'ahk' Wahy Na' |</p>
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<th>Glyphic Panel</th>
<th>H.S.</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Hieroglyphic Stairway</th>
<th>King (or) Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 43</td>
<td>H.S. 3 Block VII</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 44</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 13</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 45</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 14</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 46</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 15</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<td>Monument 47</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 16</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 48</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 17</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 49</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 18</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 50</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 19</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 51</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 20</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<td>Monument 52</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 21</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 53</td>
<td>H.S. 1 Block 22</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway 1</td>
<td>Final king (?)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 54</td>
<td>H.S. 3 Block V</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 55</td>
<td>H.S. 3 Block VI</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 56</td>
<td>H.S. 3 Block VIII</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 57</td>
<td>Misc. 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 58</td>
<td>Misc. 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 59</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Block XV</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway B</td>
<td>K'ahk' Wahy Na'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 60</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 1, H.S. 3 Block IX</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 61</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 2, H.S. 3 Block X</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 62</td>
<td>Misc. 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 63</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 3</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 64</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 4</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 65</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 5</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 66</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 6</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 67</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 7</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monument 68</td>
<td>H.S. 2 Looted Block 8</td>
<td>Hieroglyphic Stairway A</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Looted Monument 69 | H.S. 2 Looted Block 9 | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook
---|---|---|---
Looted Monument 70 | H.S. 2 Looted Block 10 | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook
Looted Monument 71 | H.S. 2 Looted Block 11 | Hieroglyphic Stairway A | K'inich ? Yook

Table 7.1. The monuments of La Corona.

Figure 7.1. Drawing of La Corona Monument 78a, an Early Classic monument fragment recovered from the palace fill.

In addition to the La Corona monuments, one carved altar and the fragment of a carved panel have also been recovered from the nearby site of La Caribá (Marken 2010:34–35), which was probably a town subordinate to La Corona.
All legible inscriptions of La Corona date to the mid-7th century or later. In 2012, Eduardo Bustamente recovered a fragment of a possible Early Classic monument (Monument 78) from the fill of the palace (figure 7.1), indicating that earlier monuments may have existed at La Corona. Some of the later inscriptions make retrospective reference to earlier events in the deep mythological past and more recent La Corona history (see table 7.2 for important dates in the La Corona inscriptions). These retrospective references are particularly interesting because they are used to rhetorically establish precedents that later rulers are said to follow. A frequent problem in the study of La Corona epigraphy is that many monuments from this site contain mathematical errors in the calculation of dates. In many cases the sources of error are obvious and it is possible to readily reconstruct the intended date. In other cases, the error is less obvious and the historical reconstruction more uncertain.

The earliest historical character recorded in the known monuments of La Corona appears on Monument 7 (figure 7.2) on a date in AD 314 (Guenter 2005:16). The verb is *tali* meaning “to come from [somewhere].” The name of the individual or place he came from follow the verb. These glyphs read *a-ne-la TAHN-na-K’INICH la-ju-a*. Stephen Houston (personal communication 2008) suggests that *la-ju-a* could mean *lajun a* ‘ten lakes,’” while Marc Zender (2011) suggests that *a-ne-la* could mean a *ahneel* “running,” thus referring to someone who came running. Unfortunately, these glyphs are not repeated elsewhere so an exact translation is difficult. Excavations at La Corona have not yet uncovered significant remains from the Pre-Classic period, so it is very possible that La Corona was founded around this time. Thus, the text may be referring somehow to the first settlement of La Corona or at least one of the earliest settlers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maya Date</th>
<th>year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.4.19.0.4 4 Kan 7 Sak</td>
<td>3805 BC</td>
<td>someone comes to La Corona from the Six Nothing Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.13.17.1.4 4 K'an 2 Mol</td>
<td>AD 314</td>
<td>Tahn K'inich Lajua' comes to La Corona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4.5.6.16 12 Kib 9 Pax</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>Arrival of Lady Naah Ek', wife of Vulture, at La Corona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5.10.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Sip</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>Period ending by Vulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.2.0.8 3 Lamat 1 Sotz'</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>Birth of Chakaw Nahb Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.12.10.6 5 Kimi 9 Sak</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>Accession of Sak Maas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.2.1.10 10 Oc 8 Kumk'u</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>Ballgame between Yuknoom Ch'en and Sak Maas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.2.4.4 12 K'an 17 Wo</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>Foundation of new Kan Dynasty capital at Calakmul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.4.8.5 7 Chikchan 8 Xul</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>Conjuring of Ikiy by Sak Maas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.8.1.9 11 Muluk 17 Pax</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>Pre-accession event for Chakaw Nahb Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.8.3.8 2 Lamat 16 Kumk'u</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>Birth of K'inich ? Yook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.2.7.14 2 Ix 7 Pop</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>Accession of K'uk' Ajaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.3.6.18 8 Etz'nab 11 Kumk'u</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>Death of Sak Maas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.5.7.9 11 Muluk 12 Kumk'u</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>Death of K'uk' Ajaw, accession of Chakaw Nahb Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.5.9.4 7 K'an 2 Wo</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>Dedicatin of shrines for patron gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.7.6.8 8 Lamat 1 K'ayab</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>Birth of Chak Ak'aach Yuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.10.0.0 11 Ajaw 18 Sak</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>Period ending by Chakaw Nahb Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.11.7.12 3 Eb 5 K'ayab</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook travels to Calakmul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.14.9.1 7 Imix 19 K'ayab</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>Death of Chakaw Nahb Chan's wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.15.0.5 9 Chik'chan 18 Mol</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>Death of Chakaw Nahb Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.15.1.11 9 Chuwen 4 Yax</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>Return of K'inich ? Yook from Calakmul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.15.2.16 8 Kib 9 Sak</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>Accession of the Son of Sak Wayis (K'inich ? Yook)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.11.16.2.8 9 Lamat 16 Yax</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>Dedication of the tomb of Chakaw Nahb Chan and his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.1.6.13 9 Ben 16 Mac</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook travels to Calakmul again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.3.5.0 7 Ajaw 13 Sak</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook accedes (for a second time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.5.7.4 4 K'an 7 Mak</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>Dedication of temple for Six Nothing Place God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.6.0.0 12 Ajaw 18 Sek</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>Conjuring of Ikiy by K'inich ? Yook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.6.16.17 11 Kaban 10 Sotz'</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>Arrival of Lady Tz'ibnal from Calakmul, wife of K'inich ? Yook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.7.12.15 3 Sen 8 Kumk'u</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook performs the Green Feather Flute Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.8.13.0 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>The second dance is performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.12.11.6.1.9 Imix 14 Yax</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>K'inich ? Yook drinks pulque</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next historical character to appear in the La Corona inscriptions is an Early Classic ruler, whose name glyph consists of a bird with the symbol for “person” in its mouth, probably representing some sort of carrion vulture (Martin 2008c:4). On Looted Monument 6, this king appears on a date in 520. On this date, a woman named Lady Naah Ek’ “House Star” arrived in La Corona to be Vulture’s wife. She is said to be the daughter of the Kaan king Tuun K’ab Hix (Martin 2008c). During this period, the Kaan capital was probably located at Dzibanche, not at Calakmul (Martin 2005a; Velásquez García 2004). The second date for Vulture can be found on Monument 1 (Martin 2008c:4). It records a date in 544 in which Vulture conducted period ending rites and “covered an [underworld] hole” (Guenter in Canuto 2008).
Figure 7.2. Drawing of La Corona Monuments 7 and 8 by David Stuart.
After a gap of about 80 years, the next historical character to appear in the La Corona monuments is Sak Maas. His name probably refers to some sort of white insect like a worm or cricket (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). He acceded as king in 625. A newly discovered hieroglyphic panel (Monument 74) tells us that in 635 he was visited by Yuknoom Ch’een, heir to the Kaan Dynasty throne, and the two played a ballgame (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). The same event is recorded on two additional panels (Monuments 76 and 77), which show the two lords seated facing each other, each holding “knuckle dusters”, apparently part of the sport (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). These two figural panels are the only two monuments known from the reign of Sak Maas. Shortly after this ballgame, the capital of the Kaan Dynasty moved to Calakmul, an event also recorded on Monument 74 (Stuart 2012b; see also Velásquez García 2004; Martin 2005a). Sak Maas died in 656, apparently violently “with the edge of a stone” (Grube in Grube et al. 2002:85). Before this death, however, a new king came to power named K’uk’ Ajaw (Quetzal Lord). This king acceded in 655, perhaps as a usurper. It was not long before he too met his death “with the edge of a stone” in 658. On the very same day, a new king came to power.
Figure 7.3. Family tree of La Corona rulers.
The new king, Chakaw Nahb Chan “Red Pool Snake,” was the son of Sak Maas (Ringle 1985:152–153) (see figure 7.3 for the family tree of La Corona rulers) and was born in 615. He seems to have undergone some sort of pre-accession event in 641 and shortly thereafter his own son (Ringle 1985:152–153), K’inich ? Yook, was born. A second son, Chak Ak’aach Yuk, was born in 660 (Schele and Grube 1994:125). Both sons had the same mother, a fact which they point out readily in their monuments. Chakaw Nahb Chan was responsible for the construction of patron deity temples in the Coronitas group. Chakaw Nahb Chan died in 667 a few months after his wife. They were buried together in the same tomb.

K’inich ? Yook (“Radiant […] Dog”) spent long periods of time in Calakmul. He made a trip there in 664 when he was 23 years old, and returned to La Corona to bury his parents in 667 (Schele and Grube 1994:128–129). The first of two accession dates is given for him less than a month after his return. The monument does not actually name K’inich ? Yook at this point, but rather gives the title of the acceding ruler as the “son of Sak Wahyis” (Sak Wahyis is a title of the kings of La Corona and was used by K’inich ? Yook’s father). This causes some uncertainty as to whether K’inich ? Yook himself came to power or some other individual. However, K’inich ? Yook’s arrival at La Corona after his parents’ death is described in two different inscriptions using the huli verb, usually carrying the connotation of dynastic change. Thus, it is likely that K’inich ? Yook was seated into office at this time, but later underwent a second ceremony. K’inich ? Yook made another trip to Calakmul in 673 (Guenter 2005:15–16). Two years later he went through a second accession ceremony, this time under the direct auspices of Yuknoom.
Ch’een, ruler of Calakmul, in which he “grasped K’awiil.” In 677, K’inic ? Yook dedicated another deity shrine in the Coronitas group. In 679 he married the daughter of Yuknoom Ch’een, who came to La Corona to be his wife (Martin 2008c). The couple had a son named Janahb, who grew up to be the king Yajawte’ K’inic (Martin 2008c:7).

It is unknown when K’inic ? Yook died, but his younger brother, Chak Ak’aach Yuk (Great Turkey [?]), came to power in 689 (Guenter in Canuto 2008). Since this was only 10 years after K’inic ? Yook’s marriage, it is possible that his son Janahb did not accede at this time because of his young age. Chak Ak’aach Yuk maintained a strong relationship with Calakmul and its king Yuknoom Yich’aak K’ahk’. Stela 1 records an important period ending ritual that the two kings performed together in 692. In 695, Calakmul suffered a military defeat at the hands of Tikal, as recorded on Lintel 3 of Temple I at Tikal. This does not seem to have affected the relationship. In fact, a new hieroglyphic panel (Monument 74) indicates that the two travelled to La Corona together in 696 (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). This is the last known date for Chak Ak’aach Yuk.

Sometime before 721, a new king named Yajawte’ K’inic came to power. His name appears first on Looted Monument 6, which he commissioned. It records that in 721 another woman from Calakmul, the daughter of king Yuknoom Took’ K’awiil, arrived to be his wife (Martin 2008c). The altar also mentions the name Janahb, so Simon Martin proposed that Yajawte’ K’inic is simply the accession name of K’inic ? Yook’s son (2008c:7). This hypothesis can now be confirmed by the discovery in 2012 of Monument 75, a panel depicting Yajawte’ K’inic and naming him as Janahb (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). The date of this panel is unfortunately mostly
eroded, but it records the capture of an individual named Numul Ahn Chaak (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). The emblem glyph of this captive is not familiar, but he was probably from a site somewhere near La Corona. The panel depicts Yajawte’ K’inich seated on a throne and gazing into a mirror. In front of him are heaped piles of tribute, the fruits of his conquest.

Looted Monument 6 records a period ending in 731. An even later date for this king may appear on an altar from the nearby site of La Cariba, recovered by the Project in 2009. It records the period ending of 746, and depicts a ruler and his wife standing before a kneeling noble. Given the importance of his wife in Yajate’ K’inich’s rhetoric on the Dallas Tablet, it is likely that this monument depicts this same married pair. The name of the king is now largely gone, but does end with the glyph K’INICH (Stanley Guenter, personal communication 2009), and is therefore consistent with his name. This altar, together with Monument 75, indicate that Yajawte’ K’inich dominated the region immediately surrounding La Corona and possibly even further afield.

Interestingly, a set of hieroglyphic stairway blocks (Hieroglyphic Stairway B) dates from the reign of Yajawte’ K’inich but never mentions him. Instead, its protagonist is a nobleman named K’ahk’ Wahy Na’, holding the titles Ajk’ uhuun and Anab (Matteo 2010), both probably priestly titles (Zender 2004). Rather than claiming Yajawte’ K’inich as his overlord, he only mentions the Calakmul king Yuknoom Took’ K’awiil. Unfortunately, we cannot yet say what the relationship between this priest and the La Corona king was. Blocks from this stairway were discovered by the Project on Structure 13R-10 in 2012, but the original location of the stairway remains unknown. Given the fact that Yajawte’ K’inich seems to have been a powerful political player in the
immediate area, it seems unlikely K’ahk’ Wahy Na’ would “go over his head” and not mention him in his monument. Thus, it is possible that the Set B blocks were originally from a site outside of La Corona proper.

After 746 there is a monument hiatus at La Corona. This may be related to other political events of the Maya world. In 743 and 744 Tikal attacked the sites of El Peru and Naranjo respectively (Martin 1996; 2000b). Both were allies of Calakmul and part of a network of sites that surrounded Tikal. Tikal broke this encirclement by attacking these sites. El Peru is only about 28km south of La Corona, within a day’s walk. Thus it is possible that Tikal’s military campaigns of the mid-8th century affected La Corona as well. The collapse of the Calakmul network may have had economic effects on La Corona or it may have suffered a military defeat of its own.

The monumental record returns in 785 with the dedication of Monument 4. Unfortunately, the name of the ruler who dedicated this altar can no longer be read. He was probably also responsible for Monument 6, dedicated in 805. This altar discusses the arrival of a woman in 791, presumably to marry the La Corona king. This woman is given a Tikal emblem glyph and is also given the very high title of “Lady Kaloomte’” (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010). Thus, the practice of marrying important foreign noble ladies was continued during this period, only now La Corona was allied with Tikal, rather than the diminished Calakmul. The Tikal lady died in 797 (Stanley Guenter, personal communication 2010). The dedication of this altar in 805 is the last known date recorded at La Corona. The collapse of royal authority must have come soon after.
Patron Deities on the La Corona Monuments

There are several monuments of La Corona that are relevant to patron deity veneration. The most important of these are Monuments 7 and 8, dedicated in 677 by K’inich ? Yook (figure 7.2). These panels were discovered in situ in structure 13R-5, the southernmost in a row of five small temple platforms in the Coronitas group (see Guenter 2005 for a summary of these monuments).

The text begins by giving the date of its own dedication, on the occasion of the construction of a temple for a deity. This date falls on the calendar round 4 K’an 7 Mak. On this day “the stone of the Six Nothing Place was fashioned.” The Six Nothing Place is the name of the temple (wayib) of a god whose name reads ? Winik Ub, of unknown meaning. This god is also referred to as “Six Nothing Place God,” thus tying him again to the temple name. The phrase “Six Nothing Place” can be linked to various other mythological place names conforming to the formula Six X Place, each associated with a different maize god and with particular political communities (Houston, Stuart, et al. 1992; Tokovinine 2008).

The text now moves backward in time, telling us that in 314, on a date with the calendar round 4 K’an 2 Mol, somebody “came running” or came from “ten lakes,” as discussed above. This early event is linked to the temple dedication because they both fall on the day 4 K’an, as do other dates in the inscription.

Next, the text links the 677 temple dedication to a similar event conducted by K’inich ? Yook’s father, Chakaw Nahb Chan. The text reads, “thrice fashioned were the stones for the wayibs of Yaxal Ajaw (Lord of Newness/Greenness), K’an Chaak (Yellow Chaak), and Chak Wayib Chaak (Great Temple Chaak). Chakaw Nahb Chan
accomplished it [the dedication].” Given structure 13R-5’s proximity to a set of three temples in the Coronitas group, it was hypothesized that these three temples are the same as those mentioned in the text. It should be noted that the dedication date of the three temples in the text falls a mere 35 days after the accession of Chakaw Nahb Chan, as described on Looted Monument 1. Thus, it was probably one of his first acts as king.

The three characters for whom these temples were constructed were almost certainly patron gods. To begin, the text draws a parallel between ?Winik Ub (who is explicitly labeled as a god) and these three individuals. In addition, the term wayib is only rarely used to describe ancestor shrines but is frequently used to describe deity shrines. Finally, these names are much more likely to belong to deities than ancestors. Yax[al] Ajaw is a deity name that is also found at Yaxchilan, Moral Reforma, and possibly Calakmul. Ek’ Wayib Chaak (“Black Temple Chaak,” similar to “Red Temple Chaak”) is a deity name at Palenque. On the other hand, no known Maya rulers carried these names. Thus, it is safe to conclude that these three characters were patron gods.

The text of Monuments 7 and 8 now discuss events in the life of K’inich ? Yook. In 673 he journeyed to Calakmul where some sort of ritual interaction took place with Calakmul king Yuknoom Ch’een (his future father-in-law) and with seven of Yuknoom Ch’een’s sons. The text then mentions the departure of Yuknoom Yich’aak K’ahk’ and his younger brother from some location. Shortly thereafter, in 675, K’inich ? Yook underwent an accession ceremony (probably his second) under the auspices of the Calakmul king.

The narrative now moves back to a discussion of the 677 temple dedication. This time, the temple dedication is related to a mythological event that took place in 3805 BC.
on the calendar round 4 K’an 7 Mak. This is another tali event, or someone coming from somewhere. The traveling person is named ya-ma-ku-a. This mythological character comes from a place called “[?] Water Six Nothing Place” (Zender 2011). Thus, he is linked to the name of the temple as well.

The text finishes by counting forward from the temple dedication date to future period endings, anchoring this event within a greater framework of historical time. Monuments 7 and 8 each depict K’inich ? Yook on the occasion of a period ending in 677, a few months before the temple dedication. Monument 7 depicts K’inich ? Yook and labels him with his royal title Sak Wahyis. The headdress of his costume contains glyphic elements spelling out the Sak Wahyis title (David Stuart, personal communication 2008). Monument 8 also depicts K’inich ? Yook, here accompanied by a text which describes him “with a backrack.” He is indeed depicted wearing the elaborate backrack of the “Six Sky Place” maize god, a deity closely associated with Calakmul (David Stuart, personal communication 2008).

This monument thus lays out two rhetorical narratives: that K’inich ? Yook has gained legitimacy through his close interactions with the Calakmul royal family, and that the dedication of the deity temple 13R-5 was the proper course of action given mythological and historical events at La Corona. According to the text, mytho-historical characters came to La Corona from far off places (on days with the name 4 K’an), one of them from Six Nothing Place itself. Thus, the dedication of a temple for the god of Six Nothing Place is appropriate given La Corona’s previous affiliation with this location. As will be discussed below, Structure 13R-5, where Monuments 7 and 8 were found, probably originally served as a funerary shrine for Tahn K’inich Lajua’, the character
who came to La Corona in 314. By discussing the earlier mythological arrival of a character associated with Six Nothing Place, the monument may be justifying the re-dedication of this structure as a shrine for the Six Nothing Place god.

Other hieroglyphic texts also mention La Corona patron deities. Among the hieroglyphic blocks recovered from Structure 13R-10 in 2012 by Jocelyne Ponce is a series of blocks originally belonging to a hieroglyphic stairway (Hieroglyphic Stairway A). Each block has four columns of three glyphs, and they can thus be easily recognized as a set. In 2012, two such blocks were recovered in situ, while an additional 10 were recovered from backdirt, where they had been abandoned by the looters. To these can be added three other looter’s rejects: two of them discovered in 2011 in front of Structure 13R-10, and one in 2006 in the main plaza. Four additional blocks are also in private collections while three looted blocks have recently been returned to Guatemala (Morales 2012), thanks largely to the efforts of the Project. The original location of this stairway, before it was re-set by the Maya, remains uncertain, but may have been Structure 13R-10 itself, given the large numbers of these blocks recovered from this area and the relevance of the text to ritual events in the Coronitas group.

Based on these recovered blocks, this stairway told of events in the life of K’inich Yook, repeating many of the events discussed on Monuments 7 and 8. It also tells about the birth of his son Janahb, later renamed Yajawte’ K’inich, probably to establish his legitimacy as heir. But this monument also mentions as god called Ikiiy (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). The text of Looted Monument 10 tells us that this god was conjured during the reign of Sak Maas, the paternal grandfather of K’inich Yook.
Figure 7.4. Drawing of La Corona Looted Monument 66, which describes the conjuring of Ikiiy. Drawing by author.

Figure 7.5. Drawing of La Corona Monument 66, which describes the Green Feather Flute dance. Drawing by author.
Another block (Looted Monument 66, figure 7.4) tells us that K’inich ? Yook himself performed a similar conjuring event on the 9.12.6.0.0 period ending of 678. This block gives us valuable information. First, we learn that this conjuring happened at La Corona itself. Second, the god is referred to as *ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil* (the image/penance/darkness) of K’inich ? Yook, a phrase sometimes used to express the relationship between kings and patron deities (see Chapter 4). Finally, the text explicitly links this conjuring to that of Sak Maas, by stating that the event *utz’akbuil ukabiy umam* “continues the work of his grandfather” (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). This implies that Ikiiy was associated with Sak Maas, and was perhaps introduced by him.

In addition to Ikiiy, another block mentions Yaxal Ajaw, one of the gods mentioned on Monument 7, whose temple was constructed in 658 by Chakaw Nahb Chan. This block (Monument 66) discusses a dance ritual performed by K’inich ? Yook in 680 (figure 7.5). The dance he performed was the “Green Feather Flute Dance” (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). The description of the dance is followed by a somewhat obscure reference to Yaxal Ajaw. The glyph preceding the god’s name reads *tu-ya-HAAB-li-?*, telling us that something happens within “the year of [?] of Yaxal Ajaw.” The unknown glyph resembles signs for sound or song, perhaps somehow complimenting the dance (David Stuart, personal communication 2012).

This first dance was followed 365 days later by another dance, this one taking place on the auspicious calendar round date of 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk’u in 682. In sum, the two events represent a set of two dances marking the 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk’u anniversary of the 13th Baktun, starting a year before the fact. In some way, the god Yaxal Ajaw presided

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39 A similar sequence of glyphs (*tu-HAAB-il-?*) can be found on Pendant 15B of Comalcalco, there followed by the name of the deity Chak Xib Chaak. In that context, it also refers to 365-day cycles (David Stuart, personal communication 2012).
over these rituals. K’inich ? Yook clearly believed it was important to maintain the cult of earlier patron deities, along with the cult of the Six Nothing Place God.

One other block from this set (Looted Monument 56) may refer to patron deity veneration. It tells us that in 683, K’inich ? Yook was involved in a feasting event in which he drank pulque (Stuart 2008a), an alcoholic beverage. Given the clear evidence for ritual feasting on and around Structure 13R-10, and the Coronitas group’s function as a venue for patron deity veneration, it is possible that the drinking of pulque in this context was part of a feasting event having to do with patron deities.

One final monument should be discussed relating to patron deity veneration. Looted Monument 6 (Stuart 2013), as described above, was commissioned by Yajawte’ K’inich to celebrate his dynasty’s history of marrying princesses from the Kaan Dynasty (Martin 2008c). According to the monument, the earliest of these was Lady Naah Ek’, who arrived in La Corona in 520. The monument presents her as a kind of dynastic founder, using the *huli* verb and depicting her with Teotihuacan-style iconography. She stands on a palanquin while behind her rises a huge effigy figure of a deity. This deity has jaguar paws and a long tail and its head represents a version of the Teotihuacan War Serpent (Taube 1998:281, 284).

We know from depictions of similar figures on the Tikal lintels that these large effigies were patron gods carried into battle (see Chapter 4). One of these lintels, in fact, may represent the arrival of the Teotihuacan War Serpent itself at Tikal, brought by the military leader Sihyaj K’ahk’ (Stuart 2000:490). The *huli* verb is also used to describe this important event, and while not technically the founding of the Tikal dynasty, is represented discursively on Tikal monuments as a kind of second founding or new era.
Recall that the introduction of the Teotihuacan War Serpent in the Maya area can be traced back to this arrival event, and was subsequently used at Tikal and other sites as a motif of dynastic legitimacy.

The same set of symbolic motif is used on Looted Monument 6. This Teotihuacan-style deity represents a “new era” ushered in by the arrival (huli) of a foreign princess. The introduction of a new patron god, as at Tikal, symbolized this new order. Thus, this monument, like other Maya monuments, clearly links an important dynastic event to the introduction of a new deity at La Corona.

From these inscriptions, we can identify six patron deities at La Corona: the Teotihuacan-style god appears to be chronologically the earliest, introduced during the reign of Vulture. Ikiiy is is associated with the reign of Sak Maas. Yaxal Ajaw, K’an Chaak and Chak Wayib Chaak first appear during the reign of Chakaw Nahb Chan and are mentioned in his son’s monuments. The earliest reference to Six Nothing Place appears on a monument from Chakaw Nahb Chan’s reign but the first mention of the Six Nothing Place god appears on K’inich Yook’s monuments. As at other sites, it is difficult to determine when patron deities are actually introduced: the first mention does not necessarily mean that the god was not venerated earlier. However, I propose that Ikiiy was introduced by Sak Maas, Yaxal Ajaw, K’an Chaak and Chak Wayib Chaak by Chakaw Nahb Chan, and ? Winik Ub by K’inich Yook for specific political reasons.

Two Households, both Alike in Dignity

While many of the monuments at La Corona concern the history of one ruling family, there are hints in the epigraphic record for dynastic changes. For example, the
violent deaths of Sak Maas and K’uk’ Ajaw suggest a period of civil strife. The hieroglyphic record is also punctuated by historical gaps, such as during the late 6th century and late 8th century. These may be the result of intentional monument destruction which accompanies dynastic changes at other Maya sites. In addition, the shift in alliance from Calakmul—whose royal family served as long-time in-laws of one La Corona dynasty—to Tikal may be indicative of dynastic changes at La Corona as well.

I propose that at least two lineages competed for royal authority at La Corona during its history (refer to figure 7.3). For convenience, I refer to these as “Lineage A” and “Lineage B.” Lineage A was responsible for most of the monuments recovered from La Corona and thus there is a much clearer picture of its family relationships and its political relationship with Calakmul. However, Lineage B members also appear in the inscriptions as well. The rivalry between these two families can explain many of the events at the site, especially those relating to patron deity veneration.

As described above, the earliest historical date at La Corona falls in AD 314 and is described on La Corona Monument 7. On this day, someone named Tahn K’inich Lajua is said to come from somewhere or “come running.” The use of the term K’inich in his name, meaning “radiant” suggests elevated status, as it refers to the Sun god and is often used in the names of rulers. However, Monument 7 does not describe his arrival at La Corona with the verb huli (to arrive) but rather tali (to come from somewhere). Since the huli verb implies dynastic founding or other arrivals of great political import, Monument 7 appears to deny Tahn K’inich Lajua the honor of dynastic founding, but still attributes important early events to him. Furthermore, the date of AD 314 is around the time we should expect the first settlement of La Corona, since major Preclassic deposits
have not yet been recovered by the La Corona Regional Archaeology Project. This evidence all suggests that Tahn K’inich Lajua was an early settler, or perhaps the founder, of the community of La Corona and was thereby given a high status by later settlers. He also appears to have belonged to Lineage B, since Lineage A members trace their dynastic founding to other events. The considerable antiquity of Lineage B and its status as the lineage of the first settler may have given it prestige and special privilege (McAnany 1995).

Some time during the Early Classic period, Lineage B appears to have lost the rulership of La Corona to Lineage A. The first identifiable member of Lineage A was “Vulture,” who is given the La Corona royal title of K’uhul Sak Wahyis on Monument 1 (carved by later Lineage A member Chak Ak’aach Yuk). Looted Monument 6 (carved by later Lineage A member Yajawte’ K’inich) tells us that in 520, the daughter of Kaan King Tuun K’ab Hix arrived in La Corona to be Vulture’s wife. Here, the huli verb is used. At this point in history, the Kaan dynasty was not yet based at Calakmul but rather much farther away at Dzibanche. Thus, Vulture’s marriage to this princess established relations with a far-off overlord.

Several attributes of Looted Monument 6 demonstrate that Lineage A considered this event to be a dynastic founding or at least a dynastic change. The use of the huli verb to describe the princess’ arrival is telling. Furthermore, she is depicted on the monument wearing costume elements associated with Teotihuacan. Such iconography was often used by the Maya to suggest the ancient prestige and authority of particular historical individuals (Stuart 2005b). Finally, Vulture’s wife arrived at La Corona with a patron deity effigy, which is also depicted using Teotihuacan iconography. As at Tikal, the
introduction of a new patron deity in this context suggests a major dynastic change. Thus, in the imagery and discourse of later Lineage A members, Vulture’s authority to rule was established through his relationship with the Kaan dynasty and this marriage was the true “founding” of rulership at La Corona. The last date for Vulture is 544 when he performed a period ending ritual.

After this date, there is a gap in the historical record of La Corona lasting until 625. Though it will be discussed further below, it is important to note that this historical gap corresponds to the period of Burials 2 and 6 from the Muk phase of Structures 13R-4 and 13R-2 respectively.

Lineage A ruler Sak Maas came to power in 625. He once again established relations with the Kaan dynasty, playing ball with future Kaan ruler Yuknoom Ch’een in 635. Two panels carved in 651 commemorate this ballgame (Monuments 76 and 77) are the earliest legible monuments known from La Corona. It is possible that earlier carved monuments existed but were destroyed in the conflict between the two lineages. The possible stela fragment from the palace fill (Monument 78) may be one example (see figure 7.1). Shortly after the 635 ballgame, the Kaan dynasty moved its dynastic seat to Calakmul, much closer to La Corona. This would have made a relationship with the Kaan dynasty even more important and advantageous for Lineage A. However, Lineage B and other community members may have wanted political autonomy. Sak Maas probably introduced the patron deity Ikiiy during his reign. This first recorded date for this deity falls about two years after the move of the Kaan dynasty.

In 655, K’uk’ Ajaw, an apparent usurper, came to power and in the following year Sak Maas died violently “with the edge of a stone.” K’uk’ Ajaw was probably from
Lineage B, and his goal in claiming authority may have been to reverse the policy of Calakmul friendship promoted by Lineage A.

This strategy did not work, however, and K’uk’ Ajaw met his own death “at the edge of a stone” in 658 on the same day that Lineage A member Chakaw Nahb Chan, son of Sak Maas, came to power. 35 days after this violent accession, Chakaw Nahb Chan dedicated temples for Yaxal Ajaw, K’an Chaak, and Chak Wayib Chaak, as mentioned on Monument 7. Chakaw Nahb Chan also quickly re-established relations with Calakmul, sending his heir to live there in 664. It is likely that the Calakmul dynasty, for its own political and economic interests, supported Chakaw Nahb Chan’s bid for power over his rival K’uk’ Ajaw.

In 667 Chakaw Nahb Chan and his wife both died and their son K’inich ? Yook returned from Calakmul to undergo an accession ceremony “seating” him in lordship. He underwent a second ceremony (this time grasping K’awiil) in 675 under the auspices of Yuknoom Ch’een of Calakmul. In 677 he completed a new phase of Structure 13R-5 and its accompanying Monuments 7 and 8. The text explains that the shrine was the “sleeping place” of the “Six Nothing Place god” and compares this temple dedication to that performed by K’inich ? Yook’s father in 658. The monuments were set into a bench against the back wall of the shrine. Although they were placed south of the central axis of this construction phase, this location placed them directly over the tomb of the K’inich phase below. The text takes pains to justify the authority of Lineage A. It explains that in 3805 BC (clearly a mythological date) someone came to La Corona from the Six Nothing Place. It is interesting to note that the phrase “Six Nothing Place” appears on two other La Corona monuments. One is Chakaw Nahb Chan’s Miscellaneous Monument 2, where
*Wak Mih Nal* apparently serves as a title following *Sak Wahyis*. The other is a newly discovered block (Monument 72) recovered in 2012 from the front of 13R-10 (figure 7.6). Here the order of the titles is reversed “*Wak Mih Nal Sak Wahyis*.” Tokovinine (2008:282–284) notes many other examples in Classic Maya inscriptions where “Six X Place” was used as a title for rulers. At La Corona, it may be a mythological place of origin of Lineage A. In that case, claiming the earlier arrival of a Six Nothing Place individual at La Corona in mythological times would further bolster the claims to authority of Lineage A over the supposedly more recent Lineage B and its founder Tahn K’Kinich Lajua’. It would also mean that the new dedication of Structure 13R-5 effectively promoted a god specific to Lineage A to a patron god of the whole community.

K’inich ? Yook was the second ruler at La Corona to marry a princess of the Snake dynasty. Following in the footsteps of his ancestor Vulture, K’inich ? Yook married Lady Tz’ibnal, daughter of Yuknoom Ch’een in 679. The *huli* verb is also used to describe her arrival, suggesting the renewal of dynastic authority at La Corona. The royal pair had a son Janahb, who would later grow up to be La Corona ruler Yajawte’ K’inich. K’inich ? Yook was succeeded by his brother Chak Ak’aach Yuk. This new ruler maintained his strong relationship with Calakmul even after a 695 defeat by Tikal. K’inich ? Yook’s son Yajawte’ K’inich followed him and married a third Calakmul princess, Lady Ti’ Kaan in 721 (also described using the *huli* verb).

After 746 Yajawte’ K’inich disappears from the historical record and there is a brief monument hiatus at La Corona. In 743 and 744, Tikal had successfully defeated Calakmul allies El Peru and Naranjo, thus breaking out of its encirclement of enemies and probably breaking supply chains to Calakmul itself. The influence of the Kaan
Figure 7.6. Drawing of La Corona Monument 72, which uses *Wak Mih Nal Sak Wahyis* as a title. Drawing by author.
dynasty thus waned at this time. It is possible that this shift in geopolitics allowed Lineage B of La Corona to ascend once again.

The hieroglyphic record resumes at La Corona in 785 with the dedication of Monument 4, which is mostly illegible. Monument 6 tells us that in 791, a woman of high status from Tikal arrived (*huli*) at La Corona, presumably to marry its ruler. The realignment of La Corona as a Tikal ally may be the result of Lineage B’s re-ascendancy. If the new Lineage B rulers destroyed their predecessor’s monuments, this may also explain the monument hiatus between 746 and 785. The monumental record of La Corona permanently falls silent after 805, although occupation at the site continued until at least 830.

**Conflicts and the Coronitas Group**

By comparing the archaeological record of the Coronitas group to the historical record at La Corona, it is possible to see how individual semiotic acts of burials, temple dedications, and ritual feasts achieved pragmatic goals within the context of a protracted conflict between two lineages.

The K’inich phase of Structure 13R-5 held an Early Classic tomb (Burial 1), probably constructed during 3^rd^ or 4^th^ century AD. The presence of the K’inich phase funerary shrine, along with jade and the ritual treatment of the bones with red pigment, all suggest that Burial 1 contains a high-status individual. La Corona Monument 7, from the later phase of the same structure, discusses the arrival of Tahn K’inich Lajua’ in AD 314, probably an early settler of the community. This panel, along with its counterpart, Monument 8, rather than set along the central axis of the later phase, were set directly
above this early tomb, suggesting a direct reference to it. For this reason, I believe that Burial 1 contains the remains of Tahn K’inich Lajua’. Although Monument 7 acknowledges the importance of Tahn K’inich Lajua’ in the history of the La Corona community, it denies him the honor of dynastic founding and even suggests that a different individual, who arrived in mythic time, should take precedence over him. For these reasons, Tahn K’inich Lajua’ was probably from Lineage B.

The K’inich phase appears to be the first in a series of Early Classic burials in the Coronitas group. While the Mam phase of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 has not been fully explored, it is very likely that these 6th century platforms served as funerary shrines for other individuals. The Muk phases of these same structures certainly served this function, as burials were found in Structures 13R-2 and 13R-4 (13R-3 probably contains a Muk phase burial as well but was not excavated fully). As at Tikal, where the North Acropolis served as a long-term venue for burials for the royal lineage, the Early Classic Coronitas group appears to have served as a necropolis for a high-status family. This family was almost certainly Lineage B, whose founding ancestor was buried nearby in the K’inich phase of Structure 13R-5.

In the Early 6th Century, according to later accounts, Lineage A member Vulture became ruler of La Corona and married a woman from the Kaan dynasty at Dzibanche. Later Lineage A rulers present this marriage as the act of dynastic founding, with this woman dressed in Teotihuacan-style clothing and accompanied by a Teotihuacan-style patron deity. A marriage alliance to the Kaan dynasty would have incorporated La Corona into a network of far-off contacts and probably inter-regional trade. However, the historical record is silent about the subsequent decades of the 6th century.
Burial 2 and especially Burial 6 of the Muk phase appear to contain occupants of very high status. Both of these burials were topped by large funerary shrines which would have required a substantial amount of labor. Their bones were treated with red pigment. The unlooted Burial 6 contained 15 ceramic vessels, numerous faunal remains of local origin and some exotic marine shells. It was also covered in approximately 20,000 to 30,000 lithic flakes (a marker of elite or royal status at other sites at this time) and a woven mat, a symbol of royal authority in Maya iconography. All of this evidence suggests that the occupants of Burials 2 and 6 were rulers of La Corona. However, the location of their burials in the Coronitas group, in close proximity to Burial 1 suggests that they belonged to Lineage B. Their chronological placement during the mid-to-late 6th century falls in the historical gap after Lineage A ruler Vulture.

It is likely that Lineage A lost royal authority at La Corona to Lineage B during this time. The paucity of exotic material in Burial 6 also suggests that this ruler or his immediate predecessors buried in Burial 2 and in Structures 13R-3 broke off trade relations with the Kaan dynasty at Dzibanche. The lack of monuments from this time may be the result of intentional destruction by later Lineage A members when they regained power. A smashed Early Classic monument from the palace fill (see figure 7.1) may be one such monument.

The historical record indicates that Lineage A regained authority in 625 when Sak Maas came to power. A later monument indicates that Sak Maas may have introduced the patron deity Ikiiy to La Corona, although his temple has not yet been identified. Sak Maas re-established relations with the Kaan dynasty, whose heir, Yuknoom Ch’een, visited La Corona in 635 and moved the Kaan capital to Calakmul a few months later.
However, this renewed alliance did not put an end to conflict at La Corona. In 655, a new ruler named K’uk’ Ajaw, apparently unrelated to Sak Maas and probably a member of Lineage B, came to power. Less than a year later, the deposed Sak Maas died violently, in what was probably a political assassination. The coup by Lineage B was short lived, however, and K’uk’ Ajaw also died violently in 658. On the same day, Chakaw Nahb Chan, son of Sak Maas, was seated in lordship. According to Monument 7, his first act as king, just 35 days after this bloody accession, he introduced three patron deities to La Corona and dedicated temples for them.

There are many reasons to believe that these patron deity temples correspond to the K’uh phase of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4. To begin, the text specifically indicates that three separate temples were dedicated on the same day. No other structures at La Corona readily stand out as potential candidates, while the K’uh phase consists of a single architectural program spread over three temples with ceramic dating it to the early-to-mid 7th century. Secondly, the Coronitas group apparently served as a precinct for patron deity veneration in later phases, with the addition of the Ub phase temple for an additional god, with other inscriptions on 13R-10 referring to patron deity veneration rituals, and with the abundant evidence for large-scale feasting events. Other evidence can be found in the archaeological remains of the K’uh phase itself. Unlike previous phases, which were sequential (built as each tomb occupant died), the K’uh phase was a single continuous architectural program. The features of the K’uh phase suggest that it was completed in a hurried fashion: the fill is quite thin, with new floors laid down only 50cm above old floors in some areas. The K’uh phase remodeling only occurs on the front of the structures and does not even extend onto the back terraces. Superstructures of
the K’uh phase were perishable, finished in waddle and daub. The hurried nature of this construction is consistent with a dedication date only 35 days after it was initiated. Finally, a midden from the K’uh phase shows considerable differences to the Mam phase midden. As discussed in Chapter 6, the decrease in plates between the Mam phase midden and the K’uh phase midden probably reflects a more egalitarian celebration, in which a higher percentage of participants used ad-hoc materials such as leaves or tortillas. This is perfectly consistent with the idea that in the Mam phase, these structures were used by the high-status/royal Lineage B as funerary shrines, but in the K’uh phase, they were used as patron deity shrines by the greater community.

All of this evidence suggests that the K’uh phase of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 corresponds to a major change in function of these structures: where they once served as funerary shrines to Early Classic Lineage B rulers, they now served as “sleeping places” for newly introduced patron deities. Thus, Lineage A ruler Chakaw Nahb Chan, after assassinating his Lineage B rival, immediately replaced the funerary shrines of his rival’s ancestors with new patron deity cults. The pragmatic effects of this highly significant act will be discussed further below.

It is likely that Chakaw Nahb Chan also commissioned other structures in the Coronitas group, specifically the platform and possibly the earliest phase of Structure 13R-10. But his son, K’inich ? Yook made even more changes to the group, all of them related to patron deity veneration. In 677, he dedicated the Ub phase of Structure 13R-5 with its accompanying hieroglyphic monuments. This dedication occurred ten years after his first accession ceremony and two years after his second accession, so he took much more time than his father in dedicating this new patron deity shrine. This is reflected in
the architecture of the Ub phase, whose platform was substantially raised and whose superstructure was made of thick masonry walls and possibly a vaulted ceiling. The text of Monuments 7 and 8 describes the Ub phase as a “Sleeping Place” for the Six Nothing Place god, a deity associated with Lineage A itself. Thus, the dedication of this temple and the accompanying hieroglyphic discourse appear to promote a lineage god to a patron deity of the whole community. This temple dedication, like the K’uh phase, was also a change in function for Structure 13R-5. While previously it had served as a funerary shrine to early Lineage B settler Tahn K’ínich Lajua’, it now became a patron deity temple. Monuments 7 and 8 appear to justify this change by explaining Lineage A’s greater antiquity at La Corona as compared to Lineage B. However, the text readily acknowledges Tahn K’ínich Lajua’s importance in La Corona history rather than attempting to blot out his memory. The pragmatic effects of these actions and discourses will be discussed further below.

K’ínich ? Yook made other changes to the Coronitas group as well. During his reign, additional phases of Structure 13R-9 and 13R-10 were added and there is evidence of large-scale feasting events in the group. The text of Hieroglyphic Stairway A, probably originally set on the front of Structure 13R-10, also discusses patron deity veneration rituals. These include the conjuring of the god Ikiiy, apparently introduced by Sak Maas, and a dance in honor of Yaxal Ajaw, one of the patron gods introduced by Chakaw Nahb Chan. Thus, in addition to promoting the Six Nothing Place god to a patron god, K’ínich ? Yook also publicly maintained the cults initiated by his Lineage A predecessors.

K’ínich ? Yook was succeeded by his brother Chak Ak’aach Yuk and his son Yajawte’ K’ínich. Patron deity veneration rituals continued during this time, with further
evidence for ritual feasting. Some of the features of the Unen phase may also have been constructed during this time, but are particularly hard to date. But in 745, the monumental record at La Corona once again ceases. Due to Tikal’s successful military campaigns, Calakmul’s influence was waning and it is possible that without the support of his in-laws, Yajawte’ K’íNich succumbed to old conflicts of La Corona. When the monumental record returns in the late 8th century, the ruler of La Corona is said to marry a high-ranking woman from Tikal in 791. Tikal was the bitter rival of Calakmul during the Late Classic and Lineage A members at La Corona were related to Calakmul rulers through ties of blood and affinity. Therefore, this new ruler was probably from Lineage B, a family which had apparently resisted the alliance with the Kaan dynasty in earlier generations.

It is very interesting that in the Coronitas group, patron deity veneration ritual, especially large-scale feasting events, continued unabated during this time. The 7th century shift from Lineage A dominance to Lineage B dominance is not reflected in the archaeological record at all. Thus, it appears that the patron deities originally introduced by Chakaw Nahb Chan and K’íNich ? Yook were believed to belong to the whole community and did not merely represent Lineage A interests.

The Pragmatic Effects of Patron Deity Veneration

In Chapter 2 I discussed how institutions, though they may appear stable and enduring, are actually accretions of individual semiotic acts and must therefore continue this semiotic process to naturalize, justify, and strengthen their social importance. Here, I will take patron deity veneration at La Corona as an example of these processes,
discussing its significance and transformative capacity when focused through relationships of status and obligation.

The first set of semiotic acts that I would like to examine is the re-dedication of the funerary shrines of Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, and 13R-4 as patron deity shrines by Chakaw Nahb Chan of Lineage A. Recall that Chakaw Nahb Chan had recently come to power after the violent death of his rival, K’uk’ Ajaw of Lineage B, who had probably been responsible for the death of previous Lineage A ruler Sak Maas. K’uk’ Ajaw’s ancestors of Lineage B were probably buried in these structures. As I have discussed, ancestor veneration rituals were a means by which Classic Maya lineages symbolically enacted their connections to the past, thereby claiming certain social entitlements such as land use. Ancestor veneration thus enabled actors to display social distinctions along lineage lines.

Patron deity veneration, on the other hand, displays social distinctions along different lines: rulers and non-rulers. Hieroglyphic discourses from the Classic period, and analogous discourses from later periods, indicate that only the ruler, by virtue of his connection to the institution of the royal court, was entitled to carry out certain rituals such as feeding or clothing the gods. By presenting these responsibilities as a “burden,” the ruler claimed that his role was necessary for the well-being of the community and that he therefore deserved obedience and tribute.

The replacement of ancestor shrines with deity shrines was clearly important to Chakaw Nahb Chan, given the speed with which it was completed, 35 days after his accession. This act was meant to solidify the legitimacy of his rule by 1) removing the
source of the entitlements claimed by Lineage B and 2) placing himself within the role of deity supplicant on behalf of the community.

In Chapter 2 I discussed “ritualization,” the phenomenon in which certain social actions can be readily differentiated from the surrounding flow of social life. Ritualization is often accomplished by formality, repetition, etc. Ritualized actions can be especially effective because they employ certain strategies such as presenting social models as natural or timeless. Ritual can be used not only as a force for conservatism, however, but to enact changes. Thus, by reference to a familiar ritual form, new social models are made to seem natural or at least plausible.

Such is the case with the patron deity veneration introduced by Chakaw Nahb Chan. Although the introduction of new deities and the construction of new temples were used to model changes to the political order, these models were enacted using familiar ritual forms. For example, the construction of the temples themselves over old ancestor shrines meant that new patron deity rituals were performed in areas that the community already recognized as ritually important. Secondly, patron deity veneration itself was not new to La Corona. Previous rulers had already introduced patron deities, such as the Teotihuacan-style deity of Vulture’s reign and Ikiiy of Sak Maas. Furthermore, patron deity veneration was a common phenomenon at other Maya sites, and would have been familiar to the inhabitants of La Corona. Finally, the new deities K’an Chaak and Chak Wayib Chaak were versions of the familiar general deity Chaak, the rain god. Yaxal Ajaw may also have been an aspect of a familiar general god. Thus, the use of old ritual forms made Chakaw Nahb Chan’s new model of the political order of La Corona seem natural or at least plausible.
The act of re-dedicating these temples thus pragmatically modeled future social conduct. It allowed Chakaw Nahb Chan to bolster his claim to royal entitlements at La Corona, as well as the future entitlements of his descendants. It modeled the defeated Lineage B as being without status by removing the lineage’s links to the ancestral source of its entitlements.

A similar set of semiotic acts occurred in 677 when K’inich ? Yook re-dedicated the ancestor shrine of Tahn K’inich Lajua’ in Structure 13R-5 as a patron deity shrine for the Six Nothing Place god. K’inich ? Yook came to power in a period of relative stability, unlike his father. He took his time re-dedicating this temple, and this time is reflected in its superior architecture. He also commissioned a hieroglyphic text which discursively justified his actions. The Six Nothing Place god appears to have been a deity specifically associated with Lineage A, whose members apparently sometimes used Six Nothing Place as a title, as if it was their mythological place of origin. It is likely that the Six Nothing Place god was thus a lineage deity before this introduction as a patron deity in 677.

The text of Monuments 7 and 8 is an excellent example of an ideological discourse, which presents a certain model of the social world as natural or timeless. In this text, K’inich ? Yook mentions the early roots of Lineage B at La Corona, with the arrival of Tahn K’inich Lajua’, buried in Structure 13R-5. He then tells of the much earlier arrival in 3805 BC of mythological Lineage A member from the Six Nothing Place. Thus, the text simultaneously reinforces K’inich ? Yook’s own Lineage’s claims to royal entitlements, and justifies the construction of a temple for a god associated with this mythological place of origin.
The fact that K’inich ? Yook did not attempt to erase the memory of Tahn K’inich Lajua’, as his father had apparently done in 658, is also significant. There are several possible explanations for this. It is possible that Tahn K’inich Lajua’, as an early or even the first settler at La Corona, was revered by community members apart from just Lineage B members. Thus, attempting to erase his memory may have been a futile or politically dangerous act. The fact that Chakaw Nahb Chan left this structure alone in 658 may support this hypothesis. Another possibility is that K’inich ? Yook simply did not see the need to remove Tahn K’inich Lajua’ from memory. The circumstances of his accession appear to have been peaceful. His alliance with the Kaan dynasty was strong and was cemented two years later with a marriage. Thus, the need to negate Lineage B’s claims may have been less urgent than in his father’s reign.

K’inich ? Yook also continued the veneration of patron deities previously introduced to La Corona. His Monument 7 makes reference to Chakaw Nahb Chan’s own re-dedication of 658, thus using precedent to justify this change in function. Yaxal Ajaw is mentioned again on a stairway block, when a dance associated with this deity was performed. K’inich ? Yook also conjured Ikiiy, a god probably introduced by his grandfather Sak Maas. The continued emphasis on these deities was probably a discursive attempt to make their veneration seem timeless, natural, and justified. It also allowed him, as a member of Lineage A, to present himself as a diligent ruler, caring for the community. Unfortunately, we cannot know whether the social model presented by these ideological discourses was accepted by other La Corona community members, or whether other models were also in circulation.
Between 658 and the abandonment of La Corona, the Coronitas group was used extensively for ritual feasts associated with patron deity veneration. Although these deities were introduced by Lineage A members, throughout the subsequent centuries patron deity veneration appears to have become routinized by the entire community. From the archaeological record, we see that patron deity veneration involved the participation of many different segments of the community, suggesting that the associated ideology of royal authority was taken up as a generally-accepted model of the social world.

The ritualized actions associated with patron deity veneration made this model of society seem highly natural by breaking it down into constituent parts, each of which are difficult to challenge on their own: 1) patron deities protect the entire community, 2) therefore resources and labor allocated toward their veneration, such as temple building and tribute payments are necessary, 3) only rulers are capable of carrying the burden of patron deity supplication, 4) therefore rulers deserve authority and tribute because they act on behalf of the community, 5) inclusionary feasting events celebrate the relationship between the community and the patron gods, 6) participation in such events and commensality with the god benefit all participants.

Even exclusionary feasting events, paid for by common tribute and labor, were seen as natural and necessary because they are part of the process by which rulers supplicate gods on behalf of the community. Thus, under these circumstances, the efficacy of exclusionary ritualized actions is not a product of their theatricality—in fact, they probably happened behind closed doors. However, by virtue of chains of individual
discursive events, the community came to know that the ruler carried out these necessary rituals, and the social model of status hierarchy and entitlements was maintained.

All the patron deities known from La Corona were introduced by Lineage A rulers. In the case of Chakaw Nahb Chan, this introduction transparently signified the defeat of Lineage B. Nevertheless, the patron deities of La Corona, like at other sites and modern communities, came to represent the entire community. Although Lineage A was clearly allied to Calakmul political interests, La Corona patron deities were distinct from Calakmul patron deities (except possibly Yaxal Ajaw), and thus symbolized the fact that La Corona still possessed its own political identity distinct from its overlords.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, patron deity veneration during the Classic period and in later periods was linked to discourses about community identity. Patron gods were carried into battle and visited other communities on friendly terms. Patron deities were believed to protect the whole community, bringing abundance and success in war. At Copan, a series of deities that were introduced one at a time over the history of the site, were referred to as “Guardians of Copan” by the end of the 8th century. The very same process appears to have taken place at La Corona. Although introduced at specific times for specific political purposes, the patron deities of La Corona came to be regarded as belonging to the whole community. Their continued veneration was thus necessary to protect all the community members, even when the lineage that originally introduced them no longer held royal authority. But because the ruler in his unique role of patron deity supplicant was still considered necessary to properly venerate the patron gods, the new Lineage B ruler of late 8th century La Corona continued to promote patron deity veneration despite its origins as a means of stripping Lineage B of its entitlements.
CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I outlined four major goals that I hoped to accomplish in this dissertation. One goal was to provide an account of Classic Maya patron deities, since this category of supernatural has remained largely unexamined until now. Another goal was to provide an example of the potential benefits to an interdisciplinary approach to the past: using archaeology and epigraphy together enriches our interpretations of the Classic Maya. A third goal was to propose a useful theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between particular meaningful social actions and large-scale institutions such as the royal court. Finally, I wanted to apply this framework to the Classic period Maya and to examine the ways in which patron deity veneration was linked to the enduring social phenomenon of hereditary rulership and the ways individuals within Maya society used patron deity veneration to contribute to the apparent strength of this institution and the power of the ruler. In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the way I think this dissertation has met these goals.

Classic Maya Patron Deities and other Supernatural Characters

The Maya of the Classic period, as well as the later Postclassic, Colonial, and Modern periods, recognized different categories of supernatural beings. The first category is deceased ancestors. Ancestors were venerated by their descendents as a means of creating links to the past and upholding social entitlements. During the Classic period, commoners generally buried deceased ancestors within the floors of their houses, while
elite and royal lineages built more elaborate funerary shrines. Each lineage, whether
noble or common, had its own ancestors. Royal ancestors, while venerated publicly in
order to establish the royal lineage’s links to hereditary entitlements, were not considered
the ancestors of the whole community. Thus, ancestor veneration partitioned
communities along family lines. Ancestors were given offerings of incense and were
depicted on monuments as gazing down upon their descendents from above. While their
veneration established hereditary rights such as land use, ancestors were not believed to
directly intercede in human affairs.

Ancestors can be contrasted to deities. Two broad categories of deities existed
(both are referred to using the term *k’uh*). General gods represented natural forces such as
wind, rain, sun, maize, and death. And just as with these forces of nature, general gods
were intractable and somewhat aloof. However, general gods could become patron gods
under certain circumstances. Each Maya community formed a relationship with one or
more general gods, giving them a new role as patron gods. As patron gods, they were
believed to protect the community and sustain it. In order to forge this special relation of
patronage, temples were built to house patron gods and they were cared for with a
particular set of ritual practices.

Previous scholars to study patron gods have sometimes mistakenly believed that
they were simply deified ancestors, or that ancestors could become patron gods (e.g.
33). However, the Maya of the Classic period and later periods drew clear distinctions
between patron gods and ancestors, demonstrating that they were not considered to be the
same thing. Patron deities existed in the form of effigies, while ancestors did not. In order
to care for patron deities, human beings (especially rulers) fed them offerings of food and
drink, clothed them, housed them, bathed them, and physically handled them. Ancestors
remained aloof to human needs, but patron deities were active in the human world. They
were given credit for successful war and for the safe passage of time. They also regularly
“oversaw” important human events such as accessions and period endings, giving them
supernatural sanction. They were described as the “precious belongings” of rulers and
were believed to have affective relationships with them.

Patron deities were believed to represent the interests of the whole community,
not just one particular lineage. This is evident because patron deities at particular sites
continued to be venerated even if major dynastic shifts occurred. The best example of this
phenomenon is at Seibal, where different dynasties carrying different emblem glyphs
ruled the community at different points in history. However, the deity GI-K’awiil
remained the patron of the community during all these different dynasties, demonstrating
its links to the place itself, rather than the ruler. At Copan, the patron deities of the site
(an impressively long list) were believed to be “guardians of Copan” itself, rather than a
subset of the community (Houston and Inomata 2009:204). Because of the special
relationship forged between human communities and patron deities, these gods served as
symbols of community identity. In friendly interactions between communities, deities
were invited to feasts where they were treated as honored guests. During warfare, deities
were carried into battle, where they risked capture by enemy armies. The conquest of
communities often involved the destruction of these effigies and their temples. Patron
deities also represented community autonomy. Although Maya communities such as La
Corona were subservient to other polities, each had its own set of patron deities separate from the cults of its overlords.

*Archeology and Epigraphy*

Archaeologists of the Classic period Maya are lucky to have access to thousands of inscriptions that can give information about Maya society. Many archaeological projects are using this data effectively to create robust interpretations of the past (e.g. Fash and Sharer 1991; Houston et al. 1998; Demarest 2006; Inomata 2008). But hieroglyphic texts have a limited perspective. They were produced only by elite members of society. These texts discuss elites and rulers to the exclusion of the majority of the population. Thus, the picture they give of Classic Maya society is skewed. Nevertheless, hieroglyphic texts are useful because they have the potential to reveal the cultural meanings of certain social practices. Archaeological data, on the other hand, is much more democratic. The activities of rulers and non-rulers both leave material remains, and these can be used to reconstruct ancient society more broadly. However, unlike epigraphic data, the meanings of the activities that produced these remains are not usually apparent. An interdisciplinary approach allows the maximum amount of data to be collected and the best interpretations proposed.

In this dissertation, I used archaeology and epigraphy together to explore patron deity veneration at La Corona, Guatemala. I excavated a series of temples in the Coronitas group of the site. These temples had fairly long construction histories. The first phase of Structure 13R-5 was probably built in the 4th century AD and contained a burial of a high-status individual. The second phase of the structure was built in AD 677 with a
different function as a patron deity temple. Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4 each had three main construction phases. The earliest platforms were constructed in the early to mid 6th century and these were covered over with additional construction in the mid to late 6th century. In this second phase, these structures contained the tombs of additional high-status people. Burial 6, of Structure 13R-2 was the best preserved of these burials since it was not looted. Archaeological evidence suggests that the occupant of Burial 6 was a ruler of La Corona given the large funerary shrine, the abundant grave goods, a woven mat, and a large lithic deposit. In the mid 7th century, a new phase of construction was added to these three temples. This new phase was a very thin veneer of architecture that did not even continue onto the back of the structures. The superstructures were made with perishable materials. This construction phase likely represents the re-dedication of these temples as patron deity shrines in 658, as described on Monuments 7 and 8.

Other inscriptions at La Corona allowed me to propose a reason why these temples changed function over the course of their history. A period of civil strife immediately preceded the 658 re-dedication and two kings were assassinated in a row. Other inscriptions suggest that this was not an isolated conflict, but that two elite families in fact struggled for rulership of the site throughout its history of roughly five centuries. The 658 construction phase on Structures 13R-2, 13R-3 and 13R-4 probably represents the replacement of one family’s ancestor shrines with a deity cult controlled by the other family. Thus, the act of changing the temple function not only eliminated a source of authority for the defeated lineage, it also placed the new king in a position of legitimacy through his connections to supernatural protectors of the community.
By using archaeological and epigraphic data together, details about patron deity veneration and the meanings of particular ritual acts emerge and can be interpreted. Without epigraphy, the changing function of these temples would not have been apparent. The presence of tombs indicates their use as Early Classic funerary shrines, but without Monuments 7 and 8 I would have assumed that the later phases were mere remodelings used to venerate the deceased ancestors within. On the other hand, before I excavated these temples, I assumed that they were patron deity shrines all along. Only after finding the burials within did it become apparent that their function had changed. Only by using these two data sets together did the hypothesis of a protracted family feud emerge as a likely scenario in La Corona history.

**Theoretical Perspective**

In Chapter 2, I outlined a theoretical framework for an interpretive style of archaeology. I argued that the goal of archaeology, like ethnography, should be to produce a “thick description” (Geertz 1973b) of events of the past. In thick description, the investigator seeks to understand the meanings of social actions and thereby to describe in more detail the causes and consequences of particular events.

Unlike the ethnographer, the archaeologist is unable to observe the ongoing flow of social action and associated meanings because these events happened in the past and the social actors in question are now dead. Thus, thick description in archaeology has a different set of challenges than thick description in ethnography and requires its own methodologies. It must also be acknowledged that thick description in archaeology is at best an approximation of past social actions, since they cannot be directly observed.
However, this should not be a deterrent for the analyst because certain methodologies allow archaeological models to approximate past social actions more closely.

Since we are unable to observe linguistic and non-linguistic signs in use, I argue that it is necessary to approximate them using ethnographic analogy, or the observation of descendent or closely-related communities for whom certain signs may retain their meaning over the generations. For the purposes of this dissertation, I developed an analogy in Chapter 3, using ethnographic material from modern Maya communities and historical material about the Colonial and Postclassic periods.

In examining this material from later periods, I was able to develop an analogical model for interpreting patron deity veneration during the Classic period. I observed that modern Maya communities recognize three major categories of supernatural being: ancestors, earth lords, and patron saints. I was able to demonstrate that these categories correspond to those described above: ancestors, general deities and patron deities. In the Modern, Colonial, and Postclassic periods, patron deities/saints were venerated through church/temple building, caring for effigies, and large-scale ritual feasts (*fiestas*). All of these ritual practices are also attested in the epigraphic record, as discussed in Chapter 4. Thus, I was able to propose a list of material correlates for patron deity veneration ritual in the Classic period: temple building, effigy maintenance, and feasting events.

As I discussed in Chapter 5, there are some known patron deity temples in the Maya area which can be identified based on accompanying inscriptions. However, they show such wide variability that I cannot yet propose a single set of architectural features that is specific to patron deity temples. Furthermore, site abandonment processes make it difficult to find patron deity effigies in the archaeological record. However, ritual feasting
can be readily recognized based on the presence of food remains and ceramic vessels for cooking and serving. By using this ethnographic analogy, ritual feasting and temple construction can be understood within the context of beliefs about patron deities and patron saints. The use of epigraphy to complement this data provides even more detail about the meanings of these rituals.

In Chapter 2, I also discussed the ways in which humans use meaningful acts and discourses to create reflexive models of society. Over time, large-scale social models called institutions are created through a series of individual semiotic acts. While institutions appear to be stable and enduring, they are actually fragile and historically contingent. They are unable to survive after the set of meanings associated with them fail to be widely recognized. A good example of a social institution is the Classic Maya royal court. The court consisted of the ruler and his retinue and administrators and was based in the palace. The court regulated interactions with other communities, economics and religious practices. It appears to us (and to the Ancient Maya as well) as a stable, enduring phenomenon because of the acts and discourses surrounding it. As archaeologists we can observe the architectural setting of the court: we excavate royal palaces and observe the intense labor used to build them. Because the palace appears stable and enduring over thousands of years, the social institution behind it appears stable as well. As epigraphers, we read the rhetoric produced by the court used to justify its own existence. We read about how the ruler was responsible for rituals marking the passage of time and about how rulers conquered their enemies. We also read about inheritance practices and how certain rulers had the right to rule because of their family connections. Thus, the court appears as a self-evident phenomenon. It is explained using cross-cultural
models developed for other ancient states. It is argued that all societies of a certain level of socio-political complexity develop similar institutions that all appear to be stable, enduring, and self-evident.

This view of history fails to recognize the semiotic processes that are actually responsible for these large-scale social models. The Classic Maya royal palace was not built all at once, but in a series of architectural phases, slowly built up over time, involving individual acts of physical labor. The palace can be taken as a metaphor for the institution itself: hereditary rulership did not emerge all at once as a single suite of social practices. It developed one semiotic event at a time. Acts of founding, marriage, and alliance, all mediated discursively, contributed to the accretion of meaning that created the royal court. Such institutions also needed to be constantly reaffirmed and justified in order to continue existing. Discourses linking events back to historical precedent, acts of ancestor veneration and deity veneration, and rituals overseen by political overlords are all strategies employed by members of the royal court to present this particular social model as natural, justified, and beneficial. At any point, these acts and discourses could be accepted, and the social model of royal power upheld, or they can be rejected and challenged, leading to social changes.

*Classic Maya Political Power and Patron Deity Veneration*

This theoretical model can be applied in the examination of patron deity veneration to understand the ways in which practices and discourses surrounding these religious beliefs are implicated in the politics of Maya society. These acts and discourses
can be analyzed and interpreted by analogy to those of later periods, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

The Popol Vuh makes it clear that certain tasks of patron deity veneration were reserved especially for members of the ruling lineages. These royal supplications involved onerous fasts as well as periods of sexual abstinence. They also required autosacrificial bloodletting, in which the practitioner would pierce his ears and elbows. During these penitential rituals, these elites would “cry out” on behalf of their vassals (the community at large) as well as their family members. The Popol Vuh indicates that the responsibility to carry out these rituals on behalf of the community is described as the basis for the king’s authority, the very reason kingship exists:

“Thus each of the lords carried out his obligations. This was their way of showing veneration for their lordship….They did not merely exercise their lordship. They did not merely receive food and drink. All this was not without purpose. They did not achieve their lordship, their glory, or their sovereignty by deception or theft. They did not merely crush the canyons and the citadels of the small nations and the great nations” (Christenson 2003:290–91).

A similar set of circumstances exists among modern Maya communities. Although hereditary rulership is no longer practiced, the cargo system (described in Chapter 3) allows wealthy community members to rise to positions of ritual responsibility. These cargo-holders are responsible for carrying out certain rituals for patron saints on behalf of the community. In return, they acquire prestige and influence. Thus, individual religious acts not only uphold the institution of the rotating cargo, but link actors to other sets of entitlements beyond the religious system.

The responsibility for certain patron deity rituals seems to have fallen to rulers of Classic Maya communities. Rulers bragged about their care for patron deities on hieroglyphic monuments. This involved sponsoring temple building projects, feeding,
bathing and dressing deity effigies, and other responsibilities such as dancing and handling of the gods. The implication of these discourses is that the ruler, by maintaining the gods that protected the community, earned his authority over his subjects.

A particularly interesting discourse surrounding patron deities is the comparison between rulers and gods. Or, to be more accurate, the comparison of the relationship between a ruler and his followers to the relationship between patron gods and humans. Patron deities needed certain things such as temples to sleep in, sacrifices to eat, as well as clothing, bathing, and handling. In return, these deities protected the community. Similarly, a ruler also needed certain things from his subjects. He demanded tribute in the forms of labor, food, and exotic goods (for building construction, eating, and clothing). In return, he protected the community by governing and defending. We can see an example of this discourse in accounts of the Postclassic period. For example, in the Popol Vuh, patron deities are regularly referred to as “lords.” Furthermore, in Duran’s history of the Aztec nation, the emperor himself is also compared to the patron god:

“You [emperor Ahuitzotl] will carry the same burden as does the god Huitzilopochtli, which is to provide and maintain this world order, that is, to provide the sustenance, the food and drink for your people. Eyes from the four directions are fixed upon you. You have now been given a sword and a shield so you may risk your life for your country. You have been charged with the responsibility for the mountains, the hills, the plains, caves, cliffs, rivers and seas, pools and springs, rocks and trees. Everything has been commended to you and you must take care and see that these do not fall apart” (Duran 1994:313).

Similar discourses are quite apparent in Classic Maya hieroglyphic texts. The term *yichonal*, meaning “to oversee” is used to mark status differentials between rulers and their subordinates. Thus, events or rituals that were “overseen by” a certain ruler were marked as being under his authority. The same term is used to describe the relationship between humans and gods. Rituals performed by rulers were “overseen by” the patron god.
gods. Thus, the usage of this term serves to compare the relationship between god and human to that between ruler and subject.

A further way of demonstrating this similarity is the frequent depiction and description of patron gods as ajaws (lords/rulers). Often, the word ajaw is incorporated into their names or into epithets describing them. In other cases, such as at Copan, they are depicted sitting with ancestral rulers, wearing the same costumes. At some sites, such as Tikal, they are even given emblem glyphs, describing them as rulers of those sites.

The opposite is also true: rulers are described as “god-like” (k’uhul). The k’uhul adjective appears frequently in the emblem glyph formula. But, as discussed in Chapter 4, it serves to mark especially powerful kings and especially influential historical figures. These human patrons were therefore similar to patron deities in their ability to influence human affairs.

The comparison of the relationship between patron gods and humans to the relationship between rulers and subjects is an excellent example of an ideological discourse serving to present social asymmetries as natural and necessary. The notion of patronage—protection in exchange for sustenance in the form of tribute—was shown to have supernatural precedent. Rulers who were particularly successful at forming relationships of patronage were thus “god-like” and this social arrangement was justified.

A different set of practices and discourses surrounded ancestor veneration among the Classic period Maya. As McAnany (1995) argues, the veneration of deceased ancestors was used by their descendants to establish continued rights to lineage resources, especially land. She also argues that hereditary rulership is somewhat antithetical to this system of lineage rights, in that the claims of the ruler come to supersede the claims of
individual lineages. Although interested in quelling rival claims to authority, ruling dynasties themselves practiced an elaborated form of ancestor veneration, by expending large amounts of resources on funerary shrines and ancestor temples. Like the less elaborate form, this was used to establish continued claims to lineage rights, in the case, rulership itself. By playing up their relationships to past rulers, descendants could claim legitimacy to rule. Thus, elaborated ancestor veneration practiced by rulers and other elites was used to establish who the rightful ruler of a particular community was. On the other hand, patron deity veneration, a completely distinct ritual practice, was used to justify the existence of rulership in the first place, as the logical outcome of the need to sustain the community’s gods.

McAnany proposes that emerging rulers took steps to neutralize the kinship-based authority of rival claims to power or hereditary rights.

“An effective means of quelling dissent to centralized rule is to dismantle the organizational nexus of that dissent—the kinship structure—and thereby reduce factional conflict to simple class conflict, which yields a more easily controllable playing field since conflict is resolved in favor of those who have the power to resolve it” (McAnany 1995:150).

She suggests that the desecration of competing lineage shrines or the appropriation of lineage resources were effective ways neutralizing competing lineages. I propose that at La Corona, this process involved the replacement of competing lineage shrines with new patron deity temples. This would also achieve the effect of reducing lineage distinctions to simple class distinctions (between ruler and non-ruler).

This highly significant act of replacement took place twice (that I know of) in La Corona history. Two families (Lineage A and Lineage B) competed for royal authority of the community over the five centuries it was settled. In AD 658, Lineage A member Chakaw Nahb Chan reclaimed royal authority from Lineage B member K’uk’ Ajaw by
assassinating him and going through an accession ceremony on the same day. His first act as ruler, just 35 days later, was to dedicate the temples of three new patron gods on top of the old funerary shrines of K’uk’ Ajawa’s Lineage B ancestors. Since patron deity veneration was linked to community identity, this ritual act had the pragmatic effect of negating the lineage-based claims to authority of Lineage B members and reducing this rivalry to a mere distinction between the ruler (Chakaw Nahb Chan) and his subjects (all other community members including Lineage B). Since rulers were believed to have special connections to patron gods, Chakaw Nahb Chan’s special position in society was justified through his acts of religious piety on behalf of the community.

Lineage A member K’inich ? Yook also replaced an ancestor shrine with a patron deity shrine in AD 677. The ancestor was Tahn K’inich Lajua’, a lineage B member. This funerary shrine had escaped replacement by Chakaw Nahb Chan possibly because of this ancestor’s particular revered status as community founder. However, K’inich ? Yook’s royal legitimacy was probably more stable than his father’s, having come to power under peaceful circumstances. Thus his replacement of the ancestor shrine with a patron deity shrine reinforced his position without risking civil conflict. Nevertheless, he took pains to discursively justify this replacement on Monuments 7 and 8. These monuments explicitly tell the story of Tahn K’inich Lajua’ and do not attempt to erase his memory. But they also tell how a mythological Lineage A ancestor came to La Corona in the distant past, long before the settlement of the community by Lineage B.

Lineage A, and its mythical ancestor were said to come from a mythical location called “Six Nothing Place.” The god for whom the new shrine was built was also from this place and was therefore associated with Lineage A. By promoting him to a patron
god of the whole La Corona community, K’inich ? Yook further justified his claims to royal authority through is exclusive links to this community protector. Monuments 7 and 8 merely serve to piously justify this promotion at the expense of Tahn K’inich Lajua’ and Lineage B. They claim that while Tahn K’inich Lajua’ was an important historical figure, his role was not as important as the mythical ancestor of Lineage A and his patron god.

Other patron deities are also mentioned on La Corona monuments. These include a Teotihuacan-style god probably introduced by Vulture’s wife and Ikiiy, probably introduced by Sak Mass. Thus, all known patron gods of La Corona were introduced by Lineage A. And in the case of the events in AD 658 and 677, they were transparently introduced at the expense of Lineage B. However, over the years after AD 677, the veneration of these deities appears to have lost its explicit association with Lineage A authority. Evidence of large-scale ritual feasts in which many different community members participated suggests that the ideology of patron deities as community protectors and sustainers was widely taken up. Within this social model, the authority of the ruler was not based upon his lineage credentials but upon his role as deity supplicant.

In the late 8th century, Lineage B seems to have regained authority at La Corona. But these new kings continued to sponsor ritual feasts for patron deities that included many community members. Thus, the ideology of rulers as deity supplicants on behalf the community eventually benefited Lineage B, while it had originally been intended to suppress their claims to rulership. Thus, new meanings came to be assigned to actions and discourses of patron deity veneration although ritual forms (and their material remains) remained unchanged.
By examining archaeological and epigraphic evidence together, La Corona has offered a remarkably detailed look at the way patron deity veneration is implicated in power relationships within a Classic Maya community. The precise historical moments in which specific deities were introduced and the subsequent routinization of patron deity rituals are unique to this particular community. However, I believe that La Corona is informative for our understanding of other Classic Maya communities. La Corona was not the only site in which different political factions vied for control. Nor was it the only site in which royal authority needed to be justified to a greater population. At many other Classic Maya sites, social asymmetries of power and entitlement came to be justified, naturalized, and made to seem timeless through patron deity veneration.
APPENDIX A

Classic Period Glyphic References to Patron Deities and Founding Ancestors

Introduction

This appendix is intended to provide a more detailed look at the epigraphic references to patron deity veneration during the Classic period. It is intended for readers who have at least some knowledge of Maya epigraphy and may be difficult to follow for those who do not. The information contained here was collected into a spreadsheet that was too large to display as a single table, so it has been broken down into smaller segments shown in each section. For each god or ancestor, the following categories of data were collected: 1) the name of the god or ancestor, 2) the inscriptions in which the character appears, 3) the attested dates of veneration, 4) the supernatural identity of the character (god or ancestor), 5) additional names or epithets used to refer to the character, 6) whether the character is depicted, 7) any references to the character’s physical effigy, 8) whether the character “oversees” (yichonal) any activities, 9) whether the character “makes happen” (ukabjiiy) any events, 10) other verbs attributed to the character, 11) the word used to refer to the character’s temple, 12) references to the character as a lord, 13) whether the character starts a dynastic count, and 14) any additional commentary. Since not all categories of data were available for all supernatural characters, tables are displayed only with the categories for which data was available.

The information displayed in each table is described in the sections that follow. For the most part, monuments are discussed on a site-by-site basis and within each site, monuments are discussed chronologically. References to patron deities are explained, as
are relevant references to important ancestors. See Chapter 4 for analysis and conclusions of the data presented here.

Epigraphic studies often grapple with an ethical dilemma: what to do with inscriptions that have been looted or removed illegally from their countries of origin? Such inscriptions often have unique and valuable data that has helped to advance the field of epigraphy. On the other hand, authenticity and provenience are in doubt in these cases, sometimes limiting the utility of these artifacts. Even more troubling, the publication of looted monuments legitimizes the practice of collecting pieces of Maya heritage and even raises their market value. It thereby contributes to the black market’s insatiable desire for more looted pieces. Not only does looting deprive countries of their cultural heritage, it directly leads to the destruction of archaeological sites, as looters dig large and unstable pits and trenches into ancient structures in their search for the monuments and tombs. It is for each scholar to decide his or her position with regard to this ethical dilemma. Here is mine: looted artifacts that have already been published have already seen their market value rise, and it is unlikely that further discussion of these artifacts will do more harm. For this reason, I choose to study and discuss these examples. On the other hand, looted monuments that have recently emerged on the art market and have not yet been published should not be legitimized. For this reason, my epigraphic database only includes two types of monuments: a) those that have been excavated archaeologically and b) those that, while excavated illegally, have already published and are known by scholars in the field.
Early Monuments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Bone Jaguar and other glyphs</th>
<th>Wayib Balam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Hauberg Stela</td>
<td>Greenstone Statuette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>around 250</td>
<td>Terminal Preclassic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor depicted</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference to effigy veneration practices</td>
<td>seated figure</td>
<td>&quot;carrying stone&quot;: statue is effigy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bloodletting with his god(s)</td>
<td>carrying stone is dedicated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.1. Supernatural Characters on Early Monuments.

The very earliest carved monuments of the Maya area are particularly difficult to interpret. This is because Late and Terminal Preclassic monuments often did not include hieroglyphic inscriptions, and the writing that does appear in this period looks different from the writing of the Classic period and in many cases is difficult to read. Studies of Preclassic ideology have therefore relied heavily on iconography. However, the images present on carved monuments during the classic period are often inadequate for understanding patron deity veneration, since patron deities are not usually depicted, but are simply described in accompanying text. For this reason, it is highly possible that the practice of patron deity veneration has deep historical roots, but that its detection only becomes possible once legible monuments are available.

Nevertheless, two Terminal Preclassic inscriptions do include references to patron deities. Unfortunately, both are unprovenienced, and cannot therefore be contextualized within their respective communities.

The Hauberg Stela, an unprovenienced monument now in the Princeton University Art Museum, dates to about 200-300 AD and depicts a ruler in the act of “first bloodletting” (Stuart 2008b). This act takes place “with his god[s]” (tuk’uhil). Stuart and others have interpreted the name following this glyph as the name of the ruler (Stuart
2008b; Schele 1985; Fields and Reents-Budet 2005). However, it is also possible that this glyph and at least one more following it are in fact names of the deity or deities before whom the ceremony was performed. This first glyph consists of a bone, possibly reading *chak* (red) (Stuart 2008b) and an animal head combining a skull and a jaguar. The next glyph consists of some sort of open mouthed serpent. The third is a bird head, possibly simply the syllable *li*. This seems to be followed by the name and title of the ruler and other lords who were also present at the ceremony.

Another reference to a possessed deity comes from an early text on a small unprovenienced Greenstone Statuette. A short text on the back of the statue describes the image. The first glyph may be some sort of dedicatory verb for the statue. This is followed by the statue’s label *uk’uhil* “it is the god of...” The next two glyphs may be the name of the god “Wayib Bahlam” or “Temple Jaguar.” This is followed by another descriptive label for the object *u kuch tuun* “the carrying stone”. Finally, we see the name of the statue’s owner, possibly Suutz’ Ixim Chaak Mo’. It seems that the statue itself represents a portable god image “his god/ his carrying stone” (Mora-Marin 2003:15–16).

**Balakbal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name inscriptions</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>Stela 5</td>
<td>Stela 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>406-</td>
<td>406-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i-k’e-?-ba</td>
<td>i-k’e-?-ba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2. Supernatural Characters at Balakbal.

Balakbal Stela 5 appears to contain a reference to the paddler gods. The occasion is the 8.18.10.0.0 (406) period ending (Morley 1938:253) which takes place two days
after the ruler’s inauguration. The verb reads **i-k’e’-?-ba** and is probably followed by the paddlers’ names.

---

**Calakmul**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Yajaw Maan</th>
<th>Yax Ha’al Chaak</th>
<th>5 Kix(?) K’uh</th>
<th>9-?-Tuun(?)-wa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Cancuen Panel, Tikal T. 1 lintel 3, Stela 54, Stela 89?, Stela 58, hieroglyphic stairway</td>
<td>Cancuen Panel, Stela 54, 58</td>
<td>Cancuen Panel</td>
<td>Stela 54, 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>656-771</td>
<td>656-771</td>
<td>656-741-771</td>
<td>741-771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>k’in ajaw?</td>
<td>as palanquin figure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference to effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td>Cancuen accession; period ending</td>
<td>Cancuen accession; period ending</td>
<td>Cancuen accession</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td><em>bukuy</em> (gets together?) with El Peru patron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td>domestication at Tikal: captured, palanquin carried, conjured, built; repair at Calakmul: palanquin carried, built</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship starts dynastic count?</td>
<td>ajaw in name phrase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td>Yax Chit Jun Witz' Naah Kaan</td>
<td>Sky raiser</td>
<td>Yuknoom Ch'een</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Yokte'</td>
<td>Stela 54, hieroglyphic stairway?</td>
<td>codex style ceramics</td>
<td>Stelae 115, 52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 54, hieroglyphic stairway?</td>
<td>around 690-741</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>741- 741-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (in list)</td>
<td>probable</td>
<td>ancestor (known king)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>god (in list)</td>
<td></td>
<td>K'awiil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference to effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td>period ending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td>used as name of king and name of lady from Calakmul at El Peru</td>
<td>dynastic vases</td>
<td>known king</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>starts dynastic count?</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.4. Supernatural Characters at Calakmul.

Early references to patron deities at Calakmul are non-existent. A variety of factors can be blamed for this. First, the preservation of inscriptions at Calakmul is particularly bad, so very few references are preserved at all. Many stelae which may have once contained significant information are now so badly eroded that little information can be gleaned. Velasquez (2004) and Martin (2005a) have also recently hypothesized that
during the Early Classic period the Snake Head polity was based at Dzibanche in Quintana Roo, rather than at Calakmul, which was controlled by a different dynasty. The lack of Early Classic inscriptions related to patron deities is therefore frustrating, because it would have allowed us to check for major religious changes at the site that accompanied the Snake Dynasty move. However, some of these details may be hinted at in later inscriptions.

**Yuknoom Ch’een**

A retrospective reference at Cancuen is the earliest attestation of the patron deities of Calakmul. While the Cancuen Looted panel was not carved until the end of the 8th century, it refers back to a date in 656 (9.11.4.4.0) when the local ruler acceded under the auspices of the Calakmul king Yuknoom Ch’een (Guenter 2002). We are told that the headband was tied and that this event was “overseen” (*yichonal*) by the Kaloomte’ (presumably Yuknoom Ch’een or possibly some deity with this title) as well as the following deities: Yajaw Maan (Lord of the Snake), 5 K’ix[?] K’uh (Five Stingray Spine God), and Yax Ha’al Chaak (First Rain Chaak). As we will see shortly, both Yajaw Maan and Yax Ha’al Chaak feature prominently in Calakmul deity lists. 5 K’ix K’uh does not appear elsewhere in Calakmul lists. The passage is concluded by emphasizing that it was done by (*ukabjiyi*) Yuknoom Ch’een, the Ux Te’ Tuun Kaloomte’.

Although foreign references to Yuknoom Ch’een are frequent in the Maya area, especially as an overseer of accessions, this is the only inscription in which the deities of Calakmul are explicitly mentioned. It is possible that these deities took part frequently and that they were simply not mentioned in other inscriptions, or it is possible that this was an exceptional event.
A jade mosaic mask recovered from Tomb 4 of Structure 2 contains a glyphic label marking it as a portrait of Yuknoom Ch’een. His name phrase incorporates the name of the Water Lily Serpent (Martin and Grube 2000:109), which is unusual, since this deity appears as a patron on Stela 54. It is extremely unusual for kings to take the name of their own patron deity. However, a later king appears to follow this pattern as well (see below). The incorporation of this serpent deity into the name phrase of the king is reminiscent of Yuknoom Yich’aak K’ahk’s use of the Teotihuacan War Serpent in name phrases at La Corona.

Yuknoom Yich’aak K’ahk’

Stela 115 is the first stela in which a Calakmul king makes reference to a dynastic sequence. Here, Yichaak K’ahk’ is named as “in the line of K’awiil, the 5 K’atun Ajaw.” The only king meeting this age requirement is Yuknoom Ch’een, and thus Yichaak K’ahk’ has cast is father in the light of a dynastic founder (Martin 2009). We know from the Codex Style Dynastic Vases that the Snake Dynasty traced its origin to a historical or mythological founder nicknamed “Sky Raiser” who must have ruled some time during the Late Preclassic (Martin 1997). However, no references to this figure appear in the monuments of Calakmul or any currently known monuments from the Dzibanche region. If this was indeed a founder figure, the Snake Kings apparently did not place a great deal of emphasis on him.

Another foreign reference is the first contemporary reference to the patron deity Yajaw Maan. On Lintel 3 of Tikal Temple 1, a war is described that took place in 695 (9.13.3.7.18). The phrase starts by telling us that “the flint and shield of Yichaak K’ahk’, the Calakmul king, were brought down” or that he was defeated in war. On the same
date, the deity Yajaw Maan, who we already saw in the Cancuen inscription, was captured (Martin 2000b). The inscription goes on to say that two months later on 9.13.3.7.18, tu-?-BAHLAM NAL ([?] Jaguar Place) was carried. This is probably the official name of the palanquin on which the deity effigy was placed. On the same date, a god was conjured by Jasaw Chan K’awiil and something was made (patwaan) in the city of Tikal. The text gives parenthetical information about Jasaw Chan K’awiil’s parentage, and then reiterates that “[?] Bahlam Nal was carried.” The accompanying image shows the king seated before a giant effigy of a jaguar, a depiction of the captured Yajaw Maan himself. Essentially, then, this is a triumphal parade bringing the captured deity to the city. Although the conjured deity is left unstated, I believe this must also refer to Yajaw Maan. Therefore, we have a record of the capture and domestication of a foreign deity at Tikal.

Yuknoom Took’ K’awiil

Yuknoom Took’ K’awiil was responsible for a collection of seven stelae associated with Structure 1 which record the 9.15.0.0.0 period ending. These include Stelae 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 89 (Morley 2004). Of these six, Stelae 51, 52, and 89 also record additional dates just before and just after the period ending which are relevant for the discussion.

Stela 52 has an initial series date of 9.14.19.5.0 although I do not know what associated glyphs accompany this date (Morley 2004:12). This date is one full tzolk’in round prior to the period ending. The monument then counts forward to 9.14.19.13.0 (741), five full months before the calendar round, and then to 9.14.19.15.14, two months and six days prior (Morley 2004:14). The glyphs associated with this date include Yax
Ajaw (first lord), perhaps an abbreviated form of Yaxa’ Ajaw, as is seen on Caracol Stela 3 (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010) or perhaps a deity name. This name appears as a deity at Moral Reforma and Yaxchilan (see below) and a similar name occurs at La Corona (see Chapter 6). The front of the monument depicts a king on the period ending, performing a scattering ritual and wearing an elaborate mosaic nose piece. The text also describes the king as “third in line from K’awiil,” once again placing Yuknoom Ch’een in the position of a founder figure (Martin 2009).

Stela 54 has an initial series of 9.15.0.0.0 (Morley 2004:14). On this day, the king grasped K’awiil (usually a ceremony performed on accessions) overseen by (yichonal) the following deities: 9-?-TUUN?-wa, Yax Ha’al Chaak, 9 Yokte’, Yajaw Maan, and [Yax Chit] Jun Witz’ Naah Kaan (Martin 2009). The list continues further, but at a certain point the titles of the king appear and it is unclear where the list of deities actually ends.

Stela 89 is particularly interesting. It starts with an initial series of 9.15.0.0.14 (731) (Morley 2004:15). On this day, the stone was planted. The text counts forward three days to 9.15.0.0.17. On this day, the tu-?-BAHLAM-li was carried (the same palanquin of Yajaw Maan that we saw on the Tikal lintel) (Schele and Grube 1994). This happened at Wak Chan Nal. This is a mythological place name, but it is associated with Calakmul on the Holmul Dancer Vessels (Coe 1978; Tokovinine 2008:280–284) and I suspect that it refers to some part of the Calakmul site core. The next glyph block is probably a distance number, telling us that it is 54 days since the “grasping” (cham). The object that was grasped was the throne of the Calakmul king, presumably the same palanquin mentioned before. Finally, we learn that 17 days after the period ending, the
same day that the palanquin was carried, *K’in Ajaw(?)* was built, and that the carrying of
the palanquin was seen by the lords. On Naranjo Stela 32, the patron deity of Naranjo is
also referred to as *K’in Ajaw* (see below), and it seems to be functioning similarly here to
describe the thing that is built. As with the narrative on the Tikal lintel, we have a throne
“grasped,” followed by a period ending and 17 days later the palanquin carried and
something built, an event witnessed by at least two lords. The built thing could be the
deity himself, or some sort of temple for him.

**Great Serpent**

The next stela of interest is Stela 62, which is attributed to a new king nicknamed
“Great Serpent” (or Ruler Z) (Martin 2000c:44) The stela dates to the 9.16.0.0.0 period
ending and tells us that the king performed a scattering ritual. The king is named as Yax
Chit ? Witz’ Naah Kaan, the name of the Water Lily Serpent. He is also given a bat
eblem glyph, suggesting that by this time the Snake Dynasty was a thing of the past
(Martin 2005a:5). The name of this ruler is unusual, since the Water Lily Serpent shows
up on Stela 54 as a witnessing deity and it is unusual for kings to take the name of their
own patron deity. The costume of the king on Stela 62 does include nibbling fish, a
feature of the Water Lily Serpent costume, suggesting that this is perhaps a god
impersonation.

**Bolon K’awiil**

Stela 58 was dedicated to commemorate the 9.17.0.0.0 (771) period ending date
(Martin and Grube 2000:115; Martin 2000c:44). On this date, the king performed a
scattering ritual overseen by *(yichonal)* his gods. This list includes the *9-?-TUUn-wa* god
seen on Stela 54, Yax Ha’al Chaak, and Yajaw Maan. This is an interesting example
because it shows that, even after the apparent collapse of the Snake dynasty lords at Calakmul still saw these deities as patrons and maintained their cults. This suggests that patron deities, once their veneration was introduced, maintained a strong link to communities, regardless of the ruling family.

An incomplete hieroglyphic stairway may also date to this ruler (Martin 2000c:44; Martin 2008a). Its incompleteness is regrettable since it seems to deal with themes related to deity veneration. One block names the Water Lily Serpent, although this may simply be naming “Great Serpent,” the previous king. Another block makes a reference to a god or gods, but the rest of the block is damaged. The most interesting passage gives the verb *bukuy*, a mediopassive construction based on the verb root *buk*, of which the subjects are Yajaw Maan and another deity, a version of Akan, who does not turn up elsewhere in the inscriptions of Calakmul, but seems to be the patron god of El Peru (see below). Here are some possibilities for the verb *buk*: As a noun, *buhk* means “clothes” and can also mean “to dress” in some circumstances.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ch’olti’</td>
<td>buquin, buctez</td>
<td>cubrir, con ropa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’orti’</td>
<td>b’ujkse</td>
<td>adorner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’orti’</td>
<td>b’ujku</td>
<td>grow feathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’orti’</td>
<td>buhkse</td>
<td>dress someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch’orti’</td>
<td>buhksu ubah</td>
<td>dress oneself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatec</td>
<td>bukbesah</td>
<td>vestir a otro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatec</td>
<td>bukinah</td>
<td>vestirse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, given that this is a mediopassive construction, it should be something that happens all by itself. I prefer to interpret this glyph with the verb root “to gather together.” In several languages the root *buk* refers to a gathering or piling up. However, in Ch’orti’ it also has the apparently opposite meaning of scattering or smoothing down.
The former would suggest that these deities from different sites got together in some sort of ritual. Similar rituals are common in modern Maya communities, in which patron saints visit one another during saint’s days. The same *bukuy* verb appears elsewhere on the same inscription, but here the subjects are missing.

### Caracol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>?-Hiix</th>
<th>3 &quot;Man Eater&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Sun Eagle&quot;</th>
<th>Jaguar God of the Underworld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stela 13, Stela 16, 14</td>
<td>Stela 16, 14, 3, 22? Naranjo HS, stela 19, Stela 17</td>
<td>Stela 16, 14</td>
<td>Stela 16, 14</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>514-554</td>
<td>534-820</td>
<td>534-554</td>
<td>534-554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
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<td>PDIG; Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
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<td>accompanies king <em>(yitaaj[?])</em> for period ending</td>
<td>accompanies king <em>(yitaaj[?])</em> for period ending</td>
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<td>use of Ajaw in Naah Ho Chan title</td>
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(continued)

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<th>Jaguar paddle</th>
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<td>Stela 3, Naranjo HS, stela 19</td>
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<td>Stela 22, BM 3</td>
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Table A.5. Supernatural Characters at Caracol.

Yajawte’ K’inic

Stela 13, dating to the 9.4.0.0.0 period ending (514) (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:48) was dedicated by the Caracol ruler Yajawte’ K’inich. Although it is poorly
preserved, the ruler on the front of the stela wears a bird mask, probably the first example of a Principle Bird Deity costume, which is also seen on Stela 16 (Grube 1994:98). It probably also contains the first Caracol god list, which is related to the 9.4.0.0.0 period ending in 514 (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010). Currently, only two items on this list are preserved, although the previous two glyphs may contain the opening of the sequence. The first preserved glyph is the Naah Ho Chan epithet, associated with the Paddler gods and other deities, as we will see in later god lists. The following glyph, while badly eroded, may contain the name of a jaguar deity called [?] Hiix.40

K’an I

Stela 16, commissioned for the 9.5.0.0.0 period ending in 534 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:62, fig. 15). The stela mentions the king’s involvement with period ending ceremonies. The glyphs that follow are yitaaj[?] uk’uhil ux-[?] k’uh… “with his deities, the [Patron Deity Introductory Glyph] deities…” The deities listed are as follows: a glyph showing a vulture with a winik sign in his mouth, which I will nickname “Man Eater”; a glyph including an eagle, sun sign, and part of the ajaw sign which also occurs on the eastern wall of Rio Azul tomb 12; the Jaguar God of the Underworld, here given the title Naah Ho Chan Ajaw; and the deity mentioned above called [?] Hiix. The last two glyphs in this sequence therefore mirror the short sequence seen on Stela 13.

The front of Stela 16 shows the ruler in the usual exuberant style. He wears a Principle Bird Deity costume and supernatural figures (deities or ancestors) emerge from his ceremonial bar.

40 The University Museum Archive has numerous photographs of Caracol stelae taken in order to produce the drawings published in Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981. Although these drawings have some problems, the photographs provide additional information. I consulted photographs of Stelae 3, 13, and 14.
Yajawte’ K’inich II

The next stela, Stela 14, was carved to commemorate the 9.6.0.0.0 period ending in 554 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:52, fig. 14). Like Stela 16, it also includes a god list. Although the published drawing lacks all the details, an examination of photos in the Museum archive revealed that the list of deities on Stela 14 closely parallels Stela 16. Here, after stating that the k’atun was finished, the deity list simply begins without any verb or connecting words. The list starts with the PDIG once again and the first god listed is one which we have not seen yet. It consists of some sort of skeletal head with an ak’bal sign infixed into the forehead. The following glyph, unfortunately, is completely illegible. Next, we see a sequence parallel to that seen on Stela 16. It begins with “Man Eater” then follows with the “Sun Eagle” deity, the JGU, the Naah Ho Chan Ajaw epithet (although here it may simply read Naah Chan Ajaw or Ho Chan Ajaw) and finally the [?] Hiix god. The text then continues by telling about the period ending rituals performed by the king.

Knot Ajaw

Knot Ajaw’s Stela 6 depicts the king dressed in a Principle Bird Deity mask and holding his ceremonial bar. Above his head, the air appears to be filled with supernatural characters, but they are currently badly eroded (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:fig. 7). The other side of the stela depicts his father, Yajawte’ K’inich II, dressed in the garb of the Jaguar God of the Underworld (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:fig. 8). He wears a cruller eye piece and holds an eccentric flint. Above him, two supernatural serpents disgorge portraits of his parents. The text of Stela 6 commemorates the 9.8.10.0.0 period ending in 603 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:31). On this date a scattering event took place. The
scatterer is named as Naah Ho Chan followed by two glyphs of unknown reading. It is possible that this refers to gods, but it would be extremely unusual for a god to perform a scattering event. The glyph that follows is the name of Knot Ajaw, so it is more likely that these are titles for the king. We next read that the event was “seen” (\textit{ila’}) by Yajawte’ K’inich, Knot Ajaw’s father. While this may seem to be a reference to a dead king’s participation, other references suggest that Yajawte’ K’inich abdicated in favor of his son, and that he was therefore still alive at this time (Houston 1993 in Martin and Grube 2000:90).

Stela 5 was also commissioned by Knot Ajaw to celebrate the 9.9.0.0.0 period ending in 613 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:26). The stela once again demonstrates the complex style of Early Classic monuments, showing the king surrounded by supernaturals, probably ancestors, disgorged from various snake mouths and other openings (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:fig. 6). One of these ancestors is labeled as K’an I, another as Yajawte’ K’inich, probably Knot Ajaw’s father rather than the earlier namesake. Above the king’s head, serpents disgorge more ancestor heads in the same style as Stela 6. Unfortunately, the name glyphs associated with these ancestors cannot be read.

\textbf{K’an II}

The monuments of K’an II are extremely interesting and provide some intriguing information about Caracol’s patron deities. Both Stelae 3 and 22 were carved for the 9.10.0.0.0 period ending in 633 and cover similar events (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:fig. 4; Grube 1994:87–90; Martin and Grube 2000:91). Naranjo’s Hieroglyphic Stairway, which probably was originally a Caracol monument (Martin 2000a:57–58),
covers the same events as well. Stela 3 shows K’an II dressed in the maize god net skirt costume. Above him, snakes disgorge ancestral figures which are unfortunately in a poor state of preservation. Stela 22 is a purely glyphic monument, but its finely incised glyphs are poorly preserved and thus there are still some large gaps in the reconstruction of its chronology. The Naranjo Hieroglyphic stairway was reassembled at Naranjo in the wrong order, and some blocks are now missing.

The first event in the sequence which interests us is the accession of K’an II. This occurred on 9.9.4.16.2 in 618. On Stela 3 we learn that the accession was ukabjiiy or “done by” a series of gods. The list is preceded once again by the PDIG. The gods in this list are the Paddler Gods (one of which may be the same JGU already mentioned in god lists at Caracol) and “Man Eater,” this time preceded by the number 3. This sequence is followed by the Naah Ho Chan epithet, which now seems to refer to all three of them. Probably the same event is recorded on Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway Block 2, where something happens to K’an II, ukabjiiy the paddler gods (the “Man Eater” would presumably appear on the next block, now missing) (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010). On Stela 3, these gods are called “the gods of X” where the final glyph is too badly eroded to read (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010). However, given reasons I will outline below, I believe this must refer to the current or a previous Caracol king.

The next event in the series, less than a year later, has been reconstructed by Simon Martin as a second accession of K’an II on 9.9.5.13.8 in 619, “done by” (ukabjiiy) Yuknoom Ti’ Chan, a lord of the Snake Dynasty (Martin 2009; see Martin 2003b). A second accession for the king is actually not entirely unheard of, and mirrors a similar
sequence in the text of La Corona, where a king underwent a “seating” event at home and later underwent a “headband tying” at the court of his overlord, the Calakmul king.

The next event, recorded on Stela 22, was the accession of Tajoom Uk’ab K’ahk’, the next king of the Snake Dynasty on 9.9.9.0.5 in 622 (Grube 1994:88). Just 180 days later, an important event occurs that is mentioned on all three monuments. The narrative is most complete on Stela 3: on 9.9.9.10.5 the 3-“Man Eater” arrived in Caracol. This was seen by K’an II’s mother. The god is referred to as the _baahaj uch’ab yahk’abil_ of K’an II and the gift of… (the name of the gift giver is destroyed). We learn his name on Naranjo Hieroglyphic Stairway Block 4, where the same events occur in a truncated form: “Man Eater” [arrived] in Caracol. He was the gift of Tajoom Uk’ab K’ahk’ (Simon Martin, personal communication 2010). In this case, “Man Eater” is not preceded by the number 3, but it is clear that “Man Eater” and “3 Man Eater” are the same deity. On Stela 22, the event is very poorly preserved, but the same date is mentioned, indicating that the event was discussed on this monument as well (Grube 1994:88).

How is it that “Man Eater” can oversee K’an II’s accession and then “arrive” in the city? Earlier monuments make it clear that Caracol kings already venerated this deity. Furthermore, he is not associated with Calakmul, Tikal, or Naranjo, suggesting that he is a purely local god and that his owner on Stela 3 must therefore be some Caracol lord. I believe the only explanation for this series of events is that the Snake overlord Tajoom Uk’ab K’ahk’ gave a new effigy to Caracol, probably to replace an old “Man Eater” effigy that may have been in a state of disrepair. This may have been a gesture of goodwill or it may have been an overtly political statement by effectively becoming the sponsor of a local deity.
Whatever the case, it is clearly not an example of a foreign power pushing a new deity on a subject city. The god is also called BAAH-hi-ja-ji-ya u-[ch’ab]-[ya]-ah’ab-[li] of the king. The bracketed glyphs are now gone and I have reconstructed them based on the clear presence of an u glyph atop an ahk’ab sign. This phrase is quite similar to the occasional ubaah uch’ab used to express the relationship between sons and fathers. As I will discuss below, the Maya did use such familial metaphors to describe the relationship between gods and kings. Here we see the addition of yaka’bil, often paired with uch’ab to represent the creative powers of the king. This may refer to a ritual act in which the king uses his creative powers to activate the deity. A similar series at Palenque connects the “Triad Progenitor” (who I believe was the dynastic founder) to GI, GII, and GIII, important patron gods of the site (see below).

Stela 22 has a very difficult chronology after the events described above, since the text is eroded and the narrative switches frequently between history, mythology, and the present ruler’s lifetime (Grube 1994:89). One of the events mentioned in this sequence is a deity conjuring by the ruler. However, the date and the conjured deity are unknown. It is also clear that this stela makes reference to an unknown event which happened several times throughout Caracol history (Chase et al. 1991:133; Helmke et al. 2006:9–16; Grube 1994:89). The Stela 22 narrative seems to discuss the first episode of this unknown event which took place sometime during the 4th century. It has been argued that the agent of this event, Te’ K’ab Chaak, served as a founding figure of the Caracol dynasty (Chase et al. 1991:133; Martin and Grube 2000:86) or at least as an important ancestor in Caracol history.
Hiatus

From 680 to 798, only one monument is known from Caracol, perhaps because of some sort of violent conflict that destroyed monuments from this period or made it impossible to commission them in the first place (Martin and Grube 2000:95). Stela 21 dates to 9.13.10.0.0 in 702. The relevant event is a conjuring of some version of the maize deity.

K’inich Joy K’awiil

This Terminal Classic ruler dedicated Ballcourt Markers 3 and 4, probably in 803, which make reference once again to the unknown event attributed to Te’ K’ab Chaak (Helmke et al. 2006:9–16). Here, K’inich Joy K’awiil is called “in the line of Te’ K’ab Chaak” but is not given a numbered sequence (Chase et al. 1991:133).

K’inich Toobil Yopaat

On 9.19.10.0.0 in 820, K’inich Toobil Yopaat dedicated Stela 19 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:69, fig. 17; Grube 1994:93–95). Stela 19 has an eroded section on its front which ends with the name of 3 “Man Eater” followed by the name of the ruler. It is unclear how these two are connected to one another since the preceding glyphs are now illegible. On the side of the monument, the text states the period ending calendar round, then makes reference to the paddler gods. Once again, the syntax of the phrase is unclear, but the paddlers are somehow involved in the rituals surrounding the period ending (Grube 1994:95).
Altar 12 was dedicated on the same date (Grube 1994:95–97) but may make reference to a palanquin event, possibly the same event which is recorded on Naranjo Stela 32 involving the king of Ucanal (Grube 1994:95–96).

**K’an III**

Stela 17 was commissioned for the 10.1.0.0.0 period ending in 849 (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981:64). On this date, the king scatters, “overseen by….” (yichonal). The overseer is the god “3 Man Eater,” but here his name is preceded by a glyph which may read *ujul* “the spear of…” However, Grube (2004:80) suggests that this actually reads *u-K’UH-JUL-lu* for *uk’uhul*, where the scribe has lost the distinction between velar and glottal spirants. In any case, clearly the “3-Man Eater” god is still important even at this late stage.

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**Chichen Itza**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inscriptions &amp; Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
<th>Hieroglyphic Jamb God</th>
<th>Te’ Uchok</th>
<th>Yax Uk’u (?) K’awiil</th>
<th>Hakatal Lintel God</th>
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<td>Casa Colorada</td>
<td>Casa Colorada, Halakal Lintel, Initial Series Lintel, Las Monjas Lintel 6, Stela 2</td>
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<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
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399
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<th>accompanies (yitah) for fire ritual</th>
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<td><strong>veneration practices</strong></td>
<td><strong>temple</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>his fire was drilled</td>
<td>His fire was conjured</td>
<td>otoot</td>
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<th>K'uh -il 9-ti-?</th>
<th>Yax Chich Kan</th>
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<td>Yula Lintel 1</td>
<td>Initial Series Lintel</td>
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<td>874-</td>
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<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>additional names/epithets</strong></td>
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<td>unuk holk'uh (great head god)</td>
<td>uyahaw k'uhul ahaw (lord belonging to the king)</td>
<td>possibly as snake</td>
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### Table 1: Veneration Practices of Bah Sabak Ahaw and Uchoch Yokpuy

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Effigy</th>
<th>Bah Sabak Ahaw</th>
<th>Uchoch Yokpuy</th>
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<td>ukaban unknown event</td>
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<td>Other verbs</td>
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<td>Temple classification</td>
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<td>called ahaw</td>
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<td>References to lordship</td>
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### Table 2: Names and Epithets of Bah Sabak Ahaw and Uchoch Yokpuy

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<th>Uchoch Yokpuy</th>
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<tr>
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<td>881-</td>
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<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional names/epithets</td>
<td>olis k'uh (heart god)</td>
<td>unuk holk'uh (great head god); kanal k'uh (sky god); 9 kan yok'in 16 yok'in; nachil (far away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicted</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to effigy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>possibly: unnamed god goes through ritual presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukabiijy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other verbs</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>unnamed god possibly Uchoch Yokpuy goes through following rituals: announcement of a festival, interrment of cache, sprinkling for the god, presentation of god image</td>
</tr>
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There are several texts from Chichen Itza dealing with patron deities of that site. These have been well summarized by Erik Boot (2005) and have also been discussed by Grube et al. (2003). The information here comes from these two sources. Although I expected the data from Chichen Itza to be different from the Southern Lowland sites, it seems that ritual practices at Chichen were quite similar, at least those recorded in the hieroglyphic record. The biggest differences appear to be 1) the spelling of certain god names, 2) an increased emphasis on referring to deities as lords and 3) the use of the term *ootot* “house” rather than *wayib* “sleeping place” to refer to god temples.

The earliest text to deal with deities comes from the Temple of the Hieroglyphic Jambs. It dates to 10.0.2.7.13 or August 4, 832. The text records this dedication date, and then tells us that a stone for the house was carved on that date. The house itself belongs to a deity whose name is not readily legible but is called the god of *(uk ’uhil)* of another individual (Grube et al. 2003:65). Unfortunately, this god does not appear elsewhere in the inscriptions. However, we can assume that the Temple of the Hieroglyphic Jambs was dedicated for this god.
The next relevant text is the hieroglyphic frieze from the Casa Colorada. It tells us that on 10.2.0.1.9 (869) “his fire was conjured.” This fire belongs to a deity called Yax Uk’u(-?) K’awiil, who appears in other inscriptions from the site. The inscription identifies this individual as a deity by saying \textit{uk’aba’ k’uh} (it is the name of the god). Grube et al. (2003:76) read this god’s name as Yax Uk’uk’um K’awiil, “Green are the Feathers of K’awiil.” However, Boot (2005:352) does not accept this interpretation.

The text then continues by telling us that “his fire was drilled” and then naming a second god. This one is named Te’ Uchok (Boot 2005:303). Again the text clarifies, telling us that “it is the name of the god.”

Later in the text, further fire events are also recorded at later dates. Each event takes place in a different year and with a different owner or perhaps different place names. None of these potential owners is specifically listed as a deity. It has been proposed (Wagner in Grube et al. 2003:82) that this text records a ritual cycle in which fire is moved from site to site. If this is the case, the owners listed could be different communities to which the god’s fire travels.

The Halakal Lintel carries a date of 10.2.0.11.8 (870) (Grube et al. 2003:85). This text also discusses a fire ritual. Here, fire is conjured by a human with lordly titles. The text then tells us that this individual was accompanied by \textit{(yitah)} an individual whose name is too difficult to read but is said to be a “sky god” \textit{(kanal k’uh)}. Another event is recorded on the front of the lintel. Unfortunately, it is now eroded away, but one of the actors listed is Yax Uk’u(-?) K’awiil, a deity seen earlier at the Casa Colorada. This text therefore probably names two deities, just as the Casa Colorada did.
Two lintels from the nearby site of Yula are important to the discussion. Yula Lintel 2 opens with the date 10.2.4.2.1, (873) (Boot 2005:312–314). On this date, the lintel was dedicated, and it belonged to a woman who was in some way connected with K’ak’upakal, who seems to be the paramount ruler at Chichen Itza during this period. The text continues, involving an enigmatic passage telling us that “it is the house of the god” and “the fire enclosure for the god.” Unfortunately, the god is not named.

Yula Lintel 1 carries a date of 10.2.4.8.4 (874) (Boot 2005:314–317). The text refers to a series of rituals, one of which involves the “gift for K’uh Yax Ha’al Chak Balun Tz’ab Ahaw.” This god name is familiar from Southern Lowland sites, translated as “First Rain Chaak.” Here the god is given the title “9 Tz’ab Lord.” As we will see in other inscriptions, Chichen Itza gods are often described as lords. The text continues, and eventually tells us that the glyphs carved here belong to another individual called Pomun Chak. This individual is identified as unuk holk’uh, “Great Head God” or some sort of principal god. Boot (2005:316) translates this name as “Rumbling Sound Chak.” On the front of the lintel, we read “here were enclosed, the gifts of Yax Ha’al Chak, the Sky god (kanal k’uh).”

The Initial Series Lintel carries the date of 10.2.9.1.9 (878) (Boot 2005:318). On the front side of the lintel is a verb, which might refer to the carving of the lintel itself. This event is carried out by (ukaban) a series of three gods. The first is K’uh Yax Chich? Kan, which is probably a version of the Southern Lowland vision serpent Yax Chit Jun Witz’ Naah Kaan (Boot 2005:321). This god was accompanied (vitah) by another, the now familiar Yax Uk’u(-?) K’awiil, and by K’uh -?-il 9-ti-?. The three gods are then called uyahaw K’uhul Ajaw “the lords that belong to the king.” This is another good
example of deities being described lords. Boot (2005:321) proposes that this set of three deities constitutes a deity triad just as we see in Southern Lowland sites such as Palenque. However, as the data show, the propensity to list gods in groups of three does not necessarily mean that any three gods were more important than others. Chichan Itza actually appears to be a good example of this phenomenon, since other gods appear just as important in other inscriptions.

The next inscriptions of interest all come from the Las Monjas structure, which has a series of doorways with carved lintels. Seven of these lintels have legible hieroglyphic texts which serve to identify individual “houses” within the structure as belonging to different individuals. The texts are somewhat formulaic, each opening with a date and a dedication formula. Lintel 1 is now badly eroded so that the owner of the house is no longer legible. The rest of the text lists titles of a probably human individual.

Lintels 2-6, along the Southern back of the structure, follow a standardized pattern listing the same date (10.2.10.11.7 in 880) followed by a dedicatory formula for the “lintel-stone of the lord belonging to the house of…” (Boot 2005:325). What follows in each text is the name of the house’s owner and that owner’s relationship to other individuals. Lintel 2’s owner is listed as Yax Chich? Kan Ahaw (the serpent god seen above modified by an Ahaw title) (Boot 2005:325). After possibly listing the proper name of the house, the text lists another god who accompanied (yitah) the first. This is Bah Sabak Ahaw, who takes the additional title Olis K’uh. Boot (2005:326) points out that Sabak is the name of a place of origin within the mythology of the Itza, and that this god seems to be associated with it. His name can be translated as “First Sabak Lord.” The title olis k’uh is frequent in Southern Lowland inscriptions and probably serves as a
descriptive title for certain types of gods. The front of the lintel continues with the phrase “he saw good things for the god,” followed by the name of K’ak’upakal.

Lintel 3 states that its house belongs to a human woman. After listing her names and titles, the text tells us that she is the mother of K’ak’upakal. The front of the lintel names another individual, Chak Balun Pet. Boot (2005:328) proposes that this is another god, but there is no evidence to demonstrate this, so it is uncertain.

Lintel 4 lists another human owner rather than a god. He is accompanied by K’ak’upakal. The front of the lintel uses the phrase “he saw good things” once again (Boot 2005:330). Here, these good things are not for the god, but may be for the human owner.

Boot (2005:331) claims that the owner of Lintel 5 is another deity but I believe that this is unlikely. His name was Hun Yahawal Winik Uchok, and Boot believes that he is named as a “sky god” (kanal k’uh) However, this glyph is in poor condition and may not name him as a god. He is accompanied (yitah) by another individual whose name and titles are badly eroded. Boot (2005:331) claims that this too is a deity named as a sky god, but the glyph is in even worse condition. The front of the lintel once again tells us that K’ak’upakal “saw good things for the god” (Boot 2005:331). The reason I believe that this lintel names a human owner is the context in which it was found. This lintel is one of three (along with Lintels 3 and 4) which span the large frontal room (Room 18) of the structure. The other two lintels name human owners, one of them female, and it is reasonable to assume that the room housed a small family of humans rather than gods. Lintels 2 and 6, however, name gods, and correspond to the much smaller rooms (17 and
19) which flank the large central room (Bolles 1977:135–145). As such, they are far better candidates for deity shrines.

The owner of the room of Lintel 6 is listed as the familiar Yax Uk’u(-?) K’awiil, who is called *ah kanal muyal* (“he of sky mist”). Accompanying this deity (*yitah*) was another deity whose name is now gone, but whose epithet *kanal k’uh* remains (Boot 2005:331–332).

BothLintels 1 and 7, on the east and west sides of the structure, have human owners, accompanied by a description of their relationships with other humans. In summary, the five back lintels name house owners and their relationships or companions (Boot 2005:334). God names are given in bold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lintel 2</th>
<th>Yax Chich Kan Ajaw</th>
<th>Yitah</th>
<th>Ba Sabak Ajaw Olis K’uh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lintel 3</td>
<td>Ixik Te’witz…</td>
<td>Mother of</td>
<td>K’ak’upakal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintel 4</td>
<td>Uchok Wah Ab</td>
<td>Yitah</td>
<td>K’ak’upakal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintel 5</td>
<td>Hun Yahawal Winik</td>
<td>Yitah</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lintel 6</td>
<td><strong>Yax Uk’u(?) K’awiil</strong></td>
<td>Yitah</td>
<td><strong>Kanal K’uh</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The texts of the Temple of the Four Lintels have a similar structure to the Las Monjas lintels, in that they each name owners (in this case all deities) of the house (*otoot*) (Boot 2005:343). Unlike Las Monjas, the temple only contains two rooms: a large western room and a small eastern room (Ricketson 1925:267–268). These probably correspond to the two gods mentioned on the lintels. Whether each room was considered an individual house or whether the gods shared one house is unclear.

Lintel 1 (Boot 2005:335–337) dates to 10.2.12.1.8 (July 13, 881). Following the dedicatory formula, the text lists K’uh Balun ? Ahaw Yax Chich? Kan Ahaw as the owner. The text clarifies, telling us “it is the name of his …k(i)” ending in a term that is
not yet understood. This phrase serves to link the deity to his human owner, whose title is listed next. After listing an obscure ritual which seems to have taken place at the ballcourt, the text reiterates, telling us that the glyphs of the house of Yax Chich Kan Ahaw were dedicated. This phrase is repeated a third time on the front of the lintel, here the god taking the additional epithet *kanal k’uh*.

Lintel 3 (Boot 2005:337–338) carries the same date as Lintel 1. Here the owner is listed as Uchoch Yokpuy. Further along in the text, this deity is given additional titles. These are *unuk holk’uh* “the great head god”; *kanal k’uh*; 9 Kan Ok’in 16 Ok’in.

Although the god’s name is unique to Chichen Itza, this final title string can be seen twice in the Temple of the Inscriptions at Palenque with an unknown referent (Krochock 1988:62–63; Boot 2005:337). The front of the lintel gives the proper name of the house, and then tells us again that it is the house of Uchoch Yokpuy, *kanal k’uh*. Here, the god is given the additional description *nachil*, which Boot (2005:338) interprets to mean “foreigner.”

Lintel 4 (Boot 2005:338–341) also carries the same date. Here the owner is also belongs to Yax Chich? Kan Ahaw. He carries the title 16 Ok’in, as we saw on Lintel 3. He is called “the god of…” (*uk’uhil*) followed by a title of a human owner. This owner is apparently some sort of “representative” of K’ak’upakal.

The date of Lintel 2 (Boot 2005:341–342) is slightly different from the others: 10.2.12.2.4 (July 29, 881) or 16 days after the date on the other lintels. After the dedicatory formula, we learn that the house belonged to *uk’uhil* (the god or gods of) K’inil Ko-?-l. The god is left unnamed and his owner is a human nobleman. Next, the text tells us that “he saw good things” (*yiliw utzil*). This is presumably the god owner
again, as in the texts of the Las Monjas lintels. The next phrase is read by Boot as “he announced the festival on this day in this year.” Next, the text repeats the building’s ownership formula, telling us again that it belongs to the unnamed god. The next phrase can be read “interred was the box [cache offering?] by day and by night” (Gracia Campillo 2000:124; Boot 2005:342). Finally we learn that K’ínil Ko-?-l then “sprinkled for the god.” The front of the lintel then makes a reference to the image of the god. The verb in question is once again *pas*, which Boot (2005:342) argues can be translated as “announce, to show.” The idea seems to be a ritual presentation of the god image. In summary, we are given a series of events that take place 16 days after the completion of the building. These include the seeing of good things (tribute offerings?); the announcement or presentation of something, possibly a festival or celebration; the interment of a cache offering by day and by night; sprinkling (presumably incense) for the god; and finally, the presentation of the god’s image.

All these point to “rituals of domestication” similar to those seen in inscriptions from the Southern Lowlands (see Chapters 3 and 4). It may not be coincidence that Uchoch Yokpuy, the new deity named on Lintel 3, is called “the god from far away.” We may be looking at a captured deity that goes through a series of domestication rituals and is housed with a local deity as part of the domestication process. Uchoch Yokpuy does not appear elsewhere in the inscriptions of Chichen Itza, which is consistent with the theory that he was a newly acquired god, introduced at this time.

The Caracol Stela (Boot 2005:344–348) opens with a date between 10.2.15.0.1 and 10.2.16.0.0 (884–885) although another slightly later date may also be listed. Breakage and erosion prevent a clear understanding of the events in the beginning of the
text. However, the later part of the text lists a series of participants, divided by yitah glyphs. One of these participants is listed as Yax Na Kan Ahaw, Yax Chich? Ahaw. Again, this is a variation on names for vision serpents seen in the Southern Lowlands, including Yax Chit and Nah Kan. After each title, the god is once again called Ahaw. The other participants seem to be human.

Stela 2 (Boot 2005:349–350) records a date between 10.3.0.0.1 and 10.3.1.0.0 (889-890). The events are badly eroded, but one of the participants is named as Yax Uk’u(-?) K’awiil, who is called k’anal k’uh. He is accompanied by (yitah) human actors.

Chinikiha

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<tr>
<th>name</th>
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<tr>
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<td>DO panel</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>(AD)</td>
<td>800-</td>
<td>800-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>ohlis k’uh (heart god)</td>
<td>ohlis k’uh (heart god)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td>period ending</td>
<td>period ending</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table A.7. Supernatural Characters at Chinikiha.

An unprovenienced panel in the Dumbarton Oaks collection may come from Chinikiha. The text tells us that the king presented a stone for the 9.18.0.0.0 period ending (800). This is overseen by (yichonal) a series of gods (Stuart et al. 1999:44). The first is called IX TZAK ko-?-wi (Lady Conjured ?). The second is called IX 9 IL-a-ja(?) (Lady Nine Sight). The pair is given the epithet ohlis k’uh. It is interesting that they are both female deities. Another possibility is that one or both of the female prefixes is in fact the head of the maize god.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
<th>God or Ancestor</th>
<th>Additional Names/Epithets</th>
<th>Veneration Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-Hut Jol</td>
<td>Pendants 1A, 1B</td>
<td>765-767</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td>bloodletting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yax Bul Chan</td>
<td>Pendants 3A-3B</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td>bloodletting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahkal Kab? Chaak</td>
<td>Pendants 4A-4B</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td>bloodletting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiix?</td>
<td>Pendants 6A-6B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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(continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
<th>God or Ancestor</th>
<th>Additional Names/Epithets</th>
<th>Veneration Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>? Chaak</td>
<td>Spine 2, Pendants 7A-7B</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td>ohli k'u (heart god)</td>
<td>priest &quot;stood with surt'ill&quot; before him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unen K'awiil</td>
<td>Spine 2, Pendants 8A-8B</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td>ch'ok (youth)</td>
<td>priest &quot;stood with surt'ill&quot; and &quot;naaj&quot; before him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ix Pakal Tuun</td>
<td>Pendants 8A-8B</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
<td>priest &quot;stood with surt'ill&quot; before her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat Hut Jol</td>
<td>Pendants 9A-9B</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>god (called k'u)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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(continued)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jolow Chan?</td>
<td>Pendants 10A-10B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>K'anal Chaak</td>
<td>Pendants 11A-11B</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaxkul Chan</td>
<td>Pendants 13A-13B</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chak Xib Chaak</td>
<td>Pendants 15A-15B, Spine 15</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.8. Supernatural Characters at Comalcalco.

The relevant inscriptions from Comalcalco all come from a Classic period urn burial (#26). Zender (2004) argues that the individual buried in this urn was a priest, as shown by the unique artifact assemblage and the texts themselves. These texts come from a series of bones and spines buried with the individual, and they list a series of ritual events that were conducted by Aj Pakal Tahn, presumably the urn’s occupant.

My reading of these texts is taken from Zender (2004). They span a 12 year period from 763 to 777, in which Aj Pakal Tahn undertook a series of rituals for the spring equinoxes, as well as other calendrical events.

The first text, dating to 9.16.12.0.0 (763) provides, as Zender argues, the rationale for the entire series. It reads wa’iij k’intuun wa’iij wi’naal tu uxlajuun tuun “there was drought and famine in the 13th year.” Supplications detailed in subsequent texts may have been in reaction to this event (Zender 2004:258).

The next set of texts is remarkably formulaic, telling of a series of bloodletting rituals performed on or near the Spring Equinoxes of the years 765-770 (Zender 2004:257–263, fig. 68–78). In each case, we see a calendar round, followed by the verb ?-xa-ja, possibly “he is cut/pierced.” This reading is provided by Zender (2004:260) who notes that in several cases, the verb is carried out by means of a shark’s tooth, a bone, and a flint blade, limiting the possible verbs. Zender proposes a possible reading of t’oxaj and
suggests that the general idea is sacrificial bloodletting. Following the verb we see the common *yichonal* phrase “overseen by” followed by the name of a god. The god name varies from text to text. This if followed by *uk’uhil* “it is the god of” and finally the protagonist’s name: Aj Pakal Tahn. As we will see, there are a large number of different deities named on the different bones. The texts read as if these gods belonged to the priest himself, much as patron gods are usually said to belong to kings. It is unclear, however, whether these deities are the same as the kingdom’s patron deities or whether they were personal deities of the priest. I will offer a theory shortly.

The first text in the series comes from Pendants 1A and 1B. The date is March 23 765 and the god observing the cutting is 4-Hut-Jol or “four-eyed head.” Unfortunately, I do not have a drawing of the next text, from Pendants 2A and 2B, but Zender (2004:254) indicates that the formula is the same, dating to March 23, 766, and that the name of the god is now unreadable. Pendants 3A and 3B, from March 23 767, refer to the god Yax Bul Chan. Pendants 4A and 4B, from March 22 768 refer to the god Ahkal Kab [?]. Pendants 5A and 5B are again unknown to me, but Zender (2004:254) reports their date as March 22 769 and the god as unknown. Pendants 6A/6B record the date of March 22, 770 and the god as Hiix-[?].

Before the texts continue on in the usual manner, a number of them record rituals performed just before, during, and after the 9.17.0.0.0 period ending. Twenty days prior to the event, Spine 2 and Pendants 7A/7B record that “Aj Pakal Tahn stood in/with *sutz’il* before his gods.” Unfortunately, the meaning of *sutz’il* is still unclear. On Spine 2, the gods listed are [?]-Chaak and Unen K’awiil. On Pendants 7A and 7B, only the god [?]-Chaak is listed, followed by the phrase *ohlis k’uh* “heart god.”
One month later, on the period ending, Pendants 8A/8B tell us that Aj Pakal Tahn “stood with naaj and his sotz’il (meanings still unknown) before young Unen K’awiil.” Unen K’awiil is therefore repeated on this day. At Palenque, this god was also called ch’ok “young” since he seems to be an infant aspect (see below). Whereas before, both [?] Chaak and Unen K’awiil were called the gods of Aj Pakal Tahn, here this is left understated, since the reader already presumably knows that Unen K’awiil is a god, and who he belongs to.

Finally, 7 days after the period ending, which is also the first day of the 365 day calendar on the seating of Pohp, we learn that Aj Pakal Tahn stands in/with suzt’il before someone named Ix Pakal Tuun-[?]. Unfortunately, it is not stated whether this individual was a goddess or a human being. She is not mentioned elsewhere in the texts.

After these period-ending related texts, we return to the equinox formula seen in the previous texts. Unfortunately, I do not have drawings or photographs of Pendants 9-14, but I will report Zender’s (2004:254) analysis. Pendants 9A/9B, recording the date March 22 771, say that the god witnessing the bloodletting was Nat Hut Jol, a name quite similar to the 4-Hut Jol seen above. Pendants 10A/10B, of March 21, 772, record the god as Jolow Chan-?. Pendants 11A/11B of March 21, 773, record the god as K’anal Chaak. This name is seen at La Corona as the name of one of the deities for whom a temple is dedicated in 658. Pendant 13A/13B record the date of March 21, 774, and the god as Yaxkul Chan, similar to the Yax Bul Chan we saw above.

Pendants 14A/14B records a date of March 21, 775, but do not seem to record gods, but rather accompanying human beings. Pendants 15A/15B and 16A/16B, which record the date of March 20, 776, also list an accompanying human individual, the king.
of Comalcalco. 16B is interesting, however, in its explicit reference to cutting “with a bone” belonging to the king. It is almost as if, in these cases, the king replaced the role of the god. On Penant 15B, the name of the king is followed by the phrase **tu-HAAB-li-? CHAK XIB [CHAACK]**. A similar phrase appears on La Corona Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 Block 11, there referring to the local patron deity Yaxal Ajaw (David Stuart, personal communication 2012). In both cases, the phrase is associated with yearly events and refers to the “year of [?] of the god” in some way. The unknown glyph is probably related to sound or song (David Stuart, personal communication 2012), and on the La Corona block the phrase is associated with dancing.

I suspect that we see the same thing on Pendants 17A/17B and 18A/18B. These record the date March 20, 777 and list the implements of cutting: a shark’s tooth, a flint blade, and other unknown items. This is called **umayil** “the gift/offering” of Aj Pakal Tahn, *yichonal* Ahkal Ibal Te’ Chaak K’inich-?-Bahlam. The final epithet K’inich-?-Bahlam is the name of a king from La Mar and the K’inich part almost certainly points to this as a ruler’s name. Therefore, I believe that the final text to actually list a deity is Pendants 13A/13B from 774.

There are two undated texts in the set. Spine 11 refers to how Aj Pakal Tahn “carved a white canoe” and impersonated the deity Sak Chin Xib ?. Zender (2004:256) suggests that this was the carving of a ritual object of some sort. Spine 15 calls Aj Pakal Tahn a *ch’ok* “youth/prince” and says he is the *uyajaw k’ahk’* “the fire priest of” Chak Xib Chaak (Zender 2004:256–257). Chak Xib Chaak or “Great Youth Chaak” is a common deity name. This passage reminds me of a monument from Tonina, which calls
a priest “the holy priest of the paddler gods” in a posthumous memorial. This may be a similar phrase meant to honor Aj Pakal Tahn after his death.

Although most of the gods in these inscriptions are explicitly stated as “belonging” to Aj Pakal Tahn, I believe this list probably represents the set of deities recognized by the town or at least the ruling lineage. This is especially probable for Chaak and Unen K’awiil, the deities invoked for the period ending ritual. In most Classic Maya texts, patron deities are only visible on important days such as period endings, and therefore equinoxal deities, such as those listed here, may go largely unrecognized. Unen K’awiil was also venerated at Palenque (see below), where we see the same titles of ch’ok and ohlis k’uh applying to their most important deities. It may or may not be coincidental that Comalcalco in this period was ruled by the dynasty of Tortuguero, which also carried the Baal emblem glyph known from Palenque.

Copan

<table>
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<tr>
<th>name inscriptions</th>
<th>9 ?-s</th>
<th>7 ajaw huun?</th>
<th>6 Bikaah Nal</th>
<th>unnamed god</th>
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<tr>
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<td>xukpi stone</td>
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<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
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<td>deity is bathed ((yatij)) and grasped ((ch'am))</td>
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<tr>
<td>said to be &quot;gods of K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo',&quot; the previous ruler</td>
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<td>Mam k'uh &quot;grandfather god&quot;; umam k'uh (his grandfather god or grandfather to the gods)</td>
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<td>k'altuun (stone dedication); accompanies (yitaaj) king on period ending</td>
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<td>T. 22 façade</td>
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<td>koknoom Ux Witik (guardian of Copan)</td>
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<td>land and sky belong to him?; u?-aj; covering belongs to him; impersonation</td>
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<td>Ancestor (known king)</td>
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<td>Oration to him on Papagayo step; Copan &quot;is his city&quot;,</td>
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</table>

Table A.9. Supernatural Characters at Copan.

The Copan dynasty was founded with the arrival of K'inich Yax K'uik' Mo' in 426 (see Schele 1992; Sharer, Traxler, et al. 1999; Bell et al. 2004). There are some
indications that he was already present in the valley prior to this founding event, but pre-dynastic events are few and far between in Copan inscriptions (Stuart 2003). Clearly, however, Yax K’uk’ Mo’ was seen as the founder of the dynasty, and subsequent kings count their reigns from his (Schele 1992). Unfortunately, no monuments can be attributed to him.

K’inich Popol Hol

Yax K’uk’ Mo’s son commissioned some of the earliest monuments from the site. Stela 63 commemorates the 9.0.0.0.0 period ending in 435 (Stuart 2003:231, fig. 11.9), with the Xukpi stone dated just two years later.

The Xukpi Stone (Stuart 2003:fig. 11.18) is a particularly difficult monument to read. However, it seems to refer to the tomb of Ruler 2 and gives a date of 9.0.2.0.0 (437) (Stuart 2003:245). A verb probably follows this date, and should correspond to I1-I2.

What follows is a series of confusing glyphs, and finally, starting at N2: k’uh K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ Ajaw… I find it likely that N1 is an u sign, and that the final passage reads “they are the gods of K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’”. This would suggest that columns J-M contain god names. Column J consists of a glyph prefixed by 9. This glyph appears as a simple number tree, implying god impersonation, but may be entirely unrelated. This is followed by a –se syllable. Column K consists of 7 prefixing a head, possibly ajaw, followed by what may be a glyph for huun “headband.” Column L consists of 6 prefixing bi and ka signs. Column N consists of a hi sign and a probable NAL sign. I suspect that we have three gods, each prefixed by a number. We have the 9 ?-s god, the 7 Ajaw Huun[?] god, and the 6 Bikaah Nal god. None of these deities appears elsewhere in the Copan inscriptions.
Tuun K’ab Hiix

The Papagayo step (Schele 1990:fig. 3) appears to have been carved under this fourth ruler of Copan. Its inscription is particularly interesting, because much of it is in the second person, and is probably addressing a dead ancestor, possibly Yax K’uk’ Mo’. The inscription picks up halfway through a set of paired columns. We read ak ’uhil “your god,” skip a glyph, and read yatij “it was bathed.” This almost certainly refers to a deity bathing. This is followed by tach’ab ahk’abil “with your power” awajawil “your rulership.” This is followed by a series of titles and other glyphs. We pick up again with ?-ubaah akab ch’een “The image of your city.” This is the end of the oration, because then we read che’en Tuun K’ab Hiix “Tuun K’ab Hiix says it” (Grube 1998:551–552).

Further down we read that he grasped his god “ch’am uk’uhil” followed by the titles of the king. In short, we see the current king making an oration about the care of deities, probably some time in the past. We also see the handling of deities in the present, probably as part of an accession ceremony.

Bahlam Nehn

Bahlam Nehn was the first to state his dynastic count (Schele 1992:135, fig. 2a). He does so on Stela 15, dating to 9.4.10.0.0 (524). The stela gives a series of like-and-kind events of previous period endings, including on on 8.19.0.0.0 performed by K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ (Stuart 2003:223, fig. 11.5). This is especially interesting because this date precedes the founding event. Bahlam Nehn’s own place in the dynasty is listed as 7 tz’akbu ajaw k’in ajaw ochk’in kaloomte’ K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’. “The seventh lord in line of the sun king, the western kaloomte, K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo.”

Wi’ Yohl K’inich
The Ante Step (Morales et al. 1990:fig. 1) is the first inscription of Copan to refer to deities that would ultimately become quite common in the inscriptions. After giving us the clear date of 9.5.7.12.2 (542), the monument is not very clear with the verb. We see only a few parallel lines, perhaps corresponding to an unusual form of the chok “scatter” verb, although this is far from clear. The missing verb is followed by a glyph probably reading yichonal “overseen by”, followed by u-? (almost certainly uk’uhil, “his gods”). These are named as 9 K’awiil and 4 te’ Ch’oktaak “Four Youths.” These god names appear frequently in other Copan texts. Next we see the names and titles of the ruler, followed by the dedication of the stair itself.

Ruler 9

Stela 49 has a series of cryptic glyphs, but it also reads bolon tz’akbu kaloomte’ or “ninth in line from the Kaloomte’,” and bolon tz’akbu k’uhul [Copan] ajaw, another reference to K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’.

Unknown Early Classic

The step of 10L-11 Sub (Schele 1990:fig. 8) has no date and the personal name recorded does not correspond to any known Copan king. This name appears to contain the epithet K’inich Tajal Wayib, which appears at Palenque as part of the name phrase of the Triad deity GIII. The same name appears as a giant glyphic mask on the Yehnal structure and on ceramics from the Tikal region (Stuart 2003:223–225). Given the variety of these contexts, I find it most likely that the epithet is simply a name for the sun god, which can get picked up by solar deities (such as the Palenque god) and by kings who use solar aspects in their names. The Yehnal mask could either be a simple sun portrait or refer to this same individual. The rest of the text is interesting in that it tells about ritual
events involving the *k’uhul* [Copan] *naah*, which was the *yotoot* “house” of K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ and Popol Hol (and possibly a few other personages as well). This seems to indicate that the structure was used as an ancestor shrine.

**Butz’ Chan**

With Ruler 11 we see a continuation and elaboration of the use of deities first mentioned by Wi’ Yohl K’inich. Stela 7 (Schele 1990:fig. 9) dates to 9.9.0.0.0 (613). It is the first example of the figural style that would become elaborated later on. On the front of the monument, the king holds a double headed serpent bar. From the left side emerges a JGU figure, while the right side is now gone. The text of the stela mentions deities in several contexts. It starts with the period ending date. The first verb to follow the date is *k’altuun* (stone dedication), and the subject of this verb is the paddler gods and the wind god (Schele 1987b:201). The next verb is *tzutz pik* “the ending of the period.” This is *ukabjiyi* a glyph probably reading *uk’uhil*. This is followed by the gods’ names: ?-Kab-?, 4 Ajaw, and 9 K’awiil. This is followed by a glyph of unknown reading, and *uhuun uk’uhil* “x is the headband of his god.” While parts of the right side are eroded, we can read *yichonal uk’uhil* by the paddler gods and *yichonal [uk’uhil?]* 4 te’ Ch’oktaak. This is followed by a series of glyphs which may or may not be gods. The other side of the monument begins with an unknown glyph, followed by *k’uhil* 9 K’awiil and the paddlers. This stela is the first reference to the paddler gods in the inscriptions of Copan.

The final part of the text gives the king the title 12 *tz’akbu* “in the line of” (should be 11) 3 *Witza’ Ajaw* (Schele 1992:136), a reference to K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ once again.
Altars X and Y are tentatively dated to the reign of Butz’ Chan. Altar X (Schele 1990:fig. 7) mentions the day 3 Ajaw, which could correspond to 9.9.0.0.0. However, the first date listed is 11 Etz’nab 1 K’ank’in, predating the period ending by seven years. On this day, the flint and shield of 4 Ajaw and 9 K’awiil were conjured (tzak). A few glyphs are missing, but the text picks up again with yahk’abil, followed by the names and titles of the king. The intervening glyphs probably refer to additional gods, and tuch’ab… “with the power of the king.”

Altar Y (Schele 1990:fig. 11) has a very similar format, and my simply continue the same text. The calendar round given on Altar Y is 8 Kimi 19 Wo. On this day we see a birth (sihyaj). It is unclear whether this refers to the birth of a god or to the king himself, followed by a title string containing the word k’uh or k’uhul. We see this in the title strings of other Copan rulers also. After the rest of the title string, we see another conjuring (tzak) this time of an unnamed god (k’uh). Both monuments depict bundles wrapping the altars, and these are grasped by deities. On Altar X, these are paired paddler gods, or sun god and JGU. On Altar Y, all appear to be JGUs.

Stela P (Schele 1990:fig. 10) strongly resembles Stela 7, but dates to 9.9.10.0.0 (623). On the front, the king grasps a double-headed serpent bar, from which emerge the jaguar paddler and stingray paddler (Schele 1987b:201). The first part of the text gives the period ending date and the verb tzutz (to finish), followed by lam tahn lakam tuun (the period ending stela). This event is ukabjiit two gods: the maize god, and a deity whose name consists of a head bursting from a star glyph, followed by the name of the Water Lily Serpent (Yax Chit Jun Witz’ Naah Kaan). I have nicknamed this second character the “Starburst Water Lily Serpent.” While it is tempting to see these as two
separate gods, the glyphs also appear together on Stela 6, as well as Quirigua Stela J and Tikal Stelae 31 and 3, demonstrating that it is a single long name sequence. The side panels of Stela P give additional information. The north side gives us a phrase starting with *ubaah*, and may introduce a description of the king’s image on the front. After a missing glyph, it continues *ta k’uh* [Jaguar Paddler], [Stingray Paddler] or “with the paddler gods.” This probably refers to the serpent bar the king holds. These gods are called *mam k’uh* “the grandfather/ancestor gods.” This phrase is followed by a verb spelled *u-ku-tz’a?*, whose object is more gods (*k’uh*). These gods are listed as 4 Ajaw and 9 K’awiil. The text then continues into dedicatory events performed by the king. The names and titles of the king appear on the other side, where among them we see the following title: *ubaah uch’abil Yax K’uhul Ajaw* “son of the first Holy Lord.” The use of Yax K’uhul before titles will become relatively common in later inscriptions. We also read that the king was “in the line of the three k’atun ch’ahoom…Yax K’uk’ Mo’…, the Western *Kaloomte’*” (Schele 1992:136).

**K’ahk’ Uti’ Witz’ K’awiil**

Ruler 12 was a very prolific monument builder, with numerous monuments of relevance to the discussion here.

Stela 12 commemorates the 9.10.15.0.0 period ending (647). Much of the text is difficult to make out but it refers to both gods and ancestors. The word *k’uh* is visible on the north side, followed shortly by the names of 4 te’ Ajaw and 9 K’awiil. On the south side, Copan is referred to as the *k’ab ch’een* (city) of K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo, the Copan lord and *wite’naah* lord (see Schele 1992:136–137).
Stela 19, dating to 9.10.19.15.0, records the king as 12th in line from Wuk chapat tz’kin k’inich ajaw K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ (Schele 1992:136). This is an excellent example of an ancestor being given the full name of the sun god.

Although Stela 2 (Maudslay 1889c:plates 101 and 102) commemorates the 9.11.0.0.0 (652) period ending, the initial series date is probably 9.10.15.0.0, approximately 20 years after the accession of the king. On this date, he finished his k’atun, which was seen (ila) by umihin (the son of) “Carrion Vulture,” [and] the god of (uk’uhil) the king. For the subsequent period ending, the king impersonates the paddler gods, who are called umam k’uh (his grandfather gods or grandfathers to the gods). Another verb then refers to the gods 4 te’ Ajaw and 9 K’awiil. The glyph that follows reads haa’in, which should be the independent pronoun “I.” But this reading doesn’t make any sense in the context of the sentence. The next set of glyphs may refer to a “period ending bath,” perhaps suggesting that the gods have been bathed. The front of the stela shows the king grasping a double headed serpent bar. A JGU emerges from the right side, while the left side is now eroded.

Stela 13 commemorates the 9.11.0.0.0 period ending. The verb is uk’altuun, and the subject is the paddler gods. In this case, they actively participate in the stone dedication ritual. Further along, we see what may be a god impersonation, followed by the gods 4 Ajaw and 9 K’awiil. After this, however, the stela continues with a long array of unknown glyphs. The text eventually finishes by calling the king the “11th in line from the Kaloomte’” (Schele 1992:136).

Stela 10 (Maudslay 1889c:plate 111) may date to 9.11.0.0.0, although the initial series date corresponds to 9.10.19.13.0. Part of the text mentions ubaah 1 pik chanal k’uh
"1 pik kabal k’uh" “the images of the 8,000 sky gods and the 8,000 earth gods. Stela 31 of Tikal also names these many deities. (see memory of Bones). The end of the text gives the king, or possibly his father, the title 10th (should be 12th) in line from K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’ (Schele 1992:137).

Stela 1 was commissioned for the date 9.11.15.14.0 (668). On its front face, the ruler grasps the double headed serpent bar, from which emerge two human figures with turbans, probably ancestors. The accompanying altar tells us: yati j k’uh Paddlers “the paddler gods are bathed.”

Stela I (Schele 1987c:fig. 2) was dedicated for the date 9.12.3.14.0 (676). On this day, period ending rituals involved the conjuring of K’awiil. This was done by (ukabjiyi) 4 te’ Ch’oktaak, 9 te’ Witz, and “he, 9 K’awiil” (using the independent pronoun haa’). The text also recalls an earlier period ending that took place on 8.6.0.0.0 at chi-throne by (ukabjiyi) “Foliated Ajaw” (Stuart 2003:219–221). The front of the monument shows an image of GI, or the king dressed as GI, holding a double-headed serpent bar. From each side emerges an image of k’awiil. The associated altar (Schele 1987c:fig. 3) counts forward to 9.13.0.0.0 (692) and simply states the king’s name, followed by yitaj uk’uhil (“with his gods”), the paddlers.

Stela 6 (Maudslay 1889c:plate 107), commissioned for the 9.12.10.0.0 period ending (682), depicts the king dressed as a Teotihuacano. He wears Teotihuacan motifs in his headdress, and from his double headed Teotihuacan-style serpent emerge two tlaloc figures. The text tells of a scattering ritual that was performed with [yi]taj the paddler gods. These god names are followed by u-12-CHUWEN (perhaps another god name) and 4 te’ Ajaw and 4 Ch’oktaak. Much of the rest of the text is obscure. However, on one
side we see a reference to the birth of K’awiil. On the other, the king conjures (tsakwiyi) the Teotihuacan war serpent Waxaklajun Ubaah Kaan. This is probably what is depicted on the front of the monument in the form of a Teotihuacan-esque double-headed serpent.

Stela I’, commissioned for the 9.13.0.0.0 period ending (692), tells us that on that date, the Paddlers were bathed (yatij).

Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil

Stela J (Maudslay 1889c:plate 68–72), one of the most interesting and peculiar of Maya monuments, dates to 9.13.10.0.0 (702). The text on the back of the stela tells about the accession of the king, in which he grasped or was presented with the royal headband. This event was overseen (yichonal) his gods (uk’uhil). We are also told that the event happened in the city of the gods (uch’een k’uh) who are listed as 4 Ajaw and 9 K’awiil. The side texts list annual rituals performed at the end of each year. However, no mention of deities is made in relation to these ceremonies. The back of the stela is particularly difficult to read due to its unusual reading order. It seems that the stela makes reference to the date 9.0.18.0.0, and may even make reference to early mythological dates as well. We see the use of several unusual place names such as 6 Mih Nal and others. There is also a mention of the Black Square Nosed Beastie, although the context is unclear due to reading order difficulties. The Yax K’uhul Ajaw title is used again. Finally, the 9.13.10.0.0 period ending date is repeated. On this day some deities are bathed (yatij), including the Starburst Water Lily Serpent.

The façade of Temple 22 (Stuart 1989:2) seems to have been carved for the first k’atun anniversary of the king’s accession on 9.14.3.6.8 (715). The text lists a name of the king, a parentage statement, and then a strange series of glyphs. These begin with
inkab inchan “my earth, my sky.” This is followed by a list of god names. Although the grammar is strange, I believe that the idea is that the land and sky belong to these gods. The list starts with 4 te’ Ajaw and 9 K’awiil, two common Copan gods. They are followed by K’uy Nik and Mo’ Witz Ajaw. This is the first time we see these gods named, but they later become common. Finally, we see Winik Ub and Winik –Pohp. Winik Ub only appears at La Corona, and its meaning is unknown. As far as I know, Winik –Pohp is unique.

Stela F (Maudslay 1889c:plate 52) was carved for the 9.14.10.0.0 period ending (721). The stela is owned by Yax-?, said to be the god of the king “uk’uhil Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awil.”

Stela B (Maudslay 1889c:Plates 37 and 38) was carved for the 9.15.0.0.0 period ending (731). Intriguingly, the first part of the text reads mih ohl chanal k’uh, mih ohl kabal k’uh, mih ohl yal?... “No heart [of/for] the sky god, no heart [of/for] the earth god, no heart [of/for]... This has been interpreted to refer to a lack of sacrificial victims. However, “heart” in that case should be suffixed by –is and it is not. I think the meaning is more obscure, and may refer to the hearts of the gods themselves. For the period ending, the stela is planted, and it is called “the image of Mo’ Witz Ajaw” (Macaw Mountain Lord). The stela does indeed depict this deity on the back. He sits in a cleft of a witz monster, whose eyes are marked with the glyphs “Mo’ Witz 4-Chanal.” The deity wears a turban typical of Copan kings and a headdress with images of the sun god. He holds a bundle in his hand. On the front of the monument, the king stands below a witz monster decorated with macaw beaks, indicating that he himself is standing within Macaw Mountain, just like the god. The text, however, tells us that he impersonates a god
with spiral eyes and a jutting chin. Figures matching this description emerge from the king’s double headed serpent bar. The king himself wears a scalloped beard piece, usually associated with the Jaguar God of the Underworld, although here it may refer again to the impersonated god. The king is also surrounded by other turbaned figures, possibly representing ancestors. The name of the god is followed in the inscription by glyphs normally only seen in the extended Initial series, including Glyph Y and K’awiil. I’m not sure if these are part of the name of the god, or if something else is going on. Finally, the name and titles of the king are given, starting with 12th (should be 13th) in the line of Wi’ Te’ (referring to Yax K’uk’ Mo’) (Schele 1992:137).

Stela 4 (Stuart 1986a:46) was also carved for the 9.15.0.0.0 period ending, and its text is very similar. Here, the name of the stela being planted is ubaahil K’uy Nik Ajaw “the image of Ceiba[?] Flower[?] Lord.” It is likely that this stela resembles Stela B, showing the king with characteristics associated with the god. However, the stela is eroded and details are difficult to discern. Above the kings head perches a figure seated cross-legged. This may be K’uy Nik Ajaw himself.

Stela D (Maudslay 1889c:plate 48) was carved for the 9.15.5.0.0 period ending. The stela’s name consists of two gods. The first is prefixed by the number nine and may be the jester god. The second is 9-K’awiil, who we have seen many times before. The front of the stela depicts the king with a double headed serpent bar, from which emerge images of the first god mentioned. He is also surrounded by serpents disgorging images of k’awiil.

A recently discovered stairway at El Palmar discusses the visit of a dignitary from that site to Copan. After naming Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil, the text gives the
undeciphered verb *chehkaj* followed by the names of 4 te’ Ajaw, 9 K’awiil, and K’uy Nik Ajaw (Tsukamoto and Esparza O. 2013). This interesting inscription indicates that the relationship between these two sites was somehow mediated through patron deity veneration.

Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil met his end at the hands of Quirigua, after being captured and beheaded. A retrospective text from Quirigua, Stela I, indicates that six days before this event, something happened to Copan gods (Looper 1999:268–269). The text reads *ch’omaj ute’ joch’aj[?] uk’ahk’ u-ta-?.* Something is happening to wood and fire. The verb associated with the wood is *ch’omaj*. The verb associated with the fire may be *joch’aj* “it is drilled.” But the glyphs are in a strange order if this is the case. It is also associated with another noun, possibly *nehn* “mirror.” These items are owned by the gods 4 Te’ Ajaw and K’uy Nik Ajaw. These are described as the gods (*uk’uhil*) of Waxaklajun Ubaah K’awiil. This may refer to the capture of these gods, or perhaps omens of misfortune before the capture of the Copan king.

**K’ahk’ Yipyaj Chan K’awiil**

No monuments were carved during the reign of the 14th king, but the 15th carved a few relevant monuments.

K’ahk’ Yipyaj was responsible for updating the hieroglyphic stairway. He tells the story of the defeat of Ruler 13 at the hands of Quirigua. The date of the capture is described as the “birth of Yax Ha’al Chaak” (First Rain Chaak) David Stuart (2008c) believes that this refers to the start of the rainy season, given that this event took place in early May.
Stela M (Maudslay 1889c:plate 74) was carved for the 9.16.5.0.0 period ending. After giving the name of the stela, there are a series of eroded glyphs, which end in *uk’uhil K’ahk’ Yipyaj Chan K’awiil*. Probably, the stela is said to be owned by a god, although the glyphs are unclear. Also, the god’s identity is now lost.

Stela N (Maudslay 1889c:plates 79, 82, 83) was carved for the 9.16.10.0.0 period ending (761). The text of the monument begins to name the stela but some important glyphs are eroded. We pick up again with K’ahk’ K’in[?] ?-Naah K’an, who is called the god of (*uk’uhil*) K’ahk Yipyaj. Probably, this god owns the stela. This god is not named elsewhere at Copan. The base of the monument gives the accession dates of K’ahk’ Yipyaj and his predecessor. Ruler 14 is called 14th in the line of the K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw, another reference to K’inich Yax K’uk’ Mo’.

**Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat**

There are three relevant inscriptions from Temple 11. Inscriptions on the door jamb give the date of the king’s accession. The south doorjamb of the west entrance gives the date 9.17.12.3.16 (783), just two months shy of his first k’atun anniversary. Unfortunately, the verb cannot be read. Unusually, it begins with *u*- and ends with –*aj*. It is probably a passive verb starting with the vowel *u*-. The subject of the passive verb is a pair of gods: K’uy Nik Ajaw and Mo’ Witz Ajaw. Next we see an independent pronoun *ha’ob* “they,” and last two glyphs read *koknoom ux witik*. Houston and Inomata (2009:204) note that koknoom means “those who watch, attend” and implies that these gods are guardians of the city of Copan.

The Reviewing Stand of Temple 11 has a dedication date of 9.16.14.0.10 (765). It is called a “ballcourt” and is said to belong to Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat, the 16th in the line
from the *Wi’te’ Naah Ch’ahoom*, and to K’ahk’ Yipyaj, the 16\textsuperscript{th} in line of the [?] Copan *Ajaw* (Schele 1992:137).

Finally, the step of Temple 11 (Maudslay 1889c:plate 8) simply gives Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat’s accession date of 9.16.12.5.17 (763). The step shows an array of seated individuals, all sitting on name glyphs. On the right, presumably starting with Yax Pasaj, we see seated kings. The third is marked 5 K’atun Ajaw, and must be Ruler 12. Next to him sits Bahlam Nehn, then Butz’ Chan, and Yax K’uk’ Mo’. All of these individuals wear the characteristic turban of Copan royalty. Behind them sit four other individuals, dressed differently, and holding flowers. The first is labeled Tukun Witz. (Tukun is a name seen also other monuments, discussed below). The second Ch’een Witz. Next comes Ba’ Ul and finally, **li-u-ka**. On the left of the text, we see the same format. Five seated individuals wearing turbans make up the front of the line. The first is **sa-?-ba-la**. Next comes 9 K’awiil, 4 Te’ Ajaw, K’uy Nik, and Mo’ Witz. Behind them are two individuals without turbans. These read **xi-ba-na** and **se-yi-wa-la**. Next we see three more with turbans: **ti xuk** (the copan place name?), **yu-ku-?-ma**, and **ch’ahoom waa’**. Fascinatingly, gods and ancestors both wear similar outfits, and gods appear on both sides of the monument.

Altar Q is one of the most famous of Copan monuments, and celebrates the ancestors of the king. All the previous kings, starting with Yax K’uk’ Mo’, are arranged around the sides, seated on their name glyphs. They wear the characteristic turbans of Copan kings. The top of the altar tells the story of how Yax K’uk’ Mo’ became king, traveling from the *Wi’té’ Naah* and coming to Copan. It then counts forward to the dedication of the monument, on 9.17.5.3.4 (776) (Stuart 2003).
*Wi’te’ Naah* is also mentioned on the West Wall text of Temple 18, associated with the date 9.18.…

I’m not exactly sure what the date of Stela 8 (Maudslay 1889c:plate 109) is, but it does mention the accession date of the king, as well as the date 9.17.12.6.2 (783), just a little after one year after his k’atun anniversary. On this day, the king “conjures k’awiil.” He is called 16\(^{th}\) in the line of *K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw*.

Stela 11 (Stuart 1993:fig. 11), which seems to come from Temple 18 as well, may have been carved for the 9.19.0.0.0 period ending (810). It shows the king, standing on top of an underworld maw, and holding a ceremonial bar. He impersonates both the maize god and K’awiil, with flames emerging from his forehead. The text reads *jomoy Wi’te’ Naah jul taaj* possibly having to do with an obsidian spear. This event happened at some place belonging to Waxaklajun Ubaah Kaan, the Teotihucan war serpent. The text then mentions Yax K’uk’ Mo’ and Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat. While this has been read as a record of the Classic collapse (Stuart 1993:346), it sounds more like a war memorial, having to do with a spear and a war serpent. This would be appropriate for a Temple 18 text, since the rest of the temple seems to have a martial theme.

Altar U (Schele 1986:32), which was carved on 9.18.2.5.17 (793), or one and a half k’atuns after the accession of the king, mentions the impersonation of the *ch’ok k’uh* (young gods): 4 te’ Ajaw, 4 Bate’, and 4 Ch’oka’taak.

Several monuments do not have an easily identifiable date. One of these is Altar R, which starts by mentioning the date of the accession of Yax Pasaj. This monument reads *umak... “the covering belonging to…”* then we see a list of gods: K’uy Nik Ajaw,
Mo’ Witz Ajaw, Tukun Ajaw, another god (possibly the bearded god?), 9 K’awiil and then some additional names: Ahkul ya-?-mo, ? Chak Ek’, and **a-ya-ti-ja-lu**.

On the bench of Temple 21a, a text discusses the accession of Yax Pasaj, and says that he impersonated 4 te’ Ajaw, K’uy Nik Ajaw, Mo’ Witz Ajaw, Tukun Witz Ajaw, and 9 K’awiil. Once again the gods are described as *koknoom Ux Witik* “the guardians of Copan.”

**Other Characters**

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<th>9 Yokte'</th>
<th>Ixim K'ahk'?</th>
<th>Yax K'amlay? Chan</th>
<th>Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol</th>
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Several names appear on various monuments of Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat. While these were long thought to be subordinate lords (Grube and Schele 1990), David Stuart (in Stuart et al. 1999:59) has argued that they are in fact gods belonging to the king. I will look at each of these characters in turn.

Several miniature temples have been found dating to Yax Pasaj’s reign. All of them say *uwaybil k’uh* “it is the temple of the deity.” Another side depicts a full figure “god C” or generic portrait of a deity, seated within the temple. Some of these miniature temples still have roofs, but their texts are now illegible.

One of these god houses names Bolon Yokte’ K’uh, a deity that can be seen at various Maya sites (Grube and Schele 1990:3). Because this god house has the name of a known god, it is possible that the other names on the god house also belong to gods.

Another god house (CPN 2845) (Andrews and Fash 1992:fig. 16d) names Ixim-K’ahk’-[?] who Grube and Schele (1990:5) claim is also named on a contemporary incensario. Two separate god houses name Yax K’amlay [?] -Chan (CPN 21141 and 19094) (Andrews and Fash 1992:fig. 16 and 17; Grube and Schele 1990:4).
Yax K’amlay

Yax K’amlay is named in a few other texts. On CPN 22350, a stone incensario, he is attributed a “seating” verb on the day 3 Ehb 0 Pohp. Like all other incensarios I will discuss, the seating does not specify which office the individual is seated into. Another incensario, CPN 22351 also names him, this time seating on the day 6 Kaban 10 Mol. This is the same calendar round as the seating of Yax Pasaj himself (Bardsley 1990).

Yax K’amlay [?]–Chan appears on a stone from Temple 22a as well (Schele et al. 1989). We are given the date 9.18.5.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Keh: tz’apaj ulakamtuun “the stone of … is planted.” The owner or owners are then named: ?-Chaak ch’ahoom and Nun Yajaw Aj Jol, holy Copan lord. We will return to this character shortly. For the sake of chronology, the monument then reminds us that this event took place in the 13th year of the 2nd k’atun of Yax Pasaj’s reign. The text then tells about the “planting” of Ek’ Chakaw Wayib “The Starry Red Temple.” This is called the “temple of Yax Pasaj,” although the term uwayib lacks the –il ending that would mark intimate possession. Thus, this is a temple that the king built, rather than a temple to him. The text then looks retrospectively at the events involving Yax K’amlay. [8 days] and 15 months after 3 Eb 0 Pohp (which we already know is a “seating” date of Yax K’amlay), we arrive at the 9.17.10.0.0 period ending of 12 Ajaw 8 Pax. On this day Yax K’amlay scatters droplets, and he is given a title Yax K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw “the first holy Copan lord.” (As we have seen above, the incorporation of Yax into titles is not unusual at Copan.) Finally, the text jumps forward to Yax Pasaj’s first k’atun anniversary in office.

Yax K’amlay also appears on Altar U (see Schele 1986). The chronology of this monument was worked out by Schele and Stuart (1986). The monument starts with the
date 9.16.112.5.17, telling us of the accession of Yax Pasaj on this date. The monument moves forward to 9.18.1.13.2, telling us about the “shaping” of a stone, probably Altar U itself (Stuart 1986b). The text anchors this date with respect to the upcoming 9.18.5.0.0 period ending. Next, the text anchors these events with respect to the “seating” of Yax K’amlay on 9.17.9.2.12. He is given the titles itz ’i[n] taaj and Yax [Copan] Ajaw.

Recently, the former title has been found, along with sukun taaj, on murals from Xultun, where it labels subordinate elites, perhaps scribes (Franco Rossi, personal communication 2012). The text then relates these events to apparently mythological events in the distant past involving a “shaping” and an undeciphered verb associated with the 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk’u creation date. The protagonist of these mythological events appears to be Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol, who will be discussed below. The text appears to move back to contemporary times to discuss a deity impersonation event. The god Akan is impersonated through the drinking of pulque. The impersonator is named as the ubaah uch’ab of Ix Chak Nik Ye’ Xok, who is the mother of Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat. The monument says as much, listing her as the “mother of the bakab, the Copan lord.” Thus, it would seem that the impersonator is Yax Pasaj himself, or a brother. The back of the text counts forward 13 (365-day) years to 9.18.2.5.17, 13 years after the “seating” of Yax K’amlay. Here, this same event is expressed as with a glyph including the sign AJAW (possibly tajawlel “as lord”). The implication is that the “seating” of Yax K’amlay is equivalent to his accession as a lord. The text lists Yax K’amlay and gives him the additional epithet Nun Ujol K’uh. Finally, it discusses another god impersonation: the “young gods” are impersonated, including 4 te’ Ajaw, 4 Bate’, and 4 Ch’oktaak. The
impersonator’s name is obscured, but is given the full emblem glyph *K’uhul* [Copan] *Ajaw*.

CPN 266 is another incensario. It names the gods 4 Bate’, 4 Ajaw, and then names Yax K’amlay.

Most of these contexts are somewhat cryptic. For example, Alter U never explicitly names Yax K’amlay as the protagonist of an impersonation event. It is only explicit in giving him a “seating” verb, which seems to be equivalent to an accession. On the Temple 22a stone it does seem to explicitly attribute a scattering verb to him. However, perhaps the text is simply missing a preposition before his name. Thus, the text would read “the first god-like Copan lord scattered droplets for Yax K’amlay” rather than “Yax K’amlay, the first god-like Copan lord, scattered droplets.” The fact that Yax K’amlay is listed with known Copan deities on CPN 266 as well as his presence on god houses, point toward Yax K’amlay’s identity as a god.

To summarize, Yax K’amlay appears on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.16.12.5.17</td>
<td>He is seated on this day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17.9.2.12</td>
<td>He is also seated on this day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17.10.0.0</td>
<td>Droplets are scattered (but maybe not by him)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18.1.13.2</td>
<td>Gods are impersonated (but maybe not by him)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The titles of Yax K’amlay are as follows:

- Yax K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw on the 22a Stone (but maybe simply referring to the king)
- Yax [Copan] Ajaw on Altar U
- Itz’i(n) Taaj on Altar U.

Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol

The next important character has already been mentioned and is named Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol. He appears on two incense burners, both giving him the seating date of 6 Kaban 10 Mol, the same as Yax Pasaj himself (Bardsley 1990:2).
As I have mentioned, he appears on the stone from Temple 22a. Here, a stone planted for the 9.18.5.0.0 period ending of 4 Ajaw 13 Keh is said to belong to him. Nun Yajaw Chan is given the title K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw. It is also possible that he is given the title *ch’ahoom*, but this may refer to another name preceding his.

He also appears on Altar U. Here, he is associated with a mythological event. Other cases of this undeciphered verb have to do with the 4 Ajaw 8 Kumku’ creation date. This context is a bit different, as it is prefixed by the syllable *tu-* and is followed by what may be a scattering glyph. However, it does seem to be associated with the mythological past.

Nun Yajaw Chan is also mentioned on Altar GI (Bardsley 1990:2, fig. 7). The altar text starts with its dedication for the 9.18.10.0.0 period ending. The monument dedication is *ukabjiyy* Yax Pasaj. After his royal title we read *Ux Witik ?* Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol, followed by additional titles.

Finally, Nun Yajaw Chan is named on Altar T (Bardsley 1990:2). This altar commemorates Yax Pasaj’s first k’atun in office. It shows a variety of supernatural creatures all seated around the sides of the altar. On top of the altar, we see a carved crocodile and a text which names Yax Pasaj, his name falling down onto the tail of a crocodile. He is given the title Southern Kaloomte’. Additional glyphs on top of the altar are now eroded beyond recognition. This is unfortunate, since the text ends on the nose of the crocodile, where we can read the name of Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol. The text then lists the titles Southern Ch’ahoom, K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw, and Bakab. While these may apply to Nun Yajaw Chan Aj Jol, they may also apply to the king himself, who is probably the subject of the now missing verbal phrase (perhaps an impersonation of or a scattering for
Nun Yajaw Chan Jol. Once again, therefore, the texts involving this character are ambiguous. However, the association of this character with a mythological event on Altar U and his “seating” on incensarios like that of Yax K’amlay also point toward the identity of Nun Yajaw Chan Jol as a god.

To summarize, here are his dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Past?</td>
<td>Mythological text on Altar U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.16.12.5.17 6 Kaban 10 Mol (accession of Yax Pasaj)</td>
<td>He is seated on this day named on Alt. T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.17.12.5.17 4 Kaban 10 Sip</td>
<td>The stone belongs to him on T. 22a named on Alt. GI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18.5.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Keh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.18.10.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Sak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Titles:
- K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw on 22a Stone
- Title string on Altar GI
- Possibly southern ch’ahoom on Altar T
- Possibly K’uhul [Copan] Ajaw on Altar T

Uyaak’ Chaak

Another character named in Yax Pasaj’s inscriptions is Uyaak’ Chaak, or “the gift of Chaak” (Schele 1993:1). He does not appear on incensarios or on god houses, so he may not belong to this set. He appears on Altar F’, G’, and on CPN 19646. On Altar F’, the monument reads as follows: It was 10 days, 10 months, and 13 years since 2 Chuwen 4 Pohp, when Uyaak’ Chaak [performed some action]. Then he died, in the 4th year since the arrival of the 1st K’atun since the accession [of Yax Pasaj]. Then he left (bixan) before (yichonal) Yax Pasaj, the 2 k’atun god-like Copan Lord. The verb performed by this individual can be phonetically read as pak’ ti tz’iik. This has been read “it was fashioned from clay” but in Ch’olti’ “clay” has a glottalized k (tz’ik’) (Schele 1993:1). The text on Altar G’ makes it clear that Uyaak’ Chaak himself died, here expressed as the
“flight of his white flowery breath.” This death took place on 9.17.17.12.1. It is unusual for a death to take place “overseen by” a king, as we see on Altar F’.

CPN 19649 also mentions Uyaak’ Chaak (Schele 1993). The text starts with the same creation-event verb we saw on Altar U. The subject of the verb is Uyaak’ Chaak himself, accompanied by “his lord” (yajawil). The text tells us that this event took place at the “k’atun seating stela.” It then tells us that this was the “first seating of the ubaah uch’ab” of Yax Pasaj. The meaning of this text is ambiguous. First, we don’t know if this is a period ending of a k’atun anniversary of Yax Pasaj’s reign. Secondly, the ubaah uch’ab of the king probably refers to a son, although the related phrase uch ’ab yahk’abil refers to king-god relations in some inscriptions.

Stuart (in Schele 1993) argues that Uyaak’ Chaak is a god, who was fashioned from clay, performed this creation-related verb, and then died. This argument is logical but there are two problems: the first is the lack of a glottal stop in tz’ik. The second is that no other inscriptions ever mention the “death” of gods and here it is mentioned in two inscriptions. I remain open to the possibility that Uyaak’ Chaak is a human being, probably the son of the king, whose death was commemorated.

To summarize, here are the dates of Uyaak’ Chaak:
9.17.4.1.11 2 Chuwen 4 Pohp Shaped from clay(?) on this day
9.17.12.5.17 or 9.17.0.0.0 creation verb
9.17.17.12.1 4 Imix 9 Mol He died on this day

In summary, the identification of any of these characters as a deity remains uncertain due to ambiguities in the texts. A better case can be made for Yax K’amlay and Nun Yajaw Aj Chan Jol, due to their presence on incensarios and god houses. The “seating” of gods as lords is unique to the Copan inscriptions. However, we have seen that deities are often discussed as if they were kings and at Copan there is explicit
imagery of gods seated alongside kings. Thus, the verbal attributions would not be inconsistent. Furthermore, we see gods taking emblem glyphs at other sites, so the use of emblem glyphs for these two characters is also consistent with a godly identity. The use of *itz’i[n] taaj* to refer to Yax K’amlay is unusual, and requires a better explanation by future scholars.

Uyaak’ Chaak does not belong to the same set as these other characters, as he is never found on incensarios or god houses. Verbs such as “fashioned from clay” and the creation verb may point to a godly identity. However, the fact that this character “dies” is incredibly unusual, and leads me to suspect that he is a human being.

*Dos Pilas and the Petexbatun*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>inscriptions</th>
<th>attested dates of veneration (AD)</th>
<th>god or ancestor reference to effigy yichonal</th>
<th>veneration practices starts dynastic count?</th>
<th>commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jaguar Paddler (Dos Pilas)</td>
<td>Dos Pilas Stela 14, Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
<td>698-727</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>accession</td>
<td>see also: Ixlu Altar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stingray Paddler (Dos Pilas)</td>
<td>Dos Pilas Stela 14, Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
<td>698-727</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>accession</td>
<td>see also: Ixlu Altar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glyph Y god (Dos Pilas)</td>
<td>Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
<td>698-727</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>accession</td>
<td>see also: Ixlu Altar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’an Tuun Chaak (Dos Pilas)</td>
<td>Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
<td>698-727</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>accession</td>
<td>see also: Ixlu Altar 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>name</th>
<th>name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GI K’awiil (various sites)</td>
<td>Painted K’awiil (Seibal)</td>
<td>SNB-Macaw-Star (Tamarandito)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yax Ehb Xook (Dos Pilas)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
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</table>

448
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>inscriptions</th>
<th>Dos Pilas St. 15, Dos Pilas Panel 19, Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Bench, Aguateca Stela 1, Seibal HS, Tamarandito HS 2, Seibal Stela 6, Aguateca Stela 7, La Amelia HS, Seibal Stela 10, Seibal Stela 3, Seibal Stela 14</th>
<th>Dos Pilas Stela 2, Aguateca Stela 2</th>
<th>Tamarandito HS 2</th>
<th>Dos Pilas Stela 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>721-874</td>
<td>-735</td>
<td>711-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god?</td>
<td>probable ancestor</td>
<td>ancestor (known king)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference to effigy</td>
<td>something of his is &quot;adorned.&quot; Maybe an effigy.</td>
<td>his effigy gets chopped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td>scattering, accession, period ending</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>something belonging to him is adorned; used as name of lady from Cancuen; the stela belongs to him; involved in warfare at Tamarandito; impersonation</td>
<td>his painted back gets chopped in warfare</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dos Pilas is an interesting case of a new dynastic capital founded during the Late Classic period in a location with a previously low or non-existent population (O’Mansky and Dunning 2004:93). The first ruler of Dos Pilas, Bajlaj Chan K’awiil, may have been the half-brother of the current Tikal king, Nuun Ujol Chaak, and carried the same emblem (Mutal) as the Tikal lords (Houston 1993; Martin and Grube 2000:56). It is quite likely that the founding of Dos Pilas was related to Tikal’s geopolitical strategy, perhaps an attempt to break a tightening circle of Calakmul allies (Demarest 2004b). The strategy seems to have backfired, however, since Bajlaj Chan K’awiil switched allegiance to Calakmul soon after the founding (Houston et al. 1992 in Martin and Grube 2000:57).

The dynasty of Dos Pilas then underwent a tumultuous history.

After the reign of the first king, Mutal lords turned their attention to other communities in the Petexbatun region. These include Aguateca, which became a twin seat for the dynasty in 735 (Houston 1993:116; Martin and Grube 2000:61–62) and then later the sole seat of the dynasty when Dos Pilas was abandoned around 761 (O’Mansky and Dunning 2004:94). The Mutal lords also gained control over other sites as well, including Seibal, Tamarandito, Arroyo de Piedra, Aguas Calientes, and La Amelia (see Martin and Grube 2000:61–65). It also maintained friendly relations with Cancuen. However, all of these sites already existed before the founding of Dos Pilas, and it seems they had their own local gods, especially GI-K’awiil, which was shared among several
sites. The Mutal lords at Dos Pilas apparently brought patron gods with them from Tikal, but began to venerate local gods when their dynasty moved and eventually splintered to a number of other sites.

**Bajlaj Chan K’awiil**

No monuments from Dos Pilas make reference to the deities of Bajlaj Chan K’awiil. However, a later monument dedicated by Ruler 3 indicates that the Mutal dynasty originally venerated deities that were probably brought with them from Tikal (see below).

**Itzamna K’awiil**

Stela 14 marks the 9.14.0.0.0 period ending in 711. Next to the ruler, there is a short text which reads “the [?] of the paddler gods is born, it was done by Itzamna K’awiil” (the king of Dos Pilas). This text has long been understood to refer to the birth of the paddler gods themselves (Stuart 1984a). However, I believe the text refers to the birth of something else, something belonging to the paddler gods (the glyph is prefixed with a possessive u-).

A retrospective date from later Stela 8, commissioned by Ruler 3, places the paddlers at the earlier 9.13.6.2.0 accession of Itzamna K’awiil in 698. Here, the accession is *yichonal uk ’uhil* “overseen by his gods.” These include the paddlers, another deity whose name glyph is identical to “Glyph Y” of the supplementary series, and *K’an Tuun Chaak* “Yellow Stone Chaak.” The same deity sequence is also present on Ixlu Atlar 1, dating to 10.2.10.0.0 in 879 nearly 200 years later (Schele and Freidel 1990:389–390). Ixlu is a Tikal satellite and it is most likely that both deity lists originate from Late
Classic Tikal, migrating with its splintering dynasty. While Stela 8 is retrospective, it seems to indicate that the first locally recorded Mutal accession at Dos Pilas involved this deity listing, suggesting that these deities were present at Dos Pilas from the founding of the site.

Stela 15 of Dos Pilas records the 9.14.10.0.0 period ending date in 721. Interestingly, the inscription discusses ritual events taking place at other sites in the Petexbatun region which were not yet alternate seats for the dynasty. The first event involves the “adorning” (*nawaj*) of something belonging to the deity GI-K’awiil. This event is said to take place at Seibal. The next event is the planting of the stela belonging to the same GI-K’awiil, this time at Aguateca. Since these events take place before the Mutal dynasty’s takeover of these sites, GI-K’awiil seems to be native to the Petexbatun region.

**Ruler 3**

The only reference to GI-K’awiil during Ruler 3’s reign is actually the name of his wife. She was originally from Cancuen, and was named Lady GI-K’awiil. Her name appears on Dos Pilas Panel 19 and on a hieroglyphic bench from Dos Pilas (Houston 1993:113). It is quite rare for patron deities to give their names to human beings but is seen occasionally. Unfortunately, there are no local references to GI-K’awiil at Cancuen itself. However, given this name, it is probably safe to assume that this deity was venerated at Cancuen also.

Although we know that Seibal venerated the deity GI-K’awiil at this time, and continued to do so throughout its history, Stela 2 of Aguateca and Stela 2 of Dos Pilas both record what may be an additional god. These two stelae commemorate the conquest
of Seibal in 735 (Martin and Grube 2000:61). The texts both record that on 9.15.4.6.4 there was a “star war” over the city of Seibal and that one day later chak utz’ibil paat k’awiil or “the painted back of K’awiil was chopped.” I believe that this refers to the destruction of a deity effigy from Seibal.

K’awiil Chan K’inich

By the time that K’awiil Chan K’inich acceded to the throne, the Mutal dynasty was using Aguateca as a twin capital. Aguateca Stela 1, dating to 9.15.10.0.0 (741) records a “scattering” event by the king, yichonal (overseen by) the deity GI-K’awiil. Clearly, the Mutal dynasty had now adopted a local deity and makes no more mention of the Tikal deities listed above.

During this period, Seibal was also a vassal of the Mutal kings, having been conquered by Ruler 3 (Houston 1993:116). However, it was not yet the seat of a Mutal lord but continued to be ruled by its own line of kings. On 9.15.14.17.18 (746) a new king of this local dynasty acceded to power at Seibal, as recorded on the Seibal Hieroglyphic Stairway. This accession was “overseen by” (yichonal) the deity GI-K’awiil, indicating that he remained the patron god, even after the site became a vassal of the Mutal lords.

The most cryptic reference to GI K’awiil comes from Tamarandito Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 step 3. Tamarandito was already a vassal site of the Mutal lords by this point but in 761, this stair records the flight of K’awiil Chan K’inich and the axing of Tamarandito (Martin and Grube 2000:63). Unfortunately, the aggressor in both cases is unclear. It is possible that this is an attack by Tamarandito followed by retaliation, or an unknown foe. The axing of Tamarandito also “made low the flints and shields of” an
unknown individual. This was done by \( (ukabjiyi) \) GI-K’awiil (LeFort 1998:15). This deity’s involvement suggests that GI-K’awiil was either the deity of the aggressor (who did the axing) or that GI-K’awiil somehow saved the day, bringing about the defeat of an aggressor who entered the city of Tamrandito. However, after this inscription, no more is heard of from Tamarandito, and Dos Pilas was abandoned for good (Houston and Mathews 1985:18; O’ Mansky and Dunning 2004:94). Another possibility is that the glyph does not in fact read \( ukabjiyi \) but \( ulakam \), “his banner” (Houston and Stuart 1996:302). If this were the case, the banner of GI K’awiil was brought low, suggesting that the defeat of the city was also the defeat of the deity.

**Petty Kings**

After this point, the Mutal dynasty seems to have splintered. The primary seat was at Aguateca (Houston 1993:119), but petty lords at Seibal, La Amelia, and Aguas Calientes also claimed the Mutal title (Houston and Mathews 1985:18–24; Houston 1993:119–121; Martin and Grube 2000:64–65). The 9.17.0.0.0 period ending of 771 is commemorated on Seibal Stela 6, where the local lord impersonated GI-K’awiil. Frustratingly, this impersonation, which may have been depicted on the front of the monument, has not survived. This is another example of the continued veneration of GI K’awiil even after a Mutal lord had literally taken over the rule of the site.

Aguateca Stela 7 commemorates the 9.18.0.0.0 period ending in 790. Here, the event was overseen by \( (yichonal) \) the deity GI-K’awiil.

The hieroglyphic stairway at La Amelia records the accession of Lachan K’awiil Ajaw Bot on 9.18.11.13.4 in 802. The accession is “overseen by” \( (yichonal) \) GI-K’awiil. This is apparently the last of the Mutal lords of the Petexbatun region.
A new Seibal

About 30 years later, a terminal classic dynasty re-established itself at Seibal (Schele in Martin and Grube 2000:227), showing a mixture of traditional Maya symbolism and Central Mexican iconography. This dynasty was apparently a vassal of Ucanal and did not use the Mutal emblem glyph (Schele and Mathews 1998:179). However, Stela 10, Stela 3 and Stela 14, all dating to this period, make reference to GI-K’awiil. On Stela 10, the ruler’s headdress incorporates both the smoking torch of K’awiil with the fish eating heron of GI, indicating that the ruler actually impersonates the deity (Schele and Mathews 1998:185). Stela 3, probably dating to 10.2.5.3.10 in 874, simply names the deity without any grammatical detail. Stela 14, of unknown date, seems to indicate that the stela belongs to GI K’awiil. These two late stelae are the last that record this deity.

This pattern of distribution suggests that GI-K’awiil was a deity familiar at many sites in the Petexbatun region, and that he remained an important deity even throughout the numerous political shifts that happened at various sites. This also suggests that although the cult of GI K’awiil was probably under elite control, he was a god of the entire community, rather than simply the ruling family. The fact that GI K’awiil did not seem to have a cult at Dos Pilas is probably due to the fact that Dos Pilas was an intrusive phenomenon, and the city was constructed during the Late Classic for a particular purpose. Thus, no local gods pre-dated the arrival of the Mutal lords, and they chose to venerate the deities brought with them from Tikal.
Ancestors of the Petexbatun

Tamarandito Hieroglyphic Stairway 3 makes reference to a character whose glyphic name consists of the “Square Nosed Beastie” element, a macaw head, and a star sign. The current king is referred to as “25th in the line” since this character, apparently marking him as an ancestral founder (Houston 1993:101). Houston argues that the same character is represented in costume elements worn by the ruler on Tamarandito Stela 3. Similar costume elements are quite common at Tikal. Also at Tikal, we see a character with a similar glyphic name. However, a skull element is represented rather than a Macaw head (see Tikal section below). It is unclear to me whether these two glyphs represent the same character, or whether the Tikal examples in fact discuss a distinct ancestor or god. The Tikal version of this glyphic name, with the skull rather than the macaw, can also be seen on Dos Pilas Panel 18 of unknown date (Houston 1993:101). This panel places this character in the mythological past at the 13.0.0.0.0 date in 3114 BC. We also see the beginning of a parentage statement, and reference to the “First Three Stone Place” and the building of a “Torch Stone” for this character. Unfortunately, both deities and ancestors are associated with mythological time, so this inscription does not clarify whether this character is a god or an ancestor.

Other ancestors at Dos Pilas are clearer. For example, Stela 14, commissioned by Itzamna K’awiil, shows the ruler wearing a headdress which contains a Yax sign and a crossed sticks element, probably referring to the Tikal founder Yax Ehb Xook. On Panel 10 of unknown date, Bajlaj Chan K’awiil’s name emerges from a ceremonial bar, indicating that he was by this time a revered ancestor in his own right (Zender 2010:2–3).
### Table A.12. Supernatural Characters at El Peru.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Version of Akan</th>
<th>Jaguar god</th>
<th>Moon goddess</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 14, Tikal T. 4</td>
<td>Stela 14</td>
<td>Stela 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>457-743</td>
<td>458-</td>
<td>458-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God or ancestor</td>
<td>God (called k'uh)</td>
<td>God (called k'uh)</td>
<td>God (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to effigy</td>
<td>Grasped; palanquin effigy</td>
<td>Grasped</td>
<td>Grasped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other verbs</td>
<td>Bukuy (gets together?) with Calakmul patron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>God is grasped for accession; domestication at Tikal: captured, impersonated, carried, danced, something built for him</td>
<td>God is grasped for accession</td>
<td>God is grasped for accession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>Passage on Stela 14 reads &quot;he grasped his 29 gods&quot; but only three are listed. May indicate that god lists are abbreviated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stela 14 of El Peru tells of the accession of the king nicknamed Tapir Chan Ahk on 9.1.3.0.17 (458). As Stanley Guenter (n.d.:4) has observed, the passage referring to the accession of the king includes a list of the site’s patron deities. The verb in question is *uch'amaw* “he grasps” followed by a glyph possibly read as “twenty nine.” Following it is a glyph *uk’uhil* “his gods.” This may read “he grasped his 29 gods,” but only three gods are then listed. Guenter reads the first deity as one version of Akan, a god of drunkenness that we see elsewhere at Calakmul and Tikal. The next glyph has a jaguar ear and is probably some form of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. The final glyph Guenter reads as the Moon goddess.
This version of Akan is present in two foreign contexts as well. The first is on Lintel 3 of Temple 4 of Tikal (discussed below). Here, the god is captured after a battle and goes through a “domestication” process at Tikal. The other example, already discussed, comes from a late hieroglyphic stairway at Calakmul. This inscription may make reference to a meeting between Yajaw Maan, a god of Calakmul, and Akan.

**La Corona**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Teotihuacan-style god</th>
<th>Ikiiy</th>
<th>? Winik Ub</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Looted Monument 6</td>
<td>Looted Monument 10, Looted Monument 66</td>
<td>Monuments 7 and 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>520-</td>
<td>637-678</td>
<td>(662)-677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>baah ch'ab ahk'ab of king</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted reference to effigy</td>
<td>as giant effigy on Palanquin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td>carried on Palanquin along with early Snake woman</td>
<td>conjuring</td>
<td>temple building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple classification</td>
<td>Wayib</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Yaxal Ajaw</th>
<th>K'an Chaak</th>
<th>Chak Wayib Chaak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Monument 7, Monument 66</td>
<td>Monument 7</td>
<td>Monument 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>658-681</td>
<td>658-</td>
<td>658-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>depicted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.13: Supernatural Characters at La Corona (See Chapter 7 for commentary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>inscriptions</th>
<th>attested dates of veneration (AD)</th>
<th>god or ancestor</th>
<th>yichonal</th>
<th>commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahkal Ichiiy</td>
<td>Stela 1</td>
<td>771-</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>stone dedication</td>
<td>see also: Palenque unprovenienced panel, Temple of the Cross Sanctuar Panel, Sak Tz'i' (Caracas Panel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A?-?-Xukub</td>
<td>Stela 1</td>
<td>771-</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>stone dedication</td>
<td>see also: Sak Tz'i' (Caracas Panel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Okte' K'uh</td>
<td>Stela 1</td>
<td>771-</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>stone dedication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.14. Supernatural Characters at La Mar.

Stela 1 of La Mar records the 9.17.0.0.0 period ending (771) on which the stone was dedicated (k’altuum). This event was overseen by the gods of the king (yichonal uk’uhil). The first of these is Ahkal Ichiiy. As we will see, this deity (Ahkal Ichiiy Chaak) is mentioned twice at Palenque, once to oversee a building dedication, once in the name phrase of the king. The second god’s glyph reads a?-?-“antler”-ba. Lopes and Davletchin (2004) propose that the antler sign is to be read xukub “horn/antler” and that the –ba is a compliment to this glyph. The final god in the list is 9 Okte’ K’uh. The same gods are also mentioned in the unprovenienced Caracas Panel, originally from Sak Tz’i’.

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Moral Reforma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Yax Ajaw</th>
<th>Yax Balun</th>
<th>? K’awiil</th>
<th>Jawless Jaguar</th>
<th>? Chaak</th>
<th>Jun Ajaw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 2</td>
<td>Stela 2,</td>
<td>Stela 2</td>
<td>Stela 2</td>
<td>Stela 1</td>
<td>Stela 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates</td>
<td>729-</td>
<td>729-756</td>
<td>729-</td>
<td>729-</td>
<td>756-</td>
<td>756-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of veneration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(AD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td>stela dedication</td>
<td>stela dedication</td>
<td>stela dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to</td>
<td>ajaw in name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ajaw in name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lordship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>maybe the same as Jun Ajaw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.15. Supernatural Characters at Moral Reforma.

Moral Reforma Stela 2 (Martin 2003b) dates to 9.15.0.0.0 but describes the earlier accession of the site’s ruler on 9.14.18.4.3 (729). After listing his name and titles, the text launches into a list of the patron deities, introduced by *uk’uhil* “his gods are….” This list starts with Yax Ajaw, followed by Yax Balun. Given the pairing with Yax Balun and the similarity to the list on Stela 1 (see below), it is possible that Yax Ajaw in fact refers to Jun Ajaw, a hero twin. If this is the case, it sheds some light on the identity of a god of a similar name present at La Corona. The same deity may also be present at Calakmul.

Following these two deities, the list continues with a variant of K’awiil, followed by a glyph including fire and the Jawless Jaguar glyph.

Stela 1, dated to 9.16.5.0.0 (756) (Martin 2003b), contains another list of patron deities. Here, after describing a period ending stone presentation, the stela states that this event was overseen (*yichonal*) by the following gods: Chaak, with some sort of now
illegible prefix before his name, Jun Ajaw, and Yax Balun (Simon Martin, personal communication 2011). The latter two are the well-known “hero twins” which are also present in the Postclassic Popol Vuh.

**Naranjo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Simple JGU</th>
<th>9-Ajaw-? JGU</th>
<th>Kab K'uh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nik? ? K'in Hiix Ik' Huun</strong></td>
<td>Altar 1, Stela 30, Stela 21, Stela 11, Stela 33, Stela 8, Stela 12, Stela 35</td>
<td>Stela 30, Stela 6, Stela 12, Stela 19, Stela 12, Stela 32</td>
<td>Altar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inscriptions</td>
<td>polychrome vessel, Tikal T. 4 Lintel 2</td>
<td>Stela 30, Stela 6, Stela 12, Stela 19, Stela 12, Stela 32</td>
<td>593-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>6th century-744</td>
<td>695-820</td>
<td>593-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional names/epithets</td>
<td>naah ho chan; baah tuun</td>
<td>K'in Ajaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicted</td>
<td>palanquin effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td>scattering; god impersonation/scattering; accession related event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yichonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>domesticated at Tikal: captured, carried</td>
<td>impersonated</td>
<td>conjured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to lordship</td>
<td>Aj Wosal is &quot;in the line of&quot; the JGU, but does not give a dynastic number.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ajaw in name, called K'in Ajaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starts dynastic count?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>may be the same as 9-Ajaw-? JGU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.16. Supernatural Characters at Naranjo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
<th>Square Nosed Beastie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 2, Stela 23, Stela 19, Stela 13</td>
<td>Stela 2, Stela 23, Stela 19, Stela 13</td>
<td>Stela 45, Altar 1, Stela 1, Tikal T. 4 Lintel 2, Stela 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>692-780</td>
<td>692-780</td>
<td>5th century-780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>probable ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>1-Tuun-K'uh</td>
<td>1-Tuun-K'uh</td>
<td>as floating head, conflated with other ancestor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted reference to effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td>fed; bathed; impersonated</td>
<td>fed; bathed; impersonated</td>
<td>Naranjo &quot;is his city&quot;; incorporated into later king's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship starts dynastic count?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.16. Supernatural Characters at Naranjo.

**Naatz Chan Ahk**

The very earliest stela that we have to work with is Stela 45. Stela 45 was commissioned sometime during the 5th century by king Naatz Chan Ahk (Tokovinine and
The monument depicts this king with a floating ancestor figure above. This ancestor is depicted as the typical floating disembodied head, in this case of the so-called “Square Nosed Beastie” (SNB), its first appearance at Naranjo. Other variants of this supernatural creature are found in mythological and calendrical contexts throughout the Maya world, but at Naranjo the SNB name contains a hand over the lower jaw, a prefixed zero sign, and the glyph for black (Martin 1993:226). As I will discuss, this character is the founding ancestor of the Naranjo dynasty. Although he is often referred to as a patron god, I will demonstrate that Naranjo had other patron gods, and that they were treated as a separate category of supernatural entity. Infixed into the head of the SNB on Stela 45 is the name Tzik’in Bahlam, probably the name of Naatz Chan Ahk’s father. Therefore, the recently deceased ancestor has been conflated into a more ancient ancestor (Tokovinine and Fialko 2007).

Aj Wosal Chan K’inich

The next set of monuments to examine was commissioned by Aj Wosal Chan K’inich, who reigned during the 6th and early 7th centuries. A polychrome vessel once belonging to Aj Wosal (Kerr and Kerr 2000:1003) depicts a ruler receiving subordinates and seated in front of a large effigy figure of a deity. The deity has the distinctive cruller and spiral eye of the Jaguar God of the Underworld and its body is covered in jaguar spots. The deity also holds a spear and has an elongated nose piece, which we will see again later on Lintel 2 of Tikal Temple IV. These two inscriptions clearly depict the same deity effigy, about 200 years apart. This connection was first noted by Karl Taube (Simon Martin, personal communication 2013).
Aj Wosal’s Altar 1 (Graham 1978:103–104) gives additional information about the SNB discussed above. Altar 1 starts by discussing the accession of the SNB roughly 20,000 years ago (Mathews 1977 and Stuart in Martin 1996:note 6). This is clearly mythological in nature, in serves to project what was probably a historical figure into the distant past.

A distance number brings the narrative forward to 257 BC, when a god, probably an “earth god” (kab k’uh) is conjured. Unfortunately, it is difficult to read the name of this god with certainty, but the name does not appear on other monuments at Naranjo.

Later on the same monument, Aj Wosal is referred to as “35th in the line of the SNB” (Schele 1992:140; Martin 1996:226). The king is also referred to as “in the line of JGU, who is called Naah Ho Chan, “First Five Sky” and baah tuun, “head stone.” This latter epithet is similar to the phrase 1-TUUN-ni or “First Stone” later used to describe the paddlers on Stela 23. Thus, while the king seems to claim the SNB as a founding ancestor, he is also referring to the JGU as a more vague type of ancestor (Schele 1992:140). This is a good example of the deity-as-king trope that we see in many inscriptions. The patron is not a historical ancestor because he is not given a numbered place in the lineage.

K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Chaak

The importance of the SNB continues to be a major theme. Stela 1 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:11–12), commissioned by K’ahk’ Tiliw gives an even more ancient date for his accession, this one nearly a million years in the past (Mathews 1977 and Stuart in Martin 1996:note 6). On Stela 24, K’ahk’ Tiliw counts himself as 38th in the line of the
SNB, continuing his predecessor’s practice of counting the lineage from the SNB himself (Martin 1996:226). He also attributes the SNB a full Naranjo emblem glyph.

Stela 2 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:13–15) mentions the paddler gods. The context is the period ending of 9.13.0.0.0 (692). The verb in question is badly eroded, but it is quite possible that the passage refers to these gods “eating.” In other words, the period ending involved the ritual feeding of the gods.

Stela 30 (Graham 1978:80) is the first to name a specifically local version of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. The Jaguar God of the Underworld, both with its full local name and with its simpler common name, seems to be exceptionally important at Naranjo. It is likely that when we see the simpler version of the name we are meant to assume the longer version, which will appear with relative frequency. However, I have chosen to keep them separate in my analysis in order to err on the side of caution. On Stela 30 and in other examples the deity’s name glyph reads 9-Ajaw-?, followed by the head of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. Stela 30 dates to 9.13.3.0.0 (695). Here, there is a scattering event which is “overseen” (yichonal) by this deity.

On the front of this monument, representing the same date, K’ahk’ Tiliw impersonates the simple JGU. This is made explicit with the impersonation phrase ubaahil aan. Interestingly, the text also states ubaah ti ahk’ab, indicating that the action is taking place at night. On this monument, the costume includes the fire drilling stick, as well as the characteristic “crueller” between the eyes, knots in front of the nose, a jaguar ear, and an eccentric flint. This monument may indicate, therefore, that the JGU could be impersonated while at the same time overseeing the event. However, it is also possible
that the impersonation and the overseen scattering took place at different times, therefore requiring “at night” emphasis on the front of the monument.

On Stela 23 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:59–60), K’ahk’ Tiliw celebrates the 9.14.0.0.0 period ending (711). On this occasion, he “bathes” the paddler gods (Schele 1987b:fig 4), who are given the epithet 1-TUUN K’UH “first/one stone gods,” a phrase similar to what we saw on Altar 1, the “head stone.”

A JGU impersonation appears again on Stela 21 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:53–54), another of K’ahk’ Tiliw’s monuments. Here, the text describes the “entrance into the city of Yootz’ on 9.13.14.4.2 in 706 and depicts the victorious K’ahk’ Tiliw dressed as the JGU standing on a crushed captive (Martin and Grube 2000:76). The costume consists of the cruller, nose knot, jaguar ear, and scalloped chin attachments that we see in both depictions of the Naranjo JGU effigy. The king also wears a suit of feathers with glyphs for “blood” all over them. He also holds a spear and a JGU shield. In this instance, therefore, the JGU is used as a representation of victory.

Two other monuments name deities from this period, but both are badly eroded. Stela 2, already discussed above, describes the anniversary in office of K’ahk’ Tiliw. The anniversary is “overseen by his gods” (yichonal uk’uhil). Frustratingly, the names of the gods themselves are badly eroded and cannot be identified. On Stela 31 (Graham 1978:83–84), we have a similar problem. Here, an event is “overseen” (yichonal) by someone, but only the outlines of the following glyphs remain. It is not even clear whether these glyphs represent people or deities.
**Yax Muyuy Chan Chaak**

The only information available about deities of Naranjo during the reign of this king comes from Tikal. Lintel 2 from Tikal Temple IV depicts the capture of a deity from Naranjo by the king of Tikal in 744 (Martin 1996). The deity depicted is the same as that discussed above that can be seen on the polychrome vase from Aj Wosal’s reign. He has attributes associated with the JGU, but also wears a hummingbird nose piece. The text of the lintel names this deity as NIK?-ki ? K’IN-ni hi-HIIX IK’ HUUN-na or “Flowery [?] Sun Jaguar Black Headband.” Note that although they are both jaguar gods, this name is different from 9-Ajaw-? JGU discussed above. Like the deities of Calakmul and El Peru, this deity went through a series of “domestication” rituals at Tikal.

This lintel also makes brief reference to Naranjo’s SNB ancestor. The text refers to Naranjo as “the city of god-like SNB” (Martin 1996:226). This demonstrates that foreign cities were also familiar with this ancestral founder.

**K’ahk’ Ukalaw Chan Chaak**

There is one mention of the SNB on K’ahk’ Ukalaw’s Stela 13 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:37), carved for the 9.17.10.0.0 period ending in 780. Here, the monument retrospectively refers back to K’ahk’ Tiliw, and his name is combined the name of the SNB. Like Stela 45, therefore, this text associates a recent ancestor with this more primordial ancestor.

On Stela 6 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:23–24), the 9-Ajaw-? JGU emerges from one side of the king’s ceremonial bar (Martin 2005b). This monument commemorates the king’s accession on 9.16.4.10.18 in 755. The JGU is impersonated on Stelae 11 and 33. Stela 11 is quite similar to Stela 21, and depicts the king standing on a bound captive
wearing a suit of feathers. Furthermore, the feathers in his headdress are marked by the same “blood” signs, and he holds the JGU shield. He also holds a fire drilling stick, and wears the cruller, jaguar ear, and scalloped chin piece. Perhaps this stela, like Stela 21, was carved to commemorate a military victory, since the date does not appear to fall on a period ending, but rather on 9.17.6.15.3 (777). Stela 33 also depicts a JGU impersonation, complete with a fire stick, eccentric flint, jaguar ear and a complete jaguar headdress as well. This stela was carved to commemorate a period ending on 9.17.10.0.0 (780).

Two other stelae depict the celebrations of the same period ending, and both of these show the king impersonating the paddler gods. On Stela 19 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:49–50), the king performs a scattering ritual while impersonating (ubaahil aan) the paddler gods. These events are overseen by the 9-Ajaw-? JGU.

Stela 13 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:37–38) also depicts the impersonation of the paddlers on the same period ending date. Here, the text states that the king dedicated the stela and danced, while impersonating (ubaahil aan) the paddler gods.

The monuments of K’ahk’ Ukalaw indicate, therefore, that multiple god impersonations could take place on the same day: the JGU as well as the paddler gods. Furthermore, Stela 19 indicates that the JGU could oversee the impersonation of other gods.

Itzamna K’awiil

The monuments of Itzamna K’awiil follow the same pattern, with some additional interesting phenomena. On Stela 8 (Graham and Von Euw 1975:27–28) we find another typical example of a JGU impersonation ritual, this one taking place on 9.18.9.14.3 (800). The king wears the cruller, a knot in front of his nose, a jaguar ear, a scalloped chin piece,
and holds a spear with knotted cords. He stands on top of a bound captive. This monument was erected along with Stelae 12 and 35 to celebrate a series of military victories, making this stela similar to Stelae 21 and 11, already discussed, which also depicting a JGU impersonation on the occasion of important victories. Stela 12 also makes mention of the 9-Ajaw-? JGU, although the context is unclear (Martin 2005b).

Stela 35 (Graham 1978:91–92) is a fascinating monument that has been discussed elsewhere (Martin and Grube 2000:82). The monument depicts the king dressed as a young lord holding a flaming torch, while a bound prisoner sits at his feet. The monument discusses a mythic cycle in which a “baby JGU” is burned by “four youths, four princes.” This JGU is also given the epithet “Naah Ho Chan.” Its name also includes the adjective “black,” making it possible to recognize that the god under discussion is the same as that mentioned on Yaxha Stela 31 (Martin and Grube 2000:82). In other words, this victory over Yaxha is played out in mythological terms: the Yaxha king, in the guise of his own patron god, here represented as the “baby JGU,” gets burned in a re-enactment of a mythic event.

What makes this episode so fascinating from the point of view of Naranjo, is that the Naranjo local pantheon also included a version of the JGU as well as the Naah Ho Chan epithet. While we might be inclined to think of the Naranjo patrons and the Yaxha patron as the same entity, clearly the king of Naranjo saw them as entirely separate deities. Otherwise, it would not be appropriate to commemorate victory as the ritual destruction of the JGU. The inhabitants of Naranjo saw no inconsistency in burning a god very similar to their own to represent a conquest. Therefore, we must recognize these aspects of the JGU as separate entities.
Waxaklajuun Ubaah K’awiil

Stela 32 (Graham 1978:86) dates to the reign of Waxaklajuun Ubbah K’awiil and commemorates his accession, as well as another event, which took place at Ucanal (Martin and Grube 2000:83). The day before the accession, some ritual took place which is not entirely clear. It was overseen, however, by the JGU of Naranjo: 9-Ajaw-? JGU, here also called K’in Ajaw or “sun lord. This is the last securely dated monument at Naranjo (commissioned in 820) but it is clear that even during Terminal Classic times, the JGU of Naranjo remained an important deity.

Palenque

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
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<td>ohlis k’uh (heart god); PDIG; ubaah uhuuntahn (precious thing) of king; ch’ok (youth); third born; first chit; k’awiil person; third created god; Ubaah uch’ab ahk’ab of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat; Naah Ho Chan Ajaw; ?-eyed god</td>
<td>ohlis k’uh (heart god); PDIG; ubaah uhuuntahn (precious thing) of king; yajaw k’ahk’; K’inich Tajal Wayib; K’in Tahn &quot;headless jaguar&quot;; sak baak naah chapaat; k’ahk’ ti’ [Square Nosed Beast]; K’inich Ajaw; ubaah uch’ab ahk’ab of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat</td>
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<td>building event; pre-accession rituals; &quot;rope-taking&quot;; heron event; first stone tying; alligator throne taking; ritual event on Temple XXI; stone dedication</td>
<td>building event; pre-accession rituals; &quot;rope-taking&quot;; first stone tying; alligator throne taking; stone dedication</td>
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<td>yalej (said it?); his heart is pleased; throws (?) with his hand at the fiery pool place (mythological); descended from sky (mythological); made the sky round (mythological); birth/earth touching/arrival; yehôte' cave entering; seated in rulership by PBD; yehôte' killing of celestial crocodile (mythological)</td>
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<td>yalej (said it?); his heart is pleased; birth/earth touching/arrival</td>
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<td>gifts of dressings, earflares, jewels, helmets; drinks with king; his oven/wayib is burned; conjured; fashioned; effigy cradled; impersonated (?) on Sarcophagus lid</td>
<td>gifts of dressings, earflares, jewels, helmets; drinks with king; his oven/wayib is burned; conjured; fashioned</td>
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| References to Lordship | Accession over a Million Years in Past | Deer Hoof Event in 3112 BC, Called K'uhul Matwiil Ajaw, Acceded in 2325 BC, | Arrived and Acceded in 993 BC, Called K'uhul Matwiil Ajaw, | Acceded in 421, Called Tok Tahn Ajaw, Said to Perform House Dedication in 252 BC, | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------| |

| Starts Dynastic Count? | "First Seating in Lordship" | | | | |

Table A.17. Supernatural Characters at Palenque.
K’inic Janahb Pakal

The hieroglyphic stairway of House C (Schele 1994:fig. 1) is the first known reference to Palenque’s patron deities. These have been nicknamed GI, GII, and GIII by epigraphers (Berlin 1963). GI is a deity seen at a variety of different sites, and appears to be some sort of aspect of the sun god (Stuart 2006a:163–170). At Palenque, his name is modified by another glyph. This glyph has been read as “One Maize Revealed” and associated with the maize god (Freidel et al. 1993). However, this reading is no longer widely accepted (Stuart 2006a:161–162). GII’s name is now fully readable as Unen K’awiil “Baby K’awiil” (Martin 2002; Stuart 2006a:174). GIII is some version of the sun god, and his name contains the term K’inic “radiant” (Schele and Miller 1986:50). However, the rest of the glyph cannot be read. The House C stairway retrospectively recounts an earlier date of 9.8.5.13.8 (599) on which Palenque was “axed” by Calakmul (Martin 2000a:110–111). On this date, the text reads yalej GI, GII, GIII. This is usually read as “the gods were thrown down” (Grube 1996:3). However, it has recently been suggested (Adánez Pavón et al. 2010) that it instead reads “the gods said it,” suggesting that the deities somehow pronounced or predicted the city’s fate.

A small panel of unknown provenience (Mayer 1980:plate 50) recounts the birth of the king then tells that something was built. This event was “overseen” (yichonal) by the ohlis k’uh. This epithet is used later on the Palace tablet to refer to the six main deities of Palenque. A further supervisor is Ahk yich/ich Chaak. Ahk Ichiiy “turtle heron” appears as part of the name phrase of K’an Bahlam on the Sanctuary Panel of the Temple of the Cross. The names may be related but it is unclear.
K’inich Kan Bahlam:

The Temple of the Inscriptions was dedicated by K’inich Kan Bahlam on the occasion of his accession on 9.12.11.12.10 (684), though it must have been under construction before the death of his father. The name of the temple is Jun Tahn Bolon (?) Naah. This name appears at the very end of the text. The tablets in the temple give a long history of the kings of Palenque and a more detailed history of K’inich Janaab Pakal’s reign. The first two panels can be read fairly completely, while the final panel is very difficult to understand.

The text starts off with a series of period ending rituals attributed to early kings of Palenque. The first is the 9.4.0.0.0 (514) period ending attributed to Ahkal Mo’ Nahb I. Here we are told that the king gives something to “his gods” GI, GII, and GIII. Based on the rest of the text, it is safe to assume that he gives a pik either “dressings” or a “bundle” to these deities.

Next we read about the 9.5.0.0.0 period ending (534). Again, the king (which should now be K’an Joy Chitam I) gives a pik to GI, GII, and GIII, who are given the Patron Deity Introductory Glyph. With some intervening events we move forward to 9.5.17.0.0 (551) where the deities are once again given a bundle or dressing. Next we see 9.6.13.0.0 (567), and although the events are now erased, we see the outline of yak’aw “he gives it” once again. The king’s name, which should be Ahkal Mo’ Nahb II, is also gone. Next we are told about the 9.7.0.0.0 period ending (573), which would have been celebrated by Kan Bahlam I. Next the 9.7.5.0.0 period ending (578), where something happens (presumably another gift) to the gods of Kan Bahlam. The text moves forward to
the accession of Lady Yohl Ik’nal and then to the 9.8.0.0.0 period ending (593). Once again, the gods of the ruler are given a *pik*.

Next the text tells of the accession of Ajen Yohl Mat and the 9.8.13.0.0 period ending (606). Unlike previous period endings, this one does not include rituals for gods, but simply states that the stone was seated and that the king “saw it.” Shortly thereafter on 9.8.17.15.14 (611) Palenque was attacked (axed) by the king of Calakmul (Martin 2000b:109–110). We quickly move on to the accession of Muwaan Mat on 9.8.19.7.18 (612). Things did not go well on the 9.9.0.0.0 period ending (613). We are told that the king gave a *pik* to his gods but certain other things did not happen. We read *satay k’uhul ixik, satay ajaw* “the god-like lady is lost, the lord is lost”, and the lack of certain rituals (Grube 1996:5). However, this situation seems to have been remedied a few months later on 9.9.0.7.6, when the king himself gave another gift to the gods.

The next segment tells about the accession of K’inich Janahb Pakal. The rest of the text focuses on his life, and emphasizes the rituals he performed in honor of his gods. It is likely that we are seeing a repeat of the rituals performed by earlier kings, but we are now given exceptional detail. K’inich Janahb Pakal’s first ritual is the 9.10.0.0.0 period ending (633). We are told that he gives a *pik* to his gods. Then, moving onto the 9.11.0.0.0 period ending (652) we get much more detail. The meaning of much of this text is obscure. It does make mention of “sky tribute and earth tribute” as well as jewels and earflares. It also has a couplet reading *Bolon Chan Yok’ in Waklajun Yok’ in*, (Nine Sky Yok’in, 16 Yok’in) a couplet also seen at Chichen Itza’s Temple of 4 Lintels to describe gods (see Chichen Itza section above).
Next we are told what specifically was given to each god. Stuart (2006a:166) observes that in this section and the next, the accoutrements of each deity have proper names. We first read about the gifts given to GI: “he gives [the quadripartite badge], his headdress, 20 (many) are the pik of GI.” While pik can be read as “bundle,” Stuart (2006a:166) prefers “dressings.” Here, the number 20 also probably means “many.” Stuart also points out that the quadripartite badge motif is indeed a common iconographic element worn as a headdress of GI. Therefore, it seems that these gifts were used to appropriately attire each deity in his proper gear. Next we learn about GII: “he gives tzixook(?)-chaak, his headdress, 20 are the pik of GII.” Finally, we read about GIII: “he gives the black headband, his headdress, 20 are the pik of K’inich Ajaw.” It is interesting that GIII here is simply referred to by the typical name of the sun god, K’inich Ajaw (Stuart 2006a:175). Pakal then presents [k’al] headbands in association with an unknown glyph [E5] which probably refers to some sort of stone altar\(^1\), which belongs to the [Patron Deity Introductory Glyph] deities, GI, GII, and GIII. These are called the Jun Tahn “precious ones” of the king.

This long sequence is essentially repeated for the 9.12.0.0.0 period ending (July 1, 672), with the addition of the sequence “downfall of eastern lords, downfall of western lords.” Once again, we see Nine Sky Yok’in 16 Yok’in, as we see at Chichen Itza. In this

\(^1\) David Stuart (2012a) has recently interpreted this glyph as referring to ceramic incense burner effigies of the gods. This interpretation is also used to explain references at Copan and Quirigua, which he believes refer to ceramic effigy incense burners of ancestors. Ceramic effigy incense burners have been recovered from the fill around the tomb of Ruler 12 of Copan, and Stuart equates these to a mention of the same glyph in the text from that temple’s exterior. However, in my opinion, there may be some problems with this interpretation. The sign has stone markings, indicating that it refers to an object made of stone. It also closely resembles an altar with two feet. A stone altar is thus a good candidate (Schele 1989a). Furthermore, the inscription of Altar Q refers to the dedication of one of these objects in what is probably a self-referential context. Altar Q is a stone altar with feet, so it makes sense that this glyph refers to objects like Altar Q itself. In this Palenque inscription, the text makes it clear that deity effigies were dressed. However, this glyph probably does not refer to these effigies themselves, but to an altar involved in the headband dedication ceremony.
text, Pakal is referred to as the 9th lord in succession, which unfortunately would leave out some kings that are known. We are told that headbands are presented once again on the gods’ altar and gifts are given.

First we read about GI’s gifts: these start with some tricky glyphs, [?] hu-lu pi- [?]. As we will see, in the other cases the first glyphs simply read upik “his pik.” But in this case we may have some other noun. Next we see 20-pi-xo-ma u-sak-hu-na-la u-ha. Stuart (2006a:167) reads this as winik pixom usakhunal uh “many are the wrappings of his white paper necklace.” Pixom has been read as “hat” (Macri 1988:116) but I like Stuart’s interpretation better, given the incorporation of the number 20. The next gift is the earflares: yax k’ahk’ [?] utuup “green fire [?] are his earflares” (Macri 1988:116) and his headdress: [Quadripartite Badge] is his headdress.” Finally, GI is named, followed by his occasional title Sak Bolon.

GII comes next: “he gives his pik, many are the wrappings of the white paper necklace.” The name of the earflares is somewhat difficult: [?] chanil utuup “[?] sky are his earflares.” We see a repeat of the earlier headdress name tzi-XOOK, although this time without the Chaak, as the name of his headdress. GII is here given the title ch’ok “youth.”

Finally we learn about GIII. “he gives his pik, many are the wrappings of the white paper necklace.” Yax-k’a-[?] are his earflares and Ik’ Huun (black headband) is the headdress of yajaw k’ahk’ GIII. The title yajaw k’ahk’ usually refers to fire priests, but here is taken on by the deity. He is also given a Patron Deity Introductory Glyph” all to himself.
Next, the text describes the dedication of GI’s platform (*ukuniil*) (Stuart 2006b:110). It is called *chak otoo chak nuk chanil, 6 ? chan*, “red house, red skinned sky, six [?] sky” and it is said to belong to GI, who is the “precious thing” of the king. The “Six [?] Sky” part of the name is the same as that which we see on the Temple of the Cross, but is different than the name given to the king’s funerary temple (the Temple of the Inscriptions itself). Since it would appear that the Temple of the Cross was built later in a single construction phase (Damien Marken, personal communication 2011), it is likely that this is a different temple to GI, located elsewhere on site.

Finally, we are reminded once again that the king presents headbands on the altar of the three gods, and then we are told that “he satisfies the hearts of his gods” (Houston et al. 2006:189).

After this point, the text gets very difficult so I will mostly summarize. We are given dates in the future and past, with which to compare the deeds of K’inic Janahb Pakal’s reign. For instance, we are told of the appeasing of the hearts of the *ch’ahoom* at Matwiil and the lords at Baakal on 9.13.0.0.0 (692) (after the king’s death). The accession of K’inic Janahb Pakal is compared to the accession of a Square Nosed Beastie over 1 million years in the past. This passage actually sounds similar to the inscriptions on Naranjo Stela 1 and Altar 1 (see Naranjo section). The name of Naranjo’s founding ancestor is also a type of Square Nosed Beastie, and it is possible that the two sites refer to the same ancestral figure. Another part of the passage refers to *chanal k’uh kabal k’uh* “sky gods and earth gods,” which we see in the inscriptions of Tikal.

We then return to a narrative about K’inic Janahb Pakal’s life. The text refers to the arrival on 9.11.6.9.0 (659) of the king of Santa Elena (Schele 1994:3; Martin and

Next we *huli uk’uhil* (his gods arrived). This is followed by names and titles of two gods. The first is Yax Ha’al Chaak, a deity known from several sites, who here carries an emblem glyph reading *batuun ajaw*. He is accompanied (*yitaj*) by the second god, named *Chan Ujol K’uh* “Four Headed God,” who is called Kab “Earth” lord. It seems likely that we are dealing with a large assembly of foreign lords and local subordinates and at least two deities (Guenter 2007:48–49). After listing these visitors, the text tells us that the [Patron Deity Introductory Glyph] gods drink. Other god names also appear: *K’an Wahyis Ahk* and *Bolon Okte’.* It is unclear whether these are deities of Palenque or other visitors. Finally, the king is listed, who also apparently drinks with the gods. Along with an example from Calakmul, this is further evidence that deities could visit each other at different sites and here it seemed that feasting for the deities and nobles was part of the event.

Further on, the text refers to an ancient mythological event involving GI in which he “throws with his hand at [?] fiery pool place” (*yaljiiy tuk’ab GI ta [?] K’ahk’ Nahb Nal*) (Stuart 2006a:169).

The text finishes by telling us of the death of Pakal and his wife and the accession of his son, K’inich Kan Bahlam.

Overall, there are some important things to be observed about the text. First, deities were given special attention each year (as we know from the mention of the 9.5.17.0.0 period ending in 551). They were given bundles of some sort, or maybe just clothing. On k’atun endings they were given special attention, including headbands, jewels, earflares, helmets, and other unknown items. Headbands were presented on their
altar. Finally, at one calendrical juncture, they, or possibly just GI, were given a new
temple.

Deities were given special titles. GI is called “Sak Balon” GII is ch’ok “prince”
and GIII is “yajaw k’ahk’” usually a priestly title. All three are referred to with the Patron
Deity Introductory Glyph. Gods are said to belong to each king in succession, and they
are called the “precious things” (Jun Tahn) of each king.

The Temples of the Cross, Foliated Cross, and Sun were dedicated by K’inich
Kan Bahlam on 9.12.14.12 (692). Texts from all three temples carry this date so we
know that they were dedicated at the same time. The texts from these three temples give a
series of mythological and historical events involving deities and ancestral figures. I will
first go through a chronology of these events (combined from all three temples) and then
I will make some particular observations about what we can learn from them. For a
complete reading of these inscriptions, see Stuart (2006b).

The earliest date recorded is 12.19.13.3.0 1 Ajaw 18 Sotz (3116 BC), about two
years before the “zero” date at the end of the 13th baktun. This date is the birth date
(sihyaj) of an ancestral character called [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat. Sometimes, this name is
simply given as Muwaan Mat. I believe this character can be put into the category of an
ancestor, rather than a deity, for reasons discussed in Chapter 4.

The next date, which is mentioned in both the Temple of the Cross and Temple of
the Sun, is the end of the 13th baktun. References are brief, however, since the main
events seem to happen about a year later. The Temple of the Sun mentions that “the sky
is made round” but this same event is discussed about a year later, and it is possible that the text simply estimated by assigning this event a date on 13.0.0.0.0.

On 13.0.1.9.0 (3112 BC), [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat underwent a “deer hoof” event. The verb in question is *uk'alaw*—“hoof” or “the hoof is dedicated/presented.” The same event appears in other texts at Palenque, most notably the Palace Tablet, where it refers to pre-accession rituals undergone by princes. We can assume, therefore, that this event was something similar in the life of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat, perhaps an heir designation.

Just two days later on 13.0.1.9.2, a series of mythological events took place, involving “the edge of the sky.” Most notably, GI descended from the sky, and a temple was dedicated for him. It was called the 6-[?] Sky House, the 8-GI House. The same 6-[?] Sky name is also the name given to the Temple of the Cross, as well as a previous GI temple mentioned in the Temple of the Inscriptions. It seems that this is a mythological place name associated with the deity that in turn gives its name to any temple built for him. The 8-GI House may refer to iconographic decoration, since the Temple of the Cross probably had a façade decorated with 8 portraits of the deity. Finally, on this date, GI is said to “make the sky round,” probably some sort of mythological creative event.

The next three dates refer to the “birth” of the three deities. On 1.18.5.3.2 9 Ik 15 Keh (2360 BC), GI is said to “touch the earth” [at] Matwiil on the Temple of the Cross Balustrade. Matwiil is the name of either a mythological place, or perhaps some sort of alternative name for Palenque. As we will see, Palenque rulers use an alternate emblem glyph *k’uhul Matwiil ajaw*, suggesting that this location is related to Palenque identity in some way. The same event is repeated on the Temple of the Cross panel, where it is given as an “arrival” (*huli*) and again an “earth touching.”
On 1.18.5.3.6 13 Kimi 19 Keh we see the “earth touching at Matwiil” of GIII on the Temple of the Sun balustrade. On the Temple of the sun panel, the same date is called the birth (sihyaj) of GIII along with a series of other deity names. These are K’ínich Tajal Wayib (a deity name known from Tikal and Copan); K’in Tahn “headless jaguar,” a wahy being or deity known from codex-style ceramics as well as a few other sites; sak baak naah chapaat, the wahy being of the Palenque dynasty; k’ahk’ ti’ SNB; K’inich Ajaw, the traditional name of the sun god; and finally GIII himself. It is probable that this is a long title string referring to GIII himself. Finally, the text tells us that he “arrived” at Matwiil.

Finally, on 1.18.5.4.0 GII “earth-touched” at Matwiil. The Panel of the Foliated Cross tells us that he was the “third born” and calls him “yax chit k’awiil winik ux ahal k’uh ch’ok” or “first chit, k’awiil person, third created god prince.” This string of titles is similar to that seen in the Temple of the Sun for GIII, further suggesting that all the names preceding GIII in that case were in fact sun-related epithets for the deity. Once again, it is repeated that this event was an “arrival.”

The deities are said to be the ubaah uch’ab (Temple of the Sun) or the ubaah uch’ab[y]ahk’abil (Temple of the Cross) of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat. Usually this phrase means “the son of [father]” and it appears this way in parentage statements. However, as we saw at Caracol and La Corona, it also describes the relationship between a king and his deity. On Quirigua Stela J, the stela is called the ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil of the gods. Thus, the term has the sense of something that is created or activated through ritual powers. Thus, we should not assume that [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat is a deity simply because his relationship to the triad is expressed in these terms. Rather, the narrative is perfectly
consistent with the forging of a ritual relationship between patron gods and founding ancestor.

As David Stuart (2006a:170–174) has noted, the birth and earth touching of GI takes place after earlier mythological events in which GI is already an actor. While some have tried to explain this by proposing two separate GI characters (Lounsbury 1980), Stuart proposes that there are simply two manifestations of GI: before his “earth-touching” and after. I concur, and propose simply that this event is simply the establishment of the special relationship between the Palenque rulers and the deities. Their “birth” or “earth touching” refers to their change in status from general gods in the heavens to patron deities whose effigies were venerated on earth and participated directly in human affairs.

The next event is the 2.0.0.0.0 period ending (2325 BC). On the panel of the Temple of the Foliated Cross, we are told that on this date [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat tzak k’uh or “conjured the deity.” Here, [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat is given a k’uhul Matwiil ajaw emblem glyph, which he shares with Palenque kings, but never with Palenque deities. This is further evidence that this individual was seen as an ancestral figure, rather than a deity. The place where the conjuring took place was yax ha’al witz sak nik ? nal ?-k’anal-Naah or “first rain mountain white flowery [?] place, [?] ripe house.” The latter part of this phrase “[?] ripe house” is the name given to the Temple of the Foliated Cross, suggesting another historical or mythological precedent for the temple.

On 2.0.0.10.2 (2325 BC), [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat received the white headband, becoming ruler. The Temple of the Cross panel next begins a history of Palenque dynasts. The first of these is Uk’ix(?) Chan, who is said to have “arrived” on 5.7.11.8.4 (993 BC)
and who acceded as king. Later Palenque dynasts saw this ancestor as important, and he is impersonated on the sanctuary panels of the Temple of the Cross, foliated cross, and at Temple XXI, discussed below. He is given the title *k’uhul Matwiil ajaw*, showing that he was considered an ancestor rather than a deity.

The next ancestor was K’uk’ Bahlam, who was born on 8.18.0.13.6 (March 31, 397) and acceded on 8.19.5.3.4 (May 2, 421). He is given the title *Tok Tahn ajaw*, rather than *Matwiil ajaw*, and has been considered to be the true “founder” of the Palenque dynasty (Martin and Grube 2000:156). While it may be true that he was the first truly historical character of the dynasty list, it is clear that Palenque rulers did not consider him to be a founder at all, and assigned that role to [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat. However, he was somehow important, since on the Temple of the Foliated cross, Kan Bahlam is referred to as some sort of “substitute” for this king.

After this figure we learn about “Casper,” whose name remains undeciphered. He was born on 8.19.5.3.4 (May 2, 421) and acceded on 8.19.19.11.17. (August 10, 435). This king is depicted on Palenque’s earliest contemporary text, a travertine bowl which gives him the title *k’uhul Tok Tahn ajaw*. He was also important to later dynasts and was impersonated at Temple XXI (discussed below).

The Temple of the Cross lists further kings, but they are not important for the discussion.

On 9.12.18.5.16 (July 23, 690) all three temples state that *puluy uchitinil 3-[?]-k’uh* “the ovens of the patron deities were burned.” Stuart (2006b:96–97) suggests that this refers to kilns in which effigies of the patron deities were fired. However, on the Temple of the Sun panel, the text uses the term *wayib* instead of *chitin*. *Wayib* refers to
the “sleeping place” of the deities, and is the typical term used to describe deity temples. Therefore, I think there are two possibilities: either the previous temples of the deities were terminated with typically Maya destructive burning rituals, or this is some sort of dedication of the new temples. I find the former explanation more likely. First of all, none of the three temples is elsewhere described as a wayib, suggesting that the burned wayib is elsewhere. Furthermore, the new temples receive their own house-entering rituals later on. Puluy is a verb generally associated with destruction, as in the burning of cities during warfare. I think it is most likely that the previous temples of the deities were terminated and thus became the “ovens” of the old effigies.

It is important to note that it is not only the three main Palenque deities whose ovens are burned, but three secondary deities as well. These are Ek’ Wayib Chaak (“Black Temple Chaak”); Akan (a death god); and Ix (?) Ajaw (“Lady (?) Lord”). This complete list of deities is still preceded by the Patron Deity Introductory glyph. On the Panel of the Foliated Cross, another deity besides GII may also be listed. This is “Baby JGU”, who seems to form some sort of couplet with GII, whose name is “Baby K’awiil.”

The very next day, on 9.12.18.5.16, the king “went up to Quetzal House” where a priest “thrice conjured deities with his ch’ab ahk’ab.” They were the deities of the k’uhul Matwiil ajaw [the king].” We learn, also, that this “fashioning” took place at Yemal K’uk’ Witz “Descending Quetzal Mountain,” probably Mirador hill at Palenque, in the temple of 3-9-Chaak (discussed below). Stuart (Stuart 2006b:97–98) believes that this sequence involves the conjuring of the deities into the new effigies, hence the patlaj verb “to make or fashion.” I agree, but once again suggest that this was not the aftermath of the firing of ceramic effigies, but rather the creation of new effigies (of unknown material) the day
after the previous effigy’s termination. Since that event happened at night, the city would not have gone 24 hours without its patron deities.

Finally, almost a year and a half later (the amount of time necessary to complete a new temple?) on 9.12.19.14.12 (692) the three temples were dedicated with a “house entering” ceremony. In these phrases we learn that the temples were called *pibnaahs* or “sweatbaths” of the deities. Houston (1996) has analyzed the architectural layout of the temples as similar to typical sweatbaths, suggesting that the deities were thought of as bathing in their new temples. Stuart (Stuart 2006b:109), however, interprets this term as “underground house,” suggesting that the Maya thought of these temples as symbolic caves. On the Temple of the Cross, both the *pibnaah* (inner sanctuary) and *kunil* “platform” are called 6-[?]-Chan. On the Temple of the Foliated Cross the *pibnaah* is called the [?]-k’an-SNB-Naah or “[?] ripe SNB house” while the platform is called 9-*pet-naah* or “9 circle structure.” On the Temple of the Sun, the *pibnaah* is called 9-[?]-*K’ahk’ K’inich Pas Kab* or “9 [upside down] Fire Radiant Earth Opening.” Unfortunately, we never learn the name of the platform.

All three temple panels contain portraits of individuals, whose identity is open to some question. On the panel of the Temple of the Cross, the left figure appears to be the young Kan Bahlam, while the right figure is Kan Bahlam upon his accession or, alternatively, the priest who officiated. This taller figure holds an effigy of GII (baby K’awiil) even though the temple is dedicated to GI. On a sanctuary panel from the same structure, there is another image of Kan Bahlam. His name phrase includes *Ahkal Ichiiy*, who we already saw on the unprovenienced panel, and who appears as a god name at La
Mar and Sak Tz’i’. His title string also includes *Uk’ix (?) Chan*, the name of an early Palenque ancestor.

On the panel of the Foliated Cross, the left figure is an adult Kan Bahlam who holds a personification of *huun*, the white headband of royalty. The right figure seems to be his older brother, who was the heir but died before coming to office. The text makes this clear when it says “he did not see [his] K’awiil grasping.” The only problem with this identification is that this brother is called by a different name in other texts.

On the Temple of the Sun panel the left figure is the young Kan Bahlam. He holds an effigy of flints and shields. The central icon is a larger version of this motif with a large shield and crossed spears. It seems that GIII probably served as a war deity given this theme. The figure on the right is probably the older Kan Bahlam and holds an effigy of K’awiil. The sanctuary panels depict him as well and the label on the right calls him *aj ux k’uh* (“he of three/many gods”).

These texts give us some information about the god’s names and titles. GII or “baby K’awiil” is called *ch’ok* or “youth/prince.” GI is called *[-xib],* another term for youth. It seems that these deities were seen as perpetually young. Both GII and GIII are given longer deity names. GII is called, or possibly born at *yax mut k’awiil nal*. He is also called *ux ahal k’uh* “third created god” as well as being paired with the baby JGU (Stuart 2006a:174). GIII is given an even longer list of names associated with sun deities and wahy beings. All three gods are associated with the Patron Deity Introductory Glyph, discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, on the jamb of the Temple of the Foliated Cross, GII is called *Naah Ho Chan Ajaw*. 
The Cross Group “Death’s Head” (Maudslay 1889b:plate 90) records that on the same day as the dedication of the cross group temples there was a dedication for an additional temple (ochk’ahk’ tu pibnaahil). The god in question was Akan, one of the secondary deities at Palenque. This was done by (yeh-te) K’inich Kan Bahlam. The text then counts forward to the 9.13.0.0.0 period ending (692). The inscription indicates that either one of the primary gods shared a sanctuary with this one, or than an additional temple was built for him within the group, possibly Temple XV or XVI.

K’an Joy Chitam

The text of the Temple XIV panel (Stuart 2006a:fig. 148) begins with a date in the mythic past: 9 Ik’ 10 Mol and discusses a “K’awiil Grasping” brought about by (ukabjiyi) Ixim Uh or Ixik Uh, a moon/maize deity. This accession takes place nearly a million years in the past. The individual who grasps K’awiil is not stated. However, it is possible to guess at his possible identity. We know from the Cross Group texts as well as the Temple XIX texts (discussed below) that GI acceded on 9 Ik’ 5 Mol. In fact, many dates related to GI happen on 9 Ik’ (Stuart 2006a). Also, the dynasty founder [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat accedes on 9 Ik’. Neither of the ancient accessions of these texts takes place a million years ago, however. It is likely that the accession discussed here is that of GI or [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat, since mythological accessions at other sites are also known to drift in time.

Next, the text mentions a second mythological event, this one on 13 Ok 18 Wo. The verb reads bolon ipnaj (nine/many times is it …ed) and the subject is Sak Baak Naah Chapat, the wahy of K’awiil. This is the wahy of Palenque kings in general, and the use of the term K’awiil, often substituted for founder’s personal names, suggests that we are
discussing the *wahy* of \[?\] Ixim Muwaan Mat, the dynasty founder. This was carried out by the deity Bolon Okte’ K’uh, who is also said to undergo his own *ch’am* (grasping) event. These events take place “in the north” at a place name called Sak \[?\] Nal (“White \[?\] place”). The accompanying scene repeats the events of 13 Ok 18 Wo but seems to represent a combination of both mythical events. We see a male figure dancing on the *Sak \[?\] Nal* placename. Kneeling in front of him is his mother, wearing the netted skirt of the moon goddess and handing him a K’awiil effigy to be grasped.

Although these events may have been important in Palenque mythology, there is not enough information here to classify Bolon Okte’ as a patron god.

The text now moves forward to historical events. We learn that on 9.13.17.8.0 (709) something was built called “First K’awiil Grasping,” presumably this panel itself. On the same day, a cave was entered, and this event was brought about by (*yehte’*) a series of deities. These include GI, the JGU, *ya-na-? K’AHK’ AJ* (“the mother of fire?”), Sak \[?\] Naah, and Ix \[?\] Ajaw (who appears in the secondary list of Palenque deities in the Cross Group inscriptions). All of these are called the gods of (*uk’uhil*) K’inich Kan Bahlam. This is unusual, since Kan Bahlam had already died at this point. It is possible that Temple XIV represents some sort of memorial or funerary shrine to him.

The long inscription of the Palace Tablet deals with the events leading up to the accession of K’inich K’an Joy Chitam.

Two dates in the text mention patron deities. The first is 9.10.18.17.19 (651). On this date the young K’an Joy Chitam (known by his pre-accession name) is involved in a the “first presentation of blood[?]” and “the dedication of hoof.” This event was overseen
(yichonal) by GI, ch’ok GII, GIII, Ek’ Wayib Chaak, Akan, and Ix [?] Ajaw. These gods are described with the epithet ohlis k’uh, “heart god(s).” Once again we see in this inscription that GII is referred to as a youth or a prince.

The next event is also a pre-accession event that took place on 9.11.13.0.0 (665). In this case, he “grasped rope” (uch’amaw [rope]). Stuart (2006a) believes that a similar event is depicted on the panels of Temple XXI. The event is overseen (yichonal) by “his gods”: GI, GII, and GIII.

The Dumbarton Oaks Panel (Stuart 2006b:93) retrospectively tells about the dedication of a temple on 9.11.4.7.0 (February 10, 657) by K’inich Janahb Pakal. On this date, he performed an och-naah “fire entering” ceremony in the wayib temple of 3-9 Chaak. Several years later, on 9.11.18.7.7 (December 6, 670), this deity “entered the house.” The deity is also named on the tablet of the foliated cross in relation to the events of 9.12.18.5.17 (July 24, 690). Here, the conjuring of the patron deities (probably the creation of their effigies) took place in the ch’een “cave” of 6-chan-chak 3-9-Chaak. Other texts from this date suggest that the event took place atop Mirador Hill, so Stuart (2006b:93) suggests that the source of the Dumbarton Oaks panel is the unexcavated temple in that spot.

K’inich Ahkal Mo’ Nahb

The inscriptions of Temple XIX have been dealt with extensively by Stuart (2006a). My reading of these inscriptions is mostly borrowed from his work, with an eye toward isolating patron deities and distinguishing them from ancestral figures.
The first event of interest comes from a stucco panel on an architectural pier. It records a series of events taking place at 2.5 year intervals, or 1/8th k’atuns. Although the event in question is unknown, its main sign is a heron of some type, while the accompanying illustration shows the heir apparent dressed in an enormous bird costume. The third and final heron event is performed by the prince on 9.14.2.9.0 (714) and is overseen (yichonal) ch’ok GII, who is given an additional epithet which Stuart suggests is “?-eyed-god.” It is unusual that GII is the witnessing deity, since the temple seems more properly dedicated to GI. Other pre-accession events at Palenque are witnessed by all three or even all six main deities.

A much longer inscription can be found on the south and west panels of the platform. The passage opens on the south panel with the date 12.10.1.13.2 9 Ik’ 5 Mol (about 200 years before the creation date). This date is not known from other Palenque inscriptions, but many GI-related dates fall on 9 Ik’. On this day, GI was “seated into rulership.” His accession ceremony was performed (ukabjiyi) by Yax Naah Itzamnaaj, a well-known ancient Maya sky deity (Principal Bird Deity). This event happened at ?-chan or “in the heavens.” Stuart (Stuart 2006a:67) points out that the same heavenly location can be found on Naranjo Stela 24, where the queen impersonates the moon goddess “in the heavens.” As we will see shortly, this accession of GI is distinguished carefully from the ancestral accession of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat.

The next event, also new to this inscription, took place on about 11 years later 12.10.12.14.18. On this day, the celestial crocodile was chopped or beheaded. Three rivers of blood flowed from his body, and something was shaped or built. Velasquez (2006) has convincingly argued that this mythological episode is the creation of the sky.
by dividing the primordial crocodile into heaven and earth. Presumably, therefore, it is the world that is shaped. This phrase is completed by (yehte’) GI, an auxiliary verb clearly attributing these exploits to GI in some way.

The rest of the mythological passages are already known from the Cross Group temples. On 1.18.5.3.2 GI touched the earth at Matwiil. As I discussed above, this is not a conventional birth, since GI clearly was involved in other events before his own earth-touching. Rather, it seems to be his manifestation as a special deity of Palenque. On 1.18.5.3.6 GIII was born (sihyaj) and on 1.18.5.4.0 the last of the triad GII was born (sihyaj/earth-touching at Matwiil). Once again, he is described as ubaah uch’ab [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat, just as we saw in the Cross Group temples.

On 2.0.0.10.2 9 Ik’ Seating Sak we see the following passage: utalnaah chumyaan ajaw Ixim [?] Muwaan Mat k’uhul matwiil ajaw. “he first sat as ajaw [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat, the holy Matwiil Ajaw.” This accession is distinguished from GI’s accession in some important ways. First, the inscription emphasizes that it is the first accession, making [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat a founder figure. Secondly, this character is given an emblem glyph, which none of the patron deities of Palenque ever carry. Finally, the accession of GI was carried out “in the sky” before the end of the 13th baktun. The text is meant to draw a parallel between the accession of the deity, the accession of the founder, and, in the next passage, the accession of the current king. All three accede on the day 9 Ik’ and the verb chum (sit) is used for all three. However, it carefully distinguishes between the ancestor and the deity.

The next passage is K’inich Ahkal Mo’ Nahb’s own accession on 9.14.10.4.2 9 Ik’ 5 K’ayab (722). The interval between his accession and that of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat
has been observed to contain several important multiples (Lounsbury 1976:220–221). Aside from simply a 260 day interval, it is also a 780 day interval (Mars cycle) and a 11,960 day interval (eclipse cycle). This was used to argue that the accession of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat was a completely contrived date meant to further legitimize Ahkal Mo’ Nahb’s authority. However, the date of [?] Ixim Muwaan Mat’s accession also appears in the Cross Group temples, which were dedicated when Ahkal Mo’ Nahb was still a child. Rather than contriving the date of the founder’s accession, Ahkal Mo’ Nahb carefully timed his own accession for a particularly auspicious date. Unlike the accession of Naranjo’s founder, it seems that Palenque’s founder’s accession date was fixed traditionally and did not drift substantially, at least between these two sets of inscriptions.

The next passage dates to 9.14.13.0.0 (724) and is recorded as unaah k’altuun uch’amaw ya-[?] “throne.” “It is his first stone dedication [and] he took the alligator throne.” This event is overseen (yichonal) by GI, GII, and GIII.

Before continuing on to the west panel, we should examine the scene depicted on the south panel. K’inich Ahkal Mo’ Nahb sits in the center. His caption tells us that he impersonates GI. His headdress consists of a heron eating a fish, emerging from an “ajaw” medallion, a common motif associated with GI at various different sites. Next to him sit his cousin (Stuart 2006a:119) who impersonates Yax Naah Itzamnaaj. He appropriately wears the headdress of the Principle Bird Deity and holds the white headband of rulership toward the king. Five other nobles are also in attendance. As the scene makes clear, K’inich Ahkal Mo’ Nahb is using his accession as an opportunity to re-enact the mythological accession of GI, which is mentioned in the text. Stuart (2006a) argues that this is a first for Palenque rulers, who before this point had never explicitly
compared themselves to deities. Ahkal Mo’ Nahb’s choice of a 9 Ik’ day for his accession was clearly part of the same mythological narrative.

The text continues on the West panel. After recounting an Early Classic platform dedication, the text records the period ending 9.15.0.0.0 (731). It tells us that K’inch Ahkal Mo’ Nahb dedicated a stone and that “it was the first time that Salaj Bolon was lifted upon GI.” This translation is taken from David Stuart’s (2006a:97) interpretation of the “palanquin” verb, which we see on the Tikal lintel inscriptions and refers to the carrying or lifting of deity effigy palanquins. Salaj Bolon is depicted in the middle of the West panel and seems to have been a noble of some importance. He was involved in some ritual involving GI’s palanquin. Perhaps a new palanquin was dedicated on this date.

On 9.15.2.7.16 (734) the temple itself was censed. We see the och k’ahk’ verb “fire entered” referring to incense burning in the new structure. The name of the temple was Waxak K’inch El Naah or “Eight Sun Emergence House” (Stuart 2006a:100). This is followed by a second building name, perhaps differentiating different parts of the building. This is K’ahk [?] Naah, “fire-?-house.” Finally the phrase ends uchak [?] naahil GI, “it is the red [?] house of GI. “Red [?] House” seems to have been a generic name for a certain type of structure, because we see it again describing temple of the other two deities further on (Stuart 2006a:101–102). Unfortunately, the main sign is unreadable at this point.

Shortly after, on 9.15.2.9.0 (734), we see further reference to a 1/8 k’atun ending and associated “rope taking” event seen on the architectural pier. The text reads something like “it is the rope-taking, his [?] rope…” followed by the palanquin verb once
again. The protagonist is Salaj Bolon once again, and the central scene seems to depict this event: Salaj Bolon holds a huge coil of rope in his arms.

Next, we learn of the dedication of the temples of the other triad deities on 9.15.4.15.17 (736). We see the same och k’ahk’ verb. The buildings being censed are Ux-Jolol Baak (?) Kab or “Three Skull and Bones (?) Earth,” belonging to GII and K’inich o’ Naah “Sun Owl House” belonging to GIII (Stuart 2006a:104–105). Both are also chak-?-naah, the same class of building to which Temple XIX also belongs.

The final event took place on 9.15.5.0.0 (736) and seems to be the dedication of the platform itself (okib) (Stuart 2006a:107–108). The platform was possessed by a figure whose name is unfortunately now gone. This was “overseen” (yichonal) by GI, who seems to have been given an extra name of Aj Chit (?). Finally, on the same day, the king scattered droplets, possibly for the period ending. As Stuart points out, it seems that this platform was added a few years after the dedication of the building itself.

A similar platform to that found in Temple XIX was also found in Temple XXI (Stuart 2006b). The text starts out with the date 9.13.17.9.0 (709). This is another 1/8th k’atun period ending, in which the master of ceremonies was K’an Joy Chitam. On the same date, an earlier platform may have been dedicated, called unaah yokib, “the first platform” of k’ahk’ k’uh. I’m not sure who k’ahk’ k’uh “fire god(s)” refers to here, perhaps all three main deities. The last three glyphs in the sentence read usuutz’ icham ajaw, but their meaning is not clear. The next sentence refers to noble offices: waan ta-[heron]-el “he was made [heron].” The heron title is also present in the temple XIX inscriptions, indicating that this is some sort of noble office (Stuart 2007b:227). The
people ascending to heron-ship are Okib Ch’ok and Upakal K’inich Ch’ok. We learn from the central image that Okib is the child name of Ahkal Mo’ Nahb and that Upakal K’inich is his successor. So these are childhood offices held by the princes. Miller and Martin (2004:232) suggest that the two were brothers.

The text then moves back to K’an Joy Chitam and in an unclear passage tells us further ritual act that he took *tach’ab ahk’ab* “with his powers.” This was overseen (*vichonal*) by a glyph now missing (possibly GI or possibly “his god” [*uk’uhil*]) and GII.

The text moves forward to 9.15.2.7.16 (734). Unfortunately, the event in question, which took place during the reign of Ahkal Mo’ Nahb is now missing.

Next we move forward to 9.15.4.15.17 (736). This date was also recorded on Temple XIX as the dedication of the temples of GII and GIII. Here, the verb is now gone but the passage ends with *K’inich O’ Naah* [?] GIII. We know that *K’inich O’ Naah* is the name of the temple of GIII and we can only assume that the missing glyph that follows is *u-chak-?-naahil*, the generic name for this type of temple. It is possible that the intervening glyphs also discuss the dedication of the temple of GII. The dedication was done by (*yehte’*) Ahkal Mo’ Nahb.

The next event is the 9.15.5.0.0 period ending (736). Ahkal Mo’ Nahb dedicated a stone and was overseen (*vichonal*) the gods GI, GII, and GIII, who are given the Patron Deity Introductory Glyph.

The text then moves back to 7.5.3.10.17 or 252 BC. Here we learn about the “first house entering” (dedication) for GI Sak Bolon and GII. (Sak Bolon is a name of GI seen on the Temple of the Inscriptions). This was done by (*ukabjiiy*) the king named “Casper.” Recall that a king of the same name is said to have acceded in 435 AD according to the
Temple of the Cross. He is believed to have been a historical character since an early classic bowl bearing his name and a portrait was found at Palenque. In this case, we have the same name, and a Palenque emblem glyph from a date several centuries earlier. The text treats him like an ancestor (with the emblem glyph and attributing a temple dedication to him in historical time). Perhaps he is an earlier namesake, or perhaps his dates simply drift in time. In addition to dedicating temples for GI and GII, we are told that he “tied the first bundle” and $SNB\ K'an\ ?\ Naah$. Recall that $SNB\ K'an\ ?\ Naah$ was the same name as the $pibnaah$ for GII, the temple of the foliated cross. Here, however, it is referred to as a $Chak\ ?\ Naah$, the generic name for the type of structure of Temple XIX.

I’m not sure who Temple XXI is dedicated to. The text compares it to an early dedication of a “platform of the fire god(s)” and places special emphasis on GI and GII. While it clearly mentions the dedication of GIII’s temple in 736, it may also mention GII’s temple dedication on the same day, just as both are mentioned in Temple XIX. The final phrase makes reference to the first “bundle” and the name of the house of GII. It may be that Temple XXI was not meant for one god in particular but rather for other types of rituals overseen by multiple deities (Stuart 2007b:227).

Let us look at the central scene. In the middle sits K’inich Janahb Pakal. In his headdress he wears the name glyph of “Casper” and he is said to impersonate Casper and $Uk'ix(?)-Chan$, another ancestor mentioned in the Temple of the Cross (Stuart 2007b:227). Normally, we see the impersonation verb with deities. However, in this case it applies to the impersonation of two ancestors. Although the impersonation verb is not
usually explicitly used to describe ancestor impersonation, Maya rulers frequently don attributes of their ancestors, especially founders.

K‘uk’ Bahlam

The Tablet of 96 Glyphs describes the history of the Sak Nuk Naah (palace) first built by K’inich Janahb Pakal and used by subsequent kings. The last passage of the inscription talks about the carving of the stone itself on 9.17.13.0.0 (November 17, 783), one k’atun after the accession of the king. The following two glyph blocks are unclear in meaning. They are followed by the verb ukobow, also of uncertain meaning, and ukabjiiy “it was done by…” The protagonist is K’inich Janahb Pakal, now a deceased ancestor. Taken at face value, the text seems to attribute an ukabjiiy verb to a dead king. However, the use of the kob verb is often found in passages that relat contemporary events to like-in-kind events of the past (Helmke et al. 2006:15–18). Therefore, it is probable that this passage is meant to refer back to the original building of the palace during Pakal’s lifetime. The overall sense of the passage would thus be that the current king creates a hieroglyphic panel for the palace originally created by the early king.

Piedras Negras

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<td>Wayib; Otoot</td>
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<td>parallel between god and Teotihuacan king</td>
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<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
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</tr>
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<td>658-</td>
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<td>711-</td>
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<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
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Table A.18. Supernatural Characters at Piedras Negras.
Ruler C

The earliest monument known from Piedras Negras is Panel 12, which is attributed to Ruler C. It records, among other things, that on the date 9.4.3.10.1 (518), the ruler performed a house-censing ritual (el naah) in the uwayibil yotoot (the temple of, the house of) three deities (Martin and Grube 2000:141). These are the sun god, a god name prefixed by the number 6, and 8-HA’-na-ka. These gods are called the gods of the ruler (uk’uhil).

Ruler 2

Panel 2 tells about events in 510, probably in Teotihuacan (Anaya et al. 2001; Zender 2007). Panel 2 also mentions patron gods. On 9.11.6.2.1 in 658, Ruler 2 grasped the war helmet that was received generations earlier at Teotihuacan. This was overseen by his gods (yichonal uk’uhil) (Stuart et al. 1999:49). These consists of Yax Ha’al Chaak, 8-Ha’ Nak, who we saw earlier on Panel 12, 1-Ha’ Nak, and the Jaguar God of the Underworld. These deities were conjured by the king as well. The narrative then moves back in time to the 510 event, where the earlier grasping of this helmet was overseen (yichonal) by Tajoom Uk’ab Tuun, Ochk’in Kaloomte’ and possibly king of Teotihuacan. It is interesting that the narrative makes a rhetorical comparison between the foreign king and the local gods.

K’inich Yo’nal Ahk II

Stela 8 records the birthday of K’inich Yo’nal Ahk II, on which he completed his third K’atun. Fitzsimmons (1998) argues that the deceased Ruler 2 was present on this occasion, and danced for his son’s birthday celebration. He makes this argument based on the glyph at D22 on the right side of Stela 8, which he believes to name Ruler 2.
However, a drawing by Stuart and Graham (2003:48) makes it clear that the dancer is in fact K’inich Yo’nal Ahk II himself, using the turtle shell variant of the Ahk glyph rather than the turtle head. The fact that he is completing his third k’atun means that the 4 k’atun ajaw title following the name applies to him, as he has now entered his own fourth K’atun.

Stela 3 was dedicated for the 9.14.0.0.0 period ending (711). On this day, the text tells us that three gods were bathed (yatij). These are the paddlers and what may be the maize god.

Altar 1 also mentions the paddler gods, this time in a mythological context. On the 13.0.0.0.0 creation date, a creation verb was carried out by the paddler gods, at “first three stone place” (just as we see at Quirigua, below).

Ruler 4

Stela 10, dating to 9.15.10.0.0 (743) shows a rare palanquin scene, similar to Tikal Lintel 3 from Temple I (Martin 1996:227). A giant jaguar figure rears up behind the seated ruler. The base of the palanquin is decorated with sky band symbols. It is possible that this figure represents one of the deities from the site that I have already mentioned, or another unknown deity.

Stela 40, dating to 9.15.15.0.0 (748), shows an unusual scene of ancestor veneration which took place on the earlier date 9.15.14.9.13 (Martin and Grube 2000:148). The ruler scatters droplets of incense into a tomb probably containing his mother. Although he is clearly scattering for her, the yichonal term is not used. Instead, her name and possibly her burial platform are mentioned. This woman is depicted sitting up on an elbow in her tomb, with a knotted cord connecting her to the world above.
However, in spite of this unusual imagery, the ancestor is not said to take an active role in human events.

Stela 20, dating to the 9.16.5.0.0 period ending (756), talks about a stone-presentation ritual. This ritual took place “with his gods” (yitaj uk’uhil) who in this case are the paddlers.

**Ruler 7**

Stela 15 commemorates the 9.17.15.0.0 period ending (785). Like Stela 20, we see a stone presentation ritual which took place “with his gods” (yitaj uk’uhil) who are also the paddlers (Schele 1987b:fig. 205).

### Quirigua

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>[Chanal] K’uh</th>
<th>Kabal K’uh</th>
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<td>depicted ukabjiy</td>
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### Jaguara

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<th>Black Centipede</th>
<th>Principal Bird Deity</th>
<th>Six Sky Lord</th>
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<table>
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Table A.19. Supernatural Characters at Quirigua.
Early Classic

The founder of the Quirigua dynasty, nicknamed “Took’ Casper” is mentioned on the hieroglyphic stairway at Copan (Martin and Grube 2000:217) and the later Quirigua Stela E tells us that his accession happened under the auspices of the Copan founder (Stuart 1987 in Schele 1989b:3–4). Although no monuments exist from his reign, a few Quirigua inscriptions make reference to him. On the Early Classic Monument 26, dating to 9.2.18.0.0 (493), there are mentions of kings “3rd in the line” and “4th in the line” probably from “Took’ Casper” (Martin and Grube 2000:217). The same monument also makes reference to deities. There is a scattering verb connected to [chanal] k’uh and kabal k’uh “sky god(s) and earth god(s).”

K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat

This king was the most prolific monument builder in the site’s history, and was responsible for capturing and beheading the king of Copan, thus freeing Quirigua from Copan’s domination.

Stela J (Maudslay 1889a:plate 46) was carved for the 9.16.5.0.0 period ending (756). It tells about the stela, calling it “ubaah uch’ab yahk’abil...” of a deity. This suggests that the deity was somehow responsible for making the stela or that it is depicted on it. The god in question is the “Starburst Water Lily Serpent,” who we saw at Copan and will see at Tikal. On this stela, the king is referred to as 14 tz’akbu Wi’te’ Naah “14th in line from the Root Tree House” (Schele 1992:141). While this location is often associated with the Copan founder, here it probably refers to the Quirigua founder “Took’ Casper” who also came from this place.
Stela C (Maudslay 1889a:plate 19) was also carved for the 9.17.5.0.0 period ending (775). It delves into Qurigua mythology, telling about the creation of the world (Freidel et al. 1993). It starts with the end of the 13th baktun on 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk’u (3114 BC). On this day, we see the dedication of “three stones.” First, the Paddler gods plant a stone. This happened at “Naah 5 Chan.” It was called the Jaguar Throne Stone. Next, a second god, whose name glyph consists of glyphs for “black” and “centipede,” plants a stone at the Earflare place. This was the Shark Throne Stone. Finally, The Principal Bird Deity dedicates a stone called the Water Throne Stone. This happened at the “edge of the sky, the first “three stone” place. Finally, the thirteenth baktun finishes ukabjiyi the “6 Sky Lord.” These events have been linked to the three stones of the Maya hearth and to the creation of the Maya cosmos in general. However, we should keep in mind that this was probably a local tradition and may not necessarily be the same everywhere.

Sky Xul

Zoomorph G (Looper 1996:fig. 1–5) was carved for the 9.17.15.0.0 period ending (785). It is carved in the form of the “Jaguar Throne Stone” and carries the same name mentioned on Stela C, and appropriately, it is said to be presented by the paddler gods. From its mouth emerges the now deceased K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat. A passage found in glyph columns M’ and N’ discusses actions of the deceased ruler. First, the passage tells us that he died on 9.17.14.13.2. However, then the text moves forward to discuss the 9.17.15.0.0 period ending, with a glyph reading k’altuun “stone dedication,” followed by the names and titles of the deceased K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat. So it seems that this text is attributing a dedicatory action to a deceased ruler (Stuart 2011). This is a unique example in the hieroglyphic corpus of an ancestor performing an action after his own
death. Perhaps it is relevant that the verb *k’altuun* is not inflected with transitive markers, possibly implying that the action was not direct. The period ending occurred just a few months after his death, so perhaps K’ahk’ Tiliw Chan Yopaat himself commissioned the monument as one of his final acts. This may explain why he is connected to its eventual dedication.

Zoomorph P (Looper 1996:fig. 22–38) and its accompanying altar were carved for the 9.18.5.0.0 period ending (September 15, 795). Its text discusses early events of the founding, such as planting a stela for the 8.19.10.0.0 period ending, carried out by “Took’ Casper” and supervised by K’inch Yax K’uk’ Mo’ of Copan, and “leaving the *Wi’te’Naah*” shortly after on 8.19.10.10.17 (Stone in Schele 1989b:5).

**Jade Sky**

I have already briefly discussed Stela I (Looper 1996:fig. 6–8) in the section on Copan. This text makes reference to the Copan deities 4 te’ Ajaw and K’uy Nik Ajaw on a date shortly before the Copan king’s capture by Quirigua. This may be a reference to captured deity effigies, but the reading remains uncertain.

It should be noted that while Stela C has been carefully studied for its information about Maya creation mythology, it does not contain examples of patron deities as I have defined them. The activities of the deities in this inscription are confined to the distant mythological past. The gods mentioned in other inscriptions, including the Sky and Earth gods, and the “Starburst Water Lily Serpent,” may have participated in contemporary period endings, making them better candidates for patron gods. However, the contexts in
which they appear are not well understood. Thus, while Quirigua has numerous extensive hieroglyphic inscriptions, patron deities seem to be lacking.

On the other hand, references to Took’ Casper are just as we would expect for a founding ancestor. He was remembered until the end of the site’s occupation and kings counted their reigns forward from his.

**Sacul/Ixkun**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Sacul Stela 1, Ixkun Stela 2, Ixkun Stela 1, Ixkun Stela 5</td>
<td>Sacul Stela 1, Ixkun Stela 2, Ixkun Stela 1, Ixkun Stela 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>761-800</td>
<td>761-800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>Naah 5 Chan [Banded Bird]; 4-Ajaw-le (possibly ruler rather than god)</td>
<td>Naah 5 Chan [Banded Bird]; 4-Ajaw-le (possibly ruler rather than god)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal veneration practices</td>
<td>scattering; stone dedication</td>
<td>scattering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship</td>
<td>burned?</td>
<td>burned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possibly has same titles as king</td>
<td>possibly has same titles as king</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.20. Supernatural Characters at Sacul and Ixkun.

The stelae of Sacul and Ixkun will be considered together, since the two sites may be part of the same polity, and seem to refer to the same individuals.

Sacul Stela 1 (see Laporte et al. 2006:229–237) dates to 9.16.10.0.0 (761) and refers to a series of rituals that took place on that date. An impersonator of the sun god (presumably the ruler) scattered droplets. The paddlers are also mentioned and seem to be the subject of a *pul* verb, meaning to burn. This is followed by the ruler’s name. The ruler then receives a series of titles. This includes *Naah Ho Chan* “First Five Sky” Banded-
Bird. Usually, Naah Ho Chan titles are associated with deities. However, on Nakum Stela C, dating to 9.19.5.0.0 (815), we see the ruler called *Naah Ho Chan Winik* “the First Five Sky Person” and on Caracol Stela 6 Knot Ajaw may be called *Naah Ho Chan* as well. At Sacul we seem to see a similar pattern. Following this title, we also read 4-ta(?)-AJAW-le “the fourth rulership” and 8-?-Ajaw. These could be titles or descriptions of the king’s reign. 8-?-Ajaw looks quite similar to the name of the Naranjo Jaguar God of the Underworld 9-?-Ajaw. The same title appears on Drawing 25 of Naj Tunich cave (Stone 1995:165) together with the Sacul emblem glyph.

Things get confusing, however, in examining Ixkun Stela 2 (see Graham 1980:141). Here, after telling of war events against Ucanal on 9.17.9.0.3 and 9.17.9.3.4 (779-780), the stela tells about a scattering event (which did not happen on a period ending). This event was overseen (*yichonal*) by the paddler gods, followed by the titles *Naah 5 Chan*-Banded-Bird and 4-AJAW-le. Whereas on Sacul Stela 1 these titles clearly belonged to the king, here they would seem to refer to the paddlers themselves. Alternatively, the king of Sacul may also be overseeing the event together with the paddler gods.

Ixkun Stela 1 (see Graham 1980:139) discusses the 9.18.0.0.0 period ending (790). The first part of the text tells about a scattering overseen (*yichonal*) by the Paddler gods which was *ukabjiyi* the king of Sacul (Laporte et al. 2006:231). The text then gives a more detailed account of the stone dedication by the local ruler and says that he also scattered, overseen (*yichonal*) by the paddlers.
Ixkun Stela 5 (see Graham 1980:149), dedicated 10 years later for the 9.18.10.0.0 period ending (800), tells of the stone dedication by the ruler, also overseen (yichonal) by the paddlers.

**Sak Tz’i’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Ahkal Ich</th>
<th>A-?-Xukub</th>
<th>9 Okte’ K’uh (?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Caracas Panel</td>
<td>Caracas Panel</td>
<td>Caracas Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>564-706</td>
<td>564-</td>
<td>565-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god (called god at La Mar)</td>
<td>probable god (called god at La Mar)</td>
<td>probable god (called god at La Mar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple classification</td>
<td>wayib</td>
<td>wayib</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>See also: Palenque unprovenienced panel, Temple of the Cross sanctuary panel, La Mar Stela 1</td>
<td>See also: La Mar Stela 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.21. Supernatural Characters at Sak Tz’i’.

An unprovenienced panel called the Caracas Panel, probably from Sak Tz’i’, makes reference to the same gods that we saw on La Mar Stela 1 (Stuart et al. 1999:46; Biro 2005). The text begins with the date 9.6.9.16.12 (564). Biro (2005:18) argues that this is a *huli* “arrival” event, possibly referring to the foundation of the Sak Tz’i’ dynasty. The text moves forward just over 15 months to 9.6.10.13.17. On this date, we see the first dedication (*och k’ahk’*) of a temple (*uwayibil*) to deities Ahkal Ich and A-?-Xukub. We move forward again just over a month to 9.6.10.17.2 12. On this date something was built (*patwaan*) having to do with Ahkal Ich and possibly 9 Okte’ as well, and the *och k’ahk’* verb is repeated (Biro 2005:18). The text then moves forward more than 7 k’atuns to 9.13.15.0.0 (706). On this period ending date, a new temple was dedicated (*och k’ahk’ tuwayibil*) to Ahkal Ich. The protagonist of this dedication was Aj Yax ? K’ab Chan Te’.
This is a king known from other sources to carry both the Ak’e and Sak Tz’i’ emblem glyphs (Biro 2005:19). Finally, the text moves forward to 9.16.3.10.11 (754). Although the verb is now gone, we can see that this date also had something to do with a Sak Tz’i’ lord. A final ochk’’ahk’ verb appears at the base of the throne in the scene, probably corresponding to the date 9.16.5.0.0 (756) (Biro 2005:18).

**Tikal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Sak Hiix Muut</th>
<th>Jaguar God of the Underworld</th>
<th>Sun God</th>
<th>18 Ubaah Kaan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stela 29, El Encanto Stela 1?, Stela 26, Hombre de Tikal, Stela 31, Temple 6 façade, Ixlu Altar 1?</td>
<td>El Encanto Stela 1,</td>
<td>El Encanto Stela 1,</td>
<td>Marcador, Naranjo HS, T. 1 Lintel 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292-766-879?</td>
<td>305-</td>
<td>305-</td>
<td></td>
<td>378-695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god (called k’uh?, appears in list?, see text)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baahaj uhuuntahn?; Naah Ho Chan?</td>
<td>baahaj uhuuntahn; Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td>baahaj uhuuntahn; Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name glyph appears in iconographic scenes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yichonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ancient period endings; recent period endings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tikal is his city; his stone is made; the pavement is struck (part of temple)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>impersonated; conjured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dedication?)</td>
<td>wayib</td>
<td>full Tikal emblem glyph</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple classification</td>
<td>references to lordship</td>
<td>starts dynastic count?</td>
<td>commentary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pik Chanal K'uh (8,000 Sky gods)</th>
<th>Pik Kabal K'uh (8,000 Earth gods)</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 40, Stela 24, Ixlu Stela 1, Ixlu Stela 2, Ixlu Altar 1, Jimbal Stela 1, Jimbal Stela 2</td>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 40, Stela 24, Ixlu Stela 1, Ixlu Stela 2, Ixlu Altar 1, Jimbal Stela 1, Jimbal Stela 2</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>406-</td>
<td>406-</td>
<td>445-889</td>
<td>445-889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td>floating in cloud of smoke</td>
<td>floating in cloud of smoke</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| bathed | bathed | }
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Wind god</th>
<th>PBD</th>
<th>Starburst Water Lily Serpent</th>
<th>9 Tz'akbu</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 40,</td>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 26?</td>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 40?, Stela 3</td>
<td>Stela 31, Stela 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>445-468</td>
<td>445-</td>
<td>445-488</td>
<td>445-488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td>PDIG?</td>
<td>Mam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted yichonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>finishes the 13th year</td>
<td>finishes the 13th year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>veneration practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bathed</td>
<td>bathed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple classification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>references to lordship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>starts dynastic count?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>see also: Copan Stela P, Stela J, Quirigua Stela P</td>
<td></td>
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(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>Jaguar head</th>
<th>Yajaw Maan from Calakmul</th>
<th>Akan from El Peru</th>
<th>Hummingbird Jaguar of Naranjo</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 40</td>
<td>T. 1 Lintel 3</td>
<td>T. 4 Lintel 3</td>
<td>T. 4 Lintel 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>468-</td>
<td>695-</td>
<td>743-</td>
<td>744-</td>
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<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional names/epithets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted yichonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>Temple classification</td>
<td>References to lordship</td>
<td>Starts dynastic count?</td>
<td>Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bathed</td>
<td>domestication: captured, carried, temple built, conjured</td>
<td>domestication: captured, brought to Tikal, impersonated, danced, Temple built</td>
<td>domestication: captured, carried</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajaw in name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested dates of veneration (AD)</th>
<th>Glyph Y god</th>
<th>Yellow Stone Chaak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God with torch forhead</td>
<td>Ixlu Stela 1, Ixlu Stela 2</td>
<td>849-879</td>
<td>Ixlu Altar 1</td>
<td>Ixlu Altar 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probable god</td>
<td></td>
<td>879-</td>
<td></td>
<td>879-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>God (in list with others)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicted</td>
<td>Floating in cloud of smoke</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>&quot;Zip Star&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yax Ehb Xook</td>
<td>El Encanto Stela 1, Stela 39, Stela 17,</td>
<td>Stela 16, Stela 5, T. 4 Lintel 3, T. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See also: Ucanal stela 4</td>
<td>see also: Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
<td>see also: Dos Pilas Stela 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.22. Supernatural Characters at Tikal.

The monuments of Tikal, especially its Early Classic stelae, represent an artistic style which fills monuments with an extensive array of supernatural characters. This complexity, combined with the sometimes poor preservation of these early monuments, can make the identification of deities and ancestors a complicated problem. However, scholars have been working with these monuments for decades now, and some progress has been made. It is likely, however, that future studies will continue to impose order on these complicated monuments, and further deities may be recognized.

Early Stelae

The earliest stela at Tikal, and the one which has traditionally set the beginning of the Classic Period, is Stela 29 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 49), dating to AD 292. While only the upper portion of the stela is well preserved, it contains a variety of supernatural creatures. The most obvious is the floating ancestor head above the protagonist. As we have seen on other stelae, the convention shows a disembodied head,
facing down, and probably contains this ancestor’s name within the headdress. The ruler holds a deity effigy head in his hand, a version of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, above which sits a name glyph which David Stuart (2007a) has tentatively identified as a name of the character he calls “White Owl Jaguar.” The name of this deity probably read Sak Hiix Muut or “White Jaguar Bird” (Martin and Grube 2000:50). As we will see, this character appears on several other monuments. Stuart identifies it as an ancestral figure, but I believe that this is actually a deity of Tikal. The reasons for this identification are discussed in Chapter 4.

El Encanto Stela 1 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 77), dating between 305 and 308, and commissioned by Sihyaj Chan K’awiil I, provides the first reference to Tikal’s dynastic founder, Yax Ehb Xook. On this stela, the founder’s name is incorporated into the name of Sihyaj Chan K’awiil’s father, probably the previous king (Martin and Grube 2000:27). It also contains the first textual reference to Tikal deities. Without grammatical introduction, it states baahaj uhuuhtahn, uk’uhil, Naah Ho Chan k’uh “his precious thing, his gods, the First Five Sky gods” (Martin 2000a:53). This is followed by six glyph blocks listing deities. The first block is too eroded to read. The second block may contain the name glyph for Sak Hiix Muut mentioned above. The third block appears to be the head of the Jaguar God of the Underworld. The fourth block unfortunately cannot be confidently translated. The fifth block is now illegible, and the sixth and final block contains the name of the Sun god.

From these two stelae, we can see that even from an early date, the rulers of Tikal saw Yax Ehb Xook as a founding ancestor, and that certain deities are present at important ritual events. Although Yax Ehb Xook continues to be considered first in the
line of Tikal rulers all the way through the site’s history, his reign is not projected backward in time as we saw with the founder of Naranjo.

**Chak Tok Ich’aak I**

Stela 39 was commissioned by ruler Chak Tok Ich’aak to celebrate the 8.17.0.0.0 period ending (376). On this monument, the Ehb Xook part of the founder’s name is incorporated into his name phrase (Schele 1992:139; fig. 6c).

Stela 26 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: fig. 44) has been tentatively attributed to this king (Martin and Grube 2000:28) but may in fact be retrospective. This monument has another iconographic reference to Sak Hiix Muut (Stuart 2007a), which appears on the front of the monument emerging from part of the king’s paraphernalia. The text refers to the dedication of a series of ritual objects belonging to ancestors. The first is a stela belonging to Sihyaj Chan K’awiil and Chak tok Ich’aak, among others. The next is the “Fire Jaguar” belonging to K’ahk’ Wahyis Naah Bahlam, and K’an Chitam, another ancestral Tikal name. The next object is the throne or seat. The owner or owners of this throne are listed next. The first glyph is the Patron Deity Introductory Glyph, suggesting that at least one of the glyphs that follow is the name of a god (Stuart et al. 1999:57). The first name listed is Unen Bahlam, which is a name of an ancestral Tikal king but also the name of a deity (Martin 2003a; 2002). The next glyph is the Principal Bird Deity, who also appears in a god list on Stela 31. The next glyph reads *Ehb K’in* and may somehow refer to Yax Ehb Xook. The final glyph includes a female prefix and incorporates the MUT main sign of the Tikal emblem glyph, but does not include the title *Ajaw*. This glyph resembles an incised sherd excavated by the Proyecto Nacional Tikal, where it is
also carried by Unen Bahlam, a known ancestor (Martin 2003a:9). It is difficult to know whether this list is a god list or a list of ancestors, as on the rest of the monument.

Yax Nuun Ahiin I

Chak Tok Ich’ak met an untimely death during the well-known entrada event, probably involving invaders from Central Mexico (Stuart 2000). Few texts remain from the reign of the newly installed king Yax Nuun Ahiin I. One relevant inscription is the “Hombre de Tikal” (Fahsen 1988). This inscription once again makes reference to Sak Hiix Muut, and this time Tikal is called “the city of the Mutal (Tikal) lord, Sak Hiix Muut” (Stuart 2007a).

Sihyaj Chan K’awiil II

The most famous of Sihyah Chan K’awiil’s stelae is Stela 31 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 51–54), which is well preserved. The front of the stela depicts the king with the usual supernatural attendants. The floating ancestor above his head is his father, Yax Nuun Ahiin, with sun god attributes. This ancestral figure contains simply a head and arm, in which he cradles a serpent, from whose mouth emerges the name glyph for the now familiar Sak Hiix Muut (Stuart 2007a). The king himself wears a headdress crested with the name of Yax Ehb Xook (Schele 1992:139).

The back of this stela contains a long, detailed text telling the recent history of Tikal. Included in this text are a series of period ending rituals which are attributed to specific gods. Strangely, no verb actually tells us what these gods are doing, they are simply listed in association with period ending events, all of which are half-k’atuns. The first listed is the 9.0.10.0.0 period ending of 445 and the associated gods are “8,000 Sky gods;” “8,000 Earth gods” (Houston et al. 2006:188); the two Paddlers; the Wind god; the
Principle Bird Deity; a deity I have nicknamed “Starburst Water Lily Serpent” in reference to Copan Stela P and Quirigua Stela J, here preceded by the glyph *mam* or “grandfather”; and finally a god called 9-*TZ’AK-bu* “many generations.” This last name is reminiscent of the Postclassic name of K’awiil “Bolon Tz’akab” (Taube 1992:73). The second reference (8.18.10.0.0 in 406) contains a much shortened list of only “8,000 sky gods” and “8,000 earth gods.” Finally, the 8.19.10.0.0 period ending of 426 is listed, here with simply the glyph “8,000 god[s].” It is possible that these last two are truncated lists, intended to represent the entire set while saving space.

One final monument, probably dating to the reign of Sihyaj Chan K’awiil, deserves attention. This is the “Marcador” text, which contains references to the Toetihuacan entrada event several decades earlier in 378 (8.17.1.4.12) (Stuart 2000:fig. 15.9). This text makes two references to the arrival of a deity called Waxaklajun Ubaah Chan, “Eighteen Images of the Snake,” the Teotihuacan war serpent. This is the earliest reference to this deity in the Maya area. Throughout the rest of the Classic period, it would become widespread as an impersonated god at numerous Maya sites.

**K’an Chitam**

Stela 40 closely resembles Stela 31 (Valdes et al. 1997). The text on the back of the monument, like on Stela 31, contains a deity list. This time, the period ending in question is 9.1.13.0.0 (468) and the associated verb is *yatij* “to bathe.” The gods that are bathed are as follows: a glyph of unknown reading resembling a jaguar head, the Water Lily Serpent, the Paddlers, the Wind god, and two more glyphs of unknown reading. From those gods that are recognizable, the list seems to largely overlap the list given on Stela 31.
Chak Tok Ich’aaq II

Stela 3 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 4) was dedicated on the 9.2.13.0.0 period ending of 488. The text once again mentions deities associated with this period ending. In this case, the phrase reads u-TZUTZ-wa u-13-HAAB... “they finish the 13th year...” The gods listed in this case are 9-TZ’AK-bu “Many Generations” and the “Starburst Water Lily Serpent” seen on Stela 31 and the Copan and Quirigua stelae. These gods are responsible for actually making the period ending occur. Also responsible is Chak Tok Ich’aak himself, who is listed immediately thereafter. One might be tempted to read the syntax of this list as simply referring to the king himself, “many generations from [god].” However, the order of the gods listed on Stela 31 shows that this is not the case, and that “Many Generations” is a separate deity. The text of Stela 3 finishes by reminding the reader that Chak Tok Ich’aak was the son of K’an Chitam, whose name incorporates Ehb Xook of the founder’s name.

Wak Chan K’awiil

Stela 17 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 24, 25), the only known monument of Wak Chan K’awiil, dates to 9.6.3.9.15 (557) and provides a dynastic count of 21st in the line from Yax Ehb Xok, and incorporates the founder’s name into the king’s own.

Jasaw Chan K’awiil

Unfortunately for Tikal, a 562 attack by Calakmul precipitated a monument hiatus that would last for 130 years. After languishing in this hiatus, Jasaw Chan K’awiil seems to have turned Tikal’s fortunes around, and a number of monuments of interest were commissioned during his reign. A series of two lintels from Temple 1 is particularly interesting (see Calakmul section, above). The inscription on Lintel 3 (Jones and
Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 70) records a date of 9.13.3.7.18 (August 8, 695) when the “flint and shield of Yich’aak K’ahk’, king of Calakmul, were brought down.” On the same date, the deity Yajaw Maan, known from other inscriptions to be a deity from Calakmul, was captured. The inscription goes on to say that forty days later on 9.13.3.9.18 (September 17, 695), the god’s palanquin, called tu?-BAHLAM-NAL (? Jaguar Place) was carried. On the same date, a god was conjured by Jasaw Chan K’awiil and something was “built” (patwaan) in the city of Tikal. The text gives parenthetical information about Jasaw Chan K’awiil’s parentage, and then reiterates that “? Jaguar Place was carried.”

The accompanying image shows the king seated before a giant effigy of a jaguar, a depiction of the captured Yajaw Maan himself. Essentially, then, this is a triumphal parade bringing the captured deity to the city. Although the conjured god and the thing that is built are left unstated, I believe that they must refer to this god effigy itself and some sort of temple for it or modification of the effigy itself. Therefore, we have a record of the capture and “domestication” of a foreign deity at Tikal. This pattern of captured deity domestication will be seen in the lintels of the next king, and will be discussed further below.

The other lintel of Temple 1 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 69) depicts a king in an elaborate costume of a snake covered in mosaic. The king holds atlatl darts and the motifs along the bottom of the image are of Teotihuacan style. The text is mostly effaced, but a small portion allows the name of Waxaklajun Ubaah Kaan, the Teotihuacan deity seen earlier, to be read. The date of the monument corresponds to the 13th k’atun anniversary of the arrival of Sihyaj K’ahk’ (Stuart 2000:490). It seems that the lintel program was designed to draw a clear parallel between the entrance into the city of
Sihyaj K’ahk’ and his War Serpent deity and the triumphal precession of Jasaw Chan K’awiil and the newly captured Yajaw Maan.

On Stela 16 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 22) of 9.14.0.0.0 (711), the king wears a headdress that contains a skull and a large star sign. Freidel and Guenter (2006) identify this costume as the “Zip Star” costume. This character was briefly discussed in the Dos Pilas/Petexbatun section above. They find two other references to this god/costume in the inscriptions of Jasaw’s son, which will be discussed below.

The last set of inscriptions from the reign of Jasaw Chan K’awiil is a series of inscribed bones from his burial, Burial 116. One set of these bones (Moholy-Nagy 2008:fig. 195) describes a series of rituals involving the conjuring of deities. These include “K’in Ajaw,” and Waxaklajun Ubaah Kaan, the Teotihuacan war serpent.

**Yik’in Chan K’awiil**

Stela 5 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 7, 8) records the 9.15.13.0.0 period ending in 744. The king is called 27th in the line of Yax Ehb Xook (Schele 1992:138) and the narrative starts by recalling important rituals that were performed on the occasion of the king’s accession. It tells about the dedication of a building which Freidel and Guenter (2006) call the “Soul Flower Cache” and link to the tomb of his father in Temple I. However, since this stela was located in front of Temple 33, I see no reason for this association. The “Soul Flower Cache” building is called the house (ootoot) of “Zip Star,” whose costume elements we saw on Jasaw Chan K’awiil’s Stela 16.

We can now turn to the lintels of Temple IV. The two lintels both anchor time from 9.15.10.0.0 (741) and then count forward to their respective events. The first of these is on Lintel 3 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 74) and takes place in 743. This
Lintel is the most complete of Tikal’s wooden lintels and carries extra detail about deity domestication. It recounts a “star war” over El Peru and the capture of a deity from the site (Martin 2000b). This deity’s name incorporates a celt sign, a skeletal sun god, the Akan god and the glyphs YAX-ja. One day later, this god is said to “complete its journey” [tzutzuy yook] and arrive in the city of Tikal. Three years later, the deity is impersonated, now called “the god of the [Tikal] Kaloomte’.” Next, the king is carried on a palanquin called ?-Naah Chan, (? Great Snake). This sentence seems to reflect the scene, which shows the king seated in front of a great serpent effigy. The effigy does not appear to be that of the captured El Peru god, but the base of the palanquin shows iconography popular at El Peru, and may therefore be a captured palanquin (Martin 2000b). In the image, the headdress of the ruler is actually the “Zip Star” costume, with a skull, star, and this time, a square nose within the headdress itself, mimicking the glyph (Freidel and Guenter 2006). Next, the king dances with an object or at a place called Tuun ? Akan Naah, probably having to do with the captured Akan god. Finally, an object or place called Akan Haab Nal is built in Tikal. This may be a temple or a new palanquin for the captured god effigy.

Lintel 2 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 73) has a similar narrative. Martin (1996) originally published an interpretation of this lintel and was the first to notice that it carried a giant deity effigy from Naranjo (see Naranjo section). In this case, less than a year after the attack of El Peru, the king descends from the “Soul Flower Cache.” Recall from Stela 5 that this was the name of the temple of “Zip Star” (Freidel and Guenter 2006). One day later, he delivered a star war attack on Naranjo and captured a throne. The glyph for this throne incorporates a sign of a hummingbird. This throne probably
refers to the palanquin which is said to carry Nik?-ki (?) K’in Hiix Ik’ Huun or “Flowery
[?] Sun Jaguar Black Headband” a god belonging to the Naranjo king. The deity that is
depicted is a form of the Jaguar God of the Underworld and wears the cruller in front of
its eye and a hummingbird nose piece. He also wears a chin piece or beard that is marked
with kaban “earth” signs. The text counts forward just over three years to 9.15.15.14.0
(747) and lists another event having to do with the throne. Unfortunately, this part of the
inscription is effaced and hard to read but almost certainly refers to another series of
“domesticating rituals” and the arrival of the deity at its new home. Martin (1996) also
noted that the triumphal scene of this deity entering Tikal was recorded in graffiti at the
site (Trik and Kampen 1983:fig. 71, 72, 73, 81, 82).

What is the identity of “Zip Star”? As a costume, it only appears on two
monuments: Stela 16 and Lintel 3 of Temple IV. References to the deity are also made on
Stela 5 and Lintel 2. From these we know that the character had a “house” (otoot) and that
the king visited this structure before going to war. Texts from the Petexbatun list a similar
character as a founding ancestor. Unfortunately, the references at Tikal are so scarce that
it is difficult to classify this character as one or the other. However, the classification of
his temple as “house” rather than a “sleeping place” points toward an ancestral
identification, as does the ancestral identity in the Petexbatun.

28th Ruler

The only inscription that can be dated to the 28th ruler of Tikal is the glyphic
façade on the Temple of the Inscriptions (Temple VI). The chronology of this monument
was first worked out by (Jones 1977). More recently (Martin and Grube 2000:50; Stuart
2007a), the non-calendrical parts of the text have been published and shown to deal with
period ending rituals and the structure’s dedication, all of which involve the deity Sak Hiix Muut.

The earliest dates in the inscription are 5.0.0.0.0 (1143 BC); 6.14.16.9.16 (456 BC); and 7.10.0.0.0 (157 BC). These events refer to early period endings involving Sak Hiix Muut, probably in the role of “overseeing” (yichonal) the events. The text then moves forward to historical times and the 9.4.0.0.0 period ending. Once again Sak Hiix Muut “oversees” a period ending. 13 years later, a wayib temple is dedicated to this god on 9.4.13.0.0 (527). A series of other rituals follow. On 9.14.13.4.16 (725), two objects are “made” (patwaan). One cannot be read; the other is “the stone of Sak Hiix Muut.” 38 days later, on 9.14.13.6.14 the text states that “the pavement is struck.” Finally, another date 13 days later is given (9.14.13.7.7) but the event is now missing. Stuart (2007a) suggests that this series refers to the dedication of the architectural space for Sak Hiix Muut during the 6th century and corresponding to an earlier phase of Temple VI. Specifically, he believes the “struck pavement” phrase refers to the Mendez Causeway, which links this temple to the rest of the site.

With a gap because of the poor preservation of the text, we can pick up the narrative again at 9.16.14.17.17 (766), when a wayib temple is once again constructed. Presumably this would be the later phase of Temple VI. The text finishes with a date three days later on 9.16.15.0.0, probably the date of the inscription’s dedication. In giving the ruler’s name, it should also be noted, the text refers to Yax Ehb Xook (Schele 1992:138).
Yax Nuun Ahiin II

Stela 22 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 33) records the 9.17.0.0.0 period ending (771) and shows the king in a scattering ritual. Above him floats a deity figure emerging from a swirling cloud of smoke, probably that produced by the incense burning. The text refers to the king by incorporating Yax Ehb Xook into his name phrase (Schele 1992:138), and then stating that he was “29th in the line” from the chi-“Throne.” This latter phrase is a mythological or historic place name that is associated with dynasty founders across the Maya world (Stuart 2003). On this stela, it seems to serve as a substitute of Yax Ehb Xook himself, suggesting that he ruled there.

Terminal Classic Tikal

Stela 24 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 37, 38) of king “Dark Sun” was dedicated on 9.19.0.0.0 (810). On both the front and the back of the stela, the text mentions that the Paddler gods are “bathed” (Schele 1987b:fig. 4b), deities who were not mentioned by name since Stela 40 of K’an Chitam about 350 years earlier.

The last known ruler of Tikal, Jasaw Chan K’awiil II, erected Stela 11 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 16) for the 10.2.0.0.0 period ending (869). The ruler performs a scattering ritual. Above him float two deities in clouds of smoke, just as we saw on Stela 22. Once again, the deities are in poor condition and cannot be identified.

The Tikal Satellites

During the 9th century, Tikal Satellites Jimbal and Ixlu put up their own monuments, perhaps suggesting that royal authority splintered during this time. The Ixlu stelae (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 80, 81) are similar in style to Tikal Stela 22 and 11, both of which feature floating deities ringed in smoke. On the two Ixlu stelae, these
deities can be clearly identified as the paddler gods (Stuart et al. 1999:50). However, both stelae depict two additional deities: one with a torch emerging from his head, the other with a reptile mask. Ixlu Stela 1 was dedicated for the 10.1.0.0.0 period ending (849), while Stela 2 was dedicated for the 10.2.10.0.0 period ending (879). Its accompanying altar, Altar 1, is quite significant in that it lists a series of deities. Unfortunately, the verb associated with these deities’ actions cannot be read but they are listed as the Jaguar Paddler; the Stingray Paddler; a god whose name includes “glyph Y” of initial series; “Yellow Stone Chaak”; and a final glyph which may possibly be Sak Hiix Muut. All of these gods are then named as Naah Ho Chan. Schele and Freidel (Schele and Freidel 1990:389–390) noticed that this same sequence turns up on Dos Pilas Stela 8, mentioned above. The only difference in this sequence is the omission of the final deity, which may be Sak Hiix Muut. It is likely that the two lists both originated from Tikal itself and migrated along with the splintering dynasty.

Jimbal Stelae 1 and 2 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 78, 79) were carved for the 10.2.10.0.0 (879) and 10.3.0.0.0 (889) period endings respectively. Stela 1 shows the paddler gods ringed in smoke, as we have seen on other stelae (Stuart et al. 1999:50). Although commemorating a period ending, this stela does not show a scattering rite but a “K’awiil grasping.” Stela 2 seems to make some reference to the paddler gods, but the context is obscure.
**Tila**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stela A</td>
<td>Stela A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>830</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional names/epithets</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
<td>Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>bathed</td>
<td>bathed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to lordship</td>
<td>Called Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
<td>Called Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table A.23. Supernatural Characters at Tila.

Stela A from Tila records the 10.0.0.0.0 period ending (Beyer 1927) and tells us that on this day the paddler gods were bathed (*yitaj*). The paddlers are given the title *Naah Ho Chan Ajaw*. A verb (possibly *ilaj* “to witness”) connects this event to the name and titles of the king.

**Tonina**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
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<td>628-721 (805)</td>
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<td>(called k'uh)</td>
<td>(called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional names/epithets</td>
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<td>Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to effigy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>box for effigy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other verbs</td>
<td>accompanies (<em>yitaj</em>) king</td>
<td>accompanies (<em>yitaj</em>) king</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration practices</td>
<td>bathed; <em>ti’ sak huun</em> belongs to him</td>
<td>bathed; <em>ti’ sak huun</em> belongs to him</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>References to lordship</td>
<td>called Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
<td>called Naah Ho Chan Ajaw</td>
<td>Ajaw in name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.24. Supernatural Characters at Tonina.
The paddler gods were the most important and frequently mentioned deities at Tonina. The earliest inscription that mentions them is Monument 56 (Graham and Mathews 1996:99–100), dating to 9.9.15.0.0 (628) in the reign of K’inich Hiix Chapat. The text is badly eroded, but I believe the verb is yatij “to bathe.” The objects of the verb are the paddler gods. The bathing of the paddler gods is a frequent theme of monuments at Tonina, especially on period endings.

The next reference to the paddlers dates to 9.12.10.0.0 (682), during the reign of Yuknoom ? Wahy, on Monument 8 (Mathews 1983:28–31). Here, the king performs a scattering ritual yitaj “with” the paddler gods, who are given the title Naah Ho Chan Ajaw.

The next reference comes from monument 134 (Graham and Mathews 1999:159–160), dating to 9.13.5.0.0 (697) during the reign of K’inich Baaknal Chaak. The date for this period ending is given and then the glyph Naah Ho Chan appears without grammatical introduction. This is followed by yatij Paddlers, “the paddlers are bathed.”

Baaknal Chaak’s Monument 139 (Graham and Mathews 1999:169) of 9.13.10.0.0 (702) has the same theme. It reads yatij [Paddlers.] Naah Ho Chan Ajaw, uk’uhil K’inich Baaknal Chaak. “The paddlers were bathed, the First Five Sky Lords, the gods of Baaknal Chaak.” This is the first and only time the paddlers are specifically stated to be gods belonging to the king.

Monument 63 (Graham and Mathews 1996:101) dates to 9.14.0.0.0 (711) during the reign of the next ruler, K’inich JGU. Once again, we see yatij “Paddlers.” “The paddlers are bathed.”
Both monuments 136 (Graham and Mathews 1999:163) and 165 (Graham and Henderson 2006:107) date to 9.14.5.0.0 (716), also during the reign of K’inich JGU. On Monument 136, the paddlers are bathed (yatij) again and called Naah Ho Chan Ajaw.

Monument 165 is particularly interesting. It records the death of a priest who was active during the reign of K’inich JGU, who was a boy king, and his predecessor K’inich Baaknal Chaak. On the monument, this priest, K’elen Hiix, is called the k’uhul ti’ sak huun Naah Ho Chan Ajaw, “the god-like nobleman of the First Five Sky Lords (the Paddlers).” Clearly, this gives him exceptional status, and it also implies a special relationship between him and the deities.

One more monument from K’inich JGU’s reign mentions the paddlers. This is monument 110 (Graham and Mathews 1999:143) dating to 9.14.10.0.0 (721). Once again, the paddlers are bathed (yatij) on this date.

Monument 138 (Graham and Mathews 1999:166–167) does not have a preserved date but the name of the next king, K’inich Ich’aak Chapat, is mentioned. Once again, the paddlers are bathed (yatij) on this day. Given that all other paddler bathing events took place on period endings, this is probably another period ending monument.

A stone box from Tonina has an inscription which includes the name of the next king, K’inch Tuun Chapat. The text gives an incomplete date and says that u-?-tuunil (“the xx stone of…”) some individual was dedicated (t’abay). This must refer to the stone box itself. The individual is named Ixim Ajaw “Maize Lord” and is the god (uk’uhil) of the king K’inich Tuun Chapat (Coe 1973:33; Martin and Miller 2004:72). It appears that the box was designed to house some small effigy. This is the only time this deity is mentioned at Tonina.
Monument 43 dates to 9.18.15.0.0 (805), during the reign of Ruler 8. Unfortunately, much of the text is badly eroded. However, the text does seem to mention *Naah Ho Chan Ajaw*, and probably refers to the Paddlers in some way.

Several other undated monuments from Tonina also mention the paddlers. Monument 42 (Graham and Mathews 1996:90) is another example of a paddler bathing event (*yatij*). Monument 166 (Graham and Henderson 2006:109) has the same ritual as well. Finally, Misc. 2 (Graham and Mathews 1999:176) mentions *Naah Ho Chan Ajaw*, although the rest of the context is unclear.

### Tortuguero

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name inscriptions</th>
<th>Ek' Hiix</th>
<th>Yax Suutz'</th>
<th>?-ji</th>
<th>Chanal Ho Kix(?) K’uh</th>
<th>K’awiil</th>
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<td>651-</td>
<td>651-</td>
<td>651-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god? (in list with others)</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>god? (in list with others)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>accompanies (<em>yitaaj</em>) king for temple dedication</td>
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<td>&quot;leg rest&quot;</td>
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<td>temple dedication(?)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>see also: Cancuen panel as Calakmul patron</td>
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</table>

Table A.25. Supernatural Characters at Tortuguero.
There are several gods mentioned in the texts of Tortuguero, although not all of them in clear contexts.

Several gods appear on Monument 6. Unfortunately, the first part of the text has been looted and is not available for study. The known text therefore begins mid-sentence with a probably reference to pulque, followed by Akan, the god of drunkenness and finally a glyph reading ka(?)-wa. These glyphs are followed by *uk'uhil* “the god(s) of” Bahlam Ajaw (king of Tortuguero). It may be that these opening glyphs constitute the god’s name. However, it is also possible that we are seeing a ritual, involving the god, in which intoxicating pulque and cacao are drunk (Gronemeyer and MacCleod 2010:45).

The text tells the chronicle of this king’s military victories, and then tells about a building dedication (*el naahaj*) that he performed on 9.11.16.9.18 (669). Unfortunately, the part of the text that would classify the structure (as a *wayib* or other type) is now destroyed. The event was carried out *yitaj* “accompanied by” the gods Ek’ Hiix “Black Jaguar” and Yax Suutz’ “Green Bat” (Gronemeyer 2006:155). It is therefore likely that this temple structure is meant for them. It is also likely that this dedication event, being the last historical date on the monument, is the focus of the text and is the same event described in the interrupted first sentence above. This would make the pulque/cacao drinking part of the dedication ceremony.

The text then moves back in time to compare the current temple dedication with a dedication taking place generations earlier on 9.3.16.1.11 (510). It was the dedication of the *pibnaah* (sweatbath) of Ahkal K’uk’ (Gronemeyer and MacCleod 2010:7). At Palenque, *pibnaah* refers to a type of temple used to house the three main deities of the site. Here, it may be used the same way, as a temple for a god. However, I do not believe
that Ahkal K’uk’ is the god’s name. Although the *pibnaah* is possessed by Ahkal K’uk’, the glyph reads *upibnaah*, rather than *upibnaahil*. The addition of the final –*il* ending is necessary to indicate the intimate relationship between the god and his temple. This text probably refers to the temple dedication that was carried out for a god by an earlier ruler named Ahkal K’uk’ (Gronemeyer 2006:43, 48). Thus, the temple is his, but is not possessed in the same way.

The final section of the monument has been interpreted to be describing events predicted for the 12.0.0.0.0 baktun ending in 2012. However, more recent analysis (Houston 2008) of the phrase indicates that this is probably simply a chronological anchor related to the ancient temple dedication. The text mentions the descent of Bolon Yokte’, probably as part of the dedication ceremony. However, the final two glyphs are destroyed, so context is lacking.

Due to erosion and looting, key information from Monument 6 is missing. However, if we read between the lines and assume that it follows the rhetorical conventions of most Maya monuments, it is reasonable to assume that the text was carved to commemorate the dedication of a temple for the Ek’ Hiix and Yax Sotz. This event involved pulque and cacao and was similar to another event, in which an earlier king dedicated a temple (*pibnaah*) for the same gods.

The other monument that deals with deities is Monument 8 (see Gronemeyer 2006:1162–184). Although this monument resembles a sarcophagus lid, it appears to in fact be a throne carved to commemorate the ruler’s 7th year in power on 9.10.18.3.10 (651). The text opens with a dedication verb for this throne. Then, a glyph appears which has been read by David Stuart (2003:238) as “leg-rested” implying the end of a journey.
The same glyph appears on Copan Altar Q at the end of Yax K’uk’ Mo’s long journey. Stuart suggests that this is a journey to the afterlife, but the death of the ruler did not come for almost another 30 years. Instead, the individuals who are “resting” appear to be gods. The first is unreadable, but the glyph consists of an open-mouthed beast complimented by the syllable –ji. The next is Chanal-5-k’ix[?] -K’uh, where in the unknown element represents a stingray spine. This god appears on Cancuen Panel 1 as one of the patron gods of Calakmul. This is followed by K’awiil. The next glyph is now obliterated so it may introduce a new phrase. The following glyphs seem to be names of the royal headband or perhaps additional god names. It seems that this passage is recording the arrival or end-of-journey of a series of ritual objects. This may imply some sort of ritual circuit, but no more detail is available.

### Ucanal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ek' ?</th>
<th>Ich'aak ? Jol</th>
<th>Spear Carrying deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 4</td>
<td>Stela 4</td>
<td>Stela 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>849-</td>
<td>849-</td>
<td>849-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>floating in cloud of smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yichonal</td>
<td>stone dedication/scattering</td>
<td>stone dedication/scattering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>see also: on Ixlu Stelae 1 and 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.26. Supernatural Characters at Ucanal.

Ucanal Stela 4 (see Graham 1980:159), dating to the 10.1.0.0.0 period ending (849), tells about the stone dedication and scattering ritual that was overseen by two deities. The name of the first deity is prefixed by Ek’ “black” and is followed by some
sort of animal head. The second appears to be prefixed by Ich’aak “claw” which is followed by an illegible glyph and a skull, probably reading jol. Above the ruler floats a deity in clouds of smoke. This same deity is depicted on terminal classic monuments of the Tikal satellites and is a human figure with fire emerging from his forehead, and carrying a spear.

*Xultun*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>&quot;Singing Jaguar&quot;</th>
<th>K’awiil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 5, Stela 14, Stela 24, Stela 3, Stela 10, Stela 1, Stela 9, Stela 16, Stela 19, Stela 23, Stela 25, Stela 18</td>
<td>Stela 5, Stela 3, Stela 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attested dates of veneration (AD)</td>
<td>672-863</td>
<td>672-863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>god or ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depicted</td>
<td>effigy cradled in king's hand; emerges from ceremonial bar</td>
<td>effigy cradled in king’s hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference to effigy veneration practices</td>
<td>effigy depicted</td>
<td>effigy depicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dancing</td>
<td>dancing</td>
<td>dancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.27. Supernatural Characters at Xultun.

The monuments of Xultun are quite interesting and display a remarkable consistency of costume and iconography (see Von Euw 1978; Von Euw and Graham 1984). On numerous stelae, the ruler is shown holding an effigy of a jaguar deity. While it was argued by Chase (1985) that this was a Terminal classic development, designed to help Xultun weather the storm of the collapse, the earliest example in fact dates to several hundred years before the collapse, on 9.12.0.0.0 (672) (Houston 1986:8). This is stela 5 and it displays many iconographic elements seen on later stelae.

In his right hand, the ruler holds the jaguar effigy aloft. From its mouth emerges a motif which we will see on many other monuments. It is some sort of vegetation or
textile, and since it always emerges from the jaguar’s mouth may refer to speech or song. For convenience, I will therefore refer to this effigy as the “Singing Jaguar.” In his left hand, the ruler cradles another effigy. Although it is not as clear on this monument, other examples demonstrate that this is a K’awiil effigy, slightly bigger than the usual K’awiil scepter, but the same idea.

Chronologically, the next stela of interest is Stela 14, dating to 9.15.0.0.0 (731). The middle section of the monument is damaged, but we can see the Singing Jaguar held up on the ruler’s right.

Stela 24 dates to 9.16.10.0.0 (761). The ruler holds the Singing Jaguar in his right hand and in his left cradles a coil of a large serpent, whose head is no longer visible.

Stela 3 dates to 10.1.0.0.0 (849). However, the scene depicted on the front refers back to an event on 10.0.3.3.8 (833). The ruler once again holds the Singing Jaguar aloft in his right hand and cradles a K’awiil effigy in his left. Here the identity is certain, since K’awiil’s serpent foot is clearly visible.

Stela 10 dates to 10.3.0.0.0 (889) but like stela 3 its scene also refers back to an earlier date on 10.1.13.7.17 (863). The Singing Jaguar is held aloft to the right, and K’awiil is cradled in the left arm.

Many other monuments of unknown date include the same elements. Stela 1, 9, 16, 19, 23 and 25 show the Singing Jaguar. Stela 25 also tells us that this scene of the Singing Jaguar is a dancing scene but gives no other details. On Stela 18 we see a slightly different scene. Here the ruler clasps the double headed serpent bar. From the right side emerges the head of the Singing Jaguar. This is reminiscent of Naranjo stela 6, where the head of the Naranjo patron deity emerges from a ceremonial bar.
### Yaxchilan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
<th>God or Ancestor (Additional Names/Epithets)</th>
<th>Veneration Practices</th>
<th>Temple Classification</th>
<th>References to Lordship Starts Dynastic Count?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak</td>
<td>Lintel 35, Lintel 25, Dos Caobas Stela 1, HS 3, Lintel 42, Bone from K’abal Xook’s tomb, Lintel 10</td>
<td>537-808</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td>fed; his k’awiil and flints and shields are conjured; he is the spear conjuring; the headband is &quot;many conjurings of Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak&quot; fed</td>
<td>wayib</td>
<td>wayib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’an Wi’ JGU</td>
<td>Lintel 35, Lintel 10</td>
<td>537-808</td>
<td>god (called k’uh)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa’ Chan Balam</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sak Baak Na?</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inscriptions</th>
<th>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</th>
<th>God or Ancestor (Additional Names/Epithets)</th>
<th>Veneration Practices</th>
<th>Temple Classification</th>
<th>References to Lordship Starts Dynastic Count?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tajal Way?</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Kaban</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yax Ajaw</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yajawte’ Took’ Ajaw</td>
<td>Lintel 10</td>
<td>808-</td>
<td>god (in list with others)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Wayib                                   | Wayib                                   | Wayib                                   | Wayib                                   | Wayib                                   |

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A series of lintels from Structure 12 record the early history of Yaxchilan. These are, in order: Lintel 11, Lintel 49 (Graham 1979:107), Lintel 37 (Graham 1979:83), Lintel 35 (Graham 1979:79), and Lintel 34 (Graham 1979:77). These lintels are notable for giving us an early dynastic history of the site and listing captives taken by each new ruler. On Lintel 11 we see the dynastic founder, given as the “first seated lord” (Martin and Grube 2000:118). His name was Yopaat Bahlam, and he is mentioned later in the inscriptions of the site. The lintels count forward through the next several rulers, until arriving at the 10th (see Martin and Grube 2000:181–121). He was K’inich Tatbu Skull II, who commissioned the monument. The text tells about a capture event that occurred on
9.5.2.10.6 in 537. The captive was a vassal of Tuun Kab Hiix of the Kaan dynasty. On the same day, we learn about a special ritual for the gods: u-WA’-ji-ya “they eat it” or “they eat him” (Houston et al. 2006:123). The gods listed will be important throughout the history of the site. They are K’ahk’ O Chaak and K’an-Wi’-[Jaguar God of the Underworld].

Lintel 34, which also comes from Structure 12, starts with the glyph uk’uhil, so I suspect that it comes next in the sequence. What follows must be a long name phrase for the king. Although some blocks are missing, the text appears to continue on by listing possibly a parentage statement or name phrase, followed by the extended royal titles of the king.

Itzamna Bahlam III

Lintel 25 (Graham and Von Euw 1977:55–56) shows the king’s wife, lady Ix K’abal Xook on the date of his accession 9.12.9.8.1 (681). The text reads utzakaw uk’awiil utook’ upakal Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak. “She conjures the K’awiil of and the flints and shields of Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak.” The text continues: “uk’uh jul tzak…” it is the god-spear conjuring of” the king. In other words, this conjuring rite, which was probably a necessary part of the accession ceremony, was carried out by the queen (Martin and Grube 2000:125). She conjured the “K’awiil” and the “flints/shields” of the god K’ahk’ O Chaak. What the K’awiil and Flints and Shields refer to is harder to assess. The image shows an armed warrior emerging from a vision serpent’s mouth. The vision serpent is probably the “k’awiil” while the warrior is the flint/shield, and emblem of warfare. K’ahk’ O Chaak is not depicted.

42 K’awiil conjuring is a major theme on Yaxchilan monuments, and is much more frequent at this site than it is at other sites. It seems that at Yaxchilan, the term “K’awiil” actually refers to a broader concept than

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Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak is mentioned in two other monuments of Itzamna Bahlam III. Dos Caobas Stela 1 (Stuart 2007c:30–31) records military victories and depicts the king in war regalia standing over captives. The front side of the monument makes reference to Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak, stating simply Aj K’ahk O Chaak ujul tzak… “Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak is the spear conjuring of…” followed by a list of the king’s names and titles. The text does not seem to serve as a caption to the scene, but echoes the similar phrase found on Lintel 25.

The back of the monument has a particularly interesting inscription. It gives him (or his father) the title of 15th tz’akbu “in the line” of Yopaat Bahlam, who carries the first of the Yaxchilan emblem glyphs, “Split Sky Lord.” This fits neatly with what is known about the beginning of the dynasty from Lintel 11. However, it continues by saying that he is 20-something in the line of the other Yaxchilan emblem. Itzamna simply a deity and may rather stand for vision serpents or conjured things in general. K’awiil conjuring rites are depicted on Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 (Graham 1982:155–164), Stela 35, and Lintels 38 (Graham 1979:85), 39 (Graham 1979:87), and 40 (Graham 1979:89). Other monuments depict the conjuring of wahys, or souls. These are depicted in the same manner as the conjuring of K’awiil: as a vision serpent disgorging another individual. Lintel 13 (Graham and Von Eeuw 1977:35) depicts the father and mother of Itzamna Balam IV conjuring something together. She holds out a sacrificial bowl, marked with the phrase ch’ab ahk’ab (“sacrifice and darkness”) from which emerges a vision serpent. Bird Jaguar IV supports the head of this serpent, from which is disgorged a young human figure. The text refers to the birth of their son Itzamna Balam IV. Lintel 14 (Graham and Von Eeuw 1977:37) shows a similar scene. Here, the female in the scene is called Ix ? Ajaw Ix Yax Jal, and a Sajal called Chak Jol, referred to here as the “grandfather of the king” (Stuart 1997:4–5). These must be the parents Itzamna Balam IV’s mother, Lady Chak Jol “Great Skull.” The mother holds an offering bowl, also marked with the phrase ch’ab ahk’ab, from which emerges a vision serpent disgorging a human figure wearing a jester god headband. The caption, however, says that the pair conjure K’awiil, ?-Muwaan Chan Nal, Chak Bay Kan, who is the wahy of Lady Great Skull, the mother of the king. In other words, the king’s grandparents together conjure his mother’s wahy, somehow represented by the vision serpent (K’awiil). I believe the scenes in on Lintels 13 and 14 are visuals metaphors referring to the way the ch’ab ahk’ab (“penance and darkness”) of the parents create the soul of their child. On Lintel 14, however, this is unlikely to represent the actual birth date of Itzamna Balam’s mother, because it occurs a few years later than we should expect. The young disgorged figures must represent the souls of Itzamna Balam IV on Lintel 13 and his mother on Lintel 14. (The man on Lintel 14 is Itzamna Balam IV’s grandfather, and is so labeled on the monument. A separate man also carrying the name “Great Skull” appears on Lintels 9 and 58, but in those cases he is called ichaan “maternal uncle” of Itzamna Balam IV (Stuart 1997:5–8). This is therefore a separate “Great Skull,” brother of his mother and son of the grandfather depicted on Lintel 14.) From these contexts, it is clear that K’awiil conjuring at Yaxchilan is actually a complex concept and does not refer to the conjuring of a specific deity.
Bahlam III is the first ruler to use this second emblem glyph (Martin and Grube 2000:119). Unfortunately, the name of this second founder is now gone. Finally, the text tells us that he is the first of some other count, now gone as well. It is clear from this inscription that Yaxchilan had two dynastic founders, and different origins of its two emblems. Perhaps the final passage is meant to tell us that this was the first king to unite the emblems.

Hieroglyphic Stairway 3 (Graham 1982:165–173) gives interesting details about the accession of the king in 681. The headband presented to him is called Bolon Tzak K’ahk’ Chaak, “the many conjuring of [Aj] K’ahk’ [O] Chaak.” This is interesting because it suggests that the name of the headband is tied to the ritual responsibility of the king to conjure this deity.

**Bird Jaguar IV**

Another reference to Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak appears on Lintel 42 (Graham 1979:93) of Bird Jaguar IV, dating to 9.16.1.2.0 (June 12, 752). Although the text does not appear to refer to the scene, it reads 9-KAL-ne-la AJ K’AHK’ o CHAAK-ki u K’UH-hu-lu TZAK…[Bird Jaguar IV] “Bolon Kalnee1 Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak is the holy conjuring of the king.” We saw a similar phrase, also apparently unrelated to the image, on Dos Caobas Stela 1. Here, however, the deity Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak has been given an additional epithet Bolon Kalneel. The same epithet appears on a bone from the tomb of Ix K’abal Xook, the queen of Itzamna Bahlam III (Schele 1991b:Stuart in ). There, it simply reads Bolon Kalneel Chaak. The meaning of Kalneel is unknown.

Lintel 21 (Graham and Von Euw 1977:49) discusses ancestors. The text tells us that on 9.0.19.2.4 (454), a building called Chan Suutz’ Nal (Four Bat place) was
dedicated. It was the house of (yootoo) K’inich Tatbu Skull. We are told that he was “seventh in the line” from Yopaat Bahlam, here called the ya-chi-“throne”-TE’ lord, a place name found at various sites referring to very early founding events. Recall that the texts of K’inich Tatbu Skull himself tell us that Yapaat Bahlam was the dynastic founder of Yaxchilan. The text now counts forward to 9.16.1.0.9, nine days after the accession of Bird Jaguar IV in 752. On this day, he was “seated in Four Bat house.” In other words, he performed a ritual having to do with his accession in the house first built by an ancient predecessor.

K’inich Tatbu Skull IV

Lintel 10 (Graham and Von Euw 1977:31), the final monument of the site is very important because it lists a series of patron gods (Martin and Grube 2000:137). On 9.18.17.13.10 (808), a wayib structure was dedicated (el naah tu wayibil) for these deities. They include Aj K’ahk’ O Chaak; an eroded name; Pa’Chan Bahlam (the Yaxchilan Jaguar); K’an Wi’ [Jaguar God of the Underworld], who was also mentioned on Lintel 35; Sak Baak Na-?; Tajal Way(?) (an epithet for the Sun god); 6 Kaban; Yax Ajaw, who is also mentioned at La Corona, Calakmul and Moral Reforma; and Yajawte’ Took’ Ajaw.

Other Ancestors

Non-founding deceased ancestors appear on several monuments of Yaxchilan. They are usually deceased parents of the king, and depict male ancestors in solar cartouches and female ancestors in lunar cartouches. They are similar to monuments from Ek’ Balam, which show the founding ancestor as the sun god. These monuments include Stela 1 (Tate 1992:fig. 124), Stela 4 (Tate 1992:fig. 86), Stela 8 (Tate 1992:fig. 71), Stela
Yaxha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Baby JGU</th>
<th>Jaguar Paddler</th>
<th>Stingray Paddler</th>
<th>ti-?-Aat Balam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inscriptions</td>
<td>Stela 31, Naranjo Stela 35</td>
<td>Stela 13</td>
<td>Stela 13</td>
<td>Naranjo Stela 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attested Dates of Veneration (AD)</td>
<td>796-799</td>
<td>793-</td>
<td>793-</td>
<td>799-</td>
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<tr>
<td>God or Ancestor</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>probable god</td>
<td>god (called k'uh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depicted Ucabjiyi</td>
<td>floating by ruler</td>
<td>floating by ruler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneration Practices</td>
<td>Naranjo king impersonates his burning</td>
<td></td>
<td>chopped after battle with Naranjo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.29. Supernatural Characters at Yaxha.

Yaxha Stela 31 was mentioned briefly in the Naranjo section. This stela names a Yaxha patron deity, a baby version of the Jaguar God of the Underworld, and credits him (ukabjiyi) for a capture that took place on 9.18.5.16.14 (796) (Martin and Grube 2000:82). Stela 35 from Naranjo mentions this deity and seems to impersonate his defeat, recounting an ancient episode in which this god is burned by youths. The same stela also tells us that in 799, the defeated Yaxha ruler was “beheaded” (ch’ak ubaah) before the temple of the JGU, presumably the same patron deity mentioned on the front of the monument (Marc Zender, personal communication 2012. See footnote 22, Chapter 4). This would have been a highly symbolic location to perform an execution.
Stela 3 (Grube 2000:262) depicts a scattering ritual that took place on 9.18.3.0.0 (793) although the monument was carved sometime later. Above the ruler’s head floats a paddler deity, while at his feat floats another.
APPENDIX B

Ceramic Data from Structures 13R-2, 13R-3, 13R-4 and 13R-5

as analyzed by Caroline Parris

Over the course of the 2011 and 2012 lab seasons, Caroline Parris analyzed the ceramic material from the relevant lots of Operations 12, 14, 15, and 17. This appendix shows the results of this analysis in a series of tables and figures which demonstrate the date and vessel-type information for these lots. The tables and figures appear in the same order in which they are referenced in Chapter 6. Statistical analysis of midden assemblages appears at the end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Chicanel</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Sierra</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>73.33</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17B-03a-02</strong></td>
<td>types identified</td>
<td>Sierra, Polvero</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
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<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>75.00</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>groups identified</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.32</td>
<td>73.68</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.1. K’inich phase fill.

Figure B.1. Some diagnostic sherds from K’inich phase fill.
Table B.2. Mam phase midden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Chicanel</th>
<th>General Tzakol</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tzakol 1</th>
<th>Tzakol 2/3</th>
<th>Tzakol 3 / Tepeu 1</th>
<th>undiagnostic</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15A-1-24</td>
<td>Aguila, Quintal, Balanza</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>87.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure B.2. Some diagnostic sherds from Mam phase midden.
Table B.3. Mam phase midden assemblage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vases</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>78.52</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>31.03</td>
<td>55.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure B.3. Pie chart showing Mam phase midden assemblage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol 3</th>
<th>General Tzakol</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14B-01-21</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Aguila, Balanza</td>
<td>Aguila, Balanza, Quintal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>count</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>28.93</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>65.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete Vessel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(24 sherds):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aguila Orange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.4. Burial 2 ceramics.

Figure B.4. Some diagnostic sherds from Burial 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vessel #</th>
<th>Original Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>slip color</th>
<th>shape</th>
<th>rim diameter</th>
<th>wall thickness</th>
<th>date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Orange red slip</td>
<td>Hemispherical Bowl</td>
<td>with ring base</td>
<td>28cm</td>
<td>5.9-7.4mm</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Orange red slip</td>
<td>Hemispherical Bowl</td>
<td>with ring base</td>
<td>28cm</td>
<td>6.2-7.5mm</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Within tomb, near right shoulder Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with outflaring walls, inset base</td>
<td>18cm</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Tzakol 2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Within tomb, near left leg Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with outflaring walls, inset base</td>
<td>19cm</td>
<td>4.5mm</td>
<td>Tzakol 2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Within tomb, near left leg Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with outflaring walls, inset base</td>
<td>20cm</td>
<td>5.1mm</td>
<td>Tzakol 2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Within tomb, near left leg Balanza</td>
<td>Red slip</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with outflaring walls, inset base</td>
<td>15cm</td>
<td>4.3mm</td>
<td>Tzakol 2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Within tomb, near left leg Balanza</td>
<td>Red slip</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with outflaring walls, inset base</td>
<td>15cm</td>
<td>4.3mm</td>
<td>Tzakol 2 or 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Within tomb, west of head Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Bowl with slightly outflaring walls, flat base</td>
<td>13cm</td>
<td>3.5mm</td>
<td>Tzakol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Within tomb, west of head Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Bowl with slightly outflaring walls, flat base</td>
<td>11.5cm</td>
<td>6.5mm</td>
<td>Tzakol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Orange red slip</td>
<td>Hemispherical Bowl</td>
<td>with ring base</td>
<td>28cm</td>
<td>6.5mm</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Orange red slip</td>
<td>Flared bowl with flat base</td>
<td></td>
<td>23cm</td>
<td>7.6mm</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Above tomb</td>
<td>Orange slip</td>
<td>Cylinder vase with vertical sides, inset base</td>
<td>8cm</td>
<td>4.0mm</td>
<td>Tzakol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Within tomb, near left leg Balanza</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Thin walled bowl with slightly flaring sides, flat base</td>
<td>13cm</td>
<td>4.7mm</td>
<td>Tzakol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Red/orange slip</td>
<td>Hemispherical Bowl</td>
<td>with ring base</td>
<td>26cm</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Above tomb Aguila</td>
<td>Red/orange slip</td>
<td>Hemispherical Bowl</td>
<td>with ring base</td>
<td>15cm</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Tzakol or Tepeu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.5. Burial 6 ceramics.
Figure B.5. Vessels of Burial 6.
Table B.6. Muk phase fill of structure 13R-4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu General</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14A-01-04</td>
<td>count 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 2.78</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>94.44</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14A-01-06</td>
<td>count 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 13.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>86.67</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14A-01-08</td>
<td>count 0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 0.00</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>95.83</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>14A-01-10</td>
<td>count 0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>% 0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>count 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td></td>
<td>% 3.49</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>94.19</td>
<td>100</td>
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Figure B.6. Some diagnostic sherds from the Muk phase fill of Structure 13R-4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Chicanel</th>
<th>Late Chicanel or Tzakol 1</th>
<th>Tzakol 2/3</th>
<th>Tzakol</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu 1</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15A-01-14</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>320</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>273</td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>15A-01-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>count</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>%</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Aguila, Balanza</td>
<td>Aguila</td>
<td>Aguila, Triunfo, Aguila</td>
<td>Balanza</td>
<td>Aguila, Sanche-Fater, Balanza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.7. Muk phase fill of structure 13R-2.

Figure B.7. Some diagnostic sherd from the Muk phase fill of Structure 13R-2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol &amp; Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14B-20-03</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>81.82</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.8. Muk phase midden.

Figure B.8. Some diagnostic sherds from the Muk phase midden.
Table B.9. Muk phase midden assemblage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>14B-20-03</th>
<th>Vases</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
<th>unknown</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>14.55</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>18.18</td>
<td>72.73</td>
<td>9.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure B.9. Pie chart showing Muk phase midden assemblage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15A-01-13</td>
<td>Aguila</td>
<td>Aguila</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>89.19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure B.10. Some diagnostic sherds from the K’uh phase fill of Structure 13R-2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14A-01-03</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14A-01-05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td>87.50</td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Figure B.11. Some diagnostic sherds from the K’uh phase fill of Structure 13R-4.
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<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Tinaja</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1.52</td>
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Table B.12. K’uh phase fill from under Un floor.

Figure B.12. Some diagnostic sherds from the K’uh phase fill under the Un floor.
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<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Saxche-Palmar</td>
<td>Saxche-Palmar, Tinaja</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>count</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>14.10</td>
<td>70.51</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14B-20-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aguila</td>
<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Saxche-Palmar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>18.27</td>
<td>24.37</td>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aguila, Saxche-Palmar</td>
<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Saxche-Palmar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>count</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<td>21.45</td>
<td>61.09</td>
<td>100</td>
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Table B.13. K’uh phase midden.

Figure B.13. Some diagnostic sherds from the K’uh phase midden.
<table>
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<th>Lots</th>
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<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>total</th>
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<tr>
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<td>10.00</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>76.25</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>21.05</td>
<td>42.11</td>
<td>26.32</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14B-20-02</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
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<td>1.52</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>76.14</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19.15</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>57.45</td>
<td>17.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>76.17</td>
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Table B.14. K’uh phase midden assemblage.

Figure B.14. Pie chart showing K’uh phase midden assemblage.
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<th>Lot</th>
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<th>Tzakol</th>
<th>Tzakol/Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>68.75</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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Table B.15. Ub phase fill.
Figure B.15. Some diagnostic sherds from the Ub phase fill.
Table B.16. Unen phase fill.

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<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
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Figure B.16. Some diagnostic sherds from the Unen phase fill.
<table>
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<th>Tepeu 3</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
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<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Saxche-Palmar</td>
<td>Chablekal</td>
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Table B.17. Unen phase midden.

Figure B.17. Some diagnostic sherds from the Unen phase midden.
<table>
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<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17B-1-3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>82.35</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>55.56</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17B-2-3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>13.13</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>78.75</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>14.71</td>
<td>61.76</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.18. Unen phase midden assemblage.

[Figure B.18. Pie chart showing Unen phase midden assemblage.]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Tzakol</th>
<th>Tzakol or Tepeu</th>
<th>Tepeu</th>
<th>Undiagnostic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12A-14-03</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Infierno</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>85.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12A-16-02</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td></td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>98.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12C-01-02</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>tinaja</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12C-08-04</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>cambio</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>55.10</td>
<td>44.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12C-08-06</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Pucte</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>60.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12C-10-05</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>cambio, Tinaja</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12C-12-03</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Tinaja</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>76.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>groups identified</td>
<td>Cambio, Tinaja, Pucte, Infierno</td>
<td>count</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>24.09</td>
<td>73.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.19. Vessels on the Unen phase floor.

Figure B.19. Some diagnostic sherds from the vessels on the Unen phase floor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lots</th>
<th>Vases</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12A-14-03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>16.92</td>
<td>13.85</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>69.23</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of known</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>98.46</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 12A-16-02|       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 1    | 0     | 1      | 64      | 65    |
| % of total| 0.00 | 1.54 | 0.00  | 1.54   | 98.46   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 100.00| 0.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00|

| 12C-01-02|       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 18   | 0     | 1      | 65      | 65    |
| % of total| 0.00 | 64.29| 0.00  | 64.29  | 35.71   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 100.00| 0.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00|

| 12C-08-04|       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 5    | 1     | 1      | 26      | 31    |
| % of total| 0.00 | 39.29| 3.23  | 5.00   | 35.32   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 88.00| 33.33 | 6.67   | 83.33   | 100.00|

| 12C-08-06|       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 4    | 1     | 2      | 26      | 30    |
| % of total| 0.00 | 20.00| 5.36  | 8.69   | 85.65   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 80.00| 20.00 | 8.00   | 82.00   | 100.00|

| 12C-10-05|       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 3    | 1     | 2      | 26      | 30    |
| % of total| 0.00 | 10.00| 3.33  | 6.67   | 86.67   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 75.00| 25.00 | 5.81   | 94.20   | 100.00|

| Total    |       |      |       |        |         |       |
| count    | 0     | 19   | 5     | 5      | 192     | 278   |
| % of total| 0.00 | 6.83 | 1.80  | 1.80   | 69.06   | 100.00|
| % of known| 0.00 | 22.00| 6.67 | 6.67   | 100.00  | 100.00|

Table B.20. Assemblage of vessels left on the front terraces of 13R-2 and 13R-3.

Figure B.20. Pie chart showing the assemblage of vessels left on the front terraces of 13R-2 and 13R-3.
Statistical comparison of midden assemblages

Fisher’s exact tests were used to determine whether the Mam, K’uh and Unen phase midden deposits were different from one another. Calculations were made using the free online calculator provided by the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, available at www.physics.cbsiu/stats/exact_NROW_NCOLUMN_form.html.

Mam vs. K’uh:
Data Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vases</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’uh</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected Table generated by Fisher’s exact test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>8.29</th>
<th>17.2</th>
<th>43.3</th>
<th>47.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p= 2.6 x 10⁻¹⁰ (less than .001)

This indicates that the assemblages of the Mam and K’uh middens are significantly different from one another.

Mam vs. Unen:
Data Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vases/fine gray bowls</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected table generated by Fisher’s exact test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3.87</th>
<th>16.20</th>
<th>44.10</th>
<th>51.80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>15.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p=3.2 x 10⁻⁸ (less than .001)

This indicates that the assemblages of the Mam and Unen middens are significantly different from one another.

K’uh vs. Unen:
Data Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vases/fine gray bowls</th>
<th>Jars</th>
<th>Bowls</th>
<th>Plates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K’uh</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected table generated by Fisher’s exact test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>11.90</th>
<th>10.60</th>
<th>35.00</th>
<th>8.58</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p=.653 (greater than .05)

This indicates that the assemblages of the K’uh and Unen middens are *not* significantly different from one another.

These results demonstrate that K’uh and Unen middens are similar, but both are different from the Mam middens. This points to the changing function of the structures from ancestor shrines (during the Mam phase) to patron deity temples (during the K’uh and Unen phases).
APPENDIX C

Radiocarbon Analysis from Burials 1, 2, and 6

Radiocarbon analysis of samples from Burials 1, 2, and 6 was inconclusive, given the small number of samples tested and problems of contamination. All samples were tested by the Beta Analytic laboratory in Miami Florida.

A bone from Burial 1 was tested. The results of analysis gave a 2 Sigma date of cal AD 660 to 780 (figure C.1). This date would suggest that the burial is contemporaneous with the structure’s second phase (the Ub phase). However, excavation indicated that the floor of the first phase, which covered the tomb, was not cut anciently but only by modern looters (Canuto 2006). Thus, stratigraphy indicates that the tomb is contemporaneous with the first phase (K’inich). Given the much earlier date of the fills surrounding the burial and the epigraphic evidence of Monument 7, I conclude that this unexpectedly late radiocarbon date is due to contamination. The bones were handled by looters, were left exposed to the elements for several decades, and then were collected by archaeologists. They then remained in the lab for five years before radiocarbon testing was done. Contamination could have occurred during any one of these processes.

A bone from Burial 2 was also tested. Analysis indicated a 1 sigma date of Cal AD 540-600 (figure C.2). This is consistent with the style of the ceramics recovered from the tomb, which dated to Tzakol 3 (Caroloine Parris, personal communication 2012). The tomb was looted, however, and this bone might also have been contaminated during this process. Thus, it cannot be convincingly used to support the date already proposed by ceramic analysis.
A wood fragment from Burial 2 was also sent for analysis because it was unclear during excavation whether the tomb had been disturbed by looters and how they had entered. The results of this analysis showed conclusively that the wood was modern, indicating that the tomb was entered and looted in modern times. The wood fragments recovered were probably rotted pieces of ladder used by the looters.

Finally, a bone from Burial 6 was sent tested. Unfortunately, water seepage had contaminated the bone and no date could be determined.
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