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UAXACTUN AFTER THE CONQUEST BY TEOTIHUACANOS AS TOLD BY THE MURAL FROM PALACE B-XIII

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Abstract

The present study deals with the mural of Structure B-XIII of the archaeological site of Uaxactun in Guatemala. Although this mural was found in 1937 and initially aroused much interest, it does not appear in recent works, given its destruction a few years after its discovery. Many new discoveries in the Maya area have been made and this old one has been burdened with interpretations that are far from the current state of the art. So, we have decided to reinstate the investigation, digitally recreate the mural on the basis of photographs from the time of its discovery and reattempt to understand its meaning by analysing the image, hieroglyphic writing, and calendric record. We summarise the results and place these in a historical context that allows us to combine new mural data with those that we have obtained from the stone monuments of Uaxactun using modern technology. The results shed light on a critical period of Maya history shortly after the so-called *Entrada* associated with Teotihuacan.

Keywords: Uaxactun, mural painting, Teotihuacan, Tzolk'in

Resumen

El estudio comenta el mural del Palacio B-XIII del sitio maya Uaxactún, en Guatemala. Aunque dicho mural fue encontrado ya en 1937 e inicialmente llamó mucha atención, no aparece en los trabajos recientes. Se han producido muchos descubrimientos nuevos en el área maya y este hallazgo antiguo se ha quedado medio olvidado, con interpretaciones que están lejos de los últimos avances. Por lo tanto, hemos decidido reconstruirlo, volver a pintarlo digitalmente de nuevo sobre la base de las fotografías de época y una vez más tratar de comprender su significado, estudiando la imagen, el texto glífico y el registro de calendario. Analizamos los resultados y los colocamos en un contexto histórico que nos permite combinar los nuevos datos sobre el mural con los datos que hemos obtenido de los monumentos de piedra de Uaxactún, utilizando una tecnología avanzada. Los resultados arrojan más luz al período crítico de la historia maya poco después de la llamada Entrada asociada con Teotihuacán.

Palabras claves: Uaxactun, pintura mural, Teotihuacan, Tzolk'in

INTRODUCTION

The lost mural of Structure B-XIII from Uaxactun has been an object of interest for more than eight decades. Nevertheless, most of the data associated with it were included in scientific literature at a time when hieroglyphs had not yet been deciphered. In addition, in the first half of the 20th century Maya archeology was relatively inexperienced and underdeveloped. Later, very few scholars returned to this old destroyed painting. Huge progress in Maya studies has flooded us with new data that dramatically shifted our insight into Maya history. Once a famous mural, it fell into oblivion. However, this exceptional work of Maya art has once again received attention, within the context of *Proyecto Arqueológico Regional Uaxactun* (PARU), implemented by Comenius University since 2009. The intention is to fully explore and revise the dynastic history of Uaxactun, including the revision of the murals. The main method of our investigation of the paintings is based on the original black and white photographs that captured the mural in its original form. Using these photographs, we employed specific digital filters to create a new rendering. Most of the existing works have been limited to a hand-painted copy of the mural. The quality of this reproduction, by Antonio Tejeda in 1937, is exceptional. Nevertheless, its details are not sufficient for the purpose of thorough epigraphic analysis. Furthermore, we have progressed in deciphering the inscriptions on the Uaxactun monuments through new technologies (especially RTI and 3D models), which has created new frameworks for the historical interpretation of the mural. The overall progress in Maya research is significant, providing us with a considerable amount of comparative materials in terms of the meaning of various iconographic and epigraphic elements.

HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH

Group B represents the second-largest architectonic group at Uaxactun (Figure 1). It was defined and excavated during the archaeological project of the Carnegie Institute of Washington between 1931 and 1937 (Smith 1950). The western part of the group is directly connected to Group A by a *sacbe*, which begins on the main square next to the B-V ballcourt and on the other side from the area of the Main Aguada. At some point in the Early Classic period, the important part of the city was the eastern part of Group B, called East Square, which contains a small square surrounded by Structures B-XII, B-XI, B-XXII, B-XLI, B-XL, B-XIV, and B-XIII. The last one of these was probably the main building (palace) of the square. Unlike other parts of Group B, East Square does not contain any stone monuments.

Structure B-XIII has three main construction phases. During the first phase (Phase A) Rooms 1 to 5 were built with a platform; during the second phase (Phase B), Rooms 6 to 10 were added, along with the staircase on the east side that leads to Room 7. During phase C, all the previous structures were covered by a stepped platform and the staircase to the west and the new Rooms 11 to 14 were added. Room 7, which contains the mural that we are interested in, was built during the second phase (Figures 2 and 3). The mural was discovered at the end of the 1937 field season (Smith 1950: 52-55).

The interior decorations in the second phase of the construction consist of the mural and traces of red paint and graffiti. The mural in Room 7 was protected by filling material during the rebuilding of the palace in the third phase and was in good condition. Antonio Tejeda made a copy of the mural in colour as well as in black and white. At the end of the 1937 field season, the mural was protected against damage, but the cover was removed by unknown persons, after which the mural disappeared completely (Smith 1950: 55-56).

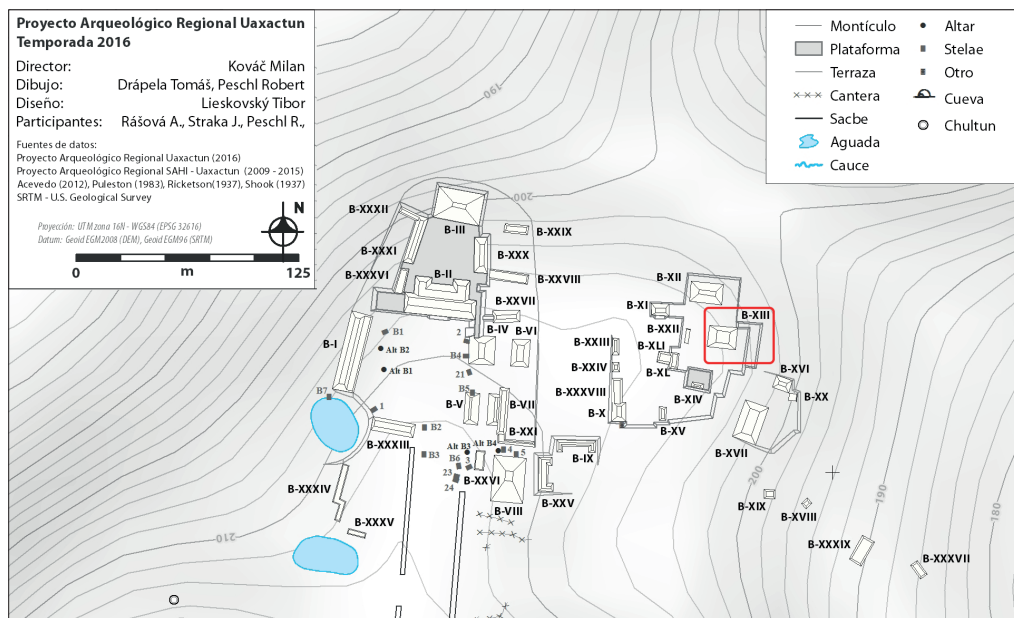


Figure 1. Map of Group B in Uaxactun.

According to Mary Ellen Miller (2006a: 65), the mural painting found in Structure B-XIII reveals a “sophisticated complexity in the art of the fifth century”. The people are in an open space as well as within the architecture. The musicians are huddled together as a dense group, partly overlapping one another. A single musician addresses the person behind him with a gesture that would eventually become common in Maya art (Miller 1983: 19).

The mural was 3.2 m long and 0.9 m high. According to Miller (2006b: 132), “framed by a broad red outline, as are Maya books, the Uaxactun painting gives us the sense of what a Maya book of the period would have looked like.” Besides this, the type of structure painted on the mural scene corresponds to the one excavated in the rooms of phase B, later serving as a model for the archaeological reconstruction (Smith 1950: 56). Below the main mural, an additional hieroglyphic text was discovered in the form of alignment of days of the Tzolk’in calendar, possibly associated with a brief description on the depicted events.

THE STRUCTURE

As we will see later, some people appear twice on the mural, so it is not possible that there are different scenes depicting the same moment. On the contrary, it is obvious that there are scenes appearing one after the other over a period of time. The question of the order of the scenes (and hence their predicted chronology) can be answered by relying on the Maya custom of displaying a record in pairs from left to right and from top to bottom.

In this case, there are scenes from left to right, from M1 to M2, then moving up to M3 and M4, and finally down to M5 and M6 (Figure 4). The state of preservation does not allow us to

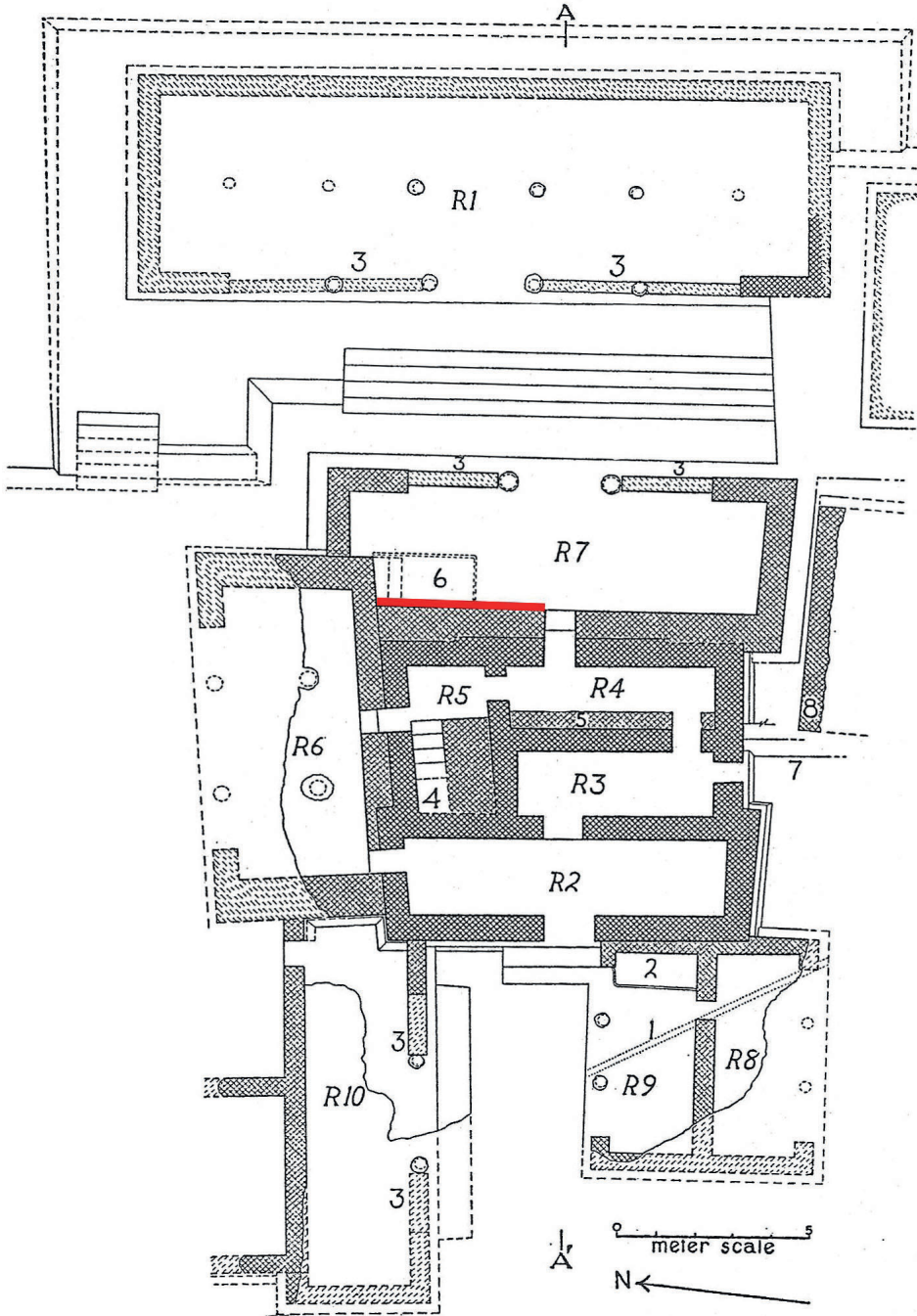


Figure 2. Schematic plan of Structure B-XIII in Uaxactun. Mural painting is located in Room 7 (after Smith 1950).

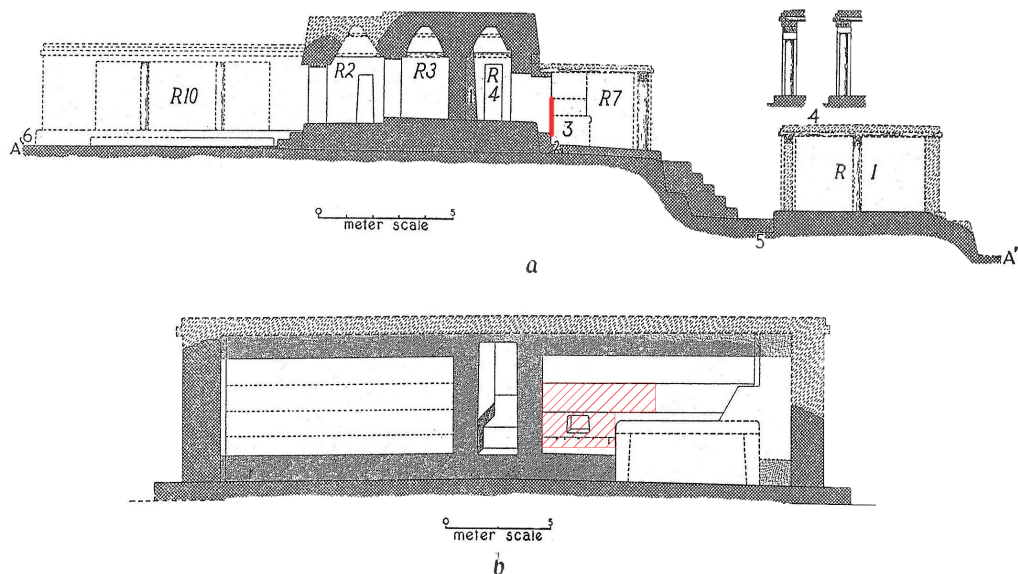


Figure 3. Side (a) and front (b) view on Structure B-XIII in Uaxactun (after Smith 1950).

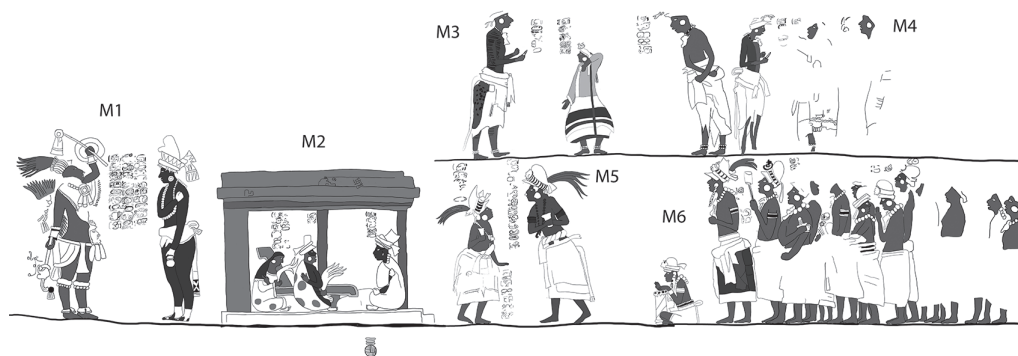


Figure 4. Structure of the scenes on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

determine whether other parts of the scene existed in the original mural, but we can assume that at least some fragments could have existed. However, as we do not have such evidence, we must consider that Scenes M1-M6 were finite and their meaning must be investigated chronologically from M1 with a culmination in M6. As we will see below, this assumption makes sense both semantically and epigraphically.

The individual scenes will be described in the above order as M1-M6. The twenty-eight persons appearing on the mural will be analysed in the same sequence, from left to right and designated as **f1-f28**, regardless of whether any of the figures represents the same person. Finally, we will analyse the inscriptions that accompany the scenes, again in the order of the scenes M1-M6, from left to right in double columns, as is customary in Maya epigraphy. Columns will be marked by letters from A to V and the corresponding glyphs in a top-down order by a number.

Alfonso Arellano (2005: 182) proposed the scheme of glyphic designations adjacent to the persons in the mural. After modifying this proposal according to the criteria explained above, the sequence is as follows:

- Scene M1: **f1** (A1-B9) and **f2** (C1-C10) (Figure 5a)
- Scene M2: **f3** (D1-E6), **f4** (F1-2) and **f5** (G1-5) (Figure 5b)
- Scene M3: **f6** (H1-6) and **f7** (I1-5) (Figure 6)
- Scene M4: **f8** (J1-5), **f9** (K1-4), **f10** (L1-?) and **f11** (M1-2) (Figure 7)
- Scene M5: **f12** (N1-5 and O1-6), **f13** (P1-13) (Figure 8)
- Scene M6: **f15** (Q1-2), **f16** (R1-2), **f17** (S1-2), **f19** (T), **f22** (U), **f23** (V) and **f24** (X) (Figure 9)

There are still four signs displayed outside the people and they appear to be symbols. Three are on the roof of Scene M2, which we call SR1-3, while underneath the same scene we can find another one, which we call SB1.

The mural contains 14 extensive inscriptions in scenes M1-M5 and several glyphs in scene M6. All inscriptions belong to the category of glyphic captions, naming the participants of the scenes and their main characteristics. Each of the 13 protagonists of the scenes M1–M5 is identified by the glyphic caption that begins with the expression **u-BAAH**, *u-baah* “it is his/her image”. Unlike these scenes, the members of the largest group in the M6 scene are identified only by glyphic signs without this expression. Thus, the scribes created a clear hierarchy. The epigraphic research will be discussed below.

Throughout the mural, there are 28 figures that perform certain clearly detectable activities and their names, titles, and other characteristics are explained by up to 102 hieroglyphs. Furthermore, there is a calendrical timeline under the scene that contains 68 day signs with coefficients and 25 corresponding glyphs. Three glyph-like symbols are found on the roof of the building and one below Scene M2. Together, these total up to 199 glyphic signs, which despite the erosion of some of them and despite the lack of knowledge of various Early Classic glyphs, have sufficient potential for the re-examination. Without doubt, this unusually rich combination of the image with its description and calendrical information could lead us to new interpretations.

ICONOGRAPHY

Scene M1

At first glance, it is clear that Persons **f1** and **f2** of this scene are dominant figures of the whole mural. They also have the largest number of glyphs and attributes. Analysing them, we can see clearly that Person **f1** with a double portion of glyphs and dominant posture is the most important person of the scene, to whom proper attention and respect must be given. Person **f1** has a pierced nose and a non-Maya hairstyle, a shaved head with a small part of hair on top of it

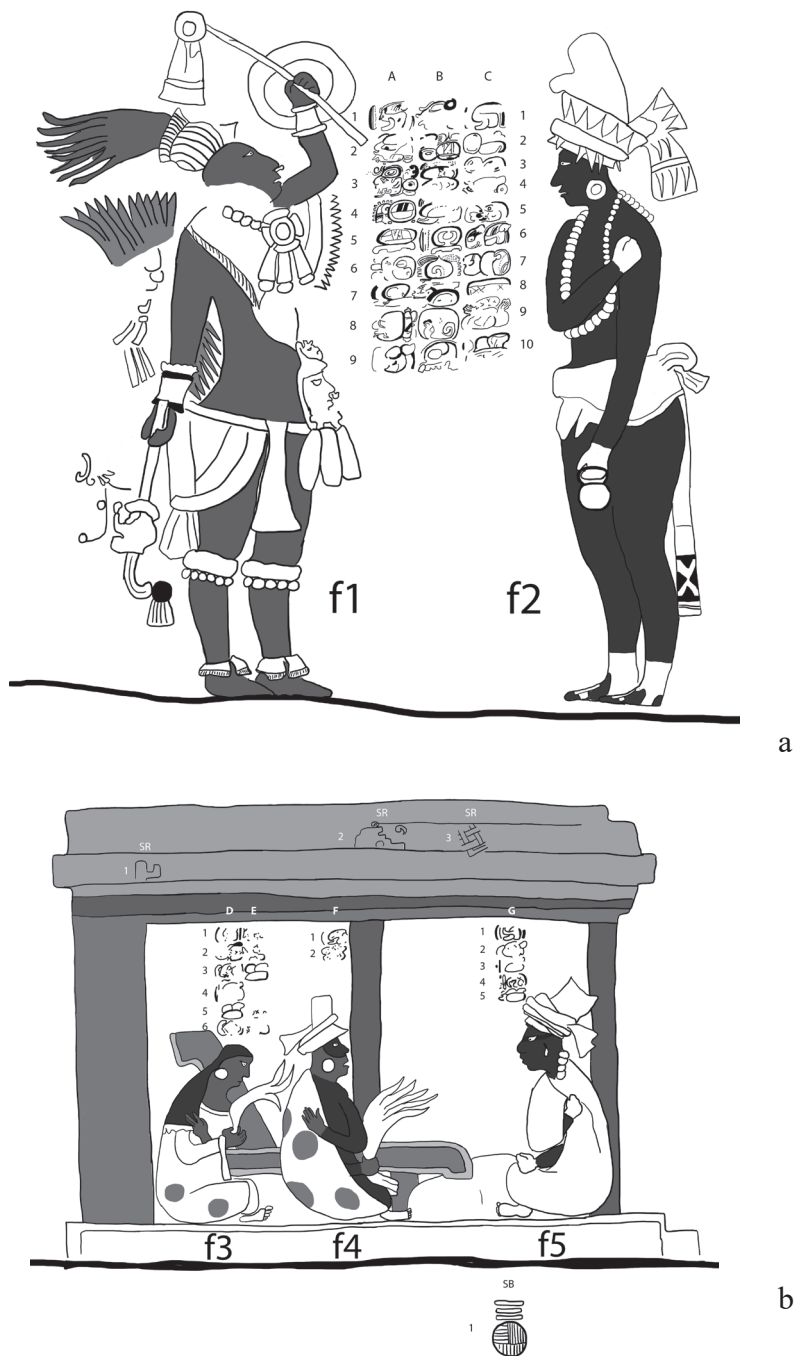


Figure 5. Scenes M1 (a) and M2 (b) on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

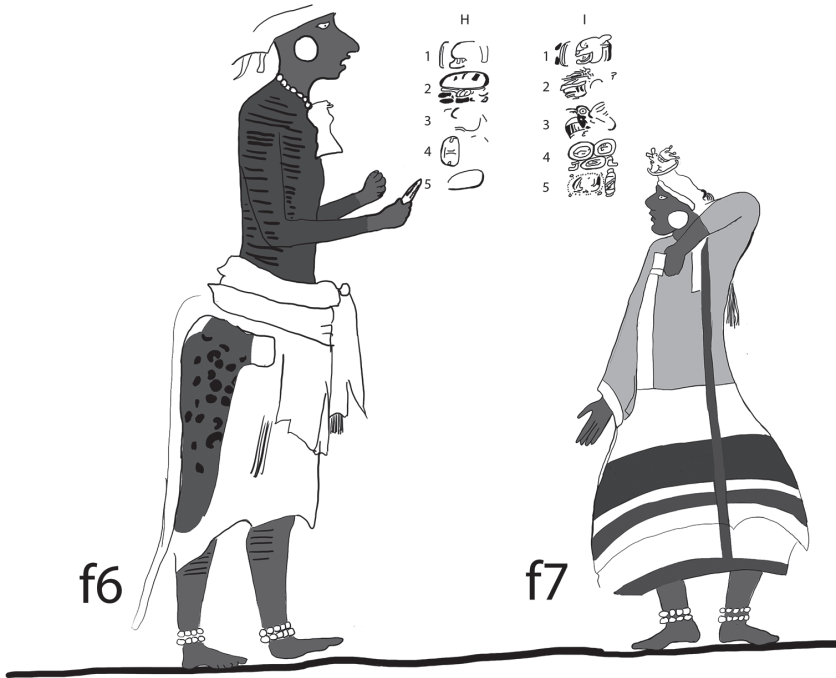


Figure 6. Scene M3 on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).



Figure 7. Scene M4 on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

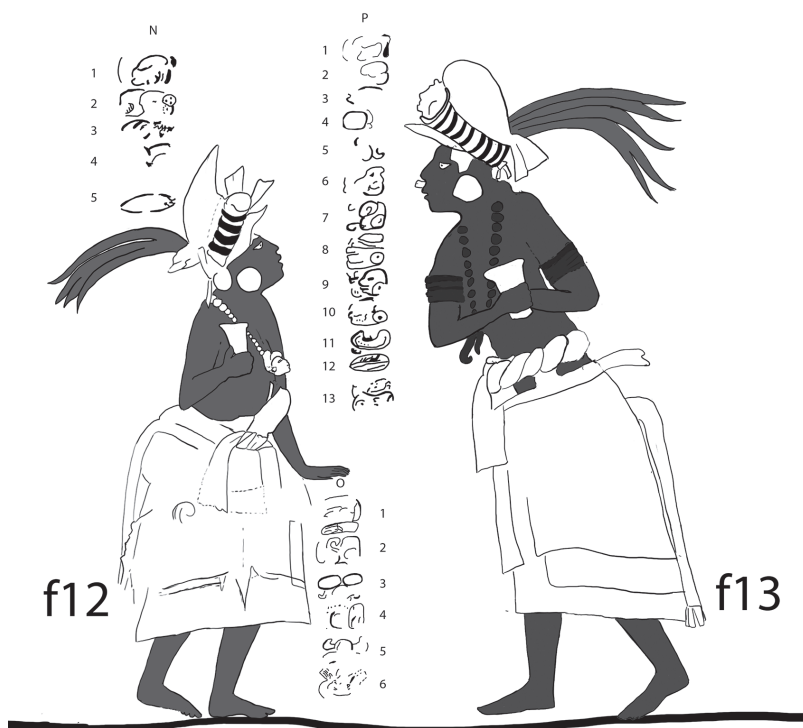


Figure 8. Scene M5 on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

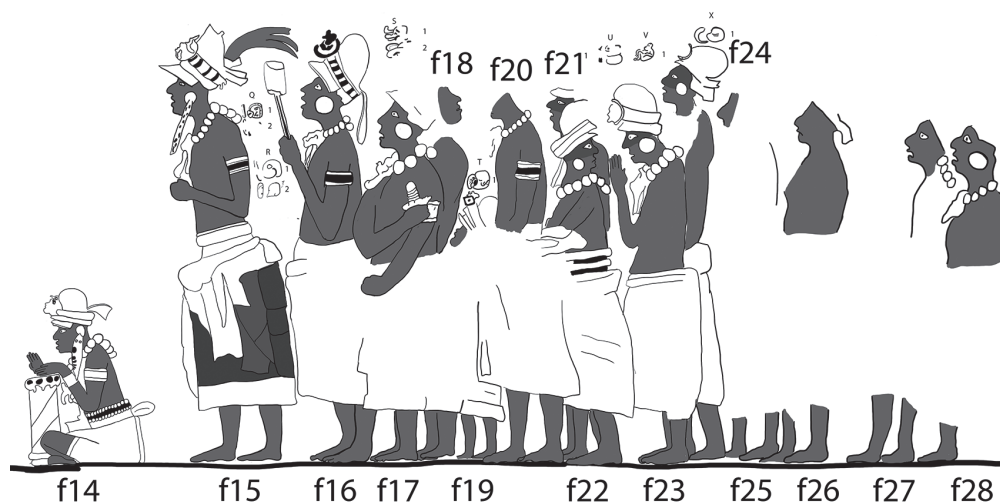


Figure 9. Scene M6 on the mural (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

woven into a special ornament covered with feathers. Many of the feathers of this adornment as well as the one on the back are grey (according to the colours recorded by Tejeda) and they quite likely depict the precious feathers of a quetzal. However, the grey cannot be the original colour. Rather, green pigments were used here, which have turned grey over the centuries. In the right hand the figure holds a spearthrower (i.e., *atlatl*), which is both an attribute of Teotihuacan as well as warriors and conquerors (Miller 2006b: 209). The figure holds a small, symbolic shield and a short spear in his left hand. The top of the spearthrower and the spear tip are covered with a decorative pompom that perhaps symbolises the political effectiveness of these weapons. However, the salute performed by raising the left hand with the weapon is unambiguous: Person **f1** is the one in charge here.

Person **f2** has his body painted black. The ceremonial meaning of the body paint is unclear in this context. The figure does not hold any weapon but in his left hand he probably grasps a basket with *copal*, which is an important aspect of the ritual power of the Maya kings. The character is holding his right hand across his chest, a sign of respect, or in this context, subordination. His costume is more modest than that of Person **f1** but it also has Teotihuacano elements, completed by an enormous jade necklace and a beautifully crafted headdress.

Overall, the scene seems to depict an event when the local (Uaxactun) king, Person **f2**, receives a high-ranking guest, Person **f1**, who is a foreigner or at the service of a foreign power, which is undoubtedly (by context and attributes) Teotihuacan. The king of Uaxactun is subordinated to the representative of a foreign power.

Scene M2

It seems that this scene takes place directly at Palace B-XIII in Uaxactun, where the mural was later painted (Smith 1950: 56). The scene depicts a ritual act in which all the attendees wear a special ceremonial garment. The first two figures, **f3** and **f4**, have a white cloak covered with large, originally likely red round spots. The third person (**f5**) has a white dress and a white turban. All attributes of power and prestige are missing; even the necklace of Person **f5** is covered with a white tunic. Persons **f3** and **f4** represent a woman and a man sitting behind each other in the palace room, dressed in similar coats, suggesting that they are husband and wife. Their presence in the throne room suggests that we could be looking at the king and the queen. If this is the case, Person **f2** is the same individual as **f4**. In their hands, Persons **f3** and **f4** hold either quetzal feathers or unidentified plants, highlighting the special circumstances of the scene. However, the meaning of the objects is unclear.

The scene is dominated by both men (**f4** and **f5**) sitting exactly opposite each other. Despite the presence of a throne bench in the room, the men sit on the ground as if all the hierarchy had now been abolished. This is also confirmed by the position of their hands: both placed across their chests (**f4** left hand and **f5** right hand) as a sign of mutual respect. Both have their bodies partially covered with black colour – hypothetically it could be an ash that would be associated with fasting and purification as an introduction to an important ritual event.

Following the first scene M1, the admission of a person by the royal couple in the palace scene M2 could be related to the arrival of this foreigner and so Persons **f1** and **f5**, as well as **f2** and **f4** would be the same individual. Their different outfits can be explained by the completely different context. However, this is quite unexpected as Person **f1** looks highly dominant and (the same) Person **f5** seems very peaceful. The answer could be that if it is indeed the same person, he must have shifted from his political to religious role, i.e., from being a political supervisor to a ritual guide.

Scene M3

This scene no longer shows any of the persons featured in the previous setting. The scene presents a tall slender person, who is apparently young, and an individual who is one quarter smaller than the taller person. We believe that the presence of this small person in the center of the M3-M4 scene is not accidental. Although the person on the left (**f6**) is dressed in a jaguar fur, which is certainly a sign of high social status, the small individual (**f7**) is wearing a *sakhuun* headband, reserved for kings and princes – similar to the function of a crown (Stuart 2012: 119). The small Person **f7** with the *sakhuun* indicates that this scene could portray an activity associated with a young prince.

The most important thing is what the young slender man **f6** (as well as Persons **f8** and **f9** in the next scene [M4]), is holding in his right hand: a perforator, probably *kohkan* (Stone and Zender 2011: 79) a stingray spine designed for ritual bloodletting. The numerous red stripes on the shoulders, body, and legs of Person **f6** appear in this context to be intentional cuts during the bloodletting. Although Person **f7** does not have a perforator in his hand, he is likely dancing and pouring liquid from a vessel. The flow of fluid runs under his “skirt”, does not fall to the ground, and apparently ends in his intimate area. We can consider this as a purification act before the bloodletting from the intimate area of the prince as indicated by the persons who surround him. The second option is that this is purification after such an activity.

Bloodletting in general, especially from the penis, was one of the most important initiating male rites of the elites (Schele and Miller 1986: 175-185; Demarest 2004: 188). Although we do not see a direct depiction of blood, the presence of tools for bloodletting is sufficient. Adding the royal insignia to the young person, it seems very likely that we are observing a solemn demonstration of the rite of passage of the young prince and the royal youth.

Scene M4

This scene follows the previous one both thematically and spatially. Person **f8** has his hands crossed in the genital area with two instruments. The one in the right hand looks similar to the perforator in the right hand of Person **f6**, while in the left hand he holds a wider knife that looks like a flint. The position of the hands indicates severe pain. While **f6** is shown in preparation for the most painful cut, **f8** has probably already done it. What we can assume throughout Scene M4 is the bleeding from intimate parts of young nobles. There are three more young men in the scene, carrying out the same activity. Although **f10** and **f11** are badly eroded, a perforator similar to the previous cases is clearly seen in the hand of **f9**. Consequently, the scene is directly related to M3 (their separation is only formal, due to the dividing space between **f7** and **f8**, although in this way the author merely emphasises the central figure **f7**) and depicts another group of royal adolescents in bloodletting rituals. Their activity is obviously carried out in the same space and on the same occasion as explained above.

Scene M5

Scene M5 represented the culmination of the entire mural painting. The figures in the next scene (M6) only accompany and admire it. At first glance, we do not see anything extraordinary here. The same small person in this scene, as well as its central location, indicates that it could be the same person. If this is the case, **f7** and **f12** are the same individual (as shown above, both represent a young prince). The difference between them is only the time, as the ritual has already

shifted from M3 to its culmination point in Scene M5. The young prince also dances, but in front of him we no longer find the person with the perforator, but a person with a vase in his hands, similar to that held by the young prince. Given the blood sacrifice that preceded the scene, it is possible that both vases contain a purification liquid that is composed, for example, of the “water from certain flowers and of cacao pounded and dissolved in virgin water”, as mentioned by Diego de Landa in reference to the rite of passage of youths in the Late Postclassic or Early Colonial period Yucatan (Tozzer 1941: 105).

Person **f13** who is dancing in front of the prince is an adult, not an adolescent. The lengthy hieroglyphic inscription describing him – and the central position of the text – suggests his importance. The dance with the prince and the number of feathers in his headdress point to an exceptionally important dignitary. Because the prince seems to have achieved initiation in a “trance dance”, **f13** could be someone like a “mystagogue” or perhaps the highest priest. At any rate, by dancing together, they can later sacrifice the contents of the vases. Furthermore, Person **f13** likely transforms the prince to a different social and religious status.

Scene M6

Scene M6 is one of the most suggestive, with up to 15 persons. The first one **f14**, probably a court dwarf is drumming to the rhythm of the dance of Persons **f12** and **f13** from Scene M5. Behind him is a crowd of other individuals who are less significant in the narrative. It looks as if they are there merely to support the central scene M5. Yet many of them carry glyphs over their heads or behind them that identify the figures. The inscriptions are much more eroded than the protagonists. Person **f15** is the orator and has a privileged position. Person **f16** holds an object reminiscent of a rattle and Person **f17** has an instrument made from the tail of a rattlesnake. As for the rest of the group, no musical instruments can be detected, so we cannot simply consider them as a group of musicians. What is probably most important here is the astonishment on the faces of the majority of those involved. This is the dominant non-verbal message. They all have jade necklaces that determine their social status. They are members of the royal court or high nobility, astounded and admiring the events in Scene M5.

In this scene, the painter also manifested certain familiarity, there is a child displayed (**f19**) and some kind of humor can be discerned. Some of the figures do not follow the ceremony but talk to each other (**f18** to **f20** and **f22** to **f23**). However, it is possible that the whispering is intended to express the admiring remarks that the participants exchanged. Furthermore, elements of the depicted persons were only sketched in lines and never completed. However, this imperfection disappears in the crowd and the mural observer apparently did not notice it. This inaccuracy confirms that this is a collective scene and, despite the very short glyphic identifiers of the courtiers, it should have been perceived as such.

EPIGRAPHY

Scene M1

Until now, this scene has received a lot of attention from researchers. It has been epigraphically analysed by Linda Schele and Nikolai Grube (1994: 83); Federico Fahsen and Juan Antonio Valdés (Valdés and Fahsen 1995: 210-211; Valdés *et al.* 1999: 32-34). According to Fahsen, the protagonists of this text were “Smoking Frog” (Sihyaj K’ahk’) and “K’awil Chan”

(Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II) of Tikal. He also suggested that the text mentions warfare (the *jubuy* verb) (Valdés and Fahren 1995: 211). Furthermore, they dated the mural to around A.D. 450 or slightly earlier (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 55).

Our review of the hieroglyphic text, consisting of three columns and 28 glyphs (Figure 10), led us to the conclusion that block C9 does not contain the name of Sihyaj Chan K'awiil II of Tikal as Fahren suggested (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 53), but the name of the local ruler of Uaxactun. Its nominal glyph represents the head of a deity with hands raised carrying the K'IN "sun" sign. This complex sign does not have a satisfactory reading; therefore, we call it a "Sunraiser" (it is probably a theophoric name). This same ruler is mentioned on Stela 4 as a *y-ajaw* or "vassal of" and then the title and name of Sihyaj K'ahk' (Figure 11). The king "Sunraiser" is also mentioned on Stela 5 (position E8) (Safronov and Beliaev 2017: 519-520) (Figure 12). According to the most recent drawing by Alexander Safronov, the monumental Altar 1 carved in the form of a turtle-earth also contains the centrally located glyph of the name "Sunraiser" inscribed into the royal headdress of the figure depicted on the top of the turtle carapace (Figure 13). Furthermore, we do not agree with Fahren that in position A6 in the mural is the nominal glyph of Sihyaj K'ahk' (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 53). This block consists of an eroded sign and another that represents a zoomorphic head very similar to the syllabogram *a*.

However, despite the poor state of preservation of the mural, Fahren and Valdés made a very important observation and identified in the position A8-B8 the name of a protagonist who they called "Mah K'ina Mo" or "K'inich Ahaw Mo" (Valdés and Fahren 1995: 210; Valdés *et al.* 1999: 32). This person (**f1**), whose name we now read as K'ihnich Mo', has clearly the highest status and is giving orders.

The nominal glyph of K'ihnich Mo' in its complete form appears on Stela 5 of Uaxactun (Safronov and Beliaev 2017: 520). The front side of this monument is sculpted with the famous image of the Teotihuacan warrior with his weapons *atlatl* and *macuahuitl*, as a representation of the entrance of the foreign army to the Maya area. For many years it was considered to be the portrait of Sihyaj K'ahk' (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 29-30; Schele and Freidel 1990: 146). However, the name written on his headdress is the glyph for macaw (Mo'). We have considered that K'ihnich Mo' was probably a Teotihuacan military captain or political-military governor, representative of *kalomte'* Sihyaj K'ahk', in the city-state of Uaxactun or in a wider region.



Figure 10. Glyphic record from Scene M1 (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

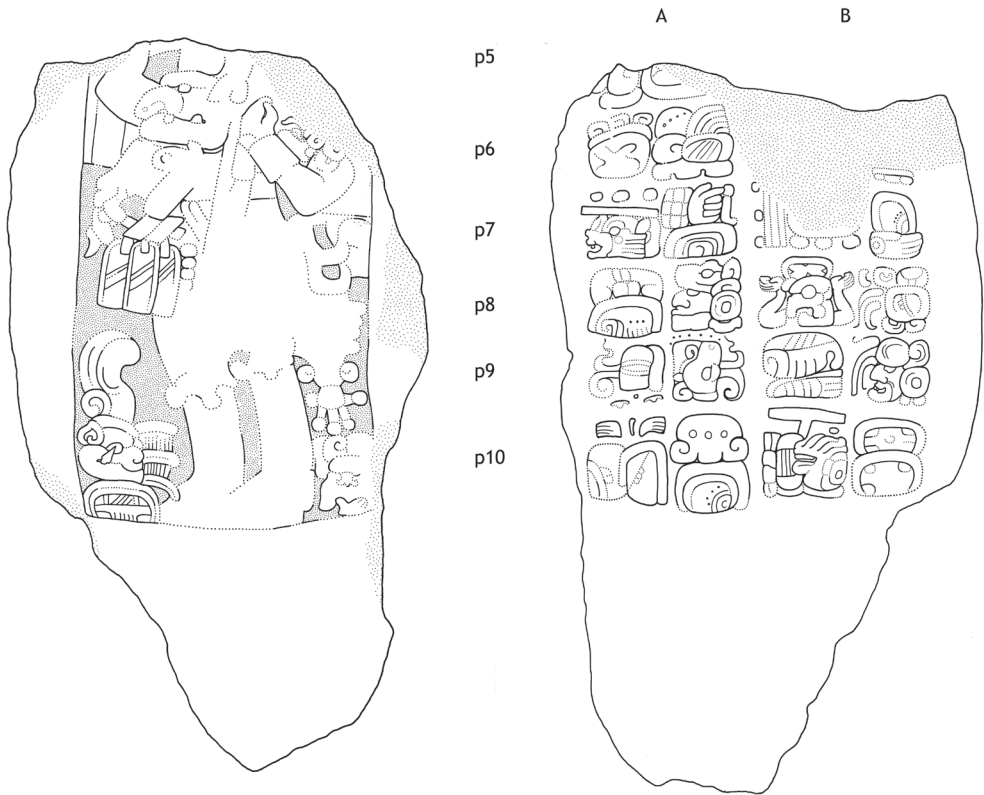


Figure 11. Stela 4 from Uaxactun with mention of “Sunraiser” (Bp8) and Sihyaj K’ahk’ at position Ap9 (drawing by Alexander Safronov).

The broader context behind why K’ihnich Mo’ is mentioned in the mural of Building B-XIII is not so clear, due to the deteriorated state of the hieroglyphic signs. In the position B4 we possibly have a verb (... **-wa-ja**) and in B5 the term **u-CH’EE’N-na** (*u-ch’ee’n*, “your city”). The glyph preceding *u-ch’ee’n* is **CHAN-na** (position A5), which can evoke the frequent term *chanch’ee’n*, which can be translated as “sky (and) cave” and can be understood as a diphrastic kenning (Martin and Velásquez 2016: 25). The term *chanch’ee’n* refers to individual toponyms (Martin 2020: 119) and, according to Tokovinine (2008: 156), this term relates to the ritual landscape. But the problem with this collocation on the Uaxactun mural is the presence of the pronominal affix **u**, which does not appear in other examples of this term. Therefore, the glyph at position A5 is probably not related to the following glyph **u-CH’EE’N-na**. In B7 we have a reference to the south (**NOJ-la**, *nojo’l*) but its meaning in this context is not clear.

The text referring to the second protagonist (**f2**) of Scene M1 consists of 10 blocks written in a single column (C1-10). The text begins with **u-BAAH**, *u-baah* “it is his image” followed by three poorly preserved blocks (C2–4). The next block (C5), as Valdes and Fahsen (1995) had noted, is the head of the macaw (**MO’**) and therefore the whole C4-C5 set could be another

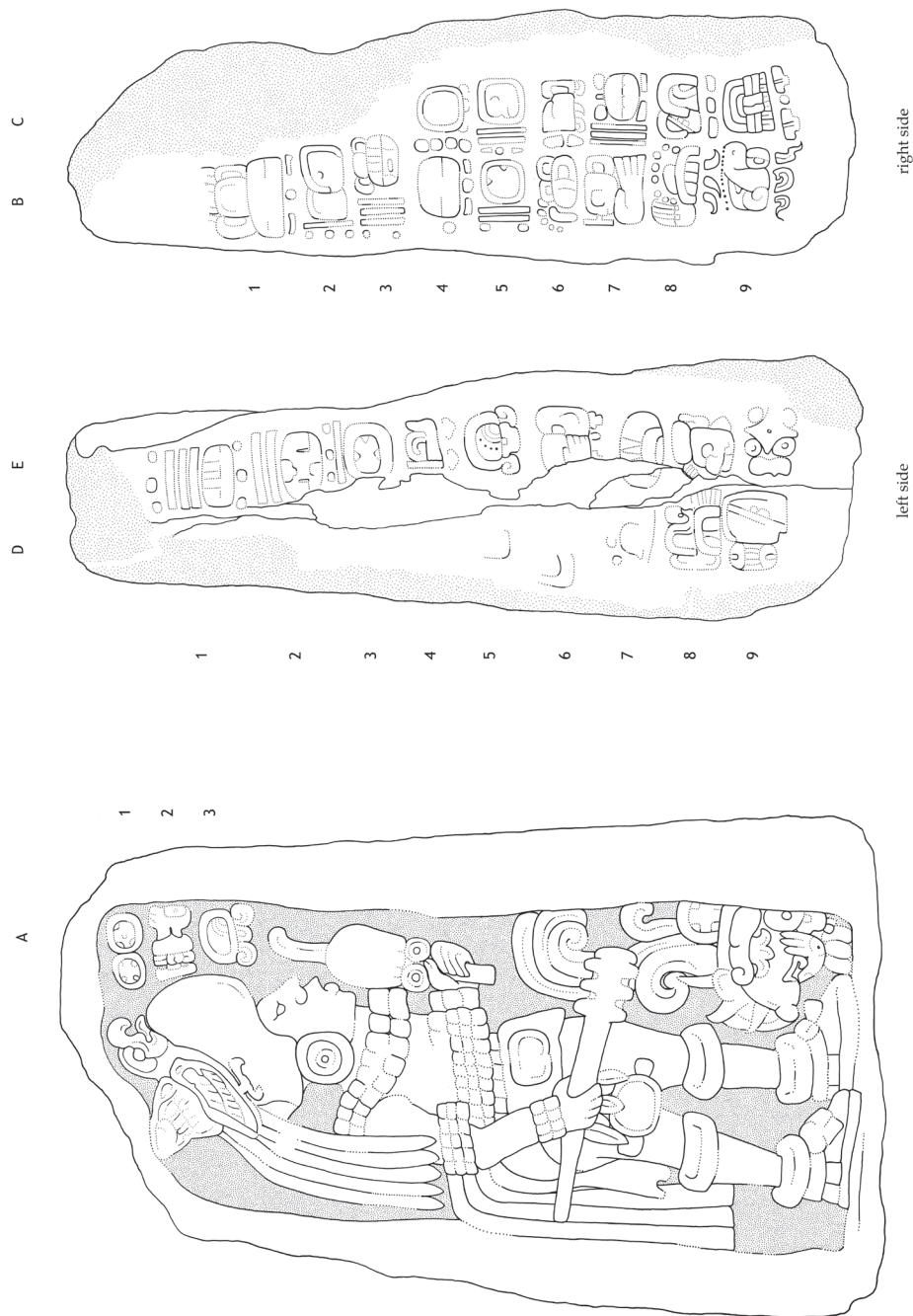


Figure 12. Stela 5 from Uaxactun showing K'ihnich Mo' as the same person as fl from the mural. The king of Uaxactun, "Sunriser" is mentioned on left side (E8) (drawing by Alexander Safronov).



Figure 13. Altar 1 from Uaxactun with glyph of the local king “Sunraiser” inscribed into the headdress of central figure (drawing by Alexander Safronov).

reference to K’ihnich Mo’. In this case, the lost elements could describe the relationship between Person **f2** and Person **f1** something like “it is his image (receiving the orders or subordinate to) K’ihnich Mo’”. The nominal glyph of Person **f2** is written in C9 and represents the name “Sunraiser”. It is complemented at position C10 with the title **AJAW** which establishes that he is a king.

Scene M2

The glyphic text of the woman (Person **f3**) was quite extensive and consisted of 2 columns and 12 glyphs (D1-E6), which unfortunately cannot be read completely. The text starts with **u-BAAH**, *u-baah* “it is her image” and includes the nominal glyph that starts with **IX**. In the inscription, the title **AJAW** appears in position D5, and another **AJAW** in position E3. It could mean that such an extensive text refers to the queen.

The king (Person **f4**) here has just a very simple glyphic legend: (F1) **u-BAAH** (F2) **AJAW**, *u-baah ajaw* “it is the image of the king”. Probably because he was already introduced with full titles and names in blocks C1-C10. We have no doubt that Persons **f2** and **f4** represent the same individual.

The glyphic legend of Person **f5** (G1-G5), begins with *u-baah* “it is his image”. G2 is represented by an eroded glyph, apparently, an animal head followed by a series of titles and names. At the position G3, we see the title beginning with **WAK** (perhaps *Wak Kab* or *Wak Kaan*). Then G4 is the distinctive name K’ihnich Mo’ and finally, glyph G5 represented the title **AJAW** (much less likely to be read as *ajawte*). It is probably the same K’ihnich Mo’ who appears here again in another specific role. In any case, it looks like Person **f1** and **f5** represent an identical entity in different functions.

Scene M3

Scene M3 is in the upper register of the mural representing two male figures. Person **f6** is to the left of the small young man (**f7**). Unfortunately, his glyphic legend cannot be clearly discerned: (H1) **u-BAAH** (H2) **ja? -la? -ma?** (H3) ? (H4) **CHAK-CH’OK?** (H5)...

The central person of the whole top scene, Person **f7**, is visibly shorter than everyone around him and is therefore identified as a young man or a boy. His identification as a young man is proven by the glyphic caption: (I1) **u-BAAH** (I2) ? (I3) **MUUT?** (I4) **CH’OK** (I5) **JAN? -K’IHNICH**, therefore *u-baah ... muut ch’ok Jan[aab] K’ihnich*, “it is the image of ... Muut, the young Janaab K’ihnich”. It presents an unusual sequence with names (... Muut and Janaab K’ihnich) and mixed titles (*ch’ok*). The form of logograph **JAN** with small circles outside the corners is very similar to the variant from the inscription on “Hombre de Tikal” (position F8), thus assuring the dating of the murals to ca. AD 400.

Scene M4

Scene M4 is very similar in composition to the previous scene. Person **f8** is displayed at a long and intentional distance from the previous scene. However, he is directed toward the central Person **f7** and, similarly to Person **f6**, holds sharp tools for ritual bloodletting. The position J1 *u-baah* “it is his image” is followed by the name of the protagonist. The second block (J2) consists of three signs: an unidentified vertical sign, a head of an animal with its mouth open and its nose curly and another elongated sign under this head. The zoomorphic head possibly represents **AHIIN** logogram for “crocodile” complemented with the **-na** syllable. Therefore, we can identify Person **f8** as *Ahiin*. The next glyph (J3) must be the second part of the name that is followed by logogram J4 **CH’OK** (“young”). The glyph at position J5 represents **BAHLAM**. We can summarise the phrase associated with **f8**: “It is the image of Ahiin.... young Bahlam”.

Person **f9** also carries a perforator in his right hand. The other person (**f10**) and the person on the right side (**f11**) are not well preserved. The glyphic captions are badly damaged, and we can only identify that the persons were originally introduced briefly by their names. The only preserved expressions are *u-baah* “it is his image” (K1, L1, and M1).

Scene M5

Scene M5 occupies the lower register of the mural, directly behind Scene M2. It represents two male individuals (Persons **f12** and **f13**) in some type of ritual action. Person **f12** is apparently

a young man or a boy, while the latter is already an adult. The hieroglyphic text of this scene (N1-5, O1-6, and P1-13) has the largest number of hieroglyphs (24 in total) after the pivotal scene M1, which shows its importance. Unfortunately, these texts were not recorded very well. In the drawings published by Smith in 1950, very few details can be distinguished in addition to the introductory blocks *u-baah* “it is his image” (N1 and P1).

However, the comparison of the drawing with the accessible photographs resulted in a new reading of the caption for the very important Person **f12**. It begins with a short column N, where in addition to the obligatory **u-BAAH** we have only 4 eroded glyphs, but continues with the text below in column O, which is a key part. There we can see a part of the caption of Person **f12** (O1-6) located under his left hand. Although blocks O1 and O2 cannot be read, O3, without doubt, is glyph **CH’OK**, while O4 is possibly again the nominal glyph of Janaab K’ihnich. Block O5 starts with the syllable **yu**, while O6 could be identified clearly in the photos, as another reference of the king “Sunraiser”. Based on the typical order and elements, we propose that the sequence **yu** ... should be reconstructed as a kinship term **yu-ne**, *y-une[n]* “he is the son of”. In this case, Janaab K’ihnich is the son of “Sunraiser” and actually the prince of Uaxactun. Apart from the similar figures, we can confirm that based on their names, it is clear that the Persons **f7** and **f12** are identical.

Column P with numerous glyphs indicates the important Person **f13** and the characteristic phrase **u-BAAH** in the first position. The 12 names, titles or functions that follow designate an extraordinarily important official. Some of the glyphs are badly eroded, others can be identified (as P8 very similar to I2 etc.), but the reading of the caption is unknown.

Scene M6

The M6 group is the least understandable of all. According to Antonio Tejada’s drawing, it was formed by 15 individuals, who lack the phrase **u-BAAH**, unlike previously depicted individuals. This is a depiction of the crowd watching the ceremony. It is possible that each person was originally simply labeled with a name or a title. These names, however, remained badly eroded. They were preserved in only six persons, **f15**, **f16**, **f17**, **f19**, **f23**, and **f24**. More important is the glyphic legend that identifies Person **f15** with the block **AJ-K’UH-na**, *ajk’uhu’n*. So far it is the first mention of this important administrative title in the Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions. This *ajk’uhu’n* leads the whole group. Of the remaining persons, **f17** has as his nominal glyph the head of a supernatural being with a very long nose (S1) and the child (**f19**) is named **MO’**, *Mo’* “macaw” (T1) and **f23** is named **UNEN**, *Unen* (V1). The last visible glyph (X1) related to **f24** is unclear.

Signs on the roof

There is an unclear eroded sign (SR1) on the left part of the roof of the palace (Figure 5b). However, there are two identifiable signs on the right side. The first in the middle part (SR2) shows the building with a staircase in profile. It is remarkably similar to the image of Structure B-XIII discovered by archaeological excavations. That is, the same palace (profile) whose interior we look into (front view) on the mural, as in Scene M2. The top right sign (SR3), although eroded, retains a clearly visible structure of the sign for the reed mat, also known as **POHP** or **JAL** (Stone and Zender 2011: 81). Exactly the same signs in stucco form stood at the front of the Preclassic palace H-South and, on the basis of other numerous comparisons (such as Structure 22-A of Copan or the Palace of the Governor at Uxmal), it is identified with the

symbol for the government. In our opinion, the sign (SR3) identifies the space of Scene M2 as a “place of royal government”.

Signs below

Underneath Scene M2 that takes place in the palace, there is a sign (SB1) consisting of vertical and horizontal lines in a circle, often referred to as a fourway hatching sign (Langley 1991: 287). Similar signs appear also on Stela 1 at Piedra Labrada (Engelhardt and Carrasco 2019: Fig. 7.4), the inscription on which is influenced by Teotihuacan (von Winning 1961), and on several Teotihuacan-style monuments from Cerro Bernal region, Coastal Chiapas (Taube 2000: Fig. 33). This sign is known as “tilled-earth glyph” in Teotihuacan writing and could function independently as well as in combination with numeric coefficients and trapezoidal year sign (Taube 2000: 41-43, 47). Its use in the murals makes this inscription another example of the inclusion of foreign signs into the Maya hieroglyphic texts in the Early Classic. Above it, the number 15 is clearly visible. The reading of this circle glyph is unknown. We found a similar glyph engraved on the wall of a room in Tz’ibatnah (northern Peten) in a calendar context (Kováč 2012: 204), so there is a possibility it is a sign for a specific day. Maybe it is the day the painting was made. In that case, they used a non-Maya calendar record. However, other options remain open.

TIMELINE

Below the iconographic scene we find a regular Maya calendar inscription that, as we suppose, can help us date events displayed on the mural (Figure 14). The calendar could be used not only to record the deeds and events of Maya royalty but also of a noble household (Miller 2006a: 65). Among the few “household” calendar records we can include the one from Uaxactun.

Hieroglyphic material under the main painting consisted of a horizontal row of 71 glyphs, representing day signs of the Tzolk’in calendar, starting from 13 Ik’ and ending with 5 Eb. To every sign, a number was attached as a superfix. According to J. Eric S. Thompson, these signs were painted in red (Smith 1950: 56-58). The reading order is the standard left to right.

All day signs and coefficients are in the correct order, without any omissions or mistakes, and create a type of day-by-day record. Analysis of these signs indicates their Early Classic form. This is obvious in some specific day signs like Ik’, Manik’, Lamat, Muluk, Eb, Kaban, Etz’nab, or Ajaw.

Very similar to the form of the Uaxactun mural are the painted inscriptions from Ek’ Balam. The mural of the 96 Glyphs at Ek’ Balam consists of three rows and 32 columns. The reading order is in horizontal lines (Lacadena 2004: 54). After the first event happened at 11 Eb 10 Sotz’ (9.16.19.3.12) described in the upper row, the text continues from 12 Ben day-by-day until 8 Imix, which means 48 days later. This type of a record serves as an extensive distance number.

As mentioned above, the whole sequence started at 13 Ik’ and the first event happened on the following day. After nine days, on 10 Eb, the second event happened; and the third event happened after 20 days on 4 Eb. On the very next day, after 4 Eb, the fourth event happened on 5 Ben and after 18 days, the fifth event is placed on 10 Chuwen. There is a small possibility of the specific event, which could have happened eight days later, on 5 Kawak, but unfortunately,

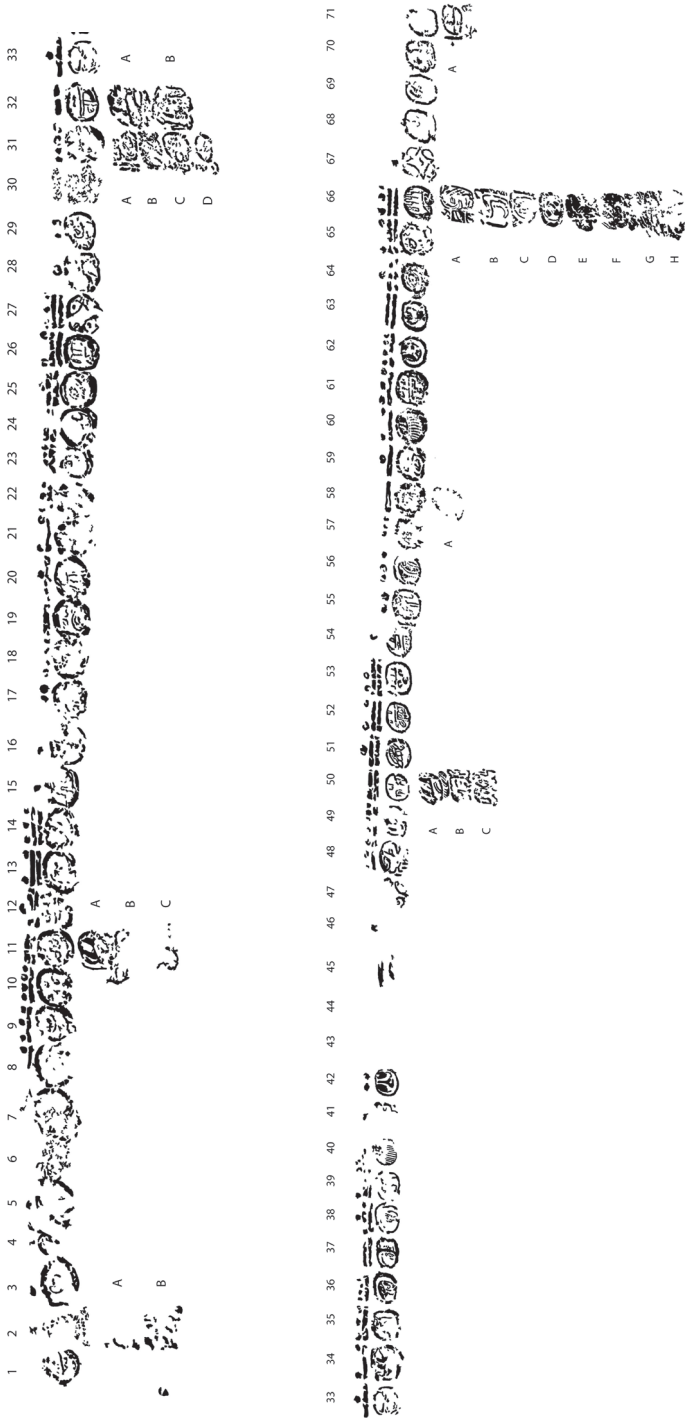


Figure 14. Timeline with the events located below the scenes (drawing by Jakub Špoták).

the only fragment of glyph contours was preserved. After another eight days on 13 Manik' an event described by the longest clause of the whole inscription took place. The whole sequence probably ended five days later on 5 Eb, but this part is barely visible (Figure 15).

We can identify eight clauses, directly under eight day signs, which probably refers to specific events. Unfortunately, clauses at positions 2 (under 1 Ak'bal) and 58 (5 Kawak) are barely visible. The number of glyphic signs for each column is not uniform, but the range is between two signs (position 32 – under 5 Ben, and position 71 – under 5 Eb), three signs (position 11 – under 10 Eb, and position 50 – under 10 Chuwen), four signs (position 31 – under 4 Eb) and up to eight signs for position 66 – under 13 Manik'.

The word order for all clauses is not typical. In the Maya hieroglyphic texts, and also in the modern Mayan languages, the word order usually follows the verb-object-subject pattern (Kettunen and Helmke 2014: 24). It does not apply to these inscriptions. None of the first glyphs looks like verbs and therefore clauses do not follow the typical pattern. Unfortunately, we can only decipher some of the signs and the meaning of these clauses is not very clear. Probably the most important part is shown under the Tzolk'in date 4 Eb. There is a crucial glyph associated with the Haab calendar (labeled 31A). The prefix of this sign appears to be a number represented by two bars, i.e., 10. The number is followed by an unidentified sign of the Haab calendar. In the combination of dates of the two calendars, one needs to follow the rule of possible Haab coefficients for Tzolk'in day names (Kettunen and Helmke 2014: 51). For the day Eb there could be the following four Haab coefficients: 5, 10, 15 and 0. In our case, number 10 is the correct Haab coefficient and together with the Tzolk'in date 4 Eb, it can be the basis for dating the mural.

For the combination of 4 Eb 10 ? we found 61 possible dates between 8.16.0.0 and 9.5.0.0. We must remove all dates outside the archaeological evidence and the style of the hieroglyphic signs. Therefore, the first possible date would be 8.16.10.06.12 4 Eb 10 Kumk'u (April 24, A.D. 367) and probably the latest date would be 9.0.03.05.12 4 Eb 10 K'ayab (March 17, A.D. 439). Still, between these two dates, we have 24 possible matches.

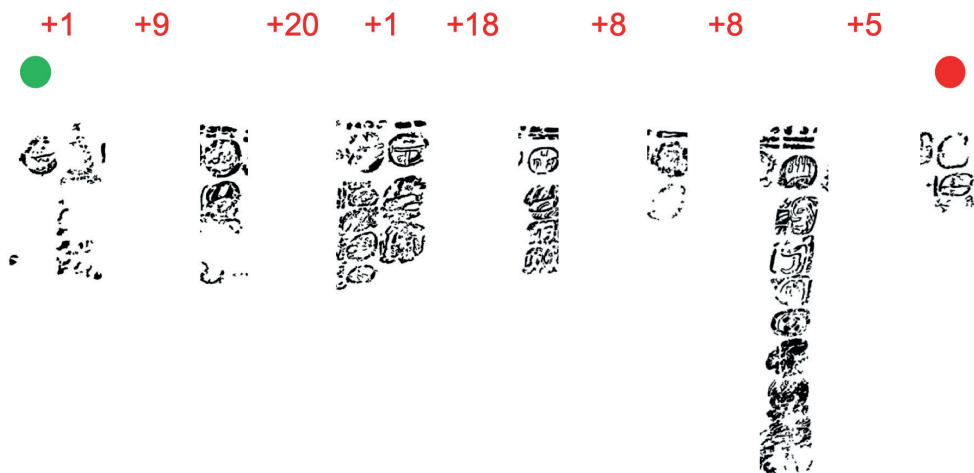


Figure 15. Eight clauses from a timeline which are connected with the mural.

The glyph from the Haab calendar that we are trying to identify consists of the main sign with no phonetic complement, but it appears clearly with a superfix, which is mostly eroded. Possible Haab months for this glyph would be Wo, Sip, Yaxk'in, Ch'en, Yax, Sak, Keh, and Kum'ũ. The possible dates are, therefore, reduced to twelve instances. Ultimately, according to a comparative analysis of this Early Classic version of the Haab date, the superfix with a little dot on the left side identifies this glyph as T58 (<SAK>).

If we agree with the hypothesis of the Haab date at position 31A, then the most probable date for the event in Clause 3 is 8.18.06.08.12 4 Eb 10 Sak (November 26, A.D. 402). The chronology for this event is described in Table 1.

Hieroglyphic inscription in the form of a timeline with recorded eight or nine events in the range of 71 days have a clear connection with depicted scenes above the inscription itself. The same type and shape of the signs appear in both parts of mural painting. The dates that were recorded on this timeline do not correspond to any known event that took place during the *Entrada* and were not found on any other Early Classic monument.

Table 1. Timeline from the Structure B-XIII for years A.D. 402/403

8.18.06.07.02	13	Ik'	0	Xul	27.10.402	Beginning
+1						DN
8.18.06.07.03	1	Ak'bal	1	Yax	28.10.402	Clause 1
+9						DN
8.18.06.07.12	10	Eb	10	Yax	06.11.402	Clause 2
+20						DN
8.18.06.08.12	4	Eb	10	Sak	26.11. 402	Clause 3
+1						DN
8.18.06.08.13	5	Ben	11	Sak	27.11. 402	Clause 4
+18						DN
8.18.06.09.11	10	Chuwen	9	Keh	15.12. 402	Clause 5
+8						DN
8.18.06.09.19	5	Kawak	17	Keh	23.12. 402	Clause 6
+8						DN
8.18.06.10.07	13	Manik'	5	Mak	31.12. 402	Clause 7
+1						DN
8.18.06.10.08	1	Lamat	6	Mak	01.01.403	
+4						DN
8.18.06.10.12	5	Eb	10	Mak	05.01.403	Clause 8

Although there is a possibility that the timeline was made under the mural as an unrelated addition (or related to other events), the likelihood is very small. Even if it was made later, the dates are not too far from the events depicted, because from the archaeological point of view, the palace was promptly rebuilt and Room 7 with the mural was filled and covered (Smith 1950: 58-59). However, our main argument is that the timeline below the mural has very similar calligraphy and glyph variants written by the same hand as the glyph captions directly in the mural. In this case, the time of creating the mural and the timeline, even if they were slightly different, does not play any role, since it is a comprehensive record of the events by the image, writing, and calendar created by the same author(s).

CONCLUSIONS AND HISTORICAL REMARKS

Jakub Špoták originally reduced the number of possible dates related to the mural in his paper to 26 (Špoták 2017). Then, together at the Archaeological Symposium in Guatemala in 2019, we proved that only two years, A.D. 378 and 402 could be taken into account. Finally, we even presented a detailed comparison of the preserved fragments of signs a few months later at the European Maya Conference 2019 in Cracow. The result is that all events mentioned in the timeline in the form of specific (explicit day-by-day) distance numbers refer to the time period between October 27th, A.D. 402 and January 5th, A.D. 403. The year A.D. 402 is most likely the year in which the ceremony was performed, as well as the other events noted in the frame of this 71-day period. Nearly 24 years had passed since the *Entrada*, and the New Order had already been fully established in the area. Yax Nuun Ahiin probably still ruled in Tikal but his death was imminent. During this period Tikal did not behave hegemonically towards Uaxactun, and Yax Nuun Ahiin himself acted as a *yajaw* (“vassal”) of Sihyaj K’ahk’. Power throughout the region was still in the hands of this Teotihuacan “satrap” and, because of the size of the territory to be controlled and the number of political units in it, the region appears to have been divided among the lower Teotihuacan governors. Exactly like the one we identified on the mural under the name K’ihnich Mo’.

We suggest that the mural of Room 7 of Structure B-XIII was dedicated to a dynastic event of high importance – the rite of passage or a collective transition ritual of the royal youth, and among them the prince, as a future *ajaw* of Uaxactun. The rite of passage known from epigraphic sources as *yax ch’ahb* or “first penance” (Houston *et al.* 2011: 93) was accompanied by dances, music, and bloodletting. The collective transition ritual of the royal youth was common among the Maya royal dynasties as we can see, for example, at Piedras Negras (Figure 16) as well as in other different sources (Houston 2018: 90-91). Clearly, the visual representation of the rite of passage (through the mural over the throne bench in the palace), guaranteed the right of the heir to the throne.

We identified the local king as “Sunraiser” and his son and heir as Janaab K’ihnich. The ceremony and the political meaning of the event were guaranteed by a high-ranking visitor identified as K’ihnich Mo’. He is the same person we already knew from Stela 5 (previously incorrectly identified as “Smoking Frog” or Sihyaj K’ahk’). The king “Sunraiser” was apparently subordinate to K’ihnich Mo’ and his presence in the act of initiation of his son, guaranteed certain future political relations, probably a power legitimisation of the continuity of the new dynasty. Finally, the custom to invite a prominent patron for the boys’ rite of passage apparently lasted until the Late Postclassic period, as described by Diego de Landa (1993: 52).

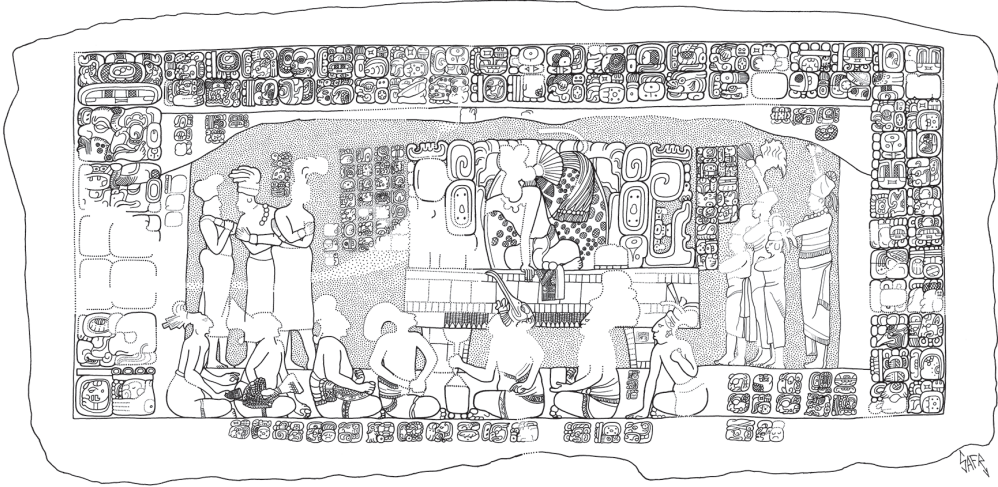


Figure 16. Panel 3 from Piedras Negras showing a rite of passage of the royal youth (drawing by Alexander Safronov).

However, the identity of the individuals and their roles is not the only fruit of this analysis. For the first time in Maya history, two very important social categories were expressed in this mural. The first one is *ch'ok*, “young man”. This expression (in its original ringed eye variant) and its context are extremely important for further research. Not just for rites of passage, but also for the different stages of life of males – and meanings associated with them (Houston 2018: 47). The word *ajk'uhu'n*, the high official of the Maya court (Jackson and Stuart 2001: 225), is also used for the first time in the Maya area here, presented “a court chaplain, a propitiator of deities and keeper of codices” (Zender 2004: iii, 180-194). The scene shows us that the *ajk'uhu'n* is at the forefront of the multitude of courtiers and confirms that after the king, he is hierarchically one of the highest individuals. This first evidence from Uaxactun, accompanied by a pictorial scene, is therefore essential for the study of the Classic Maya court hierarchies.

The court hierarchy can also be proven through the ownership of luxury and valuable items. Jade necklaces and quetzal feathers can be considered such objects on the basis of the mural scenes. Even the royal couple on the M2 Scene, seems to be holding quetzal feathers, intended as a gift or for sacrifice. If we do not count the royal couple and K'ihnich Mo' with his foreign outfit, then precious quetzal feathers in the headdress have three figures: the young prince (Person **f12**), Person **f13**, whose great importance we know, and the Person **f15** *ajk'uhu'n*. Thus, these characters are very clearly hierarchically distinguished from the others. Another criterion of the hierarchy can be the size of the jade necklace – its length or the number of jade pearls. Initiated young men apparently do not yet have such necklaces. If we double the number of jade pearls of those figures that are shown from the profile, we find that there is a relatively uniform level among the courtiers. They have approximately 12 jade pearls. This number is very different for the king who has around 50 jade pearls and his son who has almost 40 pearls. Behind them, at the highest level of the court, is again an unidentified dignitary **f13** with approximately 30 pearls. The size of the pearls even exceeds the prince's and he even has one quetzal feather

more. The *ajk'uhu'n*, who would be the fourth most important dignitary according to this criterion, has less than 20 jade pearls. It should be noted, however, that the small drummer figure (**f14**) must have been of great importance at the court, as he has an identically rich necklace as the *ajk'uhu'n*. Furthermore, only these two characters have strips of jaguar skin in their ears. However, the drummer does not have feathers and, as the only one, he is not associated with a name caption. This would rather correspond to the function of a court dwarf, which were seen as supernatural beings in human form (Prager 2000: 278). That would explain the connection with the *ajk'uhu'n* by jaguar stripes. The presence of the dwarf could then call forth a medium through which the gods could participate in earthly life (Prager 2000: 278-279).

The central theme of the mural is the ceremony associated with the rite of passage of young men and boys (such as *ch'ok* Janaab K'ihnich, *ch'ok* Ahiin and *chak ch'ok* Bahlam, and others in identical contexts whose titles have not been preserved). This ritual is associated with their first blood sacrifice, probably from the penis, as was the custom of the royal elite. Although this ritual is known to have occurred since the Preclassic period, its details and meaning may have evolved. Its visual record in the Early Classic is extremely valuable. It communicates many elements and aspects, such as the blackened body and face of the royal father, and later also the supervisor of the ceremony, the white tunic and the white turban of the patron... We also learn about cloaks that originally bore red spots and in which the royal parents were clothed, and about the sacrifices they would perform. Although a remote comparison, it is worth noting that until quite recently, red dots on white tunic were stained by the Lacandon on very special ritual occasions (Tozzer 1907: Lam. XII, Fig. 1). However, the intentional absence of embellishments and elements of secular power in the preparatory phase (M2) points to a deeply religious context. This may also be closely related to the term *ch'ahb* – “penance” (Looper 2019: 113; Houston 2018: 98), to which the whole activity was probably connected.

It is also interesting that the act of the bloodletting of young men is not performed by the typical festively decorated handle of perforators, as we know from the scenes dating to the Preclassic or the Classic periods (likely associated with another type of royal ceremonialism), but just ordinary perforators or knives. The blood is not clearly depicted in the scenes, even if it should be omnipresent. The absence of blood depictions in the form of typical drops or volutes may be related to a new imported ideology, perhaps because of a taboo of direct blood imagery. However, it is also possible that we are looking at a local custom. In Maya art, across time, blood was routinely displayed, although specifically in self-sacrifice scenes, and not always explicitly.

The penises of the youngsters, if they were perforated, are very chastely hidden and only the pain in the intimate parts is indicated. However, the blood is likely to be hidden in the vessels that the protagonists of Scene M5 carry (the young prince **f7** and his “mystagogue” **f8**). This is the culmination point of the whole ceremony, the initiation itself, the course of which we have a detailed depiction for the first time in Maya history. It does not necessarily mean that we are looking at a ritual known as *yax ch'ahb* in some universal form. It may have been altered by the ideology of the New Order. Nevertheless, visually it bears the main known characteristics of this ceremony. Above all, it is obviously of great importance for the young prince, confirmed by placing the scene directly in the throne room of his father (or his own). This clearly confirms that this ritual was not only a rite of passage, that is to say, age-grade ritual or shift of status from the boy to the man, but in the case of the royal sons it had direct dynastic consequences.

It is very interesting that in 2015 we discovered in Uaxactun, under the Structure H-XVI, a Preclassic jade perforator engraved by the first known hieroglyphs for the *yax ch'ahb* ceremony in Maya history (Kováč *et al.* 2016: 21). The dynastic sanctuary, as we identified the building, had no burial inside, but the central object was precisely dedicated to the perforator

and other paraphernalia of the newly initiated king, nicknamed “Blood Head,” who was probably the founder of the new dynasty. This evidence of his first sacrifice of blood around 10 B.C. was an important part of the legitimacy of the power of all his successors because the place where the *yax ch’ahb* perforator was stored, presented the centre of an intense cult for almost 400 years. This is also the proof that at least in Uaxactun, this ceremony was associated with the succession. The importance attributed to it by the king “Sunraiser” suggests that although foreigners have brought many changes, this dynastic tradition has been respected.

King “Sunraiser”, whose existence we had never known before, was a much more powerful ruler than it might seem. He erected the dominant Stelae 4 and 5 and also the monumental Altar 1, and ordered the painting of the mural, which was to guarantee the success of his son. None of the later successors destroyed these monuments. On the contrary, they stood at the central location of Group B, which may testify to the deep respect that his followers showed him. Unlike them, “Sunraiser” himself was not so gentle to his predecessors. In concordance with the dating of stelae, mural and the historical context, we should see “Sunraiser” as the first ruler of the New Order (after A.D. 378). It must have been he who stopped the cult in the old dynastic sanctuary H-XVI which continued from 10 B.C. to A.D. 378 (Kováč *et al.* 2016: 26). He also left the cult of commemorative places of the whole Group H and F also maintained from late Chicanel to the period Tzakol 2. There is no other explanation than that he himself was not a member of the previous dynasty.

After the *Entrada*, cooperative elites were installed by Teotihuacanos and “Sunraiser” was given an exceptional opportunity to establish his own dynasty. He seized the opportunity with all the energy. We can speculate that it is even likely that he had murdered (in alliance with foreigners) the last members of the previous dynasty. However, the burial under building B-VIII, which was for a long time believed to be evidence of this (Schele and Freidel 1990), was dated by Juan Pedro Laporte to the time before the *Entrada*. His assumption was based on the fact that the floor that had been broken to build the burial was not chronologically identical to the floor related to Stela 5, but preceded it (Laporte 1989: 630). Stela 5, however, was then understood as a stela depicting Sihyaj K’ahk’ and his entry to Uaxactun (and Tikal) dated to A.D. 378 (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 114). In fact, we know today that it depicts a later event associated with a Teotihuacan representative K’ihnich Mo’ who in A.D. 396 celebrated the anniversary of the 18th k’atun with the local king “Sunraiser”. The mention of the arrival of Sihyaj K’ahk’ in A.D. 378 on this stela is retrospective. The event happened around eighteen years after the *Entrada*, which gave enough time to renew the floor of the square dedicated to the monuments promoting the new political situation. The burial of the royal family, in fact, can be attributed to the violent seizure of power around A.D. 378.

The palace of “Sunraiser” looks rather modest, but the stelae, the altar, and the mural already feature the highest artistic level of those times, demonstrating the power and privileges he possessed. The themes of the monumental Altar 1 in the form of a turtle are related to the creation of the world and the cosmic justification of the power of the new king. Stela 5 depicts the political justification of his right to rule. It represents K’ihnich Mo’ on one side of the stela and other (bad eroded) figure, probably the king “Sunraiser”, on the other side. This unusual double portrait of the king with a foreigner was in fact necessary. The cosmic or mythological justification of power was probably not enough; the new dynasty had to have a power reasoned politically from outside. That alone gave it legitimacy.

On both of his monuments, Stela 4 and Stela 5, “Sunraiser” also mentions Sihyaj K’ahk’, but it is clear that for contemporary Uaxactun this supreme governor – *kalomte’* – was only a remote authority. The real representative of the occupying power here was K’ihnich Mo’. From

him mattered the position and power of “Sunraiser”. He guaranteed his new dynasty and succession rights to his son Janaab K’ihnich. This is the moment and context that the mural of building B-XIII should be understood.

The mural was situated in the palace and, as a consequence, its ideological message was not meant for the common people, in contrast to the stelae and altars in the public squares. It was not even necessary as it was intended for those who had access to the palace: the courtiers and local elite. Many of the depicted nobles could have been genealogically linked to the previous dynasty or could have concealed sympathy with it, so depicting them in legitimisation of the new dynasty was particularly important. Their astonishment and excitement expressed on the mural (scene M6) mean that looking at themselves in this scene; they had to fully accept the future dynastic conditions.

It appears that “Sunraiser” achieved his main dynastic goal. Although it is not certain at all that his son Janaab K’ihnich (pictured on the mural as a 10-12-year-old boy) actually sat on the throne. Maybe he did not live to see it, or he just ruled for a short period of time. We did not find a single stela that would be unequivocally associated with his reign. It is also possible that Janaab K’ihnich adopted another name as a king. The mural which authorised his government was buried in the third and final building phase of the palace as if its new owner no longer needed this ideological instrument, and then the power to the palace A-V in Group A was finally moved. There, an extremely rich tomb A29 was built, containing in addition to the body remains, up to 26 vases, a jade necklace and a shell necklace, a jade mask and remnants of a codex (Smith 1950: 23, 25, 88-90, 97; Horáková 2018). This grandiose tomb, located at the very center of the Triadic complex, was incorrectly attributed to Sihyaj K’ahk’ by Valdés, Fahsen and Escobedo (Kováč and Barrois 2012: 120-123). However, they aptly noted that it contained ceramics from the breakthroughs of Tzakol 2 and Tzakol 3 phases, and the buried person died in Tzakol 3 phase and, consequently, this important king reigned around A.D. 400 and must have been the founder of the new dynasty (Valdés *et al.* 1999: 45). We have every reason to believe that the buried king was “Sunraiser”.

However, it seems that the period of the first decades after “Sunraiser’s” reign was some way turbulent, as could be evidenced by the never completed ballcourt marker for the ball game commissioned by king Unen Bahlam Noho’l Winkil (Beliaev and Tokovinine 2019, Kováč *et al.* 2019). Then the situation stabilised and Uaxactun experienced (until the devastating war in A.D. 562) one of the most successful periods in its history. The fact that the dynasty founded by “Sunraiser” was still in power is not only evidenced by the central position of his exceptional (and undamaged) monuments. Furthermore, the retrospective inscription on Stela 22 from A.D. 504 refers to the *Entrada* on A.D. 378 (Stuart 2000: 477). It looks like the time had begun to count again from the *Entrada* because it was a turning point in the history, from which the legitimacy of the rulers of “Sunraiser’s” dynasty was derived.

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