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T168 AS ITSA': MAYA SORCERERS AND THEIR SUCCESSION

INTRODUCTION

The reading of T168 has long been a major problem for Maya epigraphers (Thompson, 1950; Berlin, 1968; Proskouriakoff, 1960, 1963, 1964; Barthel, 1968; Lounsbury, 1976; Marcus, 1976; Mathews and Justeson, 1984). The only evidence for its meaning which does not rest upon a translation is provided by its appearance with titles such as those examined in Appendix B of this paper. Similarly the nature of the *itsa'* has long been a thorn in the side of Maya historians (Roys, 1933; Thompson, 1970, 1977; Edmonson, 1982; Villagutierrez Soto-Mayor, 1983). The primary evidence concerning the nature of the *itsa'* comes from such difficult to interpret sources as the Yucatec Books of Chilam Balam and the accounts of early Spanish chroniclers. The reading presented here, of T168 as *itsa'*, suggests these two problems cannot be examined in isolation as they are facets of the same problem, a problem of paramount importance to Maya studies as a whole.

This paper presents what is essentially a two part argument. Part one is based on Lounsbury's (1973) identification of T687a as a ball of incense. Here T687a is interpreted not as a phonetic sign for *pom*, "copal", but rather as a logographic sign which could have different readings in different contexts. A logographic reading of T687a would accommodate both Landa's unique use of a doubled T687 to "spell" the first month name, *po(m)+p(om)*, "mat", and the reading presented here of T687 as *its*, "resin, sorcery".

Part two examines iconographic evidence, for the nature of eminent Maya discussed in Classic and Post Classic Period texts,

of the reading of T168 as *itsa'*, "sorcerer". The implications presented are based on a survival argument augmented by historical Maya documents and analogies with the more conservative of present day Maya.

All Maya words are given in italics, in the orthography of the Cordomex Dictionary, unless they are cited from other works or are place names. Place names appear in the Colonial orthography and are not italicized, citations are given in the original orthography and are followed by the Cordomex orthography, in square brackets, where confusion might otherwise arise.

The reading of T168 proposed in this paper is essentially a minor adjustment of the reading proposed by Floyd Lounsbury in 1971, and I refer the reader to Lounsbury 1973 for the details of his argument. Following is an enumeration of the pertinent points of his argument.

1. T168 is composed of two graphemes, T584 and T687a.
2. Both T584 and T687a must contribute to a reading of T168.
3. T584 and T687a combine phonetically to form a third word.
4. The textual context shows that third word is a title.
5. T584 is the thirteenth day of the twenty day series.
6. T584 is read *aj* [*ah*] as in the Quiché day list.
7. T687a is a ball of incense.
8. "This copal glyph... must be read *pom* in any Maya language...".
9. T168 is read *ah po(p)*, *ah pop* or *ahau*.
(Lounsbury, 1973).

Lounsbury's evidence does not suggest a reading of T168 as *ah pop*, "mat lord", as he asserts, much less his highly convoluted reading of T168 as *ahau*, "lord". What his evidence actually suggests is a term incorporating the masculine superlative *ah* and copal *pom* producing the non-existent title *ah pom*, "copal lord". This cannot be a correct reading of T168 and it is not surprising that Lounsbury seeks an alternative reading of T687a as *pop*, "mat". However, he fails to demonstrate, apart from Landa's ethnocentric attempt to "spell" *pop*, why a ball of copal, *pom*, should represent *pop*, "mat".

Rather than abandon the demonstrated identification of T687a as copal, *pom*, a more productive approach is to abandon a strictly phonetic approach in favor of a logographic reading of T687a. This expands the range of possible readings of T687a without requiring abandonment of Lounsbury's demonstrated identification of T687a as a ball of incense. As Tozzer (1941: 75, n. 338) ob-

serves, the Maya offered copal, rubber and chicle to the fire. Therefore, T687a could represent *k'ik'*, "rubber", *sats'*, "rubber", *cha'*, "chicle", and *yits ya'*, "chicle" as well as *pom*. Any of these substances could be rolled into a ball, for use as incense, and subsequently represented by T687a. However, Lounsbury identified T577 as a ball of rubber, *sats* (Lounsbury, 1973: 112-116). This identification is not implausible, given the evidence from the sacred Cenote at Chichen Itza where balls of rubber have been found in contexts clearly paralleling the use of balls of copal (Coggins and Shane, 1984: 129, 130, 131, 133, 155), and effectively eliminates rubber as a specific referent for T687a.

None of the names of substances used for incense mentioned above, whether alone or in combination with *ah*, yields a known Maya title. Therefore it seems a better course to seek a reading of T687a in terms which describe trait common to all of the substances used as incense.

One trait that all of the substances used as incense share is that they are coagulated resins or gums of trees and shrubs. Thompson, in his discussion of *Itsam na*, observes that *its* is defined as "'milk', 'tear', 'sweat', 'resin or gum of trees and shrubs', 'candle wax' and 'rust'" (Thompson, 1970: 211, author's under-scoring). A reading of T687a as *its*, "resin", includes all of the substances used as incense within its semantic domain. Many mixed phonetic systems (cuneiform, Egyptian, Chinese) use polyvalence as a means of representing concepts which cannot be depicted. It is reasonable to assume that Maya writing did the same. While solids can be depicted on the basis of their characteristic shape, liquids cannot, unless they are associated with specific containers. Thus *its*, "liquid resin", could not be depicted and would have to be represented indirectly. Therefore, a reasonable solution to this problem would be to use a depiction of one of its solid products to represent the liquid and its name. Hence, a ball of coagulated resins could be used to represent *its*, "liquid resin", as well as *pom*. On turning to *its* in the Diccionario Maya Corde-mex, we find the following:

1 ITS 13 abv: el morfema *its* de *itsa'* forma parte de una familia de variantes existentes en las lenguas mayances; en cakchiquel aparece sin o con modificación *its*: hechicería, brujería, encantamiento; *ah-its*: hechicero; en el maya yucateco aparece en la variante *its'*; V. *its'al*, *its'athal*, *its'atho'olmal*, etc.

2 ITS 1-5, 8, 9: leche, lágrima, sudor, resina o goma por cuajar de ár-

boles y de matas y de algunas yerbas; *yits k'umche'*: leche de *k'umche'*; *yits kandela*, *yits kib*: lo que corre de la candela cuando arde; *yits kuchiyó*, *yits maskab*: herrumbre que tiene el cuchillo y el hierro, etc.; leche; de aquí *yan yits ya ti'*, *yan yits ti' ya*: tiene ya leche de amor, anda ya en garzonía, comienza ya a bellaquear o sabe ya qué cosa es mujer, o la mujer qué cosa es varón; 2: orín; 3: *its sabak che'*: goma con que dan colorado a la ropa; *its chakah*: goma de almácigo; 8: moho u hóxido metálico; 9: herrumbre; 2. *ITS CHE'* 2, 3: goma o resina; 3: sudor de árbol antes de cuajarse; 3. *k'ab* 9: leche, lágrima; 13: zumo, jugo; 4. *k'in chaan* 2: goma de ciruelo [*spondias*] y otros árboles cuando está cuajada.

(*AH ITS* 13 abv: hechicero; 2. *AH ITSAM* 13 abv: el brujo del agua; *V. itsam* 3. *ITSA'* 10: patronímico maya; el nombre de una nación; 13 abv: "brujo del agua".*

(Barrera Vásquez, 1980: 271-272).

The "Cordomex" glosses suggest that *its* "resin" is used to represent its homonym *its* "sorcery". This use of "resin" for "sorcery" is not merely a play on words, it is a reflection of the common Maya practice of burning resins when establishing contact with the spirit world.

The evidence presented above suggests that T584 and T687a represent *ah* and *its* respectively and that T168, the combination of T584 and T687a, represents *ah-its/itsa'* "Sorcerer". The broad distribution in time and space, the glyphic context, the native documents and modern use of the "Sorcerer" title argue convincingly for the reading of T168 as "Sorcerer" rather than the Maya patronym.

The order of the two graphemes T584 and T687a forming T168 exhibits a certain degree of regionalism. The order 584:687a is almost invariable in Yucatec inscriptions and codices (Lounsbury, 1973: 118). During the Classic Period the inscriptions of a number of sites show no dominant order, while the inscriptions of Tikal show a dominant order, 687a:584, which is the inverse of the dominant order in the Yucatec texts (Lounsbury, 1973; Jones and Satterthwaite, 1982). The Yucatec examples are peculiar because the texts conform to normal Yucatec morpheme ordering,

* The value laden nature of these glosses of *an-its/itsa'* reflects the Spaniard's insistence that all native religious specialists were "servants of the Devil" and therefore "witches". No doubt, the omission of *its* from the titles of such modern religious practitioners as the (*its*) *ah kin* and the (*its ah*) *men* is a direct response to this Spanish ethnocentrism. To avoid this problem and the awkward *ah-its/itsa'* construction, I will refer to these religious specialists as "Sorcerers," "Sorceresses" or *Itsa'*.

where the masculine superlative precedes its referent, while the Books of Chilam Balam invert this normal order (Roys, 1933; Edmonson 1982).^{*} This inconsistency may well be a direct result of the foreign nature of the *itsa'* discussed in the Chilam Balam texts (Roys, 1933; Thompson, 1970, 1977; Edmonson, 1982). If this is so it is possible to suggest that the foreign *itsa'* came from some region, like Tikal, where dominant order 687a:585 is attested in the inscriptions. Thompson attributes this inversion of masculine superlative and referent to this "Putun" Maya, from Campeche and Tabasco, and the Manche Chol (Thompson, 1977: 27).

Proskouriakoff has demonstrated the historical nature of the hieroglyphic inscriptions and the accompanying figural art (Proskouriakoff, 1960). Her argument is based on the monuments of Piedras Negras and neighboring sites, such as Yaxchilan and Naranjo, but her conclusions are valid for the Classic Maya as a whole. The primary points of her argument are as follows:

1. Inscriptions form a pattern of discrete sets of records.
2. Each set of records is inscribed on a group of consecutive monuments.
3. The time span covered by each set of records is not longer than a reasonable lifetime.
4. Each set of monuments records the history of a reign.
5. Representations on monuments are portraits of rulers and their families.

(Proskouriakoff, 1960).

The reasoning behind Proskouriakoff's thesis that Maya monuments depict historical figures and detail their histories is flawless. However, she consistently describes these historical figures in such a way an uncritical reader might believe she has also demonstrated their "dynastic" nature (Proskouriakoff, 1960: 474). However, social and political eminence is not limited to "ruling dynasties".

There have been a number of hypotheses concerning the nature of eminent Maya as kings, priests, gods, cargo bearers, etc. Before drawing any conclusions concerning the nature of eminent Maya,

^{*} However, Spell XXIX of the Bacabs manuscript uses the more traditional Yucatec ordering *ah ytz* (Roys 1965: 53, MS.: 155-157). Though Roys glosses *ah ytz* [*ah its'*] "exuder" and Barrera Vásquez does not gloss *its' alone*, it is employed in compounds which suggest a meaning of "wise" or "knowledgeable" (Barrera Vásquez, 1980: 273-274).

it is necessary to critically examine competing claims in light of existing evidence.

The foremost evidence for the eminence of the Maya individuals depicted and discussed on Maya monuments is the simple fact of their appearance in this context; insignificant individuals are unlikely to appear in such a context. The elaborate costume and rich ornamentation of these individuals is also characteristic of eminence. There are a number of thematic roles which these figures play which detail the functions of eminent Maya.

Many of the figures on Maya monuments are depicted in ritual contexts which suggest a religious function. There is an enormous body of sculpture depicting eminent Maya performing the "scattering gesture". This "scattering gesture" is widely recognized as a ritual activity and Proskouriakoff believes it "refers to prophecy or divination" (I. Graham, 1967: 9). There is also a large body of sculpture particularly at the site of Yaxchilan, depicting eminent Maya performing autosacrifice and bloodletting. This is a ritual activity which was widespread during the contact period and Landa devotes considerable space to it in his *Relación* (Tozzer, 1941). The Books of Chilam Balam present this sort of self-mortification as one of the ritual duties of public office holders (Edmonson, 1982, 99, n. 2540). In many cases eminent Maya are depicted wearing costume and bearing emblems which are identical to those of depictions of Maya supernaturals (Kubler, 1969). This sort of depiction suggests eminent Maya impersonated and/or were possessed by the supernatural(s) whose costume and emblems they bear. Spirit possession is well attested for the modern Maya (Oakes, 1951; Bricker, 1981). Also Tedlock specifically attributes this "spiritualist" function to modern sorcerers as a class (Tedlock, 1982: 74).

Another artistic theme which has not previously been examined for relationships to the problem of the nature of eminent Maya is the face or figure of an eminent Maya in the mouth of a serpent. As Spinden (1913) and Proskouriakoff (1950) have noted, the serpent is the overriding theme of Maya art. No other theme occurs as frequently, and no other theme occurs in such creative variety as does the serpent. Eminent Maya commonly wear serpents, or serpent derived forms, at the ankles, wrists, waist, neck and as headdress. The objects worn thus represent an enormous expenditure of energy both in their design and manufacture as well as the time it must have taken to don this serpent garb.

There can be little doubt that eminent Maya identified themselves with the serpent in some way.

Thompson provides a piece of Maya folklore which sheds some light on the Maya obsession with the serpent theme, and with the Maya in the serpent's mouth variant in particular; he observes the following:

"One of the best ways of learning *brujeria* [sorcery] is to visit an ant's nest. Each ant's nest is presided over by a master, who is inevitably an expert in *brujeria*. The grandfather of an informant made this trip in the company of the *Hmen*, who was teaching him. The master knocked three times on the nest, and a serpent issued forth. The master had previously removed all his clothes and was standing nude. The snake came up to him and after licking him all over, proceeded to swallow him whole. A few moments later he passed him out of his body with excrement. The master didn't appear to be much the worse for his adventure. Very similar initiation ceremonies in Chiapas are described by Nuñez de la Vega [1702] (p. 133). (Thompson, 1930: 109-110).

Watters Payne translates Nuñez de la Vega's (1720) more detailed account as follows:

"In some provinces it is the custom to place the disciple on some great ant hill, and the Master, after taking a position above him, calls upon a large snake which is colored, black and red, and named mother of the ants. The latter emerges, accompanied by the ants and other small snakes, and they enter the joints of the hands, beginning with the left, emerging at the nostrils, ears or joints on the right side. The largest snake, making little jumps, enters the neophyte and leaves by the posterior part, and after they have left the boy they all return to the ant hill. After this they go upon the road, where they are met by a ferocious dragon in the form of a serpent, spitting fire from his mouth and eyes, and opening his mouth the dragon swallows the disciple, then ejects him from the rear. Then the master tells the boy that he is now initiated. These ceremonies continue from time to time through thirteen days". (Watters Payne, 1932: 62).

There are other data which link the theme of the eminent Maya in the serpent's mouth with the theme of sorcery. One of these links is glyph X of the "lunar series". Glyph X2 generally appears as 173:41:1021. This glyph group may be described as a completion sign surmounting a profile *ahau* (J. Graham, 1972) within the jaws of a fret-nosed serpent. In one example (Mayer, 1980: pl. 27, glyph A1) this glyph bears the T168 superfix. Though

Mayer's example is not part of a lunar series, his example of this glyph is particularly suggestive of the central motif of Thompson's initiation story. However, the pattern and purpose of the non-lunar glyphs in the lunar series is as yet unknown and this reading of glyph X2 is only a suggestion.

The significance of passage through the body of a serpent as a metaphor for initiation is easier to explain. *Kan*, "serpent", is homologous with *Kan*, "learn" and "teach". Therefore the serpent graphically represents its homonym, learn and teach. This suggests the common artistic theme of a human within the jaws of a serpent is likely to represent the emergence of a newly trained sorcerer from the "body of the teaching" as described by Thompson and Nuñez de la Vega.

All of the artistic themes presented above suggest a "religious" or "shamanic" role for eminent Maya as depicted in the monumental art. The scattering gesture presents them as diviners or prophets. The auto-sacrifice motif shows them as penitents. The costuming as Maya supernaturals shows them as spirit mediums. Identification with the serpent shows them as initiates.

Many of the sorceres on Maya monuments are depicted in contexts which suggest a political, decision making, function. There are a large number of depictions of eminent Maya seated on thrones or daises. In many cases these individuals appear to be giving instructions to or receiving reports from subsidiary figures. In other cases a council appears to be in session with the eminent individuals acting the leadership role. The depiction of eminent Maya on thrones is somewhat ambiguous because monarchs, high priests, judges, council chairs and many other kinds of public officials may sit on thrones.

The depictions of eminent Maya in military roles are clear and unambiguous. There is a large, and long recognized, body of sculpture and murals depicting eminent Maya with weapons and armor. There are also a number of depictions of eminent Maya in the process of taking military captives. The power to call up soldiers and to make war was clearly one of the prerogatives of eminent Maya as depicted in the monumental art.

Perhaps connected with the depiction of eminent Maya as war leaders is the depiction of eminent Maya as judges of men's fate. The clearest examples of this role are at Bonampak, room 2, Front wall, where the judged are military captives, and Piedras Negras Stela 12 where the circumstance of the judged is unknown. In both

these examples the judged are depicted with fear in their faces and are clearly pleading their cases. In both cases an eminent Maya sits or stands above, gazing down on the judged. There are no clear depictions of eminent Maya mediating a dispute between two individuals, but the judgement scenes presented above suggest a judiciary role for eminent Maya of the Classic Period.

Another theme is represented by depictions of eminent Maya in ballplayer costume. The ball game itself is highly ritualized, and eminent Maya shown as ball players frequently wear costume associated with Maya supernaturals, in addition to their ball playing gear. A review of the motifs presented above shows that the only unequivocal evidence for role, aside militaristic, is "shamanic" or "religious" in nature.

Another problem is Proskouriakoff's belief that her identification of robed and skirted figures in Maya art as women pulls the rug out from under those who had believed Maya priestes were depicted on monuments. All her identification indicates is that women were depicted in Maya art along with men. This does not demonstrate the secular nature of the male figures nor does it demonstrate the secular nature of the female figures.

The supposed secular nature of the female figures depicted on Maya sculpture is cast in doubt by depictions of women performing auto-sacrifice, wearing costume and bearing emblems associated with Maya supernaturals. Also, as Miles observes, "*Ah itz*, was undoubtedly the ancient counterpart of the modern *Ah itz*, consulted by individuals of every rank for private divination, curing, and witchcraft. It is the only office open to women, and probably had prerequisites similar to those for modern brujos of illness, cure and dreams" (Miles, 1957: 751). Also, Tedlock informs us that women are an important component of modern Maya religious hierarchies. She explains this as a manifestation of the sense of harmonious balance and complementarity which Maya religion seeks to establish and maintain (Tedlock, 1982). If the eminent males depicted on the stelae are "religious" figures, then it is likely that the eminent females appearing with them, whether wives, mothers, daughters, or unrelated are also appearing in "religious" roles.

Proskouriakoff has destroyed forever the once popular notion that human depictions on Maya sculpture represent anthropomorphic deities (Proskouriakoff, 1960). Indeed, Marcus casts a wither-

ing light on the notion that the Maya even worshipped anthropomorphic deities at all (Marcus, 1978).

As Marcus observes in her review of the documentation of Zapotec and Maya religion, Mesoamerican "ethnohistory [is] fraught... with European preconceptions and misconceptions" (Marcus, 1978: 173). Her observation concerning the ethnocentric nature of contact period Spanish interpretation is as true for Mesoamerican social structure as it is for Mesoamerican religions. Just as the contact period Spanish had only their "knowledge of the ancient Greco-Roman pantheon... as their model for an 'idolatrous' religion" (Marcus, 1978, 174), so they had only their knowledge of contemporary western monarchies as their model for a "dynastic" social structure.

Bricker has observed that the structure of Maya society was of so little interest to the European invaders that they naively assumed Maya leaders were, like their own masters, despotic monarchs. She further notes this misconception of Maya leadership has dominated the literature on the Maya to such an extent that colonial and modern Maya revolts and revivalist movements are invariably interpreted as attempts to re-establish Maya "monarchies". In her monograph Bricker examines the Maya and "European" documentation on each of these historical movements in detail. She concludes that in no case did the concept of Maya "Kingship" originate with the Maya themselves (Bricker, 1981).

While Bricker's argument deals exclusively with colonial and modern Maya history, it strongly implies that the concept of kingship was introduced from Europe by the Europeans themselves.

All of the epigraphic evidence for "Dynasties" and "Dynastic Succession" which has been found subsequent to Proskouriakoff's 1960 paper is predicated on her assumption that Classic Period inscriptions record "dynastic" histories and genealogy. There has been a complete absence of rigorous methodology in papers dealing with the putative genealogies of eminent Maya of the Classic Period. Researchers commonly assume that the content of this unknown writing system is known and proceed to base translations of Maya script on that assumed content.

Proskouriakoff interprets 168 "toothache" as the glyph of an "inaugural event" or "accession to Power". Her argument for this interpretation is as follows:

"There is only one date in each series associated with this glyph [168: "toothache"], and since this date stands near or at the beginning of the record of current events for the series, it will be called the 'inaugural date' Such a date is often repeated or celebrated by the record of its tun-count anniversaries. References to its cease when another ascension stela is erected and a new inaugural date takes its place" (Proskouriakoff, 1960: 544).

Here no effort is made to link the pattern of inscriptional dates to any form of leadership. However, in her "Discussion and Speculations", Proskouriakoff cites passages in the Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel (Roys, 1933: 74, MS, p. 11) as evidence that her "ascension motif" in the sculptural art of Piedras Negras represents "the accession of a ruler" (Proskouriakoff, 1960: 460). This is the only place where she attempts to justify her implicit assumption that eminent Maya were "ruling dynasts". On reading page 75 of the Chumayel, it is apparent that the individual referred to in the text could not possibly be a ruling dynast for he is Hunac Ceel the usurper! However, this is simply a poor selection of comparative texts, the main problem with these passages of the Chilam Balam of Chumale being Roys' translation of *ahau* and *ahauilil* as "ruler". These words mean a number of things but are normally translated "lord", though "eminent man" encompasses the full semantic realm of these titles.

In her "Discussion and Speculations" on initial and inaugural dates or records, Proskouriakoff suggests:

"If the inaugural date [168: "toothache"] celebrates the accession of a ruler, the initial date ["upended frog"], which falls between 12 and 31 years earlier, must represent an event that happened early in the ruler's life, possibly even his birth, though more probably some ceremony corresponding to baptism or to his *initiation into formal training*" (Proskouriakoff, 1960: 460, author's underscoring).

If the initial date represents "initiation into formal training", then it is likely that the inaugural date, 168: "toothache", represents completion of formal training. 168: "toothache" as completion of formal training is a possibility which merits further investigation. First it is necessary to identify the object represented by the "toothache" element of 168: "toothache".

Schele identifies the "toothache" element of 168: "toothache" as "the 'bundle' motif which plays an important role in Maya pictorial scenes, especially on the lintels of Yaxchilan and in the

murals of Bonampak" (Schele and Miller, 1983: 63). Details on the role of bundles in Maya religion are provided by Landa and by modern ethnography from the sacred calendar-using Maya of highland Guatemala.

In his description of the ceremonies for the month of *Zip*, Landa states:

"On the following day the physicians and the sorcerers assembled in one of their houses with their wives, and the priests drove away the evil spirit. Which being done, they opened the bundles of their medicine, in which they kept many little trifles and, each having his own, little idols of the goddess of medicine, whom they call *Ix Chel*. And so they called this festival *Ihicil Ix Chel*, as well as some small stones, called *am*, of the kind which they used for casting lots. And with great devotion, they invoked with prayers the gods of medicine whom they said were *Itzamna*, *Cit Bolon Tun* and *Ahau Chamahes*, and the priests giving them the incense, they burned it in the brazier of the new fire and meanwhile the *chacs* smeared the idols and the small stones with another blue bitumin like that of the priest's books. This being done each wrapped up each of the things which belonged to his office and taking the bundles on their backs, all danced a dance called *Chan Tuniah* (Tozzer, 1941: 154-155).

Landa's "bundles of their medicine" are an important link between the Classic Period "toothache" glyph, Schele's "bundle motif and the divining bundles of the modern highland Maya. All ethnographies which deal with calendar divination among the modern Maya point to the importance of the divining bundle and its contents. With the training and initiation of Tedlock as a calendar diviner, we have our first glimpse of calendar divination, and the divining bundle, from an insider's viewpoint.

Tedlock observes that initiation as a calendar diviner is practically a prerequisite to the attainment of any position of public responsibility within the Maya community where she worked. The primary task for the Maya acolyte is to learn to manipulate the seeds, paralleling Landa's "small stones", contained in the divining bundle and to memorize the sacred calendar with its associated prognostics (Tedlock, 1982). In Tedlock's account we further learn that the divining bundle is not simply an inanimate tool, it is the physical manifestation of a familiar spirit or spiritual spouse. Indeed the final initiation ceremony is regarded as a wedding (Tedlock, 1982: 71).

Modern Maya calendar diviners are divinely "elected" through

a variety of stereotyped signs. Divine election is recognized when an individual is subject to certain dreams or illnesses (Tedlock, 1982; Miles, 1947; Colby and Colby, 1981). On occasion, where there is a vacancy in a particular office, a council consisting of all living holders of that office will convene to hold a divination and thereby "elect" a new member (Tedlock, 1982: 52-58, 74-82).

Following any of these signs of divine "election", the chosen one will begin training for the office indicated. When the training period is complete, the novice receives his/her divining bundle and is presented at the altar of his/her teacher's ancestral shrine (Tedlock, 1982: 64-74). This divining bundle, or something very similar, is represented by the "toothache" glyph. The "inaugural event" is therefore the presentation of the divining bundle to the novice "Sorcerer".*

It is likely that initiation as a "Sorcerer" was a prerequisite for holding high public office in the Initial Series Period as well. A model of Maya leadership and social structure based on initiatory, rather than genetic, lineages alone would also explain the difficulties researchers have had identifying patterns of Maya succession.

Roys discusses the absence of genetically determined lines of succession within the Late Period *Xiu* lineage, where, bloodlines of actual successors are well documented (Roys, 1933: Appendix E). He also examines the case of the *ah Canul* who, although they had no claim to dynastic legitimacy and were recognized as the descendants of foreign intruders, were accepted as legitimate rulers (Roys, 1933: Appendix E).

A possible Terminal-Classic parallel to the *ah Canul* occurs at Seibal where early Cycle 10 monuments show individuals with "foreign" costume and facial features. The accompanying inscriptions display the T168 superfix, suggesting these "foreigners" had received initiation as "Sorcerers" and were therefore regarded as legitimate leaders at Seibal.

Because of Berlin's observation that "emblem" clauses are primarily associated with individual sites, many researchers have assumed that they represent geo-political concepts such as "cities" or "states" (Marcus, 1976). However, there are several flaws in this hypothesis. Sites using several "emblems" are inconsistent with the geo-political hypothesis, as are single "emblems" shared by

* This would explain why T573, a knot, is used to represent *hel*, "change" or "succession". The knot which binds the bundle is a metaphor for the bundle and therefore the succession itself.

several sites. For example, five distinct "emblem" clauses are appended to the names and titles of leading sorcerers at Palenque, while three distinct "emblem" clauses are appended to the names and titles of leading "sorcerers" at Tikal. Conversely, the "Petexbatun emblem" is appended to the names and titles of leading "sorcerers" at La Amalia, Dos Pilas, Tamarindito, Aguateca, Seibal and Ixtutz. In none of these contexts is T59 or T87, both prepositions, affixed to the "emblem", name or titles to indicate origin or affiliation. Therefore it seems likely that these "sorcerers" are native to the sites where they are depicted.

If "emblems" do not represent geo-political concepts, Tedlock's description of the divinatory election and initiation succession of modern Maya leaders suggests the possibility that "emblems" represent initiatory lines of succession. Such initiatory succession fits the inscriptional evidence without the inconsistencies of the "dynastic hypothesis". Thus, the distribution of the "Petexbatun emblem" would reflect the domination of several sites by the "sorcerers" of a single line of succession. Also, the use of multiple "emblem" clauses at Palenque and Tikal would reflect the domination of a single site by the "sorcerer(s)" of several lines of succession. This interpretation of T168: "emblem" also brings our understanding of Pre-Columbian Maya political organization into agreement with what is known of modern Quiché Maya, among whom the *ajitz* [*ah-its*] "are highly respected and often chosen as lineage or canton priest-shamans as well as civil leaders" (Tedlock, 1982: 74).

Summary

Part one of this paper considers the iconographic, linguistic, and ethnographic evidence both for and against Lounbury's (1973) reading of T168. Lounbury's iconographic identifications of T584 and T687a are accepted as correct. However, his phonetic reading of T687a is found to be too narrow and non-productive for the context of T168, due to his uncritical reliance on the confused, though sometimes valuable, "alphabetic" approach of Landa. An alternative, logographic, reading of T687a, as *its*, "resin, sorcery", is suggested for its appearance in the context of T168. T168 is therefore read *itsa'*, "sorcerer". Variation in the reading order of T168 is noted and explained as a reflection of linguistic variation in the spoken form of the title written with T168.

Part two examines Classic Period iconography for evidence concerning the nature of eminent Maya whose inscribed life histories contain the T168 title. Evidence for religious or ritual roles related to those of modern Sorcerers is strongly suggested in themes of Classic Maya sculpture. Only the theme of eminent Maya as military leaders is as unequivocal. The important sculptural theme of the serpent bearing an eminent Maya in its mouth is also examined in light of early Colonial and Modern sorcerers and their initiation.

Thompson's "toothache" glyph is then examined in light of Classic Period inscriptions and iconography, Contact Period accounts, and modern ethnography. This material suggests "toothache" represents a sacred bundle and that Proskouriakoff's "inaugural event" is initiation into the Sorcerer rank of the Maya religious hierarchy.

Finally, it is suggested that the figures depicted on Maya monuments and identified with the T168 title are not "ruling dynasts", but rather a "divine elect" which was independent of the hereditary nobility. T168: "emblem" is therefore interpreted as a reference to initiatory, rather than genetic, lines of descent.

Conclusions

While Lounsbury's iconographic identification of T687a as incense is correct, his reading of T687a as *pom* produces a reading of T168 as *ah po*, a title which is only known from the Contact Period Cackchiquel of the southern highlands (Lounsbury, 1973: 131). This gives a false impression of the significance of the T168 title. The reading of T168 as *itsa'*, "sorcerer", both explains the widespread distribution of the affix and steers our conception of Classic Maya leadership closer to what is known of Post Classic, Colonial and modern Maya leadership.

If T168 represents the Maya title *itsa'*, "sorcerer", we would do well to look to colonial and modern Maya sorcerers for models of Pre-Colombian Maya leadership and succession. The use of T168 in titles of Classic period eminent Maya and the respect accorded sorcerers by modern Maya are as close as the different political circumstances of these two periods will permit. The presentation of the sacred bundle, "toothache" in the inscriptions, to both modern and Classic Maya office holders is also closely parallel. We can no longer simply assume that the eminent Classic



Maya depicted on the monuments and discussed in the inscriptions were monarchs in the western model who succeeded each other in genetic lines. The evidence for a "shamanic"/"religious" leadership component with initiatory lines of succession is too strong to ignore.

Appendix 1: Chronological distribution of T168 and the "sorcerer" title

Thompson's T168 first appears in the inscriptions at 8.16.0.0.0 on the carved peccary skull from Copan and continues to appear at virtually every site with hieroglyphic texts until the practice of carving inscriptions ceases. In most cases human depictions accompany these inscriptions. Proskouriakoff identifies these human depictions as historical figures and the accompanying inscriptions as life histories (Proskouriakoff, 1960). In most cases there is a single figure, in many cases there are subsidiary figures, and in some cases it is difficult to identify the primary figure.

In most cases where there is a single figure, or where the primary figure is identifiable, these figures are depicted as members of a social elite. The bear emblems of office, are richly ornamented and elaborately costumed. In addition to these characteristics, they often sit on thrones, receive visitors and gifts, wear military garb, capture foreign dignitaries, perform rituals and are attended by subordinates. Where hieroglyphic inscriptions accompany these elite depictions, one or more of the titular passages generally contains T168. Possession of the T168 "Sorcerer" title was almost surely a prerequisite to the social status represented by depiction as a primary figures on sculpture monuments.

T168 also appears in each of the three Post Classic codices which span the remainder of Pre-Conquest Maya history. In the Codex Dresden, T168 appears superfixed to glyph b1 on pages 25-28 and page 60. Dresden pages 25-28 show the primary actors and officials participating in new year ceremonies (Thompson, 1972: 90-91). Glyph b1 is 168:573, *itsa'hel*, "Successor Sorcerer": On page 26, this title is augmented by another glyph at b2. Glyph b2 is 168:544, *itsa'kin*, "Priest Sorcerer". In all four cases these titles can only refer to the solitary figure seated in section b.

Dresden page 60 shows human *katun* lords as the agents of *katun* history and prophesy (Thompson, 197: 79). Glyph b1 is

XI.168:533:130, *buluc itsa'ahau?*, "Sorcerer [of *katun*] 11 *ahau*". This title probably refers to the enthroned figure in section b.

In the Codex Paris T168 appears superfixed to the introductory glyphs of section b on pages 2-11. Paris pages 2-11 show the primary actors and officials associated with *katun* history and prophesy. The introductory glyphs of section b on pages 2-11 are a doubled 168:573:130, *itsa'hel?*, "Successor Sorcerer".

In the Codex Madrid T168 appears superfixed to glyph a16 on pages 34 and 37. Madrid pages 34-37 show the primary actors and officials participating in new year ceremonies. The absence of T168 on pages 35 and 36 is peculiar, but the Codex Madrid is noted for its peculiarities and slovenly execution.

During the Colonial Period and the first years of the modern period the Yucatec Books of Chilam Balam show the *itsa'* as the militant nativist leadership of declining populations of traditional Maya. Most of this material is couched in terms of calendric disputes and the concomitant legitimacy of succession (Edmonson, 1982: xvi-xx). Finally, recent ethnography in highland Guatemala shows the *ajitz* [*ah-its*] continuing role as lineage, religious and civil leaders, in the face of almost 400 years of foreign domination! (Tedlock, 1982: 74).

In all four of these contexts, "Sorcerers" from the highest levels of both religious and political hierarchies. They loom large on the stage of Maya history; indeed, their actions are Maya history.

Appendix 2: Glyph groups containing T168

An examination of glyph groups containing T168 will be useful in revealing more about the "Sorcerers" and their organization. T168 appears as a component in a number of stereotyped glyph groups in Maya writing. Some of the most common of these glyph groups are 168:544; 168:613; 168:573; 168:612; #168:533; #168:28:548; 168: "toothache" and 168: "emblem".

Glyph 1. 168:544:130. *itsa'kin?*, "day sorcerer"

T544 is the glyph of the "daykeeper" or "calendar priest" whose main function is to read the fortune of the day. Lizana derives *ah kin*, the title of these religious practitioners, from the verb *kinyah*, "to draw or cast lots" (Tozzer, 1941: 27, n. 148). For a more expanded description of the duties of modern *ah kin*, see Lincoln, 1942; Oakes, 1951; Colby and Colby, 1981, and Tedlock, 1982.

Glyph 2. 168:613. *itsa' men?*, "sorcerer [of] doing" or "sorcerer [of] making"

Most likely T613 is the glyph of religious practitioners known as (*a*)*h men*, "doers" or "makers", in modern Yucatan (Redfield and Villa, 1934: 74-77). This glyph is used interchangeably with Glyph 1 in the inscriptions.

Glyph 3a. 168:573:130. *itsa' hel?*, "sorcerer [of the] succession"

Thompson identifies T573 as the Maya word *hel*, "change" or "succession" (Thompson, 1950: 161). This glyph designates individual heirs to the *itsa'* tradition and is interchangeable with glyphs 1 and 2.

Glyph 3b. #168:573:130. # *itsa' hel?*, "#th sorcerer [of the] succession"

Riese identifies this glyph as the numerical position of a particular eminent sorcerer within the history of a given site (Riese, 1984: 271-279).

Gglyph 4. 168:612. *itsa'le*, "sorcerer [of] rank"

Kelley identifies T612 as a leaf representing the Maya word *le*, : "leaf", "feather", "tremble", "generation", "rank", "age group", "order" (Schele, 1976: 14). In the inscription this compound appears interchangeably with glyph 3a.

Glyph 5. #168:533:130. *itsa' # ahau?*, "sorcerer [of *Katun*] # *ahau*"

This glyph refers to the human "*katun* lords" who play such an important role in the Books of Chilam Balam (Edmonson, 1982: xvi-xx).

Glyph 6. #168.28:548. # *itsa' katun*, "# *katun* [as] sorcerer"

Proskouriakoff has identified this glyph as "katunes... to be counted from initial dates of records" (Proskouriakoff, 1960: 472). However, this glyph actually records time elapsed from the inaugural dates of records, suggesting that extended service as an *itsa'* was highly regarded.

Glyph 7. 168: "toothache", "sorcerer's bundle"

This glyph is associated with inaugural dates and records the initiation of an individual as a "Sorcerer". The main event of this initiation is receipt of the "Sorcerers bundle".

Glyph 8. 168: "emblem", *itsa'?*, "sorcerer [of]?"

Since the main sign of this compound varies, it is difficult to determine the true meaning of this glyph. Berlin found the main

signs of this glyph are generally associated with specific sites (Berlin, 1958; 111). However, he is not certain whether "emblem" glyphs refer to geography, genealogy, religion or government.

The proposed readings of glyphs 1-8 give a more detailed picture of the nature of Maya sorcerers and their organization. Glyph 7 records the initiation of an individual into the highest rank, sorcerer, of the Maya religious hierarchy. Glyphs 3a and 4 record an initiate's position as a member of an ongoing tradition. Glyph 3b pinpoints the numerical position of a Maya sorcerer within the history of a given polity. Glyph 4 records the length of service of a Maya sorcerer to a given polity. Glyph 5, a late development, records a specific period of service to a given polity. Glyph 8 records the status of a sorcerer as representative of a particular line of descent within the "sorcerer" tradition. Glyphs 1 and 2 assert the religious role of eminent Maya sorcerers.

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