

HISTORICAL DATA IN THE INSCRIPTIONS OF YAXCHILAN

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Part 1

THE REIGN OF SHIELD-JAGUAR

In a paper published in 1960 in *American Antiquity* (1), I discussed a certain pattern of dates that was related to motifs on stelae and to their placement at Piedras Negras. The pattern was explained by regarding the texts as records of events in the lives of successive rulers. Assuming that the suggested interpretations were essentially correct, I here attempt to apply them to texts from Yaxchilan without repeating the argument presented. My object is to see how the content of Yaxchilan records differs from that at Piedras Negras, and to discover if the assumption of historical import helps to clarify Yaxchilan dates, which have proved very difficult to place in time.

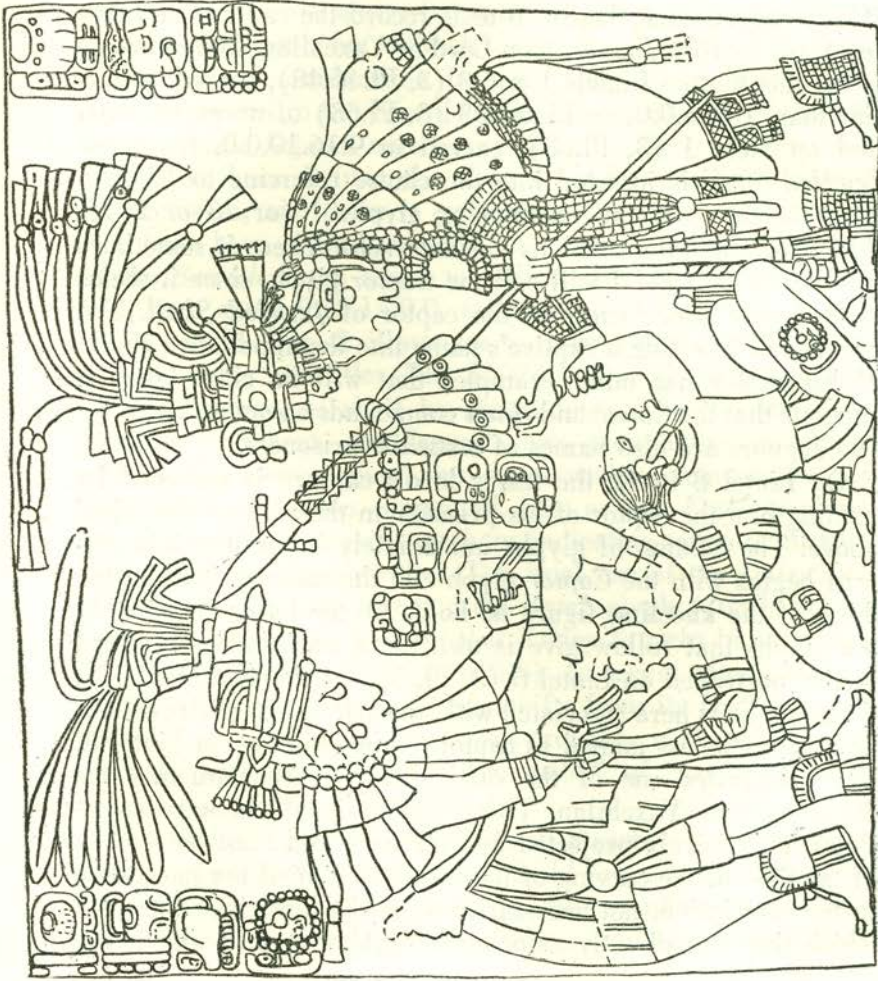
The pattern of setting up monuments at Yaxchilan and the events recorded upon them are patently different from those of Piedras Negras. There are fewer Initial Series notations and no regular sequence of consecutive hotuns. Since many stelae are in poor condition, most readable texts come from lintels that are inscribed with Calendar Round notations only. Fortunately, on Lintels 29, 30 and 31 (2, Pl.112,*a,b*; 3, Pl.60,61) there is a very clear record of the birth and accession of a certain ruler, whose identifying clause, noted by Thompson (4, fig. 46,10-16) and Berlin (5, pp. 115,116), is characterized by the presence of the *Bird-Jaguar* glyph: 126.236:751 as transcribed in Thompson's system (6). The date of this ruler's accession is 9.16.1.0.0. Another nominal clause contains the

Shield-Jaguar glyph (152.751), and is associated with earlier dates. It appears to designate a predecessor of *Bird-Jaguar*. Since records dealing with events in the reigns of these two rulers are by far the most numerous and provide more reliable historical data than the scattered texts of earlier and later periods, they will be examined first.

Before attempting to take up the sequence of events, however, I must mention a pattern of glyphic notation that was not evident at Piedras Negras. There are several examples of this pattern at Yaxchilan, Lintels 8 (3, Pl.52) and 41 (2, Pl.178B) providing the clearest illustration of it. The date inscribed on both these lintels is 7Imix 14Zec. I believe Morley was mistaken in ascribing different long-count positions to the two notations. They clearly record the same event, and their principal figures are dressed very much alike, with a Tlaloc head-dress, a short cape, a scarf of quilted armor, and a round, beaded, pectoral ornament. Since both texts identify the figure as that of *Bird-Jaguar*, the best long-count position for the date is 9.16.4.1.1, about three years after his accession.

The scene on Lintel 8 (fig. 1) shows *Bird-Jaguar* and a lesser lord in the act of capturing prisoners. Such scenes may be realistic portrayals, or may be symbolic of conquest. Though I speak here of the captives as if they were individual men, I hold the reservation that they may be representatives or even embodiments of tribes or towns.

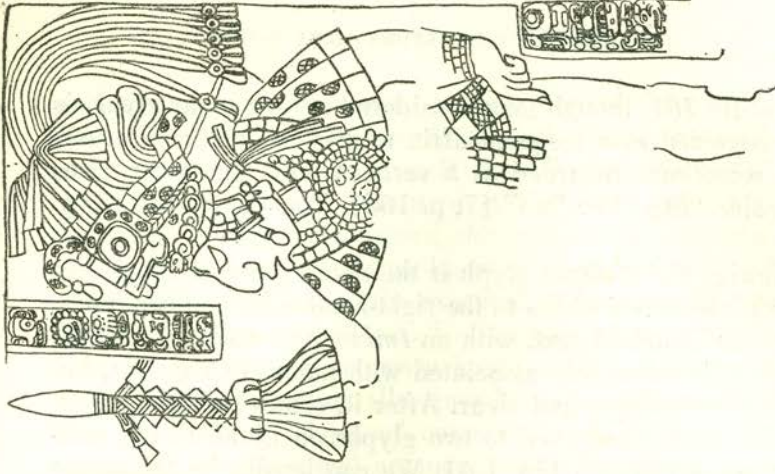
On the thigh of each captive shown on Lintel 8 is a glyph that doubtless gives his identity. That of *Bird-Jaguar's* captive has as its main element a circle of dots containing a skull, not very clear here, but surely identical to the same element of the last glyph in the upper left panel, and to the second glyph of the central panel of Lintel 41. Although the first notation has one affix, the second two, and the last none, these affixes apparently are not germane to the reference the glyph makes to the captive, whom I will name *Jeweled Skull*, with to implication, of course, that this is a translation. In spite of considerable erosion, the glyphs on Lintel 8 can be identified by comparison with the inscription on Lintel 41, which contains an almost identical passage. The glyph immediately after the date on Lintel 8 and the first glyph of the central panel of Lintel 41 is the *Capture* glyph: 87.515.181:25, consistently associated with scenes of capture, prisoners, and portraits of armed men.



Lintel 8

FIGURE 1. Two records of the capture of *Jeweled Skull*. Note close duplication of costume detail in the two portraits of *Bird-Jaguar*.

Lintel 41



The post-fix *181*, though long considered to be a lunar glyph, is now recognized as a frequent affix to glyphs signifying events and is sometimes regarded as a verbal suffix. Knorozov gives it the value "h(a)" or "ah" (7, p. 106), Thompson, "u" (4, p. 286).

Following the *Capture* glyph is the name *Jeweled Skull*. The text on Lintel 8 now shifts to the right-hand side, and continues, as does the Lintel 41 text, with an *Imix* compound: *1.501:102*. This glyph is intimately associated with names of captives, but its precise meaning is not clear. After it, comes the designation of *Bird-Jaguar*, condensed to two glyphs on Lintel 8, but written out more fully on Lintel 41. We can hardly be far wrong if we conclude that these two texts record the capture of *Jeweled Skull by Bird-Jaguar*, then Lord of Yaxchilan. More curious is the fact that on Lintels 1 and 3 (3, Pl.46,48), carved no earlier than 9.16.5.0.0, on Lintel 33 (3, Pl.63) of uncertain date, and on Stela 1 (3, Pl.68), carved in 9.16.10.0.0, the name *Jeweled Skull* is inserted into the clause referring to *Bird-Jaguar* together with an introducing glyph: *1* (or *13* or *204*). *108:764*. This glyph and its variants (elsewhere it sometimes has the suffix *106*) I will call the *Captor* glyph, since it seems to designate *Bird-Jaguar* as the captor of *Jeweled Skull*. The practice of inserting a captive's name into the appellative clause of his captor has other examples that will be cited later. It suggests that the *Cauac* and *Ahau* compounds associated with the two Jaguars are also names of erstwhile prisoners.

On Lintel 8 itself, the lesser lord's capture is recorded by naming him the captor of his prisoner in the manner described above. The column of glyphs immediately in front of his portrait begins with the *Captor* glyph and the name written on the thigh of the kneeling figure he holds by the hair. Presumably the glyphs that follow give his own name and titles. This lord is also portrayed on Lintel 6 (3, Pl. 50) of the same building. Although he is here associated with an earlier date (9.16.1.8.6), he is nevertheless named as captor of the prisoner on Lintel 8. This illustrates one of the difficulties of reconstructing the chronology of Yaxchilan. Titles and designations were sometimes retroactively projected into the past, and must be read as of the time of the carving of the inscription or of the latest date in the inscription, not necessarily as of the historical date with which they are directly associated. Perhaps that is why it has

proved impossible to place Calendar Round dates in time by their association with numbered *Ben-ich katuns* included in the name-clauses of the Jaguars. If these katuns are regarded as expressing the current katuns of rulers' lives, referring to the latest date of any given record, the sequence is somewhat more consistent, and possibly if we knew when the various sculptures at Yaxchilan were actually executed, a completely consistent system could be worked out. Unlike the stelae of Piedras Negras, which were set up every hotun to record current events, the lintels of Yaxchilan illustrate history and are not marked with "dedicatory" dates of current hotuns. Table 1 presents a tentative chronological arrangement of Yaxchilan dates associated with *Shield-Jaguar*, but some of the dates suggested are no more than probable estimates.

With these considerations in mind, let us now turn to the recorded events in the life of one of the greatest of Yaxchilan rulers, *Shield-Jaguar*, noted especially for his numerous conquests. We know neither the date of his birth, nor the date of his accession, and there is even some reason to think that he may have been a foreigner and an usurper. If we can depend on the *Ben-ich katun* series to indicate his age, he must have been born about 9.10.15.0.0, and lived until he was well over 90 years old. Fig. 2 illustrates various glyphic series which give his name and titles. The *Shield-Jaguar* glyph is probably a lineage name, as shall be shown later. The *Ben-ich katun* glyph may indicate the Jaguar's age, though this is not yet certain. The *Captor* glyph introduces various compounds, preponderantly the *Ahau* compound. One or two *Emblem* glyphs are almost always present, perhaps indicating towns or districts over which the Jaguar ruled. The final use of the *Imix-comb-imix* glyph (501.25:501) and the *Batab* glyph (1030,l,m) appears to be optional. I doubt that Kelley is right in suggesting that the former is a title (8, p.306). It occurs after names of men and women alike and never shifts from its position at the end of the name-clause. Thompson probably is nearer the truth when he compares it to the "he dicko" of Spanish-speaking orators (6, p.96).

The sculptures and inscriptions on Structure 44 contain the most comprehensive account of *Shield-Jaguar's* life, featuring his military exploits. Unfortunately, the record we have is fragmentary. All the lintels of this building are badly damaged and

yield only partial texts. Of the hieroglyphic steps there are adequate photographs only of the panels in the middle and in the southeast doorways, and the latter panel is partly obscured by the masonry of a jamb resting upon it. Thompson has corrected Morley's reading of the dates, advancing the latest to 9.15.0.12.0 (9), when *Shield-Jaguar* was already in the ninth decade of his life, but the inscription may continue further, and it is probable that the record was made after his death. The lintels were apparently put in place even later, but I am inclined to think that they were dismantled from an earlier structure, for their deep-relief carving is inconsistent with the style of the early years of Katun 16, and similar carvings on Structure 23 record Initial Series in Katun 14, and include the 4th *Ben-ich katun* in the name of the Jaguar. 9.14.5.0.0. is the earliest hotun that we can assign to the Str. 44 lintels.

Now for the facts recorded. The panel of the upper step of the middle doorway, under Lintel 45, begins with an Initial Series, 9.12.8.14.1, 12Imix 4Pop (3, Pl.79), when *Shield-Jaguar* was already past 30. The date is followed by a somewhat unusual but clearly recognizable *Capture* glyph, and the *Imix* compound noted on Lintel 8. The next glyph, preceded by the affix 59 (*ti*) is the name of the captive: 12.533:102, here called simply *Ahau*. The man portrayed in the panel illustrating the text has this name and the *Imix* compound inscribed on his loincloth. The fact that the *Imix* compound, which normally follows a captive's name takes a *ti* prefix when it precedes it, may give an important clue to its translation, but in this preliminary study I have not attempted linguistic interpretations, leaving them to experts in that field who may wish in the future to check my conclusions. *Ahau's* capture is symbolized by the bands on his arms, indicating that he is bound with ropes. There is a rope also around his neck, perhaps because he is destined for sacrifice, though such a rope is also often worn by figures performing blood-letting rites. He wears a large headdress, showing that he is a man of rank, and carries a fan.

The five glyphs that follow the captive's name are unknown. Perhaps they explain his status or give details of his capture. There follow four expressions introduced by the *Captor* glyph and leading to the name of *Shield-Jaguar*. The first names *Ahau* as the captive; others I have been unable to identify, but

they are probably either victims of earlier conquests or other prisoners taken in the same war.

The capture of *Ahau* is illustrated on Lintel 45 above the step (2, Pl.114,c), but the inscription on this lintel is largely destroyed, and one can see only the day of the date, the *Imix* compound, and part of the shield of the Jaguar, so that its text adds little to our knowledge of the event.

I find it hard to believe that this monumental record, made many years later, does no more than record some small raid on a defenseless village made to secure victims for sacrifice, as, according to Thompson, does the mural scene from Bonampak (10, p.51). I prefer to regard it as documenting a battle of some political importance, perhaps even one in which *Shield-Jaguar* won the lordship of Yaxchilan, for from this time on, the name *Ahau*, introduced by the *Captor* glyph, is constantly mentioned in references to him. The prefix of the *Ahau* is sometimes Thompson's affix 12, and sometimes 229. There seems to be no pattern to this change, and the two affixes are probably equivalent, if not interchangeable. Knorozov's value "ah" for affix 12 (7, p.105) seems very apt, since it is so frequently attached to single signs apparently designating a masculine figure.

After describing the battle, the text on the step continues with a secondary series of 12.0, immediately followed by an expression in which one recognizes the *Capture* glyph, without its affix 181, the name *Ahau*, and the *Forward-count* glyph, which together establish the beginning and the direction of the count. The practice of repeating after a secondary series the notation of the earlier event is not uncommon and is often a help in deciphering series that are discontinuous. I don't recall that it has ever been mentioned explicitly, though doubtless epigraphers have used it from time to time. The changes in the form of the event-glyphs when they are so used, may offer another useful check on linguistic decipherment.

The date reached by the secondary series is 5Imix 4Mac. Its distance from the battle date may be excessive for a celebration of victory, but it could represent the consolidation of *Shield-Jaguar's* power by the sacrifice of war prisoners. The sixth glyph after the date is the familiar *Hand-fish* sign (714) with the coefficient "9", here probably to be read as "many", since normally this glyph does not take a numerical prefix. The next

is the so-called *Fire glyph* (122:563), and there follow several not clearly identified god and animal-heads. All this suggests a religious rite rather than a mundane event.

A similar complex of glyphic forms occurs with the same date on Lintel 25 (11, Pl.87), carved at least 42 years later. In this case, the *Hand-fish* glyph without any coefficient follows the date immediately, as if one of the "many" rites performed on that day were singled out for commemoration. The illustration shows a kneeling woman with a bowl of sacrificial paraphernalia beside her and a skull in her hand. Above her rises a two-headed serpent, with the head of Tlaloc in the jaws of the tail-head. From the upper head emerges the bust of a fully accoutred young warrior wearing a highly conventional Tlaloc mask. To me this suggests not so much a "vision" or "apparition", as Kubler describes it (12, P.156), as an invocation to the spirit of some long-deceased warrior, possibly one of the victims of sacrifice in the war with *Ahau*, whose apotheosis is symbolized by the serpent and the mask. The identity of this young warrior is in doubt. His name, if mentioned at all, is probably in the L-shaped panel beneath the head of the serpent. It begins with the so-called *Fist glyph* (93.672:142), associated elsewhere with the 5th *Ben-ich katun* and *Shield-Jaguar* in references that are probably posthumous. Not all posthumous references include the *Fist glyph*, however, and its association with the deceased is still somewhat dubious.

Shield-Jaguar's name, preceded by 4 *Ben-ich katun* ends the inscription on the underside of Lintel 25, but the count continues on the front (11, Pl.89) with a secondary series of 2.2.7.0, the start being indicated by the repetition of the *Hand-fish* sign and associated glyphs. The date reached, 3Imix 4Chen (9.14.11.15.1) is probably the date of the ceremony shown in the carving, for the woman's name appears here for the first time, after the statement of the event. Moreover, it is this date, rather than the date on the underside which agrees with the *Ben-ich katun* notation.

Lintel 25 was apparently the central lintel of Structure 23. The inscriptions on Lintels 24 (11, Pl.86) and (3, Pl.58), which span the two other doorways, also have ritual themes if one can judge by the presence of the so-called *Fire glyph* and grotesque heads of "gods". Lintel 24 has in addition the glyph 712:24 that often accompanies blood-letting rites, and a com-

pound of 568c, which Lizardi Ramos identifies as a glyph of human sacrifice at Copan (14). In the scene, a woman with a distinctive scroll tattooed on her cheek is drawing a cord through her tongue, while a man, probably *Shield-Jaguar*, stands over her with a wand. On Lintel 26, it is the Jaguar who seems about to perform a sacrifice with a hafted knife, while the same woman holds his helmet and shield. There is a *Toothache* glyph in this inscription, though not in a context which indicates a record of accession. Another association of the *Toothache* glyph with a similar motif occurs on the Tablero de los Esclavos at Palenque. The latest date of Structure 23 is probably 9.14.12.6.12, so that these carvings appear to be later than the lintels of Structure 44 but earlier than the inscription on the steps.

To return to the conquests of *Shield-Jaguar*, another is recorded on the southeast step of Str. 44 (9, fig. 1). The first date inscribed here is very early: 9.6.10.14.15, according to Thompson, and *Shield-Jaguar*, of course, is not mentioned. A long secondary series then leads to 5Ix 17Kankin (9.14.1.17.14), which may be under the jamb of the doorway and cannot be seen. The first three visible glyphs, however, are essentially the same as the corresponding glyphs on Lintel 46 of the Northwest doorway (3, Pl.68), where the date is recorded as a date of capture. They give the name of the captive, beginning with 229.281:23, here shortened to *Kan Cross*. It is unfortunate that the Initial Series that gave the long count position of this date is almost completely gone. Thompson's reading of it does not agree with the lunar data given, and it is a question whether one should rely on it. So far, however, there is no better reading I can suggest.

Kan Cross appears in the names of *Shield-Jaguar* on Lintel 32 (3, Pl.62), and on Stelae 12 (3, Pl.76) and 23 (2, Pl.178A,a), in each case with a record of 5 *Ben-ich katun*. In every instance it lacks the expected *Captor* glyph to introduce it and is followed by another glyph on Lintel 32 and on St. 23. By the beginning of Katun 14, *Shield-Jaguar* was well into his sixties, and was probably not himself active on the field of battle, although the capture seems to be attributed to him, perhaps only in an indirect way, and not as a personal deed of valor.

A secondary series on the southeast step of Str. 44 leads to a

third capture on 2Chuen 14Mol (9.14.17.15.11). By this time, *Shield-Jaguar* had passed his 80th year, and his name does not seem to be directly associated with the event. Finally, there is the capture portrayed on Lintel 44 (2, Pl.114,b). This occurred on 13Ahau 3Muan, which could equally well be 9.12.17.2.0 or 9.15.10.7.0. Morley and Thompson both prefer the earlier date. The captive's name, so far as I know, is not mentioned again, and we have no other record of the event.

The stelae standing in front of Str.44 add little to the data of this record. Stela 23 (2, Pl.178A,a) is the only monument of the six on which glyphs mentioning *Shield-Jaguar* are preserved. *Kan Cross* and 5 *Ben-ich katun* are included in the name, but the upper part of the inscription, which should record the date and the event, is missing. I suspect that the real subject of this stela is not *Shield-Jaguar* himself, but some of his relatives or successors.

In spite of the imperfections of the record on Str. 44, and the uncertainties inherent in it, it lends itself quite well to historical interpretation and presents no serious discrepancies; but when we compare it with texts on Stelae 18, 19 and 20, we meet with curious ambiguities and contradictions. This group of stelae, with Stelae 15 and 16 on a raised platform behind it, is set up in front of Str. 41, on a high hill overlooking the site. Its has always posed problems, both in regard to the peculiar style of its carvings, and to an unorthodox method of notation on Stelae 18 and 20. Thompson noted the similarity of the texts to passages on Str. 44 (13, p.198,199), but he construed it as a matter of calendrical computation. If we assume that the dates are historical, the similitary of the passages is even more striking, and I am convinced that the two records deal with the same series of events in spite of the discrepancies in dates.

None of these monuments presents an Initial Series. That in itself is one of the peculiarities of the group. Stela 19 (3, Pl.77), which stands in the middle of the lower row, and was probably erected first, records the date 11Ahau 3Pop, not a Period-ending date, but the date of the capture of one *Death* (229.1040?.102?) *Shield-Jaguar* is called *Captor of Death* on this same stela, on Stelae 10 and 12, and on Lintels 24 and 26. The *Captor of Death* notation, however, is not added to that of *Ahau*, but seems to replace it, and since the date given for *Death's* capture is very likely the very day before the capture

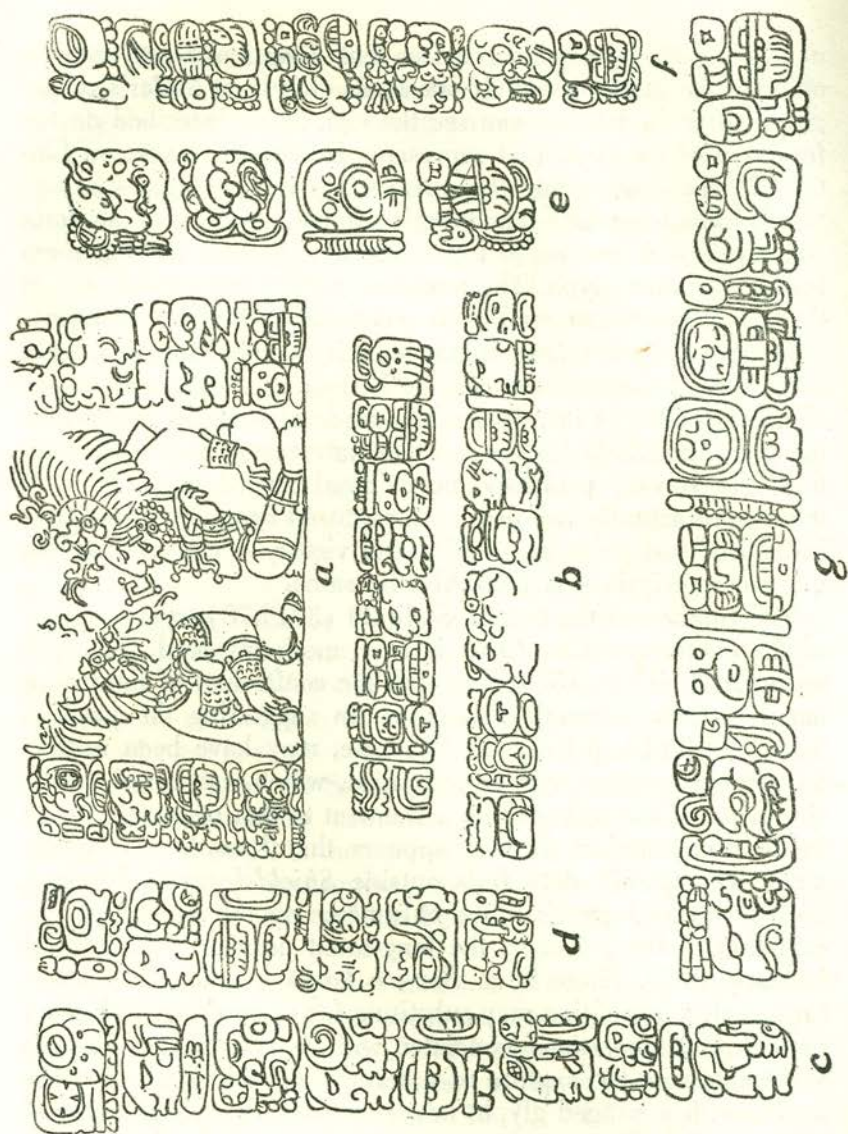


FIGURE 2. *a*: Portraits of Shield-Jaguar and his consort on Stela 11. Their names appear beside them. *b*: The death(?) of Shield-Jaguar and of consort recorded on Lintels 27 and 28. *c, d*: Name of Shield-Jaguar's consort on Lintel 32 and on Lintel 53. Note variation of sign between feminine head and the "God C" glyph, and rearrangement of elements. *e*: Name of Shield-Jaguar on Lintel 46. *f*: Clause with portrayal of blood-letting rite on Lintel 24. Note "fire" and "sacrifice" glyphs. Jaguar is here called "Captor of Death". *g*: Name of Shield-Jaguar on Lintel 32. Note insertion of Kan Cross and use of two Emblem glyphs.

of *Ahau*, a strong suspicion arises that *Ahau* and *Death* may be one and the same person. If one looks closely at Maler's photograph of Stela 19, one can see the sign *Ahau* inscribed on the forehead of the skull that represents *Death*. Moreover, on Lintel 45, which notes the day 12Imix, on which *Ahau* was captured, *Shield-Jaguar's* name begins immediately after an *Imix* compound which seems to follow the date without leaving room for the *Capture* glyph. The next few glyphs are eroded, but at the top of the column on the left occurs the name-glyph of *Death*. Although the order here is unusual, it may be that this lintel named the prisoner captured on 12Imix as *Death* and not as *Ahau*. The Str. 44 inscription was made at least 51 years after the event, but Stela 19 has no other date except that of the capture and is very probably the original record of it. Even if there were actually two prisoners captured on consecutive days, instead of just one, the conflict and victory commemorated in the two inscriptions is probably the same.

The relation of the text on Stela 20 (3, Pl.78) to the records of the capture of *Kan Cross* is even more involved. The date on Stela 20 is 6Ix 16Kankin, with the coefficient of the month one less than is usual. Thompson, in suggesting the position 9.16.2.9.14 (13, p.199) for this date, may have been relying too strongly on my stylistic appraisal, which was based on the similarity of the style of this monument to that of certain stelae in the Puuc region. It now appears that I made a misjudgment. Thompson's date falls outside *Shield-Jaguar's* lifetime, and since this Jaguar's is the only name on the monument, except that of the prisoner, the long-count position 9.13.9.14.14 is more likely. There is no *Ben-ich katun* notation, but 3 Katuns in close repetition may substitute for it, agreeing with the 4 *Ben-ich katun* notations associated with dates in Katun 14. The text treats with the capture of a certain individual whose name begins with a winged glyph, now somewhat damaged, and contains the *Kan Cross* and a compound of 683a, the "moon-glyph", elements that are all present in the passage that deals with the capture of *Kan Cross* on Lintel 46. I find it hard to believe that these references are to two different events. Although there is a seeming discrepancy of 12 years in the dates, their calendar-round position: 5Ix 17 Kankin and 6Ix 16 Kankin are suspiciously similar. One of these notations may be in error, or the later historians of Yaxchilan, puzzled by the date

on Stela 20, may have relied on independent historical evidence to place the event 12 years later. If *Kan Cross*, however, is merely the title of a chief, Lintel 46 may record the re-conquest of a rebellious town.

Were it not for Stela 18 standing in the same row, the argument for the identity of the events recorded here and on Str. 44 might be hard to maintain; but there can be no question that Stela 18 (3, Pl.77) deals with the last capture recorded on the southeast step. The name of the captive [*Chuen*] is given twice: once after the statement of capture, and again in a separate glyphic block near the head of the prisoner-figure. Here again, the dates are not identical. Instead of 2Chuen 14Mol, Stela 18 has 3Eb 14Mol. What is puzzling is that there seems to be no pattern in the discrepancies, though neither the days nor the coefficients vary by more than one position. The only explanation I can offer is that the military group that held power at Yaxchilan in the period of these early conquests was not thoroughly familiar with the Classic forms of recording historical dates. The strange style of the monuments hints at a provincial origin. Was *Shield-Jaguar*, then, a foreigner who usurped the rule of Yaxchilan by a military or political coup? Is that why we have no record of his formal accession?

On Stela 18, as on Stela 20, instead of the usual *Ben-ich katun* notation, there are two notations of 5 Katuns. If 9.14.15.17.11 or 12 is the correct position for the date, *Shield-Jaguar* must have just entered into the 5th Katun of his life, confirming the identity of the *Ben-ich* and the repeated Katun notations.

The remaining stelae that mention *Shield-Jaguar* are monuments of a different character, much more like the later stelae of Yaxchilan. Stela 13 (3, Pl.72,2), grouped with Stelae 11 and 12 in front of Str. 40, adjacent to Str. 41, has no date and no *Ben-ich katun* notation. Stela 10 (3, Pl.73), on the same eminence, in front of Str. 39, and Stelae 15 (3, Pl.79) and 16 (2, Pl.104,c), behind the early group, all record 5 *Beni-ich katun*. All were probably set up after 9.15.0.0.0, and some may be posthumous. The inscription on Stela 15, though rather eroded, seems to record the Str. 44 version of the capture of *Ahau*. Was this monument erected years later to revise and correct the earlier version of the event? If we knew the stratigraphic relation between the platform on which this stela

stands and the group below, we might interpret the inscription with more confidence. As it is, the association of the 5 *Ben-ich katun* with the early incident of the capture of *Ahau* throws a shadow of doubt on the meaning of such katuns.

There are other reasons, however, for suspecting that a number of records dealing with *Shield-Jaguar* were made after his death. Apparently his reign was considered the foundation of a dynasty, and various persons may have claimed nobility through his descendants, substantiating their claims by ancestral portraits. It is the only satisfactory explanation of the appearance of his name and portrait on Stela 11, which commemorates the accession of *Bird-Jaguar* in 9.16.1.0.0 (fig. 2a). The date of *Shield-Jaguar's* death is uncertain, but I surmise that he died on 6Ix 12Yaxkin, 9.15.10.17.14, exactly 29 tuns after his capture of *Kan Cross*, as recorded on Str.44. This date appears on Lintel 27 (2, Pl.111,a) of Str.24, and again on Stela 12 (3, Pl.76).

Unlike most monumental records, which recount different events with the same appellative clause, the lintels of Str.24, which are otherwise unsculptured, have four records of the same kind of event associated with different names, three of them of women, at intervals roughly of 37, 6, and 2 years. The first date on Lintel 27, 9.13.13.13.5, probably about 50 years earlier than the lintel, has an error in the name of the month. (Is it mere coincidence that this date is of the same period as Stela 20?) The woman's name that follows begins with what I assume to be a title, composed of a variant of the *Kin* glyph and a female head wearing a jeweled necklace, or perhaps the affix 32. There is then a record of 6 Katuns followed by the *Batab* glyph (1030, 1, but with a female head), and signs preceded by other female heads. The high coefficient of the katun is consistent with its association with an early date, which one might surmise marks the death of the ruler's first wife, his mother, or some other relative. He himself died 37 years later (on 6Ix 17Yaxkin, 9.15.10.17.14), as is stated in the next clause. The count probably continues on Lintel 59 (2, Pl.178G,b), though the secondary series, perhaps calculated from the mistakenly recorded month Yax, instead of from Zac, overshoots the mark by one uinal. The date reached, 31x 17Zip, 9.15.17.15.14, marks the death of a woman whose name begins with the same title as that of the first, and continues with what

is probably a female head attached to the glyph 1013a, ending with an animal head. The fourth death, on 10Akbal 16Uo, 9.15.19.15.3, on Lintel 28 (2, Pl.111,b), is probably that of the wife of *Shield-Jaguar*, who appears with him on Stela 11 (fig. 2b). The glyphs are somewhat eroded, but the female head with suffix 12, the next to last glyph, no doubt identifies her, though I am somewhat puzzled by the omission of the usual *Kin* title, which introduces her name elsewhere. The final date on Str.24 is 9.16.4.6.17, 6Caban 10Zac. It marks a different event, associated with a living woman, probably the author of the obituaries.

The expression for which I am proposing the meaning of death begins with a serpent-wing over a scroll element. Thompson (6) cites this glyphs as 793:575, but I do not agree with his identification of the prefix. Thompson (6, p.99) illustrates variations of the glyphs that follow, which include signs for *Ahau* and *Ik*. The Motul gives many meanings for "ik" and words containing this syllable. "Ikom né" means "comet", and those who prefer astronomical explanations of dates might do well to check the intervals of the dates to see if this meaning is possible. "Ik" also means "breath", and "ikal" is "spirit". "Binam ik" is translated as "murióse, fuésele el espíritu o el alma." Possibly the expression for "death" makes some such reference to a departing spirit, though I would not venture to translate it. The obituary nature of the passage is highly conjectural, but it would be exciting if some day the excavation of the environs of Str.24 would reveal the graves of a very old man and of his three female companions.

Bird-Jaguar, the next great ruler of Yaxchilan did not accede to power until 11 years had passed, and there are no records that we can definitely ascribe to his period. Perhaps, as often happens after a long and distinguished reign, it was a time of conflict, when various pretenders competed for the chief's office, and perhaps that is why *Bird-Jaguar*, on his accession, seems to have taken great pains to prove and document his legitimacy. On Stela 11 (3, Pl.74,75) on which is recorded his accession, portraits of *Shield-Jaguar* and of his wife, who had died in the previous year, appear above the scene of *Bird-Jaguar's* triumph. Their names, shown in fig.2a, are inscribed on each side and appear also after the record of accession on the front of the monument. A date 12Cib 19Yaxkin, at the foot

of the young man's figure on the front, is also associated with the *Shield-Jaguar* glyph, but none of the Jaguar's other tiles appear here, and the meaning remains problematical. The scene may represent the transfer of power from *Shield-Jaguar* to *Bird-Jaguar*, but I am inclined to think that the larger figure is that of *Bird-Jaguar* himself, and that the younger man is a descendant of *Shield-Jaguar*, possibly at this time too young to rule. His identity will be considered later in connection with *Bird-Jaguar's* reign.

A more difficult problem is posed by the date 7Ben 16Mac associated with *Shield-Jaguar's* name on Lintels 32 (3, Pl.62; 2, Pl.111,d) and 53 (2, Pl.115,a). Morley reads the date on L.32 as 11Ben 16Mac, but the glyphs immediately after the date are the same on both lintels, as are the sculptured motifs and the references to *Shield-Jaguar*, so that it seems likely that both record the same event. Both lintels were probably carved posthumously, since they are associated with others that refer to *Bird-Jaguar* and his reign. The scene shows a man, presumably *Shield-Jaguar*, holding a manikin sceptre before a woman with a big bundle in her arms. This woman is probably the same as the woman on Stela 11, though different expressions are added to her name (fig.2c,d) The *Ben-ich katun* in *Shield-Jaguar's* name has the coefficient 5, but it is impossible to place the date in the 5th katun of his life. It is either 9.13.5.12.13, when he was about 50, or it is 9.15.18.7.13, when he was already dead, or if alive, would have been over 100 years old. Whatever interpretation we may put on the woman's bundle, the aim of the representation seems to be to establish her status and to claim descent through her. If this is the case, the earlier date may be preferable, though the age of *Shield-Jaguar* is given as of the time of his death.

I strongly suspect, however, that there is an error in the notation, and that the date intended is either 6Ben 16Mac, 9.13.17.15.13, or 12Ben 16Mac, 9.15.10.5.13. The first of these dates is one day after the scene of sacrifice on Lintel 24 which may conceivably be a ceremony of purification after the birth of *Bird-Jaguar* on 9.13.17.12.10. If we accept the Stela 20 date (9.13.9.14.14) for the capture of *Kan Cross*, the naming of *Shield Jaguar* as his captor on Stela 32 would no longer seem out of place. The second of the dates would place the event a few months before the death of *Shield-Jaguar* and pro-

TABLE 1
EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF SHIELD-JAGUAR

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Ben-ich katun</i>	<i>Titles of Shield-Jaguar</i>	<i>Monument</i>
9.10.15.0.0 ± 2.0.0	Hypothetical birth of <i>Shield-Jaguar</i>			
9.11. 0. 0. 0 (9.11. 3. 8. 1)	Katun unknown			Str.44 steps
9.11.15. 0. 0 + 9.11.16.10.13	Start, 2 <i>Ben-ich katun</i> 2Katun anniversary of accession of former ruler			St.6, see Part 2
(9.11.18.15. 1)	unknown			Str.44 steps
9.12. 0. 0. 0	Katun			
9.12. 8.14. 0	Capture of <i>Death</i>		Captor of <i>Death</i>	St.19
(9.12. 8.14. 1)	Capture of <i>Death</i> or <i>Ahau</i>		name destroyed	Str.44, L.45
(9.12. 8.14. 1)	Capture of <i>Ahau</i>		Captor of <i>Ahau</i> and 3 others	Str.44 steps
(9.12. 8.14. 1)	Capture of <i>Ahau</i> [?]	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i> [?]	St.15
(9.12. 9. 8. 1)	<i>Hand-fish</i> rite	(4)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.23, L.25
(9.12. 9. 8. 1)	"Many" <i>Hand-fish</i> rites		no name	Str.44 steps
9.12.10. 0. 0	Lahun tun. Erection of <i>Stela 19?</i> <i>Shield-Jaguar</i> rules Yaxchilan			
9.12.15. 0. 0 (9.12.17.12. 0)	Start, 3 <i>Ben-ich katun</i> Capture, unidentified		Title not clear	Str.44, L.44
9.13. 0. 0. 0	Katun			
9.13. 9.14.14	Capture of <i>Kan Cross</i>	3	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	St.20
9.13.10. 0. 0	Lahun tun, Erection of <i>Stela 20?</i>			
(9.13.13.12. 5)	Death of <i>Shield</i> woman			Str.24, L.27
9.13.15. 0. 0 (9.13.16.10.13)	Start, 4 <i>Ben-ich katun</i> 819-day period. Divination date for birth of <i>Bird-Jaguar</i> .			Str.10, L.30
(9.13.17.12.10)	Birth of <i>Bird-Jaguar</i>			Str.10, L.29, 30
(9.13.17.15.12)	Blood-letting rite	(4)	Captor of <i>Death</i>	Str.23, L.24
? (9.13.17.15.13)*	Woman with bundle	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i> , <i>Kan Cross</i>	Str.13, L.32
? (9.13.17.15.13)*	Woman with bundle	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.55, L.53
9.14. 0. 0. 0	Katun			
9.14. 1.17.14	Capture of <i>Kan Cross</i>		Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.44, L.46
(9.14. 1.17.14)	Capture of <i>Kan Cross</i>	(5)	Captor of <i>Death</i> (<i>Fist</i> glyph)	Str.44 steps
9.14. 5. 0. 0	Hotun. Lintels of Str.44			
(9.14. 8.12. 5)	I.S., unknown event			Str.23, L.26
(9.14.11.15. 1)	Invocation to warrior		Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.23, L.25
9.14.12. 6.12	<i>Toothache</i> glyph rite	4	Captor of <i>Death</i>	Str.23, L.26
9.14.15. 0. 0	Hotun. Erection of Str.23			Altar 7
9.14.17.15.11	Start, 5 <i>Ben-ich katun</i>			
(9.14.17.15.11)	Capture of <i>Chuen</i>	5	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	St.18
9.15. 0. 0. 0	Capture of <i>Chuen</i>			Str.44 steps
9.15. 0. 0. 0	Katun, Erection of St.18			Str.44 steps
9.15. 0.12. 0	unknown			Str.44 steps
(9.15. 6.13. 1)	<i>Fire-glyph</i> rite	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	L.56
(9.15. 9.17.16)	unknown	(5)	none	St.11
9.15.10. 0. 0?	erection of St.10?	5	Captor of <i>Death</i>	St.10
? (9.15.10. 5. 13)*	Woman with bundle	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i> , <i>Kan Cross</i>	Str.13, L.32
? (9.15.10. 5. 13)*	Woman with bundle	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.55, L.53
(9.15.10.17.14)	Death of <i>Shield-Jaguar</i>	(5)	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	Str.24, L.27
(9.15.10.17.14)	Death of <i>Shield-Jaguar</i> [age 92-96 yrs.]	(5)	Captor of <i>Death</i> (<i>Fist</i> -glyph)	St.12
9.15.15. 0. 0?	erection of Str.44?			
9.15.15. 0. 0?	erection of St.15?	5	Captor of <i>Ahau</i> ?	St.15
(9.15.17.15.14)	Death of woman			Str.24, L.59
(9.15.19.15. 3)	Death of <i>Shield-Jaguar's</i> wife			
9.16. 0. 0. 0?	Katun, Erection St.16?	5	Illegible	St.16
9.16. 1. 0. 0	Accession, <i>Bird-Jaguar</i>	5	Captor of <i>Ahau</i>	St.11
9.16. 1. 0. 0	Accession, <i>Bird-Jaguar</i> ?	5	<i>Fist</i> glyph Captor of <i>Ahau</i> , <i>Kan Cross</i> <i>Fist</i> glyph	St.12
9.16. 4. 6.17	unknown			Str.24, L.28
9.16. 5. 0. 0?	Erection of Str.24			

* Alternate positions given for these dates; both require alteration of day number. Parentheses indicate that later dates follow.

perly in the fifth katun of his life. A choice between these possibilities is difficult to make and in any case both interpretations remain questionable, since they require revision of the day-number on Lintel 53, which is very well preserved.

Unfortunately, none of the other lintels associated with these two have legible dates. Morley's date for Lintel 33, 9.10.10.11.6 5Cimi 19Yaxkin, is much too early, since *Bird-Jaguar* is named as captor of *Jeweled Skull*, according to an event that took place in 9.16.4.1.1. His reading of 7Ahau 18Pop, 9.16.15.0.0 for Lintel 52 is equally suspect, for there is no indication of a Period-ending in the teyt. Other possibilities will be suggested after *Bird-Jaguar's* life has been reviewed. Here we need note only that many of the difficulties in dating events in the life of *Shield-Jaguar* arise in connection with posthumous records, and may be due to the irregularities in calendrical notation current at the beginning of his reign, as well as to the distortions of self-interest that may be involved.

In the next issue of *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, I hope to present a resumé of *Bird-Jaguar's* reign, which was the most productive of sculpture and inscriptions, though probably not so long or so distinguished as that of *Shield-Jaguar*. Serious problems, though of a different nature, arise in connection with his activities and those of his successors, but even though many of them remain unsolved, the patterns of association between texts and sculptures give us some insight into the themes expressed, and this may prove useful when our methods of decipherment are somewhat more advanced and we can begin to deal with the structure and meaning of individual signs.

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