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Parallel Throne Phrases at Tikal and Palenque

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In *Copán Note 96*, Schele and Newsome noted that a particular "*Chi-Cauac*" phrase on Copán Stelae I and 4 likely identified the location or political context of associated events (Fig. 1). They noted that the collocation often occurred with the *yahaw-te'* title and with lineage founders. These include Yat-Balam on Yaxchilan Lintel 21 and the Site Q founder on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stair (Schele and Newsome 1991:1) (Fig. 2). Schele, Stuart, and Houston earlier identified the *chi-cauac* phrase on Tikal Stela 31 as a locative associated with the king Hunal-Balam (Schele 1990:73; Stuart and Houston 1991:31) (Fig. 3). At the 1990 Texas Maya Meetings, Schele suggested that the collocation referred to a square throne with globular legs, as in the case of Copán Altar Q (1990:73). Eccentric Cauac thrones pictured on Late Classic Maya vases support Schele's identification (Fig. 4). The

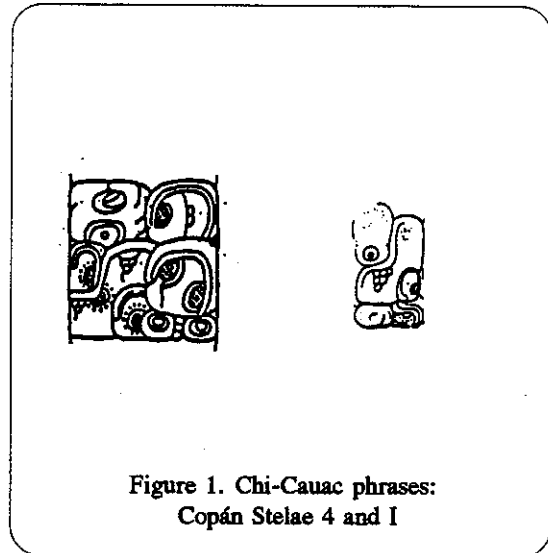


Figure 1. Chi-Cauac phrases:
Copán Stelae 4 and I

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Figure 2. Chi-Cauac Thrones and Founders, Palenque and Yaxchilan

chi-cauac also occurs on Tikal Stela 26, the roof-comb text of Tikal Temple VI, and twice on Piedras Negras Lintel 7 (Fig. 5). I focus on the Stela 26 example.

Three gods in the *ox-lut k'u* relationship possess the *chi-cauac* phrase on Tikal Stela 26 (Fig. 5). Parallel phrases on the tablets of the Palenque Tem-

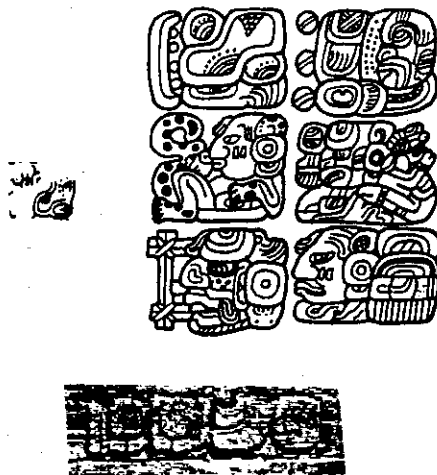


Figure 5. Chi-Cauac Thrones on Piedras Negras Lintel 7, Tikal Temple VI roof-comb, and Tikal Stela 26



Figure 3. Hunal-Balam Chi-Cauac phrase, Tikal Stela 31

ple of the Inscriptions suggest that the *chi-cauac* structure may be equivalent to the T174:530 compound, identified by several epigraphers as a throne or other large square object (Fig. 6).¹ On the West and Middle panels, the Palenque Triad possess the 174:530 "throne" (Fig. 7). As on Tikal Stela 26, the trio are named as *ox-lut-k'u*, "the three born together." I propose that this parallel is more than coincidence, and that the *chi-cauac* and 174:530 throne phrases substituted in some cases.

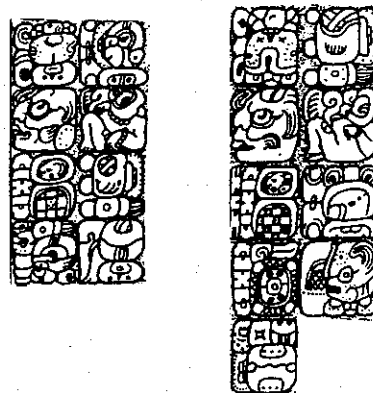
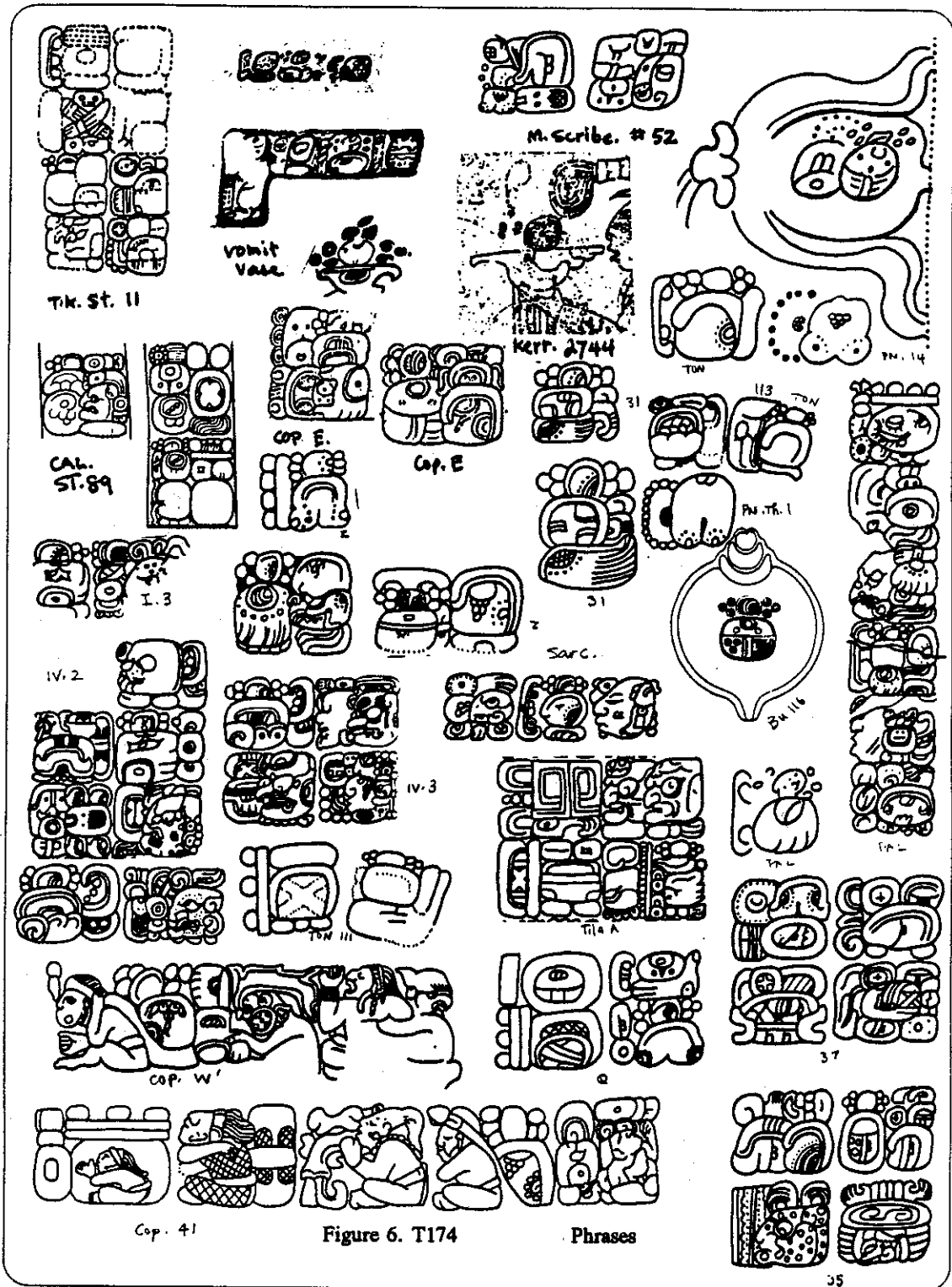
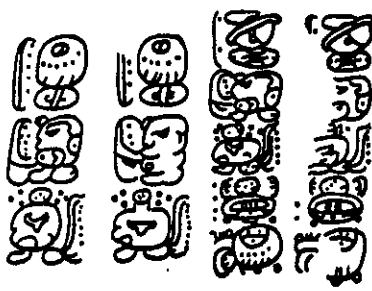
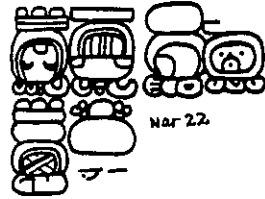


Figure 7. T174:530 Throne Phrases on the Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions Middle and West Tablets



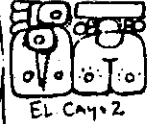
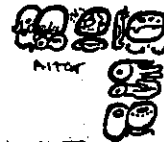
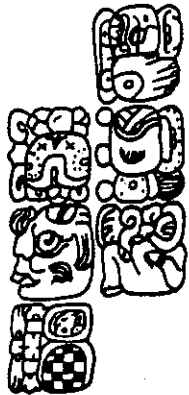


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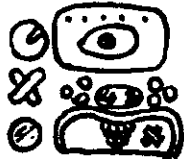
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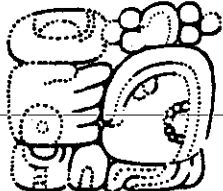
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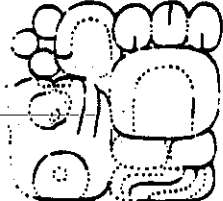
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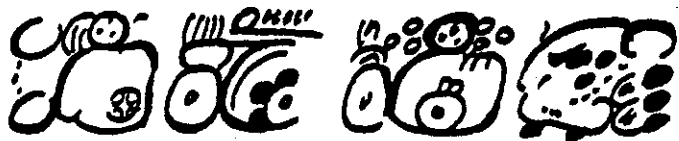
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Notes

1. Based on common T126 *ya* possessive pronoun prefixation and occasional *ki* suffixation, Barbara MacLeod and I recently proposed an *ak* reading for T174, which we argued is the reduced form of the full 174:530, including the "folded caucac" grapheme. T174 also occurs with the T528 *tun* and *ni* collocation. The phrase then seems to read *aktun*, or "ak-stone." *Ak* as a noun refers to seats, vaulted spaces like caves and buildings, and arched forms. As a Yucatec verb, it can mean "to sit" and "to enclose or define a space." Examples at Tikal, Calakmul, and on pottery from Motul de San José portray individuals seated in arched or enclosing forms, jaguar protectors, etc. In each case, T174 describes the nature of the space formed by the protector or, in the case of the vase, the acrobatic position of the jaguar the main protagonist rides. *Ak* is also a Yucatec noun classifier for thrones, troughs, and other large square objects (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4-5). Maya ethnohistory provides additional evidence for the *ak* reading. Weldon Lamb recently notified us that a large square altar or table in king Kan-Ek's palace at Tah-Itzá was called a *Mayactun* (Means 1917:19, Weldon Lamb, personal communication Summer 1991). Although we were unaware of the Itzá

throne, Thompson and others discussed it decades ago. See for example, Thompson 1951.

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Figure 4. Chi-Caucac Thrones on Maya Vases