

The Sign 576 as a Logograph for KUK, a Type of Bundle

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Artfully wrapping sisal rope and cloth strips around people, gods, portable objects, or even large stone monuments; enshrouding sacred objects in laboriously constructed cloth bundles; robing humans and images of gods and adorning them with insignias of status and other paraphernalia—these acts represent central themes in Classic Maya visual and textual narratives (Stone and Zender 2011:24). Clothing and insignia mark status, forge identity, and imbue the wearer with potency (Danesi 2004:177ff.). It thus comes as no surprise that clothing, ornaments, and cloth were among the most significant elite goods exchanged among Classic Maya elites as gifts for visitors or tribute payment. Clothing, cloth, weavings, and ornaments were not only an elite form of currency; they also served as a skin with social consequences: garments or jewelry marked the rank or status that the bearer occupied within the social hierarchy.

Removing ornaments or clothing, in contrast, constituted a humiliating prelude to loss of status, as expressed in the case of Classic Maya images of captives. Generally, captives not only were stripped of their clothing and ornaments, but also tied up with ropes like a kill from the hunt, packed into human bundles, publicly denigrated, and, finally, ritually sacrificed. In their study of rope imagery, Andrea Stone and Marc Zender determined that cords, ropes, ribbons, and bands were also worn by kings in the context of religious rituals such as auto-sacrifice. In dressing themselves in this manner, kings expressed their humility before the gods and degraded themselves by acting as captives and sacrificing themselves, or at least their blood; self-abasement and self-sacrifice thus represented central elements of Classic Maya ritual performance (Stone and Zender 2011:24; Stuart 2005:27-30).

As everyday objects, bundles, knots, bands, and cords constitute frequent elements in Maya hieroglyphic writing, where they serve as syllabic signs or logographs (Figure 1). The icons of the syllabic signs **che**, **ha**, **hi**, **ki**, **nu**, **tzi**, **tzo?**, **tz'a**, **we**, and **yu**, for example, represent different knotted or bundled objects made from textile-like materials. The inventory of logographs also includes dozens of icons that depict wrapped, knotted, rolled, tied, and bundled humans, animals, or objects made from cloth, fibers, or other, unidentified materials, whereas additional graphs are tied or decorated with knotted bands or ropes (Macri and Looper 2003; Macri and Vail 2009; Stone and Zender 2011; Looper 2006; Schele and Miller 1983; Tokovinine 2017; Zender et al. 2016).

The most frequent signs in this “bundle” category include the previously deciphered logographs #60: **HUN**, #64: **ITZAM**, #98: **CH’AJAN?**, #153: **JEL**, #551: **JAL**, #569: **MUT**, #574: **TZ’AK**, #577: **POM** #645: **WAY**, #676: **TAL**, #684: **JOY**, and #1525: **WOL**. It also includes a series of signs whose (logographic) meaning has not yet been deciphered and which are not all included in Thompson’s sign catalog.¹ The stated examples for bundled, knotted, or banded signs include the sign 576, which was first designated as such by Eric Thompson (1962).

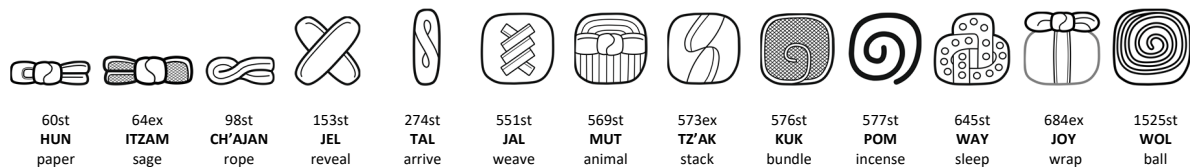


Figure 1. Several Maya graphemes that depict bundles, cords, ropes, balls, textiles, etc. Drawings by Christian Prager.

The readings cited in Figure 1 are widely accepted and do not require further explanation here. For sign 98, Zender proposed the reading **CH’AJAN?** ‘rope’ several years ago (Stone and Zender 2011:24), and for the sign 576 under discussion here, I argue below for its decipherment as **KUK** ‘cloth bundle’ (Figure 2). The sign’s icon shows a spiral, shaded object that is wrapped once and probably represents a dark textile with crosshatching that has been rolled into a bundle. In Alexandre Tokovinine’s (2017:17) sign inventory, it is listed as number 17-9 and marked as undeciphered. In nomenclature used in the catalog by Martha Macri and Mathew Looper (2003:244), in turn, the sign is designated as ZUQ.

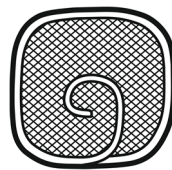


Figure 2. Sign 576, a possible logograph KUK for ‘textile, bundle; something bundled’ as attested on Naranjo, Stela 8. Drawing by Christian Prager.

¹ As part of our work on a new catalogue of Maya signs and their graphs, we are currently evaluating and revising Thompson’s *Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs* (1962). We are critically scrutinizing his system with the help of his original grey cards and supplementing it with signs that were not included in Thompson’s original catalogue. Despite its known shortcomings and incompleteness, his catalogue is still regarded as the standard work for Maya epigraphers, which is why we adopt Thompson’s nomenclature while removing misclassifications and duplicates, merging graph variants under a common nomenclature, and adding new signs or allographs to the sign index in sequence, starting with the number 1500. Allographs are also further organized with the help of newly defined classification and systematization criteria, which we described in detail in Prager and Gronemeyer (2018). Basically, many graphs of Maya writing can be divided into two or more segments along their horizontal and vertical axes. These segmentation principles are designated by a two-letter code that is suffixed to the sign number. Thus, 1537bl, for instance, refers to a variant of the character 1537 (hand-with-moon sign) that has been vertically separated into two parts, with only the left segment shown in that context, i.e., the hand without the moon sign (Prager 2020:Fig. 4). Revision of existing catalogues and their expansion, including a systematic index of all known allographs of each sign, will form the basis for our machine-readable text corpus of Classic Mayan.

Sign 576 was first discussed by Nikolai Grube and Werner Nahm in their study of Classic Maya *way* creatures (Grube and Nahm 1994:711). In these contexts, the sign appears in the personal name of a *way* whom they dubbed the “man in the bundle” and whose name they tentatively translated as *balan winik*. Depictions of this *way* creature on various ceramic vessels show a man wrapped in a dark, square textile. Embellished knots on the outside of this bundle clearly indicate that it represents a woven textile. Based on the attestations that were known at the time, Grube and Nahm assumed that sign 576 represented a logograph with the possible reading **BALAN**. This proposal was based on an occurrence on Stela 2 from La Amelia, where sign 576 is complemented by a knotted sign that we can now identify as the syllable **nu**. On the ceramic vase Kerr 3924, sign 576 is uniquely suffixed with a **–na** syllable; although Grube and Nahm also note occurrences of this sign with the phonetic complement **ki**, they do not consider these examples further in their discussion. Their decipherment is based on the occurrence with the syllable **na** and is derived from the icon’s representation of something rolled or wrapped up. On this basis, they propose the reading **BALAN**, based on lexical entries in Yukatek and Tzeltal in which *bal* and *balan* signify ‘roll up; rolled up’ (Grube and Nahm 1994:711; vgl. Kaufman 2003:909).

However, new attestations of sign 576 in texts from Palenque indicate that the grapheme constitutes a logograph with the phonemic structure C_1VC_1 . Three occurrences in texts from Temple XIX, which have yet to be considered in decipherment attempts, show the sign with a so-called doubler, a miniature version of the number ‘two’ that serves as a diacritical element. With syllabic signs, the doubler diacritic underscores that the marked syllable is to be pronounced twice (Stuart and Houston 1994:46; Stuart 2014). Some Classic Maya logographs with a C_1VC_1 structure were also marked with a doubler, however, especially the logographs **TZUTZ** ‘plant’ (TRT: Mon. 6; PMT: Mon. 9) or **K’AK** ‘fire’ (Zender 1999:205). In these cases, the doubler marks the congruence of the logograph’s initial and final consonants.

Given this pattern, use of the doubler with the sign 576 suggests that this glyph should also have the structure C_1VC_1 , which would not be the case with the root **BAL** or **BALAN**. Marc Zender has also previously observed the probable C_1VC_1 structure of sign 576, although he characterizes the icon as a rubber ball. Rubber is conceptually associated with blood sacrifice, for which reason he suggests the reading **CH’ICH’** ‘blood’ (Stone and Zender 2011:67-68). However, separate signs are already attested for ‘blood’ and ‘ball’, respectively, making Zender’s proposal less plausible. Moreover, his reading cannot explain the occurrences of the sign 576 with **ki** as a phonetic complement (Figure 3), as will be discussed further below.



Figure 3. Main arguments for the phonetic decipherment of the grapheme KUK ‘textile, bundle’: phonetic complementation with **–ki on Kerr 1256 and 3395; and the diacritic doubler in several texts from Palenque indicating a logogram with identical initial and final consonants. Drawings by Christian Prager.**



Figure 4. Image of king K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nab III accompanied by attendants who assist him with dressing or carrying the heavy regalia. *Yok Kuk* 'textile bearer' is likely the designation of the attendant to the king's right. Copyrighted photograph by Jorge Perez de Lara.

The hieroglyph 576 occurs with the doubler diacritic in three inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque. In these contexts, it appears in the nominal phrase of a member of the royal court, whose designation David Stuart (2005:31-32) reads as **yo-ko-576-TAL** (see Figure 6). Stuart does not propose a decipherment for sign 576, but he, like Grube and Nahm before him, assumes that it represents a logograph. On the stone panel from Temple XIX, *Yok ? Tal* appears in the nominal phrase of a court member who fulfills the function of *Yajaw K'ahk'* or fire priest and as a ritual specialist is closely associated with Temple XIX (Figure 4). He is depicted kneeling to the right of the standing king K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naab III, using his hand to support the heavy garments and bulky regalia decorating the king during a *k'am tal* or 'rope-grasping' ceremony. A second member of court kneels to the left, supporting the king's heavy backrack (Stuart 2005:29).

Yok ? Tal appears again on the Temple XIX platform (Figure 9), where K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naab is depicted in the center receiving royal insignias, including the royal headband and a *ko'haw* helmet made of jade plaques, wood, and feathers, from the hands of local elites. Three high-ranking functionaries from the royal court sit to his right, with *Yok ? Tal Yajaw K'ahk'* himself positioned

immediately next to the king. The scene and inscription underscore that *Yok ? Tal* was not only a ritual specialist; he was also associated with the *ko'haw* helmet. It is possible that he was personally charged with supervising the king's clothing and equipment. This idea is based on Sven Gronemeyer's proposal in a recent publication about an office in the royal court that is described in the inscriptions as *yok waal* 'fan-bearer', a high-ranking servant charged with wafting cool air to the ruler (Figure 5) (Gronemeyer 2020). He argues that the construction "y-ok + noun" encompasses a wide semantic range in Mayan languages that includes the handle, endpiece, pedestal, or underside of natural or artificial objects; in addition, as in the case he discusses, it can describe human functionaries who handled the royal inventory and thus had the privilege of being in the king's immediate presence.



Figure 5. Detail of vessel Kerr 2914 showing Individual 1 sitting on a platform with the caption *yok waal* in front of him and two large fans below next to the platform. Drawing by Elisabeth Wagner with additions by Sven Gronemeyer.

The construction "y-ok + noun" that Gronemeyer analyzes as a functional descriptor of attendants at the royal court provides a blueprint for interpreting *Yok ? Tal Yajaw K'ahk'* as a functional name phrase that describes its bearer's role in the royal court, including the function of a *yok ?* as well as that of the ritual specialist *yajaw k'ahk'*. He may also be depicted and named on a miniature panel from Group XIV as observed and suggested by David Stuart (2005:125).

The hieroglyphic phrase *Yok ? Tal* at Palenque consists of the components [115st:110st].[2000st 576st:274st] or **yo-ko-²576-TAL**, according to current literature (Figure 6). The sign 576 has been identified as a logograph that appears here with the doubler diacritic, indicating that its initial and final consonants are likely identical. A sign similar to the grapheme 274, whose reading remains unknown, is positioned under 576. However, it remains unclear whether this composite of 576:274 consists of two signs *? + ?*, or whether it comprises one complex sign whose icon represents a dark textile that is folded or bundled and tied with a knot. One indication is provided on La Amelia Stela 2, where a sign previously thought to represent the syllable **nu** (Grube and Nahm 1994:711) very similar to the logograph 98 **CH'AJAN?**, which shows a rolled rope with one open end, occurs under the crosshatched sign 576. This context may indicate that the cloth cord or knot belongs to the sign icon of 576, whereby 576:274 represents a complex sign that may also occur in the corpus without the knots or band.

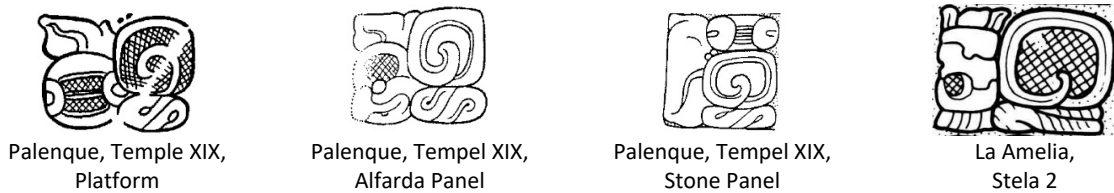


Figure 6. Various renderings of the bundle sign 576 with a knot-like subfix in Palenque and La Amelia. Copyrighted drawings by David Stuart (2005:32) and Stephen Houston (1992:Fig. 3-21).

An indication that sign 576 represents a textile bundle with knots is found on ceramic vessels with representations of the so-called “man in the bundle.” The image shows a man who is wrapped in a dark textile and seated or whose features are obscured except for his limbs or face (Figure 7). On the basis of his headdress, long, knotted hair, and three-pronged obsidian blade, he can be identified as a *ch’ajoom* (Scherer and Houston 2018:117-119). This term designates a religious specialist associated with fire, smoke, blood, and human sacrifice, but it also serves as a title for kings and high-ranking members of the royal court. Nonetheless, this *way* creature is not hieroglyphically designated as a *ch’ajoom*. Instead, the nominal phrases identified by Grube and Nahm for the “man in the bundle” describe the *ch’ajoom* wrapped in a bundle of dark textiles with the components 576 and **wi-WINIK-ki**, i.e., as a ‘? person’.



Figure 7. Depictions of the so-called “man in the bundle,” a *way* creature whose name may be read as KUKIL WINIK ‘rolled-up person’. Photos of Kerr 1256 and 3924 courtesy of Justin Kerr, copyrighted photograph of Kerr 3395 by Dorie Reents Budet.

The sign 576 in question should reflect this depiction, in which case we can assume a semantic value under the scope of a bundle or textile or of wrapping, rolling, or bundling. In this case, two attestations of the name glyph for the *way* creature “man in the bundle” that are complemented with a phonetic **ki** prove fundamental for deciphering the sign. In contrast with prior proposals, I assume that the syllabic sign **ki** attested on Kerr 1256 and Kerr 3395, rather than **na**, functions as a phonetic complement indicating that the sign ends with the consonant *-k*. Thanks to attestations of the logograph 576 at Palenque with the doubler diacritic, which have been largely overlooked to date, we can infer that the initial and final consonants are identical, leaving **KAK**, **KEK**, **KIK**, **KOK**, or **KUK** as possible phonetic readings.

Given that the icon of sign 576 can be identified as a rolled or wrapped textile, **KUK** appears to be a particularly promising lexeme. In colonial-period Cholti’ (Morán 1695), the meanings of <ucte> included ‘skein, clew, yarn’ (fol. 29, 37), ‘ball of yarn’ (fol. 48), ‘cloth, scarf, clothing’ (fol. 62), and the derived verbal form <ucteni> ‘wrap, roll’ (fol. 25). Relevant lexical entries from twentieth-century Ch’orti’ include *kuk* ‘rolling over, anything rolled up or over, a roll of’; *kuki* ‘turn a thing over, turn upside down’; *kukp’ah* ‘turn or roll oneself over (as in bed)’; *kukp’ir* ‘turned or rolled over’; *kukran*

‘roll, tumble’, *kukrem* ‘rolled’, *kukremah* ‘fall or topple over’, and *kukur* ‘pushed over, rolled, tumbling’ (Wisdom 1950:496-497). For contemporary Ch’orti’, Kerry Hull (2016:210-211) also cites the lexemes *kuk-re-b’a* ‘roll around’; *kukrem* ‘fallen’; *kukrema* ‘fall down, roll down’; *kukru* ‘overturn, knock to the ground, fell’; and *kukru-b’a* ‘roll around, spin around, turn around on an axis’. A similar form, *kukän* ‘to turn, roller’, occurs in Chontal as well (Keller and Luciano 1997). Additional evidence for glossing the Classic Mayan root **kuk* as ‘turn over, roll over’ can be found in Itza’ *kuk* ‘to roll’ (Hofling and Fernando Tesucun 2000) and in Yukatek *xkuklin* ‘dung beetle’ (Bricker et al. 1998), the Ch’ol cognate for the latter being <*cuclunta*> (Aulie and Aulie 1978:17). This beetle rolls dung into round balls that they use as a food source or breeding location (Lopes 2004:3). The concept of wrapping or rolling up is associated with this root in many other Yukatek terms as well, such as *kukultep* ‘envolver arrollando’ (Barrera Vásquez 1980:345-347).

The semantic values attested in Cholti’, Ch’orti’, and other Mayan languages correspond with sign 576’s visual form and iconographic context, which further support its interpretation as ‘bundle, textile; roll up, wrap up’. Based on these data, I propose reading sign 576 as **KUK** and translating it as ‘something rolled up’. Furthermore, based on its association with the way creature “man in the bundle,” (see above) I suggest that this cloth or bundle may conceivably serve for wrapping up the remains of the dead. If **KUK** does represent the reading of sign 576, the name phrase of the “man in the bundle” could be read as **KUK wi-WINIK-ki** ‘bundle-person’. The attestations on Kerr 1256 and Kerr 3395 with the phonetic complement –**ki** could also be interpreted as **KUK-ki-[IL] wi-WINIK-ki** or *kukil winik*, ‘rolled-up person’. On the ceramic vase Kerr 3924, sign 576 occurs with the syllable **na** under it. In this case, the **na** might represent not a phonetic complement, but the inchoative suffix -*Vn*, whereby this phrase could possibly be interpreted as **KUK-na WINIK** or *kukaan winik* ‘person who becomes a bundle’.

This image of a human tied into a bundle may also be conveyed in the inscription on La Amelia Panel 2 (Figure 8). The illustration on the front of this monument shows the king Lajchan K’awiil Bot Ajaw as a ballplayer who, according to the inscription, kills a captive during a ballgame (Miller and Houston 1987). Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 from Yaxchilan for example displays prisoners who are wrapped into a bundle and thrown down the stairs during a sacrificial ball game. In the context of Panel 2 from La Amelia, the text compares the captive with a ball that is cast down the stairs and thus killed: *yahlaj uchan bahlamnal uk’aba’ baluun naab* (Zender 2004:3-4; Eberl and Bricker 2004:28; Tokovinine 2002:3; Schele and Grube 1990). In the inscription on Panel 2 and Hieroglyphic Stairway 1, block 4, the captive is identified as a namesake of Lajchan K’awiil Bot Ajaw (*yetk’aba’il bot ajaw*), someone bearing the same name as the local king of La Amelia. Moreover, *uchan bahlamnal* is described in the inscription on Stela 2 as the king’s **KUK** or **KUK-TAL?**, depending on whether one considers the knots under sign 576 as a separate grapheme or as part of sign 576.

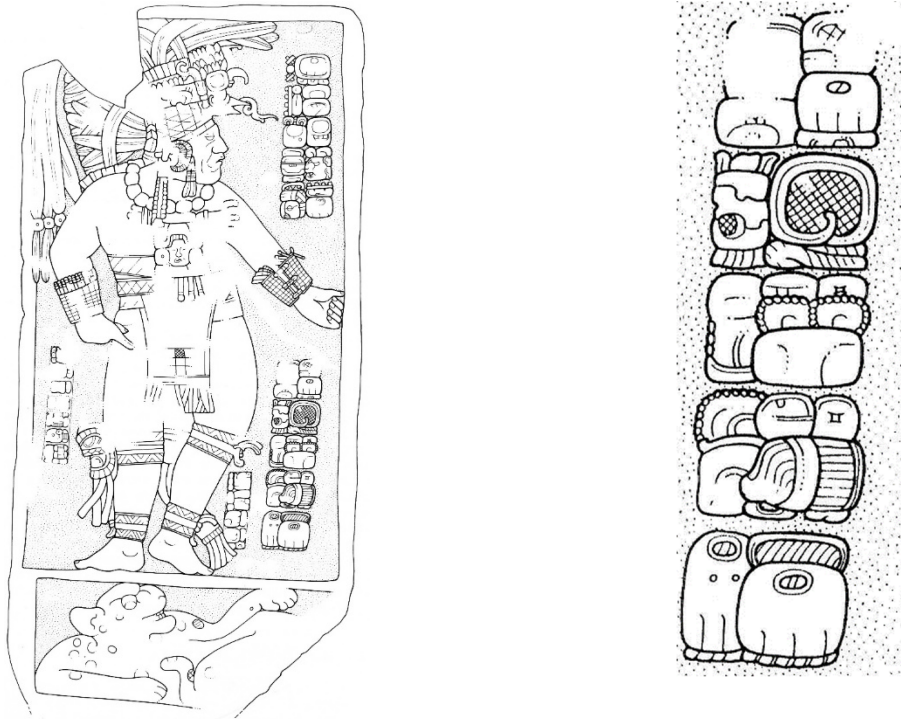


Figure 8. Lajchan K'awiil Bot Ajaw, king of La Amelia, in a ritual ballgame on Panel 2. The enlarged text passage may describe the captive killed in the ballgame as KUKTAL 'tied-up bundle', which is pushed like a ball down the stairs to his death. Copyrighted drawing by Stephen Houston (1992:Fig. 3-21).

Tokovinine (2002:3) rendered this expression as 'the wrapped thing', whereas Zender semantically interpreted the phrase 576:98 as 'rubber ball' and 'rope' and suggested that it portrayed the captive as the king's ball and rope (Zender 2004). According to my proposal, the expression can be read either as **KUK-TAL**, **KUK-CH'AJAN?** or just as **KUK**, whereby the larger text passage below the king's outstretched hand can be deciphered as follows: *u kuk tal / kuk ch'ajan bot ajaw k'uh mutul baahkab* "he is the tied-up bundle of Bot Ajaw, divine king of Mutul, first of the land."

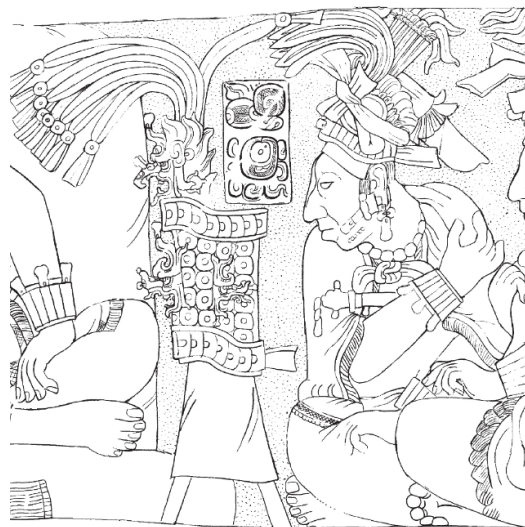


Figure 9. Detail of the platform of Temple XIX at Palenque. Yok Kuk Ch'ajan or Tal supervises the king's regalia, here specifically the so-called warrior or *ko'haw* helmet. Copyrighted drawing by David Stuart (2005:210).

The proposed decipherment of sign 576 as **KUK** permits a new interpretation of the nominal phrase on the platform of Temple XIX at Palenque as well. Whereas prior publications cited *Yok ? Tal Yajaw K'ahk'* as the reading, we can now interpret the phrase as *Yok Kuk Yajaw K'ahk'*, using the newly identified reading of sign 576. Nonetheless, as previously noted, it remains unclear whether the knot-like sign under 576 represents the grapheme 274 **TAL** or **CH'AJAN?**, or whether it constitutes a complex sign with 576 and thus has no individual reading in this context.

Based on the title *yok waal* that Gronemeyer recently identified as a courtly attendant who generates a fresh breeze with his fan, we can also infer that *yok kuk (tal or ch'ajan)* likewise designates a position in the royal court. The scene on the Temple XIX platform shows *yok kuk yajaw k'ahk'* in a small circle of high-ranking nobles before the king, with a *ko'haw* helmet resting in front of him on a small wooden stand between him and the ruler. The royal headband and helmet are among the monarch's insignias and it may have been the task of the *yok kuk (tal / ch'ajan)* to watch over the king's wardrobe and regalia. Temple XIX would thus have been something of a treasury for the ruler where his regalia, clothing, and insignias were stored and guarded.



Figure 10. Stela 8 from Naranjo with an image of the king Itzamnaaj K'awiil and a text passage that enumerates 70 objects that he lined up, which probably included textile bundles containing human remains, weapons, and skulls. Photo by Teobert Maler, courtesy of the Ibero-American Institute in Berlin.

Stela 8 from Naranjo provides another attestation of sign 576, in the inscription on the front of the stela where the victorious king Itzamnaaj K'awiil is shown standing on a captive lying on the ground (Figure 10). The inscription begins with the Calendar Round date 11 Ak'bal 11 Yaxk'in (9.18.9.14.3) (Berlin 1973:8) and a series of hieroglyphs that still remain poorly understood. After the Calendar Round, where one normally finds a verb, the numerical term **LAJUUN HUXK'AL** for the number '70' occurs, followed by **U KUK** 'textile bundle', **u-ma-sa-?** 'ringing stones',² and **u-POL?-lo** 'heads'(?). These designations refer to objects or possessions of K'inich Lakamtuun, the king of Yaxha' whom Itzamnaaj K'awiil attacked on 9.18.8.16.2 and 9.18.9.0.13 and seems to have finally conquered on 9.18.9.14.3, because K'inich Lakamtuun's name no longer appears in the text corpus after this date. Assuming that the decipherment of sign 576 as **KUK** is correct, this unusual victory monument enumerates what are probably 70 bundles and other objects that cannot be easily identified, which were presented to Itzamnaaj K'awiil in Naranjo. This count could refer to bodies, heads, and weapons wrapped in cloth that were laid before the king—or tribute that the subjugated king in Yaxha' had to pay to his new overlord.

² In Yukatek, <maz> signifies 'retinte, o sonido del hierro, metal o piedra' (Arzápalo Marín 1995:fol. 285r).

Another attestation of the logograph 576 was identified by David Stuart on Monument 176 from Tonina (Figure 10) (Stuart 2005:31). Based on this context in which sign 576 functions as the main element of an Emblem Glyph, Stuart argues that sign 576 constitutes a logograph. Here, the sign 576 **KUK** appears in the name phrase *Ix Muyal Chan K'awiil Ix Kuk Ajaw*. According to the inscription, this figure observed an unidentified event at Tonina and, according to her Emblem Glyph, originated from the place Kuk, which unfortunately is not mentioned in any other texts and thus cannot be linked with a known archaeological site.

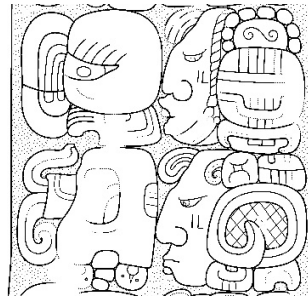


Figure 11. Monument 176 from Tonina that refers to Lady Ix Muyal Chan K'awiil from the place Kuk. Copyrighted drawing by Guido Krempel (published with kind permission by the *Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural del INAH*)

I will wrap up this study by discussing three less certain contexts that may present phonetic spellings of the term **KUK**, ²**ku** for **ku-ku** and **ku-ki**. One occurrence is associated with a way being shown on the ceramic vase Kerr 7220 as a headless body lying with its torso on a textile bundle (Figure 12). This figure may represent the “man in the bundle;” his name phrase is introduced with a syllable **ku** that may be accompanied by a doubler diacritic, thus indicating **ku-ku** or **KUK**. Unfortunately, however, the doubler cannot be securely identified here due to the additional, dot-like elements above the sign 528 **ku**, and the following hieroglyphs also cannot be securely deciphered. Nonetheless, the iconography of the beheaded figure and the textile bundle would support identification of this individual as the “man on the bundle.”



Figure 12. Detail of a way creature on the ceramic vase Kerr 7220 that shows a headless figure lying on its torso atop a textile bundle, possibly a version of the “man in the bundle.” The upper hieroglyph in the phrase to the left is sign 528 **ku with a possible doubler above. Photograph by Justin Kerr, drawing by Christian Prager.**

In 2003, Erik Boot and Luís Lopes (2004) identified the image of an insect on the ceramic vase Kerr 1815 that is described in the accompanying text as *k'ahk' ti' kuk* (Figure 13) (Boot 2009:99). Guido Krempel (personal communication March 31, 2020) states that the ceramic vessel is heavily over-painted, some details were probably added freely, so the following explanations should be treated with caution. The glowing beetle appears in a scene that takes place at dusk and depicts the sacrifice of the baby jaguar Unen Bahlam by the death god Sak-ja-? and the rain god Yax Ha'al Chahk. The baby jaguar is being thrown into the mountain while the rain god splits the earth or the mountain so that the sacrificed baby jaguar can enter it as a seed, sprout, and be reborn from there (Taube 1992:17-27; Boot 2004; Lacadena 2004; García Barrios 2007, 2009; Martin 2002; Steinbach 2015).

Figure 13. Sacrifice of the baby jaguar on Kerr 1815 with the image of a beetle moving backward.
Photo by Justin Kerr, enlargement and accentuation by Penny Steinbach (2015:277).



The insect's name phrase was initially analyzed by Erik Boot and later also by Luís Lopes as **K'AK' TI' ku-ku-la** or *k'ahk' ti' kukuul*, which they translated with 'fire-mouthed beetle-like insect' or 'smoking beetle-like insect'. In Yukatek, *kukul* refers to 'un insecto enemigo de la calabaza y otros sembrados' and is related to the terms (ix) *kuklin* 'escarabejo pelotero, escarabejo' and (ix) *kuklim ta'* 'escarabejo' (Lopes 2004:3-4). According to Lopes, Ch'ol as documented in Tumbalá also includes the lexical entry *cuclunta'*, meaning 'cocuyo (insecto escarabajo negro que vuela por la noche, y que es relumbroso)'. The name phrase here is preceded by the numerical value **JUN PIK** '8000': *jun pik*

k'ahk' ti' kukuul, or infinite quantities of glowing beetles.

Moreover, *kukuul* or *kuknal* is a toponym in or near Tikal. The place name was identified by David Stuart in 1990 (Stuart 2014:2), although its etymology remains unclear (compare Tokovinine 2013; Boot 2009:98-99) or has been proposed as a possible alternative reading of Tikal's Emblem Glyph (Beliaev and Tokovinine 2013). Nonetheless, it remains an open question whether *kukuul* or *kukul* in this context also designates the glowing beetle or refers to a 'rolled bundle'. The same uncertainty of interpretation also applies to the Emblem Glyph on Monument 176 from Tonina.

In conclusion, I would like to discuss a similarly ambiguous occurrence of the lexeme *kuk* on an unprovenanced panel from the region of Piedras Negras (Figure 14) (Mayer 1989:Plate 103), the so-called FLAAR Panel (Mayer 1987:25). The panel is the epitaph of the *sajal* K'an Xook under Piedras Negras Ruler 2. According to the inscription, the 'skin' (*nu[h]ku[l]*) or garments and the *ko'haw*

headdress of Ruler 2 was publicly presented (*na[']waj*) on the date 9.12.13.4.3 by an *aj baak* of the king of Calakmul, Yuknoom the Great. The name phrase of the *aj baak* is partially preserved, beginning with *aj ?-ja* and continuing with *k'uk'ulte'* 'feather-adorned spear' and *k'ahk' kuuk* 'fire-bundle'. The text passage addresses the clothing of the Piedras Negras ruler that was publicly presented to him by an emissary from the Calakmul kingdom. Given that this figure's nominal phrase includes the elements *k'uk'ulte'* and *k'ahk' kuuk*, we can tentatively conclude that he represents an attendant from the royal court of Calakmul who was tasked with guarding the royal paraphernalia, clothing, and regalia and dressing the king with these items.

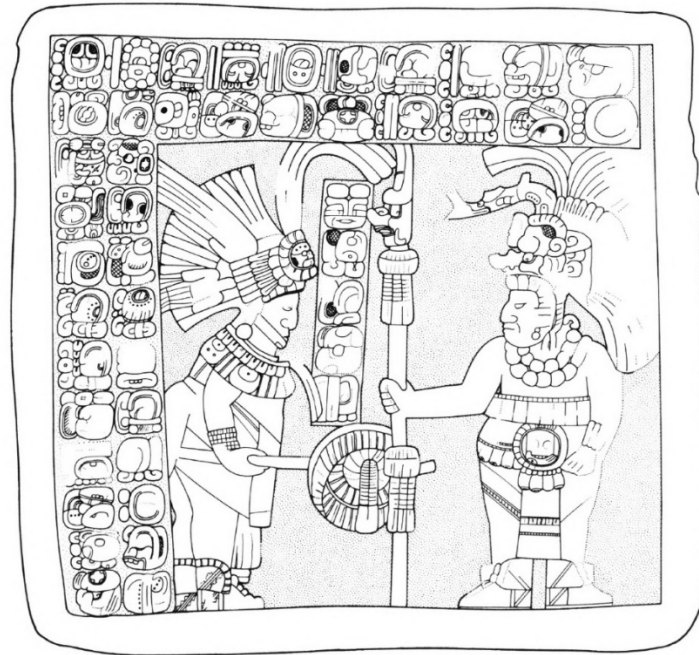


Figure 14. Drawing of the so-called FLAAR Panel from the region of Piedras Negras, illustrating Ruler 2 from Piedras Negras and his *sajal*. Drawing by Nikolai Grube (Mayer 1989:Plate 103).

The decipherment **KUK** for sign 576 that has been tested here proves productive for understanding its occurrences in Palenque (*yok kuk ch'ajan* 'guardian of the tied bundle') and for reading the name phrase of the *way* creature nicknamed "man in the bundle" as *kuk winik*, *kukil winik*, or *kukan winik* 'bundle person', 'rolled-up person', or 'person who becomes a bundle'. This interpretation also fits well with the attestation on La Amelia Stela 2, where the captive who has been tied and wrapped up into a bundle is rolled down the stairs in the context of a ritual ballgame. In Palenque, this term also identifies a member of the royal court who was assigned with caring for the royal vesture and regalia and dressing the king or otherwise assisting him with donning his vestments.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Daniel Graña-Behrens, Sven Gronemeyer, Nikolai Grube, Guido Krempel, Mallory Matsumoto, and Elisabeth Wagner for their constructive criticism of the text. Guido Krempel's drawing is published courtesy of "Coordinación Nacional de Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural del INAH". Mallory Matsumoto also kindly translated the original manuscript.

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