

## *Jun Yop Ixiim* – Another Appellative for the Ancient Maya Maize God

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The present note will discuss a new reading of the initial hieroglyphic block (D1) of *K'inich Janaab Pakal* II's (henceforth: *Pakal*) nominal phrase as recorded in the inscription on the Oval Palace Tablet at Palenque. The identification of the collocation's initial sign has been made after recent documentation of two casts of the Oval Palace Tablet in 2015 and 2016. Of these reproductions, one is a fiberglass cast on exhibit in the *Knauf-Museum* (Iphofen) (Gaida 2005:240), the other one is a plaster cast kept in the storage facilities of the *Ethnologisches Museum* (Berlin). Both casts were made from molds taken from the original sculpture; the one at Berlin by Eduard Seler in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the one at Iphofen by staff of the Knauf-Museum in the 1970s.

### The Oval Palace Tablet and its Context

The original Oval Palace Tablet is a tablet of rounded shape, sculptured in low relief from a dense greyish limestone and its dimensions are 117 cm (height) by 95 cm (width) (Robertson 1985:28) (Figure 1). It was set into the rear wall of the throne room in House E of the Palace at Palenque where it is still located *in situ* today (cf. del Rio 1822, Brasseur de Bourbourg and Waldeck 1866, Maudslay 1889-1902, Vol. IV: Pl. 44; Schele 1994; Robertson 1985:28-31, Pl. 91-92; Stuart and Stuart 2008:38, Fig. 9A, 157-158, Fig. 49A). It faces the central doorway of the western face of House E on and is visible from the court in front (Figure 2). Information on the exact distance from the floor to the lower edge of the tablet has not been found in the literature, but from a reconstruction drawing published by Merle Greene Robertson (cf. Robertson 1985: Pl. 92) it can be estimated to be about 80 cm.

The surface of the Oval Palace Tablet is considerably eroded and lacks some of the finer details of the sculptured inscription. The pitted surface indicates the destruction of the stone's structure by pecking its surface when the stone was prepared for sculpturing – a common technique applied by ancient Maya sculptors when preparing harder stone for sculpturing. As a side effect that technique accelerated the erosion of the sculptured surface when exposed to weathering.



Figure 1. Cast of the Oval Palace Tablet in the Knauf-Museum Iphofen (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015; post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer).



Figure 2. Palenque, East façade of House E with the Oval Palace Tablet *in situ*. (View from the Tower Court towards the east; the left doorway is covered by the Palace Tower) (Photograph by the author, 2008).

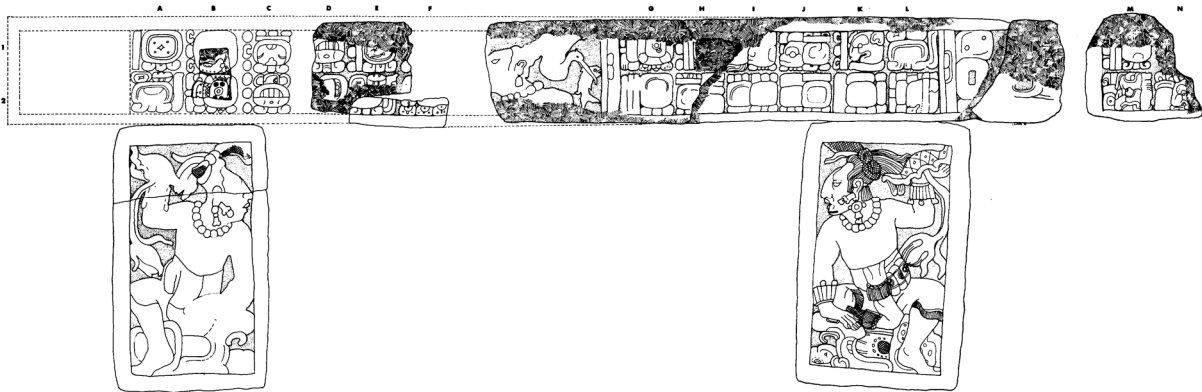
Below the tablet was originally erected a throne seat resting on four supports (Figure 3) that was apparently still *in situ* when first documented by Antonio Bernasconi in 1785 (Stuart and Stuart 2008:38, Fig. 9A) and later by Ignacio Armendáriz during Antonio del Rio's Palenque expedition in 1787 (del Rio 1822:12-13; Nygard 2003:3; Stuart 2008a). When del Rio removed the throne's right front leg to bring it back with him to Spain, the throne assemblage apparently collapsed and was badly damaged (Schele and Mathews 1979:140; Robertson 1985:30; Nygard 2003:3-4). That destruction and later removal of the remaining parts of the throne contributed to the fact that the Oval Palace Tablet has often been perceived and discussed as a single monument, not considering its original context as a back rest (Nygard 2003:11) whose shape mimics that of a large jaguar pelt throne cushion (Miller and Martin 2004:202).



**Figure 3. Reconstruction of the Del Rio Throne assemblage below the Oval Palace Tablet (Drawing by Merle Greene Robertson, cited from Robertson 1985: pl. 92).**

The assemblage of throne bench and Oval Palace Tablet as encountered by Antonio del Rio appears not to be the original configuration that had been installed in the throne room to commemorate *Pakal's* accession. The original throne was probably re-erected in the basement of the palace and replaced by another one during a refurbishment of the throne room by one of *Pakal's* successors (Marken and Gonzalez Cruz 2007:154; Stuart 2008b). This later one was found by del Rio and is now

known as the Del Rio Throne. The inscription on the front of this throne records *K'an Joy Chitam II's* accession in a prominent position and connected that event to the accession of *Pakal* (Figure 4) which may point to the former as the one who refurbished the throne assemblage while *Ahkal Mo' Nahb* has been responsible for another refurbishment in the throne room, such as the painted inscription on the wall below the vault spring above the Oval Tablet (cf. Stuart 2008b; Callaway 2008; 2009).



**Figure 4. Inscribed fragments and sculptured front legs of the Del Rio Throne (Drawing by Linda Schele, cited from Schele and Mathews 1979:140).**

David Stuart convincingly assumes that the badly eroded and calc-sinter covered inscribed throne in the basement of the Palace was the original throne erected together with the Oval Palace Tablet (Stuart 2008b). A quick inspection of this throne in November 2008 revealed that its badly eroded inscription starts with a Long Count date 9.11.2?/4? [...] and contains a reference to *K'inich Janaab Pakal II* at its end. The mostly illegible 9.11 date clearly lies in *Pakal's* reign, and if the coefficient of the *Tun* is 2, then it is close to his 2<sup>nd</sup> *K'atun* anniversary in office and also to the dedication of House E on 9.11.2.1.11 9 *Chuen* 9 *Mac* (cf. Mathews n.d.:5; Stuart and Stuart 2008:156; Martin and Grube 2008:163), probably shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, the remainder of the inscription is too much eroded and covered with calc-sinter to reveal clear details about the exact date and the event recorded, until a closer inspection with better lighting and eventual removal of the sinter by a restorer had been done. Further, Stuart and Stuart (2008:157) pointed out that the Oval Palace Tablet shows *Pakal* as an adult not as a 12-year old child in an idealized image of his accession. This anachronistic representation which already shows the distinct facial features of the adult *Pakal* clearly indicates that the tablet was designed and sculptured years after *Pakal's* accession when he was already an adult, apparently during his new building program at the Palace.

Given that the Oval Palace Tablet was the backrest of *Pakal's* throne, that one's seat was re-erected in the basement of the palace, while its backrest remained in place during various later refurbishments of the throne room which continued to be used as such by his successors. The tablet remained to serve as the backrest for the thrones of *Pakal's* successors, apparently indicating a political strategy to legitimate their authority by emphasizing their descent from *Pakal* (Stuart and Stuart 2008:156) and thus stressing dynastic continuity.

That the Oval Palace Tablet has always been part of a larger sculptural and inscripational program needs to be considered when assessing the textual and pictorial content of the Oval Tablet. As is known for long, the scene on the tablet depicts the coronation of *Pakal* on 9.9.2.4.8 5 *Lamat* 1 *Mol* when he received the crown from the hands of his mother *Ix Sak K'uk'* at the young age of 12 years (e.g. Mathews and Schele 1974:64; Schele 1979:50-51; 1994; Martin and Grube 2008:161). The date of accession is well documented on other inscribed sources at Palenque - including the Del Rio Throne

(e.g. Mathews n.d.:3; Stuart 2008a), while the scenic representation on the Oval Tablet is accompanied by captions giving only the nominal phrases of the depicted individuals, consisting of their proper names plus titles, each one preceded by a deity name. This is not surprising when the pictorial representation plus captions is viewed as a supplementary illustration to the inscription of the possible original throne seat that once stood below its backrest, the Oval Palace Tablet. From the pictorial record of accession scenes at Palenque, the one on the Oval Palace Tablet is the so far earliest known.

### The Epitheta of *K'inich Janaab Pakal* and his Mother

The focus of the present note is the collocation (D1) that precedes *Pakal's* proper name and emblem title in his nominal phrase (D1-D3) to the right of his portrait. So far there has not been a definite identification, reading or interpretation for Block D1 due to its eroded state on the original monument as it is preserved today. This partial illegibility resulted in a variety of renderings of this block in the various drawings published, either left blank or rendered to fit the respective author's interpretation (cf. Schele 1979:50, Fig. 8, 51, Fig. 9; Robertson 1985: Pl. 91- 92; Schele and Miller 1986:114; Schele 1994:2). While most studies dealing with the Oval Palace Tablet and its inscription do not discuss the collocation in Block D1, Linda Schele had read the initial block of *Pakal's* nominal phrase as "*och hun nal*" (Schele 1994:2) and she offered two possibilities to interpret her reading: 1) *Pakal* became the avatar of the Maize God when he acceded, or 2) the initial part of his nominal phrase refers to the headdress *Pakal* received by his mother. Another reading, "*jun yax ixim*", was proposed by Carl Callaway (2008:32, fn. 1; 2009: fn. 1).



Figure 5. Palenque, House E, Oval Palace Tablet: Nominal Phrase of *K'inich Janaab Pakal* II: a) fiberglass cast at the Knauf-Museum (Iphofen) (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015, post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer); b) plaster cast at the Ethnologisches Museum (Berlin) (Photograph by Christian Prager, 2016).

However, a close inspection of various renderings of a structured light 3D-scan of the cast in the Knauf-Museum (Figure 5a) and of a detail photograph of Seler's cast at Berlin (Figure 5b), allows for a clear identification and reading of the initial part of *Pakal's* nominal phrase (Table 1).

The main sign of block D1 (Figure 6) is T1006 which is one of the two anthropomorphic graphs that represent the two major aspects of the Maize God. The logograph T1006h, **IXIM**, represents the Tonsured Maize God. The discovery of a syllabic spelling of the term for maize grains as **i-xi-ma**, *ixiim*, in the mural on *Chihk Nahb* Structure 1 at Calakmul (Martin in Carrasco *et al.* 2009:19248, Fig. 6A; Zender 2014:5) and T1006h, prefixed by T679, **i**, as initial phonetic indicator to read T1000h as the logograph **IXIM** (Stuart 1995:116; 2005:182; 2006:197-198; Zender 2014:5). That decipherment has confirmed that *ixiim*, known in many Mayan languages as the word for grain maize, was also the term for grain maize in Classic Mayan. A reading for another variant of T1006 which represents the Foliated Maize God has been presented by Marc Zender as **AJAN** (Stone and Zender 2011:21-22; Zender 2014:2,4), based on a syllabic spelling of this theonym on Quirigua, Altar P (U1) and on the case where the phonetic complement **-na** is suffixed to T1006 as on Lintel 3 of Temple I at Tikal (F5). The word *ajan* is attested in many Mayan languages and refers particularly to the fresh ear of maize (*elote*) (cf. Kaufman and Justeson 2003:1159; Stross 2006:589; Zender 2014:2,4).



Figure 6. Palenque, Oval Palace Tablet: D1: The epithet of *K'inich Janaab Pakal* (Drawing by the author).

The erosion of the sculptured surface resulted in the partial loss of the inscription's finer details. In the case of T1006 in D3, it appears on the first glimpse rather difficult to distinguish between the two variants of T1006, whether **IXIM** or **AJAN** is written here. The faint remains of a scroll in the upper right of the graph and the small bead or flower-shaped element on the forehead of the Maize God points to the Tonsured Maize God, thus **IXIM**, *ixiim*.

The previously illegible sign in front of T1006, **IXIM**, can now clearly be identified as the graph T115, which represents the syllabic value **yo**, derived acrophonically from its logographic value **YOP** (Stuart 1987; 2012:123; 2013). This sign whose graph icon depicts an elongated plant leaf with its tip pointing downwards and bent to the lower left is used here as a logograph, **YOP**, to spell the Cholan and Classic Mayan word *yop* for "leaf".

This sign is prefixed to T1006, the head of the Tonsured Maize God (cf. Taube 1985; Zender 2014), and aptly designates this deity as **YOP IXIM**, *yop ixiim*, "leaf grain maize". Altogether with the superfixed number "one", **JUN**, the epithet in B1 can now be read altogether as **JUN-YOP-IXIM**, *jun yop ixiim*, "One-Leaf-Grain Maize", as an appellative for a manifestation of the Tonsured Maize God, known as (*Jun*) *Ixiim*.

D1



T115.[5001:1006]

YOP.[JUN:IXIM]

JUN YOP IXIM

*Jun yop ixim*

one leaf maize

One Leaf(ed) Maize

D2



T184.[181.[86:624]]:178]

K'INICH.[ja.[NAB:PAKAL]:la]

K'INICH ja-NAB PAKAL<sup>la</sup>*k'inich Janaab pakal**K'inich Janaab Pakal**K'inich Janaab Pakal II.*

D3



T36.[168:570:178]

K'UH.[AJAW:BAK:la]

K'UH BAK=la AJAW

*K'uhul baakal ajaw*Divine *Baakal* KingDivine *Baakal* King

**Table 1. Epigraphic analysis of Pakal's nominal phrase**

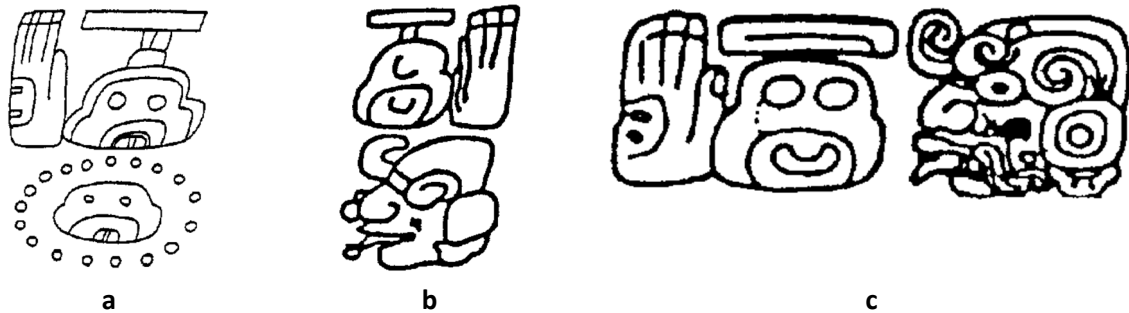
To the list of known appellatives for the various aspects and regional manifestations of the Maize God that are recorded by various theonyms such as *?-nal ixim* or *hux yatik ixim* for the progenitor of the Palenque Triad, or *jun ixim*, “One (Grain) Maize” (Martin in Carrasco *et al.* 2009:19248, Fig. 6; Zender 2014:5) for the Tonsured Maize God, as well as and *jun ajan* and *yax ajan* (Kerr n.d.: Vessel #623) for the Foliated Maize God, another one for the Tonsured Maize God can now be added: *jun yop ixim*, literally “One-Leaf-(Grain) Maize”. Thus, the fully readable theonym proves Linda Schele's former statement that we deal with a specific aspect of the Maize God, here embodied by *Pakal*, as correct. Correspondingly, the acceding king is dressed as the Maize God, and the caption next to his pictorial representation identifies the acceding ruler as embodiment of a specific aspect of the Maize God.

That dynastic events were linked to particular events from local mythology and dynastic rituals were actually re-enactments of such events is well known from ancient Maya inscriptions and imagery. The royal family and members of the court were dressed as the respective mythic entities and acted in their specific roles. During these ritual performances these humans were viewed as these particular supernatural beings themselves (Houston and Stuart 1998). Particularly Palenque had a tradition to record such events in detailed narratives, both textual and pictorial (cf. Mathews and Schele 1974; Schele and Freidel 1990; Freidel *et al.* 1993; Stuart 2000; 2005; Stuart *et al.* 2006; Stuart and Stuart 2008; Gonzales Cruz and Bernal Romero 2012) of which the ones from the reign of *Pakal* are the so far earliest known from Palenque.



**Figure 7. Palenque, House E, Oval Palace Tablet, detail: Nominal Phrase of Lady Sak K'uk' on a fiberglass cast at the Knauf-Museum (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015; post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer).**

That *Pakal's* accession as shown on the Oval Palace Tablet was such a re-enactment as well becomes apparent in the captions naming both *Pakal* and his mother Lady *Sak K'uk'*. Besides of their proper names and titles, their nominal phrases start both with the proper name of a mythical character. While *Pakal's* proper name is preceded by the name of an aspect of the Maize God, his mother's nominal phrase starts with a not yet completely deciphered collocation which is an extended nominal phrase of the supernatural entity known as GI (Figure 7), known particularly from Early Classic texts (cf. Stuart 2005:121) (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Nominal Phrase of a GI-aspect (from Stuart 2005:122, Fig. 90): A1-C2: a) Uaxactun, Early Classic cache vessel (drawing by David Stuart, after Smith 1955, Vol. II: Fig. 71); b) Unprovenanced celt (drawing by Dorie Reents-Budet) c) Tikal, Stela 31: A24-B24 (from Jones and Satterthwaite 1982: Fig. 52b).**

GI was described by David Stuart (2006:88) as:

“an enigmatic character in many ways, [...] a celestial god bearing aquatic attributes. It was a deity of the ocean who also had strong meanings associated with the rising sun and themes of royal ancestry.”

Erik Boot (2016:12) assumed GI as a possible aspect of *Chaak*. Apparently this aspect of GI is embodied by the mother of *Pakal* at his accession. It is not clear how this entity is related to *Jun Ye'nal GI*, the first born of the Palenque triad, but I assume that the prefixed *naah* may indicate it as another manifestation of a supernatural entity in a category of such, dubbed GI, probably closely related to *Chaak* and in its manifestation as *Jun Ye'nal GI*, to the Maize God as well. The prefix T4, **NAH**, *naah*, “first, great”, may assign it to a group or generation of primordial supernaturals whose names feature the same prefix, like *Naah Itz Mam* (= *Itzamnaaj*), or various *naah kan/chan* creatures, like e.g. *Yax Chit Jun Winik Naah Kan*. That particular aspect of GI embodied by the mother of *Pakal* and him impersonating the very young Maize God, points to the former entity as the mother or - when considering the absence of a female prefix in the name of that GI - as at least some kind of an either male or neuter supernatural progenitor of the Maize God.

At present the discussed case of the theonym *Jun Yop Ixiim*, “One Leaf Grain Maize”, is the only one known so far. Therefore, an attempt to relate it to a particular episode in maize mythology and in the Maize God's “life-cycle”, and thus a specific stage of the cycle of maize agriculture remains still a bit speculative. Any such attribution depends on whether the Maize God symbolism relates to the whole plant, the maize ear or the seed kernel only, or even combining all of these, although the semantics of the terms for the two major manifestations of the Maize God, *ixiim*, “grain maize”, and *ajan*, “young maize ear” (*elote*), indicate a focus on the seed and the ear. These provide not only the staple food and seeds, but are also the parts of the plant which show most obviously the various developmental stages of development from the female blossom, via the various ripening stages of the ear until its harvest to provide food and seeds for the next planting. However, it is still possible that the symbolism



based on the development of the ear and the (planted) seed may eventually be a *pars pro toto* reference to the development of the maize plant as a whole. Although maize mythology in general reflects the agricultural cycle (cf. Taube 1985; Quenon and Le Fort 1997; Saturno *et al.* 2005; Martin 2006; Taube *et al.* 2010; Braakhuis 1990; 2009; 2014), the correlation of the respective mythic episodes with specific developmental stages of the maize plant/ear/seed during the agricultural cycle still requires further research, which lies beyond the scope of this note. However, it is tempting to see the “One-Leaf-Grain Maize” as a figurative description of the appearance of the shoot from the freshly sown seed after it has emerged from the surface of the earth and features its first leaf. If this assumption is correct, *jun yop ixim* refers to the initial “aboveground” developmental stage (VE) of the maize plant when the first embryonic leaf emerges from the coleoptile (cf. Ritchie *et al.* 1992) (Figure 9).

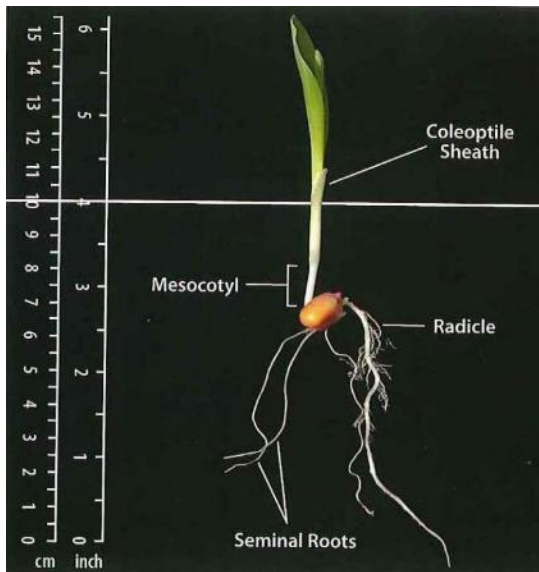


Figure 9. VE stage of maize plant: the first leaf emerges from the coleoptile of a planted seed (from Ritchie *et al.* 1992).

Since *Pakal* is acting as Maize God, his costume and hairdo is that of the Tonsured Maize God, but supplemented by three iconographic motifs which include the following:

1) The first is a single long vegetal element rendered like a stalk with a bud or flower at its end that seems to emerge from the top of the head like a sprout or shoot of a plant (Figure 10) which also shows up in other royal portraits at Palenque (eg. Schele 1979:47, Fig. 5b-d).



Figure 10. Palenque, House E, Oval Palace Tablet, detail: Stalk with flower or bud emerging from the top of various Palenque rulers' heads (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015; post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer).

This motif represents a generic flower or-bud as e.g. show the various fruit trees on *Pakal's* sarcophagus and particularly the tips of the so-called “Jester God’s” head crest. In his study on the Jester God as the supernatural entity named *hux yop huun*, “three leaf headband”, David Stuart (Stuart 2012:126, Fig. 11) lists examples of the iconographic development of the Jester God motif in Maya iconography and these clearly show that the shoot or branch emerging from the back of the head is a prominent part of that motif. The Jester God has been identified by David Stuart as a personification of a fig tree and as the supernatural essence of *amate* paper (Stuart 2012:128-129). The tree symbolism not only alludes to the material of the royal headband as *amate* (bark paper), but particularly incorporates that deity’s association with “primordial ancestry and rulership” (Stuart 2012:117).

The tree-symbolism of both the Jester God of the royal headband – or, in the case of the Oval Palace Tablet, the headdress handed over to the acceding *Pakal* – and the mentioned sprout or branch emerging from the top of *Pakal's* head both relate to the theme of ancestral rebirth from an “orchard of ancestors”, the latter denoting the deceased members of Palenque’s royal dynasty (cf. Schele and Freidel 1990:217, 221; Carlsen and Prechtel 1991; Martin 2006:161), which already had been noticed by Linda Schele when she pointed out that what she called the “leaf motif” “is a prominent symbol of lineage and political accession” (Schele 1979:52). Besides of its relation to the Jester God of the royal headband, this vegetal element may mark its bearer as offspring of Palenque’s ruling dynasty. It is rather tempting – and highly speculative - to relate the tree-branch or –sprout symbol in the headdress to *yajaw te'*, literally “lord of the tree”, a term that has been assumed elsewhere to refer to the concept of lineage or dynasty (cf. Martin and Grube 2008:119; Prager and Wagner 2017:21) in a sense of being the offspring of the dynastic ancestors and thus the rebirth, renewal and continuity of these.

2) The second element in *Pakal's* headdress is also a vegetal one, but merged with the head of a “*xok*-fish” (Figure 11). This motif may allude to another episode in Maya maize mythology: the rebirth of the Maize God from the maw of a piscine monster (Quenon and Le Fort 1997:886-891; Sachse and Christenson 2005:10-14; Grofe 2007:28-33; Sachse 2008:133-138), probably the Tropical Alligator Gar (*Lepisosteus tristoechus*) also known as “*xok*-fish” (Reilly 1991:160; Quenon and Le Fort 1997:889). Thus, this second element may represent the aquatic form of the Jester God that was noted by David Stuart (2012:129) as distinct from the celestial avian “true” Jester God.



**Figure 11.** Palenque, House E, Oval Palace Tablet, detail: “*Xok*-fish” merging with tree-sprout/-branch (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015; post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer).

3) The third motif features a flare or ear spool shaped element from which emerges a human hand holding or scattering a stylized appendage that is known from various representations of jewelry and

also flower motifs in ancient Maya art (Figure 12). It is also a common costume element in representations of the Maize God as well as of jewelry worn by ancient Maya royalty and nobility.

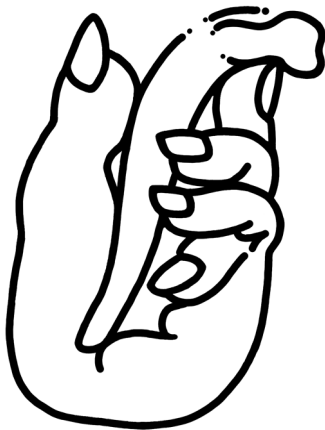


Figure 12. Palenque, House E, Oval Palace Tablet, detail: hand holding or dropping jewel-flower-element (Screenshot of textured 3D-model, structured light 3D-scan and -model by the *Textdatenbank und Wörterbuch des Klassischen Maya* project, 2015; post-processing by Sven Gronemeyer).

The jewel like object held in the hand seems to combine the motifs of a small flower/blossom and that of a seed kernel, which also comprises the graph icon of the logograph T218, **TZUTZ**, *tzutz*, “repeat, start anew, renew, replant, repair” (Stuart 2011:269; Hopkins *et al.* 2011:243) (Figure 13a), that can be substituted by a hand holding a stick-like object which seems to symbolize a digging stick (Figure 13b), a device commonly used for planting in Mesoamerica (cf. Flood n.d.).



a



b

Figure 13. Example of the logograph TZUTZ: a) hand holding or dropping seed (Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs: L3); b) hand holding digging stick (Copan, Stela 4: B7a) (Drawings by the author).

The mentioned jewel-like object may symbolize a seed kernel, combined with a small flower. The hand holding this object seems to be a synthetic representation, combining the process of planting, sowing and first blooming of the maize plant, thus summarizing the initial stages of the maize cycle. It may further allude to the episode apparently following the emergence of the Maize God from the fish and subsequently being dressed by a group of young women handing him over his jewels and headdress before the Maize God enters the canoe to be transferred to the place where he resurrects out of the primordial waters of the Underworld (cf. Quenon and Le Fort 1997:891-898) (Figure 14). A relation of

this third motif to the third manifestation of the Jester God, the Trident Blossom and possible maize flower (Stuart 2012:129), seems reasonable.



Figure 14. Kerr Vessel #3033 (Photograph by Justin Kerr, from Kerr n.d.a; [http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya\\_hires.php?vase=3033](http://research.mayavase.com/kerrmaya_hires.php?vase=3033)).

Related to the three discussed motifs is also the imagery on a pair of Early Classic shell disks (Kerr n.d.b: #8341) (Figure 15). Each disk depicts a seated male holding in his arms two tree-branches or -sprouts that seem to emerge from behind him. Besides of wearing an *ajaw*-headband, a zoomorphic head with both piscine and serpentine features, tassels, as well as flower and seed symbols, the same branch- or sprout symbol - as those in the Palenque portraits - emerges from the back of his head.



Figure 15. Pair of Early Classic shell disks (Kerr #8341) (Photograph by Justin Kerr, from Kerr n.d.b; <http://research.mayavase.com/uploads/kerrfolio/hires/8341.jpg>).

Nikolai Grube (pers. comm. October 2017) pointed out that this male figure is related to the entity *Hux Yop Huun*, the Jester God (cf. Stuart 2012:122-128). The mentioned seated males show both features of *Hux Yop Huun* - here in its serpentine/piscine form – and the Maize God. Furthermore, like *Pakal* on the Oval Palace Tablet, this character wears the same type of loincloth and also a “wind jewel”-pectoral (cf. Taube 2005), alluding to both the Maize God and the anthropomorphic *Hux Yop Huun*-character on the two shell disks as primordial rulers (*ajaw*) (cf. Stuart 2012:121). Here should be noted that both *Hux Yop Huun* as a personified *amate* tree (including the paper made of its bark) (Stuart 2012:128) and the Maize God embody vegetal entities, and therefore it is not surprising that both Jester God tree-symbolism and maize symbolism are closely related and occur combined (cf. Stuart 2012:128-131), and both underlie the production and representation of royal regalia and -ritual.

In sum, all three motifs - just as the various manifestations of the Jester God - are intimately related to the theme of ancestral rebirth and regeneration, dynastic succession and continuity, expressed by vegetational metaphors, namely the germination and growth of trees and maize.

On the background of the king as human manifestation of the Maize God, the primordial nature of accession and by the fact that *Pakal* acceded as a young boy, it seems rather adequate to refer to him as a germinating maize seed kernel or as a very young maize plant that just sprouts from its seedling – thus being a “very young” Maize God.

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