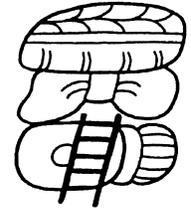


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Report 16

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The 'Manikin' Glyph Compound (T86:700) as a Reference to Headdresses

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This note concerns the interpretation of Maya glyphic collocations that include a grapheme which represents a human lower body and legs. The sign is sometimes identified with T700, which in other contexts reads **kum/chum** "sit" (Fig. 1; Grube 1992; Macri andLooper 2003:114). Accompanied by a T86 **näl** superfix, the sign frequently appears as part of the variable element sequence of the prepositional phrases that follow T516 "dance" verbs at several sites. Grammatically, the T86:700 compound appears to be a noun, while the glyphs that precede it in these contexts would be expected to be adjectival. Unfortunately, a dictionary search for the reference of *kumnal* or *chumnal* was unproductive. An examination of the contexts in which this collocation appears provides greater insight into its meaning.



Figure. 1. T86:700. DPL St. 15, E6b.
Drawing by Stephen Houston.

Many years ago, Peter Mathews (cited in Houston 1984; see also Mathews 1997) noted a correspondence between the variable elements of the prepositional phrases following T516 verbs, and the objects manipulated by the persons in the accompanying scenes. Thus, the collocation possibly reading *xukpi* "Motmot bird" on Yaxchilan Lintels 1 and 5 refers to the cruciform scepters decorated with flowers and birds that are held by the performers (Looper 1991a). This pattern is followed in other examples, such as an unprovenienced lintel which shows dancers holding snakes and a caption that refers to a "celestial snake" (Grube 1992:212-

213). The T86:700 glyph has likewise been interpreted as a reference to certain objects held in the hands of the dancers, either God K scepters (Peter Mathews, cited in Grube 1992) or other effigy figures (Looper 1991b).

As Houston (1984) noted, however, in some cases the object of the prepositional phrase in “dance” compounds refers to costume rather than to objects held by the performer. This is demonstrated in the mural of Bonampak Str. 1 Room 1, where the object of the prepositional phrase reads *ti' k'uk'* “with quetzal feathers”—surely a reference to the feathered backracks or headdresses worn by the dancers. This example suggests that the variable elements of the prepositional phrases in “dance” expressions should not always be taken to refer to objects manipulated in the dance. Instead, they should be evaluated through decipherment of their various components and through comparison of text and image.

The T86:700 compound occurs on ten monuments; eight of these accompany images (Table 1). Of these eight examples, six (c-h) appear in conjunction with what I term “triadic” iconography: the ruler holding the God K scepter and shield in his hands and wearing a tri-lobed mosaic pectoral (Looper 2003). Within this set, there are numerous variations in costume, especially in the headdresses. The two examples in which triadic iconography does not occur, Naranjo St. 30 (i) and Xultun St. 25 (j), show the ruler in diverse attire and holding objects unrelated to the triadic complex. On one of these, Naranjo St. 30, the dance text is located on the reverse of the monument. The text, therefore, may not refer to image on obverse, even though the dates of obverse scene and reverse dance text are the same.

Table 1. Image-text correspondences of T86:700 compounds.

	Monument	Prepositional phrase	Image
a.	DPL HS4, Step 1	<i>ti' ux ajen ch'e'en</i> T86:700	[no image]
b.	AGT St. 5 D3	<i>ti' _-tob'(a)-_ ti'</i> T86:700	plaited “fire god” headdress
c.	DPL St. 14	<i>ti' yax mutal su-??-la</i> T86:700	triadic, platelet headdress and anthropomorphic mask
d.	DPL St. 15	<i>ti' yax chitaj? noh? chan</i> T86:700	triadic, platelet headdress and long-nosed mask
e.	DPL St. 11 C2	<i>u-</i> T86:700	triadic, platelet headdress, mask with jaguar paw nose
f.	YAX Lnt. 32 D1	<i>ti'</i> T86:700	triadic
g.	YAX Lnt. 53 B2	<i>ti'</i> T86:700	triadic
h.	NAR St. 13 B1	<i>ti'</i> T86:700	triadic, yo'at headdress
i.	NAR St. 30 D12	<i>ti'</i> T86:700	jaguar deity, holding staff
j.	XUL St. 25 A2	<i>ti'</i> T86:700	net costume, holding jaguar, snake effigies

While these examples suggest that T86:700 compounds in dance expressions are usually accompanied by triadic iconography, it cannot be demonstrated that triadic iconography correlates with the T86:700 compound. In fact, in five cases in which dancers are represented with triadic iconography (Yaxchilan Lintels 1, 3, 42, 52, 54), the accompanying text caption does not include the T86:700 compound. Instead, the texts incorporate diverse variable elements as references to the names of the dances. My conclusion from the overall patterning of text and

image suggests that the T86:700 compound does not refer to this particular imagery, nor to the God K scepter of which it is a part.

What, then, is the referent of the T86:700 compound? To answer this question conclusively would require a complete decipherment of this compound, which has not yet been achieved. Moreover, we would like to see several examples of dance expressions in which the adjectival elements preceding the compound demonstrate a clear correspondence to some aspect of the image. An example which may prove useful to this end is Dos Pilas Stela 15 (Fig. 2). As noted by Houston (1993:92), Stela 15, together with Stelae 11 and 14 (Fig. 3), constitute a group of related monuments, all of which include a T86:700 compound in the text and feature similar imagery. In each case, the ruler is associated with triadic iconography, holding a God K scepter and a shield. On two of the stelae, 14 and 15, the God K scepters are virtually identical; that shown on St. 11 is very similar, except for a rosette atop the figure's head which replaces the flowers shown on St. 14 and 15.

Despite these correspondences of dance objects, the texts of the three stelae that refer to the dance differ considerably. On St. 11, the T86:700 compound has an *u-* superfix and is followed by an illegible sign. The Stelae 14 and 15 phrases are more elaborate and include completely different adjectival modifiers: *yax mutal su-??-la* on St. 14, and *yax chi?-ta?-ja noh? kan* on St. 15. The variance of these two expressions leads me to doubt their relationship to the identical God K figures that the rulers hold in the two portraits.

A more likely interpretation would be that the variable element of the prepositional phrases refers to some aspect of the costume worn by the ruler on the two monuments. From the neck downward, these costumes are identical. However, the headdresses differ in several significant details. In both cases, the core of the headdresses is the same, with a shell mosaic casing, a jester god on the front, a personified wing to the back, and an apical adornment consisting of a knot, spotted curls, a stuffed jaguar tail, and a second jester god and beads. However, the headdress of Stela 14 includes flowers with a bird sipping nectar attached to the top, a scaffold-like object with a *yax*-shell attached emerging from the serpent wing, and an apron-like element surmounted by a feathered God-C variant medallion at the very top.

In contrast, the headdress worn by the ruler on St. 15 includes a large waterlily and flower on the front, a flapstaff emerging from the personified wing, and a waterlily serpent (also termed “waterlily monster”) tail. The masks worn by the rulers are also different in form. That shown on Stela 14 has an anthropomorphic nose, while the St. 15 mask has a long, obviously zoomorphic, down turned snout, representing the face of the waterlily serpent. Is it possible that the adjectival elements that modify the T86:700 compounds refer to the different elements of the headdresses shown on these two stelae?

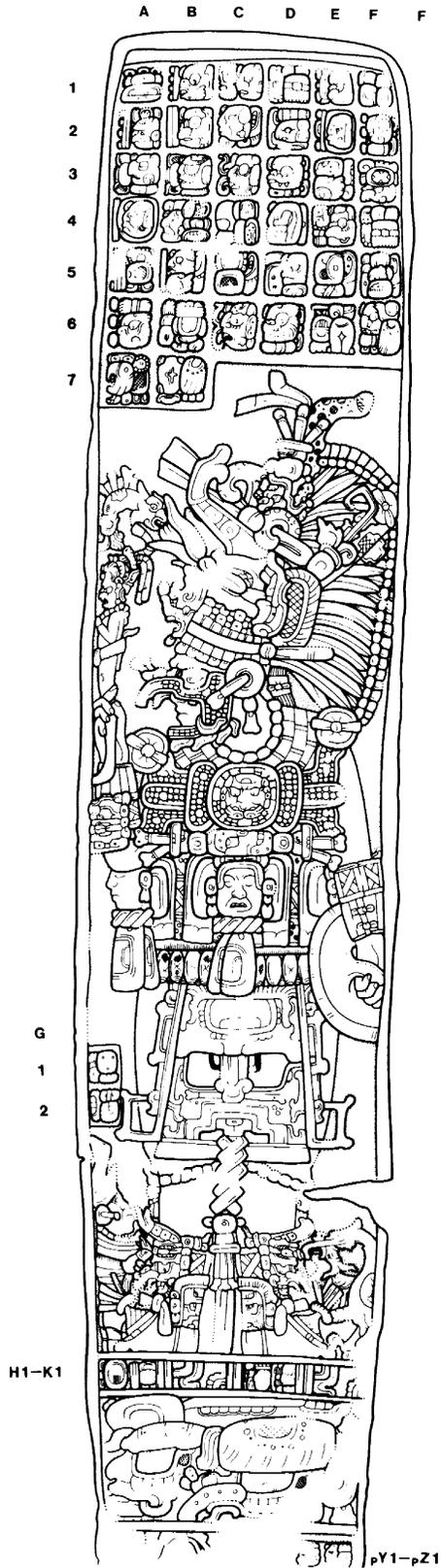


Fig. 2. DPL St. 15. Drawing by S, Houston.

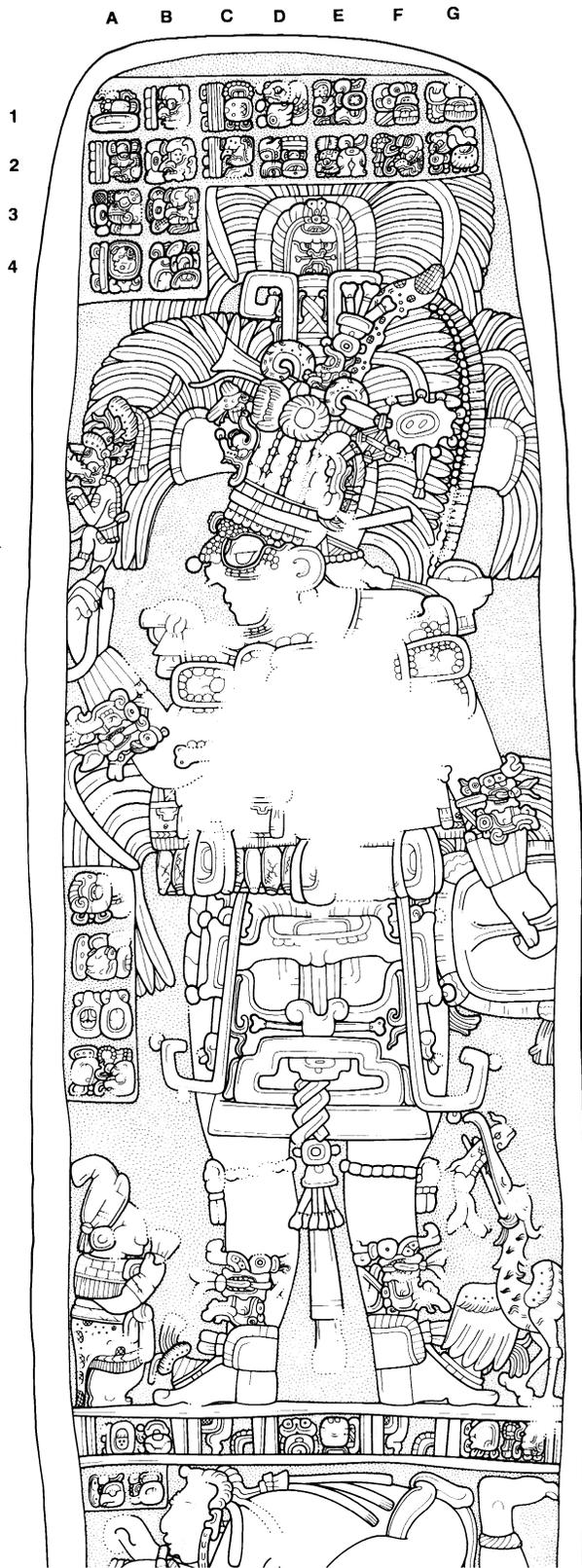


Fig. 3. DPL St. 14. Drawing by S, Houston.

While I cannot at present identify the supernatural being represented by the mask and headdress on St. 14, that of St. 15 is readily recognizable as the waterlily serpent. This being, known from numerous examples during the Classic period, is associated with period ending ceremonies, as well as narratives of creation (see Quenon and LeFort 1997). Its name is partly undeciphered, but is usually written: *yax [chit] jun T1032 noh? kan* (Fig. 4; Stuart, Houston, and Robertson 1999: II-56).

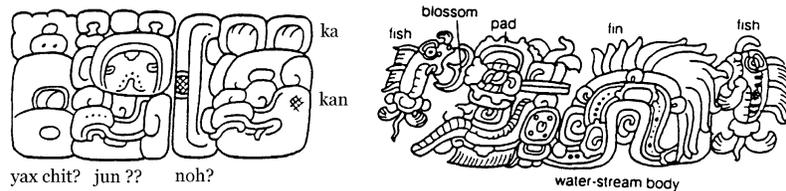


Figure 4. Glyphic reference to the waterlily serpent from Pomona Panel 1.
After Stuart, Houston, and Robertson (1999: II-56)

The first part of this name is of uncertain meaning; *noh? kan* means “great? snake.” This name includes elements that are similar to the name of the dance recorded on Stela 15. These include the initial *yax* and the final *noh? kan*. In this case, *kan* “snake” appears to be spelled with a T561 “sky” logograph, rather than the usual T764 snake head. Although unusual, this spelling is found elsewhere, as on the painted vessel K927 (Fig. 5; Schele 1989).

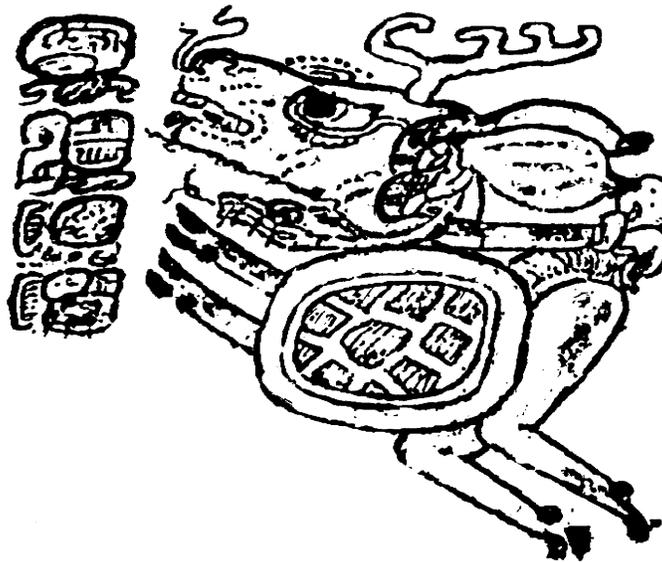


Figure. 5. Polychrome vase, K927, detail. Drawing by Linda Schele.

On Dos Pilas St. 15, the middle elements of the phrase are slightly eroded, but may include **chi** and **ta**, providing the *chit* part of the name of the waterlily serpent. While these readings could be disputed, it seems reasonable to suggest that the *noh? kan* element in the name of this dance probably refers to the headdress that the ruler wears.

Further evidence in support of the theory that the T86:700 compound refers to costume rather than to an object held in the ruler's hands may be exemplified by Aguateca St. 5 (Fig. 6). The name of this dance is eroded, but includes a sequence composed of **to-b'a** preceding the T86:700

compound. In the accompanying image, the ruler wears a plaited headdress similar to that worn on other Maya monuments, including Copan Stela A. On the Copan monument, the name of the stela includes a sequence reading *yax sak tob'aj* (Fig. 7). It is possible that both monuments incorporated this term in reference to the headdresses worn by the rulers.

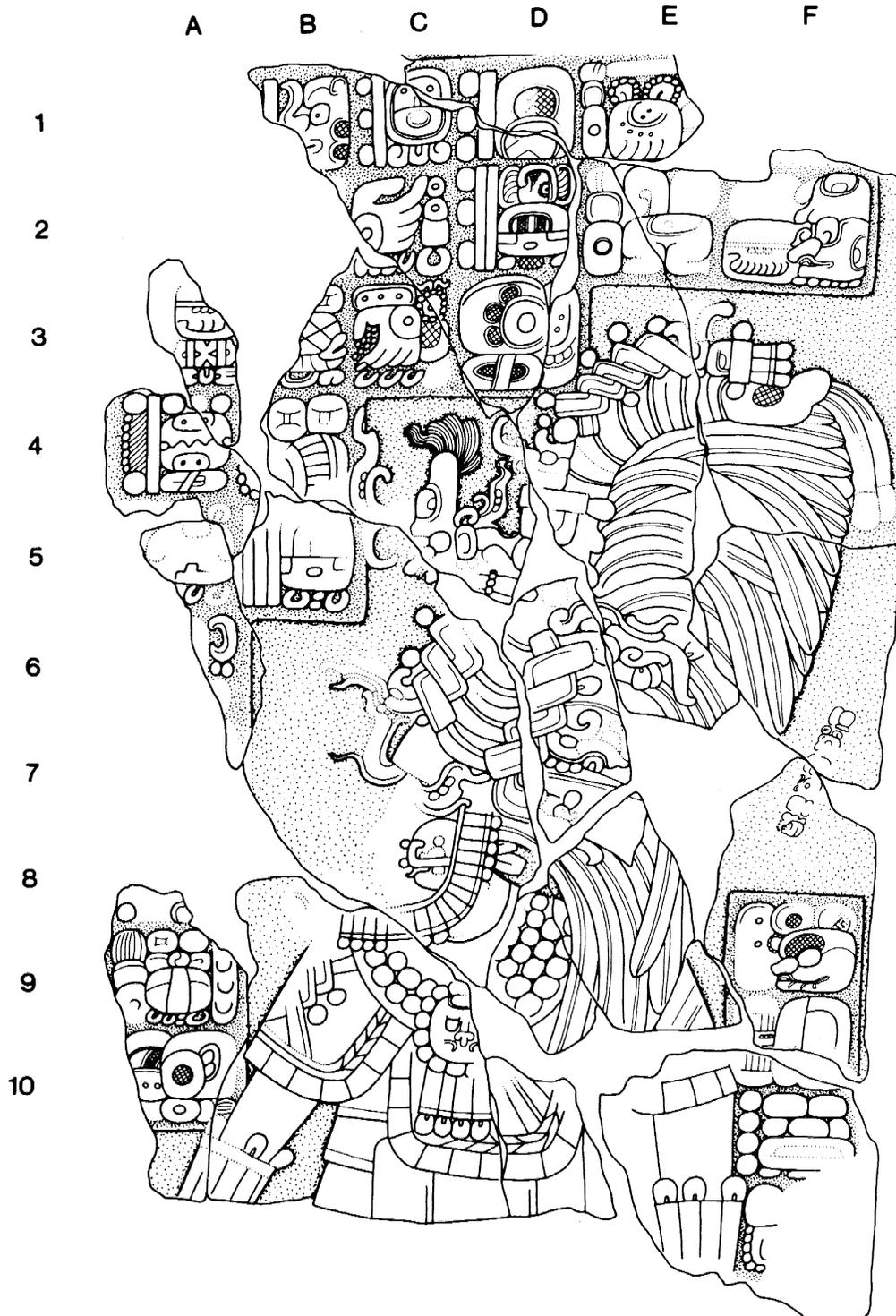


Figure 6. Aguateca Stela 5. Drawing by Ian Graham.

While this note has not provided a conclusive solution to the problem of the interpretation of the T86:700 compound, it casts some doubt on the correlation of this compound and dance objects held by rulers, and particularly the God K scepter. It is proposed that we look more closely at the costume worn by rulers in these images for clues that might aid in the decipherment of the names of the dances they perform.

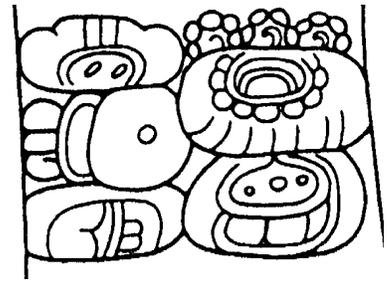


Figure 7. Copan Stela A, A-B12.
Drawing by Linda Schele and Matthew Looper

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