



Monuments of Yaxchilan: Lintel 17¹

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Context: Lintel 17 spanned the rightmost of the three doorways leading to the central room of Structure 21, associated with the early years of Yaxuun Bahlam IV (Tate 1992:197). Found by Maudslay in 1882 and removed to the British Museum by the López brothers under the direction of Maudslay in 1883 (Graham and von Euw 1977:39, 43).

Dimensions: MW 0.74 m, HSc 0.60 m, WSc 0.64 m, MTh 0.05 m (sawn), Rel 1.0 cm (Graham and von Euw 1977:43).

The lord Yaxuun Bahlam IV, here depicted on the right side of the scene, pierces his penis with a stingray spine. In front of him, on the left side, one of his spouses, Ix Mut Bahlam from the Hix Witz court, draws a rope through her perforated tongue. The blood-soaked cord ends in a cache vessel that is filled with strips of paper to absorb the precious liquid in order to offer it as part of a conjuring ritual to evoke the gods and ancestors. The principal text remains obscure. It first refers to a piercing event (A2) and then to the birth of Chelew Chan K'inich (A3–B3). Thanks to Lintel 17 we know that he was born on 1 Chikchan 13 Pop (9.16.0.14.5, 19 February AD 752), almost two months before Yaxuun Bahlam IV acceded to the throne. Curiously, the scene does not depict nor mention the mother of the king, Ix Chak Joloom, but instead shows one of his secondary spouses, namely Ix Mut Bahlam.

A1 – C3: (A1) **u-BAAH-ji** (B1) **ti-?-?** (A2) **ti-na?-JUL?** (B2) **u-BAAH?-ji?** (A3) **SIH-ya-ja** (B3) **che?-le-we?** (A4) **ti-ba?-?-ja** (B4) **TI'-?-yi?** (A5) **3-WINIKHAAB-AJAW** (B5) **ya-YAXUUN-BAHLAM** (C1) **AJ-WINIK-BAAK** (C2) **K'UH-?-AJAW** (C3) **K'UH-PA'-CHAN-AJAW**

ubaaj ti ... ti ... jul ubaaj? sihyaj cheleew? ti ... j ti' ... huux winikhaab ajaw yaxuun bahlam ajwinik baak k'uh[ul] ... ajaw k'uh[ul] pa'chan ajaw

“It is the image in ... in ... piercing. Cheleew(?) was born ... Yaxuun Bahlam IV, lord of three katuns, he of the twenty captives, divine lord of ..., divine lord of Pa'chan.”

D1 – K1: (D1) **u-BAAH[A'N]-li?** (E1) **12-IX-AJAW** (F1) **IX-MUT?-tu** (G1) **BAHLAM** (H1) **IX-HIX** (I1) **wi-tzi-AJAW** (J1) **IX** (K1) **ba-ka-ba**

ubaahil aan lajchan ix ajaw ix mut bahlam ix hix witz ajaw ix ba[ah]kab

“Ix Mut Bahlam, Hix Witz lady, lady head of the earth, is the impersonation of Ix Lajchan Ajaw.”

¹ See also Zender 2007.

References

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Yaxchilan Lintel 17. Photograph by Jorge Pérez de Lara. High-resolution version available: www.mesoweb.com/monuments/Yaxchilan