

The New York Relief Panel – and Some Associations With Reliefs at Palenque and Elsewhere, Part I

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In the collection of The Museum of Primitive Art, New York, there is an important carved and inscribed relief panel (62.102) of Late Classic Maya manufacture (Fig. 1). This monument, which is called here the New York Relief Panel, is important to Maya studies for several reasons: (1) its hieroglyphic inscription, though extremely brief and without a date, names one of the now famous *Jaguar* rulers of Yaxchilan, (2) its scenic “presentation” motif displays an especially rich store of iconographic information, and (3) it retains a considerable amount of its original painted color.

Photographs of the New York Relief Panel have been published, in black and white, by The Museum of Primitive Art (1965: No. 98; 1969: Pl. 625), and, in color, in *Art News* (1968: 35). A rubbing of the relief panel, with a short commentary, has been prepared and published by Merle Greene Robertson (in Greene et al., 1972: Pl. 67), and a preliminary sketch of the inscription on the panel has been made by Ian Graham, who has graciously consented to have his work included here (Fig. 2).

Carved from the soft porous limestone used for so much Maya sculpture, the New York Relief Panel measures 89 cm. high x 87.5 cm. wide. These dimensions suggest that the panel most likely originally functioned as a lintel — like the well-known limestone lintels of Yaxchilan, Bonampak and La Pasadita. On the other hand, however, these same dimensions also approximate those of the “presentation” scene so beautifully incised on Sculptured Stone 1 at Bonampak (Ruppert et al., 1955: Fig. 2), a monument which, according to Thompson (in Greene and Thompson, 1967: Pl. 52, notes), “probably once served as a wall panel.” The throne-room locus of the New York Relief Panel also recalls the famous Wall Panel 3 from Piedras Negras (Morley, 1937-38, Vol. 5: Pl. 146), though this latter monument is admittedly of considerably larger dimensions than those of the relief panel under discussion.

In the present paper, I wish to discuss the New York Relief Panel at length, in terms of its composition, inscription, iconography, use of color, formal qualities, and possible provenience. The concluding part of this study, which I hope to present at the *Tercera Mesa Redonda de Palenque*, will seek to trace the iconodrome of a series of “presentation” reliefs at Palenque — the Oval Tablet (Greene and Thompson, 1967: Pl. 13), the Tablet of the Slaves (*ibid.*: Pl. 33), and the Tablet of the Palace (*ibid.*: Pl. 34; Greene et al., 1972: Pl. 2) — ostensibly associated in theme with the “presentation” motif on the New York Relief Panel. The more immediate purpose of this two-part study will be to attempt to establish whether, in fact, such thematic associations do exist. Serious problems arise with respect to the study of those Palenque tablets and other reliefs at that town, inasmuch as the ordering and the arrangement of hieroglyphic texts at Palenque often demonstrate marked divergences from the structural patterns of texts at other Maya towns, and on a wider level, it is hoped that such an essentially comparative approach to the investigation of texts and images at Palenque will have broad and useful implications.

The composition of the New York Relief Panel presents an arrangement of ambitious complexity. Three costumed persons, one of whom sits upon a throne, are depicted, and for convenience, these three persons have been assigned numbers, from right to left, corresponding to the presumed order of their respective social status.

Person 1. Seated, cross-legged, upon a throne.

Costume: Feathered jade flares, feathered pom-pom-like object with a long flowing panache, and jade circlet headband with a feathered flare as headdress; most of the hair swept and tossed upwards, with one heavy lock of hair bound and falling down over one



Fig. 1 The New York Relief Panel. The Museum of Primitive Art, New York (62.102). Limestone, paint, 89 cm. x 87.5 cm. Courtesy The Museum of Primitive Art.

shoulder.

Folded and tucked loincloth, with a broad sash, wrapped tightly around the waist.

Jade accessories: wristlets, anklets, garters, beaded necklace with a bar ornament, feathered tubular bead under the nose, and a flared tubular earplug.

Comment: With only one minor difference, the head-dress here, as Greene (in Greene et al., 1972: 146) has

observed, resembles that worn by the kneeling woman on Lintel 15 Yaxchilan (*ibid.*: Pl. 33). The feathered jade flares, in a pair, are of special interest, resembling not only those worn by the woman on Lintel 15 Yaxchilan, but also those worn by the woman who accompanies *Shield-Jaguar* on Lintel 26 Yaxchilan (Soustelle, 1967: Pl. 109) as well as those worn by *Bird-Jaguar* on Lintel 42 Yaxchilan (Greene et al., 1972: Pl. 39). These paired feathered flares are, I believe, local equivalents of the

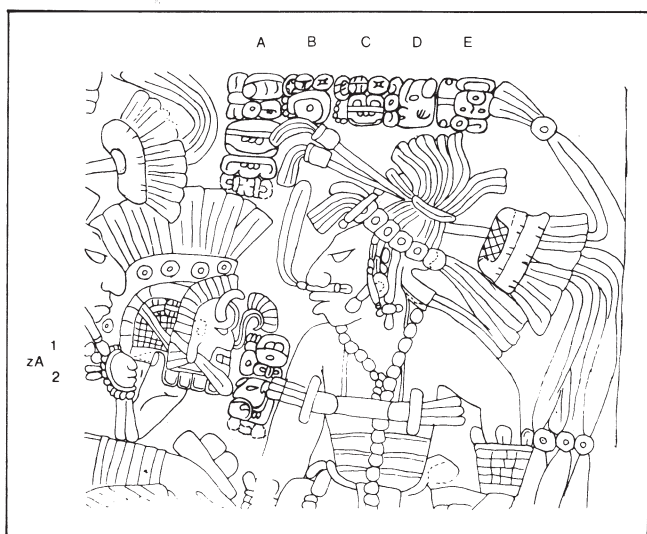


Fig. 2 The New York Relief Panel, detail. Line drawing in ink, copied from a pencil drawing provided by Ian Graham. Original drawing, courtesy Ian Graham.

paired feathered “headdress wands” that Hellmuth (n.d.: 61-66) has pointed out as worn by the “warrior” on Stela 7 Piedras Negras and by the serpent-protector image shown arching over the seated ruler on Lintel 2 of Temple I at Tikal. Though the paired feathered flares at Piedras Negras and Tikal are probably not made of jade, their form and arrangement on Lintel 42 Yaxchilan indicate a functional (and presumably symbolic) analogy. Hellmuth regards these paired feathered flares, or “headdress wands” as he calls them, as stylized forms that derive from the many (and earlier) “butterfly antennae” representations in the pictorial repertory at Teotihuacan.

The two-legged throne which supports Person 1 recalls those often represented on reliefs at Palenque, Piedras Negras, Yaxchilan and, of course, on the polychrome fresco cycle at Bonampak, as well as actual examples known from Palenque and Piedras Negras. This particular throne, however, is shown decorated with a series of tasseled Kin designs (which recall the tasseled jade flares that embellish the headdresses worn by the women on Lintels 17 and 24 Yaxchilan), as well as with an unusual bead-like mosaic along the lower half of the bench portion of the throne. The rendering of this throne features a curious “sloping” effect.

Beneath the throne rests a bowl containing what are probably three pieces of sliced fruit, recalling similar bowls of fruit represented on Wall Panel 3 Piedras Negras and especially on a Chama vase recently published by M. Coe (1973: 41).

Person 2. Standing, in profile, facing toward the enthroned Person 1, and holding objects in both hands.

Costume: Fringed and patterned plaitwork headdress, surmounted on the top by a feathered fiber scroll and a feathered pom-pom-like object; headdress held secure with a knotted band of jade pieces

decorated with Kan Cross designs.

Open fringed fabric garment which, by analogy with similar representations on several Yaxchilan lintels, is possibly brocaded (Mahler, 1965: 586); worn with a broad sash around the waist and secured with a wide, decorated belt.

Jade accessories: flared tubular earplug, wristlet decorated with tasseled ropework, and pendant medallion suspended from a beaded necklace.

Fringed high-backed sandals, resembling those often depicted on reliefs from the Yaxchilan vicinity, worn on the feet.

Long fringed cloth hung over and falling from the left arm.

Comment: The extended right hand of Person 2 holds an object of uncertain identification, though this is possibly a small bowl or dish containing balls of *copal* incense. It seems further possible, though this is mere conjecture, that this object might somehow be analogous with the ritual objects held in the extended hands of the robed women depicted on Lintels 13 and 14 Yaxchilan (Greene et al., 1972: Pls. 31 and 32).

With his upraised left arm, Person 2 holds, or rather grasps, a headdress of jade mosaic and short clipped feathers. The Mexicanoid form of this headdress is of more than passing interest. Although other headdresses which incorporate similar short, clipped feathers have been pointed out by Graham (1967: 14), that under present discussion shares no other features with any of them, but does incorporate a most unusual head-mask, from the nose of which emerges a feathered (speech?) scroll. The closest analog which comes to mind for this distinct head-mask is the one which is incorporated into the headdress worn by the striding individual shown on the so-called Randel Stela (Randel Art Gallery, 1966). Although these two respective head-masks are not identical, they do share certain common features, in content as well as in form, and the unidentified element that passes diagonally beneath the elongated ear lobes of both head-masks is indeed a striking common feature.

Person 3. Standing, in profile, also facing toward the enthroned Person 1, and also holding objects in both hands.

Costume: Rimmed and folded conical headdress made of patterned fiber; secured with a knotted band of jade pieces decorated with Kin designs.

Open fringed fabric garment with an unusual design; worn with a high, broad sash around the waist and held secure with a wide, decorated belt.

Jade accessories: earplug with pendant elements, wristlet with a pendant element, and pendant medallion hung from the neck.

Fringed high-backed sandals, virtually identical to those noted for Person 2, worn on the feet.

Comment: The extended right hand of Person 3 holds a scroll with feathers issuing from one end. The upraised and clenched left hand grasps a long, fringed cloth and, perhaps, another object which, in any event, I am unable to identify.

The inscription on the New York Relief Panel is unusual, though certainly not unique, inasmuch as it lacks any date. Recently Kubler (1973) has shown that the Classic Maya inscriptions encompass both *clauses*, consisting of expressive statements which “explain” chronological events (with the latter usually preceding their “explanations”), and *captions* identifying “persons and scenes.” Assuming this format of chronographic statements followed by explanatory expressions, the inscription on the New York Relief Panel must accordingly be regarded as embracing two captions — one principal and the other subordinate. Each refers to Kubler’s “persons and scenes,” but neither refers to any stated chronological event(s).

The principal caption opens, at A1-A2, with the expression *145.188:87/561:23:184*. This expression refers to the Yaxchilan ruler whom Proskouriakoff (1964: 190 ff.) called *Shield-Jaguar’s descendant*. The lineage name of this ruler consists of the sign for *Shield-Jaguar* (152.751), but expressed with a slight alteration in the *Shield* prefix (viz., 152-90.751), though in both cases the Akbal sign is infix into the prefix. The *145.188:87/561:23:184* (or *561.184:74*) expression functions structurally as what I call a name-title, that is, an honorific appellation accorded to only one specific member of the ruling lineage at a given Maya town. It has occurred to me that name-titles may actually represent personal names, but that is a point which will require considerably more study than has yet been given to it. In any event, such name-titles should be carefully differentiated from lineage names, which very likely indicate clan designations of a more general nature (Proskouriakoff, 1964: 197) — such as the compound *Jaguar* expressions at Yaxchilan and the analogous *Sky* expressions at Quirigua.

In the hieroglyphic records of Yaxchilan, *SJ’s descendant* is actually named more often by his name-title alone than by either his lineage name or else by the two in conjunction, and to find the reason for this signal behavior ought to form the basis of an interesting research project. An important instance of this circumstance is Lintel 2 (Greene et al., 1972: Pl. 26) where, for the first time in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Yaxchilan, *SJ’s descendant* is named in a caption at J1-J2 — and by his name-title alone! Later, on Stela 7 (*ibid.*: Pl. 52), which Proskouriakoff (1964: 193) has conjectured was the accession monument of this ruler, the name-title of *SJ’s descendant* appears, again alone, at the beginning of the inscription at B2-B3 (though elsewhere on the same monument, at D3, this name-title immediately follows the lineage name of *SJ’s descendant*). This name-title on the New York Relief Panel is followed, at B-C, by the two Emblem Glyphs of Yaxchilan.

These paired Emblems are in turn followed, at D, by the expression *61.756[568]*, which, as Thompson (1962: 349) has noted, occurs very frequently at the beginning of subsidiary inscriptions, especially when these are incised. In this respect, continues Thompson, the expression functions much like the compound *61.757*. (For a detailed discussion of the latter see Proskouriakoff,

1968.) Though the expression *61.756[568]* functions as what I call an introductory predicate and, as such, usually stands at the beginning of a caption, instances are known in which it occurs embedded within clauses and captions: two such instances are on Lintel 26 Yaxchilan (Mäler, 1901-03: Pl. 58), at G’1, and on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs from Palenque (Kubler, 1973: Figs. 1 and 3), at L4a, and doubtless others exist. The principal caption here concludes with the expression *110.25?:534:87*, which is perhaps a title of quality or attribute, giving additional information about *SJ’s descendant* — much like the *Bird-claw* expression (291:552) which is thought to give further information about *Bird-Jaguar III* (Proskouriakoff, 1964: 181; Berlin, 1968: 141) and, perhaps, also to distinguish that ruler from the earlier *Bird-Jaguar II* (Proskouriakoff, 1964: 185). Together with its introductory predicate (*61.756[568]*), this expression functions as a parenthetical phrase within the structural network of the principal caption.

At zA1-zA2 there occurs the expression *59.580:103/1004a:178*, which surely refers to Person 2 (and possibly, though almost certainly not, by extension to Person 3). The occurrence of this glyphic caption, in association with a subordinate individual, is very striking since it duplicates exactly the same expression, at zA4-zA5, on the Maya lintel from La Pasadita now in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, in Leiden (Fig. 4; see also Berlin, 1968: Fig. 1; von Winning, 1968: Pl. 471).

On the Rijksmuseum lintel the *59.580:103/1004a:178* expression forms the conclusion of a caption clearly referring to the nobleman (perhaps a *batab*) who assists *Bird-Jaguar III* in the casting of lots for divination, as part of what I have called the rite of sacred kingship (Simpson, n.d.). This expression apparently refers to a title of rank or office, held by two presumably different noblemen (*batabs?*) under two successive rulers — first under *Bird-Jaguar* and then under *SJ’s descendant*.

The structure of this *59.580:103/1004a:178* title is of some interest. I surmise that its first part (i.e., *59.580:103*) functions as a specific adjectival qualifier while its second part (i.e., *1004a:178*), since it is fairly widespread on monuments from the region around Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan, is somewhat more general in nature. (For a discussion of the *1004a* expression see Proskouriakoff, 1964: 189 ff.) It might be noted here that the *1004a* expression usually carries an infix element — in some instances a Cauac (528) sign, in others a Caban (526) sign. The extent to which this variation of infix elements affects (as I suspect it does) the meaning of the *1004a* expression is far too complex a topic, however, to be treated with justice in the present paper.

The inscription on the New York Relief Panel may be summarized as follows:

A1-A2:	<i>145.188:87/561:23:184</i>	Name-title: <i>SJ’s descendant</i>
B:	<i>36.168:511</i>	Yaxchilan Emblem (Y1)
C:	<i>37.168:562</i>	Yaxchilan Emblem (Y2)
D:	<i>61.756[568]</i>	Introductory predicate
E:	<i>110.25?:534:87</i>	Title of quality or attribute?

zA1-zA2: *59.580:103/1004a:178* Title of rank or office

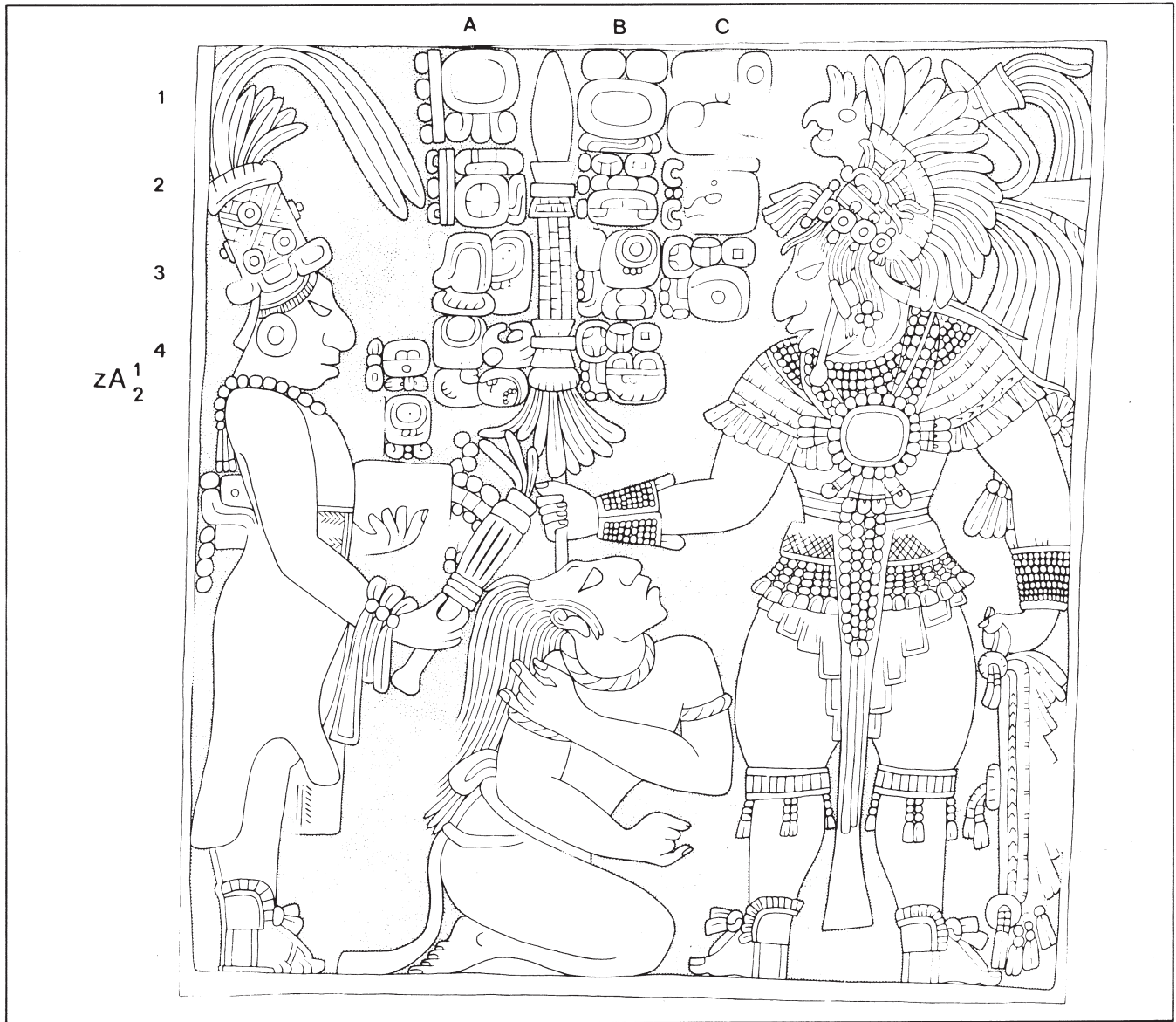


Fig. 3 Lintel 1 La Pasadita. Berliner Museum für Völkerkunde. (Limestone, paint, 95 cm. x 89 cm.) Line rendering by Ian Graham. Courtesy Ian Graham.

Though the New York Relief Panel lacks any internal date, it has been shown that the depicted seated ruler is one of the *Jaguars* of Yaxchilan, *SJ's descendant*. This lord came to power in 9.17.0.0.0 (Proskouriakoff, 1964: 193) and seems to have ruled for about one katun. This external information permits a dating of the panel, then, of 9.17.0.0.0-ca.9.18.0.0.0. And, as will be shown below, such a dating, based on epigraphy, ties in very nicely with many of the formal qualities characteristic of the dated monuments from the reign of *SJ's descendant* at Yaxchilan. First I wish to discuss the iconography, and then the use of color, of the New York Relief Panel.

In her discussion of the discrete sets of inscriptional records and their accompanying scenic motifs at Pied-

ras Negras, Proskouriakoff (1960: 460) offered a very neat and appropriate correlation of the arrangement that she called the "ascension" motif with certain passages in the Books of Chilam Balam which refer to the "seating" of rulers. There are several sources which, I believe, are singularly appropriate for understanding the iconography of the motif represented on the New York Relief Panel.

Expressed in simplest terms, the motif here encompasses the presentation of a feathered headdress to a seated and enthroned Maya lord — who, as noted above, may be specifically identified as *Shield-Jaguar's descendant*, one of the last of the great *Jaguar* dynasts of Yaxchilan.

This motif brings to mind the account given by Vil-

lagutierre Soto-Mayor (1701: 349-350 of how the nephew of Ah Canek, the ruler of the Itza Maya of Tayasal, journeyed to Merida in 1695 to offer surrender and submission, on behalf of the defeated Ah Canek, to the Spanish Governor, Don Martin de Ursua:

Y aviendo llegado el Governador hasta la entrada del Patio, y apeadose allí de su Carroça, y acercadose donde el Indio Embaxador estava, saludados reciprocamente, cada uno á su usança, le traxo consigo á su Carroça; y siguiendo todo el Acompañamiento, y muchedumbre de Gente, que avia, á ver la Entrada, trayendo otros Cavalleros consigo á los demás Indios, se conduxeron á la Iglesia Catedral, donde entraron. Y aviendo hecho Oración el Governador, con el Embaxador á su lado, bolvieron á continúar hasta el Real Palacio, donde el Governador vivia, y donde estando presente toda la Comitiva, y el Dean, y Cabildo de la Catedral (por ser Sede Vacante, y no aver Obispo) todo la Clerecia, Religiosos de San Francisco, Padres de la Compañia, y Hermanos Religiosos de San Juan de Dios, y todo el Pueblo; el Indio Embaxador tomó en las manos una Corona de Plumas, de varios colores, que traía, á modo de Tyara, y la entregó al Governador Ursua, diziendole, segun la interpretacion de el Licenciado Don Juan Pacheco, Presbytero, Diocesano de aquel Obispado, estas palabras:

Señor: Representando la Persona de mi Tio el Gran Canek, Rey, y Señor absoluto de los Itzaex, en su Nombre, y de su Parte vengo, á postrarme á tus pies, y á ofreçer á ellos su Corona Real, para que el Nombre de tu Gran Rey, cuya Persona representas, nos recibas, y admitas en su Real servicio, y debaxo de su Amparo, y Patrocinio y nos concedas Padres Sacerdotes, que nos bautizen, administren, y enseñen la Ley del Verdadero Dios.

Esto es á lo que hé venido, y lo que mi Rey solicita, y desea, con el común sentir de todas sus Vassallos.

Con lo qual acabó el Embaxador su Razonamiento; y el Governador Ursua, tomando la Corona en sus manos, por medio del mismo Padre Interprete, le respondió lo siguiente:

Que le recibia, con todo su Coraçón, y en el gran Nombre de su Catolico Rey, y Señor Soberano le admitia á su Patrocinio, y Amparo; y le prometia favoreçer, y ayudar, en todo quanto fuesse de su conveniencia, utilidad, quietud, y agrado, puesto, que el Coraçón los llamava al Conocimiento del Verdadero Dios, que era el que los avia de valer, para la salvacion de sus Almas, y gozar de la Gloria Eterna; que lo demás era engaño, y çequeda: Y que les daria Padres Sacerdotes, Ministros de las Almas, para que los instruyessen en los Misterios de la Santa Fé Catolica, y los bautizassen (these passages transcribed with minor orthographic changes) ...

The theme of the above passage is that of the fealty of a vassal toward his lord or master — expressed in terms of sworn surrender and submission. The leitmotif is that of the encounter between two differently-ranking members of the elite class — expressed here by means of the

use, by the surrendering nephew of Ah Canek, of the familiar form of the grammatical Second Person and, by Governor Ursua, of the more formal form of the Second Person.

An even more appropriate literary source for the iconographic documentation of the New York Relief Panel is the *Popol Vuh*, which, according to Edmonson (1971: vii) was drawn from an earlier redaction: a hieroglyphic codex (or perhaps several such codices) of pre-Columbian manufacture. Three passages in the *Popol Vuh* are especially useful for understanding the paramount role that feathered headdresses, or “feathers,” and the offering of such “feathers,” must have played among the ancient Maya. From the account of the Fourth Creation, then, we read the following:

And when they arrived
Before the lord,
Nacxit was the name of the great lord,
The sole judge
Of a huge jurisdiction.
And it was he who gave out the signs of authority,
All the insignia.
Then came the sign of the Counsellor
And Step House Counsellor.
And then came the sign of the power
And authority
Of Counsellor
And Step House Counsellor.
In the end Nacxit gave out
The insignia of lordship.
These are the names of them: Canopy,
And Throne,
Nose Bone
And Earring,
Jade Labret,
And Gold Beads,
Panther Claws
And Jaguar Claws,
Owl Skull
And Deer,
Armband of Precious Stones
And Snail Shell Bracelet,
Bowing,
And Bending,
Filled Teeth
And Inlay,
Parrot Feather Crest,
And Royal Crane Panache ... (*ibid.*: Lines 7280-7311).

The tribes came first to burn offerings before Storm,
And then when they had revered
The Counsellor
And Step House Counsellor,
Then they came to give their quetzal feathers,
Their tribute before the lord.
He was still the lord,
And it was still he
Whom they nourished
And supported:

The Counsellor
 And Step House Counsellor.
 Many towns were destroyed ... (*ibid.*: Lines 8119-8131).

... The little tribes
 And great tribes.
 A great payment
 They gave.
 There came turquoise;
 There came silver;
 And there came plaster handles,
 And handles covered
 With jade,
 With jewels,
 And there came dove feathers
 (And quetzal feathers),
 Sitting,
 Or standing,
 The tribute of all the tribes
 Came before the spirit lords,
 Quetzal Serpent
 Ahd Chief Sweatbath
 And before Blood
 And 8 Monkey
 The Counsellor,
 And Step House Counsellor,
 Captain
 And Lord Nobleman.
 It was not just a little that they did,
 And it was not also just a few more tribes they destroyed ... (*ibid.*: Lines 8323-8348).

In the first of these three passages, the theme is that of the conferral of Maya royal insignia, and Edmonson (*ibid.*: 217fn.) quotes Francisco Javier Clavijero, whose own description of the Aztec royal insignia parallels astonishingly that given in the *Popol Vuh*; in Clavijero's own words,

When the king went out on campaign he wore besides arms his personal insignia: on his feet certain half boots of thin gold plates and other thin platelets of the same metal on his arms, on his wrists certain bracelets of precious stones, in his lower lip an emerald encrusted with gold and certain rings of similar stones in his ears, on his neck a chain of gold and stone pieces and a crest of eye-catching feathers on his head; but the insigne most characteristic of his rank was a precious strand of beautiful feathers which fell from his head down his back to the waist.

In the second and the third of the passages cited from the *Popol Vuh*, the theme is that of tribute rendered by conquered vassals and peoples. This same theme recurs many times in the first part of *The Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Recinos and Goetz, 1953: 48, 50, 53, 56), with "the green and blue feathers" always an important motif in the accounts of tribute payment. Finally, in the *Títulos de la Casa Ixcuín-Nehaib* (Recinos, 1957: 71-94) there is an important account of the military conquests of the Quiche Maya kings, and of the tributes exacted from the people conquered from them.

The Maya literary sources quoted and discussed above suggest altogether a specific interpretation of the iconographic motif represented on the New York Relief Panel: the acceptance by *Shield-Jaguar's descendant* (Person 1) of tribute and/or fealty from two noblemen (Persons 2 and 3). The details of the scenic motif itself, with its accompanying inscription, reinforce this interpretation very nicely.

The personage of *SJ's descendant* constitutes the visual and dramatic focus of the depictive scene. Both the throne upon which he sits as well as his person are depicted frontally. The two noblemen are shown close together and turned, in profile, toward the enthroned *Jaguar* lord: it is to him that they offer headdress and *copal* incense. Were the intention of the sculptor concerned in any way with illustrating the conferral of insignia of office, the focal arrangement of the composition here would, I expect, be otherwise. Moreover, the insignia of office conferred upon noblemen by their lords, as recounted in the *Popol Vuh*, does not seem to have included *copal* incense and feathered scrolls.

The feathered scroll shown here held by Person 3 is distinctive, though not unique, and it provides an important clue to the iconographic intention of this relief panel. In her article on "Portraits of Women in Maya Art," Proskouriakoff (1961) listed the scroll with feathers as one of the characteristic traits associated with representations of women in Maya art, and examples were cited from Piedras Negras (on Stelae 1, 14 and 33, and on Lintel 7) and from Naranjo (on Stela 3), where, in fact, they do occur with women portrayed either directly or indirectly in association with incumbent rulers.

An example of the feathered scroll not mentioned by Proskouriakoff, however, occurs on Stela 12 Piedras Negras (Maler, 1901-03: Pl. 21; see also Soustelle, 1967: Pl. 86), where it appears to have been placed at the feet of the enthroned ruler by the topmost of the bound captives. This captive figure makes the "submission" gesture and, judging from his costuming and placement within the composition, is the spokesman for his eight companion prisoners. And even more remarkably pertinent to this study is the feathered scroll held by one of the personages shown on a polychrome pottery vessel found in Burial 116 at Tikal (W. Coe, 1965: 42, left). The splendidly rendered scene on this ceramic depicts an enthroned ruler, probably the occupant of the grave itself — the ruler whom Kubler (n.d.; see also Simpson, in preparation) has called *Sky-Rain* — receiving homage from visitors or suppliants. One of these visitors or suppliants presents an offering, while another holds the feathered scroll; the rest, some standing, others kneeling, make various gestures of "submission." Apparently, then, the feathered scroll was sometimes held by women in conjunction with incumbent rulers, and at other times by noblemen in the act of surrendering or submitting — as seems the case on the New York Relief Panel. And if I am correct in construing the shallow object held in Person 2's right hand as a bowl or dish with *copal* incense, then this, too, would certainly be an appropriate offering from a loyal vassal to his lord.

There is yet another iconographic detail here which is quite possibly significant for the present study. The knotted headband ornament with feathers and jade circlets, worn by the enthroned ruler, *SJ's descendant*, is also distinctive though not unique. This very same headband occurs as part of the headdress worn by *Bird-Jaguar III* who, with an assistant, is shown castigating a prisoner on the lintel from La Pasadita now in the Berliner Museum für Völkerkunde (Fig. 3; see also Barthel, 1966; Greene et al., 1972: Pl. 66). Close variants of this headband occur as part of certain headdresses worn by various individuals at Yaxchilan; these occurrences are most often associated with the theme of war, or else with themes (such as the "serpent rite") related to war.

Many Maya monuments have retained traces of their original colors — a consequence of the use made by Maya artists of inorganic pigments — and among the earlier explorers of Maya ruins, the Austrian, Teobert Maler, was one of the most consistently conscientious in recording such traces of color as still adhered to the monuments he encountered in his travels.

The color of the bodies and hair of all three persons on the New York Relief Panel is a dark red-orange, which in places has faded, thus imparting a yellowish appearance. The skirt-like robes of Persons 2 and 3, as well as the loincloth of Person 1, are dark blue. The various feather panaches of Persons 1 and 2 and the fiber headdress of Persons 2 and 3 are also dark blue. The color of the various jade accessories varies between dark blue and dark green. The color of the head-mask headdress held by Person 2 is especially faded, but appears originally to have been painted a mixture of bright green and some blue, while the clipped feathers attached to it on top are dark blue. The upper portion of the bench of the throne, is very faded, but some traces of dark blue-green remain. Finally, the clear ground spaces between the figures and the two captions of glyphs are painted dark red-orange.

This use of color agrees generally with such traces of paint on other Maya monuments that Maler, and occasionally Morley and others, have noted in their accounts. It also agrees essentially with the use of color that one may observe on the fresco cycle of Structure 1 Bonampak (Ruppert et al., 1955), and it is particularly interesting that the same combination of dark red-orange for the main portions with dark green for the borders should have been used to color both the throne depicted on the panel as well as that depicted on the upper west wall of Room 1 at Bonampak (*ibid.*: Fig. 27).

Another point of agreement between this relief panel and the Bonampak frescoes is the functional purpose of color, which in both instances is descriptive, and not symbolic. The locus of action for the scenic motif on the New York Relief Panel is interior, so that the occasion which it records would have taken place inside either a temple or, more likely, a "palace" structure.

The technical execution of the New York Relief

Panel, while admittedly not of the same extraordinary quality that characterizes the best sculptured works at Yaxchilan (especially Lintels 24 and 25), is certainly competent. The formal qualities of the relief panel are best understood and appreciated against the foil of those Yaxchilan monuments associated with *SJ's descendant*. Those monuments have been evaluated by Proskouriakoff (1964: 195) as exhibiting "rigidity and simplification in sculpture" and, at the same time, "flamboyance and exaggeration of inessential detail"; a conspicuous feature of this relaxing of the earlier Classic canons of art is the cursive, and often careless, rendering of glyphs, arranged in block formations which have now become irregular.

As noted before, the composition of the panel is quite complex. But the very complexity of design here is what I take to be a function of the sculptor's intent to render the concrete details of an historical event. The details of design, of costuming, of gestures and of attitudes here are contingent, not heraldic, and expressed in terms of a dramatic, and hence scenic, space. The sculptor of this panel, in spite of a certain awkwardness in his figural proportions (especially in the instance of Person 3), has succeeded in creating a tensional relationship among his figures which makes the distance between them a significant, and not a symbolic, void. One might compare, for example, the sense of motion implied by Persons 2 and 3 here with the dull enumerative sequence of lance-bearers on Lintel 2 Piedras Negras (Maler, 1901-03: Pl. 31), where the distance between the figures is a mere hiatus. The distances established by the sculptor of the New York Relief Panel, however, are significant because they both divide and bind: they are the distances of a dramatic situation, drawing the spectator into a nascent illusionary world.

All too often in Maya monumental art, the sculptor has rendered the figure of a ruling Maya lord less as a concrete corporeal reality existing in time and space than as a hieroglyph of a sign for that reality, so that such a figure implies mere beneficent presence, intended to demonstrate political status. The slightly overlapping positioning of Persons 2 and 3, relative to each other, on the panel expresses no mere enumerative procession of figures, but rather it actually defines a tangible spatial depth, as does the sculptor's arrangement of the enthroned ruler, *Shield-Jaguar's descendant*, who turns toward one side in order to confront his approaching underlings. If the sculptor of this panel has, in certain passages of his work, lost some clarity of statement, he has compensated for the loss more than adequately through the pictorial actuality he has achieved. Even the use of gestures and attitudes here, though somewhat formalized (due to the necessity of the occasion), is expressive rather than merely explicative. *SJ's descendant* turns toward the two noblemen who approach him, and he seems to be about to speak, to acknowledge the offerings presented to him; the two noblemen approach with dignified humility. The sculptor has even observed the youthful age and physiognomy of *SJ's descendant*, who, according to Proskouriakoff (1964: 196), was about

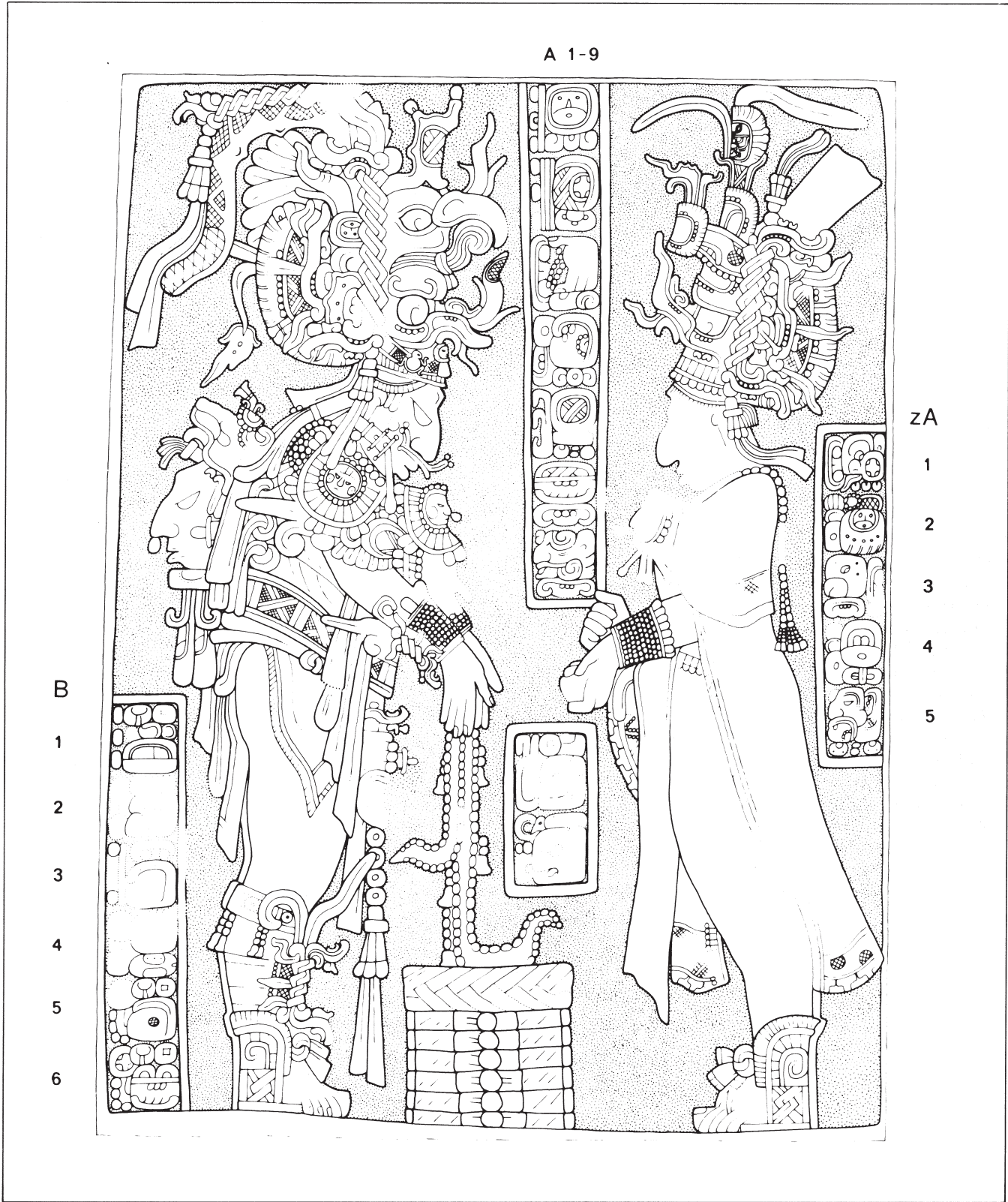


Fig. 4 Lintel 2 La Pasadita. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden. (Limestone, paint, 114.5 cm. x 88 cm.)

Line rendering by Ian Graham. Courtesy Ian Graham.

20 when he began his reign at Yaxchilan. Very significantly, then, the representation of that ruler on this panel embodies no mere sacred political presence, but rather a dynamic personality. The sculptor here has successfully correlated iconographic intention with formal devices expressive of that intention.

Now, what can one say about the possible provenience of this panel? The only information on this question given by The Museum of Primitive Art (1969: Pl. 625, caption) is "Mexico, Chiapas, Yaxchilan-Bonampak area," which is, after all, an estimate based on the artistic style of the monument. There exist, however, some fairly good grounds for assigning the panel to a somewhat more specific provenience, even though the assignment must be regarded as tentative.

In 1970, Ian Graham visited and explored very briefly the site of La Pasadita, some 15 km. north of Yaxchilan. Although this site is located on the Guatemalan side of the Usumacinta River, it lies even closer to Yaxchilan than does Bonampak. Graham has reported to me (in personal conversation, 1971) the remains there of one standing building (with an extremely unusual ground-plan), which has been designated elsewhere as Structure 1 La Pasadita (Simpson, n.d.: 27-28), as well as collapsed remains and debris of several other buildings. Structure 1 originally contained, inside it, a monumental polychrome fresco cycle, as well as three carved lintels. (For a detailed discussion of lintel cycle see Simpson, in preparation.) When Graham arrived at the site, all three lintels and large fragments of the frescoes had already been vandalized.

On the basis of Graham's field notes and the data contained in them, which I shall not discuss here, it is possible to assign with certainty two currently displaced Maya monuments to Structure 1 La Pasadita. These are Lintel 1, now in Berlin (Fig. 3), and Lintel 2, now in Leiden (Fig. 4), both of which have been mentioned previously in this paper. Both lintels share in common a sculptural feeling and style — in terms of their respective texts as well as their respective depictive scenes —

which is so remarkably coherent that one may venture to conclude that both pieces were actually carved by the same individual sculptor. In textual matters, too, there is a remarkable continuity and coherence of structural style and content; and of course, both lintels celebrate events from the reign of *Bird-Jaguar* III. The present whereabouts of the third lintel from this Structure 1 group is regrettably unknown. (For a detailed discussion of the La Pasadita lintels see Simpson, in preparation.)

The New York Relief Panel certainly does not, for a number of reasons, belong with the group of lintels which was removed from Structure 1 La Pasadita. But I do think it very possible that it did originally come from that site, which apparently was an artistic as well as a ritual and political dependency of Yaxchilan. Certain formal qualities of the New York Relief Panel — namely, the rendering of lines, the use of several very specific anatomical features, and the overall compositional design — argue that the sculptor of this panel was closely familiar with the style of Lintels 1 and 2 La Pasadita. Moreover, the later date of the New York Relief Panel, though not actually proving this assertion, at least has the value of offering it no contradiction. So it is conjectured here that the panel under present discussion very possibly originated at La Pasadita, perhaps from the debris of one of the several collapsed buildings found there.

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