

ANALYSIS OF THE PICTORIAL TEXT INSCRIBED ON TWO PALENQUE TABLETS.

BY PHILIPP J. J. VALENTINI.

NOTE.—The illustration given is a copy taken from three of the best photographs I could obtain. The left hand tablet is reproduced from Mr. Désiré Charnay's cast, the central tableau all from a photograph of the year 1868, in possession of Mr. Fred. Lambert, N. Y., and the right hand tablet from the photograph of the slab preserved in the National Museum, Washington. As these three photographs differ in size and are products of different lenses, I have thought it best to represent the whole sculpture in a harmonious shape, trying to render the traits of the originals as correctly as is possible by a pen and ink drawing.

The letter L in the scheme means the symbols as presented in Landa's *Cosas de Yucatan*; the letter C, the symbols in the *Codex Cortes*; the letter T, those of the *Codex Tro*.

TEMPLE OF THE SACRED TREE.

EACH of the pages of the Maya Codices, as a rule, presents on the right hand of its face a large number of signs, accompanied by colored illustrations. The arrangement of these signs appears to be in horizontal lines, and these lines suggest a hieroglyphic text, which text, however, because none of its elements have yet been deciphered, stands still mute and without interpretation.

The opposite and left hand sides of these pages are covered with signs too. But they differ from their companions, considerably. As regards their arrangement, there is no doubt that they run in a perpendicular column. Moreover, as to their interpretation, there is no Maya

student who would not be thoroughly conversant with the special meaning of each of these signs, with its functions and its names. They represent the twenty symbols for days in the Maya Calendar, and so much do these symbols form part and parcel of all the Codices, that they are observed running, invariably from top to bottom, along the left side of every one of their pages. They may not always follow each other in the same order of succession,—they sometimes arrange themselves in certain changeable groups,—but the physiognomy of these twenty symbols remains unaltered.

It was but natural that, on account of the circumstances described, these symbols should have prominently attracted the attention of the American archæologist; and it was because of the presence and of the perspicuity of these symbols that a way was found to proceed to the conquest of at least one province of the Maya domain—that of the Maya Calendar-reckoning; and it is mainly through the assiduous and pains-taking research of Rev. Cyrus Thomas, not to mention other scholars, that we now have become acquainted with the foundation underlying this Calendar, with the variety of its laws, and also with some of its highly perplexing ambiguities.

This much of light, and not much more, has hitherto been cast into the cloud-capped provinces of ancient Maya civilization.

The purpose of this address is to bring evidence that there is still another light under which these interesting symbols may be viewed.

It seems as though the students, when examining the contents of the Codices, had been impressed only by the one face of the symbols turned to their eyes, which was, so to speak, the *arithmetic* side, a view indeed that has finally led to the pretty exhaustive knowledge which we now possess of the Maya Calendar-system.

The same symbols, however, if closely examined, will

also be seen to have a figurative or *pictorial* side. It is true, this side is not ostensibly expressed upon the face of the written symbols; but it is so if *epigraphy* be consulted. In whatever kind of carving, or of relief-sculpture, on temple or on palace walls, on large stone slabs, on drinking-cups, or on jade-celts, these self-same symbols would appear to strike the eye of the observer. The *numerals* are their conspicuous monitors, and the symbols affixed to them, invite to the certain belief that we stand in the presence of a day's-date.

Here follows, in brief anticipation, the sum of the results I have gathered from the *pictorial* nature of both the written and the graven symbols.

1. The written symbols are plainly nothing else than *tachygraphs*. They show on their face the traces of abbreviated, degenerated images, and thereby suggest the pre-existence of a *prototype*.

2. Their corresponding prototype will be detected in *sculpture*.

3. The sculptured prototype will then be found to represent the image of a *distinct object*.

4. All these objects can be demonstrated of *ritual* nature. As such they are expressly designated by the authority of Bishop Landa.

5. When passing from the scrutiny of these day-symbols interspersed with the remaining characters which form the greater burden of the graven text, these same characters will prove to be nothing else than *the aforesaid day-symbols*, now stripped of their Calendar numerals.

6. *New* objects of ritual nature make their appearance beside contributing to the completion of the text.

7. Conclusion: the method of recording both on paper and on stone, was not alphabetic, syllabic, or intermixed, but *object and picture writing*.

The items, as above enumerated, require closer substantiation.

To accomplish this task, I have selected a Palenque sculpture, composed of a centre tableau and two lateral inscribed tablets, the copy of the whole being in your hands.

The reason why, out of so many other graven texts, I selected these two Palenque texts, in order to serve, so to speak, as primers for object-spelling, is this: the sculpture is comparatively one of the best preserved in existence. The inscribed text is one of the longest we know of, thus offering the richest material. The Palenque sculptor was simpler, clearer, and in his delineation truer to nature than his fellow artists in the other centres of Central American worship. Finally, the archæologic brotherhood is most conversant with this precious specimen of American prehistoric art and the interest is thereby more easily engaged.

The sculpture, as you know, is imbedded in the rear wall of a little fane built on the top of a tumulus thrown up quite near to the stately ruins of the ancient Palenque monastery.

Let us have first a rapid glance at the centre tableau.

This tableau tells its own story to the eye. It represents a sacrificial scene. Two persons, evidently priests, are seen with their heads raised and their eyes directed toward a bird perched on the top of a cross-like framework. The bird can easily be recognized, being the sacred bird *Quetzal* (*trogon resplendens*). His wings are slightly raised, his legs in attitude of walking, his head and neck bent forward. The framework represents the *yak-ché*, the sacred tree of life (L, page 200), and is rooted upon what seems to be a monstrous skull. On the hands and outstretched arms of the elder priest lies the figure of an idol, the god *Chac* (L, p. 220), the protector of the fields and harvests. He lies there in dignified posture, his arms folded, and with wide-opened eyes seeming to take in the words the bird is singing into his ears. The junior assistant holds in his hand a stalk of the maize-plant, its root and its waving leaves conventionally but clearly expressed.

The tapestry of the background is emblazoned with short rows of day-symbols, and intermixed with clasps in which pairs of maize-leaves, as if moved by a breeze, are fastened. Mr. Francis Parry, in one of his last pamphlets, has pointed out, with evident correctness, that the salient emblematic features of this background are the green leaves of the maize, all of them tending to glorify fecundity and the worship of the bountiful god *Chac*.

This much on the central picture. We must now turn to the inspection of the lateral tablets.

Each of these tablets is divided into six vertical columns, and these columns into seventeen transversal rows. Each of the squares (cartouches, katunes) thereby obtained, shows on its face a graven object. The initial square occupies the space of four squares. The total of the squares to be scrutinized, presents therefore the sum of 201 squares.

For the purpose of stating the place of each square the vertical columns of Tablet I. are inscribed with the letters A—F, those of Tablet II. with the letters S—X, and the transversals of both with the numbers 1—17.

Which of the features graven on Tablet I. will be of easiest recognition? No doubt those heading the first columns A, B, 3—9. These squares exhibit a series of human profiles. To judge from their diversified physiognomies, we take them to be portraits, and, from their location at the head of the inscription, to be portraits of prominent men. Later examination will prove them to be portraits of certain historic priests, and the fifth of the series the emblematic image of one of them.

In this tablet, we find six other portraits scattered in B 17; C 10; C 11; D 8; D 16; and F 4.

Tablet II. exhibits none of the kind.

What other features will be found of ready recognition? No doubt the many chronologic signs observed at a rapid glance to cover the faces of both tablets. These dates—the mentioned symbols for certain days—make their presence

conspicuous by balls (*thuun*) and erect staffs (*paiché*), either or both of them being always affixed to the left side of a symbol. Together, they form a date, each ball counting 1, each staff 5. They are the numerals to state which of the 20 days of the month is registered. Counting the number of dates present on both tablets, the amount is 79 dates, in all. We make a brief halt here. For, as it is around the axis of these symbols that almost the whole discussion will turn, a few words more must be said of them.

We have known of these symbols ever since Lord Kingsborough's Codices were laid before the eyes of the public. Later, through the discovery of Bishop Landa's work on the antiquities of Yucatan, we learned how to employ these symbols for a rational construction of the Calendar, and, moreover, we learned what name each of these symbols bore—and there is much in a name, as will readily be seen. But Landa, unfortunately, did not tell us on this occasion what positive meaning was hidden under that confused scribbling which was seen covering the face of those little symbols, miniatures of only $\frac{1}{8}$ or $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch square. Here and there they would suggest a face, but whether that of man or woman, of a beast or an idol, is not clearly distinguishable, and others are positive nondescripts.

However, in spite of the tachygraphic deterioration under which the scribe has presented them, he has never failed to leave on the face of each symbol as many of the characteristics as will permit us to trace out its corresponding counterpart when seen chiselled by the hand of the sculptor. He represents them on the large surface of stone, and gives them for the most part a measure of $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches square. He cuts them out elaborately in bas relief. Upon comparison, it will be clearly seen that the incomplete, confused strokes made by the scribe stand in the corresponding sculpture in forms that are completed. The interrupted strokes run into well defined outlines; they combine to gratify the eye with the aspect of a certain object which

is known and which we must own was quite correctly copied after nature. Should we not recognize this object at first sight, or feel doubtful as to its identification, we may be brought upon the right track by consulting Landa's chapters, in which objects are noted, discussed, sometimes even profusely described, which were employed in the religious ceremonies and the rites performed in the temples of the Maya people. This fact on the one hand, and on the other hand the presumption that the objects in question might also have been employed in the representation of such sacred symbols as our twenty calendar symbols are, will contribute to their verification and to their final identification, in the highest degree.

For the purpose of exemplifying and to bring this translation of the written symbols into the sculptured ones to full visual perception, I have prepared a scheme (see diagram) on which the corresponding counterparts are paired. They are not there arranged in their common calendaric succession, but in the order in which the sculptured dates make their gradual appearance in our tablets.

THE REGISTERED DATES.

I. The first date comes up in square A 16. It must be read: the first day *Ahau*, because it shows in its numeral but one ball; and that the affixed symbol is that of *Ahau* is warranted by comparison with the written tachygraphic symbol, which exhibits the very same features and is known by the name *Ahau*.

The Maya word *Ahau* means: old man, chief, lord. Landa speaks of this *Ahau* as an idol representing the *Lord of the Katun*, or period of twenty years, on which occasion it was carried from temple to temple in procession. For particulars read Landa, page 316.

II. The second date stands in square B 10. The tachygraphic symbol *Oc*, when completed by drawing a profile

round those strokes swung to and fro, would give a short-copy of the sculpture. The characteristics left are still stronger accentuated by the three dark spots. The determinative on top of the head shows by the elongated front-line and the clearly defined ear, that the sculptor intended the head to be recognized as that of a quadruped. What animal it is, whether the *dog* or the fox-like *tacuatzin*, is of no material interest to discuss. The form is seen resting on three feet, and the whole is thereby thought to represent a baked earthen idol.

The symbol shows one single staff for numeral, and therefore reads: the day 5 *Cib*.

III. The third date, beneath in square B 11, exhibits, as an exception, a compound picture—a hand holding a human head, drawn, as always, in profile. We may see the same symbol, but without the hand, repeated in D 11. Its tachygraphic paragon will be that which bears the name *Cib*, translated: *the Scribe*. The series of the 20 days shows only two human heads, of which the other one will presently appear. The numeral, on account of the two balls, is that of 2, and therefore we read this date: 2 *Oc*.

I must not forget the explanation of the two hooks above and below the two balls. These hooks never come to light except in connection with the numerals 1 or 2. As it appears they were intended to fill out the vacant spaces left at this spot by the presence of but one or two balls. The motive itself seems to have been borrowed from hooks by which the earthen idols were grasped. Look at the suggestion given by the hand and handle, as shown in the present symbol.

IV. The fourth date is found in B 16. Sculpture: a human face, elongated, with expression differing from the former. Tachygraph: probably that of *Men*, which in translation means: the *Architect*. The symbol bears the numeral 18, and therefore reads: the date 18 *Men*.

V. The fifth symbol met with stands in column C 2.

Sculpture and tachygraph *Cimi* tally perfectly. Both show the closed eyelids, the dry jawbone, the bare teeth, the hollowed nose of the human skull. *Cimi* translated means: *death*. Hence we read the numeral included: the date 8 *Cimi*.

It must be observed here, that the sculptor whenever he repeats the same symbol, never would repeat the same accurate modelling of it. This shows that he did not work with stencils. He was a free-hand draftsman. His clever hand never failed to express substantially the characteristic features in the repeated objects. I found this figure more varied than any other, and this fact of continuous variation should be duly observed, because some scholars, misled by it, felt induced to take the somewhat altered day symbols for a new set of chronologic signs, for symbols of the months.

VI. The sixth date stands in square C 4. Its corresponding tachygraph can be no other than *Manik*. The reasons why this symbol must be admitted to represent some kind of *vessel* are as follows: 1. It shows three feet. 2. It is rounded. 3. It is hollowed and shows its opening. The tachygrapher, almost invariably, draws this mouth of vessel *Manik* in the shape of an inverted *Tau*, and with three strokes at the bottom of it—signs for the three feet. The sculptures show the mouth more rounded. No doubt, the picture represents that rudimentary earthen vessel found in the household of the whole Indian race, and which was called by the Spaniards: *la lebrija*. It serves to keep the maize soaked in water and ashes during night time and thus get it softened for the morning, and the process of grinding on the *metate*-stone. The little round marks suggest the form of the maize-kernel and the object laid on top the *masa*, ready to shape the tortilla. We read the day: 8 *Manik*.

VII. In square C 5 we find another vessel of domestic use, this time, however, a fruit vessel, and perfectly corresponding to the tachygraph *Chicchan*. Here, as well

as for the others of its kind, the sculptor always presses two of these vessels into the space of one square. See *e. g.* A B 3, where one of them shows a more rounded form. Both are evidently to represent the two brother-vessels: *el guacal* and *la jicara*, the one a large fruit of globular, the other of elongated form, both gathered from the tree *Crescentia cujete*, and so similar in trunk, ramification, foliage and flower, that they can scarcely be distinguished from each other, unless the fruit begins to show its coming form. The people, therefore, call these trees *los jemelos*—the twins, and the sculptor, impressed by similar observation, seems to have brought the same idea to expression, by always coupling these vessels together. The globular *guacal*, of the size of a man's head and more, serves manifold purposes, mainly that of scooping water, while the *jicara* is the people's drinking cup. A mark like y or x will be noticed always on these vessels. This mark means: *carving*. See *e. g.* Cod. Tro, plates 15, 17, 32, in which the wood carver is about to carve an idol from the trunk of a tree. Perhaps the reader will remember the extreme neatness and taste exhibited in decorative carving on the surface of the named vessels, as brought to market throughout the whole of Central America. We read the date: *14 Chicchan*.

VIII. The eighth date in square C 8, with a simile for the same in C 16, shows its tachygraphic replica in the symbol *Cabac*. Maya words beginning with the syllable *cab* always have reference to *honey*. With this suggestion in mind, it will be easy to recognize the image of a honey-comb graven on the centre of the shield, above which for closer definition the body of a bee is noticed, a super-addition which in the tachygraph is always lacking. The *apiary* pages of the Codex Tro afford samples in abundance for the customary representation of the honey-comb, in a triangular mosaic form. See Cod. Tro, plate IX.; and for that of the bee itself, with its characteristic feature of the round head,

the protruded eyes, the mandibular apparatus, and the insect-body, see plates X. and XI. Diagram 8 D shows a bee fed with honey.

Bee culture was widely spread among the natives of Yucatan. They knew how to tame not less than five different species of this insect swarming in their woods. Honey, in the past centuries, was almost the only staple article of this peninsula.

The symbol bears the numeral 1, we therefore read: the day 1 *Cabac*.

IX. Close beneath C 8, in C 9, a symbol makes its appearance bearing the simple feature of the Roman capital letter T (or *Tau*). What in this T is straight and angular in sculpture, will be seen rounded and curved in the tachygraph. The simple structure of this symbol is not very suggestive of any object available and in existence. Landa gives the name for it, *Igk*, which means breath, or spirit, a word which the linguists have brought to comparison with *Ehecatl*, the name of one of the twenty symbols of the Mexican cycle, and which means wind. As regards *Igk*, this curious sign may be connected and an interpretation found for it by pointing to a monogram of the identical T form which is engraved on the centre jewel of a necklace worn by one of those sumptuously dressed men whose life-size stuccoes adorn the walls of the Palenque monastery. See John L. Stephens, *Travels*, Vol. II., p. 318. A monogram on such a place probably had the meaning of Spirit of Life. Upon further inspection, this T form would then still appear repeated in the Palenque architecture. The eye of the visitor is surprised to see the windows of the convent constructed after this unexpected and uncommon pattern of a *Tau*. See diagram 9 D.

This three-fold appearance of the *Tau*-sign as a symbol for a day, as a monogram and in architecture, and this only in Palenque, as far as I know, no doubt points to certain local associations of thought, for which the clew

remains still to be discovered. We read: the day 13 *Ighk*.

X. We pass over date 10 *Men* in C 11, and shall do so farther on with all dates previously discussed, to meet in square C 14 with a new day-symbol. Its tachygraph is that of *Ben*, determined by the horizontal bipartition and the two vertical and parallel slits.

The sculptured symbol, owing to its frequent reappearance not only on our tablets but everywhere in sculpture, and moreover owing to its intrinsic significance as a ritual object of the highest order, requires closer inspection.

In written form, and in such as nearest approaching our sculpture, the symbol is placed by Landa, page 264, at the head of his discussion on the month *Pax*, which month was that of planting the corn. See diagram. Upon comparison we notice the same tachygraphic traits, however, in fuller development. The strokes at the bottom develop in Landa to three feet, in printing the symbol in the Codices with the character of an earthen vessel, and especially that of an *incense-vessel* or a *brazier*, when taking into account the two wreaths of curling smoke emitted from the upper slot-strokes. The hatch-lined picture on the left side is still an indefinable and accessory object. In Landa's work this picture of the brazier dominates the page of his month-calendar; in our tablet we also see this brazier impressed upon the whole inscription, and its emblematic importance is still more emphasized by the fact that it occupies not one but fully four squares. We notice, too, that the sculptor has taken care to develop its features by hatch-lining the two upper parallel strokes. Hatch-lines always mean hollowing. The curling smoke is as carefully and intelligently chiselled as sculpturing would allow, and between the smoke and the top of the brazier some sacrificial offering is seen interposed. The two lateral objects will be explained in later pages.

Of this large brazier and its special function we may learn more from Landa's text (pp. 148, 280). It stood in the

centre of the temple-room. In each of the corners a priest was seated, with a basin filled with water before him. A penitent enters the door and throws a certain quantity of copal-balls for incense in the slots of the brazier. The latter must have been of considerable size, for somewhere,—I think it is in Tezozomoc's History of Mexico,—it is told that some wretch with hands and feet bound was thrown into a brazier to be roasted alive. I am not aware that specimens of those braziers are preserved as its bulk exposed it to easy destruction. The bipartition in both representations suggests the fact, that the upper part could be taken off so as to fill the lower with embers, and the slots of the cover served for ventilation, for escape of the smoke and for slipping into it the incense balls. The little round on the face of the lower basin seems to indicate the knobs by which the heavy vessel was grasped for removal. The Cacchiqueles and Mames of Guatemala call such incense-vessels: *polbalpom*, pol-vessel, bal-rounded, pom-incense.

In Quirigua, in Copan or in Palenque, the figure of this sacred vessel will always be noticed to head the inscribed texts of the sculptures on which only the deeds of some illustrious person, when deceased, were commemorated. We read: the day 3 *Ben*.

XI. The next symbol is that which stands in D 5. The tachygraph is an exact copy of it, and bears the name *Chuen*, for which there is no translation found. It shows the rounded form, is posted on three feet, and therefore represents an earthen vessel too. To judge from the carving on its surface, the three thorns, it is the vessel in which the thorns with which the penitents had drawn blood from their bodies were preserved, which thorns, on a later occasion, were solemnly burnt by the priest designated to this ritual function. Each priest, says Landa, page 242, officiated at a sacred vessel of his own. I found only the two vessels *Ben* and *Chuen*, commemorated on our tablets.

On top of *Chuen* the numerals for 9 appear to be resting,

a fact by which interpreters were induced to read this symbol the 9th day of the 2d month. If altogether, it would have to be read the 2d day of the 9th month. For there is no reason apparent why the sculptor should have deviated from the typical rule of giving the day's numeral a vertical position and have exchanged it for that of a horizontal one above the symbol. There are, however, many grave reasons why the notation of months, as well as the appearance of any qualified symbol for a month on these tablets as well as in the Codices, must be denied. The discussion of this case and of others of controversial nature must be left to Part II., of which this article is the introduction. What to think of the top-piece seems to me to be suggested by Landa, on pages 148, 250, where he describes the four priests sitting in the corners of the temple and holding in their hands a tablet on which the incense-balls intended to be cast into the brazier are resting. According to the occasion, we read, one, two, and more of these copal balls of different ingredients, were prescribed. If a dog was sacrificed, we read further on, two tablets were required, and this would explain the presence of two of such "tablillas," as are seen in square E 5, in E 10 and D 13. It may also be observed that the copal-tablets are found placed only on the symbol or brazier *Chuen*, but never three tablets. We read: the day 2 *Chuen*.

XII. A new date comes forth on square E 4, recognizable by the three balls. Its representation is somewhat abnormal, and so much more so as it bears a figure which I recognize to be nothing else than that of a grasshopper, a locust. Locusts indeed were a dreaded plague in those countries, and the natives sallied out in organized squads to kill them and to sacrifice them to the gods, as they did with other vermin on the fields, but I am unable to find a counterpart in the tachygraphs.

XIII. Somewhat effaced, but susceptible of restoration, the new symbol following will be found on square F

1, its tachygraph being that of the day *Eznab*. The crisp cross lines which this symbol everywhere presents, have been interpreted as signifying the chipped obsidian lance or arrow head. I do not venture to find a suitable explanation for this peculiar object. Something like a bale, rolled up and tied, lies above this symbol. We read: the day 15 *Eznab*.

XIV. The next new day-symbol stands in F 11. It must represent the head of an idol made of earthenware, because it is posted on three feet. Which of the many long-nosed idols it is to represent, I do not undertake to discuss, and I abstain from putting it in comparison with any of the still remaining tachygraphs.

XV. We turn for new symbols to Tablet II. It is found in square S 4. Enough remains from its worn surface to recognize in it the image of a bird's head, the traces of which are visible in the round outline of the head, the eye in the centre and the little curved bill. Its better preserved equivalent, see S 2, will confirm this statement. There is only one tachygraph that would show the characteristics of a bird, that of *Eb*. There not being room enough for drawing the bill, the scribe left the characteristics of the bird in the form of a long feather. We read: the day 5 *Eb*.

XVI. The next new symbol stands in S 10. It shows a quartering on its face, each of the quarters filled with a round dot. Its replica is found in the tachygraph *Lamat*. It is again that the name will aid us to recognize what object is represented in *Lamat*. This word is a contraction of the syllables *la-amay* and *tun*. *La* serves in Maya to form the tens (10). *Amay* signifies *squaring* and *tun*, the *stone*. Thus *Lamat* is likely to represent the squared stone, of which *Cogolludo* (see Lib. IV. 5) reports, that it was dressed and set up at the end of a period of twenty years, the four dots, and in our picture the central diamond dot representing the five lustrous (each lustro of four years) into which this period was subdivided. Therefore we may

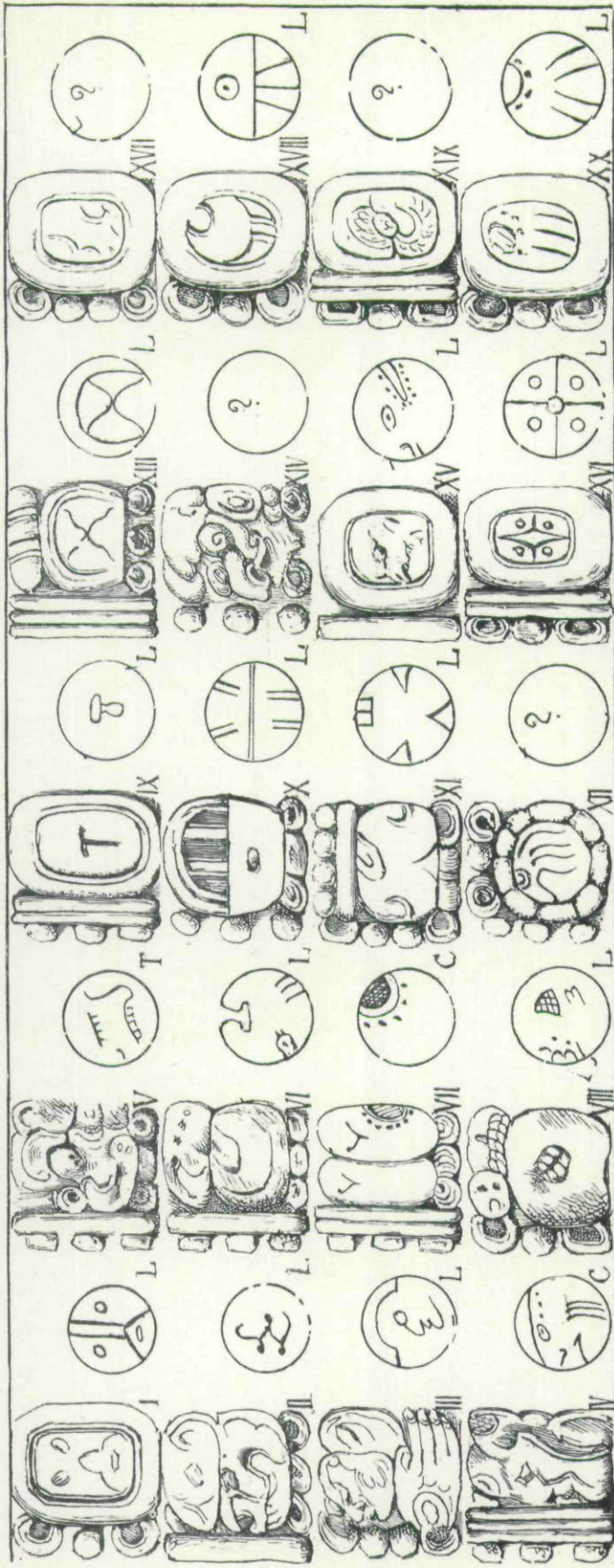
see in this image the genuine picture of the often-mentioned and discussed *Katun*. The picture comes up again in square V 15 and W 5, not as a symbol for the day, but as a chronologic mark-stone. Part II. will contain more on this subject. We read: the day *11 Lamat*.

XVII. We find a new day-symbol in square S 14. The features engraved on it are not easily recognizable. What remains I have tried to reproduce in the scheme of the diagram. As the four remaining tachygraphs, those of *Kan*, *Ymix*, and *Caban* are susceptible of correct identification, only the day-symbol *Akbal* would still be left to be put in parallel with that on the sculpture, but I refrain from any attempt of identification.

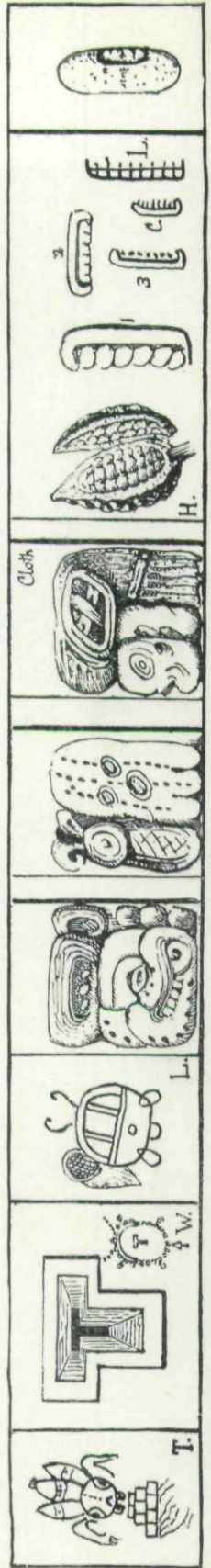
XVIII. In square T 8 follows a new date, which we may confidently read: *1 Kan*. The tachygraph is not absolutely identical with the sculpture, but all the main features of *Kan* are intelligibly rendered. No doubt the picture stands for the Indian maize-cake, the *tortilla* of the Spaniards. As such it has been recognized, and very correctly, by all students, perhaps not so much by its being a realistic copy from nature, as by its continuous association with sacrificial offerings.

Apart from other meanings bestowed upon the word *Kan* in Maya language, it has also that of *yellow*, and under given circumstances that of the "yellow, ripened maize." It is only in this condition that the kernel represented in the picture is available for preparing the tortilla. The part stands for the whole. The kernel at its top shows heart and rim with which it is fastened in the cob; the furrows or folds, as signs of the hardening of the kernel, are indicated by the downward-running strokes. We read: *1 Kan*.

XIX. The following new symbol stands in W 14. Tachygraph, as well as sculpture, does not impress the eye with representing any distinct object. Nevertheless, when remembering that the word *cab* means honey and that when



SCHEME TO SHOW THE CORRESPONDENCE OF TACHYGRAPH WITH SCULPTURE.



reading in Landa, pages 292 and 296, we find the people had two honey-feasts, the one celebrated in the month *Tzec*, the other in the month *Mol*, there will be no surprise in finding the sculptor engaged in the task of giving another version of the apiary motive. But which object, associated with bee-culture, he has chosen to represent, is hard to learn from the web of the few chisel strokes that appear on the surface of the square. Let the apiarist be called on to give his version. I do not hesitate to read: *I Caban*.

XX. The twentieth and last symbol is that in square X 5. Its tachygraph, unquestionably, is that of *Imix*. As to the object represented, no doubt can be entertained that it is, like *Kan*, a kernel of maize. It shows the same features above the germinating point, the heart, below the furrow strokes. However, it lacks the horizontal bar-line of *Kan*. The reason for this peculiar mode of pictorial differentiation is not quite clear. But clear it is, if *Kan* was to be the representative of yellow, ripe maize, *Imix*, on the contrary, was to remind us of the early stage of its maturity—when the maize is still in its green husk. The green maize gave the long expected prophecy of an approaching and successful crop, and this advent was celebrated by days of boisterous debaucheries. Nor is the dualism in the representation an exceptional feature with the symbols. We had the same before with *Honey*. *Time* had its two representatives in *Ahau* and *Lamat*. *Science* in *Men* and *Cib*, the *vessels* in *Ben* and *Chuen*.

The name *Imix* is evidently nothing else than a dialectic metathesis of the word *imix*, which is the usual Maya word for maize. We read the symbol: *I Imix*.

It will not have escaped the attention of the student that the symbol for the day *Hix* is missing among those sculptured on the tablets. *Hix* however will be seen appearing, and without its numerals, in squares T 11, T 13 and T 16, and in perfect pictorial agreement with the tachygraph. The word *hix* means sorcerer, magician, in Maya language.

It is highly probable that we have the *sorcerer's mask* before us in this picture—the two eyeholes through which to observe, the nose wanting, the mouth through which to utter the oracle, the beard-fringes pretty clearly expressed, and the paint over the whole mask indicated by the row of black dots. Thus also the mask *Hix* may be registered among the many objects used in the ritual performances of the Palenque people.

We are now at the end of the pictorial analysis of the twenty symbols, which, on account of frequent repetition, occupy seventy-six squares on both tablets—more than one-third of the whole amount. Let us now see what more pictorial discoveries await us on examination of the one hundred and twenty-five remaining squares.

THE REMAINING SQUARES.

It requires but a superficial glance to inform us of a curious fact, at the very outset. We become aware that a large number of the objects we found concealed under the mask of the symbol, are again making their appearance on these remaining squares. Only a certain change has happened to them. A part of them having cast off the calendaric numerals, these objects now appear, as a rule, always in company with some other object of similar kind, often even with three and more. Compressed as they now are within the small space of one single square, their form has grown either elongated or flattened, sometimes reduced to the smallest size, on top or at the base. But the motive itself remains unaltered. Certainly we also meet with quite new features, but of these later. Let us first make sure of those objects we are already acquainted with, and which contribute to fill the remaining squares. I shall catalogue them in their tabular succession, as follows :

There is, for instance, the incense-vessel *Ben*, which we shall find making its reappearance twenty-eight times : in

squares A B 1 and 2; A B 4; A B 5; B 15?; C 3, half; C 6; C 17; D 6; D 7; D 9; D 15; D 17; E 13, half; F 2; F 7, hand; F 9?; F 14; on tablet II.: T 3?; T 6, twice; T 7, hand; T 15, hand; U 6, half and hand; U 9; U 16, half; W 3, half and hand; W 8?; W 17, hand; X 9, half.

The vessel *Chuen*, the thorn-vessel, in B 6; B 9?: D 1; D 13?; it returns 4 times on Tablet I., but never on Tablet II.

The vessel *Manik* (lebrija) in A 13; B 13; on Tablet II. in U 5, 3 times.

The twin-vessel *Chicchán*, in B 3; C 7; C 15; on Tablet II. in V 3 and U 11, 5 times.

The maize-kernel *Kan* is not present, but *Imix*, the green maize in E 2 and S 1, 2 times.

The bird *Eb*, in C 1; E 3?; E 8; E 12?; E 15?; F 3; F 8?; F 10; F 11; on tablet II. in S 2; S 8; S 16; T 1; U 12; V 6; V 10?; V 16; W 4; W 9; W 10; X 8; X 9; X 17, 23 times. Notice the variations of *Eb*: in S 4 the tiny head of the *quetzal-bird*, in S 8 the speaking parrot, with outstretched tongue; in T 10 the *eagle*, devouring a piece of carrion; in X 8 long-billed sea bird?; bird-heads 23 times.

Such is the long list of squares showing features already recognized as ritual objects. New ones will find identification as follows:

Heads of *tigers* are easily recognized as standing in S 17, X 13 and X 16, 3 times. The tiger played a superstitious rôle with the Maya, making its marked appearance at the baptism of a new born child. (See "nagual" in F. y Guzman, Rec. flor. page 45.)

The head of the *tapir* turns up 18 times, in squares A 11; A 17; D 2; E 7; E 13; E 17; S 5; S 7; S 11; S 13; U 15; V 1; V 4; V 9; W 13; W 16; X 12 and X 17. The characteristic features of the *tapir* will be better recognized when giving the picture a quarter turn. See diagrams F. We notice in this sculpture the tapir's four much dreaded

molar teeth, and the prolonged proboscis turned to the mouth, as if browsing; while in the architectural decorations the trunk is always turned up. Moreover, we notice the tapir's picture associated with a half-shield, a characteristic probably to be interpreted with the three-toed footprint left by the animal with its hind legs on the moist sand of the river banks, in contradistinction to that of the four toes of the front legs. Tradition tells of the tapir-cult as being introduced from Chiapas (Palenque), in the lowlands of the peninsula. Also the "Zayi" dance, a ballet, is still performed in Yucatan, in which the tapir-masked head dancer plays a principal part.

Another new feature is that of *the bag* (see diagram Hix), characterized by the *fastening* string and the two loops. It is seen as well above or below or at the left hand. See *e. g.* E 8; F 7; F 9; S 1; S 8; S 17; T 11; T 13; T 15; T 16; U 12; V 5; V 6; V 16 and W 14, fifteen times. It is of still more frequent occurrence in the Codices, where it must be distinguished from the *tunkul*-drum, the inseparable associate of *Cimi*.

Hands, offering some sacrificial object, are conspicuous in A 12; C 3; F 7; S 1; T 7; T 15; U 6; U 16; V 11; W 3 and W 17. *Articles* of woven, plaited and fringed stuffs are seen in B 12 and C 12, not to speak of many others on other squares, and the details of which, for the present, escape recognition. (See diagram: Cloth).

There is, however, one object the ritual offering of which could not fail to be represented on these temple-tablets, and which is the *cacao*, the *Theobroma-Linnæi*. Its best specimen appears on the initial square, where it stands posted upright, cut into halves, on the sides of the large brazier. On a Copan-stele the brazier is flanked by two fishes. These sectional parts of the cacao-pod return frequently on our tablets, and in varied form and posture. In the miniature form of the initials and on top, on squares C 1; D 14; E 6; E 11; F 16; U 4; U 9; V 14; X 2, and X 14; in

larger form and as an annex on the top or side in B 9; B 13; C 3; D 1; D 11; D 13; E 2; E 3; E 8; F 11?; F 17?; but never on Tablet II.

We must imagine the cacao-pod cut open and presenting its row of grains, the edge to stand for a section of the thick peel. See diagram H with the natural cut, the three sculptural renderings, and the two others as they so often make their appearance in the Codices.

To conclude this list of varied ritual articles let me still mention the appearance of the precious jade stone, in its conventional celt-form (diagram J), in C 7 and U 5. Strung up in form of garlands the same jade stone forms also a decorative part of the *yakché*, the Sacred Tree.

To sum up here, what did we find expressed on the face of the two tablets? No symbolic abstract signs, as alphabetic letters are,—only objects tangible, concrete and of definable form were met with. None of them were of profane nature—all of them susceptible of being brought into a certain connection with the dignified and impressive sacrificial scene as represented in the central tableau. These objects were gifts brought by the simple-hearted believer into the temple, idols manufactured by his hands, animals held in superstitious awe, vessels and accessories used by the officiating priests. Their ritual character is warranted by what Bishop Landa says of them in all the chapters written by him on this special subject.

Thus, it is picture, and not alphabetic writing, with which we have to deal in future when looking at these relics of prehistoric American civilization. More or less those very same pictures and their peculiar arrangement are found graven on all the monuments that cover the soil of Central America.

The results as above gained from the examination of the tablets, and which I could impart here only to a very limited extent, can in no wise cause us surprise. The whole race of the American Indians was unacquainted with

phonetic writing. In those parts where the manufacture of paper was unknown, they left their records engraved on rock. Had the Aztecs found the native Maya—whose territory they invaded and on whose advanced civilization they were thriving as mere parasites—in the actual possession of phonetic writing, they would also have adopted and practised it. Moreover, had the Spanish missionaries met with the same, they would not have flung the sacred Maya books into the fire, but would have studied and translated them. Picture-writing was as much a revelation to those learned men, as was phonetic writing to the Indians, whose minds were absolutely unprepared for this abstract task. Constantly their teachers had to recur to the trick of substituting pictorial alphabets.

Nor is it to be forgotten that despite the perfected methods employed by the scholars of modern times in the deciphering of archaic texts, all the attempts made in this direction with Maya hieroglyphs have led to results which could not be accepted. Also, when examined in the light of “cipher despatches,” the experts have pronounced against the Maya texts being of phonetic character.

Finally, it will be of interest and value to learn what Bishop Landa, the best authority I can quote here, has said upon this subject. His words (page 242) are: “*y ponian en la pared la memoria destas cosas con sus caracteres.*” I shall not comment at length on this laconic passage; in free translation it would run, as follows: and all those objects of which I have just spoken, they may be seen engraved on the temple and the palace walls, to be preserved there, *quasi in memoriam*. And they are sculptured there in those peculiar characters in which those people used to write their records.

Copyright of Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society is the property of American Antiquarian Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.