A NEW SIGN WITH PHONETIC /NO/ READING?

David F. Mora-Marín
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

There is a sign that looks like a human head in profile that may be another syllabogram with the reading /no/, seen in figure 1.

One of the instances of this face show it as an unusual face (Figure 1b), hence for now I'll label this sign FACE. It appears in substitution for T134/136 [595] /no/ at Naj Tunich, as seen in figure 2.

Naj Tunich Drawing 28:A4 shows the spelling of a proper name as no[mo]-pa-na (Figure 2a), with the typical syllabogram T134/136 [595] no, which was first proposed by David Stuart, according to Prager (2002:60). On Drawing 66 at D1 one sees mo[FACE]-pa-na (Figure 2b). On Drawing 25:A4 one sees mo-FACE-pa-na (Figure 2c), while on Drawing 23 at A4 one sees mo-no-pa-na (Figure 2c). The spellings appear in a nearly identical context, as evident from MacLeod and Stone's
structural analysis (in Stone 1993:165): after the verbs \( y(i)-(Y)IL-ji \) (Drawing 28 at A3), \( (Y)IL-ja \) (Drawing 25 at A3), or \( (Y)IL-(i)-a-j(a) \) (Drawing 66 at B1), and before the phrase ma-na-ma CHAN a-ku ?-AJAW.

At this time I do not know of other occurrences of this FACE sign, but its clear contexts at Naj Tunich strongly support a \( \text{no} \) reading given its substitution for T134/136[595] \( \text{no} \) in a word-initial context. Nevertheless, there is tentative but interrelated iconographic and epigraphic evidence to support this identification. Indeed, Prager (2002:59) has suggested that the sequence T134[210a], which is associated with imagery of dwarfs, is read \( \text{no-NOL} \) (Figure 3a). He supports this hypothesis with the sequence \( \text{NOL-le} \) (Figure 3b), based on the possible match between this term and the colonial Tzeltal and Tzotzil terms \( \text{nolnol} \) and \( \text{nolnol uinic} '\text{enano (dwarf)}' \) (Ara 1986:348), and \( \text{nopnol} '\text{enano (dwarf)}' \) (Ruz 1989:195), respectively. Thus, he argues that T210a is logographic \( \text{NOL} \) 'dwarf'.

It is possible that the FACE sign discussed here, especially as seen in the second instance above (Figure 1b), could be a depiction of a dwarf’s face, and therefore, the sign might be \( \text{DWARF.FACE} \) rather than just FACE. If so, it might even have a logographic reading \( \text{NOL} \), or at least it may have been derived acrophonically from a sourceword \( \text{nol} \) 'dwarf', although for now this is of course highly speculative. However, should this external sources of evidence be proven incorrect, the identity between the FACE glyph and T134/136 [595] \( \text{no} \) would not be affected.

**References cited**

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