

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DATE 7 MANIK' 5 WOH? AN ANALYSIS OF TEXT AND IMAGE ON KERR NOS. 0717, 7447, AND 8457

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Introduction

The ever growing corpus of (Late) Classic Maya ceramics provides a wealth of hieroglyphic and iconographic material to any researcher around the world (Kerr n.d). New additions or reanalyses of already known examples may provide clues to a better understanding of both text and image on any ceramic vessel now known.

In this note three vessels are discussed that record the same Calendar Round date (7 Manik' 5 Woh) and provide the viewer with variations of the same visual narrative. The shared visual narrative and the details in the painted hieroglyphic texts provide clues to the identification of the action recorded. The three vessels are of Late Classic origin and have no known provenance (circa A.D. 750-900).

The Vessels

The first and best known vessel of the three vessels discussed here is Kerr No. 0717, which served most prominently as the cover of the 1994 exhibition catalog "Painting the Maya Universe: Royal Ceramics of the Classic Period" (Reents-Budet 1994: cover, 38, 315; also see Coe 1977: Figure 6, Robicsek and Hales 1981: Figure 31a, and Kerr 1989: 39) (Figure 1a). It was loaned to this exhibition by an anonymous benefactor. The second vessel is Kerr No. 7447 (Figure 1b), which to my knowledge never has been exhibited and remains in the private domain. The third vessel is Kerr No. 8457 (Figure 1c),¹ which only survived in part. This vessel, again to my knowledge, also never has been exhibited and remains in the private domain. The measurements of the three vessels can be summarized as follows (after Kerr n.d):

¹ In an earlier version of this note I only discussed Kerr Nos. 0717 and 7447. After sending this version for review I discovered that Kerr No. 8457 contained a text with the same contents and a visual narrative similar to the other two vessels. Dmitri Beliaev, who reviewed my earlier note, also noted this independently and informed me via e-mail on January 6, 2006.



a



b



c

Figure 1: The Three Vessels, a) Kerr No. 0717, b) Kerr No. 7447 c) Kerr No. 8457 (rollout photographs by Justin Kerr)

	Kerr No. 0717	Kerr No. 7447	Kerr No. 8457
Height	21.5 cm	23 cm	26.5 cm
Diameter	13.2 cm	11.2 cm	14.5 cm
Circumference	41.4 cm	36.1 cm	47.5 cm

Kerr No. 0717 is the smallest of the three vessels, while Kerr No. 8457 is the largest vessel. Kerr No. 8457 clearly belongs to a variant of the tradition or style nick-named Codex Style (Coe 1978: 16; Robicsek and Hales 1981: xvii-xxi). This tradition or style was probably produced in the Greater Nakbe area, based on the amount of locally produced Codex Style sherds found at Nakbe and surrounding sites (Hansen, Bishop, and Fahsen 1991; Reents and Bishop 1987; Reents-Budet 1994). The other vessels also have the typical upper red band (Kerr No. 0717) as well as the lower red band (Kerr No. 7447). This may hint at the fact that these vessels possibly were produced in an area close to where Kerr No. 8457 was produced.

An Analysis of Text and Image

The upper rim of Kerr No. 0717 contains a repetitive text of one glyphic collocation, the two individual signs of which are difficult to identify with certainty. It has been suggested that this collocation reads «*lakam tun*» (Fields, in Reents-Budet 1994: 315), but at present I doubt the correctness of this identification. I identify this collocation as **ji-chi** (**yi?**-**chi**, or perhaps **ji/yi?**-**CHIJ**),² in which the “Kawak/TUN”-like sign is actually a sign that substitutes for T671 **chi** and the **CHIJ** DEER sign in the Standard Dedicatory Formula or SDF on ceramics (formerly the Primary Standard Sequence or PSS, cf. Boot 2005c). This particular substitution is common to regional variations of the SDF on ceramics that are executed in a style close to the Codex Style as possibly originating at the site of Nakbé (e.g. Kerr No. 1394, 1437, 2068, 2583, 2723). The continuous repetition of a single collocation from the SDF can be found

² In this essay the following orthography will be employed: ‘, *a, b’, ch, ch’, e, h, j, i, k, k’, l, m, n, o, p, p’, s, t, t’, tz, tz’, u, w, x, and y*. In this orthography the /h/ represents a glottal aspirate or glottal voiced fricative (/h/ as in English “house”), while /j/ represents a velar aspirate or velar voiced fricative (/j/ as in Spanish “joya”) (Grube 2004). In this essay there is no reconstruction of complex vowels based on disharmonic spellings (compare to Houston, Stuart, and Robertson 1998 [2004] and Lacadena and Wichmann 2004, n.d.; for counter proposals see Kaufman 2003 and Boot 2004a, 2005a). In the transcription of Maya hieroglyphic signs uppercase bold type face letters indicate logograms (e.g. **YAX**), while lowercase bold type face letters indicate syllabic signs (e.g. **ji**). Items placed between square brackets are so-called infixed signs (e.g. **’IK’[’AT]**); order of the transcribed signs indicates the epigraphically established reading order. Queries added to sign identifications or transcribed values express doubt on the identification of the assigned logographic or syllabic value (e.g. **yi?**). All reconstructions (i.e. transliterations) in this essay are but approximations of the original intended Classic Maya (“epigraphic”) linguistic items (Boot 2002: 6-7), a written language which was employed by the various distinct language groups already formed in the Classic period. Older transcriptions and/or transliterations are captured between double pointed brackets (e.g. «*lakam tun*»). Citing of so-called T-numbers (e.g. T528) refers to the hieroglyphic signs as numbered and cataloged by Thompson (1962; the sign list can now be found online at www.famsi.org/mayawriting/thompson/index.html).

found on other ceramics (e.g. Kerr No. 1800, repetition of the collocation 'a-LAY-ya [but twice combined with K'AL]). The collocation **ji-chi** (or **ji/yi?-CHIJ**) may lead to the item *jich* (*yich?*), which within the context of this note I leave without a translation. Also the upper rim text on Kerr No. 7447 provides a continuous repetition of a hieroglyphic collocation of which the individual signs can not be identified with certainty. The rim text on Kerr No. 8457 will be discussed below in more detail.

Kerr No. 0717 contains a complex visual narrative which is set within the interior of a court or palace. A vertically arranged hieroglyphic text divides the narrative in two sections. On the right, on an elevated bench or dias an anthropomorphic being is seated. His complex headdress identifies him as a scribe, painter, and artisan. Attached to the mainly white headdress one can find a package or bundle of thin and long rods; this is probably a bundle of quills (or feather pens) which were employed in the act of writing and painting. A large and prominent water lily is attached to this bundle. His body is painted in red, while on his face a descending row of four black dots can be found. He has a human eye (gods would have large, squarish eyes). His upper left leg and arm are marked by so-called god-markings that identify beings and entities of supernatural stature (Coe 1977: 336). He wears a jeweled skirt common to the Classic Maize God. Behind him (actually on his right side) one can find a large cushion, while in front of him part of his loincloth is visible. Below him, next to the bench or dias on which he is seated, one can find a bowl-like vessel containing a fermented and foaming beverage. The body of the vessel is marked with the syllabic sign **chi**, a spelling indicative of the word *chih* "pulque (fermented agave drink)". Next to the bowl-like vessel one can find a large calendrical reference to 8 Ajaw. This 8 Ajaw may refer to the last day of a *winal* (20-day period), a *tun* (a 360-day period), or a *k'atun* (a 7,200 day period), as each of these periods terminate on a day named Ajaw.³ Without any other calendrical information it is difficult to ascertain which period is meant. However, a series of altars, for instance, at Toniná (e.g. Monuments 16, 34, 110) and Caracol (e.g. Altar 1, Altar 3, Altar 4) refers to Ajaw dates that are clearly the end of a *k'atun* period or a half-period (midway a *k'atun* period). Perhaps this also the case here.

On the left of the vertically arranged hieroglyphic text the court or palace scene continues. On ground level one can find a seated anthropomorphic being with the head (mask?) of a vulture (note the **ti** sign on its beak) (Coe 1977: 336, Kettunen 2005: 146-147). In his right hand he holds a writing implement which hovers above an ink container placed upon a jaguar skin-covered Classic Maya screenfold book. His headdress identifies him as a scribe, painter, and artisan. A cloth bundle is placed on the left of the screenfold book; a hieroglyphic collocation is written on this bundle. This collocation clearly opens with the numeral 1 (*jun*) and is possibly followed by 'a-T528-wa?.⁴ A level higher an elevated bench or dias can be found on which an an-

³ Ajaw is the twentieth day sign in the Classic Maya calendar. As all periods that are contained in the Long Count are multiples of twenty, the last day of each period (*winal/winik*, *tun/hab'*, *k'atun/winikhab'*, *b'ak'tun/pik*, etc.) always is Ajaw.

⁴ This collocation **1-'a-T528-wa?** is a variation of the glyphic collocation which can be found written three times on the back walls or columns, 'a-T528-wa?. As the example on the bundle opens with the numeral 1 (*jun*), it is probably identified either as the first in a series or perhaps indicates the amount of counted 'a-T528-wa? within the bundle. The correct spell-

thropomorphic being is seated. He wears a headdress similar to the vulture headed being, which identifies also him as a scribe, painter, and artisan. He has a human eye and on his face a descending row of four red dots can be found. He wears the same jeweled skirt as the supernatural being on the right. To honor his position as a scribe, painter, and artisan he holds an anthropomorphic mask or (carved) portrait head in his right hand, while in his left hand he holds a writing, painting, or carving implement. Behind his back one can find a small cushion; the squarish indentation on this cushion is reminiscent of the syllabic sign **po**, perhaps a hint at the word *pop* "mat", a sign of elevated status (Boot 2000, 2005b).

The whole court or palace scene is set against a black background. It is framed by two walls (which is only painted once on the vessel but included twice in the rollout photograph in Figure 1a). The walls (or perhaps columns) are marked by a collocation, of which the main sign can be identified as T528 **TUN** STONE, perhaps a hint at the material of which the walls (columns?) were made.⁵

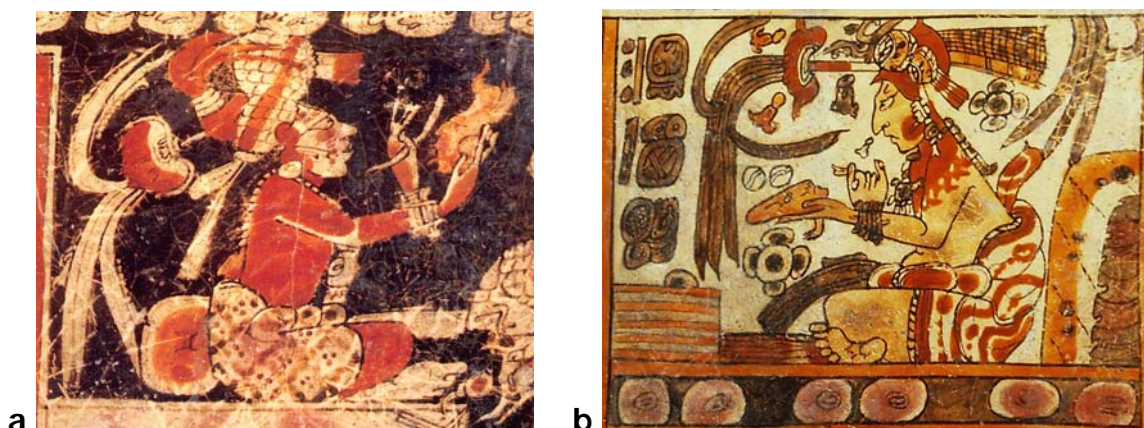


Figure 2: Comparison of a Scene from Both Vessels,
a) Kerr No. 0717, b) Kerr No. 7447 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

The visual narrative on Kerr No. 7447 is less complex. There are two panels that contain the same narrative. A table top bench, supported by two wedge-shaped legs, provides the elevation for an anthropomorphic being who wears the headdress of a scribe, painter, and artisan.⁶ Attached to the front of the headdress is a large water lily. He has a human eye. He is seated cross-legged and in his left hand he holds a

ing may actually be 'a-T528-la? ('a-ku-la?, or *akul* "turtle"; note *aktun* "cave (literally "turtle stone").

⁵ The T528 main sign is prefixed and postfixed, the whole of which can be tentatively transcribed as 'a-T528-wa?. The T528 main sign may indeed refer to **TUN** STONE, but this leaves the other two sign unexplained. Virginia Fields read these collocations as «*ah-cauac-wa*» (Fields, in Reents-Budet 1994: 315). Also see note 4.

⁶ The variety of headdresses worn by scribes, painters, and artisans has a specific distribution in which conflated headdresses only rarely occur. The range of these different headdresses is the subject of a future note.

mask or (carved) portrait head. The right hand makes a rare gesture (meaning unknown). In front of the anthropomorphic being a stack of layered flat objects can be found, probably a depiction of a Classic Maya screenfold book. Behind him a large cushion can be found; between the legs of the table top bench a large bundle can be identified. Each table top bench is framed between two walls or columns.

The two narrative panels on Kerr No. 7447 provide a clear visual parallel to one of the scenes from the visual narrative on Kerr No. 0717 (Figure 2). The actual parallel between these two vessels is even closer. The most prominent text on Kerr No. 0717 is the large vertically arranged text that consists of a single column containing 5 hieroglyphic collocations. This text opens with a Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh.⁷ It is followed by a verbal expression consisting of four signs. Each panel on Kerr No. 7447 is associated with a single column text that contains three collocations. These texts open with the Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh and this date is followed by a verbal expression that consists of three signs.

There is a yet a third vessel. Along the upper rim of Kerr No. 8457 an extended version of the SDF on ceramics can be found. This text can be transcribed and transliterated as 'a-LAY? ?-yi tz'i-b'i na-ja yu-k'i-b'i [...] ka-wa [i]tz'a-ti K'AYOM [i]tz'a-ti 'a-'AJAW? 'a-? or *alay CVC-Vy tz'ib'naj yuk'ib' [...] (ka)kaw itz'at k'ayom itz'at ajaw(?) a(j ?)* "here it (is/was dedicated), written it is/was, (it is) the drink-instrument (for?) cacao of Itz'at K'ayom Itz'at Ajaw(?) A(j ?)".⁸ The owner or patron of the vessel is identified as Itz'at K'ayom "Sage Singer" and Itz'at Ajaw(?) "Sage King".

Kerr No. 8457 presents a complex visual narrative, of which only part has survived. It presents a very similar court or palace scene to Kerr No. 0717. The visual narrative is divided by a double column hieroglyphic text. The scene on the right illustrates an anthropomorphic being seated on a table top bench, supported by two legs. The table top bench is colored black and is marked by stone signs and depictions of a woven mat, possibly indicative of *pop* "mat", a sign of elevated status. The anthropomorphic being has an elaborate headdress indicative of scribes, painters, and artisans. He has human eyes. His right arm is extended forward and in his right hand he holds a mask or (carved) portrait head. The scene on the left illustrates another table

⁷ The Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh is a "normal" date that exists in "real" time. The day Manik' combines which each month as long as the coefficients are 0, 5, 10, or 15. The Classic Maya rendition of the Calendar Round date may have been 7 Chij 5 Ik'atil. The seventh day sign Manik' (colonial Yucatec calendar) was more than probably Chij ("Deer") in the Classic Maya calendar, based on the fact that the T671 HAND has the value **chi** and that there at least two examples on Site Q/La Corona panels that have DEER.HEAD **CHI** as the seventh day sign. Other important Mesoamerican calendars do have "Deer" as the seventh day sign (e.g. Mixtec and Aztec calendars). The month name is here spelled 'IK'['AT]-li for Ik'atil. The final -// suffix may seem aberrant, but note also the rare spelling **pa-xi-la** for the month name Paxil (Kerr No. 1813) instead of the more common Pax.

⁸ The abbreviation CVC refers to a root formed as Consonant-Vowel-Consonant; as such V refers to Vowel. The identification of the **K'AYOM** logograph is tentative, but it has all the hallmarks of the logographic sign as previously identified by Houston (2002: 54-55). The main sign of the last collocation seems to show characteristics of the El Perú "Emblem Glyph" and may be a title of provenience.

top bench, supported by two legs. Also this bench is colored black and is marked by stone signs and depictions of a woven mat, again a sign of elevated status. The table top bench supports two anthropomorphic beings. The one on the left is seated cross-legged and his head seems to be shaped as a corn husk, while a typical personified jewel is attached to the front of his head. These particular characteristics identify this being as a manifestation of the Classic Maya Maize God.⁹ In his right hand he holds a mask or (carved) portrait head. The being on the right has an anthropomorphic body, but his head is that of a howler monkey. He wears the headdress common to scribes, painters, and artisans. This is a manifestation of the Monkey Scribe as identified by Coe (1977). In his right hand he holds a mask or (carved) portrait head. In his left hand he holds a painting or carving implement; it is slightly bent, which may be due to the pressure admitted. The whole visual narrative is set between two walls (only depicted once on the vessel, but contained twice in the rollout in Figure 1c), which are marked by the same collocation as on Kerr No. 0717, now written 'a-T528.

The visual narrative on Kerr No. 8457 clearly provides a parallel to Kerr Nos. 0717 and 7447. This parallel also extends to the double column hieroglyphic text that separates the two scenes within the visual narrative on Kerr No. 8457. This text opens with a Calendar Round date which is recorded as 6 Manik' 5 Woh, while the verbal expression following the Calendar Round date consists of four signs (Figure 3). As the other two vessels provide the Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh, I suggest to correct the date on Kerr No. 8457.



Figure 3: The Calendar Round Date 7 Manik' 5 Woh and Associated Event, a) Kerr No. 0717, b) Kerr No. 7447 (Panel 1), c) Kerr No. 7447 (Panel 2), d) Kerr No. 8457 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

⁹ It would not be strange to encounter the Maize God as a scribe, painter, and artisan. The best known illustration of the Classic Maya Maize God in the act of writing and painting can be found on the cover of "The Maya Book of the Dead: The Ceramic Codex" (Robicsek and Hales 1981: cover, Vessel 69) and page wide published in "Planting the Maya Universe" (Reents-Budet 1994: Figure 2.2) (MS0347/Kerr No. 1185). Also see for instance Kerr Nos. 1257, 1523, 1565, and 5824.

As the Calendar Round date is the same on all three vessels (but reconstructed in one case), as well as the contents of the visual narratives on all three vessels, could the verbal expression also refer to the same action or event?

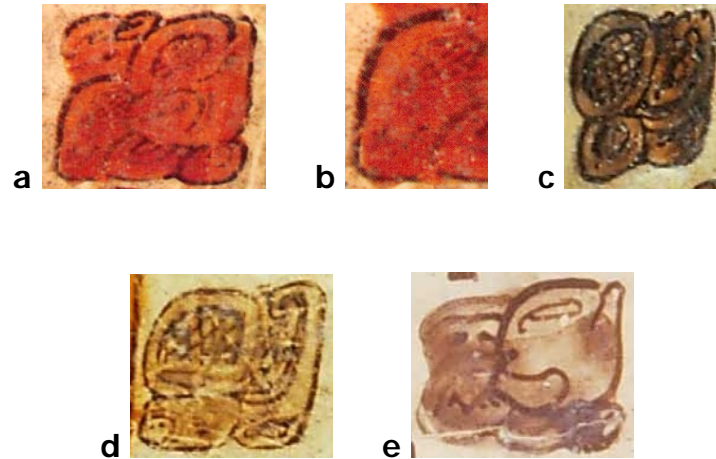


Figure 4: Details of the Event on Kerr Nos. 0717 and 7447, a) Kerr No. 0717, b) Detail of Sign on Lower Left of Kerr No. 0717, c) Kerr No. 7447 (Panel 1 text), d) Kerr No. 7447 (Panel 2 text), e) Kerr No. 8457 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

Figure 4 provides the details of each of the four verbal expressions. The verb on Kerr No. 0717 seems to be spelled **?-pa-k'a?-wa** (note detail of **pa** in Figure 4b), while the verbs on Kerr No. 7447 spell **pa-?-ja**.¹⁰ The spelling on Kerr No. 8457 can be transcribed as **'u-pa?-k'a-wa**, as the **pa?** sign is less clear. Spellings that end in **-wa** and **-ja** are indicative of the fact that possibly a (root) transitive verb is involved, twice recorded in the active voice (Kerr Nos. 0717 and 8457) and twice in the passive voice (Kerr No. 7447). That would explain the endings in **-aw** (active voice) and **-aj** (passive voice). The passive voice does not necessitate an ergative pronoun, while the active voice does. If correctly deduced, the unknown sign on Kerr No. 0717 may be a variant of the sign for **'u**. The complete spelling would thus be **'u-pa-k'a-wa** on Kerr No. 0717 versus **pa-?-ja** on Kerr No. 7447. The spelling **'u-pa?-k'a-wa** on Kerr No. 8457 confirms both the identification of the **'u** and the **k'a** sign on Kerr No. 0717, while Kerr No. 0717 confirms the **pa** sign on Kerr No. 8457. As the same event is depicted on all three vessels as well as the same date probably also the same verb is recorded. The unknown sign on Kerr No. 7447 may be a variant of **k'a**. Note as such the detail of the **k'a** sign in Figure 4d (Kerr No. 7447, Panel 2) with the lower half of the **k'a** sign in Figure 4a (Kerr No. 0717).

¹⁰ In an e-mail to Harri Kettunen (dated february 5, 2005), Justin Kerr noted that Kerr No. 7447 had suffered a fair bit of repainting (Kettunen, personal communication via e-mail, January 8, 2006). As such the identification of the verbal expression on Kerr No. 7447 remains tentative. For a different interpretation of the verbal expression on Kerr No. 7447 (without the benefit of Kerr Nos. 0717 and 8457) and a detailed iconographic analysis, see Kettunen 2005: 263-267.

Thus Kerr Nos. 0717 and 8457 record the verbal expression **'u-pa-k'a-wa** for *u-pak'aw* (the active voice of the verb *pak'*), while Kerr No. 7447 records the verbal expression **pa-k'a-ja** for *pak'aj* (*pa[h]k'aj*, the passive voice of the verb *pak'*). The verb root *pak'* has the following meanings in Yucatec Maya, Ch'ol, Ch'oltí', and Ch'ortí' (spellings of Maya words as in source cited):

Yucatec	<i>pak'</i>	"to unite, to piece together; to make a wall; to shape by hand; to place a pole in the ground" (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1980: 623-625)
Ch'ol	<i>pajc'</i> <i>pak'</i> <i>pajk'</i>	"pared de barro" (Aulie and Aulie 1978: 91) "sembrar, siembra" "pared" (Schumann 1973: 90)
Ch'oltí'	<i>paclum</i> [pak'lum] <i>pacte</i> [pak'te'] <i>pacbil</i> [pak'b'il]	"bajareque, casa de lodo y cañas" "congregar gente" "cosa q. se siembra" (Morán 1935 [1695]; also see Boot 2004b: 13, 16, 17)
Ch'ortí'	<i>pak'i</i> <i>pak'i</i> <i>pahk'</i> <i>pahk'ib</i> <i>pak'</i> <i>pak'i</i> <i>pak'mah</i> <i>pak'bil</i>	"plant" (Hull 2004: 92) "sembrar" (Wichmann 1999: 22) "shaped or molded object; shape; form" "shaping instrument, mason's trowel" (Wisdom 1950: 554) "hand-shaping, and shaped or molded object" "shape (with hands), mold, arrange things in proper order" "shape, mold" "shaped by hand, arranged by hand" (Wisdom 1950: 556)

Specifically the entries in Ch'ortí' make the most sense in the present context: *pahk'* "shaped or molded object; shape, form", *pak'* "hand-shaping", and *pak'i* "shape (with hands), mold". This particular meaning is also conveyed in one of the entries from Yucatec Maya ("to shape by hand", based on the entry *pak'ach* "hacer tortillas de maiz [...], entre las manos"). If this particular meaning is extended to the transliterations as suggested above, *upak'aw* in the active voice would mean "he shapes/shaped (it)" while *pak'aj* (*pa[h]k'aj*) in the passive voice would mean "(it) is/was shaped".¹¹ These paraphrases describe the action as recorded in the visual narrative very well indeed.

¹¹ Most problematic is the interpretation of tense and aspect within Classic Maya verb conjugations: Does a verb refer to an action performed in the past or the present and what aspect does it carry? I take a Calendar Round date in any hieroglyphic text to function as an tempo-

The text on Kerr No. 0717 continues with two collocations. The first collocation can be transcribed **6[li]-YAX-WINIK** (a **-li** sign is infixed into the five bar) (Figure 5a). This collocation would provide the name of the one who performs the action described by the expression *upak'aw* "he shapes/shaped (it)". It would thus be the name of the anthropomorphic being seated on the elevated bench or dias on the left side of the court or palace scene, holding the mask or (carved) head in his hand. That **6[li]-YAX-WINIK** indeed refers to this individual is confirmed through the occurrence of the same name or nominal phrase in the second panel on Kerr No. 7747 (Figure 5b). Albeit only faintly visible, an elongated **-li** seems to be infixed into the five bar, while some less frequent details are visible in the **YAX** and **WINIK** signs (see note 10). In the second panel this nominal phrase is directly associated with the seated figure. As shown in Figure 2, these are the same individuals.



Figure 5: The Nominal Phrase **6[li]-YAX-WINIK**, a) Kerr No. 0717, b) Kerr No. 7447, c) Kerr No. 8457 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

Kerr No. 8457 confirms the correctness of the identification of the numeral as "six", as in this text the five bar is clearly recognizable, while the **-li** sign has been infixed into the five bar.¹² The nominal phrase identifies the anthropomorphic being with descending row of four red dots on Kerr No. 0717 as *Wakil Yax Winik*: six or sixth (*wakil, wak* "six" plus *-il* suffix), first or primeval (*yax*) human or man (*winik*). The nominal *Wakil Yax Winik* thus also identifies the individual being as depicted twice on Kerr No. 7447 and it identifies the anthropomorphic being as seated on the right on Kerr No. 8457. The last part of his nominal phrase as *winik* "(hu)man" is confirmed through the fact that these anthropomorphic beings have no so-called god-eyes.¹³ The collocation **6[li]-YAX-WINIK** can also be found in the Postclassic Maya screen-fold books (Prager, personal communication via e-mail, January 4, 2006) (Figure 6).

ral adverb, as such placing in the past any action as described by a verb unless a Distance Number carries the action to the future (compare to Houston 1997, Wald 2000).

¹² It is not strange to have an *-il* suffix on a numeral coefficient. Regularly examples of numeral coefficients infixed with an **-li** suffix can be found (e.g. Naranjo Stela 20: A1, Naranjo Stela 22: E9). This particular *-il* suffix can also be found on numeral coefficients as employed in the Books of Chilam Balam (e.g. Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, *kab'il ajaw* for 2 Ajaw, *ho'il kawak* for 5 Kawak, *waxakil ik'* for 8 Ik').

¹³ Why and how gods and human beings have different eye visions is explained in a short story of Lacandón origin (Bruce 1974: 128-132). This difference in eye vision may explain the difference between god-eyes (large, squarish eyes) and human eyes (small, squinty eyes) in Classic Maya iconography.

In the Codex Dresden this nominal phrase identifies a supernatural entity that occurs in a passage in the Venus pages.¹⁴ The example in the Codex Paris is more difficult to place in context. Most importantly, the occurrence of the nominal phrase in the Venus pages confirms the supernatural stature of the entity as named and portrayed on Kerr Nos. 0717, 7447 (Prager, personal communication via e-mail, January 4, 2006), and 8457. More importantly, the entity as depicted on Kerr Nos. 0717 and 7447 thus provides a Classic period antecedent of a supernatural entity previously only known from the Postclassic Maya screenfold books.



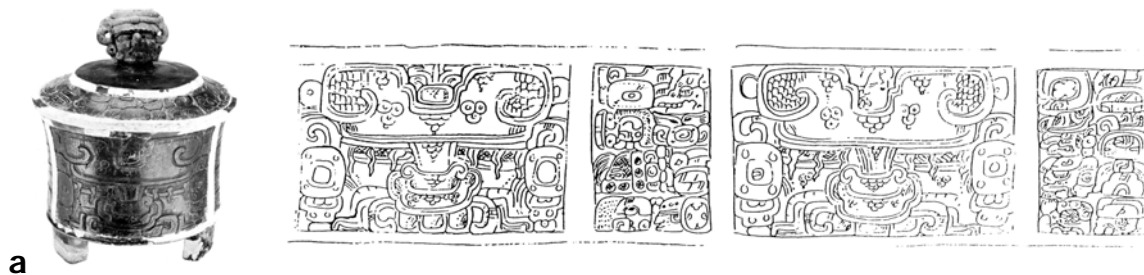
Figure 6: The Nominal Phrase **6-li-YAX-WINIK** in the Postclassic Maya Screenfold Books, a) Codex Dresden Page 49, b) Codex Paris Page 21 (scanned by the author after Lee 1985)

The text on Kerr No. 0717 ends with the spelling '**UH-ti-ya** for *uhtiy* (or perhaps simply *utiy*) "(it) happened (at)", but the name of the location where the event described earlier (*upak'aw*) occurs is not provided. The two short texts on Kerr No. 7447 end after the verbal expression *pak'aj*. However, the hieroglyphic text on Kerr No. 8457 not only has the glyphic expression '**UH-ti-ya** for *uhtiy* (or *utiy*) "(it) happened (at)", it also has the name of the location (Figure 7).

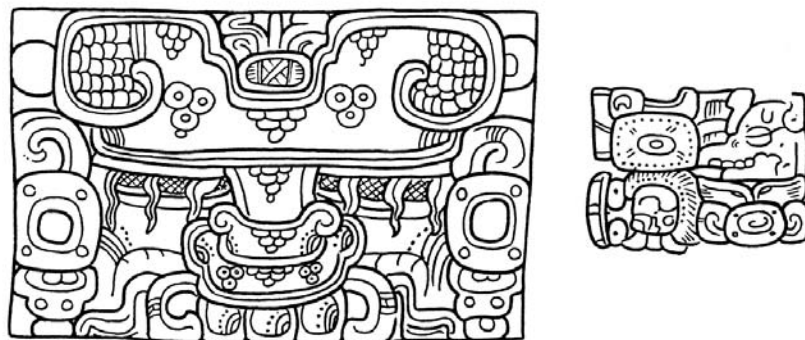


Figure 7: The Location as mentioned on Kerr No. 8457 (photographs by Justin Kerr)

¹⁴ Note that in the example in the Codex Dresden the **-li** sign is separate from the coefficient **6-** or *wak*. This is also the case in the example from the Codex Paris, but there the **-li** sign has no inner detail.



a



b

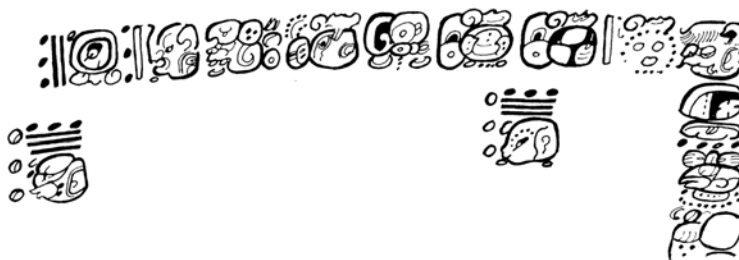


Figure 8: The Location Five Flower Place, a) Early Classic Teotihuacan-style Lidded Incised Tripod Vessel (after *Art de Mesoamérique* 1976: Plate 194, line drawing by Lin Crocker, & Stuart and Houston 1994: Figure 93), b) Late Classic Codex Style Plate (after Kerr No. 1609, Schele and Miller 1986: Plate 122b & Stuart and Houston 1994: Figure 86a)

The name of the location on Kerr No. 8457 can be transcribed **5-FLOWER-NAL**. The FLOWER main sign may have the logographic value **JAN**,¹⁵ but as there is no definitive decipherment of this sign I paraphrase the location simply as Five (*jo'*) Flower (*jan?*) Place (*nal*). One may conclude that the visual narratives as illustrated on the three vessels thus happened at a place named Five Flower Place. This particular place name is mentioned on other Classic Maya vessels (Figure 8).¹⁶

The Early Classic tripod vessel illustrated in Figure 8a contains a hieroglyphic text on both the lid and the body of the vessel. The opening section of the text on the body of the vessel can be transcribed **5-FLOWER-NAL CH'EN 'u-[K'UH]K'AB'A'-b'a yu-k'i-b'i** [...] and transliterated as *jo' "flower" nal ch'en u-(k'uhul-)k'ab'a' yuk'ib' [...]* for "Five Flower Place Cave is the (divine) name of the drink-instrument [...]".¹⁷ The body of the vessel depicts the location Five Flower Place twice as a giant personified mountain, marked by stone signs. In the crack of the personified mountain once a fire stack may be depicted, once the head of a young male entity.¹⁸

The Late Classic Codex Style plate in Figure 8b (also known as The Cosmic Plate) depicts a water band from which rises or emerges a manifestation of the Rain God, here possibly named Chak Xib' Chak (Schele and Miller 1986: 311). The hieroglyphic text as written above the central visual narrative opens with a Calendar Round date of 13 Ok 8 Sotz',¹⁹ followed by the expression **'UH-ti-ya** for *utiy* (or *utiy*) "(it) happened (at)" and the name of the location which can be nick-named Split Earth (**K'UH-SPLIT.EARTH**). A second *utiy* expression (written **?-'u-ti-ya**) for "(it) happened at" introduces the name of another location which ends in **5-FLOWER-NAL CHAN CH'EN-na** or Five Flower Place Sky-and-Cave (see note 17). However, the name of the location is extended by two other locations names, the

¹⁵ In Ch'ol de Tumbala one can find the entry *jan* "flor de maíz" (Aulie and Aulie 1977: 62), in Ch'olti' one can find the entry "flor de la milpa *har*" (Morán 1935 [1695]; see Boot 2004: 24). Also note the Ch'orti' entry *unichir e a'n* "flower of young maize" (Wisdom 1950: 541), which does not employ the common referent for maize, *nar*. *A'n* in this entry is the "green ear of corn" (Hull 2004: 6).

¹⁶ This location is also mentioned in monumental inscriptions, for instance at Copán (Temple 22a, West Façade & Stela C: A10-B10) (Stuart and Houston 1994: Figure 92b-c) and Quiriguá (Stela A: West, D4, importantly incorporating the prefix **'IK'** BLACK) (Schele and Grube 1990: Figure 16).

¹⁷ The part **CH'EN** is here translated "cave"; it is part of a metaphorical expression *chanch'en* with a more general meaning of "community", which contains the parts *chan* "sky" and *ch'en* "cave" (compare to Stuart and Houston 1994). Possibly the collocation **'u-[K'UH]K'AB'A'-b'a** has to be simply transcribed **'u-K'AB'A'-b'a** as the **K'UH** sign may be part of the logogram **K'AB'A'**.

¹⁸ This young male head may be of the emerging Maize God from the Mountain of Sustenance (Five Flower Place). It would take too much space to provide all information leading up to this tentative conclusion.

¹⁹ The calendar Round date 13 Ok 8 Sotz' is also a "normal" date that exists in "real" time. It occurs every 52 years. The day name Ok can be combined with any month name as long as the coefficients are 3, 8, 13, or 18. Possibly in the Classic Maya period this Calendar Round date would have been read as 13 Tz'i' 8 Sutz', based on the more common word *tz'i'* for "dog" and the spelling of the month name as **su-SUTZ'** (or **su-BAT.HEAD**; Toniná site museum, ceramic sherd) and **su-tz'i** (St. Louis Art Museum, column of unknown provenance).

first of which may be transcribed as 'IK'-WAY?-NAL-**la**²⁰ and the second as 'IK'-NAB'-NAL for Ik' Waynal and Ik' Nab'nal. Most importantly, note that both these location names open with *ik'*, the Classic Maya word for "black" (compare to Kaufman 2003: 231, Greater Tzeltalan *7ihk'*, Western Mayan *7ihq'* "black"). The adjective *ik'* "black" as used in these complementary place names to Five Flower Place may not be accidental. Albeit tentative, this adjective *ik'* may explain the black background on Kerr No. 0717 and the black color of the thrones on Kerr No. 8457.

The text on Kerr No. 8457 is the most elaborate as it contains the Calendar Round date (6 corrected to 7 Manik' 5 Woh), the verbal expression (*upak'aw*), the name of the agent (Wakil Yax Winik), and the name of the location where it all happened (Five Flower Place). The other vessels do not only abbreviate their hieroglyphic commentary or explanatory texts, these vessels also abbreviate their visual narratives. The text on Kerr No. 0717 ends after *uhtiy* (or *utiy*) "(it) happened (at)". This seems to suggest that the observer of the visual narrative, being familiar with both the contents of the narrative as well as the iconographic characteristics of the location as illustrated can identify this location as Five Flower Place. The text and visual narrative on Kerr No. 7447 are even more abbreviated. On this vessel the hieroglyphic commentary text is reduced to the Calendar Round date and the verbal expression, while the visual narrative is now limited to the portrayal of only one anthropomorphic being holding a mask or (carved) portrait head. In only one of the panels his nominal phrase Wakil Yax Winik is included. This process of textual and visual abbreviation is clearly notable in these three Late Classic Maya examples, however this process of abbreviation can be observed in other complex visual narratives as well.²¹

The text on Kerr No. 8457 continues with further collocations. The collocation after Five Flower Place may have been a reference to *ch'en* "cave", as on the Early Classic lidded vessel. The next collocation seems to be a variant of the "Initial Sign" *alay* "here" as commonly employed in the SDF and which can introduce an important new segment of a text. However, this is only tentative as the remainder of the hieroglyphic text is lost.

Based on the above elaborate discussion of text and image also one other Classic Maya ceramic can be related to this complex visual narrative. This vessels features several anthropomorphic beings in the process of shaping a mask or portrait head (Figure 9).

²⁰ It was Barbara MacLeod who already in 1989 suggested a value **WAY** for the main sign, a stylized depiction of the opened centipede jaws of the Underworld. This value has been doubted in more recent epigraphic research, but based on a specific spelling in the Wayeb' month name spelled **WAY-ya-HAB'** (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, La Mar Stela 3) I support MacLeod's 1989 reading.

²¹ Kerr No. 0631 contains a complex visual narrative. The left hand scene includes God L seated in front of God K as well as three other anthropomorphic characters within a court or palace setting, while the right hand scene illustrates a maize tree bearing cacao pods and a male dancer wearing a macaw headdress. This particular visual narrative can be fully abbreviated to the pairing of God L seated in front of God K, a common theme of a large selection of small bottles that may have contained pigments (e.g. Reents-Budet 1994: Figure 5.54) (Boot n.d.).



Figure 9: Kerr No. 1522
(rollout photograph by Justin Kerr)

The visual narrative on this ceramic vessel consists of three panels in which three different anthropomorphic characters are portrayed. All three wear the headdress of scribes, painters, and artisans. In the left hand panel one can identify a vulture scribe, with in front of him a jaguar-skin covered screenfold book and in his right hand a mask or (carved) portrait head. The vulture scribe, painter and artisan can be found on Kerr No. 0717. In the center panel the anthropomorphic character holds nothing in his hands, while in the right hand panel the artisan has a monkey face and holds a mask or (carved) portrait head in his left hand. A monkey faced scribe, painter, and artisan can be found on Kerr No. 8457. The hand gesture as made in the center and right hand panel on Kerr No. 1522 is very close to the hand gesture as employed in the two panels on Kerr No. 7447. Although there is no direct interaction between the characters nor a hieroglyphic commentary or explanatory text (the text around the rim is the SDF on ceramics in a local variant), their identity and the actions in which they are involved suggest to me that this narrative is related to the visual narratives as illustrated on Kerr Nos. 0717, 7447, and 8457.

Final Remarks

This note sought an answer to the question “What Happened on the Date 7 Manik’ 5 Woh?”. Three Late Classic Maya ceramic vessels provided this date (of which one date was reconstructed, as it recorded the date as 6 Manik’ 5 Woh) and parallel visual narratives. The verbal expressions associated with the date 7 Manik’ 5 Woh provided both the active voice (*upak’aw*) and the passive voice (*pak’aj*) of the transitive verb *pak’-*, which can be translated as “to shape, to form”.²² This verb adequately describes the action performed in the visual narratives on Kerr Nos. 0717, 7447, and 8457. To the Classic Maya the shaping and forming action as performed by Wakil Yax

²² The root *pak’-* is also recorded in other hieroglyphic texts. Note for instance the spelling *pak’jiy* (spelled **pa-k’a-ji-ya**) with the possible meaning “was shaped (long ago)” at Copán (Hieroglyphic Stairway) (Boot 2004a: 7) or *upak’aj* with the possible meaning “he plants/planted” in the Codex Madrid (Page 106, spelled **’u-pa-k’a**) and Codex Dresden (Page 15, spelled **’u-pa-k’a-ja**).

Winik was very important as it is illustrated three times within the present corpus of Classic Maya ceramics.²³

Now, when did this Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh take place? Virginia Fields suggests two calendrical placements in historical time, namely in A.D. 694 and A.D. 746 (Fields, in Reents-Budet 1994: 315). I doubt the correctness of these calendrical placements, as the date 7 Manik' 5 Woh may well have passed before or close to the present Maya creation at 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'uh.²⁴ This I base on the presence of the anthropomorphic being seated on a bench or dias on the right side of the court or palace scene on Kerr No. 0717. His body is marked by so-called god-markings. The anthropomorphic being that produces the mask or (carved) portrait head may be a supernatural entity whose nominal phrase is written in the texts on Kerr No. 0717 and Kerr No. 8457 as **6[li]-YAX-WINIK** or Wakil Yax Winik. It is also included in the second panel on Kerr No. 7447. The supernatural status of Wakil Yax Winik may be indicated through the descending row of four dots on his face, which he shares with the figure with the god-markings on Kerr No. 0717. His supernatural status can be confirmed through the fact that the name of the location where it all happened is Five Flower Place, a mythological location mentioned on Kerr No. 8457 and other ceramics. Wakil Yax Winik performs his action at this location. His supernatural status is further confirmed through the fact that the nominal phrase Wakil Yax Winik is mentioned in a passage from the Venus pages in the Codex Dresden. Also the fact that the Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh is shared by three Late Classic Maya ceramic vessels painted in three different regional traditions or styles contributes to this assessment. Only on rare occasions a historical Calendar Round date is shared between sites or regional traditions, and when a date is shared between different regions the context seems to be mythological. This observation may be strengthened through the fact that other black background vessels (e.g. Kerr Nos. 0688, 1184) depict visual narratives set in mythological time and at mythological locations.²⁵

²³ How this event and agent can be related to the very complex and elaborate Classic Maya perception of the creation of the world and of man will be subject of a future study. As Ketunen (personal communication via e-mail, January 9, 2006), at this early stage of research I am quite hesitant to make a or any direct connection to the "shaping" and "forming" events as detailed in the colonial K'iché' epos the "Popol Wuj".

²⁴ The Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh occurs every 52 years in an ever repeating cycle. If the 8 Ajaw as integrated into the narrative of Kerr No. 0717 is taken into account one may suggest that the date 7 Manik' 5 Woh could fall in a *k'atun* that ends on the day 8 Ajaw in mythological time close to 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'uh. However, the first possibility is at 8.18.18.16.7, 7 Manik' 5 Woh (Old Era) (4712 B.C.) and consecutive periods of 52 years earlier.

²⁵ A longer list of visual narratives with a black background includes Kerr Nos. 0688, 1184, 1377, 1742, 1873, 3796, 3422, 7750 (only half of the narrative), and 8233. The black background of these vessels may also be a part of the actual name of the location where the event takes place. The black background on Kerr Nos. 2796 and 7750 may refer to the location Ik' U(?) Tan ('**IK'**-'**u?**-**TAN-na**) as contained in the explanatory texts to the visual narratives on these vessels. The date associated with the event is 13.0.0.0.0, 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'uh.

To conclude this note, on the Calendar Round date 7 Manik' 5 Woh a mask or (carved) head was shaped or formed by the anthropomorphic being depicted on Kerr Nos. 0717, 7447, and 8457. This was not a historical date, but probably one placed in mythological time. The action as illustrated in the visual narratives is included in the hieroglyphic texts and employs the transitive verb *pak'*- "to shape, to form". Future research on both the iconographic and epigraphic details discussed in this essay may verify or falsify the present conclusions.

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