

## A PAINTED CAPSTONE FROM THE MAYA AREA

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### Introduction

Mesoamerican archaeology is in an exciting period of synthesis, in which many scholars are making attempts to understand their particular areas or sites as parts of the complex development of civilization in the Americas. The spirit of synthesis has often re-exposed the shakiness of the scaffolding on which some of the most trusted chronologies are based. One of the frustrating chronological controversies at present is that of the architectural styles of the Yucatan Peninsula, with its strongly regional nature and its apparently sudden changes and abandonments. Attempts have seemed to fail so far to reconcile differences of viewpoint in such major matters as the correlation of the Northern and Southern Maya Lowland sequences (see Willey and Shimkin 1973: 471- 473 for a recent statement), and even the basic outline of the architectural sequence at Chichen Itza (Parsons 1969: 172-184).

The present paper is written for two purposes. The first is to illustrate and describe a hitherto unpublished painted Maya capstone from the peninsula and present a reading of its inscription. The second is to review our knowledge about capstone dates and scenes in the belief that these small paintings can contribute toward a resolution of some of the above-mentioned controversies, as well as toward a better understanding of the complex religious beliefs of the area.

### The University Museum Capstone: The Artifact

William R. Coe, curator of the American Section of the University Museum, has kindly furnished the following comments upon the physical appearance of the University Museum Capstone as well as a photograph (Plate 1), a drawing of the painted scene (Figure 1), and a drawing of the capstone as an object (Figure 2).

"In 1965 the University Museum received as a gift an intricately painted slab of limestone. It was accompanied by the most vague attribution of 'Yucatan.' There is no reason to doubt that this object originally functioned as a capstone, that is, one of a series of the horizontally, transversely set stones forming the ceiling of corbel-vaulted chambers in Maya architecture.

"This capstone (Catalogue No. 65-44-1) is incomplete lengthwise, measuring 60 cm. Its intact width is 33 cm. Seen in terms of its painted surface, its bottom edge does seem to retain a short span of original surface. The space from this edge to the base of the painting is 19 cm. Doubling this and adding the length of the painting, i.e., 35.8 cm., we arrive at 74 cm. as the approximate original length of the capstone.

Traces of raised, secondarily applied plaster form a transverse line across the face of the stone at a point 7 cm. below the painting. This line should mark the uppermost edge of one vault face. If we double this gap and add again the length of the painting, the visible span of the stone installed was about 50 cm.

"Longitudinally, the face of the stone is essentially flat, but with a slight convexity side-to-side. The whole underside of the piece has been recently removed by a combination of round-chiseling from the sides and sawing. This has left not more than 5.5 cm. of the original thickness. The stone was anciently beveled from its face to its rear, buried in situ top. These sides were pecked, then rough-smoothed. Though we have little left with which to judge, its ends probably were flat rather than beveled.

"Turning to the painting, this was done on a thin (a matter of millimeters) hard smooth cream plaster that entirely sizes the face of the capstone. The poorly squared painting was executed in a red specular hematite paint. Two brushes appear to have been used, one 2 mm. wide and a second about 1 mm. wide. The smaller one was often used in a double-stroke fashion to achieve relatively wide lines. The immediately surrounding rectangular frame consists of outer and inner thin specular red lines that originally carried entirely across the face of the stone. These lines and the lateral edges of the stone bound the frame proper. This frame was painted a variably opaque orange-red rather than specular red. An important point is that three circular drops of orange-red occur within the line-work proper; in one case, the orange drop overlaps specular red. We can thus be fairly certain that the whole painting was carried out before the installation of the capstone, since the drops must have fallen downward.

"Following its placement across the gap of the vault, finger-daubed plaster was applied to the four visible peripheries of the face of the stone. This plaster survives today as low plaster lips along the sides and below the painted frame. The 'left' lip is very pronounced in its 'lift.' This lip clearly overlies the original edge of the specular red transverse outer frame line, again indicating that the painting preceded installation. Both left and right plaster lips were painted red-orange to match the coloring of the interior of the frame.

"The curvature of the left longitudinal lip of plaster might suggest that the capstone occurred at an end of a row of such stones but is more probably an indicative of an imperfect alignment to a neighboring capstone, since painted capstones were usually placed centrally above a doorway. The sectional conformation of right hand plaster does suggest that masons filled the interstice between this capstone and the adjacent one. What remains of this secondarily applied plaster is also painted orange-red. Presumably the application of color to these lateral lines of plaster was only carried as far as the sides of the stone proper. At issue here is whether the rest of the line of capstones and the vaults proper were painted orange-red as well. We can only note that the vestiges of transverse secondary plaster (below the frame) were left unpainted, a fact indicative of plain vault soffits.

"The ends of the stone appear to be old break-lines. The heavily faded area in the lower right quarter of the painting might be the result of water damage. Two deep and old-appearing nicks, each about 3.5 cm. long, occur on the painted face (Figure 1: at Glyph A2 and to the left of A4 and A5). These features indicate that the capstone was recovered from collapsed vault debris. To lighten the piece, the back of the stone was removed in the manner already indicated.

"The painting proper is primarily illustrated here (Figure 1) by blackened and stipple-shaded lines which follow the relative intensities of the surviving specular red paint. Broken-line restoration is used only in the case of Glyph A2. Water damage, as we have noted, probably accounts for the weakness of line work in the lower right of the panel. The inked rendering of the scene was traced on a full-scale photograph and then carefully checked against the original. Glyphic material has been referenced in the system of the Tikal Project. It is necessary to note that Glyph wA1 refers to the sign painted on the shoulder of the left personage; Glyph xA1 to that carried in his hands; and yA1 to the sign on which he directly sits. The 'planetary band' of the right 'bench' has not been labeled."

### The Scene and Glyphs

The scene on the University Museum Capstone depicts two figures in profile seated close to and facing one another. J. Eric Thompson, in a recent study of the Sacnicte capstone (1973: 60), has identified the left-hand figure here as the maize god (God E of Shellhas, 1904). The deity is depicted with his characteristically youthful face and maize headdress. The headdress, which Shellhas says is derived from an ear of maize, emerges from a "curved-line" glyph, 617 in Thompson's Catalog (1962) instead of the usual kan glyph (506) of the codex representations. Under the ear of corn, the god is wearing a tied cloth headband, the ends of which project forward in the same manner as on much Late Classic Maya pottery painting (cf. W.R. Coe 1967: 52). The feathers projecting out behind the sash are also arranged like Late Classic headdresses. The figure wears a flaring-edged "ear spool," wristlets made of beads, and a bead necklace. A small pendant on his necklace has the projecting nose of the rain god (God B) or the beak of the screech-owl, both of which occur as pendants at Tikal (cf. Tikal Stelae 5, 22, 16 and Temple IV Lintel 3).

The figure appears markedly hunchbacked, as indicated by the shortened torso, the strong curved line under the shoulder blade, and the excessive distance between the arm and backbone. In his recent study of the Sacnicte Capstone, Thompson (1973: 60-61) points out on that stone a hunchbacked dwarf facing another standing figure. He states that dwarfs and hunchbacked figures are associated with hallucinatory drugs and the resultant divine messages in Maya folklore. Such a context is in keeping with the glyphic message of abundant food (see below) which the figure holds up in his hands, but in this case, the hunchbacked figure is not a dwarf and seems to be the god himself presenting the message. Some of the gods on Chenes capstones have similarly protruding backs (see below).

Hunchbacks and dwarfs occur among the many figurines from the island of Jaina off the Campeche coast. Corson (1973: 60-61) notes that hunchbacks occur exclusively in Jaina I and dwarfs exclusively in Jaina II. Although time limits for the two periods were not offered in the cited paper, this observation does support the contention below that the University Museum Capstone is early in the Late Classic - Terminal Classic - Postclassic sequence of the western Yucatan.

The figure of the maize god wears a glyph on his shoulder (Glyph wA1 of Figure 1), a clear kan cross (281MS) surmounted by two bars and the visible traces of a centrally placed dot (see Table 1 for a listing of the glyphs on the capstone). The scrolls and a single dot on both sides of the glyph are probably not numerical. Thompson (1950: 276-277) thinks that the kan cross has the general meaning of "precious" as well as "yellow" and can be freely substituted for symbols for green, jade, shells, and completion in his "water group" of affixes. The number 11 above the glyph is represented at times in its head variant form by Thompson's God R. Thompson (1950: 131) says that "God R is benevolent, and his associations are with the maize god" and also that God R might be the god named Buluc-Ch'abtan in the colonial period Chumayel Manuscript. Roys (1933: 134) translates the name as "11 penances" or "11 times fortunate." On the capstone, the name would read, "11 precious things" or "11 yellow," both fitting names for the maize god. With such associations, the sign would be appropriate as a name for the maize god, written on his shoulder in the same way as names seem to be written on the skin of some figures on Late Classic monuments.

The glyph held in the hand of the left figure has been identified by Thompson (1973: 60) as cauil meaning "second helping" or "abundance of food" (Thompson 1968: 85-87). The glyph appears as an offering in the Maya codices in contexts of plenty, for example on Dresden Codex p. 27, where it is an offering in a ceremony of the new year.

The god is seated on a glyph or cushion decorated with the Maya day glyph Ik (503). The Ik sign is also used as a glyphic seat on a Late Classic plate from Tikal (W.R. Coe 1967: 104) and might have a glyphic meaning or might simply represent the manner in which some Maya bolsters were made. The jaguar-skin cushions below and in back of the figure are surprisingly similar in construction to a cushion on another vessel from Late Classic Tikal (W.R. Coe 1967: 52).

Attached to the front of the cushion is a profile human head decorated with three oval pendants in the Classic Maya manner.

The figure on the right side of the capstone scene has a grotesque face commonly found in Maya art. A long nose projects straight out from the face and curls up slightly at the end. The gaping mouth exposes a large curved front fang and a molar. The rounded lower jaw sports a tuft of beard. The eye is large and square, with the interior hooked line characteristic of sky deities. The front of the forehead is hollowed out as if pierced by a hole. Projecting from this is a long tubular object with two scrolls

<u>Glyph</u>	<u>Catalog Numbers</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
A1	IX.513:125 (reversed)	9 Muluc
A2	544?.116:142 (rev.)	<u>kin?</u> , wing, dots ("the day")
A3	XI.95.552 (coeff. rev.)	11 Uo
A4	1047a.126	death head, scrolls and dots
A5	? .682	eroded prefix, moon sign
B1	IX?.528?	9? (or 8, 13, 14?), haab? ("Tun 9 (10) ?")
C1	II?.533	2? (or 1, 3, 4, 5?), Ahau ("in Katun 2 Ahau ?")
vA1	I?.526?:23	1?, <u>Caban</u> , <u>al</u> ( <u>hun cabal</u> ?)
vB1	I?.508:23	1? <u>Chicchan</u> , <u>al</u> ( <u>hun canal</u> ?)
wA1	144.XI:281MS.144	11, kan, flanking scrolls ( <u>Buluc Kan</u> ?)
xA1	144:16.281MS	scrolls (or 1,2?), <u>yax</u> , <u>kan</u> ( <u>cauil</u> ?)
yA1	503?	<u>Ik</u> ? (or non-glyphic?)
zA1	526?:23	<u>Caban</u> , <u>al</u> ( <u>Cabal</u> ?)
zB1	I? .?:23	1?, ?, al (...al?)
zC1	I?.508:23	1?, <u>Chicchan</u> , <u>al</u> ( <u>hun canal</u> ?)

TABLE 1: Hieroglyphs on the University Museum Capstone

curving out of the end. A feather headdress, a tied bead with features, a bead necklace, beads or vertebrae showing on the back, and a loincloth and wide belt complete the costume.

The figure can be positively identified as that of Shellhas' God K, by the up-turned nose, the large squared eye, the fang, and especially by the object protruding from the forehead. In the codices, the figure of God K is always drawn with a huge branching and upturned nose, but, as Thompson (1970: 224) says: "In the codical glyph of God K, this branching nose is absent. Instead, there projects from the forehead a circular or wedge-shaped object from which, in turn, issues a double flame-like motif."

The nature of God K has apparently not been agreed upon by scholars. Thompson has said that he is a fertility god, as shown by the vegetal scrolls issuing from the hole in the forehead, and suggested by similarities to a god called Bolon Dzacab ("nine generations" or "eternal") who is described as seed in the Colonial Period books of Chilam Balam (Roys 1933: 99; Thompson 1972: 90). God K's fertility powers might have been extended at one time to human generation and the continuance of the Classic Period dynastic lineages as suggested by Michael Coe (1966: 153).

Thompson (1970: 224ff.) has also stated that God K is a manifestation of Itzam Na, the serpent who is both earth and sky together. This suggestion would fit well the similarity of representation of God K, God B (the rain god and sky serpent) and God D (Itzam No). In the codices, these three are drawn with the same hair or headdress, the same large squared eye and loop under the eye. Often the only differences exist in the shapes of the upper mouth.

Morley (1946: 229-230), following some earlier scholars, suggests that God K might be the wind god, Ehecatl, whose huge branching and upturned mask is worn by Quetzalcoatl in Aztec mythology. Morely points out that the Aztec Ehecatl sweeps the way for the rain god, and the Maya God K is pictorially similar to God B (the rain god) in the Maya codices. This is a complex subject, as can be observed by reading Thompson's recent attempt to understand Itzamna (1970) and Henry B. Nicholson's recent summary of the difficult Mexican pantheon (1971). Nevertheless, it would seem that God K is celestial rather than earthly, and associated with the weather or the stars.

The object protruding from the god's forehead is identified by Thompson as vegetation, but it looks more like a flaming torch. For comparison with a similar tubular object with volute scrolls, see the "cigar" or pipe smoked by the old man on the sanctuary of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque (Thompson 1970: Figure 1 after Maudslay) and examples from Uaxactun and the Codices Madrid and Dresden cited by Thompson (1970: 106-107). The torch and the wind are intimately connected in the cycle of traditional Maya agriculture. When the brush and trees have been felled and allowed to dry out during the spring, the Maya farmer must pick a day for the burning. This must be done with care; after the brush is dry but before the summer rains arrive. If burned too soon, weeds will choke the crops. Sometimes an offering of corn meal

is given to the wind before burning. At the moment of setting the torch to the piles of dried brush, the farmers whistle a special wind tune and shout for the winds to whirl up the flames and make an intense consuming fire (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 132-134; 118-119). Redfield and Villa Rojas note that the choosing of the day of burning and summoning of the winds is a cause of special anxiety in the modern Maya farmer. It is the only occasion mentioned in which the people of Chan Kom count the days in order to predict an event. Thus, in the context of the scene on the capstone, it would be very meaningful to portray the wind god face to face with the maize god.

God K on the capstone holds two objects in his hands, from which emerge long curving dotted scrolls decorated with intermittent clusters of short loops. These would appear to be maize ears and leaves, since they look like simplified versions of the maize god's headdress and also resemble the "maize affix" (84/85) (Thompson 1972: 151). However, the scrolls are also like the dotted scrolls (rain clouds?) which the gods ride on several Late Classic monuments (i.e. Ixlu Stelae 1 and 2; Greene 1972: Plate 170-171).

The figure of God K sits cross-legged on a rectilinear hard-surfaced "celestial throne," as Thompson (1972: 67) calls it. The throne is decorated along its borders with the "celestial band," which here contains cross-bands glyphs (552), kat, meaning "crossing, or celestial or sexual conjunction" (Thompson 1972: 48-49) and the curved-line glyph (24). The former sign is seen on the wide belt of God K. The latter is a common prefix to the glyphic names of the maize and death gods (Gods E and A) in the codices and occurs on the capstone painting on the headdress of the maize god and on the bodies of both figures.

Glyphs above the maize god (Figure 1: vA1 and vB1) and within the rectangle of the celestial throne (zA1, zB1, zC1) might serve to further identify the two deities. All the glyphs have the same partial cartouche as the identifiable day sign at A1. In addition, they carry the al (23) subfix. Four of them are prefixed by a dot and two scrolls which might represent the number one. Two of the signs are unmistakably the glyphs for the Maya day Chicchan (508) at vB1 and zC1. Two others (vA1 and zA1) are probably the day-signs for Caban (526) or possibly Cauac (528). In his study of the Dresden Codex, Thompson (1972: 152) translates the subfix al (23) as "in" or "at," as in the phrases ti caanal (59.561:23) "there on high," and u cabal (1.526:23) "his below." Along these lines, the glyphs on the capstone might refer to one or both of the deities in the painting, saying something like hun cabal "the one in the earth" (maize) and hun canal "the one in the heavens or in the sky serpent" (the day Chicchan is the sky serpent, called can in Yucatec Maya) (Thompson 1950: 75). The presence of the al subfix makes it fairly certain that these are not day notations.

### The Hieroglyphic Date

The principal set of hieroglyphs, on the central top portion of the painting (Table 1 and Figure 1: A1-A5, B1, C1) surely make a calendric statement. When the

capstone arrived in the University Museum in the spring of 1965, Linton Satterthwaite, then curator of the American Section of the University Museum, kindly allowed me to try my hand at decipherment. We recognized the reversed day and "month" glyphs at A1 and A3, which clearly read 9 Muluc 11 Uo. Subsequently, Satterthwaite and I recognized the winged kin glyph at A2, a characteristic placement for this sign in the "Yucatecan Method" of Maya dating first deciphered by Thompson (1937; 1950: 197-203; Figures 38, 39) on inscriptions from Cichen Itza. We then realized that B1 read as a haab glyph with a coefficient and C1 as an Ahau sign also with a coefficient, making the inscription a full statement (with the exception of certain affixes noted below) of the Yucatecan Method, in which a Calendar Round (day and "month" position) is stated in a text as occurring within a numbered haab or tun (360-day period) and within a Katun (twenty tun period) ending at a numbered Ahau day.

The day Muluc would normally fall on 12 Uo in Classic Maya texts instead of the clearly stated 11 Uo. Such a shift of one day in the month position, called the "Puuc Style" of dating or the "Shifted Classic" is found in inscriptions from Campeche and Western Yucatan from as early as 9.12.0.0.0 (A.D. 670), in the Madrid Codex, and in occasional texts from Yaxchilan, Bonampak, and Dos Pilas (Thompson 1950: 127-128, 304-305; 1952; J. Graham 1973: 208).

All the positions of 9 Muluc 11 (12) Uo in Baktuns 9 through 11 were considered (22 positions in all). It was decided by inspection that the coefficient of the haab sign (B1) could only be 8, 9, 13, or 14 and that Ahau coefficient must be 5 or less. Even without these broad parameters of possibilities, only one day within the Baktuns 9, 10, and 11 (from A.D. 435 to approximately A.D. 1617) fulfills all of the above-stated conditions: 10.8.13.5.9.9 Muluc 11 (12) Uo, in 14th Tun of Katun 2 Ahau (A.D. 1001).

Another reading is possible: 9.15.9.12.9 9 Muluc 11 (12) Uo in 10th Tun of Katun 2 Ahau (A.D. 741). In a memo sent to epigraphers, Satterthwaite (Memo 2, 1965) writes: "The position may be made possible by choosing 9 rather than 14 as the recorded haab coefficient, and then correcting it to the required 10. One could argue that the Maya priest was accustomed to elapsed-time tun numbers in dividing his katuns, but forgot to shift to current-time style for this special "Yucatecan Method" which gives the current tun (as 'haab') as well as the current named katun." Memos on the dating were circulated in 1965 (Memo 2) and 1972 (Memos 3 and 4).

Thompson (in a letter to W.R. Coe, 1972) objects to an acceptance of either of the above two dates. He points out that the haab and Ahau glyphs of the "Yucatecan Method" dates normally carry their own sets of special affixes which make a linguistically proper Maya phrase out of the statement, something like: "in the journey of Tun 10 within a Katun 2 Ahau " (Thompson 1950: Figures 38-39).

While I share Thompson's wish for caution in assigning a fixed date to this important painting, I should point out that the haab and Ahau glyphs do not always



take affixes in known examples of Yucatecan Method dating outside the Chichen Itza area. For example, in the Xcalumkin "Temple of the Inscriptions" text (Ruz 1945: Figure XXIV), dated by Thompson (1950: 199) at 9.15.12.6.9, the Ahau glyph lacks the important ben-ich (168) superfix, even though the haab carries the usual crosshatched (89) prefix. On one of the capstones from the Nunnery at Uxmal (discussed below) the haab has no affixes, although the Ahau seems to have the proper ben-ich superfix and the bil (130) subfix. Both of these stones come from the Puuc-Chenes area from which the University Museum Capstone probably originates. The Uxmal capstone is dated by Thompson at 10.3.17.12.1 (1973: 61-62), contemporary with the many properly stated Chichen Itza examples. It seems likely that the method was more strongly established at Chichen Itza than in the Puuc and Chenes area, where the affixes were sometimes dispensed with.

The reversal of the calendric glyphs at A1 and A3 is interesting. It involves the positions of the coefficients but not always the ordering of the main sign elements themselves. The prefix of the month sign Uo at A3, for example, is in its proper position, even though the wing postfix at A2 is not. Glyph reversal is rare but not unknown in Maya writing. It occurs on Temple 11 at Copan and on Stela 6 at Uaxactun (in order to keep the coefficients of the dates toward the front of the monuments, according to Morley (1920: 311-314)), on Lintel 25 at Yaxchilan (apparently for the same reason, if the top of the scene rested on the right jamb of its doorway, as occurs on the companion Lintel 26 from the same structure (Maler 1903: 151-153, Plates 58, 59), on Stela 2 from Jimbal, near Tikal (perhaps for balance), and on pages 23-24 of the Paris Codex (perhaps to conform to a reversed order of reading: Gates 1910: 30-34). In the case of the capstone, the coefficients would not face the outside of the building, since the painting was positioned transversely in the ceiling of the room. I have wondered if the reversed placement of the coefficients might have been occasioned by a desire to direct the significance of the date to the maize god on the left instead of to God K, since the normal placement of a date in a Late Classic scene makes the left-to-right order of reading of the inscription carry the viewer's eye into the face of the principal figure on the stone, who usually faces the inscription from the right. However, this interpretation of the glyph reversal conflicts with my suggestion that the right hand figure (God K) is indeed the focus of the whole scene (see below).

Two hieroglyphs follow the date below the month sign (A4 and A5 of Figure 2 and Table 1). They are, respectively, a death head (1047a) and a moon sign (682). They are probably not reversed like the glyphs above them, since the affix of the death head (126) is in its more usual position as a postfix. Both signs are in the so-called codex form. This does not mean, however, that the capstone was painted as late as the codices, for these glyphic forms are also very similar to glyphs found on Late Classic carved bones and pottery from Tikal (cf. Trik 1963: Figures 9a and 12, Mt-39: B and Mt-29; also W.R. Coe 1967: 52, Mt-176).

As has been stated, several aspects of the scene on the capstone suggest an agricultural theme: the maize god with his maize ear headdress, God K as the god of

the wind or of fertility, the glyph in the maize god's hand, translated by Thompson as "abundance of food," and the maize ears in the hands of God K. The associations with farming suggest that the written date might be significant in terms of the agricultural year. Therefore, I have tried to determine where the date fell within the solar year.

The month position 11 (12) Uo is a day in the Maya "vague year" of 365 days. This year does not contain a built-in correctional system similar to our leap-year. Therefore 9 Muluc on the day 11 of the month Uo fell on March 9 of the Gregorian calendar in A.D. 741 (the 9.15.9.12.9 corrected position) and on January 3 in A.D. 1001 (the 10.8.13.5.9 position). Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934: 44) reported that in the modern Yucatecan town of Chan Kom: "burning usually begins in early March, is at its height in April, and continues into the first part of May." Thus, if one is to believe that God K is associated with the wind and with crop-burning, the scene on the capstone could involve a prognostication of a good harvest for the new agricultural year. It is possible that the recorded date is actually the officially approved day of burning, written either in anticipation or after the fact. If so, then the earlier position, in March of A.D. 741, would be the better date for burning.

It would appear that the scene on the University Museum Capstone is a religious rather than a dynastic one. Dynastic themes seem to dominate the art of Late Classic cities of the Southern Maya Lowlands. Even the roof-combs of the major temples at Tikal seem to portray the rulers as the center of their compositions. In this respect, the capstone scene differs from the art of Late Classic Tikal and follows the pervading religious themes of the Maya Postclassic. However, it should be noted that "idols" similar to the God K of the stone were found in a Tikal tomb (Coe 1967: 57).

There are many stylistic similarities between the scene on the capstone and the art of Late Classic Tikal: the bound headdress of the maize god, the head of God K with his characteristic forehead ornament, the details of the jaguar-skin seat, the three pendant shells hanging from the head on the jaguar cushion. The glyphs also resemble Late Classic forms. The wing affix (116) at A2, for example, differs considerably from the codical form, with its long row of dots, and resembles closely one on Mt-57 from Burial 116 at Tikal (W.R. Coe 1967: 30). The al (23) suffix of glyphs vA1, etc. are also similar in form to suffixes on Tikal bowl (Mt-2 and Mt-232, unpublished). I have already mentioned that the death-head at A4 and the moon glyph at A5 have their stylistic counterparts in Late Classic Tikal pottery painting.

I have compared the style with Tikal pottery partially because it is more familiar to me than is the art of other sites. However, it does appear that the resemblance to Tikal pottery is far closer to Imix ceramic Complex vessels of the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. than to the preceding Ik Complex or the succeeding Eznab Complex. Thus, from the standpoint of this somewhat restricted stylistic comparison, the capstone would appear rather to belong to the 8th century A.D. and the earlier 9.15.9.12.9 date than to the later 10.8.13.5.9 date of the beginning of the 11th century. However, as we shall see, it is difficult to define and compare Maya art styles of the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. because of a paucity of glyphic dates and much confusion about sequence.

### Other Maya Capstones: Introduction

Now that the scene and glyphs on the University Museum Capstone have been described, we can turn to the question of origins. As I have mentioned, the "Puuc Style" of dating on the stone is commonly found in the western Yucatan and Campeche, although scattered texts have appeared from the riverine sites to the southwest. The "Yucatecan Method" has been found only on the inscriptions of Yucatan and Campeche, specifically at Chichen Itza and outlying sites, at Uxmal, and Xcalumkin, and possibly also at Kabah and Labna near Uxmal, and Tulum on the east coast (Thompson 1950: 199). All these sites are in the Northern Maya Lowlands.

A comparison of scenes, glyphs, and styles of the known Maya painted capstones can help narrow down the probable origin of the capstone even more. Table 2 lists as many of the capstones as I have been able to find mentioned in print. They are listed by architectural associations, with the Chichen Itza stones first, then those from sites with predominately Puuc architecture, then those from Chenes style sites, and finally the University Museum Capstone, of as yet unknown origin. Lists of occurrences of capstones have previously been published by Morley (1946: 420) and Thompson (1950: 20; 1973: 59-60). The present list adds only four to Thompson's survey: the ones mentioned by Pollock (1970) from Dzibiltun, El Tabasqueno, and Hochob. There are 34 known painted and carved Maya capstones, of which sixteen have not been illustrated in publication, although the six unillustrated Uxmal stones have apparently been drawn by Blom (1933: 56).

The following discussion will treat each capstone in turn, focusing on hieroglyphic dates and the content and style of the scenes for comparative purposes. References and illustrations of the capstones are listed on Table 2 and often omitted in the text.

#### Chichen Itza Capstones

Morley (1920: 520) first noted the possibility of a year-bearer date on the capstones from a tomb on the outskirts of Chichen Itza (Table 2: #1). He suggested that the third and fourth glyphs on the top band read 6 Kan 9 Tun, recording 6 Kan as the first day in a new 365-day year, falling within a ninth Tun (360-day period). He stated (correctly) that these conditions were met twice only in Baktuns 9 through 11:

10.3.8.14.1 6 Kan 1 Pop (A.D. 897 by the 11.16.0.0.0  
Correlation)

11.12.8.13.4 6 Kan 1 Pop (A.D. 1469)

Morley preferred the later date (correlating it to A.D. 1210 by the then-preferred 12.9.0.0.0 Correlation) because he believed that the shift of one day in the 365-day cycle (allowing Kan to be one of the four-year bearers instead of Akbal) had not occurred as early as 10.3.8.14.4. As noted above, the shift had actually occurred as early as 9.12.0.0.0. Morley's date was repeated without challenge by Beyer (1937: 169) and Thompson (1937: 186), but the year-bearer method of dating in the Maya inscriptions

has apparently not been accepted as demonstrable, since Thompson does not mention the Chichen Itza capstone, or the method in his otherwise exhaustive Maya Hieroglyphic Writing (1950). This lack of acceptance is probably justified in view of the fact that the capstone has stood as the only example of a year-bearer date in Maya writing, even though the method (without the use of the Tun) was widely spread in Central Mexican manuscripts.

In the 1937 paper cited above, Thompson identified the glyph preceding 6 Kan as 10 Sky, the name of a god Lahun Chaan, one of the more ferocious aspects of the planet Venus as the morning star, an identification well suited to the threatening pose of the figure on the stone. This is Venus as the spearer of the young, the aged, the lords, the crops, etc., as recorded in the mythology of the conquest period of Mexico and as read in the Dresden Codex Venus Tables on pp. 46-50 (Thompson 1950: 217-218; 1972: 62-71).

A confirmation of Morley's reading of a year-bearer date and Thompson's reading of the god-name might be provided by the glyphs in the top band of the capstone from the Temple of the Owls at Chichen Itza (Table 2: #2). A similar set of four opening glyphs are found: 1) a non-calendrical glyph, featuring an animal head with gaping mouth (transferred to a prefix in the tomb capstone, and a wing suffix; 2) a name for a god connected to the Planet Venus (in this case 1 Ahau or Hunapu); 3) a day (here 10 Muluc) in the "shifted-classic" or "Puuc Style" or year bearers (Kan, Muluc, Ix, Cauac); 4) a glyph with a coefficient (here 13). The two published drawings of the Owls capstone differ considerably in the rendering of these last two glyphs. The Muluc is clear only in Willard's drawing (in Tozzer 1957). The fourth sign is indistinct in both, but could be read as a winged haab in Morley's version. If the Owls Capstone is read as 10 Muluc within Tun 13 in the same manner as the tomb capstone, a pair of dates are the only ones possible for the stone within Baktuns 9 through 11, each date only about 35 years distant from the two tomb Capstone readings:

10.1.13.5.9 10 Muluc 1 Pop

11.10.12.12.9 10 Muluc 1 Pop

The first reading, however, must assume a current rather than elapsed-tun notation of Tun 13, as was considered possible in the University Museum Capstone reading.

The weakest part of the year-bearer-tun reading for the two stones lies in the tun glyph. As I have mentioned, the glyph on the Owls Capstone is non-committal. On the Tomb Capstone, the glyph is clearly a winged Uinal (521) or Chuen (520). Thompson (1962: 125) notes that: "piles of uinal signs, usually with numerical coefficients, found in Codices Dresden and Madrid, still conceal their function and meaning." Such a study has not been attempted for this paper, but might reveal demonstrable proof of the correct way to read these capstone year-bearer dates. Although the uncertain tun reading casts doubt on the Long Count positions for these stones, the similiar opening glyphs, the deity names, and the day-signs within the same set of year-bearers suggest that the dating method on the two stones is the same, setting them apart from other Chichen Itza inscriptions and the Uxmal capstones.

A: #	B: Location	C: References (illustrations underlined)	D: Architecture	E: Date	F: Method	G: Glyph Placement	H: Scene	I: Artistry
1	Chichen Itza, "Tomb" (Halakal).	Morley 1920: 520, <u>Fig. 77</u> ; Beyer 1937: 169, <u>Pl. 13a</u> ; Thompson 1937: 186-7; 1941: 106-8; 1945: 1950: 199; Morley 1946: <u>Fig. 53</u> ; Tozzer 1957: 24, 35, 86, 156, 158, <u>Fig. 540</u> .	Chichen II?, IV?	10.3.8.14.4?? or 11.12.8.13.4??	Year-bearer, "Puuc Style"	top and bottom bands	warrior throwing spear (Venus, named <u>Lahun-Chan</u> )	Fine (Toltec?)
2	Temple of the Owls.	Beyer 1937: 162; Willard 1926: 248; Morley 1946: <u>Fig. 52</u> ; 1927: 235; Tozzer 1957: 35, 122, 127, 175, <u>Fig. 384</u> .	Chichen II?	10.1.13.5.9?? or 11.10.12.12.9??	Year-bearer, "Puuc Style"	top band	God K rising from serpent mouth (Venus?, named <u>Hunahau</u> ) holding bowl	Fine
3	Temple of the Warriors, N. Colonnade.	Tozzer 1957: 78, 150, <u>Fig. 616</u> .	Chichen III	-	-	no glyphs?	standing figure	Fine
4	Temple of the Warriors.	Thompson 1973: 59.	Chichen III	-	-	-	-	-
5	Uxmal, Nunnery, East Building, NW Chamber.	Blom 1934: 56, <u>Fig. 3</u> ; Morley 1920: 510-1, <u>Fig. 74</u> ; Thompson 1937: 194-5; 1941: 106-8; 1973: 61-2, <u>Fig. 2</u> .	Puuc (Pure Florescent)	10.3.17.12.1	"Yucatecan," "Puuc Style"	top and bottom bands	dancing figure	Fine
6	Uxmal, Nunnery, Building Y.	Blom 1934: 56, <u>Fig. 4</u> ; Thompson 1937: 194-5; 1973: 61-2, <u>Fig. 3</u> .	Puuc (Pure Florescent)	10.3.8.7.12? or 10.3.18.9.12?	"Yucatecan"	top and bottom bands	dancing figure	Fine
7-12	Uxmal, Nunnery.	Blom 1934: 56 (unillustrated)	Puuc (Pure Florescent)	-	-	-	-	-
13	Sacnicte.	<u>Kutscher 1971: Pl. 24; Thompson 1973.</u>	Puuc	-	"Puuc Style"	top and bottom	standing figure facing dwarf	Fine
14	Xkichmook, Ch. 11.	E. Thompson 1898: 227, <u>Fig. 34</u> .	Puuc (w/Chenes)	-	-	infixd	seated figure (facing another figure?)	Careless
15	Xkichmook, Ch. 4.	E. Thompson 1898: 227 (unillustrated)	Puuc (w/Chenes)	-	-	bottom band	seated god	Careless
16	Xcalumkin-Holactun.	Morley 1946: 420 (unillustrated)	Western Puuc	-	-	-	-	-
17	Dzibilnocac, Str. 1, West Room.	Pollock 1970: 25-7, 29, 82, <u>Figs. 32a, 32c</u> ; Seler 1916: <u>Figs. 49, 50</u> ; Coggins 1972: 16.	Chenes	10.10.2.11.4??	Year-bearer, "Puuc Style"	infixd	seated God K holding inverted basket	Careless
18	Dzibilnocac, Str. 1, East Room.	Pollock 1970: 29, <u>Figs. 32b, 32c</u> ; Seler 1916: <u>Figs. 49, 50</u> .	Chenes	-	-	no glyphs	seated God K holding bowl	Careless
19	Santa Rosa Xtampak, Palace, Outer Room	Pollock 1970: 57, <u>Fig. 74a</u> .	Chenes	10.3.5.10.9?? or 11.12.5.7.9??	Year-bearer, "Puuc Style"	infixd	seated god (God K?) holding object	Careless
20	Santa Rosa Xtampak, Palace, Inner Room	Pollock 1970: 57, <u>Fig. 74b</u> .	Chenes	-	-	no glyphs	seated god (God K?) holding bowl?	Careless
21-3	Santa Rosa Xtampak, S. E. Quad.	Pollock 1970: 59 (unillustrated)	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
24-8	Santa Rosa Xtampak.	Morley 1946: 420 (notes 10 from Santa Rosa Xtampak).	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
29	Hochob, Str. 2.	Pollock 1970: 13 (unillustrated)	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
30	El Tabasqueno	Pollock 1970: 21 (unillustrated)	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
31-2	Dzibiltun	Pollock 1970: 25 (unillustrated)	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
33	Kiuc (carved)	Morley 1946: 420 (unillustrated)	Chenes	-	-	-	-	-
34	University Museum	Thompson 1973: 60; <u>Present Paper</u> .	unknown	9.15.9.12.9? or 10.8.13.5.9?	"Yucatecan," "Puuc Style"	infixd	God K holding maize facing God E holding glyph meaning "bountiful harvest"	Fine

TABLE 2: A List of Painted and Carved Capstones From the Maya Area

Instead of the threatening Lahun Chan of the Tomb Capstone, the Owls Capstone presents a god with upturned snout, rising from a coiled serpent, bearing a bowl-full of objects and surrounded by large beads and conch shells (or cacao beans in Willard's drawing). The upturned, branching mask (of Ehecatl, the wind?) the conch shells, the ascension from the earth-serpent, and the gifts, suggest that this is the complex deity Quetzalcoatl, who in Mexican stories became the morning star (Nicholson 1971: 428-429). Here, he is called by the Maya name 1 Ahau, the Hunapu of the Quiche Maya book, the Popol Vuh, whom Thompson (1950: 218-219) believes also became the planet Venus. In the above-cited discussion of Venus, Thompson suggests that Lahun Chan was the original Maya malevolent deity of the rising planet, fused in the Colonial Period Chumayel Manuscript with the Mexican idea of Quetzalcoatl as Venus (see also Thompson 1970: 22 for Quetzalcoatl as 1 Ahau). Perhaps "Maya" and "Mexican" are not the correct contrasting terms here, since our knowledge of the malevolent aspect of the star comes from Mexico as well as from the Dresden Codex, and the Venus Table pages of the codex are markedly more "Mexican" in style than in the remainder of the manuscript. At any rate, it is interesting that the two capstones, which appear to be roughly contemporaneous with each other, are portraying opposed aspects of Venus, one threatening, the other bearing gifts. The latter comes from a building, as do the object-holding deities on the Chenes capstones (see below). Perhaps the threatening aspect of Venus on the capstone from the Halakal tomb has something to do with the death of the person entombed there.

The third stone from Chichen Itza (Table 2: #3) is a beautiful piece in several colors, portraying a standing figure wearing a necklace and a medallion. It was found in the ruins of the North Colonnade of the Temple of the Warriors. Stone #4 is from the Temple of Warriors itself and unpublished.

The architectural associations of the Chichen Itza capstones is not at all clear. The tomb capstone comes from the outlying group called Halakal, which contains a "Puuc-style" temple (Tozzer 1957: 23), but the capstone itself is placed by Tozzer in his post-Puuc Chichen II period (1957: 35). Tozzer (1957: 33-35) puts the Temple of the Owls in his Chichen II period as well (ca. 948- ca. 1145 A.D.). On the other hand, Proskouriakoff (in Tozzer 1957: 44) thought that the temple may belong in Tozzer's Chichen IV (1280-1450 A.D.). The Temple of the Warriors and the North Colonnade appear to be from the Chichen III period.

In Table 3, in the three columns to the right, I have listed conflicting views on the temporal placement of the architectural styles associated with the Chichen Itza capstones: Tozzer's (1957) scheme of four numbered periods; Thompson's (1970: 3-47) view, essentially similar to Tozzer but with differing transition dates; and Parson's (1969: 172-185) sequence, which puts Thompson's first "Itza" period (Tozzer's Chichen II) back into the 7th century A.D.

The two early "year-bearer" dates from Chichen Itza (10.1.13.5.9 and 10.3.8.14.4) are too early for Tozzer's Chichen II period, and would suggest that these



paintings come from the Chichen I or Puuc period. This would be supported by the presence of a Puuc-style temple near the tomb at Halakal, and by the other early Baktun 10 dates on other capstones from the Puuc and Chenes areas (see below). Perhaps the trait of capstone-painting came in to Chichen Itza from the Puuc area during this period in conjunction with other Puuc architectural traits. The early "year-bearer" dates certainly cannot be ruled out by the somewhat "Mexican" character of the drawings, since Tozzer's dichotomy between "Mexican" and "Maya" at Chichen Itza has become more and more difficult to correlate with a succession of time periods.

### Puuc Capstones

The hieroglyphic dates on two capstones from the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal (Table 2: #5 and #6) have been read with some certainty by Thompson (1941 and 1973) as:

10.3.17.12.1 5 Imix 18 Kankin (A.D. 906)

and:

10.3.8.7.12? 4 Eb 15 Ceh (A.D. 897)

or 10.3.18.9.12? 4 Eb 5 Ceh (A.D. 907)

Thompson (1973: 62) notes a confirmation of these dates by a radiocarbon from a Nunnery lintel at 885 A.D. plus-or-minus 100 years. Andrews (1973: 253) felt that this radiocarbon date should be discarded in favor of the fourteen dates averaging 662 A.D. from the Rio Bec area to the south, which he supposed to be contemporary with the Puuc. Recent reports on the excavations at Becan, in the Rio Bec area, however, (Potter 1974) make it clear that the Rio Bec architectural styles began in the Classic and are in part considerably earlier than the Nunnery at Uxmal. Thus the glyphic dates here may well be contemporary with the erection of the Uxmal Nunnery.

The dancing figures on the two Uxmal Capstones cannot be identified as divine or human. They are drawn in a quick but practiced style not unlike that on Late Classic polychrome pottery. Six more stones from Uxmal are unpublished.

Another capstone associated with the Puuc area is from Sacnichte (Table 2: #13), near Labna (Thompson 1973: 59). Its date has not been placed within the Long Count, but surely is in the Puuc style, like capstone #5 from Uxmal. The presence of a winged kin glyph after the day sign and the coefficient on the last glyph of the top band of glyphs suggests that the stone records a full Yucatecan Method date like the Uxmal stones. Again, the principal figure cannot be identified as human or divine. He has a human face with a large-eyed mask over his eyes. The painting is in black line with red, orange, green, and blue coloring. Like the Uxmal paintings, the artistry is quick and sure, and does not seem to have any particularly "Mexican" touches to it. The glyphs are placed in top and bottom bands, as at Uxmal. Thus, in several attributes the Uxmal and Sacnichte capstones are quite similar to each other.

Two painted capstones were found at Xkichmook, a Puuc site near the Chenes



area (Table 2#14, #15). The caption to Figure 34 of E. Thompson's 1898 report states that both illustrated capstones come from Chamber 11 of the Palace, although the text (p. 227) describes a painted capstone in Chamber 4 of the same building. Possibly three capstones are involved. In Table 2 of this report, #14 refers to the scene from Chamber 11, even though it might be painted on more than one capstone. The illustration of the Chamber 11 Capstone shows a seated figure, God B or one of the other celestial deities, judging by the large squared eye and projecting upper lip. The glyph for God B (668) is at the figure's feet. Two horizontal lines separate the scene from a bottom band of glyphs. The painting (or possibly only Thompson's drawing of it) is crudely done, reminding one of the Chenes capstone figures. Xkichmook has been termed a Puuc site, but with Chenes influence in its architecture (Pollock 1970: 83; Andrews 1973: 252). The bottom band of glyphs is like the Puuc Capstones, but the crude artistry and the seated god make it more similar to the Chenes examples. Perhaps this can be taken as additional evidence of a mixture of regional styles at this border site.

A painted capstone is mentioned from Xcalumkin-Holactun in the Western Puuc area, but is unpublished. Pollock (1970: 84-85) thinks that Western Puuc is slightly earlier than Eastern Puuc sites such as Uxmal, and contemporary with Chenes.

#### Chenes Capstones

Painted capstones have been found in several Chenes sites south of the Puuc area. Seventeen have been reported in all (see Table 2: #17 through #33), of which only two from Dzibilnocac and two from Santa Rosa Xtampak have been illustrated in print.

Two of the stones (#17 from Dzibilnocac and #19 from Santa Rosa Xtampak) have similar infixed glyphs which may record dates in the year-bearer system. The stone from Dzibilnocac (#17) has an infixed Kan glyph with coefficient 8 or 9 prefixed and coefficient 3 subfixed. For the prefix, 8 is a preferred reading by inspection of Pollock's photograph (1970: Figure 32a). According to Pollock (1970: 25-27) Herbert Spinden read this date at:

10.18.8.16.2 3 Kan 1 (2) Pop

apparently following the year-bearer-tun system of the Chichen Itza Capstone. Spinden's reading necessitates a switching of the two coefficients. It seems unlikely that the subfixed numeral 3 would represent the day-number in place of the prefixed number 8 or 9. If one assumes instead a normal placement of 8 or 9 as the day-number and the subfixed 3 as the tun, one arrives at the following dates as the only possibilities within Baktuns 9 through 11:

9.1.2.12.4?? 8 Kan 1(2) Pop (A.D. 458)

10.10.2.11.4?? 8 Kan 1(2) Pop (A.D. 1030)

The former date would seem late for the Chenes area, but we do not yet know how late construction continued there.

The capstone with glyphs from Santa Rosa Xtampak (Table 2: #19) actually has two paintings, an inner-thick-line painting and an outer fine-line one on a secondary coat of plaster. Glyphs with coefficients appear on the outer plaster but cannot be interpreted. On the earlier painting, one glyph is a day-sign, probably Muluc, with a two-scroll suffix identical to that under the Kan sign of the Dzibilnocac stone. The Muluc has a clear coefficient 3. Its connection to the Dzibilnocac glyph is unmistakable, since it appears in an identical position behind the seated figure, enclosed within an oval. The Santa Rosa glyph has no subfixed coefficient, but a separate glyph with coefficient five appears at the feet of the figure. The glyph itself does not appear to be a tun sign, but assuming for the moment that it does record a 5 Tun date, one finds that there are no Long Count positions for the date within our limits of Baktuns 9 through 11. Two positions do occur, however, if one assumes again that current tuns rather than elapsed ones were recorded, as we did with the University Museum Capstone:

10.3.5.10.9??      3 Muluc 1(2) Pop  
 11.12.5.7.9??      3 Muluc 1(2) Pop

These positions are close in time to those read on the Uxmal and Chichen Itza capstones, the latter being year-bearer dates as well. The 10th Baktun position is 137 years earlier than the 10.10.2.11.4 position of the Dzibilnocac date.

The four published capstones from Dzibilnocac and Santa Rosa Xtampak have much in common besides the similarity of the day-signs. They show seated figures rather than standing ones, and the glyphs are infixed into the scene rather than in top and bottom bands. On the two Dzibilnocac paintings, the figures are clearly God K, with his long snout and huge foliated ornament protruding from the forehead. One holds a plaited basket out of which pours small objects like food or raindrops. The other holds a large bowl filled with feathers or paper strips and possibly a deity head (cf. Tikal Altar 6; Coe 1967: 75). On the first stone from Santa Rosa (Table 2: #19), the deity has the roman nose of God D, Itzam Na, and holds a fringed object which might be a bowl or a handled fan. The figure wears a long-nosed serpent head as a headdress. The figure on the other capstone is more likely to be God K, judging from the remains of a foliated ornament in front of the forehead, and the snakeskin markings on the top of the forearm and the back of the upper arm, identical bearer scene on the Temple of the Owls Capstone from Chichen Itza, although mixed with the concept of 1 Ahau (Hunapu) as the rising planet Venus.

The dating of the Chenes architectural style has been sharpened by recent excavations at Dzibilnocac and Santa Rosa Xtampak (DeBloois 1969; Joesink-Mandeville 1972). Unfortunately, I have not seen the fuller reports on these excavations (Matheny and Berge 1970; Nelson 1970). A recent report (Potter 1974) on the architectural sequence at Becan, a Rio Bec style site far to the south, states that Chenes and Rio Bec architectural styles form a coherent whole, and that most of the architecture of the Rio Bec and Chenes is Late Classic in date (Bejuco/Chintok Ceramic Periods, 500-830 A.D.) (see Table 3). However, Potter (1974: 122) adds that: "fairly numerous Chenes area buildings and some farther south may have been constructed during a slightly later time period and therefore represent a transition from the style of Becan into that of the Puuc."

Thus the buildings which contained the Chenes capstones in question (Dzibilnocac Structure 1 and the Santa Rosa Xtampak Palace) could date from the Late Classic or even slightly later, as the postulated Baktun 10 Long Count dates on the stones suggest. The Baktun 11 dates are probably much too late for the Chenes sites, however.

Many aspects of the Chenes paintings, their curde "idol" representations, the brief calendric notations, the year-bearer day signs, the postulated Baktun 10 Long Count positions, suggest a Terminal Classic date for the capstones and for their buildings. The year-bearer readings are uncertain, however, and the capstones still might be fully Late Classic. Thus we cannot be sure of the temporal relationship of the Chenes capstones to the University Museum stone, with its similarity of theme and differences of style.

### Conclusions

In this review of Maya painted capstones, it has become clear that the capstones divide themselves into three groups according to the architectural styles of the areas in which they were found: Chichen Itza; Puuc, and Chenes (Table 2). The two Chichen Itza scenes with glyphs show well-drawn standing figures, probably of the gods of the planet Venus, with glyphs in top and bottom bands, apparent year-bearer date notations in "Puuc Style" with similar text arrangements, and with relatively contiguous Long Count positions, probably in early Baktun 10. The Puuc capstones from Uxmal and Sacnichte show well-drawn standing figures, not recognizable as being deities, glyphs in top and bottom bands, with "Yucatecan Method" date notations, sometimes in Puuc Style, one time not. The Chenes stones depict more crudely drawn seated large-eyed deities holding objects (usually containers), glyphs infixed into the scene, with apparent year-bearer date notation in Puuc style. The Xkichmook capstone paintings, from the southern limit of the Puuc area resemble the neighboring Chenes stones more than they do the Puuc ones.

Since the University Museum Capstone bears no particular resemblance to the Chichen Itza stones, it probably comes from within the Puuc-Chenes area. As in the Chenes scenes, the glyphs are infixed, without top or bottom bands of glyphs. Likewise, the principal figure is God K, seated and holding out objects in his hands. On the other hand, the Yucatecan Method of date notation is that of the Puuc capstones and the careful delineation of details is more like the Puuc than the Chenes paintings. Also, the complexity of the scene, with two personages instead of one, recalls the Puuc area Sacnichte scene, and is in contrast to the simple scenes of the Chenes area.

Feeling obligated at this point to make a preliminary guess as to provenience, I would say that the Chenes area is a more likely source than the Puuc, in spite of the dating method and careful style. It would seem more probable that a Chenes ruler would import a prestigious neighboring artist and dating method, than that a Puuc ruler would import a neighboring religious practice.

As I have stated, the two alternative Long Count positions for the date on the capstone are in the Eighth and the early Eleventh Centuries A.D. (in the 11.16.0.0.0 Correlation). I mentioned that the earlier position is preferred by style in spite of the necessity for a Maya error. This judgment was based on the similarities to Late Classic painted pottery from Tikal. Since we really know so little about artistic styles of the 11th century Yucatan, the later date should not be eliminated from consideration. As far as we know at present, Chenes and Puuc cities might have been occupied as late as the 11th century. The capstone might be an earlier and more "Classic" version of Chenes deity capstones, or it might be entirely contemporaneous with them.

An outline of continued research on the capstones is formed by the questions raised in this study. The first task would be to obtain a complete photographic record of the capstone paintings, before they all disappear. In particular, we need photos of the Temple of the Owls stone, the Xkichmook stones, the series from the Uxmal Nunnery Quadrangle, including the two illustrated by Blom, and finally the unpublished Chenes capstones. Secondly, the question of the highly important year-bearer dates might be resolved by better photographs of the glyphs, by a search for other possible year-bearer Maya dates, and by comparison with the Mexican year-bearer systems of date notation.

The painted capstones reviewed here can and probably will be major items in the renewed attempt to resolve the questions of Yucatecan cultural sequence. In several instances, they hold the only hieroglyphic dates for a site, for a time period within a region, or even for a whole architectural style.



PLATE 1: The University Museum Capstone.

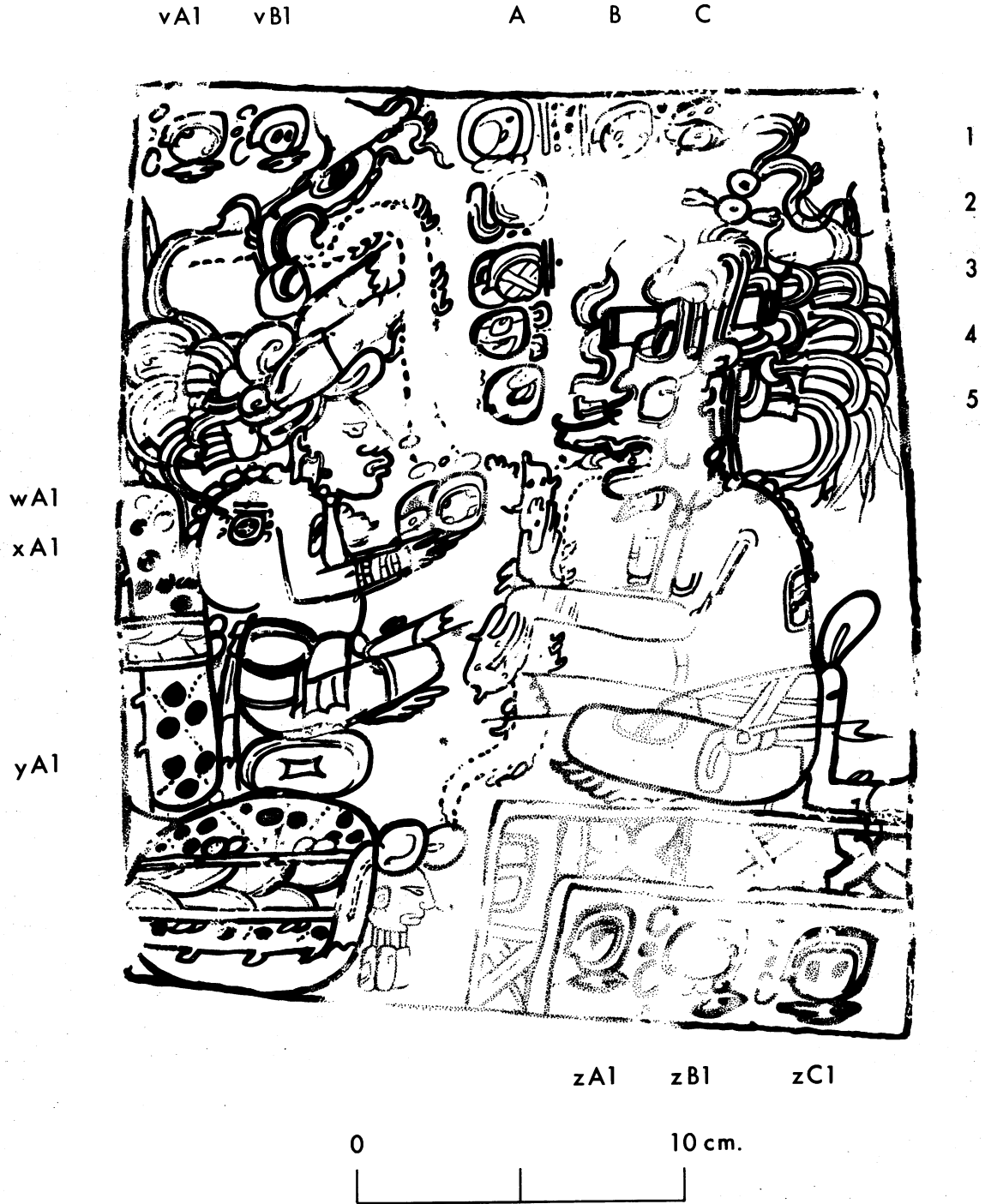


FIGURE 1: Drawing of Painted Scene on the University Museum Capstone (1/2 Scale).  
Drawing by W.R. Coe.

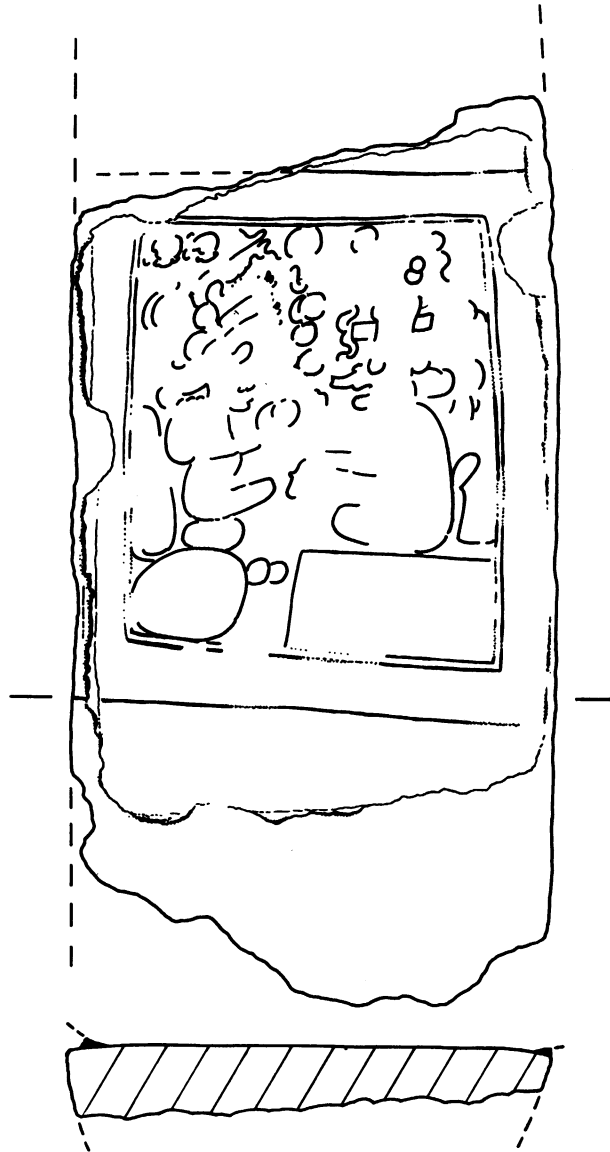


FIGURE 2: Drawing of Painted Side and Section of the University Museum Capstone (1/5 Scale). Drawing by W.R. Coe.

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