A Monument Fragment in the Tonina Site Museum

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In fall 2014, we had the opportunity to visit the site museum at Tonina. While there, we examined an unlabeled relief fragment, pieced together from several smaller fragments. A sculpture of high quality, the fragment features an iconographic upper section, while the lower half consists of nine complete or partial glyph blocks (**Fig. 1**). The imagery is carved in a highly naturalistic style characteristic of the Late Classic period, and certain grapheme details point to a date of approximately 9.14.0.0.0 (Dec. 5, 711) to 9.15.0.0.0 (Aug. 22, 731). Its exact date, however, is unknown.

The image in the upper section of the fragment consists of a cartouche framing a human face, facing to the viewer's right. The inner edge of the cartouche is formed from at least two fused profile serpent heads with beaded snouts, of the type referred to by Schele as the "square-nosed serpent" (Schele and Miller 1986:77). This serpent, in other contexts, is thought by some authors to symbolize blood, fire, or breath (see Taube 2005). On the Tonina monument, however, emerging from the serpent at regular intervals are the markings typical of the **LAKAM** grapheme, which are part of the iconography of plants and trees (see Schele and Stuart 1985). This serpent, in fact, appears in the most elaborate variant of the **LAKAM** grapheme, as exemplified by Palenque Temple 18 Stucco 413/ F06 (**Fig. 2**) (Fernández and Berlin 1954; Schele and Mathews 1979:Cat. 413). The human face within the **LAKAM** cartouche wears a floral earflare, and the hair binding is in the form of a waterlily blossom. Such headdresses appear fairly frequently in Maya art, as on Palenque Tablet of the Slaves and Pomona Panel 1.

Fig. 1. Panel fragment in the Tonina site museum. Photograph by Yuriy Polyukhovych.

Fig. 2. Drawing of stucco LAKAM HA' glyph, Palenque Temple XVIII, after Fernández and Berlin (1954:fig. 6).
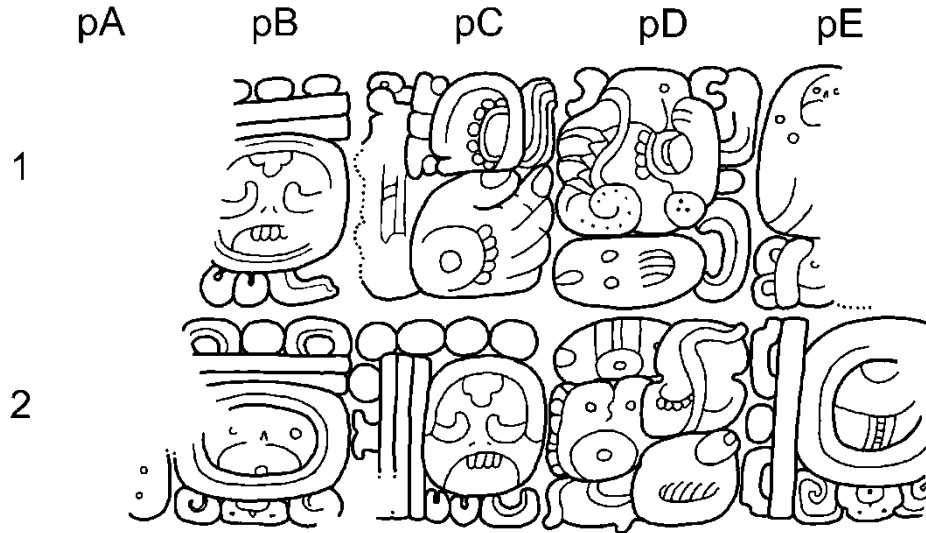
pA   pB   pC   pD   pE

1

2

Fig. 3. Inscription, panel fragment in the Tonina site museum. Drawing by Matthew Looper.

The inscription (**Fig. 3**) consists of an unknown number of columns and two rows. The surviving text can be transcribed and translated as:

pA2	_	_	_
pB1	_ 13 WINIK-ji-ya	_ uxlajuun winikijiiy	_ k'ins, 13 winals
pC1	u-YAX-K'AL-TUUN	uyaxk'altuun	his first stone-setting
pB2	11 AJAW	ti buluch ajaw	on 11 Ajaw
pC2	4 17 WINIK-ji-ya	chan huklajuun winikijiiy	4 k'ins, 17 winals
pD1	hu-li-ya	huliiy	since he arrived
pE1	ma-si _	Mamis?	at Mamis?
pD2	CHAK xo-yo tzu-lu	Chak Xoy Tzul	Chak Xoy Tzul
pE2	6 OHL?	wak ohl?	on 6 K'an

The surviving portion of the text begins with an incomplete distance number leading to a "stone-setting." Although this ritual is often associated with Period Endings at other sites (e.g Copan Stela P, Piedras Negras Altar 2 and Stela 6, Pomona Stela 5), at Tonina, this expression appears on Monument 169 in association with the date 9.14.12.9.0. Thus, the following Tzolk'in position, 11 Ajaw, cannot be readily fixed in the Long Count.

Fig. 4 and **5**. *Mamis ajaw* expressions fromTonina Mons. 125 and 144. Photographs by Yuriy Polyukhovych.

The next phrase begins with another distance number, followed by the verb "arrived." Next (pE1) is probably Mamis, which is the same toponym recorded on Tonina Monuments 125 (A2) and 141 (A2) (**Figs. 4** and **5**). The following block (pD2) should be the name of the person who arrived. A similar combination of **xo-yo** appears on Comalcalco Shell Pendant 17 (A5) (Zender 2004:Fig. 76), though not in the context of a personal name. The person named on the Tonina monument is likely non-royal, as he bears no additional titles.

The date of the arrival is 6 K'an (pE2). The problem with reconstructing this date is that a distance number of 4 days would be required to lead from K'an backward to Ajaw, rather than the written Ajaw to K'an. In order to account for the appropriate number of days between Ajaw and an earlier K'an date, we suggest that the distance number is in error, and should be 4 winals, 16 k'ins.

Although the dates on this monument fragment elude us, certain details of the carving allow for style dating. For example, the "filler" in the glyph for 17 at pC2 seems to consist of 2 scrolls. Similar fillers appear on many monuments at Tonina, clustering from about 9.13.0.0.0 (692 C.E.) to 9.15.5.0.0 (731 C.E.). In addition, the **WINIK** glyphs at pB1 and pC2 have an unusual form, with a large lower oval decorated with small loops at the top. This is similar to Tonina Miscellaneous 4, a fragment of a stone receptacle, which also includes the name of K'inich Ich'aak Chapaat (Ruler 4) (Graham and Mathews 1999:179). Dated to approximately 9.14.15.0.0 (Sept. 17, 726), this comparison suggests that the monument fragment may date somewhere between 9.14.0.0.0 to 9.15.0.0.0 (711-731 C.E.).

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