



# Glyph Dwellers

Report 43

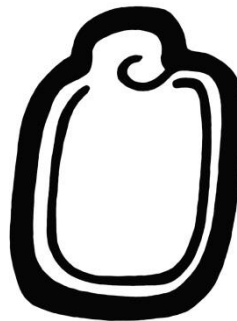
May 2016

## A Possible Logogram for SITZ', "Swollen Belly, Glutton"

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The group of Maya vessels known as Chinos Black-on-Cream is well known for its simple calligraphic style of hieroglyphic inscriptions (see Reents-Budet, Bishop, and Fahsen 1994). Vessels painted in this style seem to constitute one of the largest subgroups within the corpus of Maya painted ceramics. Recent epigraphic analyses suggest an origin of the style in northeastern Peten, especially in the Xultun region (see Krempel and Matteo 2011).



**Fig. 1.** ZS6 "Swollen belly" grapheme from painted bowl, private collection (K4387), see Fig. 5. Drawing by Yuriy Polyukhovych.

One interesting and until now undeciphered hieroglyphic sign appears on the Chinos Black-on-Cream style vessel Kerr 4387 (private collection). It is unique and occurs only once as a component of the name of the vessel's owner (**Fig. 1**). This grapheme, designated with the code ZS6 in Macri and Loooper's (2003:233) glyph catalog, seems to represent a swollen belly with twisted navel.



This identification is confirmed through comparison with representations of one of the wahy spirits studied by Grube and Nahm (1994). For example, vessels K927, K2286 and K2716 depict wahy spirits with distended bellies and everted, twisted navels exactly as represented by ZS6 (Figs. 2, 3, 4). The proper name of this wahy is usually spelled **si-tz'i CHAM-ya**, *sitz' chamay/chamiy*, "gluttony death," or **si-tz'i WINIK-ki**, *sitz' winik*, "gluttony man" (Grube and Nahm 1994:709).



Fig. 2. Sitz' Winik, depicted on painted vase, Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia 86.454 (K927). Photographs by Yuriy Polyukhovych.





**Fig. 3.** Sitz' Chamay/Chamiiy, depicted on painted vase, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore 48.2776 (K1111, 2286). Photographs by Yuriy Polyukhovych.



**Fig. 4.** Sitz' Chamay/Chamiiy, depicted on painted bowl, Museo Popol Vuh, Guatemala 0419. Photograph by Yuriy Polyukhovych.



Several hieroglyphic signs in the Maya script represent body parts of humans or animals. Usually they have the phonetic value of the body part depicted (i.e. **K'AB**, "hand;" **ICH'AAHK**, "claw;" **JOL**, "head;" etc.). These logograms are frequently combined with phonetic complements (**K'AB-ba**, **ICH'AAHK-ki**, **JOL-lo**, etc.).



**Fig. 5.** "Swollen belly" grapheme with **tz'i** complement on painted bowl, private collection (K4387). Photograph by Yuriy Polyukhovych.

On K4387, we have the "swollen belly" sign combined with the "bat head" variant of the **tz'i** syllable (**Fig. 5**). Taking into account arguments described above, it seems probable that the glyph in question is a logogram **SITZ'** or "swollen belly, glutton" and **tz'i** in this case functions as a phonetic complement (**SITZ'-tz'i**). Obviously, in the decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing, we require direct substitutions to reveal readings of unknown logograms, but in this case, a **SITZ'** reading seems very promising.

**Acknowledgments:** I would like to thank the following individuals for allowing me to photograph objects discussed in this report: Andrea Terrón at the Museo Popol Vuh, Devon Dargan at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Danielle Bennett at the Walters Art Museum, and Justin Kerr.

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Glyph Dwellers is an occasional publication of the Maya Hieroglyphic Database Project at California State University, Chico, California. Its purpose is to make available recent discoveries about ancient Maya culture, history, iconography, and Mayan historical linguistics deriving from the project.

Funding for the Maya Hieroglyphic Database Project is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, grants #RT21365-92, RT21608-94, PA22844-96, the National Science Foundation, grants #SBR9710961 and IBSS1328928, the Department of Native American Studies, University of California, Davis, and the Department of Art and Art History, California State University, Chico.

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ISSN 1097-3737