Glyph Dwellers is an occasional publication of the Maya Hieroglyphic Database Project, at the University of California, Davis, 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, #SBR9710961, and the Department of Native American Studies, University of California, Davis.

(c)1998 Martha J. Macri & Matthew G. Looper. All rights reserved. Written material and artwork appearing in these reports may not be republished or duplicated for profit. Citation of more than one paragraph requires written permission of the publisher. No copies of this work may be distributed electronically, in whole or in part, without express written permission from the publisher.

ISSN 1097-3737

Glyph Dwellers

Report 8

T855: A Numeral Classifier

Martha J. Macri

Glyph T855 is a cartouche containing a bar with two dots above it-the number seven (fig. 1). It occurs only once, on Aguateca Stela 7 B2, in a period ending expression, "11 Ahau 18 Mac, the eighteenth _" (fig. 2). It follows the number 18 in place of an expected k'atun sign. Thompson (1962:396) recognized that it must have signified 'k'atun'.

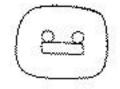


Figure 1. T855 (drawing by Matthew Looper).



December 1998

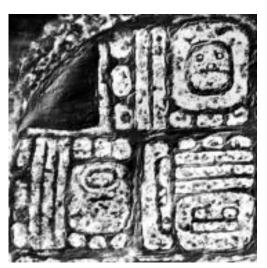


Figure 2. Aguateca Stela 7, A1-B2 (detail from Rubbing #T23742 by Merle Greene Robertson 1995).

John Justeson and Peter Mathews suggested that T855 may be a "sportive writing" of k'atun with the two dots representing the word ka' 'two' and tun represented by the bar for 'five'.

A useful working hypothesis is the principle that any glyph immediately following a number should be looked at as a likely numeral classifier. Are there any classifiers homophonous with the Ch'olan word for 'seven', *huk (Kaufman & Norman 1984:138)?

Attinasi (1973:329) does in fact record *uk* 'a short period of time' and gives two examples of it, both in the position of a numeral classifier suffixed to the number one: *hum-uk* 'while' and *ti hum-uk* 'in an hour, in a while'. Aulie & Aulie (1996:60) list *jumuk'* as 'ratito'. The final consonant in Aulie & Aulie's entry is glottalized, but it is not glottalized in any of Attinasi's three examples.

This unique glyph provides evidence that the Ch'ol numeral classifier *uk* was used in the Pasión area during the late Classic Period. A motive for this scribal improvisation may have been that the three bars and three dots for the number 18 left little room for a larger, more detailed sign. As a classifier for 20 years (of 360 days) it probably meant 'time period' without the sense of 'a short period of time' recorded for Ch'ol of today.

References:

Attinasi, John J. 1973 Lak T'an: A Grammar of the Chol (Mayan) Word. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago.

Aulie, H. Wilbur & Evelyn W. de Aulie

1996 *Diccionario Ch'ol de Tumbalá, Chiapas, con variaciones dialectales de Tila y Sabanilla.* Revised by Emily F. Scharfe de Stairs. México: Instituto Lingüístico de Verano.

Kaufman, Terrence S., & William M. Norman

1984 An outline of Proto-Cholan phonology, morphology, and vocabulary. In *Phoneticism in Mayan Hieroglyphic Writing*, edited by John S. Justeson & Lyle Campbell, pp. 77-166. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, Pub. no. 9. Albany: State University of New York.

Robertson, Merle Greene

1995 Merle Greene Robertson's Rubbings of Maya Sculpture, Volume VII. Revised Edition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Thompson, J. Eric S.

1962 Â Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.