# Hieroglyphic Decipherment Guide

compiled & revised by Inga E. Calvin
2012

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Persons using this guide should be aware that the field of Maya hieroglyphic studies is ongoing and decipherments are subject to revision and intense debate regarding spelling, grammar, tense aspect or meaning. Any mistakes are the responsibility of the compiler, Inga E. Calvin.

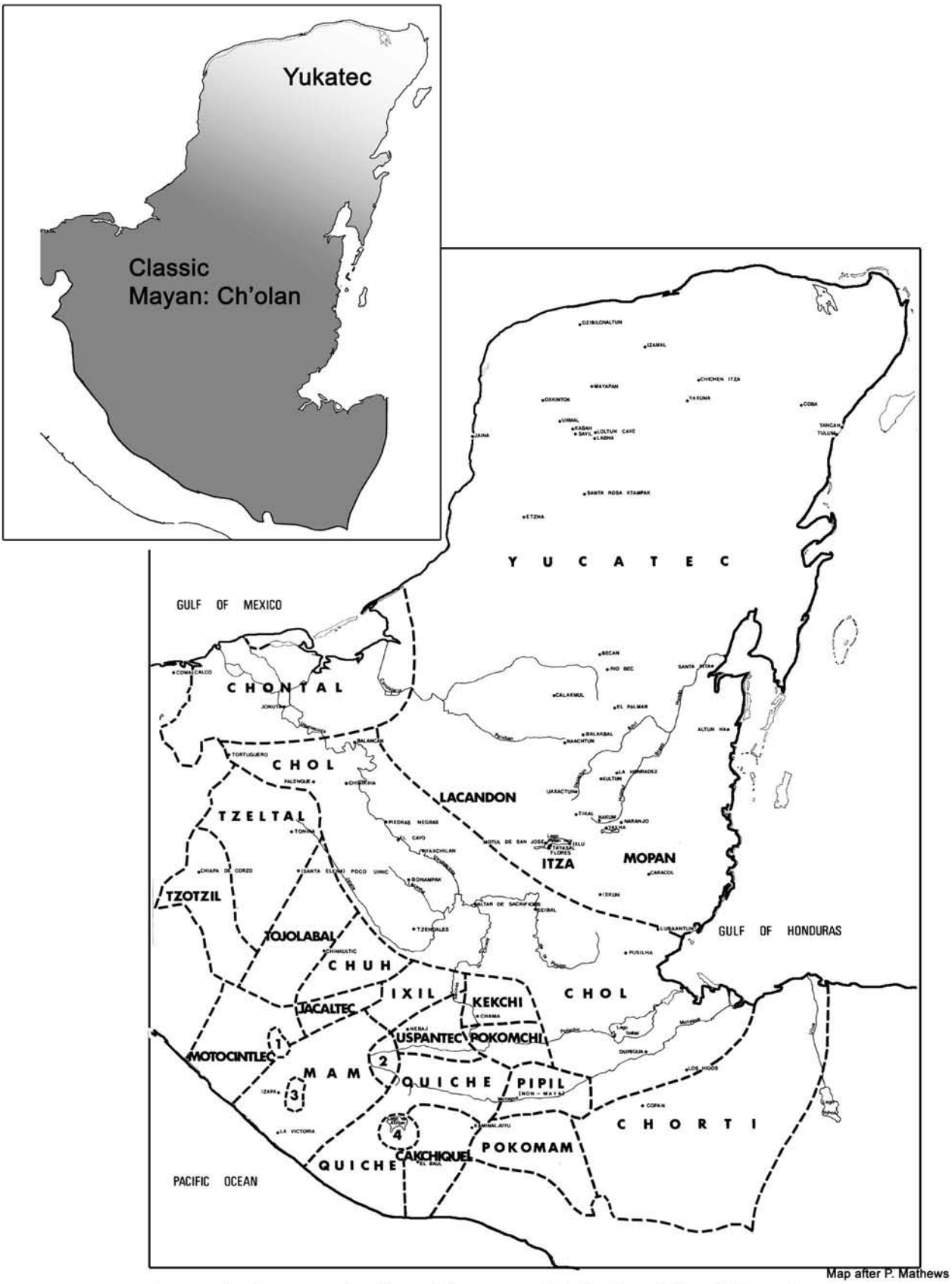
ANY USE OF THIS GUIDE FOR SALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

# Chronological Periods

| Periods | Dates |
|---|---|
| Modern | AD 1500 - present |
| Post Classic | AD 1500 - AD 900 |
| Late Classic | AD 900 - AD 600 |
| Early Classic | AD 600 - AD 200 |
| Pre-Classic | 900 BC - 200 AD |
| Formative/ Archaic | 2000 BC - 900 BC |

# Classic Period Maya Sites

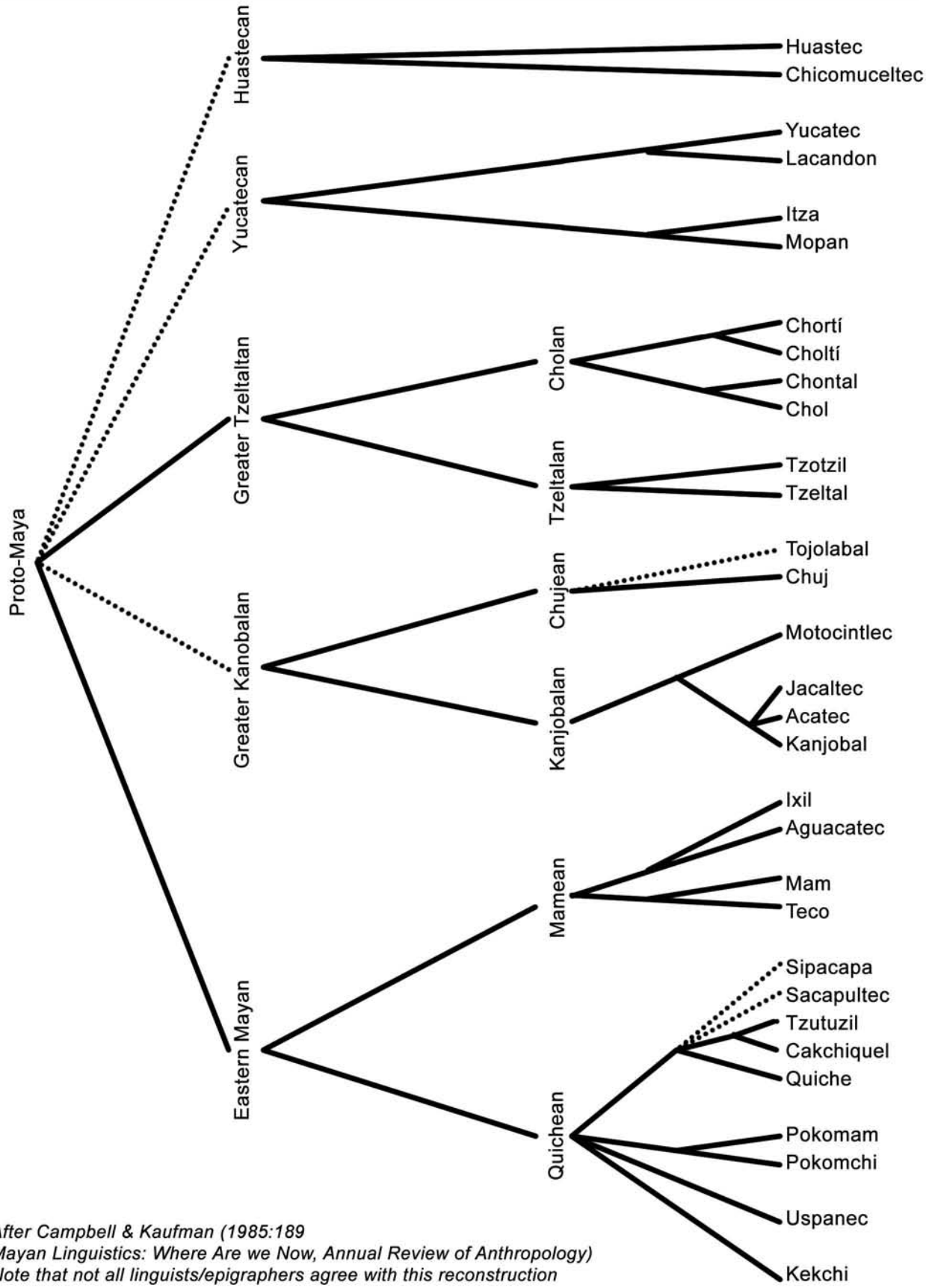
# Classic Period & Modern Maya Languages




Map after P. Mathews

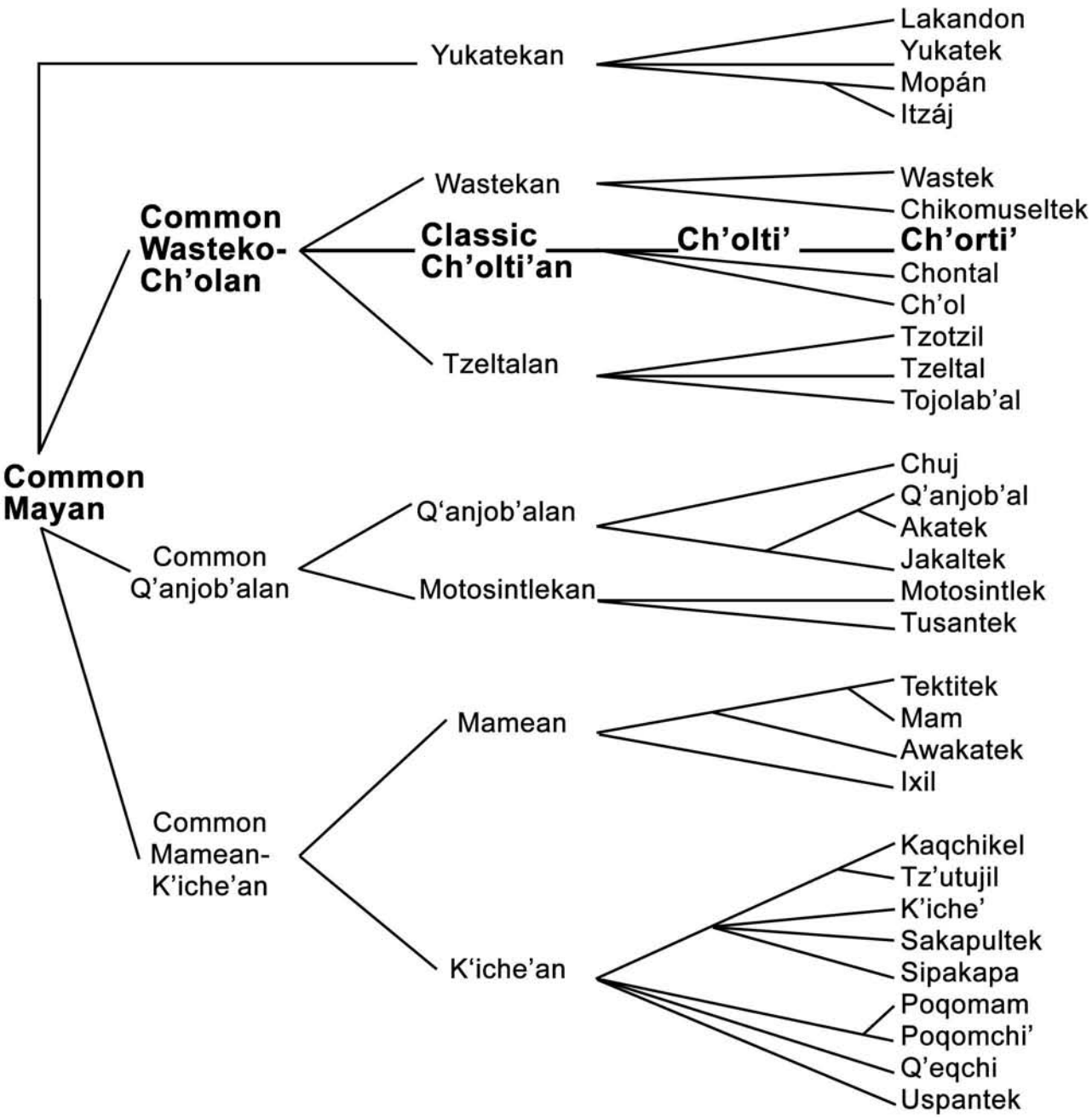
(approximate reconstruction of language distribution of the 16th century)

# Evolution of Mayan Languages




*After Campbell & Kaufman (1985:189*
*Mayan Linguistics: Where Are we Now, Annual Review of Anthropology)*
*Note that not all linguists/epigraphers agree with this reconstruction*

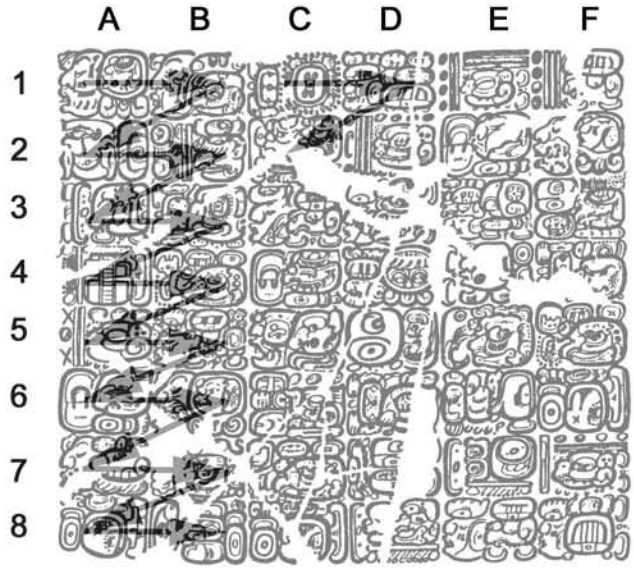
# Evolution of Mayan Languages



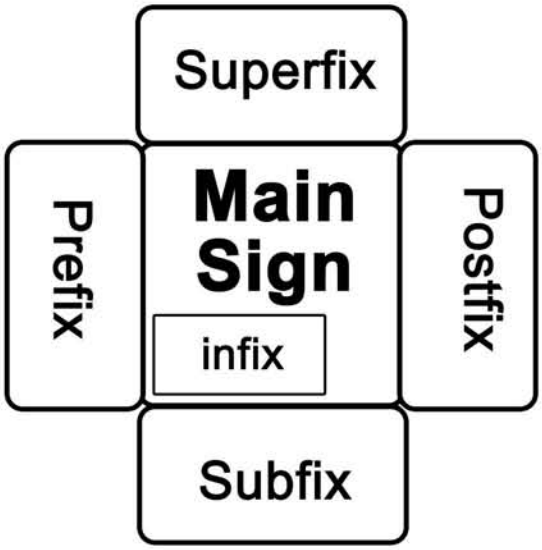

*from Robertson 1992:fig. I.I; Houston et al. 2000:Fig. 1*
*Not all linguists/epigraphers agree with this reconstruction either*

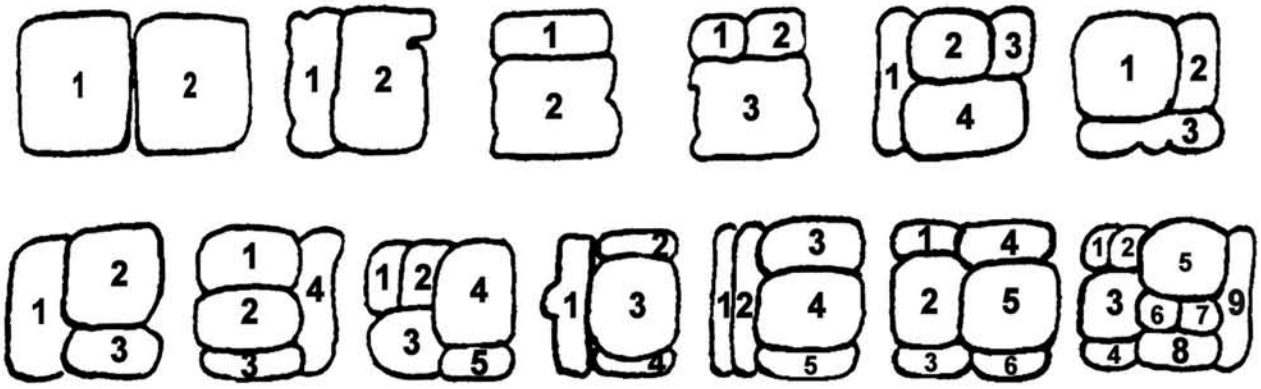
# Reading Order

## Text - Palenque, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs




## Glyph Block



# Phonetic Syllables 1

| | b | ch | ch' |
|---|---|---|---|
| a |  |  |  |
| e | |  | |
| i |  |  | |
| o |  |  | |
| u |  |  | |

| glottal initial vowel |
|---|
| 'a  |
| 'e  |
| 'i  |
| 'o  |
| 'u  |

## Phonetic Syllables 2

| | h | j | k | k' |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a |  |  |  |  |
| e |  |  |  |  |
| i |  |  |  |  |
| o |  |  |  |  |
| u |  |  |  |  |

## Phonetic Syllables 3

| | l | m | n | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a |  |  |  |  |
| e |  |  |  | |
| i |  |  |  |  |
| o |  |  |  |  |
| u |  |  |  |  |

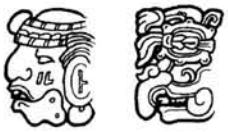
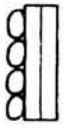
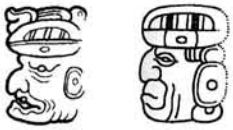
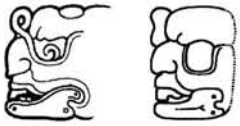
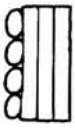
## Phonetic Syllables 4

| | s | t | t' | tz |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a |  |  | |  |
| e |  |  | |  |
| i |  |  | |  |
| o | |  | | |
| u |  |  |  |  |

## Phonetic Syllables 5

| | tz' | w | x | y |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a |  |  |  |  |
| e | |  | |  |
| i |  |  |  |  |
| o | |  |  |  |
| u |  | | |  |

# Numbers

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** *JUUN* | 0 | | **11** *BULUCH* | | |
| **2** *CHA'* | | | **12** *CHALAJUUN* | | |
| **3** *'UX* | | | **13** *'UXLAJUUN* | |  |
| **4** *CHAN* | | | **14** *CHANLAJUUN* |  | |
| **5** *HO'* | |  | **15** *HOLAJUUN* | | |
| **6** *WAK* | | | **16** *WAKLAJUUN* | | |
| **7** *HUK* | | | **17** *HUKLAJUUN* | |  |
| **8** *WAXAK* | | | **18** *WAXAKLAJUUN* | | |
| **9** *BOLON* | | | **19** *BOLONLAJUUN* |  | |
| **10** *LAJUUN* | | | **20 / 0** *MIH / JUUN K'AL* | | |

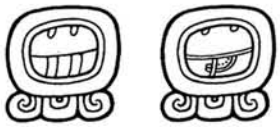
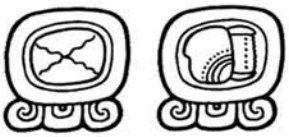
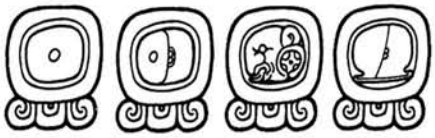
MIH JUUN K'AL

(after Kaufman and Norman 1984:137-138)

# Dates - Sacred Almanac of 260 days

***Yukatek***

*Classic Mayan*

| | |
|---|---|
| ***IMIX***<br>*Ha'?*<br> | ***CHUWEN***<br>*?*<br> |
| ***IK'***<br>*Ik'?*<br> | ***EB***<br>*?*<br> |
| ***AKBAL***<br>*Ak'ab?*<br> | ***BEN***<br>*?*<br>  |
| ***K'AN***<br>*Ohl?*<br> | ***IX***<br>*Hix?*<br> |
| ***CHIKCHAN***<br>*?*<br> | ***MEN***<br>*Tz'ikin?*<br> |
| ***KIMI'***<br>*Cham*<br> | ***KIB***<br>*?*<br> |
| ***MANIK'***<br>*Chij?*<br> | ***KABAN***<br>*Chab? /*<br>*Kab?*<br> |
| ***LAMAT***<br>*Ek'?*<br> | ***ETZ'NAB***<br>*?*<br>  |
| ***MULUK***<br>*?*<br>  | ***KAWAK***<br>*?*<br> |
| ***OK***<br>*?*<br> | ***AJAW***<br>*Ajaw?*<br> |

# Dates - Solar Calendar of 365 days

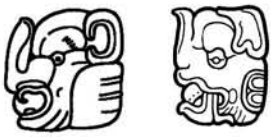
***Yukatek***
*Classic Mayan*

***POHP***
*K'anjalab*

***WOH***
*Ik'at*

***SIP***
*Chakat*

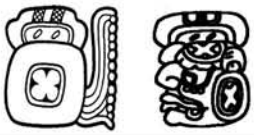
***SOOTZ'***
*Suutz'*



***TSEK***
*Kasew*

***XUL***
*Tz'i*

***YAXK'IN***
*Yaxk'in*



***MOL***
*Mol*

***CH'EN***
*Ik'sihoom*

***YAX***
*Yaxsihoom*

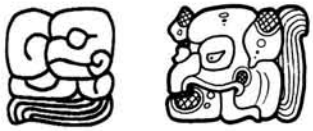
***SAK***
*Saksihoom*

***KEH***
*Chaksihoom*

***MAK***
*Mak*

***K'ANK'IN***
*Uniw or*
*K'ank'in*

***MUAN***
*Muwaan*



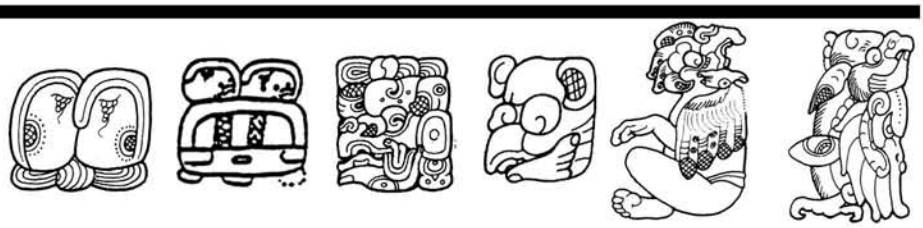
***PAX***
*Paax*

***K'AYAB***
*K'anasiiy*

***KUMK'U***
*Hulohl? /*
*Ohl?*

***WAYEB***
*Waayhaab? /*
*Kolajaw*

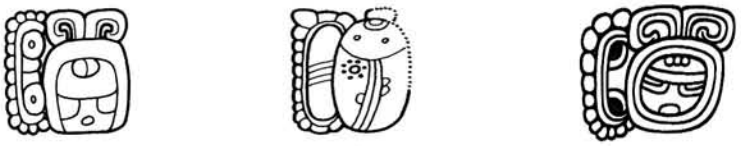
# Dates - Long Count

| | |
|---|---|
| ***K'IN***<br>1 day<br><br>#s 0-19 | |
| ***WINAL / WINAAK***<br>20 *k'in* =<br>20 days<br>#s 0-17 | |
| ***TUUN / HAAB***<br>18 *winal* =<br>360 days<br>#s 0-19 | |
| ***K'ALTUUN***<br>20 *tuun* =<br>7,200 days<br><br>#s 0-19 | |
| ***BAK'TUUN / PIK***<br>400 *tuun* =<br>144,000 days<br>#s 0-19 |  |
| ***PIKTUUN***<br>8000 *tuun* =<br>2,880,000 days | |
| ***KALABTUUN***<br>160,00 *tuun*<br>57,600,000 days | |
| ***KINCHILTUUN***<br>3,200,000 *tuun*<br>1,152,000,000 days | |

# Dates - Supplementary Series
## Lords of the Night

**G1**

**G2**

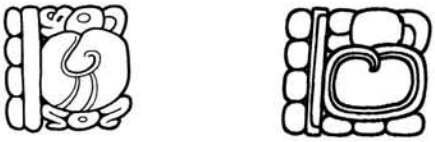


**G3**

**G4**

**G5**

**G6**



**G7**

**G8**

**G9**

**F - *HUUN***
TI' HUN-na
"[is] at the
edge of
the paper"

# Dates - Lunar Series

## Glyphs E & D

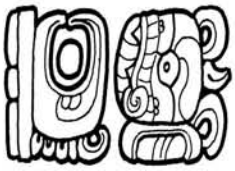
Number of days since last New Moon (29-1/2 day period)

10 days since its arrival

11 days

14 days

22 days



26 days

29 days

## Glyph C - *'U # K'AL*

position of moon within a cycle of 6 lunations

'u KA jaguar K'AL
his/its 2 ? binding

KA IX K'A
2 ? binding

OX-eye K'AL
3 ? binding

OX-skull K'AL
3 ? binding

## Glyph X

accompanies Glyph C - names the lunar month

X1

X2

X3

X4

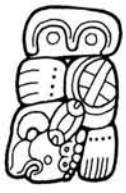
X5

X6

## Glyph B

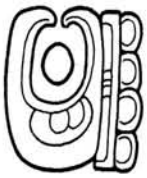
***'u K'ABA'***

"its name"



## Glyph A

Moon Length (29 or 30 days)



29 days

30 days

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8.14.0.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 3 Xul | 1-Sep | A.D. | 317 |
| 8.14.10.0.0 | 6 Ajaw | 13 Sip | 11-Jul | A.D. | 327 |
| 8.15.0.0.0 | 5 Ajaw | 3 Pop | 19-May | A.D. | 337 |
| 8.15.10.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 18 Pax | 28-Mar | A.D. | 347 |
| 8.16.0.0.0 | 3 Ajaw | 8 K'ank'in | 3-Feb | A.D. | 357 |
| 8.16.10.0.0 | 2 Ajaw | 18 Sak | 13-Dec | A.D. | 366 |
| 8.17.0.0.0 | 1 Ajaw | 8 Ch'en | 21-Oct | A.D. | 376 |
| 8.17.10.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 18 Xul | 30-Aug | A.D. | 386 |
| 8.18.0.0.0 | 12 Ajaw | 8 Sotz' | 8-Jul | A.D. | 396 |
| 8.18.10.0.0 | 11 Ajaw | 18 Pop | 17-May | A.D. | 406 |
| 8.19.0.0.0 | 10 Ajaw | 13 Kayab | 25-Mar | A.D. | 416 |
| 8.19.10.0.0 | 9 Ajaw | 3 Muwan | 1-Feb | A.D. | 426 |
| 9.0.0.0.0 | 8 Ajaw | 13 Kej | 11-Dec | A.D. | 435 |
| 9.0.10.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 3 Yax | 19-Oct | A.D. | 445 |
| 9.1.0.0.0 | 6 Ajaw | 13 Yaxk'in | 28-Aug | A.D. | 455 |
| 9.1.10.0.0 | 5 Ajaw | 3 Sek | 6-Jul | A.D. | 465 |
| 9.2.0.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 13 Wo | 15-May | A.D. | 475 |
| 9.2.10.0.0 | 3 Ajaw | 8 K'umk'u | 23-Mar | A.D. | 485 |
| 9.3.0.0.0 | 2 Ajaw | 18 Muwan | 30-Jan | A.D. | 495 |
| 9.3.10.0.0 | 1 Ajaw | 8 Mak | 9-Dec | A.D. | 504 |
| 9.4.0.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 18 Yax | 18-Oct | A.D. | 514 |
| 9.4.10.0.0 | 12 Ajaw | 8 Mol | 26-Aug | A.D. | 524 |
| 9.5.0.0.0 | 11 Ajaw | 18 Sek | 5-Jul | A.D. | 534 |
| 9.5.10.0.0 | 10 Ajaw | 8 Sip | 13-May | A.D. | 544 |
| 9.6.0.0.0 | 9 Ajaw | 3 Wayeb' | 22-Mar | A.D. | 554 |
| 9.6.10.0.0 | 8 Ajaw | 13 Pax | 29-Jan | A.D. | 564 |
| 9.7.0.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 3 K'ank'in | 7-Dec | A.D. | 573 |
| 9.7.10.0.0 | 6 Ajaw | 13 Sak | 16-Oct | A.D. | 583 |
| 9.8.0.0.0 | 5 Ajaw | 3 Ch'en | 24-Aug | A.D. | 593 |
| 9.8.10.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 13 Xul | 4-Jul | A.D. | 603 |
| 9.9.0.0.0 | 3 Ajaw | 3 Sotz' | 12-May | A.D. | 613 |
| 9.9.10.0.0 | 2 Ajaw | 13 Pop | 21-Mar | A.D. | 623 |
| 9.10.0.0.0 | 1 Ajaw | 8 K'ayab' | 27-Jan | A.D. | 633 |
| 9.10.10.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 18 K'ank'in | 6-Dec | A.D. | 642 |
| 9.11.0.0.0 | 12 Ajaw | 8 Kej | 14-Oct | A.D. | 652 |
| 9.11.10.0.0 | 11 Ajaw | 18 Ch'en | 23-Aug | A.D. | 662 |
| 9.12.0.0.0 | 10 Ajaw | 8 Yaxk'in | 1-Jul | A.D. | 672 |
| 9.12.10.0.0 | 9 Ajaw | 13 Sip | 10-May | A.D. | 682 |
| 9.13.0.0.0 | 8 Ajaw | 8 Wo | 18-Mar | A.D. | 692 |
| 9.13.10.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 3 K'umk'u | 26-Jan | A.D. | 702 |
| 9.14.0.0.0 | 6 Ajaw | 13 Muwan | 5-Dec | A.D. | 711 |
| 9.14.10.0.0 | 5 Ajaw | 3 Mak | 13-Oct | A.D. | 721 |
| 9.15.0.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 13 Yax | 22-Aug | A.D. | 731 |
| 9.15.10.0.0 | 3 Ajaw | 3 Mol | 30-Jun | A.D. | 741 |
| 9.16.0.0.0 | 2 Ajaw | 13 Sek | 9-May | A.D. | 751 |
| 9.16.10.0.0 | 1 Ajaw | 3 Sip | 17-Mar | A.D. | 761 |
| 9.17.0.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 18 K'umk'u | 24-Jan | A.D. | 771 |
| 9.17.10.0.0 | 12 Ajaw | 8 Pax | 2-Dec | A.D. | 780 |
| 9.18.0.0.0 | 11 Ajaw | 18 Mak | 11-Oct | A.D. | 790 |
| 9.18.10.0.0 | 10 Ajaw | 8 Sak | 19-Aug | A.D. | 800 |
| 9.19.0.0.0 | 9 Ajaw | 18 Mol | 28-Jun | A.D. | 810 |
| 9.19.10.0.0 | 8 Ajaw | 8 Xul | 6-May | A.D. | 820 |
| 10.0.0.0.0 | 7 Ajaw | 18 Sip | 15-Mar | A.D. | 830 |
| 10.0.0.10.0 | 6 Ajaw | 8 Pop | 22-Jan | A.D. | 840 |
| 10.1.1.0.0.0 | 5 Ajaw | 3 K'ayab' | 30-Nov | A.D. | 849 |
| 10.1.10.0.0 | 4 Ajaw | 13 K'ank'in | 9-Oct | A.D. | 859 |
| 10.2.0.0.0 | 3 Ajaw | 8 Kej | 17-Aug | A.D. | 869 |
| 10.2.10.0.0 | 2 Ajaw | 13 Ch'en | 26-Jun | A.D. | 879 |
| 10.3.0.0.0 | 1 Ajaw | 3 Yaxk'in | 4-May | A.D. | 889 |
| 10.3.10.0.0 | 13 Ajaw | 13 Sotz' | 13-Mar | A.D. | 899 |
| 10.4.0.0.0 | 12 Ajaw | 3 Wo | 20-Jan | A.D. | 909 |