



Glyph Dwellers

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Seven Inscribed Ceramic Vessels in the Mint Museum, Charlotte

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Recently we were generously given permission to photograph the important Maya ceramics collection at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina. Although many vessels from this collection are well known to Mayanists, having been published by Justin Kerr on mayavase.com as well as in books such as Robicsek and Hales (1981), others have not been fully published. The purpose of this note is to discuss seven significant works from this collection, pointing out important historical and epigraphic details. Full transcriptions of the texts and documentary images appear in the Maya Hieroglyphic Database (MHD), online. The vessel designations below can be queried under *objabbr* in the MHD. All of the vessels discussed below are approximately Late Classic in date, and one of these, MMC7815717, can be securely dated to 771 CE. They are presented here in no particular order but are grouped by style.

1. MMC04964 [Accession no. 2004.96.4]: Hix Witz-style vase showing four lords, including an initiate (Fig. 1)

This red-ground polychrome vase with a pseudoglyphic rim “text” shows four figures dressed in elaborate costumes and holding ritual implements. One of these figures (photo 1) wears a garment made of leaf-like (or feather-like) forms and holds a staff with an attached blade. The blade touches an adjacent L-shaped caption, which identifies him as the focal figure. Similar figures wearing leafy garments appear on monuments, such as the platform from Temple XXI at Palenque, where the future rulers of Palenque (and likely, brothers), K'inich Ahkal Mo' Naahb III and Upakal K'inich Janahb Pakal, participate in a bloodletting rite associated with youths (Fig. 2; Miller and Martin 2004:23). A similar cape is worn by the presumptive



heir to Dos Pilas on Dos Pilas Panel 19, as he lets blood into a bowl—a public demonstration of piety and courage (Fig. 3; Houston 2018:101–110; Houston, Stuart, and Taube 2006:131–132). The other three figures on the Mint Museum vase seem to be dressed as deities, including a "cruller"-eyed being holding a flaming beaded baton (photo 2), a long-lipped fanged being (photo 3), and a deity with a hand in place of his mandible and holding a feathered wand and a square object, possibly a shield (photo 4).



Fig. 1. Vase, Mint Museum 2004.96.4. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photographs by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 2. Palenque Temple XXI platform, detail. Drawing by Dana Moot II.



Fig. 3. Dos Pilas Panel 19, detail. Drawing by David Stuart and Stephen Houston.

Rites of first bloodletting are also commemorated on painted ceramics, most of which reference Hix Witz (Pajaral/Zapote Bobal/La Joyanca) or are stylistically associated with this polity (Green 2014; Houston 2012; Houston 2018; see also Stuart 2003). For example, the Hix Witz-style vase K1116 commemorates a first bloodletting and shows the youth on the left together with six taller companions participating in an initiatory rite associated with deer sacrifice and warfare (**Fig. 4**). The jaguar deity markings on the faces of some of these figures, as well as the imagery of shields and a flaming torch, may be compared with similar iconography on the Mint Museum vase.



Fig. 4. Vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K1116).

Like K1116, Mint Museum 2004.96.4 is painted in the Hix Witz style, with red background and highly detailed, though somewhat awkwardly drawn polychrome painting. The glyph located nearest to the leaf-adorned figure mentions a Hix Witz lord (**Fig. 5, C1**). The other glyphs in the caption are more problematic. The first sign (A1) is probably an emblem glyph, preceded by a possible **K'UH** and topped by a clear **AJAW** superfix. The main sign closely resembles HB1, the main sign of the Tikal Emblem Glyph. At A2 is possibly



another emblem glyph, consisting of a clear K'UH and a possible AJAW superfix, and a possible snake head for the main sign, corresponding to the Calakmul Emblem Glyph. Complicating matters is a ya subfix on this block as well as possibly a numeral 7 to the right. The glyph at B1 consists of ka-KAN, but with the addition of a bracket adorned with dots. This block may represent another (partial) emblem glyph, with the bracket as the K'UH and a missing AJAW. The caption may therefore possibly be a list of three emblem glyphs of Tikal, Calakmul, and an unknown Kaan site, together with a Hix Witz lord, corresponding to the four figures who are depicted on the vase.

An alternative is that B1 is part of the proper name for the Hix Witz lord. If the dotted bracket is 1S1 wi, then this nominal component would possibly be related to the wi?-CHAN/KAN-na nominal elements that appear on a Hix Witz-style bowl in the Museo VICAL de Arte Precolombino y Vidrio Moderno 1.2.75.225 (Luín et al. 2018:878, fig. 1), as well as a Hix Witz-style vase Kerr 9244 (Fig. 6). The texts of both of these vessels include references to *yax ch'ahb* 'first penance/bloodletting,' which is consistent with the iconography of the Mint Museum vase.

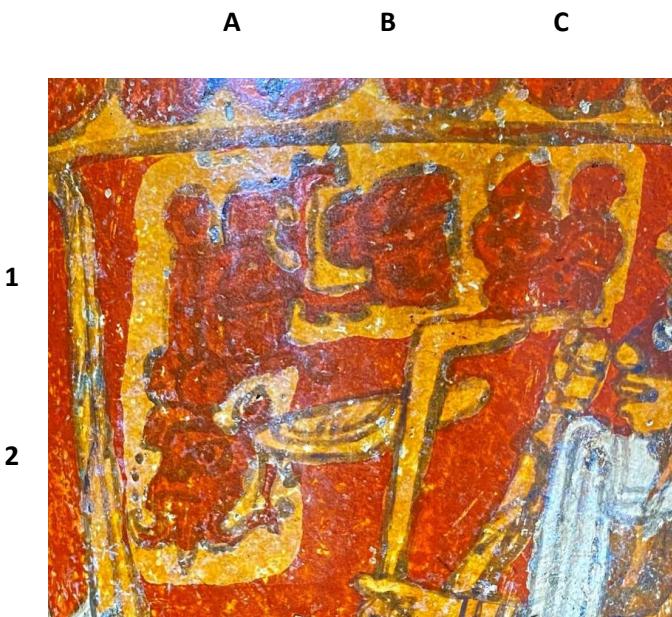


Fig. 5. Detail of text caption on Mint Museum 2004.96.4. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photograph by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 6. Details of nominal components from Hix Witz-style vessels. **a.** Museo VICAL 1.2.75.225 (photograph by Yuri Polyukhovych); **b.** K9244 (photograph by Justin Kerr).

**2. MMC991297 [Accession no. 1999.129.7]: El Zott-style atole bowl with an unusual /ta/ sign (Fig. 7)**

This bowl is decorated with text near the rim in black paint on a yellowish cream ground, similar to Kerr 5465 and other vessels (Fig. 8). The style of painting and the use of certain unusual syllabic substitutions associate this vessel with the El Zott polity (see Boot 2016; Carter 2015; Houston, Garrison, and Román 2018; Moot 2021; Reents-Budet 1994). According to the stylistic typology of El Zott vessels proposed by Dana Moot (2021), this vessel seems to pertain to the "Mirror Face" group. Other vessels belonging to this set include: K5465, K5509, K8393, MS0274, and possibly K6618 and LC.p2.180 (Moot 2021:Table 4).

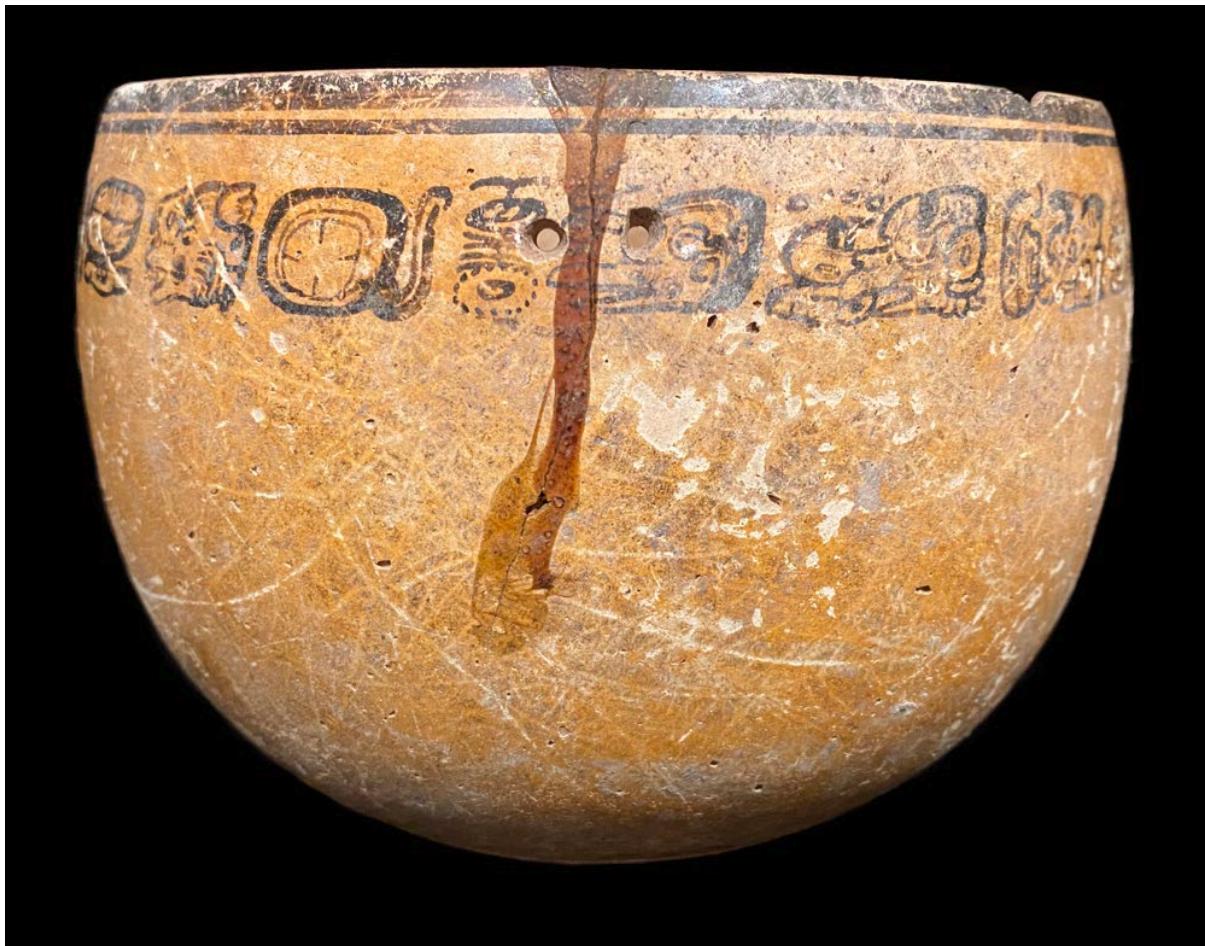


Fig. 7. Bowl, Mint Museum 1999.129.7. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photograph by Matthew Looper.



© K5465

Fig. 8. Vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K5465).

The Primary Standard Sequence (PSS) or Dedicatory Formula of the vessel, painted just below the rim, begins (A) with a rare vulture head allograph of the PSS Initial Sign. A similar glyph appears on the El Zozt-style "Bowl of the Eleven Deities," though this example has a breath scroll emerging from its mouth, and the Nasser bowl vulture seems to have a torch attached to its forehead (Fig. 9; Robicsek 1978:fig. 146). These graphemes are distinct from the "bird-eating-bird" allograph of 1M3, discussed by Krempel et al. (2017) (in current catalog, BX5).



a.



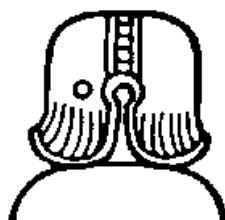
b.

Fig. 9. PSS Initial Sign variants (BV6) from a. Mint Museum 1999.129.7. Photo by Matthew Looper; b. "Bowl of the Eleven Deities". Drawing by Dana Moot II after Robicsek (1978).

Blocks B and C spell out the dedication verb using a complex "haab-hand" **T'AB** allograph (PJ8) that is also used on other El Zozt-style vessels, such as Denver Art Museum 2004.956, followed by **yi-chi**. Blocks D-F spell out the typical **u-tz'i-ba-li**, using a "skull" allograph of **ba** common in El Zozt ceramics (SJ1s). Next at G is the "split-sky" allograph of **u**, also common in El Zozt-style ceramics; however, in this case, the scribe deleted **ja-yi** for *jaay* 'cup' that would be expected to follow. Instead, the text moves directly into **yu-k'i-bi yuk'ib** 'his drinking vessel' (H-I).

The preposition **ta** is expected next (J); however, on this vase we see an unusual grapheme depicting a possible shark's tooth with an inverted U-shape and a "shiny" marking. This sign appears in Thompson's catalog as T155e (Fig. 10). The other context for T155e is in a nominal expression for a deity name/title (or theophoric appellation; see Beliaev, Davletshin, and Vepretskii 2018) for Yax Nun Ahiin I of Tikal on Stela 31 where it substitutes for the "torch" form of **ta** (2SA, Fig. 11). This substitution seems to suggest that the "open hand" combines with the dots/beads on the left-hand side of the block to form a single logograph possibly reading **TAY**.¹

¹ Tokovinine and Zender (2012:41) make note of substitution spellings of **ta-ye(-le)** in this nominal expression. In Tokovinine's online glyph catalog (2017), the "droplets" appears together with the "open hand" and T155e as a



a.

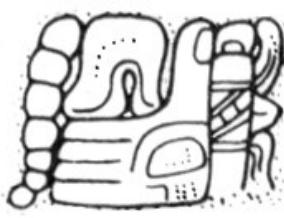


b.

Fig. 10. T155e. a. After Thompson (1962). b. Mint Museum 1999.129.7 Photo by Matthew Looper.



a.



b.



c.

Fig. 11. T155e substituting for ta. a, b. T155a on Tikal Stela 31 (M2, B22). Drawing by William R. Coe (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982:fig. 52); c. 'Torch' (2SA) ta on Santa Rita Corozal Cache vessel 2 (Structure 7, Special Deposit P2B-5). Drawing by Christophe Helmke (Stemp, Awe, and Helmke 2014:fig. 6d).

The rest of the text of Mint Museum 1999.129.7 provides the intended contents for the bowl (*paaj ul* 'sour/fermented atole'; K—L), followed by the titles of its owner, who is stated to be *yanabil k'uhul pa'chan ajaw*, the *a'nab* [courtly official] of the holy El Zotz lord (M—P). References to persons with an *a'nab* title appear rarely on El Zotz'-style ceramics; other examples include K3444, K8426, Museo Popol Vuh 0411 and 1144, and probably Denver Art Museum 2000.307.

The last three blocks (Q—S) provide another title, starting with '9 sky', then a bat head, and then **K'IN-ni** 'sun/day' (Table 1a). Parallel examples of this title appear in monumental texts such as Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions east panel, where the "sun" sign is infixated into the bat eye (AW4) (Table 1b). A more common variant of this title uses a canine head (AP5) instead of a bat, as on Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions, middle panel and portable texts such as Kerr 1901 (see Table 1c, d, e). Many epigraphers have assumed that the "sun" element here is an integral component of the complete grapheme and used

logograph possibly reading **TAY**. Another option is that the "open hand" is simply **YAL** (see Tokovinine and Zender 2012:41).



complementation patterns to suggest various logographic values for AP5, including **YO(O)N** and **YO(O)K'IN** (Beliaev and Safronov 2013:25; Helmke, Hoggarth, and Awe 2018:34; Schele and Grube 1997:87; Tokovinine 2017:30).² The example from the Mint Museum bowl, in which that bat head and "sun" are relegated to distinct blocks, however, suggests that the "bat" and "sun" are distinct logographs. By extension, the canine and "sun" are also likewise separate graphemes. This is also suggested by the text of the Bowl of the Eleven Deities and the Vase of the Initial Series from Uaxactun, in which the animal head is missing altogether (**Table 1f, g**). Although a lack of full syllabic spellings makes it impossible to offer a precise phonetic analysis of these titles at present, evidence from the Mint Museum bowl casts doubt on previous decipherments of AP5. At the very end of the PSS is a **ta** grapheme, which probably serves as pseudoglyphic "punctuation," marking the point where the text begins and ends.

Table 1. Parallel '9 sky' titles in El Zozt-style ceramics and Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions.

a. Mint Museum 1999.129.7			
b. Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions, East panel P12-Q1 (drawing by Yuriy Polyukhovych)			
c. Palenque Temple of the Inscriptions, Middle panel B9-A10 (drawing by Yuriy Polyukhovych)			
d. Vase K1901 (photo by Justin Kerr)			

² Although this note is not the place for a full consideration of the relationship between AW4 and AP5, it should be noted that the two graphemes often appear in the same contexts; for example, following the Wak Kabnal (Naranjo) title, with ordinal numbers, following directionals, and with a '16' coefficient. In addition to the examples illustrated in **Table 1**, the "9 sky AP5" title appears on Chichen Itza Cenote Jade 1402, Chichen Itza Temple of the Four Lintels Lintel 3, Comitan Stela 1, Moral-Reforma Stela 5, Naranjo Stela 13, and Xcalumkin Cornice 1, where it seems to be a toponym.



e. Plate, Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University 1983.36.1 (drawing by Dana Moot II)		
f. Vase of the Initial Series (drawing by Dana Moot II)		
g. Bowl of the Eleven Deities (drawing by Dana Moot II)		

Table 2. Text of bowl Mint Museum 1999.129.7. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photos by Matthew Looper.

	A	AL	alay	here
	B	T'AB?-	t'abaayich?	is dedicated?
	C	-yi-chi	"	"



	D	u-tz'i-	utz'ihbal	its painting
	E	-ba-	"	"
	F	-li	"	"
	G	u	ujaay?	his cup?
	H	yu-k'i-	yuk'ib	his drinking vessel
	I	-bi	"	"
	J	ta	ta	for
	K	pa	paaj	sour/fermented



	L	lu	ul	atole
	M	ya-na-bi-li	yanabil	his <i>a'nab</i>
	N	K'UH	k'uhul	holy
	O	PA'-CHAN-na	pa'chan	El Zotz
	P	AJAW	ajaw	lord
	Q	09 CHAN-na	balu'n chan	9 sky
	R	??	??	??
	S	K'IN-ni	k'in	sun/day



	T	ta	-	[pseudoglyphic]
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**3. MMC991298 [Accession no. 1999.129.8]: El Zottz-style bowl with an unusual emblem glyph (Fig. 12)**

Mint Museum 1999.129.8 is a finely painted polychrome bowl in the El Zottz-area style, but it cannot be readily associated with the stylistic groups outlined by Moot (2021). Its glossy surface is heavily pitted, but its text is still almost entirely readable.



Fig. 12. Bowl, Mint Museum 1999.129.8. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photograph by Matthew Looper.

The PSS begins with a typical Initial Sign (A), followed at B—D by the dedication verb. Although the **yi-hi-chi** suffix is clearly visible in blocks C and D, the sign representing the verbal root is damaged by pitting and two drilled holes, making it difficult to identify. We suggest that it is the "female head" dedication verb allograph (PLC), which also appears with the -**yi-hi-chi** suffix on the El Zottz-style vase Museo Popol Vuh 0465 (K3390). Next is **u-tz'i-ba-li** (E—H), spelling out *utz'ihbal* 'its painting'. The **u** is clearly the sacrificial head PC1, and the "bat" **tz'i** and "skull" **ba** are in the wrong order. The **li** sign is the common 'worm bird' (BV5). Block I is too damaged to read but should be either *ujaay* 'his cup' or



yuk'ib 'his drinking vessel'. Many El Zozt PSSs include both *ujaay* and *yuk'ib*, but when space is limited, one or the other object reference may be deleted. Next at J—L is the "contents" section of the PSS, *ta paaj ul* 'for sour/fermented atole', and at M and N are owners' titles *keleem ch'ok* 'young male, youth'. The most significant part of the inscription is an Emblem Glyph at O—P. This consists of **K'UH** at O and the "sucking fish" **tz'u** followed by **AJAW** at P. The "sucking fish" must provide the name for the polity; however, it is not known from other site titles or emblem glyphs. Because it is given only with a syllabic sign, we cannot be certain what the target word would be. Possibly it is underspelling a word like *tz'uutz'* or *tz'uuh*.

Table 3. Text of bowl, Mint Museum 1999.129.8. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photos by Matthew Looper.

	A	a-AL-ya	alay	here
	B	T'AB?-	t'abaayi(hi)ch?	is dedicated?
	C	-yi-	"	"
	D	-hi-chi	"	"



	E	u-	utz'ihbal	its painting
	F	-ba-	"	"
	G	-tz'i-	"	"
	H	-li	"	"
	I	-	yuk'ib?	his drinking vessel?
	J	ta	ta	for
	K	pa	paaj	sour/fermented



	L	u-lu	ul	atole
	M	KELEM	keleem	young male
	N	ch'o-ko	ch'ok	youth
	O	K'UH	k'uhul	holy
	P	tz'u AJAW	?? ajaw	?? lord

**4. MMC7815717 [Accession no. 1978.157.17]: Carved vase with tzolk'in date (Fig. 13)**

Werness-Rude (2017) discussed this brown carved tripod vase, associating it with the Chocholá-style corpus, which was produced at sites in northern Campeche (see also Ardren 1996; Boot 1997; Boot 2006; Boot 2010; Coe 1973; García Campillo 1992; Green 1997; Grube 1990; Lacadena García Gallo, García Barrios, and Morales Uh 2018; Tate 1985; Tokovinine 2014:15–18; Werness 2010; Werness-Rude 2015). Beneath the rim of the vessel is a carved band of six glyphs separated by double vertical bands. The form and glyptic details of this work are highly reminiscent of a fine slateware vessel from Uxmal illustrated by Vaillant (1927) (Fig. 14).

The first two blocks in the rim inscription are the PSS Initial Sign and the *k'ah/lajich?* dedication verb (A-B). Block C probably contains the -**ji-chi** part of this collocation; the main sign is probably the **chi** "hand," while the precise identification of **ji** is unclear. Block D is probably **yu**-"BAT"; block E is perhaps **lu**, and block F might be the "worm bird" **li**. Together these may form the sequence referring to the carving of objects (Stuart 1987; 1989a; 1989b). The **K'AL** allograph in block B is a fairly rare sign depicting a celt on top of "sky" (ZH9). This grapheme appears in painted pottery but also in Chocholá-style carved ceramics, such as the bowl Kerr 4466 (Fig. 15).



Fig. 13. Tripod vase, Mint Museum 1978.157.17. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photograph by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 14. Slateware vessel from Uxmal (after Vaillant 1927:fig. 310).



Fig. 15. Chocholá-style vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K4466).

Another parallel between Mint Museum 1978.157.17 and Chocholá-style pottery is the placement of an Ajaw-date on the body of the vessel, as also appears on K4466 (Fig. 15). Indeed, in both the Mint Museum vase and K4466, the coefficient is 13. On the Chocholá vessels, the day signs are usually personifications alone, such as the young lord (PJ1) on K4466. However, interestingly on Mint Museum 1978.157.17, the day name is spelled with the T168 AJAW superfix placed over a main sign that may be the "vulture" form of AJAW (BV1) together with two syllabic complements. To the right is the crescent form of ZU1s ja, and 2S2 wa appears at the bottom. The day name, therefore, is written as AJAW-ja-wa. Such mixed logo-syllabic spellings of the day Ajaw appear elsewhere in the northern Maya zone, as on Chuncanob Capstone 1, Kabah Codz Pop, and Sisilha Hieroglyphic Doorway (a-AJAW-wa) (Fig. 16). The AJAW vulture with T168 on top is analogous to forms seen at Chichen Itza (note the bundled hair on top of this example, similar to the hair descending in front of the bird head on the Mint Museum vase), and there are other examples of AJAW-ja-wa spellings of ajaw in the hieroglyphic corpus, though these do not spell the day name.



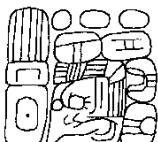
		
a. AJAW-wa (Kabah Codz Pop, Northern Doorway Eastern Jamb, G.).	b. AJAW-wa (Chichen Itza Watering Trough Lintel D1)	c. AJAW-ja-wa (Caracol Ballcourt Marker 3 F4)

Fig. 16. Mixed logo-syllabic spellings of *ajaw*. a. Drawing by David Stuart; b. Drawing by Ruth Krochock; c. Drawing by Nikolai Grube.

Like Kerr 4466, the coefficient 13 for the day Ajaw suggests that both vessels record the period ending 9.17.0.0.0 (771 CE). Such vessels that commemorate period endings are rare in the ceramic corpus and by the end of the Classic period tend to be created in northern Campeche, including COLK0508, COLK4466, COLK8017, COLK8853, COLMAI248346 (**Table 4**).

Table 4. Ceramics commemorating period-endings.

Itzamnaaj Effigy (COLESB50116)	9.3.0.0.0	[2 Ajaw] 18 Muwan
COLK8121	9.6.0.0.0	9 Ajaw 3 Wayeb
Comalcalco Urn fragment (CMLUrn)	9.11.0.0.0	11th k'atun
Museum zu Allerheiligen Eb11413 (COLSchV)	9.12.0.0.0	10 Ajaw [8 Yaxk'in]
COLK9130	9.15.0.0.0	4 Ajaw [13 Yax]
COLMAI248346	9.16.0.0.0	2 Ajaw [13 Sek]
COLK8017	9.16.14.0.0	14th tun of k'atun 13 Ajaw
COLK4466	9.17.0.0.0	13 Ajaw [18 Kumk'u]



COLK8853 ³	9.17.15.0.0	5 Ajaw [3] Muwan
COLK0508	9.18.0.0.0	11 Ajaw [18 Mak]
COLK5453	9.18.5.0.0?	4 Ajaw 13 Keh

Table 5. Text of tripod vase, Mint Museum 1978.157.17. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photos by Matthew Looper.

	A	a-AL	alay	here
	B	K'AL?-ja-	k'ahlajich?	is made?
	C	-ji?-chi?	"	"
	D	yu?-xu?-	yuxulil?	its carving?
	E	-lu?-	"	"
	F	-li?	"	"

³ Werness-Rude (2017:135-136) suggested that the smaller glyph on this vase is AJAW, but it has the mouth full of feathers suggesting that it is in fact MUWAN.

**5. MMC8120414 [Accession no. 1981.204.14]: Chocholá-style tripod plate with incised texts (Fig. 17)**

This large tripod plate is decorated with carved and painted images and texts. The inner surface is painted in black with a design consisting of a vegetal serpent out of which a long-beaked bird emerges. A black band encircles the rim. The exterior of the plate is decorated with four rosettes painted in black. These alternate with four carved/incised zones, in the recessed part of which can be seen significant traces of red pigment. These include two large images of God N emerging from a star-eyed serpent, which itself is threaded through a Venus/star motif, and two glyptic passages, each consisting of four blocks arranged in single columns and oriented diagonally. Many aspects of this plate, including glyptic details, the diagonal arrangement of single-column texts, black pigment, and exquisite carving of imagery are typical of the Chocholá style; however, until now, no other example of a Chocholá-style inscribed plate has been included in the MHD. A Chocholá-style vase with similar iconography is Kerr 2774 (Fig. 18).



Fig. 17a-b. Tripod plate, Mint Museum 1981.204.14. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Andrew A. Lanyi. Photographs by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 17c, d, e. Tripod plate, Mint Museum 1981.204.14, details. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Andrew A. Lanyi. Photographs by Matthew Looper.



Fig. 18. Chocholá-style vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K2774).

The two text columns on this plate both begin with *u-* expressions, suggesting possessed objects/nouns; however, there is no indication that they are meant to be read in any specific order. One column (A) seems to begin with **u-bo-ka**, which is not attested elsewhere in the script. Consequently, it seems reasonable to suggest that the **bo** here is intended to be **LAK** or **Ia**, yielding **u-LAK/Ia-ka**, *ulaak* 'his plate'. At A2 is **K'AWIL-Ia**, probably a personal name. At A3 is **che-e?-bu**, which is possibly an abbreviated form of *bahchehb*, a scribal title (see Coe and Kerr 1997:148–150; Houston 2016:405, 414). An analogy for this title is found on the Chocholá-style bowl K4022 (AMNH, New York 30.3/2482). A4 is the portrait head of God CH, which can have four different possible readings: **9**, **YAX**, **ba**, or the undeciphered name of the deity. Given its position in this column, it seems most likely that it is not a syllabograph or an adjective (*yax*), but either **9** or the God CH nominal.

The second column begins with a partly reconstructed glyph (B1) having a main sign that looks like a skull, possibly SJ1 **JOL** or **BAK**. If this *ubaak* 'his captive(s)', then it may read together with the last glyph of column A to yield *balu'n ubaak*, 'many are his captives'. It is also possible A4 plus B1 compose the nominal component *balu'n ujo'*. The glyph at B2 is a modern fabrication. Next is **sa-ja-la**, *sajal*, a title found frequently in Chocholá-style ceramics as well as contemporaneous monuments from northern Campeche (see Grube 1994:320-321, fig. 2). The last glyph (B4) again begins with a **u** prefix, followed by an indeterminate sign. In other Chocholá-style texts (e.g. Chrysler Art Museum 86.423), *sajal* is sometimes followed by an *uyul(uul)* expression, which attributes the inscription to some individual; however, in this case, there is not enough space for the signs required. In sum, the inscription of this plate may read continuously as a "name tag" for the plate, indicating that it was made for a *sajal* called K'awiil, who also bore other titles of note.

Table 6. Text of tripod plate, Mint Museum 1981.204.14. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Andrew A. Lanyi. Photos by Matthew Looper.

	A1	u-LAK/Ia?-ka	<i>ulaak?</i>	his plate?
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	A2	K'AWIL-la	k'awiil	K'awiil
	A3	che-e?-bu	[bah]chehb?	first/head scribe 'quill'?
	A4	9?	balu'n?	many/Balu'n Ujo'l?
	B1	_JOL/BAK?	uko'l/baak?	(are) his captives/Balu'n Ujo'l?
	B2	-	-	-
	B3	sa-ja-la	sajal	sajal
	B4	u-??	??	??

**6. MMC8317240 [Accession no. 1983.172.40]: Dynastic vase by "Painter B" (Fig. 19)**

This tripod vase is a previously undocumented example of an important type, the Dynastic Vase, which records important historical events—i.e. royal accessions—associated with the Kaanu'l dynasty (Martin 1997; Robicsek and Hales 1981:97–104, 157–159; Robicsek and Hales 1982:58–61; Vepretskii, Savchenko, and Khokriakova 2021). Although this vessel has not been chemically sampled, other Dynastic Vases have paste chemistry that was reported to suggest production in the southern Mirador Basin (Martin 1997:851; Reents-Budet et al. 2011).



Fig. 19. Tripod vase, Mint Museum 1983.172.40. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Andrew A. Lanyi. Photograph by Matthew Looper.

While the texts of most Dynastic Vases are relatively long, suggesting that their content may have been excerpted from lengthy manuscripts (now lost), the Mint Museum Dynastic Vase has a very short text, consisting of only 16 blocks, arranged in 8 columns (see Carter 2014:350–351). This text provides no



previously unknown historical data, but lists the dates, accessions, and names of three Kaan'ul rulers, Rulers 1, 2, and 3. The text ends abruptly at H2 with the tzolk'in position 3 Etz'nab, which corresponds to the accession date of Chak Jo'l (Ruler 4). Other examples of Dynastic Vases that record the same data are:

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Kerr 1302 (**Fig. 20**)

Kerr 1334 (**Fig. 21**)

Kerr 1344 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1988.1285) (**Fig. 22**)

Kerr 1371 (Etnologisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin IV Ca 50142)

Kerr 1372 (Jay I. Kislak Collection, Library of Congress PC 0188)

Kerr 6751 (Los Angeles County Museum of Art M.2010.115.1)

Because the vases above have longer inscriptions, several of them include information that the Mint Museum vase lacks, such as the *kalo'mte'* title for Ruler 2 (see K1302, 1371, K1372; **Fig. 20, 21, 22**). Various details of the Mint Museum vase strongly suggest its close relationship to a specific subset of the Dynastic Vases. Although retouching of these vessels makes it difficult to discuss attribution, we note the overall general similarity in painting style of the Mint Museum Dynastic Vase to K1302, K1334, and K1344, suggesting that it was by the same or a related artist ("Painter B;" see Martin 1997:850).



Fig. 20. Dynastic vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K1302).



Fig. 21. Dynastic vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K1334).

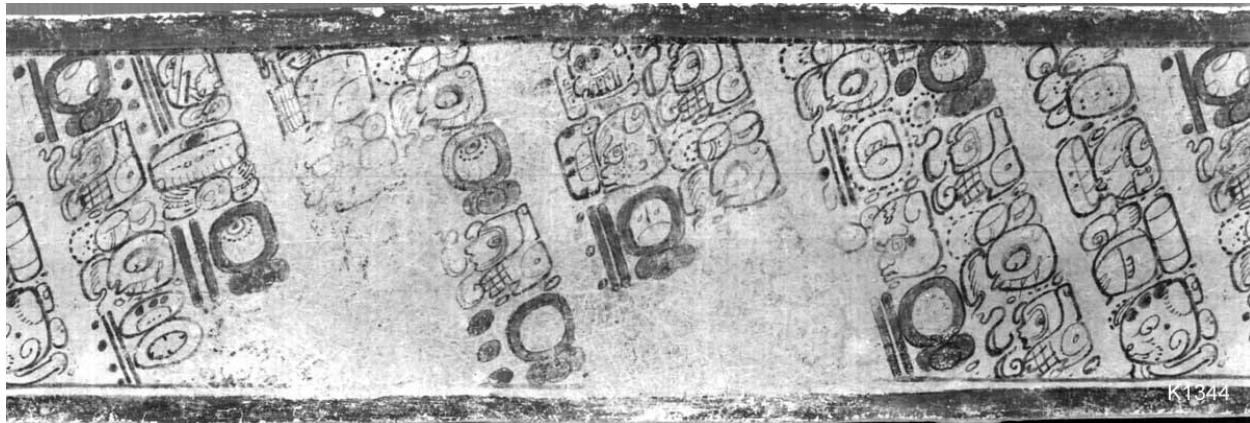


Fig. 22. Dynastic vase. Rollout photograph by Justin Kerr (K1344).

Table 7. Text of tripod vase, Mint Museum 1981.204.14. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Andrew A. Lanyi. Photos by Matthew Looper.

	A1	07 ??	wuk ??	07 Chuwen
--	----	-------	--------	-----------



	B1	19 K'AN-JAL-la?-bu	balu'n laju'n k'anjalawab	19 Pop
	A2	CH'AM-ya K'AWIL	ch'amay k'awiil	takes K'awiil
	B2	?? CHAN ??	?? chan ??	"Sky Raiser" (Ruler 1)
	C1	K'UH ka-KAN AJAW	k'uhul kaanu'l ajaw	holy Kaanu'l (Calakmul/Dzibanche) lord
	D1	10 ??	laju'n ??	10 Imix
	C2	14 YAX-K'IN-ni	chanlaju'n yaxk'in	14 Yaxk'in
	D2	CH'AM K'AWIL	ch'amay k'awiil	takes K'awiil



	E1	ta-TAY? K'INICH	tayel k'inich	Tayel K'inich (Ruler 2)
	F1	K'UH ka-KAN AJAW	k'uhul kaanu'l ajaw	holy Kaanu'l (Calakmul/Dzibanche) lord
	E2	03 ??	hux ??	03 Imix
	F2	07 YAX-SIHOM	wuk yaxsihoom	07 [12] Yax
	G1	CH'AM-wa K'AWIL	ch'ama'w k'awiil	takes K'awiil
	H1	CHAN-NAL CHAK CHAPAT	chanal chak chapaht	Chanal Chak Chapaht (Ruler 3)
	G2	K'UH ka-KAN AJAW	k'uhul kaanu'l ajaw	holy Kaanu'l (Calakmul/Dzibanche) lord



	H2	03 ??	hux ??	03 Etz'nab
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7. MMC7928715 [Accession no. 1979.287.15; MS0510]: Eastern Peten-style pedestal vase with a unique object reference (Fig. 23)

This vessel is of an unusual form, consisting of a small globular or *tecomate*-type body supported by a pedestal.⁴ It is painted in a polychrome style typical of the eastern Peten region, including Xultun (see Garrison and Stuart 2004; Krempel and Matteo 2013; Matteo and Krempel 2011; Polyukhovych and Looper 2019). It is decorated with two columns of text (2 blocks each), interspersed with two images of flaming personified K'an-crosses. Stylistically it is close to another globular vessel, K6882, though this vessel lacks the pedestal (Fig. 24). It is also similar in style to a bowl sherd (MSBU10) excavated at Buenavista del Cayo, Belize, associated with production in the Baax Witz polity (Xultun) (Fig. 25; Reents-Budet and Bishop in press; Joe Ball, personal communication, 2022).⁵



Fig. 23a. Pedestal vase, Mint Museum 1983.287.15. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photograph by Matthew Looper.

⁴ For a similar Eastern Peten-style globular vessel supported by a pedestal, see Los Angeles County Museum of Art M.2010.115.786 (K7042). Other examples painted in different styles include Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1988.1284 (MS1079) (Naranjo area) and Kerr 8722 (Hix Witz area).

⁵ A preliminary transcription of the probable nominal that survives on MSBU10 is: AJ/a-t'u-na AJ/a-“K'IN-IMIX”-na-AKAN CHAK-LEK?-MO'-o. On the “SNAKE-ON-STICK” grapheme, see (Houston 2019).



Fig. 23b, c. Pedestal vase, Mint Museum 1983.287.15. Collection of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Francis Robicsek. Photographs by Matthew Looper.

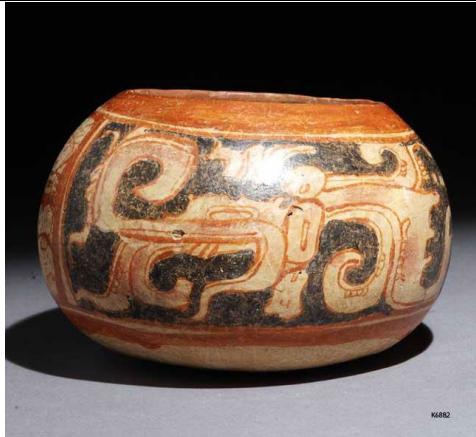


Fig. 24. Bowl. Photographs by Justin Kerr (K6882).

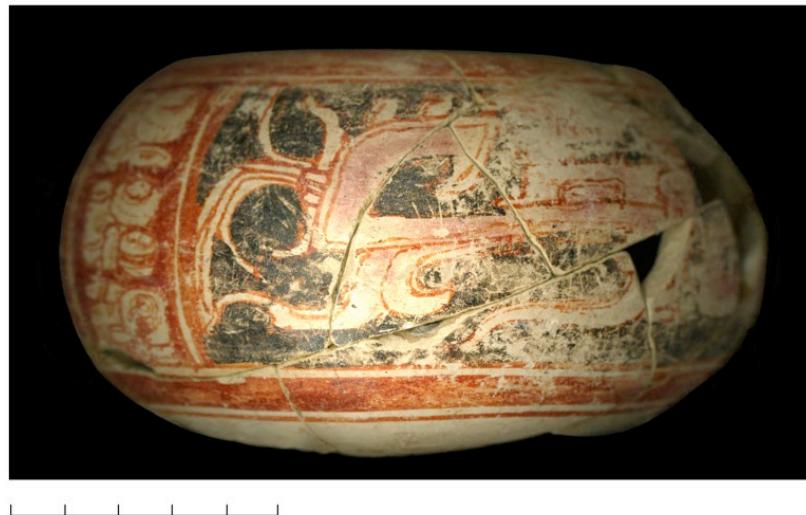


Fig. 25. Sherd from Depositional Context BVDC 32-3 [MSBU10, Buenavista, Belize]. Sherd image courtesy of Joseph W. Ball; detail courtesy of Jennifer Taschek.

While K6882 (**Fig. 24**, and similar globular vessels such as Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1988.1284) is designated as a metaphorical *yotoot* 'his house', the first text column of Mint Museum 1979.287.15 refers to the vessel with a unique combination of graphemes reading **u-nu-ki-bi**, *unu(h)kib*. Interpreted analogously to *yuk'ib* 'his drinking vessel', which is commonly used to refer to other ceramic vessels, such as those described elsewhere in this report, this collocation can be analyzed morphologically as a possessed noun derived from a root *nu(h)k*, with an instrumental suffix *-ib*. In Maya inscriptions, the term *nuhk* is usually a noun, referring to 'skin' or metaphorically to 'clothing/attire'. One possibility is that this



object designation is related to terms for 'drum', such as Tzotzil *nukulil vob* 'skin drum, tambourine, timbrel' (Laughlin and Haviland 1988:276) or Tzeltal *nuhkulel* 'drum skin' (Polian 2018:464), in that it is similar in shape to a Maya hand drum (**Fig. 26, 27**). In this case, it may be referred to as a 'thing for putting leather on', analogously to Tzeltal *xuhkub* 'elbow', related to Proto-Mayan/Proto-Cholan **xuhk* 'corner' (Kaufman and Norman 1984:137; Kaufman and Justeson 2003:342).



Fig. 26. Figure playing a ceramic hand-drum (MS1436). Photograph courtesy of Dorie Reents-Budet, MCP.



Fig. 27. Ceramic drum (inverted). Photograph by Justin Kerr (K5624).

The other column on this vessel contains two titles that refer to the object's owner. These read *chak tok wahyaab wuk tzuk*. The first component, Chak Tok Wahyaab, is a dynastic title associated with Holmul (Estrada-Belli et al. 2009:246–248), while the second, *wuk tzuk* '7 provinces', is a toponym referring to a particular region of the eastern central lowlands extending from Motul de San José to the Belize valley (Beliaev 2000; Helmke and Andres 2015:26–27; Tokovinine 2013:98–110). Xultun, which is presumed to be close to the place of origin of this vessel, was not part of the 7 provinces, suggesting that it may have been made for a non-local patron. Other vessels from the Xultun region that refer to persons from Holmul and/or the 7 provinces in general include vases K2295 (Portland Art Mus. 2005.29.25) and K2358 (**Fig. 28**,



29).



Fig. 28. Vase, Portland Art Museum 2005.29.25. Photograph by Justin Kerr (K2295).



Fig. 29. Vase. Photograph by Justin Kerr (K2358).

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