



# Palenque's Alliances with Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh*:

## The Role of Interdynastic Marriages and Alliances in Late Classic Power Struggles and Local Conflicts

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to contribute to the research of interdynastic marriage and alliance strategies in the (Late) Classic Maya Lowlands and their purpose in a landscape of growing regional conflict. For this purpose, the power dynamics and interactions between the polities of Palenque, Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh* will be analyzed. Relevant hieroglyphic inscriptions will be presented, temporally framing the start of such alliances and relating them to socio-political events.

### Keywords

Maya Epigraphy, Interdynastic Marriage, Late Classic Lowlands, Palenque, Maya Women

### Resumen

Este trabajo trata contribuir a la investigación del matrimonio interdinástico y las alianzas estratégicas en las Tierras Bajas Mayas del Clásico Tardío Maya y su propósito en un ambiente de crecientes conflictos regionales. Para ello las dinámicas de poder y las interacciones entre las entidades políticas de Palenque, Tortuguero y *Uxte' K'uh* serán analizadas. Se presentarán inscripciones jeroglíficas relevantes que enmarcan temporalmente el inicio de tales alianzas y su vínculo con eventos sociopolíticos.

### Palabras clave

epigrafía maya, matrimonio interdinástico, Palenque, Tierras Bajas del Clásico Tardío, mujeres mayas

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## Introduction

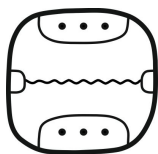
Palenque is a Maya site in the western part of the Central Lowlands, situated close to the northern edge of the highlands of Chiapas (see Fig. 3). A stylistic peculiarity of Palenque's inscribed stone monuments is the fact that almost no stelae were created in the site. Instead, the typical style for local monumental inscriptions is that of architectural sculpture (Martin and Grube 2008: 155). The easiest way to identify a person from Palenque in an inscription is through its emblem glyph (see Fig. 1), which serve as marker of being part of the dynastic identity (cf. Martin 2020: 326). Why this first impression can be deceiving in Palenque's case will be explained in section "Palenque – Tortuguero" below. The characters discussed in this essay use three different versions of this emblem glyph, namely two different ways of writing *baakal*, in which the **BAAK** logogram varies (see Fig. 2). Another frequent Palenque emblem spells *matwiil* and refers to a mythological place, which will later be explained in more detail.



Figure 1. A variation of the Palenque emblem glyph *k'uh[ul] baakal ajaw*, as appearing on Palenque's Temple XIX platform (west) (Drawing by the author).



(a) Graph 1045st<sup>1</sup>: **BAAK**.



(b) Graph 570st: **BAAK**.



(c) Graph 793st: **MAT**.

Figure 2. Some examples for logographs used in Palenque emblem glyphs. (Drawings by Christian Prager for the sign catalog of the Text Database and Dictionary of Classic Mayan (2014 - to date) project).

This essay deals with a specific aspect of Palenque's history: the city's interdynastic relations with Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh* in the Late Classic, mainly regarding interdynastic marriages. Therefore, the epigraphically recorded cases of a foreign woman marrying a Palenque noble or a Palenque woman becoming the wife of a foreign king will be analyzed, as well as the presence of foreign nobles at the court of Palenque. It

<sup>1</sup>All graph numbers in this article are in accordance with the standards of the Text Database and Dictionary of Classic Mayan (2014 - to date) sign catalogue.

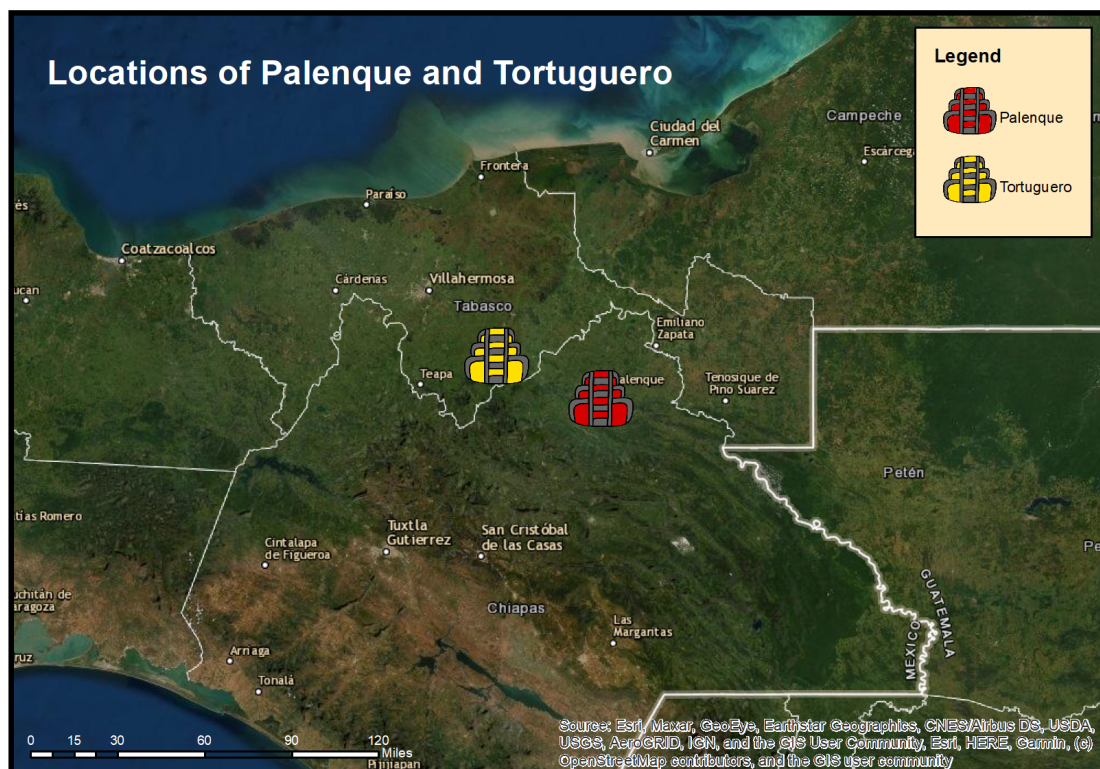


Figure 3. A map showing the locations of the sites of Palenque and Tortuguero.

will be demonstrated, that the phenomenon of interdynastic marriage arose in troubling times, which means that it might have been a way of forging important alliances to withstand or recover from foreign attacks. Therefore, evidence for war events involving the cities tied to Palenque in the form of marriage alliances will be collected and chronologically ordered to assess whether there are patterns of positive and negative contact. As a result, an attempt to answer the question concerning the motivations for this extraordinary type of marriage will be given. Finally, the complex conflict and alliance triangle between Late Classic Palenque, Tortuguero, and *Uxte' K'uh* will be analyzed and explained.

## Interdynastic Marriages

Table 1 lists five instances of a positive relationship between Palenque and the cities of Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh*, four of which started in the Late Classic. Palenque already began to build up an alliance with *Uxte' K'uh* in the last decades of the Early Classic, which is attested for in the inscriptions of Palenque's Temple XIX Platform (West), where *Uxte' K'uh*'s ruler *Yax Itzam Aat* (<561 CE<) attended the building's dedication

Event Date	Event	Monument
<b>09.06.07.00.00</b>	<b>Dedication of Building</b>	recorded on
02/13/561 CE	<i>Yax Itzam Aat - K'an Joy Chitam I</i>	PAL: Tmp. XIX, Platform (West)
<b>&lt;09.08.19.09.16</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	< Birth of their son, see
<11/29/612 CE	<i>Ix Yan K'oj - Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I</i>	TRT: Monument 6
<b>09.09.03.12.11</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	recorded on
01/02/617 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - K'inich Janahb Pakal I</i>	PAL: Tmp. of Inscr. (West)
<b>&lt;09.12.06.05.08</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	< Birth of their son, see
<09/16/678 CE	<i>Lady Kinuww Mat – Tiwol Chan Mat</i>	PAL: Tmp. XVIII Jamb
<b>9.15.00.00.00</b>	<b>Period Ending Celebration?</b>	PAL: Tmp. XIX,
08/22/731 CE	<i>Salaj Baluun – K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III</i>	Platform (West)

Table 1. Evidence of positive contact between Palenque and the cities of Tortuguero (dark grey) and *Uxte' K'uh* (light grey).

ceremony in 561 CE by invitation of the *k'uhul ajaw*, the “holy lord” of Palenque at the time: *K'an Joy Chitam I* (birth: 490 CE, reign: 529–565 CE).

More than half a decade later, this alliance would be fortified by an interdynastic marriage between one of the most famous Palenque kings, *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* (birth: 603 CE, reign: 615–683 CE) and a noble woman from *Uxte' K'uh*, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* (marriage: 617 CE, death: 672 CE), who is mentioned frequently in the inscriptions of Palenque. Their youngest son, *Tiwol Chan Mat* (death: 680 CE) would later marry an *Uxte' K'uh* woman as well: *Ix Kinuww Mat*. The date of this second generation interdynastic marriage between Palenque and *Uxte' K'uh* is not known, but it must have been forged before 678 CE, the birth date of the couple's son and later divine ruler (*k'uhul ajaw*) of Palenque, *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* (accession: 721 CE). Ultimately, another *Uxte' K'uh* noble, *Salaj Baluun*, witnessed the 9.15.0.0.0 Period Ending celebration with said Palenque ruler, *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*, in 731 CE.

The details of the Palenque – *Uxte' K'uh* alliance seem to be rather clear, contrary to Palenque's relationship with another city in the region: Tortuguero. The archaeological site of Tortuguero is situated in a transition zone, on the edge of the Western Lowlands and the highlands of Chiapas. It lies at the foot of the volcano *Cerro de Macuspana* (also known as *Buena Vista* or *Gavilán Blanco*) (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 12f.). Tortuguero's use of the *Baakal* emblem glyph poses a big problem to researchers, because their legitimation to do so has long been the cause of speculation among scholars, because it is unclear when Tortuguero assumed the *Baakal* identity. The first contemporary use comes from Tortuguero, Monument 6, with Late Classic ruler *Bahlam Ajaw*. On the same monument, he also mentions his enigmatic relationship to a woman carrying the *Baakal* emblem glyph, in an event dating to 667 CE. What the nature of the Palenque–Tortuguero relation was in the Late Classic however, still remains unclear. This article will draw some new implications from David Stuart's recent decipherment of the *k'o-*

Event Date	Event	Monument
<b>&lt;09.08.19.09.16</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	< birth of their son, see
<11/29/612 CE	<i>Ix Yan K'oj - Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I</i>	TRT: Monument 6
<b>09.10.11.3.10</b>	<b>Accession</b>	recorded on
02/09/644 CE	<i>Bahlam Ajaw</i>	TRT, Monument 6
<b>09.10.11.09.06</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
06/04/644 CE	Tortuguero attacks <i>Uxte' K'uh</i>	TRT, Monument 6
<b>09.10.15.1.11</b>	<b>Marriage + <i>k'ahxi t'an</i></b>	recorded on
12/11/647 CE	<i>Ix Witz Chan - Bahlam Ajaw</i>	TRT Monuments 8 & 6
<b>09.11.02.17.04</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
13/11/655 CE	Tortuguero attacks <i>Uxte' K'uh</i>	TRT, Jade Ear Flare

Table 2. Relevant dates pertaining to *Bahlam Ajaw's* biography.

syllable (Stuart June 5, 2020), as well the new book by Martin (2020) trying to reveal more clues concerning *Bahlam Ajaw's* affiliation with Palenque.

## Palenque – Tortuguero

Epigraphically, the most obvious relation between Palenque and Tortuguero is their use of the same *Baakal* emblem glyph. At first, it was only used as a self-identification by members of the Palenque dynasty, but later it was also used to identify rulers of Tortuguero, a trend which has often been said to have started with their Late Classic ruler *Bahlam Ajaw*, the site's most notorious ruler (see Table 2). The fact that the *Baakal* emblem glyph was, at least for a short time span, used by rulers of two different polities, becomes obvious through the fact that both *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* from Palenque and *Bahlam Ajaw* from Tortuguero both simultaneously claim to be *k'uhul baakal ajaw*, while there can always only be one *k'uhul ajaw* in one polity. Interestingly, the same emblem glyph is later used by Comalcalco as well, the first instance being recorded in 9.14.14.9.12 (726 CE) (Gronemeyer 2004: 123). Similar cases can be observed in the use of the *Mutul* emblem glyph by Tikal and Dos Pilas, as well as the shared emblem glyph in use at Yaxchilan and El Zotz (Bíró 2016). One hypothesis, proposed by Bernal Romero (cf. 2005: 78), states that *Bahlam Ajaw* introduced the *Baakal* emblem glyph to Tortuguero because he claimed to be somehow related to or a descendant of the Palenque dynasty which self-identified by the *Baakal* emblem.

In this section, the reference to a woman carrying the *Baakal* emblem glyph in the inscriptions of Tortuguero will be discussed, analyzing the possible implications of her presence for the relationship between Palenque and Tortuguero.

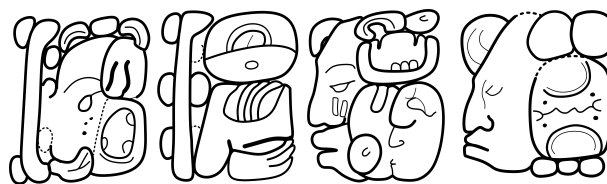


Figure 4. Female name phrase on Tortuguero, Monument 6: *u baah u chit ch'a[h]b ix ? ix baakal ajaw*, "his person is her co-creation, lady ?, lady of *Baakal*" (Drawing by the author).

### Women Associated with *Bahlam Ajaw*: Past Research

In the past, there has been a lot of confusion regarding *Bahlam Ajaw*, and the women mentioned in his monuments. Shedding light on this complicated matter might also provide insight into the king's self-image and identification with the *Baakal* emblem.

The question of who *Bahlam Ajaw*'s mother was has been the cause of some confusion in past publications (cf. Gronemeyer 2004; Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010) due to the appearance of two female name phrases in the Tortuguero inscriptions, both related to *Bahlam Ajaw* in ways that can be interpreted as motherhood statements. Furthermore, the reading of said name phrases and the contexts they appear in have resulted in different interpretations due to the complicated and eroded nature of some of the glyphs featured therein.

The two name phrases in question appear on two separate monuments: Monument 6 (F17–G1) and Monument 8 (A21–A24). Up until now, the most common assumption regarding these two name phrases was that they likely refer to two different women, one of which must be *Bahlam Ajaw*'s mother and the other related to him in a different way (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134).

The name phrase on Monument 6 (see Fig. 4) has been read as **IX-wa-na-chi-jo**, *Ix Wan Chii* or **IX-wa-na-k'o-jo**, *Ix Wan K'oj* in past publications (Gronemeyer 2004; Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010). A closer look at the name phrase might reveal an interesting clue concerning Tortuguero's ties to its powerful neighbor Palenque. According to (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134), it is usually the case that women do not carry an emblem glyph when they are mentioned in inscriptions from the same city they were born in. Only foreign women, meaning women that were not born in the city in which an inscription is commissioned, carry emblem glyphs; not the local one, but the emblem glyph of their city of origin. Therefore, he argues that the use of the *Baakal* emblem in the female name phrase of Tortuguero's Monument 6 was due to her affiliation with her city of origin, Palenque, the only other polity that was using this emblem glyph at this time. (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134)

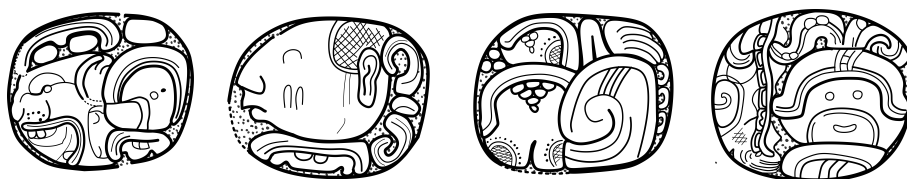


Figure 5. Female name phrase on Tortuguero, Monument 8 (A21–A24): *u baah [u] junta[h]n ix ? u mijiinil?? {...}*, “his person is the cherished one of *Ix ?*, he is the son of his father [...]” (Drawing by the author).

New research questions the truth of this rule concerning emblem glyph use of women however. According to Martin (cf. 2020: 336), the factor whether a woman carries an emblem glyph or not cannot be considered as an indicator of foreign origin, and might have really been a facultative element. This will be discussed further in the last section of this article.

Furthermore, Monument 6 reveals important information about *Bahlam Ajaw's* paternal descent, as glyph blocks H1–G3 identify *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* as his father (see Table 7) (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134).

The second female name phrase on Monument 8 (see Fig. 5) has been read as *Ix Nay Amay Noh* or *Nay Ak Noh* in past publications (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134; cf. Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 56), which is incorrect. The name is spelled over two glyph blocks and contains some complicated elements whose reading will be explained in the next section, following a new theory recently proposed by Stuart (June 5, 2020).

Until now, it has been assumed that the identification of the Monument 6 woman as *Bahlam Ajaw's* mother is more probable than that of the one on Monument 8, because the former is related to him in a motherhood statement (see Fig. 5) of the form *u baah u junta[h]n*, “his person is the cherished one of” (cf. Helmke et al. 2018: 31). In some examples however, *u baah u juntahn* can also be used to connect actors to important supernatural entities (cf. Prager 2013: 458). The relationship statement *u chit ch'a[h]b* preceding the name of the woman on Monument 8 is even more enigmatic. Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010) mention two possibilities for its meaning: A commonly used translation would fall into the sphere of a “neutral reference between the child and any parent”, an interpretation fitting in with most scenarios where this expression appears. Due to the then common assumption that the name phrases on Monument 6 and Monument 8 refer to two different individuals, the authors rather settled on another possible meaning of *chit*, “co-X”, which, in combination with *ch'ahb* builds “co-creation” (Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 55), because *u baah u juntahn* was seen as a potentially more obvious motherhood statement (cf. Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 55).

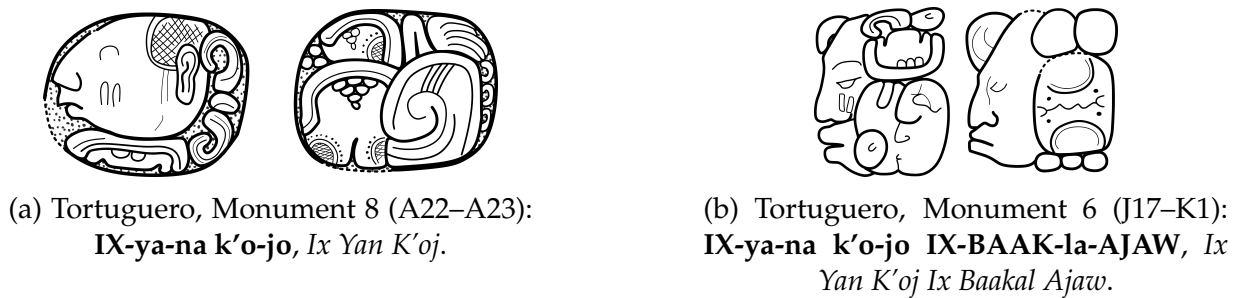


Figure 6. The two known spellings for *Ix Yan K'oj*'s name from Tortuguero (Drawings by the author).

### *Ix Yan K'oj*

Very recently, David Stuart has proposed another hypothesis regarding the complicated issue regarding the two female name phrases on Monument 6 and Monument 8. Based on his identification of a new **k'o** syllable, he proposed the two women to actually be one person called *Ix Yan K'oj*. Therefore, the two name phrases that had been assumed to be references to two different women with close contact to *Bahlam Ajaw* would actually be two very different spellings of the same name. He transliterates both name phrases as **ya-na k'o-jo** for *yan k'oj* (see Fig. 6) (Stuart June 5, 2020).

If true, this hypothesis would decomplicate the matter significantly. Firstly, it would finally answer the question who *Bahlam Ajaw*'s mother is. Furthermore, it could shed light on *Bahlam Ajaw*'s legitimation for claiming the Palenque identity, instilled in the *Baakal* emblem, which could have started to be used in Tortuguero as a kind of endonym with the king's accession (cf. Zender and Guenter 2000: 7). This assumption is problematic however, because we don't know whether the *Baakal* emblem glyph really first started to be used in Tortuguero with *Bahlam Ajaw*'s accession. There is one retrospective reference to *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* on Monument 6 (L1–K3), where he carries the *Baakal* emblem (cf. Zender and Guenter 2000: 7). Future inscriptions from Tortuguero might reveal whether he was retrospectively assigned this title on Monument 6, commissioned by his son *Bahlam Ajaw*, or if he already carried the *Baakal* emblem glyph in his lifetime, but at this point no final answer can be given to this question.

If the *Baakal* emblem glyph really started to be used with *Bahlam Ajaw*'s accession, it might be speculated that he felt affiliated with Palenque through the fact that he was the child of a Tortuguero father (former king *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I*) and a possible Palenque mother (*Ix Yan K'oj*), genetically linking him to the Palenque elite. Which status *Ix Yan K'oj* had in the Palenque elite, or if she really came from Palenque for that matter, remains unclear (see section "Interdynastic Marriage and Warfare" below for a closer analysis of this problem). Generally, it is interesting however, that we barely know anything from Tortuguero before *Bahlam Ajaw*'s accession, and that it started to become

significantly more active and powerful during his reign. If *Ix Yan K'oj* really came from Palenque, it can be speculated that she might have brought prestige and a powerful alliance to Tortuguero, that fueled the site's sudden rise in influence. Thus, her appearance on Monument 6 could serve as an example as to how mothers, especially when having come from a foreign city to form an interdynastic marriage, are prominently mentioned on their sons' monuments to legitimate and enforce their claim to power, sometimes even more prominently than the son's father, even if he was the former king.<sup>2</sup>

## Palenque – *Uxte' K'uh*

The *Uxte' K'uh* toponym can be divided into three morphemes, *ux*, *te'* and *k'uh*. The morpheme *te'* however is probably not used in its usual sense as the noun “tree”<sup>3</sup>, but as a numeral classifier, which is mostly used for calendrics or, what is more likely in this case, for “numerals in proper names of persons, supernatural actors, places and objects”<sup>4</sup> (Prager 2013: 578). The location of *Uxte' K'uh* has not been identified as of yet, but there have been several suggestions, although none of them is very satisfying<sup>5</sup>. In this section, Palenque's close ties to *Uxte' K'uh* will be shown, based on the frequent occurrence of actors equipped with this toponym in the site's inscriptions. Furthermore, the temporal aspect of this alliance will be analyzed, showing its effects on the dynasty of Palenque.

### *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*

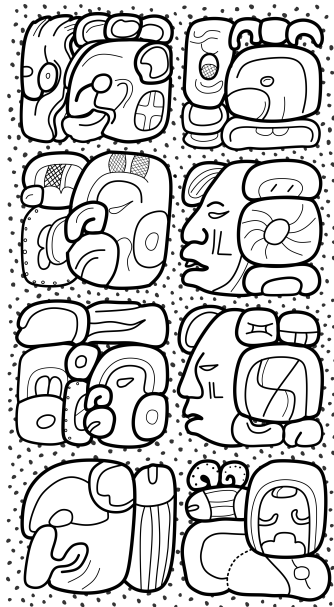
The first known interdynastic marriage between the polities of *Uxte' K'uh* and Palenque was comprised of a Palenque man, *K'inich Janahb Pakal I*, and an *Uxte' K'uh* woman, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*. Although she is mentioned on numerous Palenque monuments (see Table 3), important pieces pertaining to her biography are missing. Neither do we know when she was born, nor when she came to Palenque (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 76). It could be argued however, that she might have already come to Palenque at a young

<sup>2</sup> Another example for this is Stela 8 from Copan, a monument linked to *Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat's* one K'atun anniversary celebration (9.17.12.6.2, 783 CE). The monument identifies this Late Classic Copan ruler as the son of a woman called *Ix Chak Nik? Ye Xook* from Palenque. According to Martin and Grube (2008: 209), in the inscriptions of her son she “receives greater prominence and serves as his prime claim to royal descent”.

<sup>3</sup> Bernal Romero disagrees in this regard, including *te'* for “tree” as a separate value in the translation of the Toponym and thus translating it as “(El lugar de) los Dioses del Árbol” (Bernal Romero 2005: 77).

<sup>4</sup> Translation by the author.

<sup>5</sup> Villaseñor M. (2012) suspects it to be identical with the archaeological site of El Retiro (Chiapas), but it is unclear what his reasons for this identification are. The same assumption is also made by Bernal Romero (2012: 6), who sees it as a likely candidate based on its close proximity to Palenque. Furthermore, the archaeological site of Cerro Limón has also been proposed as a possible location to which *Uxte' K'uh* might refer, based on geographical features near the site, which is surrounded by two lakes and generally situated close to Tortuguero (Bernal Romero 2005: 85).



(a) Palenque Palace Tablet (C14–D17):  
**u-BAAH u-1-TAN-na ta-K'UH IX-**  
**YAX?-627st-li? NAAB-CHIT-K'UH**  
**IX-TZ'AK-AJAW-wa ch'o-ko to-ko-**  
*\*TAN-WINIK-ki?, u baah u junta[h]n*  
*ta k'uh ix ? na[h]b chit k'uh ix tz'ak ajaw*  
*ch'ok tokta[h]n winik* (Drawing by the  
 author).



(b) Palenque, Temple of the Sun (Sanctuary Jamb): **ya-YAL 291vc-K'UH-IX**  
**IX-TZ'AK-AJAW u-MAM-ma YAX-**  
**ITZAM-ti, yal ix k'uh ix tz'ak ajaw u**  
*mam yax itzam [aa]t.*

Figure 7. Two examples of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw's* name phrase (Drawings by the author).

age, as her father, *Yax Itzam Aat*, already had very good connections and a high status at the court of Palenque at a young age (see section “*Salaj Baluun* and *Yax Itzam Aat* from *Uxte' K'uh*” below). Furthermore, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* carries a title on the Palace Tablet (D17) that is otherwise only used by Palenque dignitaries (see Fig. 7a).

The title in question is the *toktahn winik* title, a toponym referring to an unknown location, that was mainly used in references to events that happened 200 years prior, with *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* being the only person carrying it in a contemporary Late Classic record (cf. Bíró 2011: 41). Additionally, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* never carries the *Uxte' K'uh* toponym, nor is she ever referred to by a foreign emblem (ignoring the strange composition of her name). Furthermore, there is actually an instance where she carries the *k'uhul baakal ajaw* title of Palenque (Palenque, Temple of the Sun: L6–M6). All these facts might lead us to believe, that she was not seen as a foreign woman, but rather assumed a Palenquean identity, or, alternatively, that *Uxte' K'uh* might have been part of the Palenque polity, which could be supported by the fact that *Uxte' K'uh* does not have an emblem glyph, but is only referred to by a Toponym introduced by the *aj-* agentive.

ME-Date	Event Date	Event	Monument
09.12.15.00.00	09.08.09.13.00	<b>Birth</b>	recorded on
04/14/687 CE	03/25/603 CE	<i>K'inich Janahb Pakal I</i>	PAL, Sarcophagus lid
09.14.10.00.00	09.09.02.04.08	<b>Accession</b>	recorded on
10/13/721 CE	07/28/615 CE	<i>K'inich Janahb Pakal I</i>	PAL, Palace Tablet
09.12.15.00.00	09.09.13.00.17	<b>Marriage?</b>	recorded on
04/14/687 CE	03/22/626 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - K. Janahb Pakal I</i>	PAL, TI (West Panel)
09.13.10.01.06	09.10.02.06.06	<b>Birth</b>	recorded on
02/21/702 CE	05/22/635 CE	<i>K'inich Kan Bahlam II</i>	PNK Emiliano Zapata Panel
09.13.00.00.00	09.10.08.09.03	<b>Child of mother</b>	recorded on
03/16/692 CE	06/17/641 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - Kan Bahlam II</i>	PAL, ToC Panel
09.14.10.00.00	09.10.11.17.00	<b>Birth</b>	recorded on
10/13/721 CE	11/05/644 CE	<i>K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II</i>	PAL, Palace Tablet
09.14.10.00.00	09.10.11.17.00	<b>Child of mother</b>	recorded on
10/13/721 CE	11/05/644 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - K'an Joy Chitam II</i>	PAL, Palace Tablet
09.13.00.00.00	09.12.11.12.10	<b>Child of mother</b>	recorded on
03/18/692 CE	01/10/684 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - Kan Bahlam II</i>	PAL, ToS Panel
09.13.00.00.00	09.12.19.14.12	<b>Child of mother</b>	recorded on
03/18/692 CE	01/10/692 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - Kan Bahlam II?</i>	PAL TC (West Alfardas)
09.13.00.00.00	-	<b>Child of mother</b>	recorded on
03/18/692 CE	-	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - Kan Bahlam II?</i>	PAL, TS (North Door)

Table 3. Relevant dates concerning the relationship between *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and *K'inich Janahb Pakal I*.

Another noteworthy fact about *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* is her involvement in an extraordinary statement on the Western Tablet of Palenque's Temple of the Inscriptions. According to B     (cf. 2011: 2), the sentence in R4  R5 likely narrates several stages or rituals involved in her marriage process. She is said to have been "anointed" (*t'abaayi*), "hidden" (*nakaw*) and finally "seated" into office(?). This has been refuted by other scholars however (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 78).

This however is only one of numerous monuments mentioning this woman. In the inscriptions of Palenque's Temple of the Sun, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*'s nominal phrase appears twice. The passage, presented in Analysis 1, defines *K'inich Kan Bahlam II*'s descent. He is said to be the son of his father *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and of his mother *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*.

The motherhood statement regarding *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* is repeated in another inscription of the Temple of the Sun (see Analysis 2), adding a possible *u mam* "his grandfather" statement that names the enigmatic person *Yax Itzam Aat* from *Uxte' K'uh* as grandfather of *K'inich Kan Bahlam II* and in consequence father of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*.

This statement is the only proof that the marriage of *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* was indeed an interdynastic one. As already mentioned above, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* never carries the *aj Uxte' K'uh*, "she of *Uxte' K'uh*" title in her name phrase. The question

8-“Ok” 3-a[K’AN]-ya K’AL-SAK-HUUN tu-BAAH K’INICH-KAN-ma ?-  
?-?-K’UH?-ya u-MIJIIN?-li 5-WINIKHAAB?-AJAW K’INICH-JANAAB-  
PAKAL u-1-TAN-na IX-TZ’AK-AJAW K’UH-BAAK-la-AJAW

*waxak “Ok”, ux k’ana[sii]y, k’al sak huun tu baah, k’inich kan [bahla]m ? k’uh[ul]?,  
u mijiinil?? ho’ winikhaab? ajaw k’inich jana[h]b pakal, u junta[h]n ix tz’ak[bu]  
ajaw k’uh[ul] baakal ajaw*

“[On] 8 Ok, the 3rd day of *K’anasiy* (K’ayab), he ties the white headband on his head, K’inich Kan Bahlam II, son of his father, five K’atun lord K’inich Janahb Pakal I, son of his mother (lit. “the cherished one of”) Ix Tz’akbu Ajaw, holy lady of Baakal (Palenque).”

Analysis 1. Palenque, Temple of the Sun tablet: L1–M6.

ya-YAL-la 291<sub>vc</sub>-K’UH-IX IX-TZ’AK-AJAW u-MAM YAX-ITZAM-ti  
TUUN-AJAW-wa o-ki-bi AJ-3-TE’-K’UH

*yal 291<sub>vc</sub> ix k’uh ix tz’ak[bu] ajaw, u mam yax itzam [aa]t tuun ajaw okib aj uxtē’  
k’uh.*

“[he, K’inich Kan Bahlam, is] the son of his mother (lit. “the cherished one of”) 291<sub>vc</sub> female deity Ix Tz’akbu Ajaw, [he is] the grandson of Yax Itzam Aat, Tuun lord, Okib, he of Uxtē’ K’uh.”

Analysis 2. Palenque, Temple of the Sun, north sanctuary jamb.

then would be, why *K’inich Kan Bahlam II* would specify his descent and relation to the dynasty of *Uxtē’ K’uh* more elaborately and precisely than that which links him to the dynastic history of Palenque through his father *K’inich Janahb Pakal I* and paternal grandfather *K’an Mo’ Hix*? If the dynastic line had not been broken for two generations, why emphasize his relation to his foreign maternal grandfather, who was not even a *k’uhul ajaw*, but only an *ajaw*? According to Bernal Romero, the absence of the *k’uhul*-title in *Yax Itzam Aat*’s name phrase signifies that he was a lesser lord, subordinate to Palenque or, more specifically, his contemporary *K’an Joy Chitam I* (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 77).

Finally, it can be said that by the time of *K’inich Janahb Pakal I*’s death on 9.12.11.5.18 (693 CE), parts of the *Uxtē’ K’uh* elite had gained considerable influence and presence in the court of Palenque, which eventually became even more pronounced through the birth of a new Palenque heir, *K’inich Ahkal Mo’ Nahb III*, son of *Tiwol Chan Mat* from Palenque and *Ix Kinuuw Mat* from *Uxtē’ K’uh* (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 81).

ME-Date	Event Date	Event	Monument
-	> 09.10.11.17.00	Birth	Palenque
-	> 11/04/644 CE	<i>Tiwoł Chan Mat</i>	Tmp. XXI Fragment
09.15.00.00.00	09.12.06.05.08	Birth	Palenque
08/22/731 CE	09/15/678 CE	<i>K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III</i>	Tablet of Slaves
09.15.00.00.00	-	Child of mother?	Palenque
08/22/731 CE	-	<i>Ix Kinuuw Mat - Ahkal Mo' Nahb III</i>	Tablet of Slaves

Table 4. Relevant dates concerning the relationship between *Ix Kinuuw Mat* and *Tiwoł Chan Mat*.

### *Ix Kinuuw Mat*

There is yet another woman from *Uxte' K'uh* mentioned in the inscriptions of Palenque (see Table 4). *Ix Kinuuw Mat* was married to *Tiwoł Chan Mat*, with whom she fathered a child that would later become *k'uhul ajaw* of Palenque. The three of them are displayed prominently on the Tablet of the Slaves, where *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* is shown during his accession ceremony, flanked and witnessed by his parents (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 83).

To begin with, a statement defining *Tiwoł Chan Mat* as father of a son is given in an inscription from Temple XVIII (see Analysis 3).

#### 3-“Lamat” 6-SAK-SIHOOM-ma SIH-ya-ch'o-ko TOLOK?-u-MIJIIN?-li TIWOL-CHAN-na MAT

*ux “Lamat”, wak saksihoom, sihya[j] ch'ok tolok? u mijiinil?? tiwoł chan mat.*

“[On the day] 3 Lamat, the 6th of Saksihoom [Sak], is born the young Tolok?, son of his father Tiwoł Chan Mat.”

Analysis 3. Palenque, Temple XVIII Jamb: A13–A15.

The name in the birth phrase from B13–A14a, here transcribed as **TOLOK?** (Davletshin 2011), has the graph number 1068st and forms (at least in part) the pre-accession name of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* (cf. Stuart 2005: 151). The sentence further states that he is the son of his father, *Tiwoł Chan Mat* (B14–A15), who was probably the youngest son of *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, which in effect means that *Kan Bahlam II* and *K'an Joy Chitam II* were his older brothers. This is not confirmed epigraphically, but instead was deduced by William Ringle, based on a hugely destroyed stucco scene from Temple XVIII. There, the three brothers, identified through their childhood names, are depicted sitting next to each other, aligned from oldest to youngest (cf. Stuart 2005: 153), in a ceremony “in which the old king establishes the order of brotherly succession” (Martin and Grube 2008: 172f.).

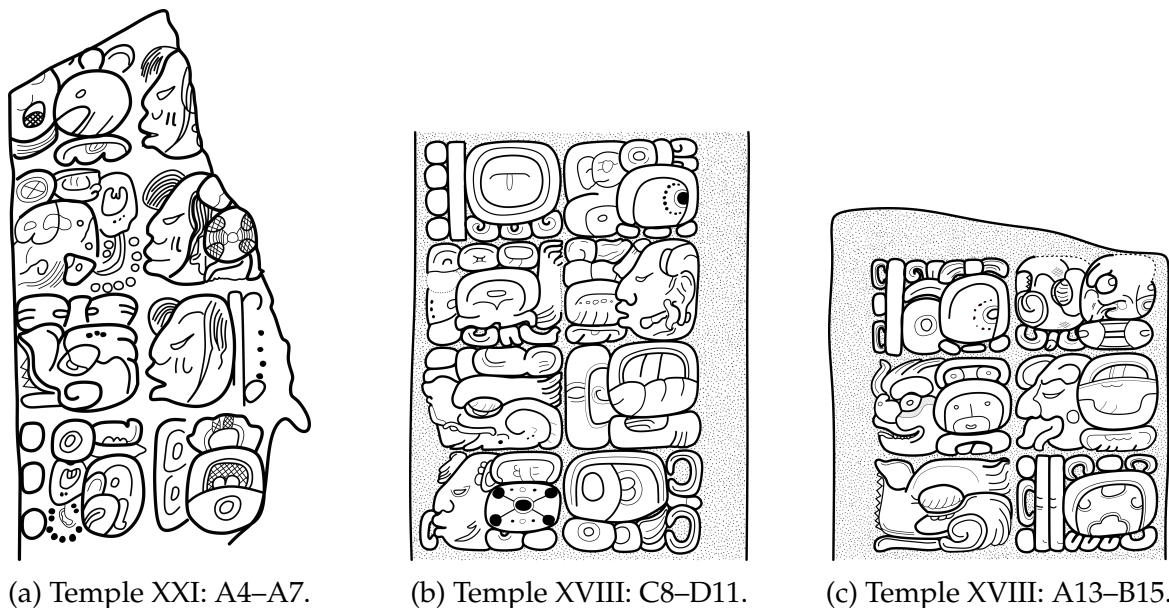


Figure 8. The name phrase of *Ix Kinuuw Mat* (a–b) and *Tiwo Chan Mat* (c) in Palenque inscriptions (Drawings by the author).

Furthermore, *Ix Kinuuw Mat*'s motherhood statement for *Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* can be found on another monument, the Temple XXI platform (see Analysis 4 and Fig. 8).

**u-1-TAN-na IX-... NAAB-CHIT-K'UH IX-ki-nu-wi ma-MAT IX-AJ 3-TE'-K'UH**

*u junta[h]n ix [...] na[h]b chit k'uh ix kinuuw mat ix aj uxté' k'uh.*

"[he is the] son of his mother [lit. "the cherished one"] Lady [...] Nahb Chit K'uh Ix Kinuuw Mat, lady of Uxté' K'uh."

Analysis 4. Palenque, Temple XXI: A4–A7.

Unfortunately, *Ix Kinuuw Mat*'s nominal phrase is partly eroded and therefore remains largely enigmatic (see Fig. 8). The *Nahb Chit K'uh* segment in A5 is either a theonym that connects her to a female goddess, or an epithet specifying certain holy attributes she is associated with or ritual functions she was involved in. The same *Nahb Chit K'uh* epithet or theonym appears in *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*'s name on Palenque's Palace Tablet as well<sup>6</sup>. The two women, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and *Ix Kinuuw Mat*, share some biographical similarities that would explain their shared use of this epithet (or theonym). Firstly, similar epithets

<sup>6</sup> The passage reads: *u baah u junta[h]n ta k'uh<sup>7</sup> ix ? na[h]b chit k'uh ix tz'ak[bu] ajaw ch'ok toktahn winik.* The "cherished one" in this context is the then four "k'atun" *ajaw K'inich Janahb Pakal I* (C11–C12), husband of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and possible father of *Tiwo Chan Mat*.

or theonyms that follow this structure, usually including *k'uh[ul]*, are featured in the name phrases of many exalted women throughout the Maya Area during the Classic period, for example the still undeciphered “inverted vase” sign 182bt/bv. Secondly, the two women are somewhat related through marriage, as *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* is *Tiwoł Chan Mat*'s mother and *Ix Kinuuw Mat* his wife. Therefore, *Tiwoł Chan Mat* could have adopted his father's way of referring to his wife on monuments he commissioned.

Another possibility is that the epithet or theonym is specific to Palenque or to *K'inich Janahb Pakal*'s kin. This however can be refuted when considering a similar title or epithet in the name phrase of *Ix Chak Joloom* on Yaxchilan Stela 7.<sup>8</sup>

Generally it can be said however, that the arrival of yet another soon-to-be wife from *Uxte' K'uh* was not a coincidence. The marriage between *Ix Kinuuw Mat* and *Tiwoł Chan Mat* was likely arranged by *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, who might very well have been a close relative of her son's later wife (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 80).

Furthermore, *Ix Kinuuw Mat*'s name phrase appears again in Temple XVIII, where she is associated with Palenque's *Muwaan Mat* (see Table 8 for an analysis of this passage). The exact reading of the glyph 700st appearing in C9 has not been discovered so far. Generally, the glyph block can be transcribed as **a-700st-AJAW-ni-ya**, ? *ajaw[a]niiy*. The -*Vn* suffix derives an inchoative verb from the noun *ajaw*, transforming it into a specific kind of verb that signals the start of an action<sup>9</sup>, in this case probably the beginning of kingship (cf. Boot 2009: 194), meaning accession.

The event in question must have happened in 2.0.0.10.2, 9 Ik' 0 Sak (2325 BCE):

According to Bernal Romero (2005: 82), “*Muwaan Mat*” might be representing *Ix Kinuuw Mat*'s mother in a supernatural, godly form on this monument from Temple XVIII. This is supported by the hypothesis that this temple was used by *Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* as a final resting place for his parents and – consequentially – a place of worship dedicated to them.

### ***Salaj Baluun and Yax Itzam Aat from Uxte' K'uh***

In the inscription on the west face of Temple XIX's platform, erected during the reign of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* (cf. Martin and Grube 2008: 172), the toponym *aj Uxte' K'uh*, “he/she of *Uxte' K'uh*”, is mentioned three times, in reference to two different individuals: a retrospective reference to *Yax Itzam Aat*, the individual that has been

<sup>8</sup> Note that the composition of signs, written as 185bv.580st:32vs and not 185bt:759st:32vr is slightly different. The entire nominal phrase reads [*u baah u ch'a[h]b*] *ixiim nik?iiy na[h]b chit k'uh ix chak joloom ix sajal* (pC6–pC8).

<sup>9</sup> According to Lacadena García-Gallo and Davletshin (2013), “[t]he suffix -*aan* derives intransitive verbs with the meaning of ‘becoming or be converted into what the root indicates’ [e.g.] *ajaw-aan* ‘to become king’”.

<b>B5/A13</b>		9.12.06.05.08	3 Lamat 6 Sak
	-	01.10.01	
A10/B10	=	9.12.04.13.07	1 Manik 10 Pop
<b>B5/A13</b>		9.12.06.05.08	3 Lamat 6 Sak
	+	14.01.12	
A17	=	09.13.00.07.00	5 Ajaw 8 Ik'
	+	02.02.00	
B20	=	09.13.02.09.00	11 Ajaw 18 Yax
<b>B5/A13</b>		9.12.06.05.08	3 Lamat 6 Sak
	+	02.03.16.14.	
[Implicit	=	09.14.10.04.02	9 Ik' 5 K'ayab]
	-	07.14.09.12.00	
D8	=	02.00.00.10.02	9 Ik' 0 Sak

Table 5. Distance number calculation of Palenque's Temple XVIII Jambs (B5/A13 in bold face because it contains the calendar round corresponding to the monument's initial Long Count).

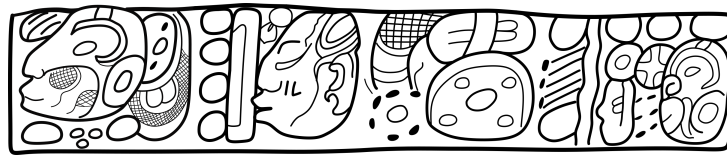


Figure 9. *Salaj Baluun's* name phrase on the west face of the Temple XIX platform: **sa-la-ja 9-na o-ki-bi AJ-3-TE'-K'UH**, *Salaj Baluun Okib aj Uxte' K'uh* (Drawing by the author after a photo by Stuart (2005)).

introduced as father of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and lord of *Uxte' K'uh* and a contemporary reference to a figure called *Salaj Baluun* (sometimes also called *Salaj B'olon*).

David Stuart writes about the west face of the platform (for a detailed analysis see Table 9), that its inscription and style largely resemble the platform's south face, although the west face focuses more on a historic-ritual account of the Palenque Triad, connecting them to Palenque's dynastic history (cf. Stuart 2005: 91). On the south face of the platform, *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* is shown in a semi-mythical scene, receiving the royal headdress while recreating an act that had taken place in the very distant past of 3309 BCE. Also present during this ceremony are five lords that he probably considered important for his power and reign (Martin and Grube 2008: 173).

*Salaj Baluun* and *Yax Itzam Aat* share a similarity in their mention on this monument, in that their names are both accompanied by a similar element, *(y)okib* (see Fig. 9 and 10),

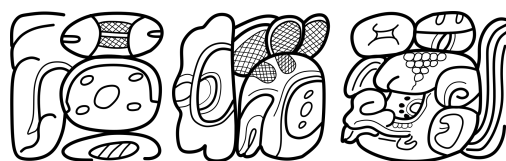


Figure 10. *Yax Itzam Aat's* name phrase on the west face of the Temple XIX platform: **yo-ki-bi-li YAX-ITZAM-AAT TUUN-ni-AJAW**, *yokibil Yax Itzam Aat tuun ajaw* (Drawing by the author after a photo by Stuart (2005)).

for which several interpretations exist in the research literature. Contextually, Stuart (cf. 2005: 131) assumes that it probably functions as a “pre-accession designation” when featured in nominal phrases and appearing without the possessive *y(o)*. Bernal Romero (2005) adds to this that *okib* was a title exclusive to the ruling family of *Uxte' K'uh*, used like a family name. If true, this would be a very interesting element, regarding the fact that it also appears in the names of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* and *K'inich Janahb Pakal II*; maybe because it has been transferred to them by their mother, *Ix Kinuuw Mat* from *Uxte' K'uh*, and they draw parts of their identity and legitimation from the *Uxte' K'uh* descent of their mother.

In its possessive *y-okib* form however, he assumes it to be derived from the word *ok*, “foot”. Morphologically, the expression could then be analyzed as *ok-Vb*, with *-Vb* being an instrumental suffix that derives places (or instrumental nouns) (cf. Lacadena García-Gallo and Davletshin 2013: 83), “place for the foot”, which is then interpreted as meaning “pedestal”. This interpretation gains some weight through the fact that the monument the inscription appears on is in fact a platform-like structure (“platform” of Temple XIX) and that *y-okib* follows a *patwaan* “shapes/forms” verb in B2–A3 (west face, see fig 11). Another occurrence of the term appears on a similar monument in Temple XXI (cf. Stuart 2005: 93).

But who is this mysterious *Yax Itzam Aat Tuun Ajaw* that is somehow involved in the “shaping of the pedestal” (“platform” of Temple XIX) in 9.6.7.0.0 (11.02.561 CE), the building on which *K'an Joy Chitam I* then scatters incense? As we have seen above, an inscription from a side panel of the Temple of the Sun reveals him to be yet another person from *Uxte' K'uh*, namely the father of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and grandfather of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*. This means, that there had already been members of the royal family of *Uxte' K'uh* present at the court of Palenque and taking part in important events for over 40 years by the time *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* was born in 9.8.9.13.0 (603 CE).

Turning to the other *Uxte' K'uh* individual mentioned in the Temple XIX inscriptions and his use of the (*y*)*okib* element: The name of *Salaj Baluun* appears three times in the Palenque inscriptions. The entire nominal phrase of this enigmatic person reads *Salaj Baluun Okib aj Uxte' K'uh* (see Fig. 9) He must have had an important role in the life of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*, the builder of Temples XIX and XXI, because

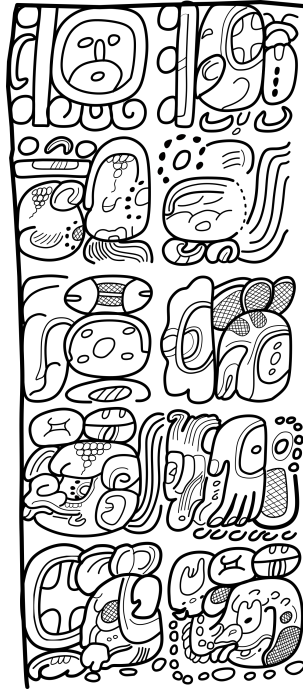


Figure 11. *Yax Itzam Aat*'s involvement in a Period Ending ceremony (9.6.7.0.0, 561 CE) by invitation of *K'an Joy Chitam I*, recorded on the west face of the Temple XIX platform (A1–B5). (Drawing by the author).

he was involved in three different rituals cited in the Temple XIX and XXI texts: (1) on the K'atun ending 9.15.0.0.0, he participated in some ceremony involving GI of the Triad; (2) on 9.15.2.9.0, he participated in a "rope-taking" rite, probably corresponding to the scene of the west side, and (3) he had some obscure role in the celebrations of the Period Ending 9.15.5.0.0, as cited in an incomplete record on Temple XXI's platform. (Stuart 2005: 129f.)

It can be firmly said that the initial calendar round date of 7 Ajaw 8 K'yab in A1–B1 (of Palenque's Temple XIX platform (west face)) corresponds to 9.6.7.0.0 (561 CE), because it is said in A2 that it is "7 heaps of *tuun*", matching the 9.6.7.0.0 period ending and because the first distance number leads to the even bigger period ending of 9.15.0.0.0 (731 CE), which is again clearly marked through the "15 'k'atun'" statement in C1 (see Fig. 12). The rest of the chronology from A1–E4 can then be calculated through the distance numbers:

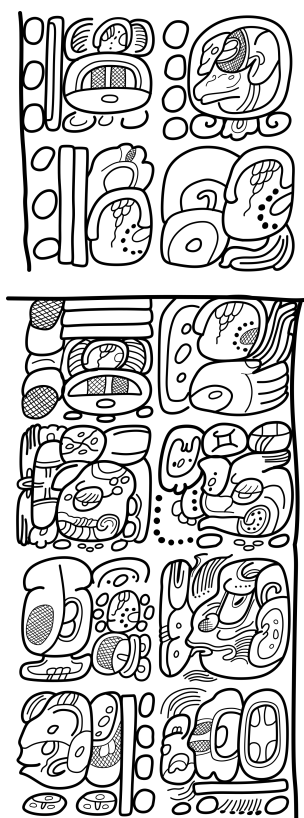


Figure 12. Passage (A7–D4) describing *Salaj Baluun*'s involvement in a celebration, together with Palenque king and son of *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, *Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* (PAL Tmp. XIX, drawing by the author).

	9.06.07.00.00	7 Ajaw 8 K'ayab	<i>K'an Joy Chitam I</i>
+	8.13.00.00		
=	9.15.00.00.00	4 Ajaw 13 Yax	<i>K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III</i>
+	2.07.16		
=	9.15.02.07.16	9 Kib 19 K'ayab	?
+	1.04		
=	9.15.02.09.00	7 Ajaw 3 Wayeb	<i>Salaj Baluun</i>

According to Bernal Romero (2005: 84), the edge text of the Temple XXI bench features another person from *Uxte' K'uh*. His descent is not explicitly stated, but he is said to be the *y-ichaan ajaw*, “maternal uncle” of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*, which in turn means that he must have been *Ix Kinuuw Mat*'s brother. Large parts of his name remain unintelligible but he held an important office at the court as he was the king's *aj k'uhu'n*, an important advisor with some additional priestly duties (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 84).

Event Date	Event	Monument
<b>09.06.07.00.00</b>	<b>Dedication of Building</b>	recorded on
02/13/561 CE	<i>Yax Itzam Aat - K'an Joy Chitam I</i>	PAL: Tmp. XIX Platform (West)
<b>09.08.05.13.09?</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
04/23/599 CE	Calakmul attacks Palenque	PAL House C, HS
<b>09.08.17.15.14</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
04/07/611 CE	Calakmul attacks Palenque	PAL Tmp. of Inscr. (East)
<b>&lt;09.08.19.09.16</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	< Birth of their son, see
<11/29/612 CE	<i>Ix Yan K'oj - Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I</i>	TRT: Monument 6
<b>09.09.03.12.11</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	recorded on
01/02/617 CE	<i>Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw - K'inich Janahb Pakal I</i>	PAL: Tmp. of Inscr. (West)
<b>09.10.11.09.06</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
06/04/644 CE	Tortuguero attacks <i>Uxte' K'uh</i>	TRT Monument 6
<b>09.10.15.1.11</b>	<b>Marriage + <i>k'ahxi t'an</i></b>	recorded on Tortuguero
12/11/647 CE	<i>Ix Witz Chan - Bahlam Ajaw</i>	TRT Monument 8 & 6
<b>09.11.02.17.04</b>	<b>War</b>	recorded on
11/13/655 CE	Tortuguero attacks <i>Uxte' K'uh</i>	TRT Jade Ear Flare
<b>&lt;09.12.06.05.08</b>	<b>Marriage</b>	< Birth of their son, see
<09/15/678 CE	<i>Lady Kinuun Mat – Tiwol Chan Mat</i>	PAL: Tablet of Slaves
<b>09.15.00.00.00</b>	<b>Period Ending Celebration?</b>	recorded on
08/22/731 CE	<i>Salaj Baluun – K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III</i>	PAL Tmp. XIX, Platform (West)

Table 6. Relevant attacks and marriages involving the cities Palenque, *Uxte' K'uh* and Tortuguero.

## Interdynastic Marriage and Warfare

In Table 6 there is an overview of all the incidences of epigraphic proof of interdynastic marriages and warfare events that Palenque, Tortuguero, and *Uxte' k'uh* were involved in.

This evidence suggests that interdynastic marriage and warfare were greatly interwoven during the Late Classic period. The question therefore is whether interdynastic marriage was used as a strategy of strengthening a polity's power by establishing ties to other cities.

The political landscape of the Classic Maya was composed of a large number of kingdoms, which can be considered as autonomous in a way, but that were in a constant negotiation process, struggling to maintain or (re)gain dominance over other kingdoms. Some, large kingdoms, achieved local control for a period of time, but never was a total domination achieved that lead to a unified Maya state or empire. Still, this leads to apparent asymmetrical power relationships, in which more powerful polities exercised control over subordinate ones. (cf. Martin 2020: 4, 334) Although, the individual kingdoms in the Lowlands show a form of unity with regard to their “consistent expression

of authority in art, writing, and architecture", which points to the existence of a "single dominant political culture" (Martin 2020: 8). This was centered around the principles of monarchy, with strong focus on the *ajaw* ("lord"), legitimated through blood and infused with not only worldly, but also sacred power, qualities that they receive in ritual. For the rest of his or her life, the *ajaw* would be responsible for his or her people, caring for their well-being in physical and spiritual terms (cf. Martin 2020: 321). The 'spiritual' duties of the ruler would later be accentuated by the *k'uhul* prefix (starting to be used in the 4th and 5th century CE), with which at first only the rulers of the most powerful kingdoms were named as *k'uhul ajaw* ('holy/sacred lord'), but that could later (6th and 7th century CE) also denote rulers of lesser kingdoms. Although past research maintained that this title always constitutes a qualitative difference with regard to a ruler's power, a closer look revealed that this is not the case (cf. Martin 2020: 322).

Interdynastic relationships can be observed with regard to a number of practices. According to Martin (2020: 334), we should not look at instances of contact as individual phenomena, but rather "assimilate the evidence for marriage, diplomacy, warfare, economics, and shared cultural traits" and view them "together under a higher-order umbrella of 'engagements'". As we have seen above, the ruler of a kingdom had a unique stand of utmost importance. Therefore, royal marriages were a highly strategic affair, that could serve the exterior purpose to build alliances, or the interior one to secure descent (cf. Martin 2020: 334). Through the practice of polygyny, it was even possible to satisfy both purposes (cf. Martin 2020: 335). Interestingly however, Martin (2020: 335) further states, that the number of foreign wives who were mentioned as principal wives is surprisingly low, meaning that endogamy was the preferred method for producing heirs. Exceptions to the rule, meaning heirs to the throne that were born from a foreign wife, could point to either an especially close relationships between the two kingdoms, or a high factor of subordination (cf. Martin 2020: 335).

Generally, surviving in a multi-polity landscape meant for kingdoms to assign a lot of importance to diplomacy, not least to avoid war. The role of war in Classic Maya life is hard to grasp, because a lack of detailed records does not allow us to exactly define its purposes and methods. Dates for war events point to a likely factor of seasonality, according to which war was predominantly waged in certain periods of the year. Furthermore, mention of war events in hieroglyphic inscriptions can predominantly be found in Late Classic texts, but it is unclear whether this can be used to draw conclusions about war having been much more frequent in the Late Classic Period, or if the subject of war was just made increasingly visible in later inscriptions (Martin 2020: 338).

The asymmetrical power relationships between polities can further be observed in the inscriptions themselves. Interestingly, they are often mentioned by the subordinate polity themselves, which might have served the purpose to either appease and satisfy their overlords, or claim their protection to deter enemies (cf. Martin 2020: 345). But dominance over other polities is also claimed by the prevailing ruler, as for example

on Naranjo Stela 2. The inscriptions mentions the accession of a ruler from Ucanal, an event that was overseen and sanctioned by *K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chahk* (cf. Martin 2020: 273), giving him the aura of authority over Ucanal's internal affairs. Another monument, Naranjo Stela 22, reveals the reason for the asymmetrical relationship: the "burning" (*puluuyi*) of Ucanal at the hands of Naranjo 14 years prior, in 698 CE (cf. Martin 2020: 273).

### Tortuguero's Attacks on *Uxte' K'uh*

With this in mind, the relationship between Late Classic Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh*, both tightly connected with Palenque, will be analyzed. Several attacks on other cities executed by Tortuguero in the Late Classic are epigraphically known. A frequently occurring victim of this warring phase during *Bahlam Ajaw's* reign is the city of *Uxte' K'uh*.

For instance, a military event against the location of *Uxte' K'uh* is marked on a jade object from Tortuguero. The date for this event, said to have been initiated by Tortuguero's *Bahlam Ajaw*, is given as 10 K'an 17 Yax (9.11.2.17.4), which corresponds to the 10th of September 655 CE (cf. Prager 2013: 579) Analysis 5 shows the war clause in the outer ring of this jade object.

**13-"Hix" 13-MUWAAN "star war" AJ?-JOY[CHAN] 10-5-WINIK-ya 5-HAAB-ya 10-"K'an" 17-YAX-SIHOOM-ma "star war" AJ-3-TE'-K'UH ?-TE'? BALAM-AJAW**

*uxlajuun "Hix", uxlajuun muwaan "star war" aj joychan, lajuun k'in, ho' winikiy, ho' habiyy, lajuun "K'an" huklajuun yaxsihoom, "star war" aj uxte' k'uh ?, ba[h]lam ajaw.*

"[On the day] 13 Hix, the 13th of Muwaan, "star wars" he of Comalcalco, 10 days, 5 months, and 5 years later, [on the day] 10 K'an, the 17th of Yaxsihoom, "star wars" he of *Uxte' K'uh* ?, Bahlam Ajaw."

Analysis 5. Outer ring of a Jade Earspool from Tortuguero: A1–A12.

Since a calendar round date of 13 Hix 13 Muwaan is an impossible combination, the question is whether there is a scribal mistake, a mistake in the drawing or whether the war event in question might be identical with the one said to have happened on 13 Hix 14 Sek in 9.10.17.2.14, mentioned on Tortuguero, Monument 6, see Table ???. Starting with *Bahlam Ajaw's* accession date, which Gronemeyer suggests as 9.10.11.3.10 [1 Ok 3 Kumk'u], February 9th, 644 CE, the date of the war event can be calculated (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 134). See Analysis 6 for a transcription, transliteration and translation of this passage.

**SIH-ya-ji-ja a-ALAY-ya ta-1-“Ok” 3-HUL-OOL CHUM-wa-ni ta-AJAW-le 16-5-WINIK-ji-ya CHUM-wa-ni-ya i-EM?-?-ye u-NAAH-u-TOOK'-PAKAL nu-pu-TE'-ja-AHIIN i-“star war” xa-ma-AJ-3-TE'-K'UH 13-“Kimi” 14-ka-se-wa**

*sihyaji[iy] alay, ta juun “Ok”, ux “Kumk'u”, chumwaan ta ajawle[l], ba[h]lam ajaw, waklajuun [k'in] ho' winikjiy chumwaaniy i e[h]mey? u naah u took' [u] pakal nupte'aj<sup>10</sup> ahiin i-“star war” xam aj uxte' k'uh uxlajuun “Kimi” chanlajuun kasew.*

“He was born here, on [the day] 1 “Ok”, the 3rd of “Kumk'u” [he] sits into ajawship, Bahlam Ajaw, [it is] 16 days [and] 5 months after he sat [in ajawship], and then descended his house/first his flint [and] his shield, and lances were joined at Ayiin, and then “star wars” Xam, he of Uxte' K'uh, [on the day] 13 Kimi, the 14th of Kasew.”

Analysis 6. Tortuguero, Monument 6: B5–A12.

The accession verb *chum* in B7 is given in the calendar round notation as 1 Ok 3 Sek, followed by a distance number of 16 days and 5 months, leading to a “star war” event against *Uxte' K'uh* (A10–A12). The calendar round date of 13 Kimi 14 Sek is not given until the end of the sentence, but can be assigned to the war event by retracing the scribe's distance number calculations:

$$\begin{array}{r} 9.10.11.03.10 \\ + \quad \quad 05.16 \\ \hline = 9.10.11.09.06 \end{array}$$

Therefore, the Long Count date of 9.10.11.9.6 resulting from the calculation fits, in with the 13 Kimi 14 Sek calendar round in B11–A12. This means that there are two chronologically separate “star-war”-events initiated by Tortuguero against *Uxte' K'uh*, one in 644 CE (9.10.11.09.06) and one in 655 CE (9.11.2.17.4), roughly 11 apart from the other.

Still, the question regarding Tortuguero's motivation for executing these attacks against *Uxte' K'uh* remains elusive. What did the power dynamics and allegiances between Tortuguero, *Uxte' K'uh* and Palenque look like in the Late Classic Period? If Tortuguero and Palenque were closely related and allied, why did Tortuguero's *Bahlam Ajaw* attack Palenque's long-time ally *Uxte' K'uh*? The next section will try to provide answers for these questions by looking at the political landscape of the Late Classic Palenque region. It will also try to provide answers as to which place interdynastic marriages and wars took with regard to these questions.

## Power Dynamics between Palenque, Tortuguero, and *Uxte' K'uh*: Strategies of Survival in a Multi-Polity Landscape

The instances of inderdynastic contact between Palenque, Tortuguero, and *Uxte' K'uh* are diverse. I will start by looking at the shared *Baakal* emblem glyph use of Palenque and Tortuguero. Afterwards there will be an analysis of (another?) interdynastic marriage in Tortuguero. Finally, I will analyze Tortuguero's motivations for attacking *uxte' K'uh*, and possible explanations why Palenque did nothing to retaliate.

### Palenque and Tortuguero: The Shared *Baakal* Identity

Multiple explanations for the assumption of the *Baakal* emblem glyph by Tortuguero have been proposed in the past. Grube (1996) hypothesized that the *Baakal* emblem might have been gifted to *Bahlam Ajaw* thanks to his assumed military involvement in favor of Palenque. On the highest political level, Palenque was affiliated with Tikal. From 599 CE until *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* accedes to the throne, Palenque had been the victim of numerous attacks from neighboring cities, most prominently two attacks by the Snake kingdom. According to Grube, the Tortuguero – Palenque alliance was forged in this time, as Pakal gives Tortuguero's *Bahlam Ajaw* permission to use the Palenque emblem glyph as a reward for the numerous wars he had fought in favor of Palenque. This said to be supported by the fact that all of *Bahlam Ajaw*'s monuments were dedicated after 9.11.0.0.0 (652 CE) and therefore after these wars had been fought and Palenque's regional power was consolidated through them (cf. Grube 1996: 3f.).

Another explanation for Tortuguero's use of the *Baakal* emblem glyph is given by Gronemeyer (2004: 147), saying that it is very likely that there was an alliance between Palenque and Tortuguero, but probably not with the sole aim of Tortuguero's *Bahlam Ajaw* waging war for Palenque's benefit, as suggested by Grube. According to Gronemeyer, the two kingdoms might have rather formed a "strategic alliance, that benefited them both" (Gronemeyer 2004: 151). Following this argumentation, Tortuguero's use of the *Baakal* emblem would have happened voluntarily, motivated by a friendly connection with Palenque, maybe even out of prestigious reasons associated with this particular emblem. Another argument against Grube's theory could be the one instance where *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* carries the *Baakal* emblem. It is unclear however, whether he was assigned the emblem post-mortem by a later ruler, possibly his son and successor *Bahlam Ajaw*, or whether he already carried this emblem in his lifetime (cf. Gronemeyer 2004: 147).

Martin (2020: 96) on the other hand, offers an entirely different explanation. He speculates, that the simultaneous *Baakal* emblem glyph use in Tortuguero and Palenque might have been due to a split in the Palenque lineage around 510 CE (with the first mention of a Tortuguero king), which resulted in the formation of two independent kingdoms. Shortly before, during the reign of *Ahkal Mo' Nahb I*, the royal seat of Palenque was

relocated. *Baakal* could thus refer to the location of Tortuguero itself, or a place nearby (Martin 2020: 96f.). The separation of Palenque and Tortuguero into distinct kingdoms is further supported by the fact that the sites don't show an overlap with regard to their patron deities (cf. Martin 2020: 162).

Furthermore, it might also be notable that the marriage between Tortuguero king *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* and his wife *Ix Yan K'oj* must have taken place before the birth of their son and future king of Tortuguero, *Bahlam Ajaw*, in 9.8.19.9.16 (612 CE). As mentioned above, *Ix Yan K'oj* carries the *Baakal* emblem glyph in her name phrase on Tortuguero Monument 6. It has thus been assumed (Gronemeyer 2004: 134), that she was part of the Palenque lineage, following the hypothesis that only foreign women carry an emblem glyph. In light of new research, there has to be serious doubt about this hypothesis however. Martin (2020: 336) states that the factor of emblem glyph use by women was probably not an indicator of their foreign origin. He provides the example of *Ix U'h Chan* in the inscriptions of Yaxchilan, whose foreign origin is only mentioned once within the nine occurrences we have of her name phrase. A similar case could be made for *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, whose *Uxte' K'uh* descent is never mentioned, while she instead even carries the *Baakal* emblem glyph once. Her father's (*Yax Itzam Aat*) *Uxte' K'uh* origin however is mentioned in his grandfather statement on a sanctuary jamb of Palenque's Temple of the Sun.

Furthermore, if Martin (2020: 96f.) is right about the split of the Palenque dynasty around 510 CE, it might be the case that *Ix Yan K'oj* was indeed a local woman from Tortuguero. If we take into account the fact that *Bahlam Ajaw* is the first Tortuguero ruler who carries the *Baakal* emblem glyph in a contemporary inscription, and consider the possibility that *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan's* carrying of the Tortuguero emblem glyph (see Analysis 7) might have been a retrospective assignment by his son, this would result in the assumption that all Tortuguero rulers before *Bahlam Ajaw* did not carry the *Baakal* emblem. If true, this could potentially be a counter argument against Martin's hypothesis of a split of Palenque and Tortuguero in 510 CE as the reason for the sites' shared emblem glyph use, because one wonders why the *Baakal* emblem does not appear and not much activity can be seen in Tortuguero until *Bahlam Ajaw's* reign 133 years later. Therefore, it could be speculated whether the *Baakal* emblem glyph might have found entrance into Tortuguero through the marriage of *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I* and *Ix Yan K'oj*, who then served as a legitimization for *Bahlam Ajaw* to carry the emblem of her origin (Palenque), with whom he would have also been related by blood. If the marriage between *Ix Yan K'oj* and *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan* some time before 612 CE was indeed inter-dynastic, it might be notable that this important event was set very close in time to the 599 CE Calakmul attack on Palenque, and might thus have been a strategic attempt of Palenque to secure a spatially close ally. Interestingly, the second attack by Calakmul (611 CE) is even closer to *Bahlam Ajaw's* birth and one wonders whether the marriage happened before or after this attack.

### *Bahlam Ajaw's Strategic Marriage*

Furthermore, which adds to the possible relation of war and marriage, Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010) identify another interdynastic marriage involving Tortuguero's *Bahlam Ajaw*, namely one tying his kingdom to that of a woman named *Ix Witz Chan*. The hypothesis, if true, revolves around the discovery of two new verbs, the first of which, *k'ahx-i(jiy) t'aan* for 'was tied the word'<sup>11</sup>, occurs on Tortuguero's Monument 6 in D11–C12. The sentence is set on the day 11 Chuwen 4 Muwaan, 9.10.15.1.11 (647 CE), a little less than four years after *Bahlam Ajaw's* accession on 9.10.11.3.10 (644 CE). According to the authors, "tying the word" is a metaphor for the forging of an alliance, in this specific case one forged to secure *Bahlam Ajaw's* numerous war campaigns which he started soon thereafter. In fact, the narrative of a "word tying" event being identical with or accompanied by an interdynastic marriage only arises after bringing together two events mentioned on two different monuments which are said to have occurred on the same date – the *k'ahx-i(jiy) t'aan* event on Monument 6 and *Bahlam Ajaw's* marriage to *Ix Witz Chan* on Monument 8.

Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010: FN 52) further expand this by writing that the marriage between *Bahlam Ajaw* and *Ix Witz Chan* had already been planned by *Bahlam Ajaw's* accession in 644 CE, but that it took almost four more years for the marriage to actually take place on 9.10.15.1.11 (647 CE) (cf. Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 52).

The marriage in question is defined by a new verb, identified by Gronemeyer and MacLeod as *pi'al-aj*, "become a companion"<sup>12</sup>, occurring on Monument 8 in B23. That this, the "tying of the word" and the consequential marriage must have been a rare and extraordinary event in Tortuguero's history is further signaled by the fact that Monument 6 ties it to another *k'ahx-i(jiy) t'aan* event 300 years prior (353 CE) (cf. Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 52). The authors further stress the importance of the parallel "word tying" and marriage as follows:

<sup>11</sup>According to Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010: FN52), *k'ahx-i(jiy) t'aan* has an equivalent in Yucatec, *k'ax t'an*, '[...] contratar algo, concordarse, [...] conjurarse con otro y hacer concierto de amistad' (Barrera Vásquez 1993: 390), or, additionally, *kax than*, 'aliarse confederarse hazerse a una y concertarse y el tal concierto en que muchos conforman y hazer monipodio y el tal monipodio (Ciudad Real 1995: f. 242v). They further cite Barrera Vásquez (1993: 387–389) with entries for both components of *k'ax[i] t'an*, namely *k'ax* for 'liar, ligar, atar, vendar', and *t'an* (often also *t'àan*) for 'palabra(s)', which brings them to their translation of *k'ahx-i(jiy) t'aan* as 'was tied the word' or 'was bound an alliance' (Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 52).

<sup>12</sup>According to Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010: FN 52), *pi'al-aj* is an inchoative, which might be equivalent to *piaran* 'be a companion, go alongside of' in Ch'orti'. They cite (Wisdom 1950), whose publication also provides *ut upiar*, 'his companion' and *piar*, 'companion, the other of a pair, that which accompanies something else'. Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010: FN 52) also provide a possible equivalent in Ch'ol, *pi'len*, which translates to 'have sexual intercourse', or 'to accompany, to conceive (of a female)' (Hopkins et al. 2011: 182). Ch'ol also provides the root *pi'*, 'companion', that is included in

But what is most exciting about these paired statements is the epigraphic confirmation that royal marriages cement major political alliances. It stands to reason that the earlier (8.15.16.0.5) event was not simply a marriage, but rather a great political accord both worthy of distant recall, yet impersonal, and a milestone in the collective memory of the *Baakiil* [sic] lineage. (Gronemeyer and MacLeod 2010: FN 52)

Thus, it would be logical to assume that this marriage must have been an interdynastic one. However, *Ix Witz Chan* does not carry an emblem glyph or toponym in this one example of her name phrase, as is sometimes the case for foreign women. According to Martin (cf. 2020: 184) however, this is not always the case, which might mean that there is a huge number of unreported interdynastic marriages because the foreign descent of the wife is not always stated.

### Palenque's Relationship to *Uxte' K'uh* and the Attacks by Tortuguero

Turning to the relationship between Palenque and *Uxte' K'uh*, there is already evidence of an alliance 40 years before *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* was born. By consequence, this also hints to the fact that the two kingdoms had been allied during Tortuguero's attack on *Uxte' K'uh* in 9.10.11.9.6 (644 CE). Generally, the relationship between Palenque, Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh* is very interesting, considering that Tortuguero attacked *Uxte' K'uh* twice, even though both sites might have been closely connected to nearby Palenque. Interestingly – which is also used as an argument for *Uxte' K'uh*'s probable close proximity to Tortuguero (and Palenque) – *Bahlam Ajaw*'s first attack on this city already happened four months after he acceded to the throne.

According to Bernal Romero (2005: 85), the city of *Uxte' K'uh* likely was an important factor in Palenque's exertion of regional power, not only as a military stronghold but also as Palenque's source for important luxurious goods such as jade, which was used to create symbols of power and wealth. The unusually high positions obtained by *Uxte' K'uh* nobles, suspiciously low-ranking compared to the title of *k'uhul ajaw*, at the court of Palenque during the reigns of *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* might thus have been due to *Uxte' K'uh*'s guarantee of a continuous flow of these precious materials. More importantly, Palenque had just suffered two attacks by the major force of the Snake Kingdom when *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* acceded to power, marking the end of Palenque's ill-fated past. But its sudden rise might have been due to more than just clever rulership, as Pakal's choice of wife in *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* from *Uxte' K'uh* might have at least aided Palenque in its recovery, being part of a complex strategy to gain control over the region. This in turn also was a smart move by *Uxte' K'uh*, who secured for themselves an important and stable role, not only at Palenque's court but also in its succession. They practically took part in the reigns of at least four Palenque kings:

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words such as *pi'äl*, 'relative, friend, neighbor, pariente, amigo, vecino, companion, compañero', but also in *pi'älan* 'vtr accompany' (Hopkins et al. 2011: 181).

*K'inich Janahb Pakal I*, and his sons with *Uxte' K'uh* woman *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, *K'inich K'an Bahlam* and *K'an Joy Chitam* and, reinforcing their relationship through another important tie by marrying off their own *Ix Kinuuw Mat* to *Tiwo Chan Mat* (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 85f.). The strategy therefore might have been to participate in yet another reign through *Tiwo Chan Mat*, a plan which was thwarted by his premature death, shortly after the birth of his son *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*. The fourth reign of a Palenque king associated with *Uxte' K'uh* therefore was that of *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*, son of *Tiwo Chan Mat* and *Ix Kinuuw Mat*.

In light of this summary of the close connection that Palenque and *Uxte' K'uh* had for more than a century makes Tortuguero's attacks on *Uxte' K'uh* appear even more strange. Bernal Romero (2005) writes that the picture could be more complex than previously assumed, adding the possibility that an interdynastic marriage could not only have positive consequences for a city, but could also be incentive for a war:

[I]t is very likely that the armed incursion was intended to make an example of *Ox Te' K'uh* [sic], a punishment for the very close loyalty they held to the Palenque dynasty, especially considering that a woman from this place was already the mother of a potential heir to the local (Palenque, author's note) lineage (translation by the author). (Bernal Romero 2005: 79)

This however is said to have had the opposite effect, as parts of the *Uxte' K'uh* elite likely sought refuge in Palenque to escape Tortuguero's attacks. Furthermore, at the time of the attack, *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* was even pregnant again, giving birth to another heir of the throne (and yet another one four years later). Later however, despite Tortuguero's efforts to the contrary, another marriage between Palenque and *Uxte' K'uh* was forged, this time between *Tiwo Chan Mat*, third son of *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw*, and *Ix Kinuuw Mat* from *Uxte' K'uh*, who likely was a close relative to her husband's mother who arranged the marriage (cf. Bernal Romero 2005: 80). Although, a problematic factor in Bernal Romero's theory about Tortuguero's motivation for attacking *Uxte' K'uh* is the fact that there is absolutely no evidence for any counter attacks against Tortuguero in the inscriptions of Palenque. It is unclear, why Palenque would have let Tortuguero attack *Uxte' K'uh*, a site with which they had been very closely allied for over 80 years at the time, without reacting to it in any way. The lack of evidence for a Palenque intervention could also be due to a gap in our sources however. If we assume that it is not true, that we just haven't found evidence for a retaliation from Palenque against Tortuguero, the explanations for these hostile actions presented above are not satisfying for multiple reasons. Firstly, we have to take into account, that Palenque constituted an incredibly powerful force in its region during the reign of *K'inich Janahb Pakal I*. Therefore, we can assume, that Palenque sanctioned both Tortuguero's use of their emblem glyph and its attacks

on *Uxte' K'uh*<sup>13</sup>, because no counter-measures from Palenque against Tortuguero are known, neither at Palenque, nor at Tortuguero. As a result, the big question remains, why would Palenque benefit from Tortuguero attacking its close ally, hometown of their great king's wife and probable source of their luxury goods? Also, we know that the alliance between Palenque and *Uxte' K'uh* did not (at least not permanently) end in *K'inich Janahb Pakal I*'s reign, because his wife brokered another marriage between her son, *Ti'vol Chan Mat*, and an *Uxte' K'uh* woman, *Ix Kinuuw Mat*, some time before 678 CE.

Therefore, a possible further explanation for Tortuguero's attacks on *Uxte' K'uh* could be that the status quo changed in *Uxte' K'uh* between 616 CE and 644 CE. Maybe a competing noble line took power over the city at some point, overthrowing the previously ruling family allied with Palenque, of which *Yax Itzam Aat* and *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* were members. Therefore, Tortuguero's attacks could have been executed to restore the former royal *Uxte' K'uh* family by the grace of Palenque, to revitalize their supply of luxurious goods much needed to sustain Palenque's elite. Why Tortuguero attacks *Uxte' K'uh* again eleven years later however remains unclear in this theory; maybe the re-establishment of the original order did not last and Tortuguero had to intervene again in favor of Palenque.

## Conclusion

After having analyzed the relations between the cities allied to Palenque through marriage in the Late Classic period, as well as pre- and post-marriage events that could have served as motivations therefore, the picture that emerges is an ambiguous one. The hypothesis that war and interdynastic marriage are connected in a cause-effect relationship can be cautiously accepted for at least some cases. Much revolves around the question whether Palenque and Tortuguero had a positive relationship in the Late Classic, and how the *Baakal* emblem glyph ended up being used in Tortuguero. On the one hand, it has theorized that Tortuguero could have had motivation to attack *Uxte' K'uh* for having too much influence in the court of Palenque. The marriage between *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* and *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* therefore could have been the turning point that triggered *Bahlam Ajaw* into waging two wars against this city. However, as shown above, this explanation is flawed, because there is no record of any counter measures or retaliation from Palenque, avenging their decade-long ally *Uxte' K'uh*. Therefore, the hypothesis has been put forward, that there could have been a coup in *Uxte' K'uh* between 616 CE and 644 CE, as a result of which the ruling elite with close ties to Palenque was overthrown. Thus, Tortuguero's intervention could have served the purpose of restoring order in *Uxte' K'uh*, which must have been in Palenque's inter-

<sup>13</sup> It might be noteworthy, that both of these attacks fall into *K'inich Janahb Pakal I*'s reign, the first one occurring almost 30 years after his accession, at a time when he must have already gained considerable influence as king.

est for economic and maybe also social reasons (regarding the queen's origin in the *Uxte' K'uh* elite). What follows is another interdynastic marriage between *Uxte' K'uh* and Palenque, probably to reinforce their alliance which must have benefitted them both. Additionally, the marriage between *Bahlam Ajaw* and *Ix Witz Chan* might have been used to forge an alliance much needed by the Tortuguero king to gather enough backup to start his series of attacks. Furthermore, the marriage between *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw* started suspiciously soon after Palenque had been the victim of two attacks by the major force of the Snake Kingdom, which means that it might have been part of Palenque's – obviously fruitful – recovery strategy.

On the other hand, for some examples there is quite a long time span between the attacks and the subsequent marriage alliances. The exact time cannot be calculated however, because for all but two couples the exact date of marriage is not known.

Still, the power dynamics and political as well as social relationships between Palenque, Tortuguero and *Uxte' K'uh* are complex and some details remain elusive. They might have been at least partially influenced by the shifting power dynamics in the Late Classic, in which smaller sites began rising in power and trying to widen their regional influence. Fueled by ambitious rulers such as *Bahlam Ajaw* of Tortuguero as well as *K'inich Janahb Pakal I* and *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III* of Palenque, the Late Classic Period region around Palenque experienced turbulent times characterized by power struggles, of which wars and marriages as “engagement” must have been both symptoms and coping strategies.

Generally, affiliations with foreign persons are mentioned frequently in Late Classic inscriptions, giving prestige to the respective ruler. This becomes clear through several of the texts analyzed above. Secondly, *Yax Itzam Aat* and *Salaj Baluun* from *Uxte' K'uh* are mentioned frequently on Palenque monuments despite their rather insignificant titles. Finally, the most astonishing occurrence with regard to prestige discussed in this essay is that of *Ix Yan K'oj* in the Tortuguero inscriptions and her hypothesized role in the change of the Tortuguero identity with *Bahlam Ajaw* – a role which needs more research in the future, especially concerning the *u chit ch'ahb* statement and the question of how the *Baakal* emblem glyph ended up in Tortuguero.

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## Addendum

### List of Abbreviations

PAL	Palenque	HS	Hieroglyphic Stairway	St.	Stela
TRT	Tortuguero	Mon.	Monument	Tmp.	Temple

### Further Analyzed Text Passages

**u-ba-hi u-CHIT?-CH'AB IX-ya-na-k'o-jo IX-BAAK-la-AJAW u-ni-chi u-ko-tz'o?-ma IK'-'MUY-'MUWAAN K'UH-BAAK-AJAW**

*u baah u chit ch'a[h]b ix yan k'oj ix baakal ajaw u nich u kotz'oom i[h]k' muuy muwaan k'uh[ul] baak[al] ajaw.*

“He is the person of her co-creation, *Ix Yan K'oj*, lady of *Baakal*, his flower, his winder<sup>14</sup>, *Ihk' Muuy Muwaan I*, holy lord of *Baakal*.”

Analysis 7. Inscription from Tortuguero, Monument 6: F16–G1.

**9-“Ik'” CHUM-SAK-SIHOOM-ma a-700st-ni-ya-AJAW NAL-ji?-TAN-na-IXIIM ?-? yi-ta-ji 1?-IX-ki-nu-wa u-ti-ya ma-ta-wi-la ha-i u-ko-bo u-KAB-ji-ya-TOLOK?<sup>15</sup> K'INICH-AJ-ku-la mo-na-bi K'UHUL-BAAK-la-AJAW u-ti ye-ma-la K'UK'-LAKAM wi-tzi LAKAM?-AJAW CHAN?-na-CH'EEN?-na**

*baluun “Ik'” chum saksihoom ? ajawniiy ? ? yitaaj jun ix kinuuz utiyy matwiil ha'i u kob[ow]? u kabjiyy tolok? k'inich ajkul mo' na[h]b k'uh[ul] baakal ajaw uht [y]emal k'uk' lakam witz lakam? ajaw chan ch'een.*

“On 9 Ik', the seating of *Saksihoom* (“Sak”), ? ‘became king’ ‘Muwaan Mat’; he/she is accompanied [by] primordial *Ix Kinuuz*<sup>16</sup>, it happened [at] *Matwiil* (Toponym), he/she/it/that/this?<sup>17</sup> he/she creates? he supervised/oversaw it, *Tolok*, *K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III*, holy lord of *Baakal*, [and] it happens [at] *Yemal K'uk' Lakam Witz*<sup>18</sup>, great lord [of the] community/town/city.”

Analysis 8. Inscription from Palenque, Temple XVIII Jamb: C8–D17.

<sup>14</sup>The transcription and translation of glyph blocks F16, E17, G2 and H2 stem from Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010: 53f.).

<sup>15</sup>See Tokovinine (2017: 29).

<sup>16</sup>This translation is given by Bernal Romero (2005: 82).

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Boot (2009: 246).

<sup>18</sup>John Harris states that this is the “name of the mountain behind the Temple of the Cross at Palenque” (Harris 1994: 25).

7-"Ajaw" 8-a[K'AN]si-ya 7-ku-lu-TUUN-ni PAT-ta-wa-ni yo-ko-bi-li YAX-ITZAM-AAT TUUN-ni-AJAW u-CHOK-ch'a-ji K'AN-na-JOY-CHITAM-ma K'UH-BAAK-la-AJAW 0-0-WINIK-ji-ya 13-HAAB-ya 8-WINIKHAAB?-? 4-"Ajaw" 13-YAX-SIHOOM CHUM-TUUN-ni u-15-WINIKHAAB? u-K'AL-TUUN-ni K'INICH AAK-la-MO'-NAAB K'UH-MAT-la-AJAW u-NAAH-u-k'o-tu ta-"G1" sa-la-ja-9 u-TZ'AK-ja 16-17-WINIK-ji-ya 2-HAAB-ya 9-"Kib" 19-a[K'AN]-si-ya OCH-chi-K'AK' ta-8-NAAH-K'INICH?-LAK/EL K'AK'-ku?-ku-NAAH u-CHAAK?-NAAH-li "G1"-4-K'AL-ji-ya 7-"Ajaw" 3-WAY-HAAB k'a-la-CHAJAN<sup>19</sup> u-JOY?-yo?-mu-li u-k'o-chi-tu sa-la-ja-9.

*huk "Ajaw" waxak k'anasiy huk-kul tuun<sup>20</sup> patwaan yokbil yax itzam aat tuun ajaw u chok ch'aaj k'an joy chitam k'uh[ul] baakal ajaw mih [k'in] mih winik uxlajuun tuuniy waxak winikhaab? chan "Ajaw" uxlajuun yaxsihoom chum tuun u ho'lajuun winikhaab? u k'al tuun k'inich a[h]kal mo' na[h]b k'uh[ul] mat[wii]l ajaw u naah u k'oot? ta "G1" salaj baluun u tz'akaj waklajuun [k'in] huk winikjiy cha' haabiyy i-uht baluun "Kib" baluunlajuun k'anasiy och k'a[h]k' ? k'a[h]k' ? naah u cha[h]k' ? naahil "G1" ka k'aljiy huk "Ajaw" ux wayhaab? k'al chajan u joy yomuul? u k'ochiit salaj baluun.*

"On 7 Ajaw, the 8th of *K'anasiy* ("K'ayab"), seven heaps of *tuun*<sup>21</sup>, [he] shapes/forms the pedestal, *Yax Itzam Aat*, *Tuun* lord, [and] he scatters incense, *K'an Joy Chitam I*, holy lord of *Baakal*. 0 days, 0 months, 13 years, and 8 scores of years (later), on 4 Ajaw, the 13th of *Yaxsihoom* ("Yax"), the setting of the stone, the 15th *K'atun*, [is] his stone binding, *K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb III*, holy lord of *Matwiil* [...] *Salaj Baluun*<sup>22</sup>. Counted are 16 days, 7 months, 2 years, and then it happens on 9 Kib, the 19th of *K'anasiy* ("K'ayab"), fire enters into [name of building], fire ? house, his red ? house, [it is] the fourth binding/containing? of "G1", [and] on 7 Ajaw, the 3rd of *Wayhaab?* ("Wayeb"), the tying of the rope<sup>23</sup>, he debuts as ?, his ?, *Salaj Baluun*."

Analysis 9. Inscription from Palenque, Temple XVIII Jamb: C8-D17.

<sup>19</sup>Reading proposed on visual grounds by Marc Zender in Stone and Zender (cf. 2011: 77).

<sup>20</sup>See Boot (2009: 99).

<sup>21</sup>The expression "seven heaps of stone" as a translation for *huk-kul tuun* comes from Boot (2009: 99). The *-kul* is a numeral classifier, that is used for counting stones (or eggs) (cf. Stuart 2005: 92).

<sup>22</sup>Stuart (2005: 199) captures the sense of this passage as follows: "It is the raising (?) of G1, the *Salaj Baluun*."

<sup>23</sup>Fittingly, ropes are featured prominently in the iconography of this monument.