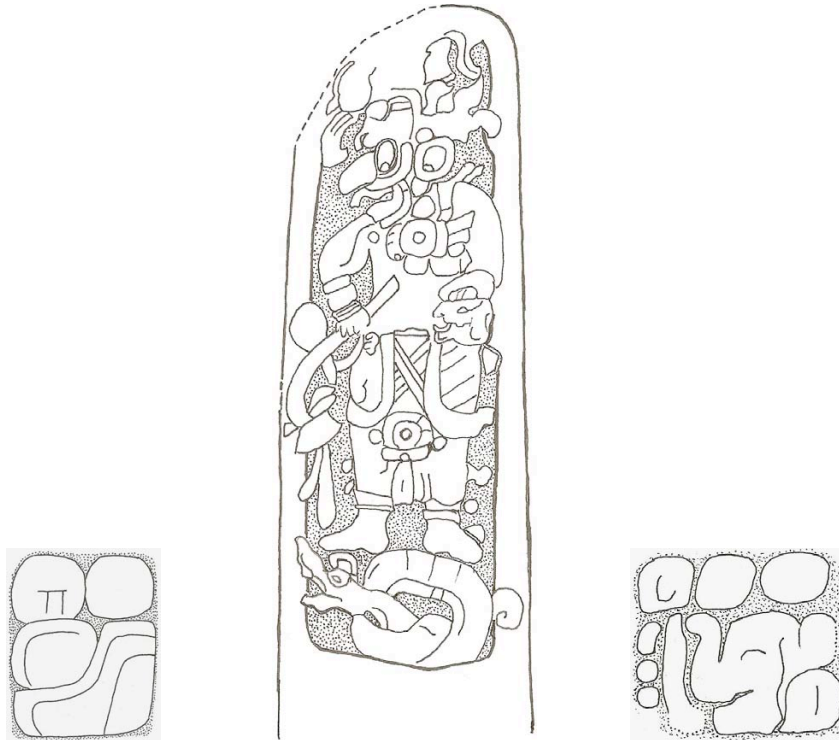


The Ancient Maya Monuments at Oxpemul, Campeche, México

Hubert R. Robichaux



A Report of the
Oxpemul Archaeological Project

Director: Dr. William J. Folan

Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Sociales
Universidad Autónoma de Campeche

2010

-Dedication-

This volume is dedicated to Drs. Richard E.W. Adams, and William J. Folan, veterans of over 50 years in the struggle that is Maya archaeology, to whom many, including the author, owe much.

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PROLOGUE

The ruins of Oxpemul, Campeche are those of a highly defensive frontier site on the northern-most extension of the Peten-Campechano environmental and cultural zone, as well as the Regional State of Calakmul generally recognized by its Kaan or serpent-head emblem glyph. A tightly packed architectural royal court on a 44.5 meter high, 5 hectare hilltop includes a palace, E-Group and a ball court comparable in size to those of Calakmul, two 25 meter high temples, plus some 50 additional structures in addition to a total of 23 stelae and 21 altars bearing some ca. 330 glyphs that date from the ca. fifth to the 9th century A.D. One stela depicts a warrior standing on a serpent's head. Oxpemul's "Stone Throne" emblem glyph, first published by us in 2004, is registered at least 13 times in Oxpemul over a period of ca. 400 years. It may also appear on the face of Stelae 51 at Calakmul dating to A.D. 731, more or less at the time of the Late Classic drought in the southern Maya area. Oxpemul and the other major sites in the Peten-Campechano formed polities *conurbadas* with Calakmul representing the major presence in the area thus suggesting a form of state, dominion, or federation until the Chan [Kaan] family moved on, possibly to Calkini where the Canules are the most numerous surname registered in the city during the 16th Century followed by the Chanés in third place, in addition to twelve Kanés according to David Bolles.

The following detailed, well-thought-out interdisciplinary study generated by Hubert Robichaux has united and documented, for the first time, the hieroglyphic texts and iconography of Oxpemul, including its emblem glyph, toward a greater understanding of the sociopolitical organization of the Peten Campechano and its relationship to other regional centers near and far. With our research project titled "Oxpemul, Campeche: A Prehispanic Classic Period Cultural Frontier of the Maya Lowlands" of the Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Sociales, of the Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, México, also supported by the National Consul of Science and Technology (Conacyt) of the same country, we have been dedicated to the conservation and interpretation of the Maya and their environment.

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Imi, Campeche, México

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am, first of all, very grateful to Dr. William Folan, director of the Center for Historical and Social Research (CIHS) at the Autonomous University of Campeche (UAC), and director of the UAC Oxpemul Archaeological Project, for appointing me to document, and interpret the wonderful set of stelae and altars present at Oxpemul. Dr. Folan, and the CIHS staff, including Lynda Folan, Lic. Raymundo González Heredia, Dr. Maria del Rosario Domínguez, and José Antonio Hernández Trujeque, were overwhelmingly, and undeviatingly generous in supporting my efforts at Oxpemul. I also thank the rector of the UAC, C.P. Enna Alicia Sandoval Castellanos, the governor of Campeche, Don Jorge C. Hurtado V., Maestro Luis Fernando Álvarez Aguilar of INAH-Campeche, and the National Consul of Science and Technology of México (CONACYT) for their support of the UAC work at Oxpemul. Candace Pruett of Austin, Tx, was my collaborator on much of the early work on the Oxpemul monuments, and I am very grateful to her, and appreciative of her efforts.

Dr. Ivan Sprajc of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, and Mexican archaeologists Adrián Baker Pedroza and Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel (members of Dr. Sprajc's reconnaissance crew) greatly assisted me in the two-day walk to Oxpemul in 2004, and were very supportive during the time spent at the site that year. The photographs they provided me were of exceptional quality and I am grateful to them for the use of some of them in this report. Gratitude is also expressed to Dr. Bruce Love for the use of photos he took during a visit to Oxpemul. Archivists Patricia Kervick and India Spartz at the Peabody Museum of Harvard University were very helpful in providing access to the written records and photographs from the Carnegie Institution of Washington's 1934 visit to Oxpemul, for which I thank them. I also owe thanks to Dr. John Weeks, and Dr. David Kelley and his wife Jane, for their assistance in tracking down the Carnegie's field records.

During my three sessions of field work at Oxpemul I was greatly assisted by numerous persons from the community of Constitución who worked as members of the Oxpemul Archaeological Project. Included among these were Ciriaco Requena Sandoval, Antonio Montejo Sánchez, Carmen Morales Cruz, Cristobal Montejo Sánchez, and the various UAC guards at the site. I also enjoyed my association and conversations with graduate student and mapping leader, Edwin Barnes of UC San Diego, during the 2007 field season.

I am exceedingly indebted and grateful to archaeologist Dr. Richard E.W. Adams for the opportunities and support he has passed my way over the last two decades. Drs. Fred Valdez, Jr., Brett Houk, and Joel Gunn have also been my colleagues and collaborators over many years for which I am very grateful. Dr. Joyce Marcus has shown interest in my efforts on the Oxpemul monuments, for which I thank her.

Numerous persons and organizations have provided financial support over the years for my work in Maya archaeology including Alexandra Miller, John K. Miller, the late Sir Barry Bowen and Lady Dixie Bowen, Tom and Josie Harding, Nick and Brigitte Bougas, Norman Evanko, Larry Benson, the Tom and Gracie Benson Foundation, Dr. Bruce and Nancy Wood, John and Bonnie Peveto, the Aramark Corporation, Bruce and Dr. Cheryl Anderson, Robert Sosa, Dr. Pat Burr, Dr. Denise Doyle, Laura Weiss, Pat Maloney Jr., The Amy Shelton Charitable Trust, John Montford of AT&T and the Plum Foundation of Los Angeles, John Oppenheimer, Jack and Laura Richmond, the administration of the University of the Incarnate Word, the Center for Historical and Social Research at the Autonomous University of Campeche, and others who go uncited here. I will always value their assistance.

I thank the faculty and staff of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) for their collegiality, and interest in my research.

My wife Cathy has been saintly in her support and tolerance of my work at Oxpemul and other sites, and I am extremely grateful and indebted to her, as well as to Jenny. I also must note the support of my late wife, Barbara, who made my career in archaeology a possibility. Daughters Marlene and Jacqueline, their husbands Kyle and Drew, and their children, Dylan, Davis, Catherine, and Nathan, have thankfully provided much needed encouragement over the years.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeologist and epigrapher John Denison, Jr., a member of the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) expedition that reported the discovery of the Oxpemul ruins in 1934, was not given to making extravagant statements. Nevertheless he wrote in his field notebook on Feb. 7, 1934, the day the team arrived at Oxpemul, that “It is a marvellous site for stelae” (Denison 1934:7). The rediscovery of Oxpemul in 2004, as detailed below, has reaffirmed Denison’s glowing assessment. Oxpemul indeed has an impressive array of carved stone monuments and they are, on average, better preserved than those at many sites in the Maya lowlands. Although these monuments were discovered over 70 years ago, they have remained undocumented in a comprehensive manner until the present report.

This volume provides documentation of the 23 stelae and 21 altars presently known at Oxpemul. In doing so, it incorporates photographs, drawings, and narrative descriptions of virtually all of the sides of all of the known Oxpemul monuments. The author’s analysis and interpretation of the monuments is also presented. A discussion at the end of the report attempts to place Oxpemul in a larger regional context based upon the information presented by the monuments themselves, and by the excavation and settlement mapping data that is currently available.

The contents of this report should be of interest to archaeologists, epigraphers, art historians, and members of the general public who have an interest in these fields.

The Discovery and Rediscovery of Oxpemul

Oxpemul is located near the southeastern corner of the Mexican state of Campeche (Figure 1), an area that even today contains large tracts of uninhabited tropical jungle. The ruins, as noted above, were first reported in 1934 by an archaeological reconnaissance expedition sponsored by the Carnegie Institute of Washington (CIW). That expedition spent the nine-day period, February 7-16, 1934, at Oxpemul mapping the central part of the ruins, and recording a very preliminary description of stelae, altars, structures, and environmental features. The CIW published its findings on Oxpemul and several other sites in the region some nine years later (Ruppert and Denison 1943).

Unfortunately, later archaeologists were unable to relocate Oxpemul in the vast jungle area of southern Campeche. In recent years the nearby ruins known as Dos Aguadas, although they do not match well with the Carnegie’s 1934 map of Oxpemul, were thought by some to possibly be those of Oxpemul (Sprajc, Gonzalez Heredia and Folan 2004:35).

On April 22, 2004, 70 years after the Carnegie expedition’s visit, Licenciado Raymundo Gonzáles Heredia of the CIHS-UAC, and Dr. Ivan Sprajc of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences (Figure 2), discovered ruins that were quickly confirmed to be those of the lost

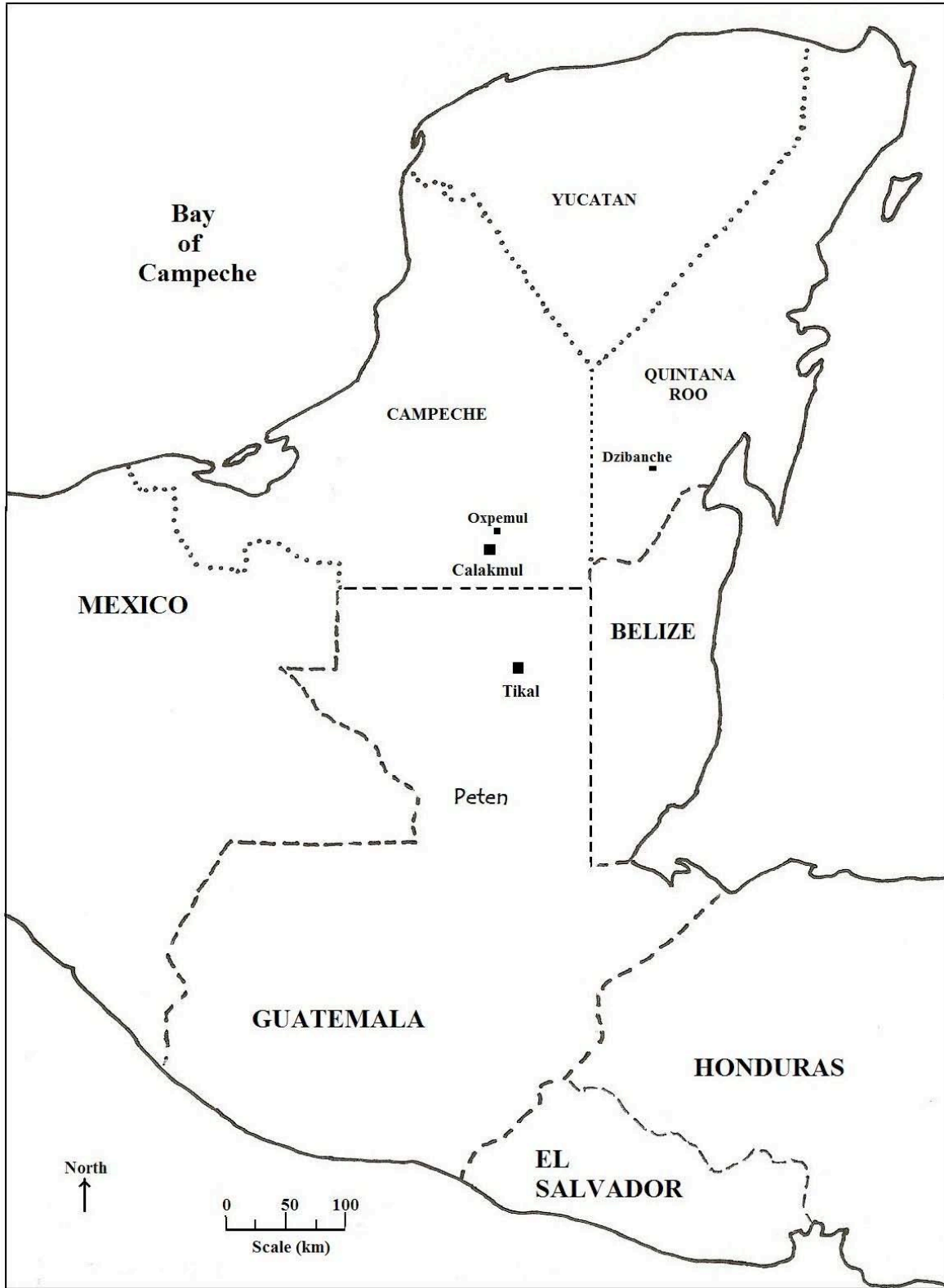


Figure 1. Map showing the location of Oxpemul in southeastern Campeche state, and other relevant sites in the Maya region.

site of Oxpemul. The central precinct of the Oxpemul ruins is located on a hill top at coordinates N18-19-11, W89-46-42 (Sprajc, González Heredia, and Folan 2004:37; Folan 2004). Since their rediscovery, the ruins have been under the constant protection of guards funded by the UAC, and UAC field crews have been investigating the site. All of the author's work at Oxpemul, as described in this volume, has been under the sponsorship of the CIHS-UAC, under the leadership of Dr. William J. Folan.

Denison, the CIW's epigrapher during the 1934 visit to Oxpemul, focused his efforts on the calendrical portions of the texts on the monuments. His report provided pictures of only a few stelae and altars, and no drawings of texts (Ruppert and Denison 1943). At the time of his writing, few glyphs other than those dealing with the Maya calendar were understood. The identification of verbs, personal names, titles, toponyms, emblem glyphs, grammatical affixes, etc, did not generally occur until decades later, and the phonetic component of the writing system was largely unrecognized. Thus, the Oxpemul monuments presented in 2004 what is today the rare opportunity to study a large number of largely unknown Maya stelae and altars for the first time.

The May 2004 Field Work at Oxpemul

In response to a telephone invitation from Drs. Folan and Sprajc, the author proceeded in early May 2004, a few days after Oxpemul's rediscovery, from San Antonio, Texas, to Campeche for the purpose of initiating the modern documentation of the Oxpemul monuments. I, together with a small crew led by Sprajc, and supported by the UAC, arrived at Oxpemul on the afternoon of Friday, May 14, 2004, after a two-day eastward hike from the Conhuas-Calakmul highway, with the night enroute spent near the Dos Aguadas ruins. I spent the next seven days at Oxpemul engaged in measuring, drawing and photographing the monuments. Due to the fact that the 19 then known stelae, having a total of approximately 50 carved sides, constituted a great challenge to document in the available time, a decision was made not to deal with the altars, except to note their size and position. Mexican archaeologists Adrián Baker Pedroza and Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel, members of Dr. Sprajc's reconnaissance crew, took excellent controlled-light night-time photographs of the stelae and some of the altars during this visit. They were assisted briefly in this effort by Dr. Sprajc before he departed to pursue reconnaissance work in other regions of southern Campeche. These photographs were provided to me later in 2004 by Dr. Sprajc, and some of them are included in this report. During my stay at Oxpemul I made in-situ drawings of the stelae, took photographs of many of the stelae during daylight conditions, and also shot video of some of the monuments. After this field work was completed I was assisted by Candace Pruett in preparing preliminary drawings, and in analyses of the texts, based upon the then available photographs and field drawings.

A very hastily prepared preliminary report on the Oxpemul inscriptions was presented at a November 2004 symposium in Campeche sponsored by the UAC (Robichaux and Pruett 2004a). A portion of that report was published in December, 2004 (Robichaux and Pruett 2004b), and subsequently the complete November 2004 Symposium preliminary report was published in 2005 (Robichaux and Pruett 2005). An update on the analysis of the Oxpemul monuments was presented at the 2007 Society for American

Archaeology (SAA) meeting in Austin, Texas (Robichaux and Pruett 2007a).

Significant discoveries made during the May, 2004 visit to Oxpemul (Robichaux and Pruett 2004a, 2004b, and 2005) included the following:

- Discovery of the site's emblem glyph, which we nicknamed the "Stone Throne" emblem glyph of Oxpemul
- Detection of the names of several rulers in the texts
- Noting the presence of the Tikal emblem glyph on Stela 3
- Recognition that the iconography on the front of Stela 9 likely commemorated some form of military victory by Oxpemul over the *Kaan* ("Snake") site or dynasty
- The expansion of Denison's observation on the presence of non-orthodox fragmented calendrical statements at Oxpemul, to also apply to non-calendrical statements as well
- Noting the distinctively unusual featuring of a simply clad "Old Deity" shown in lateral motion on the front sides of Stelae 5 and 10



Figure 2. Photo on the left is of Oxpemul co-rediscoverer Lic. Raymundo González Heredia of CIHS-UAC. Photo on the right shows, from left to right, the author, Oxpemul co-rediscoverer Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Adrián Baker Pedroza, and Atasta Flores Esquivel with Oxpemul Stela 10 on May 16, 2004. (Photo on the right is courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

The July-August 2007 Field Work at Oxpemul

During the period July 19-August 4, 2007, I made a second visit to Oxpemul in conjunction with the 2007 field season of the Oxpemul Archaeological Project of the UAC. Fieldwork by the project in 2007 included the remapping of Oxpemul's central

precinct and South Oxpemul; the mapping of settlement and environmental features in the 9 sq. km area that surrounds the central precinct; as well as the additional epigraphic documentation conducted by myself.

During the 2007 visit I focused my efforts on the documentation of the Oxpemul altars, and enhancement of the in-situ drawings of the stelae texts and iconography. Many additional day- and night-time photographs of the stelae and altars were taken during this visit, including photos of the previously hidden and unknown sides of several fallen stelae.

Highlights of the 2007 field work included:

- The documentation of texts and iconography on Altars 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 14, and 15
- The discovery of two small stelae located near the ball court, designated as Stelae 20 and 21. Also, some fragmented architectural decorative elements associated with the ball court which had been disturbed by looters, were noted and partially documented
- The documentation of the previously unknown sides of fallen Stelae 3, 6, 8, and 16
- Recognition that the image on the front of Stela 3 constituted a third example of an Old God shown in lateral motion
- Enhancements of the drawings of texts and iconography of stelae previously documented.
- Confirmation of the presence of a “Bat emblem glyph” in the texts on Stela 2 and Altar 15, as was first noted by Nikolai Grube (2005). At least one additional instance of this bat emblem glyph was found by the author in 2007 on Altar 6
- Several additional examples of the Oxpemul “Stone-Throne” emblem glyph were also encountered.

Based upon the preliminary findings of this 2007 field work, an updated presentation on the Oxpemul monuments was made at a November 2007 conference in Campeche (Robichaux and Pruett 2007b), and an updated paper was subsequently published in 2008 (Robichaux and Pruett 2008b). Finally, an updated summary was subsequently presented in 2008 at the SAA 2008 meeting in Vancouver, Canada (Robichaux and Pruett 2008a).

A Visit to the Peabody Museum, Harvard University

Most of the records from the CIW’s work in the Maya region are now stored in the Archives Section at Harvard University’s Peabody Museum. On March 14, 2008, the author made a visit to the Peabody Museum to make digital copies of the photographs taken by the CIW during their 1934 visit to Oxpemul. These CIW photographs taken in 1934 contain, in some cases, epigraphic and iconographic detail that is no longer clearly visible on the monuments. In this effort, I was greatly assisted by Ms. Patricia Kervick and Ms. India Spartz of the Peabody staff. The Peabody also provided us copies of John Denison’s and Karl Ruppert’s hand-written field notes made at Oxpemul during their 1934 visit. These helped clarify some issues relating to the monuments as they were found in 2004. For the reader’s information, the CIW photos are now accessible on the internet at Harvard’s Peabody Museum website.

The May 2008 Field Work at Oxpemul

The author made a third visit to Oxpemul during the period May 12-17, 2008. This trip was in response to the discovery by the CIHS-UAC team of two previously unknown stelae, Stelae 22 and 23, located at South Oxpemul. Most of this visit was directed at the documentation of these two important Early Classic monuments, but all of the stelae, and some of the altars, were re-photographed at night during this trip.

The most significant result of the 2008 visit was the determination, based upon stylistic criteria, that Stelae 22 and 23 date to the Early Classic period, perhaps as early as the late 4th, or early 5th Century, rendering them to be the earliest known Oxpemul monuments. The presence of the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph on Stela 22 greatly extended the time period when the Oxpemul polity was represented by that emblem. The names of two Early Classic rulers, one apparently the third in the dynastic sequence, were also cited on these stelae. A paper on Stelae 22 and 23 was published in 2009 (Robichaux 2009b).

UAC Monument Discoveries at Oxpemul

As noted above, members of the UAC Oxpemul Archaeological Project have discovered four stelae, Stelae 20, 21, 22, and 23 during their recent work at Oxpemul. They have also discovered two additional uncarved altars within the central precinct's West Plaza. These important recent discoveries of monuments at Oxpemul by the UAC add to those discovered in 1934 by the CIW, and are listed below. The list includes a discovery by Atasta Flores Esquivel of Dr. Sprajc's crew, which turned out to be a rediscovery.

<u>Monument</u>	<u>Discoverer</u>	<u>Date of Discovery</u>
-Stela 20	Neri Del Rosario Requena (Guard)	August 3, 2007
-Stela 21	Neri Del Rosario Requena (Guard)	August 3, 2007
-Stela 22	Gonzalo and Jacinto Gómez Jiménez (Guards), and Raymundo Gonzáles Heredia	January 29, 2008
-Stela 23	Gonzalo and Jacinto Gómez Jiménez (Guards), and Raymundo Gonzáles Heredia	January 29, 2008
-Altar 19*	Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel, ENAH	May 18, 2004
-Altar 20	Antonio Montejo Sanchez, UAC crewmember	July 27, 2007
-Altar 21	Carmen Morales Cruz, UAC crewmember	July 30, 2007

* Note: subsequent to the discovery of Altar 19 by Flores Esquivel in 2004, it was realized that this was really a "rediscovery" of the altar. Although the CIW's 1943 published report does not mention this uncarved altar, Denison's unpublished, hand-written notes (Denison 1934:4) make it clear that he noted its presence, and cited its correct diameter, 1.2 m. Rather curiously, the CIW map of Oxpemul incorrectly shows the position of Stela 6 and Altar 6 to be near the actual location of Altar 19, and not in their actual position in front of Str. Va. The designations, Altar 19, Altar 20 and Altar 21 originated with the present author.

The possible presence of four additional unsculpted altars out in the broader Oxpemul community was reported in July 2007 by mappers (Edwin Barnes, personal communication 2007). These have not yet been confirmed.

It should also be noted that Denison's hand-written notes reported the discovery of a blank unerected stela located downslope behind Str. III (Denison 1934). Denison informally referred to it as "Stela 1A", apparently because the nearest erected stela to it was Stela 1. This blank monolith was interpreted by the CIW crew to have been in-transit from a quarry site to the West Plaza, and for some reason was abandoned enroute. This "stela" was not reported in the expedition's official report (Ruppert and Denison 1943). In the present report I have followed Denison's lead, and have not added this apparently blank and non-erected monolith to the total count of Oxpemul stelae. The presence of this object at the location specified by Denison was confirmed by a UAC crew in December, 2009 (William Folan personal communication, 2009). If possible, it should be turned over in the future to confirm that it was indeed blank on all sides.

Methodology: The data base on the Oxpemul monuments that was utilized in producing the present report included in-situ drawings accomplished by the author during three visits to Oxpemul, day-time and night-time photographs taken by the author, photographs taken by members of Dr. Sprajc's crew in 2004, photographs taken by members of the UAC crew, and the field notes, reports and photographs made by the CIW 1934 expedition. Also, photographs taken by Dr. Bruce Love during a visit to Oxpemul in 2008 were available to the author.

The in-situ drawings were generally made during daylight hours. A ladder was used to access the upper sculpted areas of the taller stelae. A tape measure and 11 X 17 inch sized graph paper were utilized in order to approximate the true shape and proportions of the sculptured elements. Reflected light from a mirror, or light from an artificial source was occasionally used to enhance the view of details in the process of generating the in-situ drawings.

Day-time digital photos were taken at different times of day to take advantage of the varying light conditions. Night-time digital photographs were taken using an artificial light source which was directed at low angles from several directions. Approximately 2000 photographs were available to the author during the writing of this report. Most of the available photographs were subjected to some digital manipulation to enhance detail.

In developing a method for producing the drawings of the Oxpemul monuments, the methods described in efforts such as the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphs project (Graham 1975), and the Caracol monument project (Beetz and Satterthwaite 1981) were reviewed and considered. The method which ultimately evolved for generating most of the final drawings of the Oxpemul monuments is described below. It proved to be both effective, and efficient.

Generally, no single photograph presented all of the details that were present in the totality of photos and in-situ drawings of a particular side of a stela or altar. The single,

overall best photograph of a particular monument side was selected to be the source for a *base drawing*. This selected “best photograph” was printed out on a sheet of ordinary typing paper. The printed photograph was then placed above a sheet of carbon paper that had a blank white sheet of paper below it. These three components were stapled together along one edge to maintain a fixed relationship between them. The details visible in the photograph were then traced directly on the photograph itself using a mechanical pencil, and were thereby accurately transferred via the carbon paper to the white sheet below. When this process was completed, the bottom white sheet was separated from the pack and utilized for the next step.

The resulting design on the bottom sheet was then enhanced by the hand drawn addition of details visible on other photographs, and on the in-situ drawings. This process was continued repeatedly, until a *master* version containing all of the secure details was arrived at.

Finally, a blank white sheet was stapled above the “master” drawing obtained above. These were then placed upon a light table, and a final ink tracing of the master drawing was accomplished. Areas determined to be “background” were dotted-in.

The drawings and interpretations presented in this report supercede all prior drawings and interpretations generated by the author alone, as well as those produced with Candace Pruett in earlier publications. The drawings herein are founded upon the greatly increased photographic and in-situ drawing data base that is now available.

The preparation of drawings of sculpted texts that are badly eroded or damaged, which is the case with some Oxpemul monuments, requires caution. In such instances it is better to be conservative, and consciously omit detail that is uncertain. In dealing with such worn texts, one must guard against imposing preconceptions of what a given glyph might or should be, and also control the natural urge to have no uncertainties remaining about a text. The context of a glyph in a glyphic sequence, especially glyphs associated with the calendar, can strongly suggest what a damaged glyph might be, but one must still be wary that the creative versatility of the Maya scribes might nonetheless foil one’s seemingly reasonable expectations. The author has consciously attempted to avoid such pitfalls.

That Mayanists can disagree on which glyph is present within a particular damaged stela text, and on how it should be interpreted, is very evident. It is made apparent in the following four examples from recent papers concerning texts at sites in the vicinity of Oxpemul:

- 1) Simon Martin (2005:10) makes the following observation in a footnote: “Grube (2004:121) refers to a *yajaw* “his lord” subordination statement on (Calakmul) Stela 114. However, close examination reveals no such term or relationship in this text.”
- 2) Referring to an earlier suggestion by Nikolai Grube that an emblem glyph known as “Masul” was present on Naachtun Stela 23, Peter Mathews et al (2004:2-4) remark that “Unfortunately, it was not possible to confirm this identification, neither with Stela 23

nor with the other Naachtun monuments.”

3) Martin (2005:9) observes concerning Calakmul Stela 114 that “... Pincemin et al (1998:316) identify the previous glyph, D4, as the head of a leaf-nose bat. Although in some angles this appears to be the case, I believe the sign is something different.”

4) Additionally, concerning Calakmul Stela 114, Martin (2005:9) interprets the damaged and worn glyph at D5 as being an emblem glyph featuring a *bat-head* as its mainsign. This bat-head was not discernible as such to Pincemin et al (1998:316) in their earlier study of the stela. During November 2007 I had the opportunity to examine and photograph Calakmul Stela 114 at the Casa Teniente del Rey Museum in Campeche City using controlled artificial light. Based upon this examination, I was unable to conclude with certainty that a bat-head constituted the mainsign of this glyph. Significantly, it is largely upon the evidence of this single glyph on Stela 114 that the assignment of a bat-head emblem glyph to Calakmul during the Early Classic period rests.

For the above cited cases and many others, it may, in fact, be impossible to say with certainty which view is correct. Indeed, one suspects that several experienced epigraphers, working independently, will produce several different renderings of a damaged text, potentially conflicting in significant ways. In the end, one does one's best, and presents the data for others to consider.

Other Research at Oxpemul - For the record, it is noted that the German epigrapher, Nikolai Grube, who is associated with Ivan Sprajc's Campeche reconnaissance project, visited Oxpemul in approximately August 2004, and he has made presentations on his findings, and published a paper on some aspects of the Oxpemul inscriptions (Grube 2005). Recently he issued a report (Grube 2008) on some of the Oxpemul monuments.

Although the author has had a copy of Grube's 2008 report on the Oxpemul monuments available to him, that report and Grube's drawings, descriptions, and interpretations within it were not examined by the author until all of the drawings, and the text of the present report were completed. Thus, the present report is a totally independent documentation, analysis, and interpretation of the complete known set of Oxpemul monuments that builds upon the data from the author's 2004, 2007, and 2008 field visits to Oxpemul, and is founded on in-situ drawings of the monuments made by the author, and upon many hundreds of photographs taken by the author, by Sprajc's crew, by the CIW, by the UAC staff, and by Bruce Love. The present report documents many Oxpemul monuments either not addressed, or only partially addressed by Grube.

Environmental Setting, and the Organization of the Oxpemul

Ruins - Before discussing the monuments, it is appropriate to briefly describe for the reader the nature of the Oxpemul ruins and the environmental context in which they exist. Oxpemul is situated in what is today a large, mostly uninhabited tropical jungle area in southern Campeche state. The ruins of many ancient Maya communities are known in this area, thanks to the work of the CIW, the Autonomous University of Campeche, and the recent extensive reconnaissance efforts of Dr. Ivan Sprajc (2008) of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The largest conglomeration of ruins in the area are those of the ancient city known today as Calakmul, which was one of the very largest ancient Maya cities, if not the largest. The ruins of Oxpemul are located ca. 23.5 km (14 miles) north-northeast of Calakmul, and are apparently those of a town-sized place in a “city, town, village, hamlet” typology of settlement units. Several additional sites of a somewhat similar size to Oxpemul such as La Muñeca and Uxul encircle Calakmul at about the same distance as Oxpemul. The spatial placement of these sites, their proximity to Calakmul, and their smaller size, suggest they were at times in their history under the political, economic, and administrative sway of a regional state centered at the city of Calakmul (Marcus 1973, 1987:113-115). The people of Oxpemul were members of a cultural sphere that extended southward past Calakmul into the Peten region of Guatemala, and adjacent Belize. Oxpemul was located on the northern boundary of that cultural sphere, facing across to sites such as Horniguero, only 10 miles away to the north, that were part of the Rio Bec/Chenes cultural spheres which differed significantly in traits such as architecture, art, and writing.

The site center of the Oxpemul ruins, hereinafter referred to as the *central precinct* of Oxpemul, contained the site’s largest architectural units, and the bulk of its monuments. It is situated on the summit of a steep hill (Figure 3) that provided a good view of the terrain in all directions, and rendered it more easily defensible.



Figure 3. Standing on the summit of Structure IV, archaeological assistant Antonio Montejo Sánchez gazes over the jungle covered ruins of Oxpemul in southeastern Campeche, Mexico.

The Oxpemul central precinct (Figure 4), as mapped by both the Carnegie and UAC teams, contains two sizable plazas (the West and East Plazas), an elite residential (“palace”) complex (Str. XII), an apparent E-Group astronomical complex (Str. V, together with Str. II), as well as 19 stelae (Stelae 1-17, 20, and 21), and 19 altars (Altars 1-16, and 19-21). Three sizable pyramids are present on the periphery of the West Plaza (Strs. III, IV and VI). Also, a ballcourt (Robichaux and Pruett 2004a:5; 2005:32; Folan et al 2007), apparently not explicitly identified as such by the Carnegie team, is present within the East Plaza. The presence of these architectural units and monuments in the Oxpemul central precinct point to the site having been the seat of a “royal court” (Folan et al 2005; Folan et al 2008) with a local king presiding. Such a site would, by consideration of the pattern at other similar sites in the Maya lowlands, likely be represented in the writing system by an emblem glyph.

An additional elite enclave at Oxpemul, known as “South Oxpemul” (Figure 5) (Ruppert and Denison 1943:50), is located on a small rise ca. 1.2 km south-southwest of the central precinct. A large pyramid, Str. XIII, is the most prominent construction at this enclave. South Oxpemul contains an additional four stelae (Stelae 18, 19, 22, and 23), and two altars (Altars 17 and 18). A low *bajo* zone, designated the “Central Bajo”, separates Oxpemul from South Oxpemul. A wide *sacbe*, or causeway, crossing the bajo and connecting the Oxpemul central precinct with South Oxpemul has recently been discovered (see the bottom of Fig. 4, and the top of Fig. 5). The presence of the same emblem glyph at South Oxpemul as at the Oxpemul central precinct confirms that South Oxpemul belonged to the same polity as Oxpemul’s central precinct.

The terrain to the north and east of the Oxpemul central precinct is generally higher, on average, than the zones to its west and south. Although not yet closely examined at this time, there appear to be additional units of elite architecture in the area north of the central precinct hill. An extensive bajo zone is present to the west of the central precinct, and it extends to near the Conhuas-Calakmul highway. It has been designated the “West Bajo”. The smaller site of Dos Aguadas (Peña Castillo 1986) is located on a hilltop “island” within this bajo zone, ca. 4.5 km to the west of the Oxpemul central precinct, and it is visible across the bajo from Oxpemul. Given Dos Aguadas’ proximity to Oxpemul, it was possibly a part of Oxpemul, or associated in some way with Oxpemul. The edges of the extensive bajo zones in the immediate vicinity of the Oxpemul settlement were very likely the basis for a system of intensive agriculture of one form or another to support the population, but additional investigative efforts will be needed to document it.

Water accumulates during the rainy season in the bajo zones to the south and west of Oxpemul, and it is further available in several nearby aguadas. It seems probable, based upon the practice noted elsewhere in the Maya lowlands (see, e.g., Scarborough and Connolly 2003), that rain water falling on plastered plaza surfaces, such as the West and East Plazas, was steered through artificial channels to nearby reservoirs for use during the dry season. Barnes et al (2009a, 2009b) have documented some preliminary aspects of the water management system present at Oxpemul, including the presence of canals, arroyos, and aguadas.

UBICACIÓN DE ESTELAS Y ALTARES EN LA MESETA PRINCIPAL



Figure 4. Map of the Oxpehul central precinct. From left to right are the West Plaza, East Plaza, and the Str. XII Palace Complex. (Map by Jose Paredes, Irene Pastrana, Lic. Raymundo González Heredia, Ciriaco Requena Sandoval, and Dr. William J. Folan. Courtesy of the CIHS-UAC)

UBICACIÓN DE ESTELAS Y ALTARES EN LA MESETA SUROESTE



Figure 5. Map of South Oxpehul. (Map by Jose Paredes, Irene Pastrana, Lic. Raymundo González Heredia, Ciriaco Requena Sandoval, and Dr. William J. Folan. Courtesy of CIHS-UAC)

Based solely on the author's observations, the forest trees at, and in the vicinity of Oxpepul, are shorter and thinner, and the presence of animals less abundant, than in the Peten zone farther south in Guatemala and Belize. The few animals noted during my three stays at Oxpepul included one spider monkey family noted early one morning, and one squirrel ("ardilla"), all in the West Plaza of the central precinct, and three ocellated turkeys at South Oxpepul. UAC botanists/biologists Pedro Zamora, Geucilio Cabrera, and M. Claudeth Castro have commenced a study of trees and plants growing on the major mounds at the site, and have documented Ramon, Guayabillo, Achotillo, Sipché, Guayacan and Chintok among others (Folan et al 2008).

A total of approximately 1400 structures were mapped during the UAC 2007 field season (Folan et al 2008; Barnes et al 2009a, 2009b). Numerous cultural and natural features such as quarries, aguadas, and chultuns have been mapped. An apparent quarry site where naturally occurring stela-sized stones lay scattered about in some abundance is located on the southern slope of the central precinct hill, on the modern trail that leads up from the UAC field camp up to the West Plaza. This and similar quarries may have also supplied the unusually large architectural stones found in various structures at Oxpepul.

CIHS-UAC is currently formulating plans to continue research at Oxpepul over several more years, and a greater understanding of Oxpepul can be expected as the project progresses.

Conventions - The designation system used in this report for the Oxpepul stelae, altars, plazas, and structures is that originated by Ruppert and Denison (1943).

The "astronomical" correlation constant, 584,285, is used in this report to convert ancient Maya Long Count dates to modern Western dates.

Columns of texts on the monuments are labeled A, B, C, etc., and rows are labeled 1, 2, 3, etc. For the majority of monuments, the reading order of texts on the different sides can be inferred, and the labeling A, B, C, etc. indicates the intended sequential reading order. Where no inference can be made as to the reading order, the author's narrative description of the text cautions the reader that the labeling of columns is arbitrary. Even though, in some cases, it is clear that a particular text on the side of a stela is continued onto the stela's associated altar, the altar text(s) always begin with a columnar label of A. A lower-case "p" in a glyphic coordinate indicates the coordinate position designation is provisional due to damaged or missing positional data.

The now standard practice of using bold-print upper-case letters to spell out the value of **LOGOGRAMS** (glyphs that stand for a word), and bold-print, lower-case letters to spell out the phonetic value of glyphs/affixes used as **syllabograms** is generally followed here. The postulated reading of a given word or phrase in a Mayan language is written in *italics*. The English translation of that word, phrase, etc, is presented within quotation marks. An example of this convention is: **BALAM-ma**, *balam*, "jaguar". In this example, the word **BALAM** was stated logographically, and had **-ma** attached to it to indicate the phonetic value of the final consonant of the logographic word.

In cases where it is not clear whether a word was intended to have a Ch'olan Mayan or Yucatec Mayan spelling, both possibilities are presented, with the Ch'olan spelling cited first, followed after a slash by the Yucatec version, e.g., **CH'UHUL/K'UHUL**, *ch'uhul/k'uhul*, “holy”.

Commonly used abbreviations in this report include:

ISIG - Initial Series Introductory Glyph

E.G.- Emblem Glyph

CIW - Carnegie Institution of Washington

CIHS-UAC - Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Sociales,

Universidad Autónoma de Campeche

In the below descriptions of the monuments of Oxpemul, photos and drawings follow the narrative description of each monument. A rather standard format for presentation of the illustrations (photos and drawings) is maintained. First there is a “portrait” photo showing the stela/altar pair in their general setting. This is typically followed by a photo and drawing of the front of the stela, followed by photos and drawings of the remaining three sides. For most cases, photos are provided even of “blank” sides, for confirmation of such an assessment. Following these, a photo is presented of the associated altar. If the altar is carved, a photo and drawing of the carving is also provided.

The known monuments of Oxpemul, as will be seen, date from the Early Classic period, through the Late Classic, and probably into the Terminal Classic. These monuments are distributed across three separate locales in the ancient town. These are the West Plaza, and the East Plaza, both situated within the central precinct of Oxpemul, and South Oxpemul, located 1.2 km to the south-southwest. The monuments will be described below in that order, West Plaza first, followed by the East Plaza, and finally, by South Oxpemul.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OXPEMUL MONUMENTS

Monuments in the West Plaza of Oxpemul

STELA 1 and ALTAR 1

LOCATION: Near the northwest corner of the West Plaza, ca. 4 m away from the northeastern front base of Str. III, a steep, pyramid-shaped mound that faces to the east.

Altar 1 is located ca. 1 m in front of Stela 1.

SIZE: Stela 1 has a height of ca. 2.48 m above the ground surface. Its width at its base is 1.53 m. It is ca. 59 cm thick (front to rear dimension).

Altar 1 was circular in shape, with a diameter of ca. 1.13 m. It had a height of ca. 40 cm. The altar is currently broken into at least three pieces.

DATE: Robichaux and Pruett (2004a, 2005) judged Stela 1 to date to the Late Classic period, largely based upon the ruler's stance, with his feet pointed outward. Grube (2005) has suggested that Stela 1 dates to the Early Classic, apparently based upon the presence of a ceremonial bar in the depiction. However, it is noted that these bars were sometimes present in Late Classic iconography, for example, at Caracol. Stela 1 does have a different physical form than the other stelae at Oxpemul, having an overall short, wide, and squat appearance. Perhaps it dates to near the transition from the Early to Late Classic period when some overlap of period styles occurred.

DESCRIPTION: This stela (Figure 6) is in a very eroded condition. The front side (Figures 7 and 8) depicts a ruler who is shown in the pose prevalent during the Late Classic period, with his body facing forward, and feet pointing outward. Although the ruler's head is very deteriorated, it can be seen that he is looking to the south (his right). Based upon the position of his arms, and faint details, he appears to have been holding a ceremonial bar in his hands. He wears a large headdress/helmet that includes a bird-head component. There is a long, forward projecting device that seems to emanate from the ruler's large ear-plug. Rather curiously, Denison (1943:36) described the figure as being that of a warrior shown in profile.

The sides and rear of Stela 1 are extremely eroded (Figure 9). Denison (1943:36) described them as blank. However, although very faint, there are indications of carvings on them, but they seem too far gone to be retrieved.

Altar 1 (Figure 10) appears to have had no carvings on it.



Figure 6. Photo of Stela 1 and Altar 1. This is a view to the west taken on July 22, 2007. Some large architectural stones are visible in the background at the base of Str. III.



Figure 7. Photo of the front (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 1.



Figure 8. Drawing of the front (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 1.



Figure 9. Photo of the west (rear) and south (left) sides of Oxpemul Stela 1. This is a view to the northeast.



Figure 10. Photo of Oxpemul Altar 1.

STELA 2 AND ALTAR 2

LOCATION: Stela 2 is the westernmost of the four stelae positioned in front of Str. IV, a tall, south facing pyramid-shaped mound centered on the northern side of the West Plaza (Figure 11).

Altar 2 is presently located ca. 3.3 m southwest of Stela 2. When found in May 2004, the altar was standing on its side (Figure 12). During the 2007 visit, it was found lying flat on the ground, in the normal configuration. I am not aware who moved the altar after the May 2004 visit. Altar 2's original position was apparently ca. 3 m directly in front (south) of Stela 2, and that location is today marked by a depression evidently left by the looters in their search for a cache below the altar.

SIZE: Stela 2 has a standing height of ca. 4.0 m above the ground surface, which makes it, with Stela 4, one of the two tallest stelae at Oxpemul (Figure 11). It has a width at its front base of ca. 1.15 m, and its sides are ca. 65 cm thick.

Altar 2 is circular in shape, and has a diameter of ca. 0.99 m, and height of ca. 0.48 m. Some red paint is still visible on the altar. Faint glyphs are visible on its side. There is

an indication that the top of the altar was also carved, but the nature of the carving is not now apparent.

DATE: 9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kumk'u (January 20, A.D. 771)

DESCRIPTION: Stela 2 is sculpted on all four sides. An ornately attired ruler is depicted on the front (south) side (Figure 13). The front of his body is directly presented to the viewer. His feet are positioned in the Late Classic style, with his toes pointed outward. His face is turned to the east, toward the other stelae in front of Str. IV. Although Denison described the ruler as wearing a grotesque mask, a mask was not evident during our visits, or in photographs. The ruler bears a small shield in his right hand, and he is standing upon a large, west-facing “monster” head that has the **K'AN**, *k'an*, “yellow”, or “precious” glyph incised on it. This same ruler is also likely shown on the front of nearby Stela 4, which carries the same Initial Series date.

The text begins on the stela's right (east) side, continues onto the rear (north) side, and ends on the left (west) side.

The single column of text on the right side is, in part, beautifully preserved (Figure 14). It begins at A1 with the Initial Series Introductory Glyph (ISIG), and is followed by the Long Count date, 9.17.0.0.0 (all rendered with head variants), with the day, *13 Ajaw*, being specified (January 20, A.D. 771). This is followed at A8 by the combined Glyph G9/F. The last glyph on the east side, at A9, was erroneously identified by Denison (1943:138) as Glyph F. Instead, it is possibly Glyph ?1D.

The rear side text consists of two columns of glyphs, B and C, that, although lacking some detail, are fairly well preserved (Figure 15). The Supplementary Series that started on the right side continues here with Glyphs 3C, X3, B, and 10A of the Lunar Series being stated. In this series, at C2, a rarely used head-glyph with a **-na** suffix denotes the numeral *10* in Glyph 10A. This data on the moon is followed by the day of the *Haab* month, *18 Kumk'u*, completing the Initial Series date as *9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kumk'u*. Given the prevailing pattern, a verb could be expected at C3 after the Initial Series date. This postulated verb begins with **U-** and has **-wa** as a suffix, which serves to suggest it may be the active voice of a consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) formed transitive verb. Regretably, some damage to the mainsign of this postulated verb leaves its identity uncertain. Its transitive nature suggests the next glyph, at B4, may be the direct object of the verb. Its mainsign is an unrecognized face. It is followed at C4 by **U-?-?**, “his ?” which would indicate that the object of the verb is possessed by the presumed ruler whose long name starts below at B5. Portions of the ruler's name are indistinct. Robichaux (2009a), and Robichaux and Pruett (2008b) have read that name as **CHAK-NIK-ki-? TI-?ka-?-ya ja-ma CHAN/KAN-na K'INICH**, *Chak Nik ? ti ? Jam Chan/Kan K'inich*, “Great (or Red) Son (or Flower) ?? Sky Sun-Eyed (Lord)”. Grube (2005:95) has read it as “lord *Chak Tajal Way ... Chan K'inich*, presumably based in part on texts on other monuments. I will refer to this ruler by the shortened sequence *Chak Nik*.

The text continues on the left (west) side of of Stela 2 (Figure 16) with a column of 9 glyphs. In comparison to the other sides of Stela 2, the west side is much more eroded, and the interior details of most glyphs are gone. An unrecognized title of the ruler *Chak Nik* is at D1. At D2 is a somewhat clear rendering of an emblem glyph that has a bat head as its mainsign: **CH’UHUL/K’UHUL ?SUTZ’/?SOTZ’ AJAW**, *ch’uhul/k’uhul ?sutz’/?sotz’ ajaw*, “Holy Bat Lord”, indicating the ruler is of the “Bat” place or dynasty. Oxpemul Altars 6 and 15 also carry this Bat emblem glyph, but the only firmly dated occurrence of it is that here on Stela 2, A.D.771. Grube (2005:95) identifies D4 as **U-1-TAHN-na**, *u-jun tahn*, “the cherished one of (mother)” and this seems correct. The name of the ruler’s mother and possibly her titles follow from D5 through at least D8, but they are largely unreadable due to erosion. At D9 there is a head glyph preceded by **mi-?ya-ni**, *?miyan*, of uncertain meaning.

There were apparently four glyphs on Altar 2 (Figures 17, 18). They are all battered. The second includes **WINIK** or **WINAL**, with a possible meaning of “man” or “person”. The meaning of the altar text is not understood.

In brief summary, Stela 2, dating to 9.17.0.0.0 (A.D. 771), presents the image, name and titles of a ruler, *Chak Nik*, who is indicated to be a holy lord of the “Bat” polity, or dynasty. His mother is also identified by name. Nearby Stela 4, also dating to 9.17.0.0.0, cites this same individual as being a lord of the “Stone Throne” (Oxpemul) site.



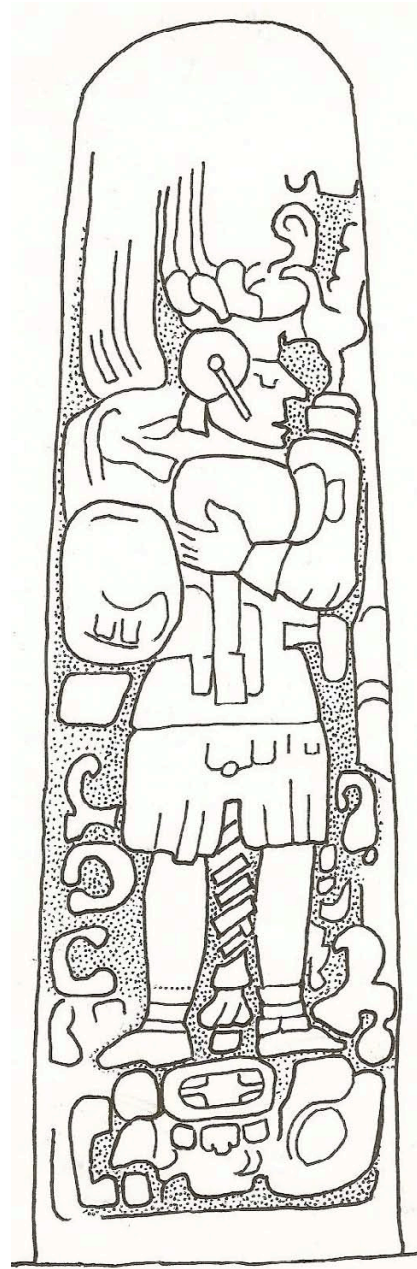
Figure 11. Photo showing, from right to left, Oxpemul Stela 5, Stela 4, fallen Stela 3, and Stela 2. Associated Altars 5, 4, and 3 are also visible. The lower slope of the Structure IV pyramid is visible to the right. This view to the west-northwest dates to July 24, 2007, and also shows UAC guard Gonzalo Gómez Jimenez



Figure 12. A view to the north-northeast showing Stela 2 and Altar 2. Altar 2 is standing on its side, as it was first found. Photo taken on May 17, 2004. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



a

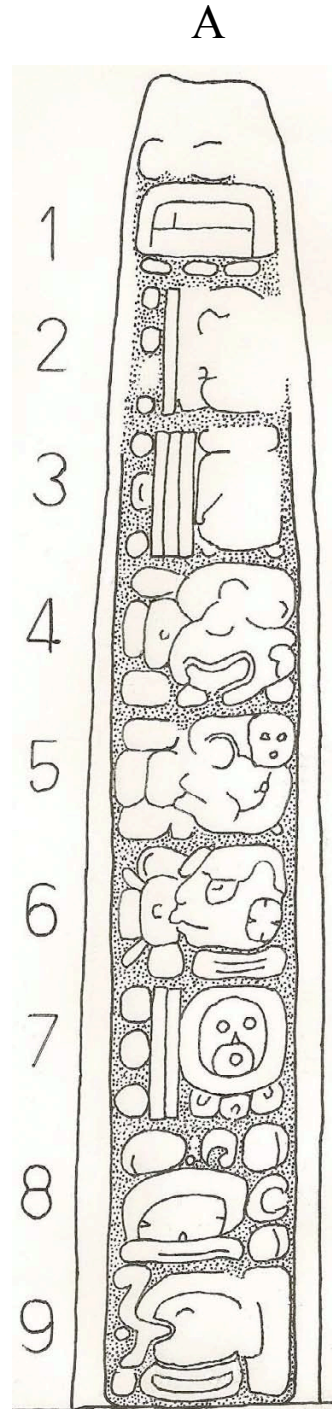


b

Figure 13. Photo and drawing of the front side of Stela 2. The view in the photo is to the north-northeast.



a

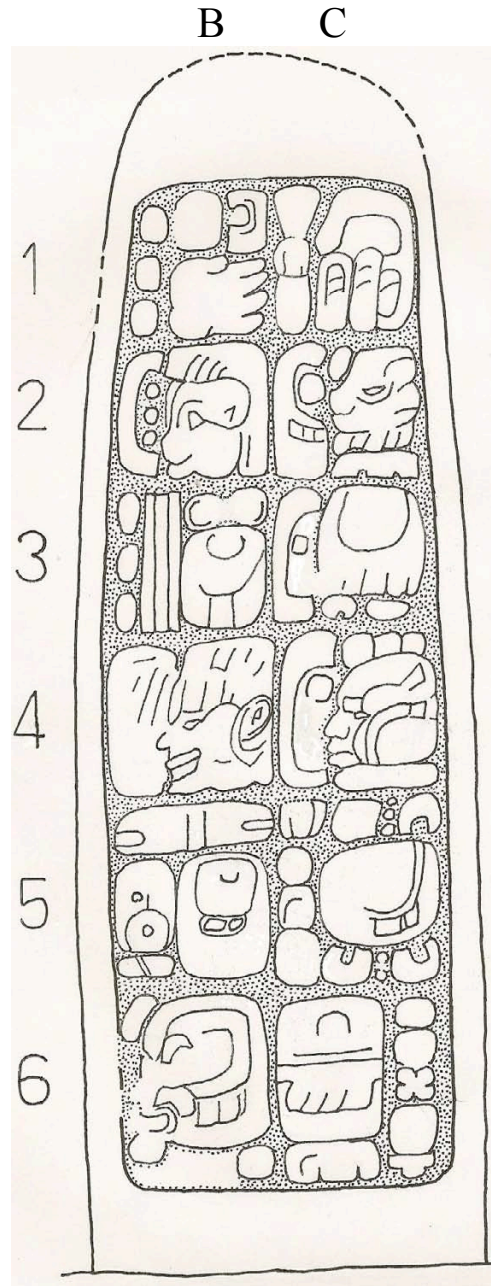


b

Figure 14. Photo and drawing of the right (east) side of Stela 2. It provides a well preserved date.



a



b

Figure 15. Photo and drawing of the rear (north) side of Stela 2

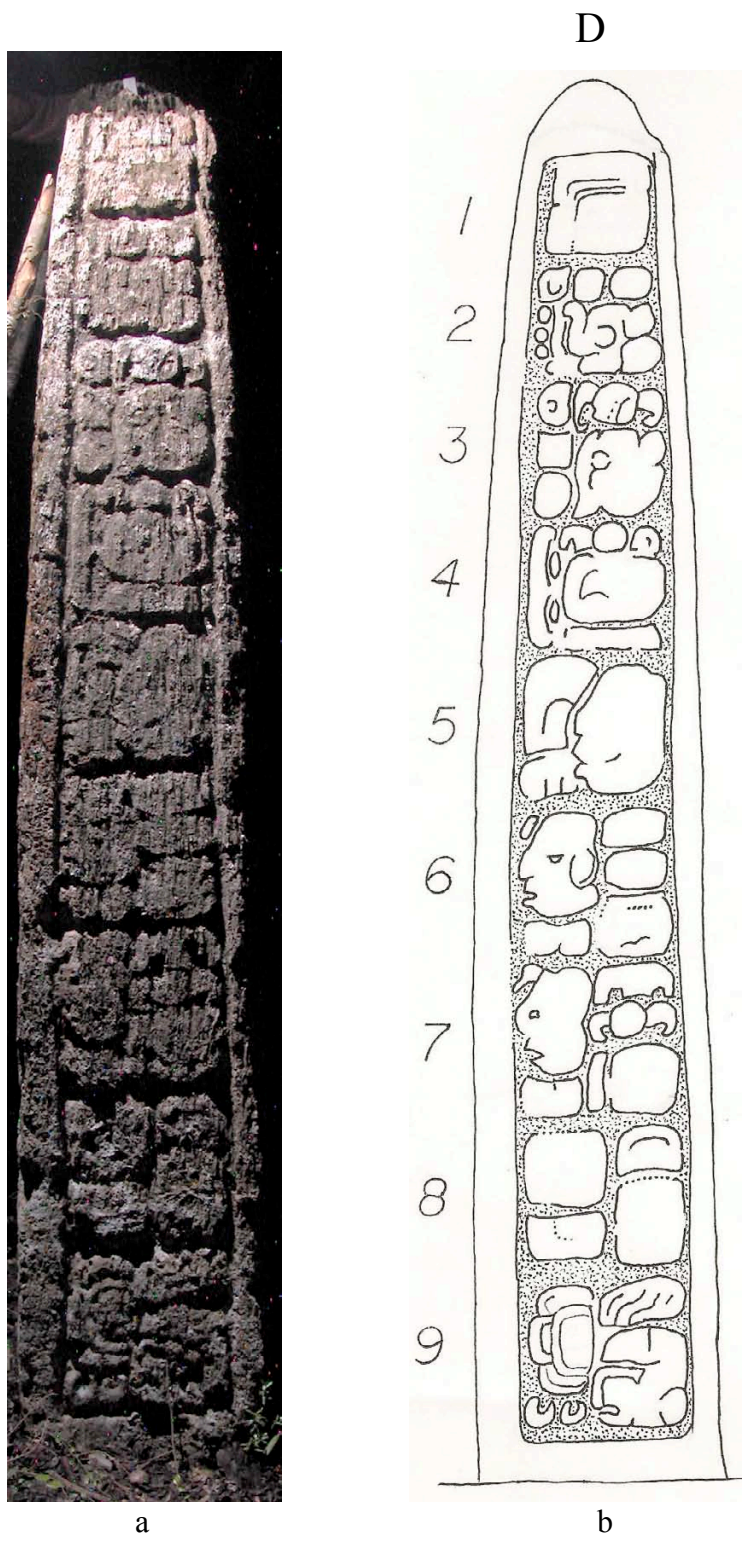


Figure 16. Photo and drawing the left (west) side of Stela 2. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Spajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



Figure 17. Photo of Altar 2 showing its damaged top, and the eroded text on its side.

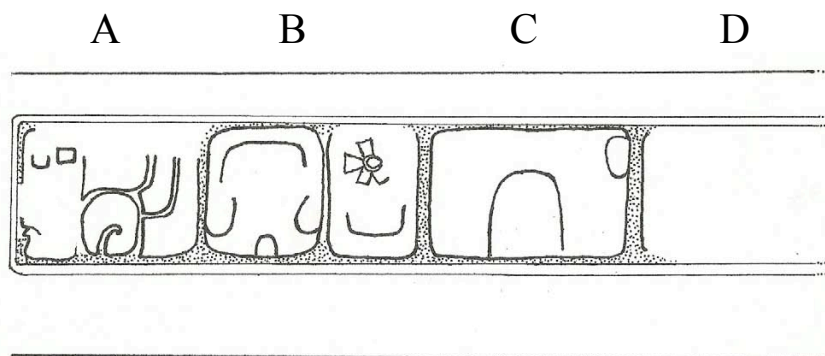


Figure 18. Drawing of the text on the side of Altar 2.

STELA 3/ALTAR 3

LOCATION: Stela 3 is located in front of Str. IV, slightly west of the structure's centerline. It is positioned ca. 2.3 m east of Stela 2, and 4.3 m west of Stela 4. At some point in time before the 1934 Carnegie visit, the stela broke near surface level and fell toward the south (Figure 19). The butt of the stela remains in the ground in its original position. A CIW photo shows that Stela 3 fell directly onto Altar 3, with the uppermost part of the stela snapping off beyond the southern border of Altar 3. Denison's comments (1943:138) make it clear that he turned over the main section of the fallen stela to view its hidden side, resulting in the configuration in which it was found when rediscovered in 2004, with the front side of the largest piece facing upward. The smaller, upper piece of the stela was found with the front side facing down. During the 2007 field season of the CIHS-UAC project, we rotated the upper part of Stela 3 in order to document what was on its front side, which was the well-preserved head of an "Old God". Similarly, the main fragment of Stela 3 was rotated on to its right side in order to document its rear side. Both fragments were subsequently returned to the positions in which they were found.

Altar 3 is currently located ca. 1 m to the east of the fallen main body of the stela, and appears to still be in its original location, although it is tilted downward toward the west.

SIZE: The middle and largest part of this fragmented stela is ca. 1.75 m long. The upper part is ca. 0.9 m long, and the butt still stands ca. 0.3 m tall, suggesting that the stela had a total height of ca. 2.95 m above the ground surface. Denison indicated that its height was ca. 3 m. Its width was ca. 1.0 m, and its thickness was ca. 50 cm.

Altar 3, circular in shape, has a diameter of ca. 1.05 m, and a height of ca. 47 cm.

DATE: Unknown, but likely from the Late Classic period given that the stelae on either side of it date to A.D. 771.

DESCRIPTION:

Stela 3 was carved on all four sides. The front of the stela (Figure 20) depicts an "Old God", or "Old God" impersonator, who is shown in motion, moving toward the east, and the viewer's right. A somewhat circular object is located against the front of his lower right leg, suggestive that he is in the process of kicking it, as in a ball game. The deity has a roman nose and a squarish-shaped eye, and he may represent the ancient Maya Sun God, *K'inich Ajaw*. Denison indicated that a warrior was depicted, but that is not consistent with what is visible. Nearby Stela 5 also has an "Old God" depicted on its front side, as does Stela 10, and they may all be representations of the Sun God.

Evidently the only calendrical data on Stela 3 was located on its rear side (Figure 21). Denison (1943:138) reported that the rear side of Stela 3 had two rows of glyphs carved on it. The text there has considerably deteriorated since 1934. Controlled-light, night-time photos of the rear side taken in 2007 do not reveal any glyphs. One of the CIW photographs is of a rubbing of the rear side of Stela 3. Although not very clear, the

rubbing shows two columns with at least four rows of glyphs. The bottom glyph of the second column in the rubbing appears to be Glyph 10A of the Lunar Series, indicating that calendrical information was presented on the rear of Stela 3.

It is uncertain as to which of the right and left side texts of Stela 3 was read first. Thus, the columnar labeling of those texts is arbitrary. It is relatively secure that each contained a total of six glyphs.

The top two glyphs on the right side text (Figure 22) are totally destroyed. The glyph at A3 appears to read **AJ-?-NIK**, *aj ? nik*, “he, ? ?son”, where the so-called “decorated ajaw” represents *nik*, or alternatively *mijin*, of the same meaning. The glyphs at A4 and A5 are both damaged and not fully recognized. Clearly identifiable at A6 is **CHAN/KAN**, *chan/kan*, “sky”, a common component of elite names, signaling that A3-A6 may be the statement of an elite person’s name.

On the left side, the three uppermost glyphs are badly eroded and not recognized (Figure 23). The mainsign of the glyph at B4 is damaged, but the subfixes below it appear to read **yu-m(a)**, *yum*, or *yuum*, “father”. This is the only instance of which I am aware for the use of the word *yum* in a Classic period monument text. Its use here may relate to the apparent use of the term *nik*, “son”, in the east side text. It seems reasonable to conjecture that this glyph at B4 and one or more glyphs above it on the left side text constitute the name of an individual who is the father of “*Aj ? Nik*” who is mentioned on the east side. The glyph at B5 is **ba-ka-b(a)**, *bakab*, a royal title of uncertain meaning. At A6, although damaged, is the Tikal emblem glyph (Robichaux and Pruet 2004a, 2005; Grube 2005), topped by *ajaw*, and apparently prefixed by the numeral 3. Grube (2005:98) interprets this combination as indicating “three lords from Tikal”. The named individuals on Stela 3 appear to be from Tikal. Robichaux and Pruet (2004a, 2005) cited this occurrence of the Tikal emblem glyph at Oxpemul as, hypothetically, related to an alliance between Oxpemul and Tikal, and to the “conquest” imagery present on the front of Stela 9, discussed below.

Altar 3 has the eroded image of a seated individual whose markings indicate he is a supernatural being (Figures 24, 25). Based upon a similar, and clearer image on Altar 15, it is possible that this is a mythical *Pawajitun*, a supporter of the heavens. The text on the side of the altar appears to consist of five glyphs (Figures 26, 27, 28) the first two of which are badly eroded. The third glyph seems to read **?K’AL-?ya-wa**, *?k’alyaw*, or alternatively, **?ja-?ya-wa**, *?jayaw*, and likely serves as a verb. The remaining two glyphs are thought to be the name of the person who is the subject of the verb.



Figure 19. Photo of Stela 3 and Altar 3. Altar 3 is in the near left foreground. The butt of broken and fallen Stela 3 protrudes slightly from the ground on the near side of Altar 3. Stela 3 broke into two parts prior to 1934. The main part is to the right of Altar 3, and the uppermost part of the stela is located just beyond Altar 3. This is a view to the south-southwest taken on July 22, 2007.

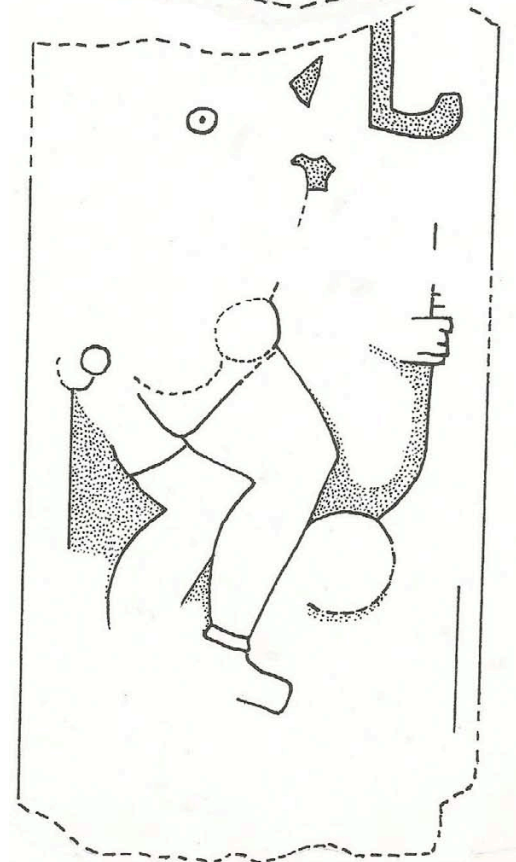
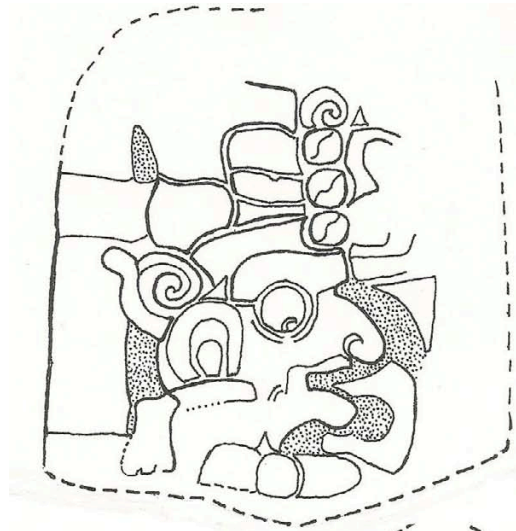
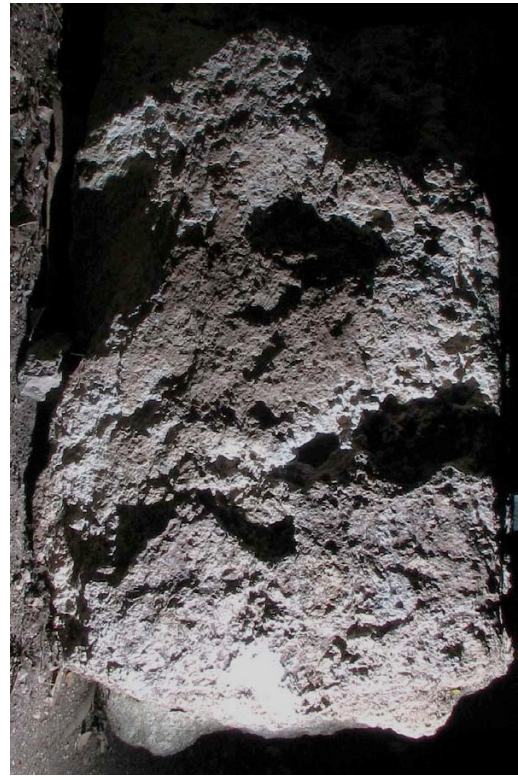


Figure 20. Photos and drawing of the front (south) side of Stela 3.

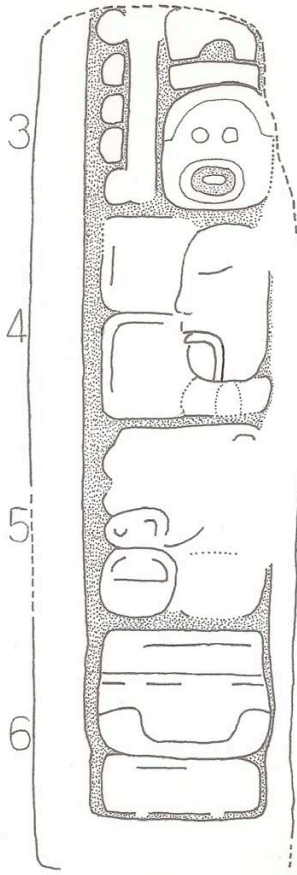
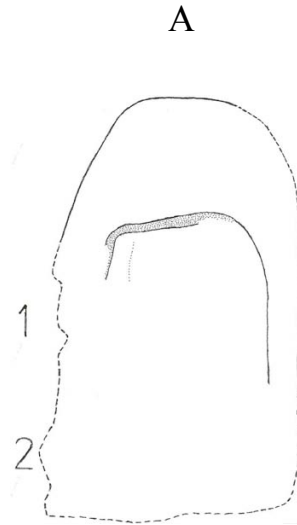


a



b

Figure 21. A day-time, and a night-time photo of the lower fragment of the rear (north) side of Stela 3. Denison (1943:138) described it as having a double row (column) of badly weathered glyphs. The glyphs are not now discernible.



a

b

Figure 22. Photos and drawing of the text on the right (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 3.

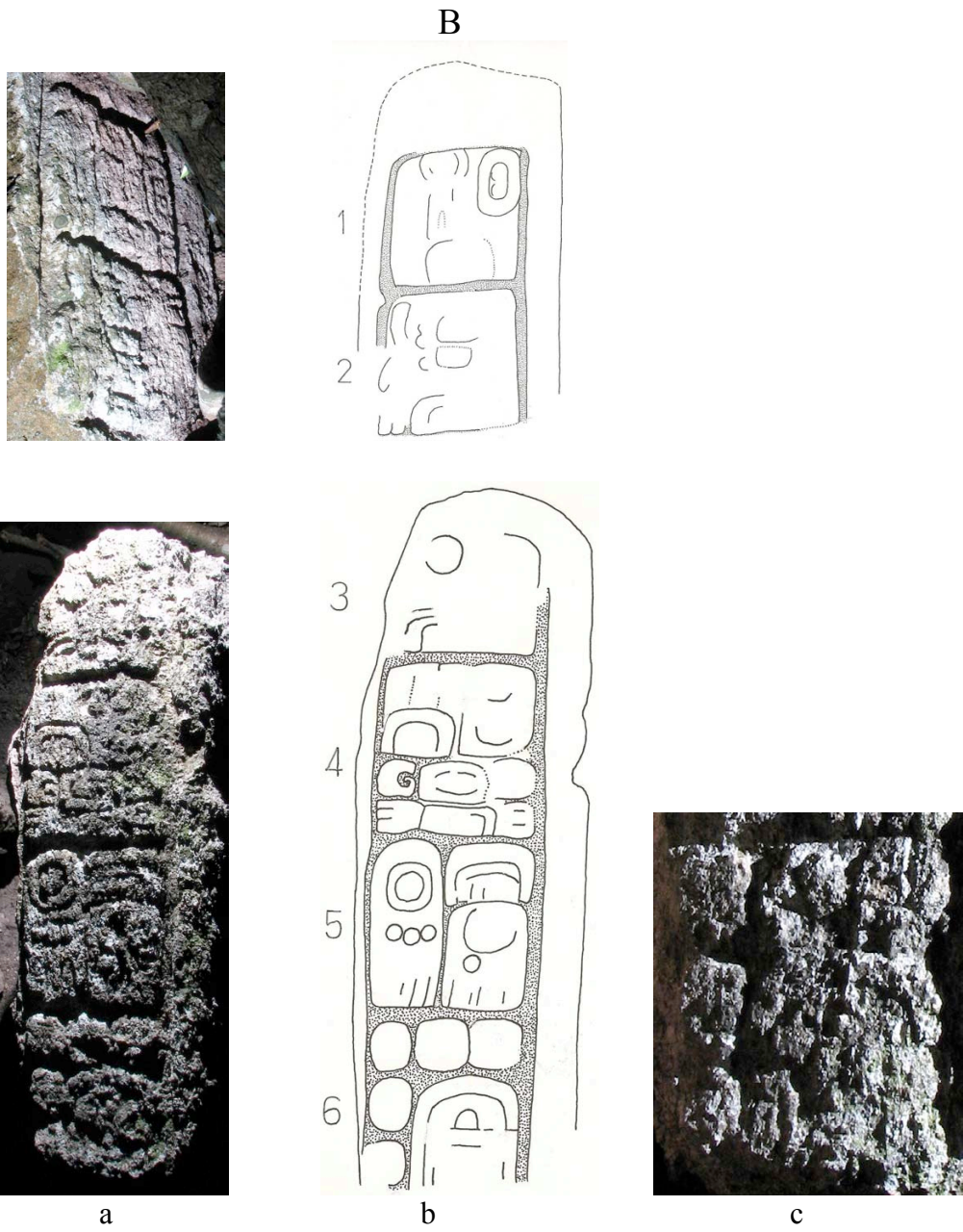


Figure 23. Photos and drawings of the text on the left (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 3. The photo on the right (c) is another view of the Tikal emblem glyph at position B6.



Figure 24. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 3.

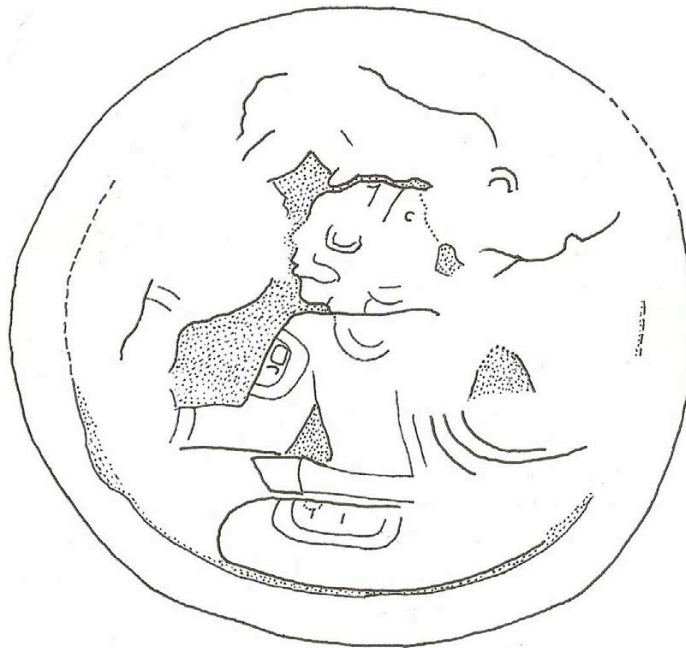


Figure 25. Drawing of the top of Oxpemul Altar 3.



Figure 26. Photo of the glyphs at A, and B, on the side of Altar 3. The glyph at C is just visible at the right edge of the photo.



Figure 27. Photo of the glyphs at C, D, and E on the side of Altar 3

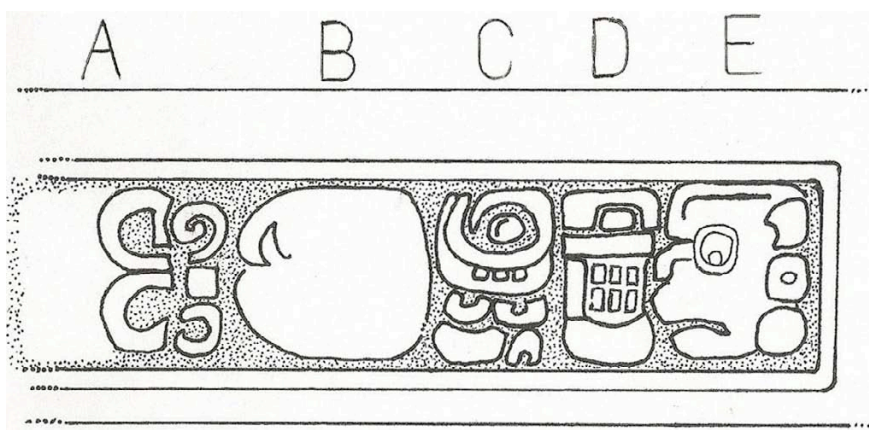


Figure 28. Drawing of the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 3.

STELA 4/ALTAR 4

LOCATION: Stela 4 (Figure 29) is standing in front of Str. IV, ca. 4.3 m to the east of Stela 3, and ca. 4 m west of Stela 5. The front of the stela faces southward onto the West Plaza. The stela, as found, was leaning steeply toward the southeast and in danger of falling over.

The associated Altar 4 was originally located ca. 1.7 m south of the stela. That position is marked by a shallow hole. The altar, at the time of our visit, was situated slightly southeast of its original location, presumably due to the action of looters.

SIZE: Stela 4 is ca. 4.0 m tall, ca 1.0 m wide, and 0.65 m in thickness. It and Stela 2 are the tallest stelae at Oxpepul. Residual paint on the bottom side of some sculpted areas shows that the stela was originally painted red.

Altar 4 is circular in shape and has a diameter of ca. 0.9 m, and a height of ca. 40 cm. The carved figure of a bird is present on top of the altar. There are four glyphs carved on the side of the altar.

DATE: 9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kumk'u (January 20, A.D. 771)

DESCRIPTION: Stela 4 is sculpted on all four sides, but is very eroded. Although Denison (1943: 138) describes him as “Completely gone,” the very damaged figure of a ruler can still be faintly seen on the front (south) side of the stela (Figure 30). He is looking to his right (to the west). His feet appear to have been pointing outward in the Late Classic style. Given that Stela 4 carries the same date as nearby Stela 2, it is highly probable that the same ruler is depicted on the front of both of them. However, the style in which this ruler is presented on Stela 4 is noticeably different than that on Stela 2. The rendering of the figure of the ruler appears to have been incised rather than deeply sculpted. The front side design seems to occupy almost the entire area of the front side, with little in the way of background areas being present.

The text on Stela 4 begins on its right (east) side, proceeds to the rear (north) side, and finishes on the left (west) side.

On the right side (Figure 31) is a single column (A) of eight glyphs that presents the beginning of an Initial Series date: *ISIG 9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw* (January 20, A.D. 771). (Note: Denison labeled the ISIG as A1-A2. I have labeled it simply as A1.) The glyph at A8, after *13 Ajaw*, is almost totally destroyed. It likely either presented the *Haab* month data (which must be *18 K'umku*), or commenced the Supplementary Series.

The rear side of the stela (Figure 32) is in a very poor condition. There are two columns of glyphs, B and C, with 7 rows each. Clearly present at C3 is Glyph X, indicating the presence of a Supplementary Series. Glyph X is followed at B4 by Glyph B, and at C4 by Glyph 10A. Based on these identifications, the glyphs at B1-B3 are all likely part of the Supplementary Series. A verb would be reasonable at B5, but it is too eroded to

recognize, as are the glyphs at C5-B6. At C6, however, we have **AJ-?**, *aj-?*, “he, ?”, indicating that this is part of a name which is believed to continue at the destroyed glyphs at B7-C7, and this name further extends out onto the left (west) side text.

The badly eroded left side (Figure 33) has seven glyphs arranged in a single column. At D1 is **ja-m(a)**, *jam*, of unknown meaning, but it is also present as part of the name of *Chak Nik* on the rear of Stela 2. At D2a is **CHAN/KAN-na**, *chan/kan*, “sky”, which is also part of the full name of *Chak Nik*. At D2b, a deteriorated face is present which may be a title. At D3 is the emblem glyph of Oxpemul nicknamed “**TUN TZ’AM**”, “Stone Throne”. It occurs 13 times in the Oxpemul texts. Although it has *ajaw* superfixed on it, it lacks the *ch’uhul/k’uhul*, “holy or sacred” prefix found on most emblem glyphs. This emblem glyph, together with the Bat emblem glyph, and others relating to the culture-history of Oxpemul are further considered in the “Discussions” section at the end of this report. The glyphs at D4-D7 are very damaged. D4 has a prefixed **U-?**, *u-?*, “his?”. D5 has a face prefixed by a bar which could be part of a numeral, or part of the male agentive indicator, *aj-*. Given the apparently possessed nature of the of destroyed mainsign at D4, it is possible that D5-D7 represents the name of the possessor, however, D6 and D7, are almost totally destroyed.

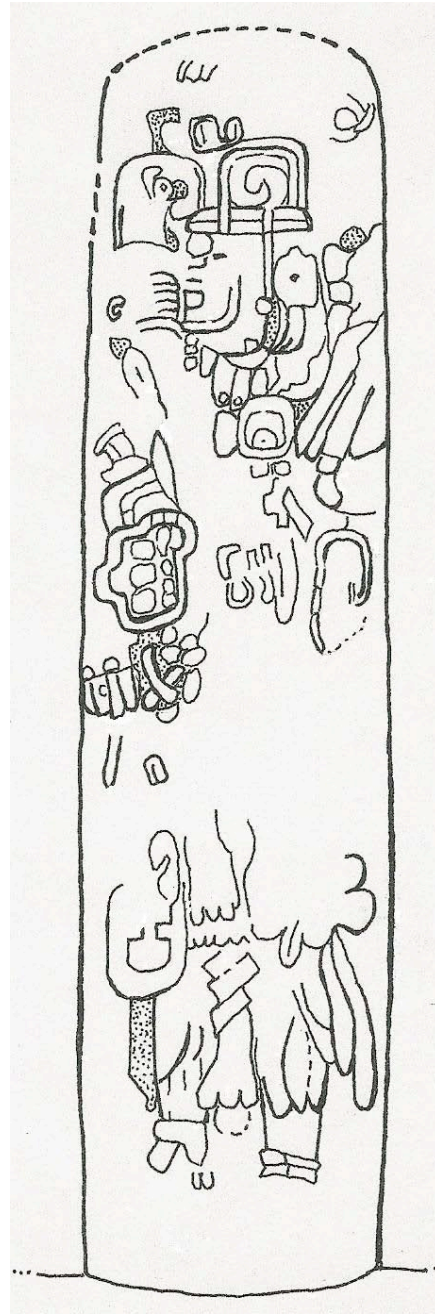
The handsome image of a bird graces the top of Altar 4 (Figures 34, 35). A snake is present above the bird’s head. The altar has a text on its side that appears to be four glyphs long (Figures 36, 37, 38, 39), however, the damage at the end of the text leaves a small possibility that a fifth glyph was there. The first glyph appears to read **U “TUN TZ’AM” AJAW**, *u “tun tz’am” ajaw*, “his “Stone Throne” lord”. Given this construction, one would expect the next glyph to be the name of the person who is the possessor of what was just stated before. The second glyph, at B, is thus a possible name, but it is not recognized. The third glyph, at C, appears to be another “Stone-Throne” emblem glyph prefixed by *u-*, “his”, but this time without the *ajaw* glyph. Following this is a hand glyph in the configuration used for the verb **CH’AM**, *ch’am*, “to take, grasp, or receive (something)”. In total, this altar statement may read “His Stone Throne lord, (name of possessor), his stone-throne place, he ?receives (?them)”.



Figure 29. Photo showing Stela 4 and Altar 4 on the left, and the shorter Stela 5, and Altar 5, on the right. The lower eastern slope of pyramidal Structure IV is visible behind the stelae. Note the depression to the left of Altar 4 which marks its original position. This is a view to the north on July 22, 2007.



a

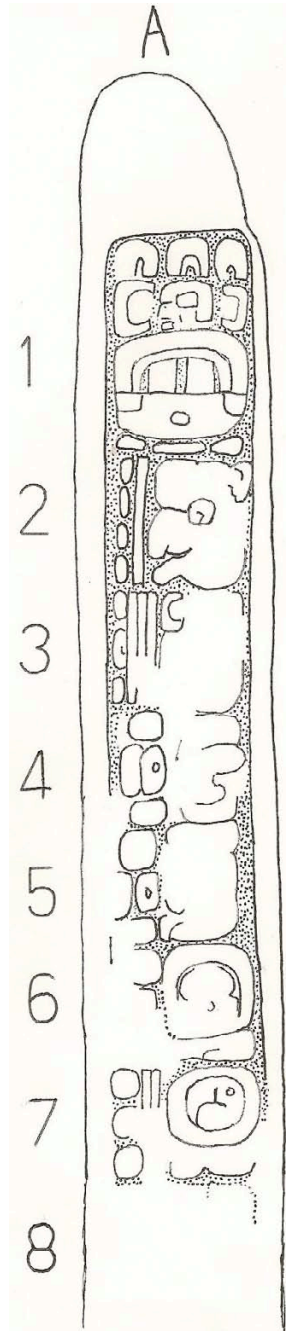


b

Figure 30. Photo and drawing of the front (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 4.



a

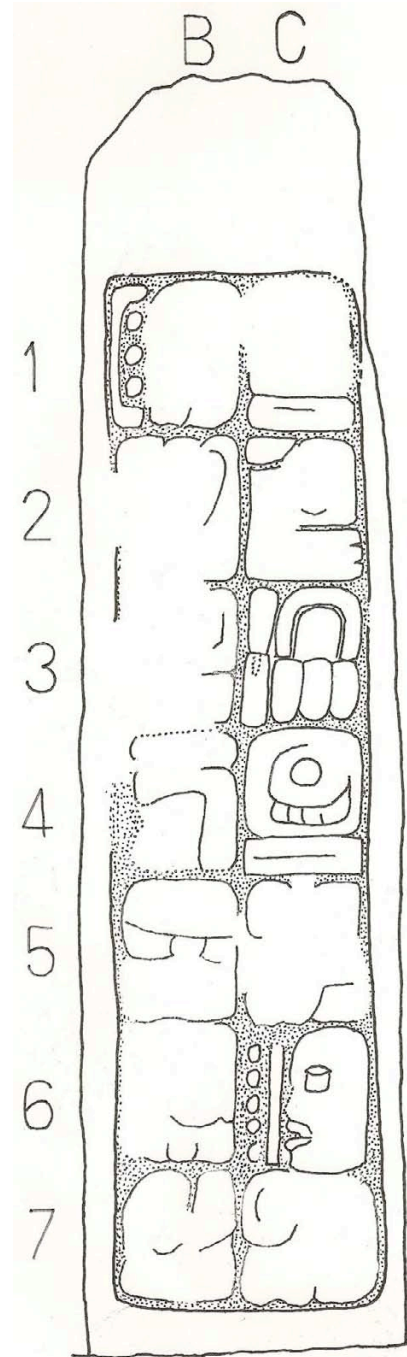


b

Figure 31. Photo and drawing of the right (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 4.



a



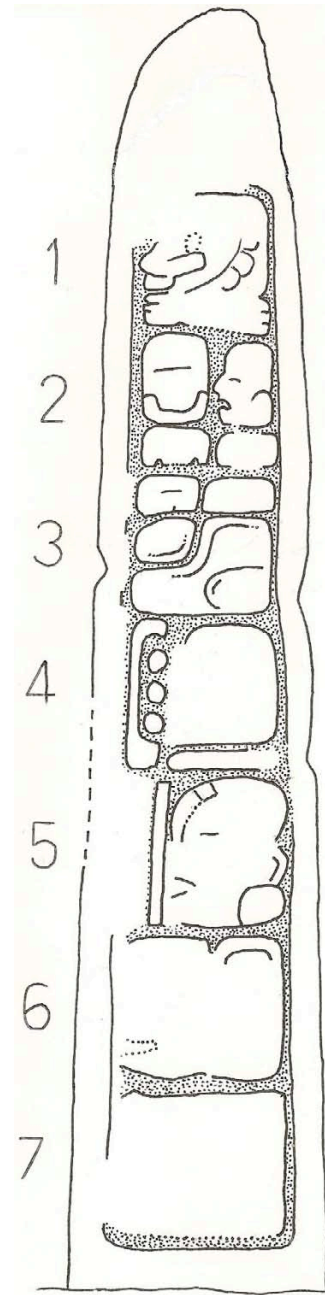
b

Figure 32. Photo and drawing of the rear (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 4.



a

D



b

Figure 33. Photo and drawing of the left (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 4.



Figure 34. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 4.

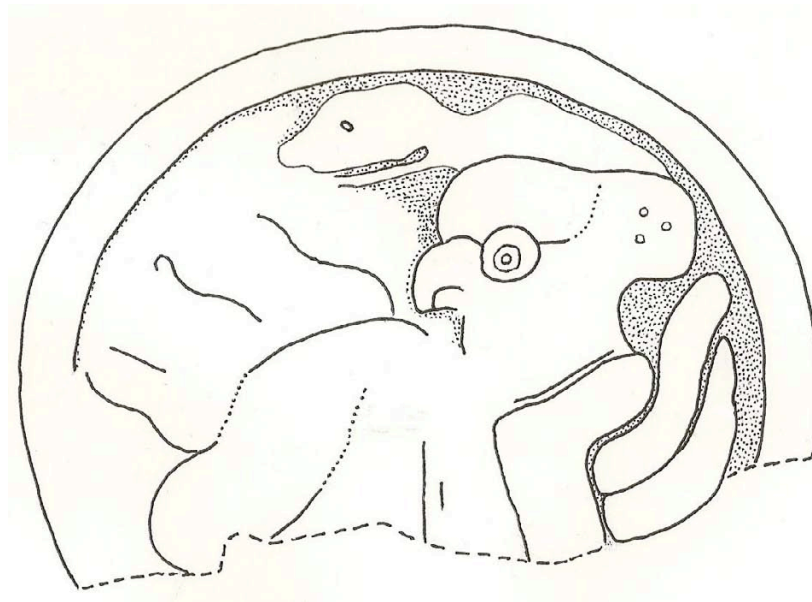


Figure 35. Drawing of the top of Oxpemul Altar 4.



Figure 36. Photo of the first glyph in the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 4.



Figure 37. Photo of the 2nd and 3rd glyphs on the side of Oxpemul Altar 4.



Figure 38. Photo of the 4th (final) glyph of the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 4.

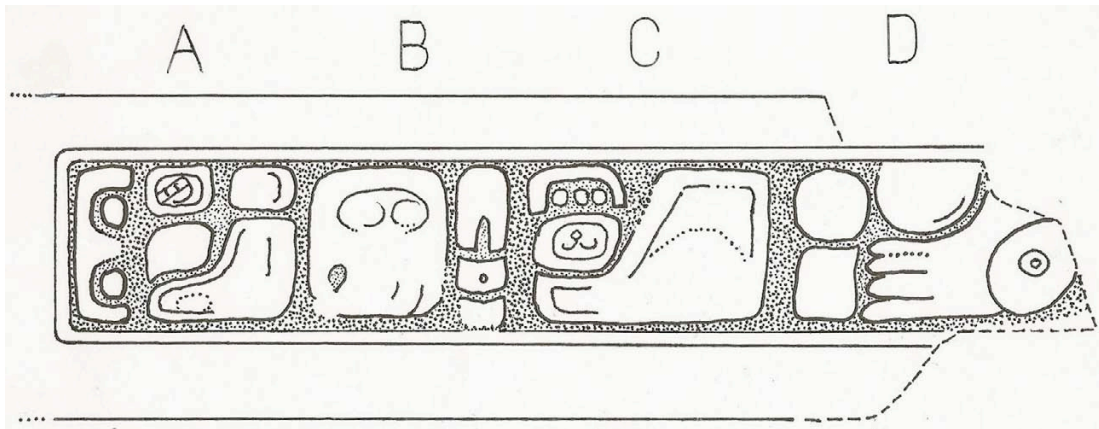


Figure 39. Drawing of the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 4.

STELA 5/ALTAR 5

LOCATION: Stela 5 (Figure 40) is the easternmost of the four in-line stelae in front of Str. IV. It is located ca. 4 m east of Stela 4, and faces to the south onto the West Plaza.

Altar 5 is located ca. 1.0 m in front of Stela 5.

SIZE: Stela 5 is ca. 2.61 m tall, 1.12 m wide at its front base, and ca. 66 cm thick at its east base. Surviving paint here and there indicates the stela was painted red.

Altar 5 is circular in shape, ca. 1.06 m in diameter, and ca. 40 cm high. The altar is badly broken.

DATE: Unknown, but a possible stylized “bird-head” in the hand of the depicted protagonist is similar to the bird-head that is part of the name of the ruler shown on Stelae 18 and 19 in South Oxpemul. Those stelae date to A.D. 756.

DESCRIPTION: The front (south) side of the stela, and its two lateral faces are carved. The rear (north) side appears to have been blank. The photos taken of Stela 5’s texts since its rediscovery in 2004 do not show as much detail as is present on the CIW photos of 1934.

The front side (Figure 41) depicts a figure who is shown in profile facing toward the west (to the viewer’s left). The figure is an Old Deity, or an Old Deity impersonator. He has a roman nose and a square-shaped eye. He is shown in motion. His left arm is extended out in front of him (to the west), and there appears to be a glyph-like bird-head

resting above his hand. Additional small, faint glyphic elements are possibly present above the bird-head. The bird-head bears a resemblance to the bird-head in the glyphic name of a ruler cited in the texts on Stelae 18 and 19 which are located ca. 1.2 km. to the south in South Oxpemul. A serpent design may be present at the figure's left foot and leg.

Stelae 5, Stela 3 (see above), and Stela 10 (discussed below) all present the image of an Old God on their front sides. While the Old God of Stela 10 is armed and perhaps shown in the act of attacking, the Old God of Stela 5 is unarmed and seems more likely engaged in a dance. The Old God on Stela 3 is similarly shown in lateral movement. Some details, such as the square-shaped eyes, suggest the Old Gods on these stelae may represent the Sun God (*K'inich Ajaw*).

There are texts on the right (east) and left (west) sides of the stela. Neither appears to provide any calendrical information. The text may commence on the right side, and continue onto the west side.

The right side text (Figure 42) contains five large glyphs set in a single column (A). At A1 is a verb, **?U TAB'-yi**, *u tab'iy*, with the mainsign seated atop an animal head. This verb, on monuments, seems to relate to dedication events for buildings, and such. The glyph at A2 is not well defined, but possibly is the name of the object being dedicated. A3 includes the head of a man, but is otherwise not identifiable. A4 is almost totally gone. The last glyph, at A5, is a woman's name **?IXIK-6-?**. I refer to her as "*Lady 6*". The statement of her name seems to continue in the text on the west side of the stela.

The left side text (Figure 43) has five glyphs arranged in a single column, B. B1 seems straightforwardly readable as **K'AL-la-m(i)**, *k'alaam*, with uncertain meaning. The second glyph, at B2, is **CHAN-na/KAN-na**, *chan/kan*, "sky", a common component of names. At B3 is another occurrence of **IXIK**, *ixik*, "lady", perhaps signaling the end of Lady 6's name. The next glyph (B4) includes **NAL**, a common locative determinant as a component, suggesting that B4 is the name of a particular location with which Lady 6 is associated. The final glyph (B5) is badly eroded, but seems to have **-ni** as a suffix, suggesting *k'in*, or *tun*, as candidates for the reading of this glyph.

The rear side of Stela 5 was blank (Figure 44).

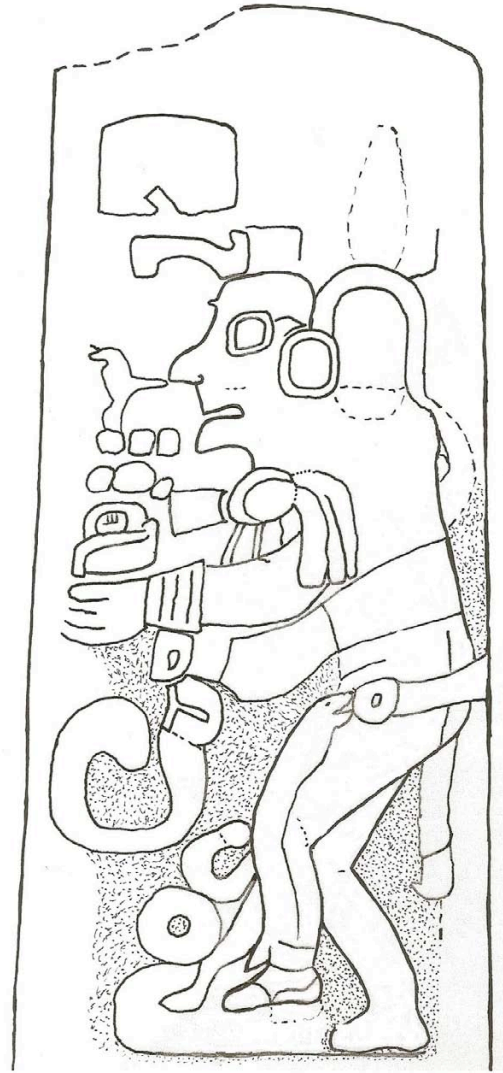
Altar 5 is badly fractured (Figure 45). There were at least two glyphs on it (Figures 46, 47). One glyph is still attached to the altar, the second was found separated from the altar, to the right of the first glyph. This second of these was clearly the last glyph of the text, and it appears to have followed immediately after the glyph that is still attached to the altar, which seems to include a variant of the **CHAN/KAN**, *chan/kan*, "sky" glyph. The final glyph appears to be the title, **K'INICH**, *k'inich*, "sun-eyed". It thus seems likely that this altar text contained the name and the title of an elite person. It is likely that there were one or more glyphic components of the name before *chaan/kaan*, but damage to the side has destroyed them.



Figure 40. Photo of Oxpemul Stela 5 and Altar 5. This is a view to the north from July 22, 2007, with the lower eastern slope of Structure IV visible behind the stela.



a

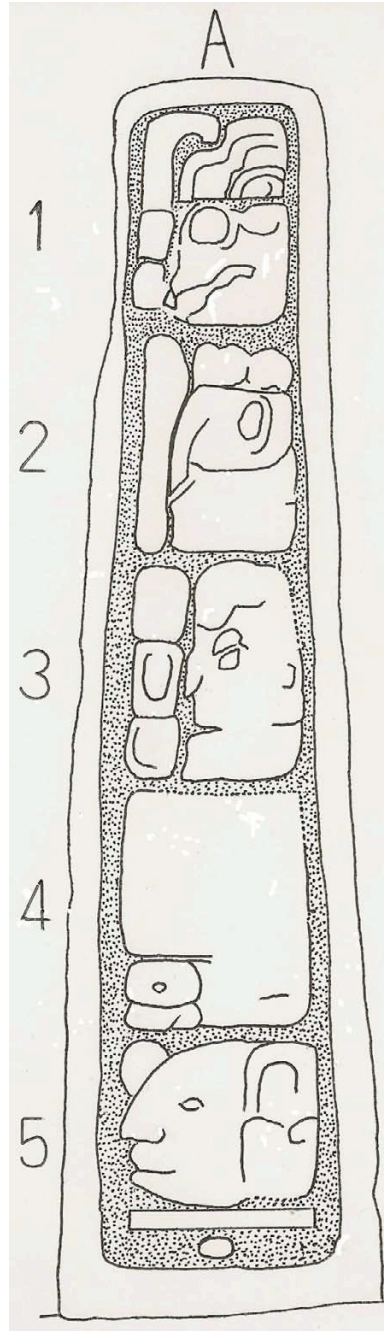


b

Figure 41. Photo and drawing of the front (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 5.



a

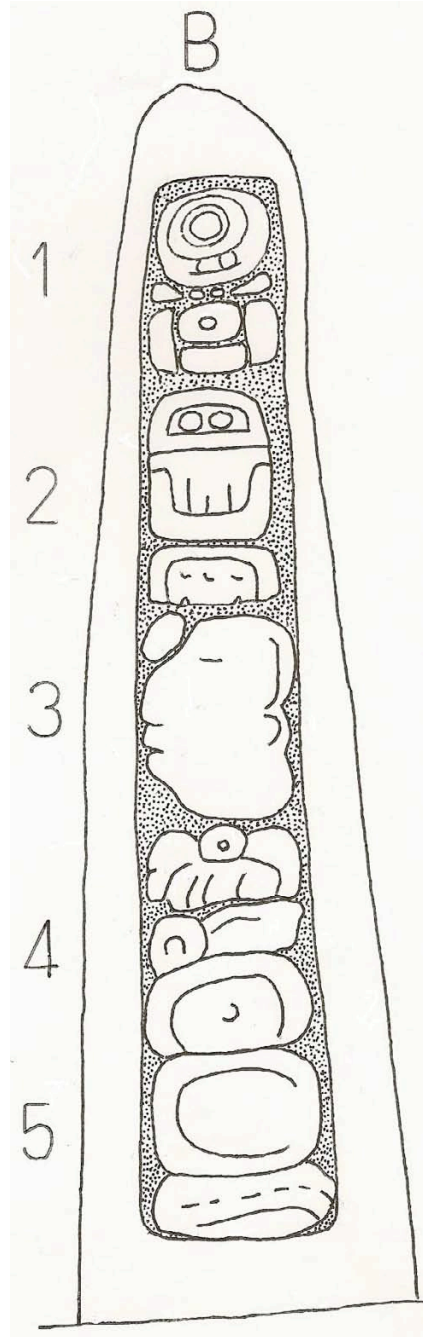


b

Figure 42. Photo and drawing of the right (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 5.



a



b

Figure 43. Photo and drawing of the left (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 5.



Figure 44. Photo of the rear (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 5. The rear side appears to have been uncarved.



Figure 45. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 5 showing the fragmented condition in which it was found. One glyph is visible on the near side of the largest fragment, and a second glyph is present on the side of the fragment to the right.

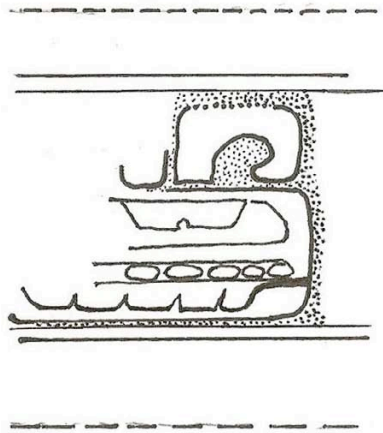


a

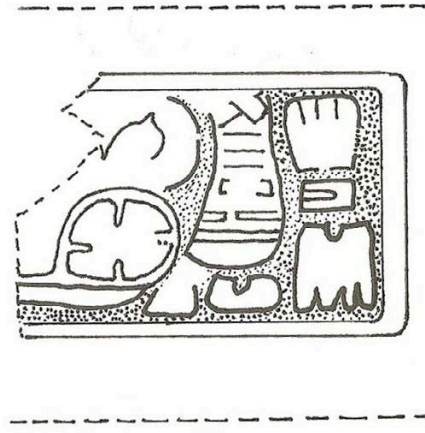


b

Figure 46. Photos of two surviving glyphs from the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 5.



a



b

Figure 47. Drawings of two glyphs from the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 5. These two glyphs appear to have occurred consecutively in the text. It is probable that one or more now destroyed glyphs preceded them in this altar text.

STELA 6/ALTAR 6

LOCATION: Near the northeastern corner of the West Plaza. Stela 6 (Figure 48) was more or less aligned in a north-south line together with Stelae 7, 8, 9, and 10 which are located to the south of it. It is situated in the front of Str. V-a, the northern most of three structures situated atop the Str. V platform that together seem to form a part of an “E Group” astronomical configuration (Ruppert and Denison 1943). The stela broke near ground level prior to 1934 and fell backwards to the east, with its front side facing upward. During the 2007 field season of the CIHS-UAC project, the main body of fallen Stela 6 was rotated on to its left side in order to document the rear side of the stela. Subsequently, it was returned to the position in which it was found.

Altar 6 is positioned ca. 60 cm west of the broken butt of Stela 6. Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel of Dr. Sprajc’s crew made an interesting observation about a pattern of symmetry with regard to the shape of the altars arranged along the east side of the West Plaza: Stelae 6 and 10, the outermost stelae in the line of five monuments have square-shaped altars in front of them, while Stelae 7, 8, and 9 located in the center, each have circular altars. This suggests the presence of a formal plan with regard to their layout, notwithstanding that the stelae themselves range in date from at least A.D. 751 to A.D. 830.

It should be noted that the 1934 map of Oxpepul (Ruppert and Dennison 1943) erroneously shows Stela 6 and Altar 6 as being located toward the interior of the West Plaza, to the south of Stela 5. That does not agree with their current location, which appears to have been their original position.

As a matter of additional information, the center of our small field camp during our May 2004 visit was located in the northeastern corner of the West Plaza, just a few meters to the north of Stela 6.

SIZE: Stela 6’s butt still stands ca. 39 cm tall, and the fallen upper part of the stela is ca. 2.41 m long, generating an estimate that the intact stela was ca. 2.8 m tall. Denison (1943:138) says 2.85 m. Its width at ground level was ca. 1.27 m, and its thickness was ca. 63 cm.

Altar 6 is square-shaped, with sides ca. 1.0 in length. Its height is 33 cm. A text present on the west side of the altar was not detected by Denison in 1934. Denison (Ruppert and Denison 1943:138) indicates that glyphs were present on top of Altar 6, but they are not now visible.

DATE: Probably the Late Classic period (see below).

DESCRIPTION: The front and lateral faces of Stela 6 are carved. A night-time photo of the rear of Stela 6 did not reveal any carvings there.

The front of the stela depicts an individual whose upper body has largely eroded away

(Figure 49). He is shown carrying a large axe-like weapon on his right side. What remains of the body suggests that his feet were pointing outward, making the stela a likely Late Classic work.

Which of the lateral texts was to be read first is not clear. The right side text (Figure 50) had five glyphs arranged in a single column (A). A1 seems to read **U-K'AL**, *u k'al*, “his 20”, although the *k'al* has an unusual configuration. Unfortunately, although elements of some of the four remaining glyphs are recognizable, such as the *k'in* sign in A2, and the large **bi** mainsign in A4, the reading and meaning of this text is not apparent.

The top of the left side text (Figure 51) is missing, thus the row numbering of the remaining four glyphs is provisional. The glyph at Bp1 is almost totally gone, but what remains resembles *Chan/Kan*, “sky”, suggesting that a name may be stated in the upper part of the left side. At Bp2 is an emblem glyph. Although badly eroded, the remaining details seem largely consistent with the emblem glyph of Tikal. If so, it, together with the example on Stela 3, would make two occurrences of it at Oxpepul, pointing to some unknown interaction between these two sites. The glyphs at Bp3 and Bp4 are badly damaged and unrecognized.

The rear side of Stela 6 appears blank (Figure 52).

Altar 6 (Figure 53) is described by Denison (1943:138) as having glyphs on its top side that included the numeral 9. Today those glyphs are not visible. However, there are two somewhat well defined glyphs on the west side of Altar 6 (Figures 54, 55) that were not mentioned by Denison. These two glyphs are the title **ba-ka-b(a)**, *bakab*, and a damaged version of the “Bat emblem glyph”. The top part of the latter glyph is missing, where an *ajaw*, “lord” superfix likely sat. Certainly this text provides the title, and emblem glyph of a person cited elsewhere, either on the top of the altar, or on the stela.

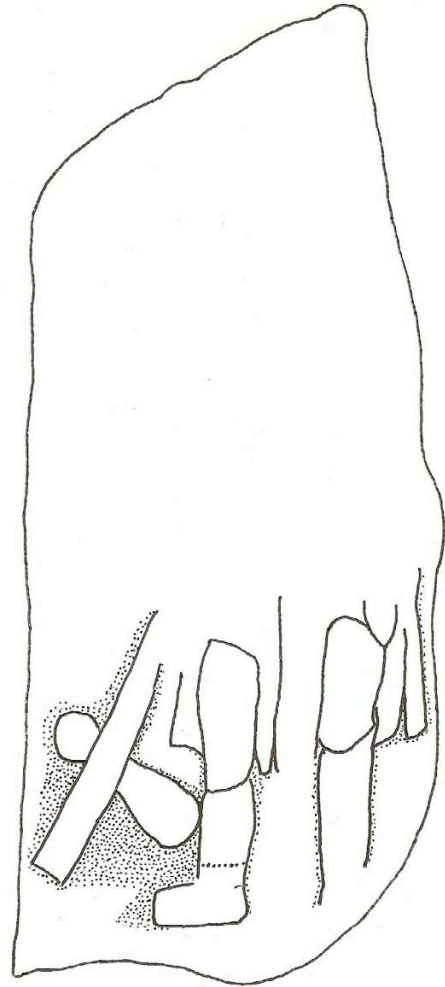
Stela 6 and Altar 6, with their presentation of warrior iconography, the Bat E.G., and possibly the Tikal E.G., form an intriguing assemblage. The lack of a date, and the damage to much of the texts, however, precludes a more precise assessment of the stela-altar pair’s intended message.



Figure 48. Photo showing sequentially, from front to rear, Altar 6, the butt of Stela 6, the fallen main body of Stela 6 , and the lower slope of Structure V. View to the east on July 22, 2007.



a

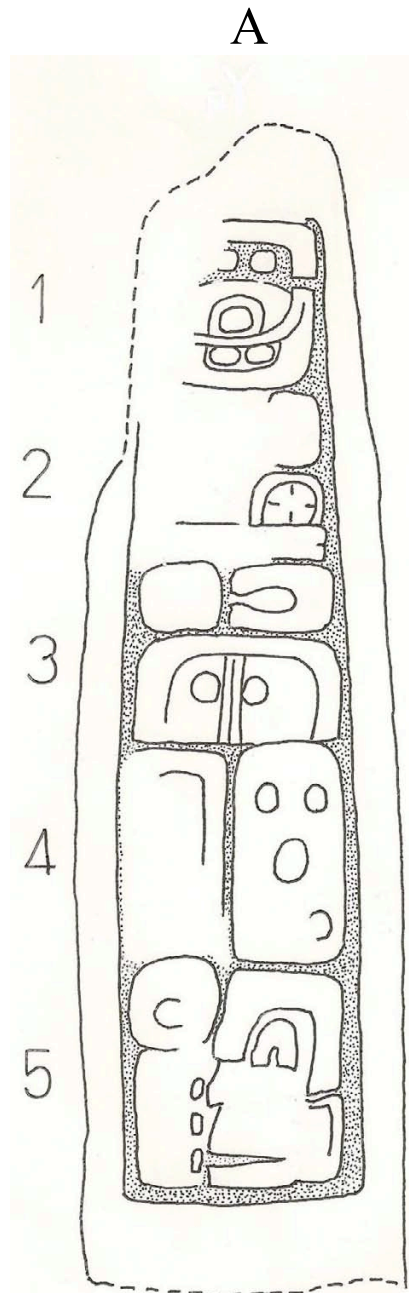


b

Figure 49. Photo and drawing of the front (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 6.
(Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



a



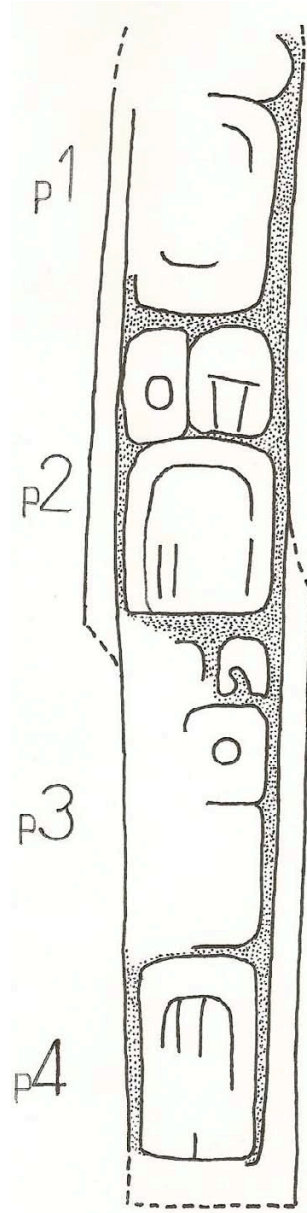
b

Figure 50. Photo and drawing of the right side of Oxpemul Stela 6.
(Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



a

B



b

Figure 51. Photo and drawing of the left side of Oxpepul Stela 6.



Figure 52. A night-time photo of the rear side of Oxpemul Stela 6, which is blank.



Figure 53. Photo of Oxpemul Altar 6. This is a view to the southeast.



Figure 54. Photo of the text on the west side of Oxpemul Altar 6,

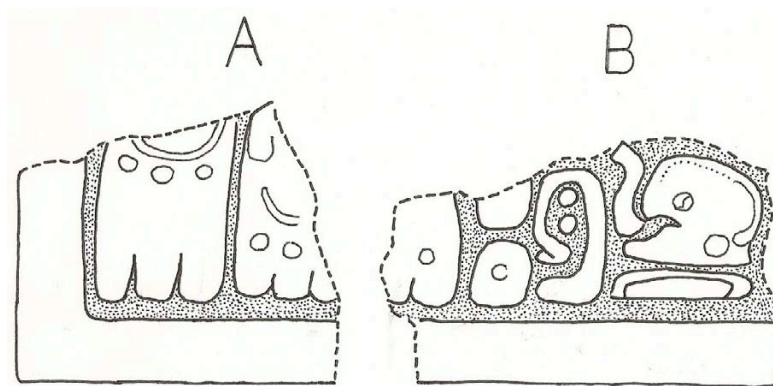


Figure 55. Drawing of the text on the west side of Oxpemul Altar 6.

STELA 7/ALTAR 7

LOCATION: Stelae 7, 8, and 9 are clustered abreast of each other at the front, center of Str. V-b on the east side of the West Plaza, with Stela 7 being the northernmost of the three. Stela 7 (Figure 56) is ca. 4 m north of Stela 8, and 7 m north of Stela 9.

Altar 7 is currently situated ca. 1 m to the southwest of Stela 7. This position suggests it has been moved, but its exact original position was not evident.

SIZE: Stela 7 is ca. 2.15 m tall, 99 cm wide, and 47 cm thick.

Altar 7 is circular in shape, ca. 1.0 m in diameter, and 42 cm tall. The altar is currently tilted downward on its northside.

DATE: 10.0.0.0.0 7 Ajaw 18 Zip (March 11, A.D. 830). This is the latest Initial Series date known at Oxpemul

DESCRIPTION: Stela 7 was carved on all four sides. Although it is the most recent firmly dated stela at Oxpemul, the front (west) side sculpture on it (Figure 57) is one of the most eroded at the site. Traces of the lower legs of an individual are still present, as well as the bottom of a garment which extended down to the knees. The position of the legs suggests that the feet were pointed outward, in the style prevalent during the Late Classic period. An apparently human face is present beside the individual's right knee.

The left side of Stela 7 contains a single column (A) of eight glyphs (Figure 58). A Long Count date, 10.0.0.0.0 (March 11, A.D. 830), is stated there. The *b'aktun*, *k'atun*, and *tun* are represented by head variant glyphs, whereas the *winal* and *k'in* are presented as symbolic variants. Their coefficients are all on the left side. The Long Count date is followed at A7 and A8 by the first two glyphs of the Supplementary Series, Glyphs G9 and F. The Calendar Round date associated with the Long Count date, 7 Ajaw 18 Zip, is not stated anywhere on the stela. Denison (1943:138) reported that the terminal Calendar Round date was stated on top of the adjacent Altar 7 along with other glyphs. None of those glyphs are visible today on top of the altar.

The right side of Stela 7 has nine glyphs arranged in a single column (B) (Figure 59). The Supplementary Series begun on the north side continues on the south side of the stela where the first five glyphs are Glyphs 13D, 6C, X, B, and 9A, providing lunar data. The remaining four glyphs on the south side, B6-B9, appear to consist of a verb, and a three-glyph long name. The verb, at Position B6 begins with phonetic "ja", but the mainsign of the verb is not well-defined. The next glyph, at B7, may be the title ?K'INICH, which is at times incorporated as part of a name. The remaining two glyphs seem likely to continue the name of the protagonist of Stela 7, but the name cannot yet be discerned. For the time being, he is referred to as *K'inich*. This ruler would be the last ruler cited in the firmly dated texts of Oxpemul. (Note: There is a possibility that the small stela, Stela 21, which contained texts on its sides, was from a later time, and had reference to a ruler, but the fact that looters cut the glyphs in half and removed part of the stela stymies

further insight into this issue.)

The rear side of Stela 7 contains five glyphs arranged in a single column (C) along its left edge (Figure 60). Denison (1943:138) reported it as having only three weathered glyphs. The first is clearly the Oxpemul “Stone Throne” emblem glyph with *ajaw* above it, indicating that this text is a continuation of the text on the south side, and that the person cited there is a lord of Oxpemul. This example of the emblem glyph atypically has a postfix on it, which is not recognizable, but is possibly the phonetic complement **-wa**, for *ajaw*. The remaining four glyphs are eroded and less well defined. The glyph at C2 is not recognized. C3 seems to have the numeral 3 prefixed to it. Nikolai Grube (2005:94-95) indicates it is the *Uxte’Tuun* toponym associated with Calakmul (Stuart and Houston 1994:28-30). It possibly is that but the preservation of the glyph does not allow absolute certainty in that regard. For more on this issue see the *Emblem Glyphs* section in the “Discussion” chapter at the end of this report. The glyph at C4 has a **ma-** superfix, suggesting that it may be a title. C5 is very damaged and eroded, making it unrecognizable.

Regarding Altar 7, Denison (1943:138) reported the presence of two columns of glyphs on its top side. He indicated that all the glyphs had flaked off except two, those at positions A1 and B1, which carried the Calendar Round date *7 Ajaw 18 Sip*. Today, visual inspection and a night-time photograph suggest those glyphs are no longer present (Figure 61). The Calendar Round date noted by Denison closes out the Long Count date which is present on the left side of Stela 7. There are traces of red paint remaining on the altar.

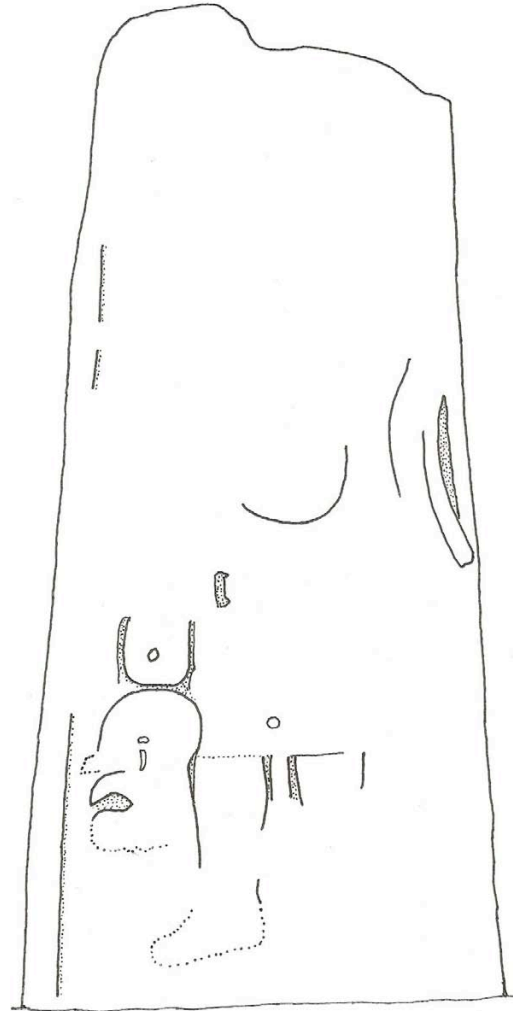
The texts on Stela 7 and Altar 7 provide the last Initial Series date at Oxpemul, 10.0.0.0.0 7 Ajaw 18 Sip, and provide a reference to a ruler whom I refer to as “K’inich”.



Figure 56. Photo showing Stela 7 and Altar 7 in front of the central portion of Structure V. A view to the east on July 22, 2007.



a

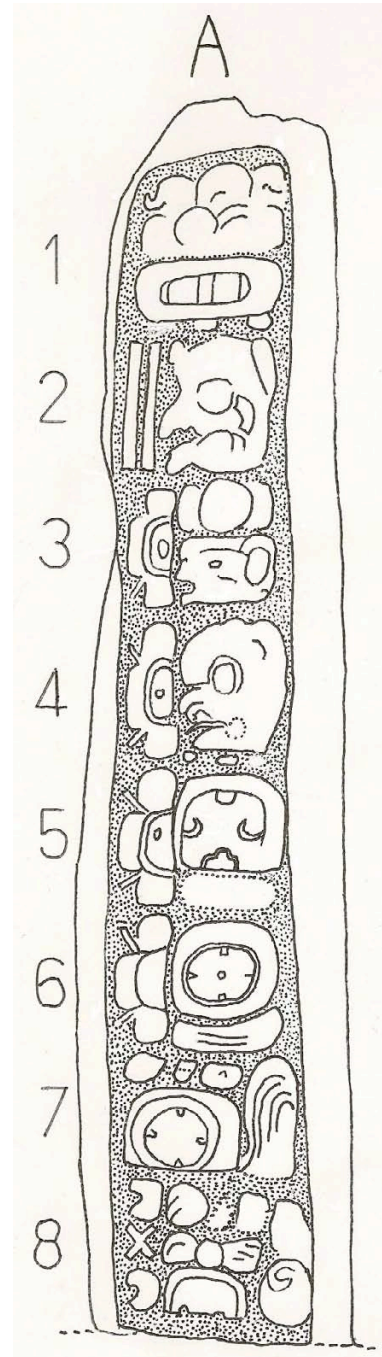


b

Figure 57. Photo and drawing of the front (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 7.



a

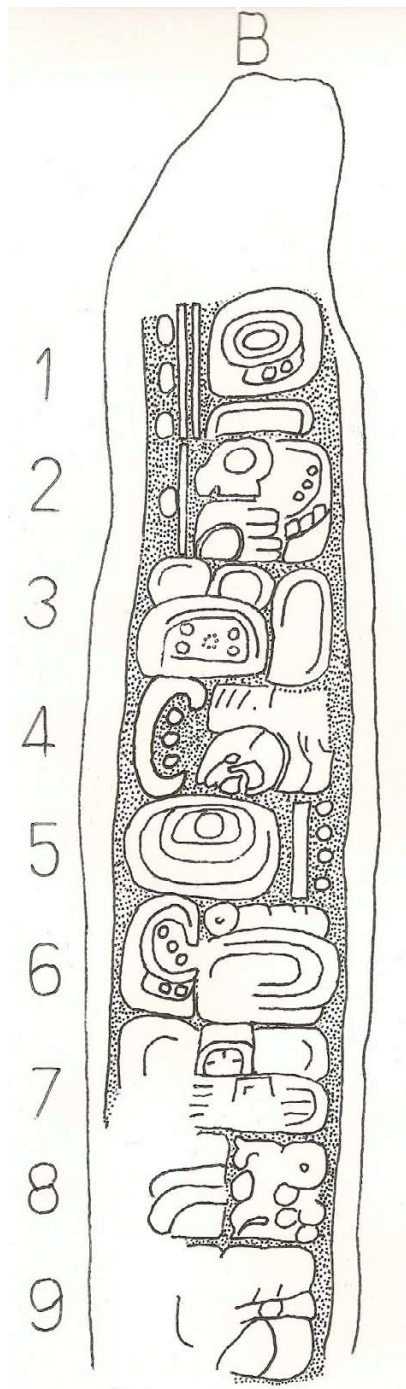


b

Figure 58. Photo and drawing of the left (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 7.



a

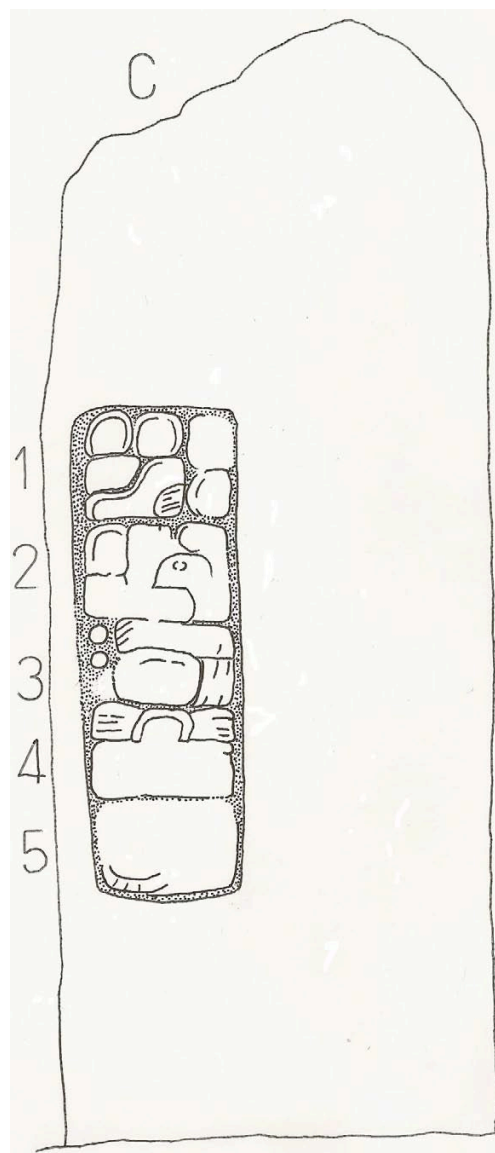


b

Figure 59. Photo and drawing of the right (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 7.



a



b

Figure 60. Photo and drawing of the rear (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 7. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



Figure 61. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 7.

STELA 8/ALTAR 8

LOCATION: Stela 8 is located in front of Str. V-b, between Stelae 7 and 9 (Figure 62). It broke near ground level, and fell forward to the west-northwest prior to the Carnegie expedition's visit in 1934. Stela 8 is situated ca. 4.0 m to the south of Stela 7. The stela was found in 2004 slightly propped up on its south side by two stones, so that the front side of the stela was somewhat raised. This was evidently done by Denison in 1934 in order to gain a slight side-glimpse of its front (west) side. Denison (1934:139) reported that a faint carving was present on the stela's front side, and that the sides and rear were blank. During the 2007 field season of the CIHS-UAC project, the stela was rolled onto its left side so that its front could be documented. Afterward, Stela 8 was carefully lowered back to the precise configuration in which it was found in 2004.

Altar 8 is in front of the original base of Stela 8.

SIZE: Stela 8 is estimated to have been ca. 2.85 m tall, 1.25 m wide, and 64 cm thick.

Altar 8 is estimated to have been ca. 1.49 m in diameter, and ca. 38 cm tall. It is circular

in shape, and broken into two pieces, one of which is near its original location. As found in 2004, it was largely buried except for its top surface. Although Denison describes the altar as plain, some very faint glyphs are possibly present on its side

DATE: The positioning of the ruler depicted on the front side of Stela 8, with his feet pointed outward, is consistent with the conventions of the Late Classic period (Figure 63). Stela 8 is physically positioned between Stelae 9 and 7 which date respectively to A.D. 751 and A.D. 830, supporting the likelihood that Stela 8 dates to the Late Classic period.

DESCRIPTION: The front side of Stela 8 depicts a ruler. His body is facing forward, with his feet pointing outward, in the style prevalent in the Late Classic. He has on elaborate attire, and seems to be holding a small, circular shield. The upper half of the stela is badly eroded, but there are faint indications that the ruler's face was turned to his right. Some feathers are visible in his headdress. Traces of red paint are still present on the front of the stela.

Surprisingly, a night-time, controlled-light photograph taken on July 25, 2007, revealed that the right (south) side of Stela 8 had at least one very faint, apparently incised, column of glyphs (Figure 64) that had previously gone undetected by Denison, and by myself in visual observations (Note: This glyphic text was previously erroneously reported as being on the rear side of Stela 8, rather than its right side (Robichaux and Pruett 2008b:92)). A *k'in* glyph is present toward the bottom of this column. Due to the damaged and faint condition of these glyphs, no attempt to label these glyphs has been made.

The left side, tilted downward both before and after the stela was rolled over in 2007, was not clearly visible. The presence of a text on the right side made it highly likely that a text had also been present on the left side. During 2010, CIHS-UAC members cleared enough soil away from the left side to determine that any text that may have been there is now largely gone (William Folan, personal communication 2010).

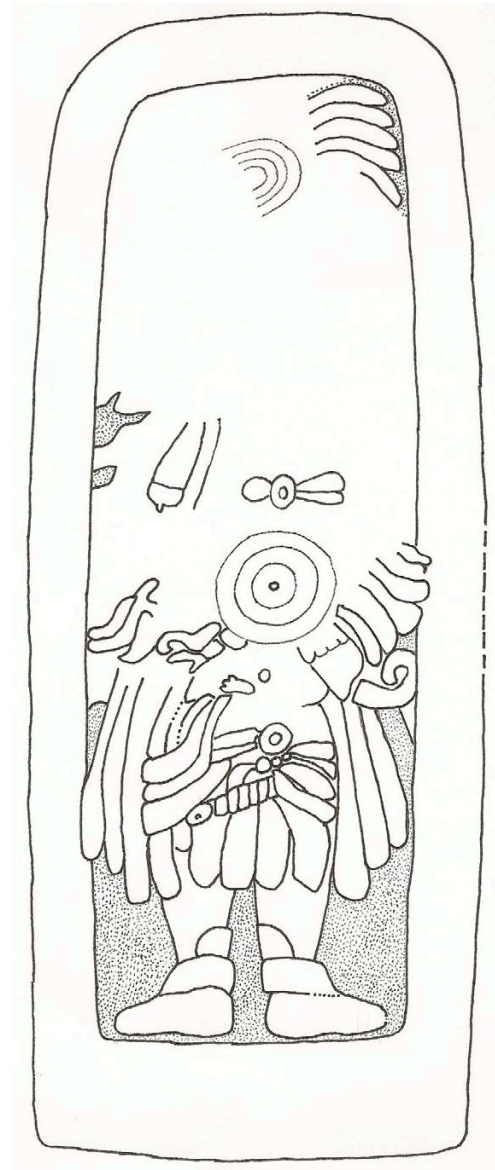
The rear (east) side of the stela had no discernible carving.



Figure 62. Photo showing fallen Stela 8 in the right middle ground, Stela 7 and circular Altar 7 in the foreground, and looter-damaged Stela 9 in the background behind Stela 8. These three stelae are situated in front of the stairway that leads up Structure V, which is visible to the left of Stela 7. This is a view to the south-southeast on July 26, 2007.



a

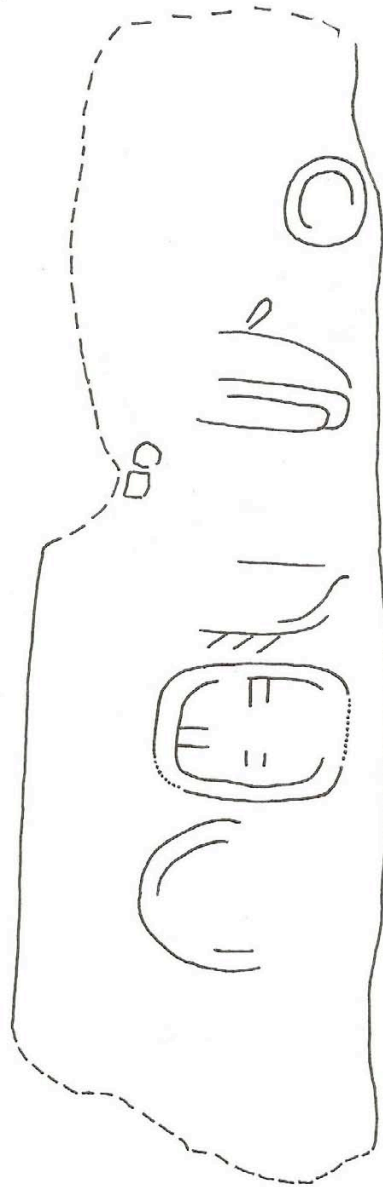


b

Figure 63. Photo and drawing of the front of fallen Stela 8.



a



b

Figure 64. Photo and drawing of the south (right) side of fallen Stela 8.

STELA 9/ALTAR 9

LOCATION: Stela 9 is the southernmost of the three stelae present in front of Str. V-b on the eastern side of the West Plaza (Figure 65). It is located ca. 7.0 m south of Stela 7, and ca. 2.5 m south of the original base of Stela 8.

Altar 9 was found 1.8 m to the southwest of Stela 9. Its original position appears to have been one meter directly in front of (west of) the stela, which position is marked today by a shallow hole apparently dug by looters after moving the altar in search of a hidden offering.

SIZE: Stela 9 was ca. 3.4 m tall, 1.28 m wide at its front base, and 57 cm thick. This stela was damaged by the action of looters subsequent to Ruppert and Denison's visit in 1934. The looters sawed off approximately 1.5 m from the upper rear, and sides of the stela. Surprisingly, the sawed-off top two glyphs from the northside text (ISIG and 9 *bak'tun*) were found by Sprajc resting at the north side base of the stela, and had not been hauled away. Some time later, the sawed-off top two glyphs of the southside text were also found in the vicinity of the stela, showing, perhaps, a trace of conscience from the looters. A shallow horizontal saw-cut line shows that the looters also began to cut off the upper front of Stela 9, but thankfully, had second thoughts about it before finishing the cut. It is evident that this stela had been painted red. Ruppert and Denison (1943:Plate 55b) have published a drawing of the front side of Stela 9.

Altar 9 is circular in shape, ca. 91 cm in diameter, and 38 cm tall. At least two glyphs were present along the side of the altar. Some red paint was still present on the altar.

DATE: 9.16.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Sek (May 5, A.D. 751)

DESCRIPTION: The front (west side) contains the striking depiction of an individual, presumably a ruler of Oxpeumul, who is wearing a mask, and armed with a club/axe (Figures 66, 67). What may be a "trophy head" is present at his left hip. His feet are positioned in the style common in the Late Classic period, pointing outward. The ruler is shown standing upon a coiled snake. His left foot rests on the snake's body, and the right foot is placed upon an object which in turn presses down upon the head of the snake. A similarly arranged scene is present on the front of Oxpeumul Stela 17 where an individual is shown in an identical stance, atop a prisoner, with his left foot on the prisoner's body, and his right foot pressing against the prisoner's head. The image on Stela 9 immediately brings to mind the fact that the nearby, very large city of Calakmul has been known, at least for part of its history, as the *Kan* (Snake) site or kingdom because the mainsign of its emblem glyph consisted of a snake head, together with an affixed "ka" phonetic complement. The object below the ruler's right foot, and above the snake's head, is consistent with the form of the phonetic affix "ka", although the interior details are largely gone. The significance of the image on the front of Stela 9 seems clear: It proclaims and commemorates some form of military success by Oxpeumul over the "Snake" site/dynasty. This topic is further considered in the

Discussion section at the end of this report

The left (north) side text is arranged in a column (A) with six glyphs (Figure 68). It contains a Long Count date, as follows: ISIG 9.16.0.0.0 (May 5, A.D. 751).

The right (south) side text had seven glyphs arranged in a single column (B). It presents a Supplementary Series: G9, F, 4C, X, B, 9A, and the Initial Series terminal Calendar Round date, *2 Ajaw 13 Sek*. The photo and drawing below of the right side of Stela 9 (Figure 69) do not depict the top two glyphs that were cut off by looters. Though they were later recovered, they were in a deteriorated state at the time I saw them. A CIW photo from 1934 provides sufficient detail to conclude that G9 and F were the top two glyphs on the right side. Restoration work conducted by the CIHS-UAC team in 2009 has now repaired and reattached the sawed-off glyphs at the tops of both the north and south sides of Stela 9 (William Folan, personal communication 2010).

What remains of the rear (east) side of the Stela 9 after the looters' depredations is blank (Figure 70), but Denison (1943:139) reported the presence of two "very large glyph blocks, undeciphered" on the rear of the stela. It is thus clear that these two glyphs were located on the portion of the rear side that was sawed off by the looters. Given that the texts on the north and south sides of this stela provide only calendrical information, it is quite possible that the two glyphs stolen from the rear side related to the actor and action shown on the front of the Stela 9.

Altar 9 (Figures 71, 72, 73) appears to have been uncarved on its top side. There were at least two glyphs on its side. The two glyphs that are evident have been assigned provisional labels because of the possibility of a third glyph to the left side. Both of the extant glyphs are damaged, and the only certain element is a **-ma** suffix in the second glyph. Unfortunately their meaning is not clear.

The most significance aspect of Stela 9 is that its iconography appears to present a dramatic message, a victory of Oxpemul over the *Kan* ("Snake") site, or dynasty, around A.D. 751.

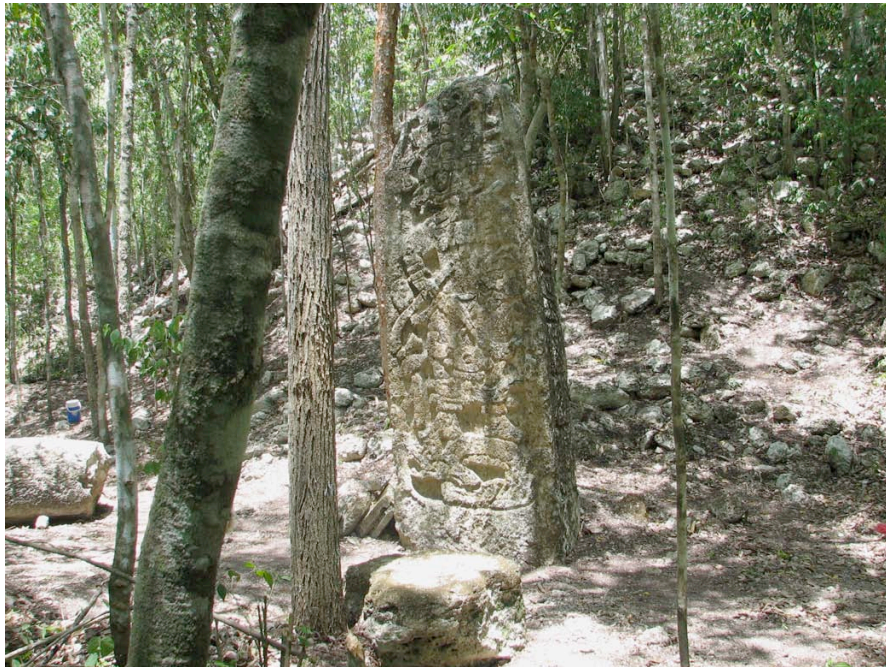


Figure 65. Photo showing the general setting of Stela 9 and Altar 9. Fallen Stela 8 is at the left edge of the photo, and a portion of Structure V is visible in the background. A view to the northeast on July 22, 2007.



a



b

Figure 66. Two photos of the front of Stela 9. Photo (a) provides generally good detail of the entire front side of the stela. Photo (b) provides better definition of the object under the ball of the ruler's right foot and over the snake's head, postulated to be the phonetic element "ka", which, together with the snake head and body, appears to be a rendering of the "Snake emblem glyph" found at Calakmul and Dzibanche. Notice the horizontal saw-cut line near the top of the figure, where looters started to cut off the front top of the stela, but fortuitously changed their minds.

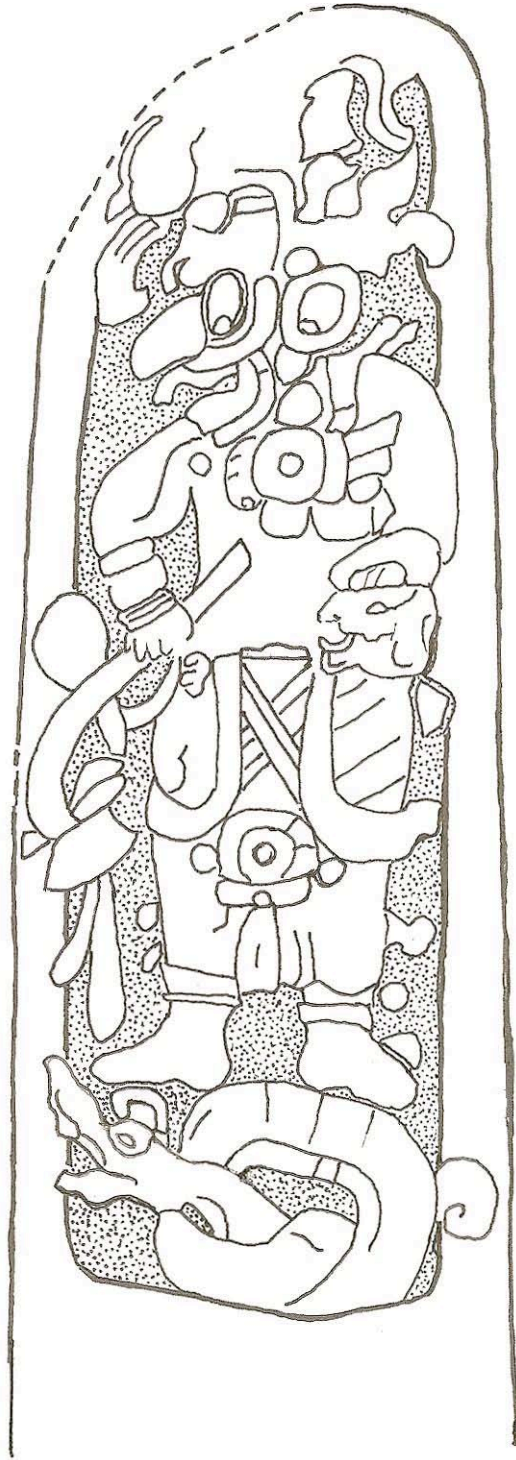
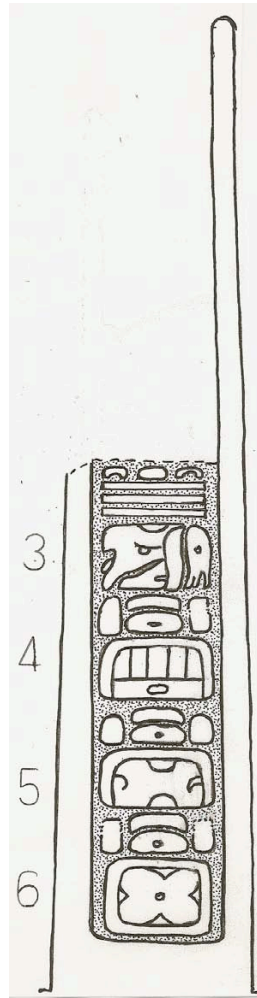
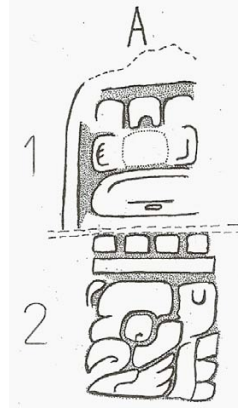


Figure 67. Drawing of the front of Stela 9.



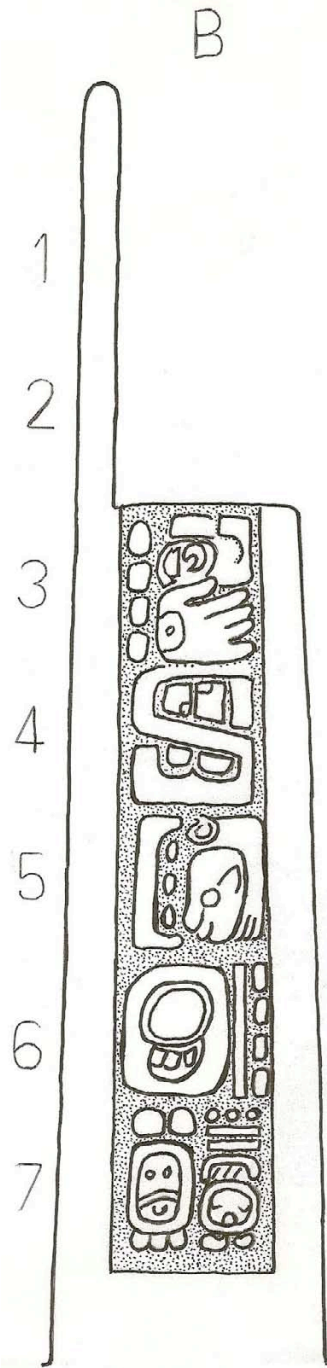
a

b

Figure 68. Photos and drawings of the looter-cut left (north) side of Stela 9, including the two glyphs cut off, but left behind by the looters. (The upper photo is courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



a



b

Figure 69. Photo and drawing of the right (south) side of Stela 9.



Figure 70. Photo of the rear side of Stela 9. Denison reported the presence of two “...very large glyph blocks, undeciphered” on the rear side. They were removed by looters sometime after 1934 and have not been recovered.



Figure 71. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 9.



a



b

Figure 72. Two views of the two very eroded glyphs on the side of Altar 9.

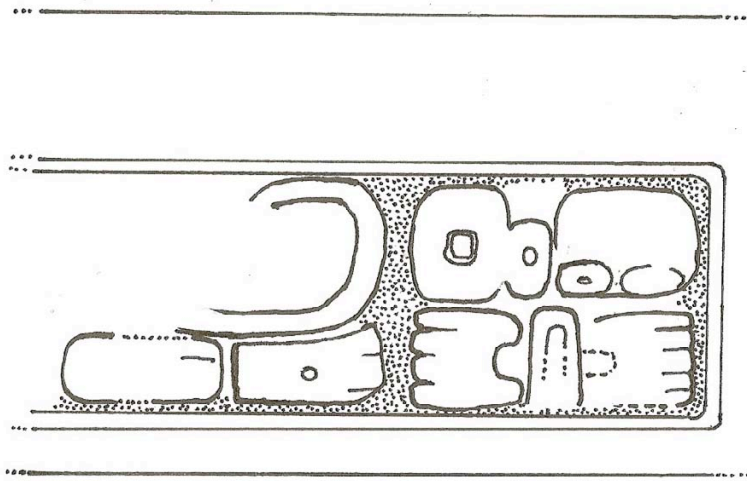


Figure 73. Drawing of two glyphs on Altar 9.

STELA 10/ALTAR 10

LOCATION: Stela 10 (Figure 74) is located in front of Str. V-c, ca. 26 m to the south of Stela 9. It is the southernmost of the five stelae positioned along the eastern side of the West Plaza.

Altar 10 is located ca. 1.0 m to the northwest of its stela, and appears to have been moved at some point from directly in front (west) of the stela.

SIZE: Stela 10 has a height of ca. 2.75 m above the ground surface, a width of 1.17 m at its front base, and is ca. 74 cm thick. The stela, when discovered, was leaning steeply toward the east and in danger of falling over.

Altar 10 is square in shape, ca. 1.14 m on each side, and ca. 37 cm tall. There are traces of red paint on it. Although Denison (1943:139) reported there were no carvings on Altar 10, a row of three or four glyphs is carved on its west side.

DATE: The Initial Series date on Stela 10 is problematic in its content (see below). It is probable that the stela dates to the Late Classic period, and possibly to A.D. 751.

DESCRIPTION: The front (west) side depicts an “Old God”, or “Old God” impersonator in warrior pose (Figure 75). He holds a spear topped by a large point, and

a shield, in his hands. The shield has a design on it that in part seems to be the “star” or “Venus” glyph. He is shown in profile, and his right leg is raised. His posture indicates movement, as in attacking, or in a war dance. This “Old God”, it appears, fought on the side of Oxpemul. No apparel is presently visible on the figure, except a bit of footwear. The squarish rendering of his eye is suggestive of the eye associated with the Sun God. If so, it would be additive to other apparent “Sun” or Sun God references at Oxpemul.

The left side of the stela (Figure 76) contains a Long Count date that is problematically stated. The coefficient of the *b’aktun* is destroyed, but is almost certainly “9”. The *b’aktun* is shown in a head-form. At the *k’atun* position is a non-standard configuration. The *k’atun* glyph, itself, is in standard symbolic form but it is curiously topped by a symbolic *tun* glyph which itself is surmounted by a bar-dot numeral. Two bars are present, and they are topped by two dots separated by a likely filler, as first observed by Denison, making the bar-dot numeral to be “12”. However, it is not clear what total value for the coefficient of the *k’atun* was intended by this unusual arrangement. Stela 17, in the East Plaza, has a similarly problematic arrangement for the coefficient at its *k’atun* position, but the sculptor’s intent there seems more transparent than is the case with Stela 10.

The *tun* position that follows is also somewhat problematic. It is topped by three bars, with two large dots centered above the bars. These two dots may or may not be part of the numeral. Denison considers the two dots to have been subfixes of the *k’atun* glyph above, rather than part of the *tun* glyph coefficient. In this regard, however, it is noted that neither the *tun* in the coefficient of the *k’atun* glyph above, nor the *tun* glyph in the *tun* position have dots/circles (-?ma) beneath them. Furthermore, the two dots are centered in the available space, suggesting the possibility that the numeral is either “17”, or “19” with the outliers destroyed. The text continues with 0 *winal*, 0 *k’in*, both in symbolic form, and terminates with a very clear 2 *Ajaw*.

The right side text (Figure 77) has six glyphs set in a column (B). Denison (1943:139) indicated there were only five. It provides at position B1 the final part of the Initial Series date which is a quite clear 13 *Sek*, indicating a Calendar Round of 2 *Ajaw* 13 *Sek*. This is the same Calendar Round date specified on the adjacent Stela 9 and suggests that the intended date for Stela 10 was the same as that on Stela 9, i.e., 9.16.0.0.0 2 *Ajaw* 13 *Sek* (May 5, A.D. 751). This would mean the scribe made a gross error in the details of the Long Count date on Stela 10, or else made some unrecognized manipulation resulting in a correct date.

The right side text then continues with a non-calendrical phrase. At B2 is the verb **TAB-[yi]**, *tabiy*, “ascended” or possibly “presented”. This verb is occasionally used to indicate the dedication of objects (including structures), and here possibly refers to the dedication of Str. V, or its sub-part Str. V-c, which is located directly behind Stela 10. This verb is sometimes followed by the proper name of the object that is being dedicated, and the badly damaged glyph at B3 may represent the name of the dedicated object. B4 appears to be a large phonetic **ta**, followed at B5 with phonetic **ja**, with an unclear subfix, possibly **-la**. B4 and B5, together, possibly produce **ta-ja-?l(a)**, *?tajal*, of several

possible meanings. A similar combination is possibly present in nominal phrases on Stela 2 (Grube 2005) and Stela 4. B6 seems to be an “upended frog head” (**ju**) with a **ya** postfix, possibly spelling ?**ju-ya**, ? *juy*, with unknown meaning. The glyphs at B4-B6 seem likely to serve as the name, or part of the name, of the individual who officiated at the dedication being commemorated by the text on this stela.

The rear (east) side of the stela appears to have been uncarved (Figure 78).

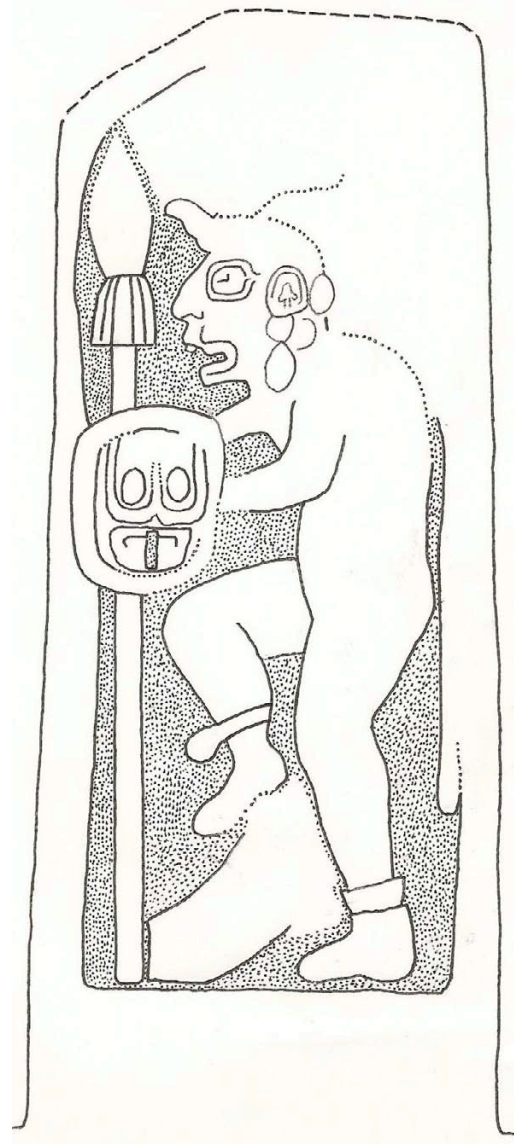
Altar 10’s top side is blank (Figure 79). There are several glyphs in the text on the western side of Altar 10 (Figures 80, 81), but the author does not have sufficient confidence about their number, and the break between the glyphs, to label them. What seems secure is the presence of the Oxpepul Stone Throne emblem glyph in the center of the text, although the *Ajaw* superfix is stated in an unusual manner. The dotted affix preceding the E.G. possibly is the adjective **CH’UHUL/K’UHUL**, *ch’uhul/k’uhul*, “holy”. If so, it would be the only such rendering, giving the Stone Throne E.G. the full emblem glyph statement typical of E.G.s at most sites in the Maya lowlands.



Figure 74. Photo showing Stela 10 and Altar 10 in front of the southern portion of Structure V. The text of the west side of Altar 10 is visible. This is a view to the east-southeast on July 25, 2007.



a

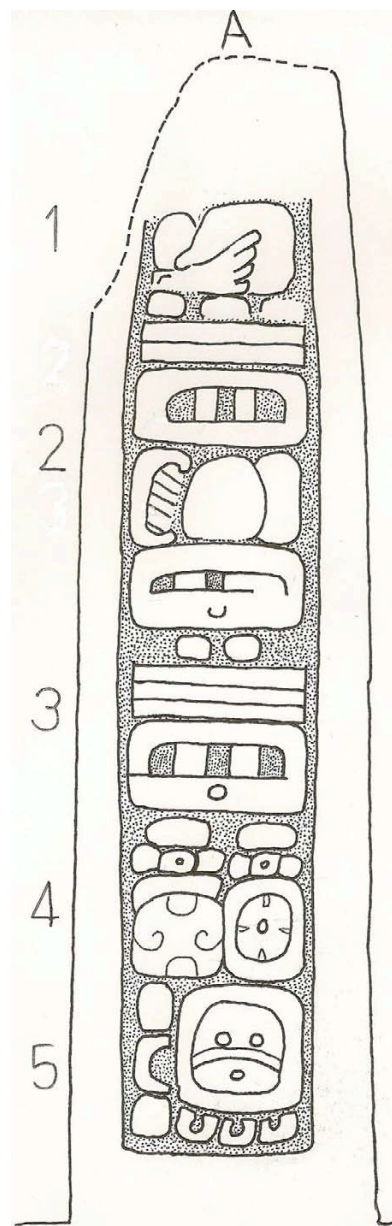


b

Figure 75. Photo and drawing of the front (west) side of Stela 10.



a

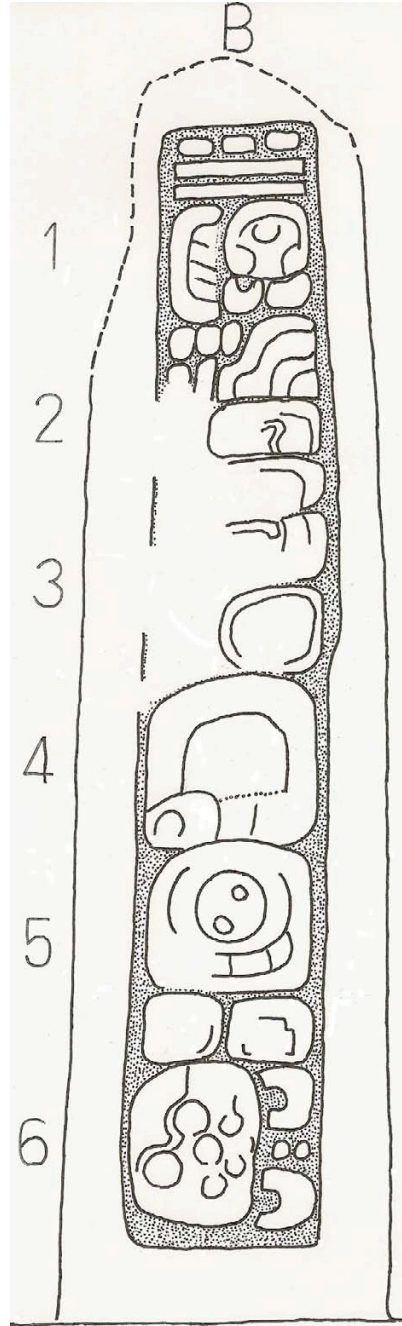


b

Figure 76. Photo and drawing of the left (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 10.



a



b

Figure 77. Photo and drawing of the right (south) side of Stela 10.



Figure 78. Photo of the rear of Oxpemul Stela 10, which is apparently blank.



Figure 79. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 10.



Figure 80. Photo of the text on the west side of Altar 10.

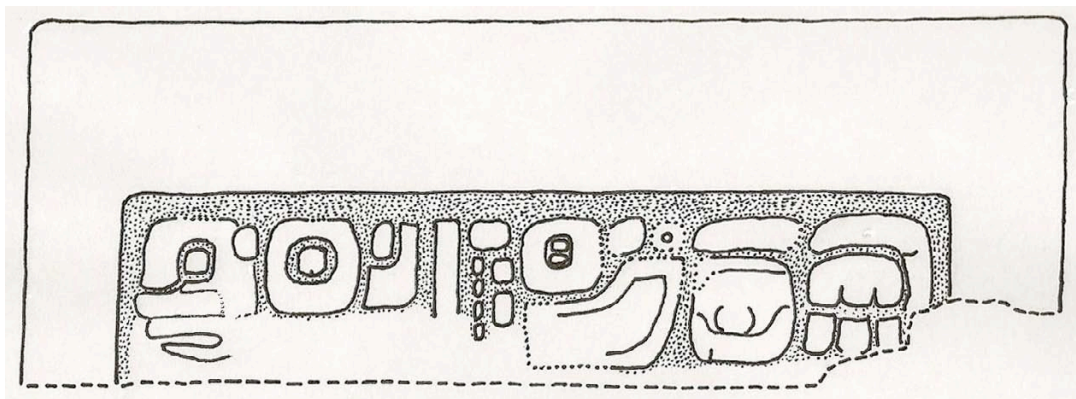


Figure 81. Drawing of the text on the west side of Altar 10.

ALTAR 19

LOCATION: This altar (Figure 82) was not cited in the official report of the CIW's visit to Oxpemul in 1934 (Denison 1943). During May 2004, Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel, a member of Dr. Sprajc's crew, noted its presence ca. 10 m south of Stela 4, and he was credited with discovering it. Subsequently, however, it was realized that Denison did detect this altar, and recorded its correct diameter, but only in his handwritten field notes (Denison 1934), making Flores Esquivel the "rediscoverer" of Altar 19.

SIZE: This circular altar is ca. 1.2 m in diameter and 46 cm high.

DATE: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: This altar appears to have been blank.



Figure 82. Vertical view of Altar 19. It was recorded in Denison's unpublished handwritten notes, but never published by the CIW. It was rediscovered in May, 2004, by Fernando Atasta Flores Esquivel of Ivan Sprajc's reconnaissance crew. It appears to have been blank.

ALTAR 20

LOCATION: This altar (Figure 83) in the West Plaza was not detected by the Carnegie expedition in 1934. It is located ca. 1.5 m to the east of Altar 19, and was covered by brush and not detected at the time of the rediscovery of Altar 19 in 2004. It was first noted by my assistant Antonio Montejo Sanchez of the UAC crew in July, 2007. There is a slight possibility that it is a fragment of Altar 19, rather than being a separate altar, and it should be re-examined in the future to determine if this is the case.

SIZE: Altar 20 is currently irregular in shape, and ca. 82 cm long on each side. It has a height of ca. 38 cm.

DATE: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Altar 20 appeared to have been blank.



Figure 83. Photo of Altar 20.

ALTAR 21

LOCATION: Altar 21 (Figure 84) is located somewhat into the interior space of the West Plaza at a point that is ca. 33 m north of the front edge of the centerline stairway of Str. VI. It is also ca. 15 m west of the front face of Str. V.

SIZE: Altar 21 is circular-to-ellipsoidal in shape, with its east-west axis being slightly longer than that the north-south one. It is generally well preserved, and ca. 1.1 m in diameter, and 46 cm high.

DATE: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Altar 21 was not detected by the Carnegie expedition of 1934. It was discovered on July 30, 2007, by Carmen Morales Cruz, who was one of my primary two assistants. It appears to be in its original position, undisturbed by looters. At the time of its discovery, it was resting with ca. 25 cm of its height below the topsoil. Since it was presumably resting upon the surface of the West Plaza at the time of the site's abandonment, it appears that a ca. 25 cm thick humic (top soil) stratum accumulated at this location since Oxpemul's abandonment. Altar 21 appears to have been blank.

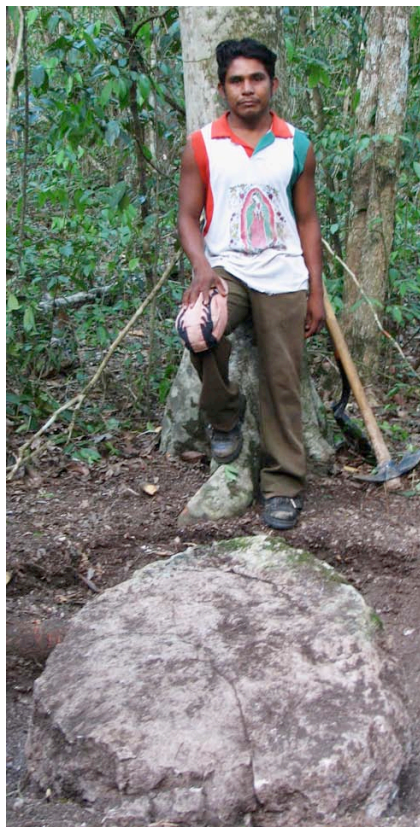


Figure 84. Photo of Altar 21 in the West Plaza with its discoverer Carmen Morales Cruz of the CIHS-UAC team.

Monuments in the East Plaza of Oxpemul

STELA 11/ALTAR 11

LOCATION: Stela 11 (Figure 85) is located on the north side of the East Plaza, in front of the “range” structure, Str. XI, somewhat to the west of the structure’s centerline.

Altar 11 is located ca. 1 m in front of Stela 11, and appears to be in its original position.

SIZE: The stela is ca. 3.4 m tall, ca. 1.10 m wide, and 64 cm thick at the base.

Altar 11 is circular in shape, 1.57 m in diameter, and 56 cm tall. A tree is currently growing on the altar and splitting it.

DATE: 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Mol (June 26, A.D. 741). This is the same date that is on Stela 13.

DESCRIPTION: The front (south) side (Figure 86), and the lateral faces of Stela 11 (Figures 87, 88) are carved. The rear side (Figure 89) is blank.

The front is badly damaged but an individual holding a spear (right hand) and shield (left hand) is partially visible. There are feathers in his headdress. His head seems to be turned toward the viewer’s left (to the west). He appears to have each foot pointing outward (Late Classic style). His body faces directly forward toward the viewer.

The left side text has seven glyphs arranged in a column (A). It begins with a badly damaged ISIG, followed by 9.15.10.0.(0) 3 Ajaw. The *b’aktun* glyph is a head glyph, followed by symbolic variants for the rest. This date is equivalent to June 26, A.D. 741. Stela 13, also in the East Plaza, displays the same date as Stela 11.

The right side text begins at B1 with the day of the month, 3 Mol, completing the date started on the west side as 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Mol. B2 appears to be a form of the verb **U-CH’AM-?**, *u ch’am-?*, “he takes/receives it”, with its suffix not fully defined. The name of the ruler performing the action of the verb likely begins at B3. That name begins with **ya-**, but the mainsign and suffix of the glyph are not fully present. This ruler will be referred to as “Ruler A” (see the description of Stela 13 below). The remaining several glyphs on the east side, although faintly visible in a CIW photo, are virtually totally destroyed today.

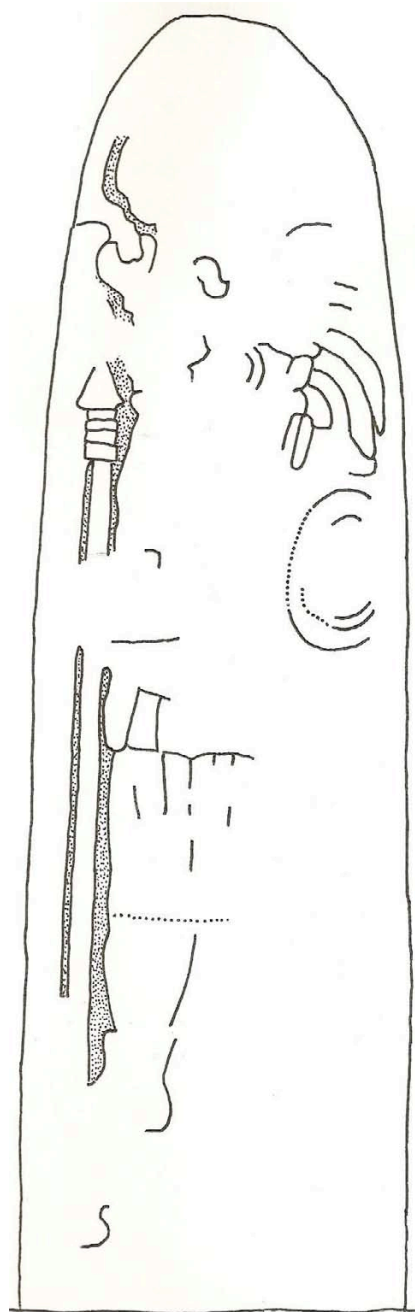
The rear of Stela 11 is blank, and Altar 11 (Figure 90) was blank on its side, but possibly had a carving on top.



Figure 85. Photo showing Stela 11 and Altar 11 in front of the range structure, Str. XI. A view to the north-northeast on July 23, 2007.



a

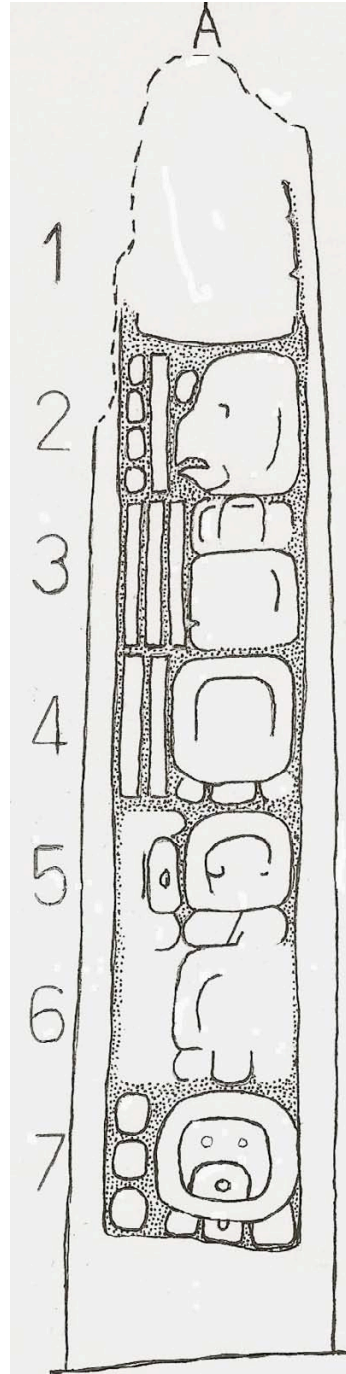


b

Figure 86. Photo and drawing of the front (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 11.



a

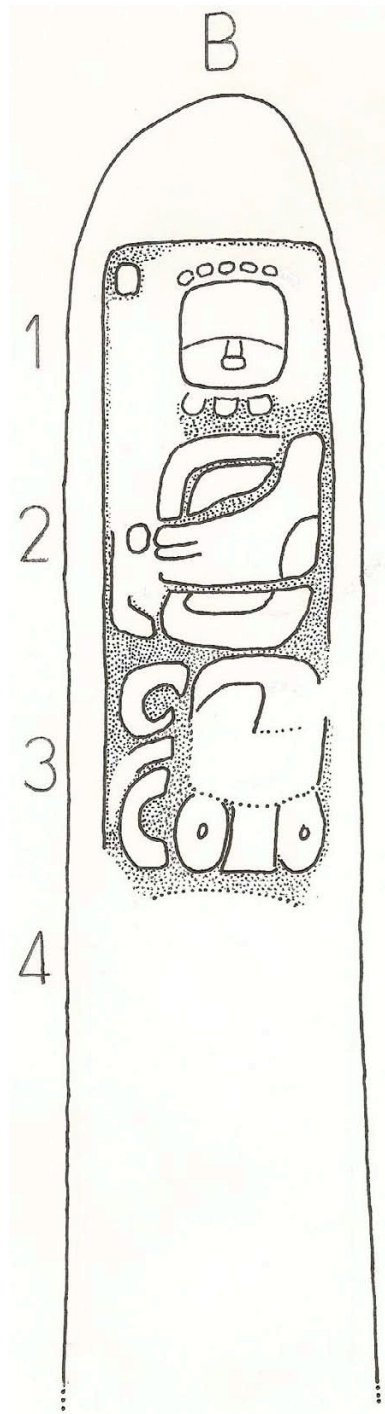


b

Figure 87. Photo and drawing of the left (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 11.



a



b

Figure 88. Photo and drawing of the right (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 11. Only the upper 2/3s of the stela is shown---the balance is severely damaged.



Figure 89. Photo of the rear (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 11, which was blank.



Figure 90. Photo of Oxpemul Altar 11.

STELA 12/ALTAR 12

LOCATION: Stela 12 is situated on the eastern side of the East Plaza, near the northern edge of a probable stairway ascending Str. XII (Figure 91). Stela 13 is symmetrically positioned on the south side of this stairway. The Str. XII complex, which contains three courtyards of masonry-vaulted structures on its east side, is believed to have served as a residential area (palace) for the rulership of Oxpemul. Almost directly across the East Plaza to the west of Stela 12 is Stela 17 which may carry an identical date to that on Stela 12. Located between Stela 12 and Stela 17, in the middle of the East Plaza, is a ball court that Ruppert and Denison 1943:52) did not explicitly identify as such. During the 2007 field season, we noted that Stelae 12, 13, and 17 would have been visible to an observer standing in the playing alley of the ball court.

Altar 12 is positioned ca. 1 m to the front of the Stela 12.

SIZE: Stela 12 is ca. 3.0 m tall, 1.03 m wide at its front base, and 58 cm thick.

Altar 12 is circular in shape, with a diameter of ca. 1.45 m, and a height of ca. 48 cm. It does not appear to have been carved.

DATE: 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax (August 18, A.D. 731)

DESCRIPTION: The front of Stela 12 (west side) depicts an elaborately dressed ruler standing in the typical Late Classic period pose, with his feet pointed outward (Figure 92). He wears a large feather headdress that has an animal skull in it. Rather atypically, the ruler does not hold anything in his hands. Instead, his hands are arranged in an expressive gesture that suggests he may be in movement, possibly dancing.

The rear (east) side text opens the Initial Series date with a large ISIG standing in isolation (Figure 93). The patron of the month component is destroyed. Below it, at a distance, is a separate text consisting of two glyphs arranged vertically. They are discussed below. Denison (1943:140) noted that the rear side appeared to have faint glyphs, but he did not describe them. He did not recognize the ISIG present there.

The Initial Series date begun with the ISIG on the rear side is completed on the left side as 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax (August 18, A.D. 731) (Figure 94). This is the earliest firm Long Count date known at Oxpeñul. It is stated in seven glyphs (B1-B7) and not in eight, as indicated by Denison, who apparently believed the ISIG was stated at the top. Head variants were used for the *b'aktun* and *k'atun* positions, with their coefficients being on top. Symbolic variants were used for the *tun*, *winal*, and *k'in* positions, with the coefficient for the *tun* being on top, and on the left side for the *winal* and *k'in*, contrary to Denison's (1943:140) comment that they were above.

The text continues on the right side with a non-calendrical statement arranged in a single column of seven glyphs (Figure 95). Glyph C1 is likely a verb, possibly a "dedication" verb. An alternative possibility is that C1 reads **U MUKNAL**, *u muknal*, "his burial", indicating that the person cited below is buried nearby. At C2 is the beginning of the name of a ruler. The first glyph in the name has **AJ**, *aj*, "he", prefixed to a mainsign that is destroyed. The presumed second part of the name, at C3, consists of the face of an Old God, with an infixed **K'IN** glyph as his eye. Subfixed below the head is the title **K'INICH**. This ruler can be nicknamed as "*Aj K'in K'inich*". (Also, see Grube 2005:95, who recognized the connection of this ruler's name to the "Sun".) At C4 is the Oxpeñul "Stone Throne" emblem glyph, indicating that he is a ruler of Oxpeñul. Skipping the glyph at C5 for the moment, the glyph at C6 is clearly the **YAL**, *yal*, "child of (mother)" relationship glyph, which is typically preceded by the name of the son, and followed by the name of the mother. The mother's name, or the first part of her name, is at C7 where the female head, **IXIK**, has **-?ki** as a phonetic complement. The postfix here resembles the **AJAW** shape, suggesting that this glyph reads **IXIK-ki AJAW**, *Ixik Ajaw*, "Lady Ahaw". The positioning of the glyph at C5, after the E.G., and before the *yal* relationship glyph suggests the possibility that it modifies the "Stone Throne" E.G. in some way. The situation here is similar to that previously noted concerning the text on the rear of Stela 7. It is possible that C5 is the *Uxte'tuun* toponym associated with Calakmul, as suggested by Nikolai Grube (2005:94-95), however, the mainsign of C5 is gone, and undefined. See the *Emblem Glyphs* section of the "Discussion" chapter at the end of this report for further consideration of this issue.

The two glyphs on the lower right side of the rear of Stela 12 (Figure 93) are hypothesized to be a continuation of the mother's name which started at C7 of the south side text. D1 is possibly a female head. D2 has a prefixed numeral four, but is otherwise unrecognized.

Stela 12, thus, provides the image of a ruler, and a date in the late summer of A.D. 731. The text contains the name of this ruler of Oxpepul, "*Aj K'in K'inich*". The ruler's mother, "Lady Ajaw", is identified, along with some unrecognized information about her. As noted earlier, Stela 17 possibly carries the same date as Stela 12, and is thought to contain a reference to the same ruler.

Altar 12 appears to have been blank (Figure 96).



Figure 91. Photo showing Stela 12 and Altar 12. A portion of Structure XII palace mound is visible in the background. A view to the east on July 23, 2007.



a



b

Figure 92. Photo and drawing of the front (west) side of Stela 12

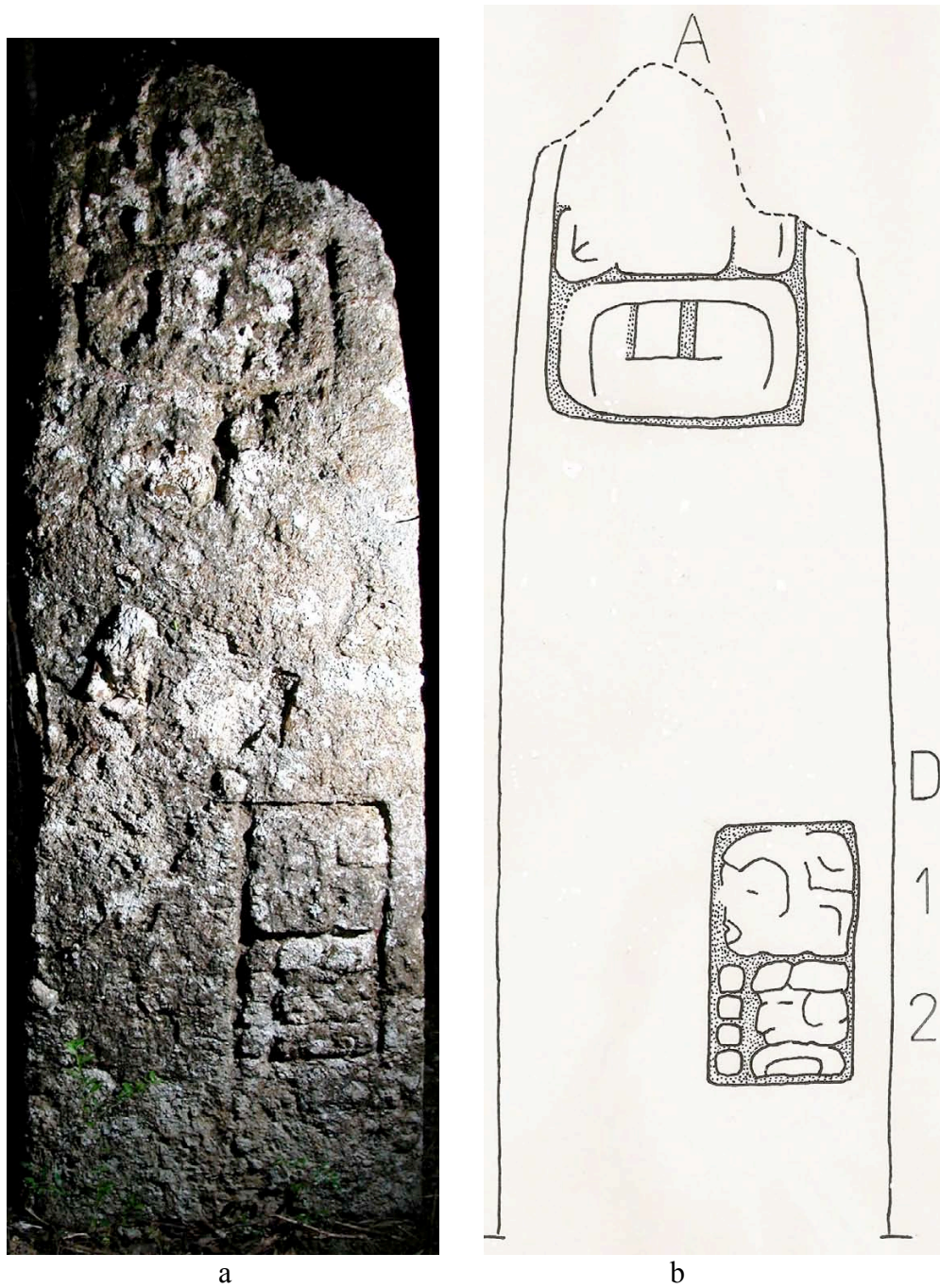
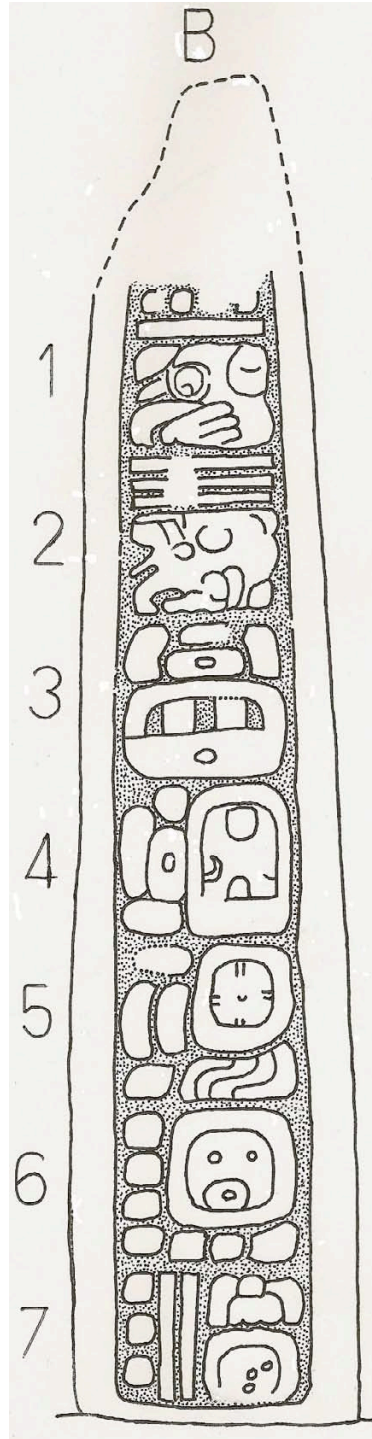


Figure 93. Photo and drawing of the rear (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 12. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



a

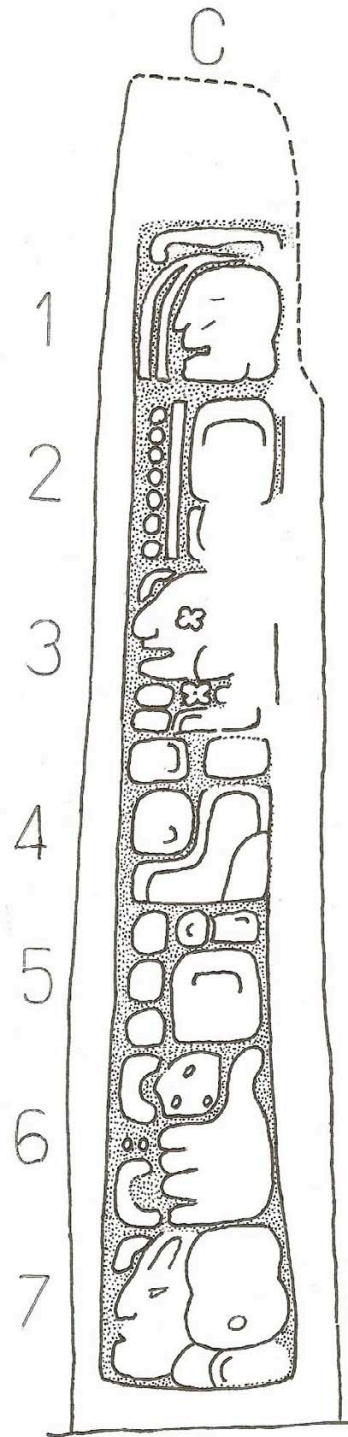


b

Figure 94. Photo and drawing of the left (north) side of Stela 12.



a



b

Figure 95. Photo and drawing of the right (south) side of Stela 12.



Figure 96. Photo of blank Oxpemul Altar 12.

STELA 13/ALTAR 13

LOCATION: The fallen and broken Stela 13 is positioned on the south side of the centerline stairway ascending Str. XII from the west (Figure 97). Stela 13 is located symmetrically to Stela 12, which is on the north side of the stairway.

Altar 13 is broken in two, and located ca. 1 m from the original front base of Stela 13.

SIZE: The stela's total height is estimated to have been ca. 3.15 m, its width at its front base ca. 1.21 m, and its thickness ca. 90 cm. Stela 13 fell toward the west, over the altar, and broke into three large pieces prior to Ruppert and Dension's 1934 visit. The CIW crew moved the top two fragments in order to see their hidden sides.

Altar 13 is square in shape, and ca. 1.66 m long on each side, and ca. 62 cm tall. A portion of the west side of the altar has broken off from the main body.

DATE: 9.15.10.0.0 (June 26, A.D. 741), the same as the date on Stela 11.

DESCRIPTION: Due to the exigencies of fieldwork, we did not turn or otherwise

move the fallen fragments of Stela 13 during the 2007 field season, and they remain as left by the CIW team. Documenting of the hidden sides of these fragments is planned to be accomplished by the UAC project during 2010. The top two pieces currently have the front (west) side of the stela facing upward (Figure 98). Both display an array of feathers and other ornamentation, but the body of the ruler who is presumed to be depicted there is not clearly discernible.

Atypically, the rear (east) side of Stela 13 also contains an iconographic depiction, rather than having text or being blank (Figure 99). In this regard, Stela 13, looted Stela 15, and the newly discovered Stela 23, discussed below, are the only Oxpemul stelae to present iconographic material on both their front and rear sides. The rear side iconography of Stela 13 was only visible on the lowest fragment of the stela which has the rear side facing upward. The image there clearly shows the leg of an individual who is presented in profile, with his body facing to the viewer's right. He may be shown in motion, but there is not sufficient detail remaining to be sure.

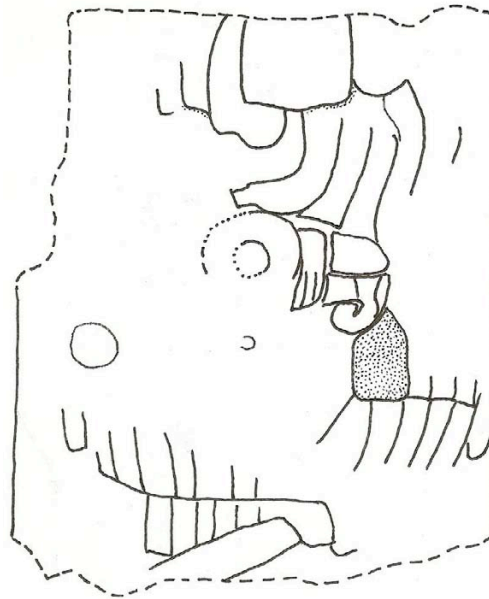
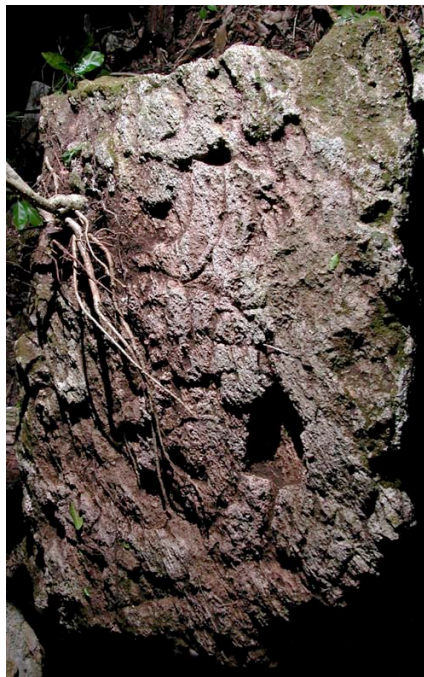
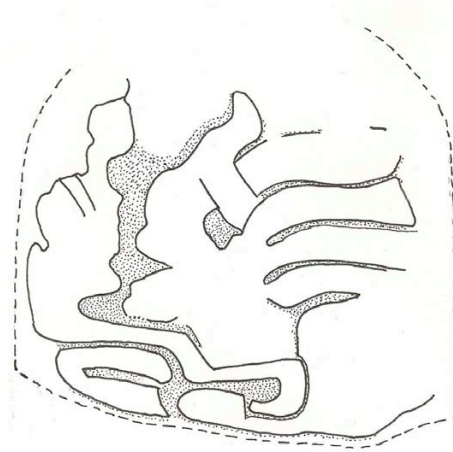
The left side (Figures 100, 101) has an Initial Series date arranged in a single column (A) of seven glyphs. A1 is a damaged ISIG. The ISIG patron of the month is destroyed. A2 has a damaged *b'aktun* glyph. The presumed 9 coefficient there is not fully evident. A3 is *15 k'atuns*. A4 has *10* for the coefficient of the *tun*. At the *winal* position, a clear "zero" is present, but the *winal*, itself, is almost all gone. The *k'in* and its coefficient, zero, are very faded. A "3" is prefixed to a now largely empty cartouche at A7 which must have contained the *Ajaw* glyph. The date is 9.15.10.0.0 3 Ajaw (June 26, A.D. 741), the same as that on Stela 11, making it virtually certain their texts both refer to the same ruler.

The right side (Figures 102, 103) appears to have had seven glyphs arranged in a single column (B). B1 and B2 are inscrutable. B3 has **2 AJAW** prefixed by what is possibly phonetic **ba-**. B4 is clearly **U CH'AM-ma**, *u ch'am*, "he takes/receives (it)". This is the same verb that is cited on Stela 11, and likely commemorates the same event. B5 is evidently a name that commences with **AJ**, *Aj*, "He". Unfortunately, the mainsign is not recognizable. It has **-ji**, or possibly **-yu** as a suffix. The glyph at B6 seems to be a bird-head with **-ni** postfixed to it. It is part of the name. The bird head, if that's what it is, is different than that in the name of a ruler cited at South Oxpemul on Stelae 18 and 19, dating to A.D. 756, and is not thought to be a reference to that individual. B7, badly damaged, may also be part of the name, or possibly a title. Unfortunately, what remains of the name on Stela 13, and that remaining on Stela 11, are damaged and incomplete. It is likely they present variants of the same name, that of the ruler depicted on both of them. Based on what can be recognized of his name, it seems to be different than the name, *Aj K'in K'inich*, cited on the preceding Stelae 12 and 17, and is therefore considered to be the name of a new ruler of Oxpemul. Until something more definitive comes along, he can be referred to as Ruler A.

Altar 13 is blank (Figure 104).



Figure 97. Photo showing three large fragments of fallen Stela 13, and rectangular-shaped Altar 13 (the light-colored stone behind the middle fragment of Stela 13). A view to the south on July 23, 2007



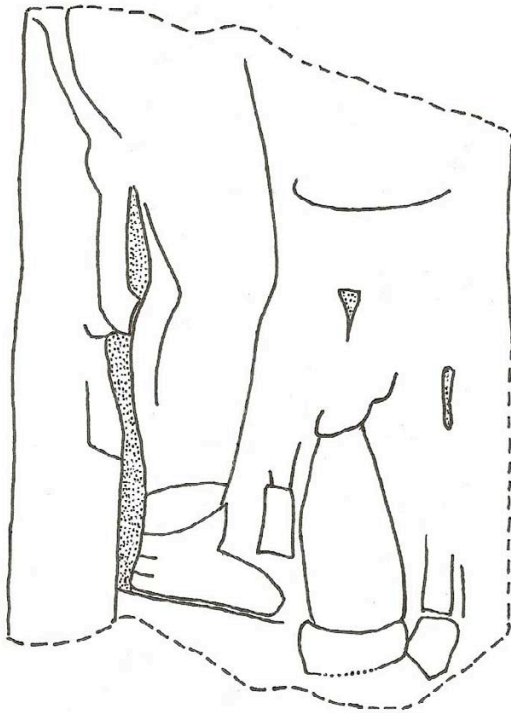
a

b

Figure 98. Photos and drawings of the front (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 13. The photos and drawings do not include the front side of the lowest fragment of Stela 13 which was not visible due to that fragment not having been overturned. (The bottom photo is courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc, Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts).



a



b

Figure 99. Photo and drawing of the lowest fragment of the rear (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 13. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Ivan Sprajc of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)



Figure 100. Photos of the fragmented text on Oxpemul Stela 13's left (north) side. The top glyph is the Initial Series Introductory Glyph. It is followed by an Initial Series Date.

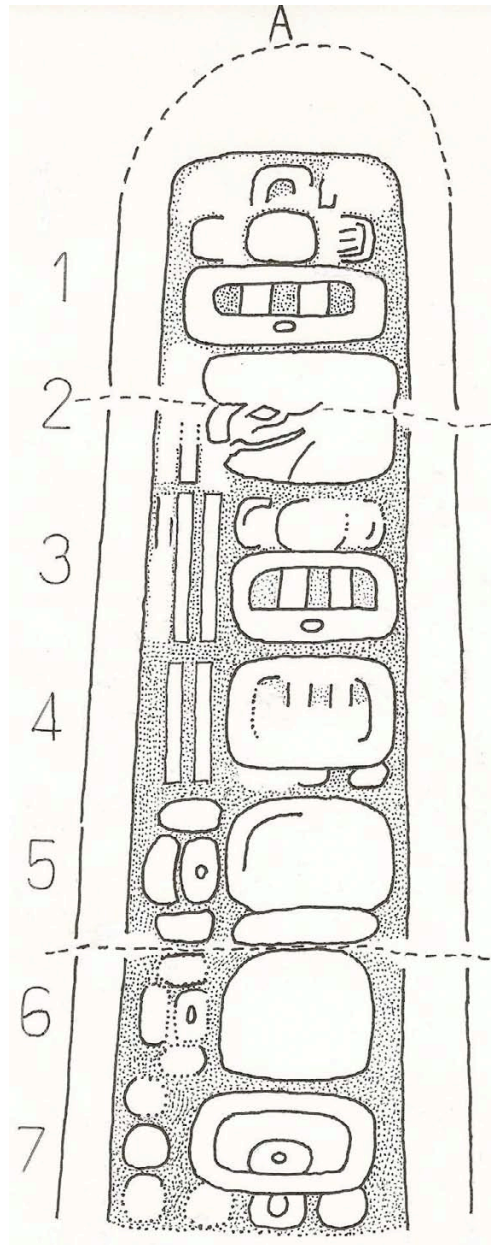


Figure 101. Drawing of the left (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 13. The horizontal dashed lines indicate the approximate points of fracture for the three large fragments into which Stela 13 broke when it fell before 1934.



Figure 102. Photos of the text on the right (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 13.

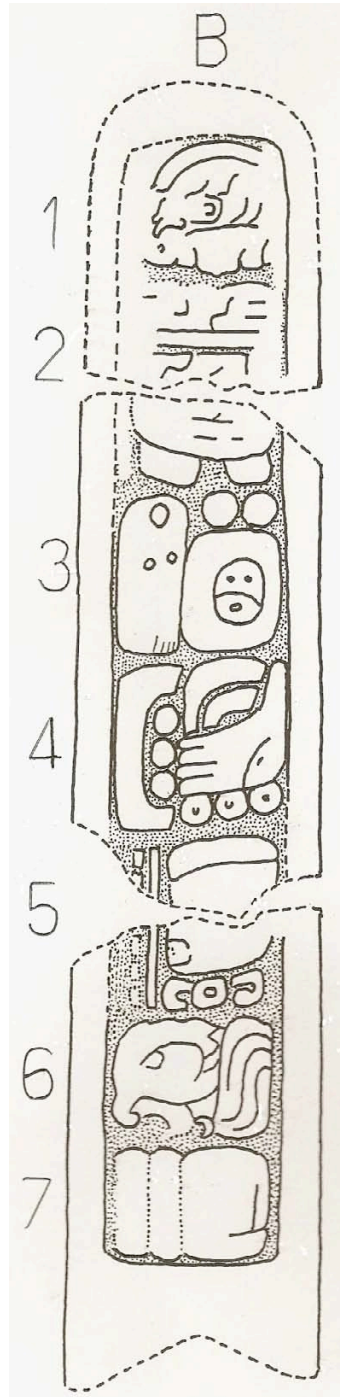


Figure 103. Drawing of the right (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 13.



Figure 104. Photo of rectangular Oxpemul Altar 13, with broken sections of Stela 13 visible at the upper left and right. This is a view to the north. (Photo courtesy of Dr Ivan Sprajc of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

STELA 14/ALTAR 14

LOCATION: Stela 14 stands in front of the eastern end of Str. VII (Figure 105). There is a little evidence that a low wall may have partially enclosed the stela, with its front side open. Str. VII forms the southern boundary of the East Plaza. Stela 16 is positioned symmetrically to Stela 14, on the west side of Str. VII. Stela 16 depicts a woman on its front side. She possibly is the spouse of the individual shown on Stela 14.

Altar 14 is positioned ca. 35 cm in front of Stela 14. It is fractured into several pieces, and some of it may be missing.

SIZE: Stela 14 is ca. 3.07 m tall, 1.01 m wide at its front base, and ca. 69 cm thick.

Altar 14 is circular in shape, 1.34 m in diameter, and 25 cm in height. It has a design on top of it, and a text on the side.

DATE: Damage due to erosion has rendered the Initial Series date on the stela's west side largely unreadable.

DESCRIPTION: The front side presents the figure of a presumed ruler of Oxpemul (Figure 106). Many details have eroded away, but what can be discerned of the position

of his body indicates that he is shown in profile, and in motion toward the west and Stela 16. He is wearing a headdress which encloses his face, faint details of which can be seen. He also has on some form of back-rack apparatus which extends from behind his head down to below the level of his feet. It is not clear if he is holding anything in his hands.

The right (west) side text has six glyphs arranged in a column (Figure 107). It contains an Initial Series date, beginning with an eroded ISIG at A1, but the remaining glyphs are badly damaged. If it follows the standard sequencing, there is only enough space to reach the k'in glyph, with the day and month being either unstated, or present elsewhere on the stela, or on the altar.

The rear (south) side has at least 8 glyphs (Denison says 10) arranged in two columns (Figure 108). Glyph 7D of the Lunar Series is sufficiently clear at position C1 to infer that calendrical data was presented on this side. It, thus, seems to follow in sequence after the Initial Series date stated on the right side. The balance of the glyphs here are badly damaged and unrecognized.

The left (east) side text, apparently non-calendrical in nature, has six glyphs in a single column (Figure 109) and seems to have followed in reading order after the rear side text. The glyphs at D1 and D2 are not clear, but may include a verb. D3 seems to be part of the name of the protagonist featured on the front of the stela, which continues on at D4. The name is not readable due to erosion. D5 is the Oxpemul "Stone Throne" emblem glyph, and D6 seems likely to be the title *bakab*.

The top of Altar 14 is fractured and badly damaged but the lower part of a seated person or deity is still discernible on it (Figures 110, 111). In this it seems similar to the images on the tops of Altars 15 and 3, possibly a *Pawaj tun* figure. Altars 14 and 15 are symmetrically placed with regard to Str. VII. Both of these altars have the seated figure facing toward the east.

Six glyphs are still visible on the side of this altar (Figures 112, 113, 114). It is possible that one additional glyph was present at the start of the text. Given this possibility, the labels for these glyphs are provisional. The glyphs at pA and pB are largely gone. At pC is the "seating" verb **CHUM**, *chum*, here apparently without affixes. This verb tends to be associated with accessions to the throne of a polity. Commonly it is followed by something akin to "in the succession of lordship". The following glyph at pD may be such a statement but it is not fully preserved. At pE seems to be a glyph which features a bat-head that may function as the name of an individual. The final glyph is undoubtedly the Stone Throne emblem glyph of Oxpemul.

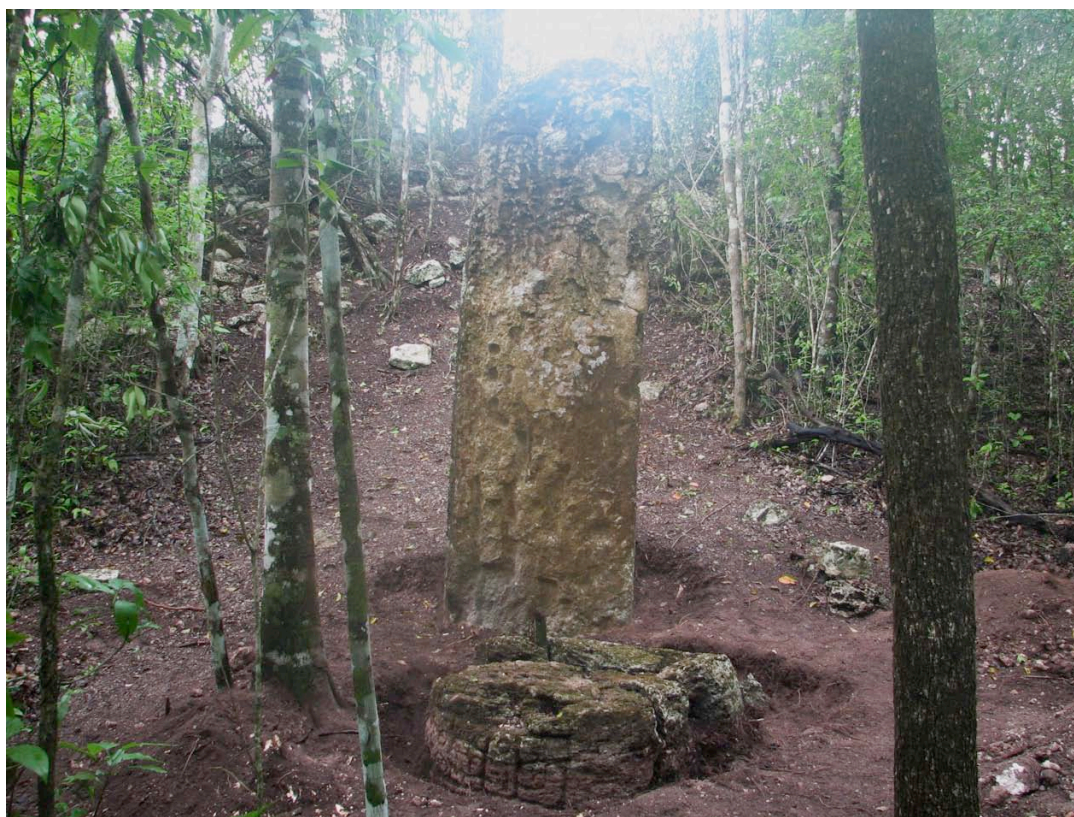
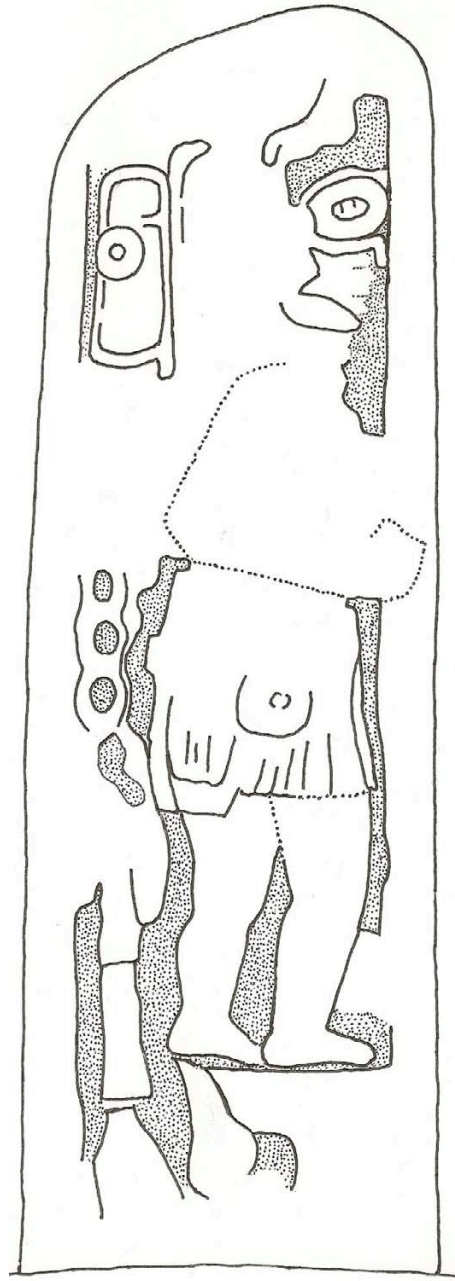


Figure 105. Photo of Stela 14 and Altar 14, in front of Structure VII. A view to the south on July 24, 2007. A portion of the text on the side of the altar is visible.



a



b

Figure 106. Photo and drawing of the front (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 14.

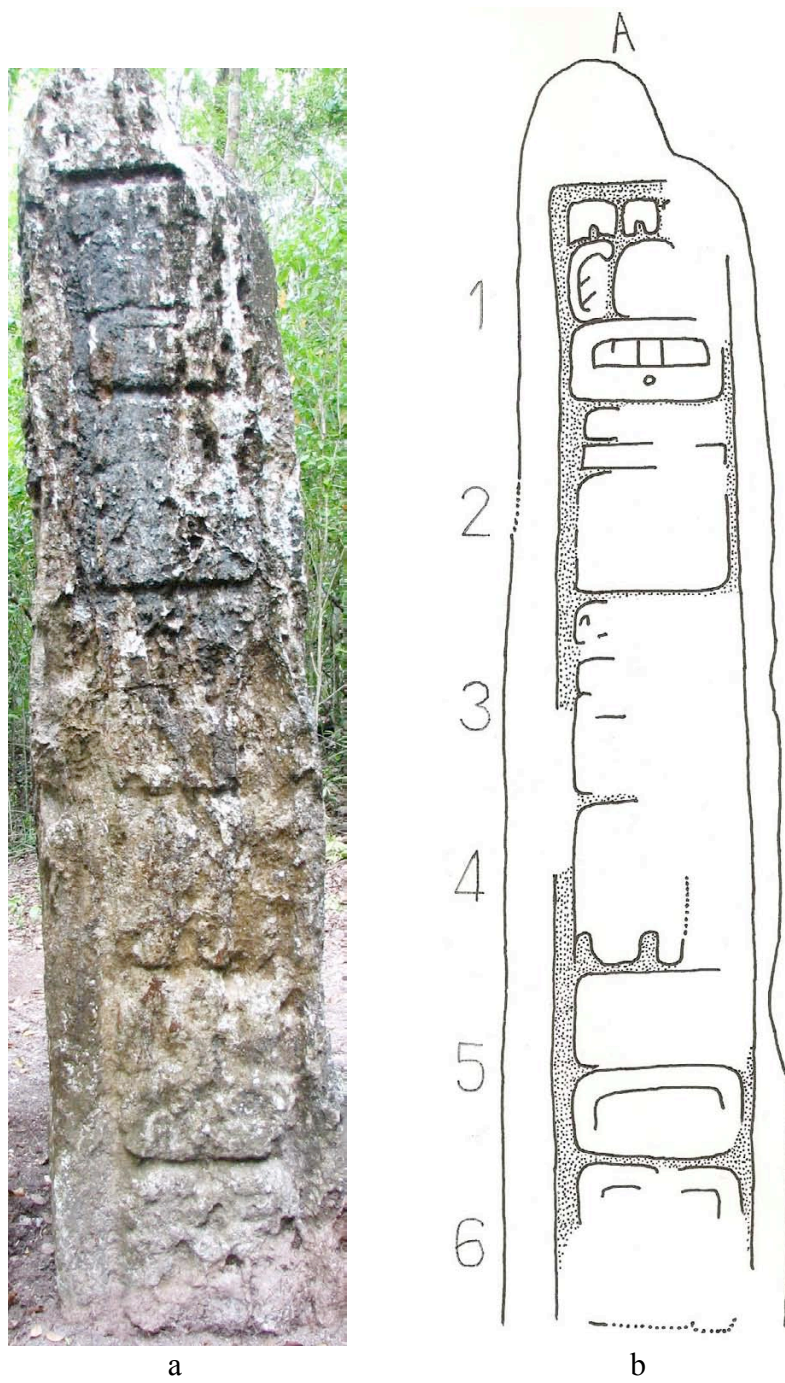
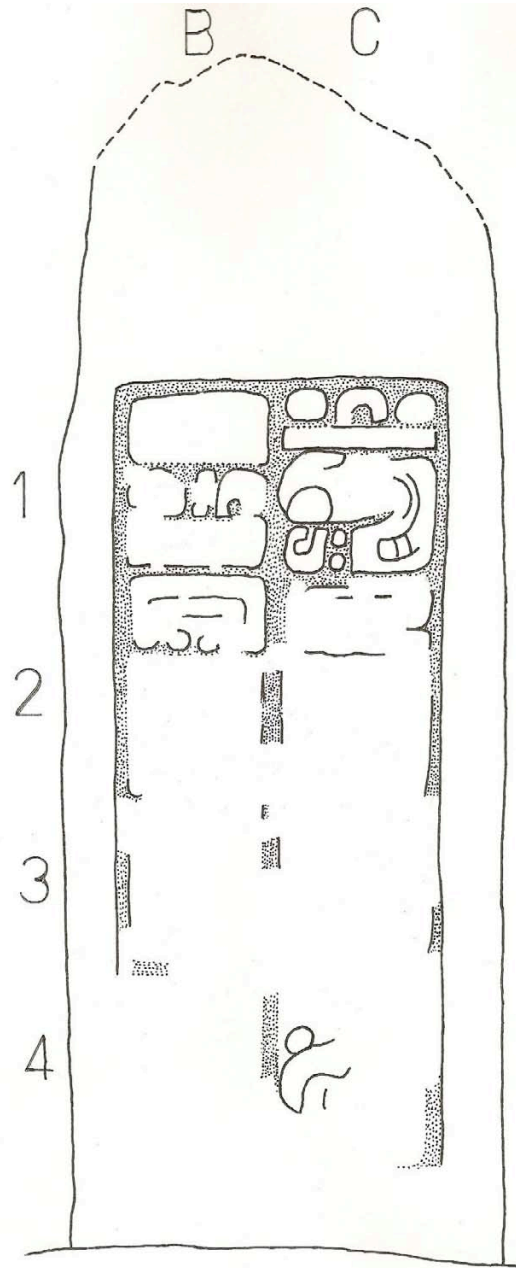


Figure 107. Photo and drawing of the right (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 14.



a

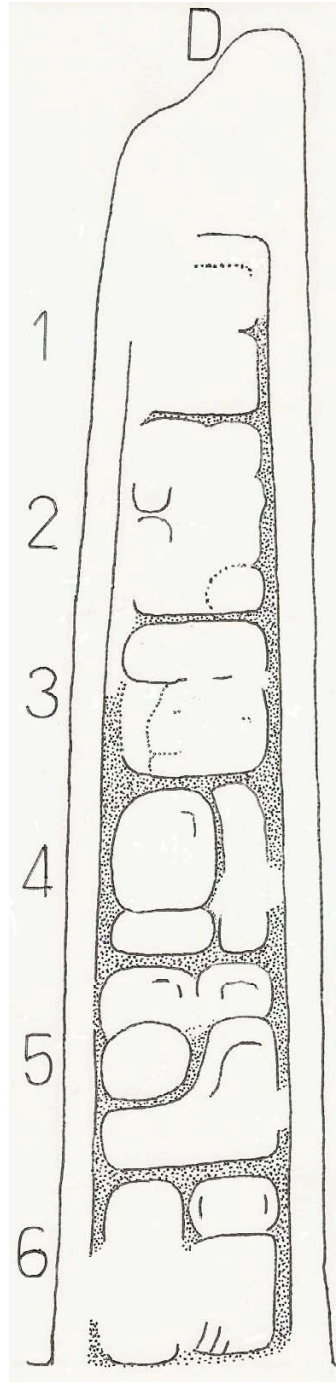


b

Figure 108. Photo and drawing of the rear (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 14.



a



b

Figure 109. Photo and drawing of the left (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 14.



Figure 110. A view of the top of Oxpemul Altar 14.

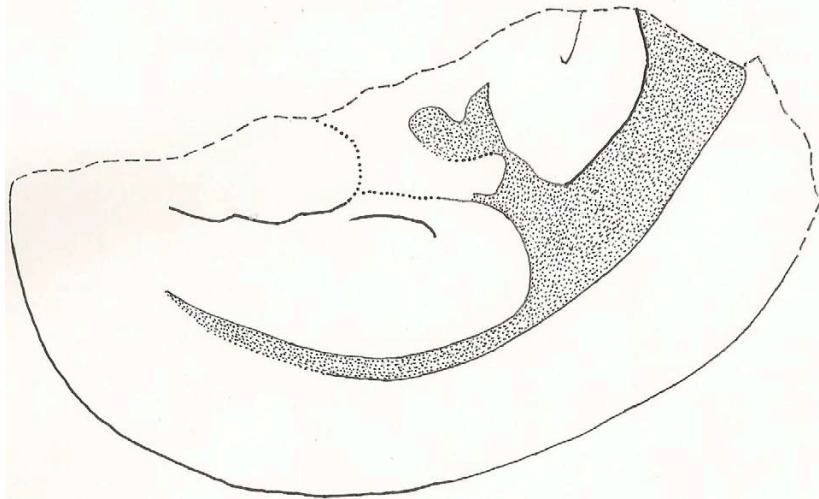


Figure 111. Drawing of the best preserved section of the top of Oxpemul Altar 14.



Figure 112. Photo of the glyphs at pC, pD, and pE on Oxpemul Altar 14.



Figure 113. Photo of the glyphs at pD and pE on Oxpemul Altar 14. Glyph C is also faintly visible on the left.

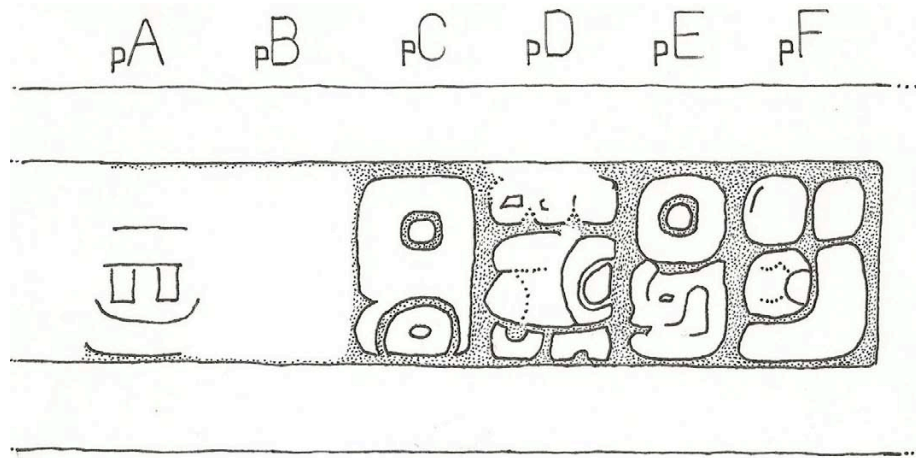


Figure 114. Drawing of the text on the side of Oxpemul Altar 14.

STELA 15

LOCATION: According to the map generated in 1934 (Ruppert and Denison 1943), Stela 15 was originally located in front of, and very near the western edge of the stairway that ascends Str. VII from the East Plaza.

There was no altar associated with Stela 15.

During our field work in 2004, 2007, and 2008, this stela was not observed, and it is believed that it was removed by thieves.

SIZE: Denison (Ruppert and Denison 1943:141) indicates this fallen stela was considerably smaller than most stelae at Oxpeul, being only 1.42 m tall, 60 cm wide, and 27 cm thick. (See the discussion of Stelae 20 and 21 below, which are also small.)

DATE: Unknown, but possibly from the Terminal Classic period, near the time of abandonment, given the rather crude style of carving on the front and rear of Stela 15. In this regard, Stela 15 bears some resemblance to Calakmul Stela 50 which apparently dates to the Terminal Classic period (Martin and Grube 2000:115). Oxpeul Stela 20, discovered nearby in 2007, is similarly small in size, and rather crude in style.

DESCRIPTION: Denison provided a photograph of the front of Stela 15 (Ruppert and Denison 1943:Plate 56b), and it is the basis of the author's drawing of Stela 15 (Figure 115). It depicts a warrior-like figure bearing a spear and a shield. He is shown facing to his right, and wearing a large headdress that includes a bird mask and many feathers, some embellished with ball shapes at their tops. He bears a large ornamental object on his chest. Denison (1943:141) offers the following statement about this stela: "The carving is crude and shows a great absence of details compared to the other monuments at this site." He reported that an unusual scene with a seated individual shown in profile was present on the rear of the stela. I have been unable to locate either a CIW photo or drawing of the rear side. The sides of this stela were plain (Denison 1943:141). There appears to have been no text on Stela 15.

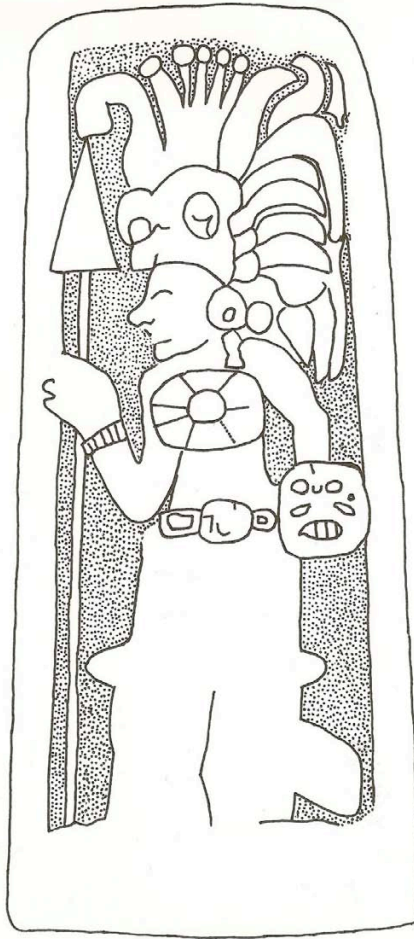


Figure 115. A drawing by the author of looted Stela 15 based upon a Carnegie Institute of Washington photograph (Ruppert and Denison 1943: Plate 56b). Its style suggests Stela 15 may date to the Terminal Classic period. Stela 15 was originally located in front of the west side of Structure VII.

STELA 16/ALTAR 15

LOCATION: Stela 16 (Figure 116) is located in front of the western end of Str. VII, symmetrically placed, opposite to Stela 14. It is also located approximately 12 m to the west of the CIW mapped position of the now looted Stela 15. Stela 16 broke and fell toward the north prior to Ruppert and Denison's 1934 visit. The stela today is on the ground, laying in a ca. east-west line, with its front side facing upward. This position indicates it was moved by the CIW from the position to which it originally fell. During the 2007 field season of the CIHS-UAC field season, we rotated Stela 16 on to its right

side in order to document the rear of the stela. Afterwards, the stela was returned to the position in which it was found.

Altar 15 is ca. 1.0 m to the east side of the butt of Stela 16. The altar has been moved from its original position just to the north of the stela, as shown in the site map (Ruppert and Denison 1943).

SIZE: Stela 16 is estimated to have been ca. 3.0 m tall, 1.1 m wide, and ca. 41 cm thick.

Altar 15 is circular in shape, ca. 1.15 m in diameter, and ca. 42 cm tall. It has a design on top, and two glyphs on its side. Denison (Ruppert and Denison 1943:Plate 56e) published a picture of the top of Altar 15.

DATE: Probably the Late Classic period, based upon the stance of the person depicted on Stela 16's front side.

DESCRIPTION: Denison (1943:141) considered Stela 16 so deteriorated that he did not provide any description of it other than its dimensions. However, there is sufficient detail surviving to suggest that the person depicted on its front side (Figure 117) was a woman, based upon the length and form of the garment worn (see, for comparison, similarly attired women depicted in Marcus (1987:143,151,166, 168-169)). She is wearing a feather headdress, and gazing to the east (to her right), toward the locations of Stelae 15 and 14. Her feet were pointed outward, in the Late Classic period style. Based upon the symmetrical positioning of Stelae 14 and 16, it is possible that they present a husband and wife pair. Marcus (1987:137-148) has documented a number of stela pairs at Calakmul that memorialize royal husband-wife pairs.

A highly eroded text with six glyphs arranged in a single column is present on the stela's right side (Figure 118). The last glyph, at A6, has a well-defined U prefix, and an indiscernible suffix. The mainsign is possibly K'IN, *k'in*, "sun". If so, it would render U K'IN, *u k'in*, "his sun", a possible name, or part of a name, that is present elsewhere at Oxpeñul. The balance of the text is too deteriorated to recognize any of the glyphs. The column designation for this right side text, A, does not imply that it was the first text to be read on the stela. Damage to the left side, and the rear side texts precludes making any assessment of reading sequence among the texts.

The east (left) side probably also carried a text but it has mostly broken off, and is not discernable (Figure 119).

Night-time, controlled-light photographs suggest the rear side of Stela 16 had two columns of glyphs arranged in at least four rows (Figure 119). They are badly damaged and eroded, and none of these glyphs are recognizable. The rear of the butt of the stela (still in the ground) may have traces of the lowest glyphs of the rearside text. There are currently no drawings of the rear or east sides of Stela 16.

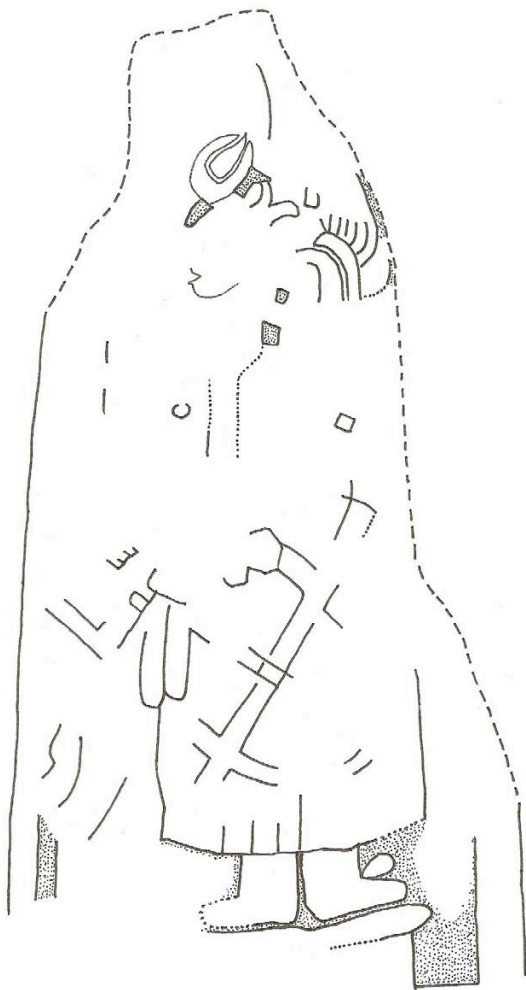
Altar 15 has a design on its top, and two glyphs on its side. The altar top presents a seated figure who has his arms raised, as in holding up something (Figures 120, 121). He wears a mask. Grube (2005:95-96) reasonably identifies this figure as a *Pawaj tun*. The text on the side of the altar has only two glyphs (Figures 122, 123). Grube (2005:95) has read the first glyph as being a “Bat” emblem glyph. The bat head is severely damaged, but, indeed, seems to be just that. The second glyph, also badly damaged, has been identified by Grube as the *kalo’mt’e* title, which it possibly is. The Bat emblem glyph is also present on Stela 2 and Altar 6. The only firmly dated appearance of this Bat E.G. at Oxpeñul is that on Stela 2, which dates to A.D. 771. Altars 6 and 15 are also believed to date to the Late Classic, based upon style criteria relating to their associated stelae.



Figure 116. Photo showing the butt of Stela 16 at the lower left, and Altar 15 to the right of the stela butt. The fallen main part of the stela lies at the foot of project members (from left to right) Carmen Morales Cruz, Antonio Montejo Sanchez, Siriaco Requena Sandoval, and Gonzalo Gomez Jimenez (guard). A view to the north on July 24, 2007.



a

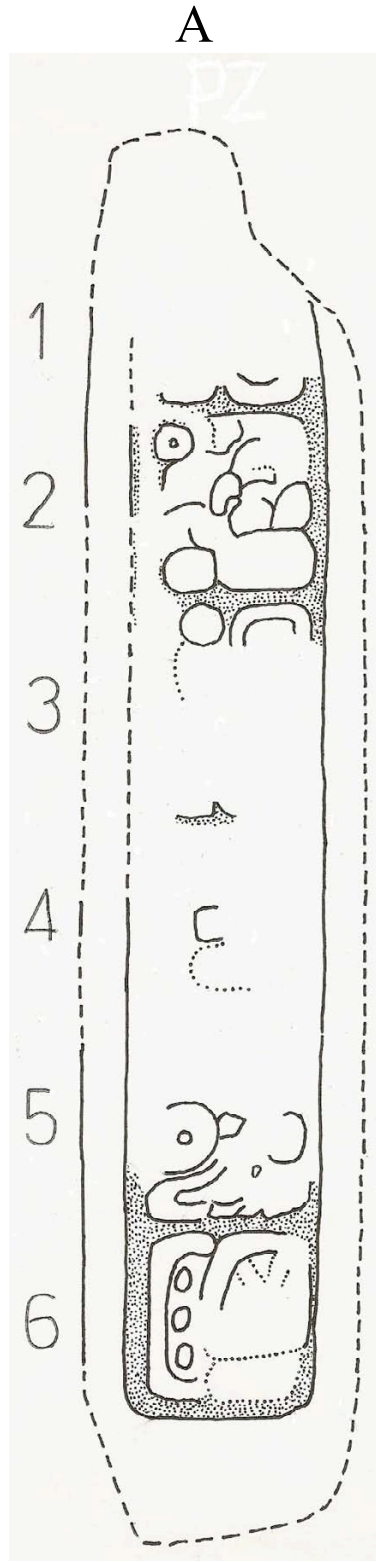


b

Figure 117. Photo and drawing of the front (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 16. Based upon the costume worn, the protagonist appears to have been a woman.



a



b

Figure 118. Photo and drawing of the right (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 16.



a



b

Figure 119. Photos, respectively, of the rear (south) and left (east) sides of Stela 16.



Figure 120. Photo of the top of Oxpemul Altar 15 on July 31, 2007.

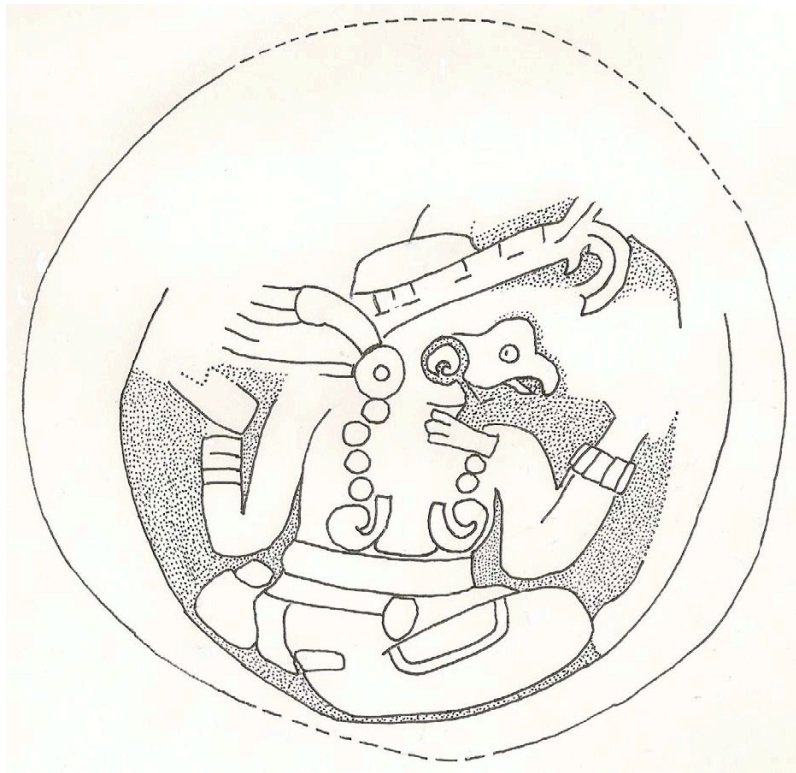


Figure 121. Drawing of the top of Oxpemul Altar 15.



Figure 122. Photo of the two-glyph long text on the side of Altar 15.

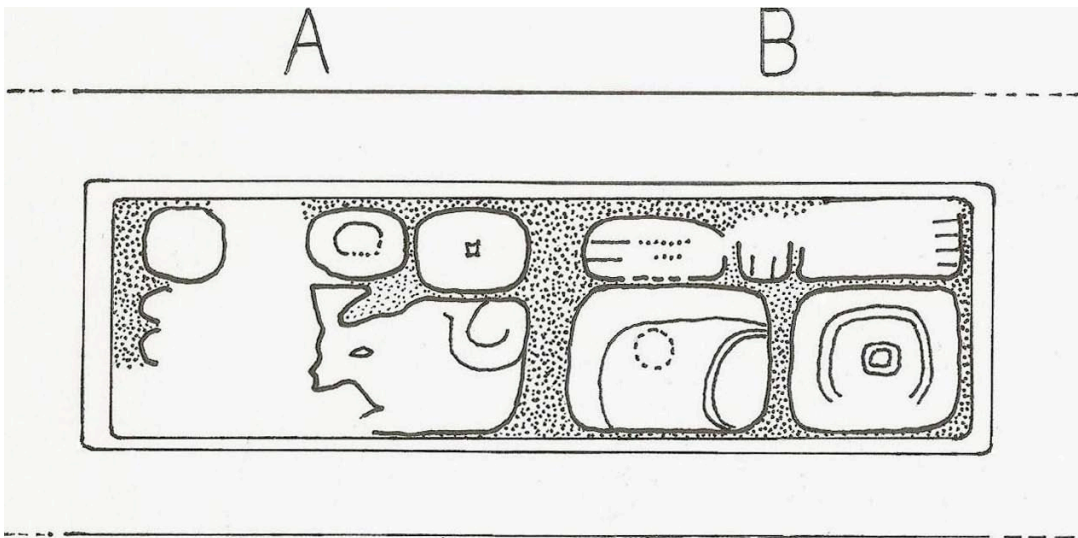


Figure 123. Drawing of the text of Oxpemul Altar 15.

STELA 17/ALTAR 16

LOCATION: Stela 17 (Figure 124) is located near the center of the western side of the East Plaza. It is in front of the stairway leading up the structure that is the eastern component of Str. VI (Note: The “eastern component” of Str. VI actually appears to be largely a separate entity from Str. VI, and is associated with the East Plaza, rather than the West Plaza. It consequently probably deserved a different designation).

Altar 16 is located ca. 70 cm to the southeast off Stela 17 and has been moved by unknown persons from its original position directly in front of the stela, as it is shown in the 1934 CIW map.

SIZE: Stela 17 is ca. 3.43 m in height, 1.21 m in width at its front base, and 45 cm thick. Red paint is still present in many places on this stela.

Altar 16 is circular in shape, 1.35 m in diameter, and 48 cm high. It appears to be blank. Part of its side is missing.

DATE: While problematically stated on the stela, it seems confidently datable to 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax (August 18, A.D. 731), which is the same as the date stated on Stela 12.

DESCRIPTION: The front (east) side depicts an elaborately dressed and ornamented male (Figure 125). He has two animal head masks in his headdress, and they are surmounted by a large arrangement of feathers. The protagonist here is memorialized as a warrior, and shown armed with a spear and small shield, as well as standing atop a prisoner.

The rear (west) side includes an isolated, very large ISIG (A) at its top (Figure 126). The variable patron of the month element of the ISIG is the “star” glyph associated with the month Yax. It indicates that the Initial Series date on the stela’s south side ends with a day in the month Yax. Below the ISIG, at a distance, are four glyphs (D1-E3) that represent a totally different text (see below). Stela 17 and Stela 12 are the only two of the 23 stelae at Oxpehum to have the ISIG standing in isolation at the top of the rear side of the stela, with a separate short text located some distance below the ISIG, near the right edge.

The Initial Series date on the left side (Figure 127) has eight glyphs arranged in a column (B1-B8). At B1 is **9 B’AKTUN**. As noted by Denison, B2 and B3 comprise a non-standard statement of the *k’atun* value. The **K’ATUN** glyph at B3 is surmounted by what is apparently a **TUN** glyph that has a bar-dot numeral “**15**” above it, rendering the value of the *k’atun* coefficient problematic. Whether the scribe made an error with the coefficient of the *k’atun*, or made some not understood, but proper adjustment at the *k’atun* position is not clear. At B4-B6 the balance of the Long Count date is stated: **0 TUN, 0 (WINAL), and 0 (K’IN)**. Following these at B7 where the T’zolkin day is expected is the coefficient **4** with a destroyed mainsign which must be that of **AJAW**, based upon the period ending nature of this Long Count date. At B8 the remnant of a coefficient that is **13**, or less likely **18**. The mainsign is gone. Denison (1943:141) concludes, and I agree, that the B8 mainsign represents the *Haab’* month. Based upon the ISIG patron of the month being that of the month *Yax*, the month stated at B8 must be *Yax*. 4 Ajaw 13 Yax is the associated Calendar Round date for the Long Count date 9.15.0.0.0, providing strong support for the inference that this was the date intended. Denison states unequivocally that the date is 9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax (August 18, A.D.

731), the same date as on Stela 12. The preponderance of evidence supports that view.

The right side has eight glyphs arranged in a single column (Figure 128). The uppermost glyph at C1 is now totally destroyed. The glyph at C2 is somewhat better preserved but still unrecognizable. C3 appears to be the **NIK**, or ?**MIJIN**, (“decorated ajaw”) relationship glyph for “child of (father)”, where typically the offspring’s name is cited before the relationship glyph, and his father’s name after. Thus, the offspring’s name would be stated above at C2, and possibly also at C1. The father’s name is surmised to start at C4 and it appears to continue through C7. The father’s name begins with a glyph containing **K’IN**, *k’in*, “sun”, and ends with the face of an Old God that resembles the Old God face in the ruler’s name on Stela 12, which had a *k’in* glyph infixed as his eye. The father carries the **K’INICH** title, indicated by the suffix of C7, as does the ruler on Stela 12. At C8, following the father’s name, is **AJAW (of the) “Stone Throne”**, indicating that the father was a ruler of Oxpemul. The similarity of the names on Stela 12 and Stela 17, and the likely identical date of Stelae 12 and 17, make it probable that the father cited on Stela 17 as being ruler, is the same individual cited as ruler on Stela 12. Therefore, he will be referred to by the same nickname, “*Aj K’in K’inich*”.

Glyphs D1-E3 on the rear side appear to represent a stand-alone text (Figure 126). It ends with the Oxpemul Stone Throne E.G. at E3. D1 has the numeral 3 prefixed to an ill-defined glyph. At E1 is a bat-head which is best defined in a 1934 CIW photograph. E2 is not clearly recognizable. One might conjecture that D1 is the *Uxte’tuun* glyph (Grube 2005), but again, it is too ill-defined to be certain. The bat-head at E1 is possibly a reference to the individual cited on Altar 14.

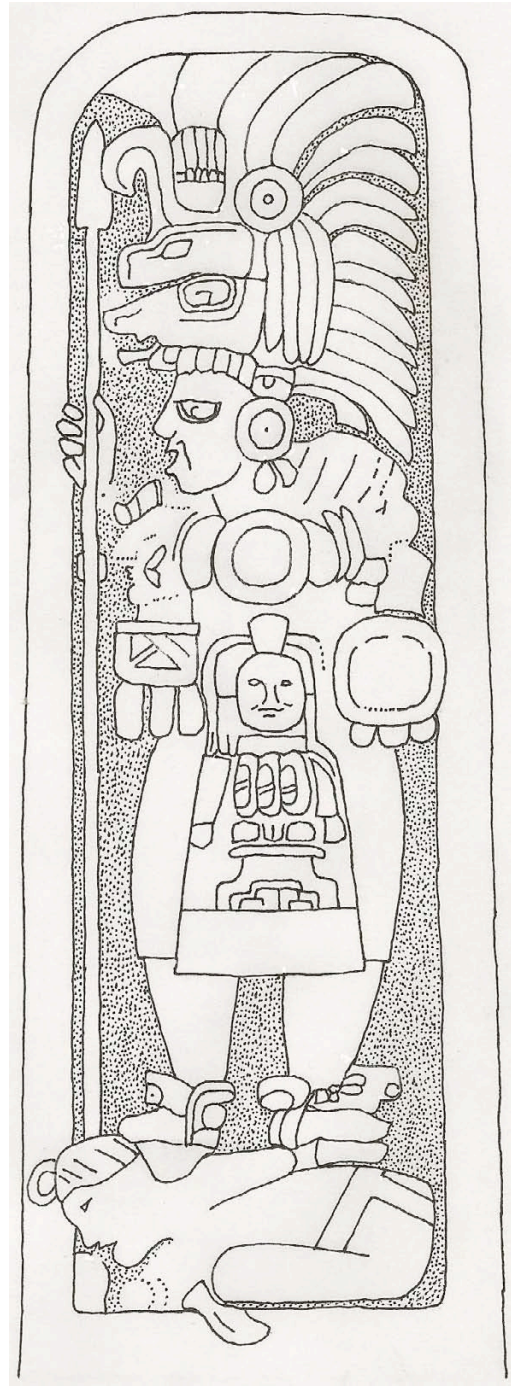
Altar 16 is blank (Figure 129).



Figure 124. Photo showing Stela 17 and Altar 16, with the lower slope of the eastern wing of Structure VI in the background. A view to the west on July 25, 2007.



a

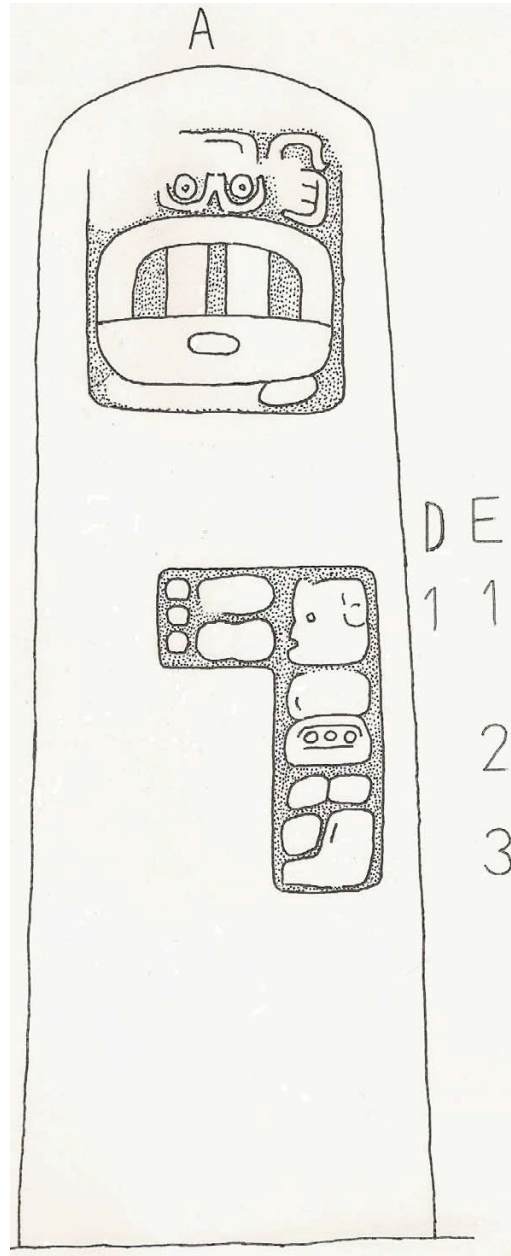


b

Figure 125. Photo and drawing of the front (east) side of Oxpemul Stela 17.



a

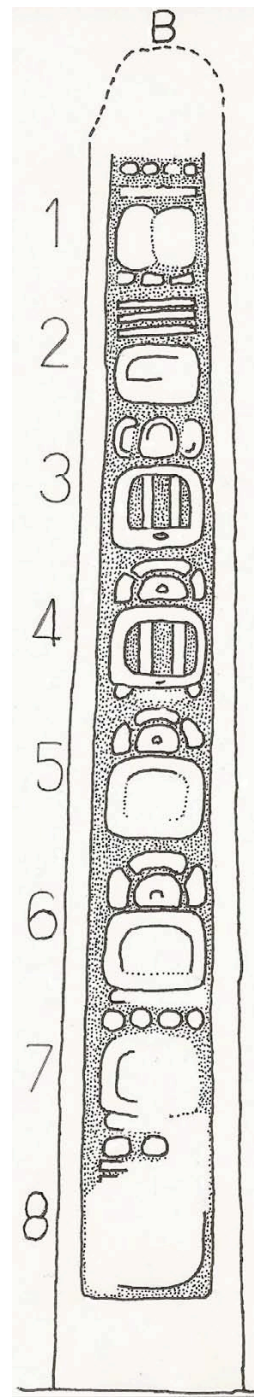


b

Figure 126. Photo and drawing of the rear (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 17. At the top is the Initial Series Introductory Glyph (ISIG). The Initial Series date, itself, is stated on the left (south) side of Stela 17. A separate text consisting of four glyphs is present in the middle section of the rear of the stela.



a

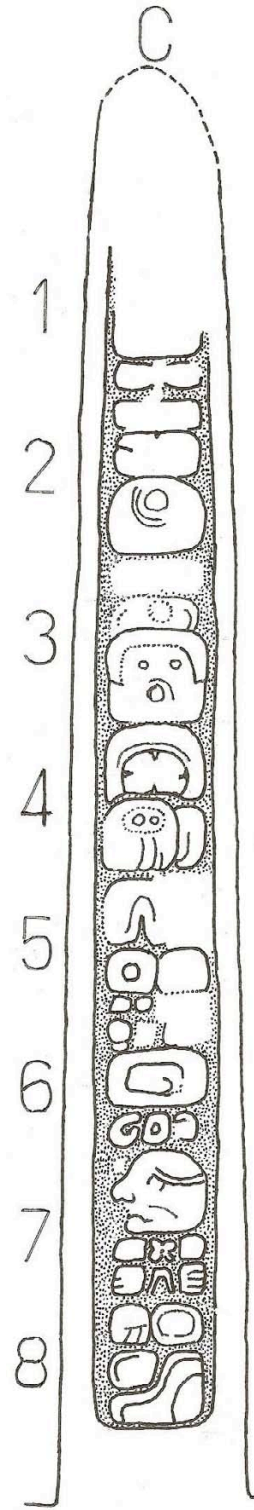


b

Figure 127. Photo and drawing of the left (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 17.



a



b

Figure 128. Photo and drawing of the right (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 17. The Oxpemul “Stone Throne” emblem glyph is clearly visible at the bottom of the text.



Figure 129. Photo of blank Oxpepul Altar 16. The base of Stela 17 is visible to the right.

STELA 20

LOCATION: This small stela, together with Stela 21, were discovered in 2007 by the UAC project near a looter's trench located on the south (rear) side of Str. IX, the southern structure of the Oxpepul Ball Court (Figure 130).

SIZE: Height ca. 1.15 m, width at base ca. 53 cm, width at top ca. 42 cm, thickness 27 cm.

DATE: Uncertain, but the crude style of depiction suggests it dates to the Terminal Classic period.

DESCRIPTION: Stelae 20 and 21 were discovered on August 3, 2007 by Oxpepul guard Neri del Rosario Requena behind Structure IX, the southern structure of the Oxpepul ballcourt. The ballcourt is located in the middle of the East Plaza. The stelae

were lying on the ground near each other, and near a looters' trench that penetrated Str. IX from its rear (south) side. It was not established as to whether the stelae were found by the looters within the structure, or were encountered near their present position outside of the structure.

Both of these stelae are in the approximate size range of the now looted Oxpemul Stela 15, which was discovered in 1934, and described by the Carnegie expedition as being only 1.42 m tall, 60 cm wide, and 27 cm thick (Denison 1943:141). Stela 15 was also located in the East Plaza., only ca. 40 m south of the ballcourt. Stela 20 appears to have been carved only on its front side, where the figure of a long-nosed human is shown facing to the viewer's right (Figure 131). He is holding a severed human head in his left hand. This hand with the head is extended outward into the frame that forms the boundary of the image. This person is wearing a headdress that is not fully defined. His lower right arm and hand are not clearly visible. The lower portion of the stela has broken off. The background area below the head is painted a distinctive and vivid orange-reddish color that is unlike the red that is widely present on other stelae at Oxpemul, and likely represents the blood of the sacrificed person. In this regard, it is relevant to note that CIHS-UAC researcher Dr. María del Rosario Domínguez Carrasco is conducting a scientific analysis of the different colors used to paint the Oxpemul monuments. The presence of the severed human head on this sculpture associated with the Oxpemul ballcourt recalls an interpretation of Mesoamerican rituals in which victorious Mesoamerican ball players at times decapitated the losers (Miller and Taube 1993: 44).

The style of the depiction on Stela 20 is crude, and the representation of the arms and the waist of the individual shown is similar to that on the now looted Oxpemul Stela 15 (Ruppert and Denison 1943: Plate 56b), and that on Calakmul Stela 50 (Martin and Grube 2000:115) which has been dated to the Terminal Classic period based upon that style. This suggests that Oxpemul Stelae 20 and 15 may date to the Terminal Classic period.

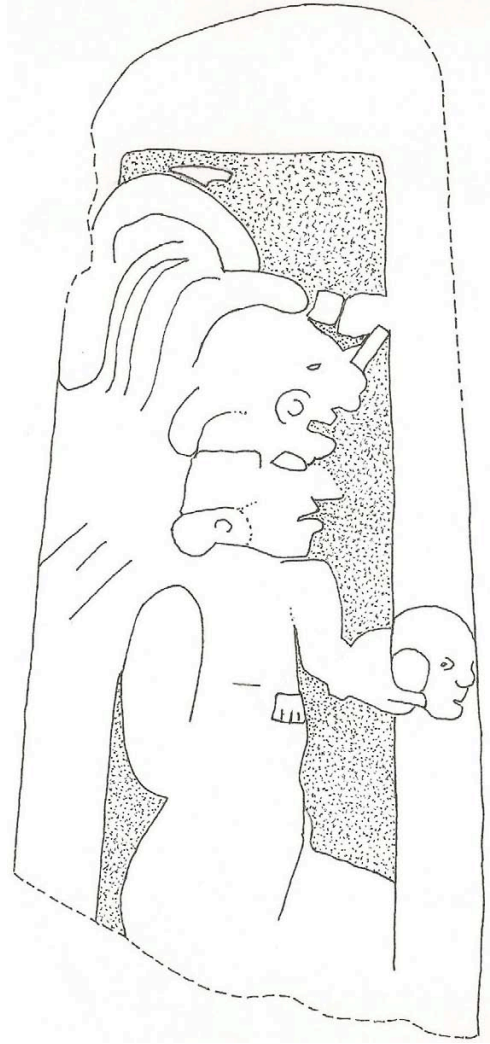
Finally, it is noted that a walk-around of the ballcourt structures by the author and Siriaco Requena Sandoval shortly after the discovery of Stelae 20 and 21 detected a number of sculpted stone fragments in the rubble of a looters' trench at the rear side of the ballcourt's northern structure, Str. X. These, apparently, are architectural decorative elements. They are described below, after the discussion of Stela 21.



Figure 130. Photo showing Stela 20 (center right) and Stela 21 (shown in two pieces to the lower left of Stela 20) on August 03, 2007, a few minutes after their discovery behind the southern structure of the Oxpemul ball court (in the background). The stelae were left in these positions by looters who sawed off the top of the Stela 21, and then cut the lower half into two parts and removed one of these. A looters' trench is present to the left of project member Antonio Montejo Sanchez. A view to the north-northwest.



a



b

Figure 131. Photo and drawing of the small Oxpemul Stela 20.

STELA 21

LOCATION: See the location provided above for Stela 20.

SIZE: Height ca. 1.3 m, width 50 cm at the bottom, and 54 cm at the top, thickness 35cm

DATE: Unknown

DESCRIPTION: Looters cut this small stela into upper and lower parts (Figure 132). Then one side of the lower part was sawed off, and apparently removed from the site. The remaining side of the lower part is carved, but badly eroded, and the nature of the carving is not clear. It is not known whether this side was the front or rear side of the stela. It is evident that the two lateral sides of Stela 21 had glyphic texts on them, but half of each glyph was removed by the looters, and what remains is badly eroded (Figure 133). Removal of the opposite side by looters suggests it was better preserved, and of more value to them.

The evidence that we have at the moment indicates that both of the small Stelae 20 and 21 served, like similarly sized Stela 15, as independently standing stelae, and not as tablets or panels embedded in the architecture of the ball court structures.



Figure 132. A photo of the two pieces of the front, or rear side of the small Oxpemul Stela 21. The opposite side of the lower piece was sawed off and removed by looters.



Figure 133. Photos showing the texts on the “left” (a), and “right” (b) sides of Stela 21. A portion of each glyph was cut off when looters sawed off the “rear” side of the Stela.

ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIVE ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH STR. X OF THE OXPEMUL BALL COURT

LOCATION: In the East Plaza of Oxpemul, within the rubble of a looter’s trench located behind Str. X, the northern structure of the Oxpemul Ball Court.

SIZE: The typical decorative element, as found, is ca. 25 cm X 20 X 1.5 cm in size. They are believed to be fractured remains of decorations present on Str. X.

DATE: The date of Str. X and the ball court is currently unknown, but see the comments concerning the date of Stela 20 above.

DESCRIPTION: When the small Stelae 20 and 21 were discovered on August 3, 2007, a walk-around examination of the ball court structures was made by the author and Siriaco Requena Sandoval, and the sculptured decorative fragments were noted among the rubble stone of a trench dug by looters on the north side of Str. X. Approximately 35 fragments are currently known. They have been left in the rubble context to be removed and studied in the future.

Most of the elements have a generally rectangular shape, with one or more straight edges present on most of them. This suggests they may have formed a frame, or border, for a larger depictive panel that may have been present on the exterior wall of Str. X, or in an interior space. The looters possibly cut or broke them off to gain access to the panel, or to lighten the load of what they hauled away. The motifs present on the examined elements include scrolls, flower-like designs, and angular shapes (Figure 134).

Given that the looter's trench encountered only a small section of Str. X's exterior wall, it seems likely that similar material remains intact on the balance of the wall, awaiting future controlled excavations to reveal it. The presence of these decorative elements, plus the fact that the small stelae, Stelae 20 and 21, were found adjacent to a looter's trench at the rear of the south structure of the ball court, Str. IX, points to the possibility that these ball court structures were rather ornate. They should be one of the foci of future excavations and research.

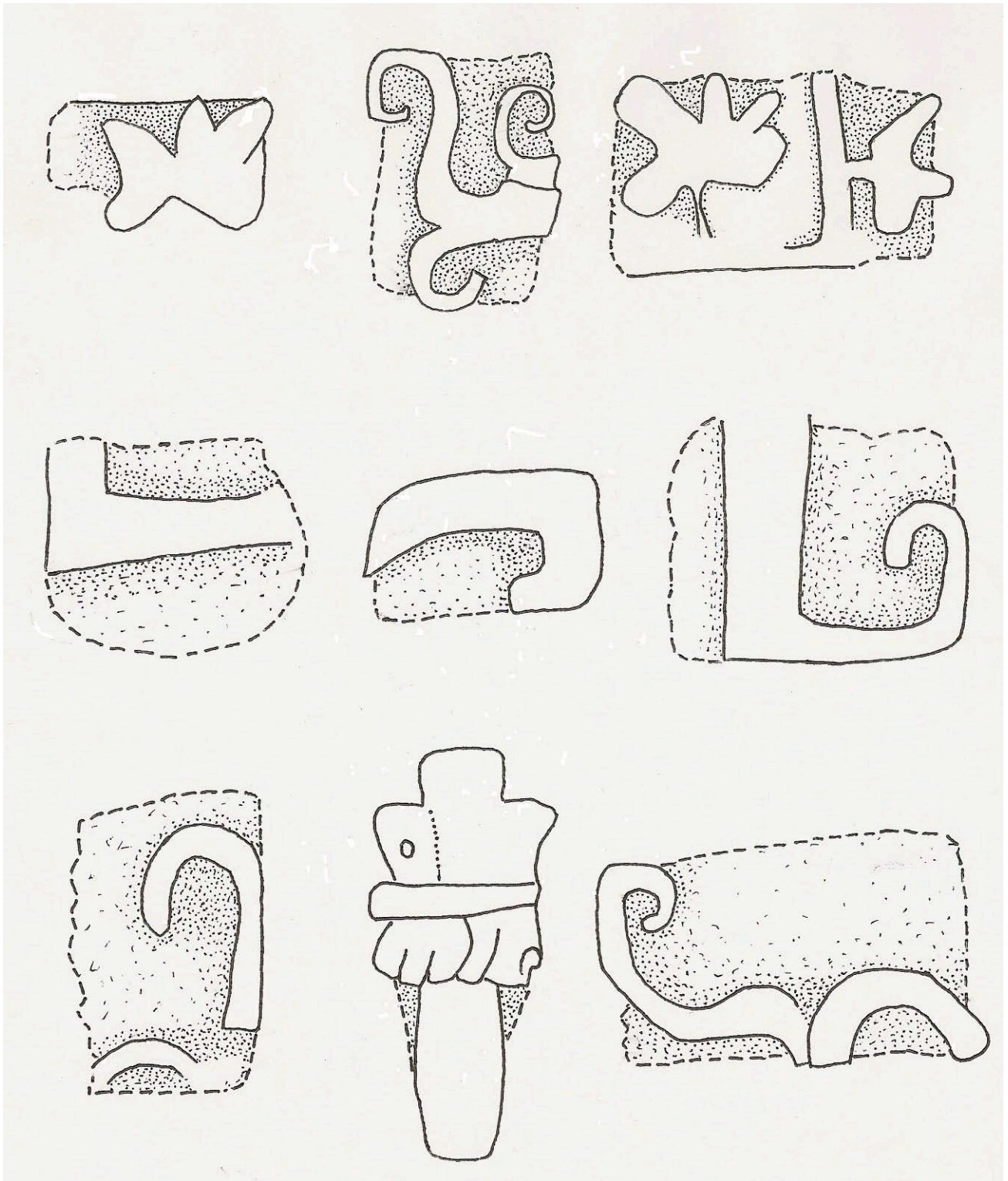


Figure 134. Drawings of a sample from approximately 35 architectural sculptured decorative element fragments. They were found in association with a looters' trench behind the north structure of the Oxpemul Ball Court. The typical element is ca 25 cm X 20 cm X 1.5 cm in size

Monuments Located at South Oxpemul

STELA 18/ALTAR 17

LOCATION: At South Oxpemul, a hilltop elite enclave positioned ca. 1.2 km to the south/southwest of the central precinct of Oxpemul. Stela 18 stands on the east side of a centerline stairway that ascends pyramid-shaped Str. XIII from its north side (Figure 135). Stela 18 is symmetrically placed with regard to Stela 19, which is located on the west side of the stairway.

(**Note:** A small, well-shaped stone slab (ca. 45 cm tall, 40 cm wide, and 20 cm thick) stands on the Str. XIII stairway's centerline, a short distance in front of the pyramid. It appeared to be blank, and is not otherwise documented in this report.)

Altar 17 is located ca. 1.0 m in front (north) of Stela 18.

SIZE: Stela 18 is ca. 2.54 m tall, 1.17 m wide at its base, and 68 cm thick. There are still traces of red paint on its surface.

Altar 17 was probably circular in shape. It is currently fragmented into many pieces and its size could not be estimated.

DATE: 9.16.5.0.0 8 Ajaw 8 Zotz (April 8, A.D. 756)

DESCRIPTION: Stela 18 depicts a well-proportioned ruler on its front (north) side (Figure 136). The ruler is positioned with his body facing forward, and his feet pointing outward in the usual Late Classic pattern. His head faces westward, toward Stela 19. He is finely dressed with various ornamentations decorating the front of his costume. He does not bear a weapon, but has a small shield on his right side. Denison (1943:141) indicates he is holding a manikin scepter in his right hand, but the scepter is in his left hand, and held up in front of his face. Three small, vertically-arranged glyphs are present to his lower left side. The first, at A1, is totally destroyed. At A2 the interior of the mainsign is gone, but there is a suffix that appears to be **-ni**. It possibly is *k'in*, a frequent component of names. A3 seems securely to be the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph.

The rear side (Figure 137) has a Long Count date arranged in two columns, B and C, as follows: ISIG, *9 b'aktun, 16 k'atun*, with the dot of the 16 lacking fillers to its sides, *5 tun, 0 (winal), 0 k'in*. The *b'aktun* is expressed with a head-glyph, the others with symbolic variants. The ISIG patron of the month is not discernible. The date is 9.16.5.0.0, or April 8, A.D. 756. Denison (1943:141) described the coefficients for the *k'atun* and *tun* positions as being to the left of those glyphs, whereas they are actually located above.

The left side (Figure 138) has a six-glyph long columnar text, beginning at D1 and D2 with the Calendar Round date 8 (Ajaw) 8 Zotz, which completes the Long Count date on the south side as 9.16.5.0.0 8 (Ajaw) 8 Zotz. D3 thru D6 provide the first part of the Supplementary Series with G9, F, 5D, and 5C being present.

The right side (Figure 139) has six glyphs arranged in a single column, E. It provides a continuation of the Supplementary Series started on the east side, with Glyph X at E1, followed by Glyph B. The series ends at E3 with Glyph 10A. At E4 is the verb **U-CH'AM-m(a)**, *u ch'am*, “he takes, or receives (it)”, referring to the manikin, or *k'awil* scepter associated with rulership, which is shown on the front side in the ruler's left hand. At D5 is the ruler's name. It begins with the prefix, **AJ-**, *aj*, “He”. The main sign of the name is a bird head. It may represent a word used generically for bird, such as *Mut* or *Ch'iich'*, or possibly the name is that of a specific species of bird (Note: *Mut* is used in the name of a scribe cited on Rio Azul Stela 2 (Robichaux 2000:42), and *Ch'iich'* is possibly used in the name of an individual cited on the front of Calakmul Stela 51). An affix, possibly **-ji** or **-yu**, is present below the bird head. Since these do not fit with either *Mut* or *Ch'iich'*, the name may be that of an undetermined specific species of bird. The title *K'inich* is present at the bottom of the name glyph. The last glyph, at D6, is the Oxpemul “Stone Throne” emblem glyph, with the *ajaw*'s phonetic complement, **-wa**, posted below it. Given the present uncertainty about the correct reading of the ruler's name, he will be referred to simply by the nickname “Bird Head”.

The associated Altar 17 is badly fractured, and appears to have been blank (Figure 140).

In summary, Stela 18 depicts a ruler, provides the period ending date, 9.16.5.0.0 with its associated Supplementary Series, and indicates that the ruler Bird Head received the *K'awil* scepter on that date. This message, as will be seen below, is mimicked on the adjacent Stela 19. The presence of the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph here at South Oxpemul securely links South Oxpemul with the Oxpemul central precinct located ca. 1.2 km away. The stela's presence in South Oxpemul suggests the period ending ceremony occurred here. It is even possible that this ruler resided at South Oxpemul, and is buried in the pyramid, Str. XIII.



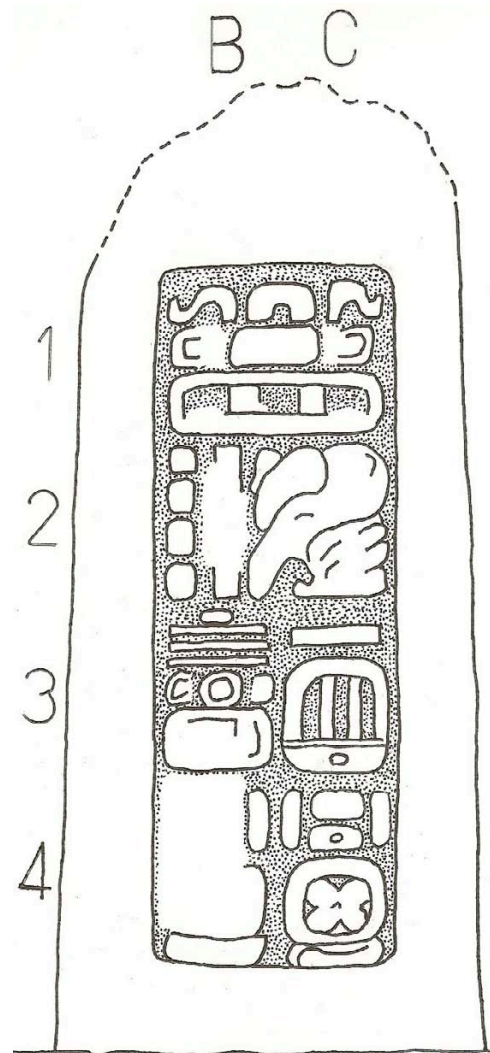
Figure 135. Photo of Oxpemul Stela 18 and Altar 17 at South Oxpemul. The eastern side of pyramidal Structure XIII is visible in the right background. This is a view to the south on July 27, 2007.



Figure 136. Photo and drawing of the front (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 18. Note the short text on the lower right.

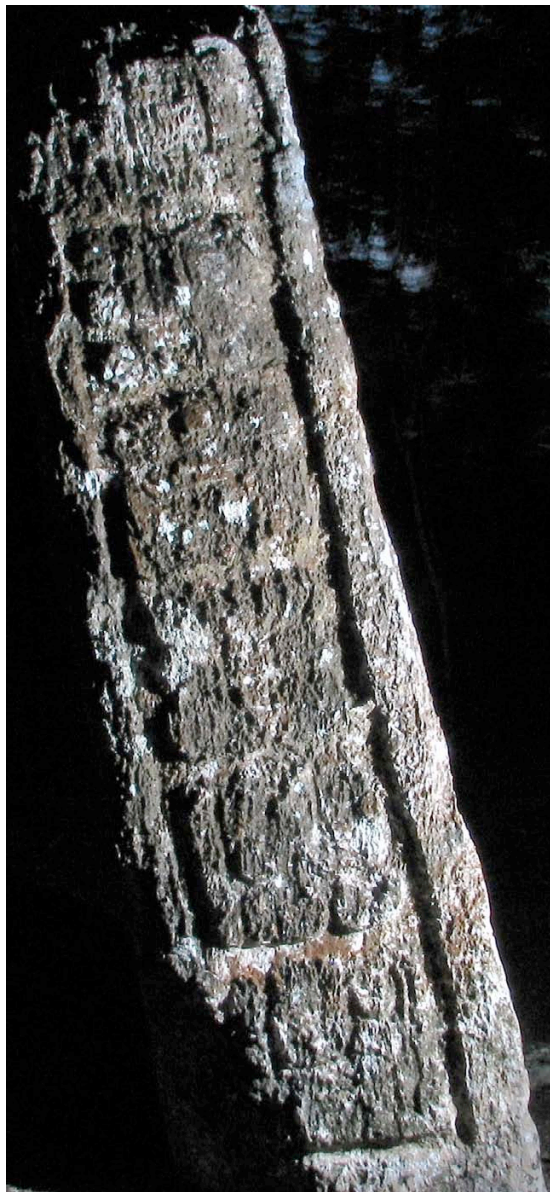


a

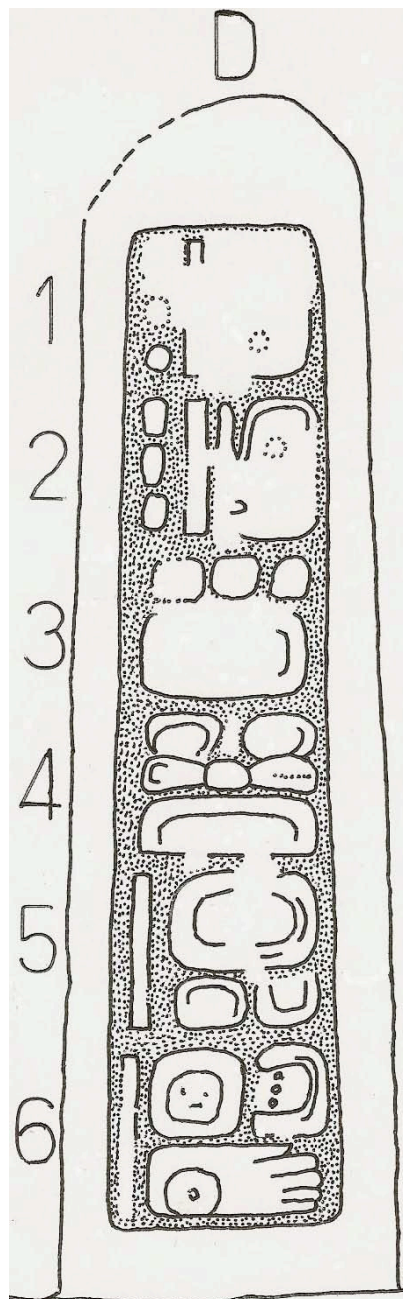


b

Figure 137. Photo and drawing of the rear (south) side of Stela 18.



a

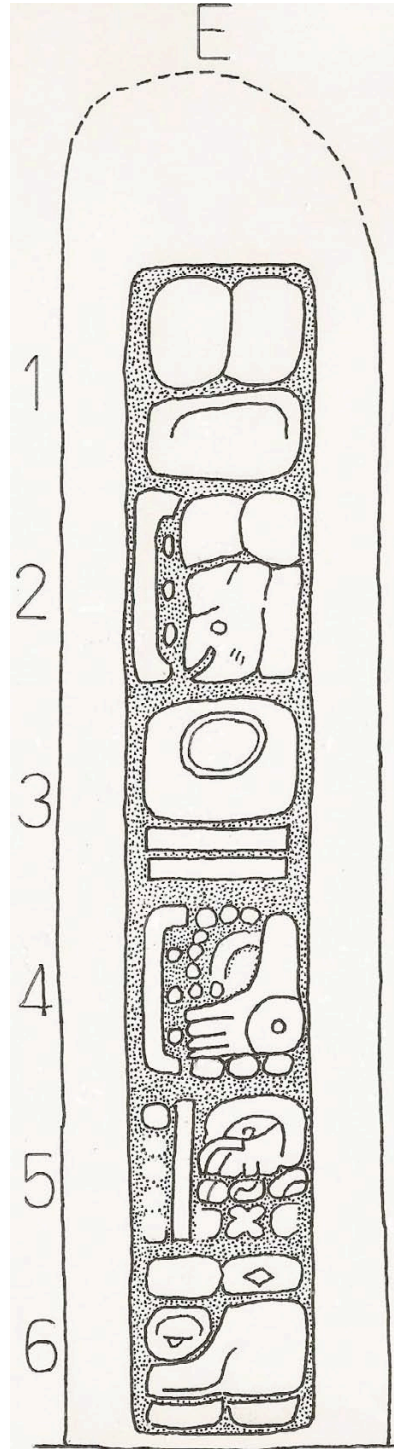


b

Figure 138. Photo and drawing of the left (east) side of Stela 18.



a



b

Figure 139. Photo and drawing of the right (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 18.



Figure 140. A near vertical view of the fractured remains of Oxpemul Altar 17.

STELA 19/ALTAR 18

LOCATION: Stela 19 is located in South Oxpemul on the west side of the central stairway that ascends Str. XIII from the north (Figure 141). Stela 18 is located on the opposite (east) side of the stairway from Stela 19.

Altar 18 is positioned 1.0 m north of Stela 19.

SIZE: Stela 19 is ca. 2.93 m tall, 1.33 m wide at its base, and 45 cm thick.

The size of Altar 18 was inadvertently not noted, however it was of the approximate size of the other altars noted at the site. It is circular in shape, and has split into two parts. There were no visible carvings on the altar.

DATE: 9.16.5.0.0 8 Ajaw 8 Sotz' (April 8, A.D. 756). This is the same date as on nearby Stela 18.

DESCRIPTION: Stela 19 (Figure 142) depicts a richly attired ruler on its front (north) side who is the same ruler depicted on Stela 18. Accompanying the ruler at his lower right is a dwarf. The ruler is holding a God K (*K'awil*) scepter in his right hand.

He is wearing a headdress that includes feathers and a probable bird head, which may be a reference to his name. What appears to be a small shield is present on his left side. At least three “medallions” depicting faces are present across his upper body, and a large “monster” face is depicted along the bottom of his skirt-like lower attire. The ruler’s face is directed eastward toward Stela 18. His body faces fully forward, and his feet point outward in the typical Late Classic style.

The rear (south) side of the stela has the beginning of a Long Count date, with the ISIG, 9 *b’aktun*, 16 *k’atun*, and 5 *tun* glyphs being present in a single column of large glyphs (Figure 143). The *b’aktun* is represented by a head glyph, while the *k’atun*, and *tun* are in symbolic form. Coefficients are placed on the left side. The patron of the month is no longer visible in the ISIG.

The Long Count date continues on the left side (Figure 144) where there are seven glyphs arranged in a single column. Denison (1943:142) says that the glyph at B1 is *0 winal*, but it is largely gone today. The presumed *0 k’in* glyph at B2 is also largely destroyed. B3 has a prefixed coefficient of “8”, and Denison, and I, infer it to be “8 Ajaw”. At B4 is the Haab entry 8 *Sotz’*. Thus the Initial Series date on Stela 19 is 9.16.5.(0).(0). 8 (Ajaw) 8 *Sotz’* (April 8, A.D. 756). This is the same date as that on the adjacent Stela 18, indicating that both of these stelae deal with the same ruler, who is depicted upon the front of both of them, and who, evidently, had a strong association with South Oxpepul. The glyph at B5 may be G9. B6 and B7 are not clear but are confidently part of the Supplementary Series since it continues on the stela’s right side.

The right side text (Figure 145) has seven glyphs arranged in a column. The glyph at C1 has a coefficient of 5, but is otherwise destroyed. Based upon Stela 18, it is likely to be 5D. C2 is 5C, C3 is Glyph X, C4 is Glyph B, and C5 is Glyph 10A. C6 and C7 provide, respectively, the verb, and the subject. The verb is **U-CH’AM-?**, *u ch’am-?*, “he takes, or receives (it)”, however, the suffix is not *ma* as on Stela 18, but is possibly *li*. The name that follows is the same as that on Stela 18, **AJ “BIRD HEAD”-? K’INICH**, with the suffix to Bird Head still not securely identifiable. Again, this ruler will be referred to by the nickname “Bird Head”.

Altar 18 is now fragmented and appears to have been blank (Figure 146).

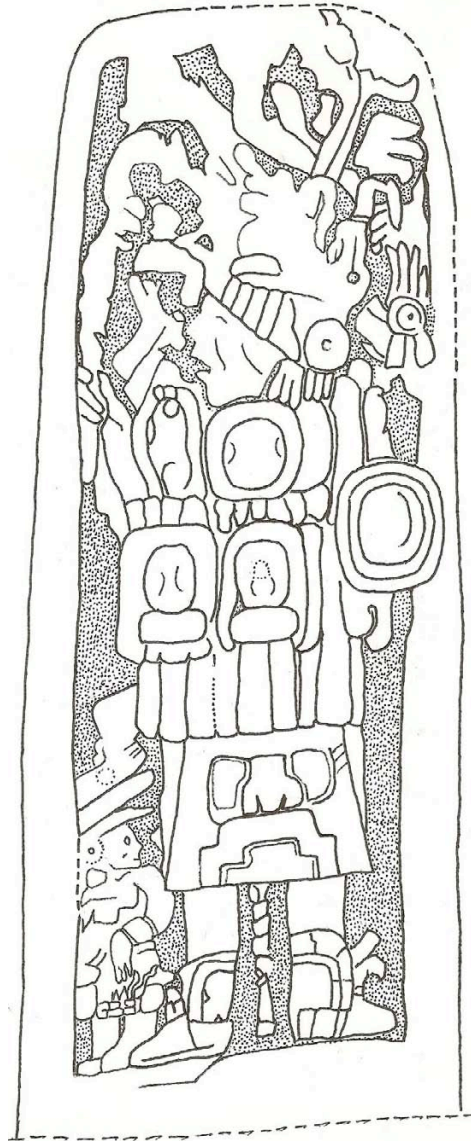
Stelae 18 and 19 largely duplicate each other, commemorating the same date and event relating to the same ruler. The sculptor for some reason omitted the Oxpepul Stone Throne” emblem glyph on Stela 19. Also, a dwarf is present on Stela 19, but not on Stela 18.



Figure 141. Photo showing Oxpemul Stela 19 and Altar 18 in front of the western side of Structure XIII in South Oxpemul. A view to the south on July 27, 2007



a

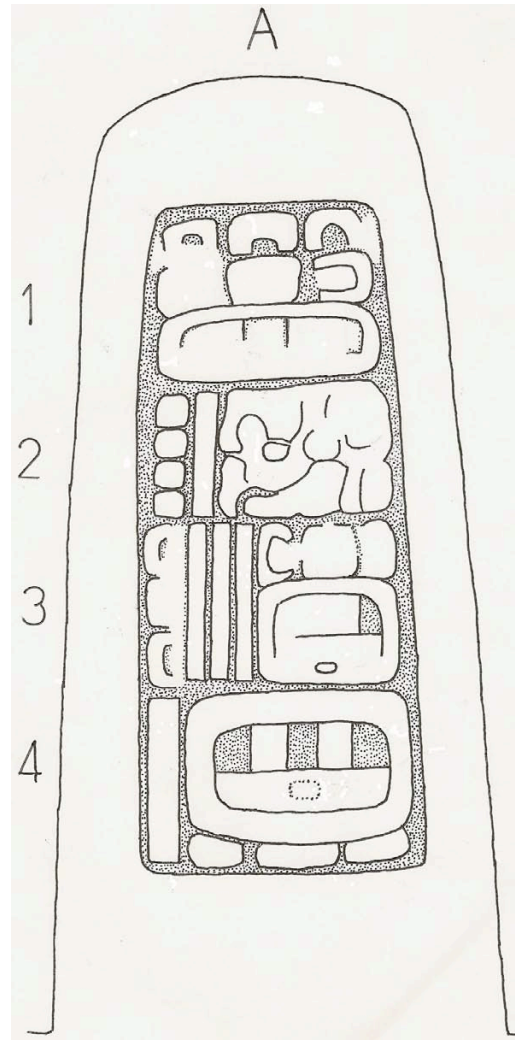


b

Figure 142. Photo and drawing of the front (north) side of Oxpemul Stela 19.



a

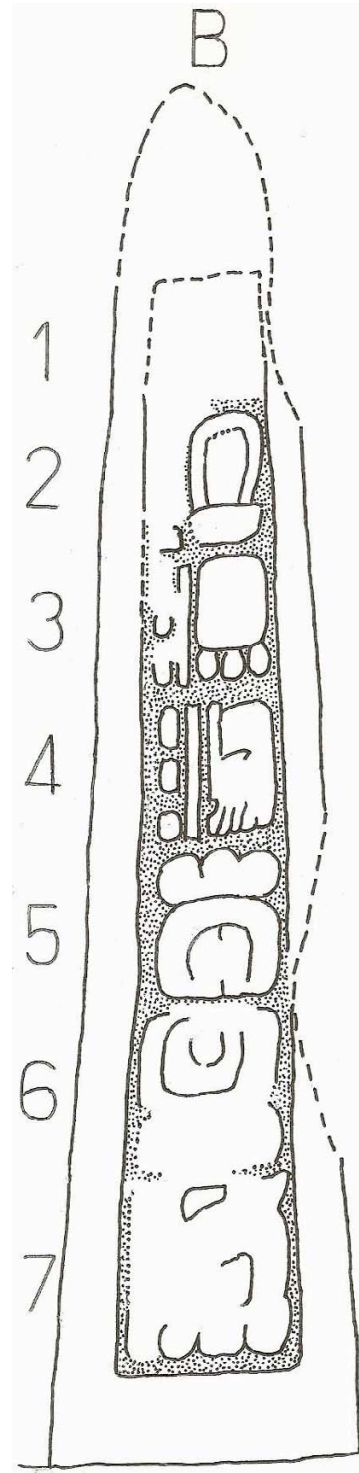


b

Figure 143. Photo and drawing of the rear (south) side of Oxpemul Stela 19.



a

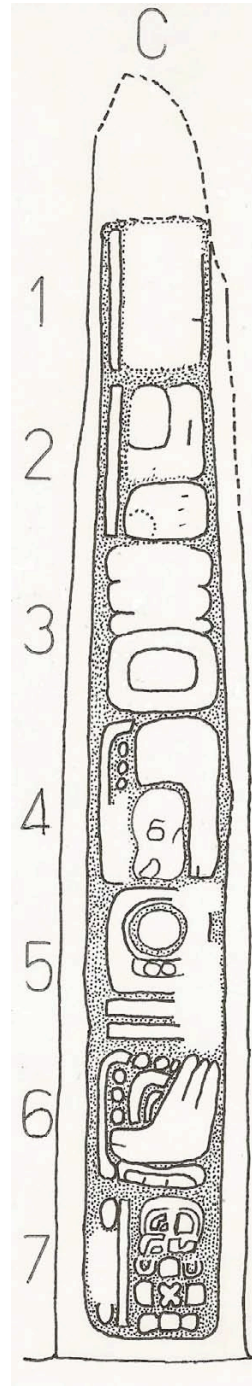


b

Figure 144. Photo and drawing of the left (east) face of Oxpemul Stela 19.



a



b

Figure 145. Photo and drawing of the right (west) side of Oxpemul Stela 19.



Figure 146. Photo of fractured Altar 18, with the the bottom of Stela 19 visible just beyond it.

STELA 22

LOCATION: Stelae 22 and 23 (Figure 147) were discovered at South Oxpepul on January 29, 2008 by Gonzalo Gómez Jimenez and Jacinto Gómez Jimenez, two of the UAC guards, and Lic. Raymundo González Heredia of the CIHS staff. The stelae were found behind a small pyramid-shaped structure that was not shown on the 1943 Carnegie map. The stelae were only lightly covered by soil, and were noticed during a walk-through of the area. The structure is located near the northwest corner of the South Oxpepul platform, well to the north of the large pyramid, Str. XIII. This small pyramid

is on the western edge of a small plaza formed by a few structures, including another, somewhat larger, pyramid. The stelae are behind the pyramid, on its centerline, and slightly above a rear-side terrace that is ca. 2 m lower than the level of the plaza in front of the pyramid. Only the lower halves of Stelae 22 and 23 were found, and these were lying horizontally next to each other. Stela 23 abutted the rear base of the pyramid, with its upper end pointing toward the west. Stela 22 was found at the same level as Stela 23, and just a few centimeters to the west of it. Stela 22, as discovered, had its front side facing upward, with the upper end pointed to the north.

Where these two stelae originally stood is unknown. The butt of Stela 22 is not included with the section found, and, thus, it is possibly still standing, and detectable at the original location where it stood. A brief scan of the small plaza area in front of the pyramid did not reveal the presence of a protruding stela butt. The stelae seem to have been placed “in storage” at their present location, after being moved from their original location. One possibility is that they fell and broke, and were then moved to this location. There is no indication that they were defaced. Folan (personal communication 2008) thinks these stelae may have been deliberately broken to facilitate moving them. While it is reasonable to think they originally stood somewhere at South Oxpepul, and reflect the in-situ history of that location, it is conceivable that they were moved to South Oxpepul from elsewhere.

SIZE: The height of the recovered portion of Stela 22 is 1.07 m. It is wider at its top (90 cm) than at its bottom (80 cm). It has a thickness of 29 cm.

DATE: Based upon its style, Stela 22 has been assigned to the Early Classic period, possibly in the late 4th, or early 5th Century.

DESCRIPTION: Stela 22 is carved on all four sides. The iconography and texts on it are generally well preserved. The front side of the stela (Figure 148) shows the legs and feet of a ruler. The feet both point to the viewer’s left side, in the style used in the Early Classic period. The face of a monkey (?howler) is present at one side of his lower “skirt”. A likely prisoner head is present at the ruler’s feet. This image is similar to that on the famous Leiden Plaque, which dates to A.D. 320. The ruler wears sandals that are in the style used in the 4th and 5th Centuries (Proskouriakoff (1950:81, 86-87). Stela 39 of Tikal, which dates to A.D. 376 (Martin and Grube 2000:28), Rio Azul Stela 1 which dates to A.D. 393 (Robichaux 2000:36), Tikal Stela 28, which dates to A.D. 416, and Calakmul Stela 43, which dates to A.D. 514, also have images generally similar to that of Oxpepul Stela 22 (as well as to that on Oxpepul Stela 23, see below).

The apparent reading order of the three sides of Stela 22 having texts is: the left side, with a postulated Long Count date (partially present); the right side, with a Supplementary Series; and the rear side, with a distance number followed by an historical account.

The left side of the stela (Figure 149) contains the last two glyphs of a single column of glyphs. Accordingly, these glyphs have their row number provisionally labeled. Although damaged, it is very possible that these glyphs (at Ap2 and Ap3) represent the

end of a Long Count date, with these last two glyphs being **WINAL** and **K'IN**. The *k'in* seems to have coefficient “2”, signifying a non-period-ending “historical” Long Count date, whose *Tzolk'in* day would be *Ik*. The coefficient of the *winal* is possibly between 1 and 4. The presence of part of a Lunar Series on the right side of the stela (see below) supports the interpretation that the left side contained a Long Count date.

The right side (Figure 150) had a single column of glyphs (B). The last five glyphs of this column are present on the recovered part of the stela. Their row labels are provisionally labeled. The first two glyphs are Glyph 4C and 9A of the Lunar Series. As noted, the presence of a Lunar Series here suggests a Long Count date was present elsewhere on Stela 22. The third glyph, at Bp3, has a dot-numeral “1” preceeding the **K'AL** glyph signifying “20”. This combination has a value of 21 and may indicate that 21 days have elapsed in the current lunation, although this value is usually placed before Glyph A of the Lunar Series instead of after it. Alternatively, the presence of a subfixed **-wa** here is suggestive that this glyph is functioning as a verb. The next glyph, at Bp4, reads **3 K'IN-ya**, apparently a distance number meaning “3 days since...” The fifth glyph, at Bp5, is **6 AJAW**. It is apparently the terminal *Tzolk'in* day of the distance number.

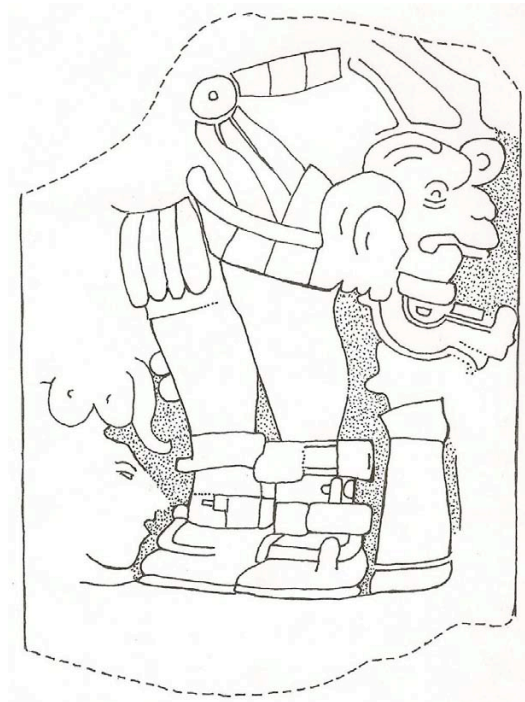
The rear side has two columns of glyphs (C and D), the last four rows of which are present, and assigned provisional labels (Figure 151). The first glyph, at Cp1, is **6 ?je-wa**, “6 days”, serving as a distance number. At Dp1 is **U-?**, “his?”. Cp2 reads **3 TAL-?la**, *3 tal*. The mainsign **TAL**, when preceded by a numeral, as in this case with 3, is frequently used to designate the position of a ruler in a royal dynastic line, such as “third in the dynastic sequence of a place”. The following glyph, at Dp2, is the Oxpepul “Stone Throne” emblem glyph (here shown with “legs”), indicating that the discussion is about the third ruler in the dynastic sequence of the Stone Throne polity (Oxpepul) whose name follows below. (Note: the name of a ruler sometimes follows an emblem glyph in early texts). At Cp3 there is **ya-** prefixed to a face that has a three-part suffix attached. It is tempting to read this as *yajaw*, but the suffix is not consistent with that. At Dp3 is **U-K'IN-?ni**, *u k'in*, “his sun”, which must be part of the ruler’s name. The two remaining glyphs at Cp4 and Dp4 are of uncertain reading. Cp4 seems possibly to be the body of a fish, with possible value **ka**. Dp4 includes the Early Classic version of phonetic **ba**, apparently prefixed by the face of an old man. One possibility is that these together spell **ka-b'a**, *kab'*, “earth”. If so, the name may, in part, be “His Sun (and) Earth”. Given uncertainty, however, we can refer to this ruler simply as *U K'in* (Robichaux 2009b).



Figure 147. Scene showing the general setting in which Stelae 22 and 23 were found. They were lying horizontally, side by side, behind a ca. 6 meter tall pyramid-shaped mound located near the northwestern corner of the South Oxpemul platform. CIHS-UAC staff member José Antonio Hernández Trujeque is hatless and facing the camera near the center of this photo.



a

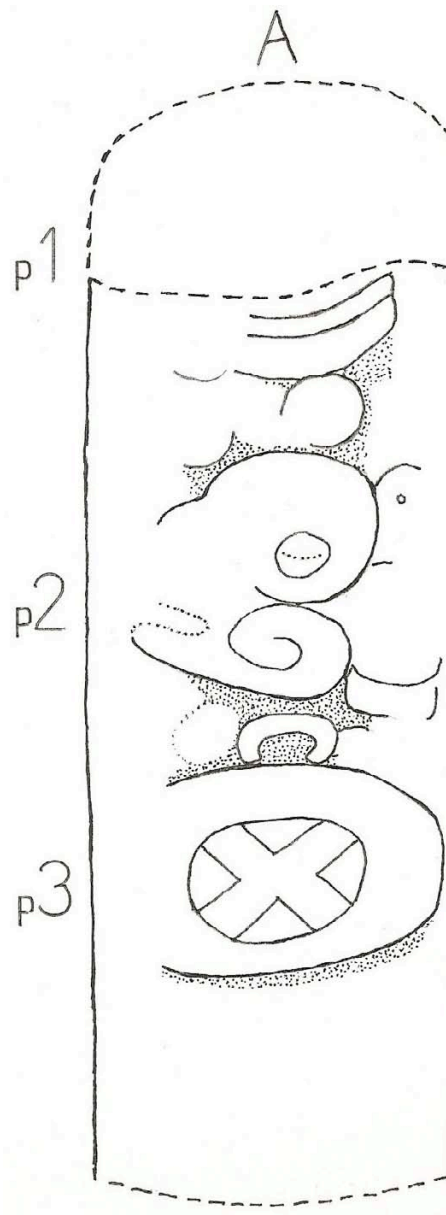


b

Figure 148. Photo and drawing of the front side of Stela 22.



a

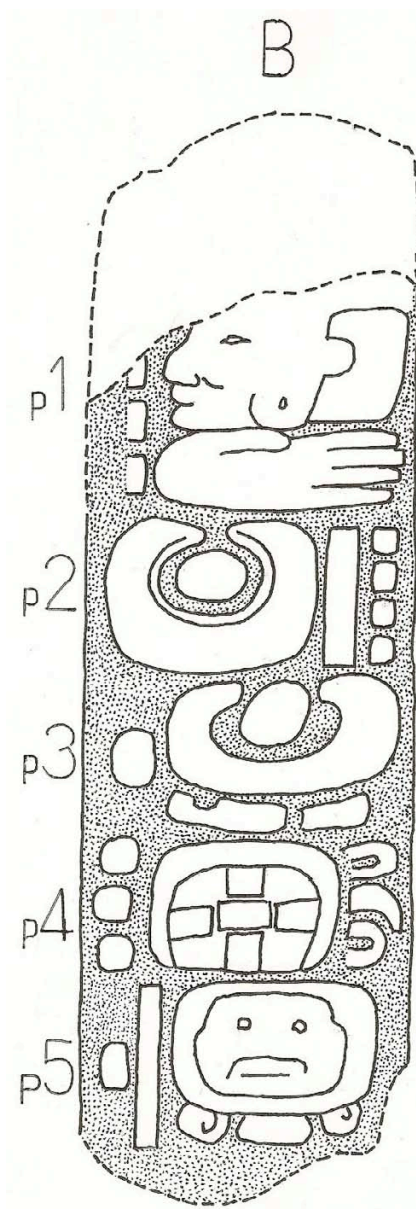


b

Figure 149. Photo and drawing of the left side of Stela 22.



a

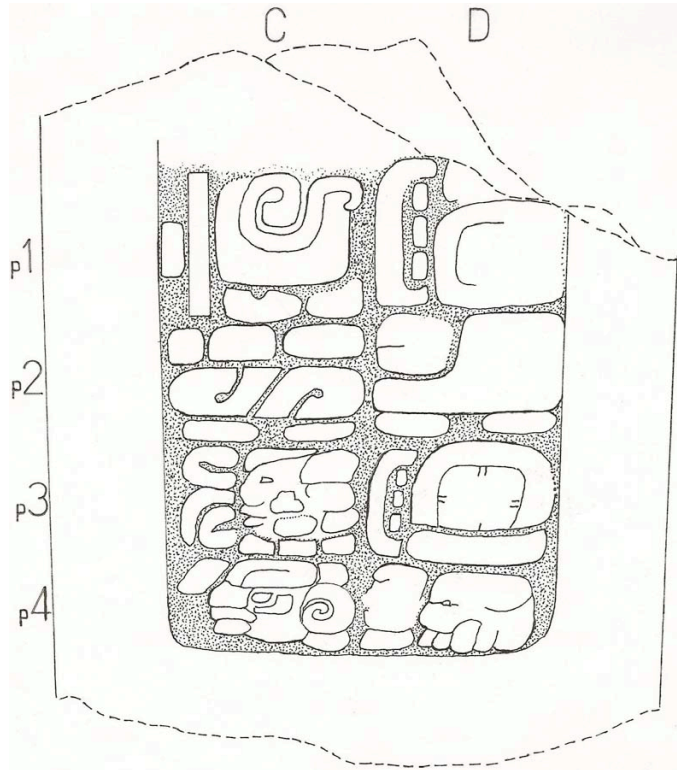


b

Figure 150. Photo and drawing of the text on the right side of Stela 22.



a



b

Figure 151. Photo and drawing of the text on the rear of Stela 22

STELA 23

LOCATION: See the discussion above concerning the location of Stela 22.

SIZE: Only the lower half of this stela has been found. The recovered section includes much of the stela butt, and is 1.35 m tall, and is wider at its top (84 cm) than at its bottom (78 cm). It has a thickness of ca. 28 cm.

DATE: Based upon its style, Stela 22 has been assigned to the Early Classic period, possibly in the late 4th, or early 5th Century.

DESCRIPTION: Stela 23 was carved on all four sides. This stela is uncommon in the sense that it has the image of an individual on both of its broad sides (Figures 152, 153). Stelae 23, 13, and 15 are the only stelae at Oxpepul to have this characteristic. The side facing upward when Stela 23 was found has been labeled the “front” side, but it is not known which side was actually the front when it was standing. The other sides of this stela were labeled accordingly. The style of the ruler images on Stela 23, like that of Stela 22, is that of the Early Classic period, and has characteristics that are consistent with the late 4th Century, or early 5th Century. The ruler’s feet are both turned toward the viewer’s left. The sandals worn by the ruler are those associated with the early part of the Early Classic period (Proskouriakoff 1950:81, 86-87). Both the “front” (Figure 152) and “rear” (Figure 153) sides show a prisoner at the feet of the ruler. The prisoners are shown in a particular style used during the late 4th Century, or not much later (see, for example, Uaxactun Stela 19, A.D. 358 (Valdes and Fahsen 1995:204), and the Rio Azul Columnar Altars, ca. A.D. 350-380 (Orrego 2000:69-70)). The captives are shown nude with genitals exposed, on their knees, and with his hands tied. George Stuart (1987) has documented various other similar images of prisoners that date to the Early Classic period.

The “right” side (in the sense of how the stela was first discovered) contains the last two glyphs of a single column (A) of glyphs (Figure 154). They are labeled using provisional row labels. The mainsigns of these glyphs are in an uncommon style that is similar to the style used on the Leiden Plaque, on Tikal Stela 29, and on the Tikal Ballcourt Marker, in stating a Long Count date. The last glyph clearly has 16 as a coefficient. The coefficient of the first glyph is damaged, but is possibly 8. Given their position at the end of a single column, they are considered candidates for being the *winal* and *k’in* positions. The coefficient of 16 for the postulated *k’in* glyph points to the *Tzolk’in* day having been *Kib*. That this side of Stela 23 contained a Long Count date is supported by the fact that the “left” side text (see below) contained Supplementary Series data. The Long Count date stated would be, as on Stela 22, a non-period-ending, or “historical” date.

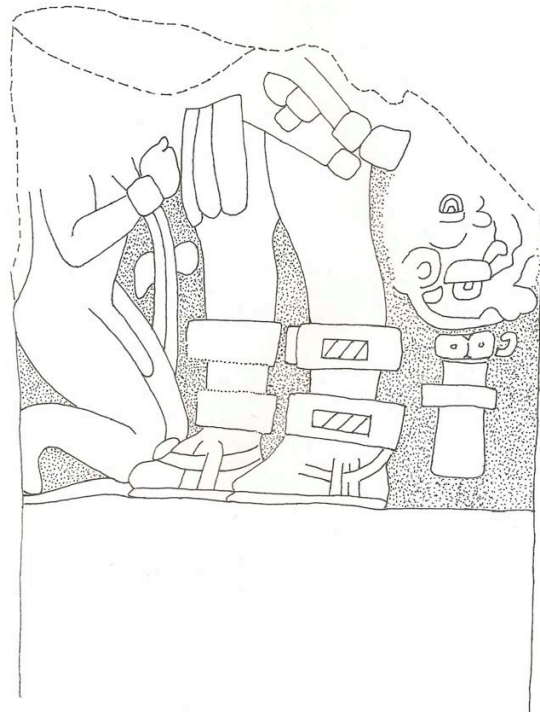
The “left” side text has a single column of glyphs, of which we have only the last five on this stela segment (Figure 155). They have been provisionally labeled as to their row. The first, at Bp1, appears to be Glyph C of the Lunar Series, with its coefficient

destroyed. This is followed at Bp2 by Glyph 9A of the Lunar Series. These two glyphs mimick the sequencing of Glyph C and 9A in the Lunar Series on Stela 22. The presence of a Lunar Series on this stela supports the view that a Long Count date was present on this stela, and it must have been on the “right” side text, as postulated above. The next glyph is not recognized but has **ji-** or **yu-** as a prefix and **-ja/aj** as a postfix, and probably served as a verb. The two remaining glyphs must present the name of the protagonist of this stela, who is, presumably shown on both the “front” and “rear” sides. The syllable **-ka** is a postfix on the first glyph of the name. The final glyph of the name includes a superfixed extended hand over **CHAN/KAN**, *chan/kan*, “sky”, and possibly **B’ALAH**, of unknown significance. For the moment, we can refer to this ruler as “*Chan Balah*”. It is not certain whether *Chan B’alah*, cited on Stela 23, ruled before or after “*U K’in*”, who is cited on Stela 22.

The 2008 discovery of the Oxpemul Early Classic Stelae 22 and 23 by the CIHS-UAC team was of major importance. These stelae provide us the names of two very early rulers of the “Stone Throne” site, including the third ruler of the dynasty. The presence of the Stone Throne emblem glyph in the text of Stela 22 greatly extends backward the time period during which Oxpemul had a royal court, and used this emblem to represent itself in the writing system. The fact that these two earliest Oxpemul stelae were at South Oxpemul and not in the Oxpemul central precinct zone, suggests the possibility that South Oxpemul was the political center of the early community, with it later moving to the larger hill where the Oxpemul central precinct is located..

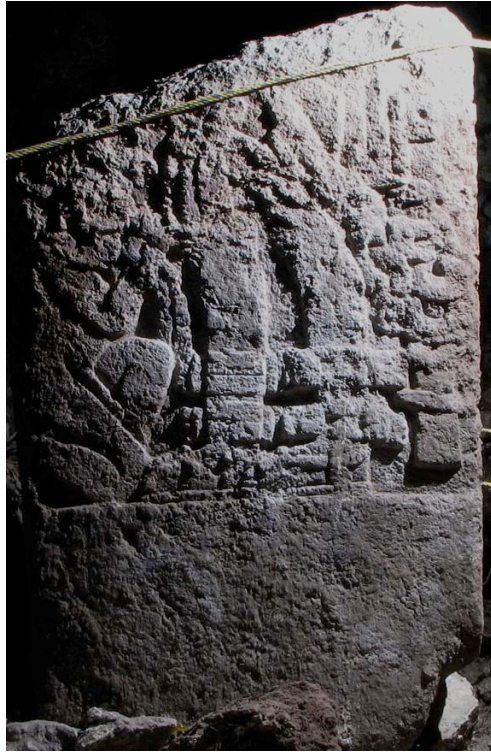


a

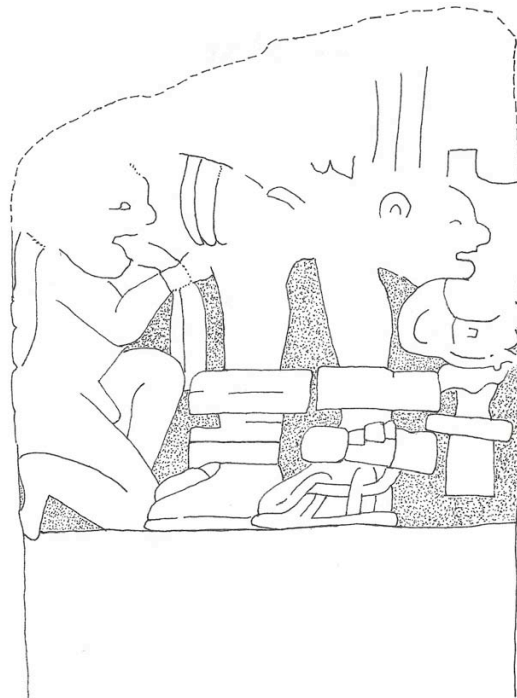


b

Figure 152. Photo and drawing of the “front” of Stela 23.

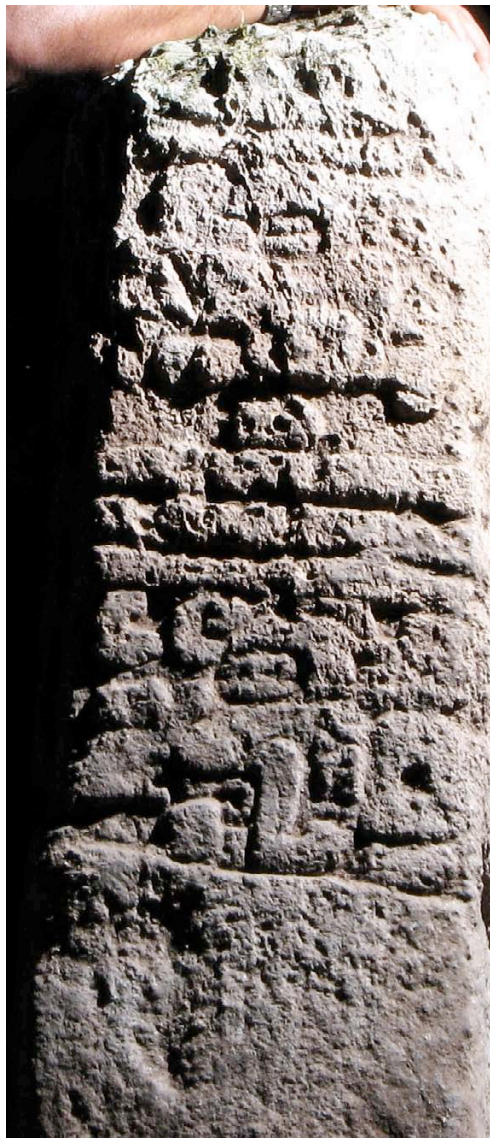


a

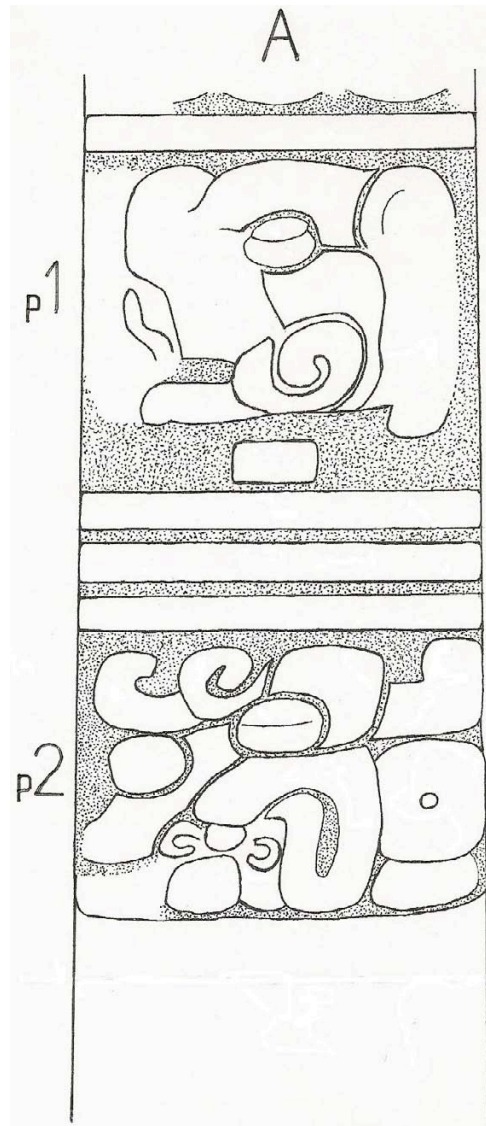


b

Figure 153. Photo and drawing of the “rear” side of Stela 23



a

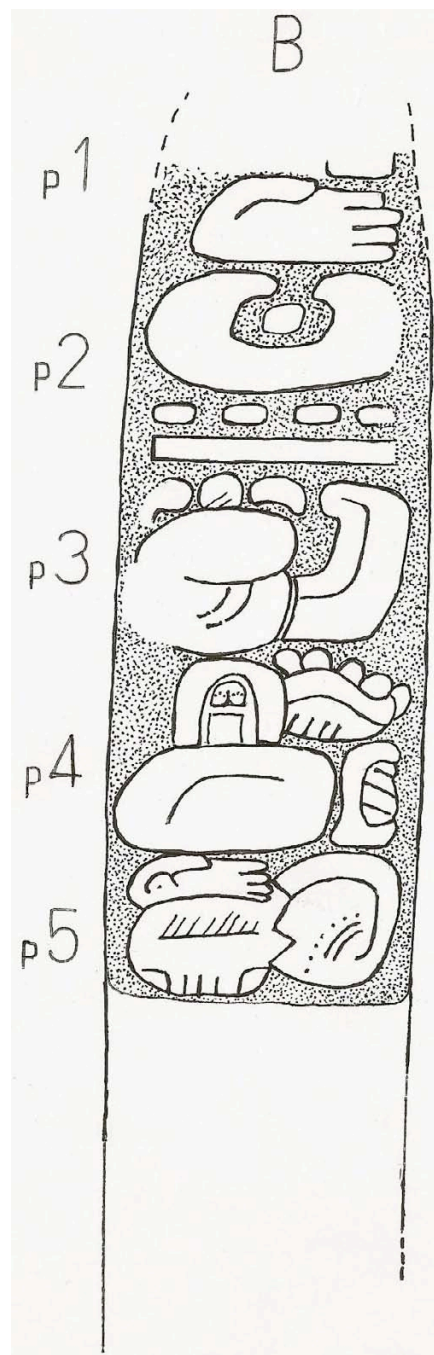


b

Figure 154. Photo and drawing of the text on the "right" side of Stela 23.



a



b

Figure 155. Photo and drawing of the “left” side text of Stela 23.

DISCUSSION OF THE OXPEMUL MONUMENTS

General Characteristics - All of the Oxpemul monuments appear to have been carved from limestone material that is abundantly available in the elevated areas of the ancient community. One apparent quarry site is situated on the trail which leads from the UAC field camp up to the West Plaza. It has an abundance of naturally occurring large slabs of limestone suitable as blanks for stelae and altars. This quarry and others in the area were also a likely source for the unusually large stone blocks utilized in the construction of some of the larger buildings at Oxpemul (Figure 156). The dimensions of the Oxpemul monuments are summarized below. The height indicated for standing stelae is from the stela top to ground surface. For fallen stelae, it is an estimate based upon the height of remnant pieces. Thickness is the perpendicular distance from the front side to the rear side of a stela.

<u>Monument</u>	<u>Stela Dimensions (m)</u>			<u>Altar Dimensions (m)</u>	
	<u>Ht.</u>	<u>Width</u>	<u>Thickness</u>	<u>Diameter/Width</u>	<u>Ht.</u>
Stela 1/Altar 1	2.48	1.53	0.59	1.13	0.40
Stela 2/Altar 2	4.00	1.15	0.65	0.99	0.48
Stela 3/Altar 3	2.95	1.00	0.50	1.05	0.47
Stela 4/Altar 4	4.00	1.00	0.65	0.90	0.40
Stela 5/Altar 5	2.61	1.12	0.66	1.06	0.40
Stela 6/Altar 6	2.80	1.27	0.63	*(SQ.) 1.00	0.33
Stela 7/Altar 7	2.15	0.99	0.47	1.00	0.42
Stela 8/Altar 8	2.85	1.25	0.64	1.49	0.38
Stela 9/Altar 9	3.40	1.28	0.57	0.91	0.38
Stela 10/Altar 10	2.75	1.17	0.74	*(SQ.) 1.14	0.37
Stela 11/Altar 11	3.40	1.10	0.64	1.57	0.56
Stela 12/Altar 12	3.00	1.03	0.58	1.45	0.48
Stela 13/Altar 13	3.15	1.21	0.90	*(SQ.) 1.66	0.62
Stela 14/Altar 14	3.07	1.01	0.69	1.34	0.25
Stela 15**	1.42	0.60	0.27	---	---
Stela 16/Altar 15	3.00	1.10	0.41	1.15	0.42
Stela 17/Altar 16	3.43	1.21	0.45	1.35	0.48
Stela 18/Altar 17	2.54	1.17	0.68	?	?
Stela 19/Altar 18	2.93	1.33	0.45	?	?
Altar 19	---	---	---	1.20	0.46
Altar 20***	---	---	---	0.82	0.38
Altar 21***	---	---	---	1.10	0.46
Stela 20	1.15	0.47	0.27	---	---
Stela 21	1.30	0.52	0.35	---	---
Stela 22****	1.07	0.85	0.29	---	---
Stela 23****	1.35	0.81	0.28	---	---

*SQ. = Square-shaped altar. All other altars were of circular shape.

**Stela 15 was apparently removed from the site by looters. The dimensions shown for it are those cited by Denison (1943:141)

***Stelae 20 and 21 were disturbed by looters. Both were clearly broken near the bottom of their sculpted areas, but their bases have not been found. Consequently, their heights were likely somewhat greater than what is indicated for them.

****Only the lower halves of Early Classic Stelae 22 and 23 were found. Thus, the heights shown above do not indicate the full heights of those stelae. Also, the width shown for these two stelae is an average. Both stelae were wider at their tops than at their bottoms. Additionally, these two stelae were unusually “thin” in front-to-rear thickness, given their overall size.



Figure 156. Photo showing the large stone blocks utilized in the construction of the front stairway and façade of Str. XIII at South Oxpeñul. A view to the south on July 27, 2007, with Antonio Montejo Sanchez present for scale.

The smallest stelae at Oxpeñul were Stelae 15, 20 and 21, with probable heights of ca. 1.4 m. Of these, Stelae 15 and 20 possibly date to the Terminal Classic period. Stela 21 is of unknown date. Stelae 2 and 4 were the tallest of the Oxpeñul stelae, with both of them having a height of ca. 4.0 m. They both date to the same day in A.D. 771. The balance of the Oxpeñul stelae ranged in height between 2.15 m (Stela 7 in A.D. 830) and 3.43 m (Stela 17 in ?A.D. 731). The norm at Oxpeñul was that each stela had an associated altar which lay a meter or so in front of the stela. Of the 23 stelae at

Oxpemul, only the three small stelae (15, 20, and 21), and Stelae 22 and 23, whose original provenience is unknown, lack associated altars. Three altars (19, 20, and 21), all uncarved, were found in isolation in the West Plaza without an associated stela. Eighteen of the altars had a circular shape, and three were square/rectangular. The typical altar size was ca. 1.15 m in diameter/width, and ca. 43 cm tall. Ten altars have significant surviving iconography and/or texts on them. There is abundant evidence that the stelae and altars were painted red.

The Oxpemul stelae are associated with various types of architecture. Stelae 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18 and 19 are positioned in front of pyramids. Stelae 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are spread across the front side of an astronomical E-Group type platform that has three small structures atop it. Stela 11 stands alone in front of a long, low, range-type structure at the north end of the East Plaza, and Stelae 14, 16, and looted Stela 15 had positions in front of the long, low, range-type structure that formed the southern boundary of the East Plaza. Stelae 12 and 13 are situated either side of the stairway that leads up to the principal elite residential (“palace”) area at the site. Stela 17 stood alone on the west side of the East Plaza, in front of a large structure whose precise form and function is not clear. Small Stelae 20 and 21, although disturbed by looters, appear to have been associated with the ball court. The original standing location of Early Classic Stelae 22 and 23 at South Oxpemul is not known.

The 23 stelae and 21 altars currently known at Oxpemul provide a body of writing and iconography that is distinctive and somewhat idiosyncratic. The individual carved glyphs are consistently large, ca. 25-35 cm square, and the glyph count on any particular monument side tends to be small, typically 5-7 glyphs. The largest glyph count on any side of a monument is that on the rear of Stela 4, 14 glyphs long. Most stela sides that contain text have it arranged in a single column. No text on a monument side has more than two columns. Only one stela has text on its front side, and that is only three glyphs long.

The text on a particular side of a monument frequently does not stand alone, but is only a fragment of a statement that continues on one or two more sides of the monument. In effect, a single hieroglyphic statement, or “sentence”, is commonly segmented across two or three sides of a stela. This unusual practice was first noted by Denison (1943) with regard to calendrical statements. The same practice also applies to non-calendrical statements (Robichaux and Pruett 2004a, 2005), wherein, e.g., a ruler’s name is the last glyph on one side of a monument, and his associated emblem glyph is the first glyph on another side of the monument.

Additionally, the Oxpemul monument statements tend to be more straightforward and non-complex in composition than is frequently the case elsewhere. For example, the use of distance numbers at Oxpemul is very limited, and there tends to be only one verb present on a stela that has text extending across three of its sides. Thus, the scribes of Oxpemul were inclined to make rather short, simple, and straightforward statements.

Denison (1943) suggested that these somewhat non-orthodox practices might be

attributable to Oxpepul's location at the northern edge of the Peten, or Peten-Campechano cultural region, allowing its scribes more latitude to vary from the norm that prevailed deeper within the region. A short distance to the north of Oxpepul a different cultural area existed, where architecture and art were dramatically different, stelae were more rare, and writing practices varied.

Adding to the distinctive nature of the Oxpepul monuments is the prominent depiction of "Old Gods" on the front sides of Stelae 3, 5, and 10. Each of these is simply clad, and distinctively shown in lateral motion. In the case of Stela 10, the Old God is carrying a spear and shield, evidently fighting on behalf of Oxpepul. Based upon facial characteristics, it is thought they may represent the Sun God, sometimes known as *K'inich Ahaw*, who may have been a patron god of the Oxpepul site.

Dating of the Oxpepul Monuments - There are at least 12 stelae at Oxpepul that carried Initial Series dates. These are Stelae 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 19. Of these 12, only Stela 14 is so eroded as to make the date totally indiscernible. The other eleven have largely readable Initial Series dates present on them. Of these eleven, the date on Stela 17 is problematic, but reasonably secure. The date on Stela 10 is more problematic. All of these readable dates are of the period ending variety, and for each date stated there appear to be two stelae carrying the date, with the only exception being for the latest date (10.0.0.0) which is carried by Stela 7 alone. The Oxpepul Initial Series dates are shown below in chronological sequence. They range from A.D. 731 to A.D. 830, a period of approximately one century. Where a Supplementary Series was also present, it is also shown below.

In addition to the stelae cited below in the table, the recently discovered Early Classic Stelae 22 and 23 are postulated to have also contained Initial Series dates, but most of the glyphs of their dates are now missing, and the surviving glyphs are of an atypical form. Their postulated dates appear to have been of the non-period-ending variety. All other Oxpepul stelae are believed to date to the Late Classic period, based upon stylistic criteria or physical associations with other stelae, with the exception of Stela 1, which is conjectured to date to near the Early Classic-Late Classic transition, and Stelae 15 and 20 which possibly date to the Terminal Classic period, based upon their more crude style.

<u>Stela Nr.</u>	<u>Maya Date</u>	<u>Modern Date</u>
-Stela 12	9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax	Aug. 18, A.D. 731
-Stela 17*	9.15.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 13 Yax	Aug. 18, A.D. 731
-Stela 11	9.15.10.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Mol	June 26, A.D. 741
-Stela 13	9.15.10.0.0 3 Ajaw 3 Mol	June 26, A.D. 741
-Stela 9	9.16.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Sek G9, F, 4C, X5, B, 9A	May 5, A.D. 751
-Stela 10*	9.16.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 13 Sek	?May 5, A.D. 751
-Stela 18	9.16.5.0.0 8 Ajaw 8 Sotz'	Apr. 8, A.D. 756

-Stela 19	G9, F, 5D, 5C, X, B, 10A 9.16.5.0.0 8 (Ajaw) 8 Sotz' ?, ?5D, 5C, X, B, 10A	Apr. 8, A.D. 756
-Stela 2	9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw 18 Kumk'u G9/F, ?0D, 3C, X3, B, 10A	Jan. 20, A.D. 771
-Stela 4	9.17.0.0.0 13 Ajaw ?, ?, ?, X3, B, 10A	Jan. 20, A.D. 771
-Stela 7	10.0.0.0.0 (7 Ajaw 18 Sip) G9, F, 13D, 6C, X, B, 9A	March 11, A.D. 830

*See the descriptions of Stelae 10 and 17 for details on these problematically stated dates.

Finally, as first noted by Denison (Ruppert and Denison 1943:137), the firmly datable stelae in the East Plaza are earlier than the firmly datable stelae in the West Plaza, suggesting that construction of the East Plaza preceded that of the West Plaza. The presence of the Early Classic Stelae 22 and 23 at South Oxpemul points to the possibility that South Oxpemul was the seat of the earliest elite enclave at Oxpemul, with the leadership of Oxpemul later relocating itself northward across a bajo zone to the larger central precinct hilltop area.

Emblem Glyphs - Emblem glyphs found in texts on stone monuments and other media have provided direct evidence about the names of many of the larger ancient Maya settlement and political units (“towns, cities, polities, etc”). During my initial visit to Oxpemul in May 2004, an Oxpemul emblem glyph was recognized in the monumental texts (Figure 157a), and several examples were noted (Robichaux and Pruett 2004a, 2004b, 2005). The mainsign of this emblem glyph seems to represent a seat, or throne, with an unidentified “bundle” resting on the seat. This “seat” glyph at times is interchangeable with *witz*, “mountain, but in this case I believe it may represent a throne, possibly the word *Tz’am*. This view is supported, in part, by the presence of “legs” under the example on Stela 22. All of the occurrences of this emblem glyph are in a less than perfect state of preservation, and interior details are generally lacking. There are, however, some faint indications of “stone” (*kawak*- or *tun*-like) markings on some of them, resulting in the nickname “*Tun Tz’am*”, or “Stone Throne”, for the emblem glyph mainsign. The outer form of the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph is similar to that of a glyph found at a number of sites that is referred to as “*Chi-Witz*” (Grube 2004), where the bundle on the seat is a clearly visible human hand. The Stone Throne emblem of Oxpemul appears at this moment, to be unassociated with the Chi-Witz symbolism. Also, the Oxpemul emblem glyph appears to be distinct from the Hix Witz emblem glyph at distant Zapote Bobal (Fitzsimmons 2006) where the bundle on the seat is a rather clear *hix*, “jaquar”. The examples from Oxpemul, Hix Witz, and the Chi-Witz location point to the “bundle” on the seat as being the key element in identifying the location intended.

Most of the occurrences of the Stone Throne emblem glyph are surmounted by the T168

title, *ajaw*, “lord”, and thus they read something like “Lord of the Stone Throne (Oxpemul) site”. The adjective *ch’uhul/k’uhul*, “holy”, which is present with emblem glyphs at many sites, is absent in all of these depictions of the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph, except possibly one, that on Altar 10. Thus, the Oxpemul emblem glyph could be considered problematic in the sense previously noted by Houston (1986).

Grube (2005:89-99) refers to emblem glyphs lacking the *ch’uhul/k’uhul* prefix as “toponymic titles”, rather than as emblem glyphs, in order to distinguish them from emblem glyphs that have the “holy” prefix. However, this seems taxonomically misleading, since they appear clearly to be two varieties of the same thing, i.e., references to the lord of a particular place. I consider both categories to be emblem glyphs, with the emblem glyphs having the “holy” prefix possibly signifying a higher level in a regional political hierarchy. However, the presence of “problematic” emblem glyphs at large sites such as Rio Azul and Xultun (Grube 2005) gives one pause in automatically inferring a lower status for them.

In 2005, Grube (2005:94,95) reported detecting a “Bat” emblem glyph on Oxpemul Stela 2. This emblem glyph had a bat head as its main sign (Figure 157b). He also found another example of it on the side of Oxpemul Altar 15. Subsequently, Robichaux and Pruett (2007b, 2008b) confirmed the presence of those Bat emblem glyphs, and reported the discovery of another example on Altar 6. The distant site of Copan in Honduras has a bat head in its emblem glyph, but it seems unlikely that is what is signified here. Of the three known occurrences of the Bat emblem glyph at Oxpemul, only the one on Stela 2 has a firm date, January 20, A.D. 771, with the other two assigned to the Late Classic period based upon stylistic criteria. Very revealing is the fact that Stela 4, only a few meters away from Stela 2, refers to the same ruler, on the same day, as being the ruler of the Stone Throne emblem glyph site. Thus, in A.D. 771 at least, the ruler of Oxpemul reigned over a polity, or polities, represented simultaneously by both the Stone Throne and the Bat emblems.

The “*Tun Tz’am*”, or “Stone Throne” emblem glyph occurs at least 13 times in the texts at Oxpemul. It is present on Stela 4, Altar 4 (twice), Stela 7, Altar 10, Stela 12, Stela 14, Altar 14, Stela 17 (twice), Stela 18 (twice), and Stela 22. The usage of this emblem extends from the early part of the Early Classic period until at least A.D. 830. Only one possible foreign reference to the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph is currently known. It is on the front of Calakmul Stela 51, which dates to A.D. 731 (Martin and Grube 2000:113). There, an apparent emblem glyph (Marcus 1987:173-178) that has the outer shape of the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem, is in association with a name that includes a birdhead similar to that on Oxpemul Stelae 18 and 19, which date to A.D. 756. On Calakmul Stela 51 the birdhead glyph is postfixed with **-ch’o**, suggesting the word intended was **CH’IICH’-ch’o**, *ch’iich’*, generic “bird”. How this possible foreign reference fits with events at Oxpemul is not yet clear, but given Oxpemul’s proximity to Calakmul, it would not be surprising if it were mentioned there.

Use of the Bat emblem glyph at Oxpemul, as noted above, was limited to three occurrences, all apparently in the Late Classic period, with the only firmly datable one

being in A.D. 771. The Bat emblem glyph has a more prolific and complex foreign distribution. Simon Martin (2005) has been studying the Calakmul monuments for 16 years. He recently postulated that Calakmul, long thought to have been represented solely by a Snake emblem glyph during its existence, may have in fact used the Snake emblem for only a period of one century, ca. A.D. 636-731. Four possible instances of a Bat emblem glyph at Calakmul, in A.D. 435, A.D. 651, A.D. 731, and A.D. 741, suggest to Martin that the Bat emblem may have represented Calakmul in the writing system both before and after the century in which he believes it was represented by the Snake emblem. Undermining any certain knowledge of these issues is the fact that a large number of the over 100 stelae at Calakmul have texts on them that are now largely destroyed and unreadable. Meanwhile, texts discovered at the Dzibanche site in Quintana Roo (Velásquez García 2005) are being interpreted to indicate that the Snake dynasty resided at Dzibanche during part of the Early Classic period.

Interacting with these uncertain emblem glyph assignments is the iconography on Oxpemul Stela 9 (Figures 67, 157c) which points to Oxpemul having gained some form of military victory over the Snake site/dynasty in, or near A.D. 751. Based on the discussion above, however, it is not really clear where the Snake dynasty actually resided at that time. The undated and poorly understood reference to Tikal (Figure 157d) on Oxpemul Stela 3 has previously been mentioned, hypothetically, as possibly symbolizing an alliance between Oxpemul and Tikal that makes a military victory by the smaller Oxpemul over the Kaan site/dynasty a more credible possibility.

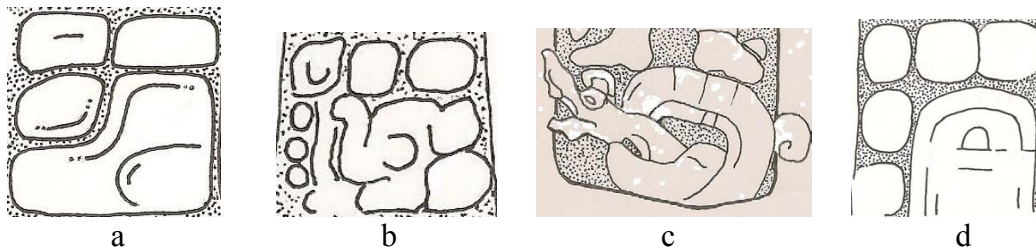


Figure 157. Examples of emblem glyphs present in texts at Oxpemul: a) “Stone Throne” emblem glyph (at D3 on Stela 4); b) “Bat” emblem glyph (at D2 on Stela 2); c) Full bodied “Snake” or “Kan” emblem (in iconography on the front of Stela 9); d) Tikal emblem glyph (at B6 on Stela 3)

Of possible relevance to the topic of emblem glyphs at Oxpemul is the presence of one particular glyph on each of Oxpemul Stela 7 (at C3) and Stela 12 (at C5) that Grube (2005:94-95) indicates is the *Uxte'tuun*, “3 stones”, toponym associated with Calakmul (Stuart and Houston 1994:28-30). Unfortunately, both of these glyphs have suffered damage, and parts of them, including the inner details of their mainsigns, are no longer discernible. Given that *Uxte'* has the rather generic meaning of “3 each ___”, the correct reading of this glyph hinges on the identification of the mainsign, which, again, in these cases, is largely gone (Grube 2005: Fig. 8). Consequently, there is a possibility that it is not the Calakmul toponym. The fact that a very similar, but distinctly different toponym is associated with not too distant Rio Azul (Robichaux and Miller 2003:294-

295) illustrates this. Thus, it is conjectural that *Uxte'tuun* is the glyph present on Oxpemul Stelae 7 and 12. If, indeed, these glyphs did represent the Calakmul toponym, it would make some sense, and indicate a linkage between the rulers of Oxpemul and the *Uxte'tuun* locale at Calakmul during the century A.D. 731-830, and it could possibly be related to the appearance of the Bat emblem glyph at Oxpemul around A.D. 771. Unfortunately, the damage to the glyphs render these issues less than certain. The known rulers of Oxpemul will now be considered.

Rulers of Oxpemul - The names of a number of rulers of Oxpemul are embedded in the texts present on the Oxpemul monuments. The names are generally not fully preserved, or fully understood, but are identifiable as names based upon their positions in statements, or by indicators such as a prefixed *Aj-*, “He”, which frequently marks the beginning of a name. In order to make sense of the succession of rulers, the firmly, or almost firmly dated monuments, will be considered first, in their chronological order, starting with the earliest. Stelae 22 and 23, although they do not have a preserved Long Count date, are nonetheless included with the “dated” monuments since their unusual style seems securely attributable to the early part of the Early Classic period. The undated monuments will subsequently be considered.

Rulers cited on Dated Stelae:

Stelae 22 and 23 - The two earliest known rulers of Oxpemul are shown and cited on Stelae 22 and 23 which are located in South Oxpemul, ca. 1.2 km south-southwest of the Oxpemul site center. Based upon their distinctive style these two stelae have been assigned to the Early Classic period, possibly in the late 4th, or early 5th Century. That would make them approximately the same age as Calakmul Stela 114, the earliest known monument at that very large, nearby city. The fact that only the lower halves of Stelae 22 and 23 have been found, and found “out of circulation”, lying behind a small pyramid, raises many questions. For the time being these stelae are considered to have originally stood somewhere in South Oxpemul. Their presence in South Oxpemul suggests the possibility that the original administrative center of the Oxpemul community was there, with it later moving northward across a bajo zone to the larger, and higher hill at Oxpemul proper. These two Early Classic rulers can be referred to as “*U K'in*” (on Stela 22), and “*Chan B'alaj*” (on Stela 23), based upon their partially understood name glyphs. Stela 22 identifies ruler *U K'in* as being the third ruler in the dynastic sequence of the Stone Throne site. It is not clear whether *Chan B'alaj* ruled before or after “*U K'in*”.

Stelae 12 and 17 - The next known Oxpemul ruler is not until A.D. 731, when he and his mother are cited on Stela 12. Thus, there is a possible gap of 250-350 years between Stelae 22/23, and Stela 12. Whether this time gap in the erection of stelae is real and due to some misfortune befalling the rulership of Oxpemul, or is simply due to vagaries relating to the discovery and preservation of monuments is not known, but it is clear that the Stone Throne emblem glyph prevailed both before and after this possible temporal gap in the erection of monuments. What remains of the names on Stela 12 have prompted the nicknames “*Aj K'in K'inich*” for the ruler, and “*Lady Ajaw*” for his mother.

The *K'in* part of the ruler's name consists of a *k'in* glyph infixed as the eye of an Old

Deity, possibly the Sun God (?*K'inich Ahaw*), who seems to feature prominently on the front of some Oxpemul stelae. The inclusion of *k'in* in this ruler's name possibly signals a continuity with the Early Classic ruler cited on Stela 22, *U K'in*. Nikolai Grube (2005) has read the glyph following the Oxpemul Stone Throne emblem glyph on Stela 12 as *Uxte'Tuun*, a toponym associated with Calakmul. This issue was addressed above in the Emblem Glyphs section of this chapter.

Although the date of Stela 17 is problematic, there is a reasonable probability that it carries the same date as Stela 12, i.e., A.D. 731. The right side text of Stela 17 includes a "son of (father)" relationship glyph. The son's name is destroyed and illegible. The name of the father, who is cited as being a ruler of Oxpemul, appears to be the same as that of the ruler cited on Stela 12, indicating that both stelae refer to the same individual, *Aj K'in K'inich*. The Stela 17 text, however, seems to focus on the ruler's son, suggesting he is the warrior shown on the front of the stela. *Aj K'in K'inich* is the third known ruler of Oxpemul.

Stelae 11 and 13 - These stelae both date to A.D. 741, some 10 years after Stelae 12 and 17. Although the date on the left side of Stela 11 is still readable, the non-calendrical text on the right side of Stela 11 is badly damaged and only the top three glyphs have partially survived. The topmost is part of the date stated on the stela. The second glyph is the verb **U-CH'AM-?**, "he grasps". The third glyph likely commences the ruler's name, but it is damaged, and only a prefixed **ya-** is recognized.

Stela 13's south side text contains a Tzolk'in date, **2 Ahaw**. It is followed by the same verb as on Stela 11, **U-CH'AM-?ma**, "he grasps", followed by the beginning of the nominal phrase of the ruler who does the grasping. The name appears to be two or three glyphs long. The first glyph of the name possibly has **AJ-** as a prefix, and **-?ji**, or **-?yu**, as a suffix. The second features a bird head that has **-ni** as a postfix. The third, possibly a title, is almost all gone. The name of this ruler appears different than that of the ruler cited on Stelae 12 and 17, and he is accordingly believed to be a new sovereign who is the fourth known ruler of Oxpemul. Because of the uncertainty as to his name, he is referred to simply as "Ruler A".

Stelae 9 and 10 - The next stela with a firm date is Stela 9. It dates to A.D. 751, 10 years later than Stelae 11 and 13. Additionally, Stela 10, although its Long Count date was problematically stated, seems likely to carry the same date as Stela 9, A.D. 751. Whereas the earlier discussed stelae, Stelae 12, 17, 11 and 13, were all located in the East Plaza of Oxpemul, Stela 9, and its likely contemporaneous neighbor, Stela 10, are both located in the West Plaza. This, as noted earlier, provides a line of physical evidence suggesting that construction of the East Plaza preceded that of the West Plaza (Ruppert and Denison 1943:137).

Stela 9 is generally in an excellent state of preservation, except for the fact that it was damaged through the action of looters who visited the site between 1934 and 2004. Unfortunately, the surviving texts on the stela are all calendrical in nature. The only clue we have as to the "theme" of the stela is provided by the iconographic image present

on its front side, where a masked and armed presumed ruler of Oxpemul is shown standing on the head and body of a large, coiled snake. Although more than one interpretation of this image is possible, the most persuasive one is that it memorializes a military victory by Oxpemul over a site represented by “snake” symbolism. The issue of which site, or sites, was represented by the Snake emblem glyph was discussed above in the section labeled “Emblem Glyphs”. Altar 9, located in front of Stela 9, has two glyphs on its side, but their damaged condition renders the altar generally uninformative..

Stela 10, as noted above, may carry the same date as Stela 9, A.D. 751. Its six-glyph long right side text begins with **13 SEK**, ending the irregularly stated Long Count date on the left side. It is followed by the dedication verb **TAB’-[yi]**, *tab ’iy*, “ascended”. The next glyph down is almost totally destroyed, but it may be the name of the entity that was dedicated. The remaining three glyphs appear to be the name of the person who “ascended”, or performed the dedication. The first two of these seem to read **ta-ja-?la**, *?Tajal*. The last glyph of the name may be **ju-ya**, *juy*, or possibly **WAY-ya**, *way*, thus generating either *?Tajal ?Juy*, or *?Tajal ?Way* for the name (see the discussion below relating to Stela 2 and Stela 4). This name is different than the name of the preceding ruler, and is thus inferred to be that of the fifth known ruler of Oxpemul.

Stelae 18 and 19 - These two stelae are located in South Oxpemul in the general vicinity of the earliest known monuments at Oxpemul, Stelae 22 and 23. The erection of Stelae 18 and 19 in A.D. 756 took place only five years after that of Stelae 9 and 10 in the Oxpemul central precinct, and may signal increased importance for the South Oxpemul complex at that time. Both stelae refer to a ruler of the Stone Throne site that I have nicknamed “*Bird Head*” who engaged in a ceremonial “taking” of the *K’awil* (God K) scepter on April 8, A.D. 756. The full name of this ruler, as cited on Stelae 18 and 19, is distinctly different than that of the ruler cited on Stela 10, therefore Bird Head is understood to be the next ruler in the line of succession, and the sixth ruler known at Oxpemul.

Stelae 2 and 4 - The next two firmly dated stelae, Stelae 2 and 4, are located in the West Plaza of Oxpemul’s central precinct. These two stelae date to A.D. 771, 15 years after Stelae 18 and 19. The north and west side texts of Stela 2 contain the name of the ruler in power at that time, as well as the name of his mother. The long name of the ruler begins with **CHAK NIK-ki-?**, and includes **CHAN/KAN-na K’INICH**. I refer to him simply as *Chak Nik*. His name and titles are followed by the Bat emblem glyph, and the unreadable name of his mother. Grube (2005:95) has read the ruler’s name as *Chak Tajal Way ...*, perhaps based in part upon on the somewhat similar name on Stela 10, which dates to 20 years earlier. As noted above, the ruler cited on stelae 18 and 19 reigned between the time of the Stela 10 ruler and that of the Stela 2 ruler.

The name of the Stela 4 ruler commences on the rear of the stela and continues on to the left side. Enough of the eroded name survives to infer that it is likely the same as the name on Stela 2. What is very informative is that on Stela 2 this ruler is associated with the Bat emblem glyph, and on Stela 4 with the Stone Throne emblem glyph. Thus, at least in the year A.D. 771, the ruler at Oxpemul reigned over both the Stone Throne, and Bat entities. This ruler, cited on both Stelae 2 and 4, is the seventh known ruler at

Oxpemul. Rather enigmatically, the text on the side of associated Altar 4 seems to refer to an unrecognized individual who, in some sense, may have had oversight of both the Oxpemul ruler and the Oxpemul site in A.D. 771.

Stela 7 - This is the last firmly datable stela at Oxpemul. It dates to A.D. 830, 59 years after Stelae 2 and 4, and on that basis alone, it is likely that a different ruler is reigning at this time. The last four glyphs on Stela 7's south side contain a likely verb, followed by the name of the ruler who is presumably shown on the very deteriorated front side of the stela. The ruler's name is damaged. The first glyph of the name is possibly **K'INICH** (normally a title following a name, but occasionally incorporated directly into the name of a ruler), the second seems to be a bird-head which is distinctly different than the bird-head in the ruler's name on Stelae 18 and 19. The last glyph of the name may include a human face, but this is not certain. In the interim, we may refer to this ruler simply as *K'inich*. This text continues onto the rear side of the stela where five glyphs are present. The first is the Oxpemul "Stone Throne" E.G., indicating that the cited ruler is from Oxpemul. *K'inich* is the eighth known ruler of Oxpemul. The remaining four glyphs on the rear side are damaged and not fully discernable. Nikolai Grube (2005:94-95) indicates that the third glyph there is the *Uxte'Tuun* toponym associated with Calakmul. It possibly is that but close examination of all available photographs and an in-situ drawing does not provide a firm confirmation of that reading. See the *Emblem Glyphs* section of this chapter for further comments concerning this issue.

Ruler Data Provided by Stelae of Uncertain Date:

The remaining stelae, Stelae 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 14, 15, 16, 20 and 21 do not carry discernable dates. They are briefly highlighted below as to any data they provide, or don't provide, about Oxpemul rulers.

Stela 1 - No texts survived on Stela 1. The style in which the ruler is depicted on its front side has characteristics of both the Early Classic period ("ceremonial bar") and the Late Classic period ("feet pointing outward"), suggesting the possibility that Stela 1 dates to near the transition between the Early and Late Classic periods (i.e., ca. A.D. 600). If so, Stela 1 would fill in some of the large temporal gap between Stelae 22/23 and Stelae 12/17. There is no surviving indication of his name.

Stela 3 - This undated stela has text that cites at least two individuals who appear to have originated from Tikal. Altar 3's text contains the name of another individual who may also be from Tikal. Unfortunately, damage to the texts does not permit firm insights into either the date, or the nature of the interaction between Oxpemul and Tikal. Hypothetically, Stela 3 may be indicative of some form of alliance between the two sites. What is thought to be a rendering of the Sun God is present on the front of the stela.

Stela 5 - Stela 5 has an Old God (?Sun God) depicted on its front side. It does not have a date stated on it. Its text refers to a "dedication" event which was possibly conducted by a woman nicknamed "Lady Six". She seems to be associated with an unknown location, as indicated by the presence of the locative determinative **-NAL** in a damaged glyphic compound following her name. It is not clear if the woman is related to any

ruler of Oxpemul.

Stela 6 - This stela has no visible date on it. There are one or more names on this stela which depicts an armed person, a presumed ruler of Oxpemul, standing in the Late Classic period posture on its front side. The right side text has some damage that precludes a full understanding. The top glyph seems to read “U K’AL”, *u k’al*, “his ?20”, or possibly “his tying”. The next glyph includes an infixed K’IN sign which may signal the presence of a name. The left side text includes an apparent emblem glyph that somewhat resembles that of Tikal. It seems to be topped by AJAW, but lacks the *ch’uhul/k’uhul*, “holy” adjective. The glyph above the possible emblem glyph may be CHAN/KAN, *chan/kan*, “sky”, suggesting the presence of a name. The meaning of the texts on Stela 6 is opaque. Altar 6 indicates that a ruler cited on either the stela, or the top of the altar, is of the Bat location, or dynasty.

Stela 8 - It was carved on at least three sides but the lateral texts have largely faded away. The image on the front is that of an Oxpemul ruler standing in the pose used during the Late Classic period.

Stela 14 - This stela carried a Long Count date but it is too damaged to read. The ruler depicted on the front is shown totally in profile, and apparently in motion, in the manner of the Old Gods shown on Stelae 3, 5, and 10. However, his clothing and accoutrements make clear that he is an Oxpemul ruler rather than a deity. He is possibly the husband of the woman shown on the front of nearby Stela 16. His name is followed by the Oxpemul Stone Throne E.G. The associated Altar 14 has a text on its side which includes the “seating” glyph *chum*, followed by a postulated individual’s name that seems to include a bat head component. This is followed by the Stone Throne E.G, apparently indicating the cited individual was seated as a ruler of Oxpemul. Where this individual fits into the sequence of rulers at Oxpemul is not yet apparent.

Stela 15 - Although it carried no date, looted Stela 15’s crude style is consistent with the Terminal Classic period, suggesting that a contingent of elite continued to function at Oxpemul beyond A.D. 830, the last firm date known at the site. Also, see Stela 20 below. An armed individual with an elaborate headdress was shown on the front of this stela. It is uncertain as to whether he was a ruler.

Stela 16 - It has the image of a woman on its front side, the only woman honored in this way at Oxpemul. She is standing with her feet pointed outward, in the Late Classic style. The rear side has two columns of destroyed glyphs which may have stated a date. The lateral texts are almost totally gone, but there is possibly an *U K’in* glyph on the right side, which may reflect some form of continuity with the Early Classic ruler shown on Stela 22. The associated altar, Altar 15, has two glyphs on its side, the first of which is the Bat emblem glyph. It is possibly followed by the title *kalo’ mte’* (Grube 2005:95). The lady on the front of Stela 16 is possibly the wife of the ruler cited on the symmetrically positioned Stela 14.

Stela 20 - Stela 20’s provenience and iconography relate it to the ball game. Its crude

style suggests it dates to the Terminal Classic period. It is not clear if the individual depicted on it is a ruler or not.

Stela 21 - This small stela had texts on it but looters cut and removed parts of it so no particulars are available about its message.

In summary, based on the discussion above about rulers cited on the dated monuments, eight different rulers can be discerned during the period extending from ca. A.D. 400 until A.D. 830. Given the damage to the names, the list is necessarily tentative, and all rulers are referred to by nicknames. The two earliest known rulers were *U K'in* and *Chan B'alaj*, and we do not know which of these two was the earliest. We do know that *U K'in* was the third ruler in the dynastic sequence of the Stone Throne site, so there were at least two rulers who preceded him, one of whom was possibly *Chan B'alaj*. After an extensive time gap, we have the next ruler, *Aj K'in K'inich*. He is followed successively by *Ruler A*, *?Tajal ?Juy*, *Bird Head*, *Chak Nik*, and finally (in A.D. 830) by *K'inich*.

The stelae lacking firm dates do not provide much additional data about the names of the rulers of Oxpemul. The text on Altar 14 refers to the seating of a lord of Oxpemul, whose name seems to include a bat head. The possible reference to the same individual on the rear of dated Stela 17 may provide a clue as to the date of this ruler.

Culture-History Summary

An excavation by Dr. Maria del Rosario Domínguez Carrasco of CIHS-UAC during the 2009 field season fortuitously encountered a Late Preclassic structure below the East Plaza, thereby providing a preliminary baseline for settlement construction at the site (William Folan, personal communication 2010). Due to the limited amount of excavation at Oxpemul so far, evidence about the site's culture history is based principally upon the settlement pattern data produced by the CIHS-UAC mapping efforts, and by the iconography and hieroglyphic texts reported on in this volume. The mapping data indicate that Oxpemul grew to become a town-sized community at the apogee of its life cycle, with a total population of ca. 5000 persons living within the 9 sq. km. area that has currently been mapped (Folan et al 2008). The evidence provided by Stelae 22 and 23 suggests that town-sized status for Oxpemul was achieved by early in the Early Classic period when it became the seat of a royal court headed by a king. It continued as such until at least until A.D. 830, and likely beyond that into the Terminal Classic period. A possible interregnum occurred during the late Early Classic and early Late Classic periods.

The mapping thus far accomplished shows that the Oxpemul settlement area extended outward in all directions from the central precinct area, with the settlement to the west and south being mainly situated on low rises within a vast area of shallow, seasonally inundated *bajo* zones where intensive agriculture possibly was practiced. South Oxpemul, an important elite enclave, was located on a hill within this low zone. A causeway that connected the Oxpemul central precinct to South Oxpemul has recently been discovered (see Figures 4 and 5). South Oxpemul was apparently important during

the early development of kingship at the site, and may have regained importance ca. A.D. 756, the time of Stelae 18 and 19.

It seems likely that during much of the time when Oxpemul was ruled by a local king, the site was also part of a regional state whose capital was at the city of Calakmul. This inference is based upon Oxpemul's smaller size and proximity to much larger Calakmul (Marcus 1973,1987), the similarity between the layout of the central precincts of Oxpemul and Calakmul (Folan et al 2008), and limited textual evidence. The textual evidence at Oxpemul suggesting a possible political linkage between Calakmul and Oxpemul are three occurrences of the Bat emblem glyph which may have represented Calakmul during parts of the Early Classic and Late Classic periods (Martin 2005). Since the Bat emblem glyph at Oxpemul is associated with a ruler who also proclaimed himself "Lord of the Stone Throne (Oxpemul)" location, it is possible that a former Bat ruler of Calakmul took refuge at Oxpemul. The political connection between Calakmul and Oxpemul would be further strengthened if Grube's reading of the *Uxte'tuun* glyph at Oxpemul proves correct.

Folan et al (2008) have suggested that Oxpemul served as a frontier fortress for the Calakmul Regional State, protecting its northern flank from the Río Bec Regional State, in the way that Early Classic Río Azul is seen as having been a frontier site for the Tikal Regional State that monitored its borders with the Calakmul and Río Bec Regional States (Adams 1999:116-117,123-126). Consistent with this view is the iconography on a number of Oxpemul stelae, starting with the earliest, that indicate Oxpemul periodically engaged in military conflicts with other settlement units, including one with the Snake site/dynasty.

For approximately 400 years, Oxpemul was represented in the writing system by the "Stone Throne" emblem glyph. At least eight rulers of the Stone Throne site are discernible in the texts at Oxpemul, two in the Early Classic period, and six in the century from A.D. 731-830. The "sun" (*k'in*) was a frequent element in the names of these rulers, and the fronts of three stelae seem to depict images of the Sun God who may have been a patron god for the site.

In the year A.D. 771 the ruler of Oxpemul was presented on Stelae 2 and 4 as reigning over both the Stone Throne emblem glyph, and the Bat emblem glyph entities. Subsequently, the last firmly dated stela at Oxpemul, Stela 7 in A.D. 830, omitted any mention of the Bat emblem. Overall, only one stela out of the 23 stelae present at Oxpemul, and only two altars out of the 10 carved altars at Oxpemul, carry the Bat emblem glyph. These facts make it clear that the presence of the Bat emblem glyph at Oxpemul was a short-lived, aberrant phenomenon, probably brought on by severe political disruptions in the region. Accordingly, it is inappropriate to characterize Oxpemul as being the Bat site (Grube 2005:95,98; Martin 2005:10). Throughout its moderately long history, Oxpemul represented itself as being the Stone Throne emblem glyph site.

Two stylistically crude monuments (Stelae 15 and 20) suggest that elite persons

continued to live at Oxpemul until some time in the Terminal Classic period, after which the Stone Throne site, together with a large number of other sites in the Maya lowlands, succumbed to the catastrophic decline known as the Maya Collapse, and was abandoned.

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