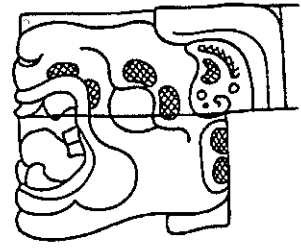


## Copán Mosaics Project

### Copán Note\* 97

September, 1991



## A New Assessment of Smoke-Monkey, the 14th Successor in the line of Yax-K'uk'-Mo'

by Linda Schele and Barbara Fash

edited by Khristaan Villela

Of the Late Classic rulers of Copán, the fourteenth, who has been dubbed Smoke-Monkey, has been the most elusive because he is known principally from the retrospective records of his successors. In his only securely identified portrait, Yax-Pak depicted Smoke-Monkey on the south side of Altar Q (Fig. 1) as the fourteenth Copán ruler. Smoke-Monkey's parentage was not recorded by his successors. But Smoke-Shell, who was responsible for the posthumous records on the Hieroglyphic Stair and the base of Stela N, recorded himself (Fig. 2) as the *yune*, "child of" Smoke-Monkey (Schele and Grube 1988). This inscription on the base of Stela N is rendered as if it were written on four strips of cloth<sup>1</sup> or paper draped on the base, one to each side. The north-south strips record data on Smoke-Monkey. The east and west strips record the accession of Smoke-

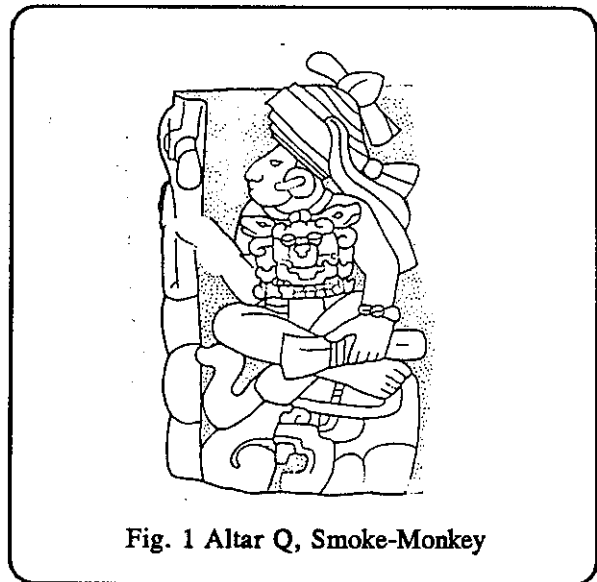


Fig. 1 Altar Q, Smoke-Monkey

\*The Copán Notes are a running series of commentaries and small reports deriving from the multidisciplinary research project designed to conserve, document, and analyze the architectural and sculpture monuments of the Classic Maya ruins of Copán. Originally undertaken by William L. Fash and known as the Copán Mosaics Project, this endeavor has since June 1988 formed part of the larger Copán Acropolis Project, funded and carried out by the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia through financing from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Funding for the Copán Mosaics Project, the Copán Hieroglyphic Stairway Project, and supplementary funding for the Copán Acropolis Project has been provided by the National Science Foundation (1986-1988), the National Geographic Society (1986-1989), the National Endowment for the Humanities (1986-1987), the Center for Field Research (EARTHWATCH; 1985-1988), the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (1987; 1989), the H.J. Heinz Charitable Fund (1986), Council for International Exchange of Scholars (1987), and Northern Illinois University (1985-1989). The Copán Acropolis Project, as a dependency of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia, is subject to the rules of that body. Regarding any re-use or subsequent distribution of these materials presented in the Copán Notes or in project publications, those rules stipulate that any publication using materials (either written or in the form of line drawings or photographs) derived from the Copán Acropolis Project must receive prior written consent from the Project Director (William Fash) and the Director of the Instituto (José María Casco). These notes are published by the Copán Acropolis Archaeological Project and the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia.

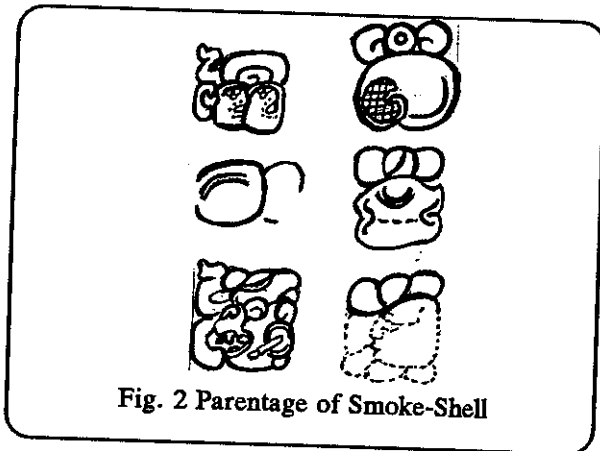


Fig. 2 Parentage of Smoke-Shell

Shell, his name, and parentage. This parent-filial relationship explains why Smoke-Shell paid so much attention to his predecessor and it suggests that the portrait on the south side of Stela N may be intended to represent his father.

Smoke-Monkey's accession and death were recorded on the Hieroglyphic Stair on a series of fragments from the upper third of the reset stairs from which Stuart (Stuart and Schele 1986:13) reassembled the date 9.15.6.16.5 6 Chikchan 3 Yaxk'in, which had also been deciphered by Morley (1920:262-263). Stuart recognized that the event is *chumwan ti ahawle(l)*, "was seated in ahaw-ship" (Fig. 3). Furthermore, in this text

Stuart found a notation of "fourteenth successor of the ch'ahom, Mah K'ina Yax-K'uk'-Mo', west batab." Since the same date is repeated on the base of Stela N with the verb *ahawyan*—which is used for "accession" both on the west panel of the Palenque Temple of Inscriptions and on Naranjo Altar 1—the date of the event and its identification as an accession is confirmed.

Morley's and Stuart's reconstructions showed that this accession date connected to the death of 18-Rabbit (Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil) by a distance number of thirty-nine days, exactly the number of days that had elapsed after that king's unfortunate death at the hands of Kawak-Sky of Quiriguá on 9.15.6.15.5 6 Kimi 14 Tz'ek. Furthermore, Smoke-Monkey chose to accede on the next maximum elongation of the Morningstar (45.6734) after the death of his predecessor. Interestingly, this Morningstar station was also the next elongation after Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil's dedication of the final phase of the ballcourt on 9.15.6.8.13 10 Ben 16 K'ayab (Grube, Schele, Stuart, and Fash 1989), the immediately previous elongation of the Eveningstar. We suggest that Smoke-Monkey chose the date of his accession to reflect these Venus connections.

Barbara Fash (Fash et al. n.d.) has been instrumental in identifying one of the major works

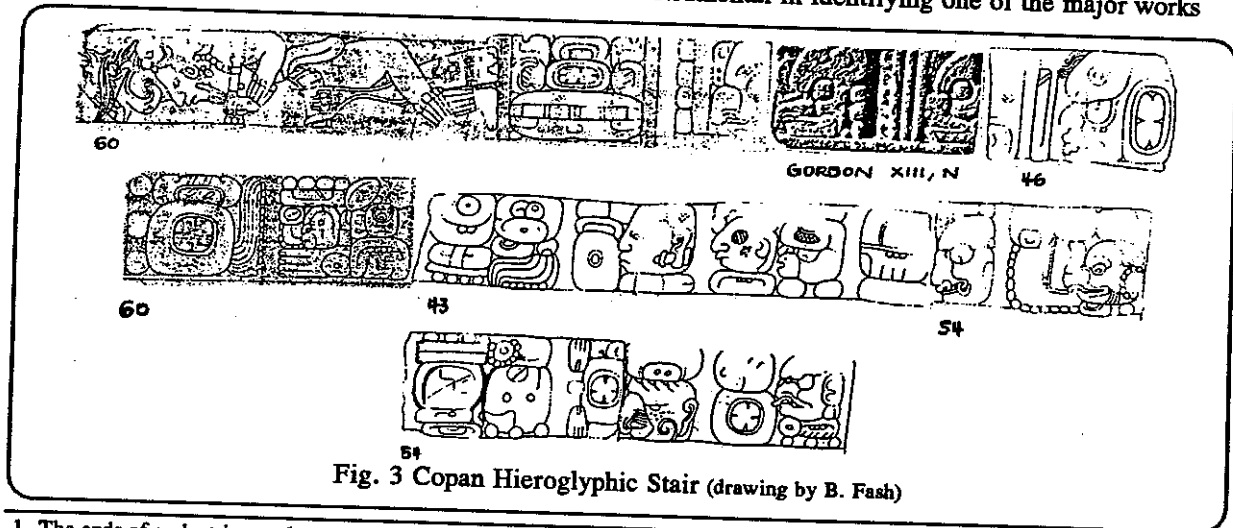


Fig. 3 Copan Hieroglyphic Stair (drawing by B. Fash)

1. The ends of each strip are decorated with a woven pattern. Because of short extensions of the base to the south, the south ends of the north-south strips lie flat. These decorated ends fold over the edge of the base on all other sides. Each strip lies on top of a crossing strip at one end and below another on the other end. Presumably, these relief strips represent what would have been real paper strips used in ritual, so that this kind of glyphic information written on perishable materials may have been used with other stelae which do not have them carved on the base. This seems confirmed by the many stela bases and altars from early reigns, principally Stela E, the outlyers, and Altars Y, Z, and A', which have paper or cloth strips and bows carved around them; as if they were modern "birthday presents."



Fig. 4 Temple 22a glyph (drawing by B. Fash)

of his reign--Structure 10L-22a. After identifying Structure 10L-22a as a *popol nah* or "house of counsel or community," she reassembled a set of glyphs once mounted on the facade of the building. Working with David Stuart identified one as 9 Ahaw<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 4). Stuart surmised that the most likely period ending to which this date might refer was 9.15.15.0.0 9 Ahaw 18 Xul.<sup>3</sup> Since this date

falls within Smoke-Monkey's reign, Structure 10L-22a (Fash et al. n.d.) is now taken to be his commission.

Nikolai Grube (in a letter dated 1989) also tentatively identified the dedication of something called *Ek'-??-Wayib*, "Venus-??-Nawal," by Yax-Pak on 9.15.12.0.0 as a reference to the great Venus Stair to the south of Structure 10L-22a. This event was recorded on a small oddly shaped stone recovered from the rear room of Structure 10L-22a (Fig. 5). There are still problems with the identification of the date and the actor on this monument. David Stuart, for example, has suggested that the distance number of "2 k'atuns and 13" might be meant as "13 tuns into the second k'atun," for thirty-six years, instead of the fifty-three years required by a standard reading. If he is right, the distance number reaches 9.16.12.0.0, near Yax-Pak's accession, and moreover, might

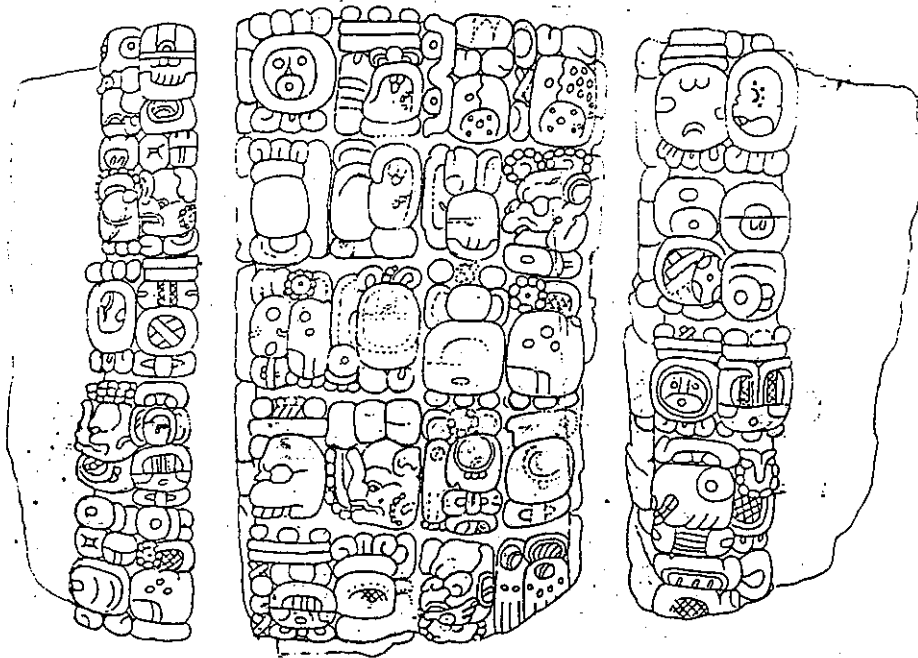


Fig. 5  
Stone from  
Temple 22a

2. Her insights and careful analysis of these pieces convinced David Stuart they recorded 9 Ahaw and probably referred to a period ending. In working with the possibilities, Stuart (in Schele, Stuart, Grube, and Lounsbury 1989) settled on the date 9.15.15.0.0 as the most likely.
3. This date must fit within an archaeologically feasible time-period following the erection of the final phase of Temple 22 and before the Temple 26 annex. The date should also be a major period ending such as a hotun, lahuntun, or k'atun. The only eligible 9 Ahaw fulfilling these requirements: falling after 9.14.3.6.8, the dedication date of Temple 22, and ca. 9.16.5.0.0, the dedication of Temple 26; is 9.15.15.0.0.



Fig. 6 Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil's death  
(drawing by B. Fash)

be a "rounded" distance number intended to refer to his accession date. If this was the intended chronology, then the Venus Stair was the work of Yax-Pak. But if the distance number is to be taken as a standard notation (and it is written in the standard way), then the stair was dedicated during Smoke-Monkey's reign and Yax-Pak participated in the rites, perhaps as a youngster.

Further information on Smoke-Monkey may be gleaned from the inscriptions of Quiriguá. In his own study of the Quiriguá-Copán conflict that led to the sacrifice of Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil, Peter Mathews (personal communication, 1980) noted that Kawak-Sky of Quiriguá called himself the "fourteenth in the succession." We had dismissed this reference as involving the Copán succession count, but new evidence lends support to Mathews's idea. In a reevaluation of this Copán-Quiriguá connection, Schele (1989b) presented evidence that Kawak-Sky's successor recorded Yax-K'uk'-Mo' as the founder of Quiriguá's lineage and, as Andrea Stone first pointed out, referred directly to the dates and events recorded on Copán Altar Q. Furthermore, Quiriguá may have been governed by the third successor of Copán (Schele 1989a) so that the ruling families of the two sites sprang from the same source early in Copán's history. This led Schele (1989b:8-9) to suggest that Kawak-Sky was a minor brother or cousin of the Copán king he killed. This may be close to the mark.

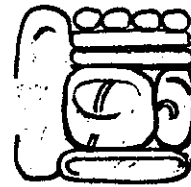


Fig. 7 Kawak-Sky's authority

Kawak-Sky recorded his relationship to his Copán contemporaries in two ways. He acknowledged that he acceded "under the authority" of Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil (Stuart 1987), thus conceding that Quiriguá was part of Copán's hegemony when he became its ruler. Secondly, he repeatedly proclaimed that he sacrificed the same Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil on 9.15.6.14.6 (May 3, 738). At Copán, the results of this family squabble may also be recorded on the Hieroglyphic Stair of Structure 10L-26 (Schele 1990) as the "death" of Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil by a "*tok'-pakal* (flint-shield)," the Maya symbol of warfare (Fig. 6). Since Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil noted himself as the thirteenth in the succession of the founder, Mathews suggested that Kawak-Sky proclaimed himself the proper heir of Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil by appropriating the "fourteenth in the succession" title for himself (Fig. 7). Subsequently, Stuart (Stuart and Schele 1986) demonstrated that Smoke-Monkey also declared himself "fourteenth in the succession of Yax-K'uk'-Mo'." Although Copán clearly honored Smoke-Monkey's claim as the legitimate one, both men may have had a basis to make it.<sup>4</sup>

Kawak-Sky outlived Smoke-Monkey by a considerable number of years. He died on 9.17.14.13.2 11 Ik' 5 Yax (July 31, 785), some thirty-six and a half years after his rival's death on 9.15.17.12.16 10 Kib 4 Wayeb (February 4, 749). With a reign of sixty years, 210 days, he lived to see the rival

fourteenth ruler at Copán take Waxaklahun-Ubah-K'awil's place as king, then die himself, to be replaced by his son, Smoke-Shell. Smoke-Shell died in his turn, to be replaced by Yax-Pak-Chan-Yat, the sixteenth and last king in the succession of Yax-K'uk'-Mo'.

Moreover, Mathews's observation that Kawak-Sky fancied himself the fourteenth successor is quite handily explained by the status of Kawak-Sky and Smoke-Monkey as "siblings." They each claimed to be the next successor of the founder, but the claim that prevailed was the one at the home city of Copán. The estrangement between Quiriguá and Copán did not last much past Kawak-Sky's death, for his successors, especially, Jade-Sky, the last recorded ruler of Quiriguá, featured the connection between the two polities by emphasizing their shared descent from Yax-K'uk'-Mo'. Yax-Pak apparently accepted the renewed accord, for he visited Quiriguá to celebrate the end of the nineteenth k'atun.

Smoke-Monkey has been a shadowy character in the history of Copán because no written texts survived from his reign. However, Structure 10L-22a can now be attributed to his reign and perhaps also the final phase of the Venus Stair and dance platform (Structure 10L-25) above it. As the complex stratigraphy of the East Court is unraveled by future archaeological investigation, we may be able to make more attributions to his reign and find that he was not the ineffective place-holder we previously thought.

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4. Grube, Schele, and several epigraphers have noticed a sibling statement on Quirigu Stela D and entertained the possibility that it referred to Smoke-Monkey of Copán as the brother of Kawak-Sky. However, in summer 1991, Schele, Grube, and Federico Fahsen examined the original monument and decided that the name does not refer to the Copán ruler, although there are some resemblances between the nominal phrases.