T299 SPLIT AS THE LOGOGRAPHIC SIGN FOR **PA'**

Erik Boot

Rijswijk, the Netherlands (e-mail: wukyabnal@hotmail.com)

Introduction

In this essay I present examples of the substitution of syllabic signs of the value **pa** with the logographic sign cataloged by Thompson (1962: 450) as T299 and which can be nick-named SPLIT[1]. This sign is commonly employed in the epigraphic or Classic Maya month name Pax(il). Examples of T299 can be found all over the Maya area; in this essay specifically examples from Aguateca, Xcalumkin, and an unprovenanced painted ceramic vessel are illustrated. The earliest example of T299 can be found at Yaxchilán (Lintel 47, A.D. 526) and the latest example can be found in the Codex Dresden[2].

---

[1] In this essay the following phonemic orthography is employed in representing lexical items in Classic Maya: ´, a, b', ch, ch', e, h, i, j, k, k', l, m, n, o, p, p', s, t, t', tz, tz', u, w, x, and y. In this orthography the /h/ represents a glottal aspirate or glottal voiced fricative (/h/ as in English "house"), while /j/ represents a velar aspirate or velar voiced fricative (/j/ as in Spanish "joya") (cf. Grube n.d.). In this essay no reconstruction of vowel complexity or quality is provided, as originally suggested by Houston, Stuart, and Robertson, and amended and extended by Lacadena and Wichmann. Absence or presence of vowel complexity would have been indicated by specific harmonic and disharmonic spellings. At present I follow a proposal by Kaufman and Justeson in which disharmonic spellings are identified as spelling a reflection of their most common -V/ («-V:l») suffix (cf. Kaufman 2003: 29-34). All transliterations are only reconstructions of Classic Maya items, not "true" linguistic items (cf. Boot 2002: 6-7). In the transcription of Maya hieroglyphic signs uppercase bold type letters refer to logographic values (i.e. **PA'**), while lowercase bold type letters refer to syllabic values (i.e. **pa**). Transliterations thereof will be placed in italics (i.e. *kitpa'*). Infixed signs are placed between square brackets (i.e. [**'i**]**tz'a-ti**). Original spellings from source material (i.e. dictionaries, grammars, or previous publications) will be retained and placed between double pointed or angular brackets (i.e. «-V:l»). T-numbers, if applicable, refer to the hieroglyphic signs as cataloged by Thompson (1962).

[2] On Yaxchilán Lintel 47 [B3], which pairs with Lintel 48, the second part of the Long Count and Supplementary Series can be found of the date 9.4.11.8.16, 2 Kib' 19 Pax, or February 11, A.D. 526. Here, the first dated example, the T299 SPLIT sign is employed in the sign for the month Pax(il). The latest example of T299 SPLIT may be recorded in the Codex Dresden [68A2-A1], in a collocation spelled T299.SPLIT-SKY-**na-ja**. referring to the event depicted in the accompanying illustration, a so-called Square Nosed Beastie emerging from a Sky Band amidst a watery down pour. Note Grube (1990: 101) who suggests that Machaquilá Stela 3 (at 9.19.5.11.0, 1 Ajaw 13 Kumk'uh, or November 12, A.D. 826) has the latest example of T299 SPLIT.

The Toponym for Aguateca

The Petexbatún area in the Petén was of great importance for a part of Classic Maya political history (cf. Demarest 1997; Houston 1993). The foundation of Dos Pilas in the early 600s A.D. started this period; Dos Pilas (a site that carried the same "Emblem Glyph" as Tikal, i.e. Mutal) at one time had its twin capital at Aguateca, a site strategically located at the edge of natural cliffs with a gorge running through the site.

Through recent decipherments many sites in the Maya area are now known by their past Classic Maya geographical name(s) or toponym(s) (cf. Stuart and Houston 1994). Also the site of Aguateca is known through a toponym, which until recently could only be deciphered in part (Figure 1a). The Aguateca toponym opens with the logographic sign for **K'INICH**, to is attached a T299 SPLIT sign that penetrates the T529 **WITZ** "hill, mountain" sign. The value of T529 **WITZ** is confirmed through the occasional phonetic complement **wi** (cf. Stuart 1987: 16-25). The text on one of the recently discovered steps of Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2 (cf. Fahsen 2002, 2003) may provide an important substitution. The example can be found on Step 2 at position F2 (Figure 1b-c). It was Nikolai Grube who first suggested that this toponym might refer to Aguateca (cf. Fahsen 2002). I gather he based his observation of the fact that it opens with **K'INICH** and terminates in **WITZ**, just like the known examples of the Aguateca toponym. In Classic Maya texts there is no other toponym that follows this specific spelling pattern. The present author has suggested at another occasion that this particular spelling is indeed a substitution for the Aguateca toponym. This substitution employs two syllabic signs and may be transcribed as **K'INICH-pa-'a-WITZ** for K'inich Pa'witz or "Hot/Sunny Split Mountain or Hill" (cf. Boot 2002). If this identification is correct, the T299 SPLIT sign is substituted by the pair of syllabic signs **pa-'a** and T299 may thus be logographic **PA'**.

The sign that the sculptor-scribe at Dos Pilas used for the syllabic sign **pa** is oval in shape and contains a smaller oval inner area defined by a continuous double line and which is marked by cross-hatching. In Classic Maya inscriptions the hieroglyphic sign regularly employed for **pa** contains a circular area marked by cross-hatching. The bottom section of the circular area marked by cross-hatching generally is either open or marked by a line of dots (cf. Montgomery 2002: 199-203). As such some doubt might be cast on the identification of the spelling **pa-'a** at Dos Pilas and subsequently also on the possible logographic value of T299 SPLIT as **PA'**. A different context with a straightforward and clear substitution may provide a better case for the oval hieroglyphic sign with a continuous oval shaped area marked by cross-hatching indeed being syllabic **pa** and thus T299 SPLIT as **PA'**.

The Nominal Phrase Kitpa' at Xcalumkin

At Xcalumkin several individual nominal phrases have been identified, the most common one of which is Kitpa' (cf. Boot 1997, Davoust 1991, Grube 1994, Hull n.d.). His nominal and titular phrase can be found five times and he is mentioned at all major structures (Boot 1997: 144) and this individual at one time may have been the

local or regional ruler (entitled *sajal*) who commisioned most of the monuments bearing inscriptions.

His nominal phrase can be found in different spellings. The underside of Lintel 4 (Figure 2a) records the phrase [A1] **'IX** [B1] **ma-b'a** [C1] **lu-ma** [C2] **ya-'AT-li** [D1] **ki-ti** [E1] **pa-'a** for *ix(ik) mab' lum yat(an)il kitpa'* "Lady Mab' Lum is the wife/partner of Kitpa' ". Stone IV, from the Hieroglyphic Cornice at the South Building of Xcalumkin (Figure 2b), contains part of the nominal phrase of Kitpa' (it starts on Stone II and continues on Stone V); clearly visible are **ti pa-'a 'e** for *(ki)tpa' e(katz)*. On Column 6 (Figure 2c), the dedicatory text can be transcribed as [A1] **'u-wo-jo-li** [A2] **ki-ti-pa-'a** [A3] **'i-ka-tzi** [A4] **sa-ja-la** [A5] **['i]tz'a-ti** for *uwojol kitpa' ikatz sajal itz'at* "it is the glyphic record of Kitpa', (who is entitled) Ikatz Sajal Itz'at". In this phrase *ikatz* substitutes for *ekatz*[3]. A fourth example of the nominal phrase of Kitpa' can be found in the text on Panel 8 (which forms a pair with Panel 7) (Figure 2d); the last hieroglyphic collocation provides a spelling **ki-ti pa-'a** for Kitpa' in which the scribe employed a unique hieroglyphic sign. The shape of the sign reminds one of some kind of an object with a crack or split; in various Maya languages one can find verbal expressions with as its root *pa'* for "to break, to cleave, to split" (cf. Dienhart 1989: 603-604; Kaufman 2003: 873). For a long time this unique sign has been identified as a syllabic sign **pa**, but it actually may be a logographic sign (and possibly a full glyphic variant of T299 SPLIT). The fifth example of the nominal phrase Kitpa' can be found on Panel 5 (which forms a pair with Panel 6) (not illustrated); it employs a common sign for **pa**, with an inner area defined by a single circular line, open at the bottom, the inner area itself is marked by cross-hatching.

In the nominal phrase of Kitpa' the Classic Maya scribes employed several different hieroglyphic signs to provide the sound /pa/ in the spelling of *pa'*. There are at least three slightly different syllabic signs with the value **pa** involved, each specifically marked with a center area in which cross-hatching appears. Possibly a fourth sign may be logographic **PA'**, based as it is on the hieroglyphic representation of an object with a crack or split.

The Classic Maya Month Name Pax(il)

At the time of the conquest, the sixteenth month in the Yucatecan calendar was named Pax (cf. Landa 1566: MS37r [bottom]). Hieroglyphic spellings from the Classic period indicate that the sixteenth month was known as Pax or Paxil. Most examples of the month Pax(il) consist of the sign T548 with T299 penetrating the top of the sign (Thompson cataloged the conflation of the two signs as T549); more rare examples have T299 penetrate T741a (Figure 3a).

Examples of the month Pax(il), discussed first by Stuart (1987: 31-33), showed the existence of syllabic spellings T299-**xi** at Dos Pilas and Ixtutz (Figure 3b). An example recently uncovered at Ek' Balam provides the Calendar Round date 8 Lamat

---

[3] The Classic Maya items *ekatz* and *ikatz* "load, tribute, bundle" substitute in the titular section of the Kitpa' nominal phrase. Kitpa' carries as his highest title *sajal*, a title possibly connected to his local or regional position as tribute collector (possibly the order *ikatz sajal* is not accidental).

1 Pax (Figure 3c), with the month name Pax(il) also spelled as T299-**xi**; interestingly, T299 SPLIT is superfixed to the **xi** sign, it does not penetrate or conflate with it. An unprovenanced ceramic vessel painted in the so-called Codex Style, cataloged as Kerr No. 1813, contains the Calendar Round date 7 Muluk 15 Pax(il) (actually an impossible calendrical combination); the month name Pax(il) is spelled by three separate signs as **pa-xi-la** (Figure 3d). Most notable is the sign for **pa**; the oval shaped sign contains an inner oval area defined by a continuous single line, while the inside is marked by cross-hatching[4]. In this particular example the Classic month name was Paxil. Seemingly, the sign used for **pa** on Kerr No. 1813 is the same sign as used for **pa** at Dos Pilas in the toponymic reference to Aguateca. Based on the substitution at Dos Pilas in the context of the possible toponymic reference to Aguateca, T299 may have the logographic value **PA'**. As such the examples of the month name Pax at Dos Pilas, Ixtutz, and Ek Balam can be deciphered **PA'-xi** for Pax (or Pax[il]).

Examples of the month name Pax(il) in Classic hieroglyphic texts show the substitution between T299-**xi** and **pa-xi-la**. The sign used for **pa** in this context is the same (or at least very similar to) as the sign for **pa** as employed at Dos Pilas in the spelling **K'INICH-pa-'a-WITZ**; the oval shaped sign for **pa** contains an inner oval area defined by a continuous single line marked by cross-hatching[5]. In the context of the month name Pax(il) this particular substitution provides evidence that T299 is logographic **PA'**.

Final Remarks

In this essay I presented three specific hieroglyphic contexts in which specific substitutions of various syllabic signs with the value **pa** substitute for T299 SPLIT. The first hieroglyphic context was a possible spelling **K'INICH-pa-'a-WITZ** which seemed to substitute for the Aguateca toponym spelled **K'INICH-**T299.SPLIT-**WITZ**. The hieroglyphic sign employed for **pa** was an uncommon sign, although it shares many traits with regular signs for **pa**.

The second hieroglyphic context was the spelling of the nominal phrase of Kitpa' at Xcalumkin. Common signs for **pa** were used in the spelling **ki-ti pa-'a** for Kitpa', while one example seemed to contain a unique sign representing a crack or split. This sign may be a (local or regional) full variant of T299 SPLIT and may thus be logographic **PA'**. The third hieroglyphic context was the spelling of the Classic month name Pax(il); certain variants provided the spelling T299-**xi**, while one spelling

---

[4] Stuart also illustrates the example from Kerr No. 1813 in his "Ten Phonetic Syllables" (as Figure 44c); his drawing shows the inner oval shape of the **pa** sign as defined by a broken line, the bottom part not being present, which is in contrast with the photograph as taken by Justin Kerr and as illustrated in Figure 3d in this essay.

[5] The common verb root *tz'ap-* "to erect, to plant; to hoist" can be found written **tz'a**[**pa**], in which in general the sign for **pa** contains an oval or circular area marked by cross-hatching, but of which the bottom is open or defined by a semi-circular line of dots. However, a singular example at Chichén Itzá (High Priest's Grave, Pillar 4: E1; cf. Grube, Lacadena, and Martin 2003: II-79) employs a **pa** sign with a closed inner area marked by cross-hatching.

provided **pa-xi-la**, in which the sign for **pa** was the same or at least very similar to the sign used for **pa** at Dos Pilas. Based on the substitution with a syllabic sign for **pa**, this calendrical context provides good evidence that T299 was logographic **PA'**[6].

To conclude, three specific hieroglyphic contexts provide substitutions of various closely related syllabic signs with the value **pa** with T299 SPLIT. Based on these particular substititions I propose that T299 SPLIT was logographic **PA'**. As such the spelling at Dos Pilas indeed refers to the Aguateca toponym; its fully logographic form can now be transcribed as **K'INICH-PA'-WITZ** or K'inich Pa'witz "Hot/Sunny Split Mountain or Hill". This description closely resembles the true geographical setting of the site of Aguateca in the Petexbatún. At Xcalumkin local scribes employed a unique hieroglyphic sign that may indeed be identified as the full form of T299 SPLIT as **PA'**, occuring in the nominal phrase Kitpa'.

References

Boot, Erik
1997   Notes on the Inscriptions of Xcalumkin, Campeche, Mexico. *Yumtzilob*, 8 (2): 124-148.

2002a A Preliminary Classic Maya-English, English-Maya Vocabulary of Hieroglyphic Readings. *Mesoweb Resources*.
        URL: http://www.mesoweb.com/resources/vocabulary/index.html

2002b The Life and Times of B'alah Chan K'awil of Mutal (Dos Pilas), According to Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2. *Mesoweb Features*.
        URL: http://www.mesoweb.com/features/boot/DPLHS2.pdf

Davoust, Michel
1991   Nueva lectura de las inscripciones de Xcalumkin, Campeche, Mexico. *Mesoamerica*, 22: 249-276.

Demarest, Arthur A.
1997   The Vanderbilt Petexbatun Regional Archaeological Project 1989-1994. *Ancient Mesoamerica*, 8: 209-227.

---

[6] The main signs of one of the "Emblem Glyphs" of Yaxchilán and the "Emblem Glyph" of Uaxactún can be transcribed as T299.SPLIT-SKY-**na**. If T299 is **PA'**, these both may be transcribed as **PA'-CHAN-na** or Pa'chan, possibly Pachan. At present I am not sure if spellings SPLIT-EARTH-**la-ja** at Palenque (Temple of the Inscriptions, Center Tablet: B4, B5) contain a variant of T299 or another hieroglyphic sign; a crack is depicted running through the top part of the EARTH sign, but from this crack a young vegetal shoot seems to emerge, not T299. A nominal phrase at Machaquilá (e.g. Stela 3) may be transcribed [T299.SPLIT?]**K'IN-ni CHAK-ki**; possibly this nominal phrase contains T299 SPLIT, but it may be another sign with a different value, when compared to very similar nominal phrases at Piedras Negras and Ucanal which can be transcribed **SIY-ya K'IN-ni CHAK-ki**.

Dienhart, John M.
1989   *The Mayan Languages. A Comparative Vocabulary*. Three Volumes. Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press.

Fahsen, Federico
2002   Rescuing the Origins of Dos Pilas Dynasty: A Salvage of Hieroglyphic Stairway #2, Structure L5-49. *FAMSI Grantee Reports* (Interim report). URL: http://www.famsi.org/reports/01098/interim/index.html

2003   Rescuing the Origins of Dos Pilas Dynasty: A Salvage of Hieroglyphic Stairway #2, Structure L5-49. *FAMSI Grantee Reports* (Final report). URL: http://www.famsi.org/reports/01098/index.html

Graham, Ian, and Eric Von Euw
1992   *Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions, Volume 4, Part 3: Uxmal, Xcalumkin*. Cambridge: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.

Grube, Nikolai
1990   Die Entwicklung der Mayaschrift. *Acta Mesoamericana 3*. Berlin, Germany: Verlag Von Flemming.

1994   Hieroglyphic Sources for the History of Northwest Yucatan. *Hidden among the Hills: Archaeology of the Northwest Yucatan Peninsula*, Hanns J. Prem (ed.), pp. 316-358. Acta Mesoamericana 7. Mockmühl, Germany: Verlag Von Flemming.

n.d.   *The Orthographic Distinction between Velar and Glottal Spirants in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*. To be published in Soeren Wichmann (ed.), *The Linguistics of Maya Writing*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. Copy in possession of the author.

Grube, Nikolai, Alfonso Lacadena, and Simon Martin
2003   Part II: Chichen Itza and Ek Balam: Terminal Classic Inscriptions from Yucatan. In *Notebook for the XXVIIth Maya Hieroglyphic Forum at Texas, March 2003*, pp. II-1/II-84. Austin: Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas.

Houston, Stephen D.
1993   *Hieroglyphs and History at Dos Pilas. Dynastic Politics of the Classic Maya*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Houston, Stephen D., David Stuart, and John Robertson
1998   Dysharmony in Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Linguistic Change and Continuity in Classic Society. In: Andrés Ciudad Ruíz et al. (eds.), *Anatomía de una civilización: Aproximaciones interdisciplinarias a la cultura maya*, pp. 275-296. Madrid: Sociedad Española de Estudios Mayas.

Hull, Kerry
n.d.   *Scribes and Wise Men: A Study of the Architecture, Inscriptions, and Iconography of Xkalumk'in*. ARH 390 Seminar paper. Austin: Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas. Copy in possession of the author.

Kaufman, Terrence
2003   A Preliminary Mayan Etymological Dictionary (with the assistance of John Justeson). *FAMSI Grantee Report*.
        URL: http://www.famsi.org/reports/01051/pmed.pdf

Landa, Fray Diego de
1566   *Relacion de las cosas de Yucatan*. Manuscript. Madrid: Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia.

Mesoweb
2002   Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, Photographs by Marc Zender. *Mesoweb*.
        URL: http://www.mesoweb.com/monuments/DPLHS2.html

Montgomery, John
2002   *Dictionary of Maya Hieroglyphs*. New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc.

Stuart, David
1987   Ten Phonetic Syllables. *Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing* 14. Washington, D.C.: Center for Maya Research.

Stuart, David, and Stephen Houston
1994   Classic Maya Place Names. *Studies in Pre-Columbian Art & Archaeology* **33**. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oakes.

Thompson, J. Eric S.
1950   Maya Hieroglyphic Writing: Introduction. *CIW Publication 589*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington.

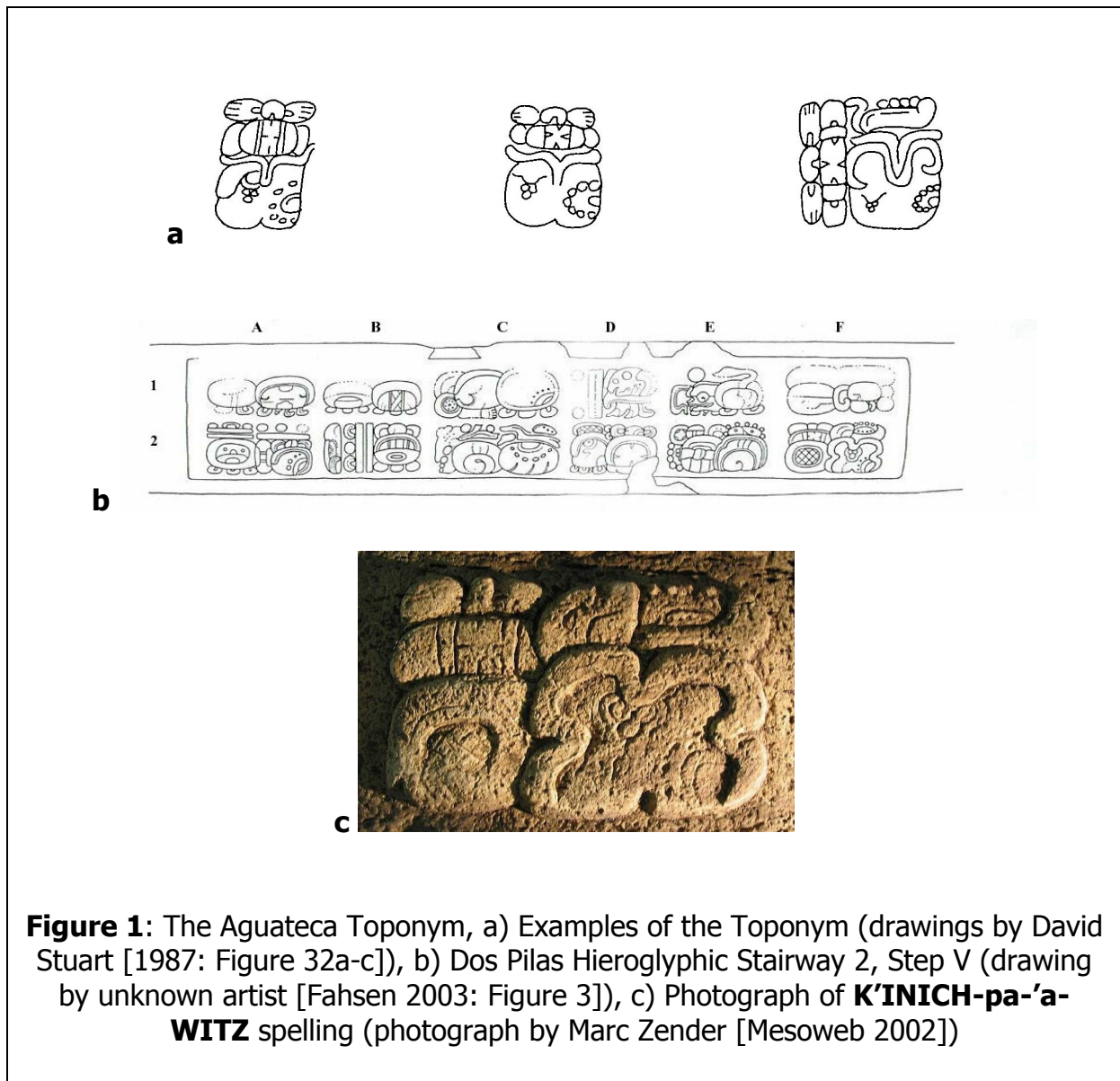1962   *A Catalog of Maya Hieroglyphs*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Figure 1: The Aguateca Toponym, a) Examples of the Toponym (drawings by David Stuart [1987: Figure 32a-c]), b) Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, Step V (drawing by unknown artist [Fahsen 2003: Figure 3]), c) Photograph of **K'INICH-pa-'a-WITZ** spelling (photograph by Marc Zender [Mesoweb 2002])
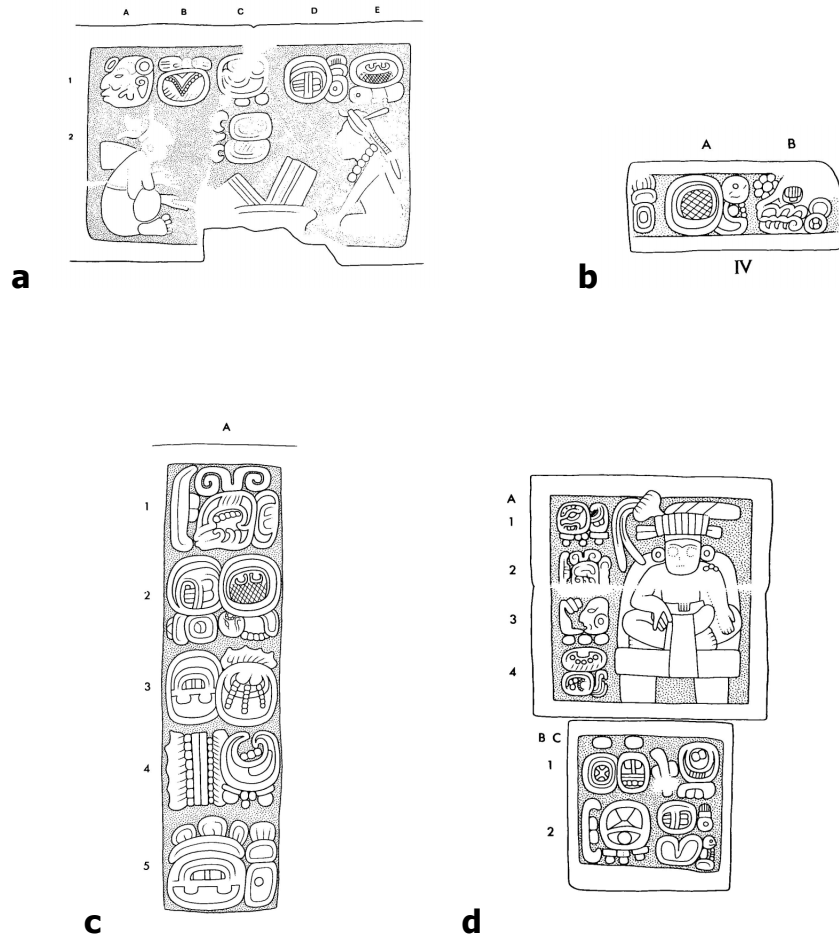
Figure 2: The Nominal Phrase Kitpa' at Xcalumkin, a) Lintel 4, Underside, b) Hieroglyphic Cornice, Stone IV, c) Column 6, d) Panels 7 and 8 (all drawings by Eric Von Euw [Graham and Von Euw 1992: 161, 178, 185, 194])
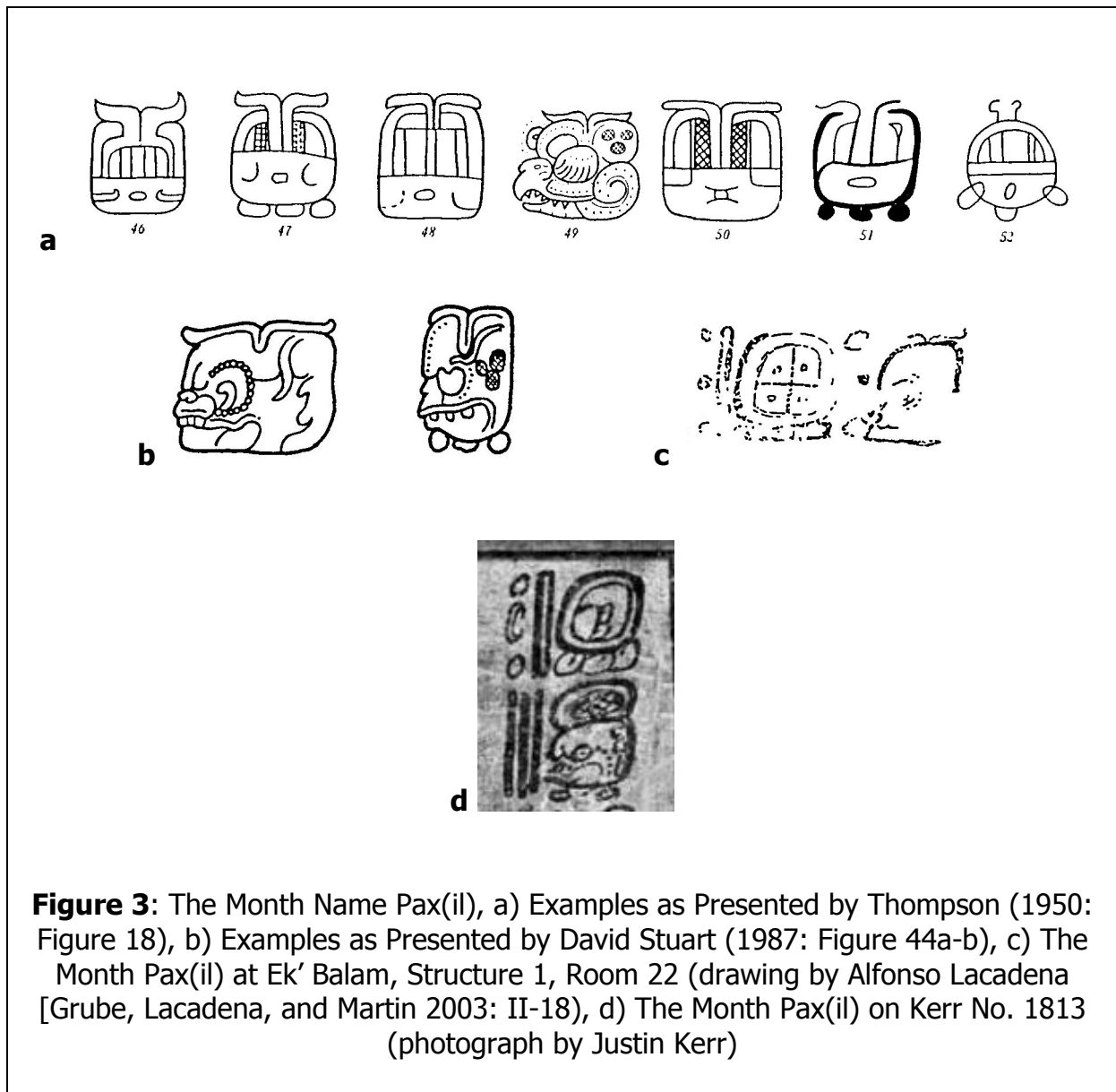
Figure 3: The Month Name Pax(il), a) Examples as Presented by Thompson (1950: Figure 18), b) Examples as Presented by David Stuart (1987: Figure 44a-b), c) The Month Pax(il) at Ek' Balam, Structure 1, Room 22 (drawing by Alfonso Lacadena [Grube, Lacadena, and Martin 2003: II-18), d) The Month Pax(il) on Kerr No. 1813 (photograph by Justin Kerr)