



Merle Greene Robertson

PRIMERA MESA REDONDA DE PALENQUE PART I.

*A Conference on the Art, Iconography,
and
Dynastic History of Palenque*

Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. December 14-22, 1973

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PACAL

Probably the greatest ruler of Palenque. He ruled from 9.9.2.4.8 (A.D. 615) to 9.12.11.5.18 (A.D. 683). He ascended the throne at age 12 years 125 days, and died at age 80 years 158 days. He is entombed in the sarcophagus of the Temple of the Inscriptions.

Above is one of several forms of the glyphic expression of his name. It is from the west panel of the Temple of the Inscriptions, column A, row 3.

LEFT GLYPH. Superfix: *Mah K'ina*, a title of honor and respect for lineage heads and rulers. Main sign: An iconic sign for Shield, possibly read as *Pacal*, a Mayan word for shield, or as *Chimal*, another widely used word for shield, which was a borrowing from Nahuatl.

RIGHT GLYPH. Top: a phonetic sign for the syllable *pa*. Center: a phonetic sign for the syllable *ca*. Bottom: a phonetic sign for the syllable *la* or for a final *l* following *a*. The three together read *Pa-ca-l*, a spelling of the Maya word for shield.

His name was probably a double name, with a personal name 'Shield' (either *Pacal* or *Chimal*) and a lineage name 'Shield' (certainly pronounced *Pacal*). The name *Pacal* is well documented as a lineage name among the Quiché, still in use throughout the sixteenth century. It was probably known and so used among other Mayan peoples also.

The title *Mah K'ina* was also known in the highlands still in colonial times and is documented for that period. It too must have had wide currency. It is of two parts, which could be used separately or as a compound. The first part was current in colonial times as a Cakchiquel title for heads of lineages, and it is still in use today among the Chol for the chief mayordomos of their principal saints.

Floyd G. Lounsbury

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Library of Congress catalog number 74-83484

PREFACE

The PRIMERA MESA REDONDA DE PALENQUE was a working conference which took place at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. The suggestion that a "round table" on Palenque be held came about one evening last August when Gillett Griffin, David Joralemon, Linda Schele, my husband Bob, and I were sitting on the porch of our Palenque home and working headquarters, Na Kan-Balam. We felt that, if a few people could get together who were particularly interested in the art of Palenque, it would be a great thing.

Enthusiasm grew by leaps and bounds. When we returned home to California, the telephone started ringing, all of those interested wanting to have the Mesa Redonda immediately. December 14-22 was settled upon as being the time most convenient for those wishing to attend. Plans got underway, with the result that 14 universities from the United States, Mexico, and Canada were represented. Unfortunately, many from Mexico were not able to attend because of previous plans which could not be changed on such short notice.

At first it was thought that meetings should be open only to those participating in the conference. However, it became evident that many persons from Palenque were very interested and wanted to find out all they could from visiting scholars who were also interested in Palenque. Consequently, not only were the planned meetings held daily from 9 AM until 12:30, and again from 8 until 10 PM, but they were also held daily from 5 PM until 6 PM for all persons in the village who were interested. The Palenque guides attended all of the meetings. After the first day, the regular meetings were also opened to everyone, as we found that the interest was so great that students were coming from a number of universities in Mexico, including the University of Mexico, the Universities at Villahermosa, Campeche, Merida, and Tuxtla, and the University of the Americas. The average attendance at the five to six o'clock meeting was around 50 persons, and the day that Dr. Manuel Velasco Saurez, Governor of Chiapas, attended, there were 104 persons. Most of the meetings were held in the new open-air *champa* of Sr. Moises Morales, while others were held at Na Kan-Balam. Two projectors were available for those using slides. Brief papers were given, followed by much discussion. Afternoons were spent at the site.

Because we have received so many requests for immediate publication of the papers of the Mesa Redonda, it was decided to publish the material now. It was thought best to retain the style of each individual author, although we know that there are inconsistencies in style and terminology used.

As similar subjects were discussed by several participants, similar interpretations were arrived at by more

than one author, although there are also some major disagreements. There has been no attempt to change any of the writing in the papers. Those who felt that their papers could best be understood if portions of the discussions, which were taped at the conference, were included in their published papers, have included them. Others felt they could best incorporate the discussion within their papers.

Illustrations which have been referred to by several authors, namely the Sanctuary Tablets of the Cross, Sun, Foliated Cross and Temple XIV, the Palace Tablet and the Sarcophagus Lid have been put at the end of the book and are designated as Plates 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. All other illustrations are designated as Figures and are within each author's own paper. In those papers which have referred to the same tablets or temples many times, these have been abbreviated as follows:

TC=Temple of the Cross; TS=Temple of the Sun; TFC=Temple of the Foliated Cross; T Insc.=Temple of Inscriptions, and T Lid=Tomb Lid. The Goodman-Thompson-Martinez correlation has been used throughout. Dynastic dates are taken from the works of Linda Schele, Peter Mathews, and Floyd Lounsbury at this conference. Illustrations and photographs are by the author of each paper unless otherwise credited.

At the last session of the Primera Mesa Redonda, it was suggested by Moises Morales that the rulers of Palenque be given Chol Maya names, rather than English or Spanish names, as Chol is the language the ancient people would have spoken. The suggestion was adopted, with the result that Maya names appear in many of the papers. *Pacal*, the ruler whose double name appears on the cover, has as his name the Maya word for shield. Kubler's "Snake Jaguar" has been named *Chan-Bahlum*, and T109:756 ('Great Bat') has been called *Chac Zutz*. Berlin's Subject C, with the *cauac* "main sign", has been named *Chaac*, and his Subject D, *Kuk*. This lord's name has Thompson's "toothache" element, but, as it is certain that no ruler would be named *Lord Toothache*, the likely significance of the knot suggested the Maya word *hok* which means 'to tie' in Chol, and so this ruler was named *Hok*. Those of the conference wish to stress that these names are not intended to represent the actual names of the rulers as they would have been referred to by their contemporaries. However, quite possibly *Kuk* and *Chac Zutz* would be fairly close to what these rulers were called, and surely *Pacal* or *Chimal* was the name of this prestigious ruler. Floyd Lounsbury and Michael Coe have both found evidence to support this since the conference.

The success of the conference can be attributed to the enthusiasm of the participants who came so eagerly and participated so freely. Major dynastic findings, the highlight of the Mesa Redonda, were the work of Linda

Schele, Peter Mathews, and Floyd Lounsbury. Lounsbury is presently a Visiting Scholar at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, and is spending almost all of his time translating Palenque inscriptions into dynastic historical dates. Linda Schele and Peter Mathews have likewise been spending a major part of their time on the Palenque Inscriptions.

All of those attending the conference wish to thank Moises Morales for his work in making the conference such a success, his building of the new *champa* as well as taking care of the many details which were bound to need attention at a meeting of these proportions. We all wish to thank George Stuart of the National Geographic Society for taking care of the tapes of the conference, and especially Miss Elizabeth S. Wooster of the National Geographic for her many hours of transcribing the tapes

from both English and Spanish. I also thank Donald Robertson for his help in arranging many of the pre-conference details as well as those which came up during the meetings. I am most appreciative of the help and suggestions offered by Elizabeth Benson of Dumbarton Oaks, concerning editing and publication problems, which facilitated the publication of these papers, and to Floyd Lounsbury for his interpretation of the *Pacal* glyph which is on the cover.

We all thank the Robert Louis Stevenson School for taking care of the publication of the Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque material which is in 2 parts, this being Part 1.

Merle Greene Robertson
May, 1974

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CONTENTS

Pacal (cover) text	ii
Preface	iii
Participants of the Primera Mesa Redonda de Palenque	v
GILLETT G. GRIFFIN	
Early Travelers to Palenque	9
ROBERT L. RANDS	
A Chronological Framework for Palenque	35
LINDA SCHELE	
Observations on the Cross Motif at Palenque	41
PETER MATHEWS and LINDA SCHELE	
Lords of Palenque — The Glyphic Evidence	63
MERLE GREENE ROBERTSON	
The Quadripartite Badge — A Badge of Rulership	77
MARVIN COHODAS	
The Iconography of the Panels of the Sun, Cross, and Foliated Cross at Palenque, Part II	95
ELIZABETH P. BENSON	
Gestures and Offerings	109
JOHN H. BOWLES	
Notes on a Floral Form Represented in Maya Art and its Iconographic Implications	121
JACINTO QUIRARTE	
Terrestrial / Celestial Polymorphs as Narrative Frames in the Art of Izapa and Palenque	129
E. WYLLYS ANDREWS V	
Some Architectural Similarities Between Dzibilchaltun and Palenque	137
JEFFREY H. MILLER	
Notes on a Stelae Pair probably from Calakmul, Campeche, Mexico	149
PLATES	
One ... Temple of the Cross	163
Two ... Temple of the Sun	165
Three .. Temple of the Foliated Cross	167
Four ... The Sarcophagus Lid	169
Five ... The Palace Tablet	171
Six Tablet of Temple XIV	173