

The Maan Polity in Maya Inscriptions

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1 Introduction

According to recent surveys in the Mayan Lowlands, thousands of ancient maya sites lie hidden under the lush tropical forest. Most of these sites are small and perhaps comparatively unimportant in the intricacies of Classic Period politics. For most of these, and mostly because of their lack of monumental output, the identification with sites known from the Corpus of Inscriptions will likely prove impossible.

There are however some sites that, although clearly important in the Classic Period political landscape, still escape identification with known archaeological ruins. A good indicator of political importance is the presence of an emblem glyph, indicating that such a site had some level of regional political autonomy [14]. Another good indicator is the occurrence of references to individuals of such sites in the monuments of foreign polities.

In this note I will list and comment on all the known references in the Corpus of Inscriptions to one such polity: Maan.

2 The Polity and Emblem Glyph

There are few references to the Maan polity in the inscriptions. No carved monuments that may be attributed to the site are known. As such all known references occur in monuments from other sites (e.g., Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan) and from texts in polychrome ceramics, most of which are unprovenanced.

The identification of the Maan emblem glyph with a known archaeological site is difficult to establish with certainty. As early as the eighties David Stuart and Stephen Houston among others, argued for the identification of Maan with the site of La Florida in Guatemala.

La Florida is close to the community of El Naranjo, in the San Pedro Martir river, near the Mexican border (figure 3). The major structures of the site are protected by a military base and there are some pyramids that have an unusual monumentality, with extremely steep sides. The location agrees very well with the known references to the site in provenanced classic inscriptions, namely from Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras, Pomona and El Peru.

Later work by Stanley Guenter [7] and Dmitri Beliaev [8] restated this early association with La Florida. This possibility has gained new strength with the recent identification by Stanley Guenter and Alexandre Safronov of the Maan emblem glyph in a local context in one of the stelae from La Florida.

The emblem glyph of the Maan polity clearly represents a section of the body of a snake, with the large belly scales and skin decoration easily matched against the iconographic representations of snakes. The emblem glyph is alternatively written as T504 and T566 (figure 1).



Figure 1: The main sign: T504, T566 and T566 variant

Early readings assigned the value of *man* for the logographs T504 and T566 based on available phonetic complementation and the occurrence of T566 in the spellings of the word *xaman* (“north”). In this context it is important to note that there are spellings *xa-ma-T566-na*, *xa-T566-na* and at least one example from Naranjo where we have a full phonetic reading *xa-ma-*na*. Another example, a sculptor’s name from El Peru stela 34, gives the emblem glyph phonetically as *ma-na* (see below).

The occurrence of a final *-ni* syllable in several examples of T566 implies an originally long vowel as in *maan*. However, towards the late classic loss of vowel length eventually resulted in *man*, thus explaining the examples with *-na* suffixes.

Semantically, *man* is believed to be related to vision quest serpents seen so often in Maya iconography. The following entries are relevant:

Colonial Yucatec [1]:

1. MANAB 1,2,5,7,8: visión o fantasma 1: estantigua y mala visión y trasgo o duende 3: duende de la casa, atrevido por metáfora 7,8: duende 11: trasgo; espectro, fantasma 2. MANAB CHI' 6: visión o fantasma 3. MANABTSIL 1: cosa abominable y cosa espantosa y que espanta, como estantigua o fantasma; *manabtsil yilabal a beele'ex*: abominables son vuestras obras, espantosas de verse 2,3: espantable cosa que pone o causa espanto 8: cosa abominable 4. MANABYA'N 2: fantasma [...]
1. MANAB 2: fantasma ver 3: espantarse uno de otro y santiguarse 8: ver visiones o espantarse de algo 9: ver visiones, algún mal aguero 2. MANABTAH 1: ver visiones y fantasmas o algún mal aguero, y agorar y espantarse de semejantes visiones; *manabnen*: vi una mala visión que se desapareció [...]

Ch'ontal [5]:

MANAP: devil (1927);

However, closer inspection revealed that in the context of the Maan polity emblem glyph, the main signs often appeared prefixed with *na-* syllables. In fact, the emblem glyph often appears as *na-T566-ni*, *na-T566*, *T566-na*, *na-T504* and *T504-na*. Once, in stela 19 from Yaxchilan, it occurs as *T566-ma-na*. This points to the possibility that, at least in this context, the main sign may read *namaan*.

Curiously, the word *namaan* may provide an interesting semantic context. Observing several sources we find that *nam* is an attested root with the specific meaning of “to vanish, to disappear, to forget”:

Colonial Yucatec [1]:

1. NAMCHAHAL 1: perderse de la memoria, olvidarse; *namchahi' u pektsil, yanumal Juan*: no se sabe de Juan cosa ninguna, no hai nuevas de él, olvidado está; perderse de vista; *namchahi' chem*: se perdió de vista el barco 2. NAMCHALAK 1: cosa que así se pierde de vista y de la memoria 3. NAMK'AHAL 1: lo mismo que *namchahal* 4,8: olvidar o perderse de vista.

Ch'orti' [2]:

Nam disappearance, waning, vanishing, dearth, lack; *Nami* hide, put out of sight; *Namatz'* disappearance, a waning; *Namtz'ah* disappear, wane, go out of sight; *Namtz'ar* disappearing, waning, a disappearing; *Namtz'es* cause to disappear, hide a thing; *Namtz'iix set*, waned, disappeared;

Ch'orti' [3]:

Nama o'yt (vr.) Unami u't, nanb'ir u't. Desaparecer (se). Usitz' e Péyru unami u't akb'i. El hijo de Pedro se desapareció ayer. Raíz vt. Nam. Raíz sr. U't.

Namtz'a, anamtz'a (vi) Ponerse el sol. War anamtz'a e k'in yo'p'en tachinam. Poniéndose el sol vine del pueblo. Raíz vi. Namtz'a.

Thus, the word *namaan* may perhaps be analysed as *nam-aan* with *-aan* being a suffix that changes the verbal root *nam* into a name, perhaps giving it the meaning of “someone/something that disappears”. I was unable to verify whether such a suffix is attested in Mayan languages. The *-aan* suffix would, in time, lose its long vowel as attested by the spellings with *-na* suffixes. *Namaan* would then bear the general meaning of “disappearing thing” or perhaps “vision”.

Another possible explanation for the observed patterns of phonetic complementation is that the emblem glyph actually reads *man* or *maan* in all contexts and that the *na*-prefixes observed are optional (e.g., the case of Tikal alternatively written as *mutu'ul* or *yax mutu'ul*). They may be underspellings of some qualifier prefixed to the main sign, perhaps an underspelling of *naah* (“house”). To reinforce this idea is the fact that the only occurrences of *na*- prefixes to T504 or T566 appear in the context of the Maan emblem glyph and that in other contexts, e.g. the spellings of *xaman*, the T566 clearly reads *maan*. So, the emblem glyph might actually read *man* (“vision, ghost”) and occasionally *naah man* (“(the) house (of the) vision”). This kind of name is attested for example in Colonial Yucatec [1]:

1. NA BALAM 10: [toponímico]; *lit* “la casa del balam (jaguar, tigre)”, población localizada al sureste de Ek' balam [...]

A problem with this view is that if *na*- is indeed an underspelling of *naah* one would expect its full logographic form T48 to appear in at least some examples.

Regardless of whatever reading is correct, the association of the name of this polity with ghosts and visions, namely snake visions so pervasive in maya art, seems indeed very likely. In fact there is some evidence that Maan was the name of a kind of mythic snake or vision associated with fire.

Another glyph, T554, likely a variant of the snake body section, shows a full snake body plus the T566 snake section (figure 1). This glyph appears in the Dumbarton Oaks Panel depicting K'ihnich Janaahb' Pakal, Lady Tsak Ajaw and their son K'ihnich K'an Joy Chitam (figure 2).

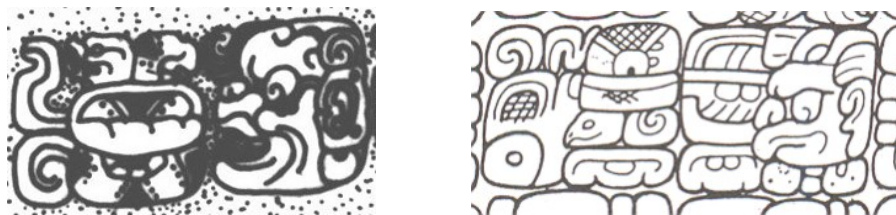


Figure 2: Details of Dumbarton Oaks Panel and Yaxchilan stela 18

The inscription next to K'ihnich K'an Joy Chitam says:

(A1) K'AHK'-T554 (A2) CHAAHK
k'ahk' maan? chaahk
 “Chaahk is a Fire Vision”

Interestingly, K'ihnich K'an Joy Chitam is dressing as Chaahk and bears an axe with a fire spitting snake. It may be that K'ahk' Maan Chaahk is the deity that K'ihnich K'an Joy Chitam is impersonating, and not a part of K'ihnich Janaahb' Pakal's name phrase.

Another example may be seen at Yaxchilan, stela 18 (figure 2). There, we have the name of a deity:

(B3) K'AHK'-k'a-T554-na (C3) CHAN-na-K'AWIIL-la

k'ahk' man? chan k'awiil

“K'awiil is a Fire Vision in the Sky”

that the ruler, Itsamnaaj B'ahlam, is impersonating.

Finally, the vase K1670 (see below) presents a most interesting scene, where a lord faces a large snake that spits fire through the mouth. The name of the snake is given in the PSS as:

(A8) K'AHK'-na-T566 (A9) tsu-ni (A10) K'AWIIL (A11) CHAN-na

k'ahk' na maan tsuun k'awiil chan

“Fire House? Vision ? K'awiil Snake”

The PSS also tells us that the vessel belongs to a lord from the Maan polity and that the snake is the result of his penance or sacrifice.

3 References to Maan in the Corpus

Piedras Negras stela 1

The text of this stela tells the story of a young princess from the Maan polity who married into the royal family of Piedras Negras (known as Yokib' in the Classic Period). The front part of the stela represents this princess, Ix WinikHaab' Ajaw. The text can be resumed to the following events:

(A7) HO-KIB' (C2) CHANLAJUN-YAXK'IN-ni (B3) SIJ-ji-ya-ja

(C3) IX-WINIKHAAB' (D1) 'a-'AJAW (E1) IX-MAAN-ni-AJAW

ho kib' chanlajun yaxk'in sijyaj ix winikhaab' ajaw ix maan ajaw

“on 5 Kib' 14 Yaxk'in, was born, Lady K'atun Lord, Lady Maan Lord”

Thus, the Maan princess was born on 5 Kib' 14 Yaxk'in (9.12.02.00.16, July 7, 674 AD).

(D2) HOLAJUN-B' AHLUN-WINIK-ji-ya (E2) LAJCHA'-HAAB'-? (D3) u-ti-ya (E3) i-PAS

(F1) B' AHLUN-AJAW (G1) B' AHLUN-UNIIW-wa (F2) ma-ka-ja

(G2) IX-MAAN-AJAW-wa

holajun (k'in) b'ahlun winikjiy lajcha' haab' utiyy i pas b'ahlun ajaw b'ahlun

uniw makaj ix Maan ajaw

“5 days, 9 winal and 12 tuns, since it had happened (the birth) then, at dawn, on 9 Ajaw 9 Uniiw, was covered, Lady Maan Lord”

Then, on 9 Chuwen 9 Uniiw (9.12.14.10.11, November 16, 686 AD), she was the subject of a little understood action written as *makaj*. The CVC transitive root *mak* has the meaning of “to close, to cover”. This is perhaps describing some ritual performed on the young princess in preparation of her union with the Piedras Negras heir.

(F3) u-HO-la-ta (G3) JUN-KIB' (G4) CHANLAJUN-UNIIW-wa (G5) na-wa-ja
u ho lat jun kib' chanlajun uniiw nawaj
“5 days later, on 1 Kib' 14 Uniiw, was adorned (Lady Maan Lord)”

Five days latter, on 1 Kib' 14 Uniiw (09.12.14.10.16, November 21, 686 AD) she was adorned (*nawaj*).

(G6) HO-CHA'-WINIK-ji-ya (G7) JUN-WINIKHAAB' (G8) HO-IMIX
(G9) B' AHLUNLAJUN-SAK-SIHO'OM (G10) u-b'a-hi (G11) ti-o-mi-b'a
(G12) IX-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW
*ho (k'in) cha' winikjiyy jun winikhaab' ho imix b'ahlunlajun sak siho'om u b'aah
ti omiib' ix winikhaab' ajaw*
“5 days, 2 winals and 1 tun later, on 5 Imix 19 Sak Siho'om, the image of, with
?, Lady K'atun Lord”

Finally, on 5 Imix 19 Sak Siho'om (09.13.14.13.01, September 23, 706 AD), she is depicted holding some unidentified object called *omiib'*.

Piedras Negras stela 3

This stela continues the saga of the young Maan princess with the birth of her daughter, a Piedras Negras princess. The text starts again with the birth of the Maan princess:

(A4) HO-KIB' (B7) CHANLAJUN-YAXK'IN-ni (A8) SIJ-ya-ja
(A9) IX-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW (A10) IX-na-MAAN-ni-AJAW
ho kib' chanlajun yaxk'in sijyaj ix winikhaab' ajaw ix naah? maan ajaw
“(on) 5 Kib' 14 Yaxk'in, was born, Lady K'atun Lord, Lady ? Maan Lord”

Next, the union with the young Piedras Negras lord is re-stated:

(C1) MIH-LAJUN-WINIK-ji-ya (D1) LAJCHA'-HAAB'-ya (C2) i-u-ti-JUN-KIB'
(D2) CHANLAJUN-UNIIW-wa-na-wa-ja (C3) IX-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW
(D3) IX-na-MAAN-ni-AJAW-yi[chi]-NAL-la (C4) K'IHNICH-yo-o[AHK]-NAL
*mih (k'in) lajun winikjiyy lajcha' haab'iiy i uut jun kib' chanlajun uniiw nawaj
ix winikhaab' ajaw ix na maan ajaw yichnal k'ihnich yo'nal ahk*
“10 winals and 12 tuns after, then it happened, on 1 Kib' 14 Uniiw, was adorned
Lady K'atun Lord, Lady ? Maan Lord, in the company of The Hot One ? Place
Turtle”

Then, on 4 Kimi 14 Ik'at (09.13.16.04.06, March 22, 708 AD) a princess was born called Ix Jun Tahn Ahk:

(D4) B'ULUK-LAJUN-WINIK-ji-ya-JUN-HAAB'-ya (C5) JUN-WINIKHAAB'-ya-i-u-ti
(D5) CHAN-KIMI? (C6) CHANLAJUN-IK'AT (D6) SIJ-ya-ja
(C7) IX-JUN-TAHN-na?-a-ku (D7) IX-K'IN-ni-AJAW

*b'uluk (k'in) lajun winikjiy jun haab'iy jun winikhaab'iy i uut chan kimi chan-
lajun ik'at sijyaj ix jun tahn ahk ix k'in(il) ajaw*

“11 days, 10 winals, 1 tun and 1 k'atun after (the adorning), then it happened,
on 4 Kimi 14 Ik'at, was born, Lady Cherished Turtle, Lady Sunny Lord”

then, on 11 Imix 14 YaxSiho'om (09.13.19.13.01, August 28, 711 AD), the Maan princess took a *temul*, meaning a “little chair or bench”. Notice that the stela depicts the Maan princess and her daughter sitting in a bench. We are also told that, in the same date, the Piedras Negras ruler (her husband) completed his 5th year in rulership:

(E1) WAXAK-HOLAJUN-WINIK-ya-HUX-HAAB'-ya (F1) i-u-ti (E2) B'ULUK-IMIX?
(F2) CHANLAJUN-YAX-SIHO'OM-ma (E3) u-CHAM-wa-te-mu
(F3) IX-WINIKHAAB'[AJAW]-wa (E4) IX-na-MAAN-ni-AJAW
(F4) TSUTS-yi-u-HO-tu-TUUN (E5) JUN-WINIKHAAB'-la-ta (F5) ti-AJAW-le-yo-o
(E6) a-ku-NAL

*waxak (k'in) holajun winikiy hux haab'iy i uut b'uluk imix chanlajun yax
siho'om u chamaw tem(ul) ix winikhaab' ajaw ix na maan ajaw tsutsuuy u
ho tuun jun winikhaab' lat ti ajawl(el) yo'nal ahk*

“6 days, 15 winals and 3 tuns after, then it happened, on 11 Imix 14 Yax
Siho'om, took the ? Lady K'atun Lord, Lady ? Maan Lord, got completed the
5th tun, and the first k'atun of rulership of ? Place Turtle”

Finally, on 6 Ajaw 13 Muwaan (09.14.00.00.00, December 5, 711 AD), the fourteenth k'atun was completed:

(F6) B' AHLUNLAJUN-CHAN-WINIK-ji-ya (E7) i-u-ti (F7) WAK-AJAW
(F8) HUXLAJUN-MUWAAN-ni (F9) TSUTS-yi (F10) u-CHANLAJUN-WINIKHAAB'

*b'ahlun (k'in) chan winijiyy i uut wak ajaw huxlajun muwaan tsutsuuy u chan-
lajun winikhaab'*

“19 days, 4 winals later, then it happened, on 6 Ajaw 13 Muwaan, got com-
pleted, the 14 k'atun (of the ? Place Turtle)”

Piedras Negras stela 8

In this stela we also find references to the young Maan princess. The adorning event in the presence of Ruler 2 is referred again:

(A1) CHA'-KAB'AN (B1) HOLAJUN-UNIIV-wa (A2) na-wa-ja
(B2) IX-MAAN?-AJAW-wa (A3) yi-chi-NAL (B3) Ruler 2 (A4) ya-'AT-na
(B4) Ruler 3 (A5) ch'o-ko (B5) K'UHUL-yo-ki[b'i]-AJAW

cha' kab'an holajun uniiw nawaj ix maan ajaw yichnal Ruler2 yatan Ruler3

ch'ok k'uhul yokib' ajaw

“on 2 Kab'an 15 Uniiw, was adorned, Lady Maan Lord, in the company of Ruler2, the wife of Ruler 3, the prince, Holy Piedras Negras Lord”

She is said to be the *yatan* (“the wife”) of Ruler 3 here named a prince (*ch'ok k'uhul yokib' ajaw*). The text on the sides also mentions the *makaj* event for the Maan princess in 9 Chuwen 9 Uniiw:

(B18) B' AHLUN-CHUWEN (A19) B' AHLUN-UNIIW (B19) ma-MAK-ji-ya-ja

(A20) IX-MAAN?-ni-AJAW (B20) u-KAB'-ji-ya Ruler2

b'ahlun chuwen b'ahlun uniiw makjiiy? ix maan ajaw u kab'jiiy Ruler2

“on 9 Chuwen 9 Uniiw, was covered, Lady Maan Lord, under the supervision of Ruler2”

Of note is the unusual spelling of the verb *mak* using the month sign logograph and the unusual set of suffixes.

Shell and Bone Plaques from Piedras Negras Burial 5

Burial 5 was one of the richest found at the site. It contained four small incised shell and bone plaques with references to Lady Winikhaab' Ajaw. Most of the information is repeated from that already given in stelae 1 and 3.

In shell plaque 1, we have the birth of the Maan princess:

(A1) HO-KIB' (A2) LAJUN-YAXK'IN-ni (B1) SIJ-ya-ja (B2) IX-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW

(C1) IX-MAAN?-ni?-AJAW (C2) B' AHLUN-HOLAJUN-WINIK-ji-ya

ho kib' lajun yaxk'in sijyaj ix winikhaab' ajaw ix na maan ajaw b'ahlun (k'in)

holajun winikjiiy

“on 5 Kib' 10 Yaxk'in, was born, Lady K'atun Ajaw, Lady ? Maan Lord, 9 days, 10 winals”

Note that, the month coefficient is in error, it should be 14. The story goes on in shell plaque 2, with the *makaj* event, and tells us that the event was overseen by Ruler 2 of Piedras Negras.

(A1) LAJCHA'-HAAB'-ya (B1) SIJ-ji-ya (A2) i-PAS (B2) B' AHLUN-CHUWEN

(A3) B' AHLUN?-UNIIW-wa (B3) ma-ka-ja (C1) IX (D1) na-MAAN-AJAW

(C2) u-KAB'-ji-ya (D2) Ruler2 (C3) CHAN-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW

(D3) K'UHUL-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW

lajcha' haab'iiy sijiiy i pas b'ahlun chuwen b'ahlun uniiw makaj ix na maan ajaw u kab'jiiy Ruler2 chan winikhaab' ajaw k'uhul yokib' ajaw

“and 12 tuns after the birth, then it happened, on 9 Chuwen 9 Uniiw, was covered, Lady ? Maan Lord, he supervised it, Ruler2, 4 K'atun Lord, Holy Piedras Negras Lord”

Finally, the adorning of the Maan princess herself seems to be recorded in shell plaque 3:

(A1) WAK-la-ta (A2) CHA'-KAB'AN (B1) HOLAJUN-UNIIW-wa (B2) na-wa-ja
(C1) yi-ICH?-NAL (C2) IX-AJ-?[b'i]-?-la
wak lat cha' kab'an holajun uniiw nawaj yichnal ix aj ?
“6 days later, on 2 Kab'an 15 Uniiw, was adorned (Lady Maan Lord), in the company of Lady She Of ?”

The date 2 Kab'an 15 Uniiw (09.12.14.10.17, November 22, 686 AD) is reached 6 days after the *makaj* event. This is one day after the date for the *nawaj* event for the princess in stelae 1 and 3. The event was witnessed by an elite lady whose title of origin is, unfortunately, not quite legible.

Finally, in the bone plaque 4, an adorning event (*nawaj*) is mentioned that is overseen by a Maan lady (likely Lady Winikhaab' Ajaw) and in the presence of Piedras Negras ruler 3.

(A1) MIH-CHAN-WINIK-ji-ya-HUX-HAAB'-ya (B1) CHA'-WINIKHAAB'-i-PAS
(A2) JUN-KAB'AN-TI'-HAAB'-YAXK'IN-ni (B2) na-wa-ja-ye-te-k'a[*b'a]-li
(A3) IX-ma-ta-wi-la-SUUTS' (B3) u-KAB'-ji-IX-na?-MAAN-AJAW (A4) yi-chi-NAL
(B4) B'AhLAM-ji-yo-o?-NAL (A5) a-ku-yo-ki-b'i-AJAW
(B5) CHAN-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW-K'IN-ni-AJAW
*mih (k'in) chan winikjiyy hux haab'iiy cha' winikhaab' i pas jun kab'an ti' haab'
yaxk'in nawaj yet k'ab'a'il ix matawiil suuts' u kab'ij ix na maan ajaw yichnal
b'ahlam ? yo'nal ahk yokib' ajaw chan winikhaab' ajaw k'in(il) ajaw*
“4 winals, 3 tuns and 2 k'atuns later, then it happened, on 1 Kab'an the end of Yaxk'in, was adorned, the namesake of Lady ? Bat, she supervised it, Lady ? Maan lord, in the presence of Jaguar ? ? Place Turtle, Piedras Negras Lord, 4 K'atun Lord, Sunny Lord”

The date 1 Kab'an end-of-Yaxk'in is very likely 09.14.17.14.17 (or, June 30, 729 AD) and is reached from the date 09.12.14.10.17 (02 Kab'an 15 Uniiw or November 22, 686 AD) through the distance number 2.3.4.0. The later date is the one given for the *nawaj* event for Ix Winikhaab' Ajaw in shell plaque 3. Thus, the text is linking the adorning event for the Maan princess to the adorning of another lady about 43 years later. The subject of this adorning is a lady said to be the namesake of Ix Matawiil Suuts'. Of note is the fact that a Lady Maan Lord (likely Lady Winikhaab' Ajaw) oversees the ceremony just as in 686 another lady (shell plaque 3) oversaw her adorning. Another interesting point is the fact that Ruler 3 witnessed the event only a few months from his death as Ruler 4 succeeded him in November 729.

Yaxchilan lintel 45

This lintel shows the Yaxchilan (known in the Classic Period as Pa'Chan) ruler Itsamnaaj B'ahlam III with his most famous captive, Aj Nik (“He From Flower”). Aj Nik is said to

be a lord of the lineage of K'ahk' Ti' Kuy, a Maan lord:

(A1) LAJCHA'-IMIX (B1) CHAN?-K'ANHALAW? (A2) ?-u-b'a-ki
(B2) ITSAMNAAJ-B' AHLAM? ... (C1) AJ-NIK?-ki (C2) u-ya-AJAW[TE']-wa
(C3) K'AHK'-TI'-ku-yu (C4) MAAN-ni-AJAW-wa
*lajcha' imix chan k'anhalaw ? u b'aahk itsamnaaj b'ahlam [...] aj nik u yajaw
te' k'ahk' ti' kuy maan ajaw*
“on 12 Imix 4 K'anhalaw (was captured) the captive of The Jaguar Is Itsamnaaj
[...] He From Flower, Lord of the Lineage of Fire Mouthed Owl, Maan Lord”

The date falls on 09.12.08.14.01 (or, February 25, 681 AD). Notice the spelling of Maan with a T566 main sign complemented with a -ni suffix.

Yaxchilan stela 5

The text of this stela describes the capture of a lord of Maan on 7 Chuwen 19 K'anasiy. The text reads:

(A1) HUK-CHUWEN (B1) B' AHLUNLAJUN-K'ANASIIY (A2) chu-ka-ja
(B2) u-CHA'AN (A3) AJ-? (B3) MAAN-AJAW? (C1) ye-he-te
(D1) ITSAMNAAJ-B' AHLAM (E1) K'UHUL-PA'CHAN-na-AJAW
*huk chuwen b'ahlunlajun k'anasiy chukaj u cha'an aj ? maan ajaw yehet it-
samnaaj b'ahlam k'uhul pa'chan ajaw*
“on 7 Chuwen 19 K'anasiy, was captured, the guardian of He From ?, Maan
Lord, the property of The Jaguar Is Itsamnaaj, Holy Pa'Chan Lord”

The date is long count 09.18.06.05.11 (or December 30, 796 AD). The prisoner is named *u cha'an aj yalaan* (“the master of He From Yalaan”) [9].

Yaxchilan stela 15

I have not managed to get a decent photo or drawing of this monument. Judging from the only (small) photo I was able to find, there seems to be a reference to Maan in the text.

Yaxchilan stela 19

The main theme of this stela is again the capture of Aj Nik by Itsamnaaj B'ahlam III. Aj Nik is again said to be the lord of the lineage of K'ahk' Ti' Kuy, a Maan lord.

(A1) B'ULUK-AJAW (A2) HUX-TE'-K'ANHALAW-b'u (A3) chu-ka-ja (A4) AJ-NIK?-ki
(A5) ? (A6) ?-ch'a-ku-yu (A7) MAN-ma-na-AJAW-wa
b'uluk ajaw hux te' k'anhalaw chukaj aj nik ? k'ahk' ? kuy maan ajaw
“on 11 Ajaw 3 K'anhalaw, was captured, He From Flower, (the Lord of the
Lineage of) Fire Drinking? Owl, Maan Lord”

The date falls on 09.12.08.14.00 (or, February 24, 681 AD). This is one day before the date given on lintel 45. Also notice the unusual spelling of Man with a T566 main sign complemented with -ma-na suffixes.

Yaxchilan's stela 21

This stela describes Cheleht Chan K'ihnich Itsamnaaj B'ahlam IV as the captor of a Maan lord:

u-cha-CHA'AN ta-ja-la MO'-o u-cha-CHA'AN B' AHLUN-AJAW-le
u-cha-CHA'AN AJ-MAN-na u-cha-CHA'AN AJ-IK'-a'
u cha'an tajal mo' u cha'an b'ahlun ajawl(el) u cha'an aj man u cha'an aj ik'a'
“the guardian of Striking Macaw, the guardian of 9 Lordship, the guardian He
From Man, the guardian of He From Ik'a”

According to Alexandre Safronov [9], these captures must have happened sometime before 788. Stela 21 is a late 8th century monument, which may explain the -na suffix to Man, showing the process of loss of vowel length in the root.

Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 5

The text of Yaxchilan's Hieroglyphic Stairway 5 recounts the military conquests of the late classic ruler Itsamnaaj B'ahlam IV. The text mentions several campaigns, some against Maan [9]. The relevant passage reads:

(37) u-CHA'AN?-nu? (38) AJ-(LAKAM)TUUN-ni (39) u-cha-CHA'AN
(40) AJ-na?-MAAN-ni (41) AJ-B' AHLAM-ma (42) ch'o-ko (43) CHA'-WINIKHAAB'
(44) K'UHUL-?-AJAW-wa (45) K'UHUL-pa[CHAN]-na-AJAW-wa (46) b'a-ka?-b'a
(47) u-TS'AK-ka-'a (48) B' AHLUNLAJUN-(K'IN)-WAXAK-WINIK-ya (49) i-u-ti
(50) WAXAK-KAWAK (51) HUK-? (52) ?-?-ja (53) ? (54) ? (55) ?
(56) AJ-na-MAAN?-ni (57) AJ-MO'-?-hi (58) chu-ka-ja ...
u cha'an aj lakam tuun u cha'an aj na maan aj b'ahlam ch'ok cha' winikhaab'
k'uhul ? ajaw k'uhul pa'chan ajaw b'akab' u ts'akaj b'ahlun (k'in) waxak winikiiy
i uut waxak kawak huk ? ? ? ? aj na maan aj mo' ? chukaj [...]
“the guardian of He From Lakam Tuun, the guardian of He From Maan, He
From B'ahlam, prince, 2 K'atun Holy ? Lord, Holy Pa'Chan Lord, First Earth,
it changed, 9 days, 6 winals later, then it happened, 8 Kawak 7 ? [...] He From
Maan, He From Macaw ?, was captured [...]”

Observing the month sign closely at (48) it seems composed of several elements and a main sign that is perhaps best matched by the month K'anasiy. Thus we arrive to a tentative CR date of 8 Kawak 7 K'anasiy giving long count 09.18.06.04.19 (or, December 18, 796 AD). The first date can then be reconstructed as 11 Ajaw 8 Mol, or long count 09.18.05.14.00 (or, June 22, 796 AD) [9].

La Florida stela 7

Recently Alexandre Safronov and Stanley Guenter, upon closer observation of La Florida stela 7, currently located at the nearby small town of El Naranjo, identified what may be a reference to the Maan polity in a local context.

(C1) ?-CHAN?-na? (C2) to-?-? (C3) CHAN-WINIKHAAB'-AJAW-wa

(C4) K'UHUL-MAAN?-ni-AJAW-wa

? *chan yopaat? chan winikhaab' ajaw k'uhul maan? ajaw*

“? Sky Yopaat, 4 K'atun Lord, Holy Maan Lord”

So, we have a stela with an image of a lord who, the text says, was four k'atun lord, a holy Maan lord. The important thing is that this lord is more than likely a local ruler and thus this links the Maan emblem glyph with the site of La Florida. Unfortunately the other monuments from La Florida are in a very bad condition and we have no more examples of this emblem glyph in the inscriptions from the site.

The date in the stela, 7 Ajaw 18 K'anhalaw, is perhaps long count: 09.16.15.00.00 (or February 19, 766 AD). It is interesting to note that the glyphs at (C1) and (C2) are consistent with the name of the Maan ruler depicted in K5418 (see below). The time frame is also consistent since the vessel date is in 756 AD and this ruler is said to be a four k'atun lord and thus he may have been ruling for some time.

El Peru stela 34

One of the sculptors of El Peru (known as K'ihnal Waka' in the Classic Period) stela 34 was a lord from Maan. The signature of this artist is as follows:

(A1) *yu-xu?[lu]* (A2) *u-ya-AJAW[TE']* (A3) ?-ma-na (A4) AJAW

yuxul u yajaw te' ? man ajaw

“the sculpture of the Lord of the Lineage of ?, Man Lord”

This reference is puzzling since it provides a phonetic spelling of the Man emblem glyph and it reads *man*. This reinforces the possibility that the emblem glyph actually reads *man* or *maan* all the time and that the *na*- prefixes observed are optional, probably underspellings of some qualifier prefixed to the main sign, as discussed above. Also of interest is the geographical information contained in this reference as it closes the circle on La Florida from the east.

Vase K1670

This vase is owned by a Maan ruler called Sijyaj Chan K'awiil. The PSS seems to be a straightforward statement of ownership, “the drinking utensil of...”, followed by the name of the owner itself:

(A1) yu-k'i-b'i (A2) u-MAM? (A3) SAAK-CHA'? (A4) ? (A5) ha (A6) ja (A7) NAL
 (A8) K'AHK'-na-MAAN? (A9) tsu-ni (A10) K'AWIIL (A11) CHAN-na (A12) NAL
 (A13) u (A14) [CH'AB']b'a (A15) CHAN-na (A16) SIJ-ya-ja (A17) CHAN-na
 (A18) K'AWIIL (A19) na-MAAN-ni?-AJAW (A20) K'UH (A21) cha (A22) TAHN
*y uk'ib' u mam saak ? nal k'ahk' na maan tsuun k'awiil chan nal u ch'ab' chan
 sijyaj chan k'awiil na maan ajaw k'uhul chatahn*
 “the vessel of the Ancestor [?] Maize, Fire Vision ? K'awiil Snake Maize the
 penance snake of, K'awiil Was Born (in) The Sky, ? Maan Lord, Holy Chatahn
 (person)”

The scene depicts a lord facing a fantastic snake that spits fire. The snake appears to be named in the PSS from (A8) to (A11): K'ahk' ? Maan Tsuun K'awiil Chan. The body of the snake shows the typical markings of the T566 main sign and the fact that Maan is part of its name implies it is closely related to the name of the site itself.

Vase K2784

This vase is the work of K'eej Ti Chan Its'aat Pitsil, a son of the Ik' site ruler Sak Muwaan. The main vertical text describes the seating (accession?) of a ruler:

(A1) ta-YIK'IN? (A2) B' AHLUN-? (A3) b'a (A4) ti-CHUM (A5) ta-na (A6) TUUN?-ni
 (A7) CHAAHK-ki? (A8) K'UHUL-MAAN-AJAW-wa (A9) b'a-ka-b'a
*ta yik'in b'ahlun ? (u) b'ah ti chum tahn tuun chaahk, k'uhul maan ajaw
 b'akab'*
 “in the darkness of the day, on 9 ?, the image of sitting (acceding), Chaahk is
 the Stone Center, Holy Maan Lord, First Earth”

The ruler is identified as a holy Maan lord, based on the T504 main sign of the emblem glyph. This vase points towards diplomatic contacts between the Maan and Ik' polities (see the discussion below on K5418). Another vase, K2803, points to diplomatic contacts between the Ik' site and Hix Wits, recently identified as El Pajjaral by David Stuart [6], also during the reign of Sak Muwaan.

Vase K5193

This vase provides another example of the Maan emblem glyph. The text may be transcribed as:

(A1) 'ALAY? (A2) yu-k'i-b'i (A3) u? (A4) TI' (A5) HUUN-na (A6) PIH
 (A7) na-MAAN (A8) HUUN-na (A9) AJAW
'alay y uk'ib' u ti' hu'un pih na maan hu'un ajaw
 “got said, the vessel of, the ? Bundle of, ? Maan Headband Lord”

This is the drinking utensil of the Ti' Hu'un (a little understood relationship collocation) of the Maan headband lord. Note the emblem glyph given as na-T566.

Vase K5418

This vase is owned by K'ihnich Lamaw Ek', an 8th century Ik' site ruler. One might think he is the main character in the scene. However, the associated emblem glyph, although eroded, is that of Maan. In the PSS, we read:

(A1) *yu-k'i-b'i-la* (A2) *b'a-po-ma* (A3) K'IHNICH-LAMAW-EK' (A4) ?-?-K'AHK'-?-?
(A5) ? (A6) ?-YOPAAT (A7) ?-?-*wa* (A8) ?
y uk'ib'iil b'apo'om k'ihnich lamaw ek' ? k'ahk' ? yopaat ?
“the vessel of, First Incense, K'ihnich Lamaw Ek', ? Fire ? Yopaat ?”

Notice how the headdress of the ruler invades and touches the PSS exactly at the place where the ruler's name phrase appears. This is a common device used to identify characters in the scenes, both in ceramics and monuments. The name phrase in the PSS shares some elements with that of the character named in the text to the right side of the ruler:

(A1) K'AHK'-? (A2) CHAN-na-YOPAAT (A3) K'UHUL-MAAN-AJAW (A4) ?-*ma*
k'ahk' ? chan yopaat, k'uhul maan ajaw, ?
“Fire ? Sky Yopaat, Holy Maan Lord”

The date, 11 Kab'an 5 Pax, corresponding to 09.16.05.11.17 (December 6, 756) agrees nicely with the time frame for K'ihnich Lamaw Ek' derived from other Ik' site vessels.

If the glyphs (A4) to (A8) in the PSS are part of a longer name phrase for K'ihnich Lamaw Ek', then the ruler depicted is likely to be K'ihnich Lamaw Ek' himself, described with another part of his name phrase. In this case, some explanation must be found for the fact that he carries the Maan emblem glyph. One possibility is that the emblem glyph that is usually associated with Maan, might in this context and perhaps in K2784 instead be an alternative emblem glyph for some site within the Ik' polity. Another more likely possibility is that, the rather eroded glyph at (A4) may indicate some connection (e.g., underlordship) between K'ihnich Lamaw Ek' and the depicted Maan ruler. The PSS from (A4) to (A8) could then name the Maan ruler.

Anonymous Plate 1

This plate, currently on display at the Pomona (known as Pakb'u'ul in the Classic Period) site museum, and refers to a lord of the Maan polity. It reads:

(A1) T'ABAAY[yi] (A2) yi-CHI (A3) ya-ja (A4) ji-b'i (A5) 'a-'AK'AB'
(A6) KALOON[TE'] (A7) na-CHAN (A8) 'o (A9) NAAHB'-NAL (A10) CHAK-ja
(A11) ? (A12) na-MAAN-ni (A13) AJAW (A14) K'UH-cha-TAHN?
(A15) ?-WINIK?
*t'abaay yich yajajib' 'ak'ab'(al) kaloonte' chan 'o naahb'nal chakaj ? na maan
ajaw k'uhul chatahn winik?*
“got fired, the surface of the ? instrument of, Darkness Tree-Splits Sky Bird?
Watery Place, Heated/Reddened ? , ? Maan Lord, Holy Chatahn Person?”

This interesting PSS starts with the usual formula for the dedication of ceramic vessels and then with the name of the plate itself, for which I have been unable to find a translation. It says it is the *ajaj* instrument (*y-ajaj-ib'*) of someone who is named afterwards. The name of the owner occupies positions (A5 – 11).

The main name of the ruler appears to be given in (A10 – 11). The collocation is hard to understand. The *-ja* suffix to *chak* indicates that we are seeing the passive form of a root transitive *chak* (“to heat” or perhaps “to redden”). The subject of the verb would therefore be the compound at (A11), which here is difficult to read (but see below).

At (A12 – 13) the lord’s affiliation with the Maan polity is made explicit in the text with a Maan lord title. Finally, and as in K1670, the text ends with a K’uhul Chatahn Winik title, linking the lord to the El Mirador basin place of origin.

Anonymous Plate 2

This plate, published in a catalog from an exhibition in Brussels [10], refers to the same Maan lord as the plate at the Pomona museum and is quite close in style. It reads:

(A1) *ya-ja* (A2) *ji-b'i* (A3) CHIT? (A4) K'UH? (A5) NAAHB'-NAL (A6) 'a-'AK'AB'
 (A7) KALOON[TE'] (A8) JUN-NAL? (A9) CHAK-ja (A10) ?
 (A11) na-MAAN-ni (A12) AJAW (A13) ya-AL-la (A14) IX (A15) IX
 (A16)WAK-cha-CHAN-na-AJAW?

*yajajib' chit k'uh naahb'nal 'akb'al kaloonte' junnal chakaj ? na maan ajaw,
 yal ix ix wak(aw) chan ajaw*

“the ? instrument of, Waterlily Snake God Watery Place, Darkness Tree-Splits,
 First Maize, Heated/Reddened ? ? Maan Lord, the son of Lady Lord that Sky-
 Raises”

The PSS starts directly with the name of the plate. The Chit K’uh collocation is quite plausible in this context since it refers to a waterlily snake deity which matches the next collocation, Naahb’nal (“watery place”), very well. The iconography of the plate also has clear associations with the watery world. Also of note is the fact that at least one ruler, Chak Naahb’ Cha’an of La Corona (known in the Classic Period as Sak Nikte’), also uses Chit K’uh in his longer name phrase. La Corona is geographically quite close to La Florida, the proposed political center of the Maan polity.

After the main name of the plate owner at (A9 – 10), we get the Maan Ajaw title. The PSS ends with some family information for the lord saying that he is the son of a lady named Wakaw Chan Ajaw. Curiously, the wife of the above mentioned ruler of La Corona also used this title. This can be simply a coincidence since the title is quite commonly used in the names of elite individuals.

Anonymous Vase 1

The owner of this vase, published in several books and catalogs [11, 12, 13], is the same individual as the previous two plates. It reads:

(A1) *yu-k'i-b'i* (A2) 'a-'AK'AB' (A3) KALOON[TE']-ni (A4) CHAN-na (A5) ?-'a
 (A6) *mo-o* (A7) ?-sa (A8) 'o (A9) NAAHB'-NAL (A10) CHAK-ja (A11) CHAAHK
 (A12) CHIH (A13) *ya-AJAW* (A14) TE' (A15) na-MAAN-ni (A16) AJAW
yuk'ib' 'ak'ab' kaloonte' chan ? mo' ? 'o naahb'nal chakaj chaahk chih yajaw
te' na maan ajaw
 “the vessel of, Darkness Tree-Splits Sky ?, Macaw ? Bird Watery Place,
 Heated/Reddened Chaahk, the Lord of the Lineage? of, ? Maan Lord”

The PSS of this vessel repeats much the same information given in the previous two plates. The text however provides some further clues to the underlying name phrase. First, the subject of the passive form *chakaj* appears, unexpectedly, split into two logographs. The first, at (A11), seems to be the head of the rain-god Chaahk, although there seems to be some extra decoration in the back of the head. The second, at (A12), is a glyph recently deciphered by Nikolai Grube that reads *chih* and appears to have a meaning related to royal lineages or thrones.

The CHIH logograph is likely connected to the following *yajaw te'* collocation and was perhaps conflated with CHAAHK in plates 1 and 2 for space reasons. In fact, the CHIH appears conflated with an AJAW logograph in a few places in the Corpus of Inscriptions where the context seems to imply that lords of the royal lineage(s) are being named. Well known examples of this are to be found at Palenque (House C, Hieroglyphic Stairway) where a Calakmul lord is named as the lord of the lineage of the Calakmul king “Sky Witness”, and at Yaxchilan (Lintel 21) where it names the ruler Jats'oom Jol as the lord of the lineage of Yopaat B'ahlam, the founder of the dynasty.

Anonymous Vase 2

This vase (currently at William's College and publicized by Samuel Edgerton on the AZT-LAN mailing list) refers to a lord of the Maan polity. The PSS reads:

(A1) ?-ya-? (A2) *yu-k'i-b'i* (A3) *ti-a-ch'a* (A4) *ka* (A5) *ka-wa* (A6) ? (A7) ITS'AAT?-ti
 (A8) ?-ho? (A9) CHAM-KOKAN (A10) WAAW (A11) WINIKHAAB' (A12) *ch'a-ho*
 (A13) WINIKHAAB' (A14) *tu-T239* (A15) CHA'-WINIKHAAB'
 (A16) na-MAAN-AJAW
? yuk'ib ti ach' kakaw ? its'aat ? cham(aw) kokan? waaw? winikhaab'
ch'aho'om winikhaab' ? cha' winikhaab' na maan ajaw
 “? the vessel of, for bitter chocolate, Artist, Turtle That Spine-Takes, K'atun
 Scatterer, K'atun ?, 2 K'atun ? Maan Lord”

I read the head variant at (A10) as *waaw* based on two substitutions, in K3390 and a vase in the Popol Vuh Museum (number 1197), where it replaces the head of the *waaw* turtle in the name of the Mutul ruler K'ihnich Waaw [15]. The spine glyph at (A9) may read *kokan* (Marc Zender and Albert Davletshin, personal communication), meaning “spine, a kind of needle used for making nets”. Thus I interpret the collocations at (A9 – 10) as an underspelling of *chamaw kokan waaw* (“turtle that spine-takes”).

Another interesting point of this text is the T239 glyph at (A14), best known for its appearance in the name of GIII at Palenque and for being the main sign in the emblem glyph of Altar de Sacrificios. Here it takes a *tu-* prefix. At Altar de Sacrificios it often carries *-si* and *-na-si* (once *-ni-si*) suffixes. This may provide an important clue to the decipherment of this glyph.

Anonymous Vase 3

This vase (whose current location is unknown) presents a quite unusual PSS with a clear Maan emblem glyph. The text appears to be heavily underspelled likely because of space constraints. A tentative reading of the PSS might be:

(A1) *yu-k'i-b'i* (A2) *ya-'AL* (A3) *IX?[K'IN-AJAW]-wa* (A4) *WINIKHAAB'[na?]*
 (A5) *CHAK-'OHL* (A6) *?-chi?* (A7) *na-MAAN-ni* (A8) *NIK-li* (A9) *CHAK-ja-la?*
*yuk'ib' yal ix k'in ajaw winikhaab' ? chak ohl ? na maan *u *k'ahk nikil chakaj?*
 “the vessel of, The Son of Lady Sun Lord, K’atun ?, Great Heart ? ? Maan,
 The Son of Reddened (Chaahk ?)”

As pointed out to me by Raphael Tunesi, this vase has several similarities with Anonymous plates 1 and 2 and vase 1. Based on the incomplete name at the end of the PSS, the owner of the vase may well be the son of Chakaj Chaahk (the owner of the above mentioned plates and vase). The “child of father” relationship collocation appears at (A8). The start of the PSS gives also the name of his mother, Lady K’in Ajaw. The collocation at (A4) is intriguing since it looks like a normal K’atun logograph with an infixed syllabic *na*. The collocation at (A6) has what may well be a *chi* syllable (Raphael Tunesi, personal communication). Given its location, immediately before the Maan emblem glyph I speculate that it may be the **CHIH** glyph (c.f. (A12) in Anonymous Vase 1), or a partial phonetic spelling of it. If so, it must be there to link the name of this lady to the Maan polity royal lineage.

4 Conclusion

In this note the references to the Maan polity in the Corpus of Inscriptions have been discussed. Although the number of references is quite small, those from inscriptions of known provenance clearly cluster in an area in the upper San Pedro Martir river, close to the Usumacinta. This is consistent with the association of Maan with the site of La Florida as proposed by several scholars.

The emblem glyph of the Maan polity and its possible connection with a rare glyph featuring a full figured snake was also discussed. This snake seems to be a fantastic being associated with fire and its name appears associated with deities such as Chaahk and K’awiil.

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