

A Study of the Classic Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions of Pusilha, Toledo District, Belize

Christian M. Prager

Universität Bonn, Germany

Abstract: This paper is concerned with an epigraphic analysis of 48 Maya hieroglyphic monuments of the archaeological site of Pusilha (Belize). The study explores the dynastic history of that ancient Maya kingdom, whose rulers were named *un ajaw* or “lord of avocado”. The epigraphic study yielded a total of 40 named individuals, including ten male rulers and a queen linked to the Pusilha emblem glyph. 21 of them could be placed within the local dynastic and chronological matrix spanning a historical period between 8.2.0.0.0 and 9.18.7.10.3. The analysis reveals a 220-year span of history dating from A.D. 571 to 798. Earlier historical dates prove that some Pusilha kings traced their origin back to Preclassic times and referred to legendary individuals that were most likely ancestors or even dynastic founders from foreign locations. In the Classic Period there is an uninterrupted sequence of six kings and one queen, from Ruler A to G, spanning a secured dynastic period from A.D. 571 to 731.

Keywords: Maya epigraphy, hieroglyphic monuments, Pusilha, southeastern Maya lowlands, Belize, Classic period.

Resumen: Este texto presenta un análisis epigráfico de 48 monumentos jeroglíficos mayas del sitio arqueológico de Pusilhá (Belice). El estudio explora la historia dinástica de este antiguo reino maya cuyos gobernantes llevaban el título *un ajaw* o “señor de aguacate”. El estudio epigráfico dio como resultado un total de 40 personas mencionadas, incluyendo diez gobernantes masculinos y una reina vinculada al glifo emblema de Pusilhá. De estas personas, 21 podrían ser colocadas dentro de las matrices dinástica y cronológica locales que abarcan un período histórico entre 8.2.0.0.0 y 9.18.7.10.3. El análisis revela un período de 220 años de dataciones históricas de 571 a 798 d. C. Las fechas históricas más antiguas demuestran que algunos reyes de Pusilhá remontaron sus orígenes a la época del Preclásico refiriéndose a individuos legendarios que probablemente fueron ancestros o fundadores dinásticos de otros lugares. En el Clásico hay una secuencia ininterrumpida de seis reyes y una reina, del Gobernante A a G, que abarca un período dinástico asegurado de 571 hasta 731 d. C.

Palabras clave: Epigrafía maya, monumentos jeroglíficos, Pusilhá, tierras bajas mayas sudorientales, Belice, período Clásico.

Introducción

The subject of this paper is the little known hieroglyphic inscriptions from the Classic Maya site of Pusilha, located in the Toledo District of southern Belize. The site was discovered in 1926 and was partially excavated by the British Museum between 1928 and 1930 (Joyce et al. 1928; Joyce 1929; Gruning 1930). This paper is concerned with the dynastic history as recorded on some forty-four carved limestone monuments thus far discovered. While some of the monuments are still *in situ*, though severely eroded, the best-preserved stelae and monument fragments were removed by the British Museum Expeditions, where they still reside today. Since the 1930's, there has been little archaeological work at Pusilha. Sporadic excavations have been conducted at the site by Norman Hammond in 1970 (1975), Richard Leventhal in 1979 and 1980 (1990; 1992), Gary Rex Walters and Lorington Weller in 1992 (1994) and by the Pusilha Archaeo-

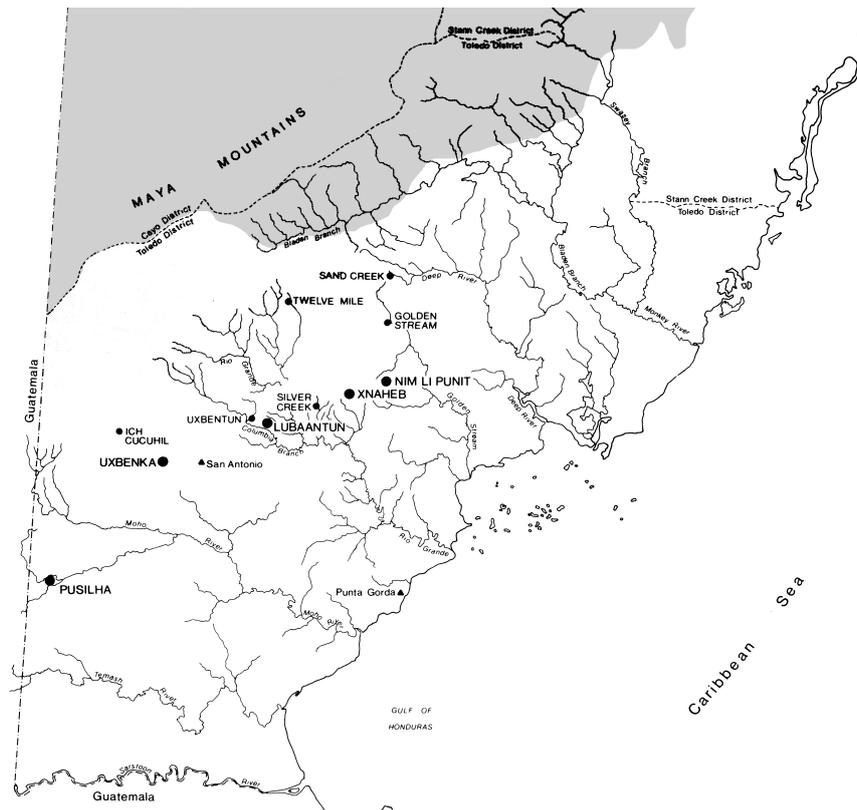


Figure 1. Map of Southern Belize (drawing by the author after Leventhal 1990: 130).

logical Project (PUSAP), directed by Geoffrey Braswell (2002). Photographs and several incomplete sketches of some of the stelae were first published by Joyce in 1928 (Joyce et al. 1928), and later by Morley (1937-1938) and Riese (1980). Except for a few brief studies concerning the chronological and astronomical contents of the hieroglyphic inscriptions, the majority of the monuments have never been adequately recorded. Nor have these hieroglyphic texts been thoroughly analyzed according to proper epigraphic standards set forth by the Corpus of Maya Hieroglyphic Inscriptions Project (Graham 1975). To better understand these texts, the author conducted field work at the British Museum in London in 1996 and 2000 and at the modern Q'eqchi' village of San Benito Poité in 2001 and in 2005.¹ As part of this research, all of the monuments located in both the British Museum and at the site of Pusilha were surveyed, photographed, and professionally drawn by the author.

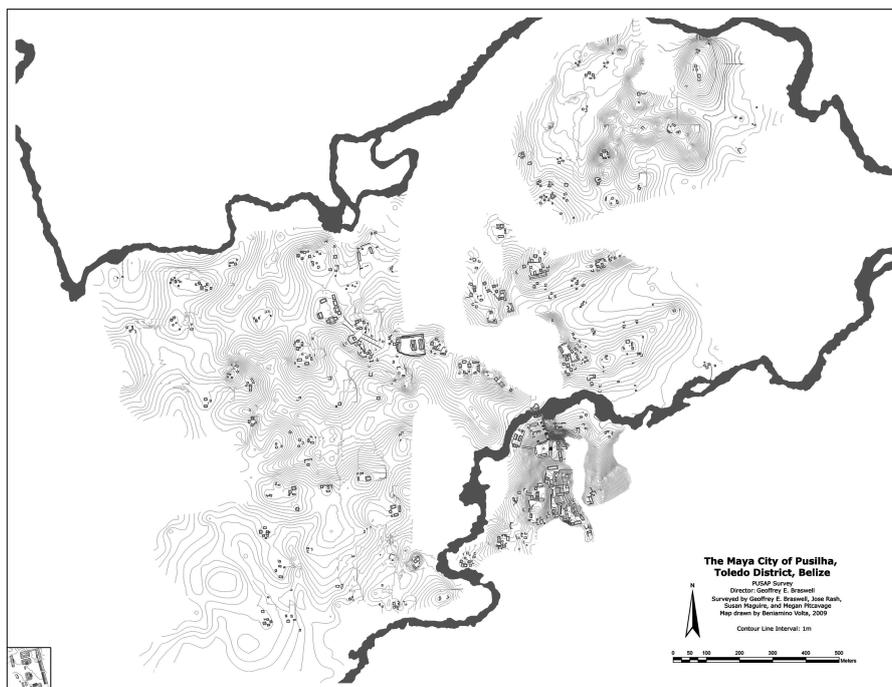


Figure 2. Map of Pusilha (courtesy of Geoffrey Braswell).

1 The epigraphic investigation at Pusilha formed part of a research program (PUSAP) initiated and directed by Geoffrey Braswell of the University of California at San Diego. The first field season was carried out in 2001 and included Geoffrey Braswell, Susan Maguire, Lorington Weller and myself. PUSAP was funded during the 2001 season by the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, Inc. (FAMSI) and the School of American Research (Braswell et al. 2004).

Pusilha, nestled in the foothills of the southwestern Maya Mountains, lies within a well-defined cultural region, as first proposed by Leventhal (1992). This area can be defined by specific geographic and archaeological features unique to the area roughly defined as the Toledo District of southern Belize and the adjacent Río Pasión Region of southeastern Guatemala (Dunham, Jamison & Leventhal 1989: 263). It encompasses more than 4000 square kilometers and is bounded to the northwest by the southeastern foothills of the Maya Mountains, to the east by the Caribbean Sea, to the south by the marshy terrain of the Temash and Sarstoon Rivers (Dunham, Jamison & Leventhal 1989: 269; Leventhal 1992: 145), and to the southwest, the area extends well up into the upper reaches of the Río Cancuen (Corzo et al. 1999). Southern Belize differs from adjacent cultural zones by its distinctive architectural remains that include terraced platform constructions, ballcourts within walled enclosures, the use of natural terrain for terraces and pyramid-like structures, collective tombs, a regional style of carving and idiosyncratic hieroglyphic inscriptions (Leventhal 1990: 138-139; Grube, MacLeod & Wanyerka 1999: 36-37). The earliest occupation appears to be concentrated along the western part of the region, which includes the major monument-erecting sites of Uxbenka and Pusilha (Leventhal 1992: 152; Wanyerka 1996: 35). By A.D. 650-700, an eastward expansion of major centers began to rise and form throughout the south-central portion of the Maya Mountains region. This eastward expansion would eventually lead to the foundation of other monument erecting sites like Nim Li Punit, Xnaheb, Lubaantun, and Tzimin Che.

Pusilha (16°06'45" N, 89°11'43 W)² is located between the Poité and Pusilha Rivers along the Guatemalan/Belizean border some 42 km northwest of Punta Gorda, the capital of the Toledo District (Figure 1). Rising to the north and south of Pusilha are an extensive series of karst limestone ridges that extend to some 200 meters above sea level. Architectural remains and ancient settlements are dispersed over an area comprising some 6.4 square kilometers. Numerous settlements have been found along the sloping karst foothills north of the Pusilha River and along the limestone massif to the south of the site. Cutting through the middle of the site is the Pusilha River, whose triple-span bridge abutments are still visible even today.

The central site core is comprised primarily of several major residential and ceremonial structures (Main or Stela Plaza, Big Tree Group), each grouped around a series of plazas or ballcourts (Figure 2). In the 1990's, two additional residential groups (the Moho Plaza and Machaca Plaza) were discovered just southwest of the main plaza (Walters & Weller 1994). In between these major residential zones are dozens of smaller outlying house-mounds that cover the area north of the Pusilha River. Located south

2 The geographical coordinates are obtained with a hand-held GPS navigator at the southern end of the Stela Plaza.

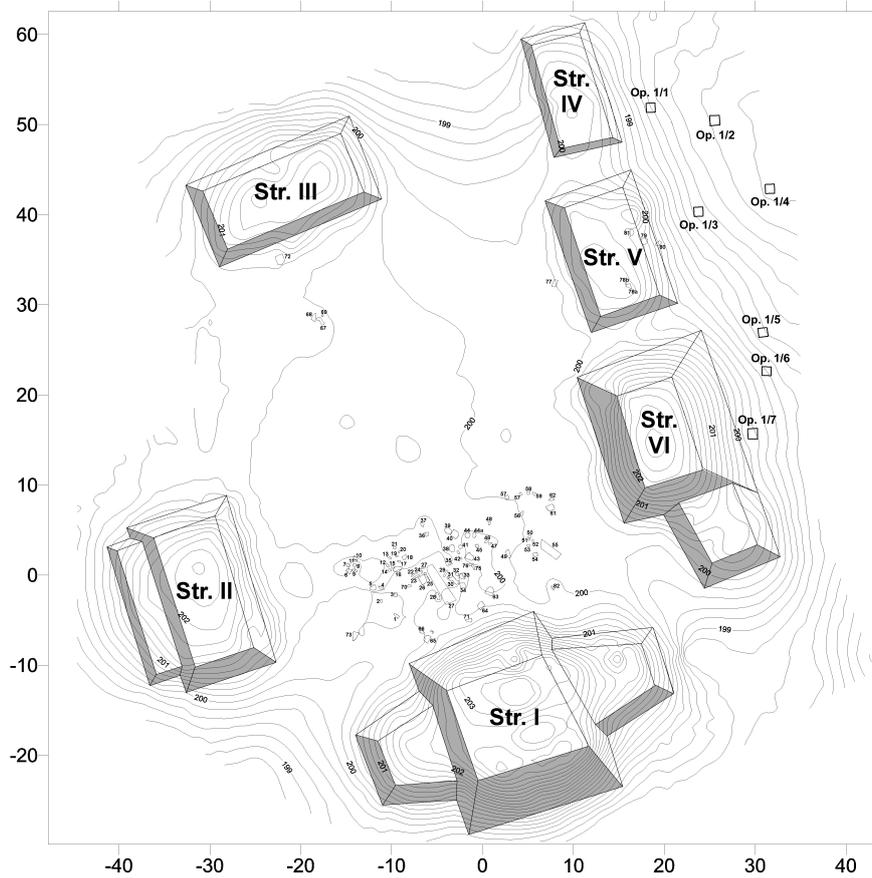


Figure 3. The Stela Group (from Braswell 2002: Fig. 2).

to the Main Plaza, on the opposite bank of the Pusilha River, is a stepped residential complex known as the Gateway Hill Acropolis. This portion of the site includes the famous bridge abutments at the banks the Pusilha River and the hilltop complex known as Gateway Hill, located some 75 meters above the river (Braswell 2002; Braswell et al. 2004; Leventhal 1990).

Of particular interest to this study are the hieroglyphic inscriptions found in the main Stelae Plaza and those found in the Moho Plaza. Most of the carved monuments and artifacts were found in the main Stela Plaza, a large area defined by six platforms (labelled Structure I - VI see Figure 3). Arguably, Structure I was the most important structure of this group, due to the fact that its massive superstructure construction is

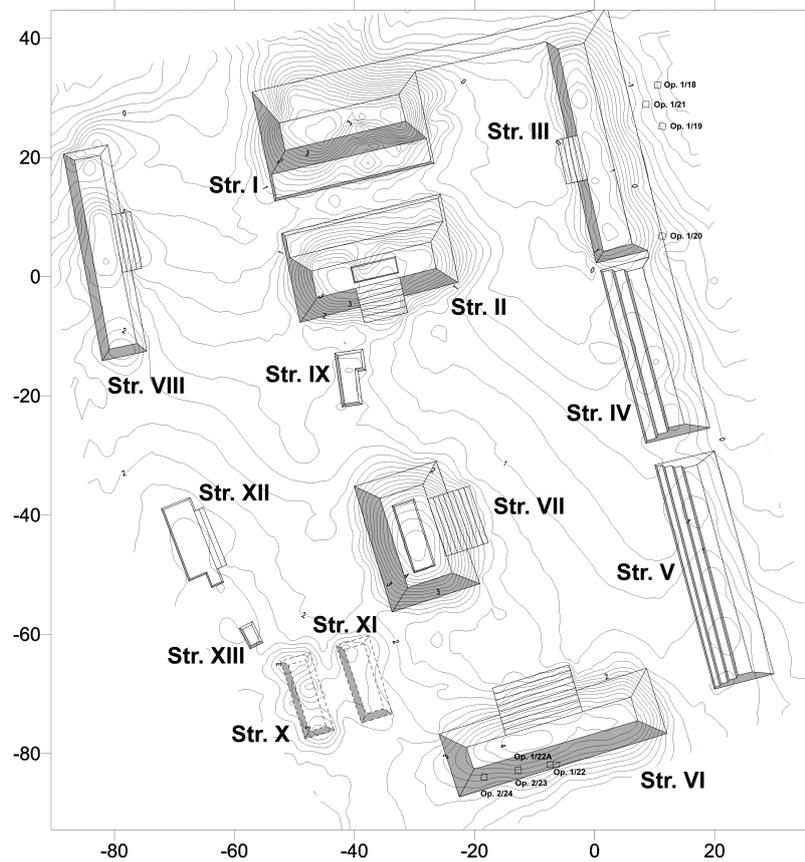


Figure 4. Map of the Moho Plaza (from Braswell 2002: Fig. 4).

much larger than any of the other structures, and that nearly all of the known monuments were concentrated in a line across the north end of the structure. All of the carved monuments discovered by the British Museum were found broken lying on the ground north of Structure I. Each monument was labeled with an alphabetic designation (Stela A-N) by Gann (see Figure 2 in Joyce et al. 1928). This system has been generally accepted, except for a few modifications by Morley (1937-1938), Riese (1980), and the author of the present study (Prager 2002). Following a suggestion by Riese (1980), all of the monument fragments found during the 2001 field season were numbered consecutively (Figure 3). None of the newly discovered carved monument fragments belong to any of the known monuments documented so far.

As first reported by Gann (1928) and Joyce (1929), most of the stelae were found broken and lying on the ground near their respective monument bases, except for Stela F, which was found intact. In total, twelve stelae were located in a line along the north face of Structure I. Because of the way in which the monuments fell, most of the best-preserved hieroglyphic texts at the site survived because they were buried text-side down. Therefore, the front figural-sides of most of the stelae are heavily eroded. Shortly after their initial discovery, many of the best-preserved monuments (Stela C, D, E, H, M, O, P, Q, R, Z, Monument Fragment 1 and 2) were removed from the country of Belize and shipped directly to the British Museum.

In 1992, several new hieroglyphic inscriptions were discovered by Gary Rex Walters and Lorington Weller in an area outside the central core of Pusilha, known today as the Moho Plaza (Walters & Weller 1994). Located approximately two kilometers southwest of the Stela Plaza, Walters and his team discovered a large residential complex and ceremonial group that included a previously unknown ballcourt (Figure 4). In addition, Walters and Weller discovered three small ballcourt markers in the alley-way of the ballcourt, and located nine hieroglyphic and iconographic cartouches engraved into the risers of a stair leading up to the top of Structure VI. During the 2001 season, the PUSAP team recovered fifteen new sculpted monument fragments in the Stela Plaza and one well-preserved fragment of an unknown stela. Today, the corpus of carved monuments from Pusilha totals some forty-five objects: twenty stelae (Stelae A, A1, B-H, K-S, U, Z), three altars (Altar V-X), three ballcourt markers (Ballcourt Markers 1-3), one hieroglyphic stairway (Hieroglyphic Stairway 1), seventeen sculptured monument fragments (Fragments 1-17), and one miscellaneous text (Miscellaneous Text 1).

Previous epigraphic studies

To date, the hieroglyphic texts of Pusilha have received only moderate attention by epigraphers. One of the few researchers to use data from the Pusilha inscriptions was Heinrich Berlin (1958) in his study of Classic Maya emblem glyphs. Others examined the dates and portions of the Supplementary Series as found on the texts shortly after their discovery (Thompson 1928; Gann 1928; Morley 1937-1938; Andrews 1951; Satterthwaite 1951). Furthermore, in the early 1970s a summary and review of the state of epigraphic research on Pusilha was compiled by Berthold Riese (1980). Table 1 is a summary of the collective dates from the Pusilha corpus as recorded from a total of ten hieroglyphic inscriptions. The chronological sequence of dates begins in the remote past with a retrospective date of 8.2.0.0.0 (February 9, 81 B.C) and the latest date known at Pusilha, found on the hieroglyphic stairway, is 9.18.7.10.3 (March 26, 798). In general, most texts date between 9.6.17.8.18 and 9.16.0.0.0 (June 19, 571 - May 9, 751) spanning a period of almost two centuries.

Monument	Date	Supplementary Series	
St. P	[8.2.0.0.0]	5 Ajaw 8 Sak	
St. K	[8.6.0.0.0]?	10 Ajaw 13 Ch'en	
St. P	[9.6.17.8.18]	[2 Etz'nab 11 Sek]	
St. O	9.7.0.0.0	7 Ajaw [3 K'ank'in]	G9, D25, C6, X6, A9
St. P	9.7.0.0.0	7 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in	G9, D3, C3, A10
St. P	[9.7.4.9.12]	[1 Eb 10 Zotz']	
St. H	[9.7.10.0.0]	6 Ajaw 13 Sak	
St. H	9.7.12.6.7	8 Manik' 10 K'ayab	G9, D2, C5, X5, A10
St. Q	[9].8.[0].0.[0]	5 Ajaw [3 Ch'en]	
St. D	9.8*.0.0.0	5 Ajaw 3 Ch'en*	G9, D17, C4, A10
St. P	[9.8.1.12.8]	2 Lamat 1 Zip	
St. D	9.10.15.0.0	6 Ajaw 13 Mak	G9, D3, C3, A10
St. D	9.10.15.0.0	6 Ajaw 13 Mak	G9, D23, C3, A10
St. H	9.11.0.0.0	12 Ajaw 8 Keh	G9, D4, C4?, X?, A9
St. K	9.12.0.0.0	10 Ajaw 8 Yaxk'in	G9, D1, C3, X3/4, A10
St. U	[9.12.7.5.0]?	4 Ajaw 13 Yax?	
St. M	9.14.0.0.0	[6 Ajaw 13 Muwan]	G9, C16, C?, X3/4, A?
St. E	9.15.0.0.0	4 Ajaw 13 Yax	D11, C1?, X2, A9
St. F	[9].16.[0.0.0]	2 Ajaw 13 Sek	
HS. 1	[9.18.7.10.3]?	4 Ak'bal 2 Sotz'	

Table 1. Dates and accompanying Supplementary Series from Pusilha. Unattested portions of the date are enclosed in brackets. Reconstructed texts are indicated by asterisks and question marks indicate uncertainty about reconstruction.

The following paper will discuss the dynastic history of Pusilha from the perspective of its rulers and other important individuals of the Pusilha royal court. As previously mentioned, the first major effort aimed at reconstructing the dynastic history of Pusilha was Heinrich Berlin's research on Classic Maya emblem glyphs where he identified the emblem glyph of Pusilha on Stela M (1958: 118). Following the work of Berlin, Marcus was the first scholar to seriously consider the hierarchical nature of Maya polities (1973, 1976). In doing so, Marcus placed Pusilha within the political realm of Copan and Quirigua based on her identification of the shared use of the Quirigua emblem glyph by Pusilha. However, epigraphic evidence uncovered by the author (Prager 2002) and Wanyerka (2003) now suggests that Marcus' identification of the Pusilha emblem glyph on Quirigua Stela I was incorrect. Subsequently, Proskouriakoff also suggested that Pusilha was subordinate to Copan (1993: 56).

Proskouriakoff argued that a Pusilha emblem glyph appears on Copan Stela 7 and that the name of the 11th ruler of Copan (*Butz' Chan*) resembled the proper name of the contemporary ruler of Pusilha, known today as Ruler B (Proskouriakoff 1993: 56). Unfortunately, Proskouriakoff's identification of the Pusilha emblem glyph on Copan Stela 7 is incorrect; however, her arguments clearly suggest some sort of political interaction or relationship between Pusilha and Copan based on the use of a similar name by both Maya polities. Proskouriakoff's idea would later be adopted by Schele & Grube (1994) who deciphered the main sign of the Pusilha emblem glyph as T559 /**TZUK**/, meaning "province" or "partition". In addition, Schele & Grube also recognized and accepted the name phrase recorded on Pusilha Stela M as that of the twelfth ruler of Copan, an individual known as Smoke *Imix*. Based on these arguments, they assumed that Pusilha was a province of Copan whose kings temporarily reigned over Pusilha or perhaps subdued the local rulers (Schele & Grube 1994: 118). However, in his discussion of the political history of Quirigua, Matthew Looer (2003) has cast a critical eye on this political model. In regard to the supposed political interactions between Quirigua and Pusilha, Looer emphasized the formal distinction between the emblem glyphs of Pusilha and Quirigua (T559 and T560). In addition, Looer also suggested that the individual on Pusilha Stela M may simply be the name of a local lord and not the name of the twelfth ruler of Copan Smoke Imix (Schele & Looer 1996). To date, arguments concerning the political relations between Pusilha and both Quirigua and Copan are scant, and they appear to have been too weak to have sustained the types of political interactions advocated by Marcus, Proskouriakoff, and Schele.

The only substantial study with respect to the dynastic history of Pusilha is an unpublished seminar paper written by Reents-Budet (1982), in which she identifies the proper names and epithets of seven Pusilha rulers. She was also among the first scholars to identify several parentage statements in the texts of Pusilha. Berthold Riese (1982) was the first scholar to identify the all-important "flint-and-shield" (*tok' pakal*) warfare expression based on the text of Pusilha Stela D. Schele & Grube (1994: 106) identified another war-related expression in the same text paraphrased as the "burning of an object" and linked to a *lakam tun* or "stela".

The rulers of Pusilha

As part of the author's original study (Prager 2002), thirty-eight individuals were identified. Among them were eleven individuals of *k'ubul ajaw* rank, or "divine ruler", seven of whom can be placed into a chronological framework (Table 1). Since most of the personal names cannot be completely read due to weathering or the lack of proper decipherment, the author simply refers to the lords of Pusilha using an alphabetic designation (Ruler A-Ruler G). Individuals who carry the *k'ubul ajaw* title that cannot be placed within the chronological framework of the site are simply labelled X1-X4 (Table 2).

Ruler A

SOURCES - Ruler A recorded only two stelae: Stela O (commemorating the 9.7.0.0.0 Period Ending, see Figure 5) and Stela Q (commemorating the 9.8.0.0.0 Period Ending, see Figure 7). The dates of Ruler A's reign fall between 9.6.17.8.18 (June 17, 571) and 9.10.15.0.0 (November 7, 647). Given that only calendar dates survive on these two monuments, no contemporary historical information can be extracted from them concerning the life of Ruler A. However, biographical data was recorded on Stela D and Stela P (Figures 8 and 9), two monuments commissioned by Ruler A's son and heir, Ruler B.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - The name phrase of Ruler A (dubbed "God K--1" by Reents-Budet 1982: 2) is recorded on Stelae D and P and both were dedicated by Ruler B to commemorate the 9.10.15.0.0 Period Ending. The complete name phrase of Ruler A, as found on Stela D (C4-D5), reads **K'AWIL CHAN-na K'IN-ni-chi MUWAN SAK tz'u-nu-na** or *K'awil Chan K'inich Mawan Sak Tz'unun*. The second part of his name phrase (*Mawan Sak Tz'unun*) may simply be his pre-accession name and means "white hummingbird" (BMM 158v). However, Ruler A's proper name is recorded on Stela P as *K'awil Chan K'inich* (C5-D5; G5-H5). A full title sequence appears on Stela D and includes the royal title of Maya nobility

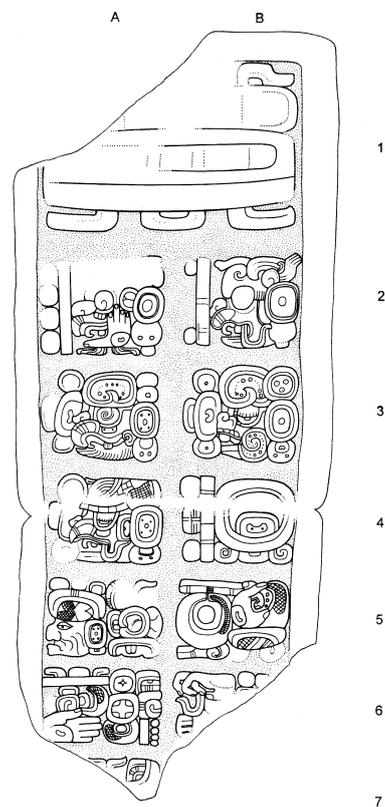


Figure 5. Pusilha Stela O, back (drawing by the author).

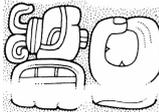
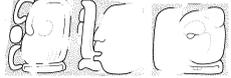
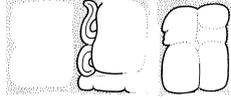
Ruler		Monument	Birth	Inthronisation / Period of Rulership	Death
A		St. O, Q	9.4.0.0.1 - 9.4.19.17.19	9.6.17.8.18?	9.8.0.0.1 - 9.10.14.17.19
B		St. P, D, C?	9.7.4.9.12? 9.8.15.0.1 - 9.9.14.17.19	9.8.15.0.1 - 9.9.14.17.19	9.10.15.0.1 - 9.11.0.0.0
C		St. H	9.7.12.6.7	9.11.0.0.0	9.11.0.0.1 - 9.12.0.0.0
D		St. K		9.11.0.0.1 - 9.12.0.0.0	9.12.0.0.1 - 9.14.0.0.0
E		St. M		9.12.0.0.1 - 9.14.0.0.0	9.14.0.0.1 - 9.15.0.0.0
F				9.14.0.0.1 - 9.14.19.17.19	
G		St. E		9.14.0.0.01 - 9.15.0.0.0	
X1		St. N			
X2		St. U			
X3		HS. 1			
X4		Frag. 3			
X5		St. F			

Table 2. Summary of Pusilha dynasty; rulers are identified by capital letters; the second column features the glyphic names of Pusilha rulers, and their deduced lifespan including the date of birth, accession and death. In the absence of concrete calendar biographic key dates are specified by a presumed span of time.

along with the Pusilha emblem glyph (*k'ubul un ajan*) (D7). The main sign of the Pusilha emblem glyph includes the T559 logograph /UN/, meaning “avocado”. This decipherment was derived from its use in the Ch'ol month of *Uniw* and its respective Yucatecan cognate of *K'ank'in* (Grube 1990: 82). Two variants of the Pusilha emblem glyph have been discovered. In most cases, the variable element (the name of the Pusilha polity) is the T559 /UN/ (Figure 10a), whereas on Stelae D, K, and E the main sign consists of an additional element: Tnn+T559 (Pusilha Stela D, G14-H14, see Figure 11b). Unfortunately, this additional grapheme has not been deciphered nor is it featured in any other known hieroglyphic text.

His title sequence contains the phrase **HUK CHAPAT CHAN K'AWIL CHAN**-na, or *Huk Chapat Chan K'awil Chan*, meaning “the Seventh Celestial Centipede of K'awil” (A14-B14). This is the proper name of a supernatural agent related to the god K'awil. Ruler A also bears the epithet **OCH-K'IN KALOM-TE'** (*ochk'in kalomte'*), or the “West Kalomte'” (C6-D6), which is a directional title of governance that asserts legitimacy to its bearer. Only members of the most powerful dynasties bore this title whose precise meaning is still up for discussion, though Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube suggest that it “asserts a legitimacy derived from the great Mexican city of Teotihuacan” (Martin & Grube 2000: 17). Ruler A also carries the title **CHAN WINIKHAB? ch'a-jo-ma**, *chan winikhab? ch'ajom* meaning that he was “4-*k'atun*-person” (C3-D3). It does indicate that he was in his fourth *k'atun* of life, or between 60 and 80 years of age as commemorated on Stela Q (9.8.0.0.0). The sequence of Ruler A's personal titles ends with the expression **UX BULUK PIK a-AJAW**, *ux buluk pik ajan* suggesting that he was “3-11 Bak'tun' Lord” (C2-D2). Together with the 4-*k'atun*-expression, this section of the text was previously assumed by many epigraphers to be a distance number leading from the Initial Series date of 9.8.0.0.0 to an implied date that was regarded as Ruler A's date of birth (Reents-Budet 1982). However, this hieroglyph is simply an epithet that is also recorded in inscriptions elsewhere, such as in Tikal, Copan, Naranjo or Quirigua. According to Maria Gaida (1990), this number must refer to the remote date of 1.13.0.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Zip (February 24, 9898). Gaida argues that this title expresses the multiplication $3 \times 11.0.0.0.0$, resulting in the remote Long Count date 1.13.0.0.0 10 Ajaw 8 Zip. This numbered title associates its bearer with this remote date and may therefore allude to the eternal nature and immortality of the person carrying these title or functions as a numbered *k'atun*-title.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - No text at Pusilha provides information about *K'awil Chan K'inich*'s birth. To reconstruct the date of his birth one must use the *k'atun*-age statements recorded on Stela D (C3) and Stela P (G4). The texts on both monuments state that stelae were erected under the aegis of *K'awil Chan K'inich* on 9.7.0.0.0 (Stela P, A10-A11,

u tz'a-pa-wa T1084 **LAKAM TUN**-ni) and 9.8.0.0.0 (Stela D, A10-A11, **u tz'a-pa-wa** T1084 **K'UH-HUL-TUN**). The text on Stela P indicates that *K'awil Chan K'inich* was an *ux winikhab ajaw* or “3-*k'atun*-lord” (G4), implying an age between 40 and 60. Twenty years later, according to the text of Stela D, Ruler A was a “4-*k'atun*-lord” (C3), implying an age between 60 and 80. These two *k'atun*-age statements suggest a plausible time-span for the date of his birth sometime between 9.4.0.0.1 - 9.4.19.17.19, also suggested by the other possible numbered title (“3-11-*pik*”) that would associate his birth with the date 9.4.7.15.0 12 Ajaw 18 Sek (July 8, 522). However, there is some epigraphic evidence to suggest that Ruler A probably acceded to kingship on 9.6.17.8.18 (June 19, 571). Recorded on Stela P in a retrospective text are the remains of a partially effaced verbal expression (D4) containing the well-known T670 logograph /**K'AM**/, meaning “to receive.” This is a common verbal expression used in formal accession statements. Less than two years later, *K'awil Chan K'inich* celebrated the 9.7.0.0.0 Period Ending and dedicated a stone monument; most likely Stela O (Figure 5) at the Stela Plaza (Stela P, A10-A11). Stela P and Stela D both record the proper name of this specific area of the Pusilha as T150-**wi-tzi ti K'UHUL** Tnn, (T150-*witz' k'ubul* ?) or “Platform-Mountain at ...” (Stela P, B11; Stela D, G12).

Interestingly, *Yajaw Te' K'inich II*, the contemporary lord of Caracol, also erected a stela at Caracol (Stela 1) in order to commemorate the 9.7.0.0.0 Period Ending. Both Caracol Stela 1 and Pusilha Stela Q share the same proper name for their respective monuments (T1084



Figure 6. Proper names of stelae on Pusilha Stela D and Caracol Stela 1 (drawing of St. D by the author; drawing of Caracol St. 1 taken from Beetz & Satterthwaite 1981: Figure 1).

k'ubul tun, see Figure 6). This could provide evidence that the two sites were in some way linked together. Twenty years later, the text of Stela D indicates that *K'awil Chan K'inich* was still in power, since he commemorated the 9.8.0.0.0 Period Ending by erecting a stela, also named T1084 *k'ubul tun*, at the “Platform-Mountain” Place (St. D, A10-A13). This stela most likely corresponds to Stela Q, a stela fragment discovered in front of the line of stelae along the front of Structure 1 (Figure 7).

There are no references to the death of Ruler A on any monument at Pusilha. According to the *k'atun*-age statements, Ruler A reached an age between 60 and 80. However, the text on Stela D (Figure 8, H10-H14) suggests that *K'awil Chan K'inich's* son

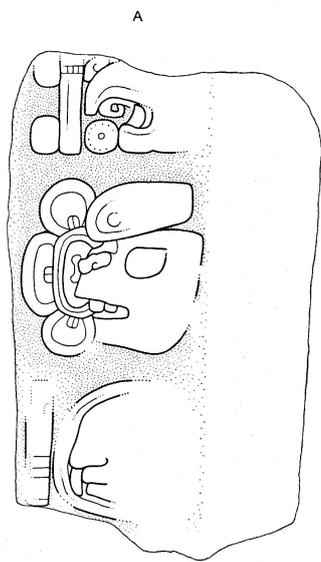


Figure 7. Pusilha Stela Q, back (drawing by the author).

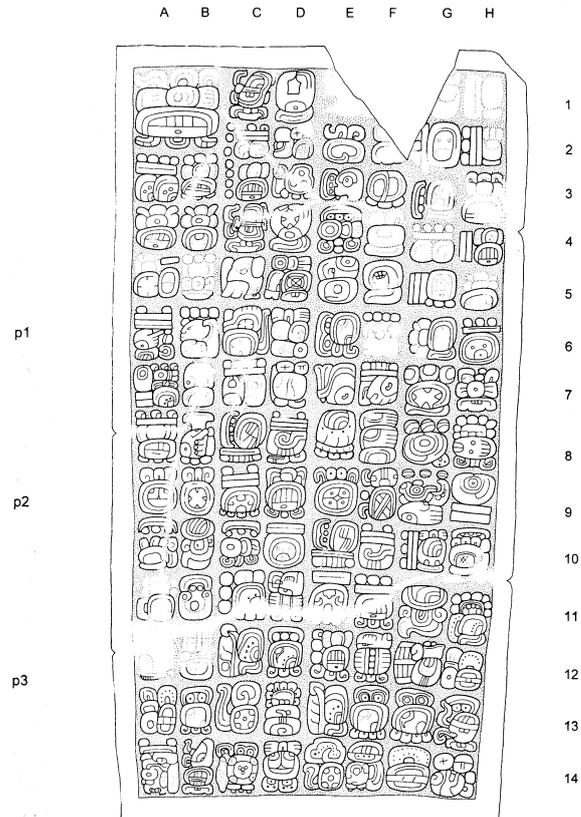


Figure 8. Pusilha Stela D, back (drawing by the author).

and heir apparent *K'ak' U Ti' Chan*, erected a stela on 9.10.15.0.0. This heir apparent carries the title “the divine lord of Pusilha.” It can be assumed that Ruler A was dead before his son acceded to the throne, which must have happened sometime before 9.10.15.0.0. The date of *K'amil Chan K'inich's* death can vaguely be placed somewhere between 9.8.0.0.0 and 9.10.15.0.0.

PARENTAGE - No explicit parentage statements are given for Ruler A. However, on Stela P, a father-son relationship between *K'amil Chan K'inich* and *K'ak' U Ti' Chan* is indicated by the “child of father” parentage statement **U YAX ch'o-ko MIJIN** (*u yax ch'ok mijin*), which can be paraphrased as simply “his first offspring” (Stela P, G3-H3).

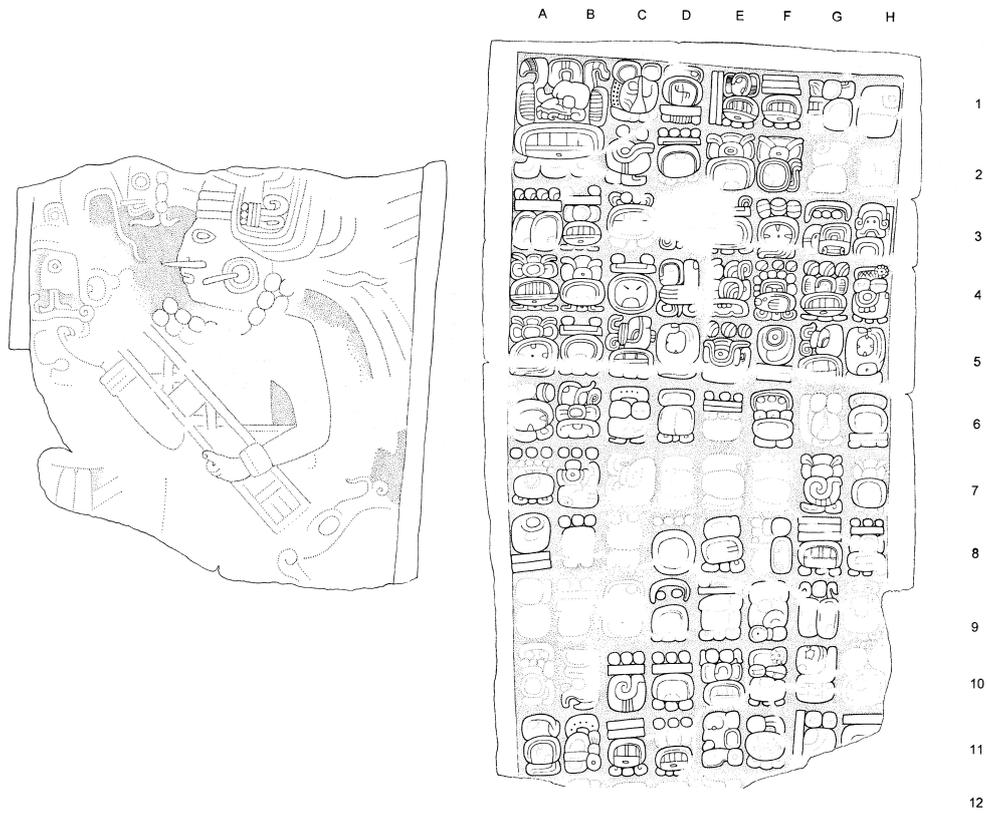


Figure 9a+b. Pusilha Stela P, front and back (drawing by the author).

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - According to the retrospective texts on both Stela D and Stela P commissioned by Ruler A's successor, the most notable accomplishment of Ruler A's reign was the erection of two stelae to commemorate the 9.7.0.0.0 and 9.8.0.0.0 Period Endings. Both stelae were erected at the "Platform-Mountain", again, the probable ancient name of the Stela Plaza (Stela P, A10-B11; Stela D, A10-A13). A war-related event involving the breaking of stelae was also recorded on Stela D (D11-C13) corresponding to the date 9.8.1.12.8 (April 24, 595). Who this attack was against is highly debated, but the individual responsible for this action was named *?-nib*, and appears to be an individual from some unknown polity, probably Altun Ha, as suggested by Phil Wanyerka (personal communication, August 2003) (**k'a-sa-ya LAKAM TUN-ni U KAB-ji-ya ?-ni-bi**, *k'asay lakam tun* "it got broken the large stone" *u kabjij ?- nib* "by the doing of Scroll-*nib*", Stela D 11-C12) (cf. Helmke, Awe & Grube 2010:

104-105). It may be that these actions were against Pusilha and that this portion of the text on Stela D describes the destruction of the stone stelae originally set by Ruler A. Following these events the text describes that the flint and the shield of “*K’ak’-Scroll*” were downed (**ju-bu-yi U TOK’ U PAKAL-la MA’ CH’AB MA’ AK’AB ... K’AK’** T579, *jubuy u tok’ u pakal ma’ ch’ab ma’ ak’ab ... k’ak’-?* (“was downed the flint and the shield”) followed by a possible metaphor or name of a captive whose proper name remains unclear. All of this was performed under the auspices of *Chan Ek’* (F6-E7), a person from *Yok’baj* (F7-E8), which is a toponym that has not yet been linked to any known archaeological site. This event occurred at a place whose toponym has survived only partially, but includes the well-known expression **K’O(B?)-TUN**, nicknamed “Fist-Stone” (E5-F5). According to Markus Eberl (2005), this expression refers to a “burial-related” place where corpses are formally laid out. Finally, this extended “war-related” clause ends with the hieroglyph **k’i-k’i-yi** (*k’ik’-ij*), meaning “blood exuded” (F8).

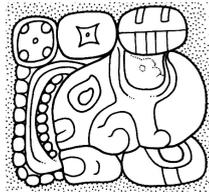


Figure 10a. The main variant of the Pusilha emblem glyph (PUS St. D, drawing by the author).

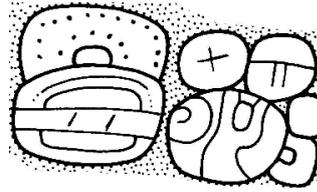


Figure 10b. Variant of the Pusilha emblem glyph (PUS St. M, drawing by the author).

Ruler B

SOURCES - Information concerning the life of Ruler B (*K’ak’ U Ti’ Chan*) comes from two monuments that he commissioned: Stela D and P (Figures 8 and 9). These two companion monuments contain the longest hieroglyphic texts at Pusilha. Both celebrate the 9.10.15.0.0 Period Ending and both were designed to glorify the past deeds of his father *K’awil Chan K’inich* (Ruler A). Because both monuments are of similar size and style, they were probably designed as a pair. Both monuments feature identical front figures (a central figure flanked by seated prisoners), and the respective rear faces are completely covered with long hieroglyphic texts. Stela H (Figure 11), a monument dedicated by Ruler C, who was probably a brother of Ruler B, is another monument that contains important dates concerning Ruler B.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - Ruler B was first identified as a Pusilha lord named “Chan Na God K-West-2” by Reents-Budet (1982: 2), who placed him as the second person in the dynastic sequence. His name phrase occurs on Stela P and includes a full sequence of epithets including his proper name (which probably reads **K’AK’ U TI’? CHAN-na** or *K’ak’ U Ti’? Chan* or “Fire is the Mouth of the Heaven” (H13).

Schele & Grube (1994: 118) were the first scholars to propose that Ruler 11 of Copan (*Butz’ Chan*) bears the same personal name. Copan’s *Butz’ Chan* acceded to the throne on 9.7.5.0.8 (November 19, 578) and enjoyed a 49-year reign, dying on 9.9.14.16.9 (January 23, 628). During *Butz’ Chan*’s reign, the leading elite of Copan oversaw a surge of political power by focusing on the surrounding borderlands. During this time, polities located in the southeastern periphery of the Maya Mountains like Pusilha and Nim Li Punit began to adopt certain Copan cultural traditions. These traditions include the use of proper Copan rulers’ name phrases and the use of Copan costumes, especially the use of the turban headdress (Grube, MacLeod & Wanyerka 1999). *Butz’ Chan*’s reign overlapped the sovereignty of Pusilha Ruler B, who took the proper name of his famous counterpart at Copan when he acceded to the throne sometime between 9.8.1.12.8 and 9.10.15.0.0. Based on these similarities, scholars like Martin and Grube (2000: 201) have suggested the existence of unspecific cultural and political interrelations between Copan and its immediate neighbors to the north in the southern Maya Mountains region.

Ruler B’s extended name phrase appears on Stela P along with several epithets including a 2-*k’atun*-age statement accompanied by the royal title of *ajaw* (F10), *ch’ajom* “person” (F10), *babte* “first tree” (E11) and *pitzil* (F11), a ballplayer title. The *k’atun*-age phrase indicates that *K’ak’ U Ti’? Chan* was between twenty and forty years of age when he celebrated the 9.10.15.0.0 Period Ending. Like his father, Ruler B also carried the *Huk Chapat Chan* [...] or “Centipede ...” title (E9). Unfortunately, the rest of Ruler B’s name phrase is now eroded.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - A possible record of *K’ak’ U Ti’? Chan*’s birth on 9.7.4.9.12 1 Eb 10 Zotz’ (May 27, 578) may be found on an eroded portion of Stela P (C10-D12). In addition, his date of birth may also be reconstructed using calculations drawn from the 2-*k’atun*-age statement. Since Stela P was dedicated on 9.10.15.0.0 (November 10, 647), the date of his birth must lie between 9.8.15.0.1 and 9.9.14.17.19. This date deviates from his suggested birth date of 9.7.4.9.12 by several years. Unfortunately, Ruler B’s birth date is not recorded on Stela P or, if it was, it has long been eroded off. In addition, this new date relies on the distance number of 3.10.8.8 that leads back from 9.10.15.0.0 to the implied date 9.7.4.9.12 1 Eb 10 Zotz’ (D9-D11). However, due to the erosion on this portion of the text, all of this will have to remain tentative.

Although this calendar date deviates from the calculated *k'atun*-age statement, it seems very probable that his birth occurred on 9.7.4.9.12, an assumption supported by Stela H (Figure 11). Stela H was dedicated by Ruler C who acceded on 9.11.0.0.0, and Ruler B's name appears in association with the 9.7.10.0.0 Period Ending. This suggests that *K'ak' U Ti' Chan* (Ruler B) was alive during this time (Stela H, E8).

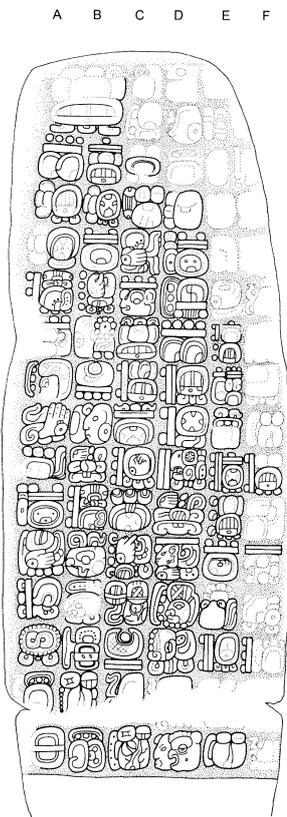


Figure 11. Pusilha St. H, back (drawing by the author).

his father, and both were set in front of Structure 1 at the southern end of the Stela Plaza or “Platform-Mountain.” Due to the lack of explicit biographic data, it remains uncertain as to whether the sequence of war-related events that occurred at 9.8.1.12.8 (the demolition of stone monuments and the downing of the war insignia by the action of *?-nib?* or “Scroll-*nib*”, see above) can be associated with either Ruler B or his father,

No information exists concerning the death of Ruler B. Assuming that Ruler B dedicated Stelae D and P on 9.10.15.0.0 and that Ruler B's successor acceded to the throne on 9.11.0.0.0, *K'ak' U Ti' Chan* must have died somewhere between 9.10.15.0.0 and 9.11.0.0.0. Unfortunately, no text includes the date of Ruler B's inauguration. He probably assumed power sometime during a series of wars that occurred during his reign (9.8.1.12.8 and 9.10.15.0.0), when he dedicated Stelae D and P. During this time, he was addressed as a *k'ubul ajam*, or “divine ruler” of Pusilha (St. D, G14-H14). In addition, *K'ak' U Ti' Chan* rededicated (St. D, H10) two *k'ubul tun* or “holy stones” (probably Stela O and Stela Q) that were set by his father in 9.7.0.0.0 and 9.8.0.0.0.

PARENTAGE - The only parentage reference to *K'ak' U Ti' Chan* is one recorded in passage on Stela P. In this passage, Ruler B is identified as the firstborn child of *K'awil Chan K'inich* (see parentage, Ruler A). Ruler B probably had a younger brother (Ruler C), who was born on 9.7.12.6.7 (Stela H) and probably acceded to the Pusilha throne on 9.11.0.0.0.

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - During his reign Ruler B commissioned Stela D and P to commemorate the 9.10.15.0.0 Period Ending. Both monuments were designed to pay homage to the past deeds of

K'awil Chan K'inich. It is by no means obvious whether the text on St. D describes a hostile act against Pusilha under the auspices of an individual dubbed “Scroll-*nib*”, or whether this individual was a local from Pusilha who moved to attack an unnamed polity. As to the T579 sign, it is interesting to note that this glyph occurs with increasing frequency in the hieroglyphic texts of sites north and east of Pusilha, like Altun Há, Nim Li Punit, Naj Tunich and Tamarindito (see Grube, MacLeod & Wanyerka 1999: 28; Helmke, Awe & Grube 2010). There is a slight possibility that “Scroll-*nib*” originates from one of these sites or at least from a site north-east of Pusilha, assuming that the destruction of the stelae was aimed at the realm of Pusilha. What is interesting to note here is that approximately 47 years after this destruction, Ruler B restored the stela plaza and re-erected some of the shattered monuments (**P' WA'-la-ja ... wi-tzi, i' wa'laj** T150-witz “and then was set the ... (at) the stela plaza”).

K'ak' U Ti' Chan linked the dedication of Stela P on 9.10.15.0.0 to some unknown past event that occurred in the presence of an ancestral or legendary person at the so-called “*Chi*-Throne Place” on 8.2.0.0.0 5 Ajaw 8 Sak (February 9, 81) (G7-H11). Interestingly enough, the “*Chi*-Throne” glyph is typically associated with events involving the founding fathers of the most important dynasties of the Central Maya Lowlands (Grube 1988). It is probably a toponym that is somehow linked with the major Preclassic metropolis of El Mirador (Stanley Guenter in a paper presented at the 6th European Maya Conference at Hamburg in 2001). Many dynasties throughout the Southern Maya Lowlands legitimated their claim to power by tracing their origins back to the legendary kings of the “*Chi*-Throne Place”. The name glyph of this individual is partially eroded, but it includes the epithet *ho' kab ajaw* or the “Five Earth Lord” (G11) which is the ancient name of the Ixtutz polity. During the Late Classic Period, this toponym appears in various contexts at numerous Maya sites including Ixtutz and Naj Tunich; both of which lie about 30 kilometers northwest of Pusilha. Based on this information, there is now strong epigraphic evidence to suggest some type of relations existed between Pusilha and several other polities in the southeastern periphery of the Central Peten. This passage on Stela P suggests that Ruler B refers to himself as a descendant of an ancestral person named *ho' kab ajaw*, who appears to have been a dynastic founder. However, it remains uncertain whether this person was the dynastic founder of Pusilha.

Ruler C

SOURCES - Stela H (Figure 11) is the only carved monument dedicated by Ruler C. The monument commemorates both the 9.11.0.0.0 Period Ending and his accession as king on the same day. Unlike the extremely hard white-colored limestone used for Stela D, P and C, Stela H was carved out of a tough darkish conglomerate and thus this monument contrasts dramatically with those monuments erected by his predecessors.

The hieroglyphic inscription that originally faced Structure 1 is fairly well preserved, though the upper third of the monument is severely eroded and unreadable. Traces of a life-sized human figure occupy the front side of the monument.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - Dorie Reents-Budet (1982: 5) dubbed this ruler “God K-West--3” and identifies him as the third ruler in the dynastic line of Pusilha. His name appears three times in the text of Stela H and is read **MUYAL-la NAH K’UHUL Tnn K’AK’ U ...**, *Muyal Nab K’ubul* [unreadable] *K’ak’ U ...* (A14-A15). The appearance of the Pusilha emblem glyph (B15) identifies him as a supreme Pusilha lord. According to the text, his personal name reads *K’ak’ U ?* and, thus, his name contains portions of the nominal phrase of his predecessor, *K’ak’ U Ti’ Chan* (Ruler B). Moreover, he had been born during the reign of Ruler A. According to the text of Stela D, *K’ak’ U Ti’ Chan* is mentioned as being the “first offspring” of Ruler A. Since Ruler C’s name partially corresponds with the name glyph of the individual named on Stela H, one cannot rule out the possibility that Ruler B and Ruler C are one and the same person, a suggestion first proposed by Reents-Budet (1982: 5). However, there are several reasons why this assumption needs revision. First, according to the 2-*k’atum*-age statement (E10) on Stela P, Ruler B’s age was between 20 and 40 at the start of the 9.10.15.0.0 Period Ending. Because Ruler C’s date of birth is known (9.7.12.6.7 8 Manik’ 10 K’ayab) he must have been about 66 years of age on 9.10.15.0.0, which would then correspond to a 4-*k’atum* statement. Second, *K’ak’ U Ti’ Chan* (Ruler B) was already the *k’ubul ajaw* on 9.10.15.0.0, and so it is assumed that Ruler C ascended to the Pusilha throne on 9.11.0.0.0. For these reasons, I draw the conclusion that *K’ak’ U Ti’ Chan* (Ruler B) and *K’ak’ U ...* (Ruler C) are not one and the same person.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - The life of Ruler C is fairly well documented as attested by the dates of both his birth and his accession. The text on Stela H states that *K’ak’ U ...* was born on 9.7.12.6.7.8 8 Manik’ 10 K’ayab (D14) and that he acceded to the throne on 9.11.0.0.0 (A12) at the age of 66. The respective accession phrase on Stela H reads **P’ K’AL-la-ja TIL K’AK’ WAK ye-bu tu ba-hi** (*i’ k’a(b)laj k’ak’ til wak yeb tu bah*) “tied was the *k’ak’ til wak yeb* on his head” (A12-B13). Based on comparable accession phrases recorded in texts from the sites of Palenque (Palace Tablet), Quirigua (St. J), and Yaxchilan (HS. 3, Step III), this expression refers exclusively to the name of the royal headband that was tied to the heir apparent (all examples from Schele & Miller 1983: 18). Ruler C’s death date is not known. The date should be pre-9.12.0.0.0, which is the dedication date of St. K, a monument that was set by the next documented Pusilha lord (Ruler D) and thus, his death occurred sometime between 9.11.0.0.0 and 9.12.0.0.0.

PARENTAGE - No parentage statements are known for Ruler C because large portions of Stela H are eroded; hence, any textual information that could have provided clues as to Ruler's C's parentage are now lost. Ruler C was probably related to both Ruler A and Ruler B, since he is referred to as the "first offspring" of Ruler A. This assumption is based on two observations: Ruler C was 66 years old when he took power at Pusilha on 9.11.0.0.0, and second, his predecessor (Ruler B) was at least the same age or, more likely older, with a probable birth date on 9.7.4.9.12. Thus, Ruler B and Ruler C were probably brothers and the two were probably sons of *K'awil Chan K'inich* (Ruler A).

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - Two major events occurred during the reign of Ruler C. First, he commissioned Stela H to commemorate the 9.11.0.0.0 Period Ending and second to celebrate his accession to the throne on that same day. The text on Stela H suggests that Ruler C was engaged in bellicose contact with other sites. Though a large portion of the text is severely eroded, a verbal expression that includes the T515 *chuk* sign meaning "to seize", and the name of a captive are still readable (D2). The captive appears to carry a *kob* or *kotz' ajaw* toponym indicating that he was a "Lord from *Kob / Kotz'*" (C4). Stela H also recounts the "binding of the stone" (**K'AL-wi TUN-ni, k'alaw tun**) rituals that presumably accompanied the 9.11.0.0.0 Period Ending celebration.

Ruler D

SOURCES - Little is known of the history of Ruler D. As the fourth ruler of the Pusilha dynasty, he was responsible for the dedication of Stela K which commemorated the 9.11.0.0.0 Period Ending (Figure 12).

NAMES AND EPITHETS - Ruler D was first recognized by Reents-Budet and dubbed "God K-West--4" (1982: 5). His name phrase consists of several elements including *ne' ... sak k'uk' jun ... aj ...* (pF5-pF9); though, most of these elements are unknown due to severe weathering. The first part of Ruler D's name probably consists of his proper name and the final part includes the Pusilha emblem glyph (pF10) along with the epithet **SUTZ'-Tnn+T227-CHAN, sutz' ... chan**, an unknown title that may be related with a supernatural location associated with the Rain God *Chak* as depicted on page 64c in the Dresden Codex.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - The life-span of Ruler D is difficult to ascertain since no other monument provides any information concerning him. Neither the birth date of Ruler D is known nor are there any *k'atun*-age statements associated with this ruler. Although no accession statement survives concerning Ruler D, his accession can be placed somewhere between 9.11.0.0.0 and 9.12.0.0.0 since the texts reveal that Ruler C

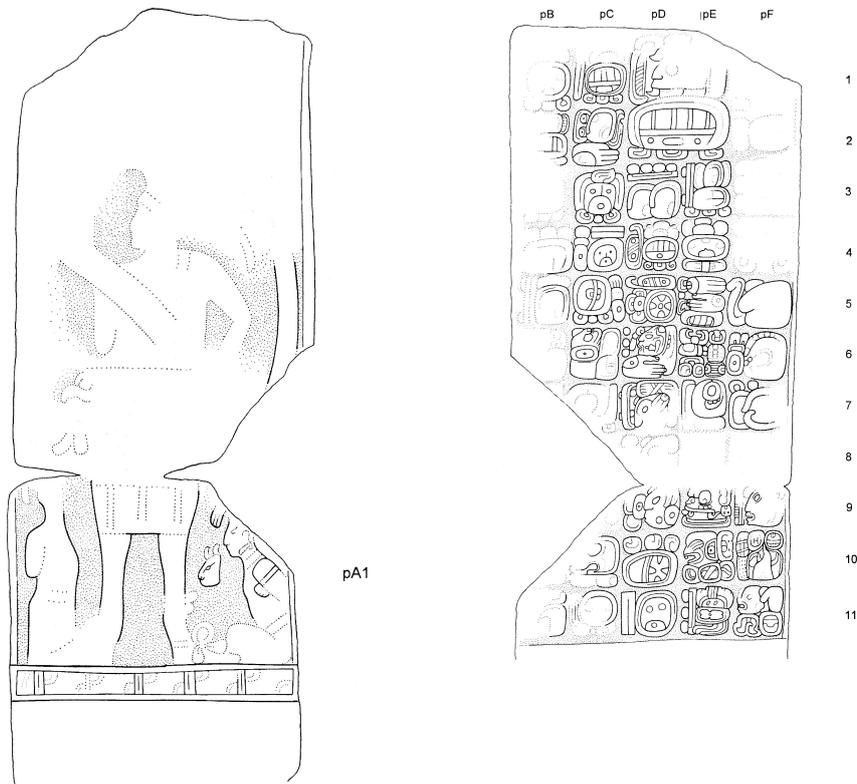


Figure 12. a+b. Pusilha St. K, front and back (drawing by the author).

was still in office on 9.11.0.0.0. However, by 9.12.0.0.0 it is clear that Ruler D was the individual responsible for erecting Stela K. The date of Ruler D’s death is unknown; however, one of his successors, Ruler E, ascended to the office of king sometime prior to 9.14.0.0.0. This leads one to assume that his death occurred sometime between 9.12.0.0.1 and 9.14.0.0.0.

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - The inscription on Stela K begins with an unknown distance number that leads back in time to 8.6.0.0.0 10 Ajaw 13 Ch’en? (pB1-pB5) as proposed by Grube & Martin (2001: 11). As the divine ruler of Pusilha, Ruler D celebrated the 9.12.0.0.0 Period Ending by erecting Stela K. Ruler D linked this Period Ending ceremony to the commemoration of the 8.6.0.0.0 Period Ending at the legendary “*Chi*-Throne” Place (pC6). On Stela K the protagonist for the events

surrounding this early date was an individual nicknamed “Foliated” or “Decorated” *Ajaw* (pC3), who appears to have been an important person that is also mentioned in several texts from the sites of Tikal, Copan, and elsewhere (see Grube & Martin 2001: 9ff). By commemorating and re-enacting the 8.6.0.0.0 *k’atun* celebration, Ruler D used this commemoration to legitimize his own power and reign by tying the 9.12.0.0.0 Period Ending to the earlier one to encapsulate the power and prestige associated with this important individual.

The iconography on the front face of Stela K portrays Ruler D flanked by two kneeling captives. Although the hieroglyphic text on the back does not mention warfare, it can be assumed that Ruler D must have engaged in some kind of battle at some point during his reign.

Ruler E

SOURCES - Ruler E dedicated Stela M to commemorate the 9.14.0.0.0 Period Ending (Figure 13). The reference to Ruler E on Stela M provides the only information we have concerning this ruler’s life. Since no other monument was erected at Pusilha between 9.12.0.0.0 (Stela K) and 9.14.0.0.0 (Stela M), there is a considerable gap of some 40 years in the local dynastic sequence. This brief hiatus can be explained as either an accident of preservation or a sign of political turbulence. Reents-Budet (1982: 6) suggests that the severely eroded Stela U, found in the stela plaza in front of Structure IV, may be another monument that was erected under the aegis of Ruler E. Her argument is based on the physical features of the monument that are seemingly comparable to Stela M. Unfortunately, no calendrical dates have survived on St. U and thus her assumption cannot be confirmed.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - The name phrase of Ruler E consists of his proper name, a title sequence that includes the Pusilha emblem glyph (C6), the *ochk’in kalomte’* title

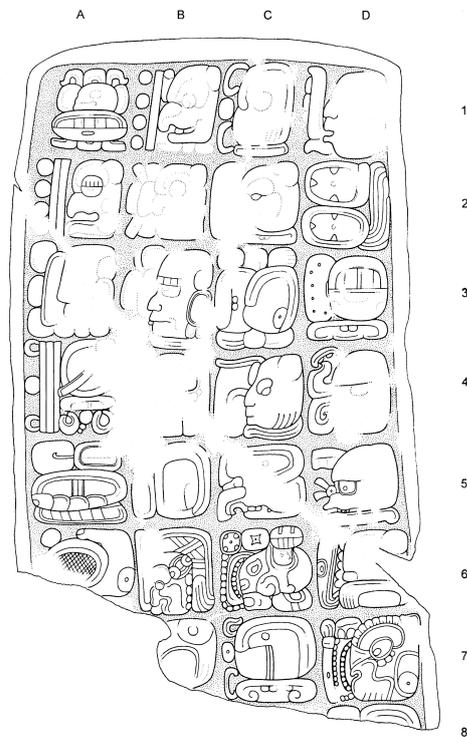


Figure 13. Pusilha St. M, back (drawing by the author)

(D2-C3), and a clause that seemingly refers to his royal descent (D3-D5). In an unpublished paper, Reents-Budet (1982) nicknamed Ruler E “God K-West-5” and placed him as the fifth ruler in the dynastic sequence. The first part of his name (C1-C2) contains an almost illegible proper name. The second part represents the previously discussed *ochk’in kalomte’* title for high-ranking nobles (D2-C3) and a long title sequence that reads **K’UHUL CHAN-na** (D3) **yo-ON?-ni** (C4) **K’AK’ U ...** (D4) **K’AWIL JOL-...** (C5-D5) **K’UHUL UN? AJAW** (C6) (*k’ubul chan yon? k’ak’ u ... k’awil jol ... k’ubul un? ajan*), with the final element being the Pusilha emblem glyph. By using the alleged Teotihuacan-related *ochk’in kalomte’* title, Ruler E refers to his distinguished predecessor in office, *K’awil Chan K’inich*, or Ruler A. Ruler A was the first to carry the *ochk’in kalomte’* title some 140 years earlier. This reference to important dynastic ancestors is a common feature of all Pusilha king’s names. It is most likely used as a form of legitimization for the rulers of Pusilha. The phrase *k’ubul chan yon? k’ak’ u ... k’awil jol?* consists of three parts: *k’ubul chan* “godly heaven”, *yon* “his lineage” and *k’ak’ u ... k’awil jol?*, which probably refers to the name of an earlier ancestral king. The first two elements (D3-C4) constitute a known title also borne by Copan and Quirigua kings. It is most likely associated with the veneration of ancestors, in particular with the concept of the divine descent and the eternity of the royal lineage, as outlined by Markus Eberl (2005). Since the third part of the name phrase (*k’ak’ u ... k’awil jol ...*, D4-D5) resembles the proper names of Ruler B and Ruler C, it may well be that the last element of this title phrase expresses the name of these kings, a predecessor in office or a venerated ancestor.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - No biographical data concerning Ruler E survives. Ruler E must have acceded to power sometime prior to the 9.14.0.0.0 Period Ending, since he is the individual presiding over the ritual commemoration as stated on Stela M. Ruler E must have died sometime between 9.14.0.0.0 and 9.15.0.0.0, because the Period Ending on 9.15.0.0.0 was performed by his successor, Ruler F, whose inauguration date is unknown as well.

PARENTAGE - A parentage statement is recorded on Stela M. The inscriptions state that Ruler E was the “cared-one” of a royal woman (**U ba-hi JUN TAN-na**, *u bab u jontan* “his person is the cared-one of”, D6-C7) whose proper name is only partially legible because the text is broken. The name phrase begins after the “child of mother” expression and reads *ti u k’ubul k’uk’* (D7). Interestingly, the female classifier (I1000a, **IX**) that usually signifies female names and titles is omitted in this context. Due to the break of the monument in ancient times, the identity of Ruler E’s father remains unknown.

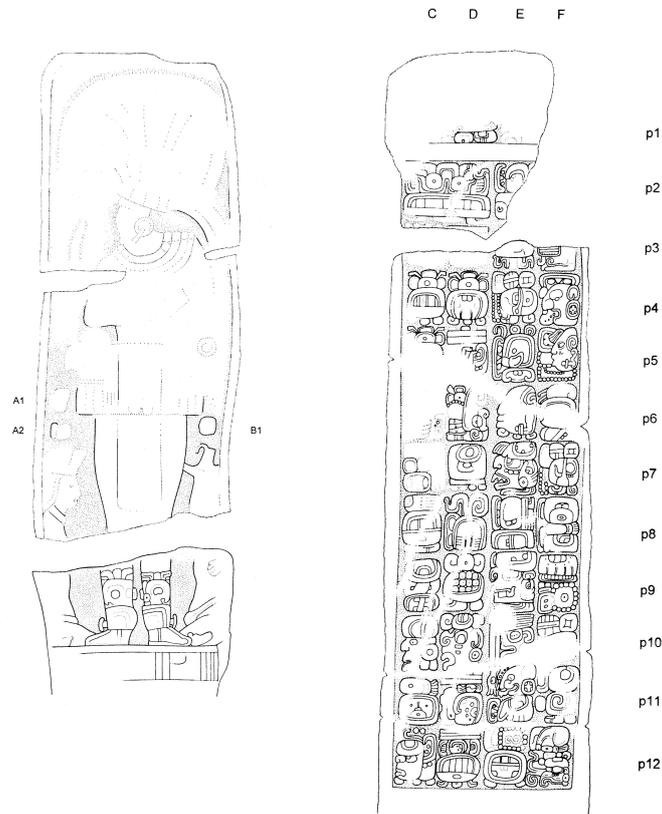


Figure 14a+b. Pusilha St. E, front and back (drawing by the author).

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - Stela M was commissioned by Ruler E to commemorate the 9.15.0.0.0 Period Ending. The depiction of captives on the weathered front side of Stela M, as described by Morley (1937-1938: IV, 54), may hint that Ruler E was involved in some sort of warfare event during his reign.

Ruler F

SOURCES - The only woman elevated to the office of kingship at Pusilha was a lady called *Ix Ich'ak ... K'inich*, or Ruler F. Although no monuments survive from her reign, her existence is attested in a parentage statement on St. E (Figure 14), which was erected by her son and the next king Ruler G on 9.15.0.0.0.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - The name of Ruler F appears on Stela E, and her name phrase contains the female title T1002 (Fp5), her proper name (Ep6-Ep7), and the Pusilha emblem glyph (Fp7). Ruler F's personal name is partially eroded, but one can still read **IX ICH'AK-...-ki ... K'INICH**, (*Ix Ich'ak ... K'inich*) or "Lady Paw ... Sun God". The initial element is the T1002, a common royal title held by high-ranking female members of a dynasty order that gave birth to heirs to the throne (Fp5). The title contains the expression *ix k'ub* (*ix* 'female classifier' and *k'ub* "god"), and most likely refers to Goddess O, the aged goddess of birth and housekeeping as first suggested by Nikolai Grube (personal communication, 2000). The last part of her personal name includes the all-important *k'ubul un? ajaw*, or the "divine ruler of Pusilha" (Fp7).

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - No biographical data exists for Ruler F. She must have ascended to the office of *ajaw* at some point during the interval between the reign of Ruler E (c. 9.14.0.0.0) and Ruler G, who appears on 9.15.0.0.0 on the front side of Stela E. The accession of a queen at Pusilha suggests that some sort of dynastic upheaval must have occurred between 9.14.0.0.0 and 9.15.0.0.0. There must have been a breakdown in the patriline in order for Lady *Ich'ak ... K'inich* to assume the throne. This also suggests that Ruler F's predecessor must have died without leaving a male successor to the throne. It is uncertain whether she was the sister or daughter of Ruler E, who probably married into the dynastic line from some unknown polity. The queen did not remain in power for a long time, since her son and successor in office, Ruler G, ascended to the Pusilha throne sometime around 9.15.0.0.0. Ruler F's reign can best be characterized as that of an interim lord, comparable with the interim rulership of Lady *Sak K'uk'* at Palenque (Martin & Grube 2000: 161).

PARENTAGE - Lady *Ich'ak ... K'inich*'s companion in life was an individual named **K'INICH ba-ka-si MO' LAJUN k'i-?**, *K'inich BakVs Mo' Lajun ...* (Ep9-Ep10), who appears to have been a noble of *ajaw* rank (Fp10). Unfortunately, due to the effects of erosion, his name phrase and emblem glyph are simply unreadable. Interestingly, a parentage statement for *K'inich BakVs Mo' Lajun ...* names his father (Ep11), or rather the grandfather of Ruler G, whose proper name was *Chak Muyal Chan Yopat K'ak' Ti' K'awil* (Fp11-Fp12). Stela E shows that the marriage produced at least one son (Ruler G), ... *k'ak' ... chan* (Ep3-Fp3), who would later accede to the Pusilha throne around 9.15.0.0.0.

Ruler G

SOURCES - Ruler G presided over the erection of Stela E on 9.15.0.0.0; the only monument dedicated during his reign to commemorate the 9.15.0.0.0 Period Ending (Figure 14). While the iconography on the front side of the monument portrays the

standing ruler flanked by two tied captives, the text on the back side mainly recounts the parentage of Ruler G, particularly his parents and his paternal grandfather.

NAMES AND EPITHETS - Dorie Reents-Budet (1982: 6) identified this ruler by means of the Pusilha emblem glyph that forms the second part of his name phrase. His proper name is mostly obliterated, but what remains reads ... **K'AK'** ... **CHAN**, the T561 sign read **CHAN** is infixed with an almost illegible portrait glyph, possibly the T1030 /**K'AWIL**/ glyph. Following his personal name is the Pusilha emblem glyph (Ep4).

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA - No statements of Ruler G's birth, accession, or death are preserved in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Pusilha. With the absence of *k'atun*-age statements, neither his date of birth nor his accession to the Pusilha throne can be calculated. An approximate accession date can only be derived from the accession dates of his predecessors. The king who commissioned Stela M (9.14.0.0) was Ruler E; the presumed predecessor of Ruler F was the mother of the next king, Ruler G. The latter accomplished the erection of Stela E to commemorate the 9.15.0.0 Period Ending. Thus, Ruler G probably acceded to the throne sometime between 9.14.0.0 and 9.15.0.0, shortly after his mother (Ruler F) had either died or stepped down as queen of Pusilha. Although the epigraphic evidence is missing, Braswell, Prager & Bill (2005) suggest that the individual in the royal tomb found on Gateway Hill Acropolis (Burial 8/4) was Ruler G, according to the Teotihuacan related goods excavated during the 2005 field season.

PARENTAGE - The inscription of Stela F ends with three parentage statements beginning with the child-of-mother relationship glyph read **U BAH U JUN TAN-na**, *u bah u juntan* "his person is the cared-one of". The mother is Lady *Ich'ak* ... *K'inich* (Ep6-Ep7), and she carries the titles T1002 "... holy woman" (Fp5) and *k'ubul un? ajaw*, or the "divine ruler of Pusilha" (Fp7). The father's name is *K'inich Bakis Mo' Lajun* ... (Ep9-Fp10), and follows the "child-of-father" relational metaphor **U si-hi U CHIT/lo-ti CH'AB**, *u sib u chit/lot (u) ch'ab* meaning that "he is the gift, and the relative or the creation of ...". He carries the partly effaced *ajaw* title followed by an emblem glyph of an unidentified polity (Fp10). As a foreign lord, *K'inich Bakis Mo' Lajun* ... probably married into the ruling family of Pusilha to give distinction to the dynasty torn by the apparent breakdown of the male line that must have occurred sometime between 9.14.0.0 and 9.15.0.0. Ruler G gave prominence to his paternal line by adding the names and titles of his paternal grandfather. The inscription on Stela E ends with a reference to the father of *K'inich Bakis Mo' Lajun* The expression **U BAH U CH'AB**,

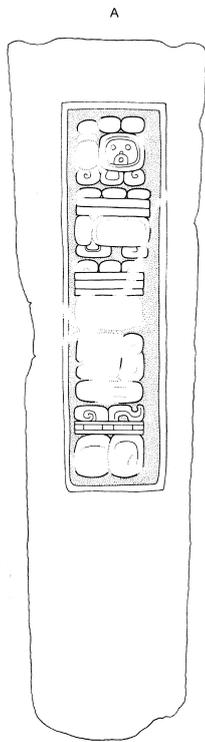


Figure 15. Pusilha St. F, front (drawing by the author).

u bab u ch'ab “his person is the creation of ...” (Ep11) precedes the proper name of Ruler G’s grandfather (Fp11-Fp12). He is **JUN e-wa CHAK MUYAL CHAN YOP-AT?-ti K'AK' TP' K'AWIL**, ...*junew Chak Muyal Chan Yopat K'ak' Ti' K'awil*.

- 1 His place of origin is not known, but several segments of
- 2 his personal name, especially the *Chan Yopat*, were also used
- 3 by various Quirigua, Copan, and Naranjo lords. There is the
- 4 faint possibility that Ruler G’s paternal line originated from
- 5 a foreign center located southeast or northwest of Pusilha. This suggestion is supported by a personal name phrase recounted on Pusilha Stela (9.16.0.0.0) (Figure 15) which is very similar to the personal name of a Naranjo king named *K'ak' Ukalaw Chan Chak* (who ruled around 9.16.0.0.0) (cf. Martin & Grube 2002: 80-81).

EVENTS DURING HIS REIGN - By the time the 9.15.0.0.0 Period Ending arrived, the dynastic trouble caused by the breakdown of the male line at Pusilha and the enthronement of a queen were apparently surmounted by the accession of a new king (Ruler G). Ruler G presided over the erection of Stela E that commemorated this important Period Ending. According to the text, he performed a “stone-binding” ritual, **U K'AL TUN** (Ep2), and ensured that his name, his contribution, and his lineage would live on. Although not mentioned in the main text of Stela E, the front face of the monument clearly shows Ruler G taking captives just as his predecessors did before him. Unfortunately, their respective name glyphs are now obliterated.

“Problematic” Pusilha kings

In addition to these seven Pusilha kings and queens, four other individual name phrases can be identified in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Pusilha. Their names include the Pusilha emblem glyph or, as it appears on Stela U, the ruler’s name is preceded by an effaced accession statement (... *ti ajawle*) (Figure 16). These four rulers, however, cannot be integrated into the chronology and history of Pusilha because of the lack of secured calendar dates on the respective monuments. They are therefore nicknamed Ruler X1 (Stela N), Ruler X2 (Stela U), Ruler X3 (Hieroglyphic Stairway 1) and Ruler X4 (Sculptural Fragment 3). A fifth individual appears in the hieroglyphic text of Stela F (Figure 15), the largest monument at the site dating back to 9.16.0.0.0. The text on

the front side describes a “hand-scattering” event that was conducted by a person named *K’ak’ Kalaw* (A5) to commemorate the 9.16.0.0.0 Period Ending (A3). Interestingly, this personal name is similar to the proper name of a Naranjo king, *K’ak’ Uk’alaw Chan Chak*, who acceded to the Naranjo throne on 9.16.4.10.18 (Martin & Grube 2000: 80ff). *K’ak’ Kalaw* was probably a ruler of Pusilha (nicknamed Ruler X5), because he celebrated the all-important *ke’atun*-ending ritual that is usually performed only by the sovereigns of a polity. The last monarch to accede to the Pusilha throne is most likely Ruler X3. He is mentioned in the dedication text of HS. 1 and is associated with the Calendar Round 4 Ak’bal 2 Sotz’. Due to the late architecture of the Moho Plaza, the Calendar Round can be attributed to the Long Count date 9.18.7.10.3 (Braswell 2002: 14).

Summary

38 individuals have been documented in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Pusilha. 21 of these individuals can be securely placed within the local dynastic and chronological history of the site (Prager 2002, see Table 1). While Reents-Budet (1982) was able to document just seven Pusilha rulers, the evidence now suggests that the local ruling dynasty was composed of at least eleven individuals, including a lone queen (Tables 3 and 4). The inscriptions reveal a 220 year span of dynastic history dating from 9.7.0.0.0 to 9.18.0.0.0. Earlier historical dates recorded on several monuments (8.2.0.0.0 and 8.6.0.0.0) prove that some Pusilha kings traced their origin back to Preclassic times and referred to legendary individuals that were most likely ancestors or even dynastic founders from foreign locations. However, in Classic times there is an uninterrupted sequence of at least six kings and one queen spanning a period of time from 9.6.17.8.18 to 9.15.0.0.0.

In general, two major issues hinder the reconstruction of the Pusilha dynasty and its local history. First, the dynastic account is not complete. It is interrupted several times

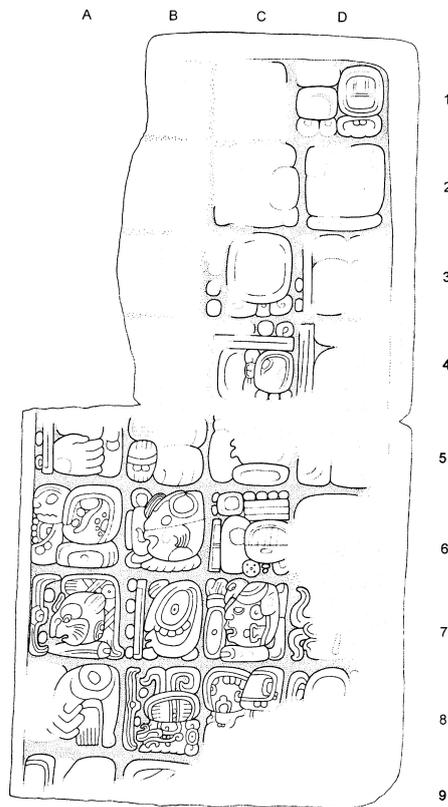


Figure 16. Pusilha St. U, back (drawing by the author).

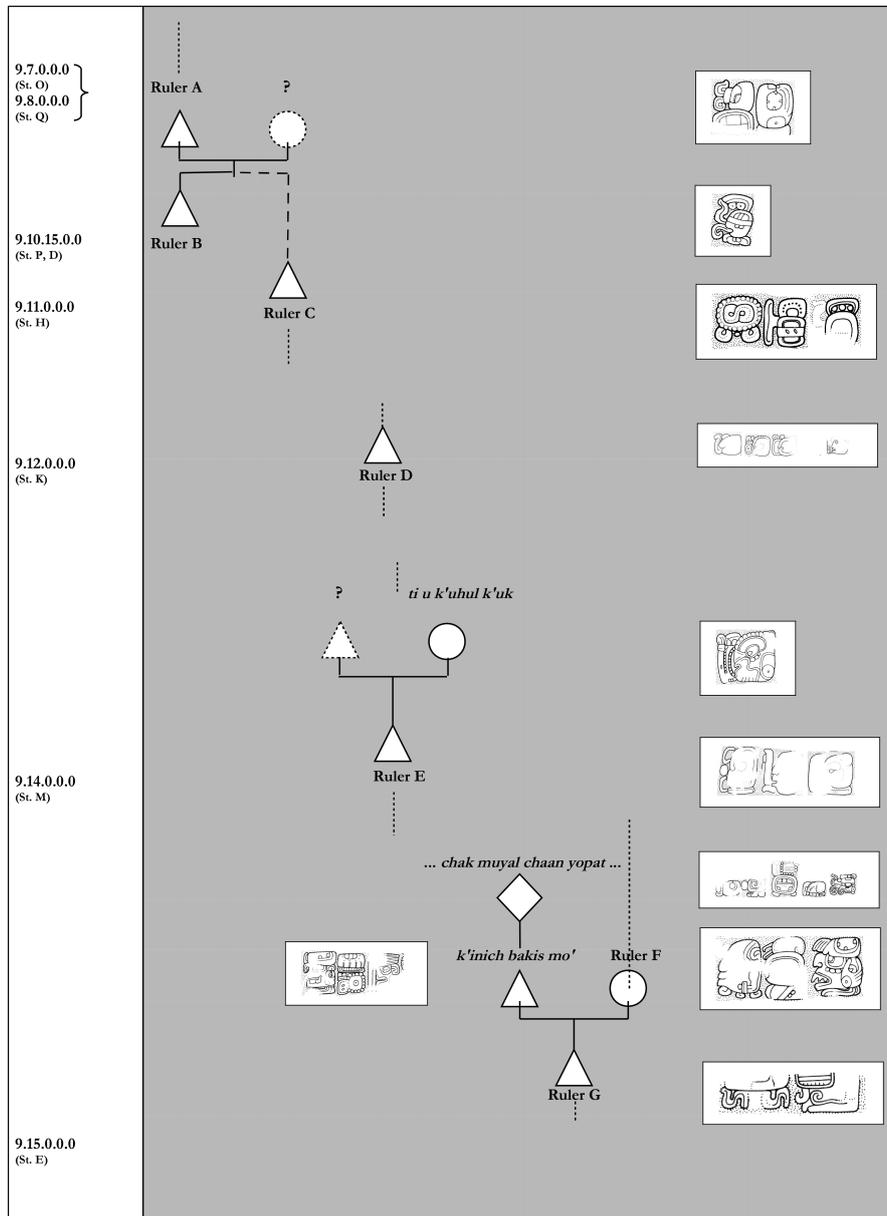


Table 3. The royal genealogy of Pusilha. The dotted lines on the chart show insecure kinship relations.

by epigraphic gaps around 9.9.0.0.0, 9.13.0.0.0 and 9.17.0.0.0. The lack of thorough historical documentation is probably due to the results of looting, eroded texts (Stela N and Stela U), as well as the fact that texts are still waiting to be discovered at the site. Second, the lack of important biographical data for most rulers, like dates of birth, accession, death, or even parentage statements is another issue that impedes the reconstruction of the dynastic history of Pusilha. Most dates were calculated using indirect evidence, such as *k'atun*-age statements or the span of time between the first and last mention of a proper name.

Reports on inter-site relations between Pusilha and its neighbors are sporadic and one-sided. It is generally accepted that, during the Late Classic period, warfare, marriage alliances, hierarchical relationships between superordinate kings and their vassal subject polities, along with other forms of diplomatic relations (including royal visitations), were regarded by the ruling elite as the primary method for seizing, expanding, and consolidating political power. Hieroglyphic inscriptions and depictions of captives stress the point that the local ruling elite intensively waged war on its neighbors, though the captives' respective names remain obscure due to weathering. As a result of the present study, new metaphors expressing warfare can be added to the repertoire of war-related clauses, such as *k'asay lakam tun* "the stelae got broken" (Pusilha Stela D, D11) and *k'ik'iy* "blood was shed" (Pusilha Stela D, F8).

As to other relations between Pusilha and its neighbors, several texts provide evidence that the rulers of Pusilha were associated, at least, ideologically, with the elite of centers northwest and south of Pusilha, especially in the Petexbatun and Río Pasión regions of Guatemala and Copan. It is attested that both Pusilha Stela Q and Caracol Stela 1 (both erected on 9.8.0.0.0) bore the identical proper name. This may be an indication that the lords of Pusilha maintained cultural contacts with Caracol around 9.8.0.0.0; later contacts, however, are not reported. A "water-scroll"-toponym is mentioned two times on Pusilha Stela D that appears very often in the Petexbatun and Río Pasión region (Aguateca, Seibal) and Altun Ha. Further, the person who demolished the stela and downed the flint and shield is called *-nib?*. The T579 hieroglyph is predominantly used in the inscriptions of Altun Ha, Naj Tunich and other sites in the region. Ideological relations between Pusilha and Copan are seemingly attested by the structural similarity between the proper names of Pusilha Ruler B and the 11th ruler of Copan, *Butz' Chan*.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people who supported my research work (in alphabetical order): Clara Bezanilla, Geoffrey Braswell, Pierre Robert Colas (1976-2008), Markus Eberl, Daniel Graña Behrens, Nikolai Grube, Berthold Riese, Frauke Sachse, Phil Wanyerka and Elisabeth Wagner. I especially express my gratitude to Phil Wanyerka who proof-read painstakingly an earlier version of this paper and shared his invaluable epigraphic material of Southern Belize with me.

References cited

- Andrews, E. Wyllys IV
 1951 The Maya supplementary series. In: Tax, Sol (ed.): *The civilizations of ancient America: Selected papers of the XXIVth International Congress of Americanists*. New York: Cooper Square Publisher, 123-141.
- Beetz, Carl P. & Linton Satterthwaite
 1981 *The monuments and inscriptions of Caracol, Belize*. University Museum Monograph, 45. Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- Berlin, Heinrich
 1958 El glifo “emblema” en las inscripciones mayas. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 47 (n.s.): 111-119.
- BMM (Bocabulario the Mayathan)
 1993 *Bocabulario de Maya T'han* (Codex Vindobonensis N.S. 3833). Edición de René Acuña. Fuentes para el Estudio de la Cultura Maya, 10. México, D.F.: Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas, Centro de Estudios Mayas, Universidad Autónoma de México.
- Braswell, Geoffrey E.
 2002 *Pusilhá Archaeological Project*. Reports submitted to FAMSI, December 2, 2002. <<http://www.famsi.org/reports/00029/index.html>> (08.10.2013).
- Braswell, Geoffrey E., Christian M. Prager, Cassandra R. Bill, Sonja Schwake & Jennifer B. Braswell
 2004 The rise of secondary states in the south eastern periphery of the Maya world: A report on recent archaeological and epigraphic research at Pusilha, Belize. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 15: 219-233.
- Braswell, Geoffrey E., Christian M. Prager & Cassandra R. Bill
 2005 The kingdom of the avocado: Recent investigations at Pusilhá, a Classic Maya city of southern Belize. *Anthropological Notebooks* 11(1): 60-88.
- Corzo, Lilian A., Jorge Chocón, Oswaldo Gómez, Nora M. López, Héctor Mejía, Paulino Morales, Heidi Quezada, Julio Roldan, Jorge M. Samayoa & Juan P. Laporte
 1999 *Arqueología de la zona montañosa del municipio de San Luis, Peten*. Lecture given at the XIII simposio de investigaciones arqueológicas en Guatemala, Museo Nacional de Arqueología y Etnología, 21 de julio de 1999.

- Dunham, Peter, Thomas R. Jamison & Richard M. Leventhal
 1989 Secondary development and settlement economics: The Classic Maya of southern Belize. In: McAnany, Patricia A. & Barry L. Isaac (eds.): *Prehistoric Maya economies of Belize*. Research in Economic Anthropology, Supplement 4, Greenwich: JAI Press, 255-292.
- Eberl, Markus
 2005 *Muerte, entierro y ascensión: ritos funerarios entre los antiguos mayas*. Libros científicos. Tratados, Vol. 21. Mérida: Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán.
- Gaida, Maria
 1990 Die Bak'tun-Hieroglyphe mit Doppelkoeffizient in Maya-Inschriften. *Baessler Archiv* (N.F.) 38: 261-269.
- Gann, Thomas A.
 1928 *Discoveries and adventures in Central America*. London: Duckworth.
- Graham, Ian
 1975 *Introduction to the corpus of Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions*. Cambridge: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
- Grube, Nikolai
 1988 Städtegründer und "Erste Herrscher" in Hieroglyphentexten der klassischen Mayakultur. *Archiv für Völkerkunde*: 69-90.
 1990 *Die Entwicklung der Mayaschrift*. Acta Mesoamericana, 3. Berlin: von Flemming.
- Grube, Nikolai, Barbara MacLeod & Phil Wanyerka
 1999 *A commentary on the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Nim Li Punit, Belize*. Research Reports on Ancient Maya Writing, 41. Washington, D.C.: Center for Maya Research.
- Gruning, Edward L.
 1930 Report on the British Museum expedition to British Honduras, 1930. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 60: 477-483.
- Hammond, Norman
 1975 *Lubaantun: A Classic Maya realm*. Peabody Museum Monographs, 2. Cambridge: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.
- Helmke, Christophe, Jaime Awe & Nikolai Grube
 2010 The carved monuments and inscriptions of Xunantunich: Implications for Terminal Classic sociopolitical relationships in the Belize valley. In: LeCount, Lisa J. & Jason Yaeger (eds.): *Classic Maya provincial politics*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 97-121.
- Joyce, Thomas A.
 1929 Report of the British Museum expedition to British Honduras, 1929. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 59: 439-459.
- Joyce, Thomas A., Thomas Gann, Edward L. Gruning, & Richard C. E. Long
 1928 Report on the British Museum expedition to British Honduras, 1928. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 58: 323-350.
- Leventhal, Richard M.
 1990 Southern Belize: An ancient Maya region. In: Clancy, Flora S. & Peter D. Harrison (eds.): *Vision and revision in Maya studies*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 125-141.

- 1992 The development of a regional tradition in southern Belize. In: Danien, Elin C. & Robert J. Sharer (eds.): *New theories on the ancient Maya*. University Museum Monograph, 77/University Museum Symposium Series, 3. Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.
- Looper, Mathew G.
 2002 *The 3-11-pib title in Classic Maya inscriptions*. Glyph Dwellers, Report 15. Davis: Maya Hieroglyphic Database Project, University of California. <<http://nas.ucdavis.edu/sites/nas.ucdavis.edu/files/attachments/R15.pdf>> (09.10.2013).
 2003 *Lightning warrior: Maya art and kingship at Quirigua*. Linda Schele Series in Maya and pre-Columbian Studies. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Marcus, Joyce
 1973 Territorial organization of the lowland Classic Maya. *Science* 180: 911-916.
 1976 *Emblem and state in the Classic Maya lowlands: An epigraphic approach to territorial organization*. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Martin, Simon & Nikolai Grube
 2000 *Chronicle of the Maya kings and queens: Deciphering the dynasties of the ancient Maya*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Morley, Sylvanus G.
 1937-1938 *The inscriptions of Peten*. Carnegie Institution of Washington, Publication 437. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington.
- Prager, Christian M.
 2002 *Die Inschriften von Pusilha: Epigraphische Analyse und Rekonstruktion der Geschichte einer klassischen Maya-Stätte*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Bonn: Institut für Altamerikanistik und Ethnologie, Universität Bonn.
- Proskouriakoff, Tatiana
 1993 *Maya history*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Reents-Budet, Dorie
 1982 *The hieroglyphic inscriptions of Pusilha: Preliminary comments*. Unpublished manuscript in possession of the author.
- Riese, Berthold
 1980 *Pusilha - Dokumentation der Inschriften*. Materialien der Hamburger Inschriften Dokumentation, 3. Hamburg: Privately published edition.
 1982 Kriegsberichte der klassischen Maya. *Baessler Archiv* (N.F.) 28: 155-180.
- Satterthwaite, Linton
 1951 Moon ages of the Maya inscriptions: The problems of their seven-day range of derivation from calculated mean ages. In: Tax, Sol (ed.): *The civilizations of ancient America: Selected papers of the XXIVth International Congress of Americanists*. New York: Cooper Square Publisher, 142-154.
- Schele, Linda & Nikolai Grube
 1994 *Tlaloc-Venus warfare: The Peten wars 8.17.0.0.0 - 9.15.13.0.0*. Notebook for the XVIIIth Maya hieroglyphic workshop, March 12-13, 1994. Austin: Department of Art and Art History, University of Texas.

Schele, Linda & Matthew Looper

- 1996 *The proceedings of the Maya hieroglyphic workshop*. Copán and Quirigua, March 9-10, 1996 (edited by Phil Wanyerka). Parma: Privately published edition.

Schele, Linda & Jeffrey H. Miller

- 1983 *The mirror, the rabbit, and the bundle: "Accession" expressions from the Classic Maya inscriptions*. Studies in Pre-Columbian Art & Archaeology, 25. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.

Thompson, J. Eric S.

- 1928 Some new dates from Pusilha. *Man* 28(6): 95-97.

Walters, Gary R. & Lorington O. Weller

- 1994 *Pusilha Project: 1992 field report*. Unpublished manuscript on file at the Tozzer Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Wanyerka, Phil

- 1996 The carved monuments of Uxbenka, Toledo District, Belize. *Mexicon* 18(2): 29-35.
2003 *The Southern Belize Epigraphic Project: The hieroglyphic inscriptions of southern Belize*. Crystal River: Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies. <www.famsi.org/reports/00077/wanyerka_full.pdf> (20.10.2013).