of institutions (cultural, economic, socio-political, religious, etc.) through the various epochs. For further information please contact Santiago Portilla, Instituto Mora, email: <sportilla@institutomora.edu.mx> (for Mexican participants only), or Elinor G. K. Melville, York University, email: <melville@yorku.ca> (for participants from the US, Canada, and overseas).

ADLAFF conference focusses on Mexico

BERLIN (IAI). This year’s ADLAFF-conference, the meeting of German Association for Latin American Studies (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsche Lateinamerikaforschung), will investigate “Mexico’s paths to modernity.” The conference is being organized by the Ibero-Americanisches Institut, Preussischer Kulturbesitz and will be held from November 13 to 15, 2002 at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. For further information please contact the ADLAFF web page at: <http://www.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/IIK/adlaff/tag2002es.htm> or email to <adlaff2002@iai.spk-berlin.de>.

Deceased: Munro Edmonson

BERLIN (mexicon). On February 15, 2002 Munro Sterling Edmonson, professor emeritus of anthropology (Tulane University), passed away. Munro Edmonson, who died at age 77, was born in Arizona. He obtained his doctorate at Harvard University and became professor at Tulane University in 1951. He helped to create the department of anthropology at Tulane University in 1967, where he continued to teach until his retirement in 1994.

Dr. Edmonson became especially well-known for his work on Mayan languages. His publication of a K’iche’-English dictionary in 1965 was followed in 1971 by the translation of the Popol Vuh. His 1997 publication of dramas and divinatory calendars attests to his continued interest in K’iche’. Equally known are his translations of two Books of Chilam Balam – the Tizimin (published in 1982) and the Chumayel (1986) – from the Yucatec Mayan into English. The hallmark of his translations was the recognition of couplet parallelisms as customary means in formal Mayan discourse.

His wider interests in Mesoamerica are reflected by his synopsis of calendrical systems (1988) and his publication on the work of Bernardino de Sahagún (1974). He also dedicated several studies to the contemporary cultures of Latin America. New Orleans, where he spent the greatest part of his academic career, became also a focus of his studies. Dr. Edmonson’s interest in local traditions eventually made him a sought-after authority whose insights were particularly appreciated during Mardi Gras times: Laissez les bons temps rouler!

Contributions

The Cosmogonic Symbolism of the Corbeled Vault in Maya Architecture

Michael David Carrasco and Kerry Hull

The iconography of cosmogony has been one of the most widely discussed issues in recent Mesoamerican studies. However, few works describe how architecture manifested the narrative of creation (see Reese 1996; Taube 1998; Schele and Mathews 1998). This paper explores architectural form and symbolism through an investigation of the painted and carved capstones of the Yucatan. An analysis of capstone texts and imagery allows for the mapping of the events of creation and the resulting cosmogram to the archetypal Maya house and permits us to delineate a morphology for a symbolic architecture directly tied to the events of creation and the imago mundi of the Classic period Maya.

Painted and carved capstones span the gap between the two sides of a corbeled vault in Puuc and Chenes architectural styles of the Northern Yucatan. The text and iconography of these objects include predominately self-referential and prognosticatory passages and depictions of K’awiil, the maize God, and other deities often framed by broad bands, glyphic texts, or architectural motifs (García-Campillo 1998:302; Mayer 1983). The majority of these scenes revolve around the
presentation of maize either in baskets or in bundles. Other offerings include the *ox wi'il* ("abundant food") and the enigmatic *yax k'an* collocations. The presence of food offerings, together with the Maize God and *K'an* imagery, suggest that capstone iconography was closely connected to concepts of fecundity and reciprocity (*k'ech*) (see Taube 1994:668–675).

Recent epigraphic research by Garcia-Campillo (1998) has shown that painted capstone texts have clear ties to the prognosticatory rites of the Dresden Codex and to passages from the books of the Chilam Balam. However, capstone texts also contain many references to the dedication of the structure itself. Verbs such as *k''al*, "to close; tie", *t'ab'i", "to polish; ascend", and *mak*, "to close" commonly occur in capstone inscriptions.

Three capstones from Ek Balam most directly refer to dedicatory ritual action. Capstone 1 (fig. 1) at Ek Balam records: *ma-ka-ja* 'u-"portal" *yo-OTOOT-ti tz'iib-b'a-MA TUUN-ni*, for *mab'ikaj* 'u "portal" *yotot tz'iib'am tuun", "was closed the portal of the house of Tz'iib'am Tuun." This passage explicitly names the portal as the space between the walls of the corbeled vault. This is even clearer when we observe that the text that frames the scene positions the portal glyph directly above the head of K'awil in an interplay between text and image. The analogy between architecture and the portal is more striking still when one compares a cross-section of a corbel-vaulted room to the shape of the portal glyph (*T769*) itself (fig. 2). The opening of the portal jaws corresponds exactly to the space covered by the capstone at the apex of the vault.

The imagery of Capstone 2 from Chichen Itza's Temple of the Owls and the San Francisco Capstone indicates that the Maya viewed the capstone as a portal place through which the Maize God and other deities move. The deity on Capstone 2 from the Temple of the Owls, probably a codical version of K'awil, emerges from both the portal and the maw of a serpent (Taube 1994:220, 226–227). The San Francisco Capstone (fig. 3) shows the Maize God seated in an iconic version of the portal glyph. A similar image from Palenque depicts the Maize God emerging from a portal at the apex of the western vault leading into the subterranean passages of House K of the Palace (fig. 4). This sculpture is in the same architectural context as the capstone and therefore indicates that the Maya saw the apex of a vault as a portal.

By identifying the profile of a corbel-vaulted room as symbolically the jaws of the portal monster with the capstone as its opening, we are now able to tie specific architectural forms to the rebirth of the Maize God narrative. The Maize God's rebirth, as recorded on the Cosmic Plate (where he also emerges from the jaws of the portal), began when Chaak cracked the turtle shell as seen on the ceramic Kerr 731. Significantly, in at least two cases (Kerr 2068, 2772) a corbel-vaulted structure replaces the turtle shell. A structural analysis of these various substitutions reveals that the turtle shell and roof can act as a synecdoche for the larger narrative of creation. The scene on the vase Kerr 2068 (fig. 5) depicts Chaak swinging back his ax to split open the roof of a vaulted building. The text on this vessel is also important because it explicitly names the crack in the roof. The two glyphs directly above this crack deviate from the standard PSS. The phonetic complementation of the first possibly produces a reading of *ja-?-ma* for *jam* (Grube and Nahm 1994:688–689), a root which in Tzotzil means "split open" (Laughlin 1988:205), and in compounds in Ch'orti' has the meaning of "a ditch between rows of corn" (*jam janaj*) (Carrasco 2006a), a large ravine (*jam ch'en*), and in general refers to the space between the V-shaped split itself (Hull 2000).2 The second glyph reads *joom* (*jo-mi*) with possible meanings of "gorge; canoe; narrow valley" (Laughlin 1975:157) and "ballcourt" (Edmonson 1965:41). Each of these semantic variations is encapsulated in a scene on Kerr 5226 where the Maize God is shown sprouting from a terraced crack (fig. 6). Indeed, on Yaxchilan Step VI the word *joom* is used to refer to the ballcourt (Freidel et al. 1993:351–352). Together, the glyphs on Kerr 2068 apparently name this crack in the vault as a "split-open ravine," or 'space between the walls of a gorge' similar to the crack found on the back of the turtle in creation scenes. The narrative of this story continues on Kerr 2772 where a serpent winds his way through the crack in the vault made by Chaak. This serpent, as we know from the

Figure 1. Capstone 1 from Ek Balam, Mexico (drawing by Víctor R. Castillo and Alfonso Lacadena and used with the permission of Alfonso Lacadena).
texts of Copan, Yaxchilan, and Palenque, is the way or co-essence of the foot of K’awiil (Freidel et al. 1993:196–197, fig. 4:12). Thus, K’awiil as serpent is one of the manifestations of the *kuxa’an sium* (Tozzer 1907:153; see Miller 1974; Kappelman and Reilly, III 1999).

Examples of serpents emerging from the roofs of structures are not limited to the ceramic corpus. One of the best examples of this comes from the sculptural program of the North Building of the Nunnery Quadrangle at Uxmal (see Schele and Mathews 1998:271, fig. 7.21). In this image two serpents sprout from the center of a model of a rustic hut. The central niche, the doorway of the structure, is now empty but below this space are two jaguars with their tails entwined. Their tails form the rope that is the beginning of the *kuxa’an sium*, which eventually emerges from the roof in the form of the serpents. The fact that serpents in the above examples serve to connect Chaak and forces of fecundity to the terrestrial world greatly clarifies the K’awiil and Maize God imagery of the capstones. The Maya, it seems, saw the capstone as the point through which K’awiil, in the form of a serpent (i.e. *kuxa’an sium*), could emerge bringing nourishment to the rulers. The capstone, therefore, was a symbolic portal for both the *kuxa’an sium* as well as the crack in turtle’s shell from which the Maize God was reborn.

On Page 19 of the Madrid codex we find another critically important piece of iconography for understanding the capstone’s relationship to the portal in Yucatecan buildings. The scene depicts a house with a corbeled vault capped by a turtle, with a glyph relating to birth, sprouting, and breaking out on its back. Five gods are shown holding a rope as it passes directly through the center of the turtle’s carapace into the building. This example further indicates that the center of the house was a portal through which the *kuxa’an sium* passed and that the capstone functioned not only as a covering but also, when carved or painted, as a portal connecting the cosmic realms to the Maya rulers. It is significant that the turtle, central to creation mythology and the locus of the rebirth of the Maize God, is shown positioned on the roof exactly at the point named in the Ek Balam texts as the portal of the house.³

The representation on page 19 of the Madrid Codex strongly suggests that the Maya related the vault of the house with a turtle (*akh* or *a’k* in the inscriptions). The Diccionario de San Francisco, a colonial Yucatec dictionary, yields additional linguistic support for the symbolic connection between the turtle and architectural forms. In this dictionary, *mac* is the word for both “turtle carapace” and “cover” (Michelon 1976: 225–226).⁴ Significantly, the word *dakak*, both alone and in a number of compounds, means “turtle,” “vault,” or “stone building” (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4). The Cordemex and Bricker’s contemporary Yucatec dictionary contain the following related entries:

- **nokak** casa de piedra / stone house (Barrera Vásquez 1980:576)
- **nokak na** casa de piedra; bóveda, casa aboveda / stone house; vault, vaulted house (Barrera Vásquez 1980:576)
- **nonak** casa de piedra / stone house (Barrera Vásquez 1980:576)
- **ak** arqueado, cubrir / arched, cover (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4)
- **-ak** bóveda arquetectónica, construcción de mampostería que alberga que tiene interior cubierto, edificio teñido en general / architectural vault, construction of rubble that shelters, that has a covered interior, roofed building in general (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4)
- **ak** tortuga / turtle (Barrera Vásquez 1980:4)
- **dak** turtle (Bricker 1998:2)
- **dak** lot (of land); structure (Bricker 1998:2)
- **dakton** cave (Bricker 1998:2–3)

*nokak, nonak*, and *nokak na* “vaulted house” or “stone house” appear to be compound lexemes of an unknown word *nok* or *non* (possibly deriving from *noj* “large”)³ together with *ak*, which in itself means “architectonic vault; roofed building in general”. The strong correlation in meaning between *dak*/ak “turtle” and architectural features provides emphatic linguistic evidence for the symbolic equivalency between the turtle and the Maya vault.

In their classic work, *Chan Kom*, Robert Redfield and Villa Rojas (1934:33) recorded the term *capac* (in proper orthography, *k’ab’ dak*, “arm of the turtle”) for the end crossbeams of roofs in many types of Yucatecan houses. The Cordemex and Bricker’s Yucatec dictionary contain the following entries under *k’ab’ dak*:

- **k’abak** unas vigas de las casas; los contravientos que se atraviesan en las casas paja [chozas] / crossbeams of houses; the “contravientos” that cross in straw houses [huts] (Barrera Vásquez 1980:360)
- **uk’abakil na** travesaños que van de una “tijera” a otra y de un costado a otro [con la armadura de una choza] / crosspieces that go from one “tijera” and from one side to the other [with the frame of a hut] (Barrera Vásquez 1980:360)
- **k’ab’ dak** “crossbeams on roof of house” (Bricker 1998: 140)

Thompson (1911:505) long ago noted that the *tijeras* in Yucatecan house construction “must be braced and strengthen-
ed by the important second cross-piece, the cap-aac or turtle’s arm. These Yucatecan entries indicate that the crossbeams (k’ab’ dak) serve not only to stabilize the V-shaped tijeras in order to support the heavy ridge pole but they are also symbolically viewed as the arms of a turtle bearing its carapace (i.e. the roof) (fig. 7). Recent fieldwork in Xocen, Mexico by Carrasco has confirmed this association between the roof, the cross beams, and the turtle shell. When asked the meaning of k’ab’ dak a native Yucatec speaker explained that the crossbeams are the arms of the turtle because the whole house is conceptually a turtle with the roof as its back (Carrasco 2000a). Furthermore, examples of just such vaultbeams are commonly found in Classic Maya architecture, attesting to the antiquity of this construction style. Wooden vaultbeams were placed near the spring of the vault and two smaller ones a little below the apex. This arrangement corresponds very well with what Thompson illustrated and described as the “chan cap-aac” (“little turtle arms”) and the larger “cap-aac” (“turtle arms”) in Yucatecan roof construction (1911:506) (fig. 7). In Classic Maya stone houses and temples these beams are, as Andrews has pointed out, “structurally redundant” and serve “no real structural function” since they provide no outward pressure on the walls of the vault (Andrews 1975:76). However, if viewed as part of the zoomorphic symbolism of the Maya house as we have here described it, the vaultbeams are, as representations of the arms of the turtle, evidence of the cosmic narrative actualized in the building itself.

With all these facts taken together, there is convincing evidence that the Maya symbolically equated the roof of some structures with the shell of the cosmic turtle. Furthermore, the gap covered by the capstone was viewed as the portal through which the maize God sprouts and kusa’an sisum passes. The painted and carved imagery of the capstones supports this interpretation and, in so doing, considerably refines our understanding of the capstones’ maize God and K’awiiil iconography.

The Iconography of Space

Many of the images on capstones are framed by motifs from witz monster masks to glyphic bands. The frame encapsulating the majority these scenes, more than merely defining the boundaries of the image, must be taken as a meaningful iconographic element itself. That is, it provides a frontal view into the portal described above. The frame functions in much the same way as does the quatrefoil frame that is used to depict the portal on altars (e.g. El Perú altar). These frames set and define the location of the events depicted within them. The same, we would argue, is true for the capstones, only in this case there is a greater architectural component and context that must also be taken into account. When portals (i.e. iconographic versions of T769) are depicted in narratives in other media they commonly illustrate the emergence of the maize god conflated with K’awiiil (e.g. Janaab’ Pakal II’s sarcophagus from Palenque and Copan Stela 1). These scenes help clarify capstone imagery by indicating that K’awiiil might have played an important role in the rebirth of the maize god as a conduit. Since we have suggested that the vault in Maya architecture is equivalent to the turtle carapace from which the maize god is reborn it is perhaps not surprising that capstone imagery mirrors rebirth scenes in other media, albeit from a slightly different perspective.

Copan Stela 11 and Janaab’ Pakal II’s sarcophagus are particularly important for our understanding of capstone imagery. The image on Copan Stela 11 depicts the founder of Copan, Yax K’uk’ Mo’, in the guise of the maize god rising from a portal. Interestingly, he also possesses K’awiiil’s smoking celt. The conflation of these two deities is iconographically well attested (Taube 1992:48–50) especially in this particular form. Similarly, Janaab’ Pakal II’s sarcophagus lid also depicts him in the guise of the maize god-K’awiiil conflation as indicated once again by the smoking celt. David Freidel has argued that this image illustrates Janaab’ Pakal II’s rebirth from the portal instead of his descent into the underworld. David Stuart’s reading of a text from the recently discovered Salpeten altar provides textual confirmation of this point by stating that birth occurred from within the portal. Thus, these images are part of an iconographic complex in which rulers, the maize god, K’awiiil, or various conflations of these entities were reborn from the portal.

An incensario from the museum at Villahermosa preserves further architectural information which may clarify this iconographic complex and its appearance on the capstones (see Feuchtwanger 1954:118, fig. 51). The Villahermosa incensario depicts a ruler seated on an earth monster framed by the jaws of the portal (i.e. a view of a ruler seated in a corbel-vaulted room). This scene itself is set within a mountain as indicated by the stacked witz monsters forming the flanges of the censer. Falling from the mouth of the skyband creatures,
the kuxa'an sāüm wraps its way around the maw and passes into the earth. In this scene the ruler sits in the same location as does the Maize God in the San Francisco Capstone. The foliation in the headdress of this ruler suggests that he too, like Janaab’ Pakal II and the apotheosized Yax K’uk’ Mo’, is in the guise of the Maize God. The placement of the ruler between symbolic representations of the earth and sky and within the jaws of the portal on this incensario provides a clear depiction of space as it was conceived symbolically by the Maya. This conception of space, as demonstrated in capstone iconography and the texts of Ek Balam, was clearly mapped onto certain architectural forms. Thus, even buildings that lack exterior iconographic programs can express very specific cosmological ideas in their structural morphology.

Contemporary Conceptions of Sacred Space

Ethnographic sources from modern Maya groups provide contemporary evidence for the mapping of the narrative of cosmology onto the Maya house. The new house dedication rituals of the Zinacantecos are a good example. Upon completion of the walls and rafters, the first and most important act in Zinacanteco house dedication, or hol chuik rite, is the precise marking of the center of the house by hanging a rope from the center of the roof. At the point on the floor that this rope plumbs the Tzotzil dig a square hole. Chickens are tied to the rope and their blood is drained into this hole as an offering and payment to the Earth Lord for the building materials and the use of the land upon which the house is built (Vogt 1969: 461–462; 1998: 21–23). The center point marked by this rope symbolizes the mishik’ balamil, or the navel of the world (Vogt 1998: 26). This rope, we argue, represents another manifestation of the kuxa’an sāüm or sky umbilicus.

For the Zinacantecos, the centering of the house in relation to the four corners defines the sacred quincuncial template upon which the universe itself was constructed (Vogt 1998: 26). Vogt explained the conceptual relationship between houses and fields in that they are both “small-scale models of the quincuncial cosmogony” whose corners and centers are “of primary ritual importance” (Vogt 1976: 58). Similarly in the Yucatan, “altars, yards, cornfields, the earth, the sky, and the highest atmospheres are described in terms of the five-point cardinal frame” (Hanks 1990: 349). In terms of the house, Yucatecans perform a dedication ceremony (jéets kuxtal) for the earth lord (yuum lu’um) immediately after the construction of a new house. During this ritual offerings are made at the four interior corner posts (okom) of the house. In the center of the house a table is erected with four plates placed at each corner and a bread offering (jomal waaj) at the center, mimicking the sacred quincuncial pattern upon which the house and the universe are based (Redfield and Villa Rojas 1934: 146–147; Carrasco 2000a).

In the ch’ul kantela rite of the Zinacantecos mentioned above, the four corners also play an important part in a
counterclockwise procession to each corner of the house led by a shaman (Vogt 1998:24). This ritual circuit serves as a boundary-defining activity that frames the house in order to keep out demons (Vogt 1998:26). Defining the center of the house at the floor and roof is crucial since demons will “especially try to enter at these places because, being farthest from the corners, they are least protected” (1998:26). The center axis of the room is clearly viewed as a portal both at ground level as well as at the center point in the roof.

The framing or marking of the center and four corners in buildings directly parallels the Maya conception of preparing land for planting. The farmer reenacts the creation of the world by measuring and plotting the four corners of the field (Freidel et al. 1993:130). The Ch’orti’ perform a ‘Payment to the Earth’ ceremony before planting in which the farmer, while censing and praying, circumambulates the milpa in a counterclockwise direction terminating at its center. After the ritual circuit is completed, the farmer then places a turkey, chilaca, and other food items in two holes at the center point of the milpa as offerings to the Earth Lord in order to protect the milpa and secure a bountiful harvest. This quincunxial ritual circuit (xoyajbir) serves to define and protect the sacred space of the milpa “kochwa’ inte’ makte,” or “like a fence” (Hull 2000; cf. Fought 1972:474, 480, for a similar description). The process of framing and defining the quincunxial pattern transcends agricultural and architectural contexts and indeed reflects the heavenly pattern laid out at the creation of the universe.

The spatial conception of the modern Maya house described above is similar to the one we have identified in Classic period architecture in which the capstone functioned symbolically as a portal. The dedication of the capstones perhaps activated the space of Classic period structures in the same way that circumambulation and other rituals activate the space of the contemporary Maya house.

Figure 7. Internal view of Yucatec Maya house showing chan k’ab’ dak (‘little turtle arm’) and k’ab’ dak (‘turtle arm’) (drawing by Michael D. Carrasco)

Conclusion

Schele and Freidel have argued that the creation of the universe began with the setting of the three original hearth stones, GI’s entering the sky, and was completed with the dedication of the eight partition house (Freidel et al. 1993). Our discussion adds to our knowledge of creation by demonstrating that the vault of the house was symbolically the carapace of the cosmic turtle. Therefore, the yax k’oj ahik/a’k, or “first image of the turtle” (Mayer 1984: Plate 43) that was seen in the sky at creation is both the turtle of creation as well as the vault of the archetypal house in which the three original hearth stones were set. It was Chaak who cracked the roof of this house and allowed the Maize God to be reborn and enter the sky. This architectonic interpretation of creation symbolism allows for a new understanding of the morphology of the Maya house.

Acknowledgments

Research by Kerry Hull on the Ch’orti’ linguistic and ethnographic data used in this study was made possible by a generous grant provided by the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies Inc. (FAMSI). We would also like to thank the Ek Balam Archaeological Project under the direction Leticia Vargas and site epigrapher Alfonso Lacadena for allowing us to reproduce his and Victor Castillo’s drawing of Ek Balam Capstone 1. We would also like to thank Nikolai Grube for his initial suggestion to investigate capstone iconography and for his helpful insights throughout this project.

Notes

1. Painted capstones are found in tombs as far south as Caracol (Chase and Chase 1998:313).

2. In Ch’orti’ and other Mayan languages jam can simply mean “space.” However, many of Hull’s Ch’orti’ consultants explicitly described this kind of space as the one between two walls, especially in the V-shape of a ravine. One word for “street” in Ch’orti’ is jam since it is the space between the buildings on each side. Jam is also the space inside a house as defined by a given set of two walls. While the term jam ch’en means “large ravine,” it is significant that ch’en can by itself mean “ravine” in Ch’orti’. It seems clear then that jam ch’en literally translates as the “space between the ravine” as another way of referring to the ravine itself.

3. It is notable that a carved capstone from the Kuic seems to actually depict a god emerging out of the back of a turtle. Previous drawings of this capstone (Pollock 1980: 356, fig. 598k; Mariscal 1928: fig. 21) do not represent the turtle carapace. However, after a careful examination of the available photos of the painted capstone of Structure 1, we believe, albeit with some degree of caution, that the turtle shell is indeed present and is an additional evidence for the capstone as a recreation of the portal through which the Maize God emerges.


5. Evidence for the underlying form of noj may be found in the modern pronunciation of the site named Dzibilnocac. Kelly notes that while the name always appears in its written form as ‘Dzibilnocac’ (“Painted Vault”), locals in the area of the ruins always refer to the site as ‘Dzibilnojac’ which Kelly translates as “Large Turtle with Writing on it” (Kelly 1982:325).

6. On Kerr 3367 there are two scenes of the Maize God. On one panel he possesses a head ornament like K’awiil’s smoking celt while in the other he has a serpent foot – a rare form of the conflation not noted by Taube (1992:48-49). Kerr 1120 also illustrates the parallalism of these two dichotomies. More importantly, in each scene both K’awiil and the Maize God are shown with a bag of maize just as they often are in certain capstone and creation scenes.
Andrews, George F.  
1975  

Barraza, Vasquez, Alfredo  
1980  

Bricker, Victoria, Elesterio P'ot' Yuh, and Ofelia Dural de P'ot'  
1998  
*A Dictionary of the Maya Language as Spoken in Hocabá, Yucatán*. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press.

Carrasco, Michael David  
2000a  
Fieldnotes from fieldwork done in Xocen, Mexico in July of 2000.

2000b  
Fieldnotes from fieldwork done in Antigua, Guatemala in August of 2000.

Carrasco Vargas, Ramón  
1987  

Edmonson, Nutro S.  
1965  

Feuchtwanger, Franz  
1954  

Friedgott, John G.  
1972  

Fredel, David, and Linda Schieble and Joy Parker  
1993  

García-Campillo, José Miguel J. M.  
1998  

Grebe, Nikolai and Werner Nahm.  
1994  

Hanks, William F.  
1990  

Hull, Kerry M.  
2000  
Fieldnotes from fieldwork carried out in Jocotán, Guatemala for three months from May to August, 2000. Funding for this fieldwork was generously provided by a grant from the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies Inc. (FAMS).  

Kappelman, Julia G.  
2001  
*Paths to Heaven, Ropes to Earth: Birds, Jaguars, and Cosmos Cords in Formative Period Mesoamerica*. *Ancient America* No. 3, Center for Ancient American Studies, Barnardsville, N.C., and Washington, D.C.

Kelly, Joyce  
1942  

Laughlin, Robert M.  
1975  

1988  

Mallison, Frederick E.  
1928  

Mayer, Karl H.  
1983  

1984  
*Maya Monument III: Sculptures of Unknown Provenance in Middle America*. Verlag K.-F. von Flurin: Verlag.

1997  
*Two Maya painted stones from Campeche*. Mexico IX (5): 99–100.

Michelon, Oscar (Ed.)  
1976  

Miller, Arthur G.  
1974  

Pollock, Harry E.D.  
1980  

Redfield, Robert, and Alfonso Villa Rojas  
1934  

Reese, Kathryn V.  
1998  

Scheler, Linda, and Peter Mathews  
1998  

Taube, Karl A.  
1992  

1994  

1998  

Thompson, Edward H.  
1911  

Tozzer, Alfred M.  
1907  

1941  

Vogt, Evan Z.  
1989  

1976  

1998  

Wisdom, Charles  
1950  
*Chorti Language*. Collection of Manuscripts of the Middle American Cultural Anthropology, Fifth Series, No. 20. Microfilm, University of Chicago. Transcribed and translated by Brian Stross, University of Texas.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: In dem Beitrag wird anhand der Analyse von bemalten Gewölbedeckensteinen gezeigt, wie die Architektur Yucatans heilige Orte aus dem klassischen Schöpfungsmymyths repräsentiert. Die Inschriften und Ikonoogie der Gewölbedeckensteine zeigen, dass sie eine zentrale Rolle in der architektonischen Symbolik spielen. Das Vorkommen der “Portal”-Hiriglyphen auf den Decksteinen und die bildlichen Darstellungen von Portalen deuten an, dass die Decksteine selbst als solche Portale verstanden wurden, die in dem Schöpfungsmymyths der Maya eine so große Rolle spielen. Linguistische und ikonoigische Belege bestätigen, dass die Maya den Gewölbedeckenstein als den Rituale im Schildkrötenpanzer deuten, durch den der Maizgott aus der Unterwelt hervorstellt und sich das k'ak' tan s'amon, das Schild, welches den Himmel mit den Herrschern verbindet, erhält.

RESUMEN: Este artículo investiga el simbolismo de la creación de la arquitectura Maya a través de un análisis de las tapas pintadas y esculpidas del Yucatán. Los textos e imágenes proponen la clave para relacionar los acontecimientos de la creación y el cosmograma que resulta de estos a las formas arquitectónicas. La presencia del jeroglífico del portal en los textos de las tapas y sus acontecimientos iconográficos nos dejan identificar las tapas como una recreación del portal específico que se menciona y se representa en las narrativas de la creación. Nosotros establecemos con evidencia lingüística e iconográfica que el techo de la casa es equivalente a la tortuga cósmica. Además, los Mayas consideraba el espazo entre la bóveda como la bendición en la espalda de la tortuga. Esta interpretación de la simbolología arquitectónica relacionada al narrativo del nacimiento del Dios de Maíz y del k'ak' tan s'amon o cordón que conectaba el cielo con los reyes antiguos.