

Yearbearers in the Paris Codex: A Description of Iconographic and Calendrical Elements¹

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In this paper, the author describes basic iconographic elements of two pages from Paris Codex, known as Yearbearer pages. Paper shown comparison of examples from Paris with other two Maya codices, Madrid and Dresden and also with colonial sources, mainly Landa's *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*. Although, huge part of codex is destroyed, or missing, author will provide summary of previous observations with new ideas and hypothesis.

Keywords: the Paris Codex, yearbearer, codices, Maya calendar, New Year ceremonies

The Paris Codex can be described as a manual for Maya priests. We can only assume what was the content of tens or even hundreds of codices that were destroyed during the Spanish conquest. We should take into consideration the fact that the route information and the content is specific to the place or the material where it is shown. This means that the texts of the Classic period (around 250 A.D. – 900 A.D.), which are depicted on stone monuments (e.g., stelae), are specific and austere, and give only the most basic dynastic information. Hieroglyphic text, which can be found on pottery, are much freer and less formal than the one on monumental inscriptions. Maya codices, according to their specific type of material, were also used as a medium for the submission of certain types of information.

Description of the Paris Codex

The Paris Codex, also called *Codex Peresianus*, was once part of a much longer book. It consists of eleven leaves that are painted on both sides, hence a total of

twenty-two pages. The entire codex can be divided into six thematic units. In comparison, the Dresden Codex is divided into twelve sections. The first and dominant part of the Paris Codex is called the K'atun pages². It comprises pages 2-12 (hypothetically, also the completely eroded first page). The second part is called the God C pages, comprising 15 to 18. The third part is the Yearbearer pages, comprising 19 – 20. The fourth part is called the Day-Sign Tables, on page 21. On page 22 is a representation of the Spirit world. The last two pages contain the sixth section entitled the Constellation pages (Love, 1993: v-vii).

Table 1. Division in the Paris Codex

Theme	Page
K'atun pages	2 – 12
God C pages	15 – 18
Yearbearer pages	19 – 20
Day-Sign Tables	21
Spirit world	22
Constellation pages	23 - 24

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² For more information, see Špoták, 2012.

The K'atun pages form a major proportion of the codex. We consider them an important tool for understanding the Maya calendar. This means that the *tun-winal* sections, which are above the k'atun part³, precisely define the prophecy for smaller periods within each *winal*, *tun* or *k'atun*. A further supplement to the prophetic calendar system was the so-called Yearbearers. It is found in the Dresden Codex⁴, and also in the Madrid Codex⁵, and a similar system is also mentioned in the Paris Codex, but in a rather different form.

Maya yearbearers

A permutation of two calendars, *tzolk'in* and *haab*⁶, resulted in an 18,960 day period, which corresponds to 52 years⁷. Because of the inequality in the number of days of these two calendars, we get to a specific day in the *haab* with four possible characters of *tzolk'in*. This means that the first day of the Maya year, 0 Pop, can be combined with only four specific days of *tzolk'in*. The names of these days we use for naming the yearbearers.⁸

During the Classic period these days was *Ik'*, *Manik'*, *Eb'*, and *Kab'an*. In classic hieroglyphic texts, with few exceptions, such records are missing. Bowditch considered that yearbearers in the Classic period simply did not exist (Bowditch, 1910: 81). Thompson noted, however, that if they did, they did not have to necessarily be mentioned in monumental inscriptions (Thompson, 1950: 128). David Stuart associated the hieroglyphic inscriptions on stela 18 from Naranjo with a pile of stones, which reports Landa, and which are also shown on pages in the Dresden Codex. in the Dresden Codex. We can see other illustrations of yearbearers in Classic inscriptions at Copán on altar U, or even on lintel 2 at Tikal temple 4. The gods which are mentioned in these texts are named as "four young men" or "four lords". This is most likely the *Pawahtuns* (Stuart, 2004: 2-4). Alternative days were *Ak'bal*, *Lamat*, *B'en* and *Etz'nab*, used in the western part of the Maya area. It was made by shifting one day in *tzolk'in* forward, but not in *haab*.

A third alternative were the days *K'an*, *Muluk*, *Ix*

and *Kawak*, which were the result of a shift of one day in *tzolk'in* and also in *haab*. This group was used in the north of the Yucatan in the Post-classic period (Bricker, Bricker, 2011: 69-70). In codices these days are part of the rituals, which we call Haab rituals, since they are linked to the *haab* calendar system. Diego de Landa describes these rituals in his *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*. Besides these yearbearers, we count among these rituals and ceremonies the hunter's ceremony¹⁰, making and dressing the wooden statues¹¹, and so on. There are also several almanacs that may be linked with the iconography rituals of yearbearers, such as the seated figure in a house, which is surrounded by food and sacrifices. (Vail, Aveni, 2009: 216).

Yearbearers at Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán

What does Diego de Landa say about yearbearers? First he describes the Maya calendar as 360 days long, divided by twenty letters or characters, thus months. The remaining five days apparently could not be named because they were considered unfortunate and bad. These days as a whole were called *xma kaba k'in* (nameless days). He describes the gods "which they specifically honor" and calls them *Bacabs*. They were four brothers whom God appointed to the four cardinal points, which supported the sky (Kováč, 2010: 202-203). The word *bacab* can be translated as "the first on earth."¹² The word is also used as a title of rulers in the Classic period. Very interesting is its absence in the codices, where it occurs in only one place, on page 74 in the Dresden Codex (Vail, Hernández, 2013: 71). It is the famous scene of the "flood of the world". In the hieroglyphic texts we can see the word BAH-ka-bi. According to Karl Taube, *Bacabs* are epithets of *Pawahtuns* (Vail, Hernández, 2013: 71). Among the contemporary Yucatec Maya, the *Pawahtuns* are linked with the *Chaaks*, and they can be specifically identified as the wind gods. *Pawahtuns* with *Bacabs* and *Mams* represent different aspects of the same deity (Vail, Hernández, 2013: 81 – 82).

In Chapter XXXIV. of Landa's *Relación de las Cosas*

3 "Celebrations" in this case is not an accurate description, since it is not a representation or description of the ceremonies, as the ceremonies depicted celebrate the new year in the Dresden Codex (D.25 - D. 28).

4 For example at D.25 – D.28.

5 For example at M.34 – M.37.

6 Combination of 260 and 365 days.

7 Complete 52 *Haab* and 73 *Tzolk'in*.

8 Because they are associated with 0 Pop, the Maya New Year.

9 The text of stela 18 at Naranjo - *Tz'ahpaj lakatuun u-chabjiiy K'ahk 'Tiliw Chan Chahk* (The stela stone was erected. K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chak oversees it). Translation by David Stuart (Stuart, 2004).

10 For example on page M.50b – M.51c. Diego de Landa mentioned these ceremonies during the month Sip.

11 Landa mentioned these rituals during the months Mol and Ch'en.

12 Word *bah* – first ; *kab* – world / earth (Montgomery, 2002: 41).

de Yucatán, he describes how the Mayas chose from the day signs, of which there were twenty, selecting the first four from a group of five. Each of them served as a dominical letter. He describes the already mentioned Bacabs, which were specific signs of the years. They carried with them the signs of bad and good periods, which in that year had to occur. It was necessary to identify ways of worship and sacrifice to protect the Mayas from harm. As I mentioned above, “Landa’s” yearbearers were the days *K’an*¹³, which were associated with the south. The second character was *Muluk*¹⁴, marking the east. The third was the sign *Ix*¹⁵ associated with the north and lastly was the sign *Kawak*¹⁶, associated with the west. They were associated with ceremonies in honor of these gods, which included casting out “demons” in prayer and blessing, and were made exactly for this purpose. The ceremony took place just before the New Year (0 Pop), during the five unlucky days, Wayeb month. Along with the individual Bacabs were mentioned gods with the names *Kanuuayayab*¹⁷, *Chacuuayayab*, *Zacuuayayab* and *Ekuuayayab* (Kováč, 2010: 203-205). He also mentions the position of piles of stones at the cardinal points, which represented an improvised altar, where statues of gods were placed during the ceremony.

Using the same yearbearers is also mentioned, for example, in the colonial manuscript *The Chronicle of Oxkutzcab*. There are permutations for the completing of tun¹⁸ and also a record of the particular yearbearer (Bricker, Bricker, 2011: 79).

...paxci cah	...the town was abandoned
tu men maya cinlal lac	Because of this high mortality
[y]chil hab 1534 años ..hu	In the year 1534 years...
he tu tu yaxacluhun yaxkine	Here is the tun on the 18 th of Yaxkin
hoyl kan ah cuch hab	5 Kan was the yearbearer.
tu hun te pop	On the first of Pop (Bricker, Bricker, 2011:79).

The text then goes on, but always after informing the reader of the year and the tun, the author emphasizes which yearbearer is actual.

Yearbearer pages in the Dresden Codex (D.25 – D.28)

The link between the “wayeb ceremonies”, which were described by Diego de Landa, and their representations in the Maya books, is most noticeable in the Dresden Codex on pages D.25 - D.28. There are illustrations of gods who are in the position of priests and perform offerings. In the hieroglyphic text in register C on page D.25 appears the glyph *kin-tun-Haab*, which means drought. This glyph is preceded by the collocation *yah Nal*¹⁹, representing misfortune for maize, meaning the Maize god (God E). It is therefore clearly an expression of misery for the harvest on the following year, which is associated with a specific yearbearer, in this case the year *B’en*. On the next page appear ceremonies beginning with the sign *Et-z’nab*, can be seen in the text²⁰ to be a positive prediction for maize (Bricker, Bricker, 2011: 124-131). In general, pages 25-28 in the Dresden Codex comprise three registers, but compared to those in the Paris Codex they are different. (For more information, see Chapter 4 in Vail, Hernández, 2013).

Yearbearer pages in the Madrid Codex (M.34 – M.37)

On the other hand, Landa’s description of the new year celebration also agrees with the image in the Madrid Codex on pages 34 to 37, which was also known as the “New Year Almanac.” Furthermore, Landa’s description also agrees with the grouping of yearbearers, thus *K’an*, *Muluk*, *Ix* and *Kawak* and they are also linked to the cardinal points²¹. The Brickers indicated in their study that these days most likely do not represent wayeb ceremonies, or the first day of the New Year, but are more likely a kind of “chronicle”, which records several events during the year (Bricker, Bricker, 2011: 138-139). As we shall see below, this kind of representation corresponds with the yearbearer pages in the Paris Codex.

The pages with the yearbearers in the Madrid Codex include several drawings of rituals associated with the celebration of the New Year, but also other events that are associated with the corresponding year. On page M.37b is *K’inich Ajaw*, the Sun god who sits facing the Maize god. He is pictured with *Kimi*

13 In the name of Bacabs Hobnil, Kanalbacab, Kanpauhtun, Kanxibchac.

14 Bacabwith names Canziena, Chacalbacab, Chacpauhtun, Chacxibchac.

15 Bacabwith names Zaczini, Zacalbacab, Zacpauhtun, Zaczibchac.

16 Bacabwith names Hozanek, Ekelbacab, Ekpauhtun, Ekxibchac.

17 Or more correct *Kan u Uayeyab*. It means, that yellow (*kan*) is linked with Wayeb and also with the south (Bricker, Bricker, 2011: 122).

18 A similar way is used for the tun-winal section in the K’atun pages.

19 Resp. *Ixim*?

20 Collocation *Yax Waj Haab-il*.

21 *K’an* – yellow, south; *Muluk* – red, east; *Ix* – white, north; *Kawak* – black, west.

(death) eye, which symbolizes that he is dead. Both are sitting on the *tun* symbol, which means that they represent fate, or prediction for the next year. The total prediction therefore means that the Sun god will bring severe drought, which will lead to the death (of the Maize god) and destruction of maize (Vail, Aveni, 2009: 224; Vail, Hernández, 2013: 360).

Yearbearer pages in the Paris Codex (P.19 – P.20)

As I mentioned above, a third of the surviving codices also contain a record of yearbearers, which can be found on pages 19 and 20. From a technical point of view, both pages are divided into four parts separated by vertical columns of *tzolk'in* signs. Unlike other pages, in the Paris Codex the yearbearers are clearly defined scenes, separated by colors. Alternately it is red and black, which form the background. On page 19, the left section (p.19a) has a red background and the right side (P.19b) black. Similarly, it also appears on page 20 (p.20a, P.20b). Therefore there is a sequence of red-black-red-black, which distinguishes the individual yearbearers. A significant part of the limestone surface is already permanently destroyed. There is about 50% destruction on each side, where the "erosion" progressed from the corners and edges toward the center. Therefore, it is only the central portion of the oval shape which is preserved. As noted by Bruce Love in his book, the Mayan priest, when creating the codex, most likely entered at the tops of the yearbearer pages only the upcoming or next year. As we shall see below, the yearbearer pages begin on the date 5 *Lamat*, which, as the beginning of a 52-year cycle, could correspond to the year 1482 in our calendar and could last until 1534 (Love 1994: 70-75).

Page 19

Page 19 consists of two parts separated by vertical calendrical data, as noted above. From the context it is evident that the left edge of the letter is a vertical strip of the same calendar sign, which is preserved in the middle of the page. It is indicated by a very small remnant of painted limestone substrate on an otherwise completely eroded section. It is clear that this is a character representing the calendar day *tzolk'in*, which, based on reliable calculations, can be identified as *Lamat*²². The reconstruction, which is shown in Table 2, is therefore not complicated, and with the help of secondary dates can be based both forward and backward²³.

22 It is based on the same group of yearbearers as in the Dresden Codex – *Lamat*, *B'en*, *Etz'nab* and *Ak'bal*.

23 For example, in the middle calendar column on page 19 there is the specific date 8 *Ben*. In the same column above it is 4 *Ben* and below it 12 *Ben*. The difference between these dates is the number 4, which means four years. The year before 8 *Ben* is therefore 7 *Lamat*.

24 In Macri & Vail catalog – ZQD (Macri, Vail, 2009: 14).



Figure 1. Page 37c from Madrid Codex. Sun god sitting on glyph *tun* (right side) and facing death Maize god. (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

Lamat Years

On a red background in section 19a, which can be considered part of *Lamat*²⁴, there are several characters, namely graphic elements that I have redistributed into four separate elements. Due to erosion, unfortunately we cannot identify the other parts of this (and other) scenes.

Table 2. *Lamat* Yearbearer daysigns.

Lamat	5	9	13	4	8	12	3	7	11	2	6	10	1
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19a_ICON_01

In the first place we can see a seated figure, probably on a roof²⁵, and part of this is the so-called skyband (for more information, see Špoták, 2011). An element which forms the headdress of the Maize god is sticking out from the bottom of the roof. As noted by Bruce Love, the seated figure is the Skeletal death god, with a typical bare skeleton²⁶ and even its lower skeletal jaw is visible (Love, 1994: 74). The dead god is depicted with a blanket or jacket, similarly to the

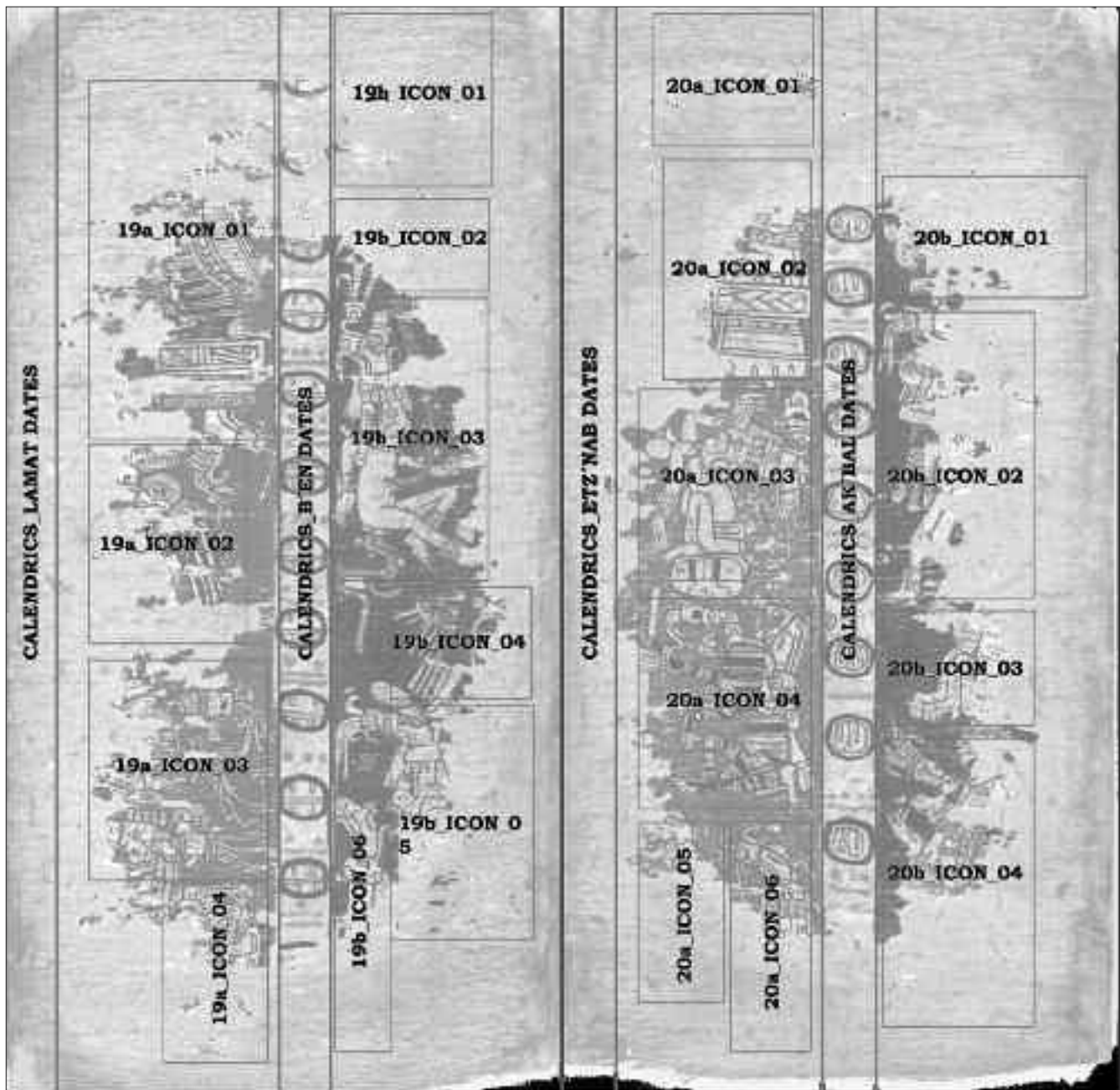


Figure 2. Template of Yearbearer pages in Paris Codex (Source: BnF with corrections of author).

yearbearer gods from the Dresden codex (D.25c), or even from other pages of the same codex (D.41b). It is interesting, however, that the figure sitting on the roof appears in the Paris Codex only twice (on the next page in a similar position – p.20a; 20a_ICON_01). In the other two codices it is a great rarity, and it is not almost there at all, except for a few examples. On page 35 in the Dresden Codex, we see the god *Chaak* located on a roof, below which is God C. We can con-

sider the “throne” on page D.48 as a similar roof. The representation of God C sitting on a roof in the Madrid Codex, M.10c, is very interesting. Because of the lack of comparative material, we do not know exactly what the god in Paris Codex is doing. I believe, however, that a similar god sitting on a roof or throne is also on the other side of page 19 in a similar position. It is, however, destroyed on the right sides of both pages. If I am correct, then the deity in this po-

25 Or some kind of throne.

26 Similar to the Skeletal death god on page D.13b.

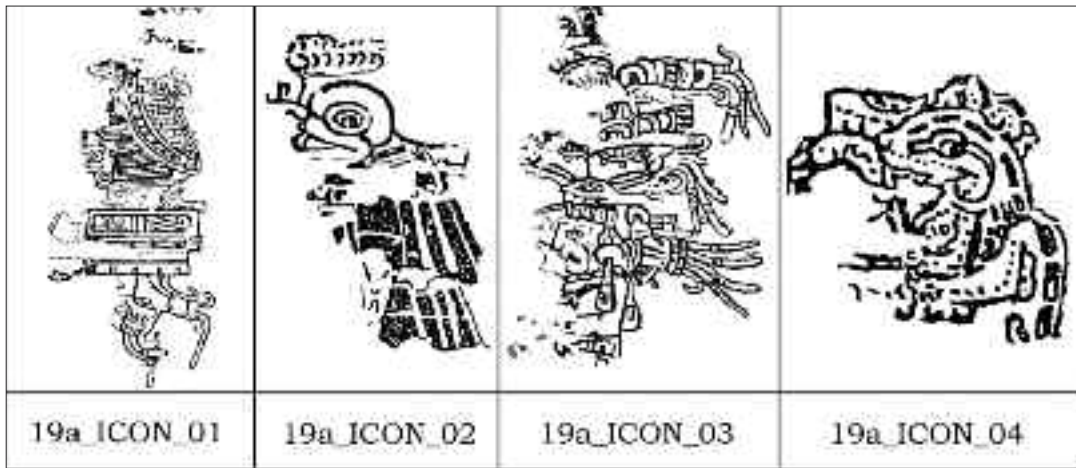


Figure 3. Figures from page P.19, section a (Lamat years). (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

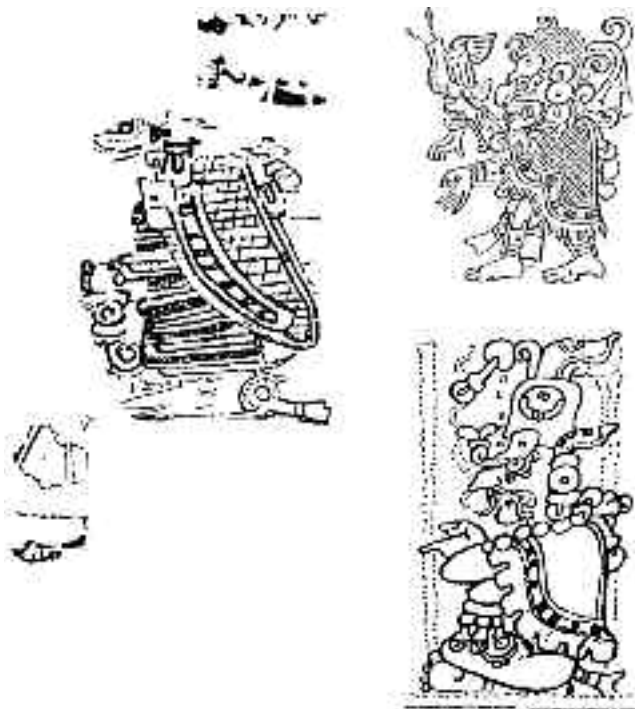


Figure 4. Comparison of blankets with other gods. 19a_ICON_01 vs. K'in Ahaw from D.25c and Chaak from D.41b. (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

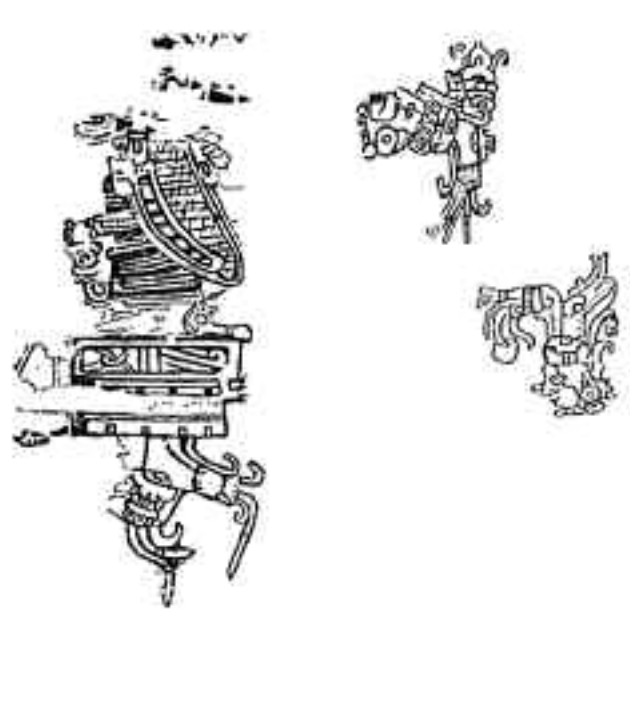


Figure 5. Comparison of headdresses of Maize gods. 19a_ICON_01 vs. examples from Paris Codex (above) and Madrid Codex (below). (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

sition would be a sort of main god / sign for the year, which also has an impact on the other prophecies. This would be the same as Diego de Landa's God being a sign for that year.

19a_ICON_02

The second figure in this part is a bird. Specifically, it is a kind of vulture, named *k'uch* in Maya languages. Its representation is similar to many depictions of

vultures in the codices, such as page D.8a, D.13c, M.22c, ai. Even in the Paris Codex on page 8 it is depicted as an anthropomorphic vulture, the incoming lord of *k'atun*. It is, however, probably a specific bird / vulture deity. This depicted bird is shown with black feathers and a brown head with the typical hallmark of the syllable *ti* over his beak. The vulture was often depicted as an evil, unfortunate sign. Probably even in this case it is nothing more than a bad omen for the

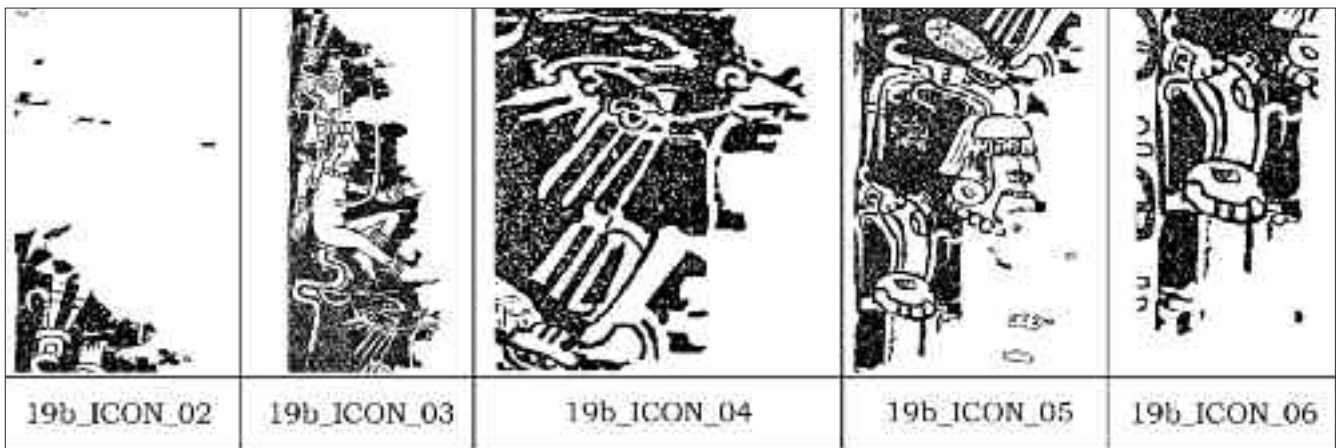


Figure 6. Figures from page P.19, section b (B'en years). (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

year. A similar representation in the Paris Codex is found on page 16, in the almanac. Despite considerable erosion in this case, we can identify this particular vulture as a torch bearer and thus it represents drought for the specific period.

19a_ICON_03

A third iconographic element in this section shows us an anthropomorphic figure, which we can easily identify as the maize god. As we find out later, generally on both yearbearer pages, we can see that the maize god is depicted a minimum of nine times. In this case is headdress unusually drawn, as Bruce Love also noted (Love, 1994: 74). Approximately half of the figure is significantly eroded, but we can clearly note that the maize god is sitting on a *tun/haab* glyph. This means that God E is a sign of the year (Haab). We see a similar element represented in the yearbearer pages in the Madrid Codex.²⁷ However, we do not have more information, but we can consider two options. The first option is that the over-decorated headdress of maize god is a positive sign for the year Lamat and the second option is that it is a great decoration of old, blooming maize which is ready for harvest. For a detailed review, we can see the senile open mouth of this character, which is unusual for a maize god. However, to determine the age of the maize gods depicted in the Paris Codex is fairly complex. Although on page P.5a we can see the prototype of a young maize god, so there are differences in the ages of the maize gods.

19a_ICON_04

The fourth iconographic element is a jaguar, which apparently eats humans. The human here depicted

is almost complete eroded, but we can identify that it is a dead man, because of the closed eyes. The jaguar is also shown on page D.26 in the Dresden Codex as cargo. On pages M.35 – M.37 we can see that the jaguar is part of the yearbearer pages. In the Paris Codex, it may be implied that the jaguar is a bad sign for humans, because it eats them. Therefore, it could be the iconographic representation of a poor prediction for the people, such as those found on page 2 of the hieroglyphic text above the k'atun scene.

B'en Years

On the right side of page 19, on a black background, the years with the symbol B'en²⁸ are shown. Unlike the Lamat calendar column, the order of the B'en yearbearer signs is well preserved. Some signs are missing at the beginning and end of this part.

Table 3. B'en Yearbearer daysigns.

B'en	6	10	1	5	9	13	4	8	12	3	7	11	2
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19b_ICON_02

Although approximately 95% of the image is completely eroded, we can formulate a hypothesis. There part of a leg is preserved. Taking into account that, in a similar area of page 19a (Figure 19a_ICON_01) and (as we shall see below) on page 20 (20a_ICON_02), characters are sitting on a roof, we can think of the same elements being in these parts, but we cannot see anything due to erosion. If it is located in a similar position as the seated figure on the roof, or a similar throne, we can consider the possibility that this is the

²⁷ For example on page M.34c.

²⁸ In Macri & Vail catalog – XH1 (Macri, Vail, 2009: 15).

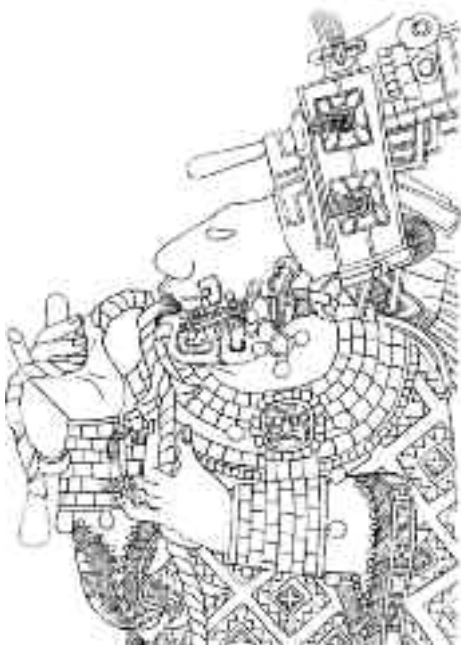


Figure 7. *Ix K'abal Xook* is stretching a rope through her tongue. Maybe similar, which is passing body of Maize god (19b_ICON_03). (After John Montgomery).

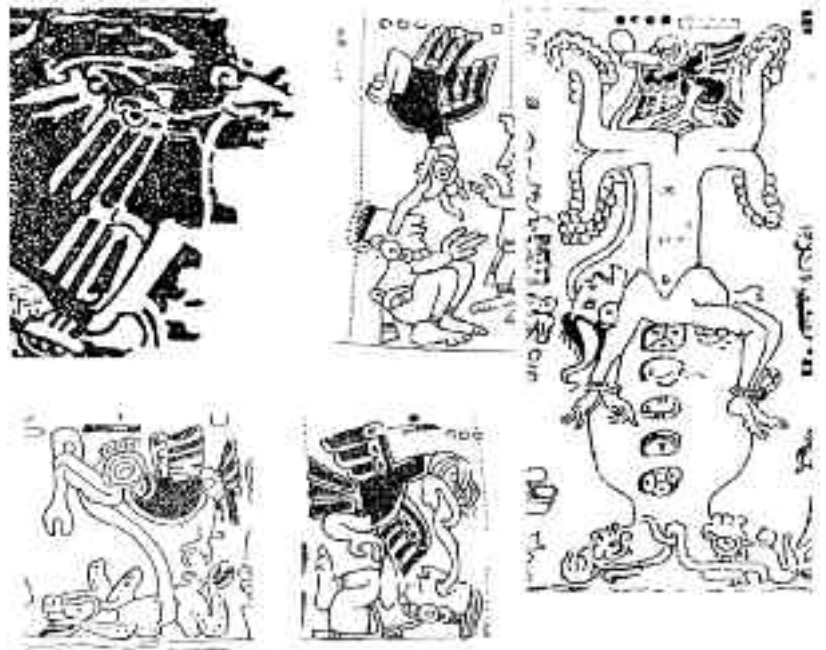


Figure 8. Comparison of vultures. From left-right – 19b_ICON_04; D. 86a; M.3a; D.40a, D.87a. (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).

symbol for the current year. As Diego de Landa recorded in *Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán*, every year was marked by a certain god that affected it. Unfortunately, the hieroglyphic text on these pages is missing and therefore the names of these gods cannot be identified nor deduced.

19b_ICON_03

Unlike other figures, this representation survived quite complete. We can clearly identify him as the maize god, which, however, is naked and dead, indicated by his closed eye. Two “ropes” comes out from his body. Bruce Love says that it is his entrails that are coming out from his anus and a gash in his abdomen (Love, 1994: 74).

It may also be a rope with obsidian spines, which is passing through his body. Like the figure from the Classic period lintel 24 from Yaxchilan, it is dated to the year 709, and in it *Ix K'abal Xook* is stretching a rope through her tongue (Martin, Grube, 2008: 125). Anyhow, the implication of this representation is quite clear: a poor, almost catastrophic year for the maize god, and therefore for maize in general.

19b_ICON_04

Here a black bird is depicted, just as in the section 19. In this case it is probably a different kind, although it

is often referred to as a vulture²⁹. To review in detail, we can notice that this bird is holding something in his beak. A comparison of colors can lead to the hypothesis that it is like a rope (or entrails), which is based on the rope/entrails of the maize god shown above (19b_ICON_03).

We can see a similar scene in a few places in the codices, such as in the Madrid Codex, M.40a, M.42a, M.86a – 87a, etc. In the Dresden Codex this vulture pulls out intestines and other offal. This occurs, for example, on page D.3a, and it is very similar to the bird in the Paris Codex yearbearers.

19b_ICON_05

Like the images in 19a_ICON_03 and 19b_ICON_03, in this case we are dealing with the maize god. Unfortunately, erosion has destroyed almost the whole image, so we cannot determine its exact function.

19b_ICON_06

The last recognizable iconographic element at the “b” section, and basically all of page 19, is a kind of pedestal (Love, 1994: 74) with a decoration, which forms the maize god headdress. It is quite possible that it is not a pedestal, but some kind of insignia. The goddess *Ix Kab'* holds a similar insignia in her hands. A similar insignia is shown on page M.72a,

²⁹ Look on page: www.mayacodices.org, 20.09.2014.

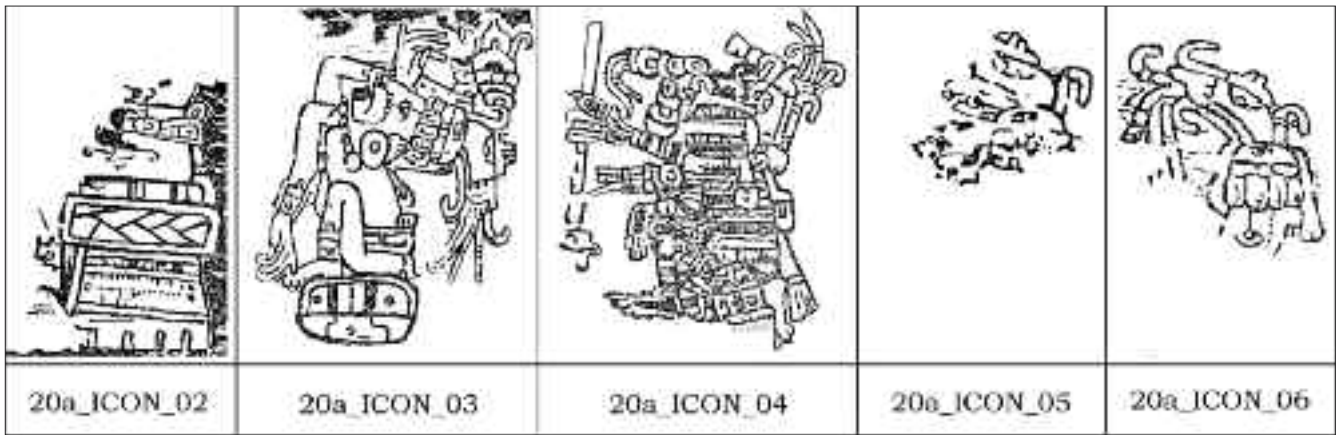


Figure 9. Figures from page P.20, section a (Etz'nab years). (after Villacorta, Villacorta,1930).

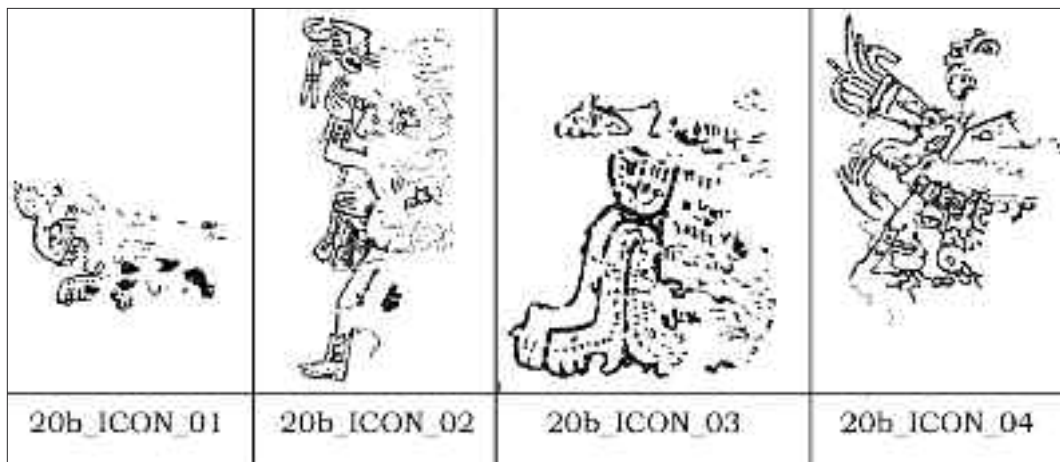


Figure 10. Figures from page P.20, section b (Ak'bal years). (after Villacorta, Villacorta,1930).

where god R (*Kab'*³⁰) holds it. However, figure 19b_ICON_05 stands facing away from this figure, and in this case they do not cooperate.

Page 20

The next page, which contains the so-called yearbearers, is very similar to the previous page. It is divided by a calendar column, and the colors continue from the previous page as red – brown. The condition of this page is similar to the previous one, and a considerable amount of information is missing.

Etz'nab years

Because the calendar column of this part is right on the edge of the part, all dates, except for a few small

fragments, are completely destroyed. Since we know what kind of yearbearers are shown in the Paris Codex (on the assumption that the preserved dates are *B'en* and *Ak'bal*), the calendar symbol on page 20 has to be *Etz'nab*³¹.

Table 4. *Etz'nab* Yearbearer daysigns.

Etz'nab	7	11	2	6	10	1	5	9	13	4	8	12	3
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20a_ICON_02

The first preserved iconographic element is very similar to that on page 19 (19a_ICON_01). In this case, however, the god³² is almost whole destroyed. We know, however, that he sits on the throne / roof that

30 Look on page: www.mayacodices.org.20.09.2014.

31 In Macri & Vail catalog – XQ8 (Macri, Vail, 2009: 15).

32 Based on the fact that on these pages only gods are shown, except for the human being eaten by the jaguar.

does not have a skyband. Based on the hypothesis which was raised above, this is the main symbol of god of the *Etz'nab* year. We cannot identify the name or function of this god.

20a_ICON_03

One of the few completely preserved figures is the maize god sitting on the *tun / haab* glyph, and thus it is a symbol for the fate of the year, like 19a_ICON_03. In this case, however, the headdress of the maize god is less ornate. The position of his hand indicates his impending death.³³ Bruce Love talks about an impending disaster (Love, 1994: 74). Anyway, this representation is of a bad year for maize.

20a_ICON_04

The figure in this position is very interesting and specific. Bruce Love considers this figure to be some kind of straw effigy, carrying maize and holding a planting stick, while her left hand is in the position of a sow (Love, 1994: 74). A very viable hypothesis is from a webpage by Gabrielle Vail and others (The Maya Hieroglyphic Codices), where this figure is associated with the Mexican deity *Itztlacoliuhqui*, which is depicted in the Mexican codices with a covered face, as in the Paris Codex. It is associated with the cold and the north, which would correspond to the cardinal point connected with the carrier *Etz'nab*.³⁴ Due to inaccurate identification, it is difficult to determine the significance of this figure over the displayed date.

20a_ICON_05 a 20a_ICON_06

These two iconographic elements are characterized in the very same way. In one case, it is clearly the maize god, because we can see part of his face. Bruce Love describes these two elements as two maize gods, which are facing each other (Love, 1994: 74). Apparently, however, these two figures are represented independently. They seem to be sitting on the glyph *tun / haab*, which would represent the fate of that year.

Ak'bal Years

A series of day-signs with the sign on *Ak'bal*³⁵ is the last of the four yearbearers. As on the previous page, there is a black background color. Therefore the possibility that the background color had a function other than clear dividing the individual yearbearers can be ruled out. Here the calendar data is preserved best of all. Therefore, the individual coefficients are easily understandable.

Table 5. *Ak'bal Yearbearer daysigns.*

Ak'bal	8	12	3	7	11	2	6	10	1	5	9	13	4
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20b_ICON_01

A significant part of this figure is missing, while around the figure is sufficient space for another character which has been permanently destroyed. However, it is clear that in this case it is a jaguar, like in figure 19a_ICON_04, but this time it isn't eating humans or gods, although it is probably in the attacking position. In the Madrid Codex, we can see several jaguars on the yearbearer pages.³⁶

In this area, a very small detail has survived around the jaguar, which could support the hypothesis of the four major gods of the individual yearbearer, who are pictured as sitting on thrones / roofs. However, because of the nearly 99% erosion the area we cannot confirm it. But there is a certain piece, which could be the thumbnail of a particular figure, such as 19b_ICON_02. Thus, it is quite possible that there are similar figures to the ones on page P.19a and P.20a.

20b_ICON_02

This is a representation of the maize god with a bright necklace. Apparently he is depicted as naked. It is possible that this god expects impending death. The details are not clear. A similar gesture of hands can also be seen in figures 20a_ICON_03 and 20b_ICON_04.

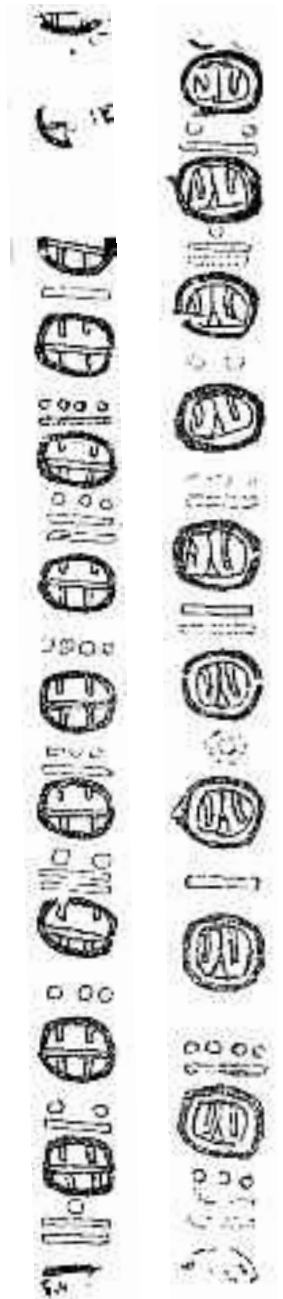


Figure 11. *B'en Yearbearer dates on page P.19b. Ak'bal Yearbearer dates on page P.20b. (After Villacorta, Villacorta, 1930).*

33 See www.mayacodices.org.20.09.2014.

34 See www.mayacodices.org.20.09.2014.

35 In Macri & Vail catalog – XH9 (Macri, Vail, 2009: 14).

36 For example pages M.35b – M.37b.

20b_ICON_03

The third figure on page 20b is clearly a seated animal. Bruce Love correctly assumed that it is not necessarily a jaguar, because the paws are very similar to those of dogs sitting on the side of the New Year in the Madrid Codex (Love, 1994: 74). Similarly, the highlighted hair is significantly different from the jaguars on page 19 (19a_ICON_04). However, it is clear that it does not sit on the glyph tun / haab, and thus it is unrelated to the main sign of the year.

On page M.66b there are two seated animals, identified as peccaries, because one of them has clearly visible hooves. However, these animals are missing from the Paris Codex. The final interpretation is therefore difficult.

20b_ICON_04

As the last figure in 20b, we can clearly see the maize deity with the same hand gesture as figures 20a_ICON_03 and 20b_ICON_02. As in those cases, so here, impending death is implied. Unfortunately, we do not have more information than this; due to the great erosion, more iconographic elements of this character cannot be known. But it is very likely that

it is a similar figure as 20b_ICON_02. Bruce Love also notes that the headdress, namely the forehead, is based on the jaguar's paw (Love, 1994: 74).

Use and interpretation of the yearbearers' pages of the Paris Codex

The whole double-page represents a full 52-year cycle, built on the basis of predictions. From a technical point of view, for example, the date Lamat is repeated every four years. The Maya priest who read these pages could therefore, at the beginning of their New Year, look for predictions. It is also assumed that these predictions were used together with other special predictions and almanacs for specific information. Bruce Love (Love, 1994: 74-75) already noted that God E, the Maize god, plays a major role in these pages. Their representations, whether good or bad, made a direct impact on the lives of Maya society, because maize held a dominant position in the religious, cultural, and practical life of the Mayas.

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