



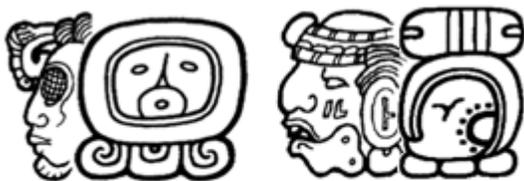
The Ahau Chronicles



Volume 17

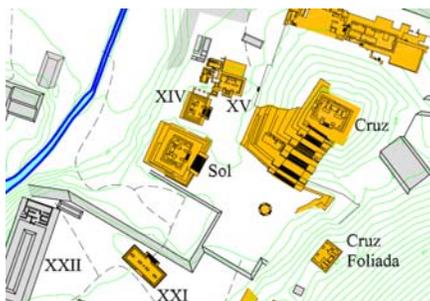
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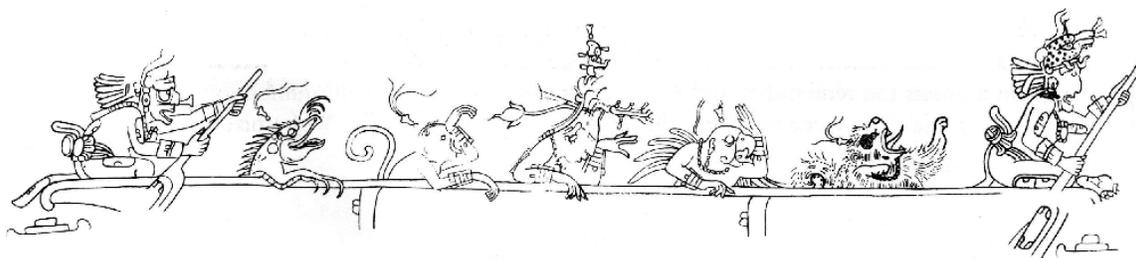
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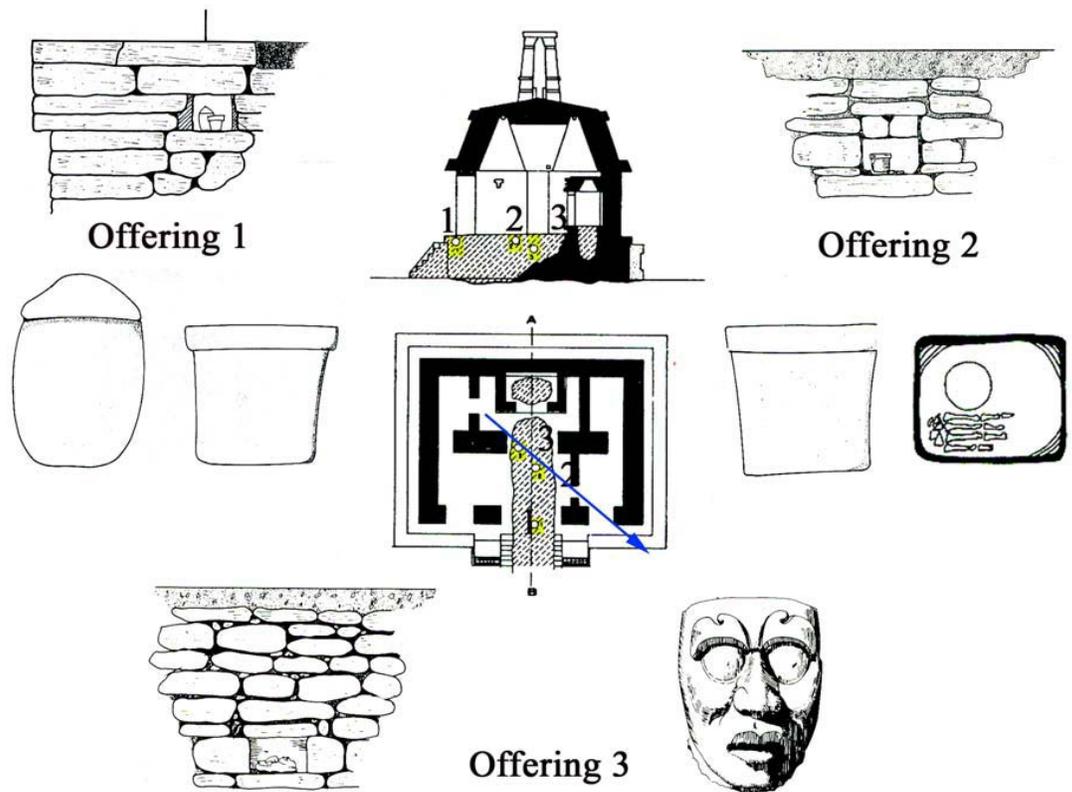


Chan Bahlum's Cross Group

For almost anyone visiting the ancient site of Palenque in Chiapas, Mexico, the first impression is one of overwhelming awe. Surrounded on all sides by vibrant rainforest, the monumental temples rise out of the mist like sacred white mountains. The environment is fully immersive and envelops the pilgrim in a mystical atmosphere where ancestor kings make stoic offerings to eternity. A single visit is insufficient to comprehend the profound enigmas embodied at this site and so I spent months there, camped in my hammock under a thatched-roof palapa with no walls. I would make my way into the ruins at any time of the day or night, communing with the silent stones and pondering the riddles of Chan Bahlum as the moon waxed and waned through its monthly cycle.

After I had become comfortable with the layout of the city I found myself spending much time within the Cross Group of Temples, a triad of buildings facing a common courtyard which were collectively named for their dominant cross motifs within the inscriptions. The Temple of the Sun quickly became my favorite temple of all and I spent hours examining the building. I even commissioned a local sculptor to carve me a replica of the central inscription on native Palenque limestone. Upon the completion of this copy I took it to the Temple of the Sun and systematically checked each hieroglyph for accuracy. It was through the study of this tablet that I became most familiar with the image of the Sun God, the same image that I would encounter shortly thereafter on the island monument on Robinson Crusoe Island. By following the clues left behind by Chan Bahlum I was able to begin to unravel his great project written across the face of the earth and which was intended to reveal itself in the years leading up to 2012.

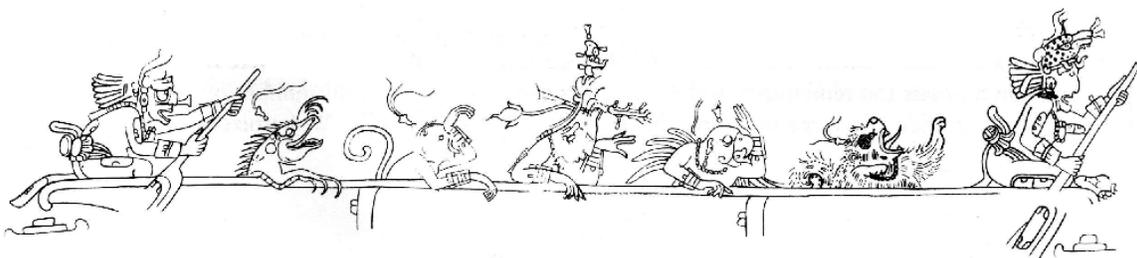


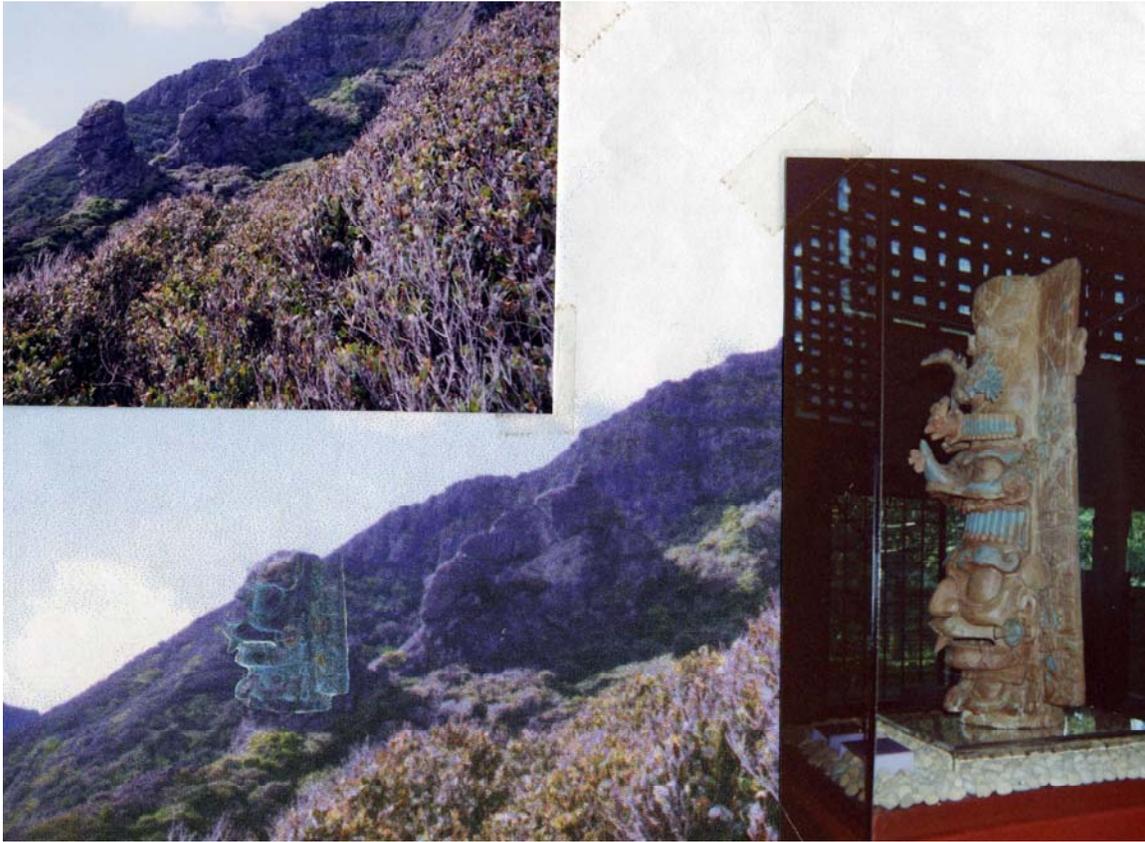


During excavation within the Temple of the Sun during the 1940s archaeologists recovered three separate buried offerings hidden within the temple floor. Offering 1 consisted of two lidded vessels under two layers of stone. Offering 2 lay slightly deeper and contained another lidded vessel as well as jaguar phalanges, the foot bones from the royal cat, the namesake of Chan Bahlum (Serpent-Jaguar). The third and most deeply buried offering was a stucco mask of the Sun God. Collectively, the jaguar and Sun God are represented in the inscription within the Temple of the Sun, in the offerings buried within the floor of the temple, and again in the two figures combined in the island monument. The symbolic redundancy seems intentionally conspicuous.



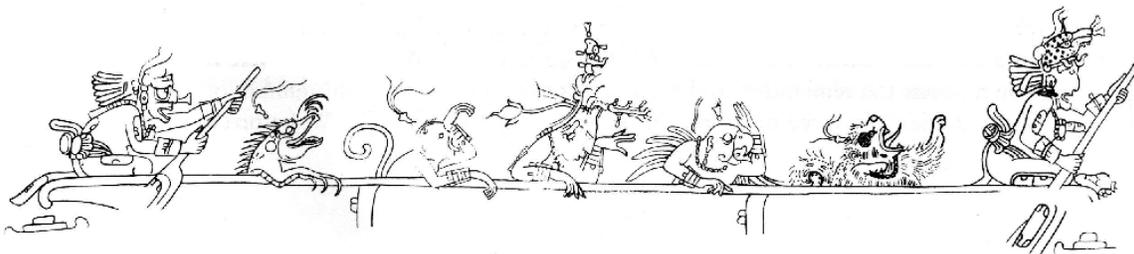
In the adjacent Temple of the Cross, numerous ceramic sculptures were also recovered as buried offerings. These often depict the Sun God in exquisite detail including the original paint. These life-like faces are captivating and one can almost sense the presence of their creator through their sublime artistry. Many hours spent studying these further familiarized me with the characteristics of the Sun God.

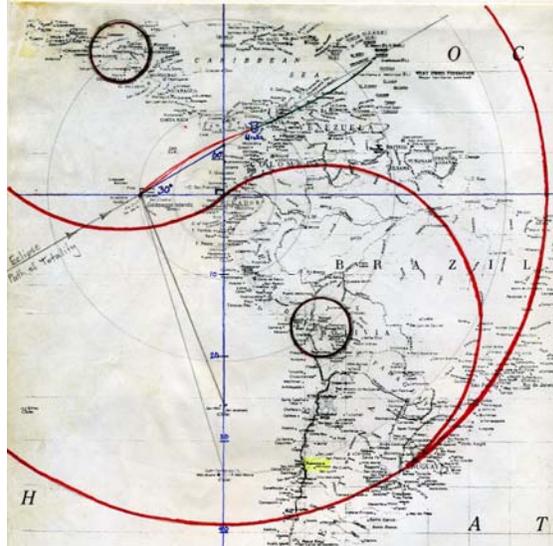
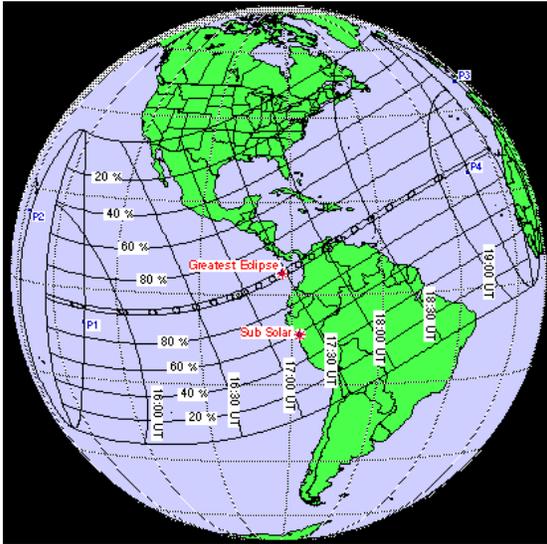




Though I hadn't been in Palenque for six months by the time I found myself wandering across the uninhabited slopes of Robinson Crusoe Island, my previous studies had emblazoned the image of the Mayan Sun God in my mind and for this reason I was able to instantaneously recognize its likeness on the island monument that fateful day at the end of 1996. While this discovery was completely unexpected I nevertheless turned my mind back to the inscriptions of Palenque and began to unravel the mystery. The hidden key, ensconced on the other side of the world, allowed me to reverse-engineer solutions to the hieroglyphs as I worked with the missing piece of the puzzle.

I returned to the island for a month at the end of 1997 and made my first attempt to climb the monument on the solstice, December 21st, when the sun was in its furthest south position. Gathering up my courage, I climbed to within 15 feet of the summit of the Sun God tower. Here the rock turns to a sheer cliff face and I was overcome by fear when I realized that I was alone with no safety equipment and a jagged 150' drop below me. For a while after my descent I suffered from something akin to post-climbing vertigo whenever I thought about my precarious perch on that rock face. I retreated to my base camp and spent the following weeks watching the brilliant Milky Way arch across the sky and familiarizing myself with the constellations of the Southern Hemisphere, the stars of the Underworld. During my return trip home at the end of January 1998 I had an epiphany that I needed to journey to Colombia for the upcoming Total Solar Eclipse.

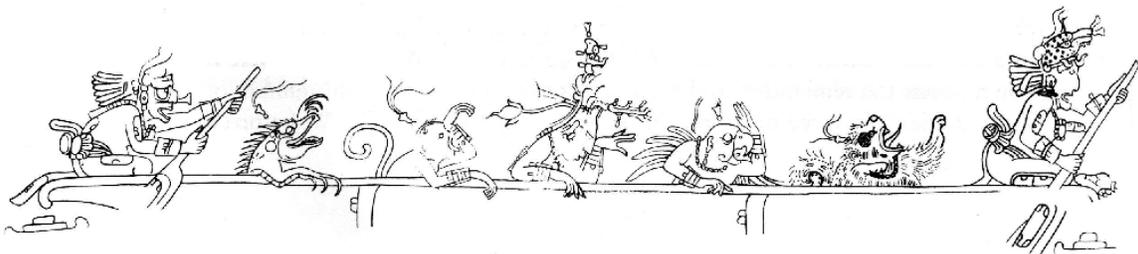




The Total Solar Eclipse of February 26, 1998 passed mainly over empty ocean, making landfall only on the Galapagos Islands, portions of Colombia and Venezuela, and a few Caribbean islands. I managed to make my way to the small Colombian village of Turbo on the Gulf of Uraba, the southernmost extent of the azure Caribbean Sea and the only inhabited location on earth to witness more than four full minutes of totality. The spectacle was unforgettable and I spent the following week in Medellin working with the eclipse maps as they related to the island monument. The 1998 eclipse path crossed the equator at precisely 60 degrees forming a pleasing 30/60/90 degree triangle reminiscent of the crossed spears in the Temple of the Sun inscription.



Later I would recognize a similar Yin-Yang symbol in the hieroglyphs of the Temple of the Sun inscription, topped by three circles and beside the “fish-in-hand” glyph that represents conjuring and the shamanic vision quest. The elegant symbolism was too obvious to ignore. The eclipse cycle of the final katun was part of the calendar code.



Shortly after returning to Toronto I was perusing a book of upcoming eclipses to familiarize myself with these future predictions. When I flipped to the page referencing the Total Solar Eclipse of November 13, 2012 my knees buckled as I realized the eclipse was visible at sunset from the westward-facing island monument. The linear triplet alignment that produces eclipses was further reflected in the sacred sites of the Western Hemisphere where Palenque was perfectly aligned with Lake Titicaca, the jaguar-shaped lake of the Underworld. My earlier research had also shown that Chan Bahlum's Temple of the Foliated Cross and Temple of the Sun also made a triple alignment with his father's burial chamber in the base of the Temple of Inscriptions in the overall temple layout at Palenque. But nothing could prepare me for what I discovered about the famous sarcophagus lid inscription as it related to the final Total Solar Eclipse of the last millennium which passed over Europe on August 11, 1999.

