

5

Fire in the Land

Landscapes of War in Classic Maya Narratives

ALEXANDRE TOKOVININE

The present chapter explores the connections between two recurrent topics in Classic Maya inscriptions: places and warfare. In so doing, it follows on my previous project of investigating notions of place, individual, and group identity in the Classic-period written records of the Southern Maya Lowlands (Tokovinine 2008, 2013b). As discussed below, some of the project's findings with respect to the indigenous concepts of place and related spatial categories are of direct relevance to understanding the Classic Maya ways of writing about war, its causes, and its aftermath.

While the goal of the study presented in this chapter is much more modest in scope, it deals with a similar set of uncertainties and challenges brought about by the nature of the available sources of information (Tokovinine 2007). The database of Classic Maya place names constitutes the primary data source for both projects. Each database entry corresponds to a single occurrence of a place name, which is accompanied by a full transcription of the clause in which the toponym is mentioned and by additional descriptive fields that serve to classify the context of a place name in terms of its syntax and general meaning. A sentence such as

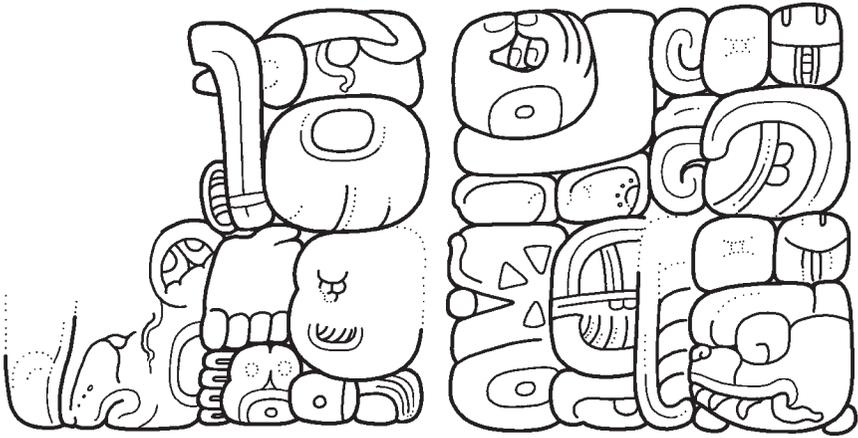


FIGURE 5.1. Detail of the Hieroglyphic Stairway, House C, Palenque

ch'ahkaj lakam ha' ukabjiiy oox kula' chi-T₃₁₆ yajawte' . . . chan kanu'l ajaw (“Lakam Ha’ is chopped; Kanu’l lord ‘Sky Witness,’ the *yajawte’* of ‘Maguey Altar,’ *oox kula’*, had tended to it”) from the inscription on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairway (figure 5.1) belongs to three database entries: a direct reference to the place of Lakam Ha’ that suffered an attack from “Sky Witness,” whose name phrase includes indirect references to the toponyms of Kanu’l and “Maguey Altar.” The distinction between the direct and indirect references is important because the former correspond to actions that affect or happen at a certain locale, while the latter only attest to a particular relationship between an individual or a group and a place. In this case, “Sky Witness” derives his lordly rank from *Kanu’l*, but his military title of *yajawte’* (“lord of spear[s]”) evokes “Maguey Altar.” These connections could have been key to “Sky Witness’s” identity as a lord and a warrior in general, but they could also have been intentionally highlighted by the anonymous author of the narrative at the expense of other places “Sky Witness” was associated with in the context of his attack on Lakam Ha’.

The key shortcomings of the dataset are a relatively small sample size (just under 2,400 entries) and its uneven distribution in time and space. The picture is heavily skewed toward archaeological sites with large corpora of well-preserved inscriptions, such as Yaxchilan, Naranjo, Tonina, Palenque, Tikal, and Dos Pilas. The quantity of texts on eighth-century CE monuments dwarfs everything else simply because those were the monuments left standing at the time of the collapse of Classic Maya royal courts in the early ninth century CE. In contrast, the sample from the fourth and fifth centuries CE is tiny because of the practice of termination and burial of early structures and monuments as well as possible desecration and destruction during times of war (Martin 2000a; see chapter by

Hernandez and Palka, this volume), which makes the discovery of such early narratives much less likely. To make things even worse, a vast set of inscriptions comes from unprovenanced objects in private and institutional collections, so the spatial and chronological attribution of some place name references is difficult or even impossible to ascertain. Nevertheless, the sample is large and varied enough to look for broader patterns in the written discourse.

It is worth emphasizing that the present discussion and the data collection project behind it are not centered on warfare as such. The object of the research is place names and landscape categories in various contexts, and this chapter deals with one subset of contexts. So, for example, when frequencies of specific war-related references are discussed, these are frequencies of place names in the context of warfare. The same war event may contain multiple landscape references, as we have seen above, but war events with no place names mentioned have not been considered in this particular study.

IDENTIFYING PLACES

Nearly all place names found in Classic Maya inscriptions are unknown from ethnohistoric or ethnographic accounts; therefore, they are identified on the basis of their meaning and morphology or because of specific semantic contexts. The morphological attributes include place name suffixes *-VVI* or *-V'I* (“place where X abounds”) and a specialized derivational morpheme *-nal* (“corn place”) (Tokovinine 2013b, 8–10). The diagnostic contexts comprise occurrences of place names with certain kinds of words and expressions: verbs of motion, positional verbs, locatives, expressions such as “it happened (at),” agentive constructions, and landscape categories (recurrent terms that accompany known place names but do not equate with them; see Stuart and Houston 1994, 7–18). Several hundred toponyms have been identified so far, and some may even be linked to specific physical locales corresponding to sections of archaeological sites, while the identification of many rare place names with no diagnostic morphological attributes remains problematic at best.

The name phrase of “Sky Witness,” cited in the introduction to this chapter (see figure 5.1), illustrates common difficulties with recognizing toponyms. Kanu'l and “Maguety Altar” are certainly place names because they appear in direct contexts. *Oox kula'* may be analyzed as “*oox-kul*-person,” where *oox-kul* could well be a place name; however, it lacks the morphological attributes of a toponym and does not appear in any context other than this title of Kanu'l lords. The possible translations of glosses *oox* as “paw” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 611) and *kul* as “tree trunk” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 348) cannot be verified by other contexts (although the iconography of the OOX logogram supports the “paw” translation and “paw trunk” would be a more-or-less accurate description of trees in Classic Maya iconography); therefore, *oox-kul* may not be identified as a place name.

The two most frequent landscape categories are *kab* (“land”) and *ch’een* (“cave”). As I have previously argued, the latter refers not so much to natural landscape features (hence its near total absence in toponyms) as to holy grounds at the heart of Classic Maya royal courts: natural or artificial mountains with the burials of ancestors and dwellings of the divine patrons of rulers and wider political communities. An example would be the *ch’een* of Naranjo rulers, also known as *Sa’aal*, which was at the triadic acropolis on a hill in the eastern area of the archaeological site (Tokovinine 2011; Tokovinine and Fialko 2007). As discussed below, these holy grounds and their supernatural and human owners were at the very core of Classic Maya written discourse on warfare. The term *kab* refers to territories/people under the sway of a particular ruler and *ch’een*, which may also be mentioned in the context of war narratives. Only a subset of place names is classified as *ch’een*, presumably as an indicator of their political and ritual centrality in a given landscape. Places are not usually classified as *kab*, but *kab* may belong to places the way social and political entities belong to or are associated with places. In addition, the couplet *chan ch’een* (“sky-cave”) refers to the divine realm associated with a locale, whereas the *kab ch’een* couplet (“land-cave”) designates the sacred core and the territory/population of a city or polity.

IDENTIFYING WARFARE

Although nearly every publication on Classic Maya political history addresses the theme of warfare in one way or another, there has been no attempt at a comprehensive critical overview of the textual record and problems with identifying acts of war in the inscriptions. Miller and Martin’s (2004, 163–172) introduction to the topic of courtly warfare, as well as Martin’s (1996, 2000b, 2004, 2009) and Mathews’s (2000) discussions of some key war-related narratives, remain the only available summaries of some of the problems involved; therefore, a brief review of these issues is in order.

There is no overarching term for war in Classic-period inscriptions. It is not even clear if the concept of war as a continuous state is applicable at all to the available textual record. The word of choice in the Colonial-period narratives is *k’atun*. It may refer to military units, fighting, and a state of war besides being the name of a twenty-year period (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 385–386). The following examples from the Acalan Chontal Maldonado Paxbolon Papers illustrate the uses of *k’atun* as “war”:

cahi utalel hobon cab ukatuninob (Smailus 1975, 29)

“Many communities started coming [and] they waged war”

cahi ukatuncelob tamal abi chankal kin (Smailus 1975, 32)

“They started being waged war upon for, they say, eighty days”

ma xach katunon coco xach col numicon (Smailus 1975, 52)

“I do not wage war now; I only want to pass now.”

There are no comparable references to war so-defined in the pre-Contact inscriptions. Instead, several terms denote acts of aggression, which may be interpreted as acts of war. Other expressions refer to acts of war in certain contexts but not in all cases. There are also glosses that may be contextually linked to warfare, but their actual significance is unclear (see also chapter by Peuramaki-Brown, Morton, and Kettunen, this volume).

References to “chopped” (*ch’ahkaj*, usually spelled *CH’AK-(ka)-ja*, see figures 5.1 and 5.2a) places are perhaps the most obvious descriptions of war that emphasize its destructive nature, regardless of the political or economic outcomes. The targets are either place names or *ch’een* of a ruler or a deity/ancestor. The only mention of *kab* occurs in the context of a sweeping statement in the narrative on the Sabana Piletas Hieroglyphic Stairway (Grube, Pallán Gayol, and Benavides Castillo 2011, 255–256; Tokovinine 2013b, 92–93) that does not seem to be concerned with specific locations: “the land was chopped where the southern lords are, where the eastern lords are, where the northern lords are, where the western lords are.” This statement of total and indiscriminate destruction nevertheless remains unique. A reference to a *ch’ahkaj* event may also be a *casus belli* statement, as on Caracol Altar 21 (Martin 2005a), when such attacks are followed by a justified retribution. People are almost never “chopped.” The accounts of the only known historic “head chopping” (*ch’ak-baah*), when Copan ruler Waxaklajuun Ubaah K’awiil was decapitated by his Quirigua adversary, take decisively mythical overtones (Looper 2003, 76–87; Martin and Grube 2008, 205, 218–219). Perhaps that special fate was reserved for ancient heroes and deities (see below).

In contrast, “downfall” references are more metaphorical and highlight the outcome of attacks or battles. The Hieroglyphic Mayan term is *jubuuy* “it fell down,” spelled syllabically as *ju-bu-yi* (figure 5.2b) or with the “star war” or “STAR.OVER.EARTH” logogram (figure 5.2c). Individuals, their weapons, and places (toponyms, *ch’een*, and *kab*) may experience the “downfall.” The range of meanings seems to be from a lost battle to a failure of a political community, its holy places, and its lands. Some of the most significant military defeats in Classic Maya history, such as the outcome of a conflict between Tikal and Calakmul in 695 CE (Martin and Grube 2008, 44–45), are described as the “downfall.” These statements are also curiously agent-less, as if some kind of predetermination were implied.

“Entering the *ch’een*” (figure 5.2d) is a potentially ambiguous expression, as it may evoke one’s visits to temples or other holy places, but at least some of these “entering” events are acts of war (Martin 2004, 106–109; Tokovinine 2013b,

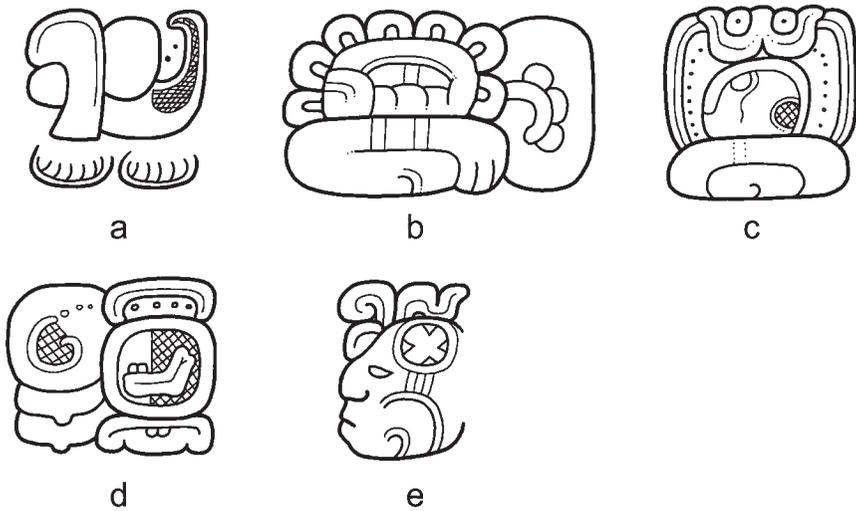


FIGURE 5.2. War references in Classic Maya inscriptions: a, CH'AK-ka-ja ch'ahkaj "it was chopped" (Tortuguero Monument 8, 40); b, ju-bu-yi jubuuy "it fell" (Dos Pilas Hieroglyphic Stairway 4, Step 4, F1); c, STAR.OVER.EARTH-yi jubuuy (?) "it fell" (Tortuguero Monument 6, C4); d, OCH-u-CH'EEN-na ochi uch'een "it entered the cave/city of" (Palenque Temple XVII Panel, I2); e, PUL-yi puluuy "it burned" (Naranjo Stela 22, E16)

33). Naranjo's Stela 21 (Graham 1975, 53) clearly belongs to the latter category, as it depicts its ruler standing on a bound captive from Yootz while the caption for the king states that "it is his image in the entering of the *ch'een* of Yootz" (*ubaah ti och-ch'een yootz*). Codex-style pottery scenes of Chak Xib Chaahk warriors confronting a wind or maize deity as they "enter the *ch'een*" also imply an act of aggression (García Barrios 2006; Martin 2004, 107; Taube 2004a, 74–75). "Entering the *ch'een*" in the narratives on the Palenque Temple XVII panel and the blocks of the Dzibanche Hieroglyphic Stairway results in the taking of captives (Martin 2004, 105–108; Velásquez García 2004).

A special kind of fiery *ch'een* entering is cited on monuments at the archaeological sites of Naranjo and Yaxchilan (Tokovinine and Fialko 2007, 7–8, figure 10). The translation of the expression remains somewhat obscure, but its context in the text on Yaxchilan Stela 18, Hieroglyphic Stairway 3, and the scene on Naranjo Stela 24 involves taking captives. On Naranjo Stela 45 (Tokovinine and Fialko 2007, figure 4), the expression is emblazoned on a shield with flint blades on its corners. The victorious ruler on Yaxchilan Stela 18 (Tate 1992, figure 145) holds an incense burner marked with "OCH-K'AHK" ("fire-entering"), whereas the expression on Naranjo Stela 24 (Graham 1975, 63) is inscribed into a plate with a blood offering held by the queen as she treads on a captive. The designs

of the queen's headdress on Naranjo Stela 24 and of the king's incense burner and headdress on Yaxchilan Stela 18 constitute a clear reference to Teotihuacan iconography. The final example of the expression occurs on a stucco frieze in Yaxchilan Structure 21 (Tokovinine 2013a, 33) that depicts the king and the queens seated on the body of a Teotihuacan "War Serpent" emerging from a Storm God-shaped incense burner. This insistence on a Teotihuacan connection implies that there is more to the fire reference than a mere description of war-related destruction or even more than an allusion to the burning of holy grounds or temples—a metaphor that is well attested elsewhere in Mesoamerica, including the Cacaxtla murals (Helmke and Nielsen 2011; see chapter by Bassie-Sweet, this volume) and later Aztec pictorial manuscripts. As addressed by Nielsen (2006a, this volume), as well as by Fash and colleagues (2009), there appears to be a specific connection between fire making and establishing a new political order in Classic Maya imagination related to Teotihuacan. Such statements imply political control rather than destruction or perhaps evoke a distinct Teotihuacan way of waging ritually sanctioned wars (see Headrick 2007, 124–145).

The potential polyvalence of war-related, fire-making statements is key to understanding another category of references that deal with the "burning," *puluuy* (figure 5.2e), of enemy places, including *ch'een* locations. It is tempting to interpret such references as military raids or as violent attacks on holy grounds or, as some have suggested, specific acts of cave desecration (Brady and Colas 2005). Such interpretations lack an emphasis on order and control that allusions to Teotihuacan fire rituals imply; for example, the accession of K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chaahk in the narrative on Naranjo Stela 22 (Graham 1975, 56) is followed by the "downfall" of K'inchil Kab and the "burning" of Bital and Tuubal. The text is concluded with a statement "it is my shield, flint, land" or perhaps, "it is my adding up/gathering of land" (Tokovinine 2013b, 44–45). Therefore, the military campaign is presented as an act of establishing order upon one's accession to kingship. That said, other references to fire making in the context of warfare may just refer to attacks with no implications of consequences or broader significance. "Drilling fire in Ik'a" (Motul de San Jose) results in capturing a local noble in the military campaign detailed on Itzan Stela 17 (Tokovinine and Zender 2012, 54). An initial attack that preludes a retribution by the Sak Tz'i' ruler on the Denver Museum panel is described as the "scattering of fire" by the transgressor (Tokovinine 2013b, 34–35).

Capturing someone in warfare is described with two expressions, one of which is a relatively straightforward *chuhkaj* "she/he was seized." The second reference is still poorly understood despite an extensive discussion of its known occurrences and spellings by Martin (2004) and Velásquez García (2005). It is often spelled with a single character (T78, 514 in Thompson's catalog [1976]), which may be preceded by *ya-* and followed by *-he*, the latter likely a phonetic

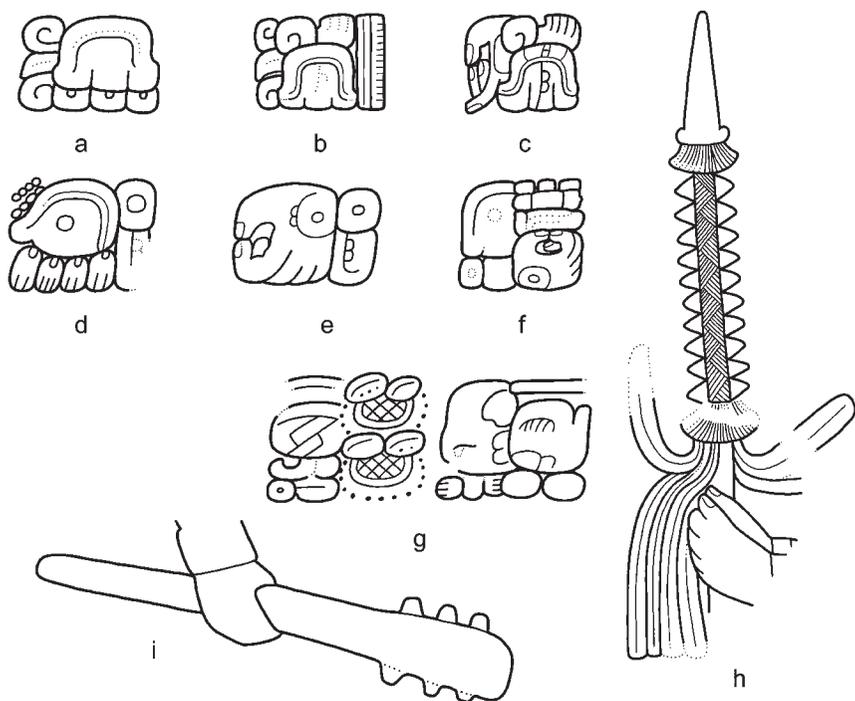


FIGURE 5.3. Possible reading of T78, 514: a, ya-T78, 514-he (Dzibanche Hieroglyphic Stairway, Block 5, B2); b, ya-T78, 514-AJ (Dzibanche Hieroglyphic Stairway, Block 13, A3); c, ye-T78, 514 (Yaxchilan Lintel 35, C1); d, ye-he-TE' (Yaxchilan Hieroglyphic Stairway 5, 82); e, ye-TE' (Tonina Monument 153, A3); f, ye-TE' K'IN-ni-chi (Motul de San Jose Stela 1, C4); g, detail of Naranjo Stela 32; h, detail of Yaxchilan Stela 19; i, detail of Uaxactun Stela 5.

complement (figure 5.3a). The -AJ character may also be added (figure 5.3b), perhaps as a spelling of the agentive *-aj* suffix meaning “person” (Houston, Robertson, and Stuart 2001, 6–7). Yet the same T78, 514 character may also be preceded by *ye-* (figure 5.3c), and the whole expression may be written as *ye-he-TE'* (figure 5.3d) and *ye-TE'* (figure 5.3e), which somehow substitute for T78, 514. As pointed out by Martin (2004, 110), in a single example T78, 514 substitutes for the usual *TE'* logogram in a different lexical context, but the uniqueness of the example implies that T78, 514 and *TE'* were seen as having different values, even though *-te'* was part of the phonetic value of T78, 514.

The substantial variation in the spelling of this possible term for captives is consistent with the way diphrastic kennings (*difrasismos*) appear in the Classic Maya script. The most relevant cases would be *saak sak ik'il*, “seed, white breath” (Kettunen 2005), and *saak mijjin*, “seed, child of father.” Both are spelled with

conflations, flexible reading order, and underspellings, all of which are attested for T78, 514 and its variants. If this assumption is correct, T78, 514 likely stands for a conflation of *TE'* with a logogram that would most likely be *EH*, “tooth,” and potentially a third glyph with a reading that begins with *a-*, as the examples prefixed by *ya-* appear to indicate. Therefore, the full *difrasismo* would consist of *y-eh-te'-(aj)*, “his/her *eh-te'* (person),” and *y-a . . . -te'-(aj)*, “his/her *a . . . te'* (person).” Given the similarity of T78, 514 to the *AT* “stinger” glyph (Lopes 2005), the second half of the kenning could be *y-at-te'-(aj)*. Since all known *ya-T78, 514* spellings occur in a single text on the Dzibanche Hieroglyphic Stairway, it is equally plausible that *ya-AT TE'* or *ya-AT EH TE'* remained a uniquely local tradition, while the rest of T78, 514 examples stand only for *EH TE'*.

The term *eh-te'* probably features the Ch'olan gloss *eh*, “tooth” (Kaufman and Norman 1984, 119). Romero (2015) recently offered an extended argument for the decipherment of T514 as a logogram for “tooth,” with an emphasis on its resemblance to the conventions for representing teeth in the Classic Maya visual culture. However, I disagree with Romero’s idea that the ergative prefix is permanently embedded in the logogram because such practice is otherwise absent in the script. Consequently, a combination with *TE'* for “spear” may not refer to the spear’s edge or its sharpness. The compound *eh-te'* should instead mean “tooth spear.” Although no such term is attested to in the Colonial sources, Yucatek *julte'* “throwing spear” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 244) and *nabte'* “hand spear” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 546) are good analogies. The translation of *eh-te'* as a kind of weapon would certainly fit the lexical contexts such as the personal name Ye[h]te' K'inich, “the tooth spear of the Sun God” (figure 5.3f), popular with Motul de San Jose rulers (Tokovinine and Zender 2012). Halberds or *macuahuitl*-like weapons with spear points and rows of triangular blades or shark teeth are frequently depicted in Classic Maya imagery (figure 5.3h, 5.3i). The remains of one such weapon with an obsidian point and fifty-six shark teeth were discovered in Tomb 1 at Chiapa de Corzo (Lowe and Agrinier 1960, 40–42, figure 36, plates 18f, 19c–d). Given the complex craftsmanship and potentially exotic materials required to make such “tooth spear” weapons, they might signal a contrast between the elite warriors and the commoners armed with ordinary darts and spears.

The second half of the *difrasismo* might denote a similar weapon (“stinger spear”), but it is tempting to consider a possibility that a completely different class of objects was evoked. Tzeltalan languages share a gloss *ah* “to count (as in accounting)” (Ara 1986, 246; Kaufman 1972, 94; Laughlin 1975, 48). In Colonial Yucatek, *atal* means “to be paid” or “something paid” (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 18). The gloss *te'* is also somehow related to accounting in the context of tribute payments (Miller and Martin 2004, 102). According to the main inscription and a caption to the scene on Piedras Negras Stela 12 (Stuart and Graham

2003, 61–63), the captives *utzakaw te'* “added up/stacked the stick(s).” The narrative on Naranjo Stela 32 (figure 5.3g; Graham 1978, 86) details how a subordinate lord K'uk' Bahlam gave several loads of cacao beans worth of tribute to the king and “added up/stacked the stick(s)” (Stuart 2006). References to weapons would not explain these contexts. At least one specific tribute-related gloss, (y) *ubte'*, attested in Classic-period inscriptions (Tokovinine and Beliaev 2013, 175) and Colonial Yukatek dictionaries (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 980–981), is a combination of the term for a piece of cloth and *te'*, which together denote a piece of cloth of standardized size used in tribute transactions. Another Colonial term for tribute, *ximte'*, appears to consist of a numerical classifier for cacao and *te'* (Barrera Vásquez et al. 1995, 944–945). “Adding/stacking sticks” would then likely refer to operations with accounting devices such as tallies, and *a[h]t te'*, “counting stick” or “tally,” would be a near perfect lexical match. Although no ethnohistoric accounts mention tallies in the Maya area, there are archaeological examples such as the inscribed shell tallies from Comalcalco (figure 5.4) that could be bound in stacks (as indicated by grooves on the plain sides) and contained records of the owner's ritual activities (Zender 2004b, 248–263). Courtiers with stacks of objects of similar size in the headdresses are present in the depictions of Classic Maya courtly life, including tribute payment scenes (figure 5.4b). The relative paucity of such tallies in the archaeological record is probably a result of the fact that most of them were made not from shell but from more perishable material like wood.

If the proposed interpretation of the T78, 514 and related glyphs is correct, the captives were referred to as people who pertained to the weapons and the accounting devices of the captor, his “halberd (person)” and “tally (person).” The first part of the *difrasismo* evoked warfare as a means of procuring captives, while the second implied that ransom or tribute was to be paid, perhaps in contrast to a more gruesome fate referenced by another term for captives, *baak*, “(trophy) bones.” At least two war narratives (see below) conclude with placing the captives and captured items in a “house of *eh te' / aht te'*,” perhaps a dedicated repository of trophies and tribute.

BROADER TRENDS IN WAR-RELATED LANDSCAPE REFERENCES

Now that the categories of place and warfare references have been defined, it is possible to consider larger trends in the relationship between them over the course of the Classic period. One can also investigate spatial variability in war landscapes, provided that the available sample is large enough to explore such an option.

As is often the case with Classic Maya inscriptions, the absolute numbers are rather misleading or at least are not as helpful as one might think. War-related place references are clearly on the rise in the Late Classic period, peak during the

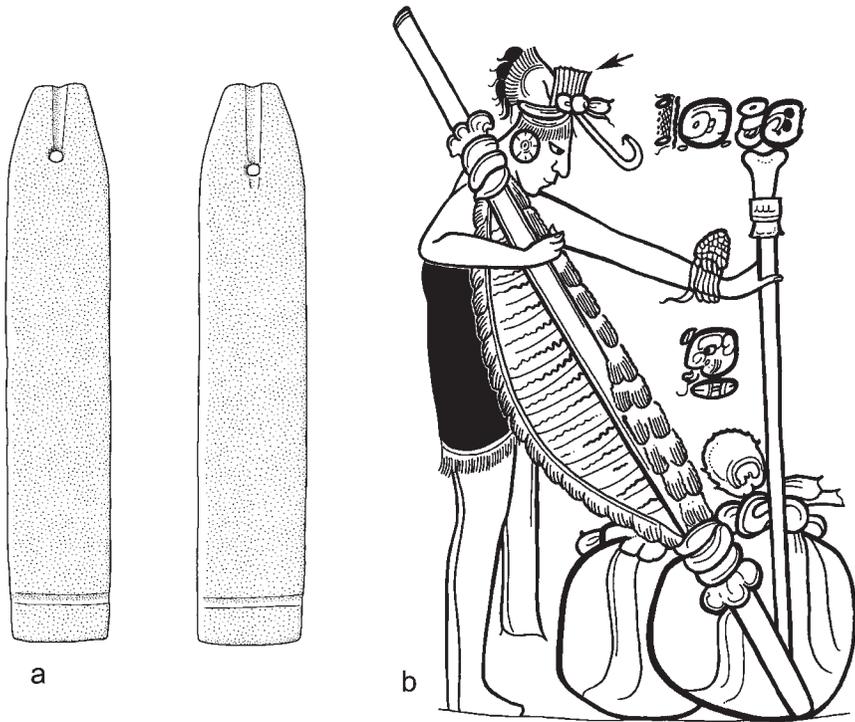


FIGURE 5.4. Tallies in Maya archaeology and imagery: a, pendants 12A and 18A (Urn 26, Comalcalco); b, detail of the Late Classic vessel K1728.

eighth century CE, and subsequently decline; however, this trend is a predictable outcome of the nature of the available data. Non-war references to places show the same trajectory, suggesting that it is the sample size and not changes in the relative importance of certain narrative types that causes the observable variation. Simply put, all kinds of references peak in the eighth century CE because it coincides with the absolute majority of known inscriptions.

The picture is more interesting if we consider relative frequencies of place reference types for each century (figure 5.5). In this way, one gets around the sample size factor and can see the contribution of a specific reference type to a total of place references in each century. This chart shows that the relative contribution of war-related place references to the total of place references remained fairly constant or even decreased; in other words, relatively the same quantity of places was mentioned in the narratives in connection to identifiable war-related events if we adjust for the different sample size in each century. The data do not suggest any major change in the presence of war in relation to other landscape references in Late Classic inscriptions. This finding seemingly

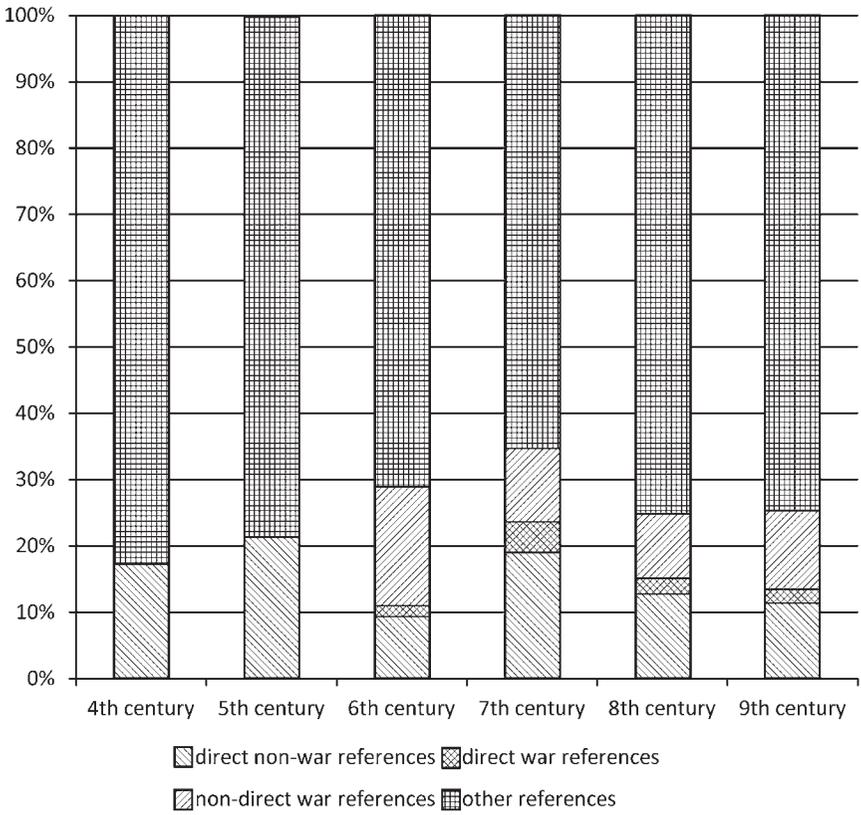


FIGURE 5.5. *Relative frequencies of place references in Classic Maya inscriptions*

contradicts the well-cited perception of the escalation of violence among Classic Maya polities, although the dataset does not deal with frequency of events but with co-occurrences of two types of references (acts of war and place names).

The absence of place names connected to war narratives during the fourth and fifth centuries CE may come down to the small number of inscriptions from this period. However, the relative frequency of non-war direct references to places as locations of events or objects of one’s actions declines in the sixth century CE just as the war-related place references appear in the corpus, so there may be more going on than just different sample sizes. The sixth century CE is also interesting as most place references in war contexts appear in non-direct contexts—the names of perpetrators or victims of war-related acts. The seventh century CE sees a rise in direct references to places as objects/locations of warfare as well as other direct references to place names not related to warfare. The frequency of places in all direct references declines in the eighth and ninth

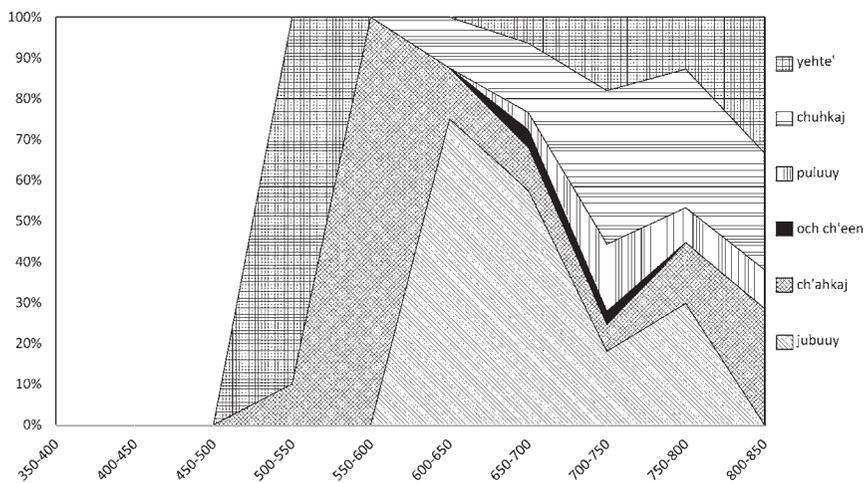


FIGURE 5.6. Relative frequencies of place references in specific war-related clause types

centuries CE as if the focus of the narratives once again shifts from the landscape to people and places with which they are associated.

These patterns are particularly significant if we take into account the relative frequencies of place names in specific war-related statements (figure 5.6). The sixth century CE is characterized by the near total dominance of toponyms in the names of captured individuals or their captors. The only other context is “chopping” statements. Such choices of narratives paint a landscape of raids and inconclusive military campaigns. The caveat is that perhaps there were other ways of writing about warfare that we cannot recognize as such; for example, the “arrival” of Sihyaj K’ahk’ and the “entering” of Waxaklajuun Ubaah Kan “War Serpent” into the *ch’een* of Tikal, as the texts on Tikal Stela 31 and “Marker” inform us, was accompanied by the death of the previous king and followed by the accession of a new young lord with a Teotihuacan connection (Estrada-Belli et al. 2009; Martin 2003; Stuart 2000). And yet all descriptions of these events omit known references to violence and conquest: no one is captured, nothing is chopped or burned, rulers do not get overthrown, and no tribute is paid.

The seventh-century CE texts already feature all known war references in which place names may be mentioned. “Downfall” statements clearly dominate the narratives, whereas place names in captives’ names decline sharply. In my opinion, this change implies a shift in the way Classic Maya written discourse dealt with landscapes and war—the new emphasis being on the outcome, the defeat of whole communities rather than raid-related destruction and captives. The known historical context is also significant because the seventh century CE was the time when Kanu’l lords of Dzibanche and Calakmul strove for dominance

over most of the southern Maya lowlands (Martin and Grube 2008, 108–113). The result of their efforts was a more connected political landscape—hence a peak in direct reference to place names (war and non-war). The eventual failure of the Calakmul political project in the late seventh to early eighth centuries CE led to a progressive balkanization of the political landscape. Consequently, relative frequency of place names in relation to “downfall” declined, whereas contexts involving capture and “burning” increased. Finally, as the Classic Maya political landscape experienced a profound crisis in the Terminal Classic period, references to “downfall” of places disappeared altogether (this sample excludes the example on Yaxchilan Lintel 10 because of its unconventional paleography), and the written discourse on war and place became dominated by captives, “burning,” and “chopping.” Therefore, the relative frequency of reference types and specific expressions suggests a shift in the written discourse sometime in the sixth century CE when violence was mentioned for the first time in relation to places and people from specific locations. The aforementioned change was followed by another shift in which war statements became more focused on conquest and places rather than on individuals, likely associated with the Kan’u’l/Calakmul wars for regional dominance. The trend was reversed in the eighth century CE as the political landscape became more decentralized. Finally, written discourse of the ninth century CE implicated even greater balkanization and decline of conquest-oriented warfare, as places were no longer attacked to be “brought down.” References to “chopping” and “burning” continued, as did mentions of places in the titles of captives.

The final set of broader trends to consider is the spatial distribution of the co-occurrences of war-related statements with place names. Regional differences in the ways of talking about landscape and warfare may be significant enough to inform our understanding of chronological patterns; for example, there appears to be no major variation in the spatial distribution of “chopping” statements (figure 5.7a). In contrast, the narratives on Dos Pilas monuments are characterized by a disproportionately high frequency of “downfall” events with place names (figure 5.7b). So even though “downfall” references are not unique to Dos Pilas, the abandonment of the site by the royal court around 761 CE (Martin and Grube 2008, 63) potentially affected the overall frequency of this type of statements in later inscriptions. References to the “burning” of places are almost exclusively restricted to Naranjo, with a few additional occurrences to the south and southwest of the site (figure 5.7c). “*Ch’een* entering” of places was not a preferred way of describing warfare in the region around Dos Pilas (figure 5.7d). It is possibly significant that “chopping” and “burning” of places are not mentioned at Yaxchilan or Piedras Negras: in the local discourse, places may fall, captives may be taken, but there is no emphasis on the destruction of locales in contrast to Naranjo inscriptions, where entire regions seem to be incinerated and axed.

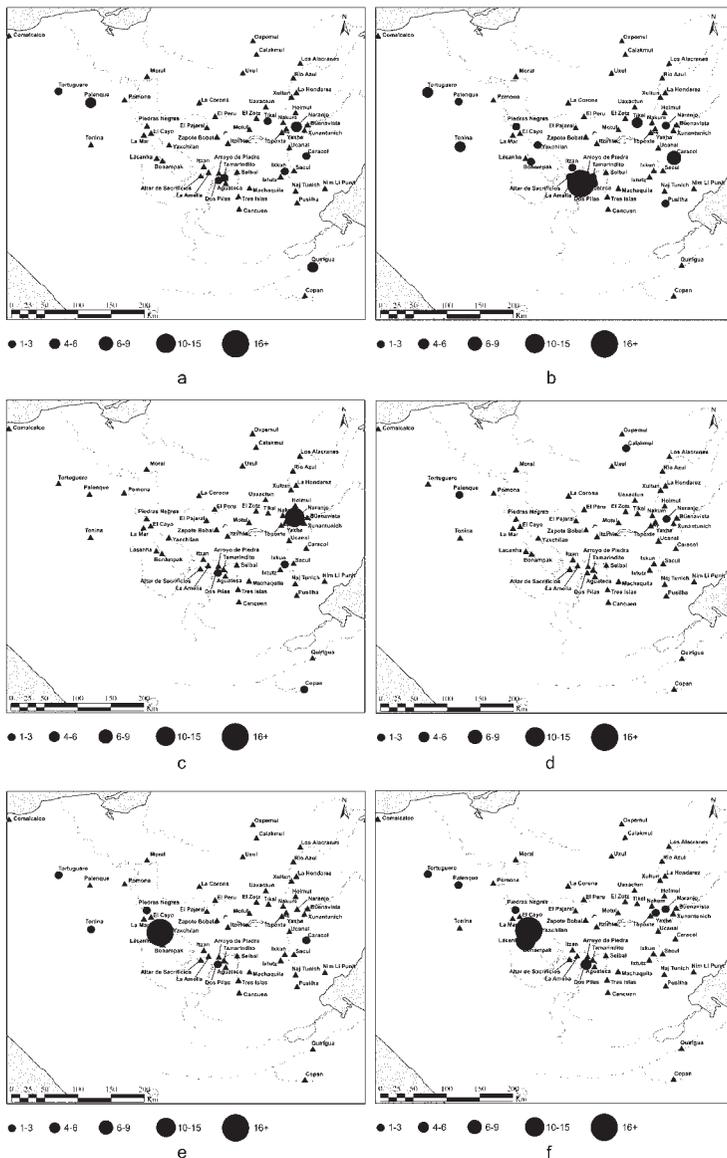


FIGURE 5.7. Absolute frequencies of place references in specific war-related clause types: a, ch'ahkaj; b, jubuuy; c, puluuy; d, och-ch'een; e, yeh-te'/yat-te'; f, chuhkaj.

Instead, war narratives at Yaxchilan and other sites in the Usumacinta area highlight captives with place names in their titles (figure 5.7e, 5.7f). These regional differences may reflect actual spatial variation in the conduct of warfare, but just

as in the case of the chronological patterns discussed above, we may be dealing with distinct traditions in the written discourse and not in military tactics or strategies.

PLACES IN THE NARRATIVES OF WAR

Who goes to war, and what goals do they pursue? It is worth emphasizing that the present chapter offers a review of the textual and visual sources, which do not necessarily reveal the actual causes of warfare (see chapter by Graham, this volume, for additional discussion). Moreover, our understanding of the Classic Maya economies, especially at the regional scale, remains woefully incomplete. That said, Classic Maya royal courts quite possibly pursued rational, long-term political and economic goals, and warfare was one of the many means of achieving these goals.

This point may be illustrated with a case of the Ik'a' lords of Motul de San Jose. When plotted on a map, the political network of that royal house in the eighth century CE (see Tokovinine and Zender 2012) closely overlaps the regional trade routes (figure 5.8). All of the known conflicts with Motul de San Jose's neighbors apparently involved access to the Upper Usumacinta and Pasión River Route and presumably further access to the Highland Verapaz Valley Route. The initial strategy of rapprochement with the courts of La Florida, Dos Pilas, and Tamarindito was likely thwarted by an increasingly assertive Yaxchilan royal house. Motul de San Jose rulers responded by forging an alliance with Yaxchilan that took on the Dos Pilas hegemony in the Pasión region. That attempt failed. The subsequent collapse of the Dos Pilas hegemony created a patchwork of conflicts and alliances between Motul de San Jose and various political actors in the Pasión region. Ultimately, Yaxchilan moved aggressively into the area and confronted Motul de San Jose and its allies. At no point in its history did the rulers of Motul de San Jose show a conflict of interest with the kingdoms to the north or east of the city. It also seems that the area under the control of Naranjo, its allies, and its clients was of no interest to Motul de San Jose rulers, with no record of friendly or hostile interactions. Geographic proximity alone does not explain these patterns.

As we saw in the previous section, Classic Maya perceptions and representations of war shifted between person-oriented conflict and place-oriented conquest campaigns. The same observations hold true if we turn to a micro-analysis of specific war narratives. Some of them do center on individual acts of aggression, which led to retribution such as the capture of the perpetrators. This type of narrative may be illustrated with a story on the so-called Denver and Brussels Panels (table 5.1) commissioned by Sak Tz'i' lord K'ab Chan Te' (Biro 2005, 2–8). Although the beginning of the inscription is missing, the first complete clause appears to contain a *casus belli* statement: La Mar ruler Nik Ahk

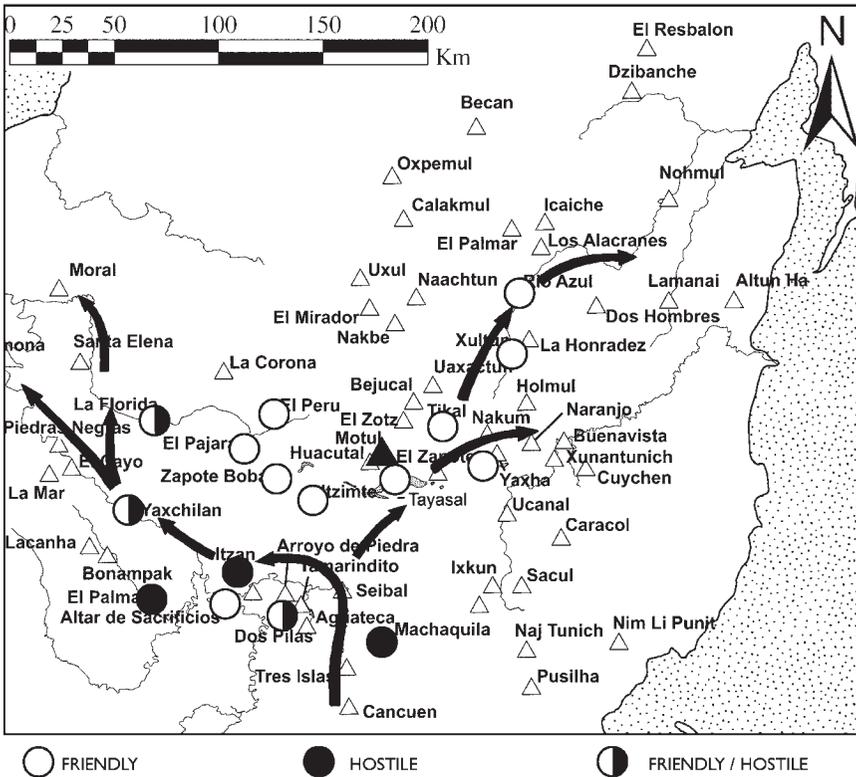


FIGURE 5.8. Trade routes (after Demarest et al. 2014, figure 1) and political networking of Motul de San Jose rulers

Mo’ “scattered fire in the holy grounds” of Sak Tz’i’ lord K’ab Chan Te’ in 693 CE. The retribution comes on the following day when something that belongs to Nik Ahk Mo’ is beheaded. Ak’e’ lord Jun May Ahk Mo’ is captured together with Yab K’awiil from K’an . . . Te’el over the next two days. Finally, four days after the initial attack, Yab K’awiil and individuals from six other locations are “summoned” (*pehkaj*) before K’ab Chan Te’. It is unclear if they are all captives or vassals, with formerly captured Yab K’awiil among them (Houston 2014). Here, the initial transgression and its agent are clearly identified in a statement with an active transitive verb. Sak Tz’i’ lord K’ab Chan Te’ is mentioned as the owner of the affected *ch’een*, and he then “tends to” the retribution and the conclusion of hostilities that are presumably enacted by his military captains.

The war narrative on Piedras Negras Stela 12 (Stuart and Graham 2003, 62) is rather similar in that it evokes a previous grievance, except that it places the transgression centuries before the response. The inscription mentions an Early Classic “ascent” to Pakbuul (Pomona) as some form of justification of attacks

TABLE 5.1. War narrative on the Denver and Brussels Panels

| <i>Transcription</i> | <i>Transliteration</i> | <i>Translation</i> |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| DENVER PANEL | | |
| (B5) 5 'Sip' u-CHOK K'AHK' | jo' 'sip' uchok[ow] k'ahk' | [on the day] Seven 'Sip', |
| (A6) NIK AHK MO' pe TUUN | nik ahk mo' pe['] tuun ajaw | Pe' Tuun lord Nik Ahk Mo' |
| AJAW (B6) tu-CH'EEEN-na | tu-ch'een k'ab chan te' sak | scattered fire in the holy |
| <u>k'a-b'a</u> CHAN TE' (A7) SAK | tz'i'ajaw baah kab juun | grounds of baahkab Sak |
| <u>TZ'I' AJAW</u> -wa BAAH ka-ba | pa[h]s[aj] juun 'ak'bal' u- . . . | Tz'i' lord K'ab Chan Te'. [At] |
| (B7) 1 PAS 1 'AK'bal' (A8) u-? | ch'ak baah u-? | first dawn [on the day] One |
| (B8) CH'AK BAAH-hi u-? | | Ak'bal it was his . . . , the |
| | | beheading of . . . of |
| BRUSSELS PANEL | | |
| (A1) NIK AHK MO' pe | nik ahk mo' pe['] tuun ajaw | Pe' Tuun lord Nik Ahk Mo'; |
| TUUN AJAW (B1) u-KAB- | ukab[j]iiy cha' winikhaab | two score-year lord K'ab |
| ya (A2) 2 WINIK.HAAB | ajaw k'ab chan te' ucha' k'in | Chan Te' had tended to it. |
| AJAW (B2) <u>k'a-ba</u> CHAN | cha' 'k'an' hux 'chikchan' | [On] the two days of Two |
| TE' (A3) u-2 K'IN-ni (B3) | chu[h]kaj juun may ahk mo' | 'K'an' [and] Three 'Chikchan' |
| 2 'K'an' 3 'Chikchan' (A4) | ak'e' ajaw yitaaj yab' k'awiil | Ak'e' lord Juun May Ahk Mo' |
| chu-ka-ja 1 MAY <u>AHK MO'</u> | aj k'an . . . te'el chan 'kimi' | was captured; Yab K'awiil of |
| (B4) <u>a-k'e</u> AJAW yi-ta-ji (A5) | pe[h]kaj yab k'awiil aj k'an . . . | K'an . . . Te'el had accompa- |
| ya-ba K'AWIIL-la AJ-K'AN-na | te'el aj . . . a' aj chak took'al | nied him. [On the day] Four |
| <u>?-TE'</u> -la (B5) 4 'Kimi' pe-ka-ja | aj . . . s aj paniil aj atuu aj | 'Kimi' Yab K'awiil of K'an . . . |
| (A6) ya-ba K'AWIIL-la | aaba' pe[h]kaj yichnal k'ab | Te'el, man of . . . a', man of |
| AJ-K'AN-na <u>?-TE'</u> -la (B6) | chan te' sak tz'i' ajaw | Chak Took'al, man of . . . |
| AJ-?-a AJ-CHAK TOOK'-la | | s, man of Paniil, man of |
| (A7) AJ-?-su AJ-pa-ni-la (B7) | | Atuu, man of Aaba' were |
| AJ-a-TUUN-ni AJ-a-bu-a (A8) | | summoned. They were sum- |
| pe-ka-ja yi-chi-NAL (B8) <u>k'a-ba</u> | | moned before Sak Tz'i' lord |
| CHAN TE' SAK TZ'I' AJAW | | K'ab Chan Te'. |

in 792 and 795 CE when Pakbuul “fell down” twice and several individuals were seized and subsequently “added up their tallies” as captives of the Piedras Negras ruler and his key vassal from La Mar (Martin and Grube 2008, 152–153). In contrast to the narrative on the Denver and Brussels Panels, the lord of Pakbuul and his vassals presumably deserved to be attacked because they were from Pakbuul or descended from the families who committed the initial transgression. Retribution is depersonalized and agent-less (“Pakbuul fell down”). Although parts of the inscription on Stela 12 are missing, despite his double downfall, the ruler of Pakbuul himself was not captured and only his subordinates of *sajal* rank fell victim to the attack. The concluding statement lists significant captives, with a potential allusion to ransom or tribute payment; therefore, the end of hostilities is not dissimilar to the story of Nik Ahk Mo' and K'ab Chan Te'.

Humans are not the only agents of Classic Maya war stories, yet the participation of deities implies more than mere supernatural intervention, as gods may

be patrons of places and royal households (see chapters by Christenson, and Hernandez and Palka, this volume). One such narrative is the inscription on the Hieroglyphic Stairway of the House C of the Palenque royal palace (Robertson 1991, figure 319), commissioned to commemorate the military exploits of K'inich Janaab Pakal (table 5.2). The story begins with Pakal's birth in 603 CE and his accession in 615 CE. It then goes back to 599 CE when Lakam Ha' (the ancient name of part of the archaeological site of Palenque) was devastated by its enemies. The text curiously mentions the deceased "Sky Witness" as the protagonist of the attack (see above), although it is possible that an omitted prefix means that the clause refers to a military commander of the late Kanu'l lord (Martin 2000b, 110–111; Martin and Grube 2008, 160, 164–165; Stuart and Stuart 2008, 140–141). The "chopped" place of Lakam Ha' is the focal point of the statement. The perpetrator is mentioned, but as a cause/orchestrator rather than the one who actually did the "chopping." The narrative cites links to the place names Kanu'l and "Maguey Altar" (Grube 2004a; Martin 1997a, 2005b), which identify "Sky Witness" as a member of one of the most ancient Classic Maya dynasties as if to show that if Palenque were to be desolated, it could only be arranged by one of the greatest Maya kings.

The destruction of Lakam Ha' was accompanied by a specific act of desecration when the three divine patrons of the Palenque rulers "were thrown." It was followed by an "opening" act involving Nuun Hix Lakam Chaahk and the ruler of Yaxchilan. The significance is opaque, but the text on Naranjo Stela 23 (discussed below) implies that the "opening" may refer to the desecration of ancestral graves (Grube 2000, 257–261; Martin and Grube 2008, 76). Finally, Santa Elena ruler Nuun Ujol Chaahk "filled/enclosed/buried it" (*ubut'uw*), presumably completing the ritual humiliation of the Palenque gods and ancestors (Polyukhovych 2012, 123; Simon Martin, personal communication, 2015). Of all the descriptions of the attack, it is the only sentence with an active transitive verb where the agent is clearly marked and named.

This last point is important in the context of the final part of the narrative. It shifts to 659 CE when Nuun Ujol Chaahk and other individuals not previously named were captured (Stuart and Stuart 2008, 158–159). A passage on one of the tablets in the Temple of the Inscriptions details the arrival of the captured Nuun Ujol Chaahk and the "eating" of enemy gods and captives by the Palenque divine patrons in the presence of the victorious K'inich Janaab Pakal impersonating the war deity Bolon Yook Te' (Guenther 2007, 49; Stuart and Stuart 2008, 169). The narrative on the Hieroglyphic Stairway (table 5.2) refers to the captives as the "tallies and halberds" (see above) of K'inich Janaab Pakal as Bolon Yook Te' at the "house of tallies and halberds," possibly the ancient name of the House C.

The narrative on the Palenque stairway is essentially a story of how an insult or damage to the gods of Lakam Ha' was avenged, with the highlighting of a

TABLE 5.2. War narrative on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairway

| Transcription | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| (B6) 6 'Lamat' (C1) 1 CHAK ? CH'AK-ka LAKAM HA' u-KAB-ji OOX-xo ku-lu-a (D1) <u>chi-'Altar'</u> ya-AJAW TE' <u>HUT</u> ? CHAN ka-KAN-la AJAW (C2) ya-le-he 'G1' UNEN-K'AWIIL 'G3'(D2) i-PAS-ja u-?-AAN NUUN HIX LAKAM CHAAHK (C3) yi-ta-ji [ITZAM]?KOKAAJ BAHLAM <u>PA' CHAN</u> AJAW <u>ha-i</u> (D3) u-bu-t'u-wa NUUN u-JOL CHAAHK wa-[k'a-be] AJAW (C4) i-chu-ka-ja 7 'Chuen' 4 IHK' SIHOOM-ma yi-ta-ji (D4) AHIIN CHAN-na a-ku ?AJAN a-ku (C5) ti-tz'-a? 7 ? SAK-ja-li ? (D5) u-? ?-ma <u>EH TE'</u> -he 9 <u>OOK K'UH</u> TE'(C6) K'IN JAN pa-ka-la K'UH BAAK AJAW <u>EH TE'</u> NAAH (D6) u-K'ABA' yo- OTOOT PAT'-la-ja LAKAM HA' | wak 'lamat' juun chak [at] ch'a[h]k[aj] lakam ha' ukabij oox kula' chih 'altar' yajawte' hut . . . chan kanu'l ajaw yaleh 'G1' unen k'awiil 'G3' i-pa[h]saj u . . . aan nuun hix lakam chaahk yitaaj itzam kokaaj bahlam pa' chan ajaw haa' ubut'uw nuun ujol chaahk wak'be['] ajaw i-chu[h]kaj huk 'chuwen' chan[te'] ihk' sihoom yitaaj ahiin chan ahk ajan chan ahk . . . huk . . . sakjaal . . . u . . . [y]-eh te' [y-at te'] bolon [y]-ook te' k'uh k'in[ich] jan[aab] pakal k'uh[ul] baak[al] ajaw eh te' [at te'] naah uk'aba' y-ootoot patlj lakam ha' | [On the day] Six 'Lamat', One 'Sip' Lakam Ha' was chopped; <i>oox kula'</i> , 'Maguey Altar' <i>yajawte'</i> Kanu'l lord 'Sky Witness' tended to it. 'G1', Unen K'awiil, 'G3' were thrown. Then the . . . of Nuun Hix Lakam Chaahk was opened. Pa' Chan lord Itzam Kokaaj Bahlam accom- panied it. As for him, Wak'be' lord Nuun Ujol Chaahk filled/buried it. Then he was captured [on the day] Seven 'Chuwen', Four 'Ch'en'; Ahiin Chan Ahk, Ajan Chan Ahk, . . . Sakjaal . . . accompanied him; [they were] the halberds, the tallies of Bolon Yookte' god, holy Baakal lord K'inich Janaab Pakal [at] the house of halberds, the house of tallies, [which] is the name of his dwelling. It took shape [at] Lakam Ha'. |

specific human perpetrator from Santa Elena; however, the retribution is cast pretty much as a divine act, and some of its victims are also enemy gods. The winning Palenque ruler assumes a specific divine identity but remains somewhat removed from the action. Who personally captured Nuun Ujol Chaahk and the others seems to be irrelevant. The final act belongs to the gods of the Palenque Triad when they eat the captives and their deities.

Some Classic Maya war narratives that embrace this divine will or divine charter framework avoid the subject of the initial perpetration altogether, as if the act of war were self-explanatory and did not require any justification. This approach may be illustrated with a story of Tikal's attack on Naranjo, as told on Lintel 2 of Temple 4 and Stela 5 at Tikal (Martin 1996, 2000b, 111–113). The inscription on Stela 5 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982, figures 7 and 8) begins with Yihk'in Chan K'awiil's accession in 734 CE when he became king and "settled" (*kajaay*) at Sak Saak Lakal, the dwelling of one of Tikal's patron gods and the *ch'een* of the local Maize God and ancestors (Tokovinine 2013b, 30–31, 79–81). The narrative moves on to the completion of the thirteenth year of the *k'atun* in 744 CE, but the scene on the monument reveals Yihk'in Chan K'awiil with the defeated Naranjo

ruler Yax Mayuy Chan Chaahk at his feet. Here, the monument presumably reveals something that happened between the two essential acts of rulership, settling among Tikal gods and ancestors and sustaining the renewal of time, but it does not elaborate, as if the circumstances of Yax Mayuy Chan Chaahk's capture were too insignificant.

The text on Lintel 2 (Jones and Satterthwaite 1982, figure 73) provides additional details (table 5.3). The campaign began in 744 CE when Yihk'in Chan K'awiil "descended" (Zender 2005, 13–14) from Sak Saak Lakal as Huk Chapaht Tz'ikiin K'inich Ajaw, a warrior manifestation of the Sun God that frequently carries "flint and shield." He "arrived at Tubal," a location approximately equidistant between Tikal, Motul de San Jose, and Naranjo. The "first dawn" of the following day saw the downfall of the "Wak Kab Nal person," probably the king of Naranjo identified by his Maize God (Tokovinine 2011, 96–97). The defeat happened at "the holy grounds of the Ihk' Miiin god," the divine founder of the Naranjo dynasty. The holy grounds in this case are a cluster of temples at Naranjo associated with the Sa'aal place name (Tokovinine and Fialko 2007), where its king probably made his last stand. The narrative continues with the capture of Yax Mayuy Chan Chaahk's palanquin and war deity that was then housed in a special building, the same "house of tallies and halberds" as at Palenque. The story concludes with a procession in 747 CE when Yihk'in Chan K'awiil was likely carried (the verb in question is unclear) in the captured palanquin while dressed as the Maize God of the "Maguey Altar" place and of the Kanu'l kings of Calakmul (Tokovinine 2013b, 116–120), whom he defeated in 736 CE (Martin and Grube 2008, 48–49, 113).

The confrontation between Naranjo and Tikal is cast as a conflict between the gods and ancestors of each place, which does not require further justification and implies involvement from entire sociopolitical communities associated with each group of deities. Yihk'in Chan K'awiil descends from the temple of his gods/ancestors/maize, and then the enemy lord is brought down in the holy grounds of his divine ancestor. Yihk'in Chan K'awiil's Sun God prevails over Yax Mayuy Chan Chaahk's war palanquin god. The Maize God of Tikal (Wak Hix Nal Maize God as known from other contexts) prevails over the Naranjo ruler's Maize God, just as Tikal's Maize God prevailed over the Calakmul Maize God. The defeated gods are taken and even somehow absorbed by the winner (see similar examples in chapters by Christenson, and Hernandez and Palka, this volume).

The Tikal narrative may be compared to the stories detailing Naranjo's conquests of Yaxha (Grube 2000, 257–265; 2004b, 201, 206–207; Grube and Martin 2004, 49, 72–74; Martin and Grube 2008, 76, 82). The first campaign was described on Stela 23 (table 5.4; Graham 1975, 60). It began in 710 CE with the "burning" of the *ch'een* of the "powerless" (*ma' ch'abil ma' ak'abil*) Yaxa' lord Joyaj Chaahk, who apparently escaped with his Tikal wife shortly after his accession to kingship. Naranjo ruler K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chaahk "had tended to" (*ukabjiy*) those

TABLE 5.3. War narrative on Lintel 2, Temple 4, Tikal

| <i>Transcription</i> | <i>Transliteration</i> | <i>Translation</i> |
|---|---|---|
| (B3) 6 'Eb' (A4) CHUM-mu K'AN-JAL-wa (B4) EHM-ye SAK ?SAAK LAK-la (A5) 7 CHAPAHT TZ'IKIIN K'IN (B5) yi-IHK'-K'IN CHAN K'AWIIL-la (A6) K'UH ?WAYWAL (B6) HUL tu-ba-la (A7) 1 PAS (B7) 7 'Ben' (A8) 1 K'AN-JAL-wa (B8) ?JUB (A9) 6 KAB NAL-la (B9) tu-CH'EEN-na (A10) IHK' mi-?MIIN K'UH (B10) BAAK-wa-ja (A11) TZ'UNUN PIIT-ta-la (B11) ?-chi-yu (A12) SAAK-ki pi-li-pi (B12) IHK' K'IN-ni hi-HIX (A13) IHK' HUUN-na (B13) u-K'UH-li (A14) YAX ma-yu CHAN CHAAHK-ki (B14) SAK CHWEN-na (A15) ?ye-EH TE' NAAH-ji-ya (B15) KAL-ma TE' | wak 'eb' chum k'anjalaw ehmey sak saak lakal huk chapaht tz'ikiin k'in[ich ajaw] yihk'in chan k'awiil k'uh[ul] waywal hul[i] tubal juun pa[h]s[aj] huk 'ben' juun[te'] k'anjalaw jub[uuy] wak kab nal tu-ch'een ihk' miin k'uh baakwaj tz'unun piital . . . saak pilip ihk'in hix ihk' huun uk'uhuul yax mayu[y] chan chaahk sak chwen yeh te' [at te'] naahiy kaloom te' | [On the day] Seven 'Eb', the seating of 'Pohp', holy sor- cerer Huk Chapaht Tz'ikiin K'inich Ajaw Yihk'in Chan K'awiil descended from Sak Saak Lakal. He arrived at Tubal. [At] first dawn [on the day] Seven 'Ben', One 'Pohp' Wak Kab Nal [person] fell down in the holy grounds of the god Ihk' Miin. The hum- mingbird palanquin . . . Saak Pilip Ihk'in Hix Ihk' Huun, the god of white <i>chuwen</i> Yax Mayuy Chan Chaahk, was taken captive. It had been [at] the house of halberds, the house of tallies of the Kaloomte'. |

events. Three months later, according to the same text, the bones and skull of a recently deceased Yaxa' lord, Yax Bolon Chaahk, were "opened" and "scattered on the island" (Grube 2000, 257–261). Finally, it appears that K'ahk' Tiliw Chan Chaahk "added up/stacked" the enemy deities as his "halberd and tallies." In so doing, he was accompanied by two poorly understood Naranjo gods or groups of deities (Tokovinine 2011, 98).

The second campaign against Yaxha took place in 799 CE. The longer inscription on Stela 12 (Graham 1975, 36) lists a series of "chopping" attacks unleashed on Yaxha and its dependencies by Itzamnaah K'awiil of Naranjo. Yaxha ruler K'inich Lakam Tuun "ran" (*ahni*) and sought refuge (*t'abaay*) at various locations but was eventually taken captive. His precious possessions (*ikaatz*) and his palanquin were "presented" (*nawaj*) before Itzamnaah K'awiil (Stuart 1998, 414). The narrative on Naranjo Stela 35 (Graham 1978, 92) retells the story from a different angle. The emphasis is on the patron deity of Yaxha, a manifestation of the Jaguar Lord of the Underworld, who was impersonated by K'inich Lakam Tuun on at least one occasion according to Yaxha Stela 31 (Grube 2000, 263–265; Martin 1997b). The text on Naranjo Stela 35 evokes a mythical event in which the same old jaguar fire deity was burned by "four men, four youths" and then states that Itzamnaah K'awiil "repeated" it (*ukobow*) as he tended to the beheading of

TABLE 5.4. War narrative on Stela 23, Naranjo

| <i>Transcription</i> | <i>Transliteration</i> | <i>Translation</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (E9) PUL-yi (F9) u-CH'EEN | puluuy uch'een ma['] | The holy grounds of the |
| (E10) ma CH'AB AK'AB-li | ch'abil [ma'] ak'abil joyaj | powerless Yaxa' lord Joyaj |
| (F10) JOY-ja-ya CHAAHK | chaahk yaxa' ajaw waxak- | Chaahk burned. He then fled |
| (E11) YAX-a AJAW (F11) 18 | lajuun k'in[iiy] ajawaan[iiy] | with the Mutal princess, his |
| K'IN-ni (E12) a-AJAW-ni (F12) | i-lok'ooy yitaaj yatan ix | wife, eighteen days since he |
| i-LOK'-yi (E13) yi-ta-ji (F13) | mut[al] ajaw ukabjiy k'ahk' | became king. Holy Sa'aal |
| ya-AT-na (E14) IX MUT AJAW | tiliw chan chaahk k'uh[ul] | lord K'ahk' Tiliw Chan |
| (F14) u-KAB-ji-ya (E15) K'AHK | sa'[aal] ajaw huklajuun[hew] | Chaahk had tended to it. |
| TIL-wi (F15) CHAN-na | chan winikjiy cha' 'men' | Seventeen days, four months |
| CHAAHK (E16) K'UH (F16) | huxlajuun[te'] yaxk'in | later, [on the day] Two 'Men', |
| SA' AJAW-wa (E17) 17 4 | pa[h]saj ubaakel ujol[el] yax | Thirteen Yaxk'in, the bones |
| WINIK-ji (F17) 2 'Men' (E18) | bolon chaahk yaxa' ajaw | and the skull of Yaxa' lord |
| 13 YAX K'IN-ni (F18) pa-sa-ja | cho[h]k[aj] ti peten utz'akaw | Yax Bolon Chaahk were |
| (E19) u-BAAK-le (F19) u-JOL | y . . . k'uh ye[h] te' [at te'] | opened. They were scattered |
| (E20) YAX 9 CHAAHK (F20) | k'ahk' tiliw chan chaahk | on the island. He added up/ |
| YAX-a AJAW (E21) CHOK ti | k'uh[ul] sa'[aal] ajaw yitaaj | stacked . . . god(s). It was |
| PET-ni (F21) u-TZ'AK-wa | nohol . . . n xaman . . . n | the halberd, the tally of |
| (G1) ya-? (H1) K'UH (G2) | aj-sa'aal | holy Sa'aal lord K'ahk' Tiliw |
| ye-TE' (H2) K'AHK TIL-wi | | Chan Chaahk. Southern . . . , |
| (G3) CHAN-na CHAAHK | | Northern . . . of Sa'aal |
| (H3) K'UH SA' AJAW (G4) | | accompanied him. |
| yi-ta-ji (H4) no-NOH-la (G5) | | |
| ?-na (H5) xa-MAN-na (G6) ?-na | | |
| (H6) AJ-SA'-li | | |

the god of the “powerless” (*ma' ch'abil ma' ak'abil*) K'inich Lakam Tuun. The scene on the monument shows the victorious Naranjo ruler preparing to reenact the mythical torching episode on the bound K'inich Lakam Tuun.

Just as in the Tikal narratives, these attacks do not appear to have required any prior transgression as a *casus belli*. Instead, they are cast as repeats of the ancient conflicts between the deities associated with Yaxha and Naranjo; for example, Itzamnaah K'awiil appears as a mere agent of the will of the gods he embodies. Victory is clearly linked to a successful destruction and appropriation of enemy gods and ancestors in addition to the capture of enemy rulers. It is significant that Naranjo narratives are full of place names and deities, but there are very few humans apart from the attacker and the victim. The emphasis seems to be not on settling personal scores but on defeating and partially appropriating a hostile, political community objectified as its holy places and divine patrons (see chapters by Christenson, and Hernandez and Palka, this volume).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite difficulties with identifying place names and war-related statements in the Classic Maya textual record, this discussion has offered macro- and micro-level

views of how war landscapes were represented in the available narratives. On the macro-level, we have seen that while the relative contribution of war narratives to other kinds of references to places remained more or less constant, the dominant types of references to places in the context of war changed over time. The seventh century CE saw the highest relative frequency of narrative contexts indicative of conquest warfare, with emphasis on places rather than individuals. The eighth century CE was marked by a decline of such contexts. Sixth- and ninth-century CE narratives are broadly similar in that the emphasis of war references was on people associated with certain places in contrast to places as locations or victims of war-related acts. These trends coincide with the observed centralization of the Classic Maya political landscape in the seventh century CE, which was preceded and followed by a less centralized geopolitical order. Data from the fourth and fifth centuries CE, associated with an episode of Teotihuacan-Tikal political centralization, stand out for the absence of identifiable landscape-war references, as if a different discourse was in place. The ninth-century CE accounts seem to reflect an increasing balkanization of the political landscape.

On a micro-level, war references to places range from stories of personal transgressions and retributions to narratives involving entire political communities embodied by their rulers and gods. A prior attack against one's holy grounds (*ch'een*) may have been mentioned, but other narratives cast acts of war as part of the preexisting order of things—confrontations between different regional deities in which the attacker simply fulfilled the roles of certain gods. Sometimes, as in Yihk'in Chan K'awiil's conquest of Naranjo, one can identify multiple (and partially overlapping) sets of deities associated with the winning and losing sides, including maize gods, ancestors, war gods, and local divine patrons. Destruction and appropriation of enemy gods and ancestors seemed to be an essential component of a successful conquest of a place, in addition to capturing its ruler and other members of the court.

Acknowledgments. The Classic Maya Place Name Database Project was supported by grants from FAMSI and Harvard University. The final stage of the project benefited from a Dumbarton Oaks Junior Fellowship. The endeavor would have been impossible without guidance from my mentors and colleagues William Fash, Stephen Houston, and Gary Urton. I would also like to thank Shawn Morton and Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown for the kind invitation to contribute to the volume and the editorial input that substantially improved the original manuscript. My special thanks to Elizabeth Graham, Dmitry Beliaev, and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions on this chapter. I remain solely responsible for any errors and omissions.