



DOI: 10.22363/2312-8127-2024-16-3-431-445

EDN: KPTCJK

Research article / Научная статья

## Palenque royal lists of the 7th-8th centuries

Daria S. Sekacheva 

Knorozov Center for Mesoamerican Studies, Russian State University  
for the Humanities, *Moscow, Russia*

✉ [daria.baida@gmail.com](mailto:daria.baida@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** Since the middle of the 5th century AD, the territory of the archaeological site of Palenque (Chiapas, Mexico) was the capital of the Baakal state, the city of Lakamha'. A large number of monumental texts have been discovered here, which are of particular interest for the study of the organization and functioning of the royal court of the ancient Maya. The main objective of this work was to examine in detail the royal lists preserved in the monumental texts in order to reconstruct the kinship ties between the Palenque rulers and to reveal the peculiarities of the local political system. One of the main features to be considered about these written sources is a retrospective character, which in theory could give the rulers who created them wide opportunities for manipulation. The lack of detailed information about the rulers of the 5th-7th centuries, which is mainly limited to the dates of accession and death, is no less difficult. Although in the written tradition the royal dynasty is presented as a continuous one, the analysis of the texts reveals several lineages. Study also shows certain peculiarities of the system of power transmission in Baakal. In general, ancient Maya used patrilineal tradition, but the history of Palenque records cases different from this pattern. The throne there was once occupied by a woman, other cases show successive rule of several siblings. These data reveal the flexibility of the political system of the ancient Maya.

**Keywords:** Mesoamerica, pre-Columbian America, royal power, Palenque, Maya epigraphy, ancient Maya, dynastic history, royal lists

**Conflicts of interest:** The author declares no conflicts of interest.

**Article history:** Received: 29.01.2024. Accepted: 02.04.2024.

**For citation:** Sekacheva DS. Palenque royal lists of the 7th-8th centuries. *RUDN Journal of World History*. 2024;16(3):431–445. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2024-16-3-431-445>

© Sekacheva D.S., 2024



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/legalcode>

## Царские списки Паленке VII–VIII вв.

Д.С. Секачева 

Мезоамериканский центр им. Ю.В. Кнорозова, РГГУ,  
Москва, Российская Федерация

✉ [daria.baida@gmail.com](mailto:daria.baida@gmail.com)

**Аннотация.** С середины V в. н.э. на территории археологического памятника Паленке (штат Чиapas, Мексика) находилась столица государства Бакаль, город Лакамха'. Здесь было обнаружено большое количество монументальных текстов, представляющих особый интерес для изучения устройства и функционирования царского двора у древних майя. Основной задачей работы было детальное рассмотрение царских списков, сохранившихся в монументальных текстах, с целью реконструкции родственных связей между правителями Паленке и выявления особенностей местной политической системы. Главной особенностью текстов Паленке можно считать ретроспективный характер, что в теории могло давать создавшим их царям широкие возможности для манипуляций. Не меньшую сложность представляет отсутствие подробной информации относительно правителей V–VII вв., которая в основном сводится к датам воцарения и смерти. Хотя в письменной традиции царская династия представлена непрерывной, анализ текстов позволил выделить в ней несколько родственных линий. Кроме того, исследование показывает определенные особенности системы передачи власти в Бакале. Несмотря на то, что для древних майя в целом характерна патрилинейная традиция, в истории Паленке зафиксированы случаи, когда трон занимала женщина или последовательно правили родные братья. Эти сведения позволяют говорить о гибкости политической системы древних майя.

**Ключевые слова:** Мезоамерика, доколумбовая Америка, царская власть, Паленке, эпиграфика майя, древние майя, династическая история, царские списки

**Заявление о конфликте интересов:** Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

**История статьи:** Поступила в редакцию: 29.01.2024. Принята к публикации: 02.04.2024.

**Для цитирования:** *Sekacheva D.S.* Palenque royal lists of the 7th-8th centuries // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Всеобщая история. 2024. Т. 16. № 3. С. 431–445. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8127-2024-16-3-431-445>

### Introduction

The archaeological site of Palenque is located in the Mexican state of Chiapas and is known for its extensive corpus of hieroglyphic inscriptions. It is known from the texts that from 490 AD the territory of Palenque was occupied by the capital of Baakal kingdom — the city of Lakamha', flourished in the Late Classic period (middle of 7th-8th centuries). The monumental inscriptions preserve a great amount of data on the dynastic history, the structure of the royal court of Baakal and the relations of this political center with others.

Researchers have long been studying the dynastic history of Palenque. One of the first to draw attention to possible dates of reign of kings in the texts was Heinrich Berlin [1]. Based on the research of Tatiana Proskouriakoff [2],

he highlighted related names and dates in the text on the main panel from the Temple of the Cross. In 1954, Alberto Ruz, head of the Palenque Archaeological Project, pointed out a possible date for the death of king K'inich Janaab Pakal I (615–683) [3. P. 94]. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, George Kubler was able to identify in inscriptions the name of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, whom he called «Sun Shield» and his dates of birth and death [4]. He also hypothesized the name glyph of a descendant of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, «Jaguar-Snake» (684–702) (K'inich Kan Bahlam II). A little later came an article by Berlin devoted to the inscription on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs, in which he identified the names of four rulers, calling them «subjects A, B, C and D» [5. P. 140.].

In 1973, at the First Palenque Round Table, Peter Matthews and Linda Schiele summarized the information on the Palenque kings of the Late Classic period [6]. Later in 1990, Linda Schiele and David Freidel described the dynastic history of Palenque in popular form [7]. They noted that the dynasty was not indivisible from its foundation and identified three patrilineages that were interrupted when power passed through the female line via *Lady Kanal Ikal* (583–604) (later her name was read Ix Yohl Ik' Nal) and *Lady Zac Kuk* (Ix Sak K'uk'). Schiele and Freidel explained dynastic crises and transition of power by internal political problems. All the rulers from the second third of the 5th century to the beginning of the 7th century, including Ix Yohl Ik' Nal, according to the authors, belonged to one patrilineage [7. P. 222]. Even though until the middle of the 6th century the texts do not indicate the connections of dynasts with each other and the kinship is based on the sequence of dates of their lives and reigns. Schiele and Freidel drew attention to the origins of the first kings of the dynasty, including «*U Kix Ch'an*» (Ukokan Kan [8]). The birth and accession dates of this ruler date from the 10th century BC, allowing him to be attributed to the mythological ancestors of the dynasty. Schiele and Freidel suggested that Ukokan Kan was not accidentally introduced by K'inich Kan Bahlam II into the Palenque written tradition. The dates of his reign belong to the heyday of the Olmec culture, which was perceived by the inhabitants of Mesoamerica of the Classic period as «the great ancestral civilization, just as the Greeks were in the Old World» [7. P. 254]. K'inich Kan Bahlam II, according to the authors, placed the legendary ancestor in the time of the Olmec culture to indicate the origin of the Palenque dynasty power from the legendary times of the beginning of civilization.

Three years later, Schiele and Mathews presented a more detailed analysis of Palenque's dynastic history as part of a workshop on Maya hieroglyphic writing at the University of Texas [9]. In 2000 Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube summarized then available data on the dynastic history of the major states of the Maya region, including Palenque [10]. Unlike previous studies, they considered not only the history of the Late Classic kings of Baikal, but also the early representatives of the dynasty, beginning with K'uk' Bahlam I (431–435).

One of the results of the study of Palenque's history by the epigrapher David Stuart was a book on the inscriptions from Temple XIX, which were created in the first half of the 8th century during the reign of K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III (721 to 736) [11]. Despite the late date of the monuments' creation, they contain references to early history, which are discussed in the paper. A joint book by David and George Stuart published in 2008 [12] focused on the first rulers of the Baikal dynasty, including a rethinking of the existing genealogical scheme. It reflects the absence of direct indications of kinship ties between kings until the middle of the 6th century [12. P. 248].

Speaking about the sequence of Palenque rulers it should be mentioned that the one sole list of all the crowned members of the dynasty doesn't exist. A consecutive listing of rulers appears on several monuments discovered at Palenque: eastern panel of the Temple of Inscriptions, sarcophagus lid from Temple of Inscriptions, main panels from the Temple of the Cross and the Temple the Sun, Tablet of the 96 Glyphs. Thus, reconstruction of the full version of the royal list and probable connections between the rulers, is only possible by examining of all these texts in complex.

### The royal lists

The history of the kings who ruled since the middle of the 7th century is described in the texts in great detail, while references to the early representatives of the dynasty are reduced to listing the dates of their births, accessions and the most important calendar rituals.

The earliest royal list was compiled at the behest of King K'inich Janaab Pakal I and is found on the eastern panel of the Temple of Inscriptions, one of three that make up the text recounting the ruler's deeds. This version of the dynastic history begins with the accession of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I in 501. It is noteworthy that the coronation of the first five rulers is expressed in the text by the formula *chumwaan ta huun name k'uhul Baakal 'ajaw*, which can be translated as «sat with the band/crown name, divine king of Baakal». As a rule, the coronation is described by the phrases «a band/white band was placed on his head» (*k'alhuu'n/k'al-sak-huu'n tu-baah*) or «ascended to the kingship» (*chumwaan ta 'ajawlel*). There is no definite answer to the question about the reasons for such a difference between the first rulers and their descendants starting from Ahen Yol Mat (605–612). Probably, in the beginning of the 7th century the kings of Baakal changed their status and this is reflected in the written tradition.

An addition to the main text from the Temple of Inscriptions is the inscription on the sarcophagus lid from the K'inich Janaab Pakal's tomb. It lists the deaths of the Baakal kings mentioned on the eastern panel: Ahkul Mo' Nahb I (d. 524), K'an Joy Chitam I (d. 565), Ahkul Mo' Nahb II (d. 570), Kan Bahlam I (d. 583), Ix Yohl 'Ik Nal (d. 604), Ajen-Yohl-Mat (d. 612). The only exception is the «wrong» king Mat

Muwaan (612–615), his place is taken by a certain Janaab Pakal (d. 612) — the namesake of the ruler buried in the sarcophagus and, apparently, his elder relative. The title «Holy Lord of Baikal» is even attributed to him, although no other source reports the existence of such a ruler. Obviously, the text lists the ancestors of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, but Mat Muwaan belonged to the same generation and was probably his cousin. This unique text makes it possible to compare the sequence of rulers and moreover to see the gaps in their reigns, which are not visible in the classical royal list.

The eldest son of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, K'inich Kan Bahlam II, erects in Palenque a complex of temples which is now known as the Cross Group. Main panels housed in an enclosed shrines of the Temple of the Cross and the Temple the Sun, records another variant of the royal list, which may be called an expanded version. The texts mention not only the real rulers of Baikal, but also the mythological ancestors of the dynasty. The first lord in the text from the Temple of the Cross is listed as Akanal Ixim Mat Muwaan, who ruled from 2325 BC. For a long time, researchers considered this character to be a female deity, the ancestor of the Palenque triad of deities [7. P. 244–255]. However, later it became clear that the gods of the triad were not the children of Akanal Ixim Mat Muwaan, as well as there is no evidence of the female nature. Dmitri Beliaev notes that the texts «specifically emphasize that the birth/arrival of the Triad was the result of Mat Muwaan's actions — his 'sacrifice'» [13. P. 135]. On the date 2.0.0.0.0 2 Ajaw 3 Wayhaab (2325 BC), Akanal Ixim Mat Muwaan performed rituals to celebrate the end of the period and became a king 200 days afterward. The text from Temple XIX says that this was the first enthronement, and by his actions Mat Muwaan set an example to the future Baikal kings of what duties towards the gods should be performed [13. P. 136]. According to the text, Mat Muwaan ruled in the place of Matawiil, the mythological ancestral home of the Palenque rulers. Mat Muwaan was succeeded by another mythical king, Ukokan Kan, who was born in 1013 BC and ascended the throne in 987 BC, assuming the title of the Holy Lord of Baikal.

K'inich Kan Bahlam II enlarged the royal list comparing to his father's version, adding two mythical and three real rulers. Unlike the text of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, the inscriptions of K'inich Kan Bahlam II do not mention the kings who ruled from 583 before him.

The third royal list was created in the second half of the 8th century by the order of K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II (764–783) and is recorded on the Tablet of the 96 Glyphs. It lists the kings of the Late Classic period, beginning with K'inich Janaab Pakal I and ending with K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II himself. This text represents some of the most beautiful inscriptions discovered at Palenque. The list itself looks unusual: it begins with K'inich Janaab Pakal I, but contains no mention of K'inich Kan Bahlam II. Right after K'inich Janaab Pakal I his second son K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II (ruled from 702) is mentioned, the next one is K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb

III (ruled from 722) and finally K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II (ruled from 764) itself ends the list.

In 1993, an extremely important monument (known in historiography as the *K'an Tok Panel*) was discovered in Temple XVI, which was published and analyzed in detail by Mexican epigrapher G. Bernal Romero [14]. Unlike the previous ones, this monument was not a royal monument, but was created in the second half of the 8th century to preserve the memory of the accession of courtiers to a certain office, not yet fully understood. The text mentions the rulers of Palenque from the middle of the fifth to the second half of the eighth century.

In most variants of the royal list, the biographies of the predecessors of K'inich Janaab Pakal I are presented extremely sparingly and are reduced to the dates of their births and accessions.

### Royal family ties

Apparently, the first of the historical rulers of Palenque, taking into account the dates of his birth (397) and reign, was K'uk' Bahlam I. His existence is known from the list of the Temple of the Cross and his name is most likely present in a damaged fragment on a panel from Temple XVI. Unlike the mythical kings, K'uk' Bahlam I, instead of the title «Holy Lord of Baakal,» bore the title «Holy Lord of Toktahn,» as did his successor Ch'a... (435–487). It is noteworthy that in the text from the Temple of the Cross, of all the historical rulers, only the name of K'uk' Bahlam I is mentioned with an emblem glyph.

Due to the lack of data, it is extremely difficult to establish kinship ties between the rulers, the assumptions about their belonging to the same lineage are mainly based on the sequence of dates of accession. The text on the panel from the Temple of the Cross lists Ch'a... as the next ruler after the founder of the dynasty, K'uk' Bahlam I, but it remains unclear whether he was his direct descendant or not. In the texts from the Temple of the Cross and the Temple XVI, both kings bear the title «Holy Lord of Toktahn,» but an earlier travertine vase from the Dumbarton Oaks collection depicts Ch'a... with the title of «Holy Lord of Baakal» in the caption. Since an emblem glyph can only be passed from parent to heir (most often in the patrilineal way, but occasionally in the female line), at least one of the king's parents was from the Baakal dynasty. K'uk' Bahlam I is always mentioned only as the ruler of Toktahn. Most likely he was married to a member of the Baakal royal family and was the first to be related to the Baakal dynasty. In this case, Ch'a... received his title from his mother and further passed it on to his descendants.

Another ruler who is not mentioned in the list from the Temple of Inscriptions, but is presented in the texts of K'inich Kan Bahlam II is Butz'aj Sak Chik (487–501), during whose reign in 490 the capital of the kingdom was moved from Toktahn to Lakamha'. This event is mentioned in the text on a panel from the Temple XVII, discovered during excavations in 1993 [12. P. 116]. The text was created during the

reign of K'inich Kan Bahlam II and is retrospective in its nature. The protagonists are Butz'aj Sak Chik and Ahkul Mo' Nahb I, who bears the title *ch'ok* («young man»). Probably, the period of his elder brother's reign was marked by the struggle for the throne between people of Toktahn and Baakal and he, being a descendant of the Toktahn kings and a pretender to the Baakal throne, took an active part in it. In the text from the Temple of the Cross only the dates of birth and enthronement are associated with the name of Butz'aj Sak Chik. It is noteworthy that both texts do not indicate the title of this ruler, although the description of his accession does not differ from the others, the text from the Temple of the Cross uses the phrase «a white band was placed on his head» (*kal sak huun tu baah*). Butz'aj Sak Chik was succeeded by Ahkul Mo' Nahb I (501–524), also known by texts from the Temple of the Inscriptions and the Temple of the Cross.

The relations of Butz'aj Sak Chik and Ahkul Mo Nahb I with Ch'a-... and others are reconstructed only by the dates of their lives. Relying on the years of their birth (459 and 465 respectively), it is accepted to consider them brothers, sons of Ch'a-.... The only drawback of this version may be the age of Ch'a-... at the time of their birth: the king was already 37 years old when his elder son Butz'aj Sak Chik was born.

Basing on the main text of the Temple of the Inscriptions, the first legitimate king of Baakal was Ahkul Mo Nahb I, his image is also depicted among the ancestors of K'inich Janaab Pakal I on the sarcophagus. Perhaps he was the youngest son of Ch'a-... who was important to the creators of the texts because he was his heir from a mother of higher status.

Not much is known about the deeds of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I, apart from his presence at the founding of the capital at Lakamha'. The ruler offered gifts to the triad of Palenque patron gods to celebrate the completion of the twenty-year period in 514. As the first ruler mentioned in the Temple of the Inscriptions, he seems to establish a tradition for subsequent kings. The end of the period in 514 and the rituals associated with that date are described in texts from Palenque's neighboring states, including Piedras Negras, Tonina, and Yaxchilan. In David Stuart's opinion, this testifies to the close integration of Palenque into the regional political network of the Maya elite of the Western Lowlands [12. P. 116].

The next ruler K'an Joy Chitam I (529–565) «*was tied with a white band*» 5 years after the Ahkul Mo' Nahb I's death. In addition to the date of accession, the text from the Temple of the Inscriptions mentions a certain ritual in honor of the god Ch'aahk, which the king performed in 552. It is difficult to judge the kinship relations of the new king with his predecessor from the existent sources. Stuart suggested that they were hardly father and son because at the time of K'an Joy Chitam I's birth his predecessor was only 15 years old [12. P. 138]. Probably this opinion arose due to an error in calculating the dates of birth of the rulers. According to the text from the Temple of the Cross Ahkul Mo' Nahb I was born in 465, K'an Joy Chitam I in 490, 25 years later. However, the question about

their kinship ties is still relevant due to the five-year difference between the death of one ruler and the accession of another. In sources there is no mention of what happened during these years, probably the ruling dynasty was in a state of crisis and struggle for the throne, in which different political groups took part. It is not known to which of them K'an Joy Chitam I belonged, but subsequent written tradition emphasizes the legitimacy of his particular ruler. The text from the Temple of the Sun contains a very interesting passage about the initiation ritual of the young prince in 496, which was held in Toktahn. The ritual was the last event in Palenque's texts in connection with which this place name is mentioned. Previously, it was considered to be a ritual of appointing an heir, but after the work of A. Davletshin and S. Vepretskii its meaning became clearer [15]. The authors showed that several noble young men took part in the ritual together with the heir, hence K'an Joy Chitam I could accompany the heir to the throne, but not be him. Like his predecessor, K'an Joy Chitam I offered gifts to the patron gods of the royal dynasty, which is recorded in the text from the Temple of the Inscriptions.

Eighty-five days after the death of K'an Joy Chitam I, Ahkul Mo' Nahb II was crowned. In the text from the Temple of Inscriptions and twice in the text from the Temple of the Cross, he is referred to as the namesake and maternal grandson of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I (*yit k'aba'il u mam Ahkul Mo' Naahb*). The kinship term of *mam* emphasizes belonging to the dynasty by the female line, hence Ahkul Mo' Nahb II was not a direct male descendant of the line of Kuk Bahlam I [16]. It is possible to offer several explanations for this fact. K'an Joy Chitam I was married to the daughter of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I and Ahkul Mo' Nahb II was their son. In this favor is evidenced by the above-mentioned five-year gap between the death of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I and the accession of K'an Joy Chitam I. According to another version, K'an Joy Chitam I had no male heirs and after his death his nephew, his sister's son, succeeded to the throne. Either way, there is no doubt that there was a transition of lineage.

The reign of Ahkul Mo' Nahb II was short and ended in 570. The new king, Kan Bahlam I ascended the throne in 572. He was born a year later than his predecessor, from which we can assume that they were brothers [10. P. 158.]. This is evidenced by the fact that the message about their birth in the text of the Temple of the Cross is directly connected. However, unlike Ahkul Mo' Nahb II, his kinship with Ahkul Mo' Nahb I is nowhere mentioned. Kan Bahlam I is depicted on the wall of the sarcophagus of K'inich Janaab Pakal I among the ruler's ancestors represented as fruit trees sprouting from the ground. In the caption to the portrait of the ruler, the adjective *K'inich* "the hottest", appears for the first time in the Baakal royal names. In the royal titles the formant *K'inich* could be used as an honorific appellation to the name of the sun god K'inich Ajaw, or as a full-fledged adjective added in the initial position to the names-titles [13]. Thereafter, this adjective was used by all Palenque rulers beginning with K'inich Janaab Pakal I. In 573, in honor of the end of the calendar cycle, Kan Bahlam I "took royalty before the countenance



of his deities” ’*u-ch’amiy ’ajawlel yichnal ’u-k’uhil*. This event is noted in the text from the Temple of the Inscriptions and was undoubtedly of great importance to the ruling dynasty.

Kan Bahlam I died in 583, and Ix Yohl Ik’nal ascended the throne, becoming the first female Baakal ruler and one of the few women in the Maya area who ever held the royal title. Traditionally, royal power in the ancient Maya was passed patrilineal, but in rare cases, as in the history of Tikal or Naranjo, women found themselves on the throne. Since we do not have enough information about the relationship between Ix Yohl Ik’nal and her predecessor on the throne, we can only assume that Kan Bahlam I had no male heirs and his daughter took the throne. Ix Yohl Ik’nal could also have been a regent of a minor heir to the throne, but it is not possible to verify both these versions to date.

Like her predecessors listed in the royal list from the Temple of the Inscriptions, the queen performs rituals to celebrate the end of the twenty-year period and offers gifts to the gods of the Triad. In describing her reign, the hitherto sparse text from the Temple of the Inscriptions begins to reveal some facts about Palenque’s relationship with the outside world. On April 23, 599 Baakal was defeated by the forces of the Kanul kingdom, one of the strongest and most powerful Maya states, located far to the east of Palenque. This was the first major military defeat in the history of Baakal, mentioned in the sources and remained for many years in the historical memory of the elite. It is also the first written evidence of Palenque’s involvement in Maya geopolitical relations. Later, K’inich Janaab Pakal I used this event to emphasize the importance of his own victories over Kanul’s allies. The text on the hieroglyphic staircase of Building C in the Palace presents K’inich Janaab Pakal I’s victories as revenge for the defeat of Lakamha’.

The successor of Ix Yohl Ik’nal to the throne was king Ajen Yohl Mat (605–612), whose name is associated with a change in the status of the Palenque dynasty. In the text from the Temple of Inscriptions, the inauguration of all the predecessors of Ajen Yohl Mat is described by the expression *chumwaan ta-huun* “sat with a band”. The white band was one of the most important symbols of royal power among the ancient Maya, and the ritual of enthronement is often described as its tying on the head of the ruler, however, in combination with the verb “to sit” the band is almost never used. The most common phrase to describe the enthronement is *chumwaan ti-ajawlel* “sat on the rulership”, in Palenque’s texts it became in use starting from the inauguration of Ajen Yohl Mat. The change in the status of the dynasty may be related to the events surrounding the confrontation between Baakal and Kanul and the strengthening of Baakal’s influence in the region. The name Ajen Yohl Mat is found on Monument 1 from Santa Elena, a monument located 93 km from Palenque. This is the earliest non-retrospective mention of a Baakal king outside of Palenque. On the April 7, 611 Kanul inflicted another defeat on Lakamha’. Apparently, Ajen Yohl Mat was captured and his further fate is unknown [17. P. 96]. After that, there was a period of acute political crisis in Palenque.

In 612, the ruler Mat Muwaan (612–615) ascended the throne and was in power for only two years. Little is known about this ruler except that his name goes back to one of the characters in the mythological story of Palenque, and that his reign marked the end of the calendar cycle. In order to legitimize his own power, K'inich Janaab Pakal I described the reign of his predecessor in extremely gloomy tones and emphasizes that he did not fulfill his duties to the patron gods, which was the cause of a deep crisis. The text from the Temple of Inscriptions contains the passage: *sataay k'uhul Ixik, sataay 'ajaw... ma' y-ak'aw 'u-tut-al...* «The queen was lost, the king was lost.... He (Mat Muwaan) did not offer sacrifice” [12. P. 146]. Obviously, such a dire situation was directly related to the defeat at the hands of the Kanul state, which plunged Palenque into a political and dynastic crisis. The short reign of Mat Muwaan ended with another change of patrilineage and the appearance of K'inich Janaab Pakal I and his descendants on the Palenque's political scene.

It is likely that the political crisis triggered a power struggle among various elite groups. One of them bet on the minor son of Ix Sak K'uk', a woman from the Baakal dynasty. It is Ix Sak K'uk' and not K'inich Janaab Pakal I's father K'an Hix Mo' who is most often mentioned in the ruler's inscriptions. On the Oval Palette from the Palace, which was placed directly above the royal throne, K'inich Janaab Pakal I is depicted accepting a military headdress, one of the insignia of power, from his mother's hands. There is no mention of the ruler's father in this case, although monuments with a similar iconography found at Palenque depict both parents. Ix Sak K'uk' is also mentioned in connection with the ending of another twenty-year cycle in 633. K'inich Janaab Pakal I having been in power for 18 years already by that time. This unusual evidence may reflect the complex political hierarchy that developed at the court at that time within which, mother and son ruled together [12. P. 150]. Both parents, along with the predecessors of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, are depicted on his sarcophagus as sprouting trees. Their portraits adorn the north and south flanges of the sarcophagus carrying captures with name and title. A rich headdress, a costume with pectoral necklace, and an unknown emblem glyph indicate the high status of K'an Hix Mo'. He was most likely a member of the highest elite of a site within the political orbit of Palenque.

The incredibly long reign of K'inich Janaab Pakal I ended in 683 and his eldest son K'inich Kan Bahlam II became the new king of Baakal. Thanks to the preserved texts, there is no doubt about the family ties between K'inich Janaab Pakal I and his successors. K'inich Kan Bahlam II and K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II, who succeeded him in 702, are named in several texts (monuments from the Cross Group, Palace Panel) as sons of K'inich Janaab Pakal I and his wife Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw. The question remains open, however, as to the reasons for the transfer of power from brother to brother. The most obvious assumption may be the absence of male heirs of K'inich Kan Bahlam II. Perhaps his younger brother K'inich K'an Joy Chitam

II faced the same problem, and as a result their nephew took up the throne. It is worth recalling that it was in Palenque at the end of the 6th century that a woman, Ix Yohl Ik' Nal, took the throne, perhaps precisely because of the absence of a male heir. However, in the case of the sons of K'inich Janaab Pakal I, such a practice was for some reason inapplicable.

After the death of K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II, the throne was occupied by K'inich Ahkul Mo Nahb III. It is noteworthy that all known monuments created during his reign are in one way or another devoted to proving the legitimacy of his power. The text from the stone bench from Temple XIX, where the ruler connects his accession with the mythological time and the accession of the gods, speaks most eloquently about it. Most likely, as in the case of his grandfather K'inich Ahkul Mo Nahb III came to power after a deep dynastic crisis and had to rely on the support of a certain group of courtiers.

It is interesting that very little is known about the father of K'inich Ahkul Mo Nahb III. Tiwol Ch'an Mat died in 680, i.e. during the life of K'inich Janaab Pakal I. His image is present on the Slaves Tablet, where he, together with the mother of K'inich Ahkul Mo Nahb III, hands over to his son the insignia of power in a typical for Palenque scene. But the most interesting for the reconstruction of family ties and the system of succession to the throne, formed after the death of K'inich Janaab Pakal I is a partially preserved text from Temple XVIII. The temple was consecrated many years after his death and contains the tomb of Tiwol Ch'an Mat [12. P. 221]. The fragmented relief once depicted several people seated around a central figure on a throne, which undoubtedly represented K'inich Janaab Pakal I. Despite very poor preservation, the captions to the three figures, which correspond to the preaccession names of the ruler's sons, have survived [12. P. 163]. The text also contains an expression of direct speech: *tihmaj awohl atz'akbujiy*, "your heart is satisfied that you put them in succession". According to David Stuart this text is important evidence of the functioning of the Maya political structure. It also shows how complicated the issue of succession remained for K'inich Janaab Pakal I even 60 years after he came to power [12. P. 163]. This text records the event retrospectively and was created by order of K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III within the program of legitimization of power, therefore it should be treated with a great deal of criticism. However, if we accept the fact of such assignment of the order of rulers as a truth, we are actually dealing with an unusual case in the political practice of the ancient Maya. And the coming to power of the nephew of K'inich Janaab Pakal I is not a consequence of the lack of heirs of his predecessors.

According to the latest royal list preserved on the Tablet of the *96 Glyphs*, in 764 the throne was taken by K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III's son K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II, the full namesake of the founder of the dynasty. The text indicates the celebration of his first twenty years of rule and the creation of the Tablet in 783. In fact, on this

monument the written tradition in Palenque ends, along with information about the possible descendants of K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II.

The last royal list indicates a direct succession to the throne by K'inich K'uk' Bahlam II after his father. However, the exact date of K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III's death is unknown, and from the texts of Temple XXI and the K'an Tok panel the name of another ruler Upakal K'inich Janaab Pakal, is known from the text from Temple XXI he is called *bah chok'*, "chief heir". Most likely he was a brother or cousin of K'inich Ahkul Mo' Nahb III. In this case we are again dealing with the successive rule of representatives of one generation followed by the accession of the king's nephew. It is extremely difficult to judge whether this practice became a tradition at the behest of K'inich Janaab Pakal I or was a forced measure under the circumstances because of the lack of data.

### Conclusion

The royal lists of Palenque have a number of distinctive features not typical for this kind of sources found in other ancient Maya sites. First there are no separate texts with a full dynastic count. In the Classical Maya inscriptions dynastic count existed in the form of special formula "such-and-such heir of the founder of the dynasty". Nevertheless, it is possible to speak about the existence of some generational count of rulers. Besides, the presence of certain features of the format, data and descriptions of the kings' deeds indicates that the lists of names existed and the authors used them as a basis for compiling the surviving monumental texts.

Apparently, the earliest version of the list presented in the text from the Temple of Inscriptions started with the reign of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I (501–524) due to the fact that he was the first to rule only in Palenque-Lakamha'. Later the rulers of the Toktahn were added. It is interesting that the first ruler of the dynasty is not considered to be the first ruler of Toktahn itself, but a certain K'uk' Bahlam I (431–435). None of the subsequent rulers used this name until the second half of the 8th century. This name is not peculiar to the rather standard onomastic pattern of the Palenque dynasty. Even Muwaan Mat (612–615) adopted the coronation name of the first mythological king rather than K'uk' Bahlam, perhaps because Muwaan Mat was the first in terms of tradition to receive the rights to the throne.

Despite the existence of a single dynastic tradition, there are several breaks in the dynasty itself. Most researchers note the transition to a new branch with the accession of Ix Yohl Ik'nal (583–604). However, the problem with the enthronement of K'an Joy Chitam I (529–565) and the re-enactment of rituals with the Palenque gods, leave doubt about direct succession. It is logical to assume that he was the son-in-law of Ahkul Mo' Nahb I.

Thus, three dynastic genealogical lines can be distinguished:

1. K'uk' Bahlam — Ahkul Mo' Nahb I
2. K'an Joy Chitam I — K'an Bahlam I, although it could just as easily have been interrupted.
3. Ix Sak K'uk' and her descendants since 615

The genealogical ties of Ix Yohl Ik'nal with her descendants are almost impossible to ascertain.

There are also several important points in the history of Palenque's dynasty that demonstrate the peculiarities of the ancient Maya political system.

First of all, despite the general tendency towards patrilineality, we see the possibility of a woman receiving a royal title and practicing the corresponding rituals. This is clearly shown by the example of the queen Ix Yohl Ik'nal. The cases of Ch'a-... and K'inich Janaab Pakal I also show the possibility of passing the title through the female line. Another important feature of the Palenque succession system was its notable flexibility. At the king's command or due to circumstances, the throne could pass not to the ruler's son or daughter, but to his brother or nephew, like in case of the descendants of K'inich Janaab Pakal I.

### References

1. Berlin H. The inscription of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque. *American Antiquity* 1965;(30):330–342.
2. Proskouriakoff T. Historical Implications of a Pattern of Dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala. *American Antiquity* 1960;25(4):454–475; Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, Part 1. *Estudios de Cultura Maya* 1963;(3):149–167; Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, Part 2. *Estudios de Cultura Maya* 1964;(4):177–201.
3. Ruz A. Exploraciones Arqueológicas en Palenque. *Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia*. 1956;(6):79–110.
4. Kubler G. Studies in Classic Maya Iconography. Vol. XVIII *Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*. New Haven: 1969, p.20-22.
5. Berlin H. The Tablet of the 96 Glyphs at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. *Archaeological Studies in Middle America*. New Orleans: Tulane University, Middle American Research Institute: 1970;(26):135–149.
6. Schele L., Mathews P. Lords of Palenque — The Glyphic Evidence. *The Proceedings of the First Palenque Round Table: December 14–22, 1973*. By ed. M.G. Robertson. Pebble Beach, Calif.: The Robert Louis Stevenson School; 1974.
7. Schele L., Freidel D. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.; 1990.
8. Davletshin A. *Glyph for Stingray Spine*. 2003 Mesoweb: <https://www.mesoweb.com/features/davletshin/Spine.pdf>
9. Schele L., Mathews P. *The Proceedings of the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshop: March 13–14, 1993, University of Texas at Austin*, transcribed and edited by Phil Wanyerka; 1993.
10. Martin S., Grube N., *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. London: Thames and Hudson; 2000.
11. Stuart. D. *The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque: A Commentary*. San Francisco: Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute; 2005.

12. Stuart. D. Stuart. G. *Palenque. Eternal city of the Maya*. London: Thames and Hudson; 2008.
13. Belyaev DD, Pakin AV. Pravitel I ego poddannye v gosudarstvakh drevnikh maya [Ruler and his subjects in the ancient Maya states] *Pravitel i ego poddannye: sociokulturnaya norma I ogranicheniya edinolichnoi vlasti*. Moscow; 2009, p. 123–152 (In Russ.).
14. Bernal Romero G. *El tablero de K'an Tok. Una inscripci3n glifika maya del grupo XVI de Palenque, Chiapas*. Mexico: UNAM; 2009.
15. Davletshin A., Vepretskii S. Ritual Seclusion of Princes in Classic Maya Texts. *Stratum plus. Archaeology and Cultural Anthropology*. 2023;(6):53–73 (In Russ.).
16. Beliaev D., Galeev Ph., Vepretskii S. On the Mother's Side: Royal Women and Maternal Ancestors in Early Classic Peten. *Paper presented at the 23rd European Maya Conference, Valencia 05–10 November, 2018*
17. Safronov A.V. *Gosudarstva maya zapadnogo regiona v klassicheskiy period* [Maya states of the Western region in the classical period]. Diss. for the degree of PhD in History. Moscow; 2006. (In Russ.).

### Библиографический список

1. Berlin H. The inscription of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque // *American Antiquity*. 1965. Vol. 30. P. 330–342.
2. Proskouriakoff T. Historical Implications of a Pattern of Dates at Piedras Negras, Guatemala // *American Antiquity*. 1960. Vol. 25. (4). P.454-475; Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, Part 1 // *Estudios de Cultura Maya*. 1963. Vol. 3. P.149-167; Historical Data in the Inscriptions of Yaxchilan, Part 2 // *Estudios de Cultura Maya*. 1964. Vol. 4. P. 177–201.
3. Ruz A. Exploraciones Arqueol3gicas en Palenque: 1952 // *Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropolog3a e Historia*. 1956. Vol. 6. P. 79–110.
4. Kubler G. Studies in Classic Maya Iconography // *Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*. New Haven : 1969. Vol. XVIII. P.20-22.
5. Berlin H. The Tablet of the 96 Glyphs at Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico // *Archaeological Studies in Middle America*. New Orleans : Tulane University, Middle American Research Institute, 1970. Pub. 26. P.135-149.
6. Schele L., Mathews P. Lords of Palenque — The Glyphic Evidence // *The Proceedings of the First Palenque Round Table: December 14–22, 1973*, The, /M. G. Robertson ed. Pebble Beach, Calif. : Robert Louis Stevenson School, 1974.
7. Schele L., Freidel D. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York : William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990.
8. A. Davletshin. Glyph for Stingray Spine, 2003. Mesoweb: <https://www.mesoweb.com/features/davletshin/Spine.pdf>
9. Schele L., Mathews P. *The Proceedings of the Maya Hieroglyphic Workshop: March 13–14, 1993*, University of Texas at Austin/ transcribed and edited by Phil Wanyerka. 1993.
10. Martin S., Grube N. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. London : Thames and Hudson, 2000.
11. Stuart. D. *The Inscriptions from Temple XIX at Palenque: A Commentary*. San Francisco : Pre-Columbian Art Research Institute, 2005.
12. Stuart. D., Stuart. G. *Palenque. Eternal city of the Maya*. London : Thames and Hudson, 2008.
13. Беляев Д.Д. Пакин А.В. Правитель и его подданные в государствах древних майя // Правитель и его подданные: социокультурная норма и ограничения единоличной власти. М., 2009. С. 123–152.
14. Bernal Romero G. *El tablero de K'an Tok. Una inscripci3n glifika maya del grupo XVI de Palenque, Chiapas*. Mexico : UNAM, 2009.

15. Давлетшин А.И., Вепрецкий С.В. Ритуал заточения царевичей у древних майя // *Stratum plus* Археология и культурная антропология. 2023. № 6. С. 53–73.
16. Беляев Д.Д., Галеев Ф.С., Вепрецкий С.В. On the Mother's Side: Royal Women and Maternal Ancestors in Early Classic Peten// Доклад на XXIII Европейской конференции майянистов, Валенсия 5–10 ноября, 2018.
17. Сафронов А.В. Государства майя Западного региона в классический период. Дисс. на соиск.уч.степени к.и.н. М., 2006.

**Information about the author:**

*Sekacheva Daria Sergeevna* — junior researcher at Knorozov Center for Mesoamerican Studies, Russian State University for the Humanities, *Miuskaya square, building 6, block 3, Moscow, 125047, Russian Federation*, e-mail: [daria.baida@gmail.com](mailto:daria.baida@gmail.com) +79031104682. ORCID: 0000-0002-5004-5878. SPIN-code: 7738-5226.

**Информация об авторе:**

*Секачева Дарья Сергеевна* — младший научный сотрудник Мезоамериканского центра им. Ю.В. Кнорозова, Российский государственный гуманитарный университет, 125047, Российская Федерация, Москва, Миусская площадь, д. 6, корп. 3, e-mail: [daria.baida@gmail.com](mailto:daria.baida@gmail.com) +79031104682. ORCID: 0000-0002-5004-5878. SPIN-код: 7738-5226.