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Dynastic history of Saktz'i': new evidences of the Late Classic Ancient Maya kingdom

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Abstract. In studies of the dynastic history of the ancient Maya of the Classic period, the kingdom of Saktz'i' plays a special role. For a long time, it could not be localized archaeologically, but its history has been well studied thanks to numerous external references and inscriptions on unprovenanced monuments. The main aspects of the kingdom's history were identified in the works of the early 2000s, however, there were a number of little-known ones that had not previously come to the attention of researchers. In the study the author, using the method of content analysis of the epigraphic monuments of the Upper Usumacinta region, conducts a complete reconstruction of the dynastic list of the Saktz'i, summarizing the entire range of available data, examines new facts from the history of the kingdom and puts forward his own hypotheses on the most controversial issues of this topic. The kingdom of Saktz'i' is associated with the archaeological site of Lacanja Tzeltal, and the author has discovered new data that allow us to date the beginning of its dynastic history to the end of the Early Classic period (c. 500 CE). An inscription on Panel 12 from Piedras Negras represents a captive, Ahku'l Mo', with the title *Saktz'i' 'ajaw*, captured by the Yokib' king Yaat Ahk II around 514 CE. A further retrospective inscription on the Caracas panel reports on the rituals of king K'ab' Chante' I in 564 CE, and the captivity of another king with the same name is also mentioned in Piedras Negras Stela 26 in 652 CE. The next piece of information about Saktz'i' dates to 693, when Kab' Chante' III defeated the Pepe'tun polity, then captured the king of neighboring Ak'e' (Plan de Ayutla) and assumed his title, which began a war with the powerful kingdom of Popo'. Kab' Chante' III got a final victory in 719 and also subordinated the kingdom of Xukalnaah (Bonampak), where he installed his vassals on the throne. After the death of Kab' Chante' III in 740, he was succeeded by the little-known (U)cha'n-Bolon, who also died in half a year in 741. Then, in 754, Chan Ek' ascended the throne, likely continuing his foreign policy expansion. During his reign, which lasted until 775, lands in the Upper Usumacinta Valley were invaded and controlled the area of Yaxniil (El Cayo) with Aj Sak Maax appointed as governor. However, he was defeated in a war with Yaxchilan in 766. At the end of the 8th century, only two kings are known. In 787, a coalition of Yaxchilan and Bonampak defeated the troops of Yehte' K'inich, and then between 790 and 800,

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his successor Jatz' Tokal Ek' Hix, was lose the war against the Popo' king, and his capital was devastated. Nevertheless, the kingdom of Saktz'i' continued to exist into the 9th century, the last mention of it dates to 864–865 and it associated with last known king K'ab' Chante' IV. After this, references to Saktz'i' disappear from hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Keywords: Mesoamerica, Late Classic period, Lacandon selva, Lacanha Tzeltal, Bonampak area, epigraphy

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Династическая история Сакц'и: новые данные о царстве древних майя позднего классического периода

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Аннотация. В исследованиях династической истории древних майя классического периода особое место занимает царство Сакц'и, которое долгое время не могли локализовать археологически, но его история была хорошо изучена благодаря множеству внешних упоминаний и надписям на монументах неизвестного происхождения. Основные вехи истории царства были определены в работах начала 2000-х гг., тем не менее остались ряд малоизученных, которые ранее не попадали в поле зрения исследователей. В исследовании с помощью контент-анализа эпиграфических памятников Верхней Усумасинты проведена полная реконструкция династического списка Сакц'и. Автор, суммируя весь комплекс имеющихся данных, рассмотрел новые факты из истории царства и выдвинул собственные гипотезы по наиболее дискуссионным вопросам данной темы. Царство Сакц'и ассоциируется с городищем Лаканха-Цельталь, и автор обнаружил новые данные, которые позволяют отнести начало династической истории к концу раннего классического периода (около 500 г.). Надпись на Панели 12 из Пьедрас Неграс представляет пленника Акуль-Мо с титулом *Saktz'i' 'ajaw*, плененного царем Йокиба около 514 г. Далее ретроспективная надпись на Каракасской панели сообщает о ритуалах царя К'аб-Чанте I в 564 г., также в 652 г. в Пьедрас-Неграс упоминается пленение другого царя с таким же именем. Следующий массив информации о Сакц'и датируется 693 г. когда царь К'аб-Чанте III разбил политио Пепетун, а затем пленил царя соседнего Ак'е (План-де-Айутла) и принял его титул, за который началась война с могущественным царством Попо'. Окончательную победу К'аб-Чанте III одержал в 719 г., и также подчинил царство Шукальнах (Бонампак), где возводил на трон своих вассалов. После смерти Каб-Чанте III в 740 г. ему наследовал малоизвестный

(У)чан-Болон, также умерший в 741 г., а затем в 754 г. на трон взошел Чан-Эк, вероятно продолживший внешнеполитическую экспансию. В период его правления до 775 г. были захвачены земли в долине Верхней Усумасинты, в частности установлен контроль над областью Йашниль (Эль-Кайо), в которых наместником был поставлен Ах-Сак-Маш, однако он потерпел поражение в войне с Йашчиланом в 766 г. В конце VIII в. известны только два царя, в 787 г. коалиция Йашчилана и Бонампака нанесла поражение войскам Йехте-К'инича, а между 790–800 гг. его преемник Хац'-Токаль-Эк'-Хиш был разгромлен царем Попо, а его столица захвачена. Тем не менее царство Сакц'и продолжило существовать и в IX в., последнее упоминание о нем датируется 864–865 гг. с царем К'аб-Чанте IV. После упоминание о царстве исчезают из иероглифических надписей.

Ключевые слова: Мезоамерика, Позднеклассический период, Лакандонская сельва, Лаканха-Цельталь, область Бонампака, эпиграфика

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Introduction

The written tradition of the ancient Maya, reflecting the dynastic history of the Classic period (250–900 CE), contains references to a large number of kingdoms and polities whose locations are unknown or problematic. Typically, such references are isolated, lacking details about their histories, and the kingdoms themselves played no significant role in the Maya political system. However, one kingdom stands out among these references: the polity of Saktz'i', which played a leading role in the military and political history of the Usumacinta Basin in the between 600–800 CE and claimed regional dominance. Paradoxically, the main episodes of Saktz'i' dynastic history were reconstructed from external references in the early 2000s, with much of the information contained in monuments of unknown origin, tentatively attributed to the “Bonampak region”. Discoveries over the past decade have provided significant new data on the history of the polity, allowing for a more detailed understanding of the dynastic history of Saktz'i' and its place in the political relations of the Usumacinta region.

The Emblem Glyph, associated with an unknown polity, was first identified in 1994 by Linda Schele and Nikolai Grube in inscriptions on Stela 26 from Piedras Negras, as well as on the Denver and Brussels panels. These inscriptions indicated the participation of a king with unknown title in the military and political events of the Usumacinta Valley in the mid-7th century [1. P. 111, 116]. The presence

of both logographic and syllabic variants of the Emblem Glyph made it possible to determine its reading: **SAK-tz'i'-i'-²AJAW** / **SAK-TZ'I'**, *Saktz'i' ²ajaw* — “king of Saktz'i'” [3. P. 179–181] (Fig. 1), while the toponym *Saktz'i'* — “White dog” — contained in the title is quite atypical for the Maya, since it does not contain the usual locatives or toponymic suffixes, so its exact meaning is not entirely clear.

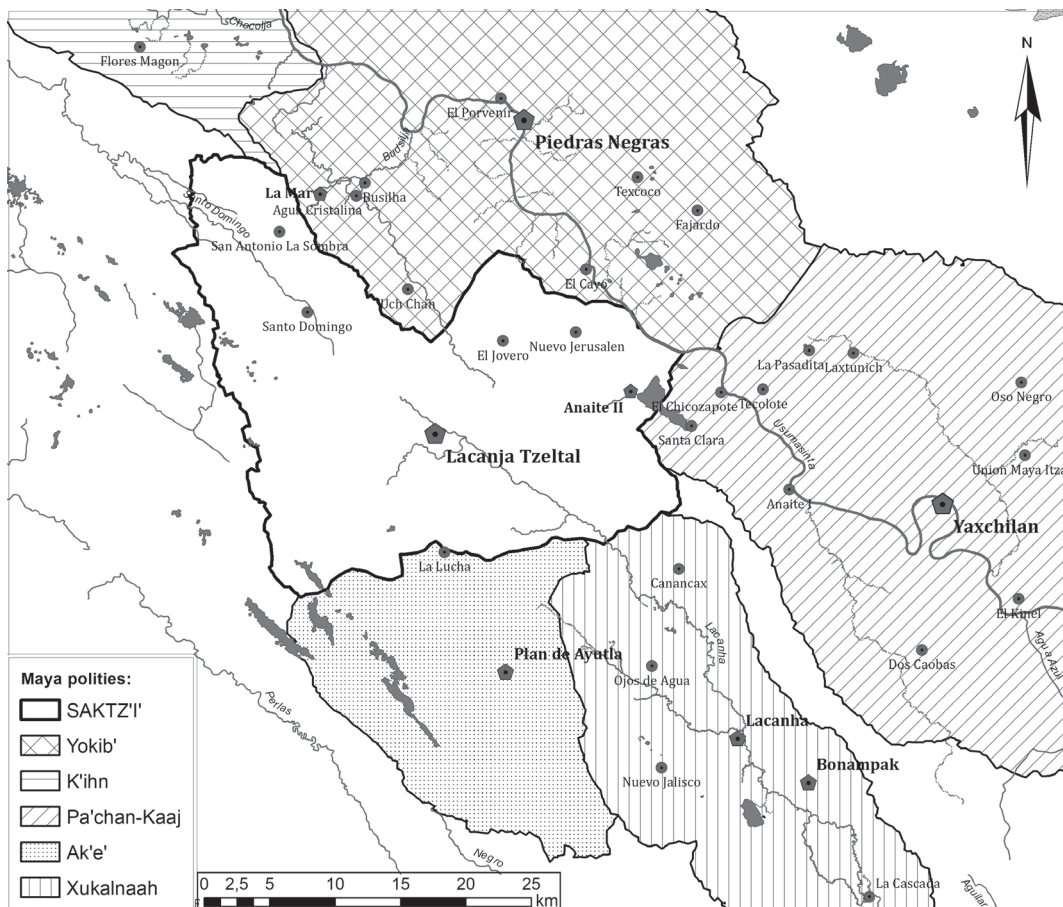


Figure 1. Saktz'i' and Maya polities of the Upper Usumasinta region in the middle of the 8th century
Source: map created by A. Safronov.

Gradually, other references to this title were discovered, it appears in inscriptions from major archaeological sites in the Usumacinta Basin — Bonampak, Yaxchilan, Piedras Negras, El Cayo, Tonina, and others — attesting to the proximity of the Saktz'i' kingdom to all of these centers. However, a significant number of references were found on unprovenance monuments, such as the Caracas Panel, the Stendahl Panel, the continuing text on the Denver and Brussels Panels, and several others. Thus, the geography of Saktz'i' references is quite broad, encompassing the Upper Usumacinta Valley, Lacandon area and eastern part of Chiapas Highlands.

In the beginning of 2000s, a number of researchers attempted to determine the borders of the Saktz'i' kingdom and the location of its political center, which was then unknown. The most important comprehensive study, positioned as a GIS approach, was conducted by Armando Anaya [2], in which the “gravity model” method was applied, that is, the calculation of a mathematical model, to determine the location of the Saktz'i' polity and the configuration of its borders. His joint work with Mark Zender and Stanley Gunther demonstrated the possibility of a detailed application of the GIS approach to epigraphic data, which opened a new direction in the study of the historical geography of the ancient Maya [3]. Moreover, the localization of the kingdom turned out to be quite accurate; it was in the area they identified in the Upper Lacanha Valley that the archaeological site Lacanja Tzeltal was subsequently discovered, which was identified as the political center of Saktz'i' [4].

Following this, in 2004, Russian researchers Dmitri Beliaev and Alexander Safronov proposed a different approach to defining the boundaries of Saktz'i', based on an in-depth content analysis of epigraphic monuments in the Upper Usumacinta region and the determination of boundaries based on mutual references to events in various kingdoms bordering this polity. First of all, they conducted a more detailed study of the dynastic history actions, clarifying their dating [5. P. 134–135]. As a result, the configuration of the territorial-political organization of the Lacanha Valley proposed by Beliaev and Safronov differs from the reconstruction of Anaya, Guenter and Zender and assumes a wider territorial scope, primarily in the Santo Domingo Valley, corresponding to the political power of the kingdom at the turn of the 7th–8th centuries.

After this, the Hungarian researcher Peter Biro published a work devoted to the epigraphic sources on the history of Saktz'i', in which he presented the reading, translation and detailed historical analysis of the most significant monuments associated with this polity, primarily monuments of unknown origin [6]. Among the extremely important observations of Biro, one can note the assumption about the possible dating of the key text on the Denver and Brussels panels to the 690s, and not to the 640s, as previously assumed [6. P. 2–8]. Biro also presented his view on the political geography of the Lacanha Valley, following the model of Armando Anaya, and identified Saktz'i' with the Plan de Ayutla site, where archaeological research was being conducted at the time [7. P. 73–74], although Beliaev and Safronov had previously pointed out its remoteness from the main events in the Usumacinta Valley and identified it with another little-known polity of Ak'e' [5. P. 134]. In 2021, the author of the current work published a general dynastic list of the kingdoms of Ak'e', Xukanaah and Saktz'i', located nearby in the Lacanha Valley, but it contains a number of inaccuracies, as well as incomplete data, which have been revised in recent years [8].

Only in 2018, thanks to the fieldwork research project led by Charles Golden and Andrew Scherer, the archaeological site of Lacanja Tzeltal was discovered

in the Upper Lacanha Valley, with a large architectural core where they found a new well-preserved monument — Panel 1, dedicated to Saktz'i' kings K'ab' Chante' III and Chan Ek' [4], as well as numerous stelae damaged by looters with the remains of reliefs, the study of which was produced by Mallory Matsumoto [9]. Thus removing all doubts about the location of the main center of Saktz'i' kingdom. However, there is still no evidence of a connection between the toponym of the Emblem Glyph and this archaeological site. Moreover, Saktz'i' looks like a very atypical toponym for the Classic Maya, it lacks the usual locatives or toponymic suffixes, rather it could have been some kind of early title for the royal dynasty. We will attempt to summarize all available data on the history of Saktz'i', taking into account new finds, and present an up-to-date dynastic list of the kingdom, as well as trace the main stages of its development.

Early data on Saktz'i' kings

The initial period of the Saktz'i' history is currently poorly known, and conclusions can only be drawn based on episodic written evidences. However, a general idea of that polity origin can be provided by archaeological research at the main political center of Lacanja Tzeltal.

It was long believed that the earliest mention of the Saktz'i' king is a retrospective inscription on unprovenance monument known as the Caracas Panel (New York Panel), erected in the mid-8th century [10. P. 23]. However, the opening section of the text contains a reference to the early history of Saktz'i', reporting events in 564. The first passage is heavily damaged, making the exact reading difficult to determine: *Wak 'Ehb' ho' Muwaahn huli'? 'aj-...? ti-patal? ... aw yax k'uk' b'olon pih K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' 'ajaw* — “(On the day of) 6 Ehb 5th (of) Muwaahn, he arrived? a man from ...? with a tribute? ... of green (feathers) of quetzal in abundance (measures of 400) (for) K'ab' Chante', king of Saktz'i'” (Caracas pan., A1–B5). The first date 6 Ehb 5 Muwaahn corresponds to 2 January 564, when the king K'ab' Chante' I, who received an offering in the form of many measures of quetzal feathers, was identified, as the earliest king of Saktz'i', ruling in middle 6th century.

The following passage also mentions the king's ritual activity: *lajcha' Kab'an ho' Chaksiho'm 'ochi' k'ahk' tu wayib'il 'Ahku'l Muuch 'Ahku'l Xukab'* — “(on the day of) 12 Kab'an, 5th (of) Chaksihom, fire entered the dwelling of Ahku'l Muuch Ahku'l Xukab'” (Caracas pan., A7–B9). Here we read that on November 2, 564, the temple of the deities Ahku'l Muuch and Ahku'l Xukab' was consecrated, and then three months later: *lajcha' 'Ik' laju'n Muwaahn patwaan 'aj-...n 'u-... 'Ahku'l Muuch* — “... (on the day) 12 Ik', 10th (of) Muwaahn was built by Aj... his-... ...? Ahku'l Muuch” (Caracas pan., A11–C2). So, it means on January 6, 656, the construction of the temple of Ahku'l Muuch was completed. The text does not contain any toponym that would indicate the place of construction, but

in all likelihood, we are talking about the initial stage of construction of one of the key temple structures in Lacanja Tzeltal back in the mid-6th century, which was subsequently rebuilt in the early 8th century.

However, a detailed analysis of one of the Early Classic monuments from the Upper Usumacinta Valley allows us to date the beginning of the dynastic tradition of Saktz'i' to the beginning of the 6th century. Piedras Negras Panel 12 is the earliest royal monument of Yokib' dynasty and one of the first hieroglyphic texts in the Upper Usumacinta region, dedicated to Yokib' king Yaat Ahk II, was erected in 518 in honor of the consecration of one of the temples in Piedras Negras. The beginning of the text reports on the erection of the monument in honor of the end of the Katun anniversary in 517. Further in the text Yaat Ahk II is called himself a vassal of the western *kalo'mte'* — the ruler of Teotihuacan Tajo'm Uk'ab' Tuun, from whom he received the regalia of power in 510 [11. P. 243]. At the same time, the scene on Panel 12 depicts the triumph of Yokib' king — four kneeling captives he had captured earlier. Although the exact date of this war is unknown, there is reason to believe that it is connected with the non-jubilee Initial Long Count date in the text, which refers to 514 BC. The titles of the two central captives were determined quite easily — the king of Pa'chan (Yaxchilan) Knot-eye Jaguar I [12. P. 120–121], and the king of Wak'ab'e' (Santa Elena Balankan) Witz' K'in Chaahk [13. P. 428]. The origin of the captive on the right is somewhat problematic to determine, but he lacks a royal title, which is probably why he is depicted separately from the kings on the left.

But the greatest debate surrounds the identity of the captive on the left; his name is legible enough — Ahku'l Mo', but the royal title following his name is heavily damaged. Previously, we assumed that the Emblem Glyph of Ak'e' was recorded with it [5. P. 120]. Then David Stuart put forward the idea that the text records the name and title of the Lakamtuun king Min' Chan Ahk, also mentioned on Lintel 35 from Yaxchilan [14]. However, despite the external similarity of the Emblem Glyph of the captive on Panel 12 with the title *Lakamtuun 'ajaw*, it is quite difficult to assume that the not dominant polity associated with the archaeological sites of Benemerito de las Americas and El Palma in the Lacantun Valley participated in the war against Yokib' at the beginning of the 6th century. Thanks to a series of digital photographs of Panel 12, produced by the Atlas Epigrafico de Peten project in 2015, we can obtain the following reading of the inscription on the left captive (Fig. 2): (Q1) 'u-B'AAH (R1) 'a-ku (Q2) MO' (R2) SAK-tz'i-'AJAW, 'u b'aah' 'Ahku'l Mo' Saktz'i' 'ajaw — “This is his image of Ahku'l Mo', king of Saktz'i'” (PNG:Pan.12, Q1-R2). Apparently, it contains the Saktz'i' Emblem Glyph, written in a rare variant using the syllabic sign *tz'i* (Fig. 3, a). This combination appears only twice: on Panel 1 from El Cayo in 772 (Fig. 3, b): SAK-tz'i-'AJAW (CAY:Pan.1, G3, M15), and on Stela 26 from Piedras Negras in 628 (Fig. 3, c): SAK-tz'i-'i 'AJAW. In all other examples from inscriptions at Lacanja Tzeltal, Bonampak, Yaxchilan, Tonina, and on monuments of unknown origin,

the Emblem Glyph is written using the logogram **TZ'I'** — “dog”, depicting the animal head (Fig. 3, d). Most likely, the syllabic variant **tz'i-(?i)** is a special form used exclusively in the Yokib' inscriptions, and therefore the example we found on Panel 12 belongs to this category.

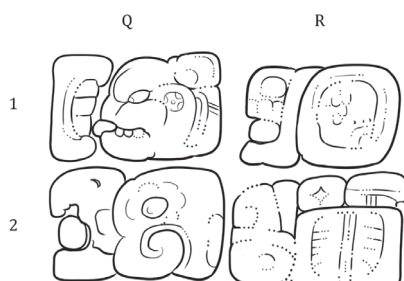


Figure 2. Piedras Negras, Panel 12, inscription fragment Q1-R2
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

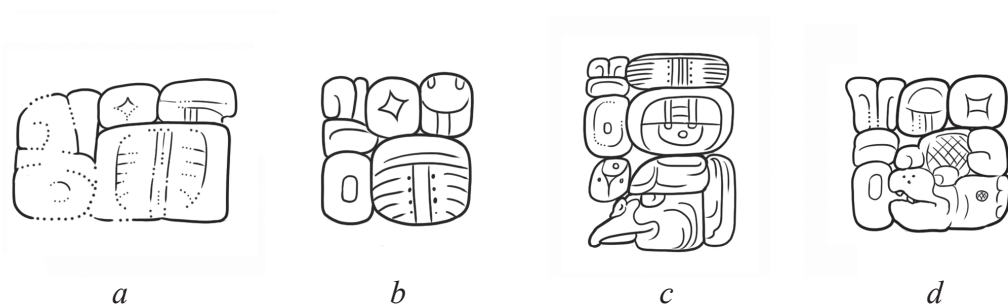


Figure 3. Examples of Saktz'i' Emblem Glyph: *a* — PNG:Pan.12, R2; *b* — CAY:Pan.1, G3; *c* — PNG:St.26, C2-3; *d* — Caracas pan., D5
Source: all drawing by A. Safronov.

Therefore, we can assume with some caution, that Panel 12 from Piedras Negras depicts one of the earliest kings of Saktz'i' Ahku'l Mo' as a prisoner captured around 514. His participation in the war against Yaat Ahk II, along with the kings of Pa'chan and Wak'ab'e', seems entirely logical — these three polities directly bordered the Yokib' territory to the south, east, and north. Consequently, the emergence of the royal dynasty in Saktz'i' should be dated late 5th century. Firstly, this is consistent with archaeological data, namely the finds of traces of Early Classic architecture on the Lacanja Tzeltal Acropolis [4. P. 11]. Secondly, such a late emergence of royal power in Saktz'i' was probably one of the reasons for the complete absence of *k'uhul* (“sacred”) prefix in the titles of local kings, which was traditionally bestowed upon the most ancient and authoritative

dynasties [11. P. 71–72]. A similar example is the neighboring Xukalnaah kingdom, with its centers at Lacanha and Bonampak, whose kings also begin to be mentioned from the early 6th century. However, the *k'uhul* prefix was added to their title only at the end of the 8th century. At the same time, the kings of the small polity of Ak'e', mentioned in Yaxchilan inscriptions since approximately the early 5th century, also located in the Lacanha Valley and presumably associated with the archaeological site Plan de Ayutla, used the *k'uhul* title already about 600 CE [8. 154, 157–159].

The rise of Saktz'i' in the 7th century

However, there follows a gap in the dynastic history of Saktz'i', which is due to the lack of informative sources on the political history of Lacandon area in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. The next mention of Saktz'i' king dates only to 625, and it is again associated with the military and political activities of Yokib' king. Stela 26 from Piedras Negras depicts K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk I with two captives, the one on the left is named *K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' ajaw* — “K'ab' Chante', king of Saktz'i'” (PNG:St.26, C1–3), and the captive on the right is named *Ch'ok B'ahlam ajk'uhuu'n k'uhul B'aakal ajaw* — “Ch'ok B'ahlam, ajk'uhuu'n of the sacred king of B'aakal” (PNG:St.26, D1–3). This likely refers to a second known Saktz'i' king, named K'ab' Chante', who reigned in the first quarter of the 7th century. but is not mentioned elsewhere. Stela 26 was erected on the anniversary date in early 628, but the events associated with the capture of Saktz'i' king occurred two and a half years earlier in October 625 (there are also possible dates for the event in 624 and 627). Unfortunately, the damage to the inscription does not allow us to determine the details of the events [12. P. 142–143; 6. P. 2].

K'ab' Chante II participation in the war against Yokib' is quite understandable; it was a continuation of the confrontation that began back in 514. It temporarily subsided in the mid-6th century, when Yokib' entered a period of 40-years hiatus, which apparently allowed Saktz'i' to gain a foothold in the political relations of the Upper Usumacinta region. But that military and political confrontation resumed after the accession of K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk I in 603, and Saktz'i' apparently found later an ally in the young Baakal king K'ihnich Janaab' Pakal I, who was rivaling Yokib' in the Middle Usumacinta area [12. P. 164–165].

However, known inscriptions from the mid-7th century do not contain explicit references to the kingdom of Saktz'i', but indirect evidence allows us to judge its growing power in the Lacandon area. Panel 4 from Piedras Negras, one of the most important, but poorly preserved, monuments dedicated to the reign of K'ihnich Yo'nal Ak I, reports: (E7) [B'OLON-OK^{day}] (F7) [HUUX-CHIK-ni] (G1) **KAJ-yi tu-CH'EE'N-na?** (H1) **pe-e-TUUN-ni** (G2) **yo-o-NAL-a-ku**, *B'olon Ok huux Chikin kajaay tu ch'een? Pepe'tuun Yo'nal Ahk* — “(On the day of) 9 Ok 3rd (of) Chikin settled in his city Pepe'tun Yo'nal Ahk” (PNG:Pan.4, E7–G2). The date of the event has not been preserved, but it can be reconstructed based

on the calculation of distance numbers and refers to 9 Ok 3 Chikin, 9.9.18.6.10 = June 18, 631, and the previously unclear event [6. P. 5], was determined after D. Beliaev and A. Davletshin read the mediopassive verb root — logogram T550 as **KAJ** — “to settle, to found” [15. P. 591]. Thus, the passage *kajaay tu-ch'een' Pepe'tuun Yo'nal 'Ahk* (Fig. 4) speaks of the founding of a new city.

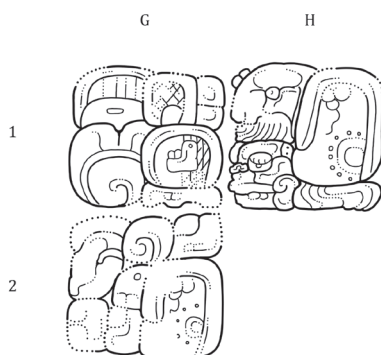


Figure 4. Piedras Negras, Panel 4, inscription fragment G1-G2
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

This toponym, containing a sign depicting a rabbit head, was previously identified by David Stuart and Stephen Houston as “Rabbit Head Stone” [16. P. 37, 40], and subsequently associated by John Montgomery with the archaeological site of La Mar, located in the Budsilja Valley, southwest of Piedras Negras [17. P. 176–183]. The modern reading of the sign in the form of a rabbit head as a syllabic **pe**, proposed by A. Davletshin and D. Beliaev, as well as the presence in several examples of the syllabic substitution **pe-ʔe-TUUN-ni**, determined the reading of the toponym as *Peʔtuun* — “Fenced with stone”, “Stone fence” [18. P. 35–37]. However, Simon Martin pointed out the presence in most examples of the syllabic **pe** (including Panel 4 from Piedras Negras) of two dots, as the doubling determinative, which gives the reading of the toponym as *Pepeʔtuun* [11. P. 271], Davletshin and Beliaev believe that this toponym could have had a Zoquean origin [18. P. 35–37]. Nevertheless, the very fact of the founding in 631 of a new center directly subordinate to the Piedras Negras king on the southwestern border of Yokib’ at the foot of the Sierra Guiral, speaks to the importance of this direction in the policy of K’ihnich Yo’nal Ahk I. Apparently, *Pepe’tuun*, as a strategic center, was intended to block a convenient pass in the Sierra Guiral, which led from the Budsilja Valley to the Santo Domingo Valley formed a single space with the Upper Lacanha Valley. Obviously, by this time, Saktz’i’ could control all this territory southwest from Yokib’ and also lay claim to lands directly in the Usumacinta Valley.

The event depicted on Panel 2 of Piedras Negras, dated to 658, can be explained by the expansion of Saktz'i' influence in the Lacandon area. This is one of the most famous monuments of Piedras Negras, exhibited in the Peabody Museum (Harvard University), was erected in 667 and dates to the reign of Yokib' king Itzam K'an Ahk III [12. P. 143–144]. The main text on the panel reports on the ritual taking of *ko'haw* — a Teotihuacan type helmet, in 658, which was a repetition of the ritual *ko'haw* taking previously performed in 510 by Yaat Ahk II, who received the regalia of power from the hands of the Teotihuacan *kalo'mte' Tajo'm Uk'ab' Tuun* [11. P. 243]. The iconographic scene precisely conveys this ritual, it depicts Yokib' king, his heir and 6 vassals, dressed in Teotihuacan-type ammunition, but researchers disagree on which event is depicted there: 510 or 658. Simon Martin believes that Panel 2 reproduces the scene of 510, based on the fact that the feathers of the king's headdress indicate the name Yaat Ahk II in the main inscription, the depicted heir to the throne, Joy Chitam Ahk, did not succeed Itzam K'an Ahk III, therefore, he could be the successor of Yaat Ahk II and been an unknown king of the mid-6th century, also Megan O'Neil pointed out the similarity of the Teotihuacan helmet on the king of Stela 7 from Lacanha, installed in 593, with the helmets received by the lords of Xukalnaah on Panel 2 [11. P. 243]. However, we do not agree with this point of view, a number of facts showing to the depiction of the event of 658. 1) It is known that Itzam K'an Ahk III was succeeded by K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk II in 686, but he was born only in 664 [12. P. 145], so he could not be present at the scene of 658, and was probably the youngest son, while the eldest Joy Chitam Ak was considered the heir, but possibly he died before his father; 2) In the ceremony scene of 510, *kalo'mte' Tajo'm Uk'ab' Tuun* should rather be depicted handing over the regalia of power, as in the murals of Uaxactun presents the king “Sunraiser” who depicted receiving investiture from the Teotihuacan emissary K'ihnich Mo' [19. P. 48–52]; 3) The list of participants of the ceremony is impossible to imagine in 510, but is logical for 658. Six local lords participate in the ceremony: one from the kingdom of Ak'e', one lord of the land of K'ana' from Pa'chan, and four lords from Xukalnaah (a canoe leader (*'aj payaal jukuub'*), lords from Saklakal, Patalaak and B'uhb'ulha'). The Panel 12 from Piedras Negras shows Pa'chan king who was defeated only in 514, so it is unlikely that a member of the royal house took part in the ceremony as a vassal of Yokib' king in 510. Xukalnaah polity was only formed at the early 6th century and it is unlikely at that time it possessed a complex system of territorial organization, including three areas under lord's power. And besides, among the participants there is no Xukalnaah king himself, who was supposed to receive *ko'haw*, so that his successor could be depicted in a helmet on Stela 7 from Lacanha. 4) Also, local lord title, written according to the formula *'aj <toponym> <Emblem Glyph>* (as: *'aj B'ubulha' Xukalnaah 'ajaw*), which represent three Xukalnaah nobles, were formed only at the beginning of the 7th century, but at the early 500s, only kings could bear the Emblem Glyph at that time [20. P. 120–121].

However, if we look at the composition of the participants in relation to the political situation in 658, a curious picture emerges. All the lords depicted come from the Lacandon area: Pa'chan lord from K'ana' probably represented one of the border regions in the southwest from Yaxchilan (for example El Chicozapote); Ak'e' polity is associated with the archaeological site of Plan de Ayutla; Xukalnaah lordship of B'ub'ulha is more likely associated with the site of Ojos de Agua [21. P. 40]; Patal(aak), also known as Knot-site, is affiliate with the archaeological site of Nuevo Jalisco, the place of origin of the mid-8th century. Xukanaah king Knot-eye Jaguar [8. P. 160]; and a possible location for Saklakal is the site Kanankax (Rancho Ojo de Agua), since this place is closest to the territory to Pa'chan, who fought with Saklakal in 642 and 689 [5. P. 125; 8. P. 159]. Thus, all of six Yokib' vassals participating in the ceremony were concentrated in the south and were all located in close proximity to Saktz'i' territory. Thus, we believe that the ritual of ko'haw taking in 658 was due to the growth Saktz'i' kingdom influence in the Lacandon area and the formation of a coalition against it by Itzam K'an Ahk III.

At the end of the 7th century, the number of references to the Saktz'i' increases sharply, which is associated with the appearance of monuments of the Saktz'i' kings themselves, many of which have no precise archaeological attribution, but it should be assumed that they came from Lacanja Tzeltal. Archaeological research has revealed approximately 70 monuments, most of which have been damaged by looters [9]. To date, only one complete monument has been discovered in Lacanja Tzeltal — Panel 1, which is dedicated to events from the late 7th to the first half of the 8th centuries.

The main source for dynastic history in the late 7th century is an inscription on two unprovenance panels, one is exhibited in the Denver Art Museum, the other in the Royal Museums of Art and History of Brussels [5. P. 124; 6. P. 2–4]. The inscription is a continuous text, but the panels are not fragments of a single monument, but rather separate blocks or sides of a stela, and most likely come from Lacanja Tzeltal. The inscription contains only cyclic dates, which were initially dated by Linda Schele and Nikolai Grube, who proposed dating the events to 636 and 641 [1. P. 116], but Peter Biro suggested a different dating option 52 years later — 688 and 693 [6. P. 6–7], Alexander Safronov showed, on the basis of a comparison with synchronous texts from Tonina, that it is the later dating most reliable [22. P. 180–184].

Let us briefly recap the events recorded in the inscriptions on the Denver and Brussels panels and highlight the key points. It begins with a report of an action concerning K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk II, who is called the king of K'ihn (the second Emblem Glyph of the Piedras Negras kings), which took place on February 14, 688, what was ordered by Saktz'i' king K'ab' Chante'. This is the third king under same name, and likely the most powerful in the history of the Saktz'i' dynasty. The chronology then goes on to present the events day by day: on April 5, 693, K'ab

Chante' III repelled the attack of Nikte' Mo', the king of the small polity of Pepe'tun; the next day, April 6, he beheaded Nikte' Mo', and references to the Pepe'tuun kingdom disappear until the mid-8th century. Then, two days later, on April 8, 693, K'ab' Chante' III won a new victory and captured the Ak'e king Juu'n Ich'aak Mo', who was accompanied by Yab'a...l, "a person from K'ante'l," and another day later, on April 9: ...*pehkaj Yab'a...l 'aj K'ante'l 'aj K'inyaha' 'aj Chaktoo'k'al 'aj ... us 'aj-Paniil 'aj 'Atuun 'aj 'Ab'ua' pehkaj y ichnal K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' 'ajaw* — "Yab'a...l, a person from K'ante'l, people from K'inyaha', people from Chaktoo'k'al, people from sa, the people from Paniil, the people of Atuun, the people of Ab'ua', they were called in front of K'ab' Chante', the king of Saktz'i'" (Brussel pan., pD5–pD8) [22. P. 179–180].

Here, the following details should be noted. First of all, the events take place during the beginning of the reign of Yokib king K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk II, only 2 years after his accession. The unknown event could have been a defeat in war or another form of political subordination to the Saktz'i' king, which once again confirms our idea of the growth of Saktz'i' power in the mid-7th century and the formation of a coalition of vassals against it in 658. The emergence on the political arena of the Pepe'tun polity, which, as indicated on Panel 4 from Piedras Negras, was initially some kind of lordship under Yokib' ruling, was caused by the military and political events of the early 690s. The inscription on Monument 91 from Tonina reports the defeat inflicted on the king of Nikte Mo' by the Popo' king K'ihnich Baaknal Chaahk, during which a man from Pepe'tun Chan Maas was captured. That noble captive was presented on Monuments 72, 84 and 147, as well as a captive statue from the Ballcourt. Moreover, the date of Chan Maas capture corresponds on March 17, 693, only 18 days before Nikte' Mo' attack on Saktz'i' [22. P. 182–186; 11. P. 271]. The emergence of royal power in Pepe'tun was apparently connected with the military campaign of the Baakal king K'inich K'an B'ahlam II, which took place between 688–692, it was directed against Yokib' and covered the entire region of the left bank of the Usumacinta and Budsilja Valley. Most of the prisoners captured by K'ihnich Baaknal Chaahk are called *'u-yajaw 'Aj Pitzil Baakal 'ajaw* — "he is a vassal of the Ballplayer, the king of B'aakal" (the title of K'ihnich K'an B'ahlam II) [11. P. 269–272]. It's possible that the conquests of K'ihnich K'an B'ahlam II and the unknown event of 688 involving the Piedras Negras king K'ihnich Yo'nal Ahk by the order Saktz'i' king, are connected, suggesting a coalition between B'aakal and Saktz'i'. This would be a logical continuation of the event of 625 mentioned on Stela 26 from Piedras Negras, and also explains why Nikte' Mo', after the defeat of March 18, 693, attacked the land of K'ab' Chante III on April 5.

No less important is the final passage, which reports on the victory over Ak'e' and the ceremony involving people from the Ak'e' region on April 8–9, 693. Literally the day after the defeat of Ak'e' king Juu'n Ich'aak Mo', his subordinate person Yab'a...l led a procession of people summoned to the Saktz'i' king to recognize his political authority over the kingdom. This fragment includes a list of six toponyms

associated with the Ak'e' polity, which are written using the formula *'aj* <toponym>, and differs from the title of Yab'a...l — <name> *'aj* <toponym>, where the agentive prefix *'aj*- means “the one who...”, “a person from...”. Dmitri Beliaev and Albert Davletshin showed that in this case, when the toponym is written without a name, we are talking about a group of people of low rank, that is, the agentive prefix has the meaning “people from ...” and, apparently, denotes a group of community members or representatives of communities [18. P. 32, 33, 39]. In other words, here are list of six communities (towns) that were part of the Ak'e' polity, obviously, formed the core of its territory, as well as one area represented by Yab'a...l — a person of noble rank, who collectively recognized the authority of K'ab' Chante' III. That action gave the Saktz'i' king a reason to declare himself the king of Ak'e'.

It was after the events of 693 that K'ab' Chante' III invariably used the second royal title, so in the retrospective text on the Caracas panel under 706 in the entry for the consecration of the temple of K'ab' Chante' III it says: *'u kab'jiy 'Aj Yax ... K'ab' Chante' k'uhul 'Ak'e' 'ajaw* — “he ordered this Aj Yax ... K'ab' Chante', the sacred king of Ak'e'” (Caracas pan., C12–D13) (Fig. 5).

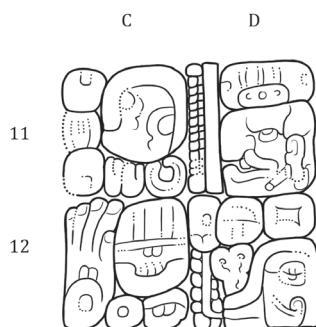


Figure 5. Caracas (New York) panel, inscription fragment C11–D12
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

At the bottom of Panel 1 from Lacanja Tzeltal, installed by king Chan Ek' in 775, there is an image of K'ab' Chante' III with an axe and a manopla in his hands — attributes of the Chaak deity, and the text is written [4. P. 12–14]: (P1) **WAK-HIXday** (Q1) **HUK-SUUTZ'** (Q2) **JUB'?'-yi** (R1) **HUK-...-B'OLON** (S1) **pa-...-ma** (S2) **K'AWIIL** (S3) **['AJ]?** (T1) **...-b'u-'a** (U1) **'u-KAB'-ji-ya** (U2) **K'AB'-CHAN-TE'** (U3) **[SAK]-TZ'T'-AJAW-wa** (V1) **K'UH-'a-k'e-'AJAW** (V2) **b'a-ka-b'a**, *Wak Hix huk Suutz' jubuuy? Huk ... “B'olon” Pa...m K'awiil 'aj ...b'ua' 'u kab'jiy K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' 'ajaw k'uhul 'Ak'e' 'ajaw, b'akab'* — “(On the day of) 6 Hix, 7th (of) Suutz' fell down 7 ‘Band’... (object) of Pa...m K'awiil, a person from ...b'ua', he ordered this K'ab' Chante', king of Saktz'i', the sacred king of Ak'e', b'akab'” (LTZ:Pan.1, P1–V2). The date of the event corresponds to April 26, 703,

and, apparently, this represents another act of the military and political struggle for Ak'e'. The captive mentioned in the text is most likely associated with the toponym Ab'ua', which is present in the list of persons from Ak'e' on the Brussels panel in 693. An inscription on a column of unknown origin from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Louis reports that on July 10, 702, "Etz'nab" Chow, who calls himself *yajaw* (vassal) of the king of Popo' K'ihnich B'aaknal Chaahk, became the sacred king of Ak'e'. Moreover, the monument was erected in 715 in honor of the 13th anniversary of the reign of "Etz'nab" Chow [11. P. 255]. Apparently, Tonina king invaded the Lacandon area again in 702, recaptured the Ak'e' polity and installed his protege, what led to a new war in 703, although in 3 years later K'ab' Chante' continued to be called the sacred king of Ak'e', but apparently the final victory of Saktz'i' was achieved only after 715.

In the lower left corner of Lacanja Tzeltal Panel 1 there is another partially preserved fragment of text that contains an important date (Fig. 6). The fragment opens with the date: (H1) **B'OLON 'OK^{day}** (I1) **HUUXLAJU'N K'AN-JAL-wa** (H2) **SIH-ya-(ja) K'AB'-CHAN-TE'**, *B'olon 'Ok huuxlaju'n K'anjalaw sihyaj* — "(On the day of) 9 Ok, 13th (of) K'anjalaw he was born K'ab' Chante'" (LTZ:Pan.1, H1-I2). Stephen Houston suggested that the date corresponds to February 26, 721 and reflects the birth date of the next king in the dynasty named K'ab' Chante', but such a king is unknown from other monuments. Therefore, we believe that the birth date should be dated 52 years earlier — March 10, 669, which is most likely the birth date of K'ab' Chante' III. That is, he ascended the throne before 688 at the age of about 17–19 years, what explains his long reign until 740 (the date of death is recorded in the main text of Panel 1 from Lacanja Tzeltal) [4. P. 13].

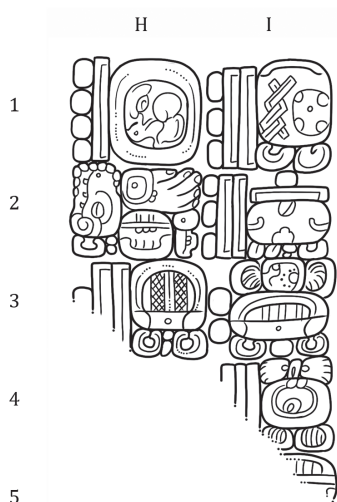


Figure 6. Lacanja Tzeltal, Panel 1, inscription fragment H1-I5
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

The fragment continues with a distance number, the subsequent Tzolk'in date is lost, but can be reconstructed: (I2) **HUUXLAJU'N-WAK-WINIK-ji-ya** (H3) **B'ULUCH-HAA'B'** (I3) **CH'A'-WINAAK-HAA'B'-ya** (H4) [**HUUX 'AKAB'**^{day}] (I4) **WAKLAJU'N-ma-ka** (H5) ...? (I5) [**K'AB'**]-CHAN- [TE'], *Huuxlaju'n(he'w) wak winikjiy b'uluch haa'b' ch'a' winaakhaa'b' huux 'Akab' waklaju'n Mak ... K'ab' Chante' ...* — “(in) 13 days, 6 months, 11 years, 2 20-years, (on the day of) 3 Akab', 16th (of) Mak ... K'ab' Chante' ...” (LTZ:Pan.1, I2-I5). Houston suggested, based on the dating of the first event, that the second date corresponds to October 15, 771, which was possibly associated with the accession of K'ab' Chante' IV [4. P. 13]. However, from our point of view, the accession of a 51-year-old heir seems unlikely, and given our dating of the first event, the second date should remove on October 28, 719. Most likely, this is not an accession, but some political event, possibly the final adoption of the title of Ak'e' king, since later his successor Chan Ek', during the celebration of the 5-years ending in 775, mentions some regalia of K'ab' Chante' III [4. P. 12–13].

This version is also supported by an inscription on the Stendahl Panel (Zurich Panel), originating from the Bonampak area [6. P. 8–11]. The inscription is dedicated to *sajal* from Xukalnaah kingdom, possibly from the land of Saklakal, who calls in 726 his ruler Yajawte' K'ihnich Chak Chij, “king of Xukalnaah”, who, in his turn, is called himself *yajaw K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' 'ajaw k'uhul 'Ak'e' 'ajaw* — “vassal of K'ab' Chante', the king of Saktz'i', the sacred king of Ak'e'” (Stendahl pan., G8–F10) [5. P. 127]. It is important here that K'ab Chante' III status as king of Ak'e' is confirmed by contemporary external sources, not just retrospective texts. Besides the kingdom of Ak'e', he also brought Xukalnaah, located in the Middle Lacanha Valley, under his subordination. The intense, a long struggle for the title of Ak'e' king is explained by the presence of the *k'uhul* prefix in this Emblem Glyph, which Saktz'i' kings never possessed. By securing it for himself, K'ab' Chante' III thus classified his lineage among the ancient, revered dynasties.

The apogee and decline of Saktz'i' in the 8th–9th centuries

The period 720–770 marked the apogee of the Saktz'i' power. At the end of his reign Kab' Chante' III controlled mostly the Lacandon area and apparently conquered lands in the Upper Usumacinta Valley. The original royal dynasty of Ak'e' disappeared from written sources, and the accession to power of Xukalnaah kings was directly sanctioned by Saktz'i' ruler. Moreover, it was not representatives of the main royal lineage who were appointed to the throne, but rather local lords related to the royal house. Panels 1 and 2 from Nuevo Jalisco (El Cedro Panels) tell the story of a lord from the Patal lineage named Knot-Eye Jaguar. According to the inscription on Panel 1, he was born in 728 and in 732 a certain Lam K'ihnich Chaahk, possibly his father, died [6. P. 12]. Further, at the beginning of the inscription on Panel 2, the coronation of the

Knot-Eye Jaguar is reported: (A1) **WAXAK-** [^ʔAJAW^{day}] (B1) **HUUX-ma-ka** [JOY]-ja (A2) **...-B'AhLAM-ma** (B2) **ʔu-KAB'-ji-ya** (A3) **K'AB'-CHAN-na-TE'** (B3) **SAK-TZ'T'-ʔAJAW-wa**, *Waxak ʔAjaw huux K'anjalaw johyaj ... B'ahlam ʔu kab'jiy K'ab' Chante' Saktz'i' ʔajaw* — “(On the day of) 8 Ajaw, 3rd (of) Mak was bound (to the kingship) ... B'ahlam, he ordered his K'ab' Chante', king of Saktz'i'” (NVJ:Pan.2, A1–B3) (Fig. 7). For a long time, the dating of this event was problematic, since the Tzolk'in day sign is written without a cartouche and the date according to Haab is badly damaged, so the date 8 Ajaw 3 K'anjalaw = 16 February 717 was proposed, which would mean that this refers to the accession of Yajawte' K'ihnich Chak Chij, mentioned in the Stendahl Panel in 726 [5. P. 127; 6. P. 12–14]. However, from our point of view, a different date is recorded there: 8 Ajaw 3 Mak = 9 October 737, in that case it chronologically continues the text on Panel 1, and reports on the coronation of the Knot-Eye Jaguar as Xukalnaah king, who was only 8 years old at that time. Further he is mentioned in Panel 1 of the Lacanha, established in 746 by Aj Sak Teles, who calls himself: *ʔu sajal ... B'ahlam ʔAk'e' ʔajaw, Xukalnaah ʔajaw ʔaj Patal* — “he is his sajal ...-B'ahlam, king of Ak'e', king of Xukalnaah, the person from Patal” (LAC:Pan.1, D3–D5) [5. P. 127; 8. P. 160].

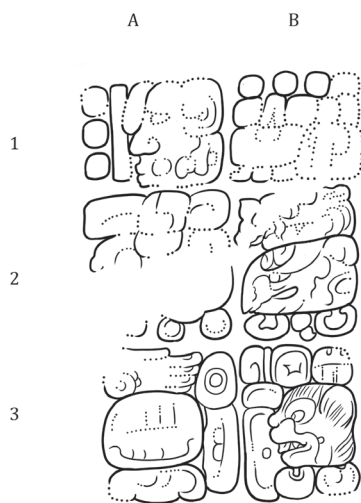


Figure 7. Nuevo Jalisco (El Cedro), Panel 2, inscription fragment J2–J3
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

This raises the question of the reasons for the use of the double Emblem Glyph by the Knot-Eye Jaguar in the 740s, especially the title *ʔAk'e' ʔajaw*, since from 719 it was held by K'ab' Chante' III, who was the overlord of Xukalnaah kings. It becomes clear from the text on Lacanja Tzeltal Panel 1, that K'ab' Chante' III died around 740, and his tomb, where he rested with his wife, was

consecrated on November 11, 740 [4. P. 13–14]. It is also quite remarkable that the king, who died at the height of his power, is given the name K'ihnich K'ab' Chante' — “K'ab' Chante' the Great”, the first king to be awarded the theofornic part of his name. Moreover, the consecration ceremony of the tomb was conducted by a person named (U)cha'n B'olon, who also called *Saktz'i' ajaw*, but he died six months later, on May 30, 741 [4. P. 13–14]. No details about him are provided in the text, but it can be assumed that he was the successor, possibly the elder son of brother, of K'ab' Chante' III. His short reign could have caused a dynastic crisis, as a result of that Saktz'i' kings lost the right to use the second Emblem Glyph for some time, since its adoption was of an individual nature and was determined by the oath of allegiance of the people of Ak'e' personally to K'ab' Chante' III. [8. P. 160].

The next known king of Saktz'i' is Chan Ek', who erected the Lacanja Tzeltal Panel in 775, however, the family ties of K'ab' Chante' III, (U)cha'n B'olon and Chan Ek' are not entirely clear; they could have been grandfather–father–grandson, or the last two could have been the eldest and youngest sons of K'ab' Chante' III [8. P. 161]. The next event in chronology is recorded on the Caracas Panel, where the third, and heavily damaged, part of the text opens with a Long Count: 9.16.3.10.11, 6 Chuwen 9 Muwaahn = November 20, 754 [6. P. 15–18], unfortunately, the verb after the date has not been preserved, but in the second block after the date is looks similar to the possessive noun *tu-b'aahil* — “on his head” (Caracas pan., H3), so it is possible that this refers to the coronation of a new king: [*k'ahlaj huu'n*] *tu-b'aahil* — “the band was presented on his head”. Considering that the date is not a period ending and is recorded by the Long Count in the middle of the text, this may indicate the special importance of the event. The name of the protagonist has always been a subject of debate; previously we associated him with Aj Sak Maax, who is mentioned in Panel 1 from El Cayo, while the inscription next to the king's image records a different name: *Ti' Muwaahn Chak Sa'* (Caracas pan., M1–M2). However, a detailed analysis of the last damaged part of the main text reveals the presence of the following entry: ... (J2) **CHAN-na-²EK'** (I3) **K'UH-²a-k'e-²AJAW** (J3) **SAK-TZ'T-²AJAW** ..., ...*Chan ²Ek' k'uhul ²Ak'e' ²ajaw Saktz'i' ²ajaw* ... — “...Chan Ek', sacred king of Ak'e', king of Saktz'i'...” (Caracas pan., J2–J3) (Fig. 8). Thus, the panel was erected by Chan Ek' in honor of his accession to the throne, which occurred only 13 years after the death of (U)Cha'n B'olon, and the last date inscribed on it is dated 756. While the unclear name of Ti' Muwaahn in my opinion could belong to the person depicted below, who brought an offering to the king. He has Saktz'i' Emblem Glyph in his title, so, he could have been either another representative of the royal dynasty, or the sajäl of the king if the title *²u-sajäl* (Caracas pan., K2) was written after his name. It is important that Chan Ek' also use a double Emblem Glyph in his title, following his ancestor K'ab' Chante' III.

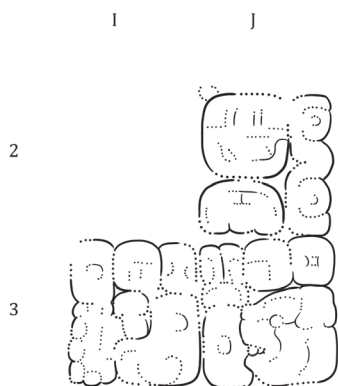


Figure 8. Caracas (New York) panel, inscription fragment J2–J3
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

The name glyph Chan Ek' is also identified in the inscription on Stela 10 from Yaxchilan. This is a 5-years anniversary monument of the Pa'chan king Yaxuun B'ahlam IV, erected in 766. Its obverse depicts Yaxuun B'ahlam in warrior dress, surrounded by two nobles and one captive. A fragment of the inscription has been preserved next to the king's head: ... (H1) [ʔOCH] tu-CH'EEʔN (H2) CHAN-ʔEK' ...
... (I1) K'UH-KAJ-ʔAJAW (I2) K'UH-PAʔ-CHAN-ʔAJAW. ... ʔoch tu ch'eeʔn Chan ʔEk' ... k'uhul Kaaj ʔajaw, k'uhul Paʔchan ʔajaw — "...he entered to the land of Chan Ek' ... the sacred king of Kaaj, the sacred king of Pa'chan" (YAX:St.10, H1–I2) (Fig. 9). The text refers to the invasion of Pa'chan forces into the territory of Saktz'i', and this is the first known war between these two polities. Since from the beginning of the 6th century, judging by Panel 12 from Piedras Negras, Saktz'i' and Pa'chan should be situational allies against Yokib'. The date of the event is unknown, it certainly took place before 766, and the inscription supports our idea of Chan Ek' accession to the throne of Saktz'i' in 754. However, during the same period, another ruler used the title *Saktz'i' ʔajaw* — Aj Sak Maax is mentioned in Panel 1 of El Cayo as the person, who sanctioned the accession to the power of two sajals of Yaxniil — very important sajaldom under subordination of Piedras Negras. First, in 763, Aj Sak Maax confirmed the sajal of Aj Chak Sinam K'utiim, and in 772, his successor, Chan Panak Wayaab' Aj Yax Sinam K'utiim. Two kings of Yokib' also participated in these events, the burial of the previous sajal was carried out by Yo'nal Ahk III in 763, and the king Ha' K'in Xook is mentioned before the event in 772 [6. P. 20–24; 12. P. 151].

A rather strange situation arises when two rulers with the title *Saktz'i' ʔajaw* appear simultaneously in inscriptions between 754 and 775. However, the subscription to the captive on Stela 10 from Yaxchilan partially explains the situation: (I1) ʔa-SAK-MAAX (I2) (K)OXʔ-ku-lu-ʔa (I3) CHAN-ʔEK' (I4) SAK-TZ'ʔ-ʔAJAW, *Aj Sak Maax (k)oxkuluaʔ Chan ʔEk' Saktz'i' ʔajaw* — "Aj Sak Maax, (k)oxkula of Chan Ek' the king of Saktz'i'" (Fig. 10). In this inscription, both names of Aj Sak Maax and Chan Ek' are mentioned in succession, and there is an incomprehensible block I2 between them. There are two possible options:

1) These are parts of the same name, in that case we are talking about the same person, and the name Aj Sak Maax could have been Chan Ek's childhood name. A similar formula is presents in the name of K'ab' Chante' III — 'Aj Yax ... K'ab' Chante' (Caracas pan., D11-C12), but then it is not clear why only the first part is recorded on Panel 1 from El Cayo; 2) Block I2 could be a title showing the relationship of Aj Sak Maax to Chan Ek', and it is similar to the poor-understood title (*k*)*oxkula'*, which is found in the titles of some rulers, in particular on the Palenque Hieroglyphic Stairway in the title of Ut-...-Chan, the lord of Kaanu'l, who devastated Lakamha' (Palenque) in 599 (PAL:HS, C1–D1), as well as the king of Kaanu'l Yukno'm Yichaak K'ahk' before his accession (CRN:Pan.1, O4–P4), the title could mean either the heir or the warrior of the king [23. P. 63–65]. However, the absence of an ergative pronoun in this example, denoting one person's belonging to another, raises problems in the interpretation of the title.

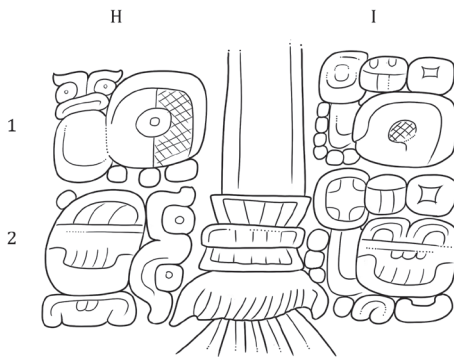


Figure 9. Yaxchilan, Stela 10,
inscription fragment H1–I2
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

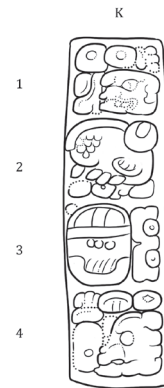


Figure 10. Yaxchilan, Stela 10,
inscription fragment K1–K4
Source: drawing by A. Safronov.

If we assume that a title is recorded here, then Aj Sak Maax was certainly a member of the royal house and was possibly a close relative of Chan Ek' and could have kind of governor. The appointment of the sajals is Yaxniil clearly indicates that Saktz'i' conquered lands to the north in Upper Usumacinta Valley and Aj Sak Maax could have been appointed the ruler in the conquered regions. Chan Ek's conquests were so extensive that Saktz'i' reached the borders of Pa'chan, approximately in the area of Santa Clara Lake, leading to war around 766. Apparently, in this capacity, he was captured by Yaxuun B'ahlam IV between 763 and 766, but he did not die, returning from captivity before 772. Anyway, Chan Ek' himself reigned until 775, and his foreign policy successes allowed him to erect a monument in honor of his predecessor K'ab' Chante III, and to assert his claim to the title of "sacred king of Ak'e"

However, after 775, Saktz'i' power declined. Chan Ek's successor was likely Yehte' K'ihnich, who continued his predecessor's policies but was unable to maintain his conquests in the Upper Usumacinta. As early as 748, Pa'chan's

protégé the sajal Aj Sak Teles came to power in Bonampak. His son, Yajaw Chan Muwaahn II, ascended the throne in 776 as king of Xukalnaah and Ak'e', laying claim to the domains of Saktz'i'. Thus, a coalition of Pa'chan and Xukalnaah was formed, supported by a dynastic marriage between the two royal houses, which got a major victory over Saktz'i' in early 787 [5. P. 131]. Lintels 1 and 2 from Bonampak report that the united forces of the Pa'chan king Itzam Kokaaj B'ahlam IV and Yajaw Chan Muwaahn II, four days apart, on January 9 and 13, 787, defeated two units of Yehte' K'ihnich and captured two of his warriors (captains) [6. 24–26; 8. P. 162]. It was in honor of this victory that Yajaw Chan Muwaahn II build a temple in Bonampak in 791, decorated with magnificent murals inside [12. P. 135–136].

We do not know how long Yehte' K'ihnich reigned after 787, but the name of another king from the late 8th century has been preserved in the inscription far from Lacandon area. A fragment of Monument 83 from Tonina depicts a tied captive, next to whom is an inscription stating: ... *Chapaht k'uhul Popo' 'ajaw jub'uuy 'u kabch'ee'n Jatz' Tokal 'Ek' Hix Saktz'i' 'ajaw* "... Chapat, the sacred king of Popo', his city fell, of Jatz' Tokal Ek' Hix, king of Saktz'i'" (TNA:Mon.83. B1–D4). The inscription refers to the defeat of Saktz'i' king's capital; the exact date of the war is unknown, but presumably occurred between 790–800 CE, and the loser, Jatz' Tokal Ek' Hix, was likely the successor of Yehte' K'ihnich. However, the name of the captive has not been preserved, and it is possible that he was not a king, in that case the reign of Jatz' Tokal Ek' Hix continued after 800, but the kingdom lost most of its possessions and political power in the region.

The last mention of Saktz'i' kingdom dates back to the mid-9th century, and is contained on an unprovenance monument known as the Randal Stela (Lausanne Stela), erected on the anniversary date in 864 in the honor of the sajal B'ahlam Chij Kayu K'uk' Maax. The text reports his death in 863 and the consecration of his tomb six months later in 864 [6. P. 27–30]. But the main point of the text is that he was a sajal of the Saktz'i' king, K'ab Chante', the fourth known king by this name, and apparently one of the last kings in Saktz'i' history. No other information about the history of his reign has been found, primarily because most other kingdoms in the Western Region had already declined and their political system had collapsed. However, it became clear from this source, that the Saktz'i' dynasty, unlike many others, not only continued to exist in the Lacandon area until the 2nd half of the 9th century but also maintained a system of territorial administrative governance. However, after this point, references to Saktz'i' in hieroglyphic inscriptions completely disappear.

Conclusion

Behavioral complex analysis of epigraphy data makes it possible to update the history of the Saktz'i' kingdom and supplement the dynastic list. In total, the names of nine kings of the Saktz'i' royal lineage have been identified to date, however, given the time gaps, the list should include at least twelve dynasties (Table).

Reconstructed dynastic list of Saktz'i' (514–864)

Nominal glyph	Dynastic list
	'Ahku'l Mo' (<514) ?
	K'ab' Chante' I (<564–565<) ?
	K'ab' Chante' II (<625) ?
	K'ab' Chante' III (≤688–740)
	('U) cha'n B'olon (740–741) ?
	Chan Ek' (756–775<)
	Aj Sak Maax (<763–772<)
	Yehte' K'ihnich (775<–787<)
	Jatz' Tok(al) Ek' Hix (787<–800<) ?
	K'ab' Chante' IV (<863–864<)

Source: compiled by A. Safronov.

We believe that the Saktz'i' dynasty was founded no earlier than the 2nd half of the 5th century, and the first known king can be considered 'Ahku'l Mo', who ruled until 514. Then until the last decade of the 7th century information about Saktz'i' is very fragmentary, only two kings with the name K'ab' Chante' are known, the first reigned in the 560s, who founded the main temple in Lacanja Tzeltal, and the second participated in the war against Piedras Negras in 625. Since the beginning of the 7th century. Saktz'i' is active in the political arena of the Upper Usumacinta region, however, successful military expansion begins with the accession of K'ab' Chante' III around 688. He subdues the kingdoms located in the Lacanja Valley — 'Ak'e' and Xukalnaah, conducts successful wars against Yokib' and Popo' and expands his possessions to the valley of Usumacinta. By 730, Saktz'i' became one of the strongest kingdoms in the region, but after the death of K'ab' Chante' III, the kingdom entered a period of dynastic crisis, which ended with the accession of Chan 'Ek in 756. He restored the power of the Saktz'i' in the middle of the 8th century, and in the north he controls the lands up to the shores of the Usumacinta (see Fig. 1), while another member of the royal house of the Saktz'i', Aj Sak Maax, appears in the inscriptions. The last decades of the 8th century were a time of weakening of Saktz'i', the kings of Yehte' K'ihnich and Jats' Tokal 'Ek' Hix suffered painful defeats from their neighbors in 787 and around 800, and no longer claimed to dominate the region. Nevertheless, Saktz'i' became the last kingdom in the Upper Usumacinta region, information about which has been preserved in inscriptions — the reign of K'ab' Chante' IV dates back to 864 and then it disappeared in the vicissitudes of the Terminal Classical period.

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