

# Maya Calendars and Writing: 3 Maya Ceramics

Graham Atkinson

# Overview

- Types of pottery
  - Plate
  - Bowl
  - Vase
  - Elite versus work-a-day vessels
- Types of inscriptions
  - Primary Standard Sequence (dedication)
  - Illustrations
  - Narrative surrounding illustrations (captions)
  - Codex vases
  - Pseudo-glyphs
- Source of photographs: Justin Kerr Maya vase data base

# Vessel type

- References are to the Calvin “Glyph Guide” or the Justin Kerr Maya vase data base
- See Calvin page 59 for the selection of vessel types
- See K6998 for an example of a vase with a carved surface rather than a painted surface.

# Primary Standard Sequence

- Around the top or edge of the vase
- Standard introduction and format
  - Dedication
  - Surface treatment
  - Vessel type
  - Use or contents
  - Owner
  - Scribe
- Not all components may be present
- See Calvin pages 60-64 for details of the PSS

# Codex Vases

- No PSS or illustrations
- Entire surface covered with glyphs
- Lists of kings with calendar round dates
- Major overlap between lists on different vases
- Difficult to place in absolute time.
- Identification of particular hands
- See K2094 for an example of a Codex vase

# Illustrations and writing on body

- Justin Kerr Maya Vase data base
  - Roll-out photographs of vases and other vessels
- Various subjects depicted:
  - Mythological scenes
  - Court scenes
  - Throne accession
- Writing normally pertains to the illustration

# Pseudo-Glyphs

- Several different levels of pseudo-glyphs:
  - Real glyphs but nonsense sentences
  - Real glyphs, repeated – often day signs
  - Drawings, with or without frames, that look generally like glyphs
  - Glyph sized blobs, with or without frames, placed where one would expect glyphs
- More ceramics with pseudo-glyphs than with real glyphs
- Ceramics with pseudo-glyphs present in royal tombs
- See K8005 for a vase with pseudoglyphs

# Resources

- Justin Kerr's Maya Vase data base
- The Maya Book of the Dead: The ceramic codex, by Francis Robicsek and Donald Hales
- The Maya Vase Book: A Corpus of Rollout Photographs of Maya Vases, New York, Kerr & Associates
- Local collections with Maya vases:
  - Dumbarton Oaks Museum, Kislak Collection at LoC, Walters Art Gallery, U. Penn. Museum