Maya Calendars and Writing: 3
Maya Ceramics

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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: