

Maya Calendars and Writing 5 Iconography

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Iconography Essentials

- Understand some of the conventions for display of breath, blood, life-force, gods versus humans.
- Look for infixed elements that are glyph related, or large scale components that are expansion of glyphs
- Understand the mythology, to the limited extent we can

San Bartolo Murals

- Circa 100 BC
- A few glyphs, but not in the wall paintings
- North and West walls preserved
- See many of the themes that continued through to colonial times
- Blood scrolls, breath elements, Principal Bird Deity
- Saturno report on Mesoweb

Glyphs in art

- Look at “Reading Maya Art”
- Examine two glyphs: Flint and Star
- Similar use of other glyphs

Popol Vuh and Chilam Balam

- Written in Maya but in Spanish script in colonial times, but based on earlier document
- Origin myth:
 - Creation of humans from mud, wood, maize
 - Dealings with the gods of the underworld
- Books of the Chilam Balam (Jaguar priest)
 - Named after the villages in which they were found

Closing remarks

- The field is rapidly evolving
- In 10 years the understanding of some of what I have said might be different – particularly on pronunciation and the precise meaning of certain glyphs, e.g., Emblem glyphs
- The Maya culture is still vigorous in the Guatemalan highlands
- PreColumbian Society has a glyph group devoted to the study of Maya writings

Bibliography

- Reading Maya Art, Andrea Stone and Marc Zender
- Popol Vuh, Allen Christenson, paperback or CD
- The Mural of San Bartolo, El Peten, Guatemala: Saturno, Taube, Stuart and Hurst
 - Part 1: the North Wall
 - Part 2: The West Wall
 - Published by Boundary End Archeology Research Center