

Maya Glyphs and Chinese Characters A Comparative Reading

*By
Charles William Johnson*



Earth/matriX Editions

A Comparison of Five Maya Glyphs and Five Chinese Characters *Part I*

*By
Charles William Johnson*



Introduction

For the comparisons between the Maya glyphs and the Chinese characters, I have selected words that do not share a natural common design. For example, the pictogram for a **"bird"** might essentially reflect a similar design based upon the natural characteristics of the **bird's** form. However, by choosing words for comparison that do not suggest an essential pictorial design, the comparisons may be more meaningful in terms of linguistic correspondence. For example, one might not expect any similarity in design with words such as the formless color **'red'**, or that of **'writing'**.

In the selected cases presented here, it becomes obvious that one may consider adding a cartouche around the Chinese characters or, subtracting the cartouche from around the Maya glyphs. In either case, the similarities between specific words are impressive and suggest a shared or common origin at some point in their respective histories.

The nature and direction of reading the Maya glyphs is frequently shown in the following manner as illustrated:

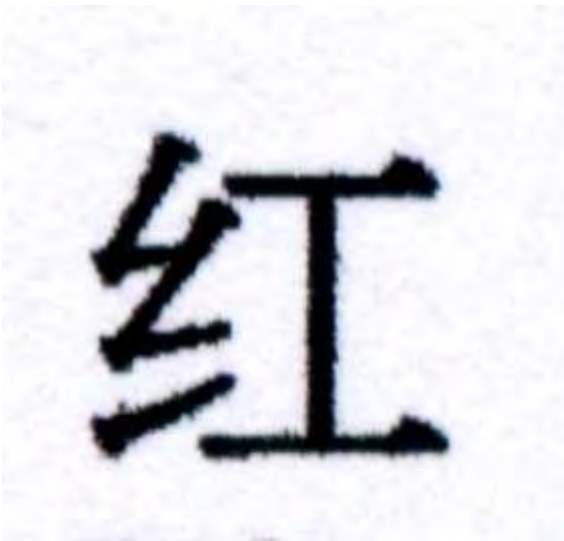


Source: www.wikipedia.com

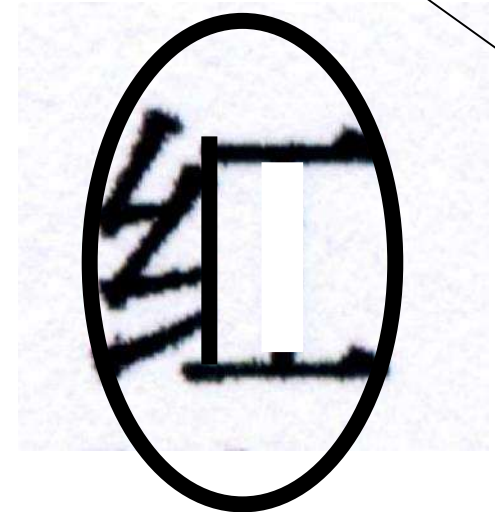
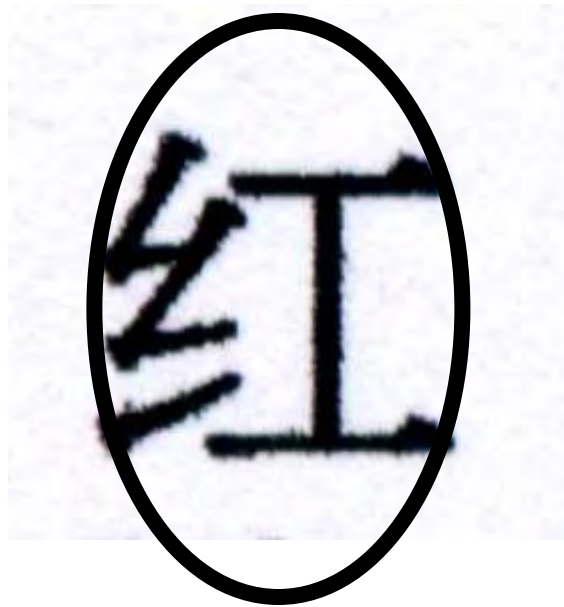
In my view, the most significant aspect of this geometric analysis and presentation of the Maya glyphs is that it also suggests the nature of the Chinese characters upon initial observation.

Both the Maya and Chinese writing systems are generally accepted as representing two totally distinct and unrelated systems. Yet, it becomes obvious that both share similar features in the structural and spatial presentation of the elements within a specific glyph or character. The comparisons made herein demonstrate this point.

“red” in Maya



“red” in Chinese



天 空

“sky” in Chinese

Note the two Chinese characters are nearly inverted designs of one another.



Add a cartouche



“sky” in Maya



Subtract the
cartouche



“writing” in Maya



Add a cartouche



“yellow” in Chinese



“yellow” in Maya

What are the chances that geographically opposite cultures on Earth would select a similar basic design for an abstracted color as in the pictograms for “yellow”? The same question obtains for the other four pictograms selected in this brief study.



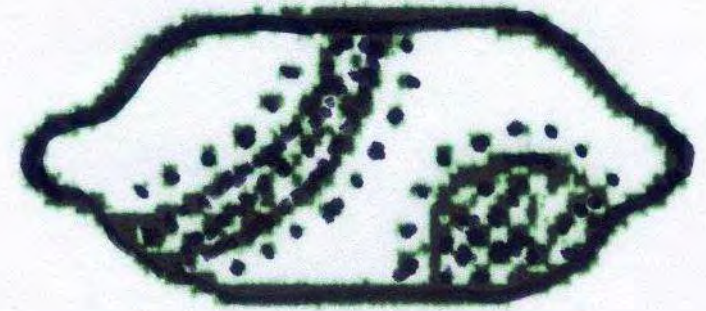
“flint” in Chinese



Add a cartouche

Flint rocks may have infinite forms, but the idea of flint striking something is common knowledge.

©2014 Copyrighted by Charles William Johnson
Earth/matriX, P.O. Box 231126, New Orleans, LA 70183-1126
www.earthmatrix.com



“flint” in Maya



Subtract the
cartouche



Observation

In this comparison, I have selected five Maya glyphs and Chinese characters [graphemes/morphemes], whose meanings do not suggest a definite pictorial form. And, yet, the similarities in the glyphs|characters are obvious and stunning.

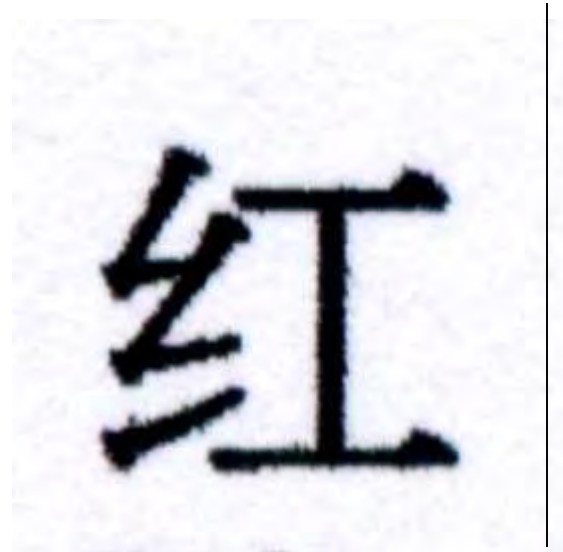
Imagine that similar pictorial designs are shared in innumerable Maya glyphs and Chinese characters, too many to compare for now. Their comparison shall require a more extension analysis.

In these comparisons, I have referred to the pictorial similarities, without alluding to or discussing their corresponding phonemes. A complete study must necessarily include the three aspects of each glyph/character: graphemes, morphemes and phonemes.

For now, I have merely offered the suggestion of carrying out similar comparative studies.

A Comparison of Maya Glyphs and Chinese Characters *Part II*

*By
Charles William Johnson*



Introduction to Part II

In this comparison, I have selected a few Maya day-sign glyphs together with other glyphs relating to general concepts. These are compared to the apparently corresponding Chinese characters as graphemes and as morphemes, relating to pictorial form and meaning respectively. Any correspondence in phonemes regarding the sounds of the compared graphemes and morphemes constitutes yet a third level of linguistic correspondence.

At this late date in linguistics studies, one might not expect to encounter any linguistic correspondence between the Maya glyphs and the Chinese characters, given the fact that so many scholars have studied these two languages for such a long time. And, yet nothing significant has been discovered regarding a comparison between the two distinct writing systems.

A possible reason why comparisons such as those effected here have not been carried out earlier lies in the prevailing concept

of theoretical linguistics. For linguistic correspondence to be recognized by many scholars the languages compared must share similarities as phonemes, morphemes and graphemes.

There is a fourth level of correspondence among written languages that has generally been overlooked. This particular level will be treated in subsequent studies. It concerns the artistic creative nature of a written language in serving as a system of codification of information regarding hidden images in artwork. This particular aspect has never been covered in the linguistic sciences literature, as far as I know. I shall be presenting studies along these lines shortly.

For now, I wish to present a few additional comparisons between the Maya glyphs and the Chinese characters in order to illustrate a possible linguistic correspondence between these two ancient writing systems.

As I mentioned in *Part I*, my impression from the correspondences

is that the Maya glyphs are older than the Chinese characters. In the sense, that it would appear that the Chinese characters derived from the more rudimentary designs in the Maya glyphs.

Such comparisons are relatively obvious when one considers drawing a circular figure around the Chinese characters or subtracting the circular form around the Maya glyphs. By effecting such comparisons, the similarities as graphemes and morphemes becomes apparent. However, often the coincidence at the level of phonemes is generally lacking. There are a few Maya glyphs and Chinese characters that appear to share similarities on all three levels, but they seem to be in the minority.

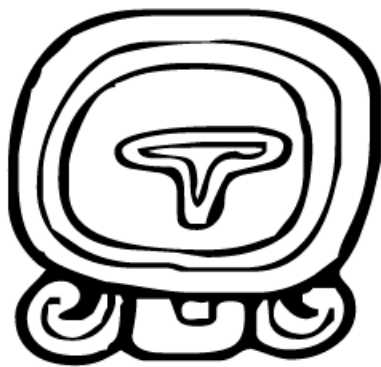
One might understand these comparisons against the backdrop of the similarities of Japanese and Chinese language systems. Where Japanese shares the Chinese characters, but not as phonemes. A similar pattern appears between the Maya glyphs and the Chinese characters. Although it may be the Chinese language that has borrowed the Maya writing system, and not the other way around.

Tzolk'in Calendar: Named days and associated glyphs

Sequence Number	Day Name	16th C. Yucatec	Reconstructed Classic Maya	Associated natural phenomena or meaning
01	Imix'	Imix	Imix (?) / Ha' (?)	waterlily, crocodile
02	Ik'	Ik	Ik'	wind, breath, life force
03	Ak'b'al	Akbal	Ak'b'al (?)	darkness, night, early dawn
04	K'an	Kan	K'an (?)	sacrifice
05	Chikchan	Chicchan	(unknown)	cosmological snake
06	Kimi	Cimi	Cham (?)	death
07	Manik'	Manik	Manich' (?)	deer
08	Lamat	Lamat	Ek' (?)	Venus, star, ripe(ness), maize seeds
09	Muluk	Muluc	(unknown)	jade, water, offering
10	Ok	Oc	(unknown)	dog
11	Chuwen	Chuen	(unknown)	howler monkey
12	Eb'	Eb	(unknown)	rain
13	B'en	Ben	(unknown)	green/young maize, seed
14	Ix	Ix	Hix (?)	jaguar
15	Men	Men	(unknown)	eagle
16	Kib'	Cib	(unknown)	wax
17	Kab'an	Caban	Chab' (?)	earth
18	Etz'nab'	Etznab	(unknown)	flint
19	Kawak	Cauac	(unknown)	rain storm
20	Ajaw	Ahau	Ajaw	lord, ruler, sun

Source: www.wikipedia.com Public domain.

Ik



"wind" in Chinese



“wind, breath,
life force” in Maya



生命的力量

Shēngmìng de lìliàng
"life force" in Chinese



Inverted
Maya Ik

Ak'b'al

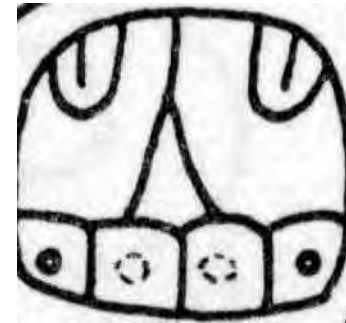


夜

“night” in Chinese



黑

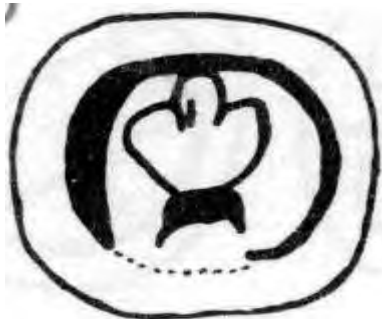


“darkness, night,
early dawn” in Maya

黑暗

Hēi'àn
"darkness" in Chinese

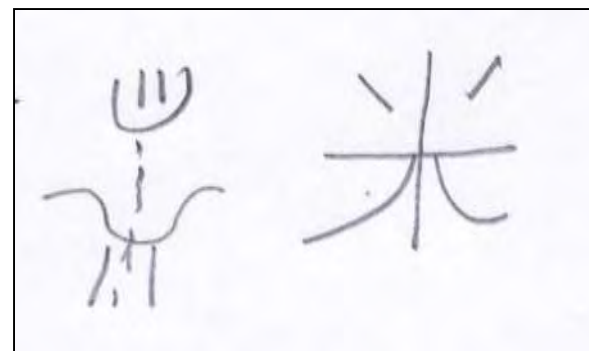
K'an



“corn; sacrifice” in Maya



玉米
Yùmǐ
"corn" in Chinese



Chicchan



“snake deity who makes rain” in Maya glyphs

She Shen

Phonemic

蛇神

Shé shén

"snake deity" in Chinese

蛇

“snake” in Chinese

蛇神谁使雨

Shé shén shuí shǐ yǔ

"snake deity who makes rain"

Cimi, Kimi



Siwang

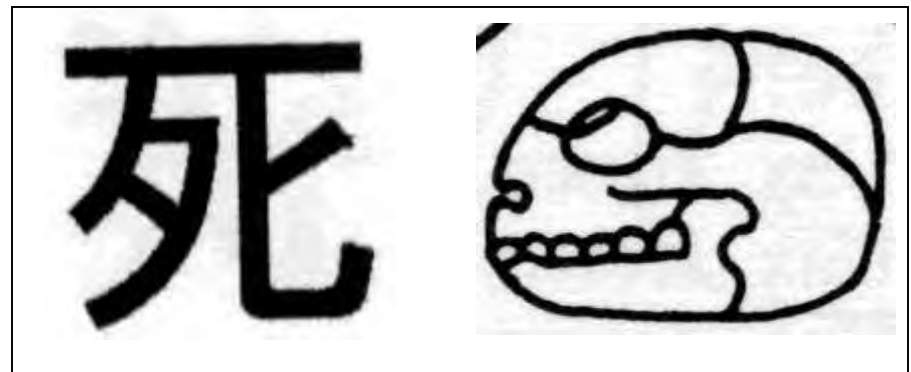
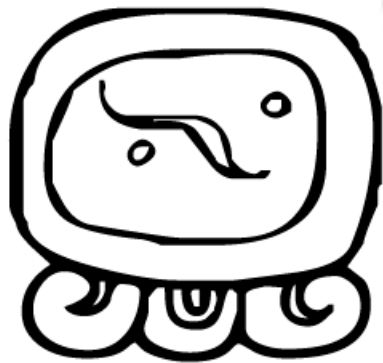
死亡

Phonemic

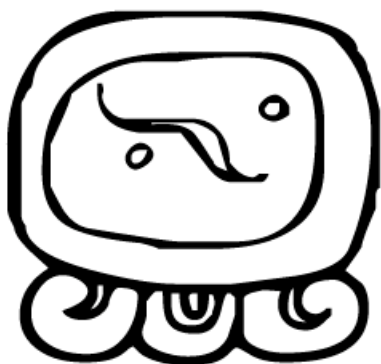
Sǐwáng
"death" in Chinese



死亡



“death” in Maya glyphs



“death” in Maya glyphs

Paul Arnold’s treatment of the comparison between the ancient language systems of Maya and Chinese is a must read study.

XII. METAMORFOSIS DE LOS MUERTOS

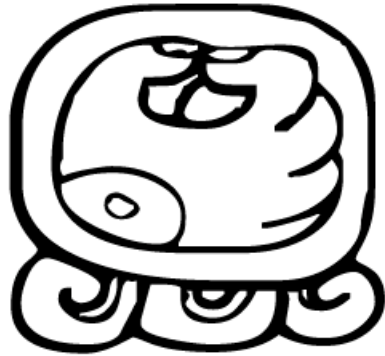


Número 185 — Se ha propuesto “muerte”. De hecho, el glifo parece figurar un arco que separa dos objetos. Tal vez el “sonido”. La muerte es una separación aparente del muerto y de los vivos. Así pues, más bien es: ciclo vida-muerte.

El signo chino (a la derecha) pone: “morir, huir, irse, desaparecer” con la idea de separación. Se interpreta como un arco y su proyectil.



Manik'

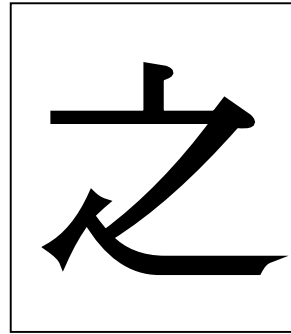


“god of hunting; deer”
in Maya glyphs

狩 猎 之 神

Shòuliè zhī shén

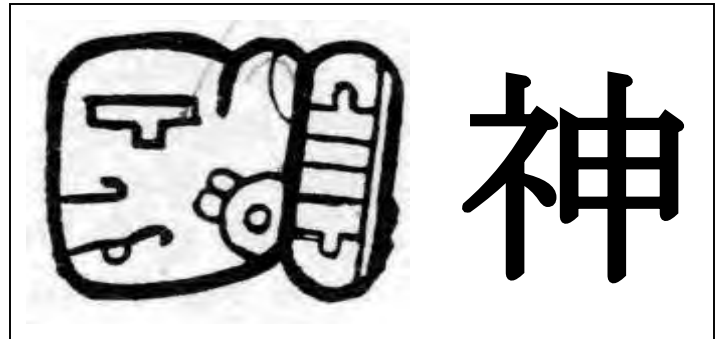
"god of hunting" in Chinese



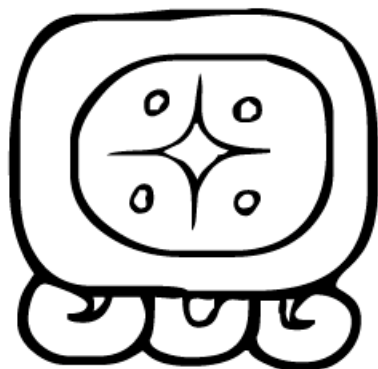
Flipped horizontally

鹿

Lù - "deer"



Lamat



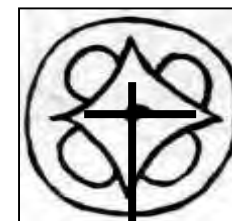
Venus, star,
ripe(ness), maize seeds

金星

Jīnxīng

"venus" in Chinese

Literally: "gold star"

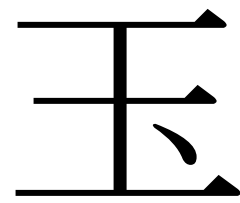


Consider

Muluk

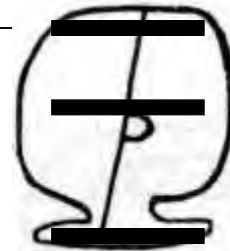
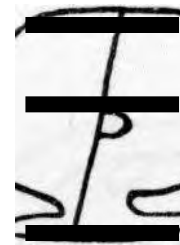
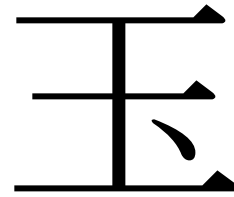


“jade, water, offering”
in Maya glyphs



Yù

"jade" in Chinese



Consider



“offering”
in Chinese



The Chinese
character contains
both elements of
the Maya glyph.

Ok, Oc

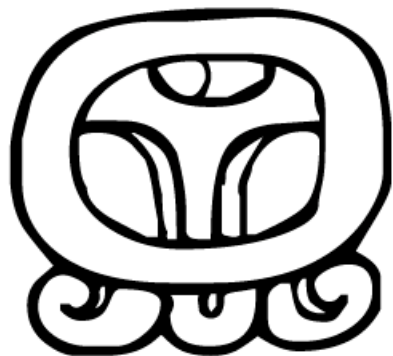


“dog”
in Maya glyphs

狗

Gǒu
"dog" in Chinese

Chuwen, Chuen



“howler monkey”
in Maya glyphs

Phonemic

哭

ku / kū (English translation: "to cry")

猴子

Hóuzi

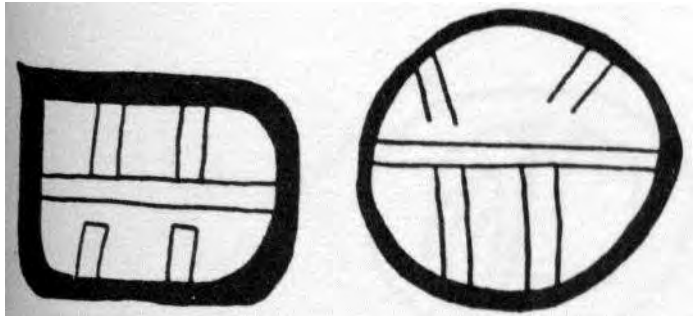
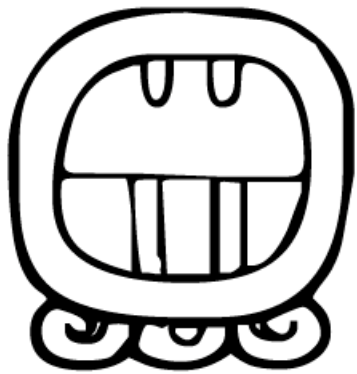
"monkey" in Chinese

吼猴

Hǒu hóu

"howler monkey"
in Chinese

B'en

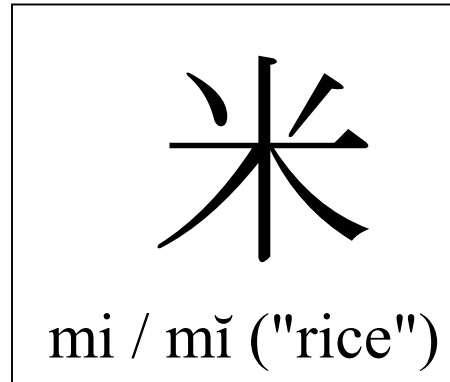


“green/young maize, seed”
in Maya glyphs

玉米

yùmǐ

”corn, maize” in Chinese



mi / mǐ ("rice")

种子

Zhǒngzǐ

"seed" in Chinese

Ix



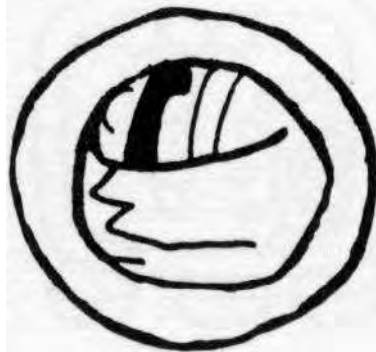
“jaguar”
in Maya glyphs

美洲虎

Měizhōu hǔ
"jaguar" in Chinese

虎

Men



老鷹

Lǎoyīng

"eagle" in Chinese



鵠

Gǔ

"falcon" in Chinese



Flipped horizontally



"eagle"
in Maya glyphs

**Kab'an,
Caban**



Flipped
horizontally



“earth; abundance”
in Maya glyphs

居

Jū

"abode" in Chinese

土

Tǔ

"earth" in Chinese

居

丰 富

Fēngfù

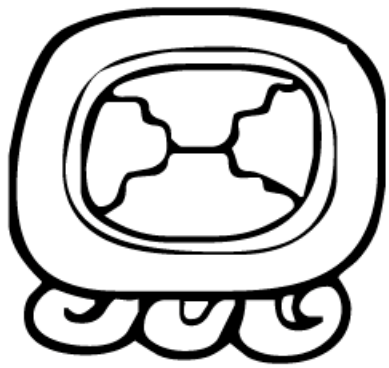
"abundance" in Chinese

大地女神年轻

Dàdì nǚshén niánqīng

"young goddess of earth" in Chinese

Etz'nab'



燧



石



“flint; human sacrifice”
in Maya glyphs

燧石

Suìshí

"flint" in Chinese

人的牺牲

Rén de xīshēng

"human sacrifice" in Chinese

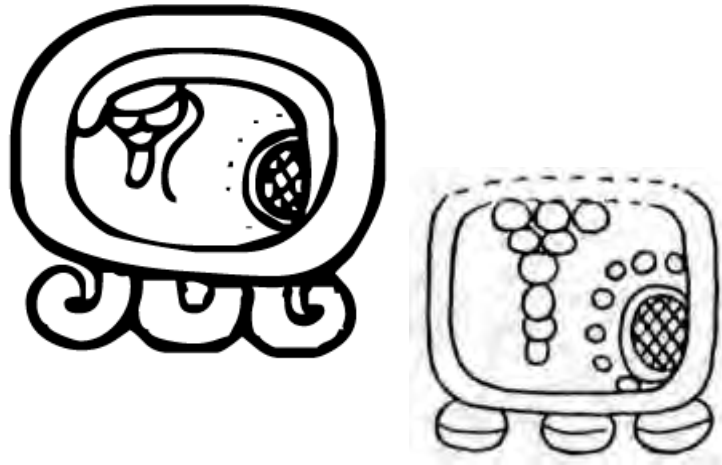
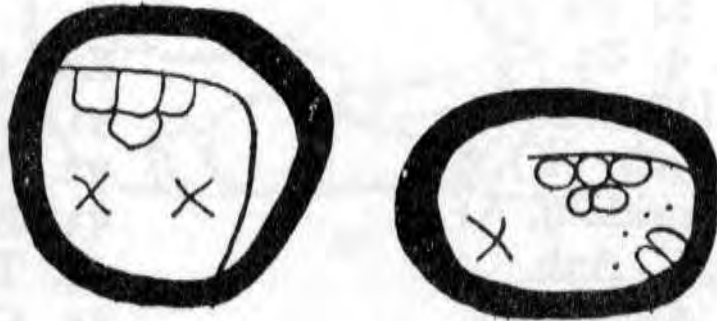
到按钮

Dào ànniǔ: "to knapp"
in Chinese

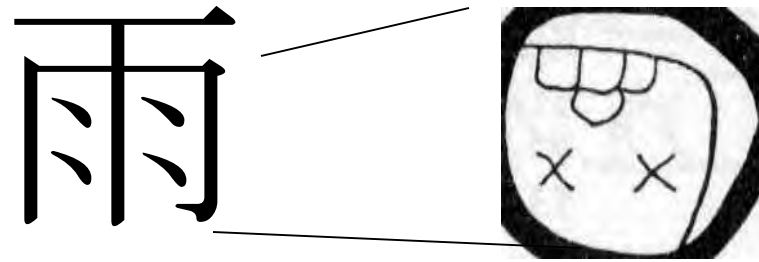


“flint” in Maya glyphs

Cauac, Kawak



“rain; dragon who sends
rain”
in Maya glyphs



Yǔ

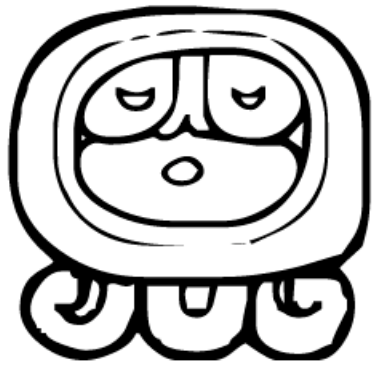
"rain" in Chinese

拉 贡 谁 送 雨

Lā gòng shuí sòng yǔ

"dragon who sends rain" in Chinese

Ajaw, ahau



“lord, ruler, sun”
in Maya glyphs

太阳

Tàiyáng

"sun" in Chinese

太阳神

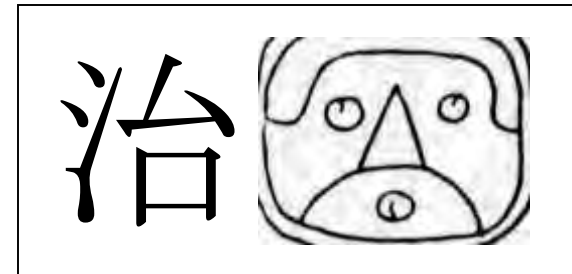
Tàiyáng shén

"sun god" in Chinese

统治者

Tǒngzhì zhě

"ruler" in Chinese



A page from Paul Arnold's book,
El libro maya de los muertos.

Ajaw, ahau



Paul Arnold's treatment of the comparison between the ancient language systems of Maya and Chinese is a must read study.



Número 113 — *El cielo*.

Glypho conocido. (Ver análisis del comentario, página 52).



Número 114. — Tipos 1 y 2: *Ahau, el Señor*

Para el análisis del signo con el punto "origen, raíz", ver comentario, p. 53.

A la derecha, los dos primeros signos chinos que representan al "árbol". El tercero es el mismo signo con el punto "origen" y significa: "raíz, origen".

Tipo 3: *Ahau, el Señor en gloria*

Está rodeado, según parece, de una aureola de llamas.

Tipos 4 y 5: *Descenso de Ahau*

El signo *Ahau* invertido no tiene un significado simplemente fonético, como lo ha sugerido Thompson, sino que sirve para indicar el "descenso". De esta manera, el dibujo de un descenso del dios del trueno figura íntegramente en CM. (Ver comentario, página 94).

Tipo 6: *Oración para el descenso del Señor*

La mano abierta con el pulgar hacia arriba lleva el objeto de la veneración o de la oración (ver el número 109). El signo *Ahau* el Señor invertido, significa su "descenso". (Ver el número 116).



Número 115 — Dios-jaguar, generalmente llamado "Dios B". Se caracteriza por los colmillos de fiera.



Pakal



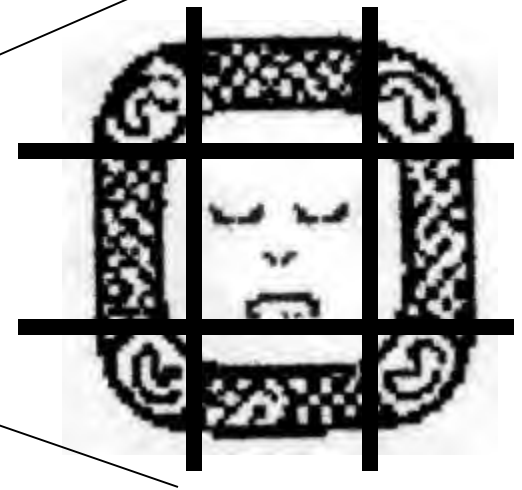
屏蔽

Píngbì

"shield" in Chinese

“shield” in Maya glyphs

屏



Zotz, sotz

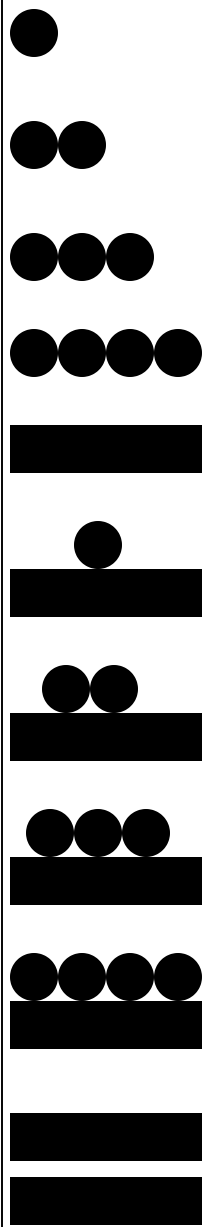


“bat” in Maya glyphs

蝠

“fu”

bat in Chinese



二
三
四
五
六
七
八
九
十



十一
十二
十三
十四
十五
十六
十七



十八
十九

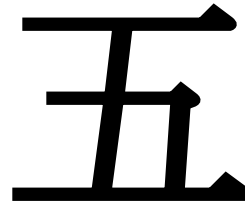
Numbers



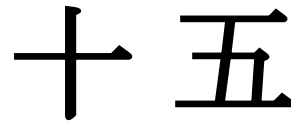
“the number five”
in Maya glyphs



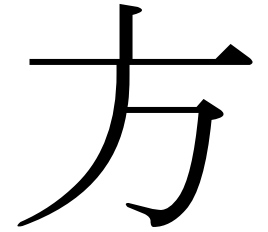
“fifteen”
“3 squares”



“the number five”
in Chinese



“fifteen”
2 squares plus 1 square [?!]



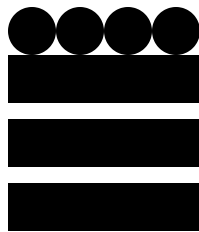
Fāng
"a square" in Chinese



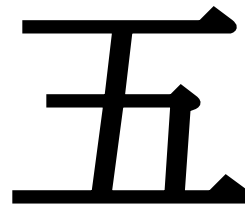
“the number five”
in Maya glyphs



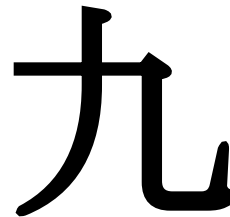
“fifteen”
“3 squares”



“nineteen”
in Maya glyphs



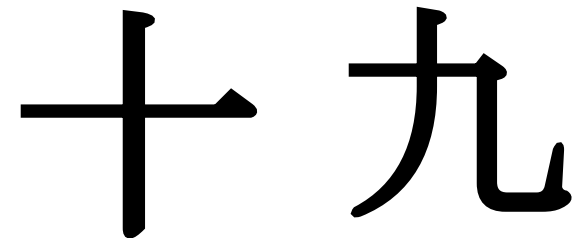
“the number five”
in Chinese



“the number nine”



Fāng
"a square"



“nineteen”



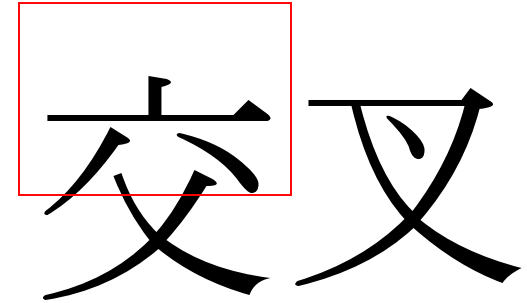
“the number six”
in Maya glyphs



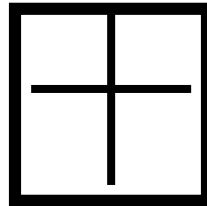
Consider



“the number six”
in Chinese



Jiāochā
"cross" in Chinese



Consider
the idea of
a cross in
a square = 2 + 4 lines

"Ring Numbers" in Maya glyphs



J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing*

			GLYPHS								
(13 CAUAC) 7 CEH	(13 AKBAL) 11 KAYAN	(13 IMIX) 9 UO									
				145600? 400 x 364?	109200? 300 x 364?	72800? 200 x 364?	36480? 100 x 364?	910 10 x 91 BEN	819 9 x 91 IK	637 7 x 91 AHAU	546 6 x 91 MULUC
13 AKBAL	13 AKBAL	13 AKBAL		29120 80 x 364	21840 60 x 364	14560 40 x 364	7280 20 x 364	455 5 x 91	273 3 x 91	182 2 x 91	91 1 x 91
(RING NUMBER) 4 AHAU (8) CUMKU 8.16.14.15.4 6.1	(RING NUMBER) 4 AHAU (8) CUMKU 8.16.3.13.0 0.17	(RING NUMBER) 4 AHAU (8) CUMKU 10.15.13.3.2 7.2.14.19		5460 15 x 364	3640 10 x 364 AKBAL	1820? 5 x 364 AKBAL	1456 4 x 364 AKBAL	MANIK - 31 Days 364 Days	CIB - 91 Days 364 Days	CHICCHAN - 31 Days 364 Days	IX - 12 Days 364 Days
13 AKBAL 16 POP	13 AKBAL 11 YAYKIN	13 AKBAL 1 KANKIN	13 AKBAL MEANINGS OF NUMBERS NOT CLEAR	1092 3 x 364 13 (MEN)	728 2 x 364 CHUEN	364 1 x 364 MANIK	1001 11 x 91 KAN	CHUEN - 364 Days	AHAU - 91 Days 364 Days	MULUC - 91 Days 364 Days	EZNAB - 91 Days 364 Days
								MEN - 364 Days	KAN - 31 Days 364 Days	BEN - 31 Days 364 Days	IK - 31 Days 364 Days
								CAUAC - 364 Days	LAMAT - 91 Days 364 Days	CABAN - 91 Days 364 Days	CIMI - 91 Days 364 Days
								AKBAL - 364 Days	EB - 91 Days 364 Days	IMIX - 91 Days 364 Days	UC - 91 Days 364 Days



Diǎn

"point, dot" in Chinese

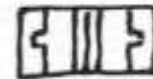
I. GENERACIÓN

Número 1 — *Alto*

El signo chino "alto" (a la derecha) coloca una raya o un punto por encima del nivel (de la tierra o de la palma de la mano, interpretaciones actualmente propuestas, aunque ambas discutibles).

Número 2 — *Bajo*

El signo chino "bajo" (a la derecha) coloca la raya o el punto por debajo del nivel adoptado).

Número 3 — *El Limbo*

Combinación de los signos "alto" (número 1) y "bajo" (número 2) en un solo glifo. El signo chino, frecuente en los documentos más antiguos (sobre carey), ha desaparecido de la escritura más reciente. De forma parecida, combina los signos "alto" y "bajo". Provisionalmente se lee "Alto-Bajo" con implicaciones metafísicas. La comparación permite conferir al signo maya un sentido análogo a Potencia-Lugar supraterrrestre. (Ver comentario de la página 33).

Propongo que provisionalmente se transcriba "en el Limbo".



“Numbers” in Maya glyphs and Chinese Characters as analyzed by Paul Arnold in his book, *El libro maya de los muertos*.

Paul Arnold’s treatment of the Maya and Chinese language systems represents an analytic venue that must be extended.

Xul



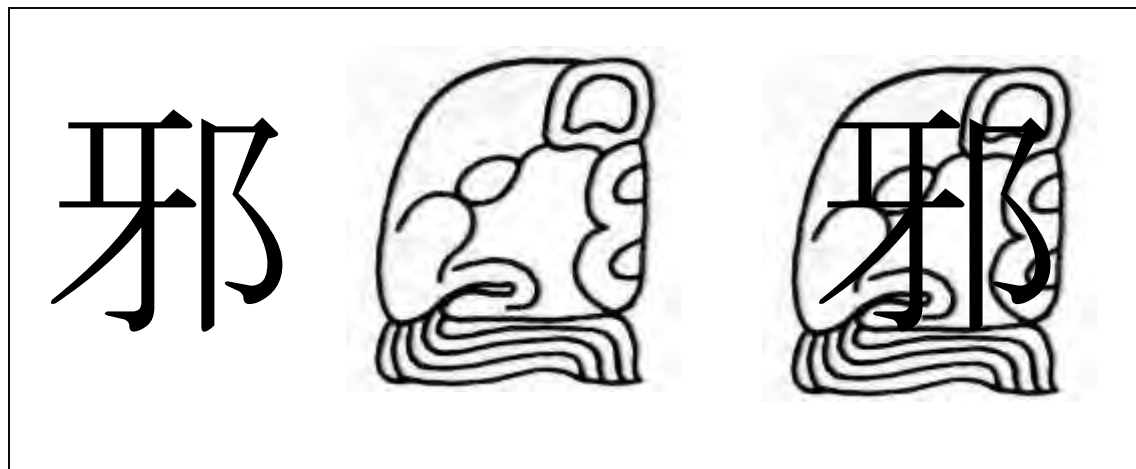
The month of "Xul"
in Maya glyphs
"a dog"

邪

"evil, heretical"
in Chinese

狗

Gǒu
"dog" in Chinese



It was at this point in my comparative analysis of the Maya glyphs and the Chinese characters, on the 4th of May, 2014, that Jorge Luna Martínez told me about Paul Arnold's book, *El libro maya de los muertos [1983]*. He sent me a few pages from Arnold's book yesterday and today [5-6 May]. Arnold makes a phonetic comparison between these two languages. Plus, he presents some comparisons between the phonemes, graphemes and morphemes of both Maya and Chinese.

His comparisons differ somewhat from the ones that I have been effecting, presented in this study. As I mentioned, my comparisons are concerned more with the aspect of graphemes and morphemes and, for now, less with the phonemes.

It is incredible that I have not come across Arnold's book after surfing thousands of pages concerning these linguistic subjects. His book is in Spanish (and German and French), but even so, one would have expected to stumble upon it. In my view, this confirms the manner in which institutional scholarship shuns certain studies and approaches. Most mayistas are concerned with translating the graphemes into phonemes, which is a limited analytic perspective. Arnold makes this point effectively.

Citations and References

Arnold, Paul, *El libro maya de los muertos*, Editorial Diana, Mexico, 1983.

J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya Hieroglyphic Writing, A Introduction*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1960, second printing, 1962, 348 pages, plus Addenda.

www.wikipedia.com

www.google.com/translate