Palenque III

Lakam-ha' III
Introduction to this great Maya city of the Classic (250-950), needed to be organized into seven parts for better understanding, owing to the site historical importance and complexity. **I-The Ancient City – II-Temple of the Inscriptions – III-Temple of the Skull and Temple of the Red Queen – IV- Of Life and Ancestors – V-Palenque Divine Triad – VI-Temple of the Count, the Ball Court, the North and Murcielago Groups – VII-Water Management.** The narrative interface text and photography for a scholarly and visual understanding of the subject matter.

Reference in annex and bibliography will help to further learn the history of this remarkable ancient city.

Each part address the historic and economic structure, architecture, kingship and kinship, beliefs, burials and other relevant topics.

The prominent name Palenque is used throughout over its ancient Maya name Lakam-ha' as more suitable to the narrative.

Maya World Images thanks for their contribution noted American, Mexican and European archaeologists, scholars and institutions of higher learning, as well as outstanding national and foreign publications, without which this presentation would not be possible.

**Temple XXI platform face (below): K'inich Janahb' Pakal.II (center), Kinich Akal Mo' Nahb' his grand-son (left), and U'Pakal K'inich Janahb' Pakal (right).**

*Museo de Sitio INAH Dr. Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, Palenque, Chiapas – Glyphs: Michael Coe & Mark Van Stone, 2001:68/1b & 72*
Left > Right – **Temple of the Inscriptions**, Temple XIII aka **Temple of the Red Queen**, Temple XIIIA partially excavated, and Temple XII aka **Temple of the Skull**
The central precinct of Palenque is the most extensively studied portion of the site. As early as 1891, H.W. Price had made architectural drawings and a beautiful topographic map of the center (Maudslay 1889-1902). Subsequent maps of the center were published by Noguera (1926), Escalona (1933), Fernandez (1936), and Berlin (1940). The most updated map available up until now was published in the Sculpture of Palenque, Volume.1 (Robertson, 1983).

Palenque Site Director, Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz, in the late 1980s and 1990s, conducted multiple consolidation projects in the central part of the Site.

On the east side of the Palace the project included Temple XII, Temple XIIA, Temple XIII and Temple X; north to the Ballcourt and the Ignorado.

Three smaller groups of structure were directly associated with the center; the Camp Group (now INAH administrative, lab and storage complex); the Temple of the Inscriptions and the small buildings around the North Group.

A bridge in the Camp Group allows the tourist trail to cross the Otolum river, providing access down to the Murcielagos Group and the modern museum.

The top of this bridge is reinforced concrete, but the architecture underneath is a corbelled arch tunnel built in the Classic Period. Known at least since Price’s 1891 map, it stands as a rare example of a still functioning ancient Maya bridge.

Temple XIII aka Temple of the Red Queen

Temple XIII (thatched roof entrance), borders the Temple of the Inscriptions on its eastern side. The north end corner of the Palace is seen at left while the Temple of the Cross is in the background, at the foot of the Yemal K’uk’ Lakam Wiz the Great Mountain of the Descending Quetzal – aka El Mirador. There are no evidence of architecture on El Mirador steep slopes; at its summit is a small structure built upon a ground-leveling platform; a narrow trail leads to the village of Babylonia.
On March 19, 626 a major event occurred for the local dynasty, the arrival at Lakamha’ of Lady Ix Tz’ak-b’u for her wedding with K’inich Janhab’ Pakal.II, Palenque’s K’uhul B’aatkal Ajaw, Sacred Lord of the B’aatkal Kingdom who, four days later, will turn 23; she may then have been in her mid-teens.

The noble Maya woman at left is not her, but shows how a woman of her social rank may have looked in 8th century Palenque.

Glyphic text in the Temple of the Sun state that she came from Ux Te’ Kuh, a city located within Palenque’s sphere of influence, but that has not yet been located (Bernal, 2005:77-75; Stuart, 2005b).

We know however, that the city was most probably located northwest of Palenque in the plains of Tabasco, about midway to Tortuguero a fierce antagonist of Palenque since both claimed the title of K’uhul B’aatkal Ajaw as their own. (Glyphs, Fideicomiso de Historia, 2012:83/F24 – The Linda Schele Drawings Collection, 2000 © David Schele).

Ux Te’ Kuh may be the site of El Retiro, an important city that controlled the western part of the kingdom (Rodrigo Liendo and Joshua Balcells (2009).

In the past Ux Te’ Kuh had been a very important place where Palenque’s nobility and government took refuge, twice, when the capital of the kingdom was attacked and burned. The first subjugation by proxies of Calakmul’s Kan (serpent) kingdom took place on April 23, 599, during the reign of Ix Yohl Ik’nal Ajaw. The Kan second attempt at subjugation in 611, forced again Pakal’s family and the court to flee to the same safe haven.

On May 20, 635 after nearly nine years of marriage, she gave birth to her first son and heir to the throne, K’inich Kan B’ahlam. She died on November 13, 672.

Jaina Island, Late Classic, ca. 550-950, MNA.120, Mexico, in Mayo, 2000:394
Temple of the Inscriptions and, at right, Temple XIII, aka of The Red Queen, ca. 1953
Archivo Fotografico del Proyecto Arqueologico Palenque/INAH, in La Reina Roja, 2008:94
Temple XIII aka Temple of the Red Queen. The restoration started in 1994 by INAH archeologist Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz, PhD UNAM was carefully planned and directed with a team of specialists in archaeological excavation and conservation. The temple northeast side abuts on the Temple of the Inscriptions' northwest side, at left, while its northwest side is a few feet away from Temple.XIIA. For both structures Maya architects took advantage of the topography, and build on the foot of hills at their back to enhanced its height. In 1889 Maudslay mapped the grounds and assigned number XIII to the mound. In 1954 Alberto Ruz Lhuillier started work on the exploration and consolidation of the temple. The temple 8th level and crest crumbled in the past, remains are lost, only the bases of 3 of the 4 crest pillars remain. The overall height of the structure is uncertain, but may have reached 60 to 66 feet.

Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:103
Temple XIII – Elevation of the structure show the main stairway from the ground to the three porticos leading to the temple on top; the upper part with the crest is now lost.  

Drawing Jorge Hernández & Magdelena Juárez, 2011:216
Temple XIII – Floor plan of the temple drawn by archaeologist Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz. The crypt, with the sarcophagus room is at center. Excavations on the south side (back) of the Temple of the Inscriptions and Temple XIII by Alberto Ruz Lhuillier, in 1954.

Drawing Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz, 2011:125
Work within the temple proceeded carefully for the safety of the people and also to document and photograph the process. The rectangular vaulted rooms, with doors on each side of the crypt, are architecturally identical. The doors were sealed with well dressed stones and smaller ones between rows as support. In the corridors were found remains of stucco that were above each of the three doors, a larger one over that of the crypt. They were so damaged with time that glyphs and figures could not be identified.

Is it possible that the name and status of the woman in the crypt was displayed on the now lost stucco panels? Most probably.

The excavation led by INAH archaeologist Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz through the temple was slow and methodical, not to miss anything and record architectural and archeological data. The access door was solidly blocked with well dressed large stones. The door (L), is H5.9xW4.2ft with a 4.12ft lintel long, 13in thick. The crypt is built of well dressed stones; its length north-south is 13.8ft, width 9.10ft and height 7.11ft.

Temple XIII – the photo at left shows the main entry point and corridor to the funerary chamber, closed with stone blocks to safeguard access. The first sacrificed companion of the Red Queen was found at the foot of the entrance to the burial chamber (R). Deteriorated remains could not allow identification if they were from either male or female. It was however as expected, an adult of high status identified by the jade bead embedded into a front tooth, shown below (arrow), an adornment reserved for members of higher segments of society (Annex.2).

Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:130-131
Once the door was open, on the four steps leading into the crypt, on the right sides were plain ceramic vessels of various sizes, among which were plain ceramics painted dark red; a tripod plate (broken legs) and 2 wide open mouth vases. The later may have contained food items as is customary, for the voyage of the deceased in the afterlife. Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:132
Archaeologist Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz and his crew had to build a wood frame around the stone sarcophagus. The crew then used hydraulic jacks from their own vehicle (the ones on order had not yet arrived), to carefully lift the slab evenly, in order not to break it. Once lifted, they were able to slide 20 galvanized tubes as rollers between the bottom of the slab and the top of the sarcophagus, then the heavy slab was moved back toward the stairs. Drawings, Jorge Hernandez, 2011:137/F7+F8
The plain sarcophagus, a monolithic bloc was painted red; a dark colored small ceramic brasero, found broken, was placed at the level of the Queen’s chest (L). The open sarcophagus (R), shows red cinnabar (mercury sulfide), covered its bottom and walls. The body was placed in an extended position, head north, heavily covered with cinnabar, as is generally the case for persons of high rank. In burial of people of lower societal rank, both extended and flexed positions are found, with the body when flexed, resting either on the right or left flank. The extended dorsal position generally indicates a lead rank of the individual in the family or group.  

Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:127
Temple XIII aka Temple of the Red Queen. INAH archeologist Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz discovered the tomb in May 1994. He is seen in the crypt studying the stone sarcophagus and the skeleton, covered with cinabar (mercury sulfide). The nickname Red Queen relates to the large amount of cinabar powder red color, that covered the inside of the sarcophagus, and the remains. The meaning of the red cinabar symbolizes blood, the very essence and vehicle of life regeneration, as the sun rises in an endless continuum.

The spilling of blood through auto sacrifice had no other function, whether performed individually or collectively. The heavily bejeweled royal woman, Ix Tz'akbu Ajaw, died on November 13, 672. She was the wife of K'inich Janahab' Pakal.II entombed in the Temple of the Inscriptions, abutting her resting place.

Photo Credit David & George Stuart, 2008:208/F36
On top of the sarcophagus were found, among other items, a broken incense burner; it may have been damaged by falling pieces of masonry over the years. Also found, a spindle whorl and its bone needle, an indication that, as a high ranking lady of the court, she used the tool for fine weaving. The whorl and its needle are associated with the patron of weavers Sak Ixik, the White Lady aka the Weaver Lady (Goddess, I, P. Shelhas 1904, N. Grube, 1997:65f); a deity identified as a young woman and the rising moon (below) in Dresden Codex 16c. Close up Photo - L Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:127
Temple XIII — The so called *Psychoduct* (Alberto Ruz Lhuilier 1958) is a duct like connection from the sarcophagus to below the floor of the temple above. It was believed to allow the chu’lel, spirit or soul, to interact with the descendants and priests during dedication ceremonies. However, the conduit does not connect from the crypt to the temple, even though a round hole (L) was drilled through the sarcophagus’ slab to let the chu’lel “travel up”. It seems the duct did not need to emerge from the floor of the temple, as long as it came close a foot or less, beneath the floor. In common burial, a ceramic plate with a hole at the center was placed, inverted on the face of the deceased, and served the same purpose as the duct. The conduit, or *psychoduct* in Palenque’s *Temple of the Inscriptions*, is the most elaborate in the Maya world (Palenque.II).

Photo Credit Octavvio Moreno, 2011:134

**Temple XIII Tomb.3.** The vertical “*psychoduct*” as a conduit that connects the “spirit” of the deceased in the sarcophagus up to beneath the floor of the temple above.

Drawing from Alberto Ruz (1958), redrawn by Magdalena Juarez, 2011:174
Ix Tz’ak’b’u Ajaw reconstituted funerary mask of malachite, crown, ear spools and necklace of jadeite (L). She lay in dorsal position with head to the north, a classic orientation in burials. Inside, the sarcophagus was heavily covered with cinnabar (mercury sulfide), a common use of the mineral in elite burials at Palenque, and other locations, hence the name given by archaeologists, the Red Queen. Her life size mask is made of 116 small tiles of which 110 are both concave and convex malachite, the 6 others are 2 round obsidian pieces for the pupil and 4 triangular grayish jadeite pieces for the iris. The upper diadem is made of 31 round flat jade disks and the lower 30, both were linked behind the head. The ear spools and necklace are likewise made of jade. The reconstitution of the mask is a tribute to the expertise of INAH-Instituto Nacional de Anthropología e Historia archaeologists and scientists in Mexico city.
Sacrificed Companions, also called attendants to service their lord in the after life, was common practice in the Americas. A practice found in the anthropological record in all parts of the pre-historic and historic world. The attendants were to attend their lord’s daily needs, as they used to in all aspects of life. For that purpose, they will use implements buried with the lord, such as wardrobe, belt, sandals, rings and necklaces among others. Favorite foodstuff and beverage were stored in ceramic jars for meals. Pets of the deceased accompanied the ruler in the other world, because companion dogs were favored to lead their master while traveling through the dangerous obstacles of the underworld (Palenque.IV).

Watercolor by Constantino Armendariz in La Reina Roja, 2011:221 – Photo Credit, Javier Hinojosa, 2011:138
First Sacrificed Companion on the east side of the sarcophagus, is that of a female 20 to 30 years old laying face down with her hands behind her back. Forensic analysis found that she bore clear skeletal evidence of violence. The skeleton showed various cuts and stab marks on two ribs and several thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, consistent with sacrifice.

Watercolor by Constantino Armendariz in La Reina Roja, 2011:221 – Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:129
Second Sacrificed Companion, on the west side of the sarcophagus is that of a young boy, 11-12 years old lying on his back. Forensic analysis established clear skeletal evidence of sacrifice. Like the female, sharp cutting tools, probably obsidian were used; the young boy third cervical vertebrae displayed flat continuous cut marks.

Watercolor by Constantino Armendariz in La Reina Roja, 2011:220 – Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:128
A *Spondylus* shell valve was found near the Queen’s head, in which was a small female limestone figurine, thought to be a representation of *Ix Tz’ak’b’u Ajaw*.

*Spondylus princeps* shells are bi-valves that were important means of exchange, gifts and personal adornment, in the cultures of most of Mesoamerica and South America. Three jade celts hanging from her belt, were an implement worn by noble men and women of the highest rank.

Among numerous offering and adornment found in the sarcophagus, was a small mask made of 120 obsidian and conch tiles, 9x7.5in, found placed near her left hand. No correlation with *Ix Tz’ak’b’u Ajaw* has so far been established. It may however, have been part of her belt hanging with 3 limestone celts. Or is it the face of an important person in her life?, that of an ancestor? The crest placed vertically above the nose ridge of the mask is unusual in belt figures.

Photo Credit Michel Zabe & Omar Luis Olguin, 2011:198
The three cels (or hatchets) are part of the royal belt adornment worn by high nobles, one of the Maya earliest symbol of rank, and were hanging below a jade mask of an ancestor, tied up to the belt. Such high rank belts were in use from the Late pre-Classic, and are found in various tombs in Palenque. Lords wore up to three such adornment; some have their face engraved with mythological scenes. We do not know if the number of such implement, and the type of stone used was representative of a rank within the noble community.

The cels, made of limestone shown at left, were found between the femurs; they are seen restored at right. Their length vary from 5.1>5.9in, width 1.6>2.25in, and average thickness: 0.33>0.39in (A. Gonzalez C., 2011:188). They were made from jade or other stone and would clink while a noble walked, emitting a chime-like sound; a warning to common people of an approaching lord?

Photo Credit Michel Zabe & Omar Luis Olgin in La Reina Roja, 2011:134+188
The seashell mother of pearl (green arrow), and 4 obsidian blades (blue arrow) were found within the upper thoracic cavity of the remains, and were probably part of her outer garment that collapsed through time. The pearl design is that of the *ajaw* symbol for a Lord, similar to the one found in Temple XVIII. The small jade figurine of a spider monkey's face resting on a quadripetal flower (blue arrow), was found at the same location split in its two components, beneath the circular flat jade discs of the Queen's double diadem and multi-strand necklace.  

Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:148
Ix Tz’ak-b’u Ajaw, the “Red Queen” is K’inch Janahb’ Pakal.II’s consort, she married in 626. She died in her late 40s in 672, and was enshrined in Temple XIII, next to the Temple of the Inscriptions, her husband’s resting place 11 years later. Careful reconstruction shown below, of her life size mortuary mask, that may not have been placed on her face, took several years. It is made of 116 pieces of malachite of various shape and size. The ear spools and diadem are of green jade. The eyes are round obsidians for the pupil, and four triangular pale green jadeite for the iris.

Photo-L. Credit Michel Zabè & Omar Luis Olgin, 2011:191
PhotoR. Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:202a
Identification of the mask and other corporal adornment in the sarcophagus was difficult, as often happens in such case. With time, the decaying bone structure was slowly crushed by the heavier adornment made of both malachite and jade. The tiles made of malachite ranged in size from millimeters to centimeters, cut at odd angles and in different shapes. Even though data are lacking, malachite may have been excavated from the Santa Fe mine closest to Palenque, and probably shipped over rivers to avoid the difficult topography for heavy carriage over the mountain range.

No pre-contact remains were found at the mine, probably destroyed when it was used again in the late 19th century (map Annex-3). There was no option for reconstruction specialists than the proven trial-and-error process. To make matters a bit more difficult was the presence of another mask, as well as a large amount of jade from the queen diadems, ear flares and necklaces. Before removal from the sarcophagus, all item regardless of their size, had to be photographed in situ and identified on a map. Once all items were removed, they were carefully shipped to INAH’s laboratory in Mexico City. There, another tedious and time consuming process started, carefully verifying and identifying the inventory; sorting items in reference to their position with the remains, before the reconstruction process itself could take place.

Photo Credit Octavio Moreno, 2011:202b
Temple XII aka Temple of the Skull

In the temple was found a wealth of jade as an *ikaatz* or tribute, paid on 17 February 697 by Pomona’s Lord Kuch B’alam, of the Pakab’ul lordship, including a large jade jewel. Pomona, was the neighboring kingdom east of Palenque near the Usumacinta river, an important ally in Palenque’s trade route network, but nevertheless historically hostile, allied with Calakmul.
The Temple of the Skull is named for the stucco skull set at the foot of the middle pillar of the structure. Its significance can only be inferred from the archaeological record. In Classic Maya mythology God.I is the moon goddess (glyph at right) represented as a young woman seated in the crescent of a new Moon holding a rabbit.

Mesoamericans, as well as many other cultures, saw a rabbit crouching in the full moon (Annex.4). In this case however, after Palenque’s First Roundtable and Dr. Linda Schele’s remark, that the skull is of the Old Goddess, the Dead Moon. The roundish ears are representative of the Maya glyph ha or hu’h, for moon.

The eye socket shapes are similar to the ears, reminiscent of the hu’h. The recognition of the temple as dedicated to the moon goddess may need to be investigated further. Together with Temple.XIIA adjacent to Temple.XII, research may bring a better understanding of the gods and deities’ roles in Palenque’s belief structure.
Temple XII aka Temple of the Skull — The lack of inscriptions prevents from knowing who was buried there, but it may well have been a Late Classic king. There may be other tombs within both Temples XII and XIIA (L), awaiting discovery. Investigations below the temple uncovered a vaulted room where were found 3 *Spondylus princeps* shells, and about 600 pieces of jade spread over nine stone slabs on the floor. Among the material recovered in the vaulted room below Temple XII in 1957, is a jade cube with the date 697, and the name B’alam, “that may be that of a lord of Pomona, a neighboring kingdom” (David & George Stuart, 2008:184).
Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz, PhD, UNAM, INAH, is a world renowned Mexican archaeologist. Director of the Proyecto Arqueologico Palenque since 1989, he worked on Temple XIII, better known as the Temple of the Red Queen, and discovered her last sanctuary and royal sarcophagus in 1994. Over his long career, he also worked on a number of sites in the State of Chiapas and other ancient cities of Mexico. He is the author of numerous scholarly books among which the celebrated La Reina Roja, published by CONACULTA-Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes and INAH-Instituto Nacional de Arqueologia e Historia Mexico, 2011, an unavoidable reference to understand Temple XIII great sanctuary and archaeological work. Palenque.III is dedicated to this great archaeologist and his team for their work on Temple.XIII. Beside La Reina Roja, Arnoldo Gonzalez Cruz wrote numerous articles and scientific papers in the renowned magazine Arqueologia Mexicana, Edición Especial.8 below, with Martha Cuevas Garcia, as well as books in cooperation with renowned Mexican and foreign archaeologists.

Photo Credit antesala.com.mx
Ancient tradition of dental scarification and implant with semi-precious stone and precious metal is well recorded for high segment of societies in the Americas and beyond. Witness the remains, below left, found in Tomb.2 between the Temple of the Cross and the Temple of the Foliated Cross.

Maize, or corn, was an essential daily food item, and still is today. Stone *metate* and *mano*, fashioned from volcanic gray stone was used to manually grind corn daily. Grindings stone-on-stone produced micro-silicate particles, an abrasive, that was mixed with corn dough. The high incidence of teeth abrasion and subsequent decay, was mostly due to the mix of silicate and corn.

Scarification, filing and implant in teeth were other contributing factors to teeth decay. Together with limited lack of dental hygiene, led to development of tooth carries.

Dental record from remains in Palenque show carries present in 96.7% of the population. *Ix Tz’akbu Ajaw*’s teeth were found to have been affected by the same problems as those of other residents of Palenque, and for the same reasons.

Teeth scarification, filing and implant with semi-precious stones or metals was widely practiced in numerous cultures. Limited knowledge in teeth and mouth hygiene then, resulted in gum decease and painful abscess.

Teeth filing is a practice that still persist well into our time, witness the young man above photographed by the author, from the Guaymi tribe in Bocas del Toro in Panama, 1984. Alteration of the body, from cranial deformation to body scarification or tattooing in ancient cultures, are still very much part of contemporary societies today.

Through time and place, body alteration in whatever form is essentially an expression of “belonging” to a specific tribe or segment of that tribe. It is in fact, the visual manifestation of the rejection of the fundamental values of others that do not share a particular group communal interaction; a voluntary marginalization within the group.
Annex 3
Source of Malachite in Chiapas
Map courtesy Arqueología Mexicana, No. 113:50
The “man in the moon” is common to popular imagery. It is associated symbolically with the monotheistic conception of absolute domination of nature by culture. The eradication of nature’s symbols from the world view over generations, lead to a world view fundamentally foreign to that of ancient and today’s traditional cultures, from the Near to the Far East, Africa and the New World. It is obvious however, that a man’s face is nowhere to be seen on a full moon, while that of a crouching rabbit, with its two long ears and its head and body, are readily identifiable.

Photo Credit: L-moonipulastions.com – R-1tess.wordpress.com
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