

Solving Errors in Mayan Calendrics: The example of the Dynasty Pots

The famous Dynasty Pots contain many calendar rounds (see Simon Martin's article in the *Maya Vase Book* vol.5, and the web page www.TraditionalHighCultures.com/Dynasty_Pots.html), but only a single distance number 4.4.11, on that one vase K6751 which is of highest quality, preserves the longest text with the largest number of accessions (19), and has essentially no overpainting (Kerr). That distance number does not work as written. It does not connect any of the calendar rounds shown. Since there are other errors on many of the dynastic vases, it has been customary to dismiss the text as not reliable history. However, the tradition of analyzing manuscript variants provides tools with which we can demonstrate that the vases fall into two groups, one of which supports reconstruction of possible calendar rounds (16 of 19 are possible combinations), in the other of which they do not (only 1 possible combination).

Many Mayan texts offer more detail for the last ruler in a sequence, presumably the one for whom the text was made. The distance number near the end of K6751 leads to a date when someone died, so it would be only reasonable to assume that it refers to the last king mentioned (who like the 2nd is a *kaloomte'*). Here is the given information:

9 Imix 9 Yaxk'in
Distance number 4.4.11
2 Ak'bal 6 Wo

This does not work, nor does it work if an oddly placed extra bar is taken as 5 K'atuns. A large DN 5.4.4.11 we might think led from some parallel event (death of a famous ancestor?) 104 years earlier. However this is not the kind of parallel usually drawn by the Maya.

Approach 1: Assume the DN and the resulting calendar round for the death date are correct.

2 Eb 10 Tzec
Distance number 4.4.11
2 Ak'bal 6 Wo

The starting calendar round would then be this. Not in the text. And no calendar round in the text strongly resembles this.

5 Eb seating K'anasiy (K'ayab)
Distance number 5.4.4.11
2 Ak'bal 6 Wo

The starting calendar round would then be this. Not in the text. And no calendar round in the text strongly resembles this.

Approach 2: Assume the DN and the starting calendar round for the preceding accession are correct.

9 Imix 9 Yaxk'in
Distance number 4.4.11
6 Eb 0 Sak

The ending calendar round would then be this. Not in the text. And no calendar round in the text strongly resembles this.

9 Imix 9 Yaxk'in
Distance number 5.4.4.11
9 Eb 5 Zotz

The ending calendar round would then be this. Not in the text. And no calendar round in the text strongly resembles this.

Approach 3: Assume the two calendar rounds are correct.

9 Imix 9 (Yax?)k'in
Distance number 4.14.2
2 Ak'bal 6 Wo

The minimal distance number leading from the first calendar round to the second would be this 4.14.2. It strongly resembles what is written. Given that Winal and K'in are typically written in the same glyph block, a shift of two bars from one to the other would change an intended 4.14.2 into 4.4.12, only one day different from the 4.4.11 which is written. This is therefore the best solution so far, retaining the maximum amount of what has come down to us, assuming the fewest errors, and the most explainable ones.