During the summer of 2015, the funding provided by the Tinker Foundation allowed me to pursue research in conjunction with the Proyecto Regional Arqueológico La Corona (PRALC). The goal of my research was to work with hieroglyphic inscriptions in order to photograph, illustrate, and translate the texts. The research was divided into two phases: the first being approximately four weeks in the field as the field epigrapher of the archaeological site La Corona in the northwestern Peten of Guatemala, and the second being another four weeks at the site laboratory in Guatemala city.

The day before I arrived at the site, I was waiting in Flores, Guatemala for the truck to come and pick me up the next morning, and I got a message from Max Lamoureux-St-Hilaire saying that he had important, confidential information for me. That day during excavations, his team had uncovered two beautifully carved stone panels, one with a figure and a short glyphic inscription and the second with a long, immaculate text.

As the designated field epigrapher, I had the distinct honor of spending my four weeks at the site working almost exclusively with these two texts. The first, La Corona Element 55, depicts a king of the nearby site Calakmul, located in present day Mexico. The king, ? Ti’ K’awiil, is named on the block, along with his titles and the date of the event of his performing a ceremony, presumably at the site of La Corona. The second block, Element 56, bears 56 elegant glyphs and tells the story of a La Corona ruler, Chak Ak’ Paat Kuy, and the actions and ceremonies he performed in becoming the ruler of La Corona. Element 56 was able to provide the field of epigraphy with some insightful new
understandings of both the name and life of this ruler, as well as giving clues to the reading of a couple of hieroglyphs which previously had been very poorly understood.

My role was to clean, photograph, and illustrate these texts. The process of learning how to draw, the conventions of hieroglyphic illustration, and how to use the drawing tablet with Photoshop was incredibly instructive. The careful critiques given by Dr Marc Zender and Dr David Stuart were invaluable to my learning process.

![Figure 1: Element 56](image)

The second phase of my summer research brought me to the laboratory in Guatemala City where I worked with texts on ceramics. My intention was to illustrate the majority of the project’s reconstructed, complete or nearly complete vessels. However, the conservator had not finished reconstructing the vessels, and thus there were only four vessels with which I was able to work. In addition to the full vessels, the project has
unearthed many sherds bearing inscriptions, so I spent my time at the lab illustrating individual sherds.

During my time at the lab, I learned valuable skills in illustrating ceramics, conventions and tools used by ceramicists, and also those used by epigraphers, thanks in large part to Carrie Parris, a ceramicist from Tulane who also works on the project. The drawings I produced include profiles, scales, and are drawn using greyscale; in effect, they are publication quality. The four complete vessels I had a chance to illustrate had been previously well documented. While the texts were not as instructive from a hieroglyphic standpoint as I had hoped, the experience was invaluable.

Figure 2: Vessel CR316

I anticipate that my dissertation research will require a very large corpus of texts, and as such I will be working primarily with published materials on previously excavated and analyzed texts. The experience I gained this summer, thanks to the funding provided by the Tinker Foundation, allowed me to create a foundation of experience in illustrating, deciphering, and generally working in a primary context with the texts. All other materials that I have worked with have been illustrated by others. The illustration process involves a great deal of precision, and some interpretation to accurately decipher the carver or painter’s intention. This kind of skill comes with practice, and having that experience this summer was irreplaceable to my future career in epigraphy.