



The Ahau Chronicles



Volume 22

March 4, 2011

Subscribers: 379



7 Ahau 13 Kayab

Long Count: 12.19.18.3.0



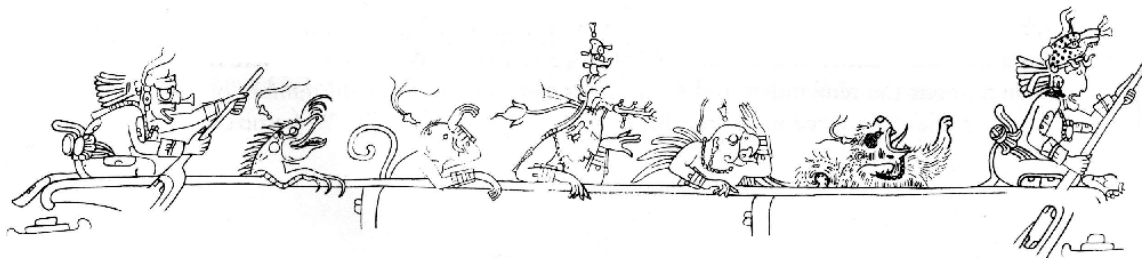
4 Ahau 3 Kankin

13.0.0.0.0

December 23, 2012

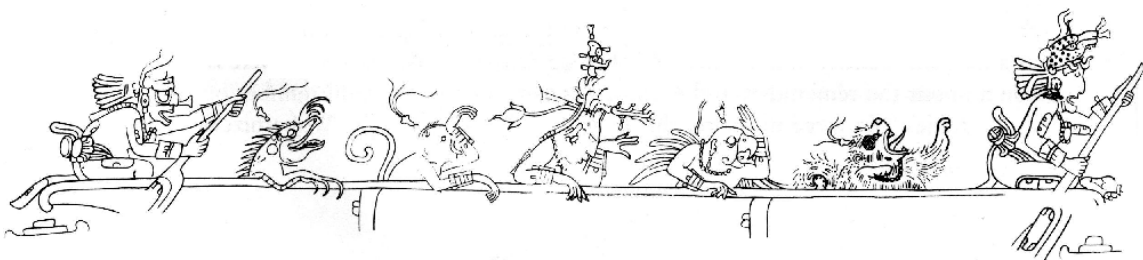
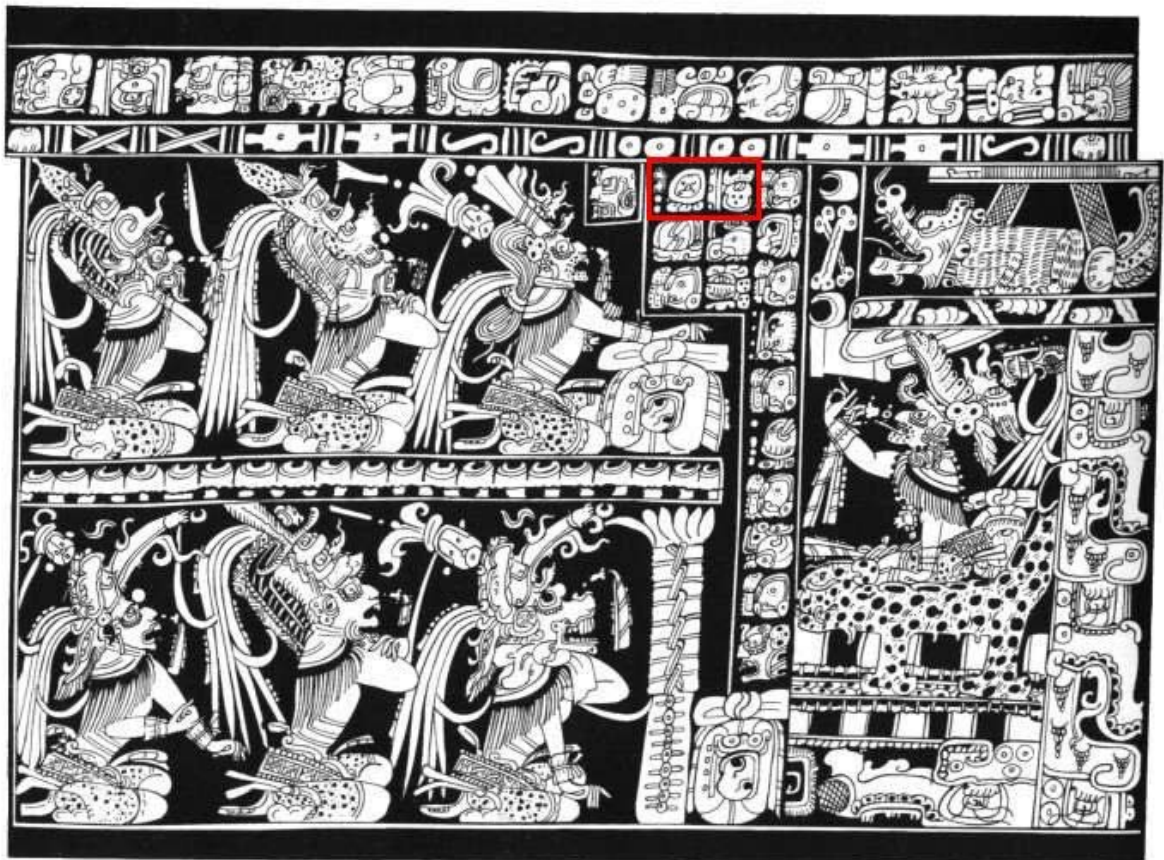
The Ninth Oxford International Symposium on Archaeoastronomy, which took place this past January, featured on its second day an afternoon of talks collectively entitled “**The 2012 Phenomenon: Maya Calendar, Astronomy, and Apocalypticism in the Worlds of Scholarship and Global Popular Culture**”. I was both surprised and excited to see this topic in such a place of prominence in the conference schedule. Unfortunately, the papers seemed to talk around the issue, treating it more as a pop culture “fad” than an object of serious study, and more than one member of the audience felt frustrated by the lecturers’ reluctance to “cross the finish line” with their papers. This newsletter will discuss pertinent topics from these talks in light of the larger issues that have been dealt with here in the past.

In his paper “**It’s not the End of the World: emic evidence for local diversity in the Maya Long Count**”, Mark Van Stone attempted to diffuse the importance of 2012 by considering inconsistencies within epigraphic evidence from Tikal, Palenque, Coba, and Yaxchilan. Some calendar inscriptions from these Maya sites do not agree with each other as we understand them and so he rushes to conclude that “any sort of event in 2012 becomes problematic when we recognize that the Maya did not even agree on the way the Calendar cycles operate.” By sowing confusion about the use of the calendar in various ancient sites, Van Stone was able to pretend that a general lack of coherence reigned and that sacred dates were perhaps subject to the whimsy of local priests who manipulated the calendar for their own purposes. But by undermining the unity of the calendar within the ancient inscriptions he ignored a wealth of evidence that correlates precisely to cosmic events of the past so that he could suggest that all the hype is “much ado about nothing”.



Far more illuminating was the paper by Carl Callaway entitled: “**Cosmogony and prophecy: Maya Era Day cosmology in the context of the 2012 prophecy**”. Callaway examined the link between the end of the current 13th B’aktun period in 2012 to the end of the previous 13th B’aktun period in 3114 BC. He suggested that “these two 13 B’aktun Period Endings, separated by a span of 5125 years, are like two bookends that inextricably link ancient Maya conceptions of time, mythic history, and prophecy” and that “mythic events and godly actions recorded at the beginning of the era directly parallel those actions that will occur at the end of the era.”

Callaway analyzed the **Vase of 7 Gods** shown below. Shown in red is the 4 Ahau 8 Kumku date that represents the completion of the previous 13th B’aktun in 3114 BC. This “Era Day” mirrors the 4 Ahau 3 Kankin date of December 23, 2012 which will signal the completion of the current 13th B’aktun and the birth of the next World Age. The vase inscription depicts a conclave of supernatural gods meeting in the Underworld, offering tribute to God L, the Smoker, who sits atop a jaguar throne. God L has been discussed in several of these newsletters, most recently in the previous one (Volume 21) where I pointed out his dual jaguar/armadillo aspects in relation to the island monument. It does not seem improbable to consider the rear of the island monument as a personification of the Jaguar God of the watery Underworld, marking the sacred location where the Gods of Time will gather at the completion of the 13th B’aktun.

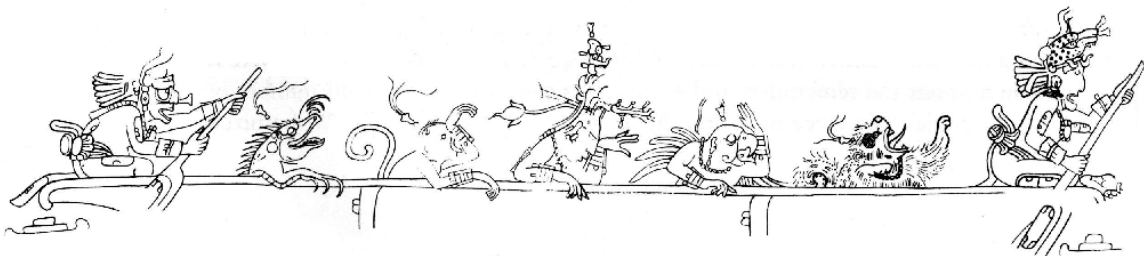




Another well-known Mayan artifact, the **Vase of 11 Gods**, depicts an almost identical scene, although here there are several more deities in attendance. The same 4 Ahau 8 Kumku date appears in the same location within the inscription as it did in the **Vase of 7 Gods**. Again, God L is shown presiding over the group, gesturing to the other gods while he smokes his cigar atop his jaguar throne. The hieroglyphic text is almost identical to the **Vase of 7 Gods**, except for the last glyphs which here refer to the Sun God as opposed to the Jaguar God of the Underworld. Both of these gods appear on the island monument

John B. Carlson presented a paper entitled: **“Lord of the Maya Creations on his Jaguar Throne: the eternal return of Elder Brother God L to preside over the 2012 transformation”** where he stated that “Old God L is *the* senior cosmogonic god...who presides over the gathering of supernaturals for the almost endless cyclical renewals or re-creations of the Maya cosmos in the great 13 Baktun cycle.” Further, he said that “God L also has prominent Jaguar and Armadillo aspects...and these qualities relate to his underworld, night, Venus sacrificer as well as cosmogonic aspects.”

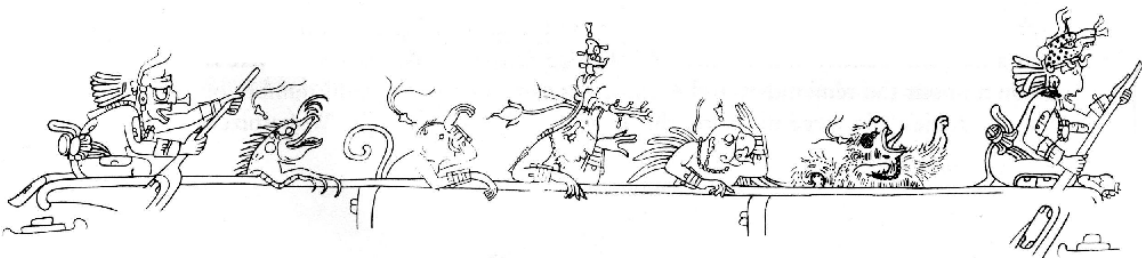
It is always satisfying for me when world-renowned scholars present evidence that is fully in accordance with my research on the enigmatic island monument, a gigantic artifact that the cloistered academic world has chosen to wholly ignore. The monument presents the binary opposition of day/night in the form of the Sun God and the Jaguar God of the Underworld. The enormous jaguar throne represents the duality of God L with its armadillo aspect on the opposite side. As witness to the Transit of Venus, when the bright planet appears instead as a dark spot on the sun, the monument plays the role of Venus Sacrificer. And as a witness to the final Total Solar Eclipse of the 13 B’aktun, when the Sun God is bitten by the Jaguar God of the Underworld and sinks below the horizon in total eclipse, the monument participates in the death of the current World Age.

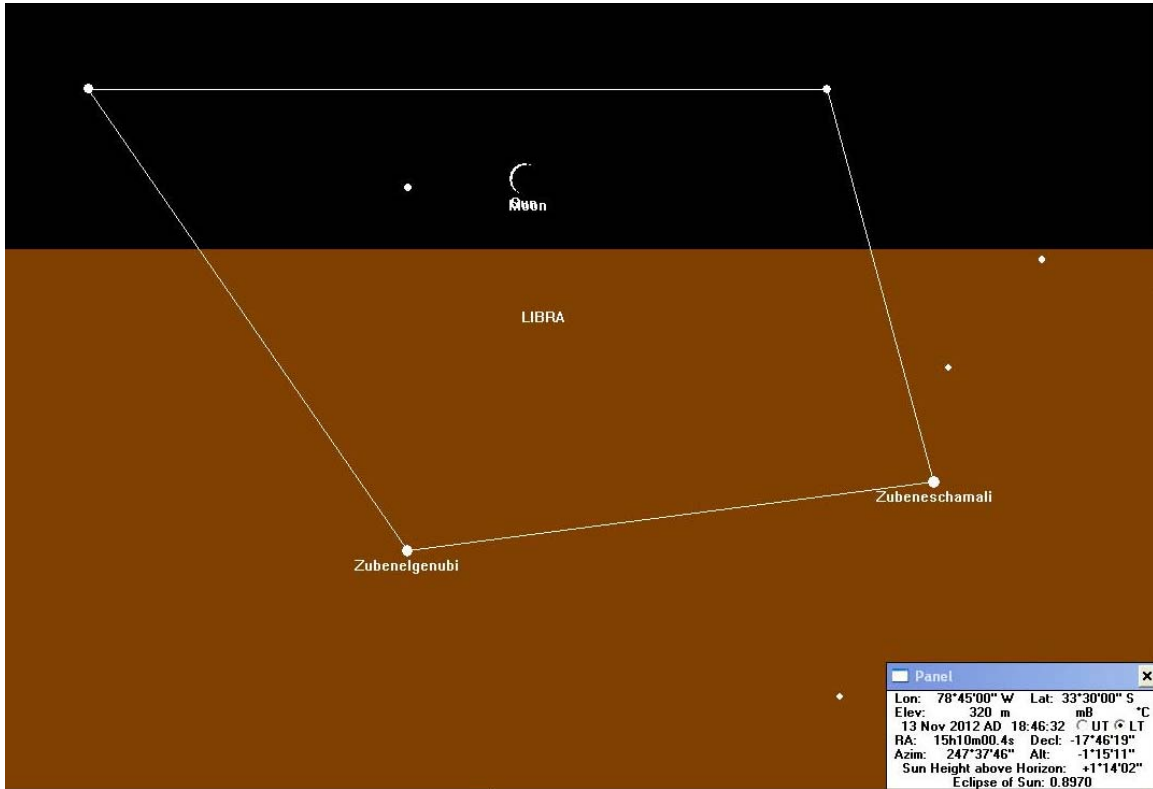


Michael J. Grofe gave the paper that most explicitly dealt with astronomical themes when he presented “**Measuring Deep Time: the sidereal year and the tropical year in the Maya inscriptions**”. The sidereal year, measured by the time it takes the sun to return to the same position in the sky relative to the background stars, is a fraction of an hour longer than the tropical year, which is measured by the time it takes the sun to return to the same position in the cycle of seasons (eg. vernal equinox to vernal equinox). Grofe examines Maya inscriptions which “contain numerous examples of long intervals of time that count both backward and forward from a fixed point of historical reference to specific mythological dates, often thousands of years in the past or future”.



Following the Venus and Eclipse Tables in the Mayan screenfold book known as the Dresden Codex, there are several pages of deep time intervals recorded. These are often referred to as the “Serpent Series” of numbers since they are represented within the coils of large snakes. Grofe showed how the repeated distance number of more than 15,000 years is almost exactly a whole multiple of the sidereal year, returning the sun to precisely the same position against the background of stars, while the position in the tropical year shifts dramatically. Such an accurate calculation suggests that the Maya were observing and recording the precession of the equinoxes, the slow drift of the equinox point around the ecliptic which takes almost 26,000 years to complete a single cycle. In our present day the sun on the vernal equinox is slowly drifting out of Pisces and into the constellation of Aquarius. For me, the most striking part of Grofe’s demonstration was the example he used to illustrate his point. He repeatedly showed the recurrence of a Sacred Round date of 3 Ix and how it always returned the sun to the same point within the constellation of Libra. This is the **exact** same location of the sun during the Nov. 13, 2012 eclipse!





The above image shows the moon eclipsing the sun one degree above the horizon in the constellation Libra as seen from the location of the island monument on Nov. 13, 2012, a mere 40 days before the end of the Great Cycle of the Mayan Calendar. It appears that the Dresden Codex reflects a precise astronomical science used to calibrate the artificial construct of the Mayan calendar with the grand movements of the cosmos.



Barbara MacLeod finished the session with her paper, **“The God’s Grand Costume Ball: a Classic Maya prophecy for the close of the thirteenth Bak’tun”** where she analyzed the inscription from Tortuguero Monument 6, a fragment of which is shown at left, which is the only known monument to mention the upcoming 4 Ahau 3 Kankin date that will end the 13th Baktun on December 23, 2012. Her study suggested a “future ceremony of investiture for a deity of deep-time transitions” who is named Bolon Yok’Te. Not surprisingly, one avatar of Bolon Yok’Te is the Jaguar God of the Underworld who I would argue is memorialized in the island monument.

