



The Ahau Chronicles



Volume 43

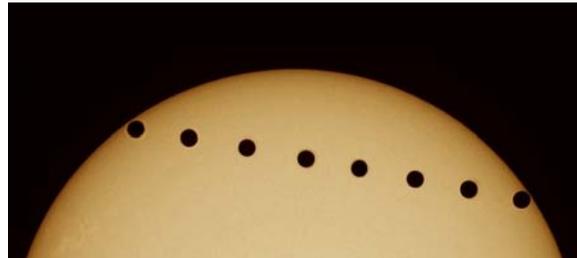
April 27, 2012

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Long Count: 12.19.19.6.0



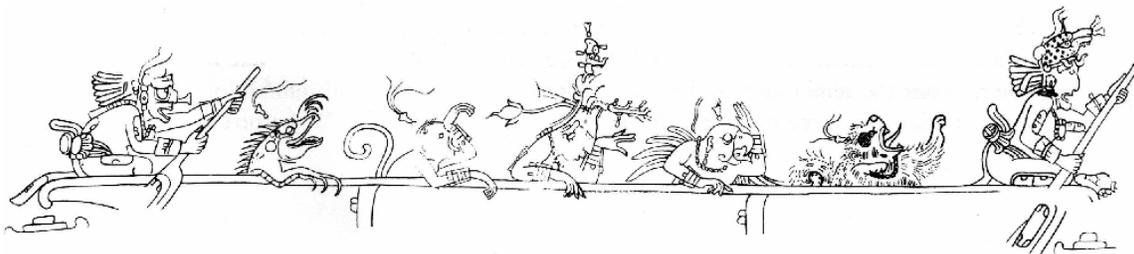
Countdown to Venus Transit



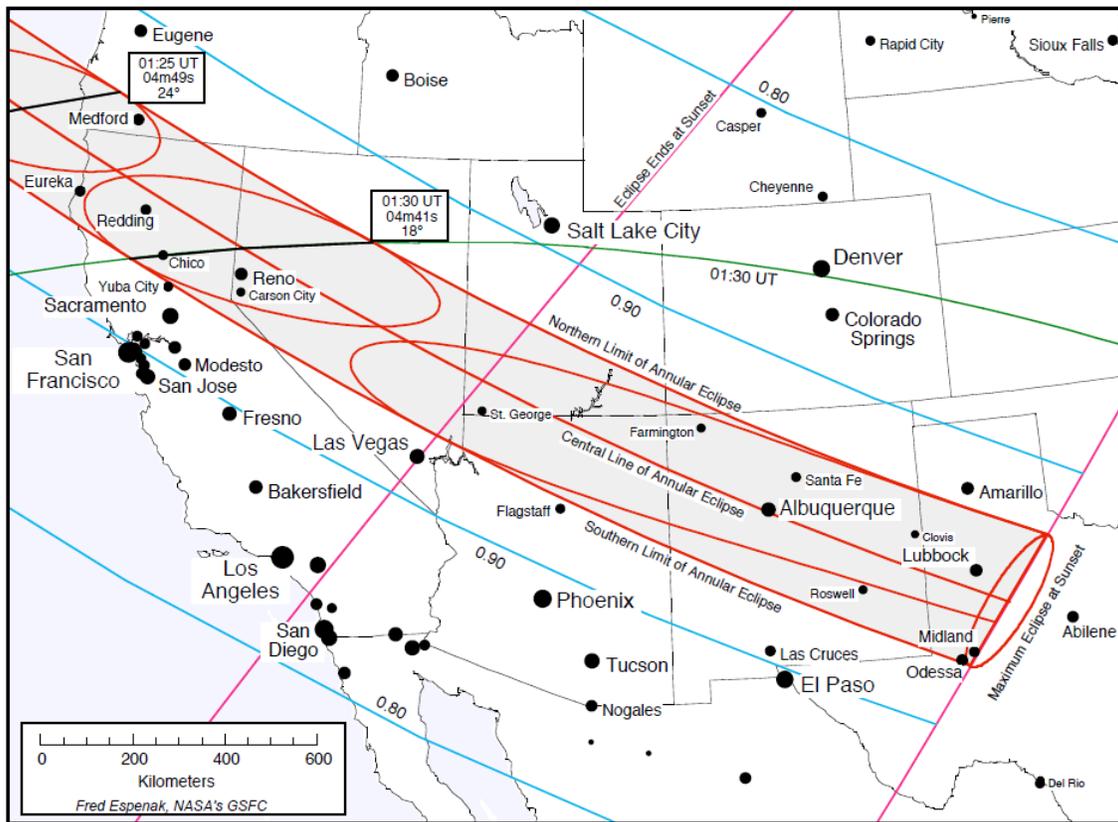
Observant readers of this newsletter may have noticed the line above which I introduced as a countdown device for the last 20 *tuns* or 400 days of the Mayan calendar. The circle advances right one space every 20 days on the Ahau day of the sacred *tzolk'in*. There are 40 days until the Transit of Venus, shown above as a "V" at the exact center. The astronomical events leading up to and including the Venus Transit reveal a wonderful symmetry where the calendar meshes with the cosmos in the twilight of 2012.



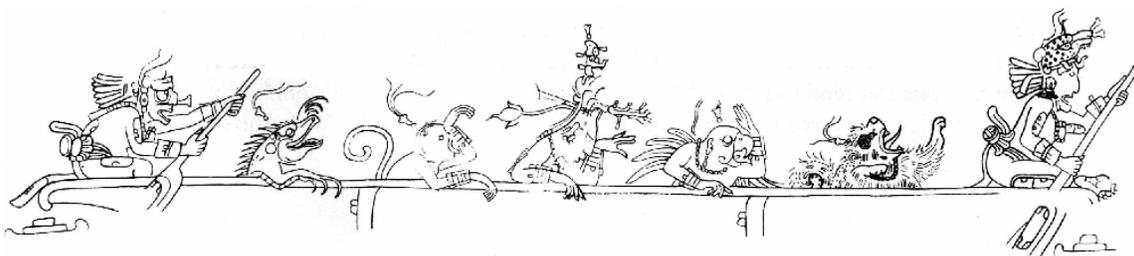
The first event consists of an annular eclipse of the sun on May 20. The eclipse starts in southern China west of Hong Kong. It crosses over the Pacific Ocean and makes landfall near the northern border of California before moving eastward through Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico, ending at sunset in western Texas. The position of the moon in its orbit is too far out for the apparent diameter of the moon to fully block the sun. The result is an annular eclipse where a ring of fire completely surrounds the moon at maximum eclipse. The eclipse path passes almost directly over Albuquerque, the capital of New Mexico and an excellent location to view the eclipse.



Annular Solar Eclipse of 2012 May 20

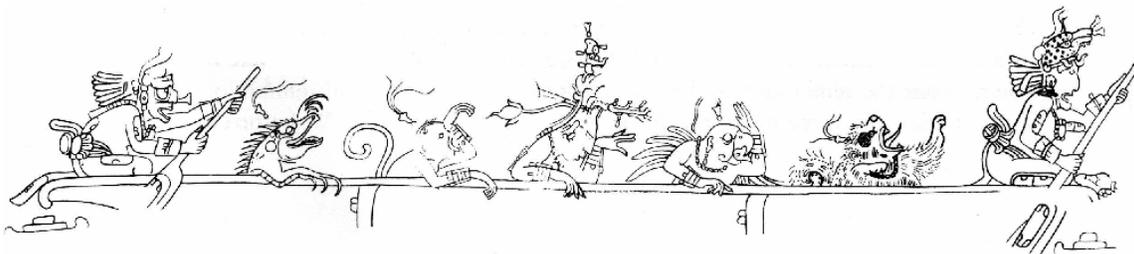
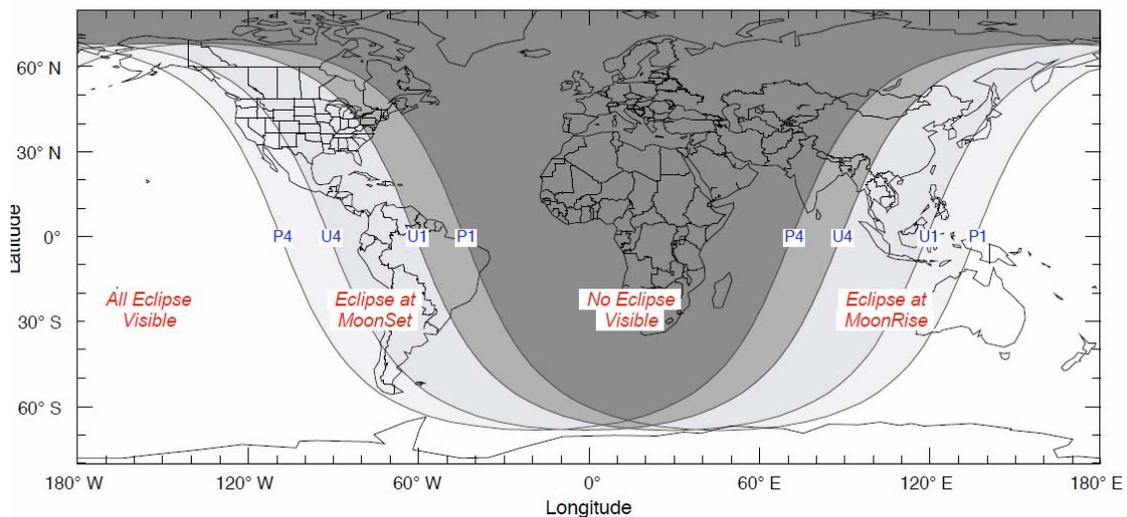
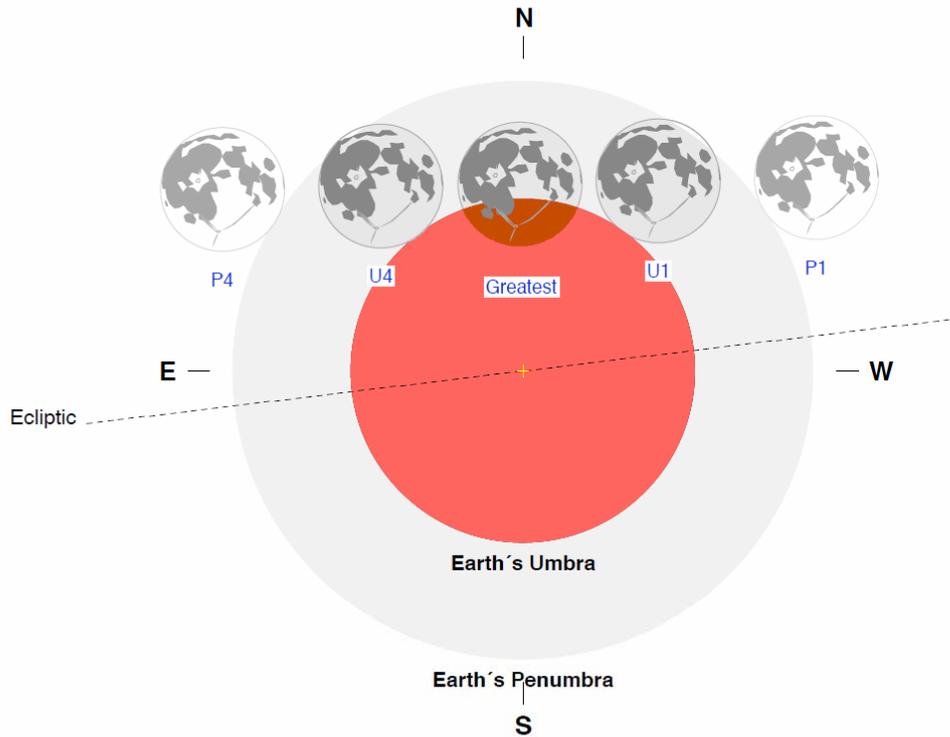


For nearly four-and-a-half minutes the moon will traverse the face of the sun as it sinks toward the western horizon before sunset as observed from Albuquerque. The event occurs on a Sunday night and should make for a great viewing experience for anyone in or near the eclipse path. I have been invited to speak at Mike Wizotzke's *Truthseeker Forum* in Albuquerque on the Saturday afternoon before the eclipse. My talk will focus on the Mayan calendar and the astronomical events of 2012, of which the annular eclipse is the inaugural event. The following day a group will make its way up onto the mesa outside of the city for the eclipse. High up the eclipse will be visible at sunset unobstructed.



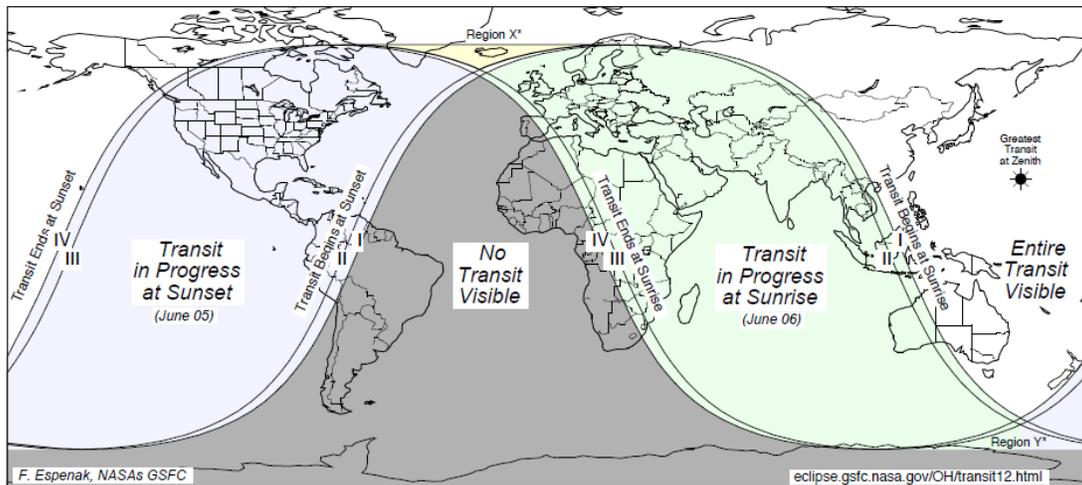
Two weeks later the moon will have completed half an orbit around the earth and a partial lunar eclipse occurs at full moon. Visible over the Pacific Ocean and Australia, the earth's shadow will cover about a third of the moon with the remainder a dull orange color as the penumbra scatters light through the earth's atmosphere. This partial eclipse is a harbinger of the Transit of Venus that will occur a mere two days later.

Partial Lunar Eclipse of 2012 Jun 04

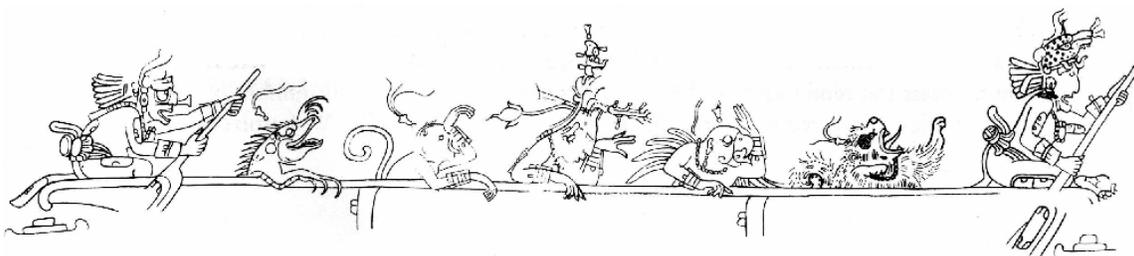


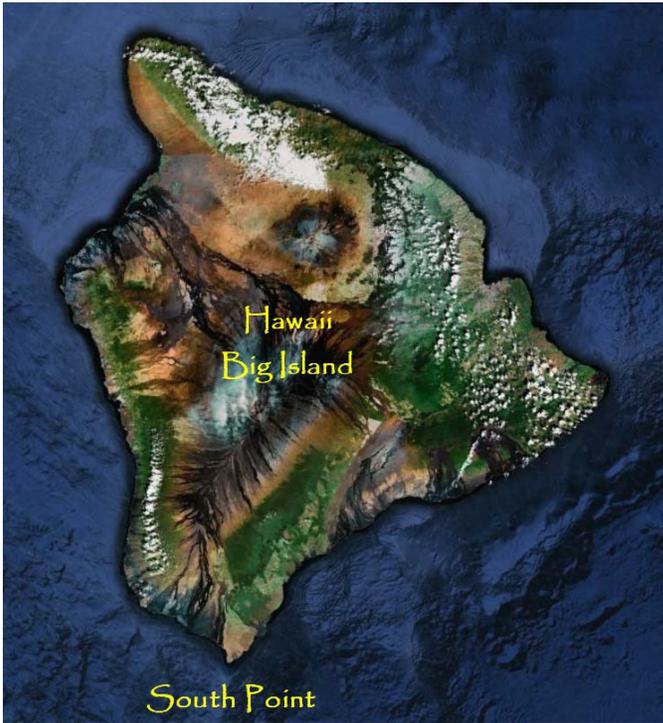
Beginning at sunrise on the morning of June 6th for those sites west of the International Date Line, the sun will appear to have a dark spot moving slowly across its face, the shadow side of the planet Venus. For Observers east of the Date Line, the transit will begin later in the day toward sunset on June 5th. Much of the Venus Transit press coverage is reporting a date of June 6th for the transit event but it actually occurs the afternoon of the 5th for North & South America. So don't be fooled by the June 6th date! If you show up a day late for the Venus Transit you'll have to wait another 105 years before it happens again!

Global Visibility of the Transit of Venus of 2012 June 05/06



Only parts of Alaska, northern Canada and Hawaii will witness the entirety of the transit. Otherwise the sun will set while Venus is still visible for observers elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. For observers in Hawaii the entire transit will be visible with Venus exiting the solar disk as the sun lies close to the ocean horizon at sunset. As the southernmost land mass of America, the volcanic archipelago of Hawaii represents an ideal viewing location with excellent weather prospects and a high probability that the sky will not be obscured by clouds.





The Big Island of Hawaii is another mysterious volcanic seamount steeped in the history of the Pacific. The peak of Mauna Kea is more than 4,200 meters (almost 14,000 feet) above sea level. Molten lava seeps out of the side of the island, splashing into a steaming sea below. Its southern point, aptly named "South Point," is the southernmost extent of the USA. It is uninhabited but accessible by paved road with excellent visibility of the sunset. Just after noon on June 5th the planet Venus will make first contact with the solar disk.

For more than 6 hours the black Venus will transit the face of the sun. This is more than enough time to hike the couple of miles of dirt trail to the famous Green Sand Beach, one of only two green sand beaches in the world. Venus will progress slowly across the sun with plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and surroundings, take a dip in the ocean, and have a picnic on the beach. Later in the afternoon, a second hike will return to the cliffs at South Point to watch the end of the transit on the western horizon. The transit ends with Venus exiting the face of the sun when it is 5° above the ocean. The day will end with a beautiful sunset and maybe even a "green flash." ¡Hasta la punta!

