A Brief Review of Martin and Skidmore's New Correlation Proposal (the 584286)

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John Major Jenkins. November 19, 2012

I will respond briefly to the new article by Simon Martin and Joel Skidmore just announced (at http://decipherment.wordpress.com/2012/11/18/the-584286-correlation/), about yet another correlation proposal, this one being JD 584286, making the 13-Baktun period-ending fall on December 24, 2012. Being brief, I will not go into the various details. A detailed review is not necessary. It is easy to see that this correlation proposal is flawed, largely for the same reasons that so many of the others are flawed.

Namely, it *does not address the interdisciplinary set of evidence that any proposed correlation must address*. By narrowly focusing on **one** criterion (astronomy, and one eclipse date) the essay sidesteps having to deal with the requirements of evidence from other disciplines. The epigram quote to the article indicates this narrowness of focus, which is from a 1920 Carnegie Institute article by Maya archaeologist Sylvanus Morley. It reads:

> As a matter of fact, the whole problem of the proper correlation of Maya and Christian chronology may be reduced to precisely this: the correct engagement of the Mayan and Julian Periods at any single point; for if it were possible to establish a single point of contact between the two, every date in Maya chronology could be transcribed into its corresponding Julian or Gregorian equivalent, and the dates on the Maya monuments would suddenly become more accurately fixed in our own chronology than any event of Old World history prior to the birth of Christ... (Morley 1920:465)

As "a matter of fact?" This actually expresses not *a fact* but a *misleading assumption* — that if we could find just ONE astronomical key ("a *single* point of contact") to link the Western and Maya calendars, then we'd have the congruent Maya dates locked in for all eras. (Morley was unspecific in what kind of "point of contact" he meant — there are many types that could be used — but I say "astronomical key" because that is the type of key taken up by Martin and Skidmore.) The problem here is that a single astronomical reference in an inscription does not mean, for certain, that the given event happened on the precise day that is recorded. Sometimes the date of a nearby period-ending was favored as an anchoring point for an astronomical reference (such as the Hotun series of dates on the stucco pier of Palenque's Temple XIX; see my essay "Sun and Moon at the Cosmic Crossroads"). Sometimes an astronomical phenomenon, such as a lunar eclipse, might be reckoned to have fallen on the previous day, or the next day (because it occurred over a period of time around midnight). And the prediction of a solar eclipse may have been a day or more off the actual occurrence.[1]

In this regard, the otherwise interesting debate that is presented as to when a day, in ancient Maya thinking, was supposed to begin becomes a moot point, because although that might allow a fudging of a correlation proposal by one day, the expectation that the Maya recorded it, anyway, with *absolute precision*, is an unwarranted (though

understandable) assumption of modern scientists. The danger of this is, again, that it results in false positives and a misleading assertion of absolute certainty, as conveyed by Martin and Skidmore in the concluding paragraphs of the essay. It is like saying, "allowing for the minor circumstance that our data sample was taken from women's bathrooms, we conclude with complete certainty that all humans are female."

Science narrowly defines the criteria and ends up with false positives. In this article, the ethnographic evidence for the placement of the 260-day Tzolk'in calendar is briefly alluded to, but is not understood for the unambiguous litmus test that it provides. Such a 'nod-and-let's-move-on' approach allows for dispensing with the evidence that would disprove the 584286 correlation, after giving the impression that one has seriously considered it.

In this regard, NONE of Munro Edmonson's works on the correlation (which provides evidence for the 584283 correlation) are cited or summarized. Edmonson does not appear in the bibliography, which is sort of like not include Einstein in the bibliography for an article on the General Theory of Relativity. This is probably the biggest problem with this new proposal, which is a result of the narrow methodology employed. In my own work on the correlation question, going back the mid-1980s, I have summarized and expanded Edmonson's citing of evidence in Conquest-era historical documents and have shown that the 584283 correlation is the only correlation that fits all of the criteria, unless an extremely unlikely accidental congruence of allegedly unstable day-counts occurred in three widely separated regions of Mesoamerica.

I first dealt with the correlation issue, after four years of studying it, in my 1992 book *Tzolkin*. My most recent argument and presentation of Edmonson's findings is simple and straightforward, and was posted on *The Center for 2012 Studies* website in July 2011 ("Steps in Understanding Calendar Continuity and in Verifying the Correct Correlation": http://www.thecenterfor2012studies.com/2012center-note18.pdf). This essay is ***essential reading*** and grew out of the exchanges I had with Gerardo Aldana, after he presented his own treatment of the correlation question in an essay of October 2010.[2]

Conclusion

Until Maya scholars who study the correlation question take a harder look at how the ethnographic evidence, combined with the other interdisciplinary data (such as C-14 dating and astronomy), points directly at the 584283 correlation, we will continue to have an endless cottage industry in correlation proposals that generate a wide variety of correlations, *all with apparent certainty*, by *admitting only a narrow set of data*. As I've stated many times,[3] what we need is a correlation that adequately meets ALL of the interdisciplinary criteria. That correlation is the 584283, making 13.0.0.0.0 fall on December 21, 2012.[4]

End Notes:

1. For example, the solar eclipse over La Corona occurred *ten days after* the dedication date of the Block V "2012" monument, but that doesn't mean the solar eclipse was not an important ritual event alluded to. From their calculations they could have expected the eclipse and thus the arrival of Yuknoom from Calakmul and the carving of Block V would have been done in anticipation of the impending eclipse.

2. That exchange is here: http://www.update2012.com/response-to-Aldana-on-the-correlation.pdf.

3. See discussion in my book *Tzolkin* (FAP 1992 / BSRF, 1994), in *MC2012* (1998), on my website Alignment2012.com, in *The 2012 Story* (2009), and in numerous other articles — for example my chapter in *2012: Decoding the Countercultural Apocalypse* (ed. Joseph Gelfer, Equinox Publishing, 2011).

4. Contrary to the assertion of several under-informed critics of my work (e.g., Van Stone 2010), I do not favor the 283 *because* it makes 13.0.0.0.0 fall on a solstice. My correlation studies confirmed the 283 *before* I turned my attention to solving the 2012 enigma.

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