

Comments on the Symbolism of the Holmul Frieze (and Comments on the La Corona “2012” Inscription)

John Major Jenkins. © August, 2013
(originally posted to [the 2012: The Beginning Facebook Page](#))



(picture credit: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/08/pictures/130807-maya-frieze-discovered-holmul-guatemala-archaeology/>)

What’s cool about this frieze is the iconography. It encapsulates the symbolism of a king taking the throne. The central image has the Holmul king within the stepped-form that represents the stairway of a ballcourt, going into the underworld. As an underworld portal or entrance, it is symbolically identical to the upturned mouth, as on Izapa Stela 11. This in turn becomes the upturned frog-mouth glyph (meaning "to be born") which is used in the inscriptions to designate a king's accession. He is reborn as a new being, the king. The portal to the underworld is thus like a birthplace. As I've documented and demonstrated in my books, this symbol complex refers to the Dark Rift in the Milky Way. In the frieze, we see the double-headed serpent bar running horizontally, under the stepped-form portal. The core image thus references a core astronomical construct in Mesoamerican thought --- that of the Cross formed by the Milky Way and the ecliptic near the Dark Rift, that spot being the king's birthplace and throne in emulation of the birthplace of deities (such as GI on the Tablet of the Temple of the Cross at Palenque). In many cases the dates associated will in fact be dates when the sun is positioned at this Crossroads, such as GI and 18 Rabbit on Copan Stela C. Lord Jaguar from Tortuguero used this ancient

image-complex in asserting his birthday relationship to the 2012 date. But not ALL images of this kind need to be dated to a specific sun-Crossroads conjunction, as the image-complex can detach from its astronomical reference and simply operate as a vague echo of the construct. Nevertheless, if dates ever turn up about this Holmul king, I wouldn't be surprised if they involve a sun-Crossroads alignment.

Maybe I should be a little more explicit. The Holmul frieze presents a defining core image of Maya cosmology. I suppose an analogy would be to the ubiquitous Christian Cross image. You see it everywhere and that simple form encapsulates an entire theology, if it is unpacked with the proper context of understanding. The Holmul frieze was a perfect teaching moment to discuss how the "sun god in the Crossroads" is likewise a core cosmology construct in Mesoamerica, as I stated in the intro to my book *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* (1998). And that core construct is symbolically equivalent to the "solstice-galaxy alignment" or "galactic alignment" of December 21, 2012. It should be emphasized that Lord Jaguar's birthday repeats this theme and was clearly the precedent by which he related himself to 2012 on Tortuguero Monument 6. The roof-comb frieze over the Temple of the Sun building in the Triad Group at Palenque repeats this same image, and faces the eastern sunrise, and many other Maya images repeat this same iconography. Maybe we need a follow-up documentary, using some of the unused interview footage or something? -JMJ, Aug 7, 2013

Original report at: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/08/pictures/130807-maya-frieze-discovered-holmul-guatemala-archaeology/>

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Other post:

The La Corona 2012 Inscription - a Forgotten Discovery?

by John Major Jenkins. August 4, 2013

In June of 2012 a second 2012 inscription was announced. From the site of La Corona in Guatemala, the inscription was commissioned in 696 AD by the Calakmul king named Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk'. This was 27 years after the other 2012 inscription was carved at Tortuguero by Lord Jaguar. Both kings apparently referenced 2012 as a means of asserting a rhetoric of power and divine mandate. Any rational researcher might wonder if the strategies of the two kings were similar in other ways. For example, by what means would such an assertion have traction? Well, an astronomical basis to the rhetoric of Lord Jaguar was noted by Michael Grofe and I presented an analysis of the astronomy of Tortuguero Monument 6 at the 75th meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in April of 2010. There are numerous examples of Maya kings using personal information to relate themselves to period-endings in the calendar with overtones of the Creation Mythos. Lord Jaguar did this through an astronomical parallel between his birth date astronomy and the sun's position on December 21 in 2012. Not that surprising, and completely compatible with the astronomical abilities of the Classic Period Maya that Grofe has argued for.

In studying the 2012 inscription from La Corona, I noted that the 9.13.0.0.0 date in 692 AD was an important fulcrum date in Yuknoom's rule, which he also took as a personal identifier, it relating to 2012 via the "13" number in the Katun place. I found Yuknoom's birthday on another text, and discovered that, like Lord Jaguar, Yuknoom's birthday astronomy relates to the 2012 astronomy, but it is secondarily relayed through the astronomy of that 692 date. In June and July of 2012 I wrote three papers on this, and tried to share my astronomical observations on David Stuart's blog --- the only place where this text has since been discussed --- but my post was censored. I include this post in my second paper, freely available at *The Center for 2012 Studies*, to show how I have tried to engage cordial discussion about the evidence that helps us understand how the ancient Maya thought about 2012. The astronomical component of this work, which ultimately provides evidence for my 2012 alignment reconstruction work, is apparently off the docket of consideration in Maya Studies. Hmmm. I wonder why.

It is certainly strange that in the 13+ months that have elapsed since the announcement of this important second 2012 inscription, there has been no publications about it in academic circles. There are my three papers, online, and a more extensive discussion of it and its relation to the Tortuguero inscription in my book *Reconstructing Ancient Maya Astronomy*, which I published myself in October 2012.

The three papers are found at: <http://www.thecenterfor2012studies.com/>:

["The Astronomy of the 2012 Text from Block V, La Corona."](#) June 29, 2012. The existence of a *second* 2012 date reference was announced by the *La Corona Archaeological Project* on June 28, 2012. The use of the 2012 date was described merely as a "literary device." This essay explores what kind of literary device it is, drawing from the precedent of the Tortuguero Monument 6 "2012" text.

["A Step-by-Step Guide to the 2012 Inscription from La Corona."](#) July 5, 2012. A detailed follow-up to the previous preliminary analysis, with charts. It includes my censored post to the project epigrapher's Maya Decipherment blog, in which I attempted to discuss astronomy as an interpretive aid to hieroglyphic decipherment. This essay demonstrates that astronomy is relevant to understanding why the Calakmul king Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk' referenced 2012 in the La Corona inscription.

["How to Assess and Understand a Maya Hieroglyphic Inscription."](#) July 8, 2012. This essay takes a look at another hieroglyphic inscription that illuminates how Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk' desired to frame his royal identity by showing astronomical relations of his birthday. The rhetorical strategy he employed was astronomically based, and this is congruent with what Lord Jaguar did on Tortuguero Monument 6. Yuknoom's ideological association with the "Venus cycle / Quetzalcoatl mythology" is here linked to his birthday as well as a solstice date, suggesting an analogy to the Maize God's solstice-time rebirth. These concepts map nicely on to his asserted connection to the 2012 solstice period-ending date through his birthday astronomy and the 9.13.0.0.0 date on Block V.

see also: <http://alignment2012.com/12-3-2012.html>.