

A Step-by-Step Guide to the 2012 Inscription from La Corona

John Major Jenkins • © • July 5, 2012 • [The Center for 2012 Studies](#)

There is now a *second* inscription that mentions the period-ending in 2012! It wasn't long ago that Maya scholars wouldn't commit to saying anything about the 2012 date. They said it was meaningless, because there were no Classic Period inscriptions that mentioned the date. My own effort to understand 2012 started, some twenty years ago, at the pre-Classic site of Izapa, the place where scholars believed the Long Count / 2012 calendar had been formulated. There at Izapa, you wouldn't expect to find hieroglyphic writing mentioning the 2012 date, because the Long Count was invented before hieroglyphic writing started being widely used. So, I looked at all the available evidence at Izapa, including the iconography of Izapa's many carved monuments and the astronomical orientations of the site. An unrecognized alignment of the ballcourt proved to be the key to my reconstruction of Maya cosmology at Izapa, and my "2012 alignment theory" was in place by the mid-1990s, subsequently published in my lengthy and well-documented book *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012* (1998).

Then, Tortuguero Monument 6 surfaced in 2006. Specialists had known about it for years, but didn't offer it up for considering even while the investigative interest in the 2012 date was growing (namely, my own efforts to engage dialogue with scholars for many years). Analyzing the astronomical content of the thirteen dates on Monument 6 revealed a strategy involving the same astronomy I identified at Izapa. However, astronomy is currently the blind spot in modern Maya epigraphy. (Actually, the full story is little more devious than that; many scholars actively reject and avoid treating the astronomy, and some even engage in unethical tactics to denounce any consideration of astronomy related to 2012.) My own treatments have been published and presented in academic conferences (SAA 2010), scholar-directed institutes (IMS, MEC), and in peer-review and scholarly book anthologies (Gelfer 2011; Benfer & Adkins 2013). *The Center for 2012 Studies* (which I direct and founded) has published over twenty of my research essays online.

And now we have the La Corona Block 5 inscription. What will it tell us about 2012? What will it show or not show? How might it relate to the one other currently known 2012 text (from Tortuguero)? Well, this text was discovered only this past April, curiously just as we began the final 260-day countdown to 13.0.0.0 on December 21, 2012. But it wasn't announced by the scholars at the La Corona Project until June 28. By then, the text had been drawn and assessed by project epigrapher David Stuart. On June 30th [he posted his comments on his Maya Decipherment blog](#), with a full drawing of the text.

It is a strangely constructed text. The Distance Numbers jump over other dates, a long parenthetical aside follows the first event date, and the final glyph-block is a Distance Number (a DN). It contains TWO forward projections to big period endings in the Long Count — one at Baktun 10 (830 AD) and one at Baktun 13 (2012). From the event in 696 AD, which involved the visit of the Calakmul king named Yuknoom Yich'aak K'uhk' to La Corona, we count back to two previous dates (both in 635 AD) and forward to the two period ending dates (in 830 AD and 2012). There is also a stated date connected to Yuknoom's identity, the 13th Katun (of Baktun 9), which fell on

9.13.0.0.0, March 13, 692 — some four years before his visit to La Corona. And, for some context, Yuknoom had just a few months prior to his visit suffered a devastating military defeat. He was probably in exile, on the run, or going around trying to maintain and strengthen his remaining allies.

So, let's work through the text in a step-by-step way. The following diagram is a schematic of the 56 glyph-blocks in Block V from HS 2 (Hieroglyphic Stairway #2), La Corona. I have color-coded the various sections I will discuss. I have indicated the location of the various dates and Distance Numbers (DNs). I've also indicated the locations of the names of Calakmul king Yuknoom, his vassal from La Corona named Chak Ak'ach Yuk, the mention of Chak's mother and father, and the stone-carving event.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1							Date 5	
2	Date 1							stone carving
3			DN 2			mother		
4			Date 4 Ch'een				Chak Ak'ach Yuk	
5	DN 1?			Yuknoom title	father		Yuknoom	Date 6
6		Date 2	Yuknoom		DN 3			Date 7
7		Date 3	Chak Ak'ach Yuk				Date 7	DN 4

There are 56 glyph blocks. Notice the thicker lines running vertically between columns B and C, D and E, F and G. These are reminders that the text is read from the upper left, downward in two-column groupings. For example, we read in this order: A1, B1, A2, B2, A3, B3, A4, B4, etc. After B7 we jump up to C1 and continue the process. The large white area on the left are glyph-blocks that are largely obliterated. There are some vague details remaining in several of the blocks, but they are not considered here. The three other solitary white glyph-blocks (at D4, E7, and G6) are fully intact and will be treated elsewhere.

Column A1-A7 is obliterated with the exception of A7b, which is part of the Date 2/Date 3 statement (lower case b indicates the right side of the internal glyph-block). Column B1-B5 is also largely obliterated, with the exception of B5b which is partially legible. I present here the reconstruction rationale from David Stuart. The process of reconstructing partially destroyed dates and Distance Numbers is a real detective story. If the Distance Number from a known date survives, it can clarify a date that is partially illegible. If two dates are legible, a partially destroyed Distance Number between them can be clarified.

The obliterated glyphs in these first two columns almost certainly contained the date 8 Kaban 10 Kumku, 9.13.3.16.17 (January 29, 696 J). This is Date 1. The rationale for this reconstruction is that two later DNs count forward from this date or back to it from secure dates. There may also be a DN in this section (DN 1) which would count to the “founding” date at B7. If so, the DN would be 22,212 days (written 3.1.12.12 in Long Count notation). B6 is a 17 Woh Haab date with a “key historical record” of a founding event — probably the founding of the Calakmul kingdom, associated with the 18 Woh date one day later in the next block (B7). So these two dates are treated together as one event date-reference (labeled Dates 2 and 3). B7 is 13 Chicchan 18 Woh, 9.10.2.4.5 (April 7, 635 AD).

C1-D1-C2 are completely obliterated. D2 is partially visible. C3 is partially visible and is part of a DN that can be reconstructed. D3 is partially visible and contains part of that same DN, with the 3 Katun position surviving. This will help determine the dating of the event it reaches, which is depicted in the next glyph-block, C4. It is largely visible and depicts a ballgame with the king Yuknoom Ch’een (of Calakmul, ruled from 636 AD, the father of Yuknoom Yich’aak). This ballgame event must take place on a date determined by the association between the above partially surviving DN and a previous date on the block. (This earlier date is the posited Date 1.) We could be lost here; however, a ballgame event at La Corona with Yuknoom Ch’een is recorded on another block from Hieroglyphic Stairway 2, occurring on 10 Ok 8 Kumku (9.10.2.1.10 = Feb 11, 635 J). Fortunately, the event of the missing Date 1 is reiterated later in the text and is associated by a clear DN at E6-F6 with the 10th Baktun ending on 7 Ajaw 18 Sip (10.0.0.0.0 = March 9, 830 AD). Thus, since the DN at E6-F6 is 6.16.1.13, we know that the missing Date 1 must be: $10.0.0.0.0 - 6.16.1.13 = 9.13.3.16.17$ (January 29, 696 AD). Consequently, the partially missing DN at C3-D3 (the one with a 3-Katun coefficient) expresses the relationship between this now known Date 1 and the likely date of the ballgame event (9.10.2.1.10). The missing DN must therefore be 3.1.15.7.

There is one caveat that could mitigate this reconstruction. And that is the presumption that the ballgame recorded on the other block is indeed one and the same as the ballgame alluded to here on Block V. There could have been several ballgames played some 3 Katuns prior to Date 1. Therefore, the date of this ballgame with Yuknoom Ch’een (Date 4) could be slightly different. This is rather unlikely, however, because the reconstructed Dates 1 and 4 are separately by exactly 61 Haab + 2 days. The two dates are ritually related, by calendar and meaning. Date 1 records the visit of Yuknoom Yich’aak K’ahk’ to La Corona in 696 AD. He is there to re-establish the alliance. And, 61 Haab (+ 2days) earlier, his father played the ballgame (Date 4) and established relations with La Corona, just prior to the founding of the Calakmul “snake clan” court (Dates 2-3).

After the ballgame in 635 AD (stated at C4), the meeting of Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk' (the visiting king of Calakmul) with the La Corona ruler (Chak Ak'ach Yuk) is described. No new date is mentioned here; thus, it is a continuation of Date 1, expressed earlier in the missing portion. The intervening events and dates are to be taken as parenthetical asides, providing back-story context for the meeting. The meeting is clearly taking place in 696 AD, the first date stated earlier. We hear of an honorific mention of Chak Ak'ach Yuk (C7) and his parents, named at F3 and E5. Along with the parents several other people are named, several of whom have numbers in their names — “6” in E3, “8” or “6” in F3, “4” in F4. A jaguar head at F5 has a solar Ajaw glyph in its eye, an odd combination, perhaps an ancestor, meaning Bahlam Ajaw (Jaguar sun or Jaguar lord).

We also read, at D5, of an alternative moniker ascribed to Yuknoom Yich'aak K'uhk (he is named at C6 and G5) — it is a “supernatural title” containing the number 18. His arrival, and his identity, is thus associated with supernatural events. Looking at the astronomy of these dates, I noticed that a near-total solar eclipse happened over La Corona 10 days after Yuknoom arrived for his visit. It may be that this eclipse is the “supernatural” allusion here. At least it would have reinforced Yuknoom's strengthening of the La Corona alliance, asserted as providential via his invocation of the future period endings at Baktun 10 and Baktun 13. It suggests a divine status, a necessary assertion in that time of instability after his recent military defeat. We should also, therefore, be cognizant of other astronomical relationships between Yuknoom and dates in the text. Such a “personal” connection to future period-endings would be like what Lord Jaguar did with the 13-Baktun date on Tortuguero Monument 6, and what Pakal did with the far-future 20th Baktun period-ending on the west panel of the Temple of the Inscriptions from Palenque. Birthdays, for example, are primary reference points in these texts with royal deep-time associations. (It may be that Yuknoom's birthday is mentioned in the missing portion at the beginning of the block. Also, Block VI, [pictured next to the Block V “2012” text](#), begins with a DN that reaches Yuknoom's birthday. The DN is unclear and it is unclear whether Block V is related to texts in other blocks.)

Continuing, a clear DN of 6.16.1.3 appears at E6-F6, which as mentioned leads from the visit/meeting of 696 AD, just discussed, to the Baktun 10 period-ending (March 9, 830 J). There's a glyph at E7, then 7 Ajaw 18 Sip at F7-G1 (the Tzolkin-Haab position of the 10th Baktun ending), followed by a “10th Baktun” statement at H1.

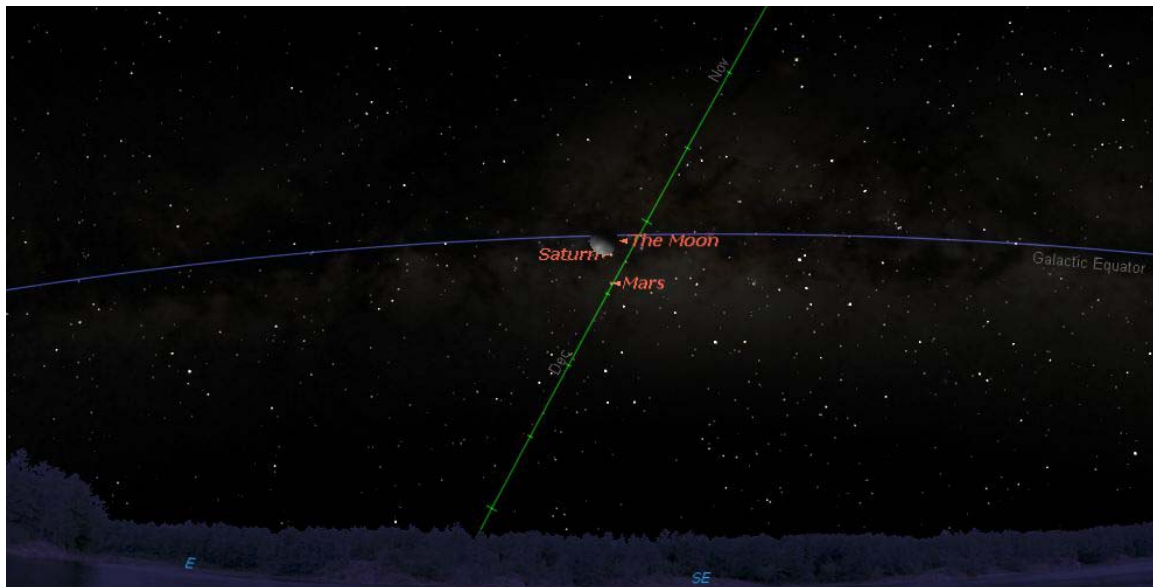
Then, weirdly, we immediately continue with more details of the visit, including the carving of a stone (probably Block V itself). Here we *may* have something else going on. The “making of the stone” may not refer to the literal carving of the stone block, but, via the “tun” pun between a stone and a time-period it may suggest that Chak Ak'ach and Yuknoom Yich'aak instead “make” or “manifest themselves at” the 10th Baktun just mentioned. Since no restatement of the previous Date 1 is offered, the events following the 10th Baktun date (G2 onward) might actually occur in a supernatural sacred space of a future period-ending.

Chak Ak'ach Yuk is named at G4, and Yuknoom at G5. Immediately follows the “13 Katun” statement, adjacent to Yuknoom's name as if it were central to his identity. He is a “13 Katun lord.” It recalls something about the recently completed 13th Katun that is central to his identity, as well as to his relationship with the 13th Baktun that is subsequently stated, linked to it by the “13” numerology. Here's where astronomy also

can provide a sub-text key, which I'll describe below. The following G6 glyph is essential and so far unclear. According to Stuart, it could be a "verb" or a "temporal statement" of some kind. If a verb, it curiously occurs between the 13-Katun and 13-Baktun statements. Then, we have the Tzolkin-Haab for 13.0.0.0 in 2012 (4 Ajaw 3 Kankin), followed by the final glyph of the text, an oddly placed DN of 3 Baktuns. This would be calculated from the prior 10th Baktun date (not Date 1).

A lot in this text is sequentially backwards. Some sense can be derived from the dates, some of which are implied dates (such as the 13 Katun date of 9.13.0.0.0). Let's look at the astronomy of this date, as it is a numerical fulcrum connecting Yuknoom's visit with the 13th Baktun period-ending in 2012.

Since Yuknoom is alluded to as being the 13 Katun lord, we understand that he has a special relationship to the date 9.13.0.0.0. So, following the "literary device" precedent used by Lord Jaguar at Tortuguero, in which he used his birthday astronomy to link himself to the 2012 date, we can compare Yuknoom's birthday astronomy to the astronomy of 9.13.0.0.0. There is one thing that stands out. *On both dates, a waning post-full moon was aligned in the early morning eastern sky with Saturn.* On his birthday (October 4, 649 J), the Gemini Crossroads of the Milky Way rose just after midnight. Then rose the moon, right next to Saturn (with Jupiter nearby). And as they reached the overhead position, the sun rose. The conjunction of the moon with Saturn was some 30° away from the Gemini Crossroads. On 9.13.0.0.0 (43 years after Yuknoom's birth), the moon and Saturn were precisely conjunct (with Mars nearby), right at the dark-rift/Crossroads *in Sagittarius*. This conceptually recalls the precessional process by which the position of the December solstice sun shifts into alignment with the dark-rift/Crossroads in era-2012. The conjunction of Moon-Saturn at the Crossroads was, in fact, so close that the Moon began occulting (covering) Saturn three hours past midnight.



The moon in conjunction with Saturn on 9.13.0.0.0, March 13, 692 AD. The Cosmic Crossroads!

This situation provides a defining link-up between Yuknoom, the 9.13 date, and the 2012 date. It is two-step linkage. The 9.13 date positions the Moon-Saturn of his birth at the

Crossroads, which is the position of the sun on the solstice of 13.0.0.0.0 in 2012 (the immediate next date stated in the text.) It shifts a defining conjunction of his birthday into alignment with the sun’s position on the far-future 13th Baktun ending, recalling, again, Lord Jaguar’s strategy.

Let’s not forget that a near-total solar eclipse occurred on February 8, 696, during Yuknoom’s visit. This was just three days shy of 61 Tropical Years after the ballgame was played by Yuknoom’s father, mentioned at Date 4. A similar parallel is found between the 9.13.0.0.0 date and the 10.0.0.0.0 date — they are separated by just 4 days less than 138 Tropical Years. Furthermore, these two dates were close to the vernal equinox. We may also note that Yuknoom was born on the Tzolkin day 3 Cauac, the day before 4 Ajaw (which is the Tzolkin date in 13.0.0.0.0). It’s a “close call” that suggests a rhetorical inborn calendrical connection to 2012, similar to how Lord Jaguar was born near the 3 Kankin Haab date. And we don’t know what fully may have been present in the missing early portion of the text. It’s possible that Yuknoom’s birthday was stated there. Perhaps the “one-day prior” statement of the “founding rite” (B6-B7) echoed a similar “one-day prior” statement involving Yuknoom’s birthday, now obliterated.

So, we have interesting astronomy happening on Yuknoom’s birthday, his special 13th Katun date, and the 13th Baktun period ending in 2012. These various astronomical conjunctions are conceptually identical to what an eclipse is — the joining of Sun and Moon, the joining of solstice sun and the Crossroads, the joining of Moon and Saturn all partake of a union of two, an alliance, the kind of thing that Yuknoom and Chak were reestablishing. We may even propose that there is astronomy in the 3-Baktun interval between Baktun 10 and Baktun 13. Since Baktun 10 fell near the March equinox and Baktun 13 falls on the December solstice, the relationship suggests a Tropical Year commensuration, if multiplied out by a factor of 4. See my “La Corona 2012” essay, linked below, for more details.

Dates:	Long Count	Julian	Event / no. of days in DN (red)
Date 1 DN 1?	9.13.3.16.17	Jan. 29, 696	The Visit, Yuknoom with Chak Ak’ach 22,213 days (theoretical)
Dates 2-3 DN 2	9.10.2.4.4/5 3.1.15.7	Apr. 6-7, 635	Founding of the Snake Court at Calakmul 22,267 days
Date 4 DN 3	9.10.2.1.10 6.16.1.3	Feb. 11, 635	Ballgame, Yuknoom’s father at La Corona 48,983 days
Date 5	10.0.0.0.0	Mar. 9, 830	PE
Date 6	9.13.0.0.0	Mar. 13, 692	Yuknoom’s special date, a 13 Katun lord
Date 7 DN 4	13.0.0.0.0 3.0.0.0.0	Dec 21, 2012	PE 432,000 days
Other context dates:		Oct. 4, 649 Apr. 1, 686 Mar. 29, 698	Yuknoom Yich’aak’s birthday (B1 VI, St. 9) Yuknoom’s accession date (elsewhere) Yuknoom’s death date (elsewhere)
Saturn near Sag. Crossroads:		Aug. 18, 662	(9.11.10.0.0) Yuknoom’s rite, age 12 (St. 9)

Dates and DNs from (unless noted) the La Corona HS2, Block V “2012” text

It's striking that I've been saying in recent presentation that more 2012 dates will surely emerge in the coming years. The El Mirador Basin, southern Yucatan, and the Peten are rich in sites that are being explored and excavated. It happened sooner than I expected!

A Comparison Between the Two 2012 Texts:

Tortuguero Monument 6, dedicated in 669 AD, and La Corona Block V, dedicated in 696 AD, are currently the only two Classic Period references to the 13-Baktun period-ending in 2012 that we have. David Stuart suggested that, on the La Corona block, 2012 was being used as a "literary device." I had to ask, then, "what kind of literary device is it?" Literary devices are known techniques in narratives, like "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, etc" or "the inciting incident" or "good vs. evil." Such devices have histories and precedents. So, in regard to 2012 the only precedent we have is Tortuguero Monument 6. And it *is*, indeed, a *precedent*, because it was dedicated 27 years before the La Corona block. As such, what kind of parallels might we see? Are there identifiable similarities in the strategies of Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk' and Lord Jaguar?

I've already mentioned that, clearly, both kings used 2012 as a means to bolster their status. In my previous and forthcoming studies, I've argued (based upon astronomical evidence in the dates) that Lord Jaguar was using an astronomical parallel between 2012 and his birthday. I mentioned (above) how Yuknoom Yich'aak seems to have done a similar thing. Let's take a closer look.

The dedication or fulcrum dates of the texts are: January 11, 669 (Tortuguero) and January 29, 696 (La Corona). As mentioned above, a near-total solar eclipse occurred ten days after the arrival of Yuknoom Yich'aak at La Corona. Similarly, a solar eclipse *theoretically* occurred on January 8, 669, three days prior to the dedication date of Tortuguero Monument 6 (Jenkins 2010). It was *theoretical* in the sense that it was not visible from Mesoamerica, but might have been expected within the eclipse tables. Curiously, the two dedication dates of the 2012 texts, one from Tortuguero and one from La Corona, are separated by almost exactly 38 periods of the 260-day Tzolkin calendar. The Tortuguero text was dedicated on 9 Etznab (January 11, 669) while the La Corona text was dedicated one day earlier, 8 Caban (January 29, 696). Strikingly, *the interval is 9880 days, exactly 57 eclipse half-years*. Astronomy thus seems to have been a motivation of Yuknoom's timing of his visit to La Corona.

The literary device used by Lord Jaguar is defined by the fact that his birthday astronomy parallels the 2012 period-ending date astronomy. He linked himself through his accession date and the dedication date to the 2012 date. Secondary links connect him to other dates on the monument that likewise contained that same, defining, birthday astronomy — namely, the positioning of the sun at the dark-rift/Crossroads, which is the same position that the sun will occupy on the solstice of 13.0.0.0.0 in 2012. In particular, the sweat bath rite of 510 AD asserts what may be a lineage founding rite of his ancestors, and it, too, shares that same sun position at the dark-rift/Crossroads.

Michael Grofe identified that Tortuguero Monument 6 references a lunar eclipse date that positions the eclipsed moon right at the same dark-rift/Crossroads location. This is an example of astronomical phenomena *other than the sun's positioning* that aligns with the Crossroads — an important factor when considering what Yuknoom apparently was doing. His strategy was rather clever in providing a two-stage link to 2012,

astronomically speaking. The key here is the 9.13.0.0.0 date that he claims as a “13 Katun lord”. That 13-Katun date links immediately, by numerological parallel, to the 13-Baktun date that follows. The astronomy of 9.13.0.0.0 involves the striking occultation of Saturn by the Moon (with Mars nearby) at the Sagittarian dark-rift/Crossroads. This sidereal location strongly echoes the sun’s position on the solstice of 13.0.0.0.0 in 2012. AND, a Moon-Saturn conjunction is a glaring feature of his birth-date astronomy. So, as with Lord Jaguar, Yuknoom seems to have employed a similar astronomical “device” or strategy, to link himself up to the far-future period-ending. Such a self-empowering link-up can be demonstrated by various criteria, one of which is astronomy. You can’t just assert it. The demonstration was divined, calculated, and rehearsed until its cogency was certain, then it was anchored in stone.

Birthdate of . . .	Yuknoom , Saturn-Moon	Lord Jaguar , Sun-DR
Accession	4-1-686	2-4-644, Sun-nadir
Parent polity founding	4-7-635, Calakmul	2-353, Palenque
Local alliance	2-11-635, ball-game La Corona & Yukn. Ch’een	12-6-510, sweat-bath Tortuguero & Ahkul K’uk
PE of king	9.13.0.0.0, Saturn-Moon/DR	9.11.15.0.0, Jupiter-DR
Death of king	3-29-698	5-679, Jupiter-DR
13-Baktun PE	2012, Sun-DR	2012, Sun-DR

The Two “2012” Texts: Narrational, Strategic, and Astronomical Parallels

The obvious question is whether or not these various factors were bouncing around in the cosmologizing heads of the La Corona scribes and calendricizing astronomer-priests. I’d say YES, definitely yes. They were playing with these numerological, calendrical, and astronomical potentialities to a level that we can barely appreciate. Anything we may stumble across was, without a doubt, considered by them.

Conclusion:

I took a clue from David Stuart’s reading of the La Corona 2012 text, that the king’s use of 2012 was a “literary device.” Having already identified the rhetorical strategy, or device, used by Lord Jaguar on the *antecedent* 2012 monument, I applied that to the new La Corona text, with striking results. Yuknoom Yich’aak used a defining characteristic of his birth-date astronomy to link himself into the narrative, and to the 2012 PE, using a linking date that was personally meaningful to him. Lord Jaguar, likewise, used a defining circumstance of his birth-date astronomy to link himself directly to the 2012 PE as well as interim dates that were personally meaningful for him and his lineage.

The *main* date on *both* texts, upon which the respective stones were carved, was heralded by a solar eclipse (either theoretical or visible). On both texts the establishment of an alliance is depicted (via a *ballgame* or a *sweat-bath* — both *underworld* contexts) and a parent polity founding rite is mentioned. The symbolism of the ball-game and the sweat-bath echoes the 2012 PE “dark-rift/underworld” astronomy. Both kings sought to accentuate their status by showing a personal relationship with the larger cosmological framework targeted by the far-future 13-Baktun PE in 2012. These are identifiable parallels of narrative, rhetorical strategy, and astronomy shared in both texts.

Appendix 1: Excerpt from an Essay Being Written for [The Epigraphic Society](#)

Many epigraphers often do not consider the astronomy associated with dates in a text as any kind of interpretive aid. This is especially common with epigrapher David Stuart, who is seen as a primary authority on matters of epigraphic decipherment. In regard to the two 2012 inscriptions that we now have, Stuart even goes so far as to repeatedly deny that the texts tell us anything, except in dismissive ways such as “it’s merely a literary device” or “it’s just an odometer clicking over” or “it’s just a numerology connection” or “it’s just a happenstance of calendar cycles.” Well, how many merelies make a something? The evidence is found in the embedded astronomy, which Stuart will not entertain. This is because he sees no explicit astronomical glyphs or statements in the texts. The problem here is that his own process of epigraphic decipherment has for many years whittled astronomical allusions out of the official readings.

Case in point goes way back to the paper he wrote with Stephen Houston about place-name glyphs, [which I reviewed in 1995](#). One can see from their language that “mythological place-names” have no location in real space. They are imaginary constructs of religious fancy. However, it is demonstrable that some “mythological place-names” are referring to astronomical locations. Similarly, the *ayin* glyph (upturned frog-mouth glyph), so common in royal inscriptions and meaning “rebirth at accession”, has a clear resonance with the caiman complex that relates to the Milky Way, with the dark-rift in the Milky Way as the caiman mouth (a birthplace and seat for rulership). With these simple examples, we can see that there is a great deal of astronomy embedded within the multiple meanings contained in Maya texts. But they’ve been shorn out of Stuart’s official lexicon. This is probably because the emphasis of modern decipherment is on *phonetic pronunciation* and a single, most tangibly supported, translation. Thus, we get the most banal concrete version of the texts. But literature is best understood in its deeper meanings through the allusions it contains. This must be the next step that Maya epigraphy and hieroglyphic decipherment takes. – JMJ

Appendix 2: David Stuart’s Essay on La Corona, and Reader Comments

[David Stuart’s piece on La Corona](#), posted June 30, 2012, inspired 37 comments in six days. Early on, I offered a response to David on the question of astronomy, but he censored the posting of it. I share this below (David’s comment first):

David Stuart July 2, 2012 2:17 pm
Like many anthropologists, when I use the word “cosmology” I’m not referencing astronomy or astrology. I’m really talking about large-scale world view, conceptions of universal structure and the like. The way I see it, the author of the text on the La Corona block was interested in situating contemporary history in terms of larger calendar cycles and structures, which I see as mostly numerological in nature (i.e., the juxtaposition of the 13s). My basic rule of thumb — and some would disagree of course — is that unless there is an explicit astronomical term of reference there in a text, then a considerable burden of proof exists to demonstrate conclusively that a mention of a given date or event is astronomically motivated.

John Major Jenkins July 2, 2012 4:39 pm
awaiting moderator approval [and never posted]

Considering Maya astronomical practices, it seems to me that a basic rule of thumb is that the Maya astronomers (in service to the ruling elite) were in a constant process of astronomical prediction, observation, and confirmation (or fine-tuning of their tables). The larger cosmological frameworks can utilize numerology, astronumerology, associations with Creation Myth themes, deep-time intervals, deity/ancestor invocations, and astronomy.

As an example of how astronomy could easily have been involved in Yuknoom's apparent strategy of (re)establishing or maintaining his power after a devastating defeat (by reasserting his alliance with "larger cosmological frameworks"), we can note that a near-total solar eclipse occurred over La Corona on the afternoon of February 8, 696 AD (J) – 8 or 10 days after his arrival is recorded (depending on your preferred correlation). Of course, the actual date section for the 696 date is missing on the block, but you've reconstructed it from the DN at E6-F6. So, unfortunately we don't know if an explicit astronomical eclipse reference was attached to the date. Nevertheless, we can imagine that Yuknoom's visit with Chak Ak'ach Yuk, the carving of the stone, recalling his father's ballgame and the founding of his dynasty at Calakmul three Katuns earlier, extended over many days. His apparent demonstration, or assertion, of a cosmological link-up to Baktun 10 and Baktun 13 would be nicely augmented — made manifest, perhaps — when the eclipse occurred. This then suggests that astronomy was involved in Yuknoom's visit and his strategy with the dates.

Yes, there is no "conclusive" evidence here, but then again much of epigraphic interpretation of narratives is built upon indirect precedents and secondary allusions. We are arguing for likeliest interpretations. For example, I see astronomy as a likely and consistent subtext that is not necessarily explicitly spelled out in the narratives, for several reasons. First, the texts are brief and the existence of the dates themselves carry the allusion of the associated astronomy occurring on those dates. Second, we don't expect spelling out of known, or easily findable, details in our own literature (e.g., a reference to "the Titanic" does not often include details of the date of sinking, lives lost, etc). Third, there are examples of astronomy clearly being utilized in date constructions while no explicit planetary or sidereal positional data is found in the inscription. For example, I looked at the three "Hotun interval" dates you reconstructed from the stucco pier of Palenque Temple XIX and, based on the intervals and the astronomy of the three dates, I reconstructed astronomical alignments that nicely echo other uses of the same astronomical positions. See: <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com/sun-moon-crossroads.pdf>. Part of the issue here seems to be that some glyphs do carry secondary allusions to astronomy – in that beautiful literary way that the Maya love puns — and this is an aspect of the multiple meanings present in hieroglyphic inscriptions that might be eliminated in the translation / decipherment process. Especially if astronomy is already assumed to not be all that relevant.

Another example of building an interpretive likelihood from indirect precedents, you often read a "boomerang" effect into the deep-time PE narratives. But there is no explicit

boomerang glyph after the Baktun 10 date in the La Corona text, nor is there a restatement of the target date (as one would expect if explicit transparency of narration is the rule of thumb). But based on your observation of similar constructs, and the fact that a new verb is not stated after the Baktun 10 date, you offer a likely interpretation that the narrative immediately shifts back to events occurring near the 696 date. In this regard, we may want to revisit earlier discussions of the new verb that appears after the 2012 date on TRT Monument 6. I don't believe that Gronemeyer's and MacLeod's evidence and argument was resolved in the previous blog post last October. (A new verb after the date obviates the boomerang back to the previous date.) As such, it might be of interest to further explore the La Corona glyph at G6 (ha-jo-ma?), which occurs packaged within the Katun 13 / Baktun 13 construct at the end of the text, because you suggested that it was "a possible verb or temporal statement." It would have been explicit if a "13 Baktun" statement occurred next to the "13 Katun" statement to really nail down the parallel that you suggest. But it's not there; it is implied and we understand that.

In any case it's not necessary to show that some future event was expected in 2012; the point is that we can understand more deeply how the 2012 PE was being used and thought about by the ancient Maya. And as you suggest it was an ideological focal point, a "literary device," to reinforce or legitimize a king's rulership by demonstrating a connection to larger cosmological frameworks. Based on scrutiny of all thirteen dates in the TRT Mon 6 text, I believe that Lord Jaguar at Tortuguero used the same kind of device, and not surprisingly he used the full arsenal in his kit-bag, including astronomy (see my SAA essay at <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com/>) It seems to me that astronomy is also a legitimate subtext of the La Corona inscription: <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com/LaCorona-2012.pdf>. But we will probably disagree about the "explicit" versus "secondary" evidence for that.

Thank you for all your work on these texts, your insights, and your scribal flare. I suspect that more 2012 dates await discovery.

---end

Everything else that transpired during the exchange among the participants, including comments by Barb MacLeod and Michael Grofe, is preserved on the now closed page: <http://decipherment.wordpress.com/2012/06/30/notes-on-a-new-text-from-la-corona/?replytocom=1128#respond>. Inevitably, astrologer Ray Mardyks began veering the topic off course with his astrological asides, and his odd countering of a basic understanding of what the galactic alignment is. I tried to clarify this for Ray and Bret, but David blocked my post again. I emailed David off-blog and kindly asked if he could let my comment through because the other contributors had thrown up criticism and I was trying to respond and clarify. He generously posted it through, but then Mardyks jumped in again and rational dialogue was doomed. David quickly closed the topic, a truly unfortunate but understandable occurrence, while Ray began sending me a series of belligerent emails. A total of seven or eight ensued. My response to an early one was:

Geez Ray, I don't know why you always have to go there. We're all struggling to be heard, to share, to find like-minded allies, to engage stimulating debate, and continue the work we feel passionate about. I'm fully willing to entertain your ideas, it's just a drag and a drain to constantly encounter your verbal/digital vomiting.

I thereafter ceased responding to him. In any case, the cause of advancing the role of astronomy in epigraphic decipherment is just beginning. Ironically, however, the issue seems to lie in the limits placed on interpretation by a select cabal of epigraphers, which has been identifiable for many years. Stanley Guenter, for example, [is on record dismissing the relevance of astronomy](#). Stuart holds to an ideological bias and does not see astronomical references, even when they are there. I reviewed this problem in Stuart's and Houston's essay on Maya "place-names" back in 1995: <http://alignment2012.com/fap11.html>. The blind spot in their analysis is that a mysterious "mythological place-name" (the "Black Hole") was believed by them to only exist in an imaginary topography, when in fact this "mythological place-name" points to an astronomical location — namely, the dark-rift in the Milky Way. This oversight illustrates a constant and ongoing problem in their work. It's a clever self-referential strategy of denial: *There are no astronomical references in the hieroglyphs because they refuse to recognize them.*

As can be seen from the data offered in this essay there IS astronomical information embedded in the La Corona text, primarily through the cipher of the dates themselves. Here, a basic rule of thumb is that the Maya were constantly looking at the sky. That's all. Simple. Obvious. We should assume that astronomy was always a constant backdrop of their campaigns, visits to other kingdoms, rites, births, and accessions. That should be the default position. So, when a date appears, we should assume that the Maya scribes were aware of the astronomy occurring around that date, and were keen to use it in sub-text allusions within the narratives they were constructing. It's very likely that the timing of visits and accessions and wars and so on was motivated at least in part by astronomy, so we should actually be expecting that the date sequences in hieroglyphic narratives contain patterns and themes and parallels. Those were probably defined by some special personal motif embodied by the king, from his birthday astronomy, accession date, or other relevant circumstance that could be thematically exploited.

Sources and Links:

See also my preliminary essay on the La Corona "2012" text, of June 29, 2012: <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com/LaCorona-2012.pdf>

[The La Corona Archaeology Project](#)

[Maya Cosmogenesis 2012](#) / [The 2012 Story](#) / [Galactic Alignment](#)

Izapa research online: [Here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Also in my monograph *Izapa Cosmos* (1996)

[The Center for 2012 Studies](#) / [Update2012.com](#) / [Alignment2012.com](#)

Astronomy software used: Starry Night Pro 6.3.3 (<http://www.starrynight.com/>)