

## Further Investigations on Tortuguero Monument 2

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



While assessing the inscription on Tortuguero Monument 2, I identified no less than three possible dating alternatives.<sup>1</sup> Two of these are particularly compelling because they relate to the birth and death of Tortuguero's great king, Lord Jaguar. This king lived from 612 to 679, and is the king who commissioned and dedicated Monument 6, which contains the 13-Baktun period-ending date in 2012. His rationale for referencing this date has been the subject of scholarly scrutiny, with basically three camps. In Camp 1, David Stuart and Stephen Houston (see Stuart 2011) assume that "a future prophecy" is what must be tested for, and conclude that *nothing* was anticipated "to happen" on 13.0.0.0.0 in 2012. The basis of their argument is epigraphic, but ignores part of one glyph (below P4) and refrains from dealing with the more detailed analysis of Gronemeyer and MacLeod (2010).<sup>2</sup> Gronemeyer and MacLeod are in Camp 2 (among others).

While still using "prophecy" terminology in questionable contexts, Gronemeyer and MacLeod do propose, based on their careful analysis of the inscription, that a new event is stated to occur on that future 2012 date. It is, at the very least, a ceremony or "investiture" rite involving both the deity Bolon Yokte and — somehow — Lord Jaguar. My own work (*Lord Jaguar's 2012 Inscriptions*, 2011) added to this scenario by incorporated information from Monument 8 to suggest that Lord Jaguar became a sacrificial priest during his life, that he will be supernaturally invoked to be present for the "ceremony" in 2012, and that the ceremony ultimately involves the ritual sacrifice of Bolon Yokte. It may be that Lord Jaguar presented himself to be the deity impersonator (of Bolon Yokte) and would himself willingly experience the sacrifice, performing what is essentially a self-naughting or self-sacrifice. In essence, regardless of whether my further deductions are accepted, the basic factor of a future ceremony involving Bolon Yokte is characterized by Sven Gronemeyer and Barbara MacLeod as a "great return," the "arrival" or return of a deity "of creation and war," a "renewal," and resulting in "a transition to a new cycle."<sup>3</sup>

Now for Camp 3. Based upon analyses of the 13 dates on Tortuguero Monument 6, Camp 3 accepts that astronomy is an important factor in understanding Tortuguero's "2012" monument.<sup>3</sup> The findings in this camp augment the ideological findings of Camp 2, while further disproving the dismissive position of Camp 1. Camp 3 recognizes that Lord Jaguar's birthday astronomy is an important nexus for the narrative in the text, and for the monument's overall meaning in terms of *why the 2012 period ending is referenced*. (Note here that any discussion of a "prophecy" is irrelevant to understanding why the Maya were interested in using the date!)

So, without delving into myriad side-issues, the position of Camp 3 is based upon published studies of the astronomical content of the Tortuguero inscriptions (Arellano 2006; Jenkins 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2011d; Grofe 2011). It acknowledges and builds upon the ideological and epigraphic reconstructions (Looper 1991; Zender and Guenter 2000; Eberl and Prager 2005; Gronemeyer 2004, 2006; Gronemeyer & MacLeod 2010; MacLeod 2011). It accepts the interdisciplinary mandate that calendrical, astronomical, epigraphic, and numerological consideration must be factored into an understanding of how 2012 was being used in relation to Lord Jaguar's life on Monument 6, and even indirectly in other monuments (see, e.g., Jenkins 2009, 2010, 2011c, 2012).

## **What We May Learn from Monument 2**

Returning now to Monument 2, I believe there is an opportunity here for confirming the main date and possibly identifying a second date on that monument. The effort will revolve around clarifying the glyphs on the dorsal side, which were roughly drawn by Frans Blom many decades ago. It is as yet unclear whether photos in Hernández Pons (1984) will be of any help. Blom's glyphs are reproduced in Gronemeyer (2004). Six cartouches are identifiable (see Figure 1, below).

Obviously, some attention was given by Blom to representing the actual appearance of the glyphs. Numerical dot-and-bar values can be made out at several locations. I believe that the top cartouche (B1) might be a 2-block construct, containing a Tzolkin-Haab date. More likely, it is a 4-block construct, probably a Distance Number. The next cartouche, B2, appears to be a 4-block construct. As in A2 on the ventral side, it may contain the Baktun, Katun, Tun, and Winal values for the new date reached by the possible Distance Number at B1. As such, the Winal number may be an "8".

Similar to A3 on the obverse ventral side, Cartouche B3 may be a 2-block construct containing the Kin value (above) and the Tzolkin position (below), whose number may be "5". Cartouche B4 may be a 4-block construct, with the Haab position in the upper right, possibly having a number value of "5". Cartouche B5 clearly has 4 inner blocks. B6 is only a fragment.

All of this is very tenuous, but the varying 2-block and 4-block construct has something to recommend it, if we accept that a similarity to the construction of the ventral side was maintained. This suggests that the two sides are thematically (and calendrically) linked. If so, one additional cartouche below B5 (see Figure 1) make a total of 6 cartouches, but we only see 5 on the ventral side. This may be explained by the lower portion, below A5, being missing until it was identified as a separate fragment. It was eventually reunited with its Monument 2 partner; however, it is extremely eroded and any evidence for a 6<sup>th</sup> cartouche (theoretical A6) is effaced.

## **Another Field Trip to Villahermosa, Mexico**

I present this rough sketch as preparation for a field trip to the Carlos Pellicer Museum in Villahermosa. According to Gronemeyer, Monument 2 was on public display in the Cámara section of the Museum. Gronemeyer reports that the dorsal side was positioned against the wall, and it was not possible to get a view of the actual glyphs that Blom had once roughly drawn. The Museum was closed after floods in 2004 for several years, but it

was recently reported that it has now been reopened. Since some access to Monument 2 may still be required, permissions must be sought and acquired ahead of time. This was an involved procedure during my trip to the Carlos Pellicer Museum in March 2011. Inquiries may begin and a visit may be possible as early as June 2012. Photographs will be taken and onsite epigraphers will hopefully be present to carefully help scrutinize what we find.

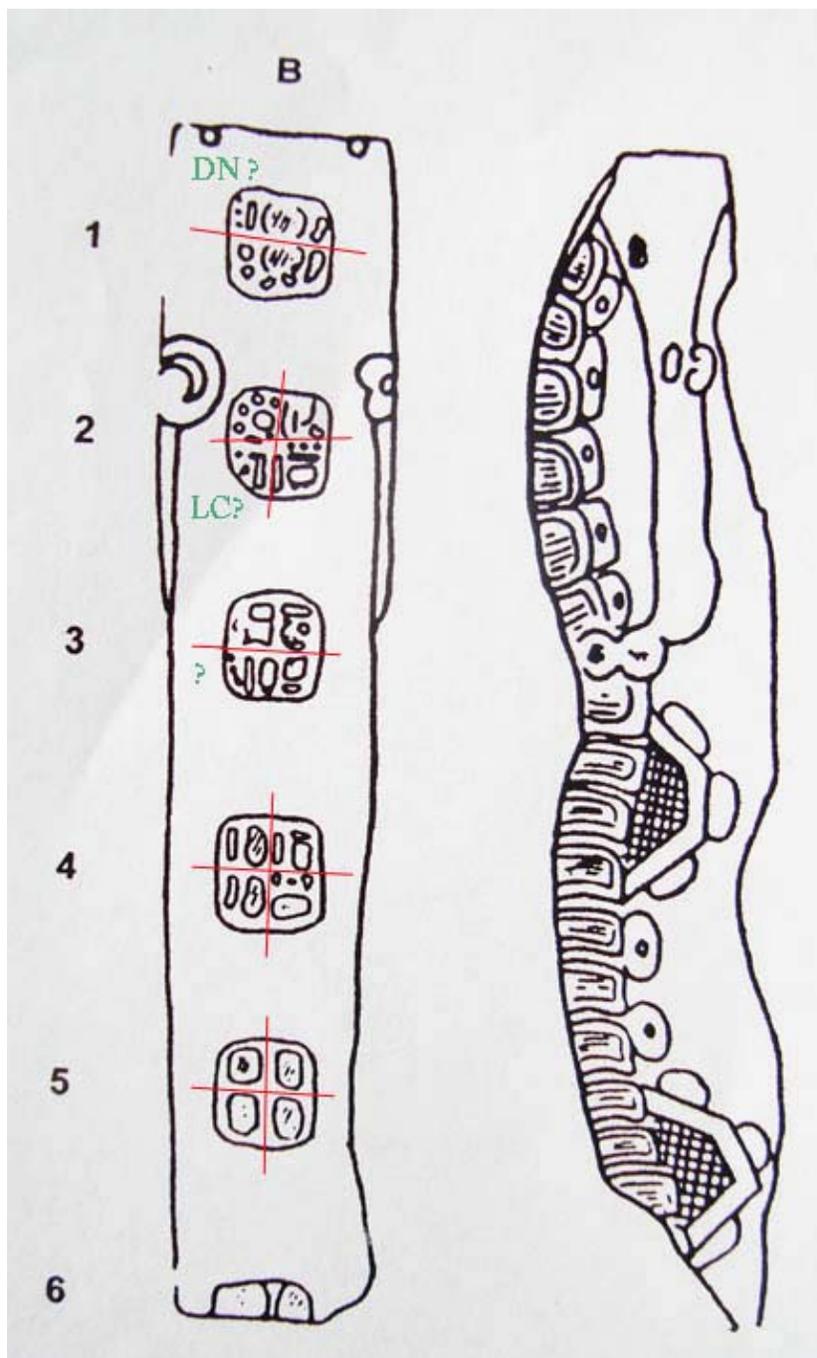


Figure 1. *Right:* A side-view of Monument 2, showing its snake shape. The dorsal side runs vertically along the right-side underbelly of this view; the ventral side runs along the left side. *Left:* The six cartouches of the dorsal side, as drawn by Frans Blom. Possible glyph-block divisions have been added.

Notes:

1. These are: 9.12.7.0.0, 9.13.0.0.0, and 9.14.5.0.0. For the details see Jenkins (2012): <http://www.thecenterfor2012studies.com/TRTMon2.pdf>. See also my [2010 SAA presentation](#) and [the debate about it](#) that ensued.
2. See the exchange between the two camps [in the comments section](#) of Stuart's article at Stuart and Houston's Maya Glyph blog, and [additional comments here](#).
3. These quotes are statements made by MacLeod in her Cambridge *IAU* Vol. 278 article (July 2011) and by [Gronemeyer at the 7<sup>th</sup> Palenque Round Table](#) (in November 2011).

Sources:

- Arellano, Alfonso. 2006. *Tortuguero: Una Historia Rescatada*. Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Eberl, Marcus and Christian Prager. 2005. "B'olon Yokte' K'uk: Maya Conceptions of War, Conflict, and the Underworld" In *Wars and conflicts in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican and the Andes*. British Archeological Reports, International Series, no. 1385. Oxford, UK, pp. 28-36.
- Grofe, Michael J. 2011. "Measuring deep time: the Sidereal Year and the Tropical Year in Maya inscriptions." Cambridge: *IAU*, Vol. 7, S278.
- Gronemeyer, Sven. 2004. *Tortuguero, Tabasco, Mexico: History of a Classic Maya Site Known from its Inscriptions*. (English version of his Master's Dissertation: 2006.) [www.sven-gronemeyer.de](http://www.sven-gronemeyer.de).
- 2006. "The Maya Site of Tortuguero: Its History and Inscriptions." In *Acta Mesoamericana*, Vol 17. Markt Schwaben: Verlag Anton Saurwein.
- Gronemeyer, Sven and Barbara MacLeod. 2010. "What Could Happen in 2012: A Re-Analysis of the 13-Bak'tun Prophecy on Tortuguero Monument 6." *Wayeb* no. 34: [http://www.wayeb.org/notes/wayeb\\_notes0034.pdf](http://www.wayeb.org/notes/wayeb_notes0034.pdf)
- Hernández Pons, Elsa Cristina. 1984. *Investigaciones arqueológicas en el Valle del Río Tulijá, Tabasco-Chiapas*. Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas. Centro de Estudios Mayas. UNAM.
- Jenkins, John Major. 2009. *The 2012 Story*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin.
- 2010. "Astronomy in the Tortuguero Inscriptions." Presented at *The 75<sup>th</sup> SAA Meeting*, St Louis. Online: <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>.

—2011a. “Photographic Clarification of Tortuguero Monument 6.” *The Center for 2012 Studies*. <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>.

—2011b. “The Sun-Binding Ritual on Tortuguero Monument 8. *The Center for 2012 Studies, Occasional Notes, no. 11*. <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>.

—2011c. “Calendrical Patterns and Tortuguero Monument 1.” *The Center for 2012 Studies, Occasional Notes, no. 4*. <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>.

—2011d. *Lord Jaguar’s 2012 Inscriptions*. Fort Collins, CO: Four Ahau Press.

—2012. “A Reassessment of Date Ambiguities on Tortuguero Monument 2.” *The Center for 2012 Studies*. <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>.

Looper, Matthew. 1991. “A Reinterpretation of the Wooden Box from Tortuguero.” *Austin Notes*, no. 11.

MacLeod, Barbara. 2011. “The God’s Grand Costume Ball: a Classic Maya prophecy for the close of the thirteenth Bak’tun.” Cambridge: *IAU, Vol. 7*, S278.

Stuart, David. 2011. *The Order of Days*. New York: Harmony Books.

Zender, Marc and Stanley Grunter. 2000. “Three Kings from Late Classic Tortuguero.” *Pari*: [http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/news\\_archive/31/ThreeKings.pdf](http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/news_archive/31/ThreeKings.pdf).