

# Notations 13.0.0.0 in the Maya long count 3114 BCE vs. 2012 of our era.

Maya long count notations 13.0.0.0 can refer to at least to two dates that we know of. We can tell the difference when a Calendar Round is given. These are the two possibilities which are known to occur.

13.0.0.0      4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u 3114 BCE (so-called "creation date", but not an absolute beginning)

13.0.0.0      4 Ajaw 3 Uniiw 2012 CE (once only, on Tortuguero Mon.6; Uniiw = K'ank'in)

Here is David Stuart's rendering of this part of the text (April 2006, UTMesoamerica discussion group):  
Tzuhtz-(a)j-oom u(y)-uxlajuun pik (ta) Chan Ajaw ux(-te') Uniiw.

Uht-oom ? Y-em(al)?? Bolon Yookte' K'uh ta ?.

"The Thirteenth 'Bak'tun" will be finished (on) Four Ajaw, the Third of Uniiw.

? will occur. (It will be) the descent(?) of the Nine Support? God(s) to the ?."

## 13 PIK



**Tortuguero, Monument 6**

by Sven Gronemeyer

**4 Ahaw, 3 K'ank'in**

Stuart writes: <<This is it. The term following uht-oom is the main puzzle, and largely effaced. The "descent" reference is highly tentative, too. The enigmatic deity Bolon Yookte' K'uh has been known for some time from many sources.... Interestingly, he is a protagonist in the deep time mythology of Palenque, as recorded on Palenque's Temple XIV tablet.>>

Another way of paraphrasing the content (treating the forms in *-oom* as future participles) would be:  
"the coming completion of the 13<sup>th</sup> Baktun 4 Ajaw 3 Uniiw, the coming occurrence of the descent of 9-OK-TE' " or perhaps at the end "... when will descend 9-OK-TE' " The verb stem *uht-* simply means 'happen', and can be used with dates, or with other content verbs, or with locations.

The most important thing to notice here is that there is no mention of the completion of any larger unit (no mention of one Pictun, for example), nor is there any implication that 13 Baktuns constitute a larger unit. This "completion" phrasing is normal in Mayan texts for completion of any K'atun or Baktun. So as far as the grammar and vocabulary goes, this is no different from a clause referring to the completion of 12 Baktuns or 14 Baktuns. There simply is no support in this text as currently understood for positing that 13 Baktuns constitute a larger unit, a world age or anything else of the kind, or in fact is special in any way.

This drawing by Sven Gronemeyer of Tortuguero Mon.6, the right-side panel, is available in slightly higher resolution at this URL:

[http://www.wayeb.org/drawings/trt\\_mon\\_006\\_a.png](http://www.wayeb.org/drawings/trt_mon_006_a.png)

Those who want to explore the meaning of this future date for the Maya should therefore study the discourse context of other references to dates in the relative or absolute future, other uses of the verb *em-* 'descend', and other references to 9-'OK-TE' in Mayan texts. When and why did the Maya write about such things? Marcus Eberl and Christian Prager have been working on this deity whose name they read as Bolon Yokte K'u. To show that this date is analogous to 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u, one would have to show that something is stated in texts about the two of them which is not shared with other dates or other texts. That is a large task, given that there is only a single reference to this future date and that so little is said about it on this Tortuguero box. To show that finding one box with a future date "13.0.0.0.0" is significant in any way, absent indication that the 13 Baktuns formed a single larger unit, one could try to show that it is the only future date which is referred to. But we know that to be false. (Nevertheless, a tally of the distribution of future references would be useful to have. A subset of those have the verb *uht-oom* 'the coming (event)')

Here is what Eric Boot wrote of this unique occurrence (23 June 2008):

Tortuguero Mon. 6 has the upcoming 13.0.0.0.0 date (it is actually the only text with the upcoming date), with a DN, completion of the 13th bak'tun/pik, and CR 4 Ajaw 3 Uniw, and additionally provides a short recap of what "will happen" on that date ... it concerns a possible descent (ye-ma > yema[1]) of Balun Yokte' K'uh (abbreviated to 9-'OK-TE') ... but pivotal information is missing ... what is recorded after the 'u-to-ma expression ... And what is recorded in the last collocation ... perhaps the ta refers to /ta/ as locative, indicating a location, or ta is simply a part of larger spelling ...

This text has been discussed previously at Aztlán, as well as at the online forum of The Mesoamerica Center at UT. Recently Mark Van Stone discussed it in a public lecture (do not know details ... and so may have many others ...), while I (to include a small part of me ...) and Elisabeth Wagner have discussed this text in length at our workshop at the 2008 EMC in Geneva as part of mythological strategies employed by Maya kings and queens to sanction and legitimize their rule ...

### The Standard "Era Date"

The first of the two dates above, 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u (3114 BCE), is often called the "era date" or some similar name. It is the implicit base of the overwhelming majority of Mayan calendrical records, and of almost all long counts given in 5-position notation.

There are quite a number of examples where Maya texts make use of the date 4 Ajaw 8 Kumk'u, whose position in time was known to all scribes. In some cases, a distance number links one date shortly before the era date with another date after it. This was especially common in the Dresden Codex, and Thompson (1972 pp.20-22) treats this under the title "Initial Series and Long Reckonings". His complete list of these is noted in one section of these discussions. There are other cases with much larger intervals going back hundreds of thousands or even millions of years, but these apparently had no standard reference point such as the era date was for relatively closer times less than 4000 years back (see Thompson 1960 p.149 and Appendix IV). Only very rarely were there references to dates implying a much earlier base. Thompson suggested that our standard 9.15.0.0.0 was at least sometimes thought of as being the same as 1.13.0.9.15.0.0.0 but only by the most expert Maya, not in ordinary usage. And it is not certain that modern scholarship would agree with the line of reasoning which led Thompson to this. In any case, this last example would not concern 13 Baktuns being treated as a larger unit. Perhaps symbolic meanings of "1" as 'first, original' and of "13" are relevant. See other parts of these discussions.