

Hoopes the Snollygoster

Here is the list of questions that Hoopes sent me, with my responses; it must have been February or March of 2011, in alleged preparation for his Power Point presentation he gave in Austin, TX. He wrote that “I want to be able to summarize your main points in just a couple of Powerpoint slides.” My friend Georgeanne was there, and saw Hoopes’s talk. She said it was reprehensible how he traced 2012 ideas to swastika symbolism and Theosophy, with clever and denigrating frameworks about New Agers and Nazis.

Despite my many efforts to communicate clarity to Hoopes, I cannot find anywhere in his writings where he accurately conveys anything I shared with him. As can be seen from my clear expressions below, this must derive from Hoopes’s inability or unwillingness to process clearly expressed words, concepts, and sentences. He approaches in a kindly way, and then twists bits and pieces of what was shared, taking them out of context, to construct his defamatory frameworks. That’s the mark of a wolf-in-sheep’s clothing, a professional snollygoster — a clever but unscrupulous person. Sneaky and dishonest.

What’s very curious, and revealing about Hoopes’s actual intentions, is that this exchange took place during the period that he and Whitesides were writing their piece for *Zeitschrift fur Anomalistik*, in response to the “prize offer” announced in late January, 2011, the deadline for which was May 31, 2011. Did my responses to Hoopes’s questions inform what they said about me and my work in their piece? No, not in the least. In fact, I stated things about my position on the Perennial Philosophy that contraverts what they wrote. In addition, the very fact that I was discussing and communicating my work with Hoopes contraverts their charge that I employ a hermeneutic of being immune from academic critique and process. If these constructs came from Whitesides, Hoopes should have at least noted that they weren’t congruent with what I had just shared with him. That would be the case if honest scholars were involved, but they were more concerned with constructing mitigating and false narratives.

Hi John [Hoopes],

[approx. early March 2011]

Thank you for spending the time to summarizing my work. All of the points can be elaborated and contextualized, and special circumstances could be brought up for consideration. However, in the interest of simplicity, I’ll keep comments brief, below. You seem to focus on the philosophical side of my reconstruction work, understandable given your interests in documenting the ideological “phenomenon” of 2012. This area will ultimately be subject to debate and disagreement.

In terms of the other part of my reconstruction work, you could mention the astronomy of the 13 dates on TRT Monument 6, as documented last year in my SAA presentation and as debated and documented on the MEC-Facebook discussion (online at the Maya Exploration Center). In brief, a reasonable proposal regarding why Bahlam Ajaw utilized the 2012 date is because of the astronomical parallel to his birthday. This presupposes an awareness of the sun’s alignment with the Crossroads in 2012, which consequently provides rather large support for my “2012 alignment” reconstruction, as documented in

MC2012 (1998). It should also be mentioned that the prejudiced comments of Guenter and Aldana failed to mitigate the arguments presented in my paper; in fact, the contributions of MacLeod and especially Grofe were helpful in clarifying the evidence and logical traction that underlies my work.

[Hoopes's question are bulleted]

- That 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in was NOT interpreted by the ancient Maya as an end-of-the-world event in a physical sense.

Yes. In the highest spiritual teaching that can be identified in, for example, the Maya Creation Mythology (the Popol Vuh), 2012, like all cycle endings, were treated as liminal zones in which transformation & renewal is the preferred outcome, which must be facilitated by sacrifices. The literalized cartoon version of this spiritual teaching, which is also possible to find in some Maya representations, is graphic destruction. These are visions of period endings from the vantage point of the limited ego, the fiction of a stable ego identity, which perceives change and transformation as annihilation. From the vantage point of the midwives of rebirth and renewal (the Hero Twins, for example, who are charged with defeating the "Lords of Darkness" and the egoism of Seven Macaw) period endings are not literal destructions of anything real, they are openings to renewal IF the sacrifice of ego illusions can be accomplished.

- (Following Malmstrom) that the Long Count was invented at Izapa in the first centuries BCE (do you have a specific date?)

I actually took my clue from Michael Coe, who said in one of his books something like "The priority of Izapa in the development of the Long Count is quite clear cut." But yes, Malmstrom's view of this is congruent with my own. However, unlike Malmstrom I don't think the Long Count was the invention of one "New World Hipparchus." Because of the prior evidence of precessional adjustment back to La Venta, I imagine that centuries of astronomers were involved. Furthermore, as I've reconstructed it, it's possible, or even probable, that the expectation of a future alignment of the solstice sun and the Milky Way developed before the precise calculations were established that resulted in the Long Count system. Thus, the archaeoastronomical statements at Izapa could have been established before the Long Count was inaugurated. Conservatively, I envision these things happening in the early to mid 1st century BC. Possibly earlier, 3rd or 2nd centuries BC.

- (Following Edmonson & Bricker) that the Long Count was calculated so as to complete a Grand Cycle on the winter solstice on 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in.

Edmonson's solstice observation in his 1988 book was important confirmation of my suspicions regarding the solstice placement of 13.0.0.0.0 according to the 584283 correlation. However, the question remained why 2012 should be the year, the

culmination of cycle of 13 baktuns. My investigations led me to Izapa and to precessional considerations, which neither Edmonson nor Bricker mentioned.

- That in an original Izapan Long Count, the day was 13.0.0.0.0 1 Ajaw 1 K'ank'in; the original Izapan calendar was altered in the Classic period, probably at Tikal

Correction – it would be 4 Ajaw 1 K'ank'in. First off, this reconstruction is not a critical point that makes or breaks my thesis. I applied Edmonson's methodology of reconstructing possible transformations of the calendar system. The Tikal system is not attested as existing during the era of the Long Count's first appearance in the archaeological record, therefore we can't assume that the original haab position should be 8 Cumku and the original 2012 haab position should be 3 Kankin. No one had ever considered this circumstance and suggested reconstructed CR positions that would correspond to the temporally appropriate pre-Tikal system. Assuming that the Long Count and the Calendar Round systems were coordinated at the origin of the LC, one expects some kind of calendrical congruence between the two systems. Such a backward reconstruction of congruence from the Classic Period Tikal system is possible, but not at the 3114 nexus --- it is only possible at the 2012 nexus. This is because no easy shift from 8 Cumku to anything indicative of a base-system is possible; but it is possible with an easy (albeit theoretical) 3 Kankin shift. A relatively simple transform from the Tikal results in an earlier system, hypothetically in existence at Izapa, in which 13.0.0.0.0 in 2012 falls on 4 Ajaw 1 K'ank'in. With the haab set to 1, and the possible linguistic implication of Kan-Kin meaning "Kan-cross-sun," we find a curious connection to the alignment image. However, we can't be sure that Kankin would have been linguistically understood by the Izapans in this way, as that month name comes from post-Classic Yucatec.

- That the Maya were not only aware of Precession, but could calculate it with precision in the Preclassic period.

This would be the unavoidable conclusion. To what degree of accuracy they were capable is not precisely known. The evidence in the Classic Period, from Grofe's work, is that they used sidereal positions of the sun and compared them at long intervals. This is exactly the kind of astronomical method that could have been used in the pre-Classic to project an accurate future sidereal position of the sun. The cross of the Milky Way and ecliptic would have been the compelling target point in this reconstruction. The astronomical sophistication required to project a future solstice date, which itself is strongly suggested by the solstice placement of the 13.0.0.0.0 date in 2012 (which means they had an accurate knowledge of the tropical year of 365.2422 days) is almost on par with accurately understanding the sidereal year and precession. In fact, it was the key that allowed Hipparchus to calculate precession using positional star data that was only 140 years old. Thus, the suggestion of this level of astronomical sophistication in the pre-Classic is not out of the question,

especially considering astronomical adjustment for precession evident at La Venta and Tak'alik Ab'aj.

- That there were Five World Ages, each 13 baktuns long; the upcoming 13.0.0.0.0 date marks the end of a full Precession cycle of 26,000 tuns.

This is a reasonable deduction. I believe that the Mesoamerica time-space doctrine is templated upon the quincunx symbol, which has four corner points and a central, fifth, point. Thus, 5 Ages and 5 spatial directions. Conflicting information, for example in some readings of the Popol Vuh Ages, gives 4, but I believe this indicates a forgetting of the original doctrine --- i.e., informants who have lost the center, so to speak. My own interpretation that the era-2012 alignment would logically signal the end of a precessional cycles follows from the winter solstice being the end-beginning anchor point or "root" of the year, and Galactic Center Crossroads (of Milky Way and ecliptic) being a spatial center or root. It's not certain if the ancient Maya saw it this way, and it's not a critical point for my theory --- i.e., the ancient Maya did not need to have a cyclic concept of precessional motion for them to have projected to the future alignment of solstice and Crossroads in era-2012. However, given the circularity of the sky, it seems reasonable to suspect that they would have known that one period of 13-baktuns covers 1/5th of the circular sky. Thus, 5 of these great periods, or Ages, would complete the circle. MacLeod summarizes her similar views on this in her 3-11 Pik paper.

- The conjunction of the Sun with the Dark Rift at the Galactic Center on 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ajaw 3 K'ank'in and its correspondence with a winter solstice is an event that happens within a narrow "Era 2012" window from 1998 – 2013 that occurs only once every 26,000 years.

Correction: The "alignment window" I propose runs from 1980 to 2016. It is a purely astronomical calculation, based in astronomy, in order to avoid the confusion that the "alignment" happens precisely on and only on one day, December 21, 2012 (an absurd notion because precession is so slow). My 36-year "window" was derived from Meeus's supposedly precise calculation of the solstice **point's** alignment with the **galactic equator** (in 1998), combined with the approx. 36 years it takes the 1/2-degree-wide body of the sun to precess through the galactic equator---thus 1980 to 2016. This is not to suggest that empirical effects are thus suppose to happen within this range; it is merely a reasonable way to think about, and discuss, a minimal zone for the alignment. The Galactic Center is the larger field in which the more precise Crossroads is located. The southern terminus of the dark rift and the Crossroads of the Milky Way and the ecliptic are located within the large visually perceivable field of this "nuclear bulge" (a term used by astronomers) of the Galactic Center. The dark rift and the Crossroads are demonstrable concepts in Maya cosmology and Creation Mythology, which connote concepts of "center" and the birth-death nexus (portal of the underworld). This is the simple evidence I presented years ago, which Malmstrom ignored in his under-informed attack, that indicates that the Maya thought of the

Galactic Center region as a “cosmic center” and a birthplace --- concepts true to what the GC is.

- The symbolism of this conjunction—as conceived by the ancient Maya—is that of a union of the First Father (the Sun) with the Great Mother (the Milky Way) as part of the rebirth (?) of Creation

Yes. The archetype of “First Father” is a primordial core image which I believe manifests in a variety of contexts and deity names, including One Hunahpu (at Izapa), GI (at Palenque), and the Maize Deity. The astronomical reference is to the December solstice sun (at Izapa) or sometimes the emphasis is on the sidereal position of the Crossroads (symbolically the “cosmic center” throne of “First Father”). And yes, the Crossroads/throne theme and the dark rift lend themselves to a concept of rebirth and renewal that can operate on different levels, from the rebirth of a man as king to worldrenewal at a large period ending (such as in 2012 AD).

- The symbolism of this conjunction was recorded on monuments at Izapa, where (following Barba de Pina Chan 1988?) these were used to teach shaman-priests.

I believe I encountered Barba de Pina Chan’s work at some point. If I recall correctly, her observation was that that Popol Vuh episodes were portrayed on the Izapan stelae, but she didn’t have an interest in astronomy. I do believe that Izapa served some function as a ceremonial initiation center. My first clue for Popol Vuh imagery on the Izapan monuments came from BYU’s Izapa study by Lowe, et al, and V. Garth Norman’s work.

- Maya shamans had insight into the cosmos as the result of metaphysical vision quests undertaken with the assistance of hallucinogenic substances.

Yes, the evidence at Izapa is Stela 6 and mushroom stones found throughout the region, some of which can be seen at the Tapachula museum. As I discussed in chapters in MC2012, following Reichel-Dolmatoff, Peter Furst, Borhegyi, and other scholars, psychoactive substances used by Native American shamans frequently resulted in complex geometrical cosmic models as well as --- almost always --- a non-dual insight regarding the interpenetration of the different levels of the cosmos, including human subjective experience (the inner dream world) and the external world (the earth environment and astronomy). Such a perspective can be recognized as an advanced metaphysical insight, a hallmark of Oriental metaphysics and Eastern Religions which in many ways is antithetical to assumptions of Western science and religions.

- Detailed, ancient knowledge of the cosmos reveals that ancient Maya spirituality is a manifestation of a “Primordial Tradition” of perennial philosophy shared by other esoteric wisdom traditions in India, Egypt, the British Isles, and elsewhere.

Yes, but it's not in the details of cosmological modeling, it's more in the "holistic" integrative vision of the cosmos, what scholars dryly acknowledge as "reciprocity." The main link-point I see between Maya spirituality and the perennial philosophy is the doctrine of self-naughting, as I discussed in *Galactic Alignment and Pyramid of Fire*. This is, basically, the high ideal of self-sacrifice ---- the sacrifice-transformation-renewal principle as applied to the human life-cycle and to time cycles, thus period endings in the calendar system.

- The core of Maya spirituality is based on perennial philosophy's teachings about cyclical events accompanied by sacrifice, transformation, and renewal.

Yes, thank you. This is still a value performed by Maya ceremonialists today, and is observed in Classic Maya rituals. Sacrifices must be performed at period endings, to facilitate renewal. This principle can be applied, by analogy, to the 2012 period ending.

- The date of December 21, 2012 represents a long-anticipated opportunity for spiritual transformation if the proper sacrifice—extinguishment of the ego—is performed.

Yes, that is my reading of the archetypal message in the Maya Creation Myth (the Popol Vuh). It is also apparent in the Creation Myth symbolism of the Izapa monuments, thus pre-Christian influence.

- Maya mythology, including the Popol Vuh, communicates the teachings of perennial philosophy; this is also a significant part of the content of Maya art

In some cases, but Maya art is a widespread and diverse phenomenon.

- Maya cosmology and spirituality are intimately connected and reflect knowledge of an ancient Primordial Tradition that is the foundation of all major religions

Yes, and this Primordial Tradition or Perennial Philosophy is not to be confused with cheap New Age products in the marketplace.

- If we can understand what the Maya and other keepers of the wisdom of perennial philosophy were trying to teach, the world will be a better place; December 21, 2012 is an ideal time to start a new cycle of Precession with a fresh perspective.

Well, that's up to the individual to decide if they feel so inclined. If one needs to have a position on the future, regardless of 2012, engaging the perennial methods for opening to higher wisdom can be recommended. This is a complex topic; since so many people are projecting hopes and fears onto 2012, it cannot be ignored. It boils

down to basic advice, applicable to any crisis or challenging situation. Most people on the planet, outside the highest elite of first-world countries, are in crisis.

---Note: My beliefs and position on the Perennial Philosophy is nothing I wish to shirk or downplay. However, I've learned that critics often like to belabor the interpretive, terminological, and philosophical debates that can arise. The reconstruction of the astronomical intention in the 2012 date is what Maya scholars should be more interest in, and new evidence from Tortuguero could be discussed. I realize this may not be your area.

Thank you again for the invitation to respond and clarify. Best wishes,
John [Major Jenkins]