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MESOAMERICA

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2012 Prophecies of the End of the Mayan Calendar

Bibliography, Part I

Chilam Balam:

Jaguar Priest Calendrical Prophecies



Introduction:

Books on the Mayan calendrical end-of-the-world predictions for 2012 are best sellers around the world for the past two years. Over thirty years ago the books of Eric von Daeniken in the 1970's on the "Chariots of the Gods" sold millions of copies. He claimed that the royal sarcophagus cover of King Pakal of Palenque (Mexico) showed an ancient astronaut operating the controls of a space ship. His fanciful books became best sellers around the world. He also claimed the Nazca lines (in Peru) were landing strips for aliens.

Archaeologists and other scholars attacked Erich von Däniken as a fraud, but a lot was pure jealousy that his books sold millions and a typical archaeological tome sold less than 1500! Frankly the books of Erich A. Paul von Däniken did more to bring Classic Maya archaeological excitement to the entire world than any other book since those by Stephens and Catherwood in the 1800's. And, precisely the fact the Erich A. Paul von Däniken obviously did not know much about Mayan iconography, opened the door for scholars to explain what the sarcophagus cover symbolism really did mean.

So these are still my feelings today; all the nonsense about the world ending in 2012 at least will bring the concepts of Maya culture to people all around the globe. The government of Guatemala is even promoting Guatemala as a center of Mayan culture focusing on 2012, and expects to interest lots of tourists to visit the Maya ruins of Guatemala.

Another benefit of all the popularistic exaggerations about the Mayan calendrical cycles will, hopefully, encourage scholars to provide more meaningful documentation. As a first installment towards helping the general public understand the role of prophecies and predictions in ancient Maya culture, FLAAR is bringing out a series of bibliographies of scholarly works. So perhaps at least some of the general public, and many students of Mayan culture, will know what books and articles are accurate. We enjoy bringing thousands of our readers to better information about the Maya past and present (and to the Maya future in the case of 2012).

We will have several more topical bibliographies to come. This first bibliography is frankly the easiest to write because it is a very specific range of articles and monographs: on the ethno-historical works of Chilam Balam: the writings of the Jaguar Priest (Balam = Jaguar in several Mayan languages). We select the Books of Chilam Balam because these were written by the Maya themselves and these books include discussion of calendrically based prophecies. But what you will notice is that these prophecies are almost all based on the katun period (roughly twenty years).

The concept of these bibliographies and the coverage (the theme) of each bibliography is the work of Nicholas Hellmuth. The library research to get the details of each opus is the work of Guatemalan anthropologist Antonieta Cajas, who works at FLAAR Mesoamerica in Guatemala.

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