The dates on Lintel 3 of Dzibanché

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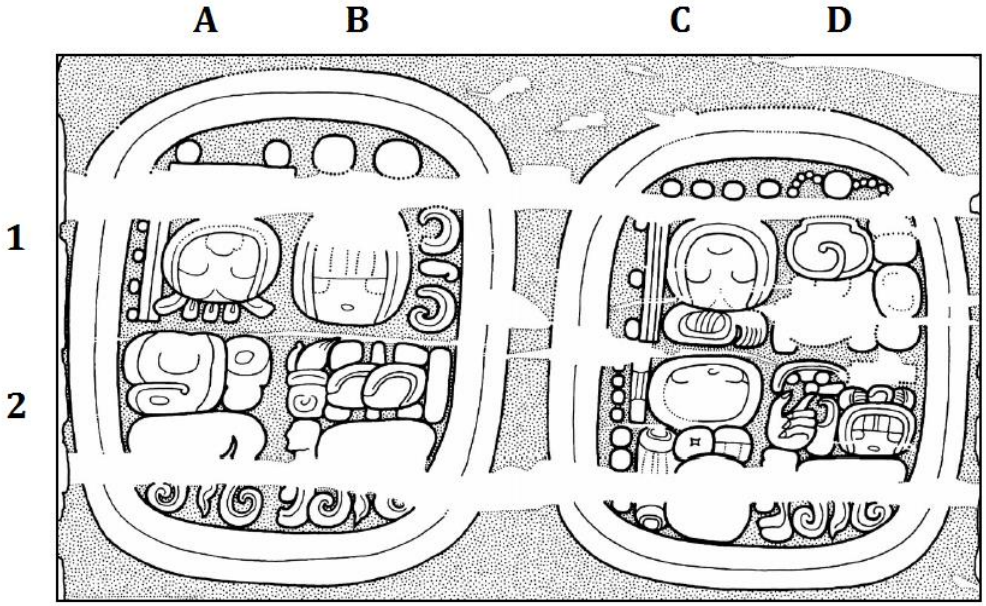
The author in front of Building 6 of Dzibanché. Photo by Mario Krygier.

A few days ago, a very interesting article was published by Dmitri Beliaev and Simon Martin: *"K'ahk' Ti' Ch'ich': A new Snake King from the Early Classic Period".* In this article, the authors make a convincing case for the existence of an early classic king of the Kaanul dynasty by the name of K´ahk´ Ti´ Ch´ich´ Aj Saakil, who acceded to the throne (as Kaloomte´) in 550 at Dzibanché. According to the authors, his coronation date can be found on the wooden Lintel 3 of Dzibanché, the very lintel which gave name to the site: *Dzibanché* – "written in wood".

I think it is noteworthy to analyze a bit deeper the dates of Lintel 3, since it contains a very interesting accession date. Also, there is still some controversy about the correct conversion of the dates.

The Spanish Wikipedia page mentions the date 554 AD as one of the dates of the wooden lintels of Building 6. So does the official INAH page about Dzibanché. If you visit the site, however, you can find an explanation table in front of Building 6, which states that the lintels date to 733 AD. This date is based on Sylvanus Morley, who thought that the Calendar round reads 9 Ajaw 3 Yax.

Today, the original lintels are no longer in place. Without proper lighting, it would be very difficult to make out any details anyway. However, there is a very good drawing of the inscription:



Lintel 3 of Dzibanché, Drawing by Alexandre Safronov, with minor amendments by Simon Martin

In their article, the authors Dmitri Beliaev and Simon Martin give the following date scheme for the Lintel 3 of Building 6:

(9.05.18.13.02)	(6 Ik' 10 K'ank'in)	552	Building dedication?
02.12.14 - (9.05.16.00.08)	(7 Lamat 6 Wo)	550	Seating as *kaloomte'*
(9.05.18.13.02)	(6 Ik' 10 K'ank'in)	552	Building dedication?
01.04.18 + 9.06.00.00.00	9 Ajaw 3 Wayeb	554	Period Ending

Lintel 3 of Dzibanché, date scheme by Dmitri Beliaev and Simon Martin

They do not give further explanation as to how they arrive at those dates, so it might be useful to illuminate this inscription somewhat deeper.

In order to determine the dates, we have to start with the last glyph block: D2. At D2 we find the expression *u hulij 5, 6, 10 or 11 winikhaab* – "5, 6, 10 or 11 K´atun have arrived". Normally, we would expect *tsutsaj x winikhaab* – "x k´atuns were completed". However, it is clear that in this case the meaning is the same: a round k´atun date. We can discern a bar, or 2 bars. Also, there is possible space for a dot above the bar. We have to reconstruct that coefficient with help of the Calendar Round date in the glyph block C2. We have a number 9 for the sacred day, and 3 or 4 as a coefficient for the month sign. The month sign itself is in no way clear. Since it is a round k´atun date, the day must be Ajaw, and the month coefficient can only be 3. It should be mentioned that in rare cases, the month coefficient can be other than 3, 8, 13 or 18 when the sacred day is Ajaw. Stela 63 of Copán carries the date 9.0.0.0.0. 8 Ajaw 14 Keej instead of the expected 8 Ajaw 13 Keej… The reason for this seems to lie in a connection with Teotihuacan.

We will check now all the possible K´atun dates and compare them with the coefficients of the Calendar Round:

9.5.0.0.0. 11 Ajaw 18 Sek
9.6.0.0.0. 9 Ajaw 3 Wayeb
9.10.0.0.0. 1 Ajaw 8 K´ayab
9.11.0.0.0. 12 Ajaw 8 Keej

As we can see, only 9.6.0.0.0. makes sense, since it is the only Long Count date which corresponds to 9 Ajaw 3 x…

Now, let us test Morley´s proposal. He suggested a reading of 9 Ajaw 3 Yax for the Calendar Round date in C2. Looking at the Maya calendar program (programmed

by Mario Krygier), we can see that 9 Ajaw 3 Yax never falls on any round K´atun date. The year 733 corresponds to the Long Count 9.15.2.0.0. Since it is no round K´atun date, it must be rejected.

Once we have established the end date, we can apply the before mentioned distance number. It appears at C1 and D1, as 0.0.1.4.18.

9.6.0.0.0.
\- <u>0.0.1.4.18.</u>
= 9.5.18.13.2.

The Calendar Round of 9.5.18.13.2. is 6 Ik´ 10 K´ank´in. According to Dmitri Beliaev and Simon Martin there are indications that this date might be the inauguration date of building 6. In the European calendar, this Maya date would correspond to 19th of December 552 Gregorian or 17th of December 552 Julian. And this is what the sky looked like:

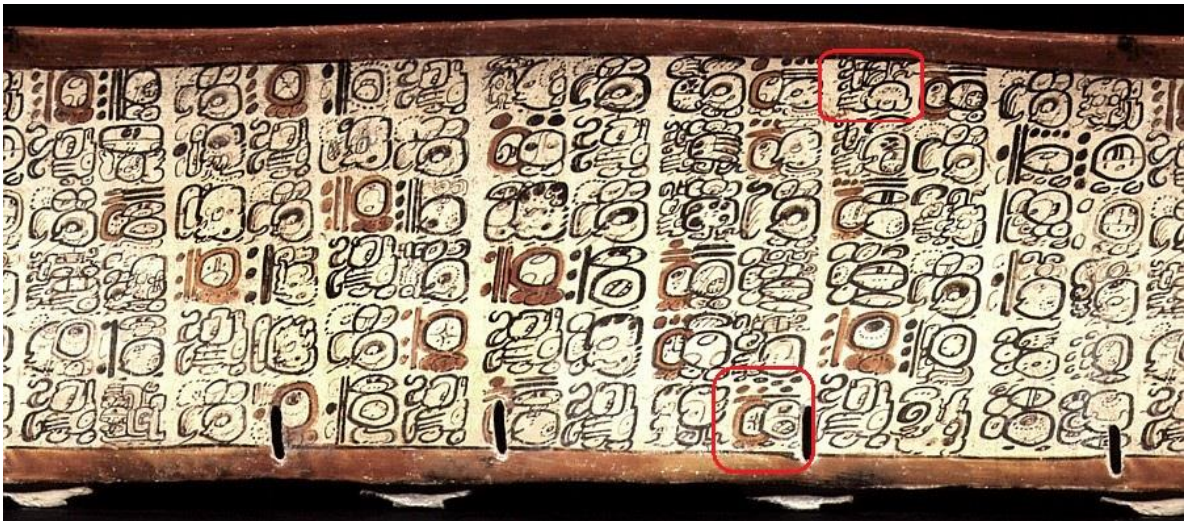
It is interesting to see that the Pleiades were exactly at zenith. However, this phenomenon was visible during many nights, so it is not date specific. Still, it was surely no coincidence.

Going back to the inscription, we find another distance number at A1 and B1. The K´in position is clearly 14. Winal position looks like 7 or 12, 12 being more probable, since there is too much space left for just being 7, since the wood of the lintel has been damaged. Tun position is 2. Therefore, the distance number is 0.0.2.12.14.

If the hieroglyphic text of lintel 1 mentioned the inauguration of the building, then this first distance number is not counted forward, but backwards, since in the following blocks A2 and B2 it says *chumlajiy ti kaloomte´el* – "after he had been seated as Kaloomte´ (emperor)". Most probably, we have to count backwards from the very same inauguration date 9.5.18.13.2. is 6 Ik´ 10 K´ank´in.

9.5.18.13.2.
\- 0.0.2.12.14.
= 9.5.16.0.8.

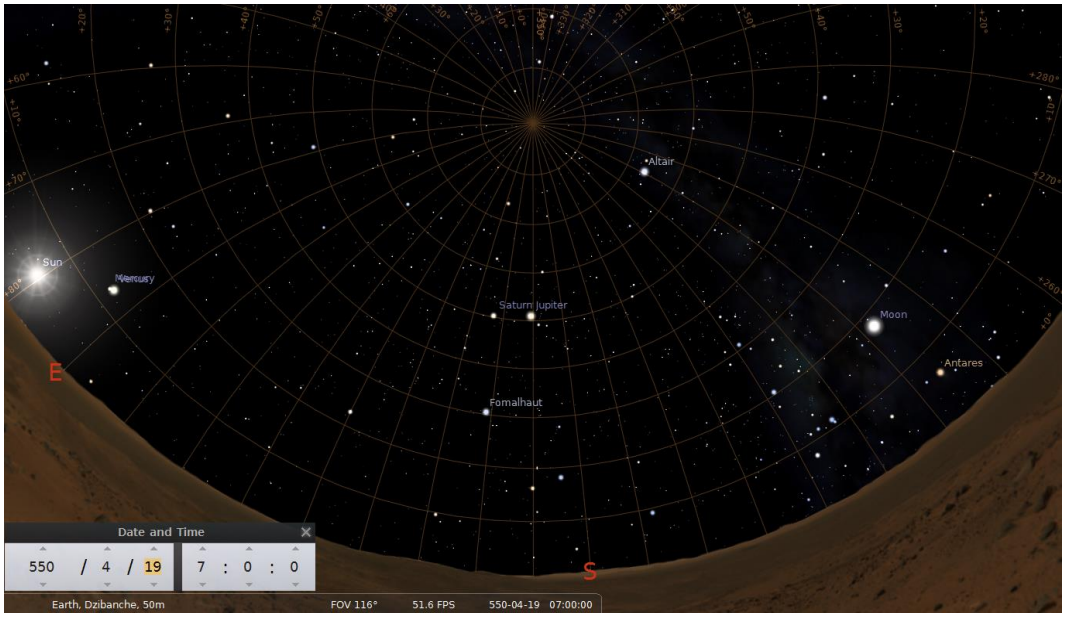
The resulting Long Count date 9.5.16.0.8. corresponds to the Calendar Round date 7 Lamat 6 Woh. And this is most extraordinary, since it is the very same Calendar Round date which appears on one of the Kaanul Dynastic vases, as Dmitri Beliaev and Simon Martin pointed out. I have marked in read the text which says "on the day 7 Lamat 6 Woh, K´ahk´ Ti´ Ch´ich´ grabbed the K´awiil (was crowned as king)".

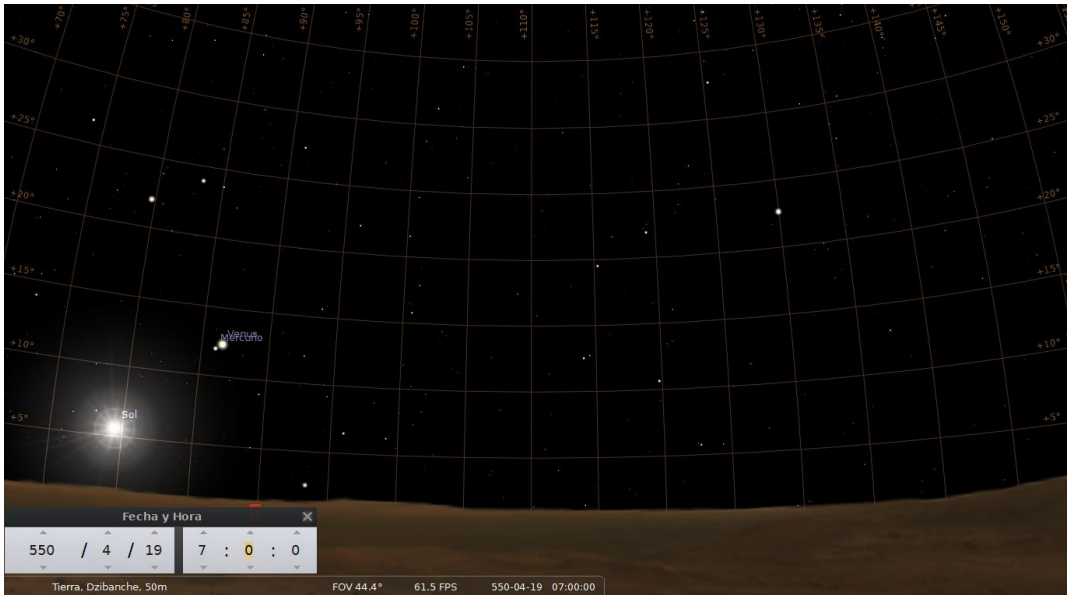


rollout of Maya vessel K 6751, photo by Justin Kerr.

This is a very nice confirmation that all our calculations have been correct so far. If K´ahk´ Ti´ Ch´ich´s accession to the throne was on the Long Count date 9.5.16.0.8. 7 Lamat 6 Woh, then it would correspond to the night from the 20th to 21st of April 550 Gregorian, or 18th to 19th of April 550 Julian. I would like to remind the reader that the Maya Long Count date is counted starting from midday, not midnight.

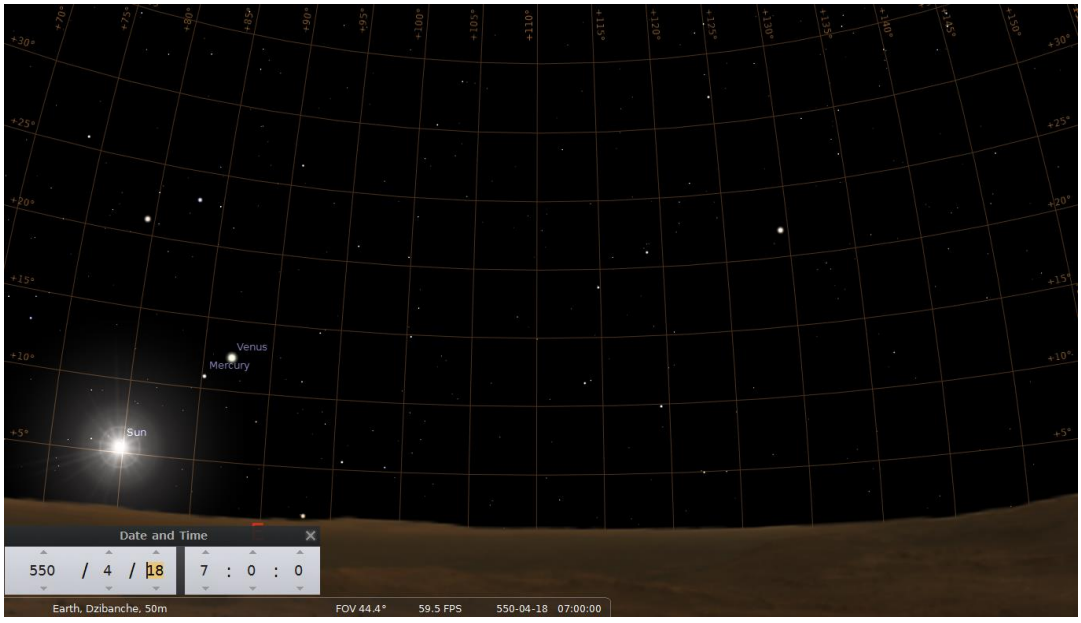
Now, let´s see what happened that night! Actually, there was nothing special to see during the night. However, it is very interesting to see that exactly on that day, in the morning hours, Venus and Mercury are extremely close to each other. Only an extreme zoom allows to even read the names of both planets.



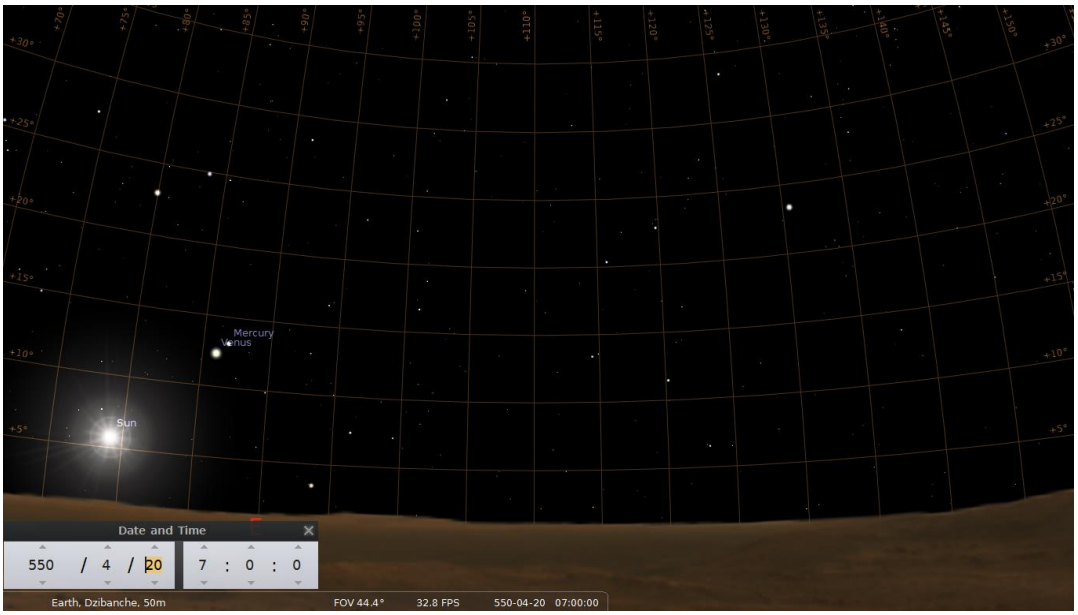


This event was not observable, of course, for the bright sunshine. However, we know that the ancient Maya were very good at calculating planetary conjunctions, first appearances of Venus, lunar and solar eclipses etc, even years an advance.

To demonstrate that this conjunction of Venus and Mercury is no coincidence, let us see the same sky one night before and one night later: On the morning of 18th of April 550, Julian, which corresponds to LC 9.5.16.0.7., Venus and Mercury were not yet as close as one day later:



One day later, in the morning of 20th of April 550 Julian, which corresponds to LC 9.5.16.0.9., the sky looked like this:



Venus is already moving away from Mercury. Therefore, we can conclude that the Maya of Dzibanché chose this planetary conjunction between Venus and Mercury as the celestial event for the coronation of K´ahk´ Ti´ Ch´ich´ Aj Saakil. So, we can again see the validity of the 584285.25 correlation.

Links:

http://www.mesoweb.com/pari/publications/journal/1703/Martin-Beliaev_2017s.pdf

http://web.archive.org/web/20080409131105/http://www.inahqr.gob.mx/Dzibanche/Dzib-elsitio.htm

https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzibanch%C3%A9

www.lacambalam.de (website of LACAMBALAM ACADEMY)

www.stellarium.org