

Mexico acknowledges 2nd Mayan reference to 2012

November 25 2011, By MARK STEVENSON , Associated Press

Mexico's archaeology institute downplays theories that the ancient Mayas predicted some sort of apocalypse would occur in 2012, but on Thursday it acknowledged that a second reference to the date exists on a carved fragment found at a southern Mexico ruin site.

Most experts had cited only one surviving reference to the date in Mayan glyphs, a stone tablet from the Tortuguero site in the [Gulf coast](#) state of Tabasco.

But the National Institute of Anthropology and History said in a statement that there is in fact another apparent reference to the date at the nearby Comalcalco ruin. The inscription is on the carved or molded face of a brick. Comalcalco is unusual among Mayan temples in that it was constructed of bricks.

Arturo Mendez, a spokesman for the institute, said the fragment of inscription had been discovered years ago and has been subject to thorough study. It is not on display and is being kept in storage at the institute.

The "Comalcalco Brick," as the second fragment is known, has been discussed by experts in some online forums. Many still doubt that it is a definite reference to Dec. 21, 2012 or Dec. 23, 2012, the dates cited by proponents of the theory as the possible end of the world.

"Some have proposed it as another reference to 2012, but I remain rather

unconvinced," David Stuart, a specialist in Mayan epigraphy at the University of Texas at Austin, said in a message to The Associated Press.

Stuart said the date inscribed on the brick "'is a Calendar Round,' a combination of a day and month position that will repeat every 52 years."

The brick date does coincide with the end of the 13th Baktun; Baktuns were roughly 394-year periods and 13 was a significant, sacred number for the Mayas. The Mayan Long Count calendar begins in 3114 B.C., and the 13th Baktun ends around Dec. 21, 2012.

But the date on the brick could also correspond to similar dates in the past, Stuart said.

"There's no reason it couldn't be also a date in ancient times, describing some important historical event in the Classic period. In fact, the third glyph on the brick seems to read as the verb huli, "he/she/it arrives."

"There's no future tense marking (unlike the Tortuguero phrase), which in my mind points more to the Comalcalco date being more historical than prophetic," Stuart wrote.

Both inscriptions - the Tortuguero tablet and the Comalcalco brick - were probably carved about 1,300 years ago and both are cryptic in some ways.

The Tortuguero inscription describes something that is supposed to occur in 2012 involving Bolon Yokte, a mysterious Mayan god associated with both war and creation.

However, erosion and a crack in the stone make the end of the passage almost illegible, though some read the last eroded glyphs as perhaps

saying, "He will descend from the sky."

The Comalcalco brick is also odd in that the molded or inscribed faces of the bricks were probably laid facing inward or covered with stucco, suggesting they were not meant to be seen.

The Institute of Anthropology and History has long said rumors of a world-ending or world-changing event in late December 2012 are a Westernized misinterpretation of Mayan calendars.

The institute repeated Thursday that "western messianic thought has twisted the cosmovision of ancient civilizations like the Maya."

The institute's experts say the Mayas saw time as a series of cycles that began and ended with regularity, but with nothing apocalyptic at the end of a given cycle.

Given the strength of Internet rumors about impending disaster in 2012, the institute is organizing a special round table of 60 Mayan experts next week at the archaeological site of Palenque, in southern [Mexico](#), to "dispel some of the doubts about the end of one era and the beginning of another, in the Mayan Long Count calendar."

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