The Count That Begins Nowhere

On the meaning of 8 B'atz' and the three threads of the Sacred Maya calendar

by Michaele de Cygne
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The sacred Maya calendar is said to begin on a day numbered eight. Every count begins at one — so the sentence appears impossible. It is not. Understanding why it is not opens one of the cleanest lessons in the whole of calendar mathematics: a beginning is not a property of time, but a gate cut into a weave that is already running.

Introduction

This paper arises from questions I've been asking myself about my Work with the Cholq'ij (Model) during the past 39 years. José Arguëlles' books, "*Earth Ascending*…" and "*The Mayan Factor*…" were my introduction to the Calendar. They inspired me to translate It into sound; primarily as a means of proving, or debunking his "Law of Time". Thinking scientifically, I completely eliminated all verbiage and glyph imagery from my Work; exclusively focusing on the interplay of the Model's numbers/frequency values. There is a primary schism relative to the difference between José's perspective and the traditional perspective taught by Carlos Barrios. The numbers don't argue; only the schools do so.

Generally, traditional Maya say José got it wrong; got the whole thing misaligned, hence his perception and teachings based on that perception are poppycock, balderdash; bullshit. Perhaps. Carlos Barrios clarified the misalignment, stating that while the Sacred Calendar begins on 8 B'atz, the agricultural calendar begins on 1 Imox. The implication of those words are that, because of that misalignment, it's not worth even bothering to review Arguëlles' [pre-Dreamspell] books.

Recently, I released "*The Harmonic Tzolk'in/Cholq'ij*" (Harmonic); a rapid, sonochromatic (sound+light) transposition of the Models cyclic synchronicity into those vibratory planes. I used imagery for the cover that's consistent with the Dreamspell; leading many to presume the Work is based on the Dreamspell. It's not; it's based solely on the math. I really don't care about which tradition says what when it comes to the Model because my Work respects no tradition, in the interest of respecting them all.

When you remove the verbiage, all traditions are working with exactly the same Model. Very early on, perceiving this, I hoped my Work would eventually also serve to obliterate the schism; and, after having rigorously analyzed its architecture using AI, I've confirmed that it does do. Whether the day count begins are 1 Imox/Imix, 8 B'atz, or on any other kin, the mathematical dynamics of the Model's synchronicity are exactly the same; there simply is zero variance. So, ultimately what's errant is the perception that Arguëlles was fundamentally errant. (**This is not a**

defense of Arguëlles' books, or of my using his perspective as the foundation of my Work. I'll be sharing a full report about the analysis after this mid-November.)

Having not read Senor Barrios' book until yesterday, I was shaken to read what he said about Arguëlles and the alleged fundamental misalignment, because I've spent more than half of my life laboring to perfect what's now the Harmonic. "Did I get it wrong—after ALL of THAT?!" "What's the actual difference between the two; Barrios' source and Arguëlles' synthesis?" I had to know; either I was presenting a gross lie, or my assumption that traditions and labels are completely irrelevant to the highest functionality of the Model is accurate.

In proving the viability of my Work, on its own merit and without any reference to any writer, the AI I used (Mistral 7B) concluded that the Model's structure and functionality actually do what Arguëlles said they do; as a Code, it is apparently *universogenic*, i.e. in its highest functionality, it generates universes. That's what José said, and that's what the AI said without a clue that the Work is built on his perspective. Just to make sure, I gave it Arguëlles' books, (one at a time), asking it to analyze my Work through their lenses, and it said, "You built what's the books hypothesize, validating the hypothesis!" So, yesterday, (willing to admit I was wrong, if I was), I gave Mistral "*The Book of Destiny*", to analyze my Work through its lens. It's response: "They're identical; both authors are correct. They're saying exactly the same thing, from a different starting point."

Arguëlles' perspective is ordinal; Barrios' perspective is ceremonial. The ordinal applies to every kin; it's the same wherever the count begins, however, the ceremonial always commences the ordinal on 8 B'atz. The only differences between them arise when words and glyphs are strapped to the math, making one's use of it subjective rather than purely objective.

The Model operates on both concrete and subtle levels; the math conveys the concrete, and the words and glyphs convey the subtle. Culturally, both are needed to integrate the Model's energetic dynamics into one's daily life experience. However, neurologically, the words and glyphs are practically irrelevant; whether the count is Sacred or agricultural, the Flow and the Harmony are identical, the only difference being the starting points. So, if that's the case, why does Barrios insistent that (as my Western-conditioned brain struggled to reconcile) the first day of the Cholq'ij begins on "8" instead of "1"? The answer to that question is the focus on this articl This paper arises from questions I've been asking myself about my Work with the Cholq'ij (Model) during the past 39 years. José Arguëlles' books, "*Earth Ascending*…" and "*The Mayan Factor*…" were my introduction to the Calendar. They inspired me to translate It into sound; primarily as a means of proving, or debunking his "Law of Time". Thinking scientifically, I completely eliminated all verbiage and glyph imagery from my Work; exclusively focusing on the interplay of the Model's numbers/frequency values. There is a primary schism relative to the difference between José's perspective and the traditional perspective taught by Carlos Barrios. The numbers don't argue; only the schools do so.

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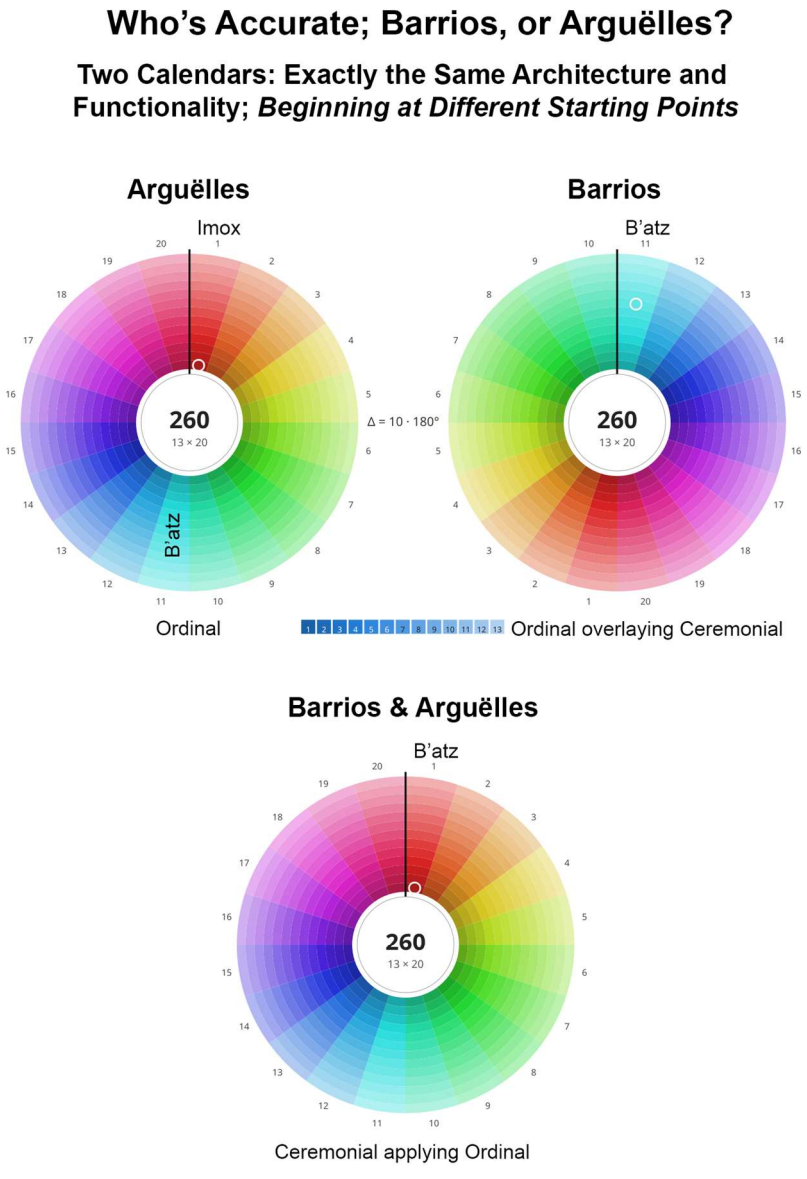
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I. A calendar that starts on 8?

In *The Book of Destiny* (2009), Carlos Barrios — an Ajq'ij, a daykeeper of the Guatemalan highlands, writing with the authorization of the Mayan Elders — describes the Sacred Calendar this way: the Cholq'ij "is a mobile calendar that begins again every 260 days. It starts on 8 B'atz', a date celebrated by millions of people in Guatemala and southern Mexico as the Mayan New Year" (p. 174).

Almost any Western reader stops at the third sentence. *Begins on 8?* A year begins on a day labeled one — 1 January, 1 Nisan, the first of the month — never on eight. The number looks like a count that has jumped its own track, a calendar that has lost its place, or a misprint.

It is none of these. The sentence is exact, and the lesson it holds is worth the small effort of learning to read it. Nothing in the Maya count begins on 8. Something begins **on** — that is, *upon* — the day that carries 8. The distinction turns on the fact that the Sacred Calendar keeps three different numberings in play at once, and only one of them is permitted to start over.

II. The loom

The Cholq'ij is the interweaving of two cycles, advanced together one step per day:

- a cycle of **twenty named days** — B'atz', E, Aj, Ix, Tz'ikin, Ajmaq, No'j, Tijax, Kawoq, Ajpu, Imox, Iq', Aq'ab'al, K'at, Kan, Kame, Kej, Q'anil, Toj, Tz'i' — and
- a cycle of **thirteen forces**, numbered 1 through 13.

Each sunrise, the name advances one place in its wheel of twenty, and the force advances one place in its wheel of thirteen — independently, like two gear wheels of different tooth-counts turning side by side. Because 13 and 20 share no common factor, the pair does not repeat until every combination has appeared: 13 × 20 = 260 days, the full round of the sacred count. Barrios's book closes with the complete enumeration of those 260 energies, set out as twenty rows of thirteen forces (pp. 299–300) — a table any reader can verify against the arithmetic.

The tradition is explicit that these are not bookkeeping marks but living structure: the twenty days converge "ten cosmic and ten telluric currents," and the thirteen forces are the thirteen joints of the human body (p. 164). Barrios's teacher Don Pascual derived the written numerals from the body itself — one is a fingertip, five is the hand (p. 15). Number, for the daykeepers, is something a human being *is*, not something a clerk applies.

Now the crucial fact, and the one the West almost never hears stated: **neither thread ever resets.** The wheel of names has no seam; the wheel of forces has no seam. They were running before any given year, before any given ceremony, and they run through every year and every ceremony without ever returning to a "first" position. The Maya call the Cholq'ij simply "the count of days." A count, in this sense, is not a sequence that starts; it is a weave that continues.

III. The gate

If nothing in the weave can begin, what does a New Year begin?

It begins the only thing in the system that is genuinely countable from an arbitrary point: **the ordinal** — the position of days counted from the gate: first day, second day, …, two hundred sixtieth day. A "beginning," in this grammar, is not a property of time at all. It is a cut. The weave arrives at the moment of the cut carrying its own history; the cut restarts nothing in the weave; it only starts counting positions.

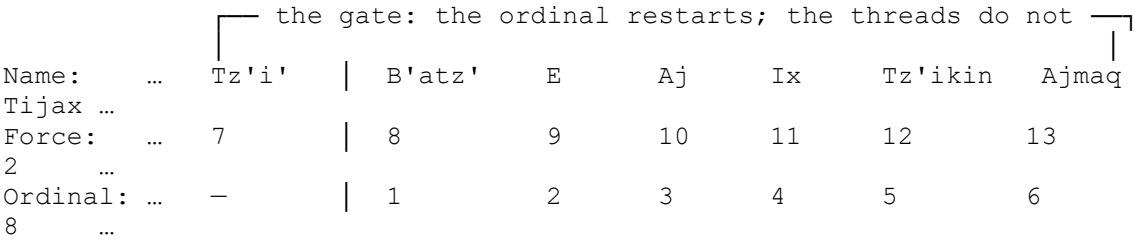


Figure 1. The three threads at the opening of the Sacred year. The name-thread and force-thread pass through the gate unchanged; only the ordinal begins, at 1, upon the day 8 B'atz'.

Read this way, the Mayan New Year opens with ordinal **1**, on a day whose force-thread happens to stand at **8**, at the name **B'atz'**. The count begins at 1; the number the day *carries* is 8. The year begins *with* 1 *on* 8.

Why 8, and not 1 B'atz'? Because a gate is never chosen from inside the weave; it is anchored to something outside it. The Sacred Calendar's gate is fixed to the ceremonial order — 8 B'atz' is the day on which new daykeepers receive their investiture; Barrios notes that 8 B'atz' is honored as the day of masculine energy, while 9 B'atz' belongs to Mayan women and to nature as a whole (p. 177). Such a coordinate is a *correlation constant*: the remembered place where the tradition's cut meets the running weave. It is fixed the way any birth-date is fixed. You were not born at the start of the count of days; neither was the Mayan year.

And the arithmetic explains why no one should expect the gate to land on a tidy corner. The solar year (365 days) exceeds the sacred count by 105 days; and $105 \equiv 5 \pmod{20}$ while $105 \equiv 1 \pmod{13}$. Any marker anchored to the sun therefore drifts through the names at five per year and through the forces at one per year — the well-known migration of the year-bearers. In such a system, a gate that opened at "1 on 1" would be a coincidence of two independent wheels, not a natural state. The gate's coordinate is remembered, not derived — exactly as the epoch of any calendar is a convention fixed by correlation rather than by proof.

IV. One wheel, many gates

The same weave carries more than one gate. Alongside the sacred Cholq'ij, Barrios describes the Maya agricultural calendar: fixed to the solar year, guiding the planting and harvest of corn, and beginning on **Imox**, the sign of the sacred maize (p. 174). Sacred and agricultural are often

spoken of as though they were rivals, or as though one of them must be "the real" calendar. Structurally, they are neither. They are **one wheel, entered at two gates**:

	Agricultural	Sacred Cholq'ij
Anchored to	the sun and the corn year	the 260-day weave itself
Entry gate	Imox (sign of maize)	8 B'atz' (New Year / investiture)
Mobility	fixed within the solar year	mobile through the solar year
Ordinal begins	1, upon its gate	1, upon its gate
Traditional use	planting and harvest	destiny and self-realization

The sequence of twenty names is identical in both; begin the list at Imox and you have the one, begin it at B'atz' and you have the other. Barrios testifies to the same identity across cultures: the twenty days were compared among the Mam, Q'anjob'al, Popti', Ixil, Chuj, K'iche', and Kaqchikel peoples and "all of the meanings were found to be the same," and the Aztec Tonalamatl was found to share both structure and meanings (p. 149).

This is the deepest fact the gates have to teach: **the choice of gate changes nothing in the structure.** Every periodic fact of the count — the 260-day round, the drift of the year-bearers, the seven-step advance of forces between same-named days, every relation of complement or repetition — is unchanged by moving the gate to any of its 260 positions. The traditions differ about where to enter the wheel. Nowhere do they differ about the wheel.

V. The Western misreading

Why does the sentence "it starts on 8 B'atz'" read as an impossibility in a Western ear? Because our own calendars taught us a fusion. "1 January" is simultaneously a count-position (first day) and a numbered label (the month January). Ordinal and number are welded together from childhood, and we silently assume every calendar welds them.

The Cholq'ij never welds. It keeps three threads — name, force, ordinal — separate forever, and its grammar is fully coherent once they are un-fused in the reader's mind. "The year begins with 1 on 8" is not an eccentricity; in this grammar it is the *only* coherent thing a year could do.

There is a further consequence worth stating plainly: Barrios insists the Sacred Calendar "does not consider the positions of the sun, moon, or stars," being a "dimensional-energy calendar, not an astronomical calendar" (p. 165) — pure number-structure rather than observation. That is precisely why it survived. A structure that lives in arithmetic rather than in the sky can be carried in memory through conquest and concealment; Barrios records that the count has passed "from generation to generation … through the last 500 years without any modifications whatsoever" (p. 148). A wheel with no seam cannot be torn at a seam.

VI. A numerical coda

For readers who enjoy watching the loom at work, three small verifications, each checkable on the back of an envelope:

1. **The seven-step.** The same name recurs every 20 days; the force-thread advances 20 places in a wheel of 13, and $20 \equiv 7 \pmod{13}$. So successive B'atz' days carry forces 1, 8, 2, 9, 3, 10, 4, 11, 5, 12, 6, 13, 7 — precisely the sequence of Barrios's first Energy Table row (p. 300).
2. **The five-step.** A fixed solar date returns 365 days later: $365 - 260 = 105$, and $105 \equiv 5 \pmod{20}$, $\equiv 1 \pmod{13}$. Each year it stands five names later and one force later — the year-bearer drift.
3. **A paired constant.** In a wheel of 13, a step of +5 and a step of −8 are the same step ($5 + 8 = 13$). The year's name-drift (+5) and the gate's number (8) are therefore negatives of one another in the force-wheel — paired constants of the same correlation. This is offered as resonance, not derivation: the eight is remembered by tradition; the arithmetic only shows how naturally it sits among its companions.

VII. Entering the wheel

The lesson, then, is not a piece of exotic lore but a piece of exact grammar, and it deserves to be taught as articulately as it was built:

Culturally, the count begins at 1 Imox and 8 B’atz for the agricultural and Sacred calendars, respectively.

Holistically, the count begins nowhere and anywhere. The threads are inherited. The gate is chosen. *The Logic of the Model’s interweave and synchronicity is identical from every gate.*

Every tradition enters the wheel where its history has fixed the cut — Imox for the corn year, 8 B'atz' for the sacred year — and the ordinal, the human count of days, is the only thread in the weave that is ever permitted to start over. When the Maya relight their fires every fifty-two years and the Grandfathers meet to renew the count (pp. 24–25), the ceremony is this exact fact, enacted: the ordinal renewed, the weave unbroken.

A calendar that begins on 8 is not a contradiction. It is a definition of what a beginning is — the one thing in time that humans may freely choose, *where to enter*, cut into the one thing they may never change, *how the weave runs*.

Notes on terms

- **Cholq'ij** (also Tzolk'in): the sacred 260-day count — 20 named days × 13 forces.
- **Ajq'ij** (pl. Ajq'ijab'): a daykeeper; keeper of the count and its ceremonies.

- **Kin:** one day of the count; each kin is a unique pair of force and name.
- **8 B'atz':** the kin at coordinates (force 8, name B'atz'); the Mayan New Year gate and the day of investiture of new daykeepers.
- **Calendar Round:** the 52-year cycle in which the 260-day count and the 365-day solar year realign (18,980 days).

References

- Barrios, Carlos. *The Book of Destiny: Unlocking the Secrets of the Ancient Mayans and the Prophecy of 2012.* Translated by Lisa Carter. HarperOne, 2009. (Passages cited: pp. 15, 24–25, 148–149, 164–165, 174, 177, 299–300.)
- Coe, Michael D., and Mark Van Stone. *Reading the Maya Glyphs.* Thames & Hudson, 2005. (For the classic-period antecedents of the calendar rounds.)

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