

NOTES ON THE COATLAN:

The "Coatlan" of Teotihuacan = The great north plaza at the foot of the so-called Temple of the Moon. Like Coatlans everywhere it is the Place of Origins and Endings, both womb and tomb. It is the enclosure where Scott and I think the original fire burned in which, according to Aztec tradition, the Fifth Sun was born. We believe that the birth occurred here and not in front of the so-called temple of the Sun or the Ciudadela as most scholars believe. Why? Because the North has always been considered the place of origins. The famous Aztlan paradise and Chicomoztoc, "The seven caves" which gave birth to the various Aztec tribes are legendary sites of the north. The calendrical sign for the North is the Tecpatl, the Flint Knife. The Aztecs began their great migration in the Year One Tecpatl (~~Flint Knife~~). Huitzilopochtli, the tribal god of the Mexica, was born in a One Flint year. The flint knife has always been associated with beginnings. It was instrumental in creating the first fire god among the sixteen hundred terrestrial gods according to one Aztec myth.

The name "Teotihuacan" in the Aztec language means "Place Where Gods are Created". This came about when the stellar goddess Citlalicue gave birth to the Flint Knife, itself a god. It fell to earth and cleaved an opening from which the gods emerged, the god of fire being the first. Mythic tradition says that this occurred at Chicomoztoc and at Teotihuacan. Since Chicomoztoc is defined by its northness, the traditional place of beginnings, it follows that the Chicomoztoc of Teotihuacan lies at the northerly terminus of the Miccaotl, the so-called Avenue of the Dead. I believe that, inspite of the caves found under Teotihuacan's Temple of the Sun, the site of the Sun's birth lies in the north at the plaza of beginnings and endings.

Remember, that when it emerged from the fire after the self-immolation of the pustulled god Nanahuatzin, the myths say that the sun lacked direction and movement. As a celestial deity its stillness made it resemble only one other god in the heavens - the North Star. It was the fire god who decided that the sun would rise in the east and set in the west, its movement made possible by Ehecatl the god of the winds, but only after all the newly-created gods sacrificed themselves in the sacred fire place. This was done and the sun was given direction and movement and was also given the name of "Nahui Ollin" which means "4-Movement". Thus began its annual North to South and South to North journey which would give mankind the seasons for rain and planting, the season for harvest and the season for war. And these origin myths established permanently the need for sacrifice to keep the sun in motion.

In our studies of various other cities dating from at least formative Olmec times through to the Conquest we have observed many sites with prominent south to north ceremonial ways terminating at plazas and/or northern temples facing south that are places of beginnings and endings. Coatlans. There is intriguing evidence in the Templo Mayor of a major South-facing structure indicated by a triple stairway found in 1900 under

the colonial house of the Marques de Apartado. It would have terminated the ceremonial way. The Nuremburg Map of 1524, when corrected, also shows a major building at the north. Moctezuma II considered the remodelling of the Coatlan one of the most important achievements of his reign. In Scott's and my opinion the Coatlan was the most sacred site in the Recinto Sagrado of Tenohtitlan. This will be the subject of an essay in depth in our book "The One Reed Year".

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The name "Teotihuacan" in the Aztec language means "Place Where Gods are Created". This came about when the stellar goddess Citlallicue gave birth to the Flint Knife, itself a god. It fell to earth and cleaved an opening from which the gods emerged, the god of fire being the first. Mythic tradition says that this occurred at Chicomoztoc and at Teotihuacan. Since Chicomoztoc is defined by its northness, the traditional place of beginnings, it follows that the Chicomoztoc of Teotihuacan lies at the northers terminus of the Miccaotli, the so-called Avenue of the Dead. I believe that, inspite of the caves found under Teotihuacan's Temple of the Sun, the site of the Sun's birth lies in the north at the plaza of beginnings and endings.

Remember, that when it emerged from the fire after the self-immolation of the pustulled god Nanahuatzin, the myths say that the sun lacked direction and movement. As a celestial deity its stillness made it resemble only one other god in the heavens - the North Star. It was the fire god who decided that the sun would rise in the east and set in the west, its movement made possible by Ehecatl the god of the winds, but only after all the newly-created gods sacrificed themselves in the sacred fire place. This was done and the sun was given direction and movement and was also given the name of "Nahui Ollin" which means "4-Movement". Thus began its annual North to South and South to North journey which would give mankind the seasons for rain and planting, the season for harvest and the season for war. And these origin myths established permanently the need for sacrifice to keep the sun in motion.

Tecpatl. Huitzilopochtli, the tribal god of the Mexica Aztecs, was born in a One Flint Knife year. As the most important stone capable of creating sacred fire, the flint knife has always been associated with new fires and hence with beginnings. In fact it was instrumental in creating the God of Fire himself, the first god among sixteen hundred terrestrial deities that the knife brought in to the world according to one Aztec myth.

The name "Teotihuacan" in the Aztec language means "Place Where Gods are Created". This came about when the stellar goddess Citlallicue "Stars are her skirt" gave birth to the Flint Knife, itself a god. It fell to earth and cleaved an opening from which the gods emerged, the god of fire being the first. Mythic tradition says that this occurred at Chicomoztoc and at Teotihuacan. Since Chicomoztoc "Seven Caves" was defined by its northness in Aztec myth, and thus the traditional place of beginnings, it follows that the Chicomoztoc of Teotihuacan must lie at the city's north at the northern terminus of the Miccaotli, the Avenue of the Dead. I believe that, in spite of the caves found under Teotihuacan's Temple of the Sun, the site of the Sun's birth must lie in the north at the plaza of beginnings and endings, the Coatlan of Teotihuacan.

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In our studies of various other cities dating from at least formative Olmec times to the Conquest we have observed many sites with prominent south to north ceremonial ways terminating at plazas and/or northern temples facing south that must have been places of beginnings and endings, that must have been Coatlans.

There is intriguing evidence in Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor of a major South-facing structure indicated by a triple stairway found around 1900 under the colonial house of the Marques de Apartado. It would have terminated the ceremonial way. The Nuremburg Map of 1524, when corrected, also shows a major building at the north. Moctezuma II considered the remodelling of the Coatlan one of the most important achievements of his reign. In Scott's and my opinion the Coatlan was the most sacred site in the Recinto Sagrado of Tenochtitlan. This will be the subject of an essay in depth in our book "The One Reed Year." We will deal not only with the goddess and some of her more important manifestations, but also with the death symbolism

of the Coatlan, Stellar imagery, and we will take a fresh look at some of the traditional interpretations of Aztec imagery and myth as evidenced by the archaeological investigations of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco and other major post-classic cities.

not only is daily East to West
rising and falling

This happened, however, only after all the newly-created gods sacrificed themselves in the sacred fire place. When this was done the sun was given direction and motion. It was also given the calendrical name of "Nahui Ollin" which means "4-Movement". This date-name honored both the day of the Sun's birth and appropriately the day of its death. Thus began its annual North to South and South to North journey which would give mankind the seasons for rain and planting, the seasons for harvesting and war. And these origin myths established permanently the need for sacrifice to keep the sun in motion to make human life possible.

In our studies of various other cities dating from at least formative Olmec times to the European Conquest we have observed many sites with prominent south to north ceremonial ways terminating at plazas and/or northern temples facing south that must have been "Coatlans" or places of beginnings and endings. There is intriguing evidence in Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor of a major South-facing structure in the north indicated by a triple stairway found around 1900 under the colonial house of the Marqueses de Apartado. It quite possibly would have terminated the south to north ceremonial way. The Nuremburg Map of 1524, when corrected, also shows a major building at the north. It is known Moctezuma II considered the remodelling of the Coatlan of Tenochtitlan one of the most important achievements of his reign. In Scott's and my opinion the Coatlan was the most sacred site in the Recinto Sagrado of Tenochtitlan. This will be the subject of an essay in depth in our book "The One Reed Year." We will deal not only with the goddess and some of her more important manifestations, but also with the life and death symbolism of the Coatlan and important stellar imagery that will hopefully add to our understanding of the Aztec view of the cosmos and how it defined their destiny. We will also try take a fresh look at some of the traditional interpretations of Teotihuacan art and its relationship to Aztec imagery and myth as evidenced by the archaeological investigations of the Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco Cholula and other major post-classic cities.

