

military leaders of the Triple Alliance. Though not armed for war, the three god impersonators on our stone do brandish the obsidian star wand like a weapon. The wand is thought to symbolize the Pleiades and very likely the fire serpent, a powerful manifestation of lightning and celestial fire. The fire serpent was in fact the weapon of choice for the Aztec god of war Huitzilopochtli.

Is it possible that our stone might commemorate a ceremony held by the rulers of the Triple Alliance to propitiate the possible malevolent influences brought about by the arrival in the East of a living embodiment of Venus and Quetzalcoatl-Ehecatl, Hernan Cortes? Probably not. But surely the stone does record a special ceremony recognizing the return of the planet Venus on the eastern horizon. It is thus the same kind of cyclical Venus celebration that did indeed include the possible return of the god Quetzalcoatl some day in a One Reed year.

A couple of final observations: The shape of this stone is rather odd in the surviving list of Aztec objects. Originally it was more elongated. With the bottom missing we can only guess how long it was, but it is possible that when it was complete it may have resembled a column. This is intriguing, because the great colonial scholar Bernardino de Sahagun in his famous list of the sacred buildings of Tenochtitlan's Templo Mayor, mentions as the fortieth site a place called Ilhuicatitlan.

"The fortieth building was called Ilhuicatitlan, and consisted of a thick (massive) and tall (high) column, on which the morning star (Venus) was painted. On the capital of this column another capital of Straw was erected. (perhaps a small straw house in which the god might reside) In front of this column and this star captives were sacrificed yearly when the star appeared again in the heavens."

Also, Sahagun records that during the festival of the month of Atlcahualo held at the end of the dry season to petition for rain, among the many ceremonies was one held at a place at the Templo Mayor precinct called Chililico which means "in the fire of the red pepper". Here they sacrificed a slave under the sign of Chiconahui Ehecatl ("Nine Wind") which is the birth day name for Quetzalcoatl-Ehecatl. Since the god's birth, like the birth of the planet Venus, occurred in the east, the worshippers are almost certainly sacrificing to the wind god of the east to bring the rain bearing east winds. Sahagun also notes that this sacrifice was performed "by the Lords (or Chieftains) only". Note Sahagun's use of the plural "Lords." These must be the rulers of the Triple Alliance and perhaps others, for we know that during another part of the Atlcahualo observances the lords of Texcoco, Tacuba, and Tenochtitlan climbed Mount Tlaloc east of the valley together to make lavish offerings and sacrifices to the rain god.

The name "Chililico", "in the fire of the red pepper" is almost certainly a poetic way of describing the dry season. Also, the ingestion of hot red peppers causes an instant need for water. The chilli's color red, then, may have a bearing on the color of our stone. We also know that the Aztecs often associated the color red with the direction of East.

*I hope this is helpful -
Stuart Gentling*

*Partial
dry season
Chiconahui
on stone*

*There
was 2
concomitant
wind
deity
glyphs
on the stone*



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