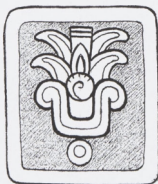


# THE HIDDEN KINGDOM

THE ART OF ANCIENT MESOAMERICA  
COMPOSITION  
AND  
THE GEOMETRY OF SACRED SPACE

SCOTT GENTLING



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### Theory:

That underlying many of the more sophisticated and complex works of ancient Mesoamerican art and architecture is a single geometric plan organized according to spatial divisions which reflect the structure of the Cosmos as they conceived it. This structure consisted of two primary spatial ideas, the terrestrial plane of the earth with its four cardinal directions with their center and passing through this center, a vertical axis creating the second of those spatial ideas, the upper, middle and lower worlds or, as is more often mentioned, the 13 heavens, the earth and the 9 under worlds — all organized around the all important axis passing through the center. I mention this latter twice since, not only unifies the threeness of Cosmic level with the fourness of the earth's cardinal directions, it indicates that the geometric plan derived from this Cosmic structure should do the same if it is to be complete and a unity.

In many indigenous Mesoamerican communities today, as in the distant past, native priests begin their rituals with the establishment of a center which they do with the kindling of a fire. Taking this in a censer, they sprinkle it with copal incense and with its fragrant fumes they acknowledge and sanctify the four cardinal directions, the heavens and the underworlds. These are thus unified by the priest who being the center and unifying axis of the ritual assumes his now sanctified position as an intermediary, a conduit and a focus for the spiritual intercommunication of all three worlds.

I believe that it is this creation of a sanctified ritual space that is the main purpose for an underlying geometric scheme organizing both the structure and the meaning of the art, architecture and design of the high cultures of ancient Mexico and Central America. As will be seen, even in its drawing-out it is a reenactment of the old Creation myths. And this is just the beginning.





The number four here refers to the four cardinal points, each a separate entity from from the cardinal directions of which it is the axis. This I call the principle of "fourness". Its first statement is in the two great diagonals of the rectangle diverging into the cardinal directions in a first act of creation both actual and symbolic. It must be so since it is this act that creates the center, without which no orientation is possible.

The Aztecs believed that the present "sun" or age was created at the ancient city of Teotihuacan when the old gods leaped into a fire transforming themselves into new gods, a new time and a new reality. In order for there to be a fire, the great diagonals were already in place in order for there to be a center for fire. This suggests that the diagonals are indeed the first act of creation.

This, I think, took place not in front of the so-called temple of the sun, but in the north, in front of the so-called temple of the moon which is really a temple to the primary Mother goddess, Chantico Coatlique, Cihuacoatl, to the Aztecs. There is a curious four sided structure there that is related to this event and is Aztec or at least that is what I think. It is in the north, the most important locus for origins and endings. A universal symbol for origins, for fire and for its center is often expressed universally by the three stones of the hearth, an important expression of the power of the number three. It also represented the minimum number of stones required to balance a juggling stone or cooking pot.

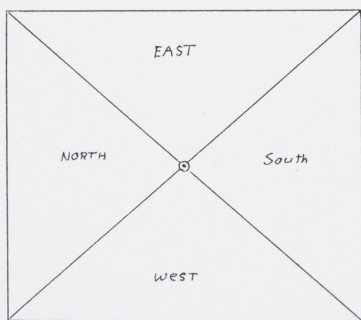
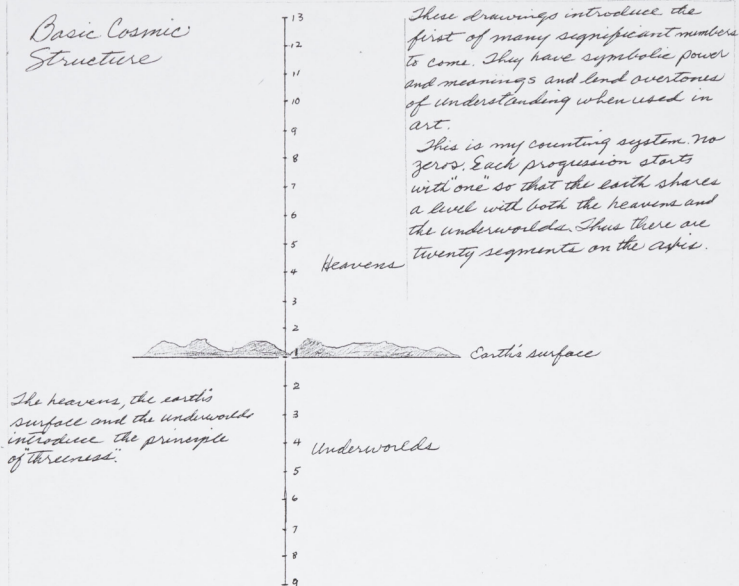
The number three which we <sup>also</sup> encountered in the triple division of the heavens, earth and underworlds I call the principle of "threeness". We now see it combining with the "fourness" of the division of the earth into four cardinal directions. It does so in the relationship the sun has with the earth both in its seasonal and in its diurnal path whose nodal points mark the extremes of summer, winter and midyear in the former and sunrise, midday and sunset in the latter. The "threeness" and "fourness" when combined create the concept of "sevenness". Seven is an even more powerful symbol for completion than the number five, its first statement.

This is due to the addition of the apical directions (2) up and down from the center of the quincunx (5) completing the primary directional forces.

The powers of certain Gods are reflected in their names, thus Macuil (5) Xochitl and Chicome (7) Coatl. I think that Macuil Xochitl's powers are more associated with the surface of the earth, while Chicomecoatl is all-important. She has the power to move in all the worlds, the heavens, the underworlds and the surface of the earth. These names may also indicate an emphasis on a particular area of influence.



## Basic Cosmic Structure



Ancient Mesoamerican Maps always place East at the top.

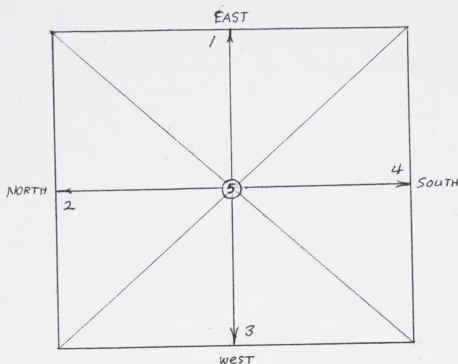
This is the earth, its four Cardinal directions with the center.

The center is always a place of fire.

Fire is always a center

The four Cardinal directions introduce the principle of "fourness" from Duality, the two diagonals.

## *"Fourness" and "Threeness"*

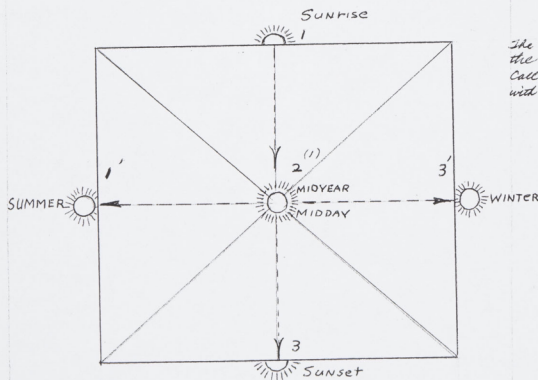


The four Cardinal points  
Creating the four quadrants  
This I call "fourness".

Then proceeds to include  
the center, the quincunx,  
the first statement of  
completion one of the  
prime meanings for  
this important number.

"5" also refers to Earth  
and gives its meaning a  
terrestrial overtone.

The 5<sup>th</sup> sun, the completion  
of the "suns" of history has this  
earth connection.



The three mobile points of  
the sun on each axis I  
call "threeness", here combining  
with the earth's "fourness".

The connection here made by the relationships the sun has with  
the earth, its four directions and its center introduces the element of  
time to the plan. We now have a space-time concept. Distances will  
now be described in terms of how long it takes to travel them.

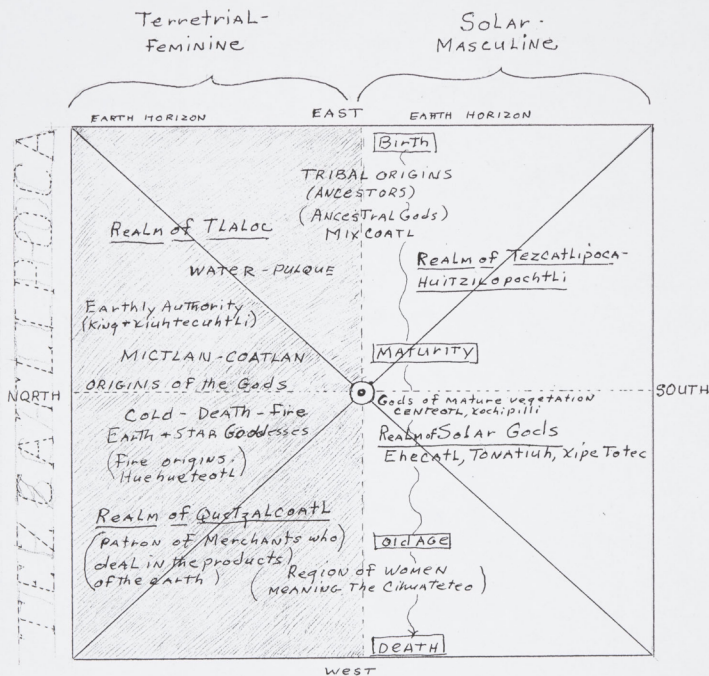
The drawing at the right shows only some of the meanings of this sacred space. Even the space itself is divided only according to one of its two systems; that of the initial duality created by the two primary diagonals of the rectangle. It is a primary system which seeks balance between opposing but complementary entities. It is further subdivided into the four quadrants by the North, South and East, West axes. In all we now have eight segments, the four cardinal directions, with each bisected by its Cardinal point.

The other system, reflecting the three levels of the Cosmos and the nodal points of the sun's daily and seasonal paths will be discussed shortly. For now, I just didn't want to introduce more complications but rather to show that there are meanings to each of these areas of division.

Many of these characteristics were the simple products of geography and seasonal change. The North was a place of cold, a desert place and the ancient home of wild ancestral tribes. But what gave it its deadly quality was the presence of the North Star - palois. So a people who thought of all nature as being animated, even rocks, which they said just moved so slowly that they couldn't be seen, the North star was stillness itself. An unmoving center about which moved the starry night sky, like a wrap around woman's skirt, they said, and stillness was death itself.

The East was seen as the place where the sun rose and escaped the dangers of its deadly journey in the underworld. It was thought of as reborn and this became associated with birth in the human life cycle. The daily path of the sun as it gained strength to full powers at noon and then weakened in its decline toward death in the west also echoed the rest of the human life cycle. Because the daily sun path was short in time compared with the yearly journey of the sun along its North South axis it became metaphorical for the brevity of human life, the span of civilizations in their mortality and even for those gods thought of as being partly mortal, like Mixcoatl, the prototype for the Aztec's subsequent patron deity, Huitzilopochtli.

# Significance of Each Cardinal Direction



In addition to these meanings there were others. Also each direction had a patron god, a color - East, red, North black, West white south blue or yellow and the center, green. Each direction had a bird and a tree of its own.



There are but two of the directions with their associated meanings. The *Axis* and the *Apex*, but all of this information and much more can be found in the vast literature on the subject. I prefer to move on with the purpose of this work and I see that it is time to introduce some working information about pictorial geometry.

Often called the painter's Secret Geometry it consisted of many systems developed in Europe from ancient times and used to proportion and structure works of art and architecture. They originally reflected religious and philosophical ideas which were then thought to pervade the art works constructed upon them.

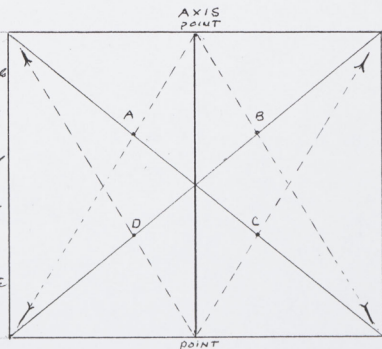
There is the famous Golden Section, ancient in origin but later used by Christians as the divine proportion, a statement of the principles of the Holy Trinity.

Related to it were other systems based upon the proportions of the musical scale and still others which dealt abstractly with the proportions inherent in the sides of the rectangle itself.

No matter what they were, they were all drawn out following the same rules. The rule we well now imply concerns how an axis in a rectangle influences by its placement the area of that rectangle. It is simply this: When an axis intersects the perimeter of a rectangle lines are drawn from that intersection, across the area of the rectangle to the two corners opposite that intersecting point,

What is important here is that the dotted lines from each end of a single axis, when they cross the diagonals of the rectangle divide them, all four sides of the rectangle, the dotted lines themselves, and if horizontal axes were drawn through points A, B and C, D the axis itself into thirds.

This is "threeness", the other of the two component aspects of Cosmic Order. It is not imposed, but occurs quite naturally.



I began my work with this subject back in the late 1960's. I had studied artists secret geometry as an art student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and had used it afterwards in many of my own works. Then in 1968 my brother Stuart bought a small Mayan Vase with the painting of a fore priest on one side, and I noticed what looked like the obvious use of some kind of geometry as the basis for its composition.

I searched for it in vain often in playful ways, sometimes more seriously but always ending my quest in frustration, putting up my drawings often for years at a time. We went on to immerse ourselves into these Mesoamerican cultures and continued collecting as well which included a substantial library. But it was not until we turned our interests toward a serious and in a way empathetic understanding of Ancient Meso American religion that my focus turned again to that geometry. This time I had a familiarity with the basic ideas behind the ordering of cosmic structure, something that I had completely lacked before and which had been the vital missing piece all along.

It must be realized that at that time scholars were just beginning notice that these ancient cultures had organized their landscapes, city plans, buildings and temples and even the ordering of their societies upon cosmic ideas. There was much opposition to this way of thinking but as more scholars, archeologists, astronomers, ethnohistorians and independent thinkers joined the mix it became clear that all of the developed cultures of Mexico and Central America were indeed models of Cosmic Structure and that this concept existed throughout the Continent.

It now seems simple common sense that given the influence of Cosmic structure in virtually every aspect of these peoples lives, down to the smallest detail, that it would certainly play an important role in so vital an area as their art. What's more this very approach has been known in every developed culture, in Africa, Indonesia, China, India, the middle east and others. It is the perfect Jungian concept of the universal Archetype operating on human consciousness.

It is my thesis that the art of Ancient Meso America is built upon a scheme which is itself a two dimensional realization of three dimensional Cosmic Structure. Now I will prove it.

## The Geometry

I found the system I was looking for in the most round-about way since I had known it existed in another context but had not made the simple connection. Maybe it was better that way because in formulating it for myself I gained a valuable sense of its workings that I might not have gotten any other way.

In the long search I made, the greatest confusion and difficulty I faced when trying first one of the European systems and then another was not that each proved to be a failure, but rather that each one had elements that worked too well. And then I saw a system used by de la Suenes in regards to one of those gigantic Olmec heads. It was pure golden section and it worked. And of course, looking at it now, it should have worked — but it was not the system I was after.

What I discovered and what was also confusing was that any rectangle shares with any other, the principles of the large diagonals, a center, and central apex. It was only when I gained an understanding of ancient mesoamerican religions and their concept of cosmic structure that the correct system fell into place, because the structure of that cosmic order eliminated every possibility but one. That was the one which in the European systems was called The Armature of the Rectangle. This was a simple division of a rectangle according to the central positions of its primary apex. This produced a system so asymmetrical that it was often considered to be a primitive organizational idea. Other systems, like the golden section or the musical ratios were considered for more dynamic since their primary apex were off center and therefore more visually interesting. And yet the armature of the rectangle was respected and considered the ancestor of later more sophisticated systems. The Greeks and Romans had used it in much of their painting and mosaic work and these were often ideal models for artists of later times.



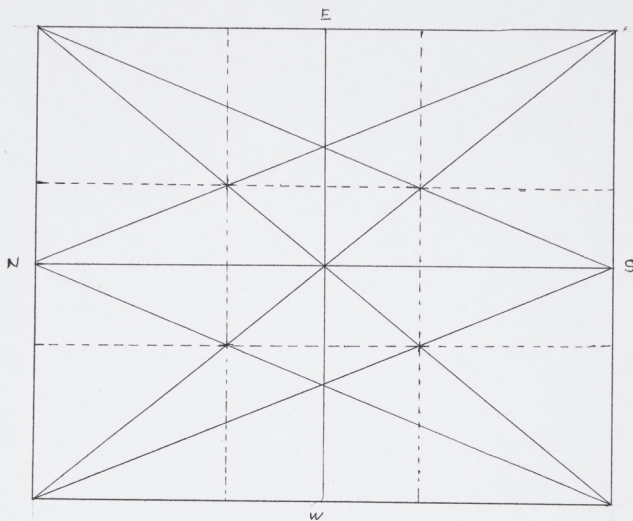
Although I am convinced that this Armature of the rectangle is the system I was looking for it brought with it a real mystery - a chicken or egg mystery. When I draw it out, the system unfolds in a parallel way exactly like the Creation myths of the Aztecs and Mayas. And others, of course and it does so with no extra steps or useless lines. Everything plays its part and works to the purpose of Cosmic structure which prompts the question: Was Cosmic structure formulated because of this geometry or was it coincidental that it so perfectly fit a preconception? I have no answer to this, but find it fascinating. In more practical terms it is a marvel in that it can be drawn out in its entirety without the aid of a compass or any need for calculations. It draws itself and all one needs is the rectangular format, a straight edge and a pencil.

Parenthetically and incidental to all of this is the rectangular format itself. There is something Classical looking about the ratios of height to width in Classical Mayan Ceramics and in post classic Aztec sculpture and in their architectures as well. I feel that there is something there but I haven't investigated it yet. It certainly fits with their sense of aesthetics and their whole way of thinking. Perhaps this book will reveal something about this as it progresses. Who knows? I think such an inquiry would surely take us into the relatively unknown area of standardized measurements and other such delights.

My plan in the following pages is to draw out this scheme a step at a time so that it makes easy visual sense, from the rectangle's first diagonal to its final grid. Then I will show how it works in art and architecture and accompany these drawings with others showing the more important symbols, like the Xicalcolukqui, the Star, water and fire signs some of which are actually derived from this system. I will deal with the importance of isomorphism and hopefully lead the reader to some understanding of the wonderful and quirky ways these peoples understood their world.



## Dual and Triple Divisions of Cosmic Space Together



Here is the synthesis of "fourness" the quadrants formed by the vertical and horizontal axes—East, West and north, south with threeness. This threeness happens when: A line drawn from any of these axis points to the corner opposite it will cross one of the two big diagonals of the rectangle, automatically dividing each side of the rectangle into three.

✦

There are, now, four quadrants and nine internal rectangles—13 in all. These numbers coincide with the three cosmic levels with four, which is, along with five, always symbolic of the earth's surface; and then nine, the traditional number for the levels of the underworld; and finally thirteen the traditional number of the levels of the heavens which is equal to the numbers of the earth and the underworlds combined as if this was meant to mirror or balance them.

This is, at last, Cosmic Structure with its two main components and their center, again three entities. I have kept it at its simplest for clarity. From now on we will consider the geometric compositional system that is based upon it. We will consider this along with some of the mythic concepts that arise from the creation stories which with the logics began when the god Tezcatlipoca causes a knife to descend from the void to cleave the earth creating duality.

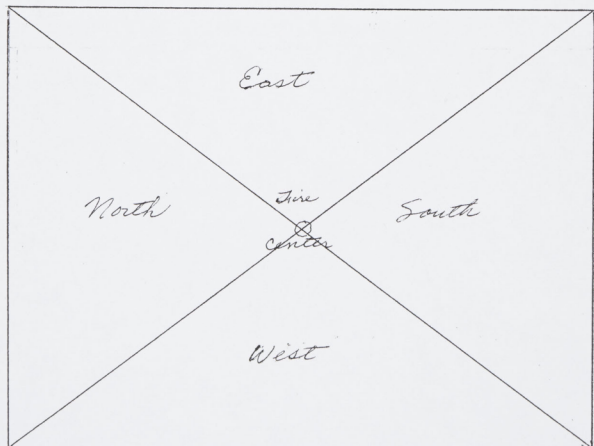
# *The Geometry of Sacred Space*

I.



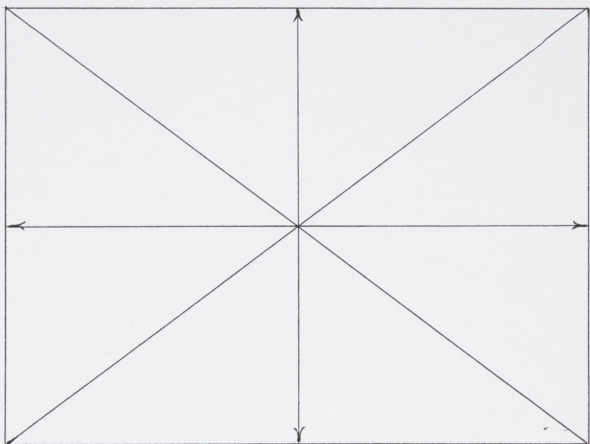
*Duality*

II.

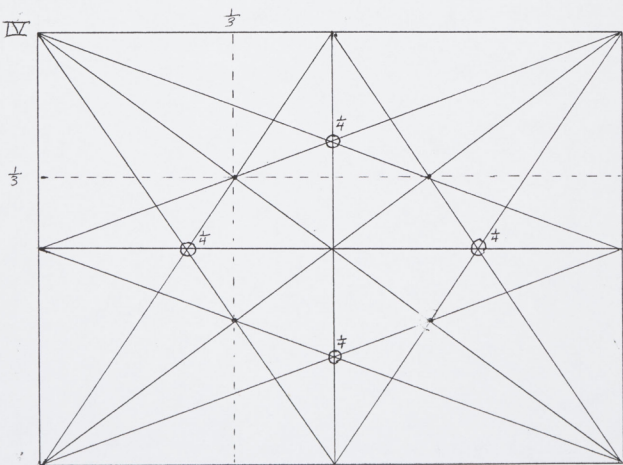


*The four Cardinal Directions, compound duality and opposition,  
creating the Center, the place of fire.*

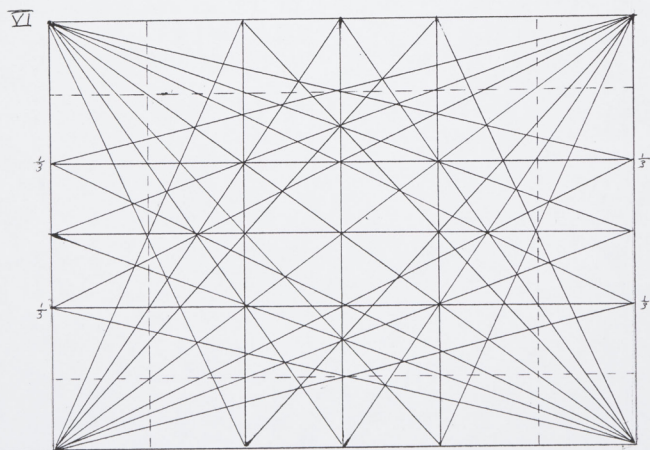
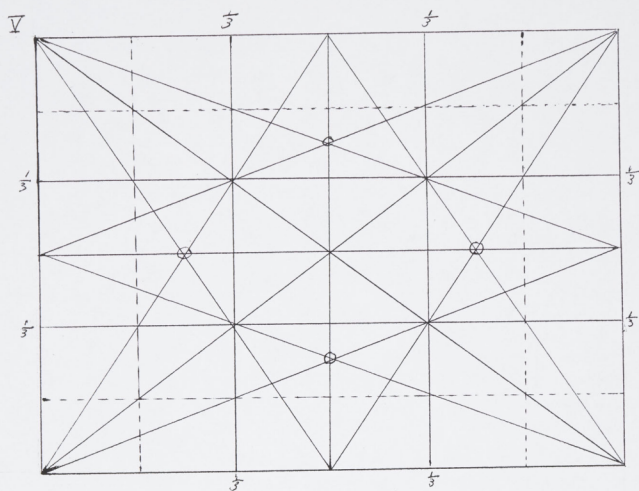
III



IV



Oblique lines from apex to the opposite corners.  
 Dotted lines indicate axes of the triple division yet to be drawn.  
 These same obliques also lay off the division of the main axes into  
 fourths - here circled.





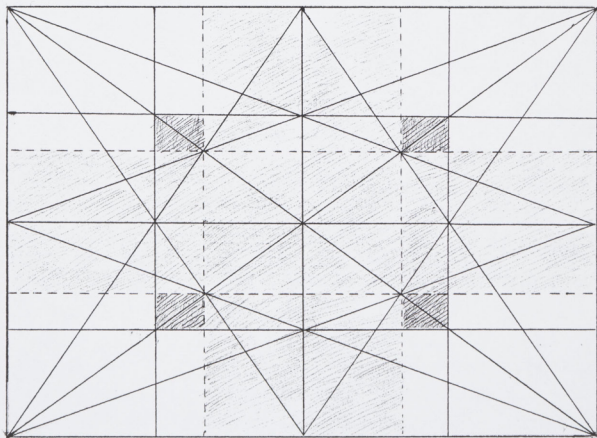
## Notes, Questions and Speculations

Had enough yet? Believe it or not this system develops through one more stage. How do I know? Well, I don't, I can only guess but I have some good reasons for that guess and it all has to do with the magic inherent in numbers. Numbers really do have definite meanings for these peoples. They still do, and I think that in what I know about precolumbian studies not nearly enough emphasis is put upon the importance of Numbers.

For decades the Maya have been given most of the credit for mathematical and astronomic prowess which our age likes to think of as science, especially some "new agers" or die hard Atlantians. But in truth the Aztecs were just as adept in these fields as were the Zapotecs certainly, and the Mixtecs the Totonacs and many others. But I digress - I do that a lot with this subject. Just remember that numbers are important. They not only have value, but meaning too, and are in a way a real language in itself.

In step IV the drawing shows the introduction of the triple division, I left out the axes that would have divided the scheme into sixteen rectangles and each side into four segments. I did this for clarity, but they should have been drawn in at that stage. Below is the complete step IV.

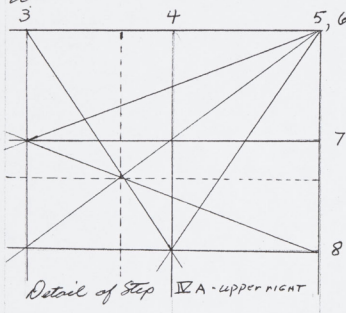
IV A



Note the small squares, the four dashed ones. Each has two of its sides formed by the solid ones of the quadruple division, and the other two sides, the dotted lines, being formed from the triple division. They come together here in the beginning of the final Grid, which will be composed of rectangles this size.

The following observations are speculative based upon numbers known to be important in ancient Mesoamerica. This has to do with the way they counted.

As can be seen in the developing system, in stages I-VI, the vertical and horizontal axes are beginning to form a grid. The question then arises as to how far can this system go? Theoretically, it could go on forever and maybe that was part of its mystique but for practical purposes it has to stop somewhere and just where that is, I think can be found in the numbers and in the way they counted them. Instead of counting as we do from zero they considered every point and line an entity. This principle also applies to any change in a line's direction. Here I am referring to the perimeter of the rectangle. Taking the top line of fig. IV A, when it reaches a corner and the line changes direction, that point of the change signifies a new entity, so the numbering begins with the next number in the sequence sharing that same corner point as the number which preceded it.



When done this way the points on each side are significant  
Stage III three points - completion with the first axes, the central ones.

Stage IV five points - the quincunx  
"Terrestrial completion"

7 Stage V seven points, three dimensional  
Stage VI completion, the earth with the axes of the upper and lower worlds.

8 Stage VII (P.) shows what I think is the furthest this system goes since its points, thirteen in number.

These thirteen points delineate twelve little rectangles of the grid for each side of the whole scheme. If you used the above method of counting the total number of points around the perimeter would add up to fifty two ( $4 \times 13$ ) a hugely important completion number since it is the same number as in an Optic Century. This is true for the other centuries as well. Every fifty two years these peoples quonched all of their temple and household fires, destroyed their old clothes, pottery and other worn goods and in one of their grandest ceremonies lit a new fire for a new century on a particularly sacred mountain, all was then taken to a sacred fire temple in the main cities. In Tenochtitlan this would be the Tlilan, the temple sacred to Cihuatlil - Coatlicue. When that fire was re-lit the priests distributed it from that center to all the land.

There may be other hints that this stage VII is the final one. In stage III with the introduction of the North-South-East-West axes the number of points around the perimeter adds up to twelve, the same number of grid rectangles on a side of stage VII. I know it's just a thought, but

beginning with a twelve and ending with a twelve might indicate a kind of cyclic completion.

Also there is another possible speculation about the Calendrical associations so clearly evident in this system. We have already seen the number 52, the number of years in a century on Stage IV A on Page we have each side of the rectangle divided into quarters. That means five points to the side, i.e. using my system of counting the points on the whole perimeter add up to 20 (5x4). This is the number of days in an Aztec month. There were eighteen of these months, a total of 360 days. The remaining five days were known as the *Neomontemi*, the empty days of all omens added on to the year.

I do think that a strong time element exists in this system. The triple division of the earth's surface in both the North, South and East West axes refers to the solstices and equinoxes for the first, and Morning, Noon and evening in the other. No Cosmic concept could be complete without its relationship to time. I don't know all of the ways it can be found in this scheme. That may come in time with further study.

Here is another idea. Since some of these stages are really different statements for different kinds of completion symbolism, and I have noticed in different art works that it appears sometimes a simpler version of the scheme is being used.

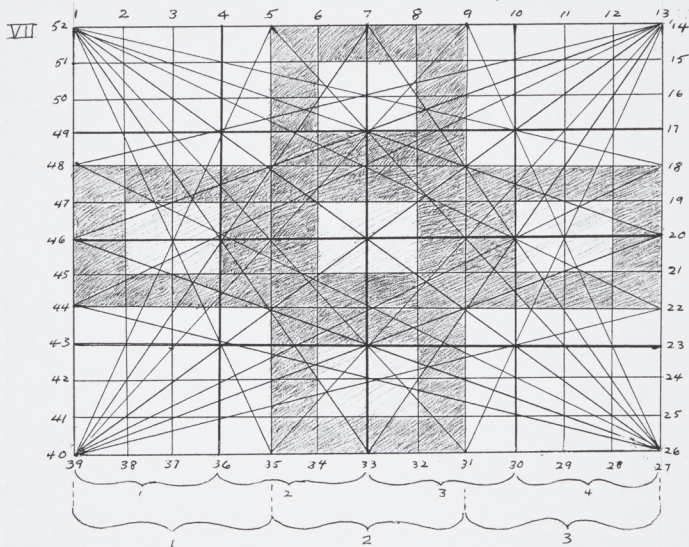
Could this mean that artists had a choice for how far they wanted to go with this system. European artists certainly had this choice. Also I have seen works, particularly painted Maya vases that must have been made in the Boondocks since their compositions are very simple expressions of the big elements of this scheme only. And some of them have glyphs which say nothing because the artists lacked the knowledge of them. They were clearly after the "look" rather than the substance.

Perhaps the choice of subject matter dictated what part of the scheme would be stressed, how far it would be used.



Land o Goshen! What have I gotten myself into? and this thing hasn't all the time it could have. In fact, oblique lines could be drawn from any of these apes to the corners opposite or for that matter, the perimeter points of any of the other apes. This really is meant to show the whole system and all the options an artist has to choose from.

I think that the symbolic nature of pre-Columbian subject matter would seek out those symbolic areas, apes, and levels most resonant in harmony with it. Remember, there is no secular anything in Pre-Columbian art. Every element is symbolic, no matter how real a scene may be and just as in much European art each element seeks out that space most congenial to it. And remember as well, that this system is a kind of symbolic, cosmic map.



This figure requires a lot of looking and contemplation. There are all sorts of inner relationships, symbolic numbers that hold deep meanings for these peoples. At the bottom are the triple division and the quadruple division, now fused into a single system. The sum of 3 and 4 is 7 and one can find this number again in the points of the main apes from the sides of the rectangle counting in to the center and also of the main diagonals from the corners of the rectangle in to the center. Seven is the completion of all the possible directions of Cosmic space. On the quadruple division, the big apes and the diagonals have five points across the area (three points each from the edge to the center) and these numbers are also completion and have important meanings for centering the most powerful concept of directionality centering pervades all of their art. It is movable and versatile and has many ways of expressing itself. It is like a fugue in music.



## Some Recapitulation

The drawing of the Cosmic levels here at the right was done to show various divisions, different ways of looking at spaces and the numbers that result from these observations. Both the dividing lines of these levels and the spaces between them are important and are numbered.

The counting system I use begins with the earth's surface being counted as one, but it also shores, the first level of both the underworld and of the heavens. I believe that this is an excellent way to express the interpenetrability of the upper and lower worlds from the earth's surface and vice-versa.

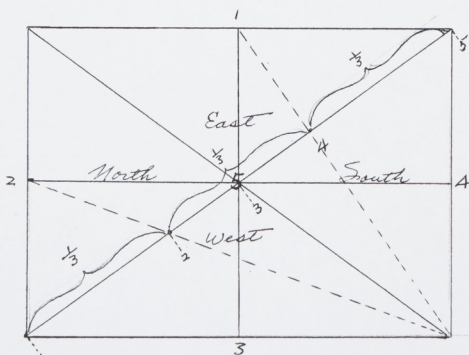
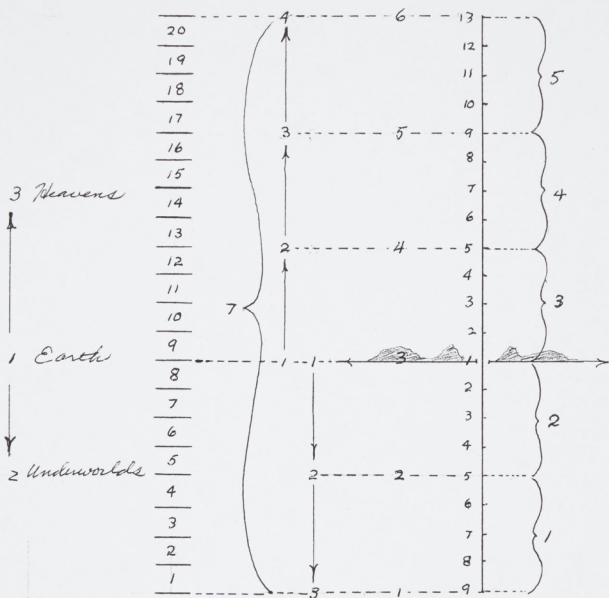
Here you will find the crucial numbers of 3, 5, 6, 7 and 20, besides 9 and 13.

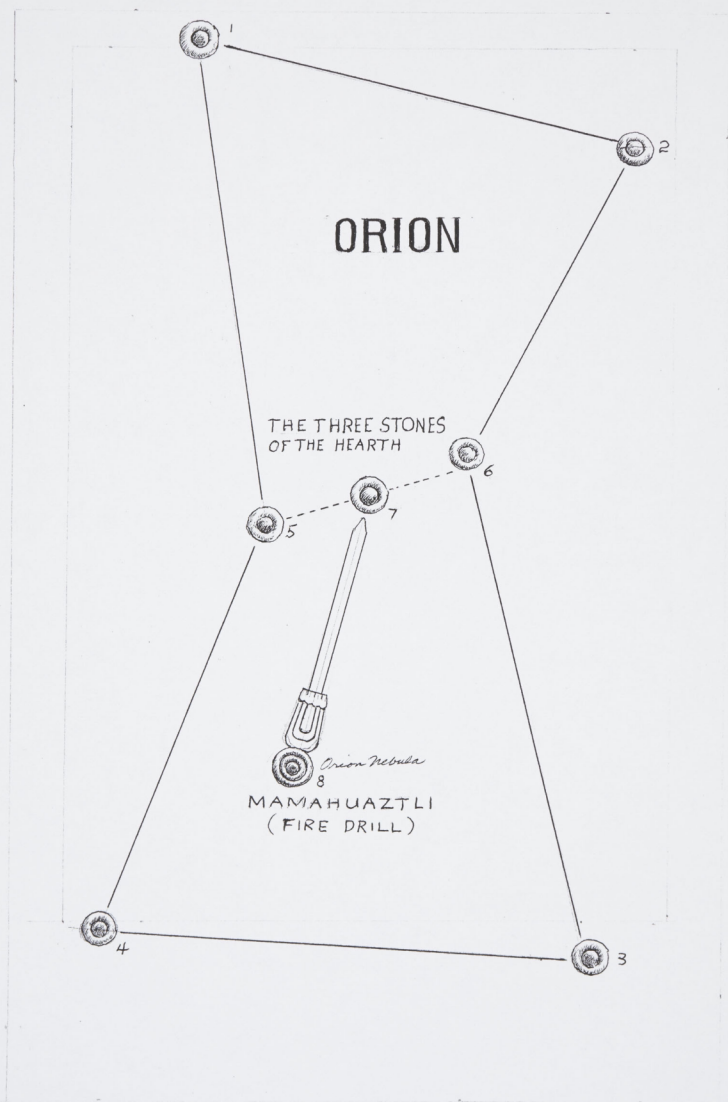
I know that I say this over and over again, but the way the two systems based on even and triple division grow out of each other and interlock so perfectly into a single system expressed by the formative of the Rectangle, works so completely in conveying all of the principles of Ancient Mesoamerican Cosmic structure that I think there is only one possible conclusion to be drawn from it. That is, that unlike Europe with its many systems of Compositional geometry, the New World possessed but one, and fact of the art to be sanctified upon it was to be done properly. This is the only system that could have been used.

Proportions of Architecture and works of art are another matter, but I sense that they too might grow directly out of this system. In the many catalogs and books containing works of art with their dimensions I often lump into the same measurements over and over again. This is very noticeable in Maya Vases and higher stone sculpture. Some have said that this was done for ease of transporting or was because of the size of the hand. That could be so, but I think there is more there.

The drawing at the right is a basic bones expression of an important relationship. Here we have the triangles of the four Cardinal directions with the vertical and horizontal axes of the four Cardinal points (1, 2, 3, 4). The center, number 5, is considered a fifth direction. The dotted lines originating from the axes to a corner divide everything into thirds, but as can be seen along the main diagonal, this triple division shores the center with the four Cardinal directions plus their "Center" so that both divisions have five points each. Fiveness is the second important expression of completeness in symbolic terms. Actually I might be the third expression of that completeness if duality can be considered the first and threeness considered the second. We will be looking at more concepts and their close relationships with the symbolic language of numbers. In the following chapter we will be adding another element to the mixture, the language of shapes and how they bring further layers of meaning to the art and architecture of Ancient Meso America.

*The Three Cosmic Levels Revisited  
with important associated numbers*





# ISOMORPHISM

## FORMS IN THE COSMOS

The drawing opposite is of the constellation of Orion Chosen here because of its distinctive shape, a shape one encounters over and over again in Meso American Art. It is found in many of the larger fire braziers which adorned the temples of the Aztecs and in the palique cups made to celebrate specific calendrical festivals. I think its shape, and meaning dictated the structural designs of the Meso American Ball Court, and looking at it and the arrangement of the stars it is easy to see why. The diagram looks rather like a short hand version of the very system we just plotted out. The four corners denote its outline shape, a crude rectangle, but very recognizable and at the center, three stars of the center, the celestial equivalent of the three stones of the hearth.

It is not so much the arrangement of these as the number which is of importance here. I am not an astronomer of any sort and certainly not expert on any of the ancient Mexican interpretations of the constellations but I can guess just by looking at this shape, what some of the meanings are.

One thing I do know about this constellation's ancient meaning comes from what they called it, *Mamahuacatl*, the fire drill. This tells me immediately that we have something here connected with Aztecs and since it contains "threeness" and "fourness" and basic Cosmic structure it also tells me we have a Celestial model or even a prototype for the whole Cosmos. What gives it its name is the imaginary line drawn from the Orion Nebula to one of the three stars of the central three. This was seen as the fire stick which when rotated in the hole of a piece of wood produced enough heat to kindle a fire. (Now I prefer to use the central star (R<sup>7</sup>)). The Orion Nebula itself gave the appearance of a hot stone which added to the power and reality of this observation.

It is known to have been recognized at the inaugurations of fifty two day cycles. This number is the same as the number of peripheral points around the grid of our Cosmic geometric scheme.

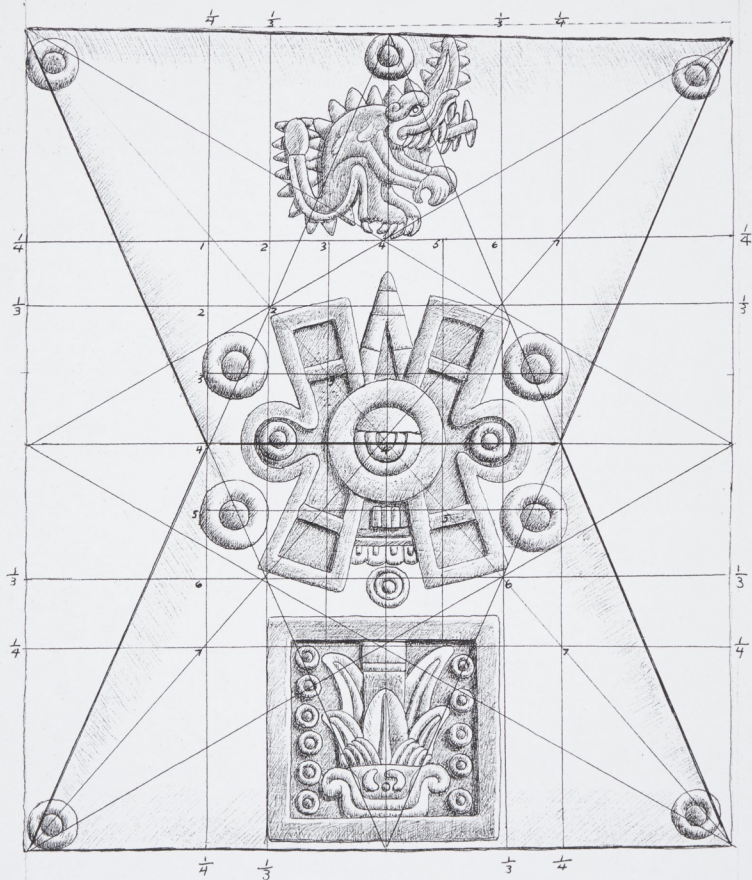
In the following pages I show how this shape is the primary organizational principle structuring the Stone of the five suns. These five represent the Cosmic ages of the past surrounding the present one "Olin" an age that will end in earthquakes. Each of these ages began in the divine hearth with the kindling of a fire.

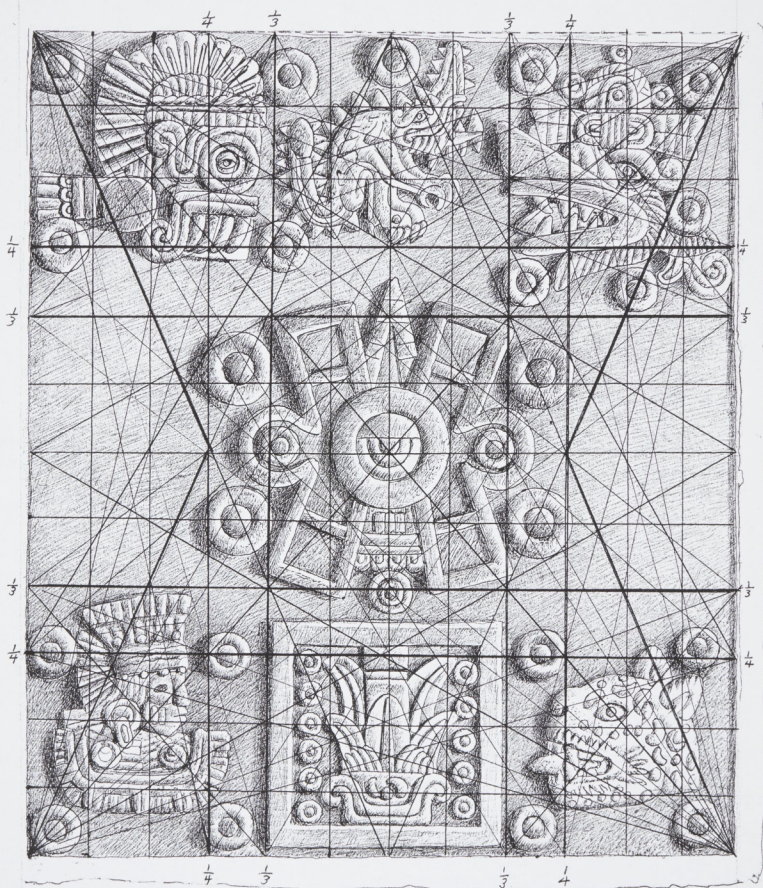
I believe that the large Ceramic braziers on Aztec Temples were tributes to these primal fires, to Cosmic structure which gave them their shapes and a reminder of origins on all three Cosmic levels. But perhaps most important of all, it celebrated continuity. All of these meanings bear on one thing showing this shape. It is an expression that the object contains and reflects the sanctity of Cosmic structure and all of the ideas connected with it. Listen, and shapes will begin to tell to you



*Stone of the Five Suns*

ORION AND THE CELESTIAL BRAZIER







## TEOTIHUACAN - THE NORTH

### *The Birth of the Fifth Sun*

The Aztec myth about the Creation of the Fifth Sun and the start of the final epoch in the great cycle of Cosmic ages was believed by them to have taken place at the ancient deserted City of Teotihuacan. *Atla* Aztec name which means 'the place where gods are created' gives its general location but does not say where exactly in the City this took place. Many believe, given the overwhelming dominance of the pyramid of the sun that it was there especially since the myth focused on the creation of the sun as the result of the self sacrifice of the personified god *Manahuatzin*.

This diseased body made him unworthy in the eyes of the other gods but in spite of this his spirit was stronger than theirs as was his inner knowing that this rite of transformation and purification for the benefit of all would place him in a unique position, the pinnacle of power and glory. He thus became the archetype for all voluntary sacrifice and for its reward as well.

The other gods followed suit, becoming lesser beings in their transformation but creating the new Cosmos for this age of the Fifth Sun.

A closer study of Aztec religion will reveal a more probable location for this event. The sources are clear that it is in the north where, of all sacred places, the greatest powers for creation and destruction lay. Here was the divine hearth of *Chantico*, *Cihuacoatl* and that of the oldest of gods *Xichtecuhtli*. This was where all life originated and indeed where it was reborn and where the stars rose, arched and descended around the deathly stillness of the northern star. Here was *Tlalilan* where in darkest gloom brooded the Great God *Tezcatlipoca* as darkness itself and the place of the sidereal goddesses, stricken and agonized in their endless hunger, in their endless pain of giving birth. This was the place of *Teomontzi* the great mother goddess.

At the right is a drawing of her temple at Teotihuacan, located at the northern terminus of the great ancestral spirit road, now called the Way of the Dead. It is no coincidence that behind this temple and repeating its form is the mountain *Tenon*, or as it is sometimes known, *Teomontzi*, Mother of stone and mother of the gods. Of the two low square structures located on the central North-South axis the northern most has always fascinated both me and me. It is unique architecturally speaking with its nine altars around a central one and the way they acknowledge the Cardinal directions, particularly the angled altars which emphasize the North and the South.

In drawing out these temples with their sacred geometry I suddenly noticed that the central third of the scheme contained: a form exactly like that of the central *Olden* glyph in its arrangement of temples, an emphasis upon the number three and at the center of the entire scheme, this curious altar square.

The geometry reveals its importance instantly, but it makes me wonder if the ancient Teotihuacanos also thought that the gods were born here or if the altar square was a shrine built by the Aztecs to commemorate its importance. It is known that they frequented the ruins in pilgrimages and worshipped here. They even did archaeological investigations and built their own temples in a desire to link their great City to this powerful source.

The central *Olden* glyph as referred to above can be seen in its full on the previous page on the Stone of the Fifth Sun. The possibility of a direct connection between this glyph and the architectural plan opposite is wonderful to think about, especially as a confirmation that it was here that the Gods of the Fifth Sun were really born. I have kept the geometry incomplete for clarity. Its outline is only an approximate guess, but a good one. The fit is close.

