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THE ANCIENT MEXICAN CREATION MYTH

II. THE FOUR AGES OF THE WORLD

THE ANCIENT MEXICANS HELD THAT THERE HAD BEEN FOUR IMPERFECT PREHISTORIC AGES EACH RULED BY A DIFFERENT DIVINITY WHO WAS REGARDED AS ITS SUN, AND CONNECTED WITH ONE OF THE ELEMENTS AND ONE OF THE FOUR CARDINAL POINTS. THE FOURFOLD DESTRUCTION AND RENEWAL OF THE WORLD ARE LINKED UP WITH THE CHARACTERISTIC MEXICAN CHRONOLOGY, SO THAT THE CALENDRIAL SIGN OF EACH AGE, FOR EXAMPLE FOUR WIND, INDICATES THE ELEMENT WHOSE SPECIAL DIVINITY THEN RULED AS THE SUN AND THROUGH WHICH IT WAS DESTINED TO PERISH

THE SECOND AGE OF THE WORLD



QUETZALCOATL, THE WIND GOD
From the Book of the Dead

IN THE ERA NAUI ECATL, FOUR WIND, QUETZALCOATL REIGNED AS THE SUN INSTEAD OF TEZCATLIPOCA. HIS REIGN WAS ECATONATIUM, THE WIND SUN, CORRESPONDING TO THE EAST. AFTER A FURTHER SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIX YEARS, TEZCATLIPOCA CAST DOWN QUETZALCOATL WITH A BLOW OF HIS PAW, CAUSING A HURRICANE WHICH DESTROYED THE WORLD, WHOSE INHABITANTS WERE CHANGED INTO APES.



THE WIND SUN
From the Book of the Dead



THE END OF THE WIND AGE

THE FIRST AGE OF THE WORLD



TEZCATLIPOCA IN JAGUAR COSTUME
From the Book of the Dead

IN THE ERA NAUI OCELOTL, FOUR JAGUAR, TEZCATLIPOCA REIGNED AS THE SUN. THIS PERIOD WAS THAT OF OCELOTONATIUM, THE EARTH OR JAGUAR SUN, CORRESPONDING TO THE NORTH, DURING WHICH GIANTS LIVED ON EARTH. AFTER THIRTEEN CYCLES, SIX HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIX YEARS, QUETZALCOATL HURLED TEZCATLIPOCA DOWN FROM HEAVEN. THUS THE SUN PERISHED. TEZCATLIPOCA BECAME A JAGUAR WHO ATE THE GIANTS, AND THE WORLD CAME TO AN END IN DARKNESS.



THE JAGUAR SUN
From the Book of the Dead



A GIANT OF THE EARTH AGE



TEZCATLIPOCA FALLING FROM HEAVEN IN THE FORM OF A JAGUAR



THE FOUR AGES OF THE WORLD

THE THIRD AGE OF THE WORLD

IN THE ERA NAUI QUIAUITL, FOUR FIRE-RAIN, TLALOC REIGNED AS THE SUN. THIS WAS THE PERIOD OF QUIAUGHTONATIUM, THE FIRE-RAIN SUN, CORRESPONDING TO THE SOUTH. AFTER SEVEN CYCLES, THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY FOUR YEARS, IT WAS BROUGHT TO AN END WHEN QUETZALCOATL DROVE TLALOC AWAY BY A SHOWER OF FIERY RAIN, WHICH BURNT UP THE EARTH, WHOSE INHABITANTS WERE CHANGED TO BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES.



THE RAIN SUN
From the Book of the Dead



TLALOC
From the Book of the Dead



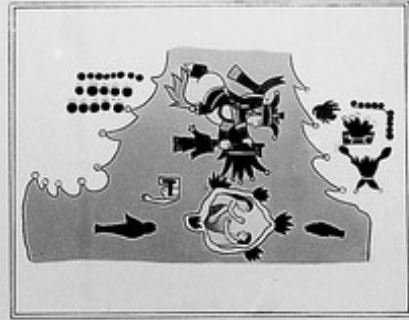
THE END OF THE FIRE-RAIN AGE

THE FOURTH AGE OF THE WORLD

IN THE ERA NAUI ATL, FOUR WATER, QUETZALCOATL ESTABLISHED HIS WIFE CHALCHIHTLICUE AS THE SUN. HER REIGN WAS ATONATIUM, THE WATER SUN, CORRESPONDING TO THE WEST. IN IT THERE WAS CONSTANT RAIN, AND AFTER SIX CYCLES, THREE HUNDRED AND TWELVE YEARS, THE WORLD PERISHED IN A DELUGE. HUMAN BEINGS WERE CHANGED INTO FISH, AND THE HEAVENS FELL DOWN UPON THE EARTH.



THE WATER SUN
From the Book of the Dead



THE END OF THE WATER AGE



CHALCHIHTLICUE
From the Book of the Dead

THE ORDER OF THE PREHISTORIC AGES IS VARIOUSLY GIVEN BY DIFFERENT SOURCES, THE ONE FOLLOWED HERE IS THAT OF THE CALENDAR SIGN, NOW GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY MODERN AUTHORITIES AS THE ORIGINAL ONE. THE MEXICAN TIME-RECKONING DEALT IN CYCLES OF 52 YEARS, AND DATES WERE NAMED BY A COMBINATION OF THE NUMBERS 1 TO 19, SHOWN AS 20'S, AND TWENTY SIGNS, WIND, WIND, AND 50 ON, REPRESENTED PICTORALLY. CALENDRIAL TERMS ARE ALSO PRESERVED IN USE AS PROPER NAMES.