

Sego Canyon and the Aztec Calendar Serpents

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National Geographic Magazine's article in January 1980 enabled me to identify the ancient lands of the Aztecs (Mexico) in the southwestern United States. The name for the land (and the people) is *Nahuatl*, and encompasses Utah, western Colorado, northern New Mexico and northern Arizona, as well as parts of eastern Nevada. My verification stems from the fact that *Nahui* means four and *Atl* means water: the National Geographic magazine article illustrated the area of the most ancient pictographic art, maps the Green, the Colorado, the San Juan, and the Paria—four great rivers. The Mexican people spoke of the *Nahuatl* as a land also known as *Huehuetlapala* or *Huehuetlapallan* which means old, old, many colored place. My experiences in northern Arizona and southern Utah in the 1950's and 1960's left me no doubt the area had to be the same. The National Geographic article also included a Venusian figure from the Head of Sinbad panel that included the eight-year cycle of Venus every five synodic revolutions (knotted strings on the sides of the main figure, number eight and five). The main figure, besides having two heads (reference to the morning and evening Venusian positions), is also identified as a "year counter" by the snake above its head, and its hands signal the division of the eight-year cycle into two four-year cycles. These two four-year cycles identify the figure as the basis of the calendar of the Mexico—Aztec and Maya.

In January 1990, accompanied by my professor and friend from the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco in Mexico, Lic., Alfonso Rivas Salmón, and guided by Dick Seeley of Green River, I visited the great panel on the east side of the Sego Canyon panel. Additional proof of the ancient Venusian knowledge was in front of me.

The concept of the two "year counters" (rattlesnakes), known to us as Venus matutine and vespertine, is clearly illustrated by the two great snakes, with four rattles each, that flank the solstice marker on the panel at Sego Canyon and also surround the Aztec calendar or Sun Stone.

It was a great pleasure during the January 1990 expedition to view what can be identified as a summer solstice marker, and to attend the yearly sunrises at the summer solstices at Sego

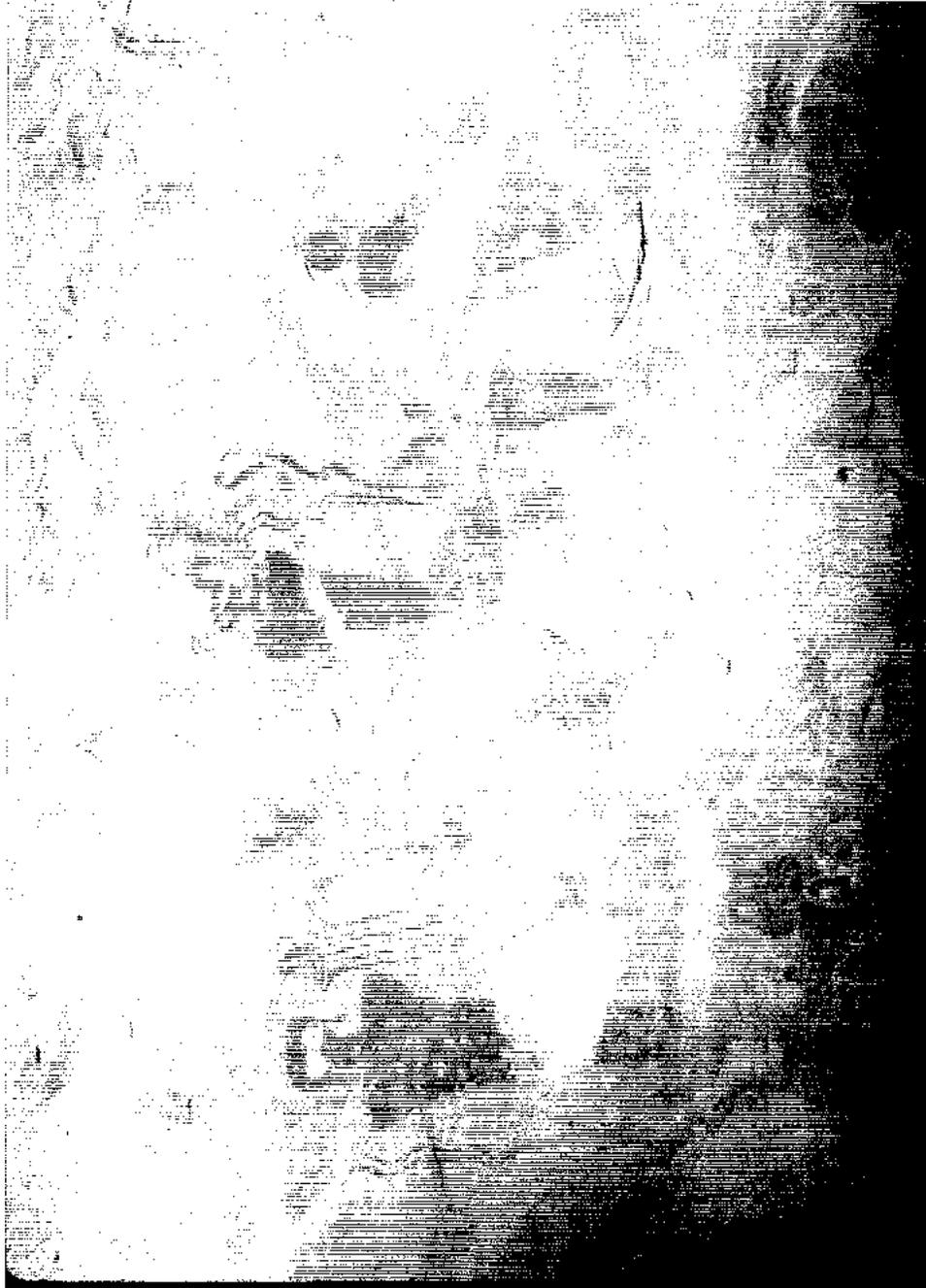


Figure #1. Serpents at the Solstice Marker at Sego Canyon

Figure #2 Four years plus a festive day!

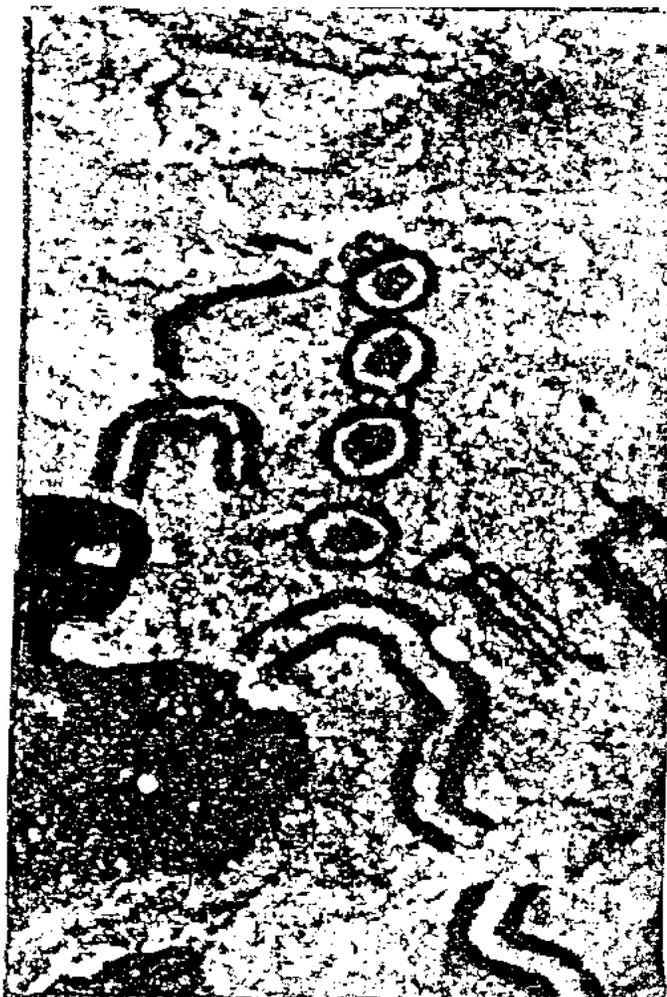


Figure #3. The Aztec/Mexican Sun Stone serpents or Xiuhcoatl



Canyon near Thompson Springs (27-miles east of Green River, Utah about three-miles north of the exit from I-70).

I thank Dick Seeley for his interest and capable guide services that took me, my mentor, Professor Rivas, my oldest son, Cecil, and my grandson, B.J. Orozco to that beautiful spot. When standing before a pre-Christian panel, it obviously expressed the same concepts as in the margin of the Mexican Sun Stone or Aztec calendar. The east panel at Seگو Canyon pre-dates the concept in the Sun Stone by more than two-thousand years. Both illustrations, although two-thousands or more years apart, depict two decorated (feathers) heads and two bodies of snakes with four rattles each. Both are representations of the four-year cycle measured so accurately by the Venusian synodic revolutions. At a particular time of our year, Venus will appear at its apogee as the “Morning Star” and four years later will, on the same day of the year, as the “Evening Star” at its apogee. These four-year “comings” of Venus were celebrated every four years, and that day was not counted in their 260-day calendars to adjust for Leap Year. At Seگو I saw that celebration represented by a festooned circle attached to each of the four-rattles.

The representations of the Venusian cycle in the Sun Stone include more evidence of the accuracy of later calendars. Each of the two “Fire Serpents” have thirteen “hearts” or heart flowers (*Yoyoxochitl*) in each of the “year-counters” that were interpreted as “lives” and multiplied by the four-year cycles (rattles on each serpent) giving us fifty-two years each, or a total of 104. This is how many years they were able to count with their 260-day calendar (Orozco 1995). The two great “serpents” are representations of Venus as a year counter at the two horizons. The dual phenomena give rise to the two-headed figure at Seگو and to the two serpents in the Sun Stone of the Aztec-Mexican. In the *Nahuatl* language, quetzal means beautiful, and the most beautiful bird they ever saw was named *Quetzal Tototl* (beautiful bird). In the same language, a rattle snake was called *coatl*, and it also stood for one who counts the years with its rattles. Thus, the figure at Seگو Canyon and the serpents of the Sun Stone are both quetzalcoatl or beautiful year counters.

Reference

Orozco, Cecilio. *The Book of the Sun—Tonatiuh*. 2nd ed. Fresno: California State University, 1992.