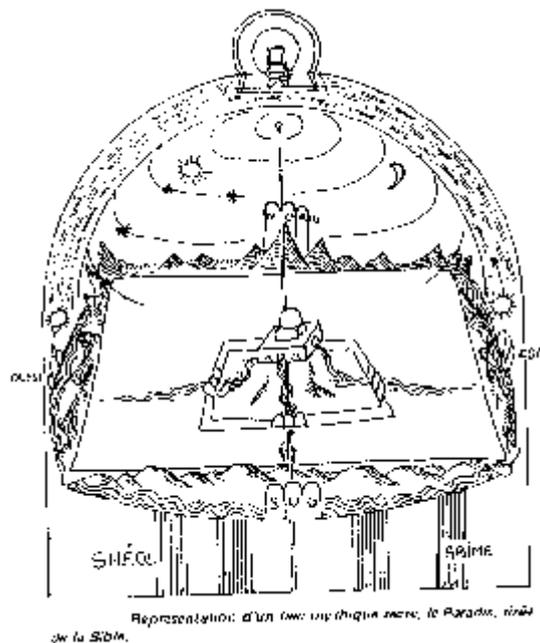


AXIS MUNDI

By Dominique Susani 2004

The “point” is the formless origin: of shapes, of humans, of all beings. For the Hindus, it is the Bindu, the circle of emptiness and the seed of manifestation. Thus the manifestation is conceived as the expansion of a point in the four directions, and is therefore the intersection of the branches of the cross, the center of the world, the mythical omphalos.

A great number of traditions identify the center of the world as a navel (omphalos in Greek) from whence the "manifestation" radiates in the four directions. In the Rig Veda, we speak of the navel of the unimagined, on which rested the seed of the world. The navel not only indicates the center of physical manifestation, but it is also the spiritual center of the world, such as the “ladder” (“bethyle” in Hebrew) in the form of a column, raised by Jacob, or the omphalos of Delphi, the center of the Cult of Apollo, the solar god, or again like certain menhirs such as Er Grah, or the Rock of Fail, which were the Celtic omphalos.



A legend of the "Mexica," ancient name of the Aztec people, tells us that the ancestors, guided by a shaman deified, Huitzilopochtli, searched many years for the foundation site of Mexico. This site, according to the prophecy, would be indicated by an eagle perched on a cactus that was eating a snake while holding it between its talons.

At first sight, this prophecy appears abstruse, but if we look at it more closely, we notice that the eagle is the solar bird "par excellence" and that it represents the

forces of the sky; the serpent represents in all traditions the energies of the earth. The Aztec prophecy speaks to us therefore of a site where the energies of the sky and of the earth meet. This meeting place is another "Axis Mundi," a privileged site where the spirit breathes, which is symbolized by the Aztec Quetzalcoatl or the Kukulcan of the Mayan tradition.

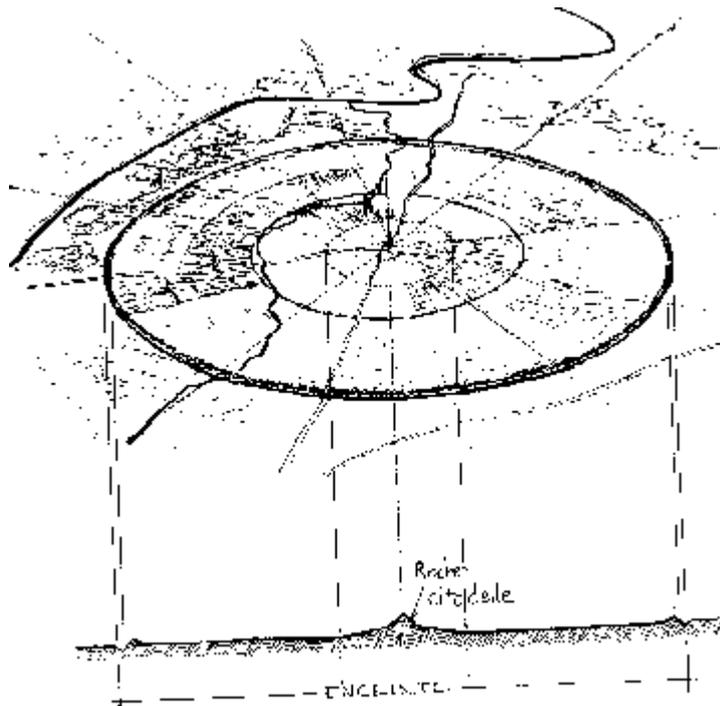
The omphalos is therefore the site where the cosmos materializes the order of the world, a type of interface between the material and spiritual. But if on an intellectual level, we succeed in forming an idea of what the center is, we feel its materialization is wanting: we realize we need a physical form for the center we have imagined.

We are talking of the axis of the world, of a sacred stone or omphalos; but when we consider the vast diversity of materials as well as the methods employed for the assembly of sacred sites, we realize, at least intuitively, that this has little importance -- though one should not for this reason underestimate its quality. We don't obtain the same vibrational quality with a piece of granite as we would with an old piece of stoneware or sandstone.

Many ancient civilizations had natural sacred sites. They often consisted of mountains, springs, rocks or even trees. The most famous were probably the sacred springs, sites of purification, sites of healing, fountains of youth. The ancients considered water to be an essential element for life, which goes without saying, but also as one of the important information carriers: something we understand easily because man is 70% water.

Coming back now to our Aztec shaman; he had the vision of the eagle and the serpent. In the different ancient traditions, the serpent represents the dark and terrifying forces of the earth. When these forces affect a person, they submerge him, dominate his will, and throw him into Chaos. Thus it is thought necessary to tame these forces and to harness them to gain access to spirituality.

These subterranean forces, "chthoniennes" in French, are the great telluric currents that circle our planet. Our celtic ancestors called them "vouivre" and represented them by a serpent or a dragon. These currents, which we might call electromagnetic currents, passed by areas that offered the least resistance to the circulation of energies, such as the underground water veins and faults in the terrain; sometimes these were active veins and faults.



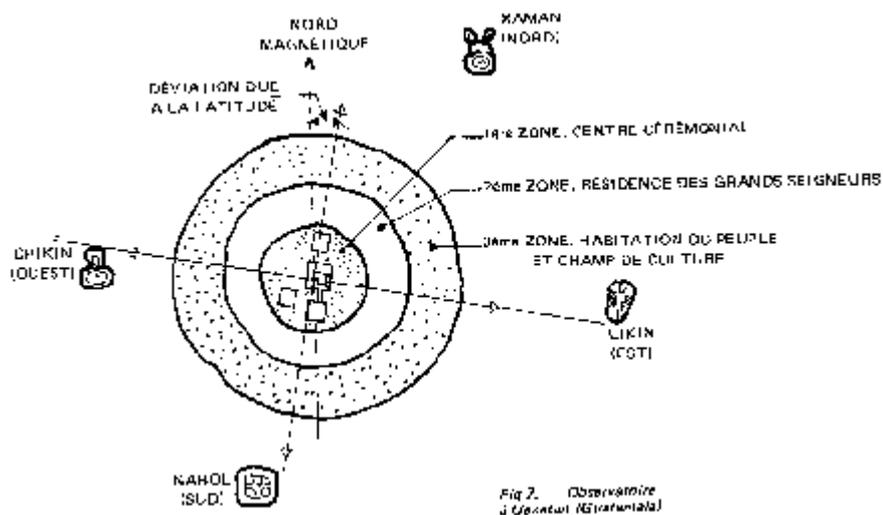
It was in this way that the energetic power of the site was obtained, and it was the dowser, the shaman or druid that found the spot, just as the Mexica shaman found the seminal site of the Aztec nation. But this point, full of the energy of the mother, according to tradition must be fertilized by the sky, the cosmos. (It is interesting that the word cosmos, besides meaning “sky”, also signifies order and the organization in the universe). But why? Where does this idea come from? To investigate this question we must make a detour.

Our planet, we know, is a celestial body of the solar system, and the solar system is part of the Milky Way. The earth therefore forms a part of a complex system and is in direct relation to the objects of this system. And we know the enormous influence of the sun on all of life on earth, including the life of humans, and we know well that without it, nothing would be possible. We also know that the moon creates the tides and diverse other (more intimate) phenomena. And, of course, this is true to a lesser extent of the planets such as Mercury, Venus, Mars etc... All this was known by our ancestors, with a different vision, of course, because all people had an insatiable curiosity for the lights of the sky and recognized the organizational power of the cosmos.

We also know that the representative systems of the world in all ancient civilizations come down to a typical immutable schema, which we find everywhere, whether it be in the descriptions of sacred mythical sites, in the construction of sanctuaries, altars, or temples, in the delineation of a territory, of a society, or else in the rituals that accompany the different phases of traditional life.

It always consists of the representation of a sacred space, centered, organized, structured in opposition to the little known, infinite, monstrous and chaotic zone of profane space.

This sacred site represents the universe such as the ancients knew it. In the different mythologies it is called Sacred Land, Pure Land, or Land of Immortality.



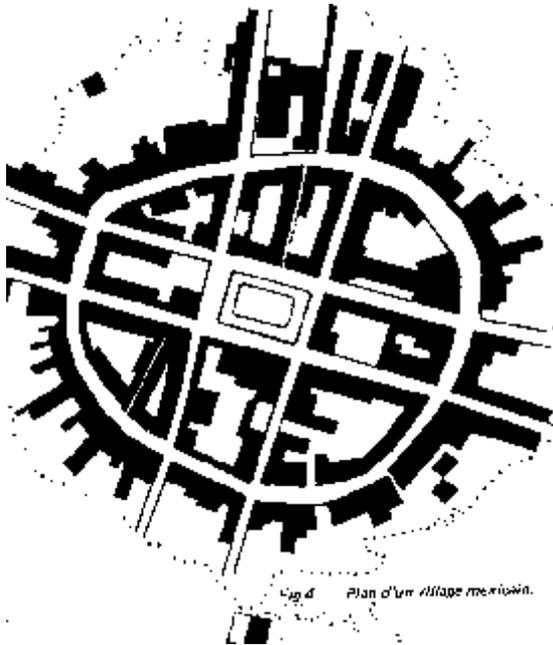
The center of this site, whether it be located mythically or physically traced on the ground, is marked by a point surrounded by an empty space. In the language of myth, one speaks of an island emerging from the ocean (for example the primordial Egyptian hill).

Through this center passes a vertical axis, the repetition of the Axis of the World. These diverse representations will be sometimes a totem, sometimes a mountain, a tree or a rock. This axis enables a liaison between the different states of the universe.

Around this vertical central pillar, we find in the horizontal plane, a division of space into several concentric circles representing the evolution of manifestation. These circles are arranged around the center. R Guenon tells us about this in "The Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science," p.85:

"Sometimes the point is surrounded by several concentric circles that seem to represent the different states or degrees of manifested physical existence, arranged hierarchically according to their separation from the primordial center."

To this circular division is superimposed a division of space into four parts, according to the four cardinal (or solstitial) directions, or sometimes also divided into 12 according to a zodiacal system. This division of space in relation to the directions was very important for the Ancients and was the foundation for the structure of their societies.



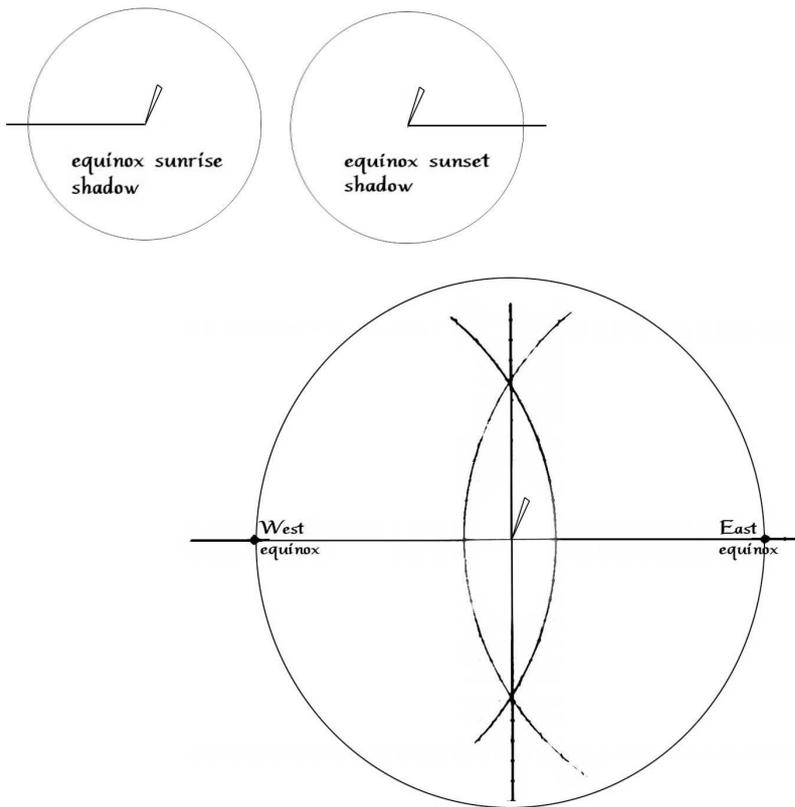
For the people that practice agriculture, astrological knowledge as well as understanding of the phenomena of nature was essential. This knowledge was the result of attentive observation and the intimate relationship they had with Nature. This is why these phenomena were taken as symbols of their cosmology.

A passage from the PopolVuh, the sacred book of the Maya-Quiches [quich-ays], casts a bit more light on the fertilization of earth by the sun: “The genetic energy of the cosmos manifests itself in the essential act of rebirth of vegetal life, that is produced every year, at the season of the rains that fertilize the earth in covering it with a green coat. This event is determined astronomically by the first passage of the sun at zenith and is compared to the honeymoon of the earth and the sky ... so that an act of creation can be realized ... it is necessary ... that the sun be at the exact center of the sky, perpendicular to the center of the earth, the singular position where he may make her fertile.”

The sanctuary, whether it be circular or square is always situated at the center of the world and is conceived as such. This is how we proceed in ancient

India:

“On the spot chosen for constructing a temple, a pillar shall be erected and a circle traced around it in the form of a gnomon, the shadow of the pillar projected on the circle will indicate, by its extreme positions in the morning and evening, two points connected by the East-West axis. Around these same points we will trace afterwards, by using a compass made from a cord, circles, the twins intersecting in the form of a fish, which will mark the North-South axis.”



This astronomical knowledge was obviously centered on the sun, as shown by the two preceding examples. The sun was the reference point that ran the gamut of all human activities. It was the source of light, of heat, and of life and its energetic and symbolic representation was one of the major preoccupations of the Neolithic builder-priests. The rays that extend from the sun manifest things, not only in making them perceptible, but in representing an extension of a principal point, in measuring and spanning space.

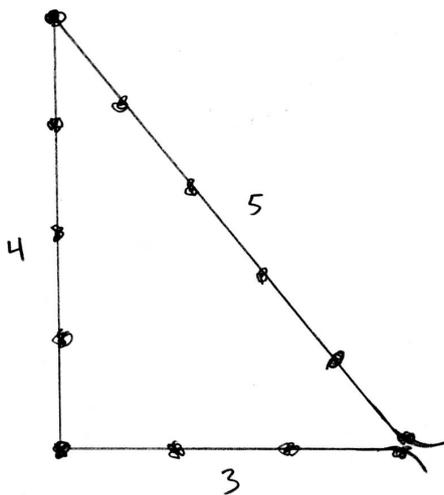
Let us imagine now a hypothesis: “good human health, on all its levels; physical, psychic and spiritual, depends on the harmony that he/she has

established with his /her environment.” And we all know immediately, we all have the intimate conviction that to live in harmony with one’s environment is the best solution. I would like to note here that to live in harmony with one’s environment does not mean to be one who passively accepts their fate, but rather to be attentive so that the fruit of human creativity does not become a disrupting factor in the harmony between man and his environment.

The first task of the person who wishes to live in harmony with his environment is to understand the minimal rules that will allow his survival. Thus the people who became sedentary did so because they understood certain advantages that this situation offered with respect to survival and human longevity. The price they had to pay was that of the accrued knowledge of the rhythms of the planet and the perceivable universe.

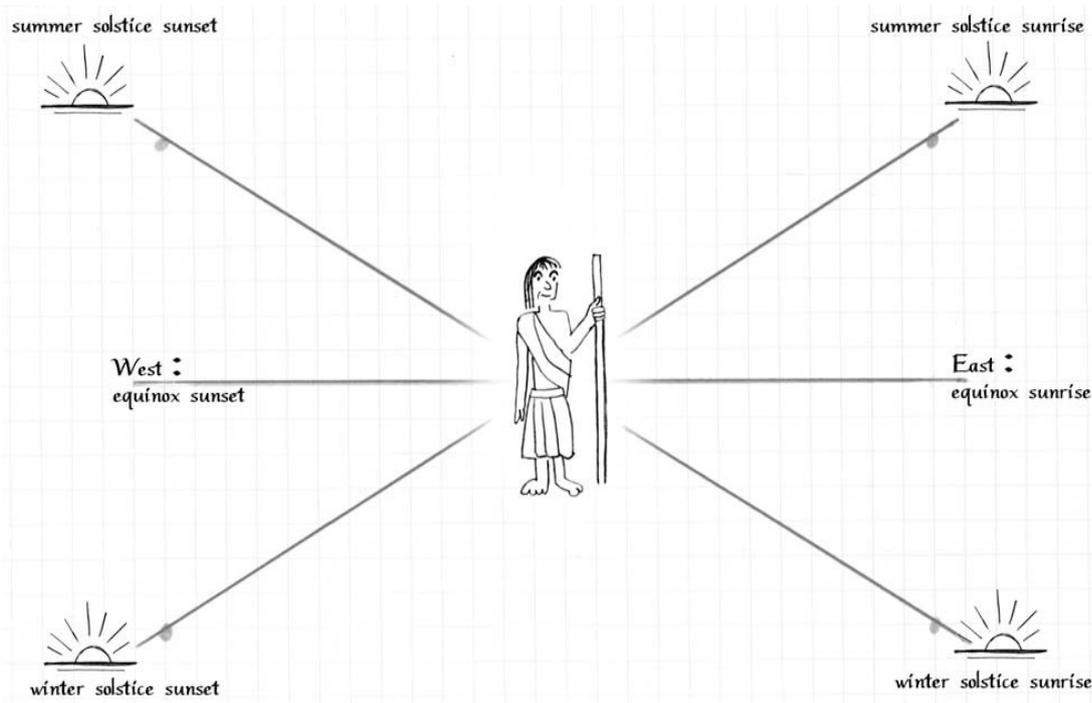
It was obvious to our ancestors that the rhythms of our planet were in strict relation with the astral bodies and, as we saw before with the Mayans and the Hindus, included putting oneself in harmony with the sun.

Our ancestors had few methods to measure the sun on earth: their senses, their capacity to build, and two tools: the stick and the cord. The stick in question was called “cane” by the Kanu Chaldeans. In Europe, this cane that could have well been called an “oie” was the emblem of all the builder-priests, from the druids to the bishops, and according to the area, had a different measure; the cord was called “cord of 12 knots,” even though it actually had 13 (superstition required it), that determined 12 cubits, which allowed one to trace circles and the famous 3,4,5 triangle.



Let us try now to identify with our ancient builder. Let us suppose that he arrives with his tribe at a place that pleases him. He installs himself there for a while and it happens that the spot reveals itself to be sufficiently interesting to create more durable structures. Like the Roman augurs, he looked perhaps at the entrails of certain animals and determined that they are [or were, he-he] in good health – a sign that the spot is propitious for life. He created thus an esplanade, a flat spot, a plan, in the center of which he would install his cane and day after day he would watch the course of the sun and would mark the length of the shadows. After a certain time, he would recognize several phenomena: At six month intervals the path traced by the shadow of the cane will follow an identical route, with sunrise and sunset occurring due east and due west. These are the spring and fall equinoxes. At six month intervals too, but three months away from the equinoxes, he noted the smallest shadow and the longest of the year – these correspond to the winter and summer solstices.

This rhythm is also the rhythm of the seasons, and one of the calculations essential to the survival of the community because this implies the mastery of the organization of agricultural life.



If he concentrates on these four days of the year, our builder will see that the points of the summer solstice sunrise and sunset are as far north of the East-

West axis, as the points of the winter solstice sunrise and sunset are south of the East-West axis. Once he does this drawing, he will realize that the sun is inscribed, is manifested in the form of a rectangle that we call the solstitial quadrilateral.

Let us imagine that the lengths of the sides of the solstitial quadrilateral are in harmonic agreement with a certain frequency of the earth's crust. We should therefore have in this space, if we decide to manifest it, a special harmonic agreement. To manifest it, we could do a very simple experiment, it suffices to place four people each on a corner of the quadrilateral and to feel that which is produced inside. If I take the example of four persons it is to make the experiment easier, but this can also be done with four rather large stones, (40 or 50 kilos each), or four tree trunks. Once the people or stones are in place, the vibration of the plasma, which is to say the air, changes.

A type of wall of air (actually of energy) manifests itself, tying together the four corners. There we can feel a greater density of the air and a different sensation of heat. This connection of the corners creates a distinct ambience in the interior of the quadrilateral. It is a type of dynamic equilibrium, of which the center, the omphalos, is a column of energy, a type of quintessence of the site. If there are people to make the corners, they will feel, also, energetic vortices which have ties to the four elements of the traditional sciences; earth, water, air and fire. This method has the result of augmenting the frequency of the area, and it is not rare that the participants of the experiment feel a certain sense of euphoria, that becomes even more intense if some people start walking around the quadrilateral. This will remind you perhaps of certain circumambulatory rituals that are still practiced in certain religions.

I forgot the most important thing, the unit of measure! It is certain that you will not wait a year for the results of solar observations, even though this would be a nice experience. We live in a period where the rhythms are a bit accelerated, and there exists a simple formula to find the unit of measure of what we call the Solar Modulus; the long side of the quadrilateral. For this, one must know the latitude of the site in which we wish to operate, which can be easily obtained with an accurate map or a gps unit. It will then suffice to calculate the cosine of the latitude and multiply by 10 to obtain our long side. In mathematical symbols – $M=10*\text{COS}(\text{latitude})$. For example $M=10*\text{COS}(40 \text{ degrees}) = 10 * 0.766$. So, in this example, the length of the Solar Modulus at 40 degrees latitude is 7.66 meters.

For the little side, it is a little more complicated because you must know the solar azimuth of the site as well as the inclination of the ecliptic, but for the region of Boulder (latitude 40 degrees) we can content ourselves for now with a coefficient by which we can divide our solar modulus of 7.66 meters, which is 1.64. This gives us 4.67 m for the length of the small side.

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Translated by Renaud Stauber