

# Abstract

## “Significado de *Aztlan*: De la prehistoria al presente”

"Significado de Aztlan: de la pre-historia al presente," *Canto al Pueblo: An Anthology of Experiences*, Leonardo Carrillo and Antonio Martínez (ed.) San Antonio: Penca Press, (1978) 75-78.

Among the cultural symbols of significance for the Chicano Art and Literary Movement during the sixties and the seventies, *Aztlan* ranks as one of the most important and unquestionably, one of the most written about and discussed topics. Generally *Aztlan* refers to origins and birthplace of all Uto-Aztec linguistic tribes ranging from Canada to Colombia, South America. *Aztlan*, moreover, became the logo for the political, social, and cultural movement expressing roots and identity. From this derived the establishment of rights for all *Raza* peoples who through the centuries have made their journeys in search for peace and justice.

This essay is divided into three parts: (1) the *Aztlan* of prehistory, (2) the *Aztlan* of the present and (3) the *Aztlan* of the future. The first part is concerned with the meaning and location of *Aztlan*. It reviews the literature regarding origin and refutes the existing interpretations through a linguistic analysis of the word *Aztlan*. A popular misconception is that it means place of the cranes, which if it were so, it would be *Aztatlan* and not *Aztlan*. Ten thousand years ago, the Americas were rich and abundant in fowl and fauna; thus, almost any place could have had an abundance of cranes. In fact, between Madison, Wisconsin and Milwaukee, there is an ancient site called *Aztalan*, which may have derived from *Aztatlan* in view that through linguistic change, the T was

dropped in time. However, this example in Wisconsin, like other places in Mexico with similar names, merely describes a characteristic of the area i.e. the place of the cranes and not *Aztlan* as the Motherland of the Uto-Aztec linguistic tribes ranging from the Algonquin tribes to Meztzika-Tenochka of what is now Mexico City. The Codex Aubin is one of the best sources that relates the journey and the land of origin or *Aztlan*. This Codex, while appearing to be pictographic, must be read phonetically and ideographically. *Aztlan* is represented here as an island or a large land mass surrounded by water. In the center, the word *calli* (edifice) is seen four times with a representative man dressed in the manner of the Aztec originating tribes. The hieroglyphics are to be read through symbol and sound to give phonetically and ideographically the sound of *Aztlan*. The exodus from the homeland was accomplished through *Acalli* or “House in the Water”. Since this occurred in pre-history i.e. before 6000 years ago, one must conjecture that the land masses were different in view that the seas rose forty feet circa 8,000 years ago at the end of the last melting ice age.

Linguistically, the late Dr. Juan Luna Cardenas, Aztec native and scholar, concluded that these ancient people must have been highly advanced in their understanding of science. The etymology, accordingly, is not related to the aviary species but to an ancient civilization from which the Aztec, Olmec, Hopi, Algonquin tribes etc. are descended. He points to the etymology of *Aztlan*: Az (instrument), and Aztli (wings). Thus, the Aztin (venerable Uto-Aztec derived tribes) that come from the *Aztekatl* race possessed “instruments of flight” or were characterized as a people who had flying instruments. Today, in Papantla, Veracruz, there remains an ancient ritual in which natives are tied by a rope to a three story pole and with music and prayer, proceed to emulate flight in the sky in a circular motion.

Most interesting is the Aztec Codex Vaticano Rios B that fixes through its numerical glyphs, the date of 18,024 years. In comparison, Humboldt notes that Egypt almost reaches 6000 years, while India lags behind. Finally, the word Atlantis, first introduced to the Western world by Plato after his uncle had acquired it from Egyptian priests, is related linguistically to Aztec Nahuatl. The word *Atlantike* in Aztec Nahuatl means “we live or are surrounded by water.”

In the second part, *Aztlan* is used metaphorically to project our current age. It focuses on the descendants of *Aztlan* of the Nahui-Ollin or Fifth Age which is characterized by hunger and land movements. This is the age that man/woman expresses man's inhumanity to man, slavery, colonialism, oppression, materialism, religions of fear and the abuse to the environment.

The third section attempts to project a probable scenario of the future or the next quantum cycle. This follows the mathematical and cyclical patterns of evolution of society as seen by the ancient sages of Pre-Columbian America. The new "Sun" or Age will be generally characterized by the following socio-cultural changes: (1) A new cycle that will in transition terminate the concept of individual self gain and materialism, (2) The new society will be based in the highest principles of humanity and community. Man/woman will no longer be in conflict through conflicting based philosophies and economies; rather, they will live in a communal oriented structures as opposed to an individualistic profit oriented society, (3) The new philosophies will end nationalism, border and will be international and universal, (4) The new society will terminate exploitation and competition. It will be a society based on collaboration, fraternity and solidarity, (5) Religions of fear will be eliminated as society will move toward a one world order, be it in religion or government. These are but a few of the changes that will bring about a new society, a new people of the "Sixth Sun" or Sixth Age as predicted by the ancient sages of Pre-Columbian America notwithstanding, the medicine men of current Native-American tribes.

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