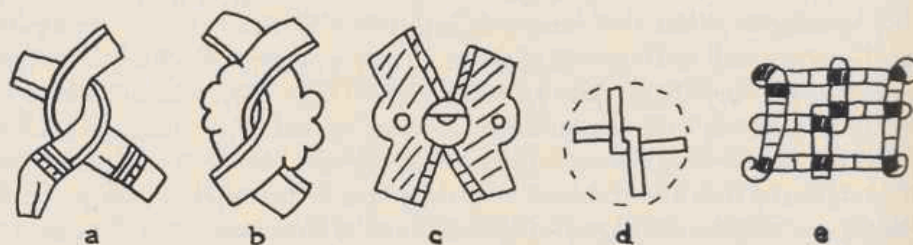


"a certain harmony was established by the gods who agreed to sacrifice themselves at Teotihuacan. As a result of this harmony, the Fifth Age, the Sun of Movement, had begun ... And according to the myths, 'the sun moved, it followed its path' as a consequence of the sacrifice of the gods (the cosmic forces).

But to keep the sun in motion, constantly moving, a concession had been necessary. To each of the four fundamental gods, to each of the four directions, a specific period of time within the Fifth Age was allotted for domination and subordination. This division of time gave rise to the years of the East, of the North, of the West, and of the South. In abstract terms, motion appeared as a consequence of the spatialization of time and of the orientation of the years and days toward the four directions ... not only in each year, but also in each day, the influence of one of the four spatial directions predominated. Space and time, combining and interpenetrating, made possible the harmony among the gods (the four cosmic forces) and, consequently, the movement of the sun and the existence of life. The profound significance of movement to the Nahuas can be deduced from the common Nahuatl root of the words movement, heart, and soul. To the ancient Mexicans, life, symbolized by the heart (*y-óllo-ll*), was inconceivable without the element which explains it, movement (*y-olli*).

The Nahuas, therefore, believed that movement and life resulted from the harmony achieved by the spatial orientation of the years and the days, in other words, by the spatialization of time. So long as this harmony continued ... the Fifth Sun would continue to exist - it would continue to move" (LEÓN-PORTILLA 1963: 54-56).



Representations of the sign *ollin*:

- a from Tajín, NW panel of the Large Ball-court;
- b from Codex Borgia (SELER 1902-03; Fig. 384g);
- c from *Tonalamatl* of the Aubin Collection; (SELER 1902-03; Fig. 384c);
- d from Tajín, NW panel of the Large Ball-court;
- e from Codex Vaticanus B, Sheet 67.

This becomes more clear if the sign *ollin* (that is, the concept of movement) is seen as being basically an expression of dualism, an expression of that balance which makes movement possible. That the balance is dualistic is indicated by the fact that the forces are opposing pairs: fire and water; air (or wind) and earth; and that in the four previous ages, which were not in true balance, each was ended by a dualistic struggle, one god overthrowing the one in power. Thus movement has its source in dualistic harmony and this is shown by the two opposing but balanced elements of its sign. I would suggest that it is not so much "movement" which is fundamental to life ("heart"), but its underlying concept of a balanced duality.

However, incongruously, the "harmony" was not peaceful, it was harmony only in that it was balanced, for within the universal scheme the dual forces