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## **Quetzalcóatl. Metaphors and Images**

*Translation of the Spanish by Alex Lomónaco*



**Research Year:** 2000

**Culture:** Teotihuacán

**Chronology:** Preclassic to Late Classic

**Location:** Teotihuacán, Central México

**Site:** Several Sites in Mesoamerica

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*"Quetzalcóatl. Metáforas e imágenes"* by Enrique Florescano is now in press and will be available from Taurus Publications, Santillana Group. For additional information, please visit: <http://www.editorialtaurus.com/mx/libro/quetzalcoatl-y-los-mitos-fundadores-de-mesoamerica/>.

### Warning

It is almost a fatality that he who gets caught by one of the fugitive faces that identify Quetzalcóatl, is bound to be sentenced to remain a prisoner of that image, captured by the mystery that emanates from his inscrutable appearance, or by the ambition to unveil his nature, or by the impulse to discover the sense of his countless manifestations. At the same time, it is ineluctable that the reader of one or more of this character's appearances will end up by being an interpreter therefrom, or in other words, that sooner or later he will undertake the task of writing his or her own version of the myth.

The book readers now hold in their hands demonstrates the power of this spell. My first approach to Quetzalcóatl was written in 1963, and since then, this figure has turned into a mirage that alternatively would break up into multiple personalities or would blend with new and old images, in a way that Quetzalcóatl's ghost finally turned into an inescapable presence, a challenge that led me to break the habits of a traditional historian, dominated by the paradigm of written texts as the major sources of historic knowledge. What I mean to say is that the enigmas Quetzalcóatl has forced me to face have imposed upon me the study of the myth, the image and the rite, all costumes under which the gods, the founding heroes, the charismatic ruler or the emblems of power have been depicted in Mesoamerican antiquity.

The results of this learning process have been summarized in the book. Here, a new interpretation of the central characters linked to the myth of Quetzalcóatl is offered: the creator god, the cultural hero, the founder of the primordial Tollán (Teotihuacán) and of his different manifestations: Kukulcán, Nakxit and Ce Ácatl Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl, the heroes that have established new kingdoms in the Yucatán Peninsula, the Central Plateau, the regions of Puebla and Tlaxcala, the area of Oaxaca or the Guatemalan highlands. The thesis emanating from such a revision is that the major enterprise of reorganizing the State and the political leadership typifying the Postclassic period (1100-1521), were inspired in the foundational myths that sustained Tollán-Teotihuacán, that is to say: Ehécatl, the creator god of the Fifth Sun; Tollán, the paradigmatic realm; and Quetzalcóatl, the wise ruler.

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