

Names, animals and meanings (Q)

The Whorl list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 30 Jul 1998

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mary whalen — 30 Jul 1998, 22:48

This is Sean Whalen (prion).

Quetzal. Plural quetzals or quetzales. Also spelled quezal or quesal. From the Nahuatl word quetzalli (large bright tail feather). A species (*Pharomachrus mocinno*) of family Trogonidae (the trogon family [trogon means "one who gnaws" in Greek]) of order Trogoniformes. The trogons are brightly plumed tree-dwelling birds (the males are brighter than the females). Their feet have two toes in front and two in back, like most tree-dwelling birds, but they are the only birds who have the first and second toes in front, rather than the first and fourth. The quetzal has green feathers on top and and at the throat and crimson ones on the bottom. The top of the head has a puffy crown of feathers. Males have long green tail feathers that can be over two feet long and are regrown after each breeding season. The birds themselves are only about a foot long. They live in the lower layers of tropical forest trees in Mexico and Central America. They are semi-solitary. They are very fond of fruit and also eat insects, small frogs, lizards, and snails. Males and females alternate sitting on the eggs. The long feathers were used in ceremonies by the Mayans and Aztecs, who believed the quetzal was sacred, and associated it with Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent god. The quetzal dance is performed by the Totonacs of Mexico to honor the quetzal as a sun symbol. The men perform the dance and where disk headdresses to represent the sun. They dance longways by two-steps and knee-raising. The advance, withdraw, and follow the leader down the center and around, split up, cross over, cross back, and and finally the lines wind back and forth through each other in a serpentine path. The quetzal is the national bird of Guatemala. Quetzal is also the name of the basic money unit of Guatemala. The god Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, was worshipped all over Central America. He was known as Eecatl (Aztec for wind) when functioning as a wind god. He was called Ce Acatl (One Cane) as lord of the planet Venus. He was also the creator god, the sun during one of the previous incarnations of the world. He went to Mictlan, the underworld, and brought the bones of the people of the previous worlds to Earth. He sprinkled his blood over them, making them into humans. He gave them corn, art, weaving, polishing jade, making feather mantles, and taught the calendar and astronomy. He was described as light-skinned and bearded. The worship of Pas on the Whorl seems similar to the Aztec worship of Quetzalcoatl. Qu. was supposedly bested by Tezcatlipoca (Smoking Mirror), and sailed east on a raft made of snakes in humiliation. He said that he would return in the year Ce Acatl, and when Cortes landed in that year (1519) he was at first thought to be Qu. returning. Tezcatlipoca, by the way, was an earlier sun who Qu. knocked from the sky and turned into a tiger. He was god of witches, thieves, night, dark, evil, and warriors. He was omnipotent, invisible, and gave and took life as he wanted. Quetzal is an inhumu from Green who came onto the Whorl and became Prolocutor of Viron.

prion