

# How were the Aztec able to create and maintain a powerful empire in Mexico?

Do now: Open up to the document "Digging for Clues" on the class google site. Use the chart at the top to complete your evaluation of the three artifacts.

- Coyolxauhqui Stone - The object is a temple entry stone with carvings of various heads or beings. The Aztecs might have used this object as either decoration or religious purposes, as it is, after all, a temple entry stone.
- Tzompantli - the object is a skull rack, with almost an array like display of various skulls. They seem to be rock carvings. The Aztecs might have used this object as either religious purposes to keep track of the number of human sacrifices made, or just for display.
- The third object seems to be another rock carving. It might have come from a temple because of the various designs on it. Unlike the first artifact, which had many figures on it, this one has a single figure on the middle with various other scriptures/carvings surrounding it on the same stone. This many have been used as a calendar, as the overall shape looks like a sun, and there seems to be some sort of writing within the artifact.

## The Aztecs

Located in modern day Mexico, and Tenochtitlan was the capital city and located in what is now present day Mexico City.

- According to legend, the war god told on of the tribe' leaders that they should look for a place where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus eating a snake. It was there that they should settle and build a new capital.

Conquered people paid tribute, which was a type of tax. The Aztec empire gained wealth through trade and tribute. The population consisted of farmers & warriors.

- They allied with Texcoco and Tlacopan, which caused the empire to gain control over many regions.
- They ruled 400-500 other city-states.

## Aztec Society and Religion

Though people were born into a certain class it was possible to move up the ranks within a life time.

The main deity in the Aztec religion was Huitzilopochtli and was known as both the sun god and war god.

- Some human sacrifice was practiced
- Believed that these sacrifices gave power to the gods, which in turn would insure the survival of the Aztec civilization.
  - There was also a political role of these human sacrifices, as it showed how powerful of an empire it really was.