

JCC: Aztec Empire

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to SSUNS 2015! My name is Mark LeBeau and I will be your chair for the Aztec Empire side of the Spanish Conquest Joint Crisis Committee.

I am incredibly excited to lead this unique committee, and I am sure you are all excited to participate. Our dais has been working hard for months to ensure that this committee will give you an amazing Model UN experience. The Spanish Conquest JCC will not only challenge your debate skills, but also require you to employ conflict resolution skills, and have a knowledge of the historical facts surrounding the Spanish Conquest. In addition, our crisis team will be working tirelessly throughout the conference to devise crisis situations designed to catch you off guard and complicate the flow of debate. To reflect the two very different cultures represented in each half of this committee there are two very different background guides for each half of the committee.

While familiarity with the events of the actual Spanish Conquest is important, this committee by no means needs to stay true to history. In fact, I am challenging you, delegates, to produce an entirely new outcome at SSUNS. It is up to you to ensure that the glory of the Aztec Empire is maintained in our version of the Spanish Conquest, and thus rendering that title irrelevant. This, however, will be no easy task. Our opponents on the Spanish side will prove to be formidable, crises will present great challenges, and one can never disregard the possibility of treachery. The fate of a great empire lies in your hands.



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But you are not alone in this quest. You will have an experienced dais at your disposal. The vice-chair and crisis staffers, alongside myself, will be able to help you with anything from Rules of Procedure to writing directives and crisis notes.

I hope that when you are not in committee, you will find time to explore both McGill and the great city of Montréal and all that they have to offer. Whether you are touring the university's campus, exploring Vieux Port, or searching out the best poutine and smoked meat sandwich in the city (personally I recommend Reuben's), there is never a dull moment in La Belle Ville.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend that you prepare yourself well for this conference. Read the background guide and do your own research as well. And most importantly, be prepared to have a great time at SSUNS! I know I speak for each member of the dais when I say that we cannot wait to meet all of you in November. Best of luck!

Sincerely,

Mark LeBeau

Introduction:

All hail the Emperor of the Mexica people, God in flesh and Ruler of the Earth! Our glory has been unmatched in the history of peoples across time. Our armies have crushed all opponents beneath our feet and offered their hearts to the gods. Our people have built such great splendors that match that great city of gods, Teotihuacan. Our dominions now stretch the great salt sea of the west to that of the east, south to the land of the great Maya people and north to the lands of the cursed Tarascan! We are the people of Aztlan, the Aztecs, who for many years have wandered from our ancestral home in the far north.

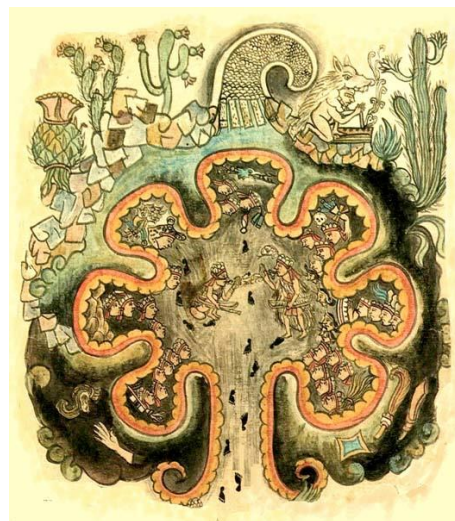
Part I: Aztec History & Culture

Early History

In the place called Aztlan legend has it that since the beginning of time the seven Nahua peoples lived in seven caves: the Tlahuica, the Acolhua, the Xochimilca, the Tepaneca, the Tlaxcalan, the Chalca, and finally the Mexica. All would come to leave the caves to found their cities, guided by the divine will of the Gods.

When the Mexica left their caves they entered the blessed land of Aztlan, a great island which sat in the middle of the great Metztliapan (Lake of the Moon). Our land was a land of paradise, but soon it was beset by great sorrow. The rains that fed us disappeared. Tyrants ruled who made our people suffer greatly. Under the guidance of the Gods and priests, our people set out from this land on the 4th Eagle of the 1st Knife¹ (January 4th 1065).

We travelled for many years and great distances until we came to the shores of Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico, nearly two hundred years after we had set out. This valley, which flowed with the riches of the earth, was watered generously by the Gods themselves. However, in such a land little was left for our people. The proud Mexica were forced into squalor at the edge of the lake, serving more powerful peoples such as the Culhuacan.²



¹ Reese, M. R. "The Lost City of Aztlan – Legendary Homeland of the Aztecs." Ancient Origins. Ancient Origins, 10 Jan. 2015. Web. 06 June 2015.

² Fuentes, Carlos. The Buried Mirror, Reflections on Spain and the New World. New York: Mariner Books, 1999. Print.

In appreciation of our service to him, as a sign of appreciation the King of Culhuacan offered us one of his beloved daughters. As royalty, she was to be worshipped as a goddess. It was then that our God Huitzilopochtli (God of War, the Sun and Patron of the Mexica people) demanded of us a grand sacrifice for our future. When the King later visited, instead of finding his daughter as high priestess, he found her a flayed skin draped around the Mexica (Aztec) priest performing a sacred dance in our patron's honor.³ As a result of this command of Huitzilopochtli, a battle ensued. Having lost our battle with this King, we were driven from our meager lands, forced to once again find a new home.

Forced out once again we were forced to wander the valley in search of a new home. But the blessed God Huitzilopochtli appeared to us and told us that we shall build a great city at the place where a great eagle perched on a cactus with a snake clutched in its talons. We found such a place on an island across the waters of Lake Texcoco. This island was a great marsh with no solid land to be found. However, since this was the where our God told us to build, build we did. This was where the Mexica founded our capital, Tenochtitlan, in 1325.⁴

This new city proved a great blessing of the all-powerful and wise Huitzilopochtli as it provided us great protection from those that would have us destroyed. We became the masters of trade on the great Lake Texcoco. Ever ingenious our people created land from the shallow lake. These floating gardens, Chinampas, bore the best of all products: beans, squash, maize, tomatoes, peppers, amaranth, and flowers in the greatest of numbers. The Mexica people came to grow greatly and prosper.



³ Ibid.

⁴ Cartwright, Mark. "Tenochtitlán." Ancient History Encyclopedia. 25 Sept. 2103. Web. 01 Apr. 2015.

Rise of the Empire



Tenochtitlan once thought merely the mistake of our people came to be a perfect place of refuge from those of greater numbers who would have us killed. Over the next few generations our city grew, as did our power in the valley. During the reign of King Huitzilihuitzli, the second of Tenochtitlan from 1395 to 1417, an alliance with the nearby Tepaneca was made.⁵

Our alliance was fruitful and together we turned our attention to the great city of Texcoco. There was reason of utmost importance for the invasion: their King Ixtlilxochitl had married one of our princesses in a gesture of friendship and equality. He had come to presume himself our ruler of all seven Mexica peoples through this marriage.⁶ The proud Mexica people could not allow a faraway leader to declare himself our sovereign. In 1418 Texcoco fell and Ixtlilxochitl, the Great Pretender, was killed. However, Ixtlilxochitl's son, Netzahualcoyotl, escaped with his life. He foiled a plot to assassinate him and remained in hiding for many years.

⁵ Gruzinski, Serge. *The Aztecs, Rise and Fall of an Empire*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992. Print.

⁶ Ibid.



Together the three would forge what would come to be known as the Triple Alliance, a union of the great cities which would form the base of the Aztec Empire.⁹ These three cities formed a political and economic alliance, promising to aid and share in the spoils of conquest, united as one in victory. The revenue from conquests was distributed among the cities according to their power. As such, Tenochtitlan and Texcoco divided between them equal portions, while Tlapocan received

⁹ Brumfield, Elizabeth. "Aztec State Making: Ecology, Structure, and the Origin of the State." *American Anthropologist*, 85(2): 261-284. 1983. Wiley Online Library.

a smaller portion. Soon after the alliance was formed, Tenochtitlan took the lead in the decision making of the Triple Alliance.

Despite this the friendship between our cities and our Kings would remain strong as personal bonds were forged in the fires of victory. Netzahualpilli, Netzahualcoyotl's son, ruled after the great leader's death. The ties between him and our current King Moctezuma II remain strong as a legacy of their fathers' close alliance. However, this closeness has become strained in recent years due to Moctezuma's perceived arrogance... Nevertheless, our Triple Alliance has lasted for nearly a century and is unlikely to fall apart due to mere annoyance.

After defeating the then dominant Tepanecs the Aztec triple Alliance rapidly took control of the Valley of Mexico. By the end of the reign of the Great Itzcoatl the boundaries of Aztec power would extend far beyond the shores of Lake Texcoco, a process which continues till this day. After Itzcoatl (1427-1440) came the Emperors Mocetzuzoma I (1440-1469), Axayacatl (1469-1481), Tizoc (1481-1486), Ahuizotl (1486-1502) all of whom have expanded the reach of Aztec power to a scale never before imagined.¹⁰ Finally today we are ruled by the Great Emperor Mocetzuzoma II. For nearly two decades since the death of Ahuizotl our Emperor has continued his predecessors' legacy and has continued to bring wealth and glory to the Triple Alliance and to the Gods who have blessed us with rain and victory.

Society, Culture, and the State



¹⁰ Gruzinski



Tenochtitlan

Our capital is a true marvel to behold. A city built by the hands of the Mexica people, it stands unique in this world. The city is built upon the swampy islands of Lake Texcoco, divided by innumerable canals, and connected to the land by three great causeways. Tenochtitlan grew rapidly, with palaces, well-organized districts, and aqueducts providing fresh water to the city from the mountains. At the edges are the Chinampas which have sustained the city for two hundred years with the finest agricultural goods. At the center of the city stands the sacred precinct with ball courts, schools for nobles, and priests' quarters.¹¹

The ceremonial heart of the city and of the whole empire is the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, known as the Huey Teocalli (the Great House of the Gods). This massive stepped pyramid is crowned with two temples dedicated to Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc, the main deities of our people. The temple – decorated with bright colors and finery from across the known world – has been rebuilt many times during our history, made grander and grander as our wealth has soared.¹²

Commoners & Nobles

There are two social classes in Aztec society which hold any deal of importance: commoners and noblemen. The noble families trace their roots to the reign of the first king of Tenochtitlan whose 20 wives had many children from which they descend. Each family splintered off into ever more distant relations with the royal lineage. These were the first members of the noble class of the Aztecs. The king could only be chosen from one of these high noblemen (pipiltin). The Nobles enjoy the benefits associated with a 'higher' class: better education, grander dress, and holding positions in the government. However, noblemen are not exempted from every day work, and many of them are fine craftsmen or serve crucial roles within the palace.¹³ Their positions in such work have become increasingly favored under our Emperor Moctezuma.¹⁴

Then there are the commoners (macehualtin). Some were once slaves who gained their freedom through service – others can become slaves if they should find themselves in a particular amount debt or if they commit some kind of grave infraction. However, most were simply farmers and workers who have made up the base of our people since the beginning. Craftsmen and

¹¹ Cartwright

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Smith, Michael. "Life in the Provinces of the Aztec Empire." *Scientific American*, 76-83. 1997. Print

¹⁴ Ibid.



merchants are also commoners, but have been gifted through their talent a higher status than land workers, or slaves.¹⁵

The military is where commoners can distinguish themselves in Aztec society. With exploits, they could once rise to ranks only noblemen held, even become nobles themselves as many families had once done.¹⁶ All this has been put to an end by the Emperor. Commoners pay the taxes to the Emperor and the nobles. The work the Nobles provided to the state is now counted as their tax. However, much of the wealth of the Empire is still extracted from the subjugated cities under our control.

Aztec Religious System

In the beginning, it took the gods five attempts to create the world, each was destroyed. In the end, all the gods sacrificed themselves, giving their blood to keep the sun moving across the sky and providing for human life. This sacrifice has had to be repaid by men, to keep the world into balance.¹⁷

Quetzalcoatl is the God who created mankind once the sun was up in the sky, the God of merchants, arts, crafts, learning, knowledge and priesthood. He is depicted as a Serpent God who is strongly associated with the fallen city of Teotihuacan and the evening star he is depicted as and associated with the quetzal bird and rattlesnakes

Huitzilopochtli is the patron Aztec God, he is the Warrior Sun. Huitzilopochtli needs blood sacrifice in order to win the battle against darkness and keep the sun moving in the sky. The main temple in Tenochtitlan is dedicated to him.

Xolotl the God of Fire, Sickness, Deformities, Lightning and Death, twin of Quetzalcoatl associated with the evening star, patron of Ōllamaliztli (Mesoamerican ritual ball game) and depicted as a hairless dog and salamander.

Mictlantecuhtli is the God of the Dead and Lord of Mictlan (part of the underworld), he is worshiped through the consumption of human flesh depicted as a skeleton with blood and flesh still attached with a neckless of human eyes. His arms were frequently depicted raised showing that he was ready to tear apart the dead.

¹⁵ Pennock, Catherine Dodds. "A Remarkably Patterned Life: Domestic and Public in the Aztec Household City." *Gender and History*, 23(3): 528-546. 2011. Wiley Online Library.

¹⁶ Smith

¹⁷ Fuentes

Mictecacihuatl, the wife of Mictlantecuhtli presided over the festivals of death and protected the bones of the dead, her festivals would later transform into the modern Dia des los Muertos in Mexico (day of the dead).

Tezcatlipoca ("smoking mirror) was a rival god to Quetzalcoatl. He is associated with many concepts and is god of many things including the night sky and winds, beauty, Jaguars, ruling, divination and sorcery, hurricanes, the earth, and obsidian. He was the first god to create the sun and the earth, but was struck down by Quetzalcoatl and turned into a jaguar. He is depicted in black and yellow stripes all over his body sometimes with an obsidian mirror in his foot or chest. His temple lays just North of Huitzilopochtli's temple.

Tlaloc God of Rain and storms, the Giver of Life. Associated with caves, springs, and mountains, he is a god who brings food the world. Depicted with bugled eyes and fangs with many of the aesthetics of the Jaguar. Can send hail, storms and lightning when angered. His main temples are at the Eastern mountain of Tlaloc and in the heart of Tenochtitlan.

Chalchiuhtlicue "She of the Jade Skirt" Goddess of Rivers, Seas, Storms, Baptisms, and Water patron of Childbirth, wife of Tlaloc. She is a goddess who personifies fertility and beauty. She is represented as a river from which a pear cactus grows, symbolizing the human heart.

Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli "Lord of the Dawn" he is considered to have been a dangerous and evil god who shoots darts at people to cause ills and sickness

There is a religious school specifically for the training of priests. Noblemen are usually sent there, or sometimes the children of a well to-do merchant (girls can study at a temple school to become priestesses). Priests and priestesses have complex work, as they possess the skills of doctors, astrologists, historians, while also having to perform complicated ceremonies daily.

Our Emperors (Tlataoni), are also the main priests of Huitzilopochtli of Tenochtitlan. Under the Tlataoni were the two high priests, highly respected among all the Aztecs. They have authority that reaches well beyond the borders of Tenochtitlan.¹⁸ The rest of the priestly hierarchies have varying responsibilities within their social strata and cults depending on their importance. Human sacrifice is a central, although not the only form of worship. Small sacrifices could be of a few slaves or prisoners of war, or they can be massive occasions with hundreds, sometimes thousands sacrificed to give life to the gods.



¹⁸ "The Aztec World | High Priests." The Field Museum. The Field Museum, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2015.

Aztec Military, Eagle Knights and Jaguar Warriors

Our military might is the envy of all, our soldiers with the blessing of Huitzilopochtli have spread across the lands crushing army after army, forcing enemies to pay us tribute, burning their temples, and taking from them captured warriors for sacrifice. All commoners have to serve in the army at one point in their lives making up the majority of our brave warriors. As such they must be well trained for many years. They serve under a small number of Aztec nobility (full-time warriors) and the rare commoner who had mounted the ranks of the army and been knighted.¹⁹

Although most often our armies will comprise of a few thousand warriors, our emperor may call upon tens even hundreds of thousands of loyal Aztec and allied peoples. At any given time 100,000 Aztec warriors (excluding foreign allies) stand ready to fight. The empire's system of roads has allowed our armies to move quickly to put down insurrection and further expand our grip. Smoke signals, drums and conch shell trumpets would be used to signal the various divisions into combat. Commoners made up the majority of the grand imperial army, often simply armed with spears, slings, atlatl (throwing spears), bows and arrows. However, our warriors are armed with a truly frightening weapon: the Macuahuitl. A wooden sword with an edge of the sharpest obsidian blades, a warrior can easily cut a man in two with such a weapon.

Bringing back a captive from battle is one way of testing a warrior's skills and is largely how his success is measured. Once, such success on the battlefield could earn a commoner a way up in society, perhaps even nobility. But today that privilege is lost to them by the decree of Emperor Moctezuma. Four ranks above the simple soldier were available for those who proved themselves:²⁰

- I. **The Eagle Warriors** are the scouts of the Aztec army, fast moving intelligent independent they conduct raids and gather information on the enemy.
- II. **The Jaguar Warriors** are the full-time, specialized fighters of the Aztec army. They are the trained nobility and those who have risen to the rank of Jaguar warriors and been knighted.



¹⁹ "The Aztec World | Warriors." The Field Museum. The Field Museum, n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2015.

²⁰ Id



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- III. **The Otomies** are a rank above eagle or jaguar warriors. The Otomi were renowned for their fierce fighting and repeated prowess in battle.
- IV. **The Shorn Ones** were the last, and highest rank (except for the Tlataoni commanders) of the army. They enjoyed immense prestige, and were respected by the population. Called the shorn ones because their head was shorn, with the exception of a long braid left at the back of their head. Dozens of heroic acts and captured enemies are required to join such an elite force, these men would have had to turn down command in order to remain a soldier and gain such honors.

Client States and Indirect Rule

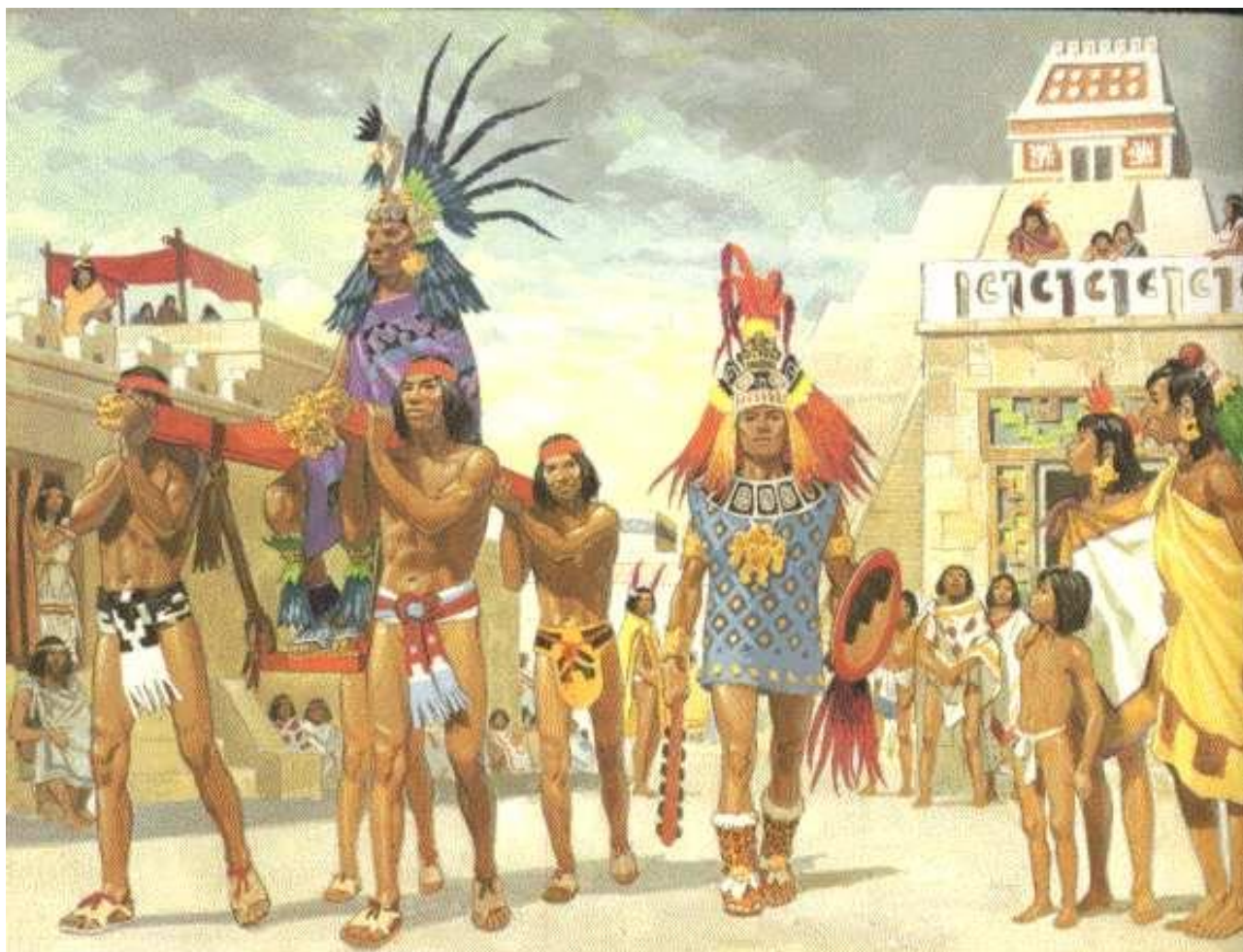
Administration of Aztec Empire subsidiaries is done through a simple hierarchy of command of three levels, and power being weakly centralized as a result of the vast distances between the provinces and Tenochtitlan. Former city-states and kingdoms are governed by the Tlataoni or princes, they must answer to the local governors appointed by the divine Emperor himself.²¹ The greatest cleavage is not between the provinces and the capital or the Mexica and other peoples. The conflict that has become most important is between the nobles and the commoners. This has allowed Tenochtitlan to give each province a considerable amount of local autonomy, as it can count on the local elites to maintain their best interest, and therefore Tenochtitlan's best interest.

Flower Wars (xochiyaoyotl) are battles we engage in against unconquered enemies so that we may show our devotion to the gods in war. These wars, rather than for material wealth and lands, are fought to instill fear in our enemies and bring a steady supply of warriors to sacrifice at our temples.

The first and grandest of these arrangements was with the city of Tlaxcala. At the beginning of the 1400s, just beyond the eastern mountains of Tenochtitlan we came into conflict with these people who have resisted us despite our shared culture. Our wars are organized, rules are set for the battles and both sides return home with captives to sacrifice, our warriors always triumph in such matches. Soon other cities entered such wars with us in exchange for our mercy. Although they claim to be willing to play our game, all know it is fear that drives these warriors to battle, for if they do not fight we will crush them beneath us for all eternity.

²¹ Brumfield

Current Standing



Emperor Moctezuma II, his purging and Reforms

Glory to our emperor! Moctezuma the second of his name was chosen by the council of nobles and elders to be the ninth ruler of the Triple Alliance, ascending the throne in 1502. He was famed in the royal family for distinguishing himself in battle and governance in his previous years.²² Following the death of Ahuizotl, rebellions against our rule were raised across our empire. Our new emperor dealt justice to these rebels establishing his control. He has further grown our marvelous realm, defeating the weakly Zapotec and Mixtec peoples of the south. His most controversial reforms have been to create new rules governing our society.

²² "Kingdoms of the Pre-Columbian Americas, plus European Colonial States, and the Modern Americas." The History Files. The History Files, 10 Oct. 2011. Web. 16 May 2015.



With the success of the empire more and more warriors came to raise themselves up to the level of nobility.²³ These warriors competed with the older nobility for rank and positions within the empire, all wanted a greater share of the spoils of victory. Moctezuma ended the ability of commoners to enter the nobility and then removed them from court life completely giving all positions to the nobles. Although this has kept the nobles throughout the empire ingratiated to Moctezuma, the Aztec commoners have increasingly become disillusioned, only kept in place by the glories of victory and awe at the power of the Emperor.

Internal Dissent

As was shown with the uprisings of 1502, many have become dissatisfied with the absolute rule of the Emperors of Tenochtitlan, from the various tributaries of our empire to even the nobles of Texcoco and Tlacopan. Moctezuma's solution was to break down further the independence of the ruling classes and tie their benefit directly to him. He began by purging Ahuitzotl's top advisors, killing many. He then abolished the opportunity of commoners to attain nobility.²⁴ He tied the nobles to himself and thus centralized his power, at the same time creating a more divisive social order within the empire. The times we live in are times of change and danger, as new threats emerge and old ones are defeated.

Legends and Apocalypse

The world is a frightful place, indeed life and death are simply the two states of being eternally entwined. There have been Four Suns which existed before this world, all were destroyed by great cataclysms brought by the gods themselves.

- 1) **Nahui-Ocelotl** (Jaguar Sun) – The giants were devoured by jaguars.
- 2) **Nahui-Ehécatl** (Wind Sun) – The people were transformed into monkeys and destroyed by hurricanes.
- 3) **Nahui-Quiahuitl** (Rain Sun) – The people were destroyed by rains of fire. Only the birds remain of this world.
- 4) **Nahui-Atl** (Water Sun) – This last world was flooded turning the people into fish and those who survived were transformed into dogs.
- 5) **Nahui-Ollin** (Earthquake Sun) – This world, our world, shall one day be destroyed by earthquakes.

²³ Id

²⁴ Smith, Michael. "The Role of Social Stratification in the Aztec Empire: A View from the Provinces." *American Anthropologist*, 88(1): 70-91. 1986. Wiley Online Library.



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The First God came from the void: **Ometeotl** the God of Light and Dark, Life and Death, Fire and Water, The Great Duality. From he and she were birth four other gods:

In the West presides **Quetzalcoatl**;

In the South presides **Huitzilopochtli**;

In the East presides **Xipe Totec**, the god of gold, farming and Spring time.

In the North presides **Tezcatlipoca**, the god of judgment, night, deceit, sorcery and the Earth.

These gods would create other gods and they would fill the world with all things past present and future. But all things must end and be devoured by the great crocodile god Cipactli. The Aztec people thank Quetzalcoatl, for it was he who resurrected the people of this world from the last great catechism by stealing our bones back from Mictlantecuhtli. Quetzalcoatl created the children of the Fifth Sun by dipping our bones in his own blood and to honor him we give our blood in return. We came into a world illuminated by the new sun Huitzilopochtli God of War we are his children. The moon goddess Coyolxauhqui and the other Tzitzimitl (stars) have grown jealous of Huitzilopochtli and every night try to overthrow him, but every day the sun rises and he emerges victorious.

To show our gratitude and gift the gods their power in fighting back the eternal darkness we must give them life. We must sacrifice the blood and hearts of the bravest warriors so that the world may survive.

Every 52 years, the world comes into a time where Huitzilopochtli might be defeated, the sun may never rise and the world will be destroyed. In this time we mourn and sacrifice, hoping that it will not be this time. In this first year of the new cycle we celebrate the continuation of our world. Yet great sorrow has befallen us of late. Our marvelous Valley was badly flooded in 1510, then we were thwarted in our conquest of Tarascan! But most worrisome are the stars which have fallen from the night sky, our priest say that this is an omen of the return of our ancestral god Quetzalcóatl in the year 1519. Our Maya neighbors to the east have for many years told of us of great canoes filled with strange beings from distant lands across the great eastern sea.

Part II: Rival States



The Tarascan Empire

Those demons of the west! The Tarascan Empire has for a hundred years threatened our great cities with destruction and our empire with ruin. No matter our efforts to conquer them these strange people have proven themselves worthy foes, if little else. Their power lies in both their size and their mastery of the metallic arts; powers which even we do not possess. The land between us is treacherous and for many years both sides have left great numbers near the frontier prepared to throw back any incursion. Our recent attempt to finally crush them in 1515 ended in failure, both sides severely bloodied. At any moment either side, smelling weakness, may once again pounce to defeat their mortal enemy.

Mixtec Kingdoms

The Mixtec city-states were never united, and many of them competed with the now Zapotec city-states, or between themselves. They lie to the far south beyond the outer mountains along the shore of the great western sea. During Moctezuma's II reign, many of them have begun tribute to the Aztec empire simply for fear that we may attempt to conquer them.

Mayan City States

The once proud Maya have been in decline from their ancient prestige, disunited and weak. Though their art and culture are rich they are too distant to come under the control of our people. Although they are a fine trade partner, the Maya cannot be considered a threat to us.

Tlaxcala

The first and largest of our rivals in the Flower Wars, Tlaxcala managed to keep itself independent, though surrounded by the Empire. They have many fine warriors and good, if slightly arid lands. We have oft heard rumors that the Tlaxcalans resent the frequent 'harvesting' of their population during the Flower Wars. They fell humiliated as a mouse does when toyed with by a fearsome cat.

Chichimecs

A people to the far and arid north of the empire who are savages living like dogs. They are wanderers who not infrequently attack the northernmost villages under our control. However, defeating or even finding them is a challenge for the best Eagle Warrior.

Part III: Character List



Tziucpopocatzin

Position: High nobleman, faithful to Moctezuma.

Tziucpopocatzin is highly trusted by Moctezuma. He was by Moctezuma's side from the start of his military career, to his accession to the throne, and as such holds a spot as his chief advisor. He profited greatly from Moctezuma's reforms which benefited the nobles to the detriment of the commoners. Tziucpopocatzin's association with Moctezuma prior to his ascendance to the throne means he is in the emperor's confidence more than anyone else.

Tziucpopocatzin keeps a close eye on the finances of the Aztec kingdom, which includes keeping track of the gold and valuables flowing out of Tenochtitlan, and the ones flowing from trade or tributes from distant provinces. The image of Tenochtitlan as an opulent city is essential when in trading and in war—as it can discourage enemies—and Tziucpopocatzin's responsibility over these only underlines his importance to emperor Moctezuma. If resources are needed such as for new armor, coco beans to trade, or other such items, and if the emperor is not present for consultation, or the matter is too small for his interest, noblemen and warriors alike ask Tziucpopocatzin for permission to use such resources.

This power over the resources of the state could easily be abused. However, Tziucpopocatzin was chosen for such a role because Moctezuma trusts that he would never cheat the Aztec state out of his gold. But such trust must not be abused, or taken for granted.

Totoquilhuatzli

Position: King of Tlapocan

Totoquilhuatzli is non-belligerent man, the most diplomatic of the rulers in the Triple Alliance. Tlapocan is the least important partner of the Triple Alliance, and Totoquilhuatzli has used this situation of Tlapocan's lesser greatness to position it and himself as impartial. Though Moctezuma's arrogance can be a great irritant to Totoquilhuatzli's as much as for the other rulers, his diplomacy and patience has kept Tlapocan's position in the Triple Alliance secure. Totoquilhuatzli is one of the lesser known rulers among the Aztec kingdom, which shields him from much of the animosity other subjugated city-states feel towards their Aztec conquerors. He himself watches over the tributary cities assigned to him generously, and is careful never to demand more of the people than they can give.

There is no doubt that should their come a crisis, Tlapocan will stand by the side of Tenochtitlan. Totoquilhuatzli has sometimes has difficulty balancing the demands of Moctezuma with what he knows to be best for his people, especially when asked to apply the reforms made in Tenochtitlan to Tlapocan as well. While the divide between nobles and commoners in Tlapocan



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was as clear as it was in Tenochtitlan, commoners could always attain high-ranking offices through the army or commerce, and nobles did not have the priority when deciding which posts go to whom.

Totoquilhuaztli believed in a minimal state of meritocracy. However, after Moctezuma's reforms this was restricted, and noblemen were almost guaranteed a spot in the army or the state, constricting the opportunities for the commoners. Such conflicts of ideology can often cause great strain, even for a skilled and impartial diplomat.

Cacamatzin

Position: Moctezuma's nephew and king of Texcoco

Cacamatzin, also called "Cacama" is a short-tempered man, who does not tolerate weakness. He is a son of the last ruler, Ixtlilxochitl, and one of his concubines. He has great respect and affection for Qualpopoca as the two were friends in their youth, and Qualpopoca himself is a respected fighter. He knows he owes his position to his uncle, Moctezuma, and bears him a strong allegiance because of this. However, he is less fond of the weakness his uncle seems to show when faced with prophecies. Cacamatzin, as all Aztecs, has an unwavering faith in the gods' power, especially Huitzilopochtli, but also believes that a man can carve his own faith, and that visions only show what might be, or what might come about. He also believes humans are fundamentally flawed and often even the visions of priests can be badly interpreted, the message of the gods lost by such incompetence.

Cacamatzin knows that in Texcoco there are whispers of rebellion, whispers of rebellion against Tenochtitlan. He has held these down for the moment, as he has no wish of betraying his uncle, who he sees as a fit leader especially in his past prowess in battle. However, he has not squashed all talk against his uncle, and allows the people of Texcoco to vent their anger as they will. While he has been criticized by his brother for this, Cacama has responded that this is the best way to keep the city in check. Perhaps this is meant to keep order in the city, or perhaps this is a revelation of true character.

Conacochtzin

Position: Cacama's brother

As Cacamatzin's brother, and a son of Ixtlilxochitl, Conacochtzin was also a possibility candidate for ruler of Texcoco, but was overlooked by Moctezuma in favour of Cacama. He is outspokenly in favour of full-fledged support of Tenochtitlan and less tolerant of the criticisms Texcocans have of their partner in the Triple Alliance. As dissent started to grow in response to Moctezuma's reforms and ambition, Conacochtzin steadfastly kept to his discourse, and as a result has risen in Moctezuma's esteem.



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Conacochtzin is often entrusted with governing over troublesome tributary states. Once conquered, the nobles are usually left to set the rules of their province, and entrusted to send tribute every month. However, these noblemen have kept their allegiance to their city alone and thus will conveniently 'misplace' much of the collected tribute. In such cases, it is too costly to force tribute across the mountains and rivers: so Conacochtzin is brought from Tenochtitlan, and supervises the delivery of tribute to Tenochtitlan. He has always delivered, mixing cunning with diplomacy, and is now trusted by Moctezuma and elevated to a position of great power over the provinces. Having no formal power in Texcoco or Tenochtitlan, Conacochtzin has used this to the best of his ability to stay in Moctezuma's favours. This has come at the cost of his popularity with the Texcocans and other provincial officials.

Qualpopoca

Position: Moctezuma's son and entrusted ambassador

Qualpopoca is Moctezuma's son, often seen by his side in Tenochtitlan, and has become a famed warrior. His father depends on him for matters of war and diplomacy. He has a strong bond with Cacama sharing a strong spirit and courage as they do. Qualpopoca has in fact even fought next to the Texcocan troops during some of Tenochtitlan's advances against her enemies.

Qualpopoca is extremely faithful to his father, and will follow almost any of his orders. He is one of Moctezuma's most senior officers and, most recently, he has conquered the region of Nauhtla with much of his famed skill and bravery.

He currently acts as military governor of Nauhtla where there are still some insurgencies to be squashed and rebels to be executed, often going back and forth between it and Tenochtitlan. While in the region, Qualpopoca heard rumors of strange men landing, which he has brought back to Moctezuma and his counsel. While a decision is made on the reality of these sightings, Qualpopoca keeps his eyes and ears open in the new tributary province of the Aztec empire, and reports to his father all that he hears. This position is not one unknown to Qualpopoca since his father often entrusted him with solidifying alliances or ensuring that a city-state was truly conquered. Qualpopoca is well-loved by several noblemen of Tenochtitlan for his bravery, though he has been noted to be brash man from time to time.

Cuitlahuac

Position: Moctezuma's brother and lord of Ixtalpalapan

Born from the son of the 6th Aztec emperor, Axayacatl. As with Qualpopoca, Cuitlahuac fully supports Moctezuma, partly because they share the same blood partly because of the benefits he has received. Cuitlahuac has an important role in governing and administering the tribute and alliance system of the Aztec Empire, making the best of rugged terrain and distance between cities



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in communication. He has ensured that all tribute given is proportional to the tributary city's resources and so has earned himself a place of respect in the provinces. Moctezuma often entrusts him with diplomatic missions and sensitive situations if Quälpopoca is away. Cuitlahuac handles these differently, more forcefully and with less tact, but always manages to get his way thanks to his conviction and polished rethoric.

As part of redesigning the imperial system, Moctezuma appointed Cuitlahuac lord of Ixtalpalapan shortly after he accessed his throne. Ixtalpalapan is a prosperous city, and Cuitlahuac gets from it a considerable income. The city is small, but nonetheless an important linchpin of the Aztec empire, where trade flourishes: the city is especially known for the clothes it makes with various dies and embroideries. Cuitlahuac is respected as ruler, though put there recently, able to make the best out of Ixtalpalapan and provide a good life for all of its inhabitants, since even the commoners live as comfortable a life as is possible for their class be they merchants selling their wears or farmers cultivating die from the plants.

Cuauhtémoc

Position: cousin of Moctezuma and ruler of Tlatelolco

Cuauhtémoc is particularly known is Tenochtitlan for his bravery, though not necessarily his warlike skill. Indeed, while a warrior's greatness can be determined based on men killed or prisoner's captured, Cuauhtémoc's fame comes from feats that are not so easily counted. He is known for never surrendering, always finding a way to defeat the single enemy or troops in front of him, through any means. After being named a commander of Aztec troops under Moctezuma, Cuauhtémoc continued to accumulate feats, and became a leading figure for his troops, the Aztec army, and the population in general.

Cuauhtémoc is brought into the sphere of politics by his parentage to Moctezuma, and was named ruler of Tlatelolco soon after he finished his education in an elite school with other noblemen, he has even climbed to the rank of Captain in the army. As a leader, Cuauhtémoc is very charismatic, and retains the absolute loyalty of his people. He and Cuitlahuac often discuss and exchange points of view on ways to rule a city, as they both share the same central care for their people's well-being and loyalty to the Aztec people in general. Cuauhtémoc is also a fiercely independent young man, which is one of the reasons Moctezuma has allowed him rule over Taltelolco, possibly also knowing that such a young man with throngs of cheering admirers might eventually see himself sitting upon the throne one day.

Mexcaloptican

Position: High priests of the cult of Huitzilopochtli.



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Venerated and greatly respected by the whole of the Aztec society. With Ihuicatl, his authority is not limited to the boundaries of Tenochtitlan, but is respected throughout much of the Empire. As the high priest he is in service to the gods, which includes vigils, fasts, and sacrifice – which might include self-bleeding, mortifying before a ritual, or sacrificial ceremony. His cult is the Empire's official form of worship to the Aztec chief god Huitzilopochtli. However, Mexcaloptican is only one half of the two most powerful religious figures of the land and is under Moctezuma's dominion. Nevertheless, shared with Ihuicatl, he commands the whole network of Aztec priest, and priestesses, temples, and cults.

Mexcaloptican was born the son of a rich merchant, who sent him to be trained as a priest after his business boomed. Mexcaloptican rose quickly in the ranks as the high priests before him recognized his real devotion to the gods. As a high priest, Mexcaloptican believes absolutely in the necessity of all laws of Tenochtitlan, rituals, and customs. While he knows that Moctezuma is not only the religious leader of the Aztec kingdom, but also the ruler, and absolute commander, he often pressures him to put the desires of the gods first. As such, Mexcaloptican is an fanatical supporter of the Flower Wars – which some in the royal court have come to view as a needless extravagance. He views them as essential to maintain an adequate number of offerings to the gods, especially Huitzilopochtli, to maintain the growth of the Empire and the survival of the world.

He respects Ihuicatl as his partner in guiding the Aztec kingdom, but privately believes that this one is sometime too lax in his application of the religious laws. Perhaps even not believing him to be a true believer in the rule of the gods?

Ihuicatl

Position: High priest of the cult of Tlaloc

Like Mexcaloptican, Ihuicatl enjoys a considerable breadth of authority among the people of Tenochtitlan, and is respected far beyond. He enjoys the pilgrimages he and Mex have to make to and from Cholula and Tenochtitlan as part of their duties as an occasion to commune with the commoners of the empire. He has some trouble with Moctezuma's new reforms which he views as greatly damaging to the commoners, and has advised against further reforms which hurt the people.

Ihuicatl is noble by birth, and as such was presented to the priests at a young age for training. He completed his training without trouble, and while his faith in the gods was unwavering, was more sociable than Mexcaloptican in his youth, and had furtive friendship with the students at the other elite schools being groomed for other positions. As a result today, Ihuicatl still has ties to many in high ranking individuals in the Aztec army, and has in touch with the situation in Cholula and Tenochtitlan more so than his counterpart.

Indeed, Ihuicatl seems to have eyes and ears everywhere, and is almost always the first to receive information about something new in the cities. Nothing in Cholula and Tenochtitlan

happens without him knowing, and he seems to have considerable knowledge about what happens in the more remote corners of his kingdom too.

Ixtlilxochitl II

Position: son of the previous ruler of Texcoco, Nezahualpili

When Nezahualpilli died, Ixtlilxochitl II attempted to succeed him to the throne which was contested by Cacamatzin. Though Moctezuma supported his brother, Ixtlilxochitl was supported by many for his fierce love of Texcoco. He argued that his brother, Cacama, would be too faithful to Tenochtitlan to truly look out for the good of Texcoco, and that the city would become a mere vassal of its ally. This tension between one candidate propped up by the Emperor and the other by most of the people of Texcoco could have resulted in civil war. Ixtlilxochitl did not wish to see his people dying for a cause of succession, and reached a compromise with Moctezuma, whereby by one half of the kingdom, with the capital, remained to Cacamatzin and the northern part to Ixtlilxochitl.

From then on, Ixtlilxochitl always resented the influence and power of Tenochtitlan, with the relegation of Texcoco—who Ixtlilxochitl sees as the equal of Tenochtitlan. He sees the divided Texcoco as part of Moctezuma's plan to draw power entirely to himself. The two are as hostile to each other as can be without outright war. Yet still, both need the other if they do not wish to allow the empire to fall.

Milintica

Position: One of Moctezuma's warriors and Captain of the Imperial Guard

Through the many rewards received at the end of each battle, he has accumulated wealth and influence. He is one of Moctezuma's most senior officials, one of the only ones not in some way related to the ruler. He is often the one to plan battle against other cities, and is known for his ability to keep his head on his shoulders during crises. When Moctezuma cannot take care of military affairs, Milintica is often left in charge of organizing the other senior officials. This is particularly exceptional since Milintica himself is not of noble birth. He seems to have escaped Moctezuma's goal of reassigning all important positions to noblemen, perhaps he is one man too





valuable to lose.

Militinca is a master tactician, and one of the youngest captains of the Aztec army, as such his troops have an easy camaraderie and fierce loyalty to him. His system of alliance is more of a mystery, as he tended to keep to himself and not mingle with the other captains and commanders, who are all noblemen. His manners are rougher and different than the one the others learnt in their schools, and it is possible he is repelled by such differences. However, it is certain he respects Moctezuma and is thankful to him for rising him to such a position and maintaining his rank despite his common background.

Tecuichpotzin

Position: Moctezuma's daughter

Tecuichpotzin has primacy among Moctezuma's daughters as she was born of his primary wife princess Teatlalco. She is young, but already very beautiful, and is often shown to be strong-willed, as well as kind and generous. She is known to have the ear of her father for her often sound—and unbiased—advice and her opinion or advice is sometimes sought out by her cousins and uncles when they wish to pass an idea by her father. Whoever she should marry is likely to be chosen as the successor of Moctezuma.

Tecuichpotzin has no formal power as she is only the daughter of the Emperor, and noblewomen were restricted in their ability to exercise a profession more so than men or even commoner women. However, she is close to the people of Tenochtitlan unlike her father and is indeed known by many for her kindness and generosity. As such, she holds a powerful sway over the opinion the population of Tenochtitlan and the Emperor. As well, she has access to the network of noblewomen of the palace and in the city, and is therefore often privy to information before it reaches ears of any noblemen. Her friends and new sources extend as far as Texcoco, and she is therefore often a valued source of information and spies for those she feels deserving.

It remains a mystery who she intends to support in succeeding to the throne, or even what her alliances and loyalties are – beyond her conflicting connection to her father and the people.

Tlazohtzin

Position: Merchant



Tlazohtzin is a middle aged woman, who through long years of work and ingenuity has been able to make a place for herself in Tenochtitlan's society. She was born to commoner parents who educated her with money her father made as a professional warrior, and eventually married a



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merchant who benefited greatly from her intelligence and skill to help him in his profession. Only a few years after their marriage, her husband died, and under Aztec law Tlazohtzin inherited all of his wealth and his business. Since then, she has become a renowned merchant and tradeswoman, finding the exact silk or dye she wants. Her standing is such that she can even keep order amongst the many merchants of Tenochtitlan. She has in these years elevated herself as matriarch of traders and merchants, commanding incredible wealth and influence.

It is thanks to her savvy and her role of influence over the merchants that, despite Moctezuma's reforms, Tlazohtzin has elevated herself to a seat on the Imperial council. This new role of influence has allowed her to bring her famous cunning to the very highest echelons of Aztec society. No one knows who she is ultimately loyal to, but such a woman is unlikely to sit idle as the men of the council play their games without adequate compensation, not with coin, but with power.

Cosijopii

Position: Zapotec prince

Son of Cocijoeza, the Zapotec emperor, Cosijopii often makes visits to Tenochtitlan to bring tribute from the conquered Zapotec cities in gestures of friendship towards the Aztec empire and to maintain diplomatic relations with Tenochtitlan – not to mention his position over his conquered people. Cocijoeza is known as the king who rallied and conquered all Zapotec cities under one banner, even expanding Zapotec territory, and pushing back the Aztecs, before ultimately being crushed in battle and forced to pay tribute. However, in respect for him Moctezuma has allowed him to maintain his place as a vassal and welcomes Cosijopii as a diplomat every time the young man visits, intent on keeping good relations with the Zapotec king who keeps some control over many Zapotec cities and fights to regain control over those who resist his, and Aztec rule.

Yet still he privately yearns for release from the bondage of conquest. His people hate the domination of the Aztecs as well and many cities in the far south resist. Cosijopii is forced to himself lead attacks against his own people. Such humiliation is fertile ground for rebellion and treason, yet resistance will only lead to defeat and devastation.

Uetzacayotl

Position: Council nobleman one of the eldest men in the city.

Having just crossed into his 89th year he has witnessed many of the events his fellow councilors refer to merely as history. Twenty years ago Uetzacoytl was part of the council of Aztec noblemen that decided which relative of Ahuizotl, the now deceased emperor, should succeed him. Uetzacoytl in fact favoured, and indeed voted for, Cuitlahuac's—Moctezuma's brother—ascending to the throne. Uetzacoytl is an old and wise man, and the council of noblemen listened respectfully as he explained that Cuitlahuac was less superstitious, and had a bravery that would serve the Aztec



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people well. However, even then Uetzacoctl was of an advanced age and is a strong believer in the opinion of his peers. So when he saw that the majority of the council favored Moctezuma as most fit to be ruler, he fell silent. He could not come to resist such a man who could so totally capture the respect of the council, and so relented.

Uetzacoctl has borne no grudge for Moctezuma being elected, and serves the emperor as best as he can. In his long life he is indeed known as a man faithful to the royal family, and Moctezuma was quick to trust him. His knowledge of court affairs is unparalleled, he is a man who holds the Aztec traditions to heart and will defend the honor of his great city till the sun dies and the world is plunged into darkness.

Xiuhcoatl

Position: Priestess

Xiuhcoatl is known in Tenochtitlan as an exceptionally gifted healer. She is greatly respected for her skills which – as the people would have us believe – come from the divine realm. Added to that, Xiuhcoatl has been afflicted with great and powerful visions. She is an oracle who commands great respect with the populace for her ever more accurate divinations, yet as a member of the cult of the stars she is despised by the high priests as no better than a heretic. Members of the council are reluctant to trust such a mysterious and threatening figure. However, her great influence over the people has caught the eye of Moctezuma, as he feels that her presence in the upper echelons of Aztec society will help him maintain public support for his rule.

As somewhat of a political outsider, Xiuhcoatl has no qualms about aligning herself with other members of this committee, no matter their societal position. She has grown more and more distressed at the visions she has been given by the stars, they riddle of palaces of the wind and sea, of huge monstrous beasts and of demons who breathe fire.

Tepiltzin

Position: Council nobleman

A greatly wealthy and influential nobleman, Tepiltzin sat on the Council that elected Moctezuma. An early supporter, he was once one of Moctezuma's closest allies. However, he soon fell out of favor with the emperor when it was rumored that Tepiltzin was spreading slander about Moctezuma in public. Tepiltzin vehemently denied these claims but was nonetheless kept at a distance from the emperor and denied the privileges afforded to other members of the council. Finding him embittered over this, the other councilmen, and Moctezuma himself consider Tepiltzin

to be an increasingly less reliable member of the council. Many have begun to whisper of espionage and treachery. While there is no evidence of this, Tepiltzin has become a pariah in the high social circles of the Aztec court.

A man increasingly stripped of his power and influence. Tepiltzin has taken to the cactus wine, a man of few words and grumbled thoughts. He himself may not know how he will ever regain his status – whether by proving himself to the man he once called friend, or by less honorable means.

Part IV: Appendix



Fig. 1 Map of Mexico ~1519

Weaponry of the Aztec Soldier:

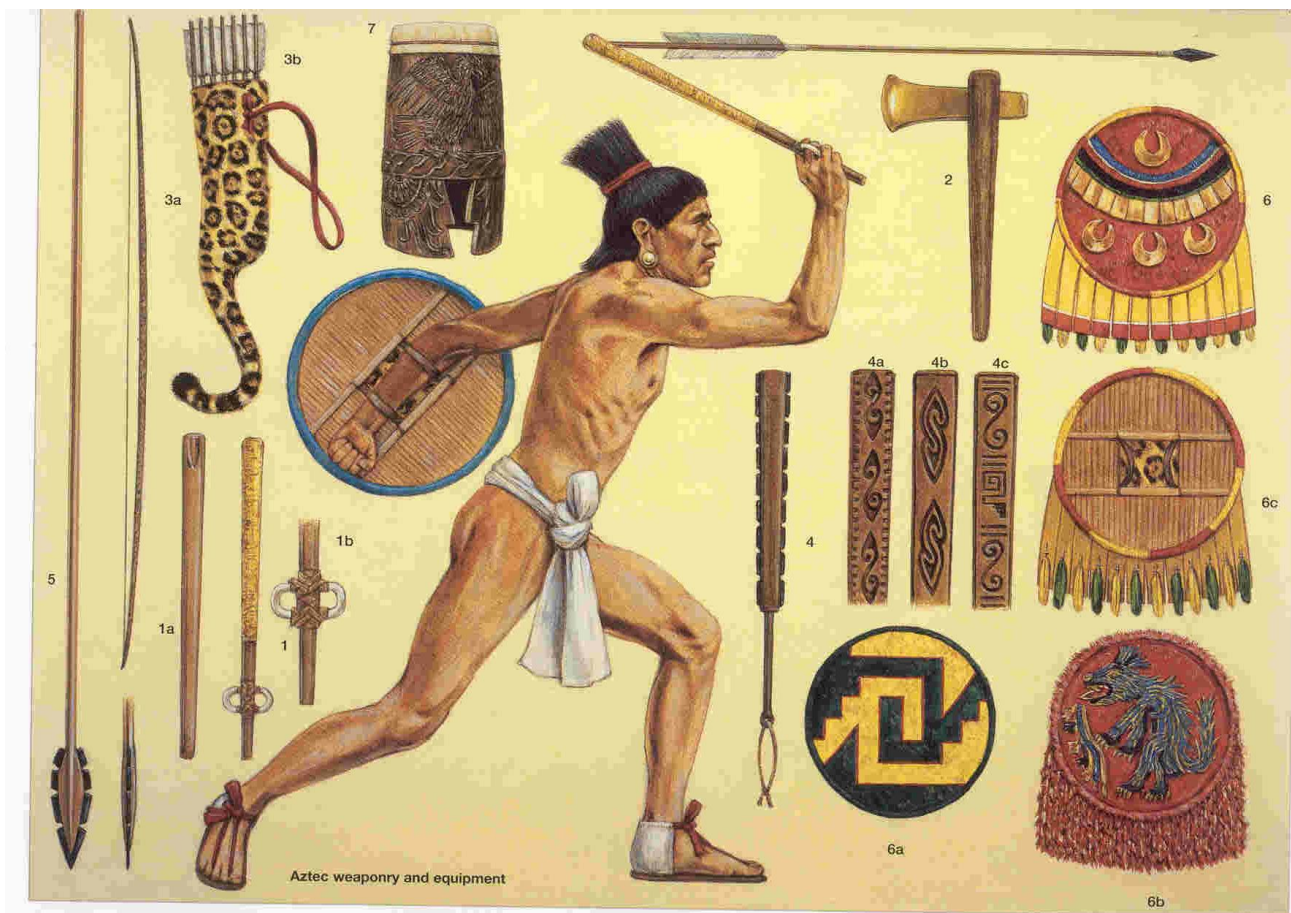


Fig. 2: Aztec Equipment

- 1) Ahtlatl: Spear Throwers (a,b)
- 2) Tlāximaltepōztli: Bronze Head Axe
- 3) Tlahhuītōlli, Mīcomītl and Yāōmītl: Bow (a), Arrow Sheath and Arrows (b)
- 4) Mācuahuitl: (Hungry Wood) a wooden Sword with obsidian blades along the sides. (a,b,c)
- 5) Tepoztōpīlli: Wooden Spear with a broad head of obsidian blades.
- 6) Chīmalli: Shields made of wood, fiber, feathers and cloth (a,b,c)
- 7) Huehuetl: War Drum
- 8) Tēmātlatl: Fiber Sling with Clay Ball projectiles filled with Obsidian shards





Fig 3. The Chinampa of Lake Texcoco

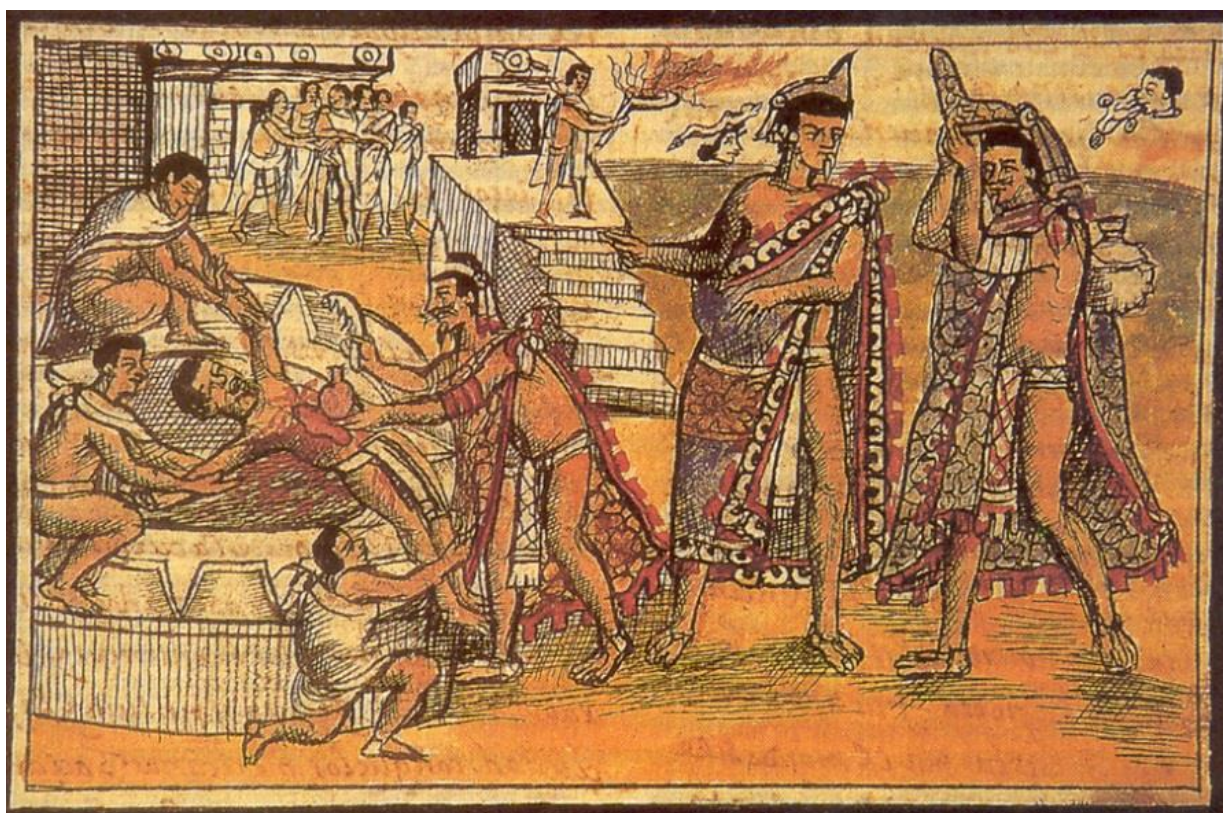


Fig. 4 Warrior Sacrifice



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