

Warlords of the Ancient Americas

Captions

Smoking-Frog name glyph.

Toltec visitors to a Maya city, found on a bowl at Tikal.

Temple of the Sun, Teotihuacán.

Temple of Quetzalcoatl, Teotihuacán. Feathered Serpent and Tlaloc carvings.

Smoking-Frog, Uaxactún Stela 5.

Left, Curl-Snout, Stela 31, Tikal. Right, Stormy-Sky.

Maya Star Wars shown on the murals at Bonampak.

Prisoners abase themselves before the King of Bonampak, having already been tortured and bled as shown by their mutilated, dripping fingers.

Feathered Serpents

The god Ehécatl. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The god Tezcatlipoca. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl offered pulque by Tezcatlipoca disguised as an old man.

Toltec warriors scout the coast of the Maya Yucatán.

The likeness of the bearded Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl is perhaps seen in this figure of a Toltec warrior attacking Maya warriors on a gold repoussé disk found in the sacred well at Chichén Itzá.

Toltec warrior on a bas relief at Chichén Itzá.

A mural of the Toltec conquest of the Yucatán from the Temple of the Jaguars at Chichén Itzá. Toltecs attack a Mayan city employing ladders and a siege tower below. The city is sacked in the upper part of the fresco.

Temple of the Warriors at Chichén Itzá. Left, as seen from the Castillo. Right, Feathered Serpent columns of the temple entrance.

Examples of the similar structures at Tollan and Chichén Itzá. *Upper,* Temple of Tlahuizcalpatecutli, Tollan. (Drawing courtesy © Scott ⁿ)

Gentling, photographed by David Wharton). *Lower*, Temple of the Warriors, Chichén Itzá.

The panorama of Precolumbian Mexican civilisation with Quetzalcoatl departing to the coast in his serpent boat. (Painting by Diego Rivera)

Tezozomoc's name hieroglyph.

Tezozomoc, King of the Tepaneca.

The divine sign that showed the Mexica where their mighty city would take root and flourish, the eagle clutching serpent on a cactus. In the background is Tenochtitlan in the midst of Lake Texcoco as it was to appear to Cortés two hundred years later. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Nezahualcoyotl's name hieroglyph.

The lineage of the kings of Texcoco. Ixtlilxochitl is No. 3; Nezahualcoyotl is No. 4.

Nezahualcoyotl in his war costume. The drum on his back was to sound commands.

A human sacrifice. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Judges and the administration of justice. The royal diadems signified that they acted in the king's name.

Nezahualpilli, the son and successor of Nezahualcoyotl.

Mexica symbol of war.

Tenochtitlan in the midst of Lake Texcoco. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The fall of Azcapotzalco in the year One Knife (1428).

Itzcoatl's name hieroglyph.

Itzcoatl rewards successful warriors with the plunder and tribute of conquest.

The Mexica sequence of war. *Upper*, battle. *Centre*, burning the enemy's temple signified victory. *Lower*, immediate sacrifice of prisoners.

The hieroglyph for the flint knife, a day in the calendar. Here it is depicted as a sacrificial knife.

Priests of Huitzilopochtli. Tlacaélel, the warrior-priest and genius behind the Mexica imperial idea, raised this local patron deity to the top of the pantheon. It was Tlacaélel who established the connection

between Mexica military success and the patronage of Huitzilopochtli who required an ever growing number of human sacrifices. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The war costume of the Tlacohtlalli.

Huitzilopochtli. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Tlaloc. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Costume of a warrior who has taken four or more prisoners.

'A Military Marketplace'. Tlacohtlalli, the Snake Woman of the Mexica, was the formaliser of the Xochiyaoyotl or 'Flowery Wars' with special enemy states where the champions of both sides would fight to show their valour and secure the finest captives for sacrifice. These special conquests were designed to meet Huitzilopochtli's perpetual hunger for blood from the finest of the civilised peoples sharing the civilisation of Anáhuac so that would come 'like warm tortillas, soft, tasty, straight out the oven' to please the gods.

Moteczuhzoma's name hieroglyph.

The tlatoani and the Eagle Council plan a campaign.

The tlatoani's war costumes.

Otomi and Cuachic Knights.

Mexica ambassadors were frequently sent with the express purpose of provoking a war by delivering unacceptable demands. This often resulted in their own deaths, an automatic just war cause for the Mexica. Mesoamerican ambassadors were not protected by any concept of immunity. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Mexica hieroglyph for a campaign.

Axayácatl's name hieroglyph.

Mexica priests and warriors on campaign. The devil on one priest's back is a post-conquest Spanish comment.

Axayácatl the Scourge.

The ruse ranked high in the Mesoamerican art of war. In the war against Tlaxcala in 1475, both sides attempted to use decoys to entice the other into an ambush. The Mexica decoys were more successful, and the tlatoani, Axayácatl, personally led the Mexica ambush force into the attack. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The Shrine of the Eagles at Manlinalco. (Painting courtesy © Stuart Gentling)

Temple of the Knights of the Sun where the gladiatorial sacrifices were held. (Drawing courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Tizoc's name hieroglyph.

Ahuítzotl's name hieroglyph.

A human sacrifice.

Every 80 days hundreds of thousands of porters carried imperial tribute to Tenochtitlan. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The Great Temple after its final dedication by Ahuítzotl in 1487. (Drawing courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The shadow of the Great Temple falls upon the Great Skull Rack. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Probably the most fearsome event in the year of every Mexica vassal state was the arrival of the imperial tribute-collectors from Tenochtitlan. By the reign of Ahuítzotl, a million bearers were bringing tribute every 80 days to Tenochtitlan. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

One of the Mexica tribute lists drawn immediately after the Conquest to provide a guide to the wealth of the empire for the Spaniards. This list

includes beads of semiprecious stones, bunches of feathers, war costumes, and blankets. Such wealth was the foundation of the new empire created by Itzcoatl, Tlaacélel, and Motecuhzoma I.

Clouds of incense perfumed Ahuítzotl's victory procession to the Great Temple. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

A Mexica palace near Chalco. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Houses on the Cuepopan road, an example of the magnificent rebuilding of Tenochtitlan after the flood of Ahuítzotl. By the arrival of Cortés the capital had achieved a cosmopolitan sophistication unparalleled in the history of Mesoamerica. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Streets and canals of the Tenochtitlan rebuilt by Ahuítzotl. (Paintings courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Motecuhzoma II's name hieroglyph.

Motecuhzoma as a young warrior. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Almost immediately after his enthronement, Motecuhzoma transformed himself from a man of reasoned good judgment to a pitiless autocrat. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

seen from the rear

The magnificent palace of Motecuhzoma II. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The Tlaxcallan host fighting under its White Heron standard. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Motecuhzoma II's superstitious nature quickly equated the arrival of the Spaniards in the year One Reed with the promise of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl to return in the same year of the Mesoamerican 52-year calendar cycle. Here Motecuhzoma prays to Ehécatl, Quetzalcoatl's divine nature, in this brilliant composition by Keith Henderson.

The round Temple of Quetzalcoatl built by Motecuhzoma, with the Temple of Yupi Tepec behind. (Drawing courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Hernan Cortés - the nightmare of Motecuhzoma - from a German medallion, the only likeness of the great Conquistador taken from life. (Courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Malinal, called by the Spaniards Marina, the woman who changed the course of history. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Distant view of Lake Texcoco and Tenochtitlan as seen from below the Paseo de Cortés. From here the Mexica sorcerers saw the vision of

Tenochtitlan in flames. (Painting courtesy © Stuart Gentling)

Motecuhzoma II had nearly had a hysterical breakdown in fear of Cortés' arrival, but composed himself as he arrived in a magnificent litter carried by eight members of his court. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The procession of 200 lords of Motecuhzoma's court preceded his litter to his meeting with Cortés at Xoloc, on the edge of the city. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Motecuhzoma II approaches the sacred precinct at Xoloc to meet the dreaded strangers. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The meeting of two worlds. Motecuhzoma II and Cortés, the tlatoani was escorted by his brother Cuitláhuac, Lord of Itzapalapa, and his nephew Cacamatzin, Lord of Texcoco. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The entrance to Tenochtitlan along which Cortés and his men marched. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The great southern road looking north towards the Templo Mayor. It is along this road that Cortés entered Tenochtitlan. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The first lengthy conversation between Motecuhzoma and Cortés.

Motecuhzoma II ordered the killing of a few Spaniards near Villa Rica about the time Cortés entered the city. Here he reacts in horror as the ferocious-looking head of one of the dead Spaniards is shown to him. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Motecuhzoma shows Cortés the splendours of Tenochtitlan from atop the Great Pyramid. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The kidnapping of the tlatoani. Informed of the murder of the Spaniards, Cortés seized Motecuhzoma II in his own palace and carried him off to his own quarters in the Palace of Axayácatl. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The burning of Quauhpopoca.

Motecuhzoma was chained to prevent his interference with the execution of Quauhpopoca, an entirely unnecessary precaution. (Drawings by Keith Henderson)

The Spaniards loot the Mexica treasury and melt down the gold and silver.

Motecuhzoma surrenders the sovereignty of the Mexica to the King of Spain. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The Toxcatl massacre.

A priest calls the Mexica to arms.

The Mexica relentlessly attacked the Palace of Axayácatl soon after Cortés' return.

Motecuhzoma II is attacked by his own people for suggesting that they put down their arms and return to their homes because the Spaniards are more than a match for them. Their traditional awe of the tlatoani did not survive this final humiliation. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Obsidian-edged sword and Mexica shield with device.

Cuauhtémoc's name hieroglyph.

Now the Mexica had found a warlord – Cuitláhuac, Keeper of the Kingdom.

Mexica assaults on the Palace of Axayácatl repeatedly threatened to overwhelm the Spaniards and Tlaxcallans inside. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Massed Mexica squadrons drove every sortie by the Spaniards and Tlaxcallans back into the palace compound. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The battle for the Great Temple. *Lower*, the near contemporary Indian drawing shows the Tlaxcallans in the thick of the fighting. *Right*, the drawing by Keith Henderson captures its desperate nature.

Upper, the Spaniards and Tlaxcallans tried to slip away at midnight during the rain. *Lower*, a Mexica woman sounds the alarm.

The Mexica attacked the enemy as they fled along the causeway to Tlacopan.

The chaos and slaughter at the Toltec Canal as the crush of fugitives pushed those ahead into the water. It was here that the legendary Salto de Alvarado or Alvarado's Leap is supposed to have occurred. Trapped on the wrong side of the canal, Pedro Alvarado is reputed to have used his lance to pole vault over the writhing mass below to safety on the other side. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The aftermath of the Mexica victory on La Noche Triste. *Upper*, the bodies of the enemy are disposed of. *Centre*, the abandoned loot is carried off. *Lower*, the canals are searched for more treasure.

The Mexica pursued the fleeing enemy around the lake.

The Battle of Otumba.

The Mexica national standard of gold and green quetzal feathers.

The damage done to Tenochtitlan was repaired, the temples restored, and new images of the gods fashioned.

The smallpox epidemic in Tenochtitlan.

Cuauhtémoc's name hieroglyph.

Cuauhtémoc is enthroned as the tenth tlatoani in February 1521. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The Mexica could not withstand the charges of the Spanish horsemen in the open field. (Painting by Diego Rivera)

The *Capitana*, the flagship of Cortés' small fleet of brigantines, tied up at the fortress of Acachinanco after its capture in a sudden descent by the Conquistador. Note the Tlaxcallan shields hung over its sides. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The 10 June assault on Tenochtitlan. *Upper*, the Spaniards attack up the Ixtlapalapan causeway. *Centre*, the barricade at the city entrance is destroyed by cannon. *Lower*, The Spaniards attack through the Xolloco district.

The fire stone at the base of the Great Temple on which the Spaniards

set a cannon, then lost it when the Mexica counter-attacked. (Drawing courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

Upper, the fighting on the first day raged from Xoloc to the Sacred Square. Lower, The Mexica captured the cannon the Spaniards had set up on the fire stone and threw it into a deep canal. (Drawing courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton.)

The fighting for the city frequently took to the shallow waters of the canals and lake. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The Great Market at Tlatelolco was the eventual objective of the Spanish attacks. This painting shows a corner of the massive colonnaded enclosure. (Painting courtesy © Scott Gentling, photographed by David Wharton)

The hero Tzilacatzin leads the attack that drove Alvarado's men into a canal.

Cavalry was a vital advantage for the Spaniards. They rode down and lanced Mexica almost at will when they attacked in groups. Alone they could be dragged out of the saddle and killed.

In one day the Mexica of Tenochtitlan abandoned their ruined city to take refuge in Tlatelolco.

Hope was kindled among the Mexica as the Spaniards were joyously dragged up the steps of the temple to be sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Cuahtémoc surrenders to Cortés after being intercepted as he tried to flee across the lake in a canoe. 'Tell the captain I have done my duty,' he said in his despair, '... Now that I am his captive, let him take this dagger and kill me with it.' (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Finally even the Mexica could fight no longer. Towards the end, each day's fighting was more and more a slaughter for the Mexica. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

'And do you think, I, then, am taking pleasure in my bath?' Cuahtémoc heroically withstood torture when the Spaniards forced Cortés to put the tlatoani to the question to reveal where all the gold lost on La Noche Triste had gone. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

Thus died Cuahtémoc, the tenth and last tlatoani of the Mexica, murdered by Cortés who feared him above all other men. (Drawing by Keith Henderson)

The coat of arms presented to Cortés by Carlos V for the conquest of Mexico. In the upper right quarter of the shield are three crowns, signifying that Cortés had conquered three kings: Motecuhzoma II, Cuitláhuac, and Cuahtémoc.