



AZTEC EMPIRE

FREEMAN-PEDIA



POST-CLASSICAL (600 CE-1450 CE)

REGIONAL & TRANSREGIONAL INTERACTIONS

APPEARANCES IN THE AP CURRICULUM

- Improved transportation technologies and commercial practices led to an increased volume of trade, and expanded the geographical range of existing and newly active trade networks.
- Existing trade routes flourished & promoted the growth of powerful **new trade cities** (*Tenochtitlan*)
- Increased cross-cultural interactions resulted in the **diffusion of literary, artistic, and cultural traditions** (*Toltec/Mexica Traditions in MesoAmerica*)
- In the Americas, as in Afro-Eurasia, **state systems expanded in scope and reach**: Networks of city-states flourished in the Maya region and, at the end of this period, imperial systems were created by the **Mexica** (“**Aztecs**”) and Inca.
- Agricultural production increased** significantly due to technological innovations (**Chinampas**, Terrace Farming)

PEOPLE TO KNOW

HUITZILPOCHTLI
(SON OF CREATOR GOD, SO ∞?)
PATRON GOD OF THE AZTECS. GOD OF WAR, SUN, SACRIFICE, & TENOCHTITLAN

MONTEZUMA II
(1466-1520)
AZTEC RULER DURING FIRST CONTACT WITH THE WEST. KILLED BY CORTES.

HERNAN CORTES
(1485-1547)
SPANISH CONQUISTADOR WHO CONQUERED THE AZTECS

1110 CE
MEXICA LEAVE THEIR HOMELAND OF AZTLAN ARRIVING IN MEXICO

1325 CE
MEXICA SETTLE IN **TENOCHTITLAN**

1502 CE
REIGN OF MONTEZUMA II (9TH & MOST FAMOUS AZTEC RULER)

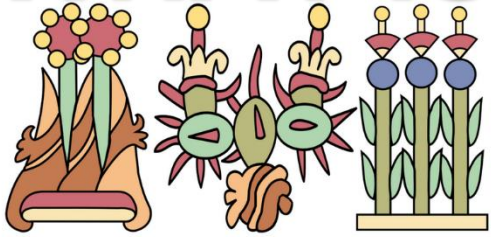
1248 CE
MEXICA SETTLE NEAR **LAKE TEXACOCO**

1431 CE
TRIPLE ALLIANCE FORMED BETWEEN TENOCHTITLAN, TEXCOCO, & TLACOPAN

1519 CE
HERNAN CORTES LANDS IN THE YUCATAN



WHAT IS



AZTEC?

- LIKE SO MANY OTHERS HISTORICALLY, THE **AZTEC** WEREN'T CALLED THE **AZTEC**
- IT DERIVES FROM THE NAHUATL (LANGUAGE OF THE AZTEC) WORD "**AZTECAH**" WHICH TRANSLATES TO:
 - PEOPLE FROM AZTLAN
 - AZTLAN=MYTHOLOGICAL HOMETLAND OF THE AZTECS
- THE AZTECS THEMSELVES WERE *MEXICA* (EPONYMOUS FOR MEXICO TODAY)



1550 DRAWING OF AZTLAN

WHERE DID THE AZTECS ORIGINATE?

- 1200 CE: PEOPLE FROM AZTLAN MIGRATED INTO CENTRAL MEX.
- CREATED A SERIES OF CITY-STATES
 - EACH RULED BY *TLATOQUE*
 - "SPEAKER"
- WARFARE BETWEEN THESE CITY-STATES WAS COMMON
- MEXICA (AZTECS) ONE OF THE LAST TO MIGRATE FROM AZT.
 - GOOD LANDS TAKEN
 - SERVED AS MERCENARIES FOR OTHER CITY-STATES
 - MOVED TO ISLAND IN MIDDLE OF LAKE TEXCOCO
 - 1325: FOUNDED **TENOCHTITLAN**

BUILDING AN EMPIRE

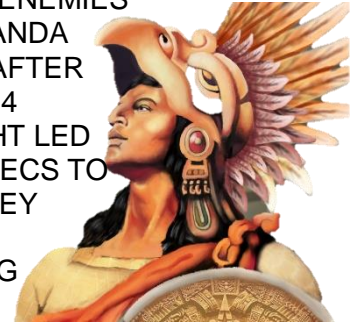
- THROUGH ALLIANCES, WAR, & SUCCESSION BATTLES; THE AZTECS BECAME THE POWER IN THE REGION
- TRIPLE ALLIANCE** (1428)
 - BEGINNING OF THE AZTEC EMPIRE
 - (TENOCHTITLAN, TEXCOCO, TLACOPAN)
 - MEXICA/TENOCHTITLAN=PRIMARY
- TRIBUTE SYSTEM**
 - TRIBUTE WAS DEMANDED OF CONQUERED CITY-STATES
 - TRIBUTE TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM THE PEOPLE (BYPASSING LOCAL OFFICIALS)
- ISSUED LAWS TO SEPARATE THE NOBLES AND THE COMMONERS



HUITZILPOCHTLI

FLOWER WARS

- INSTIGATED TO GAIN PRISONERS
- PREORDAINED TIME/PLACE
- EACH SIDE HAD SAME # OF SOLDIERS
 - 1. SHOWED AZTEC SUPERIORITY (RESISTANCE WAS FUTILE)
 - 2. WEAKEN ENEMIES
 - 3. PROPAGANDA
- BEGAN AFTER 1450-1454 DROUGHT LED THE AZTECS TO BELIEVE THEY WEREN'T SACRIFICING ENOUGH PEOPLE



AZTEC EAGLE WARRIOR

CHINAMPAS "FLOATING GARDENS"

- THE MOST DISTINGUISHING ASPECT OF AZTEC AGRICULTURE
- FROM THE NAHUATL WORD MEANING "SQUARE MADE OF CANES"
- THE SPANISH DESCRIBED IT LIKE THIS:
 - WITHOUT MUCH TROUBLE, THE INDIANS PLANT AND HARVEST THEIR MAIZE AND GREENS IN CHINAMPAS. THESE WERE STRIPS BUILT ABOVE WATER
 - FATHER JUAN DE TORQUEMADA
- BUILT ALONG FRESHWATER SHORELINE OF CENTRAL MEXICO
- NOT "FLOATING GARDENS"
 - ISLANDS BUILT ALONG THE SHORE
- Q: HOW DO THEY WORK? A:** →

WILLOW TREES- ANCHORED CHINAMPA & PROTECTED FROM ENVIRONMENT

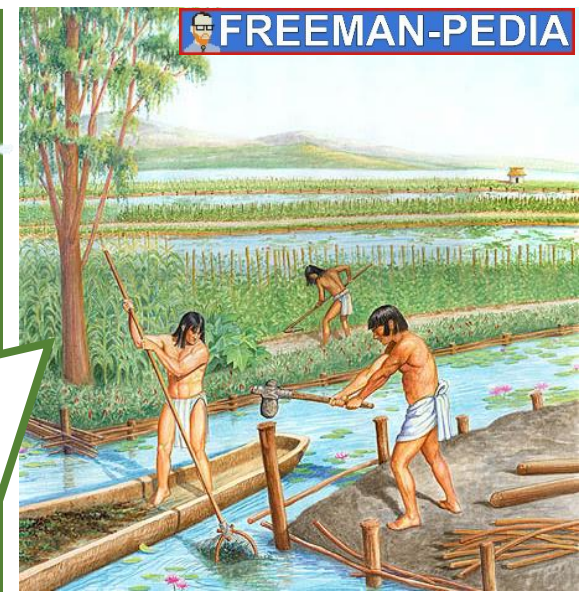
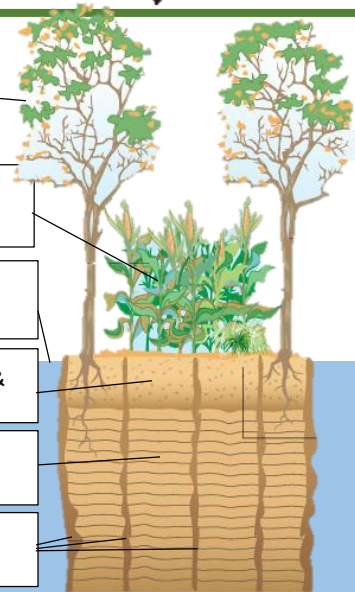
CROPS- MAIZE, BEANS, SQUASH, PEPPERS, TOMATOES,

CHANNELS- DUG BETWEEN CHINAMPAS FOR IRRIGATION

SEED BED- MUD, MANURE, & NIGHTSOIL LAYER FOR SEEDS

SOIL LAYERS- DIFFERENT SOILS FOR OPTIMAL GROWTH

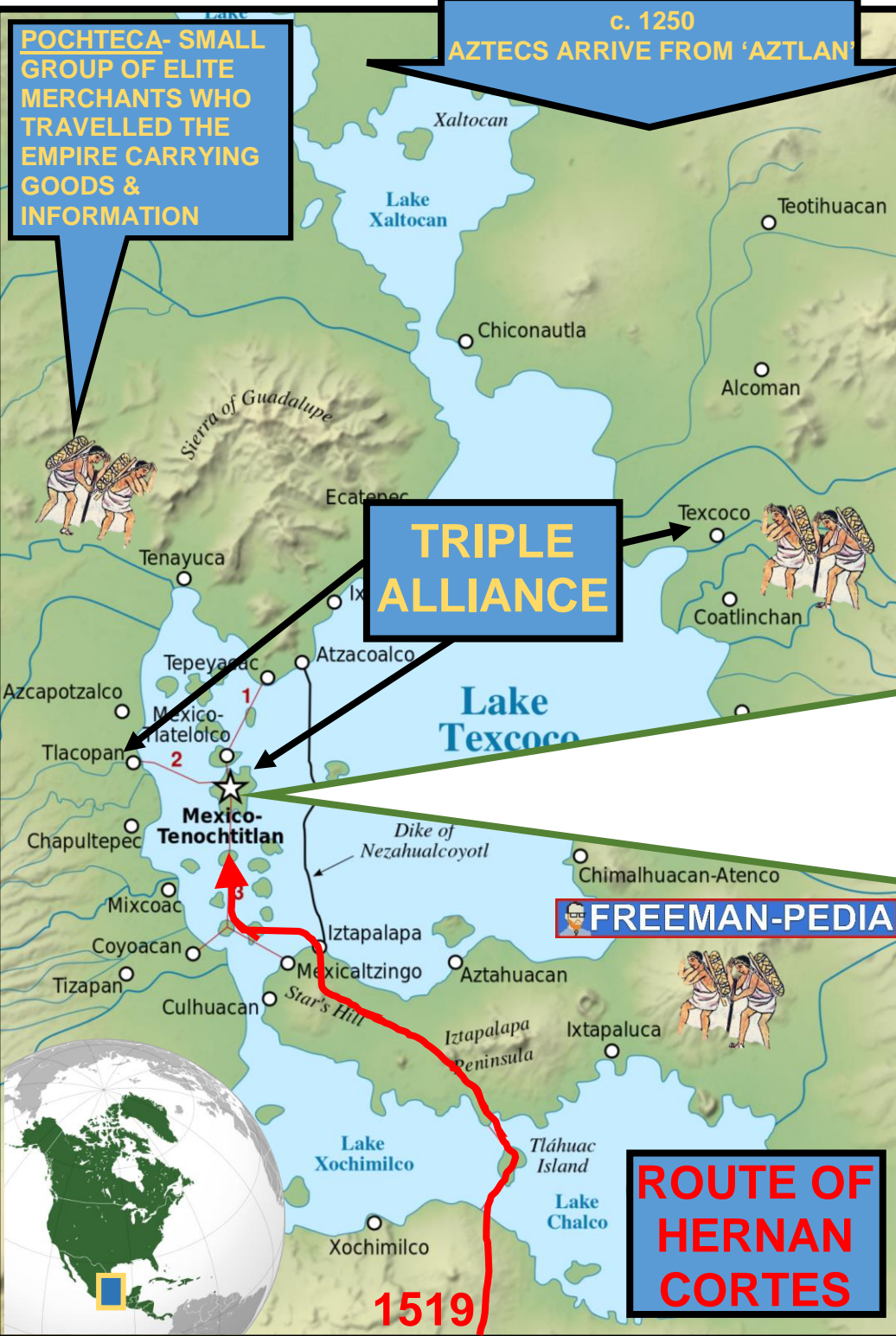
POSTS- HAMMERED ALONG EDGES TO PROVIDE STABILITY



FREEMAN-PEDIA

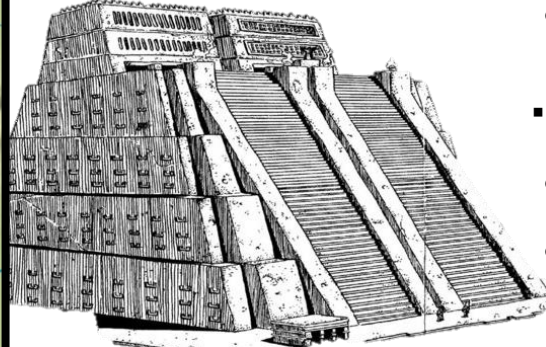
POCHTECA- SMALL GROUP OF ELITE MERCHANTS WHO TRAVELLED THE EMPIRE CARRYING GOODS & INFORMATION

c. 1250 AZTECS ARRIVE FROM 'AZTLAN'



AZTEC GOVERNMENT

- INDIRECT GOVERNMENT
 - DID NOT CLAIM ULTIMATE SUPREMACY OVER TRIBUTARY STATES
 - BUT, DID REQUIRE TRIBUTE
- NOT TRULY AN EMPIRE
 - COLLECTION OF CITY-STATES RULED BY KING
 - EACH OWING TRIBUTE TO TENOCHTITLAN
 - ONCE CONQUERED, THE LOCAL KING WAS RETURNED TO POWER
 - EMPEROR WAS "GREAT SPEAKER"
 - HAD COUNCIL OF 4 ADVISORS (GENERALS)
 - ANY MEMBER COULD VETO THE ACT OF THE OTHER THREE
 - EARLY CHECKS/BALANCE



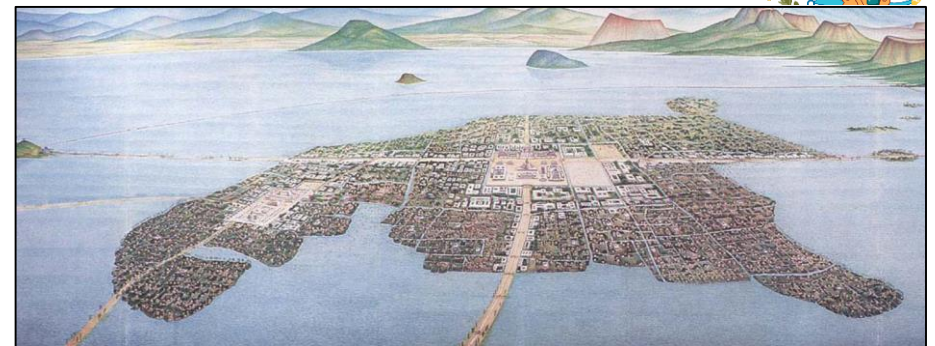
TEMPLO MAYOR, TENOCHTITLAN

TENOCHTITLAN

"It was like the enchantments (...) on account of the great towers and cues and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream? (...) I do not know how to describe it, seeing things as we did that had never been heard of or seen before, not even dreamed about."

-Bernal Dias del Castillo, Conquistador accompanying Cortes

- FOUNDED IN 1325
 - FULFILLED MEXICA PROPHECY:
 - GREAT CITY SHOULD BE BUILT UPON THE SPOT WHERE AN EAGLE IS EATING A SNAKE ON A CACTUS
 - AZTECS SAW THIS ON THE ISLAND
 - SURROUNDED BY CHINAMPAS
 - POP=200,000 IN 1519
 - 5X LARGER THAN LONDON, MADRID
 - ONLY RIVALED BY VENICE & CONSTANTINOPLE IN EUROPE
 - MARKETS SERVED 40K PEOPLE DAILY
- (AS SEEN ON THE MEXICAN FLAG TODAY) →



AZTEC RELIGION


FREEMAN-PEDIA

100s OF GODS MADE UP THE AZTEC PANTHEON

- CONTROLLED BY GREAT SPEAKER & PRIESTS AROUND TENOCHTITLAN
- BASED AROUND FESTIVALS
 - 18 FESTIVALS
 - EACH 20 DAY MONTH
- DOMINATED BY SACRIFICE
 - NOT JUST HUMAN →
 - CROPS, BLOOD, ETC.
- PRIESTS' JOB WAS TO SEE THAT THE GODS RECEIVED THE OFFERINGS

HUMAN SACRIFICE*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DONE BY MAYA, ZAPOTEC EARLIER ORIGINAL GODS SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR AZTEC LIFE ONGOING SACRIFICES SUSTAIN THE UNIVERSE <u>NEW FIRE CEREMONY</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EVERY 52 YEARS ALL FIRES EXTINGUISHED NEW FIRE LIT FROM VICTIM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRIFICE RITUAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TOP OF THE TEMPLE SLICED THROUGH THE ABDOMEN BEATING HEART REMOVED → UP TO 250k per year 1 EVERY 2 Minutes LITTLE EVIDENCE OF ACTUAL #'s
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| MICTLANTECUHTLI
GOD OF DEATH; MOST PROMINENT GOD OF THE UNDERWORLD | XIPE TOTEC*
GOD OF AGRICULTURE | QUETZALCOATL
GOD OF WIND, VENUS, & KNOWLEDGE; PATRON GOD OF PRIESTHOOD | TEZCATLIPOCA*
GOD OF NIGHT, HURRICANES JAGUARS; THE MOST POWERFUL GOD | HUITZILOPOCHTLI*
GOD OF WAR, SUN, & HUMAN SACRIFICE; PATRON GOD OF THE AZTEC/MEXICA PEOPLE | XOCHIQUETZAL
GODDESS OF FERTILITY, BEAUTY & CHILDBIRTH | TLALOC*
GOD OF RAIN, STORMS, & WATER |
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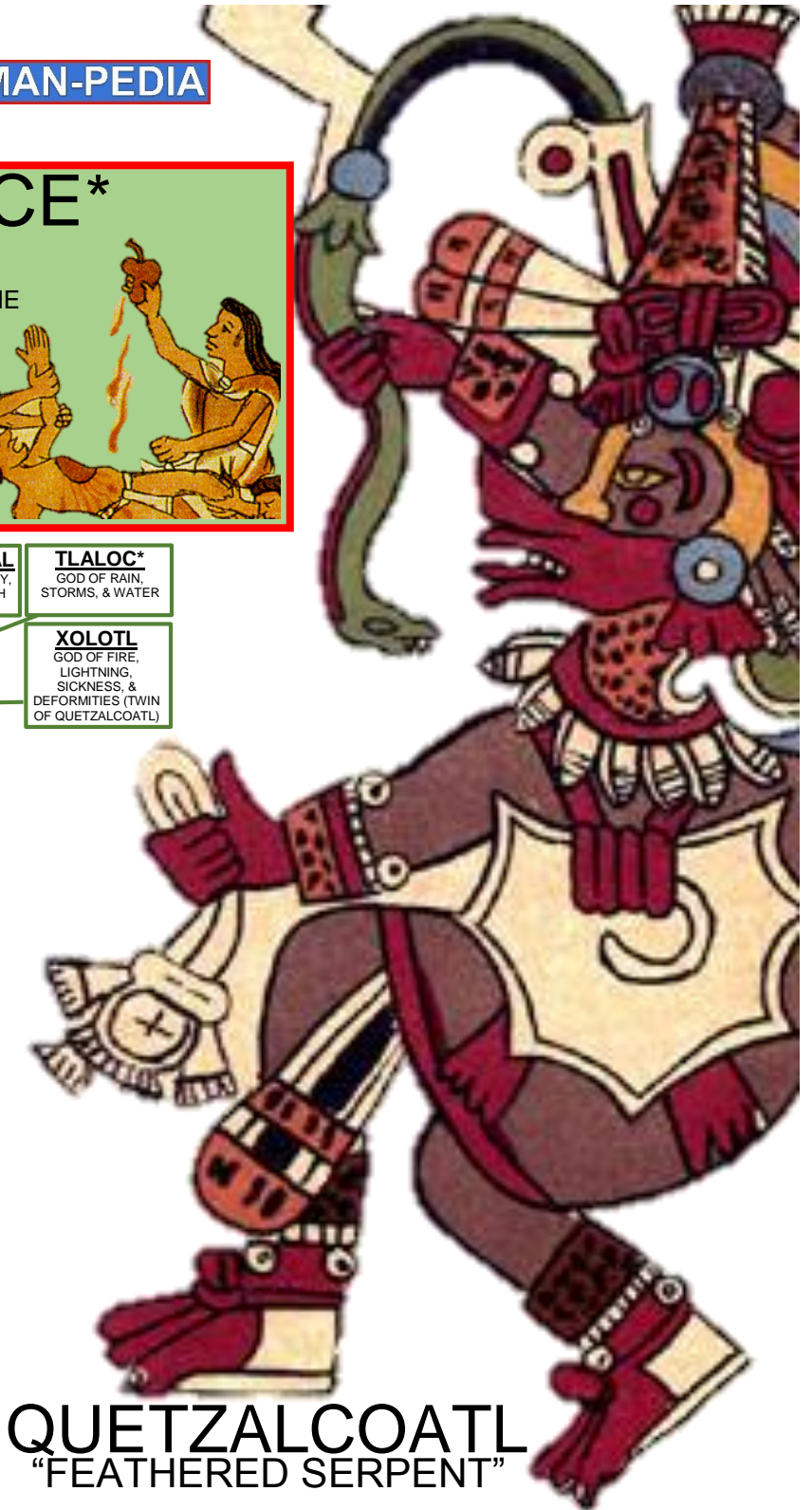
THE AZTEC PANTHEON ACTUALLY MADE SEVERAL APPEARANCES IN MARVEL COMICS

ŌLLAMALIZTLI

- ### MESOAMERICAN BALL GAME
- PLAYED SINCE 1400 BCE!
 - MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS FROM DIFFERENT AREAS
 - ORIGINALLY, GOAL WAS TO KEEP THE BALL IN PLAY (LIKE RACQUETBALL)
 - HOOP ADDED LATER →
 - USED TO SETTLE DISPUTES WITHOUT GOING TO WAR
 - EARLY ON, SACRIFICE WAS COMMON



- AZTEC VERSION OF THE GAME:
 - SYMBOLIZED THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE SUN & MOON
 - PLAYED FOR FUN BY NOBILITY
 - TOP PLAYERS PLAYED PROFESS.
 - AZTECS DIDN'T HAVE RUBBER
 - RECEIVED IT AS TRIBUTE FROM LOWLAND CITYSTATES



QUETZALCOATL
"FEATHERED SERPENT"