

MZC1

# MAZTICA

Sample file



The Maztica Campaign Guide

*Jason*

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# HISTORY

The True World is a continent of unknown cultures and strange magics that is teeming with opportunities for adventure. Once exploited by the Golden Legion of the Amnian general Cordell, recent trials and tribulations have allowed its people a return to normalcy.

## INTRODUCTION

This netbook is designed to attract new players to the Mesoamerican based setting known as Maztica. Maztica is a continent of the greater world of Toril from the Forgotten Realms. It was originally introduced in 1990 with the novels **Ironhelm** (1990), **Viperhand** (1990) and **Feathered Dragon** (1991); each written by Doug Niles. It was subsequently followed up by a number of 2nd Edition gaming products, starting with the **Maztica Boxed Set** in 1991 (also by Doug Niles) and followed by two adventures (**FMA1 Fires of Zatal** by Jeff Grubb and Tim Beach, **FMA2 Endless Armies** by Jeff Grubb) and one accessory/adventure called **FMQ1 City of Gold** by John Nephew and Jonathan Tweet.

In later editions of Dungeons and Dragons, with a few minor exceptions, Maztica was summarily ignored or outright removed from the Forgotten Realms setting. With the advent of 5e and the Dungeon Master's Guild, Maztica is back once again in the Realms!

## HISTORY OVERVIEW

Maztica has had a vibrant and eventful history that has left it disconnected to the continent of Faerûn for the majority of its existence and its varied peoples have only made contact with the wider world in the past century and a half. During that time, Maztica spent an entire century exiled to the twin world of Abeir. So despite foreign influence, most of the continent's primary cultures have managed to remain nearly untouched.

While Cordell and his legionnaires might have conquered many of its nations and greatest warriors, during the exile, much of its culture returned to what it once had been. After now having returned for half a decade, those who seek to plunder its riches once again might find the continent quite a bit more prepared.

This chapter first gives a narrative of Maztica's history, beginning before recorded time, and then gives an actual timeline with the date of a number of major events.

## HISTORICAL ERAS

The history of the True World can be divided into different ages. Three of these ages, known as the *Immortal Era*, the *Golden Age of Payit*, and the *Dawn of Nexal* represent the vast majority of Maztica's history. Recent major changes have occurred with such frequency, however, that it is difficult for Maztican historians to give this period a single fitting title.

Although it might not accurately represent the plethora of changes, the time after the Night of Wailing will from this point forward be referred to as *The Return*. Qotal, the primary influence for good and the source of the fabled pluma magic, did in fact return at this time from a self-imposed exile.

Since the land itself has recently returned from exile, the name has stuck for those who require such classifications. Note that in this section, there are major spoilers for the Maztica Trilogy and it should not be perused if there is still an intention to read the novels.

## THE IMMORTAL ERA

Long before mankind's dominance in the True World, avatars of the gods came to Toril in a flying pyramid of unimaginable size known as the Great Skyhome. Having embarked from another world far from Toril, some of these deities took new names upon themselves in an attempt to start fresh on this beautiful blue-green world. When they came to Toril, many of the deities scattered and fled to other lands, while a core group remained.

The journey itself was not easy on the gods, and one even perished for unknown reasons upon the ships' landing. This goddess, known as Cōātlicue, is said to be resting uneasily in her underground tomb.

It is also said that the gods were not the only ones who came to Toril in the Great Skyhome. The demoness Itzapaplotl, who was also known as the Obsidian Butterfly, stowed away on the gargantuan ship. She fled from the gods soon after their arrival and she has plagued the True World ever since.

The eleven deities who remained were a close family of powers and they would come to dominate the lands which would one day be known as Maztica. The patron and matron of this pantheon were known respectively as Kukul, the ancient Father of the Gods, and Maztica, the Mother of Life.

Kukul and Maztica were accompanied by the greatest of their children, Qotal. This noble deity was alternatively called the Feathered Dragon, the Plumed Father or the Plumed One for his manifestations as a great golden dragon with colorful plumage. Close behind Qotal followed his cruel brother Zaltec, whose name was often accompanied by the titles Bringer of War and the Eater of Hearts. Zaltec had a much more human-like appearance than Qotal, but his anger and hatred were always readily apparent in his ever-snarling mouth of jaguar-like teeth.

The three remaining males shared much of Zaltec's anger and vile appetites. Azul was the Giver of Rain and Taker of Breath and although his penchant for cruelty was great, his domain was essential to the survival of the True World and its inhabitants.

Tezca was the Ruler of the Sun and Fire, though his father was also often attributed dominion over the sun. Much as his brother brought life with his rains, Tezca, despite his cruel nature, brought life-giving warmth to the world.

Plutoq was not quite as bloodthirsty as his three brothers, nor was he as kind and compassionate as the eldest, but certainly the Master of Earth and Stone was just as influential and powerful.

As a general rule, the four sisters were not as demanding as their more ambitious brothers but their influence was no less important to the True World. Kiltzi was the sister known as the Giver of Health, Growth, Nourishment and Love. She was a compassionate goddess who cared mostly for love, happiness and the contentment of her people.



Eha was the Wind Sprite; a goddess whose powers were said to bring the breath to a newborn child.

Finally there was Watil and Nula; the Guardian of Plants and Animals respectively. These sisters were responsible for the well-being of the more natural aspects of the True World.

In the earliest of their days on Toril, the gods sought to find new playthings. They attempted to create man to both honor and fear them, though they were less than satisfied with their earliest attempts.

The first man was made of mud, but their amorphous forms were washed away and soon forgotten. Next, men of wood were created, and although they were not susceptible to the waters of great Azul, Tezca's fire proved their downfall. The third attempt was to create a man of gold. While remarkably beautiful and immune to both the rains and fires, this man had no tonalli (soul) of his own, and the gods were truly disappointed. Some say that there are ancient survivors still from each of these failed attempts, living somewhere in the most forsaken and hidden regions of the True World. Forgotten and unloved by their creators, these outcasts hold no love for the ones who brought them life.

Kukul, as the Father of the Gods, knew far more than his sons and daughters of the act of creation. In his wisdom, Kukul severed the fingers of his hand. As they landed, each finger found a life and breath of their own. These beings; mankind in its infancy, grew to love, honor and fear the gods and the powers rejoiced.

The gods enjoyed their new playthings greatly, and each bestowed wonderful gifts upon their toys. Tezca and Azul gave fire and water to help mankind survive the ravages of their uncaring environment. Plutoq and his sisters Nula, Watil and Eha worked to bring sustenance to mankind, though the life they offered was seldom simple. Desire was also given in many different forms. Desire to love from Kiltzi, to learn from Qotal and even the desire to war was given by Zaltec. All of these gifts caused mankind to expand and exalt in the worship of their creators.

Of all of the gods, Maztica herself was raised above all others in her role as the great Mother of Life. The eldest of her children grew jealous of his mother's position. Qotal decided to bring himself to the forefront of human love, so he gave them mayz. This grain was greater than all other gifts because it allowed mankind to settle and focus more of their time on worship and for honoring the gods. Their numbers continued to expand and mankind became civilized.

Much like the eldest before him, Zaltec also grew jealous. The Eater of Hearts harnessed the magic of claws, fangs, talons and venom and gave it to his priests in the form of magic known as hishna. This newfound power led to great strife among the humans and warring soon increased tenfold, all in the name of Zaltec. For a brief time, the darkest of the brothers was ascendant and in their endless war, mankind despaired.

Maztica and her son Qotal were infuriated with their cruel brother. This was not how the gods intended to be worshiped! Though Qotal could do nothing to counter his dark brother's will, Maztica, in her role as the Mother of Life, created the magic of life and feathers known as pluma. She bestowed this magic upon her son, who then passed it along to his own priests and worshipers. Balance was once again found among the gods' playthings.

The weapon of choice among the gods; passed along to man long ago, was the obsidian edged mācuahuitl (sometimes called abbreviated as a "maca"). Zaltec's mācuahuitl was mighty indeed, and in his anger over his family's perceived betrayal, he beheaded his mother with a single blow from this gargantuan weapon.

Kukul, who had up until this point remained distant from the brewing conflicts within his family, despaired at the death of his wife and the strife among his sons. It is not known if he simply fled the world in disgust or took his own life, but what is certain is that neither man nor god has felt his presence since.

Itzapaplotl may have been the only one to understand that some remnant of Kukul remained in Toril's great sun. She and her star demon servitors could not plague the world with their atrocities when the sun, who to them was known as the Eye of Kukul, could gaze upon the world. Only when the Eye was eclipsed could she visit her depredations on the lands of mankind.

After Maztica's murder and Kukul's disappearance, war erupted among Kukul's children. The female goddesses flocked to their brother Qotal and the males stood alongside their brother Zaltec.

The war was to commence at the site of a great pyramid created by mortal worshipers under the direction of their deities. Hidden somewhere in the blistering sands of the House of Tezca, this pyramid was known to be the greatest of any with the exception of the Great Skyhome itself. The people were blessed with food and water and toiled for decades. They built the grand pyramid and a city surrounding it which they named Tewahca, the City of the Gods. Upon the steps of the great pyramid, the gods called for sacrifice.

Zaltec called to his warriors and ten-thousand gave up their lives and cut out their hearts upon Tewahca's grand steps. Qotal too, required sacrifice, but the Plumed One need only release thirteen beautiful butterflies from a gilded cage upon its steps. Even in war, Qotal would not demand the hearts of his faithful. Upon their release, the presence of the freed butterflies wiped the blood clean from the steps and flowers bloomed throughout the world wherever they passed. It is not known what became of the butterflies, though it is thought that they still carry the essence of the divine in their beautiful forms.

The gods fought long and hard that day and the effects of the battle were felt all across the True World. The land shook as mountains crumbled and weather that was formerly unknown in the True World appeared and just as quickly dissipated. Eventually, it would be Qotal and his sisters who would emerge victorious. Zaltec, weakened and humiliated, shrunk into the shadows.

Watil, in her lordship over the flora of the True World knew her charges could not flourish without Plutoq's blessing so she pleaded for mercy on his behalf. Eha the Wind Sprite sought to spare her elemental brother Azul whom had depended so long on her winds to deliver his life-bringing rains. Likewise, the goddess Nula pleaded for Tezca even though his fire often frightened the animals under her own dominion.

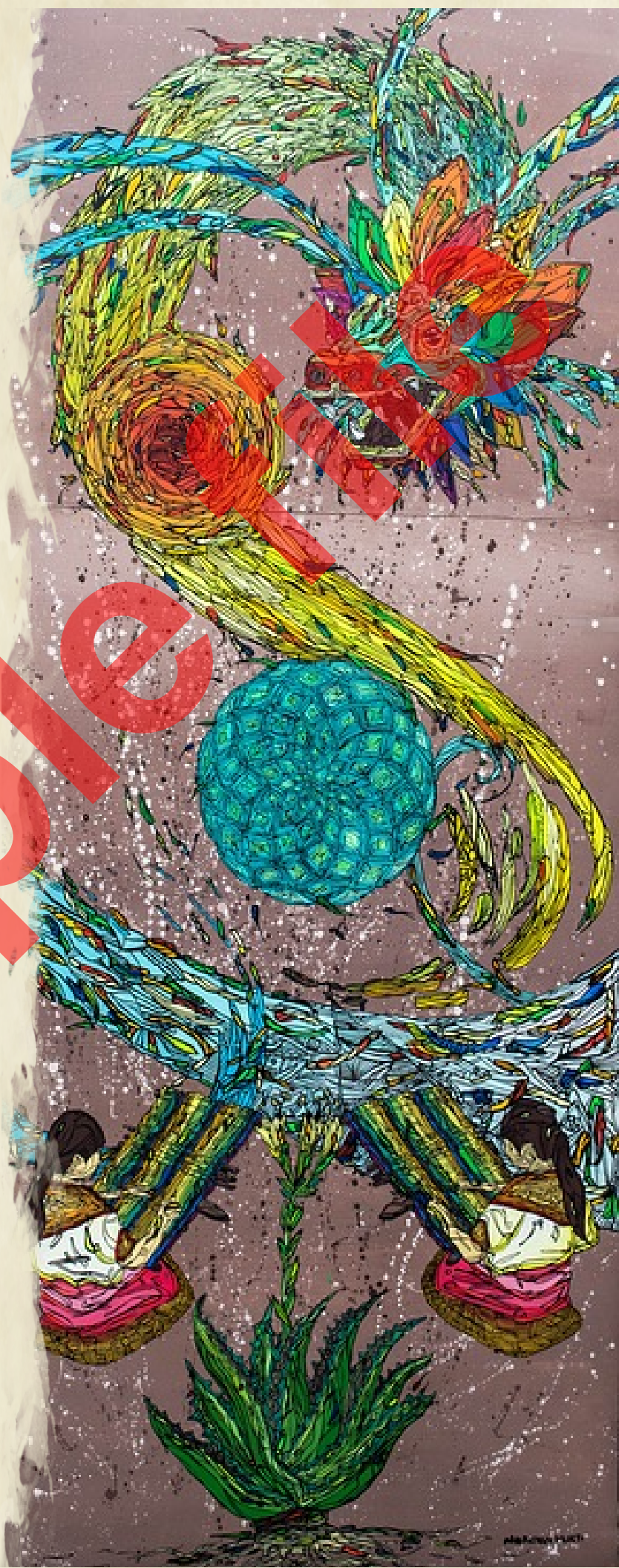
Kiltzi, whose boundless love extended even to her dark brother Zaltec, knew that to remove Zaltec from the world would upset the balance that they had all fought so hard to create and she requested he be spared as well.

Not since the days when mankind had first been given the gift of mayz had they found such peace than in the years following the Godswar. There was still conflict, but man exalted their gods and held the ideals of Qotal as the greatest of all. Qotal observed how they loved and laughed and once again, he grew jealous.

Jealousy is a powerful emotion, and in Toril where the gods of Maztica are not the only powers that be, such strong emotion is liable to attract the attention of others. Shar, the Lady of Loss and Mistress of the Night turned her eye towards this distant land and sought to sow discord as she so often does.

Posing as a beautiful mortal known only as Diamond Eyes, Shar fooled Qotal into temporarily giving up part of his divinity though he ironically reacquired it with the help of his brother Zaltec. Qotal's jealousy had grown in this time and Shar encouraged this dark emotion in the Feathered Dragon. When he noticed that his sister Kiltzi resembled the human woman he once loved, he soon after he took her against her will.

Qotal slumbered long after his terrible deed and during his sleep Kiltzi fled to her disgraced brother Zaltec. The most heretical of rumors claim that Kiltzi was pregnant with Qotal's child, but what became of it is utterly unknown.



The people of Maztica suffered terribly during Qotal's absence. After hearing of their eldest brother's betrayal, Nula, Watil and Eha fled to Zaltec and with the absence of so many gods, the world could no longer flourish. As the crops died and famine threatened the land, the people once again turned to Zaltec. At first they tried to appease him with material gifts but Zaltec payed these no mind. Then they tried to bring to him precious foods despite the fact that they were themselves starving, but this only worsened their condition.

The Bringer of War and his equally cruel brothers would accept only one type of sacrifice and that was the hearts of the faithful! Soon afterwards, thousands upon thousands did exactly what their god commanded and gave themselves to the deities. Temporarily sated, the gods once again began performing their sacred duties and though their lives had become all at once more brutal, the people would once again begin to expand under the divine commands of the gods.

Long overdue, Qotal eventually did wake from his slumber, but he awoke to a world that he could barely recognize. The people had gone mad with bloodlust and his brother Zaltec had grown in power far beyond his own. In his weakened state Qotal attempted to punish mankind by taking away their very speech! His attempt, however, was half-hearted and only his remaining priests obeyed his call to silence.

Qotal decided to leave the land for a time and he departed from the shores of Maztica into the Trackless Sea. In response to the faithfulness of his priests, Qotal bestowed on them the Prophecy of the Cloak of One Plume in which he stated:

*The couatl will come to let them know the way,  
My feathered snake of wisdom and might;  
My chosen daughter shall greet me on the shore,  
Know her; she wears the Cloak of One Plume;  
And the Ice of Summer, frozen under heat and fire,  
Will prepare the path to my door.*

When he departed, Qotal's faithful carved two magnificent heads, one male and one female, into the nearby cliff face to mark the point of his departure which would forevermore be known as the Twin Visages.

At around the same time Qotal left the True World, the first people to actually call themselves Mazticans arose in the north. They were a fierce and warlike people who only worshiped the deity Zaltec and their worship of the dark god was nothing short of fanatical. Zaltec began to plot for the Mazticans, his new chosen people.

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF PAYIT

With the departure of Qotal there was at least a temporary end to the strife that had besieged both the unpredictable immortal world and the human world over which they lorded. Mankind once again began to expand. Nearly every great city of men in Maztica was founded during this time (with the notable exception of Nexal).

The nation of Payit, and to a lesser extent Far Payit, led this growth with advances in learning that have not been matched to this day. Many roads and networks for travel were built during this time, bringing trade to new heights that had never been met in the past.

Pochteca, who were great traveling merchants, spread knowledge and normally unobtainable goods into every corner of the True World. In some cases, they spread far beyond the normal boundaries of the better known lands and into the foreign lands of Anchôromé in the north and Lopango in the south.

While knowledge of the heavens, medicine and travel flourished in Payit, other lands greatly expanded their own knowledge. Unlike Payit however, the lands of Kultaka and Huacli developed their military tactics and weapons in ways that had yet been seen. It was during this time that the Kultakans developed the very specialized atlatl. This "sling" could be used to hurl spears to incredible distances. They also perfected the use of the weapon of their gods, the mācuahuitl.

Though their god no longer answered their prayers, the people of Payit continued to revere, at the very least, the tenets that Qotal once held so dear. In other lands, temples to Azul, Tezca and Zaltec continued to war and sacrifice upon their bloodstained altars.

In Payit, plumaweavers created great works of beauty and power made of feathers while the others heightened their strength in the power of hishna and their hishnashapers.

Perhaps the most beautiful princess ever known to Payit came to maturity during this time of plenty. Aliah by name, she had been destined to marry her half-brother Xetl in the capital city of Ulatos.

Prince Tacal of Far Payit's own capital Tulom-Itzi grew jealous and desired Aliah for himself. The noble decided he would abduct her on the evening of her wedding but was caught in the act and his entire retinue was slain to the man. Thinking them co-conspirators, even Tacal's family and other nobles of Far Payit were pushed to their deaths in response to the affront despite the fact that they were innocent guests of Aliah's wedding ceremony.

Seeing the slaughter of his family and people, Tacal flew into a fit of madness and beheaded the woman he had once sought to possess with his obsidian edged maca before being slain himself. It is often whispered that the spirits of the prince and princess are forever bound to the city of Ulatos and will not move on until reparations are made for both, or until both Payit and Far Payit are laid low.

Though it may not have been the direct cause, this terrible tragedy marked the beginning of a time of decline for Payit and Far Payit. They would no longer advance humanity's cause with the rapidity they had shown in the years prior, and most migrated from the great cities back into less civilized villages.

While Payit declined, the warlike folk of the west continued to hone the skills of war and they became increasingly bloodthirsty at the behest of their darker gods.

Around this time, though recorded history doesn't have an exact date, one of the war chiefs of the distant Mazticans was given a vision. This warrior, who was named Tecco, wandered the desert for a year before finding a huge pillar of stone from which his god Zaltec manifested.

Zaltec bid Tecco to return to the Mazticans and lead them south to a new destiny. When he returned to his people with the pillar of stone, they followed him on his journey. Soon after, the Mazticans arrived in the Valley of Nexal knowing only that Zaltec had chosen them.

## THE DAWN OF NEXAL

To the valley of Nexal this wave of immigrants flooded in from the north. Acting uncharacteristically peaceable, the Mazticans took land that no others wanted and proceeded to build homes and a temple to Zaltec. This pyramid would be added to over the years and one day it would become a wonder to the world, but in its first days it was a humble place of worship.

A city known as Tezat was at the time considered the most powerful in the region. With two other great cities in close proximity (known as Azatl and Zokil) to form a balance of power however, Tezat never truly dominated the others. It was with this city that the Mazticans formed an alliance.

Under the influence of the bloodthirsty Mazticans, war and sacrifice grew to new heights. Tezat's newfound allies helped upset the balance in the valley and the city grew to prominence.

Unexpectedly, the Mazticans betrayed their allies in a battle against the combined forces of Azatl and Zokil and the Mazticans took the city for themselves.

Now it was the Mazticans' turn to dominate the region, and as the chosen people of Zaltec, they did so with ruthless efficiency. During their dominance, the Mazticans and their subjugated cities began to refer to themselves as the Nexala after the name of their valley. The war chiefs of the Mazticans also changed their title to the Revered Counselors of Nexal, and an empire was born.

The first Revered Counselor of Nexal was named Ipana and his reign began two-hundred forty years before the arrival of the Golden Legion. During Ipana's reign, Azatl and Zokil were fully subjugated and each city's temple to Zaltec was raised above all other gods.

Oddly, only Tezat managed to maintain any sense of independence from the empire during Ipana's reign and this continued all through the second Revered Counselor Tenoch's reign as well. Throughout his entire tenure, this grandson of Ipana attempted to finalize Tezat's absorption but was never successful. It wasn't until Ipana II's reign, through the use of poison and treachery, that Tezat became a full part of the empire.

It was Ipana III, the fourth Revered Counselor of Nexal, who began to lead the expansion of the empire. At first, Ipana III held "Feathered Wars" among his own subjects where the only goal was to capture opposing warriors for later sacrifice to the hunger of the gods.

Ipana III led his own army in one particularly large Feathered War and many of his warriors were captured. Because of this humiliating defeat, he decided to end the Feathered Wars and find his sacrifices elsewhere. Ipana III decided to take war beyond his borders.

Ipana III immediately defeated two city-states to the east known as Cordotl and Palul.

He then attempted to attack the fearsome Kultakans but was soundly defeated and decided to turn his wars westward. To the west, he took a city state of the nation of Huacli known as Ixtal and captured over 5,000 warriors for sacrifice.

Another Huacli city-state known as Pulco actually joined the invaders and helped Ipana III defeat three more in a ten year campaign. A city-state known as Otomi managed to hold off the Nexalans until the aggressors eventually had to give up.

Tolco, a great warrior and the grand-nephew of Ipana III was to succeed Ipana III after his death of extreme old age. While he was personally a superb warrior, Tolco failed to subjugate both the people of Kultaka and of Pezelac. Tolco was slain in his last campaign against the Kultakans just as he thought there might finally be a chance at victory.

Tenoch II, a great-grandson of Ipana III, was crowned the sixth Revered Counselor after Tolco's death. Tenoch II did not lead any truly grand wars during his twenty-one years as Revered Counselor but the empire strengthened its grasp on the nations it had already conquered and many roads and way stations were built to ease trade and travel.

Pezelac did attempt to revolt at one point during Tenoch II's reign but the Nexalans reacted with such a brutal and swift retaliation that all thoughts of rebellion quickly faded. Tenoch II's son Chimal led the war effort and brought back thousands of slaves and sacrifices. In celebration, Zaltec's temple was once again rebuilt to an even greater height.

Chimal took the title Revered Counselor after his father's death and led only small skirmishes against the Kultakans to capture more sacrifices for the hungry gods. He was also known to expand trade even further than any of the Revered Counselors before him.

Chimal even opened trade with the distant nations of Payit, Far Payit and Otomi.

The successful leadership and life of Chimal was replaced with that of his weakling son Totep. Totep partook of concubines and the fermented drink known as octal rather than spend time governing the empire as the Revered Counselors before him. The reign of this eighth Revered Counselor only lasted a paltry six years before he was poisoned by his own war commanders.

Zomoc was next to rise to the title of Revered Counselor. His reign saw military victories previously unmatched. Across dry lands and far to the southwest, Zomoc led a twenty year military campaign against the people of Kolan. The Kolan campaign was led by Zomoc's own chief general Coyo. The Kolan fought long and hard, but Coyo eventually brought back a vast line of prisoners back from across the desert.

Coyo was hailed as a great war-leader and his popularity surpassed that of even the Revered Counselor. Zomoc feared for his position so he fooled Coyo into offering his own heart in sacrifice to Zaltec.



Zomoc eventually went insane after Coyo's death and spent his remaining years in debilitating paranoia. Some believe it was Coyo's tonalli returned from the very maw of Zaltec to make Zomoc pay for his treachery.

After Zomoc's tortured death exactly one hundred years before the Golden Legion's arrival, Izco ascended as the tenth Revered Counselor of Nexal. Izco and his son Izco II's reign were relatively peaceful times in Nexal, though tribute was still taken in the form of sacrifice, slaves and wealth.

The arts also flourished during this time and Zaltec's pyramid was raised yet again. When a paltry thousand hearts were given to Zaltec in celebration of the passing of leadership to Izco II, however, Zaltec grew angry and caused Mount Zatal to erupt.

The Feathered Wars were reinstated and this time ten-thousand hearts were offered to appease the Eater of Hearts.

Pakli was selected to replace Izco II upon his death. Pakli immediately enacted war once again throughout the True World. Unwisely, he spread his forces way too thin by simultaneously attacking both the Kultakans and the Otomi (while trying to maintain control in Pezelac) and his fourteen years drained Nexal's once vast wealth.

Having suffered from frequent defeat, the Nexala elected another war leader named Chalco as the thirteenth Revered Counselor. This great war leader seemed to be the first who was truly up to the task of defeating the Kultakans.

In the first days of battle, thousands were captured and Chalco seemed poised to take the Kultakan capital. The defenders, however, had a hero of their own.

A warrior named Takamal rallied his people and though they suffered thousands of losses, the Kultakans still managed to hold their lands.

The Otomis did not fare as well against the Nexalans, but they fled into the mountains rather than be subjugated.

Chalco also sent numerous expeditions into distant lands to find evidence of the cultural roots of the Nexalans. The Pyramid of the Gods known as Tehwaca was sought out, as was the cave where Tecco first found the pillar of stone in which Zaltec manifested.

Even the legendary Great Skyhome was sought by some of the more adventurous Nexalans. These explorers were said to have worked alongside some of the dreaded sea devils known as sahuagin in an attempt to find the Ship of the Gods.

Very few of the explorers returned and those that did had little to report. One group of a thousand strong literally disappeared altogether while searching for Tecco's cave.

Chalco had his successes and failures. However, there is no disputing the fact that when he died and the title of Revered Counselor was passed onto his grandson Axalt, the empire was truly at its peak.

Axalt fought relentlessly against the Kultakans but Takamal was always able to outmaneuver the fourteenth Revered Counselor. During Axalt's reign a great aqueduct was built from Cicada Spring on Mount Popol all the way to the center of the city. The Aqueduct of Axalt may very well have been the greatest accomplishment of his reign.





The fifteenth and final Revered Counselor of Nexal was Axalt's son Naltecona. Naltecona was a wise and brave military leader, but a new threat was soon to find its way to the True World and Naltecona's reign was only to last a paltry twelve years.

## THE RETURN

Ten years before the coming of the Golden Legion, annual omens set into motion the inevitable demise of the Nexalan Empire. Naltecona built a grand palace for himself and the empire seemed to be at relative peace, but then the omens began.

First, a great light appeared in the skies above Nexal for twenty days. At the very moment Naltecona witnessed the lights, the temple of Zaltec suddenly burst into flames and a great statue of Zaltec melted to a lump of molten rock. Tecco's stone pillar remained safe deep in the pyramid itself, but this event gave "proof" to the priests that the gods were unsatisfied. The omen led Naltecona to order thousands more sacrifices and many captive Kultakans died upon Zaltec's altars that year.

The second omen came the following year. The sky turned a blood red color and it happened on the exact same day at the exact same time as the previous year's omen.

On the third year, again at the same time and day, Mount Zatal began to belch steam and ash. This omen lasted for a full twelve days.

The fourth omen was reported by a hunter who claimed to see a deer with a plumed ring about its neck. The hunter said that the deer spoke to him and he emptied his mīcomitl quiver trying to slay it. The deer simply ignored each arrow according to the hunter, but Naltecona thought the man mad and put him to death.

On the fifth year, Naltecona himself dreamed of a great canoe arriving from the east and it was at this moment that he began to suspect the omens were signs of the Return of Qotal.

The annual omens continued. On the sixth year, a great sandstorm rose from the House of Tezca and took the form of a great pyramid. Capitulating to Zaltec's priests who sought ever more sacrifices to appease the gods, Naltecona sent his nephew Poshtli to attack the Kultakans and the young Eagle Knight saw much success.

On the seventh year, the top of Mount Zatal turned a deep crimson as if covered in blood. Naltecona's child was born dead on the day of the eighth omen and the child's skin color was a pale white not seen in the True World.

The ninth omen saw three of the four lakes near Mount Zatal erupt with steam. Only Lake Qotal remained calm.

The final omen was the grandest of all. A wyvern-like creature landed atop the pyramid of Zaltec, and on its chest was a smoky black mirror. In this mirror, Naltecona saw the coming of Cordell's Golden Legion exactly one year before their actual landfall. The creature flew off, never to be seen again.

Cordell was a great military commander who was aided by his lover, an elf mage (later discovered to be a drow) named Darien. Cordell had defeated the great pirate army led by Akbet-Khrul for the Faerûnian nation of Amn and then set off on an expedition to the True World with five-hundred men he now named his "Golden Legion."

When they landed in Ulatos on the shores of Payit, Caxal, the Revered Counselor of Payit, did not quite know how to react. The daughter of the highest ranking cleric of Helm was captured and cruelly sacrificed soon after landing. This event precipitated a war, urged on by the young girl's father Bishou Domincus, and the Payit lost to Cordell's five-hundred men rather easily. After his victory, Cordell established the fort of Helmsport nearby.

After tasting the riches of the Payit and hearing rumors of the fabulously rich Nexal to the west, Cordell set his sight on continuing Maztica's conquest. With the help of Darien, who killed Takamal with her magic, the Golden Legion defeated the mighty Kultakans and subjugated their warriors in addition to the five-thousand or so Payit.

Though Naltecona originally considered a peaceful welcome for the invaders, his advisors convinced him that war was the only route acceptable to the gods. Through treachery, the Nexala attempted to end the war early, but the duplicity was discovered and any hopes of defeating the Golden Legion were dashed.

Cordell and his army entered Nexal and took all the treasure they could find, but Naltecona was allowed to live. A period of shaky peace was found but an attempt on Cordell's life and the urgings of a high priest of Zaltec named Hoxitl increased tensions, leaving the standoff on the brink of violence.

Hoxitl led a growing cult of fanatics known as the Cult of the Viperhand and their resentment of the foreign invaders grew with each passing day. The cultists eventually did attack, and Naltecona was one of the first casualties. The savagery of the cultists was on a level that the Golden Legion and their allies had not yet seen and many were slain or sacrificed on the altars of Zaltec.

Helm's cleric Bishou Domincus, like his daughter before him, was also sacrificed and upon his death the Night of Wailing had begun. In the chaos that followed, Bishou Domincus' bloody corpse was seen disappearing into a mist that came at once from nowhere and everywhere. Mount Zatal erupted and the strange magics that were unleashed transformed the cult of the Viperhand into beasts formerly unknown in the True World. For the first time, orcs, ogres, trolls, and a dreaded creature known as the jagre walked upon Maztica.

Cordell's one-time lover Darien eventually had her true nature revealed. Darien, with the assistance of the Ancient Ones (similarly disguised or hidden drow), was a driving force behind the strife that had fallen upon the Mazticans and the Golden Legion.

On the Night of Wailing, the drow became driders, and they too plagued the remaining humans. Those who managed to escape fled into the sands of the House of Tezca.

When all hope had appeared to be lost, a far gentler god made his presence known. Qotal had finally and truly returned! His power froze a lake to allow far more humans to escape than otherwise might have.

The Cloak of One Plume appeared in the hands of a woman from Palul known as Erixitl as well. This woman had seen the couatl, as the prophecy stated, and together all of the conditions had been met for Qotal's return. Aided by Qotal's intervention, the Mazticans and foreigners fled deep into the House of Tezca.

During the march of these one-hundred thousand refugees from Nexal with what was left of the Golden Legion, a number of events occurred that would forever shape the future of the True World. Many of these events occurred simultaneously and included inhabitants of the continent that did not yet know of what had occurred in Nexal.

The desert was home to a race of desert dwarves that had arrived in the House of Tezca centuries prior. These dwarves had been at war with the drow who would one day plague the True World. In an event known as the Rockfire, they were separated from their enemies and headed further through the Maztican Underdark from which they eventually emerged into the desolate sands of the deserts of Maztica. The dwarves had not had an easy existence in the desert, but they did know a relative peace. With the arrival of the beasts of the Viperhand, there was now a distinct possibility that the peace would be shattered.

The dwarves knew the location of the fabled city of Tewahca and one of their chieftains, a warrior named Luskag, discovered that the obsidian mined near the city had the strength of steel. This fact would be important in the days to come, but in the True World's farther future, the founding of this plumastone would prove world changing.



Now, with a material that could match the swords of the invading Amnians, the Mazticans would no longer be at such a blatant disadvantage.

Other outcroppings of plumastone were soon to be found in the rest of the True World once the signs of its presence became fully understood. Luskag called to the other chieftains of the desert dwarves and brought them to the Sunstone. This magical lake of silver was found in the caldera of a volcano and could bring visions to those who stared into its waters during the suns rising. The chieftains all shared a similar vision, and they were convinced that they could not sit out of the coming battles.

Poshtli, thought to have perished on the Night of Wailing, also revealed himself to Erixitl and her Amnian husband Halloran. In the form of a great eagle nearly the size of a man, Poshtli became perhaps the most well-known and powerful Eagle Knight ever known. Gultec, an honorable Jaguar Knight, also assisted the refugees in their march across the desert lands.

Poshtli, Erixitl, Halloran, a young scout named Jahtli, and a dwarf legionnaire named Daggrande separated from the rest of the refugees and managed to locate the fabled City of the Gods. Here, they discovered Erixitl's father Lotil, a blind plumaweaver of legendary skill along with Coton, one of the most devout of Qotal's silent priests. Trolls of the Viperhand pursued the heroes to Tewahca while a battle raged between Zaltec and Qotal in the great pyramid of Tewahca.

Qotal was weak and not yet fully formed in this world, so Zaltec prevailed against the Plumed Dragon. In the midst of the battle, the Cloak of One Plume was also thought destroyed, but this later proved to be untrue.

The four companions eventually escaped Tewahca through hidden tunnels and were assisted by the ancient spirit wardens of the once great city. The trolls maintained a dogged pursuit and all was thought lost when they caught up to the heroes. With little hope of escape, Halloran and Daggrande made a last stand to protect his now many month pregnant wife and the rest of the companions. With no time to spare, the desert dwarves (known to Mazticans as the Hairy Men of the Desert) led by Chief Luskag managed to turn the trolls away.

In the meantime, the main army of the beasts of the Viperhand caught up to the refugees from Nexal. A powerful defense against the horde was led by Cordell, a veteran of the Eagle Knights named Chical, and Tokol, the son of the legendary Kultakan leader Takamal. After defeating charges of orcs and after gravely (but not fatally) wounding

the jagre Hoxitl, the fierce defenders managed to turn back the horde of monsters.

Gultec had also broken from the refugees and traveled back to Tulom-Itzi in Far Payit at the call of his master Zochimaloc. When he arrived in Far Payit, he saw vast swaths of destruction in the jungle.

The drow, who had been changed to driders by their cruel goddess Lolth and the magic of the Night of Wailing, led an army of giant ants within the jungle, though Gultec was not yet aware. When he reached his master, Zochimaloc bid him to prepare the defense of Tulom-Itzi but the wise Jaguar Knight knew that the peaceful defenders could not withstand the drider and ant army.

Gultec advised fleeing into the jungle and Zochimaloc conceded. Under Gultec's command, the Itza managed to slow the giant ants enough for their very young and very old to escape, though the loss in life was great. Finally, the Jaguar Knight decided to make a stand at a border ridgeline between Payit and Far Payit known as the Verdant Crest.

Erixitl, Halloran, the desert dwarves and the remainder of their companions began to head east to the sea and once again north towards the jungles towards Ulatos and Helmsport. Separated from the others, Erixitl and Halloran were captured by savage halfings of the jungles who attempted to feed them to their Cat God (a Jaguar Lord).

Halloran used what little magic he had to defeat the creature and this unexpected victory convinced the halfings that he was the big folk of a prophecy who would one day lead them out of the jungle. The growing army of humans, dwarves and halfings continued northward.

Eagle Knights in Cordell's army reported to him that more men from Amn began to arrive in ships back in Ulatos and Helmsport. Having now been away from their families for more than a year, many in the Golden Legion celebrated the news, but Cordell remained only hopefully optimistic.

At the time he did not know that the army was led by Don Vaez and Bishou Domincus' apprentice Pryat Devane who were determined to show that Cordell had in fact gone rogue. Their intentions were opportunistic,

and they sought to prove that Cordell was no longer loyal to the crown of Amn.

When these men landed in Payit, they imprisoned the few remaining warriors of the Golden Legion who had remained in

Helmsport. Don Vaez, while not generally liked by his men stood at the head of twenty five ships and far more men than Cordell.

The betrayal was eventually reported to Cordell by his Eagle Knights, but despite knowing what awaited him Cordell decided to return to Payit. The monsters of the Viperhand were once again on the march. This time, the beasts were headed east towards Payit and were led by none other than the titanic stony form of Zaltec himself!

Gultec's defense against the ants and driders was a truly valiant stand, and over a thousand ants had been slain. When all seemed lost, Zochimaloc sacrificed himself to channel the growing power of Qotal and collapse a mountain upon the marching insects. It is unknown if he has truly died, or in fact ascended to become something "different."

Halloran, Erixitl and their diverse contingent of warriors caught up to Gultec's refugees shortly afterward and together they finished off what was left of the ant army.

Defeated but not dead, Darien and her driders decided to turn to hishna magic. The target of her rage had become the chosen one of Qotal, Erixitl.

All armies and players in this great epic converged upon Helmsport and the Twin Visages where Qotal was prophesized to return to the True World.

Cordell was at first captured and imprisoned by Don Vaez when he reached Helmsport, but he eventually escaped with the help of former associates in Don Vaez's employ. Eventually, the men of Don Vaez's expedition proved to be more loyal to Cordell and more trusting in him to lead against the oncoming monsters.

Halloran and his retinue also arrived, though he was carrying a sick Erixitl who had fallen to a mysterious ailment in the last days of her pregnancy. They did not know the cause, but Erixitl's condition was due to a hishna curse laid by the drider Darien.

As the monsters approached, Halloran sought to bring Erixitl to the Twin Visages thinking it the only place where her mysterious curse could be broken.

Led by the Zaltec monolith, the monsters arrived in Helmsport only days afterward. Cordell, while greatly outnumbered, held strong against the horde while he sent Vaez's ships to return to waiting Kultakan warriors that Cordell had left behind.

At the Twin Visages, Darien and her remaining driders assaulted a recently reawakened Erixitl, Halloran and their allies. All of the driders except Darien were slain by the powerful pluma magic of Lotil, though he too perished. Qotal also had finally returned to the True World as the Plumed Dragon and he and Zaltec commenced their epic battle!

Cordell's Kultakan reinforcements returned via Vaez's ships and Hoxitl's horde was finally turned back to Nexal. Cordell was hailed as a hero by Amnians and Mazticans alike, though the losses that had been suffered were great. The blood of monsters, desert dwarves, Amnians, Kultakans, Payits, and even the halflings all commingled in the fields of Helmsport.

While Qotal and Zaltec's battle raged, the True World was being torn asunder in this new godswar. The titanic battle was causing earthquakes, landslides and other cataclysmic events. Coton, the silent and devoted high priest of Qotal finally had had enough of the gods' treatment of their mortal worshipers and he broke his vow of silence to admonish his own deity!

Both Qotal and Zaltec stopped their battle momentarily to kill the man for his hubris, but before they could kill the blasphemer, Coton sacrificed himself and the still rampaging Darien.



The mixture of hishna and pluma slammed the door shut to the world that the gods had used to enter, and both Qotal and Zaltec were forced to return to their otherworldly domains.

Maztica itself had a few decades of relative silence after the huge shakeup that had occurred following Cordell's arrival. A connection had been established with the continent of Faerûn that would actually only exist for a few decades of time before the Spellplague tore Maztica from the world.

During this time, Faerûnians from realms other than Amn began to visit the True World. Most notably, Waterdeep founded their own colonies and even the folk of Lantan sent colonists and traders. New cities and towns sprung up within this time - locales such as Qoral, New Waterdeep, Trythosford and Fort Flame.

The cruel treatment of the native Mazticans by Helm's clergy and worshipers caused irreparable damage in his faith leading to a decline in the god's power.

When the Spellplague came, the Mazticans were caught completely unaware. The skies changed from the azure of Toril to the metallic skies of Abeir. Earthquakes, similar to the ones which occurred during Zaltec and Qotal's battle decades prior, once again tore the land apart.

Village elders thought the gods were angry with them and many returned to the old ways of sacrifice. Thousands of foreigners were expelled or offered for sacrifice though sacrifice as a whole never quite returned to pre-Cordell levels outside of Nexal.

In Nexal, the jagre Hoxitl still ruled with an iron fist and he sought only to ever please the Bringer of War. New beasts began to appear across Maztica.

Great lizards with terrible fangs and claws savaged the humans and halflings of the jungles. Ancient evils, once forgotten, began to appear on the continent.

Itzapaplotl, the dreaded Obsidian Butterfly, decimated villages and tortured entire populations that had been captured by her dreaded tzitzimitl. She no longer seemed bounded by the rules of the gods that long ago curbed the worst of her depredations.

The worst thing of all was that the gods no longer answered the prayers of their faithful. On this new world and under a new sky, the gods no longer existed and the Mazticans despaired.

Born of the great god Kukul so many thousands of years prior, however, mankind and the other races of the True World did not give up on survival so easily.

The plumaweavers and hishnashapers of Payit and Far Payit developed greater and more powerful magics to survive in their newer, harsher world.

Jaguar and Eagle knights, bolstered in strength by the discovery of plumastone, began to develop weaponry and combat techniques unmatched even by the Kultakans and Nexalans of old. The Faerûnians that remained had been cut off from their homeland and without continuing immigration, they began to naturalize in this once strange land.

A century passed and the True World not only survived, but thrived.

Just as equilibrium took hold, the skies have changed yet again. The few powerless priests who held onto the old ways have heard something in their dreams and meditations.

If these whispers are correct, then the gods have once again returned to the True World.



# MAZTICAN TIMELINE

*I am sworn to silence by my station. I say nothing to the mighty of Nexal. Instead, my tale becomes the Chronicle of the Waning. As my immortal master, the Silent Counselor, so wills, I observe and record, a witness but not a participant to the unfolding of history.*

Coton, Silent Priest of Qotal  
Ironhelm Prologue

Maztica has a history as long and as eventful as Faerûn itself, beginning far back in the Days of Thunder when the gods first came to ground, through numerous cataclysms and all the way to the modern day on Toril.

This portion of the history chapter attempts to catalogue major events both in the mortal and immortal world, and presents them in chronological order for easy reference. All dates are given in Dalreckoning (DR).

## c. -32500 DR: The Immortal Era Begins

Deities from Aztec, Mayan and Incan mythologies send the greatest of their avatars to seek out a new world far from their home on an enormous ship in the form of a pyramid. The ship is given the name "The Great Skyhome."

## c. -32000 DR

The gods arrive on Toril and land in the ocean far west of the main continent of the lush world. Eventually, they occupy lands in the west but upon their arrival, some avatars disappear for other lands, never to be seen or heard from again.

Deep in the bowels of the Great Skyhome, the demoness Itzapaplotl emerges, having stowed away without the knowledge of any of the deities.

The goddess once known as Coatlicue perishes upon arrival. Her massive bloated corpse disappears far underground where it begins to spawn terrible abominations that haunt the underground ways.

## c. -31900 DR

Itzapaplotl makes her presence known only to Zaltec, who she seeks out as a lover. He initially spurns her advances but temporarily relents, until he discovers her desire to steal his divinity.

## c. -31500 DR

After many centuries of a relatively lonely existence on their new home the gods attempt to create "new toys to play with" and labor to create mankind. The gods are not satisfied with their first attempts. Man created from mud, wood and gold are all deemed failures before Kukul severs his own fingers. The fingers wriggle to life to all the gods' satisfaction and begin populating Maztica. Rumors persist to this day that not all of the "failed attempts" have been destroyed.

The First Man to stand is named Camazotz. He is initially favored amongst the gods (particularly Zaltec), but eventually deems himself greater than his creators and is subsequently struck down by Zaltec. He is raised back from the dead into unlife by the Zaltec' Itzapaplotl and the First Man becomes the First Vampire.

## c. -31000 DR

Aeeree empires (avian creator race) dominate Faerûn and many migrate to Maztica. Interactions between the aeeree and the primitive, young race of humans are rare due to their geographical habitats, though when they do occur, they are generally peaceful.

Camazotz makes a second play for power among mankind and learns how to coopt the souls of female humans who die in childbirth. These souls are sacred to all of the deities, though it is the elemental brothers Plutoq, Azul, and Tezca who issue their wrath upon the would-be-deity and his city known as Chacobben. Camazotz is thought slain and the city is buried in a great mudslide, effectively erasing it from history.

Itzapaplotl's duplicity is discovered in her resurrection of Camazotz and she is beset upon by the brothers as well, this time including her former lover Zaltec. She uses much of her power to rip great swaths of land and casts the molten rock into the sky. She escapes the god's wrath by forming her Void Kingdom of Tamoacha upon this floating stone and occupying it forever more. Itzapaplotl kidnaps shepherd spirits of the dead known as zizimime and slowly transforms them into her subject star-demons. An edict is written where Itzapaplotl or her children may not come to ground as long as Kukul's Eye (the sun) is upon the world.

## c. -30000 DR

As the Time of Dragons begins, the aeeree empires collapse. The pattern continues in Maztica due to conflicts with powerful green dragons. Qotal, also known as the Feathered Dragon, reaches out to a tribe of decimated aeeree and changes them into the fierce quetzaldaun, who are then able to overcome the greatest of green dragon threats. The quetzaldaun never reach the heights of power once reached by the aeeree, but they no longer have fear of extinction.

## c. -12000 DR

Due to generous gifts from the gods, mankind begins to flourish and spread out. They advance from their primitive state to become inquisitive, honorable and loving, but the gifts also bring war and cruelty. Agriculture, particularly in the cultivation of mayz, becomes a driving force behind humanity's success. Many towns and great cities are built, most in honor of the firstborn of the goddess Maztica, Qotal. The newfound piety is in part due to mankind's appreciation for his gift of mayz.

The sand elder giants arrive in the house of Tezca from a portal to an unknown desert plane or demiplane under circumstances which they either do not remember or do not care to speak of.

## c. -8500 DR

Zaltec creates the magic of fang, claw and venom known as hishna and introduces it as his own gift to mankind. War and cruelty reach new heights among the toys of the gods. Hishnashapers begin to appear at this time in addition to a breed of warriors known as jaguar knights.

## c. -8100 DR

After hundreds of years of never-ending war, the goddess Maztica gives her favored son Qotal the gift of pluma magic, which he passes on to mankind. Plumaweavers and eagle knights are seen for the first time.