

# LEGEND OF TENOCHTITLÁN BY REBECCA HINSON

(HISTORY/NONFICTION) & (FICTION)

## Questions for *Legend of Tenochtitlán* by Rebecca Hinson

### LEVEL 1: What does it say?

#### General Understanding

- Tell the story about Huitzilopochtli, Coyolxauhqui, Coatlicue, and the 400 brother gods.
- Tell the story about Huitzilopochtli, the seven tribes, Malinalxochitl, Copil, and Lake Texcoco.
- Tell the story of Tenochtitlán, Emperor Montezuma, Cortés, and the golden eagle.

#### Key Details

- What key details are used by the author to weave Huitzilopochtli throughout the book?
- How does the text describe the transformation of Huitzilopochtli?
- Explain how the author combines stories of legendary gods and goddesses with the history of Tenochtitlán, the Spanish conquest, and Mexico City.

### LEVEL 2: How does it work?

#### Vocabulary

- What are the meanings of the following words: plotted, avenge, fertility, shrine, anticipate, empire, descend, withdrew, and re-emerged?

#### Structure

- Compare and contrast the chronology of the Spanish conquest in *Legend of Tenochtitlán* and *Tecún Umán*.

#### Author's Craft

- Analyzing another account of Tenochtitlán below from Encyclopaedia Britannica, explain the similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

Tenochtitlán, the ancient capital of the Aztec empire, was located at the site of modern Mexico City. It was founded c. 1325 in the marshes of Lake Texcoco. It formed a confederacy with Texcoco and Tlacopán and was the Aztec capital by the late 15th century. Originally located on two small islands in Lake Texcoco, it gradually spread through the construction of artificial islands to cover more than 5 square miles. It was connected to the mainland by several causeways. The population in 1519 was estimated to be about 400,000 people, the largest residential concentration in Mesoamerican history.

### LEVEL 3: What does it mean?

#### Author's Purpose

- What reasons and evidence does the author use to create an interplay between mythology and history to interpret Mexica culture?
- The author asserts that "Art reveals the soul of a nation." How does the art in the book support her interpretation of Mexica culture?

#### Intertextual Connections

- Draw on information from *Legend of Tenochtitlán, An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya* (below), and [www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coatlucue](http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coatlucue), to interpret the sculpture of Coatlicue on page 3.

Standing on huge taloned feet, Coatlicue wears a dress of woven rattlesnakes. Her pendulous breasts are partially obscured behind a grisly necklace of severed hearts and hands. Writhing coral snakes appear in place of her head and hands, denoting gouts of blood gushing from her severed throat and wrists. The two great snakes emerging from her neck face one another, creating a face of living blood.

### LEVEL 4: What does it inspire you to do?

#### Opinion with Evidence or Argument

- Integrate information about the Coyolxauhqui Stone from *Legend of Tenochtitlán, An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya* (below), and [www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coyolxauhqui-monolith](http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coyolxauhqui-monolith) in order to write or speak about the Coyolxauhqui Stone knowledgeably.

In 1978, a massive representation of Coyolxauhqui was discovered at the base of the Huitzilopochtli side of the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. As in the cited Aztec text, she is depicted with her head and limbs severed from her torso, as if tumbling down the hill of Coatepec....she displays on her cheeks the metal coyolli bells for which she is named. In addition, she also wears the same metal year sign ear ornaments and circular elements of eagle down in her hair.

## Sources

Rebecca Hinson, *Tecún Umán*

[www.britannica.com/place/Tenochtitlan](http://www.britannica.com/place/Tenochtitlan)

Mary Miller & Karl Taube, *An Illustrated Dictionary of the Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya*

[www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coyolxauhqui-monolith](http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coyolxauhqui-monolith)

[www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coatlicue](http://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-americas/early-cultures/aztec-mexica/v/coatlicue)