



Understanding the Aztec Codex

Mr. Ralston | Social Studies 8

What is a Codex?

- Basically it is a book.
- Found in many different cultures.
- Aztec used pictograms (pictures) to tell their story.
- Aztec wrote on fig bark (amatl)
- Usually colourful but not always



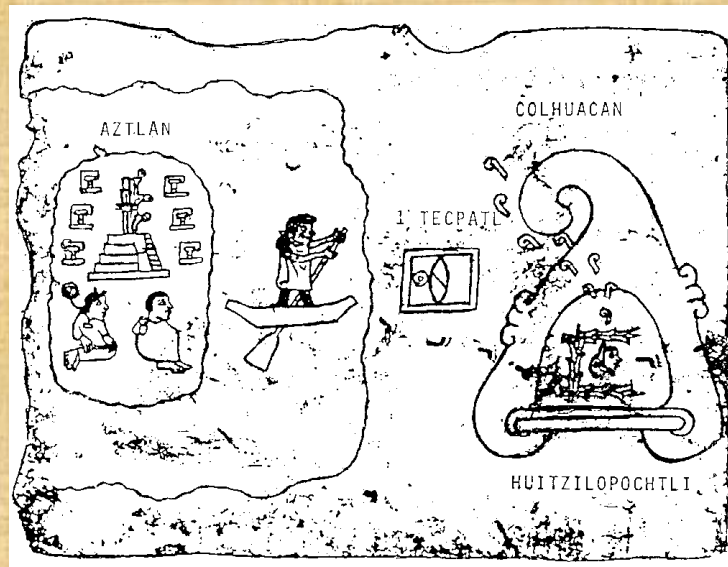
THE BOTURINI CODEX



Take 5 minutes to examine this codex. What do you think it is about?

The Boturini Codex

- Tells the story of how the Mexica left Aztlan because they had offended their main god, Huitzilopochtli, by cutting down a forbidden tree.
- They were forced to wander until their god told them where to settle.



THE BOTURINI CODEX

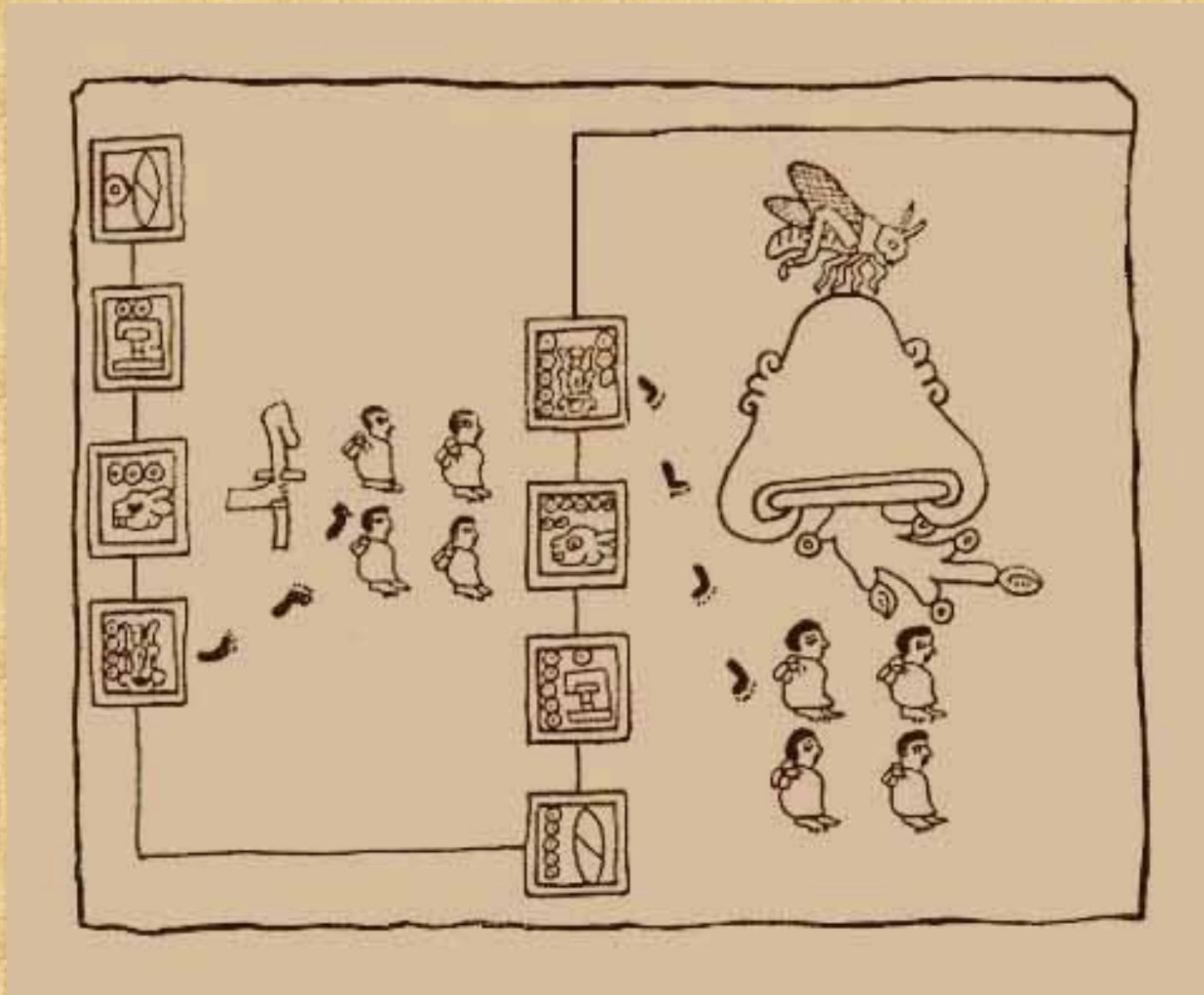


Now that you know the story what do you think the symbols represent?

THE BOTURINI CODEX

- Pictorial in nature, it tells the story of the legendary Aztec journey from Aztlán to the Valley of Mexico.
- Rather than employing separate pages, the author used one long sheet of amatl, or fig bark, accordion-folded into 21½ pages.
- There is a rip in the middle of the 22nd page, and it is unclear whether the author intended the manuscript to end at that point or not.
- Unlike many other Aztec codices, the drawings are not colored, but rather merely outlined with black.

THE BOTURINI CODEX (Page 18)



From
Year
1-Flint
to
Year
2-House
to
Year
3-Rabbit
to
Year 4-Reed
they remained
in Techcatitlan
[where they'
on the previc

Then they moved on to Chapultepec,

"Grasshopper Mountain,
the mountain that issued
fresh water into the salty lake.

Year
8-R

to
uayan,
of the
rower."

Ye
7-Ra

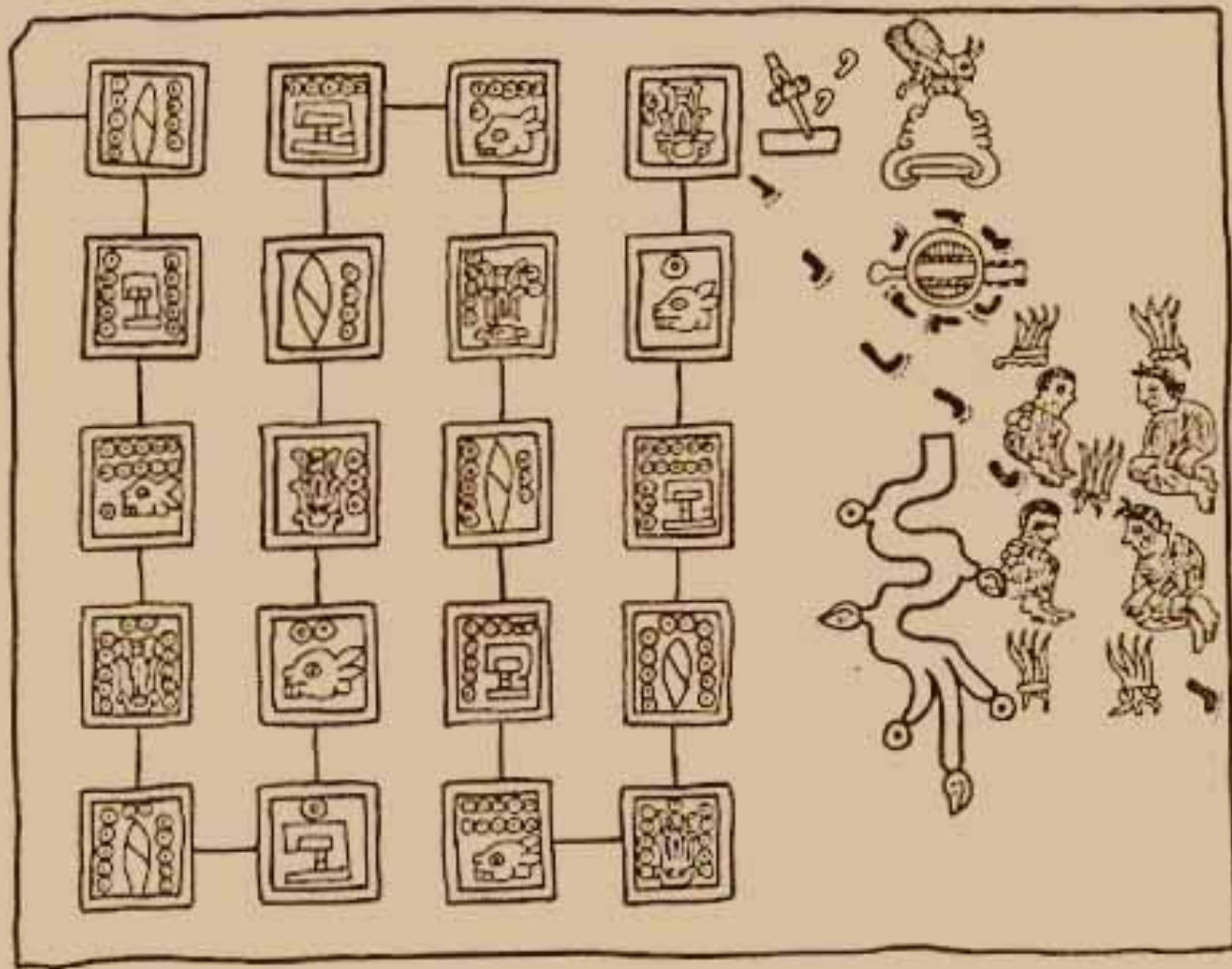
Year
6-House

Year
5-Flint

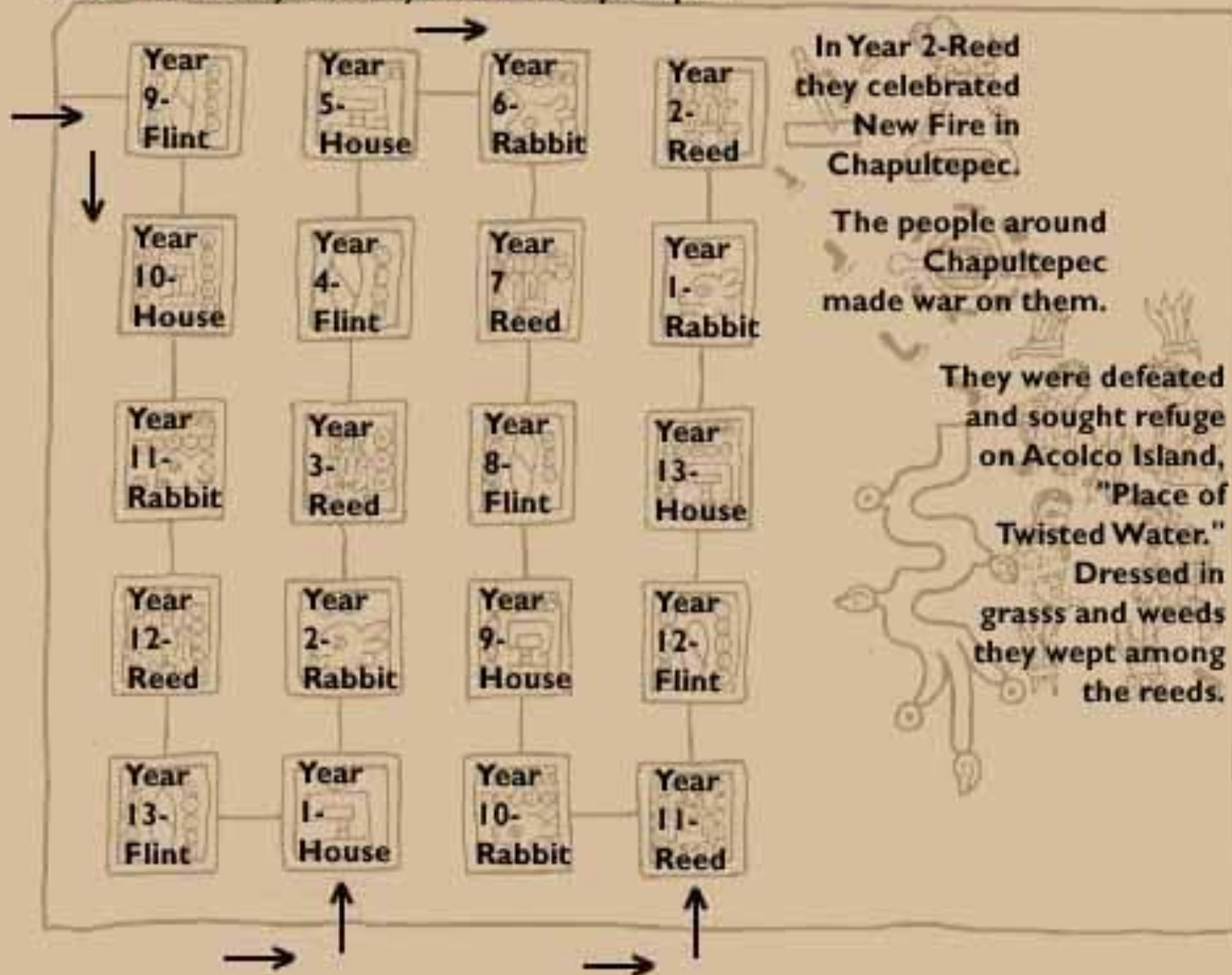
Refers to Time



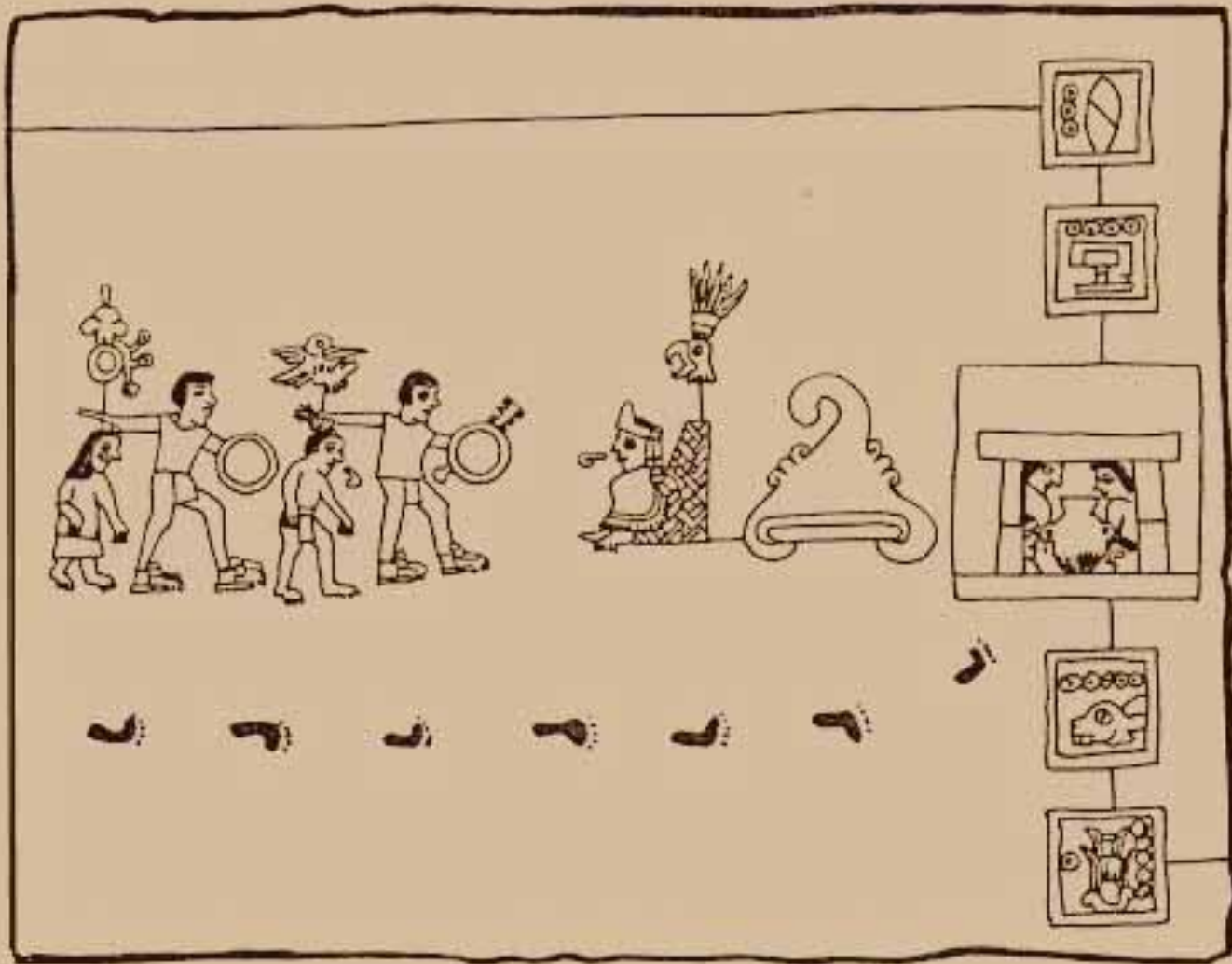
THE BOTURINI CODEX (Page 19)



These were the years they lived in Chapultepec:



THE BOTURINI CODEX (Page 20)



For two years most of the people were outlaws:

Year
3-Flint
&

Year
4-House

They made slaves
of those they
captured; they
stayed in
Contitlan
"Place of Jugs."
for two years:

Chimalmaxochitl,
"Water Plant
with Shield Petals"
and her father,
Huitzilihuitl,
"Hummingbird
Feather"

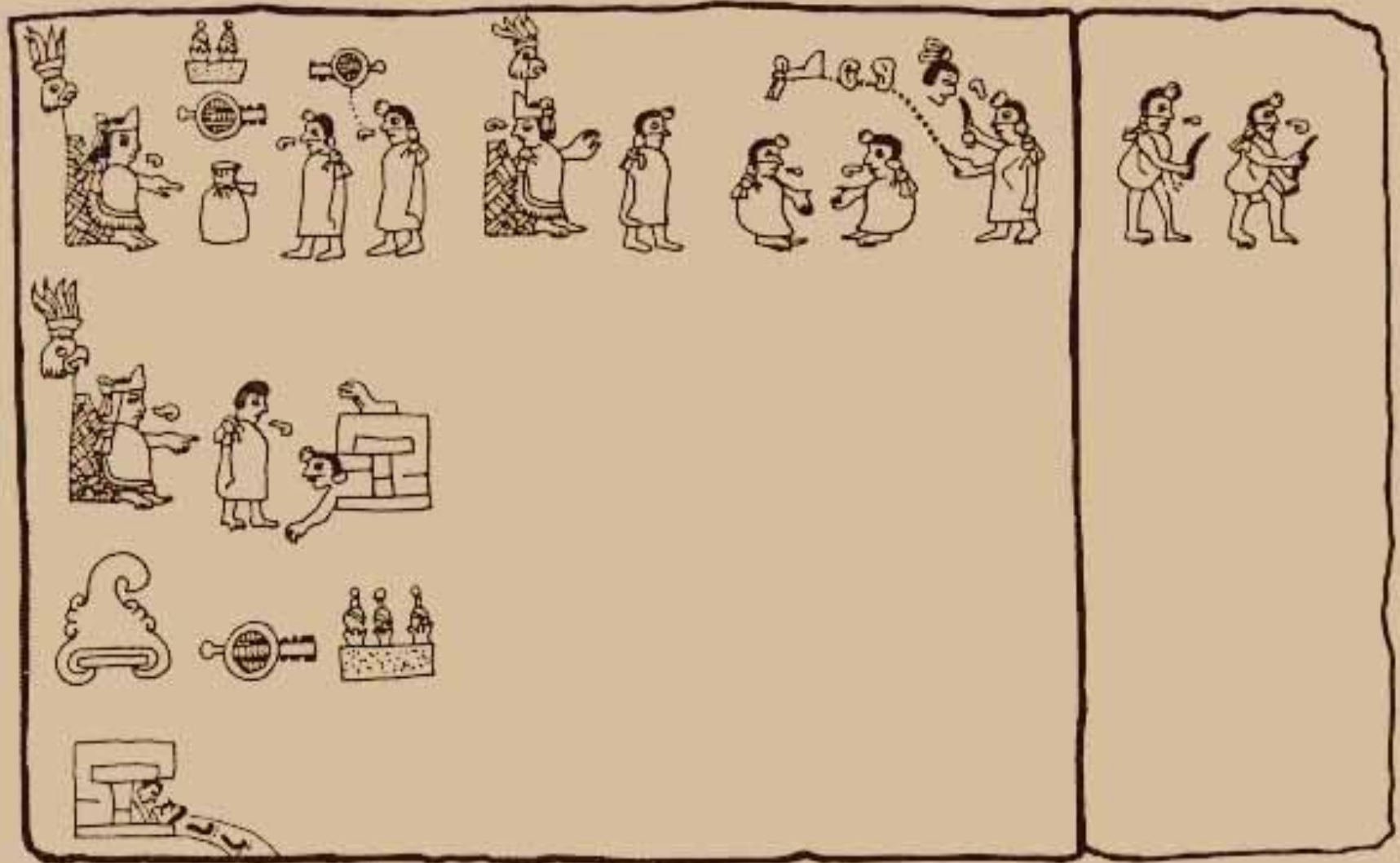


were captured by their enemies and brought before Coxcoxtli,
"Pheasant Lord,"
King of
Colhuacan
"Bent
Mountain."

5-Rabbit
&

6-Reed

THE BOTURINI CODEX (Page 21 & 22)





He told them
that they
must bring
him the ears
from the
Xochimilcans.

They asked
for weapons.

Coxcoxtli
refused them.

They agreed
among
themselves
to go
anyway.

They
gathered
many ears
from the
Xochimilcans.

Coxcoxtli offered them freedom
if they fought for him in this war.

But Colhuacan declared war
on Xochimilco, "Place of Flowers."

Some were sacrificed
at Colhuacan.

The Mexica
went forth,
in bands,
with glass knives
and war cries,
ready
to conquer
the world.



Explanation using Written Text

- Page 18

<http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/bot/bot18-3.htm>

- Page 19

<http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/bot/bot19-3.htm>

- Page 20

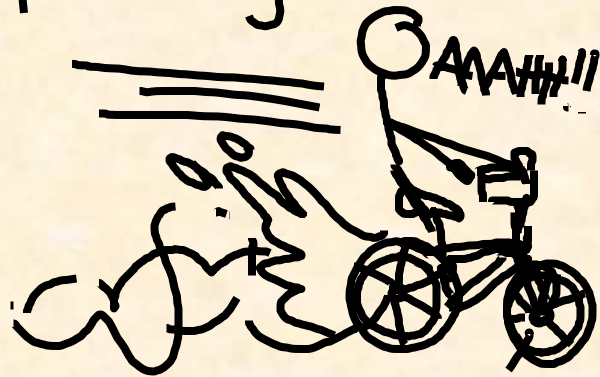
<http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/bot/bot20-3.htm>

- Page 21 & 22

<http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/bot/bot21-3.htm>

The Class Codex

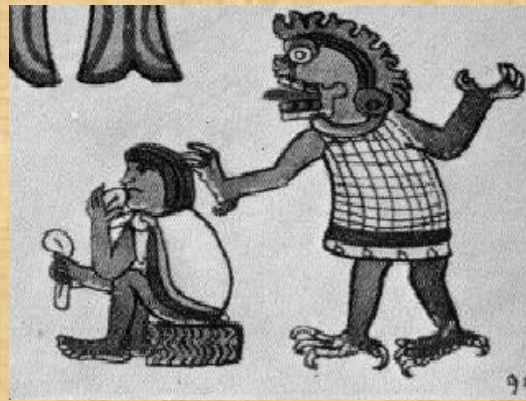
- 10 clear pictograms (colored) that depict important events in your life
- 2-3 sentences explaining what is happening in your pictogram



The Class Codex

The Class Codex

The codex we have examined gives us a glimpse of how the Aztec got to where they were.



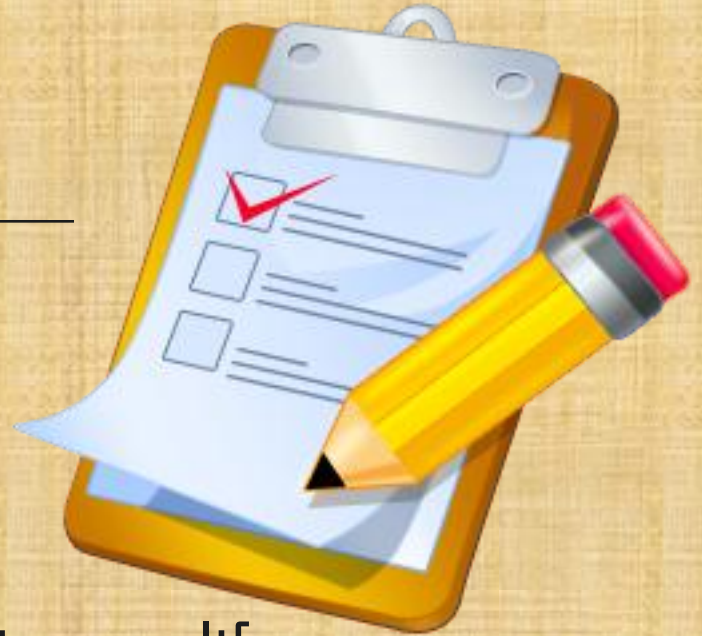
How did you get to where you are today?

Assignment

- Create a codex explaining major events in your life and how you arrived to where you are today.

Criteria:

- ✓ Your codex should be colourful.
- ✓ Contain all pictograms
- ✓ Use a variety of symbols
- ✓ Represent at least 10 major events in your life.
- ✓ In addition you must include a small write up explaining each section of your codex.



Rubric

Symbols (x2)

- ☐ **4** at least 10 symbols. Symbols are expertly clear, distinct and relevant to each event.
- ☐ **3** at least 10 symbols. Symbols are generally clear and relevant to each event
- ☐ **2** at least 8 symbols somewhat clear but there is some guessing as to the relevancy of the event.
- ☐ **1** less than 8 symbols or the symbols used are too vague and there is much guessing as to the relevancy of each event.

Rubric

Written x1

- ☐ **4** Reader is enlightened by the write up and can clearly understand the connection between event and symbol.
- ☐ **3** Reader can understand the general connection between event and symbol.
- ☐ **2** Reader understands connection but assumption is needed to make larger connection.
- ☐ **1** Writing further confuses reader. Reader is left with more questions than understanding.