Tenochtitlan: The Clash of Empires

The year is 1519. Hernán Cortés and his army of Spanish conquistadors are riding toward the island city of Tenochtitlan, the center of the Aztec empire. Montezuma, despite a series of foreboding omens, has decided to receive Cortés and provide the hospitality for which he and his people are known. Now, nearly 500 years later, we join the conquistadors as they tour the sacred walled precincts at the ceremonial heart of Montezuma's realm.

Tenochtitlan: The Clash of Empires is a Web-site-based, three-dimensional, interactive multimedia tour built in VRML 2.0. To follow the narrative, the visitor travels from one landmark to the next by clicking on tour icons. At each significant spot, there are further models, background, and historical information to be explored. The site is not just a still, silent monument to the past. Ambient sounds drift through the island air, birds fly overhead, and people glide along the lake in boats. Pop-up web pages and audio clips narrate the encounter between the two cultures, culminating at the top of the Great Temple, facing the shrines of the most sacred gods. There, the course of history is set as Cortés, disturbed by the pagan idols and appalled at the sight and stench of sacrificial blood, insults the Aztec gods and attempts to replace them with the sign of the cross.

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