

## Aztec civilization

### The origin of aztec civilization

- The Aztecs called themselves Mexica
- They were the newcomers to the valley of Mexico
- Teotihuacán was the capital of Aztec
- located on the northeast shore of Lake Texcoco



### State religion

- human sacrifices
- Politics and religion were closely linked
- the creator-gods sacrifice themselves to create the sun and moon
- Aztecs viewed it as a paid off to the gods that having human sacrifices
- The Aztecs had human sacrifices each month
- They believed they continuing pay the never ending debt will prevent the world from ending
- The victim will be painted and would be placed on a slab and the heart would be removed
- The heart would be held to the sun and the body would be thrown down the stairs the temple
- Viewed as the ultimate gift to sustain life
- The sacrifices were important to the religion of Aztecs but meanwhile it became the main reason that the Aztec civilization went down

## Class structure

- Rulers
- Chiefs
- Nobles
- Luxury Artisans
- Merchants
- Commoners
- Rural Tenants
- Slaves
- The Empire was organized with a strong central government headed by the emperor.
- The priests and a warriors castes came next, they were made up of nobles who enjoyed a high status in Aztec society. These warriors formed a professional core in Aztec armies and were ranked according to their achievements on the battlefield.

## Centralized government

- The emperor (Huey Tlatoani) means the “Great Speaker”
- The emperor was appointed by the gods and the divine rights to rule
- The new emperor was elected by a group of high level nobles
- The second command of the Aztec government was called the Cihuacoatl
- Cihuacoatl was in charge of running the government
- He had thousands of officials who worked under his command to run the empire
- Council of four—made up by powerful men and high officials
- They gave advice to the emperor when it is needed to make a major decision
- Aztecs had a sophisticated code of law to record laws against from stealing to a series of crimes
- A system of courts and judges determined punishments all the way to the supreme court

## Occupational Specializations

### Aztecs Nobles

- Hereditary
- The ruling class
- Government officials, priest, warriors
- Punished more severely

### Aztecs Priests

- The Aztecs performed various rituals and prayers during the religions and ceremonies.
- The Aztecs priests were considered as the guardians of the temples and devoted to different gods.
- They enjoyed a very privileged status but they accompanied warriors to the battleground in order to hear their confessions.
- Since religion was central importance of Aztec society, the priests role was significant.

## Aztec Warriors

- These warriors formed a professional core in Aztec armies and were ranked according to their achievements on the battlefield.

## Aztec regular Units

- The common warriors were called Calpulli
- Each Calpulli were divided into four groups and led by nobles from the region
- Boys also accompanied with the army as porters to carrying weapons

## Elite Aztec Warriors

- The largest warrior societies were the eagles and the jaguars
- They adorned in eagle feather and with a eagle head
- Jaguars wear suits that is made from the pelts of Jaguars

## Armors and protection

- The Aztec warriors wore a kind of cotton amour called Ichcahuipilli
- The light armor worked well in the hot climate of central Mexico
- They used small round shields made of wood and twisted fiber
- If an soldier can brought 6 prisoners, they could be awarded a carved hardwood helmet

## Weapons

- Most made of wood, stone and obsidian
- A wooden sword with sharp obsidian embedded to its sides
- two-handed weapon called macuahuitl that in rectangle shape
- The weapon required a lot of space to swing

## Aztec Commoners

### Farmers and Labors

- Fished the seas and worked the soil
- They worked the lands of others
- They were grouped into different wards based on family ties within a city
- Each ward was called a calpulli

### Slaves

- There are three ways that could get you in slavery
- Being captured in war, committing certain crimes
- To paid off the debts
- The kids of the slaves were not slaves

## Agriculture intensification

- Tribute was coordinated with the times of crops ripened
- Cultivation of crops involved called swidden farming
- A field was cleared of vegetation and cultivated for two or three years and then allowed to rest so that the soil would recover lost fertility

## Trade & Merchants

- The markets of central Mexico were an important part of economy
- The market Tlatelolco where can find ornaments of gold and silver, brass copper
- Aside from crops, Aztecs market offers various goods and services
- The method of exchange were through tribute and trade
- The currency that Aztecs bartered was through the cocoa beans
- They also used a form of money called the Quachtli, not common but a form of cotton cut into standardized lengths

## Science & Writing

- The language that Aztec spoke was Nahuatl
- It is still used today in some parts of Mexico
- Mandatory education for everybody
- The Aztecs wrote using symbols called glyphs
- They used pictures to represent items and events
- There was a book called a codex that most of bodies were destroyed but a few survived to show Aztec's daily life
- The famous aspects of Aztec technology was their use of calendar
- It was also made Aztecs sculpture famous
- This calendar was called the tonalpohualli which means "day count".
- The calendar had 260 days. Each day was represented by a combination of 21 day signs and thirteen day signs.
- The Aztecs believed that the illness came from nature
- They used herbs to cure sickness
- The main cure was steam bathing
- They believed sweating can make the poison out of the body

## Interesting facts about Aztec civilization

- introduced popcorns and chocolate
- made mandatory education
- The deceased usually buried under their houses
- They never discovered the wheel and had no iron or steel
- Their language had a picture like hieroglyphics alphabet
- use cocoa beans as currency

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