



Mayan Civilization



Summary of the Mayans

- Developed an accurate calendar
- Built steep temple pyramids and used advanced agricultural techniques
- Developed a system of mathematics (including the concept of zero)
- Located in the Yucatan Peninsula
- Ruled large cities based in southern and southeastern Mexico, as well as Central American highlands





Mayan Cities



- Built large cities including pyramids, temples, and stone carvings
- Tikal = largest major city
- Used advanced technology to build complex structures



Mayan Religious Practices

- Believed in many gods that represented all parts of life
 - Gods of corn, death, rain, war, good, and evil
- Used human sacrifices as well as body piercing to nourish the gods with blood



Chichen Itza

- Threw captives into deep sinkholes for human sacrifices
- Also studied astronomy from the observatory
- Developed math and astronomy to support religious beliefs and customs
- Temples dedicated to gods, warriors, and rulers



Chichen Itza



Mayan Calendar

- Each day had a different god, so a calendar was created so the people would know which god was in charge each day
 - 260 day religious calendar and 365 day solar calendar
 - Calendar told them when to plant crops, attack enemies, and pick new rulers



Mayan Calendar



- Calendar was based on careful observation of sun, moon, and planets
- December 2012 marks the end of the calendar used prior to the arrival of Europeans
- Most scholars dismissed the world ending in 2012



Mayan Writing System

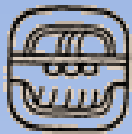
- Most advanced writing system in the ancient Americas
- Recorded important historical and religious events
- Glyphs – 800 hieroglyphic symbols used like letters
 - Some glyphs represented whole words while others were symbols



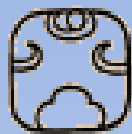
Mayan Writing System

- Codex = bark paper used to record the glyphs
 - Only three codex still remain and are kept in museums
- Used to keep track of important historical events
- Popul Vuh – Mayan version of the creation story





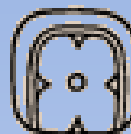
CHAN
'sky'



WINIK
'person'



WITZ
'mountain'



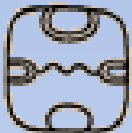
K'IN
'sun'



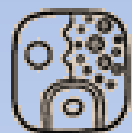
B'ALAM
'jaguar'



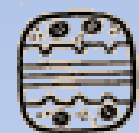
K'AK'
'fire'



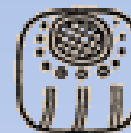
BAK
'bone'



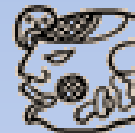
WAY
'spirit'



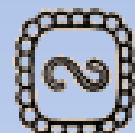
JUUN
'book'



JA'
'water'



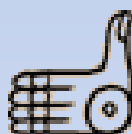
AJAW
'lord'



MUYAL
'cloud'



IX
'woman'



CH'AM
'to grab'



K'UK'
'quetzal'



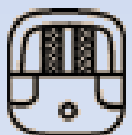
CHAN
'snake'



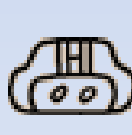
CH'UL
'holy'



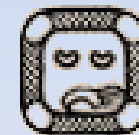
CHOK
'to scatter'



JAAB'
'year'



YAX
'blue/green'



PAKAL
'shield'



TOK
'flint'



NAJ
'house'



K'AL
'twenty'



A



A



A



B



B



C



T



E



H



I



CA



K



L



L



M



N



O



O



PP



CU



KU



X



X



U



P



U



Z

Mayan Decline

- Mayans left many of their important cities in the late 800s (before the Europeans arrived) but scientists are not sure why
- Theories:
 - War between the cities forced some Mayans to live in the jungle
 - Population growth caused food shortage, famine, and disease
- Some Mayan cities like Chichen Itza existed for several more centuries



Aztec Civilization



Teotihuacan (Tay-oh-tee-wah-Kahn)

- Toltecs = First major civilization in central Mexico
 - Near present day Mexico City
- Center for trade network that extended far into Central America
 - Obsidian – most valuable trade item, used to make razor sharp weapons
- Pyramid of the Sun was a 200 foot tall pyramid in the center of the city
 - Used technology to build complex structures



Toltecs

- Extremely warlike
 - Whole empire was based on conquering neighboring tribes
- Worshipped a war god
 - believed human sacrifice was the only way to keep the god happy
- Changed to worshipping a peaceful god named Quetzalcoatl
 - One of the major influences on the Aztecs





Quetzalcoatl

- Quetzalcoatl = Feathered Serpent God
- Legend of Quetzalcoatl:
 - Quetzalcoatl was overthrown and the Toltecs returned to worshipping the war-god
 - After exile, he traveled across the sea on a raft made of snakes
 - Promised to return and overthrow the king
 - Later, Aztecs thought the Spanish conquistadors were Quetzalcoatl



Aztec Empire

- Aztecs settled near present day Mexico City and built their capital on the shore of Lake Texcoco
 - Capital = Tenochtitlan
- According to legend:
 - Aztec sun god told the people to look for a place where an eagle perched on a cactus holding a snake in its mouth



Aztec Empire

- Triple Alliance = Aztecs joined with Texcoco and Tlacopan to become the most powerful group in central America
- Power was based on military conquest
 - Aztecs required tribute from the conquered tribes, usually gold, maize, cacao beans, cotton or jade

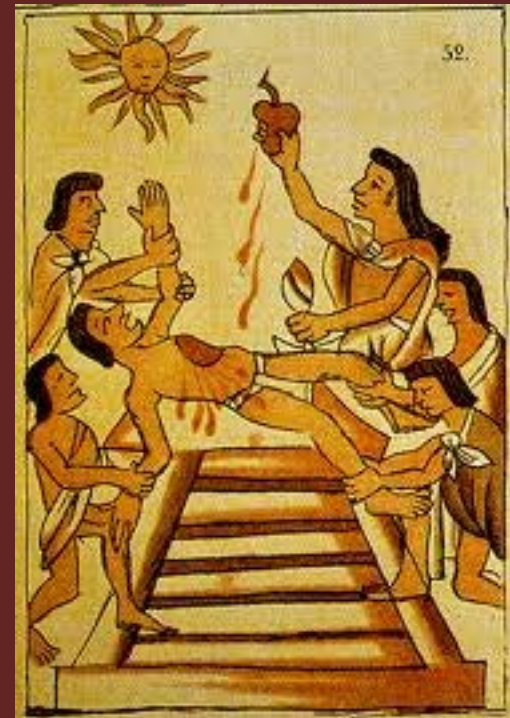


Aztec Empire

- Military leaders, governments officials, priests and the emperor formed the highest levels of Aztec society
- Their wealth came from tribute paid by the conquered tribes
- Aztecs controlled extensive trade routes that allowed the Tenochtitlan to become a major urban center

Aztec Religion

- Aztec religion based on Toltec and Teotihuacan religions
 - Polytheistic
- Tenochtitlan had hundreds of temples and religious buildings where priests held public ceremonies including songs, dances, and sacrifices



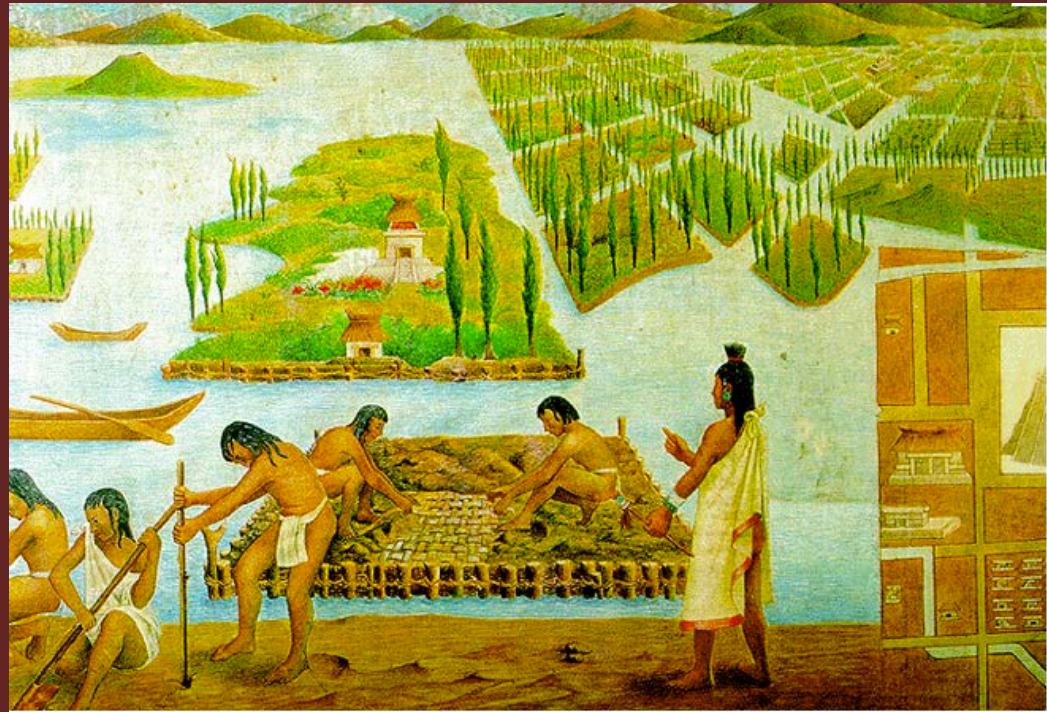


Aztec Religion

- Sun God was most important (Huitzilopochtli)
- Believed he would make the sun rise and fall each day only if there was a human sacrifice
- Thousands of prisoners and slaves were sacrificed at the Great Temple using obsidian knives
 - The need for prisoners forced the Aztec to be constantly at war
 - Used conquered people for human sacrifice
 - Conquered provinces resented Aztec rule

Aztec Agriculture

- Built chinampas = floating agricultural islands
 - Demonstrates how the Aztecs adapted to their environment



Decline of Aztec Empire

- Aztecs had many enemies because they were constantly at war
- As the empire grew, taxes were raised and human sacrifice increased
- Spanish conquistadors brought new weapons and diseases
- Eventually neighboring city-states rebelled against the Aztecs with the help of the Spanish
- A major reason for the end of the Aztec Empire was the technology of the Spanish conquistadors
 - Horses
 - Guns
 - Metal armor



Diseases



These diseases decimated native populations, which contributed to the conquistadors' success

- Conquistadors brought diseases with them from Europe
 - Smallpox
 - Chicken pox
 - Mumps
 - Diphtheria
 - Typhus
 - Influenza
 - Measles
 - Malaria
 - Yellow fever
- They contracted diseases in Central and South America
 - Hemorrhagic fever



Incan Empire

Origins of the Incan Empire

- Inca was the name of the ruling family that controlled lands in the Valley of Cuzco
- Believed the empire was descended from the Sun God
 - Leader could only be chosen from the original 11 families
- All dead rulers were worshipped and preserved as sacred mummies



Pachacuti

- Incan Emperor (ruled 1438 – 1472)
- Expanded the empire to include all of Peru and the west coast of South America from Ecuador to Chile and Argentina





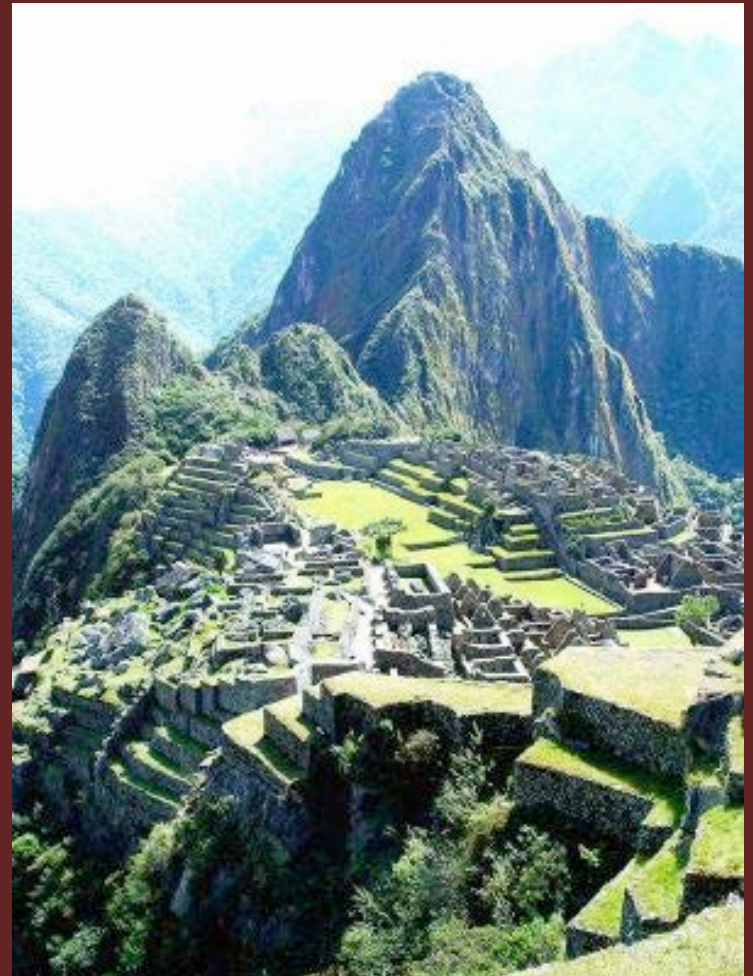
Pachacuti



- Incan military was very powerful but Pachacuti only used it when there was no other choice
- Expanded his kingdom into an empire through diplomacy and military conquest

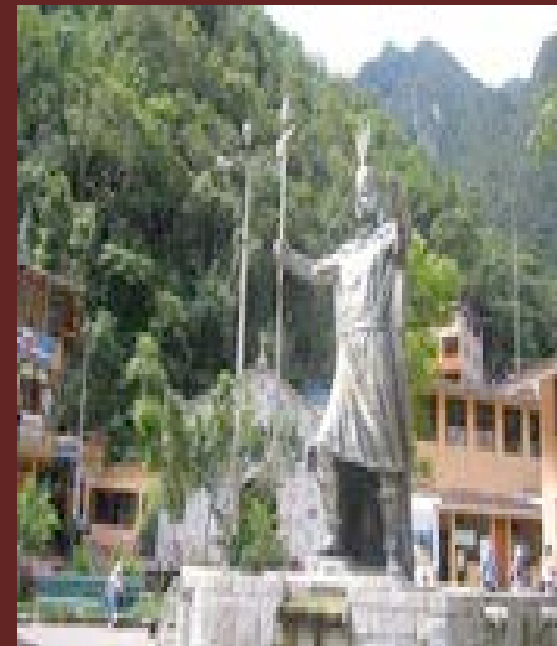
Incan Government

- Incans added territory to their empire by a combination of military force and diplomacy
- Incans built many new cities throughout conquered territories
- Lots of roads to connect the new cities
 - All road led to the capital, Cuzco



Incan Government

- Mita – tribute of labor demanded from everyone by the government
- Usually paid in labor (had to work a certain number of days each year for the government)



Incan Socialism

- Socialism = the government controls economic activities
 - Regulated production and distribution of goods
- Citizens expected to work for the state and were cared for by the government in exchange



Incan Socialism

- Land was divided between state, church, and community
 - No private ownership of land
 - Used terrace farming to produce crops such as maize and quinoa
 - Developed a system of freeze-drying potatoes for times of shortages of food
- Incan welfare system helped increase loyalty of conquered peoples



Incan Food Supplies

- The Incans grew maize, coca, beans, grains, potatoes, sweet potatoes, ulluco, oca, mashwa, pepper, tomatoes, peanuts, cashews, squash, cucumber, quinoa, gourd, cotton, talwi, carob, chirimoya, lúcuma, guayabo, and avocado
- They cultivated over 100 different types of potatoes!



Llamas and Alpacas

- Llamas and alpacas were extraordinarily important to the ancient Incas
- They raised the animals for wool, meat, leather, moveable wealth, transportation, and they could be sacrificed to the gods



Incan Roads

- Roads had two main parts: one through the mountains and the other along the coast
- Messengers carried mail along the roads
- The extensive road system connected all parts of the empire for trade



Incan Record Keeping

- Incans developed two calendars (day and night) to provide information about the gods
- Incans never developed a writing system
- Instead used quipu to record data



Incan Record Keeping

- Quipu – set of knotted strings used to record data (accounting records). Knots and their position on the cord indicated numbers and significance.



Incan Religion

- King was considered a descendant of the Sun God (Inti)
- Priests led Sun worship services and were assisted by “Virgins of the Sun”
 - “Virgins of the Sun” = unmarried women who served the church for a lifetime
 - Trained in religious activities as teachers, spinners, weavers, and beer makers



Incan Religion



- Temple of the Sun in Cuzco was the most sacred religious site

Incan Technology

- Incas were masterful engineers and stonemasons
 - No iron tools and did not use the wheel
 - Carved and transported huge blocks of stone
 - Fit them together without mortar
- Many walls are still in place even with frequent earthquakes



Fall of the Incan Empire

- Struggle between rivals for the Incan throne
- People unable to care for themselves after welfare was eliminated
- Spanish arrived and were able to divide and conquer the Incas

