The Aztec and Inca Empires

AP World History Notes
Chapter 13
General Info

- Aztecs = in Mexico and Central America
- Incas = in South America
- Both lacked: work animals, metal tools, wheels
- Both still developed: centralized governments & armies and both conquered other empires
- Both ended when: conquered by the Spanish
Aztec Empire
Inca Empire

The Inca Empire
1463 - 1532
Aztec Empire

Capital = Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City)

Agricultural center and marketplace
Aztec Empire

Built **chinampas** = artificial islands used for farming made by piling mud from the lake onto rafts ➔ floating gardens

As population grew, Aztecs expanded outside of the city ➔ built canals and bridges to connect the mainland to the island where the capital was
The Empire

- Stretched from Mexico to the border of Guatemala
- Stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean
- Conquered people had to pay tribute (taxes) in the form of: food, clothing, raw materials, prisoners for sacrifice, jewelry, military supplies, rubber balls, etc.
The Empire

Aztec civilization organized as a hierarchy

- At the top = the emperor
- Classes = nobility, commoners, serfs, slaves
  - Land owned by: nobility and commoners
  - Commoners = priests, merchants, artisans, farmers
  - Serfs = farm workers tied to noble lands
  - Lowest class = slaves = prisoners of war; criminals; debtors – often sacrificed
Religion & the Arts

- Religion moved them to engage in war and sacrifice
- Live human sacrifices were needed to keep the gods happy
- Aztec artists decorated temple-pyramids with scenes of gods or battles
- Writers glorified Aztec victories in their works

Quetzalcoatl
God of dying & resurrection
The Inca Empire

- Lived in the Andes Mountains in South America
- Empire stretched about 2500 miles along the Andes
- Capital = Cuzco
The Inca Empire

- Raided other tribes and slowly built a large empire
- Strong central government → local rulers had to report to Inca emperor
  - Unlike the Aztec Empire, which had no centralized government or complex administration
The Inca Empire

- Emperor closely controlled the lives of common people
- Owned all land and carefully regulated the growing & distribution of food
- Farmers used step terraces on hillsides
- Part of all crops after every harvest went to emperor as taxes
The Inca Empire

- Work crews built roads & bridges to link different regions of the empire
- Gods pleased with food, animal, and human sacrifices
  - Not even close to the scale of the Aztecs
- No writing system → used quipus to record information = ropes with knotted cords of different lengths
The Inca Empire

- Mita = labor service used
  - Required periodically of every household
  - Required to work for the state
    - Examples: farming, herding, mining, crafting manufactured goods, construction
  - In return: state provided elaborate feasts for the people
“Gender Parallelism”

- Both the Aztec and Inca Empires used this system with men and women.
- Separate spheres and responsibilities, but each one equally valuable.
- Each had autonomy in its own sphere.
- Did NOT mean total gender equality.