The Aztec and Inca Empires

AP World History Notes
Chapter 14
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 located.
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
Huey Tlatoani

Tecuhlí (Lords) & Pilli (Nobles)

Pochtectli (Merchants)

Macehualli (Commoners)

Mayeque (Slaves)
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
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.