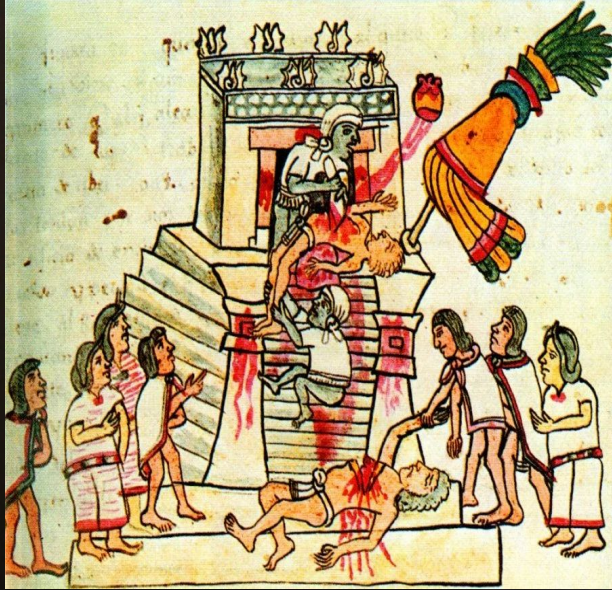


A close-up photograph of numerous water droplets of various sizes scattered across a dark, reflective surface. The droplets catch the light, creating bright highlights and soft shadows. The background is a dark, almost black, textured surface.

Worldview Elements In Aztec Society



Beliefs



Human sacrifice was extremely influential in Aztec society because they believed that in order to appease their gods, blood was necessary for them. If they did not feed their gods, the empire would be destroyed, which means that in turn, the world would end and the Aztecs would die. During a human sacrifice, a priest would rip out a person's beating heart, (the victim was often a prisoner) and offer it to the gods. The Aztecs believed that they owed their gods and through human sacrifice they could repay them. These sacrifices would allow the gods to grow strong and bring them plenty of food, water, and help them sustain a phenomenal society.

Beliefs



The gods were essential in the success of the Aztec empire because the Aztecs believed they controlled all aspects of their lives. If the Aztecs obeyed the gods, they would receive good crops, plenty of water, lots of sun, and the forces of nature would be good to them. The Aztecs did everything for their gods, as they thought the gods created the world. If they did not treat their gods well, they would be punished. If they did not perform human sacrifices, the “good gods” would grow weak and not be able to defend the Aztecs against the “bad gods”. The Aztecs were determined to please their gods by creating a fantastic community and through years of hard work, they made a powerful and prosperous empire.

Beliefs



The Aztecs looked to their gods in their day to day life for directions on how to live. One of these directions was when Huitzilopochtli commanded the Aztecs to leave their home and search for an eagle on a cactus. He then said that the location of the eagle was where the Aztecs should live and build a community. For more than 150 years the Aztecs travelled in search of their new home. Finally, in 1325 the Aztecs saw an eagle perched on a cactus. The land on which the eagle had been found was swampy and not ideal for farming or any processes that were needed for a growing society. However, the Aztecs believed that since Huitzilopochtli had led them there, this was a very sacred place on which they should build their empire. The Aztecs were determined to survive in Tenochtitlan and developed many ways to help them live, such as aqueducts and chinampas. The Aztecs believed that the gods gave them guidance, and so through lots of hard work, they generated a prosperous society.

Economy



The Aztec economy was based on trade, which was crucially important to the survival of the empire. Without trade, the Aztec empire would not have thrived because many goods were not produced locally. Prized items such as cotton, jewellery, feathers, and cocoa beans had to be imported from other nations. Aztec merchants would often go on long trading expeditions to acquire these goods. Trading allowed the Aztecs to have a diverse amount of items, and by using these goods to their advantage, they grew more successful.



Another part of Aztec economy was war. The Aztecs wanted to expand their wealth, power and empire, and often achieved this through war. When Aztec merchants went on trading trips, they would also act as spies for their army. They drew maps of neighboring tribes and reported information to Aztec leaders. This helped them to conquer many cities and eventually control a huge empire. They managed to accomplish this because the Aztecs had a strong belief that society was foremost over the individual people within it. Once the Aztec army took over a nation, they would collect a tribute, which assisted in making their society wealthy. War helped the Aztecs to gain territory, control, and wealth, which helped aid in their success.

Economy



Farming was also a component of the Aztec economy. Even though Tenochtitlan was not great for farming and agriculture, the Aztecs built chinampas to grow their food. Some key things they grew on these islands were squash, maize, tomatoes, chilies and beans. Terracing was also a method used to help grow food. The Aztecs became the most productive plant cultivators of their time by producing more than enough food to feed their population. Without farming the Aztecs would not have had as much to eat, and would not have prospered the way they did.

Values



Temples were very important to the Aztecs because they allowed the Aztecs to praise their gods. Aztec beliefs say that mountains are sacred because they are closer to the gods and the heavens. Sometimes priests would build temples on mountains, so they could be closer to the spiritual world. Temples in Tenochtitlan were often shaped like pyramids to resemble the holy mountains. These temples gave the Aztecs places to worship and perform sacrifices for their gods. Temples provided the Aztecs a place to glorify and strengthen their gods, so that their flourishing society would still remain.



Cocoa beans were necessary in Aztec life, as they were the basis of chocolate. This bean, along with cornmeal and hot chili peppers, was made into a drink that resembled hot chocolate. This divine drink was considered to give you power and wisdom. Cocoa beans were also used as a means of payment and were extremely popular in Aztec society. Cocoa beans gave the Aztecs a source of food, something to trade and benefitted their community.

Values



Of all of the creations in Aztec civilization, feathers were the most highly valued. The Aztec people hunted tropical birds for their beautifully coloured feathers. These feathers were then made into headdresses, fans and also decorated shields. Only the emperor and the nobility wore the prized bird feathers. Quetzal bird feathers were the most coveted in Aztec society because of their bright turquoise colour. These feathers were associated with the god Quetzalcoatl and were sometimes offered to him. Aztecs would obtain feathers through tributes and trade. Feathers helped make the Aztecs successful because they helped them to represent their empire in war and show their importance through clothing.

Society



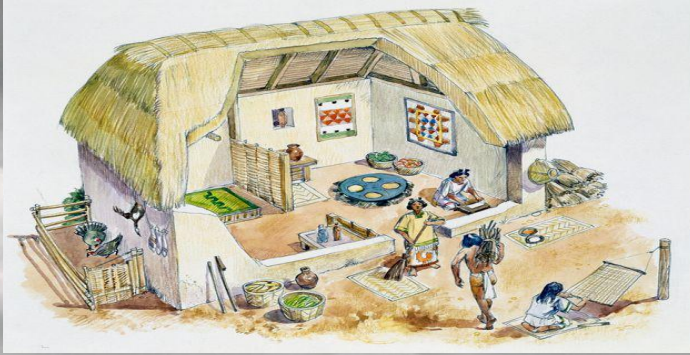
In Aztec society, military was very important. From the moment a baby boy was born, he was destined to be a warrior. Men trained for their whole lives to join the Aztec army. An Aztec warrior was highly honoured in their community. A warrior's admiration was based on bravery, skill and the number of enemies captured in battle. The worst insult in Aztec society was to be called a coward because a lack of courage meant a weak army. The Aztecs firmly believed that their empire was more important than the individuals within it. At the age of 15, boys became warriors and took a role in battle. The highest military orders were the jaguar and the eagle. The Aztec military was huge and since it helped expand and protect the empire, was key in the Aztecs success.

Society



The leader of the entire Aztec empire, was the emperor, who was also referred to as *Huey Tlatoani* (Great Speaker). The emperor was always a man and was treated like a god by the Aztec people. The citizens of the Aztec empire pampered their emperor, and often gave him luxuries such as ocelot skins. The emperor decided what tribute the lands he ruled would pay the Aztecs, and when to go to war. An emperor's main responsibilities were to be chief priest, commander of the army, and the head of state. The emperor had to have great leadership, know military strategy, and make decisions that would benefit the Aztec community. The good of the entire empire rested on his shoulders. Without an emperor, the Aztecs would not have had a strong leader to guide them and help bring the empire success.

Society



Aztec society was organized into family clans called calpolli. The calpolli included the commoners, who made up the majority of the Aztec population. Members of a calpolli worshipped in the same temple and lived in the same neighborhood or house. Calpolli could be based on related family groups, the work that people did, etc. People within a calpolli shared chinampas and land. Each calpolli elected a council and a captain. The council assigned houses and collected tributes and taxes to pay to the empire. They also had the responsibility of repairing buildings, washing the streets, and keeping the neighborhood clean. Calpolli helped the Aztecs to have a sense of political power, and keep the community organized and clean. This would have somewhat helped the Aztecs in building a strong society.

Geography



Tenochtitlan was not located on fertile farming land, so the Aztecs built chinampas to grow their food. In order to build them, stakes were driven into the lakebed in a rectangular shape. Then the builders laid reed mats within the stakes and piled soil on top. Once a chinampa was made, farmers planted flowers, medicinal herbs, and vegetables. As the Aztec empire grew, more sources of food were required, so the chinampa system was expanded. Without chinampas, the Aztecs would not have been able to support a rapidly growing population because many food sources were not locally grown. Chinampas allowed the Aztecs to grow various kinds of food and helped them to achieve a great society.



The Aztec empire was surrounded by mountains which helped provide security for the Aztecs. Mountains protected the Aztecs and helped keep away attacks from invaders. However, these mountains also caused problems for the Aztecs because since they were so steep, flash floods were common. Sometimes the mountains would also keep out clouds and rain would not come. Even though the Aztecs created devices to help with the disadvantages of mountains, these landforms did not make a significant difference in making the Aztec empire successful.

Geography



Tenochtitlan was surrounded by Lake Texcoco, which provided safety from their enemies and also provided a water source. The Aztecs built three causeways, which linked the lake to the mainland. Bridges that connected the causeways to the city could be destroyed to help stop invasion. Even though Lake Texcoco provided the Aztecs with water, it also caused them some problems. There was no river for water to flow out of the lakes. This caused the process of evaporation to make the lakes salty. To make sure they had clean drinking water, the Aztecs built a system of dams to separate the fresh and salty water. Lake Texcoco helped make the Aztec society better in some ways, however it also had disadvantages, which did not help them in their quest to be successful.

Knowledge



In Aztec society, information was passed along orally and through codices. In school, children would learn to write and read using a system of pictures called glyphs. These glyphs were then used to record information in codices. Codices contained pictures that represented songs, stories, myths, and religious rituals that, therefore, formed part of the Aztecs oral history. Codices were important to Aztec society because they held all of the Aztecs history and information, however, they did not play a big role in making the Aztec empire successful.



Laws in the Aztec community protected peoples rights and aided in maintaining order in their society. Aztec laws covered many aspects of life such as laws about inheriting an estate, marriage, the social hierarchy, and economic situations. Most crime in Aztec society was dealt with in a local court, however, if a crime was extremely serious, it was dealt with in the emperor's palace. For lesser crimes, a guilty person was fined or sentenced to slavery. If you committed a very serious crime, the consequence was death. The Aztecs legal system reminded people of their responsibilities to be a good citizen. In Aztec society, the legal system was crucial and it did help in bringing the Aztecs some prosperity.

Knowledge



Education in the Aztec empire was valued and all schooling was free. The calmecac was a school for the nobles, and it was often attached to a temple. Here, students learned about codices, religion, astronomy, math, reading, writing, music, law, and the calendar. Students who went to this school were trained for a honoured career in Aztec life. The school for the commoners was called telpochcalli. Since commoners did not learn how to read and write, all the teaching was done orally, and students needed to learn through rote memorization. Students were given lessons in history, citizenship, religion, and music. Girls and boys also received instruction to prepare themselves for the family trade. Education was valued in Aztec society, however, the other elements of worldview played a larger role in the Aztecs success.

Time



The Aztecs had two calendars: a solar calendar and a sacred calendar. The solar calendar consisted of 18 months each of 20 days, with 5 extra days at the end of each year which were considered unlucky. The Aztecs used this calendar for keeping track of when to plant and harvest their crops. Even though this calendar was useful, it didn't help a whole lot in making the Aztec community successful, as the Aztecs probably harvested their crops around the same time every year, so having this calendar was not very influential.

The other calendar the Aztecs used was a sacred calendar. This calendar consisted of 13 months of 20 days. As its year was only 260 days long, it would very rarely synchronize with the solar calendar. The sacred calendar was used to divide the days and rituals between the gods, which was very important to the Aztec mind. To prevent the world from ending and a spiritual war among the gods, this calendar was made to give each god their own space and their own time to rule over the universe. The sacred calendar also shows how the world began and how it will end. Even though this calendar emphasized the close connection between human beings and the gods, it did not have as big of an impact on society as the other elements did.

Links

<https://www.historyonthenet.com>

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