

Economic System

- Economy of European countries changed due to wealth coming from colonies
- Gold/silver coming in from Aztec/Incan empires into Spain upset the balance in Europe – more gold meant gold lost its value
- Portugal and Spain didn't develop industries or manufacturing facilities as it could buy it all
- Other countries: England, Germany and Netherlands developed these industries and facilities to provide the goods for Spain/Portugal and the colonies
- The more money in circulation, the less it was worth, inflation happened (an increase in prices and a decrease in the purchasing power of money)

HOW DID GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY AFFECT THE WORLDVIEWS OF THE AZTEC AND THE SPANISH?

The Aztecs

- Aztec called themselves Mexica, this is the origin of the name of the country of Mexico
- Geography of Mexico includes: deserts, mountains, tropical forests, ranchland, rich farmland and seacoasts (east and west)
- 2 largest rivers are Rio Grande and Usamacinta
- Northern Mexico is desert (Chihuahua and Sonoran)
- Only 10% of land can produce crops in Mexico
- Mountain ranges located in central plateau of Mexico
- Large basin between mountain range referred to as Valley of Mexico
- Temperatures in basin are always spring like
- South Mexico has dense forests and tropical climate with lots of rainfall
- Tropical beaches line both Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea
- Pre-columbian societies lived in central basin (basin had plenty of water from 5 lakes, largest: Lake Texcoco (all water drained into Lake Texcoco making it saline – soil around the lake not suitable for agriculture
- Aztec civilization lived in this valley – small agriculture that existed around the lakes supplied food for whole civilization, nobles/elite lived in cities and farmers grew the agriculture
- Basin had different ecological zones – farmers grew a variety of items and had different farm techniques based on the zones they lived in - this diverse zone created a market system for distribution of food and other items
- Canals and waterways main form of transportation

Spain

- Spain occupies about 80% of Iberian Peninsula
- Due to Spain being located on the ocean, it had an advantage in the exploration race
- Mountain ranges: Pyrenees (largest) separates Spain from France
- Fast flowing and difficult to navigate rivers
- Central Plateau called Meseta Central is treeless, dry and drought like – plateau is isolated from the north and south of Spain by mountain ranges
- Climate is rainy in the north and moderated by the ocean, winters are mild and summers cool
- Southern part of Spain is dry and little rainfall
- Due to the geography of Spain, the kingdoms were usually localized, small and based on mountain ranges, or rivers, this helped to shape Spain's history



HOW DID THE HISTORY OF THE AZTEC AFFECT THEIR WORLDVIEW?

Long Migration

- Aztec were one of several Nahuatl-speaking groups who left the desert like country of northern Mexico and migrated southward looking for a place to settle
- Other groups went north (ie. Comanche into US)
- roughly 200 year led a semi-nomadic life and finally settled in the Valley of Mexico
- Aztec followed during their migration the orders of their patron god – Huitzilopochtli who spoke to the priests
- Priest would force followers to keep moving upon instruction from Huitzilopochtli, even if it meant leaving unharvested crops
- They believed they were the chosen people and the god would lead them to their land and destiny
- Tenoch was chieftain who led them to the Valley of Mexico
- In the Valley city/states of various other groups were already settled and wouldn't let Aztec settle as they were barbarous and uncultured
- Other societies were: Tlaxcalans, Cholulas and Tepanecs – all would have conflicts with Aztecs

Tenochtitlan, The City of Tenoch

- Finally Aztecs found a swampy island in the middle of the Lake Texcoco
- Priests had seen an eagle perched on a cactus holding a rattlesnake – sign that had been foretold of the “right” place
- After settled dealt with the other societies they would continue to have conflict with
- Many Aztec worked as mercenaries and servants for other societies especially the Tepanecs
- Became skilled hard workers and ferocious warriors, build aqueducts to bring fresh water and connected their island to mainland by 3 causeways (provided protection against attack)
- Use waterways to trade with other societies around the lake
- City grew, roughly 1,000,000 people in Valley and 150,000 on island (larger than any European city)
- Once settled into new city, a new culture was built on history of migration, strong religious beliefs and what made them strong/able to flourish (ie. hard work, faith, negotiation skills, etc.)

HOW DID THE HISTORY OF THE SPAIN AFFECT THEIR WORLDVIEW?

Iberian Peninsula had successive waves of invasion and colonization over the years:

- romans (Christian),
- then the Ostrogoths, Franks and Visigoths (also Christian),
- then the Moors (mostly muslim from North Africa)

History - The Reconquista

- Muslim rule in Spain lasted more than 700 years - Muslims, Jews, and Christians were **all** allowed to practice their own beliefs.
- few northern regions in Spain resisted the Muslim invaders and remained Christian and over the centuries became more powerful and continuously fought to get lands back
- the Reconquista, was the move to retake the Iberian land under Muslim control
- during the 1100 and 1200's the Christian regions were successful at reconquista and now the muslims only held one small kingdom
- in 1492 the last small kingdom was captured by the **conquistadors** of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Moorish control of Spain was over
- the Spanish conquistadors were Christians and believed that it was their duty to convert non-believers to Roman Catholicism
- the Spanish conquistadors fought for both religious and nationalistic reasons

- the two largest kingdoms, Aragon and Castile, were unified with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella
- Spain was not yet a nation but was now made up of several kingdoms brought under the authority of the monarchy



Spanish Inquisition

- After the Reconquista, the Roman Catholic faith was considered the only true faith in Spain
- Ferdinand and Isabella used this to their advantage because it would unite everyone if they followed one religion and it was a way to control people
- In 1492, the Spanish Inquisition was instated
- the Inquisition was both a civil and a religious court
- the court was set up to judge if the converted Jews and Muslims were true Roman Catholics
- it also judge any citizen who was accused of not following the Roman Catholic faith (punishable by confinement to dungeons, torture, or death)
- If an individual was simply accused, but not proven guilty, property was confiscated and the person was forbidden from holding any public office
- Eventually, all Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spain
- the Spanish Inquisition did not officially end until 1834.

Desire for Exploration

- Spain and rest of Europe were benefiting from better economies, new technologies, and more stable government
- the Spanish had a strong desire for exploration to find new lands because the routes to the East around Africa had already been explored by other countries
- in 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic, reaching land in the Caribbean and claiming it for Spain.
- with any new lands capture or recaptured, Ferdinand and Isabella considered themselves as the rightful owners including all resources and goods
- missionaries were sent to teach the beliefs and customs of the Roman Catholic Church
- the conquistadors had an imperialistic view of the new world, Superior in culture and religion therefore, conversion happened either peacefully or forcefully

HOW DID CONTACT WITH THE MOORS INFLUENCE SPAIN?

- When the Moors conquered regions of the Iberian Peninsula, they imported their Islamic culture and with it their knowledge and ideas.
- the legacy left by the Muslims influenced Spanish learning, architecture, and design (architectural styles, mosaic tiles and carpets)
- muslim scholars and Jewish scholars, were involved in the revival of the study of ancient Greek and Roman culture and philosophy.
- The legacy included the following:
 - important schools of astronomy, mathematics, and architecture
 - illuminated manuscripts and murals from the 9th and 10th centuries that showed the strong influence of the Islamic and Byzantine artistic style known as Mozarabic.
 - great libraries containing books, classical documents (ie. works of Aristotle) all which contributed to the idea of humanism
 - beautiful buildings that included enclosed courtyards with fountains and decorative tiles (ie. palaces and mosques)

Definitions

Conquistador one who conquers; specifically, a leader in the Spanish conquest of America and especially of Mexico and Peru in the 16th century

codex: an ancient manuscript in book form

destiny: all that is supposedly predetermined to happen to someone or something in spite of all efforts to change or prevent it.

Incarnation: a deity or spirit taking a physical form

Meso-American Societies : other societies which existed the same time the Aztecs did in the Americas

HOW DID CONTACT WITH OTHER MESO-AMERICAN SOCIETIES INFLUENCE THE AZTEC?

- each of the Meso-American societies had its own unique customs and traditions.
- many similarities between Aztecs and other civilizations because they all had incorporated the ideas and beliefs of the **ancient** societies

Earlier Societies of Meso-America

- the three greatest earlier civilizations in the Valley of Mexico were:
 - Olmec - 1200 to 400 BCE
 - Teotihuacan - peak of power between 150 and 450
 - Toltec - 900 to 1150

The Olmec

- said to be the founding society, or mother culture, of all Meso-American civilizations
- lived in the lowlands near the Gulf of Mexico
- considered to be the greatest sculptors – ie. the colossal heads
- had several gods, including: a fire god, a rain god, a corn god, and the Feathered Serpent.
- Pyramid of the Sun in the city of Teotihuacan was the largest structure in the Western hemisphere until 1960s.

The Teotihuacan

- *Teotihuacan* refers to the ancient civilization and to its **altepetl (a meso-american city-state)**
- altepetl was located what is now Mexico City.
- the Aztec, impressed by the enormous ruins believed it was a holy place where the sun, moon, and universe were created
- Aztec copied the way Teotihuacan was laid out (ie. the temples in the city centre) when building their city of Tenochtitlan
- within the centre of Teotihuacan was a temple to the god Quetzalcoatl

The Toltec

- capital city of the Toltec was called Tula, located about 100 km northwest of present-day Mexico City
- Aztec believed the Toltec were masters at creating a refined civilization
- each time the Aztecs lived among new people, they absorbed many of their customs and beliefs

Effects of Other Meso-American Societies on Aztec Cultures

Social Systems

- a hierarchical society with both a noble class, priests, and commoners
- a government with a strong central authority
- use of militaristic practices to build an empire

Religious Beliefs and Practices

- the belief that gods could take on different forms such as the jaguar (an earth mother goddess) and the serpent (a water goddess)
- a belief in many gods, including Quetzalcoatl (the gentle plumed serpent god) and the god of rain Tlaloc
- religious practices that centred on seasonal cycles, emphasizing astronomy and the calendar
- a belief that human sacrifices were necessary to sustain the gods with human hearts and blood



Architecture and Art

- huge pyramid-shaped temples to honour the gods
- beautiful murals, large sculptures, and monuments of both humans and animals, mainly with religious motifs
- the art of fine jewellery making, ceramic pottery, mosaic, metalworking, and featherworks

HOW DID THE AZTEC EMPERORS BECOME THE MOST POWERFUL RULERS IN THE VALLEY OF MEXICO?

- While the Spanish were struggling to unify their kingdoms, the Aztec were establishing an empire.
- when Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, the Aztec controlled most territories left in Meso- America

The Aztec Rise to Power

- Aztec emperors increased their power by creating alliances with other powerful rulers, often through arranged marriages that were direct descendants of the Toltec
- the Aztec gained power and respect in the Valley, they formed a Triple Alliance of the city-states of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Tenochtitlan to fight the rival Tepanec.
- most of the region from the Pacific to the Gulf of Mexico was under the control of the Alliance

Conquering New Societies

- Life in Aztec society developed around a culture of war. The goals of battle were:
 - to seek an honourable defeat for the enemy and then make them pay tribute and provide labour to the empire
 - to gain soldiers for the human sacrifice to the god Huitzilopochtli
- Aztec had a conquering military strategy, first conquered weaker societies around those that were stronger then, they attacked the isolated society
- Aztec did NOT reorganize the societies they defeated
- defeated ruler continued to carry out the local laws and government, customs and beliefs and followed emperor's orders
- if defeated society refused to pay tribute to the Aztec, they killed the people, sparing only the children, children then distributed throughout the empire (ie. as much as 40,000 children)
- When a city-state was defeated, its citizens were required to:
 - promise allegiance to the emperor
 - pay tribute to him in either goods or services
 - worship the god Huitzilopochtli
- when no formal wars were being fought, the Aztec and their allies often challenged the rulers of other regions to participate in battles, this provided opportunities for young warriors to train and improve their skills and to take captives for sacrifices



What Political Structure Developed in the Aztec Empire?

- governing the empire were the nobility, the pipiltin , the emperor was the highest-ranking noble and held the greatest power
- Chief of Internal Affairs was the closest advisor to the emperor and the second in command
- The tlatoque ruled, kept the records, managed the marketplace and resources, general of the military and members of the advisory group, of the major towns and cities and the Tecutin ruled smaller areas
- Priests, advised the emperor, studied religious calendar to determine which days would be lucky

How Did the Spanish Monarchy Become So Powerful?

- During King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella ruled they increased the powers of the throne and decreased the powers of the Cortes (the Spanish parliament).
- To do this, they:
 - centralized government under their control
 - created a more efficient government bureaucracy
 - imposed new taxes
 - took control of the Roman Catholic Church in Spain
 - began the Spanish Inquisition
 - forbid any faith but Roman Catholicism



Reducing the Powers of the Aristocracy

- Cortes (aristocrats) were established to keep the power of the monarchs under control by controlling the national treasury, and needed approval for all major expenditures
- Ferdinand and Isabella reduced the power of the aristocracy by having men not from the aristocracy, selected for the Cortes

- allowed nobles to participate in parliamentary proceedings, but not vote
- reorganized important financial and judicial institutions
- centralized the powers of the government under a Council of State, Finance, and Justice
- for loss of power, the aristocrats were granted huge tracts of land and exempted them from paying taxes
- Ferdinand and Isabella gained support of the merchants and townspeople by helping them financially and with their business and protection - merchants taxes increased to make up the shortfall

Control of the Church

- In 1486, Pope Innocent VIII gave Ferdinand and Isabella the right to choose whomever they wanted to fill Church positions
- the Roman Catholic Church gave up this power and in return, Ferdinand and Isabella agreed to set up the Spanish Inquisition

The Spanish Begin to Build an Empire

- the changes Ferdinand and Isabella made gave them greater authority and better resources to begin a policy of exploration and discovery
- in 1492, Columbus convinced the monarchs to support him in his explorations
- this decision led to Spain becoming the most powerful and wealthy country in Europe in the 16th century
- by the middle of the 1500s, Spain controlled large areas of the Caribbean, the Americas, and parts of Asia and Africa.

What Aspects of Worldviews Are Reflected in Creation Stories?

- societies have creation or origin stories that explain the creation of the world and human beings often provide a way of understanding the religious and spiritual beliefs and customs of a specific society
- these stories were originally told through oral traditions of storytelling and often seen in art and sculpture
- Aztec believed the gods had created and destroyed the world four times.
- Aztec believed they were living in this fifth world, known as the fifth sun, and that it was their duty to keep the sun alive to prevent the destruction of the Earth and its people.
- studying the traditional stories of Aztec, we can learn about their beliefs and gain understanding of the reasons for their behaviour
- Aztec stories reinforce their beliefs that there must be some form of sacrifice in order for the sun to shine and the world to exist and remain in balance
- this belief was an important part of their worldview and led them to perform human sacrifices
- believed the blood of humans was the most precious offering they could give to their gods
- Aztec considered warriors who were sacrificed to the gods to be great heroes
- Captured enemies would all be sacrificed
- Gods and humans worked together to maintain the balance of the universe of the fifth sun

How Did the Aztec and the Spanish Ways of Life Reflect Their Worldviews?

- Aztec society was highly structured
- based on agriculture and trade
- guided by a religion that was part of every aspect of life
- cities were dominated by giant stone pyramids topped by temples where human sacrifices provided the gods with the human blood that the priests and people believed kept their world in balance
- hierarchical system divided into three social classes: upper, middle, and lower:
 - The pipiltin, the upper class, were the ruling class made up of nobles, high-ranking warriors, and high-ranking priests.

- Commoners were divided into two classes: the middle class, and the peasants - provided all the labour to keep the economy of the empire flourishing and made up most of the military
- individual born into a social class generally remained a member of that class

Nobility

- The pipiltin, the upper class, were the ruling class
- top positions in government, the army, and the priesthood
- top noble was the emperor, political ruler, highest-ranking priest
- amount of land each noble family owned was based on their social position in society and the administrative positions they held in the community
- follow a strict code of behaviour
- role models for the commoners
- when they broke the law, they were punished even more severely than a commoner
- held the jobs of administrators, judges, and clerks
- noble warriors could gain entry into the two military orders: Eagle Knights and Jaguar Knights

Commoners

- the middle class, were able to improve their status by gaining recognition in the military or by becoming priests, merchants, artisans, or long-distance traders
- small number of middle class managed to become wealthy through trading
- warriors were next in social status to the nobility, which reflected their importance in the Aztec worldview
- allowed to become priests and fill the more lowly religious positions
- poorest peasants, worked the land of the nobles
- required to build and maintain temples of the cities and the palaces of the nobles
- they guaranteed a piece of land that they could cultivate for life and even pass on to their children
- received a share of the produce after taxes were paid
- lowest in status were the slaves
- no one was born into slavery - could sell himself/herself into slavery if unable to pay a debt or punishment for a crime and could buy back their freedom
- slaves were able to own property and marry, their children were free.



Priests

- all boys could study to become priests
- top-ranking positions in the priesthood were reserved for the upper class
- oversee important religious functions, advise emperor and to offer human sacrifices to the gods
- men in the priesthood did not marry.
- young women could enter the priesthood but were given specific roles to do with honouring goddesses.

Roles of Men and Women

- men and women had different roles
- women were expected to care for the household and family, and could be an artisans, run a business, and control their own property
- women had legal protections, along with a high degree of freedom.
- men did all other physical work and were forced to join the army when soldiers
- men held positions of power
- children work beside their parents age five
- girls married around the mid-teens; boys married in their late teens or early twenties

Education

- education was free for all girls and boys
- taught religious rituals and structured classes of singing, dancing, and music
- rhetoric and the ability to memorize long poems, stories, songs, and histories was important
- separate school systems for children of nobles and those of the middle class and lower classes
- schooling began in the early teens, and students attended classes until they married.

- schools for commoners
- boys and girls were taught separately
- children would learn a craft
- boys were taught occupational skills, history, religious practices, and the characteristics of good citizenship, warrior

- school for nobility lived at their schools
- training to be warriors
- trained for the high offices they would hold as adults
- taught rhetoric, music, history, and traditions, how to govern and advance within the imperial bureaucracy, and how to live wisely
- emphasized self control, humility, and unselfishness, highly valued qualities
- girls taught how to manage the households of their future spouses, spin and weave, morality, religion, history, and tradition.

How Did the Spanish Social Systems Reflect the Spanish Worldview?

- Spanish society, the feudal system remained in place
- 1486 and was then replaced with a seigneurial system of landholding
 - lands given to the nobles by the monarchy were operated as self-sufficient estates
 - Peasants were given sections of land by the lord of an estate to cultivate in return for money, goods, or services
 - right to cultivate the land could be handed down from peasant father to peasant son
 - lord of the estate did not have the right to withdraw the property or to increase the taxes

Nobility

- nobles were powerful, ruled their estates
- huge tracts of land were still in the hands of a small percentage of the population and given to eldest son
- other sons either became clergy or conquistador
- judged people by social position rather than by achievement through hard work, manual labour was frowned upon.

- highest class of nobility — the dukes, marquis, and counts

- lesser nobles were referred to as don
- minor nobles were referred to as the hidalgo were expected to follow a code of behaviour based on courage in battle

Commoners

- Commoners made up 90% of Spain's population
- feudal peasant farmers or herders had the lowest status
- lived and worked on huge estates that belonged to the nobles
- tiny percentage of peasants eventually owned land

- due to Ferdinand and Isabella, a middle class began to grow
- professionals trained in religion, law, medicine, independent merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and traders
- these groups shared the same lifestyles as the nobility

Priests

- Roman Catholic priests were the religious leaders in local **parishes**, Franciscans, Jesuits, or the Dominicans
- better educated and came from wealthier families
- religious orders operated many basic schools for commoners
- parish priests often look for other work to support themselves
- upper clergy had great status and rank, similar to that of the nobility

Roles of Men and Women

- women were expected to marry well and take care of the household
- divorce was forbidden by the Church
- some women became fine writers and artisans
- peasant women would cultivate the land
- no women could hold government positions or be involved in business

Education

- Spain under Moorish control far more tolerant of different religions
- Jews and Muslims in Spain providing an active merchant class and educated elite
- Spanish scholars began to focus on religious studies rather than humanist pursuits
- Roman Catholic Church offered schooling at the elementary level for most children and taught work-related skills (farming and carpentry) or (household skills – cooking/sewing)
- guilds provided training in specific crafts and trades
- noble boys were mostly tutored at home and went to university
- noble girls attended schools of the royal court or private lessons in their homes (taught art, music, and poetry)

How Did the Political and Economic Systems Reflect the Aztec Worldview?

Aztec Political System

- The Aztec emperor, the huey tlatoani, was elected by a Council of Wise Men made up warriors and priests
- head of the government and the highest priest in the land
- decision of sentencing a criminal was his
- position of huey tlatoani was not hereditary, had to prove to the Council that he had the skills to be a good leader

Altepetl

- each person of the Aztec belonged to an altepetl, made up of a grouping of related calpulli (clans)
- similar to an Italian city-state or a domain in Japan
- practised its own customs and beliefs and prayed to its own patron god
- had its own origin stories and recorded history

Role of Priests in the Government

- priests that held high positions were nobility
- decided which days were lucky to go to war or to hold sacrificial ceremonies
- lowly priests were responsible for providing music and directing religious ceremonies

Aztec Economy

Tribute

- based primarily on agriculture

- payment of tribute to the Aztec emperor - support the cities and paid to by conquered societies
- territory located on the borders of the empire was required to protect outlying areas of the empire; this military service would be considered part of its tribute
- tribute could be in the form of food, **cacao beans**, natural resources such as lumber, special crops such as cotton, or beautiful luxury items such as featherwork and precious metals. Huge amounts of food, clothing
- movement of different kinds of products throughout the empire encouraged the development of new businesses and improved the economy
- no coins were used, but cacao beans were often used to purchase products
- marketplace where goods and services could be traded or bartered was another important part of the economy



Farming

- backbone of economy was farming
- products were used for tribute and to pay taxes
- technological innovations such as irrigation and dike systems increased agricultural productivity
- farmers began to plant on terraced hillsides and chinampas (raised land and fertilized by human waste collect at public latrine boats), food production increased.

Other Goods and Services

- marshland farmers worked full time on the chinampas
- inland farmers often had the time to develop a part-time specialization (ie. mined products such as salt)
- producing these local goods eventually developed into **cottage industries** that supplied products for neighbours and other citizens
- other services such as barbers and herbalists and individuals who sold prepared food and drink

Marketplace

- goods that were not used for tribute or taxes went to the markets
- no draft animals such as horses or oxen, nor use of the wheel, all goods were transported by porters or by canoe along the waterways

How Did the Political and Economic Systems of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

Spanish Political System

- king and queen were the highest political power
- god had appointed the monarch, no king or queen could be removed from power
- King and Queen had near absolute power

Spanish Parliament

- Spanish parliament was called the Cortes
- any new legislation was supposed to be approved by the Corte
- king and queen could call and dismiss the Cortes whenever they wished
- Cortes did have some power because it controlled the treasury
- Due to King and Queen reducing the powers of the Cortes meant a weakened parliament



Role of the Church in Government

- Roman Catholic Church closely linked to the monarchy
- pope had the authority to ask members of the clergy to oppose royal actions or decrees
- King and Queen reduced the powers of the Roman Catholic Church and gained the right to place individuals of their own choosing in important positions within the Church

Spanish Economy

- after the first cycle of the Black Death, the population of Spain decreased this resulted in a decline in both agricultural and manufacturing output
- seaports also suffered from labour shortages
- sheep-farmers guild formed a powerful organization called the Mesta
- minimum of agricultural products created a lack of money to support the development of larger industries

- therefore, Spain imported more products than it exported.

Economic Problems

- manual labour, such as farming and running commercial businesses, was not held in high regard by the nobility or by anyone who wanted to gain social prestige
- nobility saw farming as something the lower classes but did like to own land, land would then remain uncultivated
- little investment in agriculture or commercial efforts, the economy of Spain suffered
- nobility did become involved in overseas trading when Spain established its colonies, but Spanish manufacturing could not produce enough products for both local use and export to the colonies
- the colonies increased their own manufacturing production
- over time, huge amounts of gold and silver were exported back to Spain and it became one of the richest and most powerful countries in Europe
- large influx of gold and silver eventually caused massive inflation in Spain and other parts of Europe

How Did the Culture of the Aztec Reflect Their Worldview?

- everyday activities of the Aztec provide insights into their worldview
- their religious beliefs, their architecture, and the arts they supported all show what was important to them
- Aztec worldview and culture evolved without knowledge of any societies
- believed Tenochtitlan was the centre of the universe

Religious Beliefs and Practices

- humans played only a small role in the world
- duty was to fight and die for the gods
- to keep the world order in balance
- believed futures were already determined by the gods, and that their life after death depended on the gods' decisions and living a balanced life
- it was their duty to make sure the sun never died and the Earth survived
- believed in many gods and goddesses (male and female/life and death/creation and destruction)
- each god or goddess was dual in nature, neither purely good nor purely evil
- gods had a physical image, often with both human and animal features
- during religious festivals and ceremonies, individuals were chosen to **impersonate** the gods
- Three gods dominated the Aztec religion: Huitzilopochtli, Tezcatlipoca, and Quetzalcoatl
- each neighbourhood had their personal patron deities
- each house had a shrine where family members would ask the gods for help and make offerings of thanks

Ritual and Sacrifice

- practice of human sacrifice that most collided with the Western worldview of the Spanish
- believed the world was created through sacrifice; their role was to maintain the universe in balance through their rituals and sacrifice
- It was the Aztec view that human behaviour could affect the stability of the universe and that it was through their rituals and sacrifices that the universe could continue to exist.
- Offerings often consisted of different foods, paper, liquid rubber, feathers, grasses, jewels, textiles, and the blood of animals, but the most important offering was human blood
- without human sacrifices, the Earth would dry up and the sun, moon, planets, and stars would not be able to travel across the sky
- human sacrifices were performed on altars at the top of their temples
- the best nourishment for the gods was the still-living hearts of the sacrificed warriors



- some records show that at times, thousands of warriors were sacrificed in a single day.

Medicine Bundles

- among the sacred objects of the Aztec were bundles containing items used in their rituals and ceremonies
- bundles contained objects such as blessed corn, feathers, rubber, and precious stones
- each object referred to an important sacred episode or event
- bundles were carefully guarded, treated with the utmost respect and ritual, and were carried safely with the people whenever they had to migrate

Medicine

- ideas about illness and medicine were a blend of religion, magic, and medicine:
 - • religion — Certain gods were thought to either send illnesses or heal them.
 - • magic — Certain illnesses were thought to be the result of black magic by some sorcerer
 - • medicine — great deal of knowledge of the healing properties of plants and minerals

Books and Codices

- created hundreds of manuscripts, called codices, they had no alphabet
- used a form of picture-writing that included pictographs, ideographs, number symbols, and calendar symbols to record information+
- scribes and priests recorded poetry, history, moral lessons, rituals, tribute lists, governmental records, and business records
- elite were taught to read these books or codices (often written on deerskin, cloth, or ornate paper made from the fibres of the inner bark of fig trees)

Sculpture

- sculpture was religious in nature
- shared a worldview with other Meso- American cultures that divided the universe into three general levels:
 - humans lived on the middle level, Earth
 - levels above and below the ground - statues were often placed below ground level in recognition of the underworld

Architecture

- largest and grandest buildings in any city were the temples
- developed distinct architectural design - the stepped pyramid form
- front of the temple looked west
- sun, during equinox, rose between the two shrines
- the sacrificial stone, on which humans were sacrificed, was at the entrance to Huitzilopochtli's shrine.

Featherwork and Luxury Items

- Aztec prized feathers more than gold - feathers were rare, delicate, and brilliantly coloured
- most prized works were of ceremonial costumes, headdresses, and warrior shields
- luxury items such as jewels and ornaments had no religious importance but were created simply to satisfy the desires of the wealthy

The Importance of Time to the Aztec

- every aspect of Aztec life was coordinated by two calendars
- had a 365-day solar yearly calendar
- they had a main calendar and a second calendar was a ritual calendar based on a 260-day cycle
- each month was named for a god and incorporated a religious festival dedicated to that god
- this was a solar calendar, the festivals closely followed the seasons
- each day was associated with a specific fate that was good, bad, or indifferent - the day on which they were born would affect their destiny

How Did the Culture of the Spanish Reflect Their Worldview?

- culture of much of Spain was influenced by Moorish rule
- Spain was one of the most cultured and literate societies in western Europe
- Christian, Jewish, and Muslim scholars had all contributed
- after the Reconquista ended in 1492, when Jews and Muslims were driven from Spain, the culture of Spain changed.

Religious Beliefs and Practice

- all Spaniards were Roman Catholics, sharing a religious worldview of one God, who was always present in their lives, and of an afterlife in either heaven or hell
- believed that their place in the afterlife depended on whether they had followed religious teachings of the Roman Catholic Church
- Cathedrals, the grandest buildings in any city, were built as places of worship to honour God
- After the Reconquista, Roman Catholicism became the only religious faith you could practice
- Spanish RC often focused on the suffering of Jesus Christ - admired both courage and the willingness of individuals to withstand suffering and sacrifice in support of their principles

Literature

- Latin was the language used by scholars/clergy
- each kingdom had its own vernacular
- Castilian (also known as Spanish) became the language of choice - having one language helped unify the country, developing a common sense of citizenship and nationalism.

Architecture and Sculpture

- architecture was greatly influenced by the Islamic Moors
- beautiful mosaic decorations and inside courtyards modelled after Muslim buildings

Painting

- artists absorbed influences from different cultures, traditions, and religions, but still developed their own artistic styles
- the most impressive Spanish art was beautiful murals and frescoes, most often found on the walls of churches

The Spanish Measurement of Time

- until the year 1582, Europeans followed the Julian calendar that was introduced by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE - year equalled 365 1/4 days including adding an extra day to February every four year
- calendar was first adopted, the **solstices** and equinoxes occurred on the 25th day of the month

Gregorian Calendar

- In 1582, Pope change the dates of the calendar and called the Gregorian calendar
- regulated the ceremonial cycle of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches and, in Europe, became the standard calendar for everyday use and is still used today

How Did Conflicting Worldviews Lead to the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Civilization?

- by 1500s, Spain was had established posts in the Caribbean islands
- exploring the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula (Mexico).
- Aztec Empire had reached great heights of wealth and luxury
- Aztec knew nothing of other civilizations across the seas, but they had receive reports of strange men in large boats

How Did the Ambitions of the Aztec and the Spanish Lead to Conflict?

The Spanish Empire

- Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand, were expanding Spain's influence and prestige by
 - establishing a large empire
 - building national unity
 - increasing its colonies and gaining wealth from any new lands
 - converting non-Christians to Roman Catholicism
- Spain's explorer (Cortes) found a rich, complex civilization never before seen,
- Spain believed that it was theirs to take - it was their right (imperialism)

The Aztec Empire

- Same time, Aztec had conquered most of Meso-America and created a unified civilization
- established military outposts along their borders
- built powerful civilization and continued to
 - expand the empire for the glory of their god Huitzilopochtli
 - receive payments of generous tribute and taxes
 - profit from trade and marketing
 - take captives to be sacrificed to their gods
- Aztec saw Europeans for the first time when Cortés and his conquistadors landed on the coast of the empire in 1519
- Aztec lack of awareness of a different worldview (European worldview) led to tragic consequences

What Was the Aztec Understanding of the Spanish Before Their Arrival?

- Moctezuma became king in 1502, roughly the same time Europeans were arriving
- Spanish had established ports in the Caribbean and heard rumours from the inhabitants of the islands about a wealthy civilization that lived on the mainland
- Aztec heard rumours from the islanders about the Spanish and their ships (they had light skin, long beards, and hair that came only to their ears - descriptions reminded the Aztec of stories of the god Quetzalcoatl)
- Aztec worldview included a belief in the powers of the gods and supernatural signs
- these omens received by the priests and a belief that the god Quetzalcoatl was returning confused Moctezuma and his advisors in how to deal with the Spanish

Omens and Gods

- Aztec worldview affected the way they interpreted natural events, dreams, and unusual happenings
- feared the world would come to an end if its balance was lost and looked for omens or signs
- beliefs about omens and the gods influenced the decisions and behaviours
- Aztec legends told how a god told the people when to expect him – same year as Cortés and the Spanish arrived
- Aztec noted a series of strange and inexplicable omens the previous 10 years forecasting a great calamity
- arrival of Cortés, coincided with the heightened fears of Moctezuma and his people about the future of their world

How Did the Spanish Conquer the Aztec?

The Aztec Meet the Spanish

- Moctezuma heard Spanish had landed
- sent emissaries with gifts of jewels and fine featherworks for the Spanish leader
- hoped giving gifts to Cortés would make him leave

- Aztec believed - an individual who offered the richest gifts was more powerful than the one who received them which meant person receiving the gifts should either submit to that power or depart
- Aztec religious ceremonies in which individuals would dress in the clothing of that specific god and believed the person became the god on Earth when the clothing was worn
- Cortes was given a feathered robe of the god Quetzacoatl, once Cortes put it on the Aztec thought he was the god but Cortes just thought it was a gift
- Moctezuma wanted more proof he was a god, Cortes was given food containing human blood, Cortes didn't eat it for fear of poisoning and therefore confused Moctezuma



This scene from the Lienzo de Tlaxcala portrays the Spaniards and their allies besieged in the palace by Aztec warriors. The defenders group in the courtyard and a cannon is fired against an Aztec formation charging the principal entrance.

The Spanish Learn About the Aztec

- Cortés knew he could not defeat the Aztec with only 500 men - he needed a strategy
- learned that many city-states disliked being dominated by the Aztec therefore used Aztec political rival to his advantage
- eight months, Cortés gathered allies by means of trickery and force

Using the Tlaxcalans and Cholulas

- Tlaxcalans were enemies of the Aztec and also did not want to be under Spanish rule
- attacked the Spanish, but Cortés held them off with guns and steel armour
- Tlaxcalans decided it was in their best interests to make an alliance with the Spanish

The First Meeting Between Cortés and Moctezuma:

Two Worldviews

- 1519, two leaders with conflicting worldviews met
- Cortés was determined to conquer the empire for his king, his God, and for riches, no matter how many lives were lost
- Cortés sent messages to Aztec saying that he was coming in peace and wished to meet the emperor to extend his greetings
- Cortés met Moctezuma on November 8, 1519
- Moctezuma greeted Cortés and addressed him if he were a god, Quetzalcoatl.

Records of the First Meeting

- Thousands of Aztec warriors protected Moctezuma and could have killed Cortés
- but Cortés and his men were treated royally and given luxurious accommodations
- Moctezuma toured them around Tenochtitlan and were amazed at the marketplace and palaces
- Cortés waited for an opportunity - within one week Cortés took Moctezuma hostage
- Cortés replaced the Aztec idols in the palace where he was staying with statues of Roman Catholic saints
- Aztec people were disgusted with the Spanish setting up their statues and felt Moctezuma was weak and had let down his people for letting them do it. They deserted him, leaving him hostage with the Spanish.

Population in 1500

- population of the Aztec Empire in 1500 is estimated to have been approximately 5 000 000.
- 10% and 20% of the population lived in Tenochtitlan

- largest city the Spanish had ever seen (London had a population of about 100 000, Florence about 60 000, and Paris about 300 000)

How Did the Battles for the Empire Unfold?

Massacre of Unarmed Aztec

- next six months, Cortés and his men remained in Tenochtitlan
- tensions between the Spanish and the Aztec increased
- Cortés received a message from Spanish Governor - upset with Cortes and was to arrest him
- Cortés left Tenochtitlan and left Pedro de Alvarado in charge
- Aztec main annual festival was held and Alvarado and his men massacred the unarmed worshippers
- Aztec were outraged – they fought the Spanish so ferociously that the Spanish had to retreat
- chance of a peaceful agreement between the Spanish and the Aztec was gone

Noche Triste (Sorrowful Night)

- Cortés and his allies, the Tlaxcalans, defeated the Spanish who had been sent to arrest him
- Cortés returned to Tenochtitlan, ordered Moctezuma to speak to his people to persuade them to let the Spanish return in peace
- Moctezuma was seriously hurt by stones hurled at him - died few days later
- new Huey Tlatoani elected and continued the attack
- June 1520, the Spanish tried to escape in the middle of the night, but the Aztec discovered them and attacked
- Spanish were carrying stolen gold, unwilling to give up the gold, many were quickly killed or drowned
- 700 Spanish and 2000 to 3000 Tlaxcalans — were killed



An Unforeseen Enemy

- Aztec began dying from smallpox
- half the city population of Tenochtitlan may have died from smallpox
- new Aztec leader died from smallpox 80 days after the battle

The Final Battle

- Cortés returned to Tenochtitlan with his allies, (Tlaxcalans and Texcoco - members of the Triple Alliance)
- Aztec had no allies, half the population already dead, defending against the Spanish became difficult
- Aztec in Tenochtitlan withstood the siege for 75 days
- Aztec Empire was crumbling, waterways block preventing food and water from reaching the city
- last group of Aztec surrendered on August 13, 1521
- Aztec Huey Tlatoani, Cuauhtemoc, was taken prisoner and hanged
- great Aztec Empire was no more
- Cortés finally took over the city - Spanish destroyed the city
- 1522 - less than three years after he arrived, Cortés became governor and captain-general of New Spain

Why Did Moctezuma and Cortés Make the Decisions They Did?

Moctezuma and the Aztec

- Moctezuma's decision making were made within a worldview that saw everything as being affected by the gods and every action of humans affecting the gods and the balance of the world
 - believed the stories about the god Quetzalcoatl (coming of Cortés and the conquistadors)
 - belief that the omens/bad luck would come to pass
 - Moctezuma's belief was that if Cortés was indeed the god Quetzalcoatl, he dared not do anything that would show disrespect to him therefore welcomed Cortés
 - Aztec had no idea of the motives of the Spanish
 - Aztec view of warfare was very different, their objective was to:
 - negotiate a takeover of the desired territory,
 - negotiations failed, conduct a war
 - war had specific rules
 - aim was not to kill, but only to capture them
 - captives were then turned into slaves or sacrificial victims
 - did not destroy the property
 - Moctezuma did not understand the ruthless, conquering behaviour of the Spanish
 - Aztec did not understand the Spanish desire for gold
 - stone-bladed weapons of the Aztec were no match to the horses, guns, and steel swords of the Spanish
 - smallpox epidemic was the final blow to the morale of the Aztec - disease was will of the gods, Aztec believed that their world was coming to an end.



Cortés and the Spanish

- Reconquista, the Spanish conquistadors develop **confrontation** and religious intolerance as normal daily life
- believed that their culture and religion were superior to any other
- Cortés had strong religious beliefs – only one god and religion Roman Catholic Church - motivated
- Cortés was appalled at the Aztec practice of human sacrifice
- motivated by a desire for the gold, silver
- motto of the conquistadors was “For God, Glory, and Gold.”
- Spanish warfare was very different - planned surprise attacks and were interested in killing the enemy in order to defeat them
- used existing political rivalries of the Aztec to his advantage
- used a divide-and-conquer strategy that offset his being so outnumbered by the Aztec

The Most Useful Weapons — Information and Communication

- Cortés needed interpreters to help win over his allies and to communicate
- Cortés had two invaluable interpreters:
 - La Malinche, a local woman who was named Dona Marina, the property of a ruler in one of the coastal areas who gave her to Cortés as a gift
 - Spanish sailor, Geronimo de Aguilar, had been shipwrecked on the Mexican coast and was rescued by Cortés after living with the Maya for many years
- Spanish knew that interpreters were essential to their military conquest, used as guides, communicators, and military information and cultural information
- without the help of Dona Marina, the Spanish Conquest of the Aztec would likely not have been achieved
- She provided Cortés with detailed information about the Aztec Empire, its worldview, and the possible ways Moctezuma would react to events

Spanish Treatment of the Aztec After the Conquest

- In 1521, Cortés claimed the land of the Aztec for the Spanish crown and named it New Spain
- conquistadors were given huge tracts of land, including control of all its inhabitants
- conquistadors were the new nobility of New Spain - they would not do manual labour themselves
- Aztec forced to work as slave labourers for the landholders
- Queen Isabella died in 1504 – left a will that stated that Aztec people should be treated justly, not abused
- 1512, King Ferdinand enacted laws that called for fair treatment of the Aztecs - laid down specific rules to prevent abuse of the workers:
 - Aztec people could not be used to carry goods like pack animals
 - Children under 14 and pregnant women were not to do heavy work in the mines
 - prohibited from being beat or whipped

Note: *laws were frequently ignored and not enforced*

- Spanish wiped out Aztec culture, religion, arts, and sciences were destroyed - codices, sculpture, and other records were burned or smashed
- destroyed Aztec Temples and used the stones to build a Roman Catholic cathedral
- forced Aztec slave labour to build a new Spanish city on the site of Tenochtitlan: Mexico City - filled in and built over all of the lakes
- Spanish continued the tribute system that the Aztec had used
- conquistadors gained immense wealth - gold and silver mines of the colony made Spain, the wealthiest in Europe.

Conversion

- convert the population to Christianity as quickly as possible
- churches built
- images of the Virgin Mary, Christ, and Roman Catholic saints were placed in the new churches
- Aztec people adopted the Christian God, common practice in their own worldview to have more than one god
- RC priests established schools and hospitals to serve the communities
- Aztec people farmed the surrounding areas to produce food for the landholders and for export to Spain
- diseases continued to kill, often wiping out entire villages
- In 1821, after 300 years, Mexico finally regained its independence from Spain



Father Bartolome de Las Casas

- (1474–1566), a Dominican friar, strongest defender of the Aztec peoples of New Spain
 - improve conditions for the Indigenous peoples when he saw the way they were being treated by the Spanish landholders
 - returned to Spain to promote his cause and became known as the “Protector of the Indies.”
 - Largely because of his pressure, Spain passed *New Laws of the Indies for the Good Treatment and Preservation of the Indians* in 1542
 - new laws abolished Indian slavery

Adaptation to a New Society

- Aztec nobles began to adapt Spanish ways
- learned to speak and write Spanish and were able to document Aztec history and traditional culture
- conquistadors settled their land grants, many took Aztec women as their wives
- people of mixed blood were called mestizos (Aztec and Spanish)
- formed a culture that grew into modern Mexico

What Records Detail Aztec Life and Conflict with the Spanish?

Archaeological Finds

- Spanish tried to destroy all physical evidence of the Aztec way of life, especially their religion
- Aztec artifacts and buildings were either reworked or built over
- Aztec sights are still being discovered today

Spanish Documents

- conquistadors and clergy recorded information about the Aztec
- reports and letters, kept diaries, and wrote entire encyclopedias about the Aztec
- Cortés wrote five letters detailing Tenochtitlan and its people

Aztec Documents

- Aztec created hand-painted manuscripts called codices (singular: codex) recording histories, religious information, and **genealogies**
- 11 and 15 codices survive

