

Aztec empire

[History](#), [Empires](#)



Aztec Empire The Aztec empire, the Native American which ruled much of what is now Mexico from about 1428 until 1521, has been one of the most prominent ancient empires in the history of the mankind. Originated as a Triple alliance between the city-states Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan in 1427, the Aztec empire was a tribute empire based in Tenochtitlan, and it extended its power throughout Mesoamerica in the late post-classic period. Significantly, the Aztecs began their rise to predominance after the decline of the Maya and this civilization represents Mesoamerica's Romans. Although the rich Aztec civilization started a century earlier, the establishment of the empire represents the highest point in the development of the civilization. In the Aztec native historical accounts, the evolution of the Aztec civilization is realized as a rags-to-riches story of the sudden rise of the Nahuatl speakers from obscurity to power. " The rags-to-riches theme centers on the Mexica people, following them from their origin as a simple nomadic tribe in the northern desert, their migration to the Valley of Mexico, the founding of Tenochtitlan, and their rise to power as the lords of the Aztec empire." (Smith, 28) It is fundamental to comprehend that, as the native historical accounts suggest, the genius and accomplishments of the Mexica and their leaders were central to the rise of Aztec civilization. This paper makes a reflective exploration of the historical accounts of the Aztec empire in order to comprehend the rise to power, the organizational governance and the fall of the empire. In a profound investigation of the rise of the Aztec empire to power, it becomes lucid that the rich Aztec civilization gained predominance after the decline of the Maya. The Toltec capital of Tula was destroyed in 1200 A. D. and none of the city-states in the rich Valley of Mexico was able

to become an empire by conquering enough territory. Into this confused state of affairs arrived a small tribe of Chichimec who came from a place called Aztlan and called themselves Aztecs. They set up the new Aztec city called Tenochtitlan which became a powerful center of governance in the region and the Aztecs had become a rising power by 1325. The soldiers of the Aztecs who were noted for their bravery fought in many wars between the city-states in the label of mercenaries. “ Finally the Aztecs became a great power by taking over the three cities that surrounded their island city. They did so by helping one city in her war against another city and then suddenly changing allies in the middle of the war.” (Stanton and Hyma, 327) Therefore, the rise of the Aztec empire to power was mainly due to the decline of several city-states which came up after the fall of the Maya and it acquired supremacy over the city-states by receiving yearly tribute, etc. however, the growth of the Aztec empire as a great power was marked by the Triple alliance between the city-states of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan. This alliance was part of a strategy to defeat the Tepanec state of Azcapotzalco, but proved to be significant episode in the rise of the Aztec empire as a glorious power. As the Aztecs of Tenochtitlan became more powerful, the other cities became subject to the Aztec rule and the supremacy of the empire was widely recognized. “ By the 1500s Aztec territory stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf Coasts and southward to the border of present-day Guatemala. There were 38 provinces that sent yearly tribute to the Aztec capital.” (Stanton and Hyma, 327) Significantly, the Aztec Empire was greatly organized and strong at the height of its power, although the element of fear was part and parcel of the rule of the

Aztecs. It is fundamental to realize that the Aztec Empire reached the height of its supremacy by 1519, the eve of the Spanish conquest and it developed an effective means of organizational governance. It was through their effective system of administration that the Aztecs ruled over hundreds of cities, thousands of towns and villages and millions of people spread over many thousands of miles. The role of the Emperor Montezuma, or 'Motecuhzoma', is significant in an analysis of the governance of the empire and his authoritarian rule was, in part, responsible for the fall of the empire. Emperor Montezuma became the ruler of Aztec empire in 1502, at the prime of the empire. " From the beginning of his reign he continued the Aztec (Mexico) expansion of an already vast theocratic empire via conquest of neighboring Mesoamerican cities and tribes, and added new levels of authoritarianism to Aztec governance... The nature of Montezuma's rule helps explain why the Spanish were able to muster so many anti- Aztec allies." (Nolan, 601) A profound analysis of the fall of the Aztec Empire confirms that several factors contributed to the weakening and the fall of the empire, and the most obvious, immediate factors include the ritual Aztec sacrifice, religion, disease, and the tactics of the Spanish army. It is fundamental to recognize that religion and the ritual Aztec sacrifice played a huge part in the fall of the Aztec empire, along with disease, and the tactics of the Spanish army. The fact that the Aztec Empire was deeply undermined by many conflicts of religious and political nature is central to an understanding of the Spanish conquest was so easy. " When word of an impressive agricultural civilization in central Mexico reached Spanish settlers in the Caribbean, Hernan Cortes organized his unauthorized expedition to

explore the area. From April 1519 to August 1521, Cortes and his supporters were able to march from Veracruz to Tenochtitlan, capture Montezuma II, and bring down the Aztec Empire.” (Mahoney, 56) Therefore, it is observable that various essential factors were responsible for the rapid and easy fall of the Aztec Empire. In conclusion, it is important to realize that rise, expansion, governance, and fall of the Aztec Empire have become central episode in the history of humankind. It is especially notable that the rise, growth, and fall of the Aztec Empire have happened at an astoundingly rapid pace and this empire has written one of the most dramatic episodes in human history. Works Cited Mahoney, James. Colonialism and Postcolonial Development: Spanish America in Comparative Perspective. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2010. P 56. Nolan, Cathal J. The Age of Wars of Religion, 1000-1650: An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilization. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group. 2006. P 601. Smith, Michael Ernest. The Aztecs. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. 2003. P 28. Stanton, Mary and Albert Hyma. Streams of Civilization: Earliest Times to the Discovery of the New World. Illinois: Christian Liberty Press. 2000. P 327.