

# The aztecs what should history say flashcard



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What should be most remembered about the ancient Aztec society? The Aztecs created a grand society in Tenochtitlan (present -day Mexico City) from 1350 to 1519. Justification for the founding of a city in Central Mexico can be explained by Document 2, where the Spanish Friar Diego Duran speaks of a gods order for them to settle in a land where an eagle is perched upon a cactus.

Although this Document provides the reason for settlement, all of the information may not be entirely true because it was written by a Spanish Friar Diego Duran as the Priest Cuauhtlequetzqui was speaking and he may have glorified the speech and put some of his own thought into it. The Aztecs had a huge population and had many progressive ideas. From Tenochtitlan, the empire stretched outward and expanded all the way from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. What should history say? History should say the Aztecs had a great society with an extremely successful military, innovative agriculture, and organized economy.

They were very successful in conquest and became prosperous from the lands they conquered. The Aztecs also had brilliant advances in agriculture. They found solutions to farming on the swampy lands in which they lived that were not suited for harvesting crops. Aztec society was connected through many series of roads and a centralized market. When speaking of Aztec history the amount of excessive sacrifices are normally brought to attention which makes their society seem inferior and brutal, these sacrifices were simply only an aspect of their religious belief and should not be emphasized to the extent that they are.

The Aztec conquests were very successful and had several benefits.

Conquest was very important as pictured in document 2 as the drawings of Aztec warriors subdue their enemies and burn enemy temples. The military was very fierce which allowed them to conquer many lands. " Most territories shown on the map were acquired by force" (Document 1). These warriors were extremely obedient, dedicated, and disciplined to the military. They committed to the military and fought for what they believed in which brought them great strength.

If the military did not have the fierce warriors that it did, the Aztecs would have never expanded and became the huge society that it was. The Aztec territories expanded by great amounts from 1427 to 1520. Tenochtitlan was the center of the empire and it expanded in all directions. By 1502, the empire stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. One of the Aztecs main objectives in conquest was to demand tribute from the lands they conquered. Tributes were payments in goods or services rather than currency.

Some items that were acquired through tributes included bowls, honey, maize, feathers, clothes, and axes (Document 10). These payments were very important to the Aztec society because they provided the economy and people with a wealth of disposable income to be used and circulated back into the economy along with items to be traded in the marketplace. Tributes allowed the Aztecs to become very prosperous and wealthy. The Aztecs had a very fierce and successful military which allowed them to conquer lands, expand the empire, and become extremely wealthy in the process.

Aztec agriculture was exceptionally innovative and provided the society with a wealth of crops to be used for food and trade. The climate in the lands that were settled by the Aztecs was very unpredictable, so the Aztecs created a calendar which helped them schedule their harvests. The calendar consisted of 51 boxes of year signs which rotated every four years. These boxes made up the 52-year calendar (Document 2). Aztecs were innovative and found useful solutions to problems that would otherwise prohibit agriculture in that area.

In order to harvest crops in the swampy lands in which they lived, the Aztecs needed to find a way to farm their crops on land that actually supported growth. The solution to this issue was the construction of chinampas.

Chinampas were brilliant “floating islands that rested in reed frames that were anchored to the bottom of the lake” (Document 8). These man-made islands were extraordinarily advanced and approximately twenty thousand acres of chinampas were constructed. The Aztec’s solution of building chinampas was the greatest agricultural advancement of Aztec society.

They allowed farmers to harvest crops in lands where excess water hindered any growth in regular soil. Farmers grew their important crops in rows on the chinampas such as maize, beans, and squash. Once the maize was harvested, women worked alongside men to “grind and roll” the maize into tortillas or other maize products (Document 9). This mural by Diego Rivera emphasized the importance of women in creating foods to be used in the household and to be traded. The Aztec’s agricultural advancements were outstanding and the society could have never functioned without the advancements such as chinampas.

The Aztec economy was extremely advanced and organized as a whole. Maps were constructed to plot the ideas for the city as well as other things such as chinampas. In document 2, the map of Tenochtitlan is very organized and contains many of the key components of the city. Plans for chinampas included locations of canals, footpaths, and also contained the name of each owner on the chinampas. This allowed the people to accurately build the chinampas and could also be used as a reference as to who owned each island.

The city of Tenochtitlan was connected with its sister city of Tlatelolco and other places as shown in document 4. The roads allowed easy transportation and trading of goods which brought even more wealth into the city. The people of Tenochtitlan came together to commerce and trade in a central market. This was a grand market and was exceptionally organized considering the size and masses of the people who formed it. "Some of the soldiers said that no large a market place and so full of people, and so well regulated and arranged, they had never beheld before" (Document 11).

This document showed the importance of a central location such as a market for trade. Aztecs helped develop the marketplace into what it became by using their wealth and trading tribute items. The Spanish conquistadors were biased against the Aztec marketplace because it was way larger and more organized than they could have ever expected from a society who they thought of as uncivilized. Nonetheless, Aztec economy was very advanced and organized which contributed to its greatness. The Aztecs had maps to plan out the city, a mass connection of roads, and common place for trade and commerce.

The sacrifices that were required by Aztec religion should not be emphasized by historians any more than the greatness of their society. Instead, the successful conquests, agriculture, and organization should be given more attention. Although the society was very successful and advanced, it could all possibly be a result of the sacrifices. Maybe the sacrifices could be explained as a form of population control (document 7) to provide room for expansion. The successes of the society were direct results of the organization of the economy.

The military was organized and had fierce warriors, agricultural feats brought along prosperity, and convenience of communication along roads and in the market place centralized the society. The Aztecs have a lasting impact on society today and should be remembered as a wonderful society with many advancements. If advancements were made today comparable to those made in Aztec society, we could benefit greatly. The Aztecs had a marvelous society and should be considered comparable to any other great society such as the Romans.