

1: 10 Fascinating Facts About the Aztecs - Listverse

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Mysteries of the Ancient World: On August 13, the city fell into ruins. Moctezuma II , the 9th emperor of the Aztecs, welcomed the Spanish explorers not knowing that these explorers would be the downfall of their civilization. They often took prisoners so that they could be sacrificed to their gods as Aztec gods were very important to them. The most important gods were: Inti, the sun god, Quilla the moon goddess wife of the sun , and Illapa god of thunder, who the Incas believed controlled the rain. Archaeologists can only apply guesswork through their findings as how important the city of Machu Picchu was during the Inca period of history. The Mayans worshipped many different gods. A calendar site showing American history in a unique way: Birthdays of important people in American history and important events in American history can be viewed; interactive - browse through it and display details on a specific person or event. A printer friendly version of the calendar is also available. Discover history through objects, photographs, interactive timelines: Complete archived collections - excellent! Each month the History Channel takes new explorations into the past and puts them on display for you, utilizing state-of-the-art interactive technology; listen to speeches drawn from the most famous broadcasts and recordings of the Twentieth Century. The History Channel Time Machine brings you to a different speech every day; trivia quiz; fact of the day; games. What better way to learn about and appreciate the history of the United States than through viewing the illustrations of artists from the last century and a half! The images are all in the public domain and are free for anyone to use in any way after viewing the Terms of Use. This website is a work in progress and new images are always being added. Present topics for images include: Encyclopedia Smithsonian features answers to frequently asked questions about the Smithsonian and links to Smithsonian resources from A to Z Information Please: Find famous people biographies fast! This site also lists links to more information about each person.

2: Aztecs - HISTORY

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The Mexica supplied the Tepaneca with warriors for their successful conquest campaigns in the region and received part of the tribute from the conquered city states. In this way, the political standing and economy of Tenochtitlan gradually grew. In 1378, Azcapotzalco initiated a war against the Acolhua of Texcoco and killed their ruler Ixtlilxochitl. Tezozomoc died in 1418, and his sons began a struggle for rulership of Azcapotzalco. The Mexica were now in open war with Azcapotzalco and Itzcoatl petitioned for an alliance with Nezahualcoyotl, son of the slain Texcocan ruler Ixtlilxochitl against Maxtla. The Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco and Tlacopan besieged Azcapotzalco, and in 1487 they destroyed the city and sacrificed Maxtla. Through this victory Tenochtitlan became the dominant city state in the Valley of Mexico, and the alliance between the three city-states provided the basis on which the Aztec Empire was built. These states had an economy based on highly productive chinampa agriculture, cultivating human-made extensions of rich soil in the shallow lake Xochimilco. Itzcoatl then undertook further conquests in the valley of Morelos, subjecting the city state of Cuauhnahuac today Cuernavaca. The accession of a new ruler in the dominant city state was often an occasion for subjected cities to rebel by refusing to pay tribute. This meant that new rulers began their rule with a coronation campaign, often against rebellious tributaries, but also sometimes demonstrating their military might by making new conquests. Motecuzoma tested the attitudes of the cities around the valley by requesting laborers for the enlargement of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan. Only the city of Chalco refused to provide laborers, and hostilities between Chalco and Tenochtitlan would persist until the 1520s. Motecuzoma therefore initiated a state of low-intensity warfare against these three cities, staging minor skirmishes called "Flower Wars" Nahuatl *xochiyaoyotl* against them, perhaps as a strategy of exhaustion. His brother Tlacaélel served as his main advisor Nahuatl languages: Cihuacoatl and he is considered the architect of major political reforms in this period, consolidating the power of the noble class Nahuatl languages: Axayacatl also conquered the independent Mexica city of Tlatelolco, located on the northern part of the island where Tenochtitlan was also located. The Toluca valley was a buffer zone against the powerful Tarascan state in Michoacan, against which Axayacatl turned next. In the major campaign against the Tarascans Nahuatl languages: Michhuahqueh in 1479 the Aztec forces were repelled by a well organized defense. Axayacatl was soundly defeated in a battle at Tlaximaloyan today Tajimaroa, losing most of his 32,000 men and only barely escaping back to Tenochtitlan with the remnants of his army. Tizoc died suddenly in 1482, and it has been suggested that he was poisoned by his brother and war leader Ahuizotl who became the next tlatoani. His successful coronation campaign suppressed rebellions in the Toluca valley and conquered Jilotepec and several communities in the northern Valley of Mexico. A second campaign to the gulf coast was also highly successful. He began an enlargement of the Great Temple of Tenochtitlan, inaugurating the new temple in 1493. For the inauguration ceremony the Mexica invited the rulers of all their subject cities, who participated as spectators in the ceremony in which an unprecedented number of war captives were sacrificed – some sources giving a figure of 84,000 prisoners sacrificed over four days. Probably the actual figure of sacrifices was much smaller, but still numbering several thousands. Ahuizotl also constructed monumental architecture in sites such as Calixtlahuaca, Malinalco and Tepoztlan. After a rebellion in the towns of Alahuiztlan and Oztoticpac in Northern Guerrero he ordered the entire population executed, and repopulated with people from the valley of Mexico. He also constructed a fortified garrison at Oztuma defending the border against the Tarascan state. His early rule did not hint at his future fame. He succeeded to the rulership after the death of Ahuizotl. He began his rule in standard fashion, conducting a coronation campaign to demonstrate his skills as a leader. He attacked the fortified city of Nopallan in Oaxaca and subjected the adjacent region to the empire. An effective warrior, Moctezuma maintained the pace of conquest set by his predecessor and subjected large areas in Guerrero, Oaxaca, Puebla and even far south along the Pacific and Gulf coasts, conquering the province of Xoconochco in Chiapas. He also consolidated the class structure of Aztec society, by making it harder for commoners

Nahuatl languages: He also instituted a strict sumptuary code limiting the types of luxury goods that could be consumed by commoners. At this point, the power balance had shifted towards the Spaniards who now held Motecuzoma as a prisoner in his own palace. During the fighting, Moctezuma was killed, either by the Spaniards who killed him as they fled the city or by the Mexica themselves who considered him a traitor. He ruled only 80 days, perhaps dying in the smallpox epidemic, although early sources do not give the cause. After the siege and complete destruction of the Aztec capital, he was captured on 13 August, and marked the start of Spanish hegemony in central Mexico. His death marked the end of a tumultuous era in Aztec political history.

Political and social organization

Main articles: Class in Aztec society, Aztec society, and Aztec slavery

Folio from the Codex Mendoza showing a commoner advancing through the ranks by taking captives in war. Each attire can be achieved by taking a certain number of captives. The most powerful nobles were called lords

Nahuatl languages: Their works were an important source of income for the city. Some macehualtin were landless and worked directly for a lord

Nahuatl languages: When a warrior took a captive he accrued the right to use certain emblems, weapons or garments, and as he took more captives his rank and prestige increased. Women in Aztec civilization

Folio from the Codex Mendoza showing the rearing and education of Aztec boys and girls, how they were instructed in different types of labor, and how they were punished for misbehavior

The Aztec family pattern was bilateral, counting relatives on the fathers and mothers side of the family equally, and inheritance was also passed both to sons and daughters. This meant that women could own property just as men, and that women therefore had a good deal of economic freedom from their spouses. Nevertheless, Aztec society was highly gendered with separate gender roles for men and women. Men were expected to work outside of the house, as farmers, traders, craftsmen and warriors, whereas women were expected to take the responsibility of the domestic sphere. Women could however also work outside of the home as small-scale merchants, doctors, priests and midwives. This situation has led some scholars to describe Aztec gender ideology as an ideology not of a gender hierarchy, but of gender complementarity, with gender roles being separate but equal. Nobles were also often polygamous, with lords having many wives. Polygamy was not very common among the commoners and some sources describe it as being prohibited. Each altepetl was led by a ruler, a tlatoani, with authority over a group of nobles and a population of commoners. The altepetl included a capital which served as a religious center, the hub of distribution and organization of a local population which often lived spread out in minor settlements surrounding the capital. Altepetl were also the main source of ethnic identity for the inhabitants, even though Altepetl were frequently composed of groups speaking different languages. Each altepetl would see itself as standing in a political contrast to other altepetl polities, and war was waged between altepetl states. In this way Nahuatl speaking Aztecs of one Altepetl would be solidary with speakers of other languages belonging to the same altepetl, but enemies of Nahuatl speakers belonging to other competing altepetl states. In the basin of Mexico, altepetl was composed of subdivisions called calpolli, which served as the main organizational unit for commoners. In Tlaxcala and the Puebla valley, the altepetl was organized into teccalli units headed by a lord

Nahuatl languages: A calpolli was at once a territorial unit where commoners organized labor and land use, since land was not in private property, and also often a kinship unit as a network of families that were related through intermarriage. Calpolli leaders might be or become members of the nobility, in which case they could represent their calpolli's interests in the altepetl government. Smith estimates that a typical altepetl had from 10, to 15, inhabitants, and covered an area between 70 and square kilometers. In the Morelos valley, altepetl sizes were somewhat smaller. Smith argues that the altepetl was primarily a political unit, made up of the population with allegiance to a lord, rather than as a territorial unit. He makes this distinction because in some areas minor settlements with different altepetl allegiances were interspersed.

Government

The Aztec Empire was ruled by indirect means. Like most European empires, it was ethnically very diverse, but unlike most European empires, it was more of a system of tribute than a single system of government. Ethnohistorian Ross Hassig has argued that Aztec empire is best understood as an informal or hegemonic empire because it did not exert supreme authority over the conquered lands; it merely expected tributes to be paid and exerted force only to the degree it was necessary to ensure the payment of tribute. The hegemonic nature of the Aztec empire can be seen in the fact that generally local rulers were restored to their positions once their city-state was

conquered, and the Aztecs did not generally interfere in local affairs as long as the tribute payments were made and the local elites participated willingly. Such compliance was secured by establishing and maintaining a network of elites, related through intermarriage and different forms of exchange. Such strategic provinces were often exempt from tributary demands. The Aztecs even invested in those areas, by maintaining a permanent military presence, installing puppet-rulers, or even moving entire populations from the center to maintain a loyal base of support. Some provinces were treated as tributary provinces, which provided the basis for economic stability for the empire, and strategic provinces, which were the basis for further expansion. These were small polities ruled by a hereditary leader tlatoani from a legitimate noble dynasty. The Early Aztec period was a time of growth and competition among altepetl. Even after the confederation of the Triple Alliance was formed in and began its expansion through conquest, the altepetl remained the dominant form of organization at the local level. Florentine Codex As all Mesoamerican peoples, Aztec society was organized around maize agriculture. The humid environment in the Valley of Mexico with its many lakes and swamps permitted intensive agriculture. The main crops in addition to maize were beans, squashes, chilies and amaranth. Particularly important for agricultural production in the valley was the construction of chinampas on the lake, artificial islands that allowed the conversion of the shallow waters into highly fertile gardens that could be cultivated year round. Chinampas are human-made extensions of agricultural land, created from alternating layers of mud from the bottom of the lake, and plant matter and other vegetation. These raised beds were separated by narrow canals, which allowed farmers to move between them by canoe. Chinampas were extremely fertile pieces of land, and yielded, on average, seven crops annually. On the basis of current chinampa yields, it has been estimated that one hectare 2. While most of the farming occurred outside the densely populated areas, within the cities there was another method of small-scale farming. Each family had their own garden plot where they grew maize, fruits, herbs, medicines and other important plants. When the city of Tenochtitlan became a major urban center, water was supplied to the city through aqueducts from springs on the banks of the lake, and they organized a system that collected human waste for use as fertilizer. Through intensive agriculture the Aztecs were able to sustain a large urbanized population. The lake was also a rich source of proteins in the form of aquatic animals such as fish, amphibians, shrimp, insects and insect eggs, and water fowl. The presence of such varied sources of protein meant that there was little use for domestic animals for meat only turkeys and dogs were kept , and scholars have calculated that there was no shortage of protein among the inhabitants of the Valley of Mexico. Apart from taking care of domestic food production, women weaved textiles from agave fibers and cotton. Men also engaged in craft specializations such as the production of ceramics and of obsidian and flint tools , and of luxury goods such as beadwork , featherwork and the elaboration of tools and musical instruments. Sometimes entire calpollis specialized in a single craft, and in some archeological sites large neighborhoods have been found where apparently only a single craft speciality was practiced. Copper products were generally imported from the Tarascans of Michoacan.

3: Aztecs - Wikipedia

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Share Shares One hundred years before its fall, the Aztec Empire went through an incredible change. From then on, the Aztecs lived in service of the god of war. Human sacrifice became a massive part of Aztec society, with hundreds of thousands of people slaughtered each year as offerings to the gods. Usually, the Aztecs used enemies whom they had defeated in war as offerings. But there were only so many wars to be fought and only so many enemies to capture. They needed more victims. The Aztecs made a deal to use the neighboring city-state of Tlaxcala like a farm for humans. The two armies organized staged battles just to capture prisoners for human sacrifice. It was a mutual agreement by both sides. They understood that this was their part of the bargain, and they would allow themselves to be led to their deaths. In fact, when the Spanish came and tried to free Aztec prisoners, some were furious that they had been robbed of the honor of a godly death. Criminals and debtors were also sent to the altar in disgrace. Others signed up eagerly, wanting the honor of dying for their gods. By tradition, whole groups of prostitutes willingly signed up to be sacrificed to the goddess of love. During a drought, some Aztecs resorted to selling their children into slavery for ears of maize. And if a slave was sold twice, they could become a gift to the gods. He needed smooth, slim skin and long, straight hair. For the next year, this man would be treated like a god. He would be dressed up like the god Tezcatlipoca. His skin would be painted black, and he would wear a flower crown, a seashell breastplate, and lots of jewelry. The man would be given four beautiful wives to do with as he pleased. He was only asked to walk through the town playing a flute and smelling flowers so that the people could honor him. When 12 months had passed, he would walk up the stairs of a great pyramid, breaking his flutes as he climbed to the top. As an adoring crowd watched, a priest would help him lie down on a long altar made of stone. Afterward, they would pick a new Tezcatlipoca and start all over again. A priest would stand over him, holding a knife with a blade of volcanic glass. The priest would hold the heart up high for all to see. Then he would dash it to pieces against the sacrificial stone. The lifeless body would be rolled down the steps of the pyramid, where butchers were waiting below to dismember the body piece by piece. The skull would be removed and placed on a rack along with the skulls of the other sacrificed dead. Then the flesh from the body would be cooked into meals and fed to the nobles. Other times, enough was prepared for the whole city, and every person present would partake in a shared act of ritualistic cannibalism. The bones were then fashioned into tools, musical instruments, and weapons. At least one dish they used in these ceremonies still exists today: In the time of the Aztecs, this was a soup prepared with thigh of a sacrificed prisoner and served to the emperor. Today, the dish is made with pork instead of human flesh, but the taste is pretty much the same. When the Christians forced the Aztecs to switch to pig meat, they reported that it tasted just like human beings. Wolfgang Sauber Not every sacrifice was normal. There were exceptional times when things were done differently. Sometimes, the methods were different. Other times, the difference was the sheer volume. The greatest was during the reconsecration of the Great Pyramid of Tenochtitlan. The Aztecs had spent years building up the temples in their capital city, and in , the Great Pyramid was complete. They held a massive celebration to inaugurate their great templeâ€”and slaughtered an incredible number of people. The Aztecs claimed that they sacrificed 84,000 people over a period of four days. During the reign of the Aztecs, an estimated 10 million people were sacrificed across Mexico during an average year. He was covered in red feathers and golden jewels and spent 40 days honored as a god. Then, on the day of the festival, he and eight other impersonators of gods were brought to the top of the temples and killed. The priests skinned the bodies of the sacrificed men in an imitation of a plant shedding its husk. The skin was then dyed yellow to look like gold. Some skins were given to priests, who danced in them. Other skins were given to young men, who spent the next 20 days begging while draped in a loose coat of human flesh. To live, though, they had to defeat the greatest Aztec champions in armed combatâ€”and the odds were not even. The sacrificial warriors were led onto a circular stone called a temalacatl. They were allowed to carry wooden weapons that were little more than toys. Holding a stick whittled into the shape of a

blade, these men watched as the greatest Aztec champions marched out, armed to the teeth. According to Aztec legends, one man named Tlahuicol actually survived. With nothing but a wooden sword, he single-handedly killed eight fully armed Aztec warriors. The Aztecs were thrilled, and they offered to make him the commander of their army. Their offer, he told them, was an insult. Tlahuicol was meant for a far greater fate. He was to be sacrificed to the gods. Adamt The Aztecs had odd and often contradictory beliefs about twins. Their myths were full of twins, usually treated as venerated deities worthy of the worship of man. Twins appeared in their stories as monster slayers, heroes, and even the creators of the world. Real twins, though, were treated with complete contempt. They had one god, Xolotl, for both deformed children and twins because the Aztecs considered twins to be a deformed child. They saw twins as a mortal threat to their parents. Allowing twin babies to live would mean the end of your life. So most parents chose one of their baby twins and sent it back to the gods. At the peak of the one dedicated to Tlaloc, the Aztecs held the most terrible and saddest ritual of them all. Tlaloc was the god of rain and lightning and he demanded children. During the late winter month called Atlcahualo, the Aztecs would bring children to the temple of Tlaloc and force them to walk up the steps. The children were not willing volunteers, and they wept as they went up. If the children cried, the Aztecs believed that Tlaloc would bless them with rain. So if the children did not weep on their own, the adults would make them. When it was done, the children were brought into a cave outside of town. They were laid in a circle under an open roof. There, under the open air, the rain brought about by their sacrifice would drizzle down upon their bodies.

4: The Aztecs (Strange Histories) Read Online Free - Video Dailymotion

Early Aztec History The exact origins of the Aztec people are uncertain, but they are believed to have begun as a northern tribe of hunter-gatherers whose name came from that of their homeland.

The most powerful were Culhuacan on the south shore of Lake Texcoco and Azcapotzalco on the west shore. As a result, when the Mexica arrived in the Valley of Mexico as a semi-nomadic tribe, they found most of the area already occupied. In roughly , [2] they first settled on Chapultepec, a hill on the west shore of Lake Texcoco, the site of numerous springs. In time, the Tepanecs of Azcapotzalco ousted the Mexica from Chapultepec and the ruler of Culhuacan, Cocoxtli, gave the Mexicah permission to settle in the empty barrens of Tizaapan in There they married and assimilated into Culhuacan culture. In , they asked the new ruler of Culhuacan, Achicomatl, for his daughter, in order to make her the goddess Yaocihuatl. Unknown to the king, the Mexicah actually planned to sacrifice her. The Mexicah believed that by doing this the princess would join the gods as a deity. As the story goes, during a festival dinner, a priest came out wearing her flayed skin as part of the ritual. Upon seeing this, the king and the people of Culhuacan were horrified and expelled the Mexicah. Forced to flee, in they went to a small island on the west side of Lake Texcoco where they began to build their city Tenochtitlan, eventually creating a large artificial island. It is said that the Aztec god, Huitzilopochtli, instructed the Aztecs to found their city at the location where they saw an eagle, on a cactus, with a snake in its talons which is on the current Mexican flag. The Aztecs, apparently, saw this vision on the small island where Tenochtitlan was founded. Originally, this was an independent Mexicah kingdom, but eventually it was absorbed by Tenochtitlan, and treated as a "fifth" quadrant. In the Mexica elected their first tlatoani, Acamapichtli, following customs learned from the Culhuacan. These customs required cleaning daily nonstop as a ritual. Aztec Triple Alliance[edit] Main article: From the beginning of the Triple Alliance, Tenochtitlan was mostly in charge of the military and conquest, whereas the other two cities had other responsibilities. This military dominance of Tenochtitlan gradually led to this city becoming the dominant power in the alliance. During this period the Nahuatl cities immediately on the lakeside, such as Xochimilco , Culhuacan and Mixquic were also subdued. Moctezuma I and Tlacaélel [edit] Two of the primary architects of the Aztec empire were the half-brothers Tlacaélel and Moctezuma I. Moctezuma I succeeded Itzcoatl as the 6th Hueyi Tlatoani in Tlacaélel became the power behind the throne and reformed both the Aztec state and the Aztec religion. Moctezuma I began the expansion in earnest. First he had to reconquer towns which were first conquered by Itzcoatl, but had since rebelled. He asked a number of smaller cities to contribute to the construction of a new Great Temple, and only Chalco refused, which caused Moctezuma to start a war against them which lasted for several years. He then conquered Huastec territory under a pretext of securing Aztec merchants in that area, and then he went to war against the Mixtecs of Coixtlahuaca. Coixtlahuaca was successfully conquered although the Mixtec ruler Atonal received military assistance from the Nahuatl states of Tlaxcala and Huexotzinco, by now enemies of the Aztecs. After the defeat of Coixtlahuaca many Mixtec artisans were relocated to the Aztec capital. Tlacaélel[edit] Tlacaélel was one of the primary architects of the Aztec empire. Rising to prominence during the war against the Tepanec in the late s, Tlacaélel wielded power as something of a Grand Vizier during the reigns of four Hueyi Tlatoani, until his death in During the reign of Moctezuma I, he instigated the flower wars in which the Aztecs fought Tlaxcala and other Nahuatl city-states. To strengthen the Aztec nobility, he helped create and enforce sumptuary laws, prohibiting commoners from wearing certain adornments such as lip plugs, gold armbands, and cotton cloaks. By the end, they had become the Aztecs, rulers of a socially stratified and expansionistic empire. During his reign, Tenochtitlan absorbed the kingdom of Tlatelolco. At this point Tenochtitlan experienced a brief "civil war" when the small city of Tlatelolco, considered a part of Tenochtitlan by the Aztecs, rebelled under their Tlatoani Moquihuix , who sought to ally himself with the longstanding enemies of the Tenochca, the Chalca, Tlaxcalteca, Chololteca and Huexotzinca. The Tlatelolca were defeated and Axayacatl then ordered the execution of all the rulers who had aided him, including the ruler of Xochimilco. The reign of Moctezuma II Xocoyotzin[edit] Moctezuma II was, although many sources depict him otherwise, a notable warrior who

extended the tributary system, and consolidated the conquests made by his predecessors as well as conquering new territories. His campaigns reached as far south as Tapachula in the Soconusco region and the Chontal Maya states of Xicallanco in Tabasco. Thus the Aztec Empire had its largest geographical extent when the Spaniards arrived in 1519. In some sources, it claims that Moctezuma II, and the Aztecs, believed the arriving Spanish to be linked to the supposed return of an exiled god, Quetzlcoatl, who was supposed to return pale and bearded. The Aztecs were conquered by Spain in 1521 after a long siege of the capital, Tenochtitlan, where much of the population died from hunger and smallpox. It was not difficult for Cortes to find allies to fight with him, as the Aztecs were not generally liked by the neighbouring city-states. It took nearly another 60 years of war before the Spaniards completed the conquest of Mesoamerica through the Chichimeca wars, a process that could have taken longer were it not for three separate epidemics, including a rare strain of paratyphoid fever, [6] that took a heavy toll on the remaining Native American population. After the fall of Tenochtitlan, most of the other Mesoamerican cultures remained intact. In fact, the conquest of the Aztec empire did not have an immediate impact on other Mesoamerican cultures. As allies of the Spaniards, the Tlaxcalans gained the most. The Spaniards would eventually break the alliance, but not until decades later.

5: Aztec History, Inca History, Mayas History

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From this place, which they leave in about the 12th century AD, there derives the name Aztecs by which they are known to western historians. Their own name for themselves is the Mexica, which subsequently provides the European names for Mexico City and Mexico. After two centuries of migration and warfare, the Aztecs finally settle within the area now covered by Mexico City. They choose an uninhabited island in Lake Tetzaco. This is either in the year or, more probably, The difference in date depends on how the Mesoamerican year calendar cycle is integrated with the chronology of the Christian era. They call their settlement Tenochtitlan. Their prospects in this place, where they are surrounded by enemy tribes, seem as unpromising as those of the Venetians on their bleak lagoon islands a few centuries earlier. Like Venice , against all the odds, Tenochtitlan became the centre of a widespread empire and it does so much more rapidly, stretching across central America within a century. But unlike Venice, this is not an empire of trade. This is a lethal combination. Every day the young warrior uses the weapon of sunlight to drive from the sky the creatures of darkness - the stars and the moon. Every evening he dies and they return. His diet is human blood. The need of the Aztecs to supply Huitzilopochtli chimes well with their own imperial ambitions. As they extend their empire, they gather in more captives for the sacrifice. As the sacrifices become more numerous and more frequent, there is an ever-growing need for war. And reports of the blood-drenched ceremonies strike terror into the enemy hearts required for sacrifice. A temple at the top of a great pyramid at Tenochtitlan now an archaeological site in Mexico City is the location for the sacrifices. When the pyramid is enlarged in , the ceremony of re-dedication involves so much bloodshed that the line of victims stretches far out of the city and the slaughter lasts four days. The god favours the hearts, which are torn from the bodies as his offering. Festivals and sacrifice are almost continuous in the Aztec ceremonial year. Many other gods, in addition to Huitzilopochtli, have their share of the victims. Each February children are sacrificed to maize gods on the mountain tops. In March prisoners fight to the death in gladiatorial contests, after which priests dress up in their skins. In April a maize goddess receives her share of children. In June there are sacrifices to the salt goddess. And so it goes on. It has been calculated that the annual harvest of victims, mainly to Huitzilopochtli, rises from about 10, a year to a figure closer to 50, shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards. The reason is that he merges in Aztec legend with a historical figure from the Mesoamerican past. The Aztecs welcome him as Quetzalcoatl. He is the Spanish conquistador Cortes. Cortes advances into Mexico: They carry some men, 16 horses and about 20 guns of various sizes. The Spanish party is soon confronted by a large number of Indians in a battle where the effect of horses and guns both new to the Indians is rapidly decisive. Peace is made and presents exchanged - including twenty Indian women for the Spaniards. Cortes then sails further along the coast and founds a settlement at Veracruz, leaving some of his party to defend it. Before proceeding inland, Cortes makes a bold gesture. He sinks ten of his ships, claiming that they are worm-eaten and dangerous. The single surviving vessel is offered to any of his soldiers and now sailors too, about in all, liberated from their previous duties who would prefer to return immediately to Cuba, publicly admitting that they have no stomach for the great task ahead. No one takes him up. His small party is now irretrievably committed to the success of the adventure. Cortes leads them into the interior of the country. The next battles, far more dangerous than the first encounters on the coast, are with the Tlaxcala people. The Spaniards eventually defeat them, and are received as conquerors in their capital city. This is a victory of great significance in the unfolding story, for the Tlaxcaltecs are in a state of permanent warfare with their dangerous neighbours. Any enemy of the Aztecs is a friend of theirs. They become, and remain, loyal allies of the Spaniards in Mexico. In November when Cortes approaches Tenochtitlan , the capital of the Aztecs, his small force is augmented by Tlaxcaltecs. But to the astonishment of the Spaniards, no force is needed. He also knows that this is a One-Reed year in the Mexican calendar cycle, when the fair-skinned bearded Quetzalcoatl will at some time return. He sends the approaching Spaniards a succession of embassies, offering rich gifts if they

will turn back. When these fail, he decides against opposing the intruders with force. Instead Cortes is greeted in Tenochtitlan, on 8 November, with the courtesy due to Quetzalcoatl or his emissary. In the words of one of the small band of conquistadors, they seemed to have Luck on their side. For a week Cortes and his companions enjoy the hospitality of the emperor. They sit in his hall of audience and attempt to convert him to Christianity. They clatter round his city on their horses, in full armour, to see the sights they are particularly shocked by the slab for human sacrifice and the newly extracted hearts at the top of the temple pyramid. But Cortes is well aware of the extreme danger of the situation. He devises a plan by which the emperor will be removed from his own palace and transferred to the building where the Spaniards are lodged. The capture of the emperor is carried out with a brilliantly controlled blend of persuasion and threat. The result is that Montezuma appears to maintain his full court procedure under Spanish protection. A few hundred Spaniards have taken control of the mighty Aztec empire. During the next year, chaos and upheaval result from the approach of a rival Spanish expedition, launched from Cuba to deprive Cortes of his spoils. He is able to defeat it, but at a high price. In his absence the 80 Spaniards left in Tenochtitlan lose control of the city - largely thanks to their own barbarous treatment of the inhabitants. When Cortes returns, he finds garrison and emperor besieged together. He persuades Montezuma to address his people from a turret, urging peace. The hail of missiles greeting this attempt leaves the emperor mortally wounded. With Tlaxcala assistance he captures it again a year later, on 13 August. There is no further Aztec resistance. The conquest of central Mexico is complete. The Spanish destroy the precious artefacts of these cultures with an unprecedented thoroughness - mainly in their lust for gold and silver, but sometimes as with Mayan manuscripts as an ideological assault on paganism. The result is that there is relatively little to show now for these rich cultures and their highly skilled crafts. Only the great pyramid mounds of their temples stand today as gaunt witnesses of a vivid past.

6: Ancient Aztec Religion

The Aztec military was quite fearsome for their time, and used bows and spears and other weapons of the age to great strength. They also intimidated their enemies by dressing in bizarre and colorful animal based costumes and creating a shocking presence on the battlefield.

Ancient Aztec Religion Ancient Aztec religion hymn: Huitzilopochtli is first in rank, no one, no one is like unto him: Brinton Ancient Aztec religion was a complex interaction of gods, dates, directions and colours. It seems that most of the preoccupation in the religion had to do with fear of the nature, and a fear of the end of the world. The actions of the ruling classes and common people can be best understood if we look way back to the Mexica understanding of the creation, or rather creations, of the world. Because the religion was a mixture from various peoples, there are variations. In the Beginnings Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent According to ancient Aztec religion, it took the gods 5 tries to create the world. These attempts were foiled because of infighting among the gods themselves. After he was knocked from his exalted position by rivals, the first creator, Tezcatlipoca, turned into a jaguar and destroyed the world. Under similar circumstances, the world was created and then destroyed with wind, and then two floods. Each time a creator-god would take a turn being the sun. The gods realized that they all must sacrifice themselves so that humans could live. The god Ehecatl sacrificed the others, and a mighty wind arose to move the sun at last. This was no free sacrifice, however. Not only would the people have to help this weak sun to keep moving, they would also be responsible to repay the sacrifice. The world remained in a precarious position! Once the sun was dealt with, the world had to be recreated. Quetzalcoatl meaning feathered serpent was the one who would create humans. Of course, people had been created several times before, so Quetzalcoatl descended into the underworld to retrieve their bones. He tripped as he fled, and the bones shattered into different sized pieces, which is why people are all different sizes. By adding his own blood to the mix, people came to life. For another variation and more detail, see the Aztec creation story here. The calendar and the sun The ancient Aztec religion was highly focused on keeping nature in balance. One false step could lead to natural disaster. The weak sun could stop moving. In the sky was a constant battle between light and darkness, a battle that would someday be lost. Huitzilopochtli Hummingbird of the South was the warrior sun either the sun god or the one who fights for the sun god, Tonatiuh the name given to Nanauatl. Huitzilopochtli or Tonatiuh needed blood sacrifice in order to win the battle against darkness. Either there would be ritual blood-letting, or actual people would be sacrificed. Those sacrificed would rise to fight with him. And so human sacrifices became more and more common in Mexico. Often battles would be fought just to capture prisoners to sacrifice - the Aztec flower war or Aztec flowery war. Every 52 years, the people were terrified that the world would end. All religious fires were extinguished, people all over the empire would destroy their furniture and precious belongings and go into mourning. When the constellation of the Pleiades appeared, the people would be assured that they were safe for another 52 years. The heavens were divided into 13 ascending layers, and the underworld 9 descending layers. The heavens and underworld may be better described as wheels within wheels, a more common form for the Aztecs than layers or lines. The end Prophecies were a part of the ancient Aztec religion. Many scholars today believe that the Aztec people thought that the conquerer Hernan Cortes was their god-hero Quetzalcoatl, who had been banished. Whether or not the more educated upper class shared this belief is questionable. The afterlife of a person was based mostly on how they died. Some, such as those sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli, would join the battle against the darkness. In ancient Aztec religion, some would eventually be reincarnated as birds or butterflies, or eventually humans. Some would be, for a time, disembodied spirits roaming the earth. Most at some point would have to make the long journey through the 9 levels of the underworld. People would be buried in a squatting position, with items that would help them in their journey. In the end they would live in darkness. There was a strong emphasis on the worship of Huitzilopochtli. The military conquest and ritual sacrifices were all related, and in a great part focused on helping Huitzilopochtli keep the sun strong so that disaster could be averted every 52 years. For more on Aztec religion:

7: 10 Horrors Of Aztec Ritual Human Sacrifice - Listverse

The Aztecs (Strange Histories) by Fiona MacDonald, ISBN , Compare new and used books prices among online bookstores. Find the lowest price.

Share2 Shares 2K The Aztecs are best known for eating chocolate, killing boatloads of people in sacrifice to their heathen gods and eventually getting beaten by the Spaniards. They are known by most as a warlike, barbaric race, mostly due to the incredible amount of people they killed. However, contrary to popular belief, they were not without culture. The Aztecs had an incredibly complex system social structure and believed strongly in education, family and art. Even their system of slavery was very detailed and not at all like what you would expect slavery to be. In short, while they may have been extremely psychopathic, there is much more to the Aztecs than first meets the eye. Listed below are ten interesting facts about the Aztecs, many of which will challenge the popular ideas in regards to their history. The Aztecs played sports and were a very artistic people. Despite the idea in the popular mind of Aztecs being savages, they were a very artistic people. Aztecs were into pottery and sculpting and created many different artistic drawings as well. The Aztecs also played team sports, specifically a game very popular among them called Ullamaliztli. The game utilized a rubber ball, which was a fairly advanced concept for their time and was played on a court called a Tlachtli. The object of the game was to get the ball through a small stone ring; however, it was an extremely difficult game to play. The ball was not supposed to hit the ground, and players could only touch it with their head, elbows, knees and hips http: The Aztecs had mandatory schools separated between boys and girls. While the Aztecs put strong emphasis on parents teaching their children properly, they also had mandatory public schooling for all children. Those of a noble class had different schools to attend and schools were also separated by gender. Boys of nobility would be sent to the Calmecac School where they learned from the priests about history, astronomy, art, and how to govern and lead. Boys of lower caste were sent to the Cuicacalli School, which was much more focused on preparing them for possible service in the military as warriors. Girls were sent to separate schools and much more of their education was focused at home where they were taught domestic duties such as cooking and weaving. Most Aztecs were actually defeated by disease, not war. While many may attempt to claim that the Spaniards beat the Aztecs through military brilliance, this could not be further from the truth. In fact, the original attacks of the Spanish were thoroughly rebuffed and they had to beat a hasty retreat. The Aztecs actually had a fairly good chance at beating the Spanish and the overall war was a fairly close one. It can be easily said that if not for the smallpox contracted from the Europeans that wiped out so many of them, especially their leaders, that it is extremely unlikely they would have fallen to the Spanish. The amount of harm caused by European diseases was tremendous, it is estimated that over twenty million Mexicans died in a period of just five years due to the diseases brought over by the Spanish. The name Aztecs was given to them after the fact. We all know the Aztecs by that name, but it was not actually a name that they ever called themselves. The Westerners who came up with the name Aztecs likely took it from one of the original places that the Aztecs lived around the twelve century, called Aztlan, which was in the Northern part of Mexico. However, the Aztecs themselves actually referred to themselves as Mexica , which is actually where the name for the country of Mexico originally came from. They had an advanced system for writing and keeping records. Knowledge on how to write things down was very specialized and was mostly performed by learned scribes and priests, who had the needed training. Records were kept on paper made of bark, or deer skin. The writing was usually performed using charcoal and then colored with vegetables and other substances. They kept tax records, historical records, kept information written down in regards to the religious sacrifices and other ceremonies and even wrote poetry. Sometimes they put their writings together in a sort of makeshift book that they called a codice. The Aztecs had very strange burial customs. We have all heard the legends in regards to building on top of an Indian graveyard, but the Aztecs cared little about having things built on top of their graves. If an Aztec was of very high stature, then they were generally cremated instead. The Aztecs believed that the cremation would change the soul of the dead warrior or ruler and send them straight to their version of heaven. Sometimes the Aztecs would also

kill a dog and bury or cremate it with the person so that it could guide them on their journey through the afterlife. They would often sell their own children into slavery. It was not at all uncommon in Aztec society for someone who was poor to sell their own children into slavery. Not only that, but many Aztecs would also sell themselves into slavery. In many cases someone would go bankrupt and feel that they had no way out, selling themselves or their children into slavery would give them some income and if they worked hard they might eventually be able to buy their way back out again. You could get married, have children and own your own land. Aztec men were allowed to practice polygamy. Aztec men were allowed to have more than one wife, however, there were certain strict rules governing these relationships. The other wives were only secondary but still recognized in the official records. While the first wife was considered the most important, the man was still expected to treat all of his wives with equal respect. While the man was the head of the household, women still had a lot of power in the relationship and were well treated in Aztec society. Extra wives contributed to the wealth of the family and were considered a mark of great status, this afforded them a high position in the culture. The Aztecs allowed divorce in some situations, but adultery by either party was punishable by death. The Aztecs had a unique system for slavery. Slavery among the Aztecs was much different than that of the Europeans and followed much different rules. Slaves children were not automatically property, and slaves could own possessions and even own other slaves. If a slave could present themselves in a temple, they would be freed, or if they could break away from their master and step on human excretion outside the market. If a slave tried to run away, only the master or his relatives were allowed to chase after them. Slaves were even able to buy their own freedom. The system for slavery among the Aztecs was quite unique, and much more like indentured servitude than most modern ideas of slavery. Some historians believe the sacrifices and cannibalism may have been due to a protein deficiency. While the most popular theory in regards to Aztec sacrifices is that they were simply performing rituals to their heathen gods and keeping people under control, an anthropologist named Michael Harner has a completely different idea. Harner estimated that roughly 20, people were ritually sacrificed by the Aztecs every year. The people who were sacrificed were often eaten, as part of the sacrificial ritual. Harner proposed the theory that the whole thing was cannibalism disguised as sacrifice because the Aztecs did not have enough meat in their diet. While it is not certain that the Aztecs ate each other due to a protein deficiency as Harner proposes, the evidence of cannibalism is very hard to ignore. You can follow Gregory Myers on twitter.

8: HISTORY OF THE AZTECS

Fact: The Aztecs had very strange burial customs. We have all heard the legends in regards to building on top of an Indian graveyard, but the Aztecs cared little about having things built on top of their graves.

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The patron deity of the Aztecs is Huitzilopochtli, god of war and symbol of the sun. This is a lethal combination. Every day the young warrior uses the weapon of sunlight to drive from the sky the creatures of darkness - the stars and the moon.

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