
UNIT 11 LATIN AMERICA*

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11.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

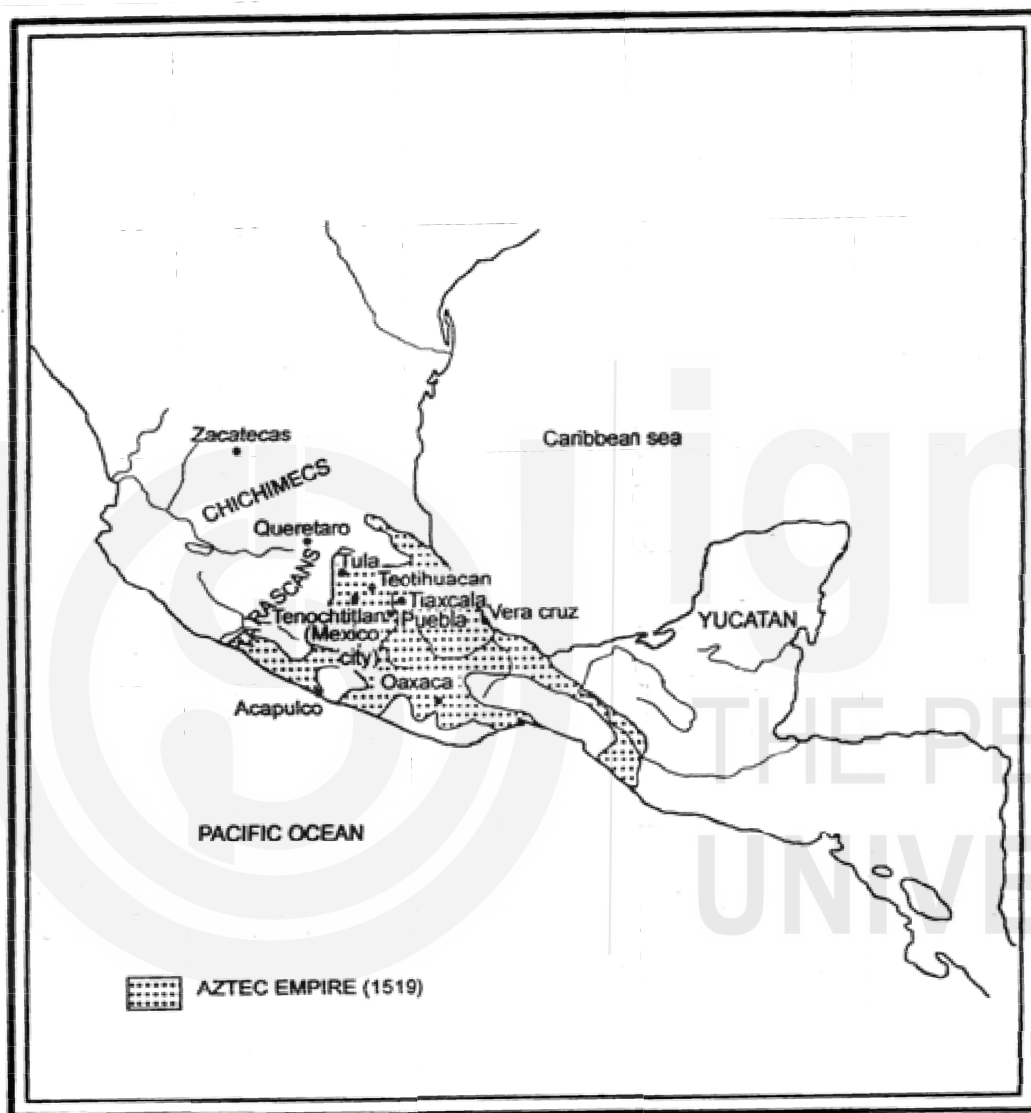
- understand the social characteristics of the Latin American Civilizations,
- construct the concept of medieval in the context of Latin America,
- learn the hierarchical socio-economic structures of the Aztecs of Mesoamerica,
- comprehend the importance of the Aztec codices,
- underline the features of Inca state structures,
- analyze the water management system of the Incas, and
- know the architectural characteristics of the Aztec and the Inca Civilizations.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

The medieval time in Latin American history is not precisely defined. Most specialists refer to the pre-colonial times as the medieval in Latin America's history. We too will do the same here. And we shall discuss about the Aztecs from Mesoamerica and the Incas from the central Andes of South America to understand some aspects of the Latin American medieval history.

11.2 THE AZTECS

The Aztecs came to the Mexico basin during the 12th and 13th centuries and had developed one of the complex society and culture. With a series of rulers, temples for Gods and one of the most populated capitals namely Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs always demand an attention in every discussion of Latin American history. Their self-reference was Mexicas. They continued to rule and dominate over a large part of Mesoamerica till the advent of the Spanish colonizers in the early part of the 16th century.



Map 11.1: The Aztec Empire

Source: After IGNOU Course MHI-01: *Ancient and Medieval Societies*, Block 4, Unit 14, p.8.

11.2.1 Polity

The Aztecs actually came from the north and lived under the hegemony and domination of the Tecpanecs for a long time around the region of present-day Mexico City since probably the 14th century. It was toward the early 15th century that the Aztecs or Mexicas became an autonomous chiefdom. Some of their chiefs were – Itzcoatl (1426-40), Moteuczoma Ilhuicamina, ‘The Elder’ (1440-69), Axayacatl (1469-81), Tizoc (1481-5), Ahuitzotl (1486-1502) and Moteuczoma II (1502-20). These chiefs further extended the Aztec hegemony and domination over the Totonacas, Mixtecs, Zapotecs clans or tribes. Aztecs collected tribute from all these tribes and placed the deities of these tribes in the temple of Huitzlopochtli (the Aztec deity in Tenochtitlan). These tribes were also asked to supply humans for sacrifice from time to time by the Aztec

tax-collectors. The tax that the subordinated tribes paid the Aztecs were in kind such as maize, fish, gold, jade, turquoise, birds, animals. Also they used to contribute by feeding Aztec garrisons, and provided land to Aztec nobles or officials. To run the Empire they built roads, canals, stone house of huge proportions and gigantic 'temples' for their deities. The Aztecs also depended on agriculture and trade with distant lands.

The Aztec chief (Huey Tlatoani), whom the initial colonial historiographers had painted as a king, possibly was not a king. Later researches have provided evidences and have suggested that the earlier commentators uncritically imposed the European categories and concepts on the Aztecs history and society. According to them the Aztec chief was not a King and that the chief was 'elected' to the office. It was not a hereditary office. The Aztec society was differentiated and there were the identifiable *pipiltin* (nobility/elite) and *macehualtin* (commoner/plebian). The *pipiltin* were divided according to ranks, titles and positions they held. These different *pipiltins* after many discussions and deliberations 'elected' the chief. The chief was powerful. The chief was commander of the army, the chief priest of the chief deity, the final judge and also the administrative head. Yet it is difficult to say that he was an 'absolute despot' as the medieval kings of Europe.

The Aztec King used to govern with the assistance from a few councils and each of the councils had one chief or two chiefs. There were the war council, festivities or ritual council for various celebrations, and the treasury council. The king or Aztec chief used to govern by consulting these councils. The chiefs of these councils were from the members of the *pipiltin* or the elite only.

There were towns which were surrounded by a number of villages away from the capital city of Tenochtitlan. A few of these towns with the surrounding villages constituted the chiefdoms or provinces of the Aztec kingdom. These were governed by chiefs either appointed from amongst the members of the *pipiltins* of the capital or Aztecs or a conquered chief who had accepted the rule of the Aztecs. These chiefs were supposed to organize the production and collection of tribute for the Aztecs at Tenochtitlan. This was largely organized through the control over the various *calpullis* or clans.

11.2.2 Society

It was a hierarchical society. There was nobility who were distinctly visible in terms of the clothes they wore, the places they occupied in public and religious rituals, the houses where they dwelt, and the jobs they performed in the running of the government and society. The nobles stayed in urban centers and their quarters were right next to the main temple in the heart of Tenochtitlan. Their houses were quite large and works of stone-masonry. During the reign of Axayacatl, when the Spaniards came to Tenochtitlan, the entire Spanish army of 400 soldiers could be housed in the palace of the ruler. The nobility was numerically a small part of the society. There was another section of the society which constituted of merchants, warriors and priests. The children of the *pipiltin* or the elites were eligible to attend *calmecac* or 'schools'. They were for some years trained in royal mannerism, religious rituals and hymns, reading the calendar, skills of war etc. After training they were given the responsibilities of royal offices.

There were the others also in that society who were the commoners. In the usual narratives of rituals, the commoners had negligible role than the nobility. Therefore it is difficult to know about them in any detail. The commoners were the peasants, carpenters, stone-cutters, miners, feather-workers, copper-workers, gold-workers and lapidaries. Though they were skilled and could produce sufficiently for the entire society, they sometimes faced challenges. Particularly the peasants who used to depend on rains/

monsoon in the wet season had harrowing times during droughts. During famines and droughts poor people even used to sell their children into slavery. During the drought of 1450, the reign of the first Moteuczoma (ruler), there are reports that poor Aztecs sold themselves to Totonacs (indigenous inhabitants of Mexico) at the rate of 400 cob¹ of maize for young woman and 500 cobs for a working male.

The ownership of land under the Aztec rule is rather complex and unclear. There were temple land, palace land, the king's land, the *calipulli/calpulli* or the clan land and so on. But it is generally held that the land was 'owned' by the *calipulli/calpulli*. In fact, it is also inferred that only the *pipiltin* (ruling elite/nobility) 'owned' land as private property. But a variant of this conclusion is that it was only 'owned' because of the highest positions/offices certain member of the *pipiltin* held. Officially, when a *pipiltin* was not holding any official position or got evicted from the office he was to lose control over the land. But some of the *pipiltin* families continued to hold offices over generations as well as the land assigned to that office as private property. The land they possessed, they either got it cultivated by peasants or by *mayeque*. *Mayeque* could be servants, labourers or even slaves. However, the slaves (*tlacotin*) in Mesoamerica were different from the slaves we read about in the history of Greece or Rome. These slaves were able to buy their freedom as well as ran the risk of being the potential victims of religious human sacrifice. The debts, punishment, failure to pay taxes or war prisoners were major factors behind slavery. Aztec slavery was not determined by birth. Even children of a slave were not considered slaves. Thus slavery was not hereditary. People often sold themselves to slavery under duress. In 1450s great famine Aztecs sold themselves to the people of the Gulf Coast.

The *pochtecas* were the merchants and possibly divided into various sections depending on the merchandise they dealt with. As for example there were slave merchants, the corn merchants, metal merchants, animal merchants etc. The chocolate and cocoa merchants were looked upon as 'slightly' privileged as chocolate and cocoa were 'exclusive' items of nobility's consumption. Some merchants specialized in trading slaves. The merchants were commoners yet were invited and consulted by the treasury council of the King. Thus they must have enjoyed some of the privileges of the *pipiltin* or the nobility. Their travels to far away lands made them polyglots. And they were also the providers of information of the outside world to the Aztecs. The merchants were part and parcel of the management of market places. They too acted as 'bankers' to other merchants by providing loans.

11.2.3 Economy

The most significant feature of the Aztecs society to the invading Spaniards in the 16th century was the most primary act of agricultural production by the Aztecs. There were the gardens inside lakes (or as the Spaniards called them – the floating gardens) or the *chinampas*. *Chinampas* were strips of mud 10-25 feet wide and 200-300 feet long inside swamps. On these raised strips of mud the Aztecs used to grow amaranth, beans, corn, squash, and varieties of flowers and so on. They constantly added mud from the floor of the swamps to maintain the strips and thus added to the fertility of the land. On these pieces of strips the farmers had built their bamboo and wooden houses to live. The state used to collect revenue from the *chinampas* in the form of products as well as cloths which women used to weave. The ownership of *chinampas* was collective. Clans (*calipulli/calpulli*) used to own the *chinampas* and the farmers used to have only user-rights over this. In case of failure to use or cultivate a certain strip, farmers

¹ The central cylindrical woody part of the maize ear to which the corns/grains are attached. At that time it was the unit of measurement.

used to get warnings against neglect and were often evicted. The strip after eviction was given to someone else. With the increase in the numbers of members in the family, the land was generally circulated within the clan and the clan used to allot more land or strips outside the family only if the clan (*calipulli/calpulli*) had more land. Beside the *chinampas* agriculture the Aztecs also involved in terraced cultivation on mountain slopes and raised various crops. The Aztec diet included dogs, deer, fish, rats, iguanas, turkey and snakes, besides the agricultural produce.

Other economic activities were mining of silver, gold, tin, copper etc. These metals were fashioned into articles of use from hand axes to ornaments. There were skilled craftsmen who were experts in their craft. The clans or *calipulli/calpulli* of these craftsmen did not own any land. Therefore, some specialists conclude that *calipulli/calpulli* was not a clan but a trade. But in all likelihood, *calipulli/calpullis* were blood-based endogamous and professional groups.

There were market places in urban centers and the rural markets used to be held in an interval of a week or five days. But the biggest market at the central plaza of the capital was a daily market place. Exchange was largely through barter or units of hours of work. But the Aztecs also used cocoa-beans, cotton cloaks, copper blades, small folded mantles, and quills filled with gold dust as standard units of value or money – in other words a kind of currency. And just about every article, beginning from slaves, prostitutes, singers to edible dogs, stone, metal, vegetables, for sale were available as commodity and services in the market. In the market of the capital there were judges to control the interactions of sellers-buyers and there was a superintendent who used to collect a toll from each seller. People from faraway places also used to bring their merchandise to the Aztec markets. Market places were not only for exchange of commodities but also places to meet and socialize.

Neither the Aztecs nor any other tribe of Mesoamerica ever domesticated any other animal apart from the dog. Consequently they did not have any draught animal and they did not use the wheel. The commoners not only produced goods for the elites in the society but also carried loads of goods on their shoulders for trade and tribute.

11.2.4 The Codices

A unique feature of the Aztec culture was the codices (singular: codex). Codices can be said to be pictographic texts. There were a set of scribes who used to ‘paint’ these texts. The early European colonizers did not understand the text and said that the Aztecs were a non-literate people. They did not have scripts or texts. But that was not entirely correct. It is just that their concept of alphabets and scripts were different from others and was unique, not found anywhere else.

The ‘writers’ or makers of the codices were known as *tlacuiloques* or scribes. And there were the scholars or wise men known as *tlamatinime* who used to own and read those texts. Most of the *tlacuiloques* were plebian craftsmen only and not women. But there were some *pipiltin* (nobles) also amongst them. At times both *tlacuiloques* and *talmatinime* was the same person. In the codices the Aztec had written annals or chronicles by the day, histories of wars or major events, genealogies of kings and nobles, rituals and religious events, accounts of agricultural production and revenue, also laws and calendars.



Figure 11.1: Codex Vaticanus B

Credit: Unknown; file originally uploaded to the Polish-language Wikipedia by Adamt; Unknown date

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/76/Codex_Vaticanus_B.jpg

These painted texts were of paper or hide or woven cloth which could be painted either on one side or both. These books sometimes had wooden covers to keep the paper or hide or cloth either folded properly or flat. Possibly these wooden covers were ornamented too. Out of these various kinds of pages the most time consuming and labour intensive was the hide (leather pages) and these were folded and called screenfolds.

11.2.5 Religious Beliefs

The Aztecs borrowed the religious ideas largely from the two major traditions, one from their predecessors Teotihuacan and Tula and the other from their Aztlan migrants who brought their own gods with them. There were two chief Gods of the Aztecs, the Tlaloc (rain and fertility God) which was the storm God of the Teotihuacan and the other was the Huitzilopochtli associated with warfare and sacrifices. Atop the Templo Mayor pyramid temples dedicated to Tlaloc and Huitzilopochtli are situated. Cities and *calipulli/calpulli* worshipped distinct deities. Huitzilopochtli was God of the Mexican people. Similarly distinct occupational groups had their own deities: Tezcatlipoca was patron of the kings, Quetzalcoatl of priests, Teteoinnan of midwives, and Xipe Totec of goldsmiths (Smith 2012: 204). They believed that Ometeotl, the highest God in male (Ometecuhtli) and female (Omecihuatli) forms produced four sons — Tezcatlipoca, Xipe Totec, Quetzalcoatl, and Huitzilopochtli of which the last two are credited to have created the earth, other gods and the people.



Figure 11.2: A drawing of Tezcatlipoca, one of the deities described in the Codex Borgia

Credit: Unknown, Pre-Columbian

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/67/Black_Tezcatlipoca.jpg

The key to Aztec religion was the human sacrifice and bloodletting/autosacrifice. Aztecs believed that god themselves had sacrificed for the benefit of mankind therefore humans should reciprocate by offering human blood and life. Apart from performing daily rituals, priests also ‘offered their own blood by autosacrifice’ as a result often their bodies were ‘scarred and mutilated from constant bloodletting’. They also believed in several distinct afterworlds which were to be determined by the manner of one’s death e.g. ‘Soldier who died in battle and sacrificial victims went to an eastern solar realm to accompany the sun during its rise to zenith. Women who died in child birth went to a western solar realm where they accompanied the sun during its setting’ (Smith 2012: 212). There appears to be a distinction between the burials of the commoners’ and those of the elites (kings and nobles). The latter were more ‘elaborate and richer’. The presence of burials within the house suggests that Aztecs considered dead as very much part of the family.

In the temples there existed hierarchy of priests. There were little priests (*tlamacazton*) who were trained in priesthood lores for a year and performed daily duties. Full priests were *tlamacazqui*. The highest priests *tlenamacac* performed the highest ritual — the human sacrifice. There were female priests as well (*cihuatlamacazqui*). However, female priests served for short periods usually they left the priesthood after marriage. Priests were the literate class and involved in learning and education.

However, ‘Aztec politics and religion were closely entwined. Kings ruled with the blessings of the gods, and the priests and temples were under the protection of the state. Human sacrifices were carried out in the service of politics...[to demonstrate] the awesome power of the gods and the state... Witnessing the gruesome deaths of not only enemy soldiers but also local slaves...made most people think twice before engaging in any form of resistance against their king or local people’ (Smith 2012: 225).

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Who were Aztecs? What was their political structure?

- 2) Comment on the hierarchical social set up of the Aztecs.

- 3) State briefly the economic activities of the Aztecs.

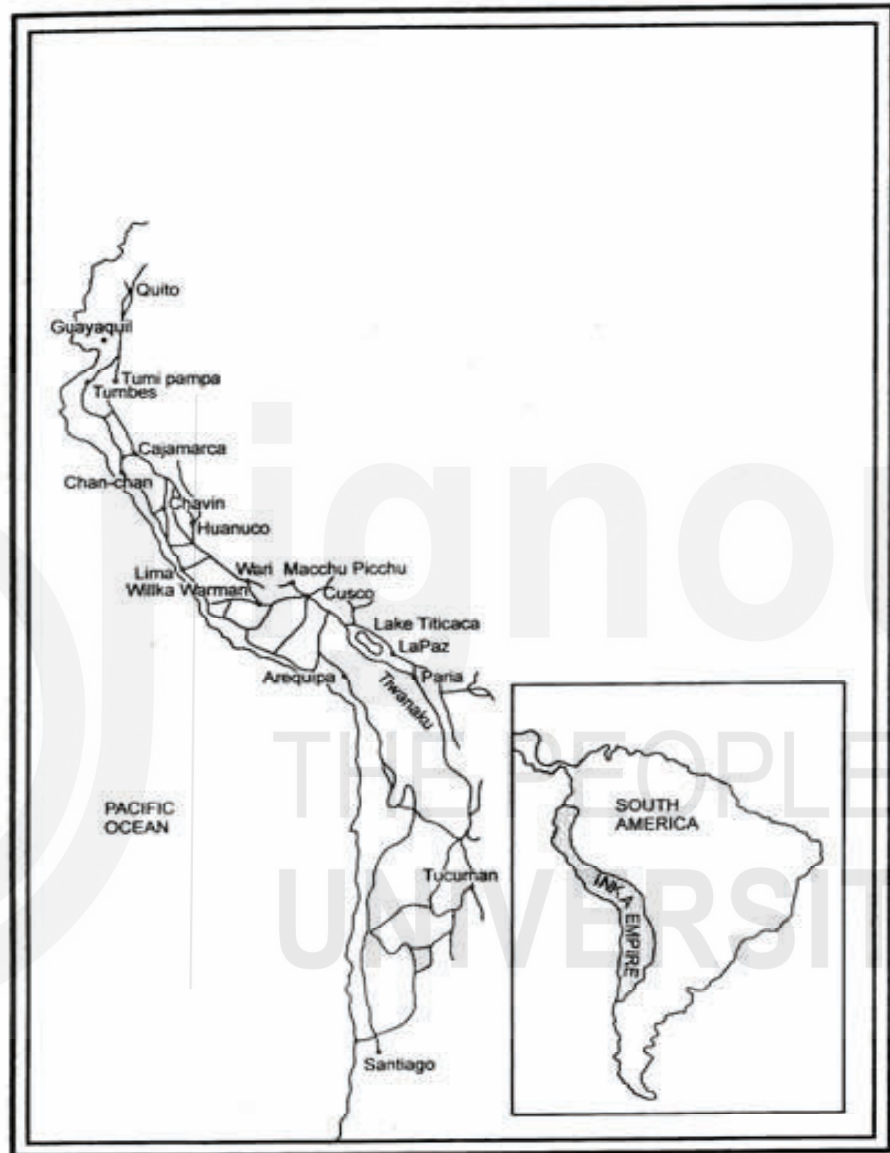
- 4) What were codices? What type of information one can obtain from them?

- 5) Write five lines on the Aztec religion.

11.3 THE INCAS

In the central Andes of South America, there developed an empire which is known as the Inca or Inka empire or the territory of four regions Tawantinsuyu or Tahuantinsuyu.

It was of the 'Indians' (Indians here is the name given to the inhabitants of the New world by Christopher Columbus mistaking New World for Asia). It includes a large and diverse set of cultural groups as the Mayas and Aztecs of Mexico and Central America, the Carib of the Caribbean Islands, the Inca of Andes, the Araucanian of Chile, the Guarani of Paraguay and the Tupi of Brazil and the indigenous people of Andes. The empire flourished during the 12th to 16th century. It was in the late 16th century (1572) that the Spaniards conquered these empires and colonized them.



Map 11.2: The Inca Empire

Source: After IGNOU Course MHI-01: *Ancient and Medieval Societies*, Block 4, Unit 14, p.13.

11.3.1 Inca State and the Empire

The Inca Empire had its capital or seat of power at Cuzco/Cusco. It was a centralized empire and administrative system which developed during the 1000 to 1400 CE (called the Late Intermediate period by some specialists). The Quechua speaking Incas spread their hegemony by military conquest and re-conquests over powerful rival ethnic communities (*ayllus*) such as the Pinahua and Mohina of Lucre basin. Towards the north of Cuzco valley resided the Anta, Ayarmaca communities who had refused to accept the Inca hegemony even after many wars. But marriage alliances amongst the ruling elites of the Incas and these communities proved more successful in making them part of the Inca Empire. Towards the east, the ever-rebellious Pinahuas were not only defeated in armed conflict with the Incas, but were also evicted from their land to

remote low-lands. They were settled in these lands possibly with an alien governor over them and thus were made part of the Inca empire. Some other ethnic groups were given protection by the Incas against other rival groups and became willing members of the Inca Empire.

Inca empire building was not a linear process. The central authorities frequently faced rebellions and certain territories needed re-conquests. Even local or provincial governors had to be changed or subjugated. Almost every succession or change of Kings at Cuzco used to make entire edifice of the empire unstable. Competing communities and powerful groups of elites attempted to assassinate, dislodge contenders to the throne or even support some claims to the throne.

The Inca chiefs or Kings used to keep a number of wives as well as concubines. This is one of the reasons which frequently led to disputes of succession and even to fratricidal wars and conflicts. Kings' kinsmen were the royal elites who used to play decisive role in the selection of king's successor and they often used to engage in intrigues and conspiracies inside and outside the royal court. Though there seems to have been a discretionary power by the out-going/dying king to nominate his successor, it was largely decided by the power the inheritor wielded amongst the supporting elite, who were divided into various groups or *panacas*.

Conventional Inca Kings

ManqoQhapaq	Wiraqocha Inka
ZinchiRoq'a	PachakutiInkaYupanki
Lloq'eYupanki	ThupaInkaYupanki
MaytaQhapaq	WaynaQhapaq
QhapaqYupanki	Waskhar Inka
Inka Roq'a	Atawallpa
YawarWaqaq	

Source: After D'Altroy, Terence N., (2015) *The Incas* (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell), Second Edition, p. 6.

The Inca Kings were ruling with the help of a large army or armed people. They used to take out military campaigns against rebels within their empires as well as against new territories subjugating them and making them pay tribute. After crushing rebellions or subjugating new territories the kings planted their own loyal people as local governors. Local governors were mostly from the royal families though it was not always so. Provincial governors and *mitimaes*² were the peace-keepers.

Military campaigns were not the only method of conquering neighbours and expanding the Empire. It happened through a process of religious and ritual integration too. According to Irene Silverblatt (1987) the Incas of Cusco actually appropriated the local deities of the ethnic communities living on the margins of their Empire and thus appropriated their autonomy and made them part of the Empire. The Incas insisted on the worship of Sun God by other ethnic communities as well as gave the deities of those communities a place in Cusco near the shrine of Sun God and Incas themselves worshipped them. Thus they 'institutionalized the imperial religion' which was not only

² Mitimaes were the forced settlements of Inca communities into the recently conquered territories with an objective to settle in the newly conquered regions the Inca loyalists; along with them they also carried Inca culture.

the appropriation or co-option of others' religion into the imperial one but also appropriation of the sovereignty of those communities.

If we look at the way *theaclla* (chosen/venerated women) ritual was being performed, it will amply clarify the story of imperial religion. Young women were chosen by men supervisors of the Incas from amongst the families of the heads of various communities conquered by the Incas and brought to the capital Cusco. After elaborate rituals some of them used to be accepted as wives of Inca Kings, some were given away to other important functionaries of the state or relatives of Incas as wives/concubines, some others were put in state-run convents as the wives of Sun God and some others were sacrificed on certain occasions "for the ends of the state" either at Cusco or at other parts of the Empire. The act of being chosen by Inca royal family made the father of the young woman a proud subordinate of the Incas. And the ritual sacrifices of the 'chosen women' (burying them alive after drugging them) not only in Cusco but also at various other outposts of the Empire in the territories of other communities helped in the political integration of those lands into the larger Empire of the Incas as the partakers of the same religious rituals. Without any dispute this was an expansionist project achieved through kinship (by marrying women of other hostile or friendly communities and having royal offspring from them). According to Isabel Yaya (2012) this project achieved two things simultaneously one was political control over an ever increasing labour-force and the other was opening of its "most strategic positions of its prestige hierarchy to contenders" of offspring of women of non-Inca origin.

Warachiku was another royal ritual which was celebrated at large scale and was a month-long event. *Warachiku* meant that 'donning of the lion-cloth/breeches'. This was a rite of passage of young men of royal family of Cusco into adulthood. From the many conflicting accounts of this ritual a general picture emerges that can be summarized as follows. During this ritual the members of the non-Inca *ayllus* (community) had to leave the city. The novices undergoing the ritual had to tonsure their heads and pierce their ear-lobes. Then they had to visit various *wakas* (shrines, which could be simply be a rock or a mountain) of 'provincial deities beginning with the principal deities of the Incas in a procession of members of royal family and officials of the state. Selected young maidens used to be part of the procession carrying *chicha* (a beverage) for the novices. Visits to different shrines or *wakas* were punctuated by different physical trials of the novices. The physical trial which included fasting, racing up and down some hills, being slapped by elders, some dances actually wounded the novices and covered them with blood. The novices were rechristened during this ritual. The ritual used to end in Cusco when the novices received the lion-cloth (*wara*) ceremonially after obeisance to the Inca King and the Sun God in Cusco. The visit of the novices included not only the sites of religious importance but also places of importance on the major water courses and irrigation networks. Its significance as the ritual which has some relation with water gets further underlined as this used to happen in the month of December or the beginning of the year which is the month of heavy rain in the Andes.

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) Explain the processes through which the Inca polity expanded and got consolidated.

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- 2) Who were the 'chosen women'? In what ways did the 'chosen women' contribute to the consolidation of Inca polity?

- 3) What was *warachiku* custom of the Incas? Mention its significance.

11.3.2 Society and Economy

Inca society has been reported to be kin based. The Empire apparently was the largest and was comprised of kin only. It had many layers of hierarchies. The different kin based communities or *Ayllus* were constantly in tension amongst themselves despite the hegemony of the Incas. Incas used force or wars to quell rebellions and extract tribute from those communities. As already stated the use of rituals was also a strategy of governance and rule.

The Incas had two calendars one for the day and another for the night. They performed their rituals according to these two calendars. The day-calendar largely guided the rituals for agricultural activities as sowing, harvesting and rituals invoking rain etc. It was a solar calendar. But the night-calendar was a Lunar calendar largely guiding the rituals of royal activities as ancestor worship, rites of passage etc.

Living on the steep peaks of the Andes, levelled fields were hardly available to the Incas. Thus, scarcity of flat lands, difficult climatic conditions and above all high altitude led the Incas to develop ingenious system of terraced farming across the land of the empire.



Figure 11.3: Terraced Farming, Machu Picchu

Credit: Martin St-Amant – Wikipedia – CC-BY-SA-3.0; June 2009

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/80_-_Machu_Picchu_-_Juin_2009_-_edit.2.jpg

For agriculture they used unique human-powered foot plough, *chakitaqlla*. They also possessed an excellent storage system (*qullaqas*).



Figure 11.4: Use of *Chakitaqlla* (Andean foot plough)

Credit: Drawing by Felipe GuamanPoma de Ayala: El primer nuevacorónica y buengobierno (1615/1616)

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e1/Trabajo-inca8.jpg>

Agricultural productions included maize, corn, cotton etc. Potato and Quinoa were unique to Incas. And the state tribute or tax was paid by produce. Among the domesticated animals camelids, llamas and alpacas were unique to Incas. All subjects also had to work for the state. The public works were largely done through this kind of labour known as *Mitima*. *Mitima* labour was used to build the network of roads connecting all places of the empire. Even the various rituals and irrigation system was maintained by *mitima*.

The Incas did not use the wheel and their language did not have scripts nor did they write or kept the documents. The former could be due to the Andean topography which discouraged the use of wheel. The absence of written language was compensated by the presence of *quipu*. It was an excellent way of keeping records of various data. It was a method of knotting strings in a systematic way. There were a special class of people or scribes called the *quipocamay*s who prepared the *quipus* or knotted-strings. This way they kept detailed records of agricultural yields and storage capacity in different parts of the Empire. They also had information regarding the number of able-bodied men of different *ayllus* ready for military service of the state or ready to build roads of the Empire or the canal system of the mines.

With the Spanish colonization the Inca state declined. Infact, the Spaniards exposed the Indians to European diseases such as typhus, measles and influenza which were not present in the Andes. These proved fatal and wiped out a large population of Indians during the 16th century.

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) What was the social structure of the Incas?

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- 2) For what purposes Inca calendars were used?

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- 3) Write five lines on Inca economy.

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11.3.3 Water Management System

The Inca architecture also seems to have given sufficient importance to water, its distribution and management. Whether it is in Machu Picchu (the largest Incan archeological site) or in Cusco (their capital), the built-structures to channelize water for different purposes or for different sets of people is amazing. At Tipon, an Inca royal agricultural estate 20 km. east of Cusco the remains of an elaborate water-works are found. A spring was harnessed by stone conduits, canals, and hydraulic drop structures to irrigate terraced agriculture in Tipon. Beside, water was channelized to a bath in the elite enclave before being allowed to flow down for the use of others. The site of Pisac near the river Urubamaba to the northwest of Cusco also had long winding canals lined with stones. Its construction is attributed to Panachuti, the son of Inca King Wiracocha in the mid-15th century. This canal used to connect the pre-Inca funerary site as well as terraced agricultural lands and residential areas with pools. Chinchero, another site of the Incas close to Cusco had both surface and subterranean ducts as water courses and is said to have been constructed by the 3rd quarter of the 15th century. Quispiguanca, another site close to Cusco and patronized by the last Inca rulers who engaged with the Spanish colonizers namely Huayna Capac during the 16th century had canal built. But more than that, this site boasted of artificial lakes and water reservoirs. This makes some historians think that perhaps at that point of time the control and distribution of flowing water had lost its political significance which had the relation of the Inca ruler to their subjects. The water-works for agriculture and for non-agricultural purposes exhibit some utilitarian consideration, rough stone masonry being its hall mark.

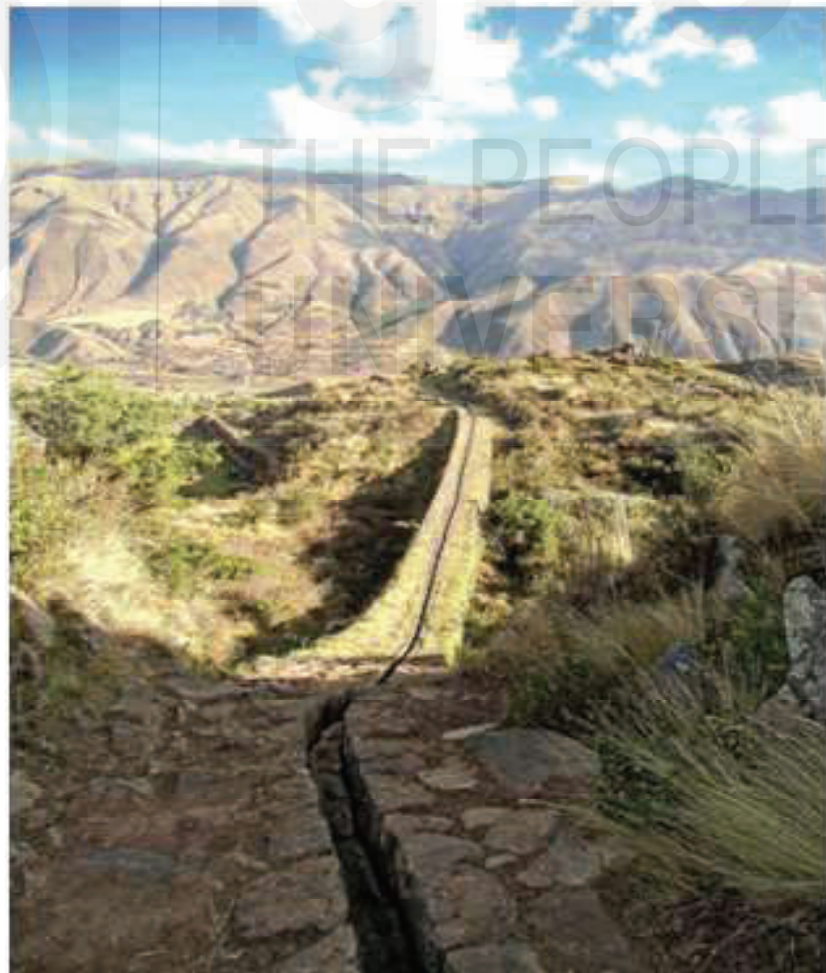


Figure 11.4: Incan Aqueduct, Tipon, Cusco

Credit: Rainbowasi from Lima, Peru June 2014

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Incan_aqueduct_at_Tipon._Cusco%2C_Peru.jpg

11.3.4 Inca Architecture

At Ollantaytambo, Callachaca, Calca — various archeological sites of the Incan history — various kinds of buildings were found which were commissioned by the Incas. Most of the Inca kings had a palace in the capital Cusco as well as a country estate. Machu Picchu, the royal estate is one of the finest surviving site reflecting on Inca architecture. They also built excellent networks of roads. The Inca masonry were of cellular polygonal (use of small stones) and ashlar polygonal (use of large stones), encased coursed (stone blocks not aligned) and sedimentary coursed (stones laid in horizontal rows [ashlar]) masonry. Incas largely used field stones (semi worked stone blocks), dirt mortar and adobe (made of earth and organic material). Most common structure of the Incas was *kancha* which was a rectangular enclosure usually in a symmetrical sequence of three around a central courtyard.



Figure 11.5: Walls of the Sacsayhuaman Ruin at Cusco (Ashlar Polygonal Masonry)

Credit: Transferred from en.wikipedia to Commons by Jalo using CommonsHelper

Author: Bcasterline at English Wikipedia, 18 March 2006

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a8/Walls_at_Sacsayhuaman.jpg

These pieces of architecture were mostly commemorative in nature. These were either to remember the victory in a war or to celebrate succession or even some mummified ancestor. But there was a fine separation between the public buildings for administrative purposes and the private dwellings of the Inca kings. The stone masonry works at the archeological sites are phenomenal. The terraces built to hold levelled patches of land for agriculture do not exhibit much finesse and aesthetics. But the large royal palaces/residences, the sacred shrines definitely exhibit a finesse which is both ideological and utilitarian. Undoubtedly, these labour-intensive works are more refined, with finely-dressed pieces of stones, joined at finely carved and perfect angles, with niches, doorways and windows, and many polygonal structures and even at times (as in the neighborhood of Chinchero) with coloured stones.

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) Write a note on the canal network of the Incas.

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- 2) What were the characteristics of Inca architecture?

11.4 SUMMARY

The Unit focuses on the formation of Aztec and Inca state structures. While the hierarchical structures of the Aztecs were class based, the Inca society and the state were largely extension of the kin based structures. Aztec agriculture was primarily gardens inside the lakes; while Incas essentially depended upon the terraced farming. The Aztecs was a literate society in the sense that their texts could be coded, in contrast Incas, did not have a written script except their knots (*quipu*). It is difficult to know the detailed history of the civilization due to lack of the contemporary documents. Nonetheless they produced amazing water management system as well as some exclusive crops which were to change the food habits across the globe (potato, tomato).

11.5 KEYWORDS

<i>Chinampas</i>	: Gardens inside the lakes
<i>Quipu</i>	: Inca writing knots
<i>Tlacotin</i>	: Slaves in Mesoamerica

11.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 11.2.1
- 2) See Sub-section 11.2.2
- 3) See Sub-section 11.2.3
- 4) See Sub-section 11.2.4
- 5) See Sub-section 11.2.5

Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-section 11.3.1
- 2) See Sub-section 11.3.1
- 3) See Sub-section 11.3.1

Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-section 11.3.2
- 2) See Sub-section 11.3.2
- 3) See Sub-section 11.3.2

Check Your Progress-4

- 1) See Sub-section 11.3.3
- 2) See Sub-section 11.3.4

11.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bethell, Leslie, (ed.) (1984) *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, Volume I, *Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

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D'Altroy, Terence N., (2015) *The Incas* (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell), Second Edition.

Gamboa, Pedro Sarmiento de, (2007) *The History of the Incas*, translated and edited by Bauer, Brian S. and Vania Smith (Texas: University of Texas Press).

Niles, Susan A., (1999) *The Shape of Inca History: Narrative and Architecture in an Andean Empire* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press).

Silverblatt, Irene, (1987) *Moon Sun and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Smith, Michael E., (2012) *The Aztecs* (Sussex: Wiley Blackwell), Third Edition.

Yaya, Isabel, (2012) *The Two Faces of Inca History: Dualism in the Narratives and Cosmology of Ancient Cuzco* (Leiden: Brill).

11.8 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

The Aztec Empire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6RbaAURCqI>

Tenochtitlan -The Venice of Mesoamerica (Aztec History)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmHVqb6t__8

The Secrets of the Incas (in 2 parts)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRSTy9ir6zs>

History of the Inca Empire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYYfg2tph3w>