

Aim: How did the Aztecs create a powerful empire?

Notes

I. Aztecs

- a. Formed late 1200's
- b. Nomadic group from north
- c. Settled in Valley of Mexico (myth eagle on cactus w/ snake in its mouth)
- d. Known as lake Texcoco
- e. Capital Tenochtitlan 1325
- f. 1400's create an empire through military conquest
- g. 1500's control most of Mexico
- h. Ruled 30 million people
- i. Tribute empire
 - i. Goods from other conquests like
 - ii. Emeralds, jade, vanilla beans, animals
 - iii. Use for trade and wealth

II Society

- a. Ruled by a single emperor ex. Montezuma
- b. **Calpulli- kinship clans in charge of land
- c. Social classes
 - Emperor
 - Nobles
 - Warriors
 - Traders
 - Farmers
 - Slaves (sold to pay debt)
- d. Religion: polytheistic (main ones: war, fertility, rain)
- e. Large scale human sacrifice
- f. Cannibalism: criminals and conquered peoples used for both
- g. Stressed military conquests

III Contributions

- a. Medicine, pyramids, calendar
- b. Farming: chinampas: known as a floating garden, built using reeds and sticks
- c. Raised corn, maize, squash, beans

IV Decline

- a. 1500's Aztecs had internal weakness
- b. many outside tribes hated the Aztecs
- c. 1519 Cortez and Spanish conquests destroy the Aztecs