# Aztec PERSIAN Chart Key

**ERAS: 600 C.E. to 1750**

### AZTEC (MEXICA)

<table>
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<th>POLITICAL</th>
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- City-state rules by head ruler
- Unlikely candidate for power after the Toltec Empire fell
- Rulers and warrior nobles took lands and tribute from conquered towns.
- Consolidated power of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and a smaller city, Tlacopan, into a triple alliance, realistically controlled by the Aztecs (dominated their allies & controlled the major share of tribute and land taken)
- Empire extended from the Tarascan frontier about 100 miles north of Mexico City southward to the Maya area
- Human sacrifice = political terror
- Divided into 7 calpulli, or clans, which expanded and adapted to an imperial position; no longer kinship groups but residential groups (neighbors, allies, & dependants); distributed land to the heads of households, organized labor gangs and military units in times of war, & maintained temples & schools
- Great Speaker – in effect the emperor with great wealth and public power
- Prime minister held great power; relative of the ruler
- Governing council
- Exerted political domination but not direct administrative or territorial control

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- Food demanded as tribute from captured areas
- Developed system of irrigated agriculture; Chinampas – beds of aquatic weds, mud, and earth that had been placed in frames made of cane and rooted to the lake floor; formed artificial islands; gave high yield of corn crops (4 per yield)
- Built dikes to close off the fresh waters from brackish waters
- Periodic markets for communities; various cycles for in calendar system; traded goods (like a market economy with cacao beans and gold dust as currency but also barter economy
- Pochteca – merchant class that operated and controlled the markets; specialized in long-distance trade in luxury items
- Markets were highly regulated and under the control of inspectors and special judges
- State redistribution of many goods interfered with the market and created state-controlled mixed economy

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<th>RELIGIOUS</th>
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- Fanatical followers of their gods; offered human sacrifices
- Human sacrifice expanded under Tlacaelel’s direction into an enormous cult; military class = supplier of war captives for sacrificial victims
- Theocracy by the time of Moctezuma II
- Religion = uniting yet oppressive force
- Gods worshipped and respected (gods of rain, fire, water, corn, sky, & sun)
- Deity = female side/form
- Gods could have different forms or avatars (like Hindu deities)
- Each god had at least 5 aspects (1 of which was a cardinal direction and the center)
- Certain gods = patrons of cities, ethnic groups, or occupations
- 3 major cults: fertility and agriculture (rain, water, maize, and fertility); creator deities (brought the universe into being – sun and night sky); cult of warfare and sacrifice
- Huitzilopochtli = paramount god, although also worshiped Toltec god of civilization Quetzalcoatl

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# Aztec PERSIAN Chart Key

## Social
- Family/kinship
- Gender roles/relations
- Social and economic classes
- Racial/ethnic factors
- Entertainment
- Lifestyles
- “Haves” & “have nots”
- Ruler of Tenochtitlan – supreme ruler with wide powers
- Yearly festivals and ceremonies (feasting, dancing, human sacrifices)
- Ritual cannibalism
- Aztec peasantry provided basic foods
- Calpulli governed by councils of family heads (but not all families were equal, nor were calpullis equal)
- Nobility class emerged w/ most privileged families and distinguished calpulli; accumulated high offices, private lands, and other advantages
- Military and administrative nobility higher than nobility class
- Nobles born into class but still has to earn position by merit; controlled the priesthood and military leadership
- Military hierarchy based on experience and success at taking captives
- Commoners similar to serfs but above slaves
- Middle group/class with scribes, artisans and healers
- More conflict between groups (calpullis, temples etc… rather than b/w social classes
- Aztec women worked in fields, kept the household, raised children, & weaving
- Arranged marriages; virginity highly regarded; polygamy with nobility & monogamy with commoners; could inherit property and pass it to heirs
- Social stresses (rise of the pipiltin, terror, and tribute) caused internal weakness = factors in collapse

## Interactions
- War/conflict
- Diplomacy/treaties
- Alliances
- Exchanges between individuals, groups, & empires/nations
- Trade/commerce
- Globalization
- Fighting skills made them attractive as mercenaries or allies
- Subjects forced to pay tribute, surrender land, and sometimes provide military service
- Empire seen as an expansion of long-existing Mesoamerican concepts and institutions of government (afterglow of earlier civilizations)
- Civilizations did not disappear but adapted to new realities

## Arts
- Art
- Music
- Writing/literature
- Philosophy
- Math
- Science
- Education
- Architecture
- Technology
- Innovations
- Transportation
- Spoke Nahuatl, language of the Toltec
- Religious art and poetry filled with images of flowers, birds, and song as well as human hearts and blood
- Complex mythology (infused in all aspects of life)
- Calendar system
- Tenochtitlan
- Lack of technology (wheels, animal powers, & mills) meant 30 to 40 hours/week went into preparing food instead of other endeavors

## Environmental
- Location
- Physical
- Human/environment
- Migration/movement
- Region
- Demography
- Neighborhood
- Urbanization
- Central valley of Mexico
- Lake Texcoco – connected by marshes; created a rich aquatic environment
- Tenochtitlan – city founded in 1325 (became a great metropolis w/ central plazas, white temples, adobe brick residential districts, smaller places, & markets; connected to the shores by 4 broad causeways and crisscrossed canals for constant canoe traffic)
- Estimates that population reached about 20 million, excluding Mayan areas