

Mexican
History and
Systems of
Empire



Day 1: The Conquest of Mexico

1. I can explain the systems the Spaniards put in place in New Spain and how they impacted Mexico over the long term.
2. I can use OPVL source analysis to critically examine a mural.

Mexico Before Colonization

Maya



Aztecs



The Aztecs were known for...

- Largest empire in region (conquered other civilizations)
- Complex city administration

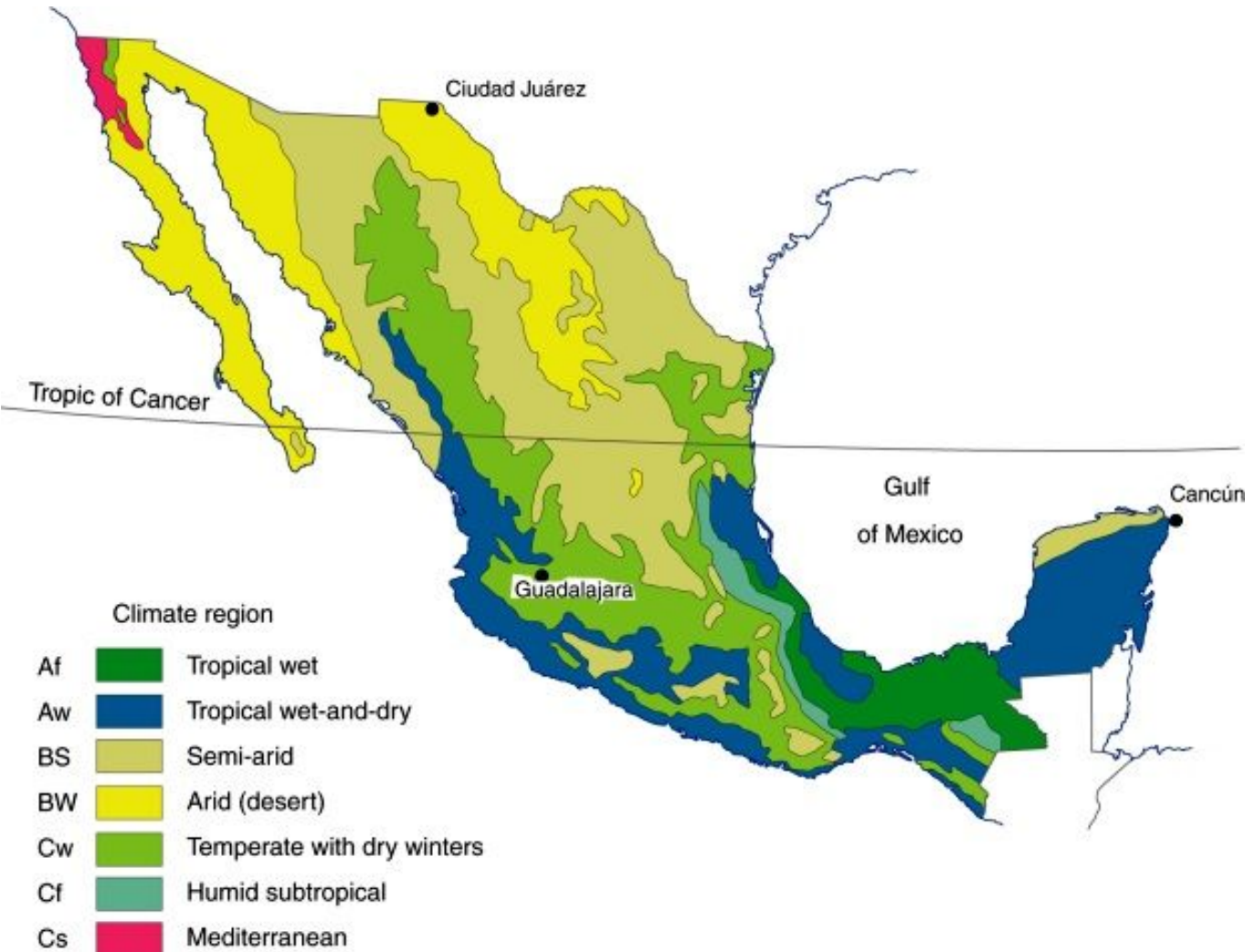


The Mayans were known for...

- Technology
 - Stone pyramids, palaces, temples
 - Developed calendar system



The Geography of Mexico



The geography of Mexico is one of diverse climates. From arid deserts to tropical zones, the climate would have impacted the development of culture in many ways. Diverse climates would lead to the development of diverse and complex cultures.

Exploration

1492: Columbus lands in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and sets up a colony focused on making profit.

The Spanish settlers use slave labor to hunt for raw materials, such as gold.



1517: Spanish Explorers travel to Mexican coasts looking for workers (slaves).

In 1517, Cortes and his men defeat the Aztec empire with the assistance of guns, germs and steel.





1. COMPLESSA TEMA DO SOTO (REPÚBLICA) 7

“On August 12, 1521, heroically defended by Cuauhtemoc [emperor of the Aztecs], Tenochtitlan fell into the hands of Hernan Cortes. It was neither a triumph nor a defeat: it was the painful creation of the mestizo nation that is Mexico today.”

Cultural Integration

European and African cultures blended with Indigenous cultures to create a distinct, new culture. This led to new forms of musical styles, dances, and cultural and religious practices.



A Blend of Cultures in New Spain

- European and African cultures blended with Indigenous cultures to create a distinct new culture.
- Music, Dance, Food, Language.
- Plagues decimated the Indigenous populations from 12 million to 1 million in about 100 years.
- Intermarriage was common between natives and Spanish Conquistadores.



The Purpose and Goal of the **Spanish Empire** was to bring riches and wealth back to Spain.

Systems needed to be put in place in order for that to happen.



System #1: La Casta

A system of racial identification that created a class structure within Mexico. Your skin color upon birth determined which caste (class) you belonged to. Your caste was permanent and could not change.



Las Castas

Peninsular: (Blancos) European born Spaniards living in Mexico.

Creole: Mexican-born Spaniards who were considered white.

Mestizos: Mixed blood European-Mexicans.

Indios: Decedents of the Native populations of Mexico.

Negros: African slaves (10%) and their decedents.

Economic Development in New Spain

- The goal of the colonies was to make money for Spain
- Economic development focused on gathering and exporting raw materials to Spain.
 - Gold, Silver, Cocoa → most desirable
 - Limited development of industry.



System of Empire #2: Hacienda

- A **Hacienda** is a large estate owned by a Spaniard. These lands arose with the seizure of Native land by Spanish Conquistadors.
- Goal: Take what was left of native lands and put it in the hands of **Spanish landowners**.
- Natives were paid **very small wages** to work on the Hacienda – which, again, was always owned by a Spaniard.



The Problem for Natives

1. Spanish landowners bought or stole almost all the land in Mexico
2. Natives were rounded up into small areas so they could be “Christianized.” But the real motive was often to take their land.
3. Natives that needed money (wedding, funeral, bad crop, etc.) borrowed from Spanish landowners... but now are in debt for the rest of their lives.

The Catholic Church in New Spain



Spaniards aimed to convert as many people as possible to Christianity.

- Indigenous communities often accepted Christianity but also blended in some of their traditional beliefs.
- The Church played a key role in banking, education, and land management. These all advantaged the Spanish settlers.

