

The Incan Civilization

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The Incas

The Incas were a south American civilization who preceded the Aztecs and ruled from 1105 to 1525. They were finally brought down by Spanish conquistadors and the disease they brought with them

Key questions

What happened when the Spanish invaded?

What was their religion?

Who did they war with?

Who were their rulers?

The Incan Inquiry

Key questions

What happened when the Spanish arrived?

All hell broke out, that's what happened. Before the Spanish conquistadors and the Incas even met face to face the Spanish brought diseases with them to South America such as measles and smallpox, which ravaged the Incas even before the inevitable wars and conflicts. When the Spanish and the Incas finally did meet in battle it wasn't hard to guess the outcome. Muskets and bayonets against wooden shields and spears. The Incas fought hard though, as they were protecting their homeland, while the Spanish fought for the massive reserves of gold that the Incas had. Even with the vigour of the Incas they were overwhelmed with diseases and superior weaponry. Unfortunately their sacrifices to the gods didn't save them then. The entire Incan civilization was wiped out by the greed of the Spanish conquistadors.

Who did they worship? What was their religion?

Well, as you probably could have guessed they were pagan. The Incas worshiped a whole pantheon of nature gods and goddesses. The most important and commonly worshipped were: Inti (the sun god), Viracocha (the creator), Illapa (the weather/thunder god), Pachamama (the earth goddess), Mamacocha (the sea goddess), and Mamaquilla (the moon goddess). Inti was the big boss god, the most important, and viracocha was a cultural hero.



Sacrificial knife

Incan Emperors were believed by the people to be direct descendants of their first emperor, Manco Capac, the son of Inti. Emperors always married their sisters as their official wife, to keep the bloodline pure. Sacrificial offerings were not uncommon among the Incas. It was usually animals such as a lama or the odd guinea pig. However occasionally they sacrificed human women or children. When this happened the sacrifices would be given chicha, a beer made out of fermented corn before being strangled and buried in fine cloth with gold and silver statues, bags of corn and other valuables.

Who did the Incas war with?

For many years the Incas fought with native tribes to expand their land and army. They took over a few tribes by violence to expand their army, and once they had a respectable army they took on the big bullies of the valleys, the Chancas. Once the Chancas were defeated they took over all the tribes in the valley either by violence or the threat of violence. When they had defeated all the tribes, they were trying to keep down Chanca rebellions for 5 years before the Spanish arrived. However the rebellions did force the Incas into civil war. This just happened to coincide with the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors, so as they were fighting the greedy Spaniards, they were also fighting each other while suffering from European diseases such as smallpox and measles. It really was a worst case scenario for the Incas. The Spanish had superior weaponry; the Incas were on the brink of a civil war and were ravaged by disease. Once the Spanish actually captured Cuzco, the capital of the Incan empire, the leader of the Spaniards, Francisco Pizarro claimed this territory for Spain and went about taking back gold and slaves to the Spanish mainland. He also tortured the natives putting them in racks shooting them

beating them and mistreating the ones they took as slaves. This was the end of the Incan empire.

The Incan rulers

The Incas had some interesting rulers, for example there was one who was so ugly even his wife couldn't stand the sight of him. However there was one of the very first emperors who had a very interesting rise to power. Sinchi Roca. He was a prince, sure, but he had brothers who were expected to take the throne instead of him, so this is what his mother did. She made him a big cape of gold,(the Incas sacred metal) and clipped it on to him. He was then instructed to go and hide in a cave and wait for his mother to tell him to come out. Then she gathered the other Incas because there weren't many then, and called to the gods for a new ruler, and out popped Sinchi Roca, from the cave, Just like the very first Incas. And he was dressed in gold. This glorious child sent by god must be destined to be the ruler! And so he was given the throne when his father Manco Capac died. He spent less time killing than dear old dad and more time inventing. In fact, he invented the fringe hairstyle. The Incan Emperors were believed to be direct descendants of the sun god, Inti. It was their belief that it was their divine right to be the emperor of their people. They were supremely powerful, but rather like the tudors, even they only had as much power as the church. They made sacrifices and made sure the gods were pleased with the Incas. They were so religious that every morning the emperor performed a ritual to make the sun rise. The emperor and the church having so much power all changed when the Spanish took over. The emperors were deposed and the pagan priests became Christian and the whole

power system destabilised. Then it was absorbed by the Spanish and the entire Incan empire was absorbed and all traces of the Incans completely disappeared.

The Incan influence

They mainly influenced through their calendars, their agriculture and their cuisine such as chocolate, Vanilla, potatoes, tomato, chilli. Also their language has been incorporated into several other major languages such as Spanish and English. Various spices and other herbs were also picked up in south America. In a way another influence were the Incan slaves. They were taken off to other countries for life as a slave but the ones that survived had kids and the influences and culture rubbed off on those who they mingled with.

Continuation of a great civilization

18,000 BCE - Early hunters and gatherers

5000-2000 BCE – Tribes start to farm the land

400 CE - Inca tribe first mention in myths and legends in Peru

1200 CE - City of Cuzco is formed. Manco Capac is the first ruler

1400-1500 CE – Incas conquer even more tribes and expand empire to 2500 miles long and about 500 miles wide

1525 CE – Civil war

1531 CE – Pizarro brings Spanish to the Inca Empire. He kills Emperor Atahualpa - the Inca ruler.

What weapons did The Incas use?

The Inca had 7 types of common weapons. These weapons included the bronze or bone-tipped spears, clubs with stone edges or lumps, bows and arrows, dart throwers, two-handed wooden swords with jagged edges, wooden slings with stones, and stone/copper headed battleaxes. For Armour the high ranking officers and noblemen had wooden helmets which were sometimes reinforced with copper. They also had wooden shields covered by leather, and padded cotton armour with wooden plates for the back. If he found it comfortable a lower class Inca grunt could wear a simple wood helmet. The helmets were either rectangular or rounded.

What changed?

Well, At first the Incas were a small tribe in the valley, with their leader Manco Capac, but they slowly grew, and got more warlike, thanks to the oppression of the big tribe, the chancas. Then, they slowly took over the other tribes in the valleys that are now Peru and started to build a proper civilization. They worshipped their pagan gods and lived their lives crushing rebellions. It wasn't peaceful exactly, but for the Incas it was a pretty good life. But, being the time that it was it was only a matter of time before one of the Imperial powers found them. In the end It was Spain. However there has never been an unbiased history report, history is opinionated, so there are several versions from here. One is that the Spanish were exploring and the savage Incan barbarians attacked them and they were defending themselves. Another is that when they encountered each other both parties were hostile and violence broke out immediately. However the most commonly believed version and the one that I believe is that when the Spanish landed they were horrified by the Incan sacrifices, however in the Incans opinion they were doing the right thing in appeasing the gods. The Spanish then asked where the "cities of gold were" and the Incas said peri peri and pointed. However the Spanish thought they said Peru and were pointing to the city, when in fact they meant go over there and keep going and going, in an attempt to get rid of the Spanish. It didn't work however and the Incas lost the resulting war. There are some more differing opinions here. One is that once the Spanish took over they were kind to the Incas and the Incas were Impressed by Christianity and converted on the spot. The more commonly believed version, and again the one I believe, Is that the Spanish were cruel to the Incas. In fact the killing stroke In the war was when they ransomed the Incan Emperor, and then executed him once they received the massive ransom sum. They forced the Christianity upon the Incas and made them stop all pagan practices. That was when The Incan empire was truly absorbed into the Spanish one.



Sources

Primary: Incredible Incas book

Secondary: My brain

Primary: www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/lost-inca-empire.html

As mentioned before, this is an account of the commonly believed ENGLISH account of history. No doubt the Spanish one would be different.