

Mesoamerican and Andean Civilizations

Aztecs, Maya, and Inca

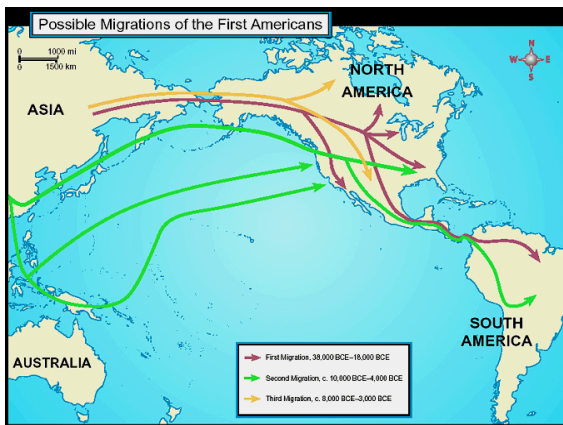


Guiding Questions

1. How did prior civilizations influence the Aztecs, Maya, and Incas?
2. How were the major political, economic, social, and cultural developments of the Aztecs, Maya, and Inca similar and different?

Olmecs

- Called “Cult of the Jaguar”
- City state government that united for religious celebrations under the authority of a Priest/shaman
- Dirt and clay pyramids used for political power and religious ceremonies



Colossal Heads

- More than a dozen found
- Largest stands 11 feet tall
- Experts think they depict individual rulers

<http://sis.csu Hayward.edu/obsw/anthropolab/miller/3250/03olmec/olmec2.html#PHOTOZGALLERY>

Olmec Religion: Polytheist nature worship

- shaman ruled, claimed to shape-change, control nature (rain, sun, crops), fly, killing enemies from a distance, and bear off-spring even though they are men.
- Jaguars seen as magical animals and shamen claimed to shape shift into them
- foundation of later Maya civilization.



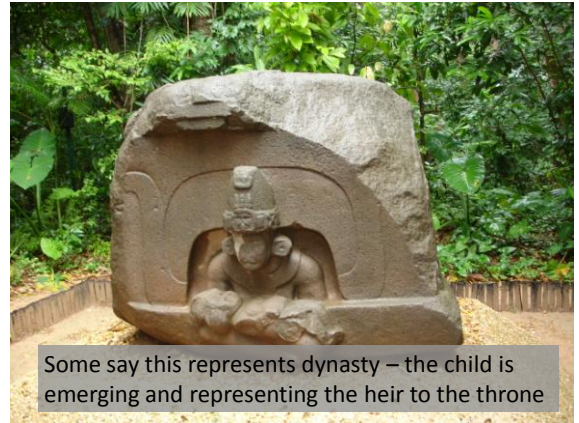
Olmec Influence on the Mayans

- Maize
- Ceremonial centers with temple pyramids
- Calendar based on the Olmec one
- Ball games
- Rituals involving human sacrifice



Agriculture

- Maize Domesticated 3000BCE
- Major staple crop in Mesoamerica
- Also domesticated cotton, cacao, feathers, pelts, woods, rubber



Some say this represents dynasty – the child is emerging and representing the heir to the throne

Olmec Art: Jade Sculpture



Jade Axe



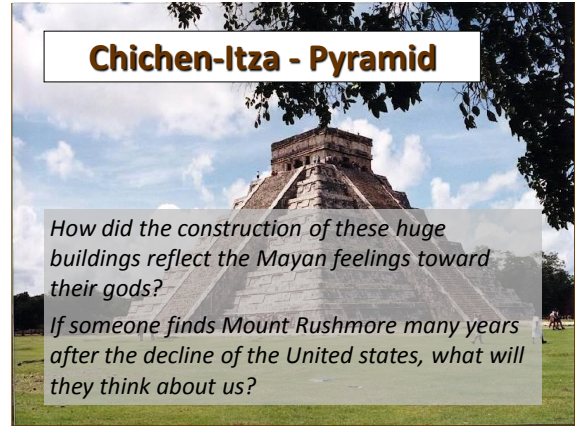
Were-Jaguar



Olmec La Venta Pyramid

Most of what is left of ancient Mesoamerican civilization has been swallowed by the landscape.

<http://www.columbia.edu/~lhw/anthropology/miller/3250/03olmec/adamec2.html#PHOTO%20GALLERY>



The Maya

- Mayan civilization stretched from what is now southern Mexico to El Salvador
- Cities are supported by trade and agriculture
- Nobles rank highest, followed by merchants, artisans, and peasants



Mayan Glyphs



sky king house child city

Mayan Mathematics



Mayan Glyphs



Aztecs

- The valley of Mexico provides a fertile home for several powerful cultures
- Teotihuacan becomes a major city-state and trade center
- The Toltecs rise to power
- Aztecs settle in the valley of Mexico and found the city of Tenochtitlan
- The Triple Alliance takes over Mexico 402

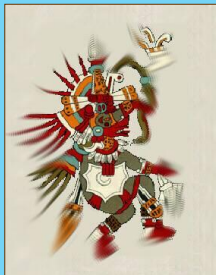
Mayan Religion

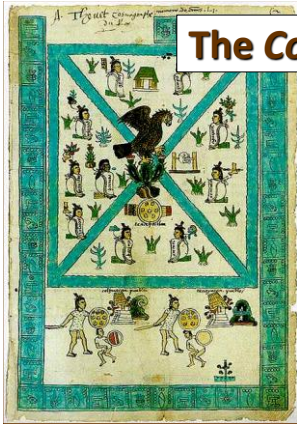
- Mayans worship many gods and create elaborate rituals
- Mayan calendars, math, and astronomy support their religious practices 398
- Their written language is preserved in stone carvings and a few remaining books
 - Glyphs
 - Calendar <http://news.discovery.com/space/the-2012-mayan-calendar-doomsday-date-might-be-wrong.html>

Lands of the Aztecs



Quetzalcoatl





The Codex Mendoza

- History of the Aztec rulers and their conquests
- List of the tribute paid by the conquered,
- Description of daily Aztec life
- In traditional Aztec pictograms with Spanish explanations and commentary



Chinampa

Origins in the Toltec language family still spoken by a half million people today

chih(ŋ) → Cholan
 colhua → Colhuacan
 ocelotl → Ocelotepec
 coatl → Coatlan
 coatl → Coatzaco
 ahuacatl → Ahuacatlan



"floating gardens"

- chinampas were artificial islands

Valley of Mexico c. 1519

Brackish Water
 Fresh Water
 Marshes
 Chinampas
 Causeway

Lake Zumpango
 Lake Xahocan
 Teotihuacan
 Texcoco
 Tenochtitlan
 Culhuacan
 Lake Xochimilco
 Lake Chalco
 Chalcó

Math and Astronomy: Measuring Time

- The way in which a culture measures time reflects the needs of that society
- A reliable method of keeping time is needed to predict natural phenomena, synchronize activities, or hold rituals on specific dates
- Cultures use a variety of ways to measure time, including calendars, sundials, clocks, and watches

Religion

- Polytheistic
- Many Temples based on astronomy for worship, agricultural planning and sacrifice
- Each holiday included ceremonies involving human sacrifice/cannibalism
- Fatalistic and cyclical view of the world

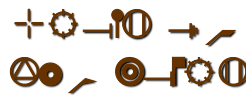
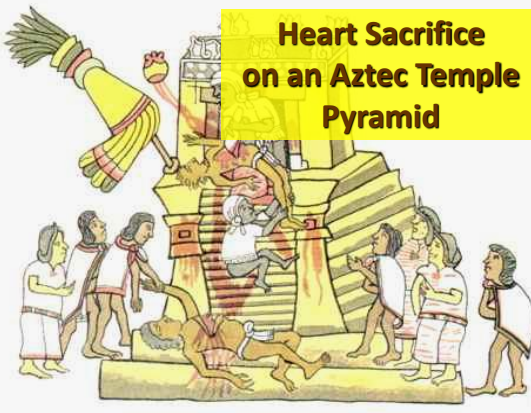


Aztec Decline

- During the time of Montezuma, the empire begins to weaken
 - The growth of the empire required more sacrifices and tribute → the demand for more made people mad and led to unrest and rebellion
 - 1520-1521 Smallpox kills about half of the remaining population



Heart Sacrifice on an Aztec Temple Pyramid



The Inca settled in the valley of Cuzco, establishing an 11-family royal lineage



Social

- Large gap between upper/lower classes
- Role of Women – decide fate of prisoners, domestic chores (grinding maize), can inherit land
- Common people in constant fear of war/sacrifice/slavery

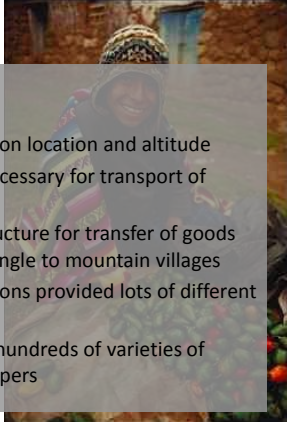


Machu Picchu



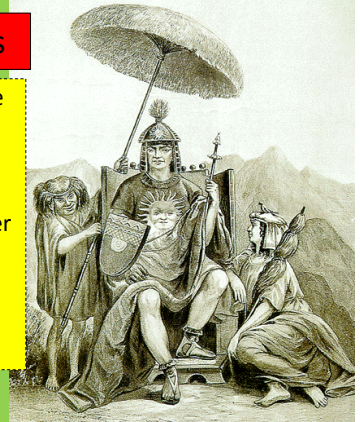
Economy

- Agriculturally based
 - terrace farming
 - different crops based on location and altitude
- Lots of labor/workers necessary for transport of goods
- Excellent Roads/infrastructure for transfer of goods from coastal desert to jungle to mountain villages
- Trade from different regions provided lots of different food to eat
- Domesticated and bred hundreds of varieties of potatoes, tomatoes, peppers

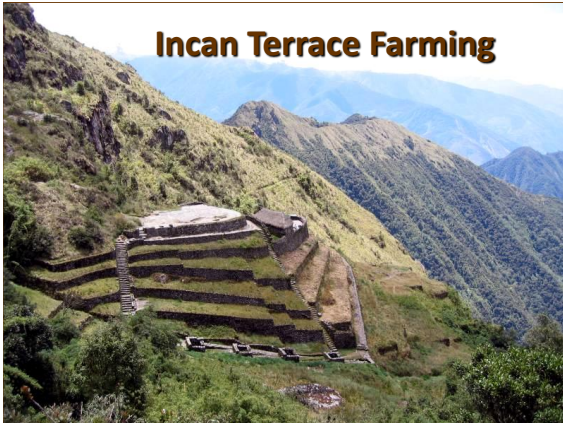


Incan Rulers

- They believe the Incan ruler is descended from the sun god
- The Inca conquer a vast territory, using military power and wise diplomacy



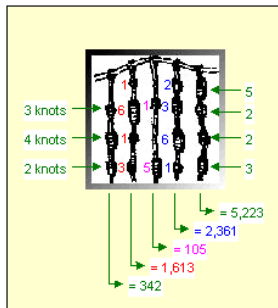
Incan Terrace Farming



Government

- The Inca create a central bureaucracy to rule their empire
- They build cities and roads to unify the empire and create a state-run economy
 - 14,000 miles of roads and bridges
 - *Chasquis* traveled the roads as mail carriers
- The Inca develop calendars and accounting methods but not a written language

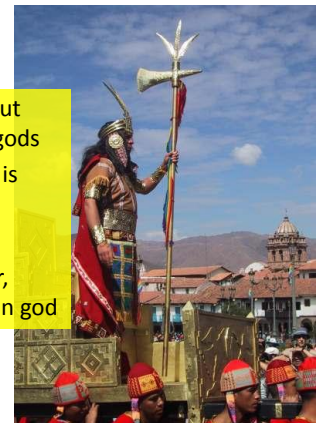
The Quipu – An Incan Database



No written language

Religion

- Religious tolerance but must worship Incan gods
- Polytheistic, sun god is most important
- Human sacrifice rare
- Great Inca – emperor, descendant of the sun god





Discord in the Empire

- The Incan ruler dies and his sons launch a civil war to determine who will rule
- When the Spanish arrive, they are able to divide and conquer the Inca Empire
 - Where have we seen this before?
 - What does divide and conquer actually mean?
 - Remember what the Belgians did to the Hutu and the Tutsi?

What do we know?

Compare the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan religion, government, and culture to determine the similarities and differences.

Achievements

Olmec (until 1200 BC)	Maya (250 AD to 900)	Inca (1200 AD to 1572)	Aztec (1400 AD to 1521)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stone temples •Carved statues •Number system •Calendar system •Writing system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Corn, tomatoes, squash, cocoa, cotton •Irrigation ditches •Formed cities, traded goods •Temples and courtyards •Calendar with 365 days in a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Terrace farming •Mined gold/silver •Thousands of miles of roads •Palaces with gardens and running water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tenochtitlán •Written language •Knew mathematics