

Chapter 14

The Americas to the Fifteenth Century

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Chapter Chronology

c. 400 c.E.–800 c.E.

Classic Maya civilization

c. 200 B.C.E.—600 c.E.

Classic Teotihuacan civilization

c. 1–500 c.E.

Middle Woodlands civilizations

c. 400–700 c.E.

Agricultural settlements in Southwest United States

c. 500–1000 c.E.

Late Woodlands civilizations

c. 700–1300 c.E.

Puebloan period in Four Corners region of United States

c. 1200s–1532 c.E.

The Inca

c. 1300s–1521 c.E.

The Aztecs



The Maya (400 BCE – 800 CE) (Slide 1 of 3)

- Located in Yucatan Peninsula and Guatemala
- Most advanced of all pre-Columbian Amerindians
 - Writing system
 - Calendar derived from Olmecs
 - Mathematics included zero
- Sizable population, may have reached 14 million
- City-states ruled by hereditary kings
 - Ceremonial centers in rain forests
 - Large public buildings (temples, palaces, ball courts)
 - Blunt-tipped pyramid – distinctive feature
 - Cities were religious and administrative centers, not commercial hubs



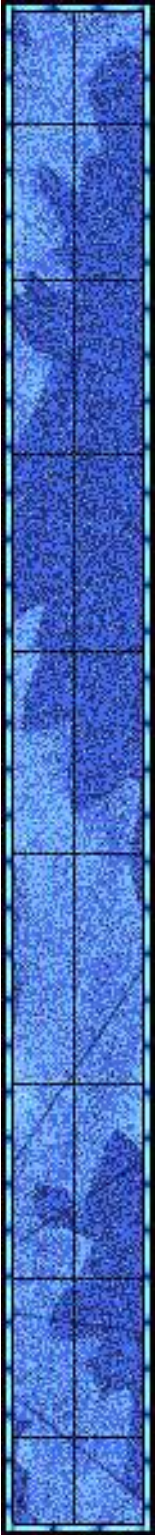
The Maya (400 BCE – 800 CE) (Slide 2 of 3)

- Mayan Society
 - Hereditary elite
 - Commoners: freemen, serfs, slaves
 - Noble women held important positions
- Mayan Religion
 - Priests had magical powers
 - Pyramids were sacred mountains with inner chambers
 - Gods combined human and animal traits; intervened in human affairs
 - No ethical content
 - Human sacrifices



The Maya (400 BCE – 800 CE) (Slide 3 of 3)

- Classical Age, 400-800
 - Accurate calendar
 - Knowledge of astronomy
 - Advances in math
 - Writing system
 - Complex public buildings, like **Chichen Itza**
- Decline due to overpopulation and ecological collapse



Teotihuacan (200 BCE-650 CE)

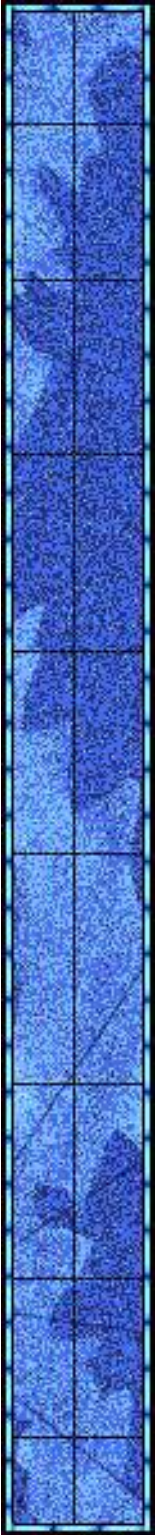
- Unfortified city located in rich farmlands of northern Valley of Mexico, c. 200 BCE
 - Theocracy devoted to agriculture, crafts, and commerce, not war
 - Population 200,000
 - Hub of trade networks from northern Mexico to Central America
 - Pyramids and temples center of religious rituals
 - Pyramids of Sun and Moon – among world's largest masonry structures
- Final years more militaristic
- Invading warriors destroyed Teotihuacán, c. 650 CE
- Cultural heritage endured

The Aztecs (Slide 1 of 2)

- Mexica
 - Warlike nomads who migrated into Central Valley of Mexico
 - Later known as Aztecs
 - Modern Mexico derives its name from Mexica
 - Mexica settled down and created large militaristic state
- Aztec state
 - **Tenochtitlan** – island capital, one of largest in world
 - Ruling elites engaged in conquest and warfare
 - Militarism shaped religion and society
- Religion
 - Chief war god (god of sun) required human blood for survival
 - Led to mass slaughters for human sacrifices
 - Terror may have been used to discourage rebellion

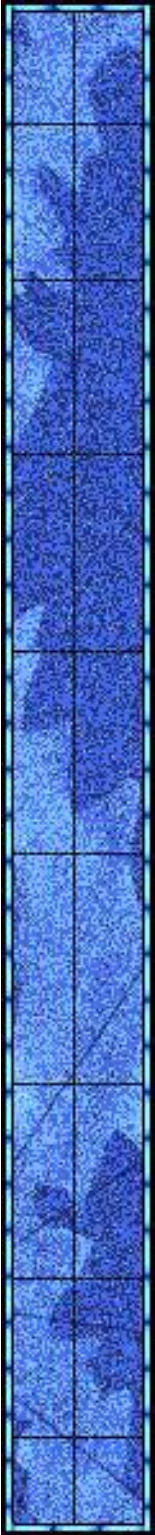
The Aztecs (Slide 2 of 2)

- Society — detailed in codices preserved by Spanish
 - Emperor elected by male members of ruling family
 - Officials — ex-warriors served as provincial governors
 - Priests
 - Warriors (Recruited from ordinary people, received full benefits after capturing four prisoners for sacrifices)
 - Merchants engaged in long-distance trade and spying
 - Freeman, organized in **calpulli**, kinship groups
 - Serfs
 - Slaves
 - Upper-class women seemed to have some rights and privileges



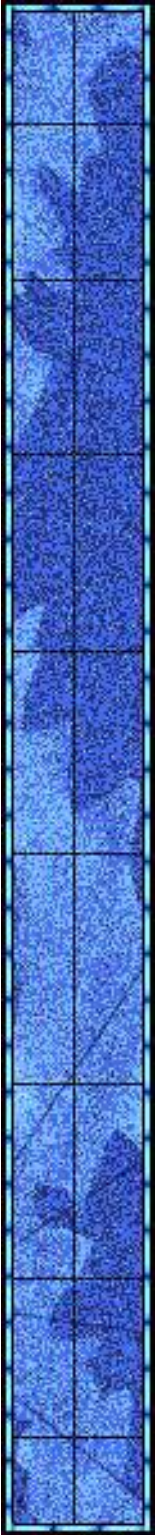
The Inca Empire (c. 1100-1532) (Slide 1 of 3)

- Andean states (Chavin, Moche, etc.) preceded Inca
- Inca conquered and unified Andean region
 - Originated in southern Andes near Lake Titicaca
 - **Cuzco** – major center
 - Sizable empire, possibly 8 million
 - Excelled at organization, administration, tax collection
- Pachacuti Inca, c. 1450s – expansion of empire
 - Adopted practice of Split Inheritance
 - Each ruler kept his lands even after death
 - New emperor must conquer new territories to legitimize rule



The Inca Empire (c. 1100-1532) (Slide 2 of 3)

- Rulers claimed descent from the Sun; rulers mummified
- Incan policies toward subjects
 - Required labor from subjugated people
 - Often deported people to new location to keep them dependent
 - Broke up old **ayllu** (clans) based on kinship; put people in artificial groups based on residence under appointed leaders
 - Maintained obedience with large army
- Social welfare policies
 - Granaries to prevent famine
 - Relief funds for disasters
 - Help for old and destitute



The Inca Empire (c. 1100-1532) (Slide 3 of 3)

- Cultural Impact
 - Quechua became **lingua franca** in region (though not a written language)
 - **Kipus** (knotted strings) used to keep numerical records
- Engineering feats
 - Extensive road network
 - Irrigation systems, dams, and canals
 - Terraced farming on mountainside
 - **Machu Picchu**, massive fortress-city



American Southwest: Hohokam

- **Four Corners region** (Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona)
 - Cultivated corn, beans, and squash
 - Water management techniques to offset drought
- **Hohokam** (contemporary with Maya)
 - Sonoran desert of Arizona
 - Adopted farming before 300 CE
 - Built 600 miles of canals
 - Ball courts
 - Ruling class lived in residences on platform mounds
 - Civilization ends c. 1450 CE, depopulation, abandonment
 - Descendants Tohono O'odham



American Southwest: Pueblos

- **Ancestral Pueblos (Anasazi)**
 - Basketmaker period 400-700 CE – farming, pit-houses, baskets
 - Pueblo I period 700-800 CE – adobe houses above ground
 - Pueblo II period 800-1150 – higher rainfall and groundwater levels, population growth, **Chaco phenomenon**
- **14 Great Houses** – multi-story stone and timber pueblos
 - Roads from Great Houses converged on **Chaco Canyon**
 - Underground ceremonial chambers called **kivas**
 - Major trade center
 - Thirty-year drought destroyed civilization, c. 1150 CE
 - Descendants: Hopi, Zuni, Acoma, Laguna, Pueblos



North America: Woodlands Civilizations

- **Hopewell Tradition**
 - Area east of the Mississippi
 - Widely dispersed groups
 - Engaged in trade, crafts and similar burial practices
- **Mississippian Civilizations**
 - Based on agriculture – squash, beans, maize
 - **Cahokia** – largest settlement, ended mysteriously about 1300
 - Pyramid-like earthen mounds
 - **Monk's Mound** – world's 4th largest pyramid
 - Elite lived on terraces of mounds
 - Some mounds for religious rituals, others tombs
 - Evidence of human sacrifice