

# AMERICAS

## GENERAL

can divide into three geographic areas: North America, Mesoamerica, Andean

remember developed entirely separate from Old World

did have large cities and political and econ org, but when faced with challenge crumbled

highly developed agriculture, elaborate cultural systems

many areas densely populated by 1500

lot of diversity of Indians!

very separate (this meant that could not borrow from other cultures!)

no horses

## ORIGINS

Asian peoples who crossed ice bridge over a long period between 20,000 and 8,000  
bce

slowly spread out

stone age tools found

little known of ice age hunting society

small groups of 20-25

some physical diversity

by 1500 2,000 different languages in use

archaic period, 9,000 bce-5000 bce

evidence of plant domestication in number of regions

slow change from hunting gathering

by 4,000 bce maize in Central Mexico and peppers, squash and beans  
spread north and south, allowed higher population density

in Amazon basin, manioc, or cassava, a flour root

potatoes in Andes

two early cultural centers: Mesoamerica and the Andean uplands

both areas experienced cultural cycles

basically just a string of centers from peru to mexico

usually hereditary chiefs

social hierarchies

## **MESOAMERICA**

vertical zones from lowland to highland (also a feature of Andean civ)

very early on, small permanent settlements appeared

### A. Olmec

general

on southeastern coast

suddenly emerged 1500 bce

sites at San Lorenzo and La Venta

"mother civilization" of the area?

maize central

hereditary rulers

elaborate religious ceremony

calendar years of 365 days

jade carvers

Mystery

by 900 bce widely diffused

### B. Zapotec

meanwhile Zapotec center at Monte Alban by 500 ce

urban center of 30,000 people

writing system

150-900 ce, classical age

### C. Teotihuacan, valley of Mexico

enormous urban center, maybe 200,000

- huge temple pyramids
- defined social structure
- many gods
- influence spread as far south as Guatemala

D. Maya, 300-900 ce

- southern Mexico and central American centers

- tropical

- large area with regional variations (Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador)

- cities: Tikal, Copan, Quirigua, Palenmque

- better sources because remnants lasted longer

- monumental architecture

- writing

- did write, cannot read, most combined phonic and semantic system

- calendar and math

- used 0, base 20

- ritual and solar calendars made a cycle of 52

- 3114 bce considered the start of cycle since creation

- religion and statecraft

- flat earth, 13 levels of heaven above, nine below, all with a god

- lot of dualism, good/bad, night/day, male/female

- irrigation used

- ritual ball court and also ritual human sacrifice

- large pyramids and temples

- constant warfare between city-states

- ruler, scribe and priest elite

- by far most were peasants

- slaves from war capture

700-900 ce, classical age collapse

Teotihuacan itself destroyed in 650

- Maya cities abandoned

- by 900 most deserted

- Northern Maya areas did tend to survive longer

Was it warfare or agricultural exhaustion or disease?

E. Toltec

- around 1000 Toltecs established supremacy around central plateau and

- controlled all

- center was Tula

war empire for about 200 years

## **NORTH AMERICA**

Mississippi river valley agriculture by 2000 bce

by 700 bce Adena culture in southern Ohio, large mounds

Hopewell culture, 200-500 ce  
very elaborate mounds

800-1300 ce, Mississippi valley civ

large urban centers such as Cahokia, in Illinois  
we know little  
chief and four-layer class

American desert Indians  
pit houses  
Anasazi in four corner region

## **ANDEAN WORLD**

complex micro-regions

highland plateaus key

irrigation projects in arid strip and terracing projects in uplands  
This required states!

many rise and fall alterations

A. Chavin de Huantar 850-250 bce  
llama domesticated  
large stone buildings  
fine craftsmen  
again not much known  
maize and potato

no unity in region after 300 bce

- B. Nazca on southern coast  
the famous lines on the plateau
  
- C. Mohica state, 200-700 ce  
expanded by conquest
  
- D. between 300-900 two regional states emerged  
Tihuanaco in north and Huari in south  
extensive irrigation  
idea of verticality  
self-sufficiency the goal  
kinship important