

**GLOBAL HISTORY II
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009**

I. End of the Marking Period

All work that you have to complete and all of the tests that you need to make-up must be submitted by Friday, May 1, 2009 to be considered for your second marking period grade. Make sure to use SnapGrades or see me to find out what you are missing or to get additional assignments to make up work.

II. The Great Civilizations of Central and South America

Some 1,500 years ago, large ocean going canoes sped along the Caribbean coast of Mexico. Cutting swiftly through the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea, the canoes made an impressive sight. Even more impressive were the riches inside the canoes. Traders carried jade statues, turquoise jewelry, parrot feathers, cocoa beans, and other valuable goods across a wide area. The canoes belonged to the Mayas, a people who flourished in Mexico and Central America. The Mayas were one of several Native American people who built great, complex societies in the ancient Americas.

The Earliest American Civilizations

A civilization is an advanced culture. Historians identify several basic features of early civilizations. Perhaps the most important is the building of cities. Other features include a well-organized government, a system of social classes, specialized jobs, a complex religion, and some method of keeping records. The earliest known American civilization was that of the Olmecs. The Olmecs emerged in the forests along the Gulf of Mexico, around 3,500 years ago. Archaeologists know very little about the Olmecs. However, rich tombs and temples suggest a powerful class of priests and nobles stood at the top of Olmec society.

Olmec Carvings

The most dramatic Olmec artifacts are the giant carved stone heads found near a religious center. Without the use of pack animals or wheeled vehicles, the Olmecs moved these colossal stones from distant quarries. Olmec temples were decorated with designs of grinning snakes and dragons. Similar designs in later buildings suggest that the Olmec civilization influenced the later, more advanced Mayan civilization.

Mayan Civilization

Mayan civilization emerged about 3,000 years ago. It grew up in the rain forest of present day Mexico and Guatemala. The rain forests were difficult and dangerous places to live. Poisonous snakes hung from trees. Jaguars and other wild animals prowled the forest floor. Disease carrying insects infested the swamps.

From earlier people, the Mayas learned to grow corn and to build stone structures. With much work, they cleared the jungle and drained the swamps. On the cleared land, they grew corn to feed a growing population. They lived in simple homes with mud walls and thatched roofs.

Great cities

In time, the Mayas built great cities in many parts of Mexico and Central America. Two of these cities were Tikal and Copán. Each city had its own ruler. Although rival cities sometimes fought, they also enjoyed times of peaceful trade. Roads that cut through the jungle linked inland cities to the coast.

Towering above the cities were huge stone pyramids. Atop each pyramid stood a temple. There, priests performed ceremonies to please the Mayan gods.

Social classes

Priests were at the top of Mayan society. Only priests had the knowledge to perform the ceremonies that the Mayas believed were necessary to guarantee good harvests and victory in battle.

Nobles, government officials, and warriors also enjoyed high rank. A visitor to a Mayan city could easily spot priests and nobles. They wore gold jewelry, fine headdresses, and colorful cotton garments. While most rulers were men, Mayan records and carvings indicate that sometimes women governed on their own or in the name of young sons.

Near the bottom of Mayan society was a large class of peasant farmers. Lowest of all were slaves. Slaves were generally prisoners of war.

Advances in Learning

Mayan priests paid careful attention to the passage of time and to the pattern of daily events. By studying the sun and the stars, they tried to predict the future. In that way, they could honor the gods who controlled events, including harvests, trade, and hunts.

Concern with time and the seasons led the Mayas to explore astronomy and mathematics. With the knowledge they gained, they created an accurate 365-day calendar. They also developed an advanced number system that included the concept of zero

To record their findings, Mayan priests invented a system of hieroglyphics or writing that uses pictures to represent words and ideas. Not until recent years have scholars deciphered Mayan hieroglyphics. The Mayas carved records on stone columns or painted them on paper made from bark.

Decline of the Mayas

About 850, the Mayas abandoned their cities, and the forests once more took over the land. For centuries, these "lost cities" of the Mayas remained hidden in the thick rain forests of Central America.

We are unsure why the cities were left to decay. Perhaps peasants rebelled against heavy taxes imposed by their rulers. Maybe farming wore out the soil. Even though their cities declined, the

Mayan people survived. Today, more than 2 million people in southern Mexico and Guatemala speak Mayan languages.

Aztec Civilization

To the north of the Mayan cities, the Aztecs built a powerful empire. Until the 1300s, the Aztecs were wanderers, moving from place to place in search of food. Then, according to legend, a god told the Aztecs to look for a sign. They were to search for an eagle perched on a cactus with a snake in its beak. On that spot, the god instructed, the Aztecs should build their capital. After more wandering, the Aztecs found the eagle in swampy Lake Texcoco (tay SKOH koh), in central Mexico.

Tenochtitlán

The Aztecs built their capital, Tenochtitlán (tay noch tee TLAHN), on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco. Aztec engineers built causeways, or raised roads, out of packed earth. Aztec causeways connected the island to the mainland.

Farmers learned to grow crops on the swampland. They dug canals and filled in parts of the lake. With long stakes, they attached reed mats to the swampy lake bottom. Then, they piled mud onto the mats and planted their crops. Aztec farmers harvested as many as seven crops a year on these chinampas or floating gardens.

In the 1400s, the Aztecs expanded their power by conquering neighboring people. They adopted many beliefs and ideas from these defeated people.

Riches from trade and conquest turned Tenochtitlán into a large, bustling city. City marketplaces offered an abundance of goods. "There are daily more than 60,000 people bartering and selling," wrote a Spanish visitor in the 1500s.

Canoes darted up the canals that crisscrossed the city. Soldiers and merchants traveled the causeways between Tenochtitlán and the mainland. Drawbridges on the roads could be raised in case of attack.

Religion

Religion was central to Aztec life. Young men and women attended special schools where they trained to become priests and priestesses. Like the Mayas, Aztec priests studied the heavens and developed advanced calendars. They used these calendars to determine when to plant or harvest and to predict future events. The priests divided the year into 18 months. Each month was governed by its own god. Aztec books contained knowledge about the gods as well as special prayers and hymns.

The sun god was especially important. Each day, the Aztecs believed, the sun battled its way across the heavens. They compared the sun's battles to their own, calling themselves "warriors of the sun." To ensure a successful journey across the sky, the sun required human sacrifices. The Aztecs sacrificed tens of thousands of prisoners of war each year to please their gods.

A Powerful Empire

By 1500, the Aztecs ruled millions of people from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean. The emperor had absolute power, that is, he had total authority over the people he ruled. The Aztec

emperor was treated almost like a god. Servants carried him from place to place on a litter. If the emperor did walk, nobles scattered flower petals in his path so that his feet never touched the ground. Ordinary people lowered their eyes when he passed. Heavy taxes and the demand for human sacrifices fueled revolts among the neighboring people conquered by the Aztecs. Powerful Aztec armies, however, put down any uprising, taking even more prisoners to be sacrificed to the gods. One Aztec poet boasted: "Who could conquer Tenochtitlán? Who could shake the foundation of heaven?" In fact, the "foundation of heaven" was not as strong as the poet thought. In the 1520s, enemies of the Aztecs would help to destroy Tenochtitlán and end the Aztec empire.

Incan Civilization

Far to the south of the Aztec empire, the Incas united the largest empire in the Americas. By 1492, the Incan empire stretched for almost 3,000 miles (4,800 km) along the western coast of South America.

The Incan capital at Cuzco (Koos koh) was high in the Andes Mountains. From there, the Incas ruled more than 10 million people living in coastal deserts, lowland jungles, and high mountains.

Farming

Like the Mayas and Aztecs, the Incas adapted customs and ideas from earlier cultures. Among them were the Moche, who lived along the Pacific coast of South America between about 250 and 700, and the Chimu people, who came after them.

Expanding on farming methods of these earlier Andean peoples, the Incas carved terraces, land shaped like wide steps, into the steep mountainsides. Sturdy stone walls kept the rains from washing the soil off the terraces. Stone aqueducts, or raised channels, carried water to the terraces from distant rivers. Most gardens produced two crops a year, including more than 100 varieties of potatoes.

The emperor, known as the Sapa Inca, controlled all the land and riches of the empire. Officials kept records of what each family in the empire produced. The government stored their surplus or extra, crops in warehouses owned by the emperor. Incan officials used much of the food in these warehouses to feed the sick or victims of famine.

Engineering and Medicine

The Incas perfected highly advanced building techniques. Their huge stone temples and forts showed their expert engineering skills. With only human labor, ropes, and wooden rollers, the Incas moved into place massive stones that weighed as much as 200 tons.

Stonemasons chiseled each block so that it fit tightly to the next without any kind of cement. Even a knife blade could not fit between blocks. Incan buildings survived hundreds of earthquakes. Some remain standing today.

To unite and control their sprawling empire, the Incas built a complex network of roads. Between 10,000 and 20,000 miles of roads linked all parts of the empire. Incan engineers carved roads through rock mountains and stretched rope bridges across deep gorges.

Teams of runners carried royal commands and news quickly across the empire. A runner from Cuzco, for example, would carry a message to a nearby village. From there, another runner

would race to the next relay station. This system helped the emperor to control his people. If a runner brought news of a revolt,

Incan armies could move swiftly along the network of roads to crush it.

Besides their success as farmers and engineers, the Incas made several important advances in medicine. They used quinine to treat malaria, performed successful brain surgery, and also discovered medicines to lessen pain.

Religious Beliefs

Like the Aztecs, the Incas worshipped the sun. The emperor, they believed, was descended from the sun god. A specially trained class of "chosen women of the sun" attended the emperor and performed religious rituals. To honor the sun, the Incas lined the walls of palaces and temples with sheets of gold. They called gold "the sweat of the gods." Nobles and priests adorned themselves with golden ornaments. Very little Incan gold has survived. In the 1530s, as you will read, the Spanish rode up Incan highways to the golden city of Cuzco. The Incas, weakened by civil war and disease, were unable to fight off the invaders. The newcomers melted down the golden treasures of the Incan empire and sent them to Europe.

III. Questions

Directions – Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.

1. The earliest known civilization in the Americas was that of the
a) Aztecs b) Olmecs c) Mayans d) Incas
2. At the top of Mayan society were the
a) Priests b) Noblemen c) Warrior d) farmer
3. Concern with time and the seasons led the Mayans to explore
a) chemistry b) social studies and science c) astronomy and mathematics d) hieroglyphics
4. To record findings Mayan priests use pictures to represent words this is called
a) Tenochtitlán b) Kachinas c) Tikal d) hieroglyphics
5. The capital of the Aztec empire was
a) Tikal b) Copan c) New York d) Tenochtitlán
6. A chinampa is a
a) floating garden b) body armor c) a capital city of the Aztecs d) a sun god
7. How many months were there in the Aztec year
a) 12 b) 18 c) 9 d) 24
8. In what modern day continent was the Inca Empire
a) North America b) Asia c) South America d) Europe
9. The Incas performed successful brain surgery
a) true b) false