

What the Americans knew
Piero Scaruffi
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Bibliography: Alvin Josephy: 500 Nations (1

Bibliography

Alvin Josephy: 500 Nations (1994)

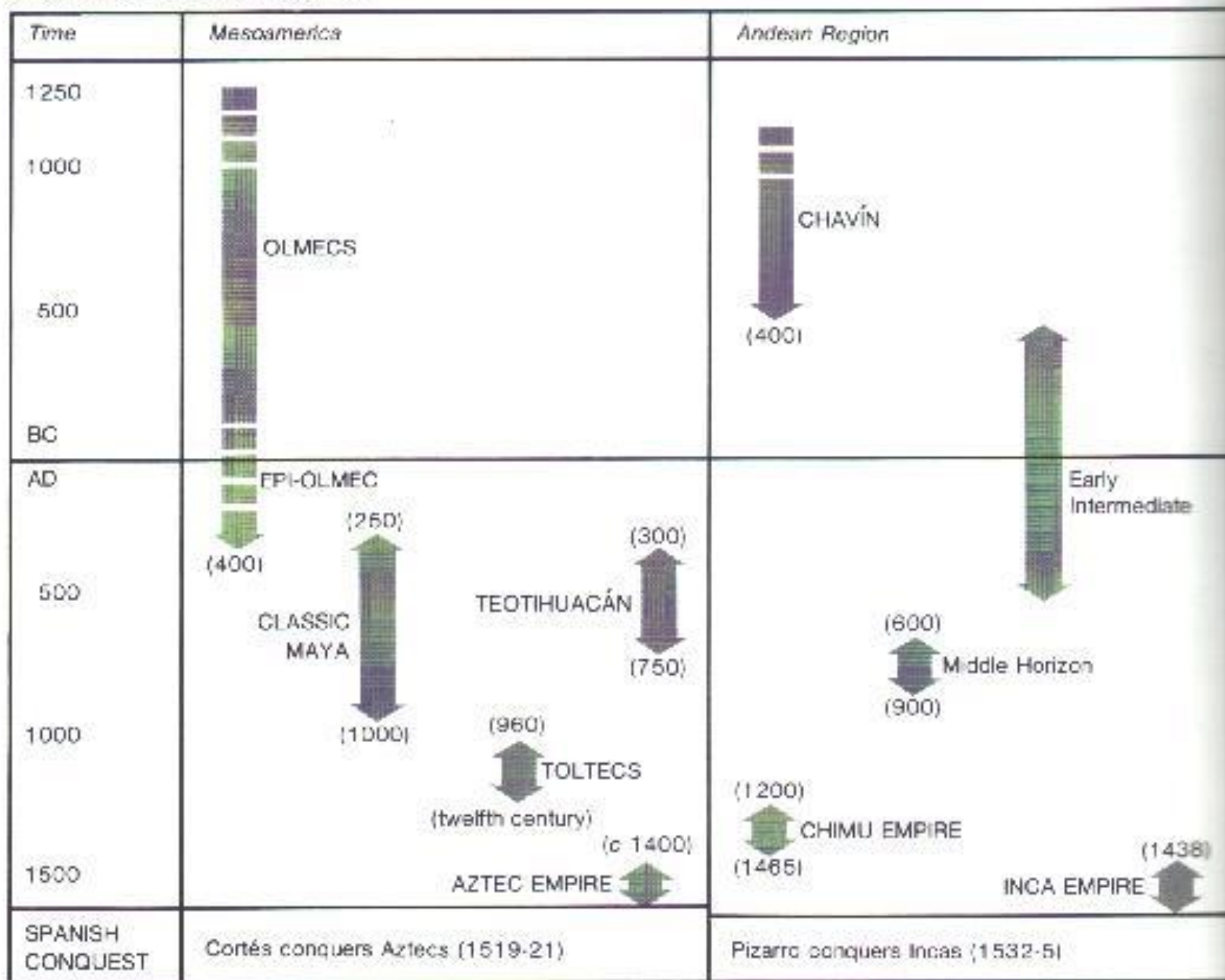
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What the Americans knew

- **21,000 B.C.: First humans arrive in Alaska (Pedro Furada in Brazil and Monte Verde in Chile claim to be older)**
- **11,000: Clovis culture spreads from Mexico to South America**
- **7,000: Farming in Mesoamerica**
- **2,000 B.C.: First towns in Mesoamerica**

Chronology for Ancient America



What the Americas knew

- **Corn/ maize**
 - **Asian societies built on rice**
 - **European societies built on wheat**
 - **American societies built on corn**

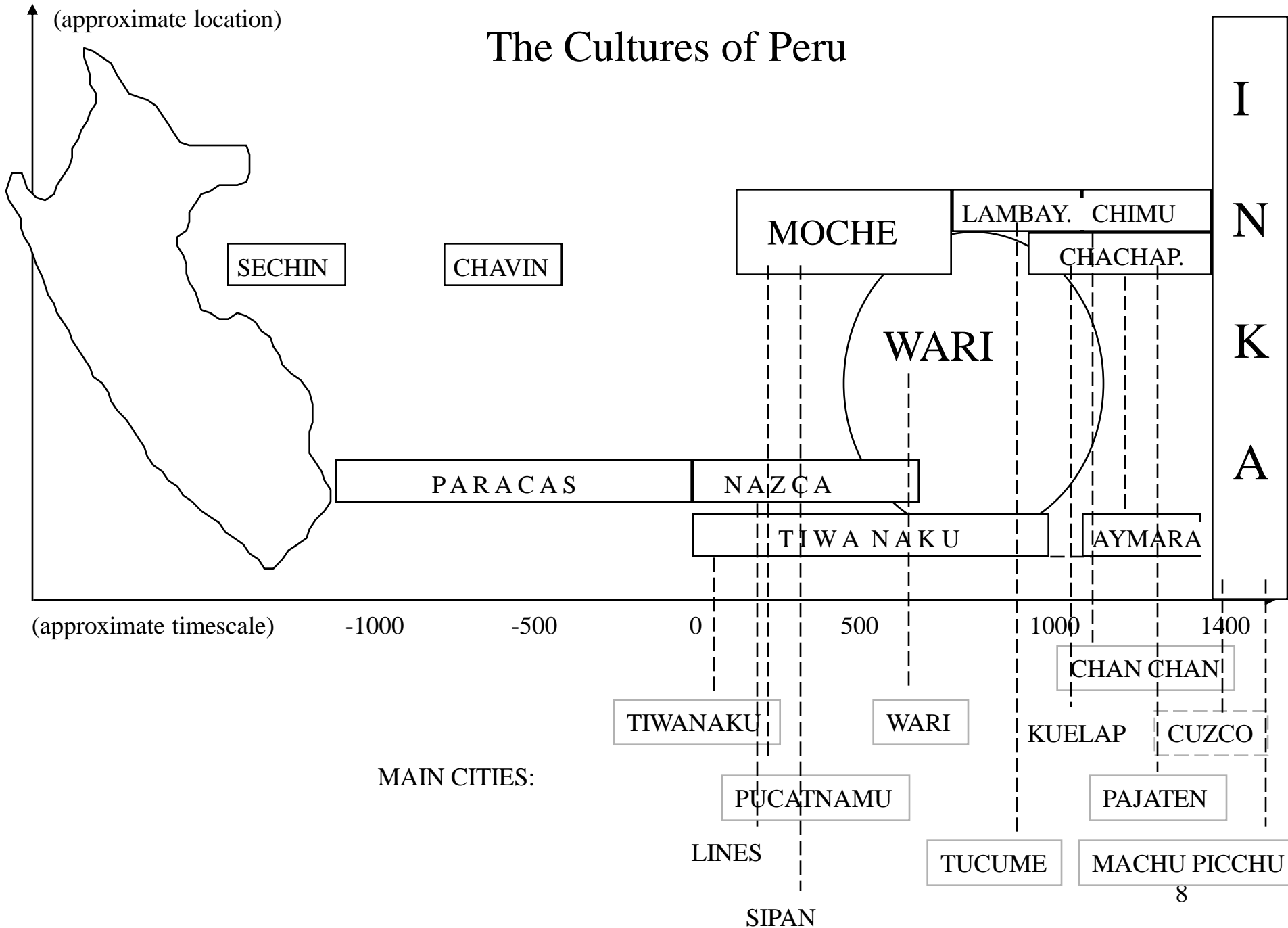
What the Americas knew

- **Characters shared by all American cultures**
 - **Communal ownership of agricultural land within a tribe**
 - **No purchase or trade of land**
 - **No sale of crops for profit**

LOST CITIES OF ANCIENT PERU

MODERN NAME	NEAREST AIRPORT	AGE	CULTURE	WHAT IS LEFT
BATAN	CHICLAYO	850-1250 A.D.	LAMBAYEQUE	PYRAMIDS
BRUJO	TRUJILLO	?	MOCHE?	?
CHAN CHAN	TRUJILLO	1100-1400 A.D.	CHIMU	28 KMQ
CHAVIN	HUARAZ	600 B.C.	CHAVIN	FORTRESS
CIUDAD ENCANTADA	PIURA	1500?	INKA?	CITY
CONGONA	CAJAMARCA	1100-1500 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	FORTRESS
CUPINISQUE	TRUJILLO	1200-200 B.C.	TRUJILLO	?
CUZCO	CUZCO	1500 A.D.	INKA	TEMPLES
KAWACHI	NAZCA	100 B.C.-700 A.D.	NAZCA	PYRAMIDS
KUELAP	CHACHAPOYAS	1100 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	FORTRESS
MACHU PICCHU	CUZCO	1500 A.D.	INKA	CITY
MOCHE	TRUJILLO	0-500 A.D.	MOCHE	2 PYRAMIDS
NAZCA	NAZCA	200 B.C.-600 A.D.	NAZCA	LINES
OLLANTAYTAMBO	CUZCO	1500 A.D.	INKA	FORTRESS
PACATNAMU	TRUJILLO	100 A.D.	MOCHE	57 PYRAMIDS
PACHACAMAC	LIMA	1350 A.D.	WARI	CITY
PAJATEN (ABISEO)	MOYOBAMBA	1300 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	CITY
PARACAS	NAZCA	700-300 B.C.	PARACAS	NECROPOLIS
PUEBLO ALTO	CHACHAPOYAS	1100-1500 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	CITY
PURUNLLACTA	CHACHAPOYAS	1100-1500 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	CITY
SACSAYHUAMAN	CUZCO	1500 A.D.	INKA	FORTRESS
SECHIN	CHIMBOTE	1500 B.C.	SECHIN	TEMPLE
SILLUSTANI	PUNO	1300-1400 A.D.	AYMARA	TOWERS
SIPAN	CHICLAYO	200 A.D.	MOCHE	TOMBS
TIWANAKU	LAPAZ	0-1000 A.D.	TIWANAKU	TEMPLES
TUCUME	CHICLAYO	900-1100 A.D.	LAMBAYEQUE	26 PYRAMIDS
VILAYA	CHACHAPOYAS	1100-1500 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	CITY
VILCABAMBA	CUZCO	1500 A.D.	INKA	FORTRESS
WARI	AYACUCHO	700 A.D.	WARI	TEMPLES
YALAPE	CHACHAPOYAS	1100-1500 A.D.	CHACHAPOYAS	FORTRESS

The Cultures of Peru



Ancient Peru

- **Chinchorros: the first people in the world to practice mummification (5000 BC)**
- **Sechin (1500 BC)**
- **Chavin (600 BC)**
- **Nazca (600 AD)**
- **Tucume (1000 AD)**
- **Tiwanaku (1000 AD)**
- **Kuelap (1100 AD)**
- **Machu Picchu (1500 AD)**



Ancient Peru



Carpet: Paracas of Peru 1st AD
(Boston Museum of Fine Arts)



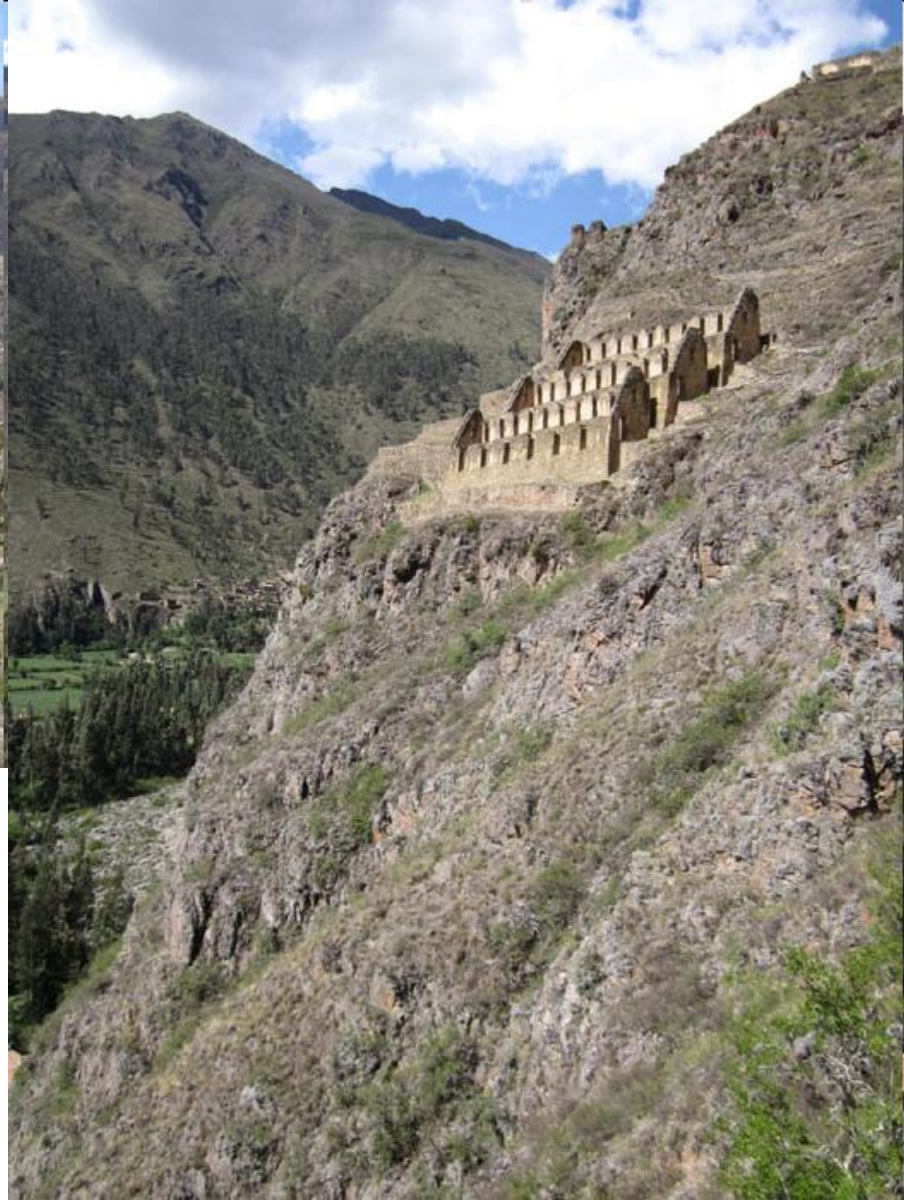
Tomb of Sipan (Moche, 3rd c AD)
(Sipan Museum)

Nazca culture (1st c BC - 6th c AD)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)



Ancient Peru

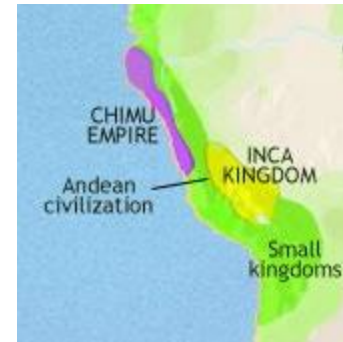
- Add monument/museums/larco





Ancient Peru

Chimu civilization (near Chan Chan): 140 children sacrificed (15th c), the largest child sacrifice in history.



Ancient Peru

Chimu civilization (near Chan Chan): 200+ children sacrificed (15th c), the largest child sacrifice in history.

Peru child sacrifice discovery may be largest in history

28 April 2018



2018

Ancient Peru

Chimu civilization (near Chan Chan): 220+ children sacrificed (15th c), the largest child sacrifice in history.



2019

Archaeologists in Peru have unearthed what is believed to be the largest single mass child sacrifice in history.

Meso-America

- **Olmec (San Lorenzo) 1400BC - 700 BC**
- **Zapotec (Monte Alban) 600 BC - 700 AD**
- **Teotihuacan (Teotihuacan) 150 BC - 750 AD**
- **Nayarit 100 BC - 300 AD**
- **Maya (Yaxchilan) 600-850 AD**
- **Maya (Tikal) 100-900 AD**
- **Totonac (El Tajin) 300-1200**
- **Maya (Palenque) 550 AD - 800**
- **Toltec (Tula) 950 AD - 1174**
- **Maya (Chichen Itza) 1000-1250**
- **Maya (Uxmal) 1100-1450**
- **Aztec (Tenochtitlan) 1370-1520**

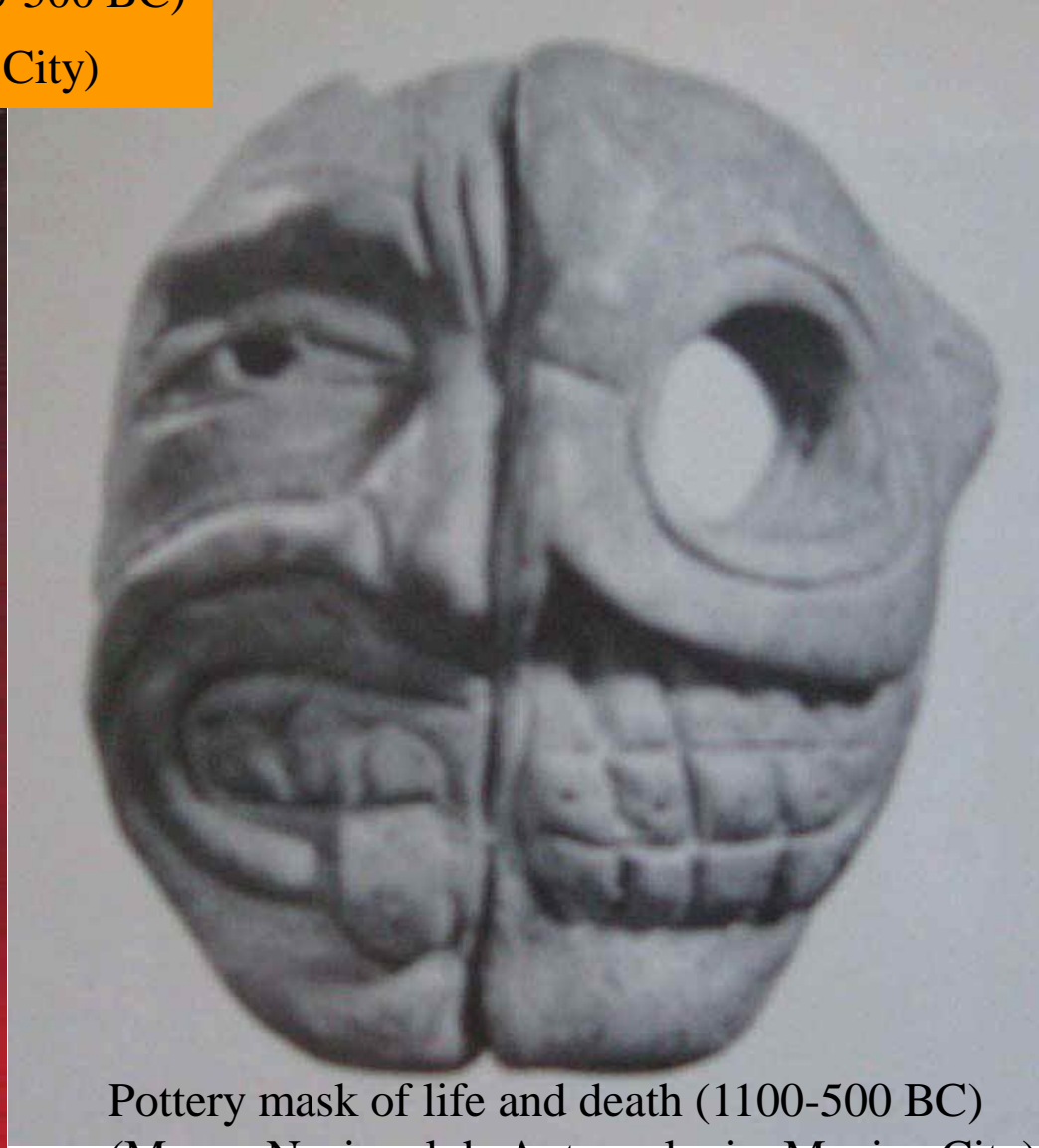
Meso-America



Tlatilco

Terracotta figurine of a contorsionist (1100-500 BC)

(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City)



Pottery mask of life and death (1100-500 BC)
(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City)

Olmec

- **San Lorenzo (1,400-1,300 BC)**
- **La Venta (1,100 BC)**
- **Farming**
- **No cows, pigs, sheep**
- **No beasts of burden (horse, donkey, oxen, llamas)**
- **No wheeled vehicles**
- **Cult of the jaguar (same as Chavin in Peru...)**
- **Peak: 1,400-400 BC**

Olmec

- **Colossal heads**



Olmec (1200-900 BC)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)



Olmec

- **Sculptures**



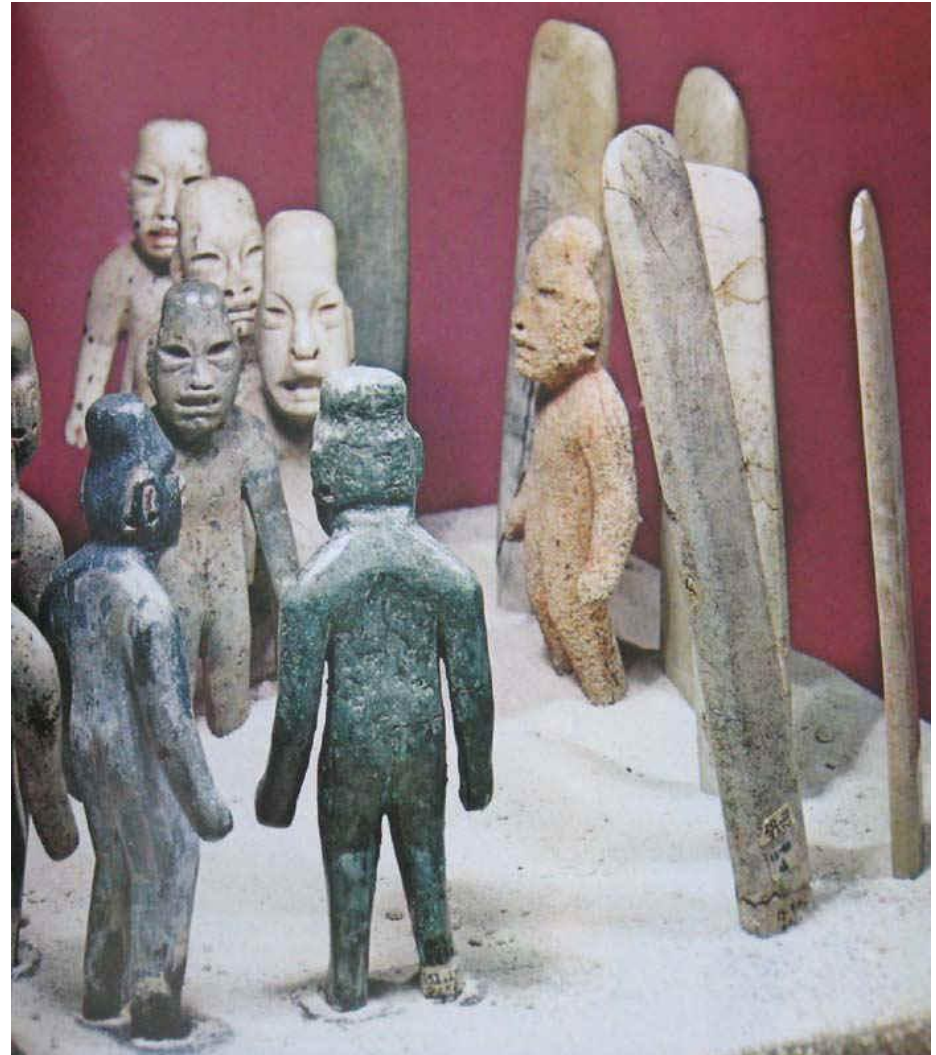
(1100-500 BC)

(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City)



Olmec

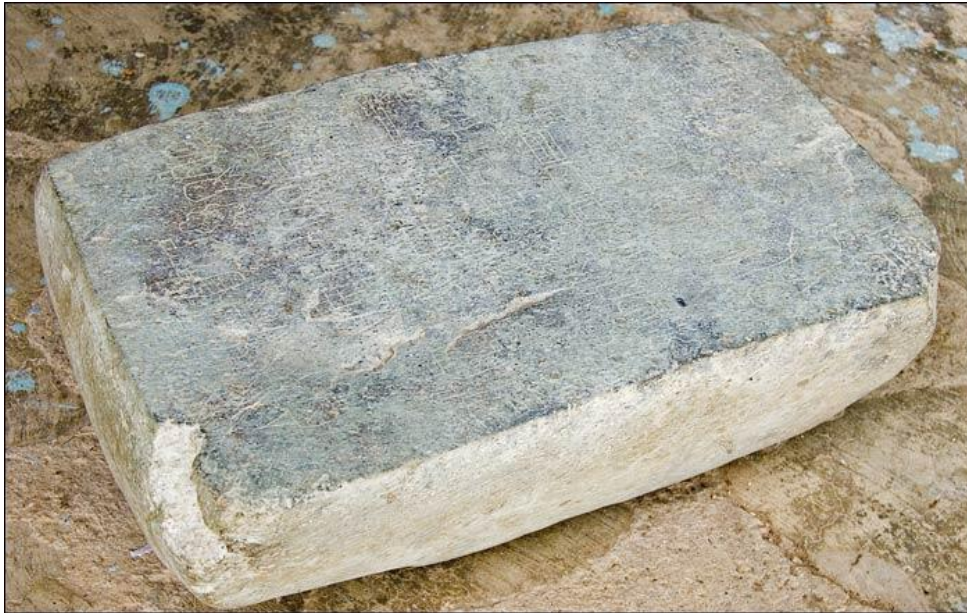
- **Jade figurines**



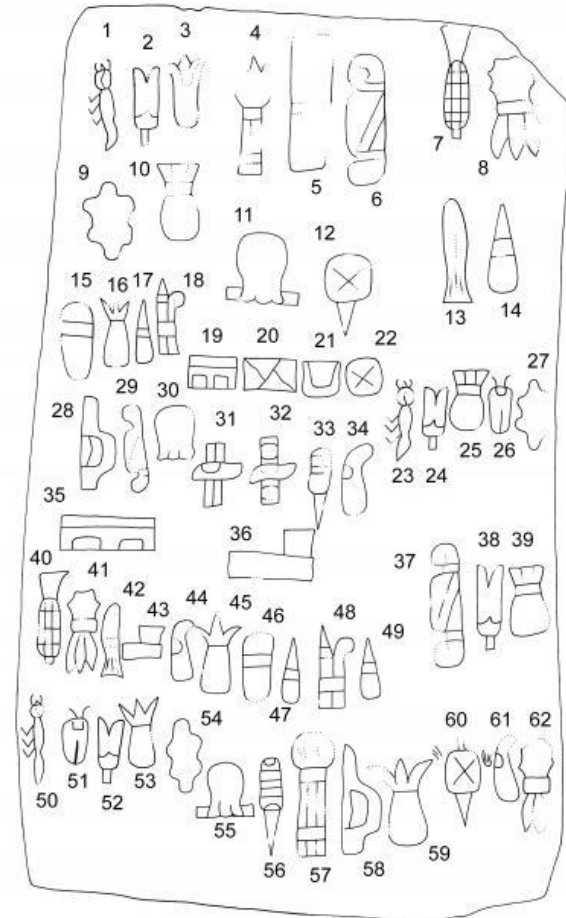
Jade figurines (850-450 BC)
(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City)

Olmec

- **Earliest writing in the Americas**
- **One of the three inventors of writing with Mesopotamia and China**
- **No Olmec writing found before 2006**



Cascajal, Veracruz, Mexico (950 BC)
(discovered in 2006)



Olmec

- **Successors of the Olmecs in the Mexican Gulf Coast:**
 - **Maya**
 - **Teotihuacan (Mexico City, pyramids of 100)**
 - **Totonac (El Tajin, 600-1200)**
 - **Toltecs (Tula, 950)**
 - **Zapotec**

Zapotec

- **Pre-Zapotec ceremonial center at San Jose Mogote (1,350 BC)**
- **Monte Alban (500 BC) first known city of Mesoamerica, with a population of 5,000 in 200 BC and 30,000 at the peak (San Lorenzo was just a 1,000 people village)**
- **Writing by 600 BC (earliest writing found in the Americas before 2006)**
- **Peak: 200BC - 200AD**

Zapototec

- **Monte Alban**



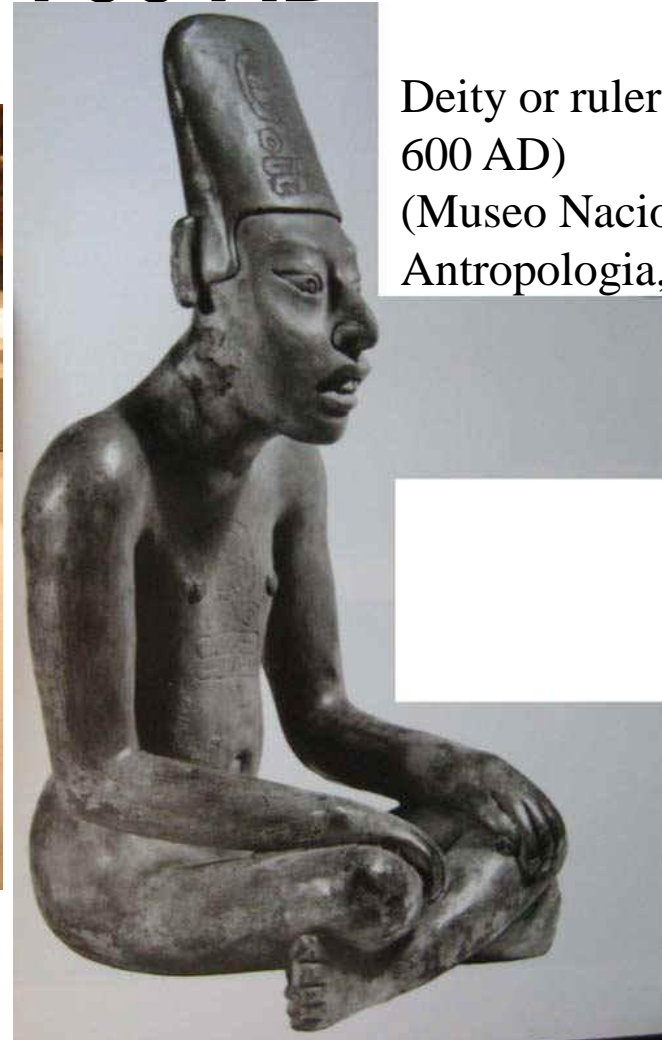
Zapototec

600 BC - 700 AD

- **Art**



Jalisco, Mexico (0-300 AD)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)



Deity or ruler (200 BC -
600 AD)
(Museo Nacional de
Antropología, Mexico)

Nayarit

- **Art**



Nayarit house (200 AD)
(Art Institute of Chicago)



Nayarit chief (500 AD)
(Art Institute of Chicago)



Nayarit (300BC - 300 AD)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)

Nayarit miniature ritual (200 AD)
(Art Institute of Chicago)



Meso-America

- **Teotihuacan (150 BC - 750 AD) one of the largest cities in the world in 550 AD (125,000 people)**
- **Pyramid of the Sun (150 AD)**
- **Trade**
- **Warfare**
- **Quetzalcoatl (plumed serpent god)**

Meso-America

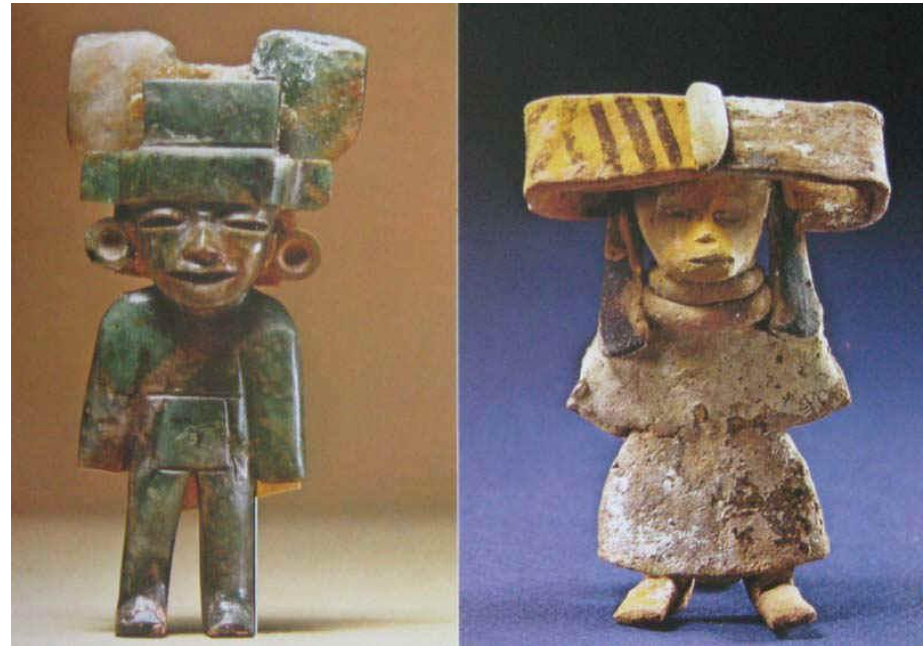
- Teotihuacan





Meso-America

- Teotihuacan



Jade figurines (Zapotec, 300-200 BC)
(Oaxaca)

Maya

- **First major ceremonial center: Nakbe (400 BC)**
- **First metropolis: Tikal (300 BC)**
- **Earliest writing: 292 AD**
- **Concept of zero, and a base 20 numbering system**
- **Farming**
- **City states**
- **Constant warfare**
- **Sophisticated calendar**
- **Pyramids**
- **Cenotes (water a scarce resource)**
- **Peak: 250 AD - 900 AD**

Maya

- **Writing**
 - **Similar to the principles of Sumerian writing (combination of non-phonetic logograms and phonetic signs)**
 - **Derived from Olmec writing**
 - **400 characters**
 - **Zero**
 - **Earliest dated artifact: 31 BC**

Maya

- **Earliest writing**



1st C BC?



Ruins at San Bartolo, Guatemala
300 BC, oldest known Maya writing

Figure 10. Dumbarton Oaks jade pectoral (DO pectoral).

Maya

- Tikal



Maya

- **Tikal**
 - **Only public buildings survive**
 - **No homes or shops ever discovered**

Maya

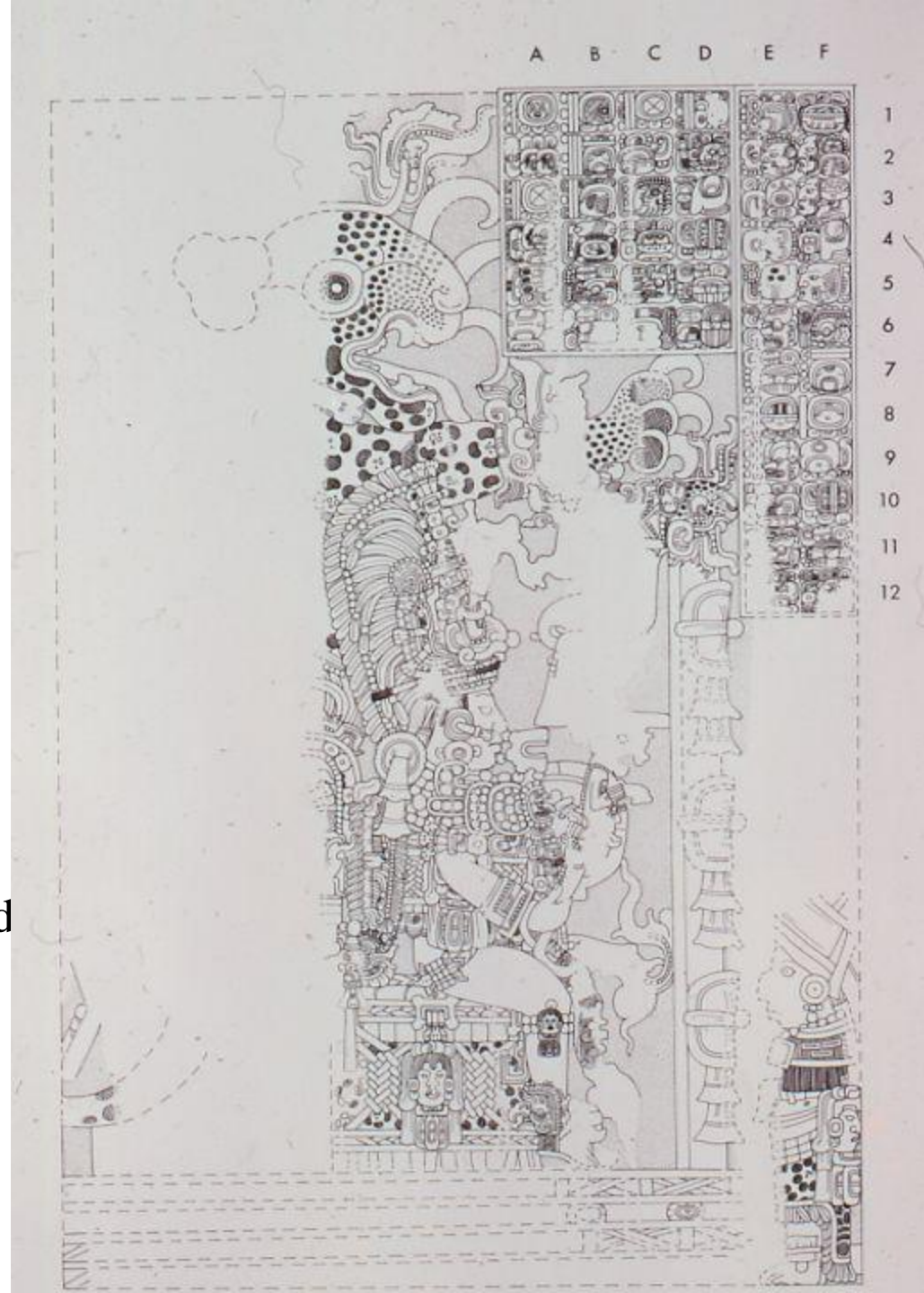
- **Tikal**
 - **Wood carving**



Carved lintels of 741 from Tikal
Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland

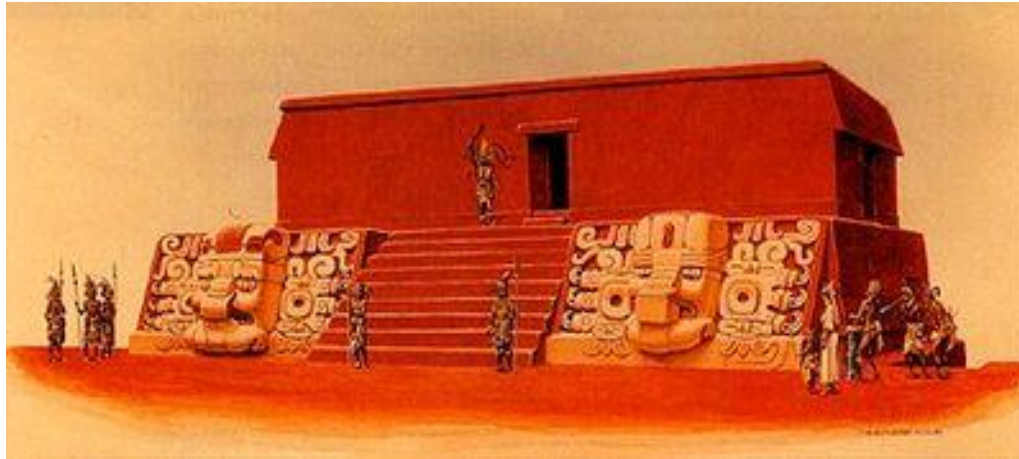
- **Tikal**

Carved lintels of 741 from Tikal
Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland
Drawing by Wm R. Coe,
University of Pennsylvania, 1961



Maya

- **El Mirador**



Meso-America

- Palenque
- Uxmal

Palenque



Uxmal



Meso-America

- **Maya-Toltec Era (1000-1400)**
 - Toltec influence on Mayan society, e.g. Quetzalcoatl
 - Chichen Itza



Meso-America

- **Totonac (300AD - 1200 AD)**



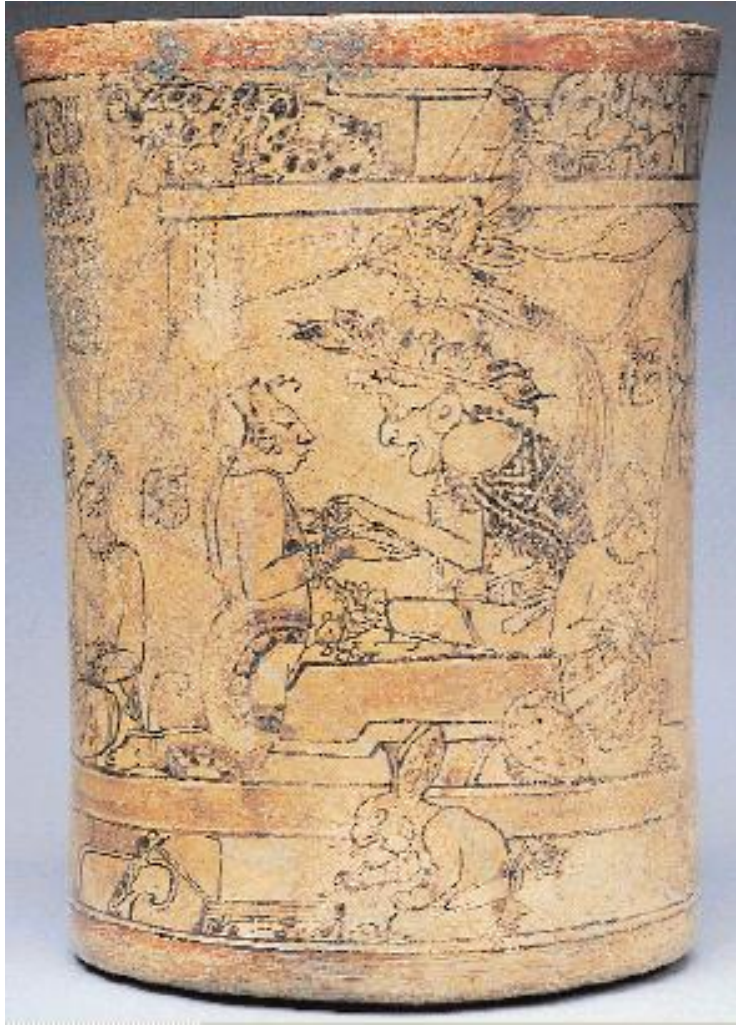
Maya

- **Maya burial urn 650-800**
- **Maya vase 650-750**
- **Yoke for Maya ballgame 450-700**
(Boston Museum of Fine Arts)



Maya

- **Princeton Vase (9th c AD)**



(Princeton Museum)



Maya

- **Goddess O**

(600-800 AD, Princeton Museum)



Maya

- **Art**



Maya woman (550-900 AD)
(Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City)

Maya

- **Stelae**



Stela (864 AD)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)

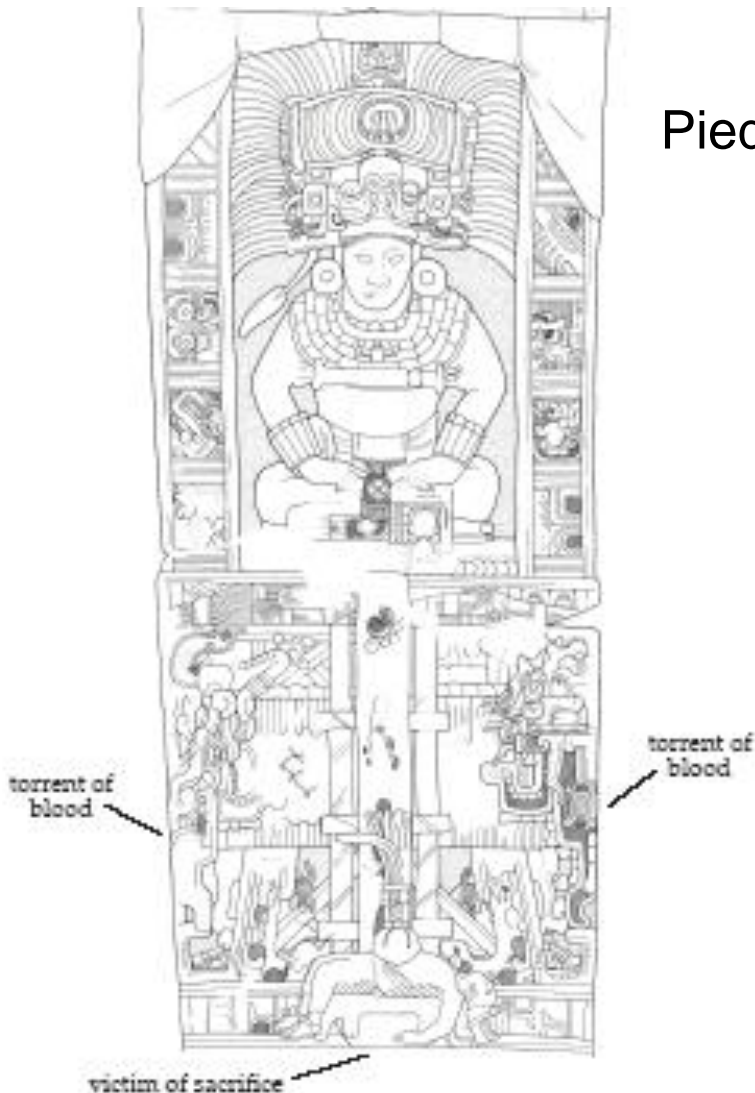


Stela of Queen (761 AD)
(DeYoung Museum, San Francisco)

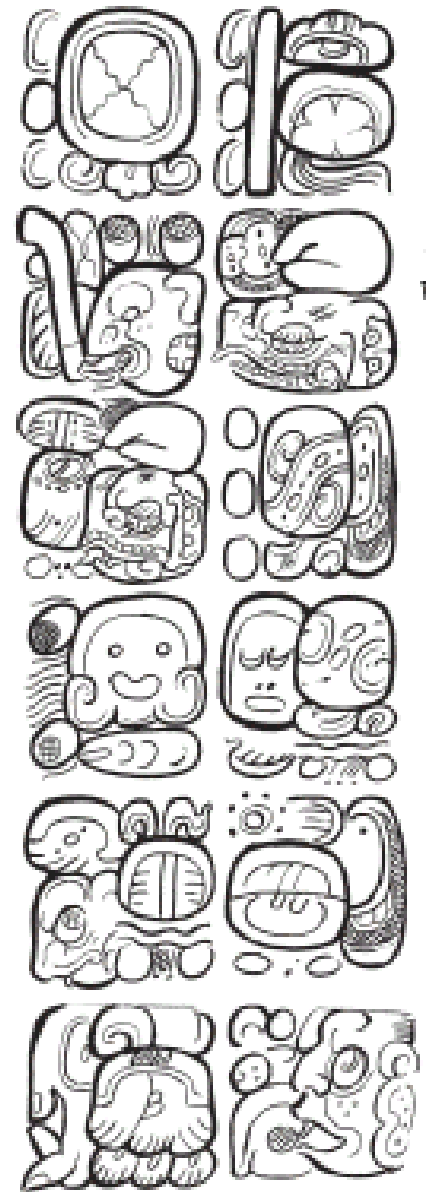


Maya

- **Mayan flood myth (flood of blood)**



Piedra Nigra, Stela XI



Palenque Temple XIX, South Side

Maya

- **Bird deity Itzemye'**

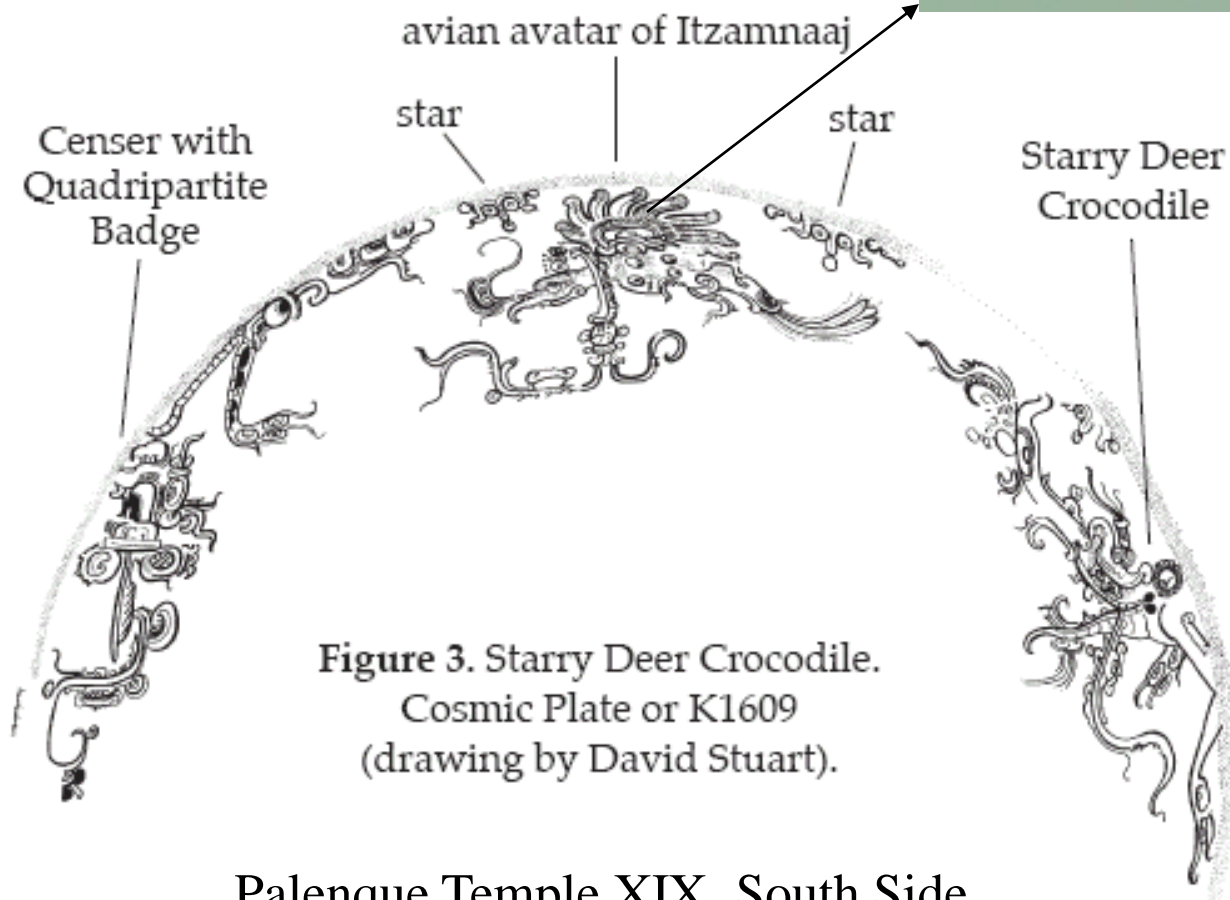
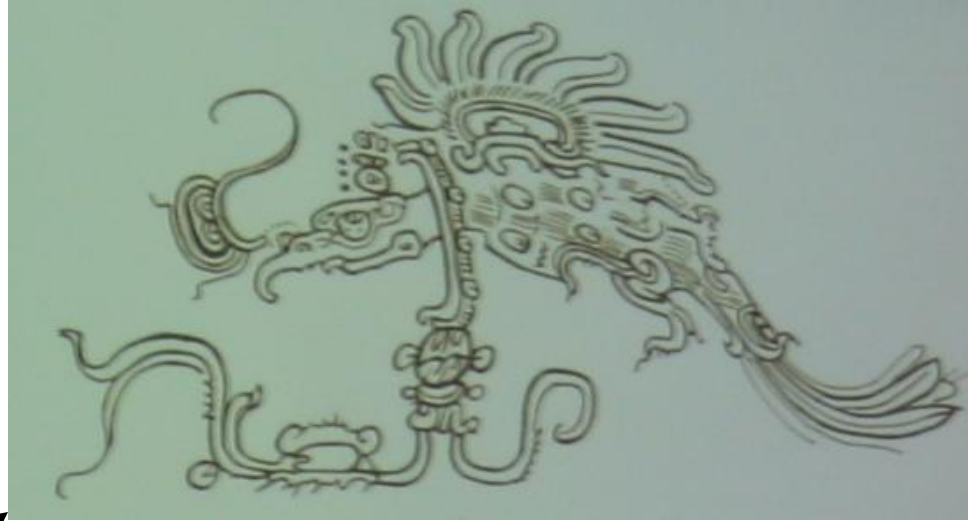
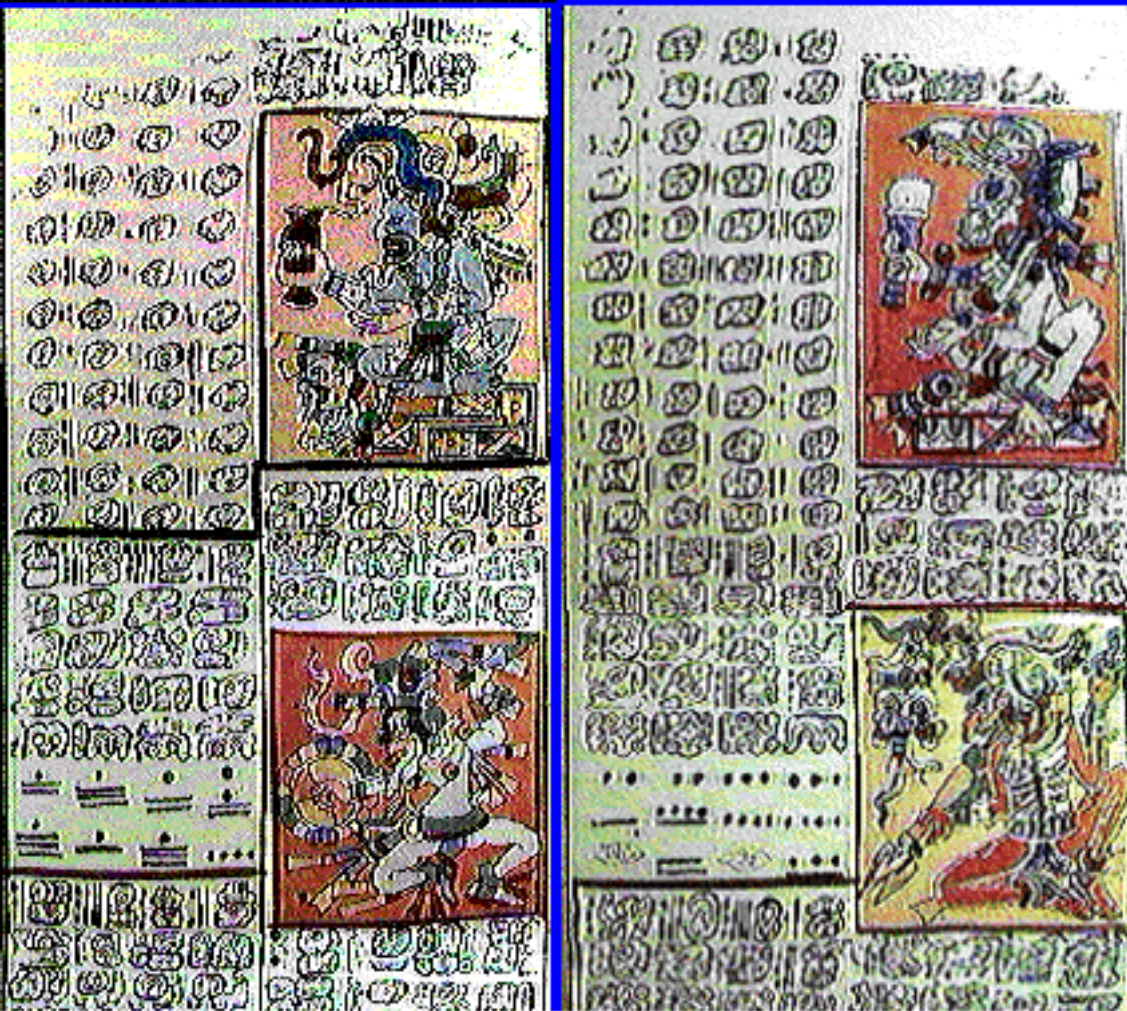


Figure 3. Starry Deer Crocodile.
Cosmic Plate or K1609
(drawing by David Stuart).

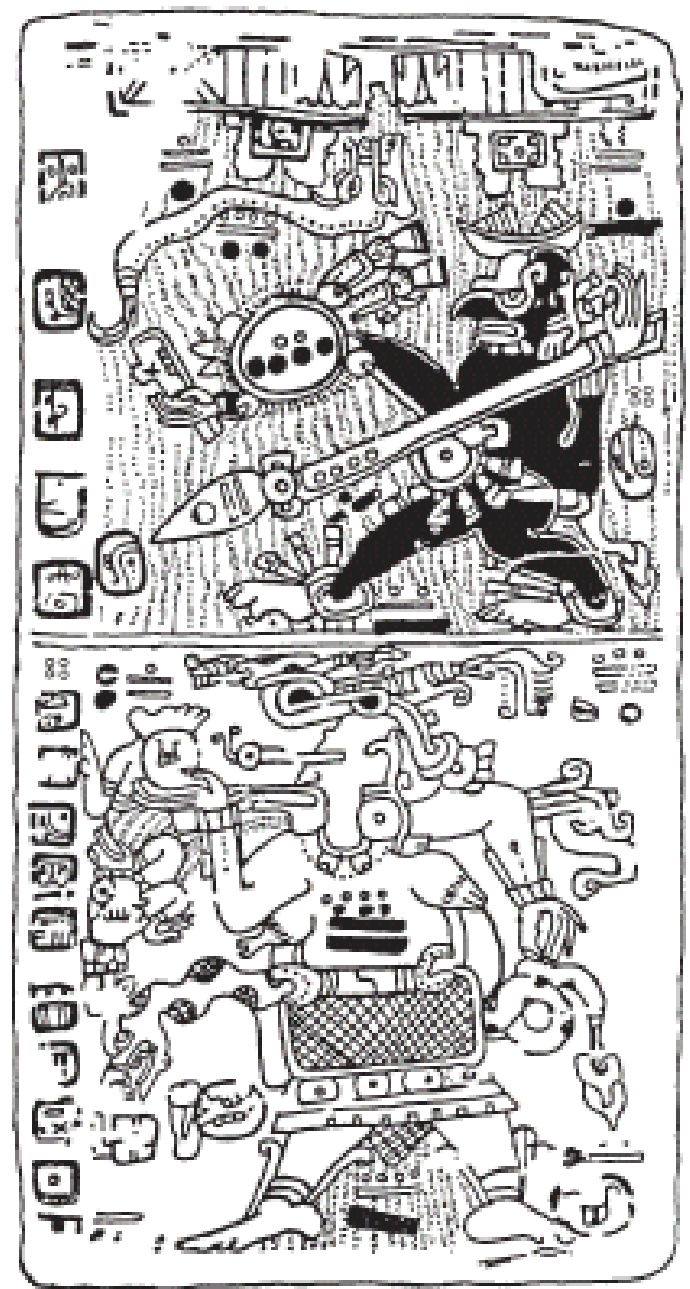
Palenque Temple XIX, South Side

Maya

- Books



Dresden Codex



Madrid Codex

Maya

- **Creation Myth**
 - There are multiple universes
 - Ours is the fourth
 - There is an upper world and an underworld

Maya

- **Creation Myth**



K1226
Photograph © Justin Kerr File no. K1226

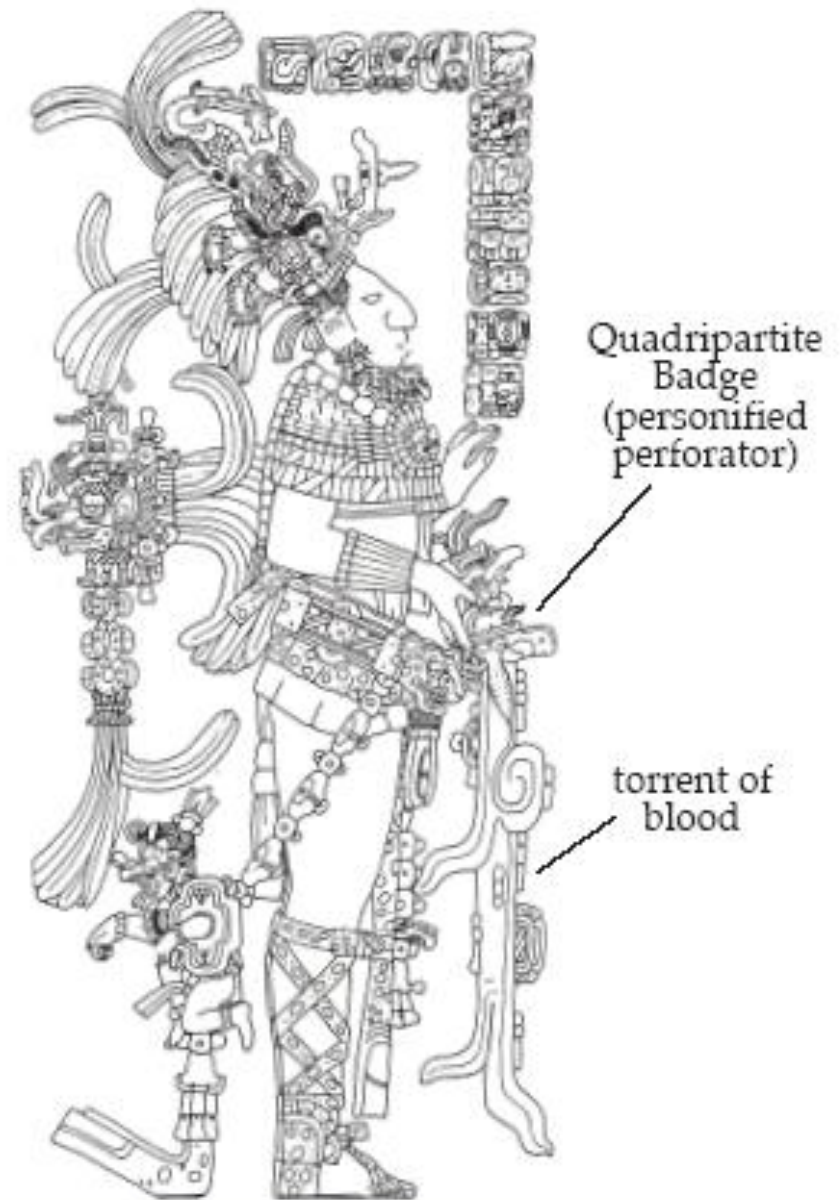
Vessel K1226
Boston Museum of Fine Arts

Maya

- **Apocalypse**
 - The world will end on the 22nd of december 2012

Maya

- ?



Palenque Tablet from the Temple
of the Cross

Toltec

- Tula (900 AD)
- Warriors
- Violent culture
- Quetzalcoatl (plumed serpent god)





Colombia

- **Ciudad Perdida (Tayronas, 500 AD)**
- **Tierradentro (1st to 8th c. AD)**



Colombia

- **Tierradentro**



USA/ Anasazi

- **Mesa Verde (600 AD - 1300 AD)**



USA/ Anasazi

- **Chaco Canyon (850-1250)**



Aztec

- Brutal society hated by subjects
- Human sacrifices on a vast scale
 - Ritual murder and interment of 42 children at Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlan
- Very primitive pictorial writing
- Never discovered iron



Aztec

- Calendar similar to Maya's: 18 months of 20 days, four weeks of five days (starts in 1091)



Aztec

- Arts
 - Jade regarded as more precious than gold
 - Mosaics



Aztec map of the world
(Codex Fejérváry-Mayer)

Aztec

- **Sculpture**



Aztec

- **Sculpture**



The goddess Tlazolteotl giving birth
(Dumbarton Oaks Museum,
Washington, USA)

Incas

- **Never invented writing**
- **Adopted Tiwanaku's building techniques**
- **Greatest engineers of pre-Columbian America (terraced hills, fortified cities, aqueducts)**

Decline and Fall

- **The population of Mexico falls from 25 million (1490) to 1 million (1605), mostly due to diseases**

Decline and Fall

- **America's lag**
 - **At their peak (900-1500) the civilizations of the Americas were as developed as the civilization of Egypt of 2,000 BC, a 3,000 lag**
 - **Much lower knowledge of the world (science, medicine, engineering) than contemporary China, India, Europe, Middle East**
 - **Much less sophisticated art (still hieroglyphic writing or no writing at all)**

The Legacy

- **Corn**
 - **Potato**
 - **Several kinds of beans**
 - **Squash/ pumpkin**
 - **Tomato**
 - **Pineapple**
 - **Avocado**
 - **60% of the world's food in the 20th century comes from plants originally domesticated in the Americas**
- Cotton**
Tobacco
Cocaine

What the Americans Knew

Piero Scaruffi

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