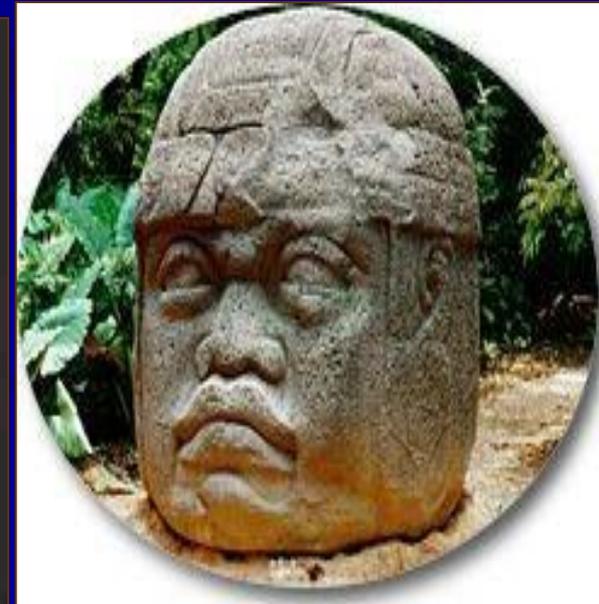


# Chapter 11 – The Americas

- **Postclassical Mesoamerica, 1000-1500 C.E.** The collapse of Teotihuacan and the abandonment of Mayan cities in the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. was followed by significant political and cultural changes.



# Early Human Migrations

Possible Migrations of the First Americans



• **“Indian”** – term created by Columbus when referring to indigenous American peoples; still used to describe Native Americans; thought he (Columbus) had arrived in India

• **Toltecs: 968-1150 CE;** nomadic peoples; established capital at **Tula**; strong militaristic society; cult of human sacrifice; adopted many cultural features from sedentary peoples; introduced metal working; by 1150 the Toltecs fell into decline and no longer dominated the region





*System of City-States* →→



Later successors, most notably the **Aztecs**, combined the legacy of the Toltec's with the city of **Teotihuacan**.

**Aztecs** – arrived around 12<sup>th</sup> century CE; established their capital at **Tenochtitlan** on an island in the middle of Lake Texcoco; Tenochtitlan became the center of Aztec power

**Aztec religion** was based on a belief in an unending struggle between the forces of good and evil throughout the universe; polytheistic



**Tenochtitlan**

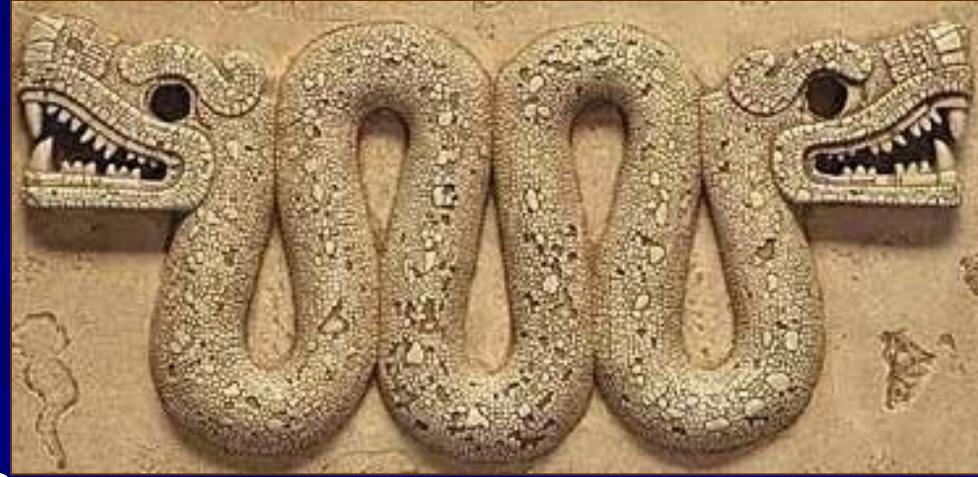


# Ruins of the City Center, Tenochtitlan



# The Aztecs – As many as 20 million people may have lived under Aztec control

- The Aztecs developed a self-image as a people chosen to serve the gods
- The religious practice of human sacrifice was greatly expanded; placed a great importance on the ritual drawing of blood to nourish the gods



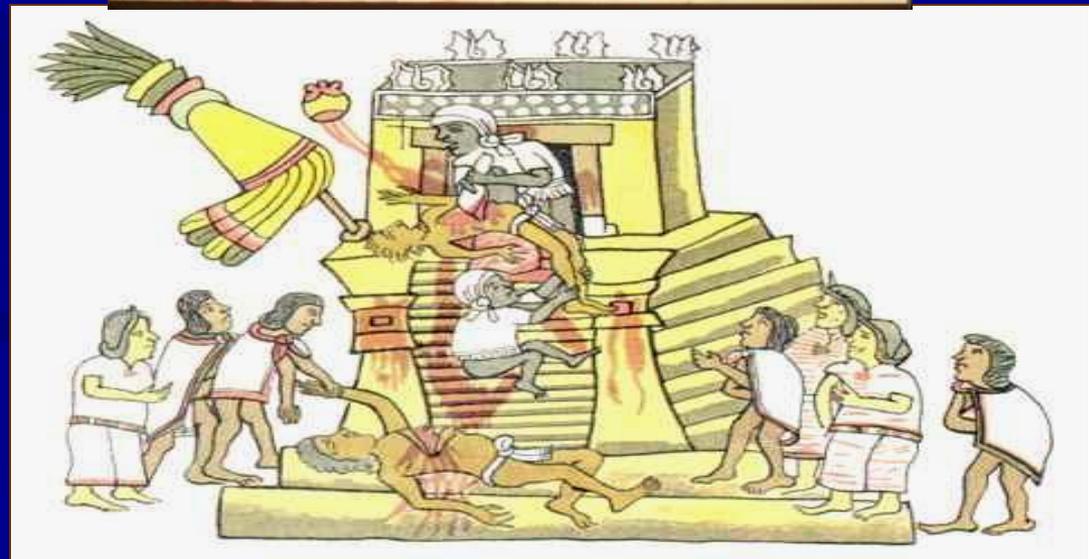
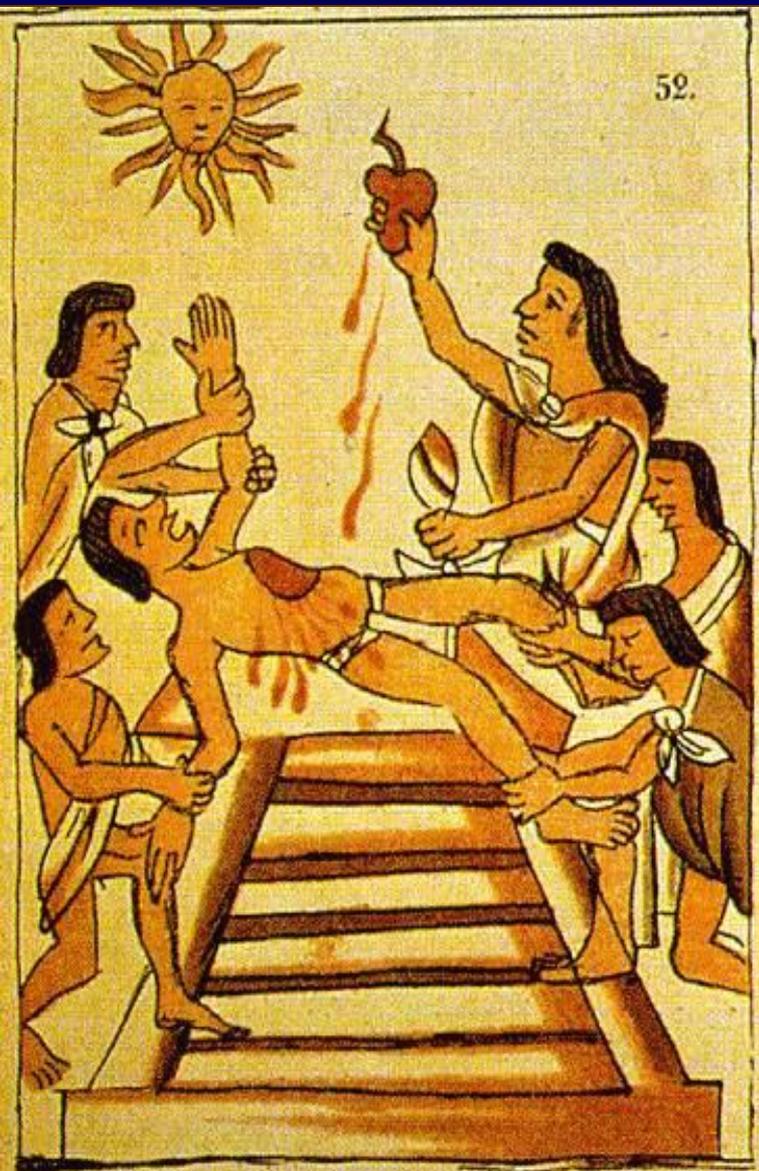
Stressed Severe discipline and a strict separation of boys and girls (think back to Greek city-state of Sparta); the Aztecs placed a greater emphasis on a rigid class system

By 1434, the Aztecs had become the dominant regional power

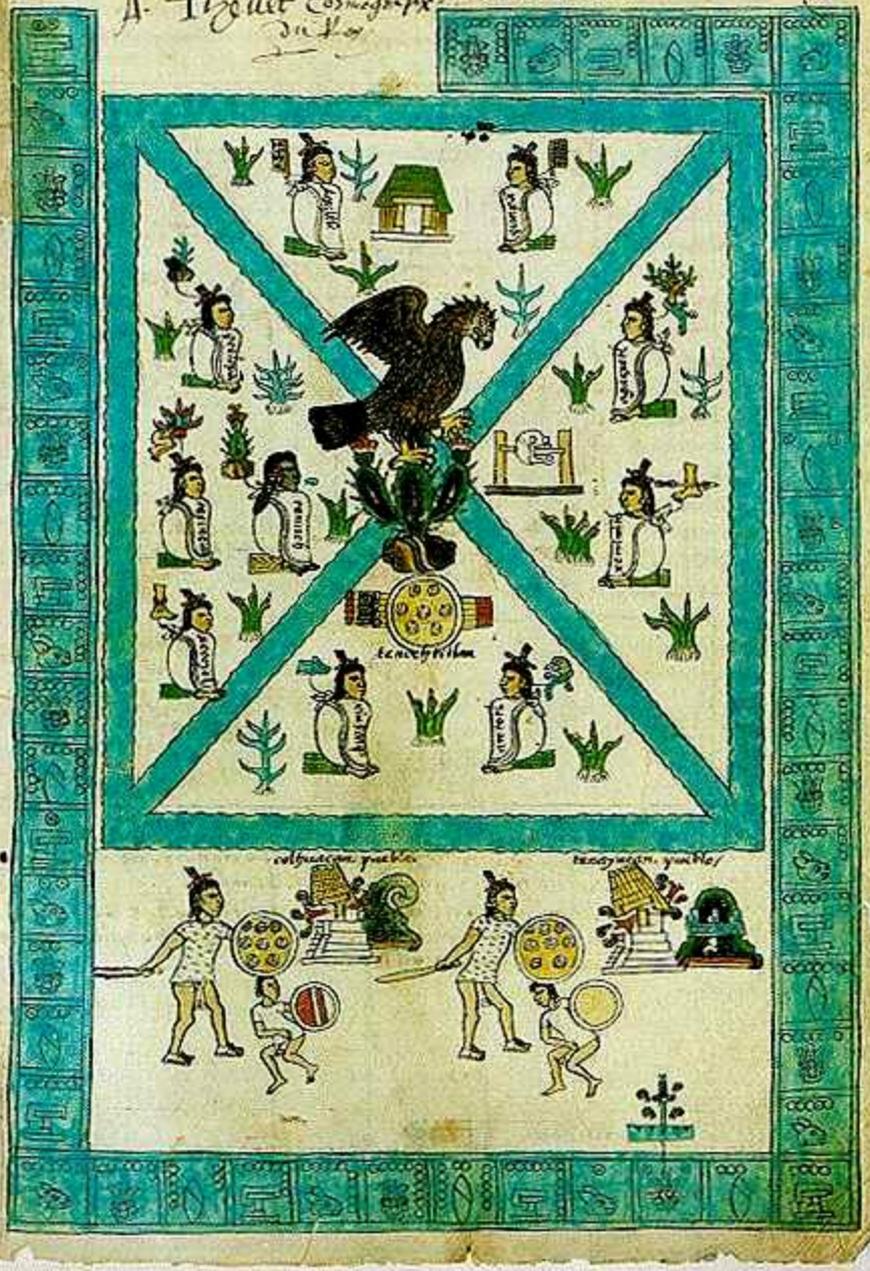
# Aztec government

- **Theocracy** - government ruled by a person who claims to have the sanction of a god or gods. This can have a powerful effect on the people if religion is important to the culture
- Aztecs conquered Central America and developed a tribute system from the conquered people which included giving up some of the conquered people for human sacrifice; rulers used sacrifice as an effective means of political terror

# Aztecs sacrifice to the Sun God

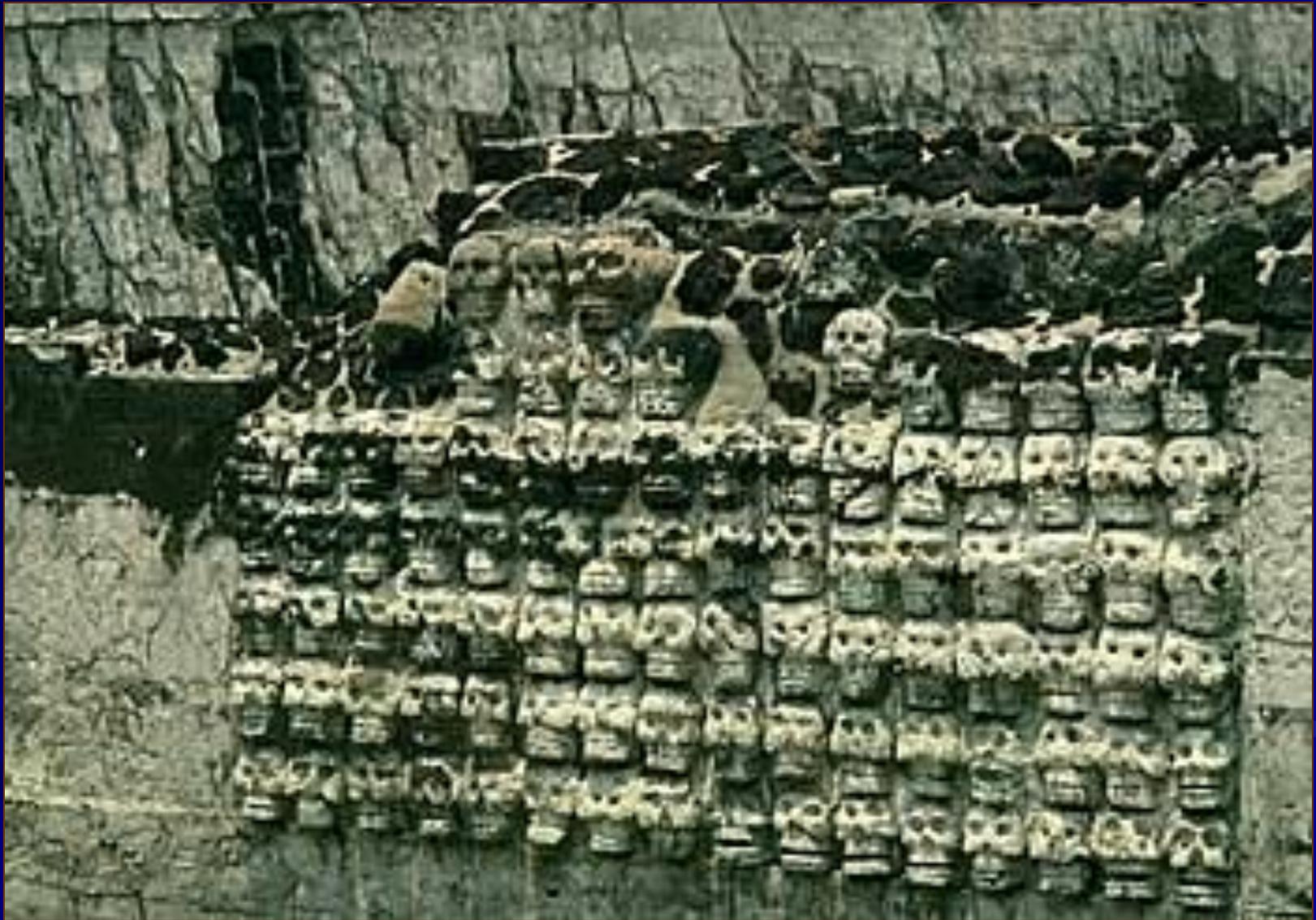


A. Ilzuet cosmographia mexicana de 1589. L. 1.



- Each of the Aztec city-states was ruled by a speaker chosen from the nobility
- The ruler of Tenochtitlan, the **Great Speaker**, surpassed all other in wealth and power. He was in charge of the court.
- Aztec economy was not based on money but rather the merchants bartered for goods and crafts.

# Wall of Skulls - Tenochtitlan

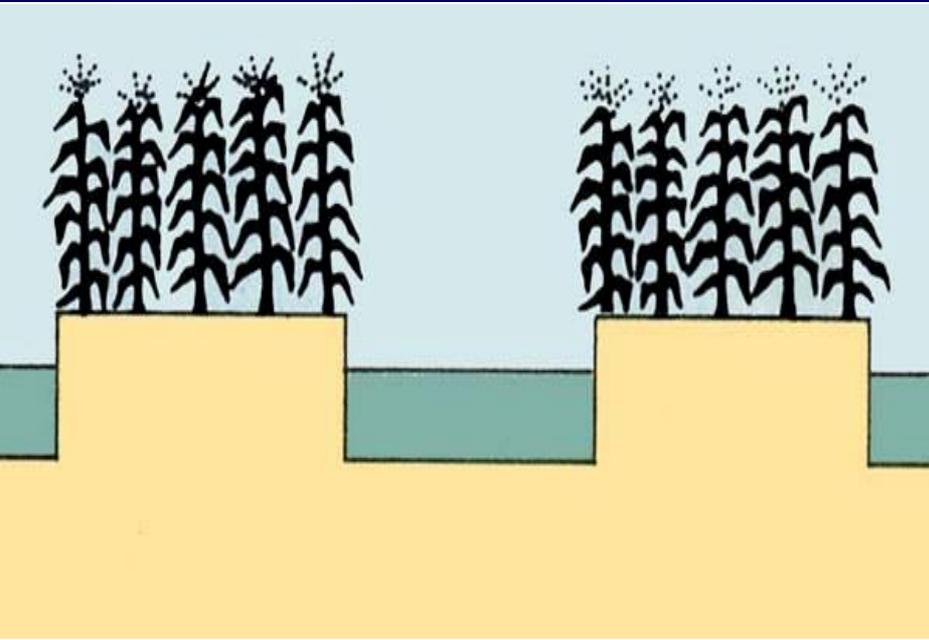


# Tenochtitlan: The “Venice” of the Americas



- Feeding the Aztec confederation depended both on traditional agricultural forms and innovations
- Conquered peoples lost land and gave food as tribute

# Aztec *Chinampa* or Floating Garden



- Aztecs developed a system of irrigated agriculture
- They built *Chinampas* – artificial floating islands that permitted the harvesting of high-yield multiple yearly crops; helped feed large Aztec population

# Aztec Sun Motifs (themes)



- Aztec social structure mirrored other previous civilizations: at the top were the king and family, the nobility, then scribes, artisans, a special merchant class, and the lower class peasants at the bottom



# Decline of the Aztecs

- Invasion of the Spanish, led by **Hernan Cortes** - Led expedition of 600 Spanish soldiers to coast of Mexico in 1519; responsible for defeat of Aztec empire and captured Tenochtitlan
- Lack of technology for Aztecs, especially the wheel, made basic food preparation laborious and difficult
- Aztec tribute system caused problems; conquered people grew resentful
- Religious need for more sacrificial victim's pushed the empire to expand, beyond its ability to control

# THE INCAS



**Incas:** centered in the Andes mountains.

Domesticated the Llama

The Inca people emerged in **Cuzco** (present day Peru)

The Incas constructed a system of roads to connect all of the empire culturally and economically

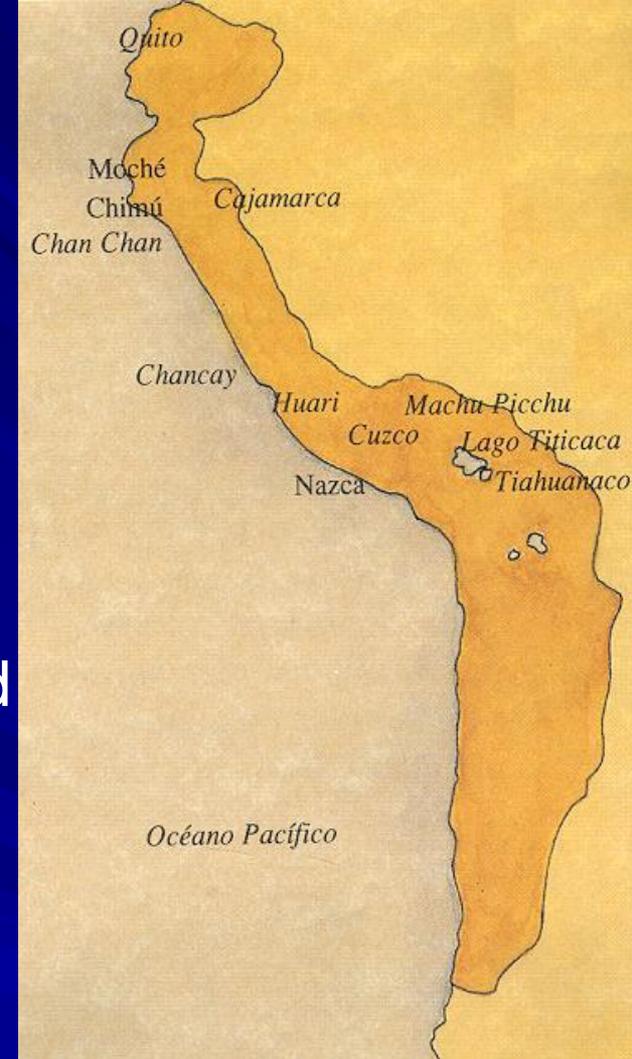


- **Inca “socialism”** - interpretation of the Inca Empire as a carefully organized system in which every community collectively contributed to the whole

- **Pachakuti** – Inca ruler (1438 - 1471) - began the military campaigns that marked the creation of the Inca Empire



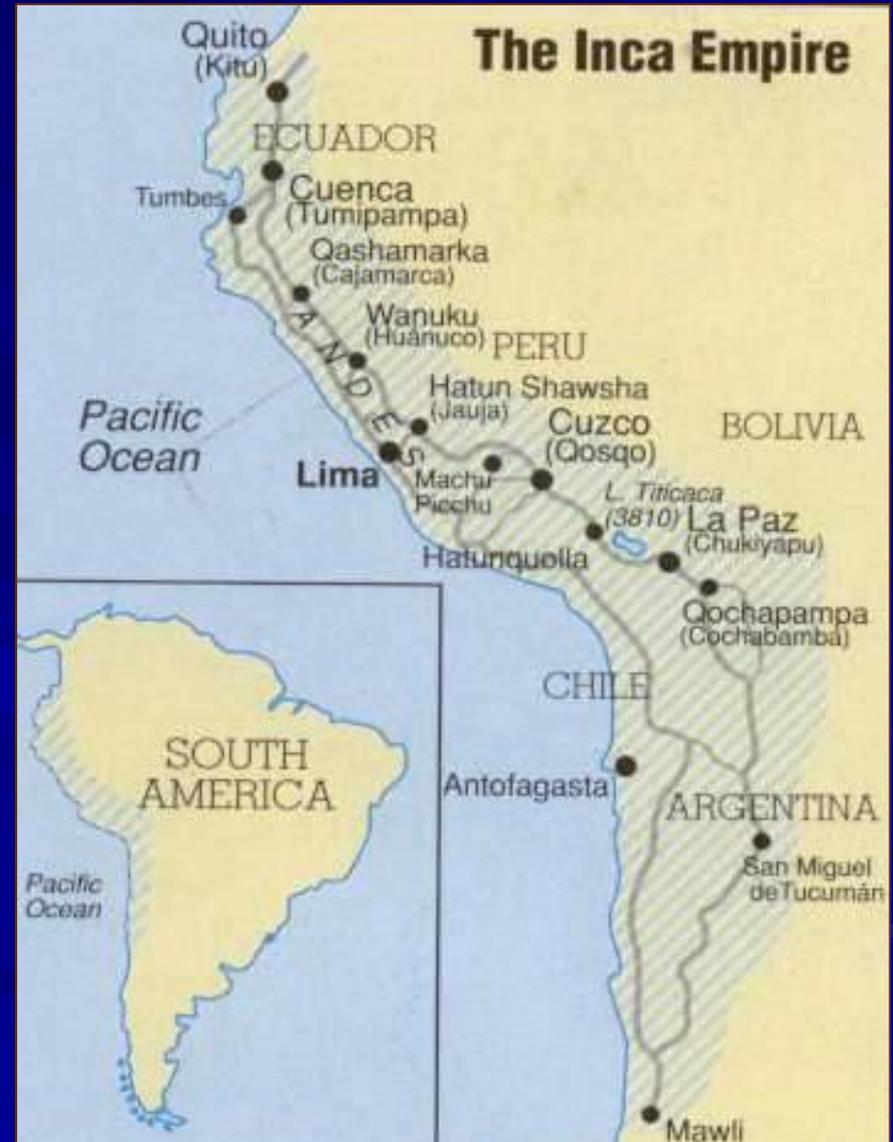
- Inca political and social life was infused with religious meaning
- The sun was the highest deity; **Inca ruler was the god's representative on earth**
- Deceased Inca rulers were mummified
- The dead rulers were treated as intermediaries between the Incan people and the gods



# Lands of the Incas

- the subsequent Incan rulers received no land or possession when they took over the empire, so they continually sought to expand the empire on their own

**Temple of the Sun** – Inca religious center at Cuzco; center of state religion; held mummies of past Incas



# Machu Picchu



- Incas constructed great stone buildings and agricultural terraces, irrigation projects, and road systems

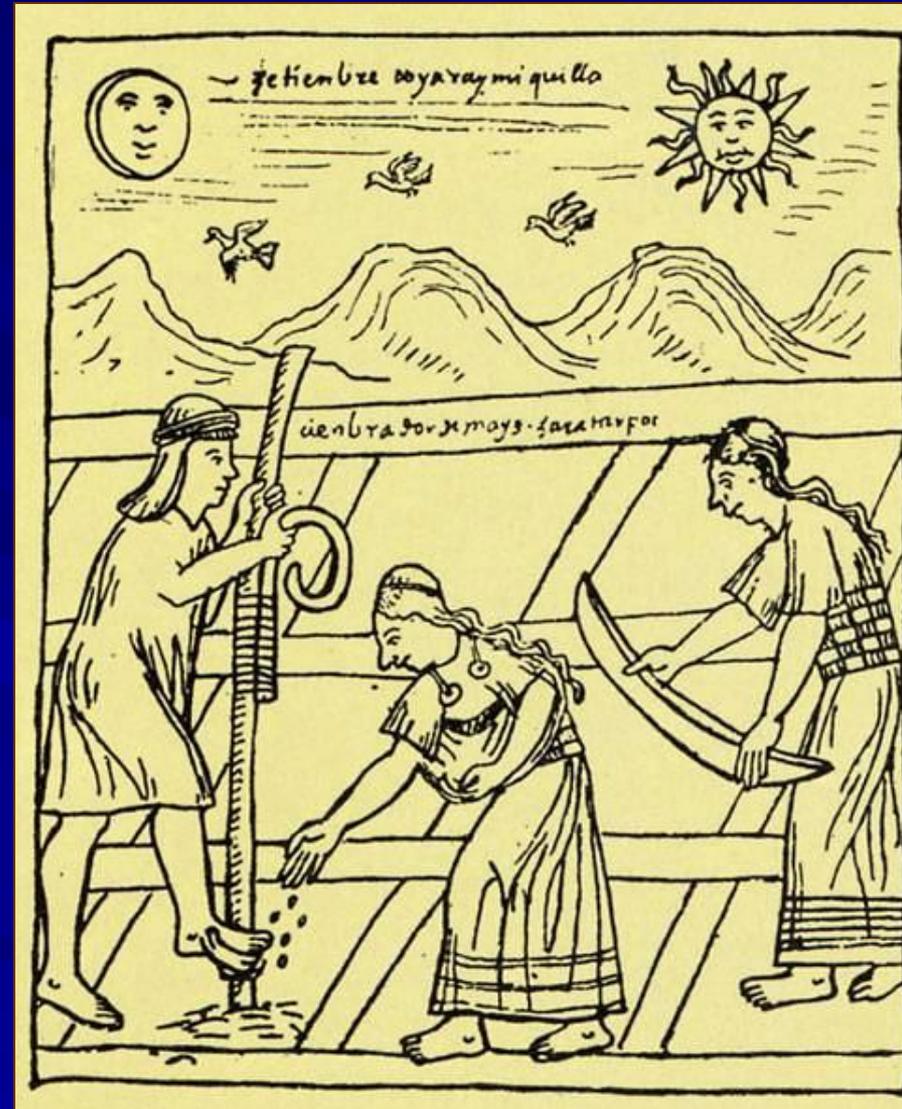
# Incan Suspension Bridges





- A complex system of roads, bridges, and causeways helped military movement
- Conquered peoples supplied land and labor, but did ***not*** pay tribute (remember those unhappy groups who were conquered by the Aztecs?); they served in the military and received rewards from new conquests

- Each community aimed at self-sufficiency
- Most men were peasants and herders
- Women worked in the household, wove cloth and aided in agriculture
- They lacked the wheel and a writing system



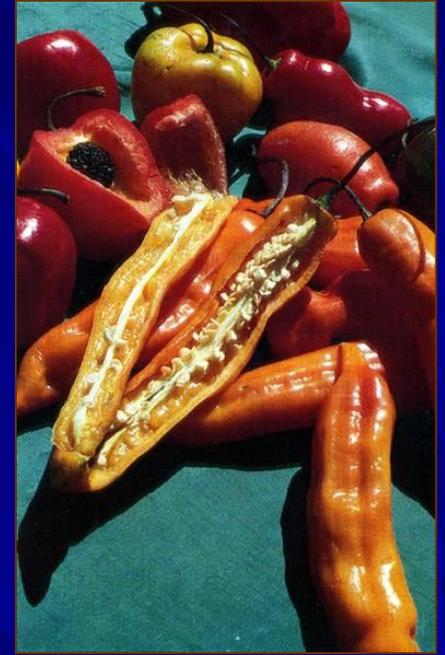
# Maize in Incan Pottery & Gold Work



# Over 100 Different Types of Potatoes Cultivated by the Incans



# Produce from a typical Inca Market



# Incan Ceramic Jars



Peanut



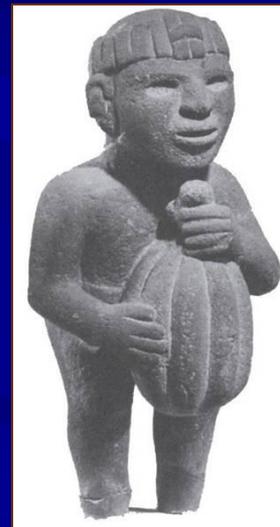
Potato



Squash



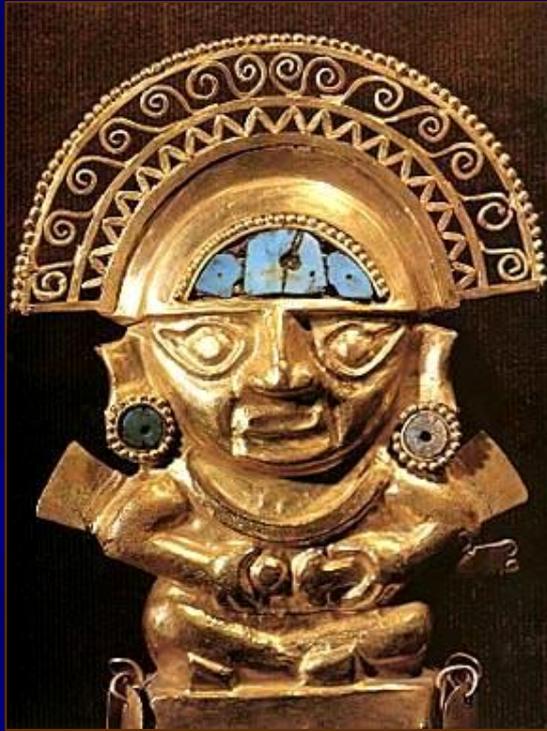
Cacao God



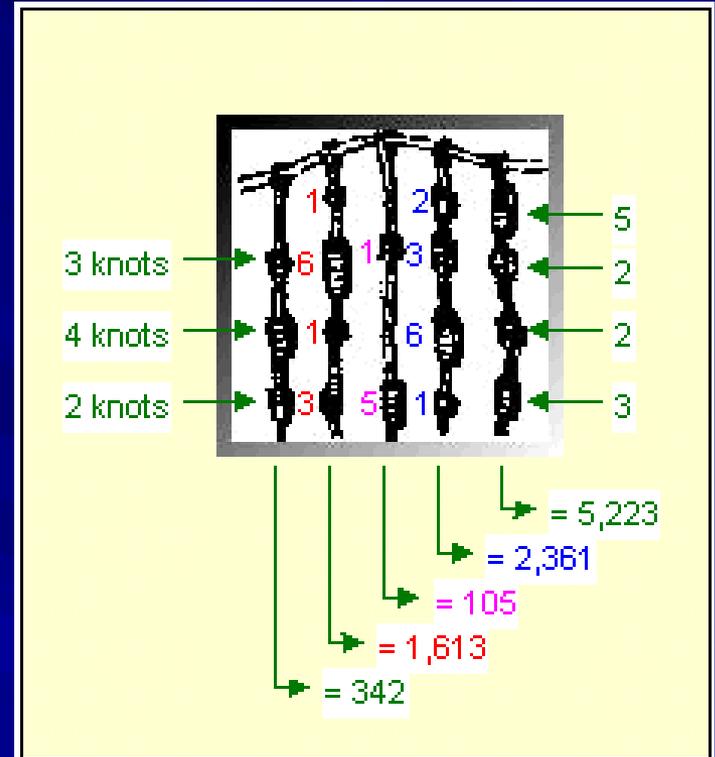
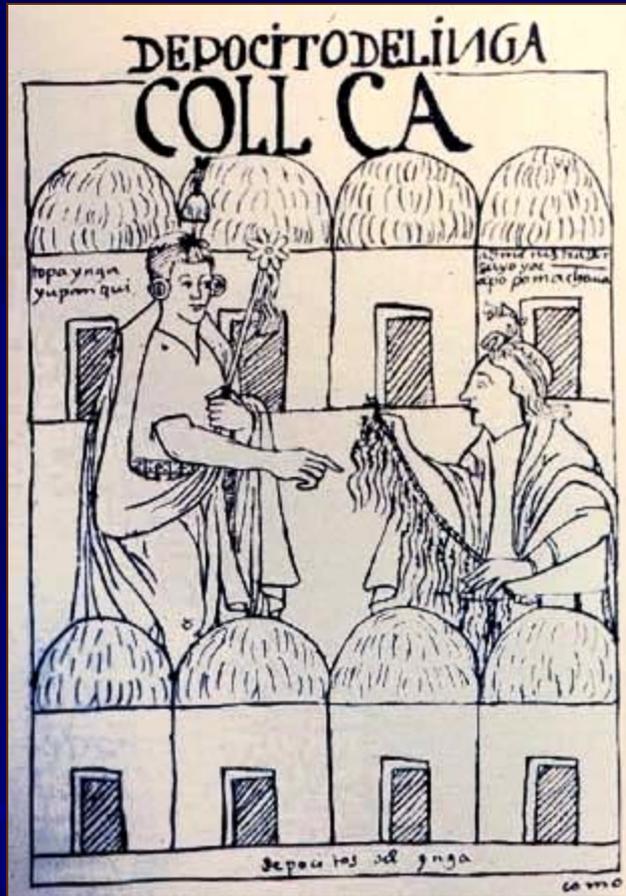
Cacao Pod

The Inca produced beautiful pottery and cloth

# Inca Gold & Silver



# The *Quipu* - An Incan Database



**Quipu** – System of knotted strings used by the Incas in place of a writing system; could contain numerical and other types of information for a census and financial records

# Incan Mummies



- The peak of the Inca genius was in statecraft and architecture

# Incan Achievement

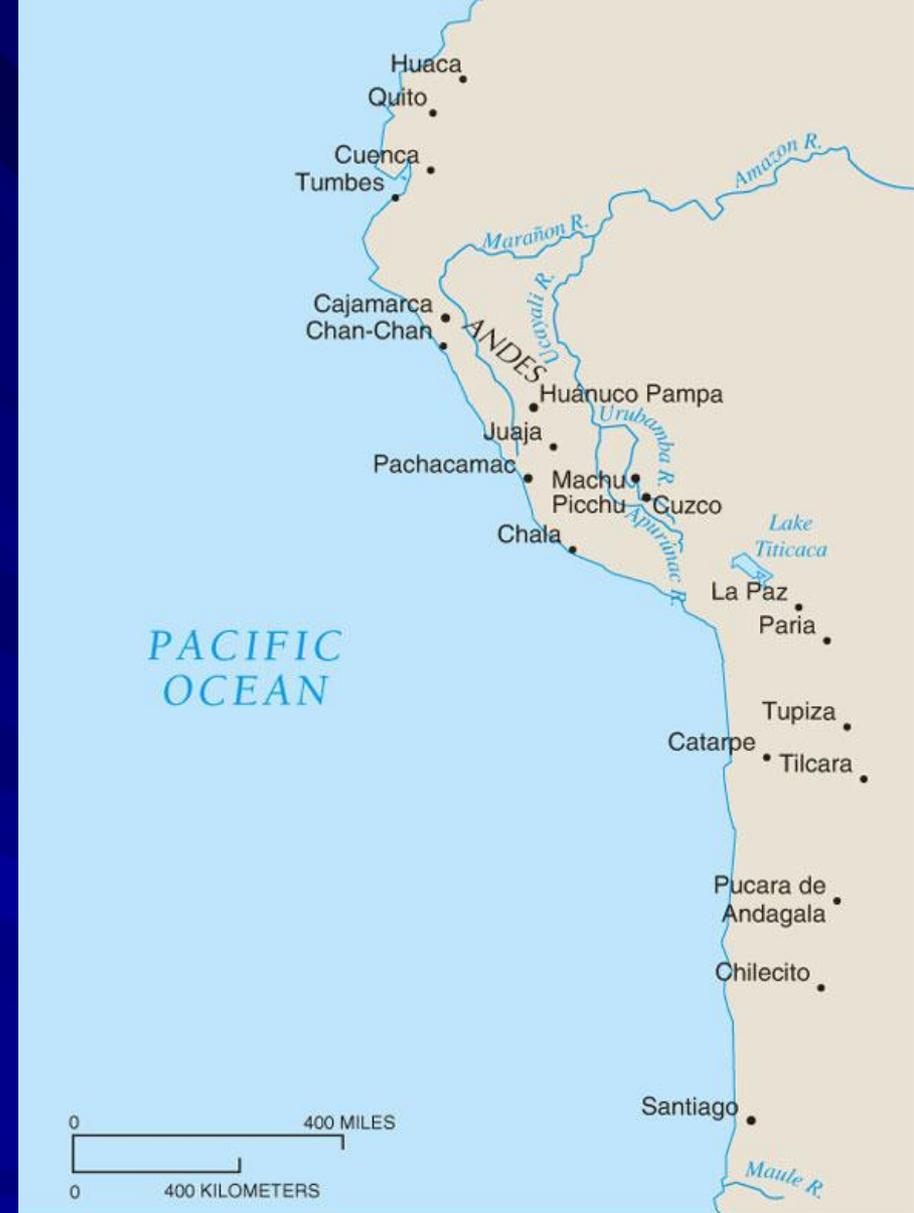
- Stability allowed for development in mathematics, architecture and metallurgy
- Architecture – precise stone buildings
- Math – developed quipu to record information
- They laid over 2,500 miles of roads throughout their empire, an engineering feat similar to that of the Roman Empire

## Comparing Incas and Aztecs (Similarities):

- Both empires were based on the long development of civilizations that preceded them
- They excelled in imperial and military organization
- Based on intensive agriculture
- Nobility was the personnel of the state
- They were based on conquest and exploitation of sedentary peoples



- Comparing Incas and Aztecs (Differences):
- climate and geography
- Trade and markets were more developed among the Aztecs
- Differences in metallurgy, writing systems, social structure



# The Least You Need To Know

- Early people traveled from Asia across the **Bering Strait** during the Ice Age, when it was a land bridge
- Many civilizations developed in the Americas, but the most notable were the **Mayans, Aztecs, and the Incas**
- The Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas developed and administered complex societies that included large urban centers and government bureaucracies