



■ Essential Question:

- What led to the rise & fall of the Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, & Inca Empires in America?

The Civilizations of America

...advanced societies were developing in isolation in the Americas

While classical civilizations were developing in the Mediterranean & Asia...



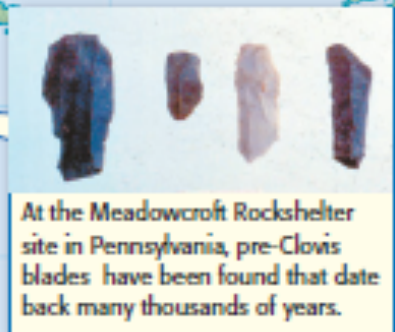


Migration Routes, 40,000–10,000 B.C.

INTERACTIVE

Interactive Feature

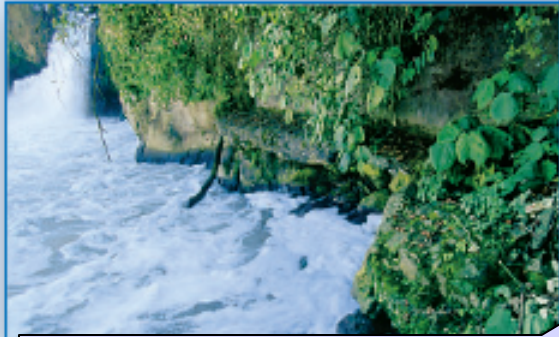
During the Neolithic Revolution, these nomads settled into farming villages; Some of which became advanced civilizations



At the Meadowcroft Rockshelter site in Pennsylvania, pre-Clovis blades have been found that date back many thousands of years.

During the Ice Age, prehistoric nomads migrated across the land bridge between Asia & America

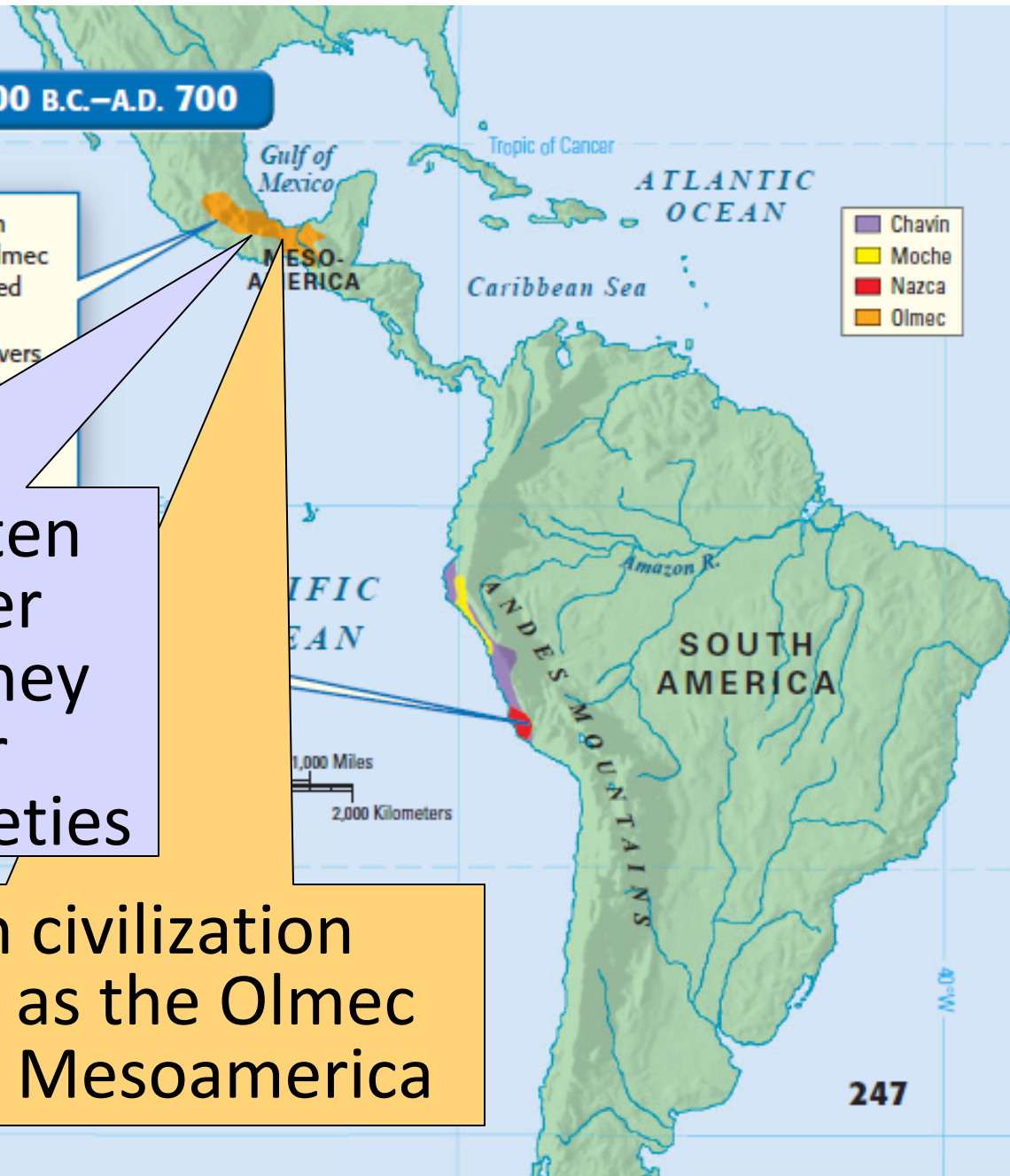
Early Civilizations, 1200 B.C.–A.D. 700



The region in which the Olmec arose included lush forests. Numerous rivers in the region provided fertile soil for farming.

The Olmecs are often called the “mother culture” because they influenced other Mesoamerican societies

The first American civilization were people known as the Olmec in an area known as Mesoamerica



The Olmecs developed a strong trade network in Mesoamerica that brought them great wealth

The Olmecs used their wealth to build large stone monuments & pyramids to honor their leaders & gods

Olmec trade allowed them to spread their culture to other Mesoamericans

For unknown reasons, the Olmec civilization declined by 400 B.C. but their cities & symbols influenced later cultures, especially the Mayans



ion, 900 B.C.

■ Olmec homeland
■ Oaxaca Valley

Government: Mayans were divided into individual city-states ruled by king-gods

Economy:

The Mayan economy was based on trade & farming maize, beans



Important events are recorded on stone monuments called "stelae."

1 400-562 A.D. Tikal is the largest Maya city and center of trade.

2 900 A.D. Crop failures and internal conflict lead to decline of Maya civilization.

250-900 A.D.

Middle American Civilizations

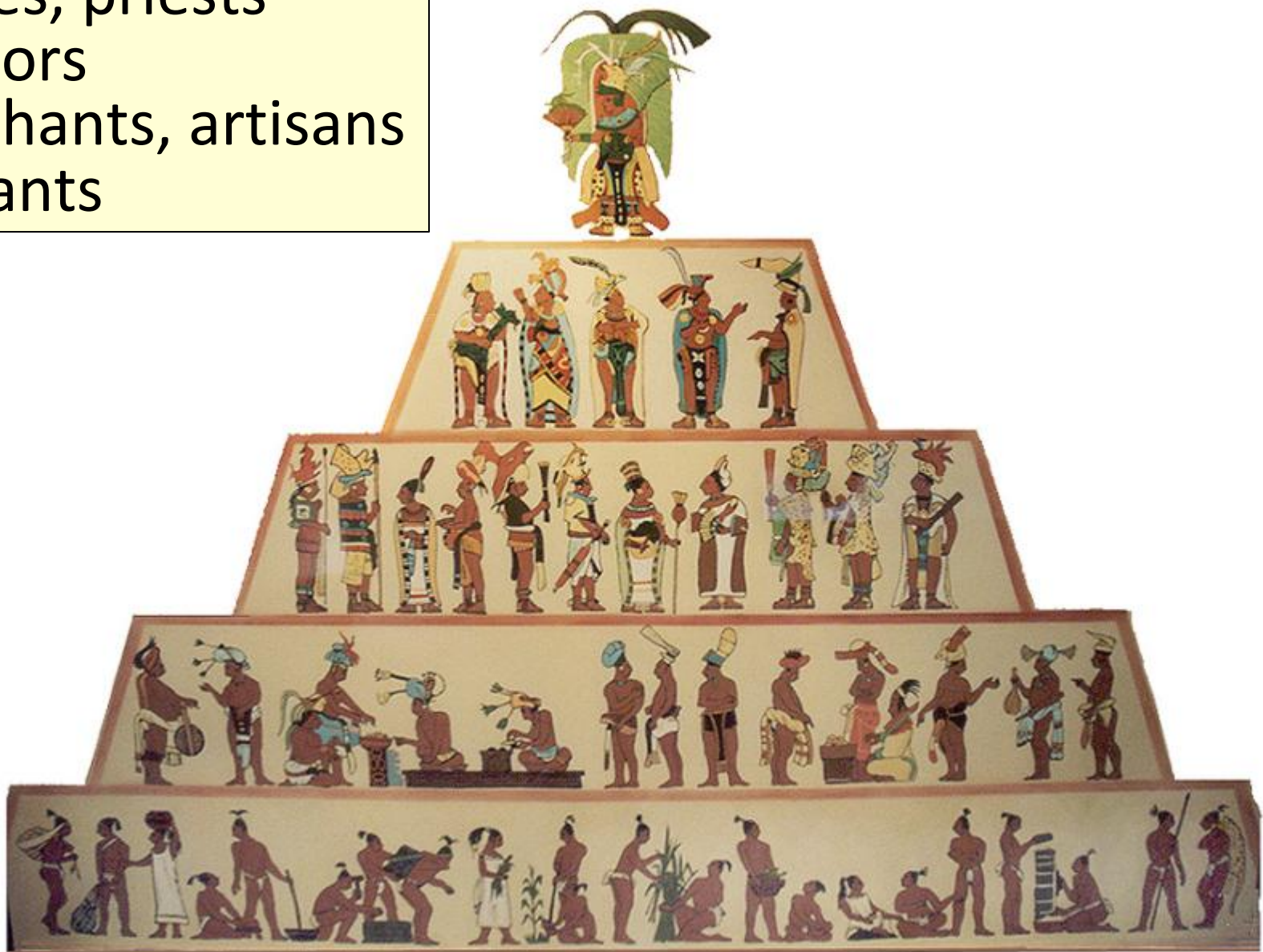
- Maya
- Teotihuacan
- Zapotec
- Trade route
- Pyramid site

During this time, Maya civilization flourished. Cities became centers of culture, and a

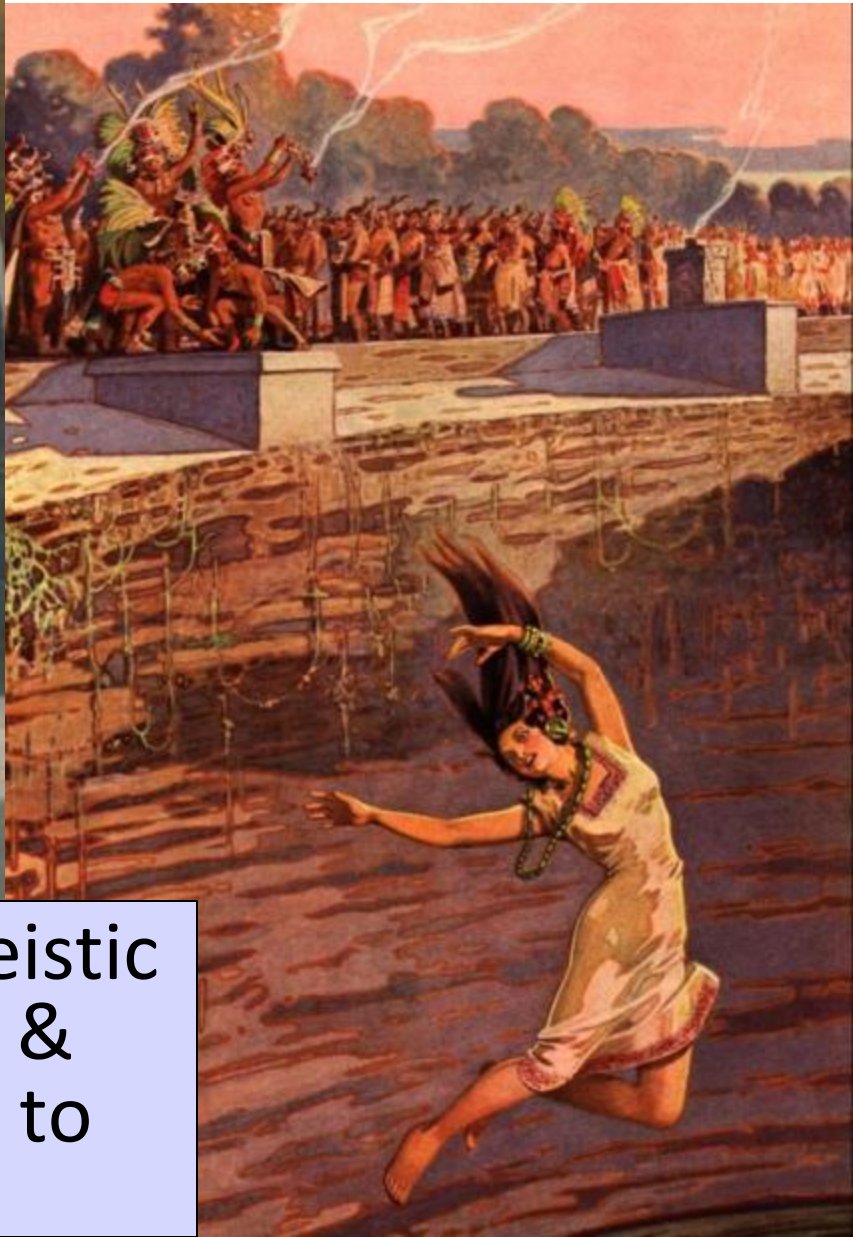
Society:

- (1) Kings (dynasties)
- (2) Nobles, priests
- (3) warriors
- (4) Merchants, artisans
- (5) Peasants

The Mayans



The Mayans



Religion: Mayans were polytheistic & offered their blood, food, & sometimes human sacrifices to please the gods

Government: Mayans were divided into individual city-states ruled by king-gods

Economy:

The Mayan economy was based on trade & farming maize, beans

Society: (1) Dynasties;
(2) Nobles, priests, warriors;
(3) Merchants & artisans;
(4) Peasants

Religion: Mayans were polytheistic & offered their blood, food, & sometimes human sacrifices to please the gods

While the Olmecs were in decline around 400 B.C., the Mayans were evolving & borrowed many Olmec ideas



Technology: Mayans invented a writing based on pictures called glyphs, an accurate 365-day calendar, & advanced temples



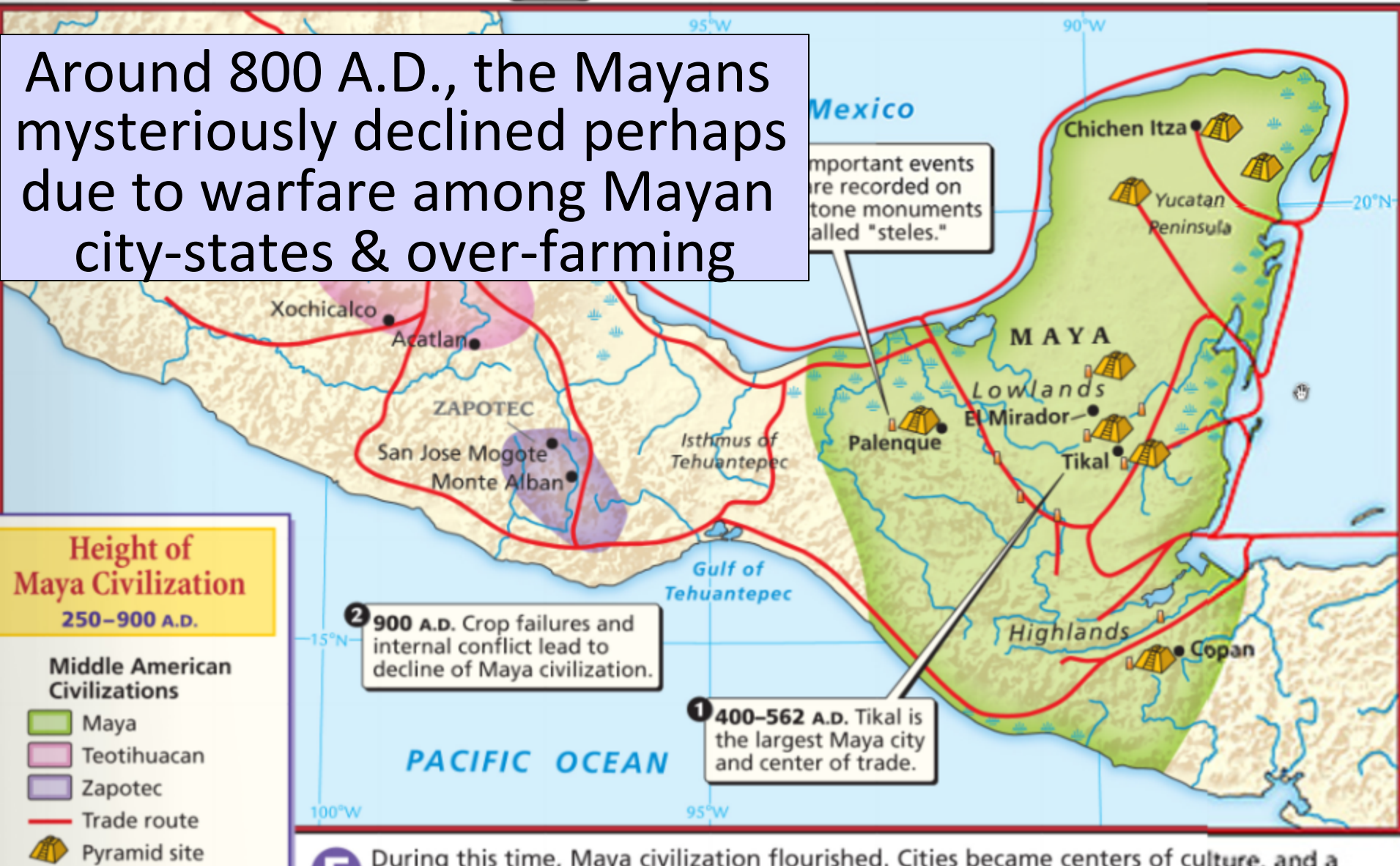
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The Mayans

Around 800 A.D., the Mayans mysteriously declined perhaps due to warfare among Mayan city-states & over-farming



During this time, Maya civilization flourished. Cities became centers of culture, and a



After the decline of the Mayans, the Aztecs were developing in present-day Mexico

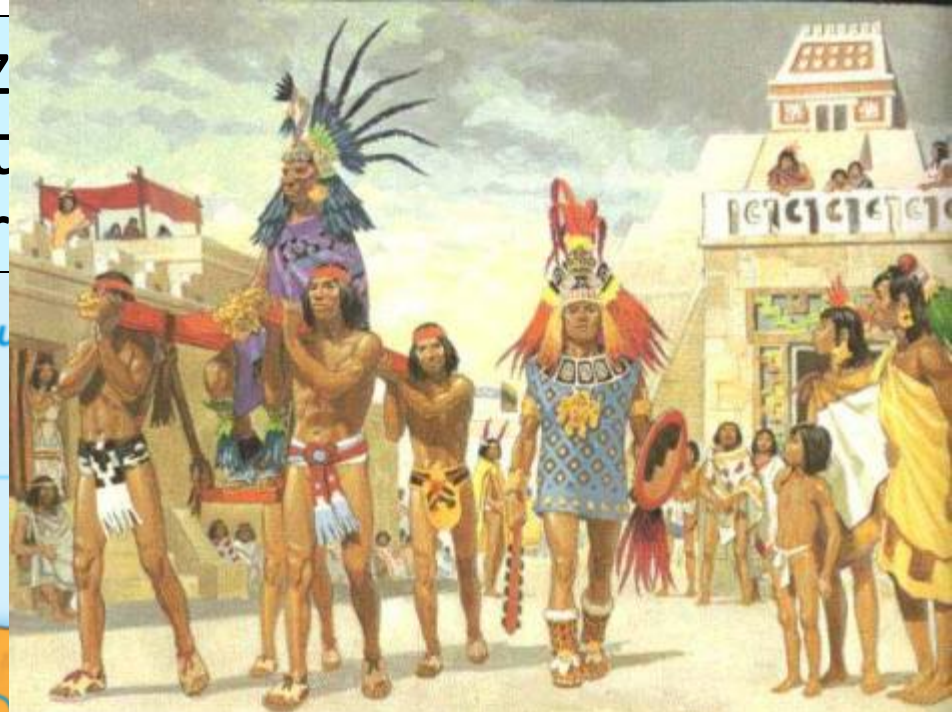
Around 1200, Aztecs arrived in Mexico & built their city Tenochtitlan in 1325



Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan

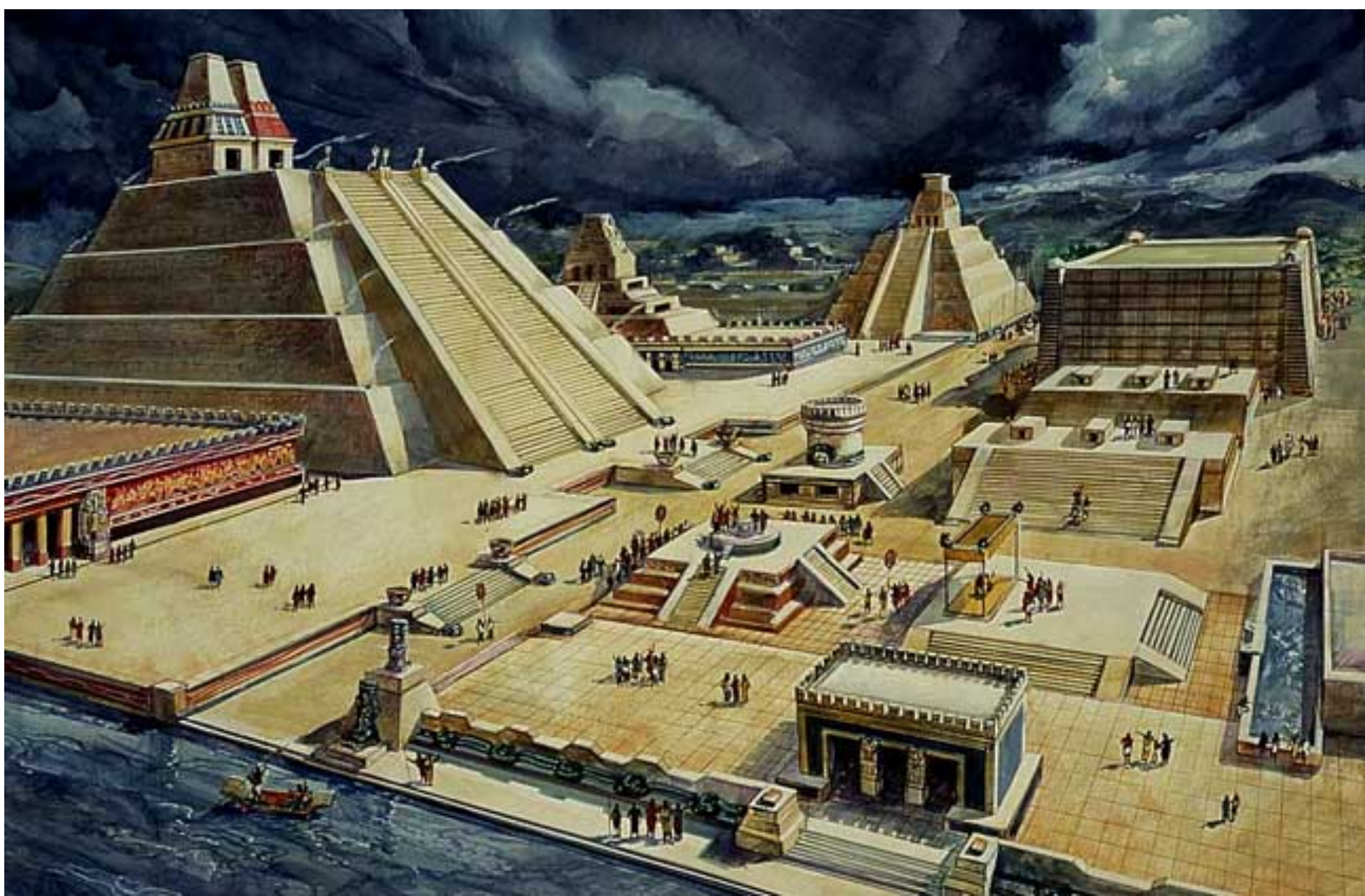


Government: The Aztec empire, controlled it & received tribute from



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Technology: Like the Mayans, the Aztecs developed an accurate calendar & built advanced temples



While the Mayans were thriving, the Aztecs were developing in present-day Mexico

Government: The Aztecs formed a massive empire, controlled it through 38 provinces, & received tribute from conquered peoples

Economy: They survived on tribute & farming; They built “floating gardens” (chinampas)

Society: (1) Kings
(2) Nobility
(3) Commoners
(4) Slaves

Religion: Aztecs worshipped many gods, especially the sun god & made thousands of human sacrifices each year

Around 1200, Aztecs arrived in Mexico & built their city Tenochtitlan in 1325

Technology: Like the Mayans, the Aztecs developed an accurate calendar & built advanced temples



The

But, the true demise of the Aztecs came when the Spanish discovered America & conquered the Aztecs



Around 1500 A.D., the Aztecs began to decline; A century of brutal rule over the provinces & millions of human sacrifices led to revolts



While the Aztecs ruled Mexico, the Incas began to dominate the area of the Andes Mountains of South America



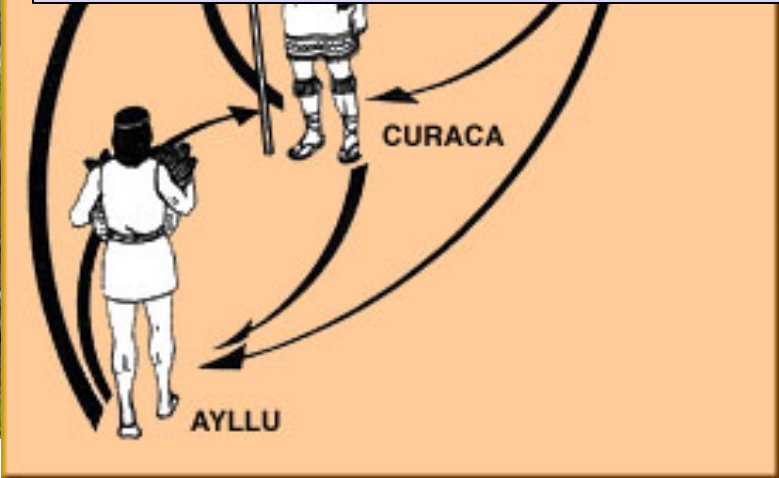
Many Incan cities like Machu Picchu & Cuzco were built in the mountains



Lambert Azimuthal Projection



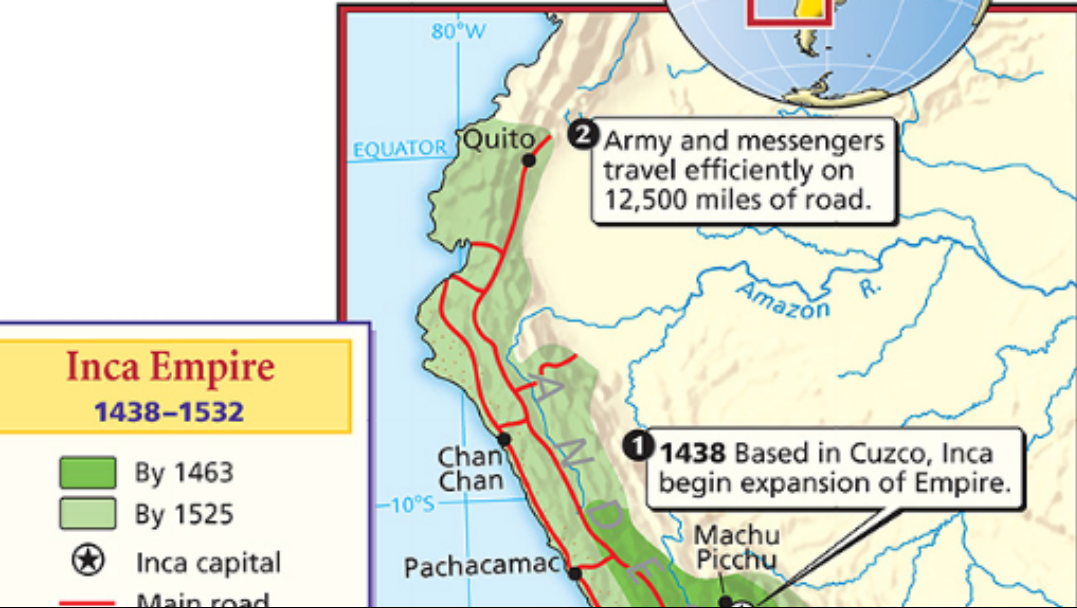
Religion:
The Inca were polytheistic & offered llamas & food (but not humans) to the gods



Economy: The Incan
Society: (1) King
(2) Nobility
(3) Ayllu (commoners)
good of the empire

Technology: Inca innovations included quipu, a means of record keeping involving knotted ropes as well as an extensive system of roads & suspension bridges





Government: Like the Aztecs, the Incas built a vast empire which included 80 provinces; But, the Incas ruled with tolerance & unified their empire with roads, schools, & a common language

Technology:
Inca innovations included quipu, a means of record keeping involving knotted ropes as well as an extensive system of roads & suspension bridges

Economy: The Incan gov't controlled the economy & required all citizens to farm for the good of the empire

Religion:
The Inca were polytheistic & offered llamas & food (but not humans) to the gods

Society: (1) King
(2) Nobility
(3) Ayllu (commoners)

The Incas

In the 1520s, a civil war divided & weakened the Incan Empire; Ten years later Spanish conquistadors conquered the empire



Closure Activity: Which American Society?

- Can you distinguish among the early societies of America?
 - Examine the descriptions on the back of your notes
 - Place the number of each descriptor into one or more parts of the chart
 - Be prepared to share your answers

Olmec	Mayan	Aztec	Inca