

Civilizations of Middle America

Olmeecs

- **Earliest known; lasted from 1400 B.C. to 500 B.C.**
- **Not well known.**
- **Pyramid-shaped temples; no true cities.**
- **Large carved stone heads.**



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Aztec Culture

- Located in central Mexico.
- Teotihuacan city that later influenced the Aztecs.
- Tenochtitlan: large Aztec city built over a swampy area.
 - Chinampas: artificial islands used to create floating gardens.
- Conquerors: empire building by capturing territory and forcing tributes.

World of Aztecs

- **Complex society of trade, wealth & aggression.**
- **Emperor chosen by nobles & priests; leader in war.**
- **Warriors could gain status through battle.**
- **Most people were lower class farmers.**
- **Slaves at the bottom of society.**

Aztec Religion

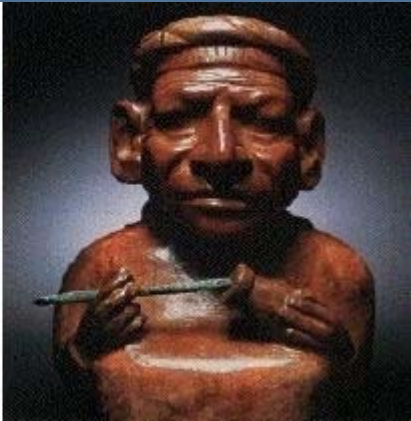
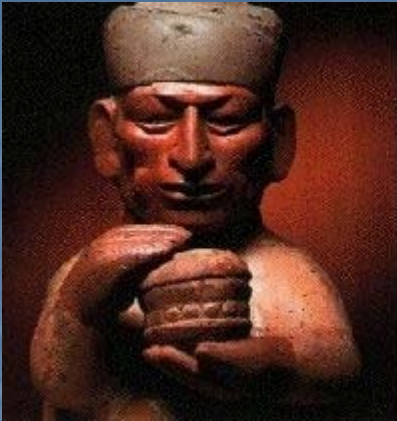
- Priests were to appease the Aztec gods through human sacrifice.
- Thousands of prisoners, slaves were sacrificed.
- Wars were important to capture prisoners.
- Other tribal groups lived in fear of the Aztecs; later would ally with the Spaniards.

World of the Incas

- Location: western South America.
- Varied climate: jungles to the east, Andes mountains in the middle, desert coastal plains to the west.
- Early peoples:
 - **Mochica**: coastal people, skilled farmers, many adobe brick buildings, textiles, pottery.
 - **Nazca**: left behind huge glyphs carved in the desert.



Cerámica Mochina (pajaro)





Incan Empire

- **Pachacuti**-emperor & founder of the Incan empire.
 - Absolute ruler; lived in great splendor.
 - **Quipu**-record keeping using knotted string.
- **Uniting the Empire**
 - Imposed their own language, **Quechua**.
 - Imposed their religion.
 - 12,000 mile road system.
 - **Cuzco**-this city was the center of empire.

Incan Daily Life

- **Ayllus:** strictly regulated communities.
 - Government controlled; arranged marriages, jobs.
- Farming: terraced land on hillsides
 - Government controlled the land and distribution of the crops
 - "Communist like"
 - Metal workings; advanced alloys.
- Religion: polytheistic; centered around harvests & festivals.