Mesoamerica
- Preclassic; Classic; Postclassic Periods
- Highland
  - massive urbanization
  - Valley of Mexico: Teotihuacan
  - Oaxaca: Monte Albán
- Lowland
  - moderate urbanization (?)
  - Maya general issues...
    - idyllic view v. brash reality
    - why the change?

Preclassic Maya
- El Mirador (late Preclassic)
- Classic Maya AD 200 - 850
  - Tikal, Calakmul, Copán, Palenque
  - early super powers

Read Chapter 17...
- Peruvian North Coast
  - Moche AD 200-700
    - Huaca de la Luna / del Sol
    - Lords of Sipán
- Highland Andes
  - Tiwanaku 650-1000 AD

Preclassic 2000 BC to AD 250
- traits of Mesoamerican culture come into being
  - Olmec chiefdoms (1200-400 BC); ceremonial centers (e.g., San Lorenzo)
  - glyphs at very end (e.g., El Mirador, San Andres)

Classic AD 250 to AD 690-900
- urban centers & state-level societies
- explosion of religious, artistic, and militaristic activity

Postclassic AD 690-900 to AD 1520
- following the collapse of the Classic in Mesoamerica
- smaller, more dispersed settlements and states and more secular rule

paper due today!!!
- turn the paper in to Anthropology Department Main Office, Haines 341
- AND!!!
- turnitin.com
- BY: 4PM

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geographically restricted development of civilizations

WHY?
Preclassic Mesoamerican cultural “package”
ancestor worship, human sacrifice, ball courts,
glyph-based writing, simple technologies, BEER!

Olmec Chiefdoms → broad influence on later complexity

Highland Mesoamerica

Lowland Mesoamerica

Olmec chiefdoms, 1200-400 BC

Olmec: mature maize agriculture; resource
surpluses & monopolization; common
iconography, glyph system, calendar; earthworks,
proto-urban ceremonial centers → loosely unified
chiefdoms

Valley of Mexico: rich soils and other resources, but
scant rainfall and relatively short growing season
- Classic Period Valley of Mexico
  - Teotihuacan: A single, massive urban center!
    - 40k people @ AD 100; ca. 125 k @ AD 450-650
      - population supported by irrigation agriculture
    - burned to the ground ca. AD 700
  - monopolization of manufacturing and trade
    - specialist production of obsidian blades
  - vast interaction area including Oaxaca (e.g., Monte Albán) and Lowland Mesoamerica (e.g., Maya Tikal)
    - Oaxacan traders living in own compounds (ethnic co-residence)

- Classic Period Teotihuacan
  - detailed urban planning
  - Pyramid of Sun & Moon
  - Avenue of the Dead
    - lined by > 100 tombs
  - the “Citadel”: Palaces & Temple of Feathered Serpent
  - 2000 walled residential compounds on a grid
    - 1 compound ~100 people
  - craft workshops in compounds
  - possible market
    - early market economics?
Highland Mesoamerica: Oaxaca

- **Oaxaca – Zapotec Civilization**
  - began as loose confederation of chiefdoms
    - rotating hosting of feasts (spread prestige & cost)
    - one chiefly lineage gains enough wealth to permanently host feasts (short step to hereditary rule)
  - Monte Albán (Oaxaca): single large center!
    - ceremonial center influenced by Olmec culture
    - 17,000 people @ 200 BC
    - AD 600-700 → 50-60,000 people
      - 1/4 the size of Teotihuacan (ca. 8 km²)
    - collapse in AD 700: no accepted explanation!!!

- **Classic Period Monte Albán AD 600-700**
  - temples and public buildings; elite residences; central plaza on artificially leveled mountain top
  - no grid-like residential planning
    - population lived on >2000 agricultural terraces surrounding the mountain-top site
  - prominence due to well-organized food production

Lowland Mesoamerica
- idyllic view
- dispersed population
  - jungles can’t have large populations...
- slash-and-burn (swidden)
  - cutting & burning natural vegetation; ash turned into field
  - fields fertile for 2-4 years; must move
- benevolent theocracy
  - dispersed populations support religious specialists, who did not oppress

- brash reality
  - irrigation farming based on raised fields in swamps
  - large, settled populations (55k at Tikal alone)
  - secular & warlike states
    - religion important, but it served political purpose
  - massive deforestation
  - body piercing extraordinaire…
    - stingray spines (ouch)…

Maya lord trampling a prisoner (ouch!)

- why the change in view?
  - residential complexes built of perishables
  - extensive raised field systems not recognized before use of satellite imagery
  - once glyphs translated, many translated as: “make war, not love…”
Maya mural showing sacrifice of war prisoners
Bonampak, Ciapas, Mexico

El Mirador ca. 200 BC
- late Preclassic Maya
- earliest urban center in Maya lowlands
- earliest examples of true Maya Glyphs
  - engraved sculpture at El Tigre Complex
- Danta Pyramid
  - larger than most of Tikal’s public buildings
- artisans, priests, traders, unskilled villagers
  - controlled by an organized elite

Tikal, Guatemala
- one of four major centers
  - also Paleque, Calakmul, Copán
- first occupations 800 BC
- Classic ca. AD 250-800
- at apex, site covered 16 km²
- residential complex
  - 45-75,000 people
  - raised swamp fields
    - corn-beans-squash; ramon nut
- substantial connection to Teotihuacan
  - trade (pottery, green obsidian)
  - support in making war

Maya Classic Period sequence
- AD 292-434
  - equal rank settlements spaced ca. 27 km apart
- AD 514-534
  - standardized symbolic system to mark monuments & public spaces on regional scale
  - 4 regional “capitals” with “emblem glyphs”
- AD 600-751
  - “super powers” engage in regional conflicts
- AD 830-909
  - reduction in ceremonial activity & political authority dispersed
surprisingly modern “super power” struggles
- Dos Pilas, Guatemala, established AD 629
- led by brother of King of Tikal, Balaj Chan K'awiil
- conquered by Calakmul ca. AD 655
- Balaj Chan K'awiil waged war against Tikal with material support from Calakmul (a “proxy war”)
- Tikal sacked ca. AD 665 and ruler, Balaj’s brother, carted off
- Dos Pilas, with Calakmul backing, a regional center until AD 760

“Blood was pooled and the skulls of the people of the central place of Tikal were piled up...Balaj Chan K’awiil preformed a victory dance”

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