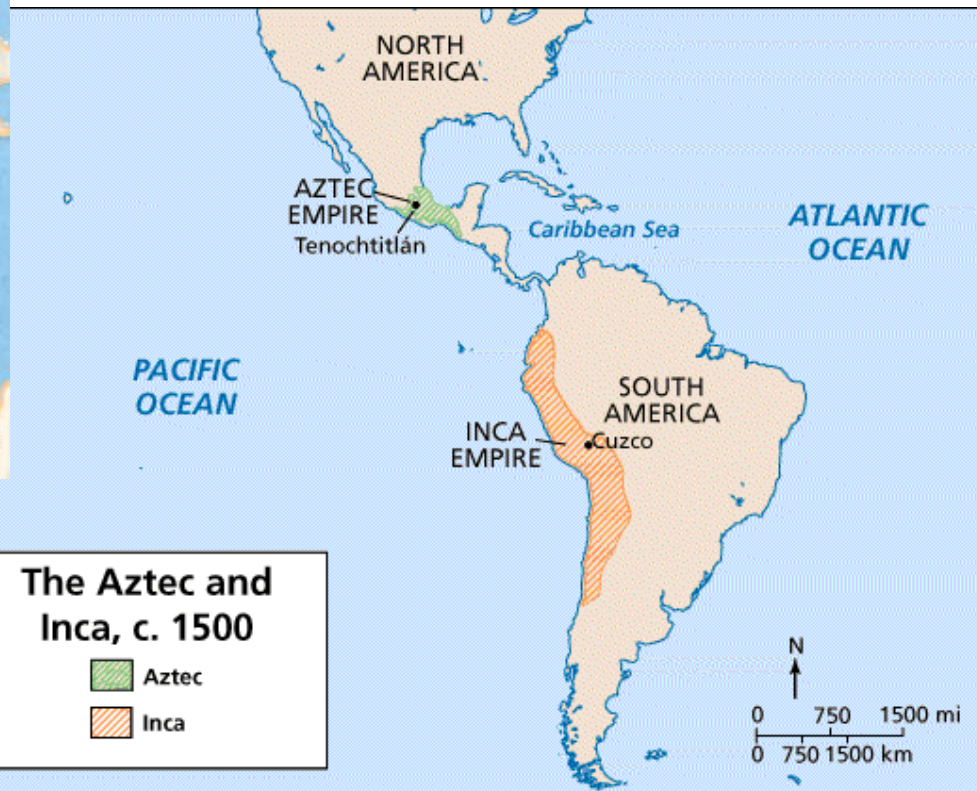


EARLY AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS (Pre-15th century C.E.)





Part I: Maya Civilization (250 – 900 C.E)



I. Classical Period

- Located in southern Mexico, northern Central America
- Olmec influences
 - Ball courts, planned ceremonial centers
 - Religious beliefs (i.e., jaguar spirit)
- “Empire” comprised of loosely organized city-states
 - Each was independent, ruled by a god-king
 - Examples: Tikal, Chichen Itza





Mayan Ball:

- Ritualistic and sometimes solemn
- Players could not use their hands
- Once the ball went through the hoop, or touched the ground, game was over
- Victors = heroes
- Losers = sometimes killed

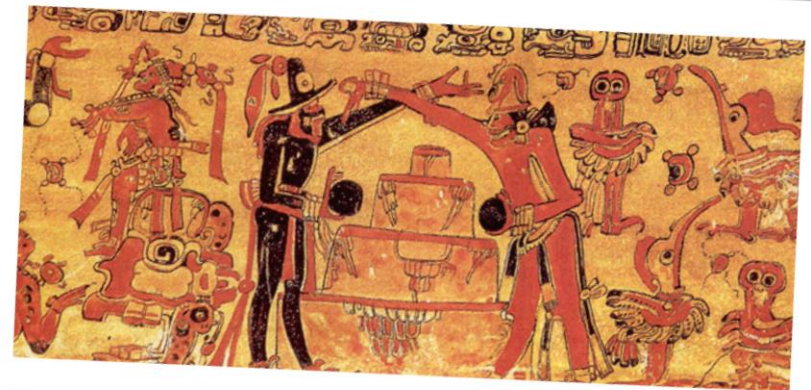
Similarities to Sports Today:

- People often gambled on games
- Required teamwork
- No hands = soccer
- Use of a hoop
- Large structures built just for games
- Large crowds attending games



II. Written Language & Economy

- Most advanced writing system in ancient Americas
 - 800 glyphs
 - Used for record keeping, history of civilization
- [Popol Vuh](#) – creation story
- City states linked by [trade routes](#) and alliances
 - Products: salt, feathers, shells, honey, textiles
 - Cacao beans sometimes served as currency



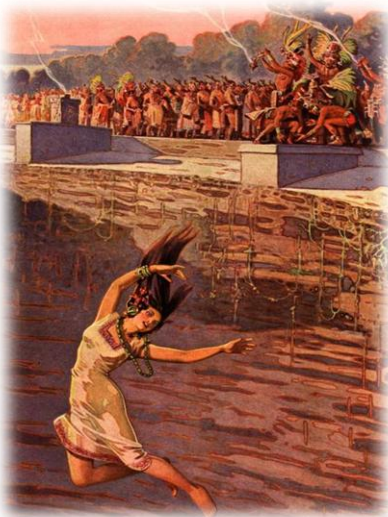
CHALLENGE QUESTION!



What observations/assumptions can you make about the Maya from the map?

III. Social Organization & Religion

- **As civilization grew, more wealth and development of social classes**
 - King at top (hereditary position)
 - Noble class: warriors, priests
 - Merchants, artisans
 - Peasant farmers (majority of population)



- **Religion was complex, polytheistic**
 - Believed each day was a living god, behavior was predicted by a system of calendars
 - Practiced human sacrifice, usually enemies
 - Believed that it pleased the gods and kept world in balance

IV. Decline

- Late 800s – many cities suddenly abandoned
- Toltec peoples moved into area
- **Theories:**
 - Increased warfare between city-states disrupted trade
 - Overpopulation, over-farming caused famine, disease



Part II: Aztec Civilization (Late 1100s – 1500s)



I. Toltec Influence

- **Prior to Aztec:** Toltec ruled over central Mexico beginning around 900, lasted until about 1150.
- **Aztec displaced the Toltec**, but retained some aspects of the culture
 - Strong focus on military, practice of sacrifice to gods
- Worshiped of many gods, including Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent



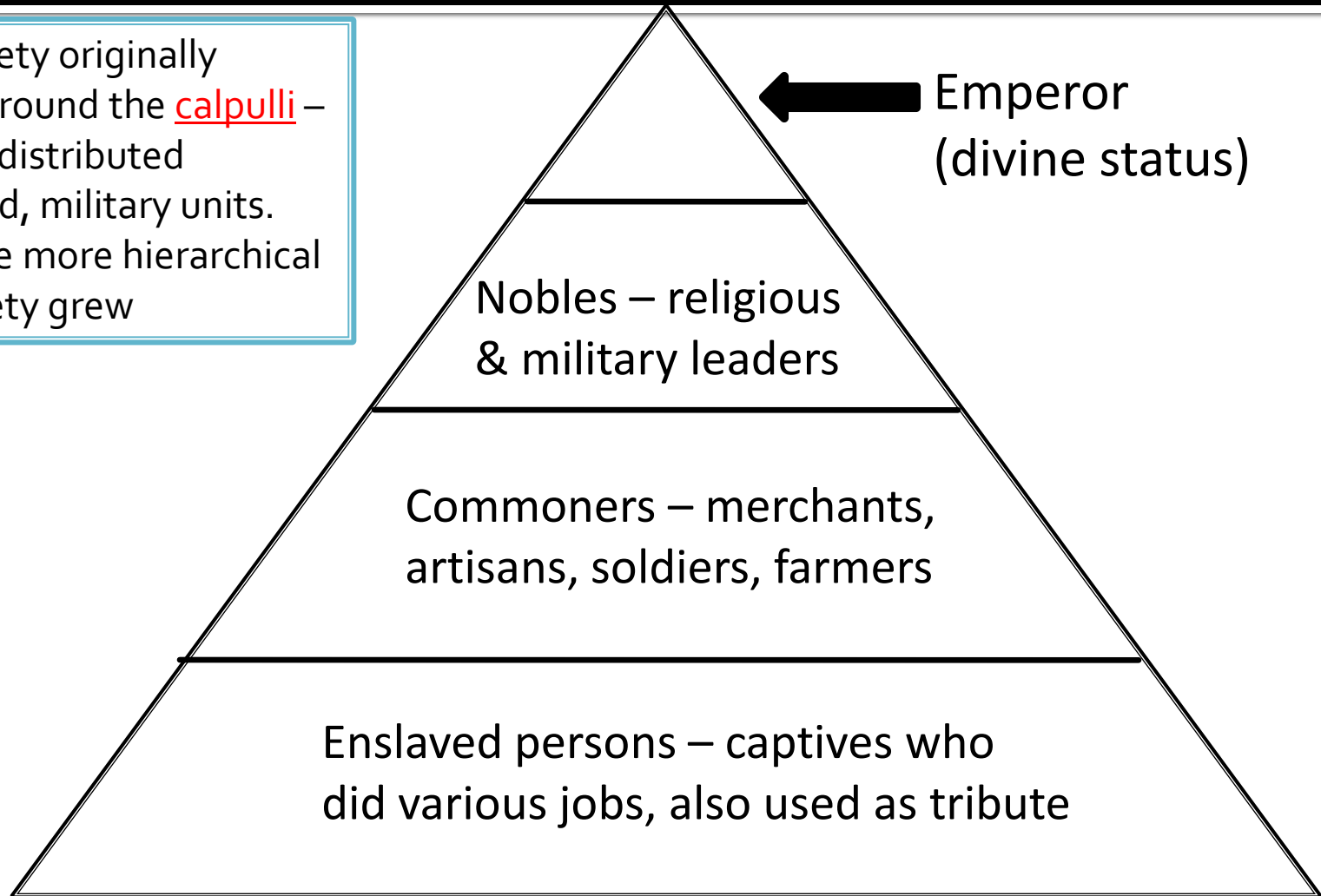
II. Aztec Rise to Power



- Built up civilization on and around Lake Texcoco, city of Tenochtitlan
- Formed Triple Alliance with other city-states, Texcoco and Tlacopan
 - Core of Aztec civilization
 - 38 provinces (up to 15 million people) loosely controlled through strong military and tributes
 - Emperor held political power in capital, but depended on loyalty/tribute of provincial governors

III. Social Hierarchy

Aztec society originally revolved around the calpulli – clans that distributed goods, land, military units.
- became more hierarchical as society grew



IV. Religious Life

- **Religion played a major role in daily life**
 - Hundreds of temples and religious structures = evidence
- **Polytheistic** - 1,000s of gods
 - Many adopted from other Mesoamerican peoples
 - Quetzalcoatl – god of learning, god of wind, symbol of death and rebirth
 - Depicted as both feathered serpent and pale-skinned man with beard
- **Practiced human sacrifice to please the gods**
 - Thousands a year sacrificed to Huitzilopochtli
 - Enslaved persons, criminals, prisoners of war



V. Economy



- Agriculture-based society
- Tribute requirement
 - Emperor demanded vast quantities of tribute from neighboring provinces
 - Government collected tribute (resources like food) and redistributed as it saw fit
- Trade important
 - Helped create alliances, as well as obtain needed resources
 - Pochteca - special merchant class, controlled long-distance trade



VI. Decline

- **1502 – Montezuma II crowned emperor**
 - Demanded even more tribute and sacrifice from provinces
 - Many provinces rebelled, threw civilization into chaos
- **Return of Quetzalcoatl!**
 - Spanish conquistadors arrived early 16th century
 - Many saw the Spanish as gods and gave very little resistance
 - Brought superior weapons and disease
 - Easily overthrow civilization





Part III: Inca Empire (1200s – mid 1500s)



I. Beginnings

- Built upon foundations of older civilizations
 - Chavin, Moche, Nazca, Chimor
- As Inca spread through Andes Mountains highlands, began to incorporate other groups
 - Created empire through acquisition of land and resources



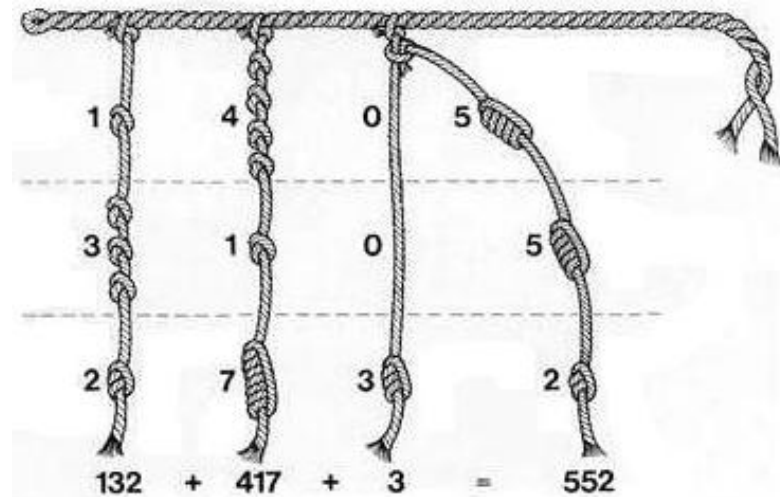
II. A Unified Empire



- Centralized bureaucracy oversaw entire empire
 - Called Twantinsuyu - "The Four Regions"
 - Encompassed 80 provinces, between 9-13 million people
 - Divine emperor at the top
- Extensive road system helped establish control over provinces
 - Tambos – way stations that served as inns, storehouses, and supply centers for Inca armies
- One official language – *Quechua* – made communication between different social/ethnic groups easier

- Economy strictly controlled by government
 - Regulated production and distribution of goods
- Demanded tribute from provinces
 - Mita: labor required by all able-bodied citizens
- Technology played an economic role
 - Quipu: system of strings and knots used to keep track of numerical information

III. Economy



IV. Religion



- Focused worship mostly on nature spirits (polytheistic/animistic)
 - Moon, stars, thunder, sun gods
 - Mamakuna – unmarried women selected for a lifetime of religious service
 - Yamacuna – men who served as full-time religious workers
 - Made sacrifices (animals) and distributed goods as gifts from gods

V. Decline

- Huayna Capac – Inca leader during early 1500s
 - Died of disease (probably small pox) when travelling around Ecuador
 - After death – empire split in two, ruled by two sons
 - Civil war weakened empire
- 1530s – Spanish arrived to overtake a very weak empire
 - Disease probably did more to weaken Inca