Chapter 21

Worlds Apart: The Americas and Oceania
States and Empires in Mesoamerica and North America

- Societies had limited or no contact with Africa, Asia, Europe
  - Brief presence of Scandinavians in Newfoundland, Canada
  - Some Asian contact with Australia
- Mesoamerica in period of war and conquest, 8th century CE
The Toltecs

- Regional states in central Mexican valley
  - Religious and cultural influence of collapsed Teotihuacan
  - Intense warfare

- Toltecs migrate from north-west Mexico, settle at Tula (near modern Mexico city)
  - High point of civilization: 950-1150 CE
  - Urban population of 60,000, another 60,000 in surrounding area
  - Subjugation of surrounding peoples

- Civilization destroyed by internal strife, nomadic incursions 1175 CE
The Mexica

- One of several groups of migrants, mid 13th c. CE
- Tradition of kidnapping women, seizing cultivated lands
- Settled c. 1375 CE in Tenochtitlan (later becomes Mexico City)
- Dredged soil from lake bottom to create fertile plots of land
  - Chinampas, up to 7 crops per year
The Aztec Empire

- Mexica develop tributary empire by 15th century
- Itzcóatl (1428-1440), Motecuzouma I (Montezuma, 1440-1469)
- Joined with Texcoco and Tlacopan to create Aztec Empire
The Toltec and Aztec Empires, 950-1520 CE
Mexica Society

- Hierarchical social structure
- High stature for soldiers
  - Mainly drawn from aristocratic class
  - Land grants, food privileges
  - Sumptuary privileges, personal adornment
Mexica Women

- Patriarchal structure
- Emphasis on child-bearing
  - Especially future soldiers
  - Mothers of warriors especially lauded
Priests

- Masters of complex agricultural/ritual calendars
- Ritual functions
- Read omens, advised rulers
- Occasionally became rulers as well
Cultivators and Slaves

- Communal groups: calpulli
  - Originally kin-based
  - Management of communal lands
  - Work obligation on aristocratic lands

- Slave class
  - Debtors
  - Children sold into slavery
Mexica Religion

- Influenced by indigenous traditions from the Olmec period
- Ritual ball game
- Solar calendar (365 days) and ritual calendar (260 days)
  - Not as elaborate as Maya calendar
Mexica Gods

- Tezcatlipoca ("smoking mirror")
  - Powerful god of life and death
  - Patron god of warriors

- Quetzalcóatl
  - Arts, crafts, agriculture

- Huitzilopochtli
  - 14th century popularity, patron of Mexica
  - Emphasis on blood sacrifices
Ritual Bloodletting

- More emphasis on human sacrifice than predecessor cultures
- Sacrificial victims had tips of fingers torn off before death, ritual wounds
  - Victims: Mexica criminals, captured enemy soldiers
- Personal rituals: piercing of penis, earlobes
Aztec Human Sacrifice
Peoples and Societies of the North

- Pueblo and Navajo Societies
  - American southwest
  - Maize farming 80% of diet
  - By 700 CE, construction of permanent stone or adobe dwellings, 125 sites discovered

- Iroquois Peoples
  - Settled communities in woodlands east of Mississippi

- Mound-building peoples
  - Ceremonial platforms, homes, burial grounds
  - Cahokia large mound near east St. Louis, 900-1250 CE
Trade

- No written documents survive regarding northern cultures
- Archaeological evidence indicates widespread trade
- River routes exploited
States and Empires in South America

- No writing before arrival of Spaniards, 16th century CE
  - Unlike Mesoamerican cultures, writing from 5th c. CE
- Archaeological evidence reveals Andean society from 1st millennium BCE
- Development of cities 1000-1500 CE
Before the Coming of the Incas

- After displacement of Chavín, Moche societies
- Development of autonomous regional states in Andean South America
- Kingdom of Chucuito
  - Lake Titicaca (border of Peru and Bolivia)
  - Potato cultivation, herding of llamas, alpacas
- Kingdom of Chimu (Chimor)
  - Peruvian coast
  - Capital Chanchan
The Inca Empire

- From valley of Cuzco
- Refers to people who spoke Quecha language
- Settlement around Lake Titicaca mid 13\(^{th}\) century
- Ruler Pachacuti (r. 1438-1471) expands territory
  - Modern Peru, parts of Equador, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina
  - Population 11.5 million
The Inca Empire, 1471-1532 CE
Quipu and Inca Administration

- Incas ruled by holding hostages, colonization
- No writing, used system of cords and knots called quipu
- Mnemonic aid
Cuzco

- Capital of Inca empire
- Residents high nobility, priests, hostages
- Gold facades on buildings
Inca roads

- Massive road building system
- Two north-south roads, approximately 10,000 miles
  - Mountain route
  - Coastal route
- Paved, shaded, wide roads
- Courier and messenger services
- Limited long-distance trade, held by government monopoly
Incan Society and Religion

- Social elites dominated by infallible king
  - Claimed descent from the sun

- Worship of ancestors
  - Remains preserved in mummified form
  - Regularly consulted
  - Sacrifices offered
  - Paraded on festive occasions
Aristocrats, Priests, and Peasants

- Aristocrats receive special privileges
  - Earlobe spools as adornment
- Priestly class ascetic, celibate
- Peasants organized into community groups called ayllu
  - Land, tools held communally
  - Mandatory work details on land of aristocrats
  - Public works
Inca Religion

- Inti sun god
- Viracocha creator god
- Temples as pilgrimage sites
- Peasant sacrifices usually produce, animals (not humans)
- Sin understood as disruption of divine order
The Societies of Oceania

Nomadic foragers of Australia
- Virtually static culture
  - No agriculture

New Guinea
- Swine herding, root cultivation c. 5000 BCE

Small-scale trade of surplus food, some goods
- Pearly oyster shells, spears, boomerangs
Aborigine with Boomerang

An Aborigine of the Naomi tribe ca. 1900
Cultural and Religious Traditions

- Loosely tied to environment
- Myths, stories about geological features
- Rituals to ensure continuing food supply
The societies of Oceania
The Development of Pacific Island Societies

- Established in almost all islands in early centuries BCE
- Trade between island groups
- Long-distance voyaging on intermittent basis
  - Brought sweet potatoes from South America c. 300 CE
  - Voyages preserved in oral traditions
Population Growth

- Extensive cultivation
- Fishing innovations
  - Fish ponds allow small fish in, trap larger fish
- Population density leads to social strife, economic degradation
- C. 1500 CE fierce fighting, cannibalism
Development of Social Classes

- Complexity of population leads to articulation of distinct classes
  - High chiefs, lesser chiefs, commoners, artisans, peasants

- Small multi-island empires form
  - Limited before 19th century
  - Yet controlled land allocation, labor and military conscription
Polynesian Religion

- Priests as intermediaries to divine
- Gods of war, agriculture most prominent
- Ceremonial precinct or temple: Marae (heiau)