

# Unit 1A Part 1: Pre-Columbian Civilizations & West Africa



1

**Beringia Land Bridge**

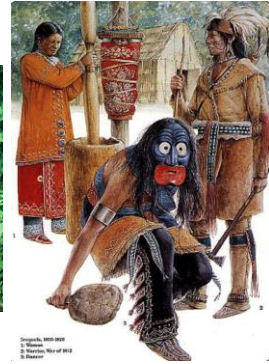
ASIA  
Siberia  
Beringia Land Bridge  
Alaska  
Bering Strait  
NORTH AMERICA

- First Americans from Northern Asia
  - Bering Strait?
  - 12 to 15,000 years ago
  - Global cooling created the bridge; global warming later submerged it
  - Other theories
  - They discovered an immense continent, and soon spread throughout the hemisphere

2

- Native Americans mostly small hunter-gatherer tribes

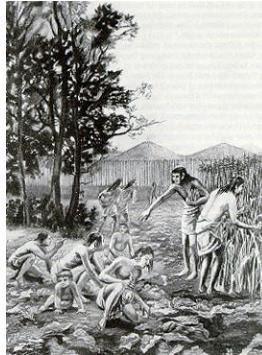
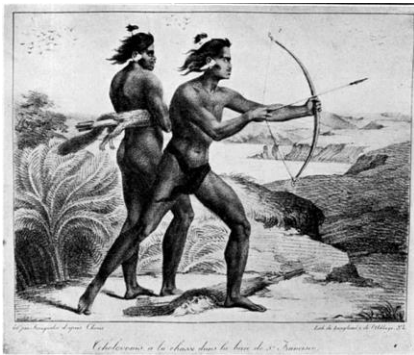
- Between one and two thousand tribes at the time of Columbus
- Lifestyle depended on environment
- Dynamic
  - Tribes fought, grew, moved, died out, etc.
  - Generalizations necessary



3

## American Indians





- Gender roles
  - Men hunted, fished, and fought
    - Endemic warfare
  - Farming mostly considered “women’s work”
    - Maize



4

## Land

- American Indians believed land was for “common use”
  - Could not be owned or sold
  - Tecumseh: “...sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, the great sea as well as the land.”

5



- Tribe = extended family
  - Ruled by council of mature males
  - Chief conducted meetings
    - No special authority or law; power came from personality

6

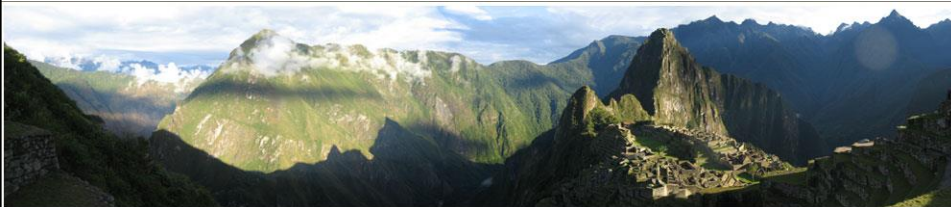
## Empires of Central & South America

- Mayans
  - Mesoamerican (Central American)
  - Cities and relatively advanced mathematics (esp. astronomy)
    - Collapsed around 900 A.D. due to over-farming & civil war



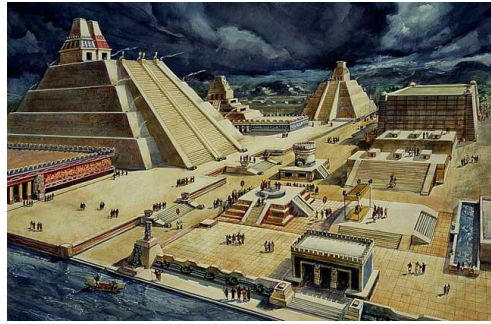
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- Inca
  - South America (Andes mountains)
  - Elaborate system of roads united the empire
    - autocratic ruler
    - steppe farms



8

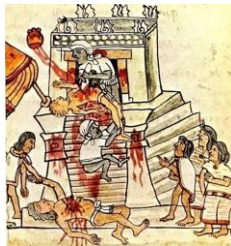
- Aztec
  - Most powerful
  - Estimates of population range from 5 to 20 million
  - Capital was Tenochtitlan (under modern day Mexico City)



9



- Aztecs built their empire on warfare and blood
  - Aztec religion demanded human sacrifice to their gods
    - Other sacrifices involved cannibalism or wearing the skin of victims
    - Occasionally children as well: the rain god required tears so victim's fingernails were torn off before the sacrifice
    - To consecrate the great temple at Tenochtitlan in 1487 the Aztecs sacrificed 80,400 over 4 days – or about 14 sacrifices per minute.
  - Victims came from neighboring tribes



10



11

## North American civilizations

- Hopewell
  - Located in N.E. U.S. (Ohio river valley) from 800 B.C. to 600 A.D.
  - Large earthworks and burial mounds
    - Trade networks ran to Rocky Mountains, Gulf of Mexico, & Great Lakes



12





- Mississippian/Cahokia
  - Located in Mississippi river valley
  - Peaked during 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> centuries
  - Built large cities and trade network
  - **Also had a death cult that involved human torture and sacrifice**




13

- Pueblo-Hohokam tribes
  - Southwest
    - elements of these cultures persist today
  - Mostly farmed
    - little evidence of sacrifice or warfare (except in self-defense)
  - Most famous was the Anasazi, who built cliff dwellings

14



15

## African Trade

- Travel within Africa was difficult
  - Rainforest along equator
  - High plateaus created waterfalls, made river travel impossible
- Trade linked Africa to other countries since ancient times
  - Salt, Gold, Iron, Copper valuable commodities
  - Mediterranean and Red Sea trade routes with Europe



16



## Sahara Highway

- By 200 A.D. traders begin using camels to transport across deserts

Develop a network of trade routes across the Sahara

- Large cities grew at crossroads (Timbuktu, Gao, & Jenne)



17

## Salt Trade

- Salt was necessary □ preservation of food
- Abundant in Nigeria and Senegal
- Trade developed with North and East Africa that had little salt



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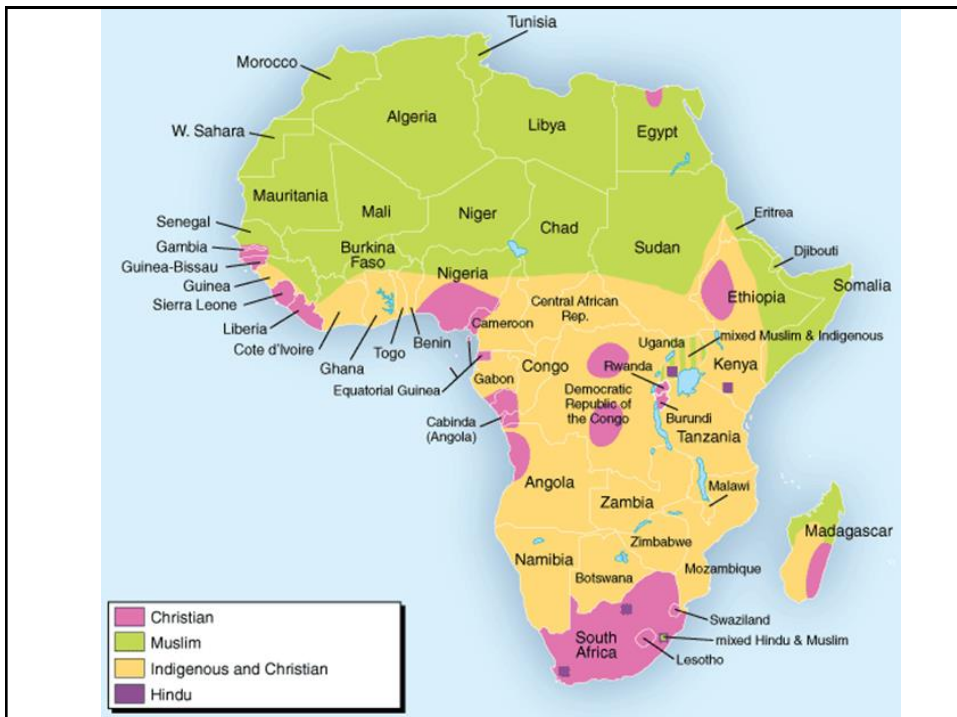
18

## Religion

- Islam was brought into West Africa via trade routes with Northern Africa
  - 1200s: accepted as court religion
  - 1400s popular with rulers/ merchants, little impact on most citizens
- Indigenous religions
  - Nature/ ancestral based
  - Polytheistic; emphasis on storytelling



19



20

## Ghana

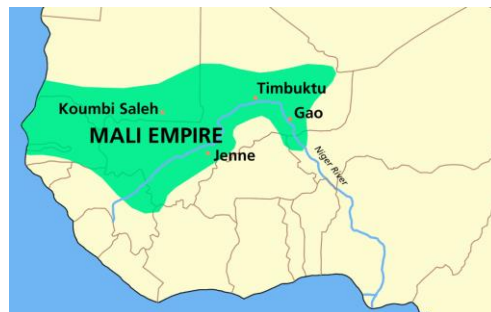
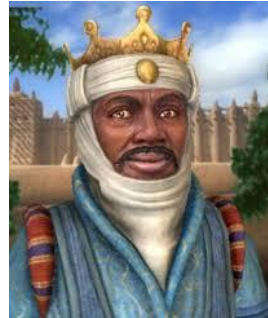
- Modern day Mali, at the intersection of Niger and Senegal rivers
- Controlled the Gold/Salt trade across West Africa
  - Collected tolls on all trade
- Capital Koumbi Saleh
  - 2 walled towns
  - Royal palace and court
  - Merchants
  - Stone buildings
- Eventually conquered by Mali



21

## Mali

- Largest kingdom, expanded west to Atlantic
- Worked to ensure peace and prosperity
- Islamic king (Mansa Musa) but allowed religious freedom
- Eventually collapsed into smaller states
- Timbuktu
  - Export gold/ slaves
  - Known for metalworking
  - Known for intellectual diversity



22

## Benin

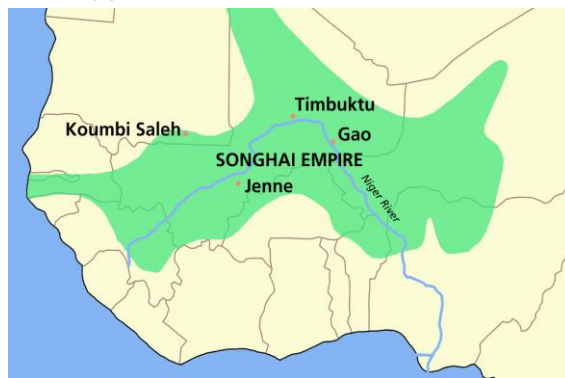
- Forest kingdom that dominated a large region around the Niger Delta
- Great Walled City with a highly organized government
- Famous for metal works (Bronze sculptures & plaques)



23

## Songhai

- Gained power and wealth by controlling the trans-Saharan trade.
- Wealth from rulers taxing trade that passed through their realms could support armies, build cities, and administer laws.



24

