

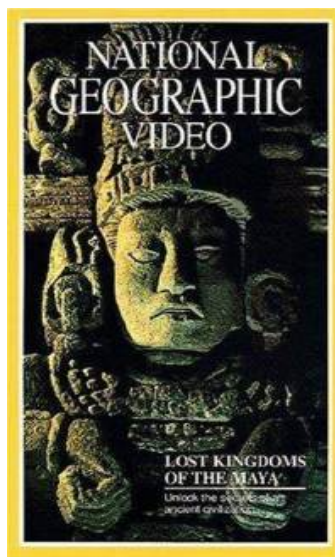
Ancient Cultures of Middle America Week 11

The Collapse

"While Paris was still a village, the [Maya] were carving cities out of the Jungle."

"If Tikál were like New York, Copán was like Paris."

Tuesday we'll have a **different look at the "Paris" of the Rainforest**, and on Thursday we'll have a look at **how they—and other civilizations—collapsed**.



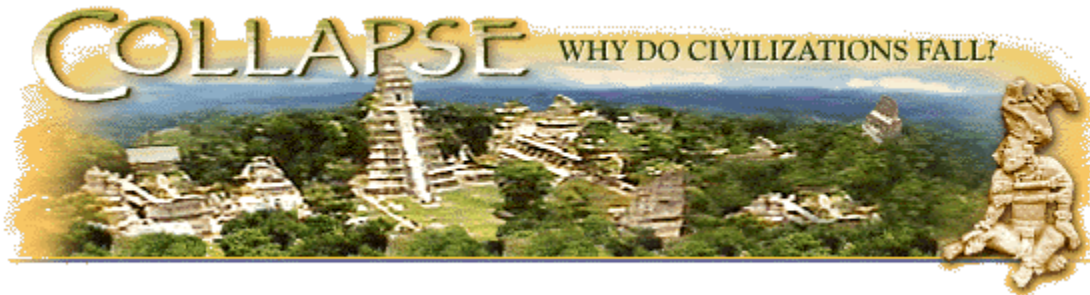
“So what exactly happened to make the Paris of its time suddenly vanish? Puzzle along with archeologists and epigraphers as they try to piece history back together, one building and astrological codice at a time. Don't expect any pat answers, however. While a few educated guesses endure (overpopulation? deforestation? an out-of-control thirst for war?), the true reason for the Mayan fate might be best summarized in the true if not elegant words of one Mayan expert: ‘Civilization is a complex phenomenon, and we can screw up.’”—*Bob Michaels*

In *Lost Kingdoms of the Maya* you'll also learn about the “GOK” pile in archaeology, and see a reconstruction of the famous **Rosalila Structure**, and the eccentric flints

http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth3618/video/Lost_Kingdoms.html.

On Thursday we'll witness *The Collapse* <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth3618/video/Collapse.html>, the third of the Annenberg *Out of the Past Series*, and another good example of how Mesoamerica contributes to

comparative studies in anthropology in general.



"Hundreds of years ago in what is now modern Honduras, Copán was a thriving center of Maya life. Tens of thousands of people made their home in the Copán Valley. Yet despite its importance, Copán went into decline. Across the vast territory of the ancient Maya, other important sites were sharing a similar fate. Classic Maya civilization was collapsing."

"Why did this great civilization fall? The history of humankind has been marked by patterns of growth and decline. Some declines have been gradual, occurring over centuries. Others have been rapid, occurring over the course of a few years. War, drought, natural disaster, disease, overpopulation, economic disruption: any of these can bring about the collapse of a civilization. Internal causes (such as political struggles or overfarming) can combine with external causes (such as war or natural disaster) to bring about a collapse. What does this mean for modern civilizations? What can we learn from the past?"

We'll see what the experts have to say.



All things considered, it will likely be a real downer of a week.

Be sure to check the details of the **Moodle** "Activities" of the week. This week they include . . .

-  Forum: Maya, Climate Change & The Collapse (Due by End of Week 12, Friday, 21 November 2014)
-  Response to the film Lost Kingdoms of the Maya (Due by the end of Week 12—Friday, 21 November 2014; Your Name Will Be Logged) Feedback
-  Response to the film Out of the Past: "The Collapse" (Due by the end of Week 12—Friday, 21 November 2014; Your Name Will Be Logged)Feedback




Remember to check the results of the class Video Responses from earlier weeks when they close. You can find the results in the **Moodle** Blocks where they first appeared. This week have a look at . . .

-  Results--"Forests of the Maya" f2014

-  Results--Culture and Math: The Maya f2014
-  Results--Cracking the Maya Code f2014

Don't forget, share your ideas. Discuss them on-line with the others in class . . .

f2014

-  Wiki for Project Collaboration
-  Live chat for Project Collaboration
-  Wiki for Project Collaboration
- QUICKMAIL (see sidebar)

The above items will be found at the top of your **Moodle** folder under "Student Collaboration Space".

This week's **(1) Topics, (2) Reading Assignments Listings, and (3) Activities** are detailed in the Week 11 Block of your **Moodle** folder.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to stop in after class, or post them on **Moodle**, or e-mail troufs@d.umn.edu. Better yet, post them on your **Moodle** Discussion and Project forum boards.

Best Regards,

Tim Roufs