

Same Time, Different Place

Same Time, Different Place highlights events occurring in other societies around the world in the same time frame as this case study.

Cities, 1400s

Timbuktu, West Africa

Timbuktu (Tombouctou) was an important Islamic trade centre located on the Niger River at the edge of the southern Sahara Desert in what is now the modern country of Mali. As the biggest city in the Songhai Empire, the largest kingdom in Africa, it became an important spiritual, educational, and cultural centre. Its University of Sankore was one of the largest in the world, with 25 000 students. It attracted Islamic scholars from around the then-known world. Knowledge held and developed in Tombouctou made its way to Europe and helped spur the Renaissance.



Cuzco, South America

Cuzco, the richest city in the New World, was the centre of the Inca civilization, the most powerful empire in South America. The empire had a population of about 12 000 000 connected by over 22 000 kilometres of roads stretching from southern Columbia to central Chile. The city was built in the shape of a sacred Puma and had great stone buildings, palaces and temples, and homes for commoners. Temples, buildings, paved roads, and elaborate gardens all shimmered with gold. The richest temple was dedicated to sun worship and was decorated with extravagant amounts of gold and silver.

I wonder ... are some of today's large cities becoming like city-states?

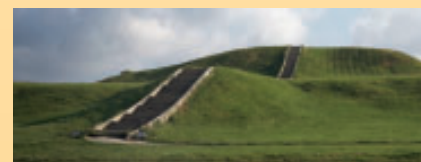


Cahokia, Mid-North America

Cahokia is the name given to a large city built by people of the Mississippian culture, believed to be the ancestors of the Osage, Omaha, Ponca, and Quapaw First Nations. Its site is located in the present-day state of Illinois.

Earthen mounds remaining today provide information about this city that existed between 650 and 1400. The largest mound is more than 30 metres high with a base of 316 metres by 241 metres. A large building, about the size of a football field and more than 15 metres tall, stood on top of the mound. This structure was larger than the pyramid of Cheops in Egypt. The plaza for this structure still holds the record for being the largest earthen plaza ever constructed.

The mounds for 109 structures have been found. The city's population of about 40 000 people was larger than that of London. The Cahokia society had trade ties throughout North America.



Top: Timbuktu Engraving, Fumagalli and others. First university set up by Arabs in the Sahara Desert.

Middle: European view of Cuzco, Peru, from *Voyages Pittoresques*, Carl Nebel

Bottom: Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site