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Response to The Blood of the Kings

1) How would you describe the "cultural screen" of the Mayan society as illustrated in this film?

The Mayan society was based on the king as the head of religion and the state. By making a sacrifice of genital blood, the Mayans believed that the god's would keep the sun rising and the crops growing. However, there would be a dispute on the legitimacy of the status whenever failure relating to this "head of state" would occur. Failure of the King, either in military defeat or probably unpredictable catastrophic weather events that lead to crop failure would undermine the belief system, and the society would crumble.

2) What were some of the technological innovations of this society? How did they help to define the people & their culture?

One of the most astonishing Mayan inventions was the calendar. The Mayans were able to observe the stars and create a complex calendar that is comparable to our modern calendars.

3) How would you describe the hierarchical system? What responsibilities did each group have to the general welfare of the society?

There's no doubt that the King was at the summit of the Mayan hierarchical system. Serving mainly as the high priest, the King probably also had military duties, albeit not as crucial as his position as the high priest. Under the King, would be the priest. These religious elites served also as civil elites of society. The strong religious belief would construct the upper half of the hierarchical pyramid. Under the religions elites were probably the warriors class and peasants would construct the base of the society.