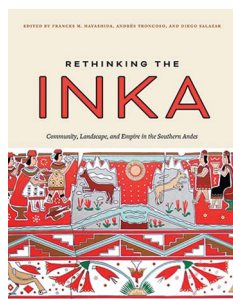


Inca: lost civilizations stands apart from its peers because it is a text that immerses the reader in the material and ecological world of the Inca and their contemporaries, while simultaneously creating a solid foundation for further scholarly exploration of the ancient Andes. The book will fit perfectly into introductory (university or other) courses on the archaeology and history of the Indigenous Andes and Americas.

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ANTIQUITY 2022 Vol. 96 (390): 1649–1651
<https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2022.130>

FRANCES M. HAYASHIDA, ANDRÉS TRONCOSO & DIEGO SALAZAR (ed.). 2022. *Rethinking the Inka: community, landscape and empire in the southern Andes*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 978-1-47732385-4 hardback \$65.



The Inka Empire was vast, covering over 2 million square kilometres across the modern countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Argentina. The empire was divided into four unequal quarters, roughly segmented according to the four cardinal points emanating from the capital, Cuzco. The two biggest divisions were the northern and southern ones. Although archaeological research has been carried out across the length and breadth of the empire, much more is seemingly known about its northern than the southern quarter, or *Quallasuyu*, which covered parts of Bolivia, Chile and north-western Argentina.

The reasons for this seeming lack of data are many and complex, ranging from a perception that these southern regions represented the far-flung fringes of the empire and were therefore less interesting (a tradition harking back to the Hispano-centrism of the Spanish viceroyalty and its capital in Lima) to a lack of English-language articles in an academic market that unfairly relegates anything not written in this language—what the editors of this volume have labelled, the “geopolitics of knowledge production” (p. 2).

These biases have been slow to correct, even though, as this book emphasises, the southern quarter of the empire is, in fact, the most studied Inka region in the quantitative and likely qualitative number of research projects and published articles, with Argentine, Bolivian and Chilean scholars producing important, empirically driven and theoretically complex archaeological research. It was also “one of the most populous and prosperous quarters of the Tawantinsuyu” (Alconini, Chapter 6, p. 107). In this respect, and by any measurable standards, *Rethinking the Inka* is a fabulous book. Wide-ranging but well focussed, this volume presents

11 chapters, front-ended by a scene-setting introduction written by the editors and completed by a final chapter written by Ian Farrington, which contextualises the articles and themes elucidated by the book, among a wider appreciation of the Inka Empire.

The other 11 chapters read like a roll call of the best, established, present-day researchers working on Qullasuyu archaeology; crucially, aside from Frances Hayashida, all the contributors are South American, lending that all-important regional perspective to the articles. Indeed, the editors should be commended on such a diverse and theoretically engaged group. As such, rather than detailed, site-specific articles, we are treated to a series of regionally scoped articles that blend material culture with broad-based inferences addressing overarching theoretical themes. These themes are essentially four: empire and control, negotiation and ritual commensality, nonhuman agency and animism, and—the elephant in the room—the chronology of Inka expansion into the Qullasuyu. Indeed, many of the articles touch on two or more of these broader themes, making for a well-balanced and solid volume.

Regarding empire and control, many of the book's authors either directly or tacitly address the theme, analysing the different types of control and, by extension, empire that existed through the Qullasuyu. As such, Alconini (Chapter 6) makes a strong case for two types of Inka colonies, dependent and independent ones, with respectively stronger or weaker ties to the imperial centre in Cuzco, as well as greater or lesser specialisation in resource production. This model can easily explain the dynamics of Inka colonisation in other parts of the Qullasuyu, such as in the Collao and Charcas areas described by Cruz (Chapter 3), the Atacama Desert (Salazar *et al.* Chapter 4), the Calchaqui Valley (Williams, Chapter 5), Los Cintis (Rivera Casanovas, Chapter 7), and the Aconcagua Valley (Pavlovic, Sánchez, Pascual & Martínez, Chapter 9).

Importantly, all these chapters from across the region focus on the bottom-up dynamics between local groups and the Inka Empire. This approach highlights three important points. First, the survival of localism or local adaptations to new incoming patterns and styles expressed in material culture, such as settlements, ceramics and rock art (Troncoso, Chapter 10), among others. Second, and more significantly, the high degree of negotiation that underwrote this imperial enterprise. These negotiations concerning variously, the economic, social, cosmological and political spheres, were often sealed by commensality rituals, which reciprocally bound local groups and the Inka. In this case, Martínez's article (Chapter 11) on cups (*Qirus* and *akillas*), addressing ritual drinking as a gesture of subservience and domination, is particularly apt. Third, these articles show that there was not one type of Inka entry into, and conquest of, a given area; each zone had its own particular way of assimilating and expressing 'Inka-ness', from direct control (which was rarer than one would assume), to various shades of hegemony, including clientage, confederation, protectionism and colonisation. It was never a case of one size fits all.

Invariably this leads us onto the 'why' of Inka conquest of the southern quarter. Against the traditional perspective of an initial move towards garnering important metal deposits and resources from the south, all the authors emphasise Inka expansion into the religious sphere of the Qullasuyu. This is a crucial factor determining how the Inka interacted with both locals

and the landscape. The Inka and Andean people lived in a highly polyanimistic environment, where nonhuman agents (many known as *wak'as*) ensconced in objects, geological features and the wider landscape underscored a plethora of complex relationships between people and places. While all the articles in this book attest to the Inka's determination to interact and dominate the sacred and that alterity, three in particular—Acuto, Chapter 2; Giovannetti, Chapter 7, and Nielsen, Chapter 12—analyse the ontology of Indigenous perspectives concerning the sacred. Especially, these articles demonstrate how the Inka inserted themselves as intermediaries between the locals and the nonhuman agents that populated the cosmological domain. A standout is Nielsen's case, in which he rather strikingly studies the silo-like structures known generically as *chullpas*, a term that has traditionally been used to describe a mortuary monument, but which Nielsen amplifies to include a variety of different forms and uses, none of which are mutually exclusive. It is a brilliant article that weaves the sacred with the mundane.

Finally, the one topic that all touch on without unduly emphasising it is the chronology of Inka expansion into the southern quarter. Recent studies have highlighted the fallacies in the existing chronology (i.e. Marsh *et al.* 2017), opting for an earlier expansion, possibly to the mid fourteenth century. Added to this, the various authors here angle for dates ranging from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, but there is yet no consensus or equanimity in their various positions. So, it seems that new research on the Qullasuyu will have to grapple with this particular question, because if the various authors are correct, then Inka imperial expansion first progressed to the south from Cuzco and only then to the north, completely reversing the present ethnohistoric model (Rowe 1945). If this was the case, then, indeed, Qullasuyu archaeology could lead the way towards disentangling the threads of Inka imperial ambition.

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