

# Chapter One

## Introduction

On Friday, November 15, 1532, Francisco Pizarro brazenly led a force of 168 frightened Spaniards into the maw of the most powerful empire ever seen in the Americas. Late that afternoon, the brigade entered the plaza at Cajamarca, an imperial Inca center in the Peruvian highlands. They had every reason to be dismayed by the sight that lay before them, since the Inca prince Atawallpa was savoring his recent victory in a dynastic war in the midst of an 80,000-man army camped just outside town. Because he was completing a fast at the hot springs of Kónoj, Atawallpa declined an invitation to disrupt his solemn duties. He would not meet his unwanted guests in the city that afternoon, but agreed to receive them after a night's rest. Astonishingly, he was Pizarro's prisoner by the next evening, captured during a surprise strike that was underpinned by equal parts of bravado, armaments, and faith.

Over the next eight months, the Spaniards extracted a ransom fit for an earthly deity in exchange for a promise of Atawallpa's freedom. An enormous amount of treasure was melted down from the empire's architectural dressings, personal jewelry, idols, and service ware hauled off from temples, aristocratic households, and perhaps even graves. By today's standards, the value would have been an astonishing US\$335 million in gold and US\$11 million in silver.<sup>1</sup> Once the ransom had been paid, Pizarro ordered Atawallpa to be tried and then executed on July 26, 1533, overriding the grave misgivings voiced by some members of his party. The power that the Inca had wielded over his vast domain even while captive had apparently convinced the Spaniard that decapitating the state was his best hope of staying alive and asserting his own control. In light of the divisions that had already riven the empire, his decision touched off the collapse of Tawantinsuyu, or "The Four Parts Together," as the Incas called their realm.

Fittingly, the Incas already had a word for such a cataclysmic change. They called it a *pachakuti*, a "turning over/around of time/space" – a moment

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when history ended and then began again. In their eyes, it was not the first time that the world had been destroyed, nor might it be the last. The mestizo chronicler Guaman Poma (1980) explained that all of creation had been wiped out four times in the ancient past, each time after a cycle of a thousand years (Urton 1999: 41). The first age was a time of darkness when the world was inhabited by a race of wild men. In each successive epoch, humans progressed, as they learned to farm, to make crafts, and to organize themselves for war and peace. The fifth “sun” was the age of the Incas. In their self-promoted vision, it was a glorious era during which they brought civilization and enlightened rule to a chaotic world. And under the circumstances, it was only right that the man who had created the empire took *Pachakuti* as his title. After all, he was the son of the Sun, a living divinity who remade the world.

Less than a century after Pachakuti died and ascended to join his celestial father, Atawallpa’s forces closed the war with his half-brother Waskhar. According to one native account, his generals declared that it was time for another *pachakuti* (Callapiña *et al.* 1974). To help move the process along, they massacred Waskhar’s extensive family and several other royal kin groups who had cast their lot with him. They also killed all the historians they could find and destroyed the knot-records called *quipu* (see chapter 5) on which history was recorded, so that the era could begin unburdened by its past. But before he could properly launch the new epoch, Atawallpa fell into Spanish hands and a century of rule by gods on earth came to an end.

The Spanish encounter with the Incas, despite its impact, was not a complete surprise to either people. In 1519, Hernán Cortés had overthrown the Aztec empire of central Mexico through a similar attack on the ruler with the aid of allies made in the new land. The descriptions of Mexico’s cities and riches that made their way back to Spain fired enthusiasm for more adventures in the Indies. Many of the men who accompanied Pizarro to the Andes had already seen action in Central America and the Caribbean, while others had just come over to seek their fortunes. Pizarro himself had been in the Americas for thirty years and was hungry to make his mark in an uncharted land called *Pirú*. In the 1520s, a few Spaniards or Portuguese had actually penetrated the Inca domain, but left no significant impression on the Andes or reported back to the Europeans. A tangible glimmer of what the Spaniards were to find reached them in 1527, when an expedition captured a boat off Ecuador filled with cloth, metal ornaments, and other riches. Even so, they were not prepared for the grandeur of Peru.

In 1532, Tawantinsuyu was the largest polity the native Americas had ever seen (figure 1.1). Its ruler was a hereditary king who the Incas claimed

had descended in an unbroken string from a creation separate from the rest of humanity. Though a powerful monarch, the *Sapa Inca* (“Unique Lord”) did not rule alone. He was counseled by mummies of his immortal ancestors and their other descendants, who all joined him in Cuzco’s most solemn ceremonies and drunken revelry. Totally unpersuaded by the Incas’ assertions of divinity and appalled at their heresies, the Spaniards were



**Figure 1.1** The Inca road and provincial installation (*tampu*) system, after Hyslop (1984): frontispiece; the four parts of the Inca realm are shown in the inset map.



**Plate 1.1** The Saqsawaman complex, on a rocky promontory above Cuzco.

still dazzled by the dynasty's riches and achievements. The early writers often drew on familiar referents to convey images of the realm for their countrymen, but some practices defied a search for analogy. Pedro Sancho and Pedro Pizarro, both members of the original expedition, have left us some impressions of the capital (plate 1.1):

There is a very beautiful fortress of earth and stone with big windows that look over the city [of Cuzco] and make it appear more beautiful ... [The stones] are as big as pieces of mountains or crags ... The Spaniards who see them say that neither the bridge of Segovia nor other constructions of Hercules or the Romans are as magnificent as this. (Sancho 1917: 193–4)

Most of the people [of Cuzco] served the dead, I have heard it said, who they daily brought out to the main square, setting them down in a ring, each one according to his age, and there the male and female attendants ate and drank. The attendants made fires for each of the dead in front of them ... and lighting [them], burned everything they had put before them, so that the dead should eat of everything that the living ate. (P. Pizarro 1986: 89–90)

Everywhere they traveled, the invaders saw the imperial imprint, whether it was in Cuzco's spare but grand architecture, the roads that traversed 40,000 km of rugged terrain, thousands of provincial installations, stocks of every supply imaginable, works of artistry in precious metal, stone, and cloth, or the government designed to manage the whole affair. About twenty years after the conquest, the soldier Pedro Cieza de León (1967: 213–14; translation from Hyslop 1984: 343) expressed his admiration for the empire's order:

In human memory, I believe that there is no account of a road as great as this, running through deep valleys, high mountains, banks of snow, torrents of water, living rock, and wild rivers ... In all places it was clean and swept free of refuse, with lodgings, storehouses, Sun temples, and posts along the route. Oh! Can anything similar be claimed for Alexander or any of the powerful kings who ruled the world?

The Incas' feats seemed all the more fabulous when the conquistadores heard that the realm was only about four generations old. As the Incas explained it, the empire was launched when Pachakuti usurped the throne from his father Wiraqocha Inka and began to annex the peoples around Cuzco. His successes and organizational genius were followed only by those of his son Thupa Inka Yupanki and grandson Wayna Qhapaq, and then by the final dynastic war (table 1.1).

For their part, the Incas were taken aback by the Spanish invasion, although they would later recount legends that had predicted the return of white, bearded strangers from the sea. Even so, their initial response was less one of awe than of anger and disbelief at the invaders' arrogance. Who were these men who dared to kill the Sapa Inca's subjects and seize the holy women for their carnal pleasures? Rather than wipe them out directly as they so richly deserved, the Incas let their curiosity get the better of them and allowed the interlopers to ascend the Andes to be examined first-hand. To Atawallpa's fatal regret, the Spanish incursion could not have been more propitiously timed. The prince, contemplating his recent victory and anticipating reunification of the empire, seemingly had nothing to fear from a small band of foreigners, as outrageous as their conduct may have been. He couldn't have been more wrong.

My goal in this book is to describe the Incas, their emergence as rulers of an empire, and the nature of their domain. That sounds straightforward

**Table 1.1** The conventional Inca king list.

	<i>Name as ruler</i>	<i>Gloss</i>	<i>Given name</i>
1	Manqo Qhapaq	Powerful [Ancestor]	–
2	Zinchi Roq'a	Warlord Roq'a	–
3	Lloq'ë Yupanki	Honored Left-handed	–
4	Mayta Qhapaq	Royal Mayta	–
5	Qhapaq Yupanki	Powerful Honored	–
6	Inka Roq'a	Inka Roq'a	–
7	Yawar Waqaq	He Who Cries Bloody Tears	Inka Yupanki, Mayta Yupanki
8	Wiraqocha Inka	Creator God Inca	Hatun Thupa Inka
9	Pachakuti Inka Yupanki	Cataclysm Honored Inca	Inka Yupanki, Kusi Yupanki
10	Thupa Inka Yupanki	Royal Honored Inca	–
11	Wayna Qhapaq	Powerful Youth	Titu Kusi Wallpa
12	Waskhar Inka	Golden Chain Ruler	Thupa Kusi Wallpa
13	Atawallpa	–	–

enough, but the Incas have proved to be remarkably malleable in the hands of historians and archaeologists. Let a social theorist or two get involved and things become even more baffling. Depending on the author, Tawantinsuyu has been held up as an exemplar of almost every form of political society except representative democracy. The Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1966), son of an Inca princess, immortalized Tawantinsuyu in 1609 as a supremely well-run, homogeneous monarchy ruled by an omnipotent and benevolent king. Although he was writing to exalt the glories of his ancestors to a Spanish audience, Garcilaso's vision is still popular today. His efforts aside, other commentators have seen the realm in radically different lights – as a type of primitive communism, a feudal society, a despotic Asiatic state, and a territorial empire. Some modern scholars even doubt that an empire existed and instead see a patchwork of ethnic groups that were never truly unified.

How could one polity inspire such contradictory views? Part of the answer lies in the fact that no one who grew up in an independent Tawantinsuyu ever wrote about it.<sup>2</sup> Although they had the tools to record information precisely, the Incas had no writing system that we have been

able to recognize and decipher. Instead, history was kept as oral tradition, supplemented by mnemonic registers. In Cuzco, poet-historians called *amauta*<sup>3</sup> and knot-record masters called *kipu kamayuq* (figure 1.2) recited sagas of the royal past at the bidding of the court. The *kipu* themselves seem to have encoded information about the past in ways that had as much to do with cultural visions of hierarchy, power, and space as with sequences of events. Aristocrats also memorized epic poems, some of which they recited to the Spaniards. Not surprisingly, the descendants of different rulers called up versions of the past that favored their own ancestors, while public recitations by the *amauta* were tailored to please the audience (Rostworowski 1999: vii–ix). Cieza (1967: 32) explained things this way:

and if among the kings one turned out indolent, a coward, given to vices and a homebody without enlarging the domain of his empire, it was ordered that of such [kings] there be little remembrance or almost none at all; and they attended to this so closely that if one [king] was found [in the histories] it was so as not to forget his name and the succession; but in the rest they remained silent, without singing the songs [as they did] of the others who were good and valiant.

Early Spanish writers thus had to choose among a variety of stories in composing their chronicles. Many resolved the problem by favoring information provided by their oldest and most aristocratic witnesses and by dismissing reports by common Indians. Those circumstances mean that the documentary history of the Incas has been filtered through competing native views, translators, scribes, conflicting mores, and differing notions of the nature of the past. Conversion of Andean narratives into a European-style history is therefore an uncertain task; similar obstacles face us when we try to understand Andean social order, economics, or world views. Fortunately, archaeological research into the Incas has been active in recent years, along with art historical studies, so that the material residues of Tawantinsuyu and documentary accounts written down after its demise can be viewed as complementary sources of information in ways that were thought impossible a short time back. Even so, we still have less direct information to work with than do scholars who have studied many of the great empires of the Old World. In this introduction, then, I would like to sketch out how we can come to an understanding of the Incas, beginning by outlining how scholars have thought about empires and then by describing the information that we have for the Incas themselves.



**Figure 1.2** *Khipu kamayuq* with his *khipu*, *yupana* (counting tray, see pp. 160–1) in lower left corner; Guaman Poma's (1936) chronicle.

### Investigating Empires<sup>4</sup>

Empires like Tawantinsuyu were the largest and most heterogeneous of the pre-modern societies, which makes studying them confoundingly difficult. By the term empire, I am referring to an extensive polity – often containing millions of subjects and covering hundreds of thousands of square kilometers – in which a core polity gains control over a range of other societies. The dominion may be political, military, or economic, and it may be remote or immediate, but the essence of an empire is that the core society is able to assert its will over the other peoples brought under its aegis. In the pre-industrial world, only a relative handful of such polities can be named. In the Old World, the Qin and Han Chinese and their successors, Middle and New Kingdom Egypt, the Macedonians maybe, the Assyrians, Neo-Assyrians, Romans, Parthians, Sassanians, Persians, Mongols, Mughals, Mauryas, and Vijayanagara, among others, can fairly be considered to have been empires. In the Americas, the Aztecs, Tarascans, Incas, and Wari qualify, although scholars occasionally dispute the status of each of them. The scale and diversity of those polities make their analysis an enormous challenge. Anyone studying the Romans, for example, might have to consider evidence drawn from more than forty modern countries, written in dozens of archaic, medieval, and modern languages. Even the Inca empire took in lands that now fall within six countries, whose native inhabitants spoke scores of languages.

Scholars have devised several ways to reduce this kind of research to manageable concepts that foster informed comparison (Sinopoli 1994; Alcock *et al.* 2001). Over the last few decades, the most widely used approach in anthropology and history divides empires into their *core* and *periphery*. The core is envisioned as the political, economic, and cultural heartland of the empire, while the periphery consists of the societies that are ruled and exploited by the core. Frequently, the relationship between the core and the periphery has been seen in terms of both power and space. The societies of a centrally located core were visualized as having been more complex politically and economically and more sophisticated culturally than the often barbaric peripheral societies. As the power of one core waned, it would be replaced by another center, often at the margins of the previous heartland. This view owed much to the nature and histories of the Roman and Chinese empires, in which heartland areas were periodically beset by troublesome borderlands peoples (e.g., Lattimore 1988).

As historians became more discerning in their analysis of empires as complex systems, they focused less on the layout of empires and more on the relations of inequality between the heartland and surrounding areas. Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems model has been widely applied to early empires, even though the scholars who use his concepts often think that he downplayed the complexities of pre-modern empires. Wallerstein observed that macro-regions are often organized by economic relations that exceed political boundaries. Labor organization, resource extraction, accrual of wealth, and market relations, for example, result from relationships that integrate vast areas and, frequently, many politically independent states and even continents. Archaeologists have adapted this general idea to study relations between the heartlands of ancient states and neighboring regions (e.g., Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991; Algaze 2005).

An alternative conception focuses on strategies of imperial rule according to their intensity and mix of different kinds of power. The sociologist Michael Mann has proposed an influential model, in which he views an empire as being constituted by "multiple overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks" of military, economic, political, and ideological power (Mann 1986: 1). Alternatively, strategies of rule have been portrayed as lying along a continuum from low to high intensity (Luttwak 1976; Hassig 1985: 100–1; D'Altroy 1992: 18–24). At the low end of the continuum is a *hegemonic* strategy, which produces a fairly loose, indirect kind of imperial rule. A hegemonic polity is built by a core state society that comes to dominate a series of client polities through diplomacy or conquest. An overriding goal of a hegemonic approach is to keep the costs of rule low. The downside is that a low investment in administration and physical facilities is offset by a relatively low extraction of resources and by limited control over subject peoples. The Aztecs provide a classic case of this kind of empire (Hassig 1985; Smith 2012).

At the other end of the continuum is a *territorial* strategy, which is an intense, direct kind of rule. That approach to governance is costly, since it requires a heavy investment in administration, security against external threats, and the physical infrastructure of imperial rule, such as roads, provincial centers, and frontier defense. The costs may be necessary to ensure the empire's continued existence, however, or to satisfy the demands of the upper classes. Rome of the first century AD and the Han Chinese provide good examples of territorial empires. Those two poles grade into each other, of course, and may be applied selectively in different regions or at different times as the situation warrants. Numerous factors may

contribute to a particular choice of strategy: the organizations of the central polity and its various subject societies, historical relations between the central society and subjects, political negotiation, the distribution of resources, transport technology, and the goals of the imperial leadership.

A widely cited political science approach, described initially by Doyle (1986), organizes theories of empire into three categories, based on where the stimulus for development arose and on the motivations driving the core polity. The first of those categories, called *metrocentric* theories, argues that the central polities were driven by their own economic, military, or political interests in self-aggrandizement. As applied to pre-modern empires, the Romans of the Republican era (Harris 1979) and the Aztecs of central Mexico would stand out. In *pericentric* theories, the expansion of the core polity is catalyzed by the difficulties of maintaining stable relationships with surrounding societies. From this perspective, imperial expansion can be seen as a defensive effort to protect the core. The Roman annexation of Greece through transformation of client polities into provinces can be cited as an example here. The last kind of model, the *systemic*, tends to be focused on more modern cases. It suggests that great powers engage in imperial ventures in an effort to dominate and contain their rivals. Interventions by European powers through their colonialist ventures during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are often seen in this light.

Recent network modeling builds more formally and quantitatively on some of the same ideas that fueled Mann's (1986) sociological approach. Network theorists argue that imperial relationships may be arrayed generally along economic, political, social, military, or ideological lines, or may be structured more narrowly around technologies like transport and communication (e.g., Smith 2005; Glatz 2009; Brughmans 2013). The approach emphasizes that such relationships were never static. They changed constantly, targeting links between key people or places, and leaping over intermediary spaces or societies, as conditions demanded. In this light, treating polities as neatly bounded territories misleads us as to how they actually worked. Even in the most intensively occupied lands, the hand of rule could be applied unevenly. The flows of ideas, people, and materials moved in both directions, from the central powers to subjects and back.

If we take the Inca case, the location of any place looks different in relation to Cuzco if we analyze relationships along the system of roads and provincial facilities or as spaces falling within geographic expanses (Jenkins 2001). Similarly, lines of communication (e.g., for military needs) may have been

built on differing networks than lines along which valuable commodities flowed or foodstuffs were supplied locally. Moreover, the hundreds of radial arrays of sacred places on the landscape that lay at the heart of Andean societies' self-images may have had essentially nothing to do with imperial political networks or the movement of commodities. John Hyslop (1984) made this point explicit some time ago in his book on the Inca road system, when he argued that Inca rule really consisted of a series of overlapping networks, rather than a single integrated system. Where the new analyses often prove most valuable is in their quantitative and graphical formalities of spatial data. Approaches applied through geographic information systems (GIS), for example, can provide startling insights into how affairs ranging from daily practice to imperial strategy played out (Kosiba and Bauer 2012).

A final influential set of ideas about how to think about empires has arisen from post-colonial theory, which appeared as a kind of intellectual resistance to the Western domination of much of the world (e.g., Said 1978). The literature on this subject is too vast to do justice here, but a couple of guiding ideas can be highlighted. One is that people or social groups in positions of power often get to decide what constitutes knowledge and how it can be legitimated (Estermann 2009). Since elites determine what history is told publicly (Dietler 2005), they often cast it in a way that makes themselves the inevitable – and desirable – outcome of natural progress. Spencer (1974), Tylor (1958), and other nineteenth-century British social philosophers, for example, saw their nation's supremacy as a natural consequence of the progress of history. Britain's role as an imperial power was therefore entirely justified.

From the vantage point of the post-colonial critique, the study of the past and of non-Western societies by Western intellectuals may itself be part of the process of political domination. So the present book could be treated as part of an intellectual imperialism. It seeks to impose a particular analytical perspective on the world, one that prefers comparative study to explanation that makes sense exclusively within a particular society.<sup>5</sup> By analogy, archaeology as a professional discipline can be cast historically as a Euro-American project that helped to pillage the world's patrimony in the name of saving it. In this light, justifications for modern archaeological practice are little better than the sense of rectitude that the Spaniards brought to bear in overthrowing Inca claims to legitimate rule.

A second important idea that underpins post-colonial thought is that colonial or imperial leaders often apply derogatory concepts of "the other"

to their subjects or peoples beyond their reach.<sup>6</sup> Societies outside the core can be safely dismissed as inferior in their intellectual capacities and accomplishments. As a logical consequence, those peoples would surely benefit from being civilized by more advanced societies. That kind of thinking underpinned the Christian imperative in the conquest of the Americas, for example, and Kipling's notion of "the white man's burden." Sweeping terms like Latin America, the Oriental, and the Third World are examples of western colonialist categories that post-colonial theory attempts to counter. The simplifications and caricatures inherent in colonial rule, it is argued, have been used to justify vast damage and exploitation in the name of superior humanity. As we will see, the Incas were no strangers to such ideas. They readily dismissed people outside the empire as barbarians, while the societies of the north coast were dog-eaters and sexual deviants, and the Uru people of the Lake Titicaca area were worthless vagrants.

As useful as they are, all of the broad approaches described here have some weaknesses. One common concern is that the conceptual division of an empire into a complex, cosmopolitan core and a less developed periphery is simply wrong on empirical grounds in several cases. Some imperial societies dominated peoples who surpassed them in urbanization, urbanity, population, social hierarchy, and economic specialization. The Incas are among the most prominent of the counter-examples, which also include the Mongols, Mughals, and Macedonians. A second concern is an unwarranted overemphasis on the power of the core society. Historical records indicate that many empires rose to power through coercive means – often conquest coupled with diplomacy that was backed by not so latent force. Even so, relations between imperial elites and peripheral societies were far more negotiated and dynamic than often thought not too long ago. To take just one counter-intuitive example, Barfield (2001) points out that, rather than extracting resources, Chinese rulers at times paid tribute to the steppe nomads to keep them at bay. They didn't call it that, of course, but the flow of wealth was often from the empire to the exterior.

Another concern is that general models often heavily focus our attention on the imperial elite or on interactions between them and subject elites. As research in provincial regions has advanced, especially within local communities, it has become increasingly clear that many important activities in ancient empires occurred without the intervention, interest, or awareness of the central authorities. Historians have long recognized that the grandiose

claims of ancient emperors were often exaggerated. Imperial histories, whether inscribed on monumental architecture or written in texts, often attributed all decisions and power to the ruler. In part, that was a literary convention or imperial propaganda, but modern authors still commonly describe the functioning of empires in terms of individual rulers. I feel that this perspective attributes too much power to individual leaders, who were often at odds with factions made up of their closest associates, and emphasizes a top-down vision that misleads us about household and community life. Moreover, as Luttwak (1976) points out for the Romans, the tactical and strategic actions of the leadership were frequently at odds when analyzed over the long haul. The decisions of individual rulers could be designed to work for short-term political or tactical ends, while the long-term strategic development of the imperial system could smooth out the occasionally disastrous eccentricities of particular rulers.

Those concerns lead me to the approach taken in this book. My view is that an adequate analysis of an early empire must take into account the perceptions, actions, and interests of the dominant society and those of the highly varied subject peoples, if we wish to make sense of life at the grand and small scale. The overarching goal is to meld information drawn from historical, ethnographic, and archaeological sources, with an occasional dash of art history and linguistics. This approach differs from most other books on the Incas, which often rely on early documents, because they provide many details about history, social life, and rationales for behavior that are not available through archaeological sources (Rowe 1946; Davies 1995; Rostworowski 1999). When archaeology is brought into play, authors often use it to illustrate the elegance of architecture or objects or to describe the road system or provincial administrative settlements. The early written record, however, is heavily weighted toward the life and times of the royalty and other elites, especially in and around Cuzco. More troublesome is that vast areas of the empire, especially in the south, are largely blanks in the written record (D'Altroy *et al.* 2007). Conversely, until recently, treatments of Inca archaeology have generally been descriptive and draw on documents to explain sites' functions or place in the empire's historical development. Some works, especially John Hyslop's (1984, 1990) exceptional studies of the Inca roads and settlement planning, consciously weave the two lines of evidence together. Even so, history and archaeology are seldom systematically integrated. Because they provide different information and sometimes lead us to incompatible conclusions, I will try to highlight where variations arise and how we might resolve the conflicts.

## Studying the Incas

Readers familiar with non-Western societies will not be surprised that the organization of this book does not correspond well to the ways that the Incas thought about their world. Andean peoples did not order things and relationships according to the same categories that we use to structure Western accounts – politics, economics, religion, and the grand chronological sweep of events, for example. In Tawantinsuyu, history served power, and the past was open to change if it furthered political ends. The Incas did not distinguish neatly between ideological and political leadership, since the ruler was both a deity and the head of government. Military power arose from a tangled mix of supernatural forces and human endeavor, while economic productivity resulted from the gifts of the earth, labor shared through social ties, and the favor of deities. In their world, priests could be generals and the dead could contribute to state policy.

So an Inca would have written a different book from mine. Or actually he would have given an oral exposition that featured give-and-take with the audience, since the Incas did not have a writing system in the sense that language was represented by inscribed symbols. Significantly, an Inca from another family would probably have recited an alternative narrative, because the telling of history depended heavily on who the speakers and listeners were. The multiple visions of the past that existed among the Incas themselves contributed mightily to the plenitude of Spanish-authored accounts that we have to work with today. Any explanation of life in Tawantinsuyu must therefore balance Western analytical categories with the ways that the Incas might have viewed any situation and what options may have arisen within their social logic, at least to the degree possible. We must also take care not to freeze Andean life into a single homogeneous instant, exemplified by the way things were in 1532 – but described half a century or more later. As we learn more, it has become increasingly clear that life and culture in the prehispanic Andes were creative, dynamic, and contested.

In an effort to bridge the chasm between Andean and European modes of thought for the reader, I have added a new chapter to this edition, called “Thinking Inca” (chapter 5). In it, I try to provide some perspective on Inca notions of the nature of existence, time, space, knowledge, information recording, and causality. My hope is that, by having some background on Andean reasoning, the reader may better understand how social order, power, and history played out in Tawantinsuyu. For those readers so

inclined, it might help to read chapter 5 after this one, as some of the discussion in it could enrich a reading of chapters 2–4.

In the modern era, scholars have relied heavily on Colonial-era documents for their insights into the nature of life and power in the Inca realm. A wealth of detail and insight can be plumbed from eyewitness diaries, chronicles, letters, inspections, court depositions, church papers, and the other materials preserved in public and private archives. They provide both particular data and culturally based explanations that will never be accessible through archaeology. Over the last half century, the agenda for discussion of the documents has been set largely by such luminaries as John Rowe, John Murra, María Rostworowski de Diez Canseco, Franklin Pease, and Tom Zuidema. They have brought radically different assumptions to the table, but they all rely on close analyses of a wide range of documents.<sup>7</sup> In many of those historically based works, the role of archaeology has often been limited to providing illustrative material. Sites and objects are frequently interpreted through the lens of written information, and archaeological fieldwork is seen as a context within which ideas derived from historical study can be assessed. Even so, many scholars have worked to integrate historical and archaeological information on the Incas, and visions of the relationships among different sources have undergone radical changes in the process (e.g., Rowe 1946; Hyslop 1984, 1990; Malpass 1993; Burger *et al.* 2007; Malpass and Alconini 2010). Paradoxically, a significant impetus to that change arose from historiographic research, which began to assess more closely the genesis, character, biases, and lacunae of the historical record (e.g., Adorno 1986, 2001; Julien 2000).

The last couple of decades have seen a shift in the balance, so that archaeological interpretation of Inca-era material remains stands as a more independent source of knowledge of the past (e.g., Malpass and Alconini 2010). At the same time, ethnographers, archaeologists, and art historians began to introduce new approaches. Their work has relied more heavily on comparative theory drawn from such diverse sources as gender studies, visual theory, processual and post-processual archaeology, landscape studies, and mathematics (e.g., Classen 1993; Urton 1997; Abercrombie 1998; van de Guchte 1999; González and Bray 2008). In the last few years, post-colonial theory, semiotics, linguistics, bioanthropology, phenomenology, and performance studies have also begun to have an impact (e.g., Verano 2003; Coben 2006; Cummins 2007; Salomon and Hyland 2010). Those theories are generally beyond what I will treat in this book, but the scope of new thought on the Incas is both exciting and at times bewildering.



The new approaches suggest that we are in the process of reframing Inca studies, even if early documents and the archaeological record still provide most information. One idea that has nudged my own view of things in different directions recently is the recognition that documents and material remains do not provide two windows into precisely the same domains of knowledge. Instead, they are partial complements. By this I mean that the Incas themselves seem to have organized their own knowledge, ideas, and forms of communication into overlapping formats. They gave some a material form (e.g., textiles, architecture, *kipu* knot-records); they left some crucial things like the grand histories in the realm of the immaterial (e.g., oral narratives); and they linked the two through performances (e.g., daily rituals, state ceremonies, readings of *kipu*). The fact that no physical representations of Inca rulers or their exploits are known is especially telling. Information of that nature appears to have been almost exclusively reserved for oral presentations, assisted by mnemonic tools. As a result, to understand the Incas, we have to read the different sources with an eye as to why a particular kind of evidence is found in that place.

## The Written Sources

Of the thousands of known documents that describe life under the Incas, no more than about fifty contain accounts of Inca history per se. The earliest eyewitness accounts were written by official scribes and soldiers in the heat of a military invasion of an alien land. Their comments were impressions written without time for reflection or understanding of the civilization they were observing. As the Spaniards learned Quechua and began to understand the Andes better, the indigenous peoples found more reason to conceal their activities and beliefs. The situation came to a head in 1559, when the Spaniards were stunned to discover that the Incas around Cuzco were still venerating the mummies of their past kings and queens. In Spanish eyes, the native peoples – far from having assimilated the word of the true church – were still inebriated with their heretical beliefs in living ancestors and a landscape filled with conscious beings.

The simultaneous clash and syncretism of cultures, combined with a gradual increase in mutual knowledge, meant that descriptions of the empire are never both immediate and informed. The eyewitnesses who wrote reflectively were few – Pedro Pizarro and Diego de Trujillo stand out among them, and they did not put quill to parchment until almost forty years had



elapsed. They were paralleled by an array of soldier-entrepreneurs, administrators, and priests, who prepared their manuscripts as part of their duties, from personal interest, or for financial gain through publication. Some of them spoke good Quechua and they were often better informed than the earliest authors, but their reports drew from the memories of informants, rather than from first-hand knowledge of the empire. By the time that the Spaniards took a real interest in the Inca realm, their witnesses provided memories colored by time, political and economic objectives, and wariness of Spanish repression. Some of the authors of the first fifty years conducted or drew from the official inquiries that were periodically undertaken to assess the state of affairs in the Viceroyalty. The questions posed were often slanted by Crown interests in denying Inca legitimacy, rooting out heresies, or discovering effective ways to exploit the rapidly declining population.

In contrast, the native peoples did not begin to set down their visions of Tawantinsuyu until the end of the century, a long lifetime after the collapse of Inca power. Those authors were all of mixed ancestry, writing from the perspective of Christians with a foot in two cultures. The only native author to set down an account from the vantage point of an independent Inca polity was the Inca Titu Kusi Yupanki, who ruled the neo-Inca state in Vilcabamba from 1561 to 1571. In 1570, he sent a lengthy missive to the newly installed Viceroy Toledo, in a vain effort to validate his position as an independent and legitimate sovereign worthy of interacting with the Spanish ruler as a client king. For our interests here, it is regrettable that he picked up the story at the point of the Spanish invasion of 1532, but his text is still valuable for its insights into Inca political thought.

Historians have paid close attention to the lives of such authors, since the context in which the documents were produced heavily affected their content. The first few decades of Spanish rule were a tumultuous era, marked by Inca resistance, Spanish internecine wars, and conflicts among clerical, administrative, and private interests, as well as by personal feuds. In the practice of the day, authors freely borrowed from one another without citation and could reinforce errors simply by repeating them. For readers interested in more detail on the subject, I recommend a number of works that are devoted to critical examinations of those documents and potential sources of bias and cross-use.<sup>8</sup> What I present here simply highlights some of the major sources of information and how they were composed.

### *Eyewitnesses to the Spanish Invasion*

Among the earliest writers were Hernando Pizarro, Francisco de Xerez, Pedro Sancho, Miguel de Estete, Cristóbal de Mena, and Juan Ruiz de Arce.



All of those men were part of the invading force that captured and killed Atawallpa at Cajamarca and then seized Cuzco. Xerez and his successor Sancho were secretaries to Francisco Pizarro, charged with keeping official records for the Crown. Their journals provide a virtual day-by-day timeline of the initial Spanish experience, without the understanding or revisionism that hindsight can bring. De Mena, on the other hand, was a soldier who returned to Spain and quickly published an account of his experiences in the new land, with the intent of profiting from the work. Pedro Pizarro, younger cousin to the expedition's leader, did not finish his memoirs until 1571. As a result, he could provide a perspective on the Incas that included a feel of immediacy, tempered by knowledge gained and memory lost over decades of life in Peru. Diego de Trujillo similarly wrote a soldier's account four decades later, providing a richly detailed – and embellished – memory of the first days of the Spaniards in the new land.

*The Major Sixteenth-Century Spanish Authors*

The Spanish authors of the mid-sixteenth century provide our greatest source of information on the Inca empire. Pedro de Cieza de León, a common soldier with an uncommon eye for detail, wrote one of the great early accounts. After spending a number of years in the Indies, he arrived in the northern Andes in April of 1547, at the age of 29. For the next three years, he traveled through the north half of the realm, making observations and inquiring about climate, constructions, daily life, local customs, myths, and sexual practices. When in Cuzco, Cieza interviewed Inca aristocrats about their past and the nature of their government. He wrote copiously on what he had seen – four volumes of his writings have now been published, but only one appeared in his lifetime (Cieza 1967). Cieza's accounts are filled with admiration for the Inca achievements, blunted by horror at the diabolically inspired religions and sexual customs that he learned about. Many of the best descriptions of Inca rule, the roads, the provinces, and Cuzco itself, come from his pen.

Juan Diez de Betanzos's *Narrative of the Incas* (1996) describes Inca history in a form that comes as close as any known source to a version told by a single royal family. Born in Spain, Diez de Betanzos lived in Peru during his adult life, becoming the most respected Quechua–Spanish translator in the Viceroyalty. In 1542, he may have served as an interpreter at an inquest held in Cuzco and soon thereafter was commissioned to prepare a bilingual doctrinal volume. He married Doña Angelina Yupanque (Cuxirimay Ocllo), an Inca princess who experienced a remarkable life. Niece to the emperor Wayna Qhapaq, she was betrothed to his son Atawallpa at 1 year of age; she



married him in 1532 when she was 10, near the end of his war to unseat Waskhar. About 1538, Francisco Pizarro took her as his mistress and she bore him two sons. After Pizarro met his own death in 1541, she married Diez de Betanzos, bringing him enormous wealth and status. So adept at the language and so close to a royal family, Diez de Betanzos was uniquely suited to write the account of the Incas that Viceroy Mendoza commissioned in 1551 and that was completed in 1557. He apparently drew a great deal of his information from his in-laws, who were members of Pachakuti's descendant kin group (Hamilton 1996: xi). The first part of the account is thus largely a heroic biography of Pachakuti, while the second describes the Colonial era. The Incas' own rationales for proper behavior are visible in his narrative, which is only moderately filtered through European eyes. For all its richness, Diez de Betanzos's account is notable for its partisanship in favor of Pachakuti and the legitimacy of Atawallpa's cause.

The Licenciado (jurist) Juan Polo Ondegardo was one of the best informed of all the administrators of the first fifty years of Colonial rule. A mine and *encomienda* owner, he served two terms as the magistrate of Cuzco and one at Potosí. Polo undertook a variety of inquiries in Peru and Bolivia both for the Crown and to satisfy his own curiosity. His concern – as with much of the Spanish attention paid to native institutions – arose from his interest in using existing practices for more effective administration and not from preserving them for their own sake. His view was that the people could best be managed for Spain's interests if its officials understood how indigenous institutions worked. His many treatises on Inca religion, economics, politics, social relations, and other elements of native life were used by the Spanish authorities in setting policy, although not as widely as he wished. One of his great successes occurred in 1559, when he discovered the whereabouts of five royal mummies that had been spirited from one hiding place to another around Cuzco since the conquest. He was widely respected and quoted by some contemporary Colonial writers (e.g., Acosta), but was heavily criticized by the mestizo Jesuit Blas Valera for his alleged ignorance of Quechua and native customs (Hyland 2011: 35–7). Valera's (partial) texts are one of the few existing criticisms of Polo's views, but a number of other writers, such as the lawyer Falcón (1918), shared his interest in countering Polo's arguments on levels of taxation and the character of Inca rule (Hyland 2003: 89–90).

The arrival of the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in Peru in 1569 irrevocably changed Andean life. A controversial figure then as today, Toledo undertook extensive reforms that included forced resettlement of natives

to communities near Spanish centers, where they could be more easily controlled. He subdued the neo-Inca state in Vilcabamba in 1572 and supervised the execution of its Inca ruler Thupa Amaru over the strenuous objections of many of his compatriots. When he returned to Spain almost ten years later, he was called on the carpet by King Philip II and upbraided for killing a king (Bauer and Decoster 2007: 2). Three volumes of papers produced by Toledo, which include ostensibly verbatim interviews with Inca and other elites in 1570–2, as well as petitions brought to his attention, provide useful detail on life in Cuzco and the provinces (Levillier 1940).

Toledo gave one of his assistants, the well-educated Captain Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, the responsibility of compiling an official history of the Incas (Sarmiento 2007). Sarmiento had recently been appointed royal cosmographer and enjoyed a colorful but controversial career as mariner, geographer, administrator, and explorer (Bauer and Decoster 2007; Pease 2008b). Sarmiento interviewed more than a hundred record-keepers and royal historians in Cuzco for the project. Once he had completed his history in 1572, he took the unprecedented step of having the work's veracity confirmed through a public reading before forty-two Inca nobles. Although his history is one of the major sources on the Incas, the content is clouded by Toledo's express interest in demonstrating the illegitimacy of Inca rule. Perhaps more than some other chronicles, Sarmiento's treatise was a synthetic vision that was influenced as much by the interests and composition of his mentor as his informants. The absence of Atawallpa's kin among the witnesses may have had a significant effect on the content. On a more morbid note, the descendants of Thupa Inka Yupanki and Waskhar had been largely wiped out, so the views of those families carried little weight. Despite his efforts to produce an account that suited official interests, Sarmiento's text is salted with examples of unresolved differences among Cuzco's factionalized aristocracy.

Sarmiento's document was written in part to engage in a long-standing controversy in Spain over the nature and rights of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. By 1550, a debate had been ongoing for half a century over the legitimacy of Spanish conquest of the Americas and subjugation of its peoples. It reached a high point in Valladolid in that year, where Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and the Dominican priest Bartolomé de las Casas argued for and against Spain's right to pursue its military ventures (Covey 2006a: 175; Decoster 2008). A series of papal bulls issued as early as 1493 had given Spain and Portugal the right, and even the obligation, to discover new lands and evangelize the peoples they encountered, but it wasn't entirely clear

what kinds of actions were acceptable in those pursuits. Long an apologist for the protection of indigenous peoples, Las Casas (e.g., 1967) took a strong pro-native viewpoint. He argued that the American peoples had been members of civilized society before the Spanish arrival. Because they were inherently neither intellectually nor morally inferior to the Spaniards, their conquest could not be justified. Las Casas carried the day in Valladolid, but the debate would go on for decades to come.

For the Crown to continue its ventures legitimately, the Lascasian position needed to be refuted legally and morally. In light of this ongoing controversy, Sarmiento's history was compiled with an eye to providing ammunition for those who wished to demonstrate that the Incas themselves were usurpers and therefore could lawfully be displaced. Its repeated use of terms such as Inca tyranny and usurpation were intended to bolster Crown claims to rightful conquest. The debates about the standing of native Andean thought and values ran on for many more decades, with clerics taking both sides of the issue. The Andean-born Jesuit Blas Valera was an apologist, at considerable personal cost, for the integrity of native culture and its compatibility with Christianity (Hyland 2003). He suffered years of imprisonment, apparently for perceived misuse of Quechua and Aymara in religious contexts. In contrast, the Spaniard Fernando de Montesinos argued vituperatively and contemptuously against native religion and those who saw value in it (Hyland 2007).

Several more important documents were written by other priests either as an official charge or from their own interest.<sup>9</sup> Bartolomé de Segovia (1968), for example, wrote an eyewitness description of the last major Inca solstice ceremony in 1535. Cristóbal de Molina, a hospice priest in Cuzco for most of his life and exceptionally well informed about Inca religion, wrote several manuscripts on the subject. One of his treatises, completed in 1575 (Molina 2011), described Inca rituals in detail. He worked closely with another cleric, Cristóbal de Albornoz (1989), who crusaded against heretical religion from 1568 until 1586. Albornoz helped put down the millenarian *Taki Onqoy* ("dancing sickness") movement and claimed to have personally demolished over 2,000 native shrines in the Huamanga region. Miguel de Cabello Valboa (1951) completed a lengthy opus in 1586, which probably borrowed from Diez de Betanzos and Sarmiento, that interweaves Inca history with a love story. Cabello Valboa is notable for proposing the imperial-era chronology that is most widely used today. Fray Martín de Murúa (1986) also borrowed heavily from earlier authors

in writing two overlapping manuscripts, but provides quite a few details about Inca life and times that appear to be independently derived.

Among a host of other authors who provide crucial information were the clerics José de Acosta, Francisco de Ávila, and José de Arriaga, who wrote or commissioned important works. Other valuable manuscripts were prepared by Falcón, Santillán, Zárate, Bibar, Matienzo, Lizárraga, and Valdivia. The last four constitute the few major works that we have by authors who visited the southern Andes in person. Two Quechua lexicons, by Domingo de Santo Tomás and González Holguín, and one in Aymara by Fray Bertonio, are also useful for their clues to social structure and conceptual linkages.

#### *Authors with Andean Ancestry*

The earliest native source on the prehispanic era may be part of a disputed account known as the *Quipucamayos de Vaca de Castro* (Callapiña *et al.* 1974). The document surfaced in 1608, but a section of it was ostensibly recorded at an inquest conducted in Cuzco in 1542 by the Licenciado Vaca de Castro. Two of the four witnesses said that they had been record keepers from the descendant kin group of the emperor Wiraqocha Inka. Scholars concur that the 1608 document manipulated accounts of the past to sustain a fraudulent royal genealogy, but disagree about the authenticity of the 1542 segment, despite considerable historical sleuthing (Duviols 1979a; Urton 1990; Pease 1995: 23; Julien 2000). The document emphasized the exploits of Wiraqocha Inka and earlier kings, attributing to them many of the conquests that are often assigned to the conventional founder of the empire, Pachakuti. The *Quipucamayos* claimed that Diez de Betanzos participated in the inquest but, as just observed, the pertinent parts of the latter's *Narrative* sustained the vision of Inca history told by Pachakuti's descendants. It conflicted outright with many elements of the *Quipucamayos*' version.

Both the *Quipucamayos* and Diez de Betanzos accounts differ crucially from another native source, known as the *Probanza de Qhapaq Ayllu* (Rowe 1985b). In 1569, the survivors of a massacre in Cuzco at the end of the final Inca civil war filed a claim to regain their lost estates. The *Probanza* listed the conquests of the emperor Thupa Inka Yupanki, apparently dictated from *khipu* records. It claimed for him alone many of the conquests that are elsewhere attributed to his father Pachakuti as monarch, but Thupa Inka Yupanki as general. The conflicted and flexible views of the Inca past seen in those three sources, each told from the perspective of a particular

royal kin group, highlight some of the problems in making sense of Inca history in a European framework.

In 1570, the sitting Inca ruler of the neo-Inca state in forested Vilcabamba, Titu Kusi Yupanki, sent a remarkable document to Viceroy Toledo in Cuzco (Titu Cusi 2005; Regalado de Hurtado 2008). Written as a legal argument, it consisted in large part of a history of the era from the first Spanish entry into Peru in 1532 until the death of the first Vilcabamba king, Manco Capac, in 1545. The treatise is the only existing account of the indigenous view of the proceedings and thus provides an invaluable perspective on the early Colonial era. As in the *Quipucamayos* document, Titu Kusi Yupanki attempted to marshal prehispanic royal genealogy to sustain the idea that he was the rightful heir to the throne. In his account, Atawallpa had displaced Titu Kusi Yupanki's father (Manco Capac) as legitimate ruler, rather than Waskhar. Titu Kusi Yupanki received clerics into his otherwise defended domain, hoping to enlist favorably inclined Spaniards in his efforts to be recognized as a client king allied with the Spanish ruler. He could thus retain the right to rule within his own land and to regain extensive resources (Legnani 2005; Salomon 2005). He apparently died before any action could be taken and his successor, Tupac Amaru, was captured and executed soon after, in 1572.

Over the last four centuries, the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega has easily been the most influential Inca chronicler. His portrayal of benevolent and omnipresent Inca rule, in a land in which no one ever went hungry, is in many ways a rose-colored apology rather than a portrait of reality. Scholars nevertheless relied heavily on his writings because of his genealogy, and thus presumed access to Cuzqueñan accounts of Inca history. Today, his work remains the dominant image of the Incas in the popular press. Born in 1539 to a Spanish soldier and an Inca princess, Garcilaso was baptized Gómez Suárez de Figueroa. The youth lived in Cuzco until 1560, when he moved permanently to Spain in a vain effort to be compensated for his late father's service to the throne (Mazzotti 2008: 239). Educated under the patronage of his Spanish relatives, Garcilaso had brief military and lengthy literary careers, writing a variety of philosophical and historical treatises. Late in life, he adopted his father's name and wrote the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, which he completed in 1609 (Garcilaso de la Vega 1966). Garcilaso wrote from the perspective of a Christian educated in a Renaissance mode, with a passion for redeeming his Andean ancestors' reputation. His status as the pre-eminent authority on the Incas stood for centuries and the *Royal Commentaries* are still cited as the earliest literary

masterpiece written by a native American. Beginning with Rowe's (1946) critical assessment, however, the historian Garcilaso has fallen mightily in the eyes of many scholars. He is most often valued today for his depictions of Inca society, government, and customs and not for the accuracy of his historical account.

Garcilaso drew enthusiastically from another mestizo author, the Jesuit Blas Valera, who finished his writings about a decade earlier. Valera's lengthy manuscript, *Historia Occidentalis* (History of the West), is now lost, like so many important sixteenth-century documents. In his writings that have survived to the present, Valera provided a lengthy list of ninety-three Inca kings, among them nine who took the name Pachakuti for their title as ruler. That list is not reproduced by any other author, and its veracity and relationship to past societies are a matter of open debate. Both Garcilaso's citations and other sources show that the two men sought to validate the values and stature of native Andean civilization in European eyes. Valera's vigorously expressed opinions – e.g., that Quechua and Aymara were as well suited as Latin to expression of doctrinal matters – were viewed as heresy by his fellow Jesuits (Hyland 2003, 2011). The result was that he spent the last fourteen years of his life in imprisonment and then exile. He died in 1597 from wounds received during the English assault on Cadíz, during which much of his writing was consumed by fire.

Four years after Garcilaso completed his great work, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala sent a document of more than a thousand pages to King Felipe III that is a fount of information on life in the Inca realm (Guaman Poma 1980, 2006). A son of ethnically mixed ancestry like Garcilaso and Valera, Guaman Poma found himself caught between two cultures. He assisted the Colonial administration in varied capacities for decades, including efforts to stamp out idolatrous practices. Even so, he was conflicted in his loyalty to things Christian and Spanish and to traditional Andean ways of life. In 1613, he completed his epic work, which included hundreds of drawings of Inca personages, history, religion, and customs, as well as an illustrated litany of Spanish abuses. His drawings are an irreplaceable source of visual detail, while the text – an often incoherent mélange of Spanish and Quechua – contains many useful particulars. Like Garcilaso and Valera, Guaman Poma wrote about expansive imperial Inca conquests earlier than many Colonial Spaniards or modern scholars have been willing to accept. In recent decades, Guaman Poma has excited renewed interest as a resistance author (see Adorno 1986; Pease 1995: 261–310). Along with his mestizo compatriots, he is viewed as an early spokesman for the importance

of protecting native rights and culture for their own value, rather than for Crown interests, as Polo Ondegardo argued (1965a).

### *The Later Spanish Chroniclers*

As the seventeenth century moved along, the pace of writing on the Incas subsided, but some important documents were still produced. The most prominent is the multi-volume work on Inca history, religion, and customs written by the Jesuit priest Bernabé Cobo. Born in Andalusia, Father Cobo traveled widely in his lifetime. He visited Mexico, but spent most of his adult life in Peru, where he completed his great work in 1653 (Cobo 1979, 1990; see Rowe 1979b). His writing is lucid and well organized, but Cobo was a naturalist and historian whose descriptions of the Incas were drawn from earlier manuscripts. Since he had access to several papers that are now lost, such as the full account of Cuzco's shrine system, his work is an invaluable source. Modern authors also rely on Cobo for his descriptions of daily life, even though the Jesuit applied his own seventeenth-century observations to the prehispanic past a century after the empire's fall (Rowe 1990a).

### *Spanish Inspections, Church Documents, and Court Records*

In the latter half of the twentieth century, historians turned their eyes from the classic chronicles to the Andean and Spanish archives. During the early Colonial era, representatives of the Spanish Crown and the Church produced a blizzard of documents about the people, customs, and resources of their new holdings. Many of those documents were intended to provide information to the Crown that would facilitate administration of the new land and extraction of its wealth. In 1549, for example, the Crown ordered detailed inspections (*visitas*) of its holdings. The inspectors used a standardized series of questions about life before and under the Incas and recorded information about the natural resources of each region. In part because conditions were changing so rapidly with the decline of the native population and administrative reforms, new inspections were ordered in the 1560s. More inquests were held with Viceroy Toledo's vast restructuring program in 1570–2. Many of the inspections recorded from 1557 through 1585 have been published in the *Relaciones Geográficas de Indias* (1965; hereafter *RGI*). The Toledan and *RGI* sources are useful as regional snapshots of the realm that drew from interviews with local native elites.

A final set of archival documents comes from litigation. About two decades after the fall of the Incas, Andean peoples began to use the Spanish

courts (*Audiencia Real*) to make claims for services that they had provided the Spaniards and to settle grievances with their neighbors. Many of their complaints arose when local societies tried to regain lands or other resources that had been taken by the Incas and given to colonists resettled by the state. Since several million people moved under Inca rule, the flood of paperwork that fell upon the court system has provided a great deal of useful information on ethnic groups, land tenure, inheritance customs, and land use practices, among many other things. Still other cases stemmed from competition over the inheritance of privileged positions, as local elites learned to make claims based on pre-Inca rights, offices granted by the state, and Spanish laws that favored primogeniture over other traditional customs.

## Inca Archaeology

1860–1960

The study of Inca archaeology has a long and often distinguished career, dating back to the nineteenth century. The main figures of the early days were more adventurers than scientists, but some of their contributions to archaeology are still valuable. Among the outstanding figures were Ephraim George Squier, Charles Wiener, and Antonio Raimondi, who traveled throughout the central part of the empire by horse with a pack train. They described or mapped many Inca settlements along the main road system and paid special attention to a number of sites in the Urubamba river valley now recognized as royal family estates. The engravings that were featured in their volumes provide indispensable information, even if they were often romanticized, since quite a few of the sites have suffered considerable damage since then.

Just before 1900, a major figure appeared on the Andean archaeological scene – Max Uhle. A remarkably energetic researcher and prolific writer, Uhle set about developing a pan-Andean chronology using the innovative combination of comparisons of ceramic types and analysis of stratigraphic deposits. Uhle took a considerable interest in Inca archaeology, investigating ruins, for example, at the northern Inca capital at Tumipampa (Ecuador), at coastal Pachacamac, and in the highland Urubamba valley (Peru), thus spanning the coastal desert, the mountains, and the eastern Andean slopes. His studies have proved to be so valuable that some of them are periodically reprinted, not simply out of historical interest, but for the information they

contain (Uhle 1903; 1909; 1917; 1923). In the northern Andes, the works of Jijón y Caamaño (e.g., 1919; Jijón y Caamaño and Larrea 1918) also stand out for Ecuador.

About the same time that Uhle was at work, other major scholars were advancing our knowledge of what was the southeastern quarter of the Inca empire. Adolph Bandelier, who is also known for his work in the North American Southwest and in Mesoamerica, conducted investigations at a series of Inca sites both on the Peruvian coast and at the sacred islands in Lake Titicaca (1910). Stig Rydén's (1947) work in Bolivia built upon and complemented Bandelier's explorations. In the southernmost part of the empire, Juan de Ambrosetti was working at Inca sites in northwest Argentina. His multi-volume publications from that region describe a variety of sites, notably Puerta de La Paya, where his excavations recovered the most elaborate set of Inca materials yet found in the south Andes. Debenedetti (1908) and Difrieri (1948), among others, also conducted important investigations on Inca installations such as Potrero de Payogasta.

Inca archaeology did not really catch the public's attention until 1912, however, when Hiram Bingham announced his discovery of Machu Picchu, one of the world's most spectacular archaeological sites. His claim to have found "the lost city of the Incas" in the eastern jungles and the truly breathtaking character of the remains sparked an interest that remains unabated today. Following on Bingham's work was a series of studies in the 1930s and 1940s at the capital of Cuzco and its environs. Most of the work was conducted by Peruvian scholars, notably Luis Valcárcel, Jorge Muelle, and Luis Pardo. Valcárcel's work at Cuzco and Saqsawaman were especially important in setting out the early chronology of the Inca heartland. Those investigators were primarily concerned with monumental sites, describing material culture, and working out cultural sequences that had not yet been defined. Their studies were supplemented by Paul Fejos's work at sites in the Urubamba (1944) and by John Rowe's (1944) seminal paper on the archaeology of Cuzco.

A complementary set of data was collected through the Shippee–Johnson air expedition of 1931, which shot some 3,000 images of the Peruvian archaeological landscape. Among their subjects were important archaeological sites, such as Machu Picchu, Písaq, and Cuzco itself. Although only a subset of their images has yet been published, that photographic record provides an invaluable source of information on the archaeological and natural landscape of the time – much of which has been heavily modified through modern developments.

## 1960–2010

Starting about 1960, a transformation began to occur in the study of Inca provinces. Throughout the preceding century, archaeologists working in local contexts had been recording Inca sites, but those were consistently interpreted in the context of the written sources and a Cuzco-centric view of the Andes. In a pivotal article written in 1959, Dorothy Menzel recognized that the Incas had formed a variety of relationships with the societies of the south coast of Peru. She inferred that Inca rule had been adapted to existing local conditions, which was a major step forward in interpreting an empire that had previously been assumed to be essentially homogeneous. The year 1963 saw the initiation of the Huánuco Project in Peru's central highlands. That was the first major investigation to systematically integrate historical and archaeological research in a regional study called "A Study of Provincial Inca Life." The circumstances for the investigation were exceptional, for the Huánuco region could lay claim to both the most spectacular provincial center in the empire and two Spanish inspections, from 1549 and 1562. The research team, led by John Murra, Donald Thompson, and Craig Morris, took great advantage of the conditions, producing a series of publications that remain the standard against which all provincial research is compared.<sup>10</sup> I will refer to the Huánuco project on numerous occasions throughout this book.

Not until the UNESCO project at Cuzco, published in 1980, did professionals make a concerted effort to identify, map, and conserve the existing Inca architecture in and around the capital (Agurto Calvo 1980). Until recently, those interests – site mapping, architectural description, ceramic analysis, and culture history – have dominated the archaeology of the Inca heartland. The Peruvian National Institute of Culture (INC) has been engaged in a long-term, full-coverage cadastral registry of archaeological remains in the greater Cuzco region. Research conducted under its auspices by Peruvian scholars has investigated an impressive array of archaeological sites, for example Machu Picchu (e.g., Valencia Zagarra and Gibaja Oviedo 1992), Maras (Gibaja Oviedo 2000), Moray (Quirita 2002), and Tipón (INC 1999). A number of other projects have made important contributions in this milieu, for example, at the estate at Chinchero (e.g., Alcina Franch 1978) and manors in the Cusichaca region (e.g., Kendall *et al.* 1992, Kendall 1996). Those studies are matched by research on many other individual sites, such as the royal estates of Ollantaytambo (e.g., Protzen 1993), Yucay (Niles 1999), and Machu Picchu (Burger and Salazar 2004).

A major shift of the archaeology of the Inca heartland occurred with the application of systematic regional survey over the last twenty-five years, complementing the work of prior scholars. Five major surveys of the greater Cuzco region have been completed: Bauer's (1992) seminal study of the Paruro region, Heffernan's (1989) work in the Limatambo area, Bauer and Covey's (2002) Cuzco Valley survey, Covey's (2006b) study of the Sacred Valley, and Kosiba's (2010) survey of the Ollantaytambo region. Even so, no complete survey of the archaeology of the Cuzco region has yet been published (although see Bauer 2004).

Those studies give us a much better understanding of the full range of the archaeological record. That point is crucial, because the archaeological landscape consists not just of major sites, but of carved natural features, roads, terracing and canal networks. Even places with no obvious modification may have been significant – sight-lines, mountain peaks, springs, and the like. From the written sources, we know that the Incas lived in a socialized landscape that was inscribed with history and populated by various beings or forms of consciousness. Andean peoples envisioned humans as inhabiting an animated space that included the earth, its surface, the waters, and the heavens. Our interpretation of that landscape needs to take the full range of its elements into account, not just the obvious sites, but viewscapes, paths of travel, and apparently empty spaces. A number of studies have taken on such topics, working from the premise that explaining the relationships between the Incas and their history requires study of the sacred elements of the landscape (e.g., Bauer 1998; Van de Guchte 1990). Collectively, those investigations have greatly advanced our understanding of the nature and genesis of the Inca polity. Just as important as their empirical contributions has been the expansion of the range of questions that researchers are trying to address and the technical tools that they can bring to bear on the subject. Satellite imagery and geographic information systems, for example, have helped considerably in mapping out large-scale patterns.

The gains from research around Cuzco have been matched by a proliferation of studies on the Inca provinces by scholars throughout the Andes (e.g., Burger *et al.* 2007; Malpass and Alconini 2010). Such works are too numerous to mention individually, but their interests take us into topics that were seldom considered before. Most importantly, they are fleshing out how Cuzco interacted with the hundreds of local societies under its dominion and are investigating elements of life that were often outside direct state control. We can now recognize stability and change in community life that

were beyond our reach until a couple of decades ago. Work on household archaeology permits scholars to examine how symbols of status, diet, architectural styles, life expectancy, and household labor were impacted (if at all) by the advent of imperial rule (e.g., D'Altroy *et al.* 2001). Biological techniques (e.g., DNA analysis, trace element chemistry) also now facilitate the study of population movements, health, and social identity in ways that had previously been inaccessible (e.g., Verano 2003; Shinoda in press).

A final array of studies is taking us into new territory. As noted earlier in this chapter, some scholars are making forays into the ways that the Incas perceived and thought about their world. For example, they are exploring the relationships between Andean linguistic and visual communication and ways of codifying information (e.g., Cummins 2007; González and Bray 2008). The work on *quipus* has been particularly fruitful in this regard (e.g., Urton 2003; Salomon 2004; see chapter 5 here), but ideas of performance, knowledge, memory and power have also been making inroads (e.g., Abercrombie 1998; Coben 2006). Throughout this book, I will try to keep the theoretical discussion to a modest level, but posing new and sometimes provocative questions leads us to understand more about old topics. All in all, such advances by hundreds of scholars in the land once called Tawantinsuyu continue to make this an exciting time to study the Incas.

## Notes

- 1 Those figures are based on the royal fifth of 2,600 lb of gold and 5,200 of silver (McQuarrie 2007: 124), using a July 2012 price of \$1570/oz for gold and \$26/oz for silver.
- 2 Titu Kusi Yupanki (Titu Cusi 2005), who was born in 1529 and thus was probably not old enough to remember an independent Tawantinsuyu, has left us a chronicle. Regrettably, he described only the era after the Spanish invasion.
- 3 *amauta*: “perhaps from *ama uta*, house of memories” (Szemiński 2008: 429).
- 4 This sections ventures a little more into theoretical questions than did the first edition, in part as a response to requests from internal reviewers. To readers for whom this is heavy slogging, my apologies.
- 5 I obviously do not share this notion, or I would not be writing this book. Even so, I think it necessary to consider both points of view – the comparative and the internally generated (i.e., the hermeneutic) – to provide a balanced explanation of the past.
- 6 Or “subaltern.”
- 7 See Morris 2007 for an excellent review.

- 8 I especially recommend the new three-volume study edited by Pillsbury (2008); see also Means 1928; Levillier 1940: 207–486; Rowe 1985b: 207–16; Porras Barrenechea 1986; Pärssinen 1992; Pease 1995; Hamilton 1996.
- 9 Segovia 1968; Cabello Valboa 1951; Molina 2011; Albornoz 1989; Murúa 1986.
- 10 Even so, an enormous amount of information from the Huánuco project is still in the process of being published (Morris *et al.* 2011). Much material, including 5,000 photos and reams of field notes, are currently being analyzed by scholars for publication (Barnes 2010).