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edited by

**ROBERT V. H. DOVER**

**KATHARINE E. SEIBOLD**

**JOHN H. MCDOWELL**

# **ANDEAN COSMOLOGIES**

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through **TIME**

persistence and emergence

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Jeanette E. Sherbondy

## WATER IDEOLOGY IN INCA ETHNOGENESIS

Tawantinsuyu, the Inca state encountered and conquered by the Spaniards in 1532–33, was the largest state ever developed in the Andes and one for which we have more abundant information than for any other, primarily because we have ethnohistorical as well as archaeological data. The ethnohistorical sources date from the time of the conquest of Tawantinsuyu and document the disappearance of the Incas. Among the information collected is how the Incas had constructed their state economically, socially, politically, and ideologically.

Of interest for this essay are the ideological strategies the Incas used to construct their identity as a people chosen to build an empire based on conquest and how they legitimized this conquest to the conquered peoples and later to their own conquerors, the Spaniards. Not all of their ideological strategies will be discussed because they were many and varied. Here the focus will be on selected ones that have as a connecting logical thread Inca ethnohydrology, the corpus of concepts the Incas used to explain the circulation of waters. Their hydrology was complex and meaningful in ways that Western hydrology is not. Their concepts about water were intimately related to their beliefs about origins, especially origins of ancestors and the kinds of rights and privileges bestowed on peoples from their original creation. The Incas constructed a multiethnic state out of many Andean peoples who shared some cultural concepts but not all; they had to incorporate and dominate many different and often disgruntled peoples.

Since we have more information on the Incas and from the Inca viewpoint than we have for any of the other Andean peoples, there is a tendency for ethnologists and ethnohistorians to consider the Incas as a sort of paradigm or baseline for judging degrees of "Andeanness" of later peoples living in the Andes. This has been easy to do, since the Spaniards wrote primarily about the Incas. Neither the Incas nor any other Andean people of the time had a system

of written language to leave their own records. Their histories were remembered from one generation to the next with the aid of the *quipu*, knotted cords that were attached to a common cord. The information of a quipu could not be adequately translated or interpreted without the oral message that was transmitted with it. Thus the narratives that the Spaniards wrote based on oral information from the Incas were reformulations in the Spanish language of information originally transmitted through interpreters from the *quipucamayoc*, the keepers of the quipu. These Spanish narratives form a corpus of data that has functioned as a sort of ethnographic present, that is, a collection of information on the condition of the Incas at the time of their contact. As with other data on the ethnographic present of other peoples, there is a tendency to ignore the historical context in which the data were collected in the enthusiasm for salvaging the earliest pieces of data about a people newly discovered by Western observers. These peoples have often been thought of as peoples without history, yet they have their own versions of their own history and they certainly did not lead a changeless, cyclical existence prior to Spanish Conquest. The archaeological evidence for the rise and fall of many chiefdoms and states in the Andean area attests to radical changes and a rich history.

Another tendency is to conceptually merge all the early sixteenth-century data on indigenous Andean peoples under the category of Inca without examining it carefully to see whether it might refer to non-Inca peoples that had been subjected to the Incas and incorporated into Tawantinsuyu. Today there is still a remarkable variety of Andean cultures (Salomon 1982). Note the vast differences between the Kogi of Colombia that clearly show some influences from Mesoamerican cultures (Reichel Dolmatoff 1950–51) and the Mapuche of central Chile (Faron 1961, 1964), who are quite different from peoples in the central Andes. Andean peoples in the late Inca and Conquest periods were also varied, as the Chimu empire of the north coast and the Chíncha merchants of the south central coast attest (Rostworowski 1970). Tawantinsuyu itself was essentially a multiethnic state that incorporated not only the Chimu and the Chíncha but also many other peoples on the coast and in the highlands in the northern, central, and southern Andes. Even within the Inca capital city, Cuzco, there were many ethnic groups of non-Inca Andean peoples, such as the Sauasiray, Alcabizas, and Ayarmacas, all of whom had their origins close to Cuzco, and in addition many peoples who had been brought in from faraway lands, such as the Chachapoyas from the north, who were used by the later Incas as special bodyguards. The Incas had ranked all these peoples in a sociopolitical hierarchy with themselves at the top. These categories or ranks were (1) Incas, that is, the royalty and nobles; (2) Incas by privilege, a secondary rank of semi-nobles who had been granted higher rank by the Incas by giving them (the men) Inca wives; and (3) local peoples (Zuidema 1964).

Therefore we cannot assume that only Inca culture is represented by early sixteenth-century Cuzco. The Incas ruled Cuzco and dominated the peoples living there, but ethnic diversity was preserved even by Inca law. The Incas required each ethnic group to wear its own distinctive clothing and hairstyle so

studied (personal communication, Gordon McEwan). It has been easier to study archaeologically the incorporation of peripheral areas into the Inca state (Burger 1989:56) than it has been to study its origins in Cuzco. This is due in part to the occupation of the site by modern Cuzco, which continues to expand onto formerly unconstructed lands at a rapid rate. Another problem has been the emphasis on examining ceramic styles to identify social groups and political movements. It is likely that similar pottery styles were used by many different cultural groups who applied the designs to their local ceramic paste (personal communication, Gordon McEwan). It will require another approach to sort out the histories of the various ethnic groups that occupied Cuzco in the pre-Inca and early Inca epochs. One possibility would be to look for those indicators of ethnic difference that were used by the people themselves in the late Inca period. They stated that ethnic status was indicated by language, clothing (textile designs), and hairstyle (Molina 1943:8).

Recent archaeological studies of the areas bordering the immediate Cuzco valley to the east and to the south probe into the influences that the two major Middle Horizon states, Wari and Tiawanaku, had on the Late Intermediate Period in Cuzco (Bauer 1989, 1990; McEwan 1987). These studies rely particularly on analyses of road systems, architecture, and ceramics to estimate how Tiawanaku and Wari might have remained in the consciousness of the local peoples throughout the intervening Late Intermediate Period to be utilized by the Incas. The Wari concepts of their road system and *cancha* architecture are thought to have been adapted for reuse by the Incas (McEwan 1987).

In the Cuzco basin itself neither the time of Inca origins nor its nature has been clearly determined archaeologically. A chronology of ceramic styles for the area in general was developed by Rowe (1944, 1945) in which Chanapata or Qotacalle ceramics is associated with the Middle Horizon, Killke ceramics with the Later Intermediate Period, and Classic and Imperial Inca with the Late Horizon. This chronology does not distinguish archaeologically the several ethnic groups that vied for control over the lands and water of the valley. For the Incas in particular Rowe developed a chronology that is based on an historicist analysis of post-Conquest Inca narratives as they were reelaborated into Spanish chronicles of the Conquest (Rowe 1945, 1946). It was seriously criticized by Zuidema for being based on a comparison of chronologies that the Spanish chroniclers recorded and adapted to fit into their sense of historical chronology based on legitimate political succession by heirs to the Inca throne (Zuidema 1964). Zuidema argued that a chronology was not necessarily intended by the Inca informants but that they used genealogical relationships to indicate the political rank of the *ayllus* and *panacas* (lineages) in Cuzco. He argued that Inca history was primarily concerned with giving a description of the structural makeup of the Inca state and that this description should not be construed as a literal account of a succession of events. Furthermore, there are distortions by the Spanish chroniclers in the selection and form of what Inca information they elicited and recorded (Rostworowski 1988:13–14; Salomon 1982; Zuidema 1964).

Taking into account all of these considerations it is possible for the chronicles to be profitably analyzed as ideological expressions of the sociopolitical structure of the late Inca empire and not as literal historical chronology, even though real historical events may have been the basis for these narratives. In this study the narratives of the early days of the Inca are treated as post-Conquest memories of those times. They are the official histories of either the Incas or of their non-Inca subjects, depending on who was the narrator, whenever that can be ascertained. They do not give us an objective order of events in the Late Intermediate Period, but they do tell us some things about the origins of Inca Cuzco, such as how the Incas viewed themselves and their enterprise, how they constructed their historical consciousness.

There are also indications of how the conquered non-Incas viewed history, a few brush strokes of the picture of what the defeated peoples thought of their Inca conquerors. For example, their narratives of how the Incas came to establish themselves in the Cuzco valley focus on the Incas' treachery and violence and not at all on the civilizing influence the Incas claim they had. Huarochiri, in the western central highlands, also had a very negative view of the Incas (Spalding 1984).

The ethnohistorical sources that were used for this study were several chronicles and some of the recorded interviews that Viceroy Francisco de Toledo ordered of the inhabitants of Cuzco in 1571–72. Incas as well as non-Inca leaders of *ayllus* were questioned as well as early conquerors who were still living in Cuzco at that time. The purpose of the inquiry was to establish several points, such as how legitimately the Incas had ruled, a Spanish concern that took into account a certain amount of native perception but was basically a question constructed by the Spanish. The results of some of these interviews were officially summarized, and later Roberto Levillier (1940) published them. The names of the informants are given, but their individual testimonies are not recorded; nor is their original language preserved, but rather a Spanish summary. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa was commissioned by Toledo to write the official summary account of the Incas based on Toledo inquiries. His chronicle was published in 1572 (1947).

Two other early chronicles clearly used Inca sources. The earliest work is that of Juan de Betanzos, *Suma y narración de los Incas* (1968 [1551]). Betanzos had married an Inca princess, Añas Kollke, a sister of Atawalpa (Rostworowski 1988:44). His chronicle is devoted primarily to the stories of Pachacuti Inca and probably reflects information he gathered from a member of Pachacuti Inca's *panaca*. A much longer version of his chronicle has been discovered recently and published (Betanzos 1987), but the first part of it, which is the part used in this study, is essentially the same as the earlier published version. The *Fábulas y ritos de los Incas* (1943 [1573]), the chronicle by Cristóbal de Molina, "el cuzqueño," offers a wealth of mythical and ritual information collected by Molina, who was a priest in Cuzco.

One later work is also used, the *Historia del Nuevo Mundo* by Bernabé Cobo (1956 [1653]), who wrote his history based on earlier chronicles, including

Molina's, as well as particularly important information from Licenciado Juan Polo de Ondegardo, an early *corregidor* (governor) of Cuzco, concerning the mummies of the Incas and the description of the *ceque* system, a list of mental lines that radiated from the central temple of Cuzco that were marked by several sacred places, *huaca*, for which the lineages of Cuzco were responsible. Cobo's compilation is extensive and has preserved information, such as that of the *ceque* system, that has been only partially preserved from earlier sources.

All of these works view the Incas and their contemporaries through the cultural lens of the Spanish conquerors and colonial administrators in the sixteenth century. Their primary purpose was to conquer lands and keep them, then to justify their acts. One way the Spanish Crown could do this was by proving that the Incas did not have a legitimate right to their territory but were usurpers. The questions put to the non-Inca lineages of Cuzco (Levillier 1940:xix) are structured so as to encourage them to answer that the Incas were usurpers and tyrants. The Spanish Crown also justified its invasion as a mission to Christianize or retrieve from heresy the indigenous population, and so proof of idolatrous and non-Christian beliefs and practices further legitimized their position. With these interests, the Spaniards could not take a culturally relative stance. Taking into account these biases, the chronicles can be studied for information on how the Incas and non-Incas constructed their worldview and how they viewed their own histories.

These materials will be used first of all to look briefly at some of the evidence for concluding that Inca Cuzco was initially formed out of the conquest of several different ethnic groups who occupied the Cuzco basin and that these groups maintained their ethnic identity throughout the Inca period. This sets the scene of Inca Cuzco as a multiethnic city, the capital of an empire that incorporated even more ethnic groups and had to maintain its hegemony over these groups. This was achieved by various means, but the ones discussed here are some of the ideological ones that the Incas used to justify their own conquest and to create a sense of unity, respect, and authority for the Inca regime. Five aspects of this process will be analyzed: (1) the myths of the original creation of the Inca ancestors that legitimize their status as supreme rulers; (2) a ritual that linked the Incas to the authority of the Tiawanaku state, which must have remained in the consciousness of the peoples of the time as a recognized authority from earlier times; (3) the logic of the incorporation of lands into the growing Inca state and their legitimization found in myths; (4) the reorganization of Cuzco by means of the *ceque* system, which ordered each lineage of Incas, Incas-by-privilege, and local peoples into a precise hierarchy, defined by their assignation to certain positions in the valley; and (5) the construction of a large and very visible symbol in the center of Cuzco for the ultimate origins of all peoples, which provided a focus for subordinating the ethnic identity of all the conquered peoples to Inca authority.

All of these mechanisms rely on a logic of what water means, how it circulates, and who has rights to it. These concepts about water are probably older than the Inca state and were probably widespread notions in the Andes

that many different ethnic groups shared in some form or another. For that very reason they were effectively used by the Incas, because they could communicate messages that were understood in spite of ethnic differences. The effort to legitimize their conquests would not have had effect if the symbolism were not broadly recognized.

These concepts may have a long history in the Andes. Even though that cannot be proven at this time, it is evident that a concern for water was ancient, as is demonstrated by the development of irrigation systems and other water management techniques from early on. An example of early ritual use of water and water symbolism is dramatically demonstrated by the temples of Chavín de Huantar in the central highlands (1800 B.C.–100 A.D.). This site has subterranean channels for waters that carried sacrifices into the nearby river (personal communication, Hernán Amat, 1972). Serpent and cayman images on stone carvings and pottery reveal a religion in which water was important as a vehicle for the movement of the ancestors, concepts that may have originated with Amazonian peoples (Tello 1960; Lathrap 1971).

## ORIGINS OF INCA CUZCO

The Incas by their own admission were an ethnic group that invaded the Cuzco valley and routed or defeated the occupants, making it the base for their political expansion. The defeated peoples, however, continued to live in the Cuzco valley or close to it, and their descendants were interviewed for Toledo's inquiry in 1572 (Toledo 1940:182–95). These were the Gualla, the Sauasiray, the Quizco, and the Alcaviza. The last three agreed that the Gualla had been in Cuzco before they had. The others originated from places close to Cuzco within the valley. The Sauasiray said they had come from Sutictoco, seven leagues from the city. The Quizco said that the Gualla and the Sauasiray were already there when they arrived but that they named the place Cuzco. Each group had occupied a different location in Cuzco, but only the Gualla were chased out of the valley to a place where they built their village of Pachatusan, located east of San Blas parish, that is, on the edge of the Cuzco valley. Whether this order of original inhabitants reflects the chronological order of occupation of Cuzco or whether it is a hierarchical ordering of peoples in terms of earliest to latest inhabitants is an open question. However, it does seem clear that there were several different ethnic groups in pre-Inca Cuzco that the Incas incorporated into their kingdom.

All four groups clearly expressed dissatisfaction with the Incas, a sentiment that the structure of the interviewer's questions elicited by asking them if it was true that the first Inca had subdued their ancestors tyrannically and with force, taken away their lands, waged war on them, mistreated them, exiled their ancestors to zones outside of Cuzco itself and exacted tribute from them, and that the subdued peoples had served the Incas under duress and not voluntarily. These questions were shaped by the Spanish concern with legitimizing the

conquest by demonstrating that the Incas had ruled as tyrants and not by law, but the interviewers also must have based their questions on what they knew their informants were likely to say. The questions seem to be a formal recording of attitudes garnered earlier informally. The Spaniards had knowledge of the stories or the origins of Cuzco and of the Incas. For their part, the original peoples must have hoped to appeal to the Spaniards for some sort of redress or at least a more favorable position now that the Incas had been defeated. They declared that they could not have complained of abuses while the Incas had ruled and that they dared to speak only now that the Spaniards were in power.

The Incas in their narratives clearly stated that they had indeed come from outside the Cuzco valley, from Pacariqtambo, some six leagues (33 km.) to the south, and from there they had brought a group of people to settle Cuzco with them. Once there, they expelled the Gualla, subdued the other groups, and founded their own polity (Vaca de Castro 1892 [1542]; Betanzos 1968 [1551]; Urton 1989). In contrast to the highly negative view of them in the Spanish questionnaire in which the Incas were indirectly accused of having achieved their power illegitimately, their portrayal of themselves is very noble and heroic. They were put in the position of having to defend their right to rule Tawantinsuyu.

## THE INCA RIGHT TO RULE

We can hypothesize that the Incas initially defended themselves in the traditional terms in which they had already legitimized their conquest to themselves and to their subjects, which took the form of myths and rituals. It was official Inca history. Whether this defense was successful is doubtful, because the underlying logic of it was entirely foreign to Spanish legal concepts. For the Spaniards it was further proof of heathenness. We will now examine five situations in which the Incas expressed their right to rule and legitimized their conquests.

### CREATED TO BE RULERS

The Incas presented themselves as having been created to be the rulers. The creation myths express a general principle that the ancestors of all peoples were created by Wiracocha, who sent them along subterranean waterways to their specific places of emergence to the surface of the earth where they could claim rights to lands and waters for their descendants (Betanzos 1968:9; Molina 1943:8–9; Sherbondy 1982a). Here are two such myths:

... éstos se llamarán los tales y saldrán de tal fuente en tal provincia, y poblarán en ella, y allí serán aumentados; y éstos saldren de tal cueva, y se nombrarán los fulanos, y poblarán en tal parte; y así como yu aquí los tengo pintados y hechos de piedras, así han de salir de las fuentes y ríos, y cuevas y cerros, en las provincias que así os he dicho y nombrado; e iréis luego todos vosotros por esta

parte (señalándoles hacia donde el sol sale), dividiéndoles a cada uno por sí y señalándoles hacia donde el sol sale, dividiéndoles a cada uno por sí y señalándoles el derecho que deba de llevar. (Betanzos 1968:9)<sup>2</sup>

... en Tiahuanaco, el Hacedor empezó a hacer las gentes y naciones que en esta tierra hay, y haciendo de barro cada nación, pintándoles los trajes y vestido que cada uno había de traer y tener; y los que habían de traer cabellos, con cabellos; y los que cortado, cortado el cabello; y que concluido, a cada nación dió la lengua que había de hablar, y los cantos que habían de cantar, y las simientes y comidas que habían de sembrar.

Y acabado de pintar y hacer las dichas naciones y bultos de barro, dió ser y ánima a cada uno por sí, así a los hombres como a las mujeres; y les mandó se sumiesen debajo de tierra cada nación por sí; y que de allí cada nación fuese a salir a las partes y lugares que él les mandase; y así dicen que los unos salieron de cuevas, los otros de cerros, y otros de fuentes, y otros de lagunas, y otros de pies de árboles, y otros desatinos de esta manera; y que por haber salido y empezada a multiplicar de estos lugares, haber sido de allí el principio de su linaje, hicieron huacas y adoratorios estos lugares, en memoria del primero de su linaje que de allí procedió, y así cada nación se viste y trae el traje con que a su huaca vestían. Y dicen que el primero que de aquel lugar nació allí se volvía a convertir en piedras; otros en halcones y cóndores, y otros animales y aves; y así son de diferentes figuras la huacas que adoran y que usan. (Molina 1943:8–9)<sup>3</sup>

The point of controversy from the Andean view was that the Incas had emerged not at Cuzco but at Pacariqtambo, and there they could legitimately lay claim to lands and waters; but how could they claim the right to the Cuzco valley? They did this first by declaring that their original creation by Wiracocha gave them the right to be first, to be above all other peoples, to rule. Their version was that when their original ancestors emerged from the cave of Pacariqtambo, it was at dawn of the first day, when Wiracocha created the sun, and so for that reason they claimed they first of all had the unique privilege of calling themselves descendants of the sun (Molina 1943:11–12). Second, Wiracocha bestowed Manco Capac and his brothers and sisters, the original ancestors of the Incas, with insignia of political power: the *suntur paucar* (staff) and the *champi* (mace) (Molina 1943:11). And third, from the beginning the Incas enjoyed the privilege of wearing large ear spoons, the item of dress that distinguished them from other ayllus, and they wore regal clothing: gold ornaments and tapestry woven textiles (Betanzos 1968:12):

... Manco Cápac y sus hermanos y hermanas, por mandato del Hacedor, se sumieron debajo de tierra, y vinieron a salir a la cueva de Pacaritambo, de donde se jactaban proceder aunque de la dicha cueva dicen salieron otras naciones, que salieron al punto que el Sol, el primer día después de haber dividido la noche del día el Hacedor; y así de aquí les quedó apellido de llamarse hijos del sol, y como a padre adorarle y reverenciarle. (Molina 1943:11–12)<sup>4</sup>

The Incas were thereby born with special status. They were the children of



the sun and therefore first among all peoples. This relationship to the sun was an important part of Inca imperial policy. This status gave them the right to dominate the other peoples, to rule; and as visible symbols of their power the Inca rulers carried the mace and staff. They were also marked apart in the same way that all ethnic groups were distinguished, by their personal appearance. They wore the highest quality of woven clothing, the largest ear plugs, and in contrast to most other peoples whose men wore long hair in some form, the Incas wore extremely short hair. Their use of gold jewelry was not only an ethnic marker and indicator of prestige but also carried the symbolic message of their close relationship with the sun because gold was the metal that represented the sun. The wearing and use of these symbolic markers daily communicated to the conquered peoples the Inca claim to legitimate rule.

#### HEIRS OF TIWANAKU

The political position of the Incas was legitimized in terms of divine right: their position was the result of the original creation of their ancestors by the deity Wiracocha, or Ticsi Wiracocha, whose name meant "origin" or "foundation" (*ticsi*) and fat or foam of the sea (*wira-cocha*) (González Holguín 1952 [1608]:65; Gutierrez de Santa Clara 1963 [16th century]:244) and who was worshiped as the creator and founder of the universe. He was intimately associated with the Sea, which was also seen as the substance from which all things were created. The Sea was the source of water for all the lakes in the highlands, and so the largest lake in the Andes, Titicaca, was revered as the Sea. It is no coincidence that it was at the site of Lake Titicaca that Wiracocha created the sun, moon, stars, and all the ancestors.

Titicaca was also remembered as being the site of the ruins of Tiwanaku, impressive stone carvings and stone plazas of temples of the center of the Middle Horizon state. This dual association of Titicaca is important because in addition to a claim to supremacy by divine right, the Incas also linked themselves to the political authority of a former state that had dominated the southern highlands for many centuries, from 100 to 1200 A.D. Molina's version of the creation story takes a short cut and just says that the world was created at Tiwanaku (Molina 1943:8). It is likely that Lake Titicaca had a similar meaning for Tiwanaku as the site of creation and source of original ancestors, so that the symbolism of Titicaca and Tiwanaku had been closely associated for centuries during the Middle Horizon.

The Incas linked themselves to Tiwanaku and Titicaca explicitly through their myths. One version of the origin of their ancestors states that Manco Capac and his brothers and sisters had been created at Titicaca and from there had traveled along subterranean channels to Pacariqtambo, where they emerged from the cave (Molina 1943:11–12). Their ultimate origins were in Titicaca–Tiwanaku, their more immediate origins at Pacariqtambo. They symbolically remembered their Titicaca–Tiwanaku origins as rulers with a ritual for each new Inca king. Beginning with Inca Roca, the Incas brought water to Cuzco from a spring in the bedrock of an island in Lake Titicaca and anointed each

new king with it. This information comes from Joan de Santacruz Pachacuti Yamqui (1968[c.1613]:292), an indigenous chronicler in the early seventeenth century from the area southeast of Cuzco, between Canacas and Canchis, which had much in common culturally with the peoples of the Titicaca basin, the Collasuyu quadrant of Tawantinsuyu. His chronicle emphasizes the Incas' Colla connections, which seem to have been important and close ones. He refers to the water of Titicaca as the water of Ttonopa, who was the Colla version of Ticsi Wiracocha.

This ritual anointment with Titicaca water also performed the function of legitimizing the displacement of the territorial center of the Incas from their cave of emergence, Pacariqtambo, to Cuzco. This was necessary because the myths of origins implied that the distribution of peoples was somewhat fixed, having been determined by Wiracocha at the beginning of the world. Yet in reality peoples moved around. The refoundation of an ayllu at a new site could be ritually accomplished by carrying water from the ayllu's previous water source into the new territory, where it was poured into the springs on the new land. Then the new water source was given the name of the old site of emergence, or *pacarisca* (Albornoz 1984:199).

The Incas were refounding their ayllu at Cuzco every time they brought water from Lake Titicaca. It is significant that they did not bring water from Pacariqtambo but from the site of their ultimate origin. This act may have been doubly effective, then, in terms of ritually establishing their right to the lands and waters of Cuzco.

#### LINKED LAKES: TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

The Incas' basic explanation of how water circulates was that the waters from the Sea that is under and around the earth well up to form lakes. Lakes in turn feed underground rivers, which carry lake water to all the smaller lakes, rivers, streams, and springs, thereby providing the entire earth with water sources. These waters return eventually to the Sea. When the Incas worshiped Wiracocha in his capacity as creator and founder of the world, it was also a reminder of the fundamental circulation of waters. Ultimate origins and ends are in the Sea.

Lake Titicaca was the most important lake for the southern part of the Andean highlands, roughly the area of the Tiwanaku state. For the northern part of the Andes other large lakes were more likely to be mentioned as origins of ancestors. Lake Choclococha was held in similar esteem by the peoples of the area that had been the Wari state. The coastal peoples revered the Sea directly as their origin and fundament. Since the Sea was believed to underlie the entire earth and provide the water for the lakes, it was ultimately the source of life for all Andean peoples, coastal as well as highland (Sherbondy 1982a).

Different peoples or ayllus could link themselves to others on the ideological basis of the connections between bodies of water and thus form local regions. The major lakes were thought to be directly connected to the Sea underneath, and these in turn were connected by the subterranean channels that were made and used by the original ancestors to travel to their sites of emergence. These

channels are revealed to be underground rivers when we realize that most of the sites of emergence of the original ancestors were sources of water: lakes, rivers, streams, and springs. Even the trees and caves that were also sites of emergence were often associated with water sources. A very large tree needs an especially good supply of water to grow in the Andes (Sherbondy 1986). Caves that were worshiped were often located near a spring or near the head of an irrigation canal. Mountains were also mentioned as sources for ancestors, and they were conceptualized as major sources of water, either because of the belief that a lake lying under the mountain provided water for the mountain, or because of a permanent snowcap or glacier that provided melt for streams, or simply because of a number of springs on the mountain's slopes.

Several peoples who used different springs to irrigate their crops could see themselves as linked to each other by hydrology to a distant lake that served as the source for all of the springs. One example from the central Andes was Lake Conococha on the Pampa de Uchu Guanuco (Huánuco). It was considered the center of a network of springs connected to it by underground rivers that had been made by a Wari ancestor. The Wari built the channel and brought the water to several springs that the villages used (Duviols 1986:121). One of these springs was located ninety-seven kilometers away from the lake, which indicates that a large territory could be mentally conceptualized as one hydrological zone even though by Western scientific investigation the direct hydrological connection cannot be proved.

The Incas symbolically expanded and consolidated their territory in Cuzco by militarily conquering nearby chiefdoms and forming alliances with others. They legitimized these conquests by ritually integrating the water sources of these chiefdoms into the Inca system. One case that must have occurred fairly early involved the incorporation of Lake Coricocha, about twelve kilometers north-northeast of Cuzco. Coricocha had probably been the cosmological center of the Wallacán (Guallacán) chiefdom until it was incorporated into the Inca chiefdom by the marriage alliance of Inca Roca with the Wallacán chief-tainness Mama Micay.

The Inca myth of the marriage of Inca Roca and Mama Micay highlights the significance of this marriage as the bringing of the sources of water for irrigation that Mama Micay controlled into the Inca realm. The myth relates that when Mama Micay looked out over the Cuzco valley she wept to see it so dry and ordered water from her lands to be brought to Cuzco to irrigate it.

Casó Inca-Roca con una señora por nombre Mama Michay, cacica del pueblo de Guayllacan; . . . acabadas las fiestas deste casamiento, echando de ver la Coya que el valle del Cuzco carecía de suficiente agua para regar las chacaras de maíz, hizo traer a él la mayor parte de la que hoy tiene; y en memoria deste beneficio que hizo a la comarca, quedó a cargo de la familia y linaje que della procedió, el repartir el aqua con que se riega el valle. (Cobo 1956:72-73)<sup>5</sup>

This myth can be interpreted as referring to the irrigation systems from Tambo

Machay in the Cuzco valley, whose waters were believed to ultimately derive from Coricocha by means of subterranean canals (Sherbondy 1982a:17-21).

The Incas formalized this incorporation of land rights by creating political divisions that covered more than the territory of the Cuzco basin. These divisions were four quarters, or *suyu*, that corresponded roughly to the intercardinal directions. They became the basis for the Tawantinsuyu, which means literally "the four quarters considered together." The northeast quarter of Cuzco, Antisuyu, was the area defined hydrologically by Coricocha and the streams and canals it fed.

A comparable cosmology linked to a hydrological region was associated with Chinchaysuyu, the northwest quarter. The myths about this quarter concern Inca Roca's discovery of the underground waters of Chacan there on the ceremonial occasion of piercing his ears for the large ear spools of the royal Incas. One myth states that he went to the hill Chacan Guanacauri, where he put his sore and bleeding ears to the ground and heard rushing waters. He thrust his arm into the earth to make an opening for the waters to emerge, thus replicating the actions of a founding ancestor who brings waters to the lands of his descendants and creates the opening for them to flow out. Inca Roca had his men channel the water and construct the most important irrigation canal networks for Inca Cuzco (Cieza de León 1943).

The subterranean waters of this quarter were believed to come from a large subterranean lake under the mountain Sencca, or Huayna Corcor. This was a significant mountain for Cuzco's hydrology because the two rivers that join to form the main river of the Cuzco valley originate from springs on this mountain and the most important canals draw water off these rivers. The mountain was a major *huaca*, or sacred site, of the Ayarmacas, one of the ethnic groups in Cuzco that the Incas had to conquer and assimilate. The incorporation of Sencca into the political territory of Cuzco was expressed by the Inca myth about Yahuar Huacac, the son of Inca Roca and Mama Micay, who had been captured as a boy by the Ayarmacas. The Ayarmacas were angry because Mama Micay had been promised in marriage to the Ayarmaca chief but had married Inca Roca instead, making an Inca alliance instead of an Ayarmaca alliance. Yahuar Huacac was rescued from the Ayarmacas by the chief of Anta (located on the western side of Sencca), who allied himself with Inca Roca. Together they defeated the Ayarmacas.

The consequences for irrigation parallel the case of Coricocha. Canals were built on the western side of Sencca, or Huayna Corcor, to divert waters to Cuzco that would have flowed naturally into the Anta River, thus emphasizing the important consequences of the Anta-Inca alliance for the water supply of Inca Cuzco.

#### REORGANIZATION OF CUZCO: CEQUE SYSTEM

Hydrology, political organization and religion are intertwined. In the late Inca period, the entire Cuzco basin apparently was reorganized spatially and



politically. Inca official history says that Pachacuti Inca was disturbed that the mummies of the ancestors occupied so much land, so he redistributed rights of ayllus to lands and waters and encoded it into the ceque system (Betanzos 1968:34; Sarmiento 1943:96; Sherbondy 1982b, 1987). It is implied that some ayllus must have lost a place while others may have been moved to a better or worse location, and the ayllus that Pachacuti favored politically were favorably placed.

The medium for effecting this reform was the redistribution of rights to and obligations for certain huacas. The Cuzco valley in the Inca period was peppered with sacred places of significance. Lakes, springs, rivers, mountains, rocks, and other features of the landscape were worshiped and cared for by the ayllus and panacas. The Inca state coded the distribution of the responsibilities for the huacas into a map whose physical representation was probably a quipu. The cords represented forty-one ceques. Not all the huacas in the Cuzco valley were included, only 329 of them, plus four that were not specifically located on any of the ceques. These huacas were the most important to the Inca state. Licenciado Polo de Ondegardo recorded the ceque system and realized the political importance of getting that information. A partial account is found in his papers (1917 [1571]), and a full account is recorded in the later chronicle of Bernabé Cobo (1956 [1653]:169–86), who had access to Polo's information. Zuidema (1964) analyzed the ceque system as the social organization of Inca Cuzco.

In an earlier work I described how hydrology influenced the choice of huacas and the placement of the ceques (Sherbondy 1982b). Over one-third, that is, more than one hundred of the huacas, were sources of water; others were closely associated with canals and water sources, such as mountains. More important, the ceque system functioned to record the distribution of water rights to specific panacas and ayllus. The sources of the major canals of Cuzco were huacas that were included on the ceques that were assigned to the panacas and ayllus that used and owned the canals. The ceques were also used to indicate the limits of the territories of the irrigation districts and of the lands of the panacas and ayllus.

The political uses of the ceques included control over the distribution of irrigation canals and lands. This was the primary way in which the Inca state exerted power over irrigation, because the individual irrigation districts functioned fairly autonomously under the authority of each panaca and ayllu. Some irrigation officials regulated the allocation of water from the larger canals and the rivers that shared their waters with several panacas and ayllus, but there was no massive hydraulic bureaucracy under state control. The Inca combination of state coordination of distribution of water and land rights and locally autonomous irrigation districts resulted in an efficient and flexible system that was especially needed in an area such as the Andes, where each microzone has a different calendar of irrigation needs (Sherbondy 1982b, 1987).

Theoretically the ceques divided the entire territory of the valley of Cuzco (approximately 8 km long and 6 km wide) into forty-one pie-shaped territories,

but the reality was somewhat more complicated (Sherbondy 1982b, 1987). This pie-shaped type of land distribution, called radial organization (Albó 1972), was common in the Andes. The Incas elaborated on its principles and developed the most complex case of it to incorporate the ten official panacas and ten official ayllus that had rights to lands and waters in Cuzco. These corporate groups had territory inside urban Cuzco as well as rural lands for crops and herds.

The center for the ceque system was formally Coricancha, the temple of the ancestors of the Incas. It is associated with water in several ways. It is located on a bluff that overlooks the juncture of the two rivers that are the most symbolic tributaries of the Huatanay River. It had several fountains that originally were fed by underground pipes from streams. But most important, it was the temple of the ancestors who had originally come from the earth.

This organization of Cuzco more than anything else formalized Inca political and ritual domination of the Cuzco basin. In terms of political power over ethnic groups it hierarchically ranked them, and in terms of economic power it established what the land and water base of the group was. Ritually it gave the ayllus a place and a responsibility. Symbolically it ordered all the peoples around the center of Cuzco, where the ancestors of the Incas were kept.

#### SAND OF THE SEA: SYMBOL OF ETHNIC UNITY

The most powerful symbol that the Incas constructed in Cuzco was one that went beyond the concerns of Inca domination to create a rallying point for the unity of all the diverse and conquered peoples of the empire, whether they were represented in Cuzco by rights to lands and waters or not. The ceque system permitted only twenty official groups in Cuzco, ten of which were lineages of the Incas themselves. In the provinces of the four suyus there were hundreds of other ethnic groups, highlanders and coastal peoples. What symbol could speak to all of these groups?

The concept of the importance of the origins of ancestors seems to have been universal enough to be able to take a symbol that represented the ultimate origins of all peoples. In the highlands various lakes were revered as origins, and the Sea was revered by coastal peoples; however, the highland peoples all seem to have recognized that the lakes had their ultimate origins in the Sea. So a symbol of the Sea was used.

The Incas established the central plaza of Cuzco, Huacaypata, as the site for this symbol. It was an appropriate place, since the plaza was in front of the temple of Wiracocha, the deity of origins and the primordial Sea. There the Incas ordered sand placed that had been brought from Pacific beaches as far away as the northern extreme of the empire, what is today Ecuador. It was enough sand to fill the area of the plaza of Huacaypata and Cusipata to the depth of two and a half palms and more in some places. Polo de Ondegardo's Inca informants explicitly stated that they had brought the sand from the Sea to

give reverence to Ticsi Wiracocha, the deity of the Sea. They had buried vessels of gold and silver in this sand as well as figures of llamas, alpaca, and human beings (Polo de Ondegardo 1917:109).

By bringing the sand to Cuzco the Incas placed the Sea at the religious and political center of the empire and provided a powerful symbol that all the Andean peoples in the Tawantinsuyu could look to as their origin and source. Polo realized that the sand was a powerful political and religious symbol and immediately ordered the Spaniards to remove it and use it up in the construction of the cathedral and four bridges.

The placing of the sand in Cuzco was an important political move because most of the symbols of Andean ethnicity are locally based on the sites of original emergence of the ayllus. Several ayllus could link themselves in terms of their origins by stating that their springs or sources of water were connected by underground streams with others by means of a lake that was the source of all of them; that still did not provide a basis for common identity of all the peoples in the vast Inca state. The Sea and the sun, however, could be used for all the peoples of the entire territory. The Incas utilized the sun to represent their political authority and ruled as sons of the sun, and they utilized the Sea to legitimize this authority as having been established by Wiracocha in the primordial times of the creation of the world when the ancestors were created. Wiracocha created the Incas to be the rulers and the other peoples, by logical extension, to be subjects of the Incas. That was the Incas' presentation of themselves.

Even though the Incas officially presented their history as if they had been established as supreme rulers from the dawn of the first day, it is evident that they used military and political conquest to construct their state. They needed to tell and retell their version of history many times in order to justify their increasing political power. Usurpation and political conquest were not a part of the origin myths that legitimized possession of lands and waters, so the myths were adjusted to meet the needs for legitimizing their actions. The Inca emergence at Pacariqtambo needed to be presented as persistence by referring to established traditions that were the equivalent of common law, such as the beliefs about original ancestors and rights to lands and waters. The Incas invented and reinvented their tradition of origins by means of myths and rituals.

One approach for partially defining *Inca* is to identify some of the major ideas or ideologies that informed the Incas' actions in various spheres of their life—much like a cultural postulate or theme that pervades various areas of culture. These ideologies, such as the one relating to water as presented here, helped shape Inca culture while they themselves were continuously reshaped by dealing with new events and actions. Thus the Inca creation of their traditions to explain who they were and justify what they did, became not just a collection of traditional tales and rituals but formed the core of their historical consciousness.

This process is similar to that of the Aztecs, who rewrote their history for

political purposes. Van Zantwijk (1985) described how the Aztecs were confronted with the problem of consolidating a state out of diverse ethnic corporate groups, a situation similar to that faced by the Incas. Since the Aztecs' perception of history was shaped by the symbolic interrelationships of the gods, they rearranged and rewrote the myths of the ethnic groups and the gods so that they would fit into one well-integrated version of history that left no doubt about the Aztecs' role as rulers. The corporate groups of Aztec society presented the greatest threat of disruption and dissolution in much the same way that the ethnic corporate groups of the Andes threatened Inca unity. Both states then had to deal ideologically with these strong identities to one's own ethnic group in order to create a unified state. They both attempted it by rewriting history.

When the Incas were faced with the need to defend themselves to the Spaniards, they drew on their official version of themselves once again to state that in Andean-Inca terms, they considered themselves to be a legitimate state. The Spaniards, however, did not share the Incas' fundamental beliefs about the origins of ancestors, nor about Wiracocha and the sea; nor did they share the same hydrological concepts about water circulation. Thus they were not able to understand fully the significance of the Incas' history. The Spaniards were supported at least in part by peoples formerly dominated by the Incas who understood the Inca version but who chose to reject their authority once it was broken. They presented their own versions of history at that time in order to negotiate for a favorable place in the colonial state. The uses of history changed.

#### NOTES

1. Lan's study (1985) of how the Dande used traditional concepts in their struggle for Zimbabwe liberation, a very modern situation, is a good example.

2. . . . these [people] shall be called so and so and shall come out of that spring in that province, and they shall populate it, and there shall their number increase; and these [people] shall come out of that cave and shall be named so and so, and they shall populate that area; and in the way in which I have painted them and made them out of stone, so shall they come out of the springs and rivers and caves and mountains, in the provinces that I have told you and named to you; and then all of you shall go in this direction (pointing to where the sun rises), dividing yourselves up and indicating the direction that each of you should take.

3. . . . at Tiahuanaco, the Maker began to make the peoples and nations that there are in this land, and making each nation out of clay, painting on them the clothing and dress that each one should wear and have; and those that were to have long hair, with long hair; and those with short hair, with short hair; and when finished he gave each nation a language they were to speak, and the songs they were to sing, and the seeds and food crops they were to sow.

And when he finished painting and making the different nations and clay statues, he gave being and spirit to each one of them, to men as well as to women; and he ordered them to sink into the earth each nation on its own; and that from there each nation go to emerge at the regions and places that he ordered them; and so they say some of them came out of caves, others out of mountains, and others out of springs, and others out of lakes, and others from the roots of trees, and other such foolishness; and that since they

had emerged and begun to multiply in these places, and that was where the beginning of their lineage [ayllu] was, they made these places huacas and shrines in memory of the first one of their lineage from whom they descended. And so each nation dresses and wears the clothing with which they dress their huaca. And they say that the first one who was born in that place, there turned into stone, others into hawks and condors and other animals and birds; and so the huacas that they worship and use are of different shapes.

4. . . . Manco Capac and his brothers and sisters, under the orders of the Maker, submerged themselves under the earth and came to the cave of Pacariqtambo, from where they boast of coming even though from said cave they say other nations emerged, that they [Manco Capac and his companions] emerged at dawn the first day after the Maker separated night from day; and so from that time on they were given the right to call themselves sons of the Sun.

5. Inca Roca married a lady by the name of Mama Michay [Micay], chieftainness of the people of Guayllacan . . . [and] at the end of the festivities of this marriage, the queen, noticing that the valley of Cuzco lacked sufficient water to irrigate the maize fields, had most of the water that the valley has today brought to it; and in memory of this benefit she bestowed on the region, her family and the lineage that descended from her remained in charge of allocating the water with which the valley is irrigated.

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