

Preface

Central Andean archaeology is at last reaching maturity and, as part of that maturity, archaeologists are revealing its range of stylistic variations and the richness of its art and artifacts. This volume seeks, as its primary goal, to introduce the reader to this richness and variation. As in Volume I (*Andean Archaeology I: Variations in Sociopolitical Organization*, edited by William H. Isbell and Helaine Silverman), we have not sought a balanced coverage of Andean areas and cultural phases. Rather, we present a representative sample of creative new investigations focused—in this case—on art, architecture, and landscapes as cultural productions.

The development of Andean archaeology was significantly shaped by the area's ancient art, its preservation, and its potential for collection and exhibition. Numerous fine objects of art had been placed whole by ancient people into graves. Impressive collections of ancient Peruvian antiquities were easily recovered by archaeologists and, inevitably, looters. Early expeditions visited the great monuments of Tiwanaku, Pachacamac, and Moche, sending many spectacular objects to foreign museums. Collections of ancient Peruvian artifacts were exhibited around the world—exquisite Nasca, Moche, and Huari pottery, fabulous Paracas and Huari textiles. These lovely materials delighted viewers with their bold elegance.

Of course, the history of Andean archaeology was shaped by other research agendas, too—the Olmec/Chavín debate about a single origin for New World civilization, the scramble to find the earliest sedentism and causes of agriculture, and the documentation of pristine Andean state government are some of the more influential. But throughout these campaigns, archaeological cultures associated with the most pleasing art styles have emerged time after time as the most thoroughly investigated. Consequently, many other cultural traditions were simply assimilated into the well known styles whose developmental trajectories were used to characterize the entire aggregate of Andean cultures.

Moche culture is an excellent example. From turn-of-the-century excavations at the Huaca del Sol, to the selection of the Virú Valley as the focus of an integrated archaeological program in the 1940s, to the Moche archive created by Christopher Donnan, to the large-scale excavations currently sponsored by private Peruvian

businesses, knowledge about Moche is unsurpassed. And now, Moche specialists are investigating new issues—from ethnic boundaries and interactions with neighboring peoples to the development of proto-writing (Jackson, this volume). Clearly, Moche is but one and, certainly, an extraordinary example of an ancient Andean society, culture, and style.

Many of the cultures associated with less popular art styles have remained little known or even ignored. The creators of the Lima style (see Makowski, in Volume I) produced pottery that does not spark the imagination as do Moche and Nasca. Although associated with impressive pyramid complexes throughout Peru's modern capital city, where there are numerous museums and universities, Lima culture is poorly reported and only now being systematically investigated. Highland cultures are less studied than coastal ones, in part because of difficult logistics, but also because their graves rarely contain complete examples of fine pottery and textiles. Least known are the archaeological records of the eastern Andean *ceja de montaña* and Upper Amazon tributaries.

Today, archaeologists are beginning to study little known areas and archaeological cultures. New investigations of highland Huari, not even recognized as an independent style until the early 1950s, are exposing the important city of Conchopata. Investigations of Recuay and other north highland styles are in progress. Pucara, Tiwanaku, and Titicaca Basin archaeology is experiencing great advances. The outlines of a new Nasca archaeology can be discerned. Little known styles from the Acarí and distant Ocoña, Majes, and Sihuas valleys are no longer collapsed into one culture. Vast areas of the highlands remain uncharted, especially in Bolivia. Even the Cochabamba valley is little investigated, in spite of its importance to the Incas and probable key role in early cultural developments in the southern sphere of the Central Andes. Many nameless archaeological societies are just beginning to appear in the literature, or remain to be discovered and meaningfully integrated into the sweep of Andean prehistory.

In addition to the attraction of discovery in an area rich with ruins, the history of Andean art and archaeology has also been influenced by the vast volume of material remains from the past, as well as their extraordinary preservation, especially in south coastal Peru and neighboring Chile. Our colleagues who work in various other parts of the world are often astonished by our photographs of standing fieldstone and adobe architecture, intact textiles, vivid polychrome sherds, pyroengraved gourds, and complete skeletons and mummy bundles. Yet this profusion of remains is a kind of curse since there is so much to analyze. Overwhelming quantities of materials have hampered timely completion of reports and publications. Pucara pottery (Chávez, this volume) is finally published fifty years after its original excavation. Pottery newly excavated at Conchopata (Isbell and Cook, Ochatoma and Cabrera, this volume) exceeds fifteen tons, so the task of simply determining what collections of sherds are worth further attention in preliminary efforts to reconstruct forms and designs is daunting, yet progressing.

The demands of field and lab work in Central Andean archaeology occupy so much time and energy that theorizing may suffer in a perverse inversion of data and ideas. In balance (as we consider more fully in the two section introductions for this volume), many Andeanists have devoted careers to one or another ancient culture and they are now, in maturity, achieving fascinating (and, above all, plausible) insights into ancient societies. They have “paid their dues,” conducting years of painstaking empirical research that might qualify as what ethnographers call “thick description.” They have become masters of the archaeological record, experts in the art and all of its variations, authorities on ancient technologies, experienced in settlement patterns and community organization, and even able to predict where tombs are to be found (this kind of knowledge has legendarily been attributed to looters who have spent a lifetime digging). Such depth of knowledge promotes empathic insights into an archaeological art and culture, furthering conditions for breakthroughs in knowledge. The associated scholarship also creates a marvelous foundation on which young archaeologists can build.

The early 21st century will see, we believe, a mature Andean scholarship that will offer to colleagues outside our culture area important contributions for comparative theorizing on processes of social inequality, prestige generation and maintenance, ethnogenesis, materiality and the differential production of culture, household organization, craft production, burial customs, landscape evolution, urbanism, and rituals of power, among many other aspects of sociopolitical life in the past. In a variety of ways the papers in this volume address these issues. Their strength, we believe, is in their foregrounding of area, data, and empirical analyses rather than theoretical approaches.

The field of Central Andean archaeology is creative and healthy. In addition to a very strong presence of established scholars active in the field, each year sees a larger group of recent Ph.D.s and advanced graduate students conducting research and presenting results at national and international meetings. Many are working on major archaeological cultures and the coast is still preferred over the highlands, but enthusiasm for venturing into unknown cultures is increasing, especially as civil unrest in Peru has been normalized. New archaeological research in unknown territories is necessarily designed to simply determine what is there, and when. The importance of this basic research cannot be emphasized enough.

We enthusiastically offer this volume, the second in what we hope will become a series, as an example of the exciting work being done in Andean archaeology today and as a preview of what will be addressed in the future.

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