

## *Chapter 1*

# *Theorizing Variations in Andean Sociopolitical Organization*

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The history of Central Andean archaeology reveals a broad array of theoretical approaches, with many significant contributions to archaeological theory as well as methods made by Andeanists. Max Uhle's (1903) precocious pan-Andean cultural chronology employed early techniques of stratigraphic excavation with a prototype of the horizon concept to formulate one of the first examples of regional space-time systematics. Alfred L. Kroeber's (1927) Andean work was instrumental in directing archaeological thinking toward issues that transcended chronology, such as patterns of culture and systems of political organization. The Virú Valley Project was the major inspiration for settlement pattern archaeology in the Americas, with its emphasis on social and political organization documented spatially (see Willey 1953). Andeanists have been important contributors to the field of ecological archaeology as seen in their modeling of terminal and post-Pleistocene adaptations in a range of environments (e.g., Lanning 1963; Richardson 1981; Rick 1980; Sandweiss et al., 1998) and attention to the processes associated with early sedentism and domestication (Lanning 1967: chps. 4, 5; Lynch 1980; Moseley 1975a; Patterson 1971; Raymond 1981). Andean archaeologists have contributed significantly to the understanding of environmental perturbations, risk management, and the cybernetics of civilization (Browman 1984; Erickson 1993, 1999; Isbell 1978a; Moseley 1983).

Andean prehistorians also have contributed to the field of cultural evolutionism (see Wilson 1999), exploring the differences between chiefdoms and

states (e.g., Feldman 1987; Haas 1987; Isbell and Schreiber 1978; Massey 1986; T. Pozorski and S. Pozorski 1987; Silverman 1993; Wilson 1988). They have theorized the origins of state government (e.g., Carneiro 1970; Stanish 1994), preindustrial urbanism (e.g., Isbell 1988; Moseley 1975b; Rowe 1963; Schaedel 1951, 1966, 1977, 1978; Silverman 1993), and the rise of imperialism (e.g., D'Altroy 1992; Schreiber 1992).

There are many alternative voices in Andean archaeology. This is particularly evident in the influential school of Marxist archaeology that originated with Luis G. Lumbreras' 1974 book, *La Arqueología Como Ciencia Social*. This theoretical approach continues today in the Instituto Andino de Estudios Arqueológicos which publishes the *Gaceta Arqueológica Andina*. North American Andeanists have developed other Marxist approaches to the past (see Patterson 1991).

Postprocessual archaeological approaches are well represented in Andean archaeology and have become important in Andean scholarship (see, especially, Goldstein 2000; Isbell 1997; Vranich 1999). Feminist interpretation received a major stimulus from Andean scholarship (Gero 1991a, b), as has the study of food ways (Gero 1992; Hastorf and Johannessen 1993).

Recently, Andean archaeologists have joined other prehistorians in investigating the origins and nature of sociopolitical complexity (inequality: institutionalized unequal access to power and material resources). This focus on ancient identity politics adopts a perspective that explicitly interrogates the processes and strategies by which elites act as self-interested agents in the achievement and maintenance of differential status. In this subtle paradigm shift with its particular forms of discourse, archaeologists identify numerous status-enhancing vehicles. Among these are control over long-distance exchange and its prestige products (e.g., Goldstein 2000; Pillsbury 1996), possession of symbols of power and the manipulation of ideology for the social construction of an elite identity (e.g., Bawden 1995; Silverman and Proulx 2002), articulation with local elites through mechanisms of reciprocity and reference to common ideologies (e.g., Albarracín-Jordan 1996; and see, of course, the classic statement in Murra 1980), differential investment in craft production (e.g., Costin 1998; Janusek 1999), social legitimization followed by achievement of economic or material power (e.g., Hastorf 1990), promotion of labor-intensive agricultural intensification for the purpose of surplus production and extraction (e.g., Stanish 1994; and see classic statement by Wittfogel 1957), the design of architecture for the display of power and exercise of social control (Moore 1992, 1996), and so on. Paradigms are constantly changing and a comprehensive evaluation of the theoretical discourse and contributions of Andean archaeology would require a historical treatment that is beyond the scope of this introduction. We feel it is important, however, to discuss here one particular aspect of theoretical development in Andean archaeology and anthropology: the theorization of Andean culture itself.

We argued in our Preface that Central Andean civilization is unique. It is not profitably investigated from the standpoint of universalistic approaches to the

past. Rather, the understanding and/or creation of the ancient Andean past requires an archaeology that is based on thorough knowledge of Andean culture in all of its temporal and geographic permutations, informed by ethnography and archaeology from the vast sweep of human history elsewhere.

Major interpretive breakthroughs have been achieved. Early studies of economic relationships in archaic societies emphasized reciprocity and redistribution mechanisms for the development of complex political systems (e.g., Service 1962; see discussion in Earle 1997). Using these insights, John V. Murra (1972) identified an apparently unique Andean pattern of redistribution called “verticality” or “zonal complementarity.” As described by Murra, this form of social, economic and political organization promotes community self-sufficiency in the highlands through the direct control of a desired suite of spatially discontinuous resources, sometimes shared with other non-local ethnic groups. Testing of the archaeological manifestations of verticality/zonal complementarity has provided important understandings and explanations of particular Andean polities (e.g., Stanish 1992) as well as thoughtful admonitions against applications of the model without convincing documentation (Van Buren 1996).

Building on Murra’s original insight, other scholars argued that zonal complementarity was precluded by certain ecological conditions in the Andes such that other Andean alternatives were developed. One example is Browman’s (1984) Altiplano economic pattern. Another approach observed that rather than being temporally omnipresent, the direct means of control of zonal complementarity could alternate with indirect interzonal mechanisms of interethnic contact and exchange (Stanish 1992).

Maria Rostworowski (1977: 181–182, 1989 *inter alia*) has proposed that there was a distinct economic organization operative on the coast of Peru in late prehispanic times in which labor specialization created socially circumscribed professions and patterns of non-colonial commercial commodity exchange between independent polities rather than redistribution within agriculturally-based polities. Shimada (1985) argues that this important coastal variation of zonal complementarity existed in Middle Sicán society of the Lambayeque-La Leche region. He describes a large-scale organizational strategy called “horizontality” or “horizontal archipelago” by which some coastal polities—such as those of the north coast—gained economic self-sufficiency through extensive (i.e., coast-wise) horizontal access to or control of diverse resources, from off-shore all the way inland to the yunga ecological zone (Shimada 1982). Most Andeanists see a recursive and power amplifying relationship between the organization needed to carry out these long-distance strategies (whether horizontal or vertical) and the growth of sociopolitical complexity and socioeconomic stratification in archaic societies.

We caution against *imposing* interpretations onto the Andean past, whether they are the Andean institutions of Murra and Rostworowski, or derived from

general anthropological theory and approaches. Verification of archaeological inferences, with material remains, is essential if archaeologists are to create a convincing past (Isbell 1997). Andean models and Andean versions of anthropological theories should be explored and evaluated along with other potential explanations of the past.

One of the most exciting contributors to an Andean understanding of Central Andean prehistory is Tom Zuidema. In a prolific array of studies, Zuidema has presented models of Inca organization which he sees as paradigmatic, asserting that they can be extended into the more remote past (e.g., Zuidema 1972, 1992). Zuidema's (1964 *inter alia*) models of the Inca ceremonial ceque system, class system of collana, payan, and callao, calendrical rhythm based on naked-eye astronomical observations, and symbolism expressed in everything from architecture and space to textiles and headdresses provide many interpretative opportunities for archaeologists (see, especially, Isbell 1978b). Of course, we insist that material from the archaeological record must support interpretations based on Andean patterns as much as interpretations based on general anthropological understandings. But, in the long run, we believe that understanding the Andean past in Andean terms will demonstrate to anthropology the real variation in the human civilizational process.

No academic field is monolithic and Central Andean archaeology in particular has its diametrically opposed positions of method, practice, and interpretation. In contrast to the sweeping structuralism of Zuidema, another key figure in our area, John H. Rowe, has applied meticulous and particularizing attention to the history (understood in western terms) of the Inca Empire and aspects of the Inca Empire such as the decimal system, yana, land tenure, and other features of Cuzco organization (see, e.g., Rowe 1957, 1958, 1982; see also Julien 1982 *inter alia*). Rowe's landmark 1946 publication, "Inca Culture at the Time of the Spanish Conquest," is still one of the most important sources of information on the workings of Inca society and culture.

Approaching provincial Inca culture from John Rowe's historical rather than structuralist perspective, Menzel (1959) argued that the Incas confronted societies of widely varying sociopolitical organization and complexity. In response, they devised flexible forms of governance, taking into account the differing local cultural patterns and administrative natures of these enemy groups. Subsequent archaeological and ethnohistorical studies have confirmed the local patterns on the south coast that were documented by Menzel for the Guarco and Lunahuaná (Rostworowski 1989: ch. 3), Chincha (Rostworowski 1989: ch. 7), Ica (Menzel 1976), and Poroma polities (Conlee 1999). The north coast Chimú (Netherly 1984; Rowe 1948), central coast Yschma (Rostworowski 1989: ch. 2, 1999 *inter alia*), Xauxa/Huanca of the central highlands (Espinoza Soriano 1971), and Lupaqa and Colla of the altiplano (Julien 1983; Murra 1975: ch. 7) also exhibited late prehispanic organizational and administrative solutions expressing their own

traditional cultures. These cases exemplify the commonalities and variations in Andean culture and society and provide a basis for understanding significant differences in Andean sociopolitical organization and complexity that date as far back as the Late Preceramic Period (Quilter 1991; Silverman 1996).

The precocious complexity of the Late Preceramic Period grew and diversified in the Initial Period (compare, e.g., Pozorski and Pozorski 1993 to Burger and Salazar-Burger 1991), and continued in the Early Horizon, always with significant regional variation or "heterogeneity" (see Burger 1988). With the demise of Chavín, regional and intra-regional differences in culture and sociopolitical organization became even more pronounced, defining the Early Intermediate Period (e.g., Bawden 1996; Bennett and Bird 1964: 102–135; Silverman 1993). Again, despite the pervasiveness of the symbol-laden Huari and Tiwanaku corporate art styles, there were major differences in society and culture in the dominant polities of the Middle Horizon (e.g., compare Isbell 1988; Isbell and McEwan 1991; Kolata 1993 *inter alia*), let alone elsewhere in the Central Andes (see e.g., Bawden 1982).

Nevertheless, all of these societies were recognizably "Andean." At the same time, however, it must be emphasized that there was not one Andean civilization (e.g., the Egyptian, Indus and Mesopotamian models) but, rather, many (as in Mesoamerica). Thus, although the Incas were the paramount state to develop in the Central Andes, ultimately the Inca Empire was only one state and the last state, prior to which other empires, states, and less complexly organized societies flourished, each with its own trajectory of development (independent, to a greater or lesser degree, of other contemporary Andean societies) and always with discrete organizational and cultural signatures. Of interest is how different these societies could be while still retaining a culturally significant core transcending mere location in the Central Andean geographical region.

The current field of Andean archaeology has a healthy balance between processualist and postprocessualist approaches to the past, with a continuing emphasis on primary data generation. The immensity of the unknown precolumbian past of the Central Andes humbles most scholars into attention to necessary fundamental fieldwork. With enough data, resultant publications are rigorously based while also informed by holistic and judicious use of context, ethnographic and ethnohistoric analogy, and cultural theory from Anthropology and other disciplines.

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