

# THE INCAS AND THEIR ORIGINS

## SESSION ABSTRACTS

Most sessions focus on a particular region and time period. The session abstracts below serve to set out the issues to be debated in each session. In particular, the abstract aims to outline to each discipline what perspectives and insights the *other* disciplines can bring to bear on that same topic.

A session abstract tends to consist more of questions than answers, then. These are the questions that it would be useful for all participants to be thinking about in advance, so as to be ready to join in the debate on any session. And if you are the speaker giving a synopsis for that session, you may wish to start from the abstract as a guide to how to develop these questions, so as best to provoke the *cross-disciplinary* debate.

## DAY 1: TAWANTINSUYU: ITS NATURE AND IMPACTS

### A1. GENERAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE VARIOUS DISCIPLINES

This opening session serves to introduce the various sources of data on the past which together can contribute to a holistic understanding of the Incas and their origins. It serves as the opportunity for each of the various academic disciplines involved to introduce itself briefly to all the others, and for their benefit.

The synopses for this session should give just a general outline of the main types of evidence that each discipline uses to come to its conclusions about the Inca past. What is it, within each of their different records of the past, that allows the archaeologist, linguist, ethnohistorian or geneticist to draw inferences as to the nature and strength of Inca control and impacts in different regions? In particular, how can they 'reconstruct' resettlements and other population movements within Tawantinsuyu?

Also crucial — especially because specialists in other disciplines are not in a position to judge this for themselves — is to clarify how reliable are the main findings and claims that each discipline makes about the Incas. What is firmly established, and what remains debated interpretation? This calls for honesty from each discipline about what it does *not* know, and the weaknesses of its evidence, as well as its strengths. This should also help identify how those respective strengths and weaknesses across the various disciplines can most constructively dovetail and complement each other.

## A2. ECUADOR: INCL. SCALE OF DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT, AND AN INCA EXPLANATION FOR ECUADOR 'QUICHUA'?

By the time of the Inca Civil War of the early 1530s, Quito province had come to rival, and ultimately defeat, even the Cuzco 'faction'. What does this tell us of the nature and strength of Inca rule in Ecuador, and indeed of the Empire itself? More specifically, is it well grounded to deduce from the archaeological and historical records that Inca impact was especially strong and significant in Ecuador, compared to many other regions of Tawantinsuyu?

In what sense did Ecuador come to constitute a second Inca court, even a "Constantinople to Cuzco's Rome"? Within Ecuador, what were the respective roles of Quito and Tumibamba? And how starkly did Inca impacts differ from the coastal lowlands to the highlands to the Oriente?

To what extent had Inca rule here entailed the movement of populations into Ecuador from other parts of Tawantinsuyu? What can we say of the scale of such incoming populations (including mitmaquna, armies, etc.), relative to local ones? And what can we say of where those incoming populations originated from?

Might such movements be detectable in the genetic record? How significant would a population movement have to have been, or how genetically distinctive, in order for any signal to be detectable? Might the revolutionary possibilities of genome-wide, ancient DNA and the latest 'Geographic Population Structure' analysis give us the resolution to start answering such questions? What might we infer from some apparent continuity in highland ethnic identities, despite them all ultimately switching language to Quechua? Might some trace of this switch be detectable, by comparing matches and mismatches between genetic and linguistic lineages?

Highland Ecuador is striking as a strongly Quechua-speaking region, in contrast to almost all of northern Peru, and elsewhere in Ecuador itself. (Quechua in the Oriente seems to date to a post-Inca expansion.) What should other disciplines make of these contrasts? How and when did this Quechua reach Ecuador, and from where? Does the strength of *Inca* impact in Ecuador offer a much more plausible real-world context than the traditional view (Chincha trade in the LIP)? What do the characteristics of Ecuador Quechua suggest as most likely source populations and social/demographic scenarios?

## A3. RESETTLEMENTS (?) IN NORTHERN PERU: INCL. CHACHAPOYAS, CAJAMARCA, 'CAÑARIS'

Several disciplines seem to have independent grounds for imagining that Northern Peru may make for a particularly useful and promising test-case for attempting to pinpoint specific resettlements during the Inca period. By combining those different perspectives, might the cross-disciplinary whole make for a stronger, clearer picture than the sum of its independent disciplinary parts?

Historical accounts (but how reliable?) have a Chanka cacique defecting from Tupaq's army, escaping with his people and the Chanka army to Chachapoyas. Is there anything in the archaeological record that might correspond — or what other scenario(s) might it suggest? Chachapoyas is also home to isolated Quechua-speaking pockets, rare in northern Peru, and obviously 'intrusive' here.

Similar questions surround the Cañari, from the reported ‘genocide’ ordered by Atahualpa to the putative link between their ‘Cañar’ in south-central Ecuador, and the ‘Cañaris’ district of highland Lambayeque in Peru. The latter is another small Quechua-speaking pocket, while others lie near Cajamarca. What scenarios are we to infer from their linguistic idiosyncrasies, which make it hard to judge where exactly to place these varieties within the wider Quechua family?

How do these various locations fit geographically with networks of roads, trade and state/military structures in Tawantinsuyu, or perhaps even earlier? What might targeted genetic studies be able to bring us, in these test-cases that seem to offer unusually precise indications of specific population resettlements?

#### A4A. COAST VS. HIGHLANDS VS. AMAZONIA:

##### SCALE AND NATURE OF INCA IMPACTS IN DIFFERENT ECOLOGICAL REGIONS

How different in nature were Inca political strategies — and degree of control — on the Pacific coast, and in the Andean highlands? Illustrations include the contrasts between regions such as Chimor vs. Cajamarca, Chíncha vs. Huancavelica, and coastal vs. highland Ecuador.

Can we tell whether Inca population resettlement policy took ecological level into account in its resettlement policy? Can genetics detect any (perseverance of?) population differences between coast and highlands?

How might such perspectives be enriched by, but also help explain, language distributions? Even under the Incas, Quechua remained essentially a highland language — except for the disputed case of Chíncha. What do historical sources reliably say on how far Quechua was really a native language of the south-central coast?

Similar questions apply to the contrasts between the highlands and the eastern lowlands — at least in the few regions where the latter fell within the Inca orbit at all.

#### A4B. A REGIONAL CASE-STUDY ON INCA IMPACTS: THE VALLE DEL MANTARO

The Valle del Mantaro makes for an ideal cross-disciplinary case-study on Inca impacts. It is one of precious few regions for which there exists high resolution archaeological evidence to track the impact of Inca expansion upon how highland societies had lived here during the Late Intermediate Period. There are also documentary sources to draw on, including local ethnohistories and detailed identifications of population groups, including some resettled by the Incas out of the valley into other specified parts of Tawantinsuyu, and outsider groups brought into the Mantaro region. Those accounts have in turn inspired research on possible corresponding effects in the linguistic record, in the shape of certain highly distinctive characteristics to be found in various Quechua (sub-)dialects spoken in the Mantaro region, and which may also be diagnostic of distinct population origins.

Together, what do these sources tell us of how radical a change Inca rule may have brought to the scale and nature of societies here? What is the evidence that a ‘pax incaica’ brought about changes in settlement patterns, and did those changes allow local populations to grow? How much accuracy can we aspire to in

estimating past population sizes, even in such cases where the archaeological record has been studied so intensively? Do the archaeological data challenge the ethnohistorical sources, or corroborate and complement them?

Crucially, for all of the above, can we judge how typical the Valle del Mantaro may have been of the Andean highlands more widely? Over what geographical or ecological areas might we presume that incorporation into Tawantinsuyu brought similar impacts?

## A5. THE CUZCO REGION: IMPACTS ON THE INCA HOMELAND ITSELF

### — E.G. POPULATIONS RESETTLED INTO THE REGION

Was Cuzco a prototypical urban settlement, or a distinctly unusual one? Did it primarily concentrate elite, religious and administrative infrastructure and residences, with a relative small and 'top heavy' social and demographic profile? Is standard thinking right to assume significant populations resettled to the city, and the wider Cuzco region: labourers to build infrastructure (e.g. Sacsayhuamán), *kamayuyq* craftspeople, *mitmaquna*, Inca *yanakuna* retainers, conquered elite hostages and their attendants, potentially rebellious groups uprooted to be better controlled in the Inca heartland, and so on. How significant was the combined demographic impact of all such incoming populations, relative to the original local population? Is it valid to assume that their role would have made the city and region a special case within Tawantinsuyu, where incomers would have formed an especially high proportion of the population, and from an especially wide range of home regions? (Or does that also apply to other specific sites across Tawantinsuyu, such as Huánuco Pampa?)

Would such Inca policies not also have entailed the Cuzco region's population being especially mixed and heterogeneous? Could signals of that heterogeneity be detectable genetically? Or do early accounts of traditional regional dress codes being maintained within Cuzco indicate that segregation continued? Is there evidence from any disciplines of which other regions of Tawantinsuyu might have provided the most or least demographic input to Cuzco? And did early Spanish colonial population movements to Cuzco also confuse the picture related to us in the chronicles?

All of these considerations would have impacted upon language in the Cuzco region. How would they have affected the demographic balance between speakers of Quechua, and of other languages? And depending on the balance of incoming populations from regions that were or were not Quechua-speaking, how would that have shaped the nature of the Cuzco dialect? Is traditional thinking on its origins, and all that has been inferred from them, really in line with what we know of demographic impacts in the region from the archaeological and historical records?

## A6. THE TITICACA BASIN: INCL. WHAT ROLE FOR THE INCAS IN RESHAPING DEMOGRAPHY, ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE(S)?

The Titicaca basin is close to Cuzco geographically, relatively easily reached, and indeed prominent in Inca cosmology and origin myths. Moreover, as one of the first regions to be incorporated into the Empire, Inca presence and influence here were especially long-lasting by the standards of most of Tawantinsuyu. How confident can we be in the traditional chronology of conquest here, however? Might it have begun here significantly earlier than the Rowe chronology suggests? And do historical accounts of the relationships between the Incas and Altiplano groups such as the Colla fit with interpretations from the archaeological record?

Do these considerations make it valid to consider the Titicaca Basin a 'core' region, more intensely integrated into Tawantinsuyu than most others? Are we to expect especially strong impacts here? Is there any evidence of significant demographic intrusion from the Cuzco region into the Altiplano, to consolidate a restive province?

Or on the contrary, was the Altiplano a 'loyal' backyard which therefore called for less 'interference' from Cuzco? From the archaeological and historical records, should we infer that Inca rule would have left genetic, ethnic and linguistic patterns in the Titicaca Basin relatively unchanged, at least by the standards of other regions of the empire such as Ecuador?

## A7. THE FAR SOUTH: COCHABAMBA, NORTH-WEST ARGENTINA, CHILE

How intense was Inca presence in each of these regions? Again, did it begin significantly earlier than the Rowe chronology suggests? To what extent, and where more precisely, might Tawantinsuyu have shaped genetic and linguistic patterns here? What evidence is there for resettlements in these regions, and for where they originated from? Might some impacts traditionally assumed as a legacy of the Incas in fact result from the colonial era instead?

In Bolivia, the local Quechua seems fairly directly derived from that of the Cuzco region, but curiously leapfrogged the Titicaca Basin into areas further south (Potosí) and east (Cochabamba). How significant was Inca impact in the Cochabamba region, and how far eastwards did it reach, towards the lowlands? How tightly was this region integrated into the Inca economic and political system, or was it principally a military 'march'? By comparison, was there any significant Inca impact in the Potosí region, or was it the Spanish mining draft that determined the current linguistic and genetic picture?

Were northern Chile and northwest Argentina just remote provinces, conquered but only weakly integrated into the empire? Did the Quechua-speaking pocket in Santiago del Estero lie beyond the imperial frontier in any case, a relic of early Spanish explorations instead?

## DAY 2: IMMEDIATE ORIGINS: CUZCO AND AROUND DURING THE LATE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD, AND THE RISE OF THE INCAS

### B1. IN AND AROUND CUZCO: FROM ARCHAEOLOGY TO ETHNOLINGUISTIC GROUPS?

For the Late Intermediate (and early Inca) Period in the 'Greater Cuzco region', in what respects do the historical and archaeological records concur, or conflict? In particular, do the traditional (historical) chronologies of early Inca conquest (and re-conquest) of territories closest to Cuzco seem reliable, or does it seem more plausible that they stretched back significantly further into the LIP?

Are there clear continuities or discontinuities in the archaeological record (e.g. at Choquepuquio) that might also be reflected in the ethnic, linguistic or genetic records? Can any clear changes be detected in settlement patterns and demography, for example? Was the rise of the Incas to predominance supported by particular demographic strength? What impacts might be expected from our growing understanding of the local palaeoclimate during this period?

How reliably can we identify ethnic or sociopolitical groups in historical accounts, reconstruct their geographical distributions, and match them with patterns in the archaeological record, or linguistic identities? Is the Killke style, for instance, a marker of early Inca development, or not? What in the other disciplines might corroborate or challenge standard thinking in linguistics that the Cuzco region saw a complex 'language stratigraphy': clear signs of early Aymara (and even some Puquina) presence, but over time an increasing predominance of Quechua.

### C1. WHO AND WHERE WERE THE CHANKA?

The Chanka well illustrate how different disciplines can tell very different tales: Inca (mytho-)history tends to assign to the Chanka far greater significance than the archaeological record seems to merit. How can we resolve these disputes into a scenario compatible with (re-)interpretations of both records together?

Where was the heartland of the Chanka? What was the geographical extent of the Chanka 'confederation', who did it bring together, and to what end did it exist — if it did at all? Was Chanka development shaped by significant changes in the palaeo-environmental context, and can we take those as a proxy for similar changes in the nearby Cuzco region at the same period? What was the real scale, strength and impact of the Chanka in territories further afield, especially in the Cuzco region? In particular, how are we to conceive of the Chanka by comparison to the growing power and reach of the Incas in the LIP?

These are key questions for language prehistory too, since traditional thinking has held that Quechua first reached the Cuzco region only at this very late stage, and specifically identified the Chanka and Chincha (see next session) as the forces that carried and spread it there. This relies heavily on a face-value interpretation of early Inca (mytho-)history, however. From an archaeological perspective, this risks attributing far too much

impact to Chanka and Chinchá in the Cuzco region, at precisely the period when expansive impacts were flowing predominantly in the reverse direction: an increasing projection of power *out* of Cuzco.

Linguistic analyses themselves offer further perspectives on ethnic and genetic patterns and identities. The Quechua of Andahuaylas is a 'half-way-house' in showing some degree of recent Aymara impacts that are absent in Ayacucho, but especially strong in Cuzco and Puno. But do present-day populations' linguistic (and genetic?) patterns still reflect continuity back to the Inca and LIP? And what can we glean from Chanka placenames, and the personal names of Chanka rulers as richly documented in mytho-histories?

## C2. CHINCHA: THE CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY OF CHINCHA INTERACTIONS WITH THE INCAS, CHANKA AND OTHERS

What was the nature of the coastal Chinchá polity in the Late Intermediate Period? On the standard interpretation, as the hub of a trading network, how extensive was that network? Was it primarily maritime or terrestrial? What was Chinchá trading, and with whom? How well-founded is the standard interpretation in any case? What, if any, was Chinchá's ability to project power?

Was Chinchá part of the Chanka federation? Can we attribute to Chinchá some significant impact on the Cuzco region, as traditional explanations for the spread of Quechua (QIIb/c) here would have it (see session C1)? And as the Incas expanded, what was Chinchá's relationship with them? Were they valued allies (Rostworowski), or enemies of the Inca crushed by Pachakutiq (Cobo)?

How should one best distinguish the LIP coastal polity of Chinchá, and the far wider scope of the 'Chinchay-suyu' of the chronicles? The official *lingua franca* of Tawantinsuyu was not Cuzco Quechua but Chinchay Quechua — but what does that really refer to?

Originally, Chinchá was also invoked as having spread Quechua to *highland* Ecuador by *maritime* trade, and leapfrogging the north coast of Peru, but is this hypothesis still tenable, as opposed to some form of Inca explanation (session A1)? Could genetics shed any light on an input from the Chinchá region into the Ecuadoran highlands?

## D1. THE ROLE OF PASTORALISM, AND THE WARI-LLAQWASH RELATIONSHIP

The nature of the relationship between agriculturalist and pastoralist lifeways takes on special relevance in the Andean context. Firstly, it seems to make a close *prima facie* fit with the much-discussed and quintessentially Andean social structures based around dualism, complementarity and reciprocity. Secondly, ecology and topography here conspire to alternate endlessly the ideal contexts for each: mid-altitudes suited to the one hugely productive cereal crop here, maize; and higher altitudes that offer ideal grazing for camelids, complemented by the crucial local domesticated, tubers. Through a large part of the Andean world, different but complementary subsistence regimes, and the people that live by them, have long co-existed cheek-by-jowl, across just a few hundred metres of altitude difference. Pastoralism, moreover, is a clear candidate for facilitating the dispersal of population groups over great distances, and contacts between them and more

sedentary, local populations. (Pastoralism is often invoked worldwide to account for long-range dispersals and contacts of languages too, for instance.)

However attractive in principle, though, a reappraisal of the role of pastoralism in the Andes is essential for our cross-disciplinary purposes. How significant really was this way of life, by comparison with maize agriculture? Both in demographic terms, and socio-politically, were pastoral populations really an equal complement to maize-farming groups? How may the balance have changed through time?

There are many instances of Andean societies structured into two different moieties, but is there clear evidence that ethnological and linguistic identities may have followed a 'wari-llaqwash' divide specifically? In particular, how widespread across the Andes, and at which periods, is the evidence for a 'wari-llaqwash' relationship? Is it helpful to presume a simple general equation of wari maize-farmer groups speaking Quechua, and llaqwash pastoralists Aymara? Might this help explain the pattern of Aymara in the Titicaca Basin, curiously leapfrogged by Quechua heading into lower-lying regions such as Cochabamba? Is there any evidence that Inca expansion and resettlement policy followed a 'wari-llaqwash' logic in which populations were moved where?

Also, might a 'wari-llaqwash' relationship help explain the defining characteristic of the Quechua of the Cuzco-Puno-Arequipa region: especially intense and *recent* interaction with Aymara?

## D2. OVER THE VILCANOTA PASS: TO/FROM TITICACA?

From Vilcanota to the Titicaca Basin, various small-scale polities of the Late Intermediate Period have traditionally been referred to, not least by archaeologists, as the 'Aymara kingdoms'. Linguistic and historical evidence, however, suggests that the Colla, for one, did not speak Aymara at all, but the now extinct Puquina. Indeed, linguistics has long been confident that Aymara did not originate in the Titicaca Basin, had reached the region at most just a few centuries before the historical period began, and was not the language of Tiyawanaku. So is the very concept of 'Aymara kingdoms' useful, or simply an anachronism, taking present-day language distribution to reflect that of six to ten centuries ago, before Inca and Spanish rule so muddied the waters here?

What can we reliably reconstruct of ethnolinguistic identities in the region in the centuries following the Tiyawanaku 'collapse'? Have the Uru, for instance, left any identifiable archaeological or genetic trace? What geographical and demographic scales did societies reach here in the LIP? Were their interactions marked by incessant conflict? Or are there significant shared characteristics — a 'chullpa horizon'? — that imply some broad unity on some levels at least?

Is it possible to detect any significant cultural or even demographic movements or expansions? Is there a clear direction? In particular, did LIP groups from the Titicaca Basin impact in any way on the Cuzco region, or vice versa? The traditional linguistic hypothesis to explain how Aymara first reached the Altiplano was that it spread south-eastwards over the Vilcanota during the LIP. But is there really anything in the archaeological record that would fit this scenario? Or do we have to wait until early Inca expansion to find a plausible candidate for a significant impact out of Cuzco into the Titicaca Basin? And what of the reverse direction: Colla/Puquina impacts into the Cuzco region, as some kind of formative input to the rise of the Incas themselves?



## DAY 3: DEEPER ORIGINS IN THE MIDDLE HORIZON?

### E1. DEEPER ORIGINS: A TIYAWANAKU CONNECTION?

Various disciplines each offer their own faint hints of a putative link from the Inca heartland in Cuzco back to earlier origins in Lake Titicaca and even Tiyawanaku. Among the various mytho-histories of Inca origins are of course those that make explicit reference to Lake Titicaca. Curious similarities in architecture and stoneworking have long been noted between Tiyawanaku and some sites in the Inca heartland. What accounts for such similarities: the Incas' own provenience, or their later co-option of specialist stonemasons? Indeed, might architecture and stoneworking styles even serve as proxy evidence on population movements, as exemplified by the 'Chachapoyan' stonework found at Choquequirao?

Linguistics, meanwhile, suggests that Puquina was not only the main language of Tiyawanaku, but possibly also of the earliest Inca elite, with relics still detectable in the sacred and 'institutional' vocabulary of the Incas. Appeal has even been made to certain genetic data, too, as compatible with such a connection.

In each field individually, the hints seem tantalising, but are hardly deemed strong or clear-cut enough on their own to convince. A Titicaca origin of the Incas remains far from enshrined as standard thinking in any discipline. What, though, if all these indications, based on data and methodologies from multiple independent fields, are taken together? Does the sum of the disciplines greatly strengthen the case? Or are we just "building on each other's myths", as well as those of the Incas?

Can we add any further perspectives that have not yet been brought to bear on this hypothesis? What can we tell of demographics on the Altiplano following the Tiyawanaku collapse? Are archaeologists (and palaeoclimatologists?) getting closer to understanding the true extent and context of that collapse, and whether it could plausibly have provoked some long-range exodus, or created a demographic vacuum to be filled from without? Is it feasible that even genetics could contribute, through genome-wide or ancient DNA analysis? Have mytho-historians reinterpreted the chronicles, in the light of the latest perspectives from the other disciplines?

### E2. DEEPER ORIGINS: A WARI CONNECTION?

Parallels have long been claimed between the Inca Late Horizon and Wari Middle Horizon. But on what levels might Wari be explicitly seen as not just a forerunner to Tawantinsuyu, but even a source of direct inputs to the Cuzco region that contributed to the genesis of the early Inca state? Archaeologists have pointed to the road network and other infrastructure works built through Wari state organisation long before the Incas took them to even greater scales. More recently, carbon dating has confirmed the chronology of the Wari *kipu*, too, adding to the renewed debate on Wari as a highly plausible candidate for the main expansion phase of the Quechua and/or Aymara language families.

What were the nature and scale of Wari impacts in the greater Cuzco region? How long-lasting was Wari presence, influence or even control here? How late did it continue, and what does the archaeological record tell us of continuities and discontinuities from Wari collapse into the Late Intermediate Period?

Sites such as Pikillaqta and Huaro presumably reflect at least *some* movement of population into the Cuzco region from the Wari heartland. But how significant was any such demographic input likely to have been, relative to the existing population here? Or does the archaeological record imply that Wari impacts would have been essentially limited to the cultural rather than the demographic level?

The many, well-known pre-Columbian infrastructure works throughout greater Cuzco would at some stage have raised the region's agricultural production and demographic carrying capacity. But is it possible to firmly identify which were first built when? How much might date back to the Middle Horizon, as the work of Wari state organisation here too?

To reconstruct language prehistory, the challenge is to identify which expansive phenomenon makes for the most plausible driver to explain how and when Aymara, and particularly Quechua, were first brought into the Cuzco region. For those questions, how do the impacts of Wari here rate alongside those of the Chíncha and Chanka in the LIP?