

**PROCREATIVE ICONS: ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY
in Pre-Columbian Art from Peru to Argentina**

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Curriculum Description: A power point survey of evolving statements about women, nature and spirituality from the prehistoric to Inka cultural eras of Peru and Argentina.

This presentation was designed for "Humanities 1A: Human Values in the Arts-Ancient to Late Medieval Culture" and "Humanities 1B: Human Values in the Arts-Renaissance through Contemporary Culture." The curriculum project features an emphasis on women's issues offered at West Valley College, Saratoga, California.

Visual images that accompany the lecture are indicated numerically.

Objective: What can we learn about shifts in cultural values by studying transformational images of women in art across the pre-Columbian aesthetic timelines of Peru and Argentina? How can analysis of these images in a historical context give us a deeper understanding of sources, sometimes conflicting, that define the basis of cultural values? How can images of women in art in general be deciphered as symbols of socio-political issues that face countries such as Peru and Argentina today, even the U.S.?

Thesis: Surveying cultural trends during the "5 fingers of empire building" in Peru and in indigenous phases of northwest Argentina during the same period, images of women in art, myth and life can provide a deeper reading about values these societies embraced. Three main stylistic themes emerge in the visual arts that define these values:

1. REALISM in art that reveals early forms of consumerism in the biological environment.
2. ABSTRACTION in monumental architecture that facilitates state theocracy and super empire building.
3. FANTASY in ceramic painting that positions the individual in a poetic nature.

1. REALISM : Early Consumerism and the Biological Environment

The prehistoric cultural development of Peru culminated in the “5 fingers of empire building” in a profoundly diverse ecological terrain ranging from arid coastal deserts with no rain to grassy highlands of varying altitudes to dense Amazonian cloud forests.

#1 map of Peru’s three ecological regions

In chronological order the “5 fingers” include:

Chavin de Huantar (800-400 BC) - first state situated next to the Cordillera Blanca.

Moche (100 BC-500/600 AD) - first state along the northern coast with its Sipán pyramid burials.

Nazca (100 BC-500/600 AD) - first state along the southern coast.

Huari (550-900 AD) - first empire in Peru, radiating from the Ayacucho highlands (Late kingdoms and states: 900-1400 A.D.).

Inka (1200-1532 AD) - the empire consists of 4 regions, ultimately radiating north and south from Cuzco.

The importance of coastal rivers in Peru bringing water to the dry coastal desert, both from Amazonian tributaries and Andean rain/snow fall to greenbelts which end at the Pacific cannot be underestimated. Most of the prehistoric cultures that provided the base for the “5 fingers of empire building,” sprang up along these numerous mini-Mesopotamian habitats. Situated as they were in arid deserts, technological opportunities were ultimately developed for two opposite enterprises - lush agricultural projects through irrigation hydraulics and mummification burials and pyramid construction in drier zones. Prehistoric Peruvian coastal irrigation and mummification find a model in Pharoanic Egypt - although very different in technique - whose cultural rituals were based on the rhythms of Osiris,

fertility god of the Nile. So, the life-giving waters and the journey of death are articulated in many Peruvian prehistoric and empire building rituals - reflecting a concern for the procreative source of abundance and its counterpoint, scarcity.

#2 map of major Peruvian coastal rivers & ecological divisions

In a stark prehistoric clay figure of a woman from the Lower Formative Period, 1,200 B.C., we can already see the seeds of a precursor of realism, an interest in an aspect of humanistic physiognomy and anatomy which is individualistic and tries to capture the essence of the sitter. The figure's naturalistic portrait provokes questions about the role of realism in Peruvian sculptural ceramics: Did realism develop aesthetically on a par with designing more realistic workable relationships with the natural environment (i.e., functional irrigation systems, pragmatic architecture and more efficient mummification methodologies)? "Curayacu Venus" was found in the fishing village of Curaycau, south of Lima, and is conceived in the shape of the body of a fish. "Venus," a western art history term, connotes the Roman goddess Venus, an archetype of female fertility.

#3 "Curayacu Venus," Lower Formative period, National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History (MNAAH), Lima

By 900 B.C., the bodies of women begin to be used as generous ceramic vase forms, not only as receptacles for fluids and possible libations, but depicted in every-day life narratives such as hair-dressing in this Chongoyape style bottle. The "Chongoyape woman" does not stand straight, forward-looking, as the "Curayacu Venus." She hints at changing social interests and a society perhaps becoming more interested in the daily acts of living in a more materialistic society. During the period this bottle was created, the Cupisnique, or Middle Formative Period, the spider appears as an important divinatory deity whose role was to intervene in ritual activities of fertility and fruitfulness of the land. Among the North American Navajo, Spiderwoman is credited with creating the world by weaving it into existence. Middle Formative women experimented with cosmetology and weaving new hairstyles as well as with producing increasingly complex textiles.

#4 "Chongoyape woman," Middle Formative period, MNAAH, Lima

#5 Drawing of carved steatite bowl with supernatural spider features,
Middle Formative period

From the Paracas Necropolis Period, 700-200 B.C., an era whose mythology and biological orientation toward nature will inform the ensuing Nazca culture, we find intricate textiles - made of camelid, wool and cotton - in the form of mantles an average of 2 ½ meters in length and embroidered with small polychrome repetitive motifs of mythological beings and geometric designs derived from biology. These textile mantles were used in funerary rituals to dress mummies, both male and female, whose bones were arranged in flexed positions and seated in large baskets. Packaged in padded bundles and decorated with a mantle, the whole funerary ensemble represents the configuration of an abundantly-shaped mountain. Mountains in the actual landscape, we shall soon see, were venerated as a source of life-giving water.

#6 Funerary bundle showing corpse covered with embroidered mantle,
and the bundle unpacked, revealing the corpse seated flexed position

The impressive range of textile colors during this period include the use of up to 130 different dye types to depict morphological embroidered forms referencing a heightened awareness of living in a natural world of abundance. Artists' acute observations of marine and land creatures are portrayed in vivid color combinations that retain minute anatomical features. Paracas textiles -which precede the monumental Nazca line drawings - feature exquisitely small line motifs woven with the care of a Persian miniature painter. Taken in together in one encompassing glance - anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, phytomorphic, ornithomorphic and even bicephalus embroidered abstract images - they suggest a fecund world of wizardry and magical nature beyond the warrior world of trophy quest and empire building also occurring at this time. Many paracas textiles were woven by women, women who would later produce more formal textiles as "mamcuna," chosen ones, for ritual offerings to deities at sacred temples throughout the Inka empire.

#7 Detail of Paracas textile with anthropomorphic and ornithomorphic
images, Amano Museum, Lima

These highly-valued and enchanting textiles were also created by women to cover bodies of loved ones, who were in turn, refashioned into the form of

the archetypal “world mountain,” giver of life and a natural earth form which is the container of springs and tree root systems that trap water. Tears were sometimes painted on mummy faces to emphasize the symbol of water and overflowing sorrow of those left behind.

- #8 Paracas person with main rank ornaments, Museo de Oro, Lima, Peru
- #9 Paracas wool textile with embroidery, ringed technique and fringes representing bicephalous serpent motifs, MNAAH, Lima
- #10 Paracas Necrópolis style cotton and wool textile embroidered with flowers, MNAAH, Lima

While abstract images of women packaged as mummy bundles in the shape of mountains figure prominently in Paracas burials, the Moche culture will see increasingly realistic portrayals of women in ceramics. A materialistic empire-oriented warrior culture, the Moche seem fond of depicting narratives, not only of daily life routines, but reveal a keen interest in exploring a visual repertoire of sexual activity on their pottery. Only two fundamental colors, red and white, were used and the stirrup-spout was a common feature of decorated Moche pots. Molds at this time were used for large-scale production for an increasingly consumer-oriented society with a war-based economy. With its prisoners of war walking perpetually in the background on temple walls, one wonders about the relationship of erotica on display in a society based on material abundance.

Love is at the origin of life. If the mountain is the macrocosmic life origin form, the female body is the microcosmic field of union. The Moche portrayed many positions of lovemaking without prudery and probably enjoyed collecting and using these pots in their consumer society.

- #11 Moche stirrup handle vessel, 200 A.D, Museo Larco, Lima
- #12 Moche stirrup handle vessel, National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology and History of Peru (MNAAH), Lima
- #13 Detail from Moche vessel, Museo Larco, Lima
- #14 Moche culture, 500 A.D., Museo Larco, Lima

Motherhood is depicted in equal realistic detail in the Lambayeque Valley style, a neighboring culture, not only in female anatomical detail, but in the prototype of feminine beauty and later, in abundant full-bodied ceramic jars

in the shape of abundant "mountainous" motherhood.

#15 "Venus de Frías," Lambayeque, Brüning Museum, Lambayeque

#16 Seated figure with child, Lambayeque, Museo Larco, Lima

Not to be outdone by the Moche - who developed parallel with the Nazca culture - further images of women in childbirth, even the initial stages of childbirth, are portrayed in intricate line work inherited from the preceding Paracas culture. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic details of Paracas textiles

simultaneously decorate and provide divine protection for the body of this pregnant women in labor in the form of a ceramic jar.

#17 Nazca effigy pot, Amano Museum, Lima

While the Moche and Nazca were expanding their empires in a greater consolidation of power, the Nazca became increasingly obsessed with spanning larger physical spaces in order to connect with geographic sites of power in nature related to fertility. The earth lines at Nazca can be interpreted as playing a direct role in a mountain fertility cult. Ethnographic information we have concerning straight lines (pathways) in other areas of the Andes demonstrates that they were often related to mountain worship. In Bolivia and in northern Chile long straight lines frequently lead to hilltops. And in Bolivia sacred lines also lead to points from which mountains are worshipped.

#18 Nazca lines, Cerro Unitas, Chile

Mountain gods are the most important of the traditional Andean deities. Further in this survey, we will address the importance of "apus," mountains as "living beings" among the Incas and the "qhapaq ucha" ceremony which offered young adolescent virgin mummies to mountain shrines. Today in northwest Argentina, images of Catholic virgins are still carried to mountain tops in Tilcara in the Quebrada de Humahuaca region.

Nazca lines often intersect with critical places in their irrigation system similar to the practice at Cusco where lines led to irrigation canals. At Nazca, the majority of lines seem to lead to places of worship and are not in themselves pointing at anything on the celestial horizon. The belief that

deities residing in mountains control meteorological phenomena has a sound ecological basis since rivers originate from mountains as well as rain, snow and clouds. Ceremonies honoring these deities must have been of prime importance to the Nazca as little rain fell in their geographical terrain.

#19 Nazca lines, southern Peru

#20 Nazca lines, southern Peru

#21 Nazca lines, southern Peru

The Nazca were not the only culture to create pathway lines intersecting with strategic “acequias,” irrigation canals, or mountain spring sites. Radiating from Cuzco, the axis mundi city of the Inca Empire, pathway lines culminated at over 300 ritual sites used for oracular divination. Lakes, springs, rocks, mountains and caves were all regarded by various Peruvian tribes as “paccaristas,” places where their ancestors had originally come into the upper world. The paccarista was usually saluted with the cry;

“Thou art my birthplace, thou art my life spring.

Guard me from evil, o paccarista.”

(Spence, The Myths of Mexico and Peru)

A spirit inhabiting the sacred site served the tribe as an oracle. Paccaristas were shown great reverence as life centers for tribes. Offerings given in the hopes of avoiding scarcity of water and ensuring agricultural abundance.

#22 Map of Cuzco lines to “huacas,” sacred places with transcendent power, in the environment around Cuzco

Spirits instrumental in aiding the growth of maize and other plants were called “mamas,” a widely accepted concept in South American countries. Peruvians called these agents “mothers” adding to the generic name the name of the plant or herb with which it was associated, i.e. "assumamama" - potato mother, "quinuamama" - quinoa mother; “saramama” - maize mother, and “cocamama" - mother of the coca shrub. Of these saramama was one of the most important as the governing principle of the community’s food source. In Inka times saramama was either carved in stone or fashioned in gold or silver in the image of an ear of corn.

All objects of reverence were known as “huacas” from the root “huacan,” to howl, an indigenous oral ritual taking the form of a howl or dirge-like wailing. “Huacas” came in many forms, the most popular of which were of the fetish class. Huaca fetishes were small portable objects capable of being carried by the worshipper or given as votive offerings to a larger sacred site. The ear of maize and the llama (many times, mummified fetuses) were the most popular forms of the smaller fetishistic huacas. Placed in proximity to acequias, they provided a supernatural insurance policy for delivery of the water supply to maize fields therefore diverting scarcity of parched fields.

#23 Maize stalk with cobs, gold, Inka, Staatliche Museum, Berlin, Germany

#24 Maize stalk with cobs, hammered copper, Inka, Denver Art Museum, Colorado

#25 Artist drawing of llama fetus offering in Inka Museum, Cuzco

One of the most compelling depictions of biological abundance for a huaca site which became a temple compound is the “Pachacamac” idol. Pre-Inca Peruvians believed that all things emanated from Pachacamac, the all pervading spirit who provided plants and animals with souls. The earth herself was designated as “Pachamama” (earth mother). Pachacamac is more the maker who infuses the vital breath of life into living forms.

“Because they even thought there is one that is the maker whom they call Virachoch Pachayachacchic, that says he is the maker of the world, and they have him as the one who made the sun and everything else that is created on heaven and earth ... it was called Pachacamac, the giver of being to the world.”

(Spanish chronicler Juan de Betancos, 1551)

This conception of Pachacamac was only involved in later Inca times. In Inca prayers to him we read expressions indicating that Peruvian consciousness had grasped the idea of a creator capable of evolving matter out of nothingness.

“Let a man be,” “Let a woman be,” and “the creative word.”

(Spence, The Myths of Mexico and Peru)

#26 The Pachacamac Idol, Ichimay Culture, 1100-1532 A.D.,
Pachacamac Archaeological Museum
#27 Detail of Pachacamac Idol

Yet the image of Pachacamac has a possible androgynous meaning. Creation also requires sustenance. Images of multiple life growth forms permeate its base and culminate in ears of corn and maize stalks on its crown. Its oracular ability is apparent in its duality: Male/female (creator, corn, and earth as source) and the potential for seeing in opposite directions (past and future) are symbolized in the details of the staff's imagery. The carved wooden image

is inextricably connected to its female protagonist myth gathered around 1617 by the Catholic priest Lusi de Ternel in a campaign to eradicate idolatry. Initially, the myth addresses the theme of food scarcity:

“In the beginning of the world when there was no food, Pachacamac created a man and a woman. The man died of hunger. Desperate, the woman pleads to the Sun, father of Pachacamac, for fruits to sustain her . The Sun gets her pregnant in turn. Jealous of this intervention, Pachacamac kills the son of the Sun and the woman, cutting him into little pieces and planting the teeth of the dead boy from corn grew.”

(Ravines, Pachacamac)

As a hero-creator of earth, Pachacamac was the husband of “Mamachocha,” goddess of the sea. He was not a god that protected against natural disasters or that prevented scarcity. As a cause of natural phenomena, the deity was a personage to be pleased in order to avoid its rage.

Ancient Peruvians also worshipped “Mamachocha” as well as “Pachamama.” Coastal people honored the sea as a source of beneficence and bounty, Mamachocha was called Mother Sea as she yielded subsistence in the form of fish. In particular, the whale was revered for its abundant size. The sea symbolizes an embracing protective power in the continuation of the Pachacamac myth:

“... one day the woman, carrying the memory of her son,

appeals to the Sun for revenge. It recreates Vichama (her son) who proceeds to travel the world. In his absence, Pachacamac kills the mother. Vichama returns and reviving his mother chases Pachacamac to kill him. Pachacamac is able to save himself by flinging his body into the sea at the place where his temple is.”

(Ravines, Pachacamac)

Another myth has a woman and her son fleeing into the sea where they turn into offshore islands that are in close proximity to the Pachacamac temple site.

#28 Painted Temple, Pachacamac

#29 Artist rendition of Pachacamac offshore islands

Pachacamac is apparently a regional version of Virachocha into which heroes of other civilizations were rehashed. A very ancient cult, its image can be identified with the “Dios de las Vargas,” gods of the sticks of Chavin whose representation reached its apogee during the Huari-Tiahuanaco period.

Taking the staff deity further, lake worship at Lake Titicaca was expressed in an abundant staff shaped deity called “Mamacota,” Mother Water, as a food source. Venerated as a giver of fish, two great stone huacas were connected with lake worship at Titicaca. One called “Copacahuana,” made of bluish-green stone shaped like a fish with a human head was placed in a commanding position on the shores of the lake. So deeply rooted was the worship of this goddess that the Spaniards, on arrival, could only suppress it by raising an image of the Catholic virgin in its place.

While Pachacamac is the animating spirit of earth - derived from the word “pacha,” translated as “things” - the world of biological forms and their ontological bedplate is “Mamapacha,” Earth Mother. Ancient Peruvians worshipped the earth under this name. Pachacamac is not the earth itself, but the animating spirit that causes multiple life forms to come into existence. From him proceed the plant and animal spirits that emanate from the earth. Mamapcha is the great source from which those things come, the Mother Spirit of mountains, rocks, springs, water locales and plains. In some locations Pachacamac and Mamapacha (also called Pachamama) were

worshipped as divine mates. Mamapacha also denotes the land immediately contiguous to a settlement which the inhabitants depend on for food supplies.

#30 Photograph of Inka agricultural terraces for growing corn, the Sacred Valley, Peru

Curiously, “pacha” also denotes time and to those things connected to the succession of linear time, particularly a person’s property such as clothing or textiles. From the ancient veneration of “Mamapacha” arose rituals of giving biological fetish offerings of corn and llama fetuses to huacas.

2. ABSTRACTION: State Theocracy and Super Empire Building

As earlier indigenous creation myths were synthesized and reformulated into Inka myths embracing a two hundred year imperial conquest, many huacas were formalized into increasingly abstract cosmology counterparts with astronomical phenomena. The Inkas built up an elaborate mythology around stars, constellations and planets. The visualized figures in both stars and black spaces in and about the Milky Way, which passes high in the Central Andes sky, began to figure predominantly in their world view. Inka reverence for stars and planets was not unusual in the Andes. The Pleiades and stars known as Orion’s Belt were especially important on Peru’s north coast. In 1559, the Spanish chronicler Juan Polo de Ondegardo wrote:

“In general they believed that for each animal and bird on earth there was a similar one in the sky who was in charge of its procreation and increase.”

#31 Diagram of Inka cosmology by Santa Cruz Pachacuti, Qoricancha, Cuzco

As the Inka became a perpetual war economy for the purpose of acquiring surplus goods and a super abundant work force, realistic images in art begin to disappear. Favoring geometric abstraction, the Inkas could utilize compulsory labor from their war economy to build huge architectural sites dedicated to astronomical earth counterparts thereby furthering a politically-

motivated theocracy. They also elevated Inka ancestral mummies (of former kings and queens) to an almost god-like level and installed them in the Qoricancha. This complex of ashlar masonry temples - constructed in the heart of Cuzco - was dedicated to the planetary bodies of the Sun, the Moon, the Pleiades, "Chaska" - the planet Venus, and to "Chuycha" - the rainbow. . Many monumental architectural sites with impressive geometric and quasi geometric edifices were also built in the Sacred Valley to further enhance their astro-cosmology. The incredible stone ashlar masonry, designed to be earthquake-proof, also serves as a metaphor for the herculean compulsory standardized labor required to complete the task. The Inka empire extracted services from other conquered cultures which forced labor relocation and severed personal and community bonds. In such a rigorous social hierarchy, personal choice was greatly diminished. There was no such thing as personal freedom, making us nostalgic for the freedom of expression implied in earlier Moche ceramic portraits. Realistic portraits do not appear in ceramics during 200 years of Inka Empire building.

#32 Sculptural bottle depicting blind man, Moche, MNAAH, Lima

#33 Inca monumental ashlar masonry wall detail, Cuzco

#34 Qoricancha architecture showing ashlar masonry, Cuzco

Along with the temple dedicated to the Sun, the second great deity of the heavens was the Moon, the wife of the sun. Just as gold was the sweat of the Sun, so was silver the tears of the Moon. The moon was even more important in some coastal Peruvian cities (such as the Chimu). "Mama-Quilla," Mother Moon, played a role in calculating time and in regulating the ceremonial calendar. Many rituals based on lunar cycles were adjusted to the solar year. The moon had its own temple in the Qoricancha complex. Its interior, decorated in sheets of silver inlaid with precious jewels, was served by its own dedicated priestesses. The Inkas envisioned the moon in female form and created an image of her in silver that was tended by "mamakuna," priestesses, dedicated to her worship. One myth even accounts for the dark spots on her surface by explaining that:

"A fox fell in love with the moon because of her beauty. When he rose up to the sky to steal her, she squeezed him against her and produced the patterns that we see today."
(Juan de la Cruz Garcilaso, Inka chronicler)

Favoring a deification of their ancestral lineage, Inka nobility kept track of the mummified remains of their “q’ollas,” queens, in the Temple of the Moon. Silver was the metal of the moon: Each living Inka q’olla dressed in silver for ceremonial processions. Former Inka q’olla mummies - to whom the living queen was directly related - were brought out for display on special ritual occasions. These queen mummies - dressed in opulent textiles, decorated in silver and offered food and drink libations as though still living - were attended to by women custodians who made certain they could even visit with each other when spending time at Cuzco’s maiu plaza!

#35 Stylized drawing of a q’olla and attendants preparing for procession by Spanish chronicler, Guaman Poma

#36 Drawing of a q’olla and attendants by Guaman Poma

#37 Drawing of a q’olla’s in final costume by Guaman Poma

#38 Drawing of a q’olla in procession by Guaman Poma

Women, especially the sovereign’s principal wife, were powerful figures in royal life. Research has revealed that the q’olla had to be of pure Inka blood. She had to be one of the king's sisters or first cousins. The q’olla brought a great deal into the marriage, including counsel, status, legitimacy for offspring, and wealth. Once in the alliance, she wielded some independent power and was also a persuasive political adviser for her husband and son who succeeded him. A q’olla mother could also prevent the marriage of her daughter to the king. In the imperial era, rulers took many women of other ethnic groups as wives, often with political intent, but only in secondary status. Later emperors were credited with having hundreds or even thousands of wives or concubines of various statuses. When Wayna Qhapaq traveled north for his Ecuadorian campaigns, for example, he was said to have taken along a mere 2,000 consorts, leaving the other 4,000 behind.

#39 Contemporary version entry of the Q’olla, Inca’s wife, arriving for the celebration of the “Inti Raymi” in Sacsayhuaman

Beyond elitist roles as q’ollas and priestesses in an absolute theocracy, special women were needed to produce the compulsory luxury goods used as ritual offerings at temple sites. The “aqllakuna,” chosen women, were the only girls to receive a formal education and they were trained throughout the realm. Attractive girls were taken from their families at about age ten and placed in Inka settlements under the supervision of the provincial governor.

In the sequestered “aqllawasi,” house of the chosen women, they were taught religion, textile weaving, cooking and chicha-making by the life-long virgins dedicated to the religious institutions. Bernabé Cobo, a Spanish chronicler, has said that as many as 200 women of various ages could be found in the largest aqllawasi. Although well protected, the girls and women were not entirely confined since they participated in many ceremonies at locations outside their quarters. After about 4 years, the girls were ready to serve as "mamakuna," priestesses, or to marry men who merited the honor for their service to the Inka. The textiles they wove and the chicha they brewed were consumed in great quantities at festivities and during sacrifices to the Sun.

#40 Drawing of "Aqllakuna," Chosen Women, by Guaman Poma

Many common women in the Inka empire were compelled to work. The standardized work force included not only tending and harvesting crops, but shearing llama wool, carding wool, cleaning, laundering and transporting necessities in large ceramic vessels. A man who had several wives was considered wealthy because of the household labor that he could command. Women and girls spent a great deal of time collecting firewood or llama dung to be used for cooking, predominantly vegetarian for the common classes. The discrepancy between a vision of the Inka state involved in all aspects of domestic life and household residues could hardly be more conspicuous. The typical Andean common woman's household had no access to our cultural equivalent of Starbucks Coffee, Wedgwood China or United Colors of Benetton. Her family made its own homespun clothes for which Spanish chroniclers have indicated that members owned only one set. Even where we know local populations were organized for state duties, those luxury goods of state manufacture are rare.

#41 Drawing of common woman carrying an Inka cántaro jug for transporting chicha

#42 Chicha cántaro, beer canteen, Inka, MNAAH, Lima

#43 Photograph of Quechua mother and child in Cuzco, 1911, by Hiram Bingham's archaeological expedition, Smithsonian Museum

#44 Inka female textile weaver by Gauman Poma

Luxury textiles were one of the most valued art forms in Cuzco. The Inkas valued their cloth so highly that they burned it rather than let it fall into

Spanish hands. Textile fabrics took on their greatest significance in the social and ceremonial aspects of life. Specialized textiles were used in all rites of passage, for weddings and for burying the dead. Many Peruvian societies, even before the Inkas, buried their dead in specially-woven brand new clothes, sandals, bags and headdresses. Women were accompanied by their weaving needles, spindles, whorls, skeins of yarn and the containers that held them.

#45 Black and white checkerboard design textile shirt, Chavin, Acari Valley, Museo Regional de Ica, Peru

#46 Chimu mummy burial with personal goods, Lippischen Landes Museum, Detmold, Germany

#47 Wool and cotton textile with geometric motifs and 8-pointed stars, Inka, MNAAH, Lima

Vast storehouses of textiles were reported at Cuzco by the Spanish, even half a century after the conquest by Pedro Pizarro. And these luxury textiles required the compulsory labor and transportation of exotic embellishment materials from far distances. Iridescent feathers from the Equatorial rainforest communities, for example, were stored in great piles in the state storage system. Next to gold and silver, textiles rank second on the list of luxury goods required for state provision. Pedro Sancho de la Hoz, a Spanish secretary who saw the empire while it still functioned, wrote:

"From the fortress of Sacsayhuaman, one can see many houses... some are of leaders or chiefs of all the land who now reside in the city; the others are houses or storehouses full of blankets, wool, weapons, metals and clothes - and of everything that is grown and made in this realm...and there is a house in which are kept more than 100,000 dried birds, for from their feathers articles of clothing are made..."

(Morris, *State Settlements in Tawantinsuyu*)

#48 Illustration of Inka state storehouse reporting under the emperor Thupa Inka Yupanki by Guaman Poma

Many of the best-preserved textiles have been found as mummy shrouds in mountain top shrines. Among these locations is Llullaillaco in Salta Province, Argentina, at 6,739 meters the world's highest archaeological site.

This site contained a well-preserved child mummy and 2 lightning-damaged mummies along with gold, silver and Spondylus shell figurines. Other deposits included human hair, camelid bones, coca leaves, pottery and feathers. The most elaborate ceremonial artifacts found were paired human statuettes and llama figures modelled in gold and silver. The combination of the 2 sexes and precious metals seem to pay homage to the male Sun and female Moon, while Spondylus evokes Mother Sea. A similar cache of richly-dressed figurines has also been found in a structure on top of a pyramid at Túcume on Peru's northern coast.

#49 Male and female gold figures, originally dressed, Inka, Archaeological Museum of the National University, Cuzco

#50 Silver figurine from a mountaintop shrine in Chile, American Museum of Natural History, New York

Striking, but rare, are sites that contain frozen bodies of children sacrificed in the "qhapaq ucha" ceremony. They have been found both in Peru and Argentina. Nicknamed "Juanita," a teenage girl adorned with rich textiles was found at 6,380 meters on top of Ampato Volcano near Arequipa. Among the offerings that accompanied her into death were female statuettes adorned with textiles similar to the ones that she wore.

#51 "Juanita," frozen mummy of a girl found at Ampato Volcano, Arequipa

#52 Figurine offering, silver dressed in textiles, found with "Juanita"

High altitude sites provided a wonderful means of meshing Inca religious and political goals. A primary reason was to pay homage to mountain deities, considered to be "apus," living beings. From an Andean perspective, however, the peaks were also a perfect context to stake an imperial claim. By building shrines, the Inkas interposed themselves as the mediators between human society and the supernatural world. Since certain peaks were origin places and home to powerful beings and since humanity's well-being depended on their relations with the "apus," the shrines let the Inkas lay claim to the cultural foundations of the area's residents. In this way the sanctuaries formed a deft analog to the abduction of previous cultures' ancestor statues.

#53 Photograph of "Wakay Willca" - "Tear of the Sun" peak -

guardian spirit of the Sacred Valley of the Inkas

3. FANTASY: The Individual in a Poetic Nature

The extent to which the Incas utilized their cosmology as an absolute theocracy - and even superimposed it on nature around them - may vividly be seen by comparing their formal geometric art style with that of the indigenous cultures of northwest Argentina. In northwest Argentina, where a scarcity of natural resources exist, developing cultures became acutely observant of the immediate environment. A delicate balance of harvest and gathering activities was necessary to preserve a cultural life-style in symbiosis with its ecology. Abundant surplus goods stored up for an aristocratic class was out of the question; Mutual cooperation within the community and with nature made for practical subsistence possible.

By 1480, the Calchaqui Valley peoples began to be invaded by Inka imperial troops. The Quilmes and other Calchaqui people were subjected one-by-one and were compelled to learn Quichua, the Inka empire language, and to pay tribute to the Inkas. Services they were obliged to provide included food and other labor provisions. They were forced to accept the presence of imperial representatives and to build houses and storage sites for them called "tampus." The foundations of an Inka tampu to the southwest of Quilmes reveals a site cut off from the rest of the community as if the Inkas simply wanted to control the subject people without getting involved with them.

#54 Map of northwest Argentina showing indigenous cultural areas established prior to Inka invasion

The most fascinating ceramic works from the Argentine vicinities of Inka conquest - from the Calchaqui Valley and Quebrada de Humahuaca - are funerary urns used to contain the remains of those who died young, either infants or children. Compared to the rigid geometric style of Inca design - an aesthetically standardized style which mirrored a machine system in which every part works the same - these large vases are painted in a relaxed curvilinear style which fantasizes the individual human. Intimate anatomical details, including eyes, eyebrows and other body parts encompass the entire circumference of each vase, turning them into a symbolic prototype of the

imagination itself. Even tears are sometimes included in the repertoire of curvilinear line painting, giving the viewer the sensation that the mother's emotion is there, that the mother is indeed that pot, still containing the child.

#55 Photograph of Quilmes ceramic vessel, Quilmes Archaeological Museum, Calchaqui Valley, Argentina

In Argentina, just prior to the arrival of the Inkas, we find a strategic opportunity to analyze Pre-Columbian images of women in art that are the antithesis of a state theocracy managed by imperial bureaucracy. Pottery painting from Quilmes, Tilcara and other northwest archaeological sites reveal an intimacy the people must have felt toward their immediate natural environment. A surreal landscape of meandering striated mountain shapes, reddish sedimentary rock formations, ghost-like Cardon cacti and quizzical prickly vegetation are features of these ecological zones and seem to animate the subject matter of funerary pots.

The energy these vases communicate is of a highly personal and integrated lifestyle with the environment. Their fantastic painted lines do not symbolize an attempt to superimpose a theocratic hierarchy on the terrain. Rather, we get a glimpse of an all-encompassing view of poeticized, intimate nature interfacing with the individual human portrait. Late vase-painting styles from northwest Argentina reveal a startling fluidity of connective lines, lines that are freely curvilinear, lines that gives us the sweep of Cardon limbs against the night sky, as well as the small thorny plants and creatures that live on them. They are not straight or monumental lines that lead to huacas or archaeo-astronomy sites.

#56 Cafayate ceramic vessel, Museo Historico del Norte, Salta

#57 Detail, artist rendition of Cafayate ceramic vessel, MHN, Salta

#58 Ceramic painted design #1

#59 Ceramic painted design #2

#60 Ceramic painted design #3

#61 Ceramic painted design #4

Lacking the geometric formalism of Inka design - which was a metaphor for compulsory imperial construction projects, road building, surplus agriculture and luxury good production required to maintain a theocratic elite - northwest Argentine pottery celebrates permutations of a plurality of

choices. With its many unpredictable line interpretations in vase painting, it is a witness of the last stand of freedom of choice against the onslaught of imperialism. The sense of emotional abundance in art in such a terrain of sparse food sources is ironic.

#62 Photograph of Quilmes ceramic vessel, Quilmes Archaeological Museum, Calchaqui

In many Inka conquest regions, state ideology was an alien and unwelcome presence. As soon as the empire disintegrated, Sun worship and use of the solar calendar quickly fell into decline outside Cuzco. Sun temples and religious orders fell apart and lands tended for the Inka gods were abandoned. Only among the Inkas proper did the royal mummies and idols retain the potency that the polity had lost - and they were defended with a desperate vengeance for decades. During the tumultuous early Colonial years the Sun cult and worship of Manqo Qhapaq's descendents were exposed as a recent veneer laid over hundreds of more local religions. This fact, more than anything else, underscores that the official Inca ideology was as much a political instrument as it was a belief system. Even today, in northwest Argentina, intimate rituals and processions to honor various local Catholic virgins contrast with the spectacular "Inti Raymi" solstice ceremony annually staged against the backdrop of Sacsayhuaman's monolithic ashlar walls.

The quest for abundance in the face of the unknown and the desire for security against the threat of scarcity reveals an ultimate non-dualistic hope in this Inka prayer to Virachocha recorded by the native chronicler Juan de Santa Cruz Pachacuti:

"I wish to look at you with my imperfect eyes.
Then seeing you, knowing you, you will see me
and you will know me.

The Sun and the Moon, the day and the night,
the summer and the winter, not in vain do they
go to the place that is chosen and they arrive
at their limit.

Whatever may be the scepter which you have

made me take up, hear me, listen to me
while I am still not tired or dead."

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