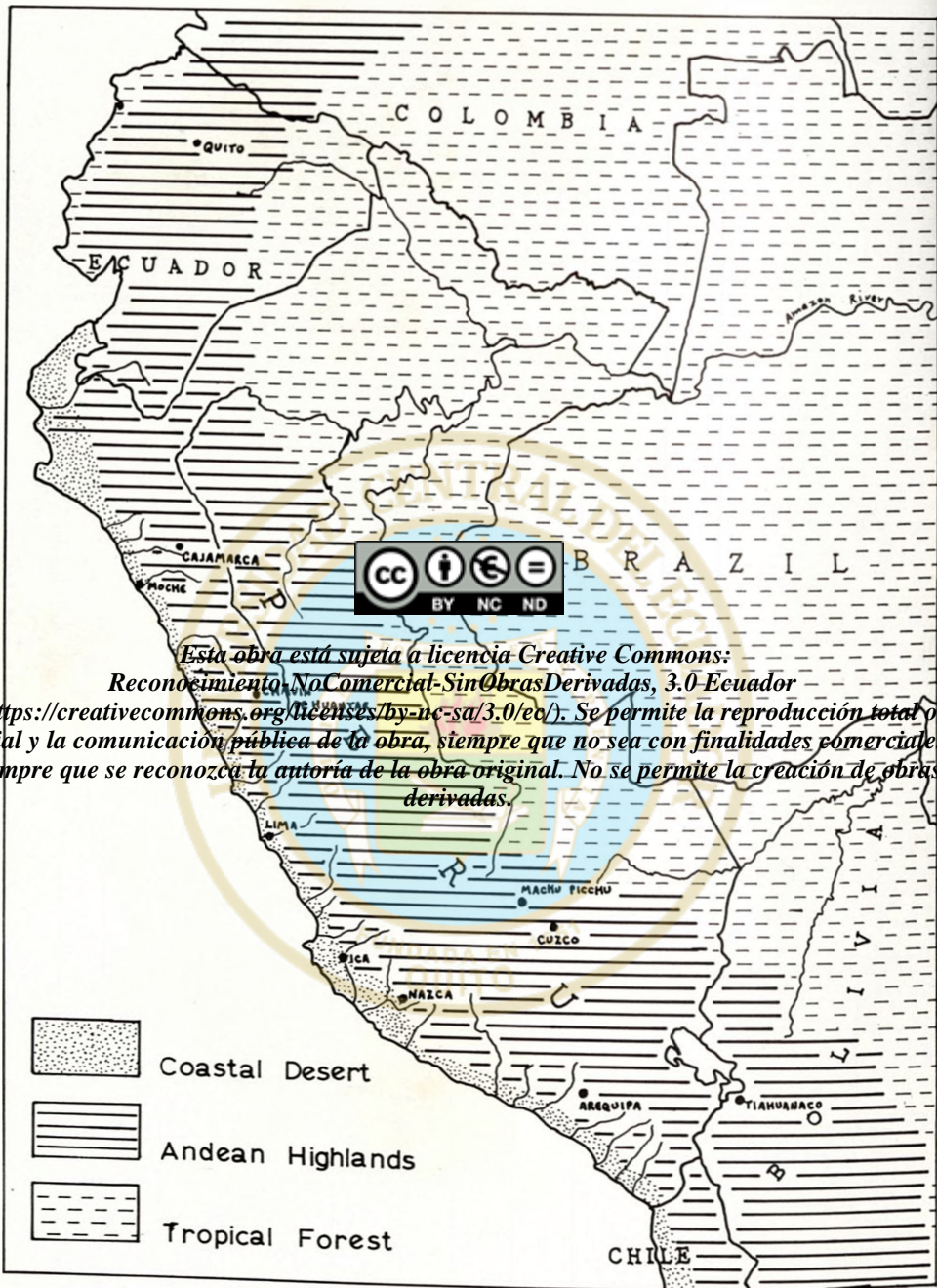


EDWARD P. LANNING
SR. MUSEUM ANTHROPOLOGIST

THE INCAS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS



Art Style and Civilization in Ancient Peru



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THE CENTRAL ANDES



THE BEST KNOWN CIVILIZATION of ancient South America is that of the Incas, who founded a great empire encompassing what is now Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and parts of Chile and Argentina. Long before the Incas rose to prominence, however, other civilizations flourished in Peru. Directly or indirectly, the accomplishments of the Incas were founded on the achievements of their predecessors.

Some of man's finest monuments to himself were erected in ancient Peru. With no source of power but human muscles, the Peruvians built elaborate temples and palaces, terraced the sides of whole mountains, and built some of the world's best planned and most ambitious irrigation systems. Without wheeled vehicles, the Incas constructed a road system which allowed rapid movement through some of the world's most difficult terrain. Without a system of writing, they organized an empire the size of Alexander's, with a government of genuine efficiency.

Since the ancient Peruvians had no written documents, most of our information about them comes from the science of archaeology. Archaeologists, by excavating in ancient ruins, cemeteries, and refuse dumps, have recovered many ancient objects together with information about their associations. With this information, it has been possible to establish the sequence of ancient cultures and to interpret their unwritten history.

The sequence of ancient Peruvian cultures is divided into periods, which should be read starting from the bottom of the list:

1476-1538 A.D.	Late Horizon
1200-1476 A.D.	Late Intermediate Period
850-1200 A.D.	Middle Horizon
150- 850 A.D.	Early Intermediate Period
B.C. 700- 150 A.D.	Early Horizon
1400- 700 B.C.	Initial Period
9000-1400 B.C.	Preceramic Stage

Ancient civilization in the Andes was centered in what is now the Republic of Peru. The great mountain mass of the Andes, which runs down the entire west coast of South America, divides Peru into three strikingly different life zones. The mountains of the interior are high and rugged, with fertile river basins isolated from each other by spectacular peaks and connected only by high, difficult passes. To the west, the narrow coastal plain is one of the world's driest deserts. Though it receives no rain except for an occasional thick mist, this desert is made habitable by numerous little rivers which bring water down from the mountains, permitting intensive irrigation agriculture in their narrow valleys. Furthermore, thanks to the cold Peru (Humboldt) Current, the Pacific Ocean off the Peruvian coast teems with fish and other sea food. The third life zone is on the eastern slopes of the mountains, where equatorial heat and excessive rainfall combine to produce a lush tropical forest. The mighty rivers of the Amazon system flow down these slopes onto the tropical flat land which makes up the heart of South America.

PRECERAMIC

Nomadic hunters inhabited the highlands of Peru at least as early as 8000 B.C. By 2500 B.C., the people of the coast had settled in numerous small villages along the shore. These people lived primarily from the sea, fishing with nets and lines, gathering shellfish, hunting sea lions and shore birds. They also practiced farming on a small scale. Though they raised a few food plants, such as beans, squash, and chili peppers, their principal crops were cotton and gourds. The cotton was used for the manufacture of cloth and nets, while the gourds served as net floats and as containers of all sorts.

Already at this time we find the beginnings of the ceremonial life which was so important to the later Peruvian peoples. Small adobe- or stone-walled temples and "altars" are found in several of the villages. At one site on the central coast, two buildings had been filled in and covered up with large boulders to make little pyramid mounds.



One-Man Band with Drum, Panpipe, Trumpet and Rattle
Pottery Bottle, from the Nasca Valley, Monumental Nasca Style
Early Intermediate Period
4-8481

The most characteristic products of these early coastal villagers are their cotton textiles, which are much the same in technique and design all along the coast. These cloths were made by twining and looping without benefit of a heddle loom, which would have permitted the wefts to be laid in place with a single stroke of the hand. Though the wefts were laboriously inserted with the fingers or bodkins or needles, the textiles show a remarkable degree of skill.

Other objects found in preceramic village sites reveal that the people of this time lived much the same way of life all along the coast, making tools to serve the same functions and ornaments for the same parts of the body. Yet these objects differ in style in each village. Stone net weights may be perforated in one site but grooved in another. Twined matting in one region is replaced by plaited matting in another.

Hairpins, spearthrowers, coca chewing apparatus, mortars, and necklaces all took different forms in different villages. Thus, local differences in style were well established before the introduction of ceramics and the invention of the heddle loom made possible the development of the famous regional art styles of later periods.

INITIAL PERIOD

Starting around 1500 B.C. a series of events took place which ultimately revolutionized life in ancient Peru, leading to increased population and stimulating the growth of city life and the development of elaborate art styles. Some of the changes came in the form of ideas diffusing in from the north, others were important local inventions, and still others were due to the opening up of trade between villages and regions. Some of these innovations were the introduction of pottery making and maize as a staple food, the invention of the heddle loom, sufficient development of irrigation to permit the coastal population to move from the shore into the valleys, and, around 500 B.C., the first use of copper and gold for the manufacture of implements and ornaments.



Amputee
Pottery Bottle, from the Moche Valley, Moche Style
Early Intermediate Period
4-2693

The Initial Period, from 1400 B.C. to about 700 B.C., was a time of locally different art styles and culture in general.

EARLY HORIZON

Some time between 800 and 600 B.C., an art style—named “Chavín” after the temple of Chavín de Huantar in the north highlands of Peru—spread all along the Peruvian coast and throughout the northern half of the highlands. Throughout the area, local artists began to copy the Chavín designs in pottery, stone, bone, gold, and textiles, and even on carved clay-plastered altars and temple friezes. The principal figures represented in the Chavín style are mythological beings, especially anthropomorphized feline figures and eagles. It is likely, though not proven, that this art style is but the material aspect of a widespread religious cult which dominated Peruvian culture for several centuries.

The spread of the Chavín style had important effects on Peruvian culture in general, carrying with it not only a series of stylistic ideas, but also an increase in inter-regional trade and an interchange of ideas of all sorts. We may assume that the wider contacts at this time stimulated innovations in the technical and social spheres of life and resulted in each region making significant contributions to the cultures of other regions.

The Chavín diffusion did not eradicate local cultural differences, however. After about 300 B.C. the contacts largely broke down, new local styles began to develop out of the Chavín-influenced styles, and local differences of culture were again emphasized. This process of differentiation led, eventually, to the intense regionalism of the Early Intermediate Period.

EARLY INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

The period from 150–850 A.D. was a time of regional diversity of style and culture in Peru. Each group of three or four little coastal valleys, each mountain valley, each section of the large highlands basins, had its own distinctive art style, its own form



Mythological Bird
Pottery Bottle from Supe, Pachacamac Style
Middle Horizon
4-7742



of architecture, its own way of laying out a town or of burying the dead. Though there is evidence of trade and the interchange of ideas at this time, connections between regions seem to have been of little importance and for the most part each region was self sufficient.

One of these regional cultures was Nasca, on the south coast. Nasca pottery and textiles are famous for their use of color in beautifully balanced combinations in the representation of animals, plants, and mythological figures. The Nasca potters and weavers set standards of technical excellence which were never surpassed by any other Andean people. Irrigation engineering was practiced by this time and the Nasca people, like most Peruvians, lived largely by farming the irrigated valley land, but also did some hunting and fishing. Nasca towns, laid out on the edges of the valleys in rectangular compounds, are among the largest in the Early Intermediate Period. Particularly noteworthy among Nasca customs is the practice of burying the dead in a seated position, wrapped in an elaborate bundle of cloth and stuffing.

The Moche culture of the north coast spanned the period from about 400 to 850 A.D. Moche art is best known for its hollow sculpture in clay and its delicate two-color figure drawing. The clay sculpture consists in large part of bottles made in complex molds in the form of animals, plants, humans or mythological beings, and ranges in style from magnificent realistic portraiture to outright satire. The figure drawing, usually showing battle scenes, domestic life, or mythological incidents, has often been compared with classic Greek figure painting for its delicate lines and skillful composition. Battle scenes and representations of soldiers are so common in Moche art that they give the impression of a warlike people who seldom knew peace. Like the Nasca, the Moche people lived primarily from farming, though they were also fishermen and hunters. Their towns are smaller and less regular than Nasca towns, and often consist of small clusters of dwellings associated with a great pyramid mound. In general, temples and pyramids are larger and more abundant in Moche territory than on the south coast.





Tiahuanacoid Mythological Creature
Fine Tapestry Bag from the Nasca Valley
Middle Horizon
4-8786

MIDDLE HORIZON

During the Middle Horizon a movement toward cultural and stylistic unification took place in various parts of Peru. The nature and causes of this movement are complex and not yet perfectly understood. Certain features of style spread throughout Peru from a center on the Bolivian side of Lake Titicaca, at the city of Tiahuanaco. The Tiahuanaco style in Bolivia is best known from the pottery and from stone carvings at the great temple at Tiahuanaco. The figures represented are mythological beings, primarily based on men, cats, and eagles.

Around 850 A.D., large urns bearing polychrome Tiahuanaco-like designs appeared in at least two widely separated ceremonial centers in Peru—Huari, near Ayacucho in the south highlands, and Pacheco in the Nasca Valley, south coast. These urns, in turn, strongly influenced local art styles, and soon there were several polychrome styles with Tiahuanaco-like designs in various parts of Peru. The most important of these new styles was that of Huari, which spread out through the entire Peruvian highlands and reached the coast at several points. Finds of pure Huari style pottery at widely scattered points, usually at important civil or ceremonial centers and contemporary with local non-Tiahuanacoid styles, suggest that the style may have spread by military action.

Another polychrome style with Tiahuanaco-like designs derived from the ceremonial urns is that of Pachacamac, with a limited distribution on the central and north-central coast. While this style, too, is often found at ceremonial sites, its distribution does not suggest conquest so much as peaceful diffusion of prestige objects. The Pachacamac style is found from Supe on the north-central coast to Pachacamac in the Lurin Valley, south of Lima. Pachacamac influence is mixed with Huari influence in local polychrome styles as far north as the Moche Valley and as far south as Ica. In later times there was a famous oracle at Pachacamac. It is possible that the oracle was already established during the Middle Horizon, and that its fame spurred the spread of the Pachacamac art style.



Pottery Doll with Feather Head Ornament
and Fringed Dress, Chancay Valley
Late Intermediate Period
16-1017

Many features of regional culture were carried to all parts of Peru at this time. Undoubtedly every region contributed some ideas to the general leveling of cultural differences, but southern influences predominated. Any local cultural assemblage of the Middle Horizon shows features diffused from distant areas and usually includes trade objects as well. For example, the urban residence pattern and the custom of burying the dead in a seated position, both old culture patterns in southern Peru, diffused northward during the Middle Horizon. The elaborate Tiahuanacoid textiles of the period were tapestries, so the tapestry art in general became very popular all over Peru. Bronze, which originated in Bolivia or northwest Argentina, was first used in Peru at this time, where it is found as part of the general diffusion of ideas during the Middle Horizon.

LATE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

Toward the end of the Middle Horizon, new regional art styles began to develop out of the Tiahuanacoid styles. By 1200 A.D., these styles were strikingly different from each other, and each region continued to have its own distinctive art style until the Inca conquest in the Fifteenth Century.

This regionalism of art style corresponds in part to the political organization of the time. The coast was divided into a number of autonomous states, the largest of which was the kingdom of Chimor in the north. In the south highlands, many small tribal states were involved in a series of intricate power struggles. It is noteworthy that with the fall of the great Middle Horizon cities of the south—Huari and Tiahuanaco—the presumably large states of the Middle Horizon broke up into minor autonomous subdivisions, and the pattern of urban residence died out entirely in the south. In contrast, the great cities of the north did not reach their full development until the Late Intermediate Period.

In spite of the differences in ceramic style and settlement pattern, there seems to have been a basic similarity of technology all along the coast, and perhaps through the highlands as well, during the Late Intermediate Period. Thus certain textile techniques such



Silver Cup with Embossed Design, Ica Valley
Late Intermediate Period
4-5272a

as tapestry, were universally popular, and weaver's tools were virtually identical from region to region—even to the extent of being kept in the same sort of rectangular basketry work box. In the fields of metallurgy, architecture, civil engineering, and agriculture, there seem to have been few significant technological differences in the various parts of Peru. One may find regional differences, of course, such as the manufacture of pottery with molds in the north and by coiling in the south, or the use of stone for building in the sierra and of adobes on the coast. On the whole, however, the technological similarities from region to region are more impressive than the differences.

In the 14th and 15th Centuries the Kingdom of Chimor was established on the north coast of Peru, with its center and capital city at Chanchan in the Moche Valley. A fragmentary history of the kingdom and its fall to the Incas has survived in brief accounts written down by the Spanish in early Colonial times. This account tells of the succession of hereditary kings and noble families who built up a large domain by successive expansions. Two outstanding conqueror-kings are mentioned: Nancen-pinco (ca. 1370), who conquered from Santa to Pacasmayo, and Minchancaman, who extended the realm northward to Tumbes and southward nearly to Lima in the 1450's and 1460's.

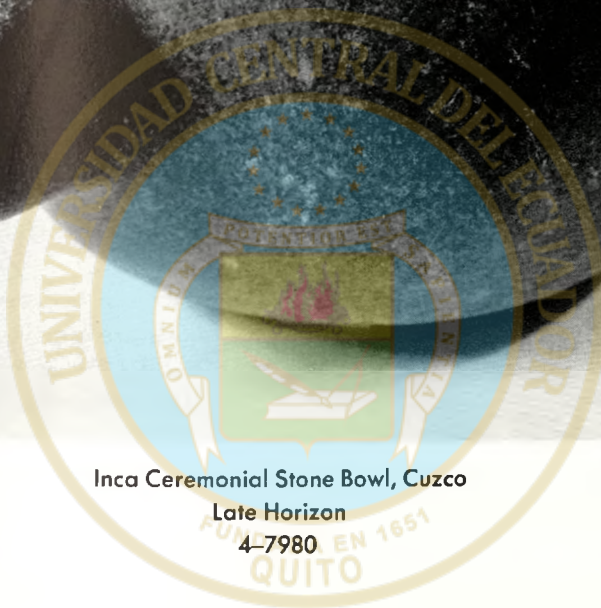
LATE HORIZON

The Late Horizon is the time of the Inca Empire—a time of cultural unification in which the forces conducive to unity are well known. The Incas are known to us not only through their archaeology, but also through their traditional history, which was written down by the Spaniards who conquered them. These same Spaniards recorded many valuable observations on Inca culture which supplement the archaeological evidence.

The battle which marked the beginning of the Inca conquest of the Andes took place in 1438. From then until the end of the century, the Incas expanded their realm to include the coast and highlands of what are now Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, north Chile, and northwestern Argentina. The two Inca rulers responsible for most of the conquest—Pachakuti 'Inka Yupanki (1438–1471) and



Inca Ceremonial Stone Bowl, Cuzco
Late Horizon
4-7980



Thupa 'Inka Yupanki (1471-1493)—also organized the government and the social and economic system of the empire and invented a state religion. Cuzco, the Incas' home town, became the capital of the empire.

The Inca Empire is famous for many of its achievements: a genuinely efficient governmental bureaucracy; a social security system which guaranteed sustenance to all; a periodic census, with permanent records kept in the capital; immense irrigation and terracing projects; and a highway system linking all points in the kingdom for rapid foot travel. All of this, and a good deal more, they accomplished with the aid of a system of recording numbers, but with no way of writing the words of the language.

The Incas' unification of Peru is reflected in the archaeology of the Late Horizon. Inca pottery was exported to all corners of the Empire and was widely imitated. Palaces, administrative centers, roadside way stations, and storehouses in Inca architectural style were built in all the provinces. Typical Inca objects, such as the *quipu* or knotted string record of numbers, are found in Late Horizon sites all along the coast. Bronze tools became common for the first time throughout Peru because the Incas, interested in the efficiency of this harder metal, developed them and encouraged their use.

The Inca Empire fell to the Spanish under Juan Pizarro, who arrived in Peru in 1532. By 1538 most of the Empire had been conquered, though Inca resistance continued in part of the highlands until late in the century.

The exhibit is composed primarily of specimens from the Museum's most important collection, excavated in 1899-1905 by Max Uhle under the sponsorship of Phoebe Apperson Hearst. Ethnographic specimens collected by John H. Rowe are also included, as are archaeological specimens loaned by the Art Institute of Chicago, the American Museum of Natural History, the Chicago Natural History Museum, the Museum of Primitive Art, the University of California Decorative Art Department, and private collectors.



Detail of a Ceremonial Digging Implement of Mesquite Wood
Ica Valley, Late Horizon
4-4663

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