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## INCA IMPERIALISM, RITUAL CHANGE, AND COSMOLOGICAL CONTINUITY IN THE COTAHUASI VALLEY OF PERU<sup>1</sup>

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*As in other ancient states, Inca religious reform was largely successful because it drew upon preexisting cosmological principles of the south-central Andes. In this case study involving the Cotahuasi Valley of southern Peru, I argue that during the Inca occupation of the valley, an offering tradition ended, an important ritual center was abandoned, and another ritual center was completely remodeled. At the same time, other local ritual practices continued largely unmolested. I suggest that the Inca chose to encourage these changes in Cotahuasi because the ritual landscape that the Inca encountered in the valley caused political and ideological problems that could not be overcome without changing some aspects of the valley's religion. These reforms were successful because they fit within a concept of circulating life forces that was shared by both conquerors and conquered. I suggest that this belief was a resilient long-term structure of meaning that was, and remains, part of the region's practical consciousness.*

AFTER THE CONQUEST OF THE INCA EMPIRE in the sixteenth century, the Spaniards attempted to strip away the indigenous religions of the Andes and replace these beliefs with Catholicism. Not only were priests sent out to convert the Andean people, but also massive efforts were made to locate and destroy the idols and priests associated with native religions (Millones 1990). While the Spanish attempts to supplant one faith with another have echoes throughout history, many states have chosen instead to co-opt local religions. In these cases, the state

manipulates aspects of local beliefs but does not significantly alter the structures of meaning upon which these beliefs are based. Religious co-option, instead of outright change, may have been the strategy more commonly pursued by ancient states in regions that shared basic cultural concepts (see, e.g., Brumfiel 1998; Conrad 1992; Hamann 2002; Joyce 2000; Umberger 1996).

The Inca Empire is one example of a state that attempted to consolidate conquered regions by co-opting local cults. The empire developed a state religion in which local gods and religious practices were placed into a larger pantheon, with imperial gods holding the principal positions in this new cosmological hierarchy (Brundage 1963:162–65; Cobo 1990 [1653]:22–36; Laurencich Minelli 2000:7; Marzal 1993:88–92). Inca attitudes toward local cults, therefore, led to the continuation of worship of most ancient, local gods during the Late Horizon (A.D. 1476–1534) (Cobo 1990 [1653]:3; Espinoza Soriano 1997:435; Kolata 1997:249; Spalding 1984:82; Urton 1999:61–62; Valcárcel 1981:77).

Relations between the Inca and local religious groups, however, were not always harmonious and could sour based on imperial interests, priestly intrigue, and local actions (Conrad and Demarest 1984:105; Gose 1996:23–24; MacCormack 1991:143; Spalding 1984:97; Uhle 1991:54). When the oracle Catequil issued an unfavorable ruling to the Inca ruler Atahualpa, for example, the king beheaded the chief priest, broke apart the idol, and burned the shrine to the ground (Gose 1996:23; MacCormack 1991:143–48). Yet, the religious reforms instigated by the Inca were largely successful because of the resonance between imperial religious tenants and long-established Andean religious traditions (MacCormack 1991:149). This manipulation of well-known cultural idioms was mirrored in other areas of Inca statecraft (Julien 1988; Kolata 1997; Urton 1997:183–84).

Our understanding of *how* ancient states co-opted local religions is often stymied by a dearth (or complete lack of) documents that deal with local beliefs and the impact of state religions on these beliefs. In the case of the Inca Empire, the only extensive document on local beliefs and rites is the Quechua manuscript of Huarochirí (Salomon and Urioste 1991). While this manuscript and other sixteenth-century documents provide us with a glimpse of the religious landscape at the time of the Inca Conquest, the nuances of how the empire struck a balance between religious continuity and change in its consolidation strategies remain poorly understood. The archaeological record can help us better understand aspects of the religious transformations that took place during the Late Horizon. In this article, I suggest that some of the changes that occurred in the Cotahuasi Valley of southern Peru are examples of how a state can manipulate local ritual practices in order to support a new political order (e.g., Kus and Raharijaona 2000).

I suggest that Cotahuasi was one area in the central Andes where local religions were fundamentally transformed following the Inca conquest. Like many areas of Peru, very few early historical documents deal with the Inca in Cotahuasi, and none of these documents explicitly discusses the valley's ritual landscape (e.g., Julien 1991).<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, both continuity and change in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape can be seen in the material record. Among other changes, a four-

thousand-year-old ritual tradition was curtailed, an important ceremonial center was abandoned, and a preexisting sacred site was radically rebuilt. At the same time, some local practices continued unchanged. These shifts in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape reflect both the capacity for significant religious change in the Late Horizon and the continuity of basic cosmological elements within this local religion despite these changes.

The article begins by discussing a number of theoretical concepts concerning the formation and resiliency of structures of the long term. I then introduce a long-term structure of meaning from the south-central Andes, and I suggest that this structure was likely present in the Cotahuasi Valley both before and after its conquest by the Inca. I discuss the ritual landscape of the valley during the Late Intermediate period (A.D. 1000–1476) and the Late Horizon changes that occurred in this landscape in relation to these long-term structures of meaning. Finally, I argue that these changes were the result of actions by the empire to politically and religiously integrate the empire into the state.

### STRUCTURES OF THE LONG TERM, INSTITUTIONS, AND “*LO ANDINO*”

In a classic paper, Sherry Ortner (1973) suggested that every culture has certain key symbols that are integral to its structural organization. She defined two kinds of symbols: “root metaphors which provide strategies for organizing conceptual experience, and key scenarios which provide strategies for organizing action experience” (Ortner 1973:1342). These symbols help to form models of and for reality that shape a person's understanding of his/her culture and cosmos (Geertz 1973:93). How one acts, how one feels, and how one knows in different social situations are guided in large part by the root metaphors and key scenarios that help to explain how the world works (Ortner 1989:60). In many cases, key symbols are remarkably durable, surviving political, economic, and social changes over hundreds of years (Geertz 1980:134; Sahlins 1981:17, 1996:421). These symbols can become part of a culture's “structures of the long term” that order social life in fundamental ways and become naturalized within a society (Bourdieu 1977:164; Sahlins 1996:395). The structures are part of the “tacit knowledge” that one employs in the course of daily activities but is unable to “formulate discursively” (Giddens 1979:59). “Characteristically simply done” in a society, these schemes are part of one's “practical consciousness”(Giddens 1984:7).

These key symbols, of course, are not immutable through the years. Instead, structures of the long term are “from time to time brought into action, remodeled and transformed ready to be used and transformed again in future claims for legitimacy by either dominant or resistant groups” (Hodder 1991:89–91). Against the backdrop of practical consciousness, these structures are brought into particular forms, called institutions (following Gluckman 1968), that crystallize around distinct cultural settings. In this case, I define institutions broadly as any organization or practice established and continued for public service, such as a political position, cult, or economic arrangement. When the conditions underlying

these institutions change sufficiently, they must reconfigure or others will replace them that better fit the given situation (Gluckman 1968:230–31). Just as an institution usually survives a person's death, structures of the long term often outlive an institution's demise (as in "The king is dead, long live the king") and are brought into play, often slightly altered, to support a new institution. States are one kind of institution that often manipulate these structures for their own benefit by using key symbols in novel ways to support a new political order (Kus and Raharijaona 2000).

In the Late Horizon, the Inca appear to have adapted certain long-established traditions, such as in numerology (Julien 1988; Urton 1997:183–84) and urbanism (Kolata 1996, 1997), for imperial aims. Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish the longevity of these principles in the Andes because of the lack of indigenous writing systems prior to the Spanish Conquest. In studies of the pre-Columbian Andes, some scholars have been guilty of assuming a timeless Andean way of doing things (W. H. Isbell 1995, 1997). Sometimes called "*Lo Andino*," this assumption can lead to the uncritical projection into the past of an array of political, economic, and social arrangements from Inca, early Colonial, and modern examples (Quilter 1996:308). The frustrating inability to thoroughly trace the roots of Andean practices, however, does not mean that long-term structures of meaning do not exist. Many core concepts of Andean cosmology remained remarkably stable despite massive political, economic, social, and religious changes over the last five hundred years (Allen 1984:152; Arnold 1991:45–47; W. H. Isbell 1977, Karttunen 1992:241; Quispe 1984:607–8; Taussig 1980:221; Urbano 1992; Urton 1981), and material correlates for some of these concepts suggest that they may extend far deeper into the past (Conlee 2000:415–16; Haas, Creamer, and Ruiz 2003; W. H. Isbell 1997; Reinhard 1985a, 1985b; Sallnow 1987; Quilter 1990).

In the following section, I outline one long-term structure of meaning in the south-central Andes—the belief in the circulation of life-giving forces through the world. I then discuss the continuity of this structure of meaning by discussing beliefs in these forces in the ethnographic present and their treatment in sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dealing with Andean religion. I do *not* suggest that this concept has remained unchanged since the time of the Incas. I argue *only* that the structure of the long term upon which this changing concept is based has remained part of the practical consciousness of the south-central Andes since at least the beginning of the sixteenth century. I then use this long-term structure of meaning to provide a tentative interpretation of the Late Horizon changes in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape.

## CIRCULATING CURRENTS AS A STRUCTURE OF THE LONG TERM

In the modern cosmology of the south-central Andes, the world is composed of circulating currents. Streams flow down mountainsides into the jungles only to return to the mountains as rain. The dead go into the soil from which their ancestors sprang and in their death will nourish the soil for future generations. Blood circulates through the body only to return to the place from where it came (Allen

1988:226). Through these currents, the essence of life, in some regions called *sami* or *enqua*, flows through the world and ultimately turns back on itself creating a closed ring (Allen 1982:179; Allen 1988:226; Bolin 1998:232). In order to receive *sami*, you must give it to other people, places, and objects (Allen 1982:194). If your relationships with kin, labor partners, nature, and the gods are in balance and in order, then you will be infused with *sami* (Greenway 1989:9 as quoted in Ackerman 1991:73).

*Sami* flows through both the gods and the ancestors, who can regulate its flow through the world. South-central Andean people are deeply concerned about maintaining *sami's* proper flow through the world because some of the most tangible manifestations of the approval of the gods and the dead are essential to life—wind, water, and sunlight. Since the gods and ancestors are capricious and people are amoral, this flow is constantly endangered. Many Andean rituals, in part, work at holding, controlling, and directing *sami* (Allen 1988:50). These rituals are needed to feed the gods and ancestors in order to insure that the world remains in harmony (Bastien 1995:373; Bolin 1998:9). The most important rituals to the gods are done on or near their *huacas*—places where the gods are made manifest on the earth. *Huacas* are typically features in the natural landscape like mountain peaks, lakes, springs, rock outcrops, and caves (Bolin 1998:22). The most vital rituals concerning the ancestors occur at cemeteries. The most important of these ritual events is the annual feast of the dead, where the dead are invited to dine with the living (Bastien 1995:368–72).

With the exception of short daily prayers, offerings are a major part of *sami* rituals. Supplicants offer ceremonially charged items to the gods and ancestors both for their consumption and as a message to reflect the desire of the participants (Allen 1988:154). A wide variety of goods is used in these offerings, including black llamas (Bolin 1998:53), pig fetuses (Candler 1997:86), sugar (Allen 1988:161), and incense (Allen 1988:161). Coca leaves, corn beer, and cane alcohol, however, are the most essential of these offerings used in rituals today in the south-central Andes (Bolin 1998:14). The offerings, and the practices surrounding the giving of these offerings, are broadly similar across a wide range of rituals. For example, offerings given to help speed a buried loved one back to the earth are often nearly the same offerings given to end a drought or to begin a difficult journey to a distant town (Allen 1988). All of these rituals involve *sami*, and therefore those offerings most potent for directing the flow of *sami* are used in each case. These offerings, if made properly, maintain the flow of *sami* through the community by assuring the cooperation of the gods and the ancestors.

The ideas of reciprocity, fluidity, and symmetry of life also structured south-central Andean ideas at the time of the Inca (Allen 1984:152; Ossio 1996). In Inca cosmology, life energy flowed cyclically from the skies through the earth to the sky again (Valcárcel 1981:91). The gods of the sun, moon, earth, etc., controlled this flow and were responsible for providing what was necessary for human life (Cobo 1990 [1653]:6; Gose 2000:90). The gods were reached through their *huacas*, and these *huacas* were most often prominent features of the natural landscape (Bauer 1998:23; Cobo 1990 [1653]:44; de Albornoz 1989 [1584]). Ancestor worship was

also common in the south-central Andes during the Late Horizon. Over the course of several ceremonies, the deceased in the Inca Empire were turned into ancestors (Salomon 1995:329–32). These ancestors would join with the world's life energy and would revisit the living either to help them or to punish them (W. H. Isbell 1997:51; Salomon 1995:343). One of the most common tomb types of the Late Horizon, at least in the central sierra portions of the Inca Empire, was the open sepulcher. These collective tombs allowed for the burial of corporate descent groups in one setting (W. H. Isbell 1997). Communal rituals at these tombs linked the living members of these groups with their ancestors (W. H. Isbell 1997:296). Worshipers offered goods, such as sacrificed animals (Cobo 1990 [1653]:112–14; de Molina 1989 [1553]:121; Silverblatt 1987:34), luxury goods (Guamán Poma de Ayala 1987 [1615]:262), and food and drink (Cobo 1990 [1653]:115; Rowe 1946:306–7), for the deity's or ancestor's consumption or for his or her personal use.

Despite the cultural upheavals and religious indoctrination that occurred in the years following the Spanish Conquest, the concept of a life force, the relation of this life force to the worship of gods and ancestors, and the types of offerings appropriate for feeding gods and ancestors have shown remarkable continuity. Although the nuances of these ideas have changed over the years, the endurance into the modern era of the core concern with the circulation of a life force suggests that it *may* be a long-term structure of meaning in Andean religion that *could* have been a structuring principle for local religions in the south-central Andes before the Late Horizon. In the section that follows, I use the life force concept to inform my interpretation of the changes that occurred in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape following the Inca conquest of the valley. The data from the valley, I argue, fit well within the framework of this structure of meaning, but our understanding of religious life in Cotahuasi remains provisional in the absence of written evidence.

## **THE PRE-INCA RITUAL LANDSCAPE OF THE COTAHUASI VALLEY**

The Cotahuasi Valley is located on the western flank of the Andes in southern Peru. The Cotahuasi-Ocoña River runs through the valley on its way to the Pacific Ocean (Figure 1). My interpretations of the Late Horizon transformations are based largely on the results of survey and limited excavation in the upper portion of the valley (see Figure 1; Jennings 2002). We surveyed a judgmentally chosen section of the valley from the upper edge of cultivation to the river bottom. Since the extreme topography of this deep, V-shaped canyon precluded a 100 percent pedestrian survey, we adopted a mixed strategy based on local knowledge, topographic criteria, and pedestrian survey over all accessible areas. Sketch maps of sites were drawn, and, if time permitted, standing architecture was mapped using a Brunton compass and measuring tape. At each site, we did a total collection of all surface artifacts from all accessible areas (Jennings 2002:163–171). Limited excavations were carried out at the site of Ancient Alca. We dug seven separate 1 × 1 meter units in different sectors of the site (Jennings 2002:118–120).



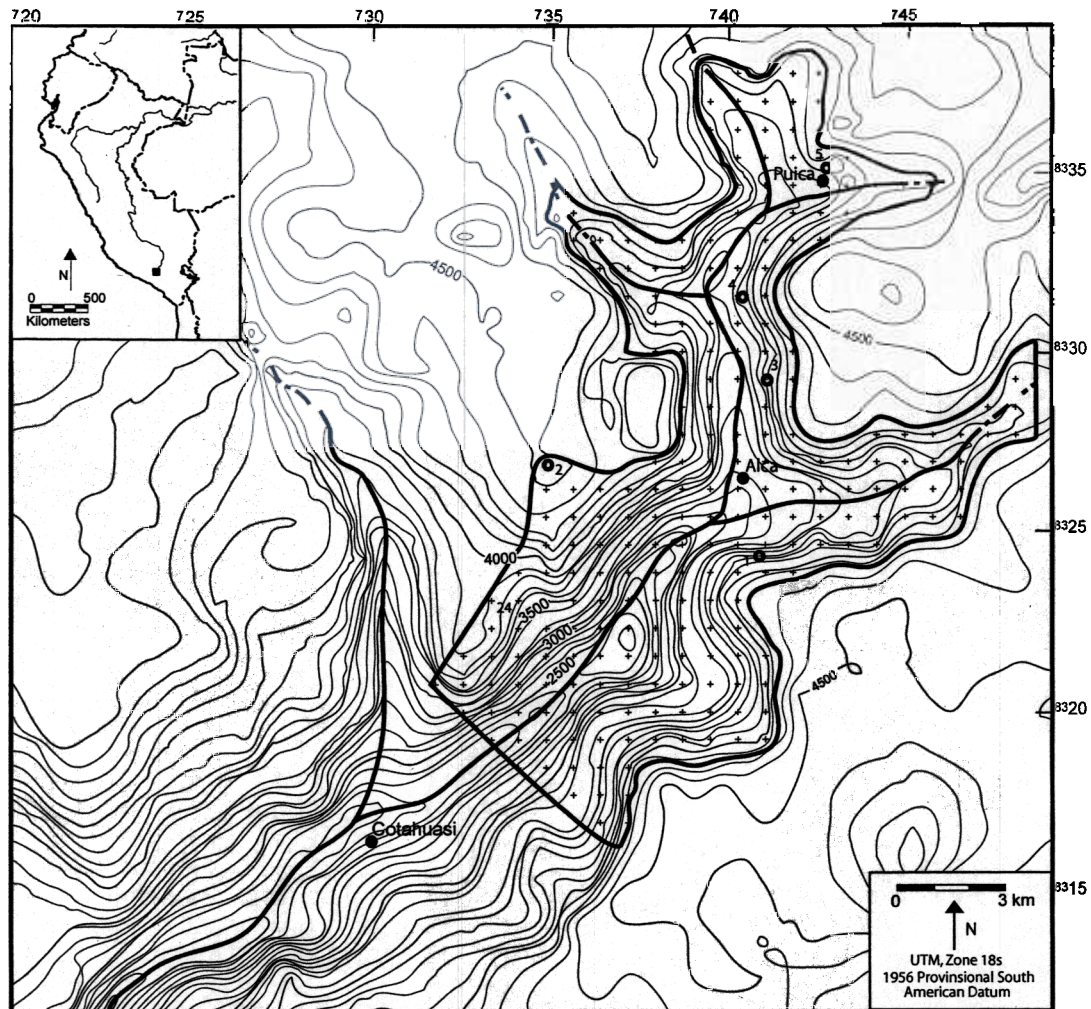


Figure 1. Map of the Cotahuasi Valley

The hatched area on the inset map of Peru indicates the research location, and the stippled area on the main map shows the survey area. The following archaeological sites discussed in the text are shown: (1) Cahuana, (2) Llamoca, (3) Ancient Alca, (4) Winyakmarka, and (5) Maulkallacta.

In order to understand how the Inca manipulated the ritual landscape of Cotahuasi, we must first understand the valley's ritual landscape from the Late Intermediate period. During this period, I identified three different types of ritual sites: painted tablet deposits, cemeteries, and sacred places. These sites were classified as ritual in nature because they (1) are separated from habitation areas (in a well-defined sector of a site or without any associated habitation area); (2) hosted regular, repetitive, invariant actions; and (3) contained symbolically laden or highly valued artifacts. These features are some of the material residues of "ritual-like" behavior that have been identified cross-culturally (Bell 1997:164–69).

As among many other non-Western cultures, rituals in the central Andes were an integral part of daily activities, and there was—and continues to be—no clear delineation between the sacred and the profane (see, e.g., Allen 1988; Salomon and Urioste 1991). Nonetheless, certain places within a region were more sacred than

others, and these locations were important nodes of ritual activity (de Albornoz 1989 [1584]; Salomon 1998:15). The identification of these kinds of ritual sites in the Cotahuasi Valley, of course, does not indicate their meaning can be easily interpreted (see, e.g., Thomas 2001:180). By interpreting these sites within a structure of meaning of circulating life forces, I can provide a tentative reading of Cotahuasi's ritual landscape. I begin my discussion with a description of the painted tablet deposits and cemeteries—sites that were likely ritually important only at the village level. I then shift my focus to sites of greater ritual import—the four sacred places found in our survey area and the sacred peak of Solimana.

Painted tablets are found in a number of different contexts in Cotahuasi but were most often placed in hollows underneath boulders. All of the painted tablet caches are found amidst or adjacent to agricultural terracing. In these contexts, anywhere from ten to more than one hundred tablets are found in dirt or rubble fill (Jennings 2002:361). Tablets are almost always painted on one side only and are often found in pairs with the painted surfaces facing each other. Iconography on the tablets varies widely and includes an array of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, and geometric patterns (Figure 2; Jennings 2003; Kauffman-Doig 1991; Linares Málaga 1988). The Cotahuasi tablets are part of a regional tradition that dates to at least 2000 B.C. (Ravines 1970; Jennings 2003:113).

We documented four painted tablet deposits of this nature in the Cotahuasi Valley (see Appendix for site descriptions), and we viewed photographs of tablets from another site that we were unable to visit (Jennings 2002:369). The number of tablet deposits is likely significantly higher since farmers tell us that they occasionally find tablets in rock hollows in their fields. The tablets are not considered sacred objects today, and farmers often take the tablets out of the hollows to admire and, at times, collect them. Some of these deposits are found in areas where *pagos de la tierra*, offerings to the earth mother, are given today. These *pagos*, typically of alcohol, burnt offerings, and smashed pottery, insure fertility of the fields by satiating the desires of the earth. The fields where these *pagos* are placed today have been cultivated since at least the Late Intermediate period. Ancient farmers were just as concerned about the fertility of the land, and the painted tablets could have been used in similar rituals. Since boulders were often *huacas* where offerings were given during the Late Horizon (Cobo 1990 [1653]:44; de Albornoz 1989 [1584]; Hyslop 1990:106–7), boulders may have been fed in the Late Intermediate period by placing stacks of tablets in the hollows.

Although isolated burials are found in Cotahuasi, most tombs are located within cemeteries. Two major tomb types were prevalent during the Late Intermediate period. The first tomb type was the boulder tomb (Figure 3). The tombs were constructed in spaces underneath naturally disposed boulders and then were sealed with a wall of fieldstones set in a mud mortar. In some cases, builders placed a row of painted tablets where the top of the wall abutted the rock. A low door in the middle of this wall was covered with a stone that could be easily moved to gain access to the tombs. The boulder tombs were all collective burials of between two and eight individuals. The second type of tomb found in the valley was the aboveground sepulcher (Figure 4). These tombs were squat, rectangular,



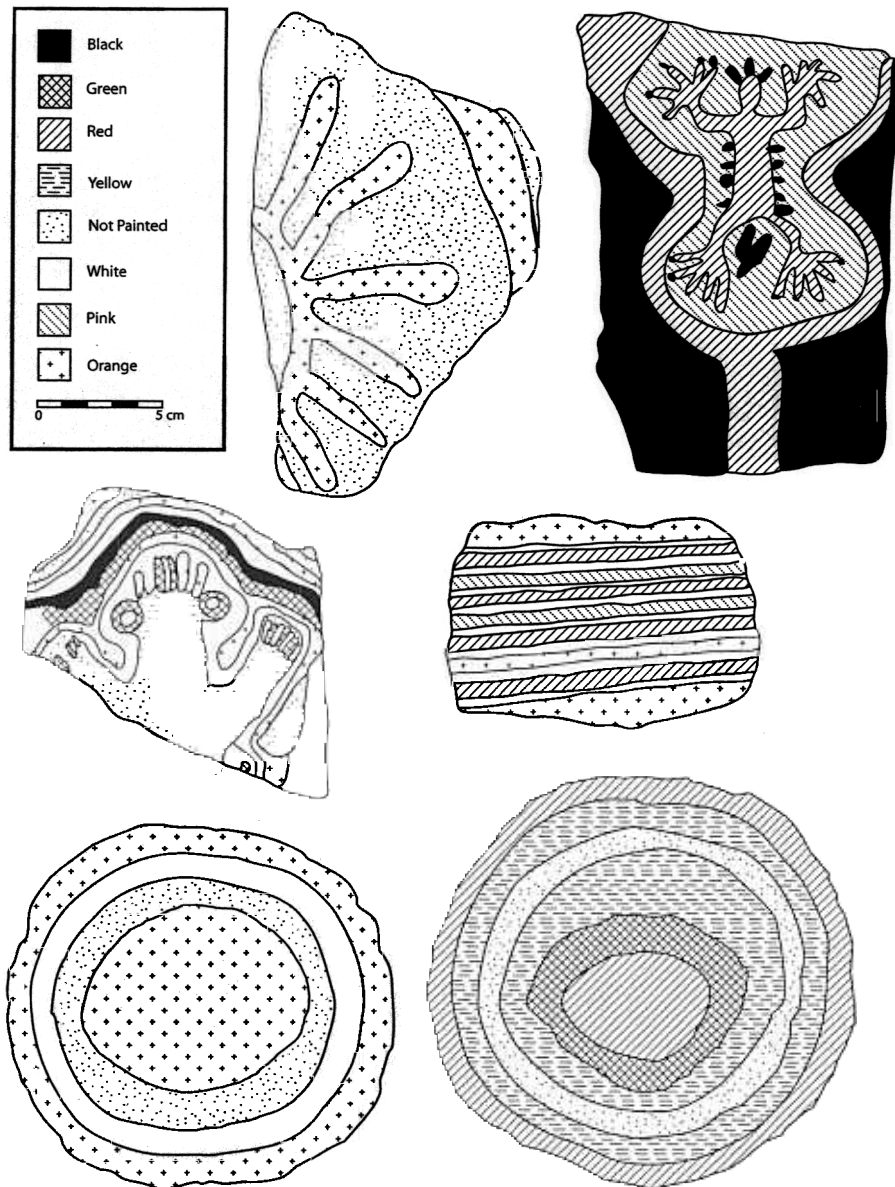


Figure 2. Examples of Painted Stone Tablets Found in the Cotahuasi Valley

single-chambered structures that were sometimes multiple-storied. Often found in groups of ten to one hundred structures, these tombs were built into the base of white- or red-colored cliff faces. The tombs were constructed out of fieldstones set in a mud mortar. The builders then applied a mud plaster to the walls and, occasionally, painted the plaster white or red. Each chamber had a single door that was sealed by a stone that could be easily removed. These tombs were collective, with approximately ten to thirteen individuals interred in each tomb (Jennings 2002:185).

Cemeteries were, and continue to be, places where rituals surrounding burial and ancestor veneration occurred in many parts of the Andes (Bastien 1995; Dillehay 1995; W. H. Isbell 1997). The easy accessibility of Cotahuasi's tombs suggests that the cemeteries in the valley may have functioned in this way. The case

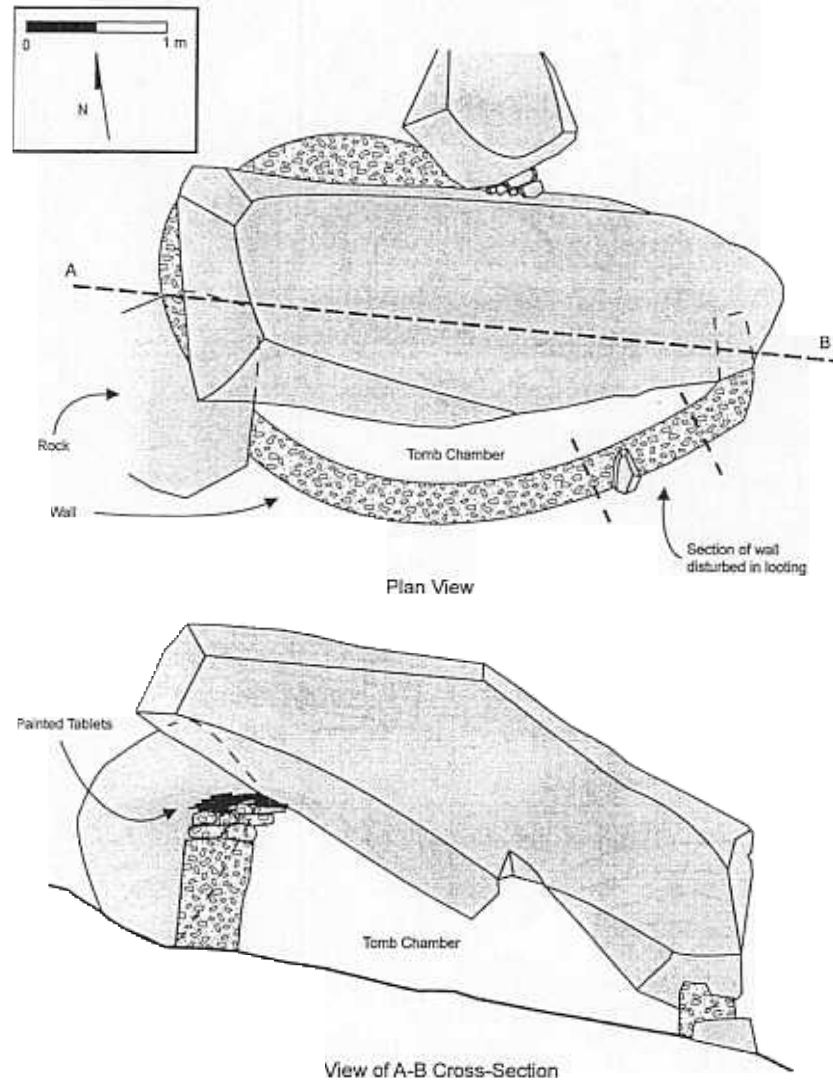


Figure 3. Plan of Tomb 1 at the Site of Ancient Alca—an Example of a Boulder Tomb

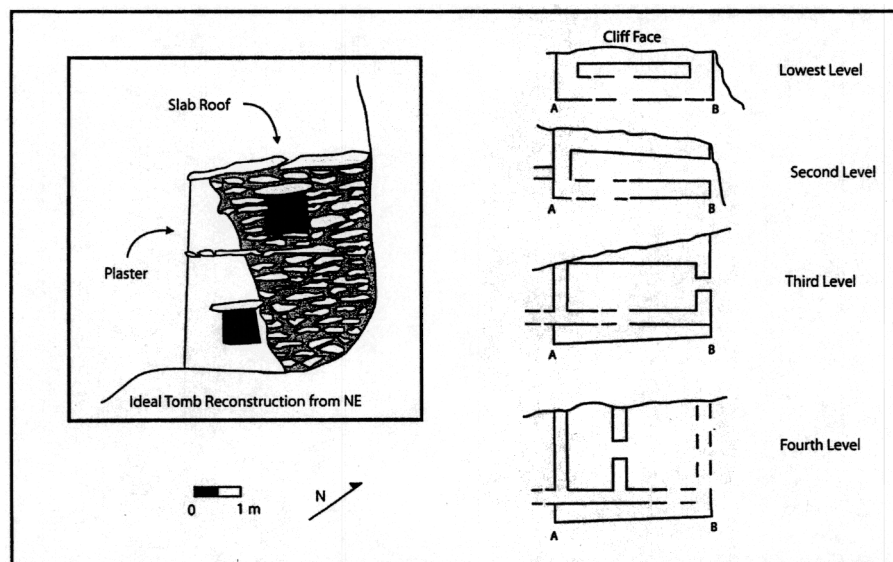


Figure 4. Plan and Reconstruction of Tomb 1 at the Site of Alimbra—an Example of an Aboveground Sepulcher

for ancestor veneration in the valley is further strengthened by the placement of a raised platform that may have been used for communal activities in front of the tombs at the Tulla cemetery (Jennings 2002:524). Moreover, rock art found on the cliff faces above many of the tombs suggests that rituals may have occurred at these sites (Jennings 2002:374–76).

While painted tablet deposits and cemeteries were clearly of religious importance to groups within the valley, these sites probably operated largely at the family, or minimal *ayllu* (corporate descent group),<sup>3</sup> level. I make this assertion based on broadly analogous practices in the region today that appear to be constrained within the same structure of the long term. Although painted tablets are no longer used in rituals in Cotahuasi or elsewhere in the Andes (Jennings 2003), the deposits are similar in size to the *pagos de la tierra* placed near these same locations today. In these rituals, the head of a family or, at most, the leader of the *ayllu*, performs the rites that deal with the fertility of a herd or set of fields (Bastien 1978:53–54; Bolin 1998:53–56). In the case of the cemeteries, modern burial ceremonies are usually only attended by immediate family members and, perhaps, a few close kin (Bastien 1978:177; Salomon 1995:329–30). According to colonial documents from the central Andes, each minimal *ayllu* was affiliated with a cemetery, and each tomb was a symbol of a kin group within this *ayllu* (Salomon 1995:321, 339–40). In most cases, only small groups of kin performed primary and secondary rituals at the tombs of their ancestors (Salomon 1995:329–30; also see Guamán Poma de Ayala 1987 [1615] for depictions of Inca and provincial funerary rituals).

Other sites in Cotahuasi appear to have had an appeal to many, if not all, people living in the valley. These sites, located above the painted tablet deposits and cemeteries in the nested hierarchy of the valley's sacred landscape, were likely considered important *huacas*. The most important of these sites may have been the valley's current *apu* (lord), Solimana, the snow-capped peak that towers above the valley. Although no archaeological investigators have systematically surveyed the mountain's flanks, Cristóbal de Molina (1989 [1553]:170) mentions Solimana as one of the most important sacred peaks in the Inca Empire and suggests that land, livestock, and offerings were given to the mountain before the Late Horizon (also see Guamán Poma de Ayala 1987 [1615] for depictions of local rites at Coropuna, a sacred peak located near Solimana). Within our survey area, we identified four sites that were also likely of ritual importance to most people living in the valley during the Late Intermediate period—Ancient Alca, Cahuana, Winyakmarka, and Llamoca. Ancient Alca's size, its unique religious architecture, and the density of ritual remains found at the site suggest that it may have been the most important Late Intermediate period ritual site within the survey area.

Ancient Alca is a six-hectare site located on a fertile ledge of land overlooking the modern town of Alca. Dating from the Early Intermediate period (200 B.C.–A.D. 600) through the Early Colonial period (A.D. 1532–1570), the village was one of the largest habitation sites in the region. Surface collections, substantiated through test excavations, suggest that after the Middle Horizon (A.D. 600–1000), the site almost doubled in size as a large domestic sector grew to the south of the more ancient

portions of the village (Jennings 2002:86–157). Ancient Alca's growth in the Late Intermediate period may have been spurred by a rise in the ritual importance of the site.

A long, low ridge, extensively altered by the construction of earthen platforms, dominates Ancient Alca. By the Late Intermediate period, the people of Alca built three structures on the western extreme of this ridge (Figure 5).<sup>4</sup> These structures, architecturally unique in the valley, would become the preeminent ceremonial area in the region. The first of the three buildings in this precinct is a niched D-shaped structure that is sunken into the ground on the northern and western sides of the ridge. The second niched building, located to the east of Structure 1, is also D-shaped. Niched, D-shaped structures were the diagnostic form of ceremonial architecture for the Wari Empire (Bragayrac D. 1991:80; Cook 2001), and the imitation of this form may have lent symbolic importance to the area. In contrast to the first two buildings, Structure 3 is irregular in form with a window in the southwestern side of the temple. In front of this small window is an upright standing slab set within a low-lying circle of stones. The window of the temple was blocked by the construction of Structure 2. The upright slab and window in the building are reminiscent of examples found at Inca temples used as celestial observatories (Jennings 2002:97–99).

Further evidence for the ceremonial importance of this sector is the presence of *maquetas* and a *Spondylus* shell fragment. Interspersed within the buildings on the western side of the ridge are two *maquetas*—stones carved to represent the

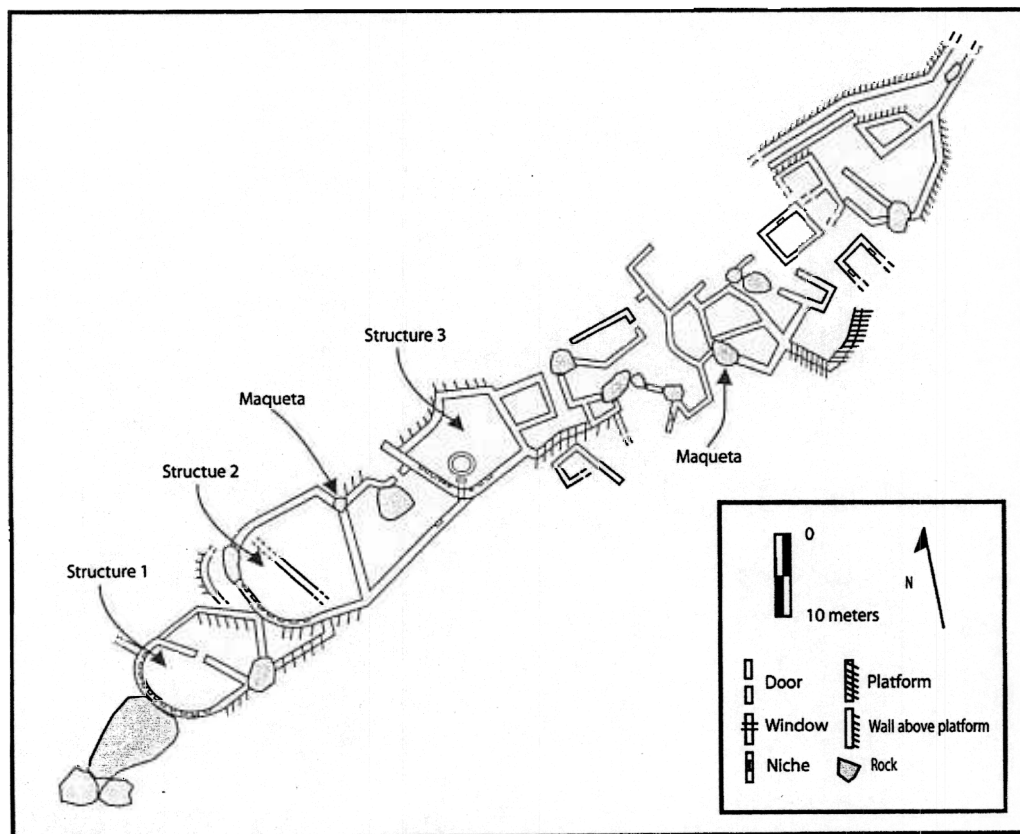


Figure 5. Plan of the Ceremonial Sector of Ancient Alca

landscape that may have been used in irrigation rituals (e.g., Brooks 1998:293). No other *maquetas* were found in our valley survey (Jennings 2002:95–97). The only *Spondylus* fragment found during our fieldwork was collected on the hillside below Structure 1 (Jennings 2002:114). An exotic good from the coast of Ecuador, *Spondylus* shell has been ritually important for thousands of years in the central Andes (Bruhns 1994:281–82). During the Late Horizon, if not earlier, *Spondylus* was an important raw material for rain ceremonies in the sierra (D’Altroy 2002:255).

The ritual importance of the sector is further evidenced by a large number of boulder tombs and deposits of painted stone tablets that surround two sides of the ridgetop on which the three structures sit. Along the steep slopes of the ridge, thousands of complete tablets can be found under rocks, deposited into the ground, and littering the surface. Many of the tablet contexts are disturbed from looting or erosion, although at least twenty deposits remain largely intact. In these cases, stacks of between three and fifteen tablets were placed underneath rocks or directly into the earth. Most of the tablets encountered were circular, often painted with red or orange concentric circles (Jennings 2002:101–4). At the base of the ridge, we documented three caches of stone tablets that were buried in deep hollows underneath boulders (see Appendix). Each of the deposits contained more than a hundred tablets placed in layers with loose dirt covering each layer. These tablets were richly colored and depicted anthropomorphic and zoomorphic motifs.

The site of Cahuana was likely the second most important ritual site found within the survey area. Cahuana, occupied by at least the Early Horizon (900–200 B.C.) through Late Horizon, sits on a saddle overlooking an eponymous modern village. In Quechua, Cahuana means “watchtower,” and indeed the site’s location provides excellent views both up and down the river. Modern agricultural practices have destroyed a significant portion of the site, but the artifact scatter and wall remnants within the fields suggest that the site was likely similar in size to Ancient Alca. Like Ancient Alca, the highest point of the site is a low ridgetop. The buildings on the top of the ridgetop, if any existed, were destroyed by Inca renovations of this area of the site (described below). We found finely decorated Middle Horizon through Late Intermediate sherds and fragments of four painted tablets eroding out of the hillside underneath the highest section of the renovated area (Plaza 3) (Jennings 2002:476). This limited evidence suggests that at least a portion of this section could have been ritually important by as early as the Middle Horizon.

The most sacred part of the site may have been a jutting peak that is found to the northwest of the renovated section. The peak, approximately one hundred meters high, forms one side of the saddle top where Cahuana sits. The peak’s relation to the site is reminiscent of the relationship of Huayna Picchu to the famous Inca site of Machu Picchu (Figure 6). There are four tombs and a raised platform on the flanks of the mountain, but no structures were built on the top of the peak. I suggest that the peak may have been sacred for two reasons. First, local villagers consider the mountain sacred and continue to leave offerings at this location (Jennings 2002:477). Second, we encountered fragments of two Late

Horizon panpipes on the summit. Musical instruments were important in Inca rituals (de Molina 1989 [1553]), and only two other panpipe fragments (of 1,341 diagnostic sherds) were collected in the valley during both survey and excavation. The discovery of sherds from three Middle Horizon and two Late Intermediate fine-ware vessels on the summit suggests that the peak may have held ritual importance before the Inca conquest of the valley.

Unlike Ancient Alca and Cahuana, the last two sacred places in the valley are not associated with habitation areas. One of these sites, Llamoca (Figure 7), is situated on the top of a highly visible red sandstone mesa that rises up from the grasslands at the canyon's rim. Although clearly visible within this section of the valley from below, the site is a three-hour walk from the nearest prehispanic site. Erosion has shaped the top of the mesa into a warren of pits and gullies. At the northern end of the mesa are a number of jutting outcrops that rise three to four meters above the mesa's surface. One of these outcrops has been shaped by the wind to resemble an upturned head in profile. Associated with these outcrops is an agglutinated structure with associated ceramics that date from the Middle Horizon through Late Horizon (Jennings 2002:557–58).



Figure 6. Vista of Cahuana and Its Sacred Peak



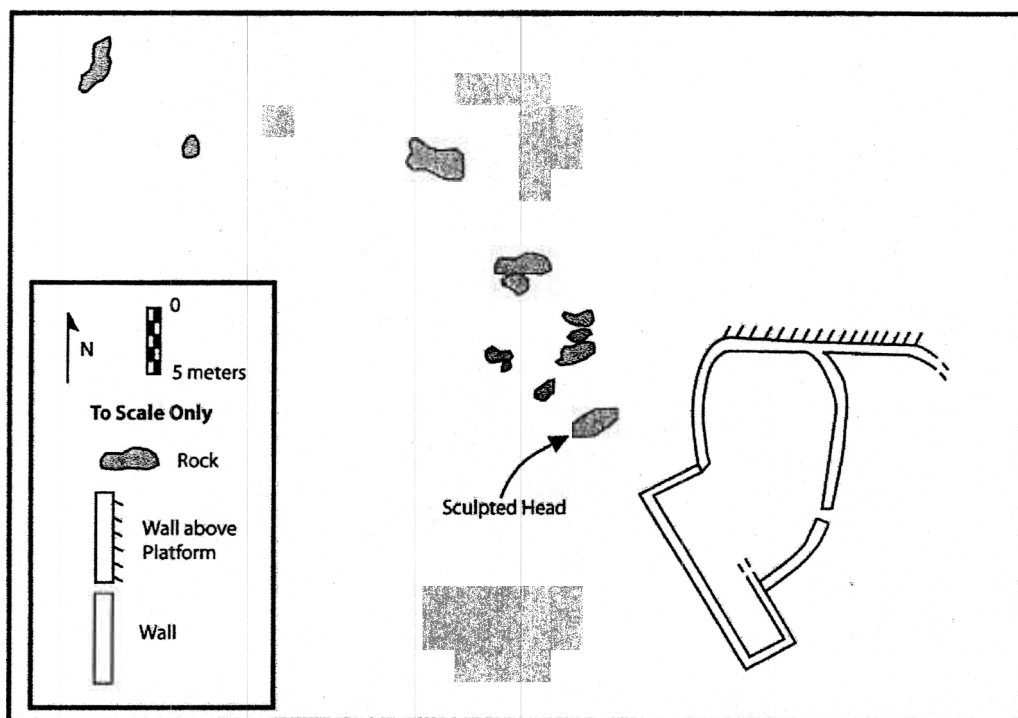


Figure 7. Plan of Llamoca

The last sacred place found within the survey zone, Winyakmarka, is centered on a rocky hillock near the top of a tall waterfall (Figure 8). Like Llamoca, the site is spatially segregated from where people resided. The nearest ancient village, buried only a few kilometers away under the modern town of Huillac, is separated from Winyakmarka by a massive cliff where a waterfall drops into a gully far below. To reach the site from any village took over an hour. Winyakmarka consists of five structures—two terraces on the hillock, a raised causeway, and two irregularly shaped structures built on top of a raised platform on the site's southern side. The causeway connects the platform to the thirty-meter-high jutting hillock. The hillcrest is littered with fragments of ceramics and painted tablets that date from the Early Horizon through the Late Horizon. Although the top of the spur contains an abundance of cultural debris, there are no architectural remains on the summit (Jennings 2002:550–52).

The ritual landscape of the valley can be interpreted through the structure of the long term discussed in the preceding section. As in other areas of the south-central Andes today, much of the ritual landscape of the Cotahuasi Valley during the Late Intermediate period may have revolved around both ancestors and prominent features of the natural landscape (Allen 1988; Bastien 1978; Bolin 1998). The people of the valley likely made offerings to the gods and to their ancestors to propitiate them and to maintain the flow of cosmic forces throughout the world. One important class of offerings was painted stone tablets that were often placed underneath rocks. These tablets, and the family or minimal *ayllu*-based rituals in the valley's cemeteries, likely sustained the flow of these forces at the community level. At important *huacas* like Ancient Alca and Llamoca, gods may have been embodied in aspects of the natural landscape. In these places, larger



Figure 8. Vista of Winyakmarca

The site is located on and around the jutting spur that is seen on the ridgeline in the foreground of the photograph.

groups of people likely participated in ceremonies that sought to feed these gods and insure that the world was kept in harmony.

### **LATE HORIZON TRANSFORMATIONS TO COTAHUASI'S RITUAL LANDSCAPE**

The Inca conquest of the valley in the fifteenth century was marked by both continuity and change in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape. One of the most far-reaching impacts of the conquest was the demise of the painted tablet tradition. This tradition ended, or was at least heavily curtailed, throughout far southern Peru during the Late Horizon (Jennings 2003). In Cotahuasi, we identified no primary context where these tablets were found with ceramics dating from this period. For example, we encountered seven tablets or fragments of tablets during the course of our excavations in Ancient Alca. Three of the tablets were associated with a Middle Horizon camelid offering found underneath a wall foundation. The other four tablets were found in Middle Horizon through Late Intermediate architectural fill in three other units (Jennings 2002:368–70). Painted tablets were also found in the interior of two tombs at the site of Ancient Alca and three tombs at other sites. All of these tombs dated from either the Middle Horizon or Late Intermediate periods. It is likely, therefore, that the boulder sites (where painted tablets, often without

diagnostic ceramics, were placed in hollows at the base of the rocks) were no longer used in the Late Horizon and that the use of painted tablets in ritual practices at other sites, such as Winyakmarka, also tapered off.

While the use of painted tablets in field fertility rites may have ended after the Inca occupation of Cotahuasi, the family and minimal *ayllu*-based mortuary ceremonies appear to have continued without major alterations. There are no breaks in mortuary traditions between the Late Intermediate and the Late Horizon periods, as people are buried in the same places, in the same form, and, occasionally, in the same structures (Jennings 2002). Also, there is evidence neither for the destruction of Late Intermediate tombs by the Inca nor for the introduction of new burial practices outside of a handful of burials found at the Inca administrative center of Maulkallacta (Jennings 2002:208; Jennings and Yépez Álvarez n.d.). Nonetheless, there is a shift away from burials in aboveground sepulcher tombs (Table 1). Of the fourteen cemeteries of this type used during the Late Intermediate period, only four continued to be used during the Late Horizon. The abandonment of these cemeteries may have been offset by an increase in tomb constructions of both types at the margins of sites.

**TABLE 1**  
**Sites Containing Multiple Boulder Tombs and Aboveground Sepulchers**

Site Name	Site No.	Tomb Type	No. of Tombs	Time Period
Ancient Alca	CO-2	Boulder	30-40	MH-LIP
Juchayoc	CO-11	Boulder	1-4	LIP-LH
Patipatilla	CO-14	Sepulcher	5	MH
Pompalca	CO-17	Boulder	1-4	MH-LH
Harenha	CO-18	Boulder	11-15	MH-LH
Huarhata	CO-19	Boulder	8-12	LIP-LH
Machaquillta	CO-21	Sepulcher	11-15	MH-LH
Marcapampa	CO-22	Sepulcher	8	LIP
Tulla	CO-23	Sepulcher	12-20	MH-LIP
Cementerio Tulla	CO-24	Sepulcher	17-19	MH-LIP
Chimpa	CO-30	Sepulcher	5	MH (?)
Ullchula Tombas	CO-34	Sepulcher	20-25	LIP
Palasaplata	CO-37	Sepulcher and Boulder	4-6	MH-LIP
Cupe	CO-40	Sepulcher	3-5	LIP
Larapampa	CO-41	Sepulcher	11-12	MH-LH
Alimbra	CO-44	Sepulcher	75-100	MH-LH
Wayñarme	CO-47	Sepulcher	20-30	MH-LH
Huiñao	CO-48	Sepulcher	3-7	MH
Huarhua	CO-50	Boulder	10-12	MH-LH
Ocos	CO-51	Sepulcher	2-3	LIP
Sihuana	CO-53	Sepulcher	4-5	LIP
Arcopunko	CO-56	Sepulcher	10-13	MH-LIP

*Note.* When estimated, the number of tombs depends upon the degree of preservation of the site, the accessibility of certain site sectors, and the time available for reconnaissance. The time periods are abbreviated as MH for the Middle Horizon, LIP for the Late Intermediate period, and LH for the Late Horizon.

The trend toward both continuity and change in the ritual landscape is also seen in the four sites of wider ritual importance in the valley. The greatest change occurred at Ancient Alca. The ritual power of the site was perhaps based in large part on the deposition of painted tablets along the flanks of the ritual precinct. The decline of the tablet tradition paralleled the loss of the site's ritual power. The ridgetop where the ritual structures are found was largely abandoned during the Late Horizon. We found no Late Horizon ceramics in three excavation units sunk into the ridgetop, and none of the 14 ceramic sherds collected in a surface survey of the three ritual structures date from this period (in comparison, 23 percent of the 285 diagnostic sherds collected across the entire site during survey and excavation were from the Late Horizon). Paradoxically, the site itself did not suffer a similar decline. It continued to be occupied and may have even grown slightly during the Late Horizon (Jennings 2002:113–15). Inca influence over the site was heavier than that seen in most villages. Three buildings were built closely following the Inca style, while at least eight other structures incorporate Inca architectural details into local designs (Jennings 2002:94, 104–10). Some of the valley's finest Inca and Inca-influenced ceramics come from excavated domestic contexts in Ancient Alca (Jennings 2002:146), and Late Horizon sherds are common throughout most of the site.

As Ancient Alca declined in ritual importance during the Late Horizon, Cahuana may have risen to take its place. While most of the major villages in the valley have a few Inca-style buildings (Jennings and Yépez Alvarez n.d.), Inca material investment in the site of Cahuana was far higher than at any other local site. Only Maulkallacta, the imperial administrative center in the valley, has more Inca buildings than Cahuana. The Inca invested heavily in a massive architectural project in the highest portion of Cahuana (Figure 9). The empire constructed a series of buildings arranged on five terraces and around three plazas. According to local oral histories, an Inca temple was built on top of Plaza 3. This temple, if it existed, was completely destroyed by the construction of an early colonial chapel (the building adjacent to Plaza 3 in Figure 9 is this chapel).

More time and labor may have gone into reshaping the site's topography than into the construction of the new buildings. To build the plazas and associated structures, the Inca razed a large portion of the saddle top, destroying both preexisting building and terraces in the areas around Plaza 3. The renovations of the site may have been directed toward exposing, and then emphasizing, two large red rock outcrops. Two of Cahuana's plazas were placed around the outcrops. The outcrop in Plaza 2 has remnants of what may have been a channel dug into it for liquid offerings. This outcrop is ringed on one side by a number of stones set into the ground. To the southwest of these plazas, the Inca either constructed or renovated a canal that ran through the site. The canal runs through a group of terraces dating to the Late Horizon, and nine Inca structures abut the canal. The canal runs from the base of a waterfall, down through the site, and finally goes on to feed a series of subcanals in the agricultural fields below (Jennings 2002:473–78).

Although ritual practices were changed at Cahuana and Ancient Alca after the Inca conquest, the other two *huacas* of the valley seem little affected by the

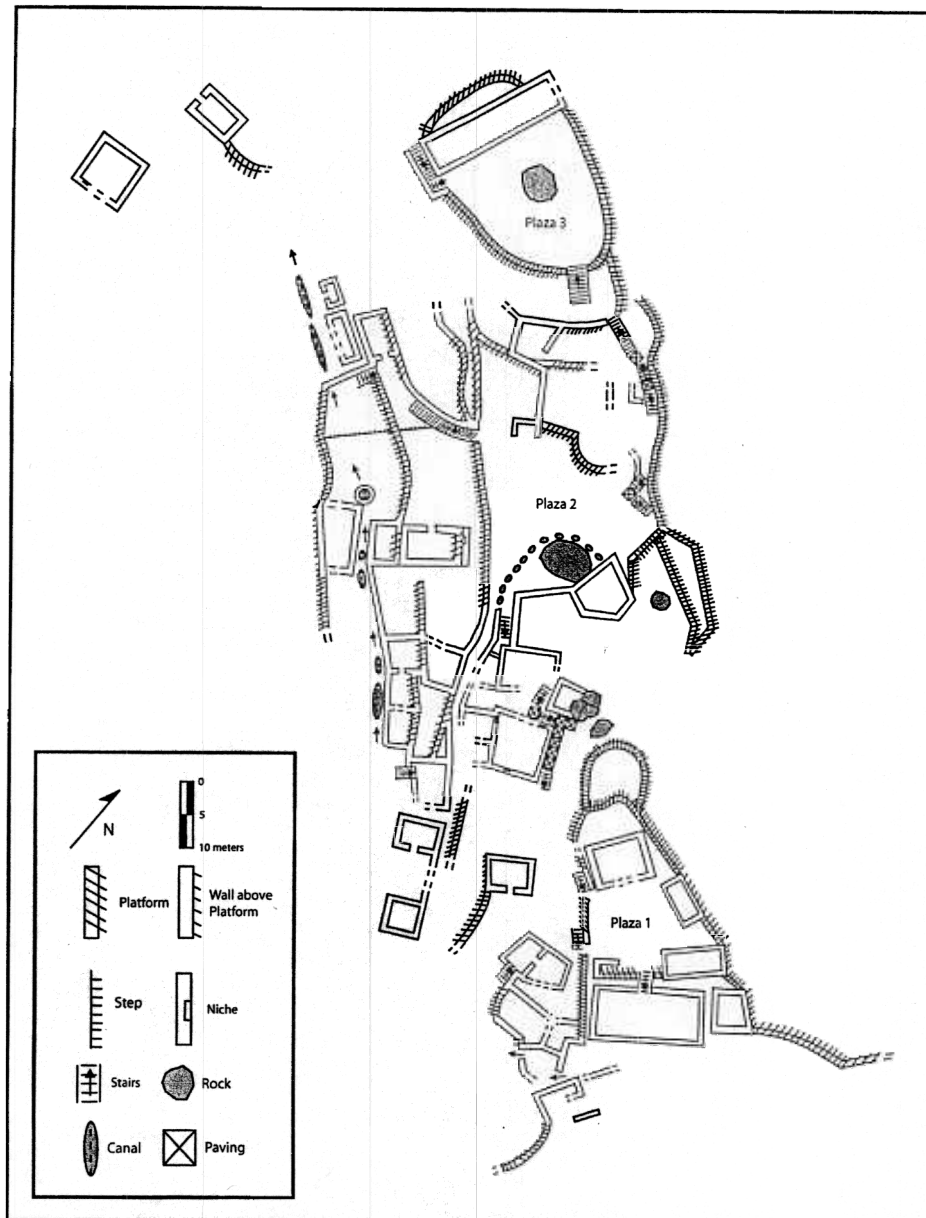


Figure 9. Plan of the Ceremonial Sector of Cahuana

transformation going on at these sites. Llamoca and Winyakmarka continued to function during the Late Horizon, and the pre-Inca architecture at these sites was not modified or destroyed. There is no Inca architecture at either site, and Inca-style sherds are found only at Llamoca.<sup>5</sup> If the empire sought to co-opt these sites, then imperial administrators did not try particularly hard to do so. Instead, it is likely that Cotahuasinos continued to worship at these sites with little to no interference or encouragement from the state. These *huacas* remained *huacas* to the people of the valley, and they were neither favored nor denigrated by the state (e.g., Spalding 1984:101).

Finally, significant changes occurred around the mountain peak of Solimana. Solimana is part of a chain of snow-clad volcanic peaks that runs through the sierra of Arequipa. In the south-central Andes today, mountains like these are regarded

as living reservoirs of water (Gose 1994), and Arequipa's peaks were considered among the most sacred *huacas* of the empire (Reinhard 1985a). The Inca not only allowed the worship of Solimana and the other peaks to continue, but they provided additional people and camelid herds to serve these *apus* (de Albornoz 1989 [1584]:170).

Although the valley's ritual landscape was radically transformed by the demise of the painted tablet tradition, the abandonment of the ritual precinct of Ancient Alca, and transformations at Cahauna in the Late Horizon, the changes do not appear to have upset the long-term structure of meaning that conceived of the world as composed of circulating currents. Specific institutions (the *huaca* at Ancient Alca and the painted tablet tradition) ended during the Inca occupation, but the structure upon which these institutions were founded remained intact. Cotahuasi's ritual landscape in the Late Horizon still revolved around both the ancestors and prominent features of the natural landscape. The people still made offerings to the gods and to their ancestors, and these offerings likely served to propitiate them in order to maintain the flow of cosmic forces throughout the world. While painted tablets were no longer used to feed the gods, other goods such as corn beer, llamas, and coca leaves likely took their place. Kin groups maintained their rituals at cemeteries, though there may have been a shift in the type and location of the tombs. Within the valley, important *huacas*, where the gods were embodied, brought larger groups of people together in worship, albeit with one *huaca* gone and another transformed. The great *apu*, Solimana, continued to tower over the valley and was likely worshiped by both the Cotahuasinos and their Inca conquerors.

### WHY WAS THE RITUAL LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMED?

Significant dangers are associated with the manipulation of ritual. If traditional rituals are substantially and obviously changed, there is a great risk that a community may deem the changes unacceptable (Bell 1997:145; Geertz 1973:164). In some cases, the failure of transformed rituals can lead toward abject rejection of the status quo and, occasionally, violence against those who are perceived to have altered the ritual (Lincoln 1989:90–91). There were substantial changes in Cotahuasi's ritual landscape during the Late Horizon. The danger of Inca religious reforms was ameliorated, however, because imperial ideas were anchored in systems of belief that were commonly held throughout much of the central Andes (Conrad 1992; MacCormack 1991:149; Van Buren 2000:82). Nonetheless, there should have been good reasons why the Inca departed from what was likely a general policy of allowing, and even fostering, local religions (Cobo 1990:3 [1653]; Espinoza Soriano 1997:435; Spalding 1984:82; Valcárcel 1981:77). I suggest that the reforms were spurred by two related factors—Ancient Alca's role in resisting the Inca conquest of the valley and the impropriety of painted tablets as offerings.

According to the Inca ideology of expansion, the empire was the result of an attempt to bring order to the chaos of local religious practices and to reestablish the



true religion that had been corrupted over time. Imperial expansion was therefore legitimized in large part by a divine mandate to bring religious reform to the Andean world (D'Altroy 2001:209; Jennings 2003). The Inca Tupac Yupanqui, for example, marched upon the forces of the Lord of Chimor not to "deprive him of his estates and authority, but to improve his idolatrous religion, his laws and customs" (Garcilaso de la Vega, as cited by Urton 1999:62). Thus, the Inca expansion was also a crusade. While the armies of the Inca waged battle against the armies of an opposing valley, the gods of the Incas likely fought the valley's gods. The conquest of a valley, therefore, legitimated the righteousness of the Inca's cause.

Cotahuasi was the first valley that offered sustained resistance to the Inca's military campaign to conquer Condesuyu, the western quadrant of the empire. According to the chronicles and local oral histories, Cotahuasi's resistance to the Inca was fierce (Trawick 1994:77). The Inca emperor Mayta Capac attempted to enter the Cotahuasi Canyon from the high grasslands to the east of the valley. The inhabitants of the valley, rallied together through the ritual power of Ancient Alca, gathered a force and defended the high passes into the valley. Over the course of two months of stiff resistance, these forces slowly yielded to the Inca until finally losing a decisive battle fought outside of Ancient Alca (Garcilaso de la Vega 1966 [1609]:152–53). Peace only lasted in the valley until the beginning of the reign of Mayta Capac's son, Inca Capac Yupanqui. At this time, the people of Cotahuasi rebelled, assembled a large force, and marched on Cuzco. This army was routed twice at a cost of six thousand men, and the Inca pursued the fleeing army back into Cotahuasi where the force was vanquished (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]:199–200). Despite these defeats, a brief uprising occurred in Cotahuasi again during the later reign of Inca Roca (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]:201).

If the rise of Ancient Alca's pivotal role in Cotahuasi's defense can be associated with a rise in its ritual importance, then the god(s) worshiped in Ancient Alca may have been critical rallying points against the Inca invasion. Drastic political failures can often lead to the questioning of underlying religious principles (e.g., Wolf 1982:111, 1999:285–91), and the Inca gods may have humiliated Ancient Alca's god(s) by conquering the valley. Identities of local groups were often bound closely to the *huacas* that they worshiped, and the disgrace of one's *huaca* was deeply felt (Gose 1996; Nesbitt 2003; Patterson 1985; Salomon and Urioste 1991; Topic, Topic, and Calva 2002). The Inca typically would have taken pains to respect local ritual practices and to integrate Ancient Alca and its god(s) into the imperial pantheon (e.g., Guamán Poma de Ayala 1987 [1615]:256–65; MacCormack 1991:148). I argue that the empire was unable to do so in this case because worship at the site was closely intertwined with the deposition of painted tablets. The tablet offerings, I suggest, blatantly contradicted Inca ideas that legitimated their expansion (Jennings 2003).

One of the primary concerns in Inca religion was maintaining the proper form of religious practices (Cieza de León 1984:337 [1553]; Cobo 1990 [1653]:110; Jennings 2003). The painted tablets of southern Peru stood in contrast to Inca offering practices in at least three ways (Jennings 2003).<sup>6</sup> First, the major offerings in Inca ritual were predominantly goods that the supplicants would desire to eat,

drink, wear, or possess themselves. The tablets could not be easily conceived of as desirable goods. Second, the power of an Inca offering was linked to the object's value in society, such that human life, gold, and silver were among the most sacred of offerings. The ritual potency of the painted tablets, however, did not stem from the value of their constitutive material. Finally, the Inca supplicant directed offerings to the deities with his or her vocalized prayers or gestures. While it is likely that prayers were also used in the tablet offering tradition, the care taken with the various painted motifs and their diversity suggest that the tablets needed symbolic representations—of humans, fantastic creatures, llamas, rain, rainbows, etc.—painted on them in order to function properly (Jennings 2003).

At the outset of their military campaign in Condesuyu, the Inca may have wanted to make a statement about their power and the sanctity of their cause to the still unconquered areas to the west. By repressing the tablet tradition or allowing it to collapse, the Inca could make this statement by fulfilling their divine mandate for imperial expansion. Ancient Alca's ritual power, already vulnerable because of its defeat at the hands of the Inca, was likely further damaged by the curtailment of painted tablet use. Since the area seethed with rebellion after its initial conquest, the Inca may have been unable to leave the village unsupervised. While it remains unclear if actual Inca administrators or soldiers were stationed at the site, the pervasive imperial influence on Ancient Alca suggests a close relation with the empire. Co-option of the ritual precinct was likely not an option because the power of this place was strongly linked to the practice of interring tablets into the flanks of the ridge and the use of tablets as offerings was unacceptable in the context of Inca ideology. Instead, they may have let the *huaca* die, even while the village continued to be occupied.

The demise of both an important ritual practice and an important *huaca* of the Cotahuasinos could only have exasperated an already tense situation. The sentiments of villagers in the central Andes coalesced around local gods, local chiefs, local practices, and local land (Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1999:66). I suggest that the Inca, deeply concerned with the threat of rebellion from the valley (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]:201), likely took steps to maintain other core aspects of Cotahuasi religion. The Inca likely fostered worship, or at least allowed it to continue, at Llamoca and Winyakmarka. As mentioned above, Llamoca was a red sandstone mesa with wind-sculpted pillars, and Winyakmarka was a jutting spur next to a waterfall. Since hilltops, mountain peaks, rock outcrops, springs, and water were sacred to the Inca (Bauer and Stanish 2001:7; B. J. Isbell 1978:59), ritual practices at these sites did not contradict Inca conceptions of the sacred. Yet, these ritual sites were located away from settlements and were likely not the scene of daily ritual practices. The last important *huaca*, Cahuana, however, was a ritual site that was associated with not only a towering sacred peak but also a habitation site situated along a major trail. By supporting Cahuana, the Inca could potentially fill the void left by the demise of Ancient Alca's *huaca*.

I suggest that, just as in the major sanctuaries of the empire (Bauer and Stanish 2001:249; Patterson 1985), the Inca reconfigured Cahuana to project an Inca vision of the religious order. The Inca destroyed any previous religious structures on the

saddle and replaced them with Inca structures. The site's landscape was transformed to reveal and highlight two rock outcrops. Inca structures were built around and on top of a canal. Inca ceremonies, as evidenced by the Inca-style panpipe fragments, were conducted on top of the peak overlooking the site. At Cahuana, the Inca highlighted the mountain peak, the rock outcrops, and the water flowing through the channel. Not only the Inca but also the people of the valley probably held these aspects of the natural world sacred. By encapsulating these sacred places within an Inca sector, and by performing rituals at these locations, the Inca created a place of local worship mediated through the empire (see, e.g., Hyslop 1990). Local religion was maintained, but only within a framework that legitimated the empire and its religion.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although significant dangers are associated with the manipulation of ritual, effectively transformed rituals can help buttress newly won positions of power (Geertz 1983:125). When an area was consolidated into the empire, the Inca generally strove to maintain most aspects of the local religion. Nonetheless, religious change tends to follow in the footsteps of conquerors, and the expansion of the Inca Empire changed the ritual world of the central Andes. In the imperial heartland, for example, Inca elite transformed long-standing corn-planting and harvest rituals to support their new positions in the imperial hierarchy (Bauer 1996). In a provisional area, the Inca co-opted the coastal *huaca*, Pachacamac, along with the deity's wife, children, and siblings. By building both a temple to the sun at the site of Pachacamac and supporting shrines for Pachacamac's siblings, the Inca elevated their ritual position through the worship of the deity (Patterson 1985; Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 2000:194–95). Although the changes in ritual practices during the Late Horizon had significant impact on society, Inca reforms were far more tolerated, and far more successful, than the reforms instituted by the Spanish in the years following the collapse of the Inca Empire.

As in other ancient states, the success of Inca religious reform may lay in part on how the "new" rituals drew on preexisting cosmological principles to support novel political formations (e.g., Brumfiel 1998; Joyce 2000). These cosmological principles, such as the belief in circulating life forces, were long-term structures of meaning that were ingrained within the practical consciousness of central Andean peoples. The particular local institutions built upon these structures were toppled, altered, or co-opted during the Inca expansion, but the changes fit within a native vision of how the world worked. The empire may have destroyed tombs in attempts to wipe out the power base of influential *ayllus* in one place (e.g., Nielsen 2002), for example, but the Inca's power structure was inextricably linked to the ancestor worship of past rulers (Conrad 1992; Van de Guchte 1996). The emperor may have declared certain *huacas* as mute and powerless, but a strong relationship to the powerful *huacas* of the empire was essential for his reign (Gose 1996). Inca religious reform, therefore, was a mixture of both continuity and change.

The case study in the Cotahuasi Valley provides us with a tentative

understanding of how this mixture was materialized within an area significantly transformed during the Late Horizon. The changes in the valley undoubtedly caused some dissent among Cotahuasinos—dissent that the Inca avoided in other places by leaving local religious practices intact. I argue that the Inca needed to make these alterations because of both the role that Ancient Alca played in resisting the Inca attack and the contradiction of the painted tablet tradition to imperial offering ideals. The transformation of the ritual landscape was facilitated by the fundamental similarity of Inca and local beliefs. Although many of the changes were likely unwanted, the reconfigured ritual landscape was intelligible within the local cosmology. Ancient Alca lost its sacred power, but another local site was elevated to take its place. Painted tablets were no longer used, but other offerings served the same function. A few cemeteries were abandoned, but ancestor worship continued to be important. The institutions that changed during the Late Horizon did not alter the villagers' structural belief in circulating life forces, yet the changes that did occur in the valley served to legitimate the precepts of Inca religion. The success of this imperial strategy is perhaps reflected in the durability of this reshaped landscape. Winyakmarca, Llamoca, and Cahuana are still important *huacas* that are worshiped in the valley today. Ancient Alca is only one of many ruins of the *gentiles*, the people who lived in the valley before the coming of the Spaniards.

## APPENDIX

### Site Descriptions of the Four Painted Tablet Deposits

#### Oshpacullta (CO-1)

A 0.1-hectare site consisting of caches of deposits placed within three rock hollows underneath three boulders. Each hollow is more than 1 meter long with the opening measuring between 0.4 and 0.8 meters in diameter. The stones were placed in layers parallel to the ground surface with loose soil often separating them. We estimate that at least one hundred tablets are *in situ* in each of the caches, but we did not have permits to excavate in this or in any other painted tablet deposit. Although no datable ceramics were found at the site, the eleven tablets that we collected from the surface outside the caches have designs similar to examples found in the valley and elsewhere from Middle Horizon (MH) through Late Intermediate period (LIP) contexts (Jennings 2002:467).

#### Charura (CO-31)

A 0.1-hectare site consisting of a cache of tablets placed within a hollow underneath a boulder. The hollow measured approximately 0.5 meters in depth by 0.5 meters in width. Unlike CO-1, the tablets in this deposit were placed in a matrix of dirt and unaltered fieldstones. Some of the tablets were unpainted, while the others were iconographically simpler (both in color and design) than those found in Oshpacullta. Our guide, however, suggested that the more beautiful tablets had already been looted from this location. Although no datable ceramics were found, the seven tablets that we collected from the surface outside the cache have designs similar to MH-LIP examples (Jennings 2002:532).

#### Sonccopata (CO-32)

A 0.1-hectare site consisting of a cache placed within three hollows underneath a boulder. The largest hollow measured approximately 0.3 meters in depth by 0.5 meters in width,

while the smallest hollow measured 0.3 meters in width by 0.2 meters in depth. The tablets in this deposit were found in a matrix of dirt and unaltered fieldstones. Some of the tablets were unpainted. The painted tablets had the simplest designs (concentric circles, broad lines) found in the valley. Although we found no datable ceramics, the two tablets that we collected from the surface outside the caches have designs similar to ML through LIP examples found elsewhere (Jennings 2002:533).

#### Pago de Lucha (CO-59)

A 0.1-hectare site consisting of a cache of tablets underneath a boulder. The hollow measured about 1 meter in depth and had an opening approximately 0.6 meters in diameter. The cache is badly looted, and the paint on the few tablets that remain is almost completely faded from the sunlight. No ceramics were found at the site. The boulder was visited during fieldwork in 1999 but was designated a site only after an informal visit in 2002 documented looting that uncovered clear evidence for tablets deposited within the hollow.

### NOTES

1. This article benefited from the comments of Melissa Chatfield, Lawrence Straus, Christina Torres-Rouf, Hendrik Van Gijseghem, Kevin Vaughn, and five anonymous reviewers. I thank Clarence Bodmer, Forrest Cook, Michael Hendrick, Kelly Knudson, Gregory Mazzeo, Hendrik Van Gijseghem, and Willy Yépez Álvarez for their hard work in the Cotahuasi Valley. Amelia Argüelles Talavera and Fabiola Talavera deserve my sincere thanks for providing us a home away from home during our stay in the valley. We thank the National Science Foundation for its support of the project (Award # 9903508).

2. As I note later in the article, the closest reference to ritual activity in the valley comes from Cristóbal de Albornoz. He mentions the Inca co-option of Solimana in his *Instrucción para descubrir todas las Guacas del Piru y sus camayos y haciendas*. The snow-capped peak towers over the Cotahuasi Valley and is today recognized as the most sacred *huaca* of the region. De Albornoz, however, does not specifically link the worship of Solimana to the Cotahuasi Valley.

3. Andean archaeologists and ethnologists disagree regarding the nature of the *ayllu* in the prehispanic Andes (see W. H. Isbell 1997). I follow William Isbell's definition of an *ayllu* as a social group organized in terms of a kinship idiom, whose members shared the administration and proceeds of resources bequeathed to them by an ancestor (W. H. Isbell 1997:36). *Ayllus* can range in size from a few dozen to tens of thousands of members (Platt 1982). In Cotahuasi and elsewhere in the Peruvian Andes, *ayllus* of less than one hundred people, typically called minimal *ayllus*, structure many aspects of daily life (Allen 1988; B. J. Isbell 1978). To be parsimonious, I define the term as "corporate descent group" in the context of the present article.

4. The dating of the construction of the three buildings is based on the results of both a collection of ceramics from the wall mortar of the temples and test excavations in Structure 1. The 14 sherds collected from the temples' walls dated stylistically to the Late Intermediate period (Jennings 2002:114). The only diagnostic sherd excavated from the 1 × 1 meter unit in Structure 1 was a Late Intermediate period bowl fragment (Jennings 2002:150).

5. I make a distinction between Late Horizon and Inca-style sherds in this article. Late Horizon sherds are dated stylistically to the Late Horizon based on both excavation context and stylistic associations with Inca decorations and forms. A subset of the valley's Late Horizon ceramics, Inca-style sherds are sherds that closely resemble examples of ceramics

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from the imperial heartland in Cuzco. Without source analyses, it remains unclear if Cotahuasi's Inca-style sherds were manufactured in Cuzco, Cotahuasi, or elsewhere (Jennings 2002:325–29).

6. This description of the Inca ideology of expansion and its relation to the painted tablet tradition of far southern Peru is described in far greater detail in a recent publication (Jennings 2003). In the present article, space is not sufficient to recapitulate much of my argument on why the tablets did not conform to Inca offering ideals.

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