



A Brief History Of The Incas:

From Rise, Through Reign, To Ruin

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Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to Marjorie “Tippy” Fuchs, who along with her husband Dick were great supporters of my artistic endeavors for decades. Tippy died during the writing of this story, and she was a great supporter and benefactor of Native people and their culture wherever she traveled.

I also want to thank my Mother, Ann, for her enduring love and support in everything that I have ever done or thought, Jim Gilbert, my surrogate uncle who fanned the embers of my early love of Native art, my father Darryl for his impeccable intellect and “old world” gentry qualities, and my blessed Irene for her amazing natural intelligence, warm heart, and wonderful infectious laughter. And finally, to the Inca themselves, whose true wisdom and wondrous accomplishments will not only withstand the tests of time, but will shine as beacons to future generations of how special humanity is as a creation of the divine source, the Sun beyond the sun.

The main purpose of this book is to give an overview, concise yet thorough, of the origin of the Inca Civilization, its achievements and splendour, and the reasons why it was overtaken and destroyed by a relatively small group of Spanish soldiers of fortune. The majority of early written accounts of the history and culture of the Inca have been penned by people of European (mainly Spanish) origin, and Peruvian Native and/or Mestizo (mixed blood) who were heavily influenced, one might even say corrupted and censored, by the Spanish establishment; both church and state. As the old saying goes, ‘ history is written by the winners.’

Since the Inca had no written form of history, most of the information in his book has been gleaned from the so-called

winners' perspective. However, some of the oral traditions have been written down, and have been included as much as possible. And as I have accessed many different sources, I feel that by piecing together this historical puzzle, with hopefully an unbiased approach (you may differ) a somewhat balanced account may be possible to display. I am neither of Peruvian nor Spanish descent, I have no reason to slant this story one way or the other; I want to know and offer you the truth, as close as I can come to it.

ORIGINS

The most common stories relating to the source of the Incas, where they came from, are that they originally lived around or near Lake Titicaca, geographically located approximately 150 miles south-west of Cuzco. Oral traditions are often very poetic in nature, and many of the traditional Incan accounts say that Manco Capac, and his blood sister Mama Ocllo Huaco, who were Children of the Sun God Inti, "rose" from the waters of Lake Titicaca, and were instructed by their celestial father to bring order back to what had become a chaotic world. These two were not only brother and sister, but also husband and wife. Manco was instructed to teach the people the arts of agriculture, and Mama Ocllo the arts of weaving and spinning. To say that they "rose" from Lake Titicaca is probably a poetic way of saying that they came from that area, their culture rising akin to a renaissance.

In terms of archaeological evidence of an advanced civilization existing at or near Lake Titicaca before the time of the Inca, one only has to visit the massive sacred ceremonial center of Tiahuanaco (or Tiwanaku), located approximately 13 miles from the eastern shore of Titicaca. In terms of stone architectural technology, it easily rivals, if not surpasses, that of the Incas.

The age of this site is widely and hotly debated; most commonly, however, it is believed that the Tiahunacan culture rose around 600 BC, and fell into decline sometime soon after 1000 AD. A much more explosive yet compelling theory is that of Arthur Posnansky, a German-Bolivian scholar, who dated the site at 15,000 BC. His theory, based on 50 years of study, uses the science of archaeo-astronomy to compare the alignment of the solstices present day, as compared to the past.



View of the main temple complex of Tiwanaku, with a Viracocha sculpture in the central background.



Sculpture of Viracocha at Tiwanaku, near the famous Gateway Of The Sun.

By most accounts, the first Inca arrived in Cusco about 1100 AD, so, in terms of chronological time, Tiahuanaco makes sense as the site of origin of the Inca. It has also been written by many authors that the leaders at Tiahuanaco were priest kings, who were driven out of their homeland by the Huari, a more war-like and barbaric people, about 1000 AD. It is also known that the soil of Tiahuanaco was or had become, by this time, very

infertile, and thus was incapable of growing crops of any great quality or quantity. This was, in part, due to an extreme El Nino, that caused the area around Tiwanaku to experience a 40 year drought.

Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo carried with them a golden wedge or staff called Sunturpaucar, a cage with a sun-bird who could give good advice, and other sacred objects. They were instructed by their father Inti to test the land's fertility as they traveled, for cultivation. Where the golden staff entered the soil easily was the place where they should live.



A VERY stylized painting of Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo rising from the waters of Lake Titicaca.

When they reached the Sacred Valley, or, more specifically the site of the present day Coricancha in Cusco, Manco Capac plunged Surturpaucar into the soil, where it not only entered the soil easily, but completely disappeared below the surface. Thus, the founding of a new city, and center of a new culture, had begun. From a purely practical standpoint, the Sacred Valley would have been chosen due to its relatively close proximity to their ancestral lands, and the fact that it has flat, highly arable soil, nurtured by a major river, the Urubamba, fed by glacial waters from the Andes.

Of course, Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo did not travel alone. Oral traditions speak of their having been 4 pairs of brothers and sisters, all related, who started the journey from Titicaca together, but the other three pairs, for various reasons, did not complete the journey. They were collectively called the Ayar brothers and sisters. The four sets of brother-sister/wife-husband probably relate to four clans of people.

Whether the other three sets of brother-sisters were killed, or became subordinate to Manco and Ocllo is uncertain. What is known is that Manco became the first supreme or Sapa Inca; the father of the Inca civilization.



The Sacred Valley outside of Cuzco, photographed from the highway winding down to the valley floor.



Salkantay, one of the Apus, or guardian mountains near the Sacred Valley.

The names and timelines of the Sapa Inca are as follows:

Hurin Dynasty:

Manco Capac 1200-1230

Sinchi Roca 1230-1260

LloqueYupanqui 1260-1290
Mayta Capac 1290-1320
Capac Yupanqui 1320-1350

Hanan Dynasty:

Inca Roca 1350-1380
Yahuar Huacac 1380-1410
Viracocha 1410-1438
Pachacutec 1438 – 1471
Tupac Inca Yupanqui 1471 – 1493
Huayna Capac 1493 – 1527
Ninan Cuyochi 1527
Huascar 1527 – 1532
Atahualpa 1532 – 1533



This painting, like all those in post-Inca times, is speculative of the facial features of the Sapa Inca.

Three major tribes lived in the Cusco valley area when Manco Capac and Mama Ocllo arrived. They were the Sawasiray, the Allkawisas and the Maras, who had formed an alliance that the Inca joined. The political power of this confederated state was divided between two groups: the Hanan, which controlled most of the political and religious power, and the Hurin, which was in charge of the military. At this time, the Inca were put in charge of the Hurin aspect of the confederation, but maintained their adherence to their God Inti.

During the 14th century, the leaders Sinchi Roca, Lloki Yupanqui, Mayta Capa, and Capac Yupanqui led several wars against neighbouring tribes of Cusco. By the time that Capac Yupanqui

died, Inca Roca had gained enough power to become Hanan, and thus controlled all aspects of political, religious, and military affairs. After Inca Roca's death, the Inca state began to decline under the rule of Yahuar Huacac. However, the next Sapa Inca, Viracocha, stabilized the state, which now reached a 50 km radius from Cusco. At this time the Chanka tribe had expanded its territories south of Cusco, and along with an alliance of other southern tribes, made a move to attack Cusco.

The Chanka army greatly outnumbered that of the Inca, and as the battle started, the Chanka placed a statue of their founder in front of their troops. During the battle, the Inca took control of the statue, and perhaps seeing this as a terrible omen, the Chanka deserted the battlefield. The next Sapa Inca, Pachacutec, whose name roughly translates as "earth shaker" began the great expansion period of the confederation. During his reign, he and his son, Tupac Inca Yupanqui brought much of the Andes mountains, under Inca control.



Stylized painting of the Sapa Inca Pachacutec.

Pachacutec was the founder of the Tahuantinsuyu; a federalist system which consisted of a central government with the Sapa Inca at its head, in Cusco, and four provincial governments with strong leaders: Chinchsuyu (NW), Antisuyu (NE), Contisuyu (SW), and Collasuyu (SE.) Pachacuti is also regarded as the builder of Machu Picchu. What sets the Inca's method of territorial

expansion at this time, and perhaps earlier, from other cultures is both intriguing and very clever. They formed a confederation, not an empire, and this point can not be emphasized enough. Empires tend to grow based on the subjugation and destruction of other groups and nations; not only their political systems and military, but also their belief systems. A confederation is an alliance of groups and or nations under a central guiding and coordinating authority.

Pachacutec sent spies to regions that he wanted to expand into. These spies brought back reports on the political organization, military might, and wealth of the prospective confederation candidates. He would then send messages to the leaders of these lands extolling the benefits of joining the confederation, offering them presents of luxury goods such as high quality textiles. Benefits to the candidate lands included access to the extensive Inca road system, some 15000 to 25000 miles in size, and the goods and services that were within the realm of the Inca's sphere of influence. The benefits to the Inca were access to goods and services that were particular to that region. Most accepted the rule of the Inca, and acquiesced peacefully. It was only when a perspective Candidate refused to join the confederation that military force was used.

It was traditional for the Inca's first born son to lead the army, and from the time of Manco Capac to Huayna Capac the first born son inherited the title of Sapa Inca. Pachacutec's son Tupac Inca began conquests to the north in 1463, and continued them as Inca after Pachacutec's death in 1471. His most important "conquest " was the kingdom of Chimor (Chan chan is a remnant of that culture) the Inca's only serious rival on the north coast of Peru. Tupac Inca then expanded into modern day Ecuador and Colombia.