

## INCAS AND ARAWAKS: A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP ALONG THE ANDES-AMAZONIA FRONTIER

Darryl Wilkinson

Dartmouth College

[darryl.a.wilkinson@dartmouth.edu](mailto:darryl.a.wilkinson@dartmouth.edu)

### INTRODUCTION

The basic argument of this paper is that there was a special relationship<sup>1</sup> between the imperial-era Incas and the Arawak-speaking peoples of western Amazonia. By “special” I mean several different things, all of which are interrelated. First, the relationship was conspicuously non-violent, insofar as the Incas seem to have maintained unusually peaceful relations with their Arawak<sup>2</sup> neighbors in comparison with virtually all of the other major ethno-linguistic conglomerations that resided along the borders of their empire. Second, the Inca-Arawak relationship depended on a relatively high degree of ritual integration, and although outright warfare was mostly lacking, it did entail ceremonial battles of the kind often referred to as *tinku* in Andean scholarship. In this respect, the nature of the Incas’ approach to the Arawak was notably different from their interactions with most other non-Andean groups. Third, this special relationship was the product of *deep*

*history*. From the late Middle Horizon onwards, the Quechua-speaking peoples of the central Andes<sup>3</sup> developed long-running and intimate interactions with Arawak speakers who lived along the eastern slopes, resulting in a considerable degree of genetic and linguistic admixture. This tradition of intense highland-lowland interactions, which the Incas inherited, was not replicated in other regions along the Andes-Amazonia divide. Fourth, the Quechua demonym *Antis* should be understood as referring (in its original sense) to speakers of Arawak languages resident in southwestern Amazonia. Although often presented as a generic term for the lowland “barbarians” native to the neotropical forests, it was actually used by the Incas to describe Amazonian groups with whom they had geopolitically complementary interactions. *Anti* is not therefore a synonym of *Chuncho*, which was a term for barbaric lowlanders with whom the Incas had violent or non-complementary relations. Indeed, the terms *Anti* and *Chuncho* were effectively antonyms. In what follows, I will lay out the evidence that supports this model of Inca frontier geopolitics, drawing on archaeological, linguistic, genetic, art historical, and ethno-historical lines of data.

### THE NON-MILITARIZED INCA FRONTIER

I wish to start with a fairly straightforward empirical oddity. Several decades ago, John

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<sup>1</sup> The term “special relationship” refers to an unusually close geopolitical alliance between two countries, and has mostly been used in reference to the association between the United Kingdom and the United States in the twentieth century. My use of the phrase here is a deliberate play on its contemporary geopolitical usage.

<sup>2</sup> I will use the term “Arawak” as a shorthand descriptor for all the peoples of the Americas who either currently speak, or once spoke, a language from the Arawak family. This is not meant to imply that all these groups constituted one ethnic group or were ever understood as single, unified people.

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<sup>3</sup> By Central Andes, I mean the portion roughly located within modern Peru.

Hyslop (1998:38) remarked upon the striking lack of archaeological evidence for Inca fortresses across a vast stretch of the eastern Andean piedmont, running from southern Ecuador to the border between Peru and Bolivia (Figure 1). It remains true that the region does exhibit a conspicuous absence of Inca settlements with obviously defensive characteristics, such as walls, perimeter trenches, small windows adapted for shooting projectiles or guarded points of entry (Alconini 2004:409–410). Although some sites in this region are situated on hilltops, which might have facilitated defense and surveillance related activities, many were not—and in any event, the simple fact that a site is built on higher ground is not strong evidence for it being any kind of fortress if defensive architecture is otherwise absent. It is probably better to think of many Inca sites as defensible *in extremis*, but not forts as such (D’Altroy 2015:326). Hyslop’s (1988) observation was coupled with the caveat that our knowledge of the eastern lowlands is very partial, and future studies might yet reveal extensive fortifications hidden amidst the forests, a view sometimes echoed by later scholars (e.g., Covey 2008:819–820).

Yet despite the fact that there is still a lack of systematic survey throughout the eastern Andes, they are hardly now “unexplored”, and in the 30 years since Hyslop first made his observation, no evidence of a fortified frontier has ever materialized. For instance, in the lowland interfaces northwest of Cusco, multiple archaeological projects have identified large numbers of Inca sites—none of which appear to have been forts. It is true that much of this work was “exploratory” and did not entail full-coverage survey (e.g., Drew 1984; Lee 2000; Von Kaupp and Fernández 2010), but it has nonetheless produced important preliminary data sets that cannot be ignored. And where more systematic surveys have been carried out, we see this same pattern of abundant Inca sites, but no fortifications (e.g., Bauer *et al.* 2015; Kendall

1984; Saintenoy 2016; Wilkinson 2013). The drainages of the Upper Urubamba, Upper Apurímac, Amaybamba, Santa Teresa, and Vilcabamba Rivers thus constitute a relatively well-sampled area with an extensive Inca presence, but with little evidence of associated militarization (see Figure 2). Moreover, this was a region adjacent to, and partially overlapping with, the imperial heartland; filled with rich royal estates and in close proximity to major highland population centers like Ollantaytambo. If defense against belligerent Amazonians were a priority anywhere in the empire, surely it would have been here? And in other eastern piedmont regions that have been surveyed, such as in Junín Department farther to the north, a lack of Inca forts has also been noted (D’Altroy 1992). If there were a general paucity of Inca sites along the eastern piedmont then the situation would be somewhat different—but we do not lack Inca sites, just Inca forts. In my view, it is becoming more and more difficult to attribute the lack of Inca military installations in this region to insufficient research, and we should thus begin to think of it as a genuine empirical phenomenon.

As might be expected, the places where the Incas invested most in military infrastructure were the very same places where they seem to have encountered the greatest resistance to their imperial project. The most heavily fortified region of all lay at the empire’s northern extremities, with a tight cordon of Inca strongholds forming a defensive ring around the Quito Basin (Bray 1992; Hyslop 1990; Ogburn *et al.* 2009), primarily to safeguard it against the ethnic confederations of the Cayambe and Caranquí. As far as we can tell, the Incas engaged in a long series of never-quite-successful campaigns to incorporate the Caranquí-Cayambe into their domain (for a recent summary of the archaeological and historical evidence, see Bray 2015). Albeit to a lesser degree, the southern extremes of the empire were also highly

fortified, where it seems the resistance offered by the Araucanians was sufficient to permanently halt the Incas' military advance near the Maule River, in what is now central Chile (Dillehay and Gordon 1988; Sauer 2015:125–130).

The region where the Incas were most pressed was probably the southeastern frontier facing the Bolivian Chaco, where they faced high levels of violent resistance from the various Chiriguano groups (Alconini 2004, 2008, 2016; Pärssinen *et al.* 2003). For instance, it is recorded that during the reign of Wayna Qhapaq, the Chiriguano sacked the Inca fortress of Cuzcotuyo and killed its entire garrison, successfully pushing back the Inca frontier, if only temporarily. Thus the Chiriguano were one of the few groups that threatened the territorial integrity of the Inca Empire in a fashion comparable to the “barbarians” of the Old World—not only halting the Incas' expansion (as did the Araucanians or Caranquí), but also briefly reversing it (Nordenskiöld 1917). Moreover, the Inca frontier from Cochabamba in Bolivia all the way down to the limits of imperial presence near modern Santiago de Chile was clearly defended (D'Altroy *et al.* 2007:96–99), with some fifty forts having now been identified along the empire's long southeastern margin (D'Altroy *et al.* 2000:4). Lowland peoples such as the Lules and Diaguitas appear to have been the most significant threats to the empire's interests in the latter region (Lorandi 1980). And yet all these militarized borders stand in clear contrast to the portion of the eastern frontier located in what is now Peru, where we find little sign of fortified Inca sites.

One area does perhaps merit special consideration: namely the province of Chachapoyas, which ostensibly falls within the bounds of the frontier region lacking Inca military installations. The Incas incorporated Chachapoyas into their empire in the middle of the fifteenth century, although there is little evidence that

the Incas constructed forts there, despite its position along the eastern frontier. But there is a pattern of ethnically Chachapoya sites being much more fortified in the east, and it seems that the Chachapoyas were frequently troubled by attacks from lowland groups referred to in colonial sources as Jeberos and Motilones (Schjellerup 2015:310). *Motilón* is a Spanish term meaning “shaven-haired” and is a somewhat vague descriptor, while the Jebero now occupy the triangle-shaped bloc of land between the confluence of the Marañon and the Huallaga Rivers, and their language (of the same name) is a member of the Cahuapana family (Adelaar 2004; Wise 1999). So it is probable that the Chachapoya frontier was not unfortified *per se*. Rather the task of defense against lowland incursions was delegated to the Chachapoyas by the Incas. Thus the true extent of the non-militarized frontier is best understood as the more restricted piedmont zone that runs (roughly) between Huánuco in central Peru and Cochabamba in northern Bolivia (see Figure 2)<sup>4</sup>.

The Incas' experiences following the Spanish conquests offer some useful corroborating evidence as well. In particular, it is interesting that the Incas chose Vilcabamba as the area to establish their new stronghold after their failed attempt to retake Cusco in 1535, as it implies that they were reasonably confident of the support of the indigenous inhabitants there. Indeed, it is recorded that Manco Qhapaq

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<sup>4</sup> There are, however, several Amazonian sites (*i.e.*, Las Piedras and Ixiamas) located between the Beni and Madre de Dios Rivers that have been interpreted as Inca forts (Pärssinen *et al.* 2003). If these sites truly were Inca installations, then the southern limit of the non-militarized frontier should be placed closer to Lake Titicaca, not farther south at Cochabamba. Although such sites clearly had links with the Andes, as seen in the presence of Inca or Inca-influenced ceramics (*ibid.* :65–67), I do not believe we currently have sufficient evidence to demonstrate they were under direct imperial control. Future research will hopefully clarify the southern extent of the non-militarized frontier.

briefly entertained Chachapoyas as an alternative place of exile, but this option was eventually rejected. Whether this was because it was too far away, or the people of Chachapoyas were considered untrustworthy, remains unclear (Hemming 2004:229–230). In any event, it is difficult to imagine that the state-in-exile centered on Espíritu Pampa could have long endured if the nearby lowland communities had been hostile towards it. Espíritu Pampa shows little evidence for defensive structures, and its only protection would have come from the dense forests that encircled it. Although the jungles of Vilcabamba were a significant deterrent to the Spanish, they would have had the opposite effect on aggressive lowlanders. The fact that the neo-Inca polity was sited in Vilcabamba, and persisted for so long, is in itself evidence of the Incas having a reasonably cordial relationship with the local indigenous groups. Note that the Vilcabamba zone lies right in the heart of the region where we see the conspicuous absence of Inca forts.

Taking the Andes as a whole then, there appears to have been a general division between two kinds of Inca frontier, one militarized and the other non-militarized. In fact, fortifications are evident along nearly all of the empire's terrestrial borders, with the exception of the highland-lowland interfaces of the east-central piedmont, a vast and seemingly undefended flank of the Inca domain. The chronicler Polo de Ondegardo (1916[1571]:98–99; my translation) largely confirms this picture, saying:

... afterwards they needed to have frontiers everywhere and to make war in many provinces, as it usually was in those of Chile, from the Maule River onwards, and in those of the Bracamoros, and in the provinces of Quito towards that of Mazas, and in those of the Charcas because the Chiriguanoes, after they came from Brazil, [were] in the confines of this entire region

and throughout the mountainous parts in the direction of the Chunchos and Mojos; in all these places to this day we find stores, *pukaras* and forts where people were gathered, and roads made to the lands of war.<sup>5</sup>

This excerpt is especially useful because rather than focusing on conflicts in one particular region, it offers a summation identifying where the most protracted frontier wars took place across the Inca domain. Interestingly, it makes no reference to any conflicts or fortifications in the vicinity of the non-militarized frontier (confirming the archaeological picture described above). The obvious question that follows is *why*? What was it about such an extensive tract of territory that led the Incas to have no apparent fears for its security, when virtually all their other borders were comparatively well guarded? As I argue, the non-militarized frontier has a conspicuous association with the border regions where speakers of Arawak languages were dominant—a fact which I do not believe is coincidental.

#### LANGUAGE AND DEEP HISTORY ALONG THE EASTERN FRONTIER

The spatial distribution of major language families often forms a palimpsest, one reflecting many millennia of complicated underlying social processes. Thus linguistic patterns are a useful window unto deep histories, even if sometimes

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<sup>5</sup> ... tuvieron despues necesidad de tener fronteras en todas partes y hacer guerra particular en muchas provincias, de ordinario como fue en las de Chile, del rio de Maule para adelante, y en los de Bracamoros, y en las provincias de Quito hacia aquello de Mazas y en estos de las Charcas por los chiriguanaes despues que salieron de Brasil en los confines de toda esta comarca, y por la parte de las montanas hacia los chunchos, y mojos en todas estas partes hallamos el dia de [hoy] silos, pucaras y fuertes adonde se recogia la gente, y caminos hechos hasta la tierra de Guerra.

a foggy one. In the Andes, the prevailing indigenous families today are Quechua and Aymara, a fact archaeologists have traditionally attributed to their adoption by imperial states in late prehistoric times (but for a more recent view, see Heggarty 2008, Heggarty and Beresford-Jones 2010). In the Amazon Basin to the east, there are several large language families, of which the most widespread are Arawak, Tupi-Guaraní, Carib, and Macro-Gê, followed by several medium-sized groups like Pano and Tukano, all of which are interspersed among numerous smaller families and linguistic isolates. The spatial patterning of the larger Amazonian language families has traditionally been attributed to pre-colonial agricultural communities expanding along major riverine conduits (e.g., Lathrap 1970; Oliver 1989; but for a different perspective see Hornborg 2005). Given the extreme scale of the Inca polity, running from the southern reaches of modern Colombia to the central regions of Chile and Argentina—a distance of some 3,800 kilometers from north to south—it is hardly surprising that the empire's frontiers encompassed an enormous degree of linguistic diversity. The Incas' engagements with lowland peoples along an extended stretch of the eastern frontier in what is now Peru were primarily mediated through communities of Arawak speakers (Hornborg and Eriksen 2011), a phenomenon I will refer to as the "Arawak Interface". It is especially interesting that this interface zone falls squarely within the non-militarized portion of the frontier described above; while areas with a more limited (or no) Arawak presence appear to have been much more heavily fortified (see Figure 3). Is there reason then to believe that the relationships between the Incas and the Arawaks were substantially different in comparison with other lowland groups?

Arawak represents the most widespread linguistic family of the pre-colonial Americas (Aikhenvald 2012:32), having a (former) distri-

bution that extended into the island Caribbean as well as across large swathes of continental South America. Recent research across a number of disciplines (especially archaeology, ethnography and ethnohistory) has emphasized several distinctive characteristics of Arawak groups, which often serve to distinguish them from other Amazonian linguistic communities. For example, Arawak speakers maintain unusually far-flung alliances and trading networks (Eriksen 2011; Hornborg 2005: 591; Renard-Casevitz 2002), which are often integrated through shared ritual practices and mythological narratives that center on key points in the landscape. One manifestation of this pattern is paramount sacred places venerated by multiple Arawak communities spread across large geographical areas. The Cerro de la Sal is an exemplary case of this pattern; a site comprised of a group of salt-rich hills located in the Perené River region of central Peru (Santos-Granero 2004; Varese 2004). Multiple Arawak groups distributed across hundreds of kilometers consider these hills to be transformed primordial beings, to whom gifts such as coca are offered in exchange for the salt taken from their divine bodies (Santos-Granero 2004:106–109). For centuries then, the Cerro de la Sal has acted as the shared nexus for ceremony and exchange among an otherwise highly dispersed set of Arawak communities (Varese 2004).

Another commonly cited characteristic of Arawak groups is their tendency to exhibit formal social hierarchies, such as ranked descent groups and ritually sanctioned leadership (Hill 1993, 2002:224–225), and in some cases, even hereditary chiefs (Heckenberger 2003). In this they are somewhat distinct from the traditional image of radically egalitarian Amazonian societies that has been propagated in several classic ethnographies (especially Clastres 1989). Moreover, it appears that this observation may have been even truer in the past, and many of the pre-colonial Amazonian societies that resemble

“chiefdoms” are found in regions where Arawak speakers either live, or were once widespread. In particular, areas with significant evidence of social stratification and monumental earthworks, such as the Llanos de Mojos floodplains of Bolivia, the Upper Xingu River region in central Brazil and Marajó Island on the Amazon Delta have all been associated with Arawak groups (Clement *et al.* 2015; Denevan 1980; Erickson 1995; Heckenberger 2002, 2005; Schaan 2004, 2016:158–166). Nonetheless, not all Arawaks were conspicuously “complex” in terms of their political organization. Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the Arawak groups of Western Amazonia (*i.e.*, those living around the Urubamba and Apurímac Rivers), who were the Incas’ primary lowland contacts, were ever organized in a “chiefdom-like” fashion. Thus this tendency towards explicit hierarchy among Arawaks is precisely that: a tendency, not a rule.

There are still other ways in which Arawaks have been seen as rather divergent from many Amazonian peoples. For example, a theme of increasing prominence in recent ethnographic accounts of Amazonia is *predation*, such that many groups conceptualize all relations (with humans, and between humans and nonhumans) as a sort of “ontological predation” (Viveiros de Castro 1992) or “familiarizing predation” (Fausto 1999). These terms refer to an ethos, or cosmological principle, in which relations with external others are primarily framed in terms of destructive appropriation and transformation. That is to say, individuals create themselves as subjects by taking on the enemy’s perspective, which often involves incorporation of their physical bodies. In practice, this implies a high incidence of ritualized warfare and inter-group violence involving headhunting and other forms of human trophy acquisition, as well as ritual cannibalism. It also included the acquisition of new community members by processes of enslavement, and the capture of wives and chil-

dren. According to Overing (1993:198–199), for the Piaroa of the Orinoco even basic forms of work like cooking are understood as violent and predatory acts; in fact all creative processes are likened to predation in general, and cannibalism specifically. The impetus to engage in practices like headhunting flows from this predatory social logic, insofar as creating oneself requires the ongoing acquisition and incorporation of others’ subjectivity. Carlos Fausto (1999: 937) provides a useful summary of the concept, in which he defines familiarizing predation as “the mode of producing persons by means of the destruction of persons”. Predation is thus quite unlike other forms of self-fashioning that rely on, for example, marriage alliances and gift-giving, not least in that one does not normally desire for predation to be reciprocated. Yet what is especially interesting is that this predatory social logic seems much more muted in (most) Arawak peoples (Fausto *et al.* 2008; Heckenberger 2002:111–112).

One particularly prominent sign of this lack of predation is seen in a common Arawak prohibition on endo-warfare (Heckenberger 2002: 115; Hornborg 2005:592; Renard-Casevitz 1985; Santos-Granero 2002:41–42). Thus vendettas, raids, slave-taking, headhunting, war cannibalism and wife capture are rare, and often absent, among many Arawak speakers (Renard-Casevitz 2002:141–142; Santos-Granero 2002). To be clear, this does not mean that the Arawak were by any means a uniquely peaceful people; an old colonial stereotype whose genesis lies in narratives from the European conquest of the Caribbean. As Santos-Granero (*ibid.*:45) puts it, it is less that they are especially disinclined to warfare or aggression, rather “for the Arawak the ‘other’, or enemy, is not to be found within the boundaries of one’s own macrosociety but beyond, among those speaking different, unrelated languages.” Consequently, communities of Arawak peoples that are otherwise quite distinct and disaggregated can still perceive themselves

to be part of an overarching “moral community” (Heckenberger 2002:111). There are many instances of Arawak communities constructing large military confederations in pursuit of their interests, but these are generally set up against outside groups. One might say that Arawak warfare is largely “strategic”, insofar as it reflects a desire to use organized violence to shape the geopolitical arena in favor of the wider community. By contrast one might construe predatory warfare as mainly “ontogenetic”, in that it can be directed against anyone (including insiders) and furthers the continuous reproduction of society and the self, rather than fulfilling specific strategic aims. Put another way, in non-predatory warfare, violence is something that people do, whereas in predatory warfare, violence is how people are made.

I should emphasize that I do not believe it necessary to rely on linguistic determinism to explain these associations. In other words, there is a correlation between communities who speak Arawak and who share a number of core features (such as prohibitions on endo-warfare or an absence of headhunting), but this is not a *causal* relationship. By way of an analogy, consider that there is a correlation between Roman Catholicism and speakers of Romance languages, and a similar overlap between Protestantism and speakers of Germanic languages.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Of the 40 countries in the world where Spanish or Portuguese is the dominant language, Roman Catholicism is the majority religion in all cases, with the exceptions of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. All Italian and Catalan speaking countries/regions are also majority Catholic too. Francophone Africa is more variable due to its high levels of religious diversity, but Catholicism is usually still the largest Christian denomination. By contrast, in most countries where a Germanic language predominates, Protestants are the largest religious group. Major exceptions include Ireland, Austria, the Netherlands and Canada. But in the case of Canada it is only the demographic impact of the Romance-speaking Quebecois that leads to Catholicism being the largest religious denomination.

Although the correlations are indisputable, few would argue that there is something in the vocabulary or grammar of the Romance languages that predisposes their speakers to believe in the literal transubstantiation of the Eucharistic wine, or something about the Germanic languages that leads their speakers to deploy less figurative forms of religious art. Instead, Catholicism is correlated with the Romance tongues because the institutional networks that make up the Catholic Church have themselves been a vehicle for the spread of these languages over centuries. Politics such as the Roman Empire and its medieval successor kingdoms were also important vectors for the Romance languages, although this is hardly a separate factor, as those states were also instrumental in propagating the Catholic Church. In any event, the key point is that language families can have an impressively close correlation with certain cultural practices, without in any way determining said practices.

Moreover, we should note that because the relationship is not a causal one, the correlation is by no means absolute, and there will always be exceptions whenever one paints in such broad strokes. So just as there are German-speaking Catholics in Bavaria and historically significant sects of French-speaking Protestants such as the Huguenots, the linguistic correlations being described in Amazonia still meet with numerous exceptions. Thus, certain Tukanoan groups in the region of the Colombia-Venezuela border show hierarchical tendencies (*i.e.*, ranked descent groups) very similar to nearby Arawak communities (Hill 1993, 1996:142–145), while the Piro of the Peruvian Urubamba drainage, despite being Arawak speakers, are much more like their Panoan neighbors in exemplifying a “predatory” mode of sociality (Santos-Granero 2002:31–32). The point I am seeking to underscore is that the correlation between Arawak languages and particular forms of Amazonian sociality is best understood as historical and contingent. Here I follow the positions of schol-

ars such as Michael Heckenberger (2002, 2005, 2013), who uses the term “Arawak diaspora” to describe something that is not (or not just) a demic expansion, but a complex interplay between a particular language family and an expanding set of technologies, sociopolitical relations, ideologies and “modes of production of social bodies” (Heckenberger 2013:115). In a similar vein, Alf Hornborg (2005) argues for a “non-essentialist” view of the Arawak language family, presenting it as a “cultural *medium*” (*ibid.*, 2005:607; emphasis in original), which provided the integrating tissue for diverse communities united by long-distance exchange relationships. The Arawak-speaking world was therefore comprised of a series of expansive trade networks, sustained and furthered through a particular set of shared ritual practices, ethical dispositions and bodily habits. In broad terms, we might say much the same thing about the Romance-speaking world of Roman Catholicism, and in both cases, these networks should be recognized as the products of millennia of development—that is, of deep histories.

All this matters because understanding the distinctive social characteristics of Arawak communities is a necessary prelude to explaining why the Incas’ frontier with the Arawak was so unmilitarized. Up to now I have been discussing the broader Arawak world, but in the context of the Arawak Interface, the focus falls on a particular cluster of linguistically related Arawak communities that reside along the western Amazon Basin of central and southern Peru, as well as parts of northern Bolivia—with their geographic center of gravity lying along the courses of the Perené-Ene-Apurímac-Mantaro and Ucayali-Urubamba River systems. Several groups living along these rivercourses are sometimes gathered under the broader ethnic label

Campa<sup>7</sup> which includes the various peoples now known as the Matsikenga, Nanti, Nomatsikenga, Asháninka, and Ashéninka. The Amuesha (or Yanesha) and the Piro (or Yine) peoples are not normally classed as Campa, but can be considered part of the same wider cluster of Arawak speakers that live along these river systems. Linguistically, these communities are sometimes referred to as pre-Andine Arawaks, in reference to their geographic location along the eastern piedmont (Gow 2002:150–157). Moving southeast, there is something of an “interruption” in the Arawak Interface along the lowland portion of the Peru-Bolivia border, in the region of the Madre de Dios River and its tributaries. Here, speakers of the Harakmbut and Tacana languages are among the dominant indigenous groups (Adelaar 2004:422). However, the interface resumes again on the Bolivian side of the modern border in the marshy floodplains of the Llanos de Mojos, so named for the Arawak-speaking Mojos people. Accounts written by Jesuit missionaries in the 1500s suggest that a majority of the 39 languages spoken in the Llanos de Mojos region were of Arawak affiliation, whereas today only three of the extant twenty-two indigenous languages are Arawak (Crevels and van der Voort 2008: 156). If correct, this would imply that Arawak communities in what is now lowland Bolivia have experienced a considerable territorial contraction since the colonial period.

#### THE GEOPOLITICS OF PREDATION AND ITS ABSENCE

Although the Arawak Interface was central to highland-lowland interactions in Inca times, its emergence long predated the Late Horizon

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<sup>7</sup> The term Campa is of Quechua derivation and frequently used by highlanders in southern Peru to describe lowland groups; however, it is often considered derogatory by the people so named.

(c. A.D. 1400–1534). Indeed, the notion of the Arawak Interface primarily references the fact that the core zones of state development in the Andes, since at least the beginning of the Middle Horizon (c. A.D. 500 A.D. onwards), have largely interacted with the eastern lowlands through Arawak-speaking intermediaries (Hornborg and Eriksen 2011; Wilkinson 2018). During the earliest days of the Incas' emergence, when their interactions with the tropical lowlands were exclusively conducted via the piedmont zones near Cusco, the Urubamba was the dominant riverine axis of communication, and Arawaks were again the primary intermediaries. However, the Incas eventually expanded much farther to the north and south than had any of their imperial predecessors; thereby establishing a foothold in regions where speakers of Jivaro, Cahuapana, Tupi-Guaraní, and Pano languages (among others) controlled the main routes of highland-lowland interchange. And it was in these regions that the Incas developed a much more militarized frontier strategy, while the older, more established frontier that looked towards the Arawak Interface retained its largely non-defensive character. Thus the Incas, unlike their Wari predecessors, had an eastern border that—by virtue of its sheer size—was overwhelmingly encircled by non-Arawaks. Why then might the Arawak-dominated stretch of the imperial frontier have been less prone to generating violent frictions, in comparison with other linguistic border regions?

I think it important to consider that for both the Incas and Arawaks, predatory violence was much less fundamental to basic sociality. As already discussed, this reflects the fact that Arawaks do not normally rely on predatory relations as the basis for reproducing themselves as individuals or as communities (although again, this is *not* the same as being pacifistic). And while the Incas were far from peaceful, the primary object of their organized violence was the extension and maintenance of their sover-

eignty. As a rule, the Incas were content to build their empire through political alliances and other non-violent methods whenever possible, and so subject populations could expect to live within a sort of *pax incaica* provided they accepted Inca rule and all it entailed. The Incas and the Arawaks were alike insofar as predation on outsiders was not a basic requirement of social reproduction.

Here we might draw a contrast with the contemporaneous empire of the Mexica (or “Aztecs”), which required large numbers of war captives for all its public sacrificial rites. Indeed, without their warfare-sacrifice complex the social reproduction of many elite Aztec males would have been impossible (Brumfiel 2001: 295–301), and as a consequence, the Mexica were probably structurally incapable of maintaining long-term peaceful interactions with all their subject populations, no matter how “obedient” they were. In this respect they shared an important similarity with the predatory societies of Amazonia, wherein combat-acquired human trophies and cannibalism were often central to the production of one's personhood. But unlike that of the Mexica, the Inca war machine was not driven by a need to acquire sacrificial victims from subject provinces. In fact human sacrifice was comparatively rare in the Inca Empire, and in any case had little relationship to their military activities. Instead, the primary form of institutionalized human sacrifice under the Incas was the Capacocha ritual, which according to the documentary accounts regularly involved children (Cobo 1990 [1653]:111–112 ; see also Duviols 1976); and for which there is significant archaeological corroboration (e.g., Ceruti 2004), but such child sacrifices were not war captives. Thus, the Incas and the Arawaks made war mainly in the pursuit of their perceived strategic interests, allowing them greater leeway to reach a peaceful geopolitical equilibrium with each other. Had either been more like the Tupi-Guaraní or the Mexica

however, this might have been much more difficult.

#### DOES THE INCA CATEGORY ANTI REFER TO ARAWAKS?

Most of the early colonial sources give the Quechua name for the Inca domain as Tawantinsuyu, or “the-four-parts-made-whole”. The name implies not merely a unification of four parts, but the bringing of those parts into their morally and numerically balanced state of correct order (see Urton 1997:63–65, 79). The four parts in question were Collasuyu, Chinchaysuyu, Cuntisuyu and Antisuyu, which respectively refer to the southern, northern, western and eastern spatial divisions of the empire. My present concern is with the part named Antisuyu, which encompassed most of the forested piedmont and lowland regions closest to Cuzco—and the Antis who were said to have lived there. However, compared to the other three parts of the empire, there is considerable variability in how Andean scholars have interpreted the boundaries of Antisuyu (see Figure 4). For some, the word Antisuyu is basically an ecological gloss, and refers to all piedmont and upper Amazonian regions east of the Andes (Schaedel 1978:294). Staller (2014), for instance, follows this interpretation, representing Antisuyu as the entirety of the eastern piedmont between northern Bolivia and southern Ecuador. However, the majority of scholars take a more “cultural” view of Antisuyu, seeking to reconstruct it from the multiple references to Antis and Antisuyu in the colonial sources. Nonetheless, there are still stark differences as to how the region’s size and location have been understood. Pärssinen (1992) is the most generous on this count, and sees Antisuyu extending far into Amazonia, right up to the confluence of the Beni and Madre de Dios Rivers. Others are more inclined to limit Antisuyu to the eastern piedmont regions of the central sierra, although they still differ considerably in their overall

views. Moseley (2001: 41–42) and Kolata (2013:75–77), for example, posit a much smaller (or “minimal”) version of Antisuyu in comparison with D’Altroy (2015:3) and Morris and Von Hagen (2011:13). I personally favor the “medial” view of the latter two scholars, in part because this interpretation of Antisuyu makes it almost identical with those eastern slope regions where the Incas would have engaged with the broader Amazonian world through Arawak intermediaries. The significance of this correlation will be discussed in more detail below.

One interpretation of why there is no scholarly consensus on the location of Antisuyu is that it was a rather vague notion for the Incas as well. Or to put it more precisely, the farther one gets away from Cusco, the less well-defined were the *suyu* boundaries. In fact I would suggest that each of the four *suyu* effectively existed at three levels, which we might denominate as “metropolitan”, “heartland”, and “imperial”. The metropolitan *suyu* were the iterations of Collasuyu, Chinchaysuyu, Cuntisuyu, and Antisuyu as they existed in the immediate vicinity of urban Cusco, and above all they were defined by the *ceque* system. The *ceques* have been widely studied by Andeanists, and comprised a group of 41 or 42 imaginary ceremonial lines that radiated outward from the Inca capital, punctuated by some 400 physical shrines (or *huacas*) that were the recipients of regular ritual offerings (Bauer 1998; Zuidema 1964). The *ceque* system was therefore a spatial expression of the internal hierarchy that existed among the elite lineages of the Inca capital with the prerogative to engage with each *ceque* and its constituent *huacas* being held by a specific kin group. This was a system that could not accommodate much ambiguity, because the delicate balance of ritual power among the various aristocratic lineages flowed directly from it, making it vital to know in precisely which *suyu* each *ceque* was located. It should be noted that several archaeological studies have presented the *ceque* lines as mean-

dering (Bauer 1992, 1998; Niles 1987:177–179), in contrast to the traditional ethnohistoric interpretation of them as radial straight lines (especially Zuidema 1964). In any event, even in the archaeological reconstruction presented by Bauer (1998:158, map 11.1), there is no overlap between *ceque* lines from different *suyu*.

*Ceque* lines typically extended no more than fifteen kilometers from central Cusco, and many were much shorter; no more than three to four kilometers in length. By contrast, the wider region around Cusco was subdivided into four heartland *suyu*, which reached considerably further beyond the capital (up to seventy kilometers) than did the metropolitan *suyu* (Zuidema and Poole 1982). If the metropolitan *suyu* were defined by the rituals associated with the *ceque* system, then the heartland *suyu* were mainly defined by the Citua ceremony. The Citua was an annually performed purification ritual in which groups of relay runners would leave Cusco with ashes to be deposited in rivers that lay on the outer boundaries of the imperial heartland (Molina 2011 [c. 1576]:30–35). There were four groups of runners overall (*i.e.*, one group per *suyu*) and at each relay point, the ashes would be passed on to lower ranking communities. Thus, the metropolitan and heartland *suyu* were not spaces in which the *ceque* and Citua ceremonies just happened to take place; rather these rituals *defined* the *suyu*. Finally, we have the imperial *suyu*, which comprised the fourfold partition of Tawantinsuyu as a whole, and in effect, the entire known world from the Incas' perspective. Of course, all the different levels flowed into each other. Imperial Antisuyu, therefore, emanated from heartland Antisuyu, which in turn flowed from metropolitan Antisuyu—and all ultimately arose from their shared point of origin at the heart of Cusco; the Qorikancha temple complex. Thus it is better to think of them as different levels or manifestations of the same phenomena, rather than truly different entities. However, the

different levels are nonetheless distinct, because, as most reconstructions of the *suyu* indicate, their boundary lines could deviate as one moved between the metropolitan, heartland and imperial levels.<sup>8</sup>

The most important point to emphasize here is that metropolitan and heartland iterations of Antisuyu were tightly defined highland territories, inhabited mainly by Incas and Incas-by-privilege. Imperial Antisuyu was a more loosely conceived piedmont or lowland region, and it was the only version of Antisuyu inhabited by people who were understood to be actual Antis. Precisely the same point could be made about the other *suyus* too. For example, it is only when you get to Imperial Collasuyu that you would find any lands associated with ethnic Collas. It is the definition of imperial Antisuyu upon which I wish to focus in what follows. And it should be emphasized that we cannot simply extend the boundaries from its highland counterparts, since, as I have emphasized, each of the three levels of *suyu* are constituted via different

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<sup>8</sup> This is especially noticeable with respect to the Chinchaysuyu-Cuntisuyu boundary. If one compares the well-defined boundary between these two *suyus* inside the *ceque* area (per Bauer 1998:158, map 11.1), it clearly deviates from Zuidema and Poole's (1982:85) reconstruction of the same boundary inside the zone defined by the Citua ritual. Moreover, Zuidema and Poole's (*ibid.*) reconstruction shows that this boundary deviates yet again on the southern side of the Apurímac (*i.e.*, once outside the Citua zone). Similarly, although the Cuntisuyu-Collasuyu boundary follows almost the same line across its *ceque* and Citua transitions, it deviates from this trajectory once outside the heartland zone of the Citua. It would thus appear that *suyu* boundaries are usually consistent *within* each level, but can shift when moving from one level to another. A corollary of this argument is that it is impossible to bring *suyu* boundaries into agreement across the metropolitan, heartland and imperial levels, because such was not a concern for the Incas themselves. One cannot therefore use *ceque* lines to extrapolate *suyu* boundaries outside the limits of the *ceque* system, nor can one use information on *suyu* affiliations inside the Citua zone to reconstruct *suyu* boundaries in the imperial provinces.

means. If metropolitan Antisuyu and heartland Antisuyu were defined via the *ceques* and Citua respectively, on what basis was imperial Antisuyu spatially demarcated? Beyond the heartland core, defining clear *suyu* boundaries was perhaps less crucial, because there was no ritual impetus like the *ceques* or the Citua to mandate such precision. Thus, I would posit that imperial Antisuyu was primarily a *moral* idea, and only secondarily a spatial one. Perhaps a loose analogy to this can be seen in how Europeans thought about the Orient in the 1800s and 1900s. To a degree, the Orient was certainly a spatial concept (*i.e.*, it was undoubtedly a real place and it always lay somewhere to the east), but it never really had any precise demarcation. In that sense, the Orient was always a fundamentally moral notion, rather than a strictly spatial one. Incidentally, the same is true of the West, which, despite its name, is an idea first, and a place second.

There are also further reasons to see Antisuyu as atypical in comparison with the other *suyu*. For instance, it seems to have been more vague, demographically speaking, than its three counterparts. Consider that the other *suyu* were clearly named for one particular group of inhabitants: Collasuyu for the Colla who resided along the northern edges of the Titicaca Basin, Chinchaysuyu for the Chinchas whose territory centered on the coastal valley of the same name, and Cuntisuyu for the Condes people.<sup>9</sup> The etymologies of these first three *suyu* are unambiguous, and their ethnic namesakes were not generalizable to all their inhabitants (*e.g.*, not all the people of Collasuyu were ethnically Colla). But was everyone from Antisuyu (or at least the imperial portion of it) necessarily an Anti? On

this point the written sources are unclear. Despite this ambiguity, there has, nonetheless, been a long-running tendency to associate the Antis with the major pre-Andine Arawak groups of the piedmont north of Cusco (*e.g.*, Markham 1910:83; see also Renard-Casevitz *et al.* 1988:85). I suspect that the lack of clarity over the identity of the Antis and the location of Antisuyu arises from the assumption that the term refers to an ethnolinguistic community of some kind. Here I wish to propose an alternative, which is to see the word Anti not as a name for an ethnolinguistic group, but rather a *mode of relation*. More specifically, Antis were not defined in terms of shared culture, language or location, but were so named because they all related to the Inca Empire in a particular way. And this relation was a fundamentally moral one.

Consider one of the most important forms of tribute the Antis supposedly provided to the Incas: charismatic megafauna from Amazonia, particularly jaguars (*Panthera onca*) and the green anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*). More than any other species, these seem to have embodied the potency of the lowlands in the eyes of the Incas. We know from the chronicles that the Incas permanently kept such creatures in the capital (*e.g.*, Betanzos 1996 [1557]:88) and Bernabé Cobo (1990 [1653]:59) specifically refers to one collection of felines and serpents in Cusco as a *huaca* (*i.e.*, a shrine). While the practice of maintaining such elaborate menageries was possibly an Inca innovation, the interest in large lowland predators itself was nothing new among the highland elites of the Andes. Jaguar and serpent imagery have long been important in the public and monumental iconography produced by Andean societies, especially since the first millennium B.C. (Cordy-Collins 1998). Such practices are of interest precisely because they capture the ideal disposition of the lowlands in the Inca imagination. Like megafaunal predators contained within a

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<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, it has been argued by Hornborg (2014) that all four of the Inca *suyu* originally had a linguistic basis, although largely forgotten by the time of the Spanish conquest. Specifically, he associates Collasuyu with Pukina, Cuntisuyu with Aymara, and Chinchaysuyu with Quechua.

cage-shrine, the savage potency of Antisuyu was to be subsumed within the Incas' greater spatio-political ritual order, so that it might be constrained, but also *harnessed* for their wider political goals. If the ideological project the Incas called Tawantinsuyu was the creation of a balanced whole from distinct parts, then the proper disposition of Antisuyu (and the uniquely savage power it contained) was to serve that project—albeit in a complementary and controlled fashion. A caged anaconda that is made into a shrine located in the Inca capital would thus be an exemplary expression of this ideal put into practice. Lowland peoples who contributed to the Incas' spatial designs in a complementary mode, irrespective of their linguistic or ethnic status, we might therefore understand as Antis.

I would suggest that there also was an opposite mode to the Anti relation; a form of interacting with the Incas that was non-complementary, represented by the term Chuncho. The demonyms Chuncho and Anti are both Quechua words attested from the sixteenth century onwards, and are usually treated as if they were basically synonymous, referring to lowland peoples of the forested piedmont regions, and connoting savagery, barbarism and chaos. They have thus been seen as the Incas' equivalent to the Romans' *barbari* or the various uncivilized foreigners the imperial Chinese knew as Man, Yi, or Ti (Di Cosmo 2002:92–96). But rather than being overlapping terms used by highlanders for lowland “primitives”, there is some evidence that these categories should be seen as originally having antithetical meanings. For instance, it is remarkable how often Chunchos are invoked in relation to warfare or violence. Although references to warfare with the Antis are far from unknown, Antis are typically implicated in a much wider range of activities, particularly the provision of tribute to the Incas, or even marriage alliances. This is normally taken to mean that the Chunchos were an ethno-

linguistic group (or confederation), who happen to have been especially bellicose with respect to the Incas. But just as the Antis were lowlanders who engaged in complementary exchanges with Andeans, the Chunchos might be better seen as those who engaged in chaotic and non-complementary interactions, such as violent resistance and/or failure to provide tribute.

As Varese (2004:40–43) discusses, the earliest uses of the term Chuncho tend to refer to the lowland peoples living east and south of Cusco (towards the modern border between Peru and Bolivia), and less to populations residing to the north (towards Jauja and as far north as Huánuco). Interestingly then, piedmont peoples begin to be called Chunchos at the geographical point where Arawak linguistic dominance disappears. Along the piedmont immediately north of Cusco, there is little evidence of speakers of any language family other than Arawak, at least since early colonial times. By contrast, the region south and east of the Inca capital was an ethnolinguistic mosaic, where other language groups such as the Harakmbut and Tacana are found, alongside several linguistic isolates. Indeed, Thierry Saignes (1981) interprets the term Chuncho to have had a primary sense of Tacana-speakers, although it was later used in a more general fashion. Broadly speaking, the territory that the Incas called Antisuyu can therefore be divided into two major demographic groups, the Antis to the north and northwest of Cusco and the Chunchos to the east and southeast. It may just be a coincidence that the use of the term “Anti” was typically applied to the peoples of the Arawak dominated portions of the piedmont, while the term “Chuncho” was largely used for inhabitants of the non-Arawak piedmont zones. However, if the Chuncho/Anti distinction reflects non-complementary versus complementary relations with highlanders—and if Arawaks had unusually complementary relations with highland states—then it would make sense that

these words would map onto a non-Arawak versus Arawak linguistic geography.

There are yet other, more direct lines of evidence that bear on this matter. Unlike chronicles seeking to produce historical narratives, dictionaries are more directly concerned with lexical nuances, and so worth considering in precisely such respect. For example, in one Quechua-Castilian dictionary published in 1608, Anti and Chuncho are distinguished in an interesting fashion. The term “Chhunchu” (*i.e.*, Chuncho) is defined as “Vna prouincia o de Andes de guerra” (a province, or of the cordillera of war) (González Holguín 1952 [1608]: 114) whereas the term Anti is defined as “El indio hombre de los Andes” (the Indian man of the eastern piedmont)<sup>10</sup> (González Holguín 1952 [1608]:21), while in an earlier dictionary, first published in 1586 and of unclear authorship, the term Chunchu is defined as “indios de guerra dela cordillera” (warlike Indians of the cordillera) (Anonymous 1586 *s.v.* D2 verso), while Anti is given only as a geographical term, “los andes” (*ibid.* *s.v.* A4 recto), and not explicitly presented as an ethnonym. In both cases, it is interesting that bellicosity is present in the definition of the word Chuncho, rather than simply an incidental characteristic; while Anti is much more generic in meaning, and not associated with war. I suggest that these semantic distinctions be taken seriously, in that Chunchos were any lowlanders who violently resisted highlanders, rather than one particular lowland people who happened to have been noted for their bellicosity. In other words, the term defines a mode of relation, not a specific ethno-linguistic community. There was a place for lowland potency in the Inca realm, and Anti-

suyu (and Antis) are chaos in its proper place. Chuncho refers to an uncomplementary, disordered form of lowland chaotic power (or the people who bring it); in other words, chaos out of place.

It is important to underscore the previous point, because there is a tendency to present the Incas' views of lowlanders as if they were little different to the way Spanish colonizers thought of Amazonian “savages” or “primitives”. Sometimes this argument is expressed in quite explicit terms by Andeanist scholars. For example, Saignes (1985:xi, my translation) argues that,

. . .the Spanish perception of the piedmont carried on the Andean vision, Aymara or Inca . . . the last Incas endlessly sent armies to cross the forested hills and subjugate their dreadful inhabitants; Antis, Chunchos, Chiriguanos, who filled the Andean chroniclers with fear.<sup>11</sup>

I see this as a projection of European style colonial discourses onto the Incas, which misrepresents their imperial project in the terms of its Spanish counterpart. The Spanish had somewhat mixed views of Andean highlanders (especially the Incas). In their European eyes, the Incas were obviously persistent idolaters, but nonetheless there was also significant admiration for their achievements in certain areas, such as engineering and statecraft (Murra 1991). However, the Spanish perception of Amazonians was much more negative, and almost uniformly so. Lowland populations were widely denigrated as naked, animal-like savages, who were not even sophisticated enough to

<sup>10</sup> Originally, the term “Andes” referred to the eastern piedmont, not the entire mountain range and its associated cultural region, as it does today. To avoid confusion, I have therefore translated early colonial references to the Andes as either “cordillera” or “eastern piedmont”.

<sup>11</sup> . . . la percepción hispánica del piedemonte prolonga la visión andina, aymara o inca. . . los últimos Incas envían sin cesar ejércitos para atravesar las colinas boscosas y reducir a sus temidos ocupantes antis, chunchos, chiriguanos quienes llenan de espanto a los cronistas andinos.

have a religion, let alone a false one. Thus it would have been very difficult for the Spanish to even understand the distinction between complementary and antagonistic “barbarians” (Varese 2016). We therefore need to undertake a degree of literary excavation to extract the original meanings of Chuncho and Anti from the later colonial sources that have largely obscured them.

#### WHAT KIND OF “WARS” WERE THE INCAS’ CONFLICTS WITH THE ANTIS?

Despite all this, stories of wars between the Incas and the Antis are not absent in the written sources. Ostensibly, these accounts might be seen as counter to my argument that the Incas had conspicuously peaceful interactions with Arawaks. Yet it is important here to distinguish between the general region of Antisuyu (often called “the land of the Antis”), and the Antis as a subset of its human inhabitants. In fact, if we look closely at the documentary sources, it seems the Incas’ military forays within Antisuyu were directed away from zones occupied by Arawaks. For instance, the main Antisuyu-related conquest episode narrated in the Spanish chronicles involved an expedition into the lowlands during the reign of Tupa Inca Yupanqui (Pärssinen 1992:108–113). It is clear that this incursion entered the lowlands along the Paucartambo Valley, and followed the River Tono, a tributary of the Madre de Dios, generally progressing in a southeasterly direction. Its primary focus was therefore the interruption in the Arawak Interface in the modern border region between Peru and Bolivia—an area lacking in Arawak populations, unlike the piedmont regions to the north of Cusco. Moreover, the history written by Sarmiento de Gamboa (2007 [1572]:158–159) (which provides the most detailed account of the conquest) names the four “nations” that were subjugated in this episode as the Opataries, the Mañaries, the Manosuyu and the Chunchos. The Chunchos

we have already discussed as referring to Tacana speakers according to Saignes (1981), or, in my view, as a generic term for lowlanders who violently resisted Inca expansion. With respect to the other groups listed, in Harakmbut languages the suffix *-eri* is typically used for demonyms (e.g., Amarakaeri, Huachipaeri, Toyoeri), and it is, therefore, interesting that two of the demonyms used by Sarmiento appear to be of likely Harakmbut derivation (i.e., Opatari and Mañari). Sarmiento certainly places the Opatari in the appropriate geographical region for the Harakmbut, and Andrew Gray (1996: 10–11) interprets this particular name as an antecedent of Sapiteri, a modern Harakmbut ethnonym.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the specific “nations” subjugated by the Incas, Sarmiento (2007 [1572]:158–159) provides us with the names of several of their leaders who were taken captive. One of these leaders, or *sinchis*, is called Nutanguari; *sinchi* being a Quechua word that means something like “warrior leader”. But in Harakmbut languages the word for “leader” is *wairi*, which often appears in the names of notable individuals (Gray 1996:10), indicating that Nutanguari is quite likely a Harakmbut name or epithet referring to a high status individual.<sup>13</sup> Thus, on geographical and linguistic

<sup>12</sup> An alternative interpretation, offered by Renard-Casevitz *et al.* (1988:99), is that Opatari is derived from Matsikenga (i.e., an Arawak language), and means “place that produces water”. However, the term is clearly used as a demonym in colonial sources, not a toponym. Moreover, a very similar demonym (i.e., Apateri) is attested for a Harakmbet community living in the same area during the late eighteenth century (Gray 1996:11).

<sup>13</sup> Renard-Casevitz *et al.* (1988:99) see the name Nutanguari as having a Matsikenga (i.e., Arawak) origin, meaning “yo lo pico” or “yo lo aplasto” (i.e., I bite/cut/crush him). But as Gray (1996:11) discusses, Harakmbet names ending in *-wairi* are documented elsewhere, including an account from the 1760s referring to one such leader called Mathaguari. A traditional Harakmbet epithet meaning “leader” seems a much more plausible etymology for a person specifically identified as a leader in comparison with the rather odd Matsikenga etymology proposed by

grounds, there is reason to believe that the main conquest episode pertaining to Antisuyu involved few, if any, Arawaks—at least prior to arriving in the Llanos de Mojos.

But what of the wars with people who are actually explicitly called Antis, and who probably were Arawaks, based on their geographical location (*i.e.*, along the Urubamba and Apurímac Rivers)? For instance, Alejandro Camino (1977) discusses a manuscript identified in Huánuco in 1923 by Juan Durand, but believed to be considerably older, in which *hundreds* of Campa incursions are described as having occurred in the piedmont region near Ollantaytambo. According to this document, the Incas' settlements there were destroyed, and their female inhabitants all captured by the lowland invaders. Yet this account stands in contrast to the archaeological evidence (which as discussed above, indicates no fortifications in the region). What are we to make of this discrepancy? It might simply be the case that the events described in the written sources are later fabrications, with no basis in historical reality, but another possible answer is that many colonial authors (and modern scholars) have profoundly misunderstood the nature of the Incas' "wars" with the Antis.

Here I wish to build on a view initially put forward by Anne Christine Taylor (1999: 202–203), who argued not all the battles that occurred between Incas and Amazonian lowlanders were true wars of conquest, but rather episodes of "ritual antagonism"—events which had a flavor of *tinku* about them. The term *tinku* is a

Quechua one that refers to a meeting or convergence, often of opposed forces, and which can imply a kind of "ritual battle" (although the problematic term "ritual" here should not be taken to mean bloodless). As Taylor puts it,

It is likely that the two forms of opposition between *serranos* and Amazonians—one inclusive, complementary, linking hierarchically ordered and ritually antagonistic halves; the other exclusive, more selective, rooted in a perception of irreconcilable sociopolitical formulas—became hybridized when the Inca empire fell (Taylor *ibid.*: 203).

If we accept this distinction as proposed by Taylor, the implication is that many of the tales of the Incas' conflicts with Antis are in fact garbled accounts of ritualized clashes, whose true significance was lost in translation. The reader will probably also see its appeal with regard to my earlier argument, given the distinctions I have drawn between Antis and Chunchos. I would therefore augment Taylor's argument, suggesting that the pattern of complementary versus irreconcilable oppositions between highlanders and lowlanders broadly reflects an Arawak versus non-Arawak linguistic geography. Thus the *tinku* mode of ritual antagonism was largely a feature of relations with Arawaks in the area between Cuzco and Huánuco, while the violent interactions with Chiriguanos, Harakmbut, Diaguitas or Jivaroans (*etc.*) were true clashes between irreconcilable polities, aimed at achieving victory rather than ceremonial resolution and renewed integration. Put another way, Arawaks/Antis were lowlanders with whom tensions could be managed through ceremonial *tinku* battles, as opposed to those other groups who were subjected to actual wars of imperial conquest.

This interpretation has the advantage of explaining why there is a lack of military infra-

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Renard-Casevitz *et al.* (1988:99). Indeed, it is puzzling that Renard-Casevitz *et al.* give relatively little attention to Harakmbet peoples in their seminal study, *Al Este de los Andes*. Given that the Harakmbet were the first major Amazonian group that the Incas would have encountered in their southeasterly march along the Madre de Dios, their focus on the Matsigenka (who instead resided to the north of Cusco) seems less appropriate.

structure along the Arawak Interface, despite the multiple textual references to Inca wars against its Anti inhabitants. Defensive architecture is at odds with the kind of antagonism expressed through *tinku* battles, which do not normally involve surprise attacks or prolonged sieges (Arkush and Stanish 2005:14–15). This puts other cultural references to the Antis in a somewhat different light. For example, the Quechua drama *Ollanta* tells the story of an eponymous warrior from Antisuyu who falls in love with an Inca princess named Cusi Coyllur, a daughter of Pachacuti (Bertazoni 2014). Forbidden from marrying his beloved, Ollanta raises Antisuyu in rebellion against the Incas, but is eventually captured by Cusi Coyllur's brother, Tupa Inca Yupanqui. Yet instead of being punished, Ollanta is pardoned, elevated to the rank of lord, and eventually reunited with Cusi Coyllur. Today, the play only exists in manuscripts of probable late seventeenth century date, and although it is undoubtedly a colonial work, it has been argued to have a pre-colonial substrate (*ibid.*:28–30). In any event, my concern here is not with *Ollanta* as an historical narrative, but rather as a representation of idealized Inca-Anti relations. As such, its basic structure of 1) initial conflict between Incas and Antis, 2) defeat of the Antis and subsequent reconciliation, followed by 3) political and affinal alliance, is telling. This is precisely the kind of warfare that might manifest in *tinku* form, where the goal is not outright conquest, but management of tensions and the ultimate reaffirmation of complementary, albeit hierarchical, social relations. The *Ollanta* play also echoes the idea that Antis frequently “captured” highland women as described above (Camino 1977). Perhaps in both cases we are seeing a distorted memory of pre-colonial marriage alliances (mediated via *tinku* battles) between the Incas and their Arawak neighbors.

Other lines of material and iconographic evidence can be deployed to bolster my case

here. For example, as Thomas Cummins (2002) discusses in his study of colonial *queros* (ceremonial drinking cups), the Inca-versus-Anti battle scene is one of the most commonly recurring motifs. Although it was once believed that these were simply illustrations from Inca history, battles between the Incas and other groups are seldom shown on *queros*. Cummins (*ibid.*: 250–251) interprets this pattern as evidence that these scenes depict ritual conflicts, reflecting the fact that *tinku* battles were of especial importance in Anti-Inca interactions, more so than for the other ethnic groups of the empire. The iconography from the *queros* are therefore seen as depicting a form of antagonism that was resolved through complementary ritual violence (*ibid.*). However, following my arguments above, the battles depicted in the *queros* involve Antis/Arawaks specifically, and do not represent the Incas interactions with other Amazonian groups (*i.e.*, Chunchos, or non-Arawaks). Thus Sarmiento de Gamboa's (2007 [1572]:158–159) account of the Incas' conquest of Antisuyu, and other similar narratives found in the chronicles, are referring to an entirely different phenomenon to the events we see illustrated on the colonial-era *queros*.

A final point worth considering here is that some modern Arawak communities seem to have engaged in a form of ritual conflict that was very similar to the highland *tinku*. In particular, Stefano Varese (2016) describes how the Ashéninka were known to act out a form of ceremonial duel, called a *parawa*, as recently as the 1960s. These duels involved combatants drawn from two separate lineages, and were public affairs watched by the assembled members of the wider community, usually accompanied by beer and celebrations. The basic logic of the *parawa* would therefore have seemed very familiar to Quechua-speaking highlanders. Indeed, given the ancient contacts between Quechua and Arawak speakers, we might even wonder if the *tinku* and the *parawa* had entirely

independent origins. In any case, there is evidence that the Incas were acquainted with an ancestral version of the *parawa*. In the ethnographic accounts of Ashéninka duels, the *cushma* (a cotton tunic) was normally worn by the fighters, and arrows were the main weapons of choice (*ibid.*). Likewise, in many of the early colonial *queros* that depict Inca-Anti battles, the lowlanders are clearly using bows and arrows, and are wearing *cushma*-like tunics (see for example Martínez and Martínez 2013: figure 9). These are not the naked, savage Antis we see in the more stereotyped depictions made by colonial-era illustrators such as Guaman Poma de Ayala (e.g., c. 1615:291 [293] drawing 114). The verisimilitude of the Anti-themed *quero* iconography suggests it was drawn from real experiences; specifically an ancestral manifestation of the Arawak *parawa*. However one interprets this evidence, the important point is that both Quechua and Arawak speakers are known to have used a remarkably similar form of ritual for managing their internal social antagonisms. This makes it more likely that they would have been able to call on the same institution to manage their *external* conflicts with each other.

#### THE DEEP HISTORY OF INCA-ARAWAK RELATIONS

Some important implications arise from seeing Inca “wars” with the Arawak/Antis as *tinku* battles, especially in respect to deep history. First, such ritualized antagonism requires that both sides share an understanding of what is occurring—in the sense that everyone understands the rules and norms that govern such forms of conflict. There is a good reason why ethnographically and ethnohistorically documented *tinku* battles primarily take place between moieties; that is between opposing halves of what are essentially the *same society*. This is not the sort of violence that is waged upon the Other, but between different parts of the self, whose wholeness and unity is ultimately reaf-

firmed through the ceremonial expression of antagonism. In effect, *tinku* battles can only occur with people who inhabit the same moral universe to a significant degree. A second implication is that people can only live within such a shared moral universe if they have known each other for a long time.

Did the relations between the Incas and the Arawaks possess a unique temporal depth—which might account for their highly developed ritualized complementarity by the time of the Late Horizon? Setting aside the Incas specifically, it is clear that interactions between highland speakers of Quechua and pre-Andine Arawaks have a deep history, predating the Inca expansion by many centuries. For instance, the Amuesha language of the eastern Peruvian piedmont (part of the Arawak family) shows considerable Quechua influence, but largely of *pre-Inca* derivation, even including the adoption of basic number terms (Adelaar 2007:296–297). Moreover, the recent discovery of the Wari installation at Espíritu Pampa, in almost precisely the same location as the last Inca capital (Fonseca Santa Cruz and Bauer 2013), is a remarkable archaeological testimony to the continuity of highland-lowland interactions in the central Andes. It seems highly improbable that the Incas could have chosen the location of Espíritu Pampa for their final refuge without knowing of its long history as a center for mediating relationships between highland lords and their lowland trade partners. Indeed, given the likelihood of a Late Intermediate Period (c. A.D. 1000–1400) occupation at Espíritu Pampa as well (Bauer *et al.* 2015), this site probably represents an unbroken set of links between the piedmont and the *sierra* that endured for at least a millennium. It appears then that a pattern of exchange relationships between Quechua speaking groups in the highlands, and Arawaks residing along the eastern piedmont, particularly at the headwaters of the major riverine axes, had been established long before the Incas rose to

prominence. So in their expansion into the near-Cusco lowlands, the Incas were not stepping into some *terra incognita* (as per the classic European colonial model). Instead they were intensifying exchange relationships long established, and interacting with peoples with whom highland communities already had considerable familiarity.

Interestingly, the genetic evidence, albeit still quite limited, complements this picture. In a recent study of modern Amuesha (Arawak-speaking) populations resident in the eastern Andean piedmont, there was considerable evidence of long-term genetic admixture with Quechua speakers in the adjacent highlands (Barbieri *et al.* 2014). In a subsequent study, Barbieri *et al.* (2017) examined a population of Quechua speakers from Chachapoyas, all of whom had surnames derived from Chacha (the likely indigenous language of the Chachapoya ethnic group). However, these individuals (of which there were 119 in total) showed little genetic proximity to adjacent highland populations—the reverse of the pattern seen with the Amuesha. In sum, these studies indicate that in southern Peru, there was substantial genetic admixture between piedmont-dwelling Arawaks and highlanders, whereas in the northern Peruvian piedmont, where Arawak languages are not present, there was much less genetic admixture across the highland-lowland divide. Such genetic research is still in its infancy, and much more data needs to be obtained before truly conclusive patterns can be identified. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the results obtained thus far point to Arawaks interacting with highlanders to a far greater degree than other piedmont-dwelling groups.

This deep history of interaction is of great importance to my model, because without it, the Quechua-speaking and Arawak-speaking communities on either side of the piedmont interface would not have had sufficient time to

develop the necessary familiarity to do such things as engage in *tinku* (or *parawa*) battles. The very core of the Arawak Interface lies along the primary axes of lowland exchange under the Wari (*i.e.*, the Apurímac and Mantaro Rivers), suggesting that the Incas were building on a mode of interaction long established. I therefore suspect that the Incas' special relationship with the Arawaks has its roots in an earlier Wari version of the same (although probably on a smaller scale). By contrast, pre-colonial Quechua speakers of the central Andes had a much shallower knowledge of lowland communities to the far south and far north; in the areas now subsumed by the modern territories of Argentina, Chile, southern Bolivia and Ecuador. Thus the relatively sudden appearance of the Inca State in such regions may well have been highly disruptive to the existing patterns of highland-lowland exchange, with the Incas effectively supplanting the traditional *sierra* communities in the far north and far south of the Andes. The Incas, or their immediate ancestors, were the traditional highland exchange partners of the pre-Andine Arawaks. But outside the central Andes, they were more like interlopers, a fact that may well have set them on a path of violent confrontation with many non-Arawak Amazonian groups.

## CONCLUSIONS

There is a long-running tendency within European thought to conceptualize ethnic identities in an essentialist fashion, that is, to define peoples in terms of shared core traits, whether it be biology, language or culture. Here, however, I have suggested that Inca categories like “Anti” and “Chuncho” were not references to ethnolinguistic entities *per se*, but were instead modes of relation. Such relationships seem to have been correlated with what we would consider to be linguistic groupings (*i.e.*, Arawak *vs.* non-Arawak), even if such concepts would have been meaningless for the Incas themselves.

The Inca's *emic* distinction between Antis and Chunchos can therefore be seen to broadly map onto our *etic* linguistic classifications of Arawak and non-Arawak. Perhaps even more alien to Western notions of imperial frontiers is the resulting distinction between complementary and non-complementary forms of violence. Yet to Inca eyes, the difference between people with whom one could have had *tinku* battles (*i.e.*, Antis), and people with whom this was impossible (*i.e.*, Chunchos), would have been enormously significant. It is the distinction between a truly external Other, versus someone who is more like a member of an opposite moiety. Such nuances are difficult to accommodate with classic European perceptions of imperialism, where all peoples living beyond the frontier are deemed barbaric Others, and so by definition do not reside within the same moral universe as the imperialists themselves.

This attempt to develop a more *emic* picture of Inca understandings of Amazonian lowlanders, using documentary and iconographic evidence, helps us to better understand other empirical patterns. In particular it explains why we see one imperial Inca frontier along the central piedmont, apparently undefended, in contrast with the much more militarized frontiers found to the north and to the south. It seems reasonable to conclude that these more militarized frontiers encompassed regions where the Incas encountered greater resistance, as opposed to those where their presence was more accepted—but that does not explain *why* such variation existed. One could attempt to account for such variable levels of conflict as a product of rather vague and nebulous cultural differences (*i.e.*, some peoples are just more “warlike” or “independence-minded” than others), which was certainly the approach taken by the Spanish chroniclers and colonial missionaries. But apart from its problematic reliance on essentialism, to me this seems more of a placeholder standing in the space where an explanation should be. The

“special relationship” model I have presented here is therefore intended to provide a more satisfactory set of reasons for the empirical patterns we can observe with respect to Inca frontiers.

Admittedly, the more lines of evidence one wishes to bring into explanatory relation, the more one must rely on interpretations from scholars working across multiple disciplines. Some might compare this deep interdependence to a house-of-cards, and perhaps with some justification. Nonetheless, I would argue that studying the Incas demands a multidisciplinary perspective, whatever difficulties this entails. As an archaeologist working in the piedmont zone north of Cusco, the lack of evidence for Inca forts struck me as a gaping empirical anomaly—one that I could not explain using purely archaeological lines of evidence. It was a desire to offer some kind of explanation for this unusual pattern that led me to develop the model outlined in this paper. In the end, an argument is not scientific because it seeks to give conclusive proofs, or final answers—rather it is scientific insofar as it explicitly lays out the empirical conditions under which it will or will not be substantiated. In this respect, the empirical correlates of the special relationship model I have offered are quite clear. If I am correct, future archaeological studies will continue to show no substantial Inca investment in defensive structures in the area where Arawak languages were historically dominant along the Andes-Amazonia frontier. In other words, the pattern of absent Inca forts will persist along the eastern slopes from Huánuco to Lake Titicaca. Elsewhere, however, we will continue to encounter archaeological evidence that speaks to substantial Inca military infrastructure along the eastern piedmont. Similarly, future genetic and linguistic studies will continue to indicate that there was an unusually intense level of interaction between Quechua-speakers and Arawak-speakers along the Andes-Amazonia divide—of

a kind that can only be explained by considerable intermarriage between these two groups over a period of multiple centuries. They will also show that in other parts of the Andes, interactions between highlanders and lowlanders were much more limited, resulting in comparatively less genetic and linguistic admixture. In this respect, the goal of the special relationship model is not only to stitch together existing data from across multiple disciplines, but also to generate new hypotheses to be addressed through future research.

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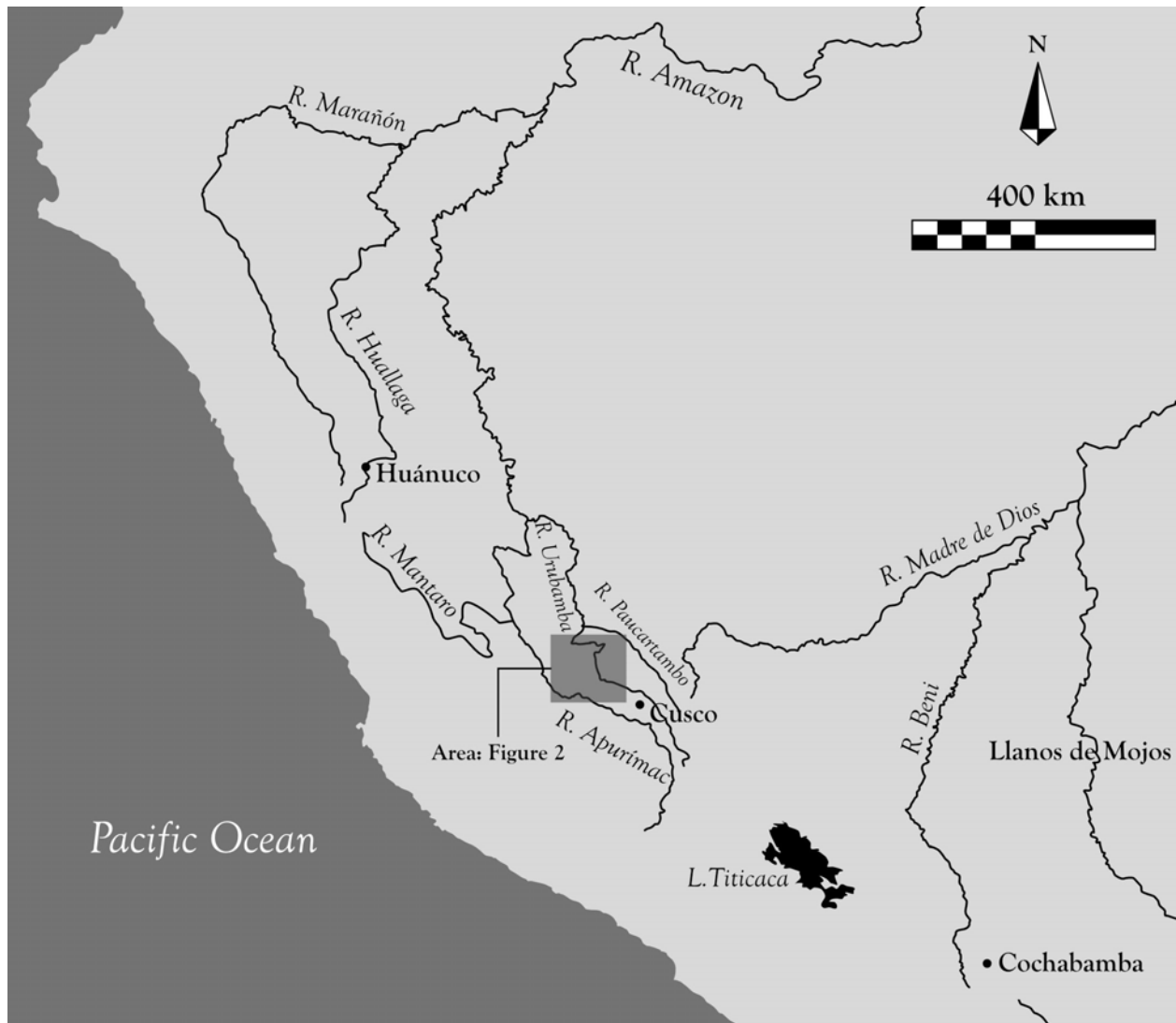


Figure 1. Map of the Central Andes, showing the main rivers and sites discussed in the text.  
The area shown in Figure 2 is highlighted.

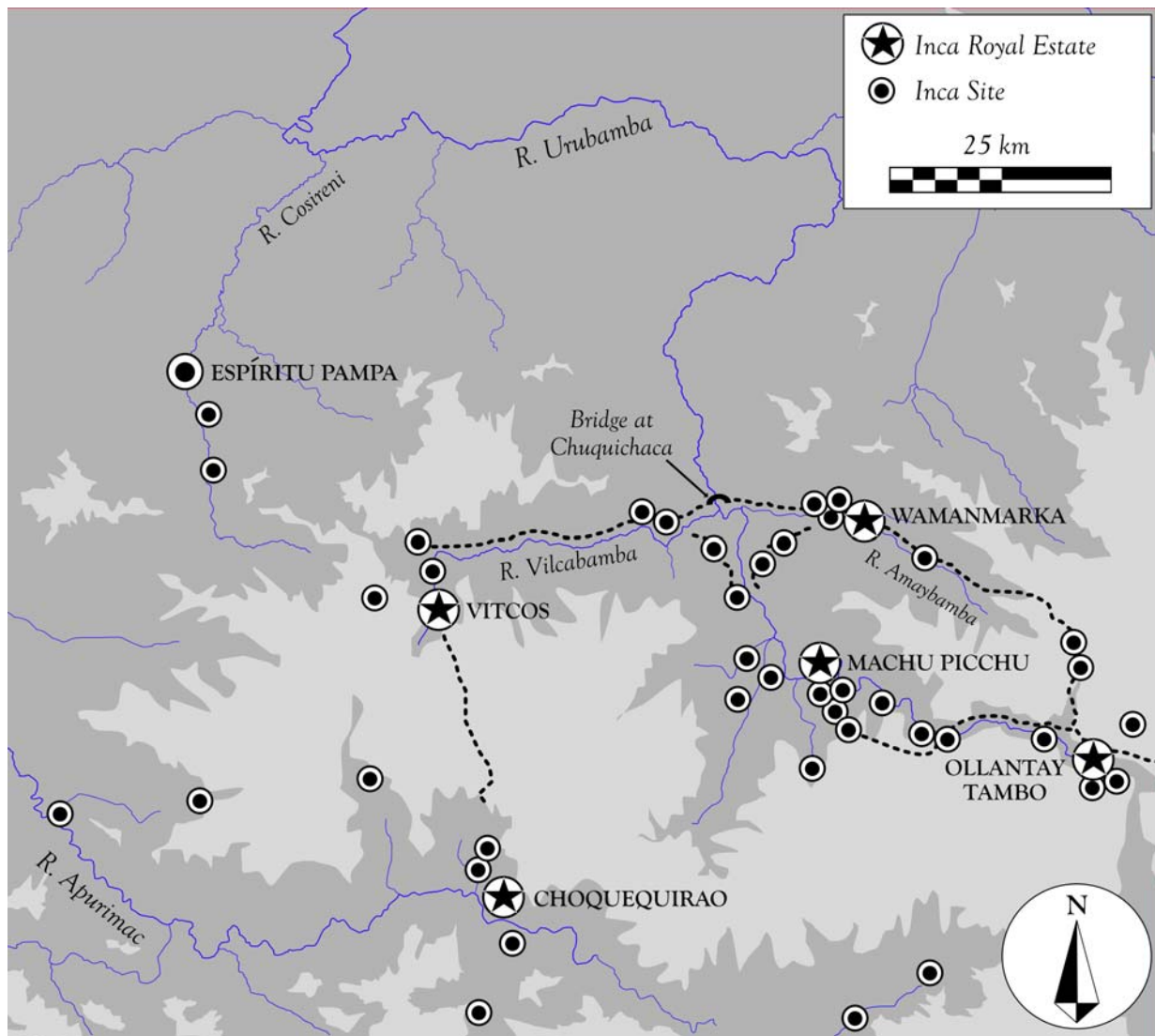


Figure 2: Map of the piedmont region northwest of Cusco. The locations of reported Inca sites (including royal estates) are indicated, as are the main Inca roads (based on: Bauer et al. 2015; Drew 1984; Kendall 1984; Lee 2000; Saintenoy 2016; Von Kaupf and Fernández 2010; Wilkinson 2013). Land above 4000 masl is shaded in light gray.

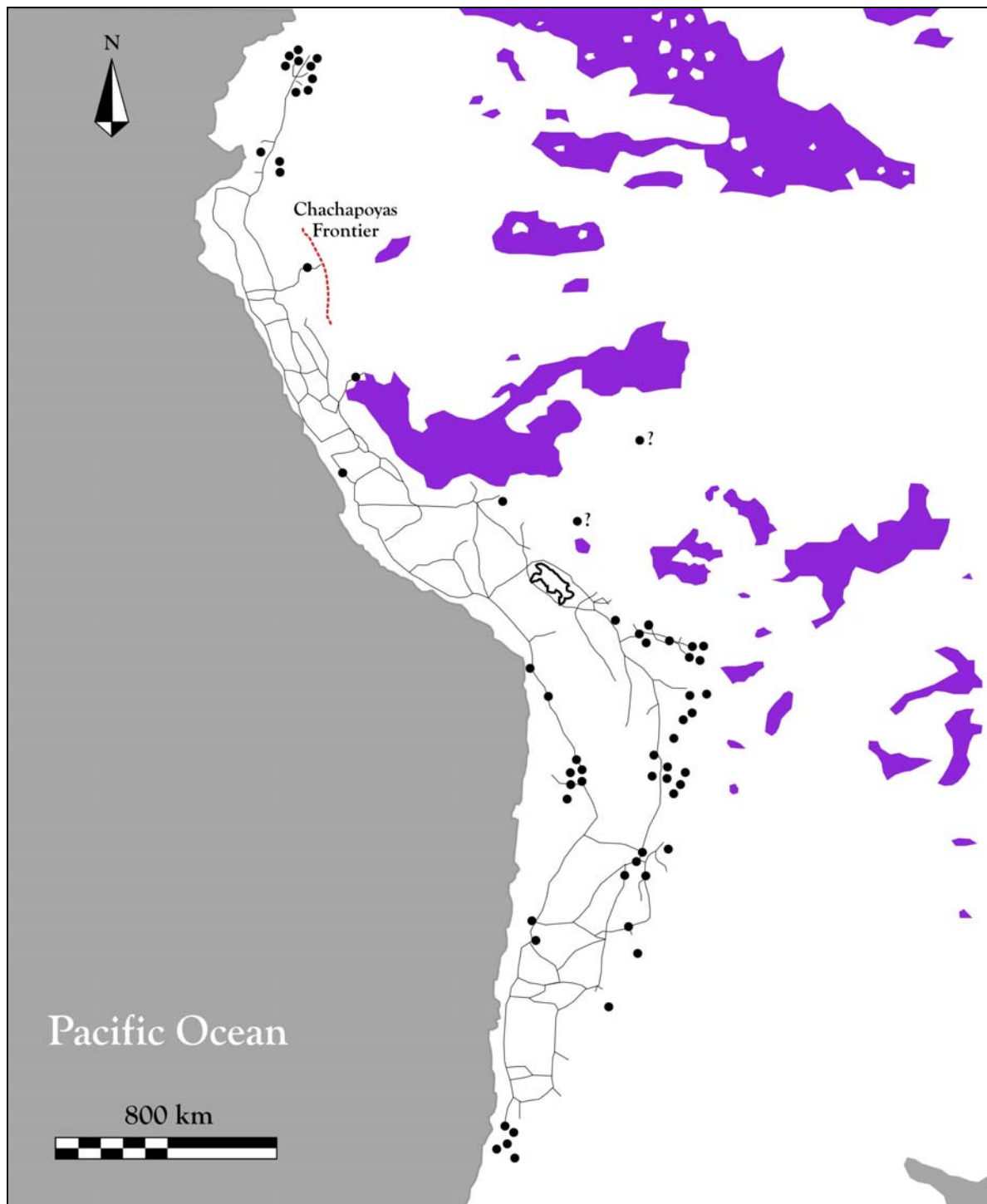


Figure 3: Map of the Inca Empire, as represented by the extent of the state highway network. All known Inca forts are also indicated (after D'Altroy 2015:235). The pre-colonial distribution of Arawak languages (c. A.D. 1500) is shown in purple (after Eriksen 2011:222). Note the dotted line indicating the eastern limits of the Chachapoyas region, which was a part of the militarized frontier. Two prehistoric sites that were possibly Inca forts (Pärssinen et al. 2003), have been indicated with question marks.

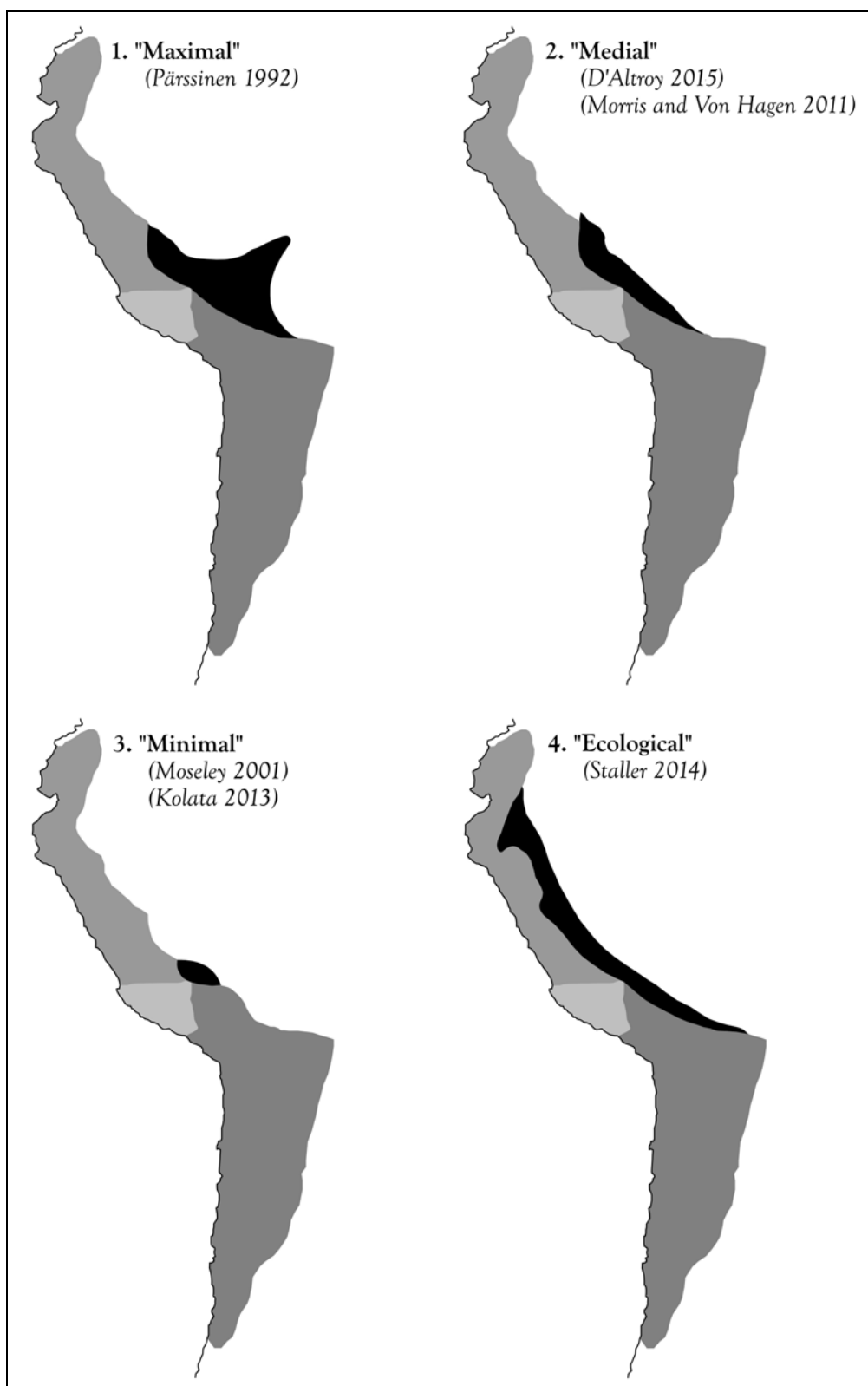


Figure 4. The four main interpretations of the spatial extent of Antisuyu (black) in respect to the other three suyu (gray).

