

LOST WORLDS, LOST GODS

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Abstract

The Inca Empire covers a huge part of the Pacific coast until the 16th century, until the lost battle with the Conquistadors.

The whole Andean World worships the Gods.

They build marvelous stone temples for their Gods. The skill to integrate constructions (from the crude brick pyramids to the extraordinary monumental structures of stone cities, built with enormous blocks, fitted together precisely), to integrate them perfectly into the landscape, remains the most important feature of the Inca Architecture. And a proof that all natural elements, plants and living creatures are valued along with the deities: the Sun God, Inti and the supreme Creator God, Viracocha.

Key Words: *Inca Empire, Inca Architecture, Gods.*

A Magic World realistically built around a Culture in Terraces / Stairs.

Pyramidal Architecture: Fortresses, Temples and Gods carved in stone. Places imbued with sacrality.

Typical Inca town planning: palaces, temples, stores, fortifications, observatories, roads, passages, tunnels. Massive walls with doorways and trapezoidal niches. Architectural perfection.

That is the cultural universe of the Andean „People of the Sun“.

The Inca Empire is, until the brutal extermination of the Spanish conquistadores, the richest Empire known in History. And Cuzco is his capital and „the center of the world“, endowed with stone palaces, gardens, squares, paved roads, with walls covered with gold sheet and amazing water systems. Coricancha is the temple / palace dedicated to the Sun, to the Moon and to the Stars. The city is divided into two parts: the upper section Hanan Cuzco and Hurin Cuzco, the „Kanchas“, the quarters are built on the four sides



Image 1

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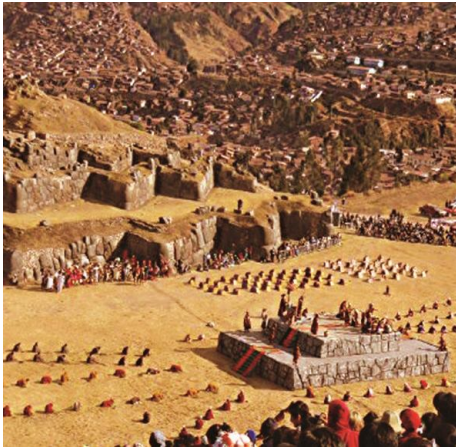


Image 2: Sacsahuaman



Image 3: Ollantaytambo



Image 4: Rachi

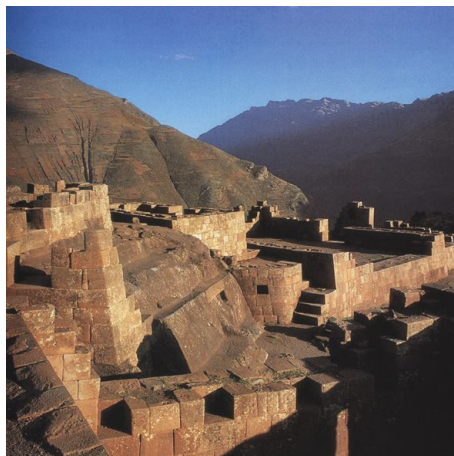


Image 5: Pisac



Image 6: Chan-Chan

of a large square. The royal palaces, residences and temples are also grouped around a central heart, from which start the four main roads that divide the Inca Empire into four sections, wisely controlled by *Sapa Inca*.

Let us follow the ancient route of the *The Sacred Valley of Urubamba*, which winds along the coast of Peru through presently ruined fortresses and temples (only one is better preserved; *Pachacamac*, the polychrome temple consisting of nine terraces linked with steps; it is the most famous place in Precolumbian Peru).

The megalithic temple / fortress of *Sacsahuaman*, near *Cuzco*, a vast temple dedicated to the sun and to god *Inti* or an astronomical observatory; the function of all the buildings is not known for certain.

Kenko and *Tambo Machay*, sites of great ritual significance, centred on the cult of water (The terrace irrigation and draining systems are successfully used in agriculture for the *Andenes*, artificial terraces, some of them created for agricultural use).

The cyclopean walls, steps and solar monoliths *Ollantaytambo* (17 terraces climb the steep mountainside).

Pisac (3,270 m altitude), center of ceremonies and rituals carried around the *Intihuatana*, a huge monolithic pillar;

Raqchi, the gigantic temple built of volcanic stone, dedicated to the supreme god, *Viracocha*;

Cerro Sechin, religious and administrative centre of the Kingdom of *Moche*, with its sacrificial pyramid platforms (50m square, decorated with a wonderful frieze of stone figures, some

of the earliest sculptures found in the Andes): Pyramid of the Sun, *Huaca del Sol*, 40m high, with the 345/160 m base made of adobe bricks and Pyramid of the Moon, *Huaca de la Luna*, with his brightly coloured relief murals, built in 6 stages, *Chan Chan* AD 1300, the largest city in the Andes (20 sqkm), the palace characterized by an elegant architectural style, the enclosures and walls are made of adobe bricks, embellished with painted reliefs reminding of the textile pattern and the architecture of *Machu Pichu*, skillfully adjusted to the natural form of the mountain-tops on which the complex stands, the buildings are arranged around a central square in parallel terraces, houses, towers and monuments (*Inca Throne*), altars are surrounded by walls and agricultural terraces. The scale remains a human one.

Far away from *Cusco*, *Tiahuanaco*, the city of megaliths, „raised by the gods“, is the main centre of theocracy, the religious area is surrounded by stone temples, enclosed sanctuaries, sunk squares and gateways (*the Gate of the Sun*).

Titicaca, the Sacred Islands, preserve a vast ceremonial complex built on artificial terraces (a long passage of gateways topped by monolithic lintels).

The Inca Architecture used for building her fabulous monuments enormous blocks of limestone, sandstone and andesite and above all a unique technical perfection with which the stones are carved and fixed together (it is still a mystery how they were transported from the quarries: such a huge block is over 5 m high and weighs 128 tones).

The Andean World, a rock surface sculptured with amazing terraces / steps, covered with breathtaking architectural sites and monuments, values the Civilization and the Gods.

It never fails to amaze and intrigue archaeologists, architects and visitors.

Glossary

Cuzco – the capital of the Inca Empire.

Coricancha – temple / palace dedicated to the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.

Sacred Valley of Urubamba – fortresses and temples spread along the coast of the Inca Empire.

Pachacamac – oracle, religious center.

Sacsahuaman – temple / fortress dedicated to the sun and to God *Inti*.



Image 7: Machu Pichu



Image 8: Isla de la Luna

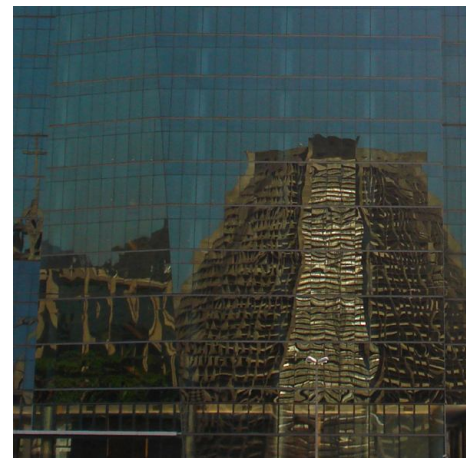


Image 9: Rio de Janeiro, Isla de la Luna

Kenko and *Tambo Machay* – sites centered on the cult of water.

Ollantaytambo – residential and religious site.

Pisac – centre of ceremonies and rituals rised around the *Intihuatana* (a huge monolithic pillar)

Raqchi – temple dedicated to the supreme god, *Viracocha*

Cerro Sechin – religious and administrative centre of the Kingdom of *Moche*

Chan chan – the largest city in the Andes, *Moche* culture

Machu Pichu – fortress-city with temples, houses, fountains and agricultural terracing

Tiahuanaco – city of megaliths, religious centre

Titicaca – the Sacred Islands



Image 10: Ayllus, Ica Chinch

Images source: photographs by A.Hasnaş

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