1 Into the Realm of the Four Quarters

On September 24, 1572, clad in mourning and riding a mule bedecked in black velvet, Tupac Amaru, the last Inca king (Figure 1.1), slowly descended the vertiginous, stone-paved streets of Cuzco to its expansive main square. The streets, patios, parapets, and rooftops of the city, once the imperial capital of Tupac Amaru's illustrious forebears, teemed with Indian subjects as well as with Spanish citizens come to bear witness to an epochal event. Accompanied by a phalanx of four hundred native guards brandishing lances to push back the jostling crowd, the king solemnly mounted a scaffold newly erected in the square. On reaching the summit, Tupac Amaru silenced the boisterous crowd with a simple gesture. He then pronounced his final discourse, received the heartfelt consolation of his conquerors' priests, and laid his head on a chopping block. With little hesitation, the executioner seized Tupac Amaru's hair, exposed the king's neck, swiftly struck his head off "with a cutlass at one blow," and then held the severed head "high for all to see" (Hemming 1970:449).

Eyewitness accounts to this act of regicide concur that upon seeing the bloody head of Tupac Amaru suspended from the executioner's hand and later speared on an iron pike, the assembled throng of some fifteen thousand Indians broke into uninhibited "cries and wailings" (Toledo [1572], cited in Hemming 1970:449–450). This spontaneous outburst of lamentation and the subsequent worship of the king's lugubrious remains by his erstwhile subjects alarmed Viceroy Francisco Toledo, the supreme political authority in what had become Spanish Peru. After only two days, Toledo ordered Tupac Amaru's royal head removed from public display, rightfully perceiving that the natives' unconstrained eruption of despair and adoration of the king's mortal remains might become a threat to public order and a potential source of sedition and rebellion.

Toledo's campaign to eradicate the last vestiges of Inca rule did not end with the execution of Tupac Amaru. He implacably persecuted natives who claimed any measure of royal blood, or who had been ennobled by the Inca. Toledo secretly immolated the mummified remains of

1.1. Tupac Amaru, the last ruler of Tawantinsuyu, executed in 1572 by order of Viceroy Francisco Álvarez de Toledo, Count of Oropesa. (Copyright Museo Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología, e Historia)

Tupac Amaru's immediate royal predecessors, Titu Cusi and Manco Inca. In a complex sequence of initial collaboration, subsequent diplomacy, and eventual rebellion, Manco Inca had fled the onslaught of the Spanish conquest begun in 1532 and established a reduced but effective state of resistance in Vilcabamba, a densely forested, virtually trackless land to the northeast of Cuzco. Although the Spanish *conquistadors* had irrevocably seized effective political power in Inca Peru with their cunning, lightning-fast capture and subsequent execution of the Inca emperor Atawallpa on July 26, 1533, his proximate descendants, Manco Inca, Titu Cusi, and finally Tupac Amaru, managed to sustain an extended campaign of resistance to the new Spanish

overlords who had humiliated, abused, and slaughtered the Inca noble families and their one-time subjects. They launched a series of harrowing guerilla-like actions and open-field battles in the countryside to harass and kill Spanish military forces, juridical authorities, priests, economic agents, and native collaborators. These last three kings of the Inca defended the small but autonomous bastion of Inca power in Vilcabamba with considerable tenacity and new tactical skills born of increasing recognition of the desires, military capabilities, and cultural proclivities of the Spanish invaders. They repeatedly sent emissaries to the Spanish authorities seeking recognition of their personal authority and right to ancestral properties and privileges, while simultaneously maintaining a state of resistance in the isolated hinterlands just beyond the reach of complete Spanish territorial control. Decades of negotiations seeking the final capitulation of these last independent members of the Inca royal dynasty yielded continued frustration for the Spanish Crown and deep unease among the citizens of Cuzco, who feared a devastating repeat of the full-scale Indian assault on the city led by Manco Inca in 1536. However, Toledo's arrival as viceroy in Peru in 1569 and his single-minded determination to eradicate the Inca dynastic line root and branch finally changed this seemingly intractable state of affairs.

The viceroy well understood the dangers to the Spanish Crown's new dominions in Peru embodied in the continuing existence of autonomous Inca nobles possessed of a palpable mystique of power and the still real capacity to mobilize thousands of Indian subjects. On Palm Sunday, April 14, 1572, Toledo acted decisively against this threat by declaring a war of "fire and blood" against the rebellious, "reprobate" Inca (Hemming 1970:424). By assembling military expeditions of overwhelming force and by exercising an iron will to annihilate the remnant of free Inca in Vilcabamba, Toledo rapidly accomplished his goal. Part of the Spanish expeditionary force under the command of Captain Martín García de Loyola finally tracked down Tupac Amaru, who was retreating from the front lines of the confrontation deeper into the jungles of Vilcabamba with his *qoya* (queen) and a few of his remaining military commanders and personal retainers. García de Loyola dragged Tupac Amaru in chains from the cloud forests of Vilcabamba to Cuzco, where the triumphal military expedition arrived on September 21, 1572, to the celebratory relief of Cuzco's Spanish citizens. Three days later, after a sham trial for sedition and rapid instruction in the elements of the Catholic faith, Tupac Amaru met his ignominious fate on the scaffold and with him the final, embodied remnants of the Inca Empire irrevocably disappeared.

But the power of indigenous mentalities, cultural dispositions, and social practices lingered long after the humiliation, immiseration, and extermination of Inca nobles. Throughout his tenure as viceroy, Toledo assiduously sought to destroy the icons of Inca religion and to eradicate indigenous religious practices. A genuine religious impulse to convert Indian "heathens" to Catholicism, and thereby bring them to salvation, may have been one of Toledo's motivating forces in his campaign to extirpate idolatry. Yet, a more compelling explanation of Toledo's relentless iconoclasm was the immediate political imperative to impose an orthodox, hierarchical social order that required the repression of heterodox practices. He intuitively understood that indigenous religious beliefs and social practices were a deep well of potential, long-term resistance to Spanish authority. Even more astutely, he realized that particular material objects, and the expression of religious sentiment mediated through objects, was the conceptual key to the meaning of Inca religion. Toledo assumed that destroying those objects held sacred by the natives would eradicate heterodox beliefs and practices by eliminating the oracular vehicles of their expression. Ironically, as we shall see, Toledo was preceded in this assumption by the Inca kings themselves, who had organized their own campaigns to extirpate the sacred objects (*wak'as*) of the natives they had subjected. Toledo was particularly anxious to locate the Inca idol of Punchao, the cast gold image of the young sun god that had a mimetic heart of dough fabricated from the desiccated fragments of the actual hearts of dead Inca kings placed in a golden chalice inside the statue's body (Hemming 1970:450). When Punchao was finally located in the custody of one of Tupac Amaru's generals in Vilcabamba, the idol was seized, stripped of its dazzling gold medallions, and dispatched to King Phillip of Spain. Viceroy Toledo recommended that the idol be sent to "His Holiness," the Roman Catholic pope, "in view of the power of the devil exercised through it, and the damage it has done since the time of the seventh Inca" (Toledo [1572], cited in Hemming 1970:450). This passage reveals just how much Toledo appreciated the efficacy and inherent political potency of religious objects. Moreover, his clandestine destruction of Inca royal mummies speaks volumes about his shrewd political instincts. Toledo clearly recognized the objects of power in the indigenous Andean world; even more critically for his purposes, he grasped the cultural power of objects.

How was it, then, that the decapitated head of an Inca king, heir only to a shattered empire, commanded such undiminished awe? Why were the desiccated corpses of former kings objects of such intense worship? What force compelled many subjects of the Inca to continue performing their assigned tributary duties to the vanquished state well after the

Spanish conquest of the realm? Why, in short, did the Inca have such a hold on the labor, imagination, and fealty of many, if not all, of their former subjects, even after it became painfully clear that they had irrevocably lost their domain to foreign invaders? Toledo intuited the presence of deep currents of social power that represented a potential challenge to Spanish authority sublimated beneath the surface of the Inca's abject military defeat. To definitively supplant the Inca so recently dominant in the Andes, Toledo sought to understand, and then to eliminate, the sources of that social power, whether these derived from the prestige of living noble lineages or from inert, yet deeply meaning-laden material objects.

The task of this book is similar to the challenge Toledo faced. To understand the Inca, we must understand the essence of social power in their world. How did the Inca themselves conceive of power? What beliefs, objects, social relations, economic forces, and political instruments did the Inca deploy to extend and consolidate their power? What roles did violence, coercion, diplomacy, sociality, religious sentiment, and the compulsive desire for renown, for wealth, and for power itself play in the story of the Inca Empire's emergence? In order to grapple with these questions, we must first analyze the nature of social power itself. Only then can we proceed to explore the specific fields of power that structured the Inca world and shaped the historical trajectory of their imperial ambitions.

The Elementary Forms of Social Power

Holding and exercising power of different forms and intensities lies at the heart of empire – the latter necessarily entails the former. But what kinds of social power did the Inca recognize, privilege, and deploy? How did they succeed in concentrating power to such a degree that in less than a century they were able to assemble the most extensive political entity that ever existed in the pre-Columbian Americas, far larger than any of the Aztec, Toltec, or Maya city-states in Mexico? What social, economic, political, and ideological forces converged in the Inca ruling classes that permitted them to transform their social order from a relatively small, bounded, and not notably powerful ethnic group, one among many in the south-central highlands of Peru, into a predatory state operating over a vast geopolitical space? What motivated them to do so? What, in other words, were the means and the ends of Inca social power? To understand the particular kinds and applications of power that underwrote the Inca drive toward political supremacy in the ancient Andean world, we must first consider the elementary forms of power more generally.

What is social power? How is it produced and circulated? What impact does the application of social power have on the parties involved in any power-laden transaction?

Broadly speaking, power is the capacity to produce causal effects, to transform an object, state of being, or social relationship through purposeful, intended actions. As John Scott notes, social power "is a form of causation that has its effects in and through social relations" (Scott 2001:1). In this sense, social power involves human agents, whether individuals or collectives (kin networks, classes, interest groups, political parties), exerting some kind of force, whether positive (persuasion, incentives) or negative (violence, coercion), on other agents to achieve a desired effect. In the sense I use the term here, one deeply relevant to class-stratified, hierarchical societies such as the Inca Empire, social power entails a dyadic relationship between "principals" (or paramount agents) and "subalterns" (subordinate agents).[1] The causal effects of such a dyadic relationship do not necessarily flow in one direction, that is, from a more powerful principal to a less powerful subaltern. The relationship can be a much more subtle form of mutual interdependence in which the beliefs, desires, actions, and social practices of subalterns can cause principals to alter their behavior to achieve a desired outcome. In other words, most forms of social relations entail a game of power in which each side of the dyad implements specific strategies to influence the behavior of the other. The rules of this power game, however, do not constitute a level playing field. By definition, dominant agents possess strategic social and political advantages that permit them to assert their will more fully and frequently than subalterns.

We can define two elementary forms of social power: interpersonal power and institutionalized, or state, power. These forms of social power are interdependent, but they operate on different scales. As the social theorist Michel Foucault observed, interpersonal power relates intimately to institutionalized structures of domination: "if we speak of structures or mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others" (Foucault 1982:225). Both of these forms of social power are highly relevant to an analysis of the Inca.

The deployment of interpersonal power to effect social and political transformations is particularly characteristic of emergent, nonbureaucratic, and precapitalist state formations. Interpersonal power operates at the scale of face-to-face interaction; it is embodied power that relies on the personal characteristics of individuals asserting their desires in

[1] See Gramsci 1971:52.

immediate communication with others. The prominent sociologist Max Weber analyzed one dimension of interpersonal power in terms of the phenomenon of charisma, and the nature of charismatic leadership. This dimension of interpersonal power is central to understanding the emergence and rapid expansion of the Inca Empire. According to Weber, charismatic authority depends on special "gifts of mind and body" that permit an individual to appear extraordinary and imbued with supernatural or divine authority: the charismatic leader "must work miracles, if he wants to be a prophet. He must perform heroic deeds, if he wants to be a warlord" (Weber 1978:1114). Charismatic domination develops in contexts in which an individual exerts a kind of magnetic attraction on followers, who view the leader as having extraordinary skills and capacities to organize and motivate others, whether in politics, religion, the military, or any other collective social endeavor.

Charismatic leaders have a sense of a personal, often divinely inspired, mission that drives them in pursuit of their goals. According to Weber, the leader "seizes the task for which he is destined and demands that others obey and follow him by virtue of his mission," and the charismatic leader's domination of others finds justification "by virtue of a mission believed to be embodied in him" (Weber 1978:1112, 1117). The charismatic leader has the capacity to inspire deep emotions of awe, fervor, and reverence in followers because of both exceptional personal characteristics and a collective belief in this embodied, charismatic mission. Jeanne d'Arc, the fifteenth-century French religious visionary and military leader, was a classic example of a charismatic leader. But charismatic leaders can sustain their power of domination only if followers continue to have faith in the leaders' ability to perform extraordinary feats in service of their mission. Charisma is an evanescent personal quality completely dependent upon collective belief. If the leaders fail to continually "work miracles" or "perform heroic deeds," their charisma dissipates and their followers rapidly disappear. In this regard, charismatic leadership is a metastable form of rule that requires of the leader exquisite sensitivity and constant personal attention to his or her followers' attitudes and behaviors. An inherent flaw in charismatic leadership as an instrument of governance is the problem of succession. As a highly personal form of social power, charisma cannot be readily transferred from one person to another. A charismatic king will not necessarily beget an equally charismatic son or daughter to succeed him. In this sense, charisma as a pure form of interpersonal power is idiosyncratic and of a relatively short duration – limited to a single lifetime. Moreover, any attempt by a charismatic leader to routinize or institutionalize this personal form of social power inevitably transforms it into

something other than charisma. Followers of the original charismatic leader and charismatic mission may lose faith in its efficacy, and the intense emotional bonds necessary to sustain this mission will dissolve. Routinization, institutionalization, and depersonalization of leadership are all anathema to charismatic authority.

Norbert Elias's observations on the distinction between charismatic and absolutist forms of kingship offer further insight into the nature of this form of leadership: "The charismatic ruler, unlike a consolidated [absolutist] government, usually possesses no established administrative apparatus outside his central group. For this reason, his personal power and individual superiority within the central group remain indispensable to the functioning of the apparatus. This defines the framework within which such a ruler must rule" (Elias 1983:124–126). Moreover, according to Elias, the charismatic ruler is "constantly required to prove himself directly in action and to take repeated risks.... [S]uccess in mastering incalculable crises legitimizes the ruler as 'charismatic' in the eyes of the central group and the subjects in the wider dominion. And the 'charismatic' character of the leader and his followers is maintained only as long as such crisis situations constantly recur or can be created" (Elias 1983:125–126). Charismatic kingship necessarily creates and re-creates a crisis mode of leadership. Personal acts of royal risk taking, or at least actions that the public perceives as entailing risk, are conceived in terms of an extraordinary capacity for engagement and personal intervention on the part of the charismatic leader. The grounds and warrants of charismatic royal power are in personal political action, public visibility of the ruler to the ruled, habitual resolution of crises, and the maintenance of social cohesion among the nobility. In sharp contrast, royal power in the absolutist state is grounded in universally and permanently defined legal conceptions, legitimized by legal text, not by personal action. The personal intervention and risk of the ruler is minimized, as is the need for continuous social interaction between the ruler and the ruled. Elsewhere I have argued that Andean, and specifically Inca, kingship as a form of charismatic power depended on a deeply ingrained cultural pattern of sociability (Kolata 1996, 2003). The mode of consciousness of this kind of power was subject oriented rather than the legally enmeshed frameworks of absolutist rule. Subject-oriented rule demanded constant engagement, or the perception of engagement, with subjugated populations at all levels of the social hierarchy by the king himself, by his representatives, or by his supernatural avatars. That is, the legitimacy of Inca kings required a peculiarly intense and continuous form of social exchange. This social exchange was not framed solely in terms of a circulation of commodities in tribute or gift form, but rather consisted of

a constantly shifting and strategically deployed manipulation of obligation, solidarity, social power, and instrumental resources. I will explore these features of Inca kingship grounded in interpersonal, charismatic authority in greater detail later in this book.

The second elementary form of social power is institutionalized power. Some prominent theorists, including Max Weber (1978), envision power as a zero-sum game in which social power relies upon inherently hierarchical relations of domination and subordination: one side of the dyadic pair achieves a favorable outcome only at the expense of the other. Weber was particularly concerned with the process of the institutionalization of power, and the organizational vehicles for the application of power. The classic framing structure for this perspective is that of the authority embedded in the premodern and modern bureaucratic states of Europe. Weber specifically concentrated on the means that states use to deploy power and concluded, along with Leon Trotsky, that "every state is founded on force." He further refined this view by defining states as "a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory" and as "a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence" (Weber 1958:77–78). In such a relation, Weber argued, the distribution of power is inherently asymmetrical: some agents will possess and implement more power than others, and there will be a continual struggle for power that results in clear winners and losers in the game. The principals in a dyadic power relation are those individuals who hold the capacity through force to constrain the actions and alternatives open to a subaltern. This concept of social power emphasizes the fundamentally asymmetrical, coercive, and repressive aspects of principals over subalterns.

When thinking about power, most people intuitively subscribe to a concept similar to that articulated by Weber: power is force, or the threat of force, applied by one party over another to extract some benefit, to punish some infraction, or to constrain the other party's possibilities for action. But, as Weber emphasized, for a state to succeed, the monopoly of force required to exercise power must be perceived as legitimate by its citizens. Without this recognition of legitimacy, the state would devolve into an anarchic, Hobbesian "war of all against all," destabilizing the very monopoly of power that underwrites the authority of the state in the first instance. This, then, presents a conundrum: how can violence, or the threat of violence, ever be perceived and accepted as legitimate? This is a paradox that has various resolutions in terms of the presumptive ends of power. The state may justify violence to maintain internal security; to defend sovereign territory and natural resources; to

promote a "civilizing mission" among weaker, less developed states; or, in contemporary terms, perhaps to defend cultural ideals of "individual freedom of choice" or "universal human rights." All states attempt to justify their monopoly over the application of force through some claim to defense, security, and the need to create a pacified territory in which citizens can conduct productive pursuits unmolested. In other words, the legitimacy of a state's monopoly over force can be sustained only if citizens are persuaded of its necessity, even when the resulting application of force fetters their capacity for individual freedom of action. Why would citizens consent to subordinate themselves to the power of the state? One simple answer would be fear: fear of violence or coercion from the state's agents, or fear of violence from other sovereign powers. Whatever the state's claims to legitimacy may be, the salient watchwords for this conception of social power are differential capacity for autonomous action, hierarchy, domination, discipline, coercion, and extraction. These characteristics certainly comprised some dimensions of the Incas' power regime, but they are not sufficient to explain entirely how the Inca held and exercised social power.

Another influential vein of social thought analyzes power relations from a different, though potentially complementary, non-zero-sum game frame of reference. From this perspective, social power is not exclusively concentrated in concrete organizational forms or organs of the state. Rather, power is broadly diffused throughout society, in individuals and institutions, even if the most efficacious forms of power are not evenly distributed. This is the vision of power exemplified by Michel Foucault. Unlike Weber, Foucault focused on the diffused strategies and technologies of power that all social actors, principals and subalterns alike, reproduce, deploy, and often resist. As John Scott observes:

> According to this view, power is the collective property of whole systems of cooperating actors, of the fields of social relations within which particular actors are located. At the same time, it stresses not the repressive aspects of power but the facilitative or "productive" aspects. Of particular importance are the communal mechanisms that result from the cultural, ideological, or discursive formations through which consensus is constituted.... [A]ll can gain from the use of power, and there need be no losers. (Scott 2001:9)

Whether it is true that we can imagine a consistent "win-win" proposition in any serious application of power, and that "there need be no losers," it is evident that for power to persist in some relatively stable form the consent of the governed is required. Consent can be coerced through acts or threats of force by the military, the police, judicial authorities, or other agents of discipline, or consent can be manufactured through