

WAR, SPECTACLE, AND POLITICS IN THE ANCIENT ANDES

Warfare in the pre-Columbian Andes took on many forms, from inter-village raids to campaigns of conquest. Andean societies also created spectacular performances and artwork alluding to war – acts of symbolism that worked as political rhetoric while drawing on ancient beliefs about supernatural beings, warriors, and the dead. In this book, Elizabeth N. Arkush disentangles Andean warfare from Andean war-related spectacle, and offers insights into how both evolved over time. Synthesizing the rich archaeological record of fortifications, skeletal injury, and material evidence, she presents fresh visions of war and politics among the Moche, Chimú, Inca, and pre-Inca societies of the conflict-ridden Andean highlands. The changing configurations of Andean power and violence serve as case studies to illustrate a sophisticated general model of the different forms of warfare in premodern societies. Arkush's book makes the complex prehistory of Andean warfare accessible by providing a bird's-eye view of its major patterns and contrasts.

Elizabeth N. Arkush is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh. She is a leading expert on ancient Andean warfare and has done extensive archaeological research on ancient hillforts in the Peruvian Andes. Her book *Hillforts of the Ancient Andes* won the SAA Book of the Year Award in 2013.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-316-51096-4 — War, Spectacle, and Politics in the Ancient Andes
Elizabeth N. Arkush
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

WAR, SPECTACLE, AND
POLITICS IN THE
ANCIENT ANDES

ELIZABETH N. ARKUSH

University of Pittsburgh



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781316510964

DOI: 10.1017/9781009039130

© Cambridge University Press 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-316-51096-4 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-316-51096-4 — War, Spectacle, and Politics in the Ancient Andes
Elizabeth N. Arkush
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For my mother

Cambridge University Press
978-1-316-51096-4 — War, Spectacle, and Politics in the Ancient Andes
Elizabeth N. Arkush
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Maps</i>	x
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
1 INTRODUCTION	I
2 SEVERITY AND SPECTACLE: THE NATURE OF OUR EVIDENCE	19
3 TOWARD A BETTER MODEL OF WAR	70
4 WARRIOR LORDS: MOCHE WAR AND STATUS RIVALRY	95
5 US VERSUS THEM: THREAT AND SOLIDARITY IN THE LATE INTERMEDIATE PERIOD HIGHLANDS	122
6 THE INVENTION OF CONQUEST: CHIMÚ AND INCA WAR AND COERCION	162
7 CONCLUSIONS	220
<i>Appendix 1</i> (Refer to www.cambridge.org/arkush)	228
<i>Appendix 2</i>	229
<i>Notes</i>	236
<i>Bibliography</i>	240
<i>Index</i>	289

FIGURES

1.1	General Auqui Tupac Inca Yupanqui presents the severed head of an enemy to Inca emperor Capac Yupanqui, Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615)	<i>page</i> 2
1.2	Modified Inca and Moche skulls possibly used as vessels	3
1.3	Andean objects distantly related to Atahualpa's cup	4
1.4	Conceptual models for conflict and warfare	9
2.1	Cranial fractures from the central Andes, Hrdlička (1914)	22
2.2	Incidence of cranial trauma on adults through time	24
2.3	Coastal and highland trauma through time	26
2.4	Northern and southern trauma through time	28
2.5	Correlation in male and female trauma rates	29
2.6	Incidence of trauma on males, females, and subadults	30
2.7	Late Intermediate Period fortified settlements from the highlands	35
2.8	Chimú strategic hillforts in the Moche Valley	36
2.9	Trauma rates across Andean cultures	41
2.10	Trauma rates from state and nonstate populations	43
2.11	Trauma rates at San Pedro de Atacama	44
2.12	Nasca trophy heads and trophy head imagery	46
2.13	The trophy head cache at Cerro Carapo	47
2.14	Nasca drum with supernaturals, priests, and trophy heads	47
2.15	Nasca scenes associating decapitation with warriors, combat, and defeat	48
2.16	Nasca scenes of the ritual use of trophy heads	48
2.17	Head removal in the Terminal Archaic at Cabezas Largas and Asia	50
2.18	Iconography at Cerro Sechín	52
2.19	Fierce felines at north coastal monuments	53
2.20	Middle Formative supernatural predators with human trophy heads	54
2.21	Consuming mouths at temple entrances	55
2.22	Heads deposited as offerings at Wiqchana and Chavín	56
2.23	Modified human skull from Shillacoto	57
2.24	Paracas male skull with healed fractures	59
2.25	Paracas textile images of powerful beings carrying trophy heads	60
2.26	Nasca iconography of plants sprouting from the mouths of trophy heads	61
2.27	Decapitated bodies at Amato and Palpa	62
3.1	Modes of war and associated political relationships	78
4.1	Moche warriors and captives in different media	99

4.2	Moche fine-line scenes of warriors fighting and leading captives	106
4.3	Moche scenes of the beating and sacrifice of captives	107
4.4	A Moche scene of combat and capture by supernatural beings	109
5.1	Violent imagery in stone sculpture and ceramics of the Titicaca basin	
	Formative	146
5.2	Terraces below the hillfort of Ayawiri	150
5.3	A drone photo of Ayawiri	152
5.4	The hillfort of Pucarani	156
5.5	A drone image of Pucarani	156
5.6	The western walls at Pucarani	159
6.1	Wari iconography of warriors and prisoners from Conchopata and Pikillacta	169
6.2	Chimú depictions of captives or prisoners	180
6.3	Inca prisoner or war captive (<i>piña</i>), Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615)	195
6.4	The Inca emperor Huayna Capac, armed with a sling and shield, is carried into battle on a litter, Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615)	205
6.5	Captain Inca Maitac attacks a <i>pukara</i> hillfort in the conquest of Condesuyo, Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615)	206
6.6	A colonial wooden <i>keru</i> portrays the Inca battle with the Chankas and the decapitation of Chanka leaders	215
7.1	The warrior, the most important life-stage for men according to Guamán Poma de Ayala (1615)	225

MAPS

2.1	Map of locations in Chapter 2	<i>page</i> 38
3.1	Cultivable farmland in the lower and upper Chicama Valley	93
4.1	Map of Moche sites in the text	97
5.1	Climate proxies indicating a phase of aridity in the terminal MH to early LIP	133
5.2	Map of the Titicaca basin, with sites mentioned in the text	145
5.3	Map of the residential sector of Ayawiri	153
5.4	Map of the central residential sector of Pucarani	157
6.1	Map of Wari-related sites in the text	167
6.2	Map of the north coast with Chimú sites	175
6.3	Fields and canals in the Moche and Chicama valleys	185
6.4	Map of LH sites in the text	191

TABLES

2.1 Andean chronology	<i>page</i> 24
2.2 Cranial trauma and perimortem trauma through time	25
2.3 Regional comparisons in adult cranial trauma rates	27
2.4 Comparing cranial trauma rates across Andean cultures	41
3.1 Relationships with war enemies and modes of war	72

Cambridge University Press
978-1-316-51096-4 — War, Spectacle, and Politics in the Ancient Andes
Elizabeth N. Arkush
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This was supposed to be a book about a big but well-defined topic: warfare in the pre-Columbian Andes. It quickly became apparent that the topic was much bigger than I had thought, and not at all well defined. It led off in unexpected directions, such as land use, the meaning of dead bodies and body parts, gender roles, social understandings of enemies and outsiders, and – something I came to think was central – the value of labor in Andean settings. In Azar Gat’s words (2006: ix), “with war being connected to everything else and everything else being connected to war, explaining war and tracing its development . . . almost amount to a theory and history of everything.” Unlike Gat’s astonishing book, this one does not try to cover everything. It follows a few avenues that seemed to me especially interesting and important, leaving large areas unaddressed while still biting off more than I ever intended to chew.

The book was long in gestation and could not have been written without the support of many people and organizations. The initial research and conceptual foundations were worked out during the 2009–10 academic year while I was supported by a Dumbarton Oaks residential fellowship and a Wenner-Gren Hunt fellowship. A University of Pittsburgh International Studies faculty fellowship in 2014 supported additional research and writing. My fieldwork in the Peruvian Titicaca Basin, supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Foundation, and the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, provided material particularly for Chapter 5. That chapter also draws on insights developed with several colleagues and crewmembers over the years, especially Hugo Ikehara, BrieAnna Langlie, Humberto Tacca, Ryan Smith, and Matt Velasco. Much of my research in Puno has relied on CARI and on the invaluable logistical assistance of Cecilia Chávez Justo. Chapter 2 revises and updates a study originally coauthored with Tiffany Tung, whose collaboration was essential in the original work, and whose overall research has influenced this book in many ways. Several students helped enter new bioarchaeology studies into the database, including Sarah Jolly, Julia Sjøhaldal, Liz Polce, and Allison Manalo. In my treatment of developments on the Peruvian north coast in Chapters 4 and 6, I am especially grateful for the feedback and expertise of Patrick Mullins. My thoughts on premodern warfare in the Andes and beyond, the focus of

Chapter 3, were hammered out in several presentations at UC Santa Barbara, the University of Michigan, and the WESIPS conference in Seville, and owe much to those invitations and the comments from them. These thoughts also benefited from conversations over several years at different moments with Amanda Suarez, Ben Raffield, Jim Roscoe, Timothy Earle, Chip Stanish, and grad students and undergrads in courses on warfare, violence, and politics. My thanks to Ruth Mostern for her comments on early portions of the book and to Ruth and Laura Lovett for keeping me motivated in the late stages of writing. Two anonymous reviewers gave very helpful comments, and I am grateful for the time and thought they put into their reviews. Images or data were graciously shared by Patrick Mullins, John Verano, and several other colleagues. I thank Kwame and Zora for their long patience and good humor. My mother brought her editorial skills and wide-ranging intelligence to bear on the whole manuscript; I owe her for her feedback and for more else than I can say. Finally, I am thankful for the example of my late father's curiosity and his constant habit of questioning how things work.

This book relies extensively on the research of many other scholars and colleagues, and ranges far from the terrain with which I am most familiar. I am indebted to their scholarship and have tried to treat it adequately. All errors and misinterpretations are my own.