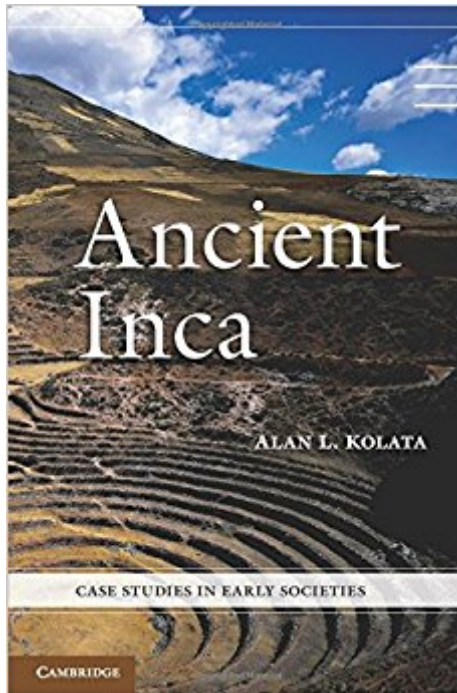


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Ancient Inca (Case Studies In Early Societies)



Synopsis

This book offers a detailed account of Inca history, society, and culture through the lens of archaeology, written documents, and ethnographic accounts of native Andeans. Throughout the Andes, public works ordained by the emperors of the Incas dominate and transform the natural landscape. Cities, temples and fortresses of stone, marvelously engineered roads cut through sheer mountain slopes, massive agricultural terraces, and hydraulic works are emblematic of Inca power. In this book, Alan L. Kolata examines how these awesome material products came into being. What were the cultural institutions that gave impetus to the Incas' imperial ambition? What form of power did the Incas exercise over their conquered provinces, far from the imperial capital of Cuzco? How did they mobilize the staggering labor force that sustained their war machine and built their empire? What kind of perceptions and religious beliefs informed Inca worldview?

Book Information

Series: Case Studies in Early Societies

Paperback: 314 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press (April 8, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521689384

ISBN-13: 978-0521689380

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #903,627 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #89 in [Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Incan](#) #1112 in [Books > History > Americas > South America](#) #2161 in [Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Archaeology](#)

Customer Reviews

This book provides a detailed account of the Inca Empire, describing its history, society, economy, religion, and politics, but most importantly the way it was managed. How did the Inca wield political power? What economic strategies did the Inca pursue in order to create the largest native empire in the Western Hemisphere? The book offers university students, scholars, and the general public a sophisticated new interpretation of Inca power politics and especially the role of religion in shaping an imperial world of great ethnic, social, and cultural diversity.

Alan L. Kolata is Neukom Family Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology and of the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. Since 1978 he has led ongoing interdisciplinary research projects studying human-environment interactions in the Lake Titicaca basin of Bolivia, on the north coast of Peru and most recently in Cambodia. He has received multiple large-scale research grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Inter-American Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, among others. His books include a major two-volume research monograph entitled *Tiwanaku and Its Hinterland: Archaeology and Paleoecology of an Andean Civilization* and *Valley of the Spirits: A Journey into the Lost Realm of the Aymara*. At the University of Chicago, he has served as Chair of the Department of Anthropology, Director of the Center for Latin American Studies and Academic Director of the University of Chicago Center in Paris. His professional awards include the Manuel Vicente Ballivián Foundation Gold Medal for distinguished service to Bolivian science, presented in conjunction with the National Academy of Sciences of Bolivia and the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Government of Bolivia; the Puma de Oro, the maximum distinction conferred by the Bolivian National Institute of Archaeology; and the Simon Bolivar Foundation Distinguished Service Award.

This well researched, professionally written text is up to date (2013) with respect to findings and chock full of detail, including, in some cases, useful photographs and/or schematic drawings. Not at all limited to predictable references to well known historical details, this book attempts with some considerable success to elaborate explanations or theoretical accounts for the considerable strangeness of what we know about Inca society in ancient times. It will not allow readers to content themselves with inserting our modern and Western presuppositions about institutional categories (e.g. church, state, economy, etc.), but recasts these into a model that is simultaneously more integrated (and more complex for us, due to its strangeness, its distance in time, and its distortions created by the imposition of the Spanish conquistadors and Roman Catholic Church. Read it slowly to absorb the richness of its detail. First class!

I follow Alan Kolata's work in South America and have for years. His work on Tiwanaku and Bolivia is unparalleled. Now, he does a capstone review of the Inca which is essential reading for professionals and amateurs (like me). In the last twenty years, so much work has been done in Bolivia, Chile, coastal Peru, pre-Inca and the Inca. It was time for this overview of the material. As always, there are recommendations for how the work must go forward, as well.

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