Pre-Inca History
Overview
Edward P. Lanning, archaeologist, “Peru Before the Incas” 1967

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<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Cultures</th>
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<td><strong>Ceramic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Horizon</td>
<td>1476 CE - 1534 CE</td>
<td>Inca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Intermediate</td>
<td>1000 CE - 1476 CE</td>
<td>Chimú, Chincha, Cajamarca, Piura, Chancay, Chachapoyas, Chinch, Chiribaya, Chucuito, Huaman Huilca, Ilo, Qoto Qoto, Pacacocha, Palli Marca, Piura, Sican, Tairara, Huaylas, Conchucos, Huamachuco, Rucanas, Chanka, Aymara nations, Ayabaya, Bracamoros, Huancabambas, Tallan culture, Huarco, Ichma, Parinacota, Cuntis, Chinchaycochas, Huarochiri, Kheswas, Tarmas, Paltas, Camanas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Horizon</td>
<td>600 CE - 1000 CE</td>
<td>Huari, Tiwanaku, Piura</td>
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<td>Early Intermediate</td>
<td>200 CE - 600 CE</td>
<td>Moche, Nazca, Lima, Tiwanaku, Pichiche, Piura</td>
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<td>Early Horizon</td>
<td>900 BCE - 200 BCE</td>
<td>Chavin, Cupisnique, Late Chiripa, Paracas, Pichiche, Sechura</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Period</td>
<td>1800/1500 BCE - 900 BCE</td>
<td>Early Chiripa, Kotosh, Torí (The Cumbe Mayo aqueduct was built c. 1000 BCE.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preceramic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Period VI</td>
<td>2500 BCE - 1500/1800 BCE</td>
<td>Norte Chico (Caral), Casavilca, Culebras, Viscachani, Huaca Prieta</td>
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<td>Period V</td>
<td>4200 BCE - 2500 BCE</td>
<td>Honda, Lauricocha III, Viscachani,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period IV</td>
<td>6000 BCE - 4200 BCE</td>
<td>Ambo, Canario, Siches, Lauricocha II, Luz, Toquepala II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period III</td>
<td>8000 BCE - 6000 BCE</td>
<td>Arenal, Chivateros II, Lauricocha I, Playa Chira, Puyenca, Toquepala I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period II</td>
<td>9500 BCE - 8000 BCE</td>
<td>Chivateros I, Lauricocha I</td>
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<td>Period I</td>
<td>? BCE - 9500 BCE</td>
<td>Oquendo, Red Zone (central coast)</td>
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- Timeline punctuated by severe droughts and thus food supply
- Connections between different cultures unclear; some connections drawn through “archaeological horizons,” widespread artifact styles
- Cultures often just named for the archaeological sites they were found in
First evidence of occupation

• Hypothesized that humans entered the Americas by crossing the land bridge from Asia (Bering Strait)
• Likely became sedentary around 7000 BCE
First evidence of occupation

- Pikimachay or “flea cave”
- Ayacucho Valley in the central highlands
- Consisted of multiple levels, the lowest called Apaccaicasa
- Radiocarbon dating implied ~22,000 BCE but others argue 12,000 or 17,000 BCE
- Earliest evidence of human occupation in South America; led some to believe that North America was occupied sooner than originally thought
First evidence of settlement

• “Oldest urban center” *originally* thought to be the Sacred City of Caral-Supe, in the Supe Valley 200 miles north of Lima
• Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site
• Site of Norte Chico/Caral civilization
• Inhabited ~2600-2000 BCE, 150 acres
• Complex of temples, amphitheaters, houses, plazas, pyramids
• Believed to be model of urban design for next 4 millenia
• Notably: drug use, no warfare, quipu piece
First evidence of settlement

• More recently found a circular plaza (2008) under the Sechin Bajo complex of ruins
• Made of rock and adobe, 33 to 39 feet across
• Carbon dating ~3500 BCE, older than Great Pyramid of Giza
• Now supposedly the oldest human construction in all of Americas
What happened afterwards?
Norte Chico

- 30 major population centers, including the Sacred City of Caral-Supe
- ‘Norte Chico region’ 150-200 km north of Lima, over 50 rivers carrying Andean snowmelt led to irrigation and likely emergence
- 3000 to 1800 BCE; oldest known civilization in the Americas
- Preceramic culture, no art, but monumental architecture, textiles, irrigation, and supposedly sophisticated government (theocratic with centralized control)
- No warfare or ‘defensive construction’ and remarkably dense sites
- Evidence of invention of human government?
- Anchovies as food source: link to coastal sites?
- Huge academic controversy: Shady VS. Haas & Creamer
Chavin culture ~900 BCE is still commonly presented as the first civilization of the area/earliest central state, despite being predated by the Norte Chico and Sechin (1800-900 BCE; not shown)

Focus on South, but interrelated

Sechin complex wall
For example:

Cupisnique had distinctive clay architecture

Unclear whether Cupisnique and Chavin are one and the same – shared artistic styles and religious symbols

Names sometimes used interchangeably; similar dates
For example:

Cupisnique had unique clay architecture

Unclear whether Cupisnique and Chavin are one and the same – shared artistic styles and religious symbols

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Ancestor of Moche culture?
The hypothesis: Weather and thus food supply controlled duration.

After the first cultures ended around 0 BCE, many localized cultures sprang up everywhere.

Around 1000 AD, Tiwanaku-Wari fragmented into numerous ethnic based-groups.
Chavín

- 900 – 200 BCE
- Chavín de Huantar, UNESCO World Heritage site in the Ancash highlands
- Power based on theocracy
- Religious temple seen as center of the world, built with white granite and black limestone
- Stylized religious icons with feline theme, esp the jaguar
- Drainage system for the temple
- Ceremonies, elite, shamans, use of drugs (hallucinogenic San Pedro cactus)
- First artistic style/horizon in the Andes
Chavín
Paracas

- 600 – 200 BCE
- Wari Kayan necropolis
- Famous for fine textiles in wool and cotton
- Practiced skull deformation
- Vicuña fibers
Paracas
Nazca

- 100 – 800 AD
- Heavily influenced by Paracas
- Ceramics, textiles, geoglyphs (Nazca lines) and underground aqueducts
- Nature gods, drugs, trephination
- Center of Cahuachi
- Trophy heads?
Nazca
Nazca
Pukara

• From Quechua “fortress” (could refer to any fortress)
• Likely foundation of Tiwanaku and Wari
• Northwest of Lake Titicaca
• Ceramics, textiles, stone work
Pukara
Wari/Huari

- 500 - 900 AD
- Coexisted with Tiwanaku
- Administrative centers and architecture distinct from Tiwanaku, but both have similar iconography (curvilinear vs rectilinear) like earlier Pukara culture
- No written records, famous for terracing, road networks later seen with Incas
Tiwanaku

- Possibly Aymara *taypiqala* or “stone in the center”
- 500 – 1000 AD
- “One of the most important precursors” to the Incas
- No written language
- Around 400 AD became predatory state, expanding through politics and religion
- Statues taken from other cultures and brought back
- Absorbed other cultures
- Famous for stone architecture – red sandstone and green andesite from far away
- Now almost all reconstruction (poorer quality)

Gateway of the Sun depicting Viracocha, god of action
Aymara (ethnic group)

- Andes and altiplano regions throughout South America
- Language likely originated in central Peru, spread to Bolivia
- Became subjects of the Incas (Incas originally Aymara-speakers?)
- The Spanish grouped many different ethnic groups under the name Aymara: possible confusion
- Supposedly descendants of Tiwanaku? Wari? Precursors of Incas?
- At least 7 ancient Aymara kingdoms, incl. Lupaqa near Lake Titicaca
- Sun god Inti and earth goddess Pachamama
- Use of coca plant
Aymara (ethnic group)

- Bowler hats from 1920s
- Aymara Chola dress
- Practiced Ayllu (community)
- Current population ~2 million
- Mostly Bolivia, Peru, Chile
- Well known for political activism, incl. 2005 President Evo Morales (coca grower)
- *Kamisaraki* = How are you?
- Unusual concept of time
Major ethnic groups

- Aymara (south)
- Amahuaca
- Bora
- Cocama
- Cocamilla
- Jivarro
- Kofan
- Korubo
- Matses
- Mayoruna

- Muinane
- Ocaina
- Quechua
- Shipibo
- Ticuna
- Tukano
- Urarina
- Witoto
- Yagua
- Yukuna
- Inca

45% of total population in Peru
References