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## The Imperial Languages of the Andes

The Andes mountains, reaching from Ecuador down through Peru and Bolivia and including the northern parts of Chile and Argentina, form a rugged terrain. The peaks rise so abruptly that in places the continental divide is only 50 miles from the Pacific Coast. Walking from one valley to the next can appear a journey of major proportions to one unaccustomed to such imposing grandeur. 'Just over the hill' may involve a climb of some 5000 feet and an equal drop back down again. It is the kind of terrain that one might imagine either uninhabited or one in which each small group would exist isolated from all others, living and dying within the confines of the natal village — much as in old Europe.

However, the case for the Andes is different, very different indeed. The Andes have been so continuously and heavily populated that, when walking over that rugged terrain, it would appear, close-up, that these mountains are sculpted by human hand. Very little remains that has not been, at some time, now or far in the past, reformed by the work of people cultivating or traveling over what would seem to a European impossible terrain. Obviously, Andean people have handled physical obstacles in their own unique fashion, in a style that has prehistoric roots and that has continued through to today.

In the Andes of today, in spite of 400 years of strenuous imposition of the European pattern of oneness — one farmer on one plot of land in one house — people regularly own numerous little fields. Furthermore, these fields are scattered up and down the mountains such that a single farmer has access to many ecological niches. It is also the common pattern to have houses at more than one of these locations. For example, one farmer I know has a house not far from the high areas where she herds cows and some sheep and goats. She also has a house down further where the corn grows. She has a third house in the lower valley where she has her plantations of citrus. And she has a fourth house in the large town where she does most of her trading and where her children study. Marriage typically increases access to ecological niches through joint cultivation (though never joint ownership) of lands belonging to each partner.

This pattern of land tenure means that farmers — virtually every adult in a native community — travel large distances both in miles and in altitude on a

regular basis simply for cultivation. They travel additionally for the trading of goods and to visit kinfolk, real and spiritual, residing, working or studying in other areas. Though one member of a family group may be the principal trader—usually a mature woman—the Andean people all travel a great deal by European standards, from their earliest years. By their own standards this is not so. Anything short of international travel is just ‘staying right here’.

Modern travel, where it is feasible, is via motor roads. These are relatively recent—1925 was the first big push for roads in the highlands. There is still in use an extensive road system consisting of ‘large roads’, i.e. passable by pack animal, and ‘small roads’ passable only on foot (and by, e.g., goats). These roads, largely unmapped even today, date from prehistoric times, and are maintained even today by communal labor. They bear place names (toponyms) at frequent intervals, at landmarks, at places where something memorable happened, at spots believed to hold power, at meeting or trading places. These toponyms are so frequent along the way that one can often specify one’s journey to within ten yards. These toponyms are heavily Jaqi. That is, they have their ultimate origin from a language of the Jaqi family of languages. A large proportion of the toponyms are also Quechua; in some areas (but not all) the Quechua is of Inca origin. These latter are less frequent than one might think, given the fame of the Inca Empire. There are also some toponyms that are today unidentifiable, that presumably came from language families other than Quechua or Jaqi.

Some essential definitions:

**JAQI LANGUAGE FAMILY:** today spoken by around three million people. Three extant languages:

**KAWKI:** 20 speakers, a dying language, in the Yauyos valley southeast of Lima;

**JAQARU:** 3000 speakers, in Tupe, Yauyos, and in migrant groups in several cities;

**AYMARA:** close to 3 million; native language of one-third of the population of Bolivia, spoken by more than half a million in Southern Peru, and by some 20,000 in Northern Chile.

Also Jaqi languages were still spoken in this century in Canta (north of Lima) and in Huarochiri (between Canta and Yauyos).

**QUECHUA LANGUAGE FAMILY:** today spoken by upwards of 20 million people in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina. At least 6 different languages. Best known is the **CUZCO VARIETY**, used by the Incas as a conquest language.

The toponymic situation in the Andes is more complicated than outlined above. Many places have more than one name—an imposed conquest name

and a local name (which may in its turn have been an earlier conquest imposition—but that we cannot always reconstruct). For example, one town near Tupe where Jaqaru is spoken is called, today, Catahuasi. This is obviously a Quechua term although the local people believe it to be Spanish. Jaqaru speakers call the town Watxuqu. Catahuasi may have been imposed by the Inca, or more likely, by a Quechua speaking guide for Spanish conquerors surveying their new territory. Thus, a toponym may itself carry the history of the meeting of two conquerors in an area which was not, in some senses, ever completely conquered, even today.

The Andean situation is then, that, after 400 years of strenuous attempts by outsiders to impose the European pattern of staidness for farmers on the farmers of the Andes, the people are far from it. They travel, often and far, for cultivation, for trade, and to maintain personal links.

These monumental human efforts to render Andean geography manageable do not reduce the Andes to the equivalent of a flat plain. It is not easy to maintain close contacts with rapidity across long distances—horizontal and vertical. In fact it is extremely difficult even today; the motor roads do not improve matters that much. As we look back over the historical and prehistorical periods, what we do see is a tension between the pull to unify and the pull to diversify. These take alternate ascendancy without the other ever fully losing force. Thus we have an alternation between widespread unifying ‘empires’ or expansions, and their dissolution into local control and separatist cultural development. The localist developments are so numerous and so complex that there is no way we could even list them. For example, each stream valley up and down the coast has its own history. At the time of the conquest, chroniclers would often simply state that each group had its own language. We can guess that each highland valley had its own individual history—each one investigated so far has shown such, although less has been done in the highlands than on the coast. We can speak, however, of the pan-Andean periods and of the localist periods.

The periods we will look at are:

- I. Chavin pan-Andean
  - A. localist—Puquina, Jaqi, Chinchay developments
- II. Tiwanaku pan-Andean
  - B. localist—Chinchay, Mochica, Puquina developments
- III. Inca pan-Andean
  - C. localist—Quechua, Spanish, Aymara developments
- IV. Spanish (republic) pan-Andean

Looking back as far as we can with current knowledge, the first pan-Andean period appears to be the Chavin, starting around 900 B.C. with its center at

Chavin de Huantar in the North Central Highlands with expansion most intensively in the direction of the North Coast, but establishing trading patterns northward to connect with Central America and southward toward the area that became Jaqi. It is indeed possible that many of the unknown toponyms came from the language(s) used in this first (as far as we know) expansionist Andean culture. The name 'Chavin' itself is a common toponym throughout the Andes—one must always specify *which* Chavin (e.g. Kawki is spoken in Chavin de Yauyos). However, there are not, to our knowledge, any remaining languages from this expansion, although it is possible that the Mochica/Chimu of the later North Coast cultures were direct descendants (linguistically/culturally speaking) of this first expansion. The language(s) these people spoke is (are) also now extinct, leaving only a few word lists, surnames, and toponyms. If the Chimu/Mochica of the northern Peruvian Coast did indeed speak languages carried there during the Chavin expansion, then this would be also an early example of language imposition by a dominant group. This is by no means certain; nor can it be ascertained by the data at our command today. More certain is that the last group to occupy the area, with the center at Chan-Chan near Trujillo did indeed impose themselves linguistically and otherwise, on local populations, leaving behind the many surnames and toponyms typical of the north Coast of Peru today (surnames like Llontop and Neciosup).

Following the Chavin expansion there was a long period of local developments, for a period of several hundred years. Three of these local developments will concern us here: Paracas/Nazca, Chinchu, and Tiwanaku.

On the South Coast there was the development of the Paracas culture on the coast itself, which we know through its textiles primarily, and later, further inland, of the Nazca, a resurgence of those we project to be the descendants of the Paracas. These people were, by all we can reconstruct, Jaqi speakers, moving further and further inland, without losing all contact with the coast. Even today there are networks of the road system I described earlier leading from modern Jaqi speaking areas into Nazca used by contemporary peoples for herding as well as other purposes. In this early expansion of the Jaqi we may hypothesize that smaller local languages were replaced as they went. This is most evident in the extreme diversity found in the Yauyos valley even today, where obviously a number of original languages were once spoken, but are now unrecoverable. It may, indeed, be the case that Jaqaru and Kawki, as well as the other Jaqi languages spoken in this area before the Inca and Spanish intrusions, moved into the valley at the time of the Nazca pre-Wari Jaqi expansion.

Also on the coast, but a bit further to the north, in the area known as South Central Coast, was a group known as the Chinchu who were building themselves a flourishing naval trading industry, mainly towards the north,

particularly up into Ecuador. They were speakers of what came to be the mother tongue of all the modern Quechuas. To them we will return a bit later in more detail. What is important to note is that they were already by this time establishing a Chinchu (Quechua) speaking outpost in Ecuador.

Meanwhile, another, quite different group, was building a complex civilization on the southern shores of Lake Titicaca—the people who built Tiwanaku. These people developed widely appreciated trade goods and a distinctive style that gave renown to their name even in our day. These people were most probably Puquina speakers.

Following this very long period of localist development the also long and extensive expansion of the Jaqi speakers began—the Wari/Tiwanaku horizon, which lasted for some 400 years at least. Today there are only three of the Jaqi languages left, but at one time Jaqi was spoken the length and breadth of the Andes, if not as a first language then as a second, or trade language. The center for the Jaqi expansion was Wari, near modern Ayacucho, but by the time that capital was built the Jaqi people already had heavy contacts with many other areas. In particular they had apparently established intense trading relations with the Puquina of Tiwanaku, and with the coastal Chinchu, spreading their goods from one end to the other, building roads—and giving them Jaqi toponyms—building trading centers, and, as a practical matter (we assume), imposing the necessity of learning Jaqi. Even so famous an Inca outpost as Cajamarca, for example, bears a Jaqi place name: q'aja marka 'town in the valley'. One result of this expansion was that in the area around Ayacucho and to the south and coastward, the local languages, of which we now have only the faintest traces, largely disappeared, so that the area inland back of what is today Lima and south around what is today Cuzco became dotted with Jaqi speaking populations, eventually becoming, in some cases, different Jaqi languages. A second result was massive borrowing from Jaqi into the other languages which did not disappear, for example into the language spoken by the Chinchu—the ancestor of modern Quechua. Some of the words borrowed at that time from Jaqi are

Quechua:	chunka	cf. Jaqaru	exunhka	'10'
	pachak		paxaka	'100'
	qucha		quexa	'lake'

This period of Jaqi expansion lasted for nearly 500 years before it eventually gave way to the localist and separatist tendencies always present in the Andes. But we have here, easily documented, a case of widespread language imposition and influence, largely, apparently, through trade. That is, the motivation for giving up one's own language would appear to have been primarily cultural and economic, including access to and the enjoyment of the variety that goes with the multiplicity of ecological niches on the Andean

vertical scale. Some evidence does indicate that trade was at times imposed in a military fashion, so that not all of the expansion can be assumed to have been peaceful. Some of the languages may have disappeared because the population did, replaced by the conquering forces.

The period of localist development that followed the Jaqi expansion lasted some 400 years. During this period there were, again, three that merit our attention here, remembering always that the actual number was at least in the hundreds.

First, the Chincha continued expanding and intensifying their naval power, such that they became an important power to be reckoned with and their language became an important one not only in the South Central Coast and in the North Central Highlands, but also in Ecuador. The trade with Ecuador appears to have been particularly vigorous; indeed they apparently transhipped goods even during the Wari period up north into Central America, and continued even more so during the localist period which followed. We can presume that some local languages were displaced in the process. It is probable that some of the descendants of these earlier settlers from the South Central Peruvian Coast interacted with and became part of the wide-traveling traders of Otavalo.

On the Northern Coast the Chimu were also developing intensely their own rather locally contained expansion that took in most of the North Coast. They also traded, by sea, with the Chinchay group further south.

The Puquina, meanwhile, having suffered numerous reverses in their original environment, among which were apparently mud slides, began a northern trek for more favorable territory, crossing Lake Titicaca (preserved in the tale of Mama Oclla and Manco Capac) and eventually settling in the Cuzco valley.

This Puquina group, then, began their expansion at the end of this localist period, in time (according to their accounts) for there to be fourteen Incas—ruling emperors—before the arrival of the Spanish.

The situation, then, at the dawn of the Puquina/Inca expansion is: a flourishing trade with skillful navigators using advanced large reed boats plying their trade and culture up and down the coast, using Chinchay as the trading language, in contact with at least one other large flourishing culture (Chimu) and numerous smaller ones. These navigators have also invaded the interior of the northern Andes establishing their language in the area over so long a period that it has begun to develop local varieties. There were no other large unified competitors, but only the remnants of the earlier Jaqi all around them.

If we pause for a moment, at the dawn of what became the Inca empire, we can see that up to this time there has been no period of staidness for the Andean population. They were ever a mobile people, traveling, even in times

of the most localistic and individualistic tendencies, interacting with others, imposing themselves on others, by trade primarily, but also by force (weapons are among the artifacts) and by religions (the large ceremonial centers).

The Puquina then, began to expand. The specific royal family of the specific group of Puquina speakers which undertook this empire building were the Inca. There remained other groups of Puquina speakers until after the conquest that were known as 'poor relations' of the royal family. Unlike the Jaqi, who used their own language in expansion, the Inca immediately ran into the existence of a widely known trade language that was also the native language of many of the populated areas into which they were expanding. This *lingua franca* was the remnant of the formerly dominant Jaqi, now in its version as proto-Aymara. Faced with this, the Inca elected to keep their own language for internal court purposes, and take advantage of the already existing language for conquest purposes (not unlike the Vandals in Spain who accepted the Latin varieties then in use by the populace, or the Normans in England). During the reign of some nine of the Incas (if the list can be considered historical) the language of conquest was Jaqi, i.e., proto-Aymara, which meant that Cuzco was, in reality, a bilingual city; certainly all of the ruling Incas themselves became fluent in the tongue. Thus the earlier Incas spread Jaqi further than the Wari themselves.

During the reign of the grandfather of Huayna Capac, the Inca to die of smallpox before ever setting eyes on a Spaniard, the expansion began to gather steam and began rolling across the peaks and valleys under the direction of this famed Pachacutic. It rather rapidly bumped into the enormous power of the Chincha on the coast with their enormous sea power and with a most powerful oracle located in Pachacamac, near modern Lima. Clash would appear inevitable, but the Inca, with what has come to be recognized as a sheer genius for avoiding conflict in conquering, took another tack. The Inca's son Tupac Inca Yupanqui married a woman of Chincha, said to be much beloved, and the mother of Huayna Capac. It was under the command of Tupac Inca Yupanqui that the empire reached its great expansion. Sometime during the reign of Pachacutic and/or Tupac Inca Yupanqui, but less than 100 years before the Spanish, the official conquest language was switched to the language of the Chincha. Chincha was, after all, more powerful than the Jaqi. They thus joined forces with the Chincha as the 'conquered' becoming subjects of the Inca empire, but enjoying a privileged status.

Thus it became the task of the bureaucrats in Cuzco to learn another language. For the space of at least one generation, the city was, in reality, trilingual. In fact, it remained so even at the arrival of the Spaniards, although the Jaqi, by then being less useful than the new 'general language', was

dropping out. Because the entire court already spoke Jaqi, it is not surprising to discover that the Cuzco version of Chinchay became heavily influenced by the first imperial language, to the extent of borrowing even some phonological features. The famous glottalization of Cuzco Quechua, for example, is an importation from this period. There was also a very large second wave of borrowings into Imperial Quechua from Jaqi as proto-Aymara, such as

Quechua:	ʃamp'atu	cf. Aymara	ʃamp'atu	'frog'
	k'i'itu		k'i'it'u	'scrape e.g. wood'
	suti		suti	'name'

During this period and into the Spanish conquest period, the Cuzco variety was considered inferior to the Chinchay variety, a fact often commented on in the early documents, especially since a good many of the interpreters came from the Ecuadorian area.

The Inca expansion wiped out many local languages, but not as an absolute policy. If there was resistance, then the residents were scattered and others brought in (the mitimaes) which resulted in loss of one language and the introduction of some variety of the 'general language' (Quechua) which policy explains some apparent anomalies in language distribution today. Some localities decided it was in their best interest to switch, for whatever reason. Huarochiri appears to have been one such place. They had apparently almost completed the switch from Jaqi to Quechua when the Spaniards arrived, at which point they switched to Spanish. However, even into the early part of this century natives of the area have reported older people still speaking Jaqi. I have not been able to document this personally.

Another policy of the Incas was to send the children of community leaders to Cuzco for a four-year higher education program, of which one year was devoted to language learning. This was high incentive (not unlike our bringing foreigners to the US for graduate training) for spreading Quechua when they returned as leaders themselves.

The accounts we have given so far of imposition have been relatively speaking rather benign, leaving intact most local languages at least initially, even if the community leaders were required to become bilingual. Not all takeovers were so peaceful. The flourishing Chimú on the North Coast were bloodily subdued, leaving only remnants of the language to disappear when the Spanish arrived not too many years later.

The process of spreading use of the 'general language' was far from complete at the arrival of the Spaniards. Population decrease was rapid, from plagues, abuse, and massacre. From estimates as high as 30 million, the population dropped within 25 years to only one million. That drop is difficult even to imagine—reading the account of visits by colonial officials to the towns, seeing the numbers spelling out the populations drops, it still seems

stunningly impossible. Twenty five years after Pizarro first met Atahualpa Inca less than one of 25 individuals in the Andes still survived. Many of the local languages simply died out with all speakers. Others were extinguished in more brutal ways. One of the victims was Chinchay itself, spoken too close to the Spanish capital of Lima. Some documents, however, have been preserved: all early writings were in this more prestigious variety. Its demise was rapid enough, however, and the prestige of the city of Cuzco was great enough, that the Spanish conquerors took the Cuzco variety to be the one and only language, the 'pure', 'true' Quechua. Another victim was Puquina, largely because the royal family was almost entirely killed, and the poor relations to the south died off with the plagues or eventually melted into the southward moving Aymara speaking groups.

The Spaniards then, like the Incas with Jaqi before them, began a far more thorough implantation of what is today known as Cuzco Quechua, or simply Quechua, than had been ever accomplished by the Incas. Cuzco, which at the moment of conquest was trilingual, became bilingual, only Quechua tying the two periods together. The priests proselytized in Quechua. Landholders, in spite of orders to the contrary, feared knowledge of Spanish on the part of the serfs and thus learned Quechua themselves—in some cases thus obligating people who spoke other languages to abandon these in favor of Quechua. Spanish was a privileged language of the ruling class. One of the results of this Spanish-inspired Quechua expansion was another wave of borrowing, but this time from Quechua into Aymara, for example:

Aymara:	ancha	cf. Quechua	ancha	'much'
	qincha		qincha	'fence'

Thus only a few of the Andean population came to learn Spanish. Rather, there began another period of localist development, in which the imposed Inca Conquest Language followed individual paths to great dialect diversity, separating ever further the original varieties and those based on the Jaqi-influenced Cuzco variety. Aymara, during this period, was pushed ever further away from the Cuzco area, south into the area it occupies today, developing as the second major language of the Andes.

The result, as of today, is that, except for a few Jaqi languages and Chipaya in southern Bolivia, *all* other languages have been erased from the Andean highlands.

Independence, the republican period, and the construction of east/west motor roads have brought the beginnings of a new expansionist period, Spanish in language, but a Spanish born of the intense interaction between conquered and conqueror. This Spanish has adopted, as did the conquering Quechua before it, many of the elements from the earlier conquering

Jaqi. We may never know what elements Jaqi adopted from those it overtook. The current rapid expansion of Spanish follows the earlier patterns of the expansions of Jaqi and Quechua: there is some imposition by force (not very successful), but far more so by the motives of trade, culture, variety, schooling, work, education. Thus loss of local languages continues and/or bilingualism becomes again the norm.

Language and culture are intricately tied together, but neither is immutable. Both change; both carry on through the change elements from the previous identity. The history of the Andes, over three thousand years, is at once the history of continuity and of disruption. And the search for the ideal balance between unity and diversity continues.

## Sources

Most of the pre-historical outline presented in this paper is the result of my own work in proto-Jaqi reconstruction and comparisons with Quechua (with which I worked for two years in the Urubamba valley and at Cornell) (Hardman 1966, 1975, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1979, 1981, forthcoming). The other primary source is the work of Alfredo Torero, both published (1964, 1972, 1974) and that which he has shared with me in many personal conversations over some 20 years of friendship. Also, my student Lawrence Carpenter has been building on this base, and has added some important refinements to the Ecuadorian phase of the Chinchay expansion (in preparation). Another student, building on the published materials cited above, has called to my attention some references in the chronicles (Mannheim 1981). It would be impossible to cite all of the chronicles, works written by persons present during the conquest and early colonial years, on which I draw to supplement and flesh out the work done in reconstruction. Obviously Garcilaso de la Vega, son of a member of the royal Inca family and a Spanish conqueror (1615/1929) is an important source, but only one. A good overview of the chronicles is Valcarcel (1964). I also wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the work of Collins (1981) and Painter (1981) in researching colonial documents in southern Peru and in their confirmations of the contemporary existence of prehistoric cultural patterns, as reported in their dissertations and in forthcoming publications.

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