

Metropolitan Museum of Art

HE FERTILE HIGHLAND basins and

coastal valleys of the central Andes became the seedbeds of

South America's greatest pre-Columbia

civilizations. The highly developed Incas

20,000-year presence on the continent.

elsewhere - from the river valleys of the

Amazon basin to caves as far south as

Tierra del Fuego. But none of these was

high culture. What was lacking was the

fertile soil and population density

associated with a long agricultural

tradition. In the Andes such a tradition

permitted the development of political

years to develop. From the distance of

organization, art, and great public works

Even in the central Andes, however, the

most renowned cultures took thousands of

part of a progression leading to a sustained

Traces of community life exist

represented the culmination of humanity's

# ARCHAEOLOGYOF SOUTH AMERICA

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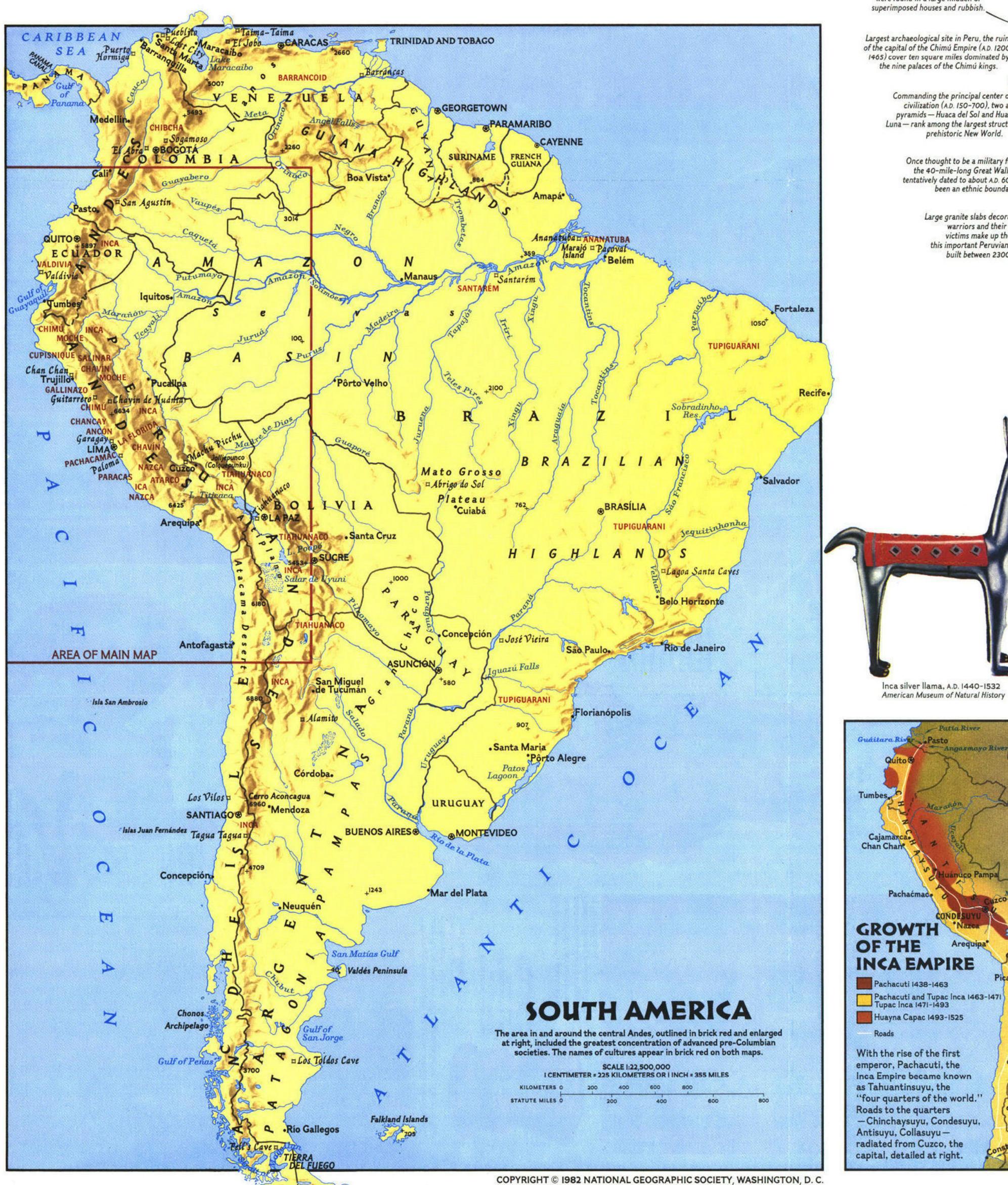
history, this spine of a continent resembles a dark screen on which pinpoints of light blink on and off, briefly illuminating cultural achievements in the scattered valleys and plateaus. These flashes reveal such imposing works of architecture as stone temples in the highlands and adobe pyramids along the coast.

Then, about 3,500 years ago, the light became more constant. Expanding communities began making more and more contact with each other, chiefly through trade and the growth of cults. Archaeologists use the term "florescence" for these periods of rapid cultural development. One remarkable example sprang from the highlands of northern Peru at Chavín de Huántar From there spread a shamanistic cult accompanied by advances in textiles, architecture, and pottery. A string of sites

along the Peruvian coast represents even earlier examples. At Huaca de los Reyes, 300 miles north of Lima, mud-plaster friezes bear human heads with feline fangs, perhaps precursors of the jaquar cult centered at Chavín de Huántar.

The Andean cultural area exhibits the most impressive works of collective labor: huge irrigation systems that connected valleys; "highways of the sun" that linked widespread settlements; and the city of Cuzco, capital of the Inca Empire.

The study and documentation of pre-Columbian sites continues across the continent. It will take time, for archaeology is a much younger enterprise than plunder. Only in the past hundred years has the knowledge inherent in a flint tool or the ashes of an ancient fire motivated the kind of intensive search once reserved for precious metals and gems.



Irrigation ditches and terracing indicate a densely populated agricultural settlement in the San Agustín district, A.D. 1-500, where earthen mounds cover stone chambers emperor, Tupac Inca (1471-1493). rna Capac (1493-1525), who, according to some sources, was born there. Santa María de Nanay Peruvian highlands was established here about 1300 B.C. Its distinctive art style was later Isla Lobos de Tierra • Cruzeiro do Sul The earliest known masterpieces of Peruvian art, twined textiles nearly 5,000 years old, were found in a large midden of superimposed houses and rubbish. Largest archaeological site in Peru, the ruins of the capital of the Chimú Empire (A.D. 1200-1465) cover ten square miles dominated by the nine palaces of the Chimú kings. Commanding the principal center of Moche ite of a principal ceremonial center founded about Bre civilization (A.D. 150-700), two adobe pyramids — Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la 1000 B.C., with a main temple bearing elaborate una — rank among the largest structures of the stone sculptures depicting felines, humanlike beings prehistoric New World. with feline features, serpents, and birds of prey.

\_\_\_\_ Inca walls still intact

PUMA-SHAPED CUZCO

ROSSROADS of the Inca world, Cuzco

religious authority. This power is reflected in the city's design in the shape of a puma, with the

corresponding to the creature's head. At the

heart lie Haucaypata and Cusipata, together

ceremonies, including human sacrifices, were

performed. The Spanish, who tore down and

graves, and residences were not discovered

-Maule River

rebuilt much of Cuzco, never found the citadel

of Machu Picchu (right), where imposing temples

known as the Great Plaza, where sacred

was the seat of both secular and

monumental fortress of Sacsahuaman



# 1000 -San Pedro de Atacama

### THE PROGRESSION OF CULTURES IN POTTERY

archaeological search for links in the growth and diffusion of cultures. Certain recurrent themes may

SCALE 1:5,540,000
I CENTIMETER = 55 KILOMETERS OR I INCH = 87.5 MILES

for the secondary names

Kuntur Wasi (La Copa) and

their phoneticized

ndicate the persistence of an artistic tradition even more ancient than local knowledge of pottery itself For example, feline motifs in the Vicus and Lima styles (4, 9, at left) seem prefigured by a gourd (1) carved as much as 3,000 years earlier.

The widespread appearance of mythological beasts and men on pottery illustrates diffusion of shamanistic cults that drew scattered societies into a common

religious bond. The deer head of a Moche shaman (10) depicts swiftness in eluding demons. A pot from the same culture but a different site (II) bears a macabre dance scene below an underworld ceremony. With the growth of Andean societies, many pieces were mass produced under the direction of the state,

such as jars for storing beer (19). The rich mythological

I Huaca Prieta carved gourd, 3500-2300 B.C.; Private collection, J. Bird 2 Ancón painted jar, 1600-1500 B.C., Private collection, R. M. Mendieta 3 Cupisnique incised bottle, 1500-600 B.C.; Peabody Museum, Harvard University 4 Vicus puma, 900 B.C.-A.D. 550; Banco Popular del Perú 5 House-shaped Salinar bottle, 600-150 B.C.; Peabody Museum

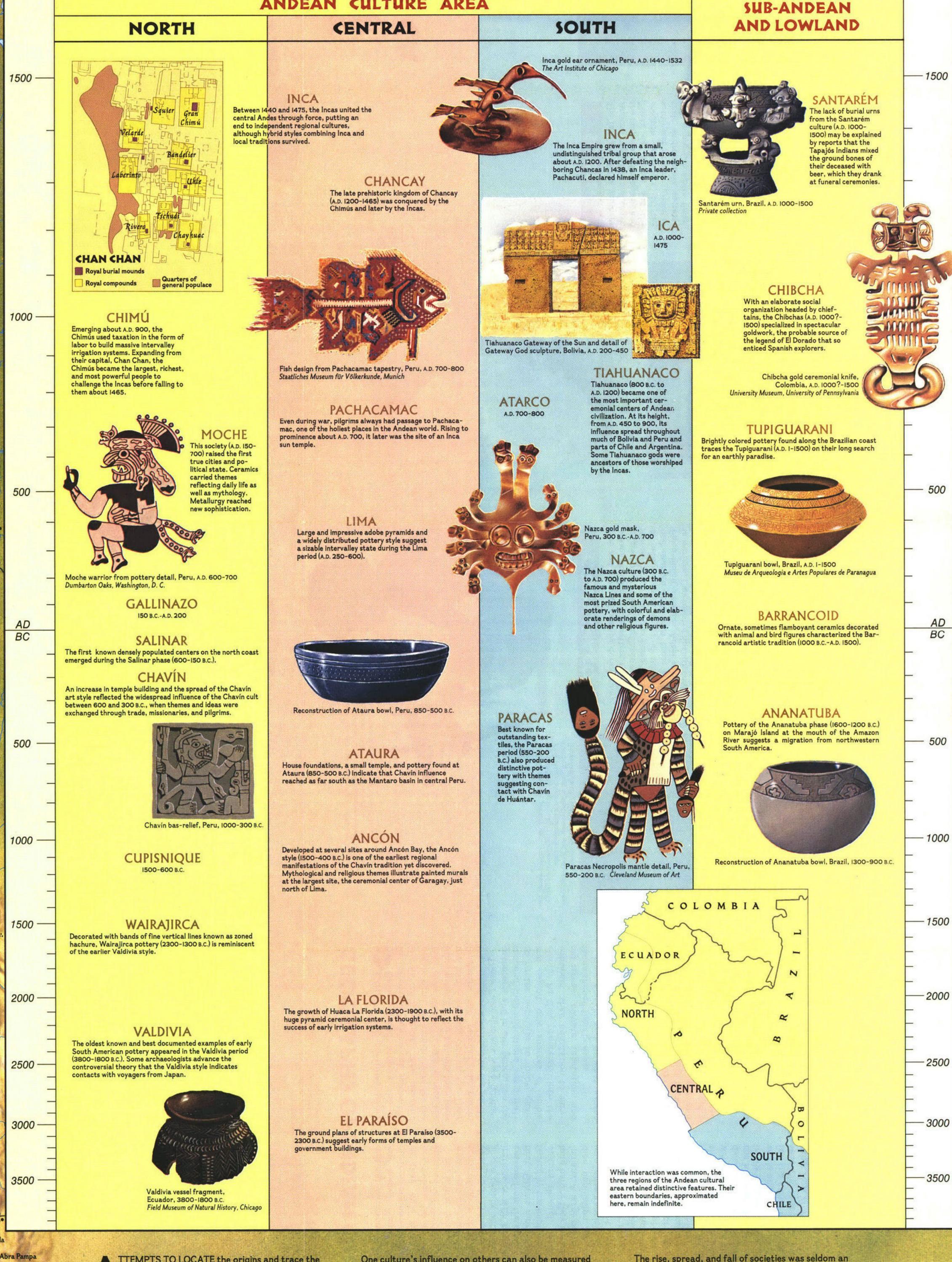
6 Paracas Cavernas polychrome bottle, 550-300 B.C.; Private collection, N. Cummings
7 Nazca jar, 300 B.C.-A.D. 700; Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D. C.
8 Recuay jar, A.D. 200-600; Private collection
9 Lima cat vessel, A.D. 250-600; Peabody Museum
10 Moche deer-man effigy, A.D. 300-400; Private collection, R. L. Hoyle 11 Moche fantasy death scene in pottery, A.D. 400-600; Peabody Museum

12 Moche portrait pot, A.D. 400-600; Smithsonian Institution 13 Tiahuanaco beaker, A.D. 450-850; Dumbarton Oaks 14 Pachacamac vessel with fish design, A.D. 700-800; Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin
15 Chimú black-ware bottle, A.D. 900-1465; Private collection 16 Chancay figure, A.D. 1200-1465; Smithsonian Institution

17 Ica polychrome jar, A.D. 1000-1475; Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin
18 Chancay-Inca vessel with whistle, A.D. 1465-1532; Metropolitan Museum of Art
19 Inca jar, A.D. 1440-1532; University Museum, University of Pennsylvania to which Spanish influences would later be melded (20). 20 Spanish-influenced Inca beaker, after A.D. 1532; Smithsonian Institution

## THE GROWTH OF SOUTH AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

ANDEAN CULTURE AREA



A TTEMPTS TO LOCATE the origins and trace the development of pre-Columbian cultures in South America contend with a central difficulty; none had a written language or calendar. Although early European chroniclers recorded useful oral histories, archaeologists reconstruct the past by inferences drawn from patient excavation, examination, and comparison. Dates for artifacts on this map were determined chiefly

by the radiocarbon method and reflect recent corrections.

One culture's influence on others can also be measured by such means as tracing styles of pottery, statuary, and weaving.

For convenient comparison, the chronology above divides the continent into four regions, three of them occupying the area in and around modern Peru. Illustrations show significant cultural remnants, from a single piece of Valdivia pottery to the plan of Chan Chan, a city that once numbered as many as 50,000 people.

The rise, spread, and fall of societies was seldom an even, measured process, and the greatest of them was the most abrupt. The Incas were a small, unremarkable group until their explosion across Peru and beyond as the Inca Empire. Their end came at the hands of Francisco Pizarro and his conquistadores, and the Inca Empire was effectively destroyed with the capture of Emperor Atahuallpa and the slaughter of his army. The chronology comes to a close on Saturday, November 16, 1532, just at sunset.

