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Denise Y. Arnold, Christine Ann Hastorf. *Heads of State: Icons, Power, and Politics in the Ancient and Modern Andes.* Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2008. 293 pp. $65.00 (library), ISBN 978-1-59874-170-4; $34.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-59874-171-1.

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A Play on Words

The joke's on me–or so I thought as I read this book, fully expecting learned treatises on Andean leaders, only to find it focused on the tantalizing topic of human heads–of kin as well as enemies–and their material and symbolic importance. But the book is not totally divorced from leadership issues. The aim of the authors, Denise Y. Arnold and Christine A. Hastorf, is to analyze how state power might have been created, organized, consolidated, and maintained by different forms of leadership and in distinct political formations. To this end, they write on the rise of early polities; the means of control of population; and the contested levels of dispersed power to propose alternative models for interpreting the data.

Heads, they contend, are symbols of political power and identity. They are reciprocally associated with death and violence, on the one hand, and fertility and regeneration, on the other. More particularly, the book covers the exchange of body parts, captives, slaves, and souls; the powers of regeneration in a sacrificial context; the use and meaning of drinking vessels made from skulls; the hierarchical and heterarchical organization of groups; and the archaeological evidence of head procurement and curation from the north-central Andes to Lake Titicaca.

The work has many merits. The discussion of heterarchy certainly complements recent scholarship on the Inca empire as a solar cult that implies less centralization than the chroniclers would have readers believe and room for negotiation between the central authorities and subordinate group leadership. Their argument as to the importance of heads in centripetal (an inward-looking model where vertical perpetuation of identities in kin-like systems with closed cycles of transmission between the ancestral dead and the living) versus centrifugal (an expansive system that rests on acquisition and appropriation of alien forces from outside the group) polities proved enlightening, especially when posing that the former antedated the latter. Thoughts on the leaders as group spokesmen and their sometimes direct association with the ancestors also support historical findings from the Spanish colonial era.

The weakness of the book (from a historian's point of view) is the juxtaposition of archaeological, precolonial findings with contemporary ethnography. There is a huge time gap here which leads everywhere to contradictions and anachronisms–most notably in regard to the control of people *vis-à-vis* land. For example, despite recognizing the "relational" and kinship-related autodefinition of groups, the authors define *ayllu* as a population that believed it descended from a common ancestor and had a common territory. According to multiple historical studies, the *ayllu* did not have a common, recognized, contiguous, and bounded territory until after the colonial *reducciones* of the 1560s and 1570s and, in some areas (like Amazonia) much later. Furthermore, there appears to have been little or no land scarcity (with a possible exception in the vicinity of the ceremonial center of Cuzco) in the immediate pre-Hispanic era. Heads do not necessarily watch over and protect territorial domain; instead, heads might have watched over the population. This is suggested by linguistic evidence that shows that the word *marka* (as well as *llacta*) as used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not translate as "political and administrative domain" in the territorial sense until the middle of the nineteenth century. Before then, the word referred to a jurisdiction over people–a mobile people who often lived dispersed over great distances in many ecological niches that may have extended from the Pacific coast, into the highlands, and down the eastern flanks of the Andes. Thus, although there is no problem referring to territory during the last decades of the sixteenth century in some high-contact areas, in others it is the imposition of a Western viewpoint that distorts

indigenous understandings. Linked to this is the use of the word "wealth," again, from the European perspective. People under Inca sway defined wealth as people, not lands, and a leader's status positively correlated to the loyalty of increasing numbers of people. Thus, the authors' focus on territory seriously undermines their interpretation. Lastly, a very minor, but irksome item is the incomplete bibliography. I could find no reference to Monica Barnes's 1993, very relevant article on Cuzco as a feline (*Revista Andina* 11, no. 1: 79-102), nor could I find the reference to the 1646 (and very intriguing-sounding) composition of lands by José de la Vega Alvarado. I have read many *composiciones de tierras*, but none in which "heads looking outward toward neighboring territories were placed at key boundary markers" (p. 132) even as late as the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite these anachronisms and omissions, scholars will find the book a convenient and no doubt provocative source on heads as used for the purposes of the state.

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