

El Dorado

A vibrant, golden city of El Dorado built on a cliffside, with a river in the foreground and a bright sun in the sky. The city features ornate, tiered structures and is surrounded by lush greenery. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

myth

or

reality

The earliest reference to the name *El Dorado* was in 1535 or 1536, before Spanish contact with the Muisca people

Between 1531 and 1538, the German conquistadors Nikolaus Federmann and Georg von Speyer searched the Colombian plateaus, the Orinoco Basin and Venezuelan lowlands for El Dorado

The Orinoco flows for more than 2,415 km , partly along the Colombia-Venezuela border, to the Atlantic Ocean.
The mouth of the river was sighted by Columbus in 1498 and alluvial gold deposits were present in the basin.



Minerals in the river deposits include manganese, nickel, vanadium, bauxite, and chrome. There also are deposits of gold and diamonds.

**The lust for gold spans all eras, races, and nationalities.
Through the centuries, this passion gave rise to the
enduring tale of a city of gold.
In the 16th and 17th centuries, Europeans believed that
somewhere in the New World there was a place of
immense wealth known as El Dorado.
Their searches for this treasure wasted countless lives.**

**When Spanish explorers reached South America
in the early 16th century,
they heard stories about a tribe of natives
high in the Andes mountains,
in what is now Colombia, that had much gold**

**The Spaniards started calling this golden city
El Dorado, "the gilded one."**

The initial story recounted how king Muisca of Colombia, used to cover himself with gold dust and then rinse it in Lake Guatavita. After nearly half a century of these baths gold dust was believed to carpet the lake's floor

Incredibly, a gold raft depicting a scene exactly like that described by Juan Rodriguez Freyle, was found in 1969 by three villagers in a small cave in the hills just to the south of Bogota.

This scene of a man covered in gold going out into a sacred lake, such as Lake Guatavita, is believed to be the real story of El Dorado.

The Spaniards didn't find El Dorado, but they did find Lake Guatavita and tried to drain it in 1545.



A crater lake 3,100 meters above sea level that served as a sacred site



**The lake is famous for the Legend of El Dorado,
which refers to the treasures held deep inside the waters of the lake.**

Spaniards had also been exploring the western coast of South America for many years: where there were reports of a powerful, wealthy Empire high in the frosty Andes Mountains.

When they moved inland to the town of Cajamarca in November of 1532. They were fortunate: Atahualpa, Emperor of the Incas was there.



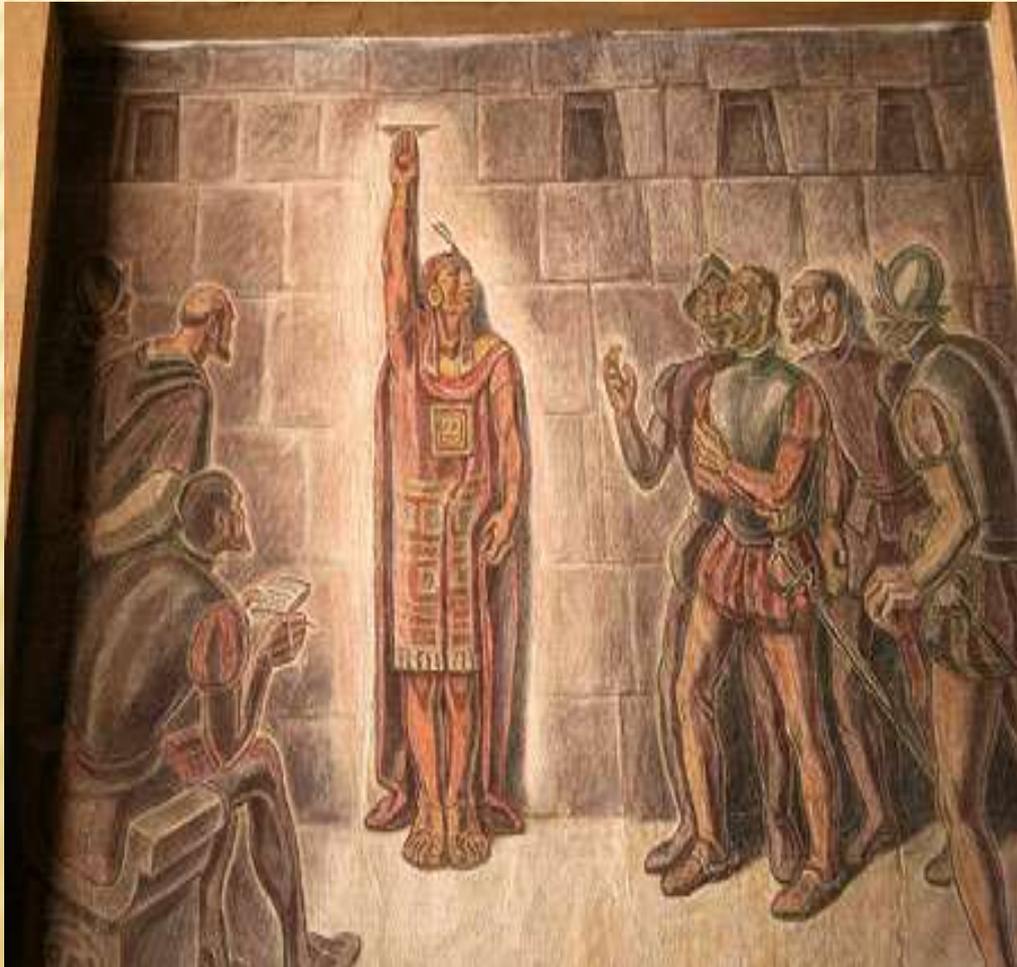
Spanish conquistadors under Francisco Pizarro treacherously attacked and captured Atahualpa the young Inca Emperor who offered to collect for his captors a ransom in gold, to secure his release

After Atahualpa's detention, the conquistadors collected his gold ransom and society was abuzz with this story, the myth then enticed Europeans to search Colombia, Venezuela, parts of Guyana, Peru and Brazil but by the late 19th century the existence of El Dorado was dismissed as a myth.

Atahualpa was made to understand that he would be freed if he paid enough.

It didn't take long for the Inca to realize that the Spanish only cared for gold and silver.

The amount of ransom in gold treasure was staggering. The Spanish, nervous about reports of Inca generals in the area, executed Atahualpa anyway

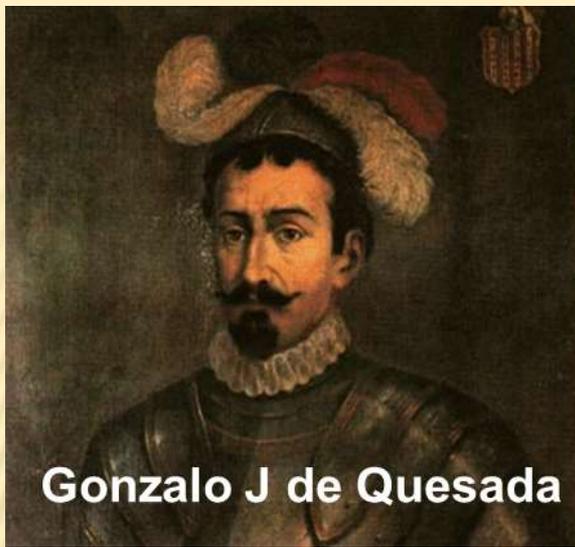


He offered to fill a room with gold and then twice over with silver. The room was 22 feet long by 17 feet wide (6.7 meters by 5.17 meters) and the Emperor offered to fill it to a height of about 8 feet (2.45m).

Colombia, Venezuela and the Caribbean Islands constituted the other sites for the many explorations to uncover the famous lost city

Caribbean Sea





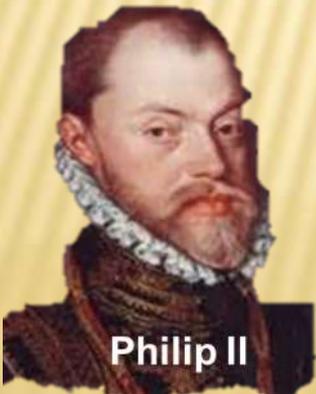
Gonzalo J de Quesada

Quesada the Conquistador wanted to become the Third Marquis of New Granada and believed discovering the lost city would confer him the glory. His expedition lasted 3 years and cost him his life

His estates passed to his niece and through her to Antonio Berrio her husband, who by a clause in the Will was required to continue the search. Berrio started three separate expeditions, descending the Orinoco to its mouth until he reached Trinidad



Antonio Berrio



Philip II

Berrio's reports of failure were soon lost among the Imperial records office at Simancas, in the Spanish court of Philip II

In the midst of Berrio's travels a new story surfaced. A man called Albuja, survivor of a previous expedition was said to have returned from El Dorado with farewell gifts of gold from the Inca

Albuja may never have existed, no one saw him and El Dorado that began as a search for gold was turning into a New World Romance a dream of Shangri-la

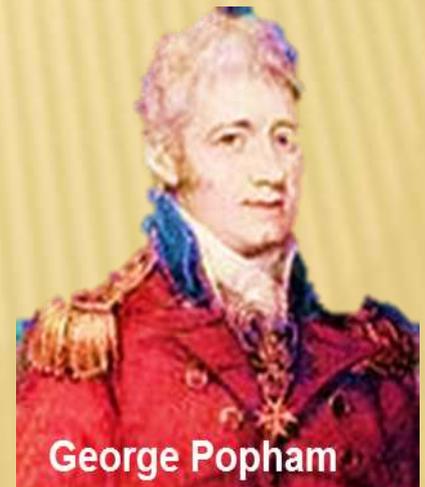
But the story of Albuja's return down the Orinoco to Margarita and Trinidad excited not only Berrio but also in 1594 Sir Walter Raleigh who sailed to find it.



In Caracas Domingo de Vera offered his services to Berrio and promised protection against the man eating Caribs tribe, the French and English whose traders were making mischief among the Indians

De Vera returned with 17 golden eagles and jackals saying he had found El Dorado, and spoke of a cold high city with temples full of gold.

Berrio wrote to Philip II announcing the discovery and later Capt. George Popham surprised a Spanish ship going home with copies of Vera's documents about Trinidad, the lands of the Orinoco, the founding of Trinidad and the discovery of El dorado.



George Popham

The news travelled to London where in 1616 Raleigh was planning an attack on St Joseph and El dorado quest.

His sights were on the Empire of Guiana

Raleigh at the same time, heard that Sir Robert Dudley was to undertake an expedition to Trinidad and El Dorado



Robert Dudley



Later Raleigh entered the Gulf of Praia with a big naval force and made an assault at Port of Spain. Spain and England were then at war. To appease the Spanish he was arrested and executed in 1618

Earlier, Raleigh continued sending a yearly ship to Guiana,
but for Spain the quest was over.

Foreigners no longer came to these lands
simply to raid, but instead to barter
and the tobacco from Trinidad turned into big business

It was illegal for Spaniards to trade with foreigners,
but there was no one else to trade with
and every Spanish official broke a law,
which could not be enforced

Even Berrio stopped looking for El Dorado
and instead started trading in Indians.
It is said, he sold more than 10,000

In Trinidad there was much bartering of cloth to the extent that the governor of Margarita remarked “the Gulf of Praia is like a trade fair”

The river of El dorado had turned into a contraband route and cloth managed to get straight up to Peru. The region was becoming better known and the legend was slowly disappearing.

There were plenty of foreign ships in Port of Spain and Englishmen moved in and out of this port as though they were in the English Channel. The medieval adventure had ended and the names of the Conquistadores disappeared in the conquered lands

**Spain decided a fortress could protect their lands.
So a Spanish Naval Officer, José Maria Chacón
a Knight of the Order of Calatrava
was sent as Governor to Trinidad.**

**The French Revolution was reflected in Santo Domingo
and in 1791 England and Spain were at war.**

**Alarm bells rang in Trinidad when the
British captain Vaughan entered the Gulf of Praia.
Chacón wrote to Godoy asking for ships and men.**

**In 1797 Admiral Harvey and General Abercrombie
anchored 9 of their 18 ships in an arc opposite
the 5 Spanish vessels that by midnight were burning.
Spanish officers wanted to scuttle them,
but the British rescued one ship and occupied the fort**

British troops began to land and occupied Port of Spain
General Abercrombie offered an honorable capitulation
and the surrender was signed by 8 next morning.
Chacón did not fight a battle

Abercrombie left his aide-de-camp as
Governor of Trinidad and gave him 1000 men

Three years later the Spanish Admiral was
stripped of his rank
and Chacón banished for life from Spanish dominions.

The USA and UK trade with the Spanish Empire
increased twentyfold in the next ten years

The other geographical areas where gold was found and contributed to the city of gold legend, were the Inca territories along the Andes and Pacific coast that composed the Viceroyalty of Peru

Technologically sophisticated societies arose in such region that used the abundant gold and silver for ceremonial purposes, which possibly also fanned the flames of the story of El Dorado

Those native cultures compensated for their lack of iron with other biological materials. They also constructed large architectural complexes and efficient irrigation systems became widespread to aid cultivation

So where is this lost city of gold?

**In his 1849 poem "El Dorado,"
writer Edgar Allan Poe offers
an eerie and eloquent suggestion:**

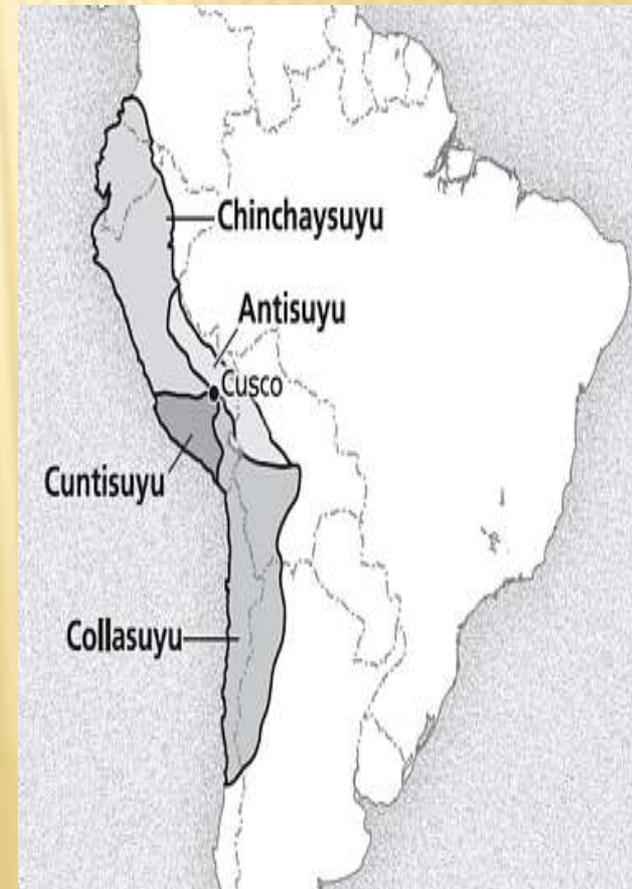
**"Over the Mountains of the Moon, down
the Valley of the Shadow, ride, boldly ride
... if you seek for El Dorado."**

Cuzco as the main Inca city had a central square and from it radiated four highways that demarcated the four sectors into which the Tawantinsuyu Empire was divided



The Tawantinsuyo was composed of four quarters or suyus

Chinchasuyu	—	North
Qollasuyu	—	South
Kuntisuyu	—	West
Antisuyu	--	East



The Andean world was a kaleidoscope of cultures, societies and languages and perhaps their achievements should be viewed as the true riches of El Dorado

As many of the important products were unevenly distributed in the various Andean regions, the Incas organised to form collaborating groups with strategies to bring together a multitude of diverse products, so political structures were created to handle this

The Andean world encompasses a wide range of climates and landscapes, ranging from frozen uplands, to tropical areas and deserts. Severe weather fluctuations caused population movements and other compensatory adaptations

Andean Technological Developments

These cultures lacked **steel weapons**,
the **wheel** and the **arch**.

Europe valued metals for hardness, sharpness and strength.

They in contrast valued plasticity, malleability and toughness, preferring to hammer metal into shiny sheets rather than pouring it into moulds.

They valued luminous gold and silver to dull iron



Their tools were made with fibres and textiles were held together by tension, and they exploited this property with inventiveness to solve engineering problems





They wove together reeds, rather than cut trees into planks and nailing them, so their ships were bundles tied together and some of their vessels reached the size of the Spanish caravels

They also made foot-thick cables to build suspension bridges across mountain gorges and their weapon was the sling made of cloth



By the time Cuzco emerged they developed the “Bolas”, three stones tied together with llama tendons and threw them at charging horses as an anti cavalry weapon that wrapped around the horses legs and brought them down



Two Andean states Wari and Tiwanaku were the greatest of the Inka forerunners. Wari were the most conventional prominent during the 6th century AD. Its principal success was in techniques of terracing and irrigation to raise above drought and flooding episodes



Tiwanaku groups infiltrated the region and did not become an important centre until 300 BC.

The impressive architectural site as a religious centre for pilgrims contains the Gateway of the Sun

The centre declined and came to an end in 800 AD



This monolith, a stone carved image has a height of 7.3 metres and an approximate weight of 20 tons. It was the biggest of the Andean statues known until now. It represents someone with a head band, mask, tunic, belt and skirt.

The person holds a cup and a tablet used frequently by the Tiwanaku culture for hallucinogenic drugs.

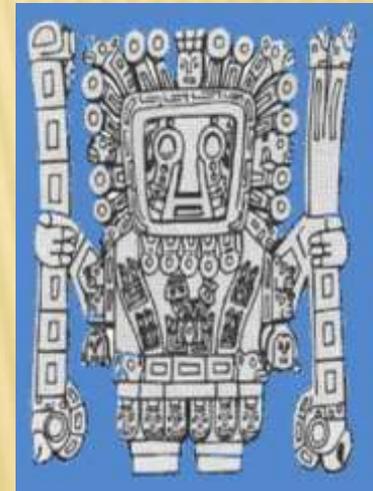
The statue is considered to be an ideal representation of the leaders



After the Wari and Tiwanaku cultures collapsed by 1000 AC
came the Inka Empire, which was the shortest.
It began in the 15th century and lasted 100 years
until the Spanish invasion smashed it

The Inka migrated to Cuzco in 1200 AC
In 1438 problems between Inka leader
Viracocha and
his son Yupanki surfaced.

The son took over and named himself Pachakuti
proclaiming the ruling families
descended from the Sun



Pachacuti expanded from Peru to lake Titicaca and
tried to incorporate the Chincha to his Empire
who had no alternative but to submit,
by choosing compliance to valour

**The Inka practiced a form of central planning.
Scholars are unsure whether those societies were
actually socialists in a communal utopia or
simply precursors of communism**

**In the final stages of the period
the Inka ruled over
the greatest Empire on earth,
bigger than any European state and
covering every imaginable type of terrain**

**The Inka managed to knit together into one
single bureaucratic framework
scores of different groups in South Western America,
speaking different languages,
under the direct rule of one Emperor**

The organising genius of Pachacuti tackled living at high altitude where most crops do not grow. For survival, representatives of the society were sent to live downslope where resources were more readily available and they could exchange products by a type of vertical socialism

The Empire shuttled people and materiel in and out of every Andean crevice.

Combining the fruits of many ecosystems they enjoyed a better life, spread the risk of natural catastrophes and managed to eradicate hunger and calamities

Their methods were audacious, brutal and efficient. They moved entire populations from their homelands via an intricate road network and forced them to work in state farms and construction projects.



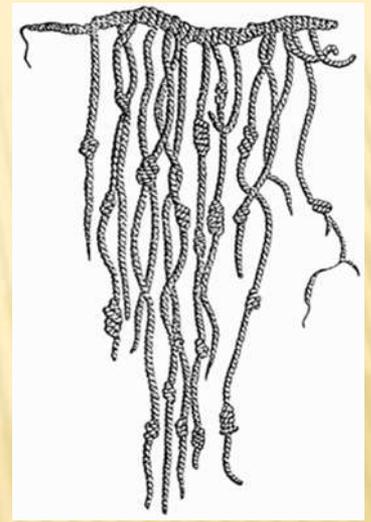
The Chasquis were physically fit messengers that were in charge of carrying the quipus, messages and gifts throughout the Inca empire. They could, and would, run 240 km per day. They were trained to read and translate the khipus. Not only did they transport oral messages but they also helped the inspector general, the Sapa Inka's brother, keep track of the people in the empire



The Quipus

Quipus, (or khipus) were recording and accounting devices

used in the Andean region of South America as a Pre-Columbian computer memory



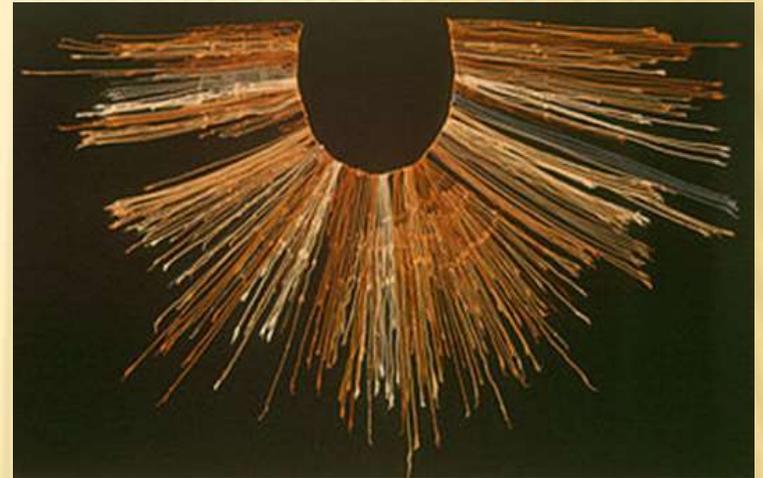
It consists of a primary cord from which dangle thinner pendant strings, about 100 or as many as 1500. The pendant strings bear clusters of knots tied in one of three ways

As hierarchical decimal arrays they show 1's on the first level, 10's on the next and so on as a binary code.

The reader inspects them visually and also by running the fingers over them, Braille-style



Each cluster of knots is a digit, and there are three main types of knots: simple overhand knots; "long knots", consisting of an overhand knot with one or more additional turns; and figure-eight knots



A quipu also contained colour coded, spun, and plied thread or strings made from cotton or camelid fibre.

Binary options were a hallmark of these peoples who included dual organisation with upper and lower halves

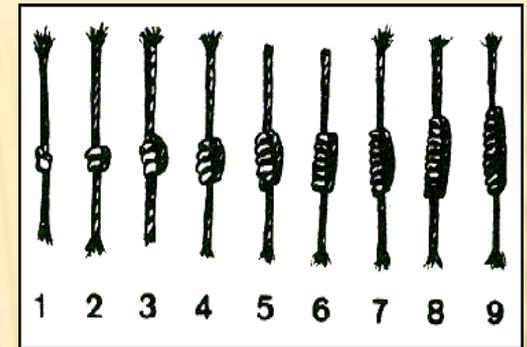
Knotted string communication was one aspect of exploitation of their textile industry in a culture where cloth was the most important carrier of status



For the Inca,
the system aided in collecting data
and keeping records,
ranging from monitoring tax obligations,
properly collecting census records,
calendrical information,
and military organization.

Quipus were used primarily as mnemonic devices
to communicate and record numerical information.
Quipucamayocs ("khipu specialist") could be
summoned to court,
where their bookkeeping was recognised
as valid documentation of past payments.

The cords contained numeric and other values encoded by knots in a base ten positional system. A quipu could have only a few or up to 2,000 cords.



Some of the knots, as well as other features, such as colour, are thought to represent non-numeric information, which has not been deciphered

It is generally thought that the system did not include phonetic symbols analogous to letters of the alphabet. However Gary Urton has suggested that the quipus used a binary system which could record phonological or logographic data.

The Tawantinsuyo existed for only a few centuries and the Quipus could be the development of earlier forms of accounting.

It constituted the “book” of those peoples in the form of a loose bundle of rolled up strings, more practical than paper scrolls or books



Chuño (Spanish pronunciation: ['tʃuño]) is a freeze-dried potato product traditionally made by Quechua and Aymara communities of Bolivia and Peru

Black chuño is obtained directly from freezing, trampling, and refreezing small size potatoes.

The product is not washed or exposed to water again; after freezing and trampling, it is simply sun-dried.





**Chuño is made via a five-day process,
by exposing a frost-resistant variety of potatoes to the very low
night temperatures of the Andean Altiplano,
freezing them, and subsequently exposing them to the intense
sunlight of the day
(this being the traditional process).
The origin of the naming word comes from
Quechua as “ch'uñu”, meaning
'frozen potato'**

White chuño is obtained by "washing" the frozen potatoes.

The "washing" may take various forms.

In Bolivia, the potatoes are spread on blankets or straw and constantly sprayed with water to moisten them.

In Peru, the frozen potatoes are transported to a river, and deposited in pools.



The final step is drying in the sun.

**The result is now called chuño,
also known as papas secas.**

In Bolivia, white chuño is also called tunta.

This is a process for preservation of the tubers once dried, with minimal care in storage for later consumption. The product can last for a long time, several years.



It is used in making desserts or prepared dishes, as well as chuño flour, which is an essential ingredient in many dishes. Chairo is one of the most traditional Bolivian soup and it is made with chuño, meat, and vegetables, it is also traditional in southern regions of Peru such as Arequipa and Puno

**Another crop that influenced Andean civilisation was MAIZE.
There are 1000's of varieties by a mutation of TEOSINTE
that started 6000 years ago.
Because the plant is open pollinated its varieties are
constantly mixing**



Coca leaf



There are two species of cultivated coca,
each with two varieties:
Erythroxylum coca
Erythroxylum novogranatense



Coca is known for its psychoactive alkaloid, cocaine.
The alkaloid content of coca leaves is low,
between 0.25% and 0.77%.
This means that chewing the leaves or
drinking coca tea does not produce the high
(euphoria, megalomania, depression)
people experience with cocaine.



Coca leaf extract had been used in Coca-Cola products since 1885, with cocaine being completely eliminated from the products in or around 1929



Traces of coca have been found in mummies dating back 3000 years. Communal chewing of coca with lime dates back 8000 years.

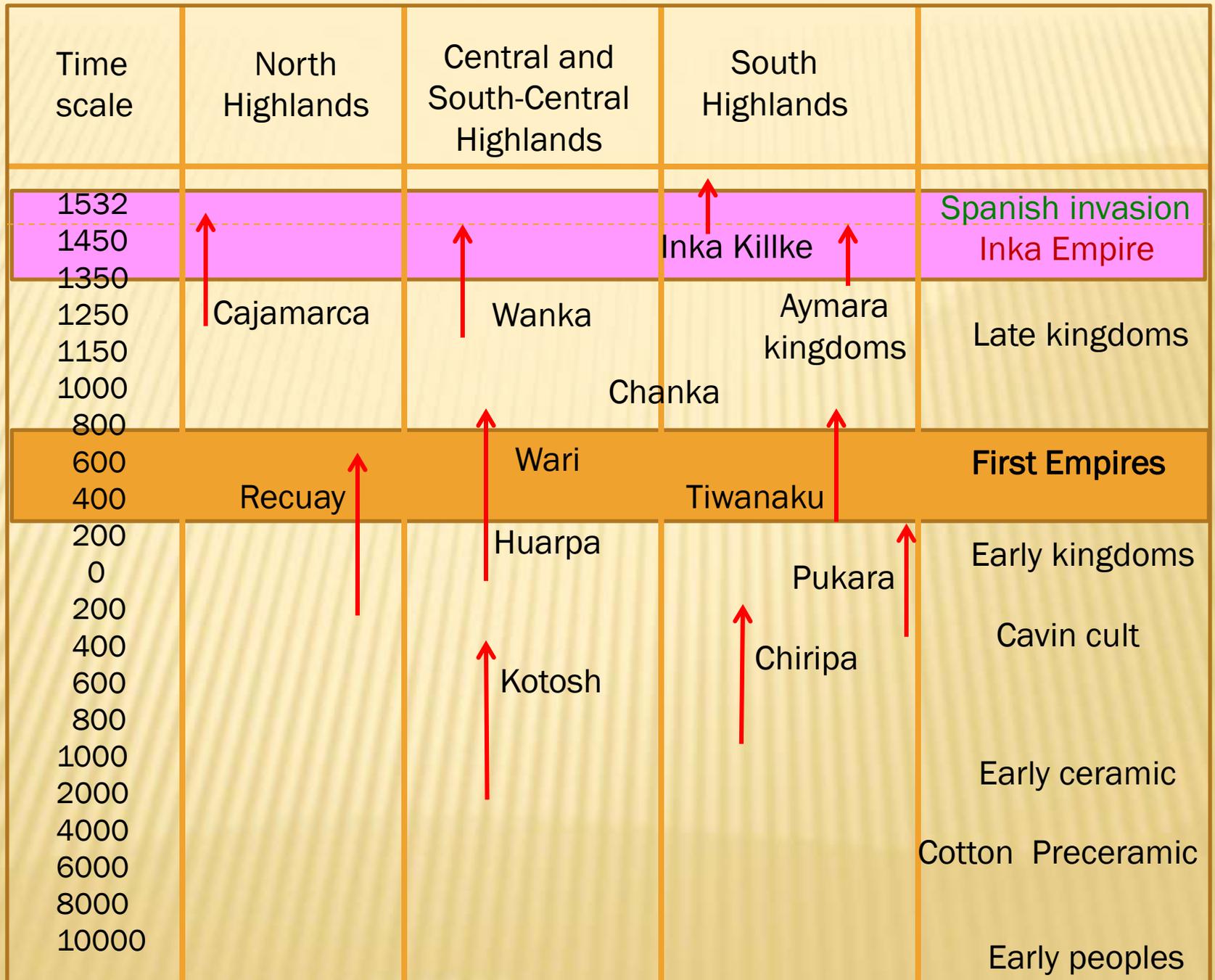
Extensive archaeological evidence for the chewing of coca leaves dates back at least to the 6th century AD Moche period, and the subsequent Inca period,



**As the plant was viewed as having
a divine origin,
its cultivation became subject to a state monopoly
and its use restricted to
nobles and a few favoured classes
(court orators, couriers, public workers, and the army)**

**Medical uses of coca were used
foremost as a stimulant
to overcome fatigue, hunger, and thirst.
It is considered effective against altitude sickness.
Today it also is used as an anaesthetic
and analgesic to alleviate
the pain of headache, rheumatism, wounds and sores, etc.**

MAJOR CULTURES OF THE ANDES



THE END
