Prior to the Spanish invasion in 1532, the Inkas built the largest empire in the Americas. By the early sixteenth century, their extensive dominion encompassed the majority of South America’s western coast (D’Altroy 2002). Since the Inkas kept no written documents, the only recorded histories of their imperial expansion come from accounts given to the Spanish by Inka elites. In these narratives, Inka elites often spoke of the dark and barbarous world they had transformed (see examples in Kosiba 2010; Salles-Reese 1997). They emphasized how the Inkas dismantled this chaos and reassembled its constituent parts into an ordered civilization.

These narratives conceal as much as they reveal. They produce an essentialized image of the pre-Inka world that obscures the social complexity of pre-Inka societies and elides the dynamic history through which Inka governmental order was built. But they also reveal what, within the waning days of the Inka Empire, was believed to be essential to pre-Inka Andean politics: specifically, the power of particular places. The narratives call attention to certain places that antedate Inka rule, and they often assert that Inka regional governance and sovereignty was constituted through the transformation of these places.

Inka narratives imputed a sort of “natural” power to certain places of various kinds, including residences of local lords, long-revered shrines, and features of the physical environment such as particular caves and springs. In historical accounts and litigation documents, the Inkas and their erstwhile subjects defined many of these places as seats of “traditional” authority—as places that embodied a primordial link between local people and the land (e.g. Bauer 1991; Kosiba 2010; Spalding 1984; Stern 1993; Urton 1990). Andean towns (llactas) were frequently described as centers
of cosmological and political authority, and homes to both deities and earthly leaders. Places of origin, called *paxarinas*, were often claimed to be embodiments of the essential social identity of the groups indigenous to the area. Furthermore, in such historical accounts, the fortified sites (*pukaras*) of the highland Andes accrue special importance as avatars of pre-Inka political and ethnic territory, and also as tropes of barbarism that the Inkas often used to characterize the past. What these terms, "*ilacta, paxarina* and *pukara*,” have in common is how they render unquestionable the power of certain local places. Although it is unclear whether the Inkas invented or co-opted this “tradition” of powerful places (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992), the Inkas indubitably cobbled together a regional social order by referring to select places’ natural power.

Of course, the power of these places was neither natural nor inborn, but claimed. In this chapter, I present my recent archaeological data to explore how these places became so powerful. My inquiry focuses on political practices and places within the Late Intermediate Period (1000–1300 C.E.), the centuries directly preceding Inka rule. It attends to the pre-Inka political dynamics of the Ollantaytambo region, an area that was later to become an essential part of the Inka heartland of Cusco [Figure 4-1]. I argue that pre-Inka social actors staked claims to political authority and autonomy by delimiting the contexts in which political action could occur, thereby defining only certain places as founts of “traditional” power.

To ask what constitutes this kind of political “tradition” is to examine the oft-neglected politics of **locality**—the material and symbolic practices that work to embed cultural significance within particular places and local environments. In archaeological accounts of non-state political dynamics, an overemphasis on the epochal rise and fall of ancient polities has long cast periods of local organization as passive reactions to broader political economic and ecological transformations, or rendered the local as a given analytical scale (see below). Conversely, in this chapter, I treat local organization as an active political strategy, and I insist that the local itself be considered as a constructed social reality.

The Tragedy of Locality

Numerous researchers have characterized the Andean Late Intermediate Period (LIP) as a balkanized political landscape largely defined by its diversity in forms of political organization, ranging from coastal empires (Chimu) to small-scale highland polities (e.g. Arkush 2008; Covey 2008; D’Altroy 1992; Keatinge 1988; Parsons et al. 2000). In the Andean highlands, LIP social groups built localized settlements that were frequently
clustered around densely agglutinated, and often fortified, towns (e.g. Arkush and Stanish 2005; Covey 2008; Hastorf 1993; Stanish 2003). Some scholars suggest that these localized LIP groups participated in regional social interactions and/or assembled confederative political networks (e.g. Julien 1988; 1994; Salomon 1986). Other researchers emphasize how these localized LIP groups were engaged in endemic warfare brought on by fierce competition for agricultural lands and economic resources (e.g. Arkush 2005; Hastings 1987; Hyslop 1979; Krzanowski 1985). Despite these different interpretations, these accounts illustrate how, in the Andean highlands, the LIP is distinguished by social aggregation within discrete local areas (Julien 1993: 266; see Covey 2008 for a recent review).

An understanding of the LIP thus requires an inquiry into processes of localization. However, most interpretations of the social and political practices that define the LIP remain hamstrung by accounts of incessant warfare, or use of the sixteenth century Spanish sources to explain thirteenth and fourteenth century archaeological contexts. Resultant accounts thus depict a regional power struggle among sharply localized ethnic or social groups, but provide only a faint rendering of the various local political conditions, strategies, and practices that may have led to

Figure 4-1: The Wat’a Archaeological Project study area.
social conflict or interaction in specific regions. Many of these accounts also pivot on a classification that equates local organization with conflict between groups. This classification no doubt owes, at least in part, to the categories that have been used to characterize the pre-Inka Andean past, specifically the LIP—categories such as “transitional period” and/or “political vacuum” (Keatinge 1988: xvi; see similar critique in Arkush and Stanish 2005). More generally, such categories are embedded in a kind of evolutionary historicism—a specifically regional analytical framework and interpretative scale, and a specific definition of the state.

Common to many historiographic accounts is a rendering of political development that takes the graphic form of a sine-wave. The sine-wave illustrates a cyclical vacillation between the ‘crests’ of state-sponsored centralization and ‘troughs’ of regional social conflict and political fragmentation (e.g. Marcus 1993, 1998; Smith 1992). Marcus’ (1993) “Dynamic Model” is perhaps the most striking and blunt representation of this perspective. The Dynamic Model charts the vagaries of political organization within a given region, representing these processes as a wavy line that rises and falls as social complexity increases and decreases. In similar models, rising “crests” are often equated with periods of “high civilization” (Baines and Yoffee 1998), and marked by centralized governmental bureaucracy, intellectual advances, and a pervasive aesthetic. In contrast, the low “troughs” of such models are often called “intermediate periods” and described as a politically balkanized world, or “Dark Ages.” There is a spatial assumption inherent to this historicism; crests are associated with regional stylistic (and often social) integration, while troughs correspond to the localization of style and settlement.

In particular, the “troughs” of these models refer to periods during which the institutions of centralized rule are underdeveloped or rejected. Trough periods are thus defined by their interstitial position within a regional chronology (an intermediate period), as well as the assumption that a lack of centralization coincides with a lack of political order. Moreover, such models assume that in the absence of an organizational capacity to mobilize or sponsor regional social labor, there can be no art, no monumental architecture—in short, no civilization.

These historicist renderings, in both the Andes and more generally, bear a problematic resemblance to the claims of universality and progress that define imperial projects (Eisenstadt 1963; Mann 1986). By focusing on the temporal fluctuation between localized fragmentation and regional integration within a particular region, such narratives render the “local” and the “regional” as a priori ontological categories with a given suite of social characteristics. Similarly, in attending to socially transformative
processes at a regional scale, archaeologists often assume local social practices and/or political agendas to be functions of or responses to regional developments. Thus, the dissolution of regional state governance is often assumed to instigate a period of darkness and disorder. Likewise, in assuming that localities are places in which “tradition” is embedded, archaeologists treat the “local” as a given spatial scale and material site (e.g. Tilley 1994), rather than a politically constituted social context. In consequence, the “local” is often assumed rather than investigated. These assumptions obscure the political strategies implicit in processes of localization—the coordinated practices that constitute the “local” as such.

Such assumptions are evident across a broad range of archaeological literatures. For instance, scholars speak of the political balkanization and bloodshed that followed the dissolution of the Western Roman Empire (e.g. Webster and Brown 1997). They assume that centuries of fragmentation and disorder coincided with the fading glory of Mycenaean palace structures (Osborne 1996; Snodgrass 1971). Also, they write of the periods of disorder that both preceded and followed ancient Egyptian dynastic rule (Baines and Yoffee 1998; Morris 2006; Seidlmayer 2003). Most pertinent to this case, researchers often argue that an era of warfare and cultural decay followed the decline of the Wari state and preceded the rise of the Inkas in the Andes (e.g. Parsons and Hastings 1988).

Bracketed by the Middle (Wari state) and Late (Inka Empire) Horizons, the Andean LIP provides a quintessential example of a “trough.” The LIP is often characterized as an era of political fragmentation that followed the dissolution of the Wari and Tiwanaku states within the Andes (e.g. Bauer 2004; Conlee 2006; Covey 2008; D’Altroy 2001; Parsons and Hastings 1988). Coinciding with the collapse of these polities was a massive drought that may have rendered ineffective the agricultural infrastructure upon which these states relied, thereby influencing people to develop local agricultural lands (Binford et al. 1997; Ortloff and Kolata 1993; Erickson 1992, 1999). In consequence, competition between social groups over economic resources is said to have furthered their localization within sharply demarcated, socially circumscribed territories and fortified towns. Particularly in the Cusco region, researchers describe how pre-Inka local organization was in part a response to declining regional state power, or an effect of broader ecological transformations (Bauer 2004; Covey 2006). Such research has provided invaluable insights into LIP social organization in several Andean regions, but it is important to remember that “LIP” is a heuristic temporal category and not a regionally uniform ecological process, sociological pattern or political phenomenon (see also Arkush 2005). We cannot assume that these states’ collapse affected all
Andean regions in an identical fashion. And, rather than assuming that such periods of local organization are characterized by incessant conflict or the dissolution of social networks, we must investigate the diverse political processes and strategies that may have led to conflict and/or interaction in different regions.

In general, due to an over-emphasis on models of regional integration and centralized administration, as well as the grandeur of the state (see also Feinman 1998), periods of local organization are too often treated as passive responses or props to regional states. They are passive inasmuch as they are conceptualized as reactions to the dissolution of broader state-sponsored projects of world-making. They are characterized as props when defined as the necessary and teleological “stages” upon which aspiring state actors concoct their master plans. But periods of local organization or non-state institutional practice are rarely considered on their own terms. Locality is seldom considered an active political strategy. One might call this the tragedy of locality. Indeed, locality suffers a double tragedy—both ancient state projects and contemporary scholars erase local histories.

**Resituating Pre-Inka Politics**

To understand local organization on its own terms, it is necessary to examine the situated practices and processes through which authority was constituted among local groups within a specific region. In this inquiry, I consider local social organization to be a set of practices through which social actors actively seek to constitute and maintain their authority and autonomy. Below, I present data from my archaeological study to introduce two definitions of localization. Localization may refer to the coordination of quotidian socioeconomic practices and routines. For instance, land use and production practices may be organized in a way that accentuates immediate social relations within a discrete area. However, localization may also be an explicit political claim. For example, ceremonial practices may be staged within select places to manifest political authority by rendering certain places—and only those places—political.

In an effort to emphasize the relation between local developments that occurred in both the Ollantaytambo area and broader Cusco region, I use the term “Ollantay Phase” when referring to the centuries that directly preceded Inka ascendency in the northwest Cusco area (Ollantay Phase [OP] ca. 1000-1300 C.E). Table 4-1 depicts the relation between this phase and other established regional chronologies largely derived from Ica—an area that the Inkas annexed during the early stages of their imperial
expansion outside of the Cusco region (Rowe 1967) and Cusco (Rowe 1944, 1945, 1946; Bauer 1992, 2004; Covey 2006; McEwan et al. 2008).

I also introduce the Ollanta Phase category for practical reasons. Researchers in the Cusco region often apply the category “Killke Period” to the centuries that precede Inka rule (e.g. Bauer 2004; Covey 2006). The Killke Period corresponds to the geographic distribution of Killke pottery, which is defined by a decorative style (Bauer 1992, 2002; Rowe 1944). The distribution of this pottery style is often taken to coincide with the emergence of an Inka polity in Cusco. Farther afield, use of Killke style pottery as a temporal and political marker becomes problematic (see also Chatfield 2007, 2010; Covey 2006: 135; Kosiba 2010; McEwan 2005: 199). For instance, throughout the Cusco region, local styles derived from pre-Inka (eleventh to thirteenth century) excavated contexts often mimic many of the design and manufacture features of Killke pottery, yet with distinct local variations (see González Corrales 1984; Kosiba 2010; Rivera 1971a, 1971b). Due to these issues, my research in the Ollantaytambo area could not reliably assume that the presence of Killke or Killke-related pottery within a site indicates temporality of occupation or Inka influence. I define the Ollanta Phase through reference to local pottery and architectural styles [Figure 4.2]. First, the OP is characterized by the correspondence of decorative styles, manufacture styles, and rim types on pottery derived from early stratigraphic levels at two pre-Inka sites (Kosiba 2010). Serving vessels—bowls, plates, and pitchers—are of particular interest to this study since these vessels may have been used in feasting events and other forms of collective commensal politics. Besides these pottery types, the Ollanta Phase refers to regional similarities in architectural styles, most notably widespread commonalities in houses, open platforms or patios, and tomb complexes (see Kosiba 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cusco region</th>
<th>Inka Provinces</th>
<th>Dates (C.E.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>ca. 1000-1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killke Period (Cusco)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Late Intermediate Period</td>
<td>ca. 1300-1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Inka Period</td>
<td>Inka Period</td>
<td>ca. 1400-1533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-1: The Cusco region chronology relative to the periodization used throughout the Inka provinces. The Ollanta Phase refers to particular stylistic changes that have been documented in the northwest area of the Cusco region.
Figure 4-2: Representative samples of Ollanta phase pottery and domestic architectural styles. Pictured here are common OP serving (left) and storage (right) vessel forms. On OP pottery, specific decorative motifs (often consisting of thickly painted bands) correspond to diagnostic rim and form types. Pictured below are common OP residential architectural styles – D-shaped (left) and circular (right).

This temporal category is used to further delineate the kinds of socioeconomic and ceremonial practices that framed everyday experience and politics within the OP. I document the distribution of serving wares
relative to other pottery form densities, architectural styles, and land use
categories. In particular, the association of high densities of decorated
serving wares with specific architectural forms (plazas, tomb sectors),
provides preliminary evidence suggesting that feasting or ancestor
veneration practices were staged within select places. Feasting and
ancestor veneration practices are salient ceremonial practices that were
often critical to the regeneration of pre-Inka authority (e.g. Hastorf 2001;
Isbell 1997; Ramirez 2005). By tracking the distribution of these vessel
types relative to architectural styles, I move beyond the culture-historical
assumptions of style categories (like Killke) and gain analytical entrée into
the organization of specific pre-Inka social and political practices.

**Pre-Inka Social Organization in the Ollantaytambo Area**

A macro-scale archaeological survey of the area, when paired with a
close attention to the distribution of specific ceramic densities and
architectural types, exposes not only the limitations of the LIP archetype,
but also, more broadly, the elisions attendant on schematic renderings of
social landscapes that are, by definition, dynamic and complex. The Wat’a
Archaeological Project (WAP) survey documented eighty-two sites with
clear OP components. These sites were arranged in tight clusters, each of
them containing one or two settlements with high densities of decorated
serving vessels [Figure 4-3].

The survey reveals a dichotomous settlement pattern in which sites
were distinguished by different artifact densities and architecture types.
Only thirteen (13/82; 15.9%) of the total sample of OP sites contained
medium to high percentages of decorated serving vessels (>25%). The
high densities of OP decorated serving vessels are often associated with
mortuary complexes and specific sectors of select sites. They do not
always correspond to large site sizes.

Some of these thirteen sites share specific attributes that differentiate
them from the others. Although there is no single site that dominates the
entire region in terms of size or architectural complexity, eight sites
(Humanmarka [W-027], Wat’a [W-041], Sulkan [W-043], Llactallactayoq
[W-144], Huaylluayllloq [W-149], Pumarka [W-124], Markaqocha
[W-168] and Yanawara [W-176]) are distinguished from surrounding
sites—not necessarily by size, but by other variables, both qualitative and
quantitative. These variables include: elaboration of domestic architecture,
houses situated on terraces, mortuary complexes, variation in mortuary
structure morphology, density of buildings, density of surface-level
artifacts, and/or later Inka elaboration (Kosiba 2010). All of these sites
Figure 4-3: This map illustrates the OP settlements (circles) and serving vessel densities (triangles) that were documented throughout the survey area. The map depicts a clustered settlement pattern. It shows how medium-high percentages (>25%) of decorated serving vessels are only associated with specific sites. Named sites correspond to the OP towns. Settlement patterns are shown relative to potential maize production terrain (MPT).
possess at least three of these criteria. At these sites, there is little evidence for OP defensive structures.\(^5\) With these distinctions in mind, I employ the term “town” in referring to these sites. The term “town” emphasizes how these were significant local places—loci of specific kinds of social and perhaps ceremonial activity (llactas), particularly as evidenced by the co-presence of high percentages of decorated serving vessels, domestic architectural styles, and mortuary complexes. It is necessary to further elucidate the socioeconomic and ceremonial practices that defined these places, particularly the practices that, over time, differentiated the towns from other sites.

**Rendering Pre-Inka Places Political: A Diachronic View**

By looking at diachronic changes in occupational history relative to land use practices, we can begin to understand whether and how the local settlement patterns and towns of the Ollantaytambo area were constituted relative to the climatic shifts and the dramatic social and political transformations that swept through nearby Andean areas. Two expansive polities (Tiwanaku and Wari) dominated much of the Andes during the eighth to the eleventh century (Middle Horizon). Of greatest interest here is the Wari state, which built a massive administrative center and greater urban complex at Pikillacta in the nearby Cusco Valley (Bauer 2004; McEwan 1991, 1996, 2005).

The WAP documented thirty-two sites that were occupied throughout the period of Wari state expansion. None of these sites contained the standard architectural styles or forms that mark Wari administrative sites. Wari pottery was recovered at only two (6%) of these sites, and constituted a small percentage of the overall surface collected assemblage from those two sites. Since the distribution of standardized spaces and objects were essential to the institutional practices of the Wari state (Isbell and McEwan 1991; McEwan 2005), the dearth of such structures and materials in the survey strongly suggests that the Ollantaytambo area was outside of the Wari expansionary purview (Kosiba 2010).

Settlement patterns in the Ollantaytambo area remained remarkably stable throughout the centuries during which the Wari exerted their imperial power in parts of the Cusco Valley. The majority (74%) of earlier sites were expanded or continually occupied throughout the OP [Figure 4-4]. At these sites, densities of surface level pottery are consistent from the Formative Period (ca. 1000 B.C.E. – 500 C.E.) to the OP, suggesting that occupational *intensity* was largely maintained at many sites.
Figure 4-4: The map depicts how distinct localities were maintained from the Middle Horizon until the Ollanta Phase. Percent change indices suggest fluctuations in occupational history – a negative index (white triangles) reflects a decrease in densities of surface-level material from one time period to the next, while a positive index (white diamond) reflects an increase relative to OP surface level artifact densities (black dots).
Land use analysis was conducted to gauge whether and how specific local lands were both continually occupied and cultivated over time. I employed a range of complementary datasets (remotely sensed data, field observations, informal interviews) and analytical techniques (Geographic Information Systems) to conduct an analysis of the overall area of potential maize production terrain (MPT) within the survey zone. Maize was a highly significant staple and ceremonial food within many pre-Inka societies (Hastorf 1993). Similarly, camelid pastoralism was essential to the pre-Inka political economy. Llamas (Lama glama) and alpacas (Lama pacos) provided meat and wool for local populations, and also served as cargo animals. Roasted camelid meat was a socially marked food that was often served in feasting contexts (Costin and Earle 1989: Sandefur 2001). A study of settlement patterns relative to potential maize production and pastoral lands thus reveals whether and how local settlement clusters were situated in order to maximize immediate land resources and sharply localize land use practices.

In the analysis, potential maize-production terrain (MPT) is defined as land that adheres to the biological requirements of maize cultivation (Gade 1975), more specifically: (1) ideal maize production land that has less than a ten-percent slope and is located at an altitude less than 3200m (MPT1), or (2) cultivable maize production land that has less than a twenty-percent slope and is located at an altitude less than 3500m (MPT2). The first category refers to land with optimal conditions for dry-farmed maize cultivation, assuming that a water source is located nearby and soils are adequate. The second category refers to land that is neither optimal nor preferred, but is sufficient for extensive dry-farmed maize production providing that soil erosion and water loss can be controlled. For the purpose of this study, pastoral terrain was categorized as land that has less than a thirty-percent slope, is situated near water sources, and is located at an altitude above 4200m.

The analysis does not indicate a shift in site altitudinal location, or any significant movement of sites away from potential maize production lands [Figure 4-3—only the more inclusive MPT2 is shown]. In fact, the long-term history of land use in this area suggests a gradual and steady downward movement toward the further exploitation and development of lower maize lands, while previously occupied pastoral lands were maintained. These site location patterns are evident within both the northern and southern portions of the survey area, despite striking differences in the overall area of potential maize terrain throughout the different valleys of the region. In fact, the majority (71.4%) of continually occupied sites were situated in areas that are a relatively short walk
(~500m) from potential maize land, as are the majority (66%) of newly established OP sites. More particularly, the large majority of newly established OP sites were situated within a short walk of select intensively used maize production and/or pastoral lands. Extensive agricultural strategies were not employed during this time period. Thus, although the occupation of individual settlements may have waxed and waned, people continued to live near the same maize agricultural and camelid pastoral lands.

Also, new sites were largely established in and around the towns, suggesting that aggregation around these places was a principal concern. During the OP, the area around each town was densely occupied, even while several well-watered and rich alluvial soils remained vacant [Figure 4-4]. The data thus suggest the maintenance of tightly clustered and localized forms of social organization near specific places (towns), as well as the apparent intensification of agro-pastoral socioeconomic practices within specific micro-regions [Figures 4-3 and 4-4].

The expanses of unoccupied agricultural and pastoral land suggest that the settlement clusters were not produced relative to processes of environmental circumscription – i.e. broad climate change or resource scarcity, as suggested by some models of pre-state politics (e.g. Carneiro 1970). Contrary to accounts of pre-Inka populations warring over scarce lands (Earle 1997, 2002), if there was any conflict or warfare during the Ollanta Phase, then resource scarcity does not seem to be the cause.

Altogether, the macro-scale analysis suggests that the organization of land use practices remained relatively consistent, thereby demonstrating that the effects of dramatic climate changes recorded for the south-central Andes may have been mitigated by the long-term local social organization of this region. Taken in tandem, the land use and survey data strongly suggest that these localized settlement clusters were a long-established form of organization that attached social groups to the soils and places of a specific area, while defining a set of localized agro-pastoral routines.

These data both contrast and complement survey results from other parts of the Cusco region. In the northeast Cusco area, Covey (2006) posits that, prior to Inka state formation, broad political economic and ecological processes influenced drastic settlement pattern changes as people abandoned valley floors for higher terrain. However, similar to the patterns documented in the Ollantaytambo area, Bauer recorded occupational continuity in the Cusco Valley (Bauer 2004) and the Paruro area, south of Cusco (Bauer 1992). Thus, there is no single pattern of change that characterizes the entire Cusco region, as expected if all local groups were subject to uniform political economic or ecological upheaval. This is not to
say that ecological or political economic changes did not occur. Rather, the
comparative data suggest that local differences in socioeconomic
organization, historical context, or political agency influenced the
development of different settlement patterns throughout the Cusco region.

It appears as though the OP settlement pattern was influenced by a
perceived need for increased settlement proximity, perhaps linked to
concerns about agricultural security or risk reduction (e.g. Wernke 2003,
2006a, 2006b). The array of potential land use activities in each cluster
suggests that the immediate spatial organization of local settlements
provided for socioeconomic self-sufficiency through the sharply localized
complementarity of agro-pastoral practices. Localized agro-pastoral
practices were maintained through the long-term (although perhaps
shifting) occupation of specific lands and settlements, as well as the
continual occupation and development of culturally valued places like the
larger towns. Further investigation assesses whether and how this local
sociological scale was linked to claims of political autonomy.

**Socioeconomic Processes and Practices of Localization**

A series of analyses were undertaken to examine how socioeconomic
production practices were coordinated within and among the settlement
clusters. First, the distribution of ceramic styles gauged whether and how
pottery production was organized locally. Second, analysis of site
architectural attributes and artifact densities assessed how agro-pastoral
routines were coordinated within specific settlement clusters. Third,
consideration of the dichotomous distribution of site types within each
cluster suggested how these settlement clusters were politically organized.

An intensive analysis of surface-collected pottery sherds from sites
within each settlement cluster identified local differences in ceramic
manufacture and decoration techniques. My analysis considered the broad
clusters of settlement revealed by the survey, categorized as: “Wat’a”
(South, Huarocondo canyon); “Kachiqhata” (Northwest, Kachiqhata gorge);
“Pumamarka” (North, Patacancha valley); and “Yanawara” (Northeast,
Yanawara plain). Although there are general OP pottery types and
decorative motifs throughout the survey region, the analysis gauged
whether there were attributes that defined each settlement cluster, therefore
suggesting the local production of pottery. The analysis considered a sample
of 746 decorated non-serving vessels, and 565 decorated serving vessels
(see Kosiba 2010).

In general, the analysis found no significant differences in manufacture
techniques (inclusion preparation, inclusion types, oxidation), paste color,
rim forms, or decorative motifs. These similarities suggest some degree of shared knowledge among the people who produced these pottery styles. On the other hand, the analysis revealed the localized distribution of specific kinds of external surface treatment, particularly slipping and heavy burnishing. Several sherds have a cream-colored slip applied over a deep red or orange paste. In addition, the exterior surface of many sherds has a characteristic heavy burnishing pattern that yields the appearance of deep grooves etched into the surface of a pot. These decorative techniques are limited to specific settlement clusters, suggesting localized pottery production practices despite general decorative motifs and pottery forms throughout the area [Figure 4-5].

Socioeconomic localization is also evident in the distinct dichotomous organization of these settlement clusters. Within all of the settlement clusters, the majority of smaller sites (68%) were situated within a short walk (~500m) of either maize agricultural land or high puna pastoral land. I refer to these as residential sites. Their location suggests that these sites were loci for agricultural or pastoral production. All of these residential sites contained very low densities of OP decorated storage or serving vessel sherds and high densities of undecorated OP utilitarian vessels. In comparison with the towns, these residential sites do not contain tombs of any type, nor do they contain complex forms of domestic architecture.

In contrast, the towns all contain evidence for markedly different kinds of intra-site places, objects, and practices. The towns were distinguished from the other sites in three main ways: ceramic style and distribution; architectural style; and occupational history. In addition to higher percentages of decorated serving vessels, the towns contained styles of OP ceramics that were not recovered in any other contexts. Particularly, I recovered only Ollanta Black and Red on Buff vessels at the towns [refer to Figure 4-2]. In my excavations at Wat’a—a long-occupied and revered pre-Inka town and shrine within the Ollantaytambo area—this style was found in contexts containing high densities of decorated serving vessels and charred animal bones, suggesting that it was discarded along with materials that would have been incorporated in feasting events. These data imply that the towns were places for exclusive objects (special pottery types), and exclusive practices (feasting; high densities of serving vessels).

Moreover, the analysis found that there is an idiosyncratic domestic architectural style at three of the towns (Wat’a, Llactallactayoq, Pumamarka) that makes them similar to one another, yet different than domestic structures in residential sites. Across the survey region, houses within the residential sites share a suite of stylistic and technological attributes. Houses at these residential sites are typically circular or D-shaped,
do not sit on platforms or terraces, and have un-coursed walls. Houses at the towns are typically D-shaped, yet also can have a more oval shape—a rectangle with rounded corners—are typically situated on platforms or terraces, and often contain coursed stones or corner quoins [refer to Figure 4-2]. These observations suggest that there was a common way of producing domestic architecture that cross-cut the socio-spatial differences.
of the clusters, and that architectural differences *between* the towns and their surrounding sites were more salient than differences *within* the towns. Besides qualitative differences in architecture and artifacts, the towns are different from surrounding sites in terms of their occupational history. Two radiocarbon assays from deep strata within one of our excavation units at Wat’a suggest that it was a village in the first millennium B.C.E. Surface collections at the other towns suggest that they have a similar long-term occupational history, even if current radiocarbon dates derived from architecture at other towns only indicate that they were occupied during the OP (Table 4-2). In contrast to many other Andean regions and LIP agglutinated settlements, these towns were not abruptly established during a time when people were more generally “moving on up” to higher locales (compare with Arkush 2005; Covey 2006; Dean 2005; D’Altroy 1992; D’Altroy and Hastorf 2001). In short, these towns were continually or intermittently occupied over centuries; they represent the extension and elaboration of a pre-existing way of life.

<table>
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<th>Source</th>
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<td>1260-1320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumamarka</td>
<td>710±55 BP</td>
<td>Hollowell 1987</td>
<td>1250-1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wat’a</td>
<td>747±36 BP</td>
<td>Kosiba 2010</td>
<td>1229-1285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wat’a</td>
<td>772±38 BP</td>
<td>Kosiba 2010</td>
<td>1230-1299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llactallactayoq</td>
<td>915±50 BP</td>
<td>Kendall 1996</td>
<td>1030-1190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumamarka</td>
<td>940±40 BP</td>
<td>Hollowell 1987</td>
<td>1080-1160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachiqhata</td>
<td>1150±60 BP</td>
<td>Bengtsson 1998</td>
<td>810-980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4-2: This table lists the published and WAP radiocarbon dates from a sample of Ollanta Phase sites (see also Bauer 2004).
The data thus reveal that pre-Inka local social organization was firmly rooted in practices of the soil—agro-pastoral practices—and in place (the towns). Sites within each of the clusters seem to be arranged in a dichotomous manner so as to coordinate socioeconomic activities within immediate areas. More particularly, inter-site differences within the settlement clusters suggest the development of nested communities in which the production of maize and other goods at smaller settlements was linked to the reproduction of both authority and society through the staging of feasting and mortuary practices at towns. Disparities in materials, house forms/sizes, and social practices suggest that the towns themselves may have been residences for emerging elite and their kin.

During the OP, then, these towns were largely produced as distinct places through both the localized coordination of socioeconomic activities, the use of exclusive objects, and perhaps the performance of distinct ceremonial practices, like ancestor veneration. Local people within these towns were most likely staking claims to their authority by directing the production of distinct localities. A deeper understanding of such claims, and their claimants, is therefore necessary.

**Blood and Soil: The Distribution of OP Mortuary Practices and Places**

Consideration of the non-quotidian practices that defined towns reveals a high degree of shared norms, especially with regards to ceremonial practices and particular spaces. Here I focus on mortuary practices. Embedding one’s ancestors within a specific place can be a claim to local autonomy, a way of ritually establishing a link between certain people and a certain place (e.g. McAnany 1995; Porter 2002; Renfrew 1976). The regularized propitiation of ancestors strengthens this claim, amplifying it to a political declaration about the history of a place and a people, or the continual—transcendental and traditional—correspondence between a people and a place (e.g. Barrett 1994; Bloch 1971; Silverman and Small 2002). A look at the distribution of tomb complexes in the Ollantaytambo area demonstrates how, in mortuary practices, local elites staked claims to particular places, assembled notions of local tradition, and perhaps ironically, contributed to the array of regionally recognized practices of authority that would later undergird the nascent Inka state.

The veneration of ancestors within open and aboveground tomb complexes was a new political practice that emerged in the Cusco area during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries (Bengston 1998; Covey 2006, 2008; Dean 2005; Hiltunen and McEwan 2004; Isbell 1997; McEwan
et al. 2002; Sillar and Dean 2002). These aboveground tombs were often individual structures built upon small platforms. Each tomb had an accessible doorway, thus allowing for visibility of the dead during highly ceremonial feasting activities throughout which specific ancestors were feted with food and drink (e.g. Ramirez 2005). Open doorways and aboveground visibility distinguish these tombs from the much more concealed subterranean tombs and mortuary rooms of the Wari (see Isbell 2004; McEwan 2005). In the Ollantaytambo area, the distribution of these open tombs suggests how different practices of ancestor veneration contributed to the establishment of authority within these localized settlement clusters.

OP tombs were often built within discrete places, and associated with specific kinds of settlements. To study the distribution of these tombs, I defined three tomb site types. Sites containing ten or more tomb structures clustered within a discrete area (< 1ha) were classified as “tomb complexes.” “Interspersed” tomb sites were typically comprised of five to ten tombs sparsely distributed among agricultural terraces or below residential structures. Finally, “isolated” tomb sites consisted of one to three mortuary structures that were not directly linked to specific sites or settlements. Both “open” and “closed” tombs were documented within these tomb site types. In “open tombs,” the dead were housed in singular mortuary chambers. “Closed tombs” typically consisted of a rock fissure that was blocked off with stones.

The open tombs were in part characterized by stylistic idiosyncrasies in architecture. Amongst the various types of tombs found throughout the region, the most common are individual open tombs: namely, tower tombs, cist tombs, cliff tombs, and pirca box tombs [Figure 4-6]. All contained high ratios of OP to later period ceramics (an average of 4:1). Tower tombs are short (1-1.5m high) circular or square structures made from un-worked fieldstone and often capped with a corbelled stone roof. Cist tombs are much like tower tombs, yet are much shorter and are semi-subterranean. Cliff tombs feature discrete doorways cut into a cliffside, typically a gypsum or quartzite bluff. Pirca box tombs are square structures made from fieldstone and adobe. The pirca box tombs were painted red. Radiocarbon dates from several Ollantaytambo area open tomb structures confirm that they were first constructed and used in the twelfth century (Bengston 1998).

These tomb styles clearly differentiate settlement clusters, although they are not exclusive to specific clusters [Figure 4-7]. For instance, tower tombs are significantly associated with both clusters within the northern portion of the Ollantaytambo area near the Vilcanota River (Llactallactayoq
Figure 4-6: Local variations on a theme – pictured here are the more common “open” tomb types documented throughout the survey zone. Tower tombs (above left and right) were situated near the Vilcanota River, and were often built aboveground or next to large boulders. Cliff tombs (below left) were often documented in the Huarococondo canyon, and were usually clustered beneath vertical rock faces. Finally, pirca box tombs (below right) were recorded in the Yanawara area, and were painted red and situated on hillsides and beneath rock outcrops. In contrast, “closed” tombs (not pictured) were sporadically distributed, and typically consisted of a niche or enclosure that was blocked off with stones.

and Pumamarka-Markaqocha). Cliff and cist tombs characterize the southern portion of the survey zone, near Wat’a. Pirca box tombs are found only within the Yanawara area. These stylistic differences in mortuary architecture morphology most likely manifested and materialized claims of local social identity and/or political authority.
Figure 4-7: This map shows the distribution of mortuary architecture styles throughout the survey area. Different mortuary styles clearly correspond to the different settlement clusters. Site numbers allow for comparison with Figure 4-8.
Figure 4-8: This map illustrates the distribution of “open” tomb complexes, illustrating how such tomb complexes are almost exclusively associated with certain OP towns.
Despite the stylistic differences, there are similarities in how mortuary practices were staged within each cluster. OP tomb complexes were only situated within or near the towns [Figure 4-8]. In many of the towns, the tomb complexes emphasize the social interrelation and localization of spaces of death (mortuary complex) and life (towns). Similarities in the internal spatial organization of these complexes are significant. When located near the towns (e.g. Wat’a, Llactallactayoq, Markaqocha, Sulkan), tomb complexes are discrete areas that are physically distant from the town’s main habitation areas [Figure 4-9]. The tomb complexes often contain large platforms upon which multiple individual tombs are situated. Many tower tombs often have a small platform attached to the tomb structure, and a wall that surrounds this platform. Such kinds of spatial demarcation suggest that these areas were marked and restricted, and thus only certain activities or people were allowed therein.

High densities of decorated serving vessels were located within and near the platform spaces of mortuary complexes. There is a statistically significant relation between tomb complexes and high densities of OP serving vessels (percentages of OP serving vessels in each tomb sector assemblage; Pearson’s $r = .753$, $n = 34$; significance at 0.01 level). Serving vessel percentages from these tomb sites were also reclassified as categories using natural breaks (jenks) in the data set. Considering these categorical data, a chi-square test also reveals a highly significant correlation between tomb complexes and high densities of serving vessels ($\chi^2 = 33.298$; df=6; significance at the 0.001 level), as well as a patterned correlation between tomb site type and densities of decorated OP serving vessels. The high densities of decorated serving vessels in these tomb complexes suggest that similar practices, perhaps feasting ceremonies, were staged in these spaces.

In sum, despite stylistic variation in mortuary architecture, similar mortuary practices were constituted in similar ways within these separate OP towns. The similarities include: (1) the spatial proximity of open tombs to towns, (2) the restricted spatiality of tomb complexes, (3) the intervisibility of tomb complexes and towns, and (4) the kinds of feasting practices that were associated with these tomb complexes. These mortuary practices relied upon an intimate relationship between ancestors, open spaces and communal food consumption. Thus, even though they were claiming local distinctions, people in various towns were invoking the same logic and participating in the same practices—although separate claims to locality were being made, they were being made in similar ways.
Figure 4-9: The layout of Markaqocha (preliminary map) provides but one example of the OP trend of building discrete tomb complexes near the towns. Radiocarbon dates from grass embedded in the mortar of both houses and tombs from Markaqocha verify that these structures were built or used during the OP (Kosiba 2010).

The mortuary data suggest that, during the OP, local autonomy was grounded in claims to social continuity within place and over time. These claims were constituted in specific ceremonial practices that were staged within particular places. Most likely, local elites or kin groups developed a set of ancestor veneration practices through which claims to local authority and autonomy could be recognized by others. I argue that these practices were not passive expressions of local culture and/or social identity, but rather strategic political actions. These ceremonial practices added to the agro-pastoral practices of the soil that assembled distinct, local communities. That is, local people staked claims to social authority and political autonomy by attaching their ancestors to particular places and thereby declaring a natural link between their blood and the soil.
Conclusions: Constituting Locality, Staking a Claim to Authority

The data from the Ollantaytambo area empirically illustrate how claims to locality engender distinct political scales and practices—both local and regional. Throughout the eleventh-fourteenth centuries in the Cusco region, certain towns (llactas) came to be the places through which claims to local social authority and tradition were made. Local social organization was assembled through the coordination of production activities and agro-pastoral practices within distinct areas, and a kind of ceremonial activity in which autonomy was declared through the ritualized establishment of traditional links between ancestors and particular places.

In this case, the inhabitants of select towns appear to have directed a program of localization as an instrument of rule and a claim to authority. Such claims to authority were staked in select places in order to declare and maintain local autonomy. In using the phrase “staking a claim,” I invoke the American and Australian usage of the term “claim” as a political right and social relation that is specifically “staked” in the land itself, and manifested through human relationships with land. These practices and relationships create “place,” and undergird claims that places both contain and constitute a kind of traditional and inviolable authority. Here, we saw how the assembly of both agro-pastoral and ceremonial practices within specific lands worked to define separate localities. Throughout the centuries that preceded Inka ascendancy, these practices—and their evocation of an essential and primordial relationship between people and the land, blood and soil—were crucial to the constitution of both ancestral places and the authority that they manifested.

In attending to these processes of localization, I propose a new rendering of pre-Inka politics in which changes in the constitution of authority are generated less by the rise and fall of regional states, and more by differences in the local and regional coordination of specific practices. Throughout the Cusco region “LIP” (ca. 1000-1300 C.E.), social groups built distinct, internally coordinated clusters of settlement that manifested localities defined by economic self-reliance and sociopolitical autonomy. Common types of settlement organization and mortuary architecture throughout much of the Cusco region (Bauer 1992, 2004) suggest that many of these groups shared a similar set of political practices, as well as mutually recognizable ways of expressing and performing their local authority. These localized socioeconomic and ceremonial practices assembled distinct localities and also, consequently, constituted a regional social landscape—a common way that people experienced, imagined, and
perceived their social and physical environment (e.g. Smith 2003). Thus, in the Cusco area, a regional sociopolitical framework might have been the unintended outcome of highly localized political practices designed to affirm local ties between people and places. In this sense, it is quite likely that, rather than (solely) a chaotic social landscape of warfare or socioeconomic competition, a shared framework of political norms preceded the development of the Inka state in this region (see Kosiba 2010). It is in these processes of localization, then, that we glimpse the history that was effaced in Inka narratives about the barbarous pre-Inka world—a dynamic history that produced the very places and “traditions” that would one day undergird Inka rule.

By focusing on political practices and processes of localization, archaeologists can begin to forge multiple narratives about pre-Inka societies, and non-state societies more generally. For some areas, a renewed focus on the link between processes of localization and regional political practices may shed additional light on emergent forms of non-state political complexity that were cut short by later imperial expansionism. For instance, the pre-Inka social landscape of the Cajamarca area (northern Peru) mirrors the data presented in this chapter, presenting a form of social interaction described as a loose “confederation” characterized by both conflict and cooperation (Julien 1993: 246). On the other hand, in Andean areas that seem to have been defined by incessant raiding, like the Collao region near Lake Titicaca (Arkush 2005; see also Frye 1997; Stanish 2003; Wise 1993), a focus on localization provides an understanding of how certain socioeconomic and political practices coincided with, supported, or subverted strategies of warfare. Analysis of local processes and agendas may also serve to elucidate the local and regional political motives that engendered fortress and castle landscapes of medieval Burgundy, Armenia, and England (Crumley and Marquardt 1987; Smith 2003; see similar critique in Johnson 2002). Furthermore, emphasis on processes of localization might further illuminate the political agendas employed by local elites on Crete, who appear to have built remarkably similar palace complexes throughout an era of political fragmentation in order to further their immediate interests, rather than to simply constitute a prop for later state formation (Cherry 1986; cf. Renfrew 1986).

Above all, a renewed concentration on links between local and regional social processes enables us to reconsider models of regional dynamics that assume particular political practices and institutions to simply coincide with balkanized or centralized landscapes of power. Such models often assume rather than explain continuity throughout sinusoidal cycles of political “boom and bust.” They too often relegate institutional developments
to fleeting moments of centralization, after which populations are assumed to passively revert to traditional (read: “safe”) forms of organization. They presume spatial units such as “local” and “regional” to be the staging grounds for politics rather than as the mechanisms and ordering principles through which politics occurs.

In such models, the local appears to be a universal ontological category, a given social reality that requires no further explanation. But archaeologists (and ethnographers) may do well to differentiate between “the local” as an analytical and inferential scale imposed by researchers, and “the local” as a political claim and social reality that social actors produce and enact. In this second sense, the local is not given: it is claimed and constituted. An analysis of how local practices may bolster political claims to autonomy highlights how such practices do not simply coincide with, but in fact assemble local communities and social landscapes. Locality is not simply a passive response. It can be, and often is, an active political program.

Notes

1 In the Inka lingua franca of Quechua, paqarina is the present participle of pacarini, which means to dawn, begin, or be born (see Domingo de Santo Tomas 1951[1560]). Paqarina thus refers to both a beginning and a place – it denotes the moment and space that gave birth to a specific kin group, or ayllu. For more information on paqarinas and/or locally important Andean places, see Acuto (2005); Bauer (1991, 1998); MacCormack (1991); Niles (1992); Ramírez (2005); Rowe (1980); Urton (1990); van de Guchte (2003).

2 The data presented here are derived from my multi-scalar systematic survey and excavation project—the Wat’a Archaeological Project (WAP, 2005-2007)—in the Ollantaytambo area of the Cusco region. Major funding for the project came from a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant.

3 My use of the term “locality” is thus distinct from Casey (1998) and Appadurai (1996), both of whom refer to a phenomenological and affective sense of rootedness that one may feel for a community or place, even when one is distanced from that community or place.

4 OP sites and serving vessel percentages per site were each categorized into four ranks using a classification by natural breaks (jenks) method. Site size ranks are not assumed to coincide with administrative tiers or a site-size hierarchy.

5 At two of these sites, immense walls surround a sector containing monumental residential structures. Recent radiocarbon, architectural, and excavation evidence from these sites (Wat’a and Pumamarka) indicates that the walls—and the buildings they contain—were constructed in the Inka Period (Kosiba 2010).
Chi-square analyses tested differences in decorated non-serving vessel sherds and differences in serving vessels sherds, by settlement cluster. All differences were significant at the 0.01 alpha level. Differences in slipping among decorated non-serving vessel sherds: $\chi^2 = 1.363; \text{df}=3$. Differences in burnishing among decorated non-serving vessel sherds: $\chi^2 = 83.228; \text{df}=3$. Differences in slipping among decorated serving vessel sherds: $\chi^2 = 1.303; \text{df}=3$. Differences in burnishing among decorated non-serving vessel sherds: $\chi^2 = 59.608; \text{df}=3$.

The majority of these sites contain only one or two decorated serving vessel sherds; the percentages of decorated serving vessels within these sites range from 0 to 25% with a mean of 11.1%. On average, only fifteen sherds were collected at each of these sites. Undecorated utilitarian wares largely characterize smaller sites.

Three radiocarbon measurements were derived from Formative period contexts. These three measurements indicate that Wat’a was first occupied in the seventh or eighth century B.C.E. The calibrated ranges for these three Formative period dates are 3 to 118 C.E., 787 to 555 B.C.E., and 766 to 543 B.C.E. (68.2%) (OxCal 4.1).
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