

TRADE AND LOGISTICS IN THE INCA EMPIRE

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Abstract

Trade is one of the most important aspects to a civilization, without trade, civilizations cannot thrive or grow. It also keeps good relations with rival empires because the civilizations rely on each other. Trade was not as simple as today, even though it was hard to establish trade contacts between nations, they weren't only trading money and resources but also religion, culture, tradition and wisdom. Therefore trade was extremely important.

Trade routes have developed since ancient times to transport goods from places of production to places of commerce. Scarce commodities that were only available in certain locations, such as salt or spices, were the biggest driver of trade networks, but once established, these roads also facilitated cultural exchange—including the spread of religion, ideas, knowledge, and sometimes even bacteria.

Unlike most of the other route The Spice Routes were maritime routes linking the East to the West. Pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg were all hugely sought-after commodities in Europe, but before the 15th century access to trade with the East was controlled by North Africans and Arab middlemen, making such spices extremely expensive and rare. With the dawning of the Age of Exploration (15th to 17th centuries), as new navigation technology made sailing long distance possible, Europeans took to the seas to forge direct trading relationships with India, China and Japan. The spice trade was one of the reasons for the development of a faster ship, which encouraged the discovery of new lands. This is how the relationship between East and West was established, so it was that in the search of new routes for the trade of spices with the India that Christopher Columbus established and ended up finding the Continent of America in 1492

Introduction

The Inca Empire is considered as one of the most important historical civilizations in America, covering large territorial extensions. Its political and economic organization are key pieces to determine its culture and its magnificent architecture. That is part of admirable tourist views.

The empire of Tahuantinsuyo was characterized by the control of the ecological floors of the Andean peoples, which constituted the fundamental pillar for its organization and political, social and economic development, its great territorial extension was divided into 4 regions Chinchaysuyo, Contisuyo, Antisuyo and Collasuyo which were formed by Ayllus, which was the set of individuals or families linked by certain links as a common origin (real or fictitious) that were descendants of a mythical common ancestor and lived in a certain place.

In this civilization a system of community work was established, La Mita which was the method most used by the empire to work the lands of the Inca, works of the community such as construction of roads and bridges, fortresses, sacred temples; As well as mining activities, guano extraction, production in ceramics, goldsmithing, product conservation, military activities, among others. The Minka has many similarities with the mita, the minka is more linked to work within the same ayllu to benefit all the members of it. However, an ayllu could help another ayllu that required support. It can be defined as a work of community and solidarity character. And the Ayni, just like the minka is a work method focused on the collective interfamilial work that likewise benefited the ayllu. In particular, this mechanism of reciprocity was used in agricultural work and housing construction; when a family clan needed support, he would turn to a family to help him.

Definitely, there were great contributions of the Inca civilization, up to our times, from the geopolitical organization, the society and the economy to the culture and architecture, of which many remained anonymous after Spain invaded and plundered the territories of America.

1. Economic Activities

The basis of the Inca economy was agriculture, they obtained a great variety of crops and raised several species of livestock, but the most interesting thing is the production system that allowed them to take advantage of the different environments that existed in the lands they occupied both on the coast, sierra and jungle. They also had mining, ceramic and goldsmithing as another of their economic activities. The products of these various economic activities were exchanged within the different regions of the empire and the former were stored and redistributed according to the needs and interests of the state.

2. Agriculture

The Incas developed farming techniques and tools that adapted to natural conditions. They built a system of agricultural terraces called Andenes (platforms) as if they were balconies of the mountains with an impressive irrigation system with aqueducts and complex channels of engineering.

- Potatoes around 1000 m. to 3900 m.
- Quinoa was grown from about 2300 m. to 3900 m.

- Maize was the principal crop up to the elevation of 3200 m. commonly and 3500 m. in favorable locations.
- Cotton was a major near the Pacific Ocean and grown up to elevations of about 1500 m. On the eastern slopes of the Andes, Coca was grown up to the same elevation, and cassava (yuka) was a major crop of the Amazon lowlands.
- Tubers such as Oca, Mashua and Maca were also grown.
- In addition they cultivated a great variety of fruits, vegetables. Spices and medicinal plants.
- Some others food grown consist of tomatoes, chili pepper, avocados and peanuts-
- Many fruit trees were also utilized in crop production.
- Banana, passion fruit can be grown from 2000 m. to 3200 m.
- Pawpaw from 500 m. to 2700 m.
- Solanum quitoense or naranjilla from 500 m. to 2300 m.
- Cape gooseberry from 500 m. to 2800 m.

3. Cattle Raising

The basis of the breeding was the breeding of camelids, who played a truly important role in the economy. These animals were used to transport the merchandise and from these they appropriated their flesh, their bones, their hide, their fat, their excrement and their lama. The Incas also raised and domesticated Cuy (guinea pigs) and ducks as a source of meat.

- LLAMA:
It takes advantage of its long and thick wool.
It was used as a pack animal
- CUY (guinea pig):
Its meat is a very complete food; it has a great nutritional value.
- ALPACA:
It took advantage if fine wool and its meat were consumed.
- VICUÑA:
It is very appreciated if fine wool with which the dresses of the upper classes were woven

- FISH AND SEAFOOD:

The sea, the rivers and the lakes gave the Andean inhabitants resources that allowed them a stable subsistence.

4. Mining

Mining was a flourishing activity of the Inca Empire, they developed techniques to work metals and precious stones. The Andean area was the cradle of metallurgy in South America, its artifices achieved the most varied techniques and alloys. For the manufacture of armaments, copper and its alloys were used, bronze for the elaboration of ceremonial knives and axes, it is also said to use platinum and iron but only for the elaboration of ornaments. Gold and silver were used to make ceremonial and royal utelcilios, as well as accessories and clothing of the Incas. The Incas devoted a lot of time and effort to the extraction of minerals for which they had to develop engineering works at the underground level, although in many cases the minerals are extracted from a superficial zone. Among the precious and semiprecious stones we find; blue, pink and turquoise opals, emeralds, diamonds, quarsos among others.

5. Handicrafts and Ceramics

Craft was a secondary economic activity, but not for that much less important than the others. The main crafts of the Incas were ceramics, textiles, metal ornaments and weapons with ornaments. The Incas ceramics are characterized by their polish surfaces, their fine decoration representative of geometric tendency and the use of yellow, black, white, red and orange colours. They used to paint rhombuses, lines, circles, animal and stylized fruits, as well as plants and flowers.

6. Trade and Logistics

Since pre-Hispanic times, the importance of trade and exchange of products for development was known. This led to the fact that later in the time of the Incas trade grew and became a market without borders that led to the export of products throughout the Empire and the rest of South America. From the time of the Empire of the Incas, the geographical location of Peru, turned it into the center of commerce and exchange of all South America.

The Inca trade was a factor of unification and exchange between the different regions of the Empire. From the coast came the dried fish to the Andes mountain range, along the stone roads built by the people. In the same way, the inhabitants of the coast received the agricultural and artisan products of the mountain.

7. The Exchange of Products – The Trueque

There was an exchange of products called “Trueque” (barter). It was authorized to carry out these activities 3 times a month, in special places called "CATU" (fairs in our days) The Catus were open places located in the corners of the squares or in a wide street where the barter or exchange was carried out.

Towards the Catus the settlers arrived, and they were located according to the products that they took. There, the trader placed himself behind his products located in rows and in piles; then the interested ones approached with other products and thus they were agreed for the exchange.

- Catu residents gathered with their llamas loaded with products.
- There were also singers, dancers, narrators who cheered the visitors.
- The hampicamayoc also attended to cure the ills of the population.
- From time to time, merchants from distant places came bringing emeralds from the north, feathers and jungle animals, beads, mullo, etc.
- Trade was a factor of unification and exchange between the different regions of the empire.

8. Storage – Collas

One of the important characteristics of the Inca economy and society was its capacity to store food, objects and other surpluses of its production. The existence of deposits that served for such purposes were called Collcas. These buildings were constructed in stone, distributed in rows that, generally, were located in the slopes of the hills. These places were chosen for their freshness, height and ventilation. The constructions were separated from each other, perhaps, to prevent the spread of fires.

9. The Incas Road System – The QHAPAC ÑAN

The Inca road system was the most extensive and advanced transportation system in pre-Columbian South America. It was about 39,900 kilometers long. The construction of the roads required a large expenditure of time and effort. The network was based on two north-south roads with numerous branches. The best known portion of the road system is the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. Part of the road network was built by cultures that precede the Inca Empire,

notably the Wari culture. During the Spanish colonial era, parts of the road system were given the status of *Camino Real*. In 2014 the road system became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Qhapaq Ñan (English: *Great Inca Road*, or *Main Andean Road*, and meaning "the beautiful road" constituted the principal north-south highway of the Inca Empire traveling 6,000 kilometers (3,700 mi) along the spine of the Andes.

The Qhapaq Ñan unified this immense and heterogeneous empire through a well-organized political system of power. It allowed the Inca to control his Empire and to send troops as needed from the capital, Cusco.

The most important Inca road was the *Camino Real* (Royal Road), as it is known in Spanish, with a length of 5,200 kilometers. It began in Quito, Ecuador, passed through Cusco, and ended in what is now Tucumán, Argentina. The *Camino Real* traversed the mountain ranges of the Andes, with peak altitudes of more than 5,000 m. *El Camino de la Costa*, the coastal trail, with a length of 4,000 kilometers, ran parallel to the sea and was linked with the *Camino Real* by many smaller routes.

10. The Main Routes

The eastern route ran high in the Puna grasslands and mountain valleys from Quito, Ecuador to Mendoza, Argentina. The western route followed the coastal plain not including in coastal deserts where it hugged the foothills. More than twenty routes ran over the western mountains, while others traversed the eastern cordillera in the mountains and lowlands. Some of these roads reach heights of over 5,000 meters above sea level. The trails connected the regions of the Inca empire from the northern provincial capital in Quito, Ecuador past the modern city of Santiago, Chile in the south. The Inca road system linked together about 40,000 kilometers of roadway and provided access to over 3,000,000 square kilometers of territory.

Although the Inca roads varied greatly in scale, construction, and appearance, for the most part they varied between about 1 to 4 meters in width.

11. Transportation

Much long-distance transportation was done on foot similar in Mesoamerica. The Inca had two main uses of transportation on the roads. They used the chasqui (runners) for relaying messages throughout the empire and llamas and alpacas for transporting goods.

The chasqui were known as the runners of the empire. They were estimated to run as much as 240 kilometers per day. Chasquis were in charge of delivering everything from news to lightweight goods such as fish. Tampu (also *tambu*, *tampo*), or way stations, were used as resting places for the chasquis as they made their journeys. Tampu were housing structures on the side of the road that provided water, supplies and shelter for the chasquis who passed by. They also had supplies for the military that were headed into battle.

Llamas and alpacas were also used frequently. Llamas and alpacas are lightweight animals. They cannot carry much, but they are incredibly nimble. When transporting large amounts of goods across the empire it was more efficient for the Incas to use herds of llamas or alpacas and have two or three herdsmen. The herdsmen would herd the animals up the steep mountain roads without having to risk peoples' lives and while still being able to carry larger amounts of resources.

12. Accounting – Quipus

The Quipu was a tool used by the Incas - and the preceding societies - to keep records and accounts. The word Quipu comes from Quechua [written: khipu] and means knot.

The first step occurred in the middle horizon or Wari, in the middle of the first millennium (BC), was used to carry out accounting, population control, land ownership and labor and production. It is a pre-Inca invention of hanging twine made of wool, auquénidos hair or cotton, and dyed in different colors. They consisted of a thick cord, on the upper part of which vertical, thin and with different knots were distributed, with the possibility of holding other strings attached to the thick cord, the quipus allowed to store information as a set of visual and tactile perceptions; The times of life in the colony. And in that way, the information you must have and control.

Conclusion

A pesar de las pocas evidencias y testimonios que se pudo rescatar de la civilización Inca después de la invasión Española, podemos considerar de que este fue un Imperio bastante organizado, tubo un gran desarrollo en todos los aspectos, y aunque fueron poco evolucionados, su organización política y social fue muy bien establecida y dirigida lo que les permitió expandirse por varios territorios e infundir nuevas culturas, costumbres, arte y religión. Algunas de estas costumbres aun estan latentes en determinados pueblos alto Andinos, donde el comercio aun permanece identico al del Imperio del Tahuantinsuyo.



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