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THE ORIGINS AND
DEVELOPMENT
OF THE
ANDEAN STATE

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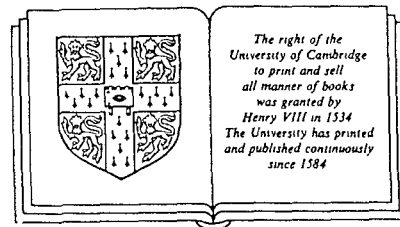
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Chapter 9

From state to empire: the expansion of Wari outside the Ayacucho Basin

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The problem

The Middle Horizon period of Andean prehistory (c. A.D. 600 to 1000) witnessed the evolution of a complex political organization centered around the city of Wari in the Ayacucho Basin of the central highlands. Although there is little doubt that Wari politically dominated this heartland, there is much dispute over the extent and nature of Wari influence outside this zone. This paper is an attempt to clarify this situation and offer some understanding of the evolutionary processes which account for the apparent occurrence of Wari cultural traits outside the Ayacucho Basin.

This, of course, requires some understanding of the development of the Wari state in Ayacucho, from the later phases of the Early Intermediate Period (c. A.D. 400 to 600) through Middle Horizon Epoch 1a (c. A.D. 600 to 700). Ideally, this involves documenting population growth and changes in settlement patterns reflecting the growth of an urban system in Ayacucho, as well as understanding the apparent interaction between Wari and Nazca (Menzel 1964) and between Wari and Tiwanaku (Cook 1979). While Isbell has touched on some aspects of the problem elsewhere in this volume, I would like to separate the issues of Wari inside the Ayacucho Basin versus Wari outside the Ayacucho Basin, and address three major problems.

First, do manifestations of Wari exist outside the Ayacucho Basin, and if so, where and in what contexts do these

occur? Some researchers argue that Wari traits are limited to the Wari heartland, others see some limited distribution outside Ayacucho; while still others see Wari traits as pervasive throughout the entire Andean region north of Lake Titicaca. Second, if Wari manifestations exist outside the Ayacucho Basin, what mechanism best accounts for these and their distribution? Some would argue that the apparent presence of Wari traits outside Ayacucho was the result of simple reciprocal trade (Shady and Ruiz 1979), while at the other extreme some argue that these traits were spread as the result of the expansion of an all-powerful military empire. Third, given the mechanism which best accounts for these manifestations, what can be said about the evolutionary processes involved in the development of this complex political system?

My specific temporal concern is the period beginning with Middle Horizon Epoch 1b (c. A.D. 700). By this time state-level organizations had probably evolved in a number of areas in the Andean region, including those centered in Moche on the north coast (Moseley 1978a, T. Topic 1982), Tiwanaku in the far south highlands (Browman 1982), and Cahuachi in the Nasca drainage on the south coast (Schreiber n.d.). The central coast and the Callejón de Huaylas may also have been characterized by complex political organization. Therefore, the theoretical problem in the Middle Horizon is not to document the development of the 'pristine' state, but rather to understand why manifestations of one particular state came to have an

apparently widespread distribution throughout portions of the Andean region while other states did not. The question to ask seems to be not, 'Was Wari a state?,' but rather, 'What was Wari doing outside the Ayacucho Basin, and why?' (cf. Isbell and Schreiber 1978).

Wari manifestations and related events of the Middle Horizon

Ceramics

Wari styles and iconography, closely related provincial styles, and local copies of these have been found in various contexts throughout the central Andes north of the zone of Tiwanaku domination. Their apparent absence in the south has been widely interpreted as reflecting a border between Wari and Tiwanaku (Menzel 1964). The presence of pure and derived Wari styles elsewhere is explained as the result of any one of many processes. Relatively 'pure' Wari styles occur in the highlands from Cuzco to Cajamarca, and on the south and central coast. The situation in the far north highlands and on the north coast is less clear; few pure Wari style ceramics are found, although some examples which may be derived or copied from Wari styles do seem to occur.

Architecture

A second manifestation of Wari outside the Ayacucho Basin is the occurrence of a number of rectangular structures,

ranging in size from 25 to 800 m on a side, and built in a distinctive and unique architectural style. Clear examples of these structures occur in the highlands from Cuzco and Cajamarca, and possibly on the south and central coast as well (Schreiber 1978). These sites (Figure 1) have been interpreted as storage facilities, *tambo* (way stations), fortresses, and/or administrative centers. The similarity in style and elements of layout of all of these sites suggests that their construction was directly supervised by architectural specialists from Wari. Regardless of their function or the mechanism through which they came to be distributed, the existence of these sites in various areas implies some direct input from Wari in those areas. Furthermore, the distribution on these sites is probably the best delimiter of the zone of direct Wari 'influence.'

Road system

The association of these architectural facilities with particular long-distance roads, many later coopted by the Incas as part of their system of 'royal highways,' implies the existence of a formal system of roads in the Middle Horizon (Lumbreras 1974a, Schreiber 1978). The association of Wari sites with the roads would indicate that Wari may have been responsible for formalizing and maintaining a system of long-distance roads. The labor input necessary in the construction and maintenance of these roads suggests that they were not merely local trails.

Exchange

Recognition of long-distance trade is certainly not new for the Middle Horizon, but it is worth pointing out that some of this trade in exotics seems clearly associated with Wari. Wari participation in some sort of long-distance trade network is indicated by the presence of various exotic goods at pure Wari sites, including gold, bronze, *Spondylus* sp, turquoise, etc. (Schreiber 1978). In some cases, notably that of turquoise, raw materials were apparently brought to Wari itself, where the finished products were manufactured. Obsidian was also widely traded since preceramic times, as has been well documented by Burger and Asaro (1977). They point out that obsidian from the major Quispisisa source reached its widest distribution during the Middle Horizon and attribute this to some sort of Wari control.

Settlement patterns

In much of the Andean region, especially in the highlands, many local settlement patterns seem to undergo major shifts in the Middle Horizon (Browman 1976; Schreiber 1982). Various explanations of this change include: environmental change, population growth, the introduction of maize cultivation, and even direct interference by Wari itself. I do not suggest here that these changes are a direct manifestation of Wari outside Ayacucho, but rather that any significant cultural developments during the Middle Horizon may be relevant to the understanding of the Wari situation



Fig 1 Distribution of sites with Wari architecture

Other political developments

Among other events of the Middle Horizon, some mention should be made of other major political changes during this period. First, we see the fragmentation and apparent relocation of central authority in the Moche state from the site of Moche to the site of Pampa Grande further north in the Lambayeque Valley (Day 1972b; T. Topic 1982). Second, we see the growth of several new polities including Cajamarca, Sicán (Shimada 1982), and Pachacamac (Menzel 1977). And third, the Nazca culture underwent a degree of fragmentations and the loss of Cahuachi as the center of authority.

Mechanisms

A number of mechanisms have been suggested in the literature that purport to explain the spread of Wari traits outside Ayacucho. In this section I discuss three possible mechanisms and briefly evaluate each of these in terms of the Wari manifestations and events of the Middle Horizon discussed above.

Religion

Religion has been suggested by some as the mechanism by which Wari traits came to be distributed throughout much of the Andean region (Menzel 1964). That is, the Wari 'expansion' was an active proselytizing effort to spread a particular set of religious beliefs. Certainly the spread of Wari iconography, including specific mythical beings, as well as the presence of the offering tradition in Epoch 1, could argue in favor of this interpretation (cf. Cook 1979). However, if religion were the only factor involved, one probably would not expect the presence of the large secular architectural facilities and an associated road system. I suggest that if religion were a factor in the spread of Wari traits outside Ayacucho it was more likely a corollary of some other mechanism, rather than a primary mechanism in its own right.

Commerce

It has been suggested that Wari was one of several urban systems during the Middle Horizon and that extensive trade between these commercial centers accounts for the distribution of Wari traits outside Ayacucho (Shady and Ruiz 1979). The distribution of ceramics, specifically when found in these other urban centers, would support this notion. On the other hand, how would one account for the apparent lack of commerce between these centers and Tiwanaku in the south? Again, the presence of major architectural facilities does not entirely support the notion that Wari extended outward for trade reasons alone. If such were the case, one would not expect the major investment of the labor and resources manifested in these structures. More importantly, the fact that all of these facilities were apparently built by just one of the proposed 'commercial centers' argues against this notion.

The existence of a road system would be consistent with extensive trade between commercial centers; however, the

investment of labor and resources necessary for its construction and maintenance again could be expected to be beyond the means of an individual center. Likewise, the shift in settlement patterns seen in many areas is not entirely consistent with the idea that Wari was one of several co-equal commercial centers, unless a change in subsistence strategies reflects an increased emphasis on particular products to be exchanged in these networks. Furthermore, the growth of new political centers and the eclipse of others outside the Ayacucho Basin could be attributed to their position and success in the proposed kind of major trading network.

As a whole, the participation of Wari in long-distance trade is consistent with the idea that it was a major commercial center, though other kinds of data do not completely confirm this as the sole cause of Wari expansion and influence outside the Ayacucho Basin. Nevertheless, whatever the mechanism that accounts for Wari traits outside Ayacucho, commerce clearly plays a part.

Political expansion/conquest

A third mechanism that has been suggested to account for the distribution of Wari traits is that of political domination. In other words, it has been suggested that Wari may be viewed as a political empire which came to dominate large portions of the Andean region (Menzel 1968, Isbell 1978). The distribution of ceramics outside Ayacucho is consistent with this possibility, although ceramics might also be found outside the boundaries of actual political control.

This notion is consistent with the distribution of architectural facilities, especially if these are interpreted as primarily administrative facilities, which may have functioned additionally as *tambo*, storehouses, and defensive sites. Certainly the maintenance of an administrative hierarchy would require the construction of intrusive administrative facilities, particularly where local levels of administration were insufficiently complex to fulfill imperial needs.

A system of well-defined and maintained roads is to be expected in this situation in order to facilitate communication within the domain, to facilitate movement of military forces through the domain, and to control the movement of people within the domain. The existence of long-distance trade is also consistent with political domination, though it cannot be taken as strong supporting evidence of the general hypothesis.

Changes in settlement patterns and subsistence, if the result of environmental change or major population growth, may simply represent local responses to the same factors which led to the rise of Wari in the first place. However, in the case with which I am most familiar, a strong argument can be made that major changes in the settlement/subsistence system were a direct result of Wari domination (Schreiber 1982).

Finally, the political changes of the Middle Horizon are not inconsistent with the notion of Wari domination, especially the growth of new polities, such as Cajamarca and Sicán, around the apparent periphery of the Wari domain. Indeed, the decentralization of political authority in Nasca during the

Middle Horizon might be interpreted as the result of the imposition of political control from Wari; and the apparent fact that Nazca collapsed along with Wari at the end of Middle Horizon Epoch 2b is also consistent with this view.

To summarize, religion alone cannot account for the existence of Wari traits outside Ayacucho. Although the commercial center/trade network possibility is very attractive, two points argue fairly strongly against this notion. (1) the presence of major architectural facilities, and especially the immense cost of establishing such facilities, and (2) the apparent one-sided nature of this commercial network. I would suggest, then, that on the basis of our present state of

knowledge and interpretation, the strongest argument can be made in favor of political domination as the mechanism which best accounts for the presence of Wari manifestations outside the Ayacucho Basin. The three possible mechanisms are certainly not mutually exclusive, and religious and commercial concerns probably played some part in the overall process.

CARAHUARAZO VALLEY Lucanas, Ayacucho, Peru

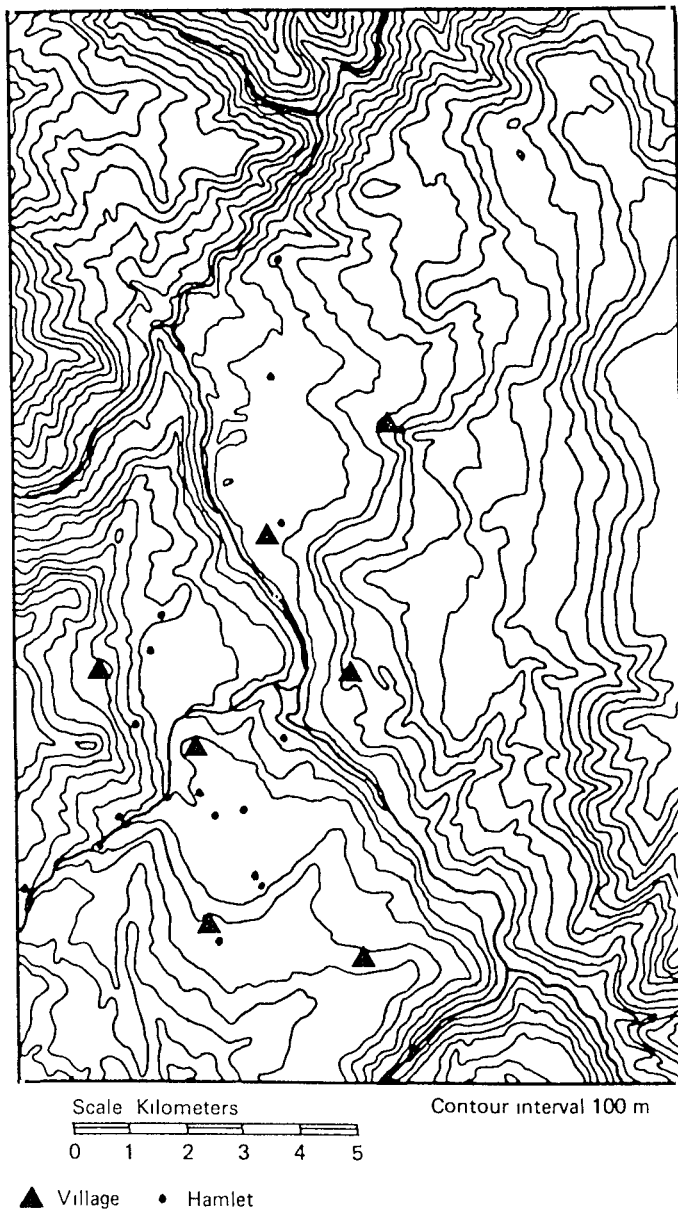


Fig 2 Carahuarazo Valley settlement pattern during the Early Jincamocco Phase

CARAHUARAZO VALLEY Lucanas, Ayacucho, Peru

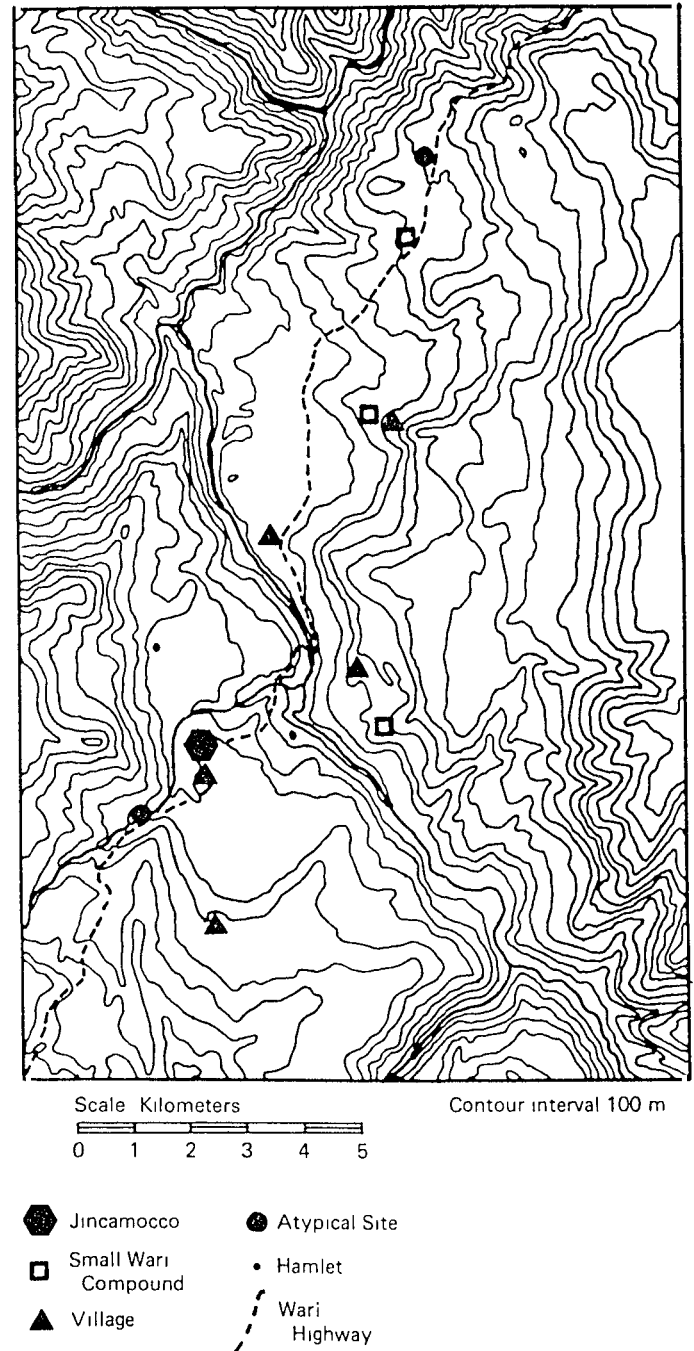


Fig 3 Carahuarazo Valley settlement pattern during the Late Jincamocco Phase

A case in the Carahuarazo Valley

One brief example may serve to emphasize some of these points. The Carahuarazo Valley is located in the south highlands just over the continental divide from the Nazca drainage, about four days' travel (by foot) from Cahuachi, and about six from Wari. Although located in the modern department of Ayacucho, the valley lies a considerable distance from the Ayacucho Basin and did not participate in any direct way in the development of the Wari state before Middle Horizon Epoch 1b.

When the Wari presence was first felt, there were seven small villages and seventeen seasonally occupied hamlets in the valley (Figure 2). During the period of Wari domination a number of major changes occurred in the valley (Figure 3). (1) The highest villages, those located at the juncture of the herding and tuber growing zones, were abandoned and new villages were established at the juncture of the tuber and grain growing zones. (2) The site of Jincamocco, a medium-sized Wari enclosure, was built in Epoch 1b. During its occupation it grew to some 27 ha in extent through the addition of more structures around the outside of the original enclosure. (This is the only case with which I am familiar of a Wari enclosure which did not stand isolated from other structures.) (3) At least three more small Wari enclosures were built, two adjacent to grain zones, the third along the road to Wari. (4) Two major stepped and paved roads were built out of the valley to the north and south, and a bridge was probably constructed over the rivers. (5) Much of the valley was terraced at this time, and irrigation systems were probably developed concurrently. This fact, along with the downward shift in settlement location, suggests the introduction of, or the intensification of, maize cultivation.

The construction of all of these features must have been extremely demanding in terms of labor and resources as well as administrative time. The sheer volume of construction suggests that it was not all done at local initiative or expense, accomplished by participation in a commercial network. More likely, it was organized and 'financed' by Wari, and was a direct result of political domination and reorganization of the local system by Wari. And what did Wari get in return? The valley was probably a good stopping-off point on the journey between Wari and Nazca, and may have served as an important node in the communication network. It is possible that Wari was exploiting a small obsidian source in the valley. However, the analysis done by Burger and Asaro (1977) shows that although obsidian from this source was predominant on sites within the valley at all time periods, it has not been found at Wari, and its distribution during the Middle Horizon does not imply Wari control. Finally, the construction of terraces and the downward shift in settlement locations might suggest that increased quantities of maize were grown, and may have served as tribute payments to Wari.

The evolution of empire

If we accept political domination as the mechanism which

best accounts for the distribution of Wari traits outside the Ayacucho Basin, what can we say about the evolution of such an expanding state? For ease of discussion, I divide this evolution into three successive stages

Initial impetus to expansion

After the evolution of state-level administration and, usually, urban society, there are a number of cases in history or prehistory in which a political organization rapidly and suddenly expanded the boundaries of its control. In these cases the area that came to be controlled was vastly larger than the initial heartland. Furthermore, such 'imperial' states may be contrasted with other states that only gradually expand their borders and do so to a much lesser degree.

What causes a state to expand suddenly in this fashion? A number of suggestions have been offered, including: proselytizing religion (Menzel 1964), control of trade, environmental or population stress leading to a need to control new resource zones (Paulsen 1976, Isbell 1978), and the dictates of certain laws of heredity (Conrad 1981). In the case of Wari, I suspect the answer to this question can only come from an increased knowledge of the processes inherent in the evolution of Wari as a state in Ayacucho (cf. Isbell 1980). Certainly the Wari expansion had the effect of spreading its religion, controlling at least some long-distance trade, and controlling new resource zones. Whatever the initial impetus, Wari suddenly and rapidly expanded outside of Ayacucho beginning in Middle Horizon Epoch 1b.

Expansion and consolidation

The second stage in the evolution of empires involves two interrelated processes: expansion and consolidation. The directions in which an empire expanded, the order in which it expanded, and especially the order in which areas were consolidated under imperial rule sometimes can be reconstructed more or less directly from the archaeological remains. The process of expansion generally involves some combination of diplomacy and militarism. As new regions are included in this expansion, the process of consolidation begins, and involves the establishment of economic and political ties between the imperial capital and the newly incorporated region. The actual manifestation of this process is the result of the interplay between a number of complex factors including general relations between the two groups, location of the new region within the empire, the administrative requirements of the empire, and the level of complexity of the local political system. In the case of Wari the processes of expansion and consolidation are manifested most clearly in presence of major facilities in some areas, as well as the sequence of their construction.

I do not mean to imply that reconstruction of imperial expansion is a simple process. In fact, political conquest empires are notoriously difficult to see archaeologically, even when one has prior knowledge of their existence. It is precisely this difficulty that suggests that, at least in the Andean region,

we may be dealing with two rather different forms of expanding states. At the risk of oversimplifying a complex situation on the north coast, in the cases of Moche and Chimu, we see examples of expanding states which might be termed to be characterized by *intensive* forms of control. That is, these states expanded rapidly to the north and south, controlling each successive valley in turn, and imposed major visible administrative structures in each (see chapter by Mackey, this volume).

On the other hand, Wari, as well as the Inca empire and possibly Tiwanaku, might be said to exhibit more *extensive* forms of control. Political control seems to be extended over a much larger area by these polities; yet within the total area visible manifestations of imperial control tend to be unequally distributed. That is, control is apparent in border areas, areas with significant resources, hostile areas, and areas lacking sufficient levels of complexity for imperial needs. Other areas seem to be totally devoid of any overt manifestations of imperial control, quite unlike the much more pervasive manifestations of the north-coast polities. In the highland cases, those areas which appear to lack any sort of imperial control may indeed lack such control; they also may represent areas within the domain that were passed over because they were not needed by or threatening to the empire; or they may have been ruled through diplomatic alliances with local leaders. This latter

situation is extremely problematic in that I can see no immediate means of evaluating it archaeologically.

Given that sites with visible remains of Wari control have a rather spotty distribution throughout the domain, it seems most feasible to suggest that the overall extent and distribution of sites with Wari architecture and the associated road system gives us the best approximation of the boundaries of the Wari Empire (Figure 4). In other words, I would argue that the Wari political domain, by the end of Epoch 2b, included all of the highlands from Pikillaqta, south of Cuzco, to Yanabamba, just south of Cajamarca, as well as the south and central coast. The order of expansion, judging from the ceramics associated with the Wari sites throughout the empire, proceeded first to the southeast toward Nazca and north to Huamachuco or even Cajamarca. Only later were major portions of the central highlands north of Ayacucho incorporated into the empire, and expansion proceeded to the southeast nearly to the Titicaca Basin.

Collapse

The third and final stage in the evolution of empires is, of course, their ultimate collapse. It is a curious aspect of most empires, at least those of the extensive type, that once they cease to expand they do not seem able to maintain themselves. This certainly seems true of Wari. Furthermore, once this point had been reached, the economic and political organization of Wari had changed to such a degree (it was so geared to an expansionist economy, if you will) that not only did the empire collapse, but the Wari state within the Ayacucho Basin also collapsed, and Wari was abandoned. In addition, those polities which were closely tied to Wari, particularly Nazca and to a lesser degree Pachacamac, also collapsed. On the other hand, states on its periphery, such as Tiwanaku, Cajamarca and Sicán, continued to exist, and eventually another complex state/empire arose on the north coast.

Many reasons have been proposed to account for the collapse of complex civilizations in different parts of the world. As in the case of understanding the first stage of empire evolution, the initial impetus to expansion, the real reasons for collapse may be extremely complex, and difficult to see in the archaeological record. As a first step, however, I would suggest not asking why empires such as Wari collapsed, but rather, why did such polities stop expanding? In the case of Wari, the answer to the latter question probably lies in the existence of other complex political organizations to both the north and south of the Wari domain, which it could not or would not subsume. I suggest that Wari itself regarded these areas as outside its domain, and built its two largest facilities near these border zones: Viracochapampa, just short of the Cajamarca polity to the north, and Pikillaqta, just short of the Tiwanaku domain to the south. The recognition by Wari of these as the limits of its domain and the failure to continue expanding beyond these limits may have preordained the collapse of the Wari empire.

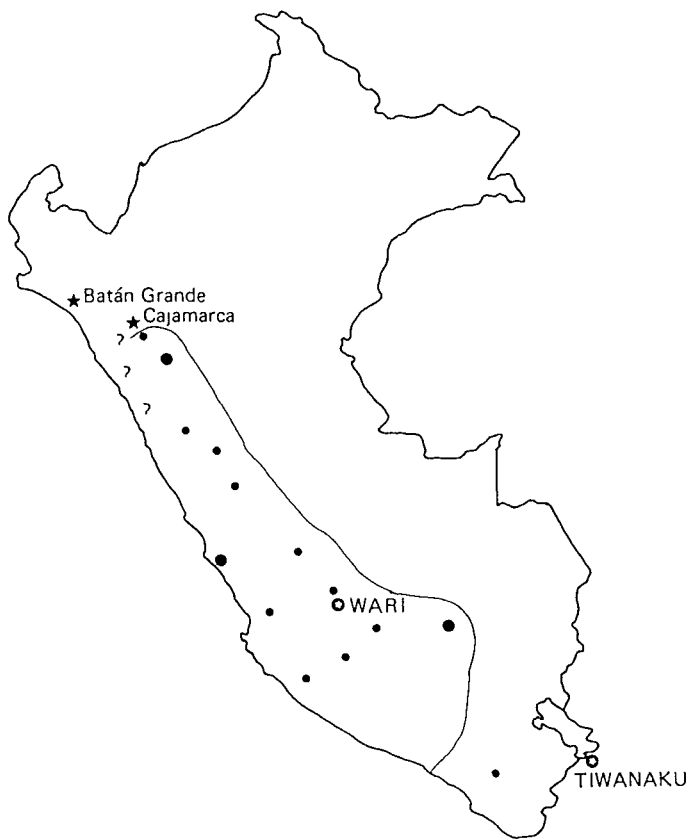


Fig 4 Probable boundaries of the Wari Empire

