



Nouveau regard sur Choqek'iraw (Choque Quirao): Un site Inca au coeur de la Cordillere de Vilcabamba au Perou (Paris Monographs in American Archaeology) (French Edition)

Patrice Lecoq

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Situating in the heart of the Vilcabamba cordillera in Peru, some 150 km northwest of Cuzco, Choqek'iraw or Choquequirao (« the golden cradle » in Quechua), is one of the most beautiful achievements of Inca architecture, and one of the very few pre-Hispanic sites displaying large wall mosaics showing geometric figures and llama caravans climbing the mountainside, the only one known from Inca times. Ethnohistoric sources suggest that Choqek'iraw was one of the Tupac Inca Yupanqui's palaces, but the excavations we conducted in peripheral residential areas suggest a much earlier occupation; it could begin in the early Intermediate Period (200 to 500 AD), and continue during the Late Intermediate (1000-1300 AD). Several elements also suggest that figures represented on the mosaics convey cosmological significance and are laid out following textile principles. Finally, the orientation of some buildings with the cardinal points and the presence of a truncated hill considered as an astronomical observatory, an ushnu, reinforce this hypothesis, suggesting that Choqek'iraw could have played the role of a regional agro-pastoral calendar and be considered as an important ritual centre or wak'a, and an oracular shrine dedicated to the triple Inca divinity of the Lightning. This book stems from an extensive French-Peruvian archaeological project conducted from 2003 to 2006, as part of a cooperation agreement between the French and Peruvian governments. It presents the results of the excavations that have been carried out, but also new hypotheses about the role - including symbolic - that this site may have played.

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