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A HUNTING OR HERDING TRAP ON THE PAMPA DE HUÁNUCO

Monica Barnes (American Museum of Natural History, monica@andeanpast.org) reports on what she believes to be a large-scale hunting or herding trap on the Pampa de Huánuco.

In 2013, I published a research report in *Andean Past* that included a sketch plan and photograph of a large keyhole-shaped aceramic stone structure on the Pampa de Huánuco. At the time, it appeared to be enigmatic. The plan and photo were previously unpublished data from John Victor Murra's "A Study of Provincial Inca Life" project (1963–1966) centered on the large provincial Inca site of Huánuco Pampa (Barnes 2013).

The function of this structure remained unknown to me until the 2019 Institute of Andean Studies meeting in Berkeley, California. There, Randall Haas presented the results of survey conducted with his students in the Titi-caca Basin (Haas *et al.* 2019). In this region, through the study of Google Earth photographs, Haas *et al.* identified multiple similar structures that he and his team interpreted as hunting traps. These are large-scale stone or brush features built communally and intended to capture migrating animals. I can now suggest that the structure on the Pampa de Huánuco is a funnel trap used during collective hunts or herding events.

The structure at Huánuco was called variously Inca Hamana, Inca Khamana, or Inca Jamana by John Murra's team. It is now known as Jardín Jardín (Carlo Ordoñez, personal communication, 12 January 2024). It was recorded by archaeologist John L. Cotter (1911–1999), best known for his early work on Clovis and Folsom stone tools and sites, for excavation of

Mississippian mound sites, and for historical archaeology in Jamestown, Virginia, and in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Barnes 2013:281). Cotter spent the time between 10 July and 23 July 1965 with Murra's team at Huánuco Pampa (*ibid.*:292). He made a sketch plan of the structure under discussion (Figure 1). At some point during Murra's project, a member of the team photographed it from above, on what Cotter marked as a "Rocky hill" on his plan (Figure 2). Cotter's written notes on Inca Khamana are at variance with his plan, and seem to describe a different site.

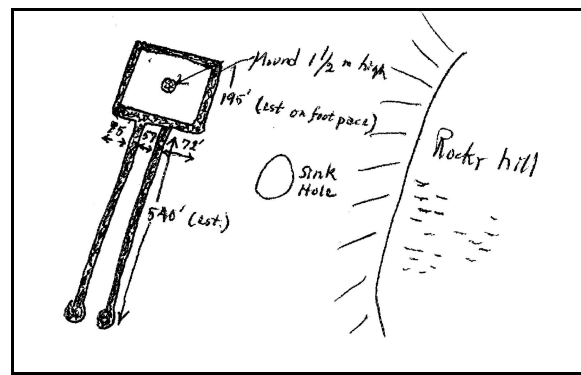


Figure 1: John Cotter's field sketch of Inca Khamana, courtesy of the Penn Museum.

Cotter's plan shows a rectangle approximately 206 feet (63 meters) along two sides and approximately 195 feet (59 meters) along the others, as estimated by pacing. Leading into this enclosure are two nearly parallel stone walls, each approximately 540 feet (165 meters) long. These walls terminate in low mounds, and there is a mound approximately 1.5 feet (0.46 meters) high in the center of the enclosure. Cotter's plan shows a wall at the internal terminus of the two long walls, but no such wall appears in Murra's photograph nor in Google Earth images.



Figure 2: *Inca Khamana* site (center). John V. Murra archive, Junius Bird Laboratory of South American Archaeology, Anthropology Division, American Museum of Natural History, Roll 7, Photo 5.

A Google Earth image shows that the walls leading into the enclosure are actually converging, not parallel (Figure 3). This structure is more finely built than other known Andean traps. It is possible that ephemeral features such as ropes, wooden posts, brush, nets, or cloths were used in conjunction with this presumed trap (see Oyaneder 2021: figure 44 for modern use of such materials at Pampa Galeras, Peru). No similar structure is known to exist on the Pampa de Huánuco (Carlo Ordoñez, personal communication, 16 January 2024).

This structure still exists, but is in a poor state of preservation (Carlo Ordoñez, personal communication, 12 January 2024) (Figure 3). It is a little more than two kilometers west of Huánuco Pampa, at $9^{\circ}52'42''$ South and $76^{\circ}50'36''$ West, at an altitude of 3690 masl. Perhaps some of its stones have been used to create field boundary walls or corrals. Many such structures exist on the pampa (Ordoñez and Vidal Espinoza 2014) and Huánuco Pampa

itself has long served as a quarry for new constructions (Barnes 2015:95–97).



Figure 3. *Inca Hamana*, *Inca Khamana*, *Inca Jamana*, or *Jardín Jardín* as it appears on a Google Earth image taken on 5 July 2023.

In Inca times, the hunting technique of communal drives, called *caycu* in Lupaca Aymara or *chaco* or *chacu* in Quechua, was a royal prerogative (Cobo 1990 [1653]: Book II, Chapter 16:241–242). Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro observed such a hunt in Jauja in the 1530s, during which Manco Inca is said, perhaps exaggeratedly, to have rounded up eleven thousand animals (*ibid.*). Ludovico Bertonio, author of the first Aymara/Spanish dictionary (1984 [1612]) defines *caycu* as “*perrecho de paredes para cazar vicuñas*”, that is, “apparatus of walls for hunting vicuñas”. Bernabé Cobo remarks that *caycu* is a type of hunt in which animals are enclosed in a corral made between mountains and in narrow spaces (1990 [1653] Book II, Chapter 16:241–242).

There are parallels to the Huánuco trap at various locations in the Andes, in addition to those identified by Haas and his students. During fieldwork in the Department of Cusco conducted between 1990 and 1995, Trinidad Aguilar Meza recorded two stone-built funnel traps in Quelloqocha, Layo District, Canchis Province (Aguilar 2018: figures 1, 19, 20) that resemble the one on the Pampa de Huánuco in both their architecture and their environmental

settings, although the corral portions of the Quelloqocha traps are circular, not rectilinear. These are considerably shorter than the one on the Pampa de Huánuco and depend on the animals falling into a pit. A similar structure on the puna above Mazocruz in Peru's Puno Department was reported by George Miller to Glynn Custred (1979:11–12).

Adrián Mauricio Oyaneder Rodríguez draws our attention to two such traps in the Atacama. One is in the Azapa Valley, above 3500 masl (Herrera *et al.* 2015:43). Another, also above 3500 masl, is in the headwaters of the Lluta Quebrada (Oyaneder 2021:306).

The Pampa de Huánuco trap was exceptionally well-built. That, plus its location near the important Inca provincial site of Huánuco Pampa, suggests its use in royal Inca hunts of the camelids and/or deer that once populated the pampa. My hypothesis could be tested and the structure's age might be established by excavating within it, following methodology recommended by Crassard *et al.* (2015) for the desert kites of Western Asia. That is, if the structure was used for hunting, one would expect to find a concentration of projectiles within it. Furthermore, Carlo Ordoñez has pointed out that the presence of coprolites, if encountered, could establish its use in herd management (personal communication 16 January 2024).

If both my functional and temporal suggestions are correct, the trap would have been an important feature of the city of Huánuco Pampa, complementing its other amenities as a “new Cusco” including the *acllawasi*, *ushnu*, sun temple, great plaza, palace, baths, and feasting halls. Because the structure was reported to be aceramic, I first suggested that it may be Pre-ceramic (Barnes 2013:298), an attribution I now think is unwarranted because of the probable

function of the site. One would not expect ceramics in such a structure.

Illustration of the drive technique can be found in ancient Andean rock art, some believed to be Archaic in its cultural-temporal framework. In his study of the rock art of Espinar Province, Cusco Department, Rainer Hostnig presents several examples of the entrapment of animals within a corral or fence, albeit without “funnel” walls (Hostnig 2018: figures 6, 7, 8, 19). At the Achaypiña site (Isivilla, Corani, Carabaya, Puno, Peru) there is a depiction of deer being driven into a spiral trap (Strecker and Campana 2021: figure 5).

In Chile, paintings in the rock shelter of Vilacaurani on the Arica piedmont, show use of hunting traps, dated stylistically to the Middle and Late Archaic (c. 5000–3000 B.P.) (Oyaneder 2021:307–310). Oyaneder (*ibid.*:313) has identified seventy-seven such traps in the Camarones Basin, relying on satellite imagery.

Worldwide Parallels

Similar traps are found in other regions of the world where there are herd animals such as caribou, reindeer, deer, camelids, bison, gazelles, ibex, sheep, goats, cattle, equids, oryx, antelopes, springbok, or aurochs that are suitable for hunting (Betts and van Pelt 2021). Thousands of similar structures are known from Western Asia and North Africa, where they are called “desert kites” because of their shape and “game drives” or “hunting traps” because of their presumed function (Bar-Oz and Nadel 2013; Crassard *et al.* 2015; Kennedy 2011; Oyaneder 2021:219, 367, 388; Repper *et al.* 2022). Traps are common in the Great Basin of North America (Hockett and Dillingham 2023), and are known from Australia and Scandinavia (Bar-Oz and Nadel 2013). With the advent of remote sensing and the continuation of field surveys, more traps are being discovered (Hill *et al.* 2024;

Hockett, Goebel, Graf, and Stoner 2023; Kempe and Al-Malabah 2013:127).

Although there is variation in plan, these features are similar in their general aspects. Two or more “guide walls” of locally available stone or brush gradually converge, forcing herd animals into a terminal trap (Repper *et al.* 2022: figure 2). Builders often take advantage of the terrain to obscure the head of the trap from the animals to be captured, or curve the head of the trap so that it cannot be seen by the animals until escape is impossible. Sometimes animals are driven off a sharp descent as at buffalo kill sites in the American West (Nadel *et al.* 2024).

Dating of these structures has proven to be difficult, but some are very old. Rock surface luminescence of kites in what is now southeastern Jordan has yielded dates of about 10,000 years (Nadel *et al.* 2024; Repper *et al.* 2022). Because of proximal association with other stone structures, dates as early as the late Neolithic have been proposed, while presumed associations with rock art in Syria’s Hemma Plateau and excavations and associated lithics in Sinai/Negev suggest dates from the fifth to the third millennium B.C. Allison Betts and Svend Helms have suggested that the use span of traps can be dated by the lithics contained within them (1986) and this methodology has been utilized by other researchers (*e.g.* Nadel *et al.* 2024)

The frequent association of rock art with hunting traps in many parts of the world is intriguing. As in the Andes, parietal hunting scenes suggest the function of desert kites in Western Asia (Bar-Oz and Nadel 2013; Betts and Helms 1986; Crassard *et al.* 2015; Hill *et al.* 2020, 2024: figure 14; Nadel *et al.* 2024: Figure 5) and in North America (Hockett and Dillingham 2023; Hockett, Goebel, Graf, and Stoner 2023; Kempe and Al-Malabah 2013:127), may serve as maps (Crassard *et al.* 2023) and may

help to date them, possibly through superimpositions and patinas (Eisenberg-Degen 2010).

By drawing attention to examples throughout the world, I do not intend to imply a introduction or diffusion into the Americas. Rather, I think we have many cases of independent invention of useful hunting technology. I do, however, intend to situate the Huánuco Pampa structure within the broad and widespread architectural genre of large-scale hunting traps.

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