

Background

Daily Life in the Inca Empire. By MICHAEL A. MALPASS. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996. Photographs. Illustrations. Maps. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. ix, 165 pp. Cloth. \$45.00.

Since 1946, John Rowe's "Inca Culture at the Time of the Spanish Conquest" has been the standard introduction to Inca civilization for students. Michael Malpass's new work, while indebted to Rowe's earlier synthesis, thoroughly updates all previous sources on Inca life in light of the last 50 years of scholarly research.

Daily Life in the Inca Empire is divided into eight chapters, covering such topics as pre-Inca history, politics and society, private life and culture, science and the calendar, and religion. Of these, the chapter on politics and society is outstanding. Malpass is an expert on the activities of the Inca government in the imperial provinces, and he creates a sophisticated picture of Inca society in both the capitol and the far-flung reaches of Tahuantinsuyu. This expertise is likewise demonstrated in the author's reconstruction of a day in the life of two families in the empire: an Inca family in Cuzco and a conquered family in the Colca Valley. These imaginative yet fact-based reconstructions will please students and scholars alike. Also noteworthy is Malpass's epilogue on the crucial need to preserve the past by preventing the worldwide destruction of archaeological sites. The author not only delineates the current crisis of destruction but also outlines steps the student can take to help bring an end to this problem.

Occasionally, one wishes the author had provided more details about his topics. The chapter on science and the calendar, in particular, would have benefited from a lengthier discussion. Malpass's explanation of the Inca calendar is exceedingly brief, almost to the point of confusion. It is unfortunate that he was unable to utilize Brian S. Bauer and David S.P. Dearborn's recent work, *Astronomy and Empire in the Ancient Andes* (1995), which provides one of the most compelling analyses of this contentious subject. Malpass is also guilty, at times, of citing outdated editions of Inca chronicles. For example, he uses the 1922–25 edition of Fray Martín de Murúa's history of the Incas, rather than the more recent 1987 edition by Manuel Ballesteros, which includes some 37 newly discovered chapters of the original text.

Daily Life in the Inca Empire is nonetheless an excellent introduction to Inca studies. Malpass successfully brings to life the cultural, political, economic, and religious aspects of the Inca world in a form that students will find enjoyable and informative.

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