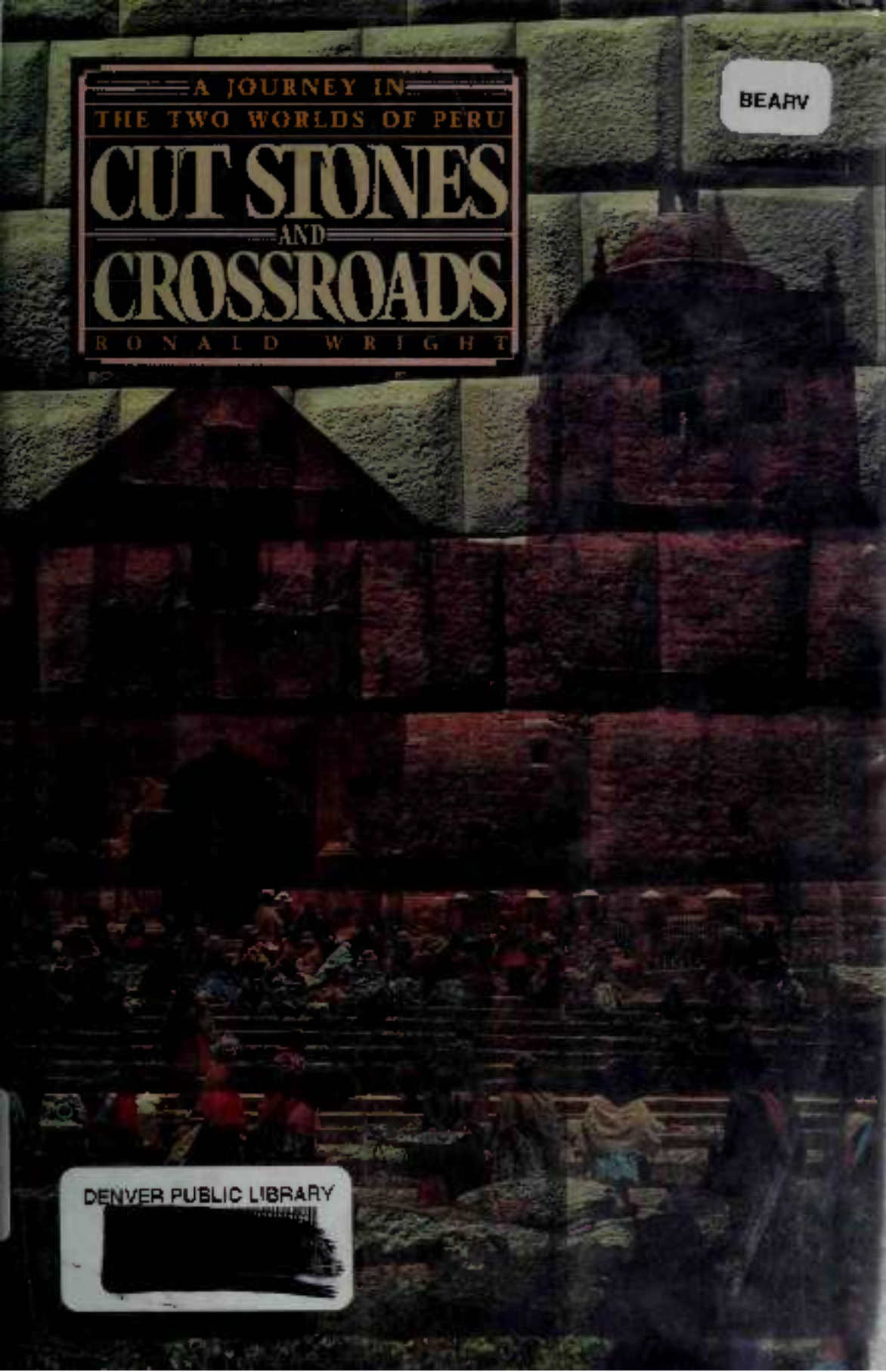


A JOURNEY IN
THE TWO WORLDS OF PERU
CUT STONES
AND
CROSSROADS
RONALD WRIGHT

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A JOURNEY IN
THE TWO WORLDS OF PERU
CUT STONES
AND
CROSSROADS
RONALD WRIGHT

This perceptive and entertaining chronicle of Ronald Wright's journey through Peru reveals that nation's two worlds—its proud Inca heritage and today's struggling, emerging nation. Starting from Cajamarca, the site of Peru's conquest by the Europeans, Wright retraces the career of the Incas, through the imperial cities of Cusco and Machu Picchu, to the place of their mythical origin in Lake Titicaca. As he explores the architecture, culture, history, and world view of the Inca, we also see the daily reality of their descendants, the Runa Indians, whose lives are a disorienting blend of ancient traditions and modern economic and social pressures.

The contrasts of Peru are seen everywhere—past and present, mountains and coast, poor and rich, Indian and Spanish—modern echoes of the ancient duality of Andean thought. But perhaps nowhere is the

(Continued on back flap)

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CUT STONES
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A JOURNEY IN THE TWO
WORLDS OF PERU

RONALD WRIGHT

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TAYTAMAMAYMAN
TO MY PARENTS



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THE TAWANTINSUYU c.1525



THE AUTHOR'S ROUTE

Travel --- by land ■● Cities or towns
 by air ▲ Ruins

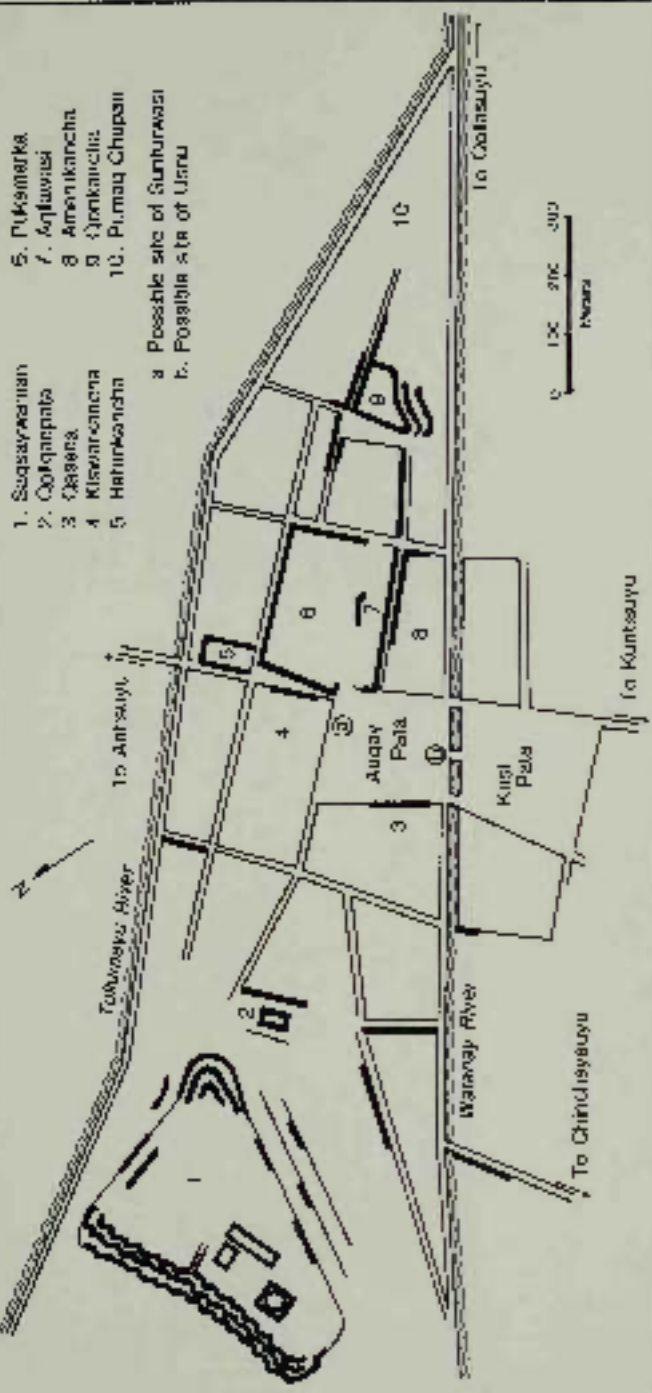


QOSQO LLAQ'IA

The City of Cusco

The sacred center of Cusco was conceived of as a stylized puma with its head at Sacsayhuaman and its tail at the triangular island of Pumaq Chupan, Puma's Tail.

Heavy lines indicate surviving walls or foundations of important buildings. The street plan is partly conjectural; for example, the course of the street between Pukamarka and The Apuswasi is far from clear today.



1. Sacsayhuaman
2. Qolqanpata
3. Qasana
4. Kiswaranama
5. Hahinkancha
6. Pukamarka
7. Aqllawasi
8. Amenikancha
9. Chinkancha
10. Pumaq Chupan

a. Possible site of Sumburwasi
b. Possible site of Urru

CUT STONES
—AND—
CROSSROADS

CUT STONES
AND
GROSEROWDS

== 1 ==

CHICLAYO, PERU

Last night I picked a bad hotel. The rooms were mere plywood cubicles in a large ward, and in the mattress there were leggy things like silverfish. A drunken couple made love noisily for hours; at about two o'clock this morning I heard: "Ay, kiss me, Pedro, kiss me"—long silence—"now the other one."

These coastal towns are greish and shabby; they always smell of urine and rotting fish. The rainless climate allows a steady accumulation of filth that dries and shrivels but is never washed away. I forget the bad side of this country between visits, and it makes for hard beginnings.

Today is my thirtieth birthday. I shall go to Cajamarca by collective limousine—damn the expense.

7:00 A.M.

An hour south of Chiclayo; the driver stops for breakfast at a roadside restaurant in the desert. The air is cool and the smells have not yet woken. Deserts are lively only at dawn and dusk.

Yesterday I was in jungle and banana groves, but at the frontier between Ecuador and Peru the climate changes abruptly—as though nature were trying to imitate cartography. Except for some small and widely separated valleys, the Pacific littoral from here to Chile is a naked beach on which nothing grows, nothing decays, and nothing moves but dunes and the dilapidated trucks that ply the Pan-American Highway.

The men at the service station fuss over the old Dodge and call our driver "gringo" because of the European cast to his features. In Mexico that

word would start a fight, but in race-conscious Peru it is taken as a compliment. Nobody is called *indio* except as the gravest of insults. However, a person with Indian looks can be nicknamed *chino* (Chinaman) without offense.

CHINO, EL PUEBLO ESTA CONTIGO! ("Chino, the people are with you!") has not yet faded from a wall: President Velasco, who died two years ago, was a *chino*.

Another hour southbound on the Panamericana (rippled asphalt; width, twenty feet; length in Peru, two thousand miles) and the collection turns east toward the mountains, on a road that follows the Japatepeque River to its source. The road is shimmering in the heat like a strip of celluloid. The driver overtakes a truck and almost fails to see an approaching car half hidden in a mitage. I'm glad now to be sitting in the back. (I had wanted a front seat beside the slender girl, but instead I have her mother—large and sweaty—for company.)

The irrigation here is impressive. The whole valley floor is leveled in terraced rice paddies and maize fields. By careful management a vast area is fed by a rather meager flow of water. The system must have ancient origins: when our road left the Panamericana we passed the extensive mud ruins of Pacatnamú, where the Mochica and Chimú kept large populations before the time of the Incas.

11:00 A.M.

The irrigated valley has narrowed to a rocky gorge, and we are leaving the desert. The hills are sparsely clothed in cactus and scrub sustained by the moisture of clouds that sometimes form here in the night.

The air is cold now; icy drafts from beneath the ill-fitting door stab my legs; the señora is delightfully warm.

Just before the pass, at about thirteen thousand feet, the paving ends. The car jounces and an exhaust pipe clatters onto the road. We get out while the driver repairs it unconviningly with a piece of wire found in the ditch. I am feeling *soroche* (altitude sickness)—a wringing headache and a fragile sense of reality, like a tequila hangover.

The señora produces a hip flask from somewhere on her person:

"Have some *pisco* for the cold, mister?"

"No, thank you. Very kind." Until one is accustomed, alcohol has triple its usual effect at these heights, and *pisco* (raw grape spirit) is an unwhettable drink at the best of times.

= 2

CAJAMARCA—9,000 FEET

From four years ago, I remember a white city in green countryside, but now the hills are brown and gray, and only the valley floor is lush. It is the beginning of the wet season, the rains are late

This hotel is better: a proper room and private bath. But the walls need painting—there are vertical snail tracks beside the bed; I wish Latin Americans wouldn't spit. "Hot water at all hours," claims the management, but only a chill trickle runs from the shower. Fortunately, in Cajamarca there's an alternative.

Twenty minutes on a minibus caught in the plaza and I am at the Baños del Inca (Inca's Baths) hot springs. An attendant takes me down a steamy corridor which has rows of doors on either side. Laughter and splashing can be heard. There is no communal pool but the private rooms are large enough for parties.

My room has tiled walls, a window up high, and a sunken tank occupying most of the floor. The water is hot and abundant, slightly sulphurous. I fill the tank to a depth of three feet and float. Bliss. I left Canada only two weeks ago; already a tub (unattainable on this continent of dank showers) has become a luxury.

In a run-down older section of the spa is a tank exhibited as a genuine Inca bath. It is about ten feet square, crudely made of rough stones and cement, and quite unlike any Inca work I have seen. Perhaps it dates from a different ancient period; most likely it's a modern fabrication.

Pizarro's secretary saw Inca Atau Wallpa's establishment at the hot springs and has left this description:

It consisted of four rooms built around a courtyard in which was a tank fed by water from a pipe. This water, which was so hot that it burnt the hand . . . was joined on the way by cold water in another pipe, the two running into the tank together . . . The pipe was large and made of stone. . .

The apartment in which Atahualpa spent the day was a gallery looking down on a garden, and beside it was the room in which he slept, which had a window facing the courtyard and the tank. . .

The walls were plastered with a red bitumen finer than ochre, which was very bright. The wood used for the roofing of the house

was stained with the same dye. The other room in front consisted of four bell-shaped vaults joined into one, and was washed with snow-white lime.

The Inca was fasting here and nursing a war wound in the waters when he received disturbing news. Waman Puma, a sixteenth-century native chronicler, recorded how the foreigners were first described to the ruler of Peru:

There are [coming] men who never sleep and who eat silver and gold, as do their beasts who wear sandals of silver. And every night each of these men speaks with certain symbols; and they are all enshrouded from head to foot, with their faces completely covered in wool, so that all that can be seen are their eyes.

It was November 1532.

3

6:00 A.M.

With morning comes the prehistoric sound of flutes and drum. Above a lilting melody a trumpet wails. Louder. A parade?

From the window I can see a dozen Indians, traditionally dressed in ponchos and homespun breeches, advancing solemnly up the street. One has a large drum, others flutes; two are carrying extraordinary *cornetas*—bamboo tubes twelve feet long, flared with tin at the ends. The sound of these is somewhere between that of a bugle and of an alpine horn. A man without an instrument is lighting and scattering powerful fireworks, which echo like gunshots in the narrow street.

The men seem oblivious of the waking town around them. They march like ghosts, with a compulsion that may date from when Cajamarca was an Inca city. I half expect to see them disappear or pass through a wall. Their self-absorption tells me this is not a parade for spectators. I am witnessing a private ritual: the twentieth century intruding on the sixteenth.

Something more familiar wakes me a second time an hour later: *She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah* . . . Beatles in Cajamarca?

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