

Processions, Ritual Movements, and the Ongoing Production of Pre-Columbian Societies, with a Perspective from Tiwanaku

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What are the most important things that a society produces? How are they produced?

What is meant by the concept of ‘procession’? How is it different from day-to-day walking? Can one person ‘process’ or is procession strictly a communal act? How does procession differ from a pilgrimage to Mecca, Santiago de Compostela, or Mount Qullqipunku in Peru? These questions emerged at two symposia held in 2014, at the Society for American Archaeology and at Dumbarton Oaks (Evans and Nair 2014a, 2014b). These were the first systematic examinations of the topic of ritual processions by pre-Columbianists, and in providing the SAA symposium with a perspective from Tiwanaku, Bolivia (Janusek 2014a) and the D.O. symposium with an overview discussion (Janusek 2014b), I identified several common threads among the papers.

Here I continue this comparative exploration of core theoretical questions intertwined with the symposia theme, while pointing toward potential avenues of inquiry not centrally addressed by its papers, and contributing my own perspective on processions from Tiwanaku. I will return to the core questions (including the one about a society’s most important products) in due course, but offer this byte: I consider

processions particularly structured and intensely disciplined forms of ritual movement that reciprocally create and are constituted by particularly charged places and things.

I introduce this paper with a case study focused on the National Archives in Washington, DC. Jeffrey Meyer (2001:76-98) considers the National Archives the most important ‘national’ temple for the U.S. Indeed, it houses some of the nation’s most important documents, including the three that have become the most representative of its moral and political constitution: the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and that increasingly fraught document, the Constitution. These are no longer simply documents signed to endorse political agreements made in the 18th century; as Meyer points out, they have become powerful objects of sacred scripture in their own right.

Every spring, traffic swells in Washington, D.C., as hundreds of buses, each carrying dozens of ‘twens’ from some local part of the country, lurch from one national monument to the next to provide their cargo a firsthand experience of the

capital's monuments. Coming to Washington, D.C, as a junior high / middle school student is not obligatory, and is likely limited to the relatively well-off. I was fortunate enough to take this journey as an eighth grade student in 1977. It constitutes a pilgrimage, and at least for many, a key rite of passage on the way to becoming a fully responsible U.S. citizen.

I visited the National Archives for the first time as an adult while I was a Dumbarton Oaks Fellow in 2008-2009. I was struck with the experience of this place, by the way that people moved through the building and how that movement shifted gears as they moved through its central hall. The building's various hallways house all kinds of fascinating documents and create spaces in which one can move more or less randomly. Yet they funnel each person into a central hall where relatively 'randomized' movement becomes a controlled, steady procession past what by all accounts are now considered *a trinity* of sacred texts.

Everything about the space, the marble architecture, the room's dim lighting, the arrangement of the texts around the building's central icon -- the Constitution -- and the presence of armed guards, *constructs this room as sacred space*. People -- even those squirrely tweens -- move slowly, quietly, reverently in one direction, clockwise, to apprehend these iconic documents.

Returning to the opening question: The most important things a community creates are particular sorts of persons, what Marcel Mauss called 'social personae,' or what Althusser (2014) and others (Foucault 1995), in a Marxist perspective, considered political subjects. Coming-of-age pilgrimage to Washington, D.C.'s monuments and the National Archives in

particular constitutes a powerful moment that seeks to produce particular sorts of persons and subjects; loyal, 'free,' moral, independent, law-abiding, enlightened U.S. citizens. But the stakes are high, and the process routinely fails. Daily newsfeeds froth with poignant accounts of those failures, presumably 'normal' citizens (kept to themselves, mostly) who suddenly embody those 'subhuman' qualities that an upstanding U.S. citizen precisely does not represent: in the political spectrum, anarchists, Nazis, communists, socialists, and now, terrorists. Or in an ontological vein, there is a danger of producing 'crazies' who think stones and springs are alive, or worse (gasp!), *in charge of our daily well-being!* Although many pre-Columbian ontologies reinforced precisely such perspectives, it is not the dominant directive for a pragmatic, reasoning, adult U.S. citizen. U.S. kids can 'play' at animacy -- with dolls, trucks, pet rocks, etc. (Gell 1998) -- but to become a morally responsible 'social person' and fully inhabited 'political subject,' one better learn to shove those tendencies deep into one's subconscious -- from where, of course, they spontaneously surface as soon as one's car breaks down or computer crashes.

The danger of failing to produce the proper sorts of persons and subjects is, I argue, a core reason why processions, and ritual movements generally, are so intensely structured and disciplined. Rituals are central to every human society, and the particularly valued attitudes, movements, gestures, and spaces that constitute those rituals are crucial to the ongoing production and transformation of that society via the production of particular sorts of persons / subjects and the places they inhabit.

Especially when they constitute key moments of the most celebrated ritual-political events in a society, such as the monumental, recurring U.S. presidential procession from the White House to the Capitol on Inauguration Day, or even the more ‘anarchic,’ sensual, counter-cultural, but altogether ‘effervescent’ sequences of pragmatic engagements and ritual acts that constitute a successful Burning Man event (Vranich 2016).

Unlike the U.S. and other Western nations, pre-Columbian political communities tended to produce subjects that encountered a world of dynamic, transacting, even fluid non-human beings; mountain peaks, caves, winds, springs, and so forth. Via ritual acts, communities strategically foreclosed an experience of ‘nature’ as a realm resolutely divided from that of humans. Many term this way of being-in-the-world a relational ontology. Producing such an ontology was undoubtedly as risky as producing what Descola (1996) categorizes as a Western ‘naturalist’ ontology, a world that most people reading this paper routinely experience, in which divided realms of ‘humans’ and ‘nature’ intersect only strategically in acts of either 1) transformation for human use and real estate, or 2) protection and romantic appreciation. These positions even roughly define the platforms of opposing political parties. Yet both positions toe the fundamental, unquestioned line that humans and nature occupy separate realms (Sahlins 2008). Unlike many pre-Columbian societies, Western actions and spaces tend to ‘blackbox,’ shove to the background of daily awareness, the intricate material and historical linkages that intricately tie, say, the flow of a particular

river to the city that has grown for decades and continues to thrive on its shores.

I am skeptical of these categories and the notion that an entire society is beholden to a particular ‘ontology.’ The term ‘ontology’ has become nearly as essentialized in 2016 as the term ‘culture’ was in Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture*, published in 1934, and such essentialization is the product of politicized academic discourse. People in any city or community constantly deal with a barrage of ideas, languages, technologies, and ways of being in the world. Politically-driven ritual acts carve through such diversity to opportunistically define particular segments as ‘a people’ with common practices, values, and goals. Highland Aymara-speaking communities have always thrived among diverse landscapes, societies, and languages. Yet the term ‘Aymara’ is the essentialized product of Spanish colonization, republican nationalism, and more recent movements valorizing indigeneity in the highland Andes, and specifically Bolivia. With Evo Morales’ rise to power in the early 2000’s and following his presidency since 2005, those communities found a political voice and empowered position in national and global geopolitics. This empowerment is continually manifested in recurring annual ritual processions, including the spectacular festival of Gran Poder that occurs every June in La Paz, or the countless danced, marched, and paraded processions that occur in countless towns and rural communities to celebrate recurring local and national events. Key to Aymara empowerment was the coopting of recently created but presumably ‘ancient’ rituals that involve annual pilgrimage to Tiwanaku and, now, many other ‘ancient’ sites on June 21, to witness

the austral winter solstice sunrise (Sammels 2011). Each ritual begins as a solemn group procession at the crack of dawn to the place where a *wilancha*, or llama blood sacrifice, will occur just as the sun rises over the eastern horizon. Each seeks to draw as many celebrants as possible, in some cases fueled by New Age-inspired explanations and the ‘ecological harmony’ that ancient Aymara communities sought with the world. Yet this ritual, now nationally promoted as Aymara New Year, and centered on calling the sun back home for the austral summer solstice (Willka Kuti), is politically inscribed as an ancient ritual exactly 5024 years old.

In the following discussion, I reign in some key concepts, most importantly the concept of procession. Next I distill key contributions of the 2014 processions

symposia papers in relation to three themes: space, time, and corporeality. I then briefly address the ways in which thinking about processions and ritual movement have influenced interpretations of my own research in Tiwanaku, located at the southern edge of the Lake Titicaca Basin in the Bolivian altiplano. An emphasis on ritual movement and specifically well-ordered processions helps explain not only the spatial peculiarities of Tiwanaku’s monumental layout, but also the iconography of some of the most imposing stone personages that inhabited its core spaces. I suggest that Tiwanaku’s emergent ritual-political power was grounded in novel manners and temporalities of ritual movement, and through them, the successful recurring production of particular sorts of ritual-political subjects.

Processions and Ritual Movement

Most fundamental, what is a *procession*? Flurries of emails among Dumbarton Oaks participants prior to the symposium, and comments by symposia attendees, submitted this question to lively scrutiny. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines procession as ‘the action of a body of people going or marching along in orderly succession in a formal or ceremonial way.’ On the eve of the symposium, Gary Urton (pers. com. 2014) defined it as, ‘a bunch of people walking together with a common objective.’ I stand by Urton’s spontaneous definition. He scribbled it on a napkin and I presented a photo of that napkin during my discussion. To *process* is to move with others in an orchestrated, synchronized manner toward a common destination. Procession is a communal, structured, and directed sociospatial performance. Paradigmatic processions

include elaborate cremation rites in Bali (Geertz 1981) and the quadrennial U.S. presidential inaugural cavalcade that moves slowly, yet deliberately down Pennsylvania Avenue, from the White house to the U.S. Capitol.

Not all ritual movement is procession. Procession is a particular *mode* of ritual movement, one that demands *relative* corporeal discipline, spatial control, and temporal cadence; relative because what distinguishes procession varies even in a single community and must be defined as such *contextually*. Seeking a universal, ready-made definition is a futile exercise. I suggest settling on a definition that can do effective work for us in understanding and explaining the critical role of processions as modes of ritual movement in the pre-Columbian Americas, and as dynamic foci

for the production of specific sorts of subjects. Processions distinguish themselves relatively through their obsessively choreographed movements; whether linearly, from the home of a deceased to a cemetery, from a home community to a sacred peak, or circumambulatory, around a temple, a plaza, or a town; or otherwise.

If processions are a distinctive mode of ritual movement, they are relatively controlled moments of movement in more encompassing ritual events. Their controlled choreography frequently renders them particularly generative of or at least influential in cosmic intervention. Yet the spaces dedicated to ritual movement in any pre-Columbian setting often afford

possibilities for multiple modes of movement and activity. A difficult question for archaeologists is: did a particular space prioritize 'procession' over other manners of ritual (or other) movement? Several papers in the symposia concluded that archaeologically delimiting spaces of procession will be difficult. Teotihuacan's central avenue, Tula's colonnaded halls, Maya sacbeob, and routes to the Island of the Sun in the Andes, all provided spaces for multiple modes of ritual and other movement. Indeed, modes of movement may vary in a single journey. If annual pilgrimage to Mount Qullqipunku for Qoyllur Rit'i is at several points austere, highly structured (**Figure 1**), and driven by carefully selected music -- especially



Figure 1. Procession on the glacier of Qullqipunku during Qoyllur Rit'i. Photograph copyright Wolfgang Schüler 1992 (Schüler 1992:37).

while entering its primary sanctuary -- the journey back home follows a more *relaxed*, informal, festive rhythm. As a pilgrim succinctly introduced the return portion of

Ritualization

Articulating procession as a structured mode of ritual movement draws us into the deeper question, *what is ritual?* Ritual aligns itself with powerful, transcendent nonhuman features and personages. Yet it is fully steeped 'in the world' and thus politically engaged. To sidestep typological and essentialized understandings of ritual we need to turn an analytical lens on the discourses that construct particular actions as *ritual practices*. Ritual is a distinctive way of acting. How and when it is done draws attention. A practice is a 'ritual' practice by dint of its social, spatial, and temporal context, and yet what constitutes ritual is constantly being redefined in relation to changing social, spatial, and temporal contexts; ritual presents itself relationally and recursively. Catherine Bell (1992) introduced the term 'ritualization' to characterize the ongoing production of

Ritual movement and the Production of Human Subjects

The processions symposia and this volume innovatively turn an analytical eye on processions -- and ritual movement more generally -- as important pre-Columbian phenomena worthy of intense study. They collectively address a turn in thought regarding ritual. As a volume we focus not on the so-called 'internal' or cognitive dimensions of ritual movement, though we may note features of the 'belief systems' associated with ritual movement. Excellent studies indicate that religious 'belief,' while

the pilgrimage (Sallnow 1987:233):
'Now we can get drunk.'

particular types of human actions as ritual practices. 'Ritualization' draws attention to the contextualization that affords any act, gesture, movement, or material a privileged place or transcendent value in the scheme of human practice. In this sense, *ritual is as ritual does*; it is a 'way of acting that sets itself off from other ways of acting by virtue of the way in which it does what it does' (Bell 1992:140). Yet its specific way of doing draws participants toward 'ultimate sources of power,' often a power conferred by non-human agents. In the pre-Columbian Americas, this generally refers not to otiose deities detached from worldly human projects and well-being, and yet judging them from on high. It refers to animate celestial bodies and landscape features that are in constant transaction with humans: a *living* world of dynamic nonhuman objects and beings who are directly engaged in worldly human affairs.

it may drive ritual action, is heterogeneous and contradictory, fluid and chimeric. Action structures belief. What matters most, at least archaeologically, is how ritual plays out in space and time, in the course of worldly transactions, and how it constructs individuals as certain types of subjects. Papers in the processions symposia and this volume focus on processions as dynamic, transformative ritual practices in their own right.

Processions and Ritual Landscapes

I now distill what I consider some of the key dimensions of pre-Columbian processions that symposia participants brought to the table. I consider their roles, sequentially, for the production of ritual space, ritual time, and ritual bodies / persons. First, ritual space. J. Z. Smith suggests (1987:103), echoing Bell, that ritual is first and foremost, a mode of paying attention.' He continues, this 'explains the role of place...: *place directs attention*' [my emphasis]. Following Gibson's (1986) 'ecologies of perception,' I suggest taking this further. Place not only 'turns your head' but, more profoundly, *educates attention* to specific built and natural environments. Processions and the encompassing ritual events they punctuate seduce individuals into learning, internalizing, embodying, and appropriately transacting with specific built and natural landscapes. Conducted repeatedly, cyclically, and over long histories, this

focused, embodied attention is fundamental to constituting people as ideal or at least competent subjects or citizens.

Clearly, many centers and monumental landscapes in Mesoamerica and the Andes were strategically built to foster and aggrandize ritual movement. Constructed environments at Teotihuacan and Chiapa de Corzo, Mexico, at Kaminaljuyu, Guatemala, at Tiwanaku or on the Island of the Sun, Bolivia, or at Pachacamac or Chinchero, Peru, educated the attention of ritual participants to particular structures, plazas, entrances, canals, murals, or monoliths. To cite Nair (2014), they were theaters for processional performances. And yet in several cases, they were regularly refabricated.

Teotihuacan was unique in its supreme focus on a central axis, the so-called 'Street of the Dead' (Evans 2014). Constructed to integrate the city and its inhabitants with surrounding water sources,

peaks, and celestial cycles, this processional route (**Figure 2**) remained its principal axis for multiple generations.

Later innovations, including constructing the southern complex and canalizing the San Juan River, expanded and ritually refined Teotihuacan's by-then ancient axis rather than dramatically re-routing its processional praxis.

Figure 2. Teotihuacan's Street of the Dead extends north toward the Moon Pyramid and Cerro Gordo. (Photo by S.T. Evans)



Maya causeways were less centralized and ‘autocratic’ but sometimes constructed new linkages, according to Traci Ardren (2014). Adapted to a far more flood-prone landscape, Coba *sacbeob* were ideal spaces for processions- some likely military -and other forms of ritual movement. Some were built to create exclusive linkages between the center and particular elite residences, indicating that at least certain processions on these sacbeob were socially restricted affairs.

Sullivan (2014, 2016) analyzed long-term transformations in monumental architecture at and around Chiapa de Corzo, Chiapas, Mexico. Monumental complexes at the centers he describes, which include La Venta in the State of Tabasco, were *designed* to stage ritual movements and processions (**Figure 3**). Many were designed and constructed according to a particular architectural arrangement that has been termed the Middle Formative Complex. Elements of this complex vary among sites and shifted over time.

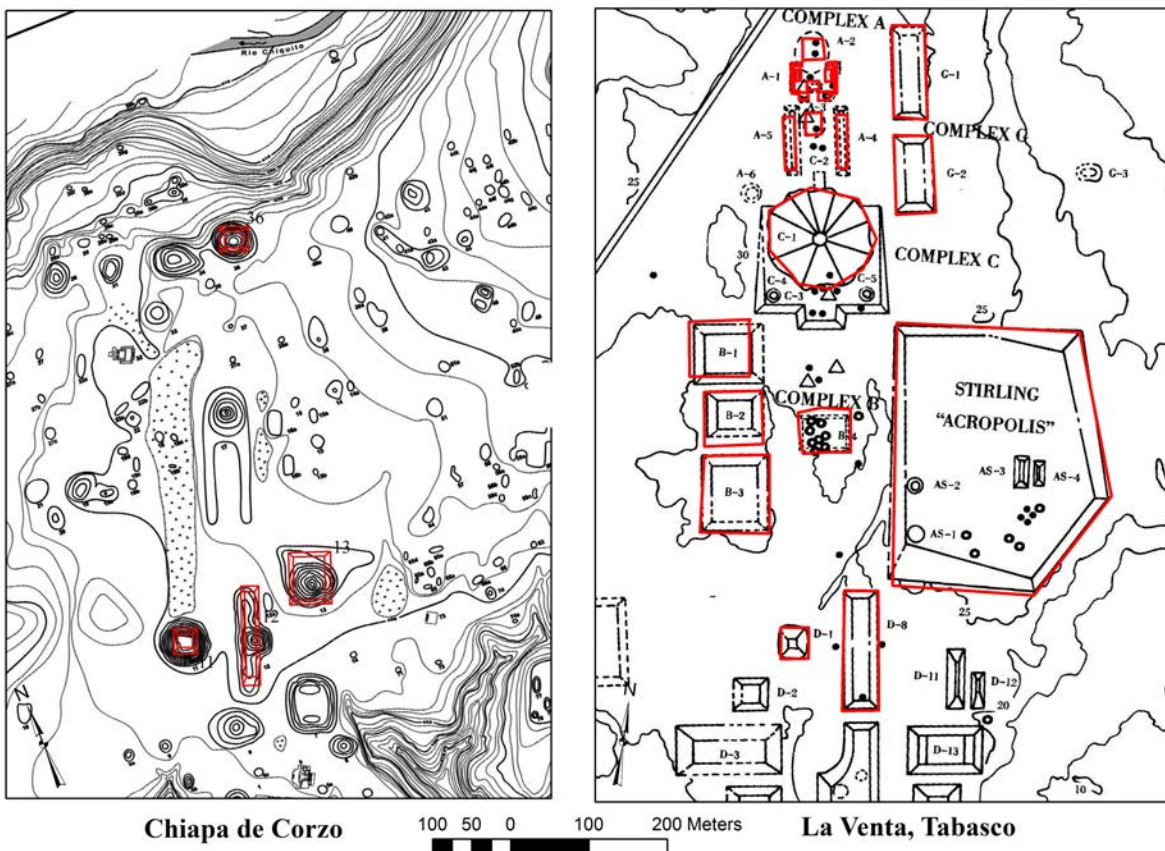


Figure 3. Plans of Chiapa de Corzo and La Venta, about 120 miles apart, reveal arenas for ritual processions in Mesoamerica’s Middle Formative period. (see Sullivan 2016: Figure 2)

Temporal shifts, overall, demonstrate an increasing purchase of emergent elites over spaces of ritual movement.

This resonates with ongoing research in the south-central Andes, where we find that formative centers 1) were designed to stage ritual movement, 2) housed emergent high status groups, and 3) ultimately produced Tiwanaku, a hierarchical society focused on a primary, axial center. In early Chiapas and in the south-central Andes, processions were central to ongoing sociospatial transformations.

Processions and other modes of ritual movement toward and through carefully constructed environments appropriated and transformed ‘natural’ landscapes. Environments built to facilitate ritual movement nearly always created corporeal (visual, auditory, gestural) engagements with prominent landscape features, whether celestial events, mountain peaks, outcrops, caves, springs, or something else. These engagements tie ritual movement to recurring cycles and prominent landscape features that are deemed critical for human well-being.



Stanish and Tantalean (2014) demonstrated that dual-mound groups and geoglyphs on the high Pampa de Gentil, Peru, created alignments to austral solar solstice setting places on the western horizon while directing processions toward major ritual and economic centers below.

Several papers demonstrated that key landscape features included mountain peaks, springs, and stone, while key skyscape features included solar observations. A comprehensive landscape (earth-sky) perspective invites exciting inquiries into the *political ecology* of processions, by which I mean, as Eric Wolf (1972) put it, ‘how power relations mediate human-environment relations.’ The relationship of procession to water is intriguing. Water in its various states -- as rainfall, springs, rivers, etc. -- was central to pre-Columbian ritual movement and the construction of pre-Columbian ontologies. Evans (2016) showed the intimate spatial connections between processions and flowing water in Teotihuacan, from origin springs near Cerro Gordo through canalized portions of the Rio San Juan; Teotihuacan’s principal avenue and urban axis, the Street of the Dead, was oriented to honor rainfall and maize production. Broda (2014, 2016) discussed the annual cycle of Aztec child sacrifices that began in February and culminated in April with the ascent of nobility to the summit of Cerro Tlaloc in petition for rain (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4. The summit of Mount Tlaloc is about 30 miles due east of Tenochtitlan/Mexico City. The Aztec ceremonial center consists of a processional causeway several hundred feet long, opening into a square sanctuary. (photo *Cia. Mexicana Aérofoto*, S.A. 1941) (Archive J. Broda).

In the Andes, the renowned pilgrimage centers of Pachacamac and Island of the Sun- respectively on the Pacific Coast of Peru and in the southern portion of Lake Titicaca- both invoked the vital power of water for the well-being of humans, their herds, and their crops.

Mendoza (2014, 2017) related the importance of water in current Qoyllur Rit'i pilgrimage to Mount Qullqipunku (**Figure 6**). The shrine is located at the foot of a glacier, and a focal act of the pilgrimage is to carve out and carry back to the local community large chunks of it. These chunks embody Qullqipunku and are carried back to the community in a hopeful bid to ensure a

continuous water supply and productive success for local communities.

At Kaminaljuyu, a Classic Period highland Maya center well-known for its intricate and masterfully crafted hydraulic landscapes, Arroyo and Henderson (2014) analyzed lithic sculptures that depicted rulers 'striding' over crocodilian 'watery earths.' Manipulating water via complex hydraulic systems was literally the political substrate of ruling power and linked highland Maya rulership to primordial cosmic origins. In all of these cases, too, water *itself*, whether frozen or liquid, placid or in motion, was a vital experiential element of ritual movement and procession.



Figure 6. Pomacanchi pilgrims on their second day of the walk (photo by and courtesy of Zoila Mendoza [2006]).

Procession and Ritual Time

One theme the processions symposia innovatively brought to the table of thematic discussion was an emphasis on *movement and temporality*. Ritual movement, and particularly structured processions, construct particular experiences of time. The manner, cadence, duration, and periodicity of ritual movement collectively construct ritual time, time out of time, a temporality markedly different from that of daily routines. Combining cues from the spaces and

representations of procession, we see that they can involve stepping, striding, marching, dancing, and, in some cases, crawling. Ritualizing gaits undoubtedly meant in some contexts moving more slowly than a typical gait, perhaps in orderly formation, in synchronized step, or perhaps in sync with spatial cues as in the Twelve Stations of the Cross, while others were vigorously danced accompanied by lively music. Mendoza's study of Qoyllur Rit'i

highlighted the importance of periodic pause, accompanied by shifts in song and perhaps musical genre; while Wiersema's (2014, 2016) close study of Moche pottery emphasized the importance of spatial pause while moving into an inner sanctum or onto a stage (**Figure 7**).



Figure 7. Moche IV architectural vessel. Moving up the spiral chamber is a procession of painted foxes. Defining the rungs of the spiral are modeled snails. At the place where procession and architecture meet is a sunken step that bridges painted and sculpted forms as well as movement and stasis. This feature is proposed as a liminal space. (Ministerio de Cultura/MNAAHP C-03340. Photo by Juliet Wiersema)

Temporality also brings us back to think about how procession fits into broader ritual events and their recurring cycles, many if not most of which endured multiple days. If you accept the relational approach to processions I suggest, then not all ritual movements- dances, parades, or pilgrimages –are processions. Qoyllur Rit’i pilgrimage endures several days, and only key moments are relatively highly structured as processions, in particular moments *en route* to and at the sanctuary, during portions of the pilgrimage leading to the principal acts and offerings, and thus those where the stakes are highest.

Relative structure in movement varied greatly during the periodic Inca ritual of *capac hucha*, during which children from across the empire were sacrificed in the name of the ruling Inca and the multiple animate mountain peaks that spanned the empire (Zuidema 1978). Selected children and their families followed official Inca roads to the capital of Cuzco, where in a sequence of elaborate rituals the children were ritually ‘married,’ sanctified, feasted, and essentially rendered ideal ‘miniature’ subjects. Afterward, they and their families processed solemnly in radiating straight paths through the Cuzco heartland and back to their home communities, singing, chanting, and carrying elaborately crafted offerings, including miniature pairs, that would accompany the sacrificial burials.

Processions and the rituals they

punctuate occur at important and auspicious times, whether directed by celestial cycles or attendant on critical social events- a military victory, the death of a ruler, or the onset of drought. If ritual creates distinctive temporalities, temporal cycles reciprocally structure ritual. Qoyllur Rit’i occurs at the first annual rise of the Pleiades over the horizon (late May-early June), heralding the coming austral winter solstice and its attendant harvest. Without documentation, archaeological evidence for such ritual movement would be difficult if not impossible to discern. Yet as several papers indicated, attention to the alignment of centers, monuments, and ritual routes can offer powerful clues. Clear alignments with celestial events and cycles directed the construction of central complexes and processional routes in Chiapas, in the Maya lowlands, at Teotihuacan, and at Late Paracas sites in Peru. Resonating with Evans’s attention to the complementary and coordinated flow of processions and water in Teotihuacan, processional routes were built to align bodily movement to and create corporeal encounters with specific recurring celestial phenomena, such as solstices and equinoxes, the first heliacal rise of Pleiades, and a host of others. It coordinated such mobile ritual engagements with recurring seasonal agrarian and celestial cycles and to the elaborate calendars that organized ritual movement through carefully constructed anthropogenic landscapes.

Processions and the Production of Ritual Bodies

Ritual movements produce ritual bodies. Learned and recurrently enacted or at least witnessed, time and again, they seek to produce ritualized persons and ideal subjects. Of course, crafting an ideal citizen is a proposition, not a guaranteed deal.

Sullivan (2014, 2016) argued that in formative Mesoamerican societies, recurring processions were crucial for constructing and institutionalizing power relations. I agree, yet ritual movement and processions remained critical to the political constitution

of later, relatively institutionalized (if volatile) Classic Maya city-states. They remain critical to the political constitution of relatively institutionalized (if volatile) nation states that comprise the current global geopolitical order. Who has not grown up in a small town in the United States without being struck by the time, effort, emotion, theatrics, and commemoration that goes into producing a local Memorial Day parade; or, for those among us who participated in such rituals as youths- perhaps as a marching band geek – the practice, discipline, excitement, fear, and clear sense of risk that goes into pulling off one’s part successfully, at least competently, or just not looking like a fool. Or, consider how thoroughly a person has been ritually constituted as a political subject who can declare, even threaten, after witnessing protesters burn a U.S. flag at a rally, ‘those idiots should be shot for treason.’

The heavily guarded secret of institutionalized political systems is that they are all uniformly subject to imminent failure, collapse. The recurring, highly structured rituals celebrate and are considered to buttress, even constitute those institutions, even as they transform them with every performance, but they are also

subject to failure, or at least popular disapproval. Ritualized practices embodied, enacted, and constructed power relations in the pre-Columbian Americas, most fundamentally and effectively by producing thoroughly ritualized political subjects. Key to the ongoing production of political subjects were intensively structured and disciplined modes of ritual movement, namely processions.

This conclusion challenges us to ‘find’ past participants and officiants of processions in the archaeological record. Several papers in the 2014 processions symposia offered intriguing clues. Iconographic depictions at Kaminaljuyu, in Teotihuacan apartment compounds, and on Maya stelae all appear to depict persons in procession. Jiménez and Cobean (2014, 2016) presented evidence for the sculpted, iconographic depiction of personages in procession in association with a variety of likely processional routes in Tula, Mexico. The processions were depicted on benches and incorporated a diverse society of hierarchically differing personages -- warriors, priests, and possible rulers -- all dressed in the attributes of deities and moving in linear order (**Figure 8**).

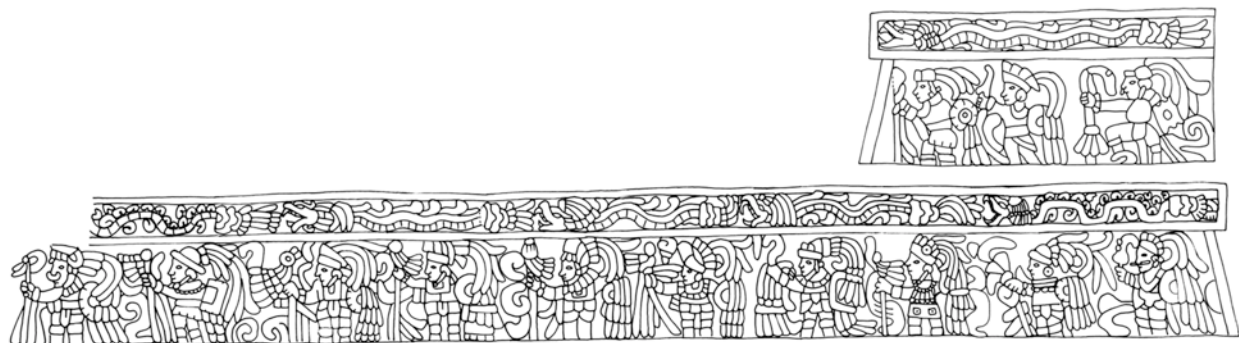


Figure 8. Benches from Tula’s Burned Palace depict a procession of warriors, perhaps dedicated to the Feathered Serpent (drawn by and courtesy of Elizabeth Jiménez García).

Referring to points made by Mendoza and Wiersema, it is an intriguing possibility that the benches marked key moments of ritual-spatial pause or some other punctuated ritual engagement on the processional routes that passed through the colonnaded halls of Tula's monumental core. The benches may depict *processing deities*, and thus transcendent models for recurring human processions through Tula, as Jiménez and Cobean suggested; or, from a more transactional pre-Columbian perspective, they may depict *processing* humans bedecked as and temporarily embodying those transcendent, primordial personages.

Several processions symposia papers emphasized the intensive corporeal disciplines and engagements of ritual movements and processions. Most touched on the heightened multisensory experiences that they afforded. Mendoza noted that key moments in the Qollyorit'i pilgrimage pique multiple human senses. Intensified sensory stimulation is central to our relational understanding of ritual. It involves a rich, even overwhelming conjunction of sights, sounds, aromas, and tactile sensations. Music, pounding drums, or just the recurring sound of stepping, striding, marching, or dancing persons moving in synch, educates attention to the particular cadence or collective import of a procession. At Kaminaljuyu, striding rulers 'sound things' in tune to the sound of running water, the water that fed parched fields and herds (Arroyo and Henderson 2014). Lining the

walls of a small temple at the Maya site of Mulchic, murals show figures in an intricate set of movements, engaging us as witnesses to, and participants in their rituals, according to Lyall (2014).

Throughout the pre-Columbian world, burning aromatic herbs, resins, and fats in 'incense burners' constructed ritual spaces by producing specific sorts of smoke and aromas. In the Andes today, offerings burned so that animate mountain and earth deities may consume them are aromatically rich and evoke entire transactional landscapes of soils, plants, animals, and humans.

The seductive capture and self-directed, ritualized production of disciplined bodies in motion is the alpha and omega of ritual movement and procession. Two D.O. papers highlighted this point for the Inca. Nair's (2014) acute analysis of the multiple entrances to Chinchero's Pampa communicates the extent to which ritual movement was tightly controlled by Inca authorities. Chinchero's multiple entrances delegated important ritual tasks; one framed a view of a nearby animate peak, one provided an 'everyday' point of entry for the Inca ruler and his family, others provided entrances and exits for ritual performers. All were tightly monitored; passing through them demanded self-imposed, monitored corporeal discipline. Curatola and Protzen (2014) describe similar control features upon entering Pachacamac and the Island of the Sun, the two most important pilgrimage centers in the Inca empire (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9. The first view the pilgrims would have had of the "Sacred Rock" or "Titikala" from the main gate to the sanctuary on the Island of the Sun. Photo courtesy of and taken by Jean-Pierre Protzen on his "pilgrimage" to the site.

While Pachacamac guided pilgrims into a narrow, visually restricted passage before approaching the primary sanctuary, approaching the Island of the Sun demanded increasingly intensive and invasive tests to ensure one's 'purity' before approaching one of the most sacred Inca temples. To again cite Nair, the Inca devised specific

'architectural strategies' to craft an empire punctuated by constructed environments that demanded self-disciplined and yet potentially monitored ritual movements. These architectural strategies and the disciplined ritual movements they demanded were fundamental to the rapid consolidation of an Inca empire

Things in Procession

One theme the symposia did not fully engage was the ritual movement of things, non-human material objects. Wiersema pointed out that ceramic vessels in coastal Peruvian Moche culture drew attention to ritual movement, emphasizing a

'recessed step' that distinguished relatively mundane (painted) from more sacred (modeled) spaces. What role did such vessels themselves play in ritual movements and processions? At the SAA meeting preceding the D.O. symposium I referred to

the animacy of stone in the Andes; for example, stones that Viracocha converted into warriors to help the Inca ruler Pachacuti defeat the Chanka, or clusters of ‘tired stones’ that are considered ritual processions that froze into place as the sun first rose. Most often, humans are treated as the sole dynamic agents of movement and engagement. Yet, in pre-Columbian worlds, certain objects and places were routinely rendered animate and powerful in specific ritual contexts. The Inca ruler brought important animated things (*wak’as*) on his journeys across the highland Andes, frequently beseeching and rendering offerings to them in order to determine ‘what to do’ or ‘where to go’ next. Who dictated movement, the Inca or his *wak’as*? In Qoyllur Rit’i, pilgrims carry portable but local icons, or *laminas*, from their community sanctuaries to the mountain

Processions in Tiwanaku

The processions symposia papers have encouraged me to reconsider the importance of ritual movement and procession in the pre-Columbian urban ceremonial center of Tiwanaku. A conjunction of spatial and material patterns indicated that ritual movement was central to the production of Tiwanaku society and processions were central to the production of properly constituted ritual persons and bodies. While Tiwanaku expanded into a city that thrived for some five hundred years, it was also, importantly, a powerful center of panregional pilgrimage. Its ritual prestige and the sacrality of its multiple temple complexes were central to and indivisible from its political power, which thrived on the production of generations of specific sorts of subjects. Who were these

shrine, so that they may be blessed at the primary sanctuary; and upon returning carve out and carry back to their home communities chunks of the Quelquepunku glacier in a hopeful act of ensuring the vitality of their home communities. In straight, highly structured return journeys to their home communities, *capac hucha* families carried sacred gifted ritual items, some of which were buried with the sacrificed children.

Sallnow (1987:180) even notes that ‘the ostensible purpose of a pilgrimage [to Qoyllur Rit’i] was to escort’ an icon ‘from the community to the sanctuary, where it would repose for a night.’ In this perspective, the icon was the primary pilgrim. I argue that specific key iconic ritual objects were central to processions and the production of subjects in Tiwanaku.

subjects, and how were they constituted as such?

Tiwanaku monumental complexes were built to facilitate movement toward, into, and through them. Tiwanaku’s emphasis on movement and permeability is especially clear when compared to the contemporary city of Wari, Peru, the spatial organization of which emphasized restricted entrances, high walls limiting intraurban visibility, and enclosed ‘elite’ patio groups (Isbell and Vranich 2004; Janusek 2008). Tiwanaku’s monuments were temple complexes that constituted the final journey for pilgrims and others who flocked to Tiwanaku for major ritual events, especially those linked to recurring astronomical events such as solstice and equinox observations (Benitez 2009, 2013).

The massive terraced platforms of Pumapunku and Akapana incorporated extensive, primary west entrances that led celebrants up to their summits to witness impressive views of the peak of Mount Illimani and, ultimately, toward intimate sunken courts (Kolata 1993; Vranich 2009). Kalasasaya led celebrants up a large west monolithic stairway to witness views of the ancient volcano Mount Ccapia, to the west, and into a sunken court. This is not to suggest movement into Tiwanaku's core ritual spaces was unrestricted or non-exclusive. Access to the far west platform of Kalasasaya, a platform that tied annual solar observations to distant peaks, including Ccapia, was likely restricted to persons of

particular status and role. Still, Tiwanaku monumentality emphasized access, permeability, and movement.

Movement into and through Tiwanaku's monumental complexes was thoroughly ritualized and created particular experiences of space, time, and corporeality. In addition to expansive entrances Tiwanaku monuments were fitted with megalithic stone portals. The well-known Solar Portal in Kalasasaya, with its elaborate frieze centered on a staff deity, is just one of several that afforded entrance into increasingly inner sancta within Tiwanaku's temples (**Figure 10**) (Janusek 2008; Protzen and Nair 2000).



Figure 10. Central frieze of Tiwanaku's Solar Portal presenting thirty profile figures facing and *processing* toward a central, frontal staff-bearing personage. The scene occurs over a serpent band that interweaves eleven solar-headed faces (photograph by Janusek).

Portals formed permeable boundaries between increasingly ritualized, and in some cases increasingly intimate and restricted spaces. Especially in Pumapunku, carved ‘blind portals’ or stone portal icons- including nested portal icons –were prominent, repetitive elements of ritual architecture (**Figure 11**). Akapana and Pumapunku themselves were built to form massive terraced ‘portals’ that linked realms of earth and sky as appropriated, perhaps ‘perfected’ mountains (**Figure 12**). Portals ritualized movement into Tiwanaku’s temples and afforded engagements between human and ancestral personages.



Figure 11, at right.
An andesite block carved with nested portal icons from Pumapunku (photograph by Wolfgang Schüler).

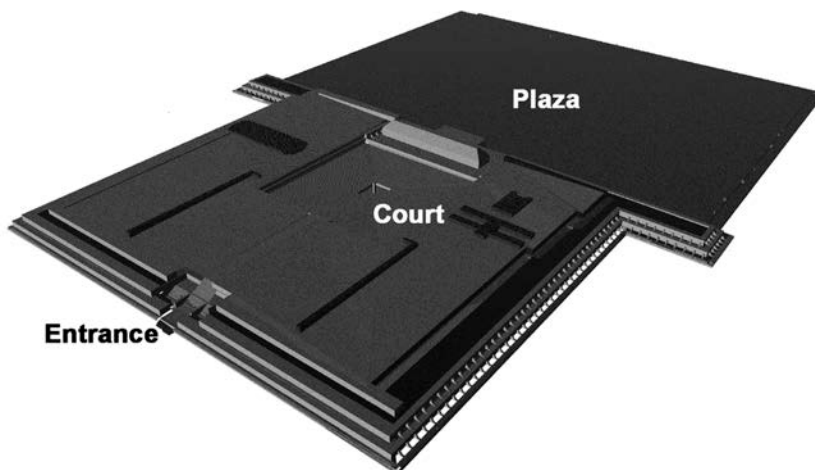


Figure 12, at left.
Isometric reconstruction of Pumapunku, demonstrating its form as a massive portal appending an expansive east plaza for ceremonial gatherings (courtesy of Alexei Vranich).

Movement toward Tiwanaku's monumental complexes likely became increasingly structured in gesture, cadence, and space as elaborate entrances and portals carried celebrants into increasingly ritualized, sanctified spaces. Further, increasingly internal spaces were likely places for witnessing the processions of ritual specialists and special performers. The frieze of Kalasasaya's Solar Portal presents an elaborate procession centered on a still, forward-facing, staff-bearing personage in high relief who wears a solar headdress and stands on a terraced platform-mountain (see Figure 10). Three rows of *processing*, lower-relief, human-like figures in profile- the middle row with beaked, skyward-facing bird heads –face and appear

to move toward the central personage, fifteen to a side; thirty in total. The number of profile figures approximates the number of days in a lunar month. The entire scene rests on a 'serpent band' that interweaves eleven repeating smaller 'solar' faces, each of which likely identifies one of the eleven massive volcanic stone pillars that Kalasasaya astronomer-ritual specialists employed to track the setting sun as it moved across the earthly horizon (Benitez 2009; Posnansky 1945). The Solar Portal orders ritual procession as a lunar cycle linked to the annual, recurring 'procession' of the sun. Tiwanaku events that featured processions were ordered according to such astronomical cycles and generated particular experiences of ritual time for leaders,

specialists, and celebrants alike.

Tiwanaku's monumental temples housed anthropomorphic stone personages (Figure 13).

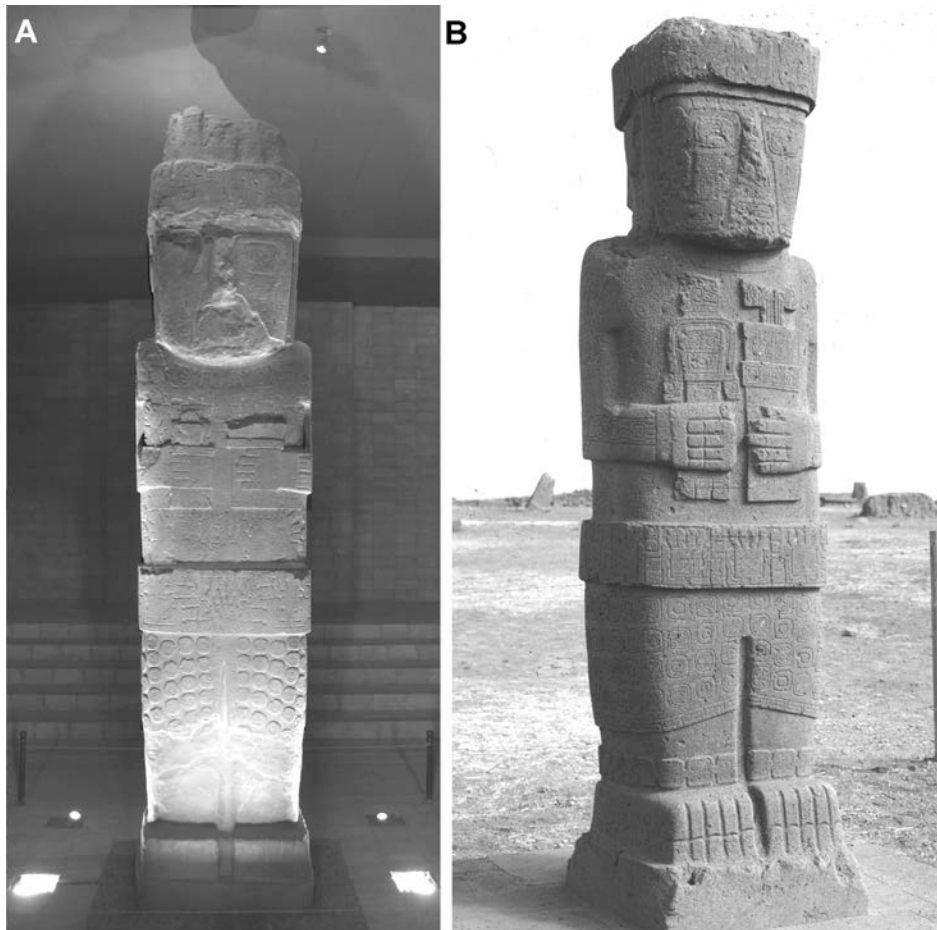


Figure 13. The Bennett and Ponce monoliths, and their focal presentation gestures: each holds a *kero* in the left hand, and a snuff tablet in the right (photographs by Janusek).

Many of these personages were telluric ancestors and the temples they occupied were treated as their homes (Janusek 2006; Janusek and Guengerich 2016). They were also perhaps the most important personages that pilgrims and others came to visit, engage, render offerings to, and otherwise venerate on pilgrimage to Tiwanaku. Engaging them, of course, required passing through elaborate entrances and megalithic portals that ritualized and sanctified the constructed places they inhabited, and demanded the relatively structured gestures, cadences, and interpersonal spaces of processions. Each of the central personages stands erect and holds- presumably in an act of reciprocal engagement with its human interlocutors- a Tiwanaku *kero* for consuming fermented drink in one hand, and a tablet for snuffing hallucinogenic resins in the other. Each presents an ideal ritual attitude, manifested in its posture, gesture, and dress, but also, importantly, complementary mind-altering substances indexed by the complementary objects- a *kero* and a snuff tablet –that it holds in each hand. The gesture indicates that these iconic

Tiwanaku archaeological artifacts- ceramic *keros* and wooden snuff tablets -were charged ritual objects central to processional ritualization and for facilitating the mutual engagement of fleshy and lithic persons.

The bodies of two Presentation Monoliths, those last carved and most representative of Tiwanaku at its ritual-political peak, present carved figures in procession. Each stood in an inner sanctum, the andesite Ponce Monolith in the Sunken Court of the Kalasasaya and the sandstone Bennett Monolith in the early, adjacent Sunken Temple. On the torso of each, elaborately bedecked figures process from around the back of the monolith, and from a scene centered on a standing front-facing solar personage, around its arms and across its sides, and toward the front presentation gesture with its *kero* and snuff tablet.

The procession on the Bennett Monolith (**Figure 14**) originates in a solar personage with upraised arms, and includes profile figures with human-like faces, figures with upturned bird heads, and on either side, an elaborately bedecked llama bearing a cactus-like plant.

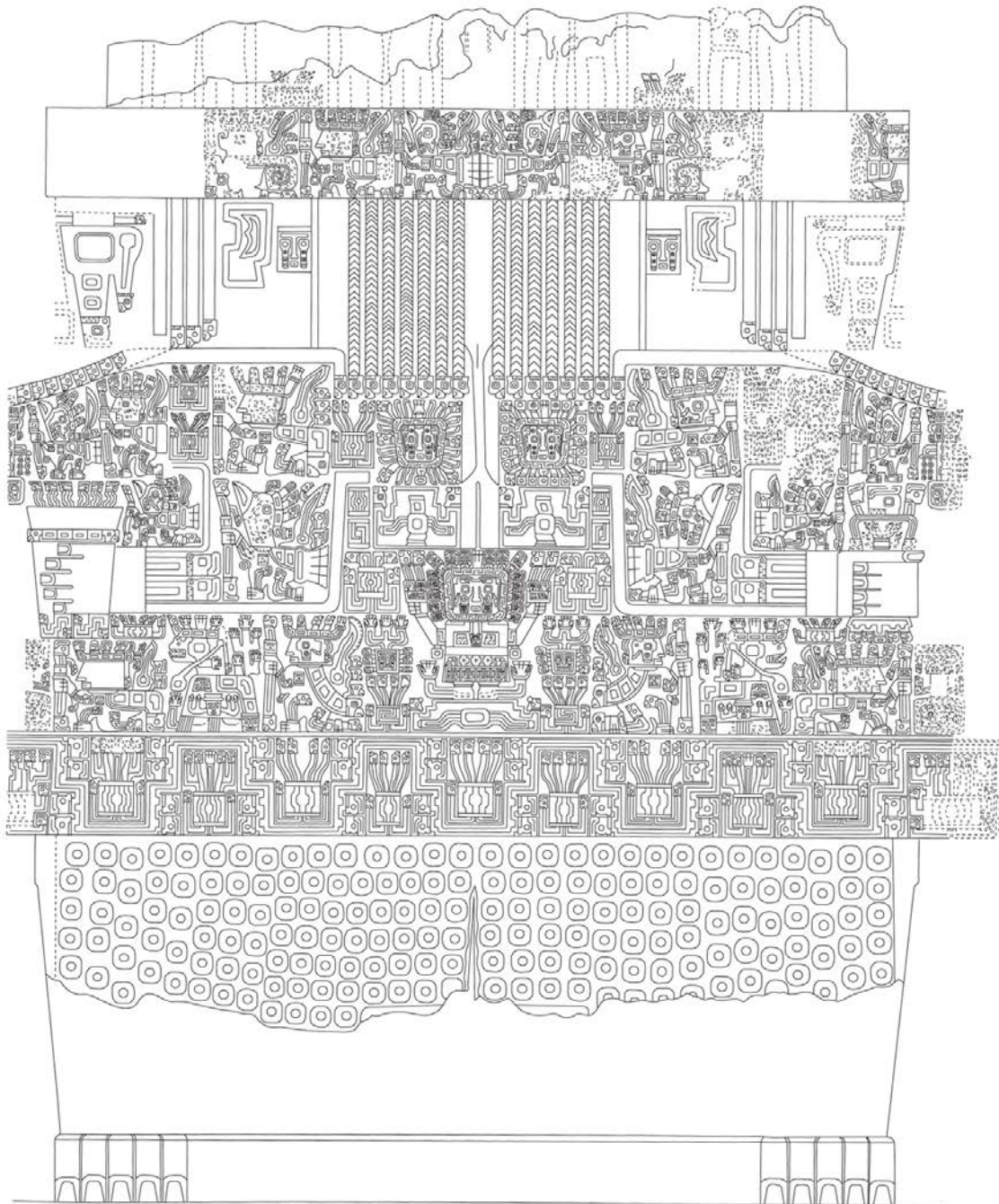


Figure 14. Splayed image of the Bennett Monolith, which shows the ‘procession’ of several figures from a central front-facing personage (center) on the back of the monolith, around toward the presentation icons of a kero (left) and snuff tablet (right) (image redrawn from Posnansky 1945 by Sally Lynch, McMaster University).

The iconographic procession continues around the sides to the front presentation gesture, emphasizing the ritual centrality of the objects and their mind-altering contents for human-monolithic and perhaps other transactions. Further, they direct the cadence and trajectory of the procession from a central back solar personage- the personification of a recurring celestial body-cycle that became axial for Tiwanaku's emergent calendrical regime –toward the frontal, reciprocal, if asymmetrical, gesture of engagement between living human and

Concluding Thoughts

Ritual movement, specifically highly structured, intensely choreographed modes of ritual movement – *processions* -- are critical for understanding pre-Columbian cultures. Echoing Sullivan's work, and as a fellow Formative archaeologist, I think recurring processions were central for early and ongoing transformations in the pre-Columbian Americas, and ultimately, for the ongoing production of cities. The demanding planning, choreography, and structured performance of processions fostered the construction of built environments and the animate landscapes and celestial cycles they appropriated. Political power did not lurk behind Kafkaesque conceptual curtains, a reclusive Wizard of Oz secretly dictating ritual movement from abstract and unattainable 'political institutions.' Clifford Geertz (1981) tackled this problem in his study of Balinese cremation rites, and concluded in his famous inversion of utilitarian anthropological causality; 'power serves pomp, not pomp power.' As usual, he exaggerated to make a point. If ritual isn't a function of power, neither is power a

ancestral beings. Ritual movements and, specifically, highly structured processions were central to Tiwanaku's emergent ritual-political power and panregional fame in the south-central Andes. Such ritualizing movements were critical in producing particular sorts of social personae and ritual-political subjects by recurrently, cyclically, and in relatively structured and disciplined manners, educating attention to particular experiences of space, time, and corporeality. Particularly iconic Tiwanaku objects were central to this ongoing ritualizing process.

function of ritual. Ritual *enacts* power through the production of appropriate social personae. Through the recurring production of space, time, *and especially subjects*, processions *constructed* power relations.

A key reason that pre-Columbian processions were so intensely choreographed is that so much was at stake: they enacted social hierarchies, they produced ritual subjects, and they were performed as dedications to the animate beings that ensured the well-being of the ritual subjects that rendered them offerings. As Evans pointed out, they were choreographed to construct some ideal model of society. Nair's focused analysis of Chinchero communicates just how this occurred in a highly regulated, intensely stratified state-focused society. Yet the success of a particular ritual is always a gamble. Highly structured rituals like processions are billed to do *more than a few* things: provide a template for social hierarchies, enact power relations, align the world of humans to the worlds of powerful non-human persons, '*pray with your feet*,'

seek to ensure that they are precisely performed such that all co-participants are content, and so forth. These thoughts brought us squarely to the Music Room at Dumbarton Oaks where the second symposium took place. We had all made something of a pilgrimage to this hallowed academic place. While processions punctuated only brief moments between groups of papers at the symposium, they were certainly intensely timed and structured. I asked, was this symposium successful? Did it somehow shift our perspective on the pre-Columbian World, on processions?

Mendoza noted that successfully conducting a ritual in central Peru produces a sensation of *pampachay*. *Pampachay* in Quechua is a 'leveling' that occurs after a major ritual event. Bolivian Aymara have a

similar notion. It refers not a return to a prior state, but to the successful creation of a new state via the successful performance of a series of ritualized acts or movements in an auspicious place. These acts include danced processions and burning ritual offerings. At Dumbarton Oaks, they involved the successful performance of presentations in its storied inner sanctum – the Music Room -- followed by processions into the Orangery for dinner and libations. As the symposium closed, I sensed *pampachay* among the symposiarchs and fellow presenters. Then, after the obligatory ritual applause and closing statements, relaxed conversation and animated discussions escalated as we got out of our seats and *processed* one last time into the Orangery, where 'now we could get drunk.'

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