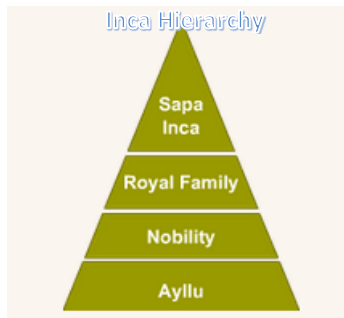


### 3.03 S.P.R.I.T.E. Elements of the Incas



**Social Contribution:** The social hierarchy of the Incas was broken down into four different groups. These groups included the Sapa Inca, who was the emperor at the top of the hierarchy. He owned and controlled everything in the Inca empire and was believed to be related to the sun god. Next came the royal family, which included the queen and relatives of the Sapa Inca. Third was the nobility, which included distant relatives of the royal family or the highly educated, and last was the ayllu which included everyone else.

Because the Sapa Inca owned and controlled everything, no trading outside the Inca empire was necessary. Everything needing to be done in the empire was completed through 'tributes' or free labor from everyone from the ages of fifteen through fifty.

**Political Contribution:** There were about 20 million people living in the Inca Empire at its peak in the 1400s. Its capital city was Cuzco, which is located in what know today as Peru. Cuzco was located at the point where each of the empire's four districts came together. Each district was governed by someone from emperor's family. Over time, several emperors conquered more territory and the government was set up for all people to pay taxes or 'tributes' to make sure the military or any social needs like roads were managed



An Incan Emperor

through free labor for the empire.

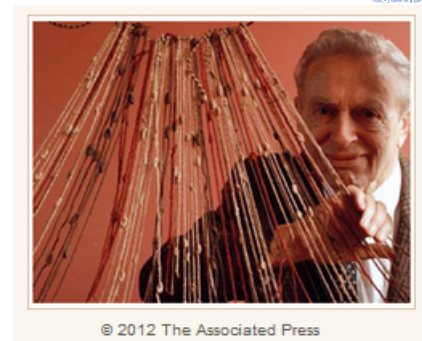


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**Religious Contribution:** The Incas worshipped many gods and believed that their principal god, Viracocha, created all life. Each god also represented something in nature such as Inti, the sun god, who they thought was the most powerful god. The Inca people also respected their ancestors by mummifying them. Crops and pieces and cloth were sometimes burned as offerings and llamas were sacrificed to the Gods, but they didn't practice human sacrifice except when there was a major crisis.

Incan Remains

**Intellectual Contribution:** While the Incas did not use written language, they did use a complex math and communication system of colored ropes called quipu. Not many people could read the quipu strings, but they were a very effective way of both math and communicating across the empire. The Incas also used coca plant leaves as a powerful drug in medicine.



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Quipu Strings

**Technological Contribution:** The Incas used very advanced forms of terracing to farm in the high hills. They were excellent stone workers and could build walls of



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stone for the terraces that did not require any mortar. The Incas were very skilled metalworkers. They worked with copper, tin, bronze, silver, and gold which they also learned to blend together to form metal alloys which could then be made into weapons and tools.

**Economical Contribution:** Macchu Picchu was built high in the mountains and was able to survive earthquakes because of the excellent stonework. The Incan Empire was very spread out and

the geography varied widely so the Incas to create a huge system of 14,000 miles of roads through mountains and deserts. All roads led through the capital city of Cuzco. These roads greatly helped their economy because they used them to communicate, move their armies to conquer neighbors, and move supplies around where and when they were needed. The Incas even built rope bridges across deep rivers, cut steps into steep slopes, and tunnels through mountains. Economic growth would never have been possible without them.



All Roads Led to Cuzco