



The Realm of the Inca

An Empire of Magic and Super-Science for GURPS Castle Falkenstein

by James L. Cambias

In the history of our own world, the Inca civilization was destroyed by civil war, the Spanish conquest, and disease. But beyond the Faerie Veil in the universe of *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*, the fate of the Inca was very different. There, the Inca had fantastically advanced science and sorcery, and their empire has survived in isolation until the Steam Age.

The Empire

The Incan Empire is called Tahuantinsuyu by its people. The empire extends along the western coast of Antillea, from Gran Colombia clear down to Chile, and inland to the eastern foothills of the Andes. The Empire has over 7 million inhabitants, making it the equal of many New European powers.

The subjects of the Inca are a variety of tribes, including Quechua, Aymara, Cara, Nazca, Chimu and Chibcha. Each of tribe has its own language. The Inca clan uses Quechua as the court language, and most inhabitants of the empire speak that tongue in addition to their native dialect. The people of the empire are pure-blooded Indians; no immigration is allowed.

The empire is divided into four sectors, each under an Inca governor. The provinces come together at Cuzco, the capital. Each province is divided in turn into smaller areas called sayas.

The northern sector extends from Cuzco to Gran Colombia. In the far north of this region live the Chibcha, who had an advanced culture before they were conquered by the Inca. South of them, just on the equator, are the Cara. The Chimu dwell between the Cara.

The western province includes the area between Cuzco and the sea, and includes the territory of the Ica and the Nazca plain. The southern province encompasses Lake Titicaca and extends down to Chile and the Argentine, and is inhabited by the Aymara people; it is the richest of the four provinces.

The eastern province of the empire includes the bulk of the Quechua tribal lands northeast of Cuzco. Beyond them the province is sparsely settled, and much of it is a military buffer zone against the Amazon tribes and Brazil. Great fortress-cities like Machu Picchu guard the mountain passes.

Major cities of the realm include Quito, which sits only a few miles south of the Equator and has a quarter-million people; Huanuco, an important silver-mining center with 200,000 inhabitants; Popayan, the northernmost metropolis with 150,000 people; Chanchan on the southern coast, once the capital of its own empire ruled by the Chimu tribe; and Cajamarca, the summer residence of the Sapa Inca, home to 100,000 citizens. The greatest city by far is Cuzco, the capital, with a million inhabitants.

The empire's economy is based on agriculture, and is entirely controlled by the government. The chief crops are potatoes and corn. Other food plants include mushrooms, peppers, beans, bananas, yams and melons. Guinea pigs are the most common domestic animal -- most households have a dozen or so running about underfoot. Herds of llamas, guanacos and vicunas supply wool and meat. The people drink beer made from corn or potatoes.

Every scrap of fertile land is carefully cultivated, and the sides of many valleys are intricately terraced to prevent erosion, and look like colossal staircases. Water is carried to the fields in stone aqueducts which far surpass anything the Romans constructed.

The People

The subjects of the Inca are proud and dignified, reserved in the presence of strangers. But they are not without a sense of humor and fun. The common folk like to get together to drink beer, sing songs accompanied by drums and flutes, and dance.

The people of the mountains wear llama and alpaca wool, and weave wonderful designs in subtle colors. The common attire for men is a wool tunic, a heavy cloak and leggings, topped off with a wool stocking-cap with earflaps. Women wear long dresses and a shorter cloak, with hats that are remarkably like a New European gentleman's bowler. Men cut their hair to neck length, and women wear theirs in long, lustrous braids.

Andean mountain dwellers have very deep chests, and beaky noses. They have astonishing stamina, and can perform great feats of labor at altitudes that leave lowlanders gasping. An Andean mountain dweller's legs are like steel, and they think nothing of going a thousand feet up or down a steep slope on an errand.

Subjects of the Incan Empire generally marry at about age thirty. Families are relatively small, and the population has been steady for centuries. Sons take their fathers' surnames and daughters bear the names of their mothers.

History

The Inca clan has controlled their empire for thousands of years. They claim to be descended from godlike beings who live among the stars. According to the Inca, humans lived in ignorance and savagery, and the wise and powerful star beings saw this and pitied mankind. To help humanity, the sky beings chose two of their number and set them down on Earth, in a high mountain region where conditions were similar to their home in the heavens.

This pair was the ancestors of the Inca clan, Manco Capac and his sister Ocllo Huaca. They landed on an island in Lake Titicaca. Equipped with a magical golden rod and amazing knowledge of magic and science, the two persuaded the tribes of the Andes to accept them as rulers. The two children of the heavens instructed humans in all the arts of civilization -- farming, irrigation, and building. Manco Capac built the city of Cuzco in a single night, using magic to raise huge stone blocks into place.

The Inca and their subjects gradually conquered the other tribes of the region, using their amazing flying pyramids and Sun-Fire projectors to overwhelm any opposition. They left the defeated lands as semi-autonomous provinces under Inca governors. With the amazing technology of the Inca, the empire prospered. Great cities grew in the mountains.

In 1532, a Spanish expedition under Pizarro entered the territory of the Inca from the north. The Empire was disorganized in the aftermath of a power struggle between the Emperor Atahualpa and his brother Huascar. Taking advantage of the confusion, the Spanish were able to march as far as Cajamarca. But by then Atahualpa had finished overthrowing his brother, and was able to turn the

full force of his army against Pizarro's men. Only one survivor returned to Panama. Since that time the Inca have guarded their empire with ceaseless vigilance. The border is clearly marked with stone cairns, and anyone crossing into Inca territory risks destruction.

Cuzco, City of the Sun

The great city of Cuzco stands at the center of the Inca Empire, in a great valley surrounded by looming mountains. Its name means "Navel of the World." Cuzco is an enormous city, with a population of just under 1 million. The city is a place of wonders, with great pyramids and towers of 100 stories.

Cuzco proper is inhabited only by the Inca clan. There are 12 wards, one for each of the Inca *ayllu*, or sub-clans. Outside the walls stretch suburbs where the ordinary folk of the empire live. There are two great squares in the center of Cuzco -- the Plaza of Joy, used for celebrations of happy occasions, and the Plaza of Tears, site of serious religious observances.

Over it all looms the colossal Sacsahuaman Fortress, covering six acres and built of stones twelve feet square. The fortress's high walls are topped with Sun-Fire projectors, and at least one Sky Pyramid floats above Cuzco as a reminder of the Sapa Inca's might. The Inca himself lives in the fortress, and other members of his family are scattered about the city in great palaces of their own.

The greatest temple in Cuzco is Coricancha, the Garden of Gold, sacred to the Sun. The building is huge and beautiful, with gold dust mixed in the very mortar. A great gold Sun disk stand in the center of the temple, decorated with emeralds and turquoise. The priests of the Sun welcome the dawn with chants and incense as the first rays strike the disk each morning.

Behind the royal palace is a complex of schools where the young nobles of the Inca are educated and trained in magic, science and the use of the quipu. Nearby is the convent of the Sun Virgins, who are the custodians of Inca medical lore and maintain the health of the Sapa Inca.

Cuzco has a municipal water system fed by mountain springs, and the water is conveyed by aqueducts all through the city. A system of sewers carries waste off to storage tanks, where it is transformed into fertilizer. A complex of baths stands above the city where hot springs issue from the mountainside, and the hot tubs are a favorite lounging-place of Inca nobility. The modest Inca have separate buildings for men and women.

The Court of the Sapa Inca

Government of the Empire is held entirely by the Inca clan. At the top, of course, is the Sapa Inca himself, the lord of the Andes and Son of the Sun. The Sapa Inca, known generally as just "the" Inca, is the absolute ruler of his domain. He wears a hat with a gold fringe as a badge of office, and carries a golden mace and golden staff as symbol of authority. The staff is a magical artifact of great power, the same one borne by Manco Capac. He sits on a throne of solid gold.

The Sapa Inca is assisted by a Council of the Realm, made up of the governors of the empire's four provinces and representatives of the 12 wards of Cuzco. The Council advises and informs the emperor, but the ultimate decision-making power lies with him. Under weak emperors the Council is powerful; under strong ones it seldom meets at all.

During the summer the Inca holds court at his pleasure-palace at Cajamarca, amid hot springs and gardens. Otherwise he rules from the Sacshauaman Fortress at Cuzco. Etiquette at the court is rigid and complex. Everyone entering the presence of the Inca must remove their shoes and bear a symbolic burden on their backs.

The Inca has a corps of inspectors, known as *Tocoyricoc*. They travel about the empire in secret,

looking for officials who are not performing their jobs, signs of rebellion among the subject tribes, plots among Inca nobles and potential problems requiring help from the imperial government.

To protect the Son of the Sun, there is an Imperial Guard, made up of men from the Canari tribe near Quito. They are imposing warriors, with fantastic headdresses of gold and feathers. The Imperial Guards carry the dreaded Sun-Fire weapons, which emit a dazzling beam of light which destroys whatever it touches.

The standing army is nearly as impressive. The Incan Empire has 50,000 men under arms, organized into regiments of 1,000 men each. Each regiment has its own uniform and traditions, and draws its members from specific tribes. They are armed with a variety of weapons: slings throwing explosive grenades, fire-sprayers, blowguns with poison darts, spears, bows, and maces. Certain regiments specialize in night fighting, sieges or guerrilla warfare.

One interesting feature of Inca government is that the mummies of previous rulers are preserved in their royal residences, with servants and attendants. By means of sorcery the current Inca can commune with his predecessors and get their advice on matters of state.

All the Inca nobles are recognizable by their elongated ears, into which they insert studs of jade, gold or turquoise. The Inca royal family and nobility are rather inbred. It is the custom of the emperors to marry only within their immediate family, and this practice is followed by the other great nobles as well.

While the imperial throne is hereditary, it does not pass automatically to a single candidate. Instead, all of the Inca's male descendants are eligible to succeed him. The heirs constantly intrigue against each other, and use poison, assassination, sorcery and blackmail to get rid of rivals.

There are several factions right now at the Sapa Inca's court. The traditionalists wish to preserve the Incan Empire's isolation from the Lower Kingdoms. For thousands of years the empire has prospered by itself, needing nothing from the outside world. The Spanish invasion proved that all outsiders are barbarians and savages. This is still the Inca's official position, and has the support of most of the Inca clan.

The "progressive" faction wishes to increase the empire's contact with the outside world. There is much to be learned in the outside world, and all may benefit by the sharing of knowledge. If the Incan Empire does not change, it may someday fall to a new set of conquistadores armed with weapons that match the dreaded Sun-Fire itself! This faction is small, but includes some of the cleverest and best-educated members of the Inca clan.

A third faction also wish to end the empire's isolation. Armed with the might of Inca sorcery and super-science, the Sapa Inca's armies could easily defeat the disorganized and disunited nations of Antillea. A few even envision expanding across the seas, forging a vast worldwide empire ruled from Cuzco. This view has support among the warriors who would gain glory leading the armies, and among the minor nobility.

Justice in the Incan Empire is severe; the penalty for murder, robbery, rape or fraud is execution -- usually by being hurled from a cliff. The penalty for disobeying a command of the Sapa Inca is the death of the offender and his entire family. In a novel twist, the local administrator is also punished when a crime is committed, on the assumption that he has not been doing his job.

Viracocha II, Sapa Inca and Son of the Sun

The Emperor Viracocha is a weak ruler, devoted to study and pleasure. In his youth he was a vigorous monarch, but as he enters his second century he has withdrawn, and now leaves most of the running of his empire to the bureaucrats and the Council of the Realm. Viracocha is a tall, lordly old man who spends much of his time listening to poets sing of the past. He is nearly blind

and goes everywhere with a young boy to guide him.

ST: 8

DX: 8

IQ: 12

HT: 8

Move: 5

Advantages: Filthy Rich with Multimillionaire, Longevity, Magery 2, Manual Dexterity +2, Status 8.

Disadvantages: Blind, Laziness, Weak Will -2.

Quirks: Collects wives, Enjoys poetry, Pretends he can still see, Recites epics from memory.

Skills: Administration-12, Area Knowledge (Inca Empire)-18, Dancing-12, Diplomacy-14, Lorebook (Lore of the Sun)-18, Lorebook (Lore of the Mountains)-16, Lorebook (Lore of the Lines)-14, Lorebook (Lore of the Virgins)-12, Poetry-18, Poisons-14, Politics-12, Ritual Magic-18, Weird Science-14.

Marvels of Inca Science

The technology of the Incas is astounding. They have preserved the knowledge given to Manco Capac by the star-dwellers centuries ago, and have added new techniques developed by the engineers of the empire. Among the Inca, there is not nearly as rigid a distinction between science and magic as in Western civilization. Many of their devices combine magic and technology, and they may have a form of Engine Magick inherited from the star beings. In general, ordinary people of the empire live at a very mature TL3, but the advanced weapons and devices of the ruling clan are TL12 or better.

A surprising lack is the complete absence of the wheel among the Inca. Despite their splendid road system, they do not use wagons or any kind of wheeled vehicles. Small loads are carried by llamas or porters; heavy items are levitated by Inca anti-gravity machines or magic.

The Inca engineers are remarkable stonemasons, constructing walls so carefully joined that one cannot force a pin between the stones. Their architecture favors massive walls and narrow windows. Buildings have high-peaked roofs of thatch. Heat comes from smoky fires of brushwood or dried llama dung.

Nowhere is the Inca gift for building more visible than in the road system. There are roads stretching thousands of miles across Inca territory. They wind across the face of sheer cliffs, pass through tunnels carved through mountains, and cross chasms on suspension bridges. The chief highway runs north from Cuzco through Cajamarca, Quito and finally to Pasto. Southward the highway goes to Lake Titicaca, and stretches to the borders of Chile and the Argentine. All along the roads are inns for travellers, maintained by the government.

The art of writing is unknown among the Inca. However, they are not without a way of recording information. The Inca use knotted strings, called *quipu*, as record-keeping devices. The number and pattern of knots of a quipu can encode numbers, allowing the Inca empire to keep extensive records about population, taxes, and all the other business of government. All young men of the Inca clan are trained in reading quipu.

For other information, the Inca make use of a specially-trained caste of secretaries whose memories are absolutely photographic. After years of training, the Inca "rememberers" can hold a virtual encyclopedia in their heads, using a quipu as a guide to recall. These secretaries are a vital part of

the empire's government, and are expected to be absolutely reliable. Any "rememberer" caught telling a lie is sentenced to hard labor in the quicksilver mines.

Crystals and jewels are a key part of Inca science. Using intricate arrangements of rubies, they can create the destructive Sun-Fire beams. Crystals also play an important part in Inca medicine, as their healers have learned to use crystals to focus energies that fight disease.

Most tools in the Inca Empire are of a superior alloy of bronze. Iron is known, and there are abundant veins of iron ore, but the Incan Empire lacks supplies of coal for steelmaking. Gold and silver metalwork made by Andean craftsmen is beautiful.

Inca medical knowledge is advanced. They know of the germ theory of disease, and practice vaccination. This was one reason the Inca suffered far less than other New World peoples from the diseases introduced by the Conquistadores. Surgery has been developed to a high art among the Inca. Doctors even perform brain surgery. Inca medicine incorporates much magical healing, as well. The Sapa Inca benefits from the magical art of "sharing life" practiced by the Sun Virgins. The Sun Virgins use magic to age themselves a few months, and transfer the lost time to the emperor. This is how the Inca rulers reign for more than a century.

The source of power for many of the Inca's most astounding machines is something they call "Blood of the Sun," a form of magickal fusion power. Gravity has long been conquered by the Inca. Using the Blood of the Sun to power machines which must be magickal Engines, they can raise objects of any size, as their flying Sky Pyramids demonstrate. Inca magicians are also masters of the art of levitation, which is of great use in such a mountainous country.

Sun-Fire Beams

These weapons emit a dazzling beam of light, which burns and destroys whatever it touches. The Sun-Fire beams come in two sizes. The smaller ones are a staff the size of a spear, tipped with a crystal lens. They are the equivalent of *GURPS Space* laser rifles, doing 2d impaling damage with a 1/2 damage range of 450 yards. Small Sun-Fire beams may be used 6 times before they need recharging.

The larger Sun-Fire projectors are enormous Infernal Engines used as artillery. They are mounted on the flying Sky Pyramids and on the battlements of Inca fortresses. The giant Sun-Fire beams are focussed by a gigantic gold Sun disk studded with jewels. Large Sun-fire beams are the equivalent of *GURPS Space* light starship lasers, doing 100d damage (1d space combat damage), with a 1/2 damage range of 110,000 yards in air.

Sky Pyramids

The Sky Pyramids are the most impressive symbols of the Sapa Inca's power. They are large pyramids of some ceramic material, roughly a hundred yards square at the base and fifty yards high. The shining gold sides are decorated with images of the sun. They fly by means of the secret Inca anti-gravity device, powered by Sun's Blood power generators. Sky Pyramids are relatively slow flyers, moving at a stately pace of about 20 miles per hour. Each Sky Pyramid is armed with a large Sun-Fire beam at the apex, and can carry an entire regiment of troops. Sky Pyramids can damage objects on the ground by landing on them. The outer covering of a Sky Pyramid has DR 500.

Inca Magic

The Inca do not use Lorebooks as such, but rely entirely on personal instruction in transmitting their magical knowledge. Their magicians learn from one of four traditions.

The Lore of the Sun

The priests of the Sun are the keepers of some of the most powerful Inca magical knowledge, handed down from Manco Capac himself. Priests must be members of the Inca clan, and the organization is exclusively male. Inca rulers must master the Lore of the Sun in order to qualify for high positions in the government. The Lore of the Sun includes the familiar spells **Mastery of Levitation** and **Scrying**. It also includes the new lore of **The Blood Oath**, which compels the subject to fulfil a vow made to the caster; and **Memory**, which allows the subject of the spell to remember something with perfect clarity.

The Lore of the Mountains

When the Inca conquered the tribes of the Andes plateau, they were careful to preserve the existing magical traditions, now codified as the Lore of the Mountains. This tradition concentrates on practical spells: control of weather, communication with ancestral spirits, and protection from harmful magic. Students of the Lore of the Mountains are usually tribal magicians of subject tribes, but occasionally an Inca sorcerer will seek to learn their magic. The Lore includes the secrets of **Speaker to the Dead**, **Raise the Storm**, **Quell Nature**, and **Banish to Eternal Rest**.

The Lore of the Virgins

The all-female order of Nustas, or Sun Virgins, preserves Inca secrets of healing and longevity. They live in great convents in Cuzco, and are responsible for the health and well-being of the Sapa Inca and other nobles. They also provide magical healing to the common people, and know a great deal of ordinary medicine. Their Lore is taught at the great convent in Cuzco. The Lore of the Virgins teaches the student how to **Cast Out the Other**, **Conquer the Madness**, and **Strengthen the Life Bond**. It also includes the secret of how to **Share Life**, which allows a large group of magicians to allow themselves to age a short period, giving the lost time to the subject of the spell in the form of renewed youth.

The Lore of the Lines

The Nazca plain occupies an area just southwest of Cuzco, in an elevated valley separated from the sea by the coastal range. It is a vast level expanse of bare dirt and scattered tufts of grass. From the ground it appears to be nothing but desert. But seen from the air the plain is marked by colossal figures of animals and vast geometric patterns. Perfectly straight lines stretch for miles across the plain. The lines are made by removing the darker topsoil to expose the lighter material beneath.

The Nazca lines are magical diagrams drawn by the Inca sorcerers, and serve as paths through space and time. The sorcerers can walk the lines to other worlds, other times and other dimensions. They visit the kin of the Inca beneath other suns, and bring back marvels from their journeys. Or they follow the paths into the past and future to see what has been and what will be. Some paths lead to other Earths, where history has followed different courses.

The magicians of the Nazca Plain are more like a New European magical Order than other Incan groups, selecting members on the basis of talent alone. Training is arduous, and many candidates fail. The Nazca Lines can act as magical paths to: **Dimensions Beyond the Faerie Veil**, **Other Planets of the Sun**, **Planets of Other Suns**, and **Other Times**.

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