

Religion and Empire: The Dynamics of Aztec and Inca Expansionism (New Studies in Archaeology)

Geoffrey W. Conrad, Arthur A. Demarest

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Religion and Empire is an innovative and provocative study of the two largest states of the Precolumbian Americas, the Aztec and Inca Empires. By examining the causes of the formation and expansion of these two empires, the authors identify similar patterns and processes underlying their rise and decline. They demonstrate that in both examples among the critical elements in the transition from marginal people to imperial power to disintegrating society were changes in traditional religion, including the elaboration of Aztec human sacrifice and Inca worship of the corpses of their kings. The authors show that the complex interaction between such ideological shifts and political and economic factors generated the spectacular historical trajectories of these Pre-Colombian empires.



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