



Tiwanaku: Ancestors of the Inca

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By the shores of Lake Titicaca, the largest body of water in the South American highland, rose the city of Tiwanaku. Its megalithic structures were constructed between AD 100 and 300. By 500 Tiwanaku had become the capital of an expanding empire in the Andes that endured until approximately AD 1000, when extended drought caused water levels to fall and agriculture to fail. After European colonization many of the buildings were raided for their stone, which was used to construct churches, rail stations, and houses. Less than a day's trip from La Paz, Bolivia, Tiwanaku remains one of the most impressive archeological sites in South America.

Despite its fame and its economic, political, and artistic importance to such later peoples as the Incas, the Tiwanaku civilization has never been the subject of a comprehensive international art exhibition and accompanying catalog until now. *Tiwanaku* introduces American audiences to the striking artwork and fascinating rituals of this highland culture through approximately one hundred works of art and cultural treasures.

The range of media is unparalleled among ancient South American civilizations: large-scale stone sculptures, spectacular works in gold and silver, masterfully crafted ceramics, monumental architecture, gold and silver jewelry, and decoratively carved wood, bone, and stone objects. Of special note are the textiles, remarkably preserved by the dry climate of Tiwanaku's outposts in Chile and Peru. These finely crafted and richly decorated objects assembled from collections around the world evoke a vivid and comprehensive picture of elite life five hundred to one thousand years before the Inca Empire.

This lavishly illustrated, full-color catalog features insightful scholarly essays introducing the general reader to the culture and historical context of the Tiwanaku.

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