

# Craft Production and the Appropriation of Wealth

Manufacturing, distribution, and  
the creation of surplus wealth

# What Kinds of Goods?

- Elite vs. nonelite
- Everyday vs. ritual or status display
- Locally made vs. imported
- How was production organized?
- Who got to keep the 'profit'?

# Ceramics

- Everything that needed a container went in ceramic, basketry or fabric
- Ceramics varied by labor, status, materials, skill

# Textiles

- Same contrast between everyday, local, and high-status or ritual materials
- Often a specialized knowledge controlled by elites: Inca, Shang

# Metallurgy

- All societies studied here had metallurgy; used metals for different things
- Pattern of accessibility varied by availability of raw materials, degree of energy investment needed

# Craft Production

- Connections between the time/labor required to produce something, customer base for that good, and how much specialized knowledge was needed
- Production (and knowledge) of some goods protected by taboos: gender, kinship, 'guild' organizations
- Differences between the 'raw' and the 'cooked': labor-intensive commodity productions of cloth, metals, etc. vs. less labor intensive extraction of raw materials
- 'craft' vs. 'industrial' production: how much production, how centralized, counts as 'industrial'?

# Government control

- States and/or elites attempted to control access to luxury goods by limiting access to materials, knowledge
- Also sponsored technological development, through their own competition for status display items

# Organization of Production

- By households
- By families (extended, as in Yoruba)
- By specialized residential enclaves within cities (Mesopotamia)
- In specific cities and regions (Maya, Yoruba)
- At production enclaves stationed around state (Inka weavers at Lake Titicaca)

# Task-based Analysis: an archaeological approach

- Understanding how much labor went into production
- Breaking down each kind of good into component materials requirements (eg., with ceramics, who dug the clay? Who got the firewood? Where did the glazes/slips come from?)

# City States vs. Territorial

- Rulers did not have same ability to control production, F-T producers could sell publicly
- Overall quality of goods available to whole population higher
- Elites often attempted to restrict access, especially to exotic imports
- Elite goods made by F-T specialists, circulate through patronage, gift exchange
- Nonelites, farmers used goods made by P-T producers, local materials, local market exchange or kin production

# Putting it All Together: Agricultural Surpluses, Craft Production and the Appropriation of Wealth

- What was wealth?
- What are:
  - Taxes?
  - Corvees?
  - Rents?
- What was tribute?
- What was reciprocity?  
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