

# Cultural Heritage and Mobility from a Multisensory Perspective

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## **Chapter 2** **Indigenous Peoples' Heritage as a Multisensory Experience: A Peruvian Case Study**

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# 2 Indigenous Peoples' Heritage as a Multisensory Experience: A Peruvian Case Study<sup>1</sup>

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## **Introduction**

It would be a truism to say that Peru is one of the most attractive countries in terms of its unique nature and wealth of cultural assets from various historical periods. In this chapter, I present some preliminary considerations on the multisensory experience with Indigenous Peoples' heritage in the context of the challenges posed by its patrimonialisation and gradual appropriation for the needs of heritage tourism development. As a case study, I have chosen the Qhapaq Ñan, a vast network of roads and related infrastructure that once connected various parts of the Inca Empire and its special section – the suspension woven bridge Q'eswachaka, renewed annually during a three-day traditional ceremony. Both are essential examples of Indigenous Peoples' heritage and can be experienced as multisensory destinations. They are not just physical structures but tangible expressions of the Andean worldview and examples of the strong bonds between local communities and nature, representing the diversity of living traditions of Andean region inhabitants. The functionality of the Qhapaq Ñan Trail has been preserved to this day, as it still serves as a means of transfer and mobility for economic and ritual purposes (e.g. pilgrims walking to places of worship). At the same time, the fact that many of its fragments are included in the offer of cultural tourism (e.g. trekking organised by tourism agencies) allows me to link the Qhapaq Ñan with our considerations on mobility and the multisensory experience of heritage.

I have travelled the Qhapaq Ñan trails many times, participating in pilgrimages (both individually and with local communities), “walks with history and tradition” organised by Qhapaq Ñan Project, or trekking organised by tourist agencies. I have also attended the Q'eswachaka Bridge restoration ceremony twice. Therefore, referring to my observations and experiences of close contact (Rappaport 2008), I wonder whether the processes of patrimonialisation and ongoing commercialisation of the Qhapaq Ñan related to the dynamic development of cultural tourism in the region do not affect the perception of its heritage, by reshaping the whole, multisensory experience. For the indigenous communities, the positive or negative effects of the patrimonialisation of their heritage largely depend on the level of their involvement in the process and the internalisation of related content. This issue is a

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separate, broad research topic, and I am interested in the perspective of a tourist (including my own perspective) who has specific expectations and ideas about the heritage of the Andean region. In the context of considerations on mobility and multisensory heritage, I ask whether the patrimonialisation processes deprive visitors and participants of the possibility of engaging all senses in contact with the Qhapaq Ñan heritage.

When it comes to the concept of the heritage of Indigenous Peoples, I agree with the indigenous notion of its holistic perception as a way of life, which includes not only the products of human thought and crafts but also natural features, landscape and all relationships between the community and other human or non-human beings and spiritual creatures. For Indigenous Peoples, tangible and intangible heritage elements are profoundly interconnected and interrelated manifestations of their ancient and continuing relationship with their lands, territories and resources (Gilbert 2014; Disko and Sambo Dorough 2022). For the adoption of a broad, holistic definition of Indigenous Peoples' heritage, Erica-Iréne Daes insisted:

The heritage of Indigenous peoples is comprised of all objects, sites and knowledge, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation .... The heritage includes all expressions of the relationship between people, their land and other living beings and spirits that share that land and are the basis for maintaining social, economic and diplomatic relations with other peoples with whom it is shared.

(Daes 1997, para. 164)

It is also crucial for my considerations to adopt a critical approach to defining heritage, one that rejects institutionalised definitions (see UNESCO 1972 and Authorized Heritage Discourse, AHD as defined by Smith 2006) and allows to put forward a thesis that it is not just an object, something material, single with a static meaning, but it is the result of a social construction known as *heritage manufacture*. Heritage is a performative process and an act of communication (Smith 2006; 2021) in which objects, places, events and actions from the past are transformed into experiences that fit present goals. Heritage elements are constantly gaining new meanings, depending on the cultural and social context in which they are patrimonialised by official national or international institutions (Harvey 2001; Smith, 2006; Harrison 2013; Graham, Ashworth 2016). As Frigolé (2010, 14) points out,

Patrimonialization converts a patch of territory into a protected area and a building into a monument. This change implies first a de-contextualization, that is to say, a physical and symbolic separation from other elements in its surroundings, and then a re-contextualization.

One of the main reasons for the re-contextualisation and changing perception of Indigenous Peoples' heritage in Peru is growing interest related to the demand created by cultural tourism. Dynamic touristification processes, understood as adapting places and objects for the needs of tourism (Ojeda and Kieffer 2020), are manifested

both in initiatives developed by local communities and national administrations, as well as in the activities of experts in promoting tourist destinations.

Key to my considerations on the multisensory contact with heritage are the aspects that connect it with the search for authenticity. Research on heritage and authenticity is highly diverse (Olsen 2002; Silverman 2015), as authenticity is one of the primary motivations for tourists to leave familiar surroundings and seek unique spaces (MacCannell 1999). As Cohen (1995) points out, some tourists seek authentic experiences, while others are satisfied with substitutes, an experience from a distance, which naturally leads to a broader debate about alternatives and mass forms of tourism that have no place here. However, in experiencing heritage, I am interested in authenticity, understood as participation, feeling and sensation, that is, processes related to our body and senses. I refer to the concept of Intra-Personal Authenticity introduced by Wang (1999), that is, existential authenticity that includes bodily sensations, as our body is the source of emotions and senses. Following the contemporary critical approach to just a visual “consumption of heritage” (Urry 2007; Scounti 2008), the issue is to engage as many of our senses as possible in contact with places, objects and creators of heritage, thereby opening up to multisensory embodied experiences of heritage – sensory reception and sensory perception (see more: Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Bagnall 2003; Pritchard and Morgan 2005; Pearce and Mohammadi 2022). I agree with MacCannell (1999) that everything depends on the role of the tourist and the involvement of tourism agents to what extent we can fully engage in experiencing heritage (by which I mean stepping out of the role of just the “tourist-spectator”). The critical question here is whether it is only a matter of choice or whether the process of institutional patrimonialisation does not leave us free, manipulating our feelings instead and forcing us to be satisfied with the imposed image of the desired destination.

### **Case Studies: Qhapaq Ñan and Q’eswachaka as a Multisensory Experience of Heritage**

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Qhapaq Ñan was crucial in developing and expanding the Inca state, enabling communication, trade and administration. The whole road system integrated an immense territory with extremely complex geography. Incan roads varied greatly in scale, construction techniques and appearance. Individual sections of roads were dedicated to different purposes – they facilitated the transport of goods, the rapid march of troops and the efficient resettlement of people to public works. They were used by state administration officials, inspectors, *chaskis* messengers, and the Incan rulers themselves. It was, therefore, an essential part of the Incas’ social, economic and political infrastructure, playing also a significant role in their religious beliefs and practices (Gade 1972; Regal Matienzo 1972; Rostworowski 2002; Hyslop 2015; Lumbreras, Tarragó and Castro 2020).

The Qhapaq Ñan Road System is not only an example of archaeological heritage. It is also associated with many traditions that have survived to this day, representing the richness and diversity of the Andean region’s cultural heritage and

values shared by communities living in an area spanning thousands of miles along the Pacific coast and the Andes chain. It is essential to their cultural heritage and identity, representing their ancestors' wisdom, knowledge and connection to the land. For many local communities, the Qhapaq Ñan is not just a physical infrastructure but also a "living road", still used and serving as an important facilitator in traditional exchange trading and common ritual practices such as pilgrimages to reach sacred sites and participate in religious festivals. It also serves as a means of transportation and connection not only between remote villages and towns but also between people and the spirit world. Already in Incan times, it was seen as a "spiritual route" that linked sacred sites and landscapes, including mountains, rivers and other natural features considered divine. Along the roads were shrines, temples and other religious sites where people could make offerings and perform rituals to communicate with the gods and ancestors. Its spiritual meaning has survived for centuries, despite changing social and political conditions. For the many Andean communities associated with the trail, it is a "sacred path" that connects different divine realms and elements of nature, serving religious ceremonies dedicated to Mother Earth *Pachamama* and mountain peak deities called *Apus*. Those who walk the preserved trails of Qhapaq Ñan admit to hearing voices and sounds emanating from each of the stones and emphasise the emotional bond that binds them to the trail (see: Matos Mendieta 2015; Castro 2015; Lumbreras, Tarragó, Castro 2020).



*Figure 2.1* Wandering along the preserved sections of the Qhapaq Ñan Trail provides a multisensory experience (Qhapaq Ñan, Section Vilcashuaman, southern Peru)  
Source: Photo by the Author.

Given the importance of Qhapaq Ñan as a “living/spiritual” expanse, when we walk the trail, we anticipate and imagine the journey as an experience that can bring us catharsis and allow us to activate all our senses by directly experiencing contact with such exceptional heritage. Moving along the preserved sections is a physical effort, but we experience a range of emotions with our whole body, as hiking is not only about satisfying aesthetic needs and admiring beautiful views (Bernat 2014; Pietrzak 2008; Stasiak 2013). Qhapaq Ñan leads through extremely different territories and the more diverse the landscape, the more it engages the senses, enabling a greater intensity of various experiences (see: Brassley 1998; Rogowski 2016). First, breathtaking landscapes are without a doubt a unique, visual experience; then we feel the smell of the plants and the wind when we breathe the “smell of the road” (since Inca times, fruit trees have been planted along the roads to make the journey more pleasant). We hear the whistle of the wind and the cries of birds, or sometimes a deafening silence. Those are all pleasant sensations. However, we engage not only the traditional Aristotelian senses of sight, hearing and touch. Our journey also means engaging our sense of balance, which enables us to orientate ourselves in the space; the sense of temperature felt both outside our body and the temperature of our body; the sense of proprioception, which allows us to control the position of our body. There is the perception of time and nociception, that is, pain sensation. Thus, unpleasant sensations also appear, which are other forms of experiencing heritage: the *soroche* disease, which appears at the heights of the *sierra*, causing nausea, pain, fever and a loss of balance; the bitter cold of the Andean peaks and the unbearable heat of the desert coast. Narrow stone paths on which we can move efficiently and quickly, but also desert sand that slows our movements and in which our feet get stuck. A wide range of sensual experiences during the Qhapaq Ñan hike significantly broaden our perception of the environment, and this is something that we look for when initiating our contact with its physical and spiritual heritage (Pritchard and Morgan 2005; Pietrzak 2008; Stasiak 2013; Rogowski 2016).

Some of the Qhapaq Ñan roads are recognised as main routes of pre-Hispanic origin, with many minor sections being reused in later times. In the southern territory of Peru, one of the most complete is the part connecting the indigenous communities of Ccollana Quehue, Huinchiri, Chaupibanda and the peasant community Chococayhua in the Quehue District, Canas Province. It is also the location of the Q’eswachaka [rope bridge] – a 28-metre-long suspension bridge over the deep canyon of the Apurimac River (see: Figure 2.2). In Incan times, the material for such suspension bridges was almost exclusively vegetable fibre, like straw, grass, branches and *ichu* (*Stipa ichu*) – a high-altitude reed widespread in the Andean area at an altitude of over 3000 m above sea level. The nature of the material and the climatic conditions made the bridges perishable structures, which forced their constant maintenance and renovation under the control of guardians, master bridge-keepers and neighbouring communities (Rostworowski 2002; Bauer 2008; Roel Mendizabál, Hernandez Macedo and Huamaní Rodríguez 2015; Ochsendorf 2015).



*Figure 2.2* The Q'eswachaka suspension bridge over the Apurimac River constitutes an essential part of the Andean Road System and the preserved traditions of communities living along the trail

Source: Photo by the Author.

In the past, the Q'eswachaka was an essential part of the Qhapaq Ñan Trail, connecting the state provinces of Cuntisuyu and Collasuyu. Over the following centuries, its good state of conservation was crucial to the lifestyle of local communities, as it was the only form of communication across the Apurimac Canyon. We can, therefore, assume that the bridge was probably regularly renewed. However, in 1968, when the first metal bridge was built just a hundred metres from the Q'eswachaka, the modernisation of transport and new communication possibilities placed the continuity of its renovation at risk. By the beginning of the 1970s, the bridge had stopped being rebuilt, though the reconstruction was not abandoned for long and the skills and knowledge necessary to renovate it were not forgotten. The area's inhabitants decided to return to the reed structure's periodic reconstruction, indicating the work date for the week following the ritual battle of *Tupay Toqto*, celebrated a few days after the new year. Members of the local community gave several reasons why they returned to the habit of restoration. They mentioned a season of chaos, a climatic disorder of significant proportions that had produced a time of scarcity, which was attributed to the abandonment of the custom. In their opinion, it was necessary to involve all the communities in the annual bridge reconstruction to prevent similar dangerous events in the future. Since then, it has become a communal effort carried out in the traditional

Andean *minka* system – a commitment to work together for the good of the community (see: Gade 1972, 98; Roel Mendizábal, Hernandez Macedo and Huamaní Rodríguez 2015, 153–154; information from Hunchiri community members). Every year, members of four communities meet to restore the Q’eswachaka Bridge in the shape of the preserved structure, using the same natural materials and traditional techniques passed down through generations. The Q’eswachaka Bridge is, therefore, not only an impressive engineering achievement and a practical necessity. It is also a vital part of the local communities’ heritage, and its renovation is supposed to be a symbolic act that reinforces the cultural and social ties of the Quehue inhabitants.

The bridge renovation is a three-day ceremony called *Chaccra Phukllay* [“the renewal of the fields”] involving various rituals and symbolic gestures. The renovation begins on a Thursday with the traditional ceremony of *pago a Pachamama* – a sacrifice dedicated to Mother Earth and the surrounding *Apus*, led by the leader of the ritual – the *paqo*. The main products on the ritual *mesa* are coca leaves, ears and grains of corn, and with wine served in a traditional wooden *qero*, along with cigarettes, a llama foetus and several chicken eggs. The sacrifice is deployed on one of the bridge’s banks where, in the bonfire made of dung and straw, the *paqo* and his helpers burn the elements one by one. Smoke from the fire is supposed to protect all the participants from accidents and symbolises the presence and consent of the *Apus* and *Pachamama* to carry out the ceremony. Around noon on the first day, ropes are stretched and intertwined to begin to form medium-sized ropes known as *q’eshwaskas*. Only men participate in this work; women cannot go anywhere near the riverbank or the bridge during the ceremony as, according to tradition, it would bring a stroke of bad luck. Instead, they stay with the children in the surrounding area, making more *q’eshwas* that will later be used to complete the other part of the construction (see: Figure 2.3). Each of the four communities is responsible for the construction of distinct elements of the bridge: Ccollana Quehue prepares one of the spans (*duro*) and one railing (*maki*); Huinchiri weaves the two spans that form the base of the bridge; Chaupibanda weaves the other railing, and Chococayhua prepares the floor (*mast’a*) made of small branches of the shrub *ch’illka*. On the second day, the men install the *duros* and *makis* on the Inca stone bases, securely tying them on each side of the gorge. After establishing a safe transportation route between both ends, the old bridge is cut and dropped over the Apurimac River (see: Figure 2.4). This is a highly emotional moment of closing the old cycle and starting a new one by physically cutting off the past and starting weaving – constructing the future. On the third day, two master weavers – the *chakaruwag* – start to weave the bridge deck, advancing from opposite ends. Everyone waits, intently watching their precise movements and the slow “dance of weaving”, moving them closer and closer to the middle of the bridge. By shouting *haili!* they triumphantly announce the successful completion of the work. The floor prepared by the Chococayhua community is laid on the stretched *duros* cords. The new bridge is ceremonially opened by the first privileged person to cross it.





*Figure 2.3* Women twisting *q'eshwas*, a unique moment of socialisation and a sense of community  
Source: Photo by the Author.



*Figure 2.4* The old bridge flows down the stream of the Apurimac River – with the weaving of a new one, another cycle begins  
Source: Photo by the Author.

Describing the successive stages of the ceremony is justified here because each task is performed by a different group, providing different sensory experiences and involving people who participate in the event in different ways. The division of roles by age and gender is noteworthy, reflecting the traditional perception of the role and place of women and men in Andean societies. As a female participant or a male participant, we experience different impressions and embody our contact with heritage through other senses. The spoken words of prayer at the ritual *mesa* take possession of the whole body, mixing with the smell of smoke floating over the river and the taste of sacrificial coca leaves and *chicha* drink. These are experiences available only to men. As a female participant, my senses are stimulated by other sensations while weaving ropes from *q'oya ichu* and feeling the rough texture of twisted strings used to create the Q'eswachaka Bridge, listening to the conversations and laughter of the women around me, or during a meal together. When considering the renovation ceremony from a multisensory perspective, we realise that the environment in which the ceremony takes place is the best scenography for the traditional senses: we can admire the beautiful views of the golden slopes of mountains and the dark blue depths of the Apurimac River – *el dios que habla* [god, who speaks in Quechua]. We hear the roar of water flowing through the deep canyon and the wind whistling through the Q'eswachaka cords. The sounds of nature blend with the shouts of men stretching the ropes of the bridge and the bustle of conversations of women who, unable to approach the shore during the whole ceremony, sit on the slope along the road.

### **Qhapaq Ñan and Q'eswachaka as Products of Patrimonialisation: Changing Sensual Perception**

The decision to include the Qhapaq Ñan – Andean Road System on the UNESCO World Heritage List was made on 21 June 2014, during the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee in Doha (Qatar). Thanks to negotiations between representatives of technical commissions and delegates of regional ICOMOS and UNESCO Committees, Qhapaq Ñan was registered according to criteria ii, iii, iv and criterion vi, which emphasise not only the aspect of authenticity and exceptional technological achievements but also the values of the living culture of the Andean road network (Martorell 2010; Hernández Ramírez 2011; Kania 2019). Due to the importance of the renovation practice, which has been maintained probably since pre-Hispanic times, through Directorial Resolution No 1112 of 5 August 2009, the Peruvian National Institute of Culture declared the ritual reconstruction of the Q'eswachaka Bridge as part of the Cultural Heritage of the Nation (Ministry of Culture 2009). The favourable vote to enter it in the world heritage category was held on 5 December 2013, as part of the 8th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Baku. According to UNESCO, the knowledge, techniques and rituals related to the annual renewal of the Q'eswachaka Bridge meet the registration criteria: *They are transmitted from*

generation to generation within *Quechua peasant families and are considered by them an integral part of their cultural heritage that favours the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature* (UNESCO 2013, italics in original). Due to the entry into the UNESCO category, the Decentralised Directorate of Culture (DDC) of Cusco has maintained an active relationship with the communities of the Quehue District. The cooperation is dictated by conservation, safeguarding and security issues, which means control of both the ceremony of renovation and the maintenance of the Q'eswachaka Bridge in good condition throughout the year.

UNESCO recognition significantly increases the visibility of the trail at a national level. In many areas, the declaration became an impulse for cultural reclamations, historic revindications, the strengthening or returning to forgotten traditions and the development of plans related to cultural and community tourism – all to create a utopian vision of the predominant Incan heritage across the Andean region, so desired by visitors to Peru (Rendón Puertas 2014; Marcone Flores 2015; Kania 2019). The patrimonialisation of the preserved fragments of the Qhapaq Ñan Trail makes it an attractive product for the tourist offer. Treks organised by specialised event agencies introduce a new form of experiencing its heritage, significantly changing the whole multi-sensual experience. By following the safety guidelines, all obstacles are removed. The wander itself is facilitated in various ways (by porters, animals carrying luggage, a chef and comfortable tents set up for tourists in appropriate places selected by agencies). However, the feeling of fatigue and pain (nociception) is an inherent part of the sensual experience when making a physical effort. Everyone needs to fit within time limits for the efficient organisation of the expedition, so our sense of time ceases to matter. The agency decides about our visual experience, choosing specific routes and our taste impressions are limited to what the chef prepares, according to the preferences and needs of visitors (such as vegan or gluten-free dishes).

When considering heritage tourism in Peru, we are faced with a typical example of the *tourist imaginaries* phenomenon, which refers to the seductive images, ideas and perceptions that individuals have about a destination before visiting it (Gravari-Barbas and Graburn, 2012; Salazar 2009; Salazar 2012; see also: Urry 2007). Tourists seek experiences that conform to their preconceptions and expectations about a particular destination. *Tourist imaginaries* can influence how a destination is marketed and promoted by emphasising certain aspects of a visited place. This is well seen in the Peruvian heritage tourism case. For several decades, the narration of the Andean past has continually highlighted the importance of Incan vestiges in constructing Peru's image, to the point of granting them a quasi-sacred aura (Hill 2007; Kania 2010; Kania 2013–2014). In this context, the renovation of the Q'eswachaka Bridge represents a set of different possibilities to re-signify (re-contextualise) its heritage as a tourism offer. Specific actions have been taken to make this offer more attractive and adjusted to the already defined needs of tourist traffic in Cusco Department. In the mid-1990s, the reconstruction of the Q'eswachaka Bridge was still being

carried out on 6 January, the day of *Bajada de Reyes*, as part of the festivities related to the new year and the rainy season. In Canas Province, this is a period of celebration, with various ceremonies and propitiation rites when new communal authorities are elected. The ceremony of renovation formerly constituted a vital part of the *tinku* festivity, related to the *Tupay Toqto* ritual dance battle between the inhabitants of the Canas and Chumbivilcas provinces. Nonetheless, according to *chakaruwaq* Victoriano Arizapana, in 1998, it was decided to change the date from January to the first week of June. One of the reasons was the preference to rebuild the bridge in the dry period, without the risk of heavy rain and dangerously high levels of the River Apurimac. Indeed, participation in the ceremony – whether as a participant / co-creator or just as an observer – is much more pleasant and will provide a nicer aesthetic experience if it takes place in good weather conditions. However, the chosen date is more convenient for tourism, not only thanks to the better weather. June is a well-known jubilee month of Cusco, attracting many visitors who want to participate in the sun feast *Inti Raymi* and observe the regional dances and parades in the city centre. Therefore, we are witnesses to the modification and redefinition of Q'eshwachaka's heritage, adapted to the needs of people from the outside, complementing the visual, sound and taste impressions accompanying tourists in Cusco during dance shows, presentations at Plaza de Armas and open-air food festivals organised in June. Tourists are invited not to limit their visit only to Cusco, but to participate in excursions and take advantage of the offer prepared by the inhabitants of the Quehue District. The information that can be found in tourism brochures, from tour operators and agencies' advertisements, highlights the renovation of the Q'eshwachaka Bridge as “truly authentic” contact with Incan heritage, which is held as the essence of the entire Andean heritage and is to provide those sensory experiences (mainly visual, auditory, taste) that tourists are looking for. A visit to the Q'eshwachaka rope bridge can be a *truly authentic way to get off the main tourism trails* and a way to experience the past through the *living traditions of local people, the last of its kind in Peru*. The Q'eshwachaka Bridge is promoted as the only place in the country where the ancestral tradition of building rope bridges still lives, making a visit to Q'eshwachaka a *truly authentic way to experience the Andes culture*.

To promote the ceremony as a unique tourist attraction, the General Assembly of four communities decided in 2013 that the men participating in the renovation ceremony would wear the same colour jackets and trousers made of thick white cloth and regional white hats, while the women weaving *queshwas* would wear their richly embroidered, colourful jackets, traditional black skirts and hats decorated with flowers and colourful ribbons. The traditional ethnic costumes currently being prepared for the renovation ceremony should evoke a traditional way of life, and maybe even more – the old times, perhaps even pre-Hispanic, thereby “confirming the authenticity” of the whole event. It is irrelevant here that those who weaved the bridge in Incan or colonial times certainly did not look like modern participants of the ceremony. The community members' appearance should fit with the image of the inhabitants of these remote Andean

provinces. The decision that all the men should be dressed in the same clothes was also dictated by issues of “visual aesthetics” – they should look good in all photos and videos, while at the same time being in harmony with the natural environment. The recommendation not to wear flashy colours also applies to tourists. Anyone dressed in red, bright blue or flashy green jackets or trousers is almost chased away from the vicinity of the bridge as intruders. They spoil the natural colours of the surroundings and disrupt the image of an “authentic Incan ceremony”, which every observer wants to immortalise with their camera. In my opinion, however, these actions have the opposite effect: we have a feeling of participating in a well-directed spectacle with well-designed costumes and well-written roles. We observe the transformation of local products and traditions linked in general to the idealised, picturesque and – most importantly – “authentic Incan” space (Rendón Puertas 2014; see also García Canclini 1999; Graham and Ashworth 2016). However, is it indeed authentic? I consider here rather the aspects related to the *invention of traditions* issue (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992), the *creation of authenticity* and performativity (Bagnall 2003; Haldrup and Bærenholdt 2015; Silvermann 2015), built in the field of tourism through the use of Incan infrastructure, regional symbols and traditional, Andean images.

Since the reconstruction of the bridge has become not only a local tradition but also an obligation towards the global community (UNESCO logo), representatives of the Ministry of Culture ensure that it takes place every year. Therefore, members of the four communities perform work for which they receive remuneration, with those who fail to provide materials for the reconstruction of the bridge or fail to perform specific roles during the ceremony paying the fine. A small fee has also been introduced for those who want to watch the ceremony (get close to the river by their own car) and want to cross the newly woven bridge after its completion. This money is collected by the Quehue municipality, which controls the course of the entire event. In 2021–2022, the Qhapaq Ñan infrastructure leading to the Q’eshwachaka Bridge was restored and cleaned by DDC employees. All the stairs and paths were secured, new benches were set up for visitors and platforms were prepared for tourists and film crews to observe the bridge from a good (and very distant) perspective. As a result, the sacred space of *Apu Q’eshwachaka* has become safe and ... sterile. Those who come to the Apurimac River are seated in the “audience” and, for a few hours (the length of a trip organised by tourist agencies), have the opportunity to watch a spectacle that brings to mind the staging of the *Inti Raymi* feast in the main square in Cusco.

## **Final Considerations**

The observations presented in the chapter regarding the heritage of the Andean region, represented by Qhapaq Ñan and the Q’eshwachaka suspension bridge, are based on issues fundamental to critical studies on heritage, such as patrimonialisation, authenticity and multisensory experience. Far from definitive

conclusions, only initiating and inspiring further in-depth research, I pointed out that the phenomenon of the patrimonialisation of Indigenous Peoples's heritage can significantly change (and even limit) its multisensory experience and that introducing new dynamics leading to the redefinition of its original meanings can be perceived as a manipulation of our senses.

Patrimonialisation has made Qhapaq Ñan heritage sites safe or inaccessible, as in many cases the aspects of conservation and protection of the pre-Hispanic structures have become most important. The UNESCO brand obliges public institutions to follow a conservative and, therefore, hegemonic attitude towards the preserved fragments of the trail, reducing contact with them to only the visual side. The patrimonialisation of the bridge renovation by official institutions (national and international) led to a situation in which the ceremony became not so much a commitment within the traditional *minka* system as an obligation imposed by representatives of public institutions and external stakeholders. There is a noticeable process of monetisation of the "sacred ceremony" related to the broader plans for the development of tourism in the region, in which both DDC representatives and local authorities are involved. In the middle of these processes is the recipient: tourists who visit the south of Peru and expect Incan ruins, traditional rites, magic and mystery. They want ethnic clothes and picturesque views, guided by the vision of the Incan lands promoted by national and international agencies. The particular image of an Andean culture that they expect to see when they come to Peru, their quest for "authentic Incan heritage", has a chance to be embodied not only through the visual side of the renovation ceremony but also through the sound of the Quechua language, the local songs and music and the traditional consumption of coca leaves and drinks of *chicha* alcohol. Nonetheless, the level of control by heritage agents (the ministry, regional authorities and, recently, the representatives of Quechua community institutions) hinders the possibility of participation and direct involvement, relegating visitors to the role of a distant observer in some safe but sterile expanse.

## Note

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