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What if the Incas had an extra 100 years?

Morillo suggests that the Inca civilization is comparable to that of a Greek tragedy, in which the civilization left the modern world with a lot of “what ifs” before history could allow them to respond(352). Yet based on the model of “low and slow” presented in his volume, little change would occur even if we gave the Incan civilization a hundred more years of development. The inherent deficiencies of isolated societies, the geographical boundaries, the lack of development in culture and the isolation from Euroasian networks would limit the Incan civilization.

The Incas did not develop advanced metallurgy, stone and wood remained the most advanced technology of warfare. Technologies took long periods of time to develop, having said that 100 years is a relatively short period of time for the Incas to develop weapons that could ward off Spaniards. Obsidian arrowheads and spears would not pierce the weakest steel plated armor of the Conquistadors and no fabric could withstand European gunpowder.

The Amazon rainforest would be the natural barrier blocking the Inca expansion eastward.

Built upon road networks, given more time, the Incas would probably reach Mesoamerica,

coming in contact with the Mayan and possibly even the Aztecs, but these slow cultural exchanges would still not be enough to repel Spanish horsemen.

Finally, Isolation from the Euroasian world meant that the Incas worst enemy was not the guns and the swords of the invaders, disease such as smallpox, and other epidemics. No amount of years added to the development of an isolated civilization could prepare itself to repel new diseases.

In short, although Historians could fantasize on the “what ifs” of the Incan Empire, the inherent isolated development of this fascinating civilization would still not be able to withstand the wave of expanding Euroasian networks. Lack of significant metal weaponry and immunity would prove to be the nail in the coffin, so to speak, that dissipated the Incan People.

Works Cited

Morillo, Stephen. *Frameworks of World History*. New York City, Oxford UP, 2014.