In the Andes, the Middle Horizon (600–1000 CE) has traditionally been interpreted as a period during which a strong Wari imperial state conquered several provinces and tightly controlled local populations. In the Cusco region of southern Peru, research conducted at large Wari installations has long guided reconstructions of Wari power, leading scholars to argue that Wari presence resulted in the loss of local autonomy and the reorganization of economic activities. In this presentation, I use regional surveys and excavation data from the local center of Ak’awillay to test this model and evaluate Wari military and economic impact in Cusco. Results do not support the hypothesis of a military conquest of the region and suggest strong continuity in agricultural production and exchange networks. I conclude that Wari impact in Cusco was not as strong as originally proposed and that similar to other early states worldwide, Wari influence did not penetrate very deeply into local life.