The Inca conquest of Cerro Azul

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By AD 1450 the Inca had annexed the Kingdom of Lunahuaná in the chaupi yunga *of the Cañete Valley. The Kingdom of Huarco proved much more difficult to subdue, but by AD 1470, after several efforts, the Inca succeeded. While Inkawasi (in the señorío de Lunahuaná) and Cerro Azul (in the señorío de Huarco) both have Inca architecture, their differences reflect the multiple strategies of the Inca empire. Inkawasi was a planned town dominated by standardized storage rooms. At Cerro Azul the Inca built ritual buildings on the sea cliffs, where they could be seen from a great distance. These buildings include an* ushnu *of sillar (a stone of volcanic origin) with a stone stairway that led to the ocean, allowing offerings to Urpay Huachac or Mamaqocha, and an adobe building with a possible* intiwatana *and a* mirador *that provides a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean.*

Hacia 1450 dC los Incas habían anexado el señorío de Lunahuaná en el chaupi yunga *del valle de Cañete. El señorío de Huarco resultó mucho más difícil de someter, pero por 1470 dC, después de varios esfuerzos, los Incas tuvieron éxito. Mientras que Inkawasi (en el señorío de Lunahuaná) y Cerro Azul (en el señorío de Huarco) tienen arquitectura inca, sus diferencias reflejan las múltiples estrategias del imperio incaico. Inkawasi era una ciudad planificada, dominada por los almacenes estandarizados. En Cerro Azul los Incas construyeron edificios rituales sobre los acantilados, donde podían verse desde una gran distancia. Estos edificios incluyen un* ushnu *de sillar (toba volcánica, una piedra de origen volcánico) con una escalera de piedra que conduce al mar lo cual permitió hacer las ofrendas a Urpay Huachac o Mamaqocha, y un edificio de adobes con una posible* intiwatana *y un mirador que ofrece una vista espectacular del Océano Pacífico.*

The Inca conquest of Peru's Pacific coast required multiple strategies. Regions that acquiesced to political incorporation, such as the Chincha Valley, might be granted a kind of joint rule or dual administration (Morris 2004, 2008; Morris and Santillana 2007: 155–158; Wallace 1998). Regions that resisted incorporation, such as the Cañete Valley, were conquered militarily and subjected to direct Inca rule (Cieza 1941: Chapter 73; Cieza 1943: 274–281; Cobo 1983: 149–150; Hyslop 1984, 1985; Rostworowski 1978–80, 1988: 105–109; Rowe 1946).

In the aftermath of incorporation, the Inca might move loyal followers into areas of local resistance,

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compel local groups to work on state roads, bridges, agricultural terraces, and storage facilities, and construct a series of ritual buildings whose very nature publicized Inca control (Bauer and Stanish 2001; Covey and Amado 2008; Gasparini and Margolies 1980; Hyslop 1990; Julien 1983; LeVine 1992; Marcus and Silva 1988; Meddens 1997, 2015; Menzel 1959; Morris 1998; Murra 1975, 1980; Niles 1992, 1993; Pease 1982; Pino 2004, 2010; Staller 2008; Stehberg 2016; Zuidema 1979, 1989).

Our data on Inca incorporation come from two sources: ethnohistoric documents and archaeology. In the past, these sources of data tended to be exploited by different cadres of scholars. Increasingly, however, we are seeing a generation of scholars who engage in both ethnohistory and dirt archaeology, taking advantage of the complementary data provided by the two disciplines (Bauer 2004; Burger et al. 2007; Covey 2006, 2015; Farrington 2013; Julien 1993; Malpass 1993a, 1993b; Malpass and Alconini 2010; Morris 2007: 6; Morris and Santillana 2007; Niles 1992, 1993).

Scholars combining archaeology and ethnohistory point out that early Colonial documents vary greatly in coverage and detail (Bray 2015; Burger et al. 2007; Covey 2000, 2006, 2015; D'Altroy 1992, 2002; Malpass 1993a; Morris 1998, 2007, 2008; Morris and Thompson 1985; Morris et al. 2011; Murra 1975, 1980). The archaeological record can be just as uneven and enigmatic. Some Late Horizon sites on the coast contain Inca-style pottery imported from Cuzco; others include local imitations of Cuzco pottery; still others produce virtually no Inca-style pottery at all.

Archaeologists are often inconsistent in their use of the term "Inca," especially when trying to distinguish different kinds of material culture: (1) imported Inca (Cuzco) pottery, (2) locally made imitations of Inca pottery, (3) hybrid Inca-local pottery, and (4) locally made Late Horizon pottery. Sites lacking Inca pottery may nevertheless feature Inca-style architecture, in buildings called "*kallankas*" (a term sometimes applied to long narrow buildings with trapezoidal niches and multiple entrances), "*ushnus*" (altars or platforms used for libations, astronomical observations, and a variety of other rituals), or in constructions employing sillares (stones often arranged in tight-fitting rows or courses in Cuzco style). Sillar is whitish to light green in color and occurs near volcanoes in southern Peru as a pyroclastic flow, a deposit of volcanic tuff.

The mere act of labeling a structure a "*kallanka*" or an "*ushnu*" often suggests that we know more about its function than we do, and, unfortunately, such labeling may discourage the very excavations and analyses that would establish their diverse functions. Furthermore, Nair and Protzen (2015) say that "recent research has revealed that this use of the term *kallanka* to describe a building form is actually a modern invention (Nair 2003: 141)." In sum, the use of terms such as *kallanka* and *ushnu* will require us (1) to provide more precise definitions, and (2) to conduct more excavations to establish building functions and the activities that took place in and around these structures (see Morris et al. 2011 for a good example).

Finally, some Late Horizon sites may feature an *intiwatana* or "hitching post of the sun," often a bedrock outcrop used to mark solstices (Dean 2007: Figure 2; Gasparini and Margolies 1980: 267–269). Many have noted that *ushnus* and *intiwatanas* occurred in various shapes and sizes and served diverse ritual purposes through time and over space (Chu 2015; Coben 2014; Dean 2007; Hyslop 1985: 23; Matos 1994; Meddens 1997, 2015; Meddens et al. 2010; Pino 2004, 2010; Staller 2008; Stehberg 2016; Zuidema 1979, 1989). In speaking of the indiscriminate use of the term *ushnu*, Coben (2014: 129) notes that "material similarities, the shared name *ushnu,* and the shared written descriptions of their functions may result in a significant interpretive pitfall," simply because diverse structures served diverse functions.

Both the *intiwatana* and *ushnu* conveyed crucial messages at subordinate sites, revealing what Pino (2004: 309) has called "ideological domination." Those stone monuments attracted pilgrims and were often built on the summits of hills (Meddens 1997, 2015; Stehberg 2016). Meddens (2015: 241) notes that *ushnu* platforms were predominantly associated

with conquered areas rather than the Inca heartland, a pattern which he says "may in fact be an important clue in explaining their distributional pattern around the empire." These *ushnus* were seasonally accessed for ritual purposes that would have served to confirm Inca control over non-Inca territories (Hyslop 1985; Meddens 2015: 257).

The site of Pachacamac in the Lurín Valley also provides us with an example of the way the Inca used architecture to assert their annexation of a region (Bueno 1982a). During the Late Intermediate period Pachacamac was a relatively modest settlement known as Ychsma. After renaming the place Pachacamac, the Inca made it more monumental by commissioning several major constructions —large plazas, ramped pyramids, the Sun Temple, the Acllahuasi, the Taurichumbi Palace, three massive walls, and walled streets to control traffic flow and processions (Makowski 2015; Ramos 2011; Rostworowski 2003; Shimada 2015; Uhle 1903). With the conquest of Ychsma, the sites of the Lurín Valley became part of a new sacred geography created by the Inca to legitimize their right to rule (Makowski 2015: 128). The Inca administration appropriated the existing sacred landscape of Pachacamac—including the sacred islands of Cahuillaca, the lagoon of Urpay Huachac, and the temples of Cuniraya Viracocha—and fully transformed it. "In Pachacamac, ceremonial roads enclosed between parallel walls directed the movements of parishioners who came to pay taxes, to deposit offerings, to fast, or to celebrate" (Makowski 2015: 130).

The Inca Conquest of the Cañete Valley

Midway through the fifteenth century, the Inca emperor Topa Inca Yupanqui made his move on the Cañete Valley (see Figure 1). At that time the lower valley consisted of two small kingdoms, Huarco in the *yunga* or coastal plain and Lunahuaná, 28 km upstream in the *chaupi yunga* or piedmont (Chu 2015; Díaz 2015; Harth-Terré

1933; Hyslop 1985; Rostworowski 1978–80). It is known that Huarco resisted incorporation.

The entire Kingdom of Huarco was protected by a *gran muralla* or defensive wall on its inland border (Larrabure 1935; Marcus 2008; Rostworowski 1978–80). Its capital, the site of Cancharí, occupied a defensible hilltop with its own supply of water for drinking and irrigation (Harth-Terré 1923, 1933; Hyslop 1985; Rostworowski 1978–80). The takeoff point of Huarco's main irrigation canal was defended by the fortified site of Ungará (Harth-Terré 1923; Hyslop 1985). A defensive wall on the lower slopes of Cerro Camacho protected Huarco's main fishing community, the site of Cerro Azul (Marcus 2016: Figure 1.5).

The Inca strategy for this valley was to conquer the Kingdom of Lunahuaná first, and convert that locality into a staging area from which Huarco could be attacked. As near as we can tell, Topa Inca Yupanqui subdued Lunahuaná around A.D. 1450. This date is used by Hyslop (1985), based on his and Rostworowski's study of sixteenth-century documents; nevertheless, ongoing excavations at the site of Inkawasi should generate a radiocarbon chronology that might be evaluated alongside the analyses of sixteenth-century documents. Topa Inca Yupanqui's armies then tried for three or four years to conquer Huarco, initially suffering a series of setbacks (Cieza 1943: 274–281).

The Inca Transformation of Lunahuaná

Once the Inca had taken over Lunahuaná, they began transforming it in preparation for their assault on the coastal plain. Their main seat of power in Lunahuaná was Inkawasi, which according to Cieza de León (1959: 339) was "a new city, to which he [the Inca ruler] gave the name of New Cuzco, the same as his main seat. They also tell that he [the Inca] ordered that the districts of the city and the hills should have the same names as those of Cuzco." Inkawasi had a military and storage function; indeed, half the rooms there were for storage. A series of walls were
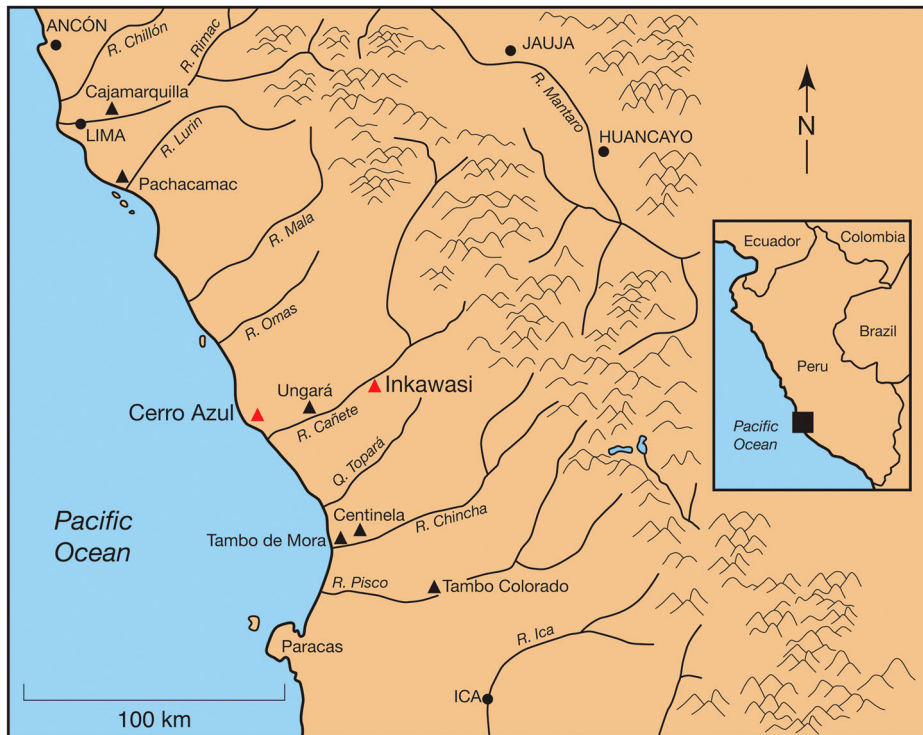
Figure 1. Peru's central coast valleys, including Chillón, Rímac, Lurín, Mala, Cañete, and Chincha.

built to protect Inkawasi, one of which lay 6 km downriver at the Inca site of Escalón.

Hyslop (1985: 34) interpreted Escalón as "a vanguard fortification and control point for Inkawasi." Some 20 m west of the site Hyslop found the stone head of a war club, shaped like a six-pointed star. "The location of the warclub head leads one to speculate whether an Inka-Huarco confrontation took place west of Escalón's wall, a logical point for an intruding Huarco army to confront Inka forces" (Hyslop 1985: 37–38). Significantly, at Cerro Azul we found a similar war club head, although ours was broken in half (see Figure 2).

Inkawasi's main plaza and *ushnu* were well situated, since they lay near the Inca royal road and have a commanding view of the Cañete floodplain. The site itself was an optimal area for food storage, and Hyslop (1985: 6) suggests that the extensive agricultural terraces on the slopes around Inkawasi are largely Late Horizon in age. The Inca also built extensive storage facilities at Inkawasi to provision their troops. Inkawasi's 245 *collcas* (36 large and 209

small), with an estimated storage capacity of 6400 m^3, let the occupants of the Cañete Valley know that the Inca could easily subsidize its army and workers.

Recent excavations in the Inkawasi storage facilities have yielded 34 *khipus*, some of which were paired and tied together. Significantly, the knots and numbers recorded on those paired *khipus* are near duplicates (Urton and Chu 2015). The practice of creating duplicate *khipus* suggests that the state was focused on checks and balances, perhaps a kind of double-entry bookkeeping. We can envision (1) one official delivering a load of maize that he has counted on his personal *khipu* and (2) another official creating a second *khipu* to show that he had received and recorded the amount of maize delivered. After the numbers on the two *khipus* had been reconciled, the *khipus* would have been tied together to acknowledge that the transaction had been completed.

In addition to the 34 *khipus,* the Inca created standardized squares on floors at Inkawasi to count commodities. In a large open space adjacent to the
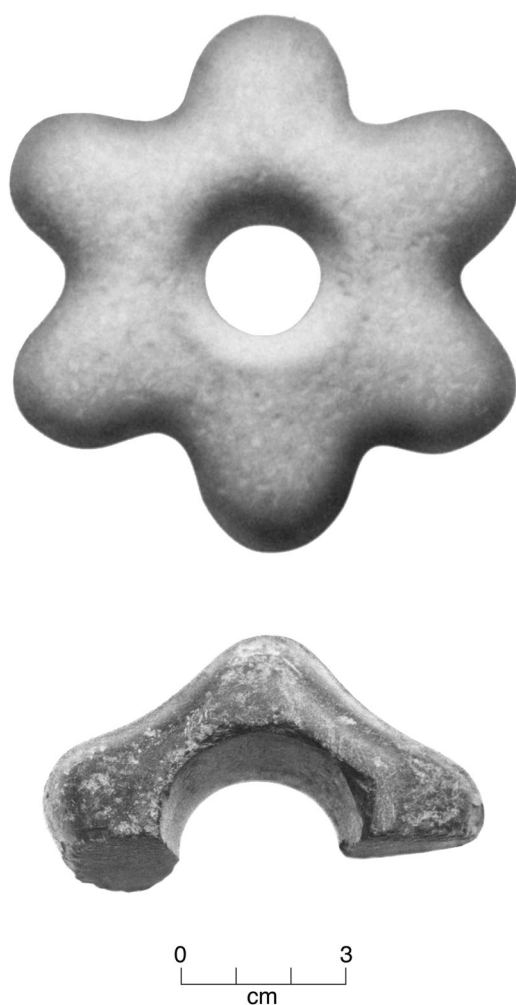
Figure 2. Stone war club heads from the Cañete River Valley. Top, star-shaped war club head found at Escalón, 6 km from Inkawasi (drawn from a photo in Hyslop 1985: Figure 19). Bottom, broken war club head from Quebrada 5a, Terrace 9, Cerro Azul (photo by the author).

kallankas (in this case they are long, multi-doored structures presumed to have had residential roles), excavators found a floor with lines and squares that had been made by impressing ropes into the damp mud. These lines formed a grid of 3,510 squares, with each square measuring 23 cm × 23 cm (Urton and Chu 2015: Figure 8).

Crops such as maize, coca, peanuts, and chile peppers were evidently placed in these squares to be dried, sorted, and counted. Multiple *khipus* were found next to, or under, the specific items they were used to count. Urton and Chu (2015: 527)

suggest that since these drying squares were uniform in size, they may have been used to standardize the amounts to be dried, recorded on *khipus*, and stored in the *collcas*.

The Inca Conquest of Huarco

Despite the extensive facilities the Inca had created at Inkawasi, it took Topa Inca Yupanqui three or four years to subdue the Kingdom of Huarco (Acosta 1940, Book 3, Chapter 15; Cieza 1943: 274–281, 1959: 337–344; Cobo 1956: Chapter 15). Each year the Inca descended from Inkawasi to attack Huarco, and each year with the arrival of the summer heat, these attackers retreated to higher ground. With each retreat, the local agricultural communities within the *señorío* de Huarco had a chance to harvest their crops and brace themselves for next year's attack.

There are several accounts of the eventual conquest of Huarco in AD 1470. Some attribute the Inca victory to deception—to wit, the Inca are said to have proposed a truce that turned out to be the pretext for a sneak attack. Convinced that the Inca genuinely wanted peace, the battle-weary people of Huarco decided to celebrate with a ritual that required them to enter the sea in their watercraft (Rostworowski 1978–80). While all the Huarco defenders, fishermen, musicians, and religious specialists were out at sea, the Inca attacked and caught them unprepared.

In Bernabé Cobo's version of this event (Cobo 1956: Chapter 15) it was Apu Achache, the brother of Topa Inca Yupanqui, who was charged with incorporating Huarco into the empire. At that time, it is said that the *curaca* of Huarco was a *capullana*, a woman who defiantly refused to let the highlanders take possession of her kingdom.

Topa Inca Yupanqui's response to this news was to laugh, saying that women were always giving him a hard time. Upon hearing this, Topa Inca's wife (the *coya*, or queen) asked her husband to let her take care of the situation, a suggestion to which the Inca ruler readily agreed. The *coya* then sent an ambassador

to the *curaca* of Huarco, and it was he who announced a truce. This inspired the *curaca* of Huarco to propose a "solemn ceremony in honor of the sea" in order to celebrate the cessation of hostilities.

On the day of the ceremony most of Huarco's defenders, including musicians and attendants, sailed out to sea. While "those of Huarco" were well offshore, the Inca army took possession of the lower valley. Rather than establishing any kind of joint rule with the aristocracy of Huarco, the Inca seem to have eliminated them.

When we turn from the ethnohistoric documents to the dirt archaeology of Cerro Azul, we find the following. (1) Most buildings of the Late Intermediate period were abandoned at the start of the Late Horizon, with the exception of an occasional commoner-class family. (2) Almost no Inca pottery has come to light at Cerro Azul; my excavations in the 1980s turned up only one sherd of an Inca-style *aríbalo*, and that was an imitation made on local clay (Marcus 1987a: Figure 17; Marcus 2008: Figure 5.15). (3) On the sea cliffs overlooking the Pacific, the Inca constructed ritual buildings (see Figure 3). One of these (Structure 1) was an adobe building with trapezoidal niches and an apparent *intiwatana*. Another building (Structure 3) was an *ushnu*, built of sillar (stones of volcanic origin) and equipped with a stairway to the sea (Marcus et al. 1985). Finally, there was a third building (Structure 2) that had been so disturbed by Colonial Spanish occupants that we ended up excavating only part of it. The once-monumental *ushnu* (Structure 3) was certainly an unusual construction for the Peruvian coast.

Structure 1, Cerro Azul

Atop Cerro del Fraile, the northernmost of two sea cliffs at Cerro Azul, the Inca built Structure 1. This was a 12-room building whose adobe brick construction contrasts with that of the Late Intermediate *tapia* compounds at the site. The adobes average 45 cm × 25 cm × 16 cm, and the building was equipped with both ramps and stairways. The fact that the adobes were of at least three different colors (brown, gray, and beige) may suggest that the building's construction involved multiple work crews with access to different clay sources.

Structure 1 had a number of architectural features that identified it as Inca. First, the southwestern edge of the building was reinforced with rows of sillar stones in Inca style. Second, its largest room (9.87 m × 2.85 m) featured seven trapezoidal niches in its back wall. Third, one ramp led to an apparent *intiwatana*, consisting of a natural bedrock outcrop into which a few steps had been carved. Fourth, another stone outcrop had been surrounded by a wall in a way similar to the treatment of *wak'as* at other sites (Dean 2007: 514; Farrington 2013: 49).

Figure 4 gives the plan of Structure 1, which had five rooms in an uphill row (Nos. 1, 6, 5, 7, 8) and seven rooms in a downhill row (Nos. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12). (Note: The reader should consult Figure 4 while examining the following room descriptions.)

We completed excavation of this building during the University of Michigan's 1983 season (Marcus 1987a, 1987b). We were able to document many of Structure 1's Late Horizon architectural details, but unfortunately this building was re-occupied by Europeans during the Spanish Colonial period. As a result, we found no Late Horizon artifacts *in situ*.

Room 1

Room 1 measured 4.12 m × ca. 1.35+ m; the eastern part of the room was too eroded to measure accurately. The room's walls were preserved to a height of 0.80 m above the floor. There was a low shelf, 48 cm wide × 72 cm long, in the north wall of the room; it consisted of a flat stone resting on a foundation of hard-packed greenish-gray earth. This shelf became Feature 1. The adobes in the walls of Room 1 fell into two sizes, some measuring 45 cm × 28 cm × 19 cm while others measured 45 cm × 25 cm × 16 cm. Room 1 was accessed by a four-step stairway that connected it to a landing at the top of a major staircase.
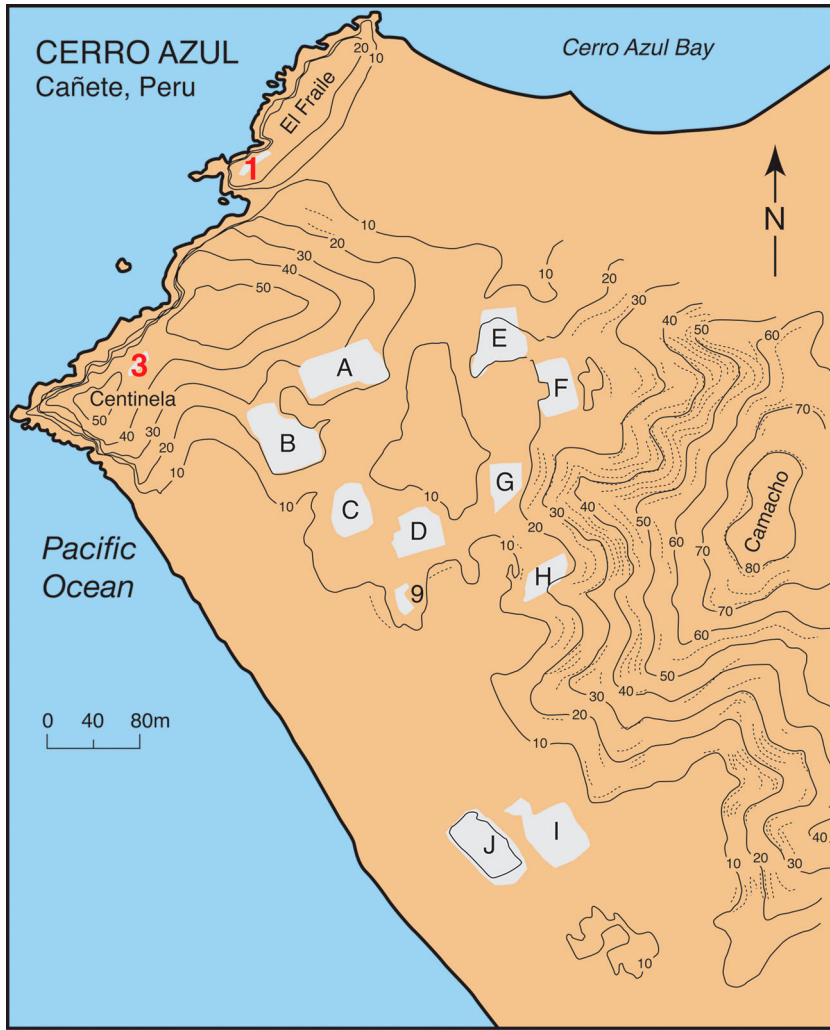
Figure 3. Map of Cerro Azul, showing Structures 1 and 3 (in red) on the sea cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean.
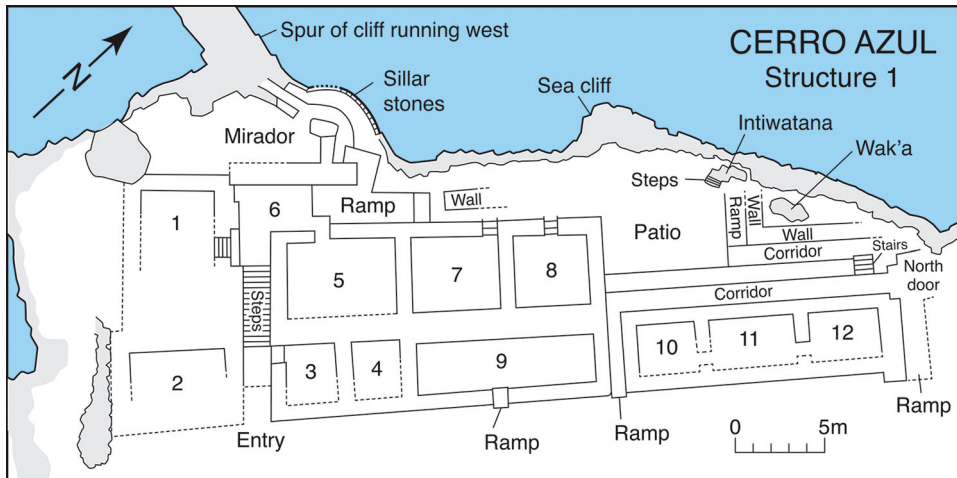

Figure 4. Structure 1, a 12-room adobe building on Cerro del Fraile, Cerro Azul.

Room 2

Room 2 lay approximately 8.5 m downslope from Room 1 and measured 5.35 m × 1.7+ m. This room had two platforms, each 15 cm high, constructed with greenish-gray adobes. Between these two platforms (each measuring 1.8 m × 1.7 m) was an open space 1.75 m wide, with a hard-packed floor of red clay.

Room 3

Room 3, similar in size to Room 4, was linked to a stairway 5 m in length and 1.5 m in width.

Room 4

Room 4 was small (2.66 m by 1.5+ m) and separated from Room 3 by an adobe wall 0.94 m in width. Its back wall was preserved to a height of 50 cm.

Room 5

Room 5 featured a platform in its northwest corner, similar to the ones described for Room 2. The platform measured 1.85 m × 4.00 m and was 20 cm in height; it consisted of a row of adobes covered with a layer of hard greenish-gray clay and given a burnished, smooth clay surface. This room provided access to "Room 6" through a doorway in its back wall.

"Room 6"

While labeled a "room" at the start of excavation, this space eventually turned out to be a stairway landing. As suggested above, "Room 6" connected Room 5 to the stairway. The back wall of the landing was well-preserved enough to reveal its construction history —over the irregular bedrock lay a fill of red clay 40 cm thick, one or two rows of bluish stones (27 to 40 cm thick), and finally an adobe wall up to 1.8 m in height.

Room 7

The dimensions of Room 7 were 4.85 m × 4.96 m (Figure 5). It was located three steps below a narrow corridor leading to a *mirador* or ocean overlook (Figure 6). This three-step stairway in the northwest corner of Room 7 measured 0.72 m in width. The walls of the room had been preserved up to 1.0 m in height and 0.81 m in width on average. The floor of the room had a cap of mud over its red clay fill.

Room 8

Room 8 was almost perfectly square, measuring 4.23 m × 4.12 m. Two of the significant features of this room are the fact that it provides access not only to the *mirador* but also to a bedrock outcrop that may be an *intiwatana*. (A well-preserved Inca *intiwatana* is known from Machu Picchu; see Gasparini and Margolies 1980: 267–269.)

Room 9

Room 9, the largest in Structure 1, measured 9.87 m × 2.85 m. It was perhaps the room most accessible to visitors, who could enter via a centrally placed ramp. The room's most prominent feature was seven trapezoidal niches along its back wall (Figure 7). The dimensions of these niches in centimeters (from south to north) were as follows:

	Width (top)	Width (bottom)	Height
Niche 1	27	37	74
Niche 2	28	37	70
Niche 3	28	37	70
Niche 4	28	37	70
Niche 5	–	39	70
Niche 6	–	38	70
Niche 7	–	37	73

Not only was Room 9 Inca in architectural style, it conveys the impression that it was the ritual center of Structure 1. Its size, its accessibility to visitors, its evidence for heavy roof beams, its central location
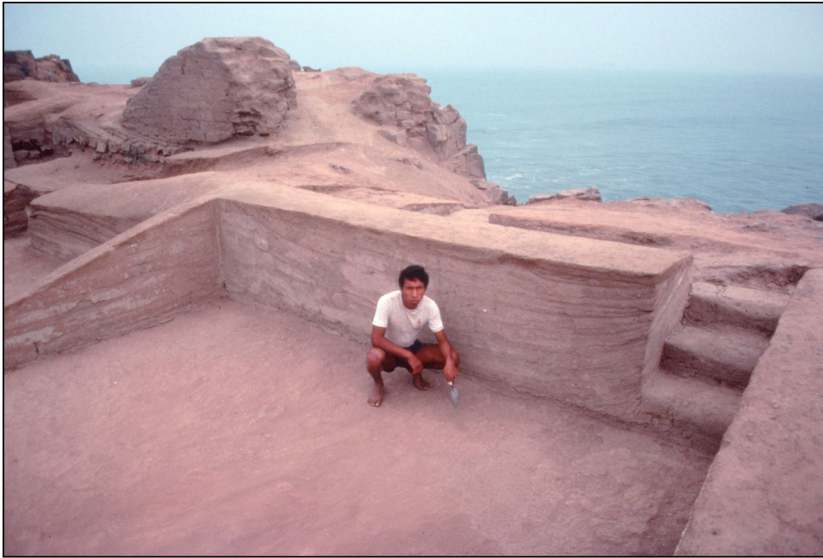
Figure 6. A corridor leading to the *mirador* of Structure 1, Cerro Azul.

on Cerro del Fraile, and its trapezoidal niches all suggest that it was a place where political or religious assemblies took place (Figure 8). It had platforms, but they do not seem to be the same kind seen in other rooms; given the presence of irregular bedrock here, the Room 9 platforms seem to have been designed to create a level floor for this important room.

Finally, the high accessibility of Room 9 contrasts with the more restricted locations of the *mirador* and the possible *intiwatana*. It would seem that the latter two features would have been accessible only to a small number of ritual specialists.

Room 10

Three rooms—10, 11, and 12—form a unit on the front of the building. This unit was bracketed by a pair of ramps. One could walk easily from one room of this triad to the others. Rooms 10 and 12 had platforms; Room 11 did not. Room 10's platform was on the south wall, while Room 12's was on the north.

Nineteenth-century occupants had made use of these rooms. We found the date 1868 incised on the back wall of Room 10, and in the fill of the room we found pages of the *Panama Star and Herald* dating to February 10, 1875.

Figure 7.   Room 9 of Structure 1, showing a wall with trapezoidal niches.

Room 11

Room 11 measured 4.64 m × 2.75 m, and its best-preserved wall measured 0.83 m thick.

Room 12

Room 12 measured 3.90 m × 2.75 m.

Reinforcement or Retention Walls along the Sea Cliffs

On the ocean side of Structure 1, we encountered two kinds of reinforcement walls. One kind was composed of adobes. The second kind was composed of well-cut sillar stones of the same type used in Structure 3 (see below). The presence of these sillar

Figure 8.   Close up of trapezoidal niches from Room 9, Structure 1, Cerro Azul.

walls was a further clue that we were dealing with an Inca structure. It is significant that sillar is a type of volcanic tuff that does not occur in the Cerro Azul area.

Wak'as Associated with Structure 1

The cliffs and rocky outcrops of Cerro del Fraile attracted the attention of the Inca. At Cerro Azul, as at other sites, these outcrops may have been considered sacred *wak'as*. On the southwestern edge of Structure 1 we see that the sea cliff projects into the ocean; this projection is where the Inca created a *mirador* (lookout), a doorway, and a narrow corridor that led to the projection.

An additional bedrock outcrop, to the north of the *intiwatana* already mentioned, was surrounded by a wall. It is known that to protect a *wak'a* and to ensure its privacy, the Inca sometimes built a wall around it. For example, Farrington (2013: 49) notes that some rock outcrops and other natural *wak'as* were walled off by the Inca "including the rock and caverns at Chingano Chico, Amarumarkawasi, and Sapantiana and the scree stones at Salapunku (Km 82), below Ollantaytambo." Farrington also notes that "in several locations, a large rock was incorporated within some form of inka structure, thus enhancing the sacred qualities of that particular feature, such as at Urqo, Huchuy Cusco, and Machu Picchu" (Farrington 2013: 50).

Structure 2, Cerro Azul

Structure 2 was an adobe building immediately to the north of Structure 1 on Cerro del Fraile. I began its excavation in 1983 and soon found that it had been extensively occupied by Colonial Spanish residents. Since Colonial archaeology was outside the stated goals of my project and time was short, I decided not to complete the excavation of Structure 2 and instead turned my attention to Structure 3.

Structure 3, Cerro Azul

Of all the Inca buildings at Cerro Azul, the one mentioned most prominently in the ethnohistoric documents is Structure 3. This was once a magnificent, stepped oval platform atop Cerro Centinela, visible many kilometers out to sea. Unfortunately, the adobe platform was encased by thousands of beautifully cut stones, so attractive as construction material that most of the stones were removed to be used elsewhere (see Table 1 for their dimensions).

Based on surviving remnants of the building, I reconstruct Structure 3 as having been 30 m in length, 11–13 m in width, and roughly 5.63 m in height (Figure 9). It was perched on the sea cliff in such a way that part of it projected out toward the ocean. From this oval platform, a stone stairway descended down the sea cliff all the way to the water, so that offerings could be made directly to the sea (*Mamaqocha*). Along the rugged and precipitous course of this stairway there were balconies (Figure 10) made from sillar stones, some of which are still in place today (Bueno 1982a: 49; Marcus 1987b: Figure 8, bottom).

From the sea, Structure 3 appeared to the Spaniards as a fort (see Figure 11), and many Colonial documents refer to it as the "Fortaleza de Guarco [sic]" (e.g., Cieza 1959: 337–344). All indications are, however, that the building was an *ushnu*, a ritual platform often built by the Inca in conquered territories as a way of showing that the region had been annexed by the empire. For example, at Ingapirca in Ecuador, the Inca built an oval *ushnu* with dimensions similar to those of Cerro Azul's Structure 3. The Ingapirca platform was 37.1 m long, 12.35 m wide, and more than 4.1 m in height (Alcina 1978; Cummins 2015: Figure 10.35; Gasparini and Margolies 1980: 296, 297, 300).

According to Farrington (2013: 38), the *ushnu* platform "is certainly a most readily identifiable feature and the focal point of any inka [sic] urban center, with more than 85 throughout Tawantinsuyu from Quitoloma in Ecuador (Connell et al. 2003) to Chena in central Chile (Stehberg 1995; Raffino and Farrington 2004)." The *ushnu*

Table 1 The dimensions (in cm) of 147 stones still remaining in Structure 3 at Cerro Azul

|	Width × Height		Width × Height		Width × Height		Width × Height		Width × Height		Width × Height
(1)	23 × 24	(26)	21 × 22	(51)	20 × 23	(76)	24 × 23	(101)	26 × 23	(126)	25 × 17
(2)	19.5 × 24	(27)	22 × 21	(52)	22 × 22	(77)	27 × 21	(102)	30 × 23.5	(127)	21 × 17
(3)	19 × 23	(28)	24 × 20	(53)	29 × 23	(78)	25.5 × 19	(103)	17 × 21	(128)	26 × 16
(4)	25 × 21	(29)	24 × 19	(54)	21 × 23	(79)	15 × 18	(104)	23 × 26	(129)	29 × –
(5)	16 × 15	(30)	23 × 21	(55)	26 × 23	(80)	29 × 21	(105)	26.5 × 24	(130)	24 × 17
(6)	27 × 14	(31)	22 × 20	(56)	25 × 23	(81)	19 × 16	(106)	30 × 13	(131)	9 × 10
(7)	24 × 15	(32)	26 × 20	(57)	24 × 24	(82)	23 × 12	(107)	23 × 18	(132)	25 × –
(8)	21 × 23	(33)	17 × 22	(58)	23 × 23	(83)	23 × 12	(108)	23 × 19	(133)	13 × 21
(9)	37 × 24	(34)	22 × 24	(59)	25 × 22	(84)	25 × 20	(109)	23.5 × 21	(134)	16 × 19
(10)	15.5 × 22	(35)	29 × 23	(60)	17 × 17	(85)	26 × 26	(110)	24 × 21	(135)	29 × 19
(11)	21 × 24	(36)	22 × 22	(61)	12 × –	(86)	28 × 23	(111)	22 × 24	(136)	23 × –
(12)	38 × 21	(37)	23 × 21	(62)	24 × –	(87)	27.5 × 24	(112)	21 × 23	(137)	22 × 22
(13)	22 × 15	(38)	23 × 20	(63)	25 × –	(88)	28.5 × 23	(113)	11 × 7	(138)	22 × –
(14)	19 × 15	(39)	26 × 23	(64)	21 × –	(89)	13.5 × 21.5	(114)	24 × 22	(139)	23 × –
(15)	18 × 16	(40)	26 × 23	(65)	25 × –	(90)	19.5 × 21.5	(115)	20 × 25	(140)	21 × –
(16)	18 × 17	(41)	25 × 21	(66)	24 × –	(91)	27 × 22	(116)	24.5 × 25	(141)	16 × –
(17)	25 × 16	(42)	30 × 21	(67)	20 × –	(92)	26 × 19	(117)	21.5 × 25	(142)	11 × –
(18)	22 × 17	(43)	20 × 15	(68)	25 × –	(93)	32.5 × 16	(118)	16 × 20	(143)	28 × –
(19)	25 × 21	(44)	12 × 14	(69)	25 × –	(94)	23.5 × 16	(119)	26 × 17	(144)	22 × –
(20)	51 × 21	(45)	21 × 15	(70)	23 × –	(95)	23 × 14	(120)	9 × 19	(145)	15 × –
(21)	21 × 21	(46)	21 × 16	(71)	32 × 13	(96)	29 × 21	(121)	24 × 19	(146)	38 × –
(22)	26 × 22	(47)	25 × 18	(72)	20 × 12	(97)	28 × 21	(122)	33 × 23	(147)	21 × –
(23)	23 × 22	(48)	23 × 19	(73)	26 × 18	(98)	30 × 14	(123)	31 × 23		
(24)	24 × 23	(49)	24 × 22	(74)	24 × 21	(99)	16 × 11	(124)	29 × 16		
(25)	15 × 24	(50)	20 × 23	(75)	19 × 22	(100)	30 × 22	(125)	30 × –		
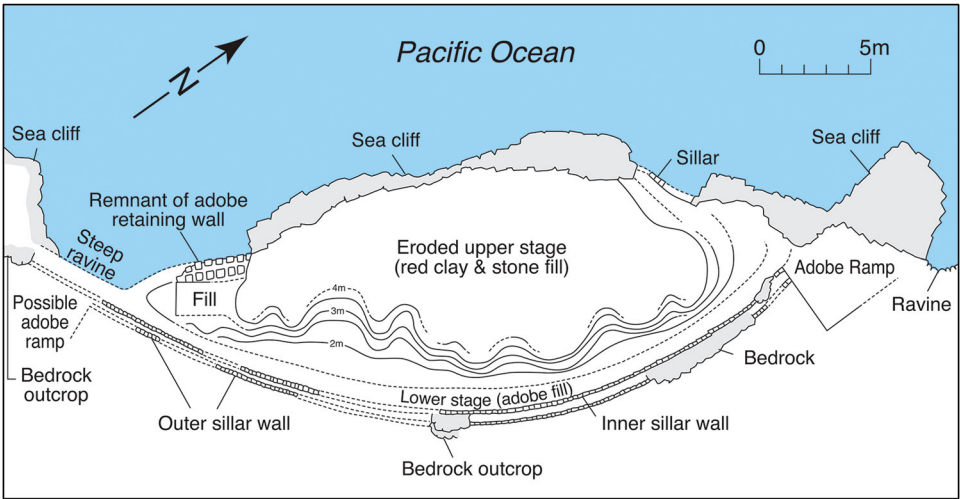
Figure 9. Structure 3, Cerro Azul, an Inca *ushnu* on Cerro Centinela.

label is applied to stone constructions that come in many forms and sizes, but very few of the Inca *ushnus* are huge, well-dressed, masonry-faced platforms found outside of Cuzco.

Although they did not fully understand the nature and function of Structure 3, the conquering Spaniards marveled at its construction. Cieza de León (1959: 339) described the Fortaleza de Guarco [sic] as "built on a high hill of the valley the most beautiful and ornate citadel to be found in

the whole kingdom of Peru, set upon square blocks of stone, and with very fine façades and large patios. From the top of this royal edifice a stone stairway descends to the sea." Cieza de León's reference to portadas and large patios suggests that he is referring not only to Structure 3 but to Structure 1 as well.

To be sure, it was the sillar platform that was visible to the ships at sea. Lizárraga (1946: 89–90) says that the Huarco fort easily guarded the port. Figure 11 shows a view of Cerro Azul Bay and Cerro del Fraile
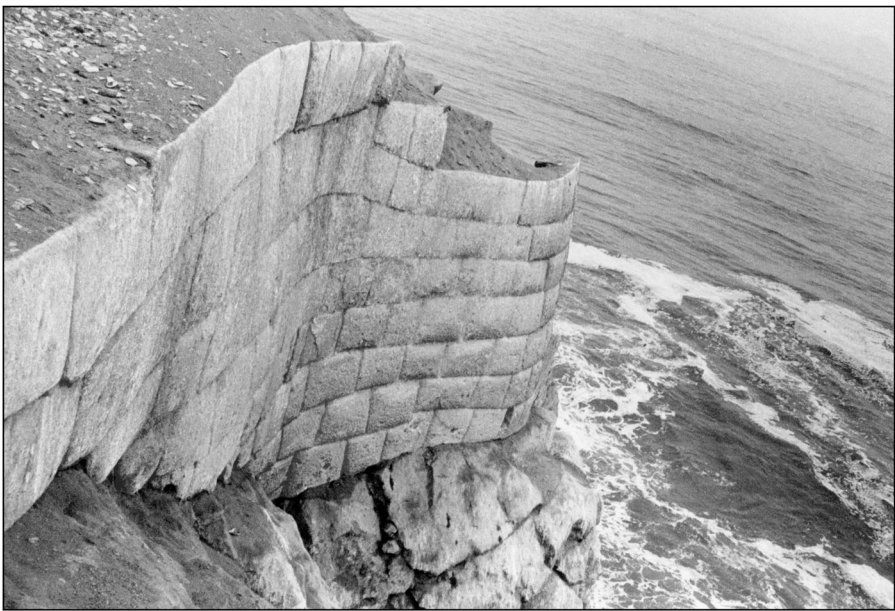

Figure 10. A surviving stone balcony on the cliff below Structure 3, part of the "stairway to the sea." (Courtesy of Alberto Bueno Mendoza.)
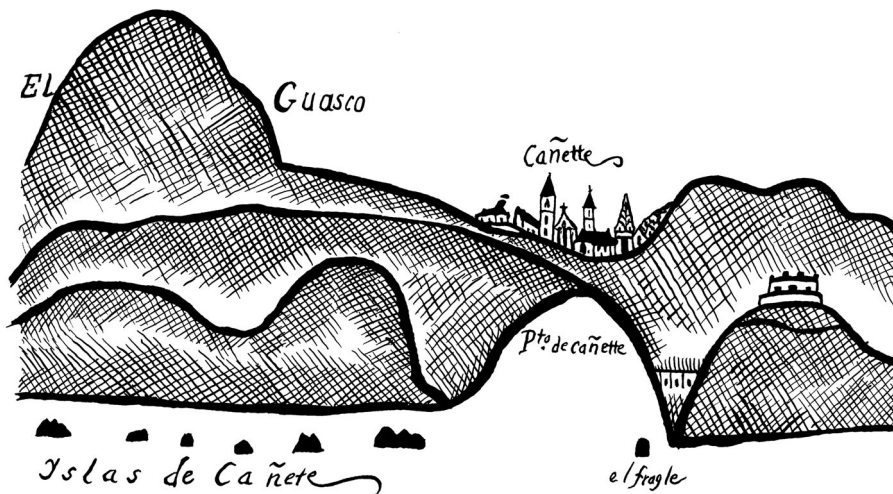
Figure 11. This drawing of the Cañete coast, which is based on a photo of a 1675 sketch, shows the Islas de Cañete, the port of Cañete, el Fraile (spelled *frayle*), and the Fortaleza de Guarco sitting atop Cerro Centinela (drawn with modifications by John Klausmeyer from ms. 120, Museo Naval, Madrid).

in a map made by a shipboard artist in 1675, in which Structure 3 was drawn as a fort on Cerro Centinela (photo supplied to María Rostworowski de Diez Canseco from the Museo Naval de Madrid; Museo Naval 1675).

Cabello de Balboa (1951: 338–339) says that the name Guarco was imposed on the area by the Inca after they achieved victory. Two of the definitions of *guarco* (Hyslop 1990: 87; Rostworowski 1978–80: 156; Santo Tomás 1951) were "gallows" or "those hanged," which probably referred to the corpses of those defeated by the Inca, those left hanging from the wall of Structure 3. Cieza de León (1959: 344) says that the Inca "ordered his troops to kill all of them, and with great cruelty they carried out his command and killed all the nobles and most honorable men there present, and also carried out the sentence against those who were not. They killed many, as the descendants of the victims state, and the huge piles of bones bear witness … . When this had been done, the Inca ordered a fine fortress built."

Explorers marveled at the spectacular setting of Structure 3. In 1550, Cieza de León remarked:

> to celebrate his victory, he [the Inca] ordered built on a high hill the most beautiful and ornate citadel to be found in the whole kingdom of Peru … . From the top of this royal edifice, a stone stairway descends to

the sea. The waves beat against the structure with such force and fury that one wonders how it could be built so strong and handsome. … there is no mortar or any sign of how the stones have been fitted together, and they are so close that it is hard to see the joining. When this building was being erected, they say that after they had laid open the hill with their picks and tools, they covered the cavities they had dug with big slabs and stones, and with these foundations the structure was so strong. And, without question, to be the work of these Indians, it is deserving of all praise, and arouses the admiration of all who see it. Although it is now deserted and in ruins, it is evident that it was once as they say. Where this fortress stood, and in the remains of that of Cuzco, it seems to me it should be forbidden, under severe penalties, for the Spaniards or the Indians to continue their destruction, for these two buildings seem the strongest in Peru, and the most noteworthy, and in time they might even prove useful. (1959: 339–340)

In 1595 the Marqués de Cañete was so impressed by the Inca ruins that he appointed six soldiers to ensure that the inhabitants would not remove the stones. But when payments to the soldiers stopped, the removal
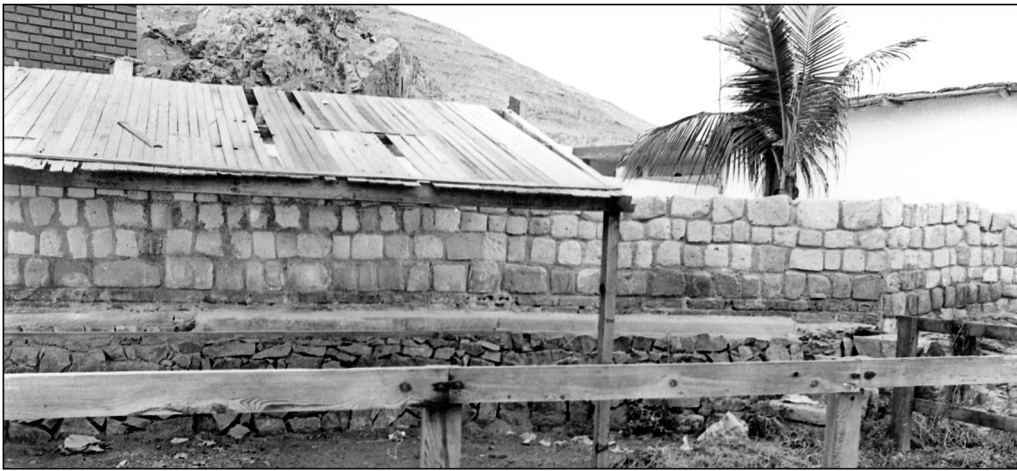
Figure 12. Modern beach house at Cerro Azul, partially built with stones removed from Structure 3.

of these stones began (footnote added by von Hagen on page 339 in Cieza de León 1959). When Middendorf (1973) arrived by boat in 1887, he noted the Inca walls on the cliffs below Structure 3 and reported the extensive earthquake damage that it had suffered in 1687. Middendorf also recounts that the Viceroy Conde de la Monclova (1689–1705) had ordered that hundreds of Structure 3's stones be removed so that a new pier could be built (Middendorf 1894: 129). Middendorf lamented the deliberate removal of the sillar stones for reuse in more recent constructions.

When Larrabure y Unanue (1935) visited Cerro Azul in the 1890s, he could still see high adobe walls protecting the ruins, one of the stone balconies projecting out above the ocean, and part of the sillar stairway winding 50 m down the sea cliff. Sadly, the destruction of Structure 3 continued into the twentieth century. When I arrived in the 1980s, I found that at least one ocean-front property owner had removed hundreds of sillar stones from Structure 3, not only to build his beach house (Figure 12) but to pave his carport as well.

Fortunately, I found that several of the lower courses of sillar stones had survived because they were buried below the current surface of earth (Figures 13 and 14). These stones allowed us to estimate the size of the platform. Figure 15 shows an artist's reconstruction of Structure 3, combining all

the available lines of evidence from Cerro Centinela and elsewhere.

According to Zuidema (1979) and others (e.g., Meddens 2015), the Inca built *ushnus* like Structure 3 in many of their subject territories. The building of an *ushnu* commemorated an Inca victory over stubborn resisters and sent out the message that they now intended to administer their new province. In the years that followed, the *ushnu*—with its distinctly Inca architecture—could play a variety of political, cosmological, astronomical, and ritual roles.

Cerro Azul and the Cults of Mamaqocha and Urpay Huachac

The ethnohistoric documents are not sufficiently detailed to make clear the function of the three Inca buildings at Cerro Azul. However, owing to Cerro Azul's location between Chincha and Pachacamac (both of which are associated with offshore islands called Urpay Huachac), one possibility is that at least one of the Cerro Azul buildings also relates to a cult that honors the sea, either Mamaqocha or Urpay Huachac.

In the beginning, or so the legend goes, there were no fish in the sea. The goddess Urpay Huachac is credited with raising the first fish in a Lurín Valley lagoon near one of Pachacamac's

Figure 13. Surviving section of sillar stones (of volcanic origin) in Structure 3, Cerro Azul.

temples. One day Urpay Huachac's divine rival, Cuniraya, became angry with her and threw her fish into the ocean. From that moment on, Urpay Huachac became the goddess of all marine fish. She was venerated from Huarochirí to Rímac to Chincha; her name was given to various *wak'as* and islands along the coast, and pilgrims visited her coastal shrines to make offerings (Albornoz 1967: 34; Duviols 1967; Rostworowski 1977a, 1977b, 2003; Salomon and Urioste 1991: 49–50).

Among the offerings made to Urpay Huachac were dried sardines, dried anchovetas, and doves (Pizarro 1944; Rostworowski 1992: 47). The doves would seem to be particularly significant because Urpay

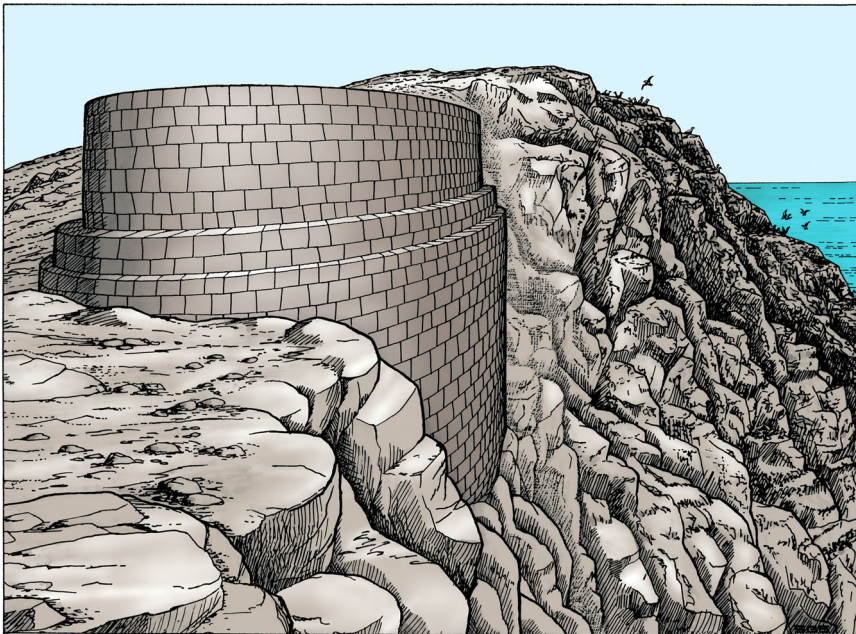**Figure 14.** Surviving courses of sillar stones in Structure 3, Cerro Azul.

Figure 15. Artist's reconstruction of Cerro Azul's Structure 3. This Inca *ushnu* overlooked a "stairway to the sea" (drawing by David West Reynolds, colorized by John Klausmeyer).

Huachac's name can be translated "She Who Gives Birth to Doves" or "The Dove that Lays an Egg." Bones of the West Peruvian dove (*Zenaida meloda*) and the eared dove (*Zenaida auriculata*) were recovered at Cerro Azul (Marcus 2016).

It seems likely that Structure 3 at Cerro Azul was considered a sacred *wak'a* (Marcus 1987a: Figure 69). Structure 3, which resembled *ushnus* built in other Inca provinces, probably communicated the fact that Cerro Azul and Huarco had been annexed by the empire. The fact that Structure 3 had a stairway descending the cliff, facilitating direct offerings to the sea, makes it plausible that it was dedicated to Mamaqocha or Urpay Huachac.

Structure 1 at Cerro Azul, on the other hand, seems different in form and function. Room 9, with its trapezoidal niches, would seem to have been a place of assembly. However, its *mirador*—which affords a great view of the sea—could be another feature dedicated to Mamaqocha or Urpay Huachac. Structure 1's *intiwatana*, like comparable modified outcrops at other Inca sites, was possibly a place where libations to the sun could be poured or where other Inca rites were performed (Dean 2007; Gasparini and Margolies 1980: 258).

Unfortunately, Structure 2 of Cerro Azul was so modified by Colonial-era residents that we can assign no function to it.

Conclusions

By AD 1450, the Inca had annexed the Kingdom of Lunahuaná and created Inkawasi as a staging area for their takeover of the *yunga*. The Kingdom of Huarco proved much harder to subdue, but by AD 1470, after several efforts, the Inca succeeded by using a subterfuge to catch the defenders of Huarco by surprise.

While Inkawasi and Cerro Azul both have Inca architecture, their differences reflect the multiple strategies of the Inca empire. Inkawasi is dominated by rows of standardized storage rooms, often accompanied by paired *khipus*. At Cerro Azul, on the other hand, the Inca placed a series of ritual buildings high on the sea cliffs, where they could be seen from a great distance. These buildings include an *ushnu* built of sillar, a stone stairway allowing offerings to Mamaqocha or Urpay Huachac, and an adobe building with a ritual place of assembly. Included in the latter building are an *intiwatana*, or "hitching

post of the sun," and a *mirador* providing a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean.

Acknowledgments

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