

Themes in Inca and Andean Cultures

- Blurred distinction between living and dead, between animate and inanimate. Life is brought by water and the sun.
- Shamanic-like movement across the three worlds- ascent
- Preeminence of the sun.
- Harmony and sacredness of the landscape

The Nature of the Inanimates-

- Living rocks, from the megaliths with their feet in water in Nabta Playa.
- Landscapes of the ancestral Pueblos- in Chaco Canyon and Chimney Rock.
- Horizon events involve hierophanies (a breakthrough of the sacred into the mundane world) and theophanies (conjoining of deities) , not just time keeping.







What did they see?

- A Great House was constructed on an isolated mesa at the base of these two spires
- The 2 dates of construction were 1076 and 1093, which were the dates of major lunar standstills.
- Ethnography of the Pueblos reveal that the spires were shrines to the Twin War Gods or the Divine Twins of Pueblo tradition

Hierophany-



Medjugorje, Bosnia



The Power of a Hierophany- 1981



Understanding Andean Ontologies

- A starting point is to collapse division between binary opposites.
- Human/non human: animism: the world is full of beings and only a fraction of them are human (Harvey); these other beings, such as huacas and mountains may have great power over people. There may be a symmetry between beings- both may possess agency.
- Humans may establish reciprocal relationships with non-human entities such as the landscape, i.e. mountains which control weather and fertility: offerings, sacrifices, respectful behavior

Animating the Inanimate

- Camay-
- Water and sunlight bring seeds to life.
- Water and sunlight bring stones and landscapes to life.

Moray

- Agricultural Research Station?
- Ushnu- sunken in the earth: ritual descent
- Huaca- animated by sunlight and water
- Local villagers claim walls of terraces were lined with gold and silver sheets
- Celebration of zenith sun
- Harmony with the land

Moray



Moray: Linear Terraces



Moray: June Solstice Sunrise













Huacas

- While huacas were often inanimate objects, they were living beings with extraordinary powers who were honored, fed, and consulted. Huacas were an aspect of ancestor worship of the Andes with great wisdom and the ability to influence the living world.
- Huacas had vibrant lives, participated in processions. They were fed, dressed in clothes, married, and sometimes abducted and destroyed by enemies. Their well-being relied upon a continuing flow of offerings. These offerings were understood to be necessary to maintain equilibrium and balance in the world, an expression of the symmetry and reciprocity between the living and the dead.

Ushnus

- Ushnus were places for ritual performance, observation of the heavens, landscape markers, and expressions of an axis mundi. They were stepped platforms and holes in the earth into which offerings of water and corn beer, chicha, would be poured to the earth mother, Pachmama, or to nearby snow peaks, apus

Urubamba: Palace of Huayna Capac

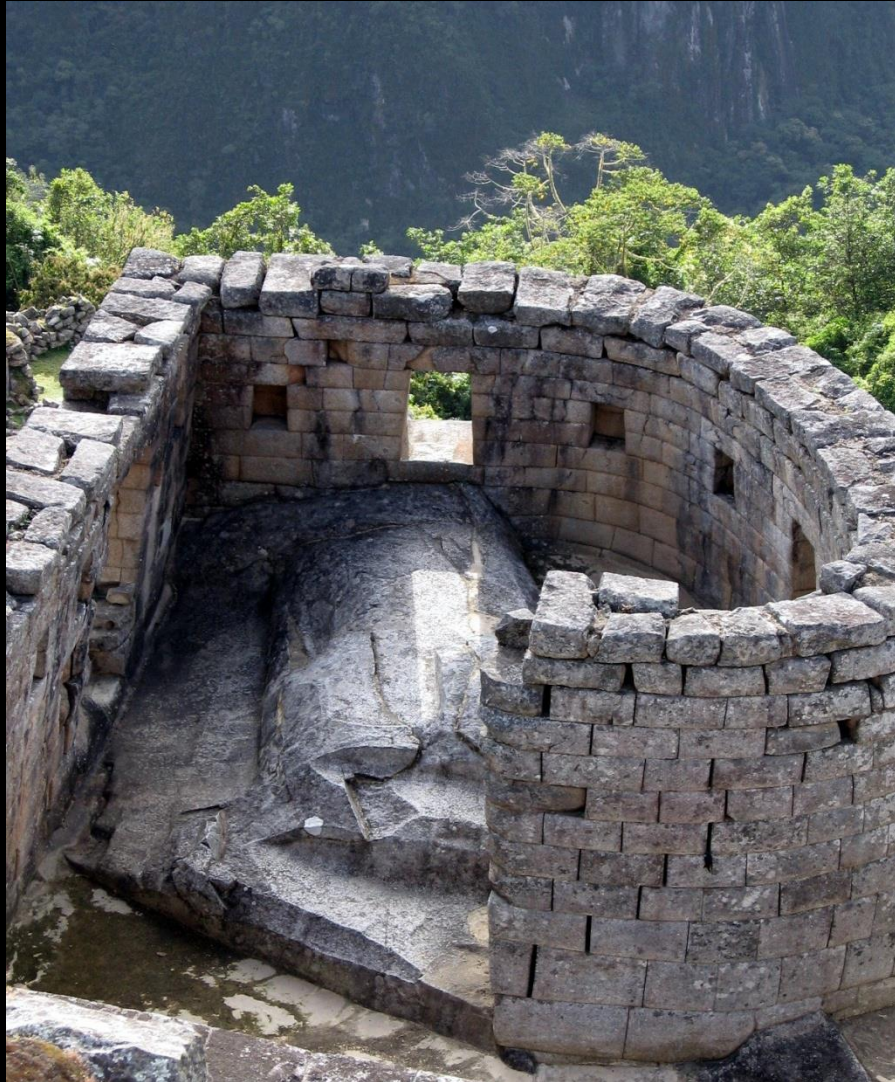




Urubamba huaca: white rock in center of plaza, stone lined channel brought water to its base. It is observing position for June solstice sunrise between the horizon pillars.



The Torreon: Machu Picchu major huaca - June solstice sunrise



The Torreón: Illumination of the cave at June solstice

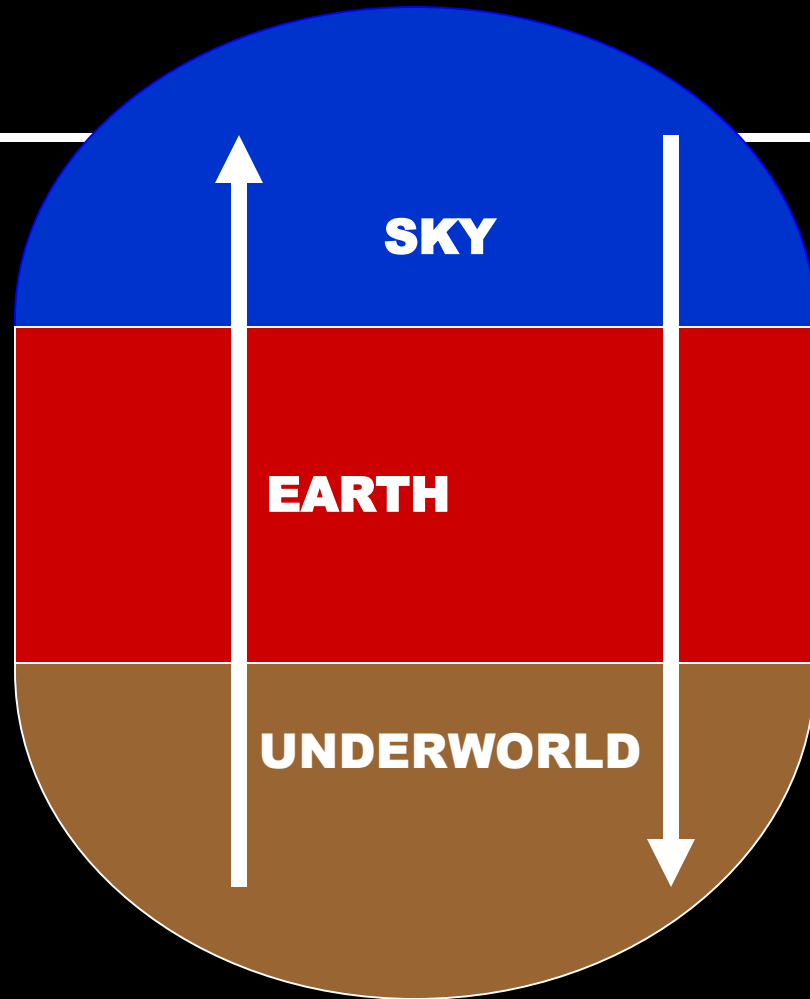


Torreón Cave: stairs and harmony with the natural rock



Stairways

Symbolic of
shamanic
movement
between the
three worlds



Ollaytatambo Huaca- stairs everywhere



Fountains and channels water the rock face



Carved Huaca- Piedra Cansada



Caral: The Great Pyramid- Monumental staircase ~3000 BCE



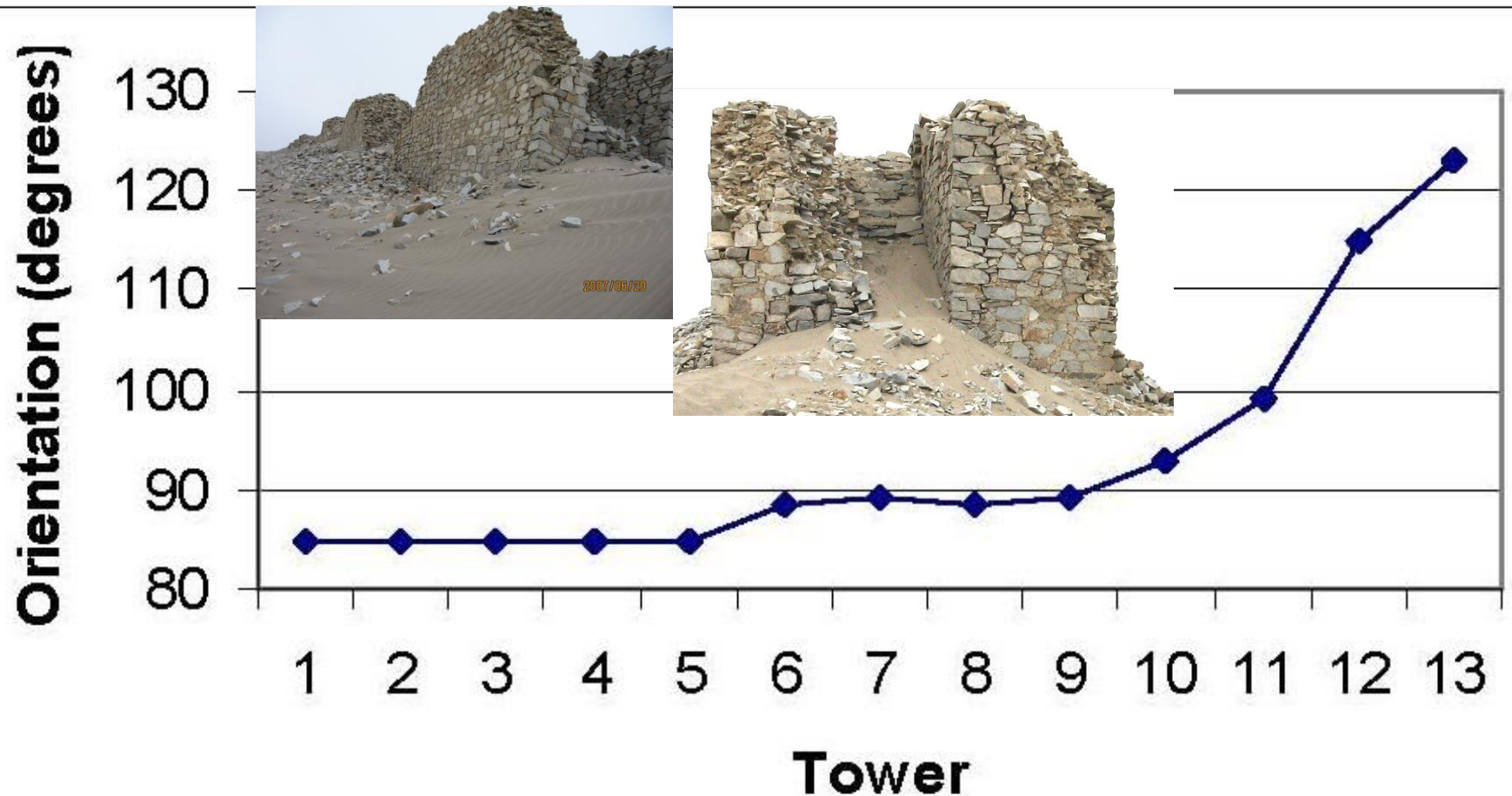
Caral- ascent from underworld



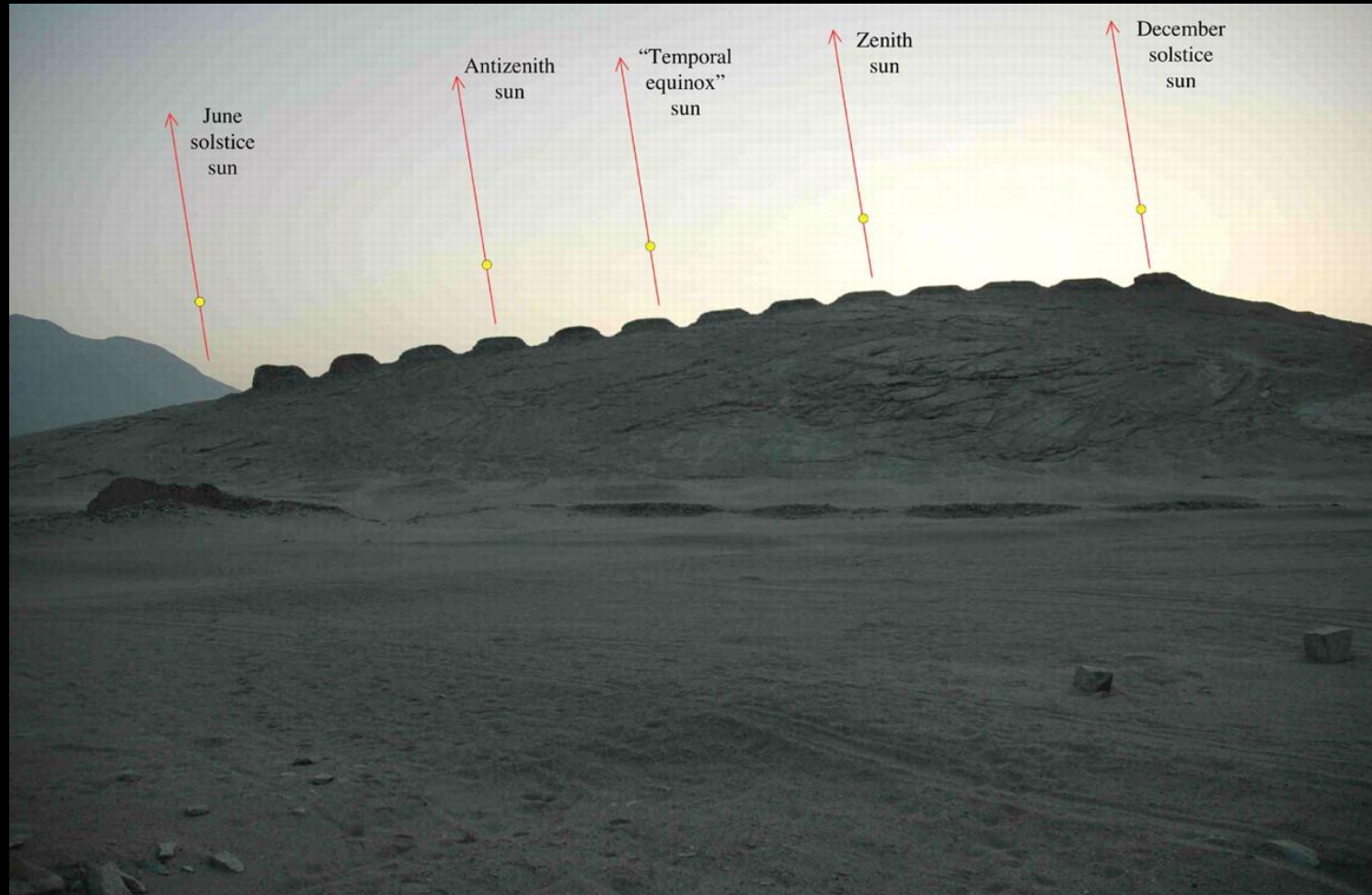
Chankillo: ritual celebration of ascent and descent



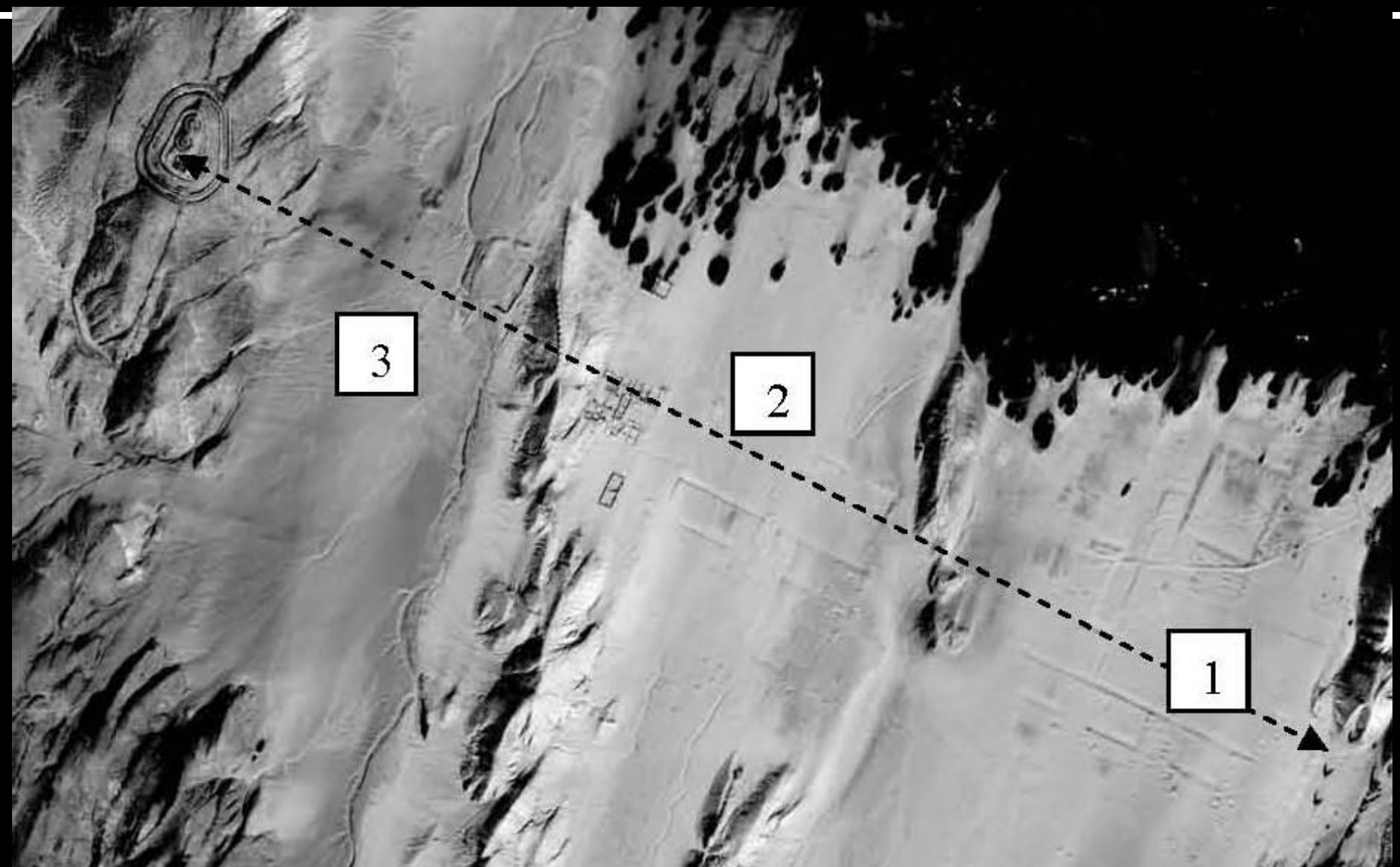
Towers of Chankillo: rotate from earth to the sun.

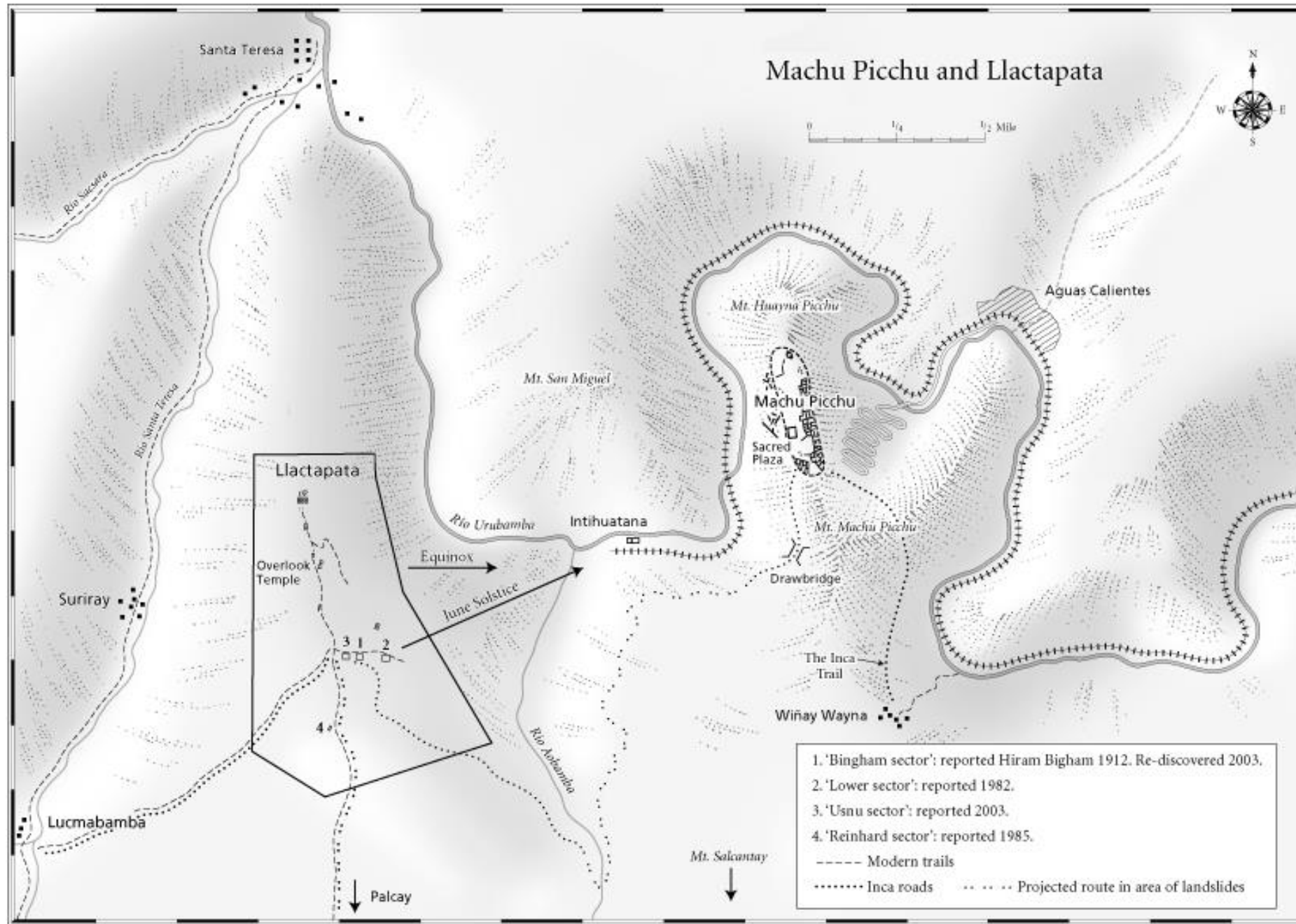


Chankillo calendar



Chankillo





Llactapata Cloud Forest



Machu Picchu Sacred Plaza

Inca trail from Machu Picchu
to Llactapata



Llactapata

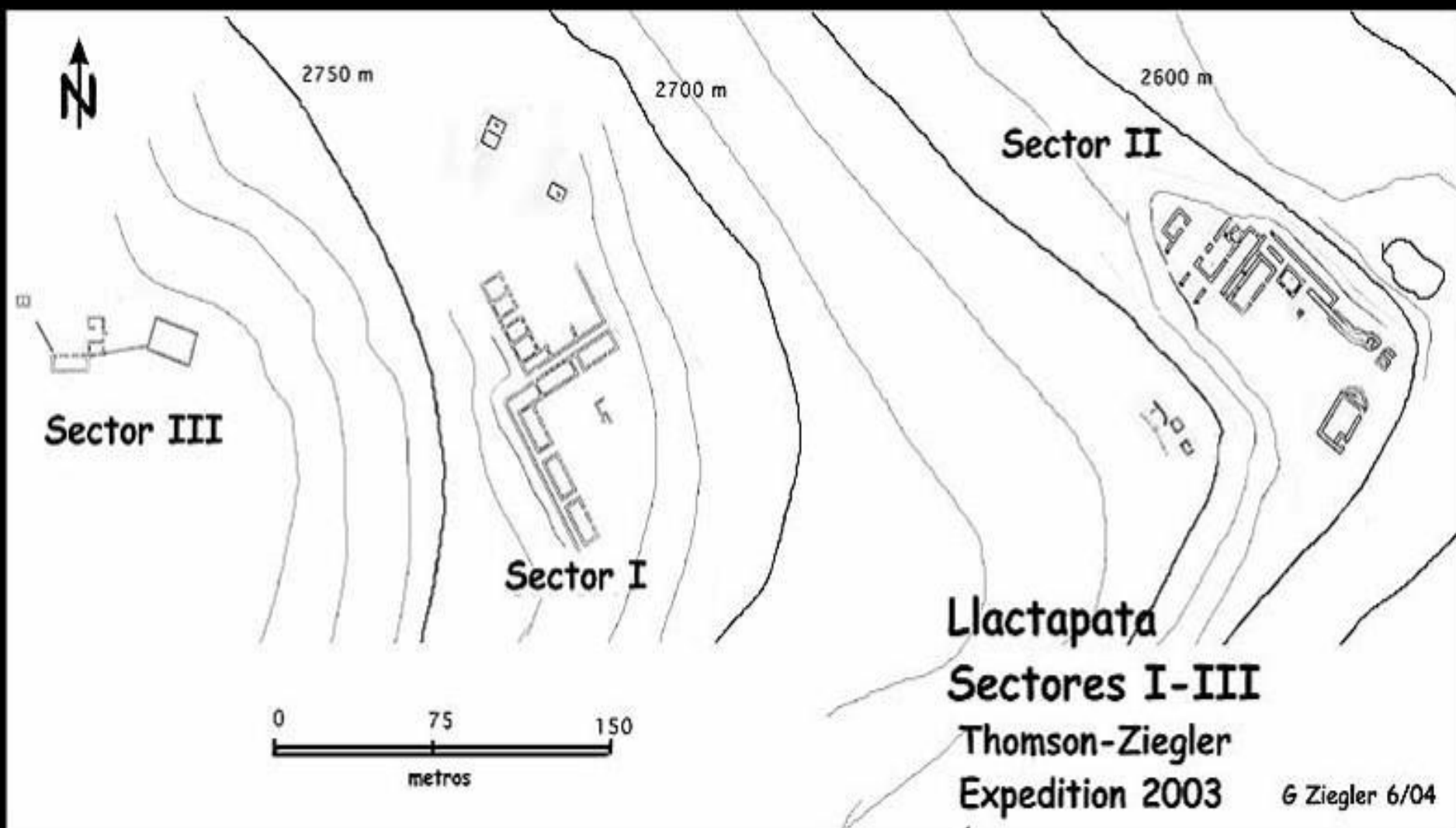


Llactapata: bringing water and life to Machu Picchu?



**Sunken corridor opens to June solstice sunrise
and floods the corridor with light 10 minutes
after sunrise**





Machu Picchu: First double jamb door



Machu Picchu: Double jamb door, June solstice sunrise, & Putucusi



June solstice at Machu Picchu



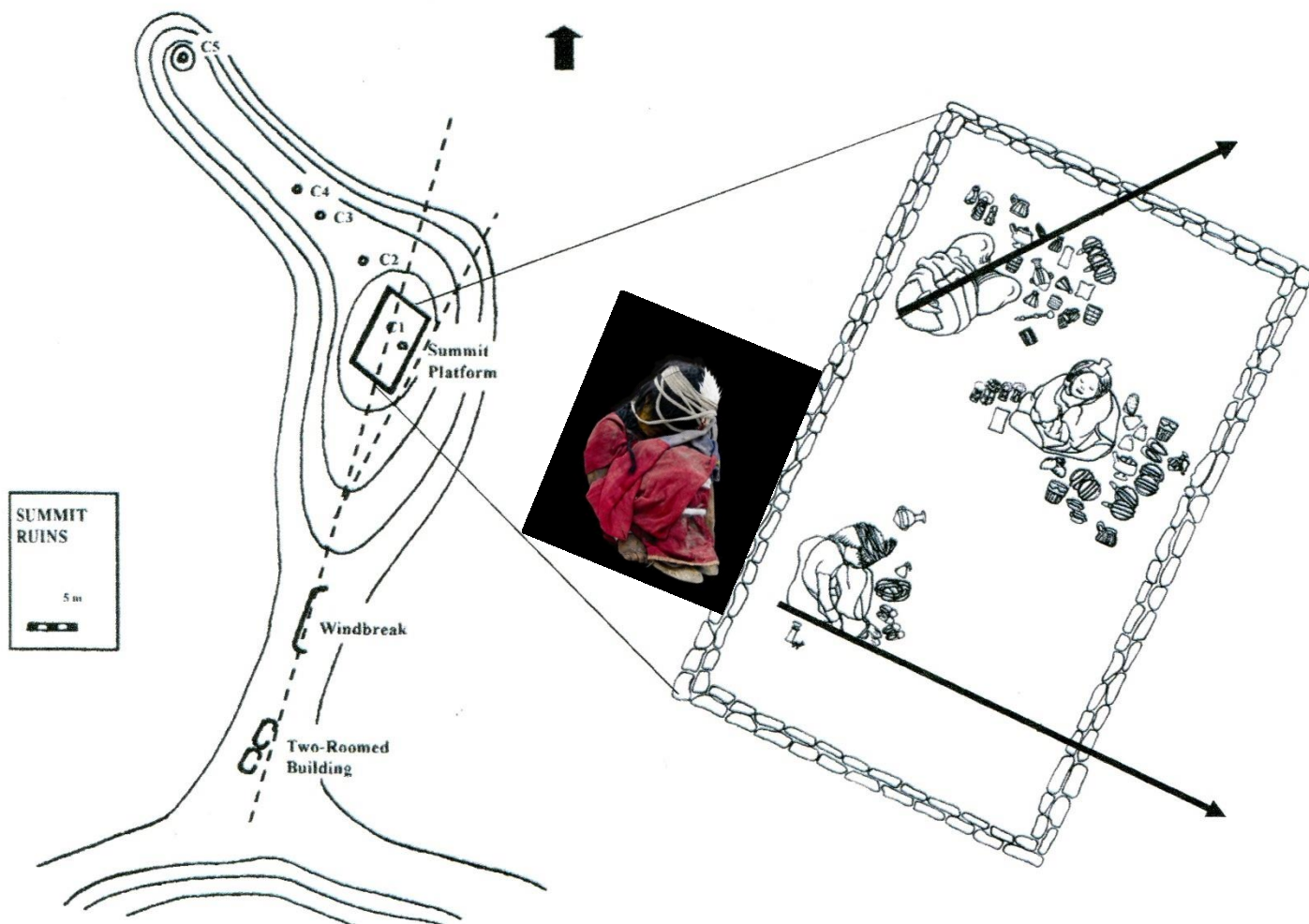
Llactapata from Machu Picchu: June solstice sun



Summit of Llullaillaco-22,120 feet

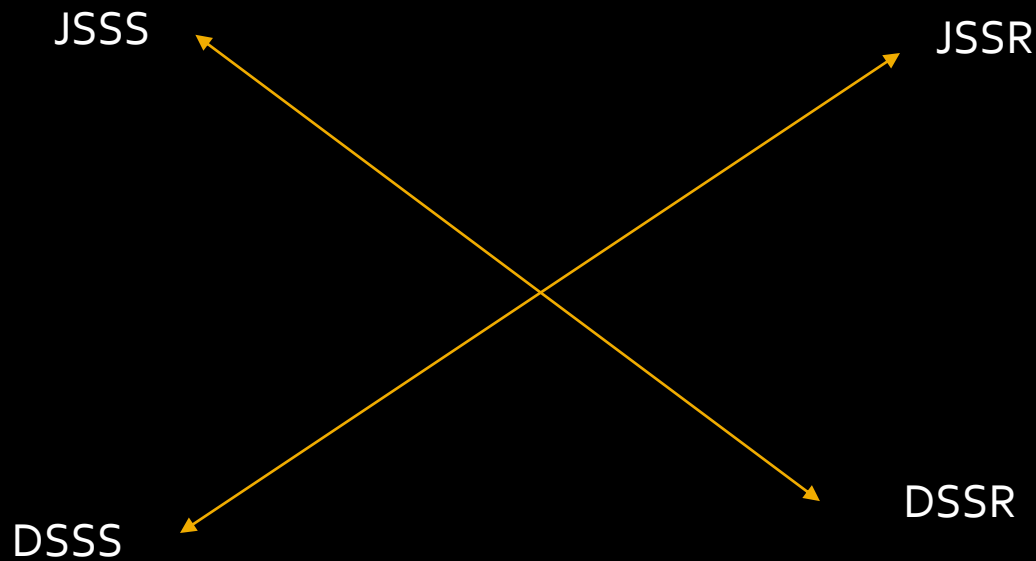






Orientations of burials

- Boy to December solstice sunrise.
- Mountain cannot be climbed in June.
- Girl to June solstice sunrise ??



Take Away

- Stones may be more than inert objects.
- Landscapes may be alive.
- Incredible effort in Andean cultures to honor the sun, from 3000 BCE.
- One should bend over backward to avoid easy ethnocentric interpretations- such as horizon calendars, observatories, or research stations.
- Be creative, learn the culture.