



FORMAL AND TEMPORAL VARIABILITY IN AYACUCHO EARLY INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND MIDDLE HORIZON FUNERARY PRACTICES

A VIEW FROM THE SITE OF ÑAWINPUKYO

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This paper addresses the issue of formal and temporal variability in Ayacucho mortuary practices by discussing a specific local case study, an assemblage of burials from the site of Nawinpukyo that spans the late part of the Early Intermediate Period and the Middle Horizon. This set of burials presents similarities with contemporary sites but also specific characteristics that differentiate it from them. It documents a diachronic process in which continuity between the Huarpa and Huari cultures is evident, and shows the use of typical burial forms as well as tomb types with no known parallels in Ayacucho. In this way, the paper contributes to broadening current knowledge of Huarpa and Huari funerary practices, and of Ayacucho prehispanic cultural processes.

En este trabajo se trata la cuestión de la variabilidad formal y temporal en las prácticas mortuorias ayacuchanas al discutirse un caso de estudio específico, un conjunto de enterratorios del sitio de Nawinpukyo que abarca la parte final del Período Intermedio Temprano y el Horizonte Medio. Estos enterramientos presentan similitudes claras con otros sitios contemporáneos de la región pero también muestran especificidades que los diferencian de ellos, con variantes no conocidas hasta el momento en otros sitios. La evidencia discutida en el trabajo muestra un proceso diacrónico de continuidad entre las culturas Huarpa y Huari, que incluye el uso de formas funerarias típicas así como tumbas que no tienen paralelos conocidos en otros sitios de Ayacucho. De esta manera, el trabajo contribuye a ampliar los conocimientos actuales de las prácticas funerarias de las culturas Huarpa y Huari, y de los procesos culturales prehispanicos en Ayacucho.

Profound sociocultural changes took place in the Ayacucho Valley at the end of the Early Intermediate Period and during the Middle Horizon. The area saw the rise of the complex Huari society from the local substratum of the previous Huarpa culture. Funerary

practices changed accordingly, with a proliferation of burial variants whose meanings and social implications are only partially understood at present.

Only fragmentary information is currently available about Early Intermediate Period Huarpa culture funerary practices. On the other hand, much more is known about Huari mortuary practices, and a num-

ber of recent works have explicitly addressed them and their relationship to sociopolitical and gender aspects of Huari culture (Isbell and Cook 2002; Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006; Valdez et al. 2006).

This paper seeks to contribute to broadening current knowledge of Huarpa and Huari funerary practices by discussing a specific and local case study, a sequence of burials spanning the late part of the Early Intermediate Period and the Middle Horizon uncovered at the site of Ñawinpukyo. These burials present definite similarities with contemporary Ayacucho cases but also specific aspects that have not been previously reported.

BACKGROUND

The Early Intermediate Period in Ayacucho is characterized by the development of the Huarpa culture. Nevertheless, and despite its acknowledged importance as the local foundation for Huari, its nature is only fragmentarily known at present. Most available studies have focused on its distinctive ceramic style, which features red and black geometric and linear motifs on a matte white background (e.g., Benavides 1965; Bennett 1953; González Carré 1972; Knobloch 1976, 1983; Lumbreras 1974; Menzel 1964; Rowe et al. 1950). Originally described as a complex state society with an urban capital at Ñawinpukyo (Lumbreras 1974: 105), later reevaluations consider the Huarpa culture in Ayacucho as characterized by scattered small-scale polities centered around one or several major settlements, such as Ñawinpukyo (Isbell and Schreiber 1978; Isbell 2001; Leoni 2006; Lumbreras 2000; Schreiber 1992). Burial practices were simple, generally consisting of individual or multiple interments in simple pits with few or no grave goods, and are commonly interpreted as indicating the existence of little social and political differentiation at the time (Lumbreras 1974: 112–114; Isbell 2000: 45; Tung and Cook 2006: 75–77).

The onset of the Middle Horizon in Ayacucho is associated with the rise of the Huari state. A process of transformation, showing both cultural continuity and rupture, began to unfold around the seventh century

AD as a result of both local Ayacucho developments and external influences from Nasca and Tiahuanaco (Menzel 1964; Lumbreras 2000; Schreiber 1992; Isbell 2001). The earlier Huarpa culture was transformed as new forms of political and cultural identities developed in the valley, and political centralization and social differentiation intensified. A gradual stylistic development from Early Intermediate Period to Middle Horizon ceramic styles reflecting this process of change has been identified (Menzel 1964; Benavides 1965; Lumbreras 1974; Knobloch 1983), although the shape and rhythm of the process in other aspects of culture remain only partially understood.

A complex settlement hierarchy developed in the Ayacucho Valley during the Middle Horizon, with the large urban site of Huari at the apex (Isbell and Schreiber 1978; Schreiber 1992: 85–93). Major centers such as Conchopata and specialized administrative centers like Azángaro, in the Huanta Valley, occupied the highest tiers below Huari, while a large number of smaller settlements, such as Aqo Wayqo, Tunasniyoq, Muyu Orqo, and others, formed the lower ranks of the settlement hierarchy. Ñawinpukyo may have occupied an intermediate position in this hierarchy, between the small rural hamlets and the major centers.

Reflecting the more complex nature of Huari society, with its wider range of social identities and political ranks, mortuary practices included a greater variety of burial types, ranging from the simple individual or group interments, to underground rock cavities with specialized above-ground offering structures, to the impressive megalithic chambers found at the Cheqo Wasi sector of Huari (Isbell 2004). Several recent works have specifically addressed the issue of Huari mortuary practices, and this extensive variability of burial types has been commonly interpreted as reflecting status and political differentiation (e.g., Isbell and Cook 2002; Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006). Isbell (2004) has proposed a typology of eight Huari burial types in which he suggests that burial form, elaboration, and content are arranged according to social and political status. Focusing specifically on Conchopata site burials, Charlene Milliken (2006) carried out an exhaustive statistical multidimensional scaling analysis of burial contents that allowed her to identify

four main burial groups with different status ranking. Tiffany Tung and Anita Cook (2006) have also focused their analysis on Conchopata burials, including bioarchaeological data as well as burial form and content, discerning not only status but also gender issues. They concentrated primarily on high status multiple bedrock cavities burials and mortuary rooms, and interpreted them as the resting places for large local elite kin groups in which senior females held a great prestige. Based on the analysis of burials at the site of Marayniyoq, Lidio Valdez and collaborators suggest that variability in Huari burials is even more complex, involving gender, age, and other as yet undetermined factors, as much as social differentiation and status (Valdez et al. 2006). In any case, it is generally agreed that the Huari interacted actively with the dead, housing burials within residential areas, propitiating the dead through offerings, and possibly periodically reopening some of the graves, in what seem to constitute manifestations of ancestor worship practices (Cook 2001; Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006; Valdez et al. 2006).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT ÑAWINPUKYO

The Ñawinpukyo site is located on a rocky hill, about 4 km southeast of downtown Ayacucho (Figure 1). The hill reaches a height of 3007 meters above sea level and lies on the southern flank of the Ayacucho valley. A dense concentration of archaeological structures is located on the hilltop, forming the core of the site, while varied archaeological remains can be found scattered on the slopes and lower parts of the hill.

First mentioned in the 1930s and 1940s by local Ayacucho scholars (see Lumbreras 1974: 22–23), systematic archaeological investigations at the site did not start until the 1960s, when archaeologists from the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga carried out limited research (González Carré 1972). Luis Lumbreras (1974, 1981) led more intensive research at Ñawinpukyo in 1971, interpreting the remains on the hilltop as belonging to the Early Intermediate Period Huarpa culture. Further archaeological research took place in the 1980s and 1990s on

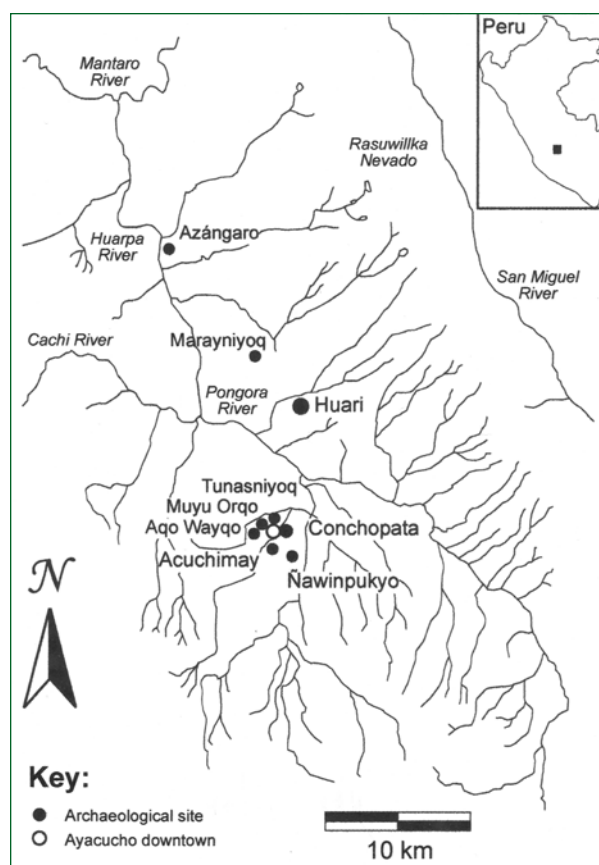


Figure 1. Map of the Ayacucho Valley showing location of Ñawinpukyo and other archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

the western slope and lower parts of the hill, revealing diverse remains of Early Horizon, Early Intermediate Period and Middle Horizon occupations (Ochatoma 1992; Machaca 1997; Cabrera 1998).

Before recent house construction took place, dense concentrations of rubble, representing heavily built up areas of prehispanic occupation, could be found spread over the 500 m long by 200 m wide Ñawinpukyo hilltop area. Our investigations concentrated on the central and eastern parts of the hilltop. Through a combination of rubble clearing, wall trenching, and exploratory excavation, 32 rooms and structures were defined. Twenty-six of them were completely or partially excavated, revealing a continuous occupation span of at least five or six centuries comprising both Early Intermediate Period and Middle Horizon components.

NAWINPUKYO IN THE EARLY INTERMEDIATE PERIOD AND THE MIDDLE HORIZON

The core of the Early Intermediate Period occupation at Nawinpukyo was a walled ceremonial compound located on the highest part of the hill, which contained several buildings and served as the focus of intense communal ritual activities (Leoni 2006). Known as the East Plaza (Lumbreras 1974: 111) (Figure 2), this compound seems to have been used mostly in the latter phases of the Early Intermediate Period. Its most important building was a circular ceremonial structure

with concentric walls, and evidence for consumption and burial of domesticated camelids was found within it. The rest of the Early Intermediate Period occupation layout is less well known, in part because Middle Horizon architectural compounds were built on top of earlier occupation remains, leaving only fragmentary evidence of the previous structures. Residential nuclei may have existed immediately to the north and south of the East Plaza, as indicated by the presence of diagnostic Early Intermediate Period pottery both on the surface and in the excavations, and an important group of buildings was located at a short distance to the west of the Plaza. Excavations on the eastern part of that ar-

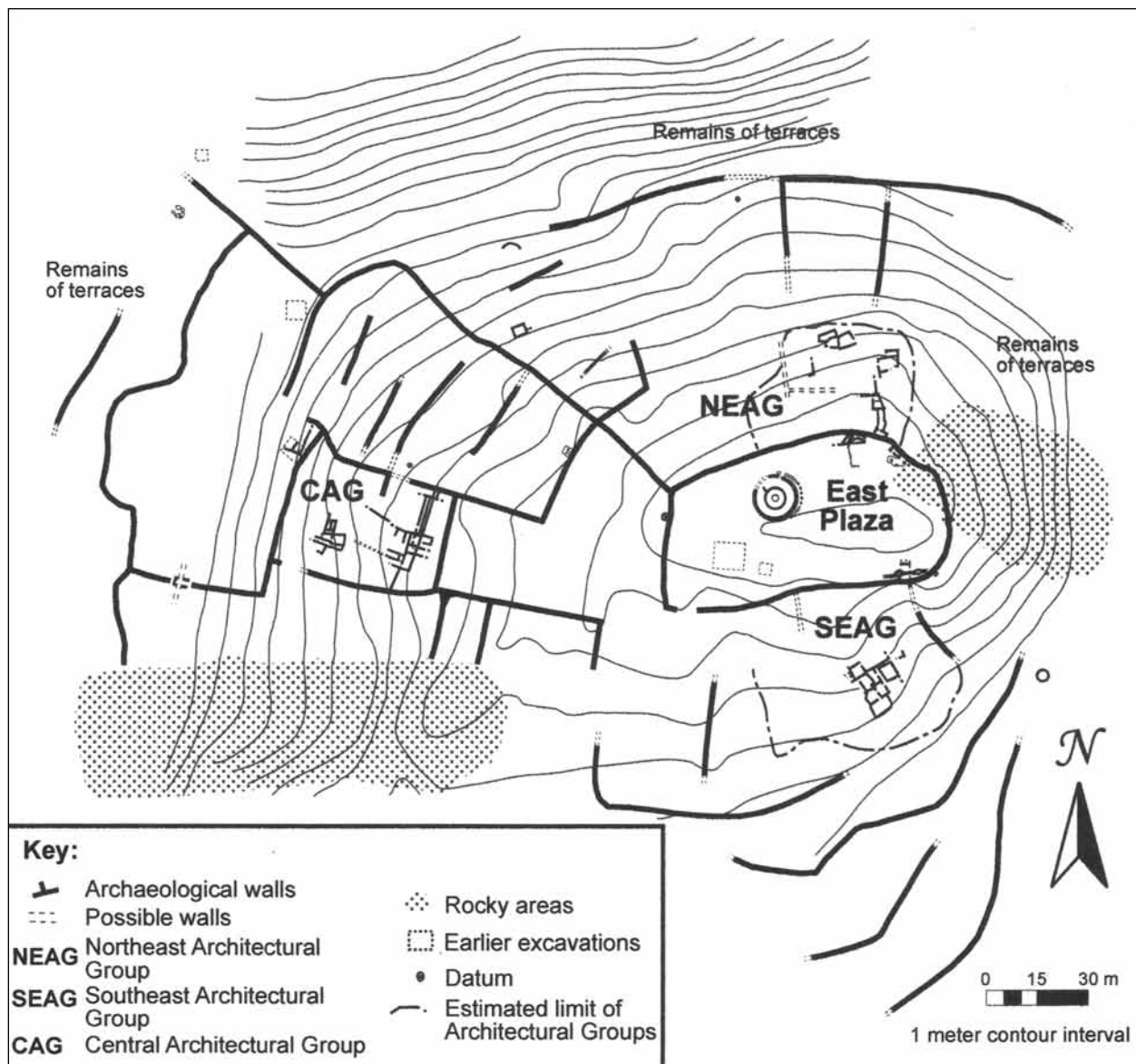


Figure 2. Nawinpukyo hilltop site plan, showing location of major architectural sectors.

chitectural sector revealed the remains of what seems to have been a residential compound with elongated galleries and rooms around a central patio, later partially built over by Middle Horizon structures (Leoni 2006).

Until recently Ñawinpukyo was not considered a major Middle Horizon site, and it was argued that it had been abandoned by the end of Middle Horizon 1 (Menzel 1964: 69). Stratigraphic data, diagnostic material culture, and radiocarbon assays, however, indicate that the majority of the architectural remains on the hilltop (with the notable exception of the East Plaza, which was not reoccupied) belong to the Middle Horizon component, and that the occupation extended well beyond the initial part of the Middle Horizon.

The transition to the Middle Horizon entailed transformations of the hilltop settlement layout, with the construction of several compounds of irregularly agglutinated stone buildings, starting perhaps around the early part of the seventh century AD. We identified at least three of these compounds (denominated the Northeast, Southeast, and Central Architectural Groups), each of them consisting of as many as 40 to 60 conjoined rooms and occupying areas that ranged between 0.2 and 0.3 ha. These architectural groups seem to have been associated directly with agricultural fields and terraces located around them; no administrative or ceremonial buildings, in the form of the Huari style planned architecture and D-shaped structures, have been detected on the hilltop. A fourth similar architectural group might have existed in the unstudied southwestern part of the hilltop (see Lumbreras 1981: Figure 7-22), while Gudeña Machaca (1997) excavated part of a fifth one on the middle section of the hill's western slope.

Ñawinpukyo's compounds are characterized by a non-symmetrical arrangement of the rooms, constructed in a series of successive additions rather than following a rigid single construction plan (Isbell 1977: 17, 52; but see Anders 1991: 182–190 for a contrary view). The archaeological contexts and artifact assem-

blages from these compounds indicate that most of the rooms excavated correspond primarily to residential and domestic spaces, although diverse ritual practices took place within several of them as well. The artifacts and features uncovered generally represent a variety of activities but food production, serving, and consumption, presumably for both domestic everyday situations and special ritual occasions, were predominant. A high occurrence of andesite hoes indicates that their inhabitants were also engaged in agricultural work.

THE SOUTHEAST ARCHITECTURAL GROUP

The Southeast Architectural Group is located south of the East Plaza, lying on a gentle slope and overlooking a large flat expanse (see Figure 2). It seems to have extended over an area of about 1,700 m², judging from the extent of the surface rubble deposits. It may have included as many as 60 or more irregularly agglutinated rooms and patios. A cluster of six interconnected rooms (designated Rooms 10, 11, 17, 21, 22, 23) within this compound was exposed and excavated (Figure 3).

Room construction progressed from a number of central rooms around which other rooms were built sequentially. Every available space between the original constructions was used, creating new rooms by the simple addition of a few sections of walls abutting preexisting structures. This cumulative growth was a complex process, which included the addition but also the closure of rooms, seemingly for both functional and ritual reasons. Several instances of doorway closure and filling of rooms with crushed white diatomaceous rock¹ have been identified, documenting this dynamic process of space redefinition. While most of this compound was probably built in the late Early Intermediate Period or beginning of the Middle Horizon, radiocarbon assays indicate that at least some of the rooms remained in use for at least two or three centuries (Table 1).

Table 1. Radiocarbon Dates, Southeast Architectural Group, Ñawinpukyo.

Sample #	Uncalibrated Date	Date Cal. 1σ	Date Cal. 2σ	¹² C/ ¹³ C	Material	Provenience
Beta-170705	1380 +/-40	AD 640-670	AD 615-690	-23.0	Charcoal	Room 21, Burial #21-9
Beta-170704	1270 +/-40	AD 685-780	AD 670-870	-22.9	Textile	Room 21, Burial #21-6
AA-46632 (*)	1140 +/-34	AD 886-975	AD 780-985	-20.7	Charcoal	Room 11, on floor

(*) Calibrated with CALIB 4.3 (Stuiver et al. 1999)

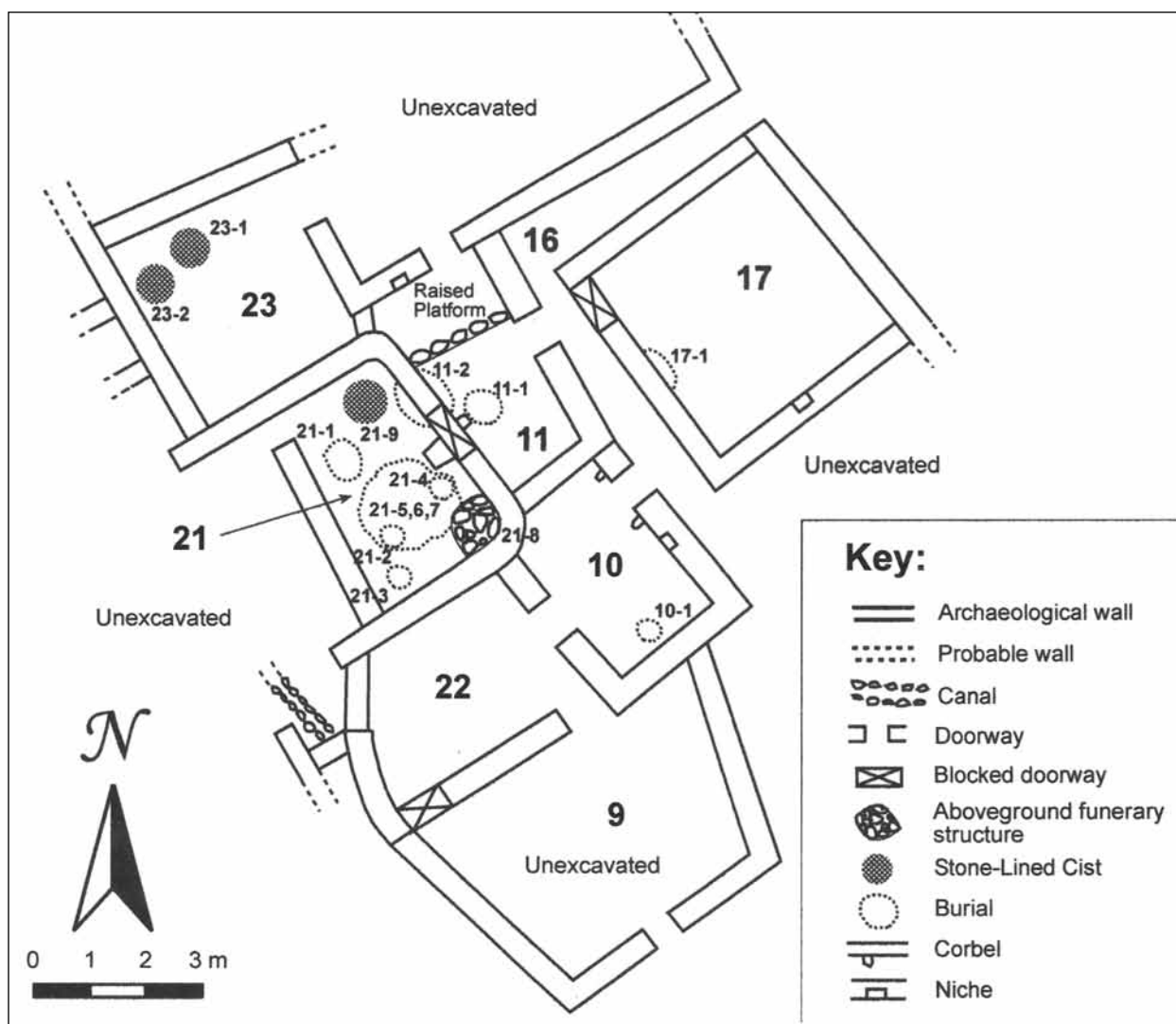


Figure 3. Plan of rooms excavated at the Southeast Architectural Group.

Fifteen burials were uncovered in the Southeast Architectural Group, most of them within Room 21, which seems to have served as a specialized mortuary space (Figure 3). These burials document a sequence extending from the late Early Intermediate Period and early Middle Horizon to the late Middle Horizon. The ceramics associated with these burials include both Early Intermediate Period and Middle Horizon styles, showing a process of cultural continuity clearly connecting the Huarpa and Huari occupations of the site and supporting the idea that a gradual transition between the social formations known as Huarpa and Huari might have taken place over a rather long span of time (Lumbreras 2000: 21).

THE BURIALS

In this section I present the burials found in the Southeast Architectural Group. The discussion is organized primarily according to their room provenience, beginning with those in Room 21 and following with burials in other rooms, but I have tried to present them in a likely chronological order as well. Table 2 summarizes the burials and their contents. All human skeletal determinations were carried out by Marc Lichtenfeld (2002).

Table 2. Summary description of Southeast Architectural Group burials, Ñawinpukyo.

Burial #	Burial Type	Human Age	Remains Sex	Grave Goods		Stylistic Chronology	C14 (1 Sigma)
				Ceramics	Other		
21-8	Subfloor cist	35-40	Female		31 greenstone beads		AD 640-670
21-9	Above-ground structure	ND	ND		1 copper <i>tupu</i>		
21-5	Bedrock cavity	20-30	Male	2 bowls 1 bottle	4 <i>Spondylus</i> fragments	MH 1B or 2	
21-6	Bedrock cavity	7	ND	1 face-neck jar 1 tube bowl 1 bowl		MH 1B or 2	AD 685-780
21-7	Bedrock cavity	20-30	Male	2 bowls 1 cup		MH 1B or 2	
21-2	Simple pit	+50	Female	1 jar base			
21-4	Simple pit	7	ND				
21-1	Simple pit	30-45 4	Male ND	1 bowl 1 cup		MH 1B or 2	
21-3	Simple pit	15	ND	1 bowl		MH 1B or 2	
17-1	Under wall	+50 35-40 +35 6	Female Male ND ND	Jar fragments		Late EIP/MH 1?	
11-1	Simple pit	4	ND	1 jar		Late EIP	
11-2	Under wall	3 30-45 Adult Infant 6 5	ND ND ND ND ND ND	1 jar	1 greenstone seed 1 copper <i>tupu</i>	Late EIP/MH 1?	
23-1	Subfloor cist	ND	ND				
23-2	Subfloor cist	+30	ND				
10-1	Simple pit	6 3 2	ND ND ND				



Figure 4. View of excavations in Room 21, showing above-ground funerary structure and bedrock cavity.

Burials in Room 21

Room 21 served as a specialized mortuary room and contained nine burials deposited over a seemingly long span of time. Wall abutments indicate that this room was one of the first to be built in this room cluster (see Figure 3). It originally had two doorways, one in the northwest corner and one communicating with Room 11, later blocked. The room also included a small trapezoidal stone pillar against the central section of the east wall.² At least three superimposed floor levels (two of them white plaster floors and the remainder a packed earthen floor) were identified in this room but all of them were broken through by the excavation of a bedrock cavity and later burials. While this might indicate a use other than funerary area before these burials took place, the lack of evidence prevents any further inferences. None of the burials in this room was looted but the human and organic remains in some of them did not preserve well, stone-lined pits and bedrock cavi-

ties being especially conspicuous for the humidity and water condensation found inside them. The first two burials (#21-8 and #21-9) were probably constructed very early in the use history of this room.

Burial #21-8. This tomb is a neatly built, above-ground funerary structure located in the southeast corner of the room and, unlike all the other burials found in this sector, was meant to be seen by the people who inhabited and used this and the adjoining rooms (Figure 4). It was built with courses of flat stones laid in mud mortar. The walls incline slightly inwards giving the structure a somewhat conical shape (84 to 90 cm in diameter at the top; 86 to 95 cm in diameter at the base; 90 cm high). The structure is capped with several layers of medium and large slabs and mud mortar arranged into a corbelled vault. The structure is seated directly on the bedrock, and, since there are no indications that floors were broken to build it, it can be inferred that the funerary structure was an initial archi-

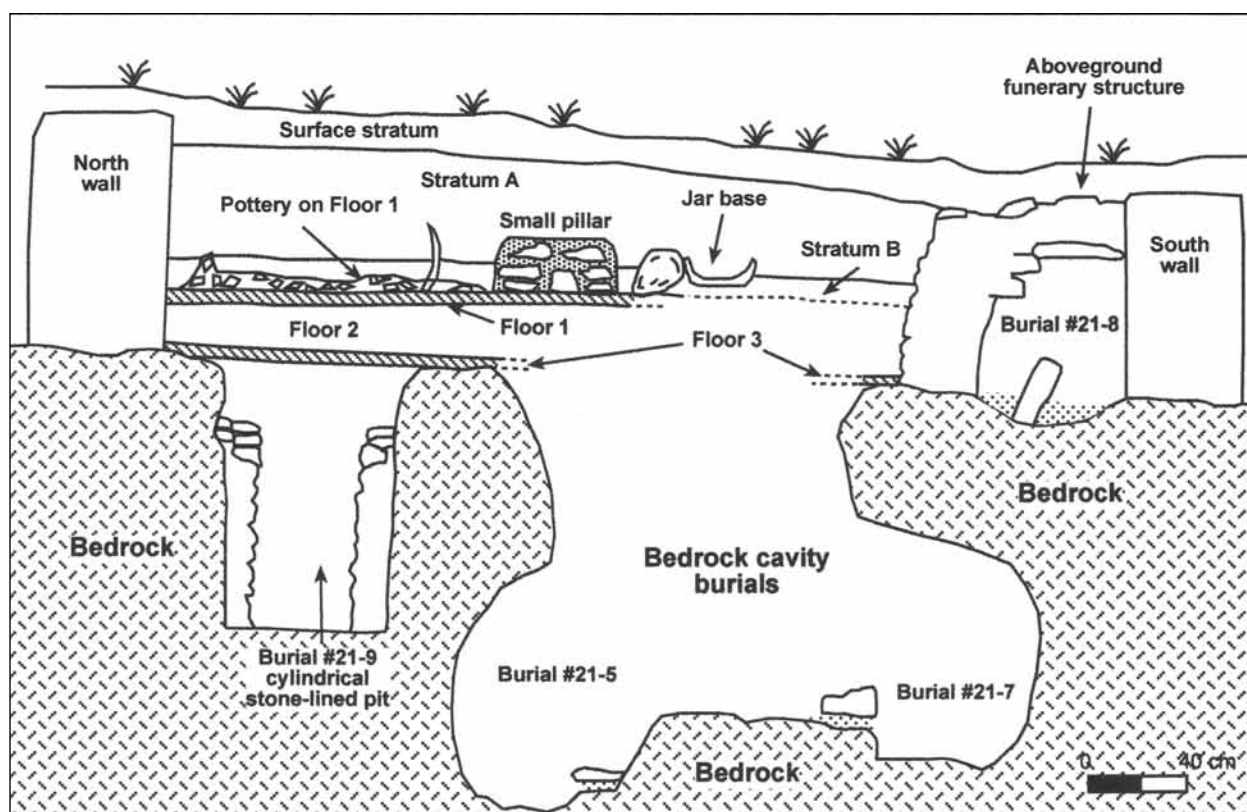


Figure 5. Cross-section of Room 21, showing stratigraphy and location of underground cist, bedrock cavity and above-ground funerary structure.

tectural feature built more or less at the same time as the room's walls (Figure 5). The tomb contained very poorly preserved remains of an individual deposited at its base. Only four cranial fragments, one mandible fragment, three ribs, four vertebrae, two femur and two tibia fragments were identified. Age and sex could not be determined (Lichtenfeld 2002). Flat stones were placed upright around the bones and a copper *tupu* was associated with the bones. Two Huarpa style and two Ocros style sherds were found inside the structure as well, perhaps accidentally included during its construction. No signs of reopening were identified, and the structure had no holes or conduits through which offerings could have been introduced.

Burial #21-9. This is a cylindrical subfloor cist (80 cm deep, 40 cm in diameter) similar to those found in Room 23 (see below). It is located in the northern part of the room and was completely sealed by the early floor (Figures 5, 6). Two large flat stones formed the tomb's lid. It contained the poorly preserved remains

(seven vertebrae—three of them showing signs of arthritis—the sacrum, three femur fragments, and a few hand and foot bones) of a single adult female (Lichtenfeld 2002).³ The bones were mixed with decomposed fragments of textile and cord, which probably wrapped the body. The original position of the body could not be determined. Thirty-one greenstone small beads (0.4 cm in diameter), probably part of a necklace or bracelet, were associated with the human remains. Above the tomb, in the compacted earth directly over the cist's lid and below the white-plaster floor, two very small fragments of worked *Spondylus* were found, probably intentionally placed as offerings. A radiocarbon date obtained from a piece of charcoal recovered from inside the cist yielded a calibrated one-sigma date ranging between AD 640 and 670 (Table 1).

Later and well into the Middle Horizon, a multiple burial event took place in Room 21. A significant effort was involved, as a large cavity was dug into the bedrock in the central section of the room to inter three

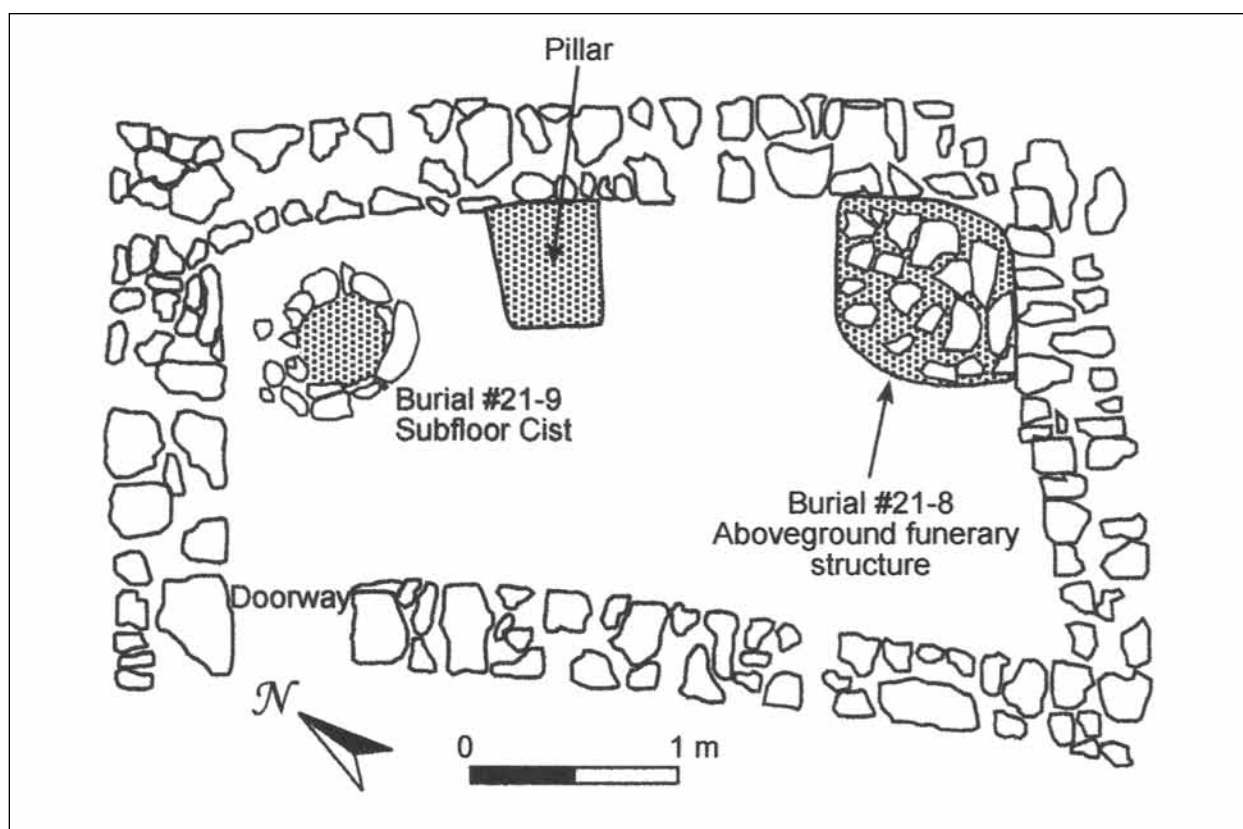


Figure 6. Plan of Room 21, showing early phase burials.

individuals (Burials #21-5, #21-6 and #21-7), possibly rendering the room useless for any other activities, but leaving previous burials untouched. This large pit broke through the floors, creating a 180-cm deep cavity in the bedrock with a mouth opening between 1.70 and 2 m wide (see Figures 4, 5). Three smaller cave-like cavities were dug horizontally at the bottom of the pit, two to the north side (Burials #21-5 and #21-6) and one to southeast (Burial #21-7), the latter projecting right underneath the above-ground funerary structure. A funerary bundle with the bones wrapped up in textile and cord, associated with three ceramic vessels was deposited in each of the cavities, which were sealed with coarse stone walls. Finally, the entire pit was filled with loose earth and gravel.

Burial #21-5. This burial occupied the smaller cavity (1 m wide at opening, 55 cm horizontal depth) dug on the northeast side of the larger pit (see Figure 5). A coarse wall of large stones and mud mortar blocked

its entrance. Bone fragments corresponding to an adult male were found inside (ribs, hand, and feet bones; skull and teeth were missing; Lichtenfeld 2002) (Figure 7). The bones were wrapped in braided rope made of vegetal fibers, and some of them had red paint. Grave goods consisted of two undecorated incurving bowls and a small bottle with a human face modeled on the neck, as well as four very small (less than 1 cm long) *Spondylus* fragments. The ceramic bottle has a decorated panel with black and red horizontal S-shaped motifs on a white/cream background, which could belong to either the Less Fancy Chakipampa B style (Middle Horizon 1B) or to coarse variants of the later Viñaque style (Middle Horizon 2) of Menzel's (1964: 17, Note 76) classification of Middle Horizon ceramics (Figure 8).

Burial #21-6. This burial was placed in another small cave-like cavity dug on the northwest side of the original pit. Its opening was blocked by a pile of large irregular stones and also by the coarse wall that blocked the

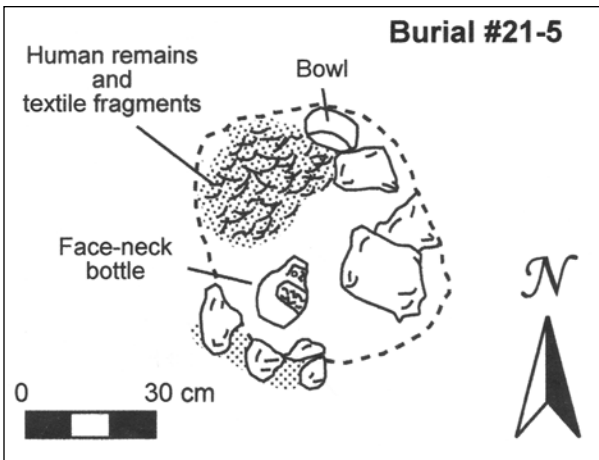


Figure 7. Room 21, bedrock cavity, burial #21-5.

access to Burial #21-5. This cavity was more carefully prepared for the burial event, with flat chunks of white diatomaceous rock placed to form a pavement for the human remains. Fine black gravel was spread on top of this white base, and two flat pieces of diatomaceous rock, one of them in an upright position, were placed

at the back of the cavity. The grave contained the extremely fragmented remains of a child whose bones were wrapped with braided cord and textiles (Figure 9). Stains of red paint were identified on some of the bones. Three vessels accompanied the human remains; a plain incurving bowl, a black tube bowl, and a small face-neck jar with a bird face molded on the neck. The latter vessel has a decorated panel with white background and black outline in the area around the face. Black spots are painted inside this panel, and the round eyes are outlined in black (Figure 10). Stylistic ascription would place the tube bowl and the small jar in Middle Horizon 2, as variants of the Viñaque and less fancy Viñaque styles (Menzel 1964: 40). Fragments of the textile yielded a calibrated one-sigma date ranging between AD 685 and 780 (Table 1).

Burial #21-7. This burial was located in a cavity (1 m mouth opening, 85 cm horizontal depth) on the southeastern side of the initial pit, under the above-ground funerary structure (see Figures 4 and 6). Its

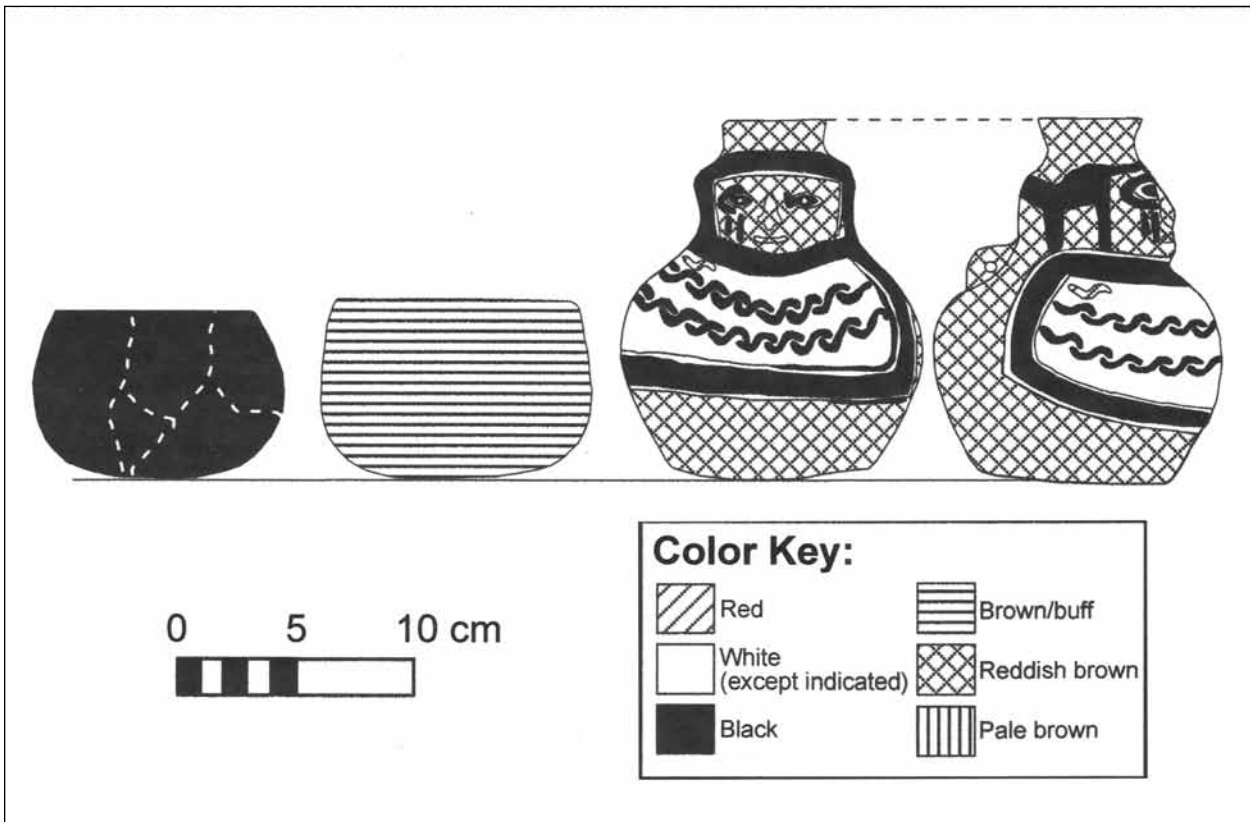


Figure 8. Ceramic vessels from burial #21-5.

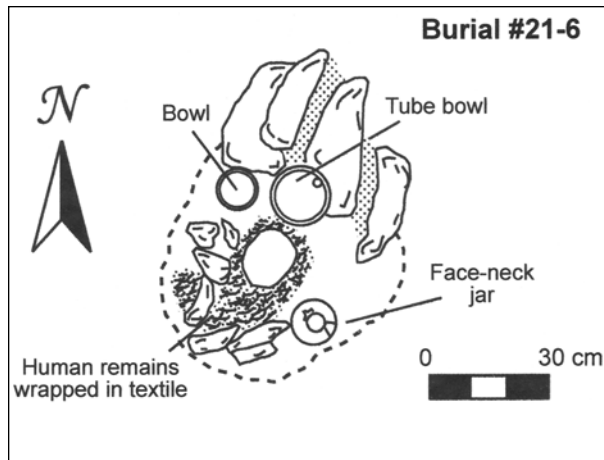


Figure 9. Room 21, bedrock cavity, burial #21-6.

opening was blocked by a heap of stones and mud mortar. Inside was found a funerary bundle containing badly decomposed bones (only small cranial fragments and a fragment of pubic symphysis were present) of a possible male adult individual wrapped in cloth and braided rope (Figure 11). The skull fragments were painted red. A ceramic assemblage consisting of two

incurving bowls and a straight-sided cup accompanied the human remains (Figure 12). The bowls are decorated with motifs (zigzag lines with crosses, crosses and dots) that originated in Chakipampa B style but persisted and increased in popularity during Middle Horizon 2 in Viñaque style variants (Menzel 1964: 40). The cup is a Black Decorated style vessel, decorated with a horizontal band of red interlocking frets close to the rim and red horizontal lines close to the base. This decorative pattern is common in Menzel's (1964: 45) Black Decorated C variant of Middle Horizon 2.⁴

A third and final phase of burials occurred in Room 21 sometime after the large cavity in the bedrock had been filled, and involved four primary burials (Figure 13). Burials #21-2 and #21-4 were dug in the earth and gravel fill of the bedrock cavity. Burials #21-1 and 21-3, on the other hand, broke through the room's latest floor.

Burial #21-2. This was a primary burial located in a simple pit (60-70 cm wide, 70 cm deep) partly delimited with stones, containing an adult female seated with knees tightly flexed, facing northeast (Figures 13,

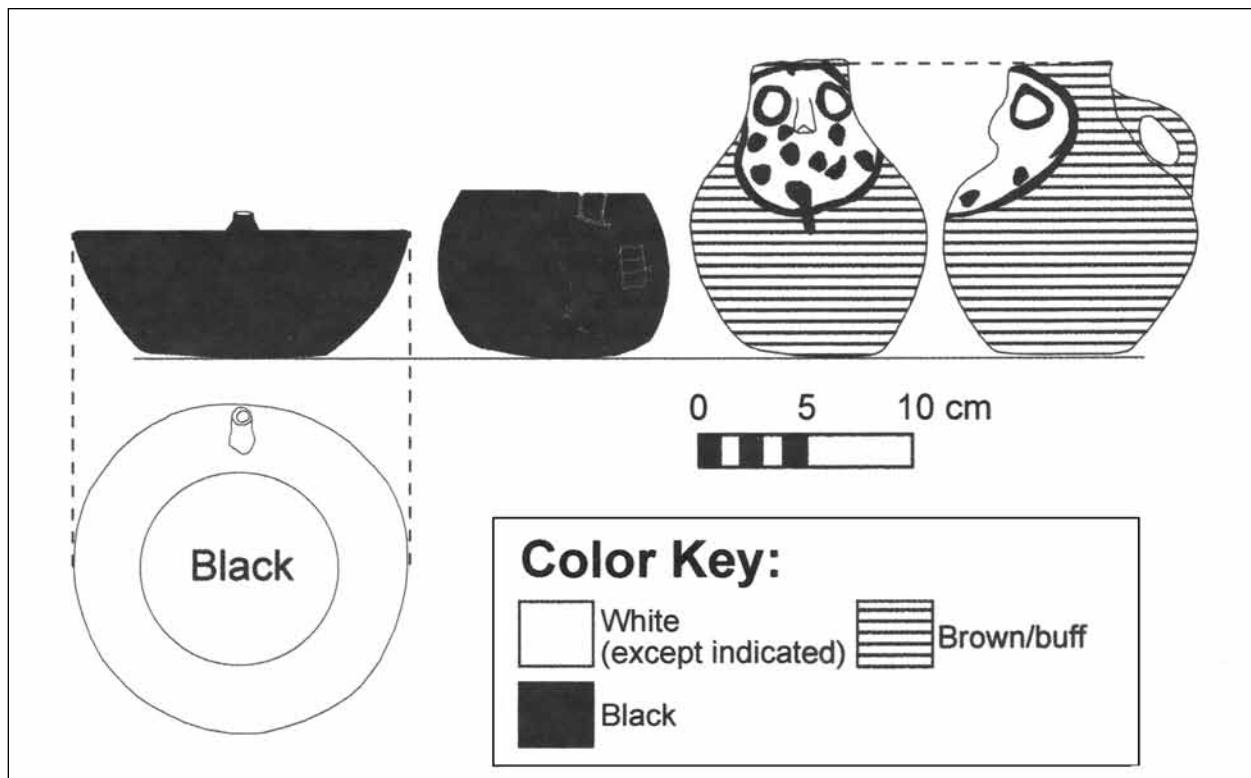


Figure 10. Ceramic vessels from burial #21-6.

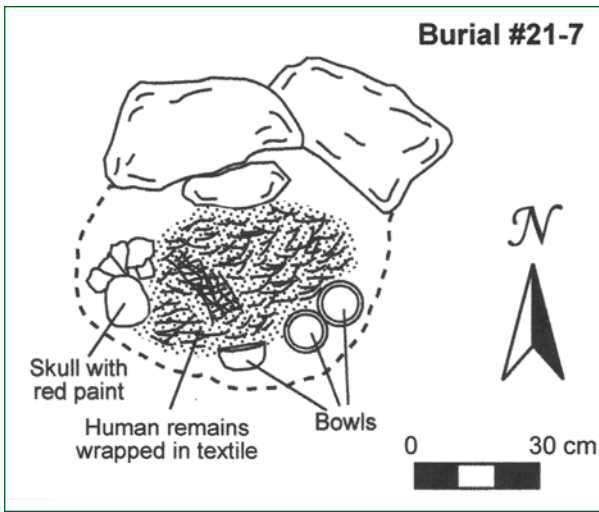


Figure 11. Room 21, bedrock cavity, burial #21-7.

14). The right arm was extended along her body, while the left arm was flexed over the chest with the hand resting on her right shoulder. The bottom of a large jar covered the front of her head, with the face resting on the vessel's inner side, an arrangement presumably intended either to protect the face or to hold the head in an upright position. According to Lichtenfeld (2002), this individual showed osteoarthritis on the proximal

left ulna, the proximal right fibula, the second cervical and the second lumbar vertebrae.

Burial #21-4. This was a primary burial containing a child seated with knees flexed, facing north in a simple unstructured pit (35-40 cm wide, 40 cm deep) dug in the fill of the bedrock cavity (Figure 13). The individual was mostly complete (except for a portion of maxilla and mandible) and had five dental caries (Lichtenfeld 2002).

Burial #21-1. This burial was located in an oval pit (110 cm by 70 cm, 57 cm deep) and contained an adult male lying on his right side with his head to the south. His knees were tightly flexed and drawn up against his chest, and his arms were crossed over his chest. This individual was the most complete found at the site, with all the bones (either complete or fragmentary) present. Interestingly, it showed the third right molar impacted, and healed fractures in the left tibia and left ulna, perhaps as a result of some kind of violent interactions and/or accident. By his side were the incomplete remains of a child (Figure 15). Only a few cranial, one mandibular, and several vertebral fragments were present, as well as fragments of the right humerus, radius, ulna, and fibula (Lichtenfeld 2002).

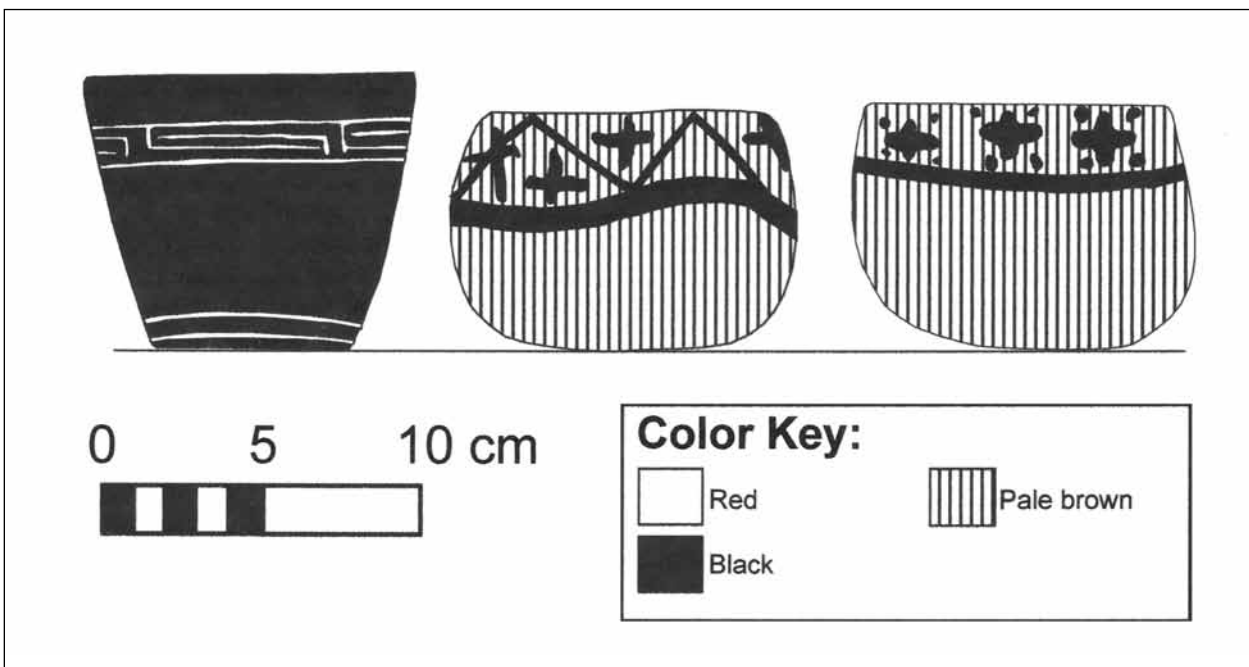


Figure 12. Ceramic vessels from burial #21-7.

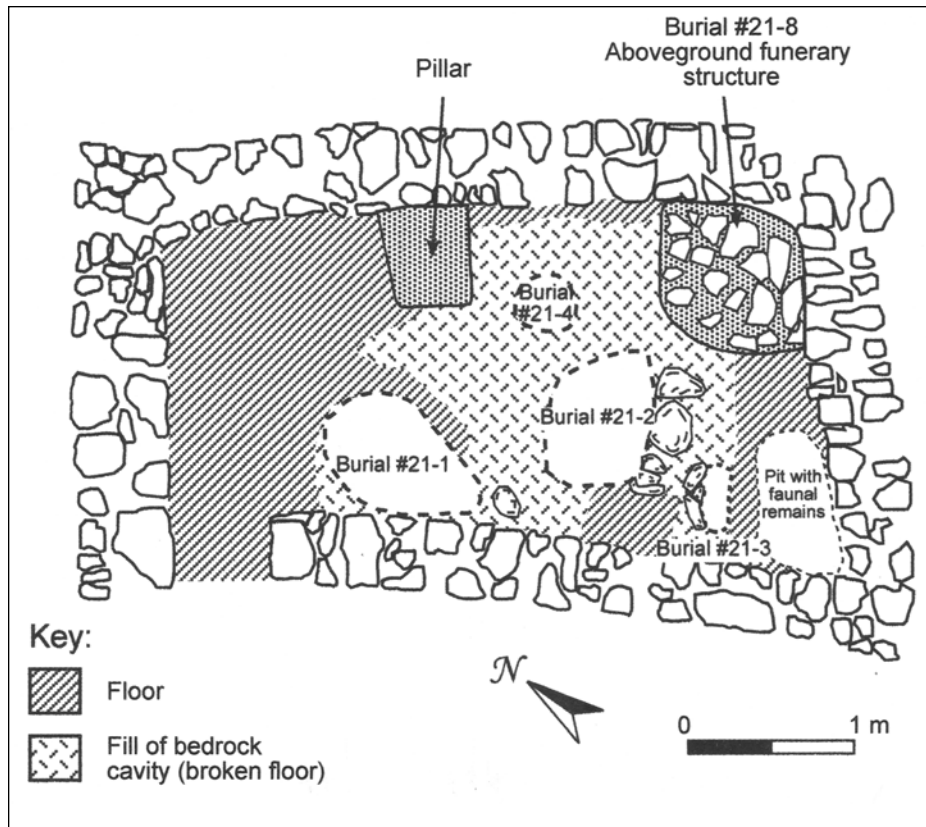


Figure 13. Plan of Room 21, showing Middle Horizon burials.

An open bowl and a cup were associated with the bodies (Figure 16). The bowl, located on the west side of the pit behind the adult's back, has a step fret decoration and a modeled human or animal face appendage outlined with a crescent-shaped band. These motifs are usually found in Menzel's (1964) Chakipampa (Middle Horizon 1) and Viñaque (Middle Horizon 2) styles, while they are usually referred to as Huamanga style among Peruvian scholars (Benavides 1965: 60–69, Lámina IX; Ochatoma and Cabrera 2001: 152–153, 173). The cup was located on the east side of the pit close to the child's head and has red geometric motifs (cross-hatching, wavy and straight lines) painted on a black slipped background. It belongs to Menzel's (1964: 18–19, 45) Black Decorated style, probably to its variant C from Middle Horizon 2.

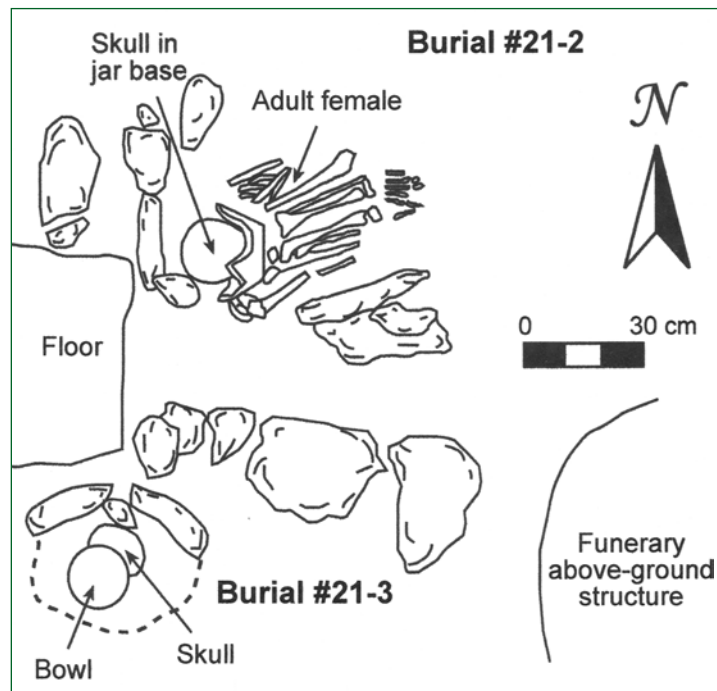


Figure 14. Room 21, burials #21-2 and #21-3.

Burial #21-3. This burial was located in a small pit (20-30 cm wide, 50 cm deep) par-

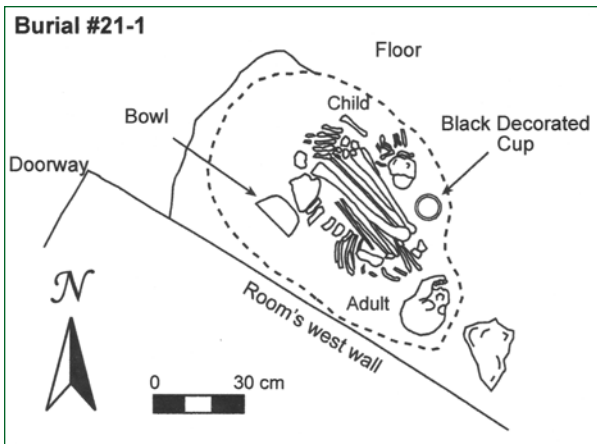


Figure 15. Room 21, burial #21-1.

tially defined with stones and contained a juvenile with knees flexed and drawn up, facing northeast (see Figure 14). Only half of the cranium, the left maxilla and mandible were present. The hands and feet were mostly present but only had half of the vertebrae, ribs and long bones (Lichtenfeld 2002). About 20 cm above the head of the individual, an open bowl in upside down position was found (Figure 17). The bowl is internally decorated with horizontal bands of red and black cur-

sive or S-shaped motifs on a white/cream background, a kind of decoration that can be found both in Menzel's (1964) Chakipampa B and Viñaque styles.

Evidence for food consumption, perhaps part of the funerary rituals associated with one of the last burials was found in Room 21 as well (Figure 18). Concentrations of large sherds (including jar bases) belonging to plainware and Chakipampa style jars were found at the northeast corner of the room and close to the above-ground tomb. Five bowls were found in the room as well, corresponding to four incurving bowls and a plain open bowl with handles (Figure 19). Three of the incurving bowls are decorated, one with a rim band of black crosses and dots, another one with a rim band of thick red chevrons on a white background, and the third one with only a horizontal black line in the middle section of the body. Both the cross and dots motif and the chevron bands are, according to Menzel (1964: 12, 18), characteristic of Chakipampa B style but continue into the less fancy variant of the Middle Horizon 2 Viñaque style.⁵

Finally, a pit (100 by 40 cm wide) breaking through the floors and containing the remains of camelids and guinea pigs was located in the southwest

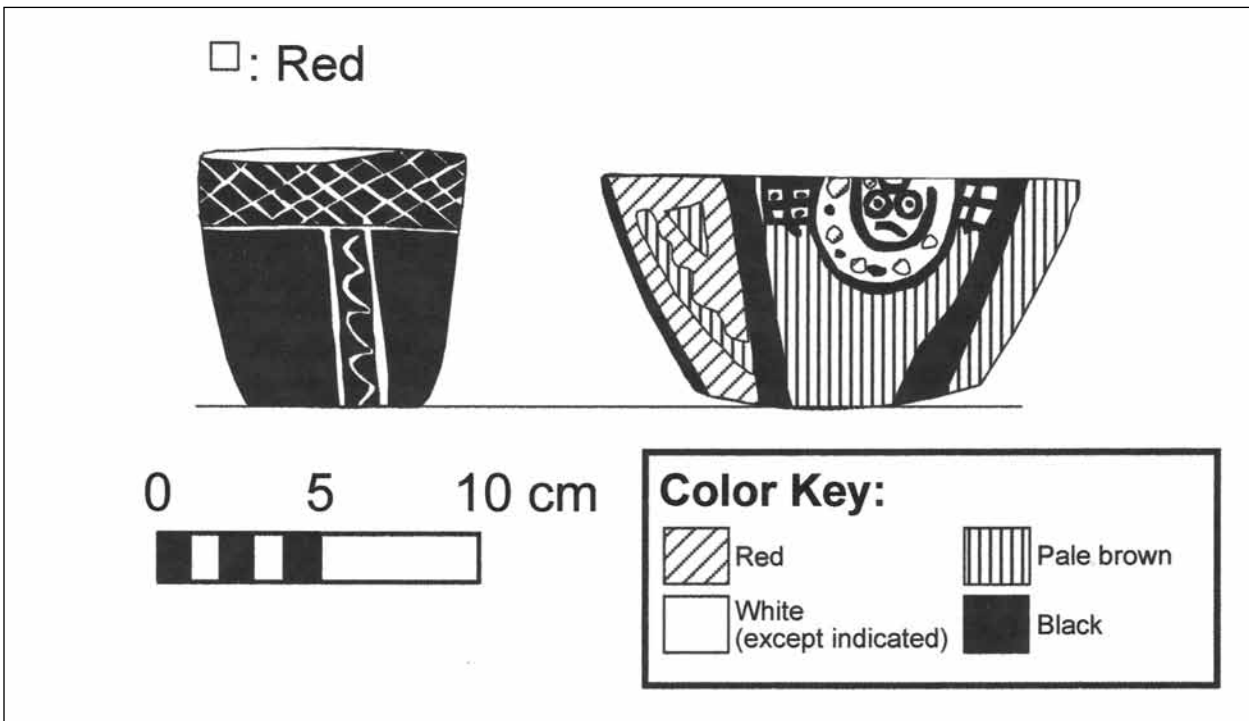


Figure 16. Ceramic vessels from burial #21-1.

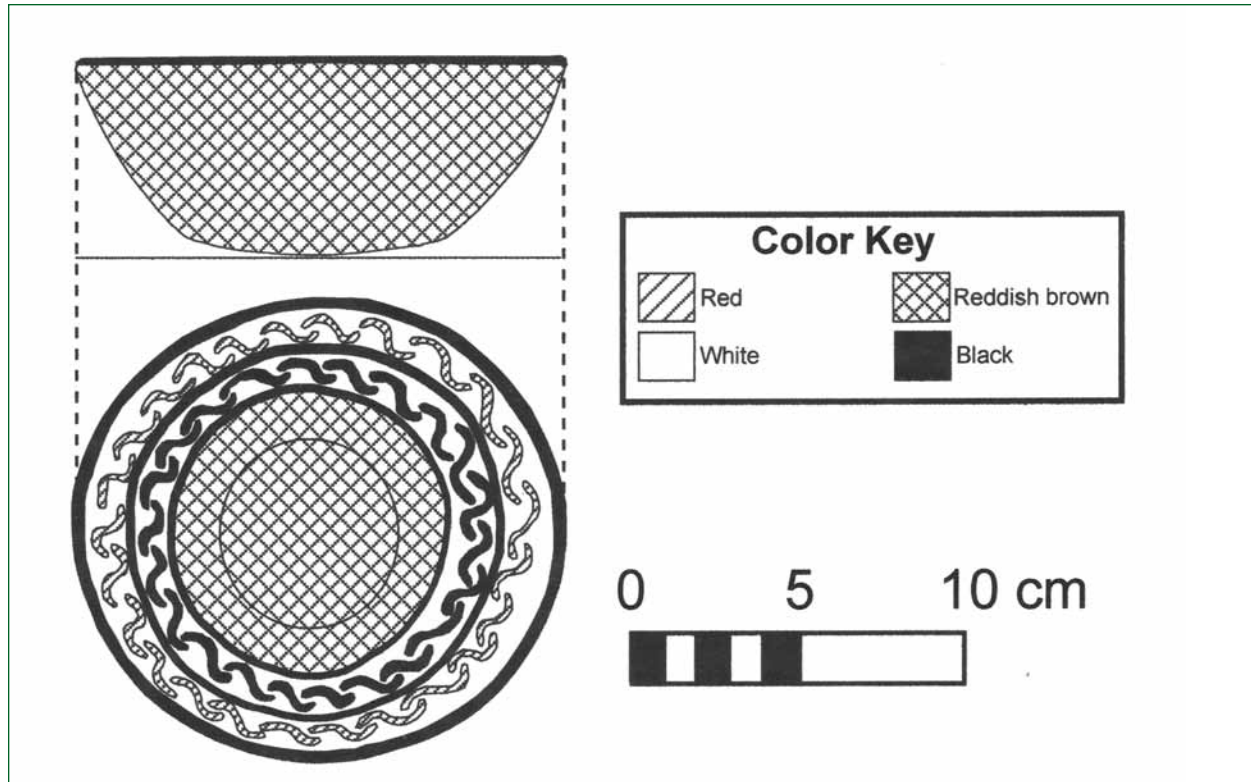


Figure 17. Ceramic bowl associated with burial #21-3.

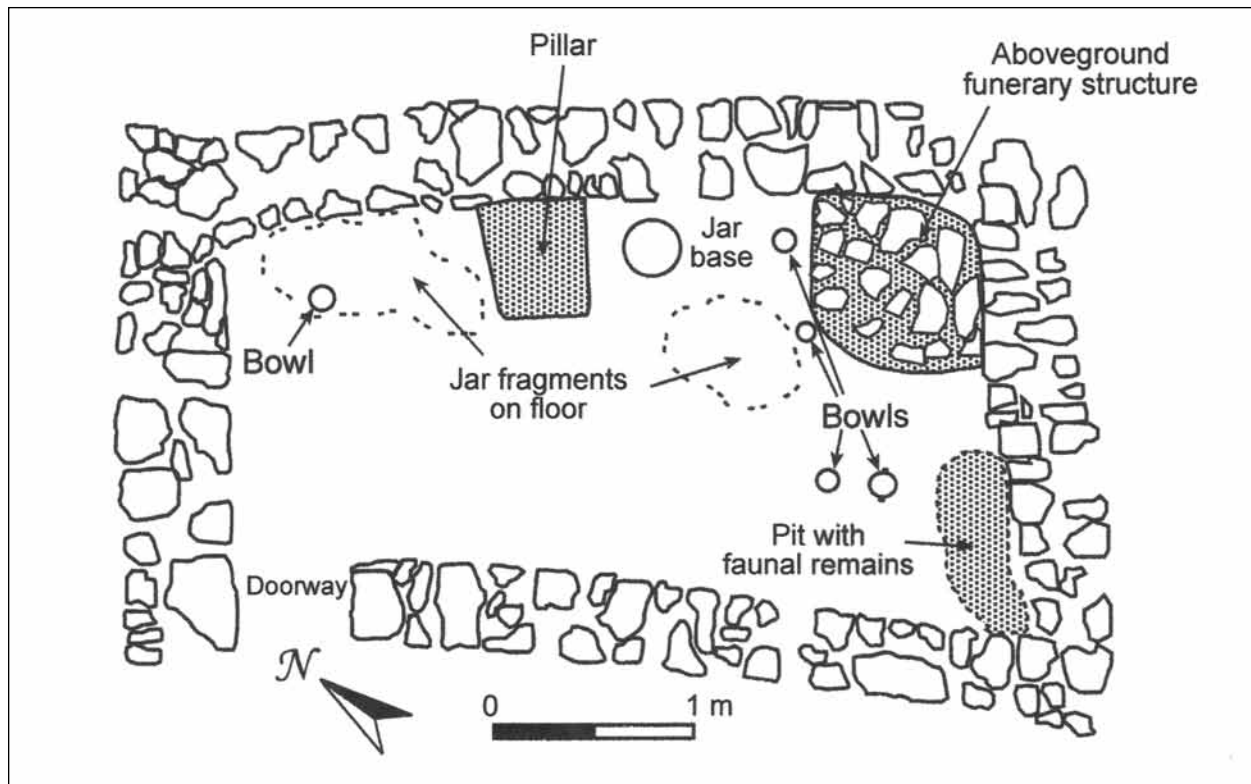


Figure 18. Plan of Room 21, showing remains of food consumption.

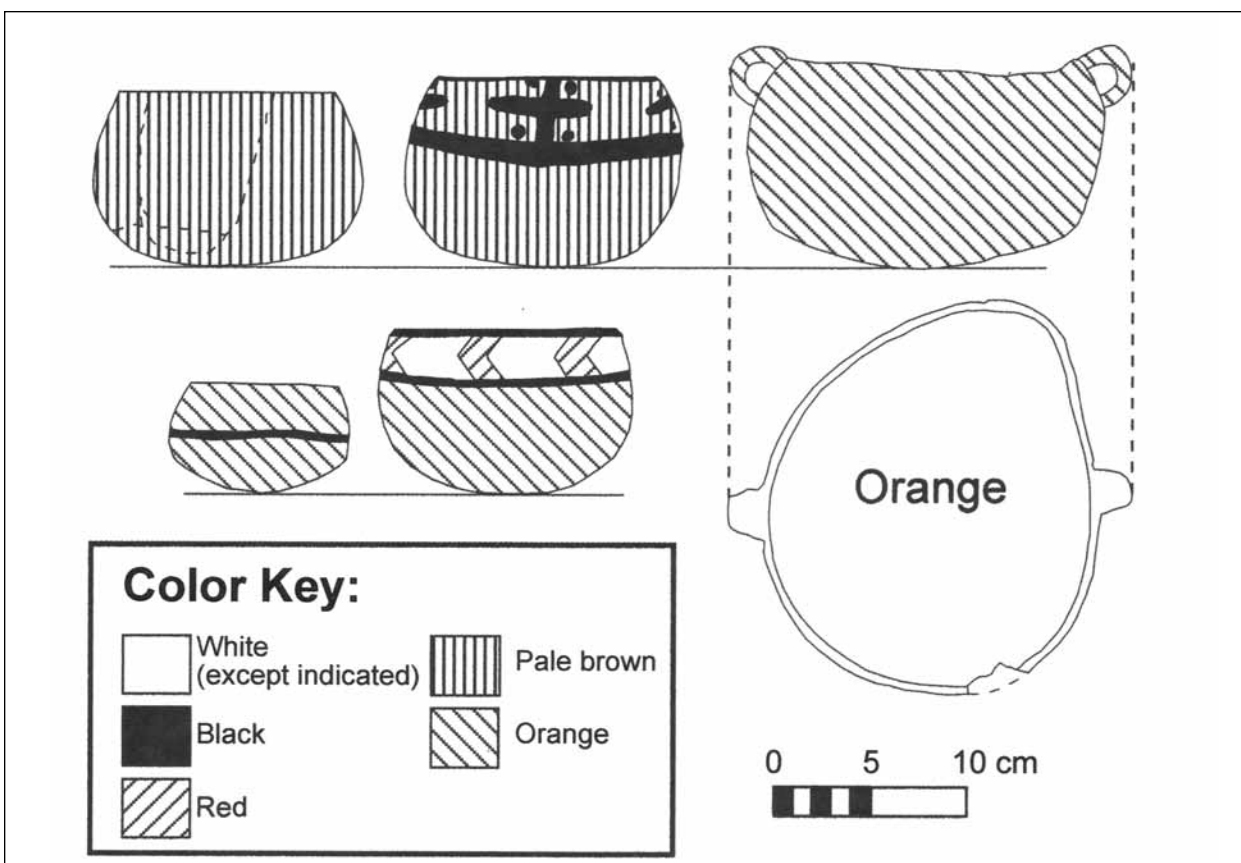


Figure 19. Ceramic bowls from Room 21.

corner of the room, perhaps representing food remains associated with the pottery mentioned above (Figure 18). Interestingly, 17 human teeth were found in this pit as well, belonging to at least two adults. The pit also contained a bone artifact, possibly an implement used in weaving, and nine beads made of small snail, as well as 38 sherds, some of them belonging to the Ocos and Viñaque styles of the Middle Horizon.

Burials in Other Rooms

Six other burials that seemingly pertain to the early phase of construction and occupation of the Southeast Architectural Group (and are thus roughly contemporaneous with Burials #21-8 and #21-9) were located in Rooms 17, 11, 23, and 10.

Burial #17-1. Room 17 is a large square structure with a single doorway (found blocked) in its north-

west corner (see Figure 3). Its size and lack of a well-prepared floor might indicate that it was an unroofed area. Burial #17-1 is a secondary burial located under the central part of the west wall. It consists of a 57 cm deep pit below the wall foundations (Figure 3). The pit broke through the room's packed earth floor indicating that it was dug after the wall was built. Inside the pit, several large sherds from at least three Kumun-senqa style (a characteristic Early Intermediate Period style) jars covered the bones of three adults and a child. The remains were disarticulated and tightly packed in the small cavity. One of the adults was a male, fairly complete with most of the cranium present, including the entire maxilla and mandible. The teeth show three caries and severe wear, and the individual suffered from osteoarthritis on the right clavicle and one thoracic vertebra. The incomplete remains (mandible and cranium, one clavicle, thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, left pubic bone, and sections of all the long bones) of a female adult were also found. Pathologies in her bones

included osteoarthritis on the right proximal ulna, left distal humerus, right distal femur, left patella, proximal right tibia, pubic bone, tenth to twelfth thoracic, and all lumbar vertebrae, and the sacrum; alveolar resorption was identified as well. The other adult and the child were mostly incomplete, with only a few cranial and long bone elements present (Lichtenfeld 2002).

Burial #11-1. Room 11 included architectural features such as a floor level ventilation duct, a niche, and a raised platform containing a camelid offering. It had two open doorways connecting it with a room to the north and a corridor to the east, and a larger blocked doorway that originally communicated with Room 21 to the west. The room seems to have been used for domestic purposes, and when abandoned it was filled with crushed diatomaceous rock and earth. A piece of burned wood on the room's floor yielded a calibrated one-sigma date ranging between AD 886 and 975 (Table 1). Two burials were found in this room (see Figure 3).

Burial #11-1 is a primary interment located in a (85 cm in diameter, 50 cm deep) subfloor pit in the central part of the room that contained the mostly incomplete remains (a few cranial, one mandibular, and several vertebral fragments) of a child, associated with a broken Huarpa style jar (Figure 20). The vessel has a neck decoration of wide vertical black and white bands, and a small decorated panel with a protruding appendage in the upper part of the body. This panel is painted with vertical alternating red and black wavy lines on a white background, a very typical Huarpa motif. The jar seems to have been broken intentionally to be buried with the child.

Burial #11-2. This is a multiple burial under the room's west wall consisting of a small pit (85 cm in diameter, 70 cm deep) with openings from Rooms 11 and 21, in which four infants/children and two adults were interred in at least two different burial phases (Figure 21). The first phase comprised the secondary interment of two adults and one infant, whose remains were deposited at the pit's bottom. All these individuals were incomplete and their bones highly fragmented and intermingled. The bones of one of the adults showed

osteoarthritis on a lumbar vertebrae and a completely healed fracture on the left ulna. Associated with these remains were a small (2.2 by 1.3 cm) piece of worked greenstone shaped as a seed, and the upper portion of a copper *tupu* or shawl pin.

Three large flat stones were placed over the earlier human remains and served as a base for the interment of a jar whose upper section was intentionally cut away to accommodate two infants (Figure 22, right). In the bottom of the vessel lay the remains of a child,⁶ whose head was covered with an inverted conical jar base. A second child was placed on top of the first one with the legs tightly flexed. This individual was mostly incomplete, and only cranial, vertebral, and mandibular fragments were preserved (Lichtenfeld 2002). Several large jar sherds covered the remains. Finally, another child was placed seated on a flat stone, facing east, a short distance south of the funerary vessel. An incurving bowl with white and black rim ticking decoration, placed in an upside-down positions accompanied this individual (Figure 22, left), and large jar sherds covered the whole funerary assemblage.



Figure 20. Huarpa style ceramic jar from burial #11-1.



Figure 21. Under-wall burial #11-2, showing funerary vessel and slabs on which a child was placed.

Burial #23-1. Room 23 is located to the north of Room 21 (see Figure 3). It features only one doorway and has well-finished white floors and wall plaster. Like Room 11, it was also intentionally filled with loose earth and fragments of white diatomaceous rock. Two cylindrical cist burials were found in its northwest part, sealed below two floor levels, thus indicating that their construction occurred early in the room's history (Figure 23).

Burial #23-1 was built using ten courses of small flat stones to line the interior of a cylindrical pit (75 cm deep, 45 cm in diameter) dug in the bedrock; it had a small niche at the bottom. Several flat stones with mud mortar were used to cap the cist. It contained the badly preserved remains of an adult (only eight cranial fragments and several long bone fragments were present), associated with decomposed textile fragments. Right on top of the cist's cap, the rear legs and mandible fragments of a juvenile camelid, and a piece of worked *Spondylus* (6.5 cm long by 2.3 cm wide, 15.3 grams) were found, possibly representing mortuary offerings

after the closure of the cist and before its definitive sealing underneath a floor.

Burial #23-2. This is also a cylindrical pit (70 cm deep, 40 cm in diameter) dug in the bedrock with a lining of ten courses of selected small flat stones. Two large slabs capped the cist. Inside were the decomposed remains of an adult (only small cranial fragments and several long bone fragments were recovered), wrapped in poorly preserved textile.

Burial #10-1. Finally, a disturbed burial was located in Room 10, a rectangular room with two doorways used mainly as a domestic area and intentionally filled in when it ceased to be used (Figure 3). The burial was found in the southern part of the room and consisted of a small circular pit (15 cm deep, 35 cm in diameter) with its sides plastered with compacted mud. It was found empty but the bones of three infants/children were found on the floor on the southeast corner of the room (Table 2). It seems that the burial was disturbed and the



Figure 22. Ceramic vessels from burial #11-2.



Figure 23. Subfloor cists in Room 23, showing burial #23-1 open and burial #23-2 with capping still intact.

bones removed, probably immediately before the room was filled with fragmented diatomaceous rock and dirt. However, it is not possible to discern when the interment took place, something that might have happened at any time since the room was constructed.

DISCUSSION

The burials found in the Southeast Architectural Group show a wide variety of construction characteristics and interment practices; formal variations over time are also evident. Nevertheless, all of them are integrated into the different architectural spaces, whether habitation rooms or the specialized mortuary room, within a larger residential compound. Almost all of them consist of variants of subterranean interments, with the remarkable exception of a unique above-ground elaborate funerary structure. The latter perhaps served as a focus for the construction of a social memory, articulating funerary practices and burials over time and thus connecting different generations of Ñawinpukyo inhabitants.

Early Intermediate Period–Early Middle Horizon burials

Stratigraphic, architectural and ceramic information indicates that the earliest burials, possibly dating back to moment of construction of the compound or its early use history in the late Early Intermediate Period or early Middle Horizon, are the under-wall burials (Burials #17-1 and #11-2), the stone-lined subfloor cists (Burials #23-1, #23-2 and #21-9), and the conspicuous above-ground structure (Burial #21-8), as well as a simple pit burial in Room 11 (Burial #11-1).

The under-wall burials have no parallels in other reported Ayacucho sites and thus are not discussed in available studies and typologies of burials (Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006; Valdez et al. 2006). The fact that both burial pits broke through the respective rooms' floors and that the floors were not completely patched afterward indicates that these burials were most probably placed after the walls had

been erected. Two aspects differentiate them from the rest of the burials: First, they are multiple, secondary interments that contain intermingled remains of both adults and infants/children, as Burial #17-1 and the first burial phase of Burial #11-2 show. Second, the latter burial constitutes the only clear example of grave reopening at Ñawinpukyo, with at least two interment phases. Interestingly, the second burial phase involved the primary deposit of infants/children, showing that different funerary practices coexisted even within the same grave.

The subfloor cists, on the other hand, were more carefully designed and built, being the most elaborate of the subsurface burials though not necessarily the ones requiring the highest labor investment. Their construction seems to be early in the use history of the Southeast Architectural Group as well. They are usually sealed by one or more floor levels and have no surface markers and/or offering holes, indicating that the cists and their contents were not meant to be reopened or periodically accessed. All of them seem to have contained adults with few or no associated grave goods, but due to poor preservation it is not possible to determine if the interments were primary or secondary.

Similar examples have been uncovered at other Ayacucho sites, such as Huari (Isbell et al. 1991: 41), Conchopata (Isbell 2000: 31), Aqo Wayqo (Ochatoma and Cabrera 2001: 82–86) and Muyu Orqo (Berrocal 1991), as well as in the lower part of the Ñawinpukyo hill excavated by Machaca (1997: 70). (See the discussion of Huari cist burials in Cook 2001: 145–149). They show a great range of variability with respect to the presence of grave goods and offerings, and the age and sex of individuals buried in them, with at least some of them having holes to communicate and make offerings to the dead (Cook 2001: 149; Isbell 2004: 8–10). There is no agreement, however, on their meaning in terms of social status. According to Isbell, they represent the “typical residents of Huari cities, neither powerful nor impoverished” (Isbell 2004: 27). On the other hand, Ochatoma and Cabrera (2001: 82–85) believe that a cist burial found at the small hamlet of Aqo Wayqo may represent a high status individual. Cook (2001: 149; see also Tung and Cook 2006: 77–78) argues that cylindrical capped cists were part of the Huari

urban elite funerary practices, and were reproduced in secondary sites and smaller agrarian villages, something that would account for their widespread presence in Ayacucho sites.

The primary burial in Room 11 (Burial#11-1) is similar to both the common pre-Huari burials in Ayacucho and the simplest Huari burial types (Isbell 2004: 8; Tung and Cook 2006: 76). The presence of a Huarpa vessel in a burial within a room that seems to have remained in use until very late into the Middle Horizon indicates a definite continuity between the Huarpa and Huari components, and also highlights the difficulties implicit in trying to define rigid boundaries between the two archaeologically defined cultures. The rise of the Huari social formation and cultural identity seems to have been a gradual process of transformation, with blurry boundaries with the local Huarpa past rather than the clear cut separations implied by the chronological units.

The set of burials in the Southeast Architectural Group shows a recurring pattern in the burial of people of all sex and age groups within habitation rooms, something that would indicate that they were probably members of the social units inhabiting them and that they remained in the places where they had lived. In this way they coexisted with their living relatives and descendants, but with only minor visibility of their physical presence. An important disparity in the treatment of the dead, however, might indicate that differences in status or importance as ancestors existed among them. It seems clear that certain people received different treatment from the rest, being buried individually in more elaborated subfloor graves. At least at Ñawinpukyo the cists seem to have been reserved for adults, perhaps group members of higher status. The above-ground structure, on the other hand, with its uniqueness and visibility, might have held the remains of a more important or different individual. It resembles a small *chullpa*, and has, so far, no parallels in other known Ayacucho sites. While above-ground offering houses, benches, and other structures were common in close-by contemporary Conchopata, they were usually the visible part of specialized funerary facilities that also included large subterranean chambers (Isbell 2004: 10, Figure 4). *Chullpas*, on the other hand, are not a com-

mon feature in Ayacucho Middle Horizon funerary landscapes (Isbell 1997: 187–188).⁷

The above-ground structure at Ñawinpukyo is perhaps largely contemporaneous with the underground cists and under-wall burials, but, unlike them, it was built with the purpose of being visible for the living. Its conspicuousness could be interpreted as a statement about the status difference between the person buried in it and those buried in underground cists and pits. His/her individuality would have been clearly remarked as well. These differential aspects could indicate that the remains belonged not just to a respected and/or high status person but also to an important ancestor or founder of a descent group. However, the grave does not show the features typically considered to define the presence of ancestor worship practices. That is, it has no conduits or holes to introduce offerings in the grave, and the structure's capping does not facilitate an easy reopening to retrieve the bones.

Middle Horizon Burials

Conspicuous changes in Ñawinpukyo funerary practices took place later, well in the Middle Horizon, with a proliferation of individual burials in a specialized mortuary room and in clear physical proximity to the above-ground tomb. As we have seen, a succession of burials followed, with the excavation of a large bedrock cavity, in turn containing three smaller chambers for individual secondary burials; and four additional primary burials were deposited later. All these burials are associated with ceramic vessels that have Middle Horizon 1B and/or 2 decorative patterns, while a radiocarbon assay from Burial #21-7 places it between the late seventh and ninth centuries AD (Table 1).

Bedrock cavity burials are also well-known from other Ayacucho sites, most notably Conchopata, where they usually contain multigenerational elite kin groups associated with varied grave goods, and show evidence for periodic reopening, to introduce and retrieve bodies and/or skeletal parts (Isbell 2004: 10–13; Tung and Cook 2006: 78–83). As in the case of the cists, the Ñawinpukyo example shows distinct characteristics. First, while sharing the same large cavity, all the burials

are separate. Second, while reopening could have been possible for a certain time, the filling of the large cavity ultimately rendered any access to the dead impossible.

The final four burials in Room 21 took place later, some of them in fact being deposited in the fill of the bedrock cavity, and all of them characterized by their relative simplicity compared to the previous burials. They consisted of primary interments, mostly individual, in simple pits, with little or no mortuary goods. The few ceramic vessels associated with these burials also have Middle Horizon 1B and 2 decorative patterns similar to those found in the vessels from the bedrock cavity. Simple pit burials are usually interpreted as low status people (Isbell 2004: 26–27; Milliken 2006: 282–283; Tung and Cook 2006: 77). Despite their simplicity, however, the intention to associate them with the previous burials, and especially the above-ground tomb, seems evident.

CONCLUSION

Previous interpretations of Ayacucho Huari burial practices have pointed out two main trends (Cook 2001; Cook and Isbell 2002; Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006; Valdez et al. 2006). First, there was a marked diversification in burial practices in the Middle Horizon with respect to the Early Intermediate Period, which has generally been interpreted as a reflection of an increase in social and political differentiation. Second, multiple burials, possibly emphasizing kin grouping, became more prevalent during the Middle Horizon, a trend that might have been associated with a growing popularity of ancestor worship practices. This interpretation is supported by the increased presence of features that allowed fluid interaction with the dead and their remains. The location of burials and funerary structures within residential and work areas also indicates that coexistence with the dead was a central aspect of Huari everyday life. Access to the dead was often restricted to members of the kin group or domestic unit rather than open for public display before large audiences. Finally, it is recognized that not everyone was revered as an ancestor and that commoners and even some members of elite groups were buried either individually or in groups with

few or no goods, no special marking of their graves, and consequently no later access to them. These characteristics of Huari funerary practices are generally understood as ways to emphasize new forms of social and political affiliation, especially on the part of the elite groups of the main Ayacucho centers, in the context of power negotiations and competition within the new Huari state polity (Cook 2001; Isbell 2004; Milliken 2006; Tung and Cook 2006).

The funerary evidence from Ñawinpukyo shares many of these general characteristics but also includes specific forms that have not been previously reported. Simple pits, subfloor cists, multiple secondary under-wall graves, and a large bedrock cavity, are found within a cluster of rooms in a larger residential compound, underscoring the importance of the coexistence of the living with the dead group members. Nevertheless, most of these graves became mostly inaccessible and not visible after their closure and no evidence of specific markers was found to indicate any forms of ancestor veneration or direct interactions with the dead. Only the above-ground funerary structure, an unusual tomb in the Ayacucho Valley, differs from this pattern, having been explicitly designed to remain visible and nucleating a number of later burials around it. This conspicuousness might reflect a higher social status or a position as ancestor. However, the tomb had no features that allowed an easy periodical access to the remains inside or the placing of offerings inside the tomb as is the norm in typical cases of ancestor worship practices in Ayacucho.

In sum, the funerary evidence from Ñawinpukyo documents a diachronic process that shows similarities as well as differences with the generalized Middle Horizon funerary patterns in the Ayacucho Valley. While the causes for these differences remain largely unknown, they do indicate that the cultural processes in Ayacucho during the Middle Horizon were even more diverse than generally recognized

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NOTES

1. Locally known as *diatomita*, this is a soft, light, white sedimentary rock widely used in the past to make floors and wall plasters, and also to fill in, mixed with earth and other rocks, some rooms and structures after their abandonment. A large source is located at the foot of Ñawinpukyo hill's western slope.
2. Similar features have been found at the Moraduchayuc compound in Huari, in a lateral gallery of one of the patio groups, and have been described as table-like furnishings (Brewster-Wray 1990: 107; Isbell et al. 1991: 41). Christine Brewster-Wray has also suggested that "the association of these features with offerings and/or subfloor cists may indicate that they served some ritual or ceremonial function" (1990: 107).
3. Age categories are discriminated as follows: infant 0-3 years old; child 4-14 years old; juvenile 15-19 years old; adult 20-49 years old; senior adult 50+ years old.
4. Nevertheless, Patricia Knobloch (1991: 250) has suggested that Menzel's Black Decorated C style could have begun in Middle Horizon 1B and coexisted with variant B during the late part of Middle Horizon 1.
5. Menzel provided only very general observations to differentiate Chakipampa B motifs from the later Viñaque derivatives: "These derivatives are distinguished from the Chakipampa B forms primarily in having

more carelessly executed designs with larger modular widths and thicker outlines" (1964: 40).

6. These remains were not analyzed, and are in storage in the facilities of the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga in Ayacucho.
7. *Chullpas* have been reported at Hornochayoq and Piruruyoc, both close to the site of Huari (Pérez 2001: 258-261), but their argued Middle Horizon chronology still remains tentative.

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