Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Post-Medieval Archaeology

ISSN: 0079-4236 (Print) 1745-8137 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/ypma20

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To cite this article: Frank M. Meddens, Kevin Lane, Cirilo Vivanco Pomacanchari & Dannal Aramburu Venegas (27 May 2025): Contested sacred ground and mistaken idioms: pre-*reducción* and early *reducción* churches in South-central colonial Peru (AD 1536–1615), Post-Medieval Archaeology, DOI: 10.1080/00794236.2025.2507623

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00794236.2025.2507623

Published online: 27 May 2025.

POST-MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY
https://doi.org/10.1080/00794236.2025.2507623

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Contested sacred ground and mistaken idioms: pre-*reducción* and early *reducción* churches in South-central colonial Peru (AD 1536–1615)

Frank M. Meddens[a], Kevin Lane[b], Cirilo Vivanco Pomacanchari[c] and Dannal Aramburu Venegas[d]

[a]Visiting Research Fellow, School of Archaeology, University of Reading, Reading, UK; [b]Instituto de las Culturas (IDECU), Universidad de Buenos Aires - CONICET, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Bartolomé Mitre, CABA, Argentina; [c]Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga, Ayacucho, Peru; [d]Independent Researcher, GIS specialist, Junín, Peru

ABSTRACT

The cross followed the sword in the Spanish colonisation of the Americas. This Christian evangelisation went hand in hand with the conquistador's subjugation of the Central Andeans. An evangelisation whose material correlates revolved around church architecture. In the colonial tumult of the first 80 years in the Andes, Christianity adapted swiftly to changing social and populational circumstances, and church buildings reflected this shift. We trace how church architecture, in the Andean highlands, changed and with it the deeper connotations of worship. A three to four phased evolution of churches, from open chapels, embedded churches, reducción churches and a final phase of add-ons such as belltowers, reflected how Andean society shifted from an animistic religion of space with churches linked to an Indigenous sacred landscape, to a Spanish Catholic religion of place focussed on the church building and internalised liturgical rituals. These changes mirrored deeper social transformations, as a fast-decreasing Indigenous population was concentrated in model colonial villages and towns (reducciones). These aimed at rooting out Prehispanic worship, and with it generate a more complete evangelisation of the local population. This severing of locals from their Prehispanic beliefs was a policy pushed by colonial and church authorities to control and convert.

KEYWORDS

Central Andean highlands; church architecture; (pre-) reducción; early colonial period

Introduction

The earliest colonial churches of the then new Viceroyalty of Peru remain understudied. The present article largely focusses on several rural examples of these from within present-day Peru. Here we define the characteristics of these pre-*reducción*[1] churches and chapels to understand their placement within an essentially, though changing, Prehispanic landscape and the principal differences between these churches

CONTACT Frank M. Meddens F.Meddens@Reading.ac.uk

Number	Site name	Number	Site name
1	Piura La Vieja	10	Iglesiachayoc, Chicha
2	Magdalena de Cao	11	Portada del Sol
3	San Pedro de Mórrope	12	Santa Isabel, Sondondo
4	San Cristobal de Pampachiri	13	Iglesiaijo, Viejo Sangayaico
5	San Juan de Huaytará	14	Molle Quiro / Jasapata
6	church of San Cristóbal de Cabana	15	La Quinta building at Pukara in Puno
7	Church of San Cristobal de Ayacucho	16	Torota Alta
8	Chiqna Jota	17	Colca Valley - Coporaque
9	Iglesiachayoc, Ayapampa		

Figure 1. Map showing the sites and areas referenced in the text.

and their immediate *reducción* successors. This paper focusses on churches in the Chicha Soras and neighbouring Sondondo valleys and includes the early colonial church of Viejo Sangayaico in the Upper Ica Basin (Figure 1). We do not review the

churches and cathedrals in the essentially Spanish dominated urban settlements, focussing rather on intrusive constructions in otherwise Indigenous settlements.

This period covers a time when the Spanish missionary church was seeking to inset itself into a mostly Indigenous Andean settlement and landscape setting, when the settlement of European and creole individuals in the rural Indigenous communities was limited to priests and members of Christian religious groups such as, Mercedarians, Franciscans, Dominicans, etc. The residence of other Spaniards in such native villages was proscribed in a series of early colonial ordnances (1563, 1578, 1581, 1589, 1600 and 1680), which forbade Europeans from settling in these Indigenous villages, allowing them to only spend a single day with a maximum of a single overnight stay if a personal visit was required (Gisbert and de Mesa 1985, 163–70). This early period saw widespread demographic upheaval as a result of the Spaniards warring amongst themselves over the nature and form of the colonial administration and extractive rights of the Spanish conquerors (Cieza de Leon 1998). Equally, the church repeatedly revisited its views on instruction of the Indigenous congregations insisting on the populations' recidivism and idolatry. Much of this mindset originated in the church's own changing interpretation of dogma and its views of how a native Christian flock should manifest itself, over the period in which the colony and church became established and beyond (Estenssoro 2001).

Spanish religious orders dominated the initial evangelization efforts in the Andes which lasted from the 1530s through to the 1570s. The availability of clerics to preach and take responsibility for rural parishes was limited from the very beginning (Mills 1997, 19). Until the Second (1567–1568) and particularly the Third Council of Lima (1582–1583) the form and manner of conversion practices was largely left to the individual priests involved. The Third Council of Lima resulted in detailed instructions as to the language requirements for parish priests, details of forms of religious instruction, types of permitted baptism, confession, sacraments for the dying and formulae of official preaching.

The second major stage of evangelization in the Andes, starting in the 1570s, was marked mainly by the policies of Viceroy Toledo (1515–1582), who regulated the installation of local populations in settlement reductions (*reducciones*) – mostly as a consequence of a collapsing Indigenous population – with a church in the charge of a doctrine priest, at this time usually formed by secular clergy.[2] From this point onward, the previously dominant religious orders gradually lost their influence (Lequernaqué and Pável 2008, 17–18). Secular priests therefore become a significant presence in the native parishes with the establishment of Spanish style *reducción* settlements.

These two major periods of evangelization in the Andes produced different architectural responses as Spanish Christianity first accommodated and then imposed itself on the local physical and sacred landscape. In this regard, when and where churches were founded in this early phase of Spanish Christianisation of the Andes was one of negotiated accommodation, at a time when the Indigenous population were relatively receptive to the message of a 'new god' (Wernke 2013). Indeed, it was customary for the Andean population to incorporate the deities of conquering nations into their pantheon in a process known as *mañay* (meaning 'compromise'), therefore the introduction of a conquering Spanish god into the Andean pantheon during early evangelization was characterized by experimental and flexible pastoral practices emphasising

liturgical participation of the congregation through non-verbal means, such as music and processions (Estenssoro 2003), while doctrinal instruction appears to have been a minor element of the Christianisation process until after the reforms of the Second and Third Lima Councils in the latter part of the Sixteenth Century. The responses of the Indigenous congregations over the timespan of the Spanish control over its colony can be characterised in terms of syncretism, resistance, reinterpretation, and acceptance of the Catholic doctrine (Martínez Ferrer 2009). Indeed, across the Andes these varied reactions can all be seen to be in play often within the same communities as can for example be observed in the burial assemblage of the Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) church and the sculpted façade of the Pampachiri church detailed below. Similarly, early church construction was fundamentally unstructured and ambivalent, incorporating or accommodating itself somewhat to local forms of pre-Christian worship, especially a closer connection to an animated landscape.

Elsewhere, Lane (Lane 2020) has described the difference between Andean and Spanish worship as respectively, a *religion of space* and a *religion of place*. Without being mutually exclusive in such cases, a *religion of space* links a particular site to an evocation of the wider animated landscape, while a *religion of place* centres worship within the confines of a particular structure mostly divorced from landscape. The development of Christian church architecture during the early Spanish colony (1532–1615) traces this shift from a *religion of space* to one of *place*, as a canon of Andean polyanimistic worship increasingly constrained within the singular bounds of church walls. In this respect, we have identified three types of churches during this period, *open chapels*, *embedded churches* and *reducción churches* and describe their forms, location and significance within their historical and archaeological context.

In this regard, *open chapels* describe small Christian structures which are open air, incorporating a congregation which is equally situated in an open area facing the chapel. We believe these to be the earliest Christian structures in the highland Andes. *Embedded churches* are structures which are situated within existing Indigenous settlements, settlements which were founded during the Prehispanic period and were still occupied by local populations. We contend that these structures were constructed coevally or immediately after the *open chapels* and reflect a later stage of early evangelisation when the various religious orders had carved geographical areas of the Andes to spread the Christian faith. Finally, the *reducción churches* were church constructions within wholly new model settlements created by the Spaniards post-Toledan reforms in the 1570s. These buildings, particularly in some of the earliest examples, are demonstrated to continue to include Indigenous forms of expression of their technological skills and socialised geographies. The location, chronology and building of these various churches was obviously cognisant on the specific social and evangelising conditions existent in the different locales throughout the Andean highlands.

Early colonial (AD 1532–1615) historical context regarding churches

On the 15th of April, 1539 Diego Maldonado received the Chankas *encomienda*[3] from Francisco Pizzaro (Julien 2002). This estate covered a large part of what is now the department of Apurimac. The areas occupied by the Rucanas and Soras (largely

in what is now the department of Ayacucho) were granted to Juan Alonzo Badajoz and Melchor Palomino respectively (Quichua Chaico 2015, 103). By 1561, the Chocorvos of the Upper Ica Basin came under the control of Crisóstomo de Hontiberos (or Hontiveros), while the Chocorvos of Huaytara passed under Francisco de Cárdenas (Huertas Vallejos 1998, 16).

It was the *encomenderos's* duty to ensure that the Indians under his aegis were provided with adequate religious instruction. The first colonial structures built therefore tended to be churches constructed with local labour under the conventional tribute system managed by Spaniards known as the *mita*. In practice, the construction of these churches was predominantly carried out by clerics rather than the *encomenderos*. In 1549 the bishop of Cuzco, Juan Solano, complained that the *encomenderos*, the former *conquistadors*, at this time did not take their religious duties concerning the construction of churches seriously enough as there were at the time only five churches in his whole bishopric (Fraser 1990, 82–86). The bishopric at this time included the present departments of Cuzco, Ayacucho and Arequipa, encompassing the area under detailed consideration here. These earlier churches tended to be of the *open chapel* and *embedded church* varieties, representing a more nuanced halfway point between a strict *religion of space* and *place*, such that the Christian faith and early evangelisation was practiced in close proximity to, and in areas associated with, Prehispanic worship and landscapes. In this way, Indigenous links with their sacred landscape were partially maintained.

Reducciones were an urban innovation of the latter part of the Sixteenth Century. The *Reducciones* served as a policy to control native communities, aiming to divest these from their pre-existing social order. A Spanish mission to 'civilise' the local population by converting them to Christianity, while concentrating their dwindling numbers to better manage tribute payments and render them more accessible for labour exploitation, especially in the mines.

These overarching intentions had been made explicit in the earlier Laws of Burgos or the *Laws for the Sound Treatment of the Indians* issued on December 27th, 1512 (Málaga Medina 1975, 13–14). After 1530 a series of ordinances were introduced to encourage the foundation of Spanish-type planned settlements where the natives would be encouraged to converge at (Málaga Medina 1975, 15–16). In Peru, Francisco Pizarro and Bishop Fray Vicente de Valverde issued ordinances in 1536 which included instructions for the construction of churches in 'Indian towns', with a part of the tributes that the natives paid to their *encomenderos* to be reserved to hire a clergyman or civilian to teach them and prepare them in matters related to the Catholic faith.

Nevertheless, at the time these directives had limited lasting effect. In 1549, several religious orders advised the King that the local population should be grouped into larger Spanish style settlements, eschewing the pervading Prehispanic pattern of highly dispersed settlements. Especially given that this dispersed settlement pattern made it difficult to instruct and evangelize them. Accordingly, King Charles V commanded that every Indigenous settlement should have a town council, a corral for cattle, a market, a prison and a plaza (Málaga Medina 1975, 37–39).

Though further attempts prior to the 1570s were made to implement these policies, the effective concentration of Andean peoples in Spanish-style model *reducción* settlements did not occur until its imposition by Viceroy Francisco de Toledo. Between

1570 to 1575 Toledo dispatched a number of inspectors to examine the regions and determine what was necessary to effect these *reducciones*. In the Huamanga district, inspector Damian de la Bandera, organised the concentration of the population in designated and ordered villages, each with a church and council house facing the plaza and further laid out as previously defined and specified in the various crown ordnances by Charles V (1516–1556) and Philip II (1556–1598). Furthermore, each village was to have a designated priest to instruct the locals in the Christian faith.[4] Even so, this was not always possible, due to a lack of priests in the *Audiencia*[5] de Lima and elsewhere in the colony.

According to Damián de la Bandera in Huamanga, following the *visita* by the Licenciado Pedro de la Gasca in 1549 there was a concerted effort to enact a policy of *reducciones*. This meant that by 1557 the population had been concentrated into 26 *repartimientos* which covered an original 676 villages. The populations of these villages were then reduced into 252 villages. Damián de la Bandera also notes that in half of these villages' crosses had been erected and that commonly – where these were present – the churches were centrally placed in a plaza or alongside one of the sides of the plaza. The fact that he also states that most of the domestic dwellings were round-shaped (Yaranga Valderrama 1995, 247), confirming that these *reducción* villages were largely of native origin, based within preexisting Indigenous settlements, rather than these being newly established Spanish foundations, therefore varying significantly from the later Toledan reform model villages. Lope García de Castro in charge from 1564 as Governor and Captain-General of the Viceroyalty of Peru, in practice was the first to initiate extensive resettlement along more Spanish lines, but he was removed and replaced by Toledo in 1569 (Málaga Medina 1975, 28). Therefore, although it was the earlier *repartimientos* which effectively resulted in the first concerted assault on native Andean community structures by creating divisions were there previously had been none and by uniting disparate groups which had hitherto been separate, it was the *reducciones* which ultimately reorganised Andean societies and cemented them into their initial colonial form (Yaranga Valderrama 1995).

Churches in the south-central Andes

Below we now delve into the various churches found in the Chicha Soras, Sondondo areas and the Upper Ica Drainage which have been the focus of our respective studies.

Open chapel and embedded church

According to Gisbert and de Mesa (1985) the architectural form which developed initially during the early evangelization of the Andes was that of the *open chapel* form. This was designed in part to accommodate outdoor catechism, as opposed to large congregations inside church buildings. As mentioned previously, this was a means towards integrating a more Indigenous concept of religious practice and sacrality through a closer association between *place*, the open chapel, and *space*, the Indigenous animated landscape. Nevertheless, Wernke has pointed out that in the Colca Valley at least a type of even more rustic chapels or shrines preceded this *open chapel* form (Wernke 2016, 152), similar to the pre-*reducción* churches described below.

Preaching in the open air from an atrium, *posas* and open-sided chapels was a characteristic of the colonial Spanish religious tradition. This was at variance with what could be found in contemporary Spain and was a new form of Catholic worship developed to engage in and accommodate a more 'Andean' fashion following Prehispanic antecedents. Open air worship of this type offered the priest a protected covered location to address his flock, gathered in front of the church out in the open (Fraser 1990, 111–12), while at the same time helping to connect the same congregation with their landscape. As mentioned previously, this open type of worship best integrated the intersection between a *religion of space* and *place*.

Nevertheless, few surviving examples of this type of church have been positively identified in the Andes. During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century some colonial clergy were known to deploy hastily constructed 'chapels' and 'oratories', situated near the places where the natives worked and cultivated their fields. The rationale for this was to accommodate potential parishioners who would otherwise find it difficult to come to church. This practice is confirmed by the fact that the church hierarchy objected to the custom and swiftly moved to have it eradicated (Mills 1997, 182). This presaged later, more aggressive moves away by the colonial church to disassociate the native populations from their Prehispanic places and spaces of worship.

The pre-*reducción* churches in the Chicha Soras, Sondondo areas and the Upper Ica Drainage are mostly associated with late Prehispanic-early Spanish Colonial-Indigenous settlements. These late Prehispanic settlements are defined by their dispersed nature, with multiple or agglutinated houses located within, and beyond, the core settlement's boundaries. For instance, in the Sondondo Valley, at the Ccecca archaeological site the core settlement comprises widely dispersed circular structures in a rough agglomeration. Similarly, the Iglesiachayoc (Ayapampa) chapel is situated within an agricultural terraced landscape with occasional, scattered habitational units in the immediate environs (Figures 1 and 2).

Nevertheless, what is notable for the Upper Ica Drainage, Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys is that the pre-*reducción* chapels are found near, but not within, the confines of late prehistoric or protohistoric agglutinated native settlements. The one exception to this being the anomalous church at Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) (Figure 3). Not only is this chapel sited within an Indigenous settlement with a Prehispanic Late Horizon foundation date, but its size is also significantly larger than that of the other pre-*reducción* churches known for the Colca Valley, the Chicha Soras Valley, the Sondondo Valley and the Upper Ica Basin. It is noticeably placed centrally within an elite sector of this settlement. However, we also know that its construction was a response by the Spanish clergy to the locally active *Taqui Onqoy* movement[6] in the 1560s (Albornoz 1967; Varón Gabai 1990) and that this in some way anticipated the soon-to-emerge Toledean reforms of the following decade and later.

Iglesiachayoc church of Ayapampa (Figures 1 and 2)

The toponym for a rectangular structure located c. 1.2 km southeast of the present-day village of Ayapampa in the Chicha Soras Valley is *Iglesiachayoc* (or place of the church). Similarly, in the Upper Ica Basin at the site of Viejo Sangayaico (Figures 1, 4, and 5)

Figure 2. The Iglesiachayoc church at ayapampa (Chicha Soras valley).

Figure 3. The Iglesiachayoc church at Chicha (Chicha Soras valley); note the circular window at the top of its west gable.

the church is known locally as Iglesiaijo, a derivative of the same name. The building at Iglesiachayoc, Ayapampa (18 L 658920 m E/8427644 m S, 3490 m asl.), measures c. 23.8 × 6.7 m along the exterior with a possible trapezoidal doorway along its southeast wall and a straight-sided doorway along the northwest wall as well as a principal entrance in its south-west facing facade.

It is likely that the western wall contained the principal entrance to the church. The north wall has two small trapezoidal windows and its south wall a single centrally placed trapezoidal window. These range from 0.36 to 0.22 m at the base and are

Figure 4. The site of the Iglesiaijo church at Viejo Sangayaico.

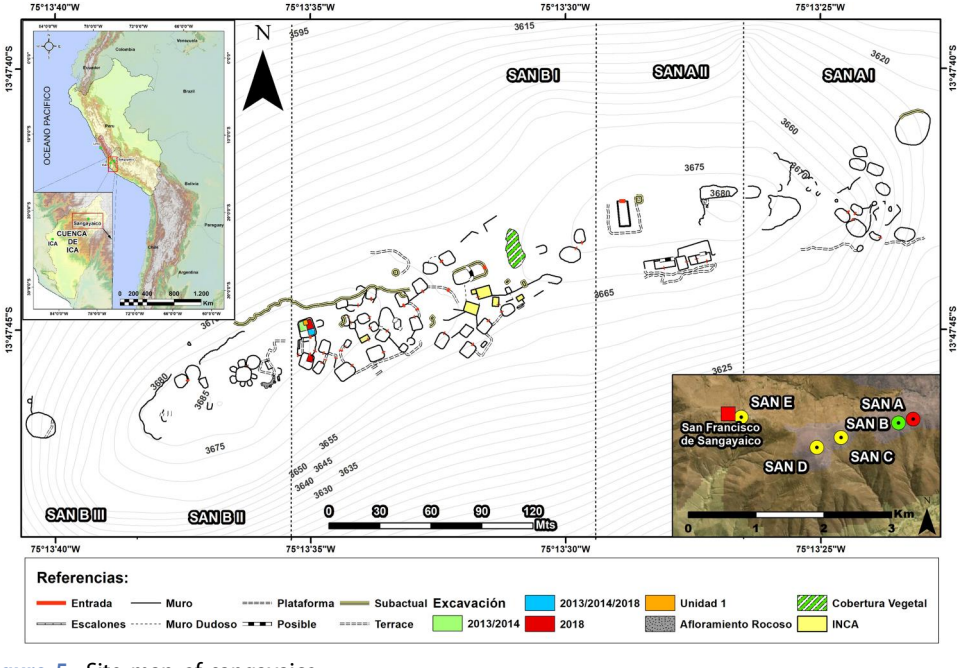

Figure 5. Site map of sangayaico.

c. 0.4 m high. The construction is of fieldstone set in clay mortar. The longitudinal axis of the building is on an east north-east by west-southwest orientation. The church is embedded in an area containing *c.* 15 small circular, as well as square to rectangular Indigenous settlement structures (Figure 5). The church's roof was likely

gabled. The lack of roof tile fragments in the surface material discernible across this site confirms that the church and other structures in its vicinity were roofed with *ichu* (*Stipa ichu*) or reed thatch laid on a timber roof frame. The altar of this church would have been at its eastern end, the interior of the structure is currently under cultivation.

Iglesiachayoc church of Chicha (Figures 1 and 3)

The church at Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) (18 L 656773.31 m/E 8427934.30 m S 3420 m asl.) measures 33 × 8 m and is on a near east-west orientation, veering to the West–South–West to East–Northeast. It has an entrance at the west end of its long north-facing wall and possibly a second doorway at the east end of this wall, with the north wall also having remnants of three, possibly rectangular, windows. The east and west façades have 7.7 m tall gabled ends with circular windows near the top. In each of the interior corners, there are two horizontal timber braces inserted. The walls were covered in clay plaster, with the interior western wall still containing remnants of red, cream, and black pigments (Meddens 1985; Norman 2019, 178, 276–80, 387, 444). The absence of rooftile indicates a possible thatch-covered roofing structure.

At the east end, excavations revealed three steps leading up to where the altar would have been (Norman 2019, 276–280). Near the northwest entrance, Norman recovered stone fragments of pedestals and fragments of a holy water or baptismal font (Norman 2019, 178, 279–80). This church was constructed following the local intervention of Cristóbal de Albornoz during an extirpation campaign conducted against the *Taqui Onqoy* millennialist movement in the region (Varón Gabai 1990). In the account of his activities in Chicha, Cristóbal de Albornoz states that a number of the movement's followers were punished, their penance being the church's construction. His *visita* to the Huamanga region took place between 1569 and 1571 which would date the church to this period or slightly later. This coincides with the radiocarbon results obtained for this church at Chicha (Norman 2019). This date also tallies with the very end of the pre-*reducción* period. The Chicha *Iglesiachayoc* church was built within the boundaries of an Indigenous settlement.

Portada del Sol church of Ccecca (Figures 1 and 6)

The *Portada del Sol* church or open chapel, is situated south-southeast of Ccecca (18 L 614312.00 m E/8421267.00 m S, at 3300 m asl.) in the Sondondo valley. The church is on a near east-west orientation (290–110°) and is open on its western side. It measures c. 5.10 m × 6.00 m, and the height of the surviving walls are in excess of 4 m. These are constructed of fieldstone set in clay mortar with remnants of a loam/clay plaster adhering to exterior and interior walls. The wall width is c. 0.8 m. There is an indication of a possible window at the top of the wall on the south side. A further small c. 0.10 m × 0.10 m hole is found in the east wall, a little above ground level in south-east corner. A large looting pit is present on the inside on the eastern side of the building. An *ichu* or reed covered roofing structure is indicated.

Figure 6. The portada del sol church or open chapel, situated South-southeast of ccecca in the sondondo area.

Figure 7. The Santa Isabel church near ccecca in the sondondo area; note the bench/platform at its base and the window in its North facing façade.

Santa Isabel Church of Ccecca (Figures 1 and 7)

There is a rectangular structure known as locally as the Santa Isabel Church (18 L 613472.48 m E/8420999.72 m S at *c.* 3195 m asl.) was constructed along the top of a low hill on a near east-west orientation. This structure measures *c.* 4.8 m × 12 m. A

small near trapezoidal window is found high up in its long north wall, and it has a square niche on the south side of its east wall. Its main entrance was located on its narrow west facing wall. A low bench is present on its exterior, at the base of its north, east and south walls. The building is likely to have been gabled and a lack of ceramic rooftiles in the immediate vicinity likely indicates that the roofing would have been composed of ichu or reed thatch on a timber frame.

A building known as Arco Iris (Ccuichi or rainbow) (Figure 1) is located approximately 100 m east of the church. The Arco Iris or Ccuichi comprises a small *huaca*[7] known locally as the Rainbow, the name likely derived from the natural representation of rainbow-like lines on the rock surface. This stone is situated inside a small structure, measuring 1.60 m × 2 m and 1.80 m high. It has a small access point measuring 0. 60 m × 0.4 m along its north wall. The walls are double-faced fieldstone set in mud/clay mortar. The entrance lintel is a single rectangular block of dressed sandstone. This natural rock represents a local *huaca* associated with rainbow, *amaru* or sky-serpent related connotations, possibly linked to water or lightning worship. The close association of Catholic churches with sacred Prehispanic features is common to early colonial churches, as early evangelization sought to impose itself, and often physically supplant existing places of worship. A similar case is seen at the site of Kipia in the Ancash region, where an early Spanish chapel consecrated to Santiago is built a few metres distance from an important local *Huanca* (Lane 2020).

Iglesiaijo church at Viejo Sangayaico (Figures 1, 4, and 7)

The archaeological site of Viejo Sangayaico in the Upper Ica Basin is a Late Intermediate Period through to early Spanish colonial settlement comprising five distinct sectors (Huaman Oros and Lane 2014). Sectors A to D are a series of interlocking hillocks across the Ampurka ridgeline with evidence for LIP (Sectors B, C and D), Inca (Sector B) and Spanish colonial (Sector A) occupations. Sector E is actually on the site of the modern town of San Francisco de Sangayaico (Figures 5 and 8), where public and private works periodically uncover Prehispanic remains, for instance fragments of an Inca *aribalo* in the old school complex and possibly Huarpa Early Intermediate Period (AD 100–600) ceramics during foundational trenching near the municipality. There are two churches within the site, the old pre-*reducción* Iglesiaijo church in Sector A and the homonymous San Francisco de Sangayaico *reducción* church in Sector E (Figures 5 and 8).

The Iglesiaijo Church in Viejo Sangayaico is located at 3,655 m asl (18 L 0475070 E/8474898 S.) (Figures 4 and 5). Although closely associated to the Inca-LIP Sector B it is still set within, yet aside from the main Chocorvos settlement (Figure 5), on the site's easternmost hillock where it overlooks the rest of the site from this vantage point. The church itself is a simple affair comprising a close-fitting, rectangular, stone perimeter wall. The structure is roughly 5 m × 20 m and is orientated on a North-South orientation. Currently the church is used as a corral for goats and sheep.

Potentially, the most significant aspect of the church is its orientation to the nearby mountaintop Cerro Huinchocruz, the location of the local *apu* or titular deity, likely *Sasaylla apo* (Duviols 1967, 29). In a recent article (Lane 2023), the connection

Figure 8. Modern town and sixteenth Century *reduccíon* of San Francisco de Sangayaico (Sector E). Note colonial church and belltower on raised hill in background.

was made between an artificially constructed sounding platform at Viejo Sangayaico and this possible thunder and lightning deity ensconced at Huinchocruz. Huinchocruz itself is the location of a Prehispanic platform superimposed by a Christian calvary cross monument which until recently was a central feature of the *Fiesta de las Cruces* held yearly on or around the 3rd of May (Lane, Coll, and Huaman 2019).

In this regard, the Iglesiaijo Church was placed to link directly with the still existing Prehispanic cosmological arrangement, albeit through substitution to a more Christian ethos, thereby evidencing the slow Sixteenth Century Spanish evangelizing mission from an Andean *religion of space* toward a more Spanish *religion of place*. Associated with the church and directly to the Southeast are a series of 4–6 small rectangular structures seemingly set out in an 'L'-shaped pattern. It might be that these structures are ecclesiastical cells for the people serving the church at this location. Excavations within these structures yielded a small amount of early Spanish colonial material similar to that uncovered in the nearby Sector B (Rodriguez Morales et al. 2020). Meanwhile a C14 date from the surface of the ancillary church building excavation has yielded a date spread from AD 1439–1616,[8] considering that this is a wholly Spanish colonial building, it implies that the date of construction and use must have been between AD 1535 and 1616. Importantly, we know that the San Francisco de Sangayaico *reducción* church was already in place by 1637 (Pariona Campos 2012) making an early Seventeenth Century abandonment of the Iglesiaijo Church a distinct possibility.

Reducción churches

From 1570 to 1575 Toledo dispatched inspectors to survey the different regions, and to organise the population in designated and ordered villages. The nineteen *reducción* churches in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo research areas range in size from approximately 255 to 590 m^2 with a median of 363 m^2 and a standard deviation (SD) of 104.5. These structures would be large enough to accommodate congregations of between 330 for the smallest churches such as San Cristóbal de Sondondo to *c.* 760 for the largest at Aucará. In contrast, comparing these with the sizes of the eight pre-*reducción* churches in these areas, including those in the Colca Valley as well as *Iglesiaijo* at the site of Viejo Sangayaico in the Upper Inca, but excluding the *Taqui Onqoy* related church at Iglesiachayoc in Chicha, these range from 31 to 125 m^2, with a median 80 of and SD of 31. This size range would suffice to accommodate congregations of between approximately 26 to a maximum of 160 celebrants inside these buildings. This beggars the question of why churches become bigger in a context of a diminishing local population and probably points to the higher populational density in these reduced villages.

The Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) church which measures *c.* 264 m^2 is excluded as its size is anomalous, likely the result of its construction date being very late within the relevant period, likely post-1569, anticipating some of the *reducción* concepts which were adopted a few years later. At the lower end of this scale, the open-sided *Portada del Sol* Chapel near Ccecca at 31 m^2 most clearly has a focus on an assembly of worshipers situated outside the open chapel on the large level terrace to the west. Taking this chapel out of the equation, the pre-*reducción* churches in the Colca valley are very similar in size to those in the Chicha Soras, Sondondo and Upper Ica Drainage areas, with the former ranging from 46 to 125 m^2, and the latter from 47 to 99 m^2.

The orientation of these pre-*reducción* church structures in the Sondondo, Chicha Soras, and Colca examples are east west or near east west, while the Iglesiaijo Church at Viejo Sangayaico is on a slight northeast by southwest alignment, pointing towards a nearby important mountain top, likely a local *apu* or mountain deity (*sensu* Lane 2020). Churches in the Arica and Parinacota region dated between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth century appear not to have particularly favoured east for the location of the altar over other possible orientations. Similar to the case of Viejo Sangayaico, it appears that alignments in this region linked the church to Indigenous sacred landscape features such as mountain and volcano summits (Gangui, Guillén, and Pereira 2017).

For the nineteen *reducción* period churches in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys considered here, orientations cluster between 285° and 90° from NNW by SSE to EW. These alignments consistently coincide with the overall configuration of the villages grid plan layout, rather than any local sacred feature. This shows that by this stage of the Spanish colony, the official policy was to align these churches away from local sacred landscape, obeying the maxims of an imposed colonial urban plan.

Among the early baroque *reducción* churches in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo areas we highlight four churches in Pampachiri, Soras, Cabana and Aucará which for various reasons merit a more detailed description. These stand out from among the

others in having design or construction details which raise them qualitatively significantly above the other churches in the region.

San Cristobal de Pampachiri Church (Figures 1 and 9)

The church of San Cristobal de Pampachiri was likely in existence prior to 1615 as Guaman Poma de Ayala references the resident priest here – Juan Bautista de Albadan – who he states violently abused several [mural] painters (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1993, 553 [696]) who at the time were likely engaged in the embellishing of the

Figure 9. North Northwest facing façade with its elaborately carved imagery, of the early seventeenth century *reduccíon* church at pampachiri (Chicha Soras valley). The figure of the virgin Mary in the entablature is a recent addition.

Pampachiri church (Hyland 2016). Guaman Poma was probably first active in the area during 1569–70. This was the period when he accompanied Cristóbal de Albornoz in his extirpation and anti-*Taqui Onqoy* campaign. Guaman Poma revisited the region between 1608 and 1615, while between 1604 and 1606 he was working with Martin de Murua in Aimareas (Adorno 2008, 257, 260). Juan Bautista de Albadán, an unsavoury resident secular priest was active in Pampachiri for ten years from 1601 until he passed away there in 1611 (Hyland 2016, 1). Given this data a construction date for the church between 1604 and 1611 seems possible.

The long axis of the church of San Cristobal de Pampachiri is on a northwest by southeast orientation and measures approximately 49 × 10 m. At is south-eastern end the two long side walls narrow to a width of 9 m. This may have been an attempt to construct a polygonal apsidal end to delimit the altar end of the church. This configuration bears similarity to examples of early baroque churches in the Collao area where early examples, include the churches at Azangaro, Taraco, Saman and Chupa all of which are *reducción* churches which have polygonal apsidal ends (Gutiérrez et al. 1978, 172–74, 182–83, 185–86, 190–91). At this southeast end the altar is located and its goldleaf encrusted wooden carved altar piece is found. A square bell-tower projects out from its northeast corner, while its elaborate entrance façade is embellished with important early colonial stone carved sculpture (Figure 9). It has several side chapels and various large windows in its opposing long walls. Construction is largely in adobe set on raised, roughly shaped stone foundations. Its orientation is aligned to that of the overall organised grid plan of the village.

The stone carved church façade outlining the arched doorway comprises, from top to bottom, a cross on top of a dais located above an entablature. On either side of this ensemble are eroded blocks on wide slab bases, which may originally have featured carved images of the sun and the moon (Barnes 1986); each in turn are on top of small pillars on the heads of two seated figures sitting on low stools. This whole group is set on a stone ledge atop the doorway arch. Either side of the doorway are columns, again from top to bottom mounted with tapered finials on flat bases, each on top of a feline head placed surmounting naked female figures set on plinths, mounted on flat slabs, each in turn resting on crown-shaped elements on the heads of a further two female figures with bared breasts, both wearing draped skirts. Each of these figures, rest on what appears to be a feline in repose. These in turn are set on stone bases forming part of the steps down to the threshold leading into the church (Figure 9).

The interpretation by Barnes (Barnes 1986) of the church façade carvings as reflecting embedded Andean concepts depicted in de Santa Cruz Pachacuti Yamqui Salcamaygua (2019, 276) illustration representing the Coricancha altar remains somewhat tenuous. Likely, it was rather a combination of European and Andean motifs mixed with the preferences of the local parish priest, possibly Juan Bautista de Albadan himself (Hyland 2016).

From among the varied depictions the presence of four caryatids and felines as well as the two seated figures on either side of the entrance of the church of San Cristobal de Pampachiri for an early Seventeenth Century Indigenous community likely reflected its dual moiety division, of the Anta and Mayu *ayllus*[9] reported for

Pampachiri at this time (Espinoza Soriano 2019, II, 1148) as well as the standard *Collana*, *Cayao* and *Payan* social and *suyu* ranking divisions[10] present in Inca and other highland polities (Zuidema 2007). The four caryatids and felines similarly could reflect a further quadripartite social partition with the additional seated anthropomorphic figures reflecting the tripartite dimension. Such classifications were common at the time as for example reflected in the *ceque* system[11] of Cuzco (Bauer 1998; Zuidema 1964).

Furthermore, the imagery of sirens on the façade could be associated with the Mayu *ayllu* (of the river) while the felines (likely pumas an animal known to have been particularly linked to the Chanka (González Carré 2004), could be identifying the Anta (copper/cloud) or puna *ayllu. Sirenas* (a present day hispanised term) likely have Prehispanic antecedents related to Thunupa as well as manifesting European influences. In both contexts these beings are associated with water, residing in springs and waterfalls, and were also responsible for creation of music (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980, 289, I; Stobart 2006, 107–10). Indeed, a modern myth has such beings as living in a waterfall just northwest of the village of Pampachiri, where they are said to continue to tempt local youths (Pers. comm. Monica Sotelo 2001). Felines are similarly linked to water, and they are seen as guardians of its sources (Gálvez 2020; Kauffmann Doig 2011; Villanueva 2022). Pumas are prominently linked to the Chankas as a sacred totemic being in their mythology (González Carré 2004). The repeated presence of the puma in the Pampachiri church façade explicitly confirms an element of Indigenous artistic inspiration rooted in earlier Prehispanic antecedents in the overall design of the entrance to this church (Gisbert and de Mesa 1985, 282).

The two seated figures at the top of the ensemble placed on either side of the central entablature appear to be seated on a dais or low stool (Figure 9), which would elevate these characters as representing individuals with power. A low stool (*tiana* or *dúo*) in the Andes was reserved for elite persona particularly *kurakas*, the Inca and his delegated authorities (Ramírez 2005, 135–36, 169, 174–79). The fact that the Pampachiri *kuraka* were *orejones*,[12] signifying they were of Inca origin or Inca affiliation (Hyland 2016, 119) may be of relevance here. Indeed, the seated form of these two individuals with their arms raised is similar to a form replicated in seated ancestral mummies or *mallqui*. These two sculpted images therefore likely represent the paired lineage heads of the moieties of Pampachiri, situated above the *ayllus* they were the heads of. Once seated, rulers were able to create order out of chaos and thereby lead (Ramírez 2005, 176). The triangles forming the chests of these sculpted individuals may represent an *unku* (or tunic) or may emphasize the seated aspect of the figures reflecting the seated mountain elements of the surrounding landscape. In Early Intermediate Period iconography from Ancash this symbol reflected ancestral status (pers. Comm. George Lau 2024). The mountain body metaphor is a common symbolic reference in Andean cosmology such as with the Qollahuaya in Kaata, in Bolivia (Bastien 1978). Triangles in such contexts are a recurring element common to Inca iconography.

The overall scheme therefore can be seen as expressing the pre-eminence of the Catholic Church as represented by the cross on its dais in the upper register. Below this the lineage heads,[13] are depicted as founders of the local *ayllus* superimposed as

controlling and owning the local water sources (Figure 9). This scheme fits into the traditional Andean concept of ancestor derived rights to land and water articulated in the basic Andean community social unit of the ayllu, its ritual activities and operation within the local landscape (Sherbondy 1982, 1987, 1992, 59).

The church of San Bartolomé de Hatun Soras (Figures 1 and 9)

The church at Soras likely has a construction date for its first building phase from the mid-1570s. As the anti-idolatry cleric Cristóbal de Albornoz states, the inhabitants of Soras were punished for their participation in *Taqui Onqoy* activities by charging them with the erection of the church, (Varón Gabai 1990, 279) which would categorise it as a late pre-*reduccion* construction. Its present-day version measures roughly 45×13.5 m and its long axis is on an east to west orientation. The church's bell tower is situated projecting off its northwest corner, abutting the building along this side, perhaps a later construction. In this regard, the Soras church incorporates multiple changes and remodulations over the centuries. Significantly, elements of what may have been among the earlier parts of the structure include particular details reminiscent of fine Inca coursed and polygonal ashlar masonry style walling (Figure 10) (Gasparini and Margolies 1977; Protzen 1993; Rowe 1946), suggesting the use of Inca specialists. As such, the north-facing lateral arched entrance of the church is flanked by such masonry.

Figure 10. The entrance into the North facing façade of the church of san bartolomé de hatun Soras in Soras (Chicha Soras valley), framed by neo-Inca style ashlar masonry.

This entrance is capped by a roughly constructed rounded arch, with recessed inset walling set at right angles which continues until it abuts a lateral stone and white plastered wall which includes the lintelled doorway entrance. This construction included a small porch fronting the entry doors (Figure 10). The recessed inset walls at shoulder height have square sunken sockets which continue for a significant depth into the lateral walls. The function of these wall sockets or bar holds is unclear, perhaps they served to place a timber beam to restrict entry to the church proper. Such a beam could be moved laterally into one of the deeply recessed sockets to facilitate entry. Both recessed inset walls have a low abutting seat of roughly shaped stonework covered in mud plaster.

The recessed porch element of the entrance construction comprises a form of design not uncommon in contemporary European church architecture. Were it to be Inca, it would be singularly unique within its architectural canons, therefore we interpret this as a Spanish colonial church that either re-utilises Inca stonework or masons. Similarly, the square sunken sockets inset in the porch walls are not found in Inka architecture. We therefore consider this entrance to also be part of a Spanish colonial period build.

The entrance width is greater than that observed in Inca structures, further suggesting that these are Spanish constructions utilizing Inca or Indigenous masons rather than a Spanish construction within an earlier Indigenous structure. The altar at the east end of the church includes several odd details. A central element of the *reredos*[14] was set forward from the main section and sits on a stepped adobe feature. In front of this adobe feature is the altar itself. The carved wooden altar piece, which would originally have been covered in gold leaf has been repainted in a rather unattractive bright pink with sections of sky blue and certain elements highlighted in white and low-quality gold paint. The surviving baroque sculpture is of moderate quality.

The Soras church has both in its lateral as well as its frontal west facing façade lintelled doorways. The lateral lintelled doorway is set back from a blunted arched feature. It is unclear from the remaining construction whether this arch is an original element of the church or a later modification. What is evident is that its construction of roughly modelled fieldstone set in mortar and covered in plaster gives an appearance of unevenness and inexpert finishing. This may indicate that the arch construction is original but executed by workers who were new to this type of architectural form, suggesting an early construction.

The use of lintelled doorways would seem to be at variance from the norm for New World colonial religious buildings (Fraser 1990, 121–23, *passim*). A single example of another lintelled doorway can be found in the early colonial church at Ccecce, which notably is situated on the Inca and later Spanish colonial roadway which runs on from the coast to Ccecce in the Sondondo Valley, linking onwards across the Altiplano to Soras in the Chicha Soras valley and beyond (RGI 239). Fraser notes that most churches without an arched doorway are characteristic of religious buildings that date to the earliest occupation of the Americas by Spaniards, with examples dating to 1541 from Santo Domingo and 1552 from Cholula in Mexico (Fraser 1990, 152–3). Although there are later examples such as the Church

of San Ignacio de Loyola in Bogota, where construction began in 1610 and finished in 1691.

The use of neo-Inca style masonry at the Soras Church would seem not just odd, it would also be unique for the Andes. Indeed, Fraser states that from a New World church perspective the use of such masonry would be inconceivable (Fraser 1990, 153). The Soras Church plainly proves that this is not the case. The Spaniards did initially use some Inca buildings as churches in Cuzco, Huaytara, and likely elsewhere, prior to the construction of purpose-built Spanish colonial churches. The use of Inca architecture in a Spanish-Christian context is therefore not completely without precedent, albeit that such use in custom-built colonial churches may be rare. Further study will show whether Soras is a unique example or one of a select few.

Aside from the ashlar masonry adorning the northern façade entrance, the Soras Church incorporates a variety of rustic fieldstone elements set in mud-mortar. All of these indicate multiple construction episodes, rebuilds and restoration events, several buttresses along the south and east walls shows that over time structural supports were needed. The ground falls away on the north (plaza) side of the church and evidently the ground was terraced here to facilitate a level construction platform for the church building. The upper sections of the church walls comprise adobe constructions finished in a white plastered mud-clay render.

The north façade wall of the church is structurally, unnecessarily wide (*c.* 3 m) and the building contains numerous redundant wall elements, such as much of its stone facing on its eastern façade, which confirms frequent rebuilds and modifications over a long period of time. It may be that this church was erected on top of an earlier Prehispanic structure. If so, this is likely to have been an Inca construction of some import, much like the construction of the San Juan Bautista Church in Vilcashuaman substituting the earlier Inca Sun-Moon temple located there. If this is indeed the case, then we have a clear example of religious substitution through destruction, burial, replacement, or even space-sharing. This is a commonly employed trope during the imposition of a new religion by a colonising power (Pérez Ordóñez 2005). Indeed, what Hayden and Walker have termed 'intersecting religioscapes' and the concept of competitively sharing the space covered by religious places under a model of *Antagonistic Tolerance* (Hayden and Walker 2013).

The church of San Cristóbal de Cabana (Figures 1 and 11)

The church at Cabana in the Sondondo Valley measures *c.* 39 × 11 m. It is on an east northeast by west southwest orientation with its altar at its west end and side chapels on the altar side on its north and south facades as well as on its south side near the main entrance. Its sacristy is on its southwest corner. It contains one of the earliest, and highest quality, baroque carved timber altar pieces of the Peruvian Andes (Figure 11). The quality of the carving recalls the work of Juan Martínez de Arrona and Martín Alonso de Mesa whose creations can be admired in the Lima Cathedral. At present, the sculptor of the superb carvings of San Pedro, San Pablo, the Virgin and San Juan which survive on the Cabana altar piece remain unidentified (San Cristóbal 1998, 145–49). It is thought to date to the last decades of the 16th or earlier seventeenth century at the latest

Figure 11. Our lady of sorrows, carving detail on the baroque altar piece at the church of san cristóbal de cabana.

(San Cristóbal 1998, 147). Clearly, either the area itself attracted attention of some of the most accomplished craftsmen available, perhaps paid for by a wealthy patron at the time or these artisans regularly transited through the region. The church at Cabana instead of a church bell tower has a bell-gable, a feature typically associated with earlier churches in the region (San Cristóbal 1998, 52–53).

The church of La Virgen Inmaculada Concepcion de Aucará (Figure 1)

The Virgen Inmaculada Concepción de Aucará Church dates to the first half of the seventeenth Century, with initial construction thought to predate 1610 (San Cristóbal 1998, 149). It is possible that it was first dedicated to the Archangel Michael. Its construction comprises an adobe superstructure on raised stone foundations, on a near north-south orientation, with its altar at it south apsidal end. The principal aisle

measures *c.* 13 m × 50 m, and its principal façade has twin stone bell towers flanking either side of the principal entrance. This follows the paired belfry model frequently seen in the churches of Huamanga, although these bell towers are more massive than those from the departmental capital. The church incorporates a high roundwood choir, where the elaborately carved and high-quality columns suggest Solomonic columns. The timber choir is also ornately painted. The church interior is decorated with nineteen, 17th and eighteenth century religious paintings. There is also metalwork and a carved baroque style pulpit, including a baroque carved and gilded altarpiece. There is a high quality early baroque sculpted figure of saint Francis of Assisi carved out of maguey a type of agave (Gonzalez Rojas, Ortega, and Maldavsky 2023, 150–51).

The paintings include a rendition of the *Virgen de la Inmaculada Concepción* and a second painting known as *El Milagro de la Virgen al Corregidor*,[15] which stand out for their pictorial and iconographic quality. The *Virgen de la Inmaculada Concepción* painting shows the Virgin Mary located in the central part of the image within a silver niche displaying a crescent shaped element. The figure is depicted wearing a red cape decorated with abundant flowers and leaves, likely local. At the top of the image are two angels holding a golden crown on the Virgin Mary's head. To the left side is the person of a *Corregidor* in bed with crutches to his side, possibly the painting's donor. This figure directs his gaze towards the virgin with his hands in a position of prayer and devotion. On the lower right side of the picture is an angel shown holding a flower garland on which there is a text which reads: 'Being paralyzed, G. Don Manuel de Aguiar y Mendosa Corregidor of this province of Lucanas, asked to be brought to the temple of Our Lady of the Concepción of Aucará and having entrusted himself to her, he healed and left the portrait in the… …. 660' (Gonzalez Rojas, Ortega, and Maldavsky 2023, 160–169).

The San Francisco de Sangayaico Church (Figures 1, 4, and 5)

The *reducción* replacement to the Iglesiaijo Church in Sector A of Viejo Sangayaico is the San Francisco de Sangayaico Church at 3,380 m ASL (18 L 0473193 E/8474800 N). The existing church was heavily restored following the 2007 earthquake using copious amounts of concrete. Nevertheless, the church reconstruction seems to faithfully follow the contours of the original structure and is orientated north to south, measuring *c.* 10 m by 36 m. The church itself is built on a high platform (*c.* 2 m) that artificially raises and flattens the low spur on which the modern town of Sangayaico itself is built, the visible platform walls to the south, west and east are built of large rough-cut stone blocks, suggesting that the construction of the platform might be Prehispanic.

The church entrance from the east is built almost like a dais, stepped up to the church proper and is where the *cabildos* (town dignitary meetings) occurred. The small plaza below the church entrance also functioned as an impromptu bullring (this has now been moved to a purpose-built structure elsewhere). The former *cabildo* and bullring has been converted into a town square with the municipality located in a new building immediately to the south of the square (Figure 8). Possible Huarpa (AD

100–600) ceramics were uncovered during the works carried out by the municipality at this location further suggesting a Prehispanic occupation of the underlying platform and area.

The bell tower of the church was built abutting the *cabildo* and church entrance wall, to the north of said entrance. The bell tower is somewhat removed from the church itself possibly denoting a later construction. This seems to be borne out by the dates of the bells which are respectively 1799 and 1819. The 1799 bell is significant for its name – María Angola – the same name as the massive bell at the Cuzco Cathedral dating to 1655 (Cornejo 2005), although other 'María Angola' bells are found in Zaña, Huarochiri and Aymaraes (MOAA 2021). It is possible that the Sangayaico bell is a later, smaller replica of the bell at Cuzco. During restoration work on the church and grounds several disarticulated bones probably from ossuaries located in the churchyard were uncovered.

Pariona Campos writes that in 1637 the viceroy, Luis Jerónimo de Cabrera, 4th Count of Chinchón, stated that in 1625 his predecessor, Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 1st Marquess of Guadalcázar, sent funds to construct churches in the area (Pariona Campos 2012). In 1637 the Chocorbos *Doctrina* of the Castrovirreyna *Corregimiento* noted that there were four churches in the area, belonging to San Juan de Huaytará, Santo Domingo, San Francisco de Sangayaico and Santiago de Chocorbos. A *Licenciado* Francisco Perez de Morales was sent by the Chocorbos *Doctrina* to inventorise the ecclesiastical ornaments that the churches had, and which were missing. Interestingly, the church at this time had no bell as Francisco Perez de Morales asks for a '*cinco quintales*' or 230 kg bell. Among the objects in the church was an 'old' Christ, maybe the original Christ statue from the older Iglesiaijo Church at Viejo Sangayaico. The Pariona Campos article also shows that the San Francisco de Sangayaico Church was already in place by 1637 and possibly 1625 (Pariona Campos 2012), this agrees well with the C14 date for Iglesiaijo Church which as a *terminus ante quem* date of 1616.

The Jasapata Hall of Aucará (Figures 1 and 12)

Finally, we have the niched hall at Molle Quiro/Jasapata (18 L 611169.64 m E/ 8422293.57 m S, 3235 m asl) an Inca-style structure (Meddens and Schreiber 2010), overlooking the Qochapampa Lake, near the village of Aucará (Sondondo Valley). This building has been identified as an early colonial period church by Gonzalez Rojas, Ortega, and Maldavsky (2023, 82–85). We disagree with this identification. The structure's architectural details include a typically Inca type arrangement of trapezoidal niches and windows, its entrance is on its east side, where one might have expected the altar. Recent excavations by workers of the Aucará town council immediately south of the building (aimed at cleaning the site) uncovered an Inca burial with a star mace (which may indicate a male warrior), fragments of a large *aribalo* and other artifacts interred under a large boulder, as well as a communal burial pit with what appeared to be an interment of three, possibly sacrificial, victims buried in an upright foetal position. The placement of such burials focussed on the structure and the large boulder beside it reinforce both an Inca date for the building as well as its importance and

Figure 12. The inca period niched hall at Molle quiro/jasapata, near aucara, in the sondondo area.

likely *huaca* status at this time. No colonial period artefacts were uncovered here or in its vicinity (Author observation: F. Meddens). It is possible that this Inca-style structure was afterwards re-used as a church during the early colonial period, but if so, then additional evidence would be required to confirm this hypothesis.

Other colonial early churches in Peru

The three early colonial pre-*reducción* churches identified in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys are all relatively small, identical in this respect to the pre-*reducción* chapels in the Colca valley and to the Viejo Sangayaico church in the Upper Ica Basin. Clearly the toponym of Iglesiachayoc associated with the building near Ayapampa in the Chicha Soras Valley and that of Iglesiaijo with the Viejo Sangayaico church in the Upper Ica Basin is strong evidence for these two structures being churches. In addition, this rectangular shape, in common with the pre-*reducción* building of Santa Isabel in the Sondondo Valley and the pre-*reducción* churches in the Colca Valley share several characteristics, including the presence of small tapering windows placed high on the walls. The walls are constructed of fieldstone set in mud mortar and apart from a single small off-centre niche on the interior of its short east wall in the Santa Isabel church, they lack interior niches. The Santa Isabel and Iglesiachayoc (Ayapampa) buildings both appear to have had entrances on their west façades, with the latter having a secondary entrance at the western end of its south wall.

The Portada del Sol structure's identification as an early colonial chapel is based on its structural characteristics not being known in a Prehispanic context, added to its east–west orientation and the fact that it is open on its western side, facing a large level open space. Though we recognise that buildings which are open on one side are found in Inca architecture the heights of these are all significantly less and they are found with features and in contexts confirming their Late Horizon date unequivocally. These traits suggest that this is probably an example of an early Latin American colonial open-sided chapel in a rural landscape setting, of which few (if any) examples are known to have survived. One instance of this type of chapel has been found at Coporaque in the Colca Valley, albeit that this one too is situated within a settlement (Wernke 2016, 152). Such chapels are thought to have once been common throughout the Andes in the Sixteenth Century. In native communities, open chapels were often standalone structures that served as rural houses of worship in the absence of a formal church. They were sometimes referred to as *guayronas*, derived from the Quechua word for wind, implying an open-air religious experience. Such chapels rapidly ceased operating once formal *reducción* type churches were constructed, and the Indigenous population was brought inside to worship indoors (Donahue-Wallace 2008, 28). The occurrence of the open-chapel variant in the Andes may have been limited to the earliest colonial church buildings and may have been quickly abandoned because of their direct link to Prehispanic religious landscapes, the Andean *religion of space* which tied fixed points to a sacred animated landscape. In a bid to disassociate native people from their sacred points of reference it was imperative to quickly move these structures into disuse.

Moving away from the open-chapel types, some of the pre-*reducción* churches have features which are unique to them individually such as the round windows high up in the façades of the late pre-*reducción* Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) church, the rectangular windows on its north facade, and the timber braces inserted into its corners. Similarly, there is the exterior bench element to the Santa Isabel building. Several groups of these structures share elements, such as the apsidal ends found on the chapels in the Colca valley. The lack of apsidal ends with the pre-*reducción* churches in the Chicha Soras, Sondondo valley and Viejo Sangayaico churches is a characteristic which continues in the *reducción* period churches in these areas; exceptions being the church at Aucará and possibly the church at Pampachiri which have polygonal ends. The *reducción* period churches all appear to have raised stone foundations with adobe superstructures, while all the pre-*reducción* churches have stone build clay plaster rendered walling. This is possibly a consequence of the larger bulk of the *reducción* churches in comparison with the earlier ones, given that the load on the stone structure would have been considerably higher had the whole church been built of this material. It is also possible that the lower cost of adobe production versus stone quarrying and transportation played a role.

Vargas Ugarte observes that the earliest pre-*reducción* churches built in Peru were constructed between 1535 and 1539 by the friar Vicente Valverde who in a letter to Emperor Charles V dated the 20th of March 1539 notes the construction of seven churches located in Cuzco, Los Reyes (Lima), Trujillo, San Miguel, Portoviejo, Santiago de Guayaquil and San Juan de la Frontera de Huamanga (Vargas Ugarte

1953, I:45). All these places represent early Spanish urban settlements, mostly established within pre-existing native settlements, with the Spanish gridiron or Hippodamian street model being the final form throughfare planning imposed on these sites. Excepting San Miguel, which proved unviable and was abandoned, all these other settlements continued in use.

Vargas Ugarte provides a description of the simplicity of these churches, taking Huamanga as a reference point. Here Valverde states: '[…] all of it is reduced to a rectangle of stone and adobe, without ornaments or windows and covered with a rustic roof of logs and reeds, thick, interwoven (Vargas Ugarte 1953). Along one of the walls runs a masonry bench that must have served as a seat for the faithful, but at the entrance the wide stone arch that leads to the temple and on whose flank stands the only tower that does not cease to attract attention, rustic and simple like the whole complex' (Vargas Ugarte 1953, 120).

This same simple style is epitomised by the earliest surviving church in Ayacucho, the Church of San Cristobal de Ayacucho, in the city of Ayacucho, which was constructed between 1540 and 1542 following the Battle of Chupas. It measures approximately 27 m by 8 m and is situated on a near east-west alignment. It has a single aisle and is built of dressed fieldstones and lacks windows. Its gabled roof is covered in ceramic roof tiles resting on a stone, adobe, and timber roofing structure. Its main entrance comprises an arched doorway on its short west wall, a secondary entrance is present at the western end of its long southern lateral wall. A raised platform is found at its eastern altar end. Along the base of the interior sides run low parallel projecting bench walls. The floor is of split stone slabs. The church was largely destroyed in flooding during 2015 and has since been largely rebuilt anew. It is neither set at right angles to the street frontage, nor is it aligned with the gridded street plan radiating out from the plaza. The small bell tower is positioned slightly forwards abutting from the west wall fronting the atrium on its southwest side with this wall being aligned with the Jirón 28 de Julio Street. This bell tower is likely a later addition to the church accommodating the alignment of the street frontage here. The top floor of the bell tower is reached by a staircase which runs up and along the arched entrance doorway into the atrium, on its north-west side.

Fraser states that all early colonial (predominantly *reducción*) churches in the Americas are architecturally characterised by bell towers, as well as by having entrances with round arched doorways (Fraser 1990, 121–123). These features, where enough of the structure survives to make a correct identification, are mostly lacking in the highland rural pre-*reducción* churches identified. Bell towers seem to have been very much a *reducción* feature, in many cases a late one. At the church of San Francisco de Sangayaico the bells in the tower date to 1799 and 1819 respectively. It is possible that the cost of bronze bells meant that initial construction of many *reducción* churches was made without this feature. At the San Francisco de Sangayaico church, the bell tower is set away from the church as its own independent structure. Indeed, an ecclesiastical visit in 1637 noted the church and the absence of a tower (Pariona Campos 2012), thereby further emphasising the lateness of this feature.

The reference to bell towers by Vargas Ugarte (1953, 120) is confirmed for the early pre-*reducción* church of San Miguel de Piura, built in 1534 and used until 1578,

which has been archaeologically excavated. The church of San Miguel de Piura was one of the first churches to have been built in Peru (Astuhuamán 2016, 46; Cieza de León 1996, LVIII). It was situated on the corner of a large open space or plaza within an important local Indigenous settlement. Here the church seems to have functioned in parallel with local Prehispanic religious traditions. It measured 13.93 m by 39.00 m and was on a North-North-West by South-South-East orientation. It was rectangular in shape, had a stepped altar at its North-North-Western end and its entrance on the opposing short wall. There were extended burials present inside the building, one of which faced the altar, while side altars were located along the long sides of the building. A space behind the main altar was probably used as a sacristy and a raised mound located on the frontal façade abutting the southeast corner was the base for the belfry (Astuhuamán 2016, 44–46). This church was situated *c.* 100 km from the sea, at an altitude of 120 m asl.

Other important early colonial churches which have been studied archaeologically, include the coastal Magdalena de Cao Church which is believed to be an early *reducción* church built in 1566. It was destroyed during an El Niño event in 1578, it was then re-founded by the Dominican order. This church was on a north to south orientation, it measured *c.* 44 m by 10 m and it had a bell tower projecting out from its northeastern corner, alongside the entrance. The altar was situated at its south apsidal end. The church probably continued to function until *c.* 1650, when it was left derelict following a wall collapse, possibly occasioned by an earthquake. At this time the adjacent settlement was also abandoned and re-sited to the location where it stands today. This occurred between 1763 and 1780 (Quilter 2016, 70–72).

The Chapel of San Pedro de Mórrope on the northwest margin of the Lambayeque Valley, is an early coastal Franciscan foundation, the first phase of its construction and perhaps initial remodelling of which is considered to date to between *c.* 1536–1548 (Klaus 2008, 334–36), it measures 45 by 16.5 m.[16] It was built of adobe bricks and mud mortar (Klaus 2008, 348) and has a low bell gable on its north elevation. Its size at the time of its initial construction likely was close to 35 by 16.5 m (Klaus 2008, 410–439). The exterior manifests a colonial Hispanic aspect while the main body of the church's interior displays Indigenous construction details such as the roof supports which are of a traditional *horcón* post-and beam type (Klaus 2008, 410). The altar comprises a 3.5 m tall adobe constructed, three-dimensional stepped pyramid element that abutted the south wall of the chancel (Klaus 2008, 413). Multiple phases of subfloor burials have been excavated which have revealed a range of interment and offering practices, which include an assortment of local Prehispanic traditional customs (Klaus 2008, 2013).

In the lower Zaña valley at Mocupe Viejo the *reducción* period church was likely founded toward the end of the sixteenth century built on a rise, projecting above the surrounding terrain in a desert landscape near the sea. It has an apsidal end and measures 36 × 15 m. This building likely was abandoned mid-seventeenth century. Separate from this building, but in close proximity are the remains of an apparent plaza and the ephemeral vestiges of *quincha*[17] constructed domestic dwellings covering an area of *c.* 10.14 hectares.

A second church identified in the lower Zaña valley, at the site of Carrizales built of *quincha* on an elevated section, had an apsidal end and measured approximately

40 × 12 m, it too is associated with domestic dwellings similarly constructed with *quincha* walling. These transient structures were built aligned to the church building outline and this site too appears to have had plaza as part a component of its layout. Excavations here uncovered the remains of 21 human burials (Turner et al. 2019). At Chérrepe Viejo in the lower Chamán drainage the remnants of an adobe constructed church were found on a mound associated with and area of domestic debris measuring *c.* 18 hectares, including a space which likely formed a plaza. Excavations next to the church uncovered colonial materials dating to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The church structure here includes buttressed supporting walls, these are still extant and in excess of four metres in height. The church also had a small atrium and there was a secondary hall (perhaps, a sacristy) projecting along the side of the apse. Measuring 35 × 15 m this building may have been linked to a nearby monastery (VanValkenburgh 2016, 2021).

Given that the Spanish were a coastal colonial power it makes sense that changes to churches and religious practices occurred earlier and quicker on the coast than in the rural highlands, where colonial and evangelizing inroads were slower outside of a few larger provincial centres such as Cuzco, Ayacucho, etc. Therefore, you have the case of the La Quinta building at Pukara in Puno which was constructed on top of the Prehispanic Kalasaya mound at the Tiahuanaco site. La Quinta is thought to be an early colonial pre-*reducción* chapel with an enclosed atrium. Its plan form is trapezoidal measuring circa 27 m × 8 m and it is aligned near east–west, its south wall contains a series of arched niches, and its altar was situated at its western end. In part, it reuses elements of an earlier Inca Hall type structure and the nave may have been unroofed (Abraham 2017, 228–29). The building had buttresses at its west end, a sunken nave, a possible baptismal font, and a line of columns which faced the niched wall. The structure varies significantly in plan form and internal details from all other pre-*reducción* chapels so far identified and would be a Spanish reuse of an existing Prehispanic building, rather than a new-built church.

The Santa Isabel church in the Toledan *reducción* settlement of Pukara was its successor, which may have been completed in 1607 (Abraham 2017) or *c.* 1610 (Gutiérrez et al. 1978, 254). The current version of Santa Isabel is a repositioned rebuild of the *c.* 1607–1610 church, completed *c.* 1778 with additions and changes occurring up to the present day. It has a cruciform ground plan, a domed roof above its transept, with the altar at its west end, a decorated baroque façade with a bell tower projecting from its northeast corner (Gutiérrez et al. 1978, 253–259). Pucara evidently was not a typical Indigenous village as in the seventeenth century, it had a much-reduced Indigenous population and more than 100 resident Spaniards (Gutiérrez et al. 1978, 254), this at a time when royal ordnances forbade such residency for Spaniards (other than clergy) in native villages (Málaga Medina 1975, 19–21). It seems this atypical population make-up resulted from its location on the royal highway linking Cuzco to the south and onwards into modern-day Bolivia.

The church of Huaytara up the Pisco Valley is at an altitude of *c.* 2,720 m asl, on the western slopes of the Andes mountains in Huancavelica. This church has some exceptional characteristics in that it appears to represent a *reducción* foundation erected on the remains of an impressive earlier Inca building constructed of stone-

built microdiorite igneous ashlar masonry as well as adobe built elements (Cuadros Rojas 2020). The *reducción* foundation, is a rare example of reuse of Inca remains. It may be that this decision was taken as the Inca structure was of a size suitable for a Christian *reducción* period church. One of its interpretations has been that of an Inca temple (Cuadros Rojas 2020), if so, then placing a church on top it would indicate the Christianisation of previously designated sacred space, yet another case of *Antagonistic Tolerance* (Hayden and Walker 2013). However, its large size would of itself make it remarkable for an Inca temple as such buildings commonly were relatively small. The large earlier Inca building had a trapezoidal ground plan which was mostly maintained for the colonial church. The church building's principal walls being circa 34.2 m on its north side by 11.5 m on the west and 37 m on the south side, while the east façade represents the most significantly modified element, with is twin church towers measuring 22 m (Cuadros Rojas 2020).

The early *reducción* church at Torata Alta in the Torata Valley, Department of Moquegua, in the Titicaca Basin is thought to have operated between *c.* 1575 and 1600/1604. It measured 38 m × 7 m in its interior, was on an east-west orientation and had a polygonal apse at its eastern, altar end (Rice 2012, 11–13). There is no evidence for a bell tower or gable. The basal walls were constructed of fieldstone set in clay mortar with much of the superstructure likely constructed of adobe, while the roof was probably made of cane and daub. Its principal entrance was on its west façade with a secondary doorway at the west end of its north wall (Rice 2012, 12–13).

All four examples of pre-*reducción* churches in the Sondondo and Chicha Soras valleys and the Viejo Sangayaico church lack bell towers. Neither did any such structures form part of the pre-*reducción* churches identified in the Colca Valley (Wernke 2013). Bell towers seem to have been a much later innovation.

Discussion

Taking all the evidence at hand we would argue for a three to four stage typology to early rural Spanish colonial church construction in highland Peru:

1. Open-chapel with no bell towers (*c.* AD 1532–1550)
2. Pre-*reducción* churches no bell towers (*c.* AD1540–1590)
3. *Reducción* churches (*c.* AD 1570+)
4. Bell tower additions to *reducción* churches (early seventeenth century onwards), possibly an addition associated to increasing prosperity of local towns.

On this last addition, that of bell towers, an alternative for colonial churches lacking bell towers, might have been hanging a bell in the loft behind the façade, with openings to allow for the sound to emanate from the building when the bell was rung. It may be that the round windows in the facades of the Iglesiachayoc church (Chicha) served such a function, although there is no concrete evidence for this. The lack of the upper segments of the other identified church structures in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys precludes reaching any such conclusions on these. That said, the surviving height of the Portada del Sol building may indicate that here the

possibility of placing a bell had been accommodated for in the higher levels of this structure.

The early *reducción* church at Cabana instead of a church bell tower has a bell gable, a feature which has been considered typical of earlier churches (San Cristóbal 1998, 52–53). The lack of evidence for bell towers or bell gables in the pre-*reducción* churches and chapels, except for possibly the Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) church, may be a result of the lack of the available specialist casting knowledge required for the manufacture of bells in the Andes or the funds to do so, many of these bells tended to be donations. It is likely that when the first relevant specialist craftspeople arrived in Peru that their services were focussed on the urban Spanish settlement churches, especially on the coast of which the San Miguel de Piura could be one such example, rather than on provisioning rural Indigenous parishes with bells. Both bells and bell towers only became widespread in the highlands from the early to mid-seventeenth century onwards.

Most of the pre-*reducción* churches remnants have not survived intact enough to establish whether these had round arched entrances such as claimed by Fraser (1990, 121–123). The San Sebastian Chapel at Coporaque has a baroque-style lintelled doorway, decorated on either end of the pediment with a lunar and solar symbol and with additional decorative elements elsewhere on the façade (Wernke 2013, 175–176). The church at Soras has both arched and lintelled entrances, while one of the entrances of the *reducción* church at Ccecca similarly has a lintel rather than an arch. Both the Soras and Ccecca examples are thought to represent early *reducción* models. It seems likely that the construction of round arched entrances would follow on when the technical knowhow to build such arches became embedded within the Indigenous workforce. This would have taken some time, with this innovation coming first in the bigger towns, probably on the coast and then in the highlands, and only afterwards diffusing into more rural areas. We would therefore expect to find lintelled, rather than arched, doorways present in the earlier churches.

The simple rectangular shape of the pre-*reducción* churches and the characteristics of their wall masonry, entrances, niches, windows, etc., suggest local architectural construction knowledge probably because of the demands set by the proselytizing Spanish missionary clerics. This conjures up the notion that the locally available labour force was either not able to erect churches of the complexity and size manifest in the buildings following the later *reducción* model, or that in a pre-*reducción* dispersed settlement pattern bigger churches were not required, or even that the expediency with which these early churches were built was a necessary first step in an evangelizing project which still linked the church very much to the sacred Indigenous landscape.

Notably the Soras church demonstrates that considerable technical knowledge remained available in the area when this building was erected, likely early in the Spanish colonial period. The available *Taqui Onqoy* documentation referencing Cristóbal de Albornoz's activities in the area indicates a late pre-*reducción* construction date. Albornoz's activity in the area dates to *c.* 1569 to 1571, so a mid-1570s timing for the church's its initial construction phase is probable. The documents declare not only that the inhabitants of *hanan* and *hurin* Soras were responsible for the

building of its church but also that they had the iron nails and timber doors made, as well as 100 pesos worth of silver to ornament its interior purchased (Varón Gabai 1990, 279). The layout of Soras on the typical Spanish *reducción* settlement grid plan and the fact that the alignment of the church coincides with this grid plan suggests a considerable *reducción* period impact on the Indigenous settlement and its church, indicative of significant remodelling at this time, possibly during the 1580s or 1590s.

The rectangular base plan for all the pre-*reducción* churches coincides with a building outline introduced earlier by the Incas, with the standard local architectural form for houses being a circular or sub-circular design. The Inca *kallanka* elongated rectangular form would have been nearest equivalent to what would have been required for the early Christian churches. Indeed, a *kallanka* was used as a church from 1533 to 1536 in Cuzco until the construction there of the Iglesia del Triunfo in 1536. Clearly the buildings identified as pre-*reducción* churches in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys and the Upper Ica Basin merit further investigation. In particular, excavations to verify the presence of altar features within as well as possible inhumation burials.

It should be noted that, with the exception of Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) and probably the earliest construction phase of the Soras example, none of the Late Intermediate Period/Late Horizon agglutinated settlement sites which likely were occupied at the time of the conquest in the Chicha Soras or the Sondondo valleys display evidence of churches or chapels having been erected at these sites. This is also not the case with Viejo Sangayaico, which includes a discrete pre-*reducción* church sector alongside the main Inca and local Chocorvos sector (Coll et al. 2022). One of the early colonial church directives was to situate churches in settlements where the local *kuraka* had his (or her) residence as specified in ordnances issued by Francisco Pizarro and the bishop, Fray Vicente de Valverde, in 1536. These ordnances included reference to the construction of churches in 'Indian' towns funded from the tributes that the natives paid to their *encomenderos*, from which a part would also have been reserved to hire an ordained or lay clergy to teach them and prepare them in matters relating to the Catholic faith (Málaga Medina 1975, 19–21). This was further reinforced by the first Lima Ecclesiastical Council (1551), which stated that in the principal village or town of each community, which should also be the seat of the local *kuraka*, the local clergy responsible for religious instruction of the population should have a church built.

The locally important site of Chiqna Jota in the Chicha Soras Valley would have been of sufficient status to accommodate its resident *kuraka*(s), as evidenced by the presence of Inca derived architecture here. Nevertheless, despite this site's confirmed continued occupation in the early colonial period, as evidenced by the presence of cattle and ovicaprid remains in early colonial contexts (Meddens et al. 2025) there is no evidence for an early colonial church or chapel here. This is not the case with Viejo Sangayaico, the settlement has confirmed elite status, including an LIP, an Inca and a Spanish colonial sector, as well as the early church (Lane et al. 2016; Rodriguez Morales et al. 2020).

The siting of pre-*reducción* churches in the Colca Valley focussed on locations which integrated earlier Inca state sanctioned public spaces within settlements with this new imported Christian ritual (Wernke 2011, 86). This aspect concerning the

positioning of early colonial churches can also be recognised in the churches of San Miguel de Piura (Astuhuamán 2016) and Torata Alta (Rice 2012). Astuhuamán Gonzáles argues that San Miguel and its deliberate placement are reflections of a brief transitional period, between 1534 and 1548, during which European and Indigenous ecclesiastical structures stood side by side in religious coexistence (2016). While for the Upper Ica Basin, and the Sondondo and Chicha Soras valleys, and at Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) agree with this pattern; the Santa Isabel and Portada del Sol ones at Ccecca, Iglesiachayoc (Ayapampa), and the Iglesiaijo church at Viejo Sangayaico do not. The latter appear to have been placed outside of the main settlement proper, sometimes only slightly so as in the case of Viejo Sangayaico, or among very widely distributed structures in an open landscape setting. Nevertheless, the common thread in all these churches is their association to charged and animated elements of this landscape, be they springs, rock art, *chullpas* or tutelar mountain deities. In this sense, these churches straddle Indigenous and Spanish ideals of religiosity and landscape. This conforms to the dichotomy between a *religion of space* and *place* (Lane 2020). At Iglesiachayoc (Ayapampa) the building is situated between a springhead and a large carved cup-marked rock. Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) is situated within the principal plaza or open space within the site facing a large elite Inca building (Norman 2019). The Santa Isabel building is located on top of a mound, immediately west of the Arcoiris Huaca, while the Viejo Sangayaico church is aligned to a local mountaintop –Huinchocruz– with a Christian calvary and an earlier local platform or *ushnu*, the church is also in close association with important features of local and Inca worship (Lane 2023). The Portada del Sol is close to a large boulder, a possible *huanca*, on its northeast edge and an important irrigation canal on its south and east sides, as well as Prehispanic funerary structures located to the north.

At the church of Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) an excavation of a sample area uncovered 21 sub-floor inhumations, with one at its altar end aligned east-west, extended and interred in a cist, and with two further extended burials on similar alignments at this end of the church. Two flexed burials were present at the western end of the church with a single extended secondary burial also found, while two secondary flexed burials were identified. Four graves were present where the remains had been removed after initial interment and a further nine disturbed burials were found here. The characteristics of the burials were interpreted as manifesting a range of religious beliefs ranging from fully Christian converts, Europeans, perhaps even priests, to removal of burials for reinternments following local Prehispanic traditions and in line with *Taqui Onqoy* inspired precepts (Norman 2019).

An alternative interpretation may be that the removed individuals were then transferred to the new *reducción* church. The establishment of *reducción* settlements and churches was apparently accompanied, certainly for the Cusco area, by the removal of Christian burials from the pre-*reducción* native settlement sites to the newly established *reducción* churches, with the relevant clergy being instructed to exercise the appropriate rites without charging the community and relatives for these reinternment services (Ramos 2010, 139–40). Cabello Carro posits that it was only after 1610 that there was an effective clampdown on non-Catholic burial practices (Cabello Carro 2003, 96).

On the subject of diets, the isotope results of individuals sampled from the Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) church group of burials indicated a high degree of maize in these people's diet, with limited access to European crops. Furthermore, there was no discernible dietary difference between the young adult male found in an extended supine body position, uniquely entombed in a stone sarcophagus, closest to the altar space (hypothesized to have been a priest) and the others found buried elsewhere within the church building (Gurevitz 2017; Norman 2019).

Although there is no confirmed presence of European crop plants in the early colonial assemblages of the Chicha Soras Valley the presence of European domesticated animals was identified at the sites of Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) and Chiqna Jota comprising cow, horse/donkey and sheep/goat. Their proportion in these assemblages is very minor (Meddens et al. 2025; Norman 2019), therefore their contribution to the local diet could only have been small. This compares with the coastal Mocupe Viejo and Carrizales sites located in the North coastal lower Zaña Valley, where middens associated with colonial churches produced significant evidence for the early introduction of both European crop plants and domestic animals (Kennedy, Chiou, and VanValkenburgh 2019), while the range and variety of the latter is far greater than the limited range observed in the Chicha Soras valley assemblages. It should be noted that contrasting with the botanical and faunal evidence the isotope signature for the colonial period human remains tested from the Carrizales site conform to a largely local Indigenous Andean diet (Turner et al. 2019).

The three *reducción* churches period churches for the lower Zaña and Rio Loco Chamán valleys all reflect settlement failures. Their abandonment may have resulted from the precipitous population losses in this area in the early colonial period with their concomitant fall in maintenance of irrigation infrastructure to water the agricultural fields associated with these settlements. In their sizes and settlement focussed placements they conform to the Toledean model as found elsewhere. The notable presence of imported goods in their associated artefact groups, such as in the ceramics found, as well as the considerable representation of European crop plants and domestic animals within these assemblages are distinct from what is found on the contemporary sites in the Andean highland environments. This can be attributed to the more rapid spread of Hispanic influence and presence in the coastal areas (Lane 2020).

Throughout the early pre-reducción colonial period little appears to have been done to implement the policies enacted by either the state or church in respect to the imposition of colonial native settlement structures (Málaga Medina 1975, 24). This early period of proselytization was characterised by notions of tolerant religious coexistence and observance (Duviols 1977, 109–14). It is likely that this less harsh proselytization was due to limited availability of clergy and effective authority, rather than through an absence of evangelizing zeal. Subsequently during the Seventeenth Century and later forced conversion, coercion and control became the norm, culminating in the later violent extirpation campaigns during this period. Prior to the response by the church to the *Taqui Onqoy* events and the introduction of Toledan policies in the 1570s, Spanish clergy was scarce in the Andean hinterland and their impact was therefore perforce limited (Mills 1997, 19).

The early period of conversion was one characterised by proselytization anchored in defective translations of Christian concepts into Quechua and Aymara, their various regional dialects and other local language groups. Linguistic analogies frequently resulted in absurd or contradictory phrasings, with translation of doctrinal principles and basic tenets of Christian canons into locally intelligible terminology proving an often-intractable task (Wernke 2013, 160). The receptiveness of native groups to incorporate foreign deities into their native pantheons was frequently misinterpreted by the early missionaries as a willingness to adopt the exclusivist Hispanic notion of conversion, when often all the Indigenous population was doing was following the local precepts of *mañay* or 'compromise', were defeated populations accepted foreign gods without this impinging on their own beliefs and sacred pantheons (Millones 1987).

It is unsurprising that the pre-*reducción* rural community churches were manifestly small in size, in the order of chapels rather than fully formed churches. The preceding late Prehispanic public sacred space was out in the open as befitting an idealized *religion of space*, and it was only a subsection of the elite who had access to enclosed temple structures to mediate directly with the deities. These Prehispanic temples were therefore relatively small, even when these were the most important temples of the state or empire, such as Cori Cancha in Cuzco or Pachacamac on the central coast. This is not to say that buildings which could accommodate larger numbers of people were completely absent from the Inca architectural repertoire. The largest of the Inca halls or *kallanka* could hold in the order of several thousands of people (Lee 1998). However, the *kallanka*'s principal role was not worship related (Lee 1998, 35), and neither was their distribution such as to suggest any association with the Inca solar or lunar religion such as was the case with the construction of Inca temples to the Sun and Moon in conquered areas.

The early pre- reducción colonial churches therefore adhered to a Prehispanic tradition of *space*, which implied much reduced *place*. What is perhaps surprising is that the *reducción* churches were substantially larger in the Chicha Soras and Sondondo valleys (and elsewhere). On average, these churches were in the order of five times bigger, or even larger, than the pre-*reducción* churches. The explanation for this can be found in the establishment of Spanish style ordered settlements to accommodate the *reducción* communities, which coalesced various populations into one. Also, the basic form of worship adhered to by the Spanish colonisers focussed on the interior of churches –*a religion of place* – rather than sacred space out in the open. Mass therefore had to be celebrated inside in the elaborate internal spatial setting provided by a physical church and its accompanying accoutrements (McAndrew 1965, 205). The *reducción* transposed Indigenous populations from their previous lived in space within a fully animated landscape into an imposed colonial demographic format, with which the church in its interiority sought to exclude the world of extrasensory and ever-present *wamanis*, *apus* and ancestors (*mallquis*). The latter explicitly by ultimately instituting a ban on the bodies of the ancestors of the Prehispanic population, being interred in consecrated ground thereby refusing these the option of salvation, forever stranded in purgatory, consequently, never to find their way into the Christian perception of a hallowed Heaven (MacCormack 1993).

The shift to veneration inside churches is likely a strong reason behind the increased size of the *reducción* period churches. The change to 'civilizing' the local Indigenous population by re-socialising them to a Spanish model therefore vitally included a shift of the congregation to the inside of the church, physically disconnected from the 'wild uncivilized' Andean landscape. Nevertheless, how this was managed remains a pertinent question, at a time of evident population collapse (Stern 1993) and when the *mita*-labour demands resulted in a significant proportion of the pre-adult and adult male population[18] leaving their home villages to go and work in the mercury mines of Huancavelica, from which many never returned, and those that did were often severely weakened or disabled (Quichua Chaico 2015).

The Royal Road (*Capac Ñan*) from Lima to Cuzco passed through La Concepcion de Guayllapampa and ran from there to San Pedro de Queca (Ccecca) and onwards to Soras (Cantos de Andrada and de la Espada 1965). It is therefore likely that Soras and Ccecca were had significant contacts with Spanish cultural ideas early on during the colonial period as these settlements were situated on this main throughfare (Capac Ñan) leading from Cuzco to the coast and from there onward to Lima. This road is known to have been used as early as 1537 by Diego de Almagro (Raimondi 1876, 86–87) to come down onto the coast and in 1538 by Hernando Pizarro (Vega 1723) to go up through the highlands towards Cuzco. García de Calahorra described the route in 1563 (García de Calahorra 1906, 130) and this road was used regularly to travel between Cuzco and Lima by the Spanish from the early conquest period onward.

The importance of this road during the very early colonial period is further confirmed by the presence of early pre-*reducción* churches in the area and in part by the quality of some of the workmanship on several of the reducción period structures, including an early baroque wood carving of the altar piece at Cabana; the religious paintings at Aucará; the neo-Inca stonework at Soras, and the embellishment of the church façade at Pampachiri. All of these in an elaboration and quality in excess of what one would regard as the norm in rural Indigenous villages for the period. This serves to confirm that this region was one of the major transit routes from the coast to Cusco and beyond in the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century and thereby benefitted from additional prosperity.

The survival of high-quality embellishments to early *reducción* period churches as found in some of the examples in the Sondondo and Chicha Soras area in the Diocese of Huamanga are not unique. For example, the church of the Virgen de la Asunción de Sacsamarca has extant fragments of painted wall plaster with frescos resembling the style of the late Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Century Indigenous painter Diego Cusi Huamán from Cusco (Arce 2018, 61). Such church elements as present here, as well as in Cabana, Aucará, Soras and Pampachiri, suggest the presence of a certain degree of wealth among the Indigenous parishes in these *reducciones*, even in the face of population decline. The local importance of the church at Sacsamarca may also be related to the fact that it is situated on an important transit road linking Cabana and onwards to Aucará and Huamanga.

Although first contact between the inhabitants of the Sondondo and Chicha Soras valleys with Spaniards was likely with soldiery as both Hernando Pizzaro and

Almagro and their followers traced the road through the Rucanas and Soras territory, the first sustained contact between colonial agents and the local populations would have been with their clergy (Wernke 2013, 159).

It is self-evident that the Indigenous communities studied across the Andes expressed a range of reactions to the arrival of the colonial church extending from acceptance to resistance and adjustment to the new order (Martínez Ferrer 2009), in time most Indigenous communities went through various phases of each. Such variations in outcomes have been convincingly demonstrated in the in-depth studies undertaken by Haagen D. Klaus and colleagues in the coastal Lambayeque Valley (Garland, Turner, and Klaus 2016; Klaus 2019; Klaus and Tam 2009). Here, responses by the Indigenous populations in the region, reflect a plethora of corollaries following the introduction of the Catholic faith in the region.

Similarly, in our study areas the small colonial chapels found across parts of the landscape of Ayacucho Apurimac and Ica reflect a strong facet of syncretism, while for instance the burial patterns at Iglesiachayoc (Chicha) manifest characteristics of syncretism, resistance, and acceptance of Christian norms. The façade of the church of Pampachiri in particular exhibits elements of syncretism and reinterpretation of a Christian space. Overall, churches reflected shifting mores across the viceroyalty, with greater changes occurring first along the coast and important road networks connecting the nascent Spanish colony, before percolating deeper into the social fabric of the Andes.

This ad hoc and heterogeneous nature of the early phase of evangelization resulted in part from the inconsistencies in approach to Christian dogma by the different orders (Estenssoro 2003, 13–16), and the unconsolidated condition of Spanish colonial power structures in this early pre-reducción part of the colonial realm. In these circumstances, the material expressions of the colonial church – its vernacular architecture – reflected greater variety than later on following the standardisations implemented by the Toledean reforms (1570s) and the edicts of the third council of Lima (1582–83). In fact, these mixed expressions of early Christian evangelisation show a Spanish church grappling with seemingly intractable problems in which sparse numbers of missionaries faced a bulwark of native sacrality, only time, depopulation and the reordering of the *reducciones* finally pried open the doors to the mass conversions of the late sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Conclusions

As noted by VanValkenburgh, it was with the Toledean reforms architectural register, crafted through the reworking of landscapes and the planning of towns, '… that the colonial administration was … providing the means by which Indigenous subjects were intended to understand their membership in the body of Christ and the Republic of Indians' (VanValkenburgh 2017, 129). The embedded aim of the *reduccion* resettlement and focus on the interiority of the *reducción* church was a purposeful disruption of the memoryscape of the Indigenous people (VanValkenburgh 2017), attempting to sever any connection to Prehispanic sacrality. The emergence of a syncretic Andino-Spanish church is testament to the limits of this evangelising experiment.

As we have seen, the forms taken by early pre-*reducción* churches regionally vary significantly, both in terms of the geographical location as well as their architectural detail. They have, with two exceptions at Pucara and Huaytara, a rectangular ground plan. A form which is common to both earlier Inca and colonial Spanish architecture. Other than that, this style is largely absent from the local architectural repertoire. Universally the pre-*reducción* churches are stone constructions, whereas the early *reducción* forms have raised stone foundations with adobe-built superstructures. Altars in the *reducción* chapels tend to be at the east end, although at San Francisco de Sangayaico it is to the south, while their placement in *reducción* churches is more varied. With the exception of the coastal variants, the earlier church forms are small, with an apparent focus on congregations largely gathering out in the open. Importantly, the siting of pre-*reducción* churches is usually fixed on locations associated with pre-existing socially and religiously charged sacrality and power landscapes. It is likely that the choices made here resulted from negotiated compromises between the Spanish clergy and local Indigenous congregations (Lane 2020).

The introduction of Christianity in the Andes was significantly paired with mutual cultural confusions. Even on the rare occasions that a colonial missionary priest was well-versed in the local language or dialect, the religious terminologies of the Spanish religious tradition was at such variance with the Indigenous one that it often proved impossible to translate a particular concept. This resulted in Spanish loan words being introduced for untranslatable concepts,[19] thereby hardly occasioning any better understanding of the framing of the new colonial religion. A religion, which the Indigenous population was meant to adhere to, not just for their own, but also for their coloniser's salvation. The latter conceived the conversion of the former as their religious duty which if ignored would lead to their own damnation.

The *reducción* church seems to adhere to a much more circumscribed model. These large houses of worship continued to be set along a rectangular plan. They were also situated facing the main square of the new model settlements, incorporating arched entrances and a bell tower or towers, or maybe a bell gable. Although bells and towers seem to have been a later addition, possibly incorporated following a donation or enrichment of the local parish. Mostly, these churches had two points of access, with the principal entrance being in the short wall on the side opposite to the altar. The façade was usually rendered in a baroque style mirroring the gilded altar piece inside the church.

With the implementation of the *reducción* policies, the notion of concentrating the Indigenous population into 'civilising' and ordered Spanish model settlements intentionally resulted in functionally breaking up the pre-existing social structures as well as allowing for the gathering of the congregations inside the new larger-sized village churches. This led to them being directly introduced and enforced onto Spanish religious mores and concepts of sacred space and alienating them from their own earlier animated landscapes. The pre-*reducción* period church structures as identified here therefore can be seen as adhering to an Indigenous dialogue within the natives understanding of their animated landscape and their *mallquis*, a syncretic adaptation to the new religion, while the Toledean reforms sought a complete rupture of the pre-existing memories of the Indigenous population from their landscape and ancestors,

through the physical spatial displacement of people and the wanton destruction of encoded places in the landscape (VanValkenburgh 2017).

As a form of ornamentation, the church façade communicated the fundamentals of a church's stylistic and religious message, directed outward to the community. The nativist elements present in the facades of the *reducción* churches at both Soras and Pampachiri confirm that considerable elements of Indigenous artistic design concepts and in the case of Pampachiri nativist and in Christian terms ambiguous social and resource focussed aspects of the local *ayllus* could continue to be incorporated in rural Christian religious architecture. This at the time of Toledo's reconstitution of the Indigenous social and religious base by means of the colonial native re-settlement of the 1570s onward and further accompanied by the restrictive religious guidelines of the third council of Lima of the 1580s, which all served to curb Prehispanic Indigenous social, religious and aesthetic expressions.

Notes

1. *Reducción* featured the policy of the Spanish colonial administration to 'reduce' or concentrate the native (dispersed) population into smaller numbers of standard model planned and sized settlements.
2. Directly responsible to the local bishop of the diocese.
3. The *encomienda* system allowed the crown to grant awards of the produce of estates to individuals it wanted to reward. In the first instance this was largely to the Spanish conquerors of Peru. These grants were meant to be only for the lifetime of the grantee, who was not supposed to reside on the lands of the estate and did not own the land or its resources but was due tribute from the estate. In return the '*encomendero*' was charged with ensuring religious instruction for the population of the estate.
4. Málaga Medina (1975, 37–39).
5. Colonial court responsible for a designated area with civil and criminal jurisdiction charged with safeguarding the rights of Indians.
6. *Taqui Onqoy* was an indigenous religious revivalist movement active in the 1560s across central and southern Peru into Bolivia. The term translates as 'dancing sickness' its proponents maintained the native deities (*huacas*) had been neglected and had risen against the Christian god. Its followers rejected all things Spanish and frenzied dancing in which the participants were said to be possessed formed a major characteristic of the sect.
7. Divinity, shrine or sacred object.
8. C14 date from charcoal sample A.1.1002 [OxA-30914] yielding a date of 446 ± 27 BP.
9. Lineal descent groups, with members claiming origin from a putative common ancestor and the fundamental social grouping in Andean societal systems. Membership ensured access to agricultural land and irrigation water resources.
10. Rankings within *ayllu* social grouping – kin age group rankings, as well as spatial divisions etc (Zuidema 2007).
11. The *ceque* system comprised several imaginary lines radiating out from its centre at the temple of the sun in Cuzco. Each line was marked in the landscape by a number of sacred markers comprising stones, trees, springs, houses etc. These lines were associated with social groups, irrigation districts and calendrical events. Similar systems structured community space across much of the Andes at the time of the Spanish conquest.
12. *Orejones* is a Spanish term meaning 'big ears' referring to the (male) Incas who, as part of the initiation into adult hood, were equipped with large earplugs.
13. *kurakas* or ancestors.
14. The large baroque carved altarpiece construction at the east end of the church.

15. also known as the *Milagro del Corregidor*.
16. These measurements concord with its final construction phase.
17. A traditional construction system that uses cane, reed or similar materials to build walls, often plastered with mud or adobe to lend further rigidity to the structure.
18. In the order of 20% of the male population would feed into this labour duty on a rotation. Such labourers would often be accompanied by their families to support them as their reimbursement was usually insufficient to afford food and accommodation in the mining areas.
19. A notable example for this is the term 'god' for which there was no Quechua or Aymara equivalent.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This study was supported by Academy of Medical Sciences; British Academy; Natural Environment Research Council; Gerda Henkel Foundation; Leverhulme Foundation; Royal Academy of Engineering.

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