Late Pre-Hispanic Communities of the Upper Maranon: Lineages, Houses, or Simply Ayllus?

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Cover Page Footnote
This article discusses social organization as manifested at the Rapayan site in Peru's upper Maranon Valley.

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INTRODUCTION

In anthropological literature, the word ayllu usually refers to an Andean highland community. In the ethnographic present, the ayllu is broadly portrayed as a resource-holding corporate group in which members derive their social cohesion by means of ritual, economic, political, territorial, residential, or kinship ties (e.g. Allen 1988:108–109; Bastien 1978:xxiii–xxv; Brush 1977:41; Cock 1981; Gillet 1992:18). Historical writings from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries particularly emphasize kinship as the main cement binding the affiliation of ayllu members (Gose 2008:14; Salomon 1991:21–23). These sources also suggest that individuals and ayllus were ranked in relation to one another into increasing and nested levels of integration (Gose 1993; Isbell 1997:85; Spalding 1984:51–52). The relatedness and rank among communities and people were established according to their real or perceived genealogical distance from a common founding ancestor (Salomon 1991:21–23). The socio-political importance of the ayllus’ “original progenitors” came to the attention of early Spanish observers by the widespread practice of the mumification of such progenitors, and by the continuous acts of propitiation undertaken by their descendants to honor them over time (Doyle 1988). William Isbell’s influential definition of the sixteenth century pre-Spanish conquest ayllu is largely based on the conclusion that the mummified ancestors embodied the multiple and nested communities’ economic, social, and political cohesion, as well as their territorial claims on resources (1997:98–99).

These broad characteristics of the sixteenth century ayllu bear many similarities with those featured in both the segmentary lineage model and Claude Lévi-Strauss’ “House society” model. For example, the ayllu, the House,1 and the lineage are all portrayed as ranked and resource-holding corporate groups in which kinship, or the idiom of kinship, and the notion of precedence as seen through ancestor veneration practices, represent fundamental socio-political organizing principles (e.g. Fortes 1953; Gillespie 2000a, 2000c; Isbell 1997). Nonetheless, given the variability of ayllu communities described in ethnographic literature, some have raised doubts about archaeologists’ ability to ever identify ayllu-like organization in the material record (Nash 2009:213). It is notable, however, that Isbell’s definition of the ayllu, centered on ancestors and their above-ground mausoleums at the time of the Spanish conquest, was specifically designed to avoid the interpretative pitfalls resulting from colonialism, like massive depopulation, proletarianization, forced resettlements, and imposed social organizations (i.e. encomiendas, reducciones, and...

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1 As proposed by Sellato (1987), I use “House” with a capital letter when referring to a social organization, and “house” with a lower-case letter when characterizing a residential structure.
corregimientos; see Ensor 2011: 207–210). In addition, the architecture of many settlements of the Andean highlands during the Late Intermediate Period (LIP, 1000–1450 C.E.) and Late Horizon (LH, 1450–1532 C.E.) remains outstandingly well preserved and chronologically close to the first colonial written records. As a result, archaeologists working on the said periods have the advantage of studying entire settlements holistically, together with the insights of the historical record, which is particularly well suited to the investigation of ancient communities like the ayllu.

The main purpose of this paper is to evaluate the extent, if any, to which the segmentary lineage and the House society models can shed light on the socio-political organization of the late pre-Hispanic (LIP/LH) communities of the Upper Marañón drainage. Given the importance attributed to ancestors in the constitution of Andean ayllus at the eve of the Spanish conquest (Isbell 1997), my discussion of the segmentary lineage and the House particularly emphasizes the role attributed to “ancestors” in these organizations. Through ethnohistorical and archaeological data, I examine the involvement of ancestors in the construction of Andean communities, and underline the similarities and differences with the segmentary lineage and House society models. The insights gained from these discussions will then be used as a backdrop for the interpretation of an archaeological case study during late pre-Hispanic times (LIP and LH) drawn from my research in the Upper Marañón in the central eastern Andes of Peru (Figures 1 and 2).

**SEGMENTARY LINEAGES**

E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1940a, 1970 [1940]) and Meyer Fortes (1945, 1949, 1970 [1940]) originally developed the concept of segmentary organization to characterize the decentralized lineage-based political systems of the African Nuer and Tallensi. The lineage is generally understood as a unilineal descent group in which members claim a common origin that can be traced back several generations to an original and named ancestor (Fortes 1945:30). A lineage is usually defined as a corporate group in that its members commonly exploit, control, or own resources collectively, and uphold mutual rights and obligations, such as those exhibited in collective rituals and defense (Fortes 1953:25; Smith 1975:13–14). The corporate lineage is a pervasive social group, as new generations inherit inalienable resources and mutual responsibilities from previous ones (Fortes 1953:26–27; Sahlins 1961:330). When the organization expands with the addition of new cohorts, and competition and conflict among its members ensue, the lineage commonly fissions into new structurally equivalent segments (Evans-Pritchard 1970 [1940]):284; Fortes 1945:33; Sahlins 1961:63; Smith 1975:16). Segmentation usually occurs along inherent genealogical fracture lines within the lineage such as seen, for instance, by the breaking-off of two brothers from their original father’s lineage to each establish a new segment of lower order in a patrilineage system (Gluckman 1937:120–121; Fortes 1945:32). Despite partitioning, the brothers’ segments are still structurally tied to the father’s higher order segment by virtue of direct agnatic unilineal descent. As a result, a segmentary lineage is composed of various interrelated segments which are graded and integrated into a nested system of increasing levels of aggregation (Fortes 1945:31; Middelton and Tait 1958:7; Sahlins 1968:18). Each segment is a structural and functional replica of any other segment, and even of the whole lineage (Fortes 1953; cf. Leach 1967). A segment thus tends to be autonomous and self-sufficient (Sahlins 1961:325–326; Smith 1975:14). The greater the historical depth of a lineage, the more intricate the branching-off of its segments (Gluckman 1937:129). Despite being equivalent in composition, function, and interests, the segments
constituting a lineage are nevertheless ranked in relation to one another according to their genealogical proximity to the recognized founder of the whole lineage (Bohannan and Bohannan 1969; Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1970 [1940]:13; Fortes 1953:31; Sahlins 1968: 21). As a result, the segment of the senior living progeny of the lineage founder holds the highest position, whereas subsequent segments decrease in rank proportionally to their genealogical distance from the founding ancestor. The pattern of groupings and identity in a segmentary lineage is also characterized by complementary opposition—that is, segments of similar levels of aggregation are prone to quarrel with one another, but unite when conflicts involve higher levels of segmentation (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 142; Fortes 1953:27; Salzman 1978). As a result, membership at any level of aggregation above the household is contingent on its opposition to similar segments until the entire lineage stands against another lineage (Evans-Pritchard 1970 [1940]:282–283).

Among the Tallensi (Nammos and Talis), complementary opposition and structural relativity of lineage segments are best seen during ceremonies involving ancestors. At the time of Fortes’s fieldwork during the 1930s, the Nammos and Talis represented an exogamous patrilineal society segmented into a nested hierarchy of lineages (Fortes 1945:30–38). A maximal lineage represented the largest autonomous grouping of individuals who recognized agnatically their descent from a named common ancestor (Fortes 1970 [1940]:243, 1945:19, 65, 1959: 26). In turn, a maximal lineage contained at least two major lineage segments which included members who shared common ancestry with ancestors positioned at least one generation less remote than the founding ancestor of the maximal lineage. Each major lineage could then be divided into lesser segments, the smallest of which being the minimal lineage comprising the children of a single man (Fortes 1970 [1940]: 243).

The nested layers of lineage segments were correlated with a hierarchy of named ancestors and shrines organized similarly into decreasing levels of inclusiveness (Fortes 1959:27). The shrines (Boyar) made of dried mud and broken ceramic vessels contained a variety of objects which represented the material symbols of ancestors (Fortes 1945:100–101; Insoll 2011: 1053–1054). Regardless of his life achievements and failures, a father became an ancestor following his death if he had left a living son to succeed him (Fortes 1987:76). After the death of his father, the elder son inherited the custody of his ancestral shrine as well as those of the previous ancestors of the same patrilineal segment (Fortes 1945:100–101, 1949:159–160, 330–331). The Tallensi could recall the sequence of named ancestors reaching back to the original founder anywhere from 8 to 12 generations (Fortes 1970 [1940]:243, 1945:19, 65, 1959:26). The ancestors and the living who honored them were thus related through a direct male line of descent whether real or fictitious (Fortes 1945: 24, 32, 1976:3–5, 13) Through the inheritance of the ancestors’ shrines, the son became simultaneously the head of the lineage, as well as the primary officiant in ritual performances. On behalf of all the members of his lineage, he had the privilege of presiding over sacrifices and libations to his father-ancestor, and by extension, to the other more remote named ancestors of the same line (Fortes 1945:100–101; 1987: 74–77). This was an immense responsibility since all important activities and social relationships had to be sanctioned by the ancestors (Fortes 1959:30). In addition to maintaining an intense ritual relationship with the ancestors, the head of the lineage also had a privileged physical access to them, as their shrines were kept directly on his homestead (Fortes 1970 [1940]:249, 1945:100–101, 1959:32). Lineage members sacrificed separately to the ancestors of

**HOUSE SOCIETY**

After a golden age lasting nearly three decades (1940–1970), the study of kinship systems, and especially the lineage model, became the target of harsh critiques in the 1970s and early 1980s. The main criticism focused on the apparent lack of correspondence between lineage theory and how the actors practiced their social relations on a day-to-day basis (e.g., Gellner 1969:62–63; Holy 1979; Kuper 1982; Schnieder 1972, 1984). Some suggested that lineages should be understood as folk models referring to the actors' own idealized representations of their socio-political universe rather than actual social processes (Holy 1996:81; Salzman 1978). Others qualified the lineage model as a pure fiction created by early anthropologists' own biased assumptions about biological relatedness (Collier and Yanagisako 1987; Kuper 1982; Leach 1968:8, 302; Schneider 1972, 1984:165–177; cf. Ennor 2011). In other words, prescriptive and proscriptive genealogical rules reported by scholars as structuring principles have little to do with configuring social, political, and economic relationships among collectivities. As a result of these criticisms, kinship studies in anthropology shifted away from theories built on descent and biological relationship to more socially grounded approaches to relatedness (Johnson and Paul 2016; Watanabe 2004).

The House society model outlined by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1982) is one such approach that gained prominence in some anthropological circles (e.g., Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995) and especially in archaeology (Beck 2007; Joyce and Gillespie 2000) where some endorsed it to replace the lineage model as a heuristic tool (e.g., Gillespie 2000c). Lévi-Strauss defined the House as:

a corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which perpetuates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship [descent] or affinity [alliance] and, most of the time, of both (1982:174; words in square brackets added by Watanabe 2004: 160).

Lévi-Strauss noted, for instance, that the noble lineage in mediaeval Europe referred to an idiom of kinship to legitimize itself, but actual membership did not coincide with an agnatic line, and even often lacked any biological substance. He thus stated that the House absorbs the notion of continuity inherent in a lineage on which it superimposes the temporary or prolonged alliance(s) of two or more lineages. Consequently, the House manages to maintain an ideal of descent (continuity), but actual alliances within the process subvert it (Lévi-Strauss 1991:434–436).

The difference between a lineage and a House is thus largely a matter of how group affiliation is recognized. In a House, membership is not primarily established according to unilineal descent prerogatives, but rather on the contribution made to the maintenance of the material and immaterial wealth of the estate (Chesson 2003:97; Gillespie 2000a:1–2; Joyce 2000:190). This may take the form of a combination of flexible kinship strategies which were conventionally interpreted as mutually exclusive in traditional kinship studies: “patrilineal descent and matrilineal descent, filiation and residence, hypogamy and hypergamy, close marriage and distant marriages, heredity and election” (Lévi-Strauss 1982:184) as well as
endogamy and exogamy (Lévi-Strauss 1991: 435). Consequently, the House actively negotiates kinship in pursuit of economic, political, and symbolic power, while lacking the rigidity of unilineal descent systems (ibid.: 434–435; Waterson 1995a: 55–56). It follows that the House model emphasizes alliances over descent (Watanabe 2004), as well as social and residential dimensions of kinship over biological and genealogical relatedness (Johnson and Paul 2016: 77, 81).

Lévi-Strauss further suggested that the House displays a façade of unity, but the coexistence of antagonistic kinship principles often generates tensions among its constituent branches (Boon 1990; Lévi-Strauss 1991: 435; McKinnon 1995: 172) which may result in the splitting-off of some of the more ambitious households (Acciaioli 2009; Gillespie 2000a: 9–10, 2000b: 33, 2000d; Gonzáles-Ruibal 2006: 145). Some archaeological investigations have addressed the propensity of the House for segmentation (e.g. Kahn 2007; Kahn and Kirch 2013; Kuijt 2018; Kuijt et al. 2011; Schortman and Urban 2011), but most have rather emphasized its unity, continuity, and perpetuity over its potential for dispersal (e.g. Boric 2007; Chesson 2003, 2007; Craig 2007; Gillespie 2000c, 2011; Hendon 2010; Hodder 2007; Hodder and Cessford 2004; Joyce 2007, 2011; King 2011; Kirch 2000; Marshall 2000; Tringham 2000; Watkins 2012). As Lévi-Strauss’ definition implies, the notions of precedence, longevity, and perpetuity of the corporate body (personne morale) represent fundamental values of House societies (Gillespie 2000a: 12–14, 2000b: 48–49). Contemporary Austronesian ethnography and ethnohistory, for example, have richly documented the paramount concern of Houses with inception, origin, and precedence (e.g. Fox 1993, 1994; Howell 1995; Kahn 2007: 200; Waterson 1995a). These ideas are expressed, amongst others, through narratives involving the foundation of the House in a legendary, mythical, or primordial past (Acciaioli 2009; Fox 1993; Helms 1998; Waterson 1995b, 2000). Claims of relatedness to memorable founders and ancestors, which are commonly and collectively reenacted through “ancestor veneration” practices, constitute a means by which the precedence and longevity of the House are legitimized (Beck 2007: 7–9; Gillespie 2000a: 12–13, 2000c: 473–475; Schrauwers 2016). In addition to economic wealth, ambiguous and often contested grades of precedence vis-à-vis the original founders represent another way by which rank is negotiated within and among Houses (Acciaioli 2009; Adams and Kusumawati 2011; Fox 1993: 16–17; McKinnon 2000: 170–174; Waterson 2000: 184–185).

Given the political prevalence of “origin” and “precedence” in Houses, most investigations on the subject address, one way or another, the topic of real or mythical founders (e.g. Adams and Kusumawati 2011; Kahn 2007; Schrauwers 2016: 338; Thomas 2015). The specific links in the chain leading up to the present, however, are usually not understood as a continuous succession of named and individual ancestors as lineage theory would have it, but rather as an ahistorical, anonymous, and generic collectivity of the dead (e.g. Adams and King 2011; Gillespie 2000c; Kahn 2007; Kirch 2000; Kuijt 2008; Laneri 2011; McKinnon 2000). Even though Lévi-Strauss’ definition of the House does not rule out unilineal descent as a temporary strategy of affiliation, most applications of the model either downplay or ignore descent as a structuring principle (Ensor 2011: 213–214). For this reason, it is often assumed that the House doesn’t entail a line of ancestors upon which people define and organize their mutual rights and obligations, as is the case in segmentary lineages. Even when specific founding ancestors are shown to be central to political competition and ranking within and among Houses, it is the collective substance of anonymous ancestors that appears to be truly at the
forefront of political struggles (Adams and Kusumawati 2011; Fox 1993:16–20; Gillespie 2000d:141, 159; Helms 1998:48; Kahn 2007: 206–207; Kirch 2000; McKinnon 2000; Waterson 1986:97, 1995b, 2000). As a result, the dead, just like material and immaterial wealth, are valuable in as much as they attest to the antiquity of the House and contribute to the ongoing social memory and regulation of its members through practice ( Hodder and Cessford 2004; Kuijt 2008). In the introductory chapter of the *Durable House* under the heading of *Ancestors*, Robin Beck neatly epitomizes this perspective: “It is easy to see why the bones of the dead, particularly long bones and skulls, are so vital to the life of the house. These human bones are ‘strong, dry, hard, and relatively impervious’ (Helms 1998:28) and as such are believed to be endowed with the power of perpetuity. They provide tangible access to a time of primordial origins and thereby link a living house to its past” (Beck 2007:7–8).

As James Whitley (2002) underscored at the turn of the millennium, it is important to reiterate the fact that not all dead are involved in socio-political affairs of the living. He cautioned archaeologists about classifying under the same banner of “ancestor” various ceremonial and funerary practices. When mentioning ancestors, Whitley noticed that most archaeologists implicitly referred to the largely apolitical and generic collectivity of the dead like those portrayed in the ethnographic case of the Merina of Madagascar (Bloch 1968:94, 1971:125–126, 147), as opposed to the politically active and individually named ancestors discussed in many classical African ethnographies (Fortes 1976). Interestingly, Lévi-Strauss used the Merina of Madagascar as an example of House society (1984:226). Though the Merina paid great attention to their megalithic tombs, upon which their identity partially hinged (Bloch 1968: 102–103), they had no interest in the after-life (Bloch 1971:124). The Merina initially remembered the dead individually, but the latter merged relatively quickly into an anonymous collectivity (ibid.:125). Despite the existence of secondary and even tertiary burials (ibid.:138–140, 145–146), the Merina did not hold regular ceremonies for the deceased, nor did they steadily propitiate them with sacrifices and offerings (ibid.:125–126). The Merina simply did not conceive of the deceased as dynamic agents in socio-political affairs of the living (ibid.:147).

Japanese “ancestor worship” represents another example regarding the apolitical nature of the deceased. Claude Lévi-Strauss also identified feudal Japan as an illustration of House society (1982). Following his insight, some authors have argued that contemporary peasant Japanese households (*ie*) display many characteristics of the House (Bloch 1995:72; Waterson 1995a:63–66). During the first forty-nine days following the death of an individual, Japanese *ie* members perform several funerary rituals aimed at purifying and distancing the dead from the living, as well as at transforming the polluted corpse into an ancestral spirit (Ooms 1976: 64–69; Yonemura 1976:179). During this period, families ritually cremate the deceased, collect the ashes, place them in an urn, and ultimately bury them in a family tomb to interact on predefined occasions with the dead, who formally become an ancestral spirit on the forty-ninth day (*i.e. hotoke*) (Ooms 1967:234; Smith 1974:52–53, 69–74; Yonemura 1976:179). For the same purpose, a permanent memorial tablet with the engraved name of the departed is also made and placed on the family altar in the house alongside other ancestral tablets of defunct household members (Smith 1974:72; Yonemura 1976:179). Individual and named ancestral spirits are celebrated and given offerings such as food at the grave or on the family altar on specific occasions like the monthly and annual death days (Smith 1974:90–98, 108–109, 133–134, 218; Yonemura 1976:179). Post-mortem rituals culminate in the final memorial
ceremony which is usually held either on the thirty-third or fiftieth anniversary of death. At this time, the deceased are believed to lose their individual identity and merge into a benign anonymous collectivity of ancestral spirits (i.e. senzo; Smith 1974:52–53, 69, 218; Takeda 1976:136; Yonemura 1976:179–180). These, taken as a collectivity, are also honored on specific occasions, such as during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the New Year, and the Annual Festival of the Dead at the household grave or altar (Smith 1974:98–104, 109, 218; Yonemura 1976:180). Ancestral spirits are occasionally believed to be harmful to the living when neglected, or to bring prosperity when they are happy. Like those of the Merina, however, they are overwhelmingly perceived as benign or passive (Ooms 1976:76–79; Smith 1974:123–125, 127, 148–151, 219). As a result, Japanese ancestral spirits are thought to have little agency in human affairs. The main reasons given to honor them are the dictates of custom and tradition, or gratitude for a prosperous continuity with the past (Ooms 1976:78; Smith 1974: 219; Takeda 1976:136; Thompson 2014:50; Yonemura 1976:181).

AYLLU

Like the segmentary lineage and the House, sixteenth century ayllus constituted nested landholding corporate groups which were ranked according to claims of priority of origins. As we have seen, one of the main differences between the segmentary lineage and the House is the way in which precedence is established. In a House, the main conduit to origins appears to be entitlement to an anonymous collectivity of the dead. In a segmentary lineage, it is the genealogical proximity to a succession of named ancestors that confers privileged access to origins. In order to situate the ayllu vis-à-vis the House and the lineage, we must determine the amount of individuality attributed to the dead, as well as their degree of agency in the socio-political affairs of the living. In order to make these determinations, I now turn to the ethno-historical record of the Andes.

The richest available source of information about non-Inca regional (ancestor) religious practices is found in judiciary documents resulting from the campaigns against idolatries in the central Andean highlands (Duviols 1971). In their efforts to eradicate native religions, the colonial government assigned ecclesiastical officials, judges, and prosecutors to indigenous villages to investigate and prosecute individuals suspected of practicing traditional rituals. Several waves of extirpation of idolatry occurred under Spanish colonial rule (ibid.). The most intense and best recorded ones took place between 1610 and 1660, especially under archiepiscopacies of Dr. Lobo Guerrero (1610–1622) and Pedro de Villagómez Vivanco (1641–1671) within the archdiocese of Lima (e.g. Duviols 2003; Hernández Príncipe 1923; Salomon and Urioste 1991). This ecclesiastical division encompassed the present-day central highland departments of Lima, Cerro de Pasco, Junín, Ancash, and Huánuco. The location of our archaeological investigations, to be presented below, overlaps the border of the last two departments.

The impact of the Spanish occupation on indigenous communities cannot be overstated. Written about a century after the Spanish conquest, the accounts of the campaigns against idolatries deal with societies undergoing a profound trauma. At the time of the visitas (inspection tours), native populations had already experienced a tremendous demographic decline (Cook 1981; Smith 1970) and had been resettled in Spanish style villages (reducciones). These new settlements often grouped together several previously independent ayllus. In other cases, members of a single ayllu were resettled in different villages (Duviols 1973:175–176). As a result, preexisting social relationships were
greatly altered. The new villages were also often built far away from previous indigenous settlements where the tombs of the inhabitants’ forebears and other symbols of Andean religion were located. As a result, the original sacred Andean landscape was greatly impacted. Since Spanish control became tighter in reducciones, Andean populations suffered even more than before from social, religious, and economic repression (Duviols 1986). In fact, the goal of the Spanish extirpators of idolatries was to destroy Andean religion, and torture was commonly used to obtain native confessions. Under these repressive circumstances, native religion was forced into secrecy and practiced clandestinely (Duviols 1973; Salomon 1995). In addition, in a struggle to maintain their privileged position as the liaisons between their own groups and the Spanish invaders, some native leaders (kurakas) apparently accommodated their religious practices to manipulate Spanish persecutors, while at the same time highlighting their contribution to the Catholic Church (Millones 1989). Bearing in mind the inevitable impact of colonial power on regional religions, the proceedings of the campaigns against idolatries are, nevertheless, the only historical information we have about non-Inca religious practices, and they reveal extremely valuable insights on local ancestor veneration practices (Doyle 1988; Salomon 1995).

The judicial trials resulting from the campaigns against idolatries frequently produced listings of what Andeans in the highlands considered sacred. Somehow puzzling to the extirpators, Andeans often used the term huaca to identify the different “things” they worshiped (Ramirez 2005:117). The huaca lists usually included immovable natural features such as stars, snow-peaked mountains, other mountains, hills, rivers, streams, springs, lakes, caves, large boulders, and trees as well as movable objects such as mummmified bodies, human bones, and small and unusual stones (i.e. conopas), as well as objects modified or made by humans like tombs in caves (i.e. machays), above-ground mortuary structures (i.e. chullpas), temples, idols, carved stones, and statuettes and wooden masks (e.g. Albornoz 1984 [1581–1585]:195–197; Arriga 1968 [1621]:22–32; Garcilaso 1966 [1609]: 76–77). Despite the great diversity of sacred manifestations, the mummmified bodies of important ancestors, or mallquis, represented the core of Andean religious beliefs, and became, at the onset, the main target of Spanish extirpators in their efforts to eradicate native religions (Doyle 1988:255–256; Duviols 1973:165, 2003:362; Gose 2016:11; Ramirez 2005:129, 134; Zuidema 1973:16).

At the time of the campaigns against idolatries, colonial sources mention two distinct groups occupying the highlands of the archbishopric of Lima: the Guaris and the Llacuaces. The Guaris were identified as autochthonous to the region, and had an economy essentially based on farming. The Llacuaces, on the other hand, were said to be camelid pastoralists who had previously migrated from the highlands of Chinchaycocha to the east, or from Huarochirí to the south (Duviols 1973). Whether these differences were real, or symbolized dual structural principles such as male and female, affinity and descent, or ruler and ruled, is a matter of debate (e.g. Duviols 1986:LIX-LX, LXII; Gose 1993:493; Salomon 1991:15; Zuidema 1973:17). In any case, judicial documents indicate that Guaris and Llacuac communities, large or small, traced their origins from at least one sacred mummmified ancestor. Songs evoking the creation myths of the mallquis were recited during periodic ceremonies held in their honor. Typically, they specify that sacred founders emerged in primordial times from the distant Pacific Ocean or from Lake Titicaca, after which they began an underground journey or traveled through the air, stopping on their way at various places, until they reached their destinations. Upon their arrival, the Guaris’ sacred progenitors sprouted
out of surrounding caves, streams, springs, or lakes, whereas lightning bolts released the *Llacuaces mallquis* on specific topographical features of snow capped mountains like Raco, Yarupajá, and Pariacaca (Duviols 1973:170, 1974–1976:275–286, 1986: LIX, LXIV). After the *mallquis* emerged from these sacred places known as *pacarinas*, they proceeded to found local groups and villages, many of which could still be identified in the seventeenth century and even today (Doyle 1988: Chapter 2; Duviols 1973:161–162, 169; Gose 2008:14–20). The names of places cited in the creation myths represented boundaries which provided the different communities with a map of what they considered to be their ancestral lands (Doyle 1988:49). The myths also invariably portray the Guari *mallquis* as the farmers who first managed water sources and introduced agricultural techniques such as irrigation canals and terraces ((ibid.:68; Duviols 1973:159–164). As a result of this, Guari *ayllus* regarded their *mallquis* as the original owners of the land, as well as the holders and suppliers of all foodstuffs.

Colonial documents indicate that larger *ayllus* or political units integrated smaller kin groups also known as *ayllus*. Not only did a larger *ayllu* recognize one mummified *mallqui* as the apical ancestor of all its lesser *ayllus*, but each smaller kin group within the larger unit possessed its own *mallqui* that was revered exclusively by his own kin (Doyle 1988:242; Duviols 2003:443; Ramirez 2005:126). Even though all the *mallquis* were considered sacred, the one venerated by all the segments within the larger group was hierarchically superior to the others. The supremacy of the latter was justified in mythical accounts by the fact that he was the original progenitor of all, while the lower order *mallquis* of minor *ayllus* were said to be either his sons or his grandsons (Doyle 1988: 60, 89–93, 96, 118; Duviols 1979:10–11). In other examples, the rank of *ayllu* segments within the larger *ayllu* was legitimized by order of seniority among siblings (Salomon 1991:20–21, 1995:322, 345), and still in others, by the military conquest by a *Llacuaz ayllu* of a Guari one (Duviols 1979:12–14; Salomon and Urioste 1991:136–137; Zuidema 1973:16–17). In all cases, the ritual responsibilities of *ayllu* members followed this nested hierarchy of *mallquis*, stretching from household, to *ayllu* segments, to an entire *ayllu* (Salomon 1991:22). Even when several *ayllus* joined together to adore a common group of *mallquis*, congregants had to first propitiate their closest *mallquis* before petitioning higher-level ones (Ávila 1966[1598]:89; Doyle 1988:122, 242; Hernández Príncipe 1923:51; Salomon 1991:17; Salomon and Urioste 1991:86–87; Spalding 1984:62, 66).

Beside the funeral and the first anniversary of the death of a member, community-wide celebration of ancestors usually took place three times a year, prior to sowing (*Pocoymita*), harvesting (*Caruaimita*), and the annual clean-up of irrigation canals (*Yarqa Aspiy*; Duviols 1979:10–11). During these events, to the rhythm of drums, songs, and dances, *ayllu* members took the *mallquis* out of their caves (*machays*) or mausoleums (*chullpas*) and placated them with maize beer, corn, and sacrifices of llama and guinea pigs. Solid offerings were burnt in front of the embalmed ancestors, whereas liquids such as blood and chicha were sprinkled on them and their tombs (Doyle 1988:225–230; Duviols 2003:409). Competitive displays between *ayllus* aiming to establish which best honored their *mallquis* characterized these collective exhibitions (Doyle 1988:164; Duviols 2003; Spalding 1984:57–60). The propitiations of the *mallquis* invariably involved pleas for good health, abundance of children, crops, and water, as well as marriage approbation, good fortune, and the naming of offspring (Doyle 1988; Isbell 1997:80; Spalding 1984:64). On the other hand, inappropriate care of the *mallquis* could bring disaster (Gose 1995:47; Duviols 1986:76, 189, 196, 212, 221, 237, 275, 407). Witnesses from Cajatambo...
repeatedly explain the illness or death of someone by his failure to conduct proper ritual duties towards the *mallquis*, which provoked their wrath (Duviols 2003).

The hierarchy of *mallquis*, as well as that of *pacarinas* and other huacas, mirrored an idealized social structure in which *ayllu* segments and individuals were ranked according to their perceived genealogical distance from the main founding ancestor (Gose 1993:489; Salomon 1991:19). Native lords (*kuraka*) and huaca priests represented the highest indigenous figures of authority in early colonial Andean communities (Martínez Cereceda 1996:33–38; Spalding 1984:33–41, 65–67). The *kurakas*, however, appear to have enjoyed a higher status, as they frequently patronized religious specialists, offering them shelter, food, and protection (Griffiths 1996:160–161; Millones 1979:259–260; Ramirez 2005:139–140). In any case, these offices were, to a large extent, hereditary, and came with many privileges (Arriaga 1968 [1621]:36; Choque Canqui 1998:325–326; Cobo 1990 [1653]:158; Salomon 1991:18; Spalding 1984:33). In Huaylas and Cajatambo for instance, *kurakas* claimed to be the closest living kin of an uninterrupted line of descendants from their respective *mallquis*. They, too, were arranged in a nested hierarchical order—the most powerful *kuraka* being the closest progeny of the highest or most integrative *mallquis* (Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:52–54). *Ayllu* members interrogated by Rodrigo Hernández Príncipe in 1621–1622, in the villages of Recuay, Allauca, and Ocros, could recite the sequential names of, and describe their kinship ties to a line of ancestors spanning from eight to eleven generations. These long genealogies appear to have had some historical grounding (Cardich 1975:25–27; Duviols 1973:182–184; Mariscotti 1973; Zuidema 1973:21, 28). During his visits in Huaylas and Cajatambo, Hernández Príncipe found the mummies of three of the four sons of Carhua Huanca, the common founding ancestor of several *Llacuaces* segments resettled in the village of Ocros, which reached back some nine generations. He describes the scene as follows:

... and they placed them in three well-built repositories, from where I had them taken away; they were seated with majesty, with their silver crowns and bracelets, although their clothes were very rotten, and within sight of sacrifices of llamas and guinea pigs and their shrines where they burnt incense to them” (Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:51, translation by the author).3

At the pre-Hispanic site of Urcon, Hernández Príncipe further discovered the descendants of Caque Poma, the great great grandson of Caha Yanac, the fourth son of the founding ancestor Carhua Huanca, who was the progenitor of a ruling line of *kurakas* also resettled in Ocros. He states that:

All these kindred pagans, great-grandfathers, grandfathers, fathers, and uncles of the caciques and governors [of] don Pedro Ventura [the acting *kuraka*], were in the old town of Urcon, within an ancient for-

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2 There is a great deal of overlap and confusion in the early colonial records regarding the functions of *kurakas* and huaca priests (Griffiths 1996:90–93; Martínez Cereceda 1995:33–38; Pease 1990:3). The difficulty in differentiating these titles has led some authors to conclude that priests and *kurakas* represented two facets of the same institution in pre-Hispanic times (Martínez Cereceda 1995:33–38; Millones 1979:260–261; Saignes 1999:83).

3 “... y en tres depósitos bien formados los depositaron, donde los mandé sacar, que estaban sentados con majestad, con sus diademas y chipanes de plata, aunque los vestuarios muy podridos, y a vista de los sacrificios de llamas y cuyes y sus aras donde encendían el incienso de ellas” (Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:51).
tress, buried within vaults . . . The cacique [Caque] Poma, so acclaimed and respected, was seated in the middle of them on his stool, [dressed in] a shirt of very fine cumbi [high quality wool cloth] and covered with silver plates. There were empty vaults made for his descendants, but, since they were now Christians, there had been no opportunity to fill them and they were sealed (Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:53; translation by the author).4

As suggested by these accounts, the embalmed mallquis were sometimes kept with their mummiified deceased relatives in the same tomb (Doyle 1988:56, 60, 96, 118), while, in other examples, they rested in separate and more elaborate mortuary structures (Doyle 1988:105–109; Duviols 1979:22). In the long run, however, ayllu members only remembered the names of politically and genealogically relevant ancestors, whereas the memory of the common dead faded into oblivion, or joined an anonymous collectivity after a generation or two (Cobo 1990 [1653]: 42; Duviols 2003:459– 461; Lau 2015:225–226).

As it is apparent from the above discussion, real or fictitious descent defined membership at each nested level of ayllu integration (Gose 1993:489; Salomon 1991:22, 1995:340). The creation myths and the genealogies such as those outlined by Hernández Príncipe connect ancestors, resource rights, and ritual authority to male lines. Claims of inheritance for these matters appear to have largely followed a patrilineal logic (Arriaga 1968 [1621]:29; Ávila [1611] 1966:255–259; Salomon 1991:20, 1995: 340; Spalding 1984:33; Zuidema 1973:28). Females do not figure as prominent actors in genealogies and ancestor veneration (Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:53; Salomon 1997:319). In Huarochoiri and other places, however, distinguished female huacas such as Chaupi Ñamca had the power of engendering females, as opposed to males who came from several pacarina on the snow capped peak of Pariacaca (Salomon 1991:21; Rostworowski 1988:84–85). In other instances, witnesses state that males originated from the sun and females from the moon (Duviols 2003:386, 414; Rostworowski 1988:78–79). These examples are evocative of a separate origin for males and females (Salomon 1991:21). Myths from Cajatambo and Huánuco further identify a female deity, Mama Raiguana, as the original creator of agricultural foodstuff (Cardich 2000; Duviols 2003:354–355; Rostworowski 1988:73–74) and some huaca priestesses enjoyed a rank like that of priests (Duviols 2003; Salomon 1991:21). The documentation discussed above, among other sources, has led some authors to suggest that parallel descent characterized the kinship system of central Andean highland groups (Isbell 1997:276; Lambert 1980:37; Salomon 1991:21; Silverblatt 1987:20–39; Zuidema 1973:17–19), a system in which males traced their descent from a patriline and females through a matriline (Maybury-Lewis 1960:191).

In addition, descent was not the only criteria of relatedness. Many examples show that the households of the kurakas sponsored and housed non-kindred such as huaca priests and other officials. Like the kurakas who often chose them, they were freed from tribute labor, in contrast to commoners (Duviols 2003:328; Gose 2016:11; Millones 1979:259; Ramirez 2005:139–140). At a higher level, mythical exogamous marriages

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4 Todos estos gentiles referidos tronco bizagüelos, agüelos, padres y tíos de los caciques y gobernadores [de] don Pedro Ventura, estaban en el pueblo viejo de Urcon, dentro una fortaleza antigua, en bóvedas y soterrados… El cacique Poma, tan mentado como respetado, estaba en medio destos sentado en su dúo, camiseta de cumbi finíssima con chapería de plata. Bóvedas habían vacías hechas para sus descendientes, que, como ya eran cristianos, y no había oportunidad de ocuparlas, estaban cerradas” (Hernández Príncipe 1923:53).
among important huacas and their progenies often justified alliances between ayllus (Salomon 1991:9, 1997). In the village of Otuco in Cajatambo, for example, the Llacuaz sons of Libiac (the lightning deity), Raupoma, and Choquerunta, symbolically married female maize deities (zaramamas) typically associated with Guaris ayllus (Duviols 1973:179; 1986: LXI; see also Isbell 1997:83–84). Moreover, informants from Cajatambo indicate that the specific descent lines from which higher-level kurakas derived their authority had a distinct mythical origin (Duviols 2003:351, 386, 414; Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:51–53; Ramirez 2005:123; Rostworowski 1977:250; Zuidema 1973). These facts underscore the concern of elites with alliances, and suggest a tendency towards exogamy. However, the majority of ayllu members most likely practiced endogamy in order to retain localized resources within the group (Isbell 1997:275–276; Salomon 1995:321).

The historical data presented above allows us to draw several conclusions regarding the questions set out at the onset of this section on how the colonial ayllu compares to the segmentary lineage and the House. In the fashion of Houses, the early seventeenth century ayllu employed various kinship mechanisms to achieve economic and political ends: descent and alliances, kin and non-kin relatedness, endogamy and exogamy, as well as mythical marriages. Like the Austronesian House, the ayllu also shows a great concern with origin and precedence. However, the articulation of the latter follows a logic much more akin to segmentary lineages than Houses. Most significantly, the ayllus’ reference to long unilineal genealogies traceable through a succession of named male ancestors as a means of assessing inheritance rights of crucial resources— as well as for determining the authority and rank among individuals and ayllus— is typical of segmentary lineage systems. It stands in sharp contrast to the unspecified channels generated by the collective substance of generic deceased ancestors leading to the original founders outlined in many House examples. Like the segmentary lineage, the ideology of descent appears to be more predominant in the ayllu than in most House societies. Yet, as with Houses, the idiom of affinity prevailed for establishing alliances at a higher level of socio-political organization among elites. It should be stressed, however, that the above discussion sketches the ayllu at a given point in time and place. The ayllus elsewhere in the Andes and prior to the seventeenth century might have been socio-politically constituted in different ways more or less akin to a segmentary lineage or a House. It would, thus, be a mistake to consider the ayllu as a static entity by projecting it into time and space without prior critical assessments. This is the subject I turn to below. I present an archaeological case study of upper Marañón communities prior to the Spanish invasion to determine the extent to which the lineage, the House, and the seventeenth century ayllu can shed light on their socio-political organization.

LATE PRE-HISPANIC COMMUNITIES OF THE RAPAYÁN AREA IN THE UPPER MARAÑÓN DRAINAGE

The Rapayán area is located on both banks of the Upper Marañón River at the eastern border of the Department of Ancash and the western limit of the Department of Huánuco in the provinces of Huari, Huamalí, and Marañón (Figure 2). As already stated, this region falls under the general area visited by Spanish officials during the seventeenth century in the most intensive campaigns against idolatries ever to take place. In crossing the Andes from west to east, the steep mountains of the Rapayán area are one of the last physical barriers one faces before reaching the tropical forests of the Amazon drainage. The Marañón and the numerous small streams that feed it have carved spectacular depressions in the mountains through time.
Altitude changes substantially over short distances, varying thousands of meters over the course of a few kilometers. In this extremely rugged topography, agriculturally productive lands without human interventions are limited, and tend to be concentrated on gently sloping hillsides.

The late pre-Hispanic stone architectural surface remains of the Upper Marañón are among the best preserved in the Andes. The settlements covered in this study extend over 800 square kilometers on both banks of the Marañón River between the villages of Tantamayo to the south and Rapayán to the north (Figure 2). The settlements in the northern portion of the surveyed area around the village of Tantamayo (102 sites) exhibit significant architectural differences compared to those found in the southern section around the village of Tantamayo (82 sites). For the purpose of this article and for the sake of clarity, I will mainly consider the settlements in the surroundings of Rapayán. The sites around Tantamayo to the south await other opportunities to publish. According to our excavations at the eponymous site of Rapayán in 2005, and from surface ceramics collected at the other sites in the northern portion of the study area, most of the settlements with surface architecture were originally constructed during the Late Intermediate Period (1000–1450 C.E.) and continued to be occupied during the Late Horizon (1450–1532 C.E.; Mantha and Malca 2016, 2017). Two main functional settlement categories prevailed in the Rapayán area during this time: the residential sites where most people lived, and the Defensive, Ceremonial, and Communication sites (DCC). Below, I briefly describe the architectural structures found at these settlement types, with a particular focus on establishing their mortuary function.

**THE RESIDENTIAL SITES**

The residential sites represent close to eighty percent of all sites (82 sites) of the Rapayán region. They are located on the tops of ridges or hilltops between altitudes of 2500 masl and 3500 masl in the quechua ecological zone (see Pulgar Vidal 1946:83–103 for an explanation of this zone). Their locations in the agriculturally productive quechua zone and their association with countless agricultural terraces, coupled with the presence of very few corrals in the area, suggest an economy mainly focused on farming. Most importantly for the present purpose, even though the size of settlements varies from less than one hectare to twenty-five hectares, the residential sites always follow the same distribution of above-ground mortuary structures: multi-story buildings in the upper part, mortuary niches inside residential structures in the middle, and relatively small above-ground mausoleums (chullpas) in the lower section (Figure 3). Since these structures formed a repeated and coherent architectural pattern at all residential sites, they are most likely contemporaneous as a group. I have outlined elsewhere the evidence supporting a mortuary function for these three kinds of structures (e.g. Mantha 2009, 2015). However, since the mortuary nature of these buildings is central to the main argument of this article, I summarize below the information already available. However, I also add significant new evidence, especially for the multi-story buildings, since a few recent publications have either partially rejected a mortuary function (Martirena 2014:51–52, 214) or remained ambiguous about their function by alternately suggesting a defensive, residential, or mortuary function (Lau 2015:216, 2016b:163).

**Upper section: multi-story structures**

The upper border of each site ends with usually one, but sometimes more than one, massive multi-story buildings (Figures 3 and 4).
They represent the most elaborate and largest constructions of the region. Their dimensions vary from three to fifteen meters in height, from two to twenty-two meters in length, and from two to four meters in width. They display fine masonry with well-cut and polished andesite stones united by a very thin layer of mortar. Some exhibit built-in ventilation systems to keep their interiors drier. The multi-story structures comprise between two to seven floors, which are made from large and thick stone slabs uniting the interior walls. Protruding stones incorporated into the masonry at regular intervals inside and outside the multi-story buildings act as stairways which enable one to reach the different levels (Figure 4). Each floor displays a variable number of rectangular or slightly trapezoidal niches, windows or doorways that look towards the residential settlement (Figures 4, 5 and 7). Sometimes, large overhanging stone slabs amalgamated within the masonry, just beside the niches and windows, create suspended platforms visibly intended for displays like mumified bodies (Figures 5 and 7). Similarly, some multi-story buildings are directly attached to a massive wall exhibiting several large niches positioned at varying heights (Figure 4). These are clearly large enough to have held mummies. In some cases, the multi-story buildings represent an outgrowth of the back room of residential structures, a characteristic I will elaborate on elsewhere. In other circumstances, however, the multi-story buildings are positioned in front of a small open area, but surrounding walls and the narrowing steep topography clearly restricted their accessibility (Figure 3). The above description appears to match Antonio Vásquez de Espinoza’s observations made in the 1620s and tends to further corroborate the mortuary function of these large structures. When he traveled in the Upper Marañón region in what is now the modern department of Huánuco where multi-story buildings are commonplace, he declared:

. . . and one league away [from Huánuco Pampa], there are many uninhabited towns of the ancients, and in them and on those hills, are many tower-like sepulchers with doors to the east, and in each tower up above and down below are many seated dead Indians, intact and set there, because this place is always frigid with light winds. Since the time of their idolatry they have had the luck referred to. It seems like yesterday that they were put in these sepulchers, I write this because I have seen them (Vásquez de Espinoza 1992 [1628]: 660; translation by the author).

Additional direct and indirect evidence confirms the mortuary function of the multi-story buildings. Most importantly, my team and I found a great quantity of human bones, some still articulated and with skin tissues, as well as ceramic and textile fragments, in eleven multi-story buildings at different settlements throughout the research area (Figures 6, 7, and 8). Given the brutality and destructive propensities of the Spanish extirpators during the campaigns against idolatries held throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as of contemporary looters, it comes as no surprise that most of them no longer contain human remains.

These large structures also represent the only buildings, together with some massive walls attached to them, to display petroglyphs in some of their construction stones. Some of these

5 . . . y a una legua [de Huánuco Pampa] hay muchos pueblos despoblados de los antiguos, y en ellos y en aquellos cerros muchas sepulturas de ellos a modo de torrecillas con las puertas al Oriente, y en cada torrecilla en lo alto y bajo muchos indios muertos sentados, enteros e incorporados, por ser aquel sitio siempre frío y de vientos sutiles, que con haber desde el tiempo de su gentilidad están de la suerte referida, parece que ayer se pusieron en aquellos sepulcros, que por haberlos visto lo escribí (Vásquez de Espinoza 1992 [1628]:660).
Mantha: Communities of the Upper Marañón

depict human faces similar to those portrayed on Recuay stone monoliths (Figure 9). George Lau directly relates Recuay anthropomorphic sculptures to ancestors, as well as to high status chullpas (2016a:178–179). Aside from these sculpted faces, most of the petroglyphs depict abstract figures such as concentric circles (Figures 9 and 10) and were carved in sandstone—a kind of stone not directly found in this area. I believe that these petroglyphs may have been extracted from some distant sacred localities and incorporated into the masonry of the multi-story buildings in order to enhance their sacredness, or—as Mary Helms would put it—to highlight their privileged access to origins (1998). One quarry from which these petroglyphs may have been extracted is located some forty kilometers west across the mountains in the Puchka River drainage, at a site called Caullumachay (Figure 6, site 17). Reminiscent of a sacred pacarina, this site contains an abundance of similar petroglyphs that were carved directly into the sandstone bedrock cliffside (Figure 11). The style of some of the petroglyphs suggests, at a minimum, an Early Horizon origin (900 B.C.E–700 B.C.E; Ibarra 2010:30–32).

Around half a dozen multi-story buildings in the area further exhibit ornaments of bright white quartz stones in their upper section (Figure 12, see also Figure 4). In addition to being clear evidence of elaborateness, the white quartz evokes lightning, sunlight, and snow-peaked glaciers. In her ethnography on the village of Sonqo in the department of Cusco, Catherine Allen observes that:

Hard, unusual stones . . . and bare bones . . . are felt to be the most potent sources of energy. They are intimately connected with lightning and sunlight, whose power they absorb and condense.... Water is most powerful and sacred in its crystalized form, and thus the glaciers of Qoyllur Rit'i are the focus of the year's most important and emotionally charged pilgrimage. Similarly, the most powerful Apukuna are those covered with snow and ice (Allen 1988:63).

In the region under consideration, as already underlined, lightning bolts were thought to have unleashed Llacuaz ancestors on the snowy peaks of Raco in Cerro de Pasco, Yarupajá in Huánuco, or Pariacaca in Lima. Libiac Cancharco, also called Yanaraman, is one of these Llacuaces ancestors said to have been dropped by lightning on top of the Raco summit (Cardich 2000; Duviols 1973:168, 2003:226–227; Salomon 2018: chapter 3, pp. 83–111). His richly ornamented mummy was found and later burnt, along with many other idols, by Father Fernando de Avendaño near the village of San Cristóbal de Rapaz in Cajatambo in the early seventeenth century (Arriaga 1968 [1621]:15–16). According to Frank Salomon, the first part of his name “Libiac” refers to “sparkling” or “re-splendent”, whereas the last part, “Cancharco” signifies something akin to “lightning” (2018: 93). María Rostworoski further translates Apu Libiac Cancharco as “the great shiny Cancharco” (1988:66; translation by the author). The meaning of Libiac Cancharco consequently stresses the relationship between this Llacuaz ancestor and lightning bolts, brilliant white color, snow-covered peaks, and possibly bright white quartz. The Late Intermediate Period high altitude puna site of Tinyash north of the study area, as well as several settlements in the Chinchaycocha region where Llacuaces are thought to have originated, exhibit similar bands of quartz on high walls and buildings (Thompson and Ravines 1973; Parsons et al. 2000). I thus believe that the rows of white quartz on some multi-story buildings in the Rapayán area symbolize a reference to Llacuaz ancestors.

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6 “el gran brillante Cancharco” (Rostworowski 1988:66).
Our 2005 excavations at the site of Rapayán (Figure 6, site 7) unveiled a final piece of evidence of the multi-story buildings’ mortuary function. While digging a trench in the open area at the foot of the main multistory structure of area II, we uncovered a circular alignment of stones in the middle of which rested the buried remains of a dog on top of which the bones of a guinea pig had been laid (Figures 3 and 13; see also Mantha and Malca 2017:112–114). Ethno-historical documents indicate that specifically raised dogs were sometimes sacrificed during the funerals of important individuals (Gose 2008: 143, 157). Another early historical source mentions the sacrifice of a dog together with four guinea pigs at the shrine of a founding ancestor during rituals held in his honor and that of Pachamama (Álvarez 1998[1588]:100–102; Zuidema and Quispe 1989 [1967]:47). Finally, both ethnographic and historical accounts indicate that in some areas, dogs held the task of carrying the soul of the deceased over a bridge of hair across a river of blood or water into the proper “other world” of the dead called Upaymarca (Allen 1988:61; Arriaga 1968 [1621]:64; Doyle 1988:239; Hernández Príncipe 1923 [1621–1622]:41; Zuidema and Quispe 1989 [1967]:47). As these references suggest, I believe that the dog and guinea pig burial at the Rapayán site represented offerings in the form of a sacrifice to an important ancestor who rested in the adjacent multi-story building of area II. In summary, direct and indirect archaeological evidence, together with ethnographic and historical data point to the mortuary function of multi-story buildings.

Middle section: house structures

Tightly packed quadrangular residential structures occupy rows of long horizontal terraces in the middle section of each residential settlement. Some houses have up to four rooms, but most possess only two. A measured sample of nearly 200 house structures at the site of Rapayán indicate that they cover 33 square meters (6.27 meters in length and 5.15 meters in width) with walls reaching 2.5 meters in height on average (Mantha 2004). Some dwellings, however, are much bigger. Five of them, for instance, are twice that size, covering a little over 60 square meters with walls reaching 5.2 meters from the present surface. Excavated house structures at the same site show that the last occupational floor was buried under at least one meter of debris, meaning that the elevation of original house walls could have reached, in some cases, an outstanding 6 meters in height.

As I have shown in more depth elsewhere, aside from containing artefacts typical of domestic activities, the house structures also exhibit evidence of mortuary rituals (Mantha 2015; Mantha and Malca 2017). For the purpose of the present study, one example will suffice. The two corners beside the main doorway in the residences’ main rooms each contains a large and elaborate niche with an overhang in the upper part of the converging walls (Figures 14 and 15). The two back corners of the same room also comprise large niches, but these are constructed within the wall separating the main room from the other smaller rear one(s) (Figures 14 and 16). Each house at Rapayán thus contained four large niches, one in each corner of the main room. All of them are sealed except for a small window above a vertically-oriented flat, circular, or quadrangular piece of limestone. A sample of 43 well-preserved niches from the Rapayán site average 100 centimeters in width, 97 centimeters in height and 101 centimeters in length.

When considering the function of these niches, we learn from the mestizo chronicler, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, that house corners were sacred in some parts of the Andes. He mentions that:
Huaca is applied to any temple, large or small, to the sepulchers set up in their fields, and to the corners in their houses where the Devil spoke to their priests . . . (Garcilaso de la Vega 1966 [1609], Volume I:76–77).

Father Barnabe Cobo further observes, in his work written around 1653, that:

The embalmed bodies were greatly venerated and sacrifices were made to each one according to their resources. Some kept the bodies of their relatives in their own houses . . .” (Cobo [1653] 1990:40; see also p. 247 for a similar statement).

In light of the above statements, it is worth considering the hypothesis that the niches built in the corners of each house were designed to host the bones or mummified remains of household members. Several lines of evidence seem to corroborate this interpretation.

First, it should be stressed that the local primary school at the Rapayán village keeps a collection of a dozen mummies (Delfour 2008). They are all placed in a foetal position, with their hands and feet tied with ropes. Given their size, the house niches could easily have held a mummy each. The small window giving access into the cavity would also have allowed household members to make offerings to the deceased (e.g. Milliones 1979:251; Ramirez 2005:30, 202). Some inhabitants of the region still make offerings such as coca leaves, alcohol, cigarettes, flowers, and candy inside those niches (Delfour 2008; Mantha 2004). Second and more compelling, a few niches from different settlements still contained human bones, including at the site of Huata (Figure 6, site 16) at the southwestern edge of our study area. When Antonio Raimondi visited the same site 150 years earlier, in 1860, he observed that:

Some [house structures] look like square or rectangular rooms without a roof; the walls contain some niches in their interior forming small closets. . . Some of these cavities located within the-thickness of the walls are full of human bones; in such a way that it can be presumed that the ancient people kept their deceased in the same houses where they lived (Raimondi 1943 [1860–1861]: 180–181; translation by the author).7

In summary, general historical data, previous exploration in the zone, as well as direct and indirect evidence drawn from our archaeological investigations all support the idea that the large house niches were constructed to hold the bones or mummified bodies of departed household members.

Lower section: chullpas

The lower part of each site begins with groups of generally small buildings with rectangular floor plans (Chullpa Type A; Figure 3). They average 2.99 meters in length, 1.95 meters in width, and 2.69 meters in height (Figure 17). They usually consist of a single story, but occasionally display two or three stories. Each level possesses a single small doorway. Their roofs are made of corbeled stone slabs. These constructions are relatively isolated from the rest of the architecture. As opposed to the multi-story buildings and houses, they stand in the open, and were relatively easy to access. A total of fourteen such rectangular structures are found

7 “Algunos tienen el aspecto de cuartos cuadrados o rectangulares sin techos; las paredes tienen algunos nichos en su parte interna, figurando pequeñas alacenas. . . . Algunos de estos huecos situados en el espesor de las paredes se hallan llenos de huesos humanos; de manera que hacen presumir que los antiguos conservaban a sus difuntos en las mismas casas donde vivían” (Raimondi 1943 [1860–1861]:180-181).
at the lower end of area II of the Rapayán site, three of which are closely associated with house structures (Figure 3). At other sites like Huata (Figure 6, site 16) mentioned above, several similar structures face each other around an open circular platform at the lower end of the settlement. Other comparable structures display more elaborate architectural features. In addition to being larger, some exhibit finer masonry, with gambrel roofs made of large projecting stone slabs in the gables (Chullpa Type B; Figure 18). Still others display a succession of horizontal stone triangles within the wall masonry above the doorway (Chullpa Type D; Figure 19). Although relatively frequent in the zone, this design appears to have a wider distribution north of our study area in the Uchumarca and Abieso drainages (Rojas Ponce 1967; Thompson 1973) as well as in Chachapoyas (Reichlen and Reichlen 1950; Schjellrup 1992, 1997). Beige, white, pale blue, or red plaster still covers some of the external walls of both types of these more elaborate constructions. A two-story structure at the site of Maraypampa (Figure 6, site 9), for example, displays all the above decorative elements, in addition to having llama bones incorporated into the masonry around the second level doorway.

Given the presence of abundant human bones in many of these structures, some still articulated and covered with dry skin, I infer that they had a mortuary function. They also share many morphological similarities with structures that have been described as having a funerary function throughout the Andean area (e.g. Hyslop 1977; Ibarra 2001; Isbell 1997; Nielsen 2018; Parsons et al. 2000; Perales 2018; Toyne and Anzellini 2017). These kinds of above-ground mausoleums are commonly called chullpas in Andean literature.

THE DEFENSIVE, CEREMONIAL, AND COMMUNICATION SITES (DCC)

The remaining twenty percent of the Rapayán zone settlements (20 sites) consist of Defensive, Ceremonial, and Communication sites (DCC). The DCC settlements are located strategically throughout the valley at high altitudes, between 3700 masl and 4300 masl (see Mantha 2009:164 figure 3). They are always associated with, and situated above, the residential settlements. They are particularly abundant around the largest and most populous residential settlements of the area like the site of Rapayán. In addition to displaying clear defensive attributes (Mantha 2009), the DCC sites are visually interrelated, due to their high elevation. From one DCC site, it is always possible to see at least one other DCC. Because all the residential sites are closely connected with the DCCs, and the latter tend to be visually linked, it can be postulated that the population of the Rapayán region was integrated into a system of visual communication that would have been extremely efficient for mobilizing the valley’s population in the case of a potential threat. The clearly defensive and communicative nature of these sites suggests that a climate of tension and violence prevailed in late pre-Hispanic times in that area of the Andes.

These forts usually do not show any house foundations. Surface ceramics are extremely scarce and, sometimes even absent at DCC sites. These facts suggest that few people must have lived there permanently. Most of them were probably used only as temporary refuges for the population of the residential sites when threatened. On the other hand, most DCCs exhibit one, and sometimes several, multi-story structures directly attached to the defensive walls. For example, two multi-story buildings attached to the same oval wall face each other at the small DCC site of Matacastillo (Figure 20, site 4). At the site of Parina II, four multi-story
buildings distributed on two connected platforms are linked by two converging walls (Figure 21, site 1). As shown in these examples, the multi-story structures at DCC settlements have the same architectural characteristics as those of residential sites discussed above. Considering the inferred mortuary nature of these buildings at residential sites, I contend that ceremonial activities linked to ancestor veneration also took place at these high-altitude sites. In sum, the DCC sites seem to have had a triple function: to defend, to communicate, and to hold funerary ceremonies.

**DISCUSSION**

To recapitulate, the residential sites from the Rapayán region during the LIP show three kinds of above-ground sepulchers: large multi-story buildings and associated walls, various kinds of relatively small rectangular structures (*chullpas*), and wall cavities within each house structure. It is most likely that the prehistoric inhabitants of the region placed the bones or the mummified bodies of their ancestors inside each of these structures. The multi-story mortuary monuments are also present at the Defensive, Ceremonial, and Communication sites, which are located at higher altitudes in the puna, and are distributed strategically across the Rapayán Valley.

Among these various types of burials, the multi-story buildings stand out due to their singularity, their monumental size, and their high visibility. They also exhibit evidence of architectural elaborateness unique to these structures, such as overhanging stone platforms, sophisticated ventilation ducts, and built-in stairway systems. Given the above characteristics, it is likely that each one of them housed the remains of the most important deceased of the community—that is, the founding ancestor of each *ayllu*. The incorporation of sandstone petroglyphs or rows of white quartz into the masonry appears to be a reference to a primordial sacred time during which the founder would have emerged. As underlined previously, the petroglyphs do look as if they had been extracted elsewhere, maybe from distant and particularly potent *pacarinas*. The white quartz, on the other hand, likely symbolized lightning from which the Llacuaces ancestors were thought to have originated. As a result, the multi-story buildings seem to allude to the primeval origin and precedence of the founding ancestor.

Moreover, the small open area in front of some multi-story buildings suggests that the population of each *ayllu* could have gathered at that location to periodically propitiate the founding ancestor. The dog and guinea pig burial exhumed at the foot of the multi-story building in area II of the Rapayán site tends to corroborate this interpretation. The multi-story buildings also contain multiple windows, niches, and overhanging stone platforms apparently intended for the display of various mummified bodies during these periodical communal ceremonies. We may recall that a few multi-story buildings still contained a great amount of human bones, which suggests that they once housed multiple deceased individuals. In addition to the remains of the founding ancestor, it is probable that the multi-story buildings also held the bodies of subsequent departed members from the same descent line. By extension, the recognized closest living progeny of the founder most likely held the highest position of authority (*kuraka*) of his *ayllu*. The sequential line of ancestors held in the multi-story building would have allowed the living *kuraka* to establish a link reaching back to primeval time, and thus endowed him with the inherited sacred power of primacy. This is exactly the kind of burial arrangement Hernández Príncipe alluded to in the seventeenth century, following his discovery in Cajatambo of Caque Poma’s mummy, together
with the mummified remains of his line of close kin.

If the multi-story building held the most potent ancestors at each residential site, who then rested in the chullpas at the lower end of the settlement? The chullpas also appear to have been public mortuary structures, since they occupy open areas in the lower section of the residential sites. They were most probably visited and propitiated periodically by several individuals. Considering that they are much smaller and less elaborate, however, it is likely that they housed the remains of less prestigious individuals, as opposed to those kept in the multi-story buildings. In other words, the chullpas could have been the resting places of lesser ayllu segment ancestors. Recent bio-distance analysis comparing late pre-Hispanic skeletal samples from different chullpas of the same site have shown that DNA and phenotypic traits are significantly more homogeneous when considering individuals buried within the same chullpa. Conversely, the bio-distance among groups buried in different chullpas is significantly more heterogeneous. Stated another way, people disposed of in the same chullpa are biologically more alike compared to skeletal samples from other chullpas (Baca et al. 2012; Mendisco et al. 2018; Velasco 2018). Although these results from the southern Andes cannot a priori be taken as representative of the entire Andes, they still provide weight to the idea that biological relatedness was important to the identity of both higher ayllu (residential site’s multi-story building) and lesser ayllu segments (chullpas).

Regarding the burial niches in house structures, the fact that they are sealed, except for small windows in their upper part, suggests that the mummified bodies or the bones resting in them were not meant to be moved. The deceased kept in the house were thus venerated by a limited number of people, most probably members of the same sociological family. The bodies held in the wall cavities might thus have been the ancestors from whom each family traced its most direct origin. Since this pattern is repeated in every residence, each dwelling most likely housed co-residents composed of socially and biologically related family members. Nonetheless, since there are four niches in each house structure, it remains difficult to determine exactly who occupied them. Did they contain only a line of male ancestors, or did they also include female ancestresses? As we have seen from Hernández Príncipe’s account, genealogies and ancestor veneration represented the domain of males in colonial times. It would, thus, be logical that house burial chambers held male ancestors. Nevertheless, since there is little historical evidence on residential burials, no clear answer to this important question can be provided for the moment. Given that the great majority of house niches no longer contain human bones, it remains unlikely that bioarchaeologists will be able to settle this question any time soon. Nonetheless, the house burials do seem to stress the importance of descent. The bones or mummified bodies contained in them might, thus, have been used to establish the
rank of individuals according to their genealogical distance from the founding ancestor and his closest living kin (kuraka).

Lastly, multi-story buildings are also found at the Defensive, Ceremonial, and Communication sites. As mentioned previously, few people must have permanently lived at these settlements. The population of the area would have used them as temporary refuges in case of threat, as well as to occasionally honor the ancestors kept in the multi-story buildings. Given their similarity to the multi-story buildings found at residential sites, it is possible that they also sheltered founding ancestors of the more integrative kind. Since few people, if any, lived at the DCCs on a permanent basis, it is likely that they were brought there from the residential sites only on specific occasions in order to celebrate them. What may have been the purpose of these celebrations if the communities already paid tribute to their mallquis at the residential sites? To answer this question, we must recall that these sites are strategically located throughout the Rapayán zone. Because of their high elevations, it is always possible to see one or more other DCC sites from any DCC settlement. By conducting periodic ceremonies in honor of the founding ancestors at these highly visible and prominent settlements, it appears as though the inhabitants literally appropriated their geographical surroundings. It also may have facilitated the integration of the population above the local residential settlement into a broader regional configuration. It thus can be proposed tentatively that the ceremonies held in honor of the ancestors at the DCC sites served, amongst others, the purpose of creating and reinforcing alliances among localized communities.

The DCC settlements of Matacastillo and Parina II mentioned earlier tend to corroborate this interpretation. Several multi-story buildings related by encircling or converging wall(s) face one another at these sites. If the mummified bodies were brought there occasionally from the residential sites, as I propose, then the celebration would have involved the participation of multiple mallquis from different ayllus. By engaging the participation of several ayllus, the ceremonies held at the DCC would, thus, have reinforced their common interest and identity. It is at this broader integrative level that political alliances among different ayllus likely unfolded. As the historical record shows, these alliances might then have been legitimized in mythical accounts using an idiom of kinship ties such as seen in cases involving the ranking of brother-mallquis. More permanent alliances might also have been sealed through exogamous marriages among the elite of different ayllus. In any case, these alliances probably shifted through time and were likely crucial to the continuity of ayllu communities in a period of generalized conflict (Arkush and Ikehara 2019).

CONCLUSION

The evidence presented from the upper Marañón during late pre-Hispanic times clearly shows that ayllu communities formed segmentary organizations. For the same time period, this kind of social arrangement has also been documented elsewhere in the Andes, but from slightly different perspectives (e.g. Arkush 2014; Lane 2007; Nielsen 2006). In the case of the Rapayán area, the segmentary configuration of ayllus is best seen through multiscalar and nested ancestor veneration practices—that is, from houses (corner niches), to lesser ayllu segments (chullpas), to ayllu (residential site multi-story buildings), and to supra-ayllu alliances (DCCs’ multi-story buildings). A nested hierarchy of ancestor veneration practices thus prevailed in this area of the Andes, from the exclusive household ancestors up to the regionally inclusive DCCs’ primogenitors. Within a single residential settlement, ayllu members venerated the bones or mummified bodies of their house, ayllu segment and ayllu ancestors.
The prevalence of nested ancestor veneration practices up to the level of the local ayllu (residential site) suggest that genealogies, descent, and biological relatedness were important to the identity and social structure of its members. If the description of colonial ancestor veneration practices from the same general area as our own study can be projected into late pre-Hispanic time, then the ideology of descent and the inheritance of critical resources probably followed a unilinear and patrilineal pattern. This conclusion conforms to the expectations of the segmentary lineage model.

Alliances and non-biological relatedness, however, do appear to have prevailed above the ayllu or residential site at the regional or supra-ayllu level of integration. I have suggested that the high altitude DCC settlements possibly brought together the ancestors of different ayllus or residential sites. The celebrations held in their honor at these prominent sites would have facilitated the creation of alliances among previously unrelated ayllus according to prevailing patterns of violence at any given time. This kind of kinship manipulation, if accurate, bears more similarities with the House than the segmentary lineage model. In fact, the use of diverse kinship strategies to achieve political ends, including unilinear descent, is what Lévi-Strauss had in mind when he defined the House. Theoretically, the ayllu could thus be interpreted along the lines of the House model. It is important to stress, however, that the House concept emerged in anthropology largely as a solution to the criticisms of the lineage model. As a result, House-centric studies have overwhelmingly distanced themselves from descent to the benefit of alliances. It is evident that the ideology of descent was much more prevalent in the social structure of the late pre-Hispanic ayllu of the upper Marañón than most case studies on the House outline. As a result of this observation, it seems preferable to avoid qualifying the late pre-Hispanic communities of the Rapyán area as either Houses or segmentary lineages. Instead, I suggest that they should still be called ayllus, but with the understanding that the term implies a strong predisposition for descent at lower segmentary levels and an inclination for alliances at higher levels of segmentary integration.

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Figure 1. Map of the Andes showing the location of the Rapayán and Tantamayo region in the upper Marañón drainage (after Ogburn 2005).
Figure 2. Map of surveyed settlements in the Rapayán and Tantamayo region. Most of the sites date to the LIP and continued to be occupied during the LH.
Figure 3. Map of area II of the site of Rapayán (site 7) showing the distribution pattern of mortuary structures.

Figure 4. Multi-story buildings and associated wall displaying protruding stones, area II of Huata (site 16). The multi-story building in the back displays a band of quartz stones in its upper part.
Figure 5. Multi-story building displaying overhanging stone platforms beside the windows, area I of Huata (site 16).
Figure 6. Map of the sites discussed in the text. Settlements with multi-story buildings still containing human bones are indicated. (1) Parina II (DCC); (2) Parina I; (3) Parina V; (4) Matacastillo (DCC); (5) Tactabamba III; (6) Tactabamba II; (7) Rapayán; (8) Viro; (9) Maraypampa; (10) Uchucmarca; (11) El Solitario (Urpish); (12) Quepakara; (13) Huari Ushnu; (14) Japallán; (15) Hijín III; (16) Huata; (17) Caullumachay.
Figure 7. Multi story-building of Uchucmarca (site 10) still containing human bones (first and second levels). Note the overhanging stone platforms on the third and fourth levels.
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Figure 20. Two multi-story buildings facing each other and attached to the same wall at the DCC site of Matacastillo (site 4).
Figure 21. Plan view of the DCC site of Parina II (site 1). The four multi-story buildings are located on two platforms interconnected by two converging walls.