3 The Stones of Pumacayán

A personal archive

We tend to think of stones as eternal objects; an ever-lasting materiality that can endure the consequences of time because rocks, indeed, give us an idea about the depth of the past. Their apparently immutable composition refers us to former geological eras and robust constructions made to last. Stones are a materiality that is capable of sustaining the foundations of society – at least ancient ones. But they are also *things*, entities that congregate us and, sometimes, require us to take care of them. Which stones are worth protecting and under what circumstances?

I started reflecting on these issues while visiting Javier's house in Huaraz in February 2020. Javier invited me to explore his collection of historical documentation – piles of archive materials that, as a social activist, he has managed to preserve over the years. *A piece of Huaraz's intellectual life is contained in here*, he affirms. A man in his seventies, Javier walks with a slow but firm stride. His slightly curved back reveals the passing of time over his body. He exemplifies that fascinating combination of wisdom and digression, a person who easily becomes lost in his thoughts. Javier is reserved and selective in his words, almost in a surly way, but generous when it comes to sharing knowledge and personal anecdotes.

Located in the limits of the districts La Soledad and Pedregal, two of Huaraz's neighbourhoods, Javier's house hosts the reminiscences of a city erased as a consequence of the 1970 earthquake. His father, a renowned musician and social activist from the traditional La Soledad neighbourhood, built the house in 1971 after the devastating earthquake razed the old family home to its foundations. The new construction, located at what was then the outskirts of the city before the existence of the Pedregal Neighbourhood, was an effort to keep the legacy of Huaraz's architectonic tradition alive at a moment when the former government of Juan Velasco Alvarado was pushing for urban reform aimed at rebuilding cities of the Callejón de Huaylas according to the ideals of modern planning. The old colonial adobe houses covering entire blocks were soon replaced by modest two-floor concrete properties accessible to anyone rather than only the members of the former urban elite – so argued the government of the day. Cities like Huaraz were taking the first steps toward offi-

cially opening their doors and streets to the non-white and non-mestizo population of the highlands and recognising them as equals; a process that, as we will see, was not exempt from tensions and conflicts.

Structured around a traditional square inner patio, the one-storey building of white mudbrick walls and red-tiled roof is a small temporal oasis in the middle of the dizzying urban transformation experienced after the earthquake. The house was previously a renowned hub of culture and politics; meetings, assemblies, presentations, exhibitions and even theatre plays took place there regularly. It is a time that seems to be preserved through a rather chaotic accumulation of papers and documents stored on dusty shelves, and in cardboard boxes and plastic bags. When guided by Javier, the history of a vibrant period shaped by musicians, artists and exhibitions, but also political causes and actions, appears from the disorder. His house operates as an informal documentation centre that keeps track of Huaraz's vivid cultural and political life over the last century.

One room in particular attracts my attention: a private museum dedicated to Pumacayán, one of Huaraz's most important and emblematic archaeological sites. Equally chaotic and aged by time, the room stores a diverse set of objects and devices of and about the place: a scale model of the site and its surroundings, posters with Pumacayán's information together with the words *proteger* (protect) and *salvar* (save), newspapers, printed documents and, above all, stones – many of them. Upon closer inspection, I realise that they are not just any types of stone, but what could be considered archaeological artefacts (see Figure 8). Javier proudly shows me some of his *piedras labradas* (carved stones), as he calls them: small limestone boulders with sharp edges formerly used for buildings and walls, cobble-sized anthropomorphic faces made of what seems to be granite and volcanic rock, remains of weapons and tools made of limestone. Even rocks hosting beautiful marine fossils are stored there.

When I ask Javier how he obtained those objects, he confesses that he took some from different archaeological sites, including Pumacayán, to protect them against *huaqueros*[1] (looters), illegal settlers and the government's indifference to the site. He argues that thieves and private collectors have conducted systematic illegal excavations over the years to steal remains from the site, including stone-based artefacts and ceramics. Many other archaeological remains have been removed by neighbours illegally occupying the perimeter of the site; and, during site-clearing operations, by

1 In the popular narrative, *huaqueros* are looters who remove archaeological artefacts without government permission. The term derives from the word *huaca*, a Quechua concept used to describe revered places, objects and entities – described in more detail later. See Atwood (2004) for a general history of archaeological looting in Peru; Coe (2011) for the influence of *huaqueros* in the development of the early pre-Columbian art market; and Seki (1996), Asensio (2018) and Tolosa (2020) for the historical relationship between *huaqueros* and archaeologists.

the previously mentioned government workers, who – according to Javier – cannot properly differentiate a regular stone from a *piedra labrada*. Under these conditions, he considers his collection to be a means of ensuring that the legacy of Pumacayán remains intact, even if that involves preserving its archaeological wealth somewhere else and behind closed doors. Stealing, in other words, is performed as an act of protection.

Figure 8: Carved stones with a scale model of Pumacayán behind, both part of Javier's collection
(Usón 2020)

Good intentions indeed drive Javier's actions. He and his family have worked actively for decades to preserve Pumacayán. His father founded a citizen association to defend the site, which Javier now chairs. Through this work, they aimed to enhance Pumacayán's value and ensure its deserved recognition in the region's history. The site's legacy speaks of an ancient, idealised past in different ways. It is considered an example of the greatness of pre-Hispanic cultures and their architectonic capacity, providing historical evidence of their advanced construction techniques and territorial planning. But it is also a place that calls upon the image of Huaraz's *Belle Époque*, a historical period prior to the most extreme events that befell the city – the 1941 flood and 1970 earthquake. The abandonment of the site, and illegal land seizures over subsequent years, are immediately connected with the consequences of both disasters – especially that of 1970. The fact that Pumacayán has not disap-

peared entirely as a consequence of looting and land seizure is due to the work of social organisations like his father's, Javier argues, recalling a past ethos committed to the city's heritage that, he says, now barely exists.

Pumacayán is a place that has not only endured catastrophic events, but has even been considered a protection and shelter against them. Due to its elevation and geomorphology, the site protected the southern part of the city from the 1941 flood. Moreover, its height makes it the perfect gathering area, where people improvised modest shelters following the flood and earthquake – nowadays converted into permanent houses made of adobe and *material noble*. Pumacayán is a site that combines history and disruption, both a long-gone past and an insecure present in which the permanence of its archaeological value is under constant threat.

In this scenario, stones appear to be the most appropriate objects to endure the passage of time and its consequences, even if scattered throughout different locations. However, they also seem to be the direct targets of illegal occupation, robbery and governmental indifference. What can we learn from stones in this context, and how do they allow us to reflect on the ways in which the past is produced – especially when disrupted by disasters?

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While the previous chapters focused on the disruptions leading to the collapse of an urban world and its surroundings, this chapter centres on what remains after that destruction. The former chapters were concerned with discontinuity, whereas the latter is about duration. To deal with this, the present chapter explores how traces of former urban configurations can acquire a historical condition that goes beyond the notion of lived memory. As Rob Shields (2002) suggests, actualising the virtual not only requires organising a present space and time but also a historical spatiotemporal articulation that overflows the immediate arrangement of actors and materialities involved. In order to inquire into those historical arrangements, this chapter explores how the remains of a settlement can cease to be regarded merely as rubble and become instead an archaeological record, 'a heterogeneous mass of our present' (Olivier 2008; in Geissler and Lachenal 2017, 15).

To answer these questions, this chapter focuses on Pumacayán, that mound located between the neighbourhoods of La Soledad, San Francisco and Molinopampa in Huaraz, together with its relationship to the extreme events that the city of Huaraz experienced during the last century. Specifically, the chapter addresses how the site's ancient past, sharply defined by the idealisation of an old urban world as well as its indigenous heritage, clashes with urban transformations experienced after the 1941 flood and, notably, the 1970 earthquake. Building on a vast set of historical material and participant observation, I explore the entangled stories

of Pumacayán both from an historical perspective as well as through attendance at commemorations and visits to the site. By exploring the palimpsest of stories, theories and legends around this site, which emerges as an effort to grant this place historical depth, this chapter shows how a place like Pumacayán comes to blur distinctions between the urban and the rural, history and myth, civilization and barbarity. However, it also shows how, despite this varied amalgam of stories and explanations, the site would keep fulfilling a central role in the construction of fixed historical figures across time: an urban, educated class that struggles to preserve the site against foreign, illiterate *invasores*.

Within this context, stones are central elements sustaining the grand narratives produced by scholars, governmental agencies and activists. They are materials granting history with depth and robustness, despite their fluid condition as a rather malleable and dynamic element in permanent change (Edensor 2012). Stones operate as traces, remains that 'may be overlooked or discovered, intimately relished and forgotten, turned into tokens of sociality, or made banners of conflict' (Geissler and Lachenal 2017, 15). In this chapter, we will see that they can fulfil multiple operations – as construction materials, reminiscences of the distant past under the notion of archaeological object, or simple rubble to dispose of; and may also operate as heterogeneous beings – guardians protecting entire communities, or as victims of looting and vandalism. When present, they can shed light on past stories, regimes and social dynamics, while contesting efforts to stabilise extinct versions or urban environments when absent. 'In the form of past human technological interventions and their environmental consequences', Martín Fonk (2021, 4) affirms, traces allow us 'to pay close attention to the politics and aesthetics of (in)visible and ignored subterranean dynamics'. It is this (in)visible multiplicity, together with its multiple operations and functions, that makes stone an appealing materiality to explore the endurances of time and its mark on the territory.

The huanca and the cross

Despite the central role that Pumacayán fulfils in Huaraz as one of the city's most renowned – and contested – archaeological sites, its history is still considered an enigma. The few scientific excavations conducted at the site over the centuries have revealed some of its main architectural features and artefacts, providing certain clues to its original function. However, many of the theories developed around this place over the last century remain broad suppositions.

The first written description of the site dates from 1532, when an expedition commanded by Hernando Pizarro and Miguel Estete passed through the Callejón de Huaylas while heading south to Pachacamac, a key administrative centre of the Inca Empire and a renowned archaeological site today. Estete already talks about 'the big

town of Guarax' (*el pueblo grande de* Guarax)' commanded by the *curaca* Pumacaxinay or Pumacapillay (Alba Herrera 2017, 46). Later, in 1554, another expedition, chronicled by the soldier Pedro Cieza León, describes the existence of a 'big fort or *antigualla* (abandoned monument)' with sturdy walls of carved stone ornamented with anthropomorphic figures that, according to the local inhabitants, represent giants that inhabited those lands prior to the Inca expansion[2] (Gridilla 1933b). The scarce mentions of Pumacayán at the time leave several doubts about whether the Spanish conquistadors knew about the uses of the site. There are neither clear explanations nor descriptions, probably because *conquistadores* themselves had no idea of the purpose of this twelve-metre-high hill with constructions on the top and surrounded by a stone wall. Perhaps they thought it was just another native settlement, another many other sites that were to be annexed to the Spanish Crown.

With the creation of the *encomienda*[3] over the area then known as Huaraspampa and the further foundation of the town of San Sebastián de Huarás, the Spanish settlers built the first Christian church, San Sebastián, close to one of Pumacayán's hillsides, around 1560, a fact that allowed historians to start making their first conjectures about the site. Building churches at the time had the double purpose of converting the indigenous population to Christianity and overshadowing local deities. That the first church in Huaraz was built so close to Pumacayán indicates, according to scholars such as Alberto Gridilla (1933a), that the site might have possessed particular relevance for natives; that perhaps it was not a simple *antigualla* or a settlement, but a place of cult and worship. What is known is that the site, like many native constructions in other cities (Álvarez-Calderón Silva-Santisteban and Sánchez García 2022), would soon be turned by the new settlers into a quarry, and its richly carved cobbles would be used for the walls and foundations of the new city's buildings – including the San Francisco church, also erected close by Pumacayán in 1689, and the Betlemita Order built in 1710 (Gamboa Velásquez 2016, 29).

Historians would continue to speculate on the relationship between the Spanish and the site. It is suggested that, despite Spanish efforts to supplant indigenous beliefs, Pumacayán continued operating as a *mochadero*[4], a place of worship located over a former *huaca* or *wak'a* – Quechua for an other-than-human entity related to

2 Some scholars, however, doubt that this description referred to Huaraz, and instead relate it to the old settlement of Huari in Conchucos (see Wegner 2017, 30–31).

3 The *encomienda* was an early legal figure of territorial control imposed by the Spanish Crown that had as an ultimate goal to 'form the commended Indian morally and socially' (Alba Herrera 2017, 53). Although the *encomenderos* were not colonial authorities as such, they had sufficient power to control extensive areas of land and live from the tribute of the indigenous population.

4 From Quechua *muchay*: to say, kiss, or worship.

a sacred place or thing[5]. It is said that this relevance could have made the site the main target of a second period of Catholic evangelism during the seventeenth century, this time more severe and eminently repressive, known as the extirpation of idolatries (Duviols 1986; Robles Mendoza 2021). The apparent initial tolerance of certain native traditions and rituals during the early colonial period (Spalding 2016) was superseded by a punitive anti-pagan regime, predicated on the destruction of *huacakuna* and idols (Alba Herrera 2017, 85). In cases where the large scale of *mochaderos* hindered their total destruction, crosses and temples would be constructed on top of them. In Huaraz, the construction of the San Sebastian and San Francisco churches was followed by the erection of a chapel on the top of Pumacayán some time in the eighteenth century[6], reinforcing the theory that the Spanish knew they were dealing with an important shrine.

It is also speculated that, during that time, a large cross came to replace a *huanca* located over the top of Pumacayán – the same cross that is located and worshipped on the hill today. *Huancakuna* (also spelt *wank'akuna*) – or *huancas*, as Spaniards started to called them – are monolithic stones that operated as landmarks in the Andean world. According to Carolyn Dean (2015, 213), *huancas* were 'a particular kind of wak'a [or *huaca*] specialising in territorial possession and whose ownership was linked to sight'. *Huancas* were widely considered sacred and sentient beings, even persons, owners of the places where they exerted influence, commonly associated with the territory within sight – extending to fields, villages or even entire valleys. They also fulfilled protectionist roles and, in return, received all manner of gifts and tributes from their community, including food, coca leaves, ceramics and animals. Some *huancas* were minor, and their influence in the territory was somewhat limited to a reduced space such as a *chacra* – beings that Pierre Duviols (1979) refers to as *chakrayuq* or 'guardian of the field'. These minor stones could have been associated with the ancestors of communities, connecting the realm of death with that of life. As Carolyn Dean (2010) suggests, stones in the Quechua tradition, like many other materialities, are trans-substantial. Thus, the petrification of humans into stones only meant a suspension of life, not its end. Other *huancas*, moreover, commonly

5 According to Tamara Bray (2015), early references to *huacas* were commonly defined in material terms, mostly as a sacred thing such as an idol or statue, or as sacred places such as oratories or shrines. The author suggests that '[t]he need to employ two (or more) Spanish terms in attempts to capture the meaning of 'wak'a' points to significant ontological differences regarding understandings of matter and materiality among Andeans and Europeans. … The notion of wak'a-as-oratory entailed spatial fixity, while wak'a-as-idol suggests a degree of mobility. This combination of properties (e.g., simultaneous fixity and portability) within one entity does not fit easily within a conventional western ontology and seems to have been a source of confusion for early authors' (Bray 2015, 5).

6 Although the exact year is unknown, the chapel already appeared on the first map of the city, published in 1782 (Wegner 2010).

related to more important ancestors, public figures or deities, had greater influence. This type of *huancas*, defined by Duviols as *markayuq* or 'owner-guardian of a village', would have been known by people for several kilometres around, and even considered true centres of power within the ethnic nations they belonged to.

According to George Kubler (in Dean 2015, 214), the Spanish were less interested in *chakrayuqs*, which they considered simple folk traditions that did not represent a real pagan threat to the expansion of Catholicism. However, *markayuqs* were regarded differently. The main *huancas* were usually attacked by 'eradicators of idolatries' (*extirpadores de idolatrías*), as they 'were more readily comparable to Catholic patron saints' (Dean 2015, 214), and later commonly converted into Catholic shrines. Thus, that both a chapel and a cross were placed over Pumacayán, and considering that the hill's privileged viewpoint offered the perfect location for a ubiquitous stone guardian, suggests that it was indeed the site of a main *huanca*. Stories supporting this theory say that ceremonies would have been conducted at the site to ensure good crops and avoid extreme events like hail storms, frosts, droughts and floods. They affirm that the guardian of the hill had the capacity to control wind and water – truly a 'god of agriculture' (Yauri Montero 2020), some would argue. Oral traditions also claim that the punishment for native people caught by the Spanish settlers leaving offerings or gathering on the hill was severe, suggesting that they would have been forced to remain for hours under the glacial waters of the Quillcay River.

By the end of the seventeenth century, religious conflicts between the Spanish and indigenous populations seemed to subside. With the Church officially considering that 'the Indian was already Christianised' (Flores Galindo 2021, 82), the colonisers paused their long persecution of indigenous culture and opted instead for tolerance. They implemented the *cofradías* (confraternities), religious organisations that aimed to bring Catholicism closer to the indigenous masses in a less-violent way. This was a period of spiritual effervescence, a 'popular Catholicism' willing to dig deep into people's world arrangements (Alba Herrera 2017, 96). However, far from eliminating the old deities and their influence on people's lives, the work of the *cofradías* seemed to reinforce them. Despite the prosecution of non-Christian traditions during earlier periods, clandestine gatherings would still take place, revealing the fictive conversion of indigenous people to Christianity: a false acceptance of the Church's doctrine in fear of their masters' rage, concealing their uninterrupted relationship with *huacas*. Based on a more mythological approach to religion, indigenous communities would find in the *cofradías* 'a means to anchor their collective identity' (Alba Herrera 2017, 96), now turning the figures of Jesus Christ, saints and the holy cross into presentations – rather than simple representations – of the Andean beings.

It is during this time that the figure of El Señor de la Soledad emerges. The origins remain unknown, but the *papachito* (little father), *Auquitetantzic* (our major old father) or *Apu Yaya La Soledad* (great lord father of La Soledad) makes his entry to

Huaraz after the foundation of the *Cofradía del Santo Cristo de la Soledad*, a confraternity specially created to commemorate the ceremonies dedicated to the burial of Christ. The group built a new temple on the southern hillside of Pumacayán (the same location as the current church of La Soledad) in 1669, probably also as a form of contesting the relevance of the site as a place of worship. Some time later, a crucifix with a human representation of Christ was brought from Conchucos or Huaraz's main church, which, for reasons unknown, replaced the figure of San Sebastián and became the city's main *patrono*. Possibly due to his proximity to Pumacayán, together with the recent removal of the site's main *huanca*, El Cristo de la Soledad soon became the most venerated image among the indigenous population (Yauri Montero 2013). Followers of Pumacayán would dissimulate their *underground* practices, overlaying existing beliefs and practices onto the new Christ figure – including requests for protection against extreme events such as prolonged droughts and floods. Now covered by the figure of the *patrono*, the local population could ensure their relationship with their Andean protector, '*burying* his figure under the cross' (Yauri Montero 2013, 71). El Señor de la Soledad would thereby become God, not simply a representation of such. Pumacayán's *huanca* and main stone, it is said, could find its substitute within Huaraz's society.

The transformations experienced since the installation of colonial rule would lead to new forms of relations with places and things considered as intrinsic community members by the native population. The protective role of *huacas* and *huancas*, the ultimate example of entities 'recalcitrant to classification (and individuation) as *either* human *or* nonhuman' (De la Cadena 2019, 40), would be assigned to the new figures imposed by the Catholic order. In their efforts to eradicate what they considered heretical customs and beliefs, the Spanish regime created new forms of protective entities, embodied in the figures of the cross, saints and Christ himself. Pumacayán would be at the centre of this process – a place that would embody the cosmopolitical encounter between the *huanca* and the cross. Despite the violent imposition of a new order based on the Catholic creed, the encounter of both figures, with Pumacayán as a main setting, would lead to a creative synergy shaping the deep connection between the local population and their environment during the following centuries.

The archaeological site

The permanent extraction of stones from Pumacayán would substantially compromise the structures that pre-dated the Spanish invasion. Over time, those large walls of carved cobbles and boulders originally described by Pedro Cieza León and others would show significant damage. Meanwhile, the flourishing colonial city would

profit from its *piedras labradas*' robustness, embellishing and fortifying new walls and constructions with them.

This situation slowly started to change after Peru's Declaration of Independence in 1821. In less than a year, Peru's new government enacted Supreme Decree Nr. 82, stating that 'the monuments remaining from Peru's antiquity are property of the Nation because they belong to the glory it derives from them' (Alba Herrera 2016b, 41). The remains of ancient structures from the pre-Hispanic period would become an extremely useful source in creating a national narrative that allows bypassing the figure of Spain, to construct a common identity among Peruvians. The same strategy was followed by many of the young South American republics freed from Spanish rule, granting their recent existences as nations with historical depth (Dünne 2021) and rights to self-government (Diaz-Andreu 2008).

Nevertheless, stated intentions to protect ancient pre-Hispanic settlements do not immediately stop excavations with extractivist purposes. In Pumacayán, the first documented excavation after Peru's Independence dates from 1847, led by the prefect Domingo Casanova. Casanova's writings reveal that carved cobbles quarried and taken from a *huaca* in the town were used for the foundations of the city's new cemetery, 'adorned with a multitude of busts and other rare stone figures' (Reina Loli 1959, 18). Later, the prominent Italian-Peruvian scientist Antonio Raimondi, during his stay in Huaraz in 1873, writes about 'the *cerrito* (little hill) of Pumacayán …, a precious remnant from the time before the conquest of Peru …, whose deposit of stones is so large that [it] serves as a quarry to extract the stones used in the construction of Huaraz's house foundations' (Raimondi 1873, 40–41). Raimondi reveals the deteriorated state of the site at the time, when he affirms that 'nothing that appears to be man-made can be recognised. All the part that had been dug out has crumbled and collapsed' (Raimondi 1873, 41) – most probably referring to the excavation conducted by Domingo Casanova 24 years prior. Riamondi also mentions a huge square, tub-shaped boulder, one of Pumacayán's most famous remains at the time, located at the central patio of the city's hospital, confirming that some of the site's most relevant artefacts had already been extracted.

Over the years, an increasing number of voices began to demand protection of the site, calling for restrictions on excavations lacking scientific purpose. In line with the growing professionalisation of archaeology, a discipline that was taking its first steps in differentiating itself from more amateurish and economically driven archaeological ventures (Asensio 2018), the first authorised excavation, led by Leonardo Bambarén, took place in 1913. Although later criticised for putting the site at risk due to a lack of scientific rigour and for still being motivated by the pursuit of riches, Bambarén's work nonetheless heightened public interest in Pumacayán after uncovering part of the underground structures and revealing 'enormous walls that point to constructions of great proportions' (El Departamento 1913, 37). However, it was not until 1919 that the renowned Julio C. Tello, considered

the father of modern Peruvian archaeology, conducted the first fully scientific excavation at the site. Tello was the first to speak of a group of stone buildings grouped in a large, walled citadel, with truncated pyramids formed by one or more superimposed platforms and crossed by interior galleries filled with stone and mud – a type of construction that he would also find in other places in the Callejón de Huaylas and Conchucos (Burger 2009). He also discarded the common assumption at the time that Pumacayán was a military complex or *pukara*. Instead, he promoted the idea that the site was an *adoratorio*, a devotional complex comprising several interconnected temples. This last idea would find support through some elements found there in the past, such as a one-metre-wide stone monolith adorned with an anthropic figure and two catlike beings that previously formed one of the walls of Huaraz's old cemetery. The first descriptions of this stone, like Raimondi's chronicle during his stay in Huaraz, suggest that this figure, together with almost all of the 'grotesque human figures [having] their heads girded with a kind of crown that varies in shape' (Raimondi 1873, 39), were brought from Pongor, a town close to Huaraz, located in front of the Cordillera Negra. However, Tello would later suggest that those elements were indeed extracted most probably from Pumacayán. He associates this rock with the famous Obelisk of Chavín, a two-and-half-metre-high monolith made of stone adorned with 'the Feline Huari, God of Agriculture' (Tello 2009, 183), that he would find in the same year while excavating the ruins of Chavín de Huantar.

Tello's findings provided for the first time substantial facts concerning what sort of being or guardian might have inhabited Pumacayán in the past. As Chavín's main deity, Huari or Wari was considered the creator of the universe and capable of connecting the three Andean worlds – the *Hanaqpatsa*, *Kaypatsa* and *Ruripatsa*[7]. His powers include the control of flows passing through these three stages, including water and air, which would relate to the stories arguing that rituals intended to ensure a good harvest or against adverse weather events were celebrated over Pumacayán. As the god of agriculture, Huari was the god of civilization, according to Western interpretations. The connection with Huari, commonly associated with the figure of a 'big cat' or puma, would also give clues about the place's name[8]. The site's association with Huari, together with the structures found there, reinforce the beliefs of schol-

7 Literally the higher world, the earthly world and the underworld. They derive from the word *patsa* (pacha in Southern Quechua), a category defining the world in terms of space and time.

8 Different authors interpret the toponymy of the site as 'the place of the puma', 'here are pumas', 'the puma-shaped stone' (Soriano Infante 1940) and 'the place where the puma is called or worshipped' (Wegner 2010). Yauri Montero (2020), moreover, argues that the name would literally mean 'they are pumas', an expression that, according to him, might have appeared during the Inca's Capac Raymi festivities, where authorities would dress like this animal.

ars such as Tello that the site was previously a regional shrine dedicated to worship, and not a fortress as initially believed.

A second excavation, conducted by Tello in 1939, would further develop his theories concerning the site. Based on his findings in the region, Tello concludes that Chavín was the earliest recorded culture in Peru, defining its vast influence from coast to jungle. Throughout his conclusions, he demonstrates the strong interconnections between the different groups across the Peruvian territory, arguing convincingly 'that the highlands had repeatedly influenced and dominated the cultures of the coast' (in Burger 2009, 73). These are strong assumptions for a country ruled by an elite located in coastal cities like Lima, where Andean societies had been commonly marginalised from politics and decision-making processes. The work of scholars like Tello would operate as a form of revendicating the legacy of the highlands as the cradle of the Andean civilizations – a geographic zone of 'cultural irradiation' (Tello 1921, 15), as he would describe it. Similar interpretations would later be used by the increasing indigenist currents that began to take shape at the beginning of the twentieth century, also revindicating the pre-Hispanic legacy of the country and its influence in the present.

These various discoveries, together with further archaeological findings in the region, would allow the development of a broadly agreed archaeological narration of Pumacayán. The site would be considered the midpoint of a larger settlement that might have operated as a regional stronghold, 'a centre of power' (Yauri Montero 2020, 48), of different cultures across the centuries. The pieces found there would help to connect the place with at least three main groups of settlers, related to the cultures of Chavín between 1500 and 500 BCE, Recuay between 100 and 700 CE and Inca between 1300 and 1532 CE (Serna Lamas 2005). Authors such as Pierre Duviols (1973) even suggest that the site was also occupied by the Huaris or Waris[9], an ethnic group from the late formative period that would have been invaded and defeated by the Yaros or Llacuas[10], a 'less civilised' group from the highlands, in a truly *desborde popular* or popular uprising. It was the first expression in the region of the civilisation-against-barbarism vertical scheme, as Yauri Montero (2020) defines the juxtaposition of population located in the lower and higher lands; a formula that, as we saw in Chapter Two, would repeat across the centuries.

Given Pumacayán's constant occupation over time, it would have reflected an accumulation of diverse architectural constructions, buildings and layers of sediment. Steven Wegner (2010) suggests that the original mound where the site is located

9 Although no evidence from this group has been found in Pumacayán, its presence in the Callejón de Huaylas between 800 and 900 CE has been well-established across other archaeological sites of the region, including Willkahuain close to Huaraz (Gamboa Velásquez 2016).

10 Some scholars argue that the name *llacuaz* was contemptuously introduced by the Waris – a word referring to somebody who is a liar, rude or deceitful (Robles Mendoza 2021).

must have resulted from heavy alluvial material accumulated over time and resistant to fluvial erosion. For centuries, the different settlers would have engaged in various types interventions that expanded the hill's dimensions. According to Serna Lamas (2005), archaeological findings include an initial structure of walls related to the Chavín period, *chullpas* or graves corresponding to the Recuay period and overlying constructions from the Inca period that were probably used as housing and workrooms. The composition of the soil strata suggests that previous buildings were sealed and buried through soil-based fillings, first by Recuay settlers as a form of containing the *chullpas* and later by the Incas to elevate the height of the site and build higher edifications. Another interpretation, however, suggests that the burial of earlier structures would have been a strategy adopted by Pachacutec, the head of the Incan empire at the time, to dominate the defeated population (Yauri Montero 2020). By burying the shrine under an artificial hill, the Incas were entombing Huari, Huaylas' most important entity, and placing Inti, the Sun, as the main deity of the lands over the Tahuantinsuyu's rule[11]. This architectural burial of Huari's relevance in the region reflects that later attempted without success by the eradicators of idolatries[12].

Just like the layers of sediment and construction found in Pumacayán, scholars and intellectuals would start accumulating theories and thoughts about the site across the years – based, on the one hand, on the scarce historical references to the site and the few excavations conducted there, and on the stories and tales orally narrated on the other. From a query and former *mochadero*, Pumacayán would be turned into a place of archaeological practices that, 'due to its various stratifications', would be considered 'of greater importance than Chavín', Augusto Soriano Infante (1940, 15) affirms. However, scholars would also share a mutual diagnosis: the poor condition of the site due to long-standing state abandonment, looting and land seizures, an appraisal that would only worsen over the years. During his visit to the Callejón de Huaylas in 1938, the renowned anthropologist Wendell Bennett (1944, 12) scarcely refers to the place, saying that 'the pyramid is now badly destroyed, and we attempted no more than a cursory examination'. Later, in 1939, Augusto Soriano

11 This version, however, contrasts with other historical sources affirming that Incas commonly respected local deities and sacred places. According to Catherine Allen (2015, 37), '[e]ven in defeat, subject communities retained their wak'as, whose pronouncements voiced their interests and concerns. About once a year the Sapa Inka called all the regional wak'as together in Cusco and publicly consulted them on policy matters "in what amounted to a congress of oracular deities" (Gose 1996, 6). Gose argues that this mode of communication through the voice of the wak'a gave indirect expression to subaltern opinions and concerns, avoiding direct confrontation with the king'.

12 It is believed that the Wari's popularity among the indigenous population might even have increased with the arrival of the Spanish, as a way of breaking the shackles of Incan domination from the past years (Yauri Montero 2013, 67).

Infante conducted a brief visit to the place, mentioning the presence of several properties located on top of the hill that are putting the archaeological remains at risk. He emphasises the necessity of declaring Pumacayán a national archaeological zone while compensating 'those who have built their properties on the slopes of the hill; preventing them, in the meantime, from widening their patios and outbuildings, opening up land for cultivation, extracting construction materials and forbidding the construction of new houses at all' (Soriano Infante 1940, 15). During his second visit in 1939, Tello shared the same preoccupation as Soriano Infante, arguing for the necessity of creating a national system of historic parks to protect Peru's archaeological heritage. One purpose of this second visit to the region was precisely to study the state of the ruins of Pumacayán and others close to Huaraz, in order to explore the possibility of designating them protected areas (Burger 2009, 42). This idea, however, would take more than 60 years to be concretised, likely due to the dramatic events that the city would experience in the following decades.

The flood

We are not dead culture; we are living culture with our stones! sings aloud Rima, a musician from Huaraz living in Cusco, while she plays a drum attached to a colourful band surrounding her body. Wearing a bright, vibrant pink dress with traditional Andean patterns and a hat with a ribbon showing the rainbow-like colours of Cusco's flag, the woman in her sixties has been invited to commemorate the anniversary of the flood that struck Huaraz on 13 December 1941. The event, organised by different citizen organisations – Javier's included – and with the support of the Municipality, is hosted every year at the Memorial of the Alluvial Stone, a small square created around a massive granite boulder left by the 1941 flood close to the Quillcay riverbed. Atop the massive rock, a five-metre-high cross covered in white and golden tiles has been erected to commemorate the almost 5,000 victims of that day[13]. On one of the boulder's granitic walls, it is possible to read carved in the stone 'the Municipality and the citizens remember those who fell in the alluvial catastrophe of 13 December 1941. Huaraz, 13–12-55'. It is the only memorial remembering the catastrophe, and today's gathering, its most important commemoration, attracts no more than a dozen participants.

Once an empty field located over the landslide scar resulting from the flood, today the memorial park is entirely surrounded by diverse homes constructed from all sorts of materials. Old one- and two-storey mudbrick houses partially covered with

13 It is estimated that the event left 2,000 to 5,000 victims – from a total population of around 35,000 people – and millions in economic losses (Wegner 2014).

thick layers of white plaster contrast with the five-storey buildings of red bricks located some metres away. Initially zoned as a high-risk area where no construction should occur, the memorial was placed atop one of the many boulders left by the landslide – witnesses to the tragedy, many of which were removed and used as construction material. Houses were constructed next to the alluvial stone during the massive waves of migration that the city experienced in the second half of the twentieth century, especially after the 1970 earthquake. During a speech, Javier urges the neighbours to take care of the memorial by shouting loudly *You must protect this park!* But except for a little girl who looks on shyly from metres away, there is no sign of other residents. Notoriously abandoned today, the square and its natural monument to the victims of the flood depict a sad scenario of a place forgotten in time, a situation that our modest gathering seems not to change.

Prior to the flood, the accumulation of water in Palcacocha over preceding decades, as a direct consequence of the dramatic effects of climate change on Cordillera Blanca's ice bodies, had turned the lake into a massive body 500 metres long, 250 metres wide and 50 metres deep, with an estimated volume of 9–11 million cubic metres (Vilímek et al. 2005). The calving of the glacier generated waves large enough to overflow the lake's natural dam, a fragile moraine left by the glacier during its retreat. According to reports of the time, the collapse of the moraine released almost 80 per cent of the water accumulated in the lake (Giesecke and Lowther 1942; in Wegner 2014, 13), which flowed downstream, dragging soil, mud, vegetation and stones along the Cojup Valley. The massive debris flow reached Lake Jircacocha further down, leading to its collapse and adding another 4.8 million cubic metres of water to the flood (Vilímek et al. 2005). After impacting Huaraz, the debris flow destroyed roads, tunnels, bridges and train lines downstream along the Santa River until reaching the Pacific Ocean 200 kilometres north. According to Mark Carey (2010), the event was the most lethal *aluvión* in the country's history and possibly one of the deadliest flash floods in the modern era.

As the days passed, the causes of the event were still unclear. While some sources immediately attributed it to process of deglaciation throughout the region, others suggested a *huayco* (a flash flood caused by torrential rains) or even a volcanic eruption (El Comercio 1941a). Alternative stories emphasised the relevance of certain figures as initiating the flood itself, while pointing to protective entities and their importance in preventing major impacts upon the city. These narratives would be evident in efforts to endow the destruction with some sort of meaning, aiming to move beyond the chaotic state and disoriented daze that engulfed the city in its aftermath.

One such story, collected by Marcos Yauri Montero (2014, 199) in Huaraz some decades after the event, goes as follows:

> It is said that when the waters reached Cancaryacu [a place seven kilometres north of Huaraz], the Inca who lives on Huayrajirca Hill came out enraged like a raging

bull. He rebuked the knight:
– Why do you do such things, *carajo*!
The knight of fire stopped. The Inca said to him:
– If you are really brave, let's fight to life or death.
They fought – the knight with his machete and the Inca with his spear. The Inca was defeated, and said:
– I think you have defeated me? Then let's go together.

According to Yauri Montero, some elements portrayed here are worth revisiting. Firstly, the central character of this story is a clear reference to an ancient order personified by the Inca, a historical figure that appears systematically both in oral and written traditions since the emergence of the Andean Utopia or messianism in the seventeenth century (Earls 1969; Flores Galindo 2021). It is a figure that fights against a foreign character: *el caballero*, the knight, the flood's originator personified as having a horse of fire and a machete (both elements traditionally related to colonial rule). The expression 'let's go together' (*entonces vámonos juntos*) refers to how the Inca takes the knight with him to death as he falls through the mountains, triggering the landslide that would later destroy part of Huaraz. Some adaptations of the tale state that the flood was temporarily checked in Cushuruyoc, a place in the highlands close to Huaraz where there was an *ushnu*[14], described as an ancient ruin used as a house by an Inca where he hides his treasures and memories. After being briefly halted by the *ushnu*, the flood moved further downstream. In other versions, it was not a *caballero* but an *enano rojo*, a small vigorous red male figure, also related to that of the Ichic Oqllo[15], who came out from Palcacocha, leading the flood downstream after throwing the rocks to Palcacocha that triggered the flood. Riding a burning black horse and waving his machete, the destructive figure moved down through the entire Cojup Valley, flattening trees and houses and producing a deafening sound.

In other versions of the story, both the knight (or red dwarf) and the Inca, who start fighting in the highlands destroying everything in their path, are diverted by the *Niño Jesús* (Baby Jesus) when they arrive in Huaraz. Yauri Montero refers to this narration in the following terms:

14 According to Frank Meddens (2015), studies agree that these sites were platform-shaped *huacas* that were built in areas conquered by the Incas rather than at the heartland of the empire. As such, they might have been fundamental ceremonial sites to confirm the place of 'foreigners' or non-Incas within the state. As sort of landmarks, *ushnus* might have also marked the limits of ethnical territories. Thus, it is no surprise that the *ushnu* in Cushuruyoc tried to stop the flood, an external force, from entering the territory of which the site was both a part of and its guardian.

15 In the popular tradition, the Ichic Oqllo (or small male) is a being from the *Ruripatsa* or underworld associated with tectonic forces and capable of triggering earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and landslides, among other events.

> As the floodwaters lapped the eastern suburbs of Huarás, through Mulinupampa and Pumacayán, *El Niño Jesús* appeared dressed all in white. Standing facing the waters, which were pouring black smoke, he energetically ordered them, waving his right hand, to turn off to the north. Thus, the heart of Huarás was saved.

The story has local variations, with some versions arguing that the Niño Jesús was on top of Pumacayán, a place that he frequented periodically to play with other children – sometimes in the company of his mother, the Virgin Mary. In others, the baby inhabited Pumacayán, close to the chapel at the top of the hill. However, common to all of these versions is the relationship between God's son and Pumacayán, and how this combination protected and saved the old part of the city from the flood.

That Pumacayán is considered a fundamental protector of the city is by no means surprising. Besides confirming the great vulnerability of cities like Huaraz to outbursts of glacial lakes in the highlands, the 1941 *aluvión* also reaffirms the relevance of places like Pumacayán for Huaraz's urban configuration. Pumacayán, as some sources argue, 'was one of the points that sheltered the most fugitives' (El Comercio 1941c, 6), providing refuge for people from the surrounding area who refused to leave the place, fearing that a similar event might happen again. In the eyes of the population, the hill was a safe zone, a robust geomorphological formation capable of resisting the onslaught of nature. Moreover, the hill managed to bifurcate the waters of the *aluvión* and limit the destruction to the new part of Huaraz, located at a much lower altitude than the older settlement. It was, in this sense, a protector of the old districts; an entity that, 'due to its location, prevented a sinisterness of greater proportions' (El Comercio 1941c, 6).

Equally unsurprising is the direct relationship between Pumacayán and the figure of Jesus. The strategic location of the site that helped to prevent a major catastrophe reinforces the central role of this site within the history of Huaraz. As mentioned previously, Pumacayán is considered the crossing point between the earlier devotion to Huari, the entity protecting inhabitants of those territories against events like floods and droughts, and Christian figures introduced by the *cofradías* – specifically, El Señor de la Soledad. Pumacayán is a *tinku*, a site that enables the synthesis of two agonistic entities – Jesus and Huari – under the figure of Huaraz's main *patrono*, the ultimate expression of the so-called Andean syncretism. By the time of the flood, the *Papachito* was an eminence among *Huaracinos* and people from the surrounding area; the protagonist of all sorts of stories in which he would appear, meandering around the outskirts of the city in abandoned places and fulfilling people's needs (Yauri Montero 2013).

In all the versions of these stories, Yauri Montero affirms, it is possible to infer a clear structure indicating the relevance of the portrayed historical figures. Confronting the flood, the Inca is always defeated by colonial rule, forced to sacrifice himself while taking his opponent with him. In other cases, the *ushnu* of Cushuruyoc

can retain the flood only briefly until the aluvión strays from its path and reaches the Quillcay River, where it flows until impacting Huaraz. The only figure that can truly control the destruction caused by the *aluvión* is the Niño Jesús together with Pumacayán, who diverts the destruction further north. According to the author, this is revelatory in two ways. Firstly, it shows a clear hierarchy between the Christian and Andean figures. Secondly, it implies that the urban world, with Pumacayán within this arrangement, is stronger than the rural as it is capable of containing the consequences of such a destructive event – related by the author as a 'civilising project countering the outburst of barbarity' (Yauri Montero 2014, 208). The stories, affirms Yauri Montero, do not contest the hegemonic domination of the colonial order over the Andean world, independent of whether we are dealing with tales from rural or urban areas. It is, above all, a reinterpretation of history through figures of the past interacting with the present to give the Inca, under the imminent collapse of his world, a last chance of revenge against invading foreign forces.

The apparent prevalence of the urban over the rural seemingly reproduced in narratives about Pumacayán is somehow contested by another type of story, particularly around the newly built high-class Centenario district in the northern part of the city that concentrated Huaraz's richest chalets and exclusive services. Accounts of this district, which was entirely destroyed by the 1941 flood, emphasise the inability of the modern urban project to cope with that event, something associated in part with the ingenuity of *Huaracino* bourgeois society.

One of the central figures in these stories is the *Hotel de Turistas*, a massive, modern construction inaugurated only a few days before the flood. Yauri Montero (2014, 228) shares the events around this building as follows:

> To this day, it is said that when the colossal mass of water advanced, many people ran to take refuge in the tourist hotel, with the idea that its solidity would not be toppled. Reality proved otherwise; according to the stories, the waters tore it from its foundations, carrying it like a toy for a short stretch, at the end of which it burst into pieces.

Different accounts of this moment usually follow a similar pattern to describe the destruction of the hotel. Godofredo Zegarra, a renowned *Huaracino* artist and survivor of the 1941 flood, tells me during an interview how tourists and residents from Centenario climbed to the top floor of the hotel, some even reaching the roof, hoping that the construction would withstand the mass of mud and water. 'As it was made of *material noble*, everyone was confident that nothing was going to happen, that it was going to be safe. But the water was everywhere, and there were no houses around anymore. It was just alone there, like a little matchbox, and suddenly it collapsed'. The hotel is remembered as one of Huaraz's first constructions of fine materials, made of 'reinforced concrete in the main parts, brick in the infills, marble in

the staircases, Oregon pine in the doors and windows' (Barrionuevo 1939; in Wegner 2014, 31). It was a building emulating a traditional colonial architectural style but following modern construction standards that should have made it more resistant to extreme events. However, its robustness could not endure the force of the flood, collapsing as yet another fragile structure amid the power of nature.

The tragic impact on the Centenario district is reinforced by anecdotes that, with a touch of humour, came to lampoon Huaraz's wealthiest groups. According to Yauri Montero (2014, 213), one account that became quite popular among inhabitants in the aftermath tells the story of a wealthy lady who became trapped in the mud due to her amount of clothing. In this account, the woman returned to her house in Centenario during the flood warning, after realising that all her fur coats were inside. Portrayed as being overweight, the lady delayed whilst deciding which belongings to take with her. 'Which of my *haciendas*[16] should I wear?' (*¿cuál de mis haciendas me pongo?*), she asked naïvely, before donning all of her coats simultaneously. The flood reached the house while she was inside, taking her with it downstream. The police found her in the mud and tried to pull her out, but she was stuck due to her body shape and the weight of all her wet fur coats. Eventually, they rescued the woman full of mud, looking almost like a bear. A similar story narrates the case of another woman, known among locals for being a usurer, who was also trapped inside the flood. Once people recognised her, they declined to help. Screaming for assistance, the woman promised to give her wallet full of money to whoever pulled her out of the flood. One man agreed, and told the woman to throw her wallet so she could more easily grab his hand. The lady did so, but he then refused to help. 'That's what you deserve!' exclaimed the man, before pushing her into deeper waters. During an interview, Godofredo Zegarra tells me the story of a man who escaped naked before the flood reached his house, covering his genitals only with a painting of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that he found on the way. While evacuating the flooded area, the picture rips off and leaves his genitals exposed without him noticing it. When he finally reached a safe zone, he started screaming euphorically 'He saved me'! while pointing mistakenly to his penis instead of Jesus' heart. All these accounts relativise the destruction and pain left in the city, by exposing the vulnerability of the wealthy groups of Huaraz. Affluent residents are portrayed as foolish and naïve, utterly disconnected from reality and unaware of how to react to the world's imminent collapse.

16 The *haciendas* would be a direct reference to the urban wealth accumulation based on rural dispossession. According to Yauri Montero (2014, 216), 'for her, what really matters is not the land as a heritage asset but what the city offers her as a reality of professional, commercial, social and cultural possibilities. Therefore, her luxurious and expensive coats are her "haciendas", which are worth as much or more than the land'.

It is interesting to reflect on how these stories with a notorious class component relate to the economic processes that the city was experiencing immediately before the flood. By the end of the 1930s, Huaraz was living its *Belle Époque* of economic growth and cultural flourishment. The developing *serrana* economy of the preceding decades was giving way to the emergence of a regional market and modest but robust local industry. Huaraz was a role model for the entire region, a commercial centre where people from all over the Callejón de Huaylas came to trade their goods and purchase supplies. The city had promising leather and wool industries with a well-established handicraft sector, all sustained by an emergent bourgeois middle class that owned shops and houses in the city, as well as middle-sized *chacras* in the rural areas for household consumption and trading products in the market.

This period also saw the emergence of a modest tourist industry that, as in Yungay's case, came to position Huaraz among the tourist destinations favoured by the national elite, especially the *Limeña* due to its proximity to the capital. Inspired by the early work of scholars like Julio C. Tello and the first scientific and mountain excursions to the Cordillera Blanca (Carey 2012; Carey, Garrard, et al. 2016), the urban bourgeoisie was eager to know more about the country's pre-Hispanic past and unique mountain landscapes – 'the Peruvian Switzerland', as the Callejón de Huaylas would become known during those years. Improved infrastructure, connectivity and services opened the region to tourism, which required better quality accommodation and facilities from cities like Huaraz. It is during these years that the famous *Hotel de Turistas* was built, 'lodg[ing] the numerous people who visited the region' (El Comercio 1941b, 2), and would become the ultimate expression of this new wealthy bourgeois class.

Meanwhile, the majority of the population, composed mostly of working-class *mestizos* and indigenous people, experienced the incipient transition from a feudal-like system of *haciendas* to a labour-based capitalist market; a transformation that, as in many other parts of Latin America, would lead to a precarious and exploitative wage-earning system. These economic transformations fostered profound changes in political and cultural domains. According to Yauri Montero (2013), the pivotal place of Huaraz in the region, together with the social problems and inequalities so common at the time, pushed for the creation of several organisations led by students, workers and artisans. Associations like Vesperal, La Defensa and Union Femenina published newspapers and magazines to spread ideas linked to literary modernism, vanguardism and indigenism. It was a time of popular creation and revindication of social demands, influenced by national movements and Marxist intellectuals like José Carlos Mariátegui (Alba Herrera 2016a), but also by recent political events in the region, including the indigenous rebellion commanded by

Pedro Pablo Atusparia and Pablo Cochachin in 1885 (Alba Herrera 2011; 2012) and the *Aprista* Revolution in 1932[17].

Considering such a context of political effervescence, it is to be expected that popular classes would use the destruction of Huaraz's most prosperous neighbourhood (mistakenly assumed to be a safe area) as an opportunity to humiliate wealthier sectors of the population. Unlike the stories of the flood's origins, in which the urban world succeeded in controlling the 'barbaric outburst', tales about the consequences of the *aluvión* in the city call upon a subjugation of the modern urban world by the natural forces of the Andes. It is the ultimate expression of an ingenuous modernity amid the destructive harshness of nature.

In this scenario, Pumacayán would remain as the ultimate place of salvation and protection. But, unlike Yauri Montero (2014) claims, this would not be granted by its allegedly inherent urban condition – a superiority of the urban world in dealing with barbaric forces. The strength of Pumacayán would result from an agonistic synthesis of historical sediments accumulated over time – like the different constructions placed upon the site over the centuries. Its protection against flooding would be combined with the enigmas buried beneath the soil layers, thereby creating a mythical site of both safety and historical depth. Pumacayán, in other words, would become a site of legend, a place that escapes a single, coherent and plausible construction of the past. It became a place of mystery and admiration, the ultimate example of the pre-Hispanic prevalence sustained precisely by the relationship of the site to the surrounding urban population. As such, the site was not an entirely urban figure, but was not totally estranged from the city's operations and logic. It was the perfect setting for building an urban indigenist identity – a romanticisation of the past, sustained by narratives of a national project – that of the Andean Utopia and political engagement.

¡Salvemos Pumacayán!

One day after the commemoration of the 1941 flood, I visited Pumacayán with Javier and other members of his organisation. Javier is willing to share with us the history of the site, as well as the challenges and dangers currently threatening its protection and preservation.

17 The *Aprista* Revolution was a popular uprising commanded mostly by members of the APRA (Popular Revolutionary American Alliance) Peruvian Party founded by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in 1924. It was part of a national insurgency against the authoritarian government of Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro. This demanded guarantees on full exercise of political and civil freedoms and called for new democratic elections. The uprising, together with similar rebellions in Trujillo and Huari, resulted in thousands of political deaths and led to the banning of the APRA in the country until 1945. See Alba Herrera (2006).

As we gather in front of the mound, Javier starts grumbling while he takes some pictures of an intervention that the Municipality is making at the site. *Concrete and steel are not the right materials. It should have been made of stone!*, he says while pointing to the gate that is being built at the main entrance (see Figure 9). The project aims to renovate the site by creating a touristic circuit with informative signs, clear walking paths and proper enclosure of the area. But despite the improvements that the project could make for the site, Javier and other activists advocating for the defence of Pumacayán are still dissatisfied. The construction does not follow a traditional style, and the main issues affecting the site are still not being tackled.

As we reach the highest part of the hill, we gain a clearer picture of the site's condition. Just as advocates of Pumacayán keep telling me, the site looks very abandoned. The top of the hill is almost an empty field, a large green area covered by grass with piles of rocks and occasional piles of garbage. *It's the Western rubbish*, exclaims Javier, the upper stratum of several layers of history buried under the soil on which we are walking. The scarce infographic material gives little information on the site's history. The only visible notorious structure is the chapel from El Señor de Pumacayán, that little shrine built in the eighteenth century upon the hill to reinforce the presence of the Catholic Church. Besides that, only some concrete foundations of former houses can be seen in the area – buildings that were evicted and demolished some years ago, Javier explains. The entire area lacks any trace of ancient ruins or anything similar. 'For the untrained eye, there is not much to see except for a large Ministerio de Cultura sign and some ruined stone walls', writes the US-based archaeologist George Lau (2016, 194–95) after visiting the site. I cannot but agree with that claim: if it were not for Javier, and the modest dirt path lined across the site with white-painted stones, I would have never suspected that we are at an archaeological centre.

In addition to the inadequate state intervention at the site, Javier is extremely angry about what for him is Pumacayán's real problem: the houses that occupy the foothills of the archaeological site – which he blames for the ubiquitous litter. He explains that the *invasiones* started during the 1970s as a temporary housing solution for survivors of the 1970 earthquake. However, those interim structures were never removed, and over time became established dwellings for many people. Although Javier recognises that some evictions have taken place (at those houses whose remains can still be seen at the top of the hill), there are still several houses on the foothills that need to be removed.

As mentioned, the occupation of Pumacayán was already thematised by people like Julio C. Tello and Augusto Soriano Infante in the late 1930s. The abandoned state of the site mentioned by those scholars would only worsen after the 1941 flood, when the authorities' priorities were focused on the recovery of the city. The flood came to jeopardise the prosperity accumulated by the city over the preceding decades. In the words of El Comercio (1941a, 2) at the time, '[f]ate has stopped the development of the

promising plan of urban improvements in Huaraz and once again the waters fulfil a destructive action in our territory'. However, it was also an impulse to implement different infrastructural transformations that would lead to profound changes in the city's dynamics.

Figure 9: Pumacayán's main entrance of concrete and steel
(Usón 2020)

During those years, Pumacayán became fundamental to reinvigorating the city's ancient history. Associations such as the Unión Progreso Soledad coordinated community clean-up workdays at the site, together with archaeological talks and discussions to reinforce the commitment to the city's archaeological heritage and its relevance for the articulation of a contemporary regional identity. Moreover, discourses claiming to protect the site reaffirmed old wake-up calls made by archaeologists warning about the dramatic consequences of permitting housing in the zone. The occupation of the hill by irregular housing in preceding decades only increased in the aftermath, as residents from surrounding neighbourhoods impacted by the *aluvión* arrived at the site and constructed improvised shelters. Over time, those temporary constructions became permanent homes of mudbricks, a situation that would escalate with the increasing migration of *campesino* families to the city in the following years (Gamboa Velásquez 2016). Driven by intentions of protecting Pumacayán's legacy as a central exponent of the region's archaeological heritage, social organi-

sations positioned themselves against irregular housing and promoted responsible uses of the land surrounding the site.

However, things changed abruptly in 1970.

The 1970 earthquake had dramatic consequences for Huaraz, razing the city to the ground. According to Barbara Bode (2001, 30), '[d]estruction of Huaraz's urban centre was virtually total. … Half a billion cubic feet of adobe bricks buried the *casco urbano* and half of its population of 20,000. Another 10,000 died in the rest of Huaraz [province]. Over 90 per cent of the structures in the centre collapsed'. The famous two-storey colonial houses made of mudbrick became death traps for *Huaracinos* who, while trying to escape through the narrow cobblestone streets of the city, were hit by the falling buildings. Books compiling the written testimonies of survivors provide numerous accounts of people who remained under the debris of the houses for days before being rescued, including the famous *Huaracino* writer Marcos Yauri Montero (1971) and the artist Godofredo Zegarra (Pajuelo Prieto 2002). Most of the trapped residents, however, did not survive the weight of the rubble. Huaraz, the Department's capital, was devastated.

As in other moments in Peru's history (Walker 2008; Álvarez-Calderón Silva-Santisteban and Sánchez García 2022; Uribe Chinen 2023), many families moved temporarily to public squares and archaeological sites and constructed improvised shelters to survive the cold nights of the *sierra*. Pumacayán was one of these sites, a place considered very safe from the earthquake's aftershocks. Just as in 1941, the hill became a congregation point; an old protector providing *Huaracinos* with shelter amid the awful destruction. Rather than temporary solutions intended for just the first days of the aftermath, some families remained at the site, turning their huts into more stable houses of mudbrick and *material noble* over time – the much-reviled *invasores* about whom Javier complains.

In addition to the urgent need for housing following the earthquake, the occupation of the site over the past decades can be also explained by the notorious state of institutional abandonment that Pumacayán experienced in the following decades. In the years after the earthquake, the former impulses to defend the place were in apparent retreat, with public opinion and social organisations focused on the ongoing consequences of the disaster. The population was dealing with the slow reconstruction of a city completely destroyed by what they considered a total lack of institutional competence to deal with the situation. Furthermore, the creation of Ancash's first public university in Huaraz, an historical demand from *Huaracinos* that had led to massive protests in the past – especially in 1968 when violent confrontations with police ended in dozens of deaths and several injured (Yauri Montero 2021), kept social organisations and activists busy with that endeavour until the founding of the Universidad Nacional Santiago Antúnez de Mayolo in 1977.

Things in Pumacayán slowly started changing in the following decade, with the declaration of the site as a zone of the nation's cultural heritage in 2003. The 1.74

hectares of the site, with a perimeter of 579,917 linear metres, was declared a conservation zone of high priority (INC 2003, 1). This new declaration triggered a whole new set of works and improvements to the site (Andina 2019), including the construction of the entrance gate that Javier openly rejects. Most importantly, it gave the Municipality greater capacity to carry out evictions and remove houses built in what was defined as the official site extension, as communicated to neighbours in the same year of the declaration. Particularly relevant are the indications that these evictions gave to the population and authorities, who saw the eradication and further demolition of *invasores*' houses as an opportunity 'to not only recover the area but also give greater economic movement to the city, because the recovery of the archaeological centre will allow … to set up a tourist development project' (Huaraz Noticias 2016). Indeed, the recovery of Pumacayán and its heritage would bring together old hopes of economic development and prosperity, expectancies sustained on the romanticised image of the idyllic *serrana* city that disappeared – in part due to the 1941 flood, and the remainder due to its destruction in 1970 – which, just like Yungay, made tourism the only opportunity for emerging from its ruins.

The apparent visibility that Pumacayán gained during these years did not eliminate the controversies around the site. As my walk with Javier showed me, advocates of Huaraz's heritage are still dissatisfied with the interventions made at the site, emphasising how little the government is still doing to eradicate completely the people located within the perimeter of the archaeological site while nevertheless pushing to fulfil more ambitious preservation strategies. Like many other archaeological sites in Peru, Pumacayán is a reflection of ancient history, the permanence of which is threatened by (rural and poor) *invasores*. It operates as a site perpetuating two simultaneous temporal constructions: a pessimistic view of the present, sustained by a racist denial of the country's contemporality, versus a romanticisation of the (ancient) past nurtured by the idea of the Andean Utopia towards the future. The risk of a further '*desborde*' (political uprising), a fear that has occupied Peruvian urban elites since the indigenous uprisings of Juan Santos Atahualpa and Tupac Amaru II in the eighteenth century, is embodied in the shattered remains of Pumacayán's ancient walls and constructions. The heroic ancient Incas differ from the contemporary *indios* threatening the continuity of Huaraz's cultural and archaeological heritage (Méndez 2000). The new rural migrants would, according to *Huaracinos*, achieve what the other *outburst* (i.e., that from the highland glacial lakes) did not achieve in the past: to bury Pumacayán, and the heart of the old city, along its path.

Scattered stones, continuous past

During my visit to Javier's house, the traditional construction located between La Soledad and Pedregal neighbourhoods, he shows me some cardboard boxes that contain what he defines as a mobile museum (*museo itinerante*) dedicated to Pumacayán. The boxes are full of plastic bags containing informative posters, photos and papers detailing working schedules of past activities, newspaper articles and a massive picture of the site taken in 1970 after the earthquake. But mostly, a significant proportion of the documents are drawings and paintings made by children depicting the site and its main features. One portrays Pumacayán as a living being, weeping over the abandonment it has suffered. On the sides, handwritten phrases from a child read, 'Little Pumacayán, don't cry. You are not alone anymore' and 'Your people have become aware. You will not be captive to the illegal invaders anymore'. Javier explains that these illustrations are the result of exhibitions that he and other members of his organisation organised at schools and cultural centres. He shows me pictures of himself and the museum in different settings, surrounded by children and adults admiring various types of artefacts, including many of the stones he keeps at home. Javier explains to me that they are part of the activities that he and his association have organised to raise awareness of the site and the dangers threatening its permanence in time, including land seizures. The work with younger generations is, in a way, how activists like Javier ensure the creation of new portraits fostering Huaraz's archaeological heritage towards the future.

The history of the social organisations fighting to protect Pumacayán is the story of Javier and his family. It is the story of people like him and other *Huaracinos* who, fearing for the legacy of their architectural heritage, organised themselves over the years to demand better conservation plans to protect their identity. Those stories are tightly intertwined with the efforts of scholars like Julio C. Tello working on the site over a period of decades, producing the necessary volume of evidence to ensure what Raul Asensio (2018) defines as the patrimonial pact in the country: all those practices and discourses, configuring the way in which archaeological remains are made an intrinsic part of Peruvian national identity. They are also connected with the labour of governmental agencies, which, at some moments in time, have worked hand in hand with those scholars and citizens to enhance the patrimonial value of the site, while at other times also being blamed for the site's poor condition. Citizen stories are also connected with the country's political context across the years, defining how much work can be realised around the site. Above all, stories of archaeological activism are deeply connected with the social transformations experienced in the region over time, especially triggered by extreme events like the 1941 flood and 1970 earthquake and the dramatic consequences of those events for the population. Disasters in Huaraz have been moments of loss, suffering and frustration, but also instances of political impulse and transformation – temporal arrangements that have

justified strong urban interventions and the rise of protectionist efforts aiming to recover the city's idealised past.

To conceive of Pumacayán as an archaeological centre is in any case an innocent endeavour. As Gastón Gordillo (2014) suggests, the distinction between archaeological ruins and rubble is sustained by elitist definitions of what societal reminiscences are worth protecting and which are simple waste. Whereas the former are material relics from the past turned into 'unified objects that elite sensibilities often treat as a fetish that ought not to be disturbed' (Gordillo 2014, 6), the latter are remnants of modes of existence that are not socially valued, and hence deemed unworthy of either short-term maintenance or preservation over time. Instead of asking what are the intrinsic conditions that produce ruins in society, the author equates ruins with other non-fetishised remains, in order to understand what turns things into rubble – a concept that, while de-glamourising the notion of valued ruins, also reveals the material sedimentation of destruction around wreckage. Inspired by the work of Anne Stoler, Gordillo proposes shifting the focus on ruins to the notion of ruination: a process that reveals how colonial rule is a still-ongoing imperial process that 'bring[s] ruin upon' (Stoler 2008, 195). As a process, ruination evokes the active forces of destruction behind imperial orders. It is the ultimate fetishisation of the lashes imposed by the same colonial violence leading to that devastation in the first place. 'Rubble', in other words, 'is evidence of destruction' (Gordillo 2014, 261), the author exclaims, and ruination its recognition.

These reflections indeed strongly resonate with the case of Pumacayán. 'What makes ruins "authentic inventions of modernity" is that they are "the copy of an original that never existed"', Gordillo (2014, 9) affirms. According to this view, a site like Pumacayán is the result of a reified past bounded in a perimeter that hides 'constellations of rubble created by ongoing forms of disruption' (Gordillo 2014, 9). However, this understanding of the operational capacity of ruins as modern devices implicitly suggests that ruins portray a false version of the past while assuming that there is an original, 'real' version that can be reached – although not through the inventions of modernity, at least. If we assume that all versions of the past are an actual creation of it, then it is useless to reaffirm the invented condition of the modern, reified past. Rather, such an emphasis might only overshadow the productions that emerge from those created schemas. Focusing primarily on the rupture left by schemes of domination, Gordillo misses exploring what is valued when ruins are produced; what remains as an object of heritage after the imperial destruction. He misses the fact that friction, collapse and disintegration to be found in rubble can also lead to the creation of values and meaning. 'The pure multiplicity of rubble is the void that haunts modernity', Gordillo (2014, 9) affirms. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, even those contested representations of the void, turned into active absences built upon an ecology of materialities and practices, have positive expressions that escape the simple emptiness left by destruction. Absence creates a

sense of belonging and identity, even when those feelings are sustained by practices of exclusion and the enactment of a conflictive alterity portraying *invasores* from the highlands as a threatening outburst. Time, under these terms, is articulated by those absences, even if they are produced by trajectories of destruction that seem to break with time in the first place.

The case of Pumacayán shows us how reified rests turned into archaeological remains are sometimes produced by the same people inhabiting the surroundings of ancient ruins. Whether influenced by major national narratives or not, local inhabitants can have a major role in articulating the remains of an ancient past that needs to be recovered and protected. But in this process, they do not operate alone. Besides archaeologists and state agencies (and even the settlers around and beyond the hill accused of land seizure), stones are also central elements in this. Rather than simple fetishised objects reflecting social expectancies, values and frustrations, stones are mediators producing means and values (Latour 1991). They have the capacity to materialise the quest for endurance because they are meant to last over time. As seen in this chapter, stones in Pumacayán have portrayed this apparent durability in multiple forms – as sacred beings, guardians of entire towns and valleys and as eternal entities across generations. They were carefully carved to make walls and other structures in pre-Hispanic times, later looted by Spanish colonists for their churches and buildings of colonial Huaraz. Due to their durability, they have operated as archaeological artefacts that connect us directly to distant epochs and social regimes. As such, they can be objects of wonder and collection, but also drivers of a national identity that must be preserved and protected against foreigners and those who are insensitive or uneducated. Stones can be educational devices performing a civilisatory role, just like Javier's *museo itinerante* suggests. Their collection can be thought of as an apparatus that sustains efforts of story-telling (Bal 1997). When collected for private archives or exhibitions, stones take part in the narrative systems that help to create diverse versions of the past – whether historical records about the archaeological traces of Pumacayán, popular stories about the flood and its consequences for the city or just accounts about the threat that *invasiones* entail. They enhance the constructions of diverse texts, sometimes following similar stories and lessons, sometimes offering different combinations of elements and events.

All these functions operate simultaneously – not because of values reflected by stones, but because of their apparently ever-lasting materiality. 'Materials are not in time; they are the stuff of time itself', Tim Ingold (2012, 439) recalls. Stones, in this sense, are a metaphor for endurance, but they are more than symbolic '*as ifs*'. They sustain metaphors because they contain time and mark its passing as the geological formations they are (Jarman 2023a). They have the capacity to endure social regimes requiring those metaphors in the first place. Stones operate as a controlled absence of humans and non-humans left across time (Edensor 2012). Although in permanent transformation, stones create a long-standing narration of the past that

gives a sense of the changes and continuities of the urban and the pre-urban – a materiality that enables us to recognise 'the multiple temporalities inscribed in the surfaces of the city' (Crang 2001; in Edensor 2012, 450). If we agree with Christopher Tilley (2007, 17) that '[a]ll materials have their properties which may be described but only some of these materials and their properties are significant to people', then we can also understand why the emptiness left by stones when they disappear is so dramatic. It is not only a material component that is gone but also their social lives, a part of history inscribed on them that fade away.

The fact that the origins of both the stones from Pumacayán and the site itself are a mystery makes this site even more appealing to a grand narrative of an ancient past. The scarce archaeological information about the site makes it a source of speculation that combines all sorts of tales and narratives. Inquiries about its origins and permanence over time create a palimpsest of stories and explanations about the power of the place, suggesting a protective role that the hill has fulfilled to keep part of the city safe. These stories, sometimes based on mythical figures, sometimes including historical characters, operate simultaneously with narratives that relate to what Steve Woolgar and Geoff Cooper (1999, 439) define as urban legends: 'Familiar-sounding stories, told and retold, often involving bizarre, horrifying or embarrassing incidents which are said to have happened to "a friend of a friend"'. Tales about rich ladies being stuck in the mud, or wealthy men running naked from the flood, operate as moral narratives on the consequences of violating established boundaries. The destruction of the city's wealthiest district, together with the histories around it, reminds us of the fragility of the urban world – a supposedly robust arrangement that is conceived to last – as a result of an naïve modernity disrespectful of the forces of nature. 'The resistance of the *ushnus*, the intervention of the Niño Jesús, the fight between knight and Inca, were no use: Disorder won; destruction, crisis and death prevailed. Things changed: the image of the city, the mentality of the people', laments Yauri Montero (2014, 217) based on the consequence of the urban defeat of barbaric outbursts.

The endurance of Pumacayán even after extreme events like floods and earthquakes, in this sense, is not an urban victory against an unruled, savage environment but the disarticulation of the urban boundaries and their encroachment upon the site. Pumacayán might be located in what nowadays is considered the modern Huaraz, but its influence surpasses that space. It is a site that transgresses the historical-mythical dichotomy because its own permanence across time requires historical plausibility and implausibility simultaneously – a cohabitation that, as Marisol de la Cadena (2015, 57) reminds us, does not cancel eventfulness. 'Though radically different from and thus excessive to history, [implausibility] coexist with it and even makes it possible', the author affirms. In Pumacayán interact both evidence and speculation, the work of archaeologists and scholars that are as speculative as the stories told by citizens and survivors are factually accurate. In

practice, there are no hierarchical distinctions: everything is used to connect the site with ancient times. Far from suppressing them, stories around Pumacayán reinforce the cohabitation of history and myth as two valid forms of creating the past, especially amid the liminal times created by disasters. The same can be said about the urban–rural distinction: Pumacayán is not the expression of one of them but an agonistic synthesis, a *tinku*, that overcomes both. It is a place that repels the barbaric forces of the Andes while allowing the destruction of the city's most civilised, modern district. The site is the city's protector but also complicit in the destruction of its civilisatory endeavours.

Whereas some of these stories deal with Pumacayán as an ancient guardian, a true flood mitigation device protecting the place against the lashes of external forces, others show us what occurred in the aftermath of extreme events. This small but robust hill that managed to resist floods and earthquakes would later be turned into an endangered place – one of Huaraz's last archaeological sites, from which remains are under constant threat of disappearing. It is the victim of unscrupulous individuals invading the site, raising concerns among authorities, scholars and activists calling for its protection. What nature could not destroy would now be endangered by *invasores*: foreigners of unknown origin – initially associated with *campesinos* and *indios* – who are unwilling and incapable of appreciating the real value of the site. Under this scenario, an ever-smaller urban, educated class would do all at hand to avoid this destruction, but without success. The lack of political support, together with wicked intentions behind the site, renders its destruction an almost inevitable outcome.

The perpetuation of these discourses over time shows us an interesting operation of Pumacayán. Despite being a place where the boundaries between rural and urban seem to blur, it is also a site that sustains the construction of historical figures that refuse to disappear. The invading *indio*, that outburst coming from the highlands, would maintain its presence in the city, putting at risk the civilisatory project – just like in other moments of history. The contemporary rurality would be separated from the historical Inca and turned into an undesired figure, evidencing the 'cancellation of the old Andean order and the emergence of new, unsuspected realities' (Cornejo Polar 1981; in Aubès 2021, 132). This paradox is the surprising thing about foreign bodies in Huaraz: whereas a constant figure throughout history, the rural is always associated with a dramatic transformation; the loss of 'a world that will never be again what it was' together with 'the insecurity and bewilderment caused by a new reality that is not always understandable' (Cornejo Polar 1981; in Aubès 2021, 132). It is a figure that would permanently endanger the urban project, threatening its foundations and its possibility to remain in time.