

Inka Astronomy at Machu Picchu

Machu Picchu has been variously described as a citadel, a lost city, a royal estate, and a sacred center. Machu Picchu was likely recognized by the Inkas as a place of power because of its many granite outcrops and caves and the cardinality of mountains such as Veronica, Machu Picchu, Wayna Picchu, Pumasillo, and the snow peak of Salcantay. Machu Picchu is a multi-faceted complex that exhibits carved rocks, light and shadow effects, solstitial orientations, an equinoctial orientation, a zenith alignment, an anti-zenith orientation, a Pleiades orientation, stairs, seats, niches, a water source, fountains, basins, caves, altars, platforms, double-jamb doorways, animal replica stones, horizon replica stones, structures, and terraces. Astronomy within and surrounding Machu Picchu will be discussed at the sites of The Mortars, Intimachay, Temple of the Condor, The Torreón, Wayna Picchu, The Gran Caverna, the Sacred Plaza, the River Iniwatana, the Llactapata Sun Temple, and the Dark Constellations of the Milky Way.

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