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Reading Response #8

The Inca venerated the sun. Coricancha, or Temple de Sol, was a tribute to the power of the sun. On the eastern façade of the temple there are many niches engraved into the walls. Gold plates had been installed into these niches that would receive the sunrise. Inside the temple complex were a few buildings that had a large gold band run along the high interior; based on the connection with gold and the sun it is not a stretch to assume that this band is an abstracted representation of the sun. The temple is also believed to have been a site of astronomical viewing where solar readings were conducted. The walkway between the two eastern facing buildings is in alignment with the Pleiades, a star cluster important to the Inca. Coricancha also housed numerous shrines and idols. These shrines included a large stone idol representing a petrified warrior as well as an idol to prevent earthquakes. The most important of these idols is called Punchao, which means sunlight. The idol was a golden man that was “synonymous with Inca rule”.

Inca architecture also served practical purposes. The site of Machu Picchu is believed to be a summer retreat for a particular Inca ruler, his family, and retainers. It was inhabited year round and maintained by servants but the ruler would only visit seasonally, like a vacation home.