

---

# Ancient Architecture In Peru And The Development Of Modern Culture

Ancient architecture reveals much about civilization at a particular time. In order to understand the development of humans, it is as important to trace development by looking into the oldest architectural structures on the planet. This may span the whole globe, but South America has proven to be a premium destination when it comes to finding links to the most ancient civilizations. Through the exploration of the architecture of the region, both the social and spiritual practice can be revealed through the ritual practices attached to the structures. The link between art, architecture, and the formation of civilization will be revealed by examining the archeological site of Sechin Bajo in Peru, alongside developments in the surrounding areas. This will be done to establish how society developed and migrated in line with various conditions, and the changes in culture to highlight how this affects global civilization today. The extraordinary structures, carvings, and ruins indicate that a sophisticated group of individuals once inhabited the region thousands of years ago with complex ritual practices that revealed a vast body of knowledge, including architecture that is seen when analyzing various ancient structures. Modern analysis of these sites has revealed that much has been misunderstood about the capabilities of ancient humans, and the scientific understanding that was held alongside these various spiritual practices. Many of the ancient traditions may still be present in the modern practices of indigenous Peruvians, as well as other natives within South America. Therefore, examining the literature on the region will reveal much about South American culture, and the influence it has within the modern globalized context.

In order to understand the most ancient civilizations, archeologists examine what is left behind by various societies. Art, pottery, and textiles are often used to help determine details about ancient civilizations. One of the primary ways to investigate ancient civilizations is through the architecture that was left behind. This is because the structures may reveal much about how society was shaped, as well as the ancient spirituality that was practiced by the inhabitants of a specific region at the time. Considering that this could be understood by looking into architecture, examining the literature on the archeological site of Sechin Bajo may prove valuable due to its age which has been dated as far back as 3500BC. This means that the architecture of the region is important because the structures are some of the oldest in South America. Due to how civilizations moved and influenced one another remnants of this civilization can still be found in modern South America, specifically Peru. Therefore, analyzing the ruins at Sechin Bajo, and the surrounding architecture may reveal how modern South America developed, as well as the influence that ancient South America had on the world.

Sechin Bajo may be the oldest archeological sites in a region that contains many significant ancient ruins. One excavation site is located in Peru's Casma Valley where the Sechin, and Moxeke rivers meet . The pyramid structure, with outer walls decorated with 400 stone sculptures is unique in terms of the fact that no other site in Peru dates back to the Initial Period of 1900BC to 1 A.D. Gruesome images, some depicting severed heads bleeding from the eyes, or mouth were common carvings found at the site which were often shown orientated upside down or sideways. This is testament to the respect the civilization that existed at the time had for warriors, and warfare. It is common in the ancient world for warriors to hold high status in the community. Thus, the exploits of warriors would be depicted in this integrated structure. Today

---

the same kind of veneration for warriors can be found in North America, particularly in the United States, where memorial sites of war veterans are erected, as well as many documentaries, and films depicting soldiers in a heroic light. Thus, it is clear how this civilization may have influenced the development of modern attitudes concerning warfare.

The uncovering of architecture that showed such detailed workmanship, as well as a sophisticated understanding related to military is important to relate to ethnohistory. Due to many western narratives that are present as a result of a colonial heritage that promoted the inferiority of many native tribes, highlighting that indigenous people could achieve this is necessary to correct this miseducation. Thus, modern archeology in Peru takes into account ethnography, dialectics, as well as the social ramifications that the findings are interwoven with. The architecture of the region represents a rich heritage of the natives of Peru, and the intricacy of these structures highlight a sophisticated culture that laid the foundation for modern Peru. The stones used for the sculptures in the region were made out of granite, which is an extremely hard roc, which is a marvel because no metal was available to achieve this. The detailed artwork were drawn with charcoal, and then carved with various tools. Thus, the locals of the region can look to the ingenuity of these people for inspiration through archaeological practices.

The ruins at Sechin Bajo are not as intact as other archeological sites in the region of Casma valley, however, it may be one of the oldest architectural artifacts in the area. The site is located 12 km away from the Pacific coast headed inland and is constructed out of a mix of stone, and adobe elements. Parts of Sechin Bajo have been dated to be as old as 3600 BCE, which places the structure in the Late Preceramic era. This era highlights a shift into more permanent settlements that were facilitated by agricultural practices like domesticating animals. Many theorize that the time saved by the development of agriculture allowed the human species to start thinking deeper about the universe, thus developing spiritual systems. This progression can be found within Sechin Bajo, as the site has been referred to as a “temple complex” containing six terraces which are built in a shape of a jaguar, an animal known to be sacred to many South American tribes. This transition into the development of spirituality is what eventually led to religion and philosophies which heavily influenced modern science.

Thus, this ancient architecture reveals the foundations of questioning and critical thinking that was expressed by ancient cultures. Furthermore, these structures reveal how larger civilizations were created through various systems that secured more reliable food sources. One such structural development that can be found in Peru are the remains of irrigation systems that aided the food production that promoted permanent settlement. The food security that the manipulation of nature through irrigation systems offered allowed for the development of city kingdoms. This is not exclusive to Peru, or South America, but also extends to other ancient civilizations like Egypt, China, and Mexico. Thus, this development may be the first occurrence that allowed for the modern economy to developed based on the trading of goods between national economies because these city kingdoms now had independent ownership of various resources. All that would now be needed for trade would be the natural inclination of human beings to migrate.

An example of this kind of movement can be seen in the eastern part of South America where various rock art and ornaments were found. This may be showing how the first humans began to move towards, and settle in North America. This, however, took place long before the permanent settlement found in Sechin Bajo. Therefore, it is clear that the natural movement of

---

humans existed before any permanent city kingdoms were established. Thus, this knowledge of migration that was already held before the building of these ancient South American civilizations may be what was used to facilitate the establishment of trade routes. Thus, the knowledge of movement, coupled with the establishment of permanent settlements may be what laid the foundation of modern trade. Looking into what was taking place before these ancient sculptures, carvings, and temples were established may grant an understanding of the processes that resulted in the modern world that human beings exist in today.

Furthermore, an understanding can be gained as to why these structures were built, as well as why these structures were located in particular places. For example, Peru gets cited as significant because of the civilizations developing close to water, and practicing agriculture. The time flexibility that was allowed by farming means that spirituality, and mythology could be developed. This is indicated by the architecture in the Senchin region. Instead of being merely isolated pieces of artwork, the carvings on the walls of these structures, and the multitude of sculptures surrounding the site show a unified story. A large military scene is depicted, as the sculptures advance towards the rear building along the central stairway. Emblems, and banners of the group that was victorious is depicted as well, with decapitated heads being displayed as prizes of these warriors. This showed a record of an what could have been a historical occurrence which means that this civilization studied its past, and recorded certain events that were deemed noteworthy.

However, in light of new research, it is suggested that the battle is some sort of mythological story that may have been influenced by elements of history. Therefore, the structures provide an insight into the spiritual understanding of the ancient Peruvians that built these structures. These kinds of mythological claims to victory, similar to the Judaic tradition of Joshua's conquest of Jericho, are often used as claims to a particular region. Thus, examining these structures reveal an understanding of the need to unify around certain concepts, beliefs, or ideologies in order to sustain a cohesive society. This unified belief system may be a contributing factor as to how this civilization with limited technology was able to achieve the architectural marvels that can be seen in Senchin. At the site, 400 sculptures adorn the outer wall, and an additional a 302 sculptures were discovered as well. This large amount of work shows a high level of organization that was present in the culture that could stimulate such a concerted effort towards the common goal of creating this ritual structure.

In modern Peru the significance of these ancient sites is still held in high regard. However, debate has formed around the importance of the site due to the interpretation of heritage. Most rural, and urban citizens of Peru perceive heritage to be the traditions, and practices passed down from ancestors. Therefore, the building ruins are not commonly thought of as heritage making the preservation of these sites difficult. The effect of the site on identity and community development is viewed in different ways by different individuals. Therefore, it is important to highlight the significance of such sites as it relates to the development of the region, as well as the global impact that the information extracted by examining these structures has on the understanding of ancient cultures.

## **Conclusion**

The importance of examining architecture to determine the influence ancient cultures had on the development of the modern world is of utmost importance. Sechin Bajo and other ancient

---

structures in Peru help trace the development of agriculture, cities, as well as spirituality. Furthermore, these sites reveal the unification of societies around central ideologies, and value-systems that were used to stimulate progress. This kind of unification around ideals is still alive as it relates to religion, or cultural identities. The current sites still impact the local community in terms of how the government preserves the sites, and how it influences the development of local culture. Therefore, it is clear that ancient architecture is interwoven with modern culture.