**CONSERVATION International**

**Perú’s ‘Sistine Chapel’ shines again**

San Pedro Apóstol de Andahuaylillas, on the Andean Baroque route, has undergone a four-year, $1.5m restoration.

Andahuaylillas. In a remote Peruvian village, 3,100m up in the Andes (700m higher than Machu Picchu), sits South America’s version of the Sistine Chapel. An elaborate Mudéjar-style ceiling and a complex scheme of murals have earned the Baroque church of San Pedro Apóstol de Andahuaylillas, located 40km west of the colonial city of Cusco, its exalted nickname. But centuries of grime, bat droppings, earthquakes and dodgy restorations have dulled the original beauty of the church. The World Monuments Fund has worked with regional and national bodies to return San Pedro Apóstol to its former splendour and draw attention to other church-sculptures, as well as its altars, received treatment.

Another church on the Andean Baroque route, the church of San Juan Bautista de Huaro, has already been restored, and the fund is looking to secure money to restore La Virgen Paf- rifica da Casenueva. “These churches are wonderful examples of Andean Baroque art during the colonial period and we are committed to their conser- vation,” Pérez de Cuéllar says. She hopes these projects will increase tourist traffic to the region. “When you restore a building, you may think you only helping the building, but these projects also benefit the community,” she says. Family Shurpe.

**Ancient stones revealed on tapestry**

The Shelton Tapestry Map may have the first depiction of the Rollright Stones.

The Mudéjar-style ceiling before and after cleaning. Below, the “Road to Hell” mural.

Doors reopen to Venetian imperial rooms

Venice. Nine imperial rooms, looking out on St Mark’s Square in Venice have been restored to their former glory and are now open to the public. The sumptuous décor, designed by Giovanni Rossi and Giuseppe Borsato, dates to the mid-19th century, when Venice was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The apartment’s most famous inhabitant was Empress Elisabeth of Austria, known to her adoring subjects as Sissi, who visited in 1856 and for several months from 1861 to 1862. The ten-year project was carried out by the Comité Français pour la Sauvegarde de Venise, Italy’s ministry of culture and Venice’s Fondazione Musei Civici. E.R.

UNITED KINGDOM

Ludlow. The cleaning of an Elizabethan tapestry map has revealed what may be the earliest depiction of the Rollright Stones, a series of Neolithic and Bronze Age megaliths in the English Midlands, says Maggie Wood, the keeper of social history at Warwickshire Museum. What appears to be a small stone circle is now visible in the lower right-hand cor- ner of the Shelton Tapestry Map of Warwickshire. Other details, including tiny cottages nestled among the trees, are also now visible. The textile was cleaned for the first time in 1971 for exhibi- tion for its inclusion in the British Museum’s exhibition “Shakespeare: Map- ing the World” (until 25 November). The tapestry, along with four other textile maps (one of which is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London), was commissioned in the late 1560s by Ralph Sheldon for his stately home in Long Compton, near the stones. The textile was bought by Horace Walpole and passed through various hands before entering the collection of the Warwickshire Mu- seum in the 1960s.

Wet cleaning by the Bel- gian company De Witt re- moved four centuries of dirt and dust. The tap- estry then returned to the UK for further treatment by Textile Conservation, a com- pany in Bristol. The studio, led by Alison Lister, removed the non- original lining because it was causing tension in the tapestry. A full backing of undyed linen fabric was then applied and all conservation stitching work was carried out through the new backing. As the textile is a map, the decision was made to reinstate missing areas, conservators have uncovered details hidden by four centuries of dirt particularly the names of the towns. “Much of the brown-black thread had degraded, so a lot of attention was given to conservation stitching, to make the lettering clearer,” Lister says. Conservators found pieces of tap- estry woven over holes, which sug- gests that the textile was repaired early in its history, possibly within 50 to 100 years of being made. “It looks as if the tapestry was dam- aged when it was folded up as there are four similar-sized holes, the quality of the weaving and the matching of the design suggests that the repair could have been done by the original studio,” Lister says. E.S.