

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2010

Department:Anthropology

Degree:PhD

Title:Paleoethnobotany of Buena Vista: A Case Study of Ritual Feasting in Late Preceramic Peru

This project studies the plant remains and plant microfossils recovered from special architectural contexts at the ~4000 year old archaeological site of Buena Vista in the Chillón Valley of Peru. The primary goal of this dissertation is to examine the evidence for early feasting at Buena Vista. Feasting is an important social activity that occurs in all societies for social or religious reasons, but feasting, as part of other social or ritual activities, can also be a means by which emergent leaders can mobilize followers and garner influence. By examining the remains of foods and evidence of foods on utensils, this study also provides important information on subsistence, the early distribution of economic plants, and evidence of early interregional exchange in the time period before the introduction of ceramics.