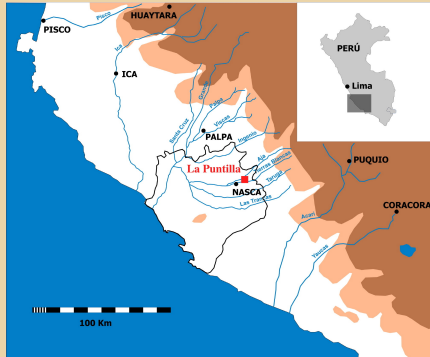


Funerary Places, Kinship and Community: Burials in settlements of the Nasca Valley (Ica, Peru)

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The Nasca River is a tributary of the Rio Grande. The Nasca river basin includes the Aja and Tierras Blancas rivers. For the most part it is located in the province of Nasca (Department of Ica, Peru, Central Andes) (Mapa: Equipo ACAIA)

Diachrony of Settlements and Funerary Spaces of the Nasca Valley (Ica, Peru).

After our research in the Nasca Valley, from 2005, and the results of C14 series in the region, we propose that the archaeological evidence was characterized by a diachrony of settlements that reaches from the first millennium BCE to c. 1450 cal CE.

We have evidence of the succession over time of social spaces dedicated to funerary practices in locations that were previously social places for economic and political-ideological activities, including domestic units. This fact entails the continuity of a historical memory that is incorporated into the ideological references of the communities concerning the abandoned enclave, perhaps maintaining property rights and not only the memory and the ideological framework.

Kinship as Political Organization

Kinship constitutes a form of political organization of social life. In illiterate ("prehistoric") societies, the organization of kinship can offer unsuspected ways of configuring the structures of ascription for women and men, and thus archaeological records should be the ones that provide data for the majority of social formations of human history.

"Kinship" serves for the affiliation of women and men, as part of their rights of belonging, property, inheritance, privileges, and wealth.

We understand as a community the group of people who share a residence in a settlement, and the "domestic group" as one whose objective is to organize maintenance work (care, attention, affection) destined for the whole or only a part of the members, work that they are crucial for the continuity of social life (Castro Martínez, et al. 2003).

Kinship groups and domestic groups can be formed in different ways. You can have a biological basis, based on the ascription derived from procreation, so that sons and daughters of the women of the group are linked to it. But there are other modes of affiliation, based on adoption, servile imposition or community affinity policies, which also form the basis of these groups.

Kinship, community, and domestic groups are political organizations. They decide how to add women and men. Within a kinship group, a community or a domestic group we must ask ourselves if domination and exploitation relationships existed, and what characteristics they had. We know that it is within these groups where relations of a patriarchal nature are located (domination and exploitation of the male collective over the collective of women), but also relationships of servitude, slavery or dependency.

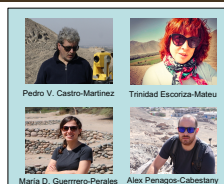
Kinship, Community, and Funerary Practices:

In the archaeological theory of funerary practices, specific burial places can be linked to either Kinship-based Groups or Communities as well. In ancient settlements of the Nasca Valley (Ica, Peru) we have evidence of the succession in time of social spaces dedicated to funerary practices, when the same sites were previously the location of social places dedicated to other economic and political-ideological activities. This funerary use of space, that housed other practices before, allows us to discuss its links with communities, kinship or domestic groups.

Social spaces where domestic units were located can be abandoned, and the community settles in another nearby location. The reasons must be considered, but they may involve collective decisions, or impositions by state coercion. Thus, the installation of communities on hills, and the construction of defensive works can be a form of communitarian resistance against threats from states that carry out policies of invasion, conquest, and territorial annexation. This is what we know happened in the Aja Valley, when the communities settled on fortified hills, around the 8th century BCE. Or when the same hills were reoccupied in the 13th to 15th centuries CE, face of the threat of the expansion of the Chincha State or the Cusco State. But abandonment can also occur due to state imposition, after the conquest of a territory, as happened in the 2nd century BCE with the expansion of the Cahuachi State, or in the 15th century with the establishment of the Inka Empire.

The abandonment of domestic social spaces for economic activities (and maintenance work) would not mean the abandonment of the site when it became a funerary space, where members who maintained the organization of certain kinship groups or domestic groups had their graves. The ideological referent of the right to territory, and the transmission of rights (property, privileges) can be expressed in this way.

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LP2-ZNC-ETU-30. Woman with mate and peanut as trousseau. Seated position. El Trigal III (Drawing: Equipo ACAIA).

Funerary structures and disposition of the body in the Nasca Valley

The pre-Inca tombs of the Nasca Valley present structures, and forms of disposition of the body that have been maintained for more than a millennium. Some children's graves are funerary urns, with the body inside. Most of the tombs have a structure with a circular or oval plan, in the form of a cylindrical pit, or with an "hourglass" profile, with the corpse in the lower part. Normally the pit was sealed with wooden beams, which served as a cover for the burial chamber. A small mound of stones and mud was built on top, which sealed the tomb and served as a marker of its location. The body was placed in a seated position, with the legs bent. These characteristics were maintained throughout the entire first millennium CE, from the time of the Cahuachi State to the time of the Wari State. Without C14 dating, clear stratigraphic contexts, or funerary associations that include ceramics of types with a defined chronology, it is not possible to establish their temporality. In El Trigal III there is evidence that after the end of the Wari State (from c. 1000-1250 CE) burials were carried out in a flexed lateral decubitus position.

Main problems in the archaeological praxis of the Nasca Valley:

The review of the bibliography and the experience and empirical evidence obtained in the excavations in El Trigal place us before reality of funerary practices that, necessarily, must reevaluate many of the axioms assumed by archeology on the southern coast of Peru:

- 1) Much of the social materiality of the Nasca Valley lacks contextualization.
- 2) An equation between tombs in a region and a "culture" has been established, without supporting evidence.
- 3) The framework of the chronological phases has been based on the ceramic series with errors in the assignment and synchronization of contexts that lack dating, making sociological readings difficult.
- 4) Very few of the graves have direct radiometric dating and in many cases with samples of fillings or clogging of erratic materials of random origin.
- 5) The presence of materials that can be considered chronotypes is restricted to only a few tombs. The rest, without trousseau, are dated because they belong to the same site or because of the treatment of the funerary practice.
- 6) Luck is required so that the contexts or the stratigraphic sequence of the architecture have not been altered, to obtain an adequate record of the association, anteriority or posteriority of the tombs to other architectures, or to link one or the other tombs to the spaces social.
- 7) Without this contextualization, without these associations, without these dates, it will be impossible to use the funerary evidence to make adequate readings about the social life of the communities, since for this a temporal framework is necessary that ensures synchronies.



El Trigal and the Aja Valley: General view from Southeast (Foto: Equipo ACAIA)



LP2-ZNC-ETU-17: Man with a vessel. Seated position. (Foto: Equipo ACAIA)

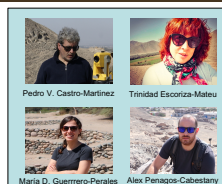


LP2-ZNC-ETU-18: individual with skull with Annular Deformation. Flexed right lateral decubitus. El Trigal III (Foto: Equipo ACAIA).



LP2-ZNC-ETU-03: Man with Skull with Annular Deformation. Seated position. El Trigal III. (Foto: Equipo ACAIA)

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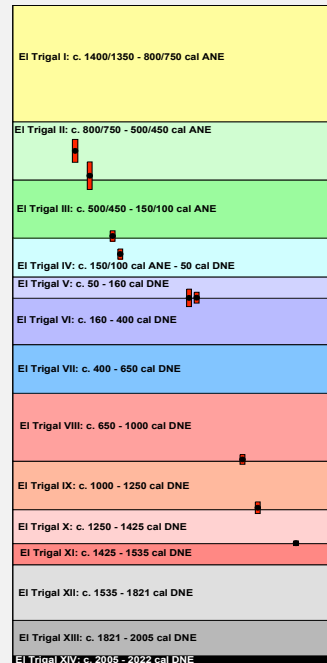
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Results:

During three millennia, extending from c. 1400 cal BCE and the Inka Empire, the social diachrony of the Nasca Valley would be divided into phases, where the communities would use abandoned areas and architectural structures as a new burial places. Phases of the archaeological zone of El Trigal, where our investigations of the La Puntilla Project have focused, have been defined based on records of extensive excavations and radiometric chronometry, and we consider that is representative of the social and historical diachrony of the Nasca Valley.

- 1) Between 1400-1000 cal BCE, a series of communities establish themselves in a stable way along the rivers. Some indications show that the first settlement in El Trigal III is located on those dates.
- 2) A series of communities settled on hills along the lower valley of the Aja River, such as Cerro de El Trigal, around 800 cal BCE, in fortified settlements. Society was organized based on a communitarian centrality, with central buildings, intended for storage or craft work. We do not know their funerary practices in the region.
- 3) The Historical Continuity of Communities of the Nasca Valley was broken around 150/100 cal BCE with the implantation of the Cahuachi State.
- 4) Funerary Practices begin with the abandonment of settlements. In the case of El Trigal III around 160-400 cal CE.
- 5) Burials with grave goods, belonged to infant individuals, could be a sign of a transfer of property or inheritance linked to kinship relationship, with evidence of relationships of subordination and social exploitation.
- 6) The expansion of the Wari State Border to the Nasca Valley, between c. 650-1250 cal ANE, displaces funerary spaces and settlements. But the continuity of alternative funerary use or not of the settlements is maintained.
- 7) The abandonment of the establishments, and the insecurity c. 1250-1425 CE, due to the expansion of new States (Chincha, Cusco), suppose the refuge of settlements in the hills. These new settlements are confirmed, among other sites in the Nasca Valley, in Cerro de El Trigal. Funerary practices persist.
- 8) The Funerary Spaces alternate between c. 200 and 1425 cal CE, but the Historical Memory is maintained.
- 9) At El Trigal and the Aja Valley, the implantation of the Cusco State (Inka Empire) entailed the rupture of the Historical Memory, associated with the loss of property rights (and inheritance).
- 10) Continuity was maintained for at least 1,000 years (or perhaps 1,500 years), until the rupture imposed by the Inka Empire.



El Trigal (Orcona, Ica, Peru). Phases between 1400 cal BCE and present. Calibration intervals from C14 series are shown in red. (Graphic: Equipo ACAIA)

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