

Guest Lecture within the framework of
Geschichtswissenschaft in der Diskussion
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**THE CHIMU EMPIRE AND ITS MASS SACRIFICE OF CHILDREN
AND CAMELIDS BETWEEN THE 12TH AND 15TH CENTURY AD,
NORTH COAST OF PERU**



Drone view of the excavations at Pampa La Cruz, Huanchaco, North Coast of Peru showing the numerous burials of children during the Chimu Period. © Gabriel Prieto

Between 2011 and 2019, a team of Peruvian, French and American archaeologists have uncovered, on the outskirts of Chan Chan, the former capital city of the Chimu Empire in the North Coast of Peru, four mass sacrificial grounds. At the beginning it was suggested that the mass sacrifices occurred as part of desperate responses to climate anomalies such as ENSO events. Current data supports the idea that mass child sacrifice was a systematic and recurrent ceremony performed by the Chimu between 1100 and 1450 AD. The evidence points to the area of Huanchaco littoral as the epicenter of such sacrificial activities, establishing a direct link between the sacrifices and the sea. Previous research has emphasized the importance of marine motives in Chimu art, and therefore the close relationship between the location of the mass sacrifices and the sea could suggest that ritualized violence was at the core of Chimu religion. In this presentation, I will show the four mass sacrificial grounds so far excavated in Huanchaco, as well as a summary of the studies done on the human and camelid remains found there. Finally, I will try inquire about the role played by human sacrifice in the Chimu Empire and its socio-political implications for what is considered one of the largest political entities of the Americas.

Thursday, November 18th, 2021 | 17:15-18:45 | 52U109 SR (GeiWi UG)

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