

Religion and Adaptation in Andean Civilizations: Archeology and Anthropology

Colloquium organized by Science of Religions, UniFr

Venue: Fribourg University, Miséricorde Campus - building MIS03, room 3118

Program

Friday, May 16th 2025

9h – Coffee service

9h15 – Welcoming words and presentations of the participants

9h30 – *The Moche in their Time and Place: New Perspectives* by Jeffrey Quilter (Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology at Harvard University)

10h30 – Break

10h45 – *Water Harvesters of the Pampa de Mocan: Resiliency on the Ancient North Coast, Peru* by Ari Caramanica (Vanderbilt University)

12h – Lunch break

13h15 – *The Moche Burial Ceremony Revisited: New Iconographic and Archaeological Perspectives* by Luis Jaime Castillo (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú)

14h30 – Comments from Véronique Dasen (University of Fribourg)

15h – Comment and closing remarks from François Gauthier (University of Fribourg)

Jeffrey Quilter (Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology at Harvard University)

The Moche in their Time and Place: New Perspectives

Once thought to have existed as a single state stretching for hundreds of kilometers on the north coast of Peru from 0 to 650 A.D., this archaeological culture has been reevaluated in recent years. Moche political organization is now viewed as more complex, its geographical range has been redefined, and its period of existence recalibrated. This paper will review

these topics and present current understandings and issues remaining to be resolved, particularly Moche's relations and interactions with past, contemporary, and later cultures.

Ari Caramanica (Vanderbilt University)

Water Harvesters of the Pampa de Mocan: Resiliency on the Ancient North Coast, Peru

How do societies become resilient to extreme environments and natural disasters? This talk examines past and present responses by agriculturalists to extreme aridity and devastating floods caused by the El Niño phenomenon on the north coast of Peru. The pre-Hispanic landscape known as the Pampa de Mocan presents an agricultural system that co-evolved with these environmental challenges. Preserved in this desert are the vestiges of innovative methods for floodwater farming, flexible technologies built to withstand natural disasters, and resource management strategies; there is also evidence of the enduring impacts and unforeseen consequences of technological choices. Together, these data point to a key to this system's resilience: prioritizing water and the production of water over land.

Luis Jaime Castillo (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú)

The Moche Burial Ceremony Revisited: New Iconographic and Archaeological Perspectives

The "Burial Ceremony" is one the most complex iconographic representations created by the Moche (300–850 CE) of northern Peru. It appears on eighteen ceramic vessels that have been documented either in museums, private collections or archaeological contexts from San José de Moro, a Late Moche elite cemetery and ceremonial center in the Jequetepeque Valley.

Drawing on an iconographic and archaeological-contextual approach, I show important correlations between the settings and artifacts represented in the Burial Ceremony and those archaeologically documented in San José de Moro, allowing us to argue that the actions represented in the narrative were enacted in real life at this site. This paper ultimately offers new insights on the deep religious and political changes that affected Late Moche society, impacting religious-artistic narratives in San José de Moro right before the Moche demise.