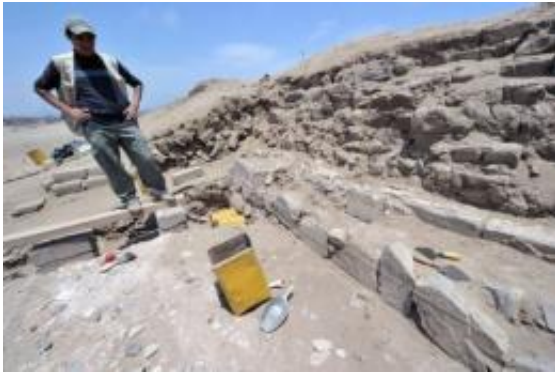


Mummies of 15th century dogs discovered in Peru

November 10 2010



Archaeologist Jesus Holguin visits the excavation site at the Inca Sanctuary of Pachacamac on November 9. Peruvian archaeologists have discovered six mummified dogs, all dating from the 15th century and apparently presented as religious offerings at a major pre-Columbian site just south of Lima.

Peruvian archaeologists have discovered six mummified dogs, all dating from the 15th century and apparently presented as religious offerings at a major pre-Columbian site just south of Lima.

The dogs "have hair and complete teeth," said Jesus Holguin, an archaeologist at the museum in Pachacamac, located some 25 kilometers (15 miles) south of Lima.

Holguin told AFP Wednesday that experts were still trying to determine their breed.

The mummified remains of four children were also found at the site, archaeologists said.

The mummified dogs were found two weeks ago wrapped in cloth and buried in one of Pachacamac's adobe brick pyramids.

[Archaeologists](#) believe the animals were offerings related to a funeral, "although we do not know if this was related to an important personality of the Inca period," said archaeologist Isabel Cornejo.

The experts believe the dogs are neither Hairless Peruvian Dogs -- an ancient native breed -- nor sheepdogs found at gravesites of the Chiribaya culture, which flourished in southern Peru between the years 900 and 1350.

"Their strong teeth lead us to believe that they are [domestic dogs](#) that were used for hunting," added another expert, Enrique Angulo.



Veterinarian Enrique Angulo examines the remains of one of the six canines found by archeologists buried in the Inca sanctuary of Pachacamac, in the coastal desert strip 30 kms south of Lima.

Researchers will x-ray the finds in an attempt to determine the breed of the animals and whether the [dogs](#) were slaughtered.

Pachacamac museum director Denise Pozzi-Escot said that the find will let researchers broaden their knowledge of ancient Peruvian canines.

The remains are well preserved due to the type of soil and the dry weather along the Peruvian coastline, where it rarely rains.

At its height, Pachacamac was the most important ceremonial center on Peru's central coast, where thousands of pilgrims flocked from afar bringing rich offerings. Human sacrifices took place at the site.

At least three different societies occupied Pachacamac for hundreds before the Incas took it over around 1400. The Incas in turn were defeated by Spanish conquistadors who arrived in 1532.

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