

# Multi-disciplinary study provides evidence of forced migration by pre-colonial Incas

July 14 2020, by Bob Yirka

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Credit: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2020). DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2005965117

A team of researchers with members from several institutions in the U.S., one in the U.K. and one in Peru, has found evidence of forced migration by pre-colonial Incas. In their paper published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the group describes their multidisciplinary study of six individuals found in two cemeteries in what is now modern Peru, and what they learned from it.

Prior research has suggested that during the Late Horizon, a period of Inca history, the Inca rounded up people living outside of the Inca Empire and forced them to relocate to places inside the empire as a means of bolstering the population and thus the economy. Unfortunately, to date, evidence for such forced migrations has been scant. In this new effort, the researchers conducted a thorough investigation of the remains of six people buried in a cemetery in what was once a part of the Inca empire during the Late Horizon—they suspected that all six were people who had been forcibly moved from their homeland hundreds of miles away.

The work involved use of ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis, study of artifacts, written accounts in later years and information from biogeochemical sources to tie the six individuals to societies of people living outside of the Inca empire along what is now the Peruvian coast.

Whole genome sequencing of the individuals found in the graves showed they had belonged to a group of people who lived along the Peruvian northern coast—their gravesites, in contrast, were in cemeteries in the center of the Chincha Valley, near the Peruvian southern coast. Radiocarbon dating showed them to have lived during the period between 1415 and 1805, which aligned with other reports of forced migrations. The researchers also noted that ceramics and textiles in the gravesites matched those that were made and used by people from the same area identified by the [genome sequencing](#).

The researchers suggest their [multidisciplinary approach](#) to studying the individuals found in the gravesites provides strong evidence of institutionalized forced [migration](#) by the Inca during the Late Horizon. They further suggest such individuals were either made to walk or were carried by oceangoing vessels.

**More information:** Jacob L. Bongers et al. Integration of ancient

DNA with transdisciplinary dataset finds strong support for Inca resettlement in the south Peruvian coast, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2020). [DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2005965117](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2005965117)

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