

ARCH/BIOANTH LUNCH TALK
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Crafting communities: Examining geographic provenience and meaning of the enigmatic Corral Redondo feathered panels from Middle Horizon (ca. 600-1000 CE) Peru



The Corral Redondo feathered panels are a well-known enigma in Andean archaeology. In the 1940's, locals recovered over 60 feathered panels rolled up inside of enormous Wari- style "face neck" jars---some of the only examples of these jars ever recovered that were not ritually smashed---in coastal Arequipa, Peru. Recent excavations have confirmed that there are no residential structures, cemeteries, or obvious rationale for deposition, other than the hypothesis that they were tied to a landscape huaca, or animated, holy place. The aberrant treatment, arid environment, and natural protections of preen wax coating the blue and yellow macaw feathered panels enabled their exceptional preservation and ongoing displays at several museums. Featherwork was not uncommon among ancient Andean elites, but the size, splendor, and bizarre deposition

of the Corral Redondo panels have perplexed researchers for nearly 90 years. Recently, our team has begun investigating where the feathers, cotton, and camelid fiber yarns originated before their assemblage. Preliminary strontium and lead isotope evidence indicates the components were sourced from an extraordinary geographic range---suggesting materials were selected with great care, and possibly, to imply specific meanings. We suggest these elaborate panels signified, were produced, and produced places, peoples, and their vital forces woven together as a physical expression of cosmological power that necessitated their careful and intentional deposition.

Beth K. Scaffidi (Assistant Professor of Anthropology & Heritage Studies, University of California, Merced) is a spatially-oriented anthropological bioarchaeologist who obtained her PhD from Vanderbilt University. She explores patterns in skeletal markers of social violence, inter- and intra-regional movement, and social inequality at multiple scales: regional, site, and individual life courses, using isotopic, paleopathological, and geospatial methods.

