

RESILIENCE AND OPPORTUNISM IN DYNAMIC LANDSCAPES: EVIDENCE OF PREHISPANIC RUNOFF IRRIGATION IN NASCA, PERU



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Wednesday, November 9 - 5 PM

Abstract

Looking at the dry and arid landscape of the Peruvian Rio Grande de Nasca Region today, it is difficult to imagine how people both past and present were able to flourish given the lack of water. Archaeological evidence, however, demonstrates that the Nasca landscape was much more dynamic and unpredictable than archaeologists working in this area have previously considered. I argue that prehispanic people living in this area were able to take advantage of the more humid conditions caused by La Niña, which local paleoenvironmental reconstructions demonstrate occurred sometime during 800 BC – 650 AD and 1150 – 1450 AD. In this talk, I will present evidence of relict runoff agricultural terraces found throughout the Rio Grande de Nasca Region, specifically near the archaeological site of Uchuchuma, to demonstrate the resilience and opportunism employed by prehispanic people living in a dynamic and unpredictable landscape.

Biography

Stefanie L. Bautista is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Rochester's interdisciplinary program in Archaeology, Technology, and Historical Structures, and an Anthropology PhD candidate at Stanford University. Stefanie's research focuses on prehistoric homes, and the daily practices that occurred within them, as a way to study the impact that broader, socio-political changes had on local populations. Her dissertation research uses a household perspective to study the transition between two archaeological cultures – the Paracas (800-100 BC) and Nasca (AD 1-700) – that occurred in the Rio Grande de Nasca Region, Peru. In addition, Stefanie is also currently co-directing another archaeological project that investigates the role of the Wari (AD 600-1000) state in the Sigwas Valley, Arequipa, Peru.

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