

Patterns of War in the Andes from the Archaic to the Late Horizon: Insights from Settlement Patterns and Cranial Trauma

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Published online: 27 March 2013
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Abstract Over the pre-Columbian sequence, Andean warfare ranged greatly in intensity. This review combines published information on cranial trauma and settlement patterns, which often align and clarify each other, to make an initial assessment of how severely Andean populations were affected by war over time and space. The data speak to a number of major topics in the archaeology of warfare, such as the origin of war, contrasts in state militarism, and changes in the practice of war related to social organization. Although there is considerable regional variation, two large-scale “waves” of escalated conflict that are clearly supported by the cranial trauma and settlement pattern data occurred in the Final Formative (late Early Horizon, 400 BC–AD 100) and the Late Intermediate period (AD 1000–1400).

Keywords Andes · Warfare · Settlement patterns · Skeletal trauma

Introduction

Prehistoric warfare was central to past social change (Arkush and Allen 2006; Brown and Stanton 2003; Chacon and Mendoza 2007a, b; Dye 2009; Guilaine and Zammit 2005; Nielsen and Walker 2009). Archaeologists’ focus has shifted recently from demonstrating that warfare was present in non-Western precolonial contexts (e.g., Bamforth 1994) to assessing variation in warfare over time and space. Robust diachronic sequences of war and peace in North America (Haas 2001; Lambert 2002; LeBlanc 1999; Milner 1999, 2007) and early prehistoric Europe (Guilaine and

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