



## Ritual Sacrifice in Ancient Peru: New Discoveries and Interpretations

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Propitiating the supernatural forces that could grant bountiful crops or wipe out whole villages through natural disasters was a sacred duty in ancient Peruvian societies, as in many premodern cultures. Ritual sacrifices were considered necessary for this propitiation and for maintaining a proper reciprocal relationship between humans and the supernatural world.

The essays in this book examine the archaeological evidence for ancient Peruvian sacrificial offerings of human beings, animals, and objects, as well as the cultural contexts in which the offerings occurred, from around 2500 B.C. until Inca times just before the Spanish Conquest. Major contributions come from the recent archaeological fieldwork of Steve Bourget, Anita Cook, and Alana Cordy-Collins, as well as from John Verano's laboratory work on skeletal material from recent excavations. Mary Frame, who is a weaver as well as a scholar, offers rich new interpretations of Paracas burial garments, and Donald Proulx presents a fresh view of the nature of Nasca warfare. Elizabeth Benson's essay provides a summary of sacrificial practices.

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