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Ventarrón archaeological site

Ventarrón is the site of a 4,000-year old temple with painted murals, which was excavated in Peru in 2007 in the Lambayeque region on the northern coast, 760 km (470 mi) north of Peru's capital of Lima.

The site is about 12 miles from Sipán, a religious and political center of the later Moche culture, which flourished from AD 1 to AD 700 (about 2000 to 1300 years ago).

Researchers named the temple structure Ventarrón. Located in a valley, the complex, covers about 2500 square meters (27,000 square feet).[2] The temple and murals were radio carbon dated to 2000 B.C., and are thought to be the oldest discovered in the Americas. One mural on two walls depicts

a deer caught in a net; another has an abstract design in red and white.[3] The temple was constructed of bricks of river sediment rather than the stone or adobe later to be traditional in the area; its construction is unique for the northern coast. It contains a stairway leading to a fire altar.

Walter Alva, the Peruvian archaeologist making the discovery, commented on the findings:

“What’s surprising are the construction methods, the architectural design and most of all the existence of murals that could be the oldest in the Americas. He said, “The discovery of this temple reveals evidence suggesting the region of Lambayeque was one of great cultural exchange between the Pacific coast and the rest of Peru.”[1]

The team discovered likely ceremonial offerings, including the skeletons of a parrot and a monkey, which would have come from Peru’s jungle regions, and shells typical of coastal Ecuador. These indicated the range of exchange.

Alva and his team worked three months on the excavation. They said that the culture that built the temple had intentionally buried it when finished with its use.[2] This helped to protect it for thousands of years. Locals have dug away at the site, taking blocks to use in constructing their own buildings. Much of the Ventarrón site had been looted in 1990 and 1992, but the thieves had not found the temple.[3]

In the 1980s Alva led the discovery of the tomb of the Lord of Sipán and other elite ancient people at the Moche center, a much later culture whose people also were based in Lambayeque. The royal tomb included generations of burials from about 300 AD, or 1700 years ago.

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