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THE REDISCOVERY OF HUACA PINTADA

*Why Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Matters Within Archaeological
Environments in Peru*

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The Rediscovery of Huaca Pintada

Why Traditional Ecological Knowledge Matters Within Archaeological Environments in Peru

Elements in Indigenous Environmental Research

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Abstract: This Element presents a case study of the authors' partnership with the La Pintada community in their excavation of a pre-Columbian site known as Huaca Pintada, a pyramidal mound located in the Lambayeque region on the north coast of Peru. The site, which gained recognition after the fortuitous discovery by looters in 1916 of an exceptional polychrome mural, was somehow "forgotten" by the scientific community after irreversible damage. However, this was not the case for the local inhabitants, families like the Inoñán or the Chapoñán descendants of ancient muchic traditions, who founded a village named after their illustrious elder. This Element describes how local actors like shamans and workers were indispensable in finding solutions that led not only to the rediscovery of the treasures of the Huaca Pintada but also to the reconnection of the community with its past.

Keywords: Andean archaeology, mural paintings, traditional ecological knowledge in Peru, Lambayeque, collaborative archaeology

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Contents

1	Navigating Tensions: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Ownership in Peruvian Archaeology	1
2	The Huaca Pintada Archaeological Project	4
3	Archaeology, Conservation, and Preservation of Huaca Pintada	35
4	Archaeological Sites as Indigenous Anchors in the Landscape	58
5	Conclusions	65
	References	68