



PRESS RELEASE

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SB Museum of Natural History Returns Indigenous Ancestral Remains to the Consulate General of Peru in Los Angeles

SANTA BARBARA, CA — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH) has coordinated the return of the remains of two ancestral Indigenous Peruvian individuals to the Consulate General of Peru in Los Angeles. These remains were excavated from the Ancón Necropolis, northern Lima Province, in 1877 by Léon de Cessac, who donated them to the Santa Barbara State College in 1878. They were subsequently donated to the SBMNH in 1925.

The Peruvian Ministry of Culture has concluded that these remains are part of Peru's National Cultural Heritage and will be transferred to the custody of the Peruvian Government on June 6, 2023. This transfer of custody is made in solidarity with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Peru concerning the Imposition of Import Restrictions on Archaeological Material from the Pre-Hispanic Cultures and Certain Ethnological Material from the Colonial Period of Peru. More broadly, the SBMNH agrees that "Indigenous peoples have the right to [...] the repatriation of their human remains," as stated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 12.1, adopted September 13, 2007.

"At the Museum we are committed to ensuring that Indigenous cultures and communities have the ability to regain custody of their ancestral remains and funerary objects," said SBMNH President & CEO Luke Swetland. "We have been honored to care for these remains for many years and are grateful that we can transfer custody to the Consulate General of Peru in Los Angeles."

The SBMNH is committed to going above and beyond the legal requirements of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), proactively engaging with tribes throughout California and beyond, to return all Indigenous ancestors and their associated funerary objects to their source communities. Visit sbnature.org/repatriation for more information on the Museum's commitment to repatriation.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being naturally different. For more information, visit sbnature.org.