While scholars and students know much about the Incan civilization of Peru, little was known about the Moche civilization until recently. This ancient culture was rich in art and wealth, but its bizarre sacrificial rites mystified archeologists and anthropologists alike. Who were the Moche? When did they live? What were their lives like? And why did they perform such extremely violent and heinous acts of human sacrifice? This episode of Ancient Mysteries unravels the enigma of the Moche.

Visitenos al www.historyinternational.com/classroom para obtener la guía de maestros del programa “La Sangre y el Tesoro en Peru”, escrita en español.

### objectives

Students will learn about the ancient Moche Peruvian civilization. They will explore the art and culture of this civilization and its human sacrificial rites. They will also explore the connection between environmental disasters and these rituals.

### national standards

This teacher’s guide fulfills the following National Standards for History for grades 5–12 as developed by the National Center for History in the Schools: Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Historical Analysis and Interpretations, and Historical Research Capabilities for World History (Era 3).

### curriculum links

This teacher’s guide would be suitable for middle and high school classes on South American history, world cultures, archeology, anthropology, and religion.

### discussion questions

1. Archeologists discovered the civilization of the Moche in Peru. Where is Peru? What is its climate? What are its physical characteristics?

2. Although archeologists now know of the Moche, they still know little about them. Who were the Moche? Why have they remained such a mystery for so long?

3. Scientists uncovered grim scenes at the Temple of the Sun and the Temple of the Moon. What are these temples? What makes them unique?

4. What were the profiles of Moche victims discovered at the Temple of the Sun and the Temple of the Moon?

5. What type of culture did the Moche have? Discuss the characteristics of their culture.

6. The Moche left no written documents, but they did leave behind other types or records. What did the Moche leave behind? How have scientists reconstructed their culture from these records?

7. How has Moche art revealed clues about long-past worlds?

8. While archeologists and anthropologists thought that the Moche practiced ritual human sacrifice, they did not have any proof. What provided evidence to support their hypotheses?

9. In whose tomb did archeologists discover evidence supporting the hypothesis of ritual human sacrifice?

(continued)
activities

1. Using a medium of your choice, construct a small-scale replica of a Moche mound.

2. Research El Niño on the Internet, and use your data to create a report about this environmental phenomenon.

3. Many of the clues about the Moche culture have come from their portrait vessels. Create an artist’s rendering of these portrait vessels, or a portrait vessel bearing the likeness of someone you admire.

vocabulary

deity (n.) a god or goddess
despot (n.) an oppressive ruler; a tyrant
elegance (n.) power and effectiveness in the use of language
grueling (adj.) requiring great continuous effort; arduous
malicious (adj.) evil; mean-spirited
mutilate (v.) to destroy or disfigure a human body or body parts

pinnacle (n.) the highest point
portraiture (n.) the art or craft of creating portraits
prowess (n.) skill; ability
sinister (adj.) indicative of evil; threatening evil
speculate (v.) to assume to be true in the absence of conclusive evidence
wanton (adj.) excessively cruel or merciless; marked by excessive violence

resources

websites & books

primary resource
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0103/feature3/ National Geographic Website featuring Moche art

book sites
http://www.travelvantage.com/per_moch.html Peru: The Moche Culture
http://www.rosehulman.edu/~delacova/moche.htm The Moche
http://www.upenn.edu/museum/Exhibits/moche.html Stolen Moche Gold
http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0103/feature3/ Moche Burials Uncovered
http://www.unitru.edu.pe/arg/index.html Proyecto Ai Apaec (translations on pages available)

books

