



BIWEEKLY COLLOQUIUM
Monday, 23rd of January 17.00

**DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETIES IN THE CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF
THE ANDES, PERU**

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Archäologie Außereuropäischer Kulturen**

The search of the factors that triggered the development of human societies in the past is a constant concern of archaeological research. Which influences moved people to change their way of live, how did complex societies arise and how did existing systems change in the course of time?

During our research in an extreme environment in the river oasis of the south coast of Peru we found a close relationship between changes in environmental conditions and changes of settlement patterns. In order to test the hypothesis that environmental changes played an important role in the development of Andean societies, we designed a project within a research area that comprises a variety of different ecozones along a transect line between the shore of the Pacific ocean, crossing the coastal desert of Peru and climbing up to the peaks of the western cordillera of the Andes at about 4500 masl. Along this "Andean Transect" we recorded more than 1500 archaeological sites dating from the Archaic Period (8000 BC) until the beginning of the colonial period in the 16th century.

Geoarchaeological investigations in sedimentary archives of the desert coast and peat bogs of the highlands showed clear evidence of major changes in humidity and temperature during the Holocene. Archaeological settlement surveys and excavations in numerous sites of different time periods, as well as datings with archaeological and physical methods showed a clear correspondence between environmental and cultural development. It seemed to be obvious that environmental changes played a major role in the development of complex societies and the shifts of the centers of power of these societies in the Andes. The results of our research in the south of Peru allow important inferences on the development of the prehispanic societies in South America and, in a general sense, on the general development of prehistoric societies worldwide.

Venue: Room 204, Leibnizstraße 1, CAU Kiel