



The well-preserved remains of a young boy, referred to as the El Plomo Mummy, were discovered, in 1954, on Cerro El Plomo (in the Chilean Andes).

Those remains were studied, in-depth, in 1982. The examiner - P. D. Horne, from the Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada - tells us how the child died:

...The male child, as was shown later, had been sacrificed and buried alive. He was found fully clothed in the sitting position. Approaching death he had pulled his knees to his chin, clasped folded hands around his knees on which he laid his head.

How did his face appear, after so many centuries?

The child's face was covered by a thin layer of red paint composed of iron ochre. Four broad yellow bands on each side of the face completed the decoration. The yellow pigment was shown to be composed of arsenic sulphide mixed with animal fats. The facial design, all but obscured during the thirty years since recovery, was brought back to sharp focus through infrared photography. The shoulder length hair was divided into more than 200 fine braids and held in place by a llatu or head-band woven from human hair. His head was crowned by a llama wool head-dress topped by condor feathers.

Where did he live, before he died?

...studies of these chronicles and modern archaeological studies show the child to be from Qolla Suyu the southeastern quarter of the [Inca] Empire near Lake Titicaca. This means the child walked or was carried some 2,000 km to reach his destination of Cerro El Plomo.

Did the Inca routinely engage in human sacrifices?

These same chronicles tell us that human sacrifice among the Inca was not a common occurrence but reserved only for auspicious occasions. In this case, perhaps to appease El Plomo [the Inca people believed in mountain gods], the source of life giving water.

Individuals who would be sacrificed were anesthetized:

...In each case the child was first numbed with several drafts of chica, a maize beer, and coca was chewed as well.

For Dr. Horne's analysis, and the source of the above quotes, see a shortened version of "[The Prince of El Plomo: a frozen treasure](#)." For the [full article](#), virtually visit the U.S. National Library of Medicine at the National Institutes of Health.

The child's mummified remains are cared-for at the [National Museum of Natural History](#) in Santiago, Chile.

Credits:

Image online, courtesy National Museum of Natural History in Santiago, Chile.

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