

# Maritime Anthropology and the Study of Fishing Settlements in Archaeology: A Perspective from the Peruvian North Coast.

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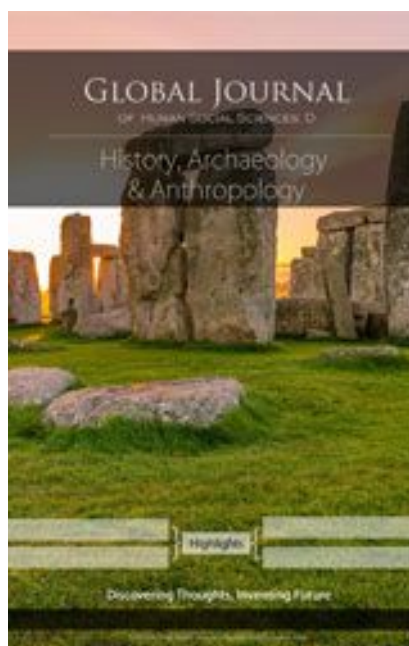
## Maritime Anthropology and the Study of Fishing Settlements in Archaeology: A Perspective from the Peruvian North Coast

**Gabriel Prieto**

### Abstract

Maritime anthropology is a sub-field devoted to the study of coastal cultures from an anthropological perspective that was popular in the mid-1970s (Casteel and Quimby 1975;

Smith 1977a; Spoehr 1980; Acheson 1981). In other areas of the world, such as the American Northwest, Southwest California, the Pacific Islands, North Atlantic regions and the circumpolar zone, this field has identified the importance of marine resources and their role in the development of social complexity in the past (Casteel and Quimby 1975; Fitzhugh 1975; Dumond 1998; Kirch 1995; Arnold 1993; Arnold et al. 2004; Ames and Maschner 1999). Maritime fishing communities can be defined, from a functional perspective, as human groups who have an emphasis on the exploitation of maritime environments. They may not be exclusively dependent on the maritime environment. As a consequence, they have developed and adapted a unique technology, which is highly variable and open to rapid changes in order to optimize its function and costs (Yesner et al. 1980). From a social perspective, fishing settlements can be defined as groups who identify themselves as maritime people but who perform a highly variable and different set of activities according to the available resources. Thus, they could be part-time farmers, part-time traders or part-time craft specialists.



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