WHAT CAN ONE ANCIENT CHILD TELL US ABOUT LIFE IN PERU?



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Researchers studying a 1,600-year-old burial in Peru have found evidence that the infant had a rare condition called trisomy 13. The condition affected the development of the brain and face, and the child had one central eye socket, a condition known as cyclopia. DNA testing helped confirm the medical explanation. The burial was found at Jauranga, a site connected with the Nazca people, who lived in southern Peru before the rise of the Inca Empire. Archaeologists also discovered decorated ceramic vessels at the site. The discovery cannot tell us exactly how the child was treated during life, but the burial gives historians a chance to ask how ancient communities responded to people with serious disabilities or unusual medical conditions. The evidence is especially valuable because written records from this period are limited.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

History is not only about kings, battles and famous buildings. The remains of one child can raise questions about family, care and beliefs in an ancient society. The discovery also shows how modern DNA science can add information that archaeologists could never learn from objects alone.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

“What might this burial tell us about how the Nazca treated vulnerable people?”

Source: Live Science

https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/americas/nazca-infant-had-rare-fatal-birth-defect-that-left-her-with-one-central-eye-1-600-years-ago