

*Audio Guide excerpt: Introduction*  
*From Ancient Peru Unearthed exhibition*  
by: **William Thorsell**  
Director & CEO  
Royal Ontario Museum

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*[Audio ROM sound sting]*

Hello and welcome.

*Buenos días y bienvenidos.*

My name is William Thorsell, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum. I am pleased to be your host today for the exhibition *Ancient Peru Unearthed: Golden Treasures of a Lost Civilization*.

For many people, the mention of Peru conjures up images of the great Inca civilization encountered by the Spanish *conquistadores* of the early 16th century, and of the precious gold pieces so treasured by the European conquerors. But the Inca in fact were a relatively late Peruvian civilization, predated by civilizations that until recently were virtually unknown. One of these produced most of the gold objects previously thought to have been a legacy of the Inca.

This dynamic, powerful, and creative culture was the Sicán -- the subject of our exhibition.

Its highpoint was the era 900 to 1100, when it flourished in the coastal area of northern Peru ... between the Andes Mountains to the East, and the Pacific Ocean to the West. Here was the main Sicán ceremonial centre at Batán Grande, and the great pyramid mound called Huaca Loro.

The majority of the objects in this exhibition are derived from the excavation of the 1000-year-old intact tomb of the Sicán Lord at Huaca Loro. Touring the displays, you will learn about the fascinating excavation of the East Tomb where the Sicán Lord was found. Along the way, you will be dazzled by the sheer beauty of the artifacts uncovered there — products of the finest masters of metallurgy in the ancient Andes, and reflective of the vast Sicán trade network.

This multi-faceted exhibition is a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in Ancient Peruvian history. Produced in cooperation with Peru's renowned Sicán National Museum and the Nickle Art Museum in Calgary, the exhibition gives North Americans their first look at the magnificent objects, the little-known Sicán civilization that produced them, and the unique circumstances of their discovery.

In the course of your visit, you will become intimately familiar with the richly symbolic world view of these ancient Peruvians, and be intrigued by their elite tomb

burial customs. Finally, the power and pageantry of their ceremonial rituals can only but impress when the Sicán Lord's regalia is encountered in the culminating section.

Before you begin, I would like to recognize HSBC Bank Canada as the Presenting Sponsor for *Ancient Peru Unearthed* at the ROM. HSBC's generous support has enabled us to realize the full ambition of this remarkable exhibition, including specially developed education and family activities.

We all wish you an interesting and pleasant visit.  
*Le deseamos una visita agradable y interesante.*

*[Audio ends with ROM sound sting]*