

## **Emblems, Leadership, Social Interaction and Early Social Complexity: The Ancient Formative Period (1500 bc-ad 100) in the Desert of Northern Chile**

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### **Abstract**

Social complexity is synonymous with inequality, a political form whose origin is associated with a reduction in residential mobility, the intensification of production, craft specialization, long-distance exchange, public architecture, the proliferation of prestige goods and ceremonial feasts. Archaeological evidence of these processes, however, is insufficient without the identification of practices related to prehistoric leadership. In the early Andean area, this social distinction was deposited in emblems or insignias of authority, objects of visual prestige whose value resided in myths and divinities. Similar arrangements of material culture, around the first millennium before Christ, appear contextually related with the first village-based communities in Northern Chile.