1 Fifteenth century CE Bolivian maize reveals genetic affinities with ancient Peruvian maize

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Abstract

Previous archaeological and anthropological studies have demonstrated the myriad of
ways that cultural and political systems shape access to food and food preferences.
However, few studies have conducted a biocultural analysis linking specific
genotypic/phenotypic traits as evidence of cultural selection in ancient contexts. Here, we
provide insight into this topic through ancient genome data from Bolivian maize dating to
~500-600 BP, included as an offering with the mummified remains of a young girl. These
data are compared to 16 previously published archaeological maize samples spanning at
least 5,000 years of evolution, and 226 modern maize samples. Our phylogenetic analysis
showed that the archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM) has the closest genetic distance to
the archaeological maize from ancient Peru, which in turn shared the most similarities
with archaeological Peruvian maize. During the period of interaction between the Inca
state and local polities in the central Andes and consequent interactions with local
agricultural traditions, the genetic diversity of maize increased. Ovule development in
modern maize was selected and compared to those in archaeological specimens,

revealing evidence of targeted breeding strategies aimed at improving seed quality and
yield. While the cultural origin of the maize – either Inca or local Aymara – is uncertain,
we demonstrate that the samples are most similar to Peruvian maize and potential
targeted selection strategies for enhanced growth were well established by the 15th
century.

Significance Statement

Maize has been improved through selective breeding delivering desirable horticultural,
agronomic, and cultural characteristics, related to environment, nutrition, etc. Inca culture
was closely associated with maize diversity, but there is little evidence to show how and
why culture influenced that diversity and modern maize biogeographic patterns in South
America. We show that in the 15th century CE, maize diversity in the central Andes was
enhanced through selection for specific traits associated with reproduction. We
hypothesize that this may have contributed to maize becoming a staple under the Inca,
as happened previously with expanding Tiwanaku interactions and influence during the
Middle Horizon.

Introduction

Modern maize (*Zea mays* ssp*. mays L.*) is one of the most important and productive global
food crops[1]. Prior to European contact in the Americas, maize had been adapted for a
wide range of environments. Its versatility is clear from its extensive geographic
distribution today, ranging from 58º north latitude to 40º south latitude, and growing below
sea level as well as 3,600 meters above sea level in the Andes[2]. In Bolivia, there is
empirical evidence that small maize varieties can grow at altitudes of 3,800-3,900 meters
above sea level (masl) in some areas of the Lake Titicaca Basin[3], as well as in other
sheltered areas of Oruro and Potosí, although with lower levels of production[4, 5]. Studies
of archaeological samples and modern molecular data indicate that maize originally
evolved in Mexico from the flowering species of grass, teosinte (*Zea mays* ssp*.
parviglumus*) ~9,000 years before the present (cal. BP) [6, 7]and spread into South America
by ~7,000 cal BP[8, 9] from the lowland and Eastern North America by ~2500 cal BP[10].
During this domestication process there was hybridization between maize and mexicana
(*Zea mays* ssp. *mexicana*)[11]. The dispersal of maize to the rest of the world followed
European colonization of the Americas in the 15th and 16th centuries AD[2, 12]. The evolution
and diversity of maize has been shaped by both cultural and natural selection in a wide
range of environmental and social contexts. For example, previous research has shown
that temperate adaption in modern maize is characterized by early flowering[13], evidence
has also shown that cultural preferences were a factor in maintaining otherwise
undesirable traits[14, 15]. Maize seeds were selected and retained by farmers for use in
subsequent growing years to maintain or enhance specific morphological traits, such as
color and texture, based on changing cultural preferences, sometimes at the cost of
reduced cultivability and/or nutrition[16].

Politics and culture have had a strong influence on crop planting and food preferences in ancient (and modern) civilizations. Indeed, in the Andes, previous research showed that under the Inca empire, maize was fulfilled multiple contextual roles. In some cases, it operated as a sacred crop[17], symbolic of political power and tightly associated with high-status or elite social groups[6, 18]. It was also an important element in numerous cultural events and rituals[19]. From an agriculture-economic point-of-view, planting a crop on the most suitable land takes priority if a farmer wishes to maximize the output-to-input ratio. However, in certain civilizations, including Andean groups, maize may not necessarily have been a crop for which yield was considered a deciding factor. For example, in Andean highland communities, maize was not the primary food crop during pre-Inca times[20], not only because maize was ill-adapted to arid highland conditions and its cultivation was risky during the short growing season, but also because planting maize did not yield a return on investment. In the Andes during the Spanish conquest, the chronicler Cobo observed that, "Indians dropped all that they were doing in order to produce a little maize, even though it cost them more than it was worth". It seemed to him that work in the fields was "…one of the major forms of recreation and festivals…", and he was impressed by the "extraordinary fondness for farming"[21, 22]. While Indigenous agriculture and foodways would have been far more nuanced than Spanish chroniclers would have appreciated, this supports the fact that Andean farmers were not deterred from planting an abundance of maize in sub-optimal environments. In fact, while it was a desirable food, it could also have acted as a symbol of empire[17] and a ritual-feast crop, since its first introduction to the region around 2500 BCE[23].

The current study contributes to broader investigations documenting maize biogeographic patterns in South America by focusing on maize samples from a 15th century elite stone tomb burial context from south of La Paz, Plurinational State of BoliviaWe sequenced two archaeological Bolivian Maize (aBM) kernels with six libraries, using short read sequencing. In parallel, we used ^{14}C Accelerator Mass Spectrometer (AMS) radiocarbon dating to determine the approximate age of the samples. Phylogenetic analysis of aBM, 16 archaeological and 226 modern maize samples (*Zea mays* ssp. *mays L.*), 88 modern samples of Teosinte *(Zea mays* ssp*. parviglumis)*, 79 modern samples of Mexicana teosinte *(Zea mays* ssp*. mexicana)* and 1 *Tripsacum* genotype revealed genetic relationships among themselves (Table S1; Dataset S1). Finally, the unique single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in aBM infer that the selection imposed to enhance reproductive success in marginal highland growing environments resulted in increased maize diversity. Based on the data presented herein, we conclude that a combination the social and political needs of the Inca and local ethnic groups, and mitigation of certain natural environmental factors may have contributed to the specific preference for, and diversification of maize in the Central Andes. As such, our conclusions offer insight into the possible pathways that influenced maize genetic diversity, thus providing a vital resource to investigate further the factors that drove selection for maize domestication and diversity at the cusp of the cultural influence of the Inca empire.

Results

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Archaeological Bolivian maize sample (aBM)
La Paz is a major city located in the highlands of west-central modern Bolivia, which is 16°30′S, 68°09′W, 3,650 masl. Dry conditions in this region and the adjacent Andes Mountain range have aided in the preservation of desiccated organic material. Our maize samples were found within a woven camelid fiber pouch that was one of many offerings associated with the mummified remains of a child reported as being found in a *chullpa* (stone tower tomb) south of La Paz, Plurinational State of Bolivia around 1890 (Fig. 1). Although it is impossible to know the exact location of the *chullpa* or the origin of the individual, the assemblage was acquired by the U.S. Consul to Chile and was sent as a gift to the Michigan State University Museum, where she was curated until 2019. Following a series of recent analyses, she has since been voluntarily repatriated to Bolivia[24]. Given the reported archaeological context of the mummy and her abundant offerings recorded in the MSU Museum intake records, it has been proposed that she might represent an elite member of society. However, the nature of the coarse fabrics, simple design motifs, and restricted color palette of her textiles would suggest a more common individual, perhaps with an affiliation with a local high-status group. The vast majority of the funerary towers that exist in a radius of 60 km south of La Paz city are made of mudbricks. To our knowledge, the only exception is an Inca "cushioned" (i.e., rounded edges) stone and mudbrick tower located in Uypaca, in the nearby Achocalla Valley, 8 km southwest of the city center[24]. Because of its characteristics, this tomb most likely belonged to a local (possibly non-Inca) high-status group and was part of a more extensive funerary site. Although it is impossible to know the exact provenience of the mummy, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that she originated from this or another similar tomb in the Achocalla Valley. Regardless, in the decades following her death, community members periodically visited the *chullpa* and left offerings. These included the pouch full of well-preserved maize from which we collected and analyzed samples from two kernels.

A single Accelerator Mass Spectrometer (AMS) date was obtained from one kernel, yielding a radiocarbon age of 400±26 BP (D-AMS-027148; Zea mays kernel; corrected for fractionation, no $\delta^{13}C$ reported). For the date 400±26 BP the two possible calibrated age ranges are 1455-1516 cal AD (p=0.489) and 1538-1627 cal AD (p=0.511), with a median age of cal AD 1534 (Calibrated at 2σ with Calib 8.2 [SHCal 20.14c]). Choice of the earlier age range is supported by other absolute dates on the assemblage[25, 26]: 447±45 BP (D-AMS-32518; Cucurbitaceae, $\delta^{13}C$ = -27.6) with two possible age ranges of 1443-1504 cal AD (p=0.848) and 1594-1616 cal AD (0.152) with a median age of 1474 cal AD; and 510±20 (PSUAMS-5947; Camelidae fiber, $\delta^{13}C$ = -18.9) calibrated to 1420-1454 cal AD (p=1.00) with a median age of 1438 (Both samples calibrated for southern hemisphere at 2σ with Calib 8.2 [SHCal 20.14c]). Ages on the squash and maize are statistically identical at p=.95 (t=1.70, x^2.05=3.84, df=1) with a pooled mean of the two ages of 424±18 BP calibrated to 1453-1505 cal AD (p=0.769) and 1593-1617 (p=0.231). Results on the squash, with highest probability between 1443-1504 cal AD, and camelid fibers with an age range of 1420-1454, as well as the pooled mean, reveal a greatest likelihood for a mid- to late 15th c age for the assemblage, consistent with the earlier of the two calibrated age ranges on the maize kernel.

Two associated maize kernels from the same pouch were subjected to molecular
analysis. Genomic base modification patterns associated with ancient DNA (aDNA),
including cytosine deamination damage patterns, have been identified. Observed
position-specific substitutions at the ends of the sequence reads (e.g., C→T/G→A[27-31]
(Fig. S1a), as well as an increase in adenine (A) and guanine (G) residues at the 5′ end,
concomitant with a reduction of C and T residues[31-33] (Fig. S1b). From this, we evaluated
all substitution types and read length (Fig. S2), including read length range[34] and
substitution rate types, which are associated with aDNA genome data[35]. In total, these
data are consistent with the radiocarbon results, supporting that 1) with the maize is in
fact consistent with an archaeological biological sample, and 2) with based on the
geographic origin of the sample, the kernels potentially descended from the period of the
last Inca empire before the Spaniard Francisco Pizarro's conquest of the Inca capital,
Cuzco, in A.D. 1533[36].

Our study focused on identifying the location from which aBM originally came,
establishing and explaining patterns of genetic variability of maize, with a specific focus
on maize strains that are related to our current aBM samples. We were especially
interested in exploring how these patterns of variability found in both archaeological and
modern samples reflect the influence of cultural systems of behavior on both the spread
of variants across the ancient landscape and selection for phenotypic traits by local
populations.

Genetic Identity and Genetic Relatedness

After Tupac Inca Yupanqui became the emperor of the Inca Empire in the 15th century,
the territory of the Inca empire was greatly expanded across much of western South
America, including the Qollasuyu, a broad territory located in what is now western Bolivia,
southern Perú, northern Chile, and non-highland Argentina[37]. Different ethnic groups
populated this territory forming polities that were confederated at the time of Inca arrival.
Several Aymara Pakaje groups inhabited the highlands and the inter-Andean valleys
south of La Paz, from where the maize samples derive[38]. Because of maize's central role
in Inca society—as both a staple crop and a symbolically charged resource among
diverse ethnic groups under Inca influence—its widespread distribution may reflect the
expansion of Inca social and political hegemony across newly incorporated territories.
Given the provenience of the aBM and its age, it is possible the samples were local or
alternatively were introduced into western highland Bolivia from the Inca core area –
modern Peru. To test this hypothesis, we first evaluated the genetic relatedness of
archaeological and contemporary modern maize samples using a genome sequence
approach to assist in identifying the origin(s) of aBM and the relatedness to other maize
from different locations. Our f3-statistics results with *Tripsacum* as outgroup suggests that
aBM is closely related to two archaeological lowland Peruvian maize (Z65 and Z61)
among all other ancient maize and modern maize (Fig. 2). These results indicate that the
closest relative of aBM is the archaeological maize that came from Peru. In addition, to
predict the geographic location of aBM, we used spatial auto-correlations in genetic data,
which allowed us to compare it to a set of archaeological maize samples of known

geographic origin[39]. Our results indicate the potential geographic location that aBM may
have originally come from (locator.py –seed 549657840) and the predicted location is
inside of Peru and very close to archaeological maize Z61 (Fig. 3; R2(x)=1.0, R2(y)=1.0).
However, this did not indicate that aBM originally came from Inca core area, given that
the results are based on predictions and the ages of archaeological samples vary. This
suggests that aBM might not only genetically, but also potential geographically related to
the archaeological maize from ancient Peru. This is interesting, as historically,
descriptions of *capacocha* rituals showed that they were able to source their food from
the stations connecting high-altitude ritual sites and other regions of the empire[36]. Indeed,
data generated herein show that our aBM has a strong relationship with archaeological
Peruvian maize in terms of both genetic identity and geographic location[40]. This finding is
also consistent with the above previous research revealing that one of the maize groups
from Peru during Inca peak times spread into newly conquered territories, then slowly
diverged to fit the local environment[41] following Inca cultural influence[21]. After this,
diverged groups were introduced outside of Inca conquered territories. Although the origin
of the aBM – either Inca core area or local – is uncertain, as our results cannot determine
the dispersal direction, they do indicate that aBM has a strong relationship with
archaeological Peruvian maize.

To investigate the genomic data from the aBM in relation to other archaeological and
modern maize, principal component analysis (PCA) was used. As expected, the results
showed that all the archaeological maize clustered with our aBM in the same cluster (Fig.
4). SM3, 5, and 10 were excluded due to their limited data to meet requirements for the
PCA analysis. Unexpectedly, there is one modern maize from Brazil in the ancient maize
cluster that has overlap with archaeological Brazilian maize Z6, which indicates that
certain genetic traits from ancient Brazilian maize might have been preserved in modern
Brazilian maize populations. There is also one modern tropical maize very close to
archaeological Peruvian maize Z65. Considering the geographic origin of Z65 and its
lowland characters, it is not surprising that modern tropical maize shares some level of
genome sequence similarity. Following the establishment of an important maize culture
center in Peru, maize was domesticated and diverged into different groups, which then
spread along with Inca culture[42]. We found that the Central American cluster has overlap
with both North and South America, which supports the distribution route of maize[13, 43, 44].
This finding also is consistent with previous research revealing that the original maize
came from teosinte in Mexico, then dispersed northward into North America and
southward into South America[6, 7, 9, 45, 46]. We also found that a few types of maize from
Europe have a much closer distance to the archaeological maize cluster compared to
other modern maize, which indicates maize from Europe might expectedly share certain
traits or evolutionary characteristics with ancient maize. It is also consistent with the
historical fact that maize spread to Europe from multiple areas and time periods after
Christopher Columbus's late 15th century voyages to the Americas[12]. But as shown,
maize also has diversity inside the European maize cluster. It is possible that European
farmers and merchants may have favored different phenotypic traits, and the subsequent
spread of specific varieties followed the new global geopolitical maps of the Colonial era[47, 48].
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Taken together, these results support the possibility that aBM was introduced into western
highland Bolivia from the Inca core area – modern Peru, and aBM may possibly reveal a
history of adaptation to tropical conditions through local agency and/or following cultural
influence of the Inca empire[46, 49]. After this, maize, both as a primary food and as a symbol
of power, was dispersed from Peru throughout the Inca empire, in the end enhancing
maize diversity in South America.
272
Selection for aBM under Inca Culture Influence
After establishing the identity of aBM and its relatedness to other regional samples, we
explored how aBM was possibly shaped by human behavior, and specifically how cultural
selection within the Inca empire influenced maize diversity in South America. To address
this question, we examined the evolutionary relationship between aBM, its wild ancestor,
and extant landraces. We constructed a Neighbor-Joining (NJ) and maximum-likelihood
(ML) phylogenetic trees using the common genome-wide polymorphisms shared among
aBM and modern maize samples[50]. Our data included 226 samples of modern maize, 88
modern samples of Teosinte (*Zea mays* ssp*. parviglumis*), 79 modern samples of
Mexicana teosinte (*Zea mays* ssp*. mexicana*), and 1 *Tripsacum dactyloides* as an
outgroup, totaling 28,588 genome-wide SNPs. As shown in Fig. S3a and Fig. S3b, both
phylogenetic trees indicate that aBM lies outside the diversity of modern maize yet
clusters within a specific clade alongside one modern tropical maize. This suggests that
aBM shares a closer genetic relationship with modern tropical maize while being
genetically distinct from other modern maize. Considering modern tropical maize is
adapted to tropical climates exhibiting traits such as drought tolerance, heat resistance,
and the ability to thrive in low-fertility soils, it is plausible that aBM might share these
stress response characteristics with tropical maize[51, 52].
291
To investigate the selection preference on aBM under Inca cultural influence, we
compared the allele frequency between aBM and other ancient maize samples. We
identified 18,668 SNPs unique to aBM. Notably, two genes - Zm00001eb123120 and
Zm00001eb178600-associated with traits "internode length below ear" and "nodes above
ear" traits[53] contain several unique SNPs in aBM (Dataset S2). This suggested that height
related traits in aBM possibly may have been selected under Inca cultural practices.
Additionally, variations in the 5 or 3 untranslated regions UTR) can significantly affect
gene expression. We found 83 target genes harboring unique aBM SNPs in their UTR
regions (Dataset S3). Gene Ontology (GO) results showed that 3 of these genes are
involved in glycosyltransferase activity, while serval of others is involved in defense
response to biotic and abiotic stress and starch biosynthetic processes (Dataset S4).
Previous researches in maize evolution implied that multiple loci are involved in shaping
traits variation[54, 55]. Combining all this information, we inferred those traits associated with
plant development and stress response processes might have been selected in maize
during the period of Inca cultural influence, although the selection direction is uncertain.
307
308 Finally, to understand positive selection in modern maize compared to ancient maize, we
309 investigated the selective sweep using cross-population extended haplotype
310 homozygosity (XP-EHH) method. Following the same method of previous research[56], the
311 cutoff metric for significant signatures of selection was set at a value of 6 for 5 kb windows

across the genome. We only identified one target gene (Fig. 5): Zm00001eb105060, whose biological process functions include plant ovule development, chromosome segregation and asparaginyl-tRNA aminoacylation. Ovule development plays a crucial role in improving maize breeding strategies via higher seed production and hybrid vigor[57]. The positive selection of this gene in modern maize suggests that characteristics aiming for higher seed production were selected during maize diversification after aBM. This finding might relate to breeding efforts to improve seed yield in modern maize compared to ancient varieties.

In conclusion, the aBM included in the funerary accoutrements of a young elite Andean girl belongs to the family of ancient Peruvian maize groups, and likely was introduced to the Aymara region following Inca expansion in the late 15th century. Following its arrival in the area of western Bolivia, the Peruvian maize variety was further modified by the local population. Some genomic changes reflect selection to mitigate local environmental conditions, including response to stress. Thus, this case study supports the idea that patterns of regional diversity in pre-Contact South America maize reflect complex biocultural processes. These data may also inform subsequent studies about Colonial dispersals and the origin of global maize varieties[12].

Discussion

Previous archaeological and anthropological studies have demonstrated that cultural and political systems shaped access to and preferences for food. In our study we explored the evidence for the contribution of Inca culture to maize diversity in South America by analyzing 16 archaeological maize samples spanning at least 5,000 years of evolution, and 226 modern maize samples. Recognizing their shared central Andean origins, we propose that the aBM sample potentially came from ancient Peruvian archaeological maize. While our findings are consistent with both genetic and archaeological evidence, they raise several questions. Notably, what specific traits were selected in aBM, and how this selection occurred under Inca cultural practices is unclear, especially given our limited aBM sample size and the lack of the same genotype in archaeological maize under non-Inca culture influence.

Cultural preferences are often a factor in maintaining certain aesthetically desirable traits[14, 15], such as color and texture, even at the cost of reduced cultivability or nutrition[16]. This suggests it is possible that culture played an important role in maize evolution and diversity. To better understand how exactly cultural interactions influenced maize diversity in the Central Andes, we explored the possible origin of aBM and its closest genetic relationships to ancient maize. We identified that aBM potentially have originated from ancient Peru, and archaeological maize from Peru has the closest genetic relationship with aBM, indicating that aBM may be a product of Inca cultural dissemination into new territories[21].

We further investigated which traits were possibly selected under Inca culture by analyzing unique SNPs in aBM. The results show that traits related to plant development,

and stress response were selected. These traits can aid in resisting drought and frost in
the relatively harsh conditions of the Andean highlands. The selected traits could facilitate
fermentation for the creation of *chicha* to meet the consumption requirement of elite
lifeways[18]. However, we are uncertain if these traits were directly selected under Inca
culture due to the limited aBM sample size, which prevented us from identifying positive
selection directly between aBM and other archaeological maize groups.

Traditional breeding systems have increased tolerance to biotic and abiotic stress and
contributed to yield in crops[58, 59]. In this study, we compared modern maize to
archaeological maize across the entire Western Hemisphere and found that the ovule
development traits were selected for breeding to improve maize seed production during
its evolution. However, it is uncertain whether this selection happened directly in modern
maize when compared to ancient maize, or if it happened during the process of modern
improvement.

Our results not only highlight the influence of culture on maize diversity in South America
but also point to the adaptive characteristics of maize in improving maize seed production
during evolution. This provides a potential source for maize diversity studies and breeding
programs. Most importantly, this work suggests that cultural influence plays an important
role in aiding maize diversity, alongside the traits selected by early farmers.

Materials and Methods

Plant material. The two archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM) kernels were collected prior
to 1890 AD from the area south of modern La Paz, Bolivia, and later curated at the
Michigan State University Museum until their repatriation in 2022[25]. AMS assay dates
reveal a mid-late 15th century date for the maize samples. In addition, data from 16
archaeological samples collected from previous published research were also used,
including two from Chile dating from 750 to 1,100 BP, two from Brazil dating from 510 to
690 BP, three from Peru dating from 600 to 1,000 BP, two from Argentina, dating from
980 to 1,040 BP and from 70 to 130 BP, three from Honduras dating from 1,740 to 2,300
BP, and three from Mexico dating to 5,310 BP (Table S1)[40, 60].

aDNA extraction. Archaeological maize kernels were processed in a clean laboratory
environment at Michigan State University. Whole kernels were crushed in a mortar and
pestle, to which 600 uL of fresh PTB (*N*-phenacylthiazolium bromide) buffer (0.4 mg/mL
proteinase K, T2.5 mM PTB, 50 nM dithiothreitol) was added. The sample was then added
to 1260 uL of lysis buffer. An additional 600 uL of PTB buffer was used to rinse the mortar
and added to the lysis buffer. The individually ground maize kernels were rotated
overnight at 37 °C. The remaining DNA extraction followed Swarts et al., 2017[13].

Library construction, amplification, and sequence. DNA extracts were converted to
Illumina-compatible paired-end DNA libraries in a clean setting using SMARTer
ThurPLEX DNA-seq from Takara Bio and amplified with 7 polymerase chain reactions
(PCR) cycles. The generated libraries were cleaned to remove remaining adaptors with
AxyPrep Mag beads (Fisher Scientific) and analyzed on a 2100 Bioanalyzer (Agilent

Technologies) to check for quality. The libraries were indexed to facilitate pooling on the
NovaSeq SP at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign).
405
Geographic location map. The geographical coordinates of each sample were obtained
from previously published studies, as indicated (Table S1). Utilizing latitude and longitude
information, the samples were plotted on a geographic map, resulting in the successful
mapping of 17 ancient samples. Geographic data visualization was carried out in R using
the ggplot2, sf, leaflet, rnaturalearth, rnaturalearthdata, ggspatial, and rnaturalearthhires
packages.
412
413 **Genome analysis.** For the aBM sequence samples data with six libraries, we combined
414 them into a single composite sample, referred to as aBMComb. This was achieved by
415 mapping each individual aBM sequence sample to the B73 V5 soft-masked maize
416 genome and subsequently removing duplicate reads before merging them. We merged
417 the sequence sample to obtain higher coverage for the analysis was needed for this study.
418
419 Subsequently, we used MapDamage v.2.2.1[61] verified cytosine deamination profiles
420 consistent with ancient DNA, and estimated the misincorporation frequencies. Based on
421 these results we hard-masked 5′ thymine and 3′ adenine residues within 5nt of the two
422 ends, where deaminations was most concentrated.
423
424 Data for 16 ancient samples with specific geographic location information (maize
425 landraces) obtained from previously published work[40, 60, 62] by downloading sequencing
426 from Sequence Read Archive (SRA) (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra/)[63]. To ensure
427 consistency and accuracy, we downloaded the raw sequence (SRA format) for each
428 sample and converted it into FASTQ format using fastq-dump.
429
For the archaeological maize samples, adapters were removed and paired reads were
merged using AdapterRemoval[64] with parameters --minquality 20 --minlength 30. All 5′
thymine and 3′ adenine residues within 5nt of the two ends were hard-masked, where
deamination was most concentrated. Reads were then mapped to soft-masked B73 v5
reference genome using BWA v0.7.17 with disabled seed (-l 1024 -o 0 -E 3) and a quality
control threshold (-q 20) based on the recommended parameter[65] to improve ancient DNA
mapping. Duplicated reads were removed by GATK tools Picard
(https://gatk.broadinstitute.org/hc/en-us). The coverage of each nucleotide position was
estimated by bam-readcount (https://github.com/genome/bam-readcount) (Table S2),
and the overall coverage of the assembled genome sequence was measured using
Qualimap v2.2.1[66].
441
Variant Calling. We used SequenceTools pileupCaller (v 1.5.4.0;
https://github.com/stschiff/sequenceTools) to generate pseudohaploid calls for 17
archaeological maize samples. The commands executed were: samtools mpileup -R -B -
q20 -Q20 & pileupCaller -- sampleNames <ancient sample name> randomHaploid --
singleStrandMode. This process yielded 16,815,782 single nucleotide polymorphisms
(SNPs).
448

We future filtered the SNPs using estimated information from bam-readcount. SNPs
supported by at least two reads were retained for each individual archaeological maize
sample. We then combined the filtered SNPs from each sample, keeping only those SNPs
that were present in at least one sample. This resulted in a final dataset of 2,808,917
SNPs for the 17 archaeological maize samples.

For all subsequent analyses, the ancient genotype data was merged with the genotype
dataset for 394 samples from Grzybowski et al, ("Feb 03, 2023 version files" in Dryad
repository: https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.bnzs7h4f1). The merged dataset included
2,635,047 SNPs from chromosomes 1-10 that were common in both archaeological and
modern maize samples, which were used for downstream analysis.

f3 **statistic and phylogenetic analyses**. We created a genotype file by combining 17
archaeological maize and publicly available SNP dataset form Grzybowski et al, resulting
in a total of 17-archaeological and 226-modern maize, 88-modern samples of Teosinte
(Zea mays ssp*. parviglumis)*, 79-modern samples of *Mexicana teosinte (Zea mays* ssp.
mexicana), and 1-*Tripsacum* genotypes.

Next, we used plink v1.9[67] to prune for linkage disequilibrium with the parameters --indep-
pairwise 50 5 0.1, following previous research[45], to prepare the dataset for Principal
Component Analysis (PCA) using "plink -pca". The final results were plotted in R using
the ggplot2 package[68].

We calculated the *f3* statistic[69, 70] using the admixr package[71] , which is part of the
package of ADMIXTURE software suite[72]. The outgroup f3 statistics was used to measure
how closely aBM and each test group are related to each other. The final results were
plotted using Python.

A total of 28,588 SNPs present in both aBM and all modern maize, out of a total of
2,626,087 SNPs, was used to build the phylogenetic tree. A maximum likelihood (ML)
phylogenetic tree was constructed using SNPhylo[73] with parameter: -v snps.vcf -r -o
tripsacum -P tree -b 1000; A Neighbour-Joining (NJ) phylogenetic tree was constructed
using VCF2PopTree[74] with the "number of differences" model. Both ML and NJ
phylogenies trees were inferred and visualized using FigTree v1.4.4
(http://tree.bio.ed.ac.uk/software/figtree/).

Geographical location prediction. To predict the possible geographical location of aBM,
we applied a deep neural network method[39] using only 17 ancient maize samples, as all
the archaeological maize clustered in the same cluster. A total of 2,800,190 SNPs were
used to predict the possible geographical location of aBM. The command used was:
locator.py --vcf SNP_file --sample_data sample_data.txt –out name.

Infer selection on aBM. Due to the lack of archaeological maize with the same genotype
as aBM grows outside the influence of Inca culture, it was impossible to directly identify
the selection that occurred on aBM under Inca cultural influence. To determine if any of
our SNPs are related to known traits, we utilized existing information on SNP-trait

association[53]. To achieve potential unique selection on aBM, we calculated the allele frequency for each SNPs between aBM and other ancient maize, resulting in allele frequency data for 49,896 SNPs. Of these,18,668 SNPs were unique to aBM. We consulted SNPVersity 2.0 from MaizeGDB[50, 75] and found that 84 of these unique SNPs were classified as "3_prime_UTR_variant" or "5_prime_UTR_variant". These SNPs corresponded to 83 target genes, for which we retrieved Gone Ontology (GO) terms.

Identification of selection sweeps. To detect genomic signatures of recent selective sweeps in modern maize compared to ancient maize groups, SNPs that present in at least two archaeological samples and modern samples were used. We applied the cross-population extended haplotype homozygosity (XP-EHH)[76] method. A commonly used threshold $-\log_{10}(p) = 6$ was set as the cutoff threshold for identifying the signal of significant selection. The regions with $-\log10(p) >= 6$ were designated as candidate sweeps for candidate genes located within 5 KB of these regions identified, following the approach used in previous research[56]. MaizeMine from MaizeGDB[77] was used to obtain putative gene function information.

Data availability

The authors declare that all data supporting the findings of this study are included in the manuscript and its supplementary files or are available from the corresponding author upon request. Source data are provided with this paper. The genome sequence data of ancient Bolivian Maize has been deposited in the NCBI database under BioProject accession PRJNA886637. Custom scripts and single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) calls are available on Dryad (DOI: https://doi.org/10.5061/dryad.w6m905qtd).

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699 **Figures and Tables**
700

701 **Fig.1. Location and appearance of archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM).** a Map of
702 maize sample collection and location information. b Photographs of kernels showing
703 morphological characteristics.
704

705 **Fig. 2. Admixture f3-statistics.** In the form f3 (aBM; Test, tripsacum) where Test
706 represents archaeological and modern samples.
707

708 **Fig. 3. Predicted geographic location of archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM).** The
709 blue point is the predicted locations of aBM based on the SNPs from all archaeological
710 maize. The pink points are the archaeological samples.
711

712 **Fig. 4. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of nuclear genomic data from**
713 **archaeological and modern maize.** Samples with greater affinity to one another cluster
714 closer together. Samples with the same color and shape indicate they came from the
715 same country.
716

717 **Fig. 5. Genome-wide distribution of ancient maize specific selective sweeps.** a
718 Signal of selection of modern maize compared to archaeological maize population. Each
719 point indicates a SNP. The blue horizontal line shows the genome-wide significance level
720 ($p = 1 \times 10^{-6}$).
721

Fig. S1. Ancient DNA (aDNA) damage pattern of archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM). a Cytosine deamination damage patterns for the combined bam file of six aBM sequence samples and individual six aBM sequence samples. The position specific substitutions from the 5' end (red) and the 3' end (green) of a read. The red line corresponds to C to T substitutions, the green line corresponds to G to A substitutions, and the blue line represents other types of substitutions. b Ancient DNA damage profile. The four upper plots show the base frequencies inside and outside of a read, where the open grey box corresponds to a read. The two lower plots show the position specific substitutions from the 5' end and the 3' end of a read. The red line corresponds to C to T substitutions, the blue line corresponds to G to A substitutions, and the fade line represents other types of substitutions.

Fig. S2. Archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM) DNA read length. a Read length distribution of combined aBM bam files prior to hard-masked 5′ thymine and 3′ adenine residues within 5nt of both ends.

Fig. S3. Phylogenetic trees of archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM). a Neighbour-Joining tree with VCF2Pop. b Maximum likelihood (ML) tree with SNPhylo. Parv (*Zea mays* ssp. *parviglumis*), Zmex (*Zea mays* ssp. *mexicana*), Europe (modern Europe), SweetC (model sweet corn), Ztrol (modern Tropical maize), mMexico (modern Mexico), mParaguay (modern Paraguay), mBrazil (modern Brazil), mPeru (modern Peru), mEcuador (modern Ecuador), mGuatemala (modern Guatemala), and mColombia (modern Colombia). Black color is Tripsacum. Red color is the aBM. Red brown color is modern maize (*Zea mays ssp. mays L.*). Green color is Teosinte (*Zea mays ssp. parviglumis*). Blue color is Mexicana teosinte (*Zea mays ssp. mexicana*).

Fig. S4. Q-Q plot for genome-wide selection in modern maize compared to archaeological maize. The Q-Q plot between modern and archaeological maize. Each point indicates a value from expected and observed. Red line represents the expected distribution of the p-value, while the blue trend represents the observed distribution.

Table S1. Geographical information of the archaeological maize samples used in this study.

Table S2: Paleogenomic characterization of archaeological Bolivian maize sequence samples with six libraries.

Table S3. The percentage of genomic sites covered at variable depths in the archaeological Bolivian maize (aBM) sample (aBMComb_rm5nt.rmDR.bam).

a
b