Chapter 1

The Impossibility of Death
Introduction to Funerary Practices and Models in the Ancient Andes

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The omnipresent awareness of the inevitability of death distinguishes humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. Humanity's wide range of means for dealing with issues connected with mortality is expressed in a plethora of material culture expressions that burgeon throughout the evolutionary history of *Homo (sapiens) sapiens* (Parker Pearson 2000: 146–154). Systems-based archaeological and ethnographic approaches to funeral traditions show the variability of social strategies that groups have evolved to contend with the social upheaval caused by the demise of one of their members; the visibility and elaborateness of these manifestations tend to increase with the complexity and size of the population in question, as well as the status of individuals (Binford 1971).

It is a measure of humanity's seemingly limitless ability to rationalise phenomena through a ritualisation process that has brought about a near-universal historically and ethnographically attested tendency towards a belief in the concept of an afterlife, which increases in visibility if not intensity from the Palaeolithic onwards. Death therefore appears to have become part of the social landscape, structured by religions and belief systems that posit infinitely variable hereafters: existences beyond physical demise. When compared to the majority of such perspectives, the secular concept of death is a rather modern – and somewhat nihilistic – notion. However, the manner in which the relationship between the current plane of existence and that of the hereafter was configured varies dramatically between groups. It can be conceived as a distinct discontinuity in the natural order, with a discrete life in the beyond that would not necessarily bear any resemblance to current existence. Some groups believe that the fabric between this dimension and the hereafter was so thin that it permitted both to be part of a continuum in which the dead could continue to play an active role in the living (notably their descendants), and/or to become reincarnated in a cyclical process.

Whatever belief system is in operation, however, the entire theoretical topography surrounding funeral belief systems is an intellectual process that translates only imperfectly (if at all) into material manifestations. In the absence of 'translation' – be it textual or ethnographic – therefore, detection and interpretation of express social intent is hindered by a vast array of epistemological and methodological barriers. This issue is heightened when dealing with archaeological materials, where our lack of conceptual appreciation of the buriers' intellectual process is worsened by a

temporal gulf as well as taphonomic and preservation factors. One might reasonably question the validity of modern claims to understand buriers' intellectual intent and ancient attitudes to death and the hereafter on the basis of a pit, a skeleton and some ceramic vessels. In recent times the remains of 'sky burials' among some groups of Buddhist monks would not even begin to hint at the complexity of the philosophy underlying the sparse physical remains. Equally, characteristics of the other end of the funeral spectrum – gigantic mausolea, multiple burials and enormous quantities of rich and diversified funerary furniture – are not necessarily any more 'readable' to the modern archaeologist. Yet it is fundamentally important that we do so, for death and burial (or, at least, treatment of the dead) is well nigh universal in the human condition; ancient deathways are just as important as ancient lifeways.

Burials and related disposals of the dead are unusual in archaeological terms, as they are a fairly discrete and one-off manifestation of behaviour (post-burial ancestor rituals notwithstanding) by ancient individuals or groups operating according to a specific set of social protocols and intentions, unlike ancient living environments where signals are more mixed and temporally blurred. It has therefore been necessary to design a very specific intellectual paradigm dedicated to capturing and understanding these elusive signals, and this is the preserve of funerary archaeologists.

The title of this introductory section – the impossibility of death – refers to an attitude towards death that is reflected to a greater or lesser extent in all the contributions of this volume. Every society discussed saw considerable emotional, physical and financial investment in the development of death-oriented ritual infrastructure – ranging from tomb architecture to wealth deposition and human sacrifices – all of which seem to refute the idea of mortality equating with absolute finality. It also serves to presage a series of chapters concerning the remarkable diversity of methods that Andean groups devised for dealing with their deceased over the past 5,000 or more years, the recurring trend within which was a consistent belief that the deceased were still connected with the mortal world and had never – in that sense – died at all. Hence this volume truly is a reiteration of how "The Return of the Living Dead", in a myriad of different guises, shaped and formed ancient Andean society.

Funerary archaeology has developed alongside – and often become elided or confused with – the companion field of human skeletal bioarchaeology. Although their priorities and agendas are certainly distinct, this often uneasy relationship has led to considerable advances in understanding – on the one side – what the deceased did, ate and looked like during their lives, and – on the other – how these factors coloured the manner in which they were perceived by their contemporaries when alive, and thus in their treatment after death. These issues also echo and perhaps justify the title chosen for this volume. It was intended that studies of both behavioural and biological/pathological phenomena be included, to emphasise the fact that they are mutually reliant rather than diametrically opposed intellectual paradigms, and that although it is of course impossible to design an archaeology without theoretical structure and methodological frameworks, it is also vital that practical perspectives and new data not be overlooked.

It therefore seemed incumbent on the organisers and editors of the 2008 Louvain-la-Neuve symposium to invite the contributors to concentrate on the provision and analysis of new field data, from which to create a new range of paradigms to focus current and future work on Andean funerary archaeology. This burgeoning field is comparatively 'young', although various seminal works on Andean archaeological remains date back more than a century (Lumbreras 1990). It is, however, interesting to note that many modern works – when sourcing references and research dating back a generation or more – often do so purely to access the basic field data that they contain. This is of course partially a practical and economic decision, and although it is an evident truism that theories, models and intellectual paradigms may come and go (Kuhn 1962) while material evidence persists, it would be potentially limiting to neglect recent discoveries, methods and practice that are revolutionising Andean (bio)archaeology.

To this end, and while not wishing to neglect the theoretical aspects of the field, we encouraged contributors to emphasise new field data and reasoned interpretations thereof, to make this

Figure 1.1. Map of the Central Andes with main sites and regions discussed in the volume.

volume a valued data resource for current and future research and investigation. The contributors responded to spectacular effect, reemphasising the active and dynamic nature of the field through the study of materials from Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Ecuador, and incorporating both their data and analyses into the current volume (Figure 1.1).

It is not our intention to speak out in support of a particular point of view or academic school, or to claim that all the interpretations in the following pages are necessarily incontestable. As will be seen, the authors are far from unanimity in their views, and some even take issue with the main theme of this book: namely, that deceased ancestors were intimately involved in the living world of ancient Andean societies. We have summarised the basic elements of the chapters under the broad headings that are common to all works: typologies and classification of funerary remains,

then methodologies and the analyses used to study them. This is followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical/conceptual frameworks into which the authors have placed their data, and comment on the nature of their interpretations and how their conclusions can best be contextualised within the field.

Describing and Classifying Interments and Tombs

Classification systems and typologies are only as good as the recognition of the assumptions that go into their construction. Our naturally discontinuous intellectual manner of dealing with large amounts of highly diverse data can make typology a good means for cutting out unnecessary detail and/or elements and focusing on what is relevant. However, this assumes certain a priori knowledge, for in most cases we cannot be aware of how to 'weight' our expectations of cultural relevance. Furthermore, typologies must necessarily be adaptable and capable of change, for monolithic typological stability can result in serious misreading of stratigraphy and sequences that do not concur with known patterns. Inevitably, and even in the most intensively assiduous system, data will be missed, and archaeological materials are particularly prone to being misread due to the nebulous nature of certain traditions and also the destructive effect of taphonomic forces. For the aforementioned reasons, and because we have only archaeological evidence for most of the ancient cultures discussed here, we have adopted an etic approach.

At the most basic level, archaeologists tend to distinguish three main elements in a single interment: the structure (the tomb structure and burial container, and/or the grave cut in the sediments into which the body is lain), the deceased (physical remains and wrappings or clothes), and the funerary furniture (offrenda and other materials associated with the burial process). The manner in which new categories of burial were created according to variability within these three elements varied markedly among authors.

Chapdelaine and Gagné identified two categories of tombs at the Peruvian Formative site of San Juanito, based on the concept of apparent egalitarianism (simple tombs) and others suggesting some form of social inequality. The pilot study of Tomasto et al. of 62 Paracas burials excavated by the Palpa Project charted Early–Middle–Late Paracas traditions using a detailed multivariate typology that detected a shift between the latter two phases. The fundamental distinction was between individual pit graves dug into (1) natural sediment or (2) abandoned buildings (each containing a single extended cadaver), and (3) the much less common multiple burials. Later Palpa tombs differ greatly from those on the Paracas peninsula – indeed, ceramics are the only common element.[1] Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo used a dichotomous typology at the Mochica site of Huaca de la Luna, distinguishing between pit graves and funerary rooms, both of which could contain single or multiple individuals. The typology was then refined – using variables including body treatment, position and artefactual associations – to demonstrate change across Moche Phases III and IV, and to imply burial groupings on the basis of familial or consanguineous affinity.[2] The authors concluded that there was no single cultural marker to denote either sex or sexual division of labour: the conventional wisdom of sexual specificity of spindle whorls, for example, was rejected, as their distribution was evidently independent of sex. Isbell and Korpisaari demonstrated what can be done with an exceptionally complex typology, assessing more than 500 MH Wari and Tiwanaku tombs, with the basic distinctions being 'simple', 'intermediate', 'elaborate' and 'monumental' (Wari) and 'simple', 'elaborate' and 'ritual' (Tiahuanaco). Although Wari and Tiwanaku tombs are superficially somewhat similar (i.e., flexed burials in pits, cists or underground rooms), the authors split the Wari sample on the basis of the individuals' status, age and sex, and the Tiahuanaco on the basis of regional or ethnic identities. The authors believe that the distinctions are based on a monarchic power structure for Huari, but not for the Tiwanaku, while the presence of multiple and collective tombs only for the Huari indicates some religious difference between the polities. Traditions appear to merge in the Late

Intermediate Period, resulting in burial universality (i.e., funerary chullpas). Despite the fact that the two polities shared the "Staff God" religion, therefore, they had no funerary commonalities, leading the authors to conclude that the new religion had no doctrinal stance concerning death. Díaz's analysis also concluded that cultural identity and sex were the main distinguishing issues in the construction of Late Period Ychsma burial bundles at Armatambo, which were subdivided into four classes on the basis of presence/absence of supporting sticks, textiles or grave furniture. In this her interpretations differed from those of Owens and Eeckhout, whose analysis of Ychsma remains from Pachacamac indicate that a wide range of different demographic and other variables were of importance to burial construction. The seeming inconsistency of these results is more likely to be evidence of social variability within individual polities, particularly given the geographic localisation of both samples. Fellow Ychsma researchers should take this as an incentive to increase yet further the diversity of academic approaches in establishing the intellectual topography of a field whose parameters are not yet fully understood, and must not come to believe that their results must match specific extant research to attain validity.

As stated in the preceding text, etic typologies are necessarily arbitrary and subjective in that they only reflect variables of significance to the researcher in question, and not necessarily – or even usually – those of any other researcher, much less those of the archaeological population under study. Although it may be impossible to control for this issue, attention should be paid to the matter of taphonomy, and also to data selectivity on the part of the archaeologist. The assumption that cemeteries are representative of the population to which they pertain is intuitively incorrect – as evidenced from numerous ethnographic, social and historical studies (see references in Murphy 2008) – and has also been demonstrated to be mathematically so (Orton 2000). The number of social variables working together at the time of burial cannot be enumerated, much less statistically accounted for, and when this is combined with the inevitably irregular way in which burials are located and excavated by archaeologists it is little wonder that many researchers consider it to be impossible to reliably reconstruct the demographic profiles of ancient societies (i.e., Bocquet-Appel and Masset 1982; Crubézy 2000; Waldron 2008). However, this has not prevented a slew of attempts to systematise our approaches (i.e., Agarwal and Glencross 2011; Hoppa and Vaupel 2002; Jackes 1992; Konigsberg and Frankenberg 2002; Paine 2000). South American archaeology has been deeply affected by the ceaseless plundering of archaeological contexts, thus further skewing the samples available to us, and this situation has worsened in recent years as looters' attentions have moved from large mausolea to any kind of ancient cemetery or structure. All work should clearly highlight the sorts of pressures to which their sample has been subject, the sampling strategy used and a concise summary of the potential limitations that sample selectivity may have on the results of the researchers' analysis.

The research contained in Chapter 10 by Owens and Eeckhout brings up many new questions. For example, why is there an escalating prevalence of disease – both mortal and nonmortal – throughout the temporal scale at Pachacamac? And although infant and child mortality is also remarkably high in certain parts of the sample, which may imply the usual high levels of pre-industrial child mortality, this site and several other Middle Horizon examples from Nazca (Isla 2001; Reindel and Isla 2001; Tello 2002; Ubbelohde-Doering 1958),[3] to Huaca Malena in Asia (Angeles and Pozzi-Escot 2004), Ayacucho (Isbell 2000) and the more recent site of Armatambo (Chan 2011: 267; Díaz 2011) show recurring associations of single adults buried with several children that do not seem to indicate fortuitous coincident deaths. Certainly, there is no evidence for epidemic disease at any of the sites in question – serious disease and causes of death are highly varied in most cases (see Chapter 10 by Owens and Eeckhout), and the regular recurrence of such patterns throughout the sequence seems to suggest a structured funerary recruitment system underlain by a specific ritual apparatus.[4] Given that recent research at the site has focused on a relatively restricted area, and that there are known to be other large cemeteries within its limits (cf. Uhle 1903), it is of course possible that this particular funerary area was dedicated to a specific sector of the population. Such cautionary outlooks should be a compulsory part of dealing with

such a large and complex site, but researchers working on smaller sites should also be cautious not to assume themselves to be immune to burial-period social selection: size is no barrier to social complexity (see Brown 1981; Dillehay 1995b: 13).

The current tome also provides multiple taphonomically oriented studies of human remains that reveal a form of interment that to our mind has not been sufficiently highlighted. In such temporospatially diverse sites and periods as Huaca de la Luna, Pachacamac and Tiahuanaco, there are plentiful indications suggesting that cadavers were exposed in the open air for some time before being buried (Chapter 7 by Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo; Chapter 10 by Owens and Eeckhout; Chapter 9 by Isbell and Korpisaari – also see Huchet and Greenberg 2010), and it is surprising that it has not been detected and examined more closely in the past. While recognising the necessity for separating historical and archaeological phenomena and the inadvisability of following historical/ancient parallels, however alluring (i.e., Owens 2005), there are at least some ethnohistorical data for cadaveric exposure prior to burial. The manuscript of Huarochiri states that the time between death and burial was fixed at five days, to allow time to prepare the body (Avila 1980 [1608]: chapter 28: 185), and although this is a temporospatially constricted sample (Early Colonial Period Checa, Upper Lurín), other indications of such practices among the Inca (Arriaga 1999 [1621]: chapter 6; Gentile 1998; Salomon 1995: 328–332, 2002) suggest that the practice was not uncommon in the Andean region during the Late Period. The simultaneous discovery of this practice in the aforementioned cultures serves to reiterate the extreme importance of bioarchaeological strategies and methods, informed by medicolegal and forensic anthropology (Schultz and Dupras 2008). It also underscores the vital necessity of ensuring adequately trained bioarchaeological specialists on every such project, for the purposes of appropriate recording and recovery of even the most nugatory evidence (such as larvae or insect cocoons, for example).

It is advisable at this point to recall a very important basic concept that underscores much of funerary archaeology: the majority of important funerary rites do not leave specifically observable archaeological traces, and the importance of recovering even the most seemingly inconsequential evidence thus cannot be overstated (Duday 2006).

Burial Analysis

Perhaps the greatest shift in methodological approaches to be seen in the current volume is the emphasis on analyses using bioarchaeological approaches. Almost all of the studies involve – or are (co)authored by – specialists in the analysis of human remains, and/or those that elide archaeological and anthropological analyses. Conventional observations on minimum number of individuals (MNI), height, weight, age, sex and so forth have been joined by socially oriented studies of population biology and palaeopathology, which have served to elucidate the general (and specific) health of populations and individuals, and to run these data against variables such as activity levels, geographical origin, profession and diet. In all cases it is most important to ensure that a wide-scale study perspective is followed, as studies concerning single individuals of interest are of limited use in the characterisation of populations unless extremely rare. A good example in the current volume is the case of decapitation found at Cahuachi, which would seem to be an excellent candidate for ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis (Chapter 13 by Jacinto), as would the potentially familial burial plots at the site of Huaca de la Luna (Chapter 7 by Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo) and the Paracas horizon at Palpa (Chapter 6 by Tomasto-Cagigao et al.). Such approaches are a relatively recent arrival on the (bio)archaeological scene, especially in the Andean area, and although it is probable that it may add to the development of works in progress (i.e., at Pachacamac; see Chapter 10 by Owens and Eeckhout), it should be remembered that this apparent 'boom' in the study of ancient remains is not without its limitations. These are partially financial – and thus perhaps beyond the reach of some smaller projects – although practical elements such as preservation must also be considered. Indeed, unless humidity, temperature

and aeration are all at appropriate levels, DNA may have degraded completely, as attested in in Chapter 12 by Delabarde (at the site of Japoto, Ecuador). As in every approach, it is necessary to develop an appropriate 'question' that is to be addressed by the deployment of new techniques, for otherwise such methods – although indubitably alluring – can yield little data of interest. Montoya's multidisciplinary approach to the study of *Nectandra* sp. seeds is a good example of a well-structured answer to an archaeological question.

Having already covered something of the typological analysis of burials in the first section of the current introduction, further social refinements can also be explored using funerary approaches. It is interesting to note that in several of the chapters presented here, certain burials have been found to differ from the normative model and are thus regarded as 'deviant'. This term, although heavily loaded in modern parlance, relates to an increasingly intense study of how unusual burial practices can relate to similarly unusual lifeways – often involving specific social roles, stigmas, and/or unusual causes of death. Historically, the subjects who underwent deviant burial were the often unwitting victims of social censure: stillborn/unbaptised children, lepers, plague victims, executed criminals, and so forth. In archaeological terms, however, determining deviancy is fraught with methodological, taphonomic and definitional problems, for although the bones remain, the social rationale is not always clear. Reynolds (2007) has ascribed archaeological deviant burials to eight notional categories – battles, execution, massacre, murder, epidemic, sacrifice, suicide and superstition – of which most Andean examples seem to have been sacrifice victims (defined as any individual who died for symbolic or ritual reasons). The current volume contains examples from Huaca de la Luna, Cahuachi, Chimu, Pachacamac and Armatambo (a possible nonritual incident, in which a single individual was tortured and beaten to death; see Chapter 11 by Díaz Arriola), and it is likely that both sacrifice and deviant burial were more common phenomena than has previously been believed (Benson and Cook 2001; Bourget 2001; Eeckhout and Owens 2008; Gaither et al. 2008; Tung 2008).

Interpreting Funerary Contexts

As stated previously, our principal concern has been to favour papers written on the basis of new field data, rather than purely theoretical, model-heavy works based on extant materials. Indeed, in the current volume only Kaulicke (Chapter 2; Formative Period), Rengifo and Castillo Butters (Chapter 8; Mochica) and Lopez-Hurtado (Chapter 3; Ychsma) refer explicitly to debates over conceptual and theoretical aspects of funerary archaeology. Nevertheless, conceptual frameworks are touched on in all the chapters. From our point of view, the contributions presented herein reflect current trends in Andean studies, where two main schools can be distinguished: the representationalist approach (Saxe and Binford) favoured by the processual school, and the post-processual approach. For the former, Saxe and Binford have proposed that the nature of funerary treatment is determined by – and thus a direct reflection of – the deceased's social position when alive. The social personality of the individual is defined by a range of social identities he or she expressed in life; in death, the burying population selects whichever social identities are deemed to have been the most significant. Their choices will be reflected in the funeral ritual (Binford 1971; Saxe 1970). Funerary development (structural complexity, additional deposits, funerary goods) and social complexity are thus considered to be positively correlated. The processual school uses this basic premise to 'measure' social investment – and thus inferred social status of the deceased – and energy expenditure in the funeral rite (Tainter 1978): in basic terms, as social status of an individual increases, social investment/energy in his or her funeral rites will be correspondingly greater.[5] This perspective differs somewhat from that held by the post-processual school, which is more orientated towards the study of contextual specificities, ideology, symbolism and agency. Rather than seeing funerary remains as a reflection of the deceased's status, therefore, it is considered to be more directly reflective of the given culture's social attitudes towards the

deceased. Political, social and strategic nuances are believed to play their part within the physical manifestations of the society's symbolic system, and these are all roles played by members of the burying group rather than the deceased (Parker Pearson 2000). Although both approaches have previously suffered from what might be termed 'paradigm crisis' (Willermet and Clark 1995), it is impossible to refute that each has brought considerable strength to our understanding of ancient funerary customs. For example, the positive correlation between funerary development and the deceased's social status in the Mochica has been accepted by the vast majority of archaeologists, while the state or multistate models of Mochica society – combined with a marked social hierarchy model – is fast becoming the accepted model for Mochica society on the basis of not only funerary but also architectural, iconographic and settlement data (Pillsbury 2001; Quilter and Castillo 2010; Uceda and Mujica 1994, 2003). Nevertheless, detailed study of contexts at Huaca de la Luna and San José de Moro demonstrates clear evidence for exhumation and manipulation of human remains that cannot be explained in purely processual terms. This is by no means an uncommon finding, as will be seen throughout the current volume. Funerary rituals are both complex and diverse, and it is not surprising that the underlying social fabric of burying populations should manifest itself in seemingly limitless variability of grave construction, endowment and connected behaviours. Funerary remains play a major role within the ritual language of any society, from the point of death through to long after the interment has been carried out, be it through exhumation (for diverse purposes ranging from magical intent through to ancestor reverence) or special treatment of the area or grave.

As has been clearly stated by many post-processualist authors, all funerary contexts must necessarily reflect the living's attitude towards death, as well as towards the deceased. These may be roughly divided into the following three categories: fear of the dead, veneration of the dead, and handling of the dead. Archaeological exemplars suggesting fear of the deceased are difficult to identify and interpret with accuracy, as there are often other possible explanations for unusual burial positions and customs. For example, Archaic Period underfloor graves at Paloma (Chilca Valley, Perú) contained multiple individuals who had been 'restrained' with ropes and poles, leading the investigators to surmise that this behaviour represented the burying population's fear of the deceased and that, specifically, they might return with harmful intent (Quilter 1989). However, there are various other – somewhat more prosaic – potential explanations for this finding. The veneration of the dead – and more specifically ancestor worship – is frequently evoked throughout the book; this is possibly due to the fact that it is a common ethnohistoric finding for the Central Andes, and it has often been projected back into the precolonial period. Ethnographic examples of ancestor worship have been reported from all across the globe in various forms (see Bloch 1971), and the findings thus derived have been focused at a wide range of archaeological cultures (Whitley 2002). Interesting refinements have become apparent. For example, the role of 'ancestor' is not necessarily guaranteed, being a marker of status that is differentially applied to the deceased (Kaulicke 2001a). Children do not usually seem to have been recognised as ancestors, for as they had not procreated they were not integrated into any ancestral lineages. There is some tantalising support for this in Andean ethnohistoric sources: colonial accounts of Inca traditions document how children received their final name at around four to five years of age (Arriaga 1999 [1621]: chapter VI: 65), and even as old as 10 to 12 years (Cieza (1995 [1551], I, chapter 65: 200). One could perhaps interpret this as being the age at which they came to be regarded as full members of society, with potential 'ancestor' status. There are some cultural/biological data in support of this notion at Pachacamac (see Chapter 10 by Owens and Eeckhout).

There are two main categories of Late Period Andean mummies: those that remain visible (potentially ancestors, which could be worshipped) and those that were invisible (the majority, which were buried in cemeteries and could not be accessed for any [archaeologically visible] worship – Eeckhout 2004c: 41–43). Although particularly well attested to in the Late Period, this distinction appears to have been something of a recurring theme throughout Andean funerary archaeology. There are even indications that it may have commenced as early as the Formative

(Chapter 2 by Kaulicke), and there are strong signs of bone handling and manipulation at the site of Huaca de la Luna (Chapter 7 by Gayoso-Rullier and Uceda-Castillo; see also Millaire 2004). According to Isbell and Korpisaari's investigations (Chapter 9), there is no specific evidence that ancestor worship as such existed in Wari and Tiwanaku society, on the basis of the fact that the manner in which the mummies were made and stored precluded good preservation and thus any practical manifestations of ancestor worship. They instead assert that although some varietal of ancestor worship probably did exist for these polities, it would have taken a very different form from that of the Incas: this pioneering view will doubtless excite considerable academic controversy among workers in the field.

It should be remembered that current thinking postulates a concurrent spread of the 'Andean funerary package' (including mummies) and Wari/Tiwanaku culture throughout the Middle Horizon. Mummy and ancestor worship are closely associated with the ayllu concept – a fundamental tenet of many ancient Andean societies – which effectively binds territory to one or more famous ancestors who originally won or conquered it. Worship of the ayllu legitimises territorial holdings, and ownership of any assets upon them. Previous work indicates that the ayllu concept may have originated in the Callejón de Huaylas during the Early Intermediate Period, subsequently spreading across much of the Central Andes (Isbell 1997), although other researchers place its genesis considerably earlier, in the Initial Period (Moseley 1992: 127–128), or even the Preceramic (Shady 2009). Although the details remain arguable, there is every indication that the ayllu concept accords with Saxe's Hypothesis 8 (1970) and studies by Lynn Goldstein (1995); similar cases of ancestor/territory binding can be found as far afield as ancient Australia (Pardoe 1988). These authors state that cemeteries were maintained by groups who used them as a means to legitimise their rights to certain resources and territories, particularly those with special economic or social/ritual value. Structured social groups and territorial rights may still exist in the absence of cemeteries; the close relationship between the deceased, religious beliefs and the hereafter should always be considered. It is at this point that the prospect of specific religious value comes to the fore. Pachacamac is a notable example, for it served as a burial place not only for the surrounding area, but also for far-flung populations that had ideological rather than physical links to the site. The site's sphere of influence included the entire Inca Empire; a similar ideological attraction was exerted by Tiahuanaco. Many have come to believe that sites on this scale – and at this level of complexity – are too multifactorial to be addressed using functionalist and analytical interpretations of funerary remains in isolation (Mantha 2009), although it could be argued that appropriate questions can be addressed reliably with the use of refined bioarchaeological techniques in combination with adequate contextual data.

There are those who favour a more phenomenological perspective towards understanding how ancient populations perceived places and monuments (David and Thomas 2008). Some contributors in the current volume have taken this approach, examining the symbolic and physical landscapes to explore how ancient societies integrated themselves into their natural context. Kaulicke (Chapter 2) is a notable exponent of this approach, and has used it in his assessment of Peruvian Formative Period burials. In so doing, he has highlighted the concept of centrality: isolated mountains – perhaps of mythical/legendary import – are often found to have been surrounded by tombs dating to various periods, thus implying some form of long-term geographical focus by successive populations in deciding where to place interments. Kaulicke's research on the terminal Archaic Period suggests an even earlier origin to this behaviour, with recurring associations of cemeteries and the littoral. In all cases, assessing motivation is uncertain: in the Formative case, although it is certainly possible that there was a direct spatial/ideological tradition across millennia, it may be that later groups were simply obeying the precepts of earlier ones without possessing the same ideological aims. Equally, although it is certainly possible that Kaulicke's assertion – that Archaic cemeteries were thus placed to reflect some form of social belief in an association between death, rebirth and the dawning day – is the correct one, it may be advisable to postulate other hypotheses and perhaps to propose means by which they could

be more fully explored. The same may be said of work by Aguero and Uribe, who interpreted the Chilean funerary mounds of the Tarapaca Pampa as metaphorical hills. These are believed to have served as visually impactive social signals for the wider population, presumably eclipsing the more demure – and plentiful – shaft tomb design. Finally, the decapitated head of a probable sacrifice victim – and various other elements – at the more recent site of Cahuachi has been interpreted by Llanos Jacinto (Chapter 13) as an indicator of the Nasca's relationship with their environment as well as an expression of their cosmological system and beliefs.

Conclusion

The current work was restricted solely in terms of the necessity of providing new and challenging field data, an aim that has been comprehensively achieved. The potential of the Andean region to address major issues in the field is enhanced by the sheer volume of funerary remains, as well as their usually excellent preservation. Many chapters in the current volume not only broach new data from recently excavated materials, but also subject them to a battery of innovative technical tests and processes. Recent years have seen a plethora of technical advances that have benefitted archaeological and anthropological investigation in the Andean area and elsewhere: these notably include bioarchaeology, petrology, phytochemical analysis, aDNA profiling and the use of stable isotope data for the determination of diet and geographical origin. However, although these and other methods are certainly beguiling, it is important that technological innovation does not overshadow the intellectual development of new research paradigms and agendas. Such techniques, therefore, should be brought in to address specific issues and questions, rather than being permitted to define the intellectual topography of the field. They should also not blind researchers to the self-evident fact that both the archaeological and historical records are heavily skewed and that the limitations of all datasets should be considered in all analyses, no matter how innovative the approach. Finally, we must avoid asserting pedantic absolutes in light of the fact that research such as that contained within this volume is making us increasingly aware of the complexity and variability within ancient polities.

Just as traditional archaeological approaches have been complemented – if not supplanted – by technological advances, so too has the role of historical information in ancient Andean research come under closer scrutiny in recent years. As the scale and detail of archaeological narratives have become more refined, it has become increasingly apparent that earlier paradigms constructed with a central infrastructure of references to historical accounts are to be treated with a certain reserve unless both the archaeological and written sources refer to the same, very specific period. Otherwise, historical references can at best be used as a *terminus post quem* for archaeological data.

Lastly, it is anticipated that this volume will fill a gap in the field – namely a single tome containing a wealth of diverse examples of Andean funerary treatments – and will hopefully guide further research efforts in this region by alerting researchers to the potential variability that underlies traditional definitions of individual polities.

We should like to make one final point concerning the organisation of the book, and the order in which the contributions are presented. Initially, we thought to present them in a traditional manner, organising them by the Andean chronological period to which they referred, from the oldest to the most recent. However, this was replaced by a more innovative and – we hope – more intellectually resonant manner of dealing with the relationships that exist between the various chapters. Thus, the chapter by Peter Kaulicke – which deals with critical syntheses of very ancient periods of Andean history – presents a data-rich treatise built upon a preconstructed theoretical framework aiming to explain the role of the ancestors and the central nature of historical social memory. Although Enrique Lopez-Hurtado chose to address much later periods, we deliberately placed his work directly after that of Kaulicke to compare and contrast their theoretical