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978-1-107-05934-4 - Funerary Practices and Models in the Ancient Andes: The Return of the Living Dead

Edited by Peter Eeckhout and Lawrence S. Owens

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Funerary Practices and Models in the Ancient Andes

This edited volume focuses on the funerary archaeology of the Pan-Andean area in the Prehispanic period. The contributors examine the treatment of the dead and provide an understanding of how these ancient groups coped with mortality, as well as the ways in which they strove to overcome the effects of death. The contributors also present previously unpublished discoveries and employ a range of academic and analytical approaches that have rarely – if ever – been utilised in South America before. The book covers the Formative Period to the end of the Inca Empire, and the chapters together comprise a state-of-the-art summary of all the best research on Andean funerary archaeology currently being carried out around the globe.

Peter Eeckhout is Professor of Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology and Vice-Director of the Department of History, Arts and Archaeology at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. His research interests include complex societies of the Americas, monumental architecture and funerary archaeology. He has been leading excavations in Peru since 1993 and is the founder and director of the Ychsma Project at the site of Pachacamac, near Lima. He is author, editor or coeditor of several books related to Pachacamac, Peruvian archaeology and wars and conflicts in the ancient Americas, and of more than seventy book chapters and scholarly papers in international journals.

Lawrence S. Owens lectures in bioarchaeology at Birkbeck College, University of London. He specialises in the interpretation of socially oriented themes – notably diet, pathology and trauma – in ancient human skeletons. He has worked on human remains from Peru, the United Kingdom, Egypt, South Africa, the United States, Bolivia, Qatar, Spain and the Canary Islands, and he has a particular interest in ancient trauma and the relationship between demographics, pathology and aberrant burial traditions in Andean populations. He has worked as head bioarchaeologist on the Ychsma Project at Pachacamac since 2004.

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The Return of the Living Dead

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Université Libre de Bruxelles

Lawrence S. Owens

Birkbeck College, University of London



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To Carole, Max and Zita for their love, patience and understanding

and

To the memory of Judith Trezies Owens (1942–2007)

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Preface

The hows and the whys of this book's existence owe everything to the editors' decade of collaboration at the site of Pachacamac, which is the source of our contribution to the current volume. We wished to share the results of our combined efforts to understand this enormously complex site, and became enthused at the thought of bringing our discoveries to a wider academic and public audience. In researching our work, we came to recognise the scope and range – and, most importantly, the quality – of research currently being carried out on funerary and bioarchaeological topics elsewhere in the Andean area, and became determined that something should be done to further promote research by both established and pioneering workers in the field. This, therefore, was the premise under which we co-organised the “Funerary Practices in the Ancient Andes” symposium at the 3rd International Congress of The Belgian Society of Americanists, held in Louvain-la-Neuve in May 2008.

Recent discoveries of tombs and their inhabitants have permitted major advances to be made in Andean funerary archaeology and bioarchaeology, from palaeopathology to genetics, from isotopes to ideologies and from gender issues to the development/refinement of stylistic and temporal chronologies. The symposium therefore aimed to bring together investigators working in diverse periods, cultures and regions, and to unite them and their sub-disciplines into a holistic and up-to-date Pan-Andean perspective. We encouraged the submission of both theoretical and practical approaches, but otherwise gave an essentially free hand to the authors and presenters, who proceeded to outdo themselves. The chapters – which ranged in topic from perimortem treatment of the body to tomb/cemetery organisation, dead–living connections, landscape references and historical approaches – gave us a unique cross section of the very best in current thought, method and practice in this most vibrant of fields. We were so taken by the quality of the submissions that we resolved to eschew the standard ‘proceedings’ volume, and instead aimed to reorganise these literary offenda into a collection of peer-reviewed chapters in an edited book.

It is quite possible – had we but known the sheer scale of the task that lay before us – that we would never have embarked on this epic mission. Luckily, however, we had the great privilege of working with a superb team of people who have steered us around the administrative and financial potholes that besieged us along the way.

The Université Libre de Bruxelles generously funded much of the editorial process so that the texts could be translated and edited. We are also indebted to the ULB Foundation, which kindly agreed to cover much of our illustration publishing costs. Nathalie Bloch, of the ULB's Centre for Archaeological Research and Heritage, remained cheerfully undaunted as she undertook the tricky task of turning wildly variable figures and tables into a uniform and coherent format. Aymeric Jourquin undertook the labours of compiling and formatting a master bibliography from all the separate submissions, and Eva Collignon produced a comprehensive index once the final stages of editing had been reached. They all did a wonderful job, and deserve our warmest thanks.

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We would like to thank Beatrice Rehl – former editor of archaeology publications at Cambridge University Press in New York – who was on hand from the very beginning of the submission process, and has provided much-appreciated support throughout the development of this project.

Numerous friends and colleagues helped both formally and informally as reviewers, editors and sources of sage advice throughout the protracted compilation and editing process, and it is our pleasant duty to thank those listed here, and our embarrassed obligation to apologise if we have accidentally omitted anyone: Monica Barnes, Henning Bischof†, Rick Burger, Claude Chauchat, Tom Dillehay, Jane Feltham, Mary Glowacki, Jorg Haerberli, Justin Jennings, Anita Kidby, Carol Mackey, Gordon McEwan, Jean-François Millaire, Bruce Owen, Ann Peters, Tom Pozorski, Don Proulx, Bill Sapp, Helaine Silverman, Emily Stovel, Geoffrey Tassie, Lisa Triemstra, John Verano, Luis Felipe Villacorta and Jim Zeidler.

Lastly, we want to thank all our colleagues who generously contributed to this volume by sharing unedited data and original manuscripts, and who have demonstrated their commitment, enthusiasm and – perhaps above all – patience in the years since this project began. We sincerely hope that the resultant volume is an honest and true reflection of all their labours, and that it will continue to stand as a significant milestone in the fascinating field of mortuary habits in the ancient Andes.