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# Death, personhood, and relatedness in the South Andes a thousand years ago

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## Abstract
This article examines the nature of personhood in the Calchaquí region, in the South Andes, during the second part of the Late Intermediate Period (AD 1250–1450). Through the study of the location of graves, architecture, and offerings, the authors explore the type of personhood that Calchaquí communities built and represented through the materiality of funerary practice. They claim that in this cultural and historical context, death became a realm in which relatedness was interwoven. Death, symbolically and materially, built bridges, connecting and entangling people with place and with each other. The funerary sphere was not strategically used to celebrate particular biographies and personal accomplishments, but rather it was another realm, like daily life, where individual identity dissolved into place and into the collective.

## Keywords
Death, graves, personhood, relatedness, South Andes

## Introduction

In recent years, archaeology has begun to develop a more critical stance toward the concepts and models it employs to understand and explain the past, questioning those

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theoretical perspectives that have assumed, implicitly many times, that the majority of the social and experiential spheres of today's Western world were also present in the past with approximately the same features. These perspectives have approached the past through explanations and descriptions that depart from a modernist ontology (Thomas, 2004), one that believes that the categories and entities that modern, Western, and capitalist societies recognize as active elements and agents in the social process were also at work in the past. In this way, the past has become a small-scale reflection of the contemporary Western world.

For many years, personhood and the body have been topics of uncritical and static understanding in archaeology. Evolutionist and functionalist approaches, which were long predominant in archaeology, had little interest in subjectivity and agency, and even less in the body beyond its biological aspects, taking for granted a cross-historical and cross-cultural embodiment and subjectivity, disregarding them as issues for theoretical and methodological reflection and debate. They assumed the existence of a universal and transcendental being/body, distinguished by its individuality: each person a unique individual, with precise limits that differentiate and separate him or her from other entities, substances, beings, or persons, not only in terms of corporality and consciousness, but with respect to will and agency as well.

Ethnography has taught us that subjectivities and corporeality are not transcendental but contingent, questioning the universality of the body and the individuality of the self. In other times and places, personhood did not entail beings with individual consciousness, separate and defined by the physicality of their bodies. People and their bodies are entangled and mixed up with the world and with other entities that dwell on it (Battaglia, 1990; Becker, 1995; Bird-David, 1999; Csordas, 1999; Strathern, 1988).

In recent years, archaeology has begun to focus on agents and agency, subjectivity, and the body, putting into question the transcendence and universality of Western modernity's subjectivity (Fowler, 2003; Hamilakis et al., 2002; Joyce, 2005, 2007; Meskell, 1996; Montserrat, 1998). A variety of artifacts and material realms – such as architectural compartmentalization, objects that molded and beautified the body producing particular dispositions and tastes, technologies and artifacts that define body posture, and pictorial representations and funerary contexts that offer clues about the nature of personhood in the past – have become central fields of inquiry in search of understanding personhood, embodiment, corporal performances, and techniques of the body in the past.

In this article, we travel almost a thousand years back in time to the mountainous region of the Calchaquí Valley, in the South Andes of South America, in order to explore the material fabric of funerary practices (Figure 1). By studying the materiality of death we intend to understand the type of personhood that past Calchaquí indigenous societies built and portrayed through their mortuary rituals and monuments. Our information comes from the analysis of 188 tombs from 6 different archaeological sites (Ambrosetti, 1907–1908; Debenedetti, 1908; Díaz, 1978–1984, 1981). In this article, we examine this database, looking for information about the location of graves, their architecture, and contents.

But first we need to clarify some aspects of our database: the tombs we will be discussing belong to settlements that, according to radiocarbon dating, were occupied during the second phase of the Late Intermediate Period (LIP: AD 1250–1450). Although

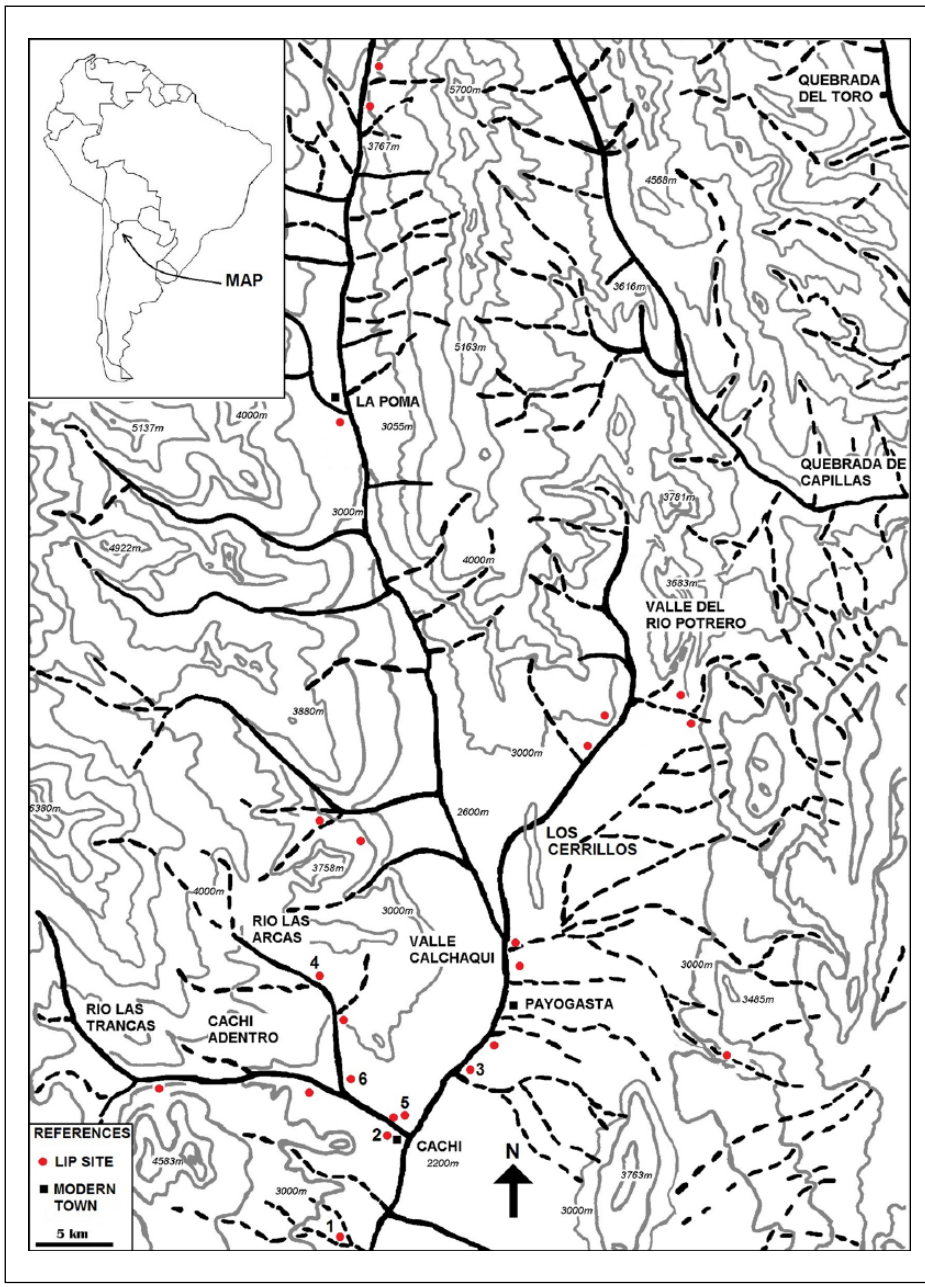


**Figure 1.** Calchaquí region, sites referenced in this article: 1. La Paya, 2. Tero, 3. Kipón, 4. Las Pailas, 5. Mariscal, 6. Borgatta.

few tombs have been carbon-dated so far, the results confirmed that they belong to this period (Sprovieri, 2013).

We have to take into account that the majority of these graves were excavated at the beginning of the 20th century and, even though there are detailed descriptions of each of them, archaeologists at that time did not consider it worthwhile to save human remains, with the exception of some skulls (and there is no information to match these skulls to specific tombs). Considering all this, at the moment we are unable to establish whether or not gender differences influenced the nature of the funerary ritual and the type of objects included as grave goods.

Finally, we have argued elsewhere (Amuedo, 2010) that life-cycle categories were materialized and expressed through the mortuary ritual. We noticed that infants less than 3 years old received different funerary treatment, with respect to the structure of graves and offerings, than older children and adults. In this article, we focus on the analysis of adults' and older infants' tombs. Nonetheless, we make some comparative comments about the graves of small children too.

## The realm of death in the Calchaquí region during the late LIP

A series of particular places, where people conducted different activities and had different experiences, constituted the Calchaquí cultural landscape during the late LIP. These places were farming fields, herding areas and shelters, river shores, conglomerate residential settlements, fortified enclaves, rock art sites, roads, quarries, and special or prominent topographic features of the natural landscape, such as springs, snowy mountaintops, volcanoes, or river intersections – places of great significance in Andean cosmology, usually considered as *wak'a*, or sacred landmarks and shrines (Bastien, 1978; Gose, 1994; Martínez, 1976).

Of all these localities, graves have been found only within (or in connection with) agglomerate towns (Figure 2). While newborns and small children were deposited inside cooking and storing pots interred at home (especially in food storing, processing, and cooking areas), with the pots' mouths and lids emerging at the floor level, Calchaquí people used small circular stone structures to place the mortal remains of adults and children over 4 years old. These stone tombs were placed inside settlements, between or within residential compounds (inside patios or in narrow corridors between rooms) (Figure 3), or in smaller or larger groups outside settlements. Tombs located outside were not, however, distant from living spaces; on the contrary, they were placed adjacent to and only a few meters away from them. There was no intention to locate graves far away from towns, associating the deceased with places with a different symbolic and social nature. The realm of death was not separated from the realm of the living, but rather death was a recurrent presence in daily domestic interactions (Figure 4).

Stone tombs were architecturally very similar to each other with respect to form, building materials, and building techniques. There were, of course, slight variations, but they responded to the building practice itself (as with every social practice, there is always a degree of variation involved) rather than to intentional actions aimed at the creation of social distinction. They were shallow, circular stone structures (except for one

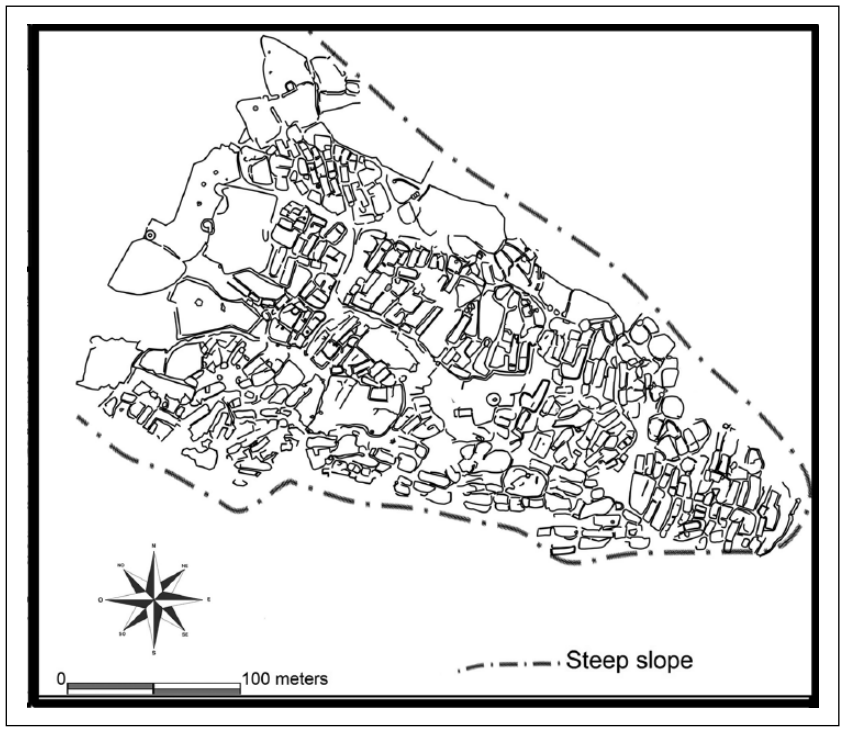


**Figure 2.** Late LIP agglomerate settlement at Las Pailas.

case with a rectangular shape), with an average diameter of 1.60 m (Figure 5). Unlike other past Andean societies, which built monumental graves, either pyramids or funerary towers (Isbell, 1997), in the Calchaquí region there were no sepulchers that rose up above the rest of the buildings. People built these tombs by digging a round pit, which was then clad with parallel rows of river cobbles or field rocks, snapped on without mortar, using large vertical slabs as foundation. Tombs were sealed with horizontal stone slabs and wooden beams to hold up these slabs. Not only were tombs similar to each other, they also shared the same type of building materials and techniques with the rest of the sites' structures.

Grave architecture expressed two notions: firstly, the construction of these stone tombs at ground level kept death and dead people present but neither distinguished nor unnoticed; rather, they were absorbed by the material context around them – that of daily life and the domestic realm. This is also the case for smaller children laid to rest inside previously used ceramic containers, buried under house floors, surrounded by household utensils and activities (Amuedo, 2010). In this historical and cultural context, the material presence of graves was neither highlighted nor hidden, but embedded within the everyday landscape. This embeddedness becomes obvious when taking into consideration that Calchaquí people employed the same building material and techniques to construct their tombs, their houses, and every other structure in their towns. Graves, then,

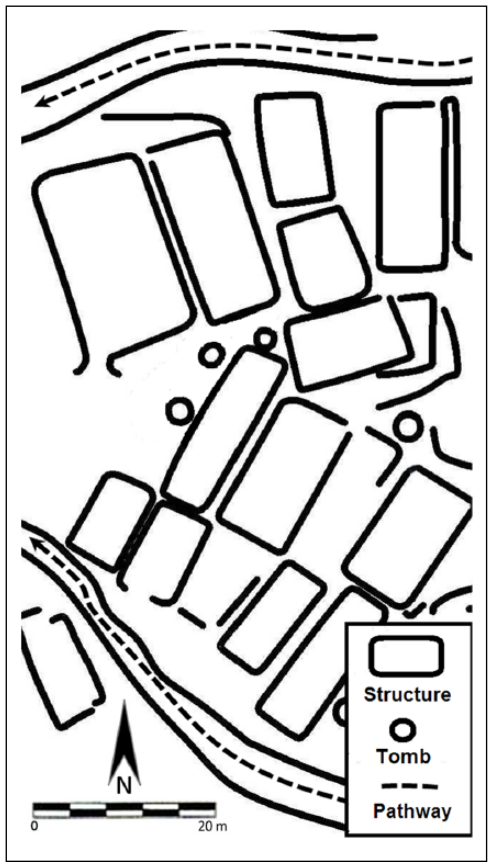


**Figure 3.** Circular graves between residential structures at La Paya.

**Figure 4.** Spatial relation between living spaces and graves. © Drawing: Alicia Charré.

blended in with the built environment and material order of residential settlements. Indeed, we do not find here an autonomous and detached funerary landscape, but an

**Figure 5.** Example of a circular stone tomb.

everyday landscape that included death. And this is also the case of sepulchers outside settlements, which do not appear materially or topographically alienated from residential areas. Rather, they are an extension of the site.

Secondly, the architecture of the tombs did not enhance a particular person or his or her lineage over the rest of the community. People did not use tombs (their size, form, or building materials) in a tactical way or as a political statement to separate themselves from their neighbors and to denote a higher status. In other words, funerary buildings were not driven by the immortalization of certain individuals or the creation of a hegemonic memory about their life, achievements, and position that would have legitimated the status of descendants. On the contrary, grave architecture sought to highlight homogeneity. The same applies to the graves of small infants, as all of them were assembled with similar domestic objects.

Yet what happened with these tombs' contents? What type of material offerings did the Calchaquí people deposit next to the dead? Did corpses receive any special treatment?

Use-wear analysis conducted by our research team confirmed that the artifacts included as grave goods were not exclusively produced for the funerary ritual but, on the contrary, had been used in other activities before being placed next to the dead. Consequently, once used for a burial, the things people selected as offerings created a symbolic link between the funerary context and other social realms to which they had previously belonged. When people chose to deposit next to the deceased certain objects (but not others), they selectively decided what aspects of late LIP social life and lived experiences they wanted to evoke and what social realms, events, places, stories, and meanings they sought to connect dead relatives and friends with.

In order to make these connections between grave goods and other social, spatial, or temporal realms of Calchaquí social life during the late LIP, we classified a large group

of 1162 objects recovered from 160 graves (of the other 28 graves we had information only about their architecture and location) in 7 categories. We have used the archaeological and ethnographic information outlined below to construct these categories:

(A) *Artifacts used indoors on a daily basis*: Archeological investigations confirmed the strong occurrence of these artifacts within residential compounds (Baralle, 2012; Díaz, 1978–1984, 1981). They are utensils related to daily activities, such as food processing and serving, cooking, storing, cutting, and grinding. Among these objects, ceramic vessels (painted, polished, and ordinary) were ubiquitous in late LIP settlements, and notoriously absent in other contexts, such as farming areas, rock art sites, or natural shrines (Acuto et al., 2011). We also included in this category tools for textile production. According to Andean ethnographies, this is not a seasonal activity since Andean people are almost always spinning or weaving, and often these tasks are conducted at home while pursuing other everyday activities (Fischer, 2007).

(B) *Artifacts used indoors during occasional activities*: These are objects that archaeological studies in the region have usually discovered inside houses but which, according to ethnographic information, were part of seasonal activities. In this category, we included instruments and raw material for ceramic production and metallurgy since both tasks require specific climatic conditions for optimal results (Arnold, 1994; Baralle, 2012; Díaz, 1978–1984, 1981; Harris, 1980).

(C) *Artifacts used in daily or seasonal activities outside residences and towns*: Objects related to herding, agriculture, hunting, and animal-powered transport of goods.

(D) *Objects employed during special events and rituals*: These were non-quotidian activities that might have been carried out either inside or outside residential settlements; so far we do not have information to classify these further. This category includes material items related to the consumption of hallucinogenic substances and musical instruments. In the pre-Hispanic Andes, the consumption of hallucinogens was closely related to ritual events (Torres, 1986). Music, on the other hand, is usually played during public activities and rituals, as well as in ceremonial contexts in which people make offerings to tutelary beings (Allen, 1988; Harris, 1980; Martínez, 1976: 290; Van Vleet, 2008).

(E) *Non-local objects*: These are artifacts, raw materials, or resources that came from other regions, probably as the product of long-distance exchange. Non-local objects in our sample are obsidian, sea shells, squash, nine non-local-style ceramic vessels, and wooden tablets and tubes to inhale hallucinogenic substances, which, according to recent analysis, were manufactured using non-local woods (Sprovieri, 2013).

(F) *Natural substances or elements*: In this category, we included wood, seeds, bones, rocks, minerals, among others, in their natural state and not intentionally transformed into artifacts.

(G) *Body adornments*: Based on ethnohistoric accounts (Guamán Poma, 1993[1615]), we divided this category into two types: (1) simple adornments, typically worn on a daily basis: shawl pins, pendants made of bone or seeds, and copper rings; and (2) more complex jewelry worn during special events (copper discs and

small pectoral plates, multi-bead necklaces, copper bracelets, and a copper pendant).

There were 158 objects we were unable to classify in one of these seven categories (e.g. sticks, wooden and ceramic sculptures, fragments of metal objects, and small stone balls). It is important to note that some objects belong to more than one category (for example, obsidian flakes and instruments to categories A and E, or clay to categories B and F). Thereby, the number of entries in the dataset is 1210.

The analysis of burial goods has allowed us to distinguish two important aspects of the funerary practice in the Calchaquí region during the late LIP: (i) the recurrent reference to the domestic and everyday realm; and (ii) the lack of transformation of the corpse and investment in its ornamentation.

## *Grave goods and the domestic everyday*

When considering the total sample of objects deposited as offerings in these 160 graves, we found that the majority (69%) came from daily domestic contexts (Figure 6a). Objects that evoked life in residential settlements and the activities people carried out within their houses account for 74 percent when we add the items from categories B (4%) and G1 (1%).

The scarce presence of imported objects is notable. Only 1 out of 13 objects that people left in these 160 tombs came from other regions. In other words, only 8 percent of grave goods symbolically connected the sphere of death with foreign lands. There are also few objects related to ritual activities. Less than 4 percent of objects evoked events beyond the everyday and mundane sphere. In a similar way, activities that took place outside towns, such as agriculture, hunting, herding, and transport with animals, are scarcely represented in our sample (Figure 6a). The same is true with respect to references to the natural world (though it should be kept in mind that varying conditions of preservation may have produced the under-representation of some natural items, e.g. vegetables).

What is the situation when we switch from the total sample of burial goods to their distribution among the 160 tombs? Did people always offer household utensils to their dead? Does this type of object always prevail over the other types?

Figure 6b shows the number and percentage of tombs that only included material items that make reference to home life (category A, category B, and category G1): those with more than 75 percent, those where more than half of the goods deposited belong to categories A, B, and G1, etc. This figure shows that 92 percent ($n$ = 147) of the graves included items that related to domestic life and activities. In addition, in 81 percent ($n$ = 130) of the tombs they are more abundant than things that evoke realms outside the house and away from residential settlements. This confirms that providing the dead with domestic artifacts was indeed a widespread practice and, therefore, references to life within the house were privileged over other representations (Figures 7 and 8).

What about those tombs that do not follow this pervasive pattern? There are 11 graves (7%) from which archeologists recovered the same number of material items related to the household realm and objects connected with spheres or activities outside the

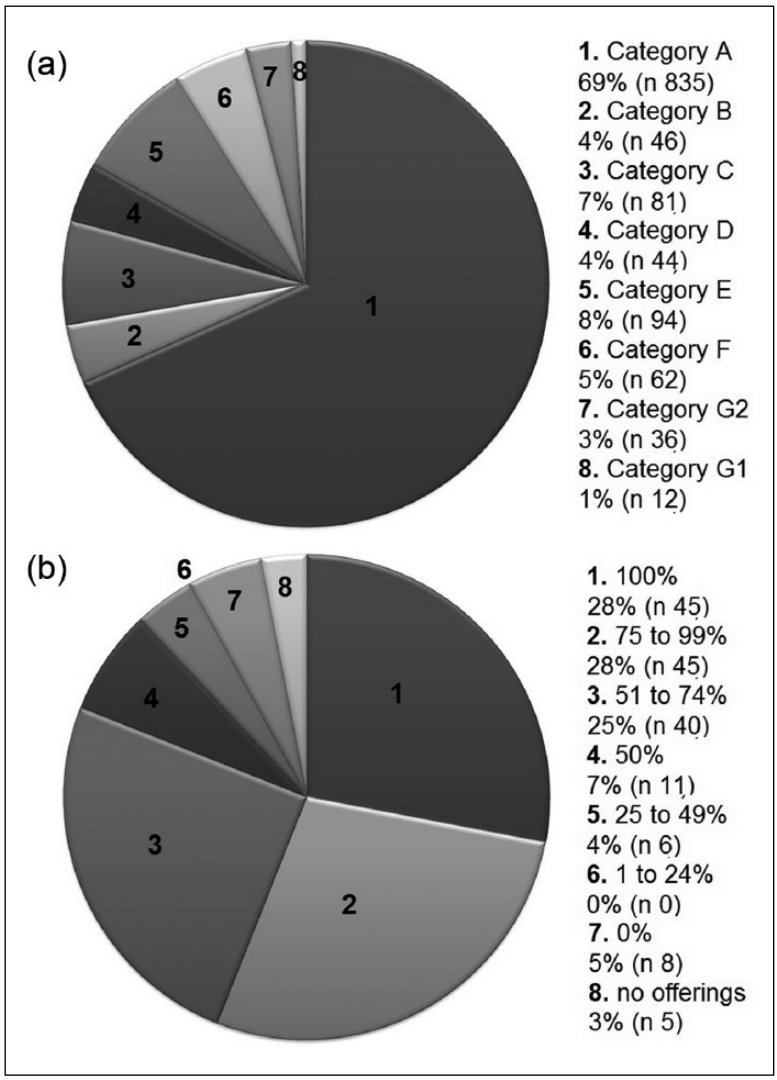


**Figure 6.** (a) total sample of burial goods by categories; (b) graves with different percentages of objects that reference home life (categories A, B, and G type 1).

domestic environment. There are only a few cases where domestic objects are slightly less numerous than the second type ($n = 6$; 4%) (Figure 6b). There are, however, 13 (8%) interesting cases in which this general trend was actually not present. Among the anomalies there were 5 (3%) tombs that did not contain any material offerings and another 8 (5%) other where people had decided not to deposit objects next to their dead referencing everyday domestic contexts and the house but things related to foreign lands, ritual activities, and special occasions. Although this could be interpreted as an example of the

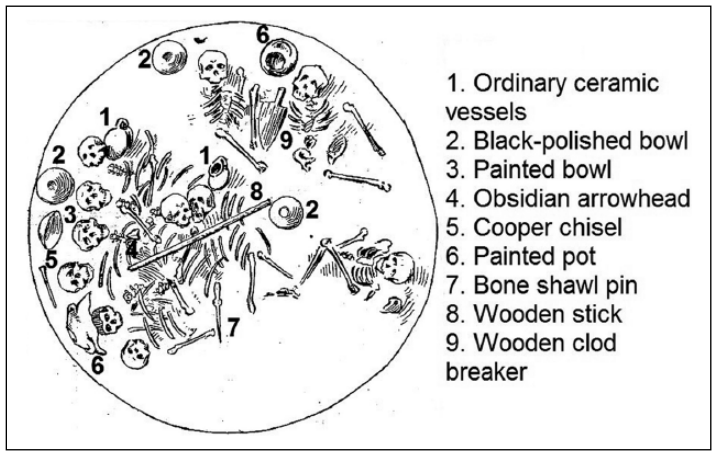


**Figure 7.** Burial 112 from La Paya (modified from Ambrosetti, 1907–1908: 197).

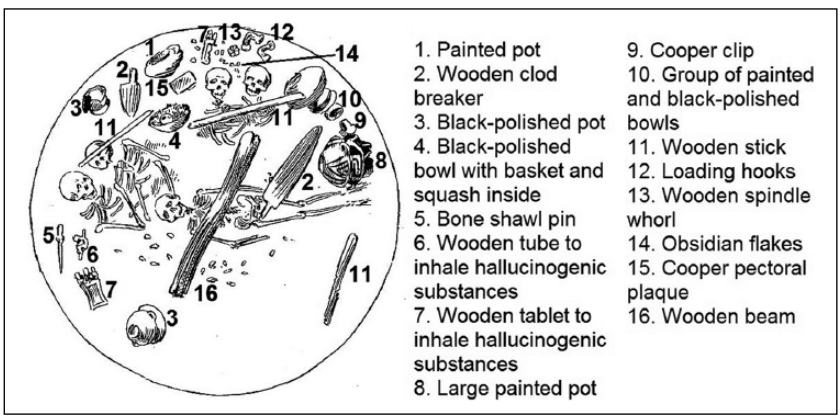


**Figure 8.** Burial 131 from La Paya (modified from Ambrosetti, 1907–1908: 217).

beginnings of an hierarchical society, these tombs are otherwise no different from the others in terms of location and architecture, and they do not form a spatial cluster. Moreover, neither these nor other tombs concentrated on objects connected with ritual activities or elements obtained from distant lands through exchange networks – both being spheres of interaction that were strategically used in many past Andean societies to create distinction and to build power. In fact, this group of 8 tombs yielded 1 burial good each, except for one that held 2. In a few words, no tomb was assembled with the intention to express a monopolistic control over ritual events or over interregional exchange networks.

In order to establish the degree of similarity and difference among our 160 graves we performed a non-metric multidimensional scaling statistical test (Bray Curtis). Simply

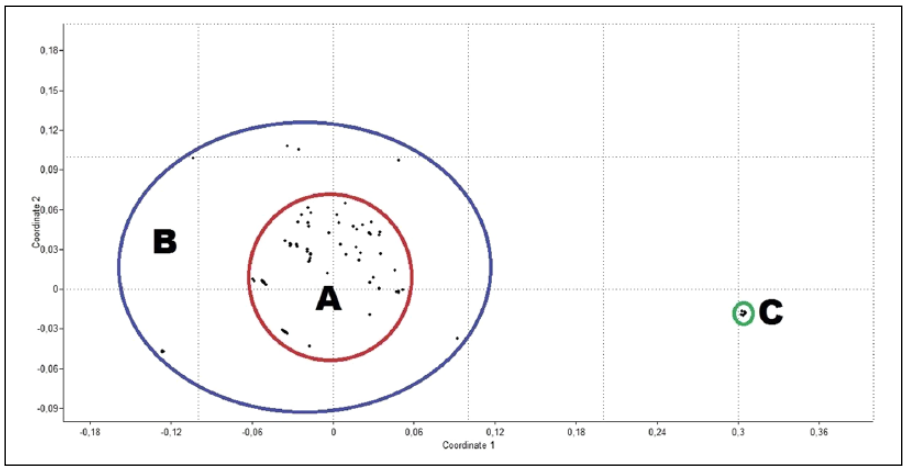


**Figure 9.** Grave clustering with respect to burial goods after performing a non-metric multidimensional scaling statistical test (Bray Curtis).

put, this statistical technique allows the visualization of data on a two coordinate graphs. It distributes items on a matrix, grouping or separating them at varying distance and proximity between dots according to the degree of similarity and dissimilarity between the items under analysis. Figure 9 confirms the patterns discussed above. We can observe that: (a) the great majority of the tombs ($n$ = 146) present some degree of similarity and, therefore, tend to cluster together; (b) surrounding and apart from this main group there is a circle of 9 graves; and (c) there is a group of 5 graves clearly separated from the main cluster. Tombs in the first group are those that included household utensils. Tombs in the second group are those cases mentioned as breaking away from the general pattern of offerings that reference the domestic and quotidian world. There is another grave in this group that is the only one where archaeologists found objects from every category. Finally, tombs that lacked grave goods are those forming the third cluster.

In summary, people privileged choosing objects as funerary offerings that evoked life as experienced in their towns and within residential compounds: objects that recalled daily domestic activities, the everyday and mundane over the exotic and extraordinary. There was thus a great permeability between the domestic sphere and the realm of death. One day, what people used in the lively context of the house (pots for cooking, storage, or pouring contents, needles and spindle whorls to weave clothes or blankets, stone tools for a variety of activities, etc.) was removed from this sphere of action and placed next to the dead.

## *Mortal remains and their treatment*

What happened with the mortal remains? It is worthwhile mentioning that the majority of the tombs (69%) held more than 1 body (Figures 7 and 8), generally between 2 and 4, with some tombs containing 8 to 12, and even two cases with 20 and 21 bodies. The

bodies were laid out inside the tomb in extended supine or flexed sitting positions. In many of these multiple graves, the skeletons and their material goods had not been disturbed which suggests that the tombs had not been backfilled and sealed for good but re-opened to accommodate new bodies.

There are two very interesting aspects of Calchaquí funerary practice that we would like to mention. First, the bodies of the dead were not subject to special transformations, e.g. cremation, excarnation, or fragmentation and the recombination of body parts with objects or body parts from other persons or animals. This suggests that people were not transformed into some other order of being after death. Second, investment in the ornamentation of the corpse was practically absent. Not only are there no traces of body painting, but body jewelry is also quite scarce. From the large sample of objects obtained from these 160 tombs, archaeologists recovered only 48 (4%) of such items (2 rings, 4 pendants, 19 rectangular pectoral copper plates with suspension holes [7 by 12 cm on average], 7 beaded necklaces, 5 groups of beads, 3 bracelets, 5 shawl pins, one 22-cm copper disc, and 2 undetermined adornments) in 40 graves (25%), with no special concentration of them in any tomb. But the most important aspect is that these adornments were not decorating the body itself, but were placed next to or beneath the corpse, next to other objects, adjacent to the walls of graves, or inside ceramic vessels (Figure 7.7 and Figures 8.5 and 8.15). When depositing these objects in graves, the intention was not to embellish the body of the deceased in order to highlight it or differentiate it from the rest.

What, then, does Calchaquí funerary practice tell us about personhood or, more specifically, about the type of personhood Calchaquíes were constructing and representing through the materiality of their graves? Archaeologists have to deal with material fragments from the past and, in order to put together the pieces of this puzzle, we need to contextualize our case studies. To help answer this question, we seek clues by looking at the social and cultural context in which Calchaquí funerary practice took place. First, based on archaeological information, we explore the spatial and social context in which tombs were located. Then, on the basis of ethnographic information, we discuss the nature of personhood and embodiment in Andean culture.

Why do we develop this methodological convergence of archaeology and ethnography? As Alberti and Marshall (2009: 344) claim, archaeologists have typically drawn on ethnographies 'to enhance or measure the accuracy of our interpretations, and [ethnographies] have proven a productive source of analogies for past life and as illustrative material for theoretical debate'. In our case, we approach the ethnographic record for three reasons: first, it helps us to defy taken-for-granted categories and assumptions based on modern ontology, allowing us to reflect about and to discover different worlds and ontologies (Alberti and Bray, 2009; Thomas, 2004: 241). Second, we follow the methodological principles used in other studies of personhood in European antiquity (Fowler, 2003; Jones, 2005), although in our article the discussion is not framed around the classical opposition of Melanesian examples of dividual/individual; rather we employ Andean ethnography, including our own studies in the Calchaquí region, to build a contingent interpretative framework to make sense of the past in this area of the South Andes. Third, as part of our engagement with and commitment to the politics of identity of contemporary Diaguita-Kallchaquí indigenous communities, we have systematically explored the socio-cultural links between past and present, claiming that there is a strong historical

and cultural continuity between late LIP and present-day indigenous communities regarding social interactions, practices, and cosmology (Flores and Acuto, 2015, in press). This link, which is not just about idealized categories but about historically located practices and active cosmologies, makes ethnographical information a pertinent heuristic tool to formulate historical analogies and, thus, to interpret the archaeological record.

## Social life in Calchaquí residential settlements

Large conglomerate settlements, defensive sites, and regional ceramic styles are the trademarks of the South Andean late LIP. While in the early LIP (AD 1000–1250) people resided in small villages or in domestic terraces located on mountain slopes (Rivolta, 2007), during the late LIP, indigenous communities began to construct houses and other buildings next to one another, creating wide fields of stone, semi-subterranean architecture (from 200 to more than 600 structures in some cases) arranged in a cell-like pattern (see Figure 2). These places were the loci of a number of key practices and activities, such as domestic life, public gatherings, artifact production, food processing and consumption, storage, and (relevant for this discussion) funerary rituals.

These conglomerate settlements were built by accretion. Wall abutments and cellular clustering indicate that new structures were added and coupled to previous buildings. Internally, they were divided into groups or clusters of structures defined and separated by raised pathways. The great majority of the buildings within these clusters were residential compounds, and large and open multi-activity patios. Furthermore, each cluster had a larger open structure, probably a public space.

Based on information provided by excavations, architectural studies and spatial analysis, we have suggested that three types of interactions and experiences prevailed in Calchaquí residential settlements: (1) homogeneity and redundancy, (2) permeability and social articulation, and (3) sharing (Acuto, 2007).

First, domestic compounds are strikingly similar to each other architecturally. The sites show no evidence of administrative buildings, monumental structures or any other type of construction that we could relate to centralized political institutions. We did not find buildings set apart from the others and taking advantage of strategic locations, e.g. in positions that allowed visual control over the rest of the community or in connection to structures or spaces that could be key to the control of social reproduction (such as public spaces, storage facilities, workshops, productive resources, etc.). Quite the opposite, we found that every cluster of structures and every residential compound within each of them was the material reflection of the others around it (in terms of architecture, the objects employed and consumed by its residents, the activities afforded, and the way people decorated their ceramic vessels). In other words, in these towns every person and family constructed similar types of buildings with similar materials and employing the same constructive techniques, used and consumed the same type of artifacts and goods, and carried out similar activities. The spatial and material order of Calchaquí late LIP settlements configured a social dynamic that avoided distinction and reified sameness.

Second, an extended network of raised passageways together with the 1-meter walls of numerous open patios created an extensive network of internal trails that reached

almost every corner of these residential settlements. This network not only promoted people's interactions but also facilitated the observation of the activities they pursued in the unroofed, semi-subterraneous patios, *loci* of a great number of activities (food processing, cooking, and eating, artifact production, weaving, storage, and the burial of children and adults, among others). As such, the spatial layout of late LIP settlements did not endorse fragmentation, but rather contributed to neighborly cohesion. The visual permeability that characterized the Calchaquí built environment enabled people to know, through ambulatory circulation, what was going on in their community.

Third, communal integration became consolidated in a number of social contexts in which sharing took place: (a) living in a conglomerate settlement involved sharing walls, halls, passages, and even spaces. We have noticed that the limits between residential compounds were quite blurry and that different households shared a common open patio; (b) food processing and consumption were also contexts that involved sharing. The concentration of grinding stones in a number of open patios throughout late LIP sites suggests that this activity contributed to social binding. Furthermore, people used large ceramic containers for cooking, pots holding an average of 40 servings. This shows that cooking was oriented to satisfying the needs of a large number of guests. Eating also implied gathering. When getting together to eat, people did not only share food, but they also shared a collective time; (c) considering that in every residential compound people lived under similar conditions and pursued similar activities (including the manufacture of a variety of tools: textile, ceramic, metal, and stone artifacts), we can claim that knowledge was shared and was not used as a source of social control.

In a nutshell, during the second part of the LIP, daily life in the Calchaquí region developed in places that, materially and symbolically, privileged redundancy and similarity over distinction and stratification. People actively engaged in the construction of a built environment and a material order that avoided fragmentation and segregation, favoring sharing, permeability, and a fluid and open interaction among its inhabitants.

## Personhood in the Andean world

What is the nature of personhood in Andean peasant indigenous culture? Andean ethnography, including our own ethnographic studies in the Calchaquí region, provides solid clues to answer this question.

The Andean person lives his or her life seeking to build relations and to maintain these relations, and is constantly fulfilling his or her obligations related to them, which actually imposes quite a heavy burden. These relations are not just social but also physical. People's bodies are entangled with the world, becoming part of larger collective bodies. The lives of Andean peasants are dedicated to work for the preservation and well-being of these collectives, as this facilitates the circulation of the animate energy that gives vitality and dynamic to the world and to every being inhabiting it, and guarantees one's own survival and welfare, as well as that of one's family, lands, and livestock (Earls and Silverblatt, 1978; Estermann, 2008).

Indeed, one of the principal nexus in the Andes is that between spouses. The Andean person is not complete until he or she gets married and assumes the social responsibilities towards the community that marriage entails (Allen, 1988; Fernández

Juárez, 1998: 265; Gavilán, 2005: 142; Harris, 1980: 88; Isbell, 1976). The dual and complementary union between man and woman (in terms of duties, tasks, and social bonds) is the base upon which Andean social order is built (Wachtel, 2001: 537). Not only are spouses a social and economic unit, but they are also perceived as a larger subject, some sort of social being formed by two persons who are considered two halves that have found each other and bonded together (Allen, 1988: 85; Harris, 1980; Silverblatt, 1987: 8; Van Vleet, 2008; Wachtel, 2001: 541). Platt (1986) explains that the husband–wife relation is defined in the Andes as *yanantin*: a complementary pair, two halves of a mirror image, and each member of the pair as the essential other half (see also Isbell, 1976; Mayer, 2002: 12). In many social contexts, the difference between married and unmarried people is more meaningful than that between men and women (Harris, 1980).

Another key social (and economic) unit is the household (Mayer, 2002; Wachtel, 2001). Mutual help and care are at the core of household members' interactions. Because they drink water from the same river, eat food produced on shared family land and cooked in the same pot, they consider themselves as people who are physically alike (Van Vleet, 2008: 64). A feeling of embodied sameness is developed in Andean families when they ingest substances produced, grown, processed, and prepared in relation with other family members and with their animate dwelling place, and in terms of sharing (labor, land, river, pot) and care. As such, not only do household members perceive themselves as sharing the same flesh, thus creating a sense of intimate connection, but they also believe that they embody the place in which they live, as they are all made of the same substances (Gose, 1994).

The Andean indigenous peasant community, also known as *ayllu*, is more a collective than a sum of individualities or a sum of individual projects, properties, and actions; self-interest is hence strongly subordinate to the common interest. Throughout his life, an Andean man, with the aid of his household and family network, must serve the community by occupying different positions, contributing to a variety of activities (e.g. the cleaning of irrigation channels, house thatching, livestock branding, and others) and hosting events of the ritual calendar (Allen, 1988; Gose, 1994; Wachtel, 2001). Reciprocity is the main structuring principle of Andean indigenous communities. The whole Andean person is someone who shows a predisposition to be (and is) in relation and a willingness to exchange labor, to share food, and to cooperate in activities for the common welfare.

Van Vleet (2008) employs the term 'relatedness' to describe the nature of social interaction in Andean families and communities. Relatedness is a moral principle that contradicts the modern ideology of individuality. *Ayni* (or the cosmological and material circulation of energy and care between the entities that inhabit the Andean world) is at the core of relatedness more than blood relations. Far from being a type of exchange mediated by personal interests, *ayni* comes from the heart, resting upon feelings such as caring, respect, and affection (Orta, 2000: 874). Reciprocity is the ontological principle of relatedness, which emerges from, and is lived in, people's daily performances. In traditional Andean communities, those who do not live in relation and in terms of *ayni* and reciprocity provoke social rupture, are 'naked' and not considered complete persons, subjects not properly socialized, pre-social beings (such as children), or sick (Allen,

1988; Greenway, 1998: 158; Van Vleet, 2008: 29; Wachtel, 2001). It is this practice, this disposition of living in relation, that makes Andean subjectivity.

Language embodies the great significance that the collective, more than the individual subject, has in Andean culture. Estermann (2008: 84) explains that:

> In Qechua there are two verbal and pronominal forms of the first person plural ('we'): *Noqayku*/*nanaka* (respectively the suffix *-yku* or *-naka*) refers to the exclusive subject in the sense of the group that talks, acts out, or celebrates, whereas the inclusive subject *noqanchis*/*jiwasanaka* (respectively the suffix *-nchis* or *-sa*) refers to both the group that 'emits' and the group that 'receives,' and in a more universal sense to all human beings. The fundamental human subject in the Andean context is not only a collective subject ('we'), but he/she also defines him/herself before another collective subject. *Noqayku*/*nanaka* means: 'we as different from you all'. (authors' translation)

He points to the fact that:

> The personal pronoun of the first person singular in Quechua is the mutilated and incomplete form of the first person plural: *noqa/naya* ('I') and *noqayku/noqanchis* or *nanaka/jiwasanaka* ('we') have a same common root (contrary to European languages) (p. 90, authors' translation)

A collective being is also present in the sphere of the dead. Whereas for a certain period of time people remember and relate to their departed relatives and friends according to their individual identities, later, and when the memory of the dead begins to fade away, the individual spirit becomes part of the general category of grandparent, ancestor, or *Machula Aulanchis* (Allen, 1988: 123, 174; Gose, 1994; Harris, 1982). As shown by Allen (1988: 57), this relationship with the departed is materialized in Andean cemeteries. Immediately after death, and as long as people are remembered, their graves are individualized and marked, but afterward these graves are not preserved any longer, and people dig them up to inter other bodies, disregarding what happens to the older human remains. When visiting the cemetery of Sonqo in the Cuzco region, Allen noticed the presence of separate individual graves and also, next to them, mingled bones from different skeletons sticking out of the ground. After a period of time, individual bodies become an assemblage of bodies.

Relatedness also connects people with place and with the supernatural tutelary beings that dwell in it (such as mountains or *Apu*, Earth Mother or *Pachamama*, and the spirits of ancestors). Because place and supernatural entities protect the community, improve the productivity of land and livestock, and provide vital energy, people, in return, have to take care of them, nurturing and feeding them with offerings (e.g. food, pastries, animal fat, coca leaves, and alcohol) (Allen, 1988; Arnold et al., 1992; Bastien, 1978; Martínez, 1976).

Place (the house, the town, the territory) plays a central role in the constitution of consciousness and corporality (Allen, 1988: 106–110). In the Andes, it is through place that people construct their identity, shape their bodies with the food locally produced, cure illnesses, weave central social relations, live under the protection of local supernatural entities, experience memories and the past, and live together with the spirits of the ancestors who, after death, still reside in the area, keep interacting with their relatives

(who ask them for certain favors and who have to take care of them in return through offerings and by feeding them on special occasions), and have the agency to influence the life of the living (Allen, 1988; Bastien, 1978; Gose, 1994; Harris, 1982; Martínez, 1976; Wachtel, 2001). Andean indigenous people believe that away from their own family, community and place, and therefore from relatedness, personhood and corporality are transformed. For instance, those who move to modern cities and who begin to incorporate other substances and to establish other relations are no longer considered full persons (Allen, 1988; Fernández Juárez, 1998; Gavilán, 2005; Greenway, 1998: 161; Van Vleet, 2008).

Beyond taking care of each other, body and place are linguistically and physically linked. Not only is anatomic and topological vocabulary used interchangeably to describe both landscape and the body, but also body and place share fluids and vital energy and they have a connected physiology (Bastien, 1985; Earls and Silverblatt, 1978; Fernández Juárez, 1998; Gavilán, 2005) that makes the boundaries between people and the surrounding world quite permeable. There are two interesting examples that show this physical entanglement between entities in the Andes.

In her compelling ethnography about an indigenous community from the Cuzco area of Peru, Allen (1988, ch. 6) offers a striking example of the Andean belief that all matter is not only alive but also connected. Ingesting large quantities of food is a common practice during particular domestic rites. Ritual participants eat to feed themselves and also to feed other people (dead or alive) or tutelary entities. Based on the ontological principle of cosmic union among the bodies of the different beings that dwell in the Andean landscape, between humans and place, people believe that a form of transubstantiation occurs during these rituals. The food a person eats in excess transfers to a supernatural or to another human being. In Andean culture, this is not a symbolic feeding through a human proxy, but a real transposition of food between two different beings that are physiologically linked.

Health and illness constitute another realm that shows the degree of connection between the individual and the social body, and between people and place. Typically, a person is believed to get sick in the Andes when he or she offends a tutelary entity or ancestor. Walking through specific areas of the landscape without asking permission from these supernatural beings, or without appeasing them with small offerings, will result in the loss of health. Illness is manifested through the social conduct of the sick person, who begins to be reluctant to return labor, does not help during communal activities, and does not share food, bringing about alienation from relatedness and disturbing communal life, since the sick person fails to fulfill reciprocity and to observe the rules of exchange (Bastien, 1985; Bolados and Moreno, 2006; Chamorro and Tocornal, 2005; Marínez, 1976; Orta, 2000). When studying diseases in the Atacama region, Chile, Bolados and Moreno (2006: 11) found clear evidence of this physical interconnection between entities. They explain that:

> Most diseases have symptoms in the physical body (sight, pulse, temperature), but there are some others that manifest in the social body, either by producing illness in other members of the family or in its economic patrimony (livestock sickness or death, failure of crops, job loss). (authors' translation; see also Bastien, 1985; Chamorro and Tocornal, 2005: 121)

By the same token, disease therapy shows how the flesh of the body is intimately linked to the 'flesh' of the world. Healing involves a procedure that takes place outside the sick person's body and in connection with the landscape. In order to restore health, shamans prepare a *despacho*, or sacrificial bundle, composed of different elements and substances (e.g. animal fat, food, sugar, candies, flowers, coca leaves, lucky coins), which guarantee the return of the lost energy. The *despacho* is simultaneously an offering to the offended entity and a medicine to cure the ill body. By burning or burying it, the shaman offers the *despacho* to the supernatural being who will eat it and return the vital energy back to the sick individual. Hence, medicines in the Andes 'run through the veins of the earth, not through the patient' (Greenway, 1998: 149). The healing process occurs, to a great extent, outside the body because its physiology is extended into the landscape.

In conclusion, indigenous Andean social life generates a relational form of personhood and, as a product of relationships, people develop and experience an extended, permeable, and connected form of selfhood and corporality. Even more, the Andean person is not just a being inside a network of bonds, but rather he or she is in relation (Allen, 1988; Greenway, 1998: 158). Becoming a person occurs only in relation: when married, building a family house, collaborating with communal projects, sharing food and labor, putting down roots in a place, feeding and living under the protection of tutelary entities, eating food produced in relation (with the family, the community, the place, the Earth Mother) and in terms of *ayni*, and by sharing emotional states with neighbors and spirits.

## Weaving relatedness in death

So far we have presented and discussed three different lines of information and knowledge: the material remains of the funerary rituals that took place 1000 years ago in the Calchaquí region of the South Andes, the social and material context within which this ritual occurred, and the ethnographic knowledge about personhood and embodiment in Andean cultural tradition. Gathering these strands together, we are now ready to discuss the type of personhood Calchaquí society attempted to construct and anchor in the landscape through the materiality of its funerary practice.

We cannot consider Calchaquí mortuary practice during the second part of the LIP an independent, self-contained, and self-referential system. On the contrary, death, both metaphorically and materially, built bridges and created bonds. The funerary sphere produced and represented a relational personhood. We claim that through the material fabric of funerary practice, ties between people and place, between life and death, and between people were interwoven.

As we have discussed above, place plays a central role in Andean culture and social life in terms of sociability and identity, and also with respect to the constitution of the self (both consciousness and embodiment). Beyond being residents of a place, people grow in a place and are nurtured and animated by it through the substances, energy, and protection their dwelling place provides. As place provides people with sustenance, so people take care of it in return. Andean personhood implies the embodiment of place, as people and place are made from the same matter and physiologically linked.

In the case of late LIP communities in the Calchaquí region, the materiality of death shows a strong connection with the place of the living and of everyday domestic activities. Through different decisions and actions, people sought to connect the dead and residential settlements. First, when choosing to locate tombs inside or in direct vicinity with settlements, instead of placing them in other zones of the social/natural landscape, Calchaquí indigenous people wanted to avoid linking the deceased to the non-domestic, to places associated with other experiences and meanings (such as crop fields, herding areas, rock art sites, roads, quarries, or shrines), or to areas under the direct influence of supernatural entities (such as near snowy mountains, volcanoes, springs, and other special topographic features). Rather, they decided to keep dead relatives and friends within the realm of the house where they could still be nurtured and cared for. If we take into account that (a) graves were not sealed but re-opened to include new corpses, and that people could have also opened them to feed the dead and to place new offerings, as was the case in other regions of the Andes in the past; and (b) that the body of the dead was not transformed but maintained a resemblance to the appearance of the living, then the dead and the living seem to have maintained regular interactions as members of the same community, taking care of each other and living under the protection of their dwelling place.

Second, when constructing graves with the same materials, techniques, and forms that were used for the rest of the buildings in the settlement, and when keeping them at ground level instead of erecting tall funerary towers, people sought to blend graves with the built environment of the town. The intention, therefore, was not to create a funerary landscape architecturally different from the landscape of the house and of everyday activities but, on the contrary, to build tombs that amalgamated with the settlement.

Third, when privileging as burial offerings objects previously used in everyday domestic activities instead of things that evoked the exotic, foreign, non-domestic, or ceremonial, the main decision was to connect the deceased with the quotidian and the memory of the dwelling place, with the life people experienced every day in their houses and settlements. The materiality of death, then, and the materiality of the house and of the town were virtually identical.

Dead people were absorbed by the residential settlement and the house they used to inhabit. They were not kept outside and away from settlements and exposed to external forces and entities, but rather they continued residing under the protection and nurture of the house, the town, and its living relatives and friends. Once departed, people were wrapped up by the residential settlement matter (stones, walls, buildings, pots, domestic utensils) and kept receiving (material) substances produced and used in this place. More than ever, they embodied the materiality and symbolism of the communal settlement.

Several elements indicate that, through mortuary material culture, people did not seek to denote and praise the individuality of the deceased or to celebrate individual biographies and identities. On the contrary, death deepened similarity and relatedness, principles that also produced the daily social and material world of the living: first, the majority of the graves accommodated multiple bodies and, therefore, people's resting place emphasized a certain type of social grouping. Second, no single tomb occupied a preeminent spot in the site or in the surrounding landscape. Third, there were no significant variations in funerary architecture. Fourth, the noticeable absence of body jewelry shows that the corpse was not a field of conspicuous decoration and exhibition oriented to extol

the identity and status of the deceased. Fifth, no tomb was distinguished from the rest by special assemblages of grave goods. Contrary to this, the widespread practice was to place next to the corpse things that everybody routinely used in household activities. Although there are a few tombs that included other types of objects, showing a certain attempt to set them apart from domestic and everyday representations, we cannot consider them radical breaks with the general pattern since they still maintained the same forms of construction and location as the rest of the tombs.

The materiality of death tied people in with the residential settlement, its temporality, meanings, and memories, metaphorically dissolving individual identities within the material matrix of the town. It sought to highlight communal life over personal biography. Thus, the realm of death was in tune with the social and material context in which daily life unfolded, where homogeneity, permeability, and relationality were the main structuring principles. As we have discussed with regard to Andean personhood, funerary practice privileged the representation of a person dissolving into the communal, of the collective over its constituent parts, privileging the 'us' more than the 'I'. Similar to contemporary Andean societies, in which members of the same family consider themselves analogous beings and bodies because they all share and embody the same substances that place provides, we may argue that people of the Calchaquí region during the late LIP were linked to each other because, whether alive or dead, they all shared the same material 'flesh': the 'flesh' of the community and the 'flesh' of the house. The materiality of the home and the materiality of death created a symmetrical relation between neighbors. They were not spheres of rupture and distinction, but rather realms of relatedness.

In the mortuary sphere, people embodied the residential settlement and were connected to each other by material bridges. Tombs, human bones, pots, stone tools, weaving utensils, ceramic iconography, walls, and houses formed a materially homogeneous and fully articulated landscape. In this socio-historical context, the limits between life and death, houses and tombs, dead people and dwelling places became blurred, since they all shared the same material substances.

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