



## Above-Ground Mortuary Architecture in the Chachapoya Region, Peru

**Speaker: Daniela Raillard Arias, MA, PhD Candidate**  
**Sunday, March 27, 2022 • 3:30pm CDT • Zoom & Facebook Live**

**D**aniela Raillard Arias, PhD Candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Northwestern University, is our lecturer online on Sunday, March 27 at 3:30pm CDT.

Between Andes and Amazon, Indigenous communities known as the Chachapoya built funerary structures above ground, across a montane cloud forest landscape, within cliff faces, on mountain slopes, and at cave entrances. The Chachapoya, who inhabited Peru's northeastern cordilleras throughout the Late Intermediate Period (LIP), from approximately 900 CE to the 1470s, constituted diverse sociopolitical and ethnic groups with some shared cultural and mortuary practices.

Radiocarbon dates from seven sites suggest that the Chachapoya built and

used these places for centuries, as early as approximately 800 CE and well into the colonial period.

In spite of the consecutive Inka and Spanish invasions of the 15th and 16th centuries, descendants of Chachapoya communities continue to celebrate their cultural practices and heritage today.

Collecting data through fieldwork, bibliographic and archival study for six years in the northeastern Peruvian region, our speaker has consolidated data on over one hundred Chachapoya mortuary sites. Building on the work of previous researchers, she is examining the architectural and geospatial diversity of these funerary sites.

Architecturally, Chachapoya communities built different mausolea, towers, retaining walls, platforms, and anthropomorphic sarcophagi. They constructed mausolea and towers using limestone masonry, clay mortars, wood beams and sometimes plaster and paint. For sarcophagi, some Chachapoya communities used reeds, clay, and paint to form conical structures with a distinct head, sometimes topped with additional, miniature

heads or a cranium.

These sites are equally diverse in their spatial composition; Chachapoya communities may have placed their funerary sites in relation to residential households, road and travel networks, agricultural zones, or lakes and water



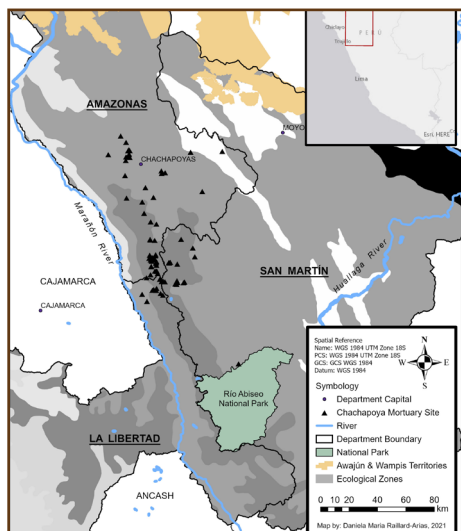
Mortuary Site Sarcophagi of San Jeronimo (photo credit Daniela Raillard Arias)

systems to form a wider archaeological and ecological landscape.

For Indigenous Andean communities, ancestors are powerful beings that continue to have an integral role in society long after their death. As evidenced by accessways using lintels, wooden platforms, stone steps, food items and other artifacts, and the re-wrapping of body bundles with textiles, it appears that Chachapoya descendants likely have placed additional bodies over the years and cared for their ancestors.

Only a handful of sites have been archaeologically studied and most are significantly damaged due to environmental factors, looting, and

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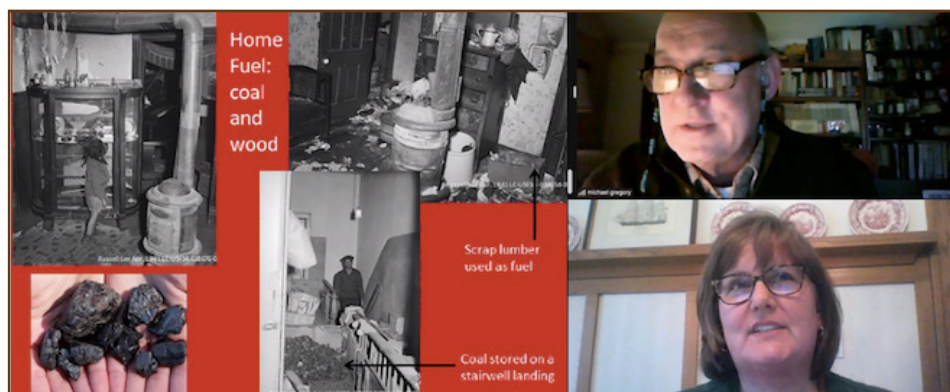


## The Space Remains the Same Response to Urban Archaeology of Bronzeville

~ "FIELD NOTES" BY JAMES MEIERHOFF, PhD CANDIDATE UIC ~

A few afternoons ago, I found myself sitting among ancient longstones on the Isle of Wight, England. The ancient stones I visited once flanked the doorway of a Neolithic Long Barrow, a communal burial monument which overlooked the English Channel and marked the landscape for centuries. Eventually, new peoples occupied the valley. During the Saxon Age (4,000 years after the Barrow was created) the location was said to have been used as a meeting place, and over time, Christians removed the mound, along with its contents and inhabitants – the massive longstones being now all that remain to remind one of those who used this valley in antiquity, and why. The land was transformed and repurposed for agricultural purposes, free of old "pagan" monuments. As I sat on one of the fallen stones, I was struck by the depth of time upon which people have gazed at this valley and pondered at how many different landscapes were seen over the ages from this one location.

Places may change even though the space remains the same. These transformations sometimes seem a natural progression, as just the flow of time as seen from a single generation or life span; however, it must be remembered that how we perceive, transform, and use space is very much a cultural phenomenon. While the material culture (artifacts) we construct, and the patterns of behavior we develop from the use of these items dominates the bulk of archaeological studies, how we conceptualize and manipulate spaces also falls within the purview of archaeological science (called Landscape Archaeology, a subfield of archaeology). It is sometimes difficult to relate the concept of a "landscape," which can be an intangible concept, as an "artifact," which by definition is a tangible, physical thing. But how we understand our environments and conceive and alter the spaces around us can tell much about our society, and the people within it.



Dr. Michael Gregory & Dr. Jane Peterson illuminate Bronzeville history on February 27, 2022

Case in point: the CAS hosted a presentation by Dr. Michael M. Gregory titled ***Materiality and Memory: Urban Archaeology in Chicago's Bronzeville Neighborhood***. In his talk, Dr. Gregory, and his Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation colleague Dr. Jane Peterson, discussed Bronzeville's transformation from a swampy marshland, potentially used as a hunting ground by Native Americans, to a place of confinement as the Civil War prisoner of war camp, Camp Douglas (a use of space I doubt was unintentional). After the war, and after the Great Chicago Fire, the Camp location was utterly transformed yet again, this time as a bustling neighborhood housing the mostly African American travelers of the Great Migration seeking a better life in the growing cities of America's Heartland. Generations have come and gone upon this same, once swampy ground – and there is almost nothing to suggest the connection from urban neighborhood to the horrors of a Civil War POW Camp. However, the archaeological eye can often spot the faint traces of landscapes gone, making the mosaic of our shared places a richer place/space to be. ▲

*Raillard Arias...continued from page 1*

destructive visitation of these places. Of the few studies, the majority focus on salvage archaeology and skeletal analysis, which poses ethical challenges regarding the removal and examination of Indigenous Andean bodies. Instead, Raillard Arias uses a landscape approach to examine the broader socio-ecological significance of Chachapoya mortuary architecture. Her methods include aerial drone photography; participatory mapping combining archaeological survey with equitable engagement of local knowledge holders; and geospatial analyses.

This lecture will contextualize the historical and current challenges to studying above ground mortuary structures in the Chachapoya region, such as the legacy of Euro-American explorers, local community anxieties, and tourism development. An overview of architectural and geospatial diversity of Chachapoya mortuary sites will then be presented with a discussion of methods used to study these sacred places.

Daniela Raillard Arias holds multiple degrees in anthropology, archaeology, and Latin American Studies. At Northwestern, she earned an MA and is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology. She earned an Honours BA with High Distinction from the University of Toronto. Daniela specializes in pre-colonial cultures and histories of the South American Andes, with particular attention to issues of human-environment relationships, landscape, heritage, and decoloniality. She manages several online platforms to engage the public in Chachapoya archaeology and Andean histories more broadly – including on Facebook, an emerging TikTok account, a personal website <[www.danielaraillardarias.com](http://www.danielaraillardarias.com)>, and her dissertation project page <[www.mapachachapoya.com](http://www.mapachachapoya.com)>.

Members are invited to sign on early at 3:15pm for an informal social period before the lecture, which begins at 3:30pm CDT. ▲



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## Driving Down to Mexico

### Guest Essay

~ DOREEN “DEB” STELTON, BOARD MEMBER CAS ~

Since the pandemic shut down our in-person library talks, we have increased our tool kit for communication to allow our members to share experiences. Those who signed on early for our last Zoom presentation (in January) liked hearing about our family trip to Dickson Mounds Museum in Macomb and are asking for more stories. So here is another experience.

In about 1970, after our first enlightening journey to see the awesome artifacts and the (now covered) burials at Dickson Mounds Museum, our appetite to learn more increased. Were the group burials the result of a virus? What can it teach us? We didn't have DNA knowledge yet. Did they trade with Mexico?

We also learned that it wasn't difficult to travel with children.

We decided to go to Mexico. We drove from Chicago via scorching hot Laredo to Mexico, stopping at sites like Teotihuacan, Palenque, La Venta and Uxmal. Our three blonde kids and our pop-up camper attracted the rural locals. After seeing our Maya books, they were proudly helpful in our pursuit of sites.

I recall hearing, “That line on the map is not a road yet.” We slept on the beach that was to become Cancun.

We learned the ways of the gracious Yucatecan Maya. I remember their faces, what they did and said, but not their names. The Yucatecan greeting, “Bosh kawali” was a door-opener to Maya myths and secrets.

Small museums at the sites displayed cases with artifacts, and sometimes copies were for sale. Besides photos and local arts, we have copies to remember, to research and enjoy. No need to be fooled by some fakes or illegal objects.

A Maya elite sculpture was copied by an artist in the Yucatan who had been arrested for selling authentic artifacts. His family was producing copies. We purchased ours from a local museum for twenty-five dollars. An



Maya Sculpture Copy Keeps Watch

upright cross-legged royal figure now gazes at us with his authoritative, tattooed face and elaborate hair style. Is he a prince or a bureaucrat? I like to think he is an artist/scribe.

Many of our guest speakers have helped us to understand the changing ideas about the Maya, as well as other cultures. We Society members learn through direct contact with archaeologists at Zoom and live meetings and discussions.



Our informative *CODEX* has previews and summaries of meetings you might have missed. Michael Ruggeri's explanations of the latest discoveries and ever-changing techniques also are featured (and will be back next month).

Part of our dues support the IAAA and the missions of working archaeologists.

We pass our learning on to others, who may not know or understand the need for provenience or context and the mission to advance our knowledge of mankind.

Our informative speaker series, website and other communication services are expensive to maintain. And although our programs are all free and open to the public, dues and donations help keep our sixty-year-old (plus a decade more?) organization alive.

Become a member! ▲

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## CHICAGO ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

is a federal 501(c)(3) and Illinois not-for-profit organization. Dues cover January-December membership in CAS as well as IAAA. Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.



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## ZOOM IN AT THE RIGHT DAY & TIME

Join us on Sunday, March 27 at 3:30pm (Central)

(3:15pm Members sign on early for informal social period.)

<<https://bit.ly/3MidvYm>>

Meeting ID: 849 2207 8248 • Passcode: 1806625 • ph (312) 626-6799 Chicago

Be sure we have your email for reminder and details!

**MEMBERSHIP**

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***Fiscal year is January-December***

Chicago Archaeological Society  
123 W Madison St., Suite 2100  
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*Membership/Donation Form on website.*

Regular meetings are held usually  
on last Sundays of the month, for  
members beginning at 3:15pm

Lectures start at 3:30pm Central

**Virtually Zoom & FBLive**

***No parking problems!***

**2021-2022 CAS Program**

Sunday Lectures begin at 3:30pm CT online on Zoom

September 26, 2021	Dr. Randy Haas	<i>Wilamaya Patixa &amp; Female Hunters of the Early Americas</i>
October 31, 2021	Dr. Charles Becker	<i>Aspects of Indiana University's Center for Underwater Science Archaeological Projects</i>
December 5, 2021	Dr. Marc Zender	<i>How Writing Came to Northern Yucatan</i>
January 30, 2022	Dr. Morag Kersel	<i>Pots from the City of Sin: The Consequences of Buying Holy Land Antiquities</i>
February 27, 2022	Dr. Michael Gregory & Dr. Jane Peterson	<i>Materiality and Memory: Urban Archaeology in Chicago's Bronzeville Neighborhood</i>
March 27, 2022	Daniela Raillard Arias	<i>Above-Ground Mortuary Architecture in the Chachapoya Region, Peru</i>
April 24, 2022	Dr. Vincent LaMotta	<i>Homolovi Site in the American Southwest</i>
May 22, 2022	Dr. Thomas Loebel	<i>The DeWulf Paleoindian Project: Early Holocene Ceremonial Behavior in the Western Great Lakes</i>

**March 27, 2022 • Daniela Raillard Arias, MA**  
***Above-Ground Mortuary Architecture in Peru***  
**online <<https://bit.ly/3MidvYm>>**

Meeting ID: 849 2207 8248 • Passcode: 806625 • or: (312) 626-6799 (Chicago)

**Members Sign on Early for Social Period ~ at 3:15pm.**

**Lecture begins at 3:30pm CDT. Virtual ONLY. Zoom & Facebook Live**

**~ All meetings are free and open to the public but membership dues and  
donations enable us to maintain the high quality speaker series ~**

**Comments? Suggestions? Write to the Editor.**

**email: [Codex@ChicagoArchaeology.org](mailto:Codex@ChicagoArchaeology.org) • CAS phone: (312) 267-2847**

**<https://www.ChicagoArchaeologicalSociety.com>**

*the*  
**Codex**



**Chicago Archaeological Society**  
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**Chicago IL 60602**

**Return Service Requested**

**Meet again this month for a Zoom  
presentation! Recorded programs  
are on our Facebook page.**