

EDITORIAL

El volumen 33, número 1 comprende 12 artículos sobre patrones mortuorios arcaicos en Sudamérica, editados por Calogero M. Santoro, Vivien G. Standen y Tom D. Dillehay, 10. Se ilustra que el tratamiento de los restos humanos en épocas tempranas fue complejo, independientemente del ámbito geográfico y el nivel de desarrollo político y económico de las sociedades. Diez artículos sobre conservación de restos humanos momificados, editados por Vickiy Cassman y Debra Meier y, ponen de relieve la ética y el profesionalismo que deben primar en el manejo de colecciones y la conservación preventiva de restos humanos antiguos. Este número se cierra con 5 artículos de etnobotánica, editados por Eliana Belmonte, donde se presentan metodologías para el estudio de plantas de origen arqueológico y se discute el uso de ellas como recurso económico e ideológico.

Patrones mortuorios arcaicos en Sudamérica: Resumen del simposio.

Este simposio tuvo por objeto evaluar la diversidad de patrones funerarios desarrollados por poblaciones tempranas de cazadores recolectores de norte y sud América. Evidencias funerarias tempranas tienden a ser escasas, limitadas en número y afectadas por problemas de conservación pre y post ocupacionales. Además, existe un corpus importante de datos inéditos o, presentados como epifenómenos en las monografías arqueológicas, integrándose débilmente a los modelos de patrones de asentamientos, sistemas de vida, estrategias de subsistencia, sistema de creencias, rutas migracionales, etc. El simposio tuvo por objeto crear la oportunidad para obtener una perspectiva continental acerca de los patrones funerarios tempranos, poniendo de relieve las variaciones regionales y temporales, su integración a los procesos de cambio y continuidad cultural y, generar una discusión acerca de los principios generales que puedan explicar estos procesos.

Uno de los temas relevantes se relaciona con ritos mortuorios que implicaron una fuerte manipulación perimortem, es decir alteraciones ocurridas antes, durante y después de la muerte. Evidencias funerarias tempranas en norte y sud América muestran señas de alteraciones de diversa índole, incluyendo ejemplos de mutilación, desmembramiento, cremación, eliminación de restos fragmentados calcinados en depósitos domésticos, enterramiento de piezas óseas seleccionadas, momificación artificial, entre otros. Estos registros arqueológicos no pueden ser explicados, completamente, como consecuencia de factores naturales y culturales post enterratorio. Por el contrario, las evidencias muestran cierta regularidad en los patrones de alteración, reflejo más bien de prácticas culturales mortuorias. En este contexto, los artículos que se incluyen se centran en los siguientes aspectos: (a) caracterización de los patrones funerarios con o sin alteración perimortem, (b) evaluación de los indicadores que señalan su carácter cultural, para distinguirlos de alteraciones naturales post ocupacionales o, de actividades culturales fortuitas y, con ello despejar los rasgos que formaron parte de un rito mortuorio, (c) evaluación posibles tendencias en la distribución espacial y temporal de patrones particularizados de ritos mortuorios con o sin alteraciones perimortem, (d) discusión acerca de los fundamentos culturales que podrían explicar los patrones mortuorios en relación a

otros aspectos de la cultura, (e) discusión acerca de restos humanos fragmentados y calcinados encontrados en contextos no funerarios propiamente tales, que podrían corresponder a prácticas culturales como canibalismo entre otras conductas sociales y, (f) consideración de factores paleoclimáticos en la evolución social de las poblaciones prehistóricas del norte de Chile.

Conservation of mummified human remains: Symposium Overview

Conservation was a new symposium topic for the III World Congress of Mummy Studies, and one that was enthusiastically received. The variety of specialties represented by the symposium authors mirrors the need for multidisciplinary teams in the study, analysis and preservation of human remains. The papers covered a very wide range of topics including: preventive conservation issues, nondestructive analyses, replica production for traveling exhibition purposes, conservation of damaged mummies, experimental recreations of Egyptian evisceration techniques, and public reactions to museum displays of mummies. It was suggested that in the next congress this symposium could be further broken down into separate symposia for nondestructive and minute sampling analyses, museology and ethics, and preven

tive conservation techniques. We (V. Cassman and D. Meier, symposium coordinators) support such a motion and hope that the enthusiasm generated at this congress will continue to build.

Debra Meier began the session by presenting preventive conservation concerns for mummy bundles on display. Her first-hand experiences and advise for adequate physical support and respectful display for an Andean South American mummy bundle was an excellent beginning to this session. The congress was situated in the archaeologically rich Atacama Desert where mummified remains are often still inadvertently discovered by the community at frequent intervals and this talk was especially relevant in this context. PerhapsPerhaps, Tthe Inka too, who paraded mummified remains in processions and regularly fed and clothed their mummies would likely have been interested in her ideas for support and proper care.

TTthe talk by Barbara Cases and Ana Maria Rojas for the Museo Arqueológico de Santiago presented a unique and preferable method for display and transport of mummies for international travelling exhibits. Mariela Santos of the Universidad de Tarapacá was employed to help madke a replica of an artificially mummified Chinchorro child for their Museum. The reconstruction was realistic, proving to be a highly viable solution to shipping a fragile mummy that otherwise surely would have surely ended in disaster. Mariela Santos and Luis Briones presented the current state and problems associated with conserving Chinchorro mummies in the museum in Arica, Chile. Most damage sustained has been due to transport and handling. They justifiably argued that new strategies for storage must be instituted that minimize direct handling and vibrations, but still allow for viewing, photography and filming.

Under the category of conservation treatments, in the talk by Through images, Monica Gustafsson, brought back home twin Arican artificially mummified Chinchorro infants that were taken to Sweden in 1924 by Swedish archaeologist Carl Skotteberg, were symbolically brought back home through images. Few of the earliest Chinchorro mummy discoveries are still in existence. However, this is one example that has been rediscovered and has received proper care and respect in its new

museum environment. Monica also introduced us to her ongoing analyses on the materials used by the Chinchorro.

Rosalie David presented a history of interventive mummy conservation - the good, the bad, and the ugly. She emphasized the preference for nondestructive analyses and treatments in order to prevent loss of information for present and future analytical techniques. Likewise, Guido Lombardi used the analogy of mummy collections as libraries, where mummies should be preserved and available to future researchers with improved techniques. Both David and Lombardi of these authors have had to deal with practical questions of mummy conservation in institutions without conservators and they provide two views of what nonconservators have and do employ in a very difficult battle to adequately preserve vulnerable human remains. Guido Lombardi also emphasized the need for environmental controls and preventive conservation, but it needs to be pointed out that those environments which preserved mummies underground should not be presumed to provide similar stable environments above ground. South Central Andean coastal climates can have large daily fluctuations in relative humidity.

Bob Brier, Egyptologist, and Ronald Wade, Pathologist demonstrated their reconstruction of Egyptian surgical and evisceration techniques. Through graphic slides of modern individuals undergoing evisceration, they demonstrated the likelihood of previously proposed theories on the paths, techniques and tools used in the process. Their presentation brought out healthy informal discussions on the ethics of studying, viewing and display of newly dead versus desiccated ancient corpses or mummies. Their work helps us understand the mummification process better and indirectly will aid in preserving Egyptian mummies.

Finally, Julia Cordova's presentation on mummy fascination was found to be of special interest. She presented evidence from an Universidad de Tarapacá exhibit survey, which detected a range of public reactions to displayed mummies with the majority of respondents reporting they want to see and know more. As the duration and size of this congress also attests, there is considerable public interest infor mummies and the lessons about past human behavior they can teach us.

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