Recuay Mortuary Patterns Over Time

**Introduction**

Recuay Mortuary customs vary tremendously by time and place. In the era before the Recuay, ca. AD 200, the dead were buried in the ground and covered. The older buried tombs are likely not intended for descendants to directly interact with the deceased due to the difficulty in accessing them after they are sealed. The first types of mortuary monument associated with the Recuay are cist burials, lined stone chambers, natural features such as caves, and galleries. The cists would sometimes be located with galleries, a holdover from the Chavín era (Lau 2000:190).

Later Recuay tombs were designed to have a defined entrance, hinting at a ritual interaction between the living and the dead. The Recuay mortuary custom seems to correspond to the early days of the highland Ancestor Cult (Ibarra, 2013:6). The burials were mummified and prepared for burial in woven textiles held together by copper, bronze, or rarely gold or silver Tupus. These pins were functional ornamentation in life, and in death held the mummy together. The mummification spread with the Wari and eventually the Inca. Though mummies and associated materials would become far more ornate with time, common grave goods include small metal objects, ceramics, micro-ceramics, and animal remains.

Chullpas are common burial monuments starting aroundAD 500 in the Recuay world. They tend to be semi-subterranean tombs, enclosed but accessible through a defined entrance which usually faces east towards the rising sun (Lau 2000:192). Many Chullpas were built on older structures such as the temple at Chavín or stone platforms from earlier Recuay sites at Chinchawas and Wilkawaín (Lau 2002: 193). Chullpas could contain single chambers supported by a post in the middle. Some Chullpas consist of many chambers and ante-chambers supported by many posts. These tend to be clustered together, even creating artificial ridges running along the mountains. The other common burial type is the chamber burials. These are usually built by modifying naturally occurring caves to make chambers with carved entrances and decorative motifs.

Isolating the specific rituals from archaeological evidence alone is complicated. Ceramics and grave goods are common, and sometimes there are stone carvings in the Chullpas themselves (Ibarra, 2013: 18). In the Chullpas, micro-ceramics are common. These range from three to twelve cemtimetres rim diameter. They have been shown to contain a wide array of organic materials from common food, to the psychedelic San Pedro cactus prepared as a soupy liquid for consumption. The micro-ceramics are often decorated, including painted motifs, incised designs, and clay rolls baked into the side of the ceramic. They are not uncommonly found with faces or heads incised or shown on the sides.

**History of the Andean Dead**

*Mallqui* (*Malki*) are the umbrella term of Andean mummies. The tradition has a long history in the Andes, dating to the Chinchorros peoples along the Pacific coast of southern Peru and northern Chile (Lau 2008:1032). Around 5000 BC, the Chinchorros Black Mummy tradition began. Their methods started naturally enough, placing bodies within the wet bogs for exposure defleshing. Then the bones were reassembled with wood and clay before being painted with a grey-black paste (Moore 2014:112-113). By around 2000 BC Red Mummies emerged. Organs were removed and the flesh covered in Red Ochre (Moore 2014: 113-114).

From these beginnings, the *Mallqui* emerged. Mummies occupy many roles for the societies that made them. In the Inka Empire, the mummies were treated especially well. Care and display of the royal mummies was central to Inka statecraft for the mummies could act as agents of the Inka statecraft. The mummies were not only kept in displayable condition, but venerated with offerings by the living (Urton 1999: 10). Mummies of the Inka rulers and their immediate families were revered in a special room at the Coricancha temple in Cusco (Urton 1999:47).

The mummies were also used in the Inka *Ayllu* system. *Ayllu* was a family or lineage system, though it referred to the larger kinship group, sometimes conceptualized by researchers as Inka ethnic groups. They were vast groups containing thousands of people and were the primary unit for kinship, landownership, and ritual events. *Ayllu* networks maintained the mummies, but they also displayed them at various festivals central to the *Ayllu* (Urton 1999: 8). Commoners maintained the veneration of their personal ancestors well into the Colonial era and the customs were documented well by Spaniards (Urton 1999: 62). The incredible *machay* sites in the Cajatambo region contained several thousand mummies to whom routine offerings were made at harvesting and planting as late as AD 1656 (Urton 1999:72).

*Ayllu* can also be used with respect to the basic social and economic units of the Andes. Ancestor veneration was entangled with the *Ayllu* or whichever kinship network was present in pre-Inka times (Herrera 2016:7-9). The Inka divided Highland Ancash into five groups for taxation purposes (Herrera 2016:10-11). Testing such lineage archaeologically is a difficult proposition, especially with limited sample spaces, however through aDNA, mtDNA, morphometrics, and non-metrics these systems can be tested (Herrera 2016:54-56). At Marcajirca, there was a test on cranial non-metrics which could not confirm specific familial linkages such as the *Ayllu* though they were able to show a wider familial group likely corresponding to several kinship networks or *Ayllu* (Herrera 2016:89-90).

On the matter of how kinship shaped mortuary practices Chronicler Bernabe Cobo wrote:

as soon as the soul had left the body, the members of the deceased’s *ayllo* [*ayllu*]and family unit would take the dead body, and if the deceased was a king or a great lord, the body would be embalmed with great skill. As a result it would be preserved intact for many years, and it would not deteriorate or give off a foul odor. Some of the bodies lasted this way for two-hundred years. (Cobo 1990[1653]: 39).

Huamán Poma wrote in 1613 a less dogmatic account. The bodies were embalmed to avoid damage to the dead, and great care was taken to ensure that the face looked as it did in life. Commoners’ mummies were referred to as *aya* but the remains of the Inca themselves were called *Illapa,* a phrase also associated with lightning. Again the *Mallqui*  of a king was dressed richly and buried with gold and silver. The queen was generally buried in the same place as companion in death (Poma 1978[1613]:79). In keeping with the chronicle of Cobo, the *Mallquis* were put on display for a full month of lamentation and libation. The remains were then placed in a vault called a *pucullo.* During the same period, the princes and legitimate heirs would engage in several months of fasting and ritual to determine the legitimate heir to the throne (Poma 1978[1613]:79-80).

The *Mallqui* had their personal property returned to them in various ways after death. *Mallqui* of the royal line would retain their palaces, lands, and even slaves after death. Mummies kept herds of llamas and alpacas designated for their use and consumption through sacrifices (Lau 2008: 1028-1029). The chroniclers were amazed the Andean people would bury their gold and valuable possessions, instead of hording them for familial use. These included ceramic and gold cups and pitchers with *chicha* corn beer (Cobo 1990[1653]: 40). Cobo also noted the offerings to the deceased. Should the mummy require additional offering, the *Mallqui* would complain through their human caretakers and demand more tribute, though his description is that of human charlatans enriching themselves off the idolatry in the Andes (Cobo 1990[1653]: 41-42). Critically, Cobo states that only ancestors who were themselves progenitors of the living were venerated this way. In the Andes, descendants focus preparation and offering only to those who had offspring and thus their line continued to need aid from their progenitor *Mallqui* (Cobo 1990[1653]: 42-43).

Poma also described mortuary treatment of non-royals throughout the lands. Chinchay Suyu corresponds to the northernmost region of the Inka domain, including Ancash and the mountains north of Lima. Poma’s discussion of mortuary treatment in Chinchay Suyu follows similar style to the royal burials. There would be five days of fasting and then a llama would be sacrificed and the food offered to the *Mallqui*. Then the body would be carried to the tomb and the widow lamented for two years. The community could return at six months, and then again at a full year to the *Mallqui* and repeat the ritual of fasting, song, lamentation, and libation (Poma 1978[1613]:81).

Naturally use of chronicles, especially those written by a conqueror about the conquered must be read with an appropriately guarded attitude. For theoretical purposes, these documents are treated more as representations, akin to an image or painting on a cup. For instance, Poma references the custom in Anti Suyu, corresponding to Amazonian eastern Peru and Bolivia, to be primarily cannibalistic in mortuary treatment. The human remains would be eaten leaving only bones to be reconstructed as a mummy with similar feasting and libations and lamentation (Poma 1978[1613]:81-82). In Colla Suyu, which corresponded to southern Peru, Lake Titicaca, and into Chile and Argentina, followed a similar pattern to the wider Inca empire, with ceremonial embalming and burned gifts. Poma claims when the *Mallqui* was appreciative of the gifts, they would represent their gratitude with lively cracks and noises. Finally in Cunti Suyu, corresponding to southwest costal Peru, The bodies were embalmed and the intestines used in the ritual process. Silver was placed in these *Mallquis* mouths and appropriate llama sacrifices observed. In all four suyus, there was a fasting around salt, Poma reveals the people believed salt corrupts the living as death corrupts life (Poma 1978[1613]:82). Poma also discusses the roles confluences of streams played in the Inca mortuary custom. Principally the divergence of water could be used to divine the remainder of time before the next of kin, especially the widow and children, had yet to live (Poma 1978[1613]:84).

Poma finally recounts the Yunca from the north, the peoples of Quito, who were buried with their dogs, even calling the Yunca dog-eaters as a negative. They too would engage in a libation at death, but it was presented as a different type of celebration. The flesh was removed and placed in ceramics, then the bones tied up in a bundle which was all then painted. Then the human remains were placed within the tomb in a circular formation, head of the household at the back and kin spread around. These are to be seen as customs foreign to the main Inca tradition (Poma 1978[1613]:82-84). Neither the dog-eaters nor the cannibals appear to be substantiated as widespread mortuary treatments, implying the representative nature of chronicles.

Another discussion is found in the Huarochirí Manuscript, which was written around AD 1600 by an unknown author. Nonetheless it reflects a narration in Quechua of the cultures and customs immediately surrounding Lima. Though the discussion is written in Quechua, the region was already overrun by a heavy Jesuit presence at the time and the narration of beliefs and customs reflects their influence (Salomon & Urioste 1991: 1-5). Chapters twenty-seven and twenty-eight in particular provide insight into pre-Hispanic mortuary custom.

The dead were to be laid out and cared for properly as described in Chapter twenty-seven. During this time the soul would vacate the remains saying “Sio” [a swishing sound] as it flew. In the depths of time the dead would return to the people after five days, but only if the remains were provided with food and drink during their soul’s absence. When the dead were properly cared for, they could be reanimated and reenter the community. The narration indicates once reanimated the body was immortal, and thus the population increased out of control. It was only once a single lazy soul which waited until the sixth day to return that the process of rebirth was ended for all Andean people (Salomon & Urioste 1991: 358).

The reanimation of the body could be a sort of metaphor for the mummification process and the reentry of the dead into society. This is unclear though as the language, translated from Quechua through Spanish to English, points to a reanimation of the corpse with no reference to a *Mallqui*. On the other hand, the story stresses the importance of proper care in handling of the dead. Regardless of the specifics the key seems to be food and drink for the dead and libation when the dead return. The story reinforces the survival of such beliefs well into colonial times.

The twenty-eighth chapter of the manuscript describes in detail the ritual meal, though it also serves as a reminder of the social and spiritual world in which the manuscript was written. The chapter begins by comparing the ritual meal with the dead found in the Andes with the Spaniards on All Saints’ Day. When a man died, the Quechua peoples around Lima would set out the food and wait for him for five days. At dawn on the fifth day, his wife brought food and *chicha* to the dead, for at dawn the soul could return to their body. As the soul flew into the body in a form akin to a blue fly, the maggots and worms vacated the flesh and the body was returned to his home. By dusk on the fifth day the whole Kinship *Ayllu* danced and sang and lamented the dead. At last a vague divination preformed with a spider to learn which *huaca* the dead man had offended in life. Then appropriate sacrifices, namely a guinea pig, could be made (Salomon & Urioste 1991: 130-131).

Chapter twenty-eight thus provides the valuable connection between the dead, the living, and the sacred landscape as represented by the *huaca*. Pre-Hispanic Andean peoples lived amid a landscape of magic mountains, special shrines, and stones representing the ancestors. Through the process we call lithomorphosis the *huaca* stones would be translated into a landmark, a statue of the ancestor as it were (Lau 2008: 1037-1038). It was the ancestor who would become the stones, and the stones could become the ancestor. When the *huaca* are displeased with the living this story would imply not only can the *huaca* can cause death, but they are the primary cause of death. The dead, the living, and the landscape all play a role in the Andean conception of death.

Around 1598, Padre Francisco de Avila wrote his discussion of the idolatry and false-gods of the Andes. The body of his work against local religion is based on the materials presented in the Huarochiri Manuscript but all in a lens of a Catholic priest preparing to commit genocide to bring about its end (Salomon & Urioste 1991: 1). His description of the soul leaving the body follows the Huarochiri Manuscript. Upon death, the European notions of nuclear kinship are presented and not the extended *Ayllu* type of kinship discussed in the original source (Avila, 1966 [c1598] 154-155). Avila also commented on the discussion of All Saints’ Day versus the local custom of feasting with the dead. This version again tells of the lamentation and feasting, but without a priest and not on church lands, thus these were considered idolatrous acts (Avila, 1966 [c1598] 156-159). Without becoming too anticipatory, Avila offers insight into the very beginnings of the assault on local customs by the Spanish. Review of his annotations to the same narration provide an insight into how the Spanish were perceiving these customs, customs which do bear similarity to the Catholic rituals by which they were supplanted.

More recently, yet nonetheless informative in describing the living and dead entanglements, are modern collections of folk lore. One Quechua story *Caverna Tenebrosa* (Tenebrous Cave) from Perú recounts the tale of two lovers who dwelled together in a cavern. The wife died and her lover dwelled with her in the cavern.

“Cuando solo los huesos de ella quedaron dendios en la Cueva, el hombre tomó una tibia y con ella fabricó un instrument para desahogar su dolor… El dolor de su alma se expresaba en esa música y hasta las piedras parecían llorar con él.” (Martín 2014: 60)

When only the bones of her remained stretched out in the cave, the man took a tibia and with it fabricated an instrument [Quena flute] to confess his pain… The pain of his soul was expressed in this music until the stones seemed to weep with him. (DMG)

This story describes their banishment to the gloomy cave, the death of the wife, and a mourning process which includes a lengthy period living together in the cavern, exposure defleshing, and using the tibia to fashion a Quena flute (Martín 2014: 60). This story described a very similar system of living with the dead for a time while they are prepared, deposition in a cave, and mournful song to process death. This would seem to echo the chroniclers centuries earlier, indicating the persistence of tradition through the Catholic incursion.

In sum, the chroniclers provide a very significant albeit biased image of the ancestors and mortuary custom. Though they are outsiders, they take pains to describe the mortuary treatment by the Inca around the time of conquest. The message they give is one of veneration and tradition surrounding death. It is also a custom of direct interaction with the dead, wherein the living would mourn while waiting for the return of the deceased. Encompassing everything were larger concepts such as *ayllu* kinship and *huaca* in which the living engaged the spiritual. The living, and the dead, and the landscape all become actors in a singular set of mortuary structures.

**Ancestor Veneration in the Recuay Era**

Cobo described the customs of ancestor veneration in his 1653 chronicle. The scale and duration of the funerary rites were directly proportional to the relative importance and social status of the deceased. The greatest festivals at the deaths of great lords saw eight days of lamentation and celebration. The *Mallqui* was dressed and placed in the tomb with all his wealth. The tomb was opened and the *Mallqui* redressed, even brought out of the tomb for important events such as anniversary of his death (Cobo 1990[1653]: 250-252). Social status and power was not limited by the grave, as corporal control over resources shaped the landscape for the living.

Though the Andes are known for incredible variability in religions, magical, and cosmic cultural expressions, common trends such as sacred mountainous landscapes and persistent ancestor veneration are well known. Ritual landscapes through the mountains and mortuary treatment together form a genealogy of place (Lau 2002 (a): 281). Both individual and group identities were constructed through the place in which they lived. In societies focused on agropastoralism such as in the Callejón control over resources and means of production are key to control of society. Agricultural and sacred lands were linked with the sacred landscape in the Callejón. In this light the changes in culture over time show changes in the ways humans interact with the landscape. (Herrera & Lañe 2006).

The Chinchawas site demonstrates ancestor veneration in the Recuay world. There is evidence for public feasting on large enclosed patios along the hilltop. Remnants of cooking and refuse are near the patios piled adjacent other rooms. There were large volumes of camelid remains as well. The feasts took place in public areas surrounding subterranean chamber tombs. Though they are never as large or contain as much ceramic material as in other Recuay sites, the stone patios are richly decorated in stone sculpture (Lau 2002: 298). Large patios and enclosures were great places for large feasting for a seemingly more general audience. At Chinchawas, ritual feasting and public ancestor veneration appear to occupy a common social structure.

Chinchawas also demonstrates the social change accompanying the arrival of the Wari cultural bundle. During the Warmi phase, after AD 800, corresponds to a very local style of Wari-Chinchawas synthesis. During this phase the first Chullpas were built at Chinchawas. Around this time the patios were built far smaller (Lau 2002: 298). Together these factors indicate a change in ancestor veneration away from large public events and towards smaller scale exercises of kinship or social stratification. Though monumental and public construction would continue, there was a push towards inconspicuous burial celebration and sculpture (Lau 2002: 298).

Recuay ceremonial architecture consists of walls, buildings, galleries, mortuary monuments, platforms, and general offerings. The Recuay built these ceremonial spaces in architectural ceramics and wall murals which provide representations of the social hierarchy and insights into the ancestor veneration (Lau 2000:182). One mural at Real Canchos site shows a feasting event along a twenty meter mural displayed along with sculptures possibly displaying local chiefs (Lau 2000:187). Ceramic vessels also show the geography of cities and sites in miniatures. These display the cities as they were occupied, with people moving about and warriors bearing shields and maces standing guard (Lau 2000:183-184).

*Mallqui* are treated with reverence as they became active participants in Andean communities. They became a representation of the society, an effigy for the local community, an image of the people. At Chinchawas there were feasts associated with the mummy bundles both as mortuary treatment as well as from far later ceramics though that had been associated with descendants (Lau 2002 (a) :282). Later traditions would associate the *Mallqui* with authority, even giving them agency and divinity, though it remains unclear how far back in time these trends originated.

Mortuary monuments became the repository for the *Mallqui* throughout the Recuay era. Based on the prevalence and accessibility of the mummies, the prevalence of burial goods, the great attention to preparation of the dead, and the stone images which surround the dead, it is clear these mortuary contexts became more than simple repositories for the dead. Lau suggests that the customs of transforming the dead into effigies as described by the chroniclers was already present in the highlands during the Recuay era (Lau 2008: 1026-1028). The Inka ancestors could to own property and herds specifically designated for their use in death as offerings. Something akin to this could have been happening in the Recuay world where ancestors and effigies become physical manifestations of the past (Lau 2008: 1028-1029). This would imply that the effigies and mummies are representative of the kinship structure (Lau 2008: 1030).

In many cemeteries the dead have been found with Coca leaves in their mouths. An excellent example of this is from the Convento site in Puerto San Antonio just north of the Ayacucho Valley. The site included a burial cist with ceramic vessels in the Cruz Pata style, dating the site to the late Early Intermediate Period and the early Middle Horizon: Wari vintage. The burial offering included two Tupu pins with coca leaves between them (Valdez et.al. 2015:238-239). As vegetable material such as leaves do not tend to survive well in the Record, it is usually in grave contexts that such materials are located. Though this example is a bit anachronistic the custom of coca leaves in mortuary contexts does date to the Early Intermediate Period and the Recuay culture as well.

Another aspect associated with ancestor veneration is Recuay sculpture. These are often found as part of mortuary contexts. The sculptures in the mortuary sector at Chinchawas show forty-three specimens carved in shallow relief on slabs. Feline and human imagery dominated the assemblage. None of these sculptures were identical to any others. These could be representations of the people in the tombs or perhaps an effigy of them (Lau 2002(a): 294-295).

Other Recuay contexts had tenon heads, seemingly a holdover from the famous Chavín heads, which would protrude from the Chullpas (Lau 2008:1033). The Recuay were also known to have far smaller portable carvings which tended to resemble the larger statues found adjacent the mortuary contexts. These small statues possess the same type of individuality of the larger ones often including headdresses and clothing painted on (Lau 2008:1036-1037).

The Recuay culture was known to produce *Mallqui* who could be reached through ritual and place for the benefit of the living. The platforms were repositories for both offerings to the *Mallqui* as well as the *Mallqui* themselves (Ibarra 2006: 86). As time went on the accessible semi-subterranean and Chullpa burials further reinforced this trend. Not only were the dead accessible, there was a defined location for offerings at the entry and immediately outside the entrance (Ibarra 2006:87).

Another facet of life to consider are the ambient dangers of living in the highlands. The Andes are prone to dangers from the plate subduction such as volcanoes, avalanches, rockslides, and earthquakes. Being so close to the coast the Andes are also vulnerable to persistent oceanic climatic oscillations such as El Niño and La Niña in addition to significant long-term and short-term variability in the climate (Lau 2016: 51-52). Together this created what George Lau calls an “economy of disasters” where the people would have to adapt to a constant threat of natural catastrophe (Lau 2016:57).

In such a tumultuous place, one way of understanding the ancestor veneration could be as an adaptation to these disasters (Lau 2016: 65-67). Neither the Recuay nor the Chavín consistently represented natural landscapes such as mountains or rivers, as such the details of their interactions with them remain interpretive (Lau 2016: 75-76). This interpretation would imply the ancestor veneration was linked with the economy of disasters. Ambient danger from the landscape could have even facilitated the growth of the Chullpa as the ancestors would have needed to be more accessible. This would have further facilitated their ability to impact the natural world through the veneration of the dead (Lau 2016: 67-68).

One final consideration is an observation that ancestors sometimes represent a sort of culture hero, a manifestation and personification of progenitors who were instrumental in creating the world inhabited by the living (Velásquez 2009: 45). In modern narrative, the site of Llamacorral was associated with a singular figure María Jiray. The account indicates that she was a *fundadora,* an ancestral founder of a village, of the colonial capital in Huari. She led the people from the church in town up to the lake carrying an effigy of the blessed Virgin in the Catholic custom. María Jiray appears to have died at the end of the procession (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 64). Though this story represents a far later early colonial understanding of the site, it reinforces the notion of a dynamic custom in ancestor veneration, much of which is invisible in the Record.

There was another custom common in the Andes to this day which further reinforces the local hero hypothesis: piles of stones. All across sites in the highlands, piles of stones appear in and around the sites. They are usually piles of stones set on top of another as a part of an offering. Cobo mentions offerings made along side of the road, small piles of stones constructed by people traveling along them. According to the chronicler, piles such as these were fairly common (Cobo 1990 [1653]: 116). I have personally seen such stacks of stone all along the concentric walls of the Llamacorral, small piles of flat stones set on the walls to the inner sunken offering pit. Another series of piles were present in the Chavín de Huantar outside the plaza behind the temple. This is a common practice in the highlands and beyond.

Roosevelt mentions these stone piles as well, in a pass near Santa Clara. They were set in a pile with bones by the side of the road. The story he references was one of witches who once plagued the area. These brujos once destroyed the salt marsh, the local source of salt, and appear to have destroyed it and made it unproductive. Benevolent spirits changed the witches to stone, another example of lithomorphosis in the ancient Andes. These piles were the remains of the witches themselves, and by adding a stone to their heaps the travelers would get good luck on their journeys (Roosevelt 1935: 31).

**Basic forms Recuay Mortuary Architecture**

Despite the relatively dispersed population with a few large urban centers, monumentality was present throughout the Recuay world in the form of their mortuary monuments. Occasionally we find representative vessels showing a scene of a village or a mortuary monument. There are representations of the connected living facilities, verandas, and walls (Orsini 2015: 72). Other representations are circular structures associated with the mortuary and religious activities (Orsini 2015: 73). The funerary structures likely represented and reinforced the social order. Monumental tombs and effigies provided a reminder of the dead through representation (Velásquez 2009: 45-46).

Early highland burials were *entierros* far less monumental in nature and generally inaccessible once sealed. This was the primary mode of burial for Chavín though carried into the first phase of the Early Intermediate Period (Velásquez 2009: 47). Starting in the second century AD, mortuary monuments underwent a significant change in form and function. There are four major types of monuments present primarily before AD 700 which were first discussed in great detail by Wendell Bennett. Though his chronology is prior to any absolute dating, the basic forms stand across contemporary authors (Lau 2008, 2015; Ponte 2015; Velásquez 2009; Ibarra 2013).

Lined graves appeared first, generally stone boxes which are placed beneath large stones or boulders. These tended to contain few or no ceramics, though occasionally they produced remarkably well preserved materials such as the ones at Wilkawain. This type of burial was also present during the Chavín era and grew in prevalence throughout the early Recuay era (Bennett 1944:34-35; Ponte 2015: 37).

A second group are unlined graves which are simpler, using natural overhangs, caves, and cracks in the landscape for the primary deposits (Velásquez 2009: 48). They often contained either limited evidence of contemporary ceramic materials, or extensive ceramic materials in a variety of styles (Bennett 1944:35-38). Commonly *cuy* and other animal remains are found as offerings. One even had monkey remains likely from the Amazon (Velásquez 2009: 48). These were simpler graves which were used at varying levels until AD 1000 (Ponte 2015: 37).

Third were the subterranean galleries, prevalent in large sites or cities. They were galleries reminiscent of Chavín though many more had been opened and looted. These galleries were entered through the shafts and tended to contain remarkable volumes of Recuay and contemporary ceramic. (Bennett 1944:42-50). Wilkawain contained large and complex galleries with fine stone work. These galleries continued to receive offerings long after the original deposit (Velásquez 2009: 51-52). The tomb at the Jancu site consisted of a gallery with a chamber beneath a granite slab. The gallery at Jancu was smaller, roughly four by five meters, but contained kaolinite ceramics and fine masonry (Ponte 2015:34&38).

The fourth common type of mortuary treatment from the early Recuay era were the cist burials which Bennett called deep stone-lined tombs. These tend to be single chambers for single burials which are sealed by a large slab of stone on top. Some are rectangular and some are cylindrical. The cists tend to have some of the best preserved ceramic assemblages, likely owing to the difficulty to access (Bennett 1944:21-28). The Cists were the most common type of subterranean burial during the Recuay era (Velásquez 2009: 48-51).

Starting in the sixth and seventh century AD, there are a variety of changes to the mortuary complexes throughout the highlands. First the cists begin to get deeper and contain more foreign materials. Kaolin began to become scarce as black ware proliferated. Goblets and zoomorphic forms also began to dominate the forms within assemblages (Ponte 2015:40).

The late Recuay era also saw the Chullpa arrive. Initially Chullpas appeared in the north as early as the sixth century and proliferated throughout the remainder of the Recuay and Wari sequence. Chullpas fundamentally changed mortuary treatment as they were generally more monumental and designed to be easily accessed for ancestor veneration and offerings. Chullpas would remain prevalent in the Callejón through the Middle Horizon (Velásquez 2009: 53). These new burials were mostly above ground, Wari wares came to dominate ceramic assemblages found within. At the larger sites like Wilkawain, there were massive multi-room Chullpas which harkened back to the mausoleums of the prior era (Ponte 2015: 41-42).

Chullpas tended to be associated with many sets of human remains, possibly even a burial plots for kinship networks (Velásquez 2009: 54-56). The larger Chullpas were located on the western slopes of the Callejón while the eastern slopes tended to have simpler tombs (Herrera 2016: 29). Chullpas represented a continuity of traditions of masonry and architecture, but also of the ancestor veneration present in earlier tomb types. Offerings and materials continued to accumulate after construction and the original deposit (Velásquez 2009: 64).

**Chavín Beginning and Huarás Cultivation (Chavín-Huarás-Recuay connection)**

There is far less known about the Chavin culture’s mortuary treatment. The great temple itself famously has no mortuary treatment identified at the site contemporaneous with the culture or religion. Additionally, there are no known Chavín era burial monuments in the Puccha Valley either (Ibarra 2006: 87). The early Recuay platforms often resembled the elder Chavín platforms, though they were circular and identifiable through presence of Recuay kaolin ceramic (Ibarra 2006: 86). Another holdover were very early Recuay entierros. The early Recuay used similarly inaccessible tombs buried with sculpture and offering, very similar to the Chavín burials (Velásquez 2009: 47).

An anomalous burial is the Isabelita Rock. The rock is from the Amá 2 site and shows the transition from Chavín through the Chapilla (600-200BC) style to the Huarás. The eight ton stone has shallow carvings along the surface. These include a human figure with a very long left hand holding a decapitated human head, interpreted as a trophy head. There are geometric designs along the belt of the figure (Ponte 2009: 136). Surrounding the human figure is an undefined reptile head, a deer, a bird, and a snake (Ponte 2009: 137). Around the stone is a circular structure, beneath it is a grave. The grave contain some Huarás white-on-red style ceramic and Chavínoid style ceramic dating to the fifth century BC (Ponte 2009: 138-140). Though the exact meaning of the site and anomalous stone is unclear, the rock is a clearly post-Chavín site. The presence of likely trophy heads on the human figure, later ceramic materials, and an art style showing neither fully Chavín nor Huarás motif point to a site for a people in transition (Ponte 2009: 144-147).

Another surreal yet strange site is Llamacorral in the Parque Nacional Huascarán. The site is along the magical Laguna Puruhuay, a large glacier fed lake formed by a natural dam around 4500 years ago (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 68). The Llamacorral is a series of concentric low stone walls with only one entrance in each circle. These entrances correspond to different directions. The visitor is directed through these rounded walls, walking in ever smaller diameter circles to the wall in the center. This last circle is only 0.8 meters in diameter and is a sunken space where even today offerings are made in the form of food and drink on special occasions (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 71).

The concentric walls stand at one end of a long plaza lined in stone of around twenty-three by nine meters. At the other end is a Huanca stone. Along the plaza is a shallow canal of unclear ritual or functional utility (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 74-75). There is a stone cist near the entrance which contains sacrificed llama bodies, suggesting that the colloquial name of corral is likely a sacred or ritual space (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 73). Along the mountainous margin far above the lake and Llamacorral is a terminal Formative Period city Ishla Ranra. This is a relatively small city, encased in stone walls that follow natural contours of the ridgetop (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 77). There were no human remains found in the site (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 82).

The Llamacorral was used during the entire Early Intermediate Period including by the local Recuay culture. This site is a Huanca monument nearby a far older site with a mysterious series of concentric rings which seem to have been primarily used for offering and sacrifice. It is a persistent place for the highland culture accessed and reused even up to the present. One interpretation casts the persistent place as a *Pacarina* a place of origin for the kinship network. This would match well with the continuous ritual reuse of a far older site for sacrifices (Orsini & Benozzi 2016: 86-88). In any case there is a persistence of tradition at Llamacorral through the upheaval of the end of the Early Horizon and the Wari incursions in the Early Intermediate Period.

Following the decline of the Chavín culture, both the Huarás and Recuay reused the temple ground itself (Velasco 2016: 77). The Canal Rocas was in the Plaza Mayor of the central temple at Chavín. Recuay materials were present at the site early as AD 200 and the Canal Rocas became a Recuay mortuary context (Velasco 2016: 78). There was a minimum of fifteen individuals in the assemblage, corresponding to eleven adults, three subadults, and one infant. The analysis showed limited pathologies, primary osteoporosis (Velasco 2016:81-82). There were some fractures corresponding to around twenty-five percent of the total assemblage. These tended to be minor and none were associated with postmortem dismemberment (Velasco 2016: 84-85).

Across the river to the east of the main complex at Chavín is La Banda site identified during highway construction (Velásquez 2016: 53). There are some features that indicate Chavín era construction, but there are a higher density of agricultural terraces from the post-Chavín, though still pre-Recuay era (Velásquez 2016: 61-62). During the early Recuay occupation, they built a hundred square meter mortuary platform on La Banda. There were a rich vein of ceramic offerings in the Recuay style. La Banda appears to be a privileged ceremonial space as there are limited activities beyond the mortuary customs which left any trace (Velásquez 2016: 69-71). La Banda is a very early site in the Recuay sequence dating to after AD 200 (Velásquez 2016: 57).

Chavín era burials throughout the Callejón tend to be flexed. (Grieder 1978: 52). Post-Chavín burials tend to remain generally flexed. There was a far higher percentage of mummification observed throughout the mortuary contexts after Chavín. Flexed burials seem to have become the preferred positions of mortuary treatment in the highlands (Lau 2002(a): 299). Recuay burials continued to prefer flexed positions, seemingly a continuation of the Chavín era. Contemporaries such as the Moche along coastal valley floors preferred extended burials (Grieder 1978: 51-52).

Additionally post-Chavín ceremonial patterns begin to shift to reflect local authority in corporeal form (Lau 2002(a). Feline motifs also would persist throughout the entire first millennium AD. Recuay and Wari cultures used feline stone reliefs heavily in mortuary contexts (Lau 2002(a):298-299). If Chavín represents a temple with a strong pull to many cultures and peoples throughout the Andes, then the post Chavín highlands shifted towards local leaders, progenitors, and corporal authority.

**Major Sites**

In 1653 Bernabe Cobo wrote: “a universal custom among all of the Indian nations was to pay more attention to the dwelling that they were to have after death than to the one they had during their lifetime… Tall tombs built above ground were more common. But we also find a great variety of these because every Indian nation sought a new style of making them.” (Cobo 1990[1653]: 246). The Recuay show a change in the mortuary customs from platforms, caves, and sepulcher early in their cultural sequence and semi-subterranean Chullpas later. Throughout all phases, there were at least some elite tombs which exemplified what Cobo wrote.

The Antaragá site is the eldest Recuay site in the Alto Mariñón, the region where the Rio Puccha and the Rio Yanamayo join with the Rio Mariñón. The site is a large village of more than 160 hectares segregated into a defined habitation and ceremonial district built higher above the residential (Riviera 2016: 95-96). Residential structures are circular and semi-circular buildings up to twenty meters in diameter which are all surrounded by a wall. These structures tend to be fairly large for the Recuay residential sites (Riviera 2016: 97&105). Much like at Pashash, there was a particularly large structure associated with the Recuay elite, possibly associated with the local chieftain or lord (Riviera 2016: 206).

The mortuary treatment at Antaragá is consistent with the early Recuay. Two types of mortuary monuments are notable at the site: type one are the cyst with a structures around them, and type two are the semi-subterranean. The second type was primarily along the southern periphery of the site (Riviera 2016: 97). Some were large quadrangular structures with kaolin ceramics. Though there are no Chullpas at the site, Antaragá is a site with early Recuay structures that transition from sepulcher to semi-subterranean buildings (Riviera 2016: 105). This implies the earliest cist and sepulcher burials were being supplanted by the later semi-subterranean monuments even before the Chullpa formally arrived in the Recuay world. Antaragá was seemingly abandoned before the arrival of the Chullpa into the highlands.

The most ornate and richest of any Recuay era tomb is the legendary horde at Pashash. Encircled by the modern city of Cabana is a great hill with a colonial church and farmstead on the ruins of a far older Recuay dwelling with great walls and platforms. Notably the mysterious Caserón is a great wall of unclear utility encompassing the platform (Grieder 1978: 15). The walls built around the hill became retainers for an earthen platform where the temple and burial were built (Grieder 1978: 49). The tomb at Pashash contained a rich deposit of mortuary ceramic, copper, and gold, and then the tomb was sealed with a great stone. These stone sealed portals included the first layer of offerings. A second layer of offerings were placed out beyond the temple entry (Grieder 1978: 45-47). The primary burial dates from AD 400-600 (Castro 2008:262).

The primary burial itself was documented as being in relatively poor condition, flexed and found with wrappings around it. The individual was indeterminate sex based on the state of preservation. Grieder used the presence of quite a few spindle whorls as a presumptive indicator of female (Grieder 1978: 51-52). Further analysis of the materials has supported the lady of Pashash. The clothing and *Tupu* pins found in the burial match well with the representations of women in ceramic and sculpture. Women seem to have been active players in the ritual customs, especially within the context of elite burials such as Pashash (Castro 2008:263).

Regardless of sex estimation the burial was accompanied by ceramics in circular fashion on bits of cloth around the burial chamber. Offerings included jewelry, ceramics, figurines, spindle whorls, and some bits of crystal. There are also a large assemblage of comparatively rare Recuay era pedestal cups (Grieder 1978: 55).

The secondary layer of offerings at the portal to the tomb and consisted of bowls, ten copper bells, nine effigy cups, and an assemblage of sixty-six ceramic vessels including a wide variety of feline and serpent motif (Grieder 1978: 56). The third offering consisted of various materials found in the layers above the primary temple. They were categorized as cruder ceramic and lithic materials. Among these was the only weapon, a granite axe, which was a challenge to the presumption of female burial as weapons are only associated with males in Recuay burials (Grieder 1978: 58). An additional burial was extended and above the floor associated only with the late Usú phase ceramics, and thus was likely a post-Recuay intrusion to the burial context (Grieder 1978: 52).

The burial at Pashash also represents the regional entanglements throughout the first millennia AD. There were sherds of Kotosh and Chavín style ceramic sherds. Within the burial offering there was a good example of a Moche stirrup bottle in the form of a human with wrappings or blankets around them. This Moche vessel was painted orange and black and was associated with the northern Moche coast (Grieder 1978: 72). Another piece associated with the Moche was a spindle whorl with a swirling pattern. In addition there was a Virú vessel with ceramic animal head fragments moulded in a grey clay. Presence of these foreign objects implies presence or exchange with these outsiders (Grieder 1978: 73-74). There was some evidence for fortification, such as the Caserón, but no Wari materials present at Pashash (Grieder 1978: 75).

Stonework at Pashash provides excellent examples of the classic Recuay styles. There were several pedestal cups painted green and black. There are also spindle whorls which had drilled holes (Grieder 1978: 104-109). The offerings also show exemplary metal work in the Recuay style. Nineteen pins made from moulding and then gilded were also found in mortuary contexts (Grieder 1978: 119-120). In addition there were several metal earplugs and disks found within a pedestal cup (Grieder 1978: 129).

The Chullpa monumental tombs spread throughout the highlands starting around AD 500 corresponding to Late Recuay and is generally thought to have originated to the north with the Wari and Casma cultures. Early Examples include the mortuary complex in Callejón de Huaylas. There were many chambers, some multiple level and multiple chamber. This site is adjacent to the Recuay, but about the same period, the Wari Empire was expanding. There is some debate as to whether the Chullpa was a Recuay or Wari invention (Ibarra, 2013: 8).

Though the Chullpas were comparatively small, they were communal types of burials. The mummified bundles could be placed in the Chullpa over a period of time. At the Classic Recuay city Marcajirca in the Rio Puenka, the small Chullpa-like burials each had a MNI of around 20. The calibrated carbon dates show a range of around 200 years between the samples, indicating successive generational reuse of the burial plots (Ibarra, 2013:20-21). At other sites, such a communal tombs were found to contain a Mallqui or common ancestor. If these monuments were used for communal burial of familial group, they were used for a long time. Interestingly, the caves surrounding Marcajirca are also communal in nature, but there had been no genetic testing for a Mallqui. (Ibarra, 2013: 21-24).

Though the Wari would spread far beyond the highlands, their reach was not absolute. Farallenes Rocosos is a late Recuay site, there are examples of materials from Lima in addition to unusual Amazonian materials (Velásquez 2009: 57-58). Though these are uncommon goods to find in highland contexts, they are nonetheless indicative of a wide trade network through the highlands.

The Yayno site was occupied during a similar period and contained Chullpa burials, but there is a lack of any Wari ceramics or architecture (Ibarra, 2013:9). Subsequent groups had a similar burial custom to the Recuay. The Marcajirca site is a hilltop settlement some 3800 MASL. There is a defined residential, public, and funerary sector in this community. The funerary area has a series of quadrilateral tombs, sometimes called Chullpas by convention. They are far smaller than the Recuay and Wari Chullpas at around 1.2-1.5M diameter. Along the edge of Marcajirca are a series of cave tombs, naturally occurring, but separated from the primary funerary sector (Ibarra, 2013: 13-17).

**Conflict**

There are two major sources of conflict within the Early Intermediate Period in the highlands. One is the age-old conflict between coastal lowlanders who spread along valley floors, and the highlanders. This manifested throughout the first millennia AD in confrontations between the Recuay and Moche (Arkush &Stanish 2005:15-16). The other is the conflict spurred on by the expansion of the Wari into the highlands after AD 650 (Arkush & Stanish 2005: 12). There are several lines of evidence used to discuss conflict in this era: violent pathologies, settlement orientation, and representative combat imagery. Relatively little evidence of combat is visible throughout the Recuay world. Most of what is known and interpreted comes from more indirect methods such as representations in ceramic and statue, or the presence of vast walls around the hilltop cities (Lau 2000:181-182).

The Recuay and the Wari after dwelled in hilltop settlements. These are sites which are difficult to access from the valley floor and tend to have walls and other defensive structures (Arkush & Tung 2013: 25). The large Recuay settlement at Yayno included extensive fortifications. These fortifications encompassed the town and the population density (Lau 2010: 425). Residential compounds were large circular and quadrangular buildings with multiple individual residences within. These structures were connected together with terraces and causeways. The walls are able to limit and direct the flow of people through the city, towards distinctive plazas and causeways with gates and parapets (Lau 2010: 431-434). There were no weapons or points found along the walls (Lau 2010: 436). There are thirty peripheral communities within five kilometers of Yayno. Down the mountains are a series of drainage trenches which even today slow drainage. The trenches are also possibly part of this buffer ring of villages and other inhibitors to slow the attackers as they approached Yayno (Lau 2010: 428-428).

In reference to Yayno’s architecture as defensive or differentiation of space George Lau concludes: “Yayno’s architecture… is overbuilt if they were only for defensive purposes, and the fortified forms would be unnecessary if they were only ceremonial in function.” (Lau 2010:438). With this assessment in mind, it is probable the walls, parapets, causeways, and plazas of Yayno and the potential buffer ring of villages and trenches were primarily for both functions. These architectural elements both divided space by directing the living through their daily life and also could have been used as defensive structures whenever the need arose. Drainage was likely built into the design as a necessity for habitation in the mountains.

The Moche were known for having incredible combat imagery adorning their walls and ceramics. Until the 1970s, the general consensus was that these imagery indicated a highly militant population (Castillo-Butters 2014: 257-258). As research expanded and developed more examples were uncovered that showed both a commonality in motif as well as a profoundly individualistic aspect. Personal insignias, personal weapons, and anthropomorphic figures showed an individuality to many of the figures represented (Castillo-Butters 2014: 263). Discussions evolved into a division between the ritual combat most often displayed on ceramics and the secular combat associated with the spread of the Moche (Arkush & Tung 2013:23-24).

The ritual combat generally features foreigners depicted with headdresses and weapons not found in the Moche world. These figures were naked save for their headdresses and weapons (Castillo-Butters 2014: 264-265). The secular conflict is generally seen as Moche versus Moche. Commanding resources and trade routes were important facets of the Moche statecraft, and secular conflict allowed one polity to control others (Castillo-Butters 2014: 268-271). A third option could be, much like Homer’s *Iliad,* these are representations or allegories of some mythical or pseudo-historical battle or event (Lau 2004: 174). It is entirely probable the true nature of conflict in the Early Intermediate Period will remain shrouded and interpretive.

In these combat images, the Moche are identifiable by the Moche’s clubs, conical headdresses, and paint or tattoos on their faces. Recuay images are identifiable by having non Moche headdresses, occasionally including display of trophy hands without arms attached. Other Recuay images have rounded helmets or skullcap like hats (Lau 2004: 168-169). Recuay also would be displayed with earplugs and spools in addition to odd crescent shaped ornaments. When the Moche would display Recuay, or general foreigner, they would display the figure otherwise unclothed, a stark contrast with the colored tunics the Moche are depicted wearing (Lau 2004: 170-171). Recuay would bear shields, as corroborated by their miniatures guarding ceramic architectural models, while the Moche would never carry shields. The Recuay also have a distinctive highland star-shaped mace, allowing blunt-forced trauma of a club to become pointed trauma (Lau 2004: 171-172). Nonetheless, the Recuay are depicted in Moche ceramic as defeated, the scenes depict the Moche demolishing their opponents, claiming trophies, and sacrificing their opponents later (Lau 2004: 176-177).

The Wari Empire, Phenomenon, or Cultural Bundle would expand into the Recuay world and throughout the Calleojón. There are Wari influence into the Nasca and Ica Valleys (Cadwallader et.al 2018: 1). Whether by invasion of an empire or expansion of a cultural bundle, the Wari styles of building, mortuary treatment, and material culture would dominate much of the northern Andes. Though their expansion was far reaching, mortuary customs were incorporated rather than changed outright. In the Nasca Valley earlier custom of tombs oriented east to west and bodies deposited in bundles with arms folded across the chest persisted through the Wari incursion (Cadwallader et.al 2018: 9-10).

The Wari expansions resulted in a spreading material culture far and wide in the Andes. They continued building high settlements at hilltops with walls and defensive structures. The Wari era also saw an increase in trophies throughout the highlands and higher rates of cranial trauma (Arkush & Tung 2013: 27-28). Indeed the highest rates of cranial trauma are to be found not in the eras of hilltop forts and cities but in the eras of crisis and of major social changes. For instance, there was a surge in violent pathologies associated with the Inka arrival into the highlands, but once they were established there was a notable decline in violent pathologies at settlements and cities during the Pax Inka (Arkush & Tung 2013: 30-32).

Wari influence is noteworthy in the Chinchawas site. Chullpas emerge later in the sequence, around AD 700 during the Chinchawasi 2 Phase. The arrival of the first D-shaped patios are contemporary with the Chullpa (Lau 2002 (b) 299-300).

**Conclusion**

Recuay mortuary customs are firmly rooted in the Andean worldview. Life and death are shaped by the natural and spiritual reality of the highlands. Death is not the end. The dead impact and shape the world inhabited by the living, but the living can affect their world through offering, sacrifice, and proper care for the dead. Chroniclers provide some insight into dynamic social processes which defined these relations including proper care for the dead, embalming ritual, visitation, and sacrifices after death. Ancestor veneration and life after death persisted in the folk traditions to this day.

During the first millennia AD when the Recuay lived in the highlands, mortuary monuments were in transition. The Isabelita context contains materials from Chavín through Huarás in a sequence showing transition in the cultures. The grounds of Chavín were reused among the similar period of time. Critically, early Recuay entombments and mortuary platforms were very similar to Chavín entombments. Early Recuay monuments were less accessible than later Chullpa designs, often being sealed with a large stone or boulder. As time passed, the more accessible platforms and cists grew in prevalence, especially for elite tombs.

By the arrival of the Chullpa into the highlands, tombs for the elites already contained accessible mummies and a wealth of grave goods. The late Recuay is an era of intense inter-regional entanglements that culminated in the Wari empire or bundle overtaking and supplanting local customs. Chullpas fit well into the highland mortuary tradition of mummies and ancestor veneration. Chullpas are mostly above ground, with defined entrances and the ability to be reused both as a repository for additional deceased and as a place to make offerings. It is logical Chullpas are one of the earliest manifestations of the Wari bundle in the highlands. The prevalence of the Chullpa proved an enduring means of deposition because they fulfilled the social requirements of the ancestor veneration even after the Wari.

Increasingly complex mortuary treatment corresponds to increased population and an increase in the sphere of influence. Recuay grew in social complexity as evidenced by social stratification. This is very visible in sites like Pashash where the primary burial was worthy of the title Lady or Noblewoman of Pashash. Though the specific details of the social hierarchy are difficult to test, the stratification in treatment for the wealthy and elites indicate a level of stratification in society.

The Recuay grew as an aspect of highland culture adjacent and inexorably linked with their neighbors. To the coasts, the Recuay grew alongside trading partners and rivals such as Gallinazo and Moche. Throughout the later Recuay era, Wari ceramic, Chullpa, and other material culture is seen in conjunction with the Recuay growth. Through this lens, the Wari and Recuay represent a synthesis of culture, not a straight supplantation. The whole region grew together until empire, union, polity, or commonwealth allowed the material culture to converge.

The Recuay culture revered the dead through many facets of their material culture. Mortuary monuments throughout time were near villages. Whether accessible Chullpas or sealed in cists beneath stone, the dead were venerated through offering and sacrifices. The dead played active roles in society by assisting their kin in times of need. Effigies in stone and miniature figures represent the dead and their roles in society before the living. Mountains spoke through the dead, indicating how best to live in the highlands. The dead lived through the stone, through the mountains they were entombed on, and in the culture of the living.