LIFE AND DEATH AT LA PALOMA

Due: in class Nov. 28, 2019
Worth: 15 points

The cemetery from the village site of La Paloma provides archaeologists with a view of past burial practices and attitudes towards life and death in Ancient Peru. Located near the coast, the site dates to the Middle Archaic Period (7000-5000 BP). Using the data below, you are tasked with trying to better understand what life was like at La Paloma based on how the dead were buried. You will need to determine the past social organization, mortuary practices and paleodemography of the villagers.

RECONSTRUCTING PALOMA MORTUARY PATTERNS

How people bury their dead tells us most directly about mortuary customs and norms, including:
- General beliefs as to how the dead should be arranged (Naked or dressed? Flexed or extended? Facing east?).
- The choice of goods chosen to accompany the dead. Grave goods can reveal what objects were most valued by a society, or which were thought to be essential in funeral ceremony. Some may have been personal belongings, or reflect an individual's occupation or status.
- Those ceremonies associated with disposing of the dead. Not all funeral ceremonies involve corpses or graves.

RECONSTRUCTING PALOMA SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

How an individual is treated in death can express something about the individual's place in society, such as social standing or family wealth. More generally, how a society makes distinctions in treating the dead should bear some relationship to the nature and extent of the social distinctions in living society.

In simple "egalitarian" societies, social standing is achieved; there are no positions of social status that are hereditary or inherited at birth. Social and wealth differences, when they occur, are attributable to an individual’s personal accomplishments. Therefore, most individuals of the same sex and age have roughly similar social status.

Complex "inegalitarian" societies, by contrast exhibit ascribed social standing. In complex societies, privileged "high status" families control the positions of chief or leader. These families may be much wealthier and more prestigious than other households. In complex societies, positions of status and leadership are hereditary in nature (inherited at birth). Complex societies thus tend to have much more pronounced social differences than simple societies. Treatment of the dead in such societies, therefore, is likely to create the kind of "social pyramid" we saw for the burial population from Moundville.

But be cautious! In “simple” societies, elaborate treatment in death may reflect the special circumstances of death, or how much the survivors adored the dearly departed, rather than social position in life.
QUESTIONS

For the purposes of examining deathways and social organization, you may assume that this sample of burials is representative of the entire Paloma burial population (in reality, we might be hesitant to accept such an assumption).

Answer questions 1-5 in a paper 4-6 pages (typed, double-spaced, 11 font, 1” margins). It may be a good idea to include charts and/or tables in your report. These should NOT be included in your page count. There are no correct answers! You will be graded on the effort you put into the assignment, the evidence used to support your conclusions, and your incorporation of materials we have covered previously in class. When referring to our class readings in your paper, you should cite the author, article, and page number of your reference.

You should begin by turning the information provided into data. In other words, make the information ready for analysis (for example by constructing graphs, charts, or tables) so that you can compare burials and sets of burials.

1. While the descriptions of burials below do not provide detailed evidence of health indicators, you can use the information to construct mortality curves. Try constructing three mortality curves: one for men, one for women, and one for the entire sample. Use the following age groupings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infant &lt; 1 yr</th>
<th>Child 1-5 yrs</th>
<th>Child 6-11</th>
<th>Juvenile 12-19</th>
<th>Adult 20-24</th>
<th>Adult 25-29</th>
<th>Adult 30-34</th>
<th>Adult 35-39</th>
<th>Adult 40-45</th>
<th>Adult 46-55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

What is the mortality curve for the Paloma population? What would explain the high or low mortality rates for certain age groups? Are males and females equally represented in every age group? If not, how would you explain the imbalance? Note: the ratio of male and female births in human populations is roughly equal (males: females 52:48 per 100 births). (3 points)

2. How would you characterize the grave goods tradition? Are the dead buried with highly valued objects? Objects of ritual significance? Toolkits or favourite possessions from life? Materials for a journey to the land of the dead or for use in the next world? Explain. (2.5 points)

3. Were females and males treated differently? Adults and children? If so, what might these differences indicate? (2.5 points)

4. Does the treatment of the dead suggest that Paloma society was egalitarian? Or are there differences in treatment cross-cutting age and sex lines that suggest an inequalitarian form of social organization? (3 points)

5. How do your results compare to the findings from the Middle Archaic site of Pernil Alto? Use the article by Gorbhan (2013) to suggest what cultural diversity existed during the Archaic Period in Peru. La Paloma occupation starts earlier than Pernil Alto, but consider both sites contemporaries. Basically, describe any similarities and/or differences in the material artifacts. (4 points)

Two Hints:
- "Coloring" probably comes from pigment or paint from a perishable item and should be counted as one grave good.
- It might make sense to count matting, textiles, and items of clothing or objects used to wrap the body as grave goods, but burial preparation.

Bibliography:
Gorbhan, Hermann
**Burial Descriptions from Paloma**

**Burial #8**  
Male, Age 24  
Buried outside of house  
Grave contents: a single mano (grinding handstone) in front of the face. A cut stone behind the head. Three junco mats and a rope also recovered in context.

**Burial #9**  
Female, Age 31  
Buried outside of house  
Grave contents: a looped cap on head, a hank of strings, a braided rope, a roll of junco tied with string, and two junco mats. The skeleton was wrapped in straw and tied with string.

**Burial #10**  
Female, Age 34  
Buried in a house  
Two bone textile working tools next to the right shoulder. A single stone bead in the neck area. A fur skin, wrapping of straw, and a junco mat were all tied over the body with a decorative rope tied to form a square.

**Burial #11**  
Female, Age 50  
Buried in house  
Grave contents: skeleton was wrapped in a fur skin and a wrapping of straw.

**Burial #12**  
Female, Age 40  
Buried outside of a house  
Grave contents: a single bone needle, four mollusc shells, a junco mat, and a (camelid?) fur.

**Burial #13**  
Male, Age 42  
Buried outside of a house  
Grave contents: two stone beads and a junco mat.

**Burial #14**  
Female, Age 27  
Buried inside of a house  
Grave contents: a bone needle, some shells, a grinding stone. Body wrapped in straw and sea lion fur.

**Burial #15**  
Male, Age 31  
Buried context unknown  
Grave contents: a textile tool and a necklace of shells in neck area, two junco mats.

**Burial #17**  
Female, Age 42  
Buried context unknown  
Grave contents: a whale vertebra covered part of right forearm and a grinding stone covered part of right leg and arm. Junco mat covered entire skeleton.

**Burial #19**  
Male, Age 25  
Buried context unknown  
Grave contents: a bone textile tool near the neck and a single shell in front of chest. Body was wrapped in straw.

**Burial #20**  
Female, Age 32  
Buried context unknown  
No grave contents.

**Burial #27**  
Female (Uncertain), Age ~7 months  
Buried context unknown  
Grave contents: Body covered in a straw mat.

**Burial #35**  
Male, Age 7  
Buried inside of a house  
Grave contents: red pigments around burial, a fragment of matted fur hide. Burial pit was lined with straw.

**Burial #47**  
Male, Age 23  
Buried inside of a house  
Grave contents: manos (grinding handstones) on left and right of midsection, stone projectile point near right arm, small wooden rod near right handstone, straw pit lining and junco mat.
Burial #51
Male, Age 25
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: chipped stone core, a bone needle. Body was wrapped in straw and camelid hide.

Burial #54
Sex Unknown, Age <8 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: grave was lined with a junco mat and capped with a layer of straw.

Burial #61
Female, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried outside of a house
Grave contents: a straw wrapping, a junco mat and a cloth of very fine cordage near the head.

Burial #63
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: body was wrapped in fibres, perhaps a cloth.

Burial #64
Male, Age 7
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: two mats, two ropes, a well-charred rock in front of chest, a straw pit lining, and a fine piece of cloth.

Burial #65
Female, Age 32
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: four ropes wrapped around neck, a braided rope was wrapped around the shoulders and another bound the hips and knees in a flexed position. Two junco mats and a straw pit lining also recovered.

Burial #67
Female, Age 46
Buried outside of a house
Grave contents: traces of burned junco and a three-strand braided rope, red and yellow pigment on a fragment of junco covering the skull. Straw pit lining.

Burial #69
Female, Age 40
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: fragments of a textile around trunk and a straw pit lining.

Burial #70
Male, Age 38
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: two junco mats, fragment of a fine textile on the skull.

Burial #71
Male, Age 40
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: a bone needle, two junco mats.

Burial #72
Male, Age 33
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: a bone textile tool and a shell in neck area. Two junco mats covered skeleton.

Burial #75
Female, Age 45
Buried outside of a house
Grave contents: skull covered with looped cap, several charred rocks on skeleton, two fragments of a braided rope. Pit was lined with straw.

Burial #76
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: several fish bones and gourd fragments.

Burial #77
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none

Burial #78
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none
Burial #79
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none

Burial #80
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none

Burial #81
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none

Burial #82
Sex Unknown, Age <6 months (infant)
Burial context unknown
Grave contents: none

Burial #84
Female, Age 35
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: a grinding stone near head, bone textile tool near chest, five shell fragments (probably once a necklace), straw and junco mat linings in pit.

Burial #85
Female, Age 36
Burial context unknown
Grave contents: a bone textile tool, a single stone bead and a shell fragment near the skull.

Burial #87
Female, Age 16
Burial context unknown
Grave contents: straw pit lining

Burial #89
Male, Age 8
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: none

Burial #114
Sex Unknown, Age <9 months (infant)
Burial context unknown
Grave contents: body wrapped in junco mat.

Burial #115
Female, Age <2 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: feathers and wool wrapping the head, body was in cradle of cordage with a carrying strap. Pit was lined with junco.

Burial #117
Male, Age 23
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: a braided rope may have bound the body but is now decayed, the head was wrapped in a junco mat and the pit was lined with straw.

Burial #128
Female, Age 1
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: straw pit lining

Burial #140
Female, Age <3 months (infant)
Buried inside of a house
Grave contents: a small shell containing red pigment, red pigment on skeleton, pit lined with alternating layers of straw and animal hide

Burial #159 (See Figure 3)
Male, Age 17
Burial not associated with a house
Grave contents: grave covered with elaborate cane structure tied with junco cords, a junco mat, a tuft of camelid wool, a mussel shell with a second tuft of wool, a gourd bowl located above burial

Burial #220
Male, Age 33
Burial context unknown
Grave contents: junco mat lining, junco mat covering on grave, nine large mussel shells surround burial, a fine-made twine cap on the head, several gourd fragments and shell fragments found in burial fill
Figure 1. Map showing the location of Pernil Alto in the Central Andes. The sites mentioned in the text are indicated: 1 - Las Vegas, 2 - Zaña valley, 3 - Huaca Prieta, 4 - Guitarrero Cave, 5 - Sechín Bajo, 6 - Aspero, 7 - Caral, 8 - Pachamachay, 9 - Telarmachay, 10 - Uchkumachay, 11 - Panaulauca, 12 - La Paloma, 13 - Chilca, 14 - Ayacucho region, 15 - Asana. (Gorbahn 2013)
Figure 2. Cane structure over burial, Paloma site

Figure 3. Burial 159, Young Male under cane structure