



Living with the Dead in the Andes

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The Andean idea of death differs markedly from the Western view. In the Central Andes, particularly the highlands, death is not conceptually separated from life, nor is it viewed as a permanent state. People, animals, and plants simply transition from a soft, juicy, dynamic life to drier, more lasting states, like dry corn husks or mummified ancestors. Death is seen as an extension of vitality.

Living with the Dead in the Andes considers recent research by archaeologists, bioarchaeologists, ethnographers, and ethnohistorians whose work reveals the diversity and complexity of the dead-living interaction. The book's contributors reap the salient results of this new research to illuminate various conceptions and treatments of the dead: "bad" and "good" dead, mummified and preserved, the body represented by art or effigies, and personhood in material and symbolic terms.

Death does not end or erase the emotional bonds established in life, and a comprehensive understanding of death requires consideration of the corpse, the soul, and the mourners. Lingering sentiment and memory of the departed seems as universal as death itself, yet often it is economic, social, and political agendas that influence the interactions between the dead and the living.

Nine chapters written by scholars from diverse countries and fields offer data-rich case studies and innovative methodologies and approaches. Chapters include discussions on the archaeology of memory, archaeoethnology (analysis of the transformation of the entire corpse and associated remains), a historical analysis of postmortem ritual activities, and ethnosemantic-iconographic analysis of the living-dead relationship. This insightful book focuses on the broader concerns of life and death.

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Cora Snyder:

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