The elderly have important roles cross-culturally, but archaeological studies of the elderly have been limited due to methodological constraints associated with the identification of older individuals using skeletal remains. Traditional methods for estimating age-at-death typically underestimate the presence of older adults and when they do, use broad ranges, such as 50+. However, a recently developed technique called transition analysis is better able to identify older individuals and can assign comparatively narrow age-at-death to older individuals. Armed with transition analysis, I re-evaluate the role of the elderly at Chiribaya Alta. This study combines analysis of skeletal remains and mortuary contexts to explore age-at-death patterning using the Bayesian statistical approach specified by transition analysis. Combining these age-at-death estimations with those for sex and mortuary contextual data, I assess the treatment of older individuals and expressions of their gender and age identities in the mortuary context. The results indicate that there is an elderly identity present amongst individuals at Chiribaya Alta and that gender and age intersect to impact the lives of older men and women differently. These results illustrate the utility of an intersectional approach to past social identities.

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