

# ARCH/BIOANTH LUNCH TALK

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021, 12-1PM

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## EMILY SCHACH

LECTURER – UC SANTA CRUZ

*THE GENDERED ELDERLY AT CHIRIBAYA ALTA:  
AN INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH COMBINING MORTUARY ANALYSIS  
AND AGE-AT-DEATH ESTIMATION USING TRANSITION ANALYSIS*

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.



Dr. Emily A. Schach is a bioarchaeologist who uses a variety of skeletal, biogeochemical, mortuary, and textiles analyses to address social identities in the Moquegua valley of southern Peru. Her dissertation research at the site of Chiribaya Alta used skeletal, textile, and mortuary analyses to address aspects of community, gender, and age identities. In 2018, she became co-director of the Yaracachi Archaeological Project, which focuses on ethnic and imperial processes in Moquegua, Peru. Yaracachi is a large cemetery site from the Late Intermediate Period and Inka Period that was excavated in 2010, but whose materials were never analyzed. Emily Schach graduated from Arizona State University with a PhD in Anthropology in 2019. She is currently a lecturer at UCSC and UNCG. She is also project co-director of the UNCG Archaeological Lab School in Peru.