Mounds of Social Death: Araucanian Funerary Rites and Political Succession

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most persistent, though least acknowledged, research themes in Andean archaeology is mortuary treatment. An important trend in the first half of this century was the excavation of burials for the purpose of reconstructing context, regional chronological sequences, and different archaeological cultures (e.g., Uhle 1903; Strong and Evans 1952; Bennett 1939; Estrada 1957; Rowe 1962; Tello and Xesspe 1979; Willey 1953). While much Andean research over the past few decades has focused on settlement and subsistence issues, there has been a resurgence of mortuary studies in other areas of the world (e.g., Bartel 1982; Brown 1981; Chapman 1981; O'Shea 1984; Tainter 1978) and from other anthropological perspectives (e.g., Blakely 1977; Cannon 1989; Powell, Mires, and Bridges 1991). Burial data are now seen as important analytical tools that allow increasing accuracy in the elucidation of other aspects of human behavior—social status and nutrition, the social narration of death, the investment of tomb construction, the role of the deceased in the past, division of labor, warfare, social class structure, centralization of power, and cosmology, to name only a few examples. With the exception of a few studies (Conrad n.d.; Donnan and Mackey 1978; Donnan and McClelland 1979; Quilter 1989; Buikstra 1990 and this volume), it has only been recently that Andeanists have given more comprehensive coverage to these topics.

The initial stage of archaeological research in south-central Chile, or the Araucanian culture area (Fig. 1), is similar to that of other Andean areas. The investigation of cemetery sites initially yielded only the recognition of different archaeological cultures. Recently interest has turned to social distinctions in the burial record (Gordon n.d., 1975, 1978, 1984), and to broader problems reflected in the rich ethnohistoric and ethnographic source material on Araucanian mortuary practice. Analysis of these sources...
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reveals that death was part of a long, transformative process involving a number of stages which marked different points of articulation between the living and the dead and their religious ideas and political organization. These records also show that the Araucanians practiced elaborate funerary rites and built impressive earthen burial mounds for paramount chiefs (Dillehay 1985, 1990). Mounds were constructed primarily during the late prehistoric and historic periods of demographic and political turmoil, although the tradition continued into the present century and still exists as “remembered culture” in a few areas (Latcham 1928; Dillehay 1985, 1990).

It is the intent of this paper to examine the Araucanian data for the context and meaning of time-extended funerary rites of ancesterial worship, mound construction, and corollary acts (e.g., animal sacrifice, feasting) associated with the burial of important war chiefs. Imperative to this study is the distinction between funerary and postfunerary rites. The former are related to the interment of lower-ranking chiefs and other lineage members. Once interred, no postfunerary rites are performed at their tombs. In this case, burial is a statement of the final biological and social conditions of the deceased. The latter involves the time-extended construction of a mound over the tomb of a high-ranking chief. This activity transforms the defunct leader into an authentic ancestor, and prolongs his “social death” for the explicit purposes of (1) installing a new leader, (2) legitimizing and extending the authority of the installed leader beyond his local kin group, and (3) maintaining (or building) alliances between his and other lineages. Set in this context, postfunerary rites and burial mounds (called auel in Mapudungun, the Araucanian language) were sources of authority and inspiration produced by regional alliances, not local groups. Alliances depended for their survival upon public ceremonial congregation and upon strong warrior leadership and the maintenance of politico-religious relations among lineages, especially during times of conflict and internal stress.

In regard to the last point, it is important to remember that the Araucanians were the only large-scale ethnic population in South America that repulsed the Inka and later the Spanish. They regained control of their own territory in the early 1600s, reinstated their ethnic identity, and expanded geographically (into Argentina) with a mixed set of political and cultural institutions introduced by the Inka and Spanish (see Cooper 1946). It was not until the late nineteenth century that the Araucanians were finally defeated by the Chilean army (e.g., Villalobos 1982, 1989).

RELEVANT THEMES OF MORITUARY ANALYSIS

A brief summation of mortuary studies specifically relevant to this paper is sufficient as background to the discussion of general archaeological and ethnological literature. This discussion focuses on four aspects: meaning and
expression of death in regard to individual and group relations: monumental burial forms; the role of ancestors in burial rites; and chiefly burial and installation rites.

In recent years, much of our anthropological thinking about the meaning of death in traditional societies has altered. We have learned that the death of an individual was a long and gradual social process and that a consistent relationship existed between the world of the living and that of the dead (e.g., Hertz 1960; Huntington and Metcalfe 1979; Turner 1969; Chapman, Kinnes, and Randsborg 1981; Tainter 1978; O'Shea 1984). It also is recognized that the death of important persons may change the relations between individuals and between different sectors in a society, thus representing a traumatic period when potential conflict may arise between groups. Participation in burial ritual also may increase or decrease during this period because of sorcery, destruction, warfare, and environmental disasters (Bloch and Parry 1982).

More specifically related to the archaeology of death is the analysis of mortuary ritual and symbolism and the hierarchical dimension of burial records. Perhaps the most widely studied approach to these dimensions in burial practice has developed from the work of Binford (1971), who suggested that the complexity of mortuary ritual (i.e., grave style and content) reflects the social position held by the deceased individual. It also has been recognized that the rank of the dead may covary with the amount of energy expended in the funeral (see Tainter 1978), and that the variance and complexity of grave goods (O'Shea 1984) are generally reliable indicators of rank. Others, including structuralists (e.g., Godelier [1977] in social anthropology and Hodder [1984] in archaeology), believe that the content and context of graves is not merely a reflection of sociopolitical organization but an active element in human relations, and that they can be used to reflect, disguise, or manipulate social ideals rather than social reality.

Of additional interest are analyses that have focused on formal burial structures as reflections of important linkages, events, and critical resources. Such cultural elaborations as earthen mounds and other monuments are frequently explained by increasing subsistence development (agriculture) and greater social differentiation and by ancestral worship and territorial claims. One of the most insightful archaeological studies of the relationship between ancestral cults and resource claims is Renfrew's work on the development of monumental tombs in a European context. He suggests that elaborate tombs are territorial markers in "small-scale segmentary societies, by which the territorial division of the terrain is given symbolic expression" (Renfrew 1976: 206). This line of thinking generally follows Sahlns (1961) in linking ancestral cults and monumental tombs. He suggested that in areas in which competition for resources occurs, dispersed communities are likely to stress links with an ancestral lineage as a way of claiming a territory. In this expression, ancestral cults are seen as developing primarily in agricultural societies that have continuous investment in the land and a developed genealogical system to relate group membership to relations of production and cooperation and to hierarchical structures (see also Meillassoux 1972, 1968).

Burial monuments have also been seen as communal status markers and historic monuments. Presumably, comparison of their number and configuration within an overall area reveals data about the historical context and event of monumental burial (Kossak 1974; Fleming 1972; Bradley 1990). Kossak, in particular, has suggested that monuments as "display graves" are built during times of excessive cultural contact, or a period of military, social, or political change. This point is particularly relevant to the historic Araucanian case.

In my previous studies of burial mounds in Mapuche society (Dillehay 1986 and 1990), I focused on the main variables accounting for mound-building rites (requelum) and for the limited distribution of these structures (Fig. 1). I postulated that mound building is related to the changing social relations between different lineages and to a set of historically contingent factors, that is, long-term kinship sedimentation, residential contiguity of related lineages, protection of land-use rights, and profitable alliance-making and trade-exchange affairs. It was also suggested that increased social and political complexity was achieved by a few lineages when they regulated the annual itinerary of multiple ceremonial events at sacred sites. My previous work did not address the specific relationships between warfare, ancestry, postburial rites, and political succession except in terms of the development of dynastic chiefdoms and mound clusters in areas where conflict had not interrupted the residential permanency of lineages. I also did not consider the potential political gains made by new leaders who administrated the periodic construction of earthen mounds over their predecessors. As discussed below, sufficient archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnoarchaeological evidence is becoming available to suggest that mound building also was a corporate ritual regulated by succeeding leaders who sought to legitimize their authority and to expand it beyond the lineage level. The scant number and uneven distribution of historic mound sites in the study area suggest that very few segments of the Araucanian population ever experienced this type of leadership behavior.

In synthesis, these and other studies have been valuable in broadening the conceptual framework of archaeological mortuary practices and relating them to changes in population size, critical resources (e.g., land scarcity), sociopolitical organization, formal disposal of the dead, descent groups, control and transfer of land, and ideological practices. As far as I am aware, there have been no archaeological attempts, however, to study the relationship between mortuary and installation rites of chiefs, and the political
benefits reaped by leaders who oversee postfunerary rites at the tomb of their predecessor. For information on this practice, we must turn to ethnographic work.

Ethnographic studies of African, Asian, and South Asian chiefdoms (Goody 1966; Buxton 1963; Arhem 1988) have shown that the death and funerary rituals for a deceased leader and the installation of his successor are often politically unstable times and are connected as a single sequence. Installation of a successor is a public event administered during the mortuary rite and attended by rival chiefs and other dignitaries. Such occasion allows a new ruler to demonstrate his ancestral affinity to the deceased chief and to define (and expand) his own power base. For instance, in her analysis of the Mandari chiefdom of east Africa, Buxton (1963: 83–87) noted that upon the death of a leader, he must be replaced immediately in the interests of orderly social and political relations among chiefdoms. If not, chiefdoms are weakened and their people are deprived of leadership, especially when an important chief dies and his successor is, as yet, of unknown quality. It is the duty of the new chief, although endowed by birth with potential leadership qualities, "to prove to members of neighboring chiefdoms, as well as to those of his own," that he is worthy of rule and that he can sustain the alliances established between his predecessor and them. Buxton and others show that in order to legitimize their new authority and to maintain alliances, chief-elects must draw on a continuous source of power, which is ritually linked to their predecessors and to the grave sites of those predecessors. This linkage, established in funerary and postfunerary ceremonies, reflects the ambivalent relations between chiefly groups during the time of death of an important leader. Without these ceremonies, there would be few lasting alliances between lineages.

TRADITIONAL ARAUCANIAN SOCIETY: ANCESTORS, FUNERALS, AND LEADERS

In terms of traditional social organization, the proto-Araucanians and contemporary Mapuche are made up of patrilineal kin groups that can be considered a patchwork of autonomous, small- to medium-scale horticultural units roughly organized on a moderately advanced chiefdom level of society. As Cooper noted about the historic period:

Some major features of the system . . . are quite clear. There was no peace-time over-all chief, no centralization of authority . . . in any one individual or administrative body. Furthermore, such authority as was vested in kinship heads and local "chiefs" was very limited—exclusively or almost exclusively consultative and persuasive, with little or no coercive power.

Supreme military commanders in important campaigns or in general uprisings against the Spaniards were usually elected in open assembly by choice of the leaders, but kinship heads and other "chiefs" were as a general rule hereditary. On the death of such a kinship head or "chief," his eldest or most capable son ordinarily succeeded him . . . In some cases, where the heir was unfit or incompetent, some other man would assume the office (rather than of authority proper) embrace higher and lower heads and "chiefs" . . . (Cooper 1946: 724–725)

Although the Araucanians have always lacked the structured control hierarchy typical of states, they were characterized by relations of social and economic dominance and subordination, and by a level of organization consisting of lineages of different social and economic scales. The relations between lineages are similar in some ways to what Colin Renfrew and S. Shennan (1982: 1–18) have described for European societies as roughly comparable "peer-polities," or in this case, peer-chieflets (Dillehay 1992).

In summarizing the territorial organization of Araucanian society, Cooper states that:

The largest geographical division among the Mapuche-Huilliche was the vuatanapa (? + country). Three such divisions were recognized in earlier times, constituting longitudinal strips along the Coast, the central valley, and the sub-Andean region . . . to which were later added a fourth embracing the Huilliche country . . . and a fifth, the Andean Cordillera region. These great divisions functioned chiefly, it would seem, in times of war. (Cooper 1946: 724–725; also see Molina 1795: 114)

It can be determined from the written documentation that formal marriage and exchange relations between lineages were organized primarily along river valleys, which extended from the Andes to the east down to the Pacific Ocean to the west. For reasons not yet well understood, the religious and military alliances of lineages were oriented in the opposite direction, in correspondence with the north to south butalmapu divisions. In other words, socioeconomic cohesion was strongest at the local level and weakest at the regional level. Religious and military cohesion, on the other hand, was strongest at the interregional level and weakest at the local level.

In more specific terms, the historic sociopolitical organization of the Araucanians was divided into four apparently ranked groups, each with internal ranking: chiefs (lonko, toqui), eminent men (wepun, ulmen), shamans (machi), and commoners. During the early historic period, rank was achieved, sometimes through personal exploits but most commonly through ascribed membership in patrilineal groups (Faron 1961). Technically, such a system is non-hereditary, but the access to important positions by descendants of powerful lineages suggests that the system also had some hereditary tendencies.
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states of ancestors (chemamill) (Figs. 2–5). Participation in these ceremonies was (and still is) important because every lineage derived its identity and its claim to land from a recognized ancestor, local or pan-Araucanian. The remnants of this traditional organization on the minimal level can be observed today in more isolated areas, in reducciones that have maintained at least some of the social and religious landscape. The more mobile and extensive social and political units, from the scale of chiefly alliances to that of war groups, obviously no longer exist. At this more extensive level, the scale of operation itself meant a change from the level of personal relations among specific chiefs to that of interlineage political structure and broader interregional ceremonial contexts. It is this latter scale, in the context of chiefly mortuary ritual and succession of leaders in times of warfare, that I will attempt to reconstruct and analyze from the archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic data.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOHISTORY

Archaeology

The study of archaeological mortuary behavior is limited by a small sample of excavated cemetery sites, by the poor preservation of skeletal remains in the wet forested areas of south-central Chile, and by the inaccessible location of many cemetery and mound sites on Mapuche lands. Despite these problems, the archaeological data have confirmed much of the ethnohistorical assertions concerning the manner in which social differentiation is expressed in the mortuary treatment.

Specifically, several pre-Hispanic and historic burial treatments have been recognized in the archaeological record, including urn, stone cistern, dug-out canoe, wooden coffin, earthen mound, and simple pit burials. It is possible in historic sites and possibly some prehistoric sites to distinguish female and male burials if earrings and/or female-specific quenu mataue vessels (Dillehay and Gordon 1977) are present. It has also been surmised that some elements of social ranking are identifiable by the content and quantity or grave offerings, as well as some elements symbolic of social units and horizontal differentiation (Gordon 1978, 1984). Social ranking in terms of leadership has also been hypothesized for earthen mounds (Dillehay 1985, 1990).

Looking briefly at the chronology and distribution of burial mounds from an archaeological perspective, three significant patterns emerge. First, the earliest indications of farming in the south appear in the first half of the second millennium A.D., possibly about the same time that the first burial mounds were built. Second, the majority of the mounds appear to belong to a late pre-Hispanic ceramic phase, probably dating around A.D. 1300 to 1500 and lasting until the late historic period. And third, most mounds are con-

1 Although there is disagreement among ethnographers and historians about the validity and meaning of the term trokinche, I have employed it here and elsewhere (Dillehay 1990, 1991) to refer to the corporate group of three different lineages that annually host a nguillatun ceremony. The present-day Mapuche do not have a term for this corporate ritual grouping, though elders claim a name once existed. Today, in literal translation, trokinche means division of people. For the purpose of convenience and consistency, I will continue to use the term trokinche to refer specifically to the tripartite grouping of host lineages. Faron (1964:111) has observed that more than three lineages may make up a nguillatun. I have seen as many as nine lineages hosting the event, but this occurred in areas where leaders were weak and required the services of peers, or the economic conditions were so bad that several lineages had to share the cost of the feast.
Fig. 2 U-shaped *ñquilatun* ceremonial field located in the highlands above Curacautín.

Fig. 3 Early historic earthen burial mound located in the vicinity of Lumaco.

Fig. 4 Dual *chenamull* ancestral figures located on a boundary line between two wife-giving and wife-receiving lineages.

Fig. 5 Nineteenth-century Mapuche cemetery showing *chenamull* grave markers. Photograph courtesy of the Museo Chileno de Arte PreColombino.
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fined to river valleys, although it is difficult to relate them entirely to agricultural subsistence. In fact, some of the largest mound clusters are found in external zones of the historic Araucanian territory, at the fringes of the main river valleys. There are indications that the political edges of this territory, or "la Frontera" as it came to be known during the traumatic historic era (Villalobos 1989), were possibly the most politically regulated and integrated from the mid-1600s to the late 1800s, while the center or heartland was less organized. As discussed later, this period might be related to intensified mound building and clustering.

Ethnohistory

The ethnohistoric data reveal that the Mapuche divided mortuary practice into treatment which all individuals received and treatment given only to elites (e.g., lonko, toqui) of the population. Information on the treatment of commoners is fairly abundant and repetitious, suggesting that single, primary burial in group cemeteries was the common mode of body disposal. Burial structures and burial coverings are mentioned often, the latter usually consisting of stone cisterns, urns, wooden canoes, and simple graves. Little information is available on burial orientation and specific grave offerings, however.

Elaborated mortuary treatment was restricted primarily to important chiefs, including the sons of these chiefs. As described below, war chiefs (toqui) and occasionally lonko of high rank were accorded particularly elaborate burial rites, involving the whole of the community. These rites often included a time-elapsing burial process related to the construction and maintenance of earthen mounds, to enduring kin and non-kin relations, and to animal sacrifice and chicha consumption over the grave. It is also clear from these accounts that not all chiefs had mounds built over their tombs and that these practices continued throughout the historic period and into the present century.

The earliest and most detailed passage regarding these matters is from the sixteenth-century chronicler Diego de Rosales. He states:

They bury dead chiefs in their best cloths and with their best ornaments, arms, and food. Kinsmen place chicha vessels and containers with meat, corn, flour, and other food in the grave. Each person attending the funeral places items in the grave. . . .

The burial of chiefs lasts 3–4 days, during which time the mourners drink heavily and sing about the deeds of the defunct chief. . . . After a period of one year, kinsmen and friends come together again to drink, to feast and to mourn in the name of the dead chief. They also placed sheep, meat and chicha in the tomb. The defunct chief is renourished by pouring the blood of sacrificed sheep on . . . the first person to throw soil on the tomb was the father. This act initiated the war cries. All participants then covered the tomb with earth, forming a large elevated mound that served as a mediating line between houses which could be seen from several directions. . . . After this, they sat at the base of the circular mound, placing all of the chicha jars in proper order [along kin lines?]. Because the funeral ritual was attended by more than 200 persons, they quickly broke their chicha vessels over the tomb. . . . (Pineda y Bascúñan 1973: 187–1930)

Writing in the eighteenth century, Juan Ignacio Molina (1795) commented that "after interring the body they again covered it with earth and stones to form a 'piramidel' (mound), upon which they broke many chicha vessels." In the following century, Pascual Cona (1973: 395–415) described in great detail the burial of a toqui war chief, also emphasizing the construction of an [and into] the tomb. Afterwards, the mourners dance around the tomb, carrying chicha vessels, worshiping their ancestors, and informing the interred chief of events that have happened since his death. Lastly, they pour chicha on the grave, telling the dead chief that he will not be hungry or thirsty because they have given him food and drink. . . . To assure that dead chiefs will always be remembered by other chiefs and by noble persons, they bury the toqui in places on high hills where kinsmen come together to play chucos [a ritual game for warriors], perform the Regue [major public ceremony, probably the tiqullatun], and hold their administrative meetings. Each relative of the interred chief breaks a chicha jar over the tomb, toasting to the defunct chief. . . .
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carthen mound over the tomb, the enduring links between the living and the dead, and the role of living chiefs in the burial ceremony.

R. Latcham, perhaps the most astute observer of early twentieth-century Mapuche culture, commented on the continuity of these burial practices. He stated: “Until recently [early part of the present century], they followed this custom [mound building]...” (Latcham 1928: 761). He also says that the burial of important persons such as chiefs and landholders (ulmen) “could last several weeks or months” (Latcham 1928: 748). It was custom

... in some areas to participate in the festivals and celebrations of the dead. ... they placed plates of food and chicha jars on the tomb. One year after the burial, they again opened the tomb to place new offerings in the grave ... and when it was the grave of an important person, they repeated this ritual for several years. ...

(Latcham 1928: 767)

Latcham (1928: 763) also provided information on wooden ancestral statues, or chemamüll, placed on graves: “they placed wooden figures and crosses on the mound.”

R. Emile Housse, also writing in the early part of this century, commented on similar practices at the tomb of defunct chiefs:

In the past, the Araucanians followed the custom of the Inca in constructing a mound of loose stones on the grave and breaking chicha vessels on it. For a long time now, they [Araucanians] have replaced the mound with a long wooden pole carved in the form of a human [chemamüll]. (Housse 1940: 332)

Viewed from both the archaeologica and ethnohistorical records, we know that mound building was associated primarily with the interment of paramount toqui chiefs. Latcham (1928) has recovered polished stone axes, or toquisara, from several mound sites near Temuco and Tirua. (As noted earlier, these stones have been identified ethnohistorically and ethnographically as the symbol of power of toqui war chiefs.) We also know from the written records and oral tradition that not all chiefs had mounds constructed over their tombs and that only a small number of toqui ever became dominant enough to form regional war and political alliances (Dillehay 1990).

These few passages suffice to give a general idea of the time-extended nature of chiefly burial during the past few centuries and the funerary contexts of ancestral worship, mound building, animal sacrifice, and chicha consumption.

Unfortunately, no known written record (including contemporary ethnographers) tells us why chiefly burials were prolonged. Several chroniclers document the role of succeeding chiefs (including the eldest sons or brothers of defunct chiefs) in performing funerary and postfunerary celebrations at

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grave sites, but they do not provide information on the broader significance of this responsibility. It is clear, however, from these data that these events were attended by a large number of people (Fig. 6), which, we can assume, required a considerable amount of communication and planning on an interlineage and probably regional level, and that living chiefs had an important role in the mortuary and postmortuary ceremonies of dead chiefs.

Quite possibly the chroniclers played down the role of new chiefs (and shamans) in these ceremonies lest they undermine the Spanish Crown’s attempt to extirpate indigenous cults of the dead. It is more understandable why Latcham and other ethnographers (e.g., Titiev 1931; Faron 1964) never emphasized the administrative role of chief-elects in rites. Most ethnographers have been more interested in other themes (i.e., kinship, acculturation), and they worked with the Mapuche when the role and power of leaders had been diminished considerably by the reducción system. A few ethnographers, notably Faron and Latcham, have observed that shaman (machi) give prayer at the funeral of an important leader, but almost always under the auspices of a local chief, usually the eldest sons, or the chief-elect, of the dead.

Fig. 6 Nineteenth-century burial ceremony of a Mapuche chief. Photograph courtesy of the Museo Nacional de Historia.
To gain additional insight into these issues, we must look to the ethnoarchaeological and ethnographic records, which provide information obtained from interviews with Mapuche elders who either participated in mound-building rites when they were young or, through oral tradition, remember stories about them.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

The brief reconstruction I present below of the burial mound construction is based on examination of some of the detailed published works on the Mapuche. My principal sources are Latcham (1915), Tomás Guevara Silva (1913), and Cona (1973) (see Dillehay 1985, 1990, 1992).

As I have described elsewhere (Dillehay 1986, 1990), there are a few areas where earthen mounds are still utilized by local Mapuche groups. Informants in one area, Lumaco, report that these structures were built over the past few centuries and that the remains of toqui chiefs are interred under them. Today, periodic earth-capping rites, called cueltn, are performed at two mounds and are attended by local and non-local lineage members. These rites are reported to have a dual function. They symbolically lift the spirit of the corpse into the upper world (wenunapu) of the ancestors, transforming the chief into an authentic ancestor, and they sustain links between the living and the dead. (It also should be pointed out that in his dictionary of the Mapuche language, Esteban Erize (1987) translates cuel as a “tumulo” or mound that forms a “borde” or “limite” between lineages.)

We also have learned that the funerary and postfunerary rites associated with these structures are ritually and architecturally separated. That is, the tomb, or etun, containing the body is different from the earth layers (i.e., the “mound”) superimposed on it. The tomb relates specifically to the awen funerary rite of interment of the deceased; the mound, or cuel, is the above-ground structure formed by the postfunerary cueltn earth-capping rite carried out by kinsmen and non-kinsmen of the deceased. Although these episodes are often administered ritually by machi, they are organized secularly by lonko, and presumably, in times past, by toqui.

In this context, it must be emphasized that earthen mounds are not true “burial mounds” but structures formed by periodic activities associated with postfunerary functions and meanings. Based on oral tradition, we can surmise that these functions served a lineage to time- and occasion-extend the death of an important chief for the purpose of constituting and reconstituting enduring and productive social relations among kin and non-kin affiliates, to recruit new affiliates, and to legitimate and extend the authority of the chief-elect, usually the eldest son of the deceased. Such episodes brought together large numbers of powerful people who were obligated to focus prayer and alliance building in the name of the defunct chief and of his lineage. Only the death of important war chiefs, who were backed by large kin and non-kin groups, provided such opportunities to the less important lineages. The funerals of less important chiefs and common lineage members were attended by fewer people and were of much less political and religious significance.

There are other important dimensions to the relations between death ritual and ancestor worship that reveal more about the mortuary rites of dead chiefs, the rites of installation of chief-elects, and the linkage and responsibility of chiefs to the ceremonial landscape and to those who live in it. These dimensions are animal sacrifice, chicha consumption, and, in the immediate past, the placement of wooden chemamull statues of ancestor heroes on the tombs of chiefs.

Machi informants in Lumaco state that every four years two sheep are sacrificed over actively used mounds of interred chiefs, and both animal blood (hache) and chicha (mudai) are poured into vertically placed holes in the mounds in the name of the lineage ancestral spirits of the deceased. When animals are sacrificed on mounds, everyone dances in a close circle around the mound and gives prayer to the spirits of the dead, all of which forms a series of ancestral and community-extended linkages (see Housse 1939: 155–159 and Cona 1973: 405 for descriptions of these practices in the last century). Although machi legitimize the ceremony through prayer and through communication with ancestral spirits, it is the lonko (as iquillatuf) who kills and defleshes the animal and distributes parts to lineage members and visiting dignitaries.

Associated with animal sacrifice are several hours of drinking and dancing and, occasionally, the deliberate breakage of chicha vessels over the tomb. Machi claim that in the past large quantities of chicha vessels were smashed over both the grave and the new layer of soil periodically placed over the tomb. The first vessel is reported to have been broken by the chief-elect. Today, informants speculate that the breakage of vessels over tombs probably signified the departure of the spirit of the deceased to the ancestral world and the final act of communion between the living and the dead. Vessel breakage on tombs is described by numerous chroniclers and ethnographers (e.g., Diego de Rosales, Pineda y Basüñan, Latcham), and also is documented at several archaeological cemeteries (Gordon et al. 1972–73: 64; Gordon 1978, 1984, n.d.).

Linkages between the living and the dead extend well beyond the grave site, and beyond the chicha consumption and bloodletting rites associated with it, to include a much wider setting. This setting is a cultivated landscape of ancestral imagery in the form of ceremonial fields, mounds, volcanoes, and chemamull. Ceremonial fields and mounds have already been discussed. The most prevalent form is the carved wooden chemamull statue (Erize 1987: 106–107), often placed in fields and, until recently, on the graves of chiefs. Chemamull usually occur in pairs and are said to represent important
ancestors, usually lonko. Informants report that these statues oversee and protect lineage lands, and that they represent land markers located between lonkos standing in a fixed dual relationship to each other. Today, as in the past, dances and prayer, and, occasionally, animal sacrifice, are performed around these figures, all in the name of local ancestors.

There is also a strong relationship between ancestor deity worship and reverence of volcanoes (see María Ester Grebe, personal communication, 1990). Spatially, the ancestral spirits of important people are associated with higher elevations, because these places are closest to the ancestor spirits in the sky. For this reason, it is reported that burial mounds are placed on high terraces and hilltops within sight of volcanoes and other mounds, if the latter are present.

Collectively, all of these features and forms are historical symbols that embody linkages between time and place and encode past, present, and future Mapuche generations. As such, they establish the coordinates of a sacred politicohistorical landscape that forms an overarching regional system of pan-Mapuche architectural icons and ancestral land markers, which are manipulated by chiefs to legitimate their authority and extend their power to others. All of this provides an interpretative framework or a core of continuity utilized by different lineages to make sense of their relationships to each other and their relationships with the political environment.

Although the tradition of sculpturing the landscape and of building mounds has nearly disappeared, the burial of important chiefs is still a major event associated with interlineage relations and the display of succeeding leaders. In recent years, I have had two opportunities to participate in the burial ceremony of chiefs in the Chol-Chol and Queule areas. Both funerals were attended by more than 1,000 persons, some traveling more than 200 km to participate (Fig. 7). Large quantities of food and drink were consumed at the funerals, and animals were sacrificed.

All prayer at the funerals was conducted by machi. Planning and administration of the funerals, however, were handled by the eldest sons, or "chief-elects," of the deceased. The sons arranged the funeral, selected the grave site, obtained and organized the food and drink, and received all participants, especially lonko and dignitaries from distant areas. Despite the moderate to heavy acculturation in both areas, it was clear at both funerals that the eldest sons were very aware of the chiefly administrative position they were about to assume. Throughout the entire funerary process, they assured trade partners, friends, and others that they would honor the linkages their fathers had established with them.

I was told by the eldest son at the Queule funeral that dance, festival, and animal sacrifice will be repeated in future years at the grave of his father. I asked him if a mound would eventually be built over the tomb of his father. Although he never mentioned a cuel, he did say that the tomb must be
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distinguished from others, visible from a distance, and curated for several years to come. I took it to mean that the grave site would be modified in some form or fashion. Once the grave has been curated socially, the dead chief can finally die. No additional rites were planned for the Chol-Chol burial, where Christian influence is much heavier.

The present-day funerals revealed that burial of important persons is still a pretext to focus attention on a new leader and, above all, to test his generosity and his potential leadership quality. It was evident at both funerals that the traditional forging of links between new leaders and the members of other lineages still demands in Mapuche terms feasting and the mutual consumption of food and drink. As R. Latcham, M. Ttitiev, L. Faron, R. San Martin, and other ethnographers have commented before, feasting and the offering of food and drink to the living and the dead was and still is a sign of chiefly wealth and power. During times of war in the historic past (and to a much lesser extent today), the new chief who met these obligations established credit among his peers, kinsmen, friends, and allies. If not, he ran the risk of resentment and anger within a social system in which political cohesion depended upon the support of other chiefs and their followers.

HISTORIC CONTEXT OF FUNERARY RITUALS AND LEADERSHIP

At this point, I will attempt to infer the meaning of these mortuary features and social patterns in terms of the history and the culture logic of the Araucanians. To speculate on the broader meaning of the postulated relationship between time-extended funerary rites and the expansion of chiefly authority during times of political stress, we must return to events and circumstances of the historic period of warfare (A.D. 1600-1850). As noted by several historians (e.g., Villalobos 1989; Pinto 1988; León 1991; Bengoa 1985; Canals Frau 1946), this period involved a radical transformation of Araucanian society in which many of the social and economic principles typical of a local society were gradually submerged by those of a regional level, primarily for the purposes of territorial defense and later of a raiding economy in foreign lands (see León 1991). In this society, characterized by political pressure and warfare, weak leadership at the suprainlineage level would have taken on greater meaning; the power and alliance of a lineage could be threatened within the regional population.

These circumstances made it necessary for Araucanian leaders to forge new mechanisms that functioned to maintain societal cohesion in the face of these pressures. The situation called for a means of greater social interaction and political unification and, above all, for a new form of leadership to emerge, one which could strengthen social control and politicomilitary authority on a regional basis (a form probably similar to the butalmapu territorial divisions mentioned by Diego de Rosales and Molina in the mid-1700s). To develop a leadership capable of military defense, chiefs not only had to solidify their power among their own kin but extend their authority beyond the boundaries of their own lineage. This feat depended upon the reputation of new leaders as warriors and household heads, and, above all, the closeness of their kinship ties to high-ranking chiefs and ancestor heroes. The opportune institutional contexts for new leaders to legitimize their claim to power and the attempt to extend it to others were the aum burial and cueltun mound-building services at the grave sites of their defunct predecessors. These rites were the only such contexts because they were the only public events bringing together numerous lineages and chiefs, and they were the places that provided linkages between the old and new leadership and between the living and the dead. As such, these services focused the communal will and effort on a single act of political integration that hopefully would endure and carry over into other relations. They also gave both lineages and chiefs the opportunity to redefine their interests and relations. Such interaction and reflection were required if new chiefs were to become successful rulers.

If indeed public ceremonies were the occasions for extending chiefly authority to non-kinsmen, then the scant presence of mounds in the study area suggests that there must have been limited times and places when these services were performed, and that, as the historical documents indicate, few leaders ever achieved a suprainlineage position, or what the Spanish called a "Touqui principal." We can surmise from the documents that the social status and political power of leaders were not passed on to their heirs. Sons, as chief-elects, were undoubtedly respected, but they had to prove their own capabilities as leaders. That is, while chiefly position was ascribed, status was achieved. Status building began with the funerary services of predecessors, which created a period of grace for new chiefs, a sort of dress rehearsal or pretext of leadership, at a time of potential decay in the social fabric of lineage alliances. Those chief-elects who fully utilized this period and worked hard to sustain alliances gained status and were more likely to be successful. Powerful lineages with a dynastic string of competitive chiefs and continued success in marriage alliances, economic activities, and warfare were able to monopolize local and regional events and, above all, to survive as productive social units.

During the late historic period, as a result of success in warfare, some touqui leaders evidently developed limited coercive power, but had no extended centralized authority. Nonetheless, the participation of leaders in interlocking sets of public ceremonies (e.g., Dillehay 1990, 1992) seems to have developed a chiefly brotherhood and solidarity at a higher level in the society. The administration of these ceremonies emphasized the separation of the chiefly elite from the rest of the population, a separation probably necessitated by regional political tension and formal leadership directed beyond the local group and expressed through the foundation of long-distance
alliances on an elite toqui level, not a local level. This separation, in the form of regional elite alliances, appears to be reflected in the butalmapu divisions. Such divisions apparently were not territorial groups defined by centralized administrative units but lineages interlocked in ritual ceremony, and, in historic times, bonded by direct cooperation among toqui war chiefs (Faron 1961). Together, these relations are encoded historically by the mounds and chemamill, which reflect an architectural and symbolic landscape conditioned by warfare and regional political integration, and hence a hierarchical Araucanian territory in general.

To summarize, in the historic Araucanian society, there was a recognized loose hierarchy consisting of major and minor authorities who apparently controlled major and minor subdivisions of the population (Aguirre 1907; Best 1960; Bengoa 1985; León 1991). Such an arrangement was, in effect, a chain of command, linking leaders at different regional and local levels. It seems clear from the written records for the early historic period that the rapid intensification of warfare in the seventeenth century was a critical factor in the development of this hierarchy and its corresponding architectural structures and ancestral symbols. We can associate these developments with a weakly institutionalized political organization, which was forced to organize and defend itself militarily and to search for ways economically to support its campaigns against the Spanish and later Chilean armies. This support came primarily from raiding Spanish homesteads along the Chilean frontier and in the Argentina pampas (Cabrera 1934; Villalobos 1989; León 1991).

Although the raiding economy was a possible intensifier of chiefly political power in times of war, it seemingly had little initial influence on the territorial defense of Araucanian society. Instead, I am convinced that the initial linkage of large-scale public religious foundations, political defense, and the extension of leadership authority beyond local communities had more to do with the problem of geopolitics among competing lineages than with a changing or developing political economy and social ranking. This is not to deny the role of these factors; but the present evidence suggests that this linkage was achieved first through an ideopolitical process, not a socio-economic one.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In this paper, I have reviewed some recent work in south-central Chile, suggesting how the archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic records of the late historic and early modern periods relate to postfunerary rites of paramount chiefs and chiefly political installation and political succession and extension. I also have suggested that the patterns described above are largely the product of the differences between two contemporary and contrasting societies. The patterns discussed changed drastically when the Araucanians were pacified in the late 1800s. Toqui leaders disappeared and the power of lonko and other chiefs was reduced. Similarly, it is obvious that the type of cultivated ancestral landscape which developed in the study area during the past few centuries, with its cuel mounds, chemamill figures, and nguillatun fields, could not have remained intact very long except in isolated and traditional areas where some customs are maintained. Despite heavy acculturation throughout the present century, there is still enough traditional material and spatial evidence available to suggest that any study of the historic relationships among ancestors, leadership, elaborate graves, and geopolitical boundaries must be cast over a wide social field. In casting a study, these findings suggest that the location of sets of contemporaneous mounds and associated habitational sites may reveal much about the political order and events of a particular epoch. Survey and excavation of these sites in the archaeological past must be carried out, however, before I can demonstrate the origins and time depth of this model and test many of its specific implications.

Although not discussed above, I am concerned about the broad 300-year time span of the model presented here and the unknown aspects of mortuary practices. Due to the lack of archaeological research on mound sites in the study area, I cannot link specific historic events and periods with specific mound sites, or say that there is a horizon of mound building. The scant evidence available suggests that the sequence of developments varied over different parts of the study area. It may be that the uneven distribution of mounds reflects preference for certain lineages and their leaders or for demographic stability. It may also suggest differences in mortuary practice and political behavior along internal and external frontiers. We can surmise that there must have been selective forces favoring the rise of certain chiefs and lineages in certain places at certain times (see Dillehay 1999), because not all leaders were vying for extended power and mounds do not occur in all valleys.

I am also concerned about other possible ritual or symbolic practices that may express similar mortuary forms and political processes. Despite the continuity in content and form of burial practices observed in the archaeological, ethnohistoric, and ethnographic records, there must have been many important changes in mortuary practice, ancestral worship, and political organization which are not being detected and which may explain the findings in different ways. For instance, extended mortuary rites undoubtedly involved the preparation of dead chiefs and their spirits for the afterworld. Was this involvement more important than the pretext of leadership afforded to his successor? Is there cause to believe that burial contexts provided new chiefs with the opportunity to attract and retain the non-military labor of followers through which privileged access to material wealth, prestige, and ultimately political power became possible? Although
we do not have answers to these questions at present, neither the archaeological nor the ethnographical records reflect an accumulation of chiefly wealth which is commensurate with political power.

These questions lead us to another issue. It is insufficient to explain the Mapuche rites of chiefly burial and the installation of new rulers exclusively in terms of ancestral worship services dedicated to defunct chiefs, or for that matter, any single variable. The general approach adopted in this paper has been to argue that these rites, in the context of mound building, reflect a need formally to install, legitimize, and expand the authority of local chiefs during periods of political stress (i.e., primarily territorial defense in the Araucanian case). As suggested in the ethnographical and archaeological records, a new regional politico-military organization was created for this defense, one which was associated with different forms of external and internal (lineage) boundaries marked by mounds, wooden statues, and public ceremonial fields. Extended funerary rites of chiefs at mound sites became the symbolic lattices through which different parts of the political system were linked. These rites, however, were much more than mere political rallies. They were also rites of social transformation and models for the fate of local political alliances, in that alliances were manipulated through the death of a paramount chief. In effect, these were the contexts within which leaders reworked social relationships by creating shifting coalitions, none of which probably lasted very long. These rites also had a cosmological meaning; they reaffirmed the perpetuity of the lineage by transforming new chiefly ancestors into old ones, thereby creating a sense of time-depth and prolonged history against which the future was projected. In this sense, extended mortuary practices brought about change in political organization and demographic structure, and made use of the past (through ancestral rites and recounting events) to determine the future. They, like the display burial mounds where they were performed, reflected time and history, and, as such, conveyed a concern with permanence and suggested a temporal reality.

All of this is intuitively evident. We have said that the political system derived its authority from lineage history (admapu) and from the plans of participating lineages, as seen by their members. In the sense of Kossak's and Renfrew's notions of conspicuous ancestor monuments, the display of monumental graves was intended to secure for the members of the lineages the benefits of the rituals in perpetuity, even when the rituals were not being performed at the mound. It is in this regard that mound building was a way of time, of history, reckoning, and that monumental graves became time markers, just as they were space markers (Dillehay 1990). Mounds, particularly a suite of mounds, represented a continuum of political eschatologies, marking the end of some chiefly regimes, and political cosmogenies, marking the beginning of others. This continuum is reflected in the spatial layout and indigenous nomenclature of mounds. For instance, as I have noted previously for a family suite of mounds in Lumaco (Dillehay 1990: 232), the older, informally named structures of the early historic period have the prefix kuwił, meaning ancient or long ago, before their names. The younger mounds including those still in use today, have active names more indicative of their specific ritual function. Within this suite of structures, some mounds are sacred architectural memorabilia that commemorate past leaders and past times; others simply mark present social history. All of this suggests a very different organizational level of time or history and a Mapuche sense of the human locus in the supramatrix of space-time. It is not the same type of time associated with rhythms of the seasons, with plants and animals, and with harvest cycles. It is a ritualized socialization of time segregated by sequential burial of chiefs at monumental grave sites. Temporal segregation through political eschatologies and cosmogenies, as continually manifested in monumental burials, was a powerful means of creating and maintaining lineage distinction, recounting achievement of ancestors, and recording social history. As such, the distribution of mounds in space is the same as the distribution of the historical behavior of lineages in time. Hence, a spatial pattern of mound burials is interchangeable with a temporal or historical pattern of lineage history.

We can say then that those lineages manipulating chiefly burials at public places to inaugurate a new chief and actively change (or even maintain) the structure and direction of social events were mound literate, so to speak. As I have discussed before (Dillehay 1990, 1992), mounds and mound-related rituals had (and still have) a life beyond the theme of death and burial; they were memorabilia and ceremonial places actively used and, through the death of a leader and the reconstruction of alliances by new leaders, actively restructured who participated in ceremony. Mound politics culturally transformed social structure as death did political structure. Thus, mound literacy—knowing how to use mounds socially to maintain the status quo or bring change for one's lineage—became as much of a prerequisite for the political conduct of a group as did technological literacy (weapons, irrigation systems) and economic literacy (monetary exchange, resource values). Each of these devices demanded a special way of human interaction in Mapuche society, and, for the archaeologist, a special way of perceiving the archaeological record.

1 Informants in the Lumaco area referred to two usages of the term kuwił, expressed here as kuwił uel, and the other as kuwil. Informants used both terms to refer to the oldest mounds. Although I recognize that the terms may have different meanings and that one may be more grammatically correct than the other, I use kuwił uel because it was identified by shamans and by more elders.
Finally, although it is not the place in this paper to discuss the broader archaeological patterns and meaning of mound building, these issues reflect on some of the primary concerns of recent mortuary studies. There has been a construction and partial testing of relationships linking social structure, economic investment, resource stress, and mortuary treatment within broader anthropological contexts (O'Shea 1984; Tainter 1978; Chapman, Kinnes, and Randsborg 1981; Bartel 1982). The findings of the Mapuche study tend to support some ideas of Renfrew, Hodder, and Kossak that monumental burial forms represent territorial markers and that the "display" (and I would add continued use) of monuments was important to historical events and circumstances in the society. It also seems that the organizational processes occurring on the macro level of chiefly political organization were partially isolated from the micro level of domestic affairs. This is not to imply a complete separation, for it is obvious that the two levels must have functioned in unison in order to meet their goals. Rather, I believe that Araucanian leadership in the form of chiefly associations, perhaps like the interregional butalmapu system, consolidated first on a regional level of interlineage relations, then perhaps began to scale down into local parts. It is possible that the size of mounds relates to this scaling-down effect. Preliminary archaeological findings suggest that the large, more elaborate mounds were produced in the earlier periods (Latcham 1928; Dillehay 1990), probably when integration among groups was more regionally based and was achieved through extended death rituals of paramount chiefs, not through the political structure itself. As chiefly military and economic networks developed further and the chiefly office became more formalized and secure, for reasons not completely understood at present, there was probably less need for large mounds. It was likely that once chiefly authority was manifested in other ways, either through an elaborate political symbolic system or through more formal secular architectural forms (e.g., formal village layout), mound building probably disappeared altogether in some areas, shrunk in size in others, or was transformed into other sacred or secular systems. From this perspective, we can envision continued use of the same mound, its growth through burial accretion, and the construction of an architectural design to allow ceremony to occur around and on top of it. We can also envision a point when a mound is abandoned or its use increased by part-time residency commensurate with architectural growth and modification and with greater public participation suited to this purpose. Obviously, these suppositions require more rigorous archaeological and ethnohistorical testing before we can consider their fuller implications.

To conclude, it is somewhat difficult to extend these findings to other Andean areas. Without comparative written records in areas where other early complex societies emerged, it is difficult to designate warfare and the stress of a frontier situation as the primary conditions accounting for the events and patterns studied here. Although I do not claim to have tested any specific hypotheses related to Andean studies, we can see in this study certain Andean traditions (e.g., animal sacrifice, intentional vessel breakage, chicha consumption) that are important to political power and public ceremony. In attempting to offer broad correlations between specific types of mortuary contexts and particular procedures of social cohesion, I suggest that we pay more strict attention to the architectural separation between the tomb and its contents and the elaborate monument built over it. Although they are linked in many obvious ways, each relates to the achievements and images of different generations of leaders and to historical events that extend well beyond the death of the interred. Hopefully the potential of these findings will stimulate constructive comment and productive research on similar themes in other areas.

In recent years, Araucanian specialists have begun to realize that the proto-Mapuche society was much more economically and politically complex than previously believed. This realization has come about largely through concerted efforts to revise the extant archaeological (e.g., Dillehay 1981, 1990) and ethnohistorical records (e.g., León 1991; Dillehay 1990), and perhaps above all, to understand the local context within which the Mapuche culture and society emerged. No doubt, as more information becomes available on the archaeology and history of the Araucanians, specialists also will realize that the pre-Hispanic societies of the south-central Andes were southern expressions of deeply rooted demographic and social processes which have their roots in an often inconspicuous and hybrid pattern of interaction between Andean and eastern tropical forest societies. This is not to deny the contribution made by local societies, but rather to identify the catalyst that gave them this expression.

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Mounds of Social Death: Araucanian Funerary Rites and Political Succession


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