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The Dead Tell Tales

Essays in Honor of Jane E. Buikstra

Edited by
María Cecilia Lozada and
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Introduction

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This volume of essays is offered to Professor Jane E. Buikstra to honor her sixty-fifth birthday, which she celebrated in 2011. The volume began life in a symposium entitled "The Dead Tell Tales: Jane E. Buikstra and Narratives of the Past," held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 2006 at the seventy-first annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology and organized by the editors of this volume. Both of us are active in bioarchaeological research and teaching. As a result, we have always been keenly aware of Buikstra's pioneering work in the development of the discipline, her leadership role in its ongoing development, and her important contributions to other aspects of anthropological research. The SAA symposium marked the first time that multiple generations of Buikstra's former doctoral students and other colleagues gathered to discuss the impact of her mentorship, and the session was remarkable for its breadth, both in terms of the topics discussed and the geographical range they covered. Despite the diversity and scope of the contributions, they were united by the integrative cross-disciplinarity that has always been a hallmark of Jane E. Buikstra's anthropology. The aim of the current volume is to disseminate the contributions to a wider audience and to thereby reinforce this approach. Like the SAA symposium, this volume celebrates more than three decades of scholarship by Jane E. Buikstra and the professional and personal relationships she has built in the process. Buikstra's mentorship has been marked by generosity. She has been a consistent advocate for her students, who have tended to move smoothly from pupil to colleague (see Rakita this volume). She has fostered generations of young scholars, not only from the United States but also from many of the countries in which she has conducted research and beyond. Her foreign students were drawn from countries where formal training in bioarchaeology was not available, and through her personal involvement and mentorship, she has played a direct role in seeding the discipline in a number of different world areas. This pioneering spirit has its roots very early in Buikstra's career.

Jane E. Buikstra's interests in archaeology and human biology can be traced to her childhood. She is from southern Indiana, an area rich in archaeological remains, where she grew up in a medical household. Her undergraduate training in anthropology was at DePauw University. She moved to the University of Chicago for her postgraduate studies. While gaining a strong background in biological anthropology under the tutelage of Dr. Charles Merbs, and others, she had an equally strong background in archaeological fieldwork with Stuart Struever due to her participation in excavations at the Koster Site in southern Illinois. In 1976, four years after she obtained her Ph.D., in a paper delivered to the Southern Anthropological Society, she advocated a new approach that sought to find common ground between these interests and to live up to the aspiration of anthropology to be a holistic endeavor. Bioarchaeology, as defined by Buikstra, sought to integrate the previously distinct areas of study of biological anthropology and

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archaeology (Buikstra 1977:69). This was in keeping with the ethos of the New Archaeology of the time, stressing as it did the place of humans in broader cultural and ecological systems. Proposing a new modus operandi is easier than giving it a reality. Equally critical to the development of bioarchaeology has been Buikstra's leadership in nurturing the discipline by means of a prodigious research output, much of it collaborative, characterized both by the integration of narratives from a range of discourses and by its dynamism, informed as it is by changing directions in theory, method, and practice (see chapters in this volume by Patterson and Charles).

Jane E. Buikstra's innovative and pioneering approach is also apparent in her career-long involvement with the Center for American Archaeology at Kampsville, Illinois. This involvement grew from the Koster excavations, which played a formative role for many anthropologists of her generation. From its earliest days, one of the distinguishing features of the CAA has been its community involvement. Dialogue with local communities is now commonplace in archaeological research projects, but Buikstra and the CAA anticipated this by decades at Kampsville. The center has played an important role in fostering students of archaeology and bioarchaeology but has always had a broader vision of involving the wider community through its various activities and outreach programs. Under Buikstra's leadership, the CAA has been characterized by its respect for local identities and by the creation of a space for open dialogue between the local and scientific communities.

Buikstra's commitment to sharing knowledge has been a characteristic of her career since her earliest academic appointment at Northwestern University. While also undertaking substantial administrative duties, Buikstra pioneered the integration of osteological data in funerary archaeology, which had lasting implications for both mortuary theory and bioarchaeology. She also collaborated in a number of groundbreaking studies across a range of topics, including bone chemistry and methods of assessing heritability of nonmetric traits in primates. Furthermore, she made important contributions in paleopathology. Her 1981 volume *Prehistoric Tuberculosis in the Americas* set a new standard for paleopathological studies and, true to the roots of bioarchaeology in the New Archaeology, established a new population-based approach that moved beyond the clinically oriented, descriptive case-study methodology of earlier studies. The 1981 volume was also notable for its integration of narratives from different disciplines.

Combining these elements of close collaborations between academic disciplines, and also between anthropologists and local communities, Buikstra was instrumental in establishing centers of bioarchaeological research outside North America. In particular, her work in Peru was critical in the seeding of her vision of bioarchaeology in the Andes. As the discipline developed in Peru, it was again characterized by its interdisciplinarity and its engagement with, and sensitivity to, the wider community. Her significant record of publications is testament to her enduring commitment to the region. She also played a personal role in establishing bioarchaeological research in Spain, where she was drawn by the culture of dialogue and inclusiveness fostered by the leaders of the Gatas Project. Her involvement marked a decisive break from previous approaches in the region and resulted in a broadening of research agendas regarding mortuary contexts. Buikstra has also worked in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Honduras, and through her students she has indirectly influenced the development of the discipline in a number of countries, including Greece, Indonesia, and Ireland.

Buikstra's ability to recruit graduate students from the United States and abroad was enhanced by her move in 1986 to the University of Chicago, where she created a rich learning and research environment characterized by cultural and intellectual diversity. Her term at Chicago was marked by a number of honors. In 1987 Buikstra was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Two years later she was elected to the presidency of the American Anthropological Association, becoming the sixth woman to hold that post since the organization was founded in 1902. These honors were an affirmation of her standing in the anthropological community but also an acknowledgment of the place of bioarchaeology within the broader discipline. This came at a time of potential crisis for the discipline, as the passing of the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 allowed for the possible return of cultural items and human remains to their respective peoples and for their reburial. With the prospect of the repatriation of many collections of archaeologically retrieved human skeletons, there was concern about the lack of a standardized approach to analysis and reporting and the need to gain the maximum amount of information from remains that might no longer be available for scientific study. A series of meetings initiated by the Paleopathology Association sought to develop standards for the collection of osteological data. This resulted in a workshop held in 1991 at the Field Museum of

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Natural History in Chicago that was supported by the National Science Foundation. The resulting publication (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994) became a key resource for researchers and students alike.

In 1995 Buikstra moved to the University of New Mexico, where her work was marked by an increase in evaluative and synthetic publications. Her international interests expanded to include studies of the ancient Maya, where she collaborated on population-based studies of hard tissue biochemistry while also generating individual osteobiographies that traced residence changes and the personal, physical cost of wielding political power (see chapters in this volume by Wright and by Tiesler et al.). She also began a productive collaboration with colleagues in Britain, where bioarchaeology, or human osteoarchaeology as it is usually called there, had come of age in the 1980s and 1990s (Roberts this volume). This work was marked by a return to a long-standing interest, the bioarchaeology of tuberculosis. Debates about the coevolution of humans and the pathogens that produce TB are critical to research aimed at mitigating the global threat to modern populations posed by this reemerging disease.

This focus on the relevance of bioarchaeology to contemporary society anticipated Buikstra's move in 2005 to Arizona State University, where she became the first director of the newly established Center for Bioarchaeological Research. The high value placed on bioarchaeology at ASU and the manner in which the center is integrated into the broader research strategies of the School of the Human Environment and Social Change are models of research and higher education that Buikstra has advocated throughout her career. At ASU Buikstra is in an innovative environment that explicitly seeks to move beyond the scope that traditionally defined the study of anthropology and that balances sociocultural and biologically based approaches to humanity. In the years since her move to Arizona, Buikstra has collaborated on three important volumes that, characteristically, span a range of interests—mortuary practices (Rakita et al. 2005), forensic anthropology (Komar and Buikstra 2008), and bioarchaeology (Buikstra and Beck 2006)—with each volume including an assessment of the current status of the topic. In the last few years, Buikstra's accomplishments have been recognized in the form of a number of awards, including the T. Dale Steward Award from the physical anthropology section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (2008) and the Charles Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Association of Physical Anthropology (2008). Her multidisciplinary study of past societies, the hallmark of her research, was further acknowledged by the Fryxell Award by the Society for American Archaeology in 2010. Her service to academia has also been continued through her role in the establishment of the *International Journal of Paleopathology*, providing an international forum for the study of health and disease in the past.

Organization of This Volume

The organization of this volume reflects the extent of Buikstra's influence in the discipline and her advocacy for a bioarchaeology that is embedded in and in constant dialogue with broader anthropological praxis. An opening section devoted to her theoretical impact is followed by papers organized geographically and reflecting the breadth of Buikstra's reach. Part I of this volume specifically addresses Buikstra's contributions to anthropology. Patterson (chapter 1) charts the dynamic interplay between theory and practice that has characterized her career, and he locates her approach within developments in the broader discipline, both in the United States and in other countries. One of the most direct ways to understand an individual's contribution to a discipline is to examine his or her body of published works. Rakita's analysis of Buikstra's bibliography (chapter 2) provides an insight into her signature multidisciplinary approach, her breadth of subject matter spanning the biological and social sciences, and the many geographical areas in which she has worked. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of much of her output reflects the collegiality of her approach and the altruism of her mentorship. In chapter 3, Charles takes up the theme of the dynamic nature of the study of archaeological human remains and notes the development of a diversity of approaches since the 1970s. He eloquently highlights the challenges inherent in attempts to straddle the physical sciences/social sciences divide, and he notes the malleability of Buikstra's bioarchaeology, which has allowed it to mature in the context of shifting theoretical landscapes. Buikstra has been particularly sensitive to these changing paradigms, and this sensitivity is reflected across the spectrum of her engagement with the human body, past and present. Buikstra's concern with advancing methods provided the inspiration for Lewis and Tung's contribution (chapter

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4). In the context of new research technologies that feed growing demands for osteological samples, this is a timely reminder of the need to develop and adhere to protocols designed to facilitate research but also the long-term conservation of human remains.

The focus of the papers in Part II is on North America, where Buikstra's academic life has been based and where, through her continuing fieldwork at Kampsville, her anthropological life is anchored. Over the last two decades, NAGPRA has posed serious challenges for the praxis of bioarchaeology in North America. Goldstein (chapter 5) uses reports from the Smithsonian Institution Repatriation Office to examine the nature of relationships between researchers and native peoples in the context of negotiations concerning the repatriation of archaeological artifacts and human remains. Goldstein reflects on the multiscalar nature of identity and the importance of the oral tradition in the formation of collective memory. The emotive connection between living peoples and ancient human remains is also evoked in Watson's detective work concerning the discovery and subsequent histories of mummified remains from Kentucky (chapter 6). She follows the development of popular narratives concerning the biographies of these remains, which are contrasted with results of more recent bioarchaeological analyses. Watson highlights how human remains, both ancient and modern, have an interest beyond the scientific, and she charts the different social lives that dead bodies can have through time. The relevance of archaeological approaches to both ancient and modern contexts is also apparent in the paper by Ubelaker (chapter 7), who notes that in bioarchaeology, contexts with commingled human remains present particular challenges in terms of excavation and analysis. Ubelaker uses the ossuaries of Maryland to address these issues. He presents a rigorous approach to the proper recovery and documentation of secondary deposits of multiple individuals, as well as a systematic methodology that allows for the spatial analysis of remains, their demographic profiles, and the details of burial practices in the past. These approaches are not only relevant to archaeological contexts but could also be adopted for forensic investigations of more recent mass graves. A similarly rigorous methodology is proposed by Aftandilian (chapter 8) with regard to the analysis of animal effigies deposited as grave goods in Mississippian burials from Illinois. This method and analysis provide a good example of the integrative approach espoused in bioarchaeology as it draws together material cultural symbolism within mortuary ritual to document a relationship between specific motifs and particular cohorts of the population, such as infants and children. The integrative approach is also central to the paper by Stojanowski (chapter 9), which examines the fluid relationship between biology and social identity among human groups. In his discussion of the use of morphological distance as a means for drawing inferences about community self-definition, Stojanowski situates biodistance studies within a broad social framework, and he argues for historically contingent reconstructions of the formation and transformation of group identities in the past.

In Part III, the focus shifts to Central and South America, where Buikstra has made a number of important direct contributions since the early 1980s. Tiesler et al. (chapter 10) note that investigations of Maya elites have benefited over the last decade from multidisciplinary studies that seek to integrate bioarchaeological and other data sets with more traditional approaches. These authors present sophisticated analyses of residues found adhering to two royal skeletons from Calakmul, Mexico, the results of which are discussed in the context of other aspects of the burial record to provide new insights into details of the complex funerary treatments of individuals from the Mayan elite. Wright's contribution (chapter 11) also has an individual focus as it takes an osteobiographical approach using stable isotopes to document age-specific changes among elite skeletons from Copan, Honduras. While acknowledging the challenges presented by such chemical analyses, her studies provide an enriched narrative of individual life histories and allow her to chart mobility, rainfall seasonality, weaning, and social differences in diet. Keeping with ancient Maya society but in contrast to the usual situation encountered in bioarchaeology, Ashmore (chapter 12) examines situations where archaeologists have encountered spaces that were prepared as if to receive the dead, but where no bodies were found. The chapter considers inferences about such "absences" to examine not only instances in which bodies may have been moved but also circumstances where interment never took place. These absences are situated within current thinking about past mortuary programs and Maya beliefs relating to the dead and to the deceased's physical remains.

In South America, Andean archaeologists have the benefit of a rich ethnohistorical record of the precolonial period. Lozada and Rakita (chapter 13) use such accounts to interpret social and biological transitions

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among the Chiribaya of coastal Peru. (The Chiribaya project was directed by Buikstra.) They integrate the analysis of skeletal data, grave goods, ethnohistory, and funerary patterns as a means of drawing inferences about gender construction and attitudes toward key transitions in the life cycle of an individual. Nystrom also seeks to integrate narratives from bioarchaeology, ethnohistory, and material culture studies (chapter 14). In one of the first investigations of the biological impact of the Inca expansion, he documents the effects of the process of imperial domination on local populations that reflect the context-specific strategies used to build Inca hegemony.

The focus of Part IV is on the Old World, where a number of different approaches to archaeologically retrieved human remains developed in parallel to the emergence of bioarchaeology in the Americas. Paleopathology has been central to the emergence of a number of these developments. In chapter 15, Aufderheide considers the long history of the study of pathological lesions in mummified human remains, where the presence of soft tissues has both fascinated and challenged researchers. He documents how the integration of clinical and bioarchaeological approaches in the last few decades has broadened the agenda beyond paleopathology and has led to the emergence of mummy studies as vibrant scientific endeavors that have moved beyond their traditional home in Egypt. In her discussion of leprosy in medieval Europe and particularly Britain (chapter 16), Roberts combines the clinical approach to the malady with historical and bioarchaeological perspectives and concludes that to achieve a more complete understanding of the impact of disease, it is necessary to move beyond biological dimensions and to consider the social context of such afflictions. Perry et al. use bioarchaeological approaches to contest the validity of historical narratives of mine workers in Byzantine-period Jordan (chapter 17). Using bone chemistry analysis and other lines of evidence, they identify a hitherto invisible cohort of the mining population, providing more complete and representative biographies of the laborers behind the production of metal. In chapter 18, Lull et al. follow similar methodologies to those outlined by Ubelaker in Part III and also consider the importance of taphonomic issues in the formation of the funerary record. They argue that categories such as collective burial have a homogenizing effect that masks diachronic variability in mortuary behavior. They advocate the adoption of historically contingent approaches where variability is related to broader socioeconomic factors. Historical contingency is also central to the contribution by O'Donnabhain and Hallgrímsson, who, like Stojanowski in Part II, examine the relationship between biology and social identity. Using morphological distance studies to interrogate the nature of the colonial encounter in Viking Age Ireland, they argue that cultural responses to biological syncretism varied and that material culture and habituated practices were critical to identity construction. In chapter 20, Milner demonstrates that it is unsafe to make broad assumptions about the relationship between health status and social organization by examining the connection between trauma, sex, and longevity in medieval Denmark. He concludes that bioarchaeological research should be historically contingent, and he questions a number of conventional wisdoms regarding temporal and geographical variations in health.

In conclusion, our hopes for this volume can be distilled into two points. First, we hope that the volume documents the degree to which bioarchaeological approaches have become normalized and integrated into anthropological research. It is apparent from this collection of essays that Buikstra's vision of bringing the osteologist out of the lab and into the field, and thereby out of the appendix and into the interpretation of archaeological data, has been achieved. This is testament to the success of Buikstra's pioneering work and her subsequent evangelical approach to the promotion of the discipline both within the United States and internationally. Secondly, we hope this volume serves to highlight the dynamism of bioarchaeology, which owes so much to the strong foundations laid down over the last few decades. New perspectives have emerged, partly in response to broader theoretical changes within anthropology but also as a result of the engagement of the broader discipline with bioarchaeology. Engagement with the broader community has also had a transformative effect on the discipline and has contributed to forging new avenues of research. We anticipate further exciting developments and a long-lasting role for bioarchaeological approaches in furthering our knowledge of the human experience in the past. Such narratives deepen our understanding of the human career and have a significant relevance to our present and future.

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