

ALANA CORDY-COLLINS (5 June 1944–16 August 2015)

Christopher B. Donnan

University of California, Los Angeles

cdonnan@anthro.ucla.edu

and

Rose Tyson

ratyson45@gmail.com



Alana Cordy-Collins excavating at La Mina, Jequetepeque Valley, Peru, 1993.

Alana Cordy-Collins was born in Los Angeles, California. There were two elements of her childhood that strongly shaped her interest in archaeology and museums. The first was her father, who was keenly interested in Maya archaeology, kept a collection of books and

journals with information about Mayan research, and enjoyed sharing his interest in this field of study with Alana. Second, she grew up less than a mile from the Southwest Museum, which she loved to visit, fascinated by its extra-

ordinary displays of Native American and Pre-Columbian artifacts.

Alana received her B.A. in Art History at UCLA in 1970, and continued in the Archaeology Program at UCLA for graduate study. As a graduate student, she became actively involved in the Moche Archive, where a large photographic record of Moche art was being compiled. It included a great many depictions of reed boats, which became the subject of Alana's M.A. thesis (Cordy-Collins 1972). Her interest in watercraft, and the role they played in Andean culture history, was a subject she returned to in subsequent publications (Cordy-Collins 1977b, 1990a; Cordy-Collins and McClelland 1984).

Closely related to her research in watercraft was her study of contact between cultures of the West Coast of Mexico, Ecuador, and the North Coast of Peru (Cordy-Collins 2001c, 2003, 2011) that resulted in the diffusion of items such as spondylus shells (Cordy-Collins 1990a, 1999, 2001b), and hairless dogs (Cordy-Collins 1994).

Alana's Ph.D. dissertation focused on a corpus of looted cotton textiles from the site of Carhua that were painted with Chavin religious iconography (Cordy-Collins 1976). By recording and carefully studying the many fragments that were scattered in various collections, Alana was able to identify pieces that had once been parts of larger textiles. She proposed that the textiles were used to teach the canons of Chavin religion to peoples of the South Coast of Peru, whose acceptance can be seen in the transference of this iconography to pottery. Alana returned to aspects of her Carhua textile research in several of her subsequent publications (Cordy-Collins 1977a, 1979b, 2000). The images painted on the Carhua textiles fascinated Alana and led to her long-term interest in shamanism and the role of hallucinogens in

Andean culture history (Cordy-Collins 1977a, 1980, 1983a, 1989, 1996a, 1998).

Although Alana was keenly interested in Moche, Lambayeque, and Chimu art, it was the subject matter and esthetics of Chavin art that most captivated her. Following the example of the Moche Archive at UCLA, she created an extensive photographic archive of Chavin art, which became an important resource for her research.

Alana's profound knowledge of Chavin, Moche, Chimu, and Lambayeque art and iconography led to masterful insights that she presented in numerous lectures and publications. In addition to her many articles, Alana published two readers for Pre-Columbian art history (Cordy-Collins, editor 1982c; Cordy-Collins and Stern 1977), a book on a collection of Pre-Columbian art (Nicholson *et al.* 1979), and edited two conference volumes (Cordy-Collins and Johnson 1997; Moseley and Cordy-Collins 1990).

For many years, Alana served as Curator of Precolumbian Collections at the San Diego Museum of Man, contributing to many programs, symposia, and exhibitions. She curated five major exhibits: *The Graphic Gourd: South American Cucurbit Art*; *Souvenirs to Science: The Eclectic Collector*; *Water: Liquid of Life in the New World*; *Artifakes: Rip-Offs, Replicas, and Reproductions in Precolumbian Art*; and *Flight of the Jaguar: An Exhibition of South American Shamanism*.

As Professor of Anthropology at the University of San Diego, Alana was a gifted and inspiring teacher. In 1995, the university was given the David W. May American Indian Collection. Because of Alana's prior museum experience, she was asked to curate the collection and use it as a resource for teaching museum studies courses. Beginning in 1996, she taught an annual course that involved student research, development, and installation of an exhibit

based on the May Collection. Her involvement with this collection led to three special events: the *American Indian Celebration: A Festival and Marketplace* (2002–2004). These festivals involved the participation of numerous Southwest and local Native American artists. In 2011, with the university as host, Alana organized the 7th *World Mummy Congress*. This meeting was held with the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Alana thoroughly enjoyed field archaeology. After receiving her Ph.D., she participated in various excavations in California and Mexico, but throughout most of her career she was involved in fieldwork in the Andean area. Alana was always a wonderful addition to the archaeological projects in which she participated. She was widely recognized for her ability to recover fragile objects intact—an ability that constantly amazed those who worked with her. Moreover, she was consistently cheerful—never complaining about long hours or uncomfortable conditions—and had a wonderful ability to enhance the comradery among the members of the team.

In 1983, Alana joined the multidisciplinary archaeological project at Pacatnamu, where she became keenly interested in the excavation and analysis of human skeletal remains. She returned to Pacatnamu for three subsequent field seasons and published two important articles based on her excavations there (Cordy-Collins 1997; Verano and Cordy-Collins 1986).

Between 1987 and 1993, Alana was involved in archaeological excavations at various Peruvian sites, including Pikillacta, La Mina, San José de Moro, Masanca, and Choquepujio, where she was often in charge of the excavation and analysis of human skeletal remains. Between 1994 and 2001 she participated in eight field seasons at Dos Cabezas. One of these seasons involved the excavation of a Lambayeque temple with sub-floor burials that contained

a remarkable array of associated objects (Donnan and Cordy-Collins 2015). Several other seasons focused on the excavation of five high-status Moche tombs, each containing an extremely tall principal individual (Cordy-Collins 2004). After carefully excavating and recording their skeletal remains, Alana set out to determine the cause of their tall stature. This quest led her to network with many physicians and physical anthropologists, and to attend numerous forensic conferences (Cordy-Collins 2004).

Between 2006 and 2008, Alana made three trips to Mongolia to study the connection between shamanistic practices, reindeer, and hallucinogenic plants. This resulted in an article in which she documented the similarities of these three elements in Eurasia and the Americas and suggested that there was an early connection between the two (Cordy-Collins 2010).

In 2012, Alana began an extensive survey of Scotland's Neolithic stone circles and standing stones. She spent the following summer working on Orkney Island at the Ness of Brodgar, a huge Neolithic temple complex covering more than six acres. This World Heritage site produced painted walls, carved stonework, and the first grooved pottery. While working on the site, she took instruction in Neolithic pottery-making and produced a large Neolithic-style vessel which was shipped to San Diego for her class on the Neolithic peoples of Europe.

Alana died of cancer at her home in San Diego, California on 16 August 2015. She is survived by her son Arian Collins.

Alana was a truly wonderful person, who will be remembered for her enthusiasm, her generosity, her grace, and her positive outlook. She is dearly missed by her many friends and colleagues.

WORKS BY ALANA CORDY-COLLINS

- 1972 *The Tule Boat Theme in Moche Art: A Problem in Ancient Peruvian Iconography*. M.A. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 1976 *Iconographic Study of Chavin Textiles from the South Coast of Peru: Discovery of a Pre-Columbian Catechism*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 1977a Chavín Art: Its Shamanic/Hallucinogenic Origins. In: *Pre-Columbian Art History: Selected Readings*, edited by Alana Cordy-Collins and Jean Stern, pages 353–362. Palo Alto, California: T.H. Peek, Publisher.
- 1977b The Moon is a Boat! A Study in Iconographic Methodology. In: *Pre-Columbian Art History: Selected Readings*, edited by Alana Cordy-Collins and Jean Stern, pages 421–435. Palo Alto, California: T.H. Peek, Publisher.
- 1979a The Dual Divinity Concept in Chavín Art. *El Dorado* 3(2):1–31 (University of Northern Colorado, Greeley).
- 1979b Cotton and the Staff God: Analysis of an Ancient Chavín Textile. In: *The Junius B. Bird Precolumbian Textile Conference, May 19th and 20th, 1973*, edited by Ann Pollard Rowe, Elizabeth P. Benson, and Anne-Louise Schaffer, pages 51–60. Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum and Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- 1980 An Artistic Record of the Chavín Hallucinatory Experience. *The Masterkey* 54(3):84–93 (The Southwest Museum, Los Angeles).
- 1982a A Possible Replicative Model for the Plastering of the San Diego Presidio Chapel. In: *Approaches to Historical Archaeology: The Case of the Royal Presidio of San Diego*, edited by Stephen A. Colston. San Diego, California: San Diego History Research Center, San Diego State University.
- 1982b Earth Mother/Earth Monster Symbolism in Ecuadorian Manteño Art. In: *Precolumbian Art History: Selected Readings*, Volume 2, edited by Alana Cordy-Collins, pages 205–230. Palo Alto, California: T.H. Peek, Publisher.
- 1983a Psychoactive Painted Peruvian Plants. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 2(2):144–153 (Flagstaff, Arizona).
- 1983b *The Cerro Sechín Massacre: Did It Happen?* San Diego Museum of Man Ethnic Technology Notes 18. San Diego, California: San Diego Museum of Man.
- 1984 Texts and Images in Andean Prehistory. In: *Texts and Images in Precolumbian Art: Essays on the Relationship of the Verbal and Visual Arts*, edited by Janet Catherine Berlo, pages 181–196. Oxford: BAR International Series 180.
- 1989 The Iconography of Visionary Experience: A Resolve of the Conflict Between Ordinary and Nonordinary Reality. In: *Cultures in Conflict: Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Chacmool Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Diana Claire Tkaczuk and Brian C. Vivian, pages 34–43. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary.
- 1990a Fonga Sigde, Shell Purveyor to the Chimú Kings. In: *Kingship and Statecraft in Chimor*, edited by Michael E. Moseley and Alana Cordy-Collins, pages 393–418. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.
- 1990b The Origins of Huichol Art. In: *Mirrors of the Gods: Proceedings of a Symposium on the Huichol Indians*, edited by Susan Bernstein, pages 41–50. San Diego Museum of Man Papers 25 (San Diego, California).
- 1990c Ancient Ecuador. *Minerva: International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology* 1(5):4–7.
- 1992 Archaism or Tradition? The Decapitation Theme in Cupisnique and Moche Iconography. *Latin American Antiquity* 3(3):206–220.
- 1994 An Un-Shaggy Dog Story. *Natural History* 103(2):34–41.
- 1996a The Cat, the Cactus, the Cloud, and the Culebra. In: *Debating Complexity: Proceedings of the Twenty-seventh Annual Chacmool Conference*, edited by Daniel A. Meyer, Peter C. Dawson, and Donald T. Hanna, pages 180–190. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary.
- 1996b Chimú. In: *Andean Art at Dumbarton Oaks*, edited by Elizabeth H. Boone, pages 223–276. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection.
- 1996c Lambayeque. In: *Andean Art at Dumbarton Oaks*, edited by Elizabeth H. Boone, pages 189–222. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection.
- 1997 The Offering Room Group. In: *The Pacatnamu Papers*, Volume 2, edited by Christopher B. Donnan and Guillermo A. Cock, pages 283–292. Los Angeles, California: Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 1998 The Jaguar of the Backward Glance. In: *Icons of Power*, edited by Nicholas J. Saunders, pages 155–170. London: Routledge.
- 1999 La sacerdotisa y la ostra: ¿Queda resuelto el enigma del spondylus? In: *Spondylus: Ofrenda*

- sagrada, símbolo de paz, pp. 17–34. Lima: Fundación Telefónica, Museo Rafael Larco Herrera, and Cussi y Cia., S.A.
- 2000 Telas pintadas Chavín, Valle de Ica, Costa Sur. In: *Tejidos milenarios del Perú*, edited by José Antonio Lavalle and Rosario de Lavalle de Cárdenas, pages 107–142. Lima: AFP Integra.
- 2001a Decapitation in Cupisnique and Moche Societies. In: *Ritual Sacrifice in Ancient Peru*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson and Anita G. Cook, pages 21–34. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- 2001b Blood and the Moon Priestess: Spondylus Shells in Moche Ceremony. In: *Ritual Sacrifice in Ancient Peru*, edited by Elizabeth P. Benson and Anita G. Cook, pages 35–54. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- 2001c Labretted Ladies: Foreign Women in Northern Moche and Lambayeque Art. In: *Moche Art and Archaeology in Ancient Peru*, edited by Joanne Pillsbury, pages 247–258. Washington, D.C., New Haven, Connecticut, and London: National Gallery of Art.
- 2003 El mundo Moche al empezar el signo VIII: Transiciones e influencias. In: *Moche: Hacia el final del milenio*, Volume 2, *Actas del Segundo Coloquio sobre la Cultura Moche*, Trujillo, 1 al 7 de agosto de 1999, edited by Santiago Uceda C. and Elías Mujica P., pages 229–246. Trujillo, Peru: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú/Universidad Nacional de Trujillo.
- 2004 Five Cases of Prehistoric Peruvian Gigantism. In: *Mummies in a New Millennium: Proceedings of the 4th World Congress on Mummy Studies*. Nuuk, Greenland, September 4th to 10th, 2001, edited by Neils Lynnerup, Claus Andreason, and Joel Berglund, pages 115–120. Nuuk, Greenland: Greenland National Museum and Archives and Copenhagen: Danish Polar Center.
- 2009 Curated Corpses and Scattered Skeletons: New Data and New Questions Concerning the Moche Dead. In: *Andean Civilization: A Tribute to Michael E. Moseley*, edited by Joyce Marcus and Patrick Ryan Williams, pages 181–193. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute for Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 2010 The Sacred Deer Complex: Out of Eurasia. In: *Adventures in Pre-Columbian Studies: Essays in Honor of Elizabeth P. Benson*, edited by Julie Jones, pages 139–160. Washington, D.C.: Pre-Columbian Society of Washington, D.C.
- 2011 The Northern Moche World at the Beginning of the Eighth Century and the Role of the Jequetepeque Valley. In: *From State to Empire in the Jequetepeque Valley, Peru*, edited by Colleen M. Zori and Illana Johnson, pages 65–82. Oxford: Archaeopress, BAR International Series 2310.
- 2015 *The May Collection: Twenty Works for Twenty Years*, edited by Alana Cordy-Collins. San Diego, California: University Galleries, University of San Diego.
- 2020 Survey Report for the Archaeological Zone of Carhua, Peru. In: *Prehistory of the Ica-Nazca Littoral, Peru* by Patrick H. Carmichael. *Andean Past Monograph* 3, pp. 21–23.
- Cordy-Collins, Alana, editor
- 1982c *Precolumbian Art History: Selected Readings*, Volume 2. Palo Alto, California: T.H. Peek, Publisher: Palo Alto, California.
- Christian, Dennis and Alana Cordy-Collins
- 1986 Aboriginal Occupation of a West Coast Rock Art Site in Baja California. In: *Rock Art Papers*, Volume 3, edited by Ken Hedges, pages 75–90. *San Diego Museum of Man Papers* 20 (San Diego, California).
- Cordy-Collins, Alana and Grace Johnson, editors
- 1997 *Proceedings of the 1995–1996 Latin American Symposia: "Death, Burial, and the Afterlife" and "Landscapes and Mindscapes of the Ancient Maya"*. San Diego, California: San Diego Museum of Man.
- Cordy-Collins, Alana and Donna McClelland
- 1984 Upstreaming Along the Peruvian North Coast. In: *Texts and Images in Precolumbian Art*, edited by Janet Catherine Berlo, pages 197–210. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Cordy-Collins, Alana and Charles F. Merbs
- 2008 Forensic Iconography and the Moche Giants. In: *The Art and Archaeology of the Moche: An Ancient Andean Society of the Peruvian North Coast*, edited by Steve Bourget and Kimberly L. Jones, pages 93–112. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Cordy-Collins, Alana and Douglas Sharon, editors
- 1993 *Current Topics in Aztec Studies: A Symposium in Honor of H.B. Nicholson*. San Diego, California: San Diego Museum of Man.
- Cordy-Collins, Alana and Jean Stern, editors
- 1977 *Precolumbian Art History: Selected Readings*. Palo Alto, California: T.H. Peek, Publisher.
- Donnan, Christopher B. and Alana Cordy-Collins
- 2015 A Lambayeque Sacrificial Temple. *Nawpa Pacha: Journal of Andean Archaeology* 34(2):117–146.
- Moseley, Michael E. and Alana Cordy-Collins, editors
- 1990 *The Northern Dynasties: Kingship and Statecraft in Chimor*. Conference Proceedings. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Nicholson, H.B., Alana Cordy Collins, and Lewis K. Land
- 1979 *Precolumbian Art from the Land Collection*. San Francisco, California: San Francisco Academy of Sciences.

Roe, Peter and Alana Cordy-Collins

1983 *Chavin Art*. Greeley, Colorado: Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado.

Verano, John and Alana Cordy-Collins

1986 The H1M1 Burial Platform. In: *The Pacatnamu Papers*, Volume 1, edited by Christopher B. Donnan and Guillermo A. Cock, pages 85–94. Los Angeles, California: Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.



Alana Cordy-Collins drawing a gourd she excavated at Pacatnamu, Jequetepeque Valley, Peru, 1983.