

RACHEL L. JOHNSON, PhD, RPA

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EDUCATION

2026	PhD Anthropology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA Thesis: <i>Technological Histories of Ceramic Production Practices in the Upper Puccha Valley, Ancash, Peru (1100 BCE – 900 CE)</i> , Chair: Jason Nesbitt, PhD Committee Members: Tatsuya Murakami and Marcello Canuto	
2018	MA Anthropology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA	<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>
2016	BS, BA University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA BS Geology, with honors; BA Anthropology, with honors Minor: Chemistry; Concentration: Latin American Studies Honors Thesis: <i>Households and Empire: a pXRF study of metal artifacts from Cerro la Virgen</i> , Chair: Elizabeth Arkush, PhD	<i>Summa Cum Laude</i>

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

KALBFLEISCH POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOW	<i>2026-present</i>
American Museum of Natural History, Division of Anthropology, New York, NY; Supervisor: Michelle Young, PhD, Assistant Curator of South American Archaeology	

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Ceramic *Chaine Opératoire*, Technology and Craft Production; Mining and Provenance; Early Complex Societies; Andes and the Upper Amazon; Museum and Legacy Collections Research

EXTERNAL GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2026	Kalbfleisch Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, Richard Gilder Graduate School, American Museum of Natural History	(\$155,000)
2021	Rust Family Foundation Archaeology Grant	(\$8,350)
2016	National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	(\$126,000)

INTERNAL GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

2024	Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Tulane University, School of Liberal Arts	(\$25,000)
2023	School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Summer Research Fellowship	(\$3,000)
2022	Land Fund for School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Travel, Tulane University	(\$1,000)
2021	School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Summer Research Fellowship	(\$3,000)
2020	Tulane Anthropology Graduate Student Summer Research Grant	declined
2020	Graduate Research Assistantship and Tuition Waiver, Tulane University	(\$21,600)
2019	Tulane Anthropology Graduate Student Summer Research Grant	(\$1,800)
2019	Graduate Research Assistantship and Tuition Waiver, Tulane University	(\$21,600)
2018	Land Fund for School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Travel, Tulane University	(\$1,000)
2018	Tinker Foundation Grant, Stone Center for Latin American Studies, Tulane University	(\$2,100)

2017	Stone Center for Latin American Studies Summer Research Grant, Tulane University	(\$1,800)
2016	Norman K. and Margaret Flint Memorial Field Scholarship, Department of Geology and Environmental Science, University of Pittsburgh	(\$1,500)
2016	University Scholar, University of Pittsburgh, <i>top 2% of senior class</i>	
2015	International Studies Fund Summer Research Grant, University of Pittsburgh	(\$1,500)
2015	Corrado Undergraduate Research Award, Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh	
2014	University Scholar, University of Pittsburgh, <i>top 2% of junior class (by credits)</i>	
2014	Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh	(\$10,000)
2012	University Honors College Scholar, Full-Tuition Scholarship, University of Pittsburgh	(\$107,000)

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Rachel Johnson and Sarah Paterno

Under Review Investigating the Cave of the Owls legacy collections: a petrographic and pXRF study of ceramic production in the Peruvian Montaña. Submitted to *Archaeometry*, August 2026.

Rachel Johnson, Jason Nesbitt, MinJoo Choi, Julia Sjödahl, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2026 Continuity and Change in Ceramic Production Practices in Conchucos: New Data from Reparín (650/600 BCE - 200 CE), Ancash, Peru. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 70 (105616). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2026.105615>

Rachel Johnson, Jason Nesbitt, Julia Sjödahl, MinJoo Choi, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2025 Ceramic Production and Exchange in the Chavín Heartland: An Archaeometric Study from Canchas Uckro (1100-800 BCE), Ancash, Peru. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 17(238). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-025-02333-0>

Jason Nesbitt, **Rachel Johnson**, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2021 Connections Between the Chavín Heartland and the Upper Amazon (1100-850 BC): New Perspectives from Canchas Uckro. In *The Archaeology of the Upper Amazon: Complexity and Interaction in the Andean Tropical Forest*, edited by R. Clasby and J. Nesbitt. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Jason Nesbitt, **Rachel Johnson**, and Rachel A. Horowitz

2019 Was Obsidian used for Camelid Shearing in Ancient Peru? An Experimental and Usewear Study. *Ethnoarchaeology*, 11 (1): 80-94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19442890.2019.1573286>

In Preparation

Rachel Johnson, Bebel Ibarra Asencios, Jason Nesbitt, MinJoo Choi, and Julia Sjödahl

Ceramic Production and *Chullpa* Mortuary Architecture at Coronajirca (600 CE – 900 CE): Identifying Social Groups through a Technological Approach to Mortuary Ceramic Assemblages. To be submitted to the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*.

Rachel Johnson, Bebel Ibarra Asencios, Carlos Escobar Silva, Jhon Cruz Quiñones, and Julia Sjödahl

Recuay ceramic production in Conchucos: an archaeometric characterization of pottery from Patio Group contexts at Huampáran (650-900 CE), Ancash, Peru.

Jason Nesbitt, **Rachel Johnson**, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

Reconsiderando el estilo Waira-jirca: Cronología y distribución en la región de Conchucos en la sierra Peruana (1100-800 AC).

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, POSTERS, AND INVITED TALKS

Rachel Johnson and Sarah Paterno

2025 *"A Connecting Link": An Archaeometric Reinvestigation of Ceramic Artifacts from the Cave of the Owls and their Relationship with Upper Amazonian Ceramic Assemblages*. Paper presented at the 90th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Denver, CO. [Invited]

Jason Nesbitt, **Rachel Johnson**, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2024 *Reconsiderando el estilo Waira-jirca: Cronología y distribución en la región de Conchucos en la sierra Peruana (1100-800 ANE)*. Paper presented at XI Encuentro de Teoría Arqueológica de América del Sur, Huaraz, Peru. [Invited]

Rachel Johnson, Julia Sjö Dahl, MinJoo Choi, Ryan Clasby, and Jason Nesbitt

2024 *Return to Yarinacocha: a pXRF and Petrographic study of ceramics artifacts from the Tutishcainyo site series (1400 BCE – 900 CE), Ucayali, Perú*. Poster presented at the 89th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans, LA.

Jason Nesbitt, Bebel Ibarra Asencios, Lars Fehren-Schmitz, Eden Washburn, and **Rachel Johnson**

2024 *Cultural Transformations in Conchucos After 500 BC*. Paper presented at the 86th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, New Orleans, LA.

Rachel Johnson, Jason Nesbitt, MinJoo Choi, Julia Sjö Dahl, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2023 *Pots and People on the Move: New Geochemical and Petrographic Evidence from Canchas Uckro (1100-800 BCE), Ancash, Perú*. Paper presented at the 40th annual Northeast Conference on Andean and Amazonian Archaeology and Ethnohistory, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Rachel Johnson and Jason Nesbitt

2022 *Resilience and Risk in the Placement of Initial Period Coastal Centers*. Paper presented at the 87th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Chicago, IL. [Invited]

Rachel Johnson, Jason Nesbitt, and Bebel Ibarra Asencios

2021 *A Comparison of Ceramic Compositions from Canchas Uckro (Ancash) and the Cave of the Owls (Huánuco), Peru: Implications for an Upper Amazon Interaction Sphere*. Poster presented at the 86th annual meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, online.

Rachel Johnson and Jason Nesbitt

2019 *An Analysis of Ceramic Compositions from Canchas Uckro, Ancash, Perú: Implications for Trade and Exchange in the Formative Andes*. Poster presented at 84th annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Albuquerque, NM.

Rachel Johnson

2018 *Animism and Agency in the Amazonian Landscape: a consideration of Amazonian perspectivism and the ontological turn utilizing perspectives from a modern Runa community*. Paper presented at 83rd annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Washington, D.C. [Invited]

Andrew Schroll, Jason Nesbitt, **Rachel Johnson**, and Sadie Weber

2018 *Analysis of the Lithic Assemblage from Canchas Uckro (1100-800 B.C.), Eastern Ancash, Perú*. Poster presented at 83rd annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Washington, D.C.

Jason Nesbitt, Bebel Ibarra Asencios, Sadie Weber, **Rachel Johnson**, Andrew Schroll, and Anne Titlebaum

2017 *Canchas Uckro: A Late Initial Period (1100-800 B.C.) Site in the Chavín Heartland*. Paper presented at the Southeastern Meeting of the Society for Amazonian and Andean Studies, Millsaps, MS.

Rachel Johnson, Patrick Mullins, and Brian Billman

2016 *Households and Empire: a pXRF study of metal artifacts from Cerro la Virgen, Perú*. Poster presented at the 81st annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Orlando, FL.

MEDIA COVERAGE

McCrory, Molly. "Ceramics provide insights into trading in ancient Peru." *Tulane Today*, March 16, 2026.

<https://news.tulane.edu/news/ceramics-provide-insights-trading-ancient-peru>

RESEARCH AND FIELD EXPERIENCE

Chavín Hinterlands Project, Huari, Ancash, Peru, *Ceramic Archaeometry* 2016-present

- Jason Nesbitt (Tulane University), PI: examining hinterland communities in eastern highland Ancash, Peru during the florescence of Chavín de Huántar (1100-400 BCE) to understand shifts in socioeconomic organization; ceramic analyses emphasize ceramic production and interregional exchange relationships c. 1100-400 BCE

Proyecto Arqueológico Huari-Ancash, Huari, Ancash, Peru, *Ceramic Archaeometry* 2022-present

- Bebel Ibarra Asencios, PI: tracking changes in mortuary patterns and their relationship with transformations in political and social organization (200-1600 CE) within the Huaritambo Valley of the Conchucos region; ceramic analyses emphasize corresponding changes in ceramic production and exchange, particularly in relation to the production of kaolin vessels associated with mortuary contexts

Cinnabar Roads Project, PIA Rutas de Cinabrio 2026-present

- Michelle Young (AMNH), PI: exploring the ancient mining and exchange of cinnabar to map trade routes, craft organization, political alliances to trace the complex forms of social and economic organization of small-scale societies in ancient Peru, Ecuador, and Chile prior to state formation

Proyecto Pucatnamu, Jequetepeque, La Libertad, Peru, *Ceramic Archaeometry* 2026

- Edward Swenson (University of Toronto) and Cartio Taverro Medina (Universidad de Barcelona), PIs: assisted in excavations, directed by Dr. Nicholas Brown, of a Formative mound associated with the pampa of Pucatnamu; paste analysis emphasized Formative ceramics from the mound complex

PIAMENOS, Cerro San Antonio, Ascope, Peru, *Project Ceramicist* 2026

- Ari Caramanica (Vanderbilt), PI; Survey around Cerro San Antonio identified significant landscape modifications and an extensive Formative occupation; ceramic analyses involved drawing and digitizing all diagnostic ceramics from the 2026 field season and characterized ceramic pastes using reflective light microscopy study

Field Technician, Hudson Cultural Services, Poughkeepsie, New York 2023-2026

- Conducted historical and archaeological research on areas of potential effect (Phase 1A), following guidelines for cultural resource investigations and the curation of archaeological collections outlined by

the New York Archaeological Council (NYAC) and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

- Planned, conducted, and supervised field reconnaissance surveys (Phase 1B), identifying significant historic and pre-contact cultural resources that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

Research Assistant, Middle American Research Institute, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 2020 - 2023

- Digitized LiDAR data from the Yucatan Peninsula and Maya lowlands using ArcGIS Pro to document settlement patterns and train algorithms to improve and increase speed of data processing

Visiting Researcher, American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY 2022

- Technological and compositional study of one component of a ceramic type collection from Yarinacocha, Ucayali, Perú, excavated by Donald Lathrap in the 1950s

Visiting Researcher, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 2022

- Technological and compositional study of one component of a ceramic type collection from Yarinacocha, Ucayali, Perú, excavated by Donald Lathrap in the 1950s

Lab and Field Technician, RC Goodwin and Associates, New Orleans, LA 2021

- Facilitated field and lab operations by coordinating resources across field teams and preparing artifacts for accession and storage; Organized landowner notifications (811 calls) for Phase 1B surveys

Visiting Researcher, Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, UC Berkeley 2019

- Investigated technological diversity in the Ross Ceramic collection from test pits excavated at the Cave of the Owls (*Cueva de las Lechuzas*), Huánuco, Peru

Carnegie Museum of Natural History Intern, Anthropology Annex, Pittsburgh, PA 2013 - 2016

- Processed and accessioned museum donations; conducted artifact photography, prepared written descriptions, and constructed specialized acid-free boxes and supports to facilitate transition to new moving storage systems

Moche Archaeological Field School, UNC Chapel Hill, Huanchaco, Peru Summer 2015

- Conducted rescue excavations, pedestrian survey, and drone mapping of fortified hill-top Chimú sites in the mid to upper Moche Valley, directed by Patrick Mullins and Brian Billman

Andes and Amazon Field School, FLAS Fellow, Tena, Ecuador Summer 2014

- Ethnographic research focusing on Kichwa views on women's access to reproductive health care and reproductive intercultural health care practices in the Upper Napo region of Ecuador's Amazon Basin

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tulane University – Instructor of Record

Spring 2022 Native America: An Introduction

Fall 2021 Environmental Archaeology

Tulane University – Peer Tutor

Fall 2019 Statistical Analysis for Anthropologists (Instructor: Tatsuya Murakami)

Higher Education Teaching Certificate, awarded by the Tulane Center for Education, Learning, and Teaching (CELT)

Mentoring

Supervised undergraduate interns at the American Museum of Natural History

Seminars Taught

An Introduction to Reflective Light Microscopy, Optical Mineralogy, and Ceramic Thin Section Petrography 2026
In association with Proyecto Investigación Arqueológico Kawsaypacha: Dynamic Landscapes and Monumental Sites, directed by Amanda Brock Morales (University of North Carolina, Charlotte) and Cynthia Cuadrao Mallqui

Potential Course Offerings:

South American Archaeology, Environmental Archaeology, Statistical Analysis for Anthropologists, An Introduction to Optical Mineralogy and Ceramic Petrography, Ceramic Analysis, Native North America, GIS Methods for Anthropologists, Archaeological Field Methods and Cultural Resource Management (CRM)

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

<i>Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM):</i>	Coordinated Instrumentation Facility Microscopy Lab, Dr. Jibao He, Tulane University, <i>Spring 2017</i>
<i>Geologic Mapping and Stratigraphic Analysis:</i>	6 week field-course instructed by Drs. James Sears and Michael Hoffman, University of Montana, <i>Summer 2016</i>
<i>pXRF analysis:</i>	Bruker Training Seminar, Lee Drake, University of Pittsburgh, <i>Spring 2015</i>
<i>Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology:</i>	Lab-based instruction by Dr. J. Brian Balta, University of Pittsburgh, <i>Spring 2015</i> Lab-based Instruction by Dr. Stephen A. Nelson, Tulane University, <i>Spring 2019</i>
<i>Optical Microscopy (Mineralogy):</i>	Lab-based instruction by Dr. Brian Stewart, University of Pittsburgh, <i>Fall 2014</i>

SERVICE

2026	Reviewer for <i>Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports</i>
2020 - 2023	<i>Student Ambassador</i> , Society for Archaeological Sciences (SAS) - Co-organized “Spring 2021 Early Career Archaeology Brown Bag Series” for emerging scholars - Co-organized Spring and Fall 2022 Interview Series featuring SAS board members - Co-organized SAS 2022 Award Recipients Recognition Event
2020 - 2021	<i>Committee Member</i> , Anthropology Online Colloquium Planning Committee, Tulane University
2018 - 2019	<i>Event Planning Committee Chair</i> , Tulane Anthropology Graduate Student Association (TAGS)
2017 - 2019	<i>Department Representative</i> , Graduate Studies Student Association (GSSA), Tulane University
2017 - 2018	Tulane Anthropology Student Association (TASA), Tulane University

SKILLS

Languages

Spanish: High Intermediate Working Proficiency, spoken (high B1); Professional fluency: writing and reading (B2)
Quechua: Beginner (A1)

Skills

Remoting Sensing and Mapping: QGIS, ArcGIS Pro, ENVI remote sensing
Ceramic analysis: rim drawing, digitization, and archaeological drawing; Wacom tablet; Adobe Photoshop

Skills (cont.)

Thin-Section Ceramic Petrography; thin-section preparation
Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS); multivariate statistical analysis
portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF): data collection, cleaning, and post-processing
Archaeological survey; Horizontal excavations
Geological and geo-hazard mapping
Backpacking, wilderness survival and first-aid

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2015 – present	Society for American Archaeology (SAA)
2019 – present	Society for Archaeological Sciences (SAS)
2024 – present	Ceramic Petrographers of the Americas (CPA)
2025 – present	New York Archaeological Council (NYAC)
2026 – present	Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA)

REFERENCES

Jason Nesbitt

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Michelle Young

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