Carlos Ponce Sangines (May 6, 1925 – March 18, 2005) directed Bolivian archaeology for most of the last half of the 20th century. His view of how archaeology should be done in Bolivia has left a permanent stamp on the development of the field in that country, and on our understanding of the second great Andean empire, Tiwanaku.

Ponce was the son of the lawyer Carlos Ponce de León, and Carolina Sangines Uriarte Fernández de Córdova, and initially also trained to be a lawyer, taking course work at the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz and the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Cochabamba. However the family had a finca or hacienda in the Mollo region, 12 km from Ayata, in Muñecas province, roughly 300 km northeast of La Paz. Ponce had located some ruins of a previously undescribed culture on the Hacienda Mollo, and conducted some small test excavations there in 1942 (Ponce Sangines 1957a:43) when he was 17. After excavating a few graves, he reported his find to the Museo Nacional Tiwanacu in La Paz, which sent an investigator out to look at the material. Much to his disappointment, the authorities did nothing about his site, except to publish a short newspaper article on their brief inspection later in 1944. Ponce continued surveying in the region, finding the ruins of Iskanwaya in 1943, and subsequently conducted additional excavations on his own on Mollo culture sites in the late 1940s. In 1952, he joined Dr. Stig Ryden when Ryden conducted a series of test excavations in the region for the Ethnographic Museum in Gothenburg, Sweden. The Mollo ceramics were thus close to his heart, which is why he later set up the separate Iskanwaya project in this region.

Ponce met and began working with a young artist in La Paz as interested in archaeology as he was, Gregorio Cordero Miranda (1922–1979). Ponce had begun his own work with Tiwanaku ceramics in 1947, and Cordero assisted him by providing drawings of the pots, as well as commentary of vessel function; their first collaboration was an article published in Argentina in 1947. Cordero and Ponce were to work as a team for much of the next three decades, with Cordero later in charge of most of the actual excavations at Tiwanaku, while Ponce secured funding and did the political footwork to keep the projects in operation; Cordero supervised the dirt archaeology while Ponce secured publication locales and did the write-up. Cordero later also was the director of the Tiwanaku museum in La Paz, while Ponce edited the various journals and publications, and took on a general overview role, running several of his archaeological institutes for many years in a wing of the museum building.

Ponce’s first wife, Julia Elena Fortún, received scholarships to Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina, and later to the Universidad Nacional Autónoma in México City. Ponce wrote his first set of articles on the Tiwanaku ceramics, perhaps as a ‘licenciatura’ thesis, when he was at Córdoba with Elena, where he studied archaeology after shifting out of law. When Julia Elena received her award to study in México City, Ponce then continued his studies in archaeology there, training with Alfonso Caso and Manuel Gamio.

Ponce republished his 1947 article on Tiwanaku ceramics the next year, 1948, with additional illustrations, as a ‘separata’, a practice that he continued throughout his life. This practice of Ponce was both a blessing and a bane. A blessing because each time Ponce re-issued an article
as a separate publication, or each time he reprinted the ‘separata’ through one of his other publishing venues, he virtually always included an expanded set of illustrations, with new photographs and line drawings, and maybe even some new appendices. While each re-issue had a different and distinct set of graphics, the main text, notes, and bibliographic citations remained the same, so if you had the original, or one of the re-issues, you had all the theoretical arguments and all the verbal descriptions of the materials and the excavations. But this was a bane as well, because if, as happened in some cases, the article was reissued half a dozen times or more, you had to track down and secure each and every one of the multiple re-issues, as it always seemed to turn out that the one you did not own was the one that had the key new illustration.

Ponce was active in the populist Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR), and served in government positions over four decades, whenever the MNR came to power. After the 1952 revolution, when the MNR revolted against the military junta who had prevented their democratically elected presidential candidate from taking office, Ponce became deeply involved in the local political scene. Right after the 1952 revolution, he was the MNR ‘official mayor’ for the capital city of La Paz, an office which is perhaps most like a cross between a lieutenant mayor and a comptroller. With MNR help, he became head of the Instituto Indigenista Boliviano in 1952. He served the MNR in a diplomatic position in Mexico in 1955. He was head of the Despacho de Asunto Campesinos of the Ministro de Estado for the MNR in 1963 and 1964, where among his duties, he provided the rural landholders with official title for their lands under the land reform, and he worked actively to establish rural schools. He was Permanent Secretary of the National Executive Committee of the MNR from 1985 to 1992, at a time period when his political activity kept him from working much in archaeology, as reflected by a gap in his publications. His MNR connections helped Ponce throughout his career; he was almost always able to call in political favors to help him with his archaeological agenda when needed.

In 1953, almost as soon as he was named to municipal office, Ponce used this post, as well as the position with the Instituto Indigenista Boliviano, to put forth a call for the Primera Mesa Redonda on Bolivian archaeology. Because this was to be an essentially in-country gathering, little time was allowed – the call went forth on October 23, 1953, for meetings which were held less than two months later, December 15–21, 1953. The result of this first round table was the first coherent summary of Bolivian archaeology.

Ponce utilized his subsequent positions as Vice President of the Consejo Municipal de Cultura, and his linkages with the Ministry of Education, to get funds to issue the 500 plus page proceedings of their Mesa Redonda sessions. The volume was ultimately published by the Municipal Government of La Paz in 1957. The municipal government was to serve as one of his important publishing venues throughout his career, particularly furnishing funds for another later synthesis of Titicaca Basin archaeology from both southern Peru and northern Bolivia (Ponce Sangines 1976d, 1977a), and in securing funds to help publish his three series of journals – Khana, Pumapunku (o.s) and Pumapunku (n.s.).

It was at these 1953 meetings that the assembled national archaeologists suggested that it might be appropriate to restore the major structures at Tiwanaku, a message Ponce took to heart, and soon which was to become his driving archaeological goal. He began exploratory work at the site in 1957, and in 1958 had secured the financial base to found the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Tiwanaku. Because Tiwanaku defined much of Ponce’s career, we need to look at some broad issues of his work there. His first operations were at the Semisubterranean Temple. This structure had been partially excavated by earlier researchers. Ponce perceived his work here then as in some measure ‘salvage’ archaeology, cleaning up the
back dirt of the earlier excavations such as George Courty and Wendell Bennett. This initial project rapidly expanded into extensive excavation work involving the Kalasasaya, Kheri-Kala, Laka-Kollu and Putuni.

The first excavations defined the strategies and techniques that Ponce imposed upon Cordero, who directed most of the actual fieldwork at Tiwanaku, as well as upon any outsiders who later petitioned for permission to work in Bolivia during Ponce’s tenure. Ponce was much taken with his understanding of the procedures of Sir Mortimer Wheeler, particularly in terms of the layout of excavation units and their excavation. Thus Ponce decided to set up a five-meter cardinally oriented grid system for each major structure to be investigated. Excavated portions of the units were thus 4.5 meters on a side, with 0.5 m baulks between them. Excavation levels were set at precise metric depths (0.5 and 1.0 m artificial units were not uncommon). Beautiful grid systems excavations were thus produced, and virtually every introductory archaeological textbook in the U.S. discussing excavation techniques in the 1960s though the 1980s had a picture of one of Ponce’s grid-system excavations (usually the Putuni) because they were so exquisitely executed, as an illustration of what one type of archaeological excavation ideally should look like. Adherence to these requirements sometimes eclipsed other aspects of the excavation.

Ponce had his own spin on the idea being hyped by his colleagues to the north that projects should be multi-disciplinary. Tasks were thus sharply divided. Ceramics were analyzed by a technician back in the museum in La Paz, into one of about a score of ‘types’ that had been pre-determined by Ponce. Wall profiles were to be drawn by a professional cartographer, brought in only after the excavations were completed. This cartographer was seen as having the ability to understand the stratigraphy as then visible, so there was no need to keep any of the excavation supervisors around to provide commentary. And so on for other archaeological categories. The beauty of this, from Ponce’s point of view, was that the specialists did not thus have to ‘waste’ their time at the site while dirt was being moved by campesinos. Instead they could potentially go from site to site around the country, plying their expertise, and had no need to get bogged down in the specifics of the excavations. At the top of the organizational pyramid was Ponce; he was responsible for collecting the reports from the experts, and integrating them into a composite archaeological whole.

All this made for what Ponce called ‘scientific archaeology’. He was extremely critical of the kind of test sondages being done in Europe and the U.S. at this time, the sort of things often called ‘telephone-booth’ tests in the vernacular. A competent excavator found materials during excavation in the horizontal grid units; thus screening was unnecessary, although on occasions, if sherds were particularly dense, 1 inch mesh chicken wire screen was employed. When we began excavations on a joint Bolivian-U.S. project in the early 1970s, with Ponce as our co-collaborator and Cordero as our co-field director, Ponce insisted that we only employ his ‘scientific’ archaeology strategy for the major part of the excavations at the site of Chiripa. We were allowed to excavate only three deep sondage units by natural stratigraphy of often few centimeters thickness, employing _ inch and smaller mesh screens. Ponce considered both of these procedures a colossal waste of time.

The practice of issuing interim reports of projects in progress was an anathema to Ponce. He was extremely proud of his reports on the Semisubterranean Temple, saying that all of the data were there, that the reader would not have to worry about changing interpretations, as new information was uncovered in a later season, because the report had not been issued until the analysis and work had been completed. What anyone wanted to know about the Semisubterranean Temple was in that report.
I came to understand Ponce’s disquiet of interim reports best, when I asked him about the Chunchu Kala area at the northwest corner of the Kalasasaya, as well as the deeply buried materials in the interior patio of the Kalasasaya. From Cordero’s workmen, I had learned that there were ‘Tiwanku I’ and ‘Tiwanku III’ materials in both those areas, as well as ‘Pajano’ style stone sculpture. Over the years, I repeatedly asked to see the reports on those materials, because of my research interests in the Formative period, and Ponce’s answer was always the same: until he had finished his excavations and reconstructions of the Kalasasaya, new information might come to light, possibly changing some interpretations, and thus I would have to wait until he could finish writing the single, complete, definitive report covering all of the Kalasasaya excavations. Unfortunately he died before this could be accomplished.

Ponce’s work at Tiwanaku was centered in large part around the agenda set up in the 1953 Round Table meetings – the restoration of Tiwanaku. The restoration of the Semisubterranean Temple seems to be the less intrusive of his projects. One portion of the wall of this structure stood to its essentially restored height, although for much of the structure, there were only the bottom one or two tiers of stone still in place. In reassembling the assemblage of tenon heads, it was quickly recognized that the sandstone or ignimbrite heads had degraded over time to be virtually unrecognizable, while those of andesite, for example, were essentially intact. Thus in the restoration, while the andesite heads were replaced in the walls, in locations comparable to those where they occurred in the one or two remaining original sections of the wall, the degraded sandstone or ignimbrite tenon heads were deliberately left out of the reconstruction.

This restoration policy was a political decision – the funding for Tiwanaku was based on restoring it to its original glory, to serve as a ‘sacred’ political ancestral place for the country, part of the sacred national cultural patrimony, as well as a powerful tourist draw. Emphasis thus was more upon what was perceived to be appropriate for these two goals, while retaining as much original archaeological integrity as this permitted.

This same procedure in restoration was also extended to the restoration of the Kalasasaya (the other buildings excavated by Ponce and Cordero being so thoroughly robbed of stone for later prehistoric and historic buildings in the region, that there was little left to restore). Although his restoration gives a sense of the monumentality and lost magnificence of the Kalasasaya, Ponce imposed a number of his own ideas on the restoration, in part to fill in the gaps, and in part to maximize the impact of the cut stone architectural features. Almost as soon as he had finished the first stages of this restoration, outside experts began criticizing it. While Ponce ignored most critics, he felt particularly stung by the remarks of fellow Andeanist Graziano Gasparini, who had been involved in restoration and reconstruction of monuments in Venezuela. When Gasparini called the Kalasasaya a ‘disastrous reconstruction’, Ponce felt called upon to issue a rebuttal (1972d), which includes much of Ponce’s rationale for the restoration procedure he employed.

As noted earlier, Ponce had a particular concern for the preservation of the national cultural heritage. Thus he was materially involved in the development of the 1961 Cultural Patrimony decree and the 1965 Archaeological Patrimony decree. Ponce, as many Bolivians, had been upset that most of the foreign investigations in Bolivia had resulted in little information sharing with the Bolivians, but mainly in foreign researchers taking monoliths, stone sculptures, ceramics, textiles, baskets, and metal and feather artifacts out of the country for display in American and European museums; there was a bleeding of the finest and the best of the national patrimony and heritage to foreign museums. Thus the 1961 and 1965 acts in particular forbade the export of these items, and in general increased governmental control over those ruins that were considered part of the national patrimony. These acts have made...
trace element analyses and other modern technological procedures difficult to conduct, because in keeping foreigners from removing Bolivian patrimony, it has also made it difficult to send out samples for high-tech analyses.

The establishment of the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Tiwanaku in 1958 was a first of its kind, but by the early 1970s, Ponce had secured his power base in La Paz well enough that he began to expand to other areas. One of the very first places was a return of attention back to the Mollo culture area, where he had begun his archaeological career. He established the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Iskanwaya in 1973, and cleared part of the ruins of El Fuerte, taking the materials recovered to found the Museo Arqueológico Regional of Iskanwaya, and subsequently was able to get Iskanwaya declared a Monumento Nacional Prehispánico. He moved nearly simultaneously to compete with the archaeological community in the Cochabamba region, by establishing the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Samaipata, where he also founded a Museo Arqueológico Regional. He subsequently set up the organizational frameworks for Centers for Archaeological Investigations in Copacabana, Yura, and Potosí; and when we began work in Chiripa in 1974, we were set up as CIACh (Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Chiripa). By 1975, all these were subsumed under a new entity that Ponce helped create – the Instituto Nacional de Arqueología (INAR), which was part of a larger new agency, the Instituto Boliviano de Cultura; Ponce served as the first director of INAR from 1975 to 1982. (INAR is now DINAR, Dirección Nacional de Arqueología).

Ponce’s work on identifying and reconstructing ruins, plus establishing museums, gained him a good measure of local recognition. He received a number of prestigious awards:

- 1971 Condecoración Pedro Domingo Murillo
- 1974 Hijo Predilecto de Samaipata
- 1977 Premio Nacional de Cultura
- 1978 Condecoración Medalla de Oro
- 1986 Condecoración del Puma de Oro
- 1989 Pergamino de al Merito de la Alcaldía de Tiwanaku
- 2005 Orden del Cóndor de los Andes en el grado de Comendador

of which the 1977 and the 2005 awards were the most major. The last award, one of the highest of the Bolivian republic, was awarded to him just hours before he died of cancer in March.

His publishing career reflects the journals he created, and his shifting political successes. Thus many of his earliest publications are in the journal *Khana* which he helped found (Ponce 1953 to 1959). When he established the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Tiwanaku, then he shifted his publication venue there (1959 on). However at about that same time, he had helped the Academia Nacional de Ciencias get funding support, and had helped them move into some unused space in the National Archaeological Museum, so that his major monographs in the early 1970s came out under the National Academy of Sciences rubric. When the journal *Khana* (1953–1967) folded, Ponce worked on establishing a new archaeological journal, *Pumapunku*. Ponce was the editor of the ‘old series’ of *Pumapunku* (1970–1978) as well as of its revival ‘new series’ (1991–1995). The intervening decade of the 1980s marks a virtual dearth of publications by Ponce, in part because of his increased political work with the MNR, and in part because he was supervising Dr. Alan Kolata and his students, who were bringing in major NSF funding to work on the Tiwanaku region.

Below I have listed the majority of publications by Ponce that I know. It is an important list, I think, because the short obituary comments by his colleagues in March lauded Ponce as an archaeological giant for having written nearly 50 books and articles – but our list includes over 75 items. At his death, Ponce was said to be working on a four volume synopsis of
Tiwanaku, to be published by the Universidad San Francisco de Asís, according to his oldest daughter, Naya Ponce. Thus in addition to a just issued book on Tiwanaku published by CIMA, not listed below as I lack the exact title, we may well be able to add to this list with a posthumous magnum opus. I have attempted to include the first published article source of the materials only; in virtually all cases for publications in the 1950s through the 1980s, the articles are all reprinted one or more times as ‘separates’ by the Academic Nacional de Ciencias, the Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Tiwanaku, and/or the Instituto Nacional de Arqueología de Bolivia, with later copyright dates. With two exceptions (both of which have substantial new materials), I have not included any of these later ‘separates’ on the list below; if we were to include them, the list would be well over 120 items.

1945 *Apuntes de Arqueología Andina*. La Paz.

1946 El Museo del Coronel Diez de Medina: una joya de la arqueología americana. *La Razón* (7 de Mayo), La Paz.


1964 *Descripción sumaria del templete semisubterraneo de Tiwanaku*. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas en Tiwanaku, Publicación #2.


1968a Perspectiva arqueológica. En Max Mille y Carlos Ponce Sangines. *Las Andesitas de
Tiwanaku, pp. 25–43. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, Publicación #18.


1970a El colonialismo científico y la desaparición de patrimonio arqueológico de Bolivia. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones de Tiwanaku, Publicación #1.


1970c Las culturas Wankarani y Chiripa y su relación con Tiwanaku. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, Publicación #25.


1972a Tiwanaku: espacio, tiempo y cultura; ensayo de síntesis arqueológica. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, Publicación # 30.


1974a Documentos Étnohistóricos: Tiwanaku 1657. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas, (n.s.), Publicación #2.

1974b Tadeo Haenke y su viaje a Samaipata en 1795. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones
Arqueológicas, (n.s.), Publicación #3.


1975a Alcides d’Orbigny y su viaje a Samaipata en 1832. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas, (n.s.), Publicación #5.


1975a Colocación de malla olímpica en el montículo arqueológico de Chiripa. La Paz: Instituto Nacional de Arqueología.

1976b El conato revolucionaria de 1805: el expediente referente al proceso seguido a José Gabriel Aguilar, José Manuel Ubalde y otros. La Paz: Casa Municipal de la Cultura Franz Tamayo.


1978b Panorama de la arqueología boliviana. La Paz: Instituto Nacional de Arqueología, Publicación #27.

1979 Nueva perspectiva para el estudio de la expansión de la cultura tiwanaku. La Paz: Instituto Nacional de Arqueología.


1984a Sobre doctrina militar y plagio. La Paz: Ediciones de la Verdad.


1994a El modelo de estado integrador de Tiwanaku y su expansión al litoral pacífico. La Paz: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, Coordinadora Nacional de Proyecto ILO, Tomo III.

1994b *Arturo Posnansky y su obsesión milenaria: biografía intelectual de un pionero*. La Paz: Producciones CIMA.

1994c Análisis espectrográfico y patrón de impurezas en el cobre de las grapas tiwanacotas. *Pumapunku* (n.s.) 7:9–64.

1995a *Tiwanaku, 200 años de investigaciones arqueológicas*. La Paz: Producciones CIMA.


1999 *Los jefes de estado de Tiwanaku y su nomina: un avance de la arqueológica política: ensayo de recuperación historiográfica*. La Paz: Producciones CIMA.

2000 *Tiwanaku y su fascinante desarrollo cultural: ensayo de síntesis arqueológica*. La Paz: Producciones CIMA.

2003 *La cultura tiwanaku y el sistema sociocultural prehispánico: ensayo de síntesis arqueológica*. La Paz: Producciones CIMA.

**Carlos Ponce Sangines, editor:**

1953 *Investigaciones arqueológicas en la región fronteriza de Perú y Bolivia, por Erland Nordenskiold* (1877–1932). La Paz: Biblioteca Paceña.


**Carlos Ponce Sangines y Gregorio Cordero Miranda:**


**Carlos Ponce Sangines y Rodolfo S. Galvarro:**

1975 *La República Federal de los Inkas: los protocolos de 1880, material para su estudio: homenaje a sesquicentenario de la Fundación de la República de Bolivia*. La Paz: Municipalidad de La Paz, Casa
Municipal de la Cultura Franz Tamayo.

Carlos Ponce Sangines y Raúl Alfonso García:
1972 Documentos para la historia de la Revolución de 1809. La Paz: Biblioteca Paceña.

Carlos Ponce Sangines, Mariano Baptista Gumucio, y Walter Hermosa Virreina:
1974 Dependencia, historia y revolución tecnológica. La Paz: Ediciones Pumapunku.

Carlos Ponce Sangines y Enrique Linares Iturralde:
1966 Comentario antropológico acerca de la determinación paleoserológica de grupos sanguíneos en momias prehispánicas del altiplano boliviano. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia, Publicación #15.

Carlos Ponce Sangines y Ana Maria Montano Duran:

Carlos Ponce Sangines y Osvaldo Rivera Sundt:

José Arellano López y Carlos Ponce Sangines:
1975 La ciudadela prehispánica de Iskanwaya. La Paz: Centro de Investigaciones Arqueológicas conjuntamente con el Instituto de Cultura Aymara de la H. Municipalidad de La Paz.

Alfredo Franco Guachalla y Carlos Ponce Sangines:
1984 Ensayo histórico sobre la revolución nacional: I: Nacionalización de la minera, II. Ciencia y cultura. La Paz: Centro de Estudios Políticos Bolivianos.

Alan Kolata and Carlos Ponce Sangines: