

South American Archaeology Seminar: London 1st December 2012

Written by Bill Sillar

Sunday, 25 November 2012 08:25 -

Dear All,

The next South American Archaeology Seminar at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London will be on Saturday 1st December. Everyone is welcome (cost £7.50), program details and abstracts below. Please e-mail b.sillar@ucl.ac.uk if you wish to reserve a place and attend the meeting.

Best wishes,
Bill

South American Archaeology Seminar 1st December 2012

Venue: Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

Co. Sponsored by: The Institute for the Study of the Americas, SAS, University of London

10.00 am: Coffee/ Registration

10.30: Paloma Prieto (Stockholm University)

Yunga Cruz & Chunga Mayu: prehispanic paths running between the Altiplano and the Yungas forest

11.05: Penelope Dransart (University of Wales) *Orphan textiles: a twenty-first century role for Henry Wellcome's Andean textiles in museum collections*

11.40: Dianne Scullin (Columbia University)

Setting the Stage: Evaluating the Acoustic Properties of Late Moche Platforms in the Jequetepeque Valley

Lunch

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1.30 pm: Frank Meddens (Preconstruct Archaeology)

Brothers, mountains and platforms, Inca dominion of the Landscape

2.05: Bill Sillar (UCL) and Dennis Ogburn (University of North Carolina)

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Inca stone selection for building and artefacts in Cusco

Tea

3.15: Lawrence Ownes (Birkbeck College) and Peter Eeckhout (Free University of Brussels)

Ychsma 2012: New Investigations into Middle Horizon To Late Period Mortuary Practices at the Monumental Site of Pachacamac

3.50: Lauren Cadwallader (University of Cambridge) Susana Arce Torres (Museo Regional de Ica), and David Beresford-Jones (University of Cambridge)

New Evidence of the Ocucaje- Nasca Transition from a Settlement Site in Samaca, Lower Ica Valley, South Coast Peru

We usually go for a drink at the bar of The Tavistock Hotel, on Tavistock Square, after the seminar. Please email Bill Sillar to reserve a place at the seminar. You will be asked to make a contribution of £7.50 towards the cost of coffee, tea, lunch & administration on the day.

Our next meeting will be on: Saturday 18th May 2013. If you would like to give a talk at a future seminar or for further information please contact Bill Sillar: b.sillar@ucl.ac.uk

Abstracts

Dianne Scullin (Columbia University)

Setting the Stage: Evaluating the Acoustic Properties of Late Moche Platforms in the Jequetepeque Valley

Performance has been postulated to be one of the founding factors of urbanism and the constitution of power in the Moche time period (100-900AD). Public performance is an inherently communicative activity and according to corresponding iconography, many Moche processions and performances involved sound and music. The efficacy and experience of this communication is shaped by many factors including the limits of human perception, the objects utilized and the spaces in which performances occur.

If space is evaluated as the setting for a particular type of experience, and thus a particular form of communication, how does that space effect and shape the experiences within it? What types of experiences does it afford or negate? What forms of communication are physically possible within a space? How did past peoples potentially actively manipulate and shape space and thus experience? This paper presents the acoustic properties of a number of Late Moche performance platforms at two sites in the Jequetepeque Valley, Cerro Chepen and San Ildefonso. It evaluates these performance platforms using a number of criteria including audience size and capacity, inclusivity vs. exclusivity, structure and acoustic enhancements. Evaluating performance spaces in relation to their effects on sound allows for a greater understanding of the changing communication and performance practices of the Late Moche of the north coast of Peru. This paper attempts to understand how the acoustic properties of the sites affected not only the experiences afforded within these performance spaces, but the potential affects of acoustic properties on site layout and architecture during the Late Moche period in the Jequetepeque Valley on the north coast of Peru.

Paloma Prieto (Stockholm Universitet)

Yunga Cruz & Chunga Mayu: prehispanic paths running between the Altiplano and the Yungas forest

Between 2006 and 2007 two routes linking the Altiplano highlands with the Bolivian Yungas forest were documented by the TAKESI project (UMSA-Universita Di Bologna). Both roads depart from Chuñavi (16°34'35"S-67°41'15"O) a small Aymara community, located ca. 70 km from La Paz city. Chuñavi is surrounded by four multifunctional sites, and hundreds of pre-Hispanic Andenes (agricultural terraces). The largest site called Inkapata/ Chijitapata, showed a continuous occupation probably since the Late Formative period until the early Hispanic colony. Both paths Yunga Cruz: Chuñavi-Chulumani (ca.50 km) and Chunga Mayu: Chuñavi-Pasto Grande-Villa Villa-Lavi (ca.120 km) are associated with several multi-component sites.

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Many of them showed different types and styles of pottery sherds, associated with different occupational periods, Formative, Middle Horizon, Late Intermediate, Lowland pottery, local Inca and Inca Pacajes style. These sites are associated with andenes and flood zones in the rainy season close to the bank of the river La Paz. This transitional space between the Altiplano highlands and the Eastern Andes or Llanos, over centuries has shown a series of puzzling questions, but also strongly social and political interaction.

Penelope Dransart (University of Wales Trinity St David)

Orphan textiles: a twenty-first century role for Henry Wellcome's Andean textiles in museum collections

Many Andean artefacts housed in museum collections lack provenance and they have been orphaned from the human remains with which they were once in intimate contact. This paper examines how Henry Wellcome acquired his collections, focusing on his Andean textiles, and the distribution of these textiles to various museums in Britain following his death. An investigation of the collecting activities of two of the recipient institutions, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, demonstrates how curatorial staff treated the textiles as exemplars of technical skill as well as objects of exchange. This research casts light on shifting values concerning the alienability or inalienability of museum objects during the twentieth century.

Frank Meddens (Preconstruct Archaeology)

Brothers, mountains and platforms, Inca dominion of the Landscape

Inca sacred space was marked out in the landscape by natural and constructed features, with fixed and portable elements. This paper reviews the nature of the available data and seeks to define aspects of liminal space as used by the Inca in controlling and managing their empire. It in particular reviews and considers the current evidence for the use of abstract portable stone effigies in this context.

Bill Sillar (University College London) and Dennis Ogburn (University of North Carolina at Charlotte) with contributions from Julio César Sierra (Ministerio de Cultura, Cusco) Rob Ixer (Good Provenance) and Sara Lunt (English Heritage)

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Inka stone selection for building and artefacts in Cuzco

The Inka developed a range of stone sources for building construction and portable artefacts. We have begun to review these using a portable XRF in quarries, monumental buildings and museum collections, and in this paper we present some preliminary ideas and directions we intend to address in future fieldwork/analysis. At the stage of state formation the Inka in Cuzco largely abandoned the use of green diorite from the region of San Blas and adopted the use of grey/black Andesite from Rumicollca for major monumental buildings such as Coricancha. This change in stone selection marks the incorporation of the Pinahua-Mohina ethnic groups and a dramatic change in the control of labour.

The Inka exploited local quarries for the construction of other sites in the Vilcanota drainage (such as Tipon, Juchuy Qosqo, Písaq and Ollantaytambo), yet our analysis has identified building blocks from Rumicollca transported to some of these more distant sites, and blocks from alternative sources brought into Cuzco. We discuss the variety and possible origins of cut stone used at these sites, and evidence of older structures and the use of cramp-sockets at Coricancha and Ollantaytambo. Analysis of carved stone artefacts such as bowls, star head maces and conopas (animal figurines) suggest that along-side a more eclectic selection of stone there were some large-scale production using specific sources and this opens the opportunity to consider the role of the Inka state in the production and distribution of these artefacts which played important roles in ritual and warrior identity.

Lawrence Ownes (Birkbeck College, London) and Peter Eeckhout (Free University of Brussels)
Ychsma 2012: New Investigations into Middle Horizon To Late Period Mortuary Practices at the Monumental Site of Pachacamac

The Ychsma project continues to excavate at the coastal site of Pachacamac, a multi-period site featuring a highly diverse range of cultural signatures over a thousand-year occupation period. Specific aims include the mapping of monumental architecture, and the excavation and exploration of the 'Uhle' cemetery, in front of the Sacred Precinct. Previous seasons have revealed single and multiple burials in various permutations, with a high proportion of sub-adults and an increasing prevalence of disease which may reflect the site's burgeoning importance as a centre of healing. The current season made a very significant discovery: specifically a very large double chambered tomb containing the remains of over 80 individuals, with a clear roof and with evidence of cultural and social patterning in terms of burial position. This is a unique find for the site and uncommon in the Central Coast region. The details of the discovery and the implications thereof are discussed.

While currently preliminary, these data will inform future work into this seminally important site.

Lauren Cadwallader (University of Cambridge) Susana Arce Torres (Museo Regional de Ica),
and David G. Beresford-Jones (University of Cambridge)

New Evidence of the Ocucaje- Nasca Transition from a Settlement Site in Samaca, Lower Ica Valley, South Coast Peru

Until recently, the Paracas epoch (or 'Late Ocucaje' in the Ica Valley) has been studied primarily through mortuary remains — a society (or societies) better understood in death than in life. Few occupation sites have been investigated in detail so that we still lack information about peoples' daily lives. It is, moreover, a time of change and of transition between different social and political organisations. We need to understand the fundamentals of domestic life at this time far better if we wish to explain how and why these changes took place. We report on our recent investigations of a semi-permanent Ocucaje 10 – Nasca 1 occupation site in the Samaca Basin, lower Ica Valley ('Samaca 1004'). The site lies high on the pampa at the edge of the basin, more than a hundred metres above the current Río Ica floodplain and so well beyond the extent of vegetation in the valley today and distant from any source of water. The site is associated with a series of trapezoid geoglyphs marked on the surface of this pampa. We present ceramic, lithic, radiocarbon and mortuary evidence from Samaca 1004 together that for the daily diets of its inhabitants, through analyses of stable isotopes in human bones, and the site's archaeobotanical and faunal evidence. Using this evidence, we examine various possible hypotheses as to why Samaca 1004 was situated where it was, including: defensive reasons; geomorphological changes in the Río Ica floodplain since that time; and whether the site was only temporarily occupied by transhumant groups, or during periodic rituals associated with its adjacent geoglyphs. Finally we attempt to place Samaca 1004 into the wider context of other, much larger, sites of this epoch in the Callango and Ocucaje basins to thereby re-evaluate our understanding of the Ocucaje-Nasca transition in the Ica Valley.