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*Online Journal in Public Archaeology*

## REVIEWS



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SOKENDAI-PUCP

### **I International Symposium on Public Archaeology SOKENDAI-PUCP (SIAP 2011)**

From September 23rd to 25th, the “I International Symposium on Public Archaeology SOKENDAI-PUCP (SIAP 2011)” was held in the Humanities Department Auditorium of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), in Lima, Peru. The Symposium was a successful joint activity between SOKENDAI and PUCP, financed by the SOKENDAI Inter-school Cooperated Educational Project Expenditure (Education) for FY2011, with the participation of 25 speakers and a total attendance of 130 people.

Since Public Archaeology can be defined as a field that studies the outcome relationships that arise when archaeology goes beyond the academic world, it allows a multi-disciplinary discussion about the relationships between academics and the public. Having this definition as a main concept, twenty-five-minutes presentations were carried out by students and professionals from different disciplines (including archaeologists, lawyers, educators, conservation specialists, etc.) and countries (Japan, Peru and Colombia). These presentations were divided into three sessions: Archaeology and Media, Archaeology and Education, and Archaeology and Development Policies. Although the main concept of the Symposium gave us the possibility to arrange all the presentations into the field of Public Archaeology, this field is not fully developed in Latin America. In this sense, for many projects it was the first time that they had the opportunity to present the results of their interaction with the public in an academic common ground.

The keynote lectures were carried out by Prof. Yuji SEKI (Director of the Pacopampa Archaeological Project - SOKENDAI), Prof. Krzysztof MAKOWSKI (Director of the Lomas de Lurin Archaeological Project - PUCP) and Prof. Paloma CARCEDO (General Director for Cultural Heritage - Ministry of Culture of Peru), and gave an overview of the situation of archaeology in Peru and its relationship with the public.

Prof. Seki opened the discussion mentioning how, in the past few years, the situation of projects related to the public has changed. Compared to the 90s, nowadays it is more common to find such projects, and the relationship between tourism and heritage has changed from being considered a non-compatible activity with heritage protection, to a useful and necessary tool to achieve it. He also mentioned how the perspective of archaeologists contrasts with that of the public, in that most archaeologists in Peru still believe that local communities are "ignorant" about their Prehispanic past and, as specialists, it is their duty to teach them the correct "history". In order to really reach the public, archaeologists need to integrate the different voices and interpretations about the past with the academic position.

Prof. Makowski mentioned how archaeological heritage is still not a priority in the political system in Peru, and how, if there is an interest, it is based on the physical characteristics of that heritage -like a treasure- and not in the archaeological information provided or the landscape. For instance, he mentioned the different problems that his project -which included sites like Tablada de Lurin, Pueblo Viejo

and Pachacamac- faced when different interests arose for the use of archaeological sites and landscape. Moreover, the government hinders research because of its lack of support and bureaucratic system, among other problems. He made several suggestions to improve this situation, for instance that archaeological heritage management should leave political interests aside, and overcome the centralized and bureaucratic aspects of the government institutions in charge of it. In addition, research and specialization through postgraduate courses should be promoted through government grants. Scholars need to actively engage in interdisciplinary research. Archaeological heritage management should be organized through protocols, based on research experiences, and excavation reports should be peer-reviewed by making them available online, etc.

Prof. Carcedo made a presentation from the perspective of the Ministry of Culture. She mentioned the difficulties that the Ministry is facing after being established. The former National Institute of Culture had a very complex bureaucratic organization that is currently in the process of simplification. Additionally, the General Direction of Cultural Heritage needs to improve the logistics, salaries and work environment of their employees in order to level up the quality of service. She also mentioned that politics need to be left aside, especially when hiring new specialists and those specialists must be from diverse disciplines. New changes include a more fluid interaction between regional and central offices, agreements with private cultural institutions and enterprises, and reaching the general public through publications.

The session on Archaeology and Media was the first of its kind in Peru. In recent years, communication with the public has become a very important activity for archaeologists, but most of them lack the experience or skills to appropriately communicate the topics that may attract the public. The presentations of Cesar Sara and Maria Helena Tord showed how important it is to address the public with a simpler language, sometimes negotiating the topics that are more interesting for the general public rather than for archaeologists. Naotoshi Ichiki and Lucia Watson also showed us the possibility of presenting the whole of the archaeological information available to the public, allowing them to choose what is important to them through electronic catalogues.

Archaeology and Education are two professions strongly related for a long time, and there are many examples that can be found in the literature of Public Archaeology. The presentation of Alejandra Figueroa

introduced this topic, addressing its main concepts and problems. The presentations in this session can be divided into two categories; how archaeology is presented to the public by school and youth programs and by archaeological projects and museums. The presentations of Anny López Ponce de León, Isabel Collazos, Maria Fé Cordoba and Jose Luis Fuentes (Hatun Llaqta group) provided examples of school and youth programs. In each case, they showed us how archaeologists can directly interact with children so as to share with them the experience of archaeological research or the interest in protecting archaeological heritage. With reference to archaeological projects and museums, the experiences presented by Roberto Pimentel, Claudia Garcia, Gonzalo Rodriguez, Irela Vallejo, Lisette Acuña, Lourdes Castillo, Lucia Watson, Ulla Holmquist and Victor Curay showed us the various approaches that can be taken, as well as the problems and solutions that arise in establishing a relationship with education professionals.

The session on Archaeology and Development Policies also offered a wide variety of examples on the relationship between archaeologists and the local population. With a multidisciplinary approach, the presentation of Fabricio Valencia showed us how the legal concept of heritage has changed, and how many legal loopholes need to be fixed in order to protect heritage in a proper way. The experiences presented in this session on how to manage archaeological heritage and the relationship with local people showed that each situation should be faced individually, especially considering rural contexts (Alejandro Chu, Claudia Bastante, Maria Fe Córdoba, Nohemí Ortiz, Iván Ghezzi, Gabriela Freyre, Julio Rucabado, Brian Billman, Arturo Noel, and Solsiré Cusicanqui) and urban contexts (Luis Felipe Villacorta, Martin del Carpio, Pedro Espinoza, Lucia Watson). In some cases the focus was on making the information available to the public, while in others improving the quality of life was considered more necessary, depending on the population living around the archaeological sites.

The SIAP gave the opportunity to several specialists to present their work, showing their problems and solutions. It also allowed us to build an information network of colleagues with similar interests. At regional level, the SIAP showed that Latin America -Peru in particular- is becoming an area where academic research must be strongly tied to economic and social development, if we want to encourage the general public to get involved in heritage protection. This approach contrasts with the situation in developed countries, where the economic situation is usually better, giving the public better access to information and an

opportunity to criticize the work of archaeologists on an equal basis. Overall, it was a very productive meeting for all the participants and organizers. The report and videos will be available in the next issue of *Arkeos*, *Electronic Magazine of Archaeology PUCP*, scheduled for 2012.

<http://mileto.pucp.edu.pe/arkeos/>



Ponentes magistrales (arriba)  
y una vista del auditorio (abajo)



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