

South American Archaeology Seminar

Written by Bill Sillar

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The next South American Archaeology Seminar (London) will be held at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL, on Saturday 10th May 2014 (please note change of date) - see program and abstracts below.

Anyone wishing to attend is welcome but please email Bill Sillar (b.sillar@ucl.ac.uk) to reserve a place. You are asked to pay £7.50 towards the cost of coffee, tea, lunch & administration (this can be paid on the day, but if you subsequently find you are unable to attend then you must either cancel your reservation or send a payment by post - cheque made out to B. Sillar)

10.00 am Coffee / Registration

10.30: Alexander Herrera (Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia) Water and territory in the Callejon de Huaylas.

11.10: Miguel Fuentes (UCL) Under the shadow of the Moai: The landscape of Colonialism in Rapa Nui during the period of the Exploitation Company of Easter Island (1895-1953).

11.50: Sue Hamilton (UCL) Making Sense of an island world: Rapa Nui c. AD 1200-1600.

Lunch (12.30-1.30)

1.30 pm: David Beresford-Jones (McDonald Institute, University of Cambridge) Investigations at the Mouth of the Río Ica, Peru: A Preceramic Record of Rich Seas, Fog-Meadows, Incipient Agriculture and Shifting Shorelines.

2.10: Manuel Arroyo-Kalin (UCL) and Santiago Rivas Panduro (Ministerio de Cultura, Perú) A preliminary report on recent archaeological investigations along the Napo river, western

Amazonia.

Tea (2.50-3.30)

3.30: George Lau (University of East Anglia) The ancient Andean things called 'maquetas' and 'yupanas'.

4.10: Denise Y. Arnold (Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore, and ILCA, La Paz, Bolivia.) Lowland-highland transpositions: The techniques and designs of some bag straps in early Middle Horizon textiles from Moyocoya (Bolivia).

We usually go for a drink at the bar of The Tavistock Hotel, after the seminar.

Our next meeting will be on Saturday 6th December 2014 if you wish to give a talk at any future seminar please contact Bill Sillar: b.sillar@ucl.ac.uk

ABSTRACTS

Water and territory in the Callejon de Huaylas

Alexander Herrera (Universidad de los Andes, Bogota, Colombia)

Considering its historical place and geographical position within the central Andes, this paper takes a hydroarchaeological approach to the archaeology of the Callejón de Huaylas (lat. 9° S, Ancash Region, Peru). Drawing on results of archaeological survey it compares settlement histories on the western and eastern escarpments at macro and micro-watershed level. Mapping and excavation results at Keushu and other ceremonial centres and necropolis, in the Ranrahirca, Ancash and Lullán valleys, allow insights into the material and symbolic dimensions of water management on the foothills of the Cordillera Blanca. Emphasis is placed on how changes in ceremonial architecture inform upon changes in collective practices in basin headwaters.

Under the shadow of the Moai: The landscape of Colonialism in Rapa Nui during the period of the Exploitation Company of Easter Island (1895-1953).

Miguel Fuentes (UCL)

A description of the spatial and architectural transformations that characterized the European and Chilean occupation of Easter Island during the period of the Exploitation Company of Easter Island. We will discuss how the establishment of this sheep industry on the island was based on a large scale capitalist phenomenon of domestication which involve not only the natural landscape, but also the local population. Spatial organization and architecture will be analysed as a particular mode of social landscape which combined the development of a high-tech capitalist industry with the survival of a Traditional Polynesian society. During the XIX and XX century the population of Rapa Nui not only suffered the violence to colonial powers, but also actively engaged in intensive resistance against them. Finally, the situation of Archaeology as an active tool of colonialist domination on Easter Island during this period will be discussed, arguing that the focus of archaeologists in the study on the Megalithic Rapanui society has to do not only with a scientific (an pure philosophical) interest, but also with a political intentionality to hide (under the Moai's shadow) the most brutal aspects of the foreign presence on the Island.

Making Sense of an island world: Rapa Nui c. AD 1200-1600

Sue Hamilton (UCL)

Interest in Rapa Nui's moai (statue) construction period is dominated by a focus on its demise. Words and phrases such as 'collapse', 'the island that self-destructed', 'ecodisaster' and 'disastrous European contact' abound. There is a tendency to analyse the moai as isolated entities, rather than as elements of a dynamic interrelationship between people, landscape, places and architecture. The neglected mystery of Rapa Nui is why the statues were put up in the first place, why so many and so large, and their role in an island-wide cosmology of 'constructing with stone'. The presentation will pull together the diverse research avenues by which the 'Rapa Nui Landscapes of Construction Project' has investigated the meaning and contexts of moai-period construction activities and offers a Polynesian framework of understanding.

On-going Investigations at the Mouth of the Río Ica, Peru: A Preceramic Record of Rich Seas, Fog-Meadows, Incipient Agriculture and Shifting Shorelines

David Beresford-Jones (McDonald Institute, University of Cambridge)

The One River Project ('orp') tracks the flux in rich cultural florescence and collapse through the past along a single river — the Río Ica — from the southern Andes to its arid coast. The earliest evidence of human occupation here are shell middens at the river's mouth, accumulated through episodic fisher-hunter-gatherer occupations during the long Middle Preceramic Period (c. 8,000 – 4,500 bp). I present preliminary results of our 2013 investigations of these sites. Apart from a variety of rich marine resources, the occupants of these middens also exploited the river estuary, woodlands along the river floodplain and nearby lomas (or 'fog meadow'), for plant and game resources. The Middle Preceramic is a period critical in three respects: (1) the onset of modern El Niño (enso) conditions after millennia of apparent quiescence; (2) eustatic sea-level stabilization, and (3) the gradual transition to sedentism and agriculture here. Interplay between these factors determined the availability of resources to prehistoric populations through, for instance, drinking water, the size of the river estuary, the formation of beaches, the extent of adjacent lomas vegetation and indeed, the technologies developed to exploit them. We seek to understand and date these processes of environmental and social change because they are essential to understanding early human trajectories here, not least the transition from fishing and gathering to agriculture.

A preliminary report on recent archaeological investigations along the Napo river, western Amazonia

Manuel Arroyo-Kalin (UCL) and Santiago Rivas Panduro (Ministerio de Cultura, Perú)

In this presentation the results of recent archaeological survey along the Napo River will be summarised and their initial implications for reconstructing the pre-Columbian history of the broader region will be discussed.

The ancient Andean things called 'maquetas' and 'yupanas'

George Lau (University of East Anglia)

This paper examines the ancient Andean objects sometimes known as 'maquetas' (architectural models) or 'yupanas' (Inca counting devices). Recent collection study of over 70 of them allows a number of observations about their function and cultural affiliation. They were in use at least a millennium before the Inca, and first appeared in the north highlands of Peru. They are characterised by considerable variability in form, quality and material -- suggesting continuity of use over a millennium and across ethno-linguistic frontiers and regardless of social status. And finally, evidence is presented to resurrect the idea that they were gaming boards.

Lowland-highland transpositions: The techniques and designs of some bag straps in early Middle Horizon textiles from Moyocoya (Bolivia), as expressions of the range of regional exchanges

Denise Y. Arnold (Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore, Bolivia, and Instituto de Lengua y Cultura Aymara, ILCA, La Paz, Bolivia.)

The paper develops the idea that textiles, through their material basis and techniques of making, served both in the highlands and lowlands of South America to articulate the relations between people and things. The study analyses some straps from personal bags found in early Middle Horizon sites around Mojocoya, in the Interandean Valleys of Chuquisaca, in the context of other pertinent containers. I suggest that the techniques of transposed warps in these straps, and the various materials used in their construction, produce certain features in the woven composition, iconography, use of colour and so on, in what Lechtman would call their 'technological style'. An idea I put forward is that the woven designs constitute a language of documentation about the uses of these bags in practice. The technical and material criteria in play here throw light on the possible cultural characteristics that this documentary language might refer to, within specific circuits of circulation of people and things in which the bags were used, as well as the possible identity of their users, and some of their objectives.

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