

## THE PERUVIAN NORTHERN COAST AS A HERITAGE DRIVER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

---

**Dr. Alberto Martorell**

*ICOMOS-ICLAFI Vice-President*

*ICOMOS Peru*

*martorellc@yahoo.com*

---

**Abstract.** This paper discusses how, for the last 20 years, archaeology is playing a major role in the development process of the Peruvian Northern Coast.

Peruvian Northern Coast has a very rich archaeological history. There are archaeological sites of the higher scientific interest in the area, the most well-known coming from the Chimú, Mochica and Lambayeque cultures. Coastal Valleys were the seat of important regional developments and there is a rich cultural heritage of their times. To name just a few, we can talk about the archaeological sites of San José de Moro, Huaca Dos Cabezas, Complejo Pacatnamú, Casa de la Luna or Sián in the Valley of Jetepeque; Sipán (maybe the most famous one), Ventarrón, Tucume and Pampa Grande in the Valley of Lambayeque; Chan Chan World Heritage Site and the Sun and Moon Huacas in the Valley of Moche and the sites of Sonolipe, Urricape, Mocollope, la Campana, Huaca Cartavio, Huaca Colorada and the Archaeological Complex El Brujo in the valley of Chicama. The last one was the place where the remains of the so called Lady of Cao were discovered.

This broad and rich region has been plundered by illegal looters for many decades. Some say that looting has occurred in Peru ever since the Spanish conquest of the Inca Empire. The fact is that Peru has loosened a no quantifiable amount of archaeological pieces many of which are currently in particular and public collections around the world.

After the current archaeological researching boom started, some amateur archaeological studies were made in the area. One of the most famous writers of this period is Rafael Larco Herrera, a rich landowner who dedicated his efforts to the recovery and classification of archaeological items. He also bought some collections. The results both of his personal excavations and acquisitions from other collections are part of the Larco Herrera Museum in Lima, one of the

most important archaeological museums in Peru.

The fact is that neither Larco Herrera Museum nor The Gold Museum of Mujica Gallo Foundation (that organized some very successful -considering the number of visitors- international exhibitions afterwards criticized due to authenticity questions which it is not the case to discuss here) generated an international expectation by the Northern Coast of Peru as a cultural area.

Insertion of this cultural area in the world academic and common interest is something happening for around the last short 20 years. What is the change generating this increasing interest on the cultures that flourished in the area? I content that a scientific archaeological boom did start more or less by the time of the formal discovery of the burial place of the Lord of Sipán. This is not the only one case. But it had a World level impact. The Lord of Sipán was compared with the most famous Egyptian Pharaohs' tombs. Archaeological teams working at Huaca Rajada, Sipán, Sun and Moon Huacas, el Brujo Archaeological Complex, Tucume pyramids, Ventarrón, and many other sites in the region, have a long time in the field, being one of their main impacts a rich information on the cultural developments made by Moche, Lambayeque and other cultures. This positioned the area in the popular imagination around the world. The North of Peru was a third level destination for the tourism industry before the described process. Nowadays, there is a growing number of international visitors coming to know some destinations such as the Royal Museum of the Lord of Sipán and the Moon and Sun Huacas or Tucume. Again, we are giving just some examples: there are many other possible destinations.

One of the interesting facts is that the projects have

not only been focused in archaeological issues, but in social and regional development. That is the case of the interventions financed by the Peru-France Counterpart Fund (FCPF), which we will present as international cooperation program which have generated real development programs having heritage as their center. By this way, heritage conservation played a role as a catalyst for development in identity.

The year 2008 the Peru-France Counterpart Fund (FCPF) convoked an open tender for consultancy service for the evaluation of the projects financed by his program on cultural heritage interventions. The Observatory for Tourism of the University of San Martín de Porres was selected on a competitive basis. The team in charge of the project was under the direction of the responsible of this paper, Dr. Alberto Martorell. The evaluation included three archaeological sites: the Choquequirao Archaeological Park in Region of Apurímac, the Sun and Moon Huacas in the Region of Trujillo and the Tucumé Pyramids Complex, in the Region of Lambayeque. The last two sites are located in the area of study I am discussing on this paper (the Peruvian Northern Coast geographical region). I will present in the next paragraphs the case of Tucumé and Sun and Moon Huacas. Both cases will serve me to explain how heritage can contribute to regional development, being the case of acting as a centre for exchange and activities.

### 1. Tucumé Archaeological Complex

The Valley of the Pyramids, named Tucumé Archaeological Complex, is located at the Region of Lambayeque. It is 33 km far from Chiclayo, the main city in the Region. It is one of the main pre-inca complexes, around Mount La Raya. In this area dozens of pyramids were constructed by the Lambayeque people and afterwards re-used under Chimú and Incas rules (around 10th to 16th centuries)

The high potential for development of an archaeological park of the place is evident. However the complexity of the site due mainly to the number of pyramids and the climatologic conditions made quite difficult to manage it. Tucumé is also the name of a small town, just next to the entry of the archaeological area. Poverty levels are still one of the main problems of Tucumé and some other minor rural villages, (two of them, Nancolan y Teplo were directly benefited by the FCPF project)

The archaeological issue has not been managed only with conservationist criteria. Social and economic



Figure 1: Ceiling infrastructure. Huaca las Balsas. Tucumé  
Figure: A. Martorell

factors have also been matter of concern for the project managers.

One of the main values of the program promoted by FCPF and the Site Museum was a comprehensive methodology to carry on it. In fact they were able to create a participative framework where the local population, local and regional authorities, businessmen, and representatives of the FCPF work all together. The FCPF project in Tucumé included the following main components :

#### 1. Archaeological researching.

Being the core aspect of the project. It was designed in order to study the constructive sequences and historic chronology of Las Balsas within the Complex of Tucumé context. In a first stage it included the construction of a temporal ceiling structure which have been replaced by the definitive one. Obtained results are highly positive.

#### 2. Architectonic conservation.

Consolidation, restoration and protection of the constructive elements was made following international principles. Huaca Las Balsas is currently in an optimum state of conservation.

#### 3. Enhancement.

Once conservation was guaranteed, communicational and public use programs were a necessity. A very interesting and technically designed interactive interpretative corridor both to arrive to the area and surrounding the specific archaeological structures has been built and is currently functioning. Visitor's equipment, parking, signals and interpretative panels, handicrafts shop, and external paths were carefully planned, using traditional materials and caring the general environmental values of the site.

#### 4. Communitarian development.

The two benefited areas are named Teplo and Nancolan. Potable water installations, public light systems, sanitarian facilities and a new path for accessing were constructed. It can be affirmed that the project helped people to overcoming the extreme poverty



Figure 2 & 3: "The town of the kids". Hypotetic recreation of the Lambayeque's houses, in miniature. The space is used for the program "Tucume Archaeological Site Children Board"

levels.

Capacity building workshops and other participative activities gave the step to the creation of handicrafts producer's organizations, some of them participating in local, national and international fairs.

It must be said that not all the described activities were founded by the FCPF. Other local, regional, national and international funds were also applied to execute the development program.

Remaining problematic of Tucume:

There are of course other necessities in the area of Tucume. We can start discussing the lack of a general

development planning framework. The population of Tucume (immediately next to the archaeological area) is growing in a very chaotic way, without any technical guidance. This must change.

Furthermore, out of the visitor's facilities within the archaeological complex, there is not a program to facilitate people staying in the place. There are not lodging or restoring services to attend visitors. It generates that the tourist arriving to the place stay there for a very short time, and as a consequence, economic benefits are very short.

From the archaeological point of view, much of the work is still pending to be done. The area, as it was said before, includes dozens of pyramids. Las Balsas is just one of them, and the only one fully researched and enhanced. Partial works were made in other areas. However, there is no other pyramid reaching the conditions to be presented to the public. Different administrative problems give to the abandon of the other projects, and old ceiling and accessing structures are in bad conditions. Researching works were not completed and the result is the existence of some fragile elements risking to disappear. It is necessary a wider effort to research as the first step and to give social use to the rest of archaeological elements, which however constitute without any kind of doubts the most valuable input for sustainable development of the region.

## 2. Sun and Moon Huacas

The "Huacas del Sol y de la Luna", or Temple of the Sun and the Moon is an archaeological complex 15 minutes far from the main Peruvian city of the Region, Trujillo in the northern coast of Peru. The site includes the Huaca (Temple of the Stars), the White Hill Huaca, the spider geoglyph and other constructions. It was an administrative and political center of the Mochica culture (100-900 a.C). It encloses 60 hectares.

It is a interesting case of public-private sponsorship in cultural heritage issues. The project started around 1991. It got the initial economic support of the Trujillo Brewing Society and the Ford Foundation. Current management model is the result of an alliance between Minister of Culture, the National University of Trujillo, the Moche Valley Temples Patrons Society, and Backus and Johnston Peruvian Breweries Society. From 2007 to 2010 the FCPF auspicated the Research, conservation, enhancement and social use project for the Sun and Moon Huacas and the Moche valley. The components of the project included two areas:

1. Archeological research, restoration and enhancement of the site and ?



Figure 4: Ai Aepac. Main moche divinity.  
Figure: A. Martorell

## 2. Capacity building and market insertion program for handicrafts producers of the Moche Valley.

The FCPF project has participated in the most important archaeological researching task undertaken in this site. It includes the main sector of the pyramids. One of the most amazing remains is the polychromatic paintings with the face of Ai Aepac, main God of the Northern Peruvian cultures.

As it was said, the social dimension of the program consists on capacity building activities targeted in the handicrafts producer in the area. There is a traditional production, and the proposal was targeted in improving quality both of installations and production process and results. Some of the iconographical elements of the archaeological site have been incorporated to diversity the offer. Some of the workshops have been enhanced in order to create more appropriate spaces both for the productive process and the commercialization of the results. Some new technical tools were introduced with the FCPF support.

The area has been included in a new tourism project called "The Moche Route" which is still in a developing moment.

Concerning the problems affecting the area, there is an urban growing process. The Valle de Moche traditional agricultural use of the land is risking to disappear. Real estate companies are very interested on urbanizing the Valley. This would seriously affect the archaeological area. It is necessary a management plan for the whole valley, including archaeological, anthropological, conservationists criteria, to name but a few number of specialties that a trans-disciplinary cultural project demand. Lands currently used for agricultural production must keep this condition.

## 3. Conclusions

Both of the cases we have discussed here are good examples of how heritage can contribute to the reestablishment of the space. The Moche Valley has maintained his agricultural vocation in part due to the existence of the archaeological area. It is very important to maintain the area free or urban development circuits. The project has recuperated some traditional values. Music and handicrafts production are good examples. Social echoes are starting to emerge, creating a strong "mocheros" regional identity. Tourism is being rationally organized as a factor for regional development. Quality improvements in handicrafts production, well presented local markets and an international projection through direct participation in national and international fairs, are creating a sustainable development model.

In the case of the Archaeological area of Tucume direct inclusion of the social dimension is very important. There are strong necessities and a big effort is necessary to manage from an integrationist and participative perspective the cultural heritage of the area. Work with children, capacity building programs and other projects designed to generate social development will contribute to reach these goals.

Other archaeological projects are working in the same line. It is the case of Sipan, being the Royal Tombs of the Lord of Sipan Museum one of the most amazing cultural improvements in Peru and even in the international arena. Recently, new museums have been inaugurated in the region. Technical improvements both for the conservation of the items and to communicate their value to visitors were carefully designed in some of them. We can quote the example of the Museum of the Lady of Cao, in the Brujo Archaeological Complex. Surely the future development of the Northern Coastal Peruvian region will be clearly marked by the appropriate use of the archaeological resources. They are, for sure, the main asset of the region.



## References

---

---

BALLART HERNÁNDEZ, Josep; JUAN I TRESSERAS, Jordi, Gestión del patrimonio cultural. Barcelona: Ariel, 2001

CEBRIÁN ABELLÁN, Aurelio (Coord.), Turismo cultural y desarrollo sostenible: análisis de áreas patrimoniales.

MURCIA: Universidad de Murcia, 2001.

GUTIÉRREZ-CORTINES CORRAL, Cristina (ED.), Desarrollo sostenible y patrimonio histórico y natural: una nueva mirada hacia la renovación del pasado. Santander: Fundación Marcelino Botín, 2002.

MARTÍNEZ JUSTICIA, María José, Antología de textos sobre restauración. Selección, traducción y estudio crítico. Jaen: Universidad de Jaen, 1996.

MUJICA, Elías and HIROSE, Eduardo. El Brujo: Huaca Cao. Centro ceremonial. Lima: Fundación Wiese, 2007.

MUJICA, Elías and UCEDA, Santiago. Moche: hacia el final del milenio. Lima: PUCP, 1999.

NARVAEZ, Alfredo and SANDWEISS, Daniel H. Pyramids of Túcume. The quest for Peru's forgotten city. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995.