

San José de Moro Archaeological Program

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Involved researchers:

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- Remi Chapoulie, Bordeaux 3, Arqueomateriales
- Larry Coben, Sustainable Preservation initiative, Community development
- Jose Canziani, PUCP, Architecture
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- Benjamin Castañeda, PUCP, Biomedical Engineering
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- Julio Rucabado, PUCP, Archaeology
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Involved Institutions:

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San José de Moro (SJM) is located in the province of Chepén, district of Pacanga, department of La Libertad. It was an important cemetery and ceremonial center in the pre-Hispanic past. One of the most significant characteristics of SJM is its dense cultural stratigraphy, which testifies a long occupational history comprising Middle and Late, and Transitional Mochica, Lambayeque and Chimú for almost 1000 years of continuous occupation. [images 1, 2 and 3]

As from 1991, San José de Moro Archeological Program (PASJM, for its Spanish acronym) is conducting studies on the development sequence of Jequetepeque Valley, focusing on nature of ritual practices and its role within power strategies. SJM is also known for elite women tombs of Late Mochica, “Priestesses”, who were buried with “Cups of Sacrifice” and particular headdresses. High position and richness of tombs would derive from its important function in the religious rite. The Priestess position seems to have been a hereditary position, which has been confirmed by the fact of having discovered one teen priestess. [images 4, 5 y 6]

On the other hand, PASJM is a Field School which receives and instructs undergraduate and graduate university students, whether fellows or foreigners. It develops a multidisciplinary research work and conducts activities related to the sustainable community development by supporting local schools and craftsmen.

LAST DISCOVERIES

Season 2009 summary

The discoveries consisted of several contexts of *chicha* production and consumption, as well as areas of activity connected with the food processing and consumption. Besides, 48 funerary contexts were excavated; from them it is important to mention the spectacular discovery of a double-chamber tomb, wherein 5 individuals were deposited as presents and a probable “Priestess” was placed in a wool-laminated coffin decorated with elongated slabs and rounded with copper. More than 6000 presents made up the trousseau which consisted of metal objects, ceramics (fine-line ceramics, polychrome ceramics and local production), semi-precious stone-made objects, crude clay scale models, seashell presents and a total of 5000 crucibles or miniatures are placed in different sectors of both chambers. Another amazing discovery was the fact of finding mural painting remains in the chamber and tombs, which were placed in alternated vertical panels of colors red and yellow. [images 7 and 8]

Season 2010 summary

In 2010, excavations in the units of the last year were continued. Thus, 18 funerary contexts were excavated, among which an interesting tomb of *bota* has to be mentioned which contained 4 individuals, three adults and one child, the latter was located above the thorax of one of the adults. Among associations there is a knife or copper *tumi*, skulls and extremities of 2 camels, as well as 45 ceramic pieces among which a fine-line

ceramic and a double-mouth bottle and bridge handle with polychrome decoration has to be mentioned. [images 9 and 10]

Chepén and San Ildefonso Hills

Complex discoveries in SJM site lead to propose new questions about the individuals who were buried in this cemetery. In this way, surveys began to be made in the most important settlements of the valley for Late Mochica period. Therefore, the two most important ones were selected: Chepén and San Ildefonso Hills. In both sites, a three-dimension topographic and a planimetric plan are being prepared to conduct an analysis of architectonic patterns (mountain or local), space management and environmental dominium. Besides, excavations were made in Chepén hill, both in the Monumental Zone (elite) and the Low Range Housing Sector (household excavation) to give an answer to function and time questions. [images 11, 12 and 13]

Community development

During twenty years of research, PASJM is developing several activities and programs aimed at supporting the community by achieving to involve them in archeological excavation activities and above all in the preservation, care and promotion of the site. With this purpose the construction of a Module Museum System was promoted, assistance was given to construct classrooms and restrooms, as well as to paint facades with scenes of Mochica iconography for elementary and secondary schools of the SJM, and folk dance school groups were promoted. Besides, with the support of Sustainable Preservation Initiative (SPI) foundation, an organization cooperating with archaeological sites in danger providing them with sustainable work related to local identity, handicrafts workshops haven been constructed this year where around 20 children are being trained in Mochica pottery techniques.

Pots are sold (at very high prices) in the store associated with the workshop. Likewise, display of its arts is inserted in touristic routes of the best travel agencies of Peru. Thanks to the support of this foundation and the local government we will have a site museum during the following two years. [images 14 y 15]

Multidisciplinary

1. PASJM Field School: Provides archeological internship to students from different parts of the world with direct participation in the field, prospection and archeological excavations, academic activities such as lessons and lectures given by the most important researchers of the Northern Coast of Peru. Professor in charge: Dr. Luis Jaime Castillo (PUCP - Department of Humanities, University of California, Los Angeles). [images 16,17 y 18]

2. Field Bioarchaeology School: Provides basic knowledge and necessary skills to students to understand human bone language, both archeological and forensics. Professors in charge: Magister Elsa Tomasto (PUCP), Magister Maricarmen Vega (PUCP) and Magister Melisa Lund (UNMSM). [image 19]

3. Dr. Richard C. Sutter (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne) is conducting an analysis of the morphological features in permanent teeth of individuals buried in SJM. Based on the frequency and variability of these features, understanding biological

relations in each occupational phase, finding blood relationships, contacts and displacements of human groups and, finally fitting chronological SJM samples onto evolution relations of the Northern Coast of Peru are envisaged.

4. Field School and Architecture Workshop: Fosters research on local and foreign architectonic patterns in Mochica archeological sites of Jequetepeque Valley, and 3D image technique of the most representative sites for this period, such as San Ildefonso and Chepen hills. At the same time, it studies scale models recovered from SJM funerary contexts and space relations with settlements. Professors in charge: Dr. Jose Canziani (PUCP - Department of Architecture, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium) and Dr. Paulo Dam (PUCP - Department of Architecture, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium).

5. Ethnomusicology project: With the support of modern and traditional musical instruments, it looks for measuring the management of sounds and acoustics in the most emblematic Mochica sites of the valley, such as Chepén and San Ildefonso hills. Under the direction of Mg. Dianne Scullin (Columbia University, New York).

6. Archaeobotany project: Enables to identify concrete species and extract information about the weather, vegetation or type of food of our ancestors. Samples recovered in domestic contexts from SJM and Chepén hill are being worked at. Under the direction of Mg. Kathie Chiou (University of California, Berkeley).

7. 3D models and reconstructions: Making use of a 3D scanner and Agisoft PhotoScan program, 3D models of the most representative Mochica and Wari vessels are being created. It will enable any researcher to have access to models and information under their possession, from any part of the world, without the need to handle original pieces. Joint work of engineers Dr. Benjamin Castañeda Aphan (PUCP - Department of Engineering, University of Rochester, New York) and Dr. Francisco Rumiche (PUCP - Department of Engineering, University of Illinois, Chicago). [images 20 and 21]