



BACKDIRT

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Archaeology in Peru

MARANPAMPA Its Discovery and Significance

Reinaldo E. Chohfi

Maranpampa, a newly discovered archaeological site, is located on the eastern slopes of the Andes on the Urubamba River in Peru, near the Machu Picchu ruins. The site was discovered by studying and interpreting aerial photographs and the distribution and utilization of natural resources in the area, followed by land reconnaissance. Even though the Machu Picchu region is a major world tourist attraction, little scientific research has been carried out there since its discovery by Hiram Bingham in 1911. The Servicio Aerofotografico Nacional del Peru (SAN) provided me with five vertical and two oblique black-and-white aerial photographs, taken in June and July 1956, of the Machu Picchu region between the cities of Cuzco and Quillabamba. From these I constructed several thematic maps: land-use, vegetation cover, drainage, alluvial deposits and terraces, fault lines, and possible archaeological sites. These maps were used to study the topographical and geomorphological relationships in the region. During the winter quarter I submitted a report on remote sensing as a class assignment at UCLA.

The area northeast of Machu Picchu initially attracted my attention because of the patterns in the vegetation cover which I saw in the aerial photographs. By carefully inspecting the photographs, I was able to detect 35 signatures in the region, including three distinctive ones around the area later called Maranpampa. These three signatures ranged in tone from light to dark gray, the light gray representing land with little native vegetation, the middle gray a zone of short trees and bushes, and the dark gray a zone of tall trees. Inspection with a magnifying loop revealed various lineaments throughout the area.

Maranpampa distinguished itself from its surroundings by a series of trees growing in a straight line and by several other rectilinear signatures. These signatures indicated a potential archaeological site, perhaps consisting of buildings, agricultural terraces, or walls.

I flew to Peru last summer to verify the existence of a site

continued on page 4



Double mortar found at Maranpampa by Reinaldo Chohfi.

UCLA /Getty Conservation Institute Workshop

CONSERVATION IN FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY

Chris Kayden

Should acid be used to clean insoluble salt deposits on pottery? Can friable bone be consolidated in situ to facilitate safe excavation? What steps can be taken in the field to prevent bronze disease from occurring on newly excavated bronze artifacts?

These and many other questions were answered in the course on conservation in field archaeology held at UCLA from March 23-27. The course, organized by the Getty Conservation Institute in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology, presented an introductory overview of on-site preventive conservation techniques. Instructors included conservators Benita Johnson, Claire Dean, and Nicholas Stanley Price of the Getty Conservation Institute, Jerry Podany of the J. Paul Getty Museum, and Catherine Sease of the Field Museum in Chicago.

Topics during the five-day course ranged from the conservation of metals, ceramics, glass, and coins to the treatment of both wet and dry organic materials. Participants in the course also learned how to plan for conservation in the field, where and how to obtain supplies, and how to make seal impressions, cast coins, and paper squeezes. Following the examination of case studies, a sealed box of Egyptian artifacts dating to the 1930s was opened for the first time to ascertain the relative success of field conservation techniques in the past. We've come a long way! ■

Oriental Society Meets at UCLA

Scholars from all over the world congregated at UCLA for a four-day conference sponsored by the American Oriental Society (March 22-25, 1987). The regions represented included the Ancient Near East, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Meeting in Bunche Hall, UCLA faculty members and students read papers and gave updates on their projects. Among the UCLA faculty reporting on current research was Dr. Giorgio Buccellati of History and Near Eastern Languages (and former Director of the Institute of Archaeology), who spoke of his work on *Cybernetica Mesopotamia*. Also delivering papers in the Near Eastern field were graduate students Patricia Olian-sky, James H. Platt, and Amanda Podany, as well as Visiting Professor (from Rome) Dr. Luciano Milano.

Dr. Hartmut Scharfe of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures was responsible for bringing the OAS to Los Angeles; his paper dealt with "Phases in the Development of the Indian State." Dr. Robert Buswell, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, spoke on Buddhist studies; and in the field of philology, Dr. Stanislav Segert discussed his dictionary on comparative Semitic Languages.

OAS participants from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Spain, and the U.S. met informally as well, and small groups of scholars could be found in the Franklin Murphy Sculpture Garden, in the eateries, and in the quad discussing their specialties. The lovely summerlike weather that prevailed may entice the OAS back to Los Angeles sooner than expected!

Maranpampa

Continued from page 1

and, given its existence, determine whether it was known to the Peruvian scientific community. Anthropologists and archaeologists at the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) in Cuzco informed me that there was no record of a site located northeast of Machu Picchu. I therefore invited archaeologist Octavio Fernandez C. of INC to accompany me to the Machu Picchu region for a field reconnaissance. We left Cuzco on September 13, 1986, at 5:30 a.m. and traveled by train down the narrow, twisting valley of the Urubamba River, arriving at the Machu Picchu station (Puente Ruinas) three hours later. There we set up camp by the site museum, obtained machetes, and began our hike toward the area we intended to survey.

We walked along the railroad that parallels the Urubamba River, to the Mamdor Farm. Mamdor Farm is located on a flood plain northeast of Machu Picchu at an altitude of 1,650 m. We saw a young girl who showed us an abandoned trail—a short cut. It took us another two hours to hack our way through the dense vegetation alive with mosquitos, snakes, and other vermin, and climb to the alluvial terrace at 1,900 m. There we found archaeological evidence which was well exposed and easily identifiable. Our exploration was limited to the eastern 10% of the site shown in the aerial photograph. The western area by the Urubamba River was not surveyed.

The following features were uncovered: two mortars with a single cup, one grinding stone, a mortar with two cups and pottery sherds, walls 1.1 m

high resembling agricultural terraces, a massive wall 3.5 m high, 2.8 m thick, and at least 250 m long, remains of two rectangular rooms, 2.8 x 4 m built of granite on terraces, as well as several carefully cut rectangular granite blocks. A thick layer of black humus, the topsoil, covered much of the site. No archaeological excavation was carried out.

Maranpampa may have been important because of its abundance of wood, water, and good topsoil on a gentle slope. It could have been Machu Picchu's production site, situated on the right bank of the Urubamba River. There is little doubt that the two sites were connected in the past, possibly by a bridge spanning a narrow gorge, about 50 m across. The airline distance between them measures only about 1.6 km.

On our way back we discussed a possible name for the site. We settled on *Maranpampa*—a combination of two Quechua words meaning "a level field with mortars" (*maran* = mortar; *pampa* = level field with good soil). INC was informed about this find in a written report two days after the field survey was completed. The INC will oversee all future research at the site.

Presently I am preparing a field project at Maranpampa. A radiocarbon chronology for Machu Picchu is being completed now as part of my M.A. thesis in archaeology on the origin and development of Machu Picchu, conducted under the direction of Dr. Rainer Berger, Director, Isotope Laboratory, UCLA. When a chronology is developed for Maranpampa and the site has been surveyed and mapped, it may be possible to explore further the relationship between the two sites. ■



Maranpampa in Machu Picchu region, Peru.



Lineaments visible on aerial photo over Maranpampa, and preliminary site plan.