

Constructing Pre-Hispanic Heritage: Entanglements between Cultural Policy and Archaeology in the formation of the Republic of Peru as a nation-state (1821-1972)

プレヒスパニック遺産の構築：国民国家としてのペルー共和国の形成における文化政策と考古学の連携
(1821-1972)

URIBE CHINEN Claudia Hatsumi
ウリベ チネン クラウディア ハツミ

1. Introduction

This research aims to develop a critical historical analysis of the Peruvian cultural policies focused on Pre-Hispanic cultural heritage. This heritage comprises cultural expressions of Andean Indigenous peoples embodied in sites, monuments and objects belonging to the period prior to the colonization by the Kingdom of Spain (11,000 BCE – 1532 CE). An overarching aim was to identify transcendental events and contexts in the history of Peru where interrelated agents such as the State and scientific experts influenced the protection of the material culture of the pre-Hispanic past as part of different agendas to create and recreate a sense of national history, community and identity. Underlying these considerations, this study looks to clarifying the politics of preserving this particular type of heritage due to sociopolitical events characterizing a modern post-colonial nation-state in South America.



Figure 1. Map of Peru with the pre-Hispanic archaeological sites mentioned in the document.

2. Research Framework

(1) Research Background

In Peru, the notion of pre-Hispanic heritage as Cultural Patrimony of the Nation is a construction that has taken place in its post-colonial history. After the independence of Peru in 1821 from the Spanish dominion (1532-1821), and throughout the 19th and 20th century, the State developed a legal framework and institutional bodies to protect and manage the material culture of pre-Hispanic times as cultural heritage. Alongside, antiquarianism, scientific explorations and studies progressively increased the knowledge on the pre-Hispanic past and its material remains, eventually giving archaeology a leading role.

In contemporary Peru, the significance of Pre-Hispanic cultural heritage can be perceived by both the legal protection and the conservation efforts made by the State. In the current Peruvian Cultural Heritage Law (Law N° 28296 of 2007) pre-Hispanic heritage is the category with the highest protection by the State. The vast number of pre-Hispanic monuments poses challenges for their protection and management, but even with limited resources and capacities, the State deals with long-term conservation programs for archaeological pre-Hispanic sites, including those inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List (E.g. Machu Picchu, Chan Chan, Chavín de Huanter, Nazca).

A diagnosis of the development of a system for the protection and preservation of pre-Hispanic cultural heritage can be obtained from the corpus of available literature of the past two decades based on studies on cultural policies, cultural heritage or archaeological heritage. Among others, perhaps the most important coincidence is the centralism of pre-Hispanic heritage, over other types of heritage (namely colonial or republican), in the historical trajectory of the Peruvian

cultural heritage policies.



Figure 2. The archaeological complex of Machu Picchu (15th century), discovered in 1911, is 'Cultural Patrimony of the Nation' and one of the World Heritage properties of Peru from the pre-Hispanic period conserved with State funds.

Some recent studies with elaborate discussions on the predominance of specific types of heritage as part of particular agendas can serve as a basis to understand the prioritization of the conservation of pre-Hispanic heritage in Peru. For some authors, an alliance between the State, museums and archaeologists as exclusive stewards of pre-Hispanic cultural heritage historically influenced in their high social valuation. However, the theoretical contextualization provided by the 'Politics of the Past' (Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1989), as suggested by Silverman (2002) when affirming the political utilization of pre-Hispanic past for the construction of national identity, appear to provide the keys to further understand the case of pre-Hispanic heritage in Peru.

(2) Research Problem

The reasons underlying the predominant protection and preservation of pre-Hispanic cultural heritage in Peru have not been clarified in the available corpus of literature in light of either critical historical approaches or heritage studies. A report by the Ministry of Culture of Peru (Cultura, 2017) even suggests that the State concentrated efforts to conserve pre-Hispanic remains merely due to their magnitude (estimated in 150,000) in the country. It is necessary to connect this problem with theoretical approaches related to the uses of the past in the present in order to elucidate its causes, interrelated processes and agents, and to open venues to interrogate current issues.

Since the 'protectionism' of pre-Hispanic cultural heritage activates conflicts on its management in the present, it was essential to re-think its history with critical reflexive lens. Therefore, the questions this research aims to answer are: 1) how did this paradigm become entrenched in the Peruvian Cultural Policy?; 2) which historical circumstances, agents and factors led to the development of a cultural heritage preservation system in Peru?; and 3) which political agendas guided the protection of cultural heritage?

The hypothesis this research aims to prove is that the focus on pre-Hispanic heritage in the cultural policy was not only due to its large amount in the Peruvian territory but also to the influence of political processes in the formation of the Republic of Peru as a nation-state since 1821.

(3) Theoretical Framework

This research used the framework of the 'Politics of the Past' (Gathercole and Lowenthal, 1989), and the interrelation of the heritage phenomenon with nation-building processes (Smith, 2006; Winter, 2012) modeled by the conceptions of the 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) and 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991). These foundations serve to understand the uses of the past for political purposes by modern societies. This past materialized in expressions such as classical monuments and antiquities, gave sense to the notion of 'heritage' when societies were compelled to look for new ways of social cohesion, collective memory and identity amid socio-political and socio-economic transformations, as those left by the French Revolution, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Nationalism emerged as a product of these circumstances where the pursuit of unifying cultural features because of unprecedented changes was central. Special attention was also given to Archaeology and its critical role in the (re) construction of history and heritage-making in the face of nation-building processes. Discussions on the politics of Archaeology (Kohl and Fawcett, 1995), and the interrelation with nationalism, also gave tools to interpret the Peruvian case.

Furthermore, it was necessary to guide the assessment of this study with an awareness on the particular conditions when dealing with post-colonial nation-states. The

research questions were reflected in the light of recent debates on post-colonial uses of the past in Latin America (Kaltmeier and Rufer, 2017). Heritage making in post-colonial nation-states often deals with a past that is 'administered', with archaeology involved in the production of knowledge and values of the Indigenous pre-colonial past.

(4) Methodology

The present research was framed under a qualitative approach as it aimed to provide a historical contextualization, in-depth analysis and interpretation of the proposed topic. The historical research consisted of two stages: The first was a comprehensive review of the currently available literature composed by primary and secondary sources, and the second was data analysis. The thesis was developed in four chapters.

3. Historical Development of Cultural Policies focused on Pre-Hispanic Cultural Heritage

(1) Preamble: The colonial social legacy and first approaches to the pre-Hispanic past

The Spanish colonial domination (1532-1821) in the territory of Peru resulted in the subjugation of Andean Indigenous societies, with the latest and largest political expression represented by the Inca Empire (1438-1533). It began a long process of disarticulation of the local culture, social relations and practices and the imposition of Western canons. Consequently, the material culture of Andean Indigenous peoples, represented by places and objects, entered a process of progressive abandonment and too often became a target of systematic lootings by treasure-hunting practices. By the 16th century, these material remains of the pre-Hispanic times became protected by the colonial legislation as belongings of the Spanish Crown.

The knowledge about the material culture and the historical past prior to the arrival of the Spaniards was mainly reconstructed by either Spanish or '*mestizo*' chroniclers in different stages of the colonial era, as Indigenous pre-Hispanic societies left no written records. Chroniclers recorded testimonies about the history of the Andean world, its culture and traditions. In some cases, they also included detailed illustrations. In the late colonial era, scientific missions from Europe also

approached the Indigenous past and its materiality and produced recordings that increased the trans-Atlantic interest in the Americas.

(2) First Period (1821-1879): Post-colonial nation building and Pre-Archaeology

This period covers the first half-century of the history of Peru as an independent nation-state, beginning with the proclamation of the independence in 1821, agreed as the dawn of the Republican era, and ending with the entrance of Peru in the War of the Pacific in 1879. In the first decades, the emergent nation-state faced the challenge of articulating its autonomous political and economic system. It was a period of political instability given the presence of diverging political visions among ruling groups and the concentration of power by military leaders, which often resulted in experimental forms of government. By 1845, the Republican model became consolidated and an era of relative economic prosperity started due to the commerce of '*guano*'. For the assessment of the cultural policies, two sub-phases were defined following the historical processes: First sub-phase (1821-1845) and Second sub-phase (1845-1879).

In the first sub-phase, the ideals of Enlightenment about building a national consciousness and fomenting the culture of citizenship through the study of the past influenced in the protection of antiquities. The first legal instruments were developed by the State since 1822 (Supreme Decree N° 89), enthrone the ownership of ancient monuments by the Nation, their intrinsic value and the prohibition of extraction of objects from them without authorization. Alongside, the first National Museum was created in 1826, representing the legitimation of the national history and identity. Peruvian naturalist and mineralogist Mariano Eduardo de Rivero y Ustáriz, mentored by Prussian scholar Alexander von Humboldt in Europe, became the first director and promoted the formation of collections from donations of antiquities, minerals and natural resources. In 1836, the government reorganized the museum into the Museum of Natural History in order to elevate its standards to display the Peruvian natural history.

In the second sub-phase, the economic boom fostered the aspirations of progress and the construction of a sense of national community in the society. These pulses,

alongside with the explorations in the country by Peruvian and foreign naturalists and scholars interested in antiquities, motivated the investment by the government in the publication of atlases and encyclopedias, where illustrations of the national territory, its natural resources and antiquities of the pre-Hispanic past were utilized to reaffirm the national history of the young state. Two cornerstones were the atlas *'Antigüedades Peruanas'* ('Peruvian Antiquities') (1851) by Mariano Eduardo de Rivero y Ustáriz and Swiss naturalist Johann Jakob von Tschudi, and the encyclopedic series of *'El Perú'* ('Peru') (1874) by Italian naturalist Antonio Raimondi. Rivero and Tschudi's publication was the first one concerned with the pre-Hispanic history in the Republican era, and it placed the Incas as the founders of the nation.



Figure 3. Front cover of *'Antigüedades Peruanas'* (1851) by Mariano Eduardo de Rivero y Ustáriz and Johann Jakob von Tschudi.

In 1872, the first civilian government ordered the relocation of the National Museum in a building constructed for an event commemorating the fifty years of the independence of Peru. The administration was conferred to the Society of Fine Arts. In 1883, when the Chilean troops occupied Lima in the context of the War of the Pacific (1879-1884), the museum closed after the looting of its collections.

(3) Second Period (1884-1919): Post-war reconstruction and beginning of Archaeology

The post-war socioeconomic crisis engendered an atmosphere of profound criticism among Peruvian intellectuals, who reflected on the decadence and the

social ruptures the Peruvian State was not able to solve in its first half-century as an independent Republic. The military campaigns of the War of the Pacific across the highlands meant the participation of a significant number of Indigenous populations for a patriotic cause and their marginalized condition became visible for the first time. The project of reconstructing the nation had to begin with the recovery from the political and economic instability but oriented to restore the national consciousness, this time with an awareness of the contrasting social and cultural realities of the country.

In this period, the government reinforced the protection of antiquities due to a general preoccupation for recovering the national history and counterbalancing the increase of pre-Hispanic collections abroad. In 1893, a decree prohibited the excavations for obtaining archaeological objects without a license, declared national monuments all the pre-Hispanic buildings and created the National Committee for the Conservation of Antiquities. In 1911, another decree declared that every object found in excavations belonged to the State, the prohibition of exportations and the supervision of excavations by government inspectors. This enactment occurred in the same year as the discovery of Machu Picchu (Cusco) by American scholar Hiram Bingham.

The museum was also re founded in 1905, following the patriotic aspirations of reconstructing the country. It implemented the sections of 'Archaeology and savage tribes' and 'Colonial and Republican'. Max Uhle, a German archaeologist specialized in Americanist studies and author of the first archaeological scientific excavations in Peru, became the director of the section of Archaeology. As Uhle believed in the contributions of the study of the past for the progress of modern nation-states, he actively contributed with the collections of the museum and the protection of archaeological monuments.

(4) Third Period (1919-1948): Years of *'Indigenismo'*

A civil dictatorial regime from 1919 to 1939, called *'Oncenio'*, promoted a nationalistic ideology of state aiming for a "new homeland", where the Indigenous communities and popular sectors were in the center of the political agenda. In these decades, the development of *'Indigenismo'*, an intellectual movement engaged with the revaluation and recognition of the rights and culture of

Indigenous peoples, influenced in the public policies. Indigenous communities were legally recognized for the first time in 1920.

This was a period of mutual collaboration between the state and archaeology. The state considerably supported the endeavors of archaeology for the reconstruction of the pre-Hispanic (Indigenous) past and the protection of pre-Hispanic monuments, as they would allow the vindication of Indigenous communities. The archaeological and political advocacy of *Indigenist* archaeologist Julio C. Tello, who was involved in the study of the origin of the civilization in the Andes, activated a series of institutional arrangements towards the protection of pre-Hispanic material remains.

In 1924, the government founded the Museum of Peruvian Archaeology amid the celebrations of the centennial of the independence of Peru. Tello was named director and from his position, he developed significant archaeological fieldwork that increased the knowledge about pre-Hispanic cultures, the protection of archaeological sites and the collections of the museum. Due to political reforms, a new National Museum absorbed the Museum of Peruvian Archaeology in 1931, but independent institutions focused on archaeology emerged again with the creation of the Museum of Anthropology in 1938 and the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in 1945, with Tello as director.

The Peruvian cultural heritage legal framework found a cornerstone in this period with the enactment of the Law N° 6634, which among other regulations, placed the rights of the nation over pre-Hispanic monuments as 'inalienable' and 'imprescriptible'. It also created the National Patronage of Archaeology and the National Monuments, which were initially eleven sites.

(5) Fourth Period (1948-1972): Modernization and Cultural Transitions

From 1948, two military dictatorial regimes were developed following coups: the '*Ochenio*' (1948-1956) and the 'Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces' (1968-1980). This was a period of industrial development and modernization through public policies, which happened in parallel with the demographic composition of the big coastal cities due to internal migrations.

In these decades, the attention to the role of archaeology

and the protection of pre-Hispanic cultural heritage was considerably less compared to previous decades. After the works of Tello, the archaeological activity by nationals decreased while foreign projects increased in different regions. The institutions established previously dealt with the protection and conservation of archaeological heritage, increasingly threatened by illegal occupations. By the middle of this period, the State attempted for a modernization of the cultural policies with the creation of the first National Commission of Culture and the administrative body of the House of Culture in 1962. In 1972, the National Institute of Culture (INC) was created in order to adopt international standards for culture.

4. Pachacamac as a Case Study

Pachacamac is a pre-Hispanic archaeological complex of 460.31 Ha located in the Lurin valley, south of Lima city. It encompasses a series of monumental buildings of earthen architecture built in different stages from 200 to the 15th century, culminating with the occupation by the Inca Empire. The site functioned as a prestigious pilgrimage center of the Andes, which fame transcended in historical records after its abandonment with the Spanish colonization.

The case of Pachacamac was selected due to the amount of available literature. It was used to reflect the historical development of the periods of entanglements between cultural policies and archaeology.

In the first period (1821-1879), Pachacamac was a locus of interest of different local and foreign scholars interested on antiquities. The first director of the National Museum visited the site and conducted excavations based on his knowledge on engineering. By the middle of the 19th century, images of the architecture of the site could be found in the publications made by explorers and naturalists, and in atlases financed by the state to display the national history.

In the second period (1884-1919), the site became the location of the first scientific excavations in Peru authored by German archaeologist Max Uhle, who years after directed the National Museum when it re-opened in the post-war reconstruction. Uhle's archaeological works contributed significantly to clarifying the chronology of pre-Hispanic history beyond the Incas. The excavations and mappings that preceded those of Uhle aimed to

understand the history before the Incas but were significantly shorter in time and less controlled.

In the third period (1919-1948), amid the state's nationalist ideologies based on *Indigenismo*, the site was declared National Monument. By 1938, some sectors of the site were restored to display its monumentality. An iconic restoration was made by archaeologist Julio C. Tello between 1940-1942 in the Inca building of *Acllahuasi*. This intervention aimed to convert the site in an archaeological park, but it considerably remarked the Inca architectural features to show the greatness of the Indigenous past.

In the fourth period (1948-1972), the site was restored again and a site museum was founded. As illegal occupations represented a threat for its conservation, protective walls of concrete were built for the first time.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This research visualized that cultural policies focused on pre-Hispanic heritage did not follow a single and unified agenda in 150 years of Republican history, but many activated by particular sociopolitical circumstances, and with the participation of certain agents that lobbied for the protection of heritage and located it in the agenda of the government. Following the theoretical background, the history of Peru shows how pre-Hispanic heritage, represented by monuments and objects, was appropriated by the State with ideals of Enlightenment and classicism initially, and successively protected in the process of becoming an independent modern nation-state, too often tied with nationalist aspirations. The symbolism of pre-Hispanic material culture was utilized by the State and political agents to build a sense of national history and identity. In this process, archaeology became a powerful ally with an agenda focused on the reconstruction of the ancient history or the origins of the nation. The initiatives for protecting pre-Hispanic heritage appear as answers to processes of change that followed contexts of unprecedented crisis: First, the wars of Independence and second, the War of the Pacific.

The main conclusions of the present study are given hereafter:

- (1) The appropriation and protection of pre-Hispanic heritage tells a history of a relationship between heritage and nationalism, often triggered by episodes

of sociopolitical and socioeconomic crisis. This heritage was protected first after the independence from Spain with an aim to create an autonomous identity, then after the War of the Pacific with an aim to build a national unity and reconstruct the national history, eventually with an agenda of vindication of values of the Andean Indigenous culture.

- (2) Particular agents that dealt with archaeology, and their ideas about the role of the past in the present, catalyzed the protection of pre-Hispanic heritage.
- (3) The material culture of the pre-Hispanic (Indigenous) past was protected and administered along the post-colonial nation building of Peru, while the history of the Indigenous societies prior to the arrival of the Spanish was being reconstructed and understood. However, Indigenous populations did not benefit from this process, as they remained socially marginalized even with their legal recognition.
- (4) The status of pre-Hispanic heritage was reinforced progressively, following the agenda of the State towards the construction of a national identity through cultural policies.

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