

SYLLABUS
FIELD SCHOOL – 2006 SEASON
SAN JOSE DE MORO ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT
PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL PERÚ - PUCP

Professor:

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Background: San Jose de Moro Archaeological Project

San Jose de Moro is a small village located on the banks of the Chaman River in the department of La Libertad on the northern coast of Peru. It lies on top of the nucleus of one of the most important cemeteries and ceremonial centers of the Mochica culture and subsequent cultures. In 1991, a group of archaeologists and experts began to do research in San Jose de Moro. These research activities, headed by Luis Jaime Castillo, have helped discover traditions, beliefs, artwork, organizational and governmental forms of ancient societies of the area. Tombs, objects and architectural evidence of these cultures are still buried at the site of San Jose de Moro. One of the most outstanding discoveries of the San Jose de Moro Archaeological Project (SJMAP) has been the famous tombs of the Mochica priestesses, burial site of the most important women in the Andean region.

Project archaeologists and students study the cultural history of the Moro cemetery over the course of 1,200 years of continuous occupation, between the 4th and the 15th century. They are thus in an excellent position to study the birth, collapse and reorganization of the different societies that occupied the area during the pre-Hispanic era. Performing excavations at the site of San Jose de Moro is like making a trip through the different occupation stages: Chimú-Inca, Chimú, Lambayeque, Transitional Period, Late Moche and Middle Moche.

The Chimú and Chimú-Inca were the last native inhabitants of the area. These empires conquered the region and turned it into their territory. Before the Chimú arrived in the area, Moro was occupied by the Lambayeque state, whose inhabitants built – between years 950 and 1200 AD – the living mounds that were subsequently occupied by the Chimú. In the open area burial evidence and platforms and patios demarcating ceremonial areas have also been found.

The Lambayeque occupation was preceded by the Transitional Period, which lasted from 850 to 950 AD, beginning after the collapse of the Moche civilization. During this period, several enclosures, fences and ceremonial grounds were built. There are three types of tombs characteristic of this time: simple shaft tombs, square chamber tombs and large chamber tombs, some of which held nearly 400 burial objects (pottery, metallic elements, textile instruments, etc.).

The Moche occupation (400 – 850 AD) occurred immediately before the Transitional Period. This occupation is characterized by the presence of huge pottery jars used for the production and storage of chicha, an alcoholic drink made from fermented maize that Moche people drank during lavish burial ceremonies they held for their most prestigious deceased. Moche tombs found in the area are of three different types: small graves, boot tombs with larger trousseaus, and chamber tombs. These consist of adobe rooms holding the bodies of a member of the elite and their spouse, plus a huge amount of burial objects, including imported goods from regions as far away as Cajamarca or Lima.

In the last few years, the project has expanded to accommodate each work season more than 30 undergraduate and graduate students of archaeology and related fields from universities in Peru, the United States, Spain, France and England. For the last 15 years, a group of nearly 20 local inhabitants has also been a part of the project staff. They have become expert technicians in local archaeology and work side-by-side with students in the excavation, data collection and preservation processes at the archaeological site.

Objectives

Participating students have the opportunity to live out a unique experience. Field School allows them to take part in the intensive excavation process at one of the most complex and important archaeological sites on the Peruvian coast. What's more, due to the close relationship that the project members have with the town's population, students are able to learn about and participate in the different festivities and day-to-day activities of local inhabitants.

Field School students will assume responsibility for the scientific work required by the archaeological excavations. For this reason, project members with the most experience will train and instruct students in the specific work carried out at the site. Each excavation unit at PASJM has a qualified scientist in charge of directing and instructing students. Furthermore, participating students are encouraged to make significant decisions, which may lead to a better understanding of the archaeological protocols that take place at the research site.

By the end of the program, students will have gone through each one of the stages required to carry out archaeological excavation processes in a systematic and satisfactory manner. Since the beginning of our excavations, students have played an active and very important role in the achievement of our goals. Many of our former students now work on their own archaeological projects in other areas of Peru thanks to the experience they gained at PASJM.

Prerequisites

The program accepts graduate and undergraduate students in the field of archaeology and related fields. No previous field work experience is required. An advanced level in Spanish is not required. Many members of the SJMPA staff speak both English and Spanish. However, it is advisable for students to have a basic knowledge of Spanish in order to facilitate a fluid

interaction with the population of San Jose de Moro. Many of the English-speaking archaeologists who have worked with us for more than a season are now able to communicate satisfactorily with the project staff and with the population of San Jose de Moro.

Duration

Field School is scheduled to take place on July. Archaeological excavations are carried out intensively for a period of 4 weeks, adding up to a total of 240 hours of practical work.

Credits

8 credits

Weekly Calendar

While participating in the Field School Program, students will have constant and direct contact with the excavation activities at the archaeological site of San Jose de Moro and with the archaeological methods used in scientific excavations, which may be applied in any archaeological excavation in any part of the world.

Week 1

Introduction. Introduction to the archeological site of San Jose de Moro. Status of archaeology on the northern coast of Peru. Use of fieldbook. Use of measurement instruments. Handling of precision compass, GPS and theodolite. Datum Point. Implementation of an archeological excavation site; geometric triangulation systems. Collection methods of archaeological material.

Week 2

Excavation tools. How and when to use the different excavation tools. Types of land. Location, cleaning and excavation of different architectural elements. Reconnaissance of structures: floors, adobe structures, walls, platforms, tomb molds, among others.

Week 3

Digital Archaeological Photography (the Project is equipped with high-resolution digital cameras, which are available for excavation and laboratory work). Field photographic record. Shadow and detail control. Photography of different archaeological strata. Zenithal and oblique photography. Photography of archaeological material in laboratory; photography of pottery vessels and fragments. Introduction and reconnaissance of the different pottery styles found at the site.

Week 4

Archaeological registration and data collection methods: handling of the different registration cards used in the project. Description and analysis cards of archaeological objects and description cards of contexts. Archaeological technical drawing; plan and profile drawing of archaeological elements. Presentation of the excavation report of one archaeological unit. Chiefs of the archaeological units will submit preliminary excavation reports, which will be prepared in collaboration with the students of each corresponding unit. During the four weeks of excavation work, students will form a comprehensive picture of the different pre-Hispanic societies that occupied San Jose de Moro.

Field Trips and Leisure Activities

Chepén is located on the northern coast of Peru. It is two hours away from the city of Trujillo, where we can find the archaeological sites of Huaca de la Luna, Huaca del Sol, and the Chimú citadel of Chan Chan. It is an hour away from the city of Chiclayo, near where we can find the famous Moche tombs of Sipan, the Archaeological Museum of the Royal Tombs of Sipan and the Pyramid Complex of the Lambayeque culture of Tucume. Each year, the staff members of the project organize a guided visit to the city of Chiclayo in order to visit these sites and the charming handicraft market of the village of Monsefu. During the Independence Holidays – July 28 to July 30 – the members of the main archaeological projects of the northern coast organize two large events that have already become a tradition among archaeologists of the area. On July 28, the SJMPA staff members invite members of other projects to visit their excavations and to enjoy a heavily-attended lunch that includes sporting events and dancing. On the 29th, students are usually taken to the lakes formed by the Gallito Ciego Dam in the Jequetepeque Valley on the way to Cajamarca in order to spend the day there and relax. On the 30th, to mark the end of the holidays, the project members visit the city of Trujillo, the Chan Chan remains and the Huaca del Sol and Huaca de la Luna sites. The members of the Huaca de la Luna Archaeological Project organize there another popular lunch and party. These activities are also covered by PASJM.

Registration deadline

May 31, 2006

Beginning of the course

June 30th

End of the course

July 30th