

THE CUSICHACA TRUST ARCHIVE: HISTORY, CONTENTS AND RESEARCH POTENTIAL

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Recibido el 4 de julio de 2019; aceptado el 4 de noviembre de 2019

Abstract

This paper, given at the Legacies of Andean Archaeology session of the 2019 SAA Conference, sets the work of Ann Kendall's 40-year applied archaeology project, the Cusichaca Trust in the context of Incan community endeavour, and argues that the female-led project both honoured and replicated Inca values. In turn, when the archival record of the Trust's work –made up of documents, note books, maps, drawings, photos, reports and audio-visual material– was taken in by the University of London, this communal, female-led approach continued through the sorting, de-duplication and cataloguing of the archive which will be ready for consultation and research in late 2019.

Key words: Applied archaeology, archives, feminism, inca, libraries, terraces.

Resumen

El archivo del Fideicomiso Cusichaca: historia, contenidos y potencial de investigación

Este artículo, comunicado con ocasión de la sesión sobre Legados de la Arqueología Andina en el marco del Congreso Anual 2019 de la Sociedad de Arqueología Americana, trata sobre el trabajo del proyecto de arqueología

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aplicada que Ann Kendall llevó adelante por 40 años, y contenido en el Fideicomiso Cusichaca en el contexto del esfuerzo comunitario Inca. Argumenta que el proyecto dirigido por mujeres destaca y replica los valores Inca. A su vez, cuando la Universidad de Londres tomó el registro de archivo de la obra del Fideicomiso compuesto por documentos, libros de notas, mapas, dibujos, fotos, informes y material audiovisual, este enfoque comunitario dirigido por mujeres continuó a través de la clasificación, deduplicación y catalogación del archivo que estará listo para la consulta y la investigación a finales de 2019.

Palabras clave: *Arqueología aplicada, archivos, feminismo, inca, bibliotecas, repositorios.*

Résumé

Archives du Cusichaca Trust: histoire, contenu et potentiel de recherche

Cet article, communiqué à l'occasion de la session sur l'héritage de l'archéologie andine dans le cadre du Congrès annuel 2019 de l'American Archaeology Society, traite des travaux du projet d'archéologie appliquée qu'Ann Kendall a mené pendant 40 ans, et Cusichaca Trust dans le contexte de l'effort communautaire Inca. Elle soutient que le projet dirigé par les femmes met en évidence et reproduit les valeurs incas. À son tour, lorsque l'Université de Londres a pris les archives de l'œuvre du Trust composée de documents, de carnets de notes, de cartes, de dessins, de photos, de rapports et de matériel audiovisuel, cette approche communautaire dirigée par des femmes s'est poursuivie classification, déduplication et catalogage du fichier qui sera prêt pour la consultation et la recherche d'ici la fin de 2019.

Mots-clés: *Archéologie appliquée, archives, féminisme, inca, bibliothèques, dépôts.*

Resumo

O arquivo do Cusichaca Trust: história, conteúdos e potencial de pesquisa

Este artigo, dado na sessão Legacies of Andina Archaeology da Conferência 2019 da SAA, define o trabalho do projeto de arqueologia aplicada de 40 anos de Ann Kendall, o Cusichaca Trust no contexto do esforço da comunidade Inca, e argumenta que o projeto liderado por mulheres ambos honraram e replicaram os valores inca. Por sua vez, quando o registro de arquivo do trabalho do Trust - composto por documentos, livros de nota, mapas, desenhos, fotos, relatórios e material audiovisual - foi levado pela Universidade de Londres, esta abordagem comunitária, liderada por mulheres continuou através da triagem, deduplicação e catalogação do arquivo, que estará pronto para consulta e pesquisa no final de 2019.

Palavras chave: *Arqueologia aplicada, arquivos, feminismo, inca, bibliotecas, repositórios.*

Foundation of the Cusichaca Archaeological Project, 1978

This paper, given at the 2019 conference of Society of American Archaeologists in Albuquerque New Mexico concerns a very personal legacy. We learned in February 2019 of the death of Ann Kendall – whose life's work in and around the Cusichaca valley not only increased the sum of knowledge about Inca expert land management, but who leaves a very real legacy to the people of the region which she helped restore, reinvigorate and re-populate.



Photography 1. Ann Kendall.

Ann arrived in Peru's beautiful Urubamba valley, the so-called Sacred Valley of the Incas in 1968 – her objective to gather material on Inca architecture and stonemasonry for a PhD at London's Institute of Archaeology. What grew from

that initial academic fascination was the Cusichaca Trust, a registered charity based in the UK, which became the largest multi-disciplinary scientific project ever mounted in the Peruvian Andes.



Photography 2. Ann crossing the Urubamba bridge, 1978.

Ann's thesis focused on a series of archaeological sites at the confluence of the Urubamba and Cusichaca rivers, 25 kms from Machu Picchu. Here the Incas had extensively remodelled the landscape, constructing formidable systems of agricultural terraces, extending earlier irrigation canals and building new ones. Local populations had evidently been relocated to exploit the land more intensively, and one of the area's main functions would almost certainly have been to provide Machu Picchu with maize and other crops. Ann's fascination with the contrast between Inca expertise and productivity and the modern legacy of post-colonial ranching, depopulation and erosion led her to launch the Cusichaca Archaeological Project in 1978, returning for the brief summer digging seasons (May-September) throughout the 1980s. With teams of 60-70 people living in tents among the community of San José de Chamana, Kendall's projects studied the evidence of human occupation from the late first millennium BC through the Inca heyday of the 15th and early 16th centuries into the Colonial period. Detailed records of this archaeological and ethnographic work were stored systematically in a local monastery in Cusco.

Terrace and canal reconstruction

Her principal research in the project's early years was on Inca agricultural and engineering expertise. It was calculated that in Inca times, when the canals and terraces were fully operational, the immediate Cusichaca drainage could have fed

5,000 people. Yet, by the 1980s, there were only 15 families subsistence farming in the lower valley.



Photography 3. Family in Cusichaca Valley, late 1970s.

Kendall's research in the archives in Cuzco showed that agricultural systems in much of the lower Cusichaca Valley, so intensively cultivated in the Inca period, had been abandoned, not because they didn't work properly, but as a result of the depopulation resulting from the conquest. The effect of European diseases such as smallpox, was so great that there was no-one left to cultivate the terraces.

The 1970s and 80s saw an agrarian reform programme in Peru, which transferred large tracts of land from hacienda estates to the ownership of indigenous communities and cooperatives. In 1979, the people of Chamana received title to the lands they occupied and farmed. In the light of this Kendall devised a plan to work with the community. Thus emerged one of the most characteristic and enduring features of the Trust's work – collaboration with local farming communities to restore pre-Hispanic systems of canals and terraces. Rehabilitating the remains of the past in this way, to help improve the economic conditions of poor farmers in the present, has made the Cusichaca Trust's work an oft-cited example of pioneering 'applied archaeology' in the service of rural development.



Photography 4. Triple photos of canal restoration work.

The Trust's initial archaeological survey had found that most of the ancient stone-built, clay-lined irrigation canals in the Cusichaca area were still remarkably serviceable. The Peruvian National Institute of Culture gave permission, and in 1981 restoration work began, run in time by local foremen and labourers. In October 1983, water began to flow again through the canals and they remain in use to this day. The restored terraces now produce many varieties of Andean crops including potatoes, maize and quinoa, along with colonial imports such as barley and broad beans.

Impressed by the results of the Cusichaca reconstruction, in 1987 communities from the nearby Patacancha Valley approached the Trust for assistance. The Patacancha project succeeded in rehabilitating the 6km Pumamarca canal and 160 hectares of terraced farmland and ended with the establishment of a cultural centre and museum in the ancient town of Ollantaytambo. This success led (in 1997) to a third set of research and restoration projects further west in the remote and impoverished Apurimac and Ayacucho area. This region was among the worst affected by the activities of the Shining Path and the violent reaction of counter-insurgency forces in the 1980s and 90s, but today, around 18,000 people have benefitted from training, from the reconstitution of terracing, irrigation and the reintroduction of native species.

Environmental renovation. Soil restoration and reforestation

All these Trust projects proved that though abandoned and in disrepair, much of the Inca farming infrastructure remains a viable reservoir of technology and expertise for the valleys. Other elements of rural development flowed from and bolstered the terrace and canal restoration, not least, analysis of



Photography 5. Agricultural training class.

environmental degradation and the development of measures to repair some of the damage done. The study of pollen cores taken from the ancient lake-bed site at Marcacocha provided vital paleo-environmental data. Overworked and abandoned soils were thin and easily washed away, native forest had largely disappeared, but research into the native food and medical crops and fauna led to project agronomists and field workers running training programmes with local farmers, who together embarked on soil restoration and re-forestation. These programmes developed over time into seminars, courses and a “National Seminar” in Lima in 2006, where it was agreed that a coordinated national plan to rehabilitate irrigated terraces would underpin rural development and water conservation in the Peruvian highlands. The International Terraces Conference in Cusco in 2014 marked the transition from the Cusichaca Trust to an independent Peruvian NGO, the Asociación Andina Cusichaca which carries on the work to this day.

I would observe that the collaborative, consultative approach to working with communities –traditional knowledge coaxed from family conversations, local workers overseen by local foremen– was also in itself a restoration of Inca societal norms. As a female among families, Ann was (unusually then, or in any age) less domineering, less obviously a colonial presence, and her work driven not by personal ambition for her scholarly reputation or advancement, but as a collaborator in a communal, Inca if you like, cooperative endeavour.



Photography 6. Ann with the Lucana family.

Her legacy stands in contrast to those of earlier, male explorers, whose “discoveries” brought them personal fame, and established major historic sites as tourist attractions to be seen not used, visited not lived. It is Ann’s and her Trust’s legacy which we at her home university in London seek to preserve and develop as we work to catalogue and accession the Trust’s complete archive.

Bringing the Cusichaca Archive to London

Handover of the Trust’s project to Peruvian control saw the removal of 40 years’ worth of paper, electronic, video and photographic records from the Peruvian monastery to Ann’s home and then to a Warwickshire farm, where, over the summer of 2017, four of us sorted, weeded and re-housed the archive - halving it in size in the process. Thousands of duplicate papers and prints were jettisoned in order to compress the collection into something meaningful and manageable for preservation and study. Electronic records include the Trust’s website, a selection of which were used as illustrations here and throughout the talk.



Photography 7. Students working on the archive, 2017.

The Library pioneered an approach involving student archivists from University College London to process the records, using them as teaching material. The collection was categorised according to record type (map, primary research, report, photograph etc.) by the students as part of their course on “curation and processing”. It is only in hindsight that we have realised that this collaborative, group approach forms a continuum from not just Ann’s work with the farming communities she sought to help, but from her inspiration and their forebears –the Inca themselves. Dr. Jenny Bunn handed over her (mainly female) students’ final report on the archive and between February and November 2018, a dedicated project archivist completed the de-duplication and sorting into hierarchical series, benefitting from the rare advantage of guidance from my co-authors and original project archaeologists Dr. Sara Lunt and David Drew. The main challenge as we turn 300 boxes of paper into a discoverable research resource has been deciding on the primary logical structure for the collection. Document type was the most achievable for the class within the single academic term available, but the collection is now structured geographically, moving papers of all categories (primary records, field notes, finds lists, maps etc) into archival series which present records from project areas –the Cusichaca valley, Patacancha, Ayacucho and Apurimac areas– and within each site, presenting records chronologically. Separate series cover governance papers and personnel records which of course, involve data protection closures, and Ann Kendall’s non-Andean career, and we predict plenty of interest in this last series –because for students now, gender and biography are as significant for study as

the archaeology, environmental science and rural development which Ann's teams achieved.

The archive holds the potential for under-graduate teaching and post-graduate research on Inca-period economic strategies, comparative ceramic sequences, ethnology, development and the environment of Cusichaca in the 1970s-90s, on the history of archaeology, women in research, Peruvian history and Anglo-Peruvian relations. With the appointment of a successor Project Archivist in April 2019, we are about to start the final stages of cataloguing and plan to open for bids to digitise the archive in the Autumn. Once the collection is online, the Cusichaca legacy will be opened up to scholars worldwide, and a keystone of any digitisation contract will be free provision within Peru's higher education network. As soon as it is discoverable and secure of course, the archive will be physically available in our reading room, and we look forward to welcoming researchers from UCL and elsewhere, and to the next generation of archaeology and rural development in the Peruvian Andes building on and preserving the work of this unique organisation, its pioneer founder and her legacy of co-operative, communal endeavour.