



HERITAGE TOURISM AND PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY

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Heritage tourism is a very big industry in the United States and worldwide. It is taking diverse and highly original directions. At the Public Education Committee retreat at last year's SAA annual meeting, heritage tourism was identified for further investigation because it offers such a significant public outreach opportunity to archaeology. In this article we briefly explore a variety of issues related to heritage tourism and public archaeology, including what heritage tourism is and its potential benefits. Examples from the U.S. and Peru are used to illustrate some of the important issues and opportunities and to make suggestions for future directions in seeking partnerships and promoting the effective role of archaeologists in protecting and managing archaeological resources for public consumption.

Heritage Tourism and Its Benefits

Heritage tourism (sometimes also called cultural tourism) has been defined as "travel designed to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past" (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2001). In a broader sense, this includes travel to archaeological and historical sites, parks, museums, and places of traditional or ethnic significance. It also includes travel to foreign countries to experience different cultures and explore their prehistoric and historic roots.

Heritage tourism offers many potential benefits to various constituencies. According to the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), heritage tourism represents a 15% share of the tourism industry, ranking third (behind shopping and outdoor activities) for domestic U.S. travel in 2000. TIA identifies heritage tourism as one of the most popular sectors of the travel industry and found in a recent survey that 53.6 million adults "visited a museum or historical site in the past year" (Domestic Travel Market Report 2001 Edition). A survey of overseas visitors to the U.S. indicated that 19% (or roughly 4.47 million) engaged in visiting a cultural heritage site (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1997 Shopping and Tourism Report).

In 2001, the tourism industry contributed \$584.3 billion to the U.S. economy and provided more than 7 million jobs. Some

50.9 million international visitors in the U.S. spent \$103 billion, while 60.8 million American travelers spent \$89 billion abroad (U.S. Department of Commerce, Tourism Industries/ITA, Travel Industry Association of America, ©Tourism Works for America, Tenth Annual Edition 2001). Spending by cultural travelers can be particularly beneficial to rural economies. Local communities often see heritage resources as a way to diversify their economies. Archaeological parks provide an opportunity for productive partnerships between archaeologists, park managers, community leaders, and residents.

Archaeological Parks, Community Development, and Resource Stewardship

Archaeological parks—prehistoric or historic sites preserved and interpreted for the public—have always been obvious tourism magnets for the communities in which they are located, and in many cases this has been a driving concern for their preservation and development. As interest in heritage tourism grows, archaeological parks will attract greater attention, resulting in benefits to, as well as pressures on, the resource. Guidance from archaeologists can aid the process.

Archaeological parks encompass diverse management concerns because they share features with recreational or nature parks, museums, and archaeological sites. Depending on which professionals from those separate fields have management control over the archaeological parks, certain areas of management may receive inadequate attention. This becomes an increasing problem as visitation rises.

Archaeological parks tend to be managed by state or federal parks systems, but historical societies, state museums, and universities also can be managing agencies. Park managers provide expertise in land management, and park interpreters may offer creative programs and educational activities, but few have formal training in archaeology and may not fully understand the special concerns of the resource. Museum professionals bring expertise in collections management, exhibitions, and education, but may have little or no training in the management of the physical site. While many archaeological parks have profes-

sional archaeologists on staff, providing research as well as consultation on public interpretation, the amount of direct input by archaeologists into park management varies.

Archaeologists should be interested in the management of archaeological parks because of their value as public education tools. Often overlooked by the archaeological community is the fact that archaeological parks serve as year-round education centers about archaeology for people of all ages and backgrounds. Although television and print media are the primary sources of archaeological information for the public (2000 SAA Public Survey), archaeological parks provide the only firsthand experience of a site for most people. Thus, archaeologists should be particularly concerned that the information about archaeology provided by archaeological parks is correct and handled with sensitivity.

Archaeologists can take a proactive role with archaeological parks by serving as advisors to individual parks and park systems, and by providing guidance for management and interpretation. Such oversight can prevent harmful decisions and individual management capriciousness while encouraging the use of accepted standards of management and bringing a broader perspective on heritage tourism. Even at archaeological parks that have an archaeologist on the staff, an advisory board that includes archaeologists can help support site-sensitive management and interpretive practices. It will require groups of archaeologists within a state, however, to request that such advisory boards are formed and that professionals have input. A united effort from professional organizations or universities working together may encourage parks agencies to create such boards.

Heritage tourism is providing new opportunities to archaeological parks and for archaeologists. Having the input and oversight of an advisory board that includes professional archaeologists can help archaeological parks take full advantage of the heritage tourism movement and enhance the educational message about archaeology that the general public receives. Responsible interpretation and development of archaeological sites can capitalize on people's interest in cultural heritage and, in so doing, boost tourism, preserve resource integrity, and promote a stewardship ethic.

Heritage Tourism in Peru

Archaeological sites are important not only for heritage tourism at the local and regional level, but they can also serve as the basis for promoting national identity. Peru is an important area



Visitors participate in a dance during a special event at an archaeological park in Tennessee. Growth in heritage tourism increases visitation to archaeological parks, but can also stress the resources.

in which to explore the multifaceted aspects of heritage tourism because the country has so many stunning archaeological sites. The Peruvian nation-state, in existence since 1821, has often looked to the past in framing transcendental questions and policies about its present and future. Indeed, last year Alejandro Toledo evoked Inca imagery in his presidential campaign and in his symbolic inauguration at Machu Picchu on July 29, 2001.

Throughout the twentieth century, the Peruvian nation-state has attempted to promote and legislate respect for the pre-Columbian past and its indigenous present. The state sponsors national archaeological symbols and folkloric images for local and international consumption. Importantly, the government declared 1997 to be "The Year of 600,000 Tourists." Although this goal was not met, Peru received 470,000 foreign tourists in 2000, the vast majority of whom came in search of ancient mysteries.

The city of Cusco, former capital of the Inca Empire, exemplifies the diverse dimensions of Peru's archaeological tourism. Impressive Inca walls form the very fabric of the urban environment of the Historic Center, which attracts tourists because this is where the Inca kings resided in grand palaces and where the most important temples and public buildings were located. Today, this zone is the crowded, negotiated space of conflicting dreams, multiple ideologies, overlapping identities, selective histories, and vibrant representations. "Picturesque" Indians in traditional dress move about the Historic Center among its

more assimilated and non-indigenous inhabitants. Catholic pageants and folkloric performances occur regularly in the streets. Inca walls support Spanish Colonial superstructures. Republican and later buildings are constructed around and over these. New buildings accommodate themselves to the remaining space in the city or gain space by destroying vernacular architecture and other buildings deemed unworthy of preservation.

Cusco is a city that is reinventing itself. The challenge faced by Cusco's authorities is to create a new ancient city for the international tourist market at the same time that Cusco is a complex, heterogeneous living city for its racially and culturally diverse residents. Indeed, the problem of image control is recognized as so strategic to tourism that there is a special office, Management of Image (*Gerencia de Imagen*), in the Cusco branch of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) for this purpose.

But Cusco is a fragile, nonrenewable resource with a limited carrying capacity. Thus, in May 1999, a dispute erupted between Cusco's archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians versus the Municipality over the latter's public works for tourism that had extended into the "off limits" restricted zone (*zona intangible*) of Coricancha, the Inca sun temple. In May–June 2000, local disputes included whether to permit visits on horseback to Sacsayhuaman, the great archaeological complex overlooking the city. The most notorious of the fights in Cusco has international repercussions, such as in the case of the plan by a private company to construct cable car access up to Machu Picchu, thereby putting this famous but fragile archaeological site and its jungle ecology at risk. This dispute pitted UNESCO, the local and national INC, the Municipality, and national and international archaeologists against the developer and its supporters in the national government in a struggle for control over the site.

The discourse of modernity in Peru is phrased in terms of economic development, and international tourism is proclaimed at all levels of society—from traditional highland villages to cities—as one of the most important catalysts for prosperity. Yet there is a constant struggle between governmental agencies charged with protecting archaeological sites; private enterprise and local residents who destroy ruins to gain space for factories, agricultural fields, and housing; and tourists who want access to sites with limited carrying capacity. Peruvian newspapers are full of reports of small towns seeking to promote their ruins for tourism. It remains to be seen how Peru will accommodate its desired international heritage tourism with its own social, political, and economic realities and the necessity of protecting its attractions from destruction.

Opportunities and Future Directions: Where Do We Go from Here?

Clearly, one of the biggest challenges facing heritage tourism

programs is ensuring that the resources that attract visitors are not destroyed in the process, either by the tourists or by inappropriate development. This article only scratches the surface of the many issues that make heritage tourism such a complicated undertaking, but it is clearly one in which archaeologists can play a significant role. It also is an undertaking most archaeologists are not trained to handle. Certainly "public archaeology" is one arena in which archaeologists have made great strides. The numerous publications and events in the U.S. and other countries attest to success in bringing archaeology to the public. Yet most archaeologists are trained in academia and have little understanding of the issues involved. Peter Stone (1997:28) argues that courses in heritage management, along with the study of archaeological tourism, should be included as necessary components of archaeology degree programs throughout the world. These programs should incorporate both academic and practical training. Given the glut of Ph.D.s, it is essential to provide students with the flexibility to move into a variety of careers, including heritage tourism. One university now offering such a program is the University of Buckingham in the U.K., which began offering a Master's degree program in heritage tourism management in January 2001. The program encompasses management and commercial issues, and it addresses conflicts between access and conservation, finance and marketing, funding sources, and legal issues. Importantly, the program offers students direct experience alongside experts in the heritage tourism sector in the U.K., Europe, and U.S.

There are many opportunities for archaeologists to play a positive role in influencing the heritage tourism industry and promoting messages of stewardship and sustainable development. Identifying where it would be most productive to target those efforts should be our next priority. There are a variety of organizations that represent potential partners, collaborators, or sources of inspiration in our efforts. For instance, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has a formal Heritage Tourism Program that provides technical assistance and information to state and local heritage tourism programs. They sponsor workshops for statewide coordinators to network and share information on their heritage tourism programs. Organized in 1941, the Travel Industry Association of America is a nonprofit organization that represents the common interests and concerns of the U.S. travel industry. The World Tourism Organization is the leading international organization in the field of travel and tourism, serving as a forum for tourism policy issues. Its membership includes 139 countries and territories and more than 350 affiliate members representing local governments, tourism associations, and private companies.

Over the next year, the Public Education Committee of the SAA will continue to explore the role that archaeologists can have in

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promoting public outreach in archaeology and sustainable heritage tourism. The authors welcome feedback from those who have similar interests, or perspectives based on personal experiences. 📧

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