

Maritime Archaeology in Latin America: A Review of Conferences

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Published online: 20 November 2017
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The discipline of maritime archeology has been present in different congresses and conferences held in Latin America since the 1990s. In this review, we would like to highlight three events, two of them recently held, and a third to be held, which account for the development, variety and depth that has resulted in recent regional advances. The first of these is the symposium “Paisajes Culturales Marítimos en Chile y en el contexto Sudamericano” (“Maritime Cultural Landscapes in Chile and in the South American context”), held in the framework of the *XX Congreso Nacional de Arqueología Chilena* (*XX National Congress of Chilean Archeology*) in the city of Concepción, Chile, October 5–9, 2015. This symposium was coordinated by archaeologists Nicolás Lira, Amaru Argüeso and Camilo Robles. In Chile, almost two decades ago, research began with a focus on maritime archeology. The establishment of research teams, the inclusion of these problems in projects financed by the National Fund for the Development of Science and

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Technology (FONDECYT), the preparation of undergraduate and master theses, as well as environmental impact studies, among other aspects, give an account of the advances and development of this field in the country. For this reason, the mentioned symposium was presented as a space to present and discuss the latest advances in the context of South America. The symposium was a successful meeting: it was attended by colleagues from Argentina, Uruguay and Peru, who exposed a variety of topics ranging from pre-Hispanic boats, traditional fishing techniques and technology, to shipwrecks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Following the meeting, parts of the proceedings will be soon published (in press).

The second event refers to the symposium “Hacia una mirada comprehensiva de las interacciones humanas con los espacios acuáticos en Patagonia” (“Towards a comprehensive view of human interactions with the aquatic spaces in Patagonia”), organized in the framework of the *X Jornadas de Arqueología de la Patagonia*, (*X Meeting on Patagonian Archaeology*) held in the city of Puerto Madryn, Argentina, June 31–August 5, 2017. This symposium was coordinated by archaeologists Monica Grosso and Nicolás Ciarlo, and proceedings are planned to be in press for 2018. As in the previous case, the symposium reflected the progress made in the last decades concerning the archaeological investigations and other related disciplines that examine the interaction between human groups and Argentinian aquatic spaces. Participants of this event included binational specialists in maritime and coastal archeology from various institutions in Argentina and Chile. The papers covered a wide range of topics, thus meeting the objective of the symposium: to address the complexity of human groups’ relationships with Patagonia’s aquatic spaces in diverse social contexts, including indigenous and Western populations. Likewise, the studies presented focused on the use of different aquatic spaces, including marine, lacustrine and fluvial, by various social groups and from pre-Hispanic times to the twentieth century. In methodological terms, it is worth mentioning the use of several related sources of evidence: archaeological, ethnographic, ethno-historical and historical. At the theoretical level, most of the analyzed aspects allow us to examine a perspective that emphasizes the continuity of the aquatic and terrestrial spaces, and the indelible mark of the human practices that took place there. These investigations constitute a significant contribution towards the knowledge of the use of space, the exploitation of resources, expeditions and other activities related to communication routes and aquatic environments. Finally, they emphasize the importance of considering, in an integrated or comprehensive way, the aquatic dimension of the human groups that inhabited or frequented Patagonia over time.

The third symposium is “La Arqueología Marítima en América Latina y el Caribe: Nuevas Perspectivas” (“Maritime Archeology in Latin America and the Caribbean: New Perspectives”) that Nicolás Lira and Nicolás Ciarlo will coordinate in the framework of the *56th International Congress of Americanists*, to be held in the city of Salamanca, Spain, between July 15–20, 2018. Following the two symposia already held, we believe that this is an excellent opportunity to present and discuss the latest advances in maritime archeology, and to develop an updated overview of this specialty in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this region, studies on the relationship between human societies and aquatic environments in the past have become particularly relevant since the late twentieth century. They comprise a wide range of themes, sites and approaches to material culture. Currently, the articulation of these approaches is the key to understanding the links between the various groups and aquatic scenarios in the region. Given the historical situation in the Americas, numerous investigations are also of interest in analyzing the dynamics of complex processes operating on a global scale (e.g., voyages of discovery, struggle for European

overseas territories, the system of exploitation of riches in the colonies, and the impact on the way of life of local societies). Therefore, we invite professionals and advanced students in Archeology, Anthropology, History and related disciplines to present the results of their work. Presentations may include theoretical discussions, methodological applications (surveying and recording of sites, spatial analysis, characterization of materials, etc.), study topics (pre-Hispanic navigation, modern naval technology, coastal settlement and mobility, use of maritime resources, etc.) and particular cases of analysis. We look forward to your contributions and hope to see you soon!