

## Development of Argentine Archaeology

by

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North American scholars have had available for some time a very rich source on the development of studies in Northwest Argentina by Rex Gonzales (1976), specifically written for *American Antiquity* at the request of the then editor Dr. Patty Jo Watson. Gonzales was influenced by the seminal work of Willey and Sabloff, as well as Willey and Phillips.

Because of this ready source I find myself not going back to the original literature base in Argentina. However, there are some good historical analyses of the discipline, published in Argentina, which ought not be overlooked. Prof. Dolores Carolina Elkin of Buenos Aires has recently reminded me of a book of significant importance, the 320 page review of Jorge Fernández.

Fernández covers many fronts; he starts with a review of the major periods as he defines them in Argentina, then looks at the contributions and histories of the major institutions conducting research in the country, the impact of international congresses and foreign investigators, and finishes his text with a review of the patterns of development of regional archaeological paradigms. This discussion takes up 180 pages; the remaining 140 pages are a very nice bibliography of Argentine archaeology.

The first state of development of Argentine archaeology is called the Formative or Documentation Stage, a period from 1516 to 1872, when Fernández sees the majority of works being simply descriptive, documenting the artifacts and ruins. The second phase, from 1872-1900, is called the Romantic or Naturalist Stage. The title is very descriptive of the principle trends Fernández observes among the scholars of the period. Fernández's Third Stage, of 1901-1925, is based upon a shift in location of home base of researchers, the period of incorporation of archaeology into university curriculum. In some respects his Fourth Stage, 1925-1949, is a continuation of his Third phase, as its definition is primarily based upon the second generation of university archaeologists, the students of the great archaeologists of 1900-1925. In Fernández's Fifth Stage from 1950-1960, he sees the prologue of New or Scientific Archaeology, with the mature development of "professional" or scientific archaeology his Sixth and last phase, from 1961 to publication date.

While one cannot do justice to a book of such great complexity in just a few lines, these remarks at least give a feel for the directions he employs in his approach. His book builds upon (and perhaps owes much to) an earlier summary of Argentine archaeology by Federico Kirbus in 1976, which has gone through a least two reprintings. However my reading of Kirbus is that it is a volume that deals more with the individuals and less with the overarching themes than does Fernández; Kirbus' volume is only half the length of Fernández's publication and thus less detailed.

The 1988 volume *Arqueologia Contemporanea Argentina* contains implicit updates of these earlier histories in the comments of several of the authors. Most specific is Gustavo Politis, in his article "Paradigmas, modelos y metodos en la arqueologia de las Pampa Bonaerense". For Politis, intellectual development comes in pulses or waves, with periods of quiet between ages of innovation.

The first paradigm is an evolutionary one, from 1880-1912; the second major paradigm shift a cultural-historical emphasis from 1950-1970, and the third paradigm shift, a shift to ecosystem focus, from 1980-1980, appear in Politis' reconstruction to be periods of slow disenchantment and collapse of the previously dominant paradigm.

## References

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## Andean Archaeological History and the Popular Press

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The only available published reports on many archaeological sites in the Andes often are found solely in the popular press, in the daily or weekly papers of the local region where the sites occur, or in the science and culture sections of the larger dailies in departmental or national capitals. Dog-eared, faded xeroxes are passed from one generation of students to the next. Each serious scholar has a few dozen of these articles, which contain the only stratigraphic photo, the new lost stela, the diagnostic elements of the newly defined style, to be found no where else.

While most specialists feel that they probably have the bulk of the relevant materials for their area, Richard Daggett (1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1994) has produced a series of studies which show we have drastically underestimated the importance of this resources. Daggett has found not only the expected specific site information, but a rich data source of study the development of archaeological theories and schools of thought.