

Max Uhle and the Museo de Historia Nacional-Lima

by

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A recent article by Teodoro Hampe Martinez (1998) sheds new light on the origins of archaeology in Peru. Hampe has a continuing research interest in the origins of historical institutions in Peru. One of the institutions that he has spent some time documenting is the Museo de Historia Nacional, and especially its archaeologist who served as its first director, Max Uhle, or more properly Friedrich Max Uhle (1856-1944). Hampe Martinez's most recent work includes materials not only from the archives in Peru, but materials extracted from the unpublished diaries of Uhle kept in the archives of the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut/Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, which Hampe visited in June of 1990 and December of 1994. Uhle transferred the bulk of his personal papers, including 170 diaries, over 2,000 photographs, and much of his personal correspondence, to this institute in 1933, three years after its founding in 1930. Hampe has been collecting information from the unpublished sources relating to Uhle's work in Peru from 1896 through 1912, although the current paper focuses mainly upon the period of Uhle's tenure at the Museo de Historia Nacional, which is covered in Uhle's diaries #76 through #93 at the Berlin archives. Hampe Martinez's studies in this paper have materially added to the earlier works by Rowe (1954) and Linares Malaga (1964) on Uhle.

The first part of the paper sets up the context for Uhle's appointment as the first director of the museum, by reviewing the events which led up to Uhle's archaeological fieldwork in Peru. Uhle's Ph.D. in 1880 dealt with early Chinese grammar; thus a chain of evidence needs to be built up to assist us to understand how Uhle becomes the "father" of Peruvian archaeology. Hampe follows previous scholarship in pointing out that Uhle was initially influenced by his contacts in Dresden, where he obtained his first job after his degree. There he had significant contact with Alphons Stuebel, who along with Wilhelm Reiss, was just finishing writing up their work at Ancon in Peru, one of the first major 'scientific' excavations in Peru.

But Hampe picks up another tread not as often recognized in Uhle's background, the influence of Adolf Bastian at the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, where Uhle moved in 1888. Bastian had just finished writing up his three volume study of South American ethnology, and so had an interest in South America often overlooked. One of the first jobs that Bastian assigned Uhle was that of the assistant secretary of the 7th International Congress of Americanists being held in Berlin in 1888. Thus Uhle did much of the organizing of the sessions and correspondence with the participants, and was hence introduced to many of the "players" in Americanist studies. Bastian subsequently sent Uhle to study "Quechua diffusion" in 1892, as part of the museum's participation in the 400th anniversary of Columbus's expedition, which resulted in Uhle's first hand experience in the Andes.

In 1896, Uhle began his first excavations in the Lima area, obviously in part influenced in location by the earlier work of Stuebel and Reiss. The quality of his work was such that Phoebe Apperson Hearst recruited him with a 3-year contract for the University of California-Berkeley in 1899, with a renewal of a second 3-year contract in 1903. With the second contract, Uhle embarked with his new bride, Charlotte (Lotti) Dorothee Grosse, to begin a major series of new excavations in Peru, continuing in the field almost constantly from 1903 to 1905. Thus we can place Uhle in Peru, conducting archaeological investigations, for nearly a decade before he ascends to the directorship of the newly formed Museo de Historia Nacional; and we can also see a trajectory beginning at least two decades earlier, for his growing interest in Peru.

The Museo de Historia Nacional was established by decree of May 6, 1905, as the official organ of

the Instituto Historico del Peru, established by decree earlier that year, on February 18. Hampe argues that the founding of these institutions by the government was a continuing part of the attempt by the Lima social elite to “regenerate” their country, to create a new Peruvian nationalism, following the debacle of the war with Chile (1879-1883). As originally conceptualized, the Instituto Historico (later re-organized as the Academia Nacional de Historia in 1962) had two sections: one dealing with archaeology and the “wild” tribes of Amazonia, and the second focusing upon the Colonial and Republican historical periods.

The contract signed with Uhle on November 14, 1905, made him both director of the museum as well as head of the archaeology section. Uhle was still under contract with the University of California-Berkeley at that point, but he wrote to resign his position there, indicating his hope that this new position might develop into a life-long career opportunity (a hope, however, soon frustrated). The Colonial and Republican section head named at the same time was Jose Augusto de Izcue. Uhle had begun excavations at the site of Cajamarquilla in late November 1905, while still under contract to Berkeley, but continued the excavations in December of 1905 through April of 1906, now as the newly named director of the Museo de Historia Nacional. The initial 2,134 specimens when the museum opened on July 29, 1906, were in large part transfers from other government institutions, with a single large loan collection of over 750 items from Luis N. Larco from his North Coast materials. Uhle was immediately able to add another 1,276 objects from his Cajamarquilla work, and over the next two years, Uhle managed to bring the collections up to 8,682 specimens. Between 1906 and 1908, Uhle added 6,548 specimens to the original 2,134 items — 5,421 which he excavated, and an additional 1,137 which he acquired while director of the museum through purchase or donation.

Hampe points out that Uhle was trained in the German “kulturgeschichte” tradition, and thus his ideas of “culture history” included components drawn from anthropology, ethnography, sociology, linguistics, and psychology, in addition to archaeology. These ideas informed his reconstruction of Peruvian culture history. Hampe sees as one of Uhle’s most important contributions the argument and subsequent demonstration that there were significant broad states or empires in the Andes in addition to, and prior to, the Incas. Thus Uhle from the beginning had the museum organized around a four-part chronological schema: an initial period of development with crude ceramics, such as the primitive fisherfolk he had studied at Ancon; a first Pan-Andean horizon, with characteristic wares such as those from Chavin and Nasca; a second Pan-Andean horizon characterized by cultures associated with Tiahuanaco; and the last Pan-Andean horizon that of the Inca. (This highland focus was later adopted by Julio C. Tello; some more recent studies have suggested that it was the beginning of politicization of Peruvian archaeology). Uhle brought his linguistic background into play as well, making the argument that while the Inca spread Quechua, that the Tiahuanaco period had been a pan-Aymara horizon.

The majority of Uhle’s significant contributions to the museum date to 1906 and 1907. Uhle conducted excavations in the field almost constantly during 1906 and 1907. In 1906, as part of his duties as the director of the museum, he established the journal *Revista Historica* (still one of the major academic journals in Peru today). In addition Uhle wrote a number of articles not only for this journal but for others, summarizing the results of his field researches during this period. During this time, he organized the collections of the museum in his four period schema (outlined above), as well, as we have noted, increasing the collections by four-fold.

However Jose Augusto de Izcue, director of the section on Colonial and Republican history, was very unhappy to find his salary was only 90 soles a month, while Uhle not only received the comparable amount as head of the archaeological section, but also received 500 soles a month as director, and had additional funds provided for excavation and purchase of artifacts. Izcue politicked continually while Uhle was in the field, asking that he, as a Peruvian national as well as being ‘on the job’ rather than running around in the field somewhere, be named the director. Thus in 1907, Uhle received a letter while he was in the field indicating that he would be replaced by Izcue as the director of the museum. After wrapping up the projects he had in progress, Uhle seems to have been unable to begin any significant additional fieldwork. The budget figures for 1906-1912 (Hampe Martinez 1998:186, Table #2) indicate a major shift away from archaeology after 1907, when Izcue comes to power. Uhle accepted another three year appointment. pre-

sumably lacking any other employment opportunities at that point (and also still deeply committed to Peruvian archaeology), but by the end of that contract period, he saw no future for himself in Peru, owing to Izcue's machinations, and willingly accepted the invitation of the Universidad de Chile in Santiago to come to Chile in 1912 to create the new Museo de Etnologia y Antropologia there. As an aside, we might note that history repeated itself in Santiago, so after his 6 year (1912-1918) tenure there, he then accepted a new job offer from Jacinto Jijon y Caamano, and moved to the Universidad Central de Quito in 1919.

Hampe provides new perspective on Uhle's contributions to the development of archaeology as a field in Peru, as well as to the development of relevant institutions such as the Museo de Historia Nacional in Lima. Hampe makes it clear that the diaries and correspondence at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut are a rich source of information on Uhle. He notes that they contain such quotidian information as daily expenses (so that one can demonstrate that Uhle bought a bottle of wine each 2-3 days, got a haircut once every 5-6 weeks, bought both the morning and afternoon editions of *El Comercio*), or that out of the 36 boxes of household goods packed in his move from Lima to Santiago in 1912, that 21 of them contained books, maps and photographs, and excavation supplies (Hampe Martinez 1998:183, Appendix #1), indicating the importance of archaeology in his life, but more importantly the archives also contain copies of letters such as his strongly worded protest to the government when he learned that Izcue, whom he considered "inept, dishonest, and lacking in knowledge of museology" (Hampe Martinez 1998:176), had managed to work the political system to be appointed museum director. The extent of the materials in Berlin, as evidenced by Hampe Martinez's work, clearly will reward further research into the study of the critical importance of Max Uhle upon the development of archaeology not just in Peru, but also in Bolivia, Chile, and Ecuador.

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III. Bibliographic/Archival Material Relating to the History of Archaeology

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