# The Samarina Archaeological Project at Santa Elena Peninsula State University: Synthesis, vicissitudes and perspectives

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## Abstract

This is an informative synthesis of what, from May 2006 to January 2019, was done and achieved within and with the Samarina Archaeological Project (PAS) of the Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE). Its importance lies in demonstrating what a Public University (State) with a small budget can achieve when it is proposed, thanks to the awareness and commitment of its authorities to the identity, memory and cultural heritage (local, regional and state), as well as what happens otherwise. This article aims not only to show the scientific nature of the study but also the high possibilities of interweaving with the environment, particularly with local governments and communities, for the sake of the common good, interests and heritage. This article aims to make visible and draw attention to the processes developed, which more than once have been hindered by a series of situations that today have it practically in a state of risk and abandonment. For this, methodologically, we have resorted to the review of archives and the experiential synthesis of the direct actors of this project.

**Keywords:** Samarina, UPSE, Archaeological Project, Guangala, Cultural Heritage, Santa Elena.

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## Resumen

Se aborda la síntesis informativa de lo que, desde mayo-2006, hasta enero-2019, se realizó y logró, dentro y con el Proyecto arqueológico Samarina (PAS) de la Universidad Estatal Península de Santa Elena (UPSE). Su importancia radica en demostrar lo que una Universidad Pública (Estatal), con poco presupuesto, puede lograr, cuando así se lo propone, gracias a la conciencia y compromiso de sus autoridades, para con la identidad, la memoria y el patrimonio cultural (local, regional y estatal); así como lo que sucede en caso contrario. Se busca con este artículo, no solo dar cuenta de lo científico del estudio, sino también de las altas posibilidades de imbricación con el entorno, muy en particular con los gobiernos y comunidades locales, en aras del bien, intereses y patrimonio común. Se busca con este artículo, visibilizar y llamar la atención sobre los procesos desarrollados, que más de una vez se ha visto obstaculizado por una serie de situaciones que hoy en día lo tienen prácticamente en estado de riesgo y abandono. Para ello, metodológicamente se ha recurrido a la revisión de archivos, así como la síntesis experiencial de los actores directos de este proyecto.

**Palabras Clave:** Samarina, UPSE, Proyecto Arqueológico, Guangala, Patrimonio Cultural, Santa Elena.

## INTRODUCTION

This article arises from the need to draw attention to and visualize an underestimated potential among the different activities that Higher Education Institutions, and especially Universities, can have in terms of research, defense and enhancement of Ecuador's Cultural Heritage. The study starts from the informative synthesis of the expertise generated and achieved in these topics by the Peninsula State University of Santa Elena (UPSE), whose most critical, key and strategic point was the defense of the former Hotel Samarina, in the canton of La Libertad, Province of Santa Elena. A heritage site belonging to the Cultural Heritage of the State, a condition little known beyond certain specialized sectors, and whose dissemination to a larger and public sphere has long been a debt that this article hopes to settle somehow, presenting for scientific dissemination purposes an updated synthesis of the preliminary results achieved through the Samarina Archaeological Research and Heritage Preservation Project (PAS), based on a brief and quick review of the reports and research records from 2006 to the present.

The purpose of this is to make known and socialize succinctly, the updated synthesis of the preliminary results achieved institutionally, as well as the different collateral effects produced directly for the benefit of the local and national collective. This highlights the role that a public university, empowered and committed to the society that gave it a reason to exist and welcomed it, can achieve as long as it has managers, citizens, and professionals aware of such rights, commitments and responsibilities; since it is also possible to verify what happens otherwise.

## METHODOLOGY

The writing of this informative summary text was based on the documentary records of the Samarina Archaeological Project and the life experience of the authors in the active participation of the same, as well as of the other actions that from Pas were developed for the benefit of the community, the identity and the Cultural Heritage of Ecuador, existing in the peninsular territory,

The excavations and results reported were carried out through the methodology of cultural/natural stratigraphic excavation in the area and the contextual analysis of materials and data according to their raw material and associative nature.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The former Hotel Samarina: A bit of history

In the canton of La Libertad, province of Santa Elena, in the early sixties of the last century, when La Libertad was not yet a canton and the province of Santa Elena did not yet exist, the hotel businessman of German origin but born in France, Henry Cooperman, built one of the first three modern hotels (Figure 1) of that time, on a property he had purchased for that purpose from the Espinel-Mendoza family of the city of Guayaquil (Isyak 2011).

**Figure 1**: Main building of the former Hotel Samarina


**Source**: PAS Archive

**Figure 2**: Location of the site of the former Samarina hotel

**Source**: Google Heart.

This property was then located on the outskirts of the town, on some small cliffs to the west, and today is located within the urban fabric of this thriving city (Figures 2 to 4). Occupying what is undoubtedly a strategic and privileged geographical location, from where you can see practically the entire extension of the bay of Santa Elena, from the point and hill of the same name to the west, to the mouth of the Palmar estuary and the tip of Ayangue to the north, in normal conditions; or with a clean environment to the Cinco Cerros and Salango Island. And it borders a small and beautiful beach, surrounded by rocky intertidal outcrops, which provide habitat for various marine species such as fish, crustaceans, mollusks, birds, etc. One of these rocky outcrops, located practically in front of the property and beach, as a natural barrier at low tide, gave the perfect shade that the hotel businessman was looking for his hotel (Figures 3 and 4).

**Figure 3:** Site of the former Hotel Samarina.

**Source**: Google Heart

**Figure 4**: Coastal marine environment behind the former Samarina Hotel.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

Once the construction was finished, it began operations under the name of Hotel Samarina, a name composed in honor of his parents-in-law, Samuel and Marina Samuelson, to whom he entrusted the administration of the establishment under which it operated for some time, until they decided to move to Cuenca (Isyack op. cit.). Thus Cooperman was forced to move with his wife and children to La Libertad to personally take charge of the hotel, where he eventually made a wrong decision that would culminate in tragedy.

Cooperman thought that to improve the stay and enjoyment of his clients, the best thing to do was to privatize the small beach directly below the hotel, so he built a stone wall separating it from the rest of the beach line of the Cove. Unfortunately, this situation led the local population to react violently, causing a dynamite attack against the wall, which collaterally ended up taking the life of the youngest of his children, who suffered from a heart condition (Ibid.).

After this unfortunate event, distressed and disappointed, Cooperman entrusted the administration of the hotel to one of his employees, returning definitively to Cuenca, where he had his other hotels, neglecting many labor aspects, among other economic and tax obligations to the state, which would end with the seizure and seizure of this by the Ministry of Social Welfare in the early seventies of last century (Idem).

After a brief period of inactivity, in which the facilities were lent to the use of several public entities and institutions, after the establishment in 1972 of the Directorate of Tourism (DITURIS), and after the corresponding acquisition process, the property passed into the hands of this entity, which decided to lease the property to the private sector, operating in this modality until 1999, when, after an impasse with the last lessee, the establishment as such closed its doors and operations.

This practice of concessioning or leasing the property to the private sector for its operation and management was a recurring practice, first by DITURIS, which later, in 1989, became the Ecuadorian Tourism Corporation (CETUR), which was absorbed in 1992 into the then brand new Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), which was the institution with which the last private lessee of the place had an impasse. This was when the Santa Elena Peninsula State University (UPSE)

entered the scene and the history of the Samarina Hotel.

It is not the purpose or intention of this article to go into detail about the long process of negotiation, discussion and struggle that the UPSE, through different instances and actors, with the majority support of the population of Santa Elena, carried out in order to obtain, for academic and scientific purposes, the Hotel Samarina; and which were duly reviewed by the press. More if that of emphasizing the role and capacity of agency that the universities have, or rather should have, for the investigation and defense of the goods belonging to the Cultural Patrimony of Ecuador in every one of those places where it has or wants to have a presence.

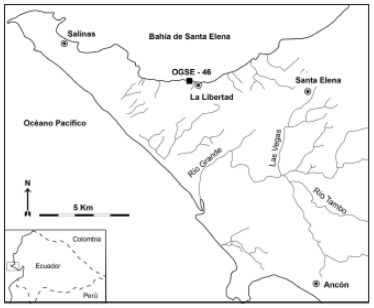
Such is the case of the defense, investigation and enhancement of the archaeological, historical-architectural and immaterial heritage of the former Hotel Samarina, a fundamental premise on which the real problem of ownership, tenure, management and usufruct of this property should have always revolved, that since the issuance in 1979 of the Law of Cultural Heritage of Ecuador, became a property belonging to the Cultural Heritage of the State, a condition that today has been strengthened thanks to the new legal norms in force, and from different legal corpus, starting with the Constitution itself.

## The Samarina site as an archaeological site

The same confluence of strategic, geographic, environmental and ecological factors and resources that attracted and induced the French-German citizen Henry Cooperman to buy the land to build his hotel there, hundreds, even thousands of years ago, made the entire sector of what today make up the 10 de Agosto and San Francisco neighborhoods of the urban canton of La Libertad, including the area of Puerto Lucia, was chosen as a place of settlement of all socio-cultural organizations of the pre- and post-Hispanic past of the peninsular region (Figure 5).

Throughout this sector, evidence of past human occupations has been found indistinctly, from the Valdivia VI (2100 BC) to the Manteño-Guancavilca phase (1535 AD), passing through the Machalilla (1600-800 BC), Engoroy (800-200 BC), Guangala (200 BC-800 AD) and Guangala (200 BC-800 AD) phases, respectively (Bushnell 1951; Lanning 1964; Paulsen 1970; Simons 1970; McDougle 1967; Stothert 1981; Tobar and Chancay 2000). A.D.) respectively (Bushnell 1951; Lanning 1964; Paulsen 1970; Simons 1970; McDougle 1967; Stothert 1981; Tobar and Chancay 2000). Even after the Hispanic contact and invasion, in the sector of La Caleta and the NE area of the 10 de Agosto neighborhood, the Port and customs area of what would eventually come to be known as El Puerto de la Punta de Santa Elena was established (Colcha 2011; Tobar and Chancay 2000) (Figure 6).

**Figure 5**: The site OGSE-46 in the spatial context of Punta de Santa Elena.




**Source**: PAS Archive

**Figure 6**: Aerial photograph of La Libertad and its surroundings in 1960

**Source**: Jorge Marcos 2004.

Most of what was once there, ecologically speaking, has been lost, but not the strategic nature of its location and the scenic beauty, which, as a point of view, offers all this sector of the current city of La Libertad, where the property is located.

The first archaeological studies in the area took place about 20 years after the beginning of industrial oil exploitation at the tip of Santa Elena. In the 1930s, the English geologist Geofrey Hext Shuterland Bushnell (1951) carried out the first

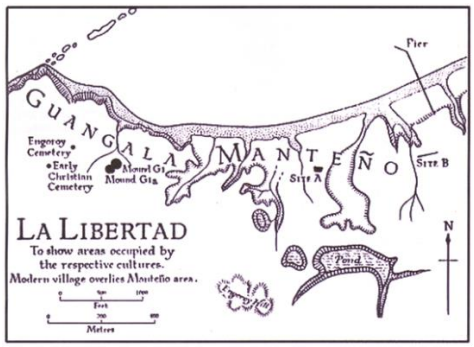
archaeological excavations in the area of La Libertad, specifically in the outskirts and surroundings of what was then still a fishing village, which was beginning to be transformed commercially and industrially thanks to the establishment of the first oil refineries in its territory.

Despite the late publication of his data in 1951, it was Bushnell who initially identified and defined the two main archaeological areas of La Libertad, designating them, based on the predominant cultural component in each of them, as the"Guangal" and"Manteñ" areas, respectively (Figure 7), He also differentiated the existence of a cemetery of the culture he called Engoroy, due to the eponymous hill nearby, as well as what he considered to be an Early Christian (Colonial) Cemetery, over what would later be known to be a Valdivia VI-VII occupation.

In the "Guangala" area or zone, researchers such as Hans Dietrich Disselhoff in 1938, Edwin N. Ferdon Jr. and John M. Corbett in 1940; Edward Lanning in 1964; Eugene McDougle in 1971; Karen Stothert in 1971 and 1984 (Stothert 1984); Marcos Suárez, Erick López, José Chancay, Gerardo Castro and Jhonny Villón in 1987 (Suárez 1987).

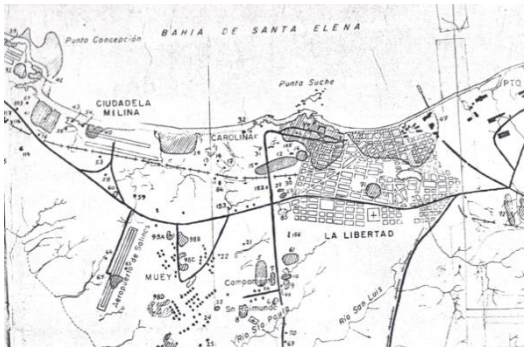
Between 1940 and 1941, Edwin Ferdon made a detailed plan of Bushnell's Guangala area, which he called "La Carolina" or E2g to avoid confusion with the Manteña sector or area and for which he maintains the eponymous name of La Libertad (Simmons 1970).

**Figure 7**: Bushnell's map




**Source**: Bushnell 1951: 17.

**Figure 8:** Lanning map.




**Source**: Laning 1964

In 1964, the archaeological expedition of Columbia University (USA), sponsored by the National Science Foundation, under the command of Edward Lanning, arrived at Punta de Santa Elena, which until 1965, would carry out the first systematic archaeological survey in the general area of this region, registering, mapping and coding in the international system in force each of the sites it located. Thus, Bushnell incorporated the areas and sites previously located and studied in this work, registering the Guangala and Manteña areas of La Libertad as OGSE-46 and OGSE-47, respectively.

In 1984 Karen Stothert carried out a relatively extensive excavation on the grounds of the house of the Polish-American diver Alex Isyak (OGSE-46D), two blocks south of the SE corner of the Samarina Hotel, taking care to locate on a sketch the areas excavated by her predecessors.

At the level of material analysis, the doctoral thesis of Michael Simmons, from the University of Arizona, who analyzes the ceramics recovered by Ferdon in his excavations at La Libertad (Simmons, 1970); the thesis of Allison Paulsen, from Columbia University, who analyzes the Guangala and La Libertad ceramics recovered by Lanning in the sites located by the expedition of that university (Paulsen, 1970), deserves particular mention. The same is true of the doctoral theses of A.V.N. Sarma and Eugene McDougle, also from Columbia University, who analyzed for paleoenvironmental reconstruction and climate change purposes, respectively, the malacological evidence collected by the expedition led by Lanning (Sarma, 1969), and the

water engineering technology for rainwater collection and management, known as "albarrada" or "jagüey" (McDougle, 1967).

With all this data as background, it is worth mentioning that in 1979 the Cultural Heritage Law of Ecuador was approved and issued, a legal body that categorizes and declares as"goods belonging to the Cultural Heritage of the State", among others, archaeological deposits, sites and materials (Art. 7, literal a), also establishing and determining (Art. 9), the property of the state over this type of goods. This situation was later reflected in the Constitution itself in 1998 (Art. 62 and Art. 64) and is currently strengthened and emphasized in the 2008 Constitution in its Art. 377, Art. 379, and Art. 380, respectively.

In other words, since in 1979, the land and property of the then still operational Hotel Samarina were already in the hands and property of a state entity such as DITURIS, it was automatically shielded against any attempt of alienation from the private sector, becoming a property belonging to the Cultural Heritage of the State, therefore"unseizable, imprescriptible and inalienable." The corresponding legal-technical instances have also ruled this through several communiqués issued in the last 12 years, during which, from time to time, it has been necessary to respond to malicious comments regarding the usefulness and functionality of the facilities and the former Hotel Samarina (López, 2008).

**The Samarina Heritage Research and Conservation Project (PAS).**

The Samarina Archaeological Research and Heritage Preservation Project, authorization No. 008.SRL.INPC.2006, was born on May 16, 2006. In order to make visible the patrimonial character of the property, which, until then, has been minimized, obviated and silenced.

According to the antecedents mentioned above, the intention of the UPSE, in addition to the evident academic-formative implications in the area of tourism and hotel management, was always to protect, investigate and value the ancestral legacy that, for reasons of destiny, the structural construction of the former Samarina Hotel of La Libertad preserved for future generations. A situation that offered and offered an excellent, unique and unpostponable opportunity - and that could be the last one - to investigate in depth and in the area the most ancestral aboriginal settlements of the remote past of La Libertad.

Thus, since mid-May 2006, an archaeological research team from UPSE has been working in a small area of these facilities, making important and valuable findings from the Guangala culture (Regional Development Period: 800 B.C. - 800 A.D.) (Figures 9 and 10).

During this period of development of the project, which today seeks to become a much more ambitious and interdisciplinary study program than what it was at the beginning, from a contemporary theoretical-methodological perspective, the study seeks to broaden and deepen the precarious knowledge we have of the Guangala and Engoroy cultures, as well as their particular human-society-environment relations in this particular part of the Santa Elena Region (Province, Peninsula and Punta de Santa Elena, three different things that bear the same name).

**Figure 9**: Beginning of work in 2006.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

**Figure 10**: Excavation of tomb 8 in 2012.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

**Figure 12**: Detail of Unit 18, N view.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

Among the evidence (hooks, net and diver weights, anchors, knives, drills and reamers, among others) found, we have evidence of a strong economic activity based on exploiting biomaritime resources for commercial purposes. Species such as Spondylus Spp, Malea ringens, Strombus Spp, Pinctada mazatlanica (Concha perla) would be processed for commercialization as artifacts and other beads, not only for local consumption; other minor species such as Arca pacifica, Anadara tuberculosa (Concha prieta), Hexaples Spp, etc., would be destined for the food diet in the local market (Figures 11 and 12).

**Figure 11**: Detail of Unit 6, E view.

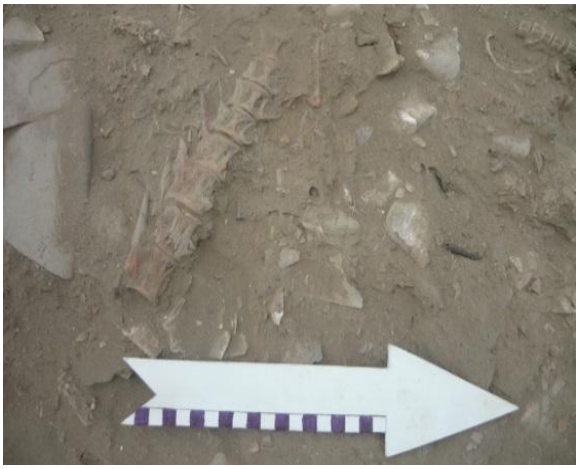
**Source**: PAS Archive.

Mixed with this malacofauna,"fillete" remains of large fish have also been found (Figures 13 and 14), some of which still have the mother-of-pearl or copper hook used to catch them in their mouths. This type of evidence added to the above, provides interesting information, not only about the different habitats being exploited but also allows us to infer aspects such as paleoenvironments, paleodiet, catchment area of the site, operational chains of appropriation-circulation and consumption, etc.

**Figure 13**: Detail of garbage dump.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

**Figure 14**: Detail of filleted fish backbone.



**Source**: PAS Archive.

At the moment, there are indications (post molds, prepared floors, cooking areas, etc.) of the existence of at least two superimposed domestic units (ED-S-001 and ED-S-002), which are perhaps the first tangible and concrete evidence of Guangala housing structures which will eventually allow an approach to the study of the architecture of the time, as well as the structuring and management of living space, and its probable variation over time.

They have also been found, associated with its interior floors, at the moment, 10 human graves (9 to ED-S-001 and 1 to ED-S-002), which in addition to informing about the funerary practices and customs of the people who inhabited this place, which, potentially will evidence aspects related to status and social function, worldviews and ideological-cultural criteria, and status associated with death; as well as an approximation to anthropometric patterns of the population, such as sex, age, kinship, physical activity, pathologies, mobility, probable causes of death, health and robustness, among others (Figures 15 and 16).

Of all the burials found, there is one, in particular, that of tomb 1 (Figure 15), which has attracted attention; it consists of secondary burial, type "bundle" of at least four disarticulated individuals, sex not yet determined, of which at least two are adults, accompanied by relative grave goods (ceramic vessel with remains of lime, stick remover, malacofauna such as Arca Pacifica and Exaples Spp).

The bones, considering the probable age of 2600 years B.P., based on the ceramic style of the vessel (early Guangala) and the fragmented ceramics associated with its filling, are in a good state of preservation.



The secondary burial in the bundle is an inhumation that comes from one of two previous practices, independent or simultaneous (Hubelaker 2007), the exhumation of previous primary burials (cleaning of graves), to later gather the bones of two or more individuals, wrap them in cotton fabrics making a package as a bundle or bundle, to later be reburied in a new ceremony. Alternatively, the use of putrefaction outdoors (pudrideros) areas, located distant to the population, from where they would be collected and gathered every time for their transfer and definitive burial in the places of habitation. There is a third practice, fleshing, which could have been used, but only after the analysis of the bones will it be possible to establish what was used.

**Figure 15**: Detail of tomb 1.- Fardo.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

**Figure 16:** Detail of Tomb 5.

**Source**: PAS Archive.

The burial was excavated almost circularly, with an approximate diameter of 2 meters 50 centimeters, with a relative depth of 1 meter 20 centimeters, placing the bundle in its central inner part to cover it with a sandy-loamy fill later. In this filling, several loose bones were located, presumed to belong to the individuals buried in the bundle and that, for some reason, could not be incorporated in its interior, being finally deposited in the filling of the tomb next to other offerings of malacofaunas.

The other burials are primary burials, usually of a single individual, adult, although there are also those of neonates, with or without grave goods, being so far the one in Tomb 5 the one that has had more grave goods, apart from not having the head, which would have been removed long after the burial (Figure 16). So far, there is only one burial of this type that contains the skeletonized bodies of an adult and two neonates, as well as the burial of a leg (U14. Tomb 6). All of them are located inside the same enclosure or domestic space (Units 4, 14 and 22).

The presence of musical artifacts such as flutes, whistles and ocarinas indicates the musical taste of the people who settled in this place in those times.

In general terms, the research process, which has been briefly outlined so far and which will be dealt with in a broader and more specific manner in other works that are being prepared, can be summarized as follows:

Thirteen of the 25 units opened in the study area have been completed and closed, being in the process of the collation and synthesis of information each of them for the respective final reports, as well as for the generation of the corresponding publications. Therefore, the stratigraphic sequence of the excavated area is practically ready, at least in the completed units.



Between 2014 and 2017, the initial processing, debugging and physical verification of the more than 3058 special finds recovered from the different excavation phases was completed, expecting at some point to continue excavating the northern halves of units 5 and 4, among others pending completion.

The analysis of human remains from the early Guangala tombs located so far at the site has also been carried out, the latter with the support of the contingent of Dr. Jonathan Santana, Prometeo fellow. He since July 2014, and for one year, he joined the team and managed during his stay to analyze the skeletal remains of at least 14 individuals from the tombs located in the Samarina excavations. As well as from other burials recovered in the surrounding area and other localities.

Several specific studies have also been completed related to thesis topics approved to graduate students of the archaeology and heritage management career of the UPSE (5 in total: Modal analysis of utilitarian ware of units 4 and 14; type-variety analysis of the ceramics of unit 22; analysis of the skeletal content of tomb 1; typological analysis of mother-of-pearl hooks; and analysis of utilitarian shell manufactures). Also participating in the project were exchange students from the Hochschule Bremen - University of Applied Sciences (Germany) and other volunteers and researchers who usually visit the site.

In 2018, the total and consolidated analysis of the archaeological malacofaunal remains from all

excavation seasons, from 2006 to 2015, was concluded, whose reports and results are currently being worked on at the level of popularization articles, including as the central subject of a master's thesis.

Similarly, we are currently working with the ceramic material of Engoroy affiliation to establish the specific corpus of the site's domestic utilitarian ware. This topic had been pending for a long time for the ceramic analysis of the Late Formative on the Ecuadorian coast. As well as aspects related to regional approaches to the occupation and networks of communication, exchange and social interaction, at a territorial level, of the Guangala culture, during the Regional Development.

In addition to all this, the expertise acquired from these experiences in the heritage complex of the former Samarina Hotel, among other previous and simultaneous actions in other sites and locations not only locally (La Libertad, Salinas, Las Conchas, Mar Bravo, Puerto de Chanduy), but also regionally (Puerto de Chanduy, Cerro Las Negras, Manantial de Guangala, Manglaralto, among others), and even nationally (Coyoctor, Zhin, Cojitambo, Culebrillas).

This allowed the UPSE to consolidate and position itself, by that time, as a reference in archaeological and patrimonial research and defense, to the point that its technicians and researchers were required to participate in a series of interventions and actions requested by the public, community and private sectors. This situation is untapped and paralyzed due to the lack of interest and support from new university administrations.

All of the above, in any case, allowed at that time to sign inter-institutional cooperation agreements with the Autonomous Decentralized Cantonal Governments (GAD's) of Salinas and La Libertad and was in the process of analysis and subscription of a similar one with Santa Elena. Not to mention one signed with the Federation of Communes of Santa Elena (FEDECONSE) to address the issue of dissemination and strengthening of the ancestral cultural identity of the region's communes (Identidad Guancavilca), which subsequently, because of the above paragraph, was not executed.

One of the last achievements and actions carried out by the PAS/UPSE was in the line of hosting two important repositories of archaeological heritage material, in the facilities of the project in the Samarina campus, the collections of the former Ernesto Gonzáles Muñoz Naturalist Museum, of the Dr. Luis Cellerí Aviles School of La Libertad, in 2017, and the Cautivo reserve, of Dr. Karen Stothert, in 2018. Commitments subscribed by the corresponding university authorities of the time, which, however, mattered little at the beginning of 2019, when the effective operations carried out by the PAS were abruptly closed, and which have been reviewed so far.

In any case, and to close these lines, it would remain to deal with or refer to the scientific-academic and tourist perspectives and projections of the Patrimonial Complex of the former Samarina Hotel, the current university campus of the UPSE, which, despite the last situation pointed out, are still valid and latent, as long as the State Cultural Heritage does not prescribe, particularly the archaeological one. Moreover, as the popular voice says "Better times will com."

In this sense, it is worth mentioning the statement made by Leira (et al. 2014). They have pointed out that archaeological and historical sites are one of the main tourist attractions worldwide to the point that countries such as Peru, Mexico, and even Spain in recent years have turned to developing research projects and enhancement of archaeological heritage. This has allowed accessibility to a large part of these archaeological assets, with a social, educational and cultural projection, not only within the domestic market but also in the international market.

From this perspective, archaeological tourism or archaeotourism is one of the existing modalities within cultural tourism (Manzato, 2007; Solsona and Rico, 2014), and is understood as a modality under which cultural and tourist proposals and products are presented in which archaeology is

the main ingredient (Manzato, 2007; Solsona and Rico, 2014; Poyato, 2011); archaeotourism or archaeological tourism being then, by its essential nature, a modality of scientific and cultural tourism, even a form of heritage and historical tourism, with multiple, varied and very dynamic overlaps of highly creative and innovative articulations, which allow to develop and enhance the existing synergy between Culture and Tourism, Tourism and Heritage, far beyond the most optimistic projections, made or that can be made within the field of planning in these topics.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is considered that the heritage character of the current Samarina campus of the UPSE constitutes today an authentic Heritage Ensemble, not only for the fact of being part of the OGSE-46 site but also for all the research developed there by the PAS, as for the actions developed by it, for reveal the architectural, historical and immaterial character of the old facilities of the former eponymous hotel. This, added to the actions of interaction, cooperation and linkage with society in terms of research interventions, mitigation, transfer and custody of heritage assets, including the acquisition of materials from other reserves, such as the Cellerí and Cautivo, among others, demonstrate how effective public universities can be in these fields, particularly as academic, scientific and cultural entities, with a social function and orientation, following their corresponding substantive functions.

To add value, reactivating and strengthening this project locally is, therefore, a priority, giving it, as proposed, a scientific-touristic projection of development, complementary to the obvious scientific and identity value that this heritage complex already possesses, starting from the proposals insistently presented tending to the total refunctionalization and enhancement, towards purposes more in line with the strictly academic and scientific, through research, management and development of cultural heritage, identity and social memory, ancestral knowledge at the level of appropriate technology, and through non-conventional tourism. To this end, it is a priority to amend regrettable decisions and actions which have recently occurred against the facilities of the former hotel. These damages must be mitigated, repaired and punished according to the law; responsibility falls not only on those who committed them, but also on the hands and shoulders of the current and future administrations of the UPSE.

The struggle developed by the Santa Elena Peninsula State University for the recovery, research and enhancement of elements belonging to the Cultural Heritage of Ecuador, cannot be put at risk by the lack of criteria of authorities with little commitment to local and national heritage, the evidence, facts and arguments briefly presented here, demonstrate and support it.



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