

ANNUAL REPORT: TEYUNA-CIUDAD PERDIDA (COLOMBIA) 2013 FIELD SCHOOL

Director: Santiago Giraldo, Global Heritage Fund (U.S.A.) and Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Ambientales Tairona (Colombia)
Co-Directors: Ms. Catalina Bateman, Fundación de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Ambientales Tairona (Colombia)



Students mapping forest-covered structures at G-1

GENERAL

IFR Field School activities at Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park in Colombia unfolded over the course of 4 weeks, between June 17 and July 17, 2013. During the first week, students and staff hiked the 15 mile trail leading to the park. The team stayed with tourist lodges along the way and enjoyed the pristine swimming holes found along the Buritaca River. Afternoons were spent in lectures and question and answer sessions wherein the historical and geographical context of the area was explained. As we moved forward daily with our 5 mule train of baggage and equipment, students were also introduced to friends from the Kogi and Wiwa indigenous communities living in the basin. Students experienced first-hand the complex logistics involved in transporting all our supplies and equipment, initially on mule back and subsequently via porters, all the way up to the park. Once we arrived, equipment was checked for damages, supplies inventoried and stored at the facilities, and students shown their accommodations for the field season.

During the initial few days on site, students recovered from the strenuous hike, were introduced to park personnel and staff, and were also given a walking tour of the site so that they could gain a sense of the extents and complexity of Ciudad Perdida's layout and location. A health and safety talk was given to minimize the risk of accidents. Total Station training began in earnest, with topographer Treisy Alvarado teaching the students the basics of Total Station set up, keyboard layout, rod and prism setup, and topographic and architectural survey work principles. IFR students were joined that first weekend by a French-Colombian M.A. student from Sorbonne University, Alice Díaz-Chauvigne. The entire team comprised 5 students, one assistant translator (Eduardo López, a Colombian student in Environmental Science at University of Virginia), and 5 staff members, with survey work headed by Santiago Giraldo and supervised by Treisy Alvarado.

The team was divided in two for the balance of the field season, with a discovery and clearing team up front and the survey team in back. The discovery team was charged with clearing up most of the heavy vegetation covering stone structures, walls, and paths and ensuring that the survey team mapped all visible features, some of which were very hard to see and detect due to centuries of forest growth over them.

The entire team worked from approximately 7:00 A.M. to 1 or 1:30 PM, returning to the park for lunch as soon as the daily afternoon rain clouds began to move in. During the afternoons, survey data was downloaded, checked for integrity and errors, and students participated in drawing surveyed structures on AutoCAD. Lectures and discussions on assigned reading also took place in the afternoons, as well as talks on research design. During the four week period, each student had to design a (hypothetical) ethnographic or archaeological research project to be carried out in the area with a limited time frame and budget. Weekends were spent resting, reading, exploring Ciudad Perdida or going for swims in the nearby creeks and river. Students were also able to interact with the tourists visiting the site, thus gaining a clearer picture of the challenges and difficulties entailed in administrating a park as remote as Ciudad Perdida. During one weekend, Peter Lewis (Student, University of Wisconsin) accompanied Santiago Giraldo and other park staff on a 6 hour hike to visit Alto de Mira, another Tairona town located in the basin.

RESEARCH RESULTS

All areas set to be investigated during this field season, including G-1, G-2, and B-201 were thoroughly surveyed, giving us a clearer picture of all the structures comprised within the park's protected area. In addition, the Colombian Institute of Anthropology and History (ICANH) is now able to include these in its management plan for the area. Activities and findings are summarized below for each area:

G-1 AND G-2

Both these sites are located on the 1.8 kilometer stone-lined path connecting Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida to B-201 and Tigres and evidence similar architectonic patterns. Two to three terraces with walls and stone rings were located on the upslope side, with masonry walls located on the downslope side serving as elevated paths or causeways connecting to the main path on both ends. The function of both sites remains unclear though, and they will be explored during the 2014 field season. Nevertheless, the layout and location suggest their use as way stations or something akin to the purpose of a *tambo* in the Central Andes. No further structures were located upslope or downslope, and these areas appear to have been used as farmland.

B-201

This site was surveyed entirely and is located on the flatter portion of a spur jutting in between the La Isla Creek and the Buritaca River. A series of domestic structures were built on three, large (over 2000 square meter) terraced areas. The uppermost level includes a wide open plaza space surrounded by masonry structures. The layout and number of structures and the good quality of the masonry work suggest that B-201 was a relatively small but permanently inhabited settlement. Excavation of a number of features in 2014 is expected to produce some more accurate information regarding its inhabitants. Unfortunately, the area has been visited by looters in the past few years and a number of structures were heavily damaged, with large pits dug in the middle of beautifully built terraces. This obscured many of the internal features since stone foundation rings, thresholds, and paving stones were found in disarray and strewn about. Damages found are all being included in the report that will be turned in to the Colombian

Institute of Anthropology and History and repairs and future conservation work are being discussed with the Ciudad Perdida conservation team.

In sum, the field season was extremely productive and we were able to map out a rather problematic “blank spot on the map” within the Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida protected area. By the end of the 4 weeks, students were doing all the mapping, with staff supervising and fixing relatively easy problems or issues. Good friendships were made with staff and park personnel, excellent quality data was produced, and everyone went home with a clearer picture of the joys and challenges of conducting archaeological research in one of the most beautiful and challenging places in South America.