

The Sacred City of Caral-Supe (Peru)

No 1269

*Official name as proposed
by the State Party:*

Sacred City of
Caral-Supe

Location:

District of Supe,
Province of Barranca,
Region of Lima
Republic of Peru

Brief description:

The Sacred City of Caral-Supe, an extensive archaeological site situated on a dry desert terrace overlooking the green valley floor of the Supe River, is one of approximately 18 urban settlements in the valley. Constructed during the Late Archaic Period of the Central Andes, the site is impressive in terms of the design and complexity of its architectural and spatial elements, especially its monumental stone and earthen platform mounds and sunken circular courts. The site and its related sites constitute the “rise of civilisation” in the Americas.

Category of property:

In terms of categories of cultural properties set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *site*.

1. BASIC DATA

Included in the Tentative List: 8 February 2005

*International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for
preparing the Nomination:* None

*Date received by
the World Heritage Centre:* 31 January 2008

Background: This is a new nomination.

Consultations: ICOMOS has consulted its International Scientific Committee on Archaeological Heritage Management.

Literature consulted (selection):

Shady Solis, Ruth, Haas, Jonathan, and Creamer, Winifred, “Dating Caral, a Preceramic Site in the Supe Valley on the Central Coast of Peru”, *Science* 292 (27 April 2001), pp. 723-726.

Shady Solis, Ruth, “Caral-Supe and the North-Central Area of Peru: The History of Maize in the Land Where Civilization Came into Being”, in *Histories of Maize: Multidisciplinary Approaches to the Prehistory, Linguistics, Biogeography, Domestication, and Evolution of Maize*, ed. John Staller, Robert Tykot, and Bruce Benz, pp. 381-402, Burlington, MA, Academic Press, 2006.

Shady Solis, Ruth, “America’s First City? The Case of Late Archaic Caral”, in *Andean Archaeology III: North and South*, ed.

William H. Isbell and Helaine Silverman, pp. 28-66., New York, Springer Science+Business Media.

Haas, Jonathan and Creamer, Winifred, “Crucible of Andean Civilization: The Peruvian Coast from 3000 to 1800 BC”, *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (Oct. 2006), pp. 745-776.

Technical Evaluation Mission: 21-27 September 2008

Additional information requested and received from the State Party: ICOMOS sent a letter to the State Party on 9 December 2008 on the following items: future development pressures; balancing future archaeological excavation with protection and care of currently revealed archaeological remains; wattle and daub conservation initiatives; time table regarding the adoption and implementation of the Management Plan and Tourism Management Plan (or tourism management policies).

ICOMOS sent another letter on 13 January 2009 to request the State Party to provide further information to justify the sacred nature of the site.

ICOMOS received a reply from the State Party (150 pages) on 27 February 2009, in which almost all of the matters raised in the letters were satisfactorily addressed. The responses are included in the report below.

Date of ICOMOS approval of this report: 10 March 2009

2. THE PROPERTY

Description

The Sacred City of Caral-Supe (Caral) was first constructed five thousand years ago, during the Late Archaic Period of the Central Andes (3000-1800 B.C.). It was occupied for approximately 1,000 years.

During this period of occupancy, Supe society, which had already obtained the level of a state, built approximately 18 urban settlements within the first 40 kilometers of the Supe Valley. These settlements, all of which can be seen today, are in different states of conservation. They allow a good understanding of the agricultural activities, construction of canals and water usage of this society. Caral is prominent among them because of its high degree of preservation and, most importantly, because of the complexity, design and monumentality of its architecture.

Caral is divided into two parts: the upper half and the lower half. There is also an outlying area and the archaeological site of Chupacigarro.

Upper Half of the City: Within this part of the city are six large pyramidal structures (platform mounds), five plazas, an extensive residential complex and several groups of residences in proximity to one or other of the pyramids. All the structures are distributed around a huge plaza. The public buildings, in particular, are constructed of blocks of stone, which are plastered with clay and painted white, yellow and red, depending upon the period of occupancy.

More specifically, this part of the city includes the Greater Pyramid, which is the largest architectural complex in the city in terms of its height (60') and “footprint” (450' x 500'). From its top platform, there is a panoramic view of

both the ancient city and the valley. Given its features and position (it dominates the large plaza), it has been suggested that it is probably the most important public building and the likely seat of political power. Other large public buildings include the Central Pyramid, the Gallery Pyramid, the Lesser Pyramid, the Huanca Pyramid, the Quarry Pyramid, the B1, B2, and B5 Residential Units, the E2-E3 Buildings, the 12 Elite Residential Group, the Greater Residential Complex and the Central Plaza. The Gallery Pyramid is the location of the major find of the site, the *quipu*, which was the device created by the Andean societies to store information. This recording system is evidence of the development and complexity of the Caral civilization.

Lower Half of the City: Within this part of the city, the buildings are organised differently. Grouped on an east-west axis, their facades face toward the upper half of the city. Most of the structures are smaller than those found in the upper half. The most impressive and largest public building is the Amphitheatre Temple, which is linked to the largest sunken circular plaza in the city.

The lower half also includes the Pyramid of the Round Altar, the Bench Temple, the “Q” Elite Residence, the Lesser Residential Complex and the Specialized Handicraft Workshop.

Outlying Area: Within this area there are two sectors, D Sector and X Sector. Both sectors are composed of residential units, although those in Sector X are located on the periphery of the city.

Archaeological Site of Chupacigarro: This site, which has an area of 44.6 hectares, contains 12 structures of different sizes and shapes, as well as houses on the periphery. The site is included in the property because it provides complementary information on the Caral Civilization, especially in the field of astronomical observation.

The site contains the Greater Temple of Chupacigarro, which is the largest building and which is linked to a sunken circular plaza. The structure is described as being very similar to the Greater Pyramid in the upper half of Caral. The site also contains the Geoglyph, a construction of various sized angular stones from nearby rock formations, which depicts a head in profile. Although the precise meaning and function of the Geoglyph is unclear, it could have been associated with astronomical observation or, as a trophy head, it could have played a role in certain activities that governed social relationships.

History and development

During its period of occupancy, approximately 1,000 years, Caral was remodelled several times. In fact, almost all of the buildings show successive periods of occupation.

Research carried out by a cross-disciplinary team has demonstrated that although the Supe Valley settlements were occupied in 3000 B.C., it was not until 2600 B.C. that their occupants became part of an organised social system with a “capital zone” in the lower middle valley. And it was this zone that was the centre of the most outstanding social and cultural tradition of the time.

Based on socio-cultural information and dating data, the theory has been posited that the influence of the social system of Supe first affected the populations of the nearest valleys. It then extended further and, by 2200 B.C., its influence had spread as far south as the archaeological site of El Paraiso in the Chillón Valley, and to all the valleys northward as far as the Santa River Valley.

The chronological sequence is summarised as follows:

- Remote Period (before 3000 B.C.): Land possession by groups of families/lineages.
- Ancient Period (3000-2600 B.C.): “Capital zone” growth; plazas and impressive buildings constructed.
- Final Middle Period (2300-2200 B.C.): Buildings enlarged in area and volume; large platforms and plazas constructed.
- Initial Late Period (2200-2100 B.C.): Public buildings remodelled; plazas constructed with quadrangular platform framework.
- Final Late Period (2100-1800 B.C.): Public buildings remodelled (using smaller stones); occupation of site reduced.

Throughout the occupancy of the site, there have been periods of great change, and it is possible to see clear distinctions in the design and architecture of the city, and the burial and renewal of buildings. There have also been minor changes or phases within each of the periods.

Each period is distinguishable from the one preceding it in several ways: elements of architectural style; building techniques; materials; and the colour of paint used on walls. However, the overall design is maintained as well as the associated cultural traditions and building functions.

In reply to the letter sent to the State Party by ICOMOS on 13 January 2009 asking for further information regarding the sacred nature of the site, the State Party on 27 February 2009 explained to the satisfaction of ICOMOS the reason for this descriptor. The archaeological work to date has enabled researchers to establish the sacred nature of Caral through both architectural and contextual analyses. Both the city (in its urban plan) and its component parts (including, for example, the pyramidal structures and residences of the elite) show clear evidence of ceremonial functions, thereby signifying what can be called a powerful religious ideology.

Sacred City of Caral-Supe Values

The values of the property are linked to the overall layout of buildings and structures and related spaces in each of the property’s four areas (the Upper Half of the City, the Lower Half of the City, the Outlying Area and the Archaeological Site of Chupacigarro); and the specific layout and probable use of individual structures and spaces in each of the four areas of the site. The major buildings are constructed primarily of stone, and the rooms of the smaller and older buildings have walls made of organic material, wooden poles and woven cane panels covered with mud. Values of the property are also linked to their associated archaeological finds, and especially to the *quipu*.

3. OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Integrity and Authenticity

Integrity

Caral is remarkably intact, largely because of its early abandonment and late discovery. Once abandoned, it appears to have been occupied only twice and then not systematically: once in the so-called Middle Formative or Early Horizon, about 1000 B.C.; and once in the States and Lordships period, between 900 and 1440 A.D. Since both these settlements were on the outskirts of the city, they did not disturb the ancient architectural structures. In addition, since the site lacked gold and silver finds, there was little looting.

The site has no modern permanent constructions in its immediate surroundings (except for tourism facilities built from local materials). It is part of a cultural and natural landscape of great beauty, relatively untouched by development. Most development has occurred in low valley areas near Lima (to the south of the site). The middle Supe Valley, where the site is located, is an area dedicated to non-industrialised agriculture.

Authenticity

There is little argument about the authenticity of the site. Radiocarbon analysis carried out by the Caral-Supe Special Archaeological Project (PEACS) at the Caral site confirms that the development of the site can be located in time between the years 3000 to 1800 B.C. and, more specifically, to the Late Archaic Period.

In its treatment of the site, PEACS has endeavoured to show both the architecture and the urban configuration within the original outline of Caral. The goals have been to consider only archaeological evidence, and to show the characteristics of every period without prejudice to any period. However, there has been some concern about the level of intervention in restoration work and about the interpretation of these works which has varied according to the professionals involved.

ICOMOS considers that the conditions of integrity and authenticity have been generally met, although ICOMOS expresses concern about the inconsistent interpretation of restoration.

Comparative analysis

The property has been systematically and comprehensively analysed by the State Party within regional, national and international contexts.

Regionally, the cultural developments at Caral were unprecedented within what is called the Norte Chico or Near North Coast, which includes four river valleys north of Lima. The Supe Valley is one of the four and Caral, to date, is the largest, best planned and most representative monumental settlement.

Nationally and internationally, Caral, as an ancient site and society, shares similar features with such Peruvian World Heritage Sites as Chavin (Archaeological Site) (1500 – 300 B.C.) (inscribed in 1985 on the basis of criterion (iii)) and the Historic Sanctuary of Machu Picchu (1450 A.D.) (inscribed in 1983 on the basis of criteria (i), (iii), (vii) and (ix)), whose layout and stone architecture are similar to those of Caral. As well, Chan Chan Archaeological Zone (apogee 15th century A.D.) (inscribed in 1986 on the basis of criteria (i) and (iii)) reflects the organisation and mud architecture of Caral, while the Lines and Geoglyphs of Nasca and Pampas de Jumana (500 B.C. – 500 A.D.) (inscribed in 1994 on the basis of criteria (i), (iii) and (iv)) have their early beginnings in the Lines and Geoglyph of Caral.

The discovery of the *quipu* within the site is a significant attribute of this site in comparative terms. It is the most ancient implement for recording information to be recovered in the Central Andean area.

Internationally, the site holds great importance within the context of other major early civilisations, notably, Memphis (2700 B.C.) and Saqqara in Egypt, Moenjodaro (2600 B.C.) in Pakistan, and Uruk (3200 B.C.) and Eridu (2900 B.C.) in Mesopotamia.

Closer to the Americas, there are no comparable cities in the Americas until Olmec society 1,500 years later, and the development of the Maya society 3,000 years later. The design of Mayan cities, in particular, is said to recall the management of constructed space in Caral.

In looking at Caral within a comparative framework, ICOMOS considers that its importance is demonstrated at an international level.

ICOMOS considers that the comparative analysis justifies consideration of this property for inscription on the World Heritage List.

Justification of the Outstanding Universal Value

The nominated property is considered by the State Party to be of Outstanding Universal Value as a cultural property for the following reasons:

- In association with other settlements within the Supe Valley, it is seen as the “rise of civilisation” in ancient Peru.
- The discovery of the *quipu* (record-keeping device) attests to, and confirms, the complexity of Caral’s social formation.
- Its early date (as early as 3000 B.C., but certainly by 2700 B.C.) places it among the earliest civilisations in the world.
- Caral is impressive in terms of the design and complexity of its architectural and spatial elements, especially its monumental earthen platform mounds and sunken circular courts.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed

The property is nominated on the basis of cultural criteria (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

Criterion (i): represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that the design of the constructed space, the architecture, the materials and their contexts, as well as the information about the management of the environment, soils and water, show the creative genius, the degree of knowledge and organisational complexity attained by Supe society. In order to set up this city and its monumental buildings according to a coordinated design, prior planning, experts and a centralised government were necessary. The government, supported by religious coercion, mobilised enormous numbers of organised labourers.

The design of the city reflects the ideology of the population, derived from its world view and its own social system. In the structures built in the city and on the surrounding land, the combined application of contemporary scientific, technological and artistic expertise can be seen. Research at Caral has changed the history of urbanism, and since Caral is the oldest centre of civilisation in the Americas, comparable to the oldest civilisations identified in the Old World, it has become a laboratory for one to draw closer, by comparative study, to the knowledge and understanding of human conduct.

ICOMOS considers that Caral is the result of practice, a combination of conscious and unconscious processes in the context of historically contingent events, which leads to a particular configuration, and therefore not a masterpiece of human creative genius, the product of deliberate symbolic or artistic activity.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has not been demonstrated.

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that in Caral, there is evidence of an exchange of goods and ideologies between it and societies in different regions of the north-central area of Peru (coast, Andean highlands and jungle). There was a sphere of inter-regional interaction from the Santa Valley in the north to the Chillón Valley in the south, and between the Pacific Ocean and the Amazon Basin, in an area measuring 4000 by 300 km during the Late Archaic Period (3000-1800 B.C.). However, the type of social and political organisation of these populations and the level of knowledge attained were projected beyond themselves. Caral's prestige converted such organisation and knowledge into an influential model, parts of which were assumed and continued by other societies.

Regardless of the diversity in lifestyles, languages and political entities that existed in the Central Andes, Caral was present as a sub-stratum for the next four thousand years, and it may be considered the "mother culture",

which began the original cultural civilising process that continued up to the Inca Empire. The use of the *quipu* for recording information began in Caral and continued until the end of the Inca Period.

ICOMOS considers that Caral is the best representation of Late Archaic architecture and town planning in ancient Peruvian civilisation. The platform mounds, sunken circular courts, and urban plan, which developed over centuries, influenced nearby settlements and subsequently a large part of the Peruvian coast.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that Caral is an exceptional testimony to the oldest civilisation in the Americas, which was developed five thousand years ago, almost simultaneously with the civilisations of Egypt, India and Mesopotamia. Because of its great age, the site is a unique laboratory in the Americas for research into the formation of the state: life in the city; social hierarchies and distinctions; the roles of trade; and the importance of religion in social organisation.

ICOMOS considers that, within the Supe Valley, the cradle of civilisation in the Americas, Caral is the most highly-developed and complex example of settlement within the civilisation's formative period (the Late Archaic period).

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.

This criterion is justified by the State Party on the grounds that, of all the urban settlements identified in the New World from 3000 to 1800 B.C., Caral is the oldest and the most outstanding because of its large area (66 ha), its well-planned design and construction and its architectural complexity. It has similarities to Maya cities, but it is at least 3,300 years older.

ICOMOS considers that Caral is impressive in terms of the design and complexity of its architectural and spatial elements, especially its monumental earthen platform mounds and sunken circular courts, features that were to dominate a large part of the Peruvian coast for many centuries.

ICOMOS considers that this criterion has been demonstrated.

ICOMOS considers that the nominated property meets criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) and that the Outstanding Universal Value has been demonstrated.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

Development pressures

At present, there appear to be few development pressures as most of the inhabitants of the Supe Valley, and the small agricultural villages in which they live, do not pose an immediate threat to Caral and other archaeological sites within the valley, except for relatively rare cases of occupation of some of the cultivation terraces near the archaeological sites. The rare cases of occupation are now being handled by the Peruvian authorities, and in the case of illegal occupation of state lands, court action is possible.

As to whether any development projects are planned within the nominated property and its vicinity, a request for additional information was sent to the State Party by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008. In the reply to ICOMOS from the State Party on 27 February 2009, development projects in the buffer zone and what is called the “shared-use sub-zone” are clearly set out in five distinct categories of projects (“Lines of action”). The first “Line of action” contains four identity-related projects; the second “Line of action” contains three river basin-related management projects; the third “Line of action” contains two organic agricultural system-related projects; the fourth “Line of action” contains eight tourism-related projects; and the fifth “Line of action” contains six infrastructure- and land-use-related projects. All of these projects appear to be contained in scale and integrated within the larger context of protecting and supporting the values of the nominated property and its buffer zone, including the shared-use sub-zone.

Tourism pressures

There is little impact from tourism, although it is anticipated that, irrespective of the outcome of the nomination of the property to the World Heritage List, visitation numbers will increase. Currently, tourism is well-managed and future planning takes into account an increase in numbers. Proximity to Lima, and its hotels, should help to lessen the impact of increased tourist numbers. However, care must be taken in the design and placement of any future tourist facilities contiguous to the site.

Environmental pressures

Solar radiation, temperature differences and wind laden with sand are the main causes of structural deterioration, especially of organic materials. In regard to rain, the El Niño phenomenon presents a significant risk.

Natural disasters

Earthquakes have been a problem since the construction of the site. In fact, the Peruvian coast has suffered a series of major earthquakes over the last five thousand years and the site is located in what is called the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Impact of climate change

The major impact could be the intensification of the El Niño phenomenon.

ICOMOS considers that the main threats to the property are environmental pressures, future tourism pressures, natural disasters and the impact of climate change.

5. PROTECTION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

Boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

The nominated property occupies an area of 626 hectares with a buffer zone of 14,620 hectares.

The property boundary coincide with the limits legally approved by the National Institute of Culture (INC), and the property boundary and buffer zone are clearly established in official plans and easy to visualise on the site due to the topography and delimitation of the Supe River in the northern section.

The property boundary and buffer zone give the site ample protection and space for the development of supporting infrastructure, whether for research or for visitors. The Master Plan for the Integrated Sustainable Development of Supe and Barranca provide the setting for Caral within a cultural and natural landscape of great historical value and scenic beauty.

The property includes sectors where no archaeological evidence is visible on the surface. These were included to ensure that potential areas of archaeological importance were appropriately protected. It is possible, for example, that such remains as cemeteries may exist beneath the surface. In general, however, the delimiting of the archaeological site is defined by the continuity of archaeological evidence.

The Natural and Cultural Protection Area, which is an integral part of the Master Plan, contains other important archaeological sites of the Caral civilisation and these are delimited and legally protected. This extensive protection area is clearly marked on maps.

ICOMOS considers that the boundaries of the nominated property are appropriate.

Ownership

The land is largely state property and is under the protection of the INC. More specifically, 5,864,293.82 m² are owned by the state and 399,349.18 m² are the property of 18 farmers. To ensure preservation of the Caral site, land-use restrictions are registered on land ownership titles. In addition, there are six plots of farmed land without title holders and this situation is being addressed by regulations regarding agricultural and housing uses.

Protection

As already stated, both the property and the buffer zone are within the Master Plan area.

Legal Protection

According to By Law No. 28296, the Republic of Peru is the owner of the nation's cultural heritage; by resolution, under the INC, sites are declared Cultural Heritage of the Nation. Caral and Chupacigarro were declared as such under National Directorial Resolution No. 720 18/INC (August 1, 2002).

The INC also issues resolutions regarding the approval of parametric plans of delimitation and demarcation of archaeological sites. The most relevant resolution is National Directorial Resolution No. 645/INC (August 27, 2003), which gives approval of the plan of the Caral archaeological site. It also stipulates that any work project that may affect or alter the landscape of the site must be approved by the INC.

Other important legislation includes:

- Supreme Decree No. 003-2003-ED (February 10, 2003), which creates the Caral-Supe Special Archaeological Project (PEACS) as an executing unit of INC. This grants PEACS administrative, financial and scientific autonomy, among other things.
- National Directorial Resolution No. 688/INC (May 25, 2005), which approves the Master Plan as an instrument for regulating and planning the sustainable development of the Supe Valley and the Province of Barranca.
- National Directorial Resolution No. 689/INC (May 25, 2005), which entrusts PEACS with the competences and attributions of INC for the purposes of protection, conservation, research, value enhancement, dissemination, and promotion of the cultural heritage and of the archaeological sites located in the area covered by the Caral Master Plan, which includes the valleys of a number of river basins, including Supe.

Significantly, and in addition to the above, the Republic of Peru has promulgated Law No. 28690 (March 18, 2006), "which declares of preferential public need the registration, research, conservation, value enhancement, recording, protection, preservation, and guardianship of the heritage of the archaeological site of Caral..." It also stipulates that PEACS is responsible for carrying out a Master Plan for the Supe Valley.

Traditional Protection

A traditional system of protection does not exist, although PEACS is indirectly creating a system through related educational projects.

Effectiveness of protection measures

The protection measures appear to be appropriate, effective and comprehensive.

ICOMOS considers that the legal protection in place is adequate.

Conservation

Inventories, recording, research

Archaeological investigation, including the documentation process and conservation of objects and archaeological evidence, has been carried out within a framework of international best practice.

Of particular interest is the use of GIS for registration and documentation. A topographic survey of all archaeological structures has been undertaken, and plans recording interventions have been digitalised and geo-referenced. As a result it is possible to follow interventions at both the micro and macro levels.

Present state of conservation

Given its relatively recent discovery and excavation, the site is generally well conserved. However, the partial collapse of terraces and the loss of wall foundations in a number of structures pose structural problems. Another problem, perhaps less severe, is the ongoing deterioration of surface plastering. The first two problems require stabilisation, while the last problem requires on-going attention. All three problem areas are being addressed.

Since no information was given in the nomination dossier regarding future excavation plans, the State Party was asked by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008 to supply information as to how excavation in the future will be balanced with the protection and care of currently revealed archaeological remains. In the reply to ICOMOS from the State Party on 27 February 2009, the following information was supplied:

Caral-Supe Special Archaeological Project (PEACS) has made the decision not to continue to expose *quincha* (wattle-and-daub) architecture; once the period has been researched and the design of the construction phase identified, *quincha* (wattle-and-daub) architecture will be buried or reburied.

In addition, since the objective of the archaeological digs is to understand the construction sequence and function of structures, once research and documentation have been completed, decisions will be made regarding the relevance of each building to "reading" the site. It is at this point that decisions regarding the burial/reburial of individual elements will be made.

However, ICOMOS notes that there is no indication as to how long the excavated *quincha* will be exposed and there is no information regarding the decision-making process as to which buildings/structures should remain exposed for visitors and the basis for such decision-making.

ICOMOS noticed also that the site was inscribed on the 2002 World Monuments Watch list of 100 most endangered sites for one year. The State Party explained that due to the limited budget available at that time, it was decided to call the attention of the local and international community. This listing led the Peruvian government granting funds for the recording, research, investigation conservation and presentation of the site.

Active Conservation measures

Active conservation measures have two objectives: to stabilise structures in order to prevent further deterioration; and to rescue the original design of buildings and structures. PEACS maintains that only anastylosis and reintegration is carried out in the restoration of the walls and platforms of pyramids. However, the interpretation of these works has varied according to the professionals involved in the work, and in some cases, new materials, in addition to those used for mortar, have been used. The latter approach, which is closer to reconstruction, raises the question about how minimum intervention is defined.

Although the conservation of *quincha* construction is mentioned in the nomination dossier, more information was needed on the conservation initiatives directly related to such construction. Accordingly, the State Party was asked by ICOMOS on 9 December 2008 to explain what specific measures are being taken now, and will be taken in the future, to protect this kind of construction. In the reply of the State Party to ICOMOS on 27 February 2009, the following information was provided:

The exposed *quincha*, when loose, is fixed by injections of clay (barbotine) containing no other ingredients. If there is evidence of salts on exterior wall faces, desalinization is carried out by applying poultices saturated with alcohol and distilled water. More importantly, PEACS has decided not to continue to expose *quincha* architecture once it has been studied and recorded.

Active preventive conservation objectives have three goals: avoid solar radiation; minimise wind erosion; and minimise sand movement. The related measures include low stone walls, vertical netting and tree hedges. The removal of surface salts appears to be an on-going task.

Maintenance

Site maintenance activities are not described, but the ICOMOS evaluation mission found that the property is well-maintained.

Effectiveness of conservation measures

It is probably too soon to assess the effectiveness of the measures, although rigorous and regular monitoring with comprehensive indicators should be able to alert staff to potential problems.

ICOMOS considers that the conservation of the property is generally good, although there is concern about the high level of intervention in some of the restoration work. ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information on the timetable for the burial or reburial of *quincha* (wattle-and-daub) architecture and regarding the decision-making process as to which buildings and structures should remain exposed for visitors and the basis for such decision-making.

Management

Management structures and processes, including traditional management processes

The administration of the site and associated projects of investigation and restoration are the responsibility of the Caral-Supe Special Archaeological Project (PEACS). As previously mentioned, this state entity was created by decree and operates under the National Institute of Culture (INC), the official institution responsible for the nation's cultural heritage. PEACS operates autonomously in the areas of administration, finance, and scientific matters. The INC must approve the structure of PEACS as well as all archaeological projects, and associated reports, carried out at Caral and other Supe Valley sites.

Numerous regulations control the areas of financial management, acquisitions and services, and resources.

Policy framework: management plans and arrangements, including visitor management and presentation

The Master Plan of the Supe Valley and the Management Plan of Caral are two different but complimentary instruments for territorial administration. The PEACS established as its first strategy the integral development of the Supe Valley, in such a way as to achieve the protection of the archaeological sites of the valley and integrate them to the economic and cultural development of the local population, in coordination with community authorities and municipalities. For this it drew up the Master Plan. Subsequently it worked on the Management Plan for the Sacred City of Caral.

PEACS is responsible for leading the implementation of the Master Plan of the Supe Valley, a plan that has been drawn up with the participation of local inhabitants and the involvement of municipal authorities and different ministries.

The anticipated Management Plan for Caral will describe the site in detail, including the buffer zone, establish management objectives, identify threats, and indicate management principles for archaeological investigation, conservation, site interpretation, land management and relationships with neighbouring populations and authorities. It will also list major projects that it hopes to carry out.

The Management Plan for Caral divides the property into four management zones:

- Intangible Monumental Zone (structures and archaeological elements);
- Special Treatment Archaeological Zone (archaeological evidence and controlled agricultural activity);
- Shared Use Zone (traditional agricultural activity); and
- Landscape Reserve Zone (archaeological evidence and natural environment).

Since only a preliminary version of the Management Plan for the Sacred City of Caral is included in the dossier, ICOMOS, in the letter to the State Party on 9 December 2008, requested information regarding the adoption and implementation of the Management Plan. In its reply to ICOMOS on 27 February 2009, the State Party reminded ICOMOS that the first Management Plan was approved within the framework of Supreme Decree No. 003-2003-ED and that this decree was ratified by Peruvian Congress Law No. 28690. However, as conveyed by the State Party in its 27 February 2009 reply, it is only with the modification of the Management Plan at the end of 2008, that there are regulations to guarantee the preservation and conservation of the Sacred City of Caral-Supe.

In regard to visitor management and presentation, there is a controlled entrance, sensitively designed reception facilities for visitors, a system of trained group guides and rock-lined site paths, with discrete signage.

Within the reception facilities, which include visitor services, the history and values of the site are presented.

Responding to a request for tourism management policies by ICOMOS on 9 December 2009, the State Party on 27 February 2009 submitted a study entitled Plan for the Development of Tourism for the Archaeological Site of Caral and the Supe valley (a 58-page study). The State Party also submitted, as mentioned above, the recently modified Management Plan (as of late 2008), which includes four sections on tourism policy – interpretation, adaptations to accommodate tourism, handling visitors, and safety and surveillance.

Risk preparedness

Given the risk of earthquake, due to the location of the site within the Pacific Ring of Fire, conservation and restoration work has included the stabilisation of platforms and walls.

There are plans to carry out an evaluation of the structural stability of the site with support from the Japan-Peru Center for Earthquake Engineering Research and Disaster Mitigation (CISMID).

Involvement of the local communities

Community involvement is being promoted through involvement with Supe Valley development projects.

Resources, including staffing levels, expertise and training

Some 250 staff is employed by PEACS and approximately one half of the staff is employed at Caral, including 10 archaeologists, 71 excavations personnel, 29 conservation personnel, 12 administrators and two guards. Most of the operating budget comes from the national government, although other monies flow from self-generated income.

Effectiveness of current management

PEACS is well administered with adequate financing from the national government, and this financing, along with other sources, has increased each year over the past four years. There are administrative issues between PEACS and

INC, although these do not seem to compromise the government's support of the nomination of Caral.

ICOMOS considers that the management system for the property is adequate and is especially supportive of the Master Plan and its objectives. A recently modified Management Plan (as of late 2008) and a tourism development plan study were submitted by the State Party. ICOMOS recommends that the current funding levels from the national government be maintained, if not increased.

6. MONITORING

Monitoring is focused on discrete architectural and structural elements, such as the mud and stone walls associated with platforms, walls of organic material, the double-faced stone walls or floors and fireplaces. Indicators include alignment measures, displacement of material and/or loss of material. Elements are checked, and the results recorded, every two or six months. The administrative arrangements for monitoring the site are under an INC unit.

In addition to on-site monitoring on a regular basis, yearly reports are sent to INC. A series of technical reports have also been prepared on the conservation and restoration work of a number of buildings.

ICOMOS considers that the monitoring of the site is satisfactory.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Although Caral is nominated for its significance as an archaeological site, it has been framed within the landscape context within the Supe Valley. This integration of a site with its greater context is commendable.

Recommendations with respect to inscription

ICOMOS recommends that the Sacred City of Caral-Supe, Peru, be inscribed on the World Heritage List on the basis of *criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv)*.

Recommended Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Sacred City of Caral-Supe is the birthplace of civilisation in the Americas. As a fully developed socio-political state, it is remarkable for its complexity and its impact on developing settlements throughout the Supe Valley and beyond. Its early use of the *quipu* as a recording device is considered of great significance.

The design of both the architectural and spatial components of the city is masterful, and the monumental platform mounds and recessed circular courts are powerful and influential expressions of a consolidated state.

Criterion (ii): Caral is the best representation of Late Archaic architecture and town planning in ancient Peruvian civilisation. The platform mounds, sunken circular courts, and urban plan, which developed over centuries, influenced nearby settlements and subsequently a large part of the Peruvian coast.

Criterion (iii): Within the Supe Valley, the cradle of civilisation in the Americas, Caral is the most highly-developed and complex example of settlement within the civilisation's formative period (the Late Archaic period).

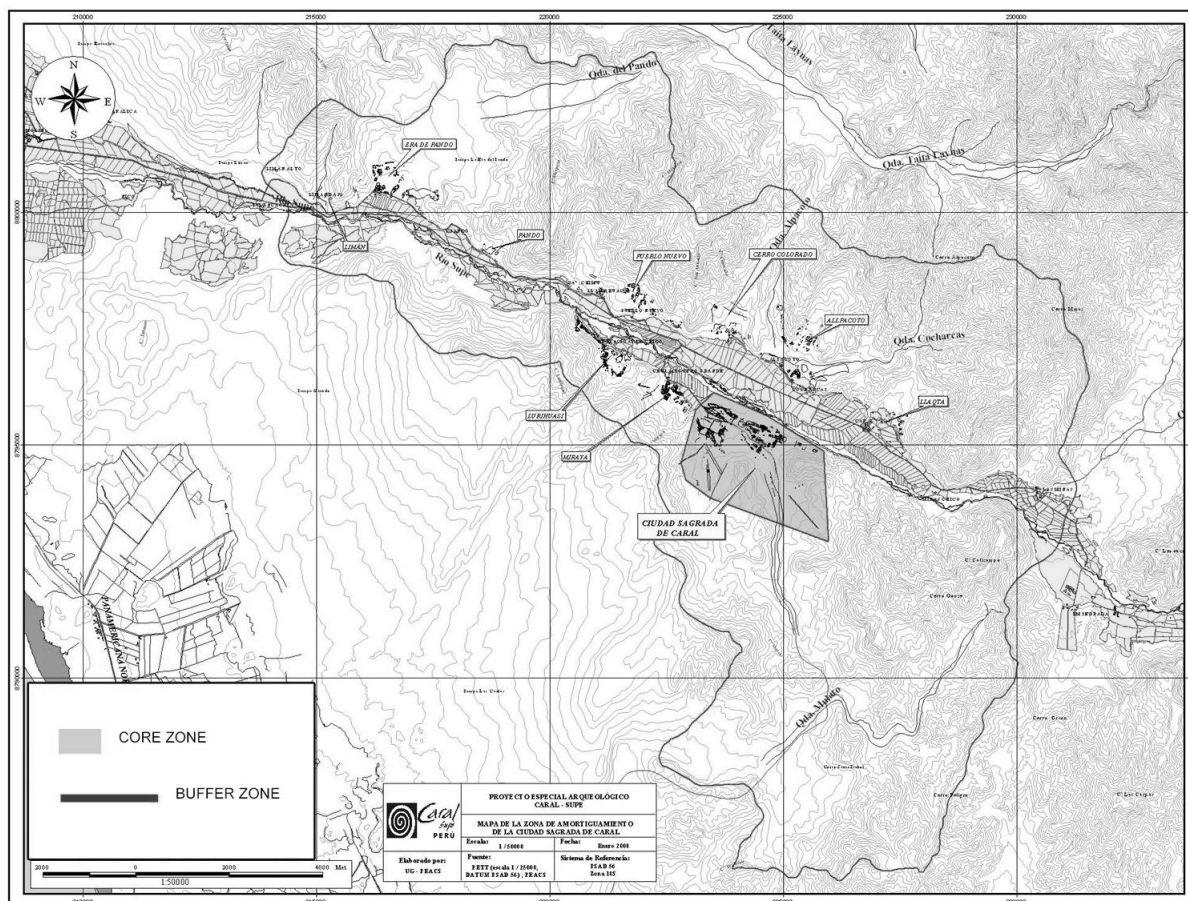
Criterion (iv): Caral is impressive in terms of the design and complexity of its architectural and spatial elements, especially its monumental earthen platform mounds and sunken circular courts, features that were to dominate a large part of the Peruvian coast for many centuries.

Caral meets the requirements for authenticity and integrity, and the requirements for protection.

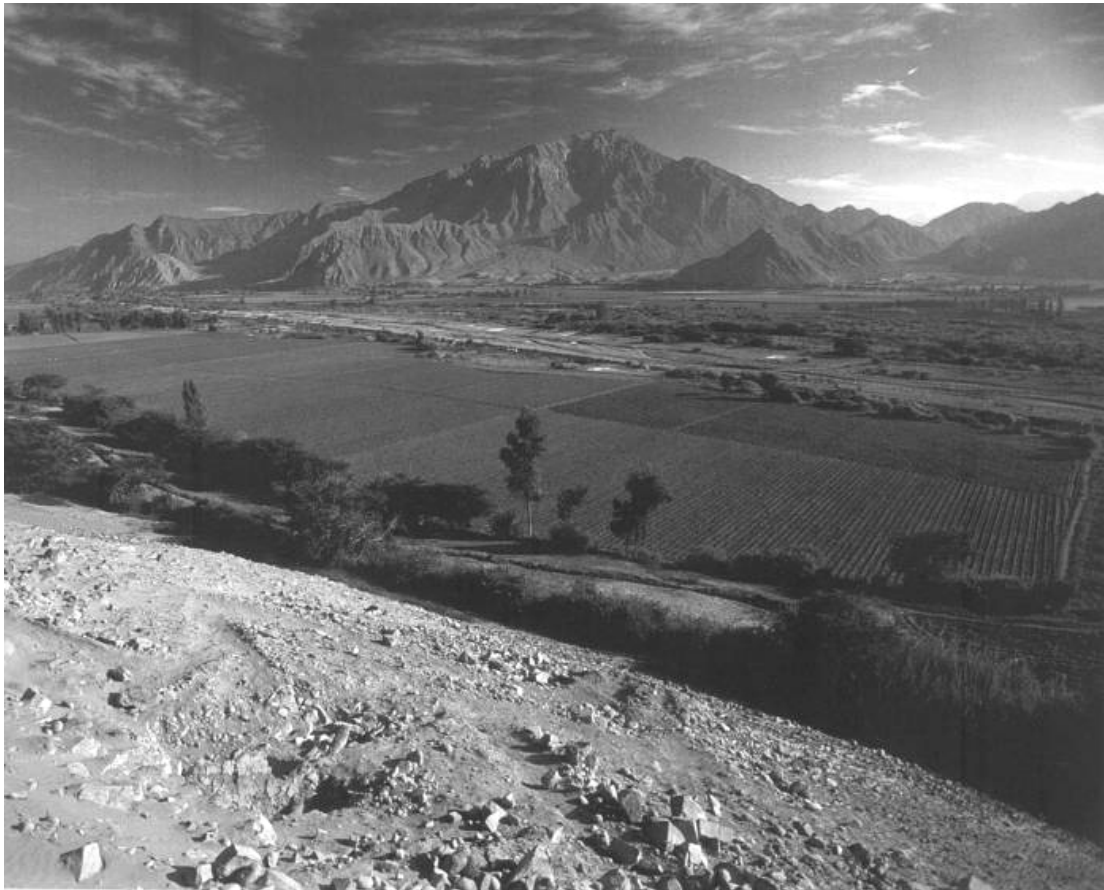
The management system in place is adequate, and a recently modified Management Plan (as of late 2008) has been implemented. The modified plan includes regulations to guarantee the preservation and conservation of the property.

Furthermore, ICOMOS recommends that the State Party give consideration to the following points:

- Clarifying the acceptable level(s) of intervention for consolidating archaeological structures and once clarified, developing detailed guidelines for such intervention(s);
- Providing further information on the timetable for the burial or reburial of *quincha* (wattle-and-daub) architecture and regarding the decision-making process as to which buildings and structures should remain exposed for visitors and the basis for such decision-making.



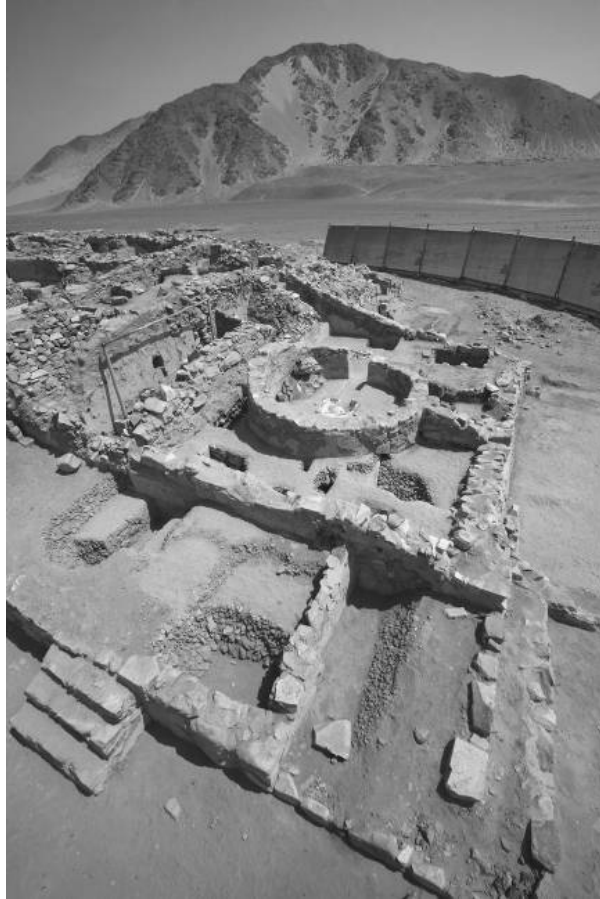
Map showing the boundaries of the nominated property



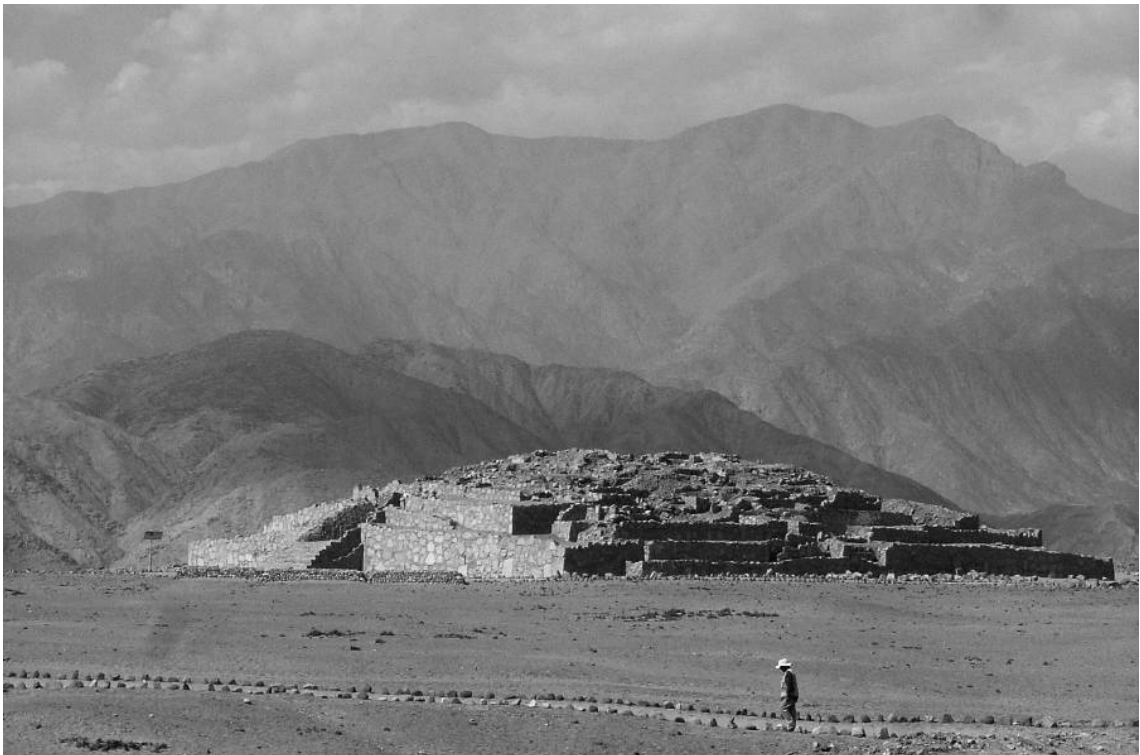
View of the Supe Valley



The Great Pyramid and its circular plaza



The Round Altar Pyramid



The Small Pyramid