July 2013

Staging Sacrifice: Knowledge Mobilization and Visitation at Huacas de Moche, Peru

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

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STAGING SACRIFICE:
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION AND VISITATION AT HUACAS DE MOCHE, PERU

(Monograph)

by

Alison Deplonty

Graduate Program in Anthropology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Archaeology

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Abstract

Since the 1990s there has been increased pressure for archaeologists to present the results of their work to the general public. Archaeological site museums have proven to be popular venues for the dissemination of archaeological knowledge. These institutions pose challenges to museum designers and archaeologists, who must negotiate visitor and heritage sustainability. In this thesis the pre-Inca site of Huacas de Moche (ca. 50-850 CE), Peru, is used as a case study to examine how visitor behaviour and experience are channeled through site branding and the adherence to a storyline throughout visits to the museum and ruins. However, this thesis shows that experience is largely a result of interaction between visitors and tour guides. Ultimately, effective organization of archaeological site museums can positively impact knowledge mobilization and visitation, as interpretation is at the heart of museum planning and use, as it connects and occurs at all levels of knowledge mobilization.

Keywords

Anthropology; Archaeology; Branding; Guides; Huaca de la Luna; Huacas de Moche; Human Sacrifice; Knowledge Mobilization; Museum; Peru; Public Archaeology; Public History; Storyline; Tour Guides; Tours; Visitation; Visitors
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people: Dr. Jean-Francois Millaire for his continuous support. His guidance and contacts proved invaluable while conducting my fieldwork in Peru, his support with research costs is greatly appreciated, and the assistance he offered while putting together my thesis has benefited me greatly. Dr. Adriana Premat for proofing later drafts and offering input. SSHRC for their generous support. Lic. Estuardo La Torre Calvera for his assistance with my conversational Spanish skills following my arrival in Peru and providing in-country support. Dr. Santiago Uceda, co-director of Project Huacas de Moche, for allowing me to conduct my fieldwork at Huacas de Moche, and Miss Vanessa Sifuentes and Lic. Susana Honores for getting the process started. The external tour guides and staff of Huacas de Moche for their kindness, particularly the security guards at Museo Huacas de Moche, who made my time at the archaeological site museum enjoyable. The site guides at Huacas de Moche, for their acceptance, without them none of this would have been possible; they truly embraced me as one of their own and were happy to help me in whatever ways they could. I would also like to thank my parents for their reassurance over the past few years, and their acceptance of my love of museums. And finally, Arthur Klages, for always being there, and encouraging me throughout this process.
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1 Introduction

Interpretation has a noble origin. Its creators believed that there were certain places so magnificent or significant as to oblige one generation to preserve them for the enjoyment of those to follow.
- Pond 1993: 71

1.1 Introduction

I feel it pertinent to begin with the above quotation as I truly believe interpretation is at the heart of this project. Interpretation connects, and occurs at, all levels of knowledge creation, presentation, and reception, and as such takes place at all levels of museum planning and use. Moreover, interpretation and archaeological site museums like Huacas de Moche, the subject of the present study, are endeavours where the disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, and public history intersect. Archaeological knowledge is mobilized in various ways at archaeological site museums and presented to the public in the museum, at the archaeological site, and by tour guides. These forms of presentation fall into the sphere of public history, or more accurately public archaeology in this case, and were researched using the hallmark method of anthropology, participant observation. The results of this research have been examined, in part, using a public history frame of mind. The end product is a project that calls upon the research methods and literature of the aforementioned disciplines and blends them into a single, coherent narrative regarding knowledge mobilization and visitation at a recently-modernized archaeological site museum on the north coast of Peru, Huacas de Moche.

1.2 Huacas de Moche

Huacas de Moche was the religious center of the Moche culture, which occupied the north coast of Peru during the Early Intermediate period. This particular site, located in the Moche Valley, was occupied between 50 to 850 C.E., at which point the site was abandoned. Huacas de Moche was constructed approximately 5 kilometers from the Pacific coast at the base of Cerro Blanco, or White Mountain. The site served an administrative, as well as religious purpose, and a large
city grew around the two large platform mounds (*huacas*) that dominate the site. *Huaca* is a Quechua term that can roughly be translated to temple or sacred place; Huaca de la Luna is thought to have been the religious center of the site, and Huaca del Sol, the largest *adobe* (unbaked mud brick) pyramid in South America (prior to its partial destruction), may have been an administrative center (see Figure 1 and Figure 2).

![Figure 1 Huaca de la Luna (photo by author)](image1)

![Figure 2 Huaca del Sol (photo by author)](image2)

El Niño events (the occasional development of a band of unusually warm water off the Pacific coast of South America, causing major regional climatic disturbances that bring rain in an
otherwise desert environment), were attributed to the main deity of the Moche, the Mountain or Decapitator God. These events ravaged the Moche culture throughout their tenure of the site. “The severity of the impact [of El Niño events] on the [Moche] is well illustrated by large scale human sacrifices at [Huaca de la Luna], where large numbers of victims were sacrificed and thrown onto the ground, made muddy by torrential rains” (Nelson and Nelson 2003: 31; see Figure 3). These seventy victims of sacrifice have created a renewed interest in Huaca de la Luna and for the Moche culture in general. As a result, many Moche archaeological sites have formed a tourist route known as Routa Moche, whereas the north of Peru, previously, was not a prominent tourist destination.

Huaca de la Luna, as mentioned, is an adobe platform mound. It experienced approximately five major construction events during its use, which were linked to changes in power. With each change in power the mound that was currently in use was completely interred and another was built over it. Each new mound was higher and wider than its predecessor, making Huaca de la Luna comparable to a matryoshka doll (also known as a Russian nesting doll). Though there were no openings between the subsequent levels of the platform mound, archaeological excavation has shown that the iconography used at Huaca de la Luna is repeated. This suggests Moche ideology, and the worship of the Mountain God, continued despite changes in power.

Figure 3 Sacrificial Zone (photo by author)
I chose to study the representation of archaeology at Huacas de Moche as it has recently become a prominent tourist site in Peru—in 2011 approximately 120,938 people visited Huacas de Moche, with approximately 25% of visitation stemming from international visitors. Since my first visit to this site in 2009 a modern museum (known as Museo Huacas de Moche), lab and conservation space, and communal areas have been constructed around the site (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). These additions were made in order to increase the site’s popularity and reputation amongst visitors, and to help the *huaca* compete with the other modernized sites in the area. Conservation, research, promotion and dissemination, tourism development, and human resources were focuses during the modernization process at Huacas de Moche as they are pillars for the successful management of visitation (Higueras 2008: 1084-85), aiding with site structure and knowledge mobilization. As such, the updates that have occurred over the past three years are what caught my attention and piqued my interest in using this particular site to study how archaeological knowledge is mobilized and what impact site structure has on the public.

Furthermore, the entrance fees for Huacas de Moche are reasonable, making the site accessible to Peruvians as well as foreign tourists—individuals who live in Campiña de Moche (where Huacas de Moche is located) and the city of Moche do not pay admission fees. A visit to Museo Huacas de Moche costs S/ 3.00 for an adult, S/ 2.00 for a university student, and S/ 1.00 for children and teens; a visit to the Huaca de la Luna costs S/ 10.00 for an adult, S/ 5.00 for a university student, and S/ 1.00 for children and teens. When combined these prices remain comparable to the entrance fees of Museo Tumbas Reales de Sipán, which does not include access to an archaeological site.

Morphy suggests that there are two activities at the core of museums: “the making and preservation of collections, and display and interpretation of those collections to the public” (2006: 471). I agree with Morphy, and would argue that these activities are core practices at Huacas de Moche. Conservation of the archaeological complex and rich painted murals found on site, and the promotion of the site as a well-organized destination have made the site a “successful cultural centre,” offering a circuit, guidance, and recreation (Higueras 2008:1084-85). Higueras suggests that these were conscious decisions, made as “the result of the central idea of [Huacas de Moche’s] development: the archaeological experience of the visitor at the site in its real dimensions” (Higueras 2008: 1085). Huacas de Moche, therefore, proves to be an
Figure 4 Huacas de Moche Site Map (created using ArcGIS 10.1)
Figure 5  Museum and Visitor Areas (created using ArcGIS 10.1)
excellent site to research knowledge mobilization as it offers visitors an opportunity to explore a monumental Moche site while working to preserve it for future generations.

1.3 Archaeological Site Museums

Huacas de Moche is an archaeological site museum. Archaeological site museums are locations where an exemplary archaeological site is accompanied by a museum which displays objects discovered during excavation and interprets the archaeological culture that created them (Silverman 2006: 4). The combination of museum, site, and areas that lend support to their functions (i.e. conservation and laboratory space) are what makes these locations unique, and worthy of study. By providing visitors with a comfortable space to acquaint themselves with the society that created the site, its material culture, and its history, archaeological site museums become “interpretive interface[s]” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998)—locations where archaeological knowledge can be transmitted to the public in a form that is engaging and accessible. The perceived value of archaeological site museums has risen over the past decade, as more and more archaeologists have begun to recognize their ethical responsibility to local populations and the public at large.

Silverman (2006) asserts that archaeological site museums should be a crucial part of the discipline of archaeology, and considered seriously by its practitioners as she suggests that they have the potential to fulfill six of the eight ethical principles put forward by the Society of American Archaeology:

1. The promotion of local stewardship
2. Consultation with local/affected groups
3. Public education and outreach
4. Locales for accessible knowledge mobilization
5. Secure depositories for archaeological materials and records
6. Sponsorship of training for the local population and organizations so they may participate appropriately in archaeological programs they initiate or are a part of.

Huacas de Moche, with its recent updates, is able to fulfill these principles.
Of particular interest to this project is the ability of archaeological site museums to mobilize archaeological knowledge through the presentation and interpretation of the archaeological record to tourists. Archaeological site museums are locations where the intricacies of archaeological knowledge, interpretation, presentation, and tourism intersect. All agents involved in these processes are responsible for the success of knowledge mobilization—archaeologists, museum designers, tour guides, staff at the archaeological site museums, visitors—everyone.

1.4 Visitation

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains that “[tourism] needs destinations, and museums are premier attractions. Museums are not only destinations on an itinerary: they are also nodes in a network of attractions that form the recreational geography of a region and, increasingly, the globe” (1998: 132). The same is true of archaeological site museums, which have become nodes of attraction, drawing visitors and becoming part of a globalizing world. Archaeological site museums offer visitors the opportunity to experience and explore some of the most extravagant and exotic destinations a location has to offer. Certainly the extravagant and exotic are what tend to attract visitors (see also Echtner and Prasad 2003: 669), as Glover states that “one of the most basic motives for tourism is to experience something different” (Glover 2008: 112).

Archaeological site museums are intrinsically unique as the archaeological remains and site history they preserve reflect the story of that particular location. When visitors arrive at museums they expect to find meaningful artifacts, regardless of what their criteria for establishing meaningfulness are (Klein 1993: 782). In the context of archaeological site museums the term “artifact” can be read as material culture, as well as the site itself. Here, artifact will only be used in reference to material culture. Archaeological site museums that take advantage of their uniqueness through the interpretation of artifacts, and site, are often the ones which receive the most attention. Because of this attention, and resulting popularity, individuals working at internationally-attractive sites are responsible for “communicating historical narratives to increasingly heterogeneous publics” (Glover 2008: 106). These sites must find a way to meet the needs of these heterogeneous groups while attempting to remain authentic and maintain preservation standards---interpretation often fulfills this role.
In order for tourism at archaeological site museums to be sustainable, effective interpretation is a must (see also Moscardo 1996: 378). Though Tilden (1977) describes interpretation as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships” I argue that the real aim of interpretation is to provoke curiosity, and that education is actually a secondary motive. Attempts to stimulate curiosity are often more appealing to visitors and effective at stimulating engagement (i.e. interaction or drawing a person’s attention) than attempts to merely educate and make visitors feel more at ease. It is therefore imperative for archaeological site museums to recognize that “people are the only reason for museums to exist[...] Everything museological revolves around [humans]” (Dean 2005: 19). This notion is crucial to site success, and is reflected in the environment, experience, content, and branding of archaeological site museums, as will be demonstrated in this thesis. In other words archaeological site museums rely on their ability to appeal to visitors.

1.5 Archaeology as Attraction

Archaeological site museums are “public archaeology” institutions. They are places where archaeology is made accessible and is meant for public consumption. In Peru public archaeology is better phrased as “archaeology [for] the public” (arqueología para el público)” (Saucedo-Segami 2011: 252). Since the 1990s archaeology and tourism development in Peru have come to be integrated as a result of the 1989 discovery of the tombs of the Lords of Sipán. These were royal tombs, uncovered by Huaqueros (looters) in a valley north of Moche, that contained large quantities of gold, silver, and copper artifacts. Under the direction of archaeologist Walter Alva, the local grave robbers, the community, local authorities, and governmental officials worked in concert to excavate the site, restore the artifacts, and create a magnificent museum dedicated to Sipán, designed and built with the general public in mind.

The subsequent push for archaeologists to present their results to the public and the media has caused “archaeology [for] the public” to become an increasingly important task for archeologists in the region (Saucedo-Segami 2011: 252, 254). In this sense archaeologists are merely the “doorkeepers of the past, [they] open the door and anyone can step through” (Arden 2002: 392).

The built environment and relics and ruins of fabled places are always the focus of tourist attractions (Echtnecer and Prasad 2003: 669). The attention of tourists is drawn to the extravagant
and exotic. Visitors tend to “focus on the left over traces of wealthy, powerful ancient empires and dynasties; on remaining structures, monuments, and treasures” (Echtner and Prasad 2003: 669; though visitors also demonstrate a curiosity about the everyday lives of those who inhabited the sites they visit as well). As such, archaeological site museums make obvious destination choices for tourists while visiting foreign locales. Silverman suggests that the majority of foreign visitors to Peru come in search of its “ancient mysteries” (Silverman 2002: 899). While other forms of tourism are also popular in Peru (i.e. surfing, adventure tourism, excursions), most people who visit the country also make time to visit Peru’s fantastic archaeological sites. Furthermore, I would suggest that the large number of archaeological site museums across Peru is, in fact, a secondary reason for choosing this place as a destination.

Many people would classify archaeological site museum tourism as heritage tourism. Though this may be correct, many people fail to recognize that heritage is actually something new, even though the sites to which it pertains to may be old. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains that “heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past” (1998: 7). It is through exhibition that “dead sites” are granted a second life and heritage is produced (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 7), making visits to archaeological site museums part of a continual process of heritage and knowledge creation. Without visitors there would be no reason for archaeological site museums to exist, meaning visitation, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization cannot be separated. And together, visitation, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization form the core of this thesis.
2 Methods, Field Site, and Research Context

2.1 Visit Structure

Unlike most archaeological site museums in Peru, Huacas de Moche recommends that visitors frequent the museum prior to going on a tour of the archaeological site itself. This prepares visitors for the types of information and language that will be used during their archaeological site tour, and organizes their visit in such a way that it becomes apparent that paranormal interpretations of the archaeological record will not be presented. To help ensure this visit structure is followed tickets for both the museum and archaeological site are sold less than 100 meters from the museum. Visitors are not required to enter the museum but it is highly recommended that they do so in order to help them understand the history of the archaeological site and the ritual sacrifices which occurred there during El Niño events. Many *combi* (public passenger vans; see Figure 6) and taxi drivers are aware that tickets are to be purchased in the museum area and inform passengers of such; however, security guards are also stationed at the entrance to the archaeological site museum complex to direct drivers where to go if need be.

On occasion, visitors do arrive at the archaeological site without a ticket and these individuals are promptly instructed that they will need to go to the museum area and purchase a ticket before they are able to go on a tour. If a tour is leaving in the immediate future, or the visitor is short on time, a security guard may be asked to retrieve tickets for visitors who arrive without them. These visitors will be able to collect their tickets at the guide office after their tour is complete. Of the visitors that are asked to go to the museum area and purchase a tour ticket, or have a ticket
procured for them, it is uncertain how many frequent the museum when circumstances such as these arise.

Unlike other site museums in Peru, a guide service is offered free of charge and is mandatory to visit the portion of the archaeological site open to visitors. Guides are required in order to mitigate visitor damage to the site as only conservation, and no restoration, is conducted at Huacas de Moche. Restoration involves reconstructing portions of the site that are destroyed, where as conservation involves protecting the site as it was found. This is a point of pride for staff at Huacas de Moche as the majority of other popular archaeological site museums in Peru restore archaeological features. For instance, the site of Chan Chan, another popular archaeological site museum located outside of Trujillo, has been extensively restored in order to correct damage caused by El Niño events, degradation because of ocean air, and deterioration due to the passage of time. Because Huacas de Moche was covered in sand, and is further from the coast than Chan Chan, it was not as heavily impacted by the elements and has largely remained intact over the years, despite being looted by Huaqueros since the Spanish Conquest. Chemicals have been applied to the colourful facades in order to protect them from deteriorating now that they have been excavated and opened to the elements once again, but the colours and adobe structures are all original.

While I was conducting fieldwork at Huacas de Moche there were 15 guides active at the archaeological site. Four of these guides are full-time employees at Huacas de Moche. Pepe, Patricia, Marisol, and Tirza¹, are certified tour guides², and have all studied English intensively in order to obtain communicative competence. This allows them to guide in Spanish and English effectively, with little deviation in content. The rest of the guides active at the site were students completing a “practicum” in order to become licensed tour guides³. The majority of the students were taking English lessons in order to broaden their language skills, as guides who speak

¹ All names used to distinguish guides are pseudonyms.
² For the purposes of this thesis the term ‘tour guide’ will be used rather than interpreter in order to reflect the translation of the position title from Spanish, as being a tour guide is a licensed/ certified profession in Peru.
³ For more information regarding the education of the tour guides active at Huacas de Moche see section 5.5.1 Guiding at Huacas de Moche.
English are more likely to obtain full time employment at archaeological site museums. Their language skills vary greatly with some only speaking a few words of English while others can communicate more extensively (though not to the degree of the full-time guides). Though the majority of the students are studying English, one student (Blanca) has studied French for the majority of her life and has made herself an asset to the project by guiding tours in Spanish and French, with the majority of her tours being conducted in the latter.

Though it is necessary for visitors to frequent Huaca de la Luna with a guide, this guide does not need to be hired by the project; external guides are also allowed to lead tours. External tours from travel agencies and tour operators found around the plaza in the center of Trujillo (the Plaza de Armas; see Figure 7) come to the site around mid-morning. These agencies and operators tend to offer a variety of tours to different locations in various languages, though full-day tours visiting Huacas de Moche and Chan Chan in Spanish or English are generally the most popular. A number of external guides come to the site each day and many become acquainted with the guides that work at the site. This aids in the fluidity of external tours as these guides are easily recognized and their guests can be processed quickly—their tickets collected and place of origin recorded for site records before being ushered on by the external guide to begin their tour.

![Figure 7 Plaza de Armas, Trujillo and Surrounding Area (photo from Google Earth)](image-url)
2.2 Field Experience and Methods

During 2012 I spent two months conducting fieldwork in Trujillo, Peru, from July 7th to September 11th. During this time I increased my Spanish language skills, conducted participant observation and visitor tracking, collected survey data and print material, and collected geographic information with a GPS for digital maps.

Prior to leaving for Peru I spent upwards of two months intensively learning Spanish using Living Language books and audio recordings in order to become familiar with Spanish vocabulary and grammar rules. I spent the first few weeks of my time in Peru practicing Spanish conversation. Within days of my arrival I was able set up opportunities to practice the Spanish I had acquired already and continue to increase my language skills. I was invited to attend a number of classes and speak with Anthropology students at the Universidad Nacional de Trujillo by Dr. Teresa Tham, and was also able to spend approximately two weeks working with Lic. Estuardo La Torre Calvera at the Instituto Nacional de Cultura repository located at Huaca Arco Iris, in order to strengthen my ability to speak confidently and hold fluid conversations.

On July 9th I met with Dr. Santiago Uceda Castillo, co-director of Huacas de Moche, in order to confirm that I would be able to conduct fieldwork at the site and discuss what exactly I was hoping to do. After our meeting, Dr. Uceda sent me to the promotional office for Huacas de Moche near Plaza de Armas to obtain further information about the site and have them contact site administrators about my impending work there. The individuals working at the promotional office were able to provide me with a book about tourist products and an interpretation guide for the archaeological site and museum. I spoke with Lic. Susana Honores Barrera at the office as well; she was able to provide me with survey and statistical data regarding the archaeological site museum for various years. Lic. Honores also put me in contact with Miss Vanessa Sifuentes Caballero, the archaeological site museum administrator, so I would be able to confirm details of my project with her as well and let her know when I hoped to start working at the site.

As July came to a close I moved on from my month of Spanish practice and began my fieldwork proper at Huacas de Moche. Miss Sifuentes phoned the guide office at the archaeological site to inform Pepe, the acting head of the guides during my time at the Huacas de Moche, that I was on
my way to introduce myself. In turn he introduced me to the rest of the guides working at the site, and helped me communicate my fieldwork plans to them.

I asked all of the guides who lead tours of Huaca de la Luna if they would be opposed to me taking tours of the archaeological site with them and subsequently making notes regarding their tours—I assured them that I would not be using their names in the reporting of my results and that they could change their minds at any time. No guides were opposed to this and it was decided that I could take tours with them at any time, as long as I confirmed that I would be joining the tour as it was starting. I attempted to take at least one tour with every guide and at least one in both Spanish and English with guides who lead tours in both languages—this was not possible for Pepe, as nearly all of the tours he leads are in English. I did not take a French tour with Blanca. Following the completion of each tour I made notes regarding the content of the tour, the composition of the tour group, the length of the tour, and which guide the tour was led by. I made special note of any differences I noticed in content or tour route.

I also audio-recorded one tour, in each language, by each guide. Again, I assured the guides that I would be using pseudonyms in reporting, and that they could change their mind at any time and I would delete what had been recorded, as per my ethical guidelines. Emilie requested I not record a tour with her, as she seemed shy about the prospect, and I did not ask Stefany as she was only at the site twice during my fieldwork and we did not build a strong enough rapport for me to feel comfortable asking.

Between tours I would interact with the guides at the site, gaining their acceptance. This eased communication and allowed me to gain insight into tour function, be able to ask questions as they came up naturally, and be offered information about visitation freely. These interactions were particularly helpful when considering visit and visitor types, as well as visitor behaviour and structure of the site.

During my time at Huacas de Moche I also accompanied four external tours to the archaeological site museum. Visitors purchase a ticket which includes transportation and guide service from these organizations, however, museum and archaeological site admission are not included; these are purchased at the archaeological site museum upon arrival. I visited 17 travel agencies and tour operators around the plaza in order to obtain information about their tour offerings (i.e.
departure time, cost, and tour length). Of these locations 13 were able to provide me with pamphlets regarding their tour operations. After consulting with my supervisor, Dr. Millaire, and based on the information I received, I selected six external tour operators to accompany on tours. Of the six operators I intended to take tours with I was only able to accompany five. Unfortunately, one of the tour operators I had selected was closed each time I tried to purchase a ticket with them after my initial visit; it appeared as if the vendor had temporarily closed in order to accommodate longer excursions rather than day trips. For the external tours I generated notes regarding the same types of information as I had recorded while taking internal tours—the content of the tour, the composition of the tour group, the length of the tour, and which tour agency I was accompanying.

In total I accompanied 31 internal tour groups, and three school groups of varying ages, on tours with guides offered by the project, as well as four tours led by external tour guides. Twenty-two of the tours by project guides I accompanied were led by women, and six of these were in English; nine of the tours by project guides were led by men, and three of these were in English. Sixteen tours with project guides were recorded in total (see Appendix A: Table 1). Of the tours I accompanied with external guides one was led by a woman, four were led by men, one of which was in English, and all of them were recorded (see Appendix A: Table 2).

I also conducted visitor tracking at Museo Huacas de Moche over six days. In total I tracked 30 groups (92 people), through the museum (see Appendix A: Table 3 and Table 4). I used two group types to classify visitors while tracking them, “nationals” and “foreigners”—these groups were based on general appearance and language use. Twenty-one of the groups were comprised of nationals, eight groups were comprised of foreigners, and I was unsure about the composition of one group. Eight of the 21 national groups were accompanied by youths; though I included youths toward visitor total, I did not time them. While tracking I tried to time and make notes about the actions of as many members of the group as possible, and gave individuals or smaller groups that broke off a letter assignment along with their larger group tracking number (i.e. 4a and 4b). Tracking all members of the group was not always possible as following a particular individual could mean losing sight of the other members of the group; therefore only a single member of a group was tracked at any one time, though their companions were included in visitor totals. In general there were two types of museums visitors, those that spent time reading
the information, or interpretive, panels and those that primarily looked at the artifacts; the first group tended to spend more time in the museum than the second.

I had initially intended to ask a random sampling of visitors to carry GPS tracking devices with them during their time at the site. This research method was forgone as the GPS tracking devices did not produce accurate maps while touring the archaeological site during initial testing due to the presence of a metal roof over the majority of the site. Similarly, the GPS tracking devices would not function inside the museum, and had a tendency to turn off depending on the amount of time spent inside.

Participant observation, for this reason, was the main research method. It allowed me to immerse myself in the archaeological site museum experience from the perspective of a visitor as well as a staff member. By spending a substantial amount of time around the archaeological site and at the museum I was able to be part of, or witness, a variety of visit events that have helped to understand the array of reactions people have to the archaeological site museum format and interactions with staff members. By accompanying various external tours I was also able to experience how these types of visits compare to each other and how they compare to visits made to the archaeological site museum by individuals/groups that arrive on their own. The information gleaned from participant observation shall be examined in the following chapters.

2.3 Museum Layout

Museo Huacas de Moche is comprised of three rooms and can be divided into five areas based on the route suggested in *Producto Turístico Huacas de Moche: Guión de Interpretación* which I received at the site’s promotional office. The largest room is comprised of Areas One, Three, and Five while the medium room and smallest room can be designated Areas Two and Four respectively (see Figure 8). In Area One of the museum exhibits information and artifacts regarding site construction, basic iconography, daily life, social stratification, and adornment. Prior to leaving Area One visitors are introduced to the main god of the Moche, the Mountain God. Visitors then enter Area Two which displays information about tombs, ancestors, ritual adornment, and coca rituals.
Some of the most representative and fine artifacts from the site are usually displayed in Area Two, however, many of these were on loan while I was conducting my fieldwork. Some artifacts were in Spain for “Tesoros Pre-Inca de la Cultura Mochica” from March 29-September 10, 2012 while a number of other pieces were on extended loan in Japan for the exhibition “El Imperio Inca revelado. Un Siglo después del descubrimiento de Machu Picchu” from February 22, 2012-February 15, 2014. A number of people I tracked through the museum lamented the absence of these artifacts but I was impressed to see that the museum had replaced these items with either a replica of the artifact or another fine object and a picture of the artifact that was away.

In Area Three exhibits about ritual hunts and competitions come before those about the ritual battles and sacrifices that took place at the site, and near the center of the room iconography depicted in the ceremonial plaza of Huaca de la Luna are displayed on ceramics—the ceremonial plaza is where the local population awaited the presentation of a cup of blood by the high priest during sacrificial ceremonies. Visitors then enter Area Four which houses exhibits about food preparation and areas of production, demonstrating how the site grew around its religious significance.

Finally, Area Five tactically deals with ritual sacrifice and contains less text than elsewhere in the museum. Objects found in this area include a mace, a ceremonial knife, bones with cut marks on them, and broken ceramics in the form of prisoners. These objects are fairly self-explanatory, meaning visitors merely needed to look at them to understand their significance. The exhibits in this area are positioned to grab the attention of visitors before they leave, and are arguably more exciting and “awe inspiring” than artifacts found in other exhibits around the museums which lead up to the display of sacrifice in Area Five. Less text may also appear in this area as much of the information that would be presented is introduced by the tour guides on site, making the information less intimidating. Prior to the exit an image portraying a cultures from the north coast of Peru. The visitors I observed always stopped to view this display as it makes it clear how the Moche and the huacas fit in with other cultures and sites in the area.

Areas One through Four of the museum serve to educate visitors about the site and the rituals that took place there, culminating in exhibits about sacrifice in Area Five. This information is subsequently discussed during tours of the archaeological site, Huaca de la Luna. By presenting
information in the museum that is based on archaeological research and conservation efforts, visitors are prepared to receive a similar brand of information while visiting the ruins. This tactic has worked particularly well at Huacas de Moche since the museum has opened. Museum designers planned Museo Huacas de Moche so that it frames archaeological site visits and reinforces that guides will present archaeology-driven content at Huaca de la Luna rather than paranormal interpretations of the past.

2.4 Tour Format

2.4.1 Internal Tour Format

Upon arriving at the archaeological site visitors are greeted by one of the numerous guides on duty, asked if they would prefer a tour in Spanish or English (or French should Blanca be on site and not leading a tour at the time), instructed as to how long to wait or if they will be able to join a tour that has just left, and are informed that tips are voluntary and may be given to the guide at the completion of their tour. There are a number of rules which dictate how the guides greet
visitors and dictate what may be suggested to them. These rules are posted in Spanish and English at the entrance to the archaeological site’s visitor area, allowing the majority of site visitors to read them personally (emphasis is original):

1. Huaca de la Luna is the main temple and shrine of the Moche, and your visit requires the utmost respect.
2. All visits must be made with a guide. **Visits without a guide are not allowed.**
3. The guide visit will be made in groups, with **a maximum of 25 people.** All visitors must remain in their group.
4. The tour begins at the Visitor Center of Huaca de la Luna. The wait time to organize a group and start the visit is 15 minutes after buying a ticket. Private guides and tour operators must comply with a 10 minute gap between groups to begin a tour visit, and strictly observe the order of departure.
5. The wait time can be spent at the various Visitor Center facilities: **video room,** the Artisan Square, souvenir shop, and cafeteria.
6. The Huacas del Sol y de la Luna Project offers a **guide free service.** This **does not apply** to the groups of **travel agencies, private guides** or **tourist operators.**
7. Tour conductors, teachers or delegates are responsible for the behavior of their group, and must **cooperate to maintain order during the visit and guarantee the conservation of the monument.**
8. The use of loudspeakers and whistles is prohibited during visits to the monument. It is not allowed to guide in two languages simultaneously.
9. Eating, consuming alcohol and smoking are not permitted during the visit. **You can only bring water bottles.** Litter bins have been placed on the visitor’s circuit. Please help us keep it clean by placing your bottles in them.
10. The bamboo poles that border the visitor’s foot path on the monument trail are very fragile. Please do not rest or sit on them.
11. **The Project is not responsible** for private, tour operators and guides from **travel agencies,** who must fulfill the commitment to their customers.
12. No refunds given for purchased tickets.

It should be noted that many people do not take the time to read these rules unless directed to, should confusion as to why they are being told something, or confrontation, arise (confrontation
shall be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4: Environment and Behaviour). These rules, particularly those regarding the archaeological site itself, are strictly followed unless the guides are continually unable to communicate with a visitor or the visitor continues to act belligerently. In these cases the visitor is allowed to go through the site on their own but they will be carefully monitored by security guards during their visit.

When a tour begins tickets are collected and the visitor’s department/country of origin are requested for statistics. Visitors are also reminded that there is no eating on site but drinks are permitted, phones should be off or on vibrate, photos are allowed as long as flash is not used, questions may be asked once the guide is done speaking at an area, and, again, tips are voluntary at the end of the tour.

There are typically 13 or 14 stops along the tour route, though there are an additional five optional stops which are utilized from time to time based on the discretion of the guide leading the tour as well as the timing of the tours before and after. The stops are locations where tour guides speak to visitors about the site and are used to help stimulate interest in the history and story of Huaca de la Luna, and to some extent the Moche city surrounding it; they are also prime locations for visitors to take photos. The three stops that tend to garner the most attention offer images of the Mountain God and help illustrate the construction of Huaca de la Luna, a panoramic view of the city at Huaca de la Luna’s feet with Huaca del Sol in the background, and a large stepped facade located in the ceremonial plaza where the Moche public waited for the presentation of a cup of blood during ceremonial human sacrifices.

Tours are intended to be approximately one hour long, though the majority tend to be longer. Of the internal tours I took the shortest was 52 minutes long, while the longest was 110 minutes long (this group was very excited and asked far more questions than normal, and the guide gladly obliged). On average the tours I accompanied lasted just over 73 minutes. Tours led by the students completing their “practicum” at Huacas de Moche tended to last longer than those led by the guides who work at the site permanently, though this varied based on the interest of the group.
2.4.2 External Tour Format

While exploring the Plaza de Armas in Trujillo, visitors to the area are often approached and questioned whether they are interested in taking a tour of one of the archaeological site museums in the area. The individuals promoting different tour vendors or operators utilize different tactics—pamphlets, photos, posters, PowerPoint presentations. Visitors are instructed to arrive at their chosen tour vendor or operator shortly before departure time, they are then brought to a central location or asked to take a seat to wait for the passenger van. It initially seemed as if external tours were sent to the archaeological site museum from each of the tour vendors and operators found around the Plaza de Armas. However, it quickly became apparent that this was not the case. In many cases, once tickets were purchased, vendors and operators mix their groups together in order to fill space in tour groups (a maximum of 25 people per tour guide, as per site rules). Establishments work together, compiling visitors, and taking a fraction of the proceeds from the tickets sold. Of the five external tours I accompanied, three were comprised of visitors who purchased tours with different tour vendors, and the other two were comprised of visitors who purchased tours from the same tour operator.

A number of external tour guides come to the site every day have established a rapport with the project guides. Four of the tours I accompanied were led by a guide I recognized from my time at the archaeological site museum; these individuals eventually mentioned recognizing me as well.

External tour groups tend to depart for Huacas de Moche a few minutes after 10 a.m. and upon arrival visitors purchase museum and archaeological site admission. Generally, visitors are given free time to explore Museo Huacas de Moche, after which the group reconvenes and is driven over to the archaeological site where they commence a guided tour of Huaca de la Luna. The external tours I accompanied were generally given 25 to 30 minutes of free time in the museum, while tours of the archaeological site lasted 67 to 82 minutes (see Table 2). While guided tours of the museum are not the norm, one of the external tours I accompanied was brought through the museum by our guide. During my time conducting visitor tracking at Museo Huacas de Moche, I noticed that this particular guide consistently led his groups through the
museum, which other guides only did on occasion, with what appeared to be larger organized groups.

The tours of Huaca de la Luna led by external tour guides stopped at the same places as tours led by internal guides and presented much of the same information but not in precisely the same way—this shall be discussed further in Chapter 5: Different Strokes for Different Folks.

2.4.3 Tour Layout

The following text has been numbered to correspond with the areas indicated on Figure 9 (see Figure 9):

Area 1: As tours begin, guides offer visitors chronological information regarding the site, placing it in historical context among other cultures from Peru and around the world, as well as information concerning the structure of the site. Huaca de la Luna is introduced as the site’s religious center, and Huaca del Sol as the administrative center, with the areas between and surrounding them being described as residential areas. Basic subsistence practices, including fishing and farming, are discussed next as the ocean and modern day fields can conveniently be seen as visitors climb the hill to the modern day entrance to Huaca de la Luna.

Area 2: At the top of the hill a wall built by the Moche to protect Huaca de la Luna from erosion by sand and wind is pointed out; this wall is described as distinguishing the sacred space of Huaca de la Luna from the residential area. Finally, before entering Huaca de la Luna a mural created from pieces of facades that have broken over the centuries is used to explain the conservation techniques used by the project to protect the site and tell visitors that all of the structures and colors they will see during their tour are original. As mentioned earlier, no reconstruction takes place at Huacas de Moche, only conservation.

Area 3: Passing through a modern wall, again used to protect Huaca de la Luna from erosion, visitors are introduced to the sacrifice rituals that took place at the site as they have entered the sacrificial zone. Visitors stand feet away from the area where 70 sacrificial victims killed during El Niño events were found, at the foot of a rocky outcrop on which they may have been killed, as well as the precinct where the victims were prepared for death to come. It is believed that
sacrifices were offered to the Mountain God who, in exchange, offered protection and was responsible for rainfall. The construction of Huaca de la Luna at the foot of Cerro Blanco therefore cannot be overlooked. Some guides mention, at this time, that sacrifice victims were chosen during ritual combat, while others wait until later, before explaining that the loser of the battle was determined when their headdress was removed or blood had been drawn.

Area 4: Visitors are led inside a private plaza and directed to look at a small room in the corner, decorated with fish, seabird, and wave iconography, which was used as an offering room. Adobe bricks with makers mark on them are shown to visitors before another offering room is introduced. This room belongs to an earlier phase of construction and is used by guides to discuss ideas about “renovations of power.” Every 100 years or so a new phase of construction (five in total) began at the huaca, at which time the old level was completely interred with adobe bricks, a new level, without any connection to the one beneath, was built larger and wider than its predecessor. Most guides draw small diagrams of this in the sand to help visitors understand, or describe the levels as boxes. The iconography found in the lower levels is the same as that of the upper levels, indicating that the Mountain God and previous ideology were still in favour. This becomes increasingly apparent with the next two walls that guides show visitors. These
walls show depictions of the Mountain God, which are repeated around the site (and have been used in site branding to be discussed in the following chapter).

Area 5: The animals/elements found in the face of the Mountain God (see Figure 11 in Chapter 3: Staging Sacrifice)—air/owl, earth/puma/jaguar, water/octopus/waves, are discussed briefly. At this point the location of a tomb may or may not be pointed out before visitors are brought over to the historical wall of the project.

Area 6: This wall was the first found by project co-director Dr. Ricardo Moralas in 1990 during a visit to the site with a class he was teaching at the time. It is covered in depictions of the Mountain God, but different facial expressions are more easily distinguishable here.

Area 7: This area is exited and more depictions of the Mountain God, in the same style as the ones viewed previously, are indicated to visitors. Visitors are then led over to a location with a view of Huaca del Sol and the urban area between the huacas. The population, and how their artistic and agricultural efforts were used to support the religious and political leaders of the site, is briefly discussed before visitors are given an opportunity to take pictures of the panorama. On either side of this view is a room whose roof was originally supported by columns; the guide will often mention that no spectacular tombs like those at El Brujo or Sipán have been found at Huacas de Moche, but that archaeologists suspect that one of these rooms may have originally housed a burial.

Area 8: Visitors are then shown a large hole created by huaqueros as they make their way to the next stop on their tour, the Altar Mayor. The Altar Mayor is where the head priest prepared for the presentation of a cup of blood to the population that waited in the ceremonial plaza beneath, demonstrating that sacrifices had been made to the Mountain God. Different representations of the Mountain God are found here, as are the only stairs constructed by the Moche on site. Stairs represented power, and as such few were built. Ramps were used instead. A modern wall has been built to protect the altar from the elements and visitors from the large drop to the ceremonial plaza below, the final stop of the tour.
Area 9: Visitors descend a set of stairs at which point guides are given their second opportunity to discuss how a victim of sacrifice was chosen during ritual battles, before heading down a long ramp toward the ceremonial plaza.

Area 10: The ceremonial plaza was originally the public face of Huaca de la Luna. The *huaca* was private and it is believed that it was only ever entered by religious leaders and sacrificial victims. A large façade, which was reconstructed during each renovation event, tells the story of the sacrifices that took place at the site. The outer façade (see Figure 10), belonging to level five, depicts vanquished soldiers being led nude and stripped of their weapons by the victorious, dancers/worshippers celebrating the impending sacrifice, and various depictions of the Mountain God as spiders/crabs with a decapitated head and *tumi* knife (ceremonial knife), a fisherman with wave hair and snake belt, and a mythical animal with the body of a puma/jaguar/fox and tail of a snake again holding a decapitated head, as well as a snake which represents rivers, water, and power. There is a final step on this façade but it is difficult to make out. The façades from earlier phases of construction can be seen behind the façade of the fifth phase because of a large hole made by the *huaqueros*.

Figure 10 Ceremonial Plaza Façade (photo by author)
Area 11: The last thing guides show to visitors before leading them back to the visitor area is a small wall covered in iconography that has been described as a ritual calendar or mural of myths. Many guides point out the image of a small woman flanked by men with staffs, indicating this may be a depiction of Señora de Cao from El Brujo (an important woman whose burial was recently uncovered at a nearby site), as well as other items of interest including an Inca dog, and *tota*ra (reed) boats which visitors can see in use in Huanchaco to this day.
3 Staging Sacrifice

3.1 Knowledge Mobilization at Huacas de Moche

Academic archaeological research is, for the most part, inaccessible to the public. Where researchers choose to publish the information they have gleaned, how it is presented, and the jargon used, often make academic findings unattainable and unapproachable. Recently, however, there has been a push for and by archaeologists to make their work accessible and relevant to the public, making it important for archaeological work to be presented and interpreted in particular ways. Museums have proven to be a popular venue for the presentation of archaeological knowledge, resulting in the construction of many archeological site museums throughout Peru. Gaither (1992: 60) discusses how museums committed to a particular heritage become institutional buttresses for their unique features and traditions. The same can be said of archaeological site museums; they are institutional buttresses for the traditions and material culture of the archaeological cultures they preserve because of the unique features they protect and display to the public.

Similar to the way academic knowledge must be interpreted for public consumption, the material and information found in museums require interpretation in order to connect with the people that come to view and access them. People who work at museums tend to assume that visitors view their institution as unique and valuable (Hood 2004: 151), however, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998: 139) explains that people sometimes see museums as boring, stagnant locations, when in actuality they are alive and exciting. It is therefore imperative for a museum that wishes to be sustainable, or increase visitation, to avoid relying solely on traditional techniques—they must plan on visitors’ terms instead (Hood 2004: 155, 157). Museum designers need to provide visitors with stimulating material which can be processed in ways that visitors find meaningful (Goulding 2000: 270). In order to appeal to modern visitors, museums must broaden their

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4 The push for archaeologists to present to the public has stemmed from the public, whom desire to be involved and/or informed about archaeological work, funding bodies, which deem knowledge mobilization a worthy pursuit, as well as archaeologists.
exhibition style to provide them with an interesting and evocative line of interpretation. This was the aim of Huacas de Moche during the construction of Museo Huacas de Moche.

Visitors tend to seek out a complete picture of the sites or museums they visit, which can be achieved through continuity and the natural progression of information, or storyline, being presented. If the progression is uncomfortable, visitors will be uneasy, decreasing the effectiveness of interpretation (Goulding 200: 274). However, comfortable presentation of a storyline can foster visitor understanding of and engagement with the site, and is intrinsically linked to how the site is branded for popular consumption, as is the case at Huacas de Moche.

3.2 Branding Destinations

Archaeological site museums are intangible products that need to “sell” themselves in order to appeal to visitors. “To compete for tourists a location must become a destination. To compete with each other, destinations must be distinguishable which is why the tourism industry requires the product be different” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 152). However, if visitors tend to view museums as boring and stagnant it isn’t enough for the archaeological site museums to just be about something different; they need to demonstrate their difference, their uniqueness, in bold ways. Therefore, archaeological site museums, like all destinations, must brand themselves in such a way that they become visible and attractive to visitors. But how do they go about doing this?

Aaker (1996 as cited in Nangru et al 2012: 49) offers a basic definition of branding, which focuses on the need for a distinguishing logo. But a logo isn’t enough; the logo must convey the “unique travel experience” visitors can expect from the destination (Ritchie and Ritchie 1998 as cited in Nangru et al. 2012: 48). Therefore the aim of destination branding must be to “produce a logo, image[,] and promise that are accurately perceived by the consumers” (Nangru et al. 2012: 49).

To fulfill these aims, branding at many archaeological site museums has focused on what is unique to them—the site and remains of the archaeological cultures that they preserve and interpret. Some archaeological site museums have an easier time with this than others, as the scale of the site, and what has been excavated, varies from place to place. Sites such as Sipán
and El Brujo in Peru have received immense amounts of publicity and a remarkable branding opportunity because of the spectacular tombs, and the “named” individuals found therein (see also Silverman 2005: 151). Other archaeological site museums, like Copan in Honduras, must find their essence in something else. For Copan, stone has become its essence (Mortensen 2006: 47). At Huacas de Moche human sacrifices are at the core of the site’s branding and essence (see also Urry 1990: 128).

As mentioned earlier, approximately 70 sacrificial victims have been found in a ceremonial plaza at Huaca de la Luna, and linked to periods when the north coast of Peru was hit by torrential rains (associated with El Niño events; Nelson and Nelson 2003:31). These victims have provided Huacas de Moche with the unique element they needed to differentiate the site from other locations. The history of sacrifice at the site, and its victims, have therefore become the focus of the site’s interpretation and storyline. With these victims also comes a distinguishing logo for the site, the main deity of the Moche, the Mountain God (see Figure 11).

![The Mountain God (center face; photo by author)](image_url)

Figure 11 The Mountain God (center face; photo by author)

The Moche attributed rainfall to the mountains, and when El Niño-related rains occurred the Moche associated them with the Mountain God being unhappy. Ritual battles and subsequent sacrifices occurred in order to appease the Mountain God, in hopes that the climate would return
to its normal state. The Mountain God is represented in a number of forms in Moche iconography at Huaca de la Luna but most often as a face depicted in the center of a white diamond (see Figure 11). This representation of the Mountain God is prominently displayed on the shirts, vests, and hats worn by site staff, is the central image on the site’s welcome sign, is found on many of the souvenir and artisinal items sold on site, and is used by external tour agencies to promote tours to Huaca de la Luna. Moreover, this image has become indicative of, and synonymous with, the structure and history of the site, as well as the sacrifice storyline portrayed throughout the archaeological site museum of Huacas de Moche.

3.3 Staging and Storyline: The Presentation of Archaeology at Huacas de Moche

3.3.1 Information and Interpretation in the Abstract

The storyline of a site, as mentioned earlier, conveys information through the process of interpretation. The three principal means people use to gather information are words, sensations, and images (Dean 2005: 26), and archaeological site museums have the opportunity to utilize all three. People look, read, speak, and listen, and are able to experience being in a particular space, feeling the environment around them. Further, they tie directly into the four keys to interpretive design: variety in experience, control over experience, connection of interpretation to personal experience, and the challenging of visitors (Moscardo 1996: 392).

Though the project directors have established a storyline to be presented at the archaeological site museum, visitors are still given some control over their visit, which varies from person to person. Visitors choose which features of the museum to pay attention to and how much to read, while being given the opportunity to discuss and ask questions. In order to break up presentation style and offer visitors a break from one style or the other, both traditional and multimedia presentation platforms are used before visitors begin their tour. During their tour of Huaca de la Luna, visitors can choose how intently to listen to their guide, and again are given the opportunity to discuss and ask questions as they visit the site. Based on the interests of the group, guides are able to adapt and present varying portions of the site’s history in order to help propel the storyline and foster engagement between themself, visitors, and the site. Throughout
this encounter visitors are able to experience the site’s environment—the wind, the sand, the sun. This helps make the site real and unique for visitors, connecting them to the past.

3.3.2 Characteristics of Storyline

In the previous chapter I outlined the structure of Museo Huacas de Moche, and to this point I have mentioned storyline a number of times. Both of these are crucial to how the site is staged and how knowledge is presented to the public. Museums must provide context for the objects and history they present, offering visitors background information and a sense of orientation (Dean 2005: 28; Goulding 2000: 271; Klein 1993: 198), as visitors arrive at the site with different degrees and arrays of previous knowledge. Hence, “attractiveness, ease of comprehension, and the ability to hold audience attention” (Dean 2005: 102) are imperative to the success of archaeological site museums, and hopefully are attributes represented in the branding of the site.

The order in which information is presented, and how it is interpreted, make up the storyline of the site. The storyline, or storyscape as it is called by Chronis (2005: 389) and Glover (2008: 112), is created through the interaction of the site, guides, and visitors. Storyline is also inherently linked to the branding of the site and is adaptable based on the situation—human sacrifice fills this role at Huacas de Moche, acting as a branding agent and the lens through which information about the site can be interpreted. But regardless of the storyline’s adaptability, it is formulated from a basic script, comprised of facts that are called upon in appropriate circumstances.

Though the information contained on text panels in the museum is “static,” for lack of a better word, but this is not the case with interactions between visitors and tour guides, nor is the information visitors take away from their visit. Perin (1992: 183) explains that “messages are as much constructed by audiences’ interpretations as by curators and designers’ intentions”. Each individual brings their own previous knowledge and agendas with them, influencing how they interpret the information being presented and how they come to understand it. “Visitors bring a multiplicity of interpretations to the reading of displays [and sites,] and the fact that [artifacts] may be subject to multiple interpretations has important implications for the way museums think about and present themselves” (Goulding 2000: 262).
Though museum designers and site museum staff consciously construct the storyline of the archaeological site museum, striving to guide visitors toward aspects of the site’s history that are unique and can be used to present further features of the site, visitor experience remains variable. Archaeological site museums must be aware of the fact that visitors may form a different understanding of the story than what was originally intended. For instance, paranormal interpretations of the past, formerly popular at Huacas de Moche, are no longer presented by tour guides but they remain popular at other sites, i.e. the creation of the zoomorphic Nasca geoglyphs by extra-terrestrials. Paranormal interpretations of Huacas de Moche have greatly decreased since the construction of Museo Huacas de Moche as these are definitely not part of the storyline.

Hence, exhibits and tours are the archaeological site museum in action. They act as the interface between academic research and the public, investing artifacts with power and meaning as they become connected with the history and storyline being presented instead of being viewed in isolation. Archaeological site museums, then, are able to bridge the previously dissociate norms and experiences of the past and the present, as Thorne (2008: 149-50) suggests of museums in general.

3.4 Physical Arrangement and Presentation

It is easy to say that the principles and keys listed above are what make interpretation and storyline effective, but how is it actually accomplished from a design perspective? At Huaca de la Luna little can be manipulated aside from the limited number of information panels that have been installed on site. More importantly, how a guide chooses to present the site, including where to stop, what to discuss, and how much time they provide visitors with for the taking of photographs, looking around, and asking of questions, are based almost entirely on the existing environment. The space visitors tour cannot be altered in any substantial way as it will detract from the archaeological and historic authenticity of the site, and may inadvertently damage it. Conversely, Museo Huacas de Moche provides ample opportunity to examine the physical, or practical, aspects of presentation at museums.
3.4.1 The Practical Aspects of Museo Huacas de Moche

In the previous chapter I discussed the layout of Museo Huacas de Moche (as well as how tours of Huaca de la Luna are conducted), demonstrating that human sacrifice is central to how the past is presented. The human sacrifice storyline makes the history of the site more comfortable and helps with the flow of interpretation. However, it is also important to structure and organize the practical and physical aspects of presentation in order to make the reception of the storyline efficient and physically comfortable. As visitors progress around Museo Huacas de Moche the history of the site is presented through the desired lens, but that is not enough to keep people’s attention; it must also be done in an evocative way. Furthermore, museums are places which can easily fatigue visitors if the atmosphere and information panels are not designed well, only present information in a single form, or do not take advantage of the compelling features at their disposal. The designers of Huacas de Moche have been able to work against visitor fatigue by addressing these issues.

Museo Huacas de Moche is designed to be inviting with warm tan-coloured walls and blue accents which mimic the colours of the expansive sand and sky found outside, while the lighting is a mix of natural and artificial, making viewing easy and less harsh on the eyes and preventing eye fatigue. Museum exhibits were skillfully designed. The backgrounds of information panels in the museum are a light blue while artifacts in the display are highlighted by a darker blue background. Conversely, panels for exhibits about tombs are black rather than blue, and artifacts are highlighted in grey. These distinctions make it possible for visitors to pinpoint areas of interest to them quickly, making visits seem more fluid and comfortable. Text is also differentiated by colour (English titles are always in orange for example). The text used on the information panels is easily legible and the language used replicates that used during the tours given by guides offered by the project, standardizing content and making the transition from museum to archaeological site easier, through effective communication (Goulding 2000:264).

Exhibit designers deliberately placed video stations throughout the museum to break up presentation style. Unfortunately those located in the largest room, Room One (comprised of Areas One, Three and Five), were not functioning during my time at the museum. The videos could not be seen adequately so they were not playing, causing a lot of space to be wasted in the
center of the room, and resulting in many visitors asking museum staff about the videos. In Area Two (see Figure 8) the video “The Power of the Old Temple,” which depicts a new phase of construction at the site and uses artifacts and iconographic representations to propel its content, was very popular. Visitors tended to watch the entire video at least once and many used the video as a rest stop. For instance, a number of foreign women sat down to watch the video—particularly those that spent longer in the museum or were wearing a large backpack. The video gave visitors a chance to relax and stop reading—it was also an area preferred by visitors with young children who could fully appreciate the video as a familiar and highly accessible form of knowledge mobilization. I would hypothesize, based on observations made while tracking visitors in the museum, that if the videos in Room One were working properly they would also have been used as rest area, increasing the amount of time visitors spent at the museum and helping relieve museum fatigue and exit gradient (which shall be discussed shortly). These videos may also have increased the length of time visitors with children stayed in the museum based on the observation that the film in Area Two proved to be a comfortable area for them and refocused their behaviour in desirable ways.

In addition to exhibits with information panels and videos Museo Huacas de Moche also utilizes free standing individual and group artifact stands that present varying degrees of information, a diorama in Area Four, and a reconstructed image of the site with a chronology of cultures in Peru beneath it. However, two of the most compelling features Museo Huacas de Moche has on display are tombs and artifacts directly related to human sacrifice. Though these features are meant to stand out, they must be seamlessly woven into the storyline. One side of Area Two exhibited information and artifacts related to tombs found at Huaca de la Luna and the urban zone at its feet. As mentioned earlier, these exhibits utilized black backgrounds, making them easily distinguishable amongst other exhibits. These displays caused people to read more thoroughly than they had been and often increased discussion. Tombs spark people’s curiosity as they deal with death and burial practices, which are part of a universal experience. Similarly, the final exhibits of the museum (Area Five) also deal with death, but through instances of human sacrifice. Unlike the exhibits about tombs this area had little text. Though there was little to read, and people who had tended to discuss things previously were doing so less by this point; these exhibits often caught people’s attention. They quietly examined the objects in this area, causing them to slacken their pace before exiting the museum. Both of these subjects may
result in visitors feeling exhilarated, as death is simultaneously something people are interested in and fear, thereby influencing the amount of attention visitors pay to exhibits and increasing the amount of time they view them.

Exhibit designers put these “attention grabbers” at strategic points in the museum visit, particularly near the end, in order to slow down people’s exit. Generally, the further along in a museum visit someone gets the quicker they start to go, especially once the end of the visit is in sight—this is known as exit gradient (see also Bitgood 2006: 439, 470; Moscardo 1996: 385). Visitor tracking at Museo Huacas de Moche showed that exit gradient tends to take hold as people enter Area Four of the museum. However, it should be noted that some individuals start to take longer as their visit progresses and they become comfortable with their surroundings, settling into the flow and rhythm of being in a museum.

The results of the visitor tracking at Museo Huacas de Moche also demonstrated that when people came to the museum as a pair/couple they had a tendency to remain together throughout their visit. However, one member of the pair often wanted to go faster than the other and pushed their progress along by moving ahead, forcing their partner to catch up to them. Foreigners who came to the site tended to come in pairs, the majority of whom were in their 20s or 30s, and they spent approximately 20 minutes more in the museum than nationals did. This extra time was fairly evenly spread amongst the different rooms. The ages of nationals who came to the site tended to be more dispersed, group size was more varied, and Area 2 (Room 2) of the museum seemed to draw their interest most. No foreigners I tracked in the museum were visiting with youths; however, I did notices a small number of foreigner groups that had children in them while conducting participant observation at Huaca de la Luna. Nationals that I tracked in the museum who were accompanied by youths only spent about 30 seconds less in the museum than groups with only adults, suggesting to me that interested youth may have been a motivator, rather than a hindrance, for some to visit the archaeological site museum in the first place (see Appendix A: Table 5 and Appendix B: Graph 1, Graph 2, Graph 3, and Graph 4).

3.4.2 Matters of Practical Design

The aforementioned design features are meant to make visitors’ time at Museo Huacas de Moche more comfortable and prevent visitors from becoming fatigued, thereby countering exit gradient
and increasing the effectiveness of the storyline. Museums are arranged with a route (floor plan) in mind “which determines where people walk, [and] also delineates conceptual paths through what becomes a virtual space of travel” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:132). Therefore the act of visiting a museum can be seen as “a journey, a process of discovery whereby the viewer moves through the exhibition spaces, creating his or her own chronology of experience” (Thorne 2008: 151). Museum designers arrange artifacts and information into “cohesive and effective units,” a challenging task as the “overall composition of a grouping can profoundly affect the attention given to any object within it” (Dean 2005: 58). This can either enhance or detract from the storyline being presented. By presenting these groups in a particular order a certain understanding of them and the storyline of the site can be achieved, building up to, and reinforcing, the importance of the artifacts displayed near the exit of Museo Huacas de Moche.

As mentioned earlier, the text that accompanies exhibits is written plainly and in a concise style. Shorter text is more likely to be read completely than longer passages of text, no matter how interested the person may be (see also Bitgood 2006: 472). Text in the museum is meant to promote a base knowledge of the site, and provoke interested visitors to continue reading and ask questions. The base knowledge promoted in the museum is also meant to help guides while conducting tours, allowing them to interpret the site without needing to explain every aspect of it and focus on the storyline instead. It also allows visitors to determine if there are other aspects of the site they may be interested in. The resulting questions, if posed to tour guides, can influence the types of additional information a guide chooses to draw on and present during the tour.

Holloway (1981: 388) explains that tour guides are able to offer a deeper insight into the site than is available to visitors through passive viewing—bridging the gap between what visitors (think they) know and what the site has to offer. Guides at archaeological site museums connect the information presented in the museum to the archaeological site as little textual information is presented at the site itself. Furthermore, guiding entails interpreting sites, or artifacts, to a variety of visitor types from a variety of places, making the rooting of presentation in place-specific features an effective tactic (see also Glover 2008: 111). By using the museum as a base, guides can interpret artifacts and the site, which increases the curiosity of visitors. As such, guides are conducive to a good experience (see also Moscardo 1996: 384), so the “more
confident a guide is in his role as curiosity-stimulator rather than sole knowledge imparter the more likely it is that his management of the [groups] expectations will be successful” (McGrath 2003: 15).

3.4.3 Consideration of Visitors in the Physical Design Process

Though visitors often arrive at museums with an idea about what they wish to get out of their experience, visitors do not always know exactly which elements will have the highest interest, as Rounds argues (2004: 397-98). The value of exhibits decreases as the time and effort expended to view them increases (Bitgood 2006: 465). Therefore visitors must be considered when installing exhibits. In order to make the most out of their time at museums many visitors pick and choose which aspects of it to devote their attention to, a tactic similar to the concept of optimal foraging strategy in anthropology, where optimal return is sought from the expenditure of minimal time and energy.

Additionally visitors are predisposed to a number of behaviours, including going toward large or moving objects, going toward moderately-sized crowds that seem to be looking at something interesting, taking shortcuts, staying to the right, and not backtracking along a path they have already taken (Bitgood 2006: 464-68; Dean 2005: 27, 51). In order to appeal to visitors and fight these tendencies, archaeological site museums attempt to offer multi-sensory experiences, with clear paths that are personally relevant and affectively charged, while also attempting to make use of various content and media types in order to produce novel/unexpected/surprising experiences. By working with these tendencies in mind designers are able to structure museum visits so visitors are able to come up with their own questions about the site, and are granted the opportunity to control their experience through their interactions with the site, with other individuals, and with the content they utilize (Moscardo 1996: 384, 387). These factors in combination with storyline and branding increase the memorability of a site as they create anticipation for what is to come, distract visitors from realizing exactly how much time has passed, and offer visitors novel items and experiences. This not only fulfills visitor expectation but also results in fostering emotional involvement, thereby reinforcing what is experienced (see also Coe 1985: 199-200).
Exit gradient, or museum fatigue, is a real consideration when it comes to visitors and exhibitions design. Museum fatigue is brought on by “[mental] and physical over stimulation or over-exertion” (Dean 2005: 52) and results in exit gradient. In their study at the National Museum of History and Technology, in the United States of America, Parson and Loomis found that “objects located along the shortest route between the entrance and exit of a gallery receive the most attention” (in Bitgood 2006: 470). The same was found during my research at Museo Huacas de Moche. Most of the time visitors take the shortest possible route through the museum.

Again, at Museo Huacas de Moche exit gradient tends to take hold in Area Four, though museum designers attempt to combat it in the ways mentioned above. Cone’s research at the Science Museum of Minnesota suggests visitors “stop at fewer exhibits, spend less time at those to which they do attend, and interact with each other less” (Cone 1978: 252) as they move through the museum. I mirror Cone’s sentiments, having witnessed much the same thing at Museo Huacas de Moche, though many visitors slackened their pace just before exiting because of the exhibition of artifacts related to human sacrifice in this area. However, I am curious if exit gradient would have been further prevented should the videos located in the room one, comprised of Areas One, Three, and Five, been functioning properly. Despite this it is clear that exit gradient and museum fatigue have been given immense attention and have been addressed by designers of Museo Huacas de Moche.

Based on this discussion it is crucial to remember “that the less time and effort visitors use in finding their way, the more they will value their museum experience and the more they can concentrate on the educative message or on having satisfying experiences provided by the museum” (Bitgood 2006: 473). By designing the archaeological site museum both practically and conceptually so that the message is clear and provides orientation (see also Goulding 2000: 271), visitors are effectively prepared for the site museum experience and what it has to offer. In effect a prepared public is an open public (Coe 1984: 207).

### 3.5 Museum and Site as One

At archaeological site museums the museum and site act as one. “The museum is an integral part of the site. The museum does for the site what it cannot do for itself” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett
1998: 169), and vice versa. The museum is a safe place for artifacts discovered on site during excavation to be displayed to the public and interpreted in a text-based form. This allows visitors to view artifacts, read about them in relation to the site, and obtain a base knowledge of the site’s history and the events that took place there. Tours of the site connects visitors, the artifacts they have seen, and interpretation of the past presented in the museum to the real world through interaction with guides. More importantly, being at the site makes the past real. In this way the museum and site allow visitors to come up with questions, and in turn present the opportunity to have those questions answered (see also Dean 2005: 25).

The past is made accessible and engaging at archaeological site museums, as “histories in museums are conceptualized and choreographed through engaging the limits and possibilities of visualizing new and different pasts” (Thorne 2008: 158) via interpretation. In this way the archaeological knowledge obtained from excavation and research conducted at the site are made available to the public rather than remaining firmly in the camp of academia.
4 Environment and Behaviour

4.1 Environment and Behaviour

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the recently-constructed museum and organization of tours at Huacas de Moche, and the archaeological site museum environment, impact social interactions and behaviour at the site. It can easily be said that environment has an effect on a person’s behaviour; how people respond and why they respond in particular ways to environmental cues (the sensory clues which impact how an environment is perceived and decision making), however, is less apparent upon initial consideration. Environments are encoded with meanings that are decoded based on context and previous personal experience—just as artifacts and storylines are decoded by museum visitors. Individuals read their environment and act according to their interpretation of it. Consequently, environmental cues “become indicators of social position, ways of establishing group or social identity, ways of defining situations and hence indicating expected [behaviour]” (Rapoport 1982: 181). As long as the cues are comprehensive they can be decoded without difficulty (Rapoport 1982: 182). However, actors usually bring their own expectations regarding proper interaction and behaviour in a given environment. Mixed signals arise when cues and expectations conflict, resulting in potentially problematic social interactions.

4.2 Visits Prior to the Construction of Museo Huacas de Moche

Prior to the construction of the museum at Huacas de Moche, visit structure to the archaeological site was chaotic. Movement was relatively uncontrolled and people arrived at the site from various directions, making it difficult for staff to control the flow of visitors. Many people would try to enter the site on their own, without purchasing a ticket, forcing staff to retrieve them and direct them to the visitor area to purchase one, which many people did not wish to do. Also, the information presented by guides varied greatly and largely depended on how well the guide had educated him- or herself about the site. Though some guides had received formal training, others had not, and no site-specific training was offered. This resulted in there being little distinction between internal and external guides, largely due to the absence of an official storyline.
Although a museum in the city center did try to interpret information about the site, it was not intimately connected to the site and was rarely visited. Therefore, visitors arrived at the site with varying degrees of prior knowledge, making it difficult for guides to interpret the site. Further, neither visitors nor guides were instructed about what sorts of information were to be presented at the site, which resulted in the proliferation of paranormal interpretations of the past (i.e. aliens). This made it difficult for engagement to be fostered and for the official (scientific) interpretation of the site to be reinforced, as visitors did not have a baseline understanding of the site. What little reinforcing of information occurred on site was conducted by artisans who sold handicrafts. These individuals hold unique understandings of the site, based on archaeological knowledge and stories that have been passed down from generation to generation, which they utilize to help them sell handicrafts. Though these means were effective for artisans who wished to make sales, they did not always impart the same information as was presented by guides.

Prior to the construction of Museo Huacas de Moche, the site was therefore clearly in need of structure and a storyline to compete with other archaeological sites in Peru. The modernization and standardization of information that would come with the construction of the museum would offer visitors a knowledge base, ease visitors into the visit structure desired by the directors of the project, and make the whole experience less confusing.

4.3 Museum Environment as Cue for Appropriate Behaviour

During the modernization of Huacas de Moche a conscious decision was made to alter the environmental context of the site in order to construct a framework through which visitors could decode environmental cues. By housing both ticket sales and Museo Huacas de Moche in close proximity to one another a visit structure is clearly suggested to visitors: the museum should be visited prior to touring Huaca de la Luna. Visitors are familiar with museums, but may not be familiar with archaeological sites. By framing visits to the archaeological site museum so that visitors attend the museum first it was hoped that the behaviours people attribute to museums would carry over to the remainder of their visit. Furthermore, Goulding (2000: 271) explains that people need to feel oriented in order to enjoy museum experiences, and the same holds for archaeological site museums. Exhibits are the framework through which the public interfaces with museums (Holloway 1981: 149), and at Huacas de Moche the museum and its exhibits are
used to offer orientation to visitors, presenting the history of the site, and indicating the types of information they will be given during their tour of Huaca de la Luna.

A security guard is stationed at the entrance of Museo Huacas de Moche and checks the tickets of visitors as they enter. The use of cameras and cell phones is not permitted in the museum, and the touching of glass or exhibit stands is prohibited; these rules are strictly enforced by security guards. However, the majority of desired behaviours are those which need not be regulated as strictly. Visitors to the museum tend to be respectful of other visitors’ space, and monitor how loudly they speak and how they move around the museum. Most visitors have been socialized to behave in the desired ways while exploring museums. As such these rules need not be posted, though the security guards will not hesitate to remind visitors of these should the need arise.

Museo Huacas de Moche is scripted to direct visitors through the exhibits towards the ritual of human sacrifice, allowing the artifacts in the museum to help stage visitor experience (Thorne 2008: 144) and introduce them to the focus of the tour at Huaca de la Luna. Moreover, the museum offers visitors an overview of the site, which benefits the project, and visitors, many of whom wish to have access to the “whole picture” (Goulding 2000: 274).

4.4 Expectations at Huaca de la Luna

4.4.1 Visitor and Staff Expectations

Visitors to archaeological site museums are, legitimately, expecting a service encounter upon their arrival; conflicting expectations are often what led to behavioural issues. Visitors are expecting to be treated as they would be at a resort or restaurant, but the dynamics of archaeological site museums do not strictly follow this pattern. Visitors are expecting to be served on their schedule, with their needs being placed above anything else. Though staff members at archaeological site museums are concerned with the well-being of visitors and meeting their expectations, they are also, and primarily, responsible for the care of the archaeological site and museum. The safety of artifacts and mitigation of visitor damage to the archaeological site are crucial to the maintenance and proper functioning of the museum and site. These needs must be tended to in order to meet visitor needs and ensure the protection of visitors, staff, and the archaeological site museum. Hence, archaeological site museums must be
staged, or framed, in such a way that visitors will be accepting of the necessary staff/visitor power dynamic. Management and staff at Huacas de Moche recognize this and attempt to establish the desired dynamic quickly. The dynamic is reinforced at the archaeological site through the posting of the site rules (listed in Chapter 2: Methods, Field Site, and Research Context), which can be cited when necessary.

Upon arrival at the visitor area of the archaeological site, people are greeted by one of the many guides who lead tours at Huaca de la Luna. Visitors are asked if they would like to take a tour in Spanish, English, or French and informed when the next tour will be starting. If there is a wait time the guide offers the visitor the options of visiting the cafeteria, souvenir shop, artisan stalls, or waiting in the small courtyard until the tour begins. Though visitors have expectations about the length of time they should have to wait for their tour to begin, they may need to wait up to 20 minutes for a tour to leave (if they would like a French tour the wait may be slightly longer), but generally tours leave 10-15 minutes after the first member of a new group arrives. Many visitors ask if they may tour the site on their own, either because they genuinely would prefer this or because they do not wish to wait for the tour to start. However, as mentioned, it is mandatory for all visitors to be accompanied by a guide at Huacas de Moche, allowing staff members to offer visitors deeper insight into the site (see also Holloway 1981: 388).

4.4.2 Undesirable Behaviour

Despite attempts by the project to make the site and visit structure as easy to decode and follow as possible, some visitors may be unable to understand the cues they provide, or are unwilling to accept them. While conducting research at Huacas de Moche I witnessed three noteworthy incidents of undesirable visitor behaviour. The first involved a couple from Eastern Europe; the man was very distraught about the prospect of having to tour the site with a guide. He raised his voice and gesticulated pointedly, citing other archaeological site museums where visitors were allowed to visit on their own. Despite explanations being offered and the site rules being referred to the man would not relent. Eventually, the head guide, Pepe, decided that the attempts to persuade the man were futile and he let the couple pass, albeit bitterly. Pepe radioed the security guards on site and had them watch over the couple during their visit to insure they did not stray from the path and did not break any further rules.
The second event involved a woman from a tour agency who had brought a group of individuals from Korea and Japan to the site. When she arrived she demanded to speak with a guide in English; this happened to be Pepe who had just returned to the visitor area with a group. The woman wanted her visitors to take English tours with guides provided by the site, based on their language skills and her own limited knowledge of the archaeological site’s history. She also insisted that the groups leave right away. Pepe and two other English speaking guides tried to explain that the groups needed to wait briefly for their tours to begin but the woman would not accept this, causing the guides to relent. The group was split in two to accommodate the 25 person maximum rule, with the second group waiting 5-10 minutes before beginning to allow some distance between them—the woman had been reluctant to allow this as well but eventually permitted it as it allowed members of the group an opportunity to use the facilities and purchase refreshments.

Coincidentally, a large group of young elementary school children had come to the site earlier in the day and were finishing their tour as these groups climbed the hill to the site’s entrance. Understandably, the guides accompanying the children did not have complete control over them, as the children called to one another and ran down the path to the foot of the *huaca*. The woman from the tour agency became extremely distraught about the behaviour of the children and lack of control the guides exhibited over them. She immediately went to speak with Pepe about this and the conduct of the guides prior to her visitors starting their tour. He apologized and explained that neither he nor the other guides could do anything about the children’s behavior. An argument followed, during which it was suggested the woman let administration know about her displeasure. She then left the area to speak on the phone with a colleague while she waited for the groups to return. When they arrived she demanded Pepe go with her over to the administration building to discuss her upset. He agreed and once all of her visitors had boarded the tour bus they made the short trip together. Nothing ever came of this complaint, to my knowledge, and the guides seemed unfazed by the woman’s upset once she had departed. Interestingly, her visitors had enjoyed themselves, and did not appear at all disgruntled by the brief wait or the presence of the school children. In this instance the guides had done their best to accommodate the needs of the woman and the visitors that had come with her. Despite their inability to calm the woman, the guides were able to maintain their composure under pressure.
and during the brief conflict that transpired, skillfully navigated these trials while applying the rules of the site as best as possible.

The third incident involved a young Asian woman who did not speak much Spanish or English. This woman was very patient and helped the guides as they attempted to explain the sites rules to her, building a positive rapport between them. After various attempts the guides were able to communicate to the woman that she was not supposed to visit the site unaccompanied, but having decided that she was not a risk, partially because she was on her own, the guides felt compelled to accommodate her. As a tour had not yet started to form and she would understand little of what a guide told her about the site, the guides decided it would be easier to allow her to visit the site on her own. The guides explained that she was to stay on the path, that she should not touch anything, and sent her on her way. As with the first incident, the guides radioed the security guards and told them the woman was allowed on site. This demonstrates that respect and sensitivity is a two-way street (Blanton 1981: 123). If visitors are respectful in their conduct guides will be happy to work with them toward a favourable solution, but if the visitor decides to react confrontationally, guides will have to be blunter in their response.

4.4.3 “Poor” Behaviour and Conflict of Expectations

Though many visitors understand that the rules of the archaeological site must be followed, and in turn accept the wait time and need to be accompanied by a guide while touring the site, others do not accept this easily. Tourists are often concerned with “clock time,” which can be “measured, spent, planned, saved, wasted, and lost” (Blanton 1981: 122). As such, many have created “strict” schedules in order to make effective use of their vacation time and being told that they need to wait for a tour to begin may make them anxious. Many visitors try to avoid the wait by requesting they leave right away. If a tour has not left in some time this request may be acquiesced to if the visitor explains they are short on time and there are a number of people in their group. If another group has left shortly before, this cannot be accommodated due to timing needs—in such instances the individuals may join the group ahead of them.

Other visitors do not wish to be accompanied by a guide and insist that one is not necessary, but this is usually not allowed. As seen earlier, however, when visitors become belligerent, or effective communication fails, the rules may need to be altered; the minority of decisions to
allow visitors to tour the site alone stem from occurrences like these. The majority of these decisions arise out of a failure to communicate after every reasonable effort has been made. In these cases the guides are happy to allow the visitor access to the site, especially if the archaeological site museum is not busy that day and the individual has been co-operative.

The guides at Huacas de Moche explain that the guide service is free of charge, hoping to help the situation. They also explain that only conservation occurs at the archaeological site and for this to remain sufficient damage must be mitigated and visitors supervised. The role of guide, clearly, is one that requires the ability to navigate a range of interactions, both positive and negative, none of which are the same as the last. Complete standardization is impossible (Booms and Bitner 1980: 340), as the needs of the visitor, guide, and site all must be taken into consideration, which change from interaction to interaction. Though incidents of poor behaviour do occur, they are few and far between and the vast majority of visitors to Huacas de Moche accept the site rules and authority of guides without question.

4.5 Huaca de la Luna as a Flexible Fact-Based Museum

Framing the archaeological site museum visit to cue respectful and museum-like behaviour early on in turn encourages and establishes the desired interaction types and power dynamics. Furthermore, the museum, with its archaeology- and conservation-based content suggests to visitors that these are the types of information that will be presented during tours of Huaca de la Luna, which in turn indicates what types of questions are and are not appropriate. This allows the script and storyline established by the project to take precedent over other, possible, interpretations, histories, and storylines.

By using the museum to frame the expectations of the project and cuing the expectations of visitors to align with them, visits to Huacas de Moche become more effectively structured, and appropriate behaviours are exhibited throughout. For instance, a number of visitors ask if they may take photos at the archaeological site since photos were not permitted inside the museum; visitors are instructed that photos are allowed, but are reminded that cell phones must remain on silent or vibrate until the end of the visit. Respect for other visitors and the authority (in both senses of the word) of staff members are therefore carried over from the museum to the archaeological ruins area.
Huacas de Moche strives to provide a service-oriented encounter that meets the need of visitors and the project. By using the museum as a way to structure and further cue visitors as to what to expect, they are able to do this in an unobtrusive way. Visitors are cued that an archaeological site museum, in its entirety, is a museum-like environment. The site itself is an artifact and needs to be protected, meaning the staff members of Huacas de Moche, be they guides, security guards, etc., are required to ensure the protection of the site, as well as the safety of visitors. Certain rules must be followed in order to ensure that the site is preserved for the future, and as such the service encounter that follows must be different than those experienced at hotels and restaurants, and will be more akin to that of an airport or a zoo. These are locations where certain rules must be followed in order to ensure safety and smooth operation.

The environment’s upkeep and control of service are of the utmost importance as visitors are directed by the signals provided by the museum environment and promoted by the behaviour of staff members (Booms and Bitner 1980: 349). By having staff enforce rules and behave according to the framework the site uses to structure visits, the behaviours desired of visitors are continually reinforced, maintaining a feeling of orientation (Blanton 1981: 271) for visitors in regards to conduct. In addition, the structured format of visits at Huacas de Moche, in combination with the modernization that has occurred, is used to help increase visitation, even if indirectly. Quality service motivates visits (McGrath 2003: 21); by offering a well-structured visit that is consistent in service and content, visitors are more likely to pass on positive recommendations and reviews of the archaeological site museum, travel agencies will continue to bring tour groups, and other advertising opportunities (such as travel books) will feature the site more prominently than they have in the past.

However, it is crucial that guides and staff at Huacas de Moche, and indeed at all archaeological site museums, remain flexible. The site must accommodate a wide variety of visitors who are able to decode the site’s cues and follow them to varying degrees. Moreover, visitors arrive at sites holding their own unique attitude regarding their visit, formed in part by their past experience, knowledge, and agenda. Guides must be able to navigate these while conducting tours, altering their own position, and deciding what sorts of information should be interpreted to their visitors in the process. Both of these topics shall be addressed in Chapter 5: Different Strokes for Different Folks.
5 Different Strokes for Different Folks

5.1 Differences between Visitor and Guide Types

As has been put forward here, and by Booms and Bitner (1980), archaeological site museum experiences are interactive, people-oriented encounters, which cannot be completely standardized. Booms and Bitner (1980) go on to suggest that standardization is not necessarily desired. Here, they are probably referring to the need to adapt interactions based on the individuals involved, which is certainly the case with museum experiences. Conversely, content and presentation standardization, as described in the previous chapters, is desired as it aids in creating and maintaining a sense of orientation for visitors. Despite the standardization of material, and the appropriate behavioural cues, how people engage (interact) with their environment varies, meaning that behaviour and interaction are separate in this case.

Visitors are a highly irregular set of individuals; each person comes to Huacas de Moche with his or her own array of past experiences, knowledge, and agendas (see also Chronis 2005: 394; Karp 1992: 3; Perin 1992: 191; Thorne 2008: 151). For this reason, visitors take different things away from their time at the huaca, be it increased knowledge of the site or the ability to say they have been there. Guides, like visitors, bring their past experiences, knowledge, and agendas to interactions. Guides assess their group based on the demography and engagement they exhibit, applying different guiding tactics depending on the audience. The aforementioned combination of factors, on the part of visitors and guides, are what make interaction and engagement so varied and allow different visitor and guide types, as well as encounters to arise.

5.2 Fictitious Visitor and Guide Characters

The following characters are fictitious individuals, based on a compilation of visitor and guide behaviours.

5.2.1 Visitor Fran

Fran arrived at Huacas de Moche with an external tour group. She wanted to see the site, take some photos, and move on to the next stop of the day, Chan Chan. She had seen a poster for the
tour agency while visiting the walking street in Trujillo, and decided it would be an easy way to take in some of the local history. She arrived at the tour agency just before the tour van was about to leave, and boarded quickly. Fran tried to pay attention to what the guide said but tuned out as she looked out the van window over the shoulder of the passenger beside her. She purchased her tickets and was ushered inside the museum by her external tour guide who informed her group that they had about half an hour to explore. Fran looked around the museum passively, glancing at the exhibits and letting her gaze flow from artifact to artifact. She waited outside for her guide to collect the group, and climbed back into the tour van to drive over to Huaca de la Luna. After her tour of the huaca began Fran listened to what the guide had to say for a bit but quickly lost interest. She spent the majority of her tour looking at her surroundings and taking a plethora of photos. Following the tour of Huaca de la Luna the external guide shuffled Fran’s group back into the van, not giving them time to visit the artisanal area or souvenir shop as they would be able to purchase souvenirs later in the day. The van brought them back to the city for lunch before the group moved on to their visit of Chan Chan and Huanchaco in the afternoon. Fran did not think much more about her visit to Huacas de Moche, but was able to post the photos on her Facebook page, demonstrating to her friends that she had been there.

5.2.2 Visitor Alex

Alex spent a lot of time reading about the places he could visit during his trip to Peru. He made a list of those he wished to see first and visited those that piqued his interest most. He figured out that the best way for him to get to Huacas de Moche was to either take a combi or a taxi. Alex made his way to the site and purchased a ticket for the museum as well as the archaeological site. In the museum he spent time reading the panels and examining the artifacts on display. He followed the flow of the museum and particularly enjoyed the video showing how subsequent levels of the huaca were built on top of each other. Before exiting the museum he examined the image of a site reconstruction and the chronology of cultures offered below it. Alex quickly walked over to Huaca de la Luna, going over the information he had previously absorbed in the museum. He was willing to wait for a tour to start, visiting the areas pointed out to him by the guide who greeted him during his wait. Alex eagerly joined his group when it was departing, and listened intently to the guide as she reiterated the site rules and began the tour. As
the tour progressed Alex recognized iconography he had seen in books and in the museum, and thought of questions for the tour guide based on portions of her tour that interested him—asking them when it was appropriate and striking up brief conversations with her between stops on the tour. Alex took a number of photos, but always waited until after his guide had finished speaking about the area before doing so. At the end of the tour Alex thanked his guide for her help before going to purchase a carefully selected replica artifact from an artisan as well as a book produced by the project about the site. Alex continued to think about his visit and read the book once he arrived home, continuing to gain knowledge about the site.

5.2.3 Guide Simon

Simon is an external tour guide who brings groups to places they would not have had access to otherwise. As an external guide he accompanies groups of tourists from the city center to areas of interest, traveling via van. Although Simon informs his group about the places they are visiting he is more interested in showing the visitors these places than presenting them with specifics about the area. What he does tell them is based on archaeological knowledge, but is also partially based on anecdotes. Simon takes shortcuts during his tours to get people to the most appealing parts of their visit—he gives them the information they need, limited as it may be, so that he can get the visitors to the things they want to see more quickly. If visitors ask questions Simon is more than happy to offer information on the topic, but he would not feel compelled to tell them these things unless prompted to. His tone is amiable, making himself approachable, so visitors are willing to ask him any questions they may have and trust his judgment about areas of interest. After finishing the tour of Huaca de la Luna Simon has his visitors get back in the van so they can move on to the next part of their day-trip. Simon can get his visitors to places they want to visit, and that is the role he aims to fulfill.

5.2.4 Guide Maia

Maia is a very structured individual, and when she guides, in English or Spanish, she has a direction in mind when she starts. Her tour is formal in tone and focuses on getting information about the site out to her tour group as efficiently as possible, following the script of the site closely. When Maia is asked questions by visitors she answers them quickly and is to the point. Once she has responded she returns to the course she had in mind for her tour. She is consistent
in the direction she takes, regardless of the demographics of her group, or if the group shows interest in a particular facet of the site and/or its history. Her tours convey the same content, in more or less the same language and style as each other, deviating very little. Maia’s focus is on information, no matter how stark her presentation is as a result. She hopes that her group takes in at least parts of the information she provides them; but if not she feels it is not entirely her fault as they may not have been interested to hear what she had to say.

5.3 Levels of Engagement

![Figure 12 Visitor-Guide Equilibrium](image)

The fictitious characters put forward in the previous section do not exist in reality, but the behaviours described are indicative of the extremes of the spectrum depicted in Figure 12. Visitors can be seen as either being driven more by status (valuing the ability to say they have been there), like Fran, or by experience (looking to satisfy curiosity), like Alex, though how they fit into one category or the other, and to what degree, depends on the person. Though people may initially lean more to one side or the other of the spectrum they are able to move along it; their position can change based on their environment and the people around them (see also Moscardo 1996: 385). Likewise, guides can be seen as mentors, as exemplified by Maia, or pathfinders, as exemplified by Simon, but in what ways and to what degree depends on the person. When visitors and guides come into contact with one another their position on the spectrum changes as a result of the individual with whom they are interacting. This change can be in any direction, and remains fluid throughout their interaction. As such, most people do not leave an encounter at an archaeological site museum unaffected, even if minimally.
5.4 Engagement Demonstrated by Visitor Extremes

5.4.1 Varied Visitors

Visitors arrive at Huacas de Moche through a variety of means, with varying agendas. *Combis*, taxis, and tour group vans are the most common forms of transportation, though some individuals do drive to the site if they have access to a car. Tour groups and individual visitors (be they alone or with a small group of allied individuals), choose the means of transportation/visitation that is most suitable for them; however, the agendas and past experience of individuals who choose a particular method are not universal. People are individuals, and the mode of transportation/visitation they choose cannot be used to divide and examine them in this context. More useful means of examination are the agendas and the outward engagement of visitors.

The two broadest visitor agendas are experience and status. These agendas have a tendency to overlap with the classification of visitors in the literature as either “mindful” or “mindless” (see Goulding 2000; Moscardo 1996). The overlapping of these categories is not difficult to fathom after reflecting on the behaviour of visitors, and viewing them as laying on a spectrum between the two extremes. The present study uses of the terms “status-driven” and “experience-driven” visitors as they more adequately reflect the behaviours witnessed during my field research at Huacas de Moche, and are far less pejorative. Furthermore, authors have traditionally used the categories “mindful” and “mindless” as either/or binaries, which is not what I have observed in the field. Again, visitors seem to lie along a continuum between positions, and can express characteristics of both poles of the spectrum to different degrees (the same can be said of guides and their respective types).

5.4.2 Status-driven Visitors

Status-driven visitors tend to view archaeological site museum visits, and perhaps travel in general, as a status symbol “which serves to separate the cultured ‘us’ from the uncultured ‘them,’” where the state of having been there is more important than the actual experience (Goulding 2000: 262-63). The silent photos that these visitors take away are the hallmarks of their trip. They take away pretty images, and can say they have been to a list of places, but they
may not take much else away, except perhaps souvenirs. At the extreme these visitors take away very little further understanding of the places they have been to, and rarely ask questions about them.

Status-driven visitors view archaeological site museums as routine or familiar in the sense that they are stale and all alike, except that there are new photos to be taken. They deem the information that can be imparted to them at these locations as irrelevant or unimportant to their understanding of the location. Status-driven visitors tend to favour interpretations and explanations from elsewhere instead of those provided at or around the site; these interpretations may be based on archaeological knowledge or, conversely, may be paranormal interpretations (Goulding 2000: 263; Moscardo 1996: 380-81). These visitors have enough of the story to satisfy themselves, as well as the pictures to legitimize their claims of “having been there” status.

While conducting research at Huacas de Moche I noticed that more status-driven visitors come to the site with external tour groups than on their own, likely because it takes less personal effort, and engagement with the experience, to obtain the status they desire. I would also suggest that there may be a link between status-driven visitors and visitors who do not exhibit the desired behaviours. Status-driven visitors who came to the site on their own while I was conducting participant observation at the archaeological site museum were the type of individuals who tended to argue that a guide was not necessary, regardless of site rules. These individuals failed to see the importance or value of the sites rules and the stability they offer to the project because the rules were inconvenient for them. Status-driven visitors do not need a guide to get what they desire out of their visit, so they do not want one.

5.4.3 Experience-driven Visitors

Experience-driven visitors, conversely, see the value in and “importance of learning, self-discovery, and exploration” (Moscardo 1996: 377). They tend to be curious about the locations they visit, view them as unique, and harbor a desire to learn more about them. In general, it may be said that these visitors are more willing to accept the rules of the site. They tend to be visiting a specific country or museum “with the goal of piquing and satisfying curiosity” (Rounds 2004: 304). Experience-driven visitors have questions, and are willing to put forth at least some effort to discover the answers to these questions. In short, they engage/interact with, and their attention
is drawn by, their surroundings in some way. Experience-driven visitors are stimulated by difference and a feeling that they are at least partially in control of their situation and are able to influence the information they receive, and personal interactions, in order to get what they want out of their experience (Goulding 2000: 263; Moscardo 1996: 381-2).

According to Csikszentmihalyi and Hermenson (1995: 68), the “desire to learn for its own sake appears to be a natural motive built into the central nervous system,” however, I feel that this assessment is more indicative of experience-driven visitors. As such, these visitors should be the more likely of the two types to arrive at the site on their own. While conducting field research at Huacas de Moche, this appeared to be the case. These visitors would seem to listen to the guides, nodding, politely taking photos of the site while the guide spoke and waiting to take photos of friends and family until after the guide had finished discussing the point of interest, as well as occasionally asking questions as the tour progressed.

According to my observations at Huacas de Moche, upwards of three-quarters of the visitors who tour the site with internal guides appear to be paying attention, with perhaps a quarter to a third of these trying to be polite; of the entire group the remaining quarter were far more concerned with taking pictures. These ratios were closer to half and half for larger tour groups led by external guides. Though it is possible to note how many people appear to pay attention during their visit to Huacas de Moche, it is not as easy to determine what they actually take away from it.

By structuring visits at the site so they offer a more complete, engaging, and different experience than other archaeological site museums, Huacas de Moche attempts to decrease the number of visitors who find themselves consumed by picture-taking, at least during tours led by their guides. By making guided visits mandatory—rather than letting people passively visit the site on their own, with little information regarding the context of the site being presented—Huacas de Moche may be able to “persuade” visitors to interact in ways traditionally considered favourable.

Through the efforts of guides at sites like Huacas de Moche visitors that exhibit some status-driven behaviours may be influenced to start demonstrating some of the behaviours indicative of experience-driven ones (Moscardo 1996: 384). Guides are able to cater to the desires and needs of visitors, altering their presentation style and selecting appropriate portions of content to be
presented based on their audience. By offering visitors the opportunity to take control, to start asking questions, and to see how their surroundings are unique, interest can be born. Though guides may be able to get visitors’ attention and foster engagement, transforming status-driven visitors into experience-driven ones entirely is not probable in all cases, as it would require an internal, personal agenda change on the part of the visitor. Even if the attempts of guides to push visitors toward the experience-driven visitors side of the spectrum is only successful a fraction of the time, making guided visits mandatory at Huaca de la Luna gives visitors the opportunity to engage with the site even if they may not have deemed it necessary or desirable initially.

5.5 Guiding

5.5.1 Guiding at Huacas de Moche

As McGrath (2003: 2) suggests in her discussion of guides in Cusco, guides are “the main interpretative supply” in Peru, and in turn are the main source of interpretation at Huaca de la Luna. Since the construction of Museo Huacas de Moche, guides have been aided in their task of interpreting the site, as visitors are introduced to the site’s script and brand prior to their tour. Though the museum builds a foundation for visitors and structures visits so they flow more seamlessly, I would suggest that guides still bear the brunt of the work when it comes to fostering engagement. Guides add a human dynamic to the site, giving visitors someone “safe” to interact with that is intimately connected to the site. Though it may be suggested that guides are the major knowledge providers at the site, imparting knowledge is not strictly the point of guiding—rather it is to ensure “that curiosity is sparked and that visitors can make sense of their experience, with the information they are given” (McGrath 2003: 6). Guides act as a bridge between the site and visitors, with the success of this bridge depending on how well guides are able to utilize their knowledge and power (McGrath 2003: 5, 15).

Guides who lead tours at Huacas de Moche, whether they are hired by the site or work for an external tour agency, have received at least some form of training. Guide training, in the formal academic sense, encompasses a large array of subjects with intensive exams including (but not limited to) history and archaeology, geography, and guiding itself. The expansion of language skills is often desired and completed independently from formal guide training. Once guides
have completed a portion of their training they are required to complete a practicum, depending on their educational program. These practicums offer guides practical experience in the field of guiding and help them form professional networks.

Guides learn extensive amounts of content regarding the sites at which they lead tours, as well as how to present and interpret this information to visitors. They often take a number of tours of the site with other guides to see how they portray information and help reinforce the information they have learned. In the end, though, how a guide interprets and presents the archaeological site is a personal decision (as long as the information is based on archaeological knowledge). Because of their knowledge and experience, visitors view guides as a sort of expert who has access to privileged knowledge regarding the site they are visiting (McGrath 2003: 14; Glover 2008: 121) and in the case of Huacas de Moche can grant them access to non-public spaces (see also Cohen 1985: 7, 11).

Again, while conducting research at Huacas de Moche there were four men and eleven women acting as internal tour guides, and of the five external tour agencies I accompanied on tours four groups were led by men and one group was led by a woman. The content of internal tours is relatively standardized, however, variation arises based on the particular interests of the group. Overall the men were less formal than women in the conduct of their tours. The men tended to joke more with the individuals in their groups; on a number of occasions they asked if there were any volunteers for a ritual battle, for example. These interludes fostered a lighter atmosphere generally. Though the women were friendly, they were more formal in the conduct of their tours, particularly when groups were larger. With smaller groups a lighter, friendlier atmosphere, was the norm regardless of if the guide was a man or woman.

The initial moments of a tour can be unnerving, as it is in these moments that visitors begin assessing their guides and looking for clues to help them interpret the situation. From the moment the tour begins the guide is constantly on “display” and must monitor the impression they are making on visitors. Opportunities for guides to segregate themselves from their group during tours are rare, straining their role as service provider and authority (in both senses of the word) (Cohen 1985: 23; Holloway 1981: 389, 391). This can be extremely draining. For this
reason most external tour guides choose not to accompany their groups in Museo Huacas de Moche, offering them some time out of the spotlight.

In the literature tour guides have, traditionally, been divided into two types: mentors and pathfinders (Cohen 1985: 7; McGrath 2003: 15). Though Holloway (1981: 385-86) offers a number of guide “sub-types” these are applied based on the situation (often in response to personal and/or audience preference), and are broadly encompassed by the spectrum of behaviours between mentor and pathfinder. Mentor-like guides are likened to tutors as they offer guidance, utilizing high levels of interpretive skill which allows them to pass on an understanding of the surroundings to those they “teach”. In contrast, pathfinder-like guides lead the way, offering visitors “privileged” access to their destination, which they would not have access to otherwise (Cohen 1985: 7-8; McGrath 2003: 15-16); in the case of Huacas de Moche this largely refers to access to Huaca de la Luna, which cannot be visited without a guide. Internal and external tour guides active at Huacas de Moche fulfill both of these roles to some degree, causing me to agree with Cohen when he suggests that the “role of the modern tourist guide combines and expands elements from both antecedents,” in what he calls the “teacher of the way” (1985: 9). Regardless, the terms mentor and pathfinder are useful for the purposes of this chapter and shall be used while discussing the roles internal and external tour guides fulfill, as they exhibit behaviours typified by both.

5.5.2 Internal Tour Guides

I would consider internal tour guides to exhibit behaviours that lean more toward the mentor side of the spectrum than the pathfinder side on the basis that their tours make use of the script put forward by the site and privileged knowledge that comes with having access to archaeologists and conservators who are working at and interpreting the site in real time. Internal tour guides interpret information put forward by the archaeologists who work at Huacas de Moche, thereby acting as mediators between academics and visitors. Furthermore, most visitors first become intimately acquainted with information about the site when they arrive at Museo Huacas de Moche, which presents interpretations of academic work. Guides step in and can be seen as acting as tutors in both of these situations. Tutors help make information more understandable and interesting for their students, continuing the story started at the museum. If visitors can be
seen as students, then it follows that guides are able to fulfill the role of mentor by making academic information accessible, understandable, and interesting to the public.

While conducting tours internal guides are required to pass on information that has been generated by the archaeologists and conservators hired by the project. As the interpretation of the past the guides present is based on academic work conducted at Huacas de Moche, it follows that the guides present the past with an air of authority. Members of the project are referred to by name, the history of the project is discussed, and on-going work is mentioned during tours, demonstrating the inside knowledge these individuals have.

Another way internal guides demonstrate authority is through the standardization of language and information across Huacas de Moche. With Museo Huacas de Moche came an increased presence of text-based interpretation on-site. Information panels in the museum utilize the same tone and language as guides do on site. This helps visitors maintain a feeling of orientation and comfort as their visit progresses from the museum to Huaca de la Luna, as this may be the first time many visitors have been to an archaeological site. The connection between standards, authority, and mentorship cannot be overlooked, and as such the classification of internal guides as tutors is easy to fathom.

However, internal guides are also pathfinders. Though visitors who take tours with internal guides were able to find their own way, or path, to the site, they cannot access Huaca de la Luna without a guide. Visitors cannot tour the site alone, making internal (and external) guides gatekeepers; without a pathfinder, visitors get nowhere at Huaca de la Luna. Furthermore, guides are able to show visitors areas of interest, increasing their pathfinder role.

5.5.3 External Tour Guides

External tour guides can easily be seen as pathfinders. These individuals shepherd visitors to Huacas de Moche in vans, offering information about their surroundings to visitors along the way. Once they have arrived at the site external guides go with their groups to purchase tickets before shuffling them inside the museum for a specified amount of time, after which they shuttle the visitors over to Huaca de la Luna and gain them access to the site and give them a tour—at which point their tendencies may begin to lean toward the mentor side of the spectrum. At the
end of the tour the guide collects the visitors in their group, makes sure they are safely in the van, and ferries them away. External tour guides literally dictate the path of their visitors. How the visitors get to the site and the progression of their visit at Huacas de Moche is regulated by them in every way. Visitors who come to the site with external tour guides, therefore, do not need to expend much effort of their own to figure out the visit, and have minimal interaction with the people who live and/or work around the site.

Visitors who arrive at Huacas de Moche with external tour guides, I would suggest, may become psychologically distanced as everything is taken care of for them. This mentality arises as external tours, at times, provide an environmental bubble for visitors, causing the site to be viewed as separate from everyday life in the area (Holloway 1981: 381-82). In cases like these the tour van figuratively transports visitors to a different time and space. Though visitors may be psychologically distanced, external tour guides attempt to bring aspects of local life into their tours by calling on authentic versions of the past, based on anecdotes as well as archaeological knowledge, instead of relying on positions of authority, based solely on academic findings, as is done by internal guides.

That being said, external tour guides, as mentioned, also present archaeological information regarding Huacas de Moche, making them mentors like internal guides, but they also integrate personal anecdotes to help interpret the site, and discuss the farming that takes place around it as well the people who live nearby. External tour guides are able to offer alternative archaeological interpretations of the site put forward by archaeologists who are not affiliated with the project, and at times mention how their version of the site’s history may differ the interpretations presented by internal guides—for instance, one external guide suggested that Huacas de Moche was not the only Moche capital. Two of the external guides related the site to the Catholic Church, suggesting that the different faces of the Mountain God are similar to the different depictions of Christ, and that Moche priests drank the blood of the sacrificed like Catholics take communion, drinking wine which represents the blood of Christ who sacrificed himself. They also interpret iconography on the site using personal stories. For instance one explained that the Mountain God is depicted as a spider at times because spiders appear in greater numbers during El Niño years, which the guide learned from elderly relatives, and because spiders drink the blood of their victims. Another guide suggested that the Moche knew about the jungle animals
depicted in their iconography because the environment was more like a jungle than a desert when
the Moche occupied the site. Finally, one claimed that the Huacas were named *Sol* and *Luna*
because the Chimu worshipped the sun and the Inca worshipped the moon, which is counter to
the explanation that the names mimic the monikers of the great pyramids of Teotihuacan, which
is subscribed to by the project.

In general, external tours were more personalized, drawing on various sources of information
rather than following the interpretive storyline of the site as internal guides must. I would
suggest this tendency to offer more personalized interpretation arises from the need to know
more than one site when working as an external tour guide, as all of the external guides I
accompanied also led tours of Chan Chan and Huanchaco at the very least. Personal stories
make interpretation easier to remember. Also, these stories may be of more interest to status-
driven visitors as they are anecdotal, and again are easier to remember. Since status-driven
visitors may comprise a large number of external tour takers, this panders to their desire for
pictures and status while still offering information about the site.

### 5.6 (Un)Standardized Interaction

Regardless of the type of guide, they have an information function and are seen by visitors as
having expertise about the sites they guide at, and this expertise is called upon while guiding.
However, guides do not solely wish to impart pieces of information (see also McGrath 2003: 6).
Guides want visitors to enjoy their visit rather than viewing it as routine. As such, they employ a
variety of interpretative strategies and dramaturgical skills. The relationship between guides and
visitors is fluid, it changes from group to group, visitor to visitor, guide to guide; this dynamic
causes live relationships to be formed. There is a high degree of contact between visitors and
guides, which requires guides to demonstrate well-developed interpersonal skills, necessitating
the rule that a tour group may contain no more than 25 people, allowing the guide to interact
with and engage visitors as effectively as possible.

Guides must also be flexible in their means of interpretation as they can never be sure exactly
what sort of group dynamic or demographic their next tour will have (Booms and Bitner 1980:
349-351; Glover 2008: 119). The various combinations of visitors, visitor agendas, and
background knowledge that arise make the standardization of interaction impossible and
undesired. Guides must be free to take poetic license with their interpretation of the site in order to spark interest in status-driven and experience-driven visitors. A major concern of guides, then, is the information on which to base their tour on and what little “tidbits” of information will cause the visitors they are interacting with at the time to take notice of the site. Hence, no tour will ever be exactly the same (see also Chronis 2005: 391, 395), and if guides are doing their job properly no tour should be.

Recall the image of the modified equilibrium sign (see Figure 12). A guide can exhibit a range of guiding tendencies, calling on an array of behaviours that lay in different positions across the spectrum to make up their personal strategy. As a guide interacts with his or her group their position along the spectrum between pathfinder and mentor changes, responding to the group demographic. Similarly, members of the group all hold unique positions between the status and experience-driven extremes, which change in response to their interactions with the guide. Interaction between them can result in endless combinations of visitor and guide types, with what may be considered optimal interaction resulting in equilibrium. For instance a visitor that is more experience-driven may become less so in a tour led by a guide who acts like a pathfinder, or the guide may also become more mentor-like in response to his curious visitor. Both may also change position, meeting closer toward the middle of the spectrum. If the two are closer to polar opposites both may disengage from the interaction. In the case of a mostly status-driven visitor being accompanied by a mentor-like guide the interaction may not be as detrimental as when a mostly experience-driven visitor is accompanied by a pathfinder-like guide. In the latter case the visitor will leave unsatisfied, possibly with a poor impression of archaeological site museum experiences.

Similarly, a visitor who expresses more experience-driven tendencies may also leave with poor impressions of the site if they are led by a mentor-type guide. If these visitors ask a lot of questions without receiving engaging answers they may lose interest. However, it is also possible for the guide to change their position and to become more accommodating to questions, thereby enhancing engagement. Conversely, if a visitor who exhibits more status-driven tendencies is led by a guide who is more pathfinder-like, both the visitor and guide may find comfort in their interaction. In such cases the full potential for engagement with the site may never be realized. Though the guide will still act as a mentor in some ways the curiosity of the
visitor may not be piqued as much as it may have been if the guide exhibited slightly more mentor-like leanings.

The easiest kind of interactions between visitors and guides probably occur between those who lay near the middle of the spectrum, or between individuals who are willing to accommodate the behaviours of those they are interacting with. These individuals are the most likely to reach equilibrium. Though visitors may be willing to alter their objectives based on the degree to which their guide is a pathfinder or a mentor, the responsibility to be accommodating is more likely to fall to guides. Again, archaeological site museums are service encounters, and as such it is in the best interest of the individuals who work there to provide reliable and appropriate service to visitors. Part of being a skilled guide is being able to negotiate the high level of interaction they have with visitors. Having a strong grasp of interpersonal skills is crucial to the success of these interactions.

Guides must be able to read their audience and be able to react to their needs and desires accordingly. This being the case, from my experience, the guides who are most successful at accommodating visitors are those that lay slightly more on the mentor side of the spectrum, while visitors who lay slightly closer to the experience-driven side of the spectrum are the ones guides are able to engage with most effectively (i.e. around the place where the black dots are positioned on the image below, see Figure 13):

![Figure 13 "Optimal" Engagement Positions](image)

What characteristics these individuals display from either side of the spectrum will vary from person to person. Individuals that hold these positions are able to shift their position more easily than those that lay closer to the extremes, and when guides and visitors who exhibit tendencies approximating to these are in contact with one another they are able to feed off the interaction, fostering increased engagement and temporary interpersonal relationships.
For example, early on in a tour led by Patricia a visitor asked about how the pottery he saw in the museum was made. In response Patricia told her group about the urban zone known as the Uhle Platform, which they would see later, in response to the question. She briefly discussed how artisans lived in this area and created pottery for everyday, as well as ceremonial, use. Patricia explained that Moche pots were made using molds or by hand. The visitor asked this question just before the group entered the sacrificial zone, so Patricia made reference to the large, smashed ceramic vessels in the shape of prisoners who were to be sacrificed on display in the museum. The majority of these ceramic prisoners were found in the sacrificial zone as well, and received similar treatment to real people, being sacrificed to help stave off El Niño events. Some of the other pottery found in the museum is in the form of animals or people, while others exhibit iconography that can be seen at Huaca de la Luna (which Patricia pointed out during the rest of the tour), or offer representations of ceremonial events that took place there. Patricia remembered the question and during the groups stop at the Altar Mayor she discussed how some iconography representing the sacrifice rituals that occurred at the site included images of a cup, which archaeologists found during excavation; she went on to mention that the cup was tested and it was confirmed that it had held blood at some point. As can be seen from the examples, Patricia related the creation of pottery at the site back to sacrifice in order to tie the presented information back into the storyline, enabling her to continue with the tour fluidly. Patricia remembered the question and brought in interpretation about pottery when appropriate during the rest of the tour, using it to further spark interest in the storyline being presented and keep the attention of visitors. This is good service, and, more importantly, good guiding.

The best way to foster engagement and interpersonal relationships is for a guide to stress visitors having a good time. When visitors are enjoying themselves they are more likely to engage with their visit, as they become not only witnesses to but also “participate in the creation of historical knowledge” (Potter and Leone 1992: 491) themselves. By using the script that has been established for the site, guides are able to draw upon a storyline that is interesting for visitors, while still being able to relate information about the day to day lives of the Moche. By presenting the site through the lens of human sacrifice the storyline is inherently compelling to visitors as the ritual is generally considered taboo, eliciting feelings of excitement and minor adrenaline rushes (tied to conceptions of danger, fear, or strangeness). This, again, makes fostering engagement easier for guides, while giving visitors what they want (within site dictated
limits)—offering them something unique about the site to latch onto (see also Glover 2008: 112) while delving into broader aspects of the site’s history.

Though it has traditionally been seen as desirable for museums to encourage engagement by training guides to become learned educators, skilled at teaching and mentoring all types of visitors by somehow instilling experience-driven values into them, this may not be the best course of action. The findings of the present study suggest that this may in fact be shunning large number of museum-goers from optimal engagement with the archaeological site museum. A more flexible attitude that embraces knowledge mobilization and acknowledges diversity in visitors might be a more productive way to move forward. Instead of defying visitors whose attitude does not match the guides’ expectations, I argue for an approach to guide-visitor interaction that responds to the desires of the visitor, framing knowledge mobilization through the unique characteristics of each encounter. For example, if a visitor is more interested in taking photos than what their guide has been presenting there may be a better course of action for fostering engagement than continuing to interact in the same way. A better option would be for the guide to take note of what the visitor is photographing and approach them during the time they provide their group to take photos. The guide can then briefly describe what the visitor had been photographing in order to provide them with a brief personal interaction and interpretation. This may cause the visitor to begin engaging with the visit on their own terms.
6 Conclusions

Archaeological site museum experiences, in the fashion of museum experiences, are part of learning to be cosmopolitan and modern—they are “part of becoming culturally literate” (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1992: 45, 50). Archaeological site museums are locations where varying cultures and portions of the past can be made real and experienced by visitors. For this reason, museums have traditionally been seen as educational institutions and more recently have been seen as the initiators of curiosity. In the past decade or so museums have been remapped in a number of ways: as sites, as institutions, as categories, as sets of social processes, as techniques through which values are produced, and as domains of interaction (Kratz and Rassool 2006: 347). These factors are discussed in the previous chapters and come together in order to create well designed and well received museums experiences.

I chose to study knowledge mobilization and visitation at Huacas de Moche as it provides an excellent example of how branding, storyline, interpretation, environment, and interactions between visitors, guides, and the site are able to influence behaviour and experience. Furthermore, there has been a “growing insertion of the north coast and the entire country of Peru into the globalized tourist industry and globalized world economy overall” (Silverman 2005: 152-53), which, coupled with the recent modernization of the site, has made it a popular tourist destination.

Information generated during archaeological research is presented and interpreted at archaeological site museums, which can be considered built heritage sites in many cases. Built heritage sites are locations that “contain much information about the history and culture of a place, and successful interpretation at such sites can create visitors who not only appreciate the specific site but who have some understanding of the region or nation that the site is a part of” (Moscardo 1996: 393). Furthermore, heritage “is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display)” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 149). As such, exhibitions grant archaeological cultures a second life (see also Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 149), allowing silent objects to become artifacts and pass on their stories. Once artifacts are on display, anyone is able to impart meaning to them, creating their own understanding of the
artifact. Archaeological site museums, therefore, reinforce the idea that archaeologists are only “doorkeepers of the past” (Arden 2002: 392). This makes interpretation through text and by guides crucial as they can influence the accurate or intended understanding of the site and can inspire curiosity.

Since its modernization and the associated construction of Museo Huacas de Moche, Huacas de Moche has been incredibly effective at creating a desired experience and instilling the desired behaviours in its visitors. By having visitors attend the museum first they establish what behaviours are appropriate, and reinforce that these behaviours are expected at the archaeological site as well by posting site rules for visitors to see. The museum atmosphere is meant to be welcoming, and has clearly written, standardized information panels which make it easy for visitors to pick out aspects of exhibitions that are relevant to them. Further, the museum also provides a knowledge-base for visitors, which guides can utilize during tours. As all visitors are required to tour Huaca de la Luna with a guide, damage to the site can be mitigated, while also providing visitors with further interpretation of the site and the opportunity to fulfill their curiosity. Museums must give tourists what they want (Glover 2008: 112), and what tourists want are unique experiences. By utilizing what is particular about the site in branding and interpretation this can be done effectively—as it has been at Huacas de Moche through the use of the Mountain God and the storyline of human sacrifice.

During the modernization process Huacas de Moche established that conservation, research, promotion and dissemination, tourism development, and human resources are important when it comes to how the project wants the site to be organized and function. Moreover, by offering a clear circuit, guidance, and preservation the project has continued to assert itself as a “successful cultural centre” (Higueras 2008:1084-85). It is evident that clear interpretation and visit layout are directly related to the value of exhibits, the behaviour of visitors, and are required for the success of any museum. Therefore, museums must not “discount the value of [their exhibits] by requiring high costs” (Bitgood 2006: 473), should they wish to maintain visitor satisfaction and ensure sustainable visitation.

Using Huacas de Moche as a case study, it can be seen that the core goals of a successful archaeological site museum must be visitor experience resulting in public support of
conservation efforts, and the encouragement of appropriate behaviours (see also Moscardo 1996: 378). It has also been demonstrated that individuals who work at and visit archaeological sites “perform on a dynamic stage set of their own construction, which encompasses landscapes that are ancient and contemporary, domestic and foreign, informal and formal, personal and historic” (Silverman 2002: 897). They must negotiate these landscapes, which are constantly being created and are in flux, just as the position of the individual negotiating the landscape is constantly being created and in flux.

Interpretation bridges these landscapes and individuals, forming the core of museum experience, knowledge mobilization, and visitation. Relationships can form through the process of interpretation, fostering engagement, and allowing visitors to “creatively and intelligently piece together the pieces of a particular history” (Goulding 2000: 274), but while how a person understands the site is individual, engagement and interpretation are not. As has been demonstrated through the case of Huacas de Moche, effective interpretation at museums can effectively decrease undesired crowding and congestion, alter behaviour, influence visitor appreciation, and create public support (Moscardo 1996: 379). These effects are crucial to museums.

With the push over the past decades for archaeological knowledge to be presented to the public, and particularly since the 1990s in the case of Peru, the aforementioned effects have become of interest to archaeologists as well as museum designers. Archaeological site museums are an excellent option for archaeologists who wish to present their findings to the public, making them locations where the studies of archaeology and public history become intimately entwined. Archaeological site museums offer interpretations of the past, but they are also places worthy of being interpreted. “Interpretation has a noble origin. Its creators believed that there were certain places so magnificent or significant as to oblige one generation to preserve them for the enjoyment of those to follow” (Pond 1993: 71). In this fashion I have come to believe that the structure and organization of Huacas de Moche, as a successful site museum, is also something magnificent and significant, obliging me to preserve the processes of knowledge creation, presentation, and reception utilized by the project for those that follow.
References

Aaker, D.A.\textsuperscript{5}


Appadurai, Arjun and Carol A. Breckenridge


Arden, Traci


Bitgood, Stephen


Blanton, David


Booms, Bernard H. and Mary J. Bitner


\textsuperscript{5} Secondary reference from Nangru et al 2012.
Chronis, Athinodoros


Coe, Jon C.


Cohen, Erik


Cone, Cynthia A.


Csikszentmihalyi, M. and K. Hermenson


Dean, David


Echtner, Charlotte M. and Pushkala Prasad

Gaither, Edmund Barry


Glover, Nikolas


Goulding, Christina


Higueras, Alvaro


Holloway, J. Christopher


Hood, Marilyn

Kaeppler, Adrienne L.


Karp, Ivan


Kirshenlatt-Gimblett, Barbara


Klein, Hans-Joachim


Kratz, Corinne A. and Ciraj Rassool


McGrath, Gemma

Morphy, Howard


Mortensen, Lena


Moscardo, Gianna


Nangru, Piyush, Vaibhav Rustagi, Manish Makhija, Lubna Nafees, and Omkumar Krishnan


Nelson, Andrew and Christine Nelson.


---

Perin, Constance


Pond, Kathleen


Potter, Parker B. Jr. and Mark P. Leone


Rapoport, Amos


Ritchie, J.R.B. and J.B.R. Ritchie


Rounds, Jay

Saucedo-Segami, Daniel


Silverman, Helaine


Tilden, F.


Thorne, Jos


Urry, J.

### Appendix A: Tables

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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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Table 3 Museum Tracking Visitor Breakdown
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Table 4 Museum Tracking Group Breakdown
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Table 5 Museum Tracking Visit Time Breakdown by Room
Appendix B: Graphs

Graph 1: All Visitor Group Room Times

Visitor Room Times

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<td>Average</td>
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Graph 2: "Foreign" Visitor Group Room Times

'Foreign' Room Times

Time in Seconds (s)

0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000 3500 4000 4500

Group Assignment

9 16 17 21 22 25a 25b 25c 25d 27 30 Average

Room 1

Room 2

Room 3

0 185 181 181 182 982 272 273 1718 650 1781 1781 1818

276 239 138 1350 184 2840 1740 1605 1153 30 385 285 1720 1149 354 90 685 691 477 535 980 1060
Graph 3 Adult “National” Visitor Group Room Times
Graph 4 “National” Visitor Groups with Children Room Times
Appendix C: Ethics Approval

Use of Human Participants - Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. Jean-François Milaire
File Number: 103448
Review Level: Full Board
Approved Local Adult Participants: 150
Approved Local Minor Participants: 0
Protocol Title: Experience and Narratives at the Archaeological Complex Huacas del Sol y de la Luna, Peru.
Department & Institution: Social Science/Anthropology, Western University
Sponsor:
Ethics Approval Date: May 18, 2012 Expiry Date: August 31, 2012

Documents Reviewed & Approved & Documents Received for information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
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<td>Western University Protocol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter of Information &amp; Consent</td>
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This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organised and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.

The Chair of the NMREB is Dr. Riley Hinson. The NMREB is registered with the US Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00002941.

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information

Grace Kelly
(gram.kelly@uwo.ca)

Jenice Sutherland
(jsofled@uwo.ca)

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

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Curriculum Vitae

Name: Alison Deplonty

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2007-2011 B.A.

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2011-2013 M.A.

Honours and Awards:
Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship, Master’s 2012-2013

Graduate Conference Travel Fund
Department of Anthropology, The University of Western Ontario 2013

SSHRC Connection Grant
Group Application 2013

Related Work Experience:
Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site
Historical Interpreter and Artifact Student 2008-2009

Banting House National Historic Site of Canada
Assistant Event Planner and Tour Guide 2010

Research and Teaching Assistant
The University of Western Ontario 2011-2012

Casual Education Assistant
Fanshawe Pioneer Village 2013

Publications:
Website: Guiding Sacrifice: Interpreting Huacas de Moche, adeplont.wix.com/guidingsacrifice