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## Constructing From the South. A Post-Colonial Perspective on Scientific Cooperation in Archaeology

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### Abstract

For the last ten years, the Institute of Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) and the University of the Republic in Uruguay (Universidad de la República, UdelaR) have had cooperation links. These began as research projects, but have now led to the establishment of a joint scientific research and work unit. The recent creation of the Landscape Archaeology and Heritage Laboratory (in Spanish, LAPPU), as a scientific unit of the UdelaR, is the final and most outstanding result of this international cooperation. The LAPPU mainly carries out activities in the field of the integrated management of cultural heritage. Its focus is on the consolidation of lines of action aimed at the integration of cultural heritage within public policies, institutional enforcement, knowledge transfer, local development and the socialization and participative construction of heritage through different projects and inter-institutional agreements.

In this paper we will present the epistemological basis and the path towards the cooperation we have maintained, exemplified by one of our main projects: *The Archaeological Landscape of Lowlands in Uruguay*, which took place in the rural areas of Tacuarembó. This archaeological and anthropological project has its foundations in the research-project *Situated in Place* and in the dialogical interaction between local and global, rural and urban, and traditional and modern, as a way of generating practical knowledge and instruments for local community empowerment. The specific act of researching “other heritages” that represent groups of indigenous peoples and those of African origin who have been marginalized culturally and historically in the construction of the Uruguayan Nation -State has made it possible to create a platform for multi-vocal and postcolonial articulation on different levels (such as academics, politicians, urban public, rural communities and African descendants). But it has also led us to deal with new ways of approaching heritage (not only in academic practices but also in social processes) involving new actors and including inter-generational dialogues. As a result, participative methodologies emerged as something engaged in the very nature of heritage understood as a social resource. From these experiences, the challenge for the LAPPU will be to de-centralise and create more platforms for the articulation of these multi-vocal approaches to heritage.

*Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Scientific Cooperation; Post-colonial Archaeology; Multivocality; Public Science; Uruguay.*

## **From Scientific-Archaeological Research to the Public Domain: Heritage as a Collaborative Arena**

The centrality of heritage for dealing with identities, memoirs and communities in current processes in post-modern societies, means that archaeology is called upon to be a technoscience of heritage (Barreiro 2003). The complexity of the incipient knowledge economy has meant that the transfer of technology has been replaced by the transfer of knowledge, which in turn has been replaced by collaborative research and, increasingly, a community science. Multivocality has ceased to be a merely post-modern manifesto. Instead, it lies in the practices of social life, accompanying our complex societies, in which a large number of agents concur who increasingly call for their own legitimacy and rights.

The experience we present in this paper is situated in this field, at the point at which archaeology, anthropology, heritage, research and the co-construction and co-transfer of knowledge converge. This paper has two central aims: 1) To present the experience of ten years of scientific cooperation between two institutional research groups (belonging to the CSIC and UdelaR); and then to show the process of moving from the study of a specific scientific (archaeological) problem (research on burial mounds in the lowlands of Uruguay) to a trans-disciplinary field such as heritage. 2) To elucidate the emergence of heritage as an arena for social and community action, in an attempt to challenge through praxis asymmetrical dualities that are deeply rooted in Uruguay (such as urban-rural, academic-social and official rhetoric-subaltern discourses), and then to show how this has been based on a collaborative research concept which not only overcomes European neo-colonialist practices, but also the endo-colonial social structures that still exist in Uruguay. This will allow us to discuss the practice of scientific cooperation and its role in the process of shaping and constructing a *Public Science* in Latin America, understood as knowledge presented in a public arena and based on the involvement of the public at large.

We have two starting points in different contexts: Uruguay and Spain. In general terms, the Spanish context was marked between 2004 and 2011 by the political priority of international development cooperation, part of which has been focused on scientific cooperation on heritage issues. The case study we are presenting here was supported by the AECID (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development). Therefore, it belongs in a wider sense to a Spanish experience in the field of cooperation for development and archaeological activity in foreign countries. However, we are aware that this is not a normal experience in this country. After 2004, Spain bolstered the politics of international cooperation for development through the AECID. This led to a substantial increase in the Spanish budget dedicated to these purposes. This policy, despite having a number of naive aspects in its development (something we could refer to as para-colonial or paternalist gestures) was deeply and ideologically rooted in the awareness of contributing towards repaying the historical debt with former European colonies. A major part of the cooperation policy for development consisted of different budgetary instruments to promote scientific and university cooperation, mainly orientated towards promoting research for development. The different instruments included grants for graduate and postgraduate studies for students from other countries, subsidies to acquire equipment and improve infrastructures, funding for cooperative research projects and specialized courses. At one point the total amount of money devoted to the specific purposes of scientific cooperation for development rose to in excess of 50 million euros.

On the other hand, the situation of Uruguay was that of a small country covering 176,215 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 3,241,000, 40% of whom live in the capital, Montevideo (530 km<sup>2</sup>), and the remaining 60% in the rest of the country (National Statistics Institute 2010). Our projects were carried out in rural areas of the Department of *Tacuarembó* and the Department of *Rocha*. Tacuarembó has a population of approximately 90,500, 85% of whom live in urban areas and 15% in rural areas. Rocha has a population of 70,000, where 91% live in urban areas and 9% in rural areas (see *Figure 1*). It is a hyper-centralised country with most of the political and administrative power maintained in the national capital (Montevideo), while the different regions or *departamentos* have very limited decision-making powers, and an asymmetrical socio-political and economic situation, with major differences between the rural areas and the urban area of Montevideo that have appeared over the last 150 years. These differences still exist at a number of levels. Apart from political centralism, the division between the city and the countryside has become increasingly severe due to dramatic changes in the economic production model over the last 15 years: the transfer of land into foreign hands, an increase in the number of extensive and more aggressive agricultural and industrial activities (tree reforestation, rice and soya cultivation), and a loss of rural population.

[place figure here].

These imbalances had already appeared before the establishment of the nation of Uruguay, during the final stage of the Spanish and Brazilian colonial experiences of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The processes of independence led to the rise of modernity in South America, but in the new independent countries the old colonial relationships continued to exist, leading to new situations of domination of the Creole (*criollo*) elite and ‘the others’ – the native peoples and/or the Afro-American population. These endocolonial relationships still dominate the internal social and political structure today, which makes it possible to reveal the two faces of colonialism (exo- and endo), and the role of the historical discourse in its reproduction, as proposed by Gnecco (2008: 23-27). The historical governmental rhetoric, in which History and Archaeology played an important role as erudite knowledge, and subsequently as academic disciplines, were important instruments in the reproduction of these practices through a dominant historical discourse that emphasized the “white” and “western” compounds of creole people while hiding the presence of indigenous peoples (who were exterminated after independence throughout the XIX century), and the descendants of African slaves.

The configuration of the concept of cultural heritage in Uruguay is a good example to use in order to specifically account for this correspondence between historic discourse, creole hegemony and nationalist feeling. The milestone that marked the emergence of heritage as an official and therefore public domain was the creation of the *National Commission for Cultural Heritage*, which resulted from the passing of the first law in this area in 1971, and which is still the only applicable law in force for this area. Until 2006, Uruguay’s cultural heritage (understood as the heritage of the Nation) reflected the same governmental discourse from the twentieth century that consecrated national unity and equal rights based on cultural standardisation, the inexistence of indigenous groups and the “European-ness” of the Uruguayans (another example of the underlying contradictions between modernity and Latin American nationalisms, Gnecco 2008).

In general, this trajectory has been shared with other neighbouring countries, revealing clear signs of fracture in the last ten years, due to the return of democracy. Over the last ten years the social and political context of several South American countries has triggered transformations and debates initiated by social movements, ethnic groups, minority groups and also by social scientists. In countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Uruguay and Chile, these collectives have begun to produce alternative discourses and bring new meanings and uses to the hegemonic historical representations that upheld fixed ideas of

national identities, allowing for the inclusion of other types of knowledge, or dissident or minority subaltern discourses on the fringes.

This critical review of history has been accompanied by constitutional reforms, actions and statutory changes that acknowledge factors such as cultural hybridism, multiculturalism and indigenous and Afro-American roots. However, in Uruguay these transformations have still not taken place, especially at judicial level and in the sphere of public policies. Towards the end of the dictatorship (c. 1985) and in the early 1990s, a movement appeared in the field of social sciences and humanities that strongly criticised the bases of the national history and its image in terms of identity (Achugar and Caetano 1992; Caetano 1992; Porzecanski, 1992; Verdesio 2008, 2009). Its inarguable 'European-ness' was questioned, together with its configuration through the denial or concealment of the presence of indigenous peoples and those of Afro-American descent. Despite the fact that these debates have continued for 20 years, no changes occurred in the public sphere until 2006, when the Uruguayan state ratified the conventions of the UNESCO to safeguard Intangible Heritage and protect Cultural Diversity (Law 18.035 approving the Convention for the Protection of Immaterial Cultural Heritage, and Law 18.068 on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions) and changes began to occur. During this time period, different laws approved the commemoration of the National Day of Afro-Uruguayan Culture and Racial Equality on 3 December (Law 18059 of 2006), National Tango Day (Law 18.107 of 2006) and the Day of the Charrúa Nation and Indigenous Identity (Law 18.589 of 2009), commemorated on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April. Some years earlier, the remains of four Charrúa Indians that had been taken to France were repatriated (supported by a specific legislation to repatriate their corpses: Law 17.256 of 2000), and subsequently a law was passed prohibiting scientific studies on the remains of one of them: *Vaimaca* (Law 17.767 of 2004). During these events, the radical change was the acknowledgement of the indigenous and Afro-Uruguayan identity, a sign of openness and the inclusion of 'other' references with regard to history and identity into the official discourse, most of which were promoted by indigenous groups and minority social groups. Although this trend seems to be gaining strength, it has still not had a tangible effect on the design of a national heritage strategy, nor on any concrete policies with regard to heritage.

In fact, debates such as those considered in some studies (Carámbula 2007; Criado-Boado, Gianotti & López 2006a; Gianotti 2005; Lezama 2004) have begun to indicate the absence of a solid, effective heritage policy. Whilst the awareness of the public, global trends and some partial political support make it possible to construct, intervene and manage National Heritage, gradually transferring more management competence to the *National Commission for Cultural Heritage*, the absence of a specific national heritage law (such as those that exist in other countries) is a clear sign of the current political situation. After thirty years of activity, the main contribution of the *National Cultural Heritage Commission* has been a brief inventory of colonial and European monuments (i.e. *criollos*), and the restoration and management of some of them. The fact is that the current law and heritage management system does not provide any tools to deal with the results of the socio-economic changes that have taken place over the last three decades, such as a rise in aggressive models of production (forestation, extensive and intensive monocultivation), industrialisation, an increasing number of public works and infrastructures and tourism development, amongst others. However, other sectors which have been involved in this transformation (territorial planning, environment, etc.) have increasingly called for the integration of cultural heritage and its management. In this context, a series of specific experiences and projects have been developed in a non-official manner and by different parties (academia, NGOs, local organisations, etc.) which, working from the ground up, have helped to fill in some of these gaps (Capdepont et al. 2010; Criado-Boado, Gianotti & López 2006a, Irazábal, Etchegaray & Florines 2006; Gianotti 2005; Gianotti et al. 2010; Lezama 2004; Lezama et al. 2010).

Faced with this situation, it seems clear that the recognition by Uruguay of a plural configuration in terms of its society and identity urgently calls for education and action regarding this “otherness”, and for specific attention to be focused on its heritage as a result of it. The chronological ‘depth’ of European cultural traditions is not an irreversible *fait accompli*; on the contrary, it is constantly changing, as it is subject to cultural losses and various types of ethnogenesis. The management of cultural diversity, the study of heritage processes, the dynamism of Latin American identities, and in particular the comparative study of all of these phenomena offers a budding field of theoretical reflection. It can contribute enormously to the project of development through heritage, and to show that work on heritage by any agent (either because of its sensitive nature, or because of the conflict generated with other agents by the absence of any such sensitivity) gives strength to local voices. The act of taking the floor produces an awareness that empowers alternative channels for dialogue in the face of (and in spite of) the dizzying processes associated with land ownership, the loss of territory and the implantation of new, aggressive economic models.

## **From Cooperative Scientific Research Projects to the strengthening of Infrastructures for Cultural Heritage Management**

The previous “evolution” involving a movement from pure research towards the public domain becomes more meaningful if we examine the trajectory of scientific cooperation between the two research groups involved. This enrichment of our practice of bilateral cooperation took shape in the Laboratory of *Landscape Archaeology and Heritage of Uruguay* (or LAPPU, the acronym in Spanish for the *Laboratorio de Arqueología del Paisaje y del Patrimonio del Uruguay*), which was created after receiving financial support from the AECID as a research unit to deal with different aspects (research, education, training, assessment, expert consultancy, etc) of the integrative management of heritage. Nowadays, the LAPPU forms a part of Faculty of Humanities and Education Sciences (FHCE) and Eastern Regional University Centre (CURE), in the Department of Rocha. At the same time, it maintains research contacts with Incipit to work together on joint projects.

With regard to the LAPPU and what it represents, we have to look back to the period between 1996 and 2010 and focus on the four stages followed up by our scheme of bilateral cooperation between Spain and Uruguay. 1) An exchange of researchers at the start of the project, based on a common research theme, 2) A yearly joint research project focusing on studying monumental South American landscapes (Gianotti 2005), 3) The consolidation of a genuine programme for the integral management of cultural heritage through a wide-ranging project financed by the Spanish Ministry of Culture (Criado-Boado, Gianotti & López. 2006a; Cuesta et al. 2009; Gianotti et al. 2007; Gianotti et al. 2008), and 4) The creation of the LAPPU as a joint research unit for collaborative work with the financial support of the AECID-PCI (Capdepon et al. 2010; Gianotti et al. 2010).

The initial stage (1996-2000), marked by an exchange of research on landscape archaeology, led to a second stage in 2001, characterised by the first joint research project funded by the AECID to study the origin and development of prehistoric mounds in the rural regions of Tacuarembó and Rocha (Gianotti 2005). See *Figure 1*. This led to the first efforts towards dealing with the problems affecting the archaeology and heritage of these rural zones. The scope of the call from which we received funding was to promote international cooperation in research by combining the interaction between a Spanish team and a team from Latin America. The project, despite being tightly funded, allowed us to consolidate the previously existing relationships.

In the third stage (2004-2009), the project was funded by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, through a specific call that had been running for years (since the 1970s). At first the call received a wholly late-colonial name: Archaeological Missions Abroad (*misiones arqueológicas en el exterior*), far removed from the type of name used by other European countries with stronger traditions in colonial research. This name sounded so old-fashioned that the call was recently renamed as "Archaeology Abroad." The main aim of this call was and still is to fund field projects in archaeological sites and areas related to relevant research topics. The heritage or social dimensions of the sites were not the primary concern of these projects, although in our case the pure research activity, carried out as part of a project known as "*The Archaeological Landscape of the Lowlands of Uruguay: an integral heritage management model*" was gradually integrated into in a much wider social and heritage dimension, as we will discuss below. Our field research led to us acquiring a more thorough knowledge of pre-Hispanic monumentality in locations such as Caraguatá, Turupí, Los Vázquez, Cerro Pereira and Villa Ansina, in the Department of Tacuarembó (as presented in Criado-Boado, Gianotti & López 2006a; Cuesta et al. 2009; Gianotti et al. 2007; Gianotti et al. 2008).

The project itself was based on the disciplinary context of archaeology, ethnography, anthropology and heritage, applying *Participatory Action Research* (PAR) strategies (Wadsworth 1998) and with an approach that focused on the local dimension and the *anthropological perspective of Place* (Escobar 2001). In this sense, the project constituted a transdisciplinary and even a post-disciplinary experience, an open scenario for research through dialogue and criticism on heritage, material culture and the distant and recent past, involving scholars from Uruguay and Spain together with local agents, the regional government, NGOs, local groups, educators and local inhabitants. The project brought together several of the principles included in the epistemological proposals of *Applied Archaeology*, as proposed by Barreiro-Martínez 2006). These state that all theoretical considerations with regard to culture, heritage and development, apart from being adapted to the place and its population (Viola 2000), must reach the most practical and instrumental dimension of these areas, which interrelate their existence and the know-how resulting from the disciplines involved, with their application and value of use (Barreiro-Martínez 2006).

To do so, we based our work on the concept of the *heritage value chain* (HVC). The HVC proposes a sequence of procedures that include the identification, characterisation, protection, dissemination and socialisation of heritage assets. This model for understanding heritage and integrating the work and management associated with it was initially proposed in Criado-Boado 1996 and has been followed closely in our work. As the transverse axis of the

model—we have incorporated the public and participative dimension in all stages, which has been re-conceptualised in our project as the *participative construction of heritage* (Cuesta et al. 2009). The aim is to develop, from and with the community, all of the different instances of the HVC, working to ensure that all heritage values, apart from being scientifically contextualised and evaluated, are the object and subject of a co-construction and re-elaboration based on dialogue, and transformed into values at social, community, cultural and economic level, and with regard to identity. In practice, this philosophy has taken shape through a wide range of activities, publications, technical documents and protocols, dissemination instruments, and documentary films (Cuesta et al. 2009; Dabezies and de Souza 2009; Criado-Boado, Gianotti & López 2006a; Criado-Boado, Gianotti & Mañana-Borrazás 2006b; Gianotti et al. 2010; most of these papers, and many others connected with these topics are available through the institutional repository of Digital.CSIC, see Digital CSIC 2012). In this case, ‘Los Narradores del Caraguatá’ (*The Narrators of Caraguatá*) is a documentary film (sponsored by the ACE project) that presents voices and practices that have been virtually obliterated throughout history in Uruguay. Filmed in small villages in Tacuarembó, local inhabitants and researchers discuss vanished heritage and residual memories (see figure 2).

[place figure 2 here].

The national identity is reconsidered through sounds and images, shattering the mirror that has been used to reflect it from prehistory until the present day. The journey moves from the empowerment of local heritage, showing children excavating burial mounds together with archaeologists, to the visions of local inhabitants and their links with the landscape or the daily life today in these rural areas. It is as much an artistic expression as it is scientific. It represents the result of five years of archaeological and anthropological research. An English version of the documentary film is available at <http://digital.csic.es/handle/10261/28600> (Gianotti et al. 2010).

This co-evolution of Incipit and the archaeological teams from the UdelaR finally led to the creation of the LAPPU in the fourth stage of our relationship, after 2007. This ambitious project was made possible as a result of obtaining substantial funding from a call by AECID to support scientific cooperation for development. The inter-university cooperation programme, as it was called, had four main categories. We designed a collaborative project in category four, allocated to promote the transfer of knowledge and expertise from Spain to other national contexts calling for specific solutions. Once again, a funding scheme that was mainly unidirectional (from Spain to other countries, from Europe to Latin America, from North to South), was modified by our own design and practice into a completely two-way form of exchange and interactions.

As a result, the main lines of research of the LAPPU project are:

1) *The production of historical knowledge with regard to Cultural Landscapes*. Due to different reasons, and not only because of the imperative of a sustainability strategy that must commence in the territory itself, as otherwise sustainability itself cannot exist, the landscape has been the essential underlying factor of our strategy (as based on Criado-Boado 1993). The multi-vocal dimension of our practical strategy means, for instance, that we not only had to look for an inexistant “archaeological landscape”, but also for the actual landscape embedded in current social practices (such as local populations, peasants, ranchers or “gauchos”). Therefore, the landscape was the concept and dimension that made it possible to combine archaeology and anthropology with heritage, the academic world with cooperation and heritage, and these with social development, providing a ‘reading’ of cultural spaces which, in Uruguay, are conceived as being natural, overlooking the fact that they are a historical product that is not only altered by modernity (Muir 1999). The space in which we work is a cultural landscape, which is fully occupied by heritage and comprised of ‘places’, rather than just sites,

where the communities and individuals who occupy them are those who primarily construct it and give it meaning.

Based on this, the research focused on two types of specific cultural landscapes: on the one hand, the prehistoric monumental landscape, and on the other, the rural landscape of Uruguay. In both cases, the main lines of research included the study of material and immaterial aspects, historical continuities and discontinuities, and the documentation and characterisation of the rural landscape in the light of its rapid transformation as a result of the introduction of new agricultural practices (see *Figure 3*). The data are being studied and analysed in a series of graduate and post-graduate research projects (Dabezies 2009; Pascual 2008).

[place figure 3 here].

The archaeological surveys carried out made it possible to identify and characterise a remarkable prehistoric and historic cultural record: nearly 2000 cultural sites of different types and from different periods. One of the most significant contributions has been the documentation and research of a unique record of the monumental spaces of populations of South American hunter-gatherers (see *Figure 4*), making it possible to explore in detail a series of aspects connected with their domestic contexts, social change, the appearance of systems for controlling water resources, technological systems, the use of plants in prehistoric times, or the paleo-environmental evolution of the region (Capdepon, del Puerto & Inda 2005; del Puerto and Inda 2005; Gianotti 2005; Gianotti et al. 2007; 2008).

[place figure 4 here].

2) *Integrated heritage management*: an applied dimension of our practice has been one of the central and cross-cutting objectives of all of the actions included in the project. The research results have been transformed into different management tools, such as the regional inventories and the creation of the first Heritage Information System of Uruguay (SIPAU). The SIPAU is currently in the process of validation and testing through two projects connected with the territorial planning and management of protected areas carried out by the LAPPU (and expected to be transferred shortly to the National Cultural Heritage Commission). Other results worthy of mention are the development of methodologies for heritage management, consultancy on the design of municipal territorial organisation regulations, or participation in the debate on Uruguay's new Cultural Heritage Law (López et al. 2010).

3) *Technological development and professional specialisation*: The incorporation of new technologies and tools (specifically GPS, GIS, remote detection, etc.) requires specialised training to be given in heritage management. Courses have been organised at different levels, ranging from universities (post-graduate and specialisation courses, research stays, the creation of the *Training Site for Archaeological Techniques* for university students, amongst others), to local level (training actions for local agents, workshops produced in collaboration with specialists from the National System of Protected Areas (National Environment Directorate), together with guidebooks and technical documents to assist with all of these tasks). Also, researchers carried out stays at the centres of the project partners, and systematic distance learning courses and tutoring sessions were started between the Incipit and LAPPU aimed at providing postgraduates students with skills in archaeological theory and practice, including technological developments, management aspects, conservation strategies, presentation tools and visitor management.

4) *Heritage and social development*. An educational programme on heritage issues was developed for schools in rural areas, and was implemented in 14 primary and 2 secondary rural schools, covering a wide geographical region marked by the wide dispersion of its population and schools. We worked in the rural areas of Caraguatá, Yaguarí, Villa Ansina and Cerro Pereira with a total of 1131 primary school children, 239 secondary school students, 48



primary teachers and 20 secondary teachers (Cuesta et al. 2009). Through informal educational activities, based on the daily experiences of the children, their surroundings and their reality, we developed a critical and reflexive approach towards the local heritage, its creation and history, its role in a wide historical context and at a regional level, and ending with its protection and presentation to the public. All of the activities were aimed at contributing towards a (re)configuration and/or (re)interpretation of the space and therefore the landscape, encouraging a new type of relationship with it; bringing into play previous knowledge, perceptions and attitudes that made it possible to put the inhabitants into direct contact with a cultural landscape which is frequently 'naturalised'. For example, the prehistoric mounds (*cerritos de indios*), have re-appeared as local objects of paramount importance, as tangible as they are symbolic, to help guide these experiences and redefine their significance, as may be seen in the documentary produced as part of the project '*Los Narradores del Caraguatá*'. The activities also included the design and production of didactic materials: games ('The River of Time', see *Figure 5*), news bulletins, workshops, guided tours and hands-on experiences for children on excavation sites (see *Figure 6*), travelling exhibitions, talks in the local communities, workshops with managers and specialists, news items in the press, radio and television, a showing of the film produced by the project followed by a debate, etc. (Cuesta et al. 2009). A specific paper would be necessary in order to examine how local communities reinterpreted monuments as part of their life. One relevant consequence of this multi-vocal practice was that the *cerritos* (prominent and conspicuous sites within their surroundings) were reintroduced as places and territorial marks in the mental maps of local populations, something that was particularly remarkable amongst children who had completely missed any shared knowledge about the landscape of their own families traditions.

[place figure 5 here].

[place figure 6 here].

This fourth stage of cooperation that began in 2007 with a new project, made it possible to create the LAPPU and formalise the joint research group that had been working together for almost ten years (Gianotti et al. 2010). The LAPPU began as a project for the transfer of research results between the Institute of Heritage Sciences of the Spanish National Research Council (Incipit, CSIC) and the *Universidad de la República*, through which techniques and specialized training were transferred to agents in Uruguay for their direct use and application. However, we are not only transferring specific tangible products (such as the information system, catalogues, protocols, etc) in one direction, but also circulating an organisational and theoretical model for scientific practice that has been jointly constructed and contrasted through a cooperative and collaborative experience. The midterm aim was to develop a new institutional agent that made it possible to operate in Uruguay, promoting cooperation and integration in different public policies (Capdeponet et al. 2010, Marozzi et al. 2009). But in the end, ideas, solutions and practices were jointly developed and circulated, taking shape in seminal processes that serve to produce, transfer and disseminate new knowledge and applications, at the same time as raising common awareness and debate amongst the agents involved through the exchange of mutual experiences, and even transforming the reality (heritage) that is the object of this cooperation. This led to cooperation becoming true joint working.

## Conclusions

In order to draw a conclusion, first we need to recognize that working in the field of heritage gives us the opportunity to discover the multi-dimensional reality of complex modern societies, over which practices from a wide range of agents are constructed, hermeneutics are

de-centred, identities are negotiated and rationalities are based. This plurality leads to a wealth of social action, in which dialogue, incomprehension and conflict occur depending on the ability or inability to establish a common horizon of intelligibility. What we call *Public Science* cannot be excluded from the vicissitudes of comprehension: the scientific construction of objectivity and intersubjectivity develops into a dialogue that interacts with other ways of creating knowledge, an instrument to create intelligibility that overcomes absolute subjectivity, which only leads to isolation or hegemony. Therefore, the necessary transformation of the systems of science and the production of knowledge must serve to make their results congruent and compatible with all of the different voices that are involved; to permit action that is positive to transform the existing conditions of a reality that must be changed. For this reason, it is necessary to reach agreement on the methods for the production of knowledge that balances the different intentions and contexts of rationality that are involved. We need methods for dialogue between alternative, frequently opposing models, in order to understand and evaluate them in relation to their positive capacity; this would be a method of knowledge different of the unilinear positivist model, and the phenomenological-subjective multivocal noisy model.

If now we return to the practical case of this Spanish-Uruguayan experience, we can not only learn from it the need for a participative and multivocal construction of heritage but also, faced with the absence of institutional directives, specific projects and initiatives such as our own, which are developed from the ground up, leading to the construction of alternative strategies to the absence of a solid public policy on heritage. Obviously, these are slow, lengthy processes, but at the same time we can be optimistic about the fact that at some stage, both situations – the absence of a solid public policy with regard to heritage, and the specific demands that call for their presence – will converge in a common political strategy, and lead to an innovative socio-political strategy. The recent vigour of community science and Public Archaeology in Brazil, Bolivia and even in Venezuela has emerged from this rich medium, in the midst of these contradictions (Gnecco 2008; Lopes and Funari 2008). This may also be the case of our project, which not only fills in a gap in terms of cooperation, but also responds to demands from different institutions, constructing a communal, multivocal space for collaboration. At the same time, these major gaps are being filled in from a collaborative and community-based space. Research results are jointly constructed by researchers, local agents and inhabitants, and are not only used to promote their locality and cultural identity in different channels, such as tourism, websites, leaflets, but also for something that is even more important: to construct a local practice with regard to heritage, beginning with the creation of social heritage maps, providing a greater understanding and improved cultural and historical knowledge, proposing the undertaking of joint projects, and ending with the training of local specialists, as the different dimensions of the heritage value chain require us to consider, as we did in the different elements of the cooperation projects described in this text (an overall regard of this complex and integrative practice is presented in Gianotti and Dabezies 2011).

In conclusion, based on the experience we have presented in this paper, and especially on its development and the current situation, we would insist on the value of both science and heritage as unique fields of and for public action. Based on this, we can evaluate our experience as praxis for cooperation, seen as the joint construction and joint execution of knowledge and work. The LAPPU, in materialising all of these aspects, is a powerful figure with post-colonial implications, going beyond heritage and as a reflection of a type of interaction that can be useful in other contexts. Scientific cooperation, and in particular the creation of a joint research unit such as our own, makes it possible to create a “structure” and strengthen the capacities of all of those involved –research groups, the community, authorities, etc. – facilitating work both in the context of heritage, and in the scientific context. Being optimistic, we can predict that our work will contribute towards defining, in the near future, a convergent

strategy for the construction of public heritage policy in Uruguay which is still lacking. At the same time, over these years it has made it possible to generate constant scientific innovation and renewal, to construct common conceptual frameworks, to develop and apply formal methodologies for analysis, diagnosis and intervention, to train local agents in sustainable heritage management, and to think about community-based work to promote participative heritage processes which mirror the cultural diversity of our societies. Finally, this cooperation model means that we help Uruguay as much as Uruguayan experience has changed many Spanish practices. The local population has learned as much about its missing traditional knowledge (such as traditions, sites and place names) as we, the archaeologists, have learned about our own themes when they are translated, written and read by this population.

**Epilogue.** In the short period of time between the first version of the paper and its final correction, there has been a significant downturn in the economic crisis in Spain and Europe. Using this as an excuse, we have witnessed the destruction of many of the social policies of the European welfare state, including those of international cooperation. The generous funding that the Spanish government destined from 2004 to 2011 to cooperation through the AECID has been slashed to the point that all of the major scientific cooperation projects for development have been cancelled (grants, cooperation projects, university cooperation, etcetera). At the same time, despite the democratic and institutional consolidation of Uruguay (and many other Latin American countries), the Uruguayan national budget has not covered these needs. This means that a lack of funding is compromising the future development of experiences such as the one being reviewed here. But at the same time as we must denounce the new, neo-conservative inspired policy affecting the whole of Europe that has reduced solidarity and replaced European international cooperation with supporting the international interests of the oligarchy of each state (Spanish contribution for cooperation reached in 2008 the 0.51% of GDP but has decreased in 2012 to GDP 0.12%, while the budget for foreign actions –support for defending national interests abroad- have increased 52%), our review allows us to see that the concepts, agents and practices that have contributed towards this experience of “constructing from the South” are quite independent from the respective national policies and the funds they have contributed to these projects. Funding undoubtedly serves as an incentive, but the post-colonial frontier is more a problem of values and ideas than money. It is even possible that without money, it could be easier for post-colonial new values to find their way. Possible, but surely hard.

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## Figure captions

Figure 1. Geographical location of work areas of cooperation projects in Uruguay (South America) (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

Figure 2. Moment of ethnographic fieldwork and film documentation in Pueblo de Arriba, Tacuarembó (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

Figure 3. Interview with Evenida Duarte in Las Tosca of Caraguatá (Tacuarembó). Evenida is a healer (*yuyera*) and she has a traditional knowledge of herbal medicine (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

Figure 4. Prehistoric mounds (*cerritos de indios*) at the hills of Potrero Grande in Rocha Department (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

Figure 5. Scholars playing the game *The River of Time* about the prehistory and history of Uruguay in a rural school of Caraguatá (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

Figure 6. Children from a rural school of Pago Lindo, excavating an archaeological mound site in Caraguatá river locality (Authors, copyright by LAPPU or Incipit, CSIC).

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