

Forgeries and archaeology: Richard Latcham, the precolumbian writing, and the Guayac n pirates

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Abstract

From the supposed discovery of pre-Hispanic writing by archaeologist Ricardo E. Latcham, this article discusses the role of archaeological forgeries in the creation of knowledge and narratives about the past. In 1929 Latcham saw in a forged "Proto-Nazca" culture pottery collection the possible discovery of a pre-Hispanic writing system. Latcham would go on to publish four articles about this theory and, some years later, a novel-like book, but presented as factual. This article reflects on the forgeries in museum collections, which reveal the fallibility of experts, the ways in which archaeological knowledge is built and, in this case, its role in the invention of historical reality.

Author keywords

Antiquarians
Forgeries
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Proto-Nazca Culture
Ricardo Latcham