We Expand our Horizons to South America! Mapping the Archaeological Pre-Columbian Heritage

New project to map the pre-Columbian archaeological heritage in several countries in South America.

We are very glad to announce our partnership with University Pompeu Fabra (UPF), through the **GIAP** research group, in the context of the project Mapping the Archaeological Pre-Columbian Heritage of South America (MAPHSA), led by the UPF in collaboration with six international institutions, funded by Arcadia Fund.

The archaeological heritage of South America is facing increasing threats due to the expansion of agricultural activities, such as cattle ranching and industrial-scale soy cultivation, infrastructure expansion, illegal wood harvesting in the main forests, and the current fire emergency plaguing the Amazon and other biomes of the continent.

It is clear that **the threat to the natural environment goes hand in hand with the damage to the archaeological heritage – with biomes such as the Amazon facing accelerated deforestation over the last years**, as documented by remote sensing real-time monitoring. Inevitably, this leads to significant heritage loss, including archaeological sites that have never been properly recorded.

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COLOMBIA
BRAZIL

Áreas de Sudamérica que cubre el proyecto MAPHSA. Imagen: Proyecto MAPHSA.

Documenting such pre-Columbian sites, in addition to finding new sites and increasing knowledge about their distribution and significance, are critical steps in preserving the cultural heritage and in changing attitudes towards its destruction, which are core aims of the Arcadia Fund.

In MAPHSA Project, we will work among seven institutions from four different countries to **document the archaeological heritage of about 3.5 million km2 of endangered forest and savanna biomes across Brazil and Colombia**. This will be accomplished by a combination of archival work, remote sensing, machine learning, and ground survey.

GIAP (ICAC)'s partnership, led by Prof. **Hèctor A. Orengo**, will include the development of algorithms that will allow the remote detection of archaeological features under the rainforest cover, mainly through satellite imagery, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

Stay tuned to our channels and MAPHSA's website to follow the latest news!

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Partners of the MAPHSA Project

University Pompeu Fabra – Research Group CaSEs; USP; Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas Espaciais, INPE; Universidad del Magdalena; Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, ICANH; University of Leiden; Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology, ICAC-CERCA – GIAP Research Group.

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Arcadia Fund is a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. It supports charities and scholarly institutions that preserve cultural heritage and the environment. Arcadia also supports projects that promote open access and all of its awards are granted on the condition that any materials produced are made available for free online.



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About the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC-CERCA)

The Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC-CERCA) is **a CERCA center** established as a consortium in 2003 by the Government of Catalonia and the Rovira i Virgili University. It is a leading institution in the research and conservation of archaeological heritage in Catalonia. Its headquarters are located in Tarragona, a city recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the year 2000. Its researchers work to understand the past through the study of archaeological remains and promote the preservation of the rich historical legacy of the region. We are CERCA!

More information at www.icac.cat.

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