



Editor:  
Jaime Almansa Sánchez



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*Online Journal in Public Archaeology*

## POINTS OF YOU

### From a book to the raw world of archaeology

Lancaster WILLIAMS

My name is Lancaster Williams and I am the main character of the Spanish novel *El Hallazgo* (*The Finding*). Someone might ask, "why the hell is a fictional character writing in a journal?" Well, it is a matter of poetic license, but also a reality slap.

My story is, in a way, sad. After gaining my PhD I managed to start working in an archaeological company. My main duty was to control the earthworks on a highway. It was, of course, hard to get used to it after an academic life but, once I did, I started enjoying it. However, this feeling did not last long; where I found a unique site, now there is just an empty highway. The crisis, the impotence I felt during the process and a bit of rage made me give up archaeology and start working as a florist, a good way to waste a title and a career.

Sometimes I wonder if my life would have been different if I had continued an academic career, or if that would have even been possible. Archaeology has always been a vocation for me and giving up was a hard decision. Today, when I think about it from a distance, I realise that working among flowers did not kill that vocation and I can just keep the good part of it. I don't have the pressure of publication or excavators anymore. But can I still consider myself an archaeologist?

Chatting with friends around a beer shows more than any congress does. This is how I remained connected to archaeology, suffering with the problems of others as if they were mine. Now that I work in a shop, basic rules like supply and demand look simple. Why is archaeology so different? People usually blame laws, companies, developers or even the public. The model is corrupted and we do our best for nothing. I used to think that too. Now I am sure it is us to blame after years of navel-gazing in a mud tower.

My rant goes to my friends, other colleagues and the collective: Wake up! People do not care about us, not because they do not value heritage, but because we have been selfish children playing with stones and pottery. We tag ourselves with trendy theories and say we are post-this or post-that while we keep doing the same our professors

did years ago. We despise our friends out of envy or hate, hurting the image of a collective that I sometimes doubt it exists. Now that I am outside of it I see it clearly; we are the problem of archaeology and it will only get worse if we do not change ourselves.

But not everything is negative. It has been years since many colleagues started doing something different, making archaeology important to people and heritage valued and lived. I just came back from the SOPA congress in Spain and it was amazing to see so many good initiatives to socialise heritage and practise a different archaeology.

Laws are sometimes hurting us, but we write most of them. Bureaucracy is overwhelming, but we run most of the offices. People do not know what we do... Did we even try to explain? Archaeology is still a young discipline and we have made many mistakes. Commercial archaeology has not probably been an example of good practices, but we have the opportunity to change it. We are in control of our future and it can be bright. I know many colleagues will suffer the same situations I did. I know the road is full of bumps. But do not give up. I say I am a florist now, but I am still an archaeologist. I will always be one. After all, as Flannery said, archaeology is the most fun you can have with your pants on.

[Lancaster Williams is the main character of *El Hallazgo* (JAS Arqueología Editorial, 2012). He lives in an undetermined country at some moment in the recent past. His story is the story of many archaeologists. His words are too, although sometimes we do not want to listen to them.]

LÁMINA 12 = SHELTER DOWN II = PLANTA ESTRUCTURAS

Aquí se han llevado por delante varias estructuras

Takúid

U.E. 2001

U.E. 2003

U.E. 2004

U.E. 2002

Tumbas 1 a 8

Inhumaciones en decúbito supino con ajuar cerámicos

# EL HALLAZGO

Material cerámico. Excavado por Mariela y Lily. Orientación Norte

Silos 1 y 2

U.E. 1002

LA HISTORIA  
~~FICTICIA~~ REAL  
DE UN ARQUEÓLOGO  
~~REAL~~ FICTICIO

U.E. 1001

PABLO GUERRA GARCÍA

Cabaña 2

La estructura se encuentra formada por un espacio interior y por una fila de agujeros de póster que sostendría el ~~techo~~ de la misma...  
Cubierta



## *AP: Online Journal in Public Archaeology*

Editor:

Jaime Almansa Sánchez

Email: [almansasanchez@gmail.com](mailto:almansasanchez@gmail.com)

Assistant editor:

Elena Papagiannopoulou

Edited by:

JAS Arqueología S.L.U.

Website: [www.jasarqueologia.es](http://www.jasarqueologia.es)

Email: [jasarqueologia@gmail.com](mailto:jasarqueologia@gmail.com)

Address: Plaza de Mondariz, 6, 28029 - Madrid (Spain)

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