El Niño and the Rise of Complex Societies: Archaeological Research on the North Coast of Peru

Winifred Creamer
Associate Professor of Anthropology

During July 1999, I will travel to Peru to visit archaeological sites along the north coast of Lima, the capital. My goal is to begin research on the effects of the weather phenomenon known as "El Niño" on the development of early civilization along the north coast. By visiting sites and meeting with my colleagues who are engaged in research in Peru, I will plan fieldwork in the region for summer 2000.

Peru's north coast is a region of coastal desert punctuated by rivers that cross the narrow coastal plain on their way from the mountains to the sea. The parallel river valleys support bush growth and have been occupied by humans for more than 5,000 years. The intervening area, however, right down to the seashore, is desert. This coastal zone is also where the effects of El Niño storms are felt. Recent research has suggested that variations in elements of the coastal environment combine to promote the development of complex polities specifically on the central coast between Casma and Lima, rather than up and down the entire coast. Apparently, the combination of water volume and annual flow in the river drainages, irrigable land available for cultivation, and the moderate frequency of El Niño events that shift up and down the coast resulted in optimal climatic conditions that nurtured early societies.

This hypothesis has not yet been investigated with fieldwork, which I plan to undertake. The coastal valleys of Peru were home to some of the earliest civilizations in the New World. While some of these places have been extensively explored by archaeologists, little is known of the ancient history of other valleys. In July I will visit archaeologists excavating sites in the Moche Valley, north of the proposed research area, the Casma Valley, and the Supe Valley. This latter river valley, the Supe, will be the focus of my research. It is a coastal valley approximately 150 miles north of Lima. Less than 10 miles further north is the mouth of the Rio Pativilca, and just five miles further along the coast is where the Rio Fortaleza empties into the Pacific. The north central coastal region developed complex civilization very early on, and the earliest center of all may be located in the combined Supe/Pativilca/Fortaleza Valley. This area remains largely unknown archaeologically.

The earliest settlements further north along the coast include the sites of Las Fláldas (1800 B.C.), Sechin Alto (1800-1450 B.C.), and Pampa de las Llamas Moreke (1750-1100 B.C.), all located in the Casma Valley, and the site of Caballo Muerto (1450-1100 B.C.) in the Moche Valley. In the Supe Valley, however, the site of Aspero is even earlier, dating to 2400-2000 B.C. The Supe site of Chupa Cigarrro Grande, based on surface survey, dates to approximately 2000 B.C. These two Supe sites represent the first developmental step beyond aggregations of households. They are unified communities with some kind of centralized decision-making apparatus, as indicated by ceremonial complexes and communal architecture—huge structures built of adobe brick. These are preceramic sites, meaning that the people used no pottery at all. Both sites are located inland, indicating there was domesticated plant cultivation of corn, beans, and cotton, all probably irrigated.

In addition to the sites mentioned, in the Supe Valley alone there are 40 sites that have been informally identified between the coast and the mountains that have large mounds and circular ceremonial features. All of these probably date to the Cotton Preceramic and Initial periods (3000-1000 B.C.). The area has not been subject to systematic archaeological survey, however.

My trip to Peru would be the first step in setting up the fieldwork portion of a collaborative research project that will survey the combined valleys to see whether the local effects of El Niño provided an advantage in the development of centralized organization and trade. Prior to my trip to Peru, I had an opportunity to discuss my plans with American and Peruvian colleagues at a conference at the Field Museum, May 27-29, 1999. The conference—"El Niño in Peru: Biology and Culture Over 10,000 Years"—offered sessions open to the public on May 29.
City of Havana as Seen by Some Cuban Writers

An interview with Cuban writer
Victor Fowler
Conducted and translated by Professor Monique J. Lemaitre

Victor Fowler Caizada, Cuban poet, literary critic, librarian, and assistant professor at the University of Havana, visited Northern Illinois University in March 1999. During his visit, he delivered a lecture on the city of Havana as seen by some of Cuba’s most prominent writers. The following interview took place after Victor Fowler’s presentation:

ML: Professor Fowler, great Cuban writers such as Alejo Carpentier, (who wrote The City of Columns—the metaphor of Havana par excellence—as well as The Love of the City in which he collects the best of his urban readings from 1925 until 1973) seemed to have exhausted a theme that you have now begun to research. Like yourself, Carpentier has studied architecture. So has art historian Eusebio Leal, who has directed the restoration of the heart of colonial Havana for many years. These and other writers have devoted many years to telling the history of Havana. You are better known as a poet and literary critic. What compelled you to begin this, a history project?
VF: Well, although I was born in Santiago, Cuba, and my forefathers originally came from Sancti Spiritus, I have come to live Havana, especially since the lack of public transportation has forced me to walk or bicycle through it daily. I have also come to know an enormous number of stories about its most famous characters—the great men and women who passed through Havana—and places that were the center of a vast array of historical events. In some way, I inherited the memory of its night life, its great fires, carnivals, natural disasters of all kinds, deaths at the hands of the police, crimes of passion, parks where our grandparents held hands in secret, old buildings long since destroyed . . . . In my imagination, the cross ties of a tram line that has been gone for decades sometimes reappear through the asphalt.

More than living it, I received the city. It was handed out to me almost since birth through comments, press news with origins I barely remember, and conversations with classmates—a whole enormous mosaic or puzzle that is constantly being put together in my head. This research tries to interview how men of letters reflect the development of a city, in this case the city of Havana, at the same time that they contribute to its construction in the texts they write. In other words, that double opening of the discourse according to which we nourish ourselves from the past in order to review the present, and we aim at the future, since we propose an option to things, a way of being. The best example of such tension within the theme that interests me is offered by the so-called “literature of manners,” which bloomed in Cuba in the 19th century. What else were in those books written by European travelers, who viewed Havana from the perspective of [European] cities? How did they describe us? What were they asking for us? What did they implicitly demand from us?

My intention is to cover the period between the end of the 18th century to the present, and to work with narrative, poetry, essays, and also with articles centered on the city’s development. This means I intend a reading that is cross disciplinary and encompasses every topic from literary analysis to social psychology, from philosophy to architecture. The key question here is that the reading of the city implies the identification of the actors, the ideological meaning of their neighborhoods, what their mutations in time express . . .

ML: When you talk about your project as the putting together of a puzzle or mosaic, I can’t help but wonder how you are going to bring together all of your findings. Both Alejo Carpentier and Eusebio Leal follow a strict chronological order.
VF: When I mentioned the idea of a puzzle, I forgot to clarify an essential aspect for the interpretation of the city in contrast to this chaotic accumulation of fragments, the sum of historically successive moments. In other words, the “diverse cities” conditioned by social changes force us to a different restructuring of the materials found. One example of this will suffice: during The Cuban Modernist period—reminiscent of the scheme drawn by Walter Benjamin for Baudeloque Paris—there emerges the flavana as the main and symbolic actor of the modern times about to begin. Perhaps the figure who incarnated to the fullest our urban stroll was Julián del Casal, although this category ought to encompass also La Habana Elegante, a journal in which he published a large portion of his writings. But what areas of the city did that book favor and focus upon, and which ones did it ignore? Thirty years later, Cuba’s urban expansion had reached great development. An important change in focus had also occurred: Spanish colonial rule had ended and the great economic force was now the United States. There appeared a group of chronicles about the city written by the young essayist Jorge Manchak. What do they tell us about the city, about its changes, about the spirit of the “modern” city? Who are the actors of the transformations? These are questions and ways of interpreting the urban space that we could just as well ask.
about the most important event in Cuban history during the last decades: the triumph of a democratic-bourgeois-nationalist revolution on January 1, 1959, and its gradual transformation into a socialist revolution during the two first years of its existence. Since it is now a 40-year-old social project, we are forced to ask ourselves not only about the revolution's immediate effects upon the life of the city, but also about the ways in which this project tried to articulate a new future for the city, in accordance with the ideology being defended. A clear example of the form is the change of the urban actors who brought about the self-exile of almost all the members of the upper middle class, which was displaced from power. Of the latter, a clear example is the occupation of the spaces they vacated by the impoverished masses of the Batista regime. It would also be fit to remember that during the first years of the revolution thousands of people of peasant origin, mainly children and teenagers, had for the first time the opportunity to study, and their lodgings were for the most part the mansions of the former bourgeoise, adapted to new functions. The way in which the future city was planned from the ideology of the revolutionary project, there is no better example than Alamar, a city where the buildings were built by the same workers who were to live in them. How was all this reflected in literature? Without mentioning that, we still have to answer another question—perhaps the most interesting of all: what is the city today? How do writers read their environment in a country where any notion of futurity was severely damaged with the disappearance of the Socialist block in 1991? These are the questions that I plan to review—if not give answers to—in my "Havana of the Literati."

Tlen Huicani Delivers a Musical Taste of Old México

An evening in April found an enthusiastic audience moving to the rhythm of traditional Latin American music. In concert at Northern Illinois University harpist and musical director Alberto de la Rosa and his world-famous troupe, Tlen Huicani ("The Singers"), effortlessly swept listeners to the warm and vibrant lands south of the Rio Grande. A native of Veracruz, Mexico, de la Rosa's wonderful performance on the Arpa Jarocho (or Jarocho Harp) threw open the door to Latin American cultures old and far away, and Tlen Huicani's singers wrapped the audience in a romantic, holiday mood.

Maestro de la Rosa, founder and musical director of Tlen Huicani, uses the Arpa Jarocho to communicate his passion for Veracruz's rich musical tradition. The state of Veracruz, on Mexico's swampy gulf coast, was for centuries one of the main ports of entry for gold-seeking Spaniards. These adventurers littered the land with such pieces of their musical culture as guitars, two-stringed violins, and harps. Veracruz's indigenous musicians quickly incorporated the Spaniards' instruments into their own ancient culture. These instruments, especially the Arpa Jarocho, remain central to Veracruz's tart and rhythmic balladry. De la Rosa delivers a delectable sampling of this heritage.

Tlen Huicani has been named the best folk group in Mexico by Mexico's Union of Music and Theater Critics, and Alberto de la Rosa ranks among Mexico's most skilled and beloved musicians. The Center for Latino and Latin American Studies sponsored the group's performance at Northern Illinois University.

Faculty Publications and Activities

Cecil H. Brown
Professor, Department of Anthropology

Publications:
(Forthcoming) "Lexical Typology from an Anthropological Point of View." In Language Typology and Language Universals, edited by Martin Haspelmath et al. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
(Forthcoming) "Paradigmatic Relations of Inclusion and Identity II: Meronymy." In Lexicology, edited by D. Alan Cruse et al. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Book Review:

Conference Paper:

Professional Activities and Awards:
(1998-present) Distinguished Research Professor, Northern Illinois University.
(1995-present) Ex-officio member, Board of Trustees, Society of Ethnobiology.

Ibis Gómez-Vega
Assistant Professor, Department of English

Publications:

Michael J. Gonzales
Professor of History and Director of the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies

Publications:

Reviews:

Continued on page 4
Lecture and Seminar by Professor José C. Moya

University of California at Los Angeles
Co-sponsored by the Graduate School by Meryl Rutz and Michael Gonzales

On March 25 and 26 students and faculty had the pleasure of attending a lecture and seminar by Professor José C. Moya of the University of California at Los Angeles. Moya is the author of the recently published book Contain and Strangers (California, 1998), which analyzes the historical importance of Spanish migrants in Argentine history.

Moya's lecture, entitled "Immigration in the Historical Development of the United States and Argentina," demonstrated the significance of mass migration in the development of both nations. During the colonial period, Britain's surplus population led the crown to encourage migration to North America, while Spain's comparatively sparse population caused the monarchy to restrict migration. Spaniards tended to settle in the more prosperous colonies of Mexico and Peru, while British settlers located throughout the thirteen colonies. Following political independence, the historical development of the United States and Argentina further diverged. Population in the Argentine was concentrated in Buenos Aires province, and a vast agricultural hinterland, the pampa, awaited development. The more diversified United States economy included a manufacturing core in New England as well as a plantation economy based on African slavery in the South. The existence of navigable waterways in the heartland of the U.S., especially the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, facilitated the economic development and peopling of the Midwest.

Western European migrants, especially English, Scots, Irish, and Scandinavians, settled along the eastern sea board and the upper Midwest. Argentina's comparative lack of economic opportunity and chaotic political climate deterred massive migration until the later nineteenth century.

The period of mass migration, from roughly 1870 to 1930, witnessed the rapid economic development of both nations. Argentina's economy exploded on the strength of its cattle and grain industries, and it attracted massive influxes of Spanish and Italian migrants. After a short period of residence on the pampa, most migrants settled in the burgeoning capital of Buenos Aires and contributed to the development of artisan trades and service industries. The expanding industrial economy of the United States also drew large numbers of migrants from southern and eastern Europe, who settled primarily in cities along the eastern coast and worked as skilled and semi-skilled workers.

European migrants to Argentina filled a demographic vacuum and soon constituted a majority of the population. This facilitated their integration into the larger society, and they received most of the rights of citizenship without becoming citizens. By contrast, southern and eastern European migrants to the United States encountered several barriers to achieving equal socio-economic status.

Professor Moya's seminar focused on his current project, Anarchism in the Land of the Tango. He traced the heritage of anarchist thought from the enlightened theory of William Godwin to Pyotr Kropotkin's altruistic anarchocommunist ideology. To Godwin's rationality, Pierre Joseph Proudhon added an essentially socialist economic model in the mid-19th century. Shortly thereafter, Mikhail Bakunin insisted on revolutionary fervor and violence as the only method for instituting social change. In the 1880s Kropotkin argued that each worker should get what he needed rather than just the value of his labor.

Immigrants to Buenos Aires in the 1880s and '90s created one of the two most important anarchist movements in the world at the time (the other was in Paris). Their thought resembled Godwin's original rationality as well
as a belief that the state, government, and the church were unnecessary. Nevertheless, they were not anti-Christian and they included an element of spirituality in their thought. They were anti-capitalist and pro-revolutionary.

Although the Argentine anarchists never carried out their social revolution, they did achieve some success in labor and social issues. They organized the working class along the lines of international solidarity with democratic unions, though these unions later became more authoritarian and state controlled. Outside of the shop, they pressured the state to adopt more favorable policies towards organized labor and organized rent strikes and anti-war demonstrations. They also founded and ran rationalist schools. Argentine anarchism was limited by two factors: First, Argentina provided excellent opportunities for immigrants, and many were content with what they had. Second, political freedom and a higher standard of living muted the appeal of anarchism in Argentina. In the end, the specter of social revolution that anarchists predicted compelled the government to implement moderate reforms, which the anarchists eventually accepted.

**Faculty-Undergraduate Research Awards**

**Magdalen Elizarraraz** (with Michael Gonzales) completed an ambitious paper titled "The Struggle for Agrarian Reform in Mexico: An Historical Perspective." The essay surveyed the principal attempts at land redistribution and agrarian development from the outbreak of the Mexican revolution in 1910 until the end of the Cárdenas presidency in 1940. Elizarraraz discussed the pertinent legislation authorizing the ejido, agricultural development banks, and the agrarian reform administration. She also analyzed problems of implementation within the context of changing ideological and political commitment.

**Pamela D. Kadner** (with Margaret Villanueva) completed an exceptional project that documented African influence in the Americas, particularly as it appears in music and dance. The research highlights ways that music and dance are embedded in Afro-Caribbean religious life and the special celebrations of working-class communities in Cuba, the Caribbean, and in the Latino neighborhoods of America.

**Patricia Garcia** (with Peter Gutierrez) has completed research that examines suicide among Latino college students. Garcia referred to previous Caucassian-focused research that posited a complex interaction between exposure and attitudes and the risk of suicide. Garcia's study tested the same hypothesis—correlation between suicide risk and received attitudes about life and death—among Latino college students.

**Gutierrez, continued**


(1998) Guest Speaker, Winona State University Psychology Department, Child Psychopathology Course (423G), Winona, Minnesota.

(July 1998-present) Chair, Publications Committee, American Association of Suicidology.

**Jeff Kowalski**

Professor and Chair of the Division of Art History

**Publications:**


**Conference Papers:**


**Professional Activities:**

(1999) Organizer and co-chair (with Professor Manuel Hernandez) of the study trip "Ancient Cities of Mexico," sponsored by the Northern Illinois University Study Abroad Office.

**Works in Progress:**

"Seats of Power and Cycles of Creation: Continuities and Changes"
Kowabhi, continued

in Political Iconography and Political Organization at Daibichiltun. Uxmal, Chichén Itzá, and Mayapan," co-authored with Rhonda Silverstein and Myra Pollanbee and presented at the 1997 International Congress of Americanists in Quito, Ecuador. The paper has been forwarded to session organizers Hans Prem and Pierre Beccinquid for publication by the Centro de Estudios Mayas (UNAM), México, in the Estudios de Cultura Maya series.

Two short entries, "Uxmal" and "Temple Complexes," submitted for publication in the Encyclopaedia of Mesoamerican Studies, are to be published by Oxford University Press.

"Lo que es, y lo que no es Totaleca en Uxmal y Chichén Itzá" has been forwarded to session organizer Mari Carmen Serra Puche for publication in Mexico.

I am presently at work on a 25-page paper titled "From Classic Motif to Mophean: Transformations in Maya Monumental Art During the Terminal and Early Postclassic Periods," which will be submitted for the volume New Perspectives on the Mesoamerican Stela Cult, edited by Elizabeth Newsome and Kent Reilly, and possibly to be published by the University of Texas Press.

And I am also preparing a paper titled "Courts of the K'Ul Ahaw'ob: The Ritual Ballgame and Maya Kingship" for submission to either the journal Latin American Antiquity or Ancient Mesoamerica.

Monique J. Lemaître
Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
Publications:
(Forthcoming) Viaje a Tríko, manuscript submitted for publication.

An article has also been requested for a book on Salvadoran poet Roque Dalton.

Conference Papers:

Gregory Schmidt
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
Publications:
(Forthcoming) "Crónica de Una Victoria Anunciada: La Redección de Fujimori." In Los Enigmas de Poder, edited by Fernando Tuesta Soldevilla. Lima: Fundación Friedrich Ebert.
(Forthcoming) "Fujimori, Alberto." In The World Book Encyclopedia.

Research Supported by the Center's 1998-1999 Graduate Student Awards

Manigeh Roosta, graduate student in adult education, spent several weeks interviewing instructors and studying the curriculum at the Centro Universitario de Bienes Rurales in Cali, Colombia. The data collected formed the basis of her recently completed dissertation.

David M. Goldberg conducted research on the political institutions of Lima, Peru, and the roadblocks to democracy there. He also sought information regarding the attitudes of Peruvians toward political institutions and democracy in general. Goldberg considered the research a pre-dissertation inquiry.

Karen Kjellquist-Gutierrez, graduate student in adult education, studied the availability and effectiveness of public services for Latin Americans victims of domestic violence in the DeKalb-Rockford area. The data will be used in the writing of her dissertation.

Sylvia Sihabur, graduate student in curriculum and instruction, spent the summer studying adult literacy programs in rural Paraguay. The data will be used in the writing of her dissertation.

Guadalupe Velazquez Oliman (with Eugene Perry) has focused her research on the state water supply of Puebla, Mexico. Her research on the region's aquifer has gathered important information on the area's geohydrology, especially the time-span in which water remains in the aquifer. This information will be particularly crucial to securing the adequate water supply for Puebla.

Research Supported by the Center's 1998-1999 Faculty Awards

Eugene Perry, Department of Geology and Environmental Geosciences, is studying the geologic, hydrogeologic, and hydrochemical processes in central Mexico. In addition to the elaboration of scientific findings of interest to geologists, the study has important implications for understanding the origins of contaminated drinking water in an area inhabited by 30,000,000 persons. Volcanic activity contributes to the inflation of sulfur and other dangerous chemicals into underground aquifers with the potential of poisoning urban drinking water. The study provides information about the processes of water contamination that could contribute to predicting, monitoring, and correcting an important public health hazard.

Jorge Jervis, Department of Leadership and Educational Policy Studies, received a grant to study educational reform and community participation in Paraiso, Brazil. He intends to investigate the interaction between popular agency and public policy through interviews with community leaders, educators, and a review of the literature on education in poor neighborhoods in Santiago, Chile.

Winifred Creamer, Department of Anthropology, will begin work on the impact of El Niño and the emergence of complex societies in the Supe/Pativilca/Fortaleza Valley region on the north central coast of Peru. For a more detailed description of the project, see the article by Creamer in this issue.

Gregory D. Schmidt, Department of Political Science, will travel to Lima, Peru, to collect data for his book on contemporary Peru to be published by Westview Press. Schmidt will also conduct fieldwork on the October 1998 municipal elections with special attention to the implementation of gender equity provisions mandated by the 1997 electoral reforms.
Graduate Student Honors

Terry Sheahan, Department of History and Center for Latino and Latin American Studies. "Most Significant Exhibit of the Year." Presented by the Nebraska Museum Association for "Creating the Plains Community." Funded by the Nebraska Humanities Council.

Visiting Scholars and Cultural Events

Fall 1998


Spring 1999


• Chiapas 1998: La Mala Cosecha (The Bad Harvest)
• La Familia Indigena (The Indigenous Family)
• Ejido Morelia
• El Collectivo de la Casta de Azucar (The Sugar Collective)


Schmidt, continued


Grants, Fellowships, and Awards:
(1998) In June and July, conducted research on executive-legislative relations in Peru under grant from the Center for Latino and Latin American Studies.


Book Review:

Conference Paper:

Margaret A. Villanueva
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology
Faculty Associate, Women’s Studies Program

Publications:
(Forthcoming) “Ambivalent Sisterhood: Latina Feminism and Women’s Studies,” In Discourse: Journal of Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture, 21(2).

(Forthcoming) Guest Editor, Issue on “Latina/o Discourses in the Academy,” In Discourse: Journal of Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture, 21(3).

(Forthcoming) “World City Regional City: Latinos and African Americans in Chicago and St. Louis.” Working Paper Series of the Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

(Forthcoming) “And the Land Shall be Free as it Was Before...: The Liberal Project and Indigenous Discourse in 19th Century Venezuela.” Manuscript under revision.

Reviews:
(MS #82698) and (MS #28097) Editorial Reviewer for Human Organization.


Conference Papers:


Continued on page 8
Villanueva, continued


Professional Activities:


Center for Latino and Latin American Studies
(815) 753-1531
Director: Michael J. Gonzales
Editors: Terry Sheahan and Michael J. Gonzales
Assistant Editor: Diana Ramp