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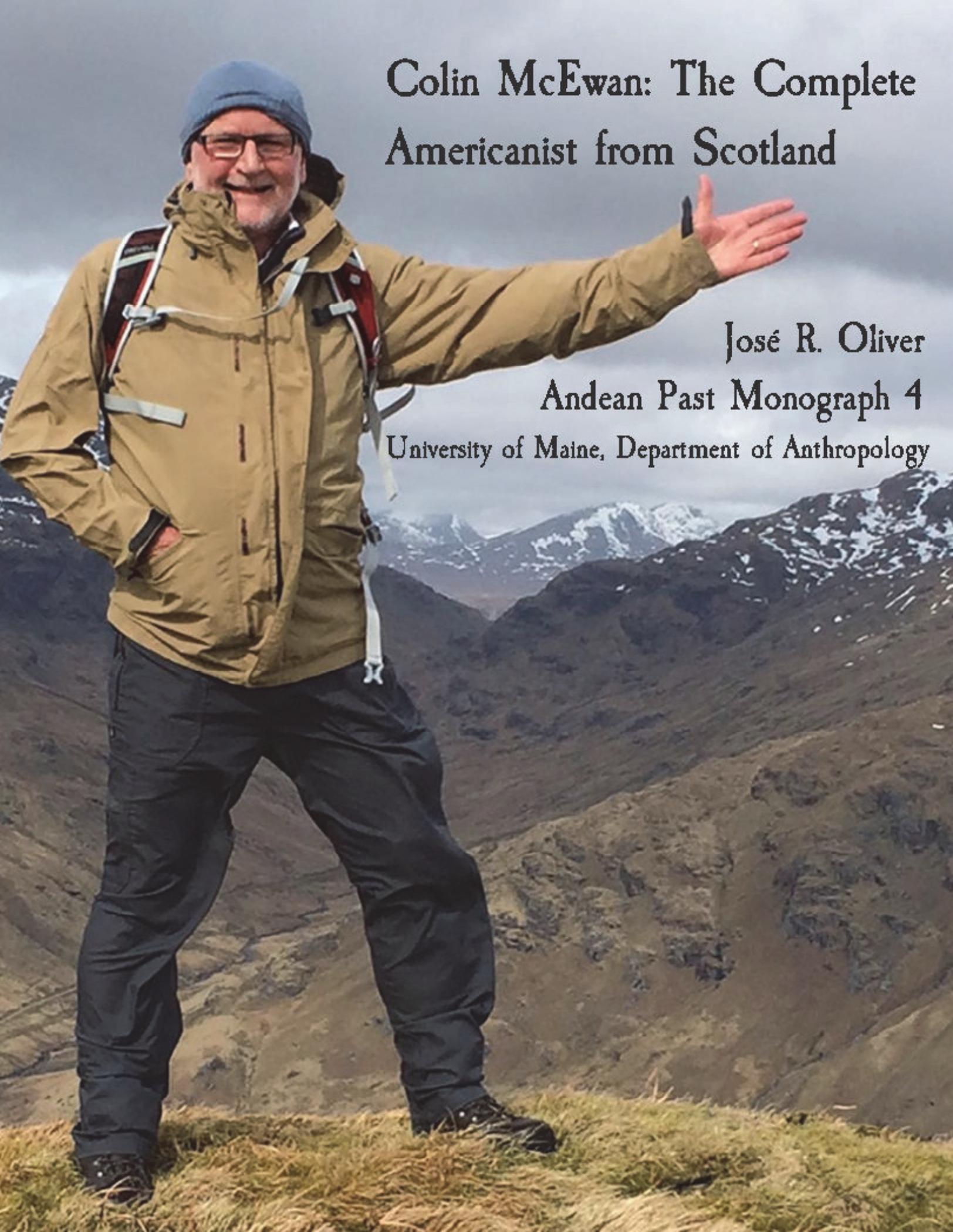
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Colin McEwan: The Complete Americanist from Scotland

José R. Oliver

Andean Past Monograph 4

University of Maine, Department of Anthropology

ANDEAN PAST MONOGRAPH 4

COLIN MCEWAN: THE COMPLETE AMERICANIST FROM SCOTLAND

by **José R. Oliver**

Institute of Archaeology, University College London

2021

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Cover photograph: Colin McEwan atop Stob Breac in the western highlands of Scotland.
Photograph courtesy of George Aitken.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

I write this preface with sadness and nostalgia. The biography that follows, *Colin McEwan: The Complete Americanist from Scotland* by José R. Oliver would not have been written had Colin not died on 28 March 2020, at the age of 68.

Editing this monograph, the fourth in our series, has naturally caused me to reflect on my own memories of Colin. We first encountered one another in 1976, when I was in a contingent of female students from the University of London's Institute of Archaeology who were part of an ill-fated project led by Warwick M. Bray of the Institute of Archaeology and Elizabeth M. Carmichael of the British Museum. As I recall, the plan was to conduct archaeological survey and limited excavations in Ecuador's Jubones River drainage in advance of a planned hydroelectric dam.

Things were not going well, but when Colin showed up, the collective mood improved. The project benefitted from his physical stamina and positive attitude.

But how was it that Colin found himself in Santa Isabel, then a small, impoverished mestizo town on the road between Machala on the coast and Cuenca in the highlands? At that time it was common for young, middle class Europeans and North Americans to take up to a year off work or formal studies and backpack the Gringo Trail, a series of intersecting routes through interesting parts of South and Central America and Mexico. Parallel experiences could be had on the Hippy Trail which ran from Ireland and Britain, through Europe, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, to India.

As José explains in this biography, Colin followed the Gringo Trail from south to north, doing so in a way that increased his practical archaeological experience and built his knowl-

edge not only of Latin America's sites, but also of its people and landscapes. At some point he met Liz Carmichael, and she invited him to be part of the Jubones Project.

Unfortunately, the work of the project remains largely unpublished (but see Carmichael *et al.* 1979). Much later, when Colin found himself on the staff of the British Museum, he inherited responsibility for finds that had been legally sent to England. As bad luck had it, field notes had been lost in shipment between Guayaquil and London (Colin McEwan, personal communication 3 August 2015). After attempting to remedy the situation, he and Warwick Bray had to admit that publication was impossible.

A few years ago Colin introduced me at a party as one of the "few survivors" of the Jubones expedition. He didn't mean that literally, of course. No member of the project had died during our time in Ecuador, but rather he meant that I had stuck with archaeology in spite of the setbacks we experienced there. Polite and cheerful as he always was, it was not until then that I realized that he, too, had found the circumstances to be distressing.

As for that hydroelectric dam, after many delays, it was inaugurated on 15 January 2019 as the Minas San Francisco Hydroelectric Plant. Santa Isabel has developed considerably and now offers attractive Air B&B accommodations to tourists. It is very different from the town where, in 1976, television and refrigeration were rarities.

For the next few years, Colin divided his time between working on North Sea oil rigs to earn money; his parents' home in Banchory, Scotland, near Aberdeen; studying in London's libraries and collections; and further trips to Latin America, as José notes in this biography.

After I left London permanently in 1981, Colin and I drifted out of frequent touch, but I was aware that he had transferred to the University of Illinois, and, now and then, we had the chance to chat at conferences.

As José notes, Colin delighted in bringing people together, and I have him to thank for one of the most important friendships of my life. On one of his working passages from Scotland to South America, Colin made the acquaintance of an elderly Englishman, Harry Barker, who, like Colin and Colin's father before him, was connected with the oil industry. Harry had married a young lady from Piura, Peru, and spent most of his adult life in his wife's country, raising his family there. Once in Lima, Harry introduced Colin to his daughter, the bilingual Elizabeth (Anita) Barker de Weiss. Anita's husband, Oscar Weiss, a printer, is a nephew of Pedro Weiss, the dermatologist who pioneered the study of bioarchaeology in Peru. Pedro Weiss focused on cranial modification, trepanation, hairless dogs, and evidence of leishmaniasis (*uta*) in human remains and as depicted on Moche portrait vessels. The Weiss family was proud of Pedro and of Pedro's wife, the talented abstract sculptor and painter Amelia Weiss. Because of their common interests, Anita introduced Colin to Uncle Pedro, bringing him to the beautiful Art Deco home and studio in central Lima that Amelia and Pedro shared.

Knowing that I planned to pass through Lima in 1977, and knowing that I would enjoy meeting the Weiss family, Colin wrote me an old-fashioned letter of introduction in those days before email. Because of a missed flight, I was unable to present the letter until the next year, which was late, even by Lima social standards. Anita and Oscar turned out to be just as kind and generous as Colin described them, and I, too, was taken to the beautiful house of Pedro and Amelia. Whenever I was in Lima, Oscar and Anita found a place for me in their

own lovely home near the Huaca Pucllana (Huaca Juliana) in Miraflores. Colin recorded these interconnections in his preface to John Verano's *Holes in the Head*.

When Colin was at Dumbarton Oaks, we would email occasionally, usually about one of the books he was editing. I looked forward to his messages. However, the one that he sent me on 19 March 2019 came as a very unpleasant surprise. In it he told me that he had been diagnosed with rapidly advancing acute myeloid leukaemia. I recognized this as a disease for which oil field workers are at increased risk. As Colin put it, "Time is short—I am planning for the medium and long term, but have no illusions about what is coming down the line."

He continued to face his disease bravely, and with dignity. He wrote of being determined to fulfill his publication commitments and to the upcoming D.O. symposium *Waves of Influence: Revisiting Coastal Connections between Pre-Columbian Northwest South America and Mesoamerica*. He told me he was "calm, resolved to work this through, and looking forward optimistically to [our] paths crossing again soon." They never did. Although my husband, David Fleming, and I were present at the symposium, Colin was not. Immunocompromised, he was not able to be physically present himself. On December 23, 2019, I received what was, essentially, a goodbye message.

Colin was cut down during one of the most productive periods of his life. He is missed by his family, and by his many friends and colleagues. Prominent among them is José R. Oliver, Reader in Latin American Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, the author of this biography. José and Colin met in the 1980s, when both were graduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Their innate compatibility and mutual interests led them to work together

on many projects, especially after life took them both to London. Colin was hired by the British Museum, and shortly thereafter José joined the faculty of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London. Moved by what José had posted on Dan's List, my fellow editor, Dan Sandweiss, and I invited José to write Colin's obituary for publication in *Andean Past*. Inspired, José's effort grew into a full biography which we are proud to publish as *Andean Past Monograph 4*.

José and I worked on this monograph when Covid-19 restrictions were still fully in force, and we could not gain physical access to libraries. Therefore we ask our readers' indulgence in technical matters. In particular, we could not always obtain page numbers for the references cited.

Unless Colin himself had chosen to write an autobiography, no one else could have produced this work, based as it is on José's deep personal knowledge of Colin, on their shared expertise in Latin American and Caribbean archaeology, and on José's familiarity with their overlapping *milieux*. José also consulted with Colin's wife, Norma Rosso, his sister, Margaret McEwan, and many of Colin's close friends and colleagues. Their contributions are incorporated into this biography and are acknowledged where they occur. Through this methodology and from his vantage point, José has done much more than set down the details of the life of one man. As he put it,

one positive thing such extended biographies have is that they capture not just the central actor, but an era, a generation, and a historic period, with many other key players. Luckily, Colin's continental and international breadth and the scope of his work means it really all takes place on a huge stage (José R. Oliver, personal communication, 23 March 2021).

As for me, I will remember Colin as a man who was as comfortable shirtless in a warm, sunny meadow, as he was in full cold weather climbing gear on a mountain, or in a traditional Scottish kilt at his wedding or at a formal museum opening, or, as Luis Borrero recounts, in a tuxedo at an embassy party. Colin crafted his own life and, I believe, he enjoyed it.

Monica Barnes
in the City of New York
27 May 2021

PREAMBLE

Colin McEwan passed away in Tampa, Florida, on 28 March 2020, after a year-long, valiant battle against acute myeloid leukaemia, amidst the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Colin was the eldest son of Sheila Jean (née Bell) and Robert (Robin) McEwan. He is survived by his father Robin, his sister Margaret McEwan and her husband Peter Tilley, and Colin's wife Norma Rosso, whom he married in San Juan, Puerto Rico on 11 September, 1993. Sadly, his younger brother Peter died in the mid-1980s while Colin was in Ecuador. Those who knew Colin personally are heartbroken and saddened by the premature loss of a brilliant scholar and, above all, of a loyal colleague and caring friend. The broader public, acquainted and touched by McEwan's spectacular national and international exhibitions of ancient Latin American civilizations, have lost a champion with an unsurpassed zest and dedicated creativity who showcased the Americas to the wide world. Colin McEwan has bequeathed a rich legacy that will be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

Until shortly before his death, Colin was the Director of the Pre-Columbian Studies Program of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection (2012–2019). His employment in that post was preceded by nearly two decades as curator of Latin American Collections and then head of the Americas section of the Department of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the British Museum (1993–2012). This biography commemorates and celebrates Colin McEwan's life and professional legacy to Americanist anthropology and archaeology through my eyes and through words of Colin's colleagues and friends who have entrusted me to convey them in the following pages. It is no exaggeration to assert that Colin McEwan was the complete Americanist. As Leonardo López Luján, director of Mexico's *Templo Mayor* (INAH), observed, "Colin was an 'all-terrain' researcher. No culture

of the American continent was out-of-bounds to his interests and knowledge" (Leonardo López Luján, personal communication, 29 June 2020).¹

This biography began with a request to write an obituary for publication in *Andean Past*. As work proceeded, it quickly became clear to me that a short synthesis of Colin McEwan's accomplishments would not adequately capture how he came to be the consummate scholar that he was and how his life experiences and education shaped his persona and forged the Complete Americanist he became. The task expanded to include different voices that helped to enrich this portrayal of Colin's life. Like all biographies, this one is seen through its author's particular lens and experiences, but I strive to respect other contributing voices and perspectives and endeavor to back up the statements made with published materials. In the following pages, the in-text references to McEwan's publications appear in a separate complete bibliography at the end of this essay. References to other sources are found in the References Cited following the main body of this essay and in a bibliography of reviews of his work. A photographic compilation comes after the bibliographies. Throughout this text, I paraphrase and quote various colleagues who have shared their memories with me for inclusion. Colin's vast network of colleagues and close friends makes it impossible to quote everyone here, for which I apologize.

¹ [Colin] "era un investigador 'todo terreno'. Ninguna cultura del continente americano fue ajena a sus intereses y conocimientos".

CHAPTER 1

IN THE BEGINNING: CHILDHOOD AND FORMATIVE YEARS TO 1975

Colin McEwan was born on 11 August 1951 in Falkirk, just west of Edinburgh, Scotland. When he was only a month old, his family moved to New Zealand, where they settled first on the South Island and later in Lower Hutt on the North Island (Figure 1). There Colin spent his childhood years until 1965, when the McEwans returned to Scotland. During this journey back to his homeland, the 14-year-old Colin kept a journal in which he recorded his fascination with the monuments from ancient civilizations. He would later recall that the voyage

took me across the Indian Ocean from Australia to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), where I encountered a statue of the seated Buddha in a temple; from there through Egypt and the pyramids of Giza and on to the Parthenon in Greece and finally to Rome. These experiences left a very deep impression in the sense of touching on the great epochs of civilizations. It encouraged my deep awareness of earlier cultures beyond textbooks, of addressing the huge panorama of human development and trying to grasp what it was all about (McEwan in Moore 1996:20–21).

In 1965–1966 Colin studied at King George V Grammar School in Southport, northwestern England and graduated (Highers certification) from Ayr Academy (1967–1969), in southwestern Scotland. Both Scotland and New Zealand left indelible imprints in Colin's character and world view. In New Zealand, he was exposed to the vibrancy and richness of the Maori people and their culture, so different from his native Scotland. Indeed, the subject of his Master's thesis was on Maori mythology and social organization (McEwan 1985a). The Scottish Northern Highlands, as well as the Grampian and

Cairngorms mountain ranges (cover photograph), stirred his life-long passions for mountain climbing, trekking, and cycling. Not surprisingly, he was also a dedicated rugby player and a fan of New Zealand's All Blacks. As a captain (Figure 2), Colin learned the value of teamwork and that victory was not dependent on any one player, but on a coordinated effort. Colin would apply this philosophy of teamwork above individual aspirations during his career in archaeology, museum work, and research.

His friend Bob Wood, now a professional folk musician, recalls those days at Ayr Academy:

Colin didn't arrive until maybe 1966 or '67. It was thus no mean feat to become not only captain of the 1st XV [Rugby team] but also "Head Boy" in his relatively short time there. More than that, he'd quickly become by a country mile the natural choice. The people's choice. As popular as he was gifted as he was respected and revered. In football-crazy Scotland, none of the rest of us, I'm sure, had even held a rugby ball until we started at the Academy. Except, of course, young McEwan, that is. He'd begun playing in NZ aged five, he told me. Didn't believe a word of it. I'm sure he emerged straight from the womb as a scrum half and that any brain scan would've been the oval shape of a rugby ball. . . . It wasn't just sport. Colin was industrious and academic too. Isn't it annoying when someone excels across the board? . . . I think I kinda envied that Colin seemed to know exactly what he wanted to do. And was gonna go for it (personal communication, Bob Wood to Norma Rosso, 9 August 2020).

In those early years (late 1960s), Colin became instinctively enthralled with the power and beauty of the Scottish landscape, on how it shaped human cognition and spirit. Mountain climbing in Scotland became central to recharging Colin's spirit and energy, adventures that he shared with George Aitken, one of his oldest friends, whom he first met at Aberdeen University (Figure 3).² Many of McEwan's subsequent academic publications feature the complex tapestry of human-environment and human-human relationships, which provide a framework for understanding past societies and cultures. These early predilections led him to focus his undergraduate university studies on the field of geography, but the magnetism of archaeology was not far from his mind. Of his undergraduate university years Colin recalled:

A very special feature of the landscape are the stone circles of the prehistoric occupation there. On journeys, on those days out to the Western Highlands, to Harris and Lewis to Orkney and the Shetlands, I became very aware of the prehistory of Scotland.

Although I was majoring in geography, some questions about human and cultural development began to loom large (McEwan in Moore 1996:17).

In 1969 we find Colin at the Department of Geography of Aberdeen University, where he earned a B.Sc. Honours degree in 1973. This was a time when the New Geography's paradigmatic revolution had come to maturity on both sides of the Atlantic (Kohn 1970). In the early 1960s, New Geography emerged as an abstract, theoretical science

focused on the spatial organization of economic, social, physical, political and urban processes, and on how outcomes generated by these processes are evidenced at given times and in particular places (Kohn 1970:211).

with special attention placed upon spatial aspects of social processes, giving rise to the New Social Geography in the United Kingdom (but *cultural* geography in North America). Computer programming and quantitative methods, along with the application of remote sensing to geographic problems, led to ever more sophisticated theory and model building. In the United Kingdom, the blueprint for teaching new curricula in geography at all levels of education emerged during the Madingley Conference held at Cambridge in 1963, the first in a series of meetings which continued yearly until 1978. It was the fourth Madingley Conference, held in 1966, focused on Theory in Geography: New Teaching Problems that led to a coherent set of research and teaching goals for the coming generation of geographers (Shimura 2015). The paradigmatic shift coincided with Colin's transition to university.³ The New Geography has some obvious parallels with the coeval emergence of New Archaeology (Social Archaeology in the U.K.), with its emphasis on theory building, hypotheses testing, quantitative (statistical) methods, spatial-temporal relationships and modeling (systems) and, above all, with its firm focus on uncovering the principles (laws) that governed social and cultural (neo) evolutionary processes (see Gosden 1999).

Although New Geography provided Colin with an academic foundation for his intellectual

² Information on Aitken is from Norma Rosso (personal communication, 21 January 2021).

³ To gain admission in the Department of Geography at Aberdeen, Colin read (took courses) on New Geography at Ayr Academy as part of the requirements for his Higher Certificate (akin to a high school diploma in the United States and Canada).

curiosity, perhaps the reduction of humans and societies to computational (quantitative) modeling was not sufficiently alluring for Colin to pursue it further. By his own account (McEwan in Moore 1996:17) this period in Aberdeen was disappointing. However, in Aberdeen he studied with Chalmers M. Clapperton, who was then working in the Falklands (Malvinas), and who later went on to work in the Andes and in Patagonia.⁴ Colin later invited Clapperton to contribute a chapter to *Patagonia: Prehistory and Ethnography at the Uttermost End of the Earth* (McEwan et al. 1997).

In the acknowledgments in Colin's dissertation he wrote: "At the university of Aberdeen, Chalmers Clapperton and Pat Hamilton awakened my latent curiosity for the landscape and cultures of South America" (McEwan 2004a: iv). Following graduation, Colin made up his mind to switch to archaeology. "I really wanted to explore these deeper questions about prehistory and history" (McEwan in Moore 1996:17).

John Watt, a close university friend and mate at Aberdeen recalls:

I was reflecting that Colin and I go back almost 50 years (surely not!) to when we were in the same class at university and the pair of us had regular long intellectually and nutritionally healthy "brown bag" lunches. These were our early radical days when we concluded that we were not be-

ing taught all the relevant things about the world and how it worked and were finding alternative interpretations for ourselves. We both took the South American course option, and this was where the seeds of Colin's deep interest in archaeology of that sub-continent took root, and where my interest in "under-development" in the "Third World" was nurtured (personal communication, John Watt to Norma Rosso, 29 March 2020).

Following graduation, Colin decamped to work as a roughneck in the oil rigs of the North Sea, in order to pay the fees for graduate school. In the autumn of 1974, we find him at Cambridge University where he obtained the Certificate in Archaeology (1975), with Professor John E. Coles as his advisor. The archaeology courses at Cambridge awoke something that satisfied Colin's yearnings; he never looked back.

It is quite likely that archaeology's emphasis on fieldwork strongly appealed to Colin's passion for outdoor activities in communion with the landscape and its inhabitants, and with no limits as to where he could go to explore and investigate. In 1974, as a Cambridge student, Colin undertook his first field experience in archaeology. First he participated in the Somerset Levels Project (in southwestern England) that, since 1964, the Department of Archaeology of Cambridge University had been conducting (led by John E. Coles). In 1974–1975

the investigators' main concern [was] to unravel the relationships between the roads and tracks and the contemporary settlements. One major focus of the investigations has been the so-called Abbot's Way, the most famous wooden road in the British Isles (Coles 1975:151),

the earliest of which dated to c. 2000 B.C. (Coles 1975, 1983). That same year Colin

⁴In the mid-1980s Clapperton invited Colin to co-publish the results of fieldwork conducted on the glacial moraines of the Chimborazo area in Ecuador (Clapperton and McEwan 1985). David Sudgen (2019) published an obituary of Chalmers Clapperton (1938–2018).

See also the Royal Society of Edinburgh web page <https://www.rse.org.uk/fellow/chalmers-clapperton/> (click on read more; accessed 18/May/2021).

joined the Asturias-Lerida archaeological surveys in northwestern Spain led by Eric Sidney Higgs (1908–1976), himself a student of Graham Clark (1907–1995) at Cambridge University (Díaz-Andreu García 2012:338–339). Higgs, a leading scholar in paleo-economic archaeology, is best known for developing, with Claudio Vita-Finzi, the site catchment area as a sampling methodology and analytical approach to address questions of paleo-economy (Roper 1979; Vita-Finzi and Higgs 1970). With his Cambridge friend, Peter Wood, Colin spent the summer surveying sites following traditional shepherd trails, starting from the edge of the French/Spanish Pyrenees, and conducting systematic surface collections of sites and their catchment areas.

Early in the 1970s, while at Aberdeen, Colin came into contact with Anthroposophy, a spiritual philosophy based on the work of Rudolf Steiner (2009). Anthroposophy speaks of an evolution of consciousness, and reflects on deep spiritual and existential questions of our humanity, on our artistic and aesthetic needs, and posits a holistic view of the world in which free human beings act collectively as ethically inspired individuals. Key to development is an analytical science of thinking itself, thinking discovered as a spiritual activity within a spiritual dimension. Three essential elements of Anthroposophy are the championing of rights, freedom, and fraternity, all prominent in Colin's ethical and moral compass.⁵ Without entering into details, Colin's predilect themes and research questions have strands that harmonize with the aims of Anthroposophy, to which he rigorously applied anthropological theory and methods (McEwan in Moore 1996). While Colin was not dogmatic about this philosophy, he nonetheless continued his links with Anthroposophy study groups throughout his

career (McEwan 2004a:vi). His views are best captured in an interview carried out by Hilmar Moore, published in 1996. It may be said that Colin's interest in the search for the meaning and *raison d'être* of the human condition attracted him to Anthroposophy. It could be argued that his anthropological perspective meant that such deep, spiritual existential philosophy was not simply about a personal quest, but an exploration of how human societies, past and present, and from different cultures, consciously expressed and dealt with similar existential and, ultimately, humanistic matters. In his work, it is evident that a purely materialistic approach to past societies and cultures had to always be matched by an in-depth understanding of the spiritual dimension of the societies in question.

⁵ I am grateful to George Aitken for clarifying the basic tenets of Anthroposophy.

CHAPTER 2

A WHIRLWIND EXPLORATION: FROM PATAGONIA TO YUCATÁN (1975–1979).

Following these European field experiences, Colin felt that “I didn’t just want to dig another Roman fort or become too myopically specialized” (McEwan in Moore 1996:17). Thus, after another stint on the North Sea’s oil rigs, an opportunity opened to do fieldwork in South America. He became acquainted with Earl Saxon (1976, 1979), then at the University of Durham. Saxon invited Colin to join his excavation team at the Paleoindian sites Cueva del Milodón and the nearby Cueva del Diablo, both north of Puerto Natales in Chilean Patagonia. Mylodon Cave, of course, was an Early Man site made world famous by Junius Bird’s pioneering excavations (Bird 1988). With savings from his stint in the North Sea, Colin arranged a working passage on a cargo ship of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, to travel from Liverpool to Valparaiso, Chile, at the very end of 1975. His plan, as we shall see, was not limited to the Mylodon Cave fieldwork, but also to explore the continent as much as was possible. Colin arrived in Valparaiso at a difficult period in Chilean history, when dictator Augusto Pinochet had been in power for slightly over a year. From Valparaiso Colin eventually made his way over two thousand kilometers south to Saxon’s camp site in the Estancia Puerto Consuelo, five kilometers southwest of Mylodon Cave (Figure 4) and eighteen kilometers northeast of Puerto Natales. It was the start of 1976. At the Estancia, he met with Argentinean Luis Alberto Borrero (then a student), becoming instantly friends for life (Figure 5). Borrero recalls:

I arrived at dusk, anticipated by the [barks of] dogs. In the darkness, an unknown young man appeared asking me in English who was I. I answered and he approached me. When he saw that from my rucksack hung mountain climbing gear [Figure 6], he made some observation, and we became

instant friends (Luis Alberto Borrero, personal communication, 10 July 2020).⁶

This was not to be their last encounter; Luis and Colin would team up repeatedly to carry out fieldwork in the Magellan Strait and collaborate in museum exhibitions in London, as we shall see later. Borrero remarked on another typical characteristic of Colin:

That same night [we first met] he loaned me two key books for the project, on palaeo-economy by Eric Higgs—that I did not know—books that a few weeks later he gifted me. A cycle was initiated of stoking me up with a bibliography—hard to obtain in Argentina—that lasted during our entire relationship. Every so often, there was a book for me in the mail, invariably with a dedication by Colin (*ibid.*; see also Borrero 2020).⁷

The Mylodon season completed, Colin made his way back to Valparaiso to board a ship to Buenos Aires. From there he traveled to La Paz, Lake Titicaca, and Cusco by bus and truck, on foot and hitchhiking. The journey continued toward Ecuador. Along the way he explored key archaeological sites of the central Andes. In

⁶ Llegué cuando estaba anocheciendo y mi llegada fue anticipada por los perros. En la oscuridad apareció un joven desconocido preguntándome en inglés quién era. Le contesté y se acercó. Cuando vió que de mi mochila colgaban equipos de escalada hizo algún comentario y nos hicimos amigos instantáneos.

⁷ Esa misma noche me prestó los dos libros principales [para el] proyecto, de paleo-economía de [Eric] Higgs—que yo no conocía—libros que algunas semanas después me regaló. Inició así un ciclo de abastecerme con bibliografía—difícil de conseguir en Argentina—que duró toda nuestra relación. Cada tanto había algún volumen para mí en el correo, invariablemente dedicado por Colin.

Ecuador, he was invited by Elizabeth (Liz) Carmichael to join the Jubones Valley archaeological project in Azuay Province, which she co-directed with Warwick Bray (Figure 7). Carmichael was then an assistant curator in the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum (1964–1997), while Bray was a reader (associate professor) at the Institute of Archaeology, then an independent institute that was part of the University of London, and is now incorporated into University College London. Little did Colin know that he would eventually join Carmichael at the British Museum.

The campaign combined both site surveys and excavations. Warwick recalls that

in the Jubones Valley we did quite a lot of exploring for sites and found everything from Machalilla-equivalents to Inca in our surface collections. Colin, Liz, and I personally excavated two Machalilla-equivalent sites (Warwick Bray, personal communication, 2 July 2020).

The sites were Río Jubones (Locus 56) and Las Juntas (Locus 58), both near the confluence of the Jubones and Rircay Rivers. A third site, Hacienda Sumaypamba (Locus 71), consisted of a series of *tolas* (raised platform mounds) of a relatively late date. From Bray's recollection (details better remain untold), it is clear that Murphy's Law (anything that can go wrong will go wrong) besieged the Jubones Project that season. Despite the difficulties, Bray was thoroughly "impressed by [Colin's] attitude in the field, and I think it was at that time we talked of doing a Ph.D." at the Institute of Archaeology. Only a brief preliminary report of this project has been published, authored by Carmichael *et al.* (1979). However, an unpublished progress report is on file at the Instituto Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural, Quito (McEwan 1979).

Decades later, in 2007, when Colin was at the British Museum, he attempted to infuse a new life to the archaeological collections from the Jubones excavations curated at the museum, bringing Bill Sillar's and my students from the Institute of Archaeology to study the specimens (Figure 8). In the end, there were so many gaps in the associated field records that it was impracticable to move beyond a descriptive ceramic typology.

After several months in Ecuador, which included his first informal visit to the Agua Blanca site in Manabí, Colin journeyed to Central America, visiting museums and sites in Panama and Guatemala, ending in Yucatan where he explored various Maya sites. At the end of 1976, he returned to the United Kingdom. Needless to say, Latin America, its people, history, and the diverse, majestic landscapes, bewitched Colin for the rest of his life. He was on his way to becoming the Complete Americanist from Scotland.

Colin planned to start his postgraduate studies at the Institute of Archaeology under Warwick Bray. However, Latin America was far too enticing for Colin to settle in lecture rooms. At this juncture, probably mid- to late summer of 1977, Warwick invited Colin to join the Anglo-Colombian Expedition to the Caquetá basin in the Colombian Amazon, a region that was, and still is, very much *terra incognita* as far as archaeology is concerned. The expedition was organized by British military personnel in collaboration with a Colombian Army contingent led by Major Rubio. The military provided logistical support for a group of Anglo-Colombian scientists, including an archaeological team (Warwick Bray, Colin McEwan, Leonor Herrera, Elizabeth Reichel de Hildebrand, and Ana María Falchetti) and an environmental team led by Michel E. Eden (Figures 9–11).

The project's key contribution consisted of the first characterization of anthropogenic soils (*terras pretas*) outside Brazil. Dark Earths were associated with pre-Columbian occupations in Araracuara at sites 3-4, La Sardina, and site 20. These sites yielded evidence of two occupations, Camani Phase (c. A.D. 100–900), a local cultural tradition, and Nofurei Phase (c. A.D. 1100–1300) related to the late Amazonian Polychrome (Guarita) tradition. At that time, *terras pretas* were thought to have begun to form no later than A.D. 800, but it was suspected that they developed some centuries earlier, perhaps as early as the start of the first millennium A.D.

The results of this project were subsequently published by Eden *et al.* (1984) and Herrera, Bray, and McEwan (1980–1981). The latter was Colin's first significant publication in archaeology. The 1977 investigations laid the groundwork for later research in the 1990s on *terra preta* occupations led by Luisa Fernanda Herrera (not to be confused with Leonor Herrera), pushing back the dates for systematic forest management and cultivation, including domesticated plants (particularly at the Peña Roja site) to around 9000 B.P. (Herrera *et al.* 1989, 1992; see also Oliver 2001, 2008). To prepare for this project, Colin became well acquainted with the still limited literature available for Amazonia, such as Peter Hilbert's (1968) Middle Amazon monograph and certainly the major works of Betty J. Meggers and Clifford Evans on Ecuador (Meggers 1971; Meggers *et al.* 1965), the Brazilian Amazon (Meggers 1996; Meggers and Evans 1957), and what was formerly British Guiana (Evans and Meggers 1960; Meggers and Evans 1955). Colin repeatedly commented to me that he was particularly impressed by Donald W. Lathrap's refreshing perspective on the archaeology of tropical lowlands synthesized in his book entitled *The Upper Amazon* (1970). As we shall see, Amazonia would be the subject of a major exhibition at the British Museum.

Leonor Herrera recalls one particular night when the team gathered around for an impromptu "variety show" in the camp site:

Colin was among the brave souls who launched into the arena. He displayed an imitation of a war dance [or Haka] of a Maori chief from New Zealand: Colin jumped like a rubber band, and while he flailed his hands and shouted, without him noticing, Major Rubio slid behind him and all the while he began to move his hands at the height of Colin's buttocks, as if he was turning a crank, transforming Colin into a marionette, which made the show double the fun. Even though he cultivated the image of a serious young man, when Colin realized what was going on, he very spontaneously laughed at himself (Leonor Herrera, personal communication, 25 November 2020).⁸

Colin returned to the United Kingdom at the end of 1977. As 1978 began, he once again prepared to travel back to Ecuador, this time invited by Presley Norton and Jorge Marcos to work on an archaeological survey of Isla de La Plata (Figures 12–14), one of several islands off the central coast of Ecuador regarded as sacred since at least Inca times (McEwan and Lunniss 2021:827–828). Colin was to supervise a group of paying volunteers from Earthwatch, while Marcos and Norton were engaged working elsewhere on the island and on the adjacent

⁸ Colin estuvo entre los valientes que se lanzaron al ruedo. Presentó una imitación de una danza guerrera [known as Haka] de un jefe maorí de Nueva Zelanda: Colin saltaba como un caucho, manoteaba y vociferaba, mientras que sin que él se diera cuenta, el mayor Rubio se le deslizó por detrás y a su vez empezó a mover sus manos a la altura de las nalgas de Colin, como si estuviera dándole vueltas a una manivela, transformando a Colin en una marioneta, lo que hizo doblemente divertida la presentación. Cuando Colin se dio cuenta, a pesar de que cultivaba por esta época una imagen de joven serio, se rió muy espontáneamente de sí mismo.

mainland. The highlight of 1978 was the excavation at Drake's Bay site, OM JP LP 12, the locus of Inca offerings (*capac hucha*, i.e. royal obligation) with hundreds of *in situ Spondylus crassisquama* shells (*ibid.*: 855), only seventy meters away from where, in 1898, George Dorsey had excavated a *capac hucha* burial that included miniature Inca gold and silver figurines (McEwan and Van de Guchte 1992: figure 10). The research on the meaning and symbolism of the Inca figurines stayed with Colin throughout his career. Dorsey's (1901) Isla de La Plata collection, curated at the Field Museum in Chicago, was to be studied in detail on multiple occasions by Colin. Colin was not directly involved in the full excavations in Drake's Bay—although he visited several times as these progressed in September 1978; however, at one point, he was put in charge of one of the cuts at OM PL IL 14 (McEwan and Lunniss 2021:830, 842, 853; footnotes 11, 25). Colin's presence was fortunate, because the collection of artifacts and many documents housed on the mainland coast at Puerto López were swept away by the mega El Niño of 1983, leaving mostly Colin's journals and photographs as the surviving record (Figures 12–14).

The research at Isla de La Plata was famously interrupted by the Ecuadorian military authorities (the *Fuerzas Especiales*) because of the presence of pre-Columbian (Inca) "treasures", which were promptly confiscated, and the archaeology crew was temporarily arrested. Gold and silver specimens, as Dorsey amply commented in his 1901 publication, had been looted since the late nineteenth century, with the "authorities" expecting a cut of the profits or a commission. This time, however, the "treasures" were bags of *Spondylus*, *Pinctata mazatlanata*, and other marine shells! This first-hand experience at Isla de La Plata spurred a life-long, deep research interest in Inca ritual and its relationship to ceremonial architecture and sacred landscapes (McEwan and Silva 1989b;

McEwan and Van de Guchte 1992; Meddens *et al.* 2014). Over the years, Colin's research extended to very detailed technological analyses of the *capac hucha* ritual artifacts from the Andes, housed in different museums (Cockrell and McEwan 2016–17).

The 1978 season over, Colin was back in the U.K., but already thinking about his next trip to Ecuador. While in England, he secured a placement in the Institute of Archaeology's graduate program, under the supervision of Warwick Bray. He promptly returned to Ecuador, this time settling in Puerto López (Manta, Manabí), in search of a research topic and site for an eventual Ph.D. dissertation. Puerto López was the location of the archaeology laboratory for processing the materials from Isla de La Plata and other sites investigated by Norton and Marcos' project "Sacred Isles of Ecuador". At the lab, Colin met, for the first time, María-Isabel Silva, and together they embarked on the first survey of the Cerro Jaboncillo, made famous by Marshall Howard Saville (1910) for the sculptured stone seats of the Manteño cultural tradition. His collaborative association with Silva would grow, first as peer graduate students at the University of Illinois, and later during his Ph.D. fieldwork. One of these sites in the Buena Vista Valley, Agua Blanca (named after the local *comuna* [community]), became the focus of his eventual Ph.D. dissertation (2004a) and was also where his archaeological project was intertwined with a community-led development of a museum in the Centro Cultural, shepherded by Colin, María-Isabel Silva, and Chris Hudson.

Chapter 3

THE ILLINOIS YEARS: GRADUATE SCHOOL AND FIELDWORK IN ECUADOR (1979–1995)

It was during his 1978 fieldwork in Ecuador that Colin made the radical decision to apply to the doctoral program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (hereafter UIUC). With Bray's blessing (McEwan 2004a: v), he transferred from the Institute of Archaeology, University of London to UIUC.⁹ Colin recalled that "It was a tremendous challenge. I entered into a field of anthropology in which I had little background; I had more in archaeology" (McEwan in Moore 1996:18), because in the United Kingdom anthropology and archaeology generally were (and still are) considered to be separate academic disciplines. No doubt both Presley Norton and Jorge Marcos had actively motivated Colin to transfer to UIUC. They must have acquainted Colin with the excellent academic faculty there, including eminences such as Donald Lathrap, Tom Zuidema, David Grove, Chris Lehman, Joseph Casagrande, and Enrique Mayer, to name but a few. Colin was also well aware of the international impact of the 1974–1977 Real Alto Project directed by Don Lathrap and Jorge Marcos, sponsored by UIUC and ESPOL (Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral) (Figures 15, 16). Marcos, in fact, had just been awarded his Ph.D. (in 1978) at Illinois on Real Alto archaeology, with Lathrap as his thesis chair, when he invited Colin to Isla de La Plata, immediately following the closure of the Real Alto Project in 1977.

That August (1979) Colin arrived at UIUC to begin graduate studies. He was joined by María-Isabel Silva, who obtained her M.A. degree in sociocultural anthropology in 1984. There he also became acquainted with James (Jim) Zeidler, a veteran of the Real Alto Project (Figure 15), who was then writing his dissertation (Jim joined UIUC in 1973, and obtained his Ph.D. in 1984). That fall Colin was also joined by John Isaacson (Ph.D. 1987) (Figure 16), Peter Stahl (Ph.D. 1984), and Ann Mester (Ph.D. 1990) and, in 1982, by Thomas D. Aleto (Ph.D. 1990) all of whom worked on Ecuadorian archaeology under the supervision of Lathrap. Ann Mester's Ph.D. fieldwork (1982–85) at Los Frailes mound complex, a Manteño Period (c. A.D. 670–1030) site with a pearl-processing workshop (twenty kilometers northwest of Agua Blanca), inevitably meant a constant dialogue between Ann and Colin, comparing their data and field work experiences.

Nowhere in the U.S.A. at this time was there such a concentration of Ph.D. students specializing in Ecuadorian prehistory, providing an ideal environment for intellectual growth. By the start of 1980, Donald Lathrap, R. Tom Zuidema (Figure 17), David Grove, and Charles (Chuck) Bareis had attracted a new cohort of graduate students to UIUC covering South America, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and, certainly, the American Bottom (Cahokia-land) in the Midwestern United States between them. This circumstance would, of course, be foundational in Colin's formation, and it goes a long way in accounting for his well-deserved reputation of being a continental Americanist, where no geographic region or culture was beyond his purvey. In those years at UIUC, Colin built strong links and friendships that lasted throughout his life. Among these in archaeology were José P. Brochado (Eastern Brazil-Amazonia),

⁹ Despite McEwan's 2016 *c.v.* indicating he was a graduate student at the Institute of Archaeology in 1979–1980, he never actually attended courses there. By August 1979, he was in Urbana starting his first semester. Because of unfamiliarity with anthropology, he was required to take and pass social/cultural anthropology courses to be formally accepted for the Ph.D. program. It was that August that I met Colin for the first time via an introduction by José P. Brochado (from Porto Alegre, Brazil) and Clark Erickson, both also Lathrap's students.

Richard Edging (Western Kentucky–Midwest U.S.A.), Clark Erickson (Peru-Bolivia), Rosemary Joyce (Honduras, Mesoamerica), and José R. Oliver (Venezuela and Caribbean), to name a few. The same can be said of sociocultural anthropology graduate students, such as Lorraine Aragon (Sulawesi, Indonesia), Dennis Bassier (Guyana), Gloria Cordones (Guatemala), Maarten Van de Guchte (Andeanist), Olatunde Layuwe (Africa), Diego Quiroga (Ecuador), María-Isabel Silva (Ecuador), and Chris Waterman (ethnomusicology of *juju* music in Lagos, Nigeria; Figures 18, 19).

When Colin began graduate studies at the Department of Anthropology, it was not an easy place for a newcomer. There was a highly competitive environment among archaeology graduate students, especially between the older and newer generations. All of us, Colin included, vied to display our skills and knowledge to our professors, especially those who made up the thesis advisory committee. It was a particularly difficult challenge to gain Donald W. Lathrap's attention, not to mention impress him, in part because of the effects of his bi-polar disorder. As a result, the younger generation of graduate students organized into close-knit study/support groups to achieve academic parity with the older generation, in the eyes of our professors.

One of the salient memories of this time (1979–1985) that Colin and I often reflected upon were the *tertulias* (gatherings) that our study/support group held regularly at Treno's, a popular drinking hole and restaurant close to the Department of Anthropology. Over pints of beer and canapes—almost always “chaired” by Don Lathrap—is how we truly learned critical thinking on a wide range of topics: Rollo May's (1967)¹⁰ position on free will and its implica-

tions for the origin of agricultural systems (cf. Lathrap 1984; Oliver 1992:305), or the significance of Gregory Bateson's (2000 [1972]) famous statement that what matters is the *difference that makes a difference* in reference to linguistics, ethnicity, and even archaeological classifications of material culture (artifacts), or debating Hemingway's (2000 [1932]) *Death in the Afternoon* where the Spanish bullfight was discussed in the context of anthropological theories of art, ritual, and performance. A baffling question raised by Lathrap sent Colin and me scurrying to the library: What do the periodic chart of the elements, the universal phonetic chart, and the tables of formal *modes* as defined by Irving Rouse (1960) arranged by *dimensions* as defined by Albert Spaulding (1960) have in common? What do these models say about western science in expressing the dynamic principles that govern the structure of any given system, be these comprised of potsherds, phonemes, or chemical elements? These, of course, are linked to Bateson's discussion about systems of *differences that make a difference* and also to Chomsky's “deep-surface grammar” (2015 [1965]:137–158). At Treno's, we were also challenged by Lathrap to dissect, deconstruct, and then reassemble seminal archaeological monographs in a “novel” light, and to present and defend our results to the group as, for example, Colin and I tried to do with the classic Meggers and Evans (1957) *Mouth of the Amazon* monograph.

will that was far less deterministic than B.F. Skinner's (2002 [1971]). Rollo May contrasted the latter's position with that adopted by Carl Rogers (Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, La Jolla, California). Lathrap favoured May's perspective of a less deterministic “free” will. How this matter of free will relates to agriculture (*i.e.* farmers' choices) can be appreciated in Lathrap's (1984) review of David Rindos' book *The Origins of Agriculture: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Rollo May, a psychologist at the Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco, California (now Saybrook University, Pasadena, California) held a position on free

Similarly, Zuidema frequently hosted stimulating *tertulias* at his home, where current Andean research topics were discussed and critically debated with zest. Zuidema's theoretical and analytical approaches to Andean ethnohistory (and for that matter Amazonian ethnography as well), with their roots in Claude Lévi-Strauss's thinking and French neo-Structuralism, were the theoretical bases and interpretive framework that left their marks in Colin's future publications.¹¹ Zuidema's neo-Structural influence is palpable in Ziedler and McEwan's chapter "La cuadratura del círculo en el pasado Ecuatoriano", forthcoming in Tristram Platt's and Isabelle Daillant's edited book *Andes y Amazonas*, with an English version also to be published in 2021 (Ziedler and McEwan, in press).¹²

Although formal lectures and seminars were obviously important in our academic formation at UIUC, the informal *tertulias* were the contexts where Colin, and all of us, truly acquired the skills of critical and, dare I say, independent thinking. A letter Colin sent to me while I was doing fieldwork in Western Venezuela in 1984 captures this sentiment nicely:

He's [Don Lathrap] been in pretty good shape and I begin to feel a real rapport developing as there's been time in the summer to share a couple of meals and some slide shows. Just before Ann [Mester] left for her summer field season

in Ecuador, she . . . and María [Silva] and I had a memorable evening when Don [Lathrap] roasted a leg of lamb in his apartment and we washed it down with a couple of gallons of red wine and talked into the wee small hours. There have been some good sessions too in Treno's—get your ass back up here fast—we miss you! (Colin McEwan, personal communication, 28 July 1984).

Thus prepared, Colin successfully undertook his preliminary doctoral examinations in April 1985, a gruelling *rite de passage* where candidates are given previously unseen questions (any faculty member could submit one), on any subject matter, in any of the four fields of anthropology. For each question, the candidate had three hours to write the answer. The written answers would then be defended orally in the presence of the Ph.D. committee and of any other faculty member who wished to examine the candidate. Once over this hurdle, that summer of 1985 Colin was ready and eager to re-restart his fieldwork in Agua Blanca, a site to which he returned many times since. This research became formally known as the Proyecto Arqueológico Agua Blanca (PAAB) and, as shall be seen shortly, its goals were much more ambitious than merely conducting archaeological excavations to fulfil the requirements for a Ph.D. PAAB was to have heritage and social action components led by Colin McEwan.

Colin's earlier fieldwork season had been devoted to a detailed mapping of the Agua Blanca site with the help of Richard Edging (Figure 18) and Diego Quiroga, both of whom would obtain their Ph.D.s at the University of Illinois. Colin undertook

the task of mapping the many hundreds of structures at Agua Blanca without any particular preconceived model in mind, although of course aware that a general

¹¹ Dutch Structuralist J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong (1886–1964) also exerted a strong influence on Zuidema, especially when Zuidema was a student at Leiden University, but also afterwards through correspondence. De Jong was both an ethnologist specializing in Indonesia and an archaeologist who did some of the earliest work in Aruba and Curaçao.

¹² My notes here are based on a 2014 draft version that Colin and James Ziedler sent me to review the English to Spanish translation.

principle of duality is expressed in various guises in Andean settlements (McEwan 2004a:116).

In the process,

the outlines of the largest structures could be discerned, and it was precisely these buildings that housed the greatest concentrations of [Manteño] stone seats. The orientation and arrangement of the structures in relation to each other were clearly going to be closely tied to the use of the seats themselves. As the mapping program progressed and additional architectural details were revealed in the course of cleaning and excavation, many subtleties in the orientations and spatial relationships between structures became apparent (*Ibid.*:163).

Over the next years, fieldwork would not be restricted to the Agua Blanca site (although it was the primary focus) but extend to several sites in the Buena Vista Valley, as far north as Cerro Jaboncillo. It is worth quoting Colin's conclusions in his doctoral thesis, expressing themes that would feature prominently in his future publications.

The alignment of the principal (probably temple) structure at Agua Blanca suggests that here too, just as the sun "sat" on the horizon at the solstitial standstills so too did human beings "sit". While the eyewitness accounts available for the highlands leave no doubt as to the importance of seating during the major seasonal festivals, nevertheless until now it has not been possible to prove their existence directly in the archaeological record and the Manteño material that I have introduced here adds a new dimension to this material in the Andes. In contrast to the hill-top location of Cerro Jaboncillo, Agua Blanca

seems to have been a more accessible center [than Cerro Jaboncillo], arguably the dominant political locus toward the south of Manteño political hegemony. . . . The hierarchical architectural order seems, if anything, to have been more fully realized at Agua Blanca. Here, the architectural order that I have mapped, and the seating order embedded within this, was once a setting for a living social order. The ruined walls of buildings long since abandoned would have come alive in the presence of the gathered lords each with their entourage of officials and attendants. The modelled *bahareque* [waddle and daub] façade of the main temple with its striking iconography was probably painted in brilliant polychrome like those of other buildings. By analogy with the iconography on clay seals, the symbols and motifs on the façades must have proclaimed their status as the "houses of seats". These were the appropriate designated spaces used at different times to commune with the ancestors and to acknowledge the sun as the preeminent celestial deity. They also formed the axial referents out of which, and around which, all human social order unfolded (*ibid.*: 525–526).

Details of the evidence supporting his arguments and conclusions (quoted above) on the Agua Blanca research are a matter of record, contained in McEwan's doctoral dissertation. He defended it in 1995. It was followed by a revised final version completed in 2003, and officially submitted in 2004. The thesis is based on the research conducted during the 1981–1990 investigations. Remarkably, Colin accomplished fieldwork work with limited funds. The delay in submitting his dissertation resulted from the untimely death of Don Lathrap (in May 1990) and, equally, was due to exciting job opportunities in Chicago, and then in London, that could not be ignored.

CHAPTER 4

THE AGUA BLANCA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (1986–1990)

From the start of the *Proyecto Arqueológico de Agua Blanca* (PAAP), Colin made the conscious decision to engage the local community as partners, not just as laborers, rather than bringing in archaeology students and volunteers (provided by groups such as Earthwatch) from abroad, as had been standard practice in Ecuadorian archaeology. To this end, with the active collaboration of María-Isabel Silva (Figure 18), he worked with the local community, while at the same time he directed the archaeological fieldwork. As shall be seen, PAAP became much more than strictly archaeological fieldwork or the creation of a community heritage museum. Several articles (e.g. Hudson and McEwan 1987; Hudson *et al.* 2016; McEwan *et al.* 1993, 1994, 2016; McEwan, Silva, and Hudson 2006) explain how the project emerged organically, and how it branched out to cover many other areas, including the economic development of the community, encompassing irrigation projects, training the local community as guides, and developing pathways, signage, and shelters for visitors to the whole site (not just to the museum). In the context of the PAAP, Colin also helped to develop a sulphur pool area, encouraged local people to do crafts, and so on. The focus was on the site and the people who lived there; the Agua Blanca Museum was just one element in a larger plan spearheaded by Colin.

As it turned out, an intact Manteño seat had just been accidentally discovered while digging a trench for a water pipeline in April 1985. With Colin's and María-Isabel's encouragement, this serendipitous discovery led to the construction of several showcases to exhibit archaeological specimens from Agua Blanca, with the Manteño seat as the centerpiece, in the village's *casa comunal* (community hall; Figure

20). The exhibition was formally inaugurated by Olaf Holm (then director of the Museo del Banco Central, Guayaquil) on 6 June 1986 (Hudson and McEwan 1987). It was a modest start of a community-led heritage project that would culminate in the redesigning of the community hall into a museum (1989–1990; Figure 21) as well as a cultural/heritage center, becoming not just a source of indigenous pride, but also of jobs and tourism revenue that, over time, was reinvested in continued physical improvements. It was the locus for hosting intra- and intercommunity cultural activities and fiestas.

Chris Hudson (Figure 22),¹³ a Briton with expertise in designing museums, had been engaged by Presley Norton (head of the Programa de Antropología para el Ecuador) to supervise the construction and design exhibits for the Museum of Salango (Chris Hudson, personal communication, 15 April 2021). In 1986 (during Colin's second extended season) Hudson and Colin crossed paths, starting a lasting friendship and collaboration. Chris Hudson, supported by Colin, María-Isabel, and

¹³ Hudson is currently an honorary senior lecturer at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. In Latin America he initially worked as a British Volunteer Program coordinator in Ecuador to design the Museo Arqueológico del Banco del Pacífico in Guayaquil, and later returned to South America to work on site museums at Salango and Agua Blanca (Ecuador) and also at Ollantaytambo (Peru). His most recent achievements are in the U.K., and include the Kilmartin House Museum (Scotland), displays in the visitor's center at the Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon burial ground (for The National Trust), and the Prehistoric Wiltshire galleries for the Wiltshire Museum in Devizes, which houses one of the best Bronze Age collections in the U.K. Source:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/people/honorary/chris-hudson-honorary-senior-lecturer> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

the *comuna* of Agua Blanca, designed the first exhibition in the community's hall.

In Chris Hudson's own words:

I first met Colin in 1986 in Salango, on the central coast of Ecuador. I was building a museum in Salango, where excavations were being carried out . . . led by Presley Norton who directed a team of about 20 ex-pat and Ecuadorian archaeologists. Colin was living on his own in Agua Blanca (initially camping out in the village hall) [and] would visit us at Salango at weekends for beer and conversation. I was impressed by this thirty-something Scot, a somewhat intense but fun man with a clear agenda. I visited Agua Blanca and found a remarkable community, unified and organised through conflict with the [Machalilla] National Park which made no attempt to replace the traditional activities (hunting, tree felling, charcoal burning) on which the village depended for a living and which the Park had banned. [However,] Colin's approach was very different. He chose to work with local people instead of alienating them by bringing in archaeology students from abroad for site work. He collaborated with María-Isabel Silva [and] brought in local surveyors and cartographers and trained villagers in excavation and post excavation techniques. . . . Through initiatives encouraged by Colin, funding was found to develop alternative economic activities such as irrigation for family horticultural plots which provided food for the table and for sale. The Proyecto Arqueológico Agua Blanca itself became a significant, if seasonal, provider of employment and training. . . . In my spare time from Salango [in 1986], I helped build a small display in Agua Blanca's village hall (*Casa Comunal*) and to develop an interpretative route round the archaeo-

logical site (Chris Hudson, personal communication, 13 July 2020).

With funding secured from the Ecuadorian Oil Corporation (CEPE), the modest initial exhibit expanded into a museum, which featured artifacts from the excavations, as well as guided tours of archaeological sites in the local area led by individuals of the Agua Blanca community, all trained by Colin. Hudson recalls:

While I was still at Salango [1986] María-Isabel suggested that Agua Blanca should have its own museum, so that the community could better attract and serve visitors. An application for funding to . . . the state oil corporation, was successful and I returned in 1989 to start building. I found myself at the heart of a community different from anything I had ever known, a unique group of people formed by their shared history of the Agua Blanca hacienda and interaction with the Machalilla National Park authorities and archaeologists. In December 1990 the Casa Cultural was inaugurated. . . . Remarkably, between 2000 and 2014 the annual number of visitors to the village had increased from 1,810 to 19,931 (an average increase of 21% per year). Over the same period the village's share of visitors to the National Park had grown by the same amount (*ibid.*).

Hudson's quotations showcase one of Colin's salient qualities, not just his can-do ethos, but the ability to gather around him people who had the expertise and moral commitment to turn dreams into reality. The achievements of the PAAP—the empowerment of the *comuna* by asserting their cultural identity—and the museum's long-term impact were captured in an article by Hudson, McEwan, and Silva (2016), "Tourism and Community: An Ecuadorian Village Builds on its Past" (see also

Hudson and McEwan 1987, 1996b; McEwan *et al.* 1993, 1994; Silva and McEwan 2011).

Here the results of Colin's investigations were not merely to satisfy personal academic goals, but were intended to be ultimately deployed to empower the people who were *the* stakeholders of the ancient Manteño legacy, and ultimately to improve their lives. It would be dangerous to claim that this was the first archaeological and museum project in Latin America in which local residents were engaged as leading partners (and who really had a vote, not just a voice), but it certainly was a first in Ecuador, and is surely a pioneer in South America. I can attest that of all of Colin's accomplishments, bar none, he was most proud of the success of Agua Blanca's heritage and social project, because of its lasting impact on the *comuna*.

CHAPTER 5

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE YEARS (1990–1993)

While the Agua Blanca museum was nearing completion, Colin was in Urbana furiously writing chapters of his Ph.D. dissertation. At the same time, he was awarded a Research Assistantship at UIUC's World Heritage Museum, where he further honed his skills in museum development, programing exhibits and collections research. Two events, however, would alter Colin's direction. First was the untimely death of Donald W. Lathrap, in May 1990 (see Oliver 1992). Suddenly, the supervision and critical comments by Lathrap (as thesis director) on Colin's draft chapters came to a halt. Of course, other UIUC faculty stepped in, but still, none could replace Lathrap's depth of knowledge and insights on the archaeology of Ecuador, not to mention South America, as a whole. Colin turned to Tom Zuidema to be his primary thesis director; they both had regularly conferred and discussed the thesis in progress. Indeed, I could tell back then that Tom Zuidema and Colin had already struck up a rather distinct rapport and collegial intimacy. The Zuidema-McEwan relationship that began as mentor-student evolved over the years to one of mutual respect and very close personal friendship. Zuidema would be a frequent guest and honored speaker in the various public lectures and workshops that Colin organized at the British Museum. Tom Zuidema's passing away, in March 2016, was profoundly felt by Colin.¹⁴ In a subsequent visit to the U.K., we got together at Regents Park to reminisce and pay our joint respects to Tom. It was, unusually for London, a sunny day.

Before the opening of the Agua Blanca Museum, at the end of 1989, Colin had accepted the job of special exhibitions coordinator at the Art Institute of Chicago, for the planned 1992–1993 exhibition *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes* directed by Richard F. Townsend. At first Colin commuted from Urbana, but soon he set up residence in Chicago. Thesis writing could wait; it was too good an opportunity to let pass. As Townsend (1992:13) acknowledged:

The arrival of Norma Rosso and Colin McEwan in 1989 signaled the creation of a new management structure that permitted exceptionally efficient coordination of this undertaking. Ms. Rosso's sphere of activities included supervision of the book and the educational program. . . . Mr. McEwan's work as an archaeologist in South America gave him expertise to negotiate arrangements [for loan specimens] and to travel and meet with our project partners abroad. His creative thought is woven into many aspects of this project. Ms. Rosso and Mr. McEwan collaborated on the innovative teaching kits to be disseminated in the United States and in Latin America. I am profoundly grateful to them for the intelligence, perseverance, and imagination with which they saw to their myriad, and at times, overwhelming responsibilities. The project's realization and success is due, in large part, to the heroic and exceptional effort made by them and my staff.

The publication accompanying the exhibition includes a chapter co-authored by Colin and Martin Van de Guchte (1992) focusing on ancestral time and sacred space in the pre-Inca state.

¹⁴ Zuidema was born in 1927; see his obituary in Jacobsen and Orta 2017. Colin and all of us at UIUC were privileged to have been among his students. I recall Colin's deep sense of loss. They both were intellectually cut out of the same cloth.

The collaboration between Norma Rosso (a Puerto Rican) and Colin flourished into a romance and a life-long partnership. They celebrated their partnership on 11 September 1993 in a ceremony held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, right after the conclusion of their work in Chicago. Needless to say, Colin proudly wore his McEwan clan kilt (Figure 23), despite the tropical heat! From a professional perspective, Norma's expertise (and university degree) in art and education complemented Colin's anthropological perspectives. Later, in London, Norma obtained an M.A. in museum studies. Indeed, initially there was only one job placement at the Chicago Art Institute and that had been offered to Norma, but Townsend wisely saw the potential of splitting the job between her and Colin. The initial wariness between Colin and Norma resulting from this shared appointment quickly led to mutual appreciation for what each brought to the project and, as noted, it developed into a life-long partnership. From my personal perspective, as a Puerto Rican, the union of Norma and Colin provided a deeper emotive content to the friendship that Colin and I already enjoyed. While the exhibition was in full swing (in 1992), Colin was also a visiting lecturer at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, teaching survey courses in the arts of the pre-Columbian Americas and the Andes.

Colin's experiences in both the Agua Blanca community museum and the major exhibition project in Chicago made him an ideal candidate for the job, opened in 1993, of curator of Latin American Collections at the British Museum, working alongside Elizabeth Carmichael. Thus, Colin and Norma set up a new home in Tufnell Park, near Camden, in London (Figure 24). In the tradition of Treno's, their home was a frequent venue for *tertulias* and dinners with lively conversations on the topics of the moment. The years in London between 1993 and 2012 were, without a doubt, the most productive of Colin's career as a museum curator and

scholar. He was responsible for launching five major exhibits at the Museum of Mankind, the British Museum, and other museums abroad.

I cannot fail to mention that shortly after arriving in London, Warwick Bray told Colin of a new post for archaeology of the Americas being created at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, with an eye to ensure that the Americas would remain present after Bray's anticipated retirement. Colin declined to apply and, instead, recommended that Bray invite me and, as it happened, James Zeidler, our mutual colleague and friend from UIUC (Figure 25).¹⁵ As things turned out, I was offered, and accepted, the position as a senior lecturer in Latin American archaeology in 1994.¹⁶ This goes to show not simply Colin's loyalty to his friends and colleagues from the UIUC years, but his forethought on the direction in which he envisioned that a teaching program of New World archaeology in England should move. In that he fully backed Bray's desire to extend the University of Illinois' "Lathrap-Zuidema School" lineage to the U.K. In 1994, Warwick Bray, Joanne Pillsbury (East Anglia University, 1991–1994), and I were the only teaching faculty in the U.K. focused on the archaeology of Latin America (to which I added the Caribbean; Warwick Bray, personal communication, 12 March 2021).¹⁷ Warwick Bray, Colin, and I formed a trio dedicated to placing Latin America on par with Old World civiliza-

¹⁵ Jim Zeidler and I were selected as two of the four finalists to be interviewed. Being good friends made it obviously awkward to find out we were interviewing for the same post, on the same day, one right after the other. My selection for this position had nothing to do with Jim's outstanding qualifications. I was just the luck of the draw.

¹⁶ Actually, the position was first offered to Christine Hastorf, who for various reasons, was not able to accept.

¹⁷ For Pillsbury's C.V. see:

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/pillsbury-joanne> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

tions, both from a teaching/academic and from a museum/public perspective.

Some years later, during Peter F. Ucko's tenure as director of the Institute of Archaeology (1996–2005), Bill Sillar (Andean archaeology), Elizabeth Baquedano (Mesoamerica-Aztecs), and Elizabeth Graham (Mesoamerica-Maya) joined the Institute's faculty, gathering in London a good nucleus of Americanists. Ucko and Bray also sought Colin's advice and input that led to the selection of these and other invited finalists. Later, the presence of Americanists was augmented by the addition of archaeo-metallurgist Marcos Martínón-Torres (now at Cambridge University) whose research included Colombia (especially with the *Museo del Oro*; connections he inherited from Bray). Colin always made us at the Institute feel not just welcome at the British Museum, but actively sought to develop collaborative avenues of research on the vast, yet understudied collections hidden away in the museum's vaults. For instance, Colin (in 2007) brought undergraduate students from the Institute of Archaeology to teach them the importance of restoring and preserving the plaster of Paris casts of Maya sculpture made by Alfred P. Maudslay in the late 1890s (Figure 26; see McEwan 2002b; Tozzer 1931). Due to erosion, he explained, the originals had lost much of the detail that is now only visible in the casts. Yet the casts themselves, over the years, had suffered damage and were in urgent need of conservation. Colin had raised this preoccupation numerous times, and surely also with his colleagues at the British Museum. However, it was not until after Colin left for Washington D.C., in 2012, that, finally, a major project was launched (c. 2013) "to 3D scan all of the casts and make them digitally accessible to scholars and a broader public with the support from Google Arts and Culture" (anonymous quotation from the British Museum blog cited in Note 17). This project is led by the British Museum's project curator (of the Ameri-

cas) Kate Jarvis and by Claudia Zehrt, the lead Google Maya Project curator, with the physical conservation work undertaken by Amy Drago.¹⁸ In a later visit to London, Colin, to his delight, learned that Maudslay's casts were not only being restored, but made digitally available to researchers, students, and the public alike. This is one of many examples of Colin combining his arguments toward conservation and restoration with teaching students and interns about the importance and value of researching the collections, even when these happened to be replicas.

Colin also made sure that the small, but growing group of Latin Americanists in the U.K.—students and professors alike—were invited to join notable Americanist archaeologists passing through London who, invariably, were captured by Colin to visit or give lectures at the British Museum (Figure 27). He valued enormously the power of networking and collegiality in advancing knowledge and in giving a new lease of life to long understudied or neglected archaeological collections.

From the start, Colin's contributions to the Institute of Archaeology, University College London included guest lectures and regular participation in seminars and workshops (Figures 26, 27). He was often called to be an external examiner of Ph.D. theses and to chair the oral defenses or vivas (*viva voce*) at the Institute of Archaeology, as well as at other universities, such as the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and East Anglia. His contribution was recognized with an honorary professorship at the Institute (from 2006). Colin did not neglect to contribute to other institutions, becoming an associate fellow of the advisory council of the

¹⁸ For the British Museum blog see: <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/maya-heritage-150-years-of-preservation/> (Accessed 11 March 2021). For Maudslay's casts of the Google Maya Project, see: <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/saving-faces/UwLSRSb-47onIw> (Accessed 11 March 2021).

Institute for the Study of the Americas, University College London (2008–2012) and a member of the British Academy Area Panel for Latin America and the Caribbean (2006–2011). The latter was particularly important to archaeologists like me, because the panel reviewed research proposals and awarded major grants for archaeological research in our part of the world. From 1995 until 2002, he was also involved with the British Museum’s Travel Tours, as leader and lecturer. This took him to Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador (1995, 1997), to Patagonia (1998, 1999), to the Mexican lands of the Olmec and the Maya (1998), and to Colombia’s El Dorado (2001). Although these trips were exhausting, Colin confessed to me that he truly relished the opportunity to “put on the professorial hat” providing a relief from the administrative demands at the British Museum. These tours also gave him an opportunity to visit, experience, familiarize himself, and photographically document archaeological sites across the continent, broadening his knowledge of South America. Indeed, publishers like Thames & Hudson would sometimes request images from Colin, given the vast personal collection of images he assembled during all his travels.

CHAPTER 6

THE BRITISH MUSEUM YEARS: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ON THE WORLD STAGE (1993–2012)

THE MEXICAN GALLERY, BRITISH MUSEUM (1994–1995)

Upon arriving in London in 1993, Colin's first task as curator was to assist and contribute to the forthcoming Mexican Gallery, a permanent installation inaugurated at the British Museum in 1994. Elizabeth Carmichael, who was the designated curator for this exhibition, however, was on an extended leave, the reason why John Mack (then keeper of the ethnography department and now professor of world art at the University of East Anglia)¹⁹ asked Colin to assume full responsibility for the gallery. This was a tall order considering that Colin had just arrived in London.

The idea of a permanent gallery came about from a diplomatic cultural initiative jointly launched by the president of the Republic of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994) and Prince Charles. The decisions for creating the gallery were left to the trustees of the British Museum and to director Robert G. W. Anderson (1992–2002). The gallery was designed by the renowned Mexican architect, Teodoro González de León. Among his various duties, Colin was responsible for the well-received publication of *Ancient Mexico in the British Museum* (1994a) that accompanied the exhibition. Equally important was the organization of a conference entitled *Mesoamerican Studies: Mexican and European Perspectives*

held in 1995 to further promote the new Mexican Gallery. Leonardo López Luján (Figure 28) shares recollections of this event:

Facing the emotion of seeing again these Mesoamerican treasures of the museum, mainly the Christy Collection and the Yaxchilán lintels, I immediately accepted the call of a young couple who were in charge of all the logistics of the event, Norma Rosso and Colin McEwan, who asked me to talk about my recent excavations in the Templo Mayor and the House of the Eagles of Tenochtitlan. Upon arriving in the English capital, I recognized in Norma the warmth of a daughter of the island of Puerto Rico and in Colin the friendliness and cosmopolitanism of a native of Scotland who lived in New Zealand, studied in the United States, and did his doctoral research in Ecuador. The meeting, I must say, was a resounding success, not only because of the intense academic exchange that took place there, but also because of personal experiences. In my case, I had the honor of meeting great researchers such as Norman Hammond and Warwick Bray; I made friends with colleagues of my generation such as Nikolai Grube and José Oliver; and I enjoyed a wonderful steak and kidney pie and a Guinness in [the pub] The Guinea. In the end I returned to Mexico with a copy of Colin's introductory guide to the Mexican Gallery [McEwan 1994b]. This publication, as brief as it is substantial, has a dedication inscribed for me: "We hope this is the beginning of a long and transcontinental friendship. It was a pleasure meeting you, Colin and Norma." And so it was. . . .

¹⁹ For John Mack see: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG134047> (Accessed 11 April 2021).
and <http://www.sru.uea.ac.uk/people/academic-faculty/john-mack> (Accessed 11 April 2021).

(Leonardo López Luján, personal communication, 16 September 2020).²⁰

In addition to the scholars mentioned above, Colin invited Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (then director of the Templo Mayor Project), Linda Manzanilla, who talked about her work on Teotihuacan, and Elizabeth Baquedano, who spoke about the Aztecs. To my surprise, Colin also asked me to talk about the native rubber ball games of Mesoamerica, but insisted that a comparison with the Caribbean and South American games would be illuminating. Colin derived immense intellectual pleasure from showing transregional perspectives that pushed the boundaries of the particular culture or civilization featured in a colloquium or exhibition. The big picture was a lesson that he took to heart from Lathrap's and Zuidema's teachings at Illinois.

²⁰ Ante la emoción de volver a ver los tesoros mesoamericanos del museo, principalmente la colección Christy y los dinteles de Yaxchilán, de inmediato acepté la convocatoria de un joven matrimonio que se encargaba de toda la logística del evento, Norma Rosso y Colin McEwan, quienes me solicitaban hablar sobre mis recientes excavaciones en el Templo Mayor y la Casa de las Águilas de Tenochtitlan. Al llegar a la capital inglesa, reconocí en Norma la calidez isleña propia de una hija de Puerto Rico y en Colin la simpatía y el cosmopolitismo de un nativo de Escocia que vivió en Nueva Zelanda estudió en los Estados Unidos e hizo su investigación doctoral en Ecuador. La reunión, debo decirlo, fue un éxito rotundo, no sólo por el intenso intercambio académico que allí tuvo lugar, sino también por las vivencias personales. En mi caso, tuve el honor de conocer a grandes investigadores como Norman Hammond y Warwick Bray, hice amistad con colegas de mi generación como Nikolai Grube y José Oliver, y disfruté de un maravilloso steak-and-kidney pie y una Guinness en [el pub] The Guinea. Al final regresé a México con un ejemplar de la guía introductoria de Colin a la Mexican Gallery [McEwan 1994b]. Esta publicación tan breve como sustanciosa, tiene inscrita una dedicatoria para mí: 'Esperamos que éste sea el principio de una larga y transcontinental amistad. Ha sido un placer conocerte, Colin y Norma'. Y así sucedió. . . .

THE GILDED IMAGE EXHIBITION, MUSEUM OF MANKIND (1996–1997)

In 1996 Colin began preparations for his first solo exhibition at the Museum of Mankind in Burlington Gardens, which at the time, was the site of the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum. The initial impetus that led to *The Gilded Image: Pre-columbian Gold from South and Central America* exhibition (16 May–31 December 1997; see poster in Bowring 2012:96) was recorded by Colin:

In the British Museum, before preparations for *The Gilded Image* began, only a fraction of the objects had ever been on public view. To have adopted the “treasures” approach would have meant leaving the bulk of the collection unseen and unstudied. A fortuitous informal conversation with Susan La Niece and Nigel Meeks (both metallurgists in the British Museum's Department of Scientific Research) led to a constructive solution. . . . They welcomed the invitation to begin a comprehensive programme of analytical work on objects drawn from the Museum's Precolumbian collections. The collaborative initiative forged between curator [Colin] and metallurgists [La Niece and Meeks] focused on revealing the sophisticated technical achievements of native metallurgical traditions of the Americas. (McEwan 2000: 8–9).

Thus, focusing on technological traditions solved the problem of the eclectic and disparate nature of the British Museum specimens, providing a unifying theme to weave together a tight narrative for the exhibition. A focus on culture areas, chronology, or regional art styles would not have worked. The gallery space was rather modest, but nonetheless this intimacy was visually effective. During preparations, Colin frequently called upon Warwick Bray and

me to join him (at the British Museum's Orsman Road warehouse) to discuss his selection of specimens, or go over results from the technical analyses, or to share his ideas on how best to relate the project's research to the public. Not infrequently, such meetings would end up at a nearby pub or tandoori restaurant, where the conversation continued long afterward.

This exhibit became, henceforth, a hallmark of Colin's style of curatorship: (a) surrounding himself with all the technical and academic expertise he could muster; (b) undergoing in-depth, scholarly research to inform the exhibitions and the public; (c) complementing the exhibition with a well-illustrated edited volume, with erudite language, yet accessible to the public. He would also strive to bring together a conference with international guests to (ideally) coincide with the opening of the exhibition, as was the case with *The Gilded Image*. Although technology structured the exhibit's narrative, for the conference (in 1996) and its publication, Colin ensured that equal stress would be given to style and iconography, and expanded its coverage expanded to include Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Panama (Gran Coclé), and the Greater Antilles.

The 1996 conference papers were published in *Precolumbian Gold: Technology, Style and Iconography* (McEwan 2000) with chapters by Izumi Shimada, Jo Griffin, and Adon Gordus on the goldwork of Sicán; by Karen O'Day on the goldwork of Chimor; by Penny Dransart on the iconography of the human form among the Incas; by Colin McEwan and Joerg Haerberli on gold diadems from the far South Coast of Peru; by Warwick Bray, Roberto Lleras-Pérez, and Ana María Falchetti on aspects of goldworking in what is now Colombia; by Richard Cooke, Luis Alberto Sánchez Herrera, and Koichi Udagawa on Panamanian goldwork; by Jeffrey Quilter on Costa Rican goldwork; by José R. Oliver on goldwork among Taíno elites; a

comparison of Old and New World goldsmithing by Susan La Niece and Nigel Meeks, and a foreword by the eminent archaeometallurgy specialist, Heather Lechtman. The book was reviewed by Clemencia Plazas (2002: 120–121). However, Colin was not happy with the time-lapse between the 1996 conference and its publication in 2000; thereafter he worked hard to get the personnel and funding to have conference proceedings published as close to the opening date as possible.

PATAGONIA-FUEGIAN EXHIBITION, MUSEUM OF MANKIND (1997)

Remarkably, as *The Gilded Image* was progressing, Colin was simultaneously working towards a new exhibition project focused on Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. In 1995–1996, there was a concerted, diplomatic effort between the governments of the United Kingdom (with John Major as prime minister) and Argentina (with Carlos S. Menem, as president) to re-establish cordial relationships between the two nations that had been ruptured by the Malvinas/Falklands War of 1982. This included exchange of university graduate students and researchers in various fields (e.g. via institutions such as the British Council, the British Academy, CONICET, and others). In this context, the idea of preparing an exhibition at the Argentine Embassy came to fruition in 1996, with Colin taking the leading role as curator. To this effect, Luis Alberto Borrero, his friend and colleague from the Mylodon Cave days, was recruited by Colin. The Tierra del Fuego-Patagonia archaeological and ethnographic material was principally from the British Museum, but also included specimens from the Natural History Museum in London (some collected during the 1872–1876 H.M.S. Challenger expedition), and a selected few (mainly ethnographic specimens) from other museums in Europe and the Americas, such as the Anthropos-Museum und Institut and the Museum für Volkerkunde-Berlin

(Germany), the National Museum of Ethnography (Sweden), and the Instituto de la Patagonia in Chile. Borrero recalls that on the opening day both

Attired in our tuxedos, we explained the [exhibition's] content to ambassadors, administrators, businesspeople, and to [H.R.H. Prince] Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was particularly interested in the Fuegians, the reason why we conversed for a good while (Luis Alberto Borrero, personal communication, 10 July 2020).²¹

Colin convinced the powers that be at the British Museum that a Patagonian-Fuegian full scale exhibition at the Museum of Mankind would be well-received by the public and strengthen cultural relationships not only between the U.K. and Argentina, but also with Chile. Both ambassadors, Rogelio Pfirter (Argentina) and Mario Artaza (Chile), enthusiastically collaborated with the Museum of Mankind in this exhibition project. As Borrero recalled, "We spoke and coordinated a lot, obtained funds, and conducted several working visits to review collections together."²² He also brought in Chilean archaeologist Alfredo Prieto, who added his expertise on the archaeology of the Magellan Strait and worked as co-editor of the accompanying book. There is a chapter on natural history by Robert D. McCulloch, Chalmers M. Clapperton, Jorge Rabassa, and Andrew P. Curren; essays on archaeology, ethnohistory, and history by Francisco Mena, Anne

Chapman, Jean-Paul Duviols, Gillian Beer, Michael Taussig, and Mateo Martinic (McEwan *et al.* 1997; see also Borrero and McEwan 1996a, 1996b). At the same time that Colin was editing the book, he was in charge of all the preparations, from coordinating the installation with in-house museum staff, to negotiating specimen loans from various museums, to managing the budget. In Borrero's words:

A year later [1997] the exhibition Patagonia: Natural History, Prehistory and Ethnography at the Uttermost End of the Earth [McEwan *et al.* 1997] was inaugurated. There I could see how Colin, the tough mountain-climber who had dislocated his shoulder in Torres del Paine [in 1999] and had scaled mountains through the Andes, also fitted perfectly well dining with the trustees of the BM, dialoguing with the authorities of the Royal Geographic Society, or donning a tuxedo to attend parties at the embassies . . . in sum, he did all that it was necessary to do to obtain approval, support, and money so that the exhibition would be possible. The success of this exhibition is entirely due to the fact that Colin would never allow himself to be intimidated when facing an obstacle; he was able to entice even those least interested to participate. When I traveled for the opening, Colin was waiting for me at Heathrow with the automobile and chauffeur of the Argentinian ambassador. This was pure Colin; only he was able to get such things (Luis Alberto Borrero, personal communication, 10 July 2020).²³

²¹ con nuestros "smokings" explicamos su contenido a embajadores, administradores, personas de negocios y al mismo Felipe, Duque de Edimburgo, quién se manifestó particularmente interesado en los fueguinos, por lo que conversamos un buen rato.

²² hablamos y coordinamos mucho, consiguió fondos y realicé varias visitas de trabajo para revisar colecciones junto a Colin.

²³ Un año después [en 1997] se inauguró la exposición Patagonia. Natural History, Prehistory and Ethnography at the Uttermost End of the Earth [McEwan *et al.* 1997]. Ahí pude ver como Colin, el duro escalador que se había sacado el hombro en Torres del Paine [in 1999] y había ascendido montañas a lo largo de los Andes, también se manejaba perfectamente comiendo con los Trustees del BM, dialogando con las autoridades de la Royal

The opening day, 18 September 1997, with notable guests and scholars present, Colin, Luis, and Alfredo provided what can only be described as a scholarly guided lecture. I recall, in particular, Colin's lively discussion with David Attenborough (the famous naturalist) and John Hemming (a prominent historian of South America) on the hunting and fishing skills and technological knowledge of Fuegians that evolved since the Early Holocene and on the indigenes' precarious living conditions following European colonization. The exhibition ended on 31 December (Bowring 2012:102) and marked the closure of the Museum of Mankind (1970–1997). The Department of Ethnography moved to the Study Centre close to the British Museum (Cowgill 2002:61, 69).

That same year (in 1997) Colin also curated a display cabinet of Peruvian whistling vessels that formed part of the larger exhibition *Pottery in the Making* (see poster in Bowring 2012:101). X-Rays of some complete vessels allowed him to explain the wind-acoustic chamber properties and sound generated along with his usual insights into the symbolism of the designs and their likely ritual use and ceremonial contexts. Colin published a chapter in the accompanying volume (McEwan 1997), but I can attest that the chapter is but a small fraction of the far richer draft I read back then (the tyranny of copy editors and word limits!).

Geographical Society o poniéndose un “smoking” para asistir a fiestas en las embajadas. . . . En fin, todo lo que había que hacer para lograr la aprobación, el apoyo y el dinero para que la exhibición fuera posible. El éxito de esa exhibición se debe enteramente a que Colin nunca se dejó intimidar ante un obstáculo, a que lograba que hasta los menos interesados participaran. Cuando viajé para la inauguración Colin estaba esperándome en Heathrow con el auto y chofer del embajador de Argentina. Eso era puro Colin, solo él conseguía esas cosas.

I am not quite sure how Colin managed to find the time, but he also attended symposia and seminars in the midst of managing exhibitions (Figure 29). One of these was the 1998 Kay Pacha Conference on Peruvian Archaeology at the University of Wales-Trinity-St. David in Lampeter, organized by Penny Dransart (now at the University of Aberdeen). It was at this conference that Catherine (Kitty) Allen, now Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and International Affairs at The George Washington University (retired 2012), first met Colin. Although she also had obtained her Ph.D. at UIUC in 1978, their paths never crossed until this time. As a result of Colin's move to Dumbarton Oaks in Washington D.C., both were frequently in contact and, as is typical of Colin, she became a close friend, too. Allen shared her memories of that first encounter:

I remember how I'd been up all night on an uncomfortable transatlantic flight, and at Heathrow I'd barely managed to find the chartered bus designated for the conference. I was sitting there in an exhausted daze when a kind voice said “Catherine Allen?” It was Colin. He asked after my trip, how I was faring, explained that our route to Wales would include stops at Avebury and other stone circles. Although not a conference organizer, he'd undertaken to oversee the bus trip, be sure the various travellers were present and accounted for, and to act as *de facto* tour guide to the megaliths that lay between London and Lampeter. That was my introduction to the genuine pleasure Colin took in bringing people together and creating contexts in which they could enjoy knowing each other and sharing interests in common. Returning from the conference, he invited me to stay at his home rather than spend the night in a hotel (personal communication, Catherine Allen, 21 July 2020).

This warm and genuinely joyful reception making you feel welcome, even special, is quintessential Colin. This he did unfailingly at each and every event, conference, exhibition, or merely in every meeting in his office or gathering at his home.

THE UNKNOWN AMAZON, BRITISH MUSEUM (2001–2002)

The idea of bringing together a major exhibit on Amazonia originated with the Associação Brasil+ 500 (later renamed BrazilConnects), in celebration of the anticipated 500th anniversary of the foundation of Brazil and the encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples. BrazilConnects, chaired by E. Cid Ferreira, was instituted to promote, both in Brazil and abroad, Brazil's cultural achievements and the protection of its diverse natural environments, especially the Amazon rainforest. Cristiana Barreto was selected as curator for BrazilConnects and Eduardo Góes Neves as its scientific advisor (Figure 30). BrazilConnects was keen to make a major statement in Europe and, not surprisingly, chose to partner with the British Museum. Of course, Colin and I had known Cristiana (Kika) Barreto and Eduardo (Edu) Neves since they were Ph.D. students in the 1990s at, respectively, the University of Pittsburgh and Indiana University. We were well acquainted with the new data generated by the Central Amazonia Archaeological Project led by the late Jim Peterson, Edu Neves, and Mike Heckenberger, of the range of illuminating analyses stemming from Barreto's research on the ceramic styles of the Amazonian Polychrome Tradition, especially Marajoara culture, and of their work together at the Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia (MAE) of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP). It was natural that Colin, as the B.M. curator for Latin American collections, would jump with gusto into hosting the Amazonian exhibition in London.

There had been an earlier exhibition at the Museum of Mankind, in 1985, *Hidden Peoples from the Amazon* (Carmichael 1985:7–11). It drew extensively from

visual/historical sources from both the 19th and mid-20th centuries to construct life-size dioramas. [This] exhibition was involved in a controversy over their (mis)representation of the contemporary life of indigenous peoples, which also played a role in the development of the subsequent [Unknown Amazon] exhibition (Lana 2018).

Given this precedent, Colin made the case for this Amazonian exhibit to the British Museum's higher authorities, giving reassurances that Amazonia would be represented accurately, supported by in-depth academic research, and created in consultation with all relevant partners, particularly Brazilian scholars. Certainly, the British Museum could rely on Colin's thorough and up-to-date knowledge of Amazonian archaeology. He was, after all, a student of Donald Lathrap, the great Amazonian synthesizer, whom we all used to call *El Gran Caimán*.

In February 2000, the preparations began with a first trip by Colin to Brazil to review collections held at numerous museums and institutions through that vast country (Figure 31), details of which can be read in Colin's introduction to the accompanying publication (McEwan 2001b: 17). One major regret for Colin was that despite a concerted effort to recruit Jose P. Brochado, one of Lathrap's brilliant Ph.D. students, it was not to be.²⁴ During

²⁴ During the years 1980–1984 at UIUC, Colin and Jose Brochado and his wife Leticia were in constant contact. They forged a very close friendship and a mutual respect that lasted forever. Once aware of Brochado's health, Colin and Edu Neves took a flight to Porto Alegre, to offer moral support and company. My memory fails here: it may be that the ill health was Leticia's (not Jose's) and thus

this trip, Colin, Barreto, and Neves compiled a list of potential artifacts (and a photographic index) for the exhibition. Once back in London, I recall spending many hours going over the list of specimens in his office (and mine at the Institute) and talking endlessly about how to arrange them in the gallery space and what other objects might be needed. Several times, Edu Neves traveled to London to work with Colin. I recall intense discussions with Colin and Edu on the structure and content of the planned publication, on authors to be invited, on maps and illustrations. Perhaps the most salient event was the day Colin showed up in my office, extremely worried and downcast, with the news that “we *may* have lost Edu” to the poisonous bite of the jararaca (fer-de-lance: *Bothrops atrox*), which happened when Edu was surveying the terraces edging the floodplain of the Madeira River. It was touch-and-go for a while. Neves’ recovery was slow and, yet, he still found the energy to continue with the exhibition project, making the journey to London. Eduardo Neves shared his recollections of this period:

These trips [to museums] were in preparation for the “Unknown Amazon” . . . It was an opportunity I will be always grateful for because it gave me the chance to learn from Colin how to read, describe, and choose artifacts for exhibitions. Colin's eye for objects was amazing: he taught me how to see things I would have never noticed on my own. One of the highlights of the European trip was the visit of the Museum of the World Cultures, then known as Ethnographic Museum, in Gothenburg, Sweden. Aside from the wonderful collections, it was there, due to some cosmic Swedish influence, that we picked up the nicknames we would call ourselves from then on: McEwansson for him and Ne-

vesson for me. That trip took us also to London, Lisbon, Coimbra, Barcelona, Berlin, and Vienna as well as Rio de Janeiro, Belém, Santarém, and Manaus in Brazil. At the time I was recovering from dengue fever, I remember that. That same year, 2000, in November, I was bitten by a poisonous snake while doing fieldwork in the Amazon. Later that same month I should have traveled to London to spend four months working with Colin on the exhibition project. The snake bite obviously blew [away] all those plans and I would only travel to London in mid-January of 2001. The snake bite left me limping and walking with a cane for several months. A few days after the accident, while still recovering at the hospital, I called Colin who greeted me with an unlikely combination of relief for my survival and exasperation for the delay of the plans (Eduardo Góes Neves, personal communication, 28 October 2020).

As noted, in March 2000, Colin embarked on a series of curatorial trips to various museums in Europe, to Portugal, Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Spain. One of these was the Barbier-Mueller Museu d'Art Precolombí in Barcelona, in Casa Nadal, in the medieval quarter, opposite the Pablo Picasso Museum. Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller (based in Geneva), better known for his African and Oceanian ethnographic collections, also owned a small, but exquisite, collection of ceramics from Marajó and Santarem, all of them curated in Barcelona. Here Colin first met Anna Casas Gilberga, the museum director, who would inspire Colin's next major exhibition project (2009).

With the necessary export permits in hand, there followed an intensive period of work to design and install the exhibition, which was opened by HRH Princess Alexandra in the

the reason why he declined to become involved.

recently restored Great Court, specifically the Joseph Hotung Gallery, on 22 October 2001 (Bowring 2012:116). It would run until 1 April 2002. In putting it together, Colin gathered a stellar advisory board consisting of Warwick Bray, John Hemming, Stephen Hugh-Jones, Joanna Overing, Ghillean Prance, and Peter Rivière (Figure 32). Besides Neves and Barreto, he also kept in close touch with Denise Shaan, Denise Gomes, Vera Guapindaia, Edithe Pereira, and Juliana Machado, Gustavo Politis, Jim Peterson, Michael Heckenberger, Lucia van Velthem, and, of course, Warwick Bray, all of whom would write chapters for the planned publication. My own recollection of that period is of the intensive work involved in putting together the accompanying publication, repeatedly reviewing drafts from various contributors that Colin, Cristiane Matsunaga, and María Magro sent my way (and to others including members of the advisory board, Colin's boss, Keeper Jonathan C. H. King; Figure 27), and the British Museum Press editors Corali Hepburn and Teresa Francis. However, the lion's share of critical editing fell on Colin, Cristiana Barreto, and Eduardo Neves, supported by Jasmin Pinho's organizational skills that kept authors and editors/reviewers on schedule. It truly was a monumental task because of the time-pressure for having the book printed before the opening day.

The volume, richly illustrated, was published on time and titled *Unknown Amazon: Culture in Nature in Ancient Brazil* (McEwan *et al.* 2001; for exhibition poster, see Bowring 2002:116). In it appears Colin's chapter "Seats of Power: Axiality and Access to Invisible Worlds" (pp. 176–197), in which he analyzed the significance (symbolism) of both archaeological and ethnographic seats used in various social and ceremonial contexts, particularly rituals involving inhaling hallucinogenic substances (*yopo*, *yajé*, etc.), where the seat and the seated constituted the axial pivot and the liminal space articulating

the visible and invisible cosmos, the latter of which was accessed and indeed made *visible* via altered states of consciousness. In short, the seat and the seated person constitute and embody power, whether as an object of representation, such as the anthropomorphic ceramic burial vessels of the Amazonian Polychrome Tradition and the Maracá Tradition, or as indigenous actors culled from ethnographic descriptions of seated individuals, particularly focusing on northwestern Amazonia's Eastern Tukanoan groups. This work is, of course, a theme that links with Colin's studies of Manteño stone seats in Ecuador (McEwan and Looper in press 2021; Silva and McEwan 2011). The analysis extended to the visual aesthetics and the semantics of the designs of the objects themselves. This book became a must-read for anyone interested in Amazonian indigenous cultures, and their relationships to nature (historical ecology), to the past (archaeology, ethnohistory), and to the present (ethnography). The book and/or exhibition were reviewed by Cadbury (2003), Funari (2002), Nugent (2002), and Perrin (2002) all of whom point out strengths and weaknesses. Nugent, for example, observed that:

While the exhibition illustrates this dispute [*i.e.*, Betty Meggers' Standard Paradigm *vs.* Donald W. Lathrap and Anna C. Roosevelt's revised models; see Stahl 2002] in broad form, the accompanying catalogue . . . goes much further. In a series of authoritative case studies accompanied by handsome plates, maps and diagrams, the catalogue picks up where the exhibition leaves off and provides compelling evidence that the unknown dimensions of prehistoric Amazonia have only just begun to be explored. There are numerous prospective tragedies facing modern Amazonia, many of which are enhanced by ignorance, and better understanding of actual–present and past–Ama-

sonian societies is a pressing issue and one which this exhibition (and catalogue) address with authority (Nugent 2002:21).

To which Cadbury (2003:133) added:

This book is a highly political object, working to publicise and protect the future of nature and culture in Amazonia through an appreciation of its past. What is more, it makes an enthralling read.

Chapters in *Unknown Amazon* are still required readings for the course on Amazonian archaeology that I teach with Manuel Arroyo-Kalin at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London.

To reach the wider public and enhance their knowledge about the exhibition and Amazonia generally, articles were published for the British Museum Friends in the journal *British Museum Magazine* (McEwan *et al.* 2001) and for the general public in *Minerva* (McEwan *et al.* 2002) and in *History Today* (McEwan 2001c). In addition, there were keynote lectures given at the William Fagg and BP Lecture Theatres, guided gallery talks, film shows (by Brazilian directors), and even a study day/workshop session. The brochure of events of the British Museum, *What's On* (January–February 2002), shows Colin scheduled to give a gallery talk (Tuesday, 8 January) entitled “Parallel Histories, Parallel Worlds: Exploring the Unknown Amazon”, while I was tasked with giving (on 18 January and 15 February) a lecture titled “The Archaeology of Forest Foraging and Agriculture in the Amazon” at the Clore Education Centre in the British Museum. J. Quinton and B. Willis (both conservators at the British Museum) also gave a gallery talk (19 February) titled “A Journey into the Unknown Amazon: A Conservator’s Perspective”. A study day/workshop (19 January) devoted to “The Amazon—Past, Present, and Future”, done in partnership with

Survival International, was carried out at the museum’s BP Lecture Theatre. These public outreach activities addressed Perrin’s (2002:806) misplaced critique that visitors “should not expect to learn much from the interpretation of the exhibit”. The opportunities to learn much more were there, but as a choice left in the public’s hands.

Earlier, in June 2000, a ceramic workshop for conservators and curators of Brazil took place in the *Museu de Etnologia Arqueologia* of the University of São Paulo (MAE-USP) hosted by María d’Agostino Flemming and Gedley Braga and led by both Quinton and Willis that, in Colin’s words, was “the first such gathering of conservators and curators in Brazil” (McEwan *et al.* 2001:18). While any such major exhibition has a limited life, beyond memories of impressed visitors (like me), Colin and the team at the British Museum left permanent legacies beyond the exhibition’s duration: an erudite publication that two decades on still has currency in academic teaching and research, despite Funari’s (2002) protestations.

Almost 30,000 paying visitors enjoyed the exhibition during the c. five month period it was on display (Bowring 2012:116). Of course, one must keep in mind that visitor’s statistics can be misleading, because such numbers alone cannot measure the relevance, importance, or even success of a given exhibition.

INTERREGNUM: LONDON AND SPAIN (2005–2007)

Following the *Unknown Amazon* exhibition (2005–2006), Colin recruited Caroline Cartwright, Andrew Middleton, and Rebecca Stacey of the British Museum to join forces in conducting a detailed technical, stylistic, and iconographic analyses of a series of Pre-Columbian turquoise artifacts selected from the museum’s own Latin American collection. This resulted in

Turquoise Mosaics from Mexico published in 2006 (McEwan *et al.* 2006). Despite its scientific, technical analyses, Colin and the co-authors' writing style was accessible and intelligible to non-specialists. The volume was particularly well received by visitors who wished to expand their knowledge of the Mexican Gallery exhibits. The weaving of materials research (B.M.'s science department) with anthropological and art studies is characteristic of Colin's approach and method for making Latin American artifacts (most hidden in storage) not only visible and comprehensible to the public, but, at the same time, furnishing new insights for academic specialists.

Colin was often approached by other museums and institutions for guidance or advice, or to request help with loans from the British Museum. Thus, in 2005, Hassan Arero, then curator at the Horniman Museum (Forest Hill, South London) launched a wonderful exhibition *Amazon to Caribbean: Early Peoples of the Rainforest* (October 2005–October 2006), which included a number of artifacts loaned by the British Museum.²⁵ I recall a particular meeting with Arero when Colin, looking at the "Oldman" *duho*, a Caribbean wooden seat with gold inlays (Oliver *et al.* 2008:98–99) and at a Carib war club/ceremonial staff from Guiana (see Arero 2005), launched into an impromptu discourse on the nature of power embedded in both objects and their human agents/users. My regret is that I did not have a voice recorder in hand.

²⁵ Hassan Arero (anthropology), was the Keeper of Anthropology at the Horniman Museum from 2002–2007. After leaving the Horniman, he became the curator of the East African collections at the British Museum, before taking up the post of Director of Museums, Sites, and Monuments for The National Museums of Kenya. He was appointed Cabinet Secretary (Minister) for Sports, Culture, and the Arts in the Kenyan government in May 2013.

In 2007, Colin also contributed to the Living and Dying permanent Wellcome Trust Gallery at the British Museum with a case study (display) titled *Living with the Earth in the Andes*. He was not shy about using any space made available to display materials, usually hidden in storage, like the small, single cabinet Muisca Offerings consisting of pots containing tumbaga (copper-gold-silver alloy) figurines that fronted the British Museum's Study Centre (displayed in 2007). As was habitual with Colin (*i.e.*, as with the Mexican turquoise), he teamed up with Warwick Bray, Roberto Lleras Pérez, and John Merkle (archaeometallurgy specialist), all from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, to conduct the research and background studies on the figurines, the results of which informed the display's legend.²⁶ Typical of Colin, in-depth research, including scientific technical analyses of the materials in question, was *de rigueur* even for modest, out of the way, exhibits like this one. It was not size, but quality of display and information, that mattered to him. Besides his own work, Colin also fulfilled his duties as curator by replying to a myriad of enquiries on artifacts (about their cultural identity; genuine or fake?) on the part of the public. More enthralling for him were requests from scholars and students to study particular collections from the Americas. For instance, in 2006 he assisted Peter Rivière's research on Sir Robert H. Schomburgk's nineteenth century ethnographic collection of Waiwai (Carib of Guiana) objects, as part of his two volume

²⁶ Roberto Lleras Pérez obtained his Ph.D. at the Institute of Archaeology (under Bray and Oliver) and specialized in the Muisca culture, especially its tumbaga/gold artifacts. He was Sub-director Técnico of the Museo del Oro in Bogota (1993–2010) and is now a professor at the Universidad del Externado in Bogota. John Merkel (now retired), on the other hand, conducted the archaeometallurgical study of some of the specimens displayed; while Warwick Bray is, indeed, well-known for his numerous works on Isthmus-Colombian gold.

biography of Schomburgk (Rivière 2006a, 2006b; Figure 32).

For Caribbean archaeologists like me, the British Museum is a treasure trove; it holds the largest concentration of first-rate wooden figures and stone-sculptured artifacts from the region, alongside many stone celts that classical evolutionary archaeologists held to be hard evidence of a Neolithic Stage in the Antilles. In 2006, I began earnestly to research in-depth the Caribbean collections held at the British Museum for a book I was planning to write (Oliver 2009). Throughout my research, Colin not only provided the key to the Orsman Road depository, but cheerfully joined me in the detective work, reviewing accession cards, opening box after box, and talking endlessly about the objects found. On one occasion we stumbled on several large wooden crates with stenciled labels “Santo Domingo, RD” (Dominican Republic) dated to 1906 that had never been opened! After some research, it became clear to both of us that although the collection was bought from a private collector in Santo Domingo, many artifacts almost certainly originated in Puerto Rico. Several of these “never-seen-before” objects would be publicly exhibited for the first time ever, in Spain (as discussed below).

Around this time (2007) Joanna Ostapko-wicz (now at the School of Archaeology, Oxford University) was also conducting technical analyses of the Caribbean wooden figures and *duhos* (seats). Although some might think of Colin as an outsider to Caribbean archaeology, I knew him to have the critical, in-depth knowledge and intellectual acumen to engage in serious dialogue.²⁷ Thus, Joanna and I took full

²⁷ The only other archaeologist in the U.K. who conducted work in the Caribbean was my colleague at the Institute of Archaeology, the late Peter L. Drewett. His links, however, were with Mary Hill Harris at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge University.

advantage of Colin during this time. That same year (end of 2006) Colin was contacted by Anna Casas Gilberga, director of the Barbier-Mueller Museu d’Art Precolombí in Barcelona, for advice on a forthcoming exhibition of Amazonian (Marajoara and Santarem) ceramics.²⁸ Previously, as noted above, Colin had traveled to both Barcelona and Geneva to explore Amazonian collections for possible inclusion in the Unknown Amazon exhibition, but as there was a question of the paperwork/legality of the acquisitions by Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller’s foundation/museum, these were not exhibited in the British Museum.²⁹ The Barbier-Mueller collection in Barcelona, however, also included a small number of artifacts from the Antilles. Anna Casas Gilberga was then keen to launch an exhibition around the figure of Fray Ramón Pané, the famous hermit of the Hieronymite Order whom Christopher Columbus had tasked in 1493 with finding out if the natives of Hispaniola had organized religion, and whether they practiced idolatry.³⁰ Pané arguably was the first genuine ethnographer of the New World. Being Catalan-born and having been recruited by Columbus from the monastery of St. Hieronymus of the Murtra (Myrtle), located in Badalona, on the outskirts of Barcelona, this friar would make an attractive link between modern day Catalans and the native Caribbean.

²⁸ This exhibit opened on 16 November 2007 and closed 5 April 2008. The catalogue publication is by Gentil Corrêa and Barry (2007).

²⁹ Following the death of Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller, his heir put to public auction (by Christie’s-Paris) the entire Pre-Columbian (Americas) collection.

³⁰ Pané’s written account to Columbus (Pané 1999 [c.1494]), unusual for its time, consciously avoided revealing his personal interpretations and moral judgements of the native myths, legends, beliefs, and ritual practices that he recorded. His voice, in the first person singular (and thus Hispanocentric), is heard only in the last chapter (XXV bis) of his account. The remainder is written in the third person (“they say”, “they/he told me”).

At the time, it fitted with the Catalanist movement to rescue important historical personages (ancient and modern) who had been largely suppressed from Catalan consciousness during Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975). However, because the museum in Barcelona lacked Caribbean archaeological specimens of note, Anna Casas Gilberga asked Colin for his collaboration in spearheading a partnership with the British Museum for the loan of specimens, and especially insisted on Colin's participation as a co-curator for the exhibition.

Given this three-pronged assault on Colin (by Ostapkowicz, Casas, and me), he became infected with the Caribbean virus to the point that in 2006 we jointly submitted to the Art and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) a proposal for their Diaspora, Migrations, and Identities program, entitled *The Caribbean before Columbus: The Amerindian Diaspora*. Unfortunately, our application was unsuccessful, which goes to show that Colin and I had our share of setbacks. Nevertheless, serendipity came into play. By early 2007, an exhibit centered on Caribbean artifacts from the British Museum was rising on the horizon as a very real possibility, but it would not be in the Great Russell Street building, but rather in three different Spanish museums.

THE PRE-COLUMBIAN CARIBBEAN EXHIBITION IN SPAIN (2007–2009)

To gain the backing of British Museum authorities for the projected Caribbean exhibition in Spain, Colin undertook the wise step of first launching a temporary exhibition in the renowned Room 3, a relatively intimate space in the vast museum dedicated, in those days, to showcasing a set of artifacts chosen by the different curators, highlighting specimens stored away or hidden in other galleries, such as the Enlightenment Gallery. To this end, Colin invited Anna Casas Gilberga to participate in

the selection of materials and consulted with Silke Ackermann (now director of the Science Museum in Oxford) an expert in archaeological science (Figure 33). The Caribbean before Columbus Room 3 exhibition opened on 3 May and closed on 17 June 2007 (Figure 34). This small exhibit was part of the British Museum's theme of the season, *Atlantic Trade and Identity* (Bowring 2012:129), during which several curators selected their favorite artifacts for display. The strategic location of Room 3 next to the main (south) entrance ensured that it received many more visitors than otherwise would have been the case. It featured the five most salient Pre-Columbian carved wooden artifacts from the Greater Antilles, in the form of carved *duhos* (seats) with gold eye-mouth inlays, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figures (some with shell inlays) representing powerful beings (imbued with *cemí* potency), most of them used in the *cojoba* (or *cohoba*) ceremony, which involved inhaling hallucinogenic snuff extracted from the seeds of the *cojobana* tree (*Anadenanthera peregrina*).

Among the ethnohistoric indigenous societies of the Greater Antilles (c. A.D. 800–1500s), the concept of *cemí* is not unlike the *mana* or *hau* of Pacific Islanders (see Oliver 2009:59–76). This Taíno term glosses as “sweet” or “sweetness”, a metaphor for “a numinous power, a driving vital force or potency that compels action; it is the power to cause, to effect.” Thus, it does not refer to an object *per se* (as many archaeologists are prone to use the term), but rather “denotes a condition or state of being” (*ibid.*: 59). Under particular conditions, beings (albeit, non-human) and other things in nature (a rock, tree), and natural phenomena (hurricanes) can be imbued (animated, empowered to act) by this vital force, *cemí*. The anthropomorphic and zoomorphic three-pointed stones, and the biomorphic carved wood figures and seats of the Caribbean are notable examples of objects imbued with this potency, which announces

that they are, indeed, powerful, sentient, beings. The *behique* (shaman) determines whether something in nature, such as a tree, is imbued with *cemí*, by conducting a ceremony that involves the inhalation of *cohoba*, during which he engages in a dialogue to discover the names and honorific titles of this (wood, stone, etc.) being/personage, its specific powers, the form it tells him should be sculpted (e.g. an anthropomorphic seat, a bird or human-like figure, and so on). This is best described by Ramón Pané (1999 [c.1494]). The resulting *cemí*-imbued figures, such as *duhos*, carved biomorphic figures, and the decorated inhaling tubes themselves, constituted the objectified *cemís*, albeit not all phenomena imbued with this force ended up as sculptured (material) objects. The ritual of *cohoba* inhalation thus enables otherwise ordinary humans to engage in social relations to, for example, negotiate with supernatural beings for their support in attaining (divining) a particular outcome (e.g. a victory in war or in a ballgame, an auspicious wedding, the best time for trading, or a bountiful harvest). When a cacique led the *cohoba* ceremony, seated on his or her *cemí*-imbued *duho* and surrounded with other *cemí*-imbued figures, the focus was on negotiating and consulting with the supernatural beings about whether this or that government policy would be supported and succeed. Shamans also conducted the *cohoba* ritual, but the agenda focused on the health and well-being of patients, for which the appropriate *cemí*-beings were summoned. Even from this very brief account, it is not surprising that Colin should become enthralled with Caribbean art and archaeology, as it added and complemented his own research on seats and power (e.g. McEwan 2001). This knowledge is what motivated Colin to immerse himself in the Room 3 display and commit to the Caribbean exhibition in Spain.

The preparations for the exhibit in Spain were administratively, logistically, and financially complex, as they involved first traveling to

the Barbier-Mueller Museum of Pre-Columbian Art in Barcelona (Figure 35), then to the Museo de América in Madrid, and concluding in CaixaGalicia Cultural Foundation's gallery in Santiago de Compostela. The exhibition opened in Barcelona on 6 June 2008 and closed in Santiago de Compostela on 8 February 2009. At a higher level, it also involved McEwan and Casas Gilberga dealing with the *Ajuntament* (City Council) of Barcelona, the Ministry of Culture of Spain, the British Museum director (Neil MacGregor) and trustees and, not the least, with Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller and his museum director in Geneva, Laurence Mattet.³¹ Through it all, Colin and Casas Gilberga were essentially responsible for the smooth operation of the traveling exhibition. At the British Museum, Eva Nueno assisted Colin in gathering the accession data of each loan specimen (and a myriad of other things); Fiona Grisdale dealt with the matter of specimen loans; while Stuart Watson assisted in the installation of the exhibit in Barcelona. In Barcelona, Anna Casas Gilberga and Colin were assisted by Candice Puget and Cristina Fernández de la Reguera in coordinating with the curators and staff in London, Madrid, and Santiago, supported by a team of Friends of the Museum (all volunteers) in the preparations for the Barcelona exhibition. Casas

³¹ Mattet (<https://www.lesmusesbm.com/artists-partners>) (accessed 13 May 2021) was particularly important as the crucial link with Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller who, with the City Hall of Barcelona, had founded his museum in Barcelona in 1997. In his lifetime, Barbier-Mueller, a renowned collector, was a controversial figure. As Noce (2017) reported in his obituary, Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller “gave his Pre-Colombian collection to Barcelona and, in 1997, a renovated Gothic palace, Casa Nadal, opened as the Barbier-Mueller Museum of Pre-Colombian Art. But there were financial and legal complications, and he withdrew his collection in 2012 to sell most of it the following year at Sotheby's in Paris (see Sotheby's 2013). The sale did not meet expectations, mostly because Mexico and Peru discouraged American institutions from buying. . . . Barbier-Mueller did not like to speak of this episode.”

Gilberga and Colin liaised with Paz Cabello-Carro, director of the Museo de América, and conservator Ana Verde Casanova for the Madrid leg of the exhibition. Simultaneously, they worked with Rosario Sarmiento Escalona, curator of the Fundación Cultural CaixaGalicia for the final leg of the exhibition in Santiago de Compostela (Figures 36, 37). This gives a taste of what it took to put together and successfully execute an exhibition abroad, a circumstance repeated in reverse (but under even more complex circumstances) in Colin's next exhibition project, *Moctezuma II: The Ruler*.

My own role was to serve as a scientific advisor on Caribbean archaeology. Colin also made me the principal editor for the accompanying publication (Oliver *et al.* 2008) and I acted as a sounding board for the ideas thrown around for producing an informative exhibition experience for visitors. The exhibition was entitled *El Caribe Precolombino: Fray Ramón Pané y el Universo Taíno* (The PreColumbian Caribbean: Fray Ramón Pané and the Taíno Universe; Figure 38, 39). There is no question (and Anna Casas Gilberga agrees) that the glue that kept all of the diverse parts (including the politics) of this project together was Colin, much like a director of an orchestra who can exact from each instrument what is needed to create a symphony rather than noise.

The exhibition was a success, receiving much attention from the press (Montaigne 2009) and radio stations, as well as television. As important, exercise and information kits (in Catalan and Spanish) were prepared for young school children for the Barcelona exhibit, and Colin further insisted that I gave my public presentations in Catalan, a gesture well received in Barcelona. As noted, except for the wooden specimens, the remaining archaeological Taíno artifacts were entirely unknown to Caribbean specialists, and never seen before by the public. The publication includes chapters by historians

Jaume Aymar, Consuelo Varela, and Juan Gil on Fray Ramón Pané; by Paz Cabello on the history of Caribbean collections held in Spain (from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries), while Colin's chapter provided a sweeping analysis of how and why Caribbean artifacts ended up in cabinets of curiosity in Europe, starting with Columbus' 1495 Treasure List and ending with British Museum acquisitions up to the twentieth century. My own contribution focused on the interpretation of the exhibited objects in context of Fray Ramón Pané's account. Today, the luxuriously illustrated book is out of print, but it is freely available from <https://ucl.academia.edu/JoseOliver> (Accessed 13 May 2021). Unfortunately, the global economic downturn of 2008 meant that Colin's plan to publish an English version of the Spanish volume (being negotiated with Princeton University Press and others) was ditched. Sadly, by the end of 2012, for various reasons, the Museum of Pre-Columbian Art in Barcelona ceased to exist.

Meanwhile, The British Museum commissioned Colin to write a book that featured the most significant specimens from the Americas held either in the museum's vaults or "lost" in such miscellaneous exhibits as the Enlightenment Gallery. This formed part of a series called *Art in Detail* that also covered other areas of the world. The culmination was *Ancient American Art in Detail* (McEwan 2009b), where Colin displayed his uncanny ability to bring together diverse Pre-Columbian objects from all over Latin America into a coherent narrative arranged by themes, such as origins of life, becoming human, seasonal cycles, and entering the spirit world, thus anticipating some of the themes for his next exhibition on *Moctezuma*.

MOCTEZUMA THE RULER EXHIBITION AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM (2009–2010)

Colin McEwan's last major exhibition at the British Museum focused on Mesoamerica, specifically on the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II (the correct Nahuatl spelling is Motecuhzoma). It opened in the famous Reading Room (the former locus of the British Library at the center of the Great Courtyard) on 24 September 2009 and closed on 24 January 2010 (Figure 40). This was the last of a series of four exhibitions by the British Museum exploring great rulers of antiquity, focusing on their power and empires. It followed the previous exhibition *The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army* (Bowring 2012:130) that closed in April 2008. The two earlier exhibitions focused on the Roman Emperor Hadrian and on Shah Abbas of Persia. The Moctezuma exhibition was timed to coincide with the anniversaries of the Independence of Mexico (1810) and of the Mexican Revolution (1910). The following paraphrases the memories of Leonardo López Luján who, as noted above, first met Colin during the conference related to the newly installed Mexican Gallery in 1995.³²

In 2007, Colin contacted Leonardo López Luján (now director of the *Museo Templo Mayor-INAH*) to propose an ambitious project in which Leonardo would play a key role, "a show of friendship for which I never stopped being grateful". The objective was to launch a major exhibition of the Aztec empire featuring Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina, who ruled Tenochtitlan between 1502 and 1520 A.D. In preparation, a series of visits to London and Mexico took place (Figure 41), where Leonardo and Colin had strategic meetings with Neil

MacGregor, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma³³ (Emeritus Research Professor, INAH and former director of the Templo Mayor Museum), and Felipe Solís (director of the *Museo Nacional de Antropología*, Mexico), and other notables such as historians John Huxtable Elliot (Professor Emeritus, University of Oxford) and Hugh S. Thomas (Baron Thomas of Swynnerton) who, in 1993, published the well-received *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés and the Fall of Old Mexico*. The preparation work was intensive and exhaustive. As Leonardo recalls:

I remember that, during two years of my life, there was hardly a day that Colin and I did not fail to communicate by e-mail to exchange news on the progress of the work. Keeping in mind the time differences existing between our two cities, the latter meant that with this exchange of messages, our activities never stopped. The work was as exhausting as it was gratifying (Leonardo López Luján, personal communication, 9 June 2020).³⁴

Initially, various Mexican institutions were not enthralled with the idea of a major exhibition about Moctezuma, as he was too controversial a historical figure in Mexico. Nonetheless, Colin and López Luján successfully negotiated loans from no less than twenty-eight different museums and institutions: in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, England, Scotland, and

³² Here I rely on López Luján's unpublished short essay "Colin y El México Antiguo", dated 29 June 2020 in the possession of the author of this monograph.

³³ <https://colnal.mx/integrantes/eduardo-matos-moctezuma/> (Accessed 13 May 2021)
For further information on Matos Moctezuma's career, see Carrasco *et al.* (2007).

³⁴ Recuerdo que, durante dos años de mi vida, no hubo prácticamente un día en que Colin y yo no nos comunicáramos por correo electrónico para intercambiar avances del trabajo. Teniendo en cuenta la diferencia horaria existente entre nuestras dos ciudades, lo anterior significa que nuestras actividades nunca se detuvieron con este cambio de estafetas. Fue un trabajo tan extenuante como gratificante.

the United States. From Mexico alone eleven different museums were engaged. The exhibition included masterpieces of Aztec culture such as the impressive stone monument Teocalli of Sacred Warfare, among other works commissioned by Moctezuma himself, which bear his image and his name glyph. An exquisite turquoise mask and goldwork showcased the consummate craftsmanship of the artisans employed in the Aztec court and masterly colonial period paintings known as *enconchados* (oil paintings on wooden panels with inlaid mother-of-pearl detail) captured the events of the Spanish conquest in vivid detail. The exhibition also included idealized European portraits of Moctezuma, as well as stunning colonial period codices.

A great effort was invested in the production and publication of the volume accompanying the exhibition, titled *Moctezuma: Aztec Ruler* (McEwan and López Luján 2009). The chapters, along with detailed catalogue entries and high-quality illustrations, were authored by Aztec specialists Felipe Solís Olguí, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, Guilhem Olivier, Richard Townsend, Frances F. Berdan, John H. Elliot, David A. Brading, Salvador Rueda Smithers, Ximena Chávez Balderas and, of course, Leonardo López Luján. Colin's modesty is reflected by the fact that other than the introduction (with López Luján), he refrained from contributing a thematic chapter. Undoubtedly, he wanted to give space and pride of place to the scholars who had, indeed, devoted much of their research to Aztec history and archaeology. Instead, his voice would find an outlet in the article "Moctezuma II: Man, Myth, and Empire" co-authored with Elisenda Vila Llonch (who assisted Colin in the British Museum) and Leonardo López Luján (López Luján *et al.* 2009). Separately, Vila Llonch (2009) wrote a more concise book (96 pages) aimed at the general public.

As was the case with the Unknown Amazon exhibition, public lectures, guided tours, workshops, and press interviews were undertaken, giving it maximum exposure. Reviews appeared in newspapers, such as *The Independent* (Akbaï 2009), *The Telegraph* (Dorment 2009), and *Le Monde* (Montaigne 2009), and in magazines such as the *New Statesman* (Holland 2009) and *Apollo* (Bailey 2009). Perhaps the most in-depth review is James's (2009) article in *Antiquity*. The exhibition, as might be expected, broke the attendance records of all of Colin's previous exhibitions (much to my chagrin, being a dedicated Caribbean and Amazonian archaeologist).

The success of the exhibition in London allayed any institutional concerns in Mexico about the presumed unpopularity of the figure of Moctezuma II. Hence, plans for exhibiting Moctezuma in Mexico City were launched, with Leonardo López Luján as curator. A version of the British Museum's exhibition was put together in the Templo Mayor Museum in Mexico City, albeit Colin's involvement as curator was not officially requested; however, Leonardo kept up constant consultation with Colin. For this occasion, the English publication was translated into Spanish (with a new introduction), *Moctezuma II: Tiempo y destino de un gobernante* this time with López Luján as the first editor (2010). In London around 210,000 people visited the exhibition, and between June and November 2010, the exhibition in Mexico City welcomed a stunning 350,000 plus visitors.³⁵

During 2011–2012 Colin collaborated with Jonathan C. H. King, Max Carocci, Caroline Cartwright, and Rebecca Stacey on a science-based study of turquoise-decorated artifacts. The effort resulted in a book with Colin as co-

³⁵ See: <https://www.inah.gob.mx/boletines/3604-moctezuma-ii-fascina-a-350-mil-visitantes>. (Posted on 29th November 2010; accessed 10 October 2020).

editor, *Turquoise in Mexico and North America: Science, Art, Culture, and Collections*, in which analyses of specimens from the British Museum and other museums are reported (King *et al.* 2012; see review by Villela 2015). This publication was the outcome of a conference that took place during the Moctezuma exhibition, centered on the Henry Christy and European Collections and was also a follow-up to the 2006 book, *Turquoise Mosaics from Mexico* (McEwan *et al.* 2006). The conference was interdisciplinary and was thematically structured to focus on scientific analyses, conservation, and interpretation, geology and provenance studies, collection histories, and included North American turquoise.

The last venture on which I worked closely with Colin in London was Neil MacGregor's project entitled *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, simultaneously showcased in print (MacGregor 2010) and in the BBC Radio 4 series (recorded interviews). Colin commented on specimens from Latin America, such as the Paracas textiles, the famous Veracruz yoke, and a Huastec stone statue, a Moche ceramic warrior figurine, the Aztec turquoise-inlaid double headed serpent, and a Mexican codex map; whereas I focused on the *guayacán duho* (seat) with gold inlays from the Caribbean. The BBC Radio 4 recorded interviews were available online for well over a year. In this regard, it is relevant to point out that as Curator and Head of the Americas, Colin had to frequently contribute and act as spokesperson on the Americas for many of the British Museum projects, such as acting as an advisor for various BBC documentaries and programs. He was likewise frequently contacted by free-lance documentary film makers to help them develop programs. Colin was contacted regularly by collectors and private and public institutions to provide his expertise on the collections and objects from the Americas. Contrary to popular perceptions, the role of curator in a public institution like the

British Museum is wider and more far-reaching than to just to create exhibitions.

CHAPTER 7

THE FIELD ARCHAEOLOGIST: PATAGONIA (2001–2003) AND THE PERUVIAN ANDES (2006–2010)

While Colin's work in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on his curatorial and directorship roles at the British Museum and Dumbarton Oaks, he still managed to conduct important archaeological field projects with trowel in hand and boots on feet. Here two of these are highlighted.

ELIZABETH ISLAND, MAGELLAN STRAIT, CHILE (2001–2003)

Two years after the 1997 Patagonia exhibition at the Museum of Mankind, Luis Borrero, assisted by Colin, began a study of archaeological collections from the Magellan Strait and Patagonia deposited at the Museum of Natural History and the British Museum. His museum-based study eventually led to a joint archaeological field project at Isla Isabel (Elizabeth Island) in the Strait of Magellan (Patagonia) in Chile. As Luis recalls:

With his [Colin's] full support, together with my team, I had at my disposal complete access to the collections, archives, photographs, and specialists during multiple visits through the three years that the project lasted. There, after studying the scarce materials collected by members of the H.M.S. Challenger expedition in 1876 that we had located at the British Museum, we began to design the project that years later we fulfilled on Elizabeth Island, Magellan Strait (Luis Borrero, personal communication, 10 July 2020).³⁶

³⁶ Con su [Colin's] apoyo pleno pude disponer junto a mi equipo de pleno acceso a colecciones, archivos, fotografías y especialistas durante las múltiples visitas a lo largo de los tres años que duró el proyecto. Allí, tras estudiar los escasos materiales colectados por miembros de la expedición de H.M.S. Challenger en 1876 que habíamos ubicado en el BM, empezamos a diseñar el proyecto que años

Fieldwork was undertaken in May 2001, from 18 to 31 January 2002, and 1 to 10 March 2003 (Luis Borrero, personal communication, 16 October 2020). In addition to Colin and Luis, the research team included Flavia Morello, Fabiana M. Martín, and Manuel San Román of the Instituto de la Patagonia, Universidad de Magallanes. As Luis Borrero remembered, fieldwork was:

. . . a difficult task, since it required navigating very early through the waters of the strait, in a Zodiac captained by the young but veteran Manuel San Román . . . in order to come back at night. In one of these campaigns, during an unexpected turn of bad weather, Colin cracked two ribs against some rocks. This forced him to remain in Punta Arenas, with a brace, the rest of the campaign. On another of these hard trips, the bad weather forced the rest of the team to stay and sleep in the open, under torrential rain and constant wind . . . until the Chilean navy went out searching [for us] that night, and whom we saw navigate with the reflector light, although they never found us. In the dim morning light, the weather improved and with GPS tracking, we were able to return to the continent's coast where, of course, Colin, bandage and all, was anxiously and worriedly waiting for us, with the pick-up truck's lights on to guide us. When we returned to the house with the "injured" [Colin], he regaled us with a delicious dinner that we consumed around 8:00 AM! A year later, during the next campaign, Colin twisted an ankle while we were traversing the island's glacial geofoms, forcing him to re-

después cumplimos en la isla Elizabeth, en el estrecho de Magallanes.

turn to London. I remember that Norma told us, jokingly of course, “I’m not going to send him again . . . he always comes back with something broken”. Colin was not clumsy; on the contrary, he was very skillful and knowledgeable [of tough field conditions]. These things happened because he took risks. As we say in Argentina “No se achicaba ante nada” [He did not shrink at anything] (Luis Borrero, personal communication, 10 July 2020).³⁷

At every opportunity Colin made a point of engaging in conversation with the indigenous Fuegian groups. In one photograph (Figure 42), Colin is seen dialoguing with two Yaghan (or Yámana) women on a topic relating to the 1997 Patagonia exhibit, as he seems to be holding the exhibition’s publication in his hands (McEwan *et al.* 1997). The photograph was taken at

³⁷ Fue una difícil tarea, pues requería navegar muy temprano por las aguas del estrecho, en un Zodiac capitaneado por el joven, pero veterano Manuel San Román, del Instituto de la Patagonia, para retornar por la noche. En una de esas campañas, durante una accidentada vuelta con mal tiempo, Colin se quebró dos costillas al golpearse con unas rocas. Eso lo obligó a permanecer en Punta Arenas, con una faja, el resto de la campaña. En uno de esos duros viajes el mal tiempo nos obligó al resto del equipo a pasar la noche a la intemperie, bajo la lluvia y el viento constantes . . . hasta la Armada de Chile salió a buscarnos esa noche, a quienes vimos pasar con un reflector pero que nunca nos vieron. En la oscura madrugada el clima mejoró y, con la traza del GPS, pudimos retornar a la costa del continente donde, por supuesto estaba esperando Colin, “fajado” y todo, ansioso y preocupado, manteniendo las luces prendidas de la camioneta para orientarnos. Cuando volvimos a la casa el “herido” nos agasajó con una cena deliciosa que consumimos a eso de las 18 de la mañana! Un año después, en la siguiente campaña, Colin se torció un pie mientras recorríamos las geoformas glaciares de la isla, por lo que retornó renco a Londres. Recuerdo que Norma nos dijo, en broma por supuesto, “No se los envió más . . . siempre vuelve con algo roto”. Colin no era torpe . . . por el contrario era muy hábil y conocedor, pero esas cosas le ocurrían porque siempre tomaba riesgos. Como diríamos en Argentina, “No se achicaba ante nada”.

Ukika, a settlement immediately east of Puerto Williams on Navarino Island, facing the Beagle Channel (Tierra del Fuego).

The survey and excavations at Elizabeth Island were aimed at characterizing the easternmost maritime-oriented and terrestrial-oriented hunter-gather “canoeing” groups in Patagonia. The project focused on (1) correlating archaeological deposits and the observations made by different European explorers and by twentieth century archaeologists, particularly Junius Bird (1980); (2) evaluating the changes that occurred in the integrity of archaeological deposits between the successive visits by explorers and the team’s arrival (2001–2003) and; (3) analyzing the archaeological deposits, which are related to easternmost distribution of the indigenous canoeing populations in the region (Borrero *et al.* 2019:118). This first section focuses on the history of exploration and the historical geography of Elizabeth Island, starting with Simón de Alazacaba’s observations in 1535 of native hunters (of “deer”) using nets woven from guanaco fiber, followed by Sir Francis Drake in 1578, who named the Island (after Queen Elizabeth I) and who produced the first map showing the island’s location. The historical review continues through the seventeenth and eighteenth century documents, explorations that intensified throughout the nineteenth century, such as Parker King’s H.M.S. Beagle expedition of 1826–27 and Robert FitzRoy’s visit in 1834 (also with H.M.S. Beagle) with Charles Darwin on board.

Darwin would comment (in a letter dated 12 February 1845) on two distinct “Fuegian” groups, the tall men clothed in mantles with their canoes from the East Coast in contrast to those he called “foot Patagonians” (Borrero *et al.* 2019:212). However, it was John Murray and Charles Wyville Thomson from the H.M.S. Challenger expedition who brought back to England the lithic artifacts from Elizabeth Island

that Borrero and McEwan studied at the British Museum (*ibid.*:122–123). These specimens came from the first excavations on this island that had many “middens of large extent, which are full of vast quantities of bones” (H. N. Moseley in Borrero *et al.* 2019:123). Borrero and colleagues were able to correlate some of the archaeological sites with those mentioned by these early explorers. By the end of the nineteenth century, pioneering archaeological excavations of kitchen and shell middens became somewhat more frequent, resulting in several archaeological reports. It was, however, Junius Bird’s 1935–1936 surveys and excavations that yielded the best archaeological data (38 sites recorded), followed by those of Omar Ortiz Troncoso in 1968 (*ibid.*) that formed the baseline for the project of Borrero and his colleagues.

The rest of the article (Borrero *et al.* 2019) focuses on the analyses of the artifacts from fifty-five sites on the island (seventeen more than Bird’s total), five of which were discussed in greater detail (sites, 28, 25, Caleta Hook-1, Cheneque-1, Cabo Thorax-1). Three radiocarbon dates suggest that some occupations began roughly during the second half of the first millennium B.C. and may have continued into historic times. This is followed by a detailed study of the processes of site formation (taphonomy), an analysis of the palaeo-economy, and a characterization of the occupations from the perspectives of cultural geography and biogeography. This project has contributed to a richer, more nuanced understanding of Magellan Strait indigenous *longue durée* history, evolving subsistence economies, and changing land- and seascapes at the utmost southern end of South America.

THE INCA USHNU PLATFORMS PROJECT, AYACUCHO HIGHLANDS, PERU (2006–2010)

In 2006 Colin became co-investigator with Frank M. Meddens (Figures 43, 44) on an Arts

and Humanities Research Council and British Academy funded project to work on Inca *ushnu* platform sites in the highlands of Ayacucho. Frank Meddens was among Colin’s closest colleagues based in London, equally sharing a passion for Andean archaeology, particularly the Inca Empire. Their project was a collaboration between the British Museum, Royal Holloway-University of London, and the Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga.

Over successive field-seasons in 2007, 2008, and 2010 the team identified some twenty platforms across the Department of Ayacucho, all located between 4200–4700 masl (see map in Meddens *et al.* 2010:175). They excavated in eleven of these, placing particular emphasis on the Incapirqa/Waminan site. The project provided material and ethnohistorical evidence to support the hypothesis that

these high-altitude Inca *ushnu* platforms and their associated roads and supporting infrastructure were intended to assert effective control over puna pastoral populations (Meddens *et al.* 2010:177).

Among the interesting evidence recovered are the “stone ancestors” (*e.g. illas, istrillas*), hard and unusual stones connected with lightning and sunlight, “whose power they absorb” (Allen 1988:63, cited in Meddens *et al.* 2010:182). Although portable, groups of these were found buried in pits within the *ushnu* platforms, and interpreted as possibly representing “deities, ancestors, and stone equivalents or ‘brothers’ of the living” (*ibid.*: 183). The associated Inca rituals involving these revered stones were inferred from several Spanish chronicles including those written by Juan Diez de Betanzos between 1551 and 1557 (1987) and Cristóbal de Molina around 1576 (1989). Some of these potent stones have a roughly conical shape like that of seventeenth century sugar loaves (*pan de azúcar*) made in ceramic molds (Meddens *et al.*

2010:187, figure 12). Betanzos (1987 [1551–1557]:52–53) described one such stone as being wrapped with a band of gold and worshiped in Cusco’s central plaza. There the Incas buried sacrificial offerings (*arpa*) including gold artifacts. Excavation of the *ushnu* platform at Incapirca/Waminan documented a similar sacrificial pit where three conical “sugar-loaf-like” stones of red and white andesite were located near the base of the platform.

The chroniclers’ accounts of the rituals associated with the *illa* stones and the conical “sugar loaf” objects “all allude . . . to the way in which axiality, seats, and seating are inextricably linked and find material expression in specific objects”, which are discussed in Meddens *et al.* (2010:188). The theme of seats and axiality (with the *ushnu* as pivot) concludes with a discussion of these material expressions in the context of Inca cosmology. The data and concepts discussed in Meddens *et al.* (2010) were elaborated in the book *Landscape, Site and Symbol in the Andes* (Meddens *et al.* 2014) and particularly in Colin’s chapter, “Cognising and Marking Andean Landscape: Radial, Concentric and Hierarchical Perspectives” (McEwan 2014b:29–47).

One can immediately recognize Colin’s voice in his 2010 Meddens *et al.* article. Indeed, the notions of *ushnu* and axiality (and radiality, concentricity, and quadripartite) are the principles that underpin and structure ceremonial rituals and shed light on cosmology. These structural principles, which are not unique to the Inca case, were first articulated in two of Colin’s papers, “Axis and *Ushnu* in Chavín Iconography” (McEwan 1992a), and “Sillas de Poder: Evolución Sociocultural en Manabí, Ecuador” (McEwan 1992b), and brought together in his 2004 Ph.D. dissertation. Seats, axiality, cosmology, and political-religious order and power, are again elaborated in his posthumous book chapters, “Seats, Seating, and Social

Roles” (McEwan and Looper in press) and “Squaring the Circle in Ancient Ecuador” (Zeidler and McEwan in press; see also McEwan 2012, 2014). Colin (like Zuidema) argued that such principles of “cosmological order” (pardon the redundancy) are not specifically Andean, but also reflect a broader cognitive perception shared by other Pre-Columbian societies and cultures in the New World, as exemplified in Colin’s article “Seats of Power: Axiality and Access to Invisible Worlds” in *N.W. Amazonia* (McEwan 2001b).

As Meddens recalls, during fieldwork Colin proved to be

. . . inexhaustible in his reserves of energy and commitment. He literally scaled the summit of every mountain, which could be remotely thought to have a promising site. Following days of excavation at high altitudes he could often be seen dancing in the evening with the locals, at not much lower elevations.

Once, on the discovery of a particularly noteworthy find at Incapirca Waminan, he spontaneously danced a jig on top of the site which, at 4371 meters above sea level, was no mean feat. Many evenings were spent arguing the finer points of stratigraphy, the nature of *capac cocha* and the meaning of features visible on the horizon over a pisco sour or a beer. Or looking at the night sky in Ayacucho identifying features and star configurations in the heavens. He was always willing to give of his time to the multitudes of students from the Universidad de Huamanga and San Marcos who participated in the numerous field-seasons and was untiringly generous with his advice and ideas on archaeology, ethnography and ethnohistory. The often-surreal problems associated with working in the Andes . . . never fazed Colin. From

road surfaces ploughed up by construction workers to angry locals convinced we were un-licenced miners out to loot the area's riches and pollute their water-supply, or at a site which we were excavating, where locals decided that it was time to burn the stubble off. Colin always remained calm and measured, happy to work on a solution to the problem at hand (Frank M. Meddens, personal communication, 23 July 2020).

Following fieldwork, during the stage of analysis, as well as while planning for a future extension of the *Ushnu* Platform project, Frank Meddens became seriously ill, requiring hospitalization. One of Colin's visits to London (from Washington D.C.) was to be with Meddens in his hour of need:

As a friend he always would be there to provide support and encouragement when there were difficult times. He would at all times be prepared to go the extra mile and go out of his way to be there for his friends when help was needed. He was there waiting for me on release from hospital following an operation, and on the phone talking and listening when times looked bleak (*ibid*).

As an extension of the Inca *Ushnu* Platform project The British Museum produced a short video directed by Damien Rea (see Rea 2013), in which Colin, as well as Frank Meddens, and Katie Willis (Professor of Geography, Royal Holloway) provided insights on a selection of key Inca ritual objects and their place in the Andean landscape.³⁸ The topic of this short film

relates to one of Colin's last books on Andean archaeology, co-edited with Frank M. Meddens, Katie Willis, and Nicolas Branch (2014), entitled *Landscape, Site and Symbol in the Andes*, which gathered a series of papers presented at a two-day conference held at the British Museum in November 2010, where Tom Zuidema was the keynote speaker. Throughout this period (2006–2010), Colin organized several conferences and workshops at The British Museum, focused on various topics related to the Landscape and Environment in the Andes program (Figures 45, 46).

³⁸ The video was filmed in 2012, edited in 2013, and posted on YouTube in 2014.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oT9NdKpUwdU&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=TheBritishMuseum (Accessed 13 May 2021).

CHAPTER 8

THE DUMBARTON OAKS YEARS (2012–2019)

For quite a number of years, Colin had been trying to promote the creation of a new, permanent Andean gallery at the British Museum, and was still at it during and following the Moctezuma exhibit. He envisioned that the Andean gallery would be located close to the Africa, North America, and Mexico Galleries. For various reasons (lack of space, for example) his previous proposals to the British Museum did not come to fruition. During 2010–2011 once again Colin was earmarking the Andean gallery for his next major project. However, at this time, The British Museum’s director had decided that the priority was to move to the main museum all of the Africa, Oceania, and Americas collections located at Orsman Road. Orders were issued that all the curators focus only on this task. This meant that Colin’s ambition to create a permanent Andean gallery was not a priority, and would not be included in future plans for unspecified years to come. This situation was frustrating and disappointing for Colin. Indeed, the renowned sculptor Anthony Gormley, a trustee of the British Museum (2007–2015), is quoted in the *Daily Mail* newspaper (20 February 2021) criticizing the museum’s overemphasis of the classical world, stating that, in his view, “the museum misrepresented certain areas of the world while underrepresenting others” and adding “there is the complete misrepresentation of the Americas—both North and South crammed into one room apart from Mexico.”³⁹ In fact, South

America is not represented within the North American gallery, but rather individual artifacts are found in other spaces, such as the Wellcome Trust and Enlightenment galleries. I believe that this was the underlying context that precipitated Colin to make a fresh start across the Atlantic.

Given this situation, Colin made up his mind to apply for the recently advertised post of Director of Pre-Columbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks (hereafter D.O.). At that time, the directorship was held on an interim basis by Mary E. Pye (assisted by Emily Gulick Jacobs), replacing Joanne Pillsbury, the D.O. director from 2005–2011, who had left for a post at the Getty Research Institute and later moved to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁴⁰ Colin succeeded in becoming the next director, moving to Washington D.C. in August 2012 (Figure 47).⁴¹ I recall Colin’s sheer excitement when he told me the news, his mind already active with all sorts of plans and ideas for the Pre-Columbian Studies programs. It is telling that one of the things he relished was the role he would undertake mentoring and advising D.O.’s Junior and Summer Fellows and engaging with Fellows and Senior Fellows. For him, a key attraction was the opportunity to organize and host thematic

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9281581/British-Museum-director-hits-row-former-trustee-Sir-Antony-Gormley.html>. (Accessed 13 May 2021).

³⁹ The article in the *Daily Mail* written by journalist Joe Davies is entitled “British Museum Director Hits Back in Row with Former Trustee Sir Antony Gormley But Says Institution WILL Give Greater Prominence to African Artefacts”. The row is with current museum director, Hartwig Fischer (2016–present). Davies takes Sir Antony’s quotes from an issue of the magazine *British Archaeology* that I was not able to obtain without paying subscription dues.

⁴⁰ Joanne Pillsbury and Colin had known each other for some time, particularly when she was a Lecturer at the University of East Anglia attached to the Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas from 1991–1994 (to be replaced by Steve Bourget, a specialist in Andean archaeology).

⁴¹ *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report–2012–2013*, p. 91. <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

workshops and seminars with guest scholars from all over the U.S. and Latin America.

Just settled in Washington D.C., Colin's first formal lecture was aimed at the volunteers of D.O. The topic reflected his predilection (if it can be said so) for Andean archaeology: "Inca State Rituals—Ordering the Sacred and Representing Cuzco" (February 2013).⁴² During the 2012–2013 academic year, Colin mentored Junior Fellows Go Matsumoto (Southern Illinois University) on the Middle Sicán ancestor cult of the North Coast of Peru; Maeve Skidmore, (Southern Methodist University) on the construction of a Wari province in Huaró, Cusco, Peru; and Kenichiro Tsukamoto (University of Arizona) on the topic of building ritual landscapes focused on the hieroglyphic stairway of the Classic Maya center of El Palmar in Campeche, Mexico.⁴³ The following year (2013) Colin welcomed a new cohort of fellows, among them Zachary J. Chase (University of Chicago) whose research was on *Performing the Past in the Ritual, Mythological, and Historical Landscapes of Huarochirí, Peru (c. 1400–1700)*. Chase noted that:

Conversations with director of studies Colin McEwan and other fellows at Dumbarton Oaks were enlightening and beneficial to developing my thinking on these and many other topics. In addition to this progress in research and writing, and perhaps matching them in importance, were the lessons and training I received in professionalism. Through feedback from the community at Dumbarton Oaks, I learned a great deal about polishing presentations,

concentrating and focusing their content, and making them accessible to audiences composed of smart and educated scholars from a variety of disciplines.⁴⁴

The next year (2014), Colin welcomed his colleague and collaborator in the Unknown Amazon exhibition at the British Museum, Cristiana Barreto (University of São Paulo). She was the first Brazilian archaeologist to be awarded a D.O. fellowship.⁴⁵ Like Chase, Barreto's indelible memory of working with Colin was their many sessions together exploring novel and stimulating ideas on her research topic *Figuring the Body in Ancient Amazonia*, a theme that resonated with Colin's own research interests. Over the next six years, new fellows received the same level of devoted attention and mentorship from Colin, too many to detail here, but who can be found in the *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report* (from 2012 through 2019). Steve Kosiba (University of Minnesota), a Fellow of the 2017–2018 cohort, captured the essence of Colin's impact on everyone at the D.O.

I was devastated to hear of Colin's passing. He was a wonderful mentor, colleague, and friend. I will always warmly remember those Sunday afternoons when we all enjoyed an amazing brunch, those somewhat raucous and debauchorous times drinking ales in the morning while watching rugby, or my many conversations with Colin at the coffee machine or toward the end of

⁴² *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report—2012–2013*, p. 135. <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

⁴³ *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report—2012–2013*, p. 26. <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

⁴⁴ Z. J. Chase in: *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report—2012–2013*, p. 50. <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports> (Accessed 13 May 2021).

⁴⁵ Cristiana Barreto, personal communication, 25 September 2019; also *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report—2013–2014*, p. 25. <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports>. (Accessed 13 May 2021). She was a Summer Fellow during the 2013–2014 fiscal year.

the day in his office. Colin will always be a role model for me. His intellect and passion about academic issues are unmatched. On any given day he could pick up a random book from his office table—whether it was new research on the cultures of the Amazon rainforest or an account of the creative energy that stemmed from rivalries among famous European artists—and tell me the valuable nuggets of knowledge and wisdom contained therein. More than this, Colin's humor, his openness to any conversation, and his lust for life are absolutely enviable. Among the former fellows from DO, there are currently Pre-Columbian, Byzantine, and Garden-Landscape scholars—whether archaeologists, art historians, sociologists, historians, or anthropologists—who are mourning his loss. They've all openly expressed in broad agreement that Colin was one of those very rare scholars whose interest in humanity, art, and the pursuit of intellectual ideas overrode and demolished any of the disciplinary boundaries that too often divide us in the academic world. Colin made everyone feel welcome and comfortable. He made sure that anyone who was speaking knew that they deserved to be heard and that their ideas were valuable (Steve Kosiba, personal communication to Norma Rosso and José Oliver, 17 November 2020).

In 2013, the Director of D.O., Jan Ziolkowski, approved the initial proposal to begin work on a comprehensive catalogue of the Central American and Colombian collections, featuring the D.O.'s Robert Wood Bliss collection (assembled between 1935–1962). Characteristically, Colin expanded the initial remit of the project—to publish a catalogue of the Bliss collection—into a more ambitious research project involving various workshops across the region. This became a four-year project titled

Art from Central America and Colombia at Dumbarton Oaks (2014–2017). It first began with an invitation by Jeffrey Quilter (Harvard University) for Colin to attend a Costa Rican archaeology workshop at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography in Boston, with which the D.O. Pre-Columbian Collections maintained strong ties throughout the twentieth century, and to the present day. This was followed by another workshop titled Ancient Central America and Colombian Art at Dumbarton Oaks, held at D.O. 12–19 January 2014, in which U.S. and Latin American scholars participated. Among these were Bryan Cockrell, Richard Cooke, Francisco Corrales Ulloa, Kim Cullen Cobb, Antonio Curet, Miriam Doutriaux, John Hoopes, James Doyle, Ainslee Harrison, Victoria Lyall, Julia Mayo Torné, Ann McMullen, David Mora-Marín, Juan Antonio Murro, Karen O'Day, Silvia Salgado González, Nawa Sugiyama, and María Alicia Uribe Villegas.⁴⁶

The 2013 workshop in Washington D.C. set the agenda for a follow-up workshop, with matching D.O. and Wenner-Gren funds and the collaboration of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (hosted by Richard Cooke). It took place 26–29 January 2015 in Panama City (Figure 48). The letter of invitation signed by Colin succinctly summarized its key objectives:

The workshop will in the first place situate Central America and Colombia within current theoretical issues of Americanist archaeology and briefly review the historical and contemporary problems raised by defining the Central American and Co-

⁴⁶ *Dumbarton Oaks Annual Report—2013–2014*, p. 93: <https://www.doaks.org/about/annual-reports>. (Accessed 13 May 2021). Information was also obtained from McEwan's "Preface and Acknowledgments" in the forthcoming publication of the catalogue (McEwan and Hoopes, in press: ix–xi).

lombian area as “Intermediate”, “Isthmo-Colombian”, or “Chibchan”. Specific synthetic topics that we have identified include, but are not limited to: the definition of a new concept of “Greater Central America” taking a broader view on shared traditions; a fresh perspective on relations between Central America and the Maya world; the re-examination of the “International Style” and other Isthmian connections; the role of the Caribbean Sea in the prehistory of Central America and Colombia, and the movement of peoples and ideas through Atlantic maritime routes; the generation of new theories and ideas on the transmission of ideas, exchange of materials, and other cultural connections between Central America and the Pacific South America littoral zone; and a re-evaluation of the history of object collection and changing paradigms for the study and interpretation of museum objects.⁴⁷

Characteristic of Colin, he broadened the initial scope of the earlier workshops, focusing on the connections between central and northern South America, to also include the Caribbean sphere, an area usually excluded from the continental oriented conversations on inter-regional cultural connections. Because of his frequent encounters with Caribbean archaeologist Antonio Curet (National Museum of the American Indian) and with John Hoopes (University of Kansas), renowned for his research publications on long distance exchange networks that included the Caribbean, and my own input, Colin was well aware that since c. 2008, a number of Antillean archaeologists had begun to look at evidence that suggested potential cultural links (e.g. exchange or trade networks) between the Insular Antilles and the Caribbean

Sea shores of Colombia, Panama, the Isthmus, and Central America (and even to the U.S. Gulf Coast). Until recently, Caribbean archaeology had almost entirely looked to northeastern South America (Orinoco and Guianas) as the only continental area that really mattered for understanding Pre-Columbian Antillean history. Curet, Hoopes, and I suggested that Colin invite my colleague Reniel Rodríguez Ramos (University of Puerto Rico-Utuado) as he was among the very first to argue the importance and relevance of the Central American connections with the Caribbean Islands.

Aside from individual paper presentations, the participants were divided into working groups who would later report a summary of the results of their discussions to all participants. The Colombia group was comprised of Warwick Bray, Juan Pablo Quintero, Juanita Sáenz Samper, and María Alicia Uribe; the Costa Rica and Nicaragua group of Francisco Corrales, Alex Geurds, Geoff and Sharisse McCafferty, Silvia Salgado, and Ivonne Tapia; the Panama group by Richard Cooke, Mercedes Guinea Bueno, Ainslie Harrison, Julia and Carlos Mayo, Juan Antonio Murro, Karen O’Day, Ileana Olmos, Stewart Redwood, and Luis Sánchez; the Mesoamerica group by Bryan Cockrell, James Doyle, Rosemary Joyce, Rus Sheptak, and Nawa Sugiyama; the Caribbean group by Antonio Curet, John Hoopes, José R. Oliver, and Reniel Rodríguez Ramos;⁴⁸ Southern Connections was comprised by Jorge Marcos and Colin McEwan.

The results of the workshops and paper presentations were halfway into the process of editing for a book when Colin was diagnosed with leukaemia in early 2019. Although almost

⁴⁷ McEwan, invitation letter dated 15 August 2014. See also McEwan’s preface in McEwan and Hoopes, in press: ix-xi.

⁴⁸ Workshop on The Art and Archaeology of Central America and Colombia Program, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in collaboration with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Panama City, January 26th–29th, 2015. Unfortunately, this not available online.

to the very end, Colin continued to do the editorial work, the final editing was taken over by Hoopes. The two volumes are scheduled for release in 2021, one focused on the Bliss collection, the other on the papers resulting from the workshops at D.O. and at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (McEwan and Hoopes in press 2021a, 2021b). This is quite an accomplishment, as Dumbarton Oaks' programs had traditionally stressed the great civilizations of the Americas (Chavín, Moche, Inca, Maya, Aztec, etc.). Colin successfully argued that the Pre-Columbian cultures of Lower Central America and Colombia-Ecuador deserved equal visibility and were germane to Dumbarton Oaks' profile as a premier research institution.⁴⁹ This continental outlook, however, did not diminish in any way his interests and knowledge of great civilizations, enthusiastically sharing it with D.O. staff and fellows.

Ever the curator, in 2015 Colin also put together an exhibition for the D.O.'s Orientation Gallery titled *Maya Ruins and the Passage of Time: Stephens and Catherwood Revisited* and wrote the foreword for the accompanying booklet (McEwan 2015b). It is worth noting that Colin was not all work; the maxim "work hard and play hard" applies. He often gathered D.O. fellows and decamped to a nearby pub to enjoy a relaxed conversation and watch rugby games on television (Figure 49).

In 2018 Colin launched another four year research program (2018–2022) entitled *Waves of Influence—Revisiting Coastal Connections between Northwest South America and Mesoamerica*. This project is a logical extension of the previous Central American, Colombian (and Caribbean) focus, redirecting its attention

to the exploration of the Mesoamerican connections with northwestern South America, and particularly with the Pacific areas of Colombia and Ecuador. There were a number of preparatory collections based workshops held at the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.; and in Colima, Mexico; San José, Costa Rica; and Guayaquil, Ecuador. Sadly, the Guayaquil workshop held at the Museo Antropológico y de Arte Contemporáneo (8–9 August 2018) was to be Colin's last visit to a country he had loved and admired since that first visit forty-five years ago (MAAC 2020). On 14 April 2018, the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology was held in Washington, D.C. and, typical of Colin and Norma, they hosted a party-reception at their home, where Colin had the joy of mingling with friends and colleagues from all over the Americas and Europe. For some, myself included, it would be the last time we would meet face-to-face.

On 11 and 12 October 2019, a symposium was held at Dumbarton Oaks bringing together the scholarly expertise that Colin had initially begun to put together with Christopher S. Beekman (University of Colorado, Denver). By this date, Colin was already well into chemotherapy and unable to personally attend the meeting as his immunity was compromised, requiring isolation, and he had been replaced by the current program director for Pre-Columbian Studies, Frauke Sachse. Despite it all, in absentia, Colin still delivered two papers, one with Chris Beekman to introduce the symposium's theme (*Waves of Influence*; Beekman and McEwan 2019) and another with Richard Lunniss of the Universidad Técnica de Manabí, Ecuador (McEwan and Lunniss 2019). It is fitting that his last paper presentation took him back to his roots, to 1978 and his early Ecuadorian

⁴⁹ It should be noted that Jeff Quilter (Harvard University and a former director of pre-Columbian studies at D.O.) had also focused on Central America, specifically on Costa Rica.

fieldwork at Isla de La Plata.⁵⁰ I still have in my WhatsApp a couple of text messages from Colin (sent during chemotherapy) commenting excitedly on his ability to continue to keep in touch with co-writers (*e.g.* Zeidler, Lunniss, Looper) to further polish the papers for forthcoming publications (McEwan and Hoopes in press a, in press b; McEwan and Lunniss, Ms., 2021).

⁵⁰ The full conference program can be accessed at: <https://www.doaks.org/research/pre-columbian/scholarly-activities/pcs-sym-2019-program/view> (Accessed 12 May 2021).

CHAPTER 9

FINAL WORDS

On 2 February 2020 I received from Colin his last texted message to me via WhatsApp. He said:

After a demanding week [in the aftermath of yet another round of chemotherapy] and a long sleep yesterday, I'm concentrating on crafting-out an expanded chapter draft on Isla de La Plata—a modest analogy would be like writing a poem—honing the structure, content and flow while mindful of the whole. The yardstick [was] set by a couple of colleagues (an art historian and an ethnographer) who set the bar in terms of the literary qualities of their published work. Not easy to achieve with matters archaeological but one never ceases to try. A bright, cool (by Florida standards) breezy day so heading to the nearest Gulf Coast beach for a paddle. All best, Colin.

This message was followed on 24 February with a photograph with the caption “Photo by our friend [Chris] Hudson of his magnolia blooming in mid-February rather than mid-April.” I firmly believe that the magnolias blossomed early because they wanted to put a smile on Colin's face one last time. A month later, on the morning of 28 March, Colin passed away with Norma by his side.

Following the sad news, a veritable explosion of e-mails travelled through the ethernet, each with touching memories, each with kind words of eulogy, all remembering and celebrating Colin's life. Despite knowing Colin for forty-two years, while writing this biography, I came to the realization, for the first time, that I was just one of his many, many best and closest friends. I am sure that all of us feel most fortunate to have known such a remarkable scholar, each with our own predilect anecdotes and

recollections. On 15 April 2020, a group of Colin's friends and colleagues from both sides of the Atlantic raised their glasses of liquor for one last Cheers. As Catherine Allen said,

let us make a little offering, libation, ritual in his honor to help his soul and share it. [Although we] are all self-isolated [because of Covid-19] . . . it will be lovely to have a chain of pictures, messages that everyone has done to honor Colin. Many of you have already done this individually, but Steve [Kosiba] and I thought since we can't meet together in a brindis [toast] right now . . . There are so many of us who miss him (Catherine Allen, personal communication, 14 April 2020).

Pictures of this memorial toast were posted via DropBox (see Figure 50).

On 28 March 2021, D.O. organized a memorial titled Celebrating the Life of Colin McEwan, which, due to Covid-19, took place online (via Zoom). Shared Memories were presented by Tom Cummins (Director of D.O.), Margaret Mullet, James Zeidler, Tamara Bray, Christopher Beekman, and José R. Oliver, followed by celebratory words from Catherine Allen, Luis Alberto Borrero, Frank M. Meddens, and Eduardo Góes Neves. One final *brindis* was led by Steve Kosiba. On the same day, the *comunidad* of Agua Blanca in Ecuador also paid a moving homage on the anniversary of Colin's death. It is fitting to conclude with the news that the community of Agua Blanca has plans to erect a bust of Colin McEwan, or place a commemorative plaque, at the entrance of the museum in his memory (María-Isabel Silva, personal communication 3 December 2020).

Colin McEwan's biography is testimony of a remarkable life lived to the full, one that touched me personally and so many other individuals, from all walks of life, on both sides of the Atlantic.

Requiem in pacem æternam amicus meus

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Figure 1. The McEwan family in New Zealand. Colin McEwan, in a dark outfit, is seated at the center of the photograph. He has his arms around his sister Margaret. His brother Peter is the first child seated to the viewer's left. Standing, second from viewer's right, is his mother, Sheila Bell McEwan. The other people in the photo are unidentified. Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



*Figure 2. Colin McEwan (circled), captain of the Aberdeen University Rugby Club.
Photo courtesy of George Aitken.*



Figure 3. Colin McEwan and his good friend George Aitken atop Ben Stack in the northern highlands of Scotland. As in the Andes, it is the custom in Scotland to add a stone to a cairn at a high place. This convergence, no doubt, pleased Colin. Photograph by George Aitken.



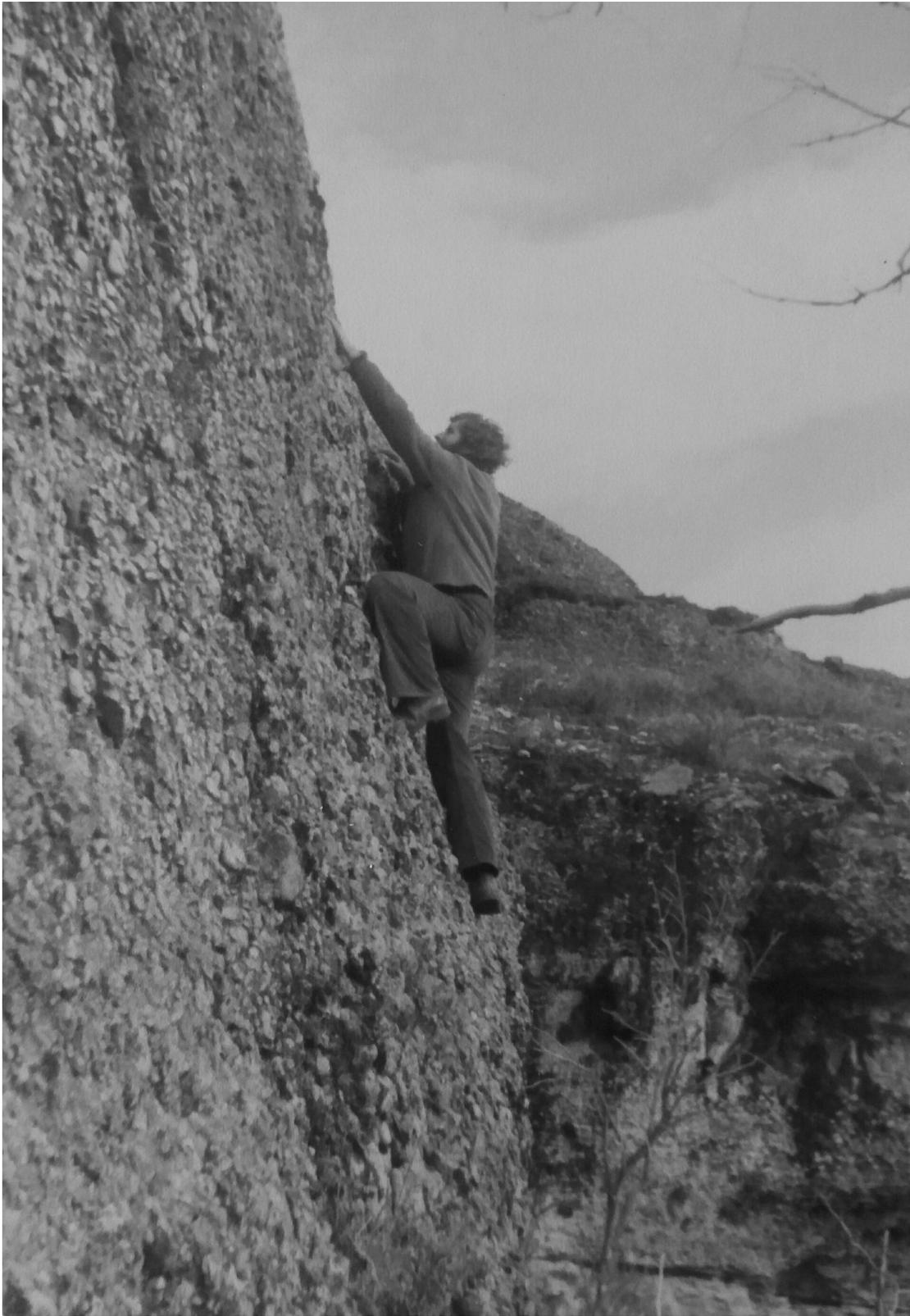
*Figure 4. Colin McEwan excavating in the Cueva del Mylodon, 1976.
Photograph by Luis Alberto Borrero.*



Figure 5. Luis Alberto Borrero (viewer's left) with Colin McEwan, 14 April 2018, at a reception in the home of Colin McEwan and Norma Rosso.

The man standing behind Colin at viewer's right is John Hoopes. The woman is unidentified.

The occasion was the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Washington, D.C. Photograph courtesy of Luis Alberto Borrero.



*Figure 6: Colin McEwan free climbing in Patagonia, 1976.
Photograph by Luis Alberto Borrero.*



Figure 7. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) and Warwick Bray in London, 1998.
Photo by José R. Oliver.



Figure 8. Archaeological materials from the Jubones Valley Project are reviewed at the British Museum by Bill Sillar (viewer's left) and Colin McEwan (center).

The others are undergraduate students from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. The Jubones project (1976), directed by Elizabeth M. Carmichael and Warwick M. Bray, was Colin's first archaeological fieldwork in Ecuador. Photograph by José R. Oliver.



Figure 9. Colin McEwan at the edge of the canyon of the Caquetá River, Araracuara Rapids, Colombia, 1977. Photograph courtesy of Warwick M. Bray.



Figure 10. Leonor Herrera and Colin McEwan (with hat) sit out a rainstorm in Araracuara, Colombia, 1977. Photograph courtesy of Warwick M. Bray.



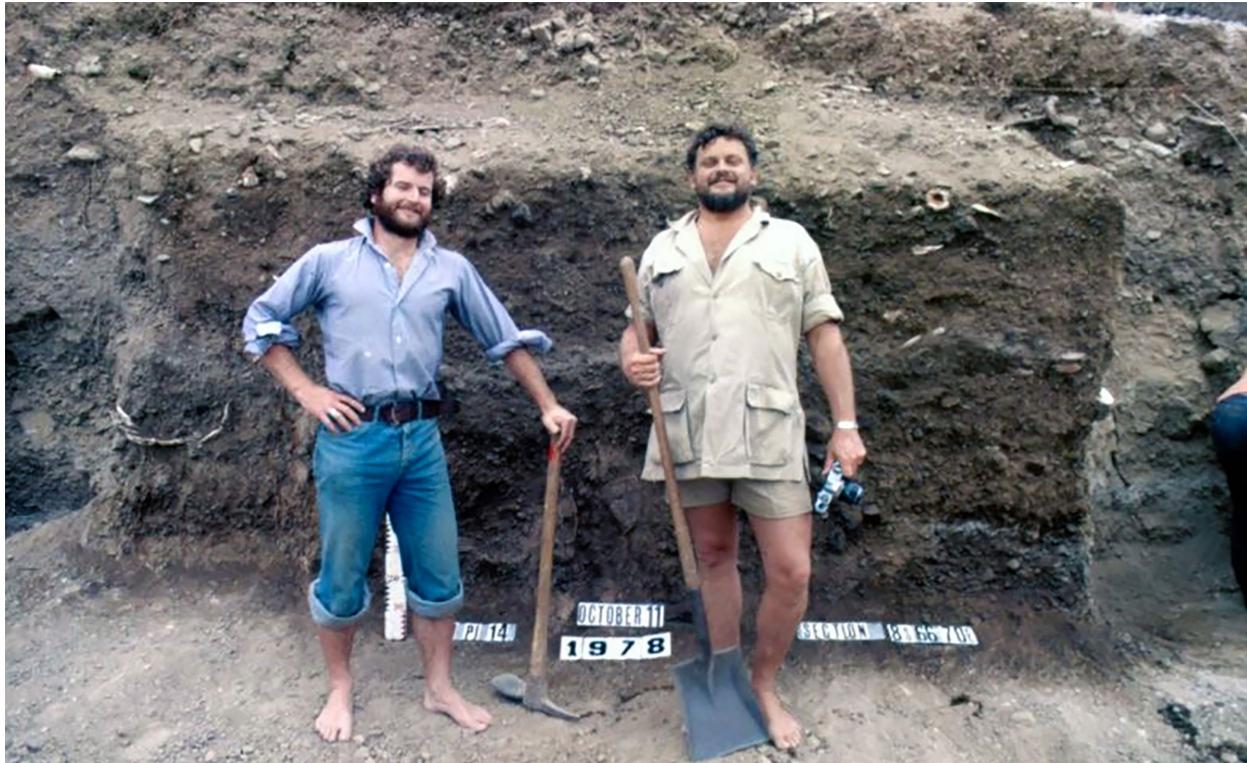
Figure 11. Colin McEwan (seated in stern of boat) and members of the Anglo-Colombian Expedition on the Yari River, Colombia, 1977. Photograph courtesy of Warwick M. Bray.



Figure 12. Colin McEwan (viewer's right), at Site OM PL IL 14, Isla de la Plata, Ecuador, 1978. The other figures are unidentified. Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



*Figure 13. Colin McEwan excavating at site OM PL IL 14, Isla de la Plata, Ecuador, 1978.
Photography courtesy of Norma Rosso.*



*Figure 14. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) and Presley Norton (1932–1993)
at site OM PL IL 14, Isla de la Plata excavations, Ecuador, 1978.
Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.*

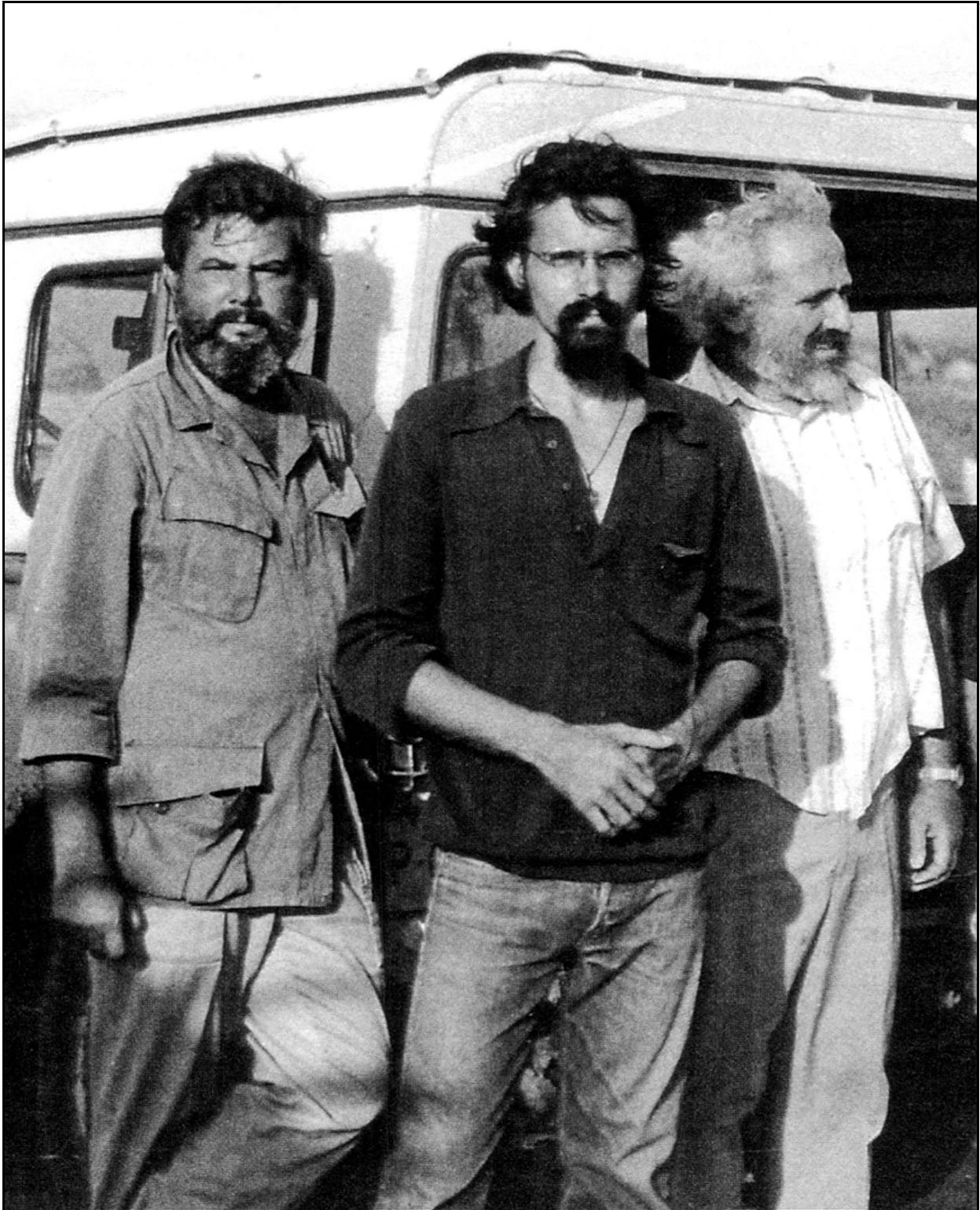


Figure 15. From viewer's left to right: Jorge Marcos, James Zeidler, and Donald Lathrap at Real Alto, Ecuador, April, 1975. Photograph by Alberta Zucchi.



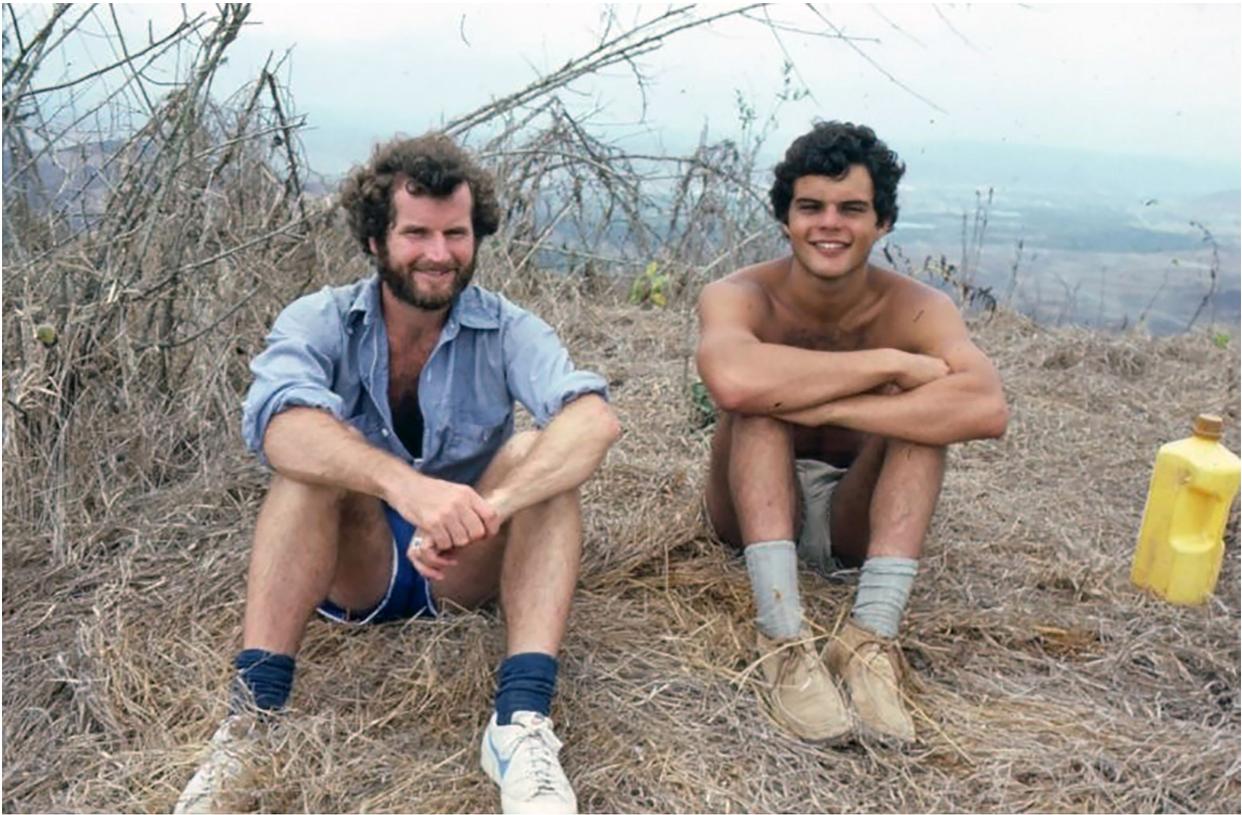
Figure 16. Colin McEwan (viewer's left), John Isaacson (center), and their Ph.D. theses advisor Donald W. Lathrap at the Anthropology Laboratory, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. This photograph accompanied the article "Artifacts Reveal Sophisticated Ancient Culture", The Champaign-Urbana News Gazette 15 June 1985, p. A3. Photograph reproduced by permission of News-Gazette Media. Permission does not imply endorsement.



Figure 17. Colin McEwan (at podium) speaking at R. Tom Zuidema's retirement party, 1993. Zuidema is seated next to the podium. Photo courtesy of Norma Rosso.



Figure 18. Dinner gathering, Urbana Illinois, c. 1984. From viewer's left to right: Richard Edging, Gloria Cordones, María Isabel Silva, and Colin McEwan. Photograph by José R. Oliver.



*Figure 19. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) and Diego Quiroga at Agua Blanca, Ecuador, 1981.
Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.*



Photo 20. Inauguration of the community cultural center, Agua Blanca, Ecuador, December 1990. Colin McEwan addresses the crowd. Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



*Figure 21. Reconstructing pottery in the Community Hall at Agua Blanca, Ecuador.
Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.*



*Figure 22. Chris Hudson raises a glass in memory of Colin McEwan, April 2020.
Photograph courtesy of Chris Hudson.*



Figure 23. Colin, in his McEwan clan kilt, and Norma Rosso celebrate their partnership in San Juan Puerto Rico, on 11 September 1993 just before moving to London. Film maker José Artemio Torres stands behind Colin. Behind Norma is Flavia Marichal Lugo, director of the Museo de Historia, Antropología y Arte de Río Piedras (Universidad de Puerto Rico). Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



Figure 24. Colin McEwan and Norma Rosso at the Camden Locks, not far from their home in Tufnell Park, London, winter 1994. Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 25. Colin McEwan (viewer's right) and José R. Oliver on Hampstead Heath. The skyline of London is in the background. Photograph taken late March 1994, after Oliver's employment interview at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Photograph by James Zeidler, courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 26. Colin McEwan (viewer's right) explains to undergraduate students from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London the importance of restoring and preserving the plaster of Paris casts of Maya sculpture commissioned in the late 1890s by Alfred P. Maudslay, 13 March 2007.

Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 27. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) in conversation with Jonathan C. H. King (viewer's right), Keeper, Department of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at the British Museum, in the company of José R. Oliver (standing next to McEwan) and R. Tom Zuidema (standing next to King). McEwan invited Zuidema to give a lecture on his research on Andean calendric rituals, 28 September 2006.

Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



*Figure 28. Leonardo López Luján, F.S.A. in London, 2013.
Photograph courtesy of Leonardo López Luján.*



Figure 29. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) and Rosemary Joyce share pints of beer at the bar of Tavistock Hotel following the December 2010 South American Archaeology Seminar held at the nearby Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Photography courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 30. Eduardo Góes Neves (viewer's left) and Colin McEwan, editors of the volume *Unknown Amazon* meet again at the 71st Annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Photograph taken 27 April 2006 by José R. Oliver.



Figure 31. Colin McEwan (viewer's left), Eduardo Góes Neves (center), and Cristiana Barreto at the Museu Nacional do Rio Janeiro, September 2000. They are selecting Marajoara Phase ceramic vessels for the Unknown Amazon exhibition. Tragically, the Museu Nacional was completely destroyed by fire in 2018. Photo courtesy of Christiana Barreto.



Figure 32. Colin McEwan and Peter Rivière (viewer's left) review Schomburgk's Waiwai (Carib of Guiana) collection of arrows at the British Museum, 23 October 2006.
Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 33. Colin McEwan (viewer's left), Silke Ackermann (center), and José R. Oliver inspect two Taíno wood figures for the Room 3 exhibition at the British Museum, 18 January 2007. Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



Figure 34. Opening day, 2 May 2007 of *The Caribbean before Columbus* exhibition at the British Museum. At the viewer's far left is Jonathan C. H. King with Colin McEwan (center) and invited guests. Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 35. José R. Oliver (viewer's left), Anna Casas Gilberga (center), and Colin McEwan meet in Barcelona to discuss the selection of Caribbean artifacts for the exhibition El Caribe Precolombino, 26 October 2007. Photograph by José R. Oliver.



Figure 36. Colin McEwan (viewer's left), Rosario Sarmiento Escalona (center), and José R. Oliver meet in Santiago de Compostela prior to the Caribbean traveling exhibition.

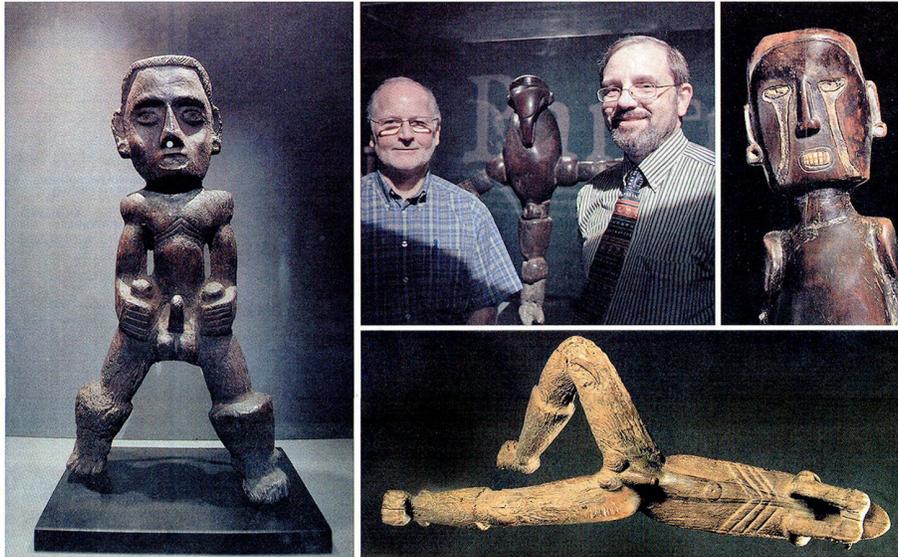
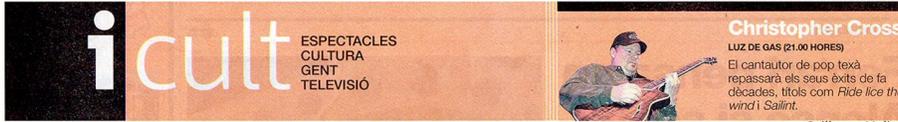
Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 37. View of the CaixaGalicia Foundation building in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain, site of the *O Caribe antes de Colón* exhibition. Photograph by José R. Oliver, 5 November 2008.



Figure 38. Poster for “El Carib Precolombí” exhibition in Barcelona, Spain.



► A l'esquerra, figura d'home taíno. A dalt, els arqueòlegs Colin McEwan i José Oliver i un cap amb llàgrimes causades per la droga. A sota, un valúcs idol.

ARQUEOLOGIA ► EXPOSICIÓ

L'enigmàtica cultura del Carib precolombí recala a Barcelona

El frare català Ramon Pané va documentar al segle XV els ritus i costums dels taínos

El religiós va descriure una pràctica psicòtropa amb estris que s'exposen al Barbier-Mueller

ROSARIO FONTOVA BARCELONA

El primer cronista del Nou Món va ser un frare català, un eremita, que va sortir del monestir de Sant Jeroni de la Murtra, a Badalona, per enrolar-se en el segon viatge de Cristòfor Colom rumb al Carib. Fra Ramon Pané va viure a La Hispaniola (Haití) amb els indis taínos i va descriure sense prejudicis els seus costums i cerimònies per encàrrec de Colom. Els preciosos estris de pedra i fusta tallada que van utilitzar els samans taínos amb qui va conviure el frare formen part, al Museu Barbier-Mueller, de l'exposició *El Carib precolombí* que comprèn 56 peces, algunes d'elles índies.

L'exposició inclou 30 peces procedents del British Museum de Londres, 29 del Museu d'Amèrica de Madrid i cinc de la col·lecció Barbier de Ginebra. Els objectes més rellevants estan relacionats amb la cosmogonia dels indígenes que va descriure Pané al llibre *Relació sobre les antiguitats dels indis* que els comissaris -Anna Casas, directora del museu barcelonès; José Oliver, antropòleg de Puerto Rico, i Colin McEwan, responsable d'arqueologia d'Amèrica al British Museum- han utilitzat com a fil narratiu.

Els taínos posseïen creences arrelades en la naturalesa exuberant de les Antilles, en el seu límitat repertori de plantes i animals. Creien que el seu poble havia sortit d'una pro-

funda cova i tenien la seva particular llegenda sobre la creació d'Eva. Els homes no tenien dones però van caure dels arbres uns éssers amorfs als quals un ocell, l'harri, va picotejar fins a foradar-los un sexe. Utilitzaven *dùhos* o seients cerimonials en les cerimònies d'ingestió de la pols màgica de la coloba, una droga psicòtropa que molien i inhalaven. Patien, després de prendre-la, convulsions, al·lucinacions i vessaven un riu de llàgrimes, com s'aprecia en algunes de les seves estàtues de fusta. Els arqueòlegs ignoren quin sentit tenien els enigmàtics cèrcols lítics d'aquesta exposició, però gràcies a fra Pané es coneix la funció dels ornats, idols familiars d'homenatge als avantpassats.



►► Destrals cerimonials.

Quan Pané va arribar al Nou Món, la colònia espanyola estava en una situació desastrosa a causa de les malalties -la sífilis feia estralls- la fam i les disputes provocades pel miratge de l'or. El van enviar a una remota fortalesa i des del 1494 fins al 1498 va intentar evangelitzar els taínos, de qui va aprendre l'idioma. Va fer amics i va convertir-ànimés, però en un poblat van enterrar les imatges religioses que va deixar en una capella, s'hi van orinar a sobre i van assassinar els seus seguidors. El frare, un simple llec que parlava malament el castellà, segons va escriure Bartolomé de las Casas, va desaparèixer de la història poc després. No es descarta que morís entre els taínos després d'entregar el seu informe. ■

Figure 39. The newspaper *El Periódico de Catalunya*, 7 June 2008, printed a review, whose title translates as “The Enigmatic Culture of the Pre-Columbian Caribbean Makes Landfall in Barcelona”. The photographs depict Colin McEwan (viewer’s left) and José R. Oliver surrounded by Pre-Columbian wooden figures featured in the exhibition “*El Carib Precombí*”. Reproduced with the permission of *El Periódico de Catalunya*.



Figure 40: Banner advertising the exhibition *Moctezuma Aztec Ruler* at the British Museum.
Photograph by Leonardo López Luján.



Figure 41. Colin McEwan in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City, 2009, photographing stone sculptures for potential inclusion in the British Museum exhibition Moctezuma II: The Aztec Ruler. Photograph courtesy of Leonardo López Luján.



Figure 42. Colin McEwan (third from viewer's left) shows a publication (McEwan et al. 1997) to Yaghan (or Yámana) women from the Ukika settlement, on the outskirts of Puerto Williams, on Navarino Island, in the Beagle Channel (Tierra del Fuego), Chile. Photograph taken during one of Colin's field trips relating to the Elizabeth Island (Isla Isabel) Project (2001–2003).

Photograph courtesy of Norma Rosso.



Figure 43. Colin McEwan (foreground) excavates next to an ushnu platform at the Incapirqu/Waminan site in the Department of Ayacucho, Peru, 2008.

Photograph by Frank M. Meddens.



Figure 44. Frank M. Meddens (viewer's left), Colin McEwan (center), and Cirilo Vivanco Pomacanchari at Mesapata in the high Andes, Ayacucho, 2008. Photograph courtesy of Frank M. Meddens.



Figure 45. Colin McEwan (viewer's left) at the South Gate entrance to the British Museum with Ian Graham (second from viewer's left), R. Tom Zuidema (third from viewer's left), and Warwick M. Bray following Zuidema's lecture at the British Museum, 18 September 2006.

Photograph courtesy of José M. Oliver.



Figure 46. The Inca Ushnus: Landscape, Site, and Symbol poster exhibit at a public event in the British Museum, 18 November 2010. Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.



Figure 47: Colin McEwan receives a present from British Museum colleagues at a pub party celebrating his departure from the B.M. and his move to Washington, D.C. to take up the post of Director of Pre-Columbian Studies at Dumbarton Oaks.



*Figure 48. Richard Cooke (foreground, viewer's right) with Colin McEwan (viewer's left), Julia Velásquez Runk, and John Hoopes (center) at the Wenner-Gren, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Dumbarton Oaks Conference, 26–29 January 2015, in Panama City.
Photograph courtesy of José R. Oliver.*



Figure 49. Colin McEwan with Dumbarton Oaks fellows and visitor. From viewer's left to right Ivan Marić (Byzantine fellow), Rebecca Bria (visitor), Gabriela Cervantes Quequezana (Pre-Columbian fellow), Colin McEwan, Steve Kosiba (Pre-Columbian fellow), and Jake Charles Ransohoff (Byzantine fellow) in an Irish pub, Washington, D.C. c. March 2018.

Photograph courtesy of Steve Kosiba.



*Figure 50. Beth and Bill Sillar make a toast to Colin McEwan, with the title page of his dissertation
And the Sun Sits in his Seat open on the chair, April 2020.
Photograph courtesy of Bill Sillar.*