
A PERSONAL *HOMENAJE* TO PHIL WEIGAND

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THE CARBONDALE YEARS, BY ROBERT B. PICKERING

Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale was “the” place to be for anyone interested in North or West Mexican studies. J. Charles Kelley, Carroll “Cal” Riley, Campbell Pennington, and Basil Hedrick constituted the cadre of scholars who specialized in the region but also served as mentors and models for what anthropological archaeology could be, even in the pre-Binfordian days. Walter Taylor also was there as an icon of theoretical archaeology. All of these scholars not only believed but also demonstrated that the subdisciplines of anthropology were intimately connected. To pursue one perspective to the exclusion of the other subdisciplines was deemed artificially limiting. Into this milieu came Lewis and Sally Binford during the summers of 1962 and 1963, working on the Carlyle Reservoir project in southern Illinois, which included excavations at Hatchery West, Toothsome, and Galley Pond. At about the same time, they began publishing archaeological theory and methodology that revolutionized the discipline. Only Lew and Sally can say how their time in Carbondale shaped their perspectives but, for me, I’d like to think that the Carbondale experience positively influenced their interdisciplinary work. I well remember discussions with Kelley regarding the new archaeology that he learned under Clyde Kluckhohn at Harvard before and during WWII, in comparison to the other “new” archaeology championed by the Binfords. Riley, Pennington, and Hedrick provided students with opportunities to integrate the archaeological perspective with the ethnographic and historical in material culture studies. The graduate students, including Weigand, Joe Mountjoy, and others, kept the discussion alive.

Great faculty attract, inspire, and develop excellent students. Among the many who were initiated into Mesoamerican studies were Phil Weigand, Joe Mountjoy, Mike Spence, and many others who have continued their passionate and productive pursuits in Mesoamerica.

As an undergraduate interested in Illinois archaeology but not yet convinced that archaeology was a viable career, I was not aware of the wealth of experience that Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU) offered, but in a short time, contact with these folks changed my life. Phil and Joe were both graduate students while I was an undergraduate. Phil taught prehistory courses, which I took. He had a broad perspective and an inquir-

ing mind that challenged his students to look for connections that we had not seen and to think about how the theory and practice of archaeology were connected. Perhaps most important, he personified the passion for archaeology as a way of knowing, not just a recovery technique. As a work-study student at the SIU Museum, I was able to interact with faculty such as Kelley (and of course, Ellen Abbott Kelley), and graduate students on a more collegial and practical level. That opportunity introduced me to Phil and Acelia Weigand’s work among the Huichol, Mike Spence’s Teotihuacan research, and Joe Mountjoy’s ceramic studies. One of my museum tasks was mounting ceramic thin sections for Joe’s dissertation research.

Early on, Phil was a proponent of pursuing the “big ideas” in anthropology—that is, how cultures work, and the challenge of how one approaches those subjects through the archaeological record. His fieldwork experiences while at Carbondale, whether excavating in southern Illinois, surveying sites in northern Mexico, or conducting ethnographic research among the Huichol, provided real testing grounds for his theoretical interests. Phil, as anthropologist, was fascinated by current issues of politics and culture no less than by similar cultural machinations in millennia past.

For good or ill, Carbondale was one of the universities dramatically affected by the antiwar riots of the late 1960s and early 1970s. As ethnographer, Phil was out on the front lines, taking photos and recording the events. Here was yet one more significant and rare display of culture in crisis that he wanted to experience and understand.

As significant as Phil was during the Carbondale years, he was often perceived as half of the team of “Phil and Celia.” Acelia García de Weigand was a powerful presence within Carbondale’s anthropology community, an unusual role for the wife of a graduate student. Assertive, outspoken, and passionate about Phil and about Mexico, the country of her birth, Celia could always enliven discussions and challenge people with ideas. In the process, she turned many events into memorable experiences. Over the years, Phil and Celia have continued to work as a very productive team, exploring a wide range of interests—whether the minutiae of archaeological survey, hacienda and *ejido* life, or the impact of the Cristero counterrevolution. The Weigands’ interests in West Mexico are broad and deep.

THE LATER YEARS, BY CHRISTOPHER S. BEEKMAN

I came to know Phil and Celia at a later stage in their careers, in the early 1990s. After carrying on a correspondence with Phil for

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some six months, I visited Jalisco for the first time and met him and Celia at their home in Etzatlán. They were beginning to receive recognition for their work (more from Mexican than U.S. sources), but the rapid growth in West Mexican archaeology had only just begun. Phil took me on a tour of the region, leaving me flabbergasted at the vast range of topics one could pursue. We saw archaeological sites from the Formative through Postclassic, to be sure, but also haciendas, pre-Columbian raised fields, sixteenth-century sites from the *Rebelión de Nueva Galicia*, and even the church where he and Celia were married. Phil expounded upon the modern politics of the area while we sat and watched the customary lines of young men and women walk opposing circuits around the plaza at Etzatlán. I quickly recognized that Phil was of that generation of pioneers for whom ethnography, ethnohistory, and archaeology are narrow specializations that can interfere with the full appreciation of the multidimensional character of an area. Phil and Celia have used all these approaches in developing a more complete view of the Occidente, a view that has also drawn them into issues of more direct importance in people's lives.

That immersion in local life served Phil well in the late 1990s, when he succeeded in drumming up municipal and state support for a long-term project of excavation at Guachimontón, the largest center of the Teuchitlan tradition located on the lowest slopes of the Tequila Volcano. In addition to the fine archaeology taking place there, the project has always considered dissemination of information to local residents to be a prime consideration, and

construction of a museum is underway. I could have seen this coming—the only point during my first tour of Jalisco when I did not have Phil's full attention was when we ran into a hapless resident who curiously asked what we were doing. Phil engaged the man for the next half-hour in an exposition of the area's rich cultural heritage, and by the time he was finished he had made a date to come back (with Celia) and speak to the community about their work in uncovering the region's prehistory.

PHIL WEIGAND AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF WEST MEXICO

The archaeology of West Mexico has been undervalued. For decades, the number of active archaeologists working in the area could be counted on one hand; it was nearly unilineal through the generations. Much of the work focused on the spectacular objects recovered from shaft tombs, particularly the fine and expressive hollow figurines. Few investigators ventured into this beautiful region so far from Mexico's central valley, but among those who did were Carl Lumholtz, Isabel Kelly, Beatriz Braniff, and Otto Schöndube. Hasso von Winning too shaped much of the discussion in the 1970s and 1980s with his insightful publications. Von Winning, and those who followed his lead, provided new insight from an art history perspective but did very little to enhance our understanding of ancient West Mexican cultures. Indeed, the focus on a narrow range of objects may have deflected more com-



Phil Weigand in front of a restored pyramid on Circle 2 at Guachimontón.



Dr. Weigand conducting ethnographic research in a contemporary transnational subculture.

prehensive research for a time. However, like many other areas in the late 1960s and early 1970s, change came to the Occidente. More archaeologists with colleagues in different specialties came to the region, and all were struck by the rich but obscure archaeological traditions that were reminiscent of, yet different from, the archaeology of better-known parts of Mexico.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Phil Weigand's expansive interests spurred him to explore broadly and to attract to the region students from Mexico and the United States, as well as colleagues. A prime example is Weigand's interest in the Teuchitlan tradition that encompasses the Guachimontón site and its environs. Clearly, this is a site of great importance, if defined only by its size and the presence of monumental architecture. However, when one stands at the site looking out over the basin with Phil, one gets the sense that its importance to our understanding of early social organization and polity interaction is pivotal. There are lifetimes of work to be accomplished on and around the site. Work conducted, led, or inspired by Phil Weigand, including site survey, examination of critical resources such as obsidian, and mapping of the extensive raised fields of the area, have all helped to lay the groundwork for generations of archaeologists to come.

Beyond Phil's contribution to survey and field archaeology, he has long served in the international arena as a tireless proponent of Occidente archaeology. He is a frequent speaker and contributor to books and symposia, not only in the United States and Mexico but also in Europe. He added his perspective and expertise to the extraordinary West Mexico exhibit curated by Richard Townsend at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1998.

For many years, Phil decried the lack of new publications coming out of the Occidente and the poor availability of published works on both sides of the border. Too few archaeologists published, and many of the publications tended toward art history and ceramic figurines. Too often, new publications were yet one more catalog of fine objects, with little new information or insight. Even worse, there seemed to be little interest in the region by university presses who eagerly sought out manuscripts on the Aztec, Maya, and better-known Mesoamerican cultures. To remedy that situation, Phil encouraged his colleagues and students to publish and to organize and participate in symposia that shed new light on this fascinating region. Perhaps one of his most significant contributions in this area has been his active participation in the excellent publication program at the Colegio de Michoacán. Under the direction of Eduardo Williams, this press is preeminent in Mexico and has become a leading archaeological press. Through Phil's formal affiliation and informal support, he too has contributed to the success of the press.

Throughout his career, Phil Weigand has often chosen the route of the independent scholar rather than a tenured academic position with its benefits and liabilities. Phil taught at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and served as department chair for a number of years in the late 1970s and early 1980s. However, New York was too far from the Occidente, and his duties at the university began to interfere with his passion. He took a more challenging and independent path, by moving to West Mexico, and has demonstrated that it was indeed the right path for him and, in the larger picture, a very positive result for Occidente archaeology and cultural studies.

Phil Weigand's research since 1970 has succeeded in drawing a very different "big picture" of the Occidente than existed before. When he began working in the Occidente, emphasis on the "cult of the dead" and its material culture was the major focus of research in the region. Through Phil's tireless efforts in his own research and in energizing others, the Occidente is now being seen as a much more complicated region that must be appreciated for its own special cultural developments but also for its place in Mesoamerica. The village cultures posited by earlier thinkers have been replaced by a mixture of complex hierarchical societies in some areas and more modest groups in others. Once, the Occidente was defined by what it was not, in Mesoamerican terms. Those days are gone. The Occidente has achieved a significance that cannot be overshadowed by developments in other areas but must be connected to other regions, whether the central valley of Mexico or the American Southwest. Phil would never claim the credit for single-handedly transforming our view of the region. However, more than any other single individual, he has influenced a generation of archaeologists and other scientists to do just that.