A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CARL L. JOHANNESSEN'S WORKS RELATING TO TRANSOCEANIC INFLUENCES, THROUGH 1999

In light of Carl Johannessen's being honored (see following page) and his being so key a contributor to the study of early long-distance contacts, we felt that Pre-Columbian's readers might like to be aware of his relevant publications, a number of which are referred to in the tribute immediately below. —Ed.


1984 Distribution and Medicinal Use of the Black-Boned and Black-Meated Chicken in Mexico, Guatemala, and South America. National Geographic Society Research Reports 17:493-95. [with Wayne Fogg and May Chen Fogg]


1989a Maize Ears Sculptured in 12th and 13th Century A.D. India as Indicators of Pre-Columbian Diffusion. Economic Botany 43(2):164-80. [with Anne Z. Parker]


1989c American Crop Plants in Asia Prior to European Contact. Yearbook, Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers 14:14-19. [with Anne Z. Parker]


HONORS

Pre-Columbiana is pleased to reprint here (with minor corrections) a testimony to editorial-board member and contributor Carl L. Johannessen. Professor Johannessen is a distinguished senior geographer, now emeritus but as peripatetic as ever in the pursuit of knowledge. The Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers (C.L.A.G.) has honored him with their highest award, named for another, now deceased prominent Latin Americanist geographer. We felt that readers of this journal would appreciate knowing more about one of its most intellectually creative associates. This tribute (here retitled) was written by tropical ecologists Joshua and Sally Dickinson. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the authors and William E. Deolittle for C.L.A.G. and for the publisher of the C.L.A.G. Yearbook, University of Texas Press, in whose Vol. 25 [1999] the tribute first appeared. The award was for 1998. A selected list of works by Johannessen appears in the Bibliography section of this journal, on the preceding page.

GEOGRAPHER CARL L. JOHANNESSEN HONORED

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The Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers honors the profession of geography by recognizing Carl L. Johannessen and his work with the Preston E. James Eminent Latin Americanist Career Award.

Carl’s career is a classic example of the hybrid vigor that derives from early training in a specialized discipline, in his case in the biological sciences, capped with a Ph.D. in geography. That his mentor, Carl O. Sauer, attracted such crossovers has been a boon to our profession. Out of his doctoral research leading to a Ph.D. from Berkeley in 1959 came Savannas of Interior Honduras (1963) in the prestigious Ibero-Americana series. The blending of scientific training in biology with the cultural and historical perspectives of geography reflected in his doctoral work, presaged a rich and wide-ranging array of research themes and publications during Carl’s long and continuing career as a field geographer. Perhaps one of the better measures of a scholar’s stature in the sciences are the sources of his or her funding. Carl’s work has been supported by a Guggenheim Fellowship, The National Science Foundation, The Carnegie Foundation, The National Geographic Foundation, The Office of Naval Research, and the Agricultural Development Council.

To say Carl exhibits the tenacity of a bulldog is far too mild a metaphor to describe the all-consuming persistence with which he approaches research—be it on the pejibaye palm, black-boned chickens, wave-cut terraces, or early maize in the Old World. Should his research challenge conventional wisdom, particularly related to the exchange of domesticates between the Old and New Worlds before 1492, his tenacity redoubles. His dedication to research should be an inspiration to students and humbling to many of the rest of us. When NSF or the National Geographic Foundation is delayed, Carl is off to the field at his own expense; when grant funding doesn’t cover a vehicle, he is off on the next rickety bus.
Carl is not always content to study, write and publish. Work on the plant domestication processes have ranged from observation and exhaustive interviews in the field in the furthest corners of Maya country, germplasm reproduction in University of Oregon greenhouses to tissue culture in his own laboratory. He is ever alert for the practical application of even the most seemingly esoteric research, whether to improve the food security of the small farmer or as a potential commercial venture. In the Northeast of Brazil, he worked with the OAS to design Centers for Innovation and Domestication, drawing on his extensive research on the ancient process of domestication. When researching the geographic distribution and domestication of the pejibaye palm, Carl, “El Pejibayero,” immersed himself in the process of selecting for high vitamin-A content and spinelessness to improve the commercial potential of this palm in the wet tropics. Not content with seed selection for desirable characteristics, Carl devoted great efforts to vegetatively reproduce the pejibaye. Not content with the pejibaye, cucurbit, amaranth, and maize, Carl works with equal enthusiasm on filberts, apples, and pears on his own farm.

Of the ideas about pre-Columbian exchanges between the Old and New worlds sown among his students by Carl Sauer, perhaps none took deeper root as the focus of the intense intellectual curiosity of Carl Johannessen than the melanotic chicken. A casual encounter with a melanotic chicken (black-boned, black-meat chicken or BB-BMC) in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, in 1973 triggered an odyssey through Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize in Mesoamerica, on to Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile in South America, and thence across the Pacific to Easter Island, Hawaii, Samoa, and Tahiti. This effort was funded by the National Geographic Foundation. The methodology followed throughout called for first the direct observation of BB-BMCS in the barnyard, discussion of the problems of hybridizing with commercially raised breeds followed by open-ended interviews in which respondents were asked to describe the medicinal uses of the chickens. The uses were most complex and similar among the Mesoamerican Maya peoples, although some uses were documented throughout South America, particularly among the Mapuches in Chile. Seeking Old World links, Carl engaged May Fogg, the Chinese-speaking wife of one of his graduate students, to explore the ancient and modern Chinese literature. This led to the discovery of a treasure trove of similar uses of the BB-BMC in southern China, not to mention among the Chinese community in the Americas. This saga is illustrative of Carl’s ingenuity in building a case for the early cultural exchange based on field mapping of distribution coupled with interviews to document uses and linguistic cues, thorough exploration of original sources, and carefully reasoned and documented presentation. There are few Latin Americanists among us who came of age in geography during Carl’s pursuit of the BB-BMC in the 1970s who weren’t infected by his enthusiasm. To this day none of us can walk through a barnyard or market in the back country of Latin America without casting a furtive eye among the chickens and asking discreet questions.

An abiding interest of Carl’s has been understanding of plant domestication in the past through study of present processes of selection and reproduction by isolated groups. The first evidence of this interest was a piece on “Man’s Role in the Distribution of the Corozo Palm,” in 1957. The conceptual underpinnings of [this interest] are well stated in his 1987 “Domestication Process: An Hypothesis for its Origin” chapter in Carl O. Sauer: A Tribute (OSU Press, Corvallis). Around 1985 Carl embarked on another epic quest—the documentation of the presence of maize in the Old World prior to 1492.
His NSF-funded work in India and beyond in Nepal and China is a tribute to this Latin Americanist’s imagination, perseverance, and pure grit. His photographs of 12th and 13th Century sculptures showing maize ears in the hands of buxom maidens offer a most convincing entree to Carl’s exhaustive analysis of sculpted maize ear morphology, linguistic connections, ancient and modern literature review, and field studies of maize growing in isolated valleys of the Himalayas.

Both the poet Gabriel Mistral and the writer Ernest Hemingway recognized the special power that the verb *servir*, to serve, has in the Spanish language. It is in the transcendent meaning of this word that we in CLAG have the honor to acknowledge that Carl L. Johannessen has served and served well. He has served as chair of his Department and of CLAG, he has served the dozens of students who took degrees under his direction as well as thousands he taught, he has served the advancement of science, he has served humanity through his plant breeding, his selection of better pejibayes; and through his probing questions, envelope-stretching ideas, and warm friendship, he has served us all.

Asyrian Fruits. (From the Monuments.)