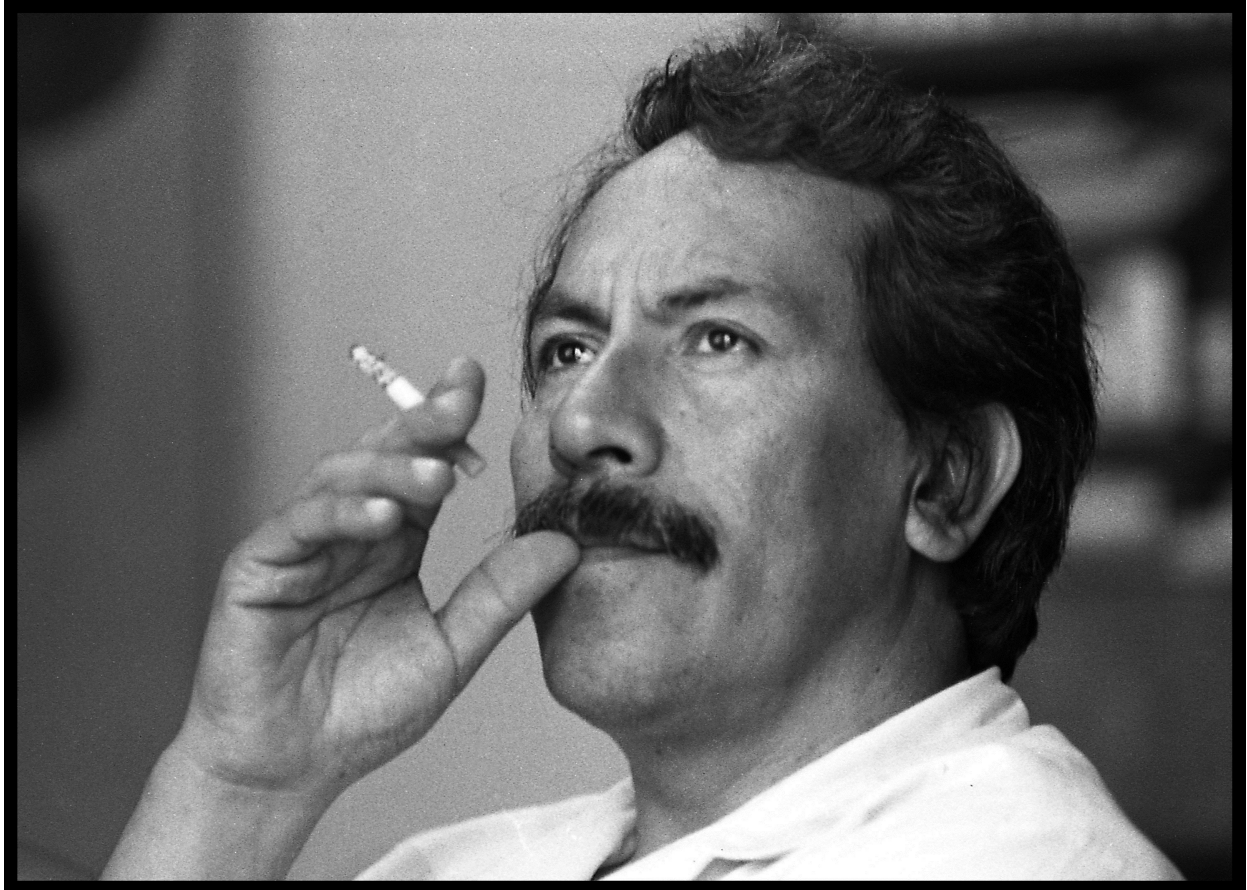


LUIS GUILLERMO LUMBRERAS SALCEDO
(29 July 1936–9 November 2023)

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Luis Guillermo Lumbreras, Lima, 1982. Photograph courtesy of Herman Schwarz.

I write this obituary at the request of the editors of *Andean Past*, Monica Barnes and Daniel H. Sandweiss.¹ While Lumbreras's friends, colleagues, and followers paid him their

last respects at his funeral, I revisited an old text that I wrote more than twelve years ago, at a time when I knew him very well. Without doubt, to talk about Lumbreras is to talk about Peruvian archaeology, and this will always be a challenge for any Peruvian or foreign researcher. Nevertheless, I had the good fortune to converse

¹ A Spanish version of this obituary has been published in *Arqueología y Sociedad* 39 (2023), pp. 9–17.

with Lumbreras during many mornings, evenings, and nights in his home, in the Lima neighborhood of Magdalena del Mar, surrounded by books, jokes, and the natural and casual environment of a family home. At times, during these conversations, we were joined by Marcela Ríos, his life partner and by Luchito Lumbreras, his son, who is also an archaeologist. I believe that everyone who paid visits there understands what I'm talking about and will remember that before being an archaeologist, scientist, or academic, Lumbreras was a great friend and a generous conversationalist with whom time flew past. He was a person from whom I could learn about things at first hand, while others could only learn them from him through books. Nevertheless, I don't think that I have a great knowledge of the life of Lumbreras. There are accounts like that by Enrique González Carré and Carlos del Águila (2005) that gather together impressions more vivid and relational than this tribute. Nevertheless, I hope that this obituary will complement the perceptions that one has of Lumbreras and form part of the larger tribute to someone who contributed, more than many others, to Peruvian archaeology, but, above all, to society in general.

A large part of this obituary is based on these conversations in which we talked about his life and the historical context in which he found himself living. In spite of the fact that Lumbreras was, and will be, criticized for his various "mistakes", "failures to act according to his principles", and "contradictions", I believe he knew how to live a life worth relating, which already forms part of the historical memory of our country.

To begin: as other researchers have already indicated, Lumbreras was, without a doubt, one of the most influential Peruvian archaeologists of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first (Schaedel and

Shimada 1982:363; Shimada and Vega Centeno 2011).

Lumbreras was born in the city of Huamanga, in the Department of Ayacucho, in the central sierra of the Peruvian Andes, to a well-off family. He was the son of a renowned lawyer and former representative of the Ayacucho province of Huamanga and of a famous mathematics teacher (Fujita 2010). In addition, his brother was a distinguished physician and his sister was a mathematician. In spite of his class origins, Lumbreras did not remain alienated from, and insensitive to, the very unjust, almost feudal, social reality that surrounded him (Lumbreras 1985:56), as will be revealed below.

After this early childhood sheltered by the comforts of life as a son of a powerful Peruvian highland family, Lumbreras moved to Lima to pursue his studies. First he obtained his primary education at La Recoleta, a Catholic school located in the center of Lima and, later, in 1951, he continued his secondary education at the Antonio Raimondi school on the Avenida Arequipa in Lima's Lince neighborhood. Although the members of Lima's middle class sent their children to study at this private educational institution, Lumbreras lived in Lince, a working class district, a short distance from the school. In his fourth year of secondary studies, his passion for Peru's past motivated him to found, with his friends, the *Círculo de Estudios Antonio Raimondi* (Antonio Raimondi Study Circle). This student association was dedicated to discussion groups, historical research, and public presentations of historical and archaeological themes. In addition, in this school, Lumbreras got to know the collection of the Italian scholar, Antonio Raimondi that was deposited there, as well as that of the famous archaeologist Julio César Tello who, also, had been a teacher there during the last decade of his life when he

confronted serious economic problems.² The conferences organized by the young Lumbreras and his circle of friends, in this college, were linked to themes about the history of Peru.

In 1953, Emilio Choy Ma³ attended one of these conferences, and there Lumbreras and Choy struck up a great friendship, and began a collaboration that allowed Lumbreras to know some Marxist writings from an early age. In addition, it was at this time that Lumbreras met with people from his neighborhood in a café in Lince to hold discussion groups concerning historical and national themes. Choy was a participant in these meetings, and was one of the most interested. At one of these 1953 meetings Choy, already interested in “Andean man”, wrote a text that later was published in the *Revista del Museo Nacional* under the title “Problemática de los orígenes del hombre y la cultura en América” (Problematics of the Origin and Culture in America) (Choy 1955). According to Lumbreras, Choy wrote it in the record time of two weeks. In 1954, sharing the same preoccupation as Choy, Lumbreras published a short piece in the newspaper *La Prensa* on the autochthonous origins of “American man”, influenced, according to Lumbreras, by Louis Agassiz. In these years, Choy showed Lumbreras, for the first time, the Marxist text titled “On

Contradiction” by Mao Tse Tung, an essay that Choy studied to understand the Chinese revolutionary process. At another of these Lince discussion group meetings Choy passed on to Lumbreras Gordon Childe’s book, *What Happened in History?* (1942). Two years later, Choy brought *Man Makes Himself* (1936), also by Childe, to Lumbreras’s attention. This book inspired Choy to write *La Revolución neolítica en los Andes* (*The Neolithic Revolution in the Andes*).

In 1955, Lumbreras joined the Faculty of Letters of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. At this period of the university’s development, its teaching faculty included Raúl Porras Barrenechea (his mentor), Luis E. Valcárcel, Jorge C. Muelle, José Matos Mar, and visiting professors like John V. Murra, John Howland Rowe, and Juan Comas. His fellow students included Rosa Fung, Ramiro Matos, Isabel Flores, and Duccio Bonavia, among others. Along with Lumbreras, they constituted the first generation of professional archaeological archaeologists in Peru. During his formation as a university student, Lumbreras assisted diverse archaeologists with their field work, above all, foreign ones, which permitted him to attain a panoramic vision of Peru’s archaeological remains. In 1958, before finishing his university studies, he began his teaching career at the Universidad Nacional de Educación Enrique Guzmán y Valle, in Lima. He finished his undergraduate education, obtaining a bachelor’s degree in humane letters, in 1959, with his thesis *Los problemas de la arqueología peruana a través de la cerámica* (The Problems of Peruvian Archaeology on the Basis of Ceramics). Later, in 1960, he submitted a thesis titled *El desarrollo de la civilización andina y sus problemas* (The Development of Andean Civilization and Its Problems) to obtain the academic degree of Doctor of Letters with a specialization in ethnology and archaeology.

² From 1930, the preeminence of Tello as an organic intellectual (*sensu* Gramsci) integrated into the Peruvian government began to be reduced. For example, the Patronato Nacional de Arqueología that Tello founded was then headed by Luis Valcárcel who didn’t offer him major aid and even criticized his work (Prieto 2010).

³ Choy was born in Callao and was the son of Chinese immigrants. He was the owner of a brickyard and, according to Lumbreras, went on his drives through Lima with a chauffeur who had the surname Huamán, a proletarian poet of the “First of May” group. Huamán knew many of the illustrious members of Lima society including José María Arguedas, who also was a friend of Choy. Lumbreras always remembered his own friendship with Arguedas.

In 1959, the Universidad San Cristóbal de Huamanga, in Ayacucho, reopened (Degregori 2011 [1990]:41). The reopening committee was composed of intellectuals as brilliant as Jorge Basadre and José María Arguedas, and was headed by Luis E. Valcárcel. In 1960, Lumbreras began to teach at this university, and got to know César Guardia Mayorga, with whom he studied Marxism systematically (Luis Lumbreras, personal communication, 2011). Between 1963 and 1966 Lumbreras served as Dean of the Social Sciences and Education Faculty of this Ayacucho university. This is the stage of Lumbreras's major political and philosophical development, in which his thinking matured, thanks to his re-immersion in the reality of Ayacucho, not just at the university and in intellectual circles, but also in the rural zones and in political work. Within his archaeological practice, he conducted excavations at the famous site of Huari, and at other sites, which helped him give form to his depiction of Wari as the first pan-Andean empire.

After this Ayacucho stage, in 1966, Lumbreras returned to Lima, and began to teach classes at several universities, the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos among them. Once established as an instructor at his alma mater, his Marxist stance became better known and more influential. Likewise, between 1968 and 1972, he was put in charge of San Marco's Museo de Arqueología y Etnología (Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology). Also shortly after his return to Lima, in mid-1966, he began his excavations at Chavín de Huántar, where he discovered the most important archaeological context recovered to date, in a subterranean structure adjacent to the Old Temple (Templo Viejo), known as the Offerings Gallery (Galería de las Ofrendas) (Lumbreras 1993; Lumbreras and Amat 1965:165).

On the basis of his doctoral dissertation and his class notes from Huamanga, he published the

book, *The Peoples and Cultures of Ancient Peru* (1974) (*De los pueblos, las culturas y las artes en el antiguo Perú* 1969a), a classic text in Peruvian archaeology. In this book, he set out his chronological framework in opposition to that of John Rowe (1962). His chronology established evolutionary stages (*etapas* or *estadios*) based on socio-cultural practices, in contrast to Rowe's periods and horizons inspired by art history and culturalism. Nevertheless, Lumbreras's system continued to utilize implicitly the evolutionary and culturalist vision of Andean prehistory (Lumbreras 1969b:127; 1974a:13). Lumbreras reflected on this contradiction in most of the rest of his publications. In spite of this, this book constitutes one of the few examples in which a synthesis of Peruvian archaeology written by a Peruvian has been translated into English (Lumbreras 1969a). Up to now, it remains a manual that is commonly part of the libraries of North American archaeologists.

In 1970, Lumbreras organized the symposium "Autochthonous Formations in America" (Formaciones Autóctonas en América) that was part of the Fortieth International Congress of Americanists that was held in Lima (Patterson 1994:533). From this, one can appreciate his vocation for gathering together the progressive thinking researchers of Latin America. One of his key texts from this period was published in 1972, although Lumbreras indicated that it was written as a present for his son and, because of this, it was crafted in simple language (Lumbreras 2010). This book was titled *De los orígenes del estado* (*On the Origins of the State*) (Lumbreras 1972). Later it was re-published several times as *Los orígenes de la civilización en el antiguo Perú* (*The Origins of Civilization in Ancient Peru*). Here one clearly sees that, according to Lumbreras, what moved the prehistory of the central Andes would be the class struggle in the Marxist manner.

In the 1970s, and under the auspices of the military government of Juan Velasco Alvarado, Lumbreras also integrated himself into the structure of the Peruvian state, specifically into institutions related to the development of cultural heritage. Concretely, the Ayacucho archaeologist functioned as the organizer of the Department of Archaeological Monuments of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (National Institute of Culture–INC), and between 1973 and 1979, he functioned as the director of Peru's Museo Nacional de Arqueología (National Museum of Archaeology).

At the same time, Lumbreras's Marxist influence was made explicit during this decade, above all, through the course he offered at the Universidad de Concepción, Chile, in 1972 titled "Archaeology and Society" (Arqueología y Sociedad). Lumbreras synthesized this course in his most popular theoretical book, *La arqueología como ciencia social* (Archaeology as Social Science) (1974b). This book is a milestone of his academic career and influenced several generations of Peruvian and Latin American archaeologists. It outlines a program of archaeological and political research influenced by historical materialism. Elsewhere (Tantaleán 2004, also see Aguirre-Morales 2005:189), I have made an extensive analysis of this book, and Lumbreras himself (2005) reflected on his early writings, so I will not treat it at length here. It remains clear, in the light of this book, that Lumbreras had internalized the method and theory of historical materialism. He also had a clear dialectic perspective on social reality and its archaeological representation. Nevertheless, the way this is carried out in practice results in an element that is still lacking in this book, perhaps as a consequence of its character as the first manifesto of this new way of observing and explaining social materiality. As Rodrigo Navarrete (2006) suggests, Lumbreras aspired to convert his historical reconstruction into a popular discourse and construct a program of

political revolution. In fact, this text inspired José Luis Lorenzo to organize the Teotihuacán meeting (Reunión de Teotihuacán) in 1975 (Lorenzo 1976), an event that attempted to establish general courses of action rooted in the historical materialist perspective that each of the participants was following in their respective countries.

On the basis of several international meetings, like that at Teotihuacán (see Navarrete 2006), but, above all, that which took place at Paracas in Peru in 1979 and which was sponsored by UNESCO, Lumbreras solidified his regional proposal for South American archaeology as articulated for the Andes. This proposal was published under the title *Arqueología de la América andina* (Archaeology of Andean America) (Lumbreras 1981). Here he set out the "cultural-historical areas" ("áreas histórico-culturales") of this part of the American continent and his explicit proposals for the social development of each of them. These have prefigured archaeology as it is practiced in the Andes up to the present.

During the 1980s, his practice took place in the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, and in other research spaces such as the "Proyecto Arqueológico e Histórico Chíncha y Pisco" ("Chíncha and Pisco Archaeological and Historical Project") from 1984 (Lumbreras 2001). This research was initiated with the North American archaeologist Craig Morris and was the base on which a series of members and associates of the Instituto Andino de Estudios Arqueológicos (INDEA) (the Andean Institute of Archaeological Studies), founded in 1982, could develop research influenced by Lumbreras's social archaeology (Alcalde *et al.* 2001; Canziani 1992; Del Águila 2010, to cite only a few). Additionally, during the first half of the 1980s, Lumbreras participated in the foundation and teaching of the archaeology degree course at the Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral

(ESPOL) in Guayaquil, Ecuador (Jorge Marcos, personal communication 2023).⁴ This was also the phase relating to his influential articles addressing theory and methodology that appeared in the *Gaceta Arqueológica Andina*, the journal published by INDEA, which Lumbreras coedited with Elías Mujica. Thanks to these texts, Lumbreras bestowed greater consistency on his initial schema published in 1974 (Lumbreras 2005). In 1989, he was named professor emeritus of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, retiring from formal teaching at his alma mater. Around the same time, in 1990, he headed the recently inaugurated Museo de la Nación (Museum of the Nation), during the first months of the government of Alberto Fujimori.

From 1991 until 1996, Lumbreras, accompanied by Marcela Ríos, made a long journey through Europe, offering classes at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid (1991) and at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona (1991–1994),⁵ and spending periods of time between 1995 and the middle of 1996 doing research and teaching in Germany. During these years, he continued to develop his line of theory, above all in relation to the emergence of the state (see, for example, Lumbreras 1996) and Chavín society (Lumbreras 1993). In 1996, he returned to South America, residing for four years in Brazil, where he emphasized (and Lumbreras always was outstanding) his participation in the creation of the Instituto Experimental de Investigación de Campos dos Goytacazes, Rio de

Janeiro (Experimental Institute of Field Research of Goytacazes, Rio de Janeiro), part of the Universidad Estadual do Norte Fluminense. Finally, he returned to Peru at the end of 1999.

Reinstalled in his country, during the first decade of the twenty-first century, Lumbreras occupied the directorship of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura between 2002 and 2006 and aided in the strengthening of Peruvian archaeology through projects as emblematic and regional in South America as the Programa Qhapaq Ñan.⁶ This had, as its principal objective, the declaration of the imperial Inca road system as part of the cultural heritage of humanity, an objective that was attained in 2014.

During the last decade of his life, Lumbreras did not occupy official posts in the government or university structures, but he continued to be active, initiating, organizing, and advising various research, museographic, and cultural projects at personal and private institutions. For example, I, personally, remember the inspiration he offered me in organizing a Congreso Nacional de Arqueología (National Archaeology Congress) in Peru which finally occurred in 2014, and in which Lumbreras participated. Lumbreras also continued research during these years. For example, he studied the site of Chavín de Huántar with John Rick and Rosa Mendoza and he advised José Ochatoma and Martha Cabrera on their research at Huari. In effect, many of his colleagues awaited his comments on their field work and publications. Another great museographical project, perhaps the most ambitious of his life, was the Museo Nacional de Arqueología (National Museum of Archaeology) a project he drove and defended. In addition, in 2018, he suggested to me, as well as to other colleagues, that we revive the extinct journal, the *Gaceta*

⁴ During my time at ESPOL with Jorge Marcos between 2014 and 2016, I was able to record the testimony of many people about the impact and influence that Lumbreras had on their education and professional development, especially that of instructors and former students who had taken this course.

⁵ While obtaining my doctorate at the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona between 2000 and 2008, I could sense how great an impression Lumbreras had left on many of my professors.

⁶ Qhapaq Ñan is a Quechua term that may be translated as “royal road”, the highway system maintained by the Incas.

Arqueológico Andina, a publication project that, unfortunately, could not be realized. However, inspired by his former students, especially Carlos del Águila, Lumbreras published a new edition of his classic 1969 book which appeared under the new title of *Pueblos y culturas del Perú antiguo* (*Peoples and Cultures of Ancient Peru*) (Lumbreras 2019). This edition, is mainly augmented with some recent archaeological data and new reflections on Andean prehistory. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, in full isolation, Lumbreras continued to publish and to offer Internet conferences. His last book, *Breve Historia General del Perú* (*Brief General History of Peru*) (Lumbreras 2022), a synthesis of Peruvian history from the first inhabitants of the Andes until the 1960s, is a book aimed at the general public that demonstrates his continuous desire to popularize archaeology. Nevertheless, his light was extinguished forever in Lima during the cold early hours of 9 November 2023.

As one can appreciate, Lumbreras undertook a large number of activities relating to the recuperation of Andean history, utilizing archaeological remains as a means of explaining to human beings what they had produced. His departure leaves a significant mark, on the history of Peruvian archaeology, but, above all, on the innumerable people who, in a direct or indirect manner, were touched by his written and spoken words. Without doubt, Luis Guillermo Lumbreras has won a place in the history of Peru and of the world.

Translated from the Spanish by Monica Barnes

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