



EMILIO ESTRADA

1916–1961

When Emilio Estrada first came to the United States National Museum on an autumn day in 1953 — a tall, serious young man slightly unsure of his reception — his interest in archaeology had just begun. Yet by May of 1960, his contribution was of such significance that two of the speakers honoring the 25th Anniversary of the Society for American Archaeology singled it out for special mention (*American Antiquity*, Vol. 27, pp. 50, 67). To have changed in less than seven years from an uninformed and unknown amateur to a scholar of international reputation, accepted on equal footing by professional colleagues, is a remarkable feat. The feat is no more remarkable, however, than the man.

Emilio Estrada was born in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on June 22, 1916, the oldest son of a distinguished family. His father was a prominent banker and leader in programs of economic development; his grandfather, whose name he bore, was one of Ecuador's presidents. His early school years were spent in Ecuador, Italy, France, and finally the United States. Upon graduation from the Baylor School in Chat-

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tanooga, Tennessee, he entered the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce of the University of Pennsylvania. Returning to Ecuador in 1937, he put into practice the business principles learned in the United States, and through good judgment and hard work became one of Guayaquil's leading businessmen. Among his most recent ventures was the opening in 1958 of the first U.S. style super service station in Ecuador, which in a few weeks was selling more gasoline than all other stations in Guayaquil combined.

The many years spent away from home strengthened his affection for Ecuador, and as his experience and resources grew he devoted himself increasingly to her service. Whatever might benefit Ecuador had his personal and financial support, and in this connection he participated actively in the founding or administration of a great many organizations in the world of sport, charity, social welfare, business, and government. His activities on behalf of sports were of sufficient interamerican importance to win him the honorary title of "Caballero del Deporte," bestowed by the Confederación Sudamericana de Atletismo. His skill in sailing brought honors to Ecuador in interamerican competitions, most recently in the Pan American Games held in Chicago in 1959. He was Ecuadorian representative of the International Game Fishing Association, and to promote international interest in big game fishing in Ecuadorian waters, founded the Sociedad Deportiva Isla de la Plata.

His political activities included serving as a member of the Guayaquil Municipal Council, and from 1955–56 was Mayor of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city. It was characteristic of him that during his term he not only initiated administrative reforms and social welfare programs, but built public parks and put all the city fountains in working order. Political life was not congenial to him, however, and he refused all subsequent requests to re-enter the political arena, including invitations from the three principal political parties to be their vice-presidential candidate in the 1960 elections. In recent years, he grew increasingly concerned over the economic situation in Ecuador. Drawing on his practical experience in business and government, he wrote several pamphlets and numerous newspaper articles outlining programs of economic development. He exercised some direct influence in his capacity as a director of La Previ-

sora Banco Nacional de Crédito, one of Ecuador's largest banks.

In addition to all of these activities are his achievements in archaeology. When his interest began in 1953, the coast of Ecuador was one of the least known regions in the New World. By 1961, he had converted it into one of the best known. Beginning with the area around Guayaquil and gradually expanding to adjacent provinces, he accumulated surface collections from hundreds of coastal sites. Dozens of stratigraphic tests formed the basis for establishment of the cultural sequences. As the chronological framework in one region became clear, he moved to the next. By the summer of 1961, preliminary work had begun in Esmeraldas, the last coastal province remaining to be investigated.

As he gained in knowledge and experience, his enthusiasm also grew, and he developed an almost uncanny skill at interpretation. It was the conclusions that interested him, and his reports present little of the tedious supporting documentation. Always, however, he was not only willing, but eager that we should check on his results, and we did so whenever we felt there was room for doubt. Although details were sometimes altered with more extensive fieldwork, we never found any significant archaeological interpretation to be wrong; on the contrary, we were generally able to make a better case than he could by more careful ceramic analysis.

The collections were housed in his private museum, named in honor of his father "Museo Víctor Emilio Estrada." It was a museum for research rather than exhibit, and to work in it was pure delight. A catalogue system initiated in 1954 was kept up to date by two college students, who served as part time staff. While Estrada took advantage of opportunities to acquire complete specimens, it was not the objects as such that interested him, but rather their significance — the clues they provided to cultural relationships. For this purpose, potsherds were most useful, and he reached a point where he ordered the removal to storage of a number of large jars to make more room for sherds. It was his intention that the collection, acquired not only by fieldwork, but also by purchase and by gifts from individuals sympathetic to his efforts to preserve Ecuador's heritage from the past, should one day belong to the people of Guayaquil. He had begun to sketch out preliminary

plans for an exhibition building when death intervened.

Business responsibilities and other demands upon his time limited his own fieldwork to weekends and vacations, but he was fortunate in having a trustworthy foreman in Julio Viteri, who undertook much of the preliminary survey and supervised stratigraphic excavations. Estrada visited all of the major sites, often repeatedly, and surveyed personally the borders of the *salitres* along the southern Guayas coast. In the field, his enthusiasm was equally great whether the site was a burial mound containing quantities of pottery vessels and metal objects, or a badly eroded shell midden producing only one or two nondescript sherds.

He accumulated a first-rate library on archaeology, including old maps and historical documents pertaining to the Ecuadorian coast. These he read and studied repeatedly, looking for answers to questions raised by what was coming from the ground. Although he was highly intelligent, quick to learn and endowed with creative imagination, his accomplishments in the field of archaeology are equally the fruit of innumerable hours of hard work. His fatal heart attack came at the end of a typical Sunday spent classifying pottery from a new stratigraphic cut and taking pictures of specimens in the museum he loved.

From the beginning, Estrada recognized the responsibility to publish incurred by those who tamper with the archaeological record. In the introduction to his first report he acknowledged his lack of qualifications, but expressed the belief that "el silencio que pierda para el estudio de la arqueología ecuatoriana lo que se ha encontrado en Milagro, es mil veces más perjudicial." In 1956, he began the series of *Publicaciones del Museo Víctor Emilio Estrada*, which in scientific importance and artistic presentation has few rivals in Latin America. Publication No. 8, *Arqueología de Manabí Central*, completed just before his death, is an outstanding example of archaeological interpretation and demonstrates clearly the level of competence he had reached in the hobby he loved. While his interest was not shared by his wife, Gloria, or his children, Víctor Emilio, Gloria María, and Felipe, they will support the publication of the report on Manabí, so that the results of all of his investigations will ultimately appear in print, as he had planned.

The significance of Estrada's contribution is not restricted to the reconstruction of archaeological sequences on the Ecuadorian coast, a major feat in itself. What he found has bearing on the interpretation of cultural development in the New World as a whole. The 1954 work at Chorrera brought to light Mesoamerican connections dating back to the Formative Period, clarifying relationships between the high culture areas at this early time. In 1960, during excavations at Esteros and Bahía on the central Manabí coast, his recognition of a series of alien features resulted in the first really good case for transpacific contact prior to the beginning of the Christian era. Additional work in 1961 at the Valdivia site revealed a series of traits from the earliest levels that are strikingly reminiscent of Jomon pottery from Japan between 3000 and 2000 B.C. Whether or not this represents the introduction of pottery making to South America, as seems possible in view of the early date, the clear ceramic evidence of a transpacific contact prior to the second millennium B.C. makes it necessary to review objections to a similar derivation of other New World elements with Asian prototypes. It should be emphasized that these discoveries were made by Estrada and full credit belongs to him, in spite of the fact that co-authors appear by his insistence on several of the papers making them public.

Estrada was a member of the Society for American Archaeology and an Associate of Current Anthropology. On recent visits to the United States, he had the opportunity to make the personal acquaintance of a number of archaeologists specializing in Latin America, and was deeply grateful for their encouragement and cooperation. His archaeological work was too new for many honors to have come his way, but among the numerous framed citations covering the walls of his museum and study, most of them for contributions in the fields of politics or sports, was one of which he was particularly proud from the town of Milagro proclaiming him an honorary citizen in appreciation of his investigations into local prehistory.

To recite his deeds does not convey an impression of the kind of person he was, nor can words recapture his gentle charm of manner and whimsical sense of humor. He was generous, loyal, honest, and wholeheartedly devoted to his city and his country. A staunch friend of the poor and underprivileged, he lost no opportunity to fight their cause. His good judgment and fair-

ness made his advice valued by friend and foe alike. It was a guiding principle with him that he should give more than he received, and this he did with courtesy and compassion. Although suffering disappointment when he found his fellow man less altruistic than he in motivation, he never passed judgment on the behavior of others. His activities in business, government, sports, and archaeology were of pervasive influence, the fruit not only of dedication to duty but of an understanding heart. At his funeral, thousands of people from all walks of life formed the procession to the cemetery, not because he was one of Guayaquil's most eminent citizens, but because he was her most dearly beloved son.

Ecuador has been deprived of an outstandingly gifted public servant at a critical period in her history, but it is perhaps to archaeology that the damage is least repairable. His thorough knowledge of archaeological materials and increasing grasp of anthropological theory, added to an exceptional ability to draw inferences from the evidence, qualified him to an extent matched by few professional archaeologists to make significant contributions to science. In addition to competence, Estrada brought fun and excitement to the work. Archaeology for him was a challenge to his imagination, a refuge from the problems of everyday life, and in addition a contribution to his country. He believed that knowledge of its history was an essential ingredient in the development of patriotism and national unity, and his goal was to provide Ecuador with that foundation. By the time of his sudden and unexpected death on November 19, 1961, he had succeeded to a remarkable extent in changing the image from that of an underdeveloped area occupied until Inca times by primitive tribes to a center of major importance in the development and dissemination of prehistoric New World civilization. Those of us who pursue the past for lesser motives can offer only admiration for his accomplishment, tempered with regret that he was not able to complete all that he set out to do.

BETTY J. MEGGERS

1954

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1955

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JULIUS LOPEZ

1918–1961

Urban New York City archaeology lost one of its most diligent investigators of recent time through the death of Julius Lopez, aged 43, in December 1961, after a long illness caused by a malignancy. A self-trained nonprofessional, representing an outstanding example of what can be done by the amateur in archaeology, Julius Lopez had come to the scene of urban archaeology in New York in an era when practically the only open land areas left for exploration are in city owned parks. He had been active in local archaeology for 14 years. His main interests were in ceramic typology of the coastal area, in which he displayed considerable insight and authority. He was instrumental in establishing new types as well as redefining many of the established ones. He developed the very admirable trait of publishing his findings; he wrote very well. He was a frequent contributor to various bulletins of the several archaeological societies in the northeast. His enthusiasm was such that it became infectious; he provided the inspiration for more than one beginning student of archaeology. His contributions to New York archaeology won for him an honorary award as Fellow in 1959 by the New York State Archaeological Association "for original research in the archaeology of New York and competence in assembly and sincerity in publishing the data." The newly formed Metropolitan Chapter of the N.Y.S.A.A., which absorbed the membership body of the New York Archaeological Group, of which Mr. Lopez had been organizer and director since 1958, similarly awarded him a citation in 1961 for his inspiring and untiring efforts in the realm of coastal archaeology. His was a rising star, cut short lamentably soon. He is survived by his wife, Eleanor, daughter, Elisabeth Jane, and his parents, Eliza and Julius Lopez, Sr.

STANLEY WISNIEWSKI

1955

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1961

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