Edward Craig Morris (October 7, 1939 - June 14, 2006)

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Craig Morris was respected, appreciated, and even loved by his colleagues in the Northern Hemisphere as well as in the Southern. Soft spoken, exceedingly thin, and sometimes frail, he was hardly taken for granted. Craig was noted for his exacting research and his grace in writing and speaking, but also he was noticed every time he entered a room. He had a sense of humor that extended to himself, his appearance, and his fate. Born with a congenital heart defect, his parents were advised that Craig would not live to adult age. Nevertheless, he did, and tempted Providence by joining John Murra’s project in Huánuco and going on to work at the extreme altitude of Huánuco Viejo. His first heart surgery resulted from that stress, as did a life-long appreciation for John’s
scholarship, penury, and propensity to live in difficult physical conditions. After the operation on his heart valves, Craig joked that his linear body type and emaciation must have been due to his heart’s inability to support more flesh, as much as to the lack of decent provisions in Huánuco.

Apropos of these issues, in 1976 when Tom Lynch was working at Catarpe Tambo and living in San Pedro de Atacama, Craig wrote, “I’m delighted you’ve seen the light and are now digging in the proper time period. . . It seems to me that all an archaeologist should need for complete happiness is a small Inca site, in a warm climate, with a good view, and near a pleasant village with an adequate supply of wine and beer. I, of course, have not practiced what I preach.” Craig went on to remark that he had recently been mugged when he went out to get olive oil for a dinner with Murra and others: “However I only had three dollars on me, and the men didn’t even take the olive oil.”

As Craig told it, he and Freda Wolf, his physical polar opposite, made quite a comic duo walking side by side down the streets of Puno and Lima. Even the least egotistical of us has favorite images of himself and that was one of Craig’s. Although he struck some as reserved, even distant, and always polite (even with those who would rant at him behind the safety of a telephone), Craig had a wonderfully quiet, wry sense of humor and, to go with it, a sly and mischievous smile. When in Ithaca, on his semester-long postings as an adjunct professor at Cornell, he bought his winter boots (Red Wing Irish Setters of course) at Sturm Brothers, the workingman’s store. Some may be surprised to learn that Craig was born and bred a Kentucky gentleman, with rural roots. He longed for home but knew he belonged in New York City.

Born on the Morris family farm, about four miles from Murray, Kentucky, where he is survived by his sister Emily Morris Luther, Craig grew up in a household pervaded by education and religion. Craig went to school with the author Bobbie Ann Mason who attended the country school at Cuba, and Mayfield High School. Craig graduated from the Murray Training School, a teaching laboratory for the local normal school, now Murray State University. There he was valedictorian and yearbook editor. One wonders how many of Morris’s New York friends, who knew him in his $800 hand-tailored fund-raising tuxedo, would be able to find him in one of Mason’s southern stories. Few knew that he had been a member of 4-H, known statewide in his youth as an exhibitor of champion beef cattle. On their farm, in the Jackson Purchase of far southwestern Kentucky, the Morris family also grew wheat and corn for feed, and cultivated and cured tobacco as a cash crop.

Craig was a man who led many lives, some of them unknown to colleagues and casual friends. He co-owned, with Ian Tattersall, a precious and very early house in Greenwich Village—which Craig was quick to point out was on Gay Street. He also had a cabin in the Catskill Mountains and an apartment in Lima’s Barranco neighborhood, as well as an interest in the Morris family home. At graduate school in Chicago, he drove a MG (when it was operable). Later he garaged a Thunderbird in New York City, while his friends John Hyslop and Tom Lynch rode motorcycles.

Craig had style and was always well dressed. He had no problem with recreational drugs, but some of his friends and colleagues were habitual users. Thus, one evening when Craig was dressing to go to the theater, it was not so terribly unexpected that four armed FBI agents appeared at his door. Craig had aplomb and managed to convince them that he had nothing to do with an infamous batch of poisoned bonbons. His household occupants, partners, and neighbors were an interesting lot. Radical lawyer William Kunstler lived next door. Craig found him to be “a great neighbor”, but once had a window shattered by a rock intended for Kunstler.

Craig was fond of Barbara Deutsch Lynch, who sometimes served as his confidant and adviser. While still in Huánuco in 1966 he wished, in a letter to Tom Lynch dated February 7, that
“she were here and could make me a hot corned beef sandwich or something–food is a real problem.” In a previous letter (December 9, 1965), he wrote to Tom:

As for my personal life–no, I did not get married [to Nancy]. After a rather involved correspondence we broke our engagement in April, but had at least a partial reconciliation when I was home. However, after thinking about it in the placid quiet of Huánuco, I have doubts again . . . They also provide me with a full time archaeology assistant and pay half for the boy who cleans, washes dishes, and takes care of the garden. The garden by the way was landscaped by a Peace Corps volunteer and looks like a set for “Night of the Iguana”.

Yes, Craig lived a complicated life, but also a rather private one, and little of his complexity was known to the world when he majored in psychology and philosophy at Vanderbilt University (B.A., 1961, Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and NSF Undergraduate Research Participation Scholarship). He came to the University of Chicago that fall on a National Defense Education Act (Title IV) three-year fellowship in anthropology, to receive his M.A. in 1964, and his Ph.D. in 1967, working primarily with Bob Adams, Bob Braidwood, and Don Collier. During the summer of 1963, Craig accompanied Les Freeman and Tom Lynch to Ambrona and Torralba, Spain to help Clark Howell with his work at these two important Lower Paleolithic sites. The following summer brought him together with John Murra, as a late addition to the Huánuco project, where Morris began his work on the nature of Inca civilization.

In 1966 Craig was awarded a NSF Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship and he returned to Chicago with hundreds of drawings and about a thousand photographs. On October 29 he wrote (personal communication to Tom Lynch) that he had holed up in a one and a half room apartment on East 60th Street–in the appropriately named Plaisance Hotel–where he had not yet written a word. At the time, this was hardly a genteel address: “I do not yet pay protection money to the Blackstone Rangers who control the area, but I will not be surprised if my car is stolen–though someone stealing it might be surprised at its unfortunate mechanical condition.” Somehow, in the ensuing year, Craig managed to finish a dissertation that satisfied Don Collier, receive his degree, and find an assistant professorship at the University of Northern Illinois for the 1967-1968 academic year. Following that post he was at Brandeis from 1968 to 1975, and received tenure there.

During the summer of 1970, Craig was back in Peru, supported by a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, to conduct a survey of prehistoric coastal storage systems. Then, from 1971 through 1981, Craig returned to Huánuco Pampa to study provincial Inca urbanism. He was awarded three successive NSF Senior Research Grants and spent 36 months in the field. The massive project involved sophisticated sampling procedures, collection and recording of over 300,000 potsherds and other artifacts, as well as some of the first effective use of computers and statistics in archaeology, particularly in South America. George Cowgill, at Brandeis, should be credited for his tutelage in these modern methods. Surely Craig was best known for his work at Huánuco Viejo, but he was also involved with major projects at La Centinela in Chincha (1983-2005), and Tambo Colorado in Ica (2001-2005). In 1993-1994 he spent a short season on the Inca occupation of Cochabamba in Bolivia.

In 1985 (to Jerome Rozen, Jr.), Tom Lynch wrote, “Morris does not waste his time on trivial problems or repetitive or outmoded approaches. He has been a leader in the application of modern methods, such as computers, at the same time as he has exercised caution and good sense. His sampling strategies, for instance, are often imitated and cited for sensibleness and practicality. Morris is hardly an old fogey, but the old fogeys listen to Morris when they tire of and become confused by the new trends. He has excellent judgment about problem orientation and techniques. . . A large part of Morris’ papers are concerned with interpretation and the problems of dealing with
new concepts in the real world of field archaeology.” Craig’s research had depth and it will have staying power.

Above all, Morris was an articulate, accurate, and graceful writer. He wrote for the public as well as for other archaeologists, and he worked diligently on the American Museum’s educational efforts and exhibitions after he moved to New York City in 1980. In that line, Craig’s crowning achievement, with Robert Carneiro, was the new Hall of South American Peoples, opened in 1989, but he also organized the Natural History Museum’s traveling exhibitions, *Peru’s Golden Treasures* (1977-1978), *Gold of El Dorado: Heritage of Colombia* (1979-1980), and the 1996 temporary exhibition *Leonardo’s Codex Leicester: A Masterpiece of Science*. He facilitated the New York display of the *Royal Tombs of Sipán* national exhibition curated by Walter Alva and Christopher Donnan (1994). Craig was co-curator with Glenn Markoe of *Petra: Lost City of Stone* (2003).

Craig Morris was a worthy successor to Junius Bird at the Museum, becoming Chairman of the Anthropology Department and, eventually, Senior Vice-President and Dean of Science. After Bird’s death, Craig and John Murra resurrected the Institute of Andean Research, Craig serving as Secretary from 1976 to 1995 and Vice President until his own death. He complained of the administrative burdens of the Museum, but enjoyed the public and social aspects of its offices and fund raising activities. Morris was elected to the National Academy of Sciences (1998), and to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1998). He found time for visiting and adjunct professorships at Cornell University (1976-1992), the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (1977), City University of New York Graduate Center (1986), and Columbia University (1992-1997).

We shall miss Craig as a scholar, an intellectual, and an advisor on everything from dress to moral matters. He was much sought out for his advice on panels and councils, such as at the National Science Foundation, the Council for the Exchange of Scholars (Fulbright), the Textile Museum, the Center for Inter-American Relations, the Inter-American Development Bank (Peruvian museum projects), the Ford Foundation, UNESCO (Qorikancha Archaeological Park), and, finally and most immediately, the Editorial Board of *Andean Past*.

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