

A Sketch of His Career

Lorenzo Ochoa Salas, recognized as one of the most incisive critical voices of Mexican anthropology, was born May 25, 1943 in Tuxpan in the Huasteca region of Veracruz, with which he maintained a warm, enduring relationship.

He studied archaeology at the National School of Anthropology and History, where he also got his master's in anthropology in 1974 with the thesis *Historia prehispánica de la Huasteca* (Pre-Hispanic History of the Huasteca Region), published in 1979, considered one of the pillars of archaeology in the region. From then on, Ochoa was firmly entrenched as one of the most prestigious scholars of that area.



As a researcher at the National Autonomous University of Mexico's Institute for Anthropological Research, he was a level II researcher in the National System of Researchers. Because of his professional merits, experience as a teacher, and important body of research and popular dissemination work, he was invited to be part of the group of evaluators of research projects by the National Science and Technology Institute (Conacyt), an advisor for countless theses, and a participant in the peer review of innumerable books, articles and presentations.

His studies centered on the Huasteca, the northwestern lowlands of the Mayan area and Hidalgo's upper mountain ranges. The results of this research became more than a dozen books and a little over 200 articles, book chapters, prologues, archaeological guides and reviews. Among them can be mentioned *Estudios preliminares sobre los mayas de las tierras bajas noroccidentales* (Preliminary Studies of the Mayas in the Northwestern Lowlands) (Mexico City: UNAM/Centro de Estudios Mayas, 1978); *Renunciar al paraíso. Paisaje y arqueología en las tierras bajas pantanosas de la Cuenca del San Pedro y San Pablo y Xicalango* (Renouncing Paradise: Landscape and Archaeology in the Swampy Lowlands of the San Pedro and San Pablo and Xicalango Basin) (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 1997); *Frente al espejo de la memoria. La costa del Golfo al momento del contacto* (Facing the Mirror of Memory. The Gulf Coast at the Moment of Contact) (Mexico City: Instituto de Cultura de San Luis Potosí/Conaculta, 1999); "La zona del Golfo en el Posclásico" (The Gulf Area in the Post-Classical Period) in *Historia antigua de México* (Ancient History of Mexico) (Mexico City: Porrúa/IHAM/UNAM, 2001), pp. 13-56; "La Huasteca in Time and Space," *Voices of Mexico* 60 (2002), pp. 73-78; "The La Venta Museum-Park Recreating a 3000-Year-Old Political-Religious Center," *Voices of Mexico* 69 (2004), pp. 89-94; Lorenzo Ochoa, comp., *Cinco miradas en torno a la Huasteca* (Five Views of the Huasteca Region) (Xalapa, Veracruz: Consejo Veracruzano de Arte Popular, 2007); "Topophilia: A Tool for the Demarcation of Cultural Micro-Regions. The Case of the Huasteca," J. E.

Staller and M. Carrasco, eds., *Pre-Columbian Foodways: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Food, Culture, and Markets in Mesoamerica* (New York: Springer, 2009), pp. 535-552.

He participated in and contributed to a notable number of national and international academic gatherings, in addition to organizing and coordinating colloquia, round table discussions and symposia. Outstanding among them were his organizing efforts in the 1998 seminar on the Huasteca, which from then on held monthly meetings without interruption. His publishing work includes founding the Tabasco-based magazine *Tierra y Agua* (Land and Water), editing the UNAM Institute for Anthropological Research journal *Anales de Antropología* (Annals of Anthropology), and participating in the Editorial Board of Poland's University of Warsaw journal *Itinerarios*.

He taught with rigorous discipline the course on Mesoamerica at the UNAM School of Philosophy and Letters College of History, and gave classes on conservation, restoration and museography at the National School of Anthropology and History. He also taught diploma courses and undergraduate and graduate courses on pre-Hispanic cultures, both in Mexico and abroad.

In recognition of his contributions to the archaeology of the Tabasco, the state government gave him the Silver Juchimán National Prize for Science in August 2008 in Villahermosa.

He died December 7, 2009, after finishing what would be his last fieldwork in his beloved Huasteca. Rest in peace, "Maestro Lorenzo," as everyone used to call you. ■■■

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