

## INTRODUCTION

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This volume, the third in the *Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, presents the history of the indigenous peoples of South America from the earliest peopling of the continent to the 1990s. It concentrates on continental South America but also makes some reference to peoples of the Caribbean and lower Central America who were linguistically or culturally connected to South America. A volume of such chronological, geographical, and ethnographic scope is a daunting challenge. It has rarely been attempted. The last great benchmark compilation on the peoples of South America, Julian Steward's *Handbook of South American Indians* (1946), which was digested but also denatured in Steward and Faron's (1959) *Native Peoples of South America*, influenced a generation of scholarly inquiry. As editors, we looked upon the present volume as a way of integrating much of what has been learned and altered in the half century since the publication of that work, and as a means of making these new findings and studies available to a wide readership.

The *Handbook*, although it contains some excellent historical research, was evolutionist rather than historical in its overarching intention. We are concerned with presenting South Americans as historical actors in the full sense.

The present volume is not a handbook or an encyclopedia but rather an idea-oriented history. It does aim at broad coverage, but it emphasizes development of general themes rather than completeness. Not every group will be mentioned, nor every society explained, but the broad patterns and general processes that large clusters of them shared will be delineated and discussed. Some authors have questioned habitual analytical blocs, some have reconceptualized periodizations, and many have problematized the common labels under which South American peoples

are grouped. Among the idea-oriented approaches we encouraged were those that sought to relate indigenous peoples' own reported or self-documented ideas about the past with the record as constructed through exterior views. This volume marks an early stage in the encounter between "histories of Indians" and "Indian histories," which are gradually taking shape as native peoples overcome their longstanding marginalization from the orbit of Spanish/Portuguese literacy and win the standing of conceptual protagonists.

It may be useful for readers to know the process by which this book came into being. The editors of the present volume first drew up a detailed prospectus outlining their understanding of the general trajectory of the history of the indigenous peoples of the continent including the basic processes as well as the regional and chronological divisions that could best present that history. Authors were then sought to write specific chapters within that framework. Because much of the scholarship on indigenous peoples of South America had been written within the framework of modern national boundaries, the editors sought authors who were willing to break out of that tradition and conceive of their task in terms of broader regional or conceptual frameworks. All of the authors were already recognized specialists, but this approach often placed on them an added burden of mastering somewhat unfamiliar scholarship while broadening the temporal or geographic scope of their inquiry. This slowed the volume's progress, and we hope that the final result reflects the advantages of this approach. The editors paid no attention to the ethnic or national background of the potential contributors, but an early decision was made to make sure that the important research advances made by South American scholars, many of which were not familiar to the general English-reading public, be represented in the volume as fully as possible. The result has been the inclusion of authors from Europe, the United States, Canada, and various Latin American countries. Within the editorial framework, authors were given free rein to design their chapters and present their conclusions and interpretations. The reader will notice a certain overlapping of chapters as well as differences of interpretation between authors. We believe that this is appropriate given the state of the field and the nature of historical inquiry. Finally, wherever possible, authors have been urged to integrate indigenous "voices" and to reckon with individual Native Americans rather than with Native America as a reified category.

Certain principles served as the basis of the organization of this vol-

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ume. First, we have sought to make more permeable the old distinctions between “highland” and “lowland” societies. In light of archaeological discoveries showing that complex South American society is rooted in lowland antiquity, many authors have repudiated the common distinction between “civilized” Andean empires and “primitive” or “simple” lowland societies. Moreover, both typological studies and historical evidence now indicate that the histories of highland and lowland societies were not separate spheres but were profoundly interconnected. Small scale and simple organization, it becomes more and more clear, often replaced complexity only when the protracted emergencies of colonial times made re-adaptation necessary. We also (within the limitations of the evidence available) reject the implicit assumption that lowland societies because of ecological constraints or because of their lack of dynamism or unhistorical cultural character reward historical study less than highland ones. Looking at complex formations, we avoid the traditional use of European states and empires as prefabricated “types” for understanding indigenous states, especially highland societies like the Inka. Cultural analysis and methodological critiques have undercut the assumptions that underlay such approaches. Second, although we recognize that the European conquest, especially in its biological and demographic impact, was a singular event, we have emphasized native peoples’ agency and individuality, which extended through and beyond the conquest. Colonial domination was important, but to emphasize it to the exclusion of all other processes is to lose too much of Native American history. Counteracting the apocalyptic emphasis on 1492 typical of quincennial-period historiography, several authors treat the European onslaught as an episode in the changing story of native institutions rather than the cutoff date for whole ways of life. Third, we have sought in the organization of this volume to avoid the common anachronistic mistake of setting modern national boundaries across the path of comparison and synthesis. Above all, our objective is to bring the diverse indigenous societies into equitable focus, to unfold their histories in terms of their internal dynamics, their connections, and their conflicts. Rather than typologizing South American indigenous societies in terms of geographical region, cultural area, or period, we prefer to seek the crucial conflicts, movements, encounters, and innovations within which native achievement has been framed.

To do this, the authors have drawn on archaeological, ethnographic, and documentary sources, on historical linguistics, demography, biocul-

tural studies, and on other fields and methods, many of which have made great advances since the publication of the *Handbook of South American Indians*. These have been integrated here within the framework of history – unfolding social reality in terms of change. Readers will note some differences in the approach and the mix of sources dependent on the current state of research. For the highland areas, much of the archaeological and documentary evidence has accumulated since the 1960s and is still awaiting comparative synthesis. Most of it – especially the huge bulk of native testimony written into litigation and bureaucratic records – is little known in the English-speaking world. For the lowlands, ethnohistorical literature is smaller in volume but fast growing and sufficient to reveal the variety and complexity of those cultures.

Traditional ways of thinking about the indigenous peoples of South America have often led to misunderstanding and misconception. Emphases on “tribal” peculiarities in distinction to “European” commonalities led to a fragmented vision of indigenous societies that lost sight of larger relationships. Older regional historiographical approaches often ignored important networks of alliance, trade, pilgrimage, and migration cutting across traditional frameworks of study. Overemphasis on the cataclysm of European conquest detracted from the study of social projects, institutions, and processes that developed through and beyond the invasion, and it downplayed the internal dynamic of native communities as historical actors in their own right. The organization of this volume and the approach of most of its authors who deal with the period after 1492 is based on seeing indigenous societies not as isolated, inward-looking, and “resistant” in a simplistic sense but as participants in early modern transatlantic history – in the making of mercantile capitalism, the breakdown of the *ancien régime*, and the formation of some of the world’s earlier postcolonial independent states. Wherever possible, the volume tries to emphasize research that allows us to see how the indigenous peoples of South America conceived of their social universe – of personhood, identity, gender, freedom, obligation, and constraint at different historical moments and under varying conditions.

Finally, this volume also departs from approaches that emphasized traditional notions of “authenticity” and from attempts to find the “real” Inka or Tupinambá. Instead, we have placed much more emphasis on the shifting historical nature of such categories and on mixed and interstitial groups. Priority has also been given to large periods often neglected in the traditional historiography in regard to indigenous societies. Thus

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the reader will find much here on the nineteenth century as well as the later seventeenth and early twentieth centuries, periods too long left relatively blank in the historiography of the native peoples of South America.

We hope that the effect will be to counteract the facile assumption of continuity between “ancient” lifeways recorded at early dates, and modern “tradition” or “identity.” Rather than tolerating any longer the supposition that modern indigenous South Americans embody archetypes of changeless culture – an idea that still saturates semisolarly and popular literature – we ask readers to recognize them as contemporaries in every sense: as products of recent pasts as well as remote exotic ones, and as protagonists of their own affairs in every period.

Within the twenty-six chapters that constitute this book, authors have taken a variety of approaches. Some have organized their materials chronologically, others by region, and still others around key problems or concepts. The volume begins with a short section on Native American and European ways of historical thinking. Chapters 1 and 2 are reflexive inquiries into the modes of thinking and the failures of knowledge about the peoples of South America. They seek to begin to understand why South America – the continental landmass with the longest colonial and neo-colonial history – could still be seen in the 1970s as what Patricia Lyon called, “the least known continent.” Salomon explores the variety of “Indian” ways of reconstructing the past, often through myth, ritual, oral testimony, or other means, all of which present challenges for connecting such approaches to Western understandings and historiography. Sabine MacCormack in Chapter 2 examines the mental frameworks that Europeans developed for seeing South Americans in the first two centuries of contact. Chapters 3 and 4 offer contrasting perspectives on the peopling of the continent and the foundation of regional cultures, reflecting both sides of the hotly debated issues of how long humans have lived in South America and how soon they domesticated its biota. In the first of these, Thomas Lynch considers the evidence of the preceramic hunter-gatherers and maritime peoples who occupied the continent for most of its prehistory. He emphasizes the critical use of data and is skeptical of proposal for very early dating. Anna Roosevelt in Chapter 4, on the other hand, favors the early chronology model and emphasizes the emergence of sedentary societies based on cultivation. She argues that social complexity had little to do with political centralization.

Chapters 5 to 9 are primarily archaeological syntheses of different parts

of the continent, tracing the historical record from the emergence of village societies to the arrival of Inka or Spanish invaders. Izumi Shimada examines Andean and Pacific coast diversity in Chapter 5 including the “Chavín” horizon, but balances the “horizon” approach by emphasizing the multicentric nature of Andean prehistory. Luis Lumbreras in Chapter 6 on “Andean Urbanism and Statecraft” discusses the interrelation of large polities like Wari and Chimor with the other peoples of the region. In Chapter 7, Juan and Judith Villamarín combine ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence of “chiefdoms,” or “intermediate societies,” from the Caribbean to northern Argentina, presenting a rich array of evidence that permits broad comparisons of those social formations across the continent. The huge number of cases embraced emphasizes that politically organized “intermediate societies,” long treated as stunted states, constituted a large and long-lasting proportion (perhaps a majority) of societies, and might better be thought of as a characteristic social form in their own right than as incipient states. The archaeological evidence of migratory waves in the Caribbean forms the basis of Allaire’s discussion in Chapter 8. Rivera in his Chapter 9 on the Southern Cone is concerned to question the stigma of the term “marginal,” which the *Handbook* attached to the Southernmost peoples.

Chapters 10 through 14 outline the impact of indigenous imperial expansions on the peoples of South America. Rostworowski and Morris analyze the indigenous empire of the Inka in Chapter 10, emphasizing distinctive organizing premises of economy and ideology. They are followed by a set of regional studies of the crisis and transformation of indigenous societies in the face of European contact to about 1580: Whitehead on the Caribbean, Spalding on the Andean region, Monteiro on Brazil, and Garavaglia on Paraguay and the pampas. This organization invites comparisons. Inka expansion operated within an economic and ideological framework that combined domination with managed and idealized concepts of complementarity and centralized redistribution. The Iberian empires driven by the expansive dynamism of Mediterranean mercantile-military society and religious fervor expanded throughout the Americas, at first by harnessing the impetus of internal political and social changes that the conquest itself set in motion. These transformations and innovations took different forms, dependent in large part on the nature of the indigenous societies. In the Caribbean islands and the northern mainland of South America, where Cariban and Arawakan groups culturally predominated, invasion entailed not only the notorious

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demographic disaster and depopulation of the island peoples but also the fateful initial development of Spanish techniques and institutions and practices for dealing with indigenous peoples. It yielded a pattern of significant settlement in a few principal ports but virtually no European settlement in the interior except on the Orinoco. Although those societies in direct contact with the Spanish suffered profound transformations, Whitehead points out in Chapter 11 that many peoples of northern South America were little affected prior to 1580. In contrast, Karen Spalding shows in Chapter 12 that in the Andean region the Spanish conquerors appropriated a gigantic preexisting power structure and made rapid use of indigenous means of centralization. At the same time, however, the entanglement of individual Spaniards in the politics of local chiefdoms created webs of collaboration, factionalism, and resistance that limited Spain's early attempts at centralization. The Portuguese and to a lesser extent the French on the Brazilian coast, both in contact with predominantly Tupí-Guaraní peoples, depended on alliance and barter in early relations. Here there was no political centralization and "acute and persistent" political fragmentation as well as cultural diversity, which was appropriated and manipulated by the Europeans. John Monteiro's Chapter 13 describes an intermittent and slow process, a pattern of trade and alliance shifting to warfare, enslavement, and conversion and eventually accompanied by demographic collapse and cultural disruption among the peoples of the Brazilian littoral. They responded by retreat, resistance, and revitalization movements. In the Río de la Plata, the extension of European conquests of Peru and Brazil encountered stateless societies and inherited kinship-based forms of alliance and inequality. Juan Carlos Garavaglia shows that the process of conquest stimulated new mutations of a prophetic and rebellious tradition among Tupían and Guaranían peoples and created a contested rather than compliant background for their participation in the coercive utopias of the Franciscan and Jesuit missions.

Chapters 15 to 20 move beyond the period of crisis to deal with the colonial condition, extending, in fact, in some places well beyond the formal "colonial" period and into the era of the independent nation-states of the region. For the Andean region, the late Thierry Saignes in Chapter 15 shows how "the people called Indians" replaced their demolished overarching indigenous institutions by demanding that native lords mediate skillfully with the colonial regime. Under that mediation, they developed networks of commerce and used Catholic institutions like

godparentage and confraternities to build locally controlled frameworks of solidarity, inventing forms of legitimacy to preserve magico-religious as well as legal and public land rights. For Araucania, the Chilean and Argentine terrain of the peoples whose major descendants are the Mapuche, Kris Jones in Chapter 16 shows that active resistance and techniques of adaptation and incorporation of intrusive material goods and individuals fostered a resistance so successful that it provided a continuity extending to the end of the nineteenth century. A similar approach is taken by Anne Christine Taylor in Chapter 17 on the Andean-Amazonian area of interaction where there was no decisive period of colonial transformation. She argues that the traditional division between “civilized” highlands and “primitive” lowlands is itself a reflection of these colonial failures. James Saeger in Chapter 18 considers the people of Paraguay and the Chaco from the late sixteenth century to 1882. Counterposing the cultures of the Guaraní and Guaicuruan peoples and their subsequent histories under colonial rule, he emphasizes the similarity of their history to that of other indigenous peoples of the continent. In Chapter 19, Robin Wright and his collaborators, using a variety of examples from the Amazon basin and coastal and southern Brazil, trace the destruction, retreat, and survival of various indigenous groups. Reflecting recent historiographical trends, this chapter is able to document continuities in indigenous-white relations extending from the colonial to the national periods through the end of the Brazilian empire in 1889. Finally, Neil Whitehead in Chapter 20 carries the story of the peoples of northeastern South America from the Orinoco to the Caribbean from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. His emphasis is on the complexity of indigenous responses and on changes within indigenous societies themselves in an area where the competition between Europeans often created unsuspected latitude and opportunities for indigenous autonomy.

We close the colonial and neo-colonial era with a double retrospective that presages both the conceptual collapse of colonial ethnic definitions and the end of the colonial order. In Chapter 21, Schwartz and Salomon emphasize the way in which the colonial era undid the simple idea of “native” America by generating new peoples in the interstices of officially visible social organization. A process of ethnogenesis created new social types – mestizos, “tribes,” individuals who crossed cultural frontiers – and created still less-recognized categories hard to define in colonial or modern ethnic terms. In Chapter 22, Luis Miguel Glave examines the political breakdown of colonial arrangements, which provoked indige-



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nous rebellions in the core Andean colonies, bringing the “Republic of the Indians,” into revolt during the era of the Atlantic Revolutions.

Chapters 23 and 24 are broad, synthetic overviews of the era of Independence and the nineteenth century, roughly divided between “highland” and “lowland” South America. Brooke Larson first contrasts the quite different fortunes of the respective peoples of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia in the face of these would-be-national state-building projects. Jonathan Hill views the northern and southern lowlands in the era of nation-building and through the disastrous rubber boom. In both of these chapters, we see how the equivocally “national” character of the creole patriotic movements for independence, and their racial exclusivism, led the beneficiaries of colonial failure to build independent states hostile to indigenous peoples. These processes created an alienation between official nationhood and on-the-ground cultural diversity that is still historiographically difficult to penetrate.

The final two chapters concern the recent era, for which ethnography and the self-scholarship of modern native South Americans each complement exterior historiography. The central theme of these chapters is the modern search for organizational forms capable of asserting ethnic interests against the grain of most state and church institutions. In Chapter 25, Xavier Albó examines the Andean countries where most Quechua and Aymara societies by 1900 had been compressed into a single social class, the peasantry. He describes the breakdown of the old agrarian order and the remarkable consequences, diversifying throughout the Andean countries: syndicalism and revolution in Bolivia; migration and “de-Indianization” amid a failing “revolution from above” in Peru, and federative ethnic movements in Ecuador among others.

In Chapter 26, David Maybury-Lewis views the lowland peoples of the continent. Outlining the development of indigenous federations and other institutions, he emphasizes how they have succeeded in expressing their desire for rights to land and local autonomy as a way to safeguard their own cultures. The lowlanders have stressed the ethnic and cultural dimensions of their struggle as corporate entities within and across modern national states. By doing so, they have underlined the participation of the indigenous peoples of South America in the global issue of ethnic pluralism within and beyond the nation-state.

This historical turn itself has affected (and been influenced by) shifts in the practice of historiography and historical anthropology. The shifts are reflected in this volume and deserve a short commentary. Until the

1970s, history “proper” usually dealt with native South Americans as the objects or victims of colonial history, and in many areas dismissed the intranative past (beyond canonical chronicles) as simply unresearchable or unimportant. This mindset tended especially to go unchallenged in regard to Amazonia, where the impressive achievements of essentially ahistorical or synchronic-minded ethnographic modeling (whether social-anthropological in the British mold, Lévi-Straussian, or ecologically systematic) allowed a continuing misattribution of timelessness to the peoples rather than to the reigning analytical postulates about them. However, scholars who aspired to anthropological modeling of change and dynamism had already begun by the 1960s to generate a body of studies loosely self-labeled as “ethnohistory” or *etnohistoria*, using a term of older North American origin. (It occurs in Peruvian Spanish context, however, before World War II.) The “ethnohistory” label stuck to conceptually diverse studies that had in common only the indigenous focus. When used thoughtfully, it was sometimes defined as historiography, which uses concepts derived from ethnology as its heuristic, but many writers applied it too broadly to any historical study of peoples lacking a published or official historiography. The popularity of “ethnohistory” in this broad sense grew quickly, notably in the Andes, especially as the 1970s brought surges of indigenous activism in Ecuador and Bolivia and political restructuring in Peru. However, the very successes of indigenous revindication, as well as the research findings themselves, undercut the equation between “history of Indians” and “ethnohistory.” For one, the increasingly clear view of native peoples as protagonistic within a multi-ethnic history, rather than acting in segregated parallel alongside a Euro-American history, demanded a more integrating historiography. To put it bluntly, there was nervousness lest ethnohistory become a kind of intellectual apartheid. Once research had overcome the image of natives as a “people without history,” it became possible to ask, as one historian acidly did, whether those who had formerly been labeled “without history” would feel any better on hearing themselves described as peoples “with ethnohistory.” The legitimate force of this concern caused the present editors to discourage the use of “ethnohistory” as a synonym for indigenous history.

However, at the same time, the term “ethnohistory” in a narrower sense has retained an equally legitimate vitality. The narrow sense is the sense analogous to terms like “ethnobotany” and “ethnoastronomy”: that is, the study of various cultures’ local understandings of time, change,