

Los Camélidos Sudamericanos: Una introducción a su Estudio. Duccio Bonavia. Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, Lima, Peru. Vol. 93, Travaux de l'Institut Français d'Études Andines. 1996. Pp. 843. ISBN 9972-623-07-6.

This impressive treatise assembles a dazzling array of facts, patterns and ideas about the living South American members of the camel family. Most of this tome is devoted to the two domesticated species, llama and alpaca, which form important elements of Andean culture history and traditional life. Their wild relatives, the vicuña and guanaco, are extant, though uncommon and understandably receive less attention.

The thirteen substantive chapters of this monograph cover taxonomy and phylogeny, biological aspects (habitat, morphology, anatomy, reproduction, nutrition, diseases, genetic selection); paleontology; archaeology (in Peru); domestication process; history (in Peru), chronicler perspectives on these animals; llamas in the republican period after 1825; archaeology and history outside Peru; use patterns past and present; Andean pastoralism, present distribution of camelids; and as somewhat an aside, an essay into the history of Old World camels introduced to Peru. Indices organized by name, place, and archaeological site help the reader locate specific information. The bibliography of more than 1600 items is an indispensable retrieval tool to those seeking printed references of these animals. Besides five distribution maps, there is a section of photographs of pre and post Conquest representations of llamas and alpacas.

Careful winnowing of the archaeological literature and close reading of the historical sources form the strongest parts of Bonavia's book. A Professor at Cayetano Heredia University in Lima and past Guggenheim fellow, Bonavia has a doctorate in archaeology. Prehistoric reconstruction of the domestication and pre-history of llamas and alpacas will remain inferential until some way can be found to identify camelid bones by these species. These animals had a much wider spread and ecological amplitude than their present distribution indicates. Llamas had disappeared from many areas including the Peruvian coast by the mid-colonial period. Since the author does a splendid literature search, gaps in this book's coverage point to holes in knowledge about camelids. Studies on contemporary camelid keeping community by community would tell us much about variations in local use patterns. A comprehensive study of the marketing of camelid products would fill the blank spots on how those items, especially fleece, get into sales channels. If phenotypic diversity of both llamas and alpacas were systematically investigated, some interesting variations would surely unfold.

The most extensive collation yet assembled on this topic, this book is an essential source on these animals and should be in all major libraries and personal collections on ethnozoology. Where opinions diverge, Bonavia carefully examines the evidence, sorts out scholarly attributions of ideas, and not infrequently corrects misinterpretations and wrong citations. To use only an example, Bonavia carefully weighs the evidence for a past use of the llama as a mount. Although the llama was generally not used in that way, Bonavia goes through the historical descriptions and ceramic materials to qualify his assertions about them.

The sum of its organizational lapses, typos and missed references are minor compared to its virtue as a useful, balanced scholarly synthesis. For the next de-

cade at least, this book will be the essential source for scholars seeking a range of information about New World camelids. The Institut Français d'Études Andines (IFEA) and its editor Georges Pratlong must be commended for having added this hefty tome to a monographic series that includes many superb studies of Andean land and life.

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