

Thanks to his good relations with the native inhabitants of the region where Boggiani worked, after 1904 Albert V. Frič was able to rescue part of the artist's material, which then remained in his possession with the permission of Boggiani's family. Over the years, Frič used some individual pieces to illustrate his own work, but it was the traveler's grandson, a professional photographer himself, who finally processed the entire photographic collection. For the present edition he selected more than 80 of the best shots, dividing them into four categories: landscape, documentation, reportage, and portrait (this latter section is the most extensive, constituting about half the book), which together offer a fascinating view of the inhabitants, as well as of life and nature, in the Río de la Plata region at the turn of the century. Anthropologists will appreciate the photographs from the section of portraits, while photographs in the reportage section, such as the *Torpedo Boat* (p. 57) or *Wagons Loaded with Maté* (p. 58), will captivate any historian dealing with Latin American history in general, and not just those who specialize in the period covered by Boggiani.

The reproductions are accompanied by a short introductory essay (pp. 7–35, translated into Spanish, English, Italian, and Portuguese) by Yvonne Fričová, in which the author briefly acquaints the reader with the figure of Guido Boggiani, whom Italian historians of photography consider to be one of the founders of documentary photography in their country. But even more significant than this textual portrait of Boggiani is the information regarding this man's material that remains in the Frič estate, and toward whose use both editors have taken the first important step. Moreover, the book constitutes further proof that there still exist little used and yet valuable sources that have the potential to offer a better understanding of the myriad facets of Latin American society. Many such caches might be deposited outside the traditional centers of research, a situation that does not in any sense diminish their value, only their availability. The meticulous edition of Boggiani's documents shows that publications of exceptional significance and wide-ranging relevance can be issued from institutes and places that are not always considered the principal sources for material on Latin America.

JOSEF OPATRŇY, Charles University, Prague

*Semillas de industria: transformaciones de la tecnología indígena en las Américas.*

Edited by MARIO HUMBERTO RUZ. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social. Appendix. Notes. Bibliographies. 181 pp. Paper.

Based on a 1990 conference held in Morelos, Mexico, the essays in this volume examine the survival and disfigurement of indigenous cultures in the Americas from the perspective of technology. In definitively countering prevalent notions of Maya, Aztec, Inca, and other Amerindian cultures as pre- or prototechnological and "natural," these essays show instead that postconquest production in the Americas was influenced and shaped by the technologies of indigenous societies even as the very survival of these societies was threatened by forced migration, slavery, and the decimation of the native population.

But the contributors are also careful to avoid technological determinism. They explore the technologies of agricultural and textile production prior to the Spanish conquest as social phenomena; their adaptation and replacement by European technologies and work patterns as political and economic phenomena; and their long-term impact on the lot of various Mesoamerican societies as cultural phenomena. Nevertheless, although well-linked heuristically, the essays could have been better edited and further developed, which would have made these conference proceedings more useful to those who missed the rumblings in the corridors and the open exchanges of the question and answer periods.

In his chapter on ecology and demography, Alfred Crosby argues that though Mesoamericans did invent the wheel, they appear to have used wheels only on toys. The absence of large domesticated animals, he holds, meant that imagining the use of wheeled machines for production and for transport beyond a rickshaw was stymied. But when the European invasion brought horses and oxen to the Americas, the wheel was transformed from a technology used for amusement to one that became an oppressive tool of production, a process that illustrates the book's premise of understanding technology as a "metaphor of power."

Ruz's edited book includes stimulating chapters on work and technology in the sugar and mining industries. These chapters complement Teresa Rojas Rabiela's innovative discussion of colonial agricultural transformation, displacement, and substitution as a biological rather than an agricultural revolution. Here she argues that the demographic catastrophe that resulted from conquest limited the potential gains in productivity associated with the introduction of animals and plows.

Two chapters reflect the types of internal debates found in *Semillas de industria*. June Nash points to the surprising persistence of weaving as a domestic form of production among many highland Chiapas communities. She views the traditional motifs women weave into their *huipiles* as a form of technological preservation and female empowerment, even in the context of a tourist and export economy that threatens traditional bases of production and community life. Marie-Nouëlle Chamoix, on the other hand, contends that precolumbian textile production was not based upon a strict sexual division of labor, but on more fluid sex roles that depended on seasonal agricultural demands and communal needs for various goods.

*Semillas de industria* is not unique in its focus, and several other works (such as Marcos Cueto's excellent edited volume, *Saberes andinos: ciencia y tecnología en Bolivia, Ecuador y Perú*) have begun to address the role of indigenous science and technology under colonialism both as a form of resistance and as an arena for conflict in the development of colonial mining, medicine, and agriculture. But while many of the essays in the present volume are noteworthy contributions and the book suggests many thought-provoking areas for further exploration, the collection would have been enhanced by fewer but more substantial essays, tighter editing, and a sharper focus.

ANNE-EMANUELLE BIRN, New School for Social Research