The Handbook of South American Archaeology
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Edited by

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and

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Springer
Dedicated to the memory of Craig Morris, an esteemed and amiable colleague to many of the Andeanists contributing to this volume and to the worldwide Andeanist community. He is remembered for his generosity, always genteel Southern charm, and pioneering Inca research.

Dedicated to the memory of James (Jim) Petersen, colleague and friend of many of the contributors to this volume, who was killed tragically in 2005 in a hold-up in Brazil, while he was conducting fieldwork. He is remembered as a wonderful person and exceptional archaeologist.
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Foreword

Perhaps the contributions of South American archaeology to the larger field of world archaeology have been inadequately recognized. If so, this is probably because there have been relatively few archaeologists working in South America outside of Peru and recent advances in knowledge in other parts of the continent are only beginning to enter larger archaeological discourse. Many ideas of and about South American archaeology held by scholars from outside the area are going to change irrevocably with the appearance of the present volume. Not only does the *Handbook of South American Archaeology* (*HSAA*) provide immense and broad information about ancient South America, the volume also showcases the contributions made by South Americans to social theory. Moreover, one of the merits of this volume is that about half the authors (30) are South Americans, and the bibliographies in their chapters will be especially useful guides to Spanish and Portuguese literature as well as to the latest research.

It is inevitable that the *HSAA* will be compared with the multi-volume *Handbook of South American Indians* (*HSAI*), with its detailed descriptions of indigenous peoples of South America, that was organized and edited by Julian Steward. Although there are heroic archaeological essays in the *HSAI*, by the likes of Junius Bird, Gordon Willey, John Rowe, and John Murra, Steward states frankly in his introduction to Volume Two that “archaeology is included by way of background” to the ethnographic chapters. Although these archaeological essays have been superseded by the last half-century of research, *HSAI* deservedly remains on the shelves of most South Americanists.

In 1999 the *Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, edited in two volumes by Stuart Schwartz and Frank Salomon, included eight long and valuable essays on South American archaeology. It seems that the Cambridge volume is in some ways a handy successor to the *HSAI*, covering large areas in significant depth.

In the present volume, the chapters are shorter and many deal with smaller areas (or very interesting particular topics such as ancestor images, trophy heads, human sacrifices, and khipus), but the *HSAA* spans the continent and gives a much fuller picture of archaeological research in South America than the Cambridge volume intended to do. The *HSAA* chapters include the peopling of the continent and early occupations, the kinds of environments and the natural resources exploited in them, and many descriptions of the archaeology of areas hardly mentioned in any other guide to the archaeology of South America: for example, the southern Andes, Patagonia, Ecuador, Guianas and Surinam, the Peruvian cloud forest, and strikingly, Brazil, both the Amazonian part and the inland and coastal regions. Although Brazil comprises about half the area of the continent, there is only one recent volume of the archaeology of the entire country, and it is in French and—given the astonishing pace of research in Brazil—dated. The chapters by Oliver, Neves, Schaan,
Gaspar and colleagues, Noelli, Guapindaia, Heckenberger, and Bastos and Funari provide an up-to-date view on much that is going on in Brazilian archaeology.

It is in its theoretical contributions that I, as a non-South Americanist, am most interested. Authors of many chapters make clear that types and categories of societies derived from North Americanist social theory really do not apply to South American societies. Even the chief of South American chiefdoms, Robert Drennan, declares his discomfort with the type of “chiefdoms,” which tends unfairly to reduce the variation in societies that encompass more than a single local community with some degrees of social inequality. Other authors discuss non-agricultural “chiefdoms” or even how the term “evolution” tends to mask the amount of and reasons for change occasioned by migrations and exchange of goods and ideas. More than one author speaks of the history of societies, not their evolution. Some authors note that Julian Steward himself insisted on “multi-lineal evolution,” precisely because there were many hierarchies and kinds of hierarchies in the history of South America.

“Complexity” covers everything from enormous shell mounds (sambaquis) in southern Brazil, which are scenes of mortuary rites and feasting, to “towns” and complex regional organizations in the Amazon. The question about “complexity” in South America, just as it is for other parts of the world, is not “was a society complex?” but “how was it complex?” (as Ben Nelson has articulated in comparing the prehistoric Southwest and Northwest Mexico). The discussions of these issues are relevant beyond South America. Authors also have persuasively critiqued the use of “horizons” and “intermediate periods,” as if the latter were awaiting “horizontalization.”

The HSAA authors not only describe new archaeological work in South America but also place the work in the social context of archaeological research. For example, several essays are devoted to how archaeology forms part of the national identity of South American countries. This is particularly vivid in South America where nations have recently shaken off military rule and/or are challenging trends in globalization.

Several archaeologists are optimistic that archaeology can play a significant role in subverting colonial versions of their deep history. I have seen new Brazilian school texts in which archaeological research is now considered part of Brazilian history. As recognition grows that prehistoric Indians, on the coast and in the Amazon, created impressive monuments and works of art, lived in towns of considerable population, and both altered and lived successfully in rich environments, perhaps one can be optimistic that there will be changes in the already zestfully complicated Brazilian national identity and in social and political life.

Brazil is the only country in South America I know even in small measure since I have attended archaeological conferences there and visited sites. The first of these conferences brought archaeologists from the University of Arizona to southern Brazil, the second archaeologists from University of Michigan to a variety of Brazilian universities and the cultural resources management organization. Although it was wonderful to exchange ideas and consider new data on both sides, we visiting North Americans were surprised that Brazilian archaeologists had relatively little contact with other archaeologists in South America, especially the army of Peruvian archaeologists, and the considerable number of Argentinian ones, who are relatively nearby. The HSAA shows how important such ties among South American archaeologists need to be. On the one hand, several essays demonstrate how local prehistoric cultures were embedded in long-distance exchange networks. Archaeologists need to cross present borders in order to appreciate the dynamics of this interaction. Just as important, archaeologists from various regions in South America have
much to learn from each other, about legal issues of cultural heritage that have continent-wide roots, as well as about theoretical concepts such as agency, landscape, and appropriations of the past, which are subjects of many chapters in this volume.

The readers of this volume hold in their hands many treasures, and they will surely join me in applauding the editors who have cannily gathered these archaeologists, a mixture of younger and venerable scholars, and translated many of their essays.

Handbooks are not destined to have a long life, but the best of them delineate, as far as possible, the state of knowledge in a domain and thus influence the direction of research. The HSAA is not only a vade mecum of new findings and new ideas in South American archaeology, but it is also an enthusiastic demonstration of the importance of (and also the fun in doing) archaeology in South America.

Norman Yoffee
Preface

The Ford Foundation, which promoted the creation of and has remained committed to area studies, recently advocated a revitalization of this field under the rubric of “crossing borders” (Ford Foundation 1999). The Ford Foundation articulates a proactive policy designed to foster “networks and new collaborations,” stating that ultimately, the revitalization of this crucial scholarly field should enhance international cooperation through an internationalized community of area studies, and foster a better informed citizenry (Ford Foundation 1999: vii). We conceive of the Handbook of South American Archaeology as a contribution to area studies and agree with the Ford Foundation’s intellectual platform. We have tried to achieve it in this volume through engagement of an international roster of scholars as well as the final section of the HSAA which considers the practice of South American archaeology in its contemporary context.

We feel a keen sense of legacy and fateful serendipity in having been offered the HSAA project by our wonderful editor at Springer, Teresa Krauss. Bill received his doctorate at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in the anthropology department founded by Julian H. Steward in 1952. Bill was deeply influenced by the extraordinary Donald Lathrap, who taught a truly South American archaeology in vast ecological and evolutionary perspective at the University of Illinois. Helaine was strongly influenced by her training at Columbia University (where Steward had taught in 1946-1952, before moving to Illinois), where she studied with the great Edward Lanning (who brought a strong ecological and evolutionary perspective to Peruvian archaeology), Morton Fried (who had been taught by Steward at Columbia), and Robert Murphy (including as a research assistant to Dr. Murphy while he was editing Steward’s posthumous Evolution and Ecology). Steward was deeply involved in the Viru Valley Project, which became a benchmark in Peruvian archaeology. In 1991 Helaine began teaching at the University of Illinois.

Both of us came to the HSAA project with a profound understanding of and respect for Steward and his commitment to holistic, supra-areal anthropology. Teresa Krauss was unaware of Steward and our intellectual connections to him when she commissioned the HSAA as part of Springer’s new handbook series. We thank her for giving us this remarkable opportunity to contribute to the field that has impassioned us for many decades. We have learned an enormous amount and hope very much that readers will similarly benefit.

The greatest challenge we faced in producing the Handbook of South American Archaeology, after lining up authors, was how to organize its content. Any organizational scheme—from phylogenetic tree to chronological chart—seeks to organize knowledge. Julian H. Steward’s original geo-cultural scheme for the earlier Handbook of South American Indians (1946-1949) is still serviceable albeit theoretically and empirically dated as seen from our turn-of-the-twenty-first-century standpoint. In the case of the HSAA, our goal has been to usefully organize knowledge about the prehistory of this continent.
“Useful for teaching and scholarly consultation” has been our guiding premise. But academic reality indicates that few colleagues are teaching the whole continent, so we had to devise a scheme that accounts for greatly increased areal knowledge since the 1940s, promotes greater interareal comparison (so long as all chapters would be read), and stimulates the reader with new ideas.

Basically, the organizational possibilities for the HSAA seemed limited to three: geographical, the traditional culture areas, and temporal-evolutionary. Since this is a handbook, whose intent is to provide the reader with foundational archaeological information about particular societies and regions, in the end we saw no way but to deal with a mix of all: geography, culture area, and the Stewardian levels of sociocultural integration (i.e., moving across the continent from early settlements, to Archaic lifeways, to greater complexity, and finally “states and empires”). We have tried to not break apart certain areally synthetic chapters so that the evolutionary trajectories being described are not lost, while not essentializing particular regions such as the Central Andes. Also, we have tried to transcend fraught classifications by adding cross-cutting new topics such as patterns of interaction and death practices (although, for instance, Arriaza et al.’s Chinchorro chapter could easily have been placed in the latter section as could Gaspar et al.’s interpretation of the sambaquis as mortuary monuments) as well as by including examples from various parts of South America in most of the sections (except “states”).

We have organized the volume’s sections according to several grand themes that we see as salient, but recognize that other scholars would have chosen other themes. Alternative organizational schemes, which we considered seriously, would have produced an equally coherent volume. Also, even within the final framework certain chapters could have been placed in more than one section of the HSAA (for instance, Schaan’s treatment of Marajó Island could have been placed in the section on lowland moundbuilders and Heckenberger’s discussion of Amazonia could have been placed in the section on non-state complexity). We have sought to strike a balance in the HSAA, yet recognize that criticism surely will be forthcoming when this volume is reviewed. The important thing is that the HSAA provides intensive and extensive coverage of South American prehistory. We propose that readers and, particularly, professors use this volume’s chapters according to whatever sequential, geographic, or thematic scheme they are most comfortable with.

Our final organizational decision has privileged the commission we received from Springer to create a handbook which we and the publisher understand as a reference work to be consulted for basic information. Thus, each author was asked to lay out the major issues in his/her region or time period or archaeological culture, present an up-to-date assessment, and provide sufficient bibliographic references for the interested reader to pursue the topic further. Moreover, we have highlighted important debates in South American archaeology, some of which run through several related chapters (note, for instance, the arguments of the Pozorskis, Makowski, and Burger). Interpretive disagreements among several sets of authors are reflections of the exciting threshold stage of particular regional and macro-regional archaeologies at this moment.

We especially call your attention to the way we have arranged Part VI on “Demographic and Cultural Expansions.” We envision this section as a circle, beginning with the dramatic situation on the coast of Peru in the third through mid-first millenniums BC as fascinatingly analyzed by Shelia and Tom Pozorski, leading logically into Krzysztof Makowski’s consideration of Andean urbanism, then considering a set of population movements documented by Francisco Noelli in Amazonia, then leading into Tiffany
Tung’s comparative case study of migration in the Central Andes, and finally returning to the end of the Pozorskis’ discussion through the focus of Richard Burger’s chapter, which is the great Chavín horizon, itself involving “proto-urbanism” but not state-level organization. This then sets the stage for the following section on Central Andean states and empires, Part VII. Here we have placed Dulanto’s discussion of many less centralized (comparatively speaking) late prehispanic societies that existed in the centuries between the fall of the Wari Empire and rise of the Incas, and contemporaneously with the great Chimú Empire, and that are the realpolitik context of various decisions made by the Inca imperial administration.

For every chapter included, other chapters that were discussed by the editors in the commissioning stage were not included. This was due to two factors. First, lack of space but not lack of interest. Given the mammoth size of the HSAA we had to make decisions about what areas or problems to eliminate. It was simply impossible to include every pre columbian culture (notably in the Central Andes) or region. The areas that have seen the most research have received more attention in the volume than other areas. Second, regrettably, several important chapters that we commissioned were never turned in despite our repeated exhortations to their intended authors and attempts to secure alternate authors [Note 1]. Finally we had to go to press without these chapters as timely publication of the HSAA had to take precedence over exhaustive coverage of the continent. Hopefully, timely publication of the HSAA compensates for omissions by stimulating future discussion and research on the issues brought to the fore or, to the contrary, under-represented in its pages.

The task of actually putting the volume together has been arduous. Papers were read, sent back for revision, and received and edited again, then formatted in standardized manner. Some spellings have been regularized, but the orthography of many terms varies among chapters according to author preferences. For many of the papers written by English-as-a-second-language or non-English speakers, texts had to be checked and double-checked to make sure that editing or translation did not change the meaning from the original language of the author. We have emphasized easy readability over literal translation.

Figures underwent various modifications but some illustrations were never made as high quality as we would have liked authors to have done. Also, a few authors did not send their figures (again, despite repeated pleas); their absence in those chapters is greatly lamented. But we could not hold up the volume’s production schedule further.

There also are some missing or incomplete references because authors did not provide these and we were unable to generate them.

Communication was sometimes difficult as many of the contributors were in and out of the field around the entire continent over the past two years, resulting in some issues remaining unresolved. Prompt and current publication seemed more important than waiting to include the missing materials. We hope readers will not be distracted by these flaws and generously understand our editorial constraints.

We thank all contributors for their papers. Truly, we are thrilled with the coverage of the volume, the quality of the chapters, and how much we have learned about South American archaeology from the contributors.

We conclude by expressing our enormous admiration for the original Handbook of South American Indians. It remains a magnificent compilation of knowledge about South American archaeology and ethnography and has served as an inspiration for decades of fieldwork thereafter.
DATING ISSUES

The prehistory of South America, like that of other continents, is complicated and sometimes confusing because of different scales in terms of which past events are discussed by archaeologists. Dates from the past may be presented as BP dates – before present – or as BC/AD dates – before and after the beginning of the Christian era, respectively. Of course, a date given as BP is about 2,000 years (actually, 1,950 years) greater than the same date given in the BC scale, so something that occurred about 5000 BP can also be said to have taken place about 3000 BC. Readers must always be alert to which system is employed in a particular discussion. This problem is even graver when calibrated and uncalibrated dates are used.

Most dates for human activity in South America – and for most archaeological records of the past 15,000 or 20,000 years the world over – are acquired from radiocarbon assays on organic materials from archaeological contexts. Results of analyses are reported by radiocarbon laboratories as a number of years BP, plus or minus a standard deviation, also in years (for example 2450±70 BP). However, radiocarbon years have been shown to deviate slightly from calendar years, and a complex curve, known as the “calibration curve” has been developed to correct radiocarbon dates, converting them as precisely as possible to calendar time. So archaeologists not only use the BP and the BC/AD scales, they also present radiocarbon dates as calibrated (also, “calendar,” as well as “corrected”) and uncalibrated. So a date may be given as cal BP or cal BC/AD, as well as traditional or uncalibrated.

Radiocarbon laboratories are constantly dating more samples of wood from tree rings whose actual calendar date was established by dendrochronological counting of growth rings. Consequently, calibration curves (and computerized conversion programs employing them) are gradually becoming more and more accurate. This means that dates calibrated some time ago should be recalibrated with a new curve/program, especially when they are compared with dates calibrated by a new program. So, calibrated radiocarbon dates are now constantly changing.

Calibrated dates are published as cal, such as cal AD 600–800, which is 1350 – 1150 cal BP. All radiocarbon dates collected and assayed over the past several decades will surely require at least a little revision as the calibration curve is (or, more correctly, the several competing calibration curves are) more intensively tested and refined. This fluid situation makes some archaeologists reluctant to assign firm dates to many materials previously collected. But without relatively firm dates, comparisons between cultural sequences and inferences about prehistoric interactions and developments are severely curtailed. Sometimes archaeologists take advantage of the changing calibrated-uncalibrated problem to present their dates as “the earliest,” thereby confusing interpretations of past events.

One might escape this quandary of calibration by deciding to date the past in terms of uncalibrated radiocarbon years only as this would equalize all dates. Moreover, the deviation between radiocarbon and calendar years is not terribly great, and radiocarbon time seems to be stable across vast areas. In fact, most of the authors in this volume have chosen this option.

Some archaeologists work with ancient societies that had their own calendars or counts of years, such as the Maya. For these societies it is vital to convert ancient dates to standard archaeological time to be able to compare across the region and beyond. Archaeologists must correlate events dated by radiocarbon with the calendar-based chronologies. Indeed, the importance of calibration was demonstrated when
Colin Renfrew (1973) showed that the radiocarbon dates for early construction at Stonehenge, when calibrated, turned out to be significantly older than the Mycenaean architecture that was supposed to have inspired the Neolithic Britains. Of course, Mycenaean chronology was based on historical time, while Stonehenge was dated exclusively by radiocarbon dates, which were consistently several centuries younger than corresponding calendar dates.

Calibration of radiocarbon dates permits archaeologists to synchronize cultural and climatic events and this permits worldwide comparisons, a laudable goal. Within particular areas archaeologists must decide on a reporting standard for radiocarbon dates and stick with it so that chronological comparisons are valid. Furthermore, a project to convert all published radiocarbon dates to a single standard is vital. To accomplish this single standard would take a substantial grant from an agency such as the United States’ National Science Foundation.

Just as radiocarbon dates of almost 2000 BC for Stonehenge calibrated two or three centuries older than the uncalibrated results, South American dates older than about 1000 BC become earlier, by an increasing order of magnitude as one moves back in time. By about 10,000 BP in radiocarbon years, more or less the beginning of the Holocene Era, calibration adds an antiquity of some 1,500 to 1,900 years—approximately 11,500 to 12,000 cal BP, in this case.

But radiocarbon time is complicated, for deviation from calendar time is not consistent, and the curve is plagued by irregular bumps and troughs. When the number of years in most radiocarbon standard deviations is considered, or doubled to increase the probability that the past event fell within the range of the date presented, the radiocarbon value may intersect several points of the volatile calibration curve, creating different possible calibrations. Indeed, there are spaces, or time periods, along the calibration curve that are highly volatile and others that are quite stable. In general, however, for the past back to about 3000 BP (1000 BC) radiocarbon assays tend to give dates that are older than calendar years. Calibration brings these events forward, into more recent time. For example, because of changes wrought by calibration Isbell (Chapter 37 in this volume) is revising the chronology of the Andean Middle Horizon, formerly thought to begin at about AD 500-550 but now considered to begin at cal AD 600-650 (yet the impact of this revision can not be assessed in the absence of calibration of all dates for a wide range of earlier and contemporary societies). On the other hand, from about 1000 BC back, the calibration of radiocarbon assays tends to produce older dates. At 2000 BC, calibration adds a couple of centuries until at 10,000 BC it adds a millennium and a half, to almost two millennia, which then becomes tremendously significant in discussions about the peopling of South America and its earliest sites.

It would be well for readers to remember that Sandweiss’ calibrated dates from maritime settlements, including the pre-Vegas finds in Ecuador (13,000 – 11,400 cal BP), the north Peruvian Amotape campsite (12,200 cal. Yr BP), and the far south Peruvian Ring site (11,400 cal. BP), all date 1,500 to 1,900 years later in radiocarbon time. So they are significantly younger than Monte Verde, dated by Dillehay to about 12,500 BP in radiocarbon years. This should be kept in mind when evaluating arguments favoring an early coastal migration route into South America. Similarly, Andean Late Archaic (Preceramic) and Formative cultures are discussed in two chapters in terms of calibrated chronologies, adding at least two or three, and in the case of the third millennium BC, as much as five centuries to their antiquity, as compared with radiocarbon chronologies employed by the authors who discuss other parts of South America.
The authors of most of the HSAA chapters have not calibrated the radiocarbon dates and chronologies they present. Dillehay, Arriaza et al., Borrero, Gaspar et al., Aldenderfer, Navarrete, Politis and others all discuss the past, including the Pleistocene-Holocene transition, in terms of radiocarbon chronologies. Some authors follow the investigators whom they are summarizing in a particular section; thus Pearsall cites one calibrated date, although most of her chronologies are in radiocarbon years. Zeidler does the same, using calibrated dates only for Cotocollao, La Chimba, the elite grave from Valdivia 4 Santa Ana-La Florida. But some chapter authors consistently employ calibrated dates – Sandweiss, Sandweiss and Richardson, Pozorski and Posorski, as well as Burger.

CONVENTIONS USED

Where authors write about the same archaeological culture or site we have tried to standardize spelling. For instance, we have chosen Inca(s) rather than Inka(s). So as to have pages full of italicization because of the large number of foreign words used, we have put in italics only the Latin names of flora and fauna and just the most occasional word from an indigenous language; otherwise, italics are used for emphasis. Other conventions used are: meters above sea level: masl; kilometers: km; meters: m; centimeters: cm; hectare(s): ha; circa: ca. For the Peruvian relative chronology: Initial Period: IP; Early Horizon: EH; Early Intermediate Period: EIP; Middle Horizon: MH; Late Intermediate Period: LIP; Late Horizon: LH.

NOTES

1. These included much desired chapters on South American historical linguistics, another on molecular genetics to complement the archaeological record for human migration into the continent, another on llama caravanning in the South Andes, and a comprehensive treatment of the Circum-Caribbean societies. With regard to the Circum-Caribbean the commission requested consideration of the evolutionary development of the various societies and the theoretical concepts that have been deployed in their investigation to complement the chapters on Amazonian cultures. We also were interested in the distinctions drawn between Circum-Caribbean and Amazonian cultures by Steward in the HSAI, that were later expanded by Steward and Faron (1959), and that contributed importantly to theorizing the chiefdom as a cultural evolutionary stage, and in the longer run, contributed significantly to the study of evolution in intermediate range societies.

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Part I

Introduction
Looking at a map (Figures 1.1, 1.2, 2.1), South America hangs heavily from the narrow, funnel-like Isthmus of Panama, which thus serves to delimit the continent on the north. Indeed, it was through Panama’s densely vegetated tropical environment that the first settlers of the vacant (in human terms) continent had to pass, and adapt, more than ten thousand years ago (Ranere and Cooke 2003); maritime movement hugging the coastline was also a possibility (Fladmark 1979). Oceans border South America on all sides, further defining and, until the age of European exploration, largely isolating it from the rest of the world, save for intrepid indigenous navigators who trafficked luxury goods, including *Spondylus* shell, between Ecuador and the west coast of Mexico (Marcos 1977–78) and Panamanian chiefs who pursued esoteric knowledge in the more complex chiefdom societies of northern Colombia (Helms 1976). But this hyper-geographical continental essence—or South America as a natural unit—is belied by what may have been the world’s greatest linguistic, cultural, and botanical diversity. This extraordinary heterogeneity is the challenge that faced Julian H. Steward (Figure 1.3) in the early 1940s as he sought to devise a framework with which to organize the approximately two hundred chapters commissioned for the six-volume *Handbook of South American Indians* (HSAI; the seventh volume is the index) from an international cast of more than ninety leading ethnographers, archaeologists, physical anthropologists, ethnologists, linguists, cultural geographers and art historians.

The *HSAI* project came about through two initiatives. As recounted in the subsequently published *Native Peoples of South America* (Steward and Faron 1959), “During the 1930s, a group of leading anthropologists [sought to unite disparate data about the continent] through the preparation of a *Handbook of South American Indians*. The *Handbook* was to assemble all available information on South American physical anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, and ethnology so as to provide the general student with a convenient summary of the salient facts and the scholar with a springboard for future research”
Figure 1.1. Map of South America: countries. (Drawn by Steven J. Holland)
Figure 1.2. Map of South America: major rivers. (Drawn by Steven J. Holland)
Steward’s employment as an anthropologist (1935–1946) in the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) of the Smithsonian Institution facilitated this goal. In 1939 the BAE agreed to undertake the task “in collaboration with the Department of State, as one of the projects under the broad program of ‘Cooperation with the American Republics’” (Steward and Faron 1959: v). Work on the HSAI began in 1940 and was completed in 1945, but publication was not until 1950.

Steward’s work was related to the U.S. government’s concern during World War II with defense, national security, language training, and the need to acquire information about hostile/potentially hostile as well as vulnerable people. As specifically concerns Latin America, Steward (1950: xi) explained, “With the growing threat of war and a general recognition of the need for greater Hemisphere understanding and solidarity, attention was
focused on Latin America. Latin American training centers were created, interdisciplinary
research was planned, and the American Council of Learned Societies, National Research
Council, and Social Science Research Council set up a Joint Committee on Latin American
Studies which was instrumental in coordinating a great variety of work.” A 1943 Social
Science Research Council report (cited by the Ford Foundation 1999: viii–ix) indicates a
concomitant concern “that our citizens must know other lands and appreciate their people,
cultures, and institutions” [Note 1]. The HSAI sought to fulfill that mission as Alexander
Wetmore, then Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, expressed in his 1944 fore-
word to the first volume: “The present monumental work is ideally suited to carrying out
the purpose of the Smithsonian Institution, ‘the increase and diffusion of knowledge’ as
well as that of the Bureau of American Ethnology, the promotion of ‘ethnological studies
among the American Indians.’”

Steward (1946a: 4) acknowledges that he created the themes of the first four vol-
umes based on Cooper’s (1941) fourfold culture division of South America. These culture
areas were: “Marginal hunting and gathering tribes of Eastern Brazil, the Gran Chaco,
the Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego; (2) the Andean civilizations; (3) the tribes of
the Tropical Forests and Savannas; and (4) the Circum-Caribbean cultures including that
portion of Central America which was strongly influenced by South America” (Steward
1946a: 4) and including the Caribbean Islands, which were correctly understood as a cul-
tural extension of northern South America (Steward 1948b: 23) [Note 2].

In addition to the adoption of Cooper’s (1941) culture area scheme, the organization
of the HSAI appears to have been profoundly informed by Steward’s previous research
among native people (e.g., Steward 1938) and with archaeological materials (e.g., Steward
1942; Steward and Setzler 1938), and his interest in the cultural content of societies and
their change over time. During the HSAI’s gestation in the 1940s Steward began to develop
a coherent evolutionary framework that linked sociopolitical complexity to environmental
and cultural ecological factors. This interrelationship was first expressed in the organiza-
tion of the HSAI (see especially Steward 1949a; see discussion below) and ultimately was
fully formulated in a series of subsequent papers (Steward 1949b, 1951, 1953, 1955d,
1956, 1960a, b, c, 1970).

In this introduction to the Handbook of South American Archaeology (HSAA),
I consider Steward’s organization of the HSAI and some of the continental schemes
that followed it. I do not discuss exclusively ethnographic volumes (e.g., Gross 1973;
Lyons 1974). I conclude with comments on a new critical scholarship for supra-area
archaeology.

FROM CULTURE AREA TO CULTURAL TYPE
TO CROSS-CULTURAL TYPE

Europeans faced a bewildering diversity of South American people during their age of
discovery, in some cases lasting into the twentieth century for the most remote groups. In
the second half of the nineteenth century armchair scholars explained this diversity in terms
of evolutionary schemes that grouped together, in broad evolutionary stages, cultures with
similar principles of kinship, economic production or political authority. Anthropologists
in the United States responded to the need to organize their ethnographic data on hundreds
of Native American cultures in some meaningful way by applying the “culture area” con-
cept (e.g., Kroeber 1939; Wissler 1917, 1938), which sprang from the kulturkreise (literally,
cultural circles) school of the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel and the German anthropologists Leo Frobenius and Fritz Graebner. The culture area concept benefited from ideas about cultural diffusion popular in European geography (diffusion of cultural traits from a few dominant cultural hearths). The culture area concept posited that peoples living in proximity to one another and inhabiting more or less similar environments tended to share many aspects of culture in common (such as subsistence patterns, crafts, religion). A key characteristic of the culture area formulation was its reliance on “facts” (Steward 1955d: 80), which were codified as trait lists (“culture content and … features which distinguish culture areas from one another” [Steward 1955d: 81, emphasis in original]). The American continents, and other parts of the world, were divided into culture areas, each one characterized by a particular variety of spatially and historically related cultures.

Steward’s conceptual innovation was the “cultural type,” a critique of the problems inherent to culture areas, such as their lack of consideration of temporality, change, and incongruence between shared features and structural pattern (Steward 1955d: 82–83). The cultural type “consists of core features that, first, are determined by cross-cultural regularities of cultural ecological adaptation and second represent a similar level of socio-cultural integration” (Steward 1955d: 89). The foundation for Steward’s formulation of types is the “culture core,” or “cultural core”—“the constellation of features which are most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements. The core includes such social, political, and religious patterns that are empirically determined to be closely connected with these arrangements. Innumerable other features may have great potential variability because they are less strongly tied to the core. These latter, or secondary features, are determined to a greater extent by purely cultural-historical factors—by random innovations or by diffusion—and they give the appearance of outward distinctiveness to cultures with similar cores” (Steward 1972: 37). In other words, the cultural core is the “functional interdependency of features in a structural relationship” (Steward 1955d: 94).

The core lies at the heart of Steward’s fourfold classification of culture areas (Steward 1955d: 94). Steward’s 1946 through 1948 fourfold classification was as follows.

Volume I of the HSAI was devoted to “marginal tribes.” These were hunters and gatherers living in mobile bands, but including fishermen as well as hunter-gatherers who practiced some cultivation and were, consequently, sedentary for at least part of the year (Steward 1946a).

Volume II described the “Andean civilizations” (Steward 1946b). The title alone characterized an evolutionary stage of cultural development. Wendell Bennett (1946: 1) was clear in his introductory paper in Volume II: “At the time of the Spanish Conquest, the three outstanding Highland cultures were those of the Chibcha, the Inca, and the Araucanians. Of these three, that of the Inca is best known and was the most advanced in cultural achievement.” “Highland” was synonymous with Andean, so in South America, only Andean cultures were “civilized,” and the most privileged were the “Central” Andeans, or the Incas and their ancestors, conceptualized as donors to simpler South American culture areas or culture types (e.g., Steward 1949a). Scholars still follow Bennett in dividing the Andean cultures into three great geographical regions and their associated culture types: North Andes, Central Andes, South Andes (e.g., Lumbreras 1981).

The “Tropical Forest Tribes” (Steward 1948a) were brought together in Volume III. The “core diagnostic features” of these people were generally characterized as tropical root crop (especially manioc) farmers who used effective river craft for transportation, hammocks as beds, and made pottery (Lowie 1948: 1). They were also defined by what

Volume IV (Steward 1948b) embraced the “circum-Caribbean tribes” who were characterized as intensive farmers residing in large villages, sometimes organized into federations by chiefs and paramount chiefs. Interestingly, Steward included chapters on Central America (Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama) as well as the West Indies. The latter is understandable since the Antilles were colonized by South Americans (already recognized by Rouse 1948a, b in his contributions to this volume). Steward included lower Central America—what he (Steward 1948b: 2) referred to as “south of the Maya frontier in Honduras”—because these societies exhibited, by Steward’s criteria, “basic circum-Caribbean culture” (defined in Steward 1948c). Cultural patterns trumped contemporary cartographic nomenclature.

Steward’s (1949a) “interpretative summary” of South America in Volume V was built upon the new information about archaeology, history and ethnography presented in the preceding four volumes of the *HSAI*. Steward acknowledged that “in retrospect it is evident that many tribes were improperly classified [in the preceding four volumes] … more or less on the basis of impressions … [using] principally the general element content [read: trait list] of the cultures rather than a systematic comparison of the patterns. Special weight was accorded one or another feature in each case” (Steward 1949a: 669, 671). Therefore, Steward’s revision relies primarily upon sociopolitical and religious patterns. The new fourfold classification was “Marginal people,” “Tropical Forest and Southern Andean people,” “Sub-Andean [Northern Andes] and Circum-Caribbean people” and “Central Andean people.”

Theory and practice shaped one another in the foundation of modern South American anthropology. Steward’s Volume V essay adumbrates his immediately subsequent work on multi-linear evolution and levels of socio-cultural integration. He writes, “Culture elements are accorded secondary importance because too many of them are independent variables. Their distributions were dissonant with those of the sociopolitical and religious patterns, and they occurred in quite different patterns. They were the building materials of culture and did not greatly affect the architecture. … A classification based on culture elements would not at all correspond to one based on sociopolitical patterns (Steward 1949a: 671). … The patterns chosen herein as the basis for classification are those that integrate the institutions of the sociopolitical unit. … This fourfold classification has developmental implications in that some institutions and practices were necessarily antecedent to others, but it is not a unilinear scheme” (Steward 1949a: 674).

It is fascinating to compare Steward’s (1949a) “interpretative summary” with “Development of Complex Societies: Cultural Causality and Law: A Trial Formulation of the Development of Early Civilizations,” which was published the same year in *American Anthropologist* (reprinted in Steward 1955a), and with a series of explicitly evolutionary treatises that followed (Steward 1951, 1953, 1956, 1960a, b, c, 1970). It is by reading these later works that one sees the theoretical fruition of the massive data base upon which Steward drew, including South America, to reason out his fully mature multi-linear evolution, which he defined as a concern with cause-and-effect relationships having limited cross-cultural occurrence and proceeding from the particular to the general. “It conceives culture as the concrete forms of behavior that characterize societies of different times and places. It therefore seeks explanations of why particular cultures develop” (Steward 1960a: 1).

In the 1960s Elman Service (1962) and Morton Fried (1967) presented explicit evolutionary schemes, classifying pre-modern human societies into four successive stages. Service proposed a sequence of stages starting with “band” organization, followed by