



Introduction

On “Indians”

“Indians,” as everyone knows, were invented by Europeans. As European settlers and explorers roamed the Caribbean and then the American mainland in the years after 1492, they began to classify the inhabitants of this new world as “Indians.” In so doing they created a cultural and ethnic category that had not previously been imagined by the continent’s original residents. The varied groups that had settled the Americas prior to the arrival of Europeans did not consider themselves members of a single community. On the contrary, some indigenous groups were not aware of the existence of the other societies with whom they were to be linked as fellow “Indians.” Others denied any connection between themselves and those peoples that they considered less developed; the Mexica of Central Mexico traded and warred with many of their neighbors, but they did not always regard them as their equals. They viewed the lowland Huastecas, for example, as uncivilized and wild, and therefore quite different from themselves. Thus, prior to the arrival of Europeans the category of “Indian” did not exist. During the three-hundred-year period of Spanish colonialism some did embrace the new category, thereby becoming “Indian,” while others clung persistently to older identities.¹ The problematic nature of the very concept of the “Indian” has led many scholars to substitute terms such as “Native American” or other less obviously European labels. This book, however, is concerned with Indians. It studies precisely the European concept encoded in the word “Indian.” Like Robert Berkhofer, who has analyzed representations of North American native peoples, I use the word “Indian” to refer specifically to the “white image of these persons.”² The fact that this term imposed a new and essentially artificial unity on disparate societies should not impede studying the meanings it had for its many users.

As the historian Blanca Muratorio has noted, in Spanish America the “Indians [who were] evoked, internalized, or rejected . . . took diverse

forms in different historical periods.”³ The historical period I explore in this book—the years between 1780 and 1930—is sometimes described as Latin America’s “long nineteenth century.”⁴ The end points of this chronology are the vast Túpac Amaru Rebellion, which swept the Andes in the years between 1780 and 1782, and the collapse of democratic governments in the wake of the 1929 Wall Street crash. The attraction of this long time frame, however, is not that these boundary events are of paramount importance to my study, but rather that this period covers the broad era from the breakup of the colonial state to the consolidation of the new nations born out of the ashes of Spanish colonialism. I focus most explicitly on the hundred-odd years from the start of the wars of independence in the 1810s to the centenaries of independence in the 1910s and 1920s, although I will look backward to the events of the 1780s and forward to the 1930s.

My aim in this study is to understand the ways in which “Indians” were incorporated into the elite idea of the nation in Spanish America. Beginning with the wars of independence, the figure of the Indian was variously employed in the construction of Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and the other states created after the end of Spanish rule. For some countries, the processes through which this happened have already received considerable attention. In particular, historians such as David Brading have shown convincingly that the Aztec past came to form a central part of Mexican nationalism.⁵ Building on what Brading called the “creole patriotism” of Mexican savants and chroniclers in the eighteenth century, Mexican insurgents in the 1810s celebrated independence from Spain as a revindication of the Aztecs: although Spanish conquistadors had overthrown the legitimate Aztec empire in the sixteenth century, Spain’s defeat three hundred years later at the hands of anticolonial revolutionaries was declared to avenge this injustice.⁶ Subsequent generations of Mexican patriots held varied opinions about the view that the Republic of Mexico was a continuation of the Aztec empire, but with the Mexican Revolution of 1910, the apotheosis of the Aztecs appeared complete. Today metro stops in Mexico City are named after Aztec emperors.

This process has often been described as a uniquely Mexican approach to national history. Elsewhere in Spanish America, scholars such as Benedict Anderson insist, revolutionaries looked forward to a new, utopian future, not back to the ancient past.⁷ Yet while Buenos Aires may not have

metro stations with indigenous names, Argentina's very national anthem describes it as a continuation of the Inca empire:

The Inca is roused in his tomb
And fire is rekindled in his bones,
On seeing his sons renewing
His *patria's* former splendour.⁸

Argentines, according to the anthem, are the sons of the Inca. Guatemala's capital city does not have a metro, let alone stations named after Maya kings, but the Guatemalan state issued a postage stamp showing a feather-crowned "Indian princess" in 1878, nearly a decade before it placed a president on a national stamp, "that most universal form of public imagery other than money"⁹ (see figure 1). In this book I tell a coherent story about the place of "the Indian" within Spanish American elite nationalism in the first century after independence that accounts not only for the subsequent construction of Mexico City metro stops named after Aztecs but also for the Argentine national anthem, Guatemalan postage stamps, and a wealth of other details from a variety of countries that complicate stories of Mexican exceptionalism.

The central feature uniting the Mexican metro stop, the Argentine national anthem, and the Guatemalan stamp is their focus on the distant pre-Columbian past rather than on the indigenous present. (We can tell that the Guatemalan stamp depicts a preconquest Indian because no one in 1878 Guatemala believed that contemporary indigenous people wore feather crowns, whereas this was precisely how pre-Columbian Indians were represented.) One of this book's arguments is that when indigenous elements were incorporated into official visions of the nation during the first century of independence they were as representatives of ancient, long-vanished cultures located in the preconquest past. Recognizing this distinction between the pre-Columbian past and the indigenous present is key to understanding the functioning of elite nationalism in nineteenth-century Spanish America. Starting with the wars of independence from Spain in the 1810s, I show how advocates of independence across Spanish America began to describe the new nations they sought to create as continuations of the pre-Columbian civilizations destroyed by the conquistadors in the sixteenth century. Independence from Spain was thus said to



Figure 1. Pencil drawing for the 1878 Guatemalan “Indian Woman” stamp. The figure, probably designed by a French artist, shows a fanciful Indian princess with a feather tiara, framed by two quetzals. This was one of the earliest Spanish American stamps to employ a (pseudo) indigenous theme. *Source:* Afinsa Auctions sale catalogue. Courtesy of Afinsa, Spain.

avenge the injured ghosts of the indigenous leaders who died resisting the conquest. These heroic figures were the true fathers of Spanish America. Through the distinctive logic of independence-era rhetoric, the newly independent Spanish American nations traced their ancestry back to pre-conquest days. The pre-Columbian past thus formed an essential part of national history, much more glorious than the “three hundred years of tyranny” of which the colonial era was said to consist. It was in this heady period that Argentina acquired its national anthem.

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In the decades after independence from Spain, that interpretation of history lost favor. Far from viewing their nations as originating in the distant pre-Columbian past, scholars, politicians and poets began to reconsider the merits of the colonial period, and asked themselves whether the moment of conception had not instead occurred in 1492, when Columbus first brought Christianity and European civilization to the hemisphere. The historian (and future president of Argentina) Domingo Faustino Sarmiento denounced independence-era celebrations of indigenous resistance to the conquest as a “deceitful claim to supposed fraternity with the Indians, intended to create a rift between ourselves and our fathers.”¹⁰ “Our fathers,” according to Sarmiento, were the conquistadors, not the Indians. Others maintained that while the distant seeds might have been planted by Columbus, birth itself occurred not in 1492 but in the 1810s with the outbreak of independence from Spain. “We come from the village of Dolores; we descend from Hidalgo,” was how the Mexican liberal Ignacio Ramírez put it, thereby dating the existence of “Mexico” from the independence leader Miguel Hidalgo’s 1810 proclamation against Spanish rule in the hamlet of Dolores.¹¹ The view that either Mexico or Argentina was heir to the Aztec or Inca past came in for prolonged ridicule in many parts of Spanish America.

Yet at the same time, this legacy of independence continued to exert a subtle, if often unacknowledged, influence. Historical studies invariably paid at least some attention to the pre-Columbian era, as the development of “national” history during the nineteenth century reveals. Museums and collectors manifested an increasing interest in preconquest archaeological remains, and writers and poets continued to celebrate the ancient past in their prose and verse. By the end of the century many Spanish American states were willing to embrace pre-Columbian history as a part of their national heritage. When the Ecuadorian government was asked to build a pavilion to represent the country at the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition, it chose to erect an “Inca palace”¹² (see figure 2). At roughly the same time the Guatemalan government placed the fanciful Maya princess on one of its stamps. Nonetheless, although preconquest history might be welcomed into the national past, contemporary indigenous peoples were rarely accepted as part of the national present. Far from benefiting from positive appraisals of the pre-Columbian era, they were on the contrary perceived largely as a problem for the republican



Figure 2. Ecuadorean Pavilion, Paris Universal Exposition, 1889. The pavilion, an “Inca palace” intended to be reminiscent of an Andean solar temple, proclaimed Ecuador’s pride in its preconquest heritage. *Source:* Picard, *Rapport Général*, 2: plate facing 219. Courtesy of the Bodleian Library.

state, and were often declared incapable of participating in the political life of the nation. Moreover, they were said to have lost contact with their own preconquest history, the ownership of which was instead claimed by the creole elites who in 1870s Mexico erected statues to Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec prince, and in 1920s Peru performed “Inca” dramas delivered in an archaic version of Quechua that was inaccessible to most native speakers (see figures 3 and 4).¹³

This book thus constitutes an exploration of national memories. The idea that national memories might be preserved in museums, statues, and the iconography of the state (such as postage stamps) derives in part from the work of Pierre Nora and his associates on *lieux de mémoire* (“sites of memory”) in France.¹⁴ But the nineteenth-century Spanish American republics differed from France, where virtually all postrevolutionary governments have defined themselves in relation to the French Revolution. In Spanish America there were competing points of origin ranging from the distant pre-Columbian past to events postdating the break from Spain, the meaning of each itself the subject of controversy and reinterpretation. If in nineteenth-century France the French Revolution was the “time of *history*,” in Spanish America there was less consensus on when history began.¹⁵ This concern with origins, which are as much mythic as historic, underlies nineteenth-century elite nationalism. I study these conflicting national genealogies through a diverse set of sources. In subsequent chapters I examine patriotic poetry, postage stamps, place names, independence day celebrations, museum holdings, and romantic dramas, as well as constitutions, decrees, and the multivolume national histories written in the decades after independence and today often unread except as sources of factual data. Drawing on this vast archive I illustrate the development of elite national memory in Spanish America in the first hundred years after independence. In so doing, I illuminate the complex legacy with which Spanish America entered the twentieth century.

NATIONALISM (AND PATRIOTISM)

This book explores the sense of national identity developed by members of the political and intellectual elite in Spanish America in the first century after independence from Spain. As nineteenth-century Spanish America is often cited as a region that *failed* to develop an effective nationalism,



Figure 3. Miguel Noreña, statue of Cuauhtémoc, 1887. This Mexico City monument to the Aztec prince Cuauhtémoc was unveiled in 1887 amid great pomp. The impressive pedestal contains further scenes from the hero's life. *Source:* Courtesy of the Biblioteca Francisco Xavier Clavigero, Universidad Iberoamericana.



Figure 4. Martín Chambi, *Theatre Group with Director Luis Ochoa*, Cuzco, 1930. Chambi's photograph shows Cuzco theater director Luis Ochoa surrounded by his troupe. The actors are dressed for the performance of an Incaic drama, complete with sun medallions and elaborate headgear. Source: Ranney and Mondéjar, eds., *Martín Chambi*, 102.

I need to justify my claim that some sort of national identity can be discerned in the region during that century.¹⁶ I would like first to clarify what I am *not* claiming. I do not believe that nineteenth-century Spanish American elites articulated nationalisms that embraced the whole of their states' populations. Insofar as any sector of society harbored even semi-inclusive images of what the nation might be, such imaginings were more likely to be found in subordinate groups than among the elite; some of the richest and most interesting historical work on the nineteenth century of the last decade has concerned precisely the nationalisms of subaltern groups such as indigenous communities and peasant villagers.¹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm's observation that "the nationalism of elite minorities" differs from a "nationalism which possesses or develops a mass basis among the people" is surely correct. Nonetheless, I disagree with Hobsbawm's assertion that such elite nationalism does not qualify as nationalism at all. Limited though it was (and in subsequent chapters I will probe its limitations), the national sense articulated by nineteenth-century elites in Spanish America did not differ quite as much as Hobsbawm implies from the nationalism based on "national consciousness or an attachment to the symbols and institutions of nationhood" that he views as true nationalism.¹⁸ The latter symbol-based nationalism, which Hobsbawm describes as typical only of the period after 1880 in those states that developed any sort of nationalism whatsoever, was, I argue, characteristic of the nationalist sense articulated by nineteenth-century Spanish American elites from its birth in the early nineteenth century.¹⁹ Part of my thesis in this book is that the nationalism characteristic of nineteenth-century elite mentalities was largely cultural, residing in symbols, iconographies, and imaginings.

How then might we describe this nineteenth-century elite nationalism? The nationalist sentiment articulated by these men and, less frequently, women rarely accepted the majority of their states' populations as fellow nationals. Nor did it necessarily maintain very close ties to any particular geographical region. Elite nationalists were interested in geography; they composed geographical studies of their republics, agonized over the intrusion of foreign troops into its heart, and participated in international commissions seeking to determine the boundaries of each state. Nonetheless, elite nationalism was not founded on a territorial vision. "The *patria* is not the soil," proclaimed the Argentine liberal Juan Bautista Alberdi.²⁰ It was rather a set of ideals, a way of thinking. It was possible for men such

as Alberdi to venerate the *patria* even if its precise limits were vague or in dispute. The nation was a commitment and a project whose membership consisted essentially of the small group of patriots sensitive enough to appreciate the idea of the patria, a term meaning simultaneously “motherland” and “fatherland.” Their number might perhaps increase with time to include a larger section of the population, but the failure of these elites to imagine an inclusive nation does not mean that they had no concept of a nation whatsoever. As the anthropologist Martha Bechis has noted, “at times, the words ‘nation,’ ‘constitution,’ ‘State’ had no direct reference for the creoles, but they uttered them with the hope of furthering a reality which they knew was under construction.”²¹ Because of this focus on the patria, some scholars have preferred to label these sentiments patriotism rather than nationalism.²² Patriotism, in the view of political scientists such as Maurizio Viroli, is a devotion to liberty and republican government, whereas nationalism is a commitment to the “spiritual and cultural unity of the people.”²³ Patriotism resides in the realm of reason, while nationalism is nourished on a diet of sentiment. In my view the concern with the patria typical of nineteenth-century Spanish American elites was essentially nationalistic in its focus on feelings and emotions rather than the specifics of governmental structure. In the words of a Chilean orator in 1843, “The patria is not simply a part of that land inhabited by millions of men, it is the preferential point in which we hope for happiness . . . in short it is a part of the heart.”²⁴ “The patriotic emotion,” explained the Peruvian scholar Eugenio Larrabure y Unanue three decades later, is like “an electric current,” which stirred the “mysterious depths of the human soul.”²⁵ In essence this nationalism was a sentiment, a love of the patria, which existed primarily in the realm of philosophy and feeling.

This concept of the nation as an idealized space for patriotic sentiment accords very well with the interpretation of nationalism articulated by Benedict Anderson in his celebrated *Imagined Communities*. Anderson’s analysis of Spanish American history has been criticized on a number of fronts, in particular for its assertion that creole nationalism was the consequence of individual circulation through the colonial bureaucracy, as well as for its equation of elite, creole nationalism with a broad-based nationalist sentiment.²⁶ Nonetheless, Anderson’s work has played a crucial role in reorienting scholarly understandings of the nationalist process toward directions that can fruitfully be employed when considering

Spanish America, despite his own difficulties in applying his theories to that region. Anderson argued that a nation resides not so much in political, ethnic, or geographic features, as in the ways in which people think. Nations are made by people deciding that they form part of some common enterprise, which we may call the enterprise of nationalism. Exactly which people decide this is a matter that Anderson at times ignored, but his attention to the role of imagining has transformed the analysis of nationalism, in particular because as an imagined entity the nation has to be represented to acquire meaning. Ernest Gellner expressed this pithily when he noted that “it is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically.”²⁷ The ways in which these borrowings and transformations occur is in itself an important part of the study of nationalism. Hobsbawm, Nora, and others have shown that nationalism is often constructed on a base of (borrowed and transformed) symbols, ceremonies, and practices. Their studies of the places where memories, particularly national memories, are crystallized, and of the “invented” nature of many traditions, national or otherwise, help us understand the importance of the symbolic to the enterprise of nationalism.²⁸ Ceremonies and symbols help make nationalism imaginable.

Central to this process is the creation of a national past, which endows the perhaps very new nation with a sense of antiquity. When Homi Bhabha observed that “nations lose their origins in the myths of time” he drew attention to this process of invention as well as to the subsequent obscuring of those foundational inventions.²⁹ Even Anthony Smith, who regards nationalism as a far more organic and ancient sentiment than do many other scholars, has noted the importance of “common myths and historical memories” to the formation of a sense of national identity.³⁰ In this book I am therefore concerned centrally with the role of the past in the construction of elite national identities.

Analysis by certain postcolonial critics has drawn attention to the particular challenges that history poses to nations formed out of former colonies, where interpretations of the past are often deeply embedded in the political struggle for independence, and where the attempts at locating the “authentic” past so central to nationalism are particularly problematic. Seeking authenticity in the precolonial era, which appears to provide

an alternative to colonial culture, may instead create “a calcified society whose developmental momentum has been checked by colonization,” as Abdul JanMohamed noted with reference to African nationalism. In other words, celebrating the precolonial era as the true national past raises the fear that national culture is essentially obsolete or trapped in bygone times and therefore backward. On the other hand, any attempt to incorporate aspects of the colonial era raises the specter of what JanMohamed calls historical catalepsy, which condemns postcolonial society as a “vacant imitator” of colonial culture and thus devoid of any genuinely authentic past of its own.³¹ Both options appear problematic, although Bhabha has suggested that the colonial, and, potentially, post-colonial experience is located precisely in that moment of imitation.³² Imitation and mimicry, rather than authenticity, perhaps mark the postcolonial, just as the search for history and origins signifies the national. An *authentic* past, in other words, is perhaps both a necessary component of nationalism and difficult to obtain in postcolonial situations. Whether or not nineteenth-century Spanish America fits comfortably within concepts of “postcoloniality,” the observations of postcolonial criticism about the conflictive nature of the past hold some relevance for the region, where elite efforts at imagining the nation were rent by internal anxieties about the weight of history.

Scholars have also taught us that nationalism usually employs notions of gender to shape its image of the nation. For example, the republican nationalisms articulated first with the American Revolution in 1776, and subsequently in France and Spanish America, constructed citizenship around an essentially masculine subject. “No one can be a good citizen who is not a good *father*, good *son*, good *brother*, good friend, and good *husband*,” stated virtually all of the revolutionary constitutions composed in Colombia between 1810 and 1819, echoing the French Constitution of 1795.³³ The quintessential citizen was thus conceived as male (although some women contested the association of citizenship with masculinity). The sociologist Carlos Lissón expressed this view clearly when he noted in 1867 that Peru achieved independence “because its sons became men.”³⁴ On the other hand, the nation itself was often represented as female, as were its attributes such as liberty, progress, or constitutionality. The Mexican artist Petronilo Monroy’s *Allegory of the Constitution of 1857* illustrates well this use of gender to symbolize the state’s more abstract qualities (see figure 5). The work, exhibited in 1869, shows a young woman



Figure 5. Petronilo Monroy, *Allegory of the Constitution of 1857*, c.1869. Monroy's painting employs a young woman to embody the principles of the 1857 Mexican Constitution, although the constitution excluded women from being citizens. *Source*: Widdifield, *Embodiment of the National*, plate 3. Courtesy of the Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico City.

who both represents and displays the Mexican Constitution of 1857. As Stacie Widdifield has shown in her discussion of this painting, although the decision to depict the constitution as a young woman, rather than a mature one, provoked criticism, the choice of a female figure did not. Widdifield notes that “the plentiful presence of the woman in this painting, as well as in numerous other sculptural and painted monuments of the Mexican national period, is an index to her absence or exclusion from the sites of power and nationhood that the Constitution of 1857 aimed to create.”³⁵ We shall have occasion to observe not only the use of gendered iconography to construct the nineteenth-century Spanish American state, but also the place of indigenous imagery within these constructions. The 1878 Guatemalan stamp depicting the Indian princess is but one example of the framing of acceptable indigenosity within a gendered structure that linked an abstracted nation to concepts of femininity.

RACE AND NATION

As I have noted above, the very concept of the “Indian” is a historical construct whose precise meaning in colonial and independent Spanish America continues to be debated by scholars. Some have stressed the importance of juridical and fiscal categories to being “Indian”: in this formulation, indigenosity consisted particularly of paying the head tax known as the Indian tribute and possessing entitlement to the use of communal land.³⁶ These factors undoubtedly influenced the functional meaning of being an Indian, although not all scholars view them as its central or fundamental designators. A number have argued that being Indian was determined more by social and cultural criteria. This view has been set forth with particular clarity by Douglas Cope in a study on plebeian culture in colonial Mexico City. Cope’s work stresses that racial identities were essentially social. They were certainly not based solely on physical appearance: as Cope noted, when individuals “wished to convince the authorities of someone’s racial status, they went beyond physical characterization” by adding information about dress, speech, occupation, and name.³⁷ Ancestry might also be discussed, but this did not necessarily provide definitive answers; the parish records in which racial classifications were supposed to be recorded sometimes either omitted information on race or contained ambiguous or contradictory classifications. Family members themselves might disagree

about the race of other relatives. As Cope notes, for plebeians “defining race was functional rather than logical, pragmatic rather than theoretically sound.”³⁸ Until the nineteenth century scholarly thinking in both Europe and Spanish America generally regarded race as similarly mutable. Scientific writings stressed the importance of climate, diet, and other factors in determining race.³⁹ Such attitudes remained typical of nineteenth-century Spanish America; indigenoussness continued to be defined largely in social, cultural, and perhaps juridical terms by most sectors of society, including the elite groupings with whom this book is concerned. Even after the rise of “scientific” racism in the second half of the nineteenth century, elite Spanish Americans clung to a non-Darwinian vision of race. As Nancy Stepan has shown, neo-Lamarckian views, which stressed the influence of the environment on evolution, rather than Darwinism, proved fundamental in the region.⁴⁰ For every savant who proclaimed that the Indian’s cranium was the wrong shape to admit progress there was another who suggested that such physical defects might be corrected by convincing indigenous people to wear Western clothes or to eat more meat. Indeed, Peter Wade has suggested that scholars of race in Spanish America would do well to question any division between “biological” and “cultural” concepts of race. At the height of “biological” racial thinking, he notes, elements of “what today would be called cultural influences” were included within the “very conception of biology.”⁴¹ Environment and other external factors, in other words, were often acknowledged to be important influences even by scientists who believed in immutable racial types.

Whether “the Indian” was a cultural, social, or even biological being, scholars today are in broad agreement that the indigenous population, and race more generally, were “fundamental to and even constitutive of the very process of nation-making.”⁴² The importance of race to the imagining of nationality in postindependence Spanish America is an area of innovative ongoing research. This literature has been central to shaping my own focus on the preconquest past as an important element of nineteenth-century elite nationalism. A number of recent works have explored the interface between elite and plebeian concepts of the nation and have analyzed the challenges that Spanish America’s racial diversity posed to elite nation-builders; both Mónica Quijada and Nicholas Shumway have made important contributions to this area in the case of Argentina, for example.⁴³ In addition, a series of studies by scholars such as Mauricio Tenorio Trillo,

Blanca Muratorio, and Deborah Poole have shed light on the centrality of iconographies—visual and discursive—to the articulation of elite (and other) nationalisms during the nineteenth century, and more specifically on the place of preconquest imagery within those iconographies.⁴⁴ These analyses themselves build on foundations laid by a previous generation of scholars who explored the development of creole patriotism and its interactions with the preconquest past.⁴⁵ Such works, together with many others that I cite later, helped form my own vision of the place of the preconquest past within elite national identity in nineteenth-century Spanish America, although in becoming my own this vision at times (inevitably) departed in significant ways from the approaches and interpretations of the works that inspired it. My book differs from these other studies most strikingly not so much in the many details of interpretation (although I will highlight particular differences), as in my emphasis on the pre-Columbian era as a fundamental challenge to nineteenth-century elite nation-building, and in my focus on more than one country. In telling a coherent story about the role of the preconquest past in the construction of elite national identities in a number of different states my work puts more emphasis on continuities within the continent's history than has been common in recent studies of the nineteenth century, where the single nation has played a prominent role in organizing analysis. As this book makes clear, I believe that nationalism is a phenomenon best studied in a broad regional and chronological context. Cross-national comparisons also throw light on distinctive regional particularities. At the same time that I chart the principal themes shaping elite responses to the past I also record some significant variations. The place of the preconquest era within elite thinking in Guatemala and in Argentina, for example, is comparable but by no means identical. These modulations, alongside the dominant motifs, together reveal the distinctive features of nineteenth-century elite nationalism.

My study focuses on Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico, although I have included examples and material from other states as well. My purpose in selecting these regions was twofold. First, they were home to a variety of preconquest cultures ranging from the large settled empires of the Aztecs and Incas and the smaller principalities of the Muiscas, as well as of the Quichés, Cakchiquels, and other Maya peoples, to the nomadic societies of the Argentine and Chilean plains. As I will

show, elite interpretations of these peoples varied substantially during the nineteenth century; the pampas-dwelling Araucanians, for example, were sometimes described as hardy republicans and sometimes as barbarous savages.⁴⁶ By referring to a range of pre-Columbian cultures I highlight the flexibility and variability of elite responses to the preconquest past. Second, the set of core countries contains states whose nineteenth-century histories differed greatly in many regards. The economic successes of Argentina and Colombia scarcely compare; Chile succeeded in attracting many European immigrants, while Guatemala did not. Nonetheless, the process of elite nation-building reveals substantial continuities—as well as some illuminating differences—across the region. The common origins of these states in the independence movements of the early nineteenth century, and the uniformity of creole culture across Spanish America—itsself continually strengthened by transnational contact between individual writers and politicians—helped form a language of elite nationalism that became the lingua franca of the entire continent, and which makes feasible a comparative study. This book does not—cannot—tell the definitive story of how elite groups understood “the Indian” during the nineteenth century, but by exploring this question comparatively it helps map the contours of the elite imagination and provides a framework for interpreting other elite encounters with the indigenous world.

My argument is structured around seven chapters. In the first two (“Montezuma’s Revenge” and “Representing the Nation”) I explain the role of the mythologized “Indian” within the nationalist discourse elaborated during the independence era. In chapter 1, I trace the efforts by insurgent ideologues to construct “national” pasts for an independent Spanish America that accorded a pivotal role to the preconquest period—an effort that placed particular emphasis on the bonds of metaphorical ancestry believed to link creole revolutionaries with the indigenous heroes of the conquest and preconquest eras. In the second chapter I examine the use of pre-Columbian imagery within the state iconographies—flags, coins, coats of arms—created in the independence years. I conclude by tracing the progressive elimination of much of this imagery from state symbols in the decades after independence. Replacing these discarded indigenous emblems were the leaders of the independence movements themselves: it was the insurgent hero Simón Bolívar, rather than an Araucanian warrior, who now repre-

sented the nation. Yet while indigenous figures were often removed from state iconography after 1830, the attitudes toward pre-Columbian civilizations expressed during independence formed a current—a way of thinking about the past—that flowed into nineteenth-century elite nationalist thought. The rest of the book traces the influence of this current.

In chapter 3 (“Padres de la Patria: Nations and Ancestors”) I probe the genealogical metaphors that shaped elite nationalism during the nineteenth century. While metaphors of genealogy dominated the articulation of elite nationalism throughout the nineteenth century, after independence these nationalist genealogies largely abandoned the tentative identification with the preconquest past enunciated during the independence era in favor of a revindicated Spanish identity. The region’s elites thus ceased to claim pre-Columbian history as part of their personal ancestry. Such abandonment, however, implied neither a loss of interest in the preconquest epoch nor its exclusion from the “national” histories composed, often with state sponsorship, in the decades after independence. Chapter 4 (“Patriotic History and the Pre-Columbian Past”) studies the development of national history. In it I chart the incorporation of the indigenous past into *historia patria* (“patriotic history”)—for at the same time that most elite nationalists were beginning to view their own heritage as essentially Iberian, scholarly studies were concluding that the era preceding the arrival of Columbus had been a time of culture, albeit a culture inferior to the one subsequently introduced by the Spanish. With some exceptions, preconquest indigenes were proclaimed to have been civilized, indeed romantic. In chapter 4, in addition to examining historical writings I also consider literary depictions of the pre-Columbian era by looking at the writings of both well-known figures such as Rubén Darío and largely forgotten individuals such as the Colombian poet José Joaquín Ortiz. Their works interpreted the precolonial era as a mythical time replete with adventure and romantic intrigue. The civilized and attractive nature of precolonial peoples presented in both scholarly and literary texts helped establish the preconquest era as a suitable element of the national past, even if it did not constitute part of the personal heritage of their authors.

In chapter 5 (“Archaeology, Museums, and Heritage”) I focus on the material remains of the pre-Columbian era. I construct the history of preconquest monuments and artifacts during the nineteenth century

by tracing first the development of legislation designed to protect pre-Columbian relics, which evolved under the dual pressures of nation-building and the new academic discipline of archaeology. I then explore the importance of museums to the nationalist enterprise. That museums display interpretations of the past has been recognized by both recent scholarship and the individuals who established Spanish America's national museums in the nineteenth century. Thus the mayor of Santiago, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (himself the founder of an important Chilean museum), could describe the British Museum as "the most authentic and succinct *book of universal history* that we have read."⁴⁷ Museums of national history were thus texts of *historia patria*. In chapter 5 I also explore the display of pre-Columbian materials in Spanish American exhibits at world's fairs, which were held with increasing frequency in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In chapter 6 ("Citizenship and Civilization: The 'Indian Problem'") I move from the nineteenth-century status of the preconquest era to that of the indigenous present. Through a reading of congressional debates, legal codes, political essays, and poems I examine the wedge driven between the indigenous past and the indigenous present via the so-called Indian problem: that is, the view that indigenous people, incapable as they were of participating in civic life, prevented the nation from progressing. While the pre-Columbian past began slowly to be incorporated into the national heritage alongside the colonial period, contemporary indigenous peoples were declared to have lost their connection to that past. The preconquest past was thus "de-Indianized." I end this book with a discussion of this legacy for twentieth-century Spanish America. Chapter 7 ("Indigenismo: The Return of the Native?") examines the success of the cultural and political movement known as *indigenismo* in bridging the gulf that elite nationalism had constructed between the preconquest past and the indigenous present. The complex genealogies claimed by Spanish American elites, which tried to accommodate differing, and potentially conflicting, heritages—indigenous, Hispanic, creole—were only partially resolved in the early twentieth century by the celebration of racial mixing (*mestizaje*), which was popularized across the hemisphere alongside indigenismo. In the epilogue I sketch briefly the continuing resonance of these debates in contemporary Spanish America.