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Introduction

SPAIN'S CONQUEST OF PERU brought together three peoples—Indian, African, and European—and propelled reconfigurations of land and labor systems to combine Old World arrangements with those of the New World. Imperial economic policy was based on a mercantilism that would intensify with the explosion of mining activity after the resounding 1545 silver strike in Potosí. Suffice it here to note that historians and economists continue to examine and debate this nearly legendary metallurgic production, which recent scholarship indicates a probability of even greater output than was previously held.¹ The force of this silver flow would manifest itself far and wide, in Europe and in the viceroalties and *audiencias* (regional courts and jurisdictions) of South America. Like the conquest itself, directly and indirectly, silver's impact would bear upon indigenous, African, and European social, political, and economic structures and institutions. Depending on the circumstances of time, place, and market (both internal and external), it would reshape old and create new networks of trade and transport just as it would reshape traditional systems and create new ones of labor and production. Furthermore, neither conquest nor mining was a simplistic, one-dimensional cause-and-effect phenomenon vis-à-vis the victors and the vanquished, the masters and the slaves, the bosses and the exploited. New World peoples, those carriers of European imperial policy, would in turn respond to ongoing change, often reshaping their own social, economic, and political institutions to form their own part of what has been described as a new, hybrid, post-conquest world.²

This work is part homage and part thank-you to the late Thierry Saignes, whose poignantly titled *Los Andes orientales: Historia de un olvido* inspired the direction the book would take in its long journey into “the forgotten,” those vast valleys, piedmonts, and lowlands of the

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eastern Andes. With much due respect to Saignes, I took the liberty of adding a further dimension to the concept of *olvido*. I included an additional group of people, African slaves and their descendants—*negros*, *mulatos*, *pardos*, *zambos*, and *morenos*—whose history in the region has been largely ignored, hidden, or in the words of Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “silenced.” Their smaller numbers belie their importance, and theirs is the most forgotten history, without which the colonial history of the eastern Andes is incomplete.³ Thus, in keeping with the spirit of my title, *Reclaiming the Forgotten*, I put Africans first in the sequence of population groups this work examines.

Further, the project exists within a larger theoretical and interpretive framework. My approach postulates that within the construct of a political economy that brought together the three population groups there existed an intersection and cross-fertilization of values, mores, and other sociocultural measurements that were present and identifiable in the workplace, in the legal system (including the courts), in the church, and in private lives. This phenomenon directly and indirectly influenced interrelations and identity in terms of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. It was a combination of forces that in turn interfaced with deeply conflicting notions (African, indigenous, and Spanish) of territoriality and power. The results manifested themselves in a colonial reality of massive contradictions and ambiguities in which in order to survive—and many did not—people reclaimed or reinvented themselves and prevailing institutions. While the larger picture acknowledges the political economy of region and empire, it also takes into consideration a moral economy that fueled a racism—itsself laden with contradictions—that seeped into the region’s societal fabric, the residues of which remain in place today.

The focus of this study is the multi-ecologically zoned province of Mizque, an early colonial settlement (designated a frontier) southeast of the Cochabamba Valley in the audiencia of Charcas. The administrative center for the jurisdiction was referred to as the Villa de Mizque long before it gained official status and recognition in 1603 as la Villa de Salinas del Río Pisuerga. However, as often as not the documents continued to refer to it as el pueblo or la Villa de Mizque, the name



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by which it is called even today. This should not be confused with the Indian community el Pueblo de Mizque.⁴

In the past, a good part of the traditional literature pertaining to the early viceroyalty of Peru placed emphasis on a Pacific coast-to-highland trade-and-transport axis geared primarily for the Potosí silver-mining market, allotting little attention to the slopes and valleys of the eastern Andes. Prompted by growing evidence indicating considerable agricultural and commercial activity early on in these eastern reaches of

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the viceroyalty, both South and North American scholars began asking different questions regarding the area's prehistoric and colonial past.⁵ Further, in recent decades a new wave of colonial and postcolonial scholarship, focused on region and based on rigorous methodology, has emerged from Cochabamba's Universidad Mayor de San Simón.⁶

More specifically, and central to the present discussion, historical economist Gustavo Rodríguez Ostría urged investigators to give closer scrutiny to regional networks and diversities. Rodríguez presented a somewhat different paradigm for the scholar who seeks more innovative explanations for historical processes involving the regions east of the Andean highlands. Here, he suggested a harder look at the equally important yet up to now relatively untapped intraregional systems. It is at the regional or local level, argued Rodríguez, that "local economies functioned independently from the 'locus' of Potosí."⁷ While Rodríguez addressed nineteenth- and twentieth-century political and economic processes, his paradigm—as with all sound paradigms—is not bound by temporal or spatial limitations. Instead, his model can apply to an earlier time and place—specifically, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mizque—to explain a far earlier version of an active, important intraregional commerce, trade, and market system.

A careful search through the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Cochabamba and the much larger Archivo Nacional de Bolivia in Sucre disclosed an impressive array of documentation pertaining to sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century Mizque. Yet this region, despite a number of local efforts,⁸ remains in the shadow of the more systematically researched Lima-Potosí sphere. Current generalist Andean literature gives colonial Mizque a passing nod at best. Close scrutiny of the documents, however, reveals that Mizque—villa, jurisdiction, and region—deserves far greater attention than it has thus far received.

Cochabamba's municipal archive, for example, houses thousands of historical documents dating from the region's earliest colonial years up to the 1920s. The data relating to colonial Cochabamba surpass that of Mizque by some four to five times. Not surprisingly, the preponderance of historians and archivists investigating the Cochabamba material reflects this ratio. To date, far more scholars seek to explain Cochabamba's history than that of its neighbor. Yet the sheer volume

of the Mizque documentation clearly indicates that this region, too, played a vital historical role in the geopolitical and economic axis under Spanish imperial rule. Careful examination of the *Protocolos Notariales* and *Expedientes Coloniales* richly underscores Mizque's significance.⁹

Compared to Cochabamba's municipal archives, the national archives in Sucre (formerly La Plata or Chuquisaca, seat of the colonial *audiencia*) hold an equally large—if not larger—body of documents pertaining to Mizque. This collection is referred to as the *Archivo de Mizque* and, along with the material collected in Cochabamba, provides most of the documentary evidence for this work. These sources are surpassed only by the *Ramo de Tierras y Indios* and *Expedientes*, also located in the National Archive, wherein land disputes, indigenous affairs, royal orders, and decrees relating to Mizque can be found. Both the Cochabamba and Sucre holdings are notarial in nature. They consist of dowries, last wills and testaments, partnerships, rental contracts, freight and transport contracts, and bills of sale, including the sale of African slaves. In addition, the collections contain the data-laden census records of rural estate residents as well as those of Indian communities. The long-term accounts of propertied orphan children under state-appointed guardianship also appear in these notarial documents, as do a wealth of court litigations. Many of these categories are serial in content and provide discernible patterns of change over time. These rich sources render a plethora of social, political, economic, and demographic history.¹⁰

The bountiful documentary resources repositied in the above archives notwithstanding, some caveats require explanation. First, in the course of my investigations, the subject of African slaves, their descendants, and all related data had yet to be afforded a separate section or branch in either archive. The National Archive now has a card catalog section specifically on this subject. Cochabamba's municipal archive does not, however, and immense time and effort are required to cull through countless documents to find any data pertaining to this group. Further, as rich in data as the court cases may be, they can be as frustrating as they are fascinating. For some of the litigations, many of which go on for years, the outcome is not available. Either the documentation was

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incomplete, the case was dropped, or the litigants settled out of court. Fortunately, most of the cases used in this work found resolution in the courts. Finally, the documents have gone through countless filters. The first round of filtering could occur at the time of the document's creation. Words, perceptions, labels, and intentions could be subtly (or not-so-subtly) altered by the scribe, the interpreter, the defense, or the prosecution, to name a few.¹¹ Then there is the selection process. Who decides which document or group of documents is preserved or discarded, and to how many of such selection processes are the documents submitted? It is little wonder that serial documentary runs and cross-references are so gratefully welcomed by the researcher.

Equally important for this work, we now know that Mizque's past extends far beyond the parameters of European contact and colonization. Indeed, current archaeological excavations and anthropological and ethnohistorical studies dramatically underscore the region's significance long before the arrival of the Europeans. Archaeologists and anthropologists often raise questions similar to those posed by social historians. The difference rests in the fact that the former must look elsewhere than the written word and seek answers from markedly different sources. The end results both inform and enrich the historian's task.

Chapter 1 sets the stage. It explains vast and complicated geography of the *corregimiento* (colonial province or jurisdiction) of Mizque, which contains many ecological niches. Here I examine the creation of a highland-lowland duality which itself became a misleading dichotomization and a two-dimensional stereotyping that ultimately led to an all-encompassing and dismissive perception of the eastern slopes, valleys, tropics, and plains, or in Thierry Saignes's timeless words, "the forgotten." Based on archaeological, ethnographical, and ethnohistorical studies, the chapter identifies the region's many indigenous ethnicities and chronologies and explains the advent of the Inca, soon to be followed by the incursions of the Spaniards. I then discuss the many Spanish expeditions into the eastern Andes, a temperate and fertile region that Spaniards soon realized contained immense economic potential to be exploited for themselves and Spain. Early explorations and pacification occurred unevenly and sometimes disastrously. The