

# THE HANDBOOK OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES : COVERAGE OF THREATENED PEOPLES AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND ELECTRONIC FUTURE\*

DOLORES MOYANO MARTIN\*\*

## RESUMEN

La problemática de los pueblos en peligro fue la preocupación central de los latinoamericanistas del 48º Congreso Internacional de Americanistas de Estocolmo. Esta contribución es un análisis de la producción científica sobre este tema a partir de las reseñas del Handbook of Latin American Studies que está dedicado en su mayoría la casi totalidad de los países de América Latina. Una segunda parte de este artículo permite presentar los accesos electrónicos de este instrumento prestigioso de búsqueda recién desarrollados tan bien como los proyectos de sus promotores.

## ABSTRACT

*The problems of the people threatened were in the center of the concerns of the latinoamericanists of 48th the CIA of Stockholm. This contribution is an analysis of the scientific production on this set of themes such as restores it Handbook of Latin American Studies which shows in particular that the articles listed relate to the majority of the countries of the Latin America. One second part of this article makes it possible to present the electronic accesses this prestigious instrument of search recently developed as well as the projects of its promoters for the years to come.*

## BACKGROUND

**T**he *Handbook of Latin American Studies* is the oldest and most prestigious area studies bibliography in the world. Its continued existence and success is a testimony to the vision of its creator and first editor, historian Lewis Hanke, who, in the 1930's, launched a publication that continues to thrive in the 1990's.

Hanke was also the first Chief of the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, a division established in 1939 to serve as a centre for the pursuit of studies in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American culture. The division provides reference services to the US Congress, US government personnel, scholars, university students, and the general public. It also plays a major role in developing and maintaining the Library's pre-eminent collections of Hispanic materials as well as in preparing bibliographies, manuscript guides, and other aids and reference tools designed to assist users of these collections. Practically all universities whose curricula include Latin American studies programs subscribe to the *Handbook* which can be found in the libraries of such institutions in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Latin American universities which can afford it subscribe to the *Handbook*, and those who cannot usually receive it directly from the Library of Congress through our exchange program.

\* A paper written for the International Congress of Americanists (48th, Stockholm, July 1994). \*\* Editor *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, Hispanic Division, Library of Congress Washington DC - USA

The print edition of the *Handbook* is an annual annotated bibliography of about 5,500 entries which include evaluative annotations prepared by 130 scholars who donate their services to the Library. Volumes alternate annually between the humanities and social sciences. It is estimated that about 60 percent of *Handbook* entries consists of monographic citations ; about 40 percent refer to serial articles culled from about 1,600 journals published world wide as well as chapters from books and papers from published conference proceedings. Disciplines covered are :

Anthropology (including Archaeology and Ethnology) ; Art ; Economics ; Electronic Ressources (beginning in 1995) ; Geography ; Government and Politics ; International Relations ; Literature ; Music ; Philosophy ; and Sociology. Off-prints of selected disciplines are available for purchase through the Latin American Studies Association.

### THE HANDBOOK OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES AND THE STUDY OF THREATENED PEOPLES AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

It will of interest to members of this Congress of Americanists to realise that the *Handbook* played a pioneering role in promoting knowledge about threatened peoples and the environment in Latin America, long before either the subject or region were fashionable in the academy or popularised by the media. For a long time, a much neglected topic was the history of these threatened peoples, descendants of the pre-Columbian inhabitants of the Americas. During the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries, such populations were regarded as «primitive» peoples who lived in a perennial present and had no notion of history as we understand it. The idea that these civilisations could have a past as rich, complex, sophisticated, and worthy of study as the Egyptians or Assyrians is of fairly new vintage. Indeed, as recently as the early 1960's there were only a few stalwart scholars who studied and researched this indigenous past. Practically all of them were contributors to the *Handbook*, where the first annotated bibliographies in ethnohistory were published by pioneers such as H.B. Nicholson, Charles Gibson, Howard Cline, and John Murra.

The present interest of ethnographers in history and of historians in indigenous peoples as well as the rapprochement of historians and anthropologists is another consequence of the success and expansion of ethnohistory, a field also enriched by the study of symbolic anthropology in the US and of structural history in France. In *HLAS* 48, our ethnohistorian observes how archaeologists have also benefitted from ethnohistory by detecting «new meaning in historically 'tired' sources» in which they could establish connections «with material traces of processes invisible to the Spaniards.» In 1992 one *Handbook* ethnohistorian remarked that although most scholars disagreed about the nature of Inca polity, all agreed that the Andean past profoundly activates the present, and that Peru's «true past is that of her native Americans, not the historical experience of the coastal Creoles.»

By 1983, or twenty years after the pioneer ethnohistorians of the early 1960's, we note an extraordinary increase in both research and political activity concerning South American Indians. In his introductory essay in *HLAS* 45, our ethnologist identified a trend as true today as it was ten years ago when he wrote that : «The accelerated expansion of frontiers stimulated by dismal economic conditions, leads to many new contacts and an increased level of threat to numerous tribes. And so tasks of ever increasing urgency are understanding Indian cultures and their problems, communicating such understanding to a wider public, and defending the interests of threatened indigenous peoples.» In that same *Handbook* volume we provided what was probably one of the first complete lists of major organisations that offer regular information on the conditions of South America's indigenous peoples. In the following social sciences volume, published in 1983, our ethnologist noted a «major development» identified as «the strengthening identity and growing

self-awareness of indigenous peoples» evident in the «appearance of writings on indigenous cultures by members of those cultures themselves.» Notable examples are : the set of Desana myths narrated by an old Desana priest and transcribed by his own son (see *HLAS* 47 : 1363) ; an introduction to Ye'cuana society written by a Ye'cuana villager (see *HLAS* 47 : 1237) ; an ethnography by an Otomí schoolteacher (see *HLAS* 51 : 668) ; autobiographies by members of a Chatino community in Oaxaca (see *HLAS* 51 : 692) ; and a narrative of relations and dialogues between the Mayas of Quintana Roo and outsiders (see *HLAS* 51 : 740).

These works were the first indications of a powerful development which is accelerating today, the active role indigenous peoples are taking in shaping their own future as well as a new ethnographic trend which allows «the indigenous thinker or self-ethnographer to speak directly to his or her public» (see *HLAS* 47 : 1330). Also in the 1980's, several personal narratives vividly depicted the oppression of Guatemalan Indians (see *HLAS* 49 and items 764, 833, and 835). The origins of this oppression are identified in a major work which is recommended in our latest volume, *Guatemalan Indians and the State : 1540 to 1988* (see *HLAS* 53 : 939). This new self-awareness is also manifest in the accelerated development of an organised and self-conscious indigenous movement that, in the 1980s, was especially dramatic in Brazil but also notable in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. In *HLAS* 47, we also noted a similar trend in the involvement of another threatened group, the peasantry, in the study of its own social conditions and power relations in rural areas from the peasants' own perspective. This participation, described by one sociologist as «the democratisation of social science research» is especially notable in recent works about Mexico and Central America, where numerous peasant autobiographies have appeared (see examples in *HLAS* 47, items 8057, 8101, 8107, 8118, 8121, 8126, 8133, and 8140). In Bolivia, the coca-cocaine boom has generated a boom in the study of the dynamic role of the peasant-producer and his response to price incentives of this illicit underground economy. But the coca leaf, long regarded as a symbol of Andean culture and the basis of a millennia old economy, is «now targeted as a threat to US national security.» This US policy has provoked the militant resistance of Bolivia's coca-leaf producers who have created syndicates that constitute «the most sophisticated and potent network of mass-based socio-political organisations ever to appear in post-colonial Bolivia» (see *HLAS* 53 : 3818).

*HLAS* 53, published in 1994, devotes much attention to the threat to the Latin American environment. Examples of recent scholarship are studies of lending institutions which impose and finance inappropriate and often damaging development projects (see *HLAS* 53 : 263) ; Juan Alvarez's study of environmental problems on the Mexican side of the US border (see *HLAS* 53 : 2712) ; the notable number of studies on Brazil that range from deforestation and government policies to mineral extraction, settlement, and planning, and the internationalisation of scientific research on environmental issues. In this *Handbook*, one ethnologist observes that the successful 1989 attempt by the Northern Cayapó Indians to stop the building of a hydroelectric dam on the Lower Xing River gives reason to hope that indigenous Amazonians will be able to join forces with anthropologists and other outsiders to insist on the protection of their lands and human rights. If this new line of ecological inquiry were to be connected with empirical studies of indigenous social organisation and history, such an approach could become a major new theoretical development for understanding the rain forest, its ecology, and its people.

## ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO THE HANDBOOK

With the publication of volume 50 of the *Handbook* in 1991, the editorial process became completely automated, with data entered in MARC format into one of the MUMs files at the Library of Congress. The *Handbook's* small editorial staff-consists of four permanent employees who perform most of their tasks on computer terminals connected to the Library's mainframe. At the end of the production cycle for each

volume, the *Handbook's* output program generates yearly proofs and a computer tape that contains the data for that year's print volume, including computer-generated document mark-up codes. The *Handbook* is merely one of numerous applications that make use of the Library's computer facility, one which encompasses more than 3,200 terminals, 160 disk drives, 75 million bytes of stored information, and which processes more than 20,000 online transactions per day.

Bibliographic information for each publication sent to *Handbook* contributors for review and possible annotation in the print volume is initially input into the database. In the case of monographs, the *Handbook* staff copies the Library's computer catalogue information drawn from the BOOKS file to the Generalised Bibliographies or GENBIB database, a shared file designed especially for bibliographers at the Library of Congress. The «cloned» book records are then edited by the *Handbook* staff for bibliographic clarity and *Handbook* style. For analytic entries such as journal articles, chapters from books, and papers from published conference proceedings, bibliographic records are created from scratch by *Handbook* staff. These *Handbook*-created records combine traditional cataloguing rules with *Handbook* style guidelines. For all annotated records, the staff adds *Handbook* subject index terms, and the author index is verified and amplified. In brief, the *Handbook's* database combines the best aspects of both bibliographies and online catalogues. For example, most online catalogue records do not include evaluative annotations prepared by scholars nor do print bibliographies provide online record information for use by researchers and librarians. Moreover, the bibliographic information for unannotated items remains in the database for electronic searching. At present, the *Handbook* database contains about 70,000 bibliographic records. This figure is growing by an additional 10,000 entries annually, of which about 5,000 are annotated by scholars and appear in the printed volume. At present the *Handbook* database is accessible to online users through various channels and formats : free of charge via the Internet; in magnetic tape sold through the Library of Congress's Cataloguing Distribution Service (CDS) ;

c) through the Research Libraries Group's Eureka service ; and d) in a CD-ROM published by the Fundación MAPFRE América and distributed by the University of Texas Press.

## ELECTRONIC CONVERSION OF VOLUMES 1-49 OF THE HANDBOOK

The electronic conversion of the first 49 volumes of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* was undertaken in 1995 by the Fundación MAPFRE América (Madrid), with additional financial support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Electronic conversion of this data was a complex task requiring detailed analysis of the original print volumes as well as careful computer programming. For volumes 1-43, this process included the following modules or phases : scanning and programming for optical character recognition (OCR), first automated introduction of field designators, manual correction, automated and manual quality controls, second automated introduction of field designators, and integration of all modules. For volumes 44-49, the data were extracted from the existing typographical tapes using a program developed for eliminating unneeded typesetting codes and replacing others with the corresponding field designators for the database. The process utilised for volumes 1-43 was then repeated : manual corrections, etc. In addition, all the bibliographic records from volumes 50-53 (those appearing in the print volumes as well as those available only in the Library of Congress database) were converted from US-MARC format and integrated with the retrospective data on the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* CD-ROM : *HLAS/CD*, Vols. 1-53 (1936-1994). This one-disc title contains approximately 20 million words in 250,000 records -- corresponding to all annotated bibliographic entries and scholars' introductory essays in the print edition of the *Handbook*. The *HLAS/CD* features context-sensitive help in both English and Spanish, as well as both novice and expert search capabilities.

Full-text searches may be conducted on any combination of fields (author, title, description, annotation, subject, etc.) and may also be restricted to type of record (bibliographic citations, introductory essays, or both). Designed by the Publicaciones Digitales MAPFRE (DIGIMAP) team, the user-friendly *HLAS/CD* interface runs under windows and uses the BRS Search engine which allows researchers to select from eight Boolean and proximity operators.

### THE *HANDBOOK'S* FUTURE ELECTRONIC PROJECTS

The Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress is currently working to provide an enhanced user-friendly Internet version of the *Handbook* on the World Wide Web. This project will provide a *Handbook* home page which will enable cumulative searches of all existing *HLAS* data, both current and retrospective. It will make use of the Inquiry search software developed by the Centre for Intelligent Information Retrieval at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

The software offers users the possibility of conducting either full-text or fielded searching, and ranks the resulting documents by relevancy to the user's original query. Generously supported by the family of Lewis U. Hanke, the *Handbook's* late founder, the *Handbook's* Web version is expected to be completed by June 1996.

Finally, with the advent of full-text databases, the *Handbook* staff looks forward to a time when it will be technically and legally feasible to scan the full text of articles, chapters, and perhaps even books into our database for full-text use by scholars and librarians.

---