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"A Native American System of Wetland Agriculture in Different Ecosystems in the Ecuadorian Andes (15th–18th Centuries)"

Caillavet, Chantal

Caillavet, Chantal. "A Native American System of Wetland Agriculture in Different Ecosystems in the Ecuadorian Andes (15th–18th Centuries)." *Environment and History* 14, no. 3 (Aug., 2008): 331–53. doi:10.3197/096734008X333554 . Ridged fields and wetland agriculture are a key element in the culture and ecology of pre-Hispanic societies, and their role often survived well beyond the immediate aftermath of the Spanish conquest. Their importance was highlighted in a series of groundbreaking publications which have appeared from the mid-twentieth century onwards. In marked contrast to Mexico, however, there is much less historical data on this type of native agriculture in South America. Was this silence caused by these techniques falling into centuries of disuse on the arrival of the European colonisers? Or, despite ongoing use, did they fail to attract enough attention to surface in the literature? In the absence of descriptions written by the Spanish chroniclers, what other types of historical sources provide significant information on native traditions of land use? Native voices are recorded in legal texts that Indians dictated to satisfy Colonial bureaucratic requirements: wills, declarations during land litigation, and judicial ceremonies associated with land possession. In this paper, Caillavet identifies a range of archival sources which provide evidence of the nature, functions, and ecology of these agricultural techniques in the northern Ecuadorian highlands. All rights reserved. © 2008 The White Horse Press

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