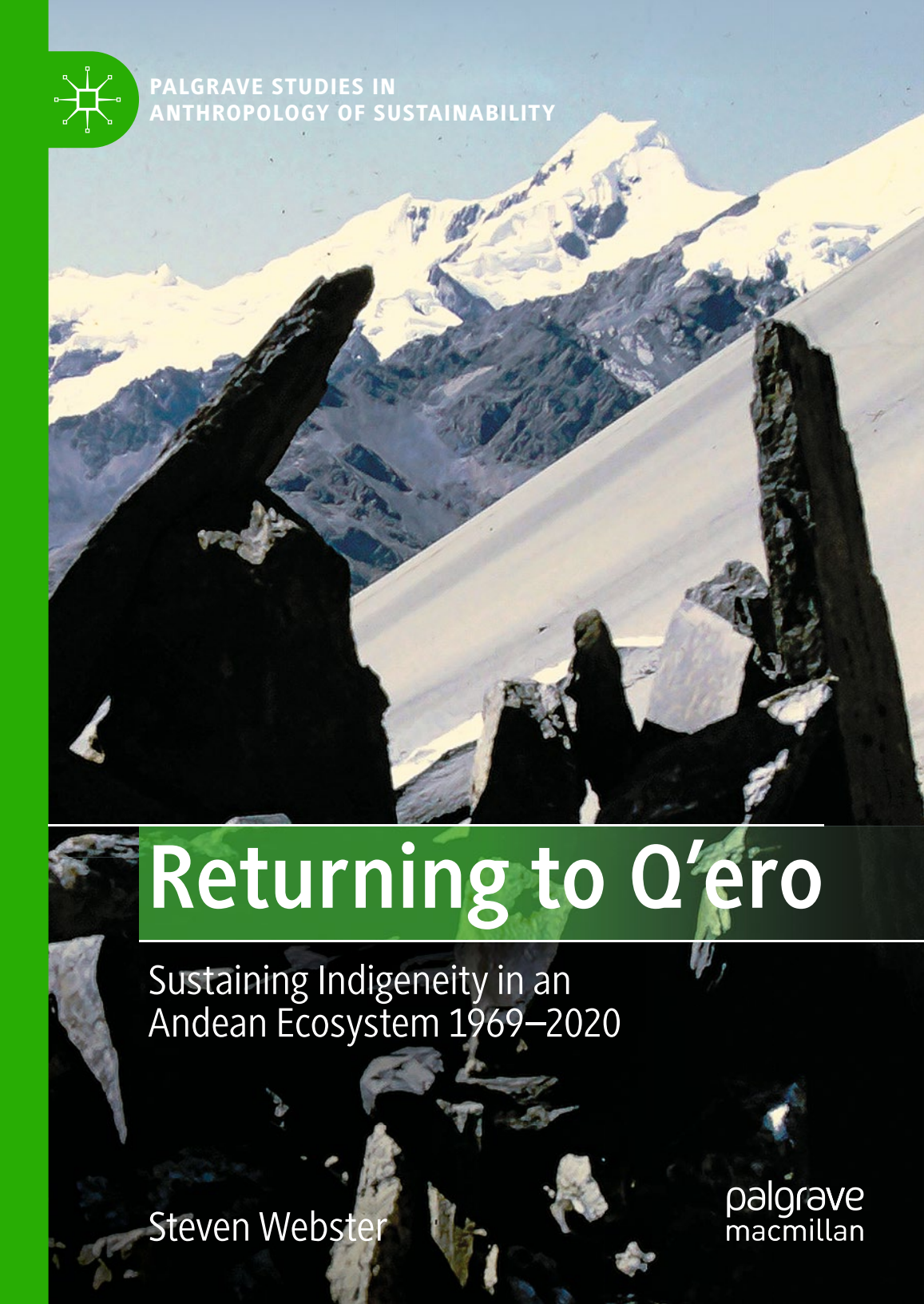
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Returning to Q'ero
Sustaining Indigeneity in an
Andean Ecosystem 1969–2020
Steven Webster
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Steven Webster

Returning to Q'ero

Sustaining Indigeneity in an Andean Ecosystem 1969–2020

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Cover image: courtesy of the author. He took this photo in 1970, looking SE from the vicinity of Hatun Q'asa toward Qawiñayoq and beyond (see Figs 1.3, 8.2). The saywa (rock cairn) in the foreground guards the crest of the pass.

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Preface (2022)

This volume is my ambitious attempt to 'return' from New Zealand to the high Andean community in southern Peru where I and my family did my fieldwork for my PhD dissertation at the University of Washington, U.S.A. I was in Q'ero (now called 'Hatun Q'ero') for most of 1969 and 1970, and returned with my family for a few months in 1977. Since then, while the Q'eros increasingly became a focus of tourist interest in indigenous peoples, my anthropological efforts became increasingly absorbed with the Māori of New Zealand. Although I intended to return to Q'ero and the Andes again, and missed a chance to rendezvous there with Andeanists Holly Wissler and John Cohen several years ago, I have not actually returned since 1977 and am increasingly unlikely to do so. Although I like to think I could still handle the altitude and the Ayakachi ('salted-corpse'!) Range, I was already in my 30s when I first went there in 1969. So, this ambitious effort is necessarily an 'armchair' ethnohistory that could not be done without the fieldwork of surprisingly few other social anthropologists in Hatun Q'ero, other communities of what has come to be widely known as the indigenous Q'ero Nation, or the surrounding region of Cuzco.

I have presumed to devote more than half of this volume (Part I) to my original unpublished dissertation (1972: '*The Social Organization of a Native Andean Community*') and a published but obscured 1974 article that used the pseudonym Ch'eqec rather than Q'ero. I have done this because these are period-pieces in the history of what has become a rather famous indigenous community internationally, but also because the dissertation included ethnohistorically important maps and figures as well as

details that have not yet seen the scholarly light of day. It also happens that my dissertation was devoted to an ecological as well as social analysis of the Q'ero community as an *ecosystem*. This perspective turns out to complement the few subsequent anthropological fieldwork reports on Q'ero or the Q'ero Nation, which are more concerned with cultural than the social and ecological features of this iconic community.

Both the Preface (original) and Introduction (augmented to preview all of Part I) of the 1972 dissertation are included below in the frontmatter of this volume so that they are freely available on-line to interested readers. The Preface was my candid account of the notorious difficulty of fieldwork with the Q'eros that I hope reveals their unique personality. Some Andeanists had actually warned me against attempting fieldwork among them.

Drawing on these divergent ethnographic perspectives then, Part II of this volume is my detailed ethno*historical* reconstruction of what has happened in (Hatun) Q'ero in the 50 years since my own detailed ethnography in the 1970s. A sufficient introduction to this ethnohistorical half of the volume is outlined in the Table of Contents below and thoroughly detailed in 'A Summary of Parts I and II' in the backmatter (also freely available on-line to interested readers). As will be explained in the 'Conclusions' of Part II, it also happens that my own ecosystematic approach in the 1970s, the cultural or semiological approaches of more recent ethnographies, and the Q'eros' own relationship with the natural environment mediated by their shamans, come together in the rising importance of environmentalism and the global climate crisis.

The inclusion of both my original account of Q'ero and my ethnohistorical reconstruction of changes since then in this single volume has required some pruning of the dissertation and specially marked notations throughout Part I (as well as the 1972 Preface and Introduction to it below), that should be explained to the reader here. Although there has been no major revision of my dissertation for Part I, I have deleted parts of the text, figures, or endnotes for the sake of keeping the final volume to reasonable length. These deletions, and insertions of my contemporary comments or original page numbers, are marked in square brackets: […] or *[…]*. I have also rephrased pretentious phrases or words that betrayed my naive academic over-confidence as a 33-year-old PhD candidate, having already travelled and mountaineered widely, resigned a career commission in the US Marine Corps, and completed an MA in Philosophy. The main deletions are in the sociological analyses of Chaps. 5, 6, and 7, and

are relatively arcane academic or methodological issues that detract from the more descriptive ethnography (these issues emerge in the Summary of Part I, but only briefly). Where significant parts of the original have been deleted, the note includes the page numbers of the original dissertation or article so that interested readers can access them as cited in the references and examine the deleted part. I also deleted most citations from the text where scholarly interest in my pre-1972 sources is likely to be limited, but left important surnames so that their publications could be found in the remaining bibliography at the end of Part I.

Part II, my contemporary ethnohistorical reconstruction of changes in Hatun Q'ero since 1969–77, has benefitted primarily from the invaluable work of the few ethnographers who have done research there since then. I have also been able to unearth additional details from some of the remnants of my original fieldwork which fortunately I had brought from the U.S.A. to New Zealand. As well as a few photos, these materials include copies of detailed genealogies of all the families in the community as well as my six field notebooks. (Now that the confidentiality of the genealogies is largely expired, I would be pleased to e-mail copies to interested Q'eros or their friends.) The notebooks display in hurried scrawls, almost illegible asides, and belated but undated insertions of my efforts in the darkening cold of one or another family hut to expand on my memories of the day's encounters before I collapsed for the night in my sleeping bag. On the other hand, apparently nothing remains of our few months' return in 1977 except our 12-year-old eldest son's diary and a semi-fictional personal ethnography that I never finished.

Auckland, New Zealand Steven Webster

Original Preface to Part I (1972)

I was initially motivated to carry out fieldwork in the south Central Andes because this area combined a spectacular mountain topography and opportunity for research among an aboriginal mountain people. As my research plans progressed I was excited to realize that opportunities for original contributions abounded. Despite the size and importance of monolingual Quechua and Aymara linguistic groups, modern ethnographic study among the native communities of this area remained surprisingly sparse and superficial.[1] I hoped to advance my research sufficiently in domains of social organization to contribute toward the knowledge that was just beginning to accumulate on the Quechua, and concern myself especially with matters of law and morality in the native community. [v]

My objectives in this last regard could have been achieved had I chosen a somewhat more acculturated native community less remotely situated than Q'ero. But instead I succumbed to the temptation to do my research in one of the most traditional communities among the many ethnic enclaves of the area, and in a striking ecological system that also seemed to cry out for closer examination before the slow but steady march of social change radically modified it. I think that what I was able to learn of Q'ero social organization and ecology is the best contribution I could hope to make to Central Andean ethnography at this time, and I do not regret my decision. However, although the full implications were not immediately apparent to me, the cultural and geographical remoteness entailed in my decision to carry out research in Q'ero gradually forced me to forego my intentions of ground-breaking research in law and morals and a cooperative research experience with my family.

The awareness of ignorance and inundation of humility that fieldwork in an alien society should precipitate in the social anthropologist was never relieved by candid cooperation from the Q'eros, who were unable fully to trust, or even comprehend, my motives for living with them. Although the more fundamental features of their social organization gradually became clear to me, understanding of its elaborations in native polity, law, and supernatural powers could not be gained in this first short apprenticeship. The community is composed of some eighty mobile families widely dispersed in a basin of several rugged mountain valleys, furthermore removed from roads by one to three days of narrow trails and high passes which can be traversed only on foot or by horseback. The grim portents of usually foul weather, resupply difficulties, emergency evacuation, the necessity of my usual absence from any central location in pursuit of the highly mobile community, and the difficulty of joint research with Lois in such a situation while caring for ourselves and our two little boys, only slowly overcame my idealistic plans. Although Lois and the boys immensely enjoyed our two periods together in Q'ero, and suffered in good spirit the difficult and exhausting exposures of the journey there, it soon became apparent that they would best remain in Cuzco during most of my research. I joined them there periodically for companionship, reassurance, and the indulgence of my other ethnocentric needs as a child of my culture. I was in the Central Andes for about fifteen months and my research [in Q'ero] was underway from October 1969 to November 1970. I departed with an understanding for the rudiments of their way of life, and groundwork for further research.

Every social anthropologist faces the difficulty of comprehending despite the confrontation of his subjects' ethnocentricity and his own. In tribal cultures, unburdened by particular prejudices toward particular alien roles, he hopes to overcome a general fear and confusion harbored by the people regarding outsiders, and become accepted as a naive child who needs to learn. On the other hand, in a peasant society or any colonialized society, he confronts an array of established prejudices and presumptions about alien roles all too familiar to the subjugated people. He hopes at least to win the confidence of these people by demonstrating that he fits none of the suspect roles and that his purposes pose no threat to them; only at best will he be accepted, and accept, as a child. [vii]

In Q'ero I was confronted by the vague fear and confusion characteristic of an isolated tribal people, but grown impenetrable and hostile through a millennium of accommodations to highland colonial regimes.

The Q'eros were not a peasant people in the usual sense, and had no particular presumptions or prejudices which I could hope to overcome; rather they simply did not know how to classify me, not even in terms of the surrounding mestizo culture with which they remain unfamiliar. But neither could they fully accept me as unthreatening, nor as a child; a succession of dominant highland societies from before Tiahuanaco, through the Incas and the Spanish Viceroyalty to the present Republican nation, had evidently taught them an adamant, if vague, suspicion. I could not effectively counter their suspicions that I was coveting their land as a patron, or preparing an inquisition of their customs as a priest, or representing the new and fearful powers of the Reforma Agraria, because their ideas of these roles were amorphous. In general, I fell into an ambivalent role as merely a strange interloper in the accustomed tranquility and privacy of the community, to be treated with impatient evasion if I was requiring a response, or teased like a boring child if they required a response. The evasiveness and suspicion characteristic of the Q'eros, and probably to a lesser degree of most Andean natives and peasants, is certainly based on a long habituated strategy of anonymity and obscurity which has been successful in protecting them from the incursions of militant religions and exploitative colonial economies. The intensity of this behavior pattern reduces in direct proportion to the degree of threat which the Q'eros perceive in an outsider, and they usually treat one another with warmth and openness. Some evidence suggests, on the other hand, that secrecy is also motivated by a need to maintain appropriately sacrosanct relations with extraordinary powers of the native pantheon.

My first contact with the Q'eros was in an exploratory hike through their region with a friend who was interested in the heavily glaciated Ayakachi Range, behind which Q'ero is located (see Fig. 1.1). Rain and dense fog, sweeping up from the montaña 10,000' below, was only occasionally relieved by sunshine. We passed through several of the Q'ero hamlets, found them deserted, and encountered (or rather, surprised) only two people in as many days. When I arranged a meeting with several of them, in a village outside their region where they were buying llamas, they met my request to return with them with a firm negative consensus, countering simply "What would the others say if we brought him back with us?" I entered their region again alone, managed to encounter their most acculturated leader in a high pass (in driving sleet), and arranged to meet him in Cuzco. There I sought the recommendation of Professor Oscar Núñez del Prado, an eminent Peruvian anthropologist who had gained

the guarded trust of the Q'eros by managing the expropriation of their lands in their behalf and by demonstrating continuous interest and concern for their culture. Núñez del Prado vouched for the harmlessness of my goals in Q'ero, winning me admission to the community; but I eventually realized that this involved the acquiescence of only one Q'ero leader who bore no special authority (and who never risked telling others of his experience). In effect the permission only furnished me with limited rights to live temporarily in the house of a friend of his. His friend turned out to be one of the most powerful oracles in the community, so the strength of the respect he enjoyed weathered the criticism he received for accepting me. *My* rights to stay, however, had continuously to be vindicated by explanations and discussion.

I proceeded to make the necessary logistic preparations for travel between Cuzco and Q'ero, and residence in Q'ero. Fortunately, Otto and Eduardo DeBary and their families lived on their hacienda near the road-head nearest to the region, and through interest in my research and extraordinary hospitality furnished me with accommodation and comfort whenever I passed to or from Q'ero.[2] No public transportation passed between Cuzco and the road-head (132 kilometers) except unscheduled, open, and dangerous cargo-trucks, and after several trips on them I decided to buy an automobile. I had twice traveled on foot the fifty kilometers between the road-head and Q'ero (and would several times again) and similarly determined to buy a horse (see Fig. 10.1). Atuh Saruh ("one-who-steps-on-foxes") was sufficiently strong and sure-footed to get me and many provisions (or on other occasions Lois or the children) to Q'ero, and swift enough, at least on returning, to furnish rapid transport to the Hacienda Ccapana in case of emergency.[3] The narrow and steep trails sometimes collapse and are disconcertingly close to the brink of precipices of several hundred feet, but also provide magnificent panoramas of the glacier-laden Cordillera Vilcanota. I was established in the ritual center of Q'ero about two months after my first exploration of the region. [ix]

My presence was tolerated. I became the object of open curiosity from the youths, and speculative suspicion from the adults. The village in which I settled, although the location most central to the scattered hamlets of the community, proved to be empty most of the time. The Q'eros spent a good deal of their time in the valley-head herding hamlets 2–3000' higher in the basin, but more than half of their time was spent in widely dispersed pastures and fields, and crossing 14,000' passes or descending gorges to as low as 6000' to get to these locations (see Fig. 1.2). The rare times that I

could locate them at rest in their huts or camps, or lure them to my own hut, one or both of us was taking refuge from the cold rain and foggy mist which is usual in Q'ero. We would spend some time in the exchange of formalities of hospitality and graciousness, and often before any conversation could begin the encounter would be interrupted by one of us falling into exhausted sleep.

After the preliminaries of hospitality, and when I felt my hosts had adjusted to my presence, I would perhaps begin some questions.[4] Rarely were answers straightforward. The Q'eros usually met my direct questions, no matter how innocuous and casual, with simple denials, pleas of ignorance, or elaborate evasions. Almost never was information volunteered, no matter how trivial. Their objective was to break off serious discussion with me, and return to the random chatter of weather or trips, or better still, politely to encourage my departure from their hamlet. If I took the tactic of trying to follow their conversation, asking relevant questions on opportunity, they would similarly brush the questions off and change the subject. I would carefully try to avoid direct questions bearing on sensitive topics such as property, production, customary litigation, or supernatural practices. My most innocent questions, however, were supposed to be insidious. My request for a person's name was sometimes taken as an affront and always answered with a noncommittal "Naa..aaa" ("umra…") or, if I was insistent, perhaps a first name would be divulged. I was frequently given an altogether false name, or the name of someone else in the community. I struggled in my genealogies with "Marianu Acarapi" until I was ultimately told (soon before my final departure) that no such person existed, and it dawned on me that Akarapi in Quechua means roughly "really in the shit." Indeed, I repeatedly met people who purported to be him when they realized that I was not sure whom they really were. (Of the highly mobile community of eighty-two families, I remained unsure of my ability to recognize and place most of the females and several of the younger males even late in my research.) [xi]

Although the Q'eros live in almost a dozen hamlets scattered in the valley-heads several kilometers above the central village named Q'ero, and the latter is usually completely deserted, the people nevertheless invariably respond "Q'ero" when asked where they live. This sort of vagueness is customary with all outsiders including itinerant merchants, unless they are personally known. Also in this case, patient and gentle insistence was often an affront, resulting in my deception, or perhaps a grudging admission such as the following: "Where do you live?" "In Q'ero." "Yes, but where,

Qolpa K'uchu? Qocha Moqo? Chuwa Chuwa? or one of the other hamlets in Q'ero?" "Yes, there." "But which one?" "The one over there." "Oh, Qolpa K'uchu?" "Well, I might live there, but don't you already know?" Another time I approached a little boy, about six years old, and asked him his name, giving him candy, and cigarettes for his family: "What's your name?" "Kaa.. aaa." "I'm Esteang—what's your name?" "Kaa..aaa.. Santus." "Santos what?" "Yes, Santus." "What are your father's and mother's names?" "I'm sorry, I can't tell you that." It was another little boy and girl from whom I first gathered the fictitious and ridiculous name of "Marianu Akarapi," their alleged father.

Extracting genealogy was even more harrowing. When it provided convenient evasion, the names of the dead, could not be uttered at all. Most people would brush off my first probes with the claim that they had no family, and were left waxcha ("poor" or "orphaned"). Questions of a more complex nature, phrased to require more than a "yes" or "no," were ignored or treated as incomprehensible. I would often finally be forced to convert them into mere leading questions, at which time the informant would delightedly comprehend my meaning, and casually say "no." This answer usually left me with no recourse but to leave off questioning, at least on that topic. Simple denials are hard to elaborate upon or gently controvert for the sake of further discussion; persistence quickly exasperates the Q'eros. Usually the impatient evasion at which the Q'ero were so expert outlasted my boldness and injured the cheek I needed to begin questioning in the first place. I would often be satisfied to retreat to chatter about the weather and trips, and become sufficiently quiet and polite to assure myself a departure from the family at least more amiable than my arrival.

When such disheartening responses reduced me to silence, or when I was exhausted by travel or preoccupied in the drudgeries necessitated by eating, sleeping, movement around the region, and recording data, I became the object of the Q'eros' wonderful sense of humor. When I was not requiring responses of them their guard was dropped and they became natives sovereign in their own domain, evincing little respect for the outsider. I spent a great deal of time in the valley-head hamlets and so often slept in their houses. They would awake several hours before dawn and while filling the low windowless stone and thatch huts with the smoke of their cooking fires, chatter and laugh endlessly, and poke my sleeping bag. At about dawn, when I had had enough, and was awake and ready to converse, they would either leave for work in their fields or pastures, or go

back to sleep. Other times when they knew I was not ready to ask questions, they would huddle so close around me (with noses pressed to my notebook, hilariously pretending to each other that they were reading) that I would stifle in the sweat and smoke-soaked folds of their several ponchos. The younger men would even sprawl in my lap, showing off their familiarity. Most of their jokes, of course, I could not understand; I would silently pout, supposing that they were at my expense, and they would redouble their efforts to force me to do something else entertaining. An attempt to ask questions of a group of Q'eros usually disintegrated into jokes and banter, during which anything I would say occasioned great mirth and no answers. [xiii]

This burlesque and hilarity, appearing when defensive evasions were not deemed necessary, at least had welcome overtones of friendliness. Rarely was a hostility manifest. Once when Lois and I were crossing a shallow stream at dusk, with our children in our arms and leading the horse, large rocks were thrown down on us from the dark bluff high above. Of course my pursuit ended fruitless in silent moonlight, and I was assured by several sincere Q'eros that it was only the pranks of children, or a kukuchi (ghost). Twice my horse was set free from his tether, and he returned loose to his distant hacienda home, leaving me to walk out the forty miles to the roadhead to recover him. But this was prank rather than malice, at least the first time. Only a few times was I involved in altercations with other men, and these were limited to verbal bluffs and implied threats; my efforts at reserve and tranquility, their own most respected response, seemed to acquit me well and leave me on good terms with them. In my more objective moments, I realized that the expression of such open anger, like the joking and ridicule at my expense, tacitly demonstrated that I was often considered an equal. At least I was not simply subjected to the inscrutable obsequious duplicity tendered the Peruvian mestizo in order to perpetuate his illusion that the indio is a dull and unmanageable "brute."

Despite the frequent frustrations of my efforts, my respect for the Q'ero grew, and I came to feel a great deal of affection for some of them. Loneliness, living intimately with them, and sharing the same difficult environment, made me feel close to them even though many aspects of their way of life continued to evade my understanding. My knowledge of their culture was derived from many moments with many of them in many settings all over their region, many fragments pieced together. Never was I able to develop a stable relationship with a special informant. The difficulty of locating a particular individual led me to depend more on several

families whose guarded trust I won, one of whom I could usually locate within a few days of searching through the scattered hamlets and camps. I was sometimes hurt that my warmth and trust toward the Q'cros was not more often reciprocated as it was among themselves. Only rarely did I feel accepted, even liked: the sharing of coca leaves as among equals; the serene silence of a night vigil in the cold mist of a mountain side; mourning the death of a mutual friend; long hard hours on the journey of a pilgrimage, through the tangled vines of the jungle or climbing toward an icy white peak in the night; carrying a fearful Q'ero boy across a log over the turbulent river; being ritually handed and forced to drink the two wooden q'eros of maize beer, in the crowded, sweaty, flute-piping, foot-thumping darkness of a house. But to the end I remained an interloper in most social contexts of the Q'ero. [xiv]

Notes

1. I have surveyed the ethnographic literature bearing on social organization of highland Peru in an annotated bibliography which [was published in 1970 in *Behavior Science Notes*]. In this bibliography I argue briefly that indigenous (native) cultural components of highland society have generally been neglected in research, which on the other hand has progressed recently in cultural components best characterized as "mestizo." I pursued this perspective, and in a paper read at the 1971 meetings of the American Anthropological Association, suggested the fruitfulness of the plural society model as it has so far been developed primarily with African studies [deletion, p. xiv].
2. A close friendship developed between the DeBarys and ourselves, and the gracious Hacienda Ccapana was often a home for Lois and our boys while I was in Q'ero (and care for my horse when I was not). The DeBary family was multilingual (Eduardo possesses the rare skill of fluency in Quechua and bilingualism in English and Spanish) and had some familiarity with Q'ero as well as a sincere interest in the folkways of the region. Although the laborious management of their progressive hacienda left them little time to directly assist me, their constant preoccupation to support my research effort and guard against emergencies was a great assurance.
3. Unless otherwise noted, glosses will be from the Cuzco dialect of Quechua. Orthography of native terms is in accord with the standard linguistic notation utilized by Donald Sola, a modern linguistic authority on the various dialects of Quechua. Sola has for several years organized courses in elemen-

tary Quechua for Cornell University [I attended his course in 1969], but most of his grammars and texts remain available only in mimeographed form.

4. The Q'eros speak only Quechua, with virtually no ability in Spanish. My first several months of research was without benefit of interpreter or assistant, because I wished to avoid the increased hostility and evasion which would unavoidably result were I to bring with me a bilingual in Quechua and Spanish. Such a misti (mestizo, or Peruvian of mixed culture) is ipso facto a representative of the surrounding dominant society, and would be assumed to be a threat even more clearly than I. I also wished to learn Quechua and insofar as possible carry out my research directly with the Q'eros without hazarding the distortions and ellipses tendered by an assistant who enjoys the questionable advantage of "knowing" the people. Toward the end of my research, when I had won the reserved trust of some of the Q'eros and knew them all, and had sufficient ability in Quechua to detect some distortions of translation, I began to work part of the time with a particularly sensitive and bright Quechua native of a nearby hacienda community. Luychu ("valley deer") could speak Spanish about as poorly as I could, and was beginning to guardedly display other symbols of class mobility. But he was previously known by some of the Q'eros and remained sufficiently native in cultural orientation to win the trust of many of the others [see Fig. 10.1]. Luycho and I worked with one another in both Quechua and Spanish. Of course his fluency in Quechua enabled me to avoid confusions which alone I had to accept and work out. He was also a second pair of eyes and ears attuned to the broader outlines of Q'ero culture; we would discuss these things at hours when we were unable to find informants. Although Luychu was with me for only short periods, my information input was vastly increased at these times. Another person who was of assistance to me in this regard was Edmundo Gongora, an anthropology student at the University of Cuzco who was fluent in Quechua (a rare skill among those fortunate enough to attend the University) as well as avidly interested in native culture and adventurous enough to undertake an expedition to Q'ero. He accompanied me and Luychu in a two-week census and questionnaire program throughout the community.

Acknowledgements (2022)

Like my actual field research, this retrospective or 'armchair' return to Q'ero in Part II has been made possible by my family (the same Lois and our two little boys who were there with me in the 1970s, plus a third son born in New Zealand in 1978). Our actual research in the 1970s was facilitated by Professors Oscar Núñez del Prado and Jorge Flores Ochoa of the University San Abad of Cuzco, Peru, who had worked with Q'ero since 1955 to expropriate the hacienda exploiting them, or with similar pastoral regimes elsewhere in the southern Andes. Their student Edmundo Gongora, joined me for a week to help undertake a census of Q'ero. My fieldwork often gained greater depth when Luychu was able to join me from his work in the Hacienda Ccapana on the other side of the Ayakachi Range (Fig. 8.1); as more *runa* ('ordinary person') than *cholo* or *mestizo* ('western' or colonising people), Luychu was able to gain the trust of the Q'eros, and his ability in Spanish as well as his fluency in Quechua eased the difficulties I had speaking Quechua with the monolingual Q'eros. The de Bary family, immigrant Germans who owned the Hacienda Ccapana, frequently hosted me and my family on my way from Cuzco to Q'ero, and took care of my horse when I was with my family in Cuzco. Among other Andeanist anthropologists and colleagues in Peru who have supported my research in various ways, currently or in the 1970s, are John Cohen, Holly Wissler, Geremia Cometti, Guillermo Salas Carreño, John Ricker, Enrique Mayer-Behrendt, Ralph Bolton, Juan Núñez del Prado, Glynn Custred, and Peter Gose. As will be seen, the recent research of Holly Wissler, Geremia Cometti, and Guillermo Salas in Q'ero or the Q'ero Nation is the

main source of the factual detail enabling my ethnohistorical reconstruction of changes in the community since the 1970s.

In similar scholarly terms, I owe what ability and confidence I have to undertake such an armchair ethnohistory of a surviving community on the other side of the Pacific Ocean to my discovery of how crucial it is to understand something of the history of a colonised people. Although I am relieved that there is some of this insight in my dissertation, cultural anthropology remained naively uninterested in the history of its hosts and their culture until the 1980s, when I myself became more fully awake to it among my colleagues and Māori hosts in New Zealand. Like Marx said, people make their own history, but not just as they please; whether in revolution or reaction, they must start with the circumstances given in their past. My scholarly turning point in this regard is the 1980–90s work of Eric Wolf and other anthropologist converts to ethno-historical research.

Nevertheless, my deepest acknowledgement in this volume is to the patience and indulgence of our Q'ero hosts in the 1970s, whose *animu* ('spirits') have risen up (warmly, not threateningly!) from my old field notes, photos, and genealogies as well as my later reports. *Urpichay, sonqochay* ('my little bird, my heart'). Most of them have now moved on to *hanaq pacha* ('the upper world'), but a few of the toddlers of the 1970s who have survived their difficult lives may still be elders of the present Q'ero community. When their predecessors glance at me out of these old black-and-white photos, even some of their names appear suddenly on the tongue of my failing memory and are confirmed in my genealogical notes. The selection of old photos I have been able to include in this volume speak for themselves.

A Note on Translations and Place-names (2022)

My dissertation included words and phrases in Spanish as well as Quechua that I have continued to use in Part II as well as Part I, but they are generally followed by their English translation in parentheses, sometimes assisted by dictionaries. Spelling of Quechua words and transliteration of Spanish words in Quechua is often inconsistent due to continuing social prejudice and suppression of Quechua as well as their radically different phonemic systems and regional variation. I have tried to use consistently spelled forms in both Parts I and II. In Part II, my few translations from French are similarly assisted by the internet, and in all cases I take full responsibility for any mis-translation.

The situation with place-names in Q'ero (for mountains, valleys, rivers, hamlets, etc.,) is potentially confusing. Most of those used by the Q'eros in the 1970s appear in my detailed maps (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3) but are translated only in endnote 5 of Chap. 2. For the sake of consistency, I have continued to use these same 1970s place-names in Part II even though many appear to have been changed according to Holly Wissler's and Geremia Cometti's reports 30–40 years later on the same community (which itself had come to be called 'Hatun Q'ero' rather than merely 'Q'ero'). Where confusion is likely, I have sometimes noted the different place-name used by Wissler or Cometti. As shown in endnote 4 of Chap. 2, the literal translation of the 1970s place-names is often ludicrous and, as described in the original Preface to Part I (1972) preceding the Introduction above, the Q'eros people were sometimes able to fool me about various things. Nevertheless, my use of these place-names was repeatedly confirmed in ordinary conversation with the Q'eros in 1969–70

and again in 1977. Perhaps it was normal that the Q'eros knew several different names for a given hamlet or other place and, characteristically, preferred to keep this to themselves? Interestingly, this may also be the case in regard to their *apu* and *awki*, the awesome alpine peaks and hills with which they seek to keep in close communication through their shamans.

Contents

About the Author (2022)

Steven Webster I immigrated with my family from the USA to New Zealand in 1972 and taught courses in social anthropology and Māori Studies at the University of Auckland until retiring in 1998. I continue there as an honorary research fellow. My 1972 PhD thesis from the University of Washington, Seattle, was on kinship, ecology, and ethnicity of an indigenous community in the southern Peruvian Andes, but in New Zealand I took up research among Māori in the Urewera mountains and the university. I continued to teach about Latin America until the 1980s by which time my focus had shifted to New Zealand. My teaching subjects developed from kinship, ethos and worldview, ethnicity, history of anthropology, and Māori land history in colonial New Zealand to political-economic critique of ideologies. After retiring in 1998, I taught a few years as a visitor at the University of Washington and the Northwest Indian College in Tacoma, Washington, and at Princeton University in New Jersey, lecturing on 'Pacific Rim' societies including First Nation communities of Washington and British Columbia, Canada, as well as the Peruvian Andes and New Zealand. Back in New Zealand I completed ethnohistorical research for the Waitangi Tribunal 2003–04 on the Urewera District Native Reserve, Crown purchase campaign, and Consolidation Scheme 1894–1926, and I continue ethnohistorical and other research regarding the Māori and indigeneity movements.

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Original Introduction to Part I (1972)

[This has been revised by adding the introductions of some chapters to the original introduction, resulting in a comprehensive preview of Part I of this volume]

This study is concerned with the social organization of a native Andean community. My understanding of the "native" community, as distinct from other major components of south Central Andean social organization, is discussed in Chap. 1. *[deleted two sentences]* Q'ero is located about 100 miles due east of Cuzco on the flanks of the eastern cordillera of the south Central Andes, and in 1969 and 1970 was composed of about 376 persons in 82 families and 52 domestic groups, living in more than a dozen settlements dispersed throughout a mountainous basin several miles in diameter. It is best defined as a community because, although it is not a single localized settlement, it is tightly integrated socially, economically, ritually, and politically. Internally these bonds strengthen still more, but take on the quality of kinship or affinity [related by marriage]; externally they attenuate rapidly and take on the quality of the dominant economy and polity of the area and nation. These same parameters apply similarly to the wider cultural region of Q'ero; however, it is best to perceive this region as composed of several native communities insofar as each is predominantly endogamous [marrying among themselves], as well as economically, ritually, and politically independent of one another. The community of Q'ero appeared to me to be an ideal "social isolate," small and integral enough for eventual comprehension through the method of participant observation, yet geographically large and diverse enough to

magnify the features of its ecological setting in a high mountain environment.

The obvious characteristics of social organizational integrity and spectacular ecosystematic adaptation drew me to Q'ero. My theoretical biases inclined me to favor the former in my research, but the overbearing importance of the natural environment in the Andean setting increasingly forced a broadening of my attentions, and occupies over a third of my analysis in this study *[Part I, Chaps. 2, 3, and 4]*. The ecosystem of Q'ero was omnipresent between the awesome glistening silence of the peaks and glaciers and the misty abyss of the jungle which bracket the upper and lower extremities of the community. My analysis of the social organization of Q'ero must first take careful account of the ecological "niche" of the community [how a component fits into the total ecosystem], in which framework the social system and ecosystem are two sides of the same coin. The ecosystematic point of view facilitates the discussion of the settlement pattern and native economy of the community. It is only after these fundamentals (also routine preoccupations of the Q'eros) have been discussed that closer examination of the social organization can appropriately be undertaken. But furthermore, because neither Q'ero nor any other community is really a "social isolate," an understanding of the native economy and other aspects of social organization must be based on some appreciation of the wider social and cultural context of the community in the surrounding area of the south Central Andes.

The South Central Highlands and the Q'ero Cultural Region: an Ethnic Enclave

Consequently, the first part of the study *[Part I, Chap. 1]* is devoted to a brief consideration of some of the more important external influences bearing on the development and current social organization of the community *[Area Geography and the Precontact Situation; The Colonial Era and Hacienda Dominion; Contemporary Highland Society and the Accommodated Tribal Community]*. The momentous and penetrating effects of the Hispanic colonization regimes, probably even more than that of still earlier precontact empires, left no region of nuclear America unaffected. Moreover, the dense aboriginal population and network of commerce and communication which persists to the present tends to homogenize highland culture in its continuous processes of change. The

cultural region of Q'ero clearly constitutes an ethnic enclave in the south Central Andes, but its internal organization is to some considerable extent a product of interaction with surrounding influences in the past and present. My concern in this first chapter is to assess the nature and extent of these influences insofar as the available evidence indicates. Implicit throughout this discussion is the analytic distinction between a "peasant" and a "tribal" society, a discrimination which is useful only insofar as it clarifies the form of economic, social, and political interaction between social groups. I assume that subordination of these domains to their counterparts in the social organization of the surrounding area reflects peasant social organization, whereas autonomy or parity reflect tribal social organization. On this basis I argue that Q'ero social organization is more tribal than peasant, despite its de jure status as subordinate to a national polity and economy. On the other hand, I try to take careful account of some of the manifold ways in which the social organization of Q'ero has accommodated outside influences. Regarding both native and accommodated aspects of Q'ero political organization my remarks are limited to the last section of Chap. 1, because this is an important topic somewhat less central to my concern with social organization, and a fuller consideration of it would exceed the bounds of this study *[in 1972; but see Part II, Ch.8, and Webster 1980].*

Adaptation to the Local Environment: An Interzonal Ecosystem

[for an introductory orientation, see Figs. 1.1, 1.2, and some 1969–70 photos: Figs. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 9.1, 9.2]

The discussions in this second part *[of Part I, Chaps. 2, 3, and 4]* focus on the local ecosystem of the Q'ero community, viewed as the integral organization of fundamental aspects of the social system and the natural environment: *[Settlement Pattern; The Structure of the Community Niche; Subsistence Strategy]*. My concern in these chapters is to reveal and analyze the socio-economic integration and close adaptation of the community despite its dispersion over a broad basin of several valleys and great altitudinal differentials. The basic aspects of social organization which I approach from this point of view are the settlement pattern, key components of the pastoral, agricultural, and horticultural regimes, and the strategy of subsistence which manages these components. My most abiding