

Book Reviews

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Armas Asín, Fernando. *Una historia del turismo en el Perú. El Estado, los visitantes y los empresarios (1800-2000)*. (2 volumes). Lima: Universidad de San Martín de Porres, 2018. 570 pp.

It is evident that interest in the development of tourism has increased in recent decades in Peru. Government entities and cooperation agencies as well as various actors on the national, regional, and local levels are underscoring the possibilities of tourism as a tool of social development in a global context. At the same time, they are identifying the challenges that need to be overcome in order to assure more efficient management and increased growth in this sector.

This outlook has led to tourism being seen as a sociocultural phenomenon in itself, with its own characteristics and meriting academic study. This increased academic interest, however, has not resulted in more historical research on the topic. Other than some university manuals, and contemporary studies that have yielded specific historical information, few researchers have been interested in studying the actors involved or the political and cultural policy proposals that paved the way for Peru's tourism offer and its institutionalization. In this context, Fernando Armas Asín's book, *Una historia del turismo en el Perú*, is especially relevant. It endeavors to fill this historical vacuum through a study that analyzes the development of the sector from the earliest imaginings of tourism at the beginning of the 19th century to the institutionalization of public policies and the consolidation of tourism as a business sector at the end of the 20th century.

Armas Asín endeavors to link the most important factors in the history of tourism (mass society, the transportation revolution, the growth of the middle classes, and consumption) with the historical processes defined by the particularities of tourism in Peru (from the late colonial Enlightenment, to 19th-century modernization projects, followed by urban growth as well as recent political violence). The author describes the history of tourism in Peru in 12 chapters across two volumes. The first refers to the origins of tourism in the 19th century, understood at the time as a practice of urban elites, and initial efforts to extend it to the emerging middle class in the

early 20th century. The second volume analyzes the development of mass tourism and democratizing endeavors by the state and business interests who wanted to expand the tourism offer to a broader and more diverse sector of the public.

The book starts with a reflection about the origins of tourism that takes into account two factors. The first refers to Enlightenment and Romantic culture, which gave birth to the custom of the aristocratic voyage, the *tour du monde*—a practice that started with trips around Europe and North America but gradually aroused interest in the scenery and populations of South America and the Andes. Here we get the first images and destinations in Peru for the transatlantic traveler: Lima as the colonial pearl of the Pacific, the tour of haciendas and “excavations” in coastal pre-Hispanic cemeteries, the city of Arequipa and its surrounding countryside, and, of course, impressions of the old imperial capital of Cusco. In turn, the second factor concerns the emergence of modern recreation practices in Peruvian society, which slowly started to validate certain relaxation habits and the concept of leisure time, involving trips to the country, ocean swimming, or train trips.

Early in the 20th century, tourism began to develop along two different lines: internal and external. At first, receptive tourism introduced Peru as an outstanding tourist destination as part of the global—or at least transatlantic—tourism offer in which North American and European tourist agencies played a leading role. Also instrumental were the Peruvian government and businessmen, who were keen to meet this external demand through efficient advertising and infrastructure—hotels, transportation, guides—and a diversified offer encompassing various destinations around the country. And, finally, the author reflects on the importance of internal tourism, which was linked to the rise of the urban middle class—with its corresponding sphere of public opinion—and which understood tourism not only as an economic factor but as an effective tool for reaffirming national feeling: “To know Peru is to love it,” as an early slogan of the Touring Club Peruano affirmed in the 1920s. In this sense, more than “attracting foreigners,” tourism was conceived of as a tool to project identity narratives. Although these were initially projected from Lima to the rest of the country, they had their regional correlates; these were especially significant in the southern Peruvian Andes, among public opinion in Cusco and Puno.

The book is centered on the development of the tourist industry and highlights the role of specific actors such as national businessmen (hoteliers, automobile importers, tourist agencies) and government institutions (including the Ministry of Development, the Peruvian Tourism Corporation, and FOPTUR) in the consolidation of tourism in Peru. At the same

time, the author reflects on the dissimilarities between these different actors' visions of the actions necessary to overcome problems in the tourism sector. Among them were interventionists, for whom the development of tourism depended on government actions and who called for investment and promotion policies; and entrepreneurs, who criticized the obstacles created by excessive or inefficient government *controlismo* in the sector. From their point of view, these obstacles—which included the bureaucratization of promotion agencies, costly investment in hotel infrastructure, and forced vacation policies or subsidies for “social tourism”—did not nothing more than discourage private initiative.

The development of the tourism sector often relied on exotic or idealized images of Peruvian traditions and cultural heritage, shaping specific narratives that still greatly influence how the government, the private sector, and civil society formulates the most efficient strategies for presenting Peru's territory and natural and cultural heritage to the eyes of the world. Cultural industries have constructed a broad discursive machinery that produces representations of Peru's society and patrimony. These discourses in turn have had a profound formative influence on the identities of local receiving populations and how these collectives represent themselves to the public and external consumers.

Altogether, this is a book that contributes to an increased understanding and invites us to reflect on a sector that is fundamental for the Peruvian economy and for Peruvian society.

Juan Carlos La Serna
Universidad de Lima
jlaserna@ulima.edu.pe