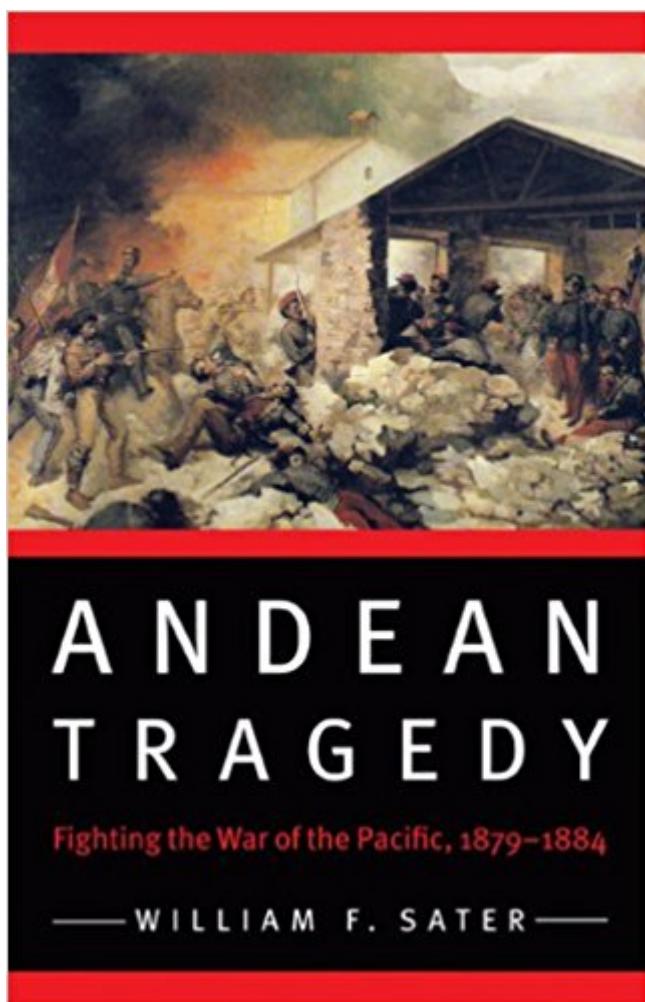


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Andean Tragedy: Fighting The War Of The Pacific, 1879-1884 (Studies In War, Society, And The Military)



Synopsis

The year 1879 marked the beginning of one of the longest, bloodiest conflicts of nineteenth-century Latin America. The War of the Pacific pitted Peru and Bolivia against Chile in a struggle initiated over a festering border dispute. The conflict saw Chile's and Peru's armored warships vying for control of sea lanes and included one of the first examples of the use of naval torpedoes. On land, large armies using the most modern weapons—breech-loading rifles, Gatling guns, and steel-barreled artillery—clashed in battles that left thousands of men dead on the battlefields. Eventually, the warring parties revamped their respective military establishments, creating much needed, civilian-supported supply, transportation, and medical units. Chile ultimately prevailed. Bolivia lost its seacoast along with valuable nitrate and copper deposits to Chile, and Peru was forced to cede mineral rich Tarapaca and the province of Arica to the victor. Employing the primary and secondary sources of the countries involved, William F. Sater offers the definitive analysis of the conflict's naval and military campaigns. *Andean Tragedy* not only places the war in a crucial international context, but also explains why this devastating conflict resulted in a Chilean victory.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A well-researched and serious study that both scholars and casual readers will learn from."—Thomas L. Whigham, *Hispanic American Historical Review* (Thomas L. Whigham, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 2008-08-01)"A fine example of the new vision of battle history

as the author discusses arms, strategies, and tactics, as well as descriptions of encounters and the conduct of soldiers. . . . This is a well-written, well-researched work on a crucial event in the history of the west coast of South America and highly recommended to those interested in this region as well as to military history buffs."•Jerry W. Cooney, The Americas (Jerry W. Cooney The Americas 2008-10-01)"This is an outstanding study of an important later nineteenth-century South American war."•Christon I. Archer, Journal of Military History (Christon I. Archer Journal of Military History)

William F. Sater is an emeritus professor of history at California State University-Long Beach. He is the coauthor of *The Grand Illusion: The Prussianization of The Chilean Army* (Nebraska 1999) and of *A History of Chile, 1802-2002*, second edition.

Very interesting book about a conflict rather unknown, even here in Chile, where I live. The book analyzes the conflict from different points of view, without being engaged with any of the three participants. The consequences of this war are still a matter pending between the countries that participated in the war, specially now, that Bolivia is requesting, through the Haya International Court, that Chile grant them a sovereign exit to the Pacific Ocean.

This is a good effort of history research. The author had to travel and examine hundreds of documents. He mentions facts that were known, and others unknown to me, but the merit is to put everything together. The analysis of the details of this war helps understand the present conditions of the countries involved. But, as any historian, the writer's ideas and own view of the world emerge inevitably. For the most part, the writer tries to be objective, which is a virtue. There is a theme repeated over and over, which is that the protagonists of this war ignored the experience of other wars, such as the US civil war or the Prussian war. He concludes, at many points of his book, that a frontal attack was a strategy of the past. It seems like an analysis of chess or "Stratego" (a board game) which may be understandable since he sees this war with foreign eyes. However, in 1879, these other wars may have not been known, with the exception of a few people who travelled to Europe or the US. Also, he mentions the disdain that Europeans feel about countries in South America, when he points out no military men would feel proud of having participated in these wars. And he doesn't clarify that his own point of view is different, but it is gathered that he writes from an Occidental Europe-US point of view, the standard to measure all people's in the world. He mentions the inferiority complex of these countries whose leaders try to follow Europe. Didn't the US did the

same? Going back to the war, the author is giving us valuable history lessons, and we see the horrors, atrocities, rapes, bombardments of civilians, burning towns, pillage, killing of the wounded, killing of the surrendered soldiers (no prisoners). He does not emphasize either that this war is different from the Civil War or the Prussian war which are part of the past, whereas the Pacific War is still alive in the minds of Peruvians, who suffered unforgettable humiliations and the Bolivians who lost a quality of having its own Pacific coasts and keep asking for the return of its territories.

Absorbing survey of this very lethal war. More a recitation of the war's course than a logistical analysis (which the title sort of suggests). Text quality quite good, few if any typos, a few grammatical constructions suggest literal translation of Spanish idioms but understandable with a bit of thought.

This was a good book. The only drawbacks were serious issues with the various tables and the author was obviously not too familiar with the military. Still a very good book for the money and on a subject not covered too well in English.

Good book on the subject. The author try to keep a neutral and academic view. A few important event are missing, for instance the dead of the Chilean War Minister in the field, Mr Rafael Sotomayor and its importance. He is very candide regarding the diplomatic involvement and wrong doing of the USA diplomats. On some aspects he takes a superior position looking to underdeveloped countries.

Good job with the military analysis, however some very important details we not in the book and the author just abruptly ended with no conclusions at all.

This is the way military history is supposed to be written. There is a complete but brief explanation of the causes of the war followed by detailed analysis of the capabilities of the belligerents. The author then spends most of the book explaining the course of the war on sea and on land. He provides the edited highlights about the diplomacy involved and the way the war was finally brought to a close. There is a simple but effective analysis of the war in the conclusion. He says that Peru and Bolivia went to war again later but not Chile - would have liked a little more information on that. Also, the main drawback of the book as other reviewers have noted is the lack of a regional map though there are several battlefield maps. God bless

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