



Magical Writing In Salasaca: Literacy And Power In Highland Ecuador (Westview Case Studies in Anthropology)

By Peter Wogan

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This engaging case study of Salasaca, a village in highland Ecuador, examines indigenous beliefs about writing, such as Day of the Dead name lists, comparisons with weaving, and a witch who kills people listed in his book of names. *Magical Writing in Salasaca* demonstrates that these beliefs reflect extensive contact with birth certificates, baptism records, and other church and state documents. Wogan's inquiry into the place of literacy in the Salasacas' worldview provides a nuanced look at the power relations between elites and nonelite villagers, at the same time that it imparts an empathetic understanding of alternative ways of viewing ostensibly familiar aspects of the world. *Magical Writing in Salasaca* will appeal to anyone interested in anthropology, literacy, power, or Latin America.

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About the Author

Peter Wogan is assistant professor of anthropology at Willamette University .

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