Chapter 10

Caste in Cuenca

Colonial Identity in the Seventeenth Century Andes

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Introduction

> The discipline [of anthropology] did not spring Athena-like from the head of Zeus; it comes out of the cauldrons of conflict that cooked up much of the toil and trouble of past centuries, and it responds—must respond—to these forces even when it strives for professional distance and dispassionate neutrality. It is precisely because it is both offspring and critic of our condition that it bears a special responsibility to examine the commonplaces of our thought and the fighting words of our speech and to subject them to resolute analysis. (Wolf, 1994: 1–2)

To explore the concept of identity in colonial Ecuador is to examine a multiplicity of ideas and ideologies. As a historical archaeologist trained in North America I bring with me my training in Americanist anthropology and archaeology. As Eric Wolf points out, the anthropologist works within a discipline that was forged in colonialism, and yet at the same time anthropology has been an important critical voice in its examination of the colonial project. Working on the colonial period in the Andes means that I face an extensive existing body of

literature produced by historians of Spanish colonialism. Working in Ecuador also means that I am confronted, and frequently confused, by issues of identity in a nation not my own; a country with dynamic interpretations of its rich prehispanic and colonial past, and with pressing current issues of identity politics in the context of globalization in Latin America.

Modern Ecuador cannot be understood without some comprehension of the Spanish colonialism which affected the region so deeply. Ecuadorian race relations, economics, gender roles, and law were all forged in the colonial encounter, and all relate to the formulation of individual identities in the country today. The challenge for historical archaeologists is to analyze "the commonplaces of our thought and the fighting words of our speech." Walking through a market or entering an old church, there is a great temptation for North Americans to look at Ecuador as a living museum of colonial relations. Any Ecuadorian, whether a taxi driver in New York City, a rose exporter in Quito, or a sweater manufacturer in Otavalo, instead understands that Ecuador is as much a part of the modern global economy as any other country on earth. Spanish colonialism cannot be analyzed without examining how life, both in Ecuador and the North American academy, has created the commonplace terms social scientists from abroad use to analyze the colonial encounter in the Andes.

As Kathleen Deagan (1998) has recently summarized, Spanish colonial archaeological research was traditionally dominated by Anglo-American research goals, and created a body of literature prior to 1992 which assumed the importance of ideas of conquest, acculturation, European technological superiority, and "clear-cut racial distinctions" in the analysis of material culture. Archaeologists of the Spanish colonies trained in the Anglo-American tradition were heavily influenced by George Foster's (1960) *Culture and Conquest*, a book that brought Robert Redfield et al.'s (1935, 1936) formulation of the concept of acculturation to the fore in describing Spanish colonial Mesoamerica. Foster is now accused, quite rightly, of minimizing the role of power relations between people in the colonial encounter, portraying the Spanish as actively introducing concepts and material advances to the people of Mesoamerica, and relegating Native peoples to the role of passively "screening" these offerings to decide whether to accept or reject them (Cusick, 1998; Deagan, 1998).

The period of the late 1980s through the 1990s saw great changes in the way archaeologists looked at Spanish colonial research, with the influences of post-processual archaeology in North America combining with an increasingly post-colonial outlook by historians of Latin America (Deagan, 1998). The worldwide 1992 Quincentenary celebrations, debates, and reformulations of the meaning of Columbus' encounter with the New World brought into focus the changing role of archaeology in exploring the Spanish colonial past. The flood of research, publication, and commemoration surrounding this event coincided with a move toward postprocessual concerns by North American historical archaeologists, and a move

toward postcolonial scholarship by historians in Latin America. In North American historical archaeology James C. Scott's (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* was one of the key books in awakening the interest of many researchers to the issue of how power works in colonial situations. His work brought a vocabulary of "hidden and public transcripts" and "onstage and offstage arenas" that made researchers reconsider the way they dealt with cultural contact in colonial situations. In Caribbean history and anthropology the concept of transculturation, introduced by the Cuban Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s as a more dynamic and complex alternative to the idea of acculturation, has recently gained popularity beyond Cuba. Deagan (1998: 30) points out that transculturation and ethnogenesis, introduced from North American historians, became two of the key thrusts of Spanish colonial archaeology in the 1990s. These streams of thought have come together to create research goals based on ideas of human agency, and the recognition of the vast range of scales and varieties of past cultural experience in the Spanish colonies. Both archaeological research and historical commemorations give voice to ideas of inequality, resistance to colonization, and an exploration of colonial gender roles, all of which come as a refreshing change (Deagan, 1998).

Far from being on the cutting edge of such research, Spanish colonial archaeologists in Ecuador are following a trail laid down by sophisticated studies of the ethnography and history of the country. As recently as 1992 Richard Schaedel (1992: 235) stated that with regard to historical archaeology in the Andes "Little archaeology has been attempted as such, and research so far has emerged from accidental finds or as by-products of restoration work." In the last decade the field of Andean historical archaeology has greatly expanded (DeFrance, 1996; Gasco et al., 1997; Rice, 1996; Schávelzon, 2000; Smith, 1997; Van Buren, 1999). In Ecuador, however, historical archaeology is still in its infancy as a subject of research (Buys, 1997; Gutierrez Usillos and Iglesias Aliaga, 1996; Jamieson, 2000a; Stothert et al., 1997; Tobar, 1995; Ubelaker and Ripley, 1999).

Both anthropologists and historians came to the realization a number of years ago that they had underestimated the extent to which identities, whether ethnic, racial, gendered, sexual, or individual, are socially constructed. This is an exciting proposition for those who study the material remains of everyday colonial life, but also presents serious challenges to our ability to interpret the colonial past.

Identity in Modern Ecuador

Identity in Ecuador is profoundly situational. At the national level, as in other Andean nations, there is a political and social scientific adherence to the celebration of *mestizaje*, the ideal of a mixed-race society where racism does not exist. In practice, however, this ideal is an assimilationist masking technique covering profound racism. It is to the advantage of the Ecuadorian elite to claim

that the proliferation of racial categories in the country means racism does not exist (Wade, 1997; Weismantel, 2001; Whitten, 1996).

Urban people of the middle and upper classes refer to themselves as *gente decente* (decent people), *culto* (cultured), or *vecinos* (citizens, urban neighbors). All of these terms can be seen as glosses on the concept of racial "whiteness," although the explicit term *blanco* is usually reserved only for official census documents (Weismantel, 2001: xxxi). The ideal of a white nation is found in the concept of *blanqueamiento*. In the nineteenth century Latin American elites assumed that *mestizaje* would lead the Andean nations toward becoming lighter-skinned over time (Wade, 1997). *Blanqueamiento*, however, refers not only to an idealized historical trajectory of a nation becoming whiter over time, but also to the possibility of each individual moving up through the social ranks, and thus becoming culturally whiter (Whitten, 1996: 195).

The elite of Ecuador see *mestizaje* as somehow desirable, yet do not refer to themselves as *mestizo* people. Instead the term *mestizo* tends to be reserved for those of the middle class, or more commonly for small shopkeepers in rural contexts. In turn, terms like *Indio* and *Negro* are also often used to insult ostensibly *mestizo* people at times of social conflict. Thus a concept like *mestizaje*, which at first glance gives value to the national role of the many distinctive cultural groups in modern Andean countries, is instead infused with hierarchical power relations.

The *chola* provides one example of the complexity of the terms used daily to identify social groups in the Andes (de la Cadena, 2000; Weismantel, 2001). *Cholas* are urban, working class women, often market vendors, but they can also be domestic servants, washerwomen, etcetera. They are partially defined by their clothing, with large hats and full skirts which are specific to the region of the country they come from. They are also defined by their mode of speech, which is seen as flamboyant and outrageous. Their position is racial and economic, defined as people of mixed-race, a bridge between the rural indigenous producers of food and labor, and the urban, white, consumer (Weismantel, 2001: xxiv–xxv). They are stereotyped as colorful figures, the subject of tourist art and early twentieth century nostalgic literature. Mary Weismantel (2001: xxvii) makes the important point that the role, or stereotype, of the *chola* both racializes them and sexualizes them. Seen as brash and openly sexual, they are often the butt of dirty jokes, providing a focus for discourse on interracial sexuality. Their identity is situational. The women themselves emphasize their role as income earners and good mothers who support their families in challenging circumstances. To municipal officials they are a regulatory challenge, key figures in an informal economy of market stalls and small-scale trade. To many Ecuadorian men *cholas* are symbols of brash interracial sexuality; figures of derision.

Even with this single example we see the challenge faced by the historical archaeologist. The identity of the *chola* in modern Ecuador is not easily defined without falling into stereotypes. It is also problematic projecting modern roles into

the colonial past, although the modern market woman, with her stall of knockoff North American team logo clothing or Chinese enamelware pots and pans, in some sense resonates with the role of market women in the colonial past (Barragán, 1997; Minchom, 1989; Larson and Harris, 1995). The challenge is to place issues of identity in Ecuador into their historical context before we can turn to the material culture of the historical archaeologist.

Identity in Latin American Colonial History

The concept of *casta* (caste) is highly contested in the study of Latin American history. Caste labels in the Spanish colonial world categorized people using a complex mixture of legal status, ethnicity, racial (or physical) categorization, and economic roles. Traditionally historians have held the idea that the *Régimen de Castas* was a rigidly defined system of ethnic and class pigeonholing developed during the Spanish conquest of the Americas, and maintained through both legal and social constraints. Historians' view of the concept of Latin American caste has changed as researchers discover that people could rework their identities within the colonial system, whether through marriage, legal challenges, or simply through their cultural practices and the material culture they used. The caste system thus crossed and commingled the categories of race, ethnicity, and class (Schwartz, 1995).

The concept of race is itself problematic. From the 1950s onward it became increasingly clear to social scientists that races were perceived categories, subject to redefinition in different situations. It was at this time that historians and anthropologists began to explore the contradictions in the way race was defined in North and Latin America (Harris, 1964; Livingstone, 1962; Mörner, 1967). The introduction to an English-language audience of the work of Latin American intellectuals such as the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado (1962) and the historian Gilberto Freyre (1946) profoundly changed the view of North American social scientists on race in Latin America. Amado, Freyre, and others suggested that the demographics of Latin America, where the majority were descended from Africans and indigenous peoples, had created a "racial democracy" reinforced by sexual miscegenation. This model gained acceptance among colonial historians with the 1971 publication of Carl Degler's Pulitzer-Prize winning *Neither Black nor White*, which compared the history of the United States to that of Brazil, and concluded that massive miscegenation in Brazil had diluted racial hostilities there. By the 1980s Latin Americanists had become adept at ignoring race, recognizing its lack of biological validity, and replacing the analysis of race with discussion of ethnicity and class relations. In the 1990s historians once again began to discuss race, and debates began to turn on the relationship between race, ethnicity, and class in the colonial caste system. One interesting conclusion of this work was that

racial ideology in the Spanish colonies, expressed through the concept of *limpieza de sangre,* or "purity of blood," developed *because of* the colonial encounter in the New World, rather than being an existing Spanish ideology imported with the first conquistadors (Schwartz, 1995: 191–192).

Gender and sexuality are of course implicated in any discussion of race. Traditionally the history of early Spanish colonialism has been glorified as a form of male sexual domination, emphasizing the idea that *mestizaje* was the result of Spanish male sexual conquest of indigenous women (Mörner, 1967; cf. Powers, 2002). This is, of course, a stereotype, or allegory, of the conquest itself. There is truth to the idea, in the sense that the lack of immigration of women from Spain in the first decades of colonization resulted in the marriage of Spanish men to Indigenous and African women in the New World. By the 1570s 20 to 40% of the genetic inheritance of New World *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New World) was very likely from their Indigenous and African mothers (Kuznesof, 1995: 155).

Recent research on kinship, law, and families in the colonial Andes is, however, changing our understanding of the ties between gender, sexuality, and caste. The malleability of the caste system is shown in sixteenth century Arequipa, Peru, where upper-class Spanish men preferred to marry Spanish women, yet when faced with the low numbers of Spanish female immigrants, often had *mestizo* children by Native Andean women. The *mestiza* daughters of these unions became sought-after spouses for Spanish merchants and professionals, who valued their father's family ties (Davies, 1984).

For Native Andeans the challenge was both economic and legal. At the same time that they were becoming Indians, Native Andeans were also being classified through labor. Initial Spanish administrative organization absorbed the Inka system, and twisted it into something with echoes of feudal Spain. The *mit'a* system under the Inka had required labor turns of all people in order to accomplish the goals of the state. With the Spanish conquest the colonial administration simply translated this into a colonial system of *mitayos*, laborers required in most cases to undertake agricultural or mining labor. Only those of Native descent were required to take turns as *mitayos*. This and other specialized taxation systems encouraged Native Andean peoples to circumvent such onerous tax and tribute burdens through migration or other means of changing their identity (Powers, 1995a).

In the Audiencia of Quito colonial rural marriage records show that illegitimate children born of Spanish fathers and indigenous mothers were treated differently based on their gender. Sons were frequently brought into the urban world of their father in order to avoid tributary status, while daughters almost always remained with their mothers, and spent their lives in rural indigenous communities (Powers, 1995b). In the seventeenth century, with considerable political and economic power in the colonies held by Native Andean *caciques,* women's marriage choices were not always toward choosing "whiter" partners to move up

the social ladder, but instead took in complex issues of class and power in their choice of marriage partner (Powers, 1998).

Marriage and the birth of children were times in which caste designations could be altered, and yet it is now clear that individuals in the Spanish colonies also changed their caste designations simply by reworking their own identities. In eighteenth century Quito many who were culturally Indian chose to emphasize their more *mestizo* cultural traits in order to avoid tribute, often using clothing and hairstyle as key indicators of their *mestizo* status (Minchom, 1994: 153–200).

Historians are agreed that crossing caste boundaries was a much more fluid, and common, practice then had been assumed by an earlier generation of researchers. Recent debate has turned to whether to privilege gender, class, or race as the mode of discussing identity in the colonial Andes (Kuznesof, 1995; Schwartz, 1995). It is reasonable to conclude, along with Karen Powers (2002: 24), that "there is no contest: gender, race and class cannot be disengaged, one from the other. No single category has ever stood alone in Latin America's colonial history; they are part of the same cloth."

Colonial Cuenca

The long history of highland Ecuador is evident in its toponyms, giving a sense of place to events in the pre-Inkaic, Inka, and colonial past. The focus of my research is the city of Cuenca (Figure 1), which has changed its name as power shifted. Prior to being subsumed into the Inka Empire it was called Guapdondelic in the language of the local Cañari people. Under the Inka Empire this regional centre was given the Quechua-language name of Tomebamba (or Tumipampa). The name "Santa Ana de los Cuatro Rios de Cuenca" was given to the place twenty years after the Spanish conquest, in 1557, with the official Spanish founding of a town on the site.

In the years immediately following the Spanish conquest a small minority of Spaniards governed through the use of an intact Inka middle-level administration, with many of the administrators espousing ethnic ties to the Inka capital of Cusco. This system was used to govern the wide variety of culturally non-Inka peoples that made up the Audiencia of Quito. There were a variety of extant local languages still being spoken at the time of the Spanish conquest. Rather than the immediate imposition of Spanish as the language of all peoples in the Audiencia, ethnohistorians have demonstrated that for the first thirty years of Spanish rule the Spanish expanded the use of Quechua, the imperial Inka language, throughout the region. Quechua replaced local languages as the universal "Native" tongue to a greater extent than it had under direct Inka rule. Using the names of local people listed on a 1559 tributary census of rural regions surrounding Quito, Frank Salomon and Sue Grosboll (1986) convincingly demonstrated the increasing adoption of Inka

Figure 1. The Spanish colonial Audiencia of Quito, today the nation of Ecuador.

names by local Indigenous people in these early years *after* the Spanish conquest, suggesting this was the period when local languages and naming conventions lost importance. They conclude that under the Inka the privilege of individuals to carry Inka names was reserved for those from the core of the empire, and that it was with early Spanish colonial rule that local peoples of middle or low rank gained the freedom to choose to take on such names for themselves. They took on Inka names, and the Quechua language, in an attempt to gain power within the new colonial system. Thus, in this key sixteenth century transition, local peoples excluded from acquiring Spanish identities saw instead a new opportunity to take on Inka identities, and used these on a local scale to alter power relations. At the same time this move towards Quechua language and naming was a way in which colonizers could lump all local people in the region under one ethnicity, a significant step in the colonial imposition of an undifferentiated Indian identity.

Colonial ideology attempted to make Indians geographically separate from, yet intimately tied to, the colonial cities. There were many colonial instruments which maintained these ties, perhaps the most fascinating being the *visita*. These inspection tours consisted of a Crown representative with an entourage of lawyers, scribes, and retainers, traveling through rural landscapes recording the names of tributary subjects, and how many laborers each area could provide. In examining a 1623 *visita* outside the city of Quito Armando Guevara-Gil and Frank Salomon (1994) point out that the *visita* reveals the colonial contradiction between ostensive Crown control of all the subjects of the empire, and the need to "visit" Native Andean peoples in their home territories in order to record their existence. The *visita* was thus both an act of recording the state of the empire in written form, and at the same time creating that empire through ritual visits. More importantly for our interest in identity, the *visita* was an administrative ritual which sent emissaries to people with distinctive local identities (such as the Collaguazo people who underwent the 1623 *visita*), and through the act of listing their names, converted them into *indios*, indigenous people categorized by their ability and obligation to provide tributary labor within the colony.

The need for laborers in Spanish colonial urban centers such as Cuenca meant that Native Andeans were forced to come from surrounding villages to work in the city, despite an early colonial ideology advocating the maintenance of Native Andeans as a separate "republic" restricted to their rural villages. City council records of the 1580s outline the transfer of rural Native peoples to the city to learn trades and the tasks of artisans (Poloni, 1997: 417). These groups settled, or were forced to live, in peripheral neighborhoods of the city, creating new urban identities in the colonial system. The French historian Jacques Poloni's (1997) research on Cuenca's urban development indicates that from its foundation in 1557 up to the 1580s a series of peripheral neighborhoods were created around Cuenca based on this urbanization of local people. People identified their properties in notarial documents by neighborhood, and in some cases, such as *Molleturos* and *Pomallactas*, the neighborhoods acquired the name of the rural region the majority of the inhabitants had presumably come from. In others, such as *Ollerías* (potters' neighborhood) and *Carpinterías* (carpenters' neighborhood), the identity of a neighborhood came through the type of artisans concentrated there (Poloni, 1997: 421–423). This situation changed in the final decade of the sixteenth century, with the founding of two official parishes, San Blas and San Sebastián, on the edges of Cuenca (Figure 2). These two parishes were intended to concentrate the various categories of Native Andean peoples in the city into two church parishes. The people the parishes were intended for were listed as *yanaconas* (an Inka term referring to individuals removed from their home community to serve the state), *forasteros* (people who had moved away from their home communities and thus avoided local taxation there), and *indios de servicio* (indigenous servants) (Poloni, 1997: 423). We can see that the intent in founding these parishes was to concentrate

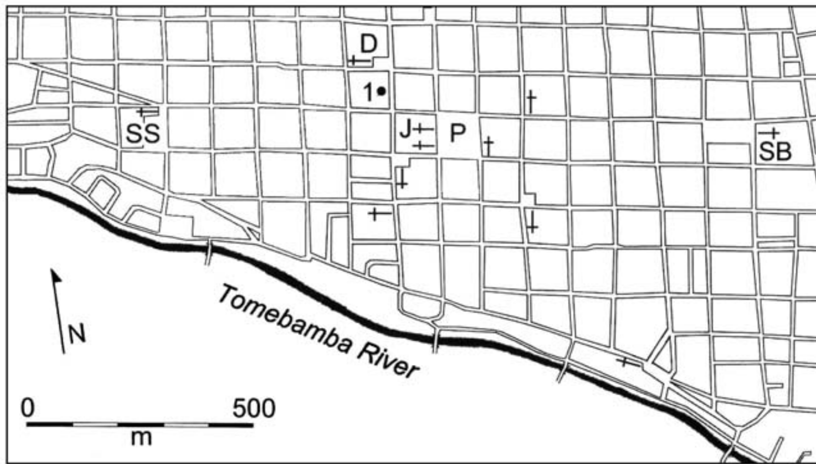

Figure 2. The historic core of the city of Cuenca. SS: San Sebastián parish church and plaza. D: Dominican monastery. J: Jesuit church and college. P: the central plaza. SB: San Blas parish church and plaza. 1: The house where Doña Ambaludi lived.

urban Native peoples physically in the city. This was a transition from Inka and early colonial labor and ethnic identities into the creation of a distinct identity for urban indigenous peasants, combining aspects of ethnicity and labor in the colonial city.

For Poloni (1997: 424) these peripheral parishes, each with their central plaza and church mirroring the plaza and church at the city core, were the physical manifestation of the transition to the "two republics" of the late colonial Andes, a term referring to the "republic of Indians" and that of Spanish people. This was a colonial dualism that greatly simplified the complexities of colonial identities in the Audiencia of Quito, a precursor of the racial identities of the 19th century.

By the late eighteenth century Bourbon administrative reforms greatly changed many aspects of urban life in the Andes. In Cuenca this period was marked by the first full census of the city, administered in 1778 by Antonio de Vallejo. A census is an instrument of colonial rule, standardizing the identities of colonizers and colonized, allowing the gaze of the authorities to focus with greater clarity on urban neighborhoods, and forcing those counted to choose, or be involuntarily assigned, a single name for their identity in an ethnic or racial sense. As Clara Rodriquez (2000) has shown in her work on the treatment of Latinos in the modern US census, the terms used to define people provide a window on both the make-up of the population, and on how that population was controlled through the assignation of ethnic or racial terms. *Visitas*, as tributary censuses, had been

conducted by colonial administrators since the sixteenth century, but these were partial and irregular events mainly focused on rural villages with the intention of assigning tributary labor and tax obligations.

By the late eighteenth century in the Andes the role of census-taking had changed. Bourbon administrators were concerned with many new aspects of enlightened rule, and in the eighteenth century an urban census was seen as a way of gaining information useful to a variety of colonial enterprises. Vallejo's 1778 census of Cuenca asserted that 61% of the city population fell within the combined category of *español/mestizo* (Spanish/Mestizo), 36% were *indio* (Indigenous), and 3% *negro* (Black) (Poloni, 1997: 433–439). The combination of *español* and *mestizo* in one column of numbers on the census administrators' summary sheets is fascinating, indicating an intention to separate these two groups, and yet also a concern with lumping them together. Several factors probably influenced this way of presenting the data. A concern with maintaining the division of the "two republics" required summary statistics that indicated how much of the city's population was Indigenous, and how much was that of the *other* republic, made up of both those of pure Spanish bloodlines and those of mixed *mestizo* status. Naming both groups despite merging their numbers shows finesse in statistical manipulation, as the endless argument of what constituted an *español* versus a *mestizo* could be avoided, while still implying that the distinction existed. It is very likely the case that the differentiation of these two racial groups was a harder line in a large urban Andean capital like Quito or Lima in the late eighteenth century. In smaller Andean cities like Cuenca the lack of a large population of those who could socially claim pure Spanish heritage meant strategic alliances with those who were identified as *mestizo* were essential to the maintenance of urban order.

Vallejo's census was a detailed instrument, but unfortunately the house-by-house census tables have only survived for one parish of the city; all others are apparently lost. The surviving records are for San Sebastián, the peripheral parish to the west of the city core. The tables give counts by ethnicity/race for each person living in each house. These data are an alarming cautionary tale for those who picture the Andean colonial city as a ghettoized landscape of ethnic and racial separation. The people of San Sebastián were 28% *español*, 46% *mestizo*, 23% *indio*, and 3% *negro*. More importantly, when examined by household, 49% of all *households* reported people of more than one caste category within their walls, with only 46% reporting all members as one caste. These numbers translate into 69% of the population of the parish living in multi-ethnic dwellings, and only 31% living in houses with only members of their own racial or ethnic attribution (Poloni, 1997: 441–443). Despite the utmost desire of colonial administrators (and naïve modern archaeologists) to classify households by ethnic group, Vallejo's detailed data show that even in the gross classificatory system of the eighteenth century administration most households were made up of individuals with differing identities. This creates challenges for an urban archaeology of the colonial Andes.

Material Culture and Household Inventories

Domestic material culture is an important arena for the expression of identity. The furnishings, tablewares, clothing, tools, and all other items used in colonial Cuenca houses helped to both project the identity of those who owned or used these items, and helped to create that identity through reinforcing or challenging particular messages about life in a given house (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984). This was a dynamic process, which could change daily within the life of a given individual as they chose to purchase, display, hide, discard, or discontinue using a particular object, for any number of complex reasons. The colonial caste system, and all that it implied about economic, racial, and gendered relations in daily life, was intimately tied to the material culture that people used to project and/or construct an image of themselves to those around them.

Archaeologists of the Spanish colonies are currently rethinking the ways they use material culture to come to conclusions about the identities of those they study (Cusick, 2000; Deagan, 1998; Silliman, 2001; Voss, 2000). In Cuenca I use two sources of data to build "cables of evidence" (Wylie, 1989) about the use of material culture in colonial households: notarial inventories and backyard excavations. These two sources provide independent, and very different, visions of the material culture of a household, each with their own strengths and limitations.

In Cuenca the notarial archive, known as the *Archivo Nacional de Historia/ Cuenca*, provides an invaluable source of documentary material on urban households. Historians, and particularly those who study the material aspects of Native Andean colonial life, have been exploiting notarial records for a number of years (Kellog and Restall, 1998). The notarial archives provide a rich data set on the ways that colonial people in Cuenca expressed their identity through household goods. This is particularly true when a will or other notarial document required an inventory of personal belongings. Two examples of such inventories can serve to show the complexities of interpreting identity from the notarial record.

One of the caste groups that continuously crossed the line between the two republics was the *caciques*. These were the local Native Andean lords who had served under Inka rule, and in some cases were able to maintain power into the colonial period. Juan Muydumbay provides one example of such a person. In the mid-seventeenth century he was *cacique* of the area around Taday, a village 45 km northeast of Cuenca, in the Paute River Valley. The role of the *cacique* as cultural go-between was a difficult one, defending his community from widening colonial powers, while at the same time ensuring that tributes were paid by community members. In 1660 Juan Muydumbay appeared in the historical record as complainant in a lawsuit alleging that the local priest in Taday was illegally forcing local people to provide tribute labor (Poloni, 2000: 217). By 1673 Luis Muydumbay had taken over as *cacique* of Taday, defending local community lands

in court, presumably after Juan's death (Poloni, 2000: 264). I presume Luis was an immediate relative, perhaps a son or brother.

At the time of his death Juan Muydumbay left a written record of his personal property in the form of a notarial inventory. Interestingly he listed no residence in the village of Taday, but instead he had a house in the regional centre of Azogues, halfway between Taday and Cuenca, and a second house in the San Blas parish of Cuenca. Muydumbay's identity must have shifted each time he moved from rural village to town to city, interacting with a wide variety of people in his role as *cacique*. Yet his personal belongings were extremely modest, reflecting either genuine poverty or a lack of personal wealth because of the communal nature of his family possessions.

His house in Azogues was thatched, consisting of three rooms, each in a separate building, probably around a small courtyard. The inventory of this house lists an altar with eight paper prints (presumably of religious themes) and a large gilded cross. There were two tables, two small chairs, and a pair of new leather travel pouches. The bed consisted of a mattress, two wool sheets, a heavy blanket, and a bedspread, all described as "old." This is the sum total of the household items listed in his Azogues house. The Cuenca house was also thatched, in contrast to the many tile-roofed houses of the city's elite at the time. It consisted of a single building divided into only two rooms. There was a single door and one window. Juan Muydumbay's property was immediately adjacent to Luis Muydumbay's house in San Blas. Juan's Cuenca house contained an altar "without a seat or backrest," with a small wooden cross and two paper prints. These are all of the domestic furnishings listed in Juan's possession (ANH/C C116.629a). In both houses the lack of material goods is conspicuous, as if the altar and basic decorations for it were the only important goods he owned. It is always difficult to determine the goods that may have been omitted from an inventory, whether out of an intent to deceive or simply because most of the goods in a house belonged to another family member. In this case however both houses appear to have been very simple affairs.

Our second notarial inventory comes from Doña Angela de Ambaludi, an elite widow. Her caste is not explicitly identified in her will, although her marriage to a military Captain and residence near the main plaza of the city, as well as the wealth she displayed, suggests she was a *vecina*, or "citizen" of the city. The role of widows was particularly important in the maintenance of family wealth in the colonial Andes. The laws of partible inheritance meant that widows frequently inherited a large portion of a family estate, often in the form of urban houses with furnishings (Jamieson, 2000b). Their identities are thus, in some sense, wrapped up in their female gender and family relationships. Wealth could come from deceased husbands or as an inheritance from their parents. The key factor was that widowhood was one of the few instances in Spanish colonial law when a woman controlled her own wealth. We can look at the material expression of a widow's wealth through a 1685 inventory taken at the time of Angela de Ambaludi's death.

Angela had inherited her urban house from her deceased husband, Captain Joseph Garcia de Medina, sometime between 1665 and 1682 [ANH/C L524 f62v [1682]). He had owned the house, located two blocks west of Cuenca's main plaza, from at least the early 1650s onward. The property was in the heart of the most elite neighborhood in Cuenca, with the Dominican monastery directly to the north and the Jesuit College to the southeast (ANH/CL513 f547r [1652]; L514 f362r [1656]; C116.404a f1v [1664]).

The house itself was described in 1685 as having four rooms with tile roofs surrounding a courtyard, and four *tiendas* or shops facing onto the street. These were usually rented out by the homeowner to small shopkeepers who may have lived in the back of their shop, or in a poorer neighborhood of the city (ANH/C C79.671 f7v [1685]). A 1685 inventory (Table 1) gives a list of the contents of the house. She also had two rural properties that included wheat and corn fields, 227 head of cattle, 208 sheep, and 24 horses. These properties included the services of four Native Andean *mitayo* tribute laborers (ANH/C C79.671 ff15r-15v [1685]).

Table 1. Inventory of the household goods of Angela de Ambaludi, 1685 (ANH/C C79.671 f9v):

8 chairs, 1 bench, and 1 buffet table
1 large wooden *estrado* (low bench covered with carpet or skins, for sitting on)
27 paintings of various religious themes
12 still-life paintings
1 inlaid walnut writing desk with 16 drawers
3 statues of the infant Jesus
1 walnut writing desk with 4 drawers
1 silver inkwell and sand shaker
1 bronze seal
silver items: 1 large plate, 6 small plates, 1 jar with handle, 3 candlesticks, 2 spoons, 1 small goblet, 1 basin
2 mattresses of local striped cloth
1 heavy blanket from Cajamarca
1 blue and white bedspread
1 bed canopy and *delantera* (front piece) of blue and white cotton
4 sheets of flowered Rouen cotton
4 shirts of high-quality Rouen cotton
2 slips/petticoats of flowered Rouen cotton
1 pillow of high-quality Rouen cotton with yellow taffeta trim
1 old suit of clothes of double black taffeta, skirt and jacket
1 cloak
1 skirt of green *picote* [shiny silk?] and another indigo colored, with a *manera* (pocket/pouch) of local purple plain-weave wool
12 small bags of aniline dye
1 medium-sized old desk with 9 drawers, upholstered in leather
1 box containing a small print of a crucifix, and glass cover
1 set of scales

As with Juan Muydumbay, Angela de Ambaludi's household furnishings emphasized her religious devotion. Her house contained 27 religious paintings in four rooms. Her collection of silver tablewares stands out, inventoried largely because of its monetary value, but it must also have been a centerpiece of her domestic image. Writing implements and three writing desks, each with multiple drawers, show the importance of the written word in elite Andean culture in the seventeenth century, and also appear to have been one of the main forms of storage in the house. Finally, her canopied bed was quite elaborate, as was common in elite households of this time and place.

Muydumbay and Ambaludi were both influential members of seventeenth century Cuenca society, and yet their material possessions are strikingly different. The focus of Muydumbay's two domestic spaces appears to have been the altars, while no such altar is listed in Ambaludi's residence. Instead, Ambaludi displayed a large collection of paintings of religious figures, demonstrating her religious devotion in a slightly different, and probably considerably more expensive, way. For Muydumbay the expression of religious devotion was through the prominent display of an altar in each of his houses, perhaps emphasizing his commitment to active household worship in his role as a Native community leader. Ambaludi, an elderly widow from the urban elite, would have focused her worship and social contacts through church attendance.

Ambaludi's household contained the chairs and silver necessary for formal dining, something Muydumbay either could not afford, or had no need for. In the end, it was probably in their clothing that Muydumbay and Ambaludi expressed the most obvious material correlates of their identity. Ambaludi's clothing and bedclothes were largely of European cloth, and although they did not approach the ostentation of some seventeenth century Cuenca inventories, it would have been clear to her contemporaries that Ambaludi was concerned to present an appearance of the "European" in her dress. Muydumbay is more enigmatic, in that no clothing is listed in his inventory, perhaps because it was not valuable. We will never know what his personal dress and official items of office as a *cacique* may have entailed, although other more elaborate wills of seventeenth century *caciques* in the northern Andes show a fascinating and dynamic mix of "European" and "Native" symbols of authority in their clothing and regalia (Caillavet, 1982; Rappaport, 1990; Salomon, 1988).

The questions that arise about the Ambaludi and Muydumbay inventories bring forward some of the strengths and limitations of this data as a source for examining their expression of identity through material culture. The exercise of inventorying belongings at the time of a person's death means that the items we see are limited to those they owned personally. A household contains items owned by all of its occupants, and thus the lists we see above ignore the items owned by spouses, children, servants, slaves, or a host of others who may have contributed to the material culture of a given household at a given moment. Chronology is also

an important factor. We are seeing the items owned by this individual at the time of the inventory. It is quite likely that they were elderly, and thus we see a snapshot of their possessions at a particular stage of their life, and a particular stage of their household's life cycle (Goody, 1958). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the inventory was intended as an instrument for verifying items to be inherited. This means that the people conducting the inventory tended to ignore items they felt did not have enough monetary value to be of any legal interest. Those conducting the inventory could also have been under pressure to falsify or ignore certain items because of the economics and politics of family inheritance. In reviewing a large number of inventories from colonial Cuenca the level of detail runs the gamut from inventories that appear to list even the smallest items, to those that only cover the major furniture and "valuables." We can turn to archaeology to solve some, but certainly far from all, of these limitations.

Material Culture and Backyard Archaeology

One of the major tenets of urban archaeology in the former Spanish colonies was first set out in Charles Fairbanks' strategy of "backyard archaeology," a program he began at St. Augustine, Florida, and which was carried on by Kathleen Deagan (Deagan, 1983; Fairbanks, 1975). Each household in the Spanish colonial urban environment had rear yards where much of the domestic work occurred, and where the household discarded its refuse. This assumption allows the archaeologist of the Spanish colonial city to tie the material remains found in a rear yard to the people who lived in that house. My work in undertaking urban excavations in Cuenca has been based on this assumption, and has involved several field seasons of excavation of urban contexts in the downtown core of the city (Jamieson, 2000a, b).

Excavations in the backyards of Cuenca reveal a colonial archaeological record dominated by ceramics and faunal material. These provide us with data that differ from the material culture of inventories in a number of important ways. There is almost no overlap between the material recovered archaeologically and that listed in the documents, largely because these items carried such low cultural or monetary value in the eyes of those conducting the inventory. Colonial Cuenca inventories contain occasional references to single porcelain pieces, but in general the ceramics of a house are not included in inventories.

Our control of colonial archaeological chronology is based on the appearance and disappearance of historic materials of known dates. Contexts can generally be classified into Early Colonial (AD 1550–1650) or Late Colonial (AD 1650–1780), with periods after AD 1780 more tightly chronologically defined because of the introduction of a number of well-dated imported items. It is generally not possible to tie an archaeological context to a single generation of household occupation. Perhaps most importantly, the material recovered archaeologically cannot be tied

to a single individual. It comes from the household as a whole, and thus represents the range of items used by all of the occupants. This is an important point when considering the implications of comparing written inventories to archaeological collections. The archaeological material comes from a range of time in the domestic cycle, and presumably from all members of the household. This is very different from a document that separates out the possessions of one person, with an individual identity, at one point in their life.

The ceramics are for the most part plain or slipped wares, often with a simple red slip, produced in rural villages surrounding the city. In a typical late sixteenth century colonial context (Jamieson, 2000: 152) these made up 70% of the ceramic vessel count. The use of these ceramics in all Cuenca houses, from the most wealthy to the poorest, indicates that they were cheap to purchase, and were used universally for cooking by people of all castes. Consumption of these vessels in the urban market probably followed various routes. Indigenous or *mestizo* people with strong ties to rural communities where such ceramics were produced may have bartered or exchanged for them, or been given them as gifts. In their urban houses these people would have thus seen these vessels as part of their identity in the sense of reflecting their rural "roots," or ties to particular rural ethnicities. In elite houses of the urban core these slipped vessels would have represented very different issues of identity. They would have been used daily in food preparation by Native Andean and *mestizo* servants, and enslaved Africans whose personal belongings are rarely recorded in notarial documents. The fact that these vessels are so common in elite households suggests that they would also have been used by all members of the household in situations where the signaling of high social status was not important, for myriad everyday tasks.

The use of imported majolicas from Panama (Jamieson, 2001; Rovira, 2001), is an entirely different matter. In the same sixteenth century elite context discussed above (Jamieson, 2000: 152) majolicas from Panama made up 15% of the assemblage. These are all in the form of open serving and tablewares (serving bowls and individual *plato hondo*, or deep plate, forms). These are more commonly seen archaeologically in the elite houses, and we can picture them complementing the silver items on Doña Angela de Ambaludi's table. New World colonial majolicas, such as those from Panama, combined traditional Iberian design elements with attempts to imitate aspects of Chinese porcelains, in an ongoing imperial fusion of elite ceramic tastes (Deagan, 1987; Lister and Lister, 1987). Such items would have been more expensive than locally made ceramics, and do not appear in any frequency in less wealthy parts of the city, yet they were not expensive enough to merit mention in notarial inventories of household goods. As such they are one of the indicators of status available to us in the archaeological record, with a complex relationship to identity. They were in general use among elite Cuenca *vecinos*, but it probably would not have been unusual to see them on the table of a *cacique* such as Juan Muydumbay. High status porcelains from China (Kuwayama, 2000)

are another important ceramic category. These are extremely rare in Cuenca, with only occasional sherds appearing in colonial contexts. It would seem from occasional mentions in inventories that these were usually unique decorative objects, rather than sets of dining or teawares. It would seem that in the most elite houses porcelains served as strong indicators of elite identity through their use as accent pieces, but never formed the bulk of a dining service on Cuenca tables.

Faunal remains provide similar ambiguities as do ceramics. Analysis of this material is ongoing, but it would seem that cattle and sheep dominate colonial archaeological contexts throughout Cuenca, as they do in other Andean colonial situations (DeFrance, 1996; Gutiérrez Usillos and Iglesias Aliaga, 1996). The climate of the Andes was ideal for the herbivores favored by the Spanish colonizers, and colonial food production in the highland Andes appears to have been much closer to the Iberian ideal than was possible in the Spanish colonies of the tropics. Some guinea pig remains attest to more Native Andean dining habits among people who also may not have been able to afford to eat beef or mutton on a daily basis. Wild deer also made up part of the diet, and although an important food source in the prehispanic Andes, in colonial contexts it seems to represent colonial elite control of hunting grounds. Looking at identity through food remains is very different from household furnishings such as ceramics. These are the remains of an accumulation of single meals, each meal a unique event that could be performed for visitors, or be consumed by a single individual alone. Cuisine is a powerful indicator of identity, and yet it is also one of the most malleable, consumed at one sitting, with the possibility of completely different foods being served depending on the occasion.

Backyard archaeology in Cuenca thus provides us with a window on identity that is geared towards the household, and towards the longer term, in comparison to the personal and instantaneous nature of a notarial inventory. Both are useful for examining issues like caste or gender, and the use of both together provides us with a better perspective than either could provide on their own.

Conclusions

Historians of the colonial period in the Andes have convincingly demonstrated that people could, within certain limits, shift their identity. This could be done through court cases involving heredity, in which the legitimacy of children or the caste of parents could be reinforced or negated. It could be done through personal and sexual relations, in terms of shifting family allegiances and the use of personal contacts to change one's position in the colonial city. Very commonly it was done through physical movement, particularly in migration between urban and rural zones, or migration from one region to another. Finally, and most importantly for the historical archaeologist, identity could be changed simply by a change

of clothing or hairstyle, speech or attitudes. This is what provides the greatest challenge to the analysis of colonial domestic material culture.

The archaeological analysis of identity is made more problematic because caste and gender are individual attributes, and yet the archaeologist has difficulty gaining data that is fine-grained enough to speak to individual concerns. In Cuenca and other Spanish colonial cities it is possible to undertake household archaeology, separating out refuse deposited by each house in their rear yards. As the eighteenth century census of the San Sebastián parish of Cuenca points out, the majority of houses by this time period were multiethnic or multiracial, housing members of different castes within their walls, whether as parents, marriage partners, offspring, servants, or renters. Most household objects would have been used by more than one person in the house, and many would have been passed on through inheritance. The archaeologist cannot "see" these things in the archaeological record, but one of the strengths of historical archaeology is the combination of documentary and archaeological evidence to improve our understanding of both.

In her recent overview of identity issues in Spanish colonial archaeology Kathleen Deagan (1998: 33) concludes that "Archaeological evidence does not always support clear-cut material distinctions between racial or ethnic groups . . . Material evidence does, however, seem to reflect status differences within each group." Her concern is mirrored by Karen Powers' analysis of identity in the colonial Andes, but for Powers (2002: 24) gender, race and class "cannot be disengaged," each relies on the other to help define identity in the Spanish colonies.

Treating domestic objects as part of the daily practice of individuals who had dynamic and shifting identities is not an admission of futility in the pursuit of colonial archaeology. It is instead an admission that our increasing knowledge of how people interacted with each other in the colonial Andes can improve our analysis of their material culture.

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